

## Enter and View Report: Links Road Surgery

Service address:	The Surgery, 27-29 Links Road, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 1XH
Service Provider:	Contract with Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group
Type of Service:	GP Practice
Date and Time:	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
Authorised Representatives:	Sylvia New and Tim Sayers
Contact details:	Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG

### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank the service provider, patients, visitors and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View programme.

### What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove supports local children, young people, adults and their communities to influence the design, delivery and improvement of their local health and social care services, now and for the future. We enable people to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing by assisting them when they have concerns or complaints about these services.

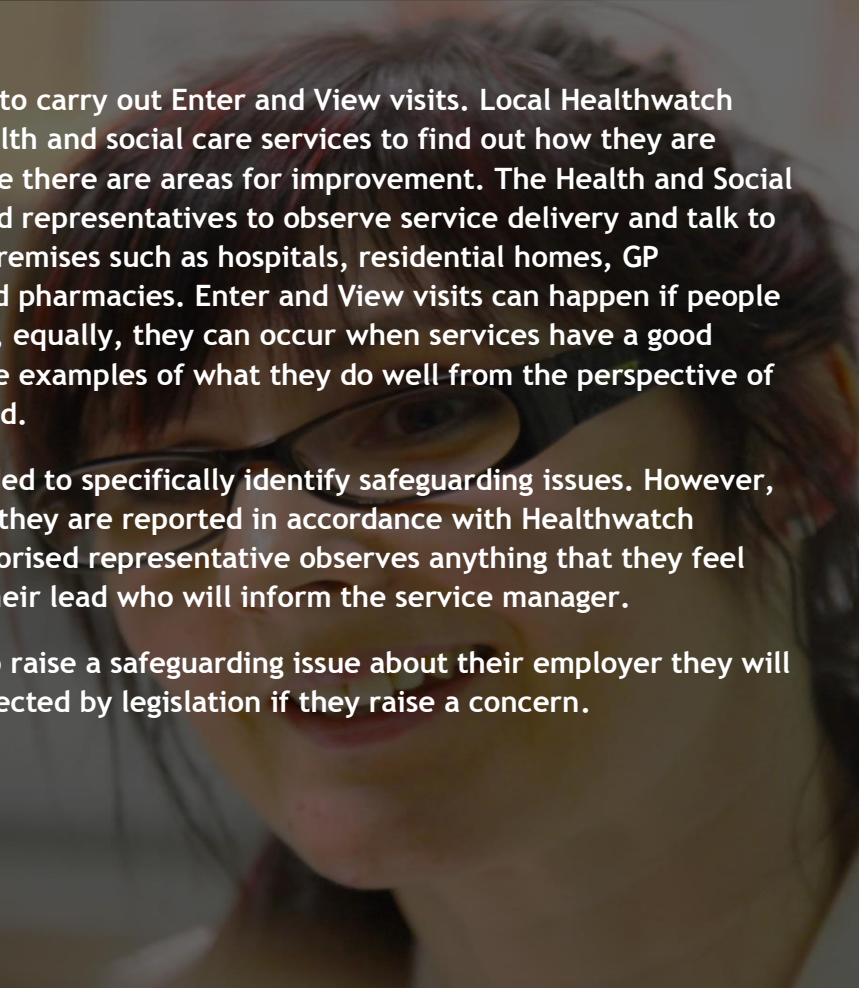
Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is a part of the Healthwatch national network, established by the Government under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to ensure local patients and users have a greater input to shaping and designing local services. There are 152 local Healthwatch organisations across England.

### What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they need to inform their lead who will inform the service manager.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.



# Why is Healthwatch Visiting GP Practices?

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is undertaking a programme of visits to GP Practices across the city during 2015. In total we will visit 15 GP practices, including 3 pilot visits in March 2015. This report on our Links Road surgery is one of our pilot visits.

During our time in each service, volunteer representatives will be talking to patients about their experiences of care and accessing services, and recording what they see in the waiting rooms. At a time when GP practices are going through a significant change both locally and nationally<sup>1</sup>, Healthwatch wants to understand how patients feel services in Brighton and Hove are performing, and make recommendations about improving patient experience.

We want to highlight what good care looks like to patients, and to look at how patients can be empowered to have more of a say in how their practices are run. The Clinical Commissioning Group<sup>2</sup> and Brighton and Hove City Council are currently working with GPs in the city to transform primary care and pilot a range of extended services. Known as 'EPIC'<sup>3</sup>, this programme is bringing multi-disciplinary teams into surgeries together with extra services such as 'Community Navigators'<sup>4</sup>.

## Healthwatch chose the pilot visits based on a range of criteria:

- Those practices about which we had received calls via our helpline.
- Those not recently visited by the Care Quality Commission<sup>5</sup>.
- A cross city representation of the 6 GP clusters<sup>6</sup> in the city.
- Feedback from NHS choices
- Patient populations
- Soft intelligence from partners and community engagement

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<sup>1</sup> [Important Changes to Healthcare in the Community](#), Department of Health

<sup>2</sup> [Clinical Commissioning Group](#) NHS organisations set up by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to organise the delivery of NHS services in England.

<sup>3</sup> [EPIC](#) stands for Extended Primary Integrated Care

<sup>4</sup> [Community Navigators](#) provide community service signposting to individuals

<sup>5</sup> [The Care Quality Commission](#) monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety

<sup>6</sup> [Developing Enhanced Health and Wellbeing Activities](#), Health and Wellbeing Board, March 2015





# Methodology

Two Authorised Volunteer Representatives for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove visited Links Road Surgery on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014. It was one of three pilot visits to GP Practices, which were put in place to calibrate our survey and method for future visits. Both representatives were fully trained and supported by the Healthwatch office. They have also both completed a full Disclosure and Barring Service check prior to the visit.

The representatives talked with 17 patients on the day of the visit, as well as some members of staff. The details of the visit were shared with the practice manager in advance of the session, however staff were not informed about what time or day the representatives would arrive, only the week of the visit was disclosed.

Patients completed a set of questions with the representatives (see appendix 1), who were located in the waiting room of the practice. If any surveys were not completed at the end of the session, they were left at reception with freepost envelopes for patients to complete and return separately. Alongside talking to patients, the volunteers also conducted an observation (see appendix 2) in the waiting room. The representatives had a checklist to encourage them to note down observations for a variety of key information.

## What does n= mean?

In the results section of this report, you may notice that we use the term 'n='. This is a way to show how many people responded to each an individual question. It is a way of being more honest and transparent about our findings. If we say that 100% of people agree with a statement, but next to this there is an (n=2), you will know that whilst 100% sounds impressive, only two people actually responded to that particular question!





# Results of Visit

## Appointments & Referrals

As with the majority of GP practices, at Links Road Surgery it is possible to book appointments with nurses and doctors over the phone, in person and via the internet. Of these options, patients who made an appointment in person (100%, N=12) and by telephone (100%, n=17) all found the process easy or very easy. Only one person had used the online appointment booking service.

93% (n=14) of patients who spoke to a doctor on the telephone and 80% (n=4) of patients who spoke to a nurse found it easy or very easy to access the service. From what patients told us on the day of the visit, they were far more likely to speak to a doctor than a nurse over the phone at this practice.

**I usually get a same day appointment**  
- A Patient at Links Road Surgery

95% (n=16) of patients we spoke to us said they were able to get the appointment they needed within days of contacting the practice, with 42% (n=8) saying they could get an appointment on the same day. Patients clarified that if they had an emergency they would be seen the same day, and if it was more routine appointment they could expect to wait up to 3 days. Patients told our representatives that they were happy with this arrangement.

Sometimes if face to face appointments are not available, GP practices will offer telephone appointments with doctors as an alternative. 81% (n=13) of those asked thought that a telephone appointment was not as good as attending a face to face appointment. Of the patients we have spoken to, 25% (n=4) said they had received this service.

Of those patients who had experienced referrals to hospital care from the practice, 81% (n=13) felt that the process went well. Of those who experienced problems, one person experienced a lost referral, and one had experienced delays on occasion.



## Quality of service

84% (n=15) of people we asked said that the reception staff were helpful or very helpful. Our representatives observed reception staff talking to patients in a warm tone, and appearing ready to be of assistance during the visit. It was observed that all staff adopted a personalised approach to patients which was commendable. Patients' comments on the topic of reception staff were very positive indeed, and several people took the time to tell us how kind and personal their service is.

**6 They always listen and give good feedback without feeling you are taking up too much of their time 9**  
- A patient at Links Road Surgery

94% (n=15) of patients who have had appointments at the practice felt that they were given enough time to explain their issues properly to the doctors and nurses on duty. Patients praised Dr Elbag and Dr Khot in particular for this quality. When calling to receive test results, 100% (n=16) of patients found it easy or very easy to access their test results.

