

## **Data on GP experiences for Overview Scrutiny Committee meeting, January 2015**

Healthwatch Islington gathers the local community's views on health and care services in the borough. We use three methods to collect this data: general out-reach at community events, libraries, health centres and markets; targeted out-reach with community and voluntary sector partners working with 'under-represented' groups and theme-based data collection, more detailed information gathering on themes from our work plan. We work with a team of trained volunteers to carry out this work. Data is stored on our database and reported annually. However, this brief summary of our findings relating to GP services has been produced specifically for the Health Review Committee for their work in GPs.

We share all reports relating to GP services with NHS England, as the commissioner of these services. We also share this information with the Care Quality Commission as the regulator and with Islington Clinical Commissioning Group.

When working with NHS England, data we collect is passed to the Patient Engagement lead, or to the Primary Care Commissioning team in NHS England's London office.

### **General out-reach work - findings**

Between April 2013 and November 2014 Healthwatch Islington gathered 299 comments relating to GP services from local residents. These comments account for around half of the feedback we get and the issue of GP services continues to be of greatest interest to local residents.

Within those 299 comments, the largest proportion related to accessing the GP (128) with 82 stating that this was a problem (and 37 stating that access to the GP was good). However, when rating their general experience at the GP (including how they are treated) out of 80 comments only 10 were negative and 65 were positive. Other issues raised were communication and meeting patient needs (though these received equal measures of good and bad feedback).

Comments were received across 29 of 36 GP practices across the borough. However, Healthwatch Islington has not taken a sample of patients from across all practices. Those who give their views are self-selecting, and this information is intended to give a snapshot of views only. At this stage we have not compared this data to the information available through the GP patient survey.

Most practices received a mixture of positive and negative feedback. Some practices come out with consistently positive feedback:

- Goodinge Group Practice (good care, appointments are easy to access),

“This surgery should be the standard benchmark expected. This surgery works extremely well. 1. Appointments are easily obtainable with the doctor of your choice. 2. Receptionists are extremely friendly, helpful and go the extra mile. 3. Doctors are very thorough and explain everything clearly, and the patients feel in control of their treatment and involved in decisions. 4. The practice has many facilities under one roof which makes it so convenient. 5. Practice nurses are amazing. Very experienced and very high standards”.

- Ritchie Street Group Practice (good care, appointments easy to access),

“I am an insomniac and often forget my appointment but they are patient with me and let me rearrange”.

- River Place Group Practice (good care, appointments are easy to access).

“Generally happy with service. I like my doctor. Very easy to get a same day appointment. I call at 8am and always get one”.

And some with more negative feedback:

- Bingfield Street Surgery (doctors don't listen, hard to get referrals),

“The GP is sometimes not patient enough to listen to your complaints and now they tell you that it's only one issue at a time, which I believe is not effective and wasting of time. They tell you that they have a target to meet hence they cannot listen to more than one case”.

- Islington Central Medical Centre (hard to make appointment),

“3 week wait to make an appointment for a named doctor. Why can't we book online?”

- Sobell Medical Centre (hard to make an appointment or get a referral).

“I wasn't referred to any other service and within a week I was in A&E”.

A focus group with Deaf service users carried out in December 2014 also highlighted inconsistencies in GP practice in terms of technology being employed to support patients with access needs. Some practices were praised for embracing technology such as digital displays in waiting areas and tablet computers to offer interpreting services.

### **Thematic work - findings**

During the year April 2014 to March 2015, Healthwatch Islington has also worked with local practices to:

- 1. improve the information that they have available on complaints procedures,**

Through this work we have found that there is inconsistency across the borough in terms of the information made available to patients and that there has been little improvement despite efforts by HWIslington to ensure practice have the correct information.

[http://www.healthwatchislington.co.uk/sites/default/files/mystery\\_shopping\\_gp\\_complaints\\_1.pdf](http://www.healthwatchislington.co.uk/sites/default/files/mystery_shopping_gp_complaints_1.pdf)

- 2. assess the support given to people who do not speak English.**

Through this work we have found that few practices consistently offer patients access to interpreting services and that staff do not seem to be clear about interpreting policies and how to implement these. However, St Peter's Street Practice stood out as an example of good practice for others to follow.

This report will be published shortly.