



**Enter and View visit: Heron Practice
Hackney
30 October 2017**

Service	General Practice
Service address	John Scott Health Centre, Green Lanes, Woodberry Down, London N4 2NU
Provider name	The Heron Practice
Date/Time of visit	11/09/2017
E&V representative/s	Kanariya Yuseinova Paula Shaw
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Practice contact	Mandy Lawrence - 020 7690 1172

About Healthwatch enter and view visits

The Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007, as amended by the 2012 Act and directed by Local Healthwatch Regulations 2013, imposes a duty on health and social care providers (including the independent sector) to allow Local Healthwatch authorised representative to enter premises that they own or control to observe the services being provided. These are legally binding directions and are often referred to as ‘the right to enter and view’.

Purpose of our visit

We visited Heron Practice to:

- Observe services being provided at Heron Practice and interview patients about their experiences
- Compile a report highlighting good practice and recommendations for improvements

Our decision to visit was influenced by the following factors:

- Routine comments and feedback from service users received by Healthwatch Hackney
- An [October 2016 Care Quality Commission inspection report which rated the service as Good and recommended improvements in nurse recruitment and access and care for people with learning disabilities*](#)
- Data from the national GP patient survey which show patients rated the practice lower than others for several aspects of care.

We will continue to monitor patients' experience of the service to check that the changes being made are working and reflected in the National GP Patient Survey.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Hackney would like to thank the practice manager and staff for accommodating our visit and the patients for participating in our interviews. We are also grateful to our volunteer authorised representatives for conducting the visit.

Important Information for management/provider

- We expect Heron Practice to provide an 'action plan and response' to issues raised under 'Recommendations'
- Copies of this report will be circulated to City and Hackney CCG, the CQC and will be made available on the Healthwatch Hackney website
- We will publish Heron Practice's Action Plan and Response along with our report

Disclaimer

- Observations made in this report relate only to the visit carried out at Heron Practice on 30 October 2017 which lasted for a total of five and a half hours
- This report is not representative of all patients of Heron Practice on the day of the visit. It only represents the views 18 patients and one member of staff who were able to contribute within the restricted time available.

Key information about the provider

- The Heron practice is based at John Scott Health Centre in a Grade II building, the first purpose-built health centre in England
- The practice has 12,000 registered patients
- It shares an entrance and waiting area with another practice
- The building is maintained by NHS Property Services
- The building was refurbished 4-5 years ago
- The practice is open every week day from 8am to 6.30pm and shuts for an hour at 1pm and closes on the weekend
- The practice has several consulting rooms located in the corridor of the neighboring practice
- Practice staff at the time of the visit:
 - 5 partners (4 female, 1 male); 4 salaried GPs (2 female, 2 male) and process of recruiting a part-time female GP
 - Three female nurses, one full-time, two part-time
- Two full time Health Care Assistants (1 male, 1 female)
- Emergency appointments for children under 5 are available every morning from 8.45pm
- Emergency appointments for other patients are available alongside morning surgeries.
- The practice offers online appointments
- From 15 November 2017, Heron Practice will offer e-consultation to patients
- Emergency appointments are offered for patients with children under 5 years old every day from 8:30am
- The practice has a website with useful health information and links for easy navigation.
- Practice uses telephone line interpreting services to accommodate patients' language needs
- A Turkish speaking advocate is available 3 mornings a week, provided by Homerton University Hospital (HUH) covering both practices and other community health services provide at John Scott
- City and Hackney Carers Centre provide one to one advice to carers every Tuesday and Friday at the practice.
- All staff are dementia trained
- It is a teaching practice which provides GP mentors to healthcare assistants and nurses
- The practice has a patient participation group (PPG) with up to ten active members
- The practice has [virtual patient forum](#) with over 100 patients providing a channel for feedback and comments if they patients are to attend PPG meetings.
- The practice uses text messages to remind patients about appointments

Summary of findings/observations

The following observations were noticed during the visit:

- Joint waiting area had a welcome, calm and clean environment
- Both entrance doors are wheelchair accessible but only one is automated.
- Two public toilets are located in front of the reception along with an accessible toilet
- Complaints procedure information was not visible in the building at the time of the visit
- Patient Participation Group information was not sufficiently visible and most patients we interviewed were unaware of the group
- The practice website provided useful information on the homepage and it was easy to navigate
- Well stocked leaflet racks with up to date information with many leaflets promoting sexual health
- Patients rated the practice on average 3.5 out of 5 (where 5 is very good)

What patients told us

- Most patients felt treated with respect and dignity by the practice team
- Most were happy with the treatment received from doctors and nurses
- 4/6 Turkish speaking patients were unhappy with the interpreