



# Enter & View Report The Doctor Hickey Surgery

November 2023

This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors, and patients who met members of the Enter & View Team on that date.

**healthwatch**  
Westminster

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# Practice Details

## **Contact details:**

The Doctor Hickey Surgery  
The Cardinal Hume Centre  
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Tel: 02072228593

## **Practice Manager:**

Tanya O'Brien

## **Date and Time of Enter & View Visit:**

30 November 2023

10AM-1PM

## **Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea Authorised Representatives:**

Ruth Daniel (Engagement & Volunteer Coordinator)

Giovanna Pascarella (Engagement and Communications Coordinator)

Jacqueline Ferguson (Volunteer)

Gaenor Holland Williams (Volunteer)

Lucie Zu Pappenheim (Volunteer)

# Introduction

At Healthwatch Westminster, our mission is to collect the perspectives and experiences of individuals, particularly those whose voices are often overlooked, in order to provide them with a platform to share their feelings about our service. The goal of an Enter and View visit is to gather feedback and insights from both patients and staff of a service, while also assessing the quality of the environment.

During our Enter & View visits in November 2023 – January 2024, Healthwatch Westminster visited three GP surgeries in Westminster, with Doctor Hickey Surgery being one of them.

These GP visits focused on evaluating the accessibility of GP clinics and identifying any challenges patients, especially those who are vulnerable or have disabilities, may encounter when accessing their GP. It is important to note all of the Enter and View visit was conducted by authorised representatives who have the authority to visit health and social care facilities, whether announced or unannounced.

On 30 November 2023, Healthwatch Westminster conducted an announced visit to Dr Hickey Surgery; the Practice Manager was not there but we were welcomed by the two reception staff and one of the senior Doctors.

We gathered feedback from both patients and staff, and conducted observations of the clinic, which formed the basis of this report. The report highlights areas of good practice as well as potential areas for improvement. As an independent organisation, Healthwatch Westminster does not make judgments or express personal opinions. Instead, we rely on the feedback received and objective observations of the environment. The report is first shared with the Practice Manager to provide them with an

opportunity to respond before it is published on the Healthwatch Westminster website at [www.healthwatchwestminster.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchwestminster.org.uk).

Additionally, we will schedule a revisit to assess the progress of any improvements. The report is also made available to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England, and any other relevant organisations.

# General Information

The Doctor Hickey Surgery delivers essential GP primary care services to approximately 2,200 homeless individuals residing in Westminster. Staffed by a team of dedicated professionals, including four GP partners (three male and one female), two nurses (an advanced nurse practitioner and a clinical nurse specialist), a practice manager, a health care assistant, three administrative staff, and cleaners, the practice is committed to meeting the unique healthcare needs of its patient population.

With a Personal Medical Services (PMS) contract commissioned by NHSE London, the practice is registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide a range of regulated activities, including diagnostic and screening procedures, treatment of disease, surgical procedures, family planning, and maternity and midwifery services.

Operating hours are from 9.30am to 4pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Wednesday. Additionally, the practice conducts outreach visits to hostels and street homeless individuals during evenings and other times as needed.

# Methodology

During the announced visit to Dr Hickey surgery, Enter and View representatives engaged with 12 patients and two members of staff to gather feedback. Westminster Healthwatch collected the views and experiences of both patients and staff. A patient questionnaire was utilised, adapted to capture individual experiences and assess the accessibility of Barlby Surgery. Patients were asked to provide suggestions for improving their GP Surgery, including feedback on appointment scheduling, communication, and the overall environment of the surgery. Staff members were also given a questionnaire to gather their perspectives on service provision, appointment management, communication, staffing levels, and support, including training opportunities.

In addition to gathering feedback, Westminster Representatives conducted their own observations on the internal and external environment of the surgery, identifying barriers to accessibility and assessing the friendliness and communication skills of the staff. To ensure confidentiality and

anonymity of respondents, all names, pronouns, and identifiable details have been removed from the report.



# Summary

## **Surgery Demographic**

Situated within the North West London Integrated Care System and part of a wider network of GP practices, the Doctor Hickey Surgery serves a transient population, predominantly male and of working age, with significant unmet health needs. Many patients are born outside the UK and may not speak English fluently. The practice specializes in providing medical services for homeless individuals, with expertise in primary care management of substance misuse, alcohol abuse, and chronic severe mental illness, serving the community for over thirty years.

Demographic questions were incorporated into our enter and view questionnaire for patients at Elgin Clinic, which indicated a diverse range of patients.

## **Appointment Management**

Appointment booking at the Dr Hickey Surgery is convenient and flexible, offering a blend of bookable and walk-in appointments, including telephone and face-to-face consultations. This helps ensure accessibility for patients. 'Out of hours' services are offered by an alternative provider, and extended hours primary care appointments are available at other locations within Westminster.

Upon arrival to the clinic patients check in from an outside bared window, with the option to come in or wait outside. Hot drinks and snacks are offered while patients wait to be called in by their health provider.