## Environment

The representatives felt that both the waiting rooms were clean and tidy, with adequate seating. They observed some children's play equipment, which was mainly in the downstairs waiting room. Magazines were available for the patients; however some of them were slightly out of date.

Antibacterial gel was provided in one of the waiting rooms along with information about why it is important to use hand sanitizer. However, no sanitizer was available in the upstairs waiting room.

## Providing Information

Noticeboard were available at the practice, which representatives felt were all kept up to date. Good examples of health promotion could be seen, such as a poster by the practice nurses on looking after your heart, and a request to children for drawings of healthy food to make into a display. However, it was reported that the boards were a little cluttered although materials were easy to read. However, no information on where to seek urgent care was available.

Links Road Surgery does not currently have a Patient Participation Group, or PPG<sup>7</sup>. This is reflected in the fact that 94% (n=15) of patient did not know what a Patient Participation Group

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<sup>7</sup> [Patient Participation Groups](https://www.patient.co.uk), Patient.co.uk





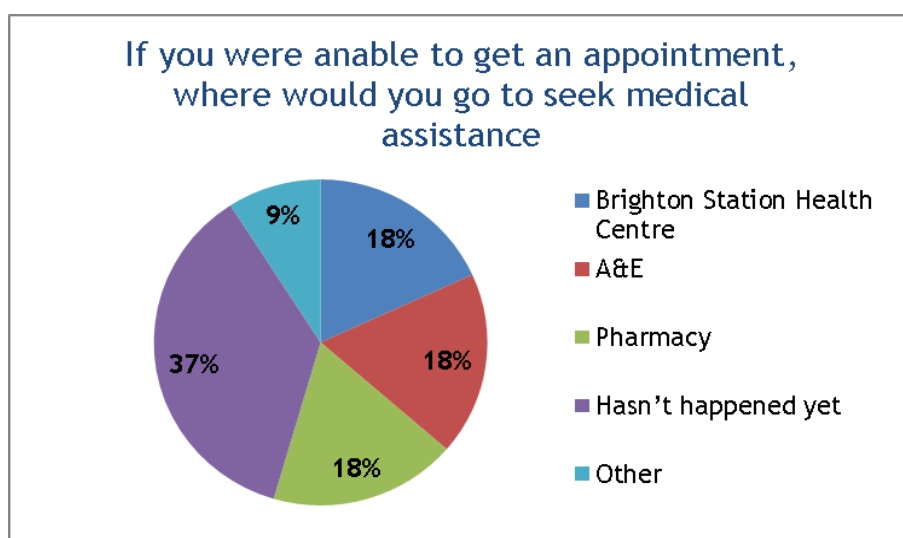
(PPG) was. However, the practice is covered by the Hangleton and Knoll Health Forum which is a regular group of GP practices which meet to discuss health issues. The practice advertises for this group, and sends attendees regularly. The practice intends to run its own PPG from April.

The representatives did not report seeing any information about how to make a complaint at the practice. When asked, 50% (n=8) the patients said they knew very little or nothing at all about how to make a complaint at their practice.

Regarding alternative ways to shape the practice's development, a number of mechanisms could be seen. A poster inside the front door encouraged people to give feedback on a website about the care they had received that day. There was also information on the reception desk on the Friends and Family test, and feedback forms were available. Only 19% (n=3) of people we talked to felt they knew what the national patient survey<sup>8</sup> was, and 32% (n=5) felt they knew what a practice manager does.

## Out of Hours

We asked patients where they would go if the practice was closed and they needed medical assistance. The detail in the chart below shows that whilst 36% (n=4) would approach places like the Brighton Station Health Centre and their local pharmacy, 18% (n=2) would go straight to A&E. A number of people said that appointment system was so good at Links Road that they had not faced that issue before.



<sup>8</sup> [National Patient's Survey](#), Frequently Asked Questions





## Summing up and looking forward

Links Road Surgery appears to have a very person-centred approach to its patients, which means that patients are generally very satisfied with the service they receive. We asked patients to rank the practice from 0-10 (with 0 being the very worst, and 10 being the very best). Of the 16 patients that took part in this, the average score was a very positive 9 out of 10. The lowest score we received was 6, and the highest 10.

Our representatives asked patients what improvements they would like to see at the practice. Most patients felt satisfied, and that they could not identify changes to be made. Those who did comment talked about increasing the size of the practice, and improving the waiting rooms. Some people said it would be useful to have evening appointments available for working people.