## **Visit Summary**

During our visit to The Dr Hickley Surgery the Healthwatch team was greeted by two reception staff members and a senior Doctor. Overall, the visit was successful, offering a unique insight into the experiences of primarily homeless patients dealing with substance abuse issues. Despite one patient becoming agitated and raising their voice, the Healthwatch staff remained composed and continued with the questionnaire. The staff



at the surgery handled the situation with compassion, consideration, and confidence. The Healthwatch team observed the surgery on two occasions and completed all questionnaires for patients and staff.

# Enter & View Observations

## **Location and External Environment**

The Doctor Hickey Surgery is located in Westminster, on a quiet road but situated in a bustling urban area. The external environment of the surgery reflects the dynamic nature of the city. Surrounding the surgery is a mix of residential and commercial buildings, with various amenities nearby. Given its focus on serving homeless individuals, the surgery is strategically located in an area accessible to this demographic, close to shelters, community centres, and other support services aimed at aiding homeless individuals. Additionally, the surgery is easily reachable via public transportation routes, facilitating access for those without personal means of transportation.

There are small steps and a gate leading down to the surgery doors from the street, as well as an accessible walkway for individuals with mobility

issues. Patients wait for their appointments outside in the courtyard. Everyone is offered hot drinks when they arrive with cakes and snacks.

The Doctor Hickey Surgery in Westminster serves as a vital healthcare resource for homeless individuals.

### **Internal Environment and Waiting Area**

Upon entering the surgery, you walk straight into the reception area. The area is small, but offers enough room to practice some social distancing as many of the patients choose to wait outside for their appointment.

Informational materials are displayed around the waiting room, predominantly clinical in nature, with some information pertaining to support that homeless people can get to signpost to different support groups.

### **Patient Involvement**

Observations were made regarding the interaction between staff and patients during the check-in procedures. New patients were required to have their picture taken as proof of identification. Furthermore, it was mentioned by one of the staff members that patients could use the GP address to open a bank account, a service offered to all patients.

Healthwatch representatives engaged with a total of 12 patients during our visit. However, it was noted that more patients could have been interviewed, as several were called into their appointments before

completing the questionnaire. Additionally, some patients declined to participate.

The patients who interacted with the Healthwatch team were at the practice for various reasons, including consultations with GPs or other healthcare professionals, as well as general inquiries.

# Patient feedback

## How did you make your appointment?

Among the 12 patients interviewed, nine had arranged their appointments via telephone, and three had walked in on the day and booked their appointment early that morning. Out of the 12 patients, all found the appointment scheduling process for their visit on that day to be easy.

When asked what you would do if you couldn't get an appointment, one patient stated:



*“Try again the next day”.*



## During your time with your GP were you able to mention more than one issue during your appointment?

All 12 patients we questioned said they could address more than one health concern in a single visit, and did not need to make future appointments to discuss more issues.



## Are the reception staff easy to communicate with?

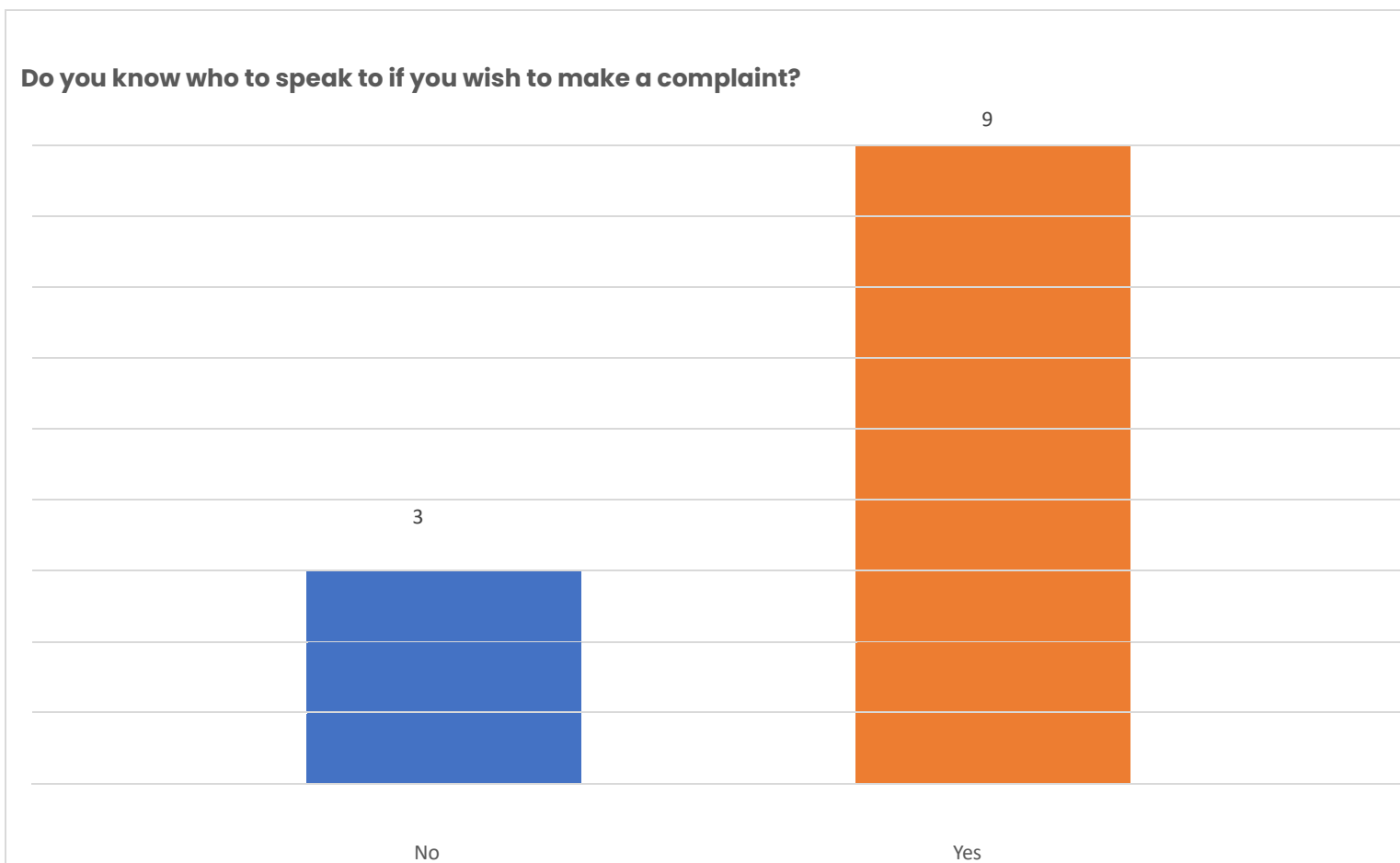
All 12 patients reported positive experiences with staff members on duty.

## Are you aware of social prescribing?

Only one of the patients were familiar with Social Prescribing, none of the other patients had used this service.

## Do you know who to speak to if you wish to make a complaint?

Of the patients questioned nine stated that they were aware of whom to contact in the event of a complaint. Three patients, however, acknowledged that they were unsure of how to file a complaint. Dr Hickey Surgery has a complaint process that patients are informed of when they ask at reception.



### **Suggestions for improvement**

None of the patients had any suggestions for improvement, as they were happy with the service they were receiving.

# Staff feedback

During the Enter & View visit, Healthwatch Westminster provided a questionnaire to three reception staff members. These staff members were observed interacting with patients briefly and demonstrated confidence in their roles while maintaining a friendly demeanour. Listed below are some of the questions they were asked.

## **How has staffing levels changed since the pandemic?**

Overall, staff indicated that there have been no significant changes in staffing levels since the pandemic, and they did not elaborate on any pandemic-related staffing shortages.

## **How do you support patients to use the online booking/Messaging system?**

Both staff mentioned the patients that visit the service either book in person or call and do not use an App.

## **Do you have enough time to deal with each patient enquiry?**

All Staff simply responded "yes" to this question without providing further detail.

## **What training have you had over the last year?**

All staff members indicated that they have received adequate training and that it is up to date.

### **How do you think the current appointment system can be improved?**

Both staff members commented there was nothing to be improved, apart from getting a bigger space as they were out growing the current location.

# Summary and Recommendations

Based on observations of the environment and questionnaire feedback from patients and staff, the following recommendations have been developed for Barlby Surgery:

#### **Strengths:**

- Appointment booking is convenient and flexible, allowing patients to book online, by phone, or in person for the same day appointment.
- All patients are offered food and drinks when they come to their appointments.
- Patients are treated with dignity and respect.
- All 12 patients we spoke to on the day were overall happy with the service they were receiving.

## Recommendations for improvement

- Provide clear information regarding the complaints procedure to ensure all patients are aware of how to raise concerns or issues, potentially by implementing a Compliments, Comments, and Complaints box for easy access.
- Considered a bigger building, as the current space is small considering the number of clients who attend the surgery.
- Additional safety measures and support for staff are essential, including the provision of a secure area for staff to retreat to if necessary. During our visit, a member of the Healthwatch team witnessed a patient exhibiting aggressive behaviour. It is crucial for staff to have access to a safe area or alternative exit during potentially dangerous situations. Currently, one staff member holds a key that opens and locks the main door each time someone enters or exits the surgery. As a result, the door remains locked at all times, raising concerns about fire safety. Therefore, it is imperative to address these safety concerns promptly and ensure that staff have



the necessary support and resources to handle challenging situations effectively.

## Provider response

Despite multiple attempts made via email and extension of deadlines to facilitate a response, Dr Hickley Surgery did not provide feedback. As a result, their input is not reflected in this report.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea would like to thank management, staff and patients for taking the time to speak to us during the visit.