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## Additional findings

Alongside telling us about their experiences of Links Road Surgery, patients also told us about issues outside of the surgery. Patients at this practice shared concerns they had about mental health services, urgent services for children and services for alcoholics. These stories will be used as future intelligence for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.



## Our Recommendations

1. Consider developing promotion for online appointment booking systems to increase capacity of reception staff over time.

**Service Response:** Patients are registering for online services on a planned basis. Posters will be posted on notice boards for online services.

2. Provide out of hours information such as the 'Great Choices Make Heroes' campaign by Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group. This could improve the patient population's knowledge of where to go when the practice is closed.

**Service Response:** There is a CLEAR sign on the front door (visible when we are closed) which directs patients to Out of Hours services. Our answerphone also directs patients to these services as does our website. We feel that there is limited advantage to a general education campaign.





3. Enable and encourage patients to report any issues of concern by providing clear complaints information (including making complaints to independent organisations such as Healthwatch or the CQC) in a visible area in the waiting room. Consider including posters explaining how to complain.

**Service Response:** A “how to complain” poster will be added to the notice boards.

4. Promote around issues such as what the patient survey is, and what a practice manager can do for patients.

**Service Response:** Patient Survey information will be added to notice boards

5. Provide a sanitising facility for the upstairs waiting room.

**Service Response:** It is important that patients sanitise when they enter and leave the premises. The Sanitiser is placed in the patient route from the front entry door to the reception. ALL patients will pass this point when entering the building. We will try to make the sanitiser more prominent.

6. Provide easy to read information about Patient Participation Groups, what they are and how people can get involved.

**Service Response:** Practice has approached CCG for support in setting up a CCG. Patient engagement is currently completed by participation in the local Hangleton & Knoll Health Forum, as was explained during the visit.

## Next Steps

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will use this pilot visit to inform our visits to GP practices throughout the year. This includes making changes to the questions asked. We will also share our recommendations with the Practice directly, as well as the CCG and other stakeholders. We welcome any feedback about this visit, the process used and questions asked so please do not hesitate to get in touch.

We will publish outcomes from this visit together with information about what has happened with the recommendations on our website<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove](#), 'What We've Done'





# Appendices

## Appendix one: The questions we asked

- 1. How have you found to do the following:** Book an appointment in person, book an appointment by phone, book an appointment online, speak to a Doctor on the phone, speak to a Nurse on the phone, get your test results back.
- 2. How long do you usually wait between booking an appointment and attending it?** The same day, up to 3 days, up to a week longer than a week, I have not booked an appointment
- 3. Have you ever been offered a telephone consultation if appointments at the practice have not been available?** Yes, it's as good as a face-to-face appointment, yes, it's not as good as a face-to-face appointment, no, but I would be interested in receiving this service, no, but I would not be interested in this service,
- 4. If you were unable to get an appointment here, where else would you go to seek medical assistance?** (if none, please leave blank)
- 5. Do the doctors and nurses give you enough time to explain your condition and issues during your appointment?** Yes, no, I have not had an appointment
- 6. How helpful do you find the reception staff?** very helpful, helpful, unhelpful, very unhelpful, unsure
- 7. What is your experience of being referred to a specialist?** My referral went well, my referral was lost, my referral was delayed, I haven't needed a referral.
- 8. How much do you feel you know about the following services at your practice:** How to make a complaint, what a PPG is, how to get involved in your PPG, what the patient survey is, what the practice manager does
- 9. Overall, how would you rate your GP practice out of 10? (10 being excellent, 1 being very poor):** 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
- 10. What changes would you like to see to make your GP practice better?**
- 11. Is there anything you would like to tell Healthwatch about other NHS or social care services in Brighton and Hove?**



## Appendix two: The Observation Checklist

- 1. Noticeboard:** Is it cluttered, does it have up to date information, is the information easy to read?
- 2. Waiting area:** Is it clean and tidy, are the seats soft, are there any magazines and children's toys?
- 3. Hygiene:** Is hand gel available in the practice waiting room, and information about stopping bugs from spreading?
- 4. Communication:** How are receptionists and other staff interacting with patients? What is their tone of voice, and how helpful are they being?
- 5. Information:** Is there any information available about: Alternative options to A&E, the Friends and Family Test, how to make a complaint?
- 6. Feedback:** Is there any information about patient participation groups, or feedback boxes and forms available?
- 7. Healthwatch Promotion:** Is there a Healthwatch poster on display? If not please provide reception with one when leaving
- 8. Additional observations**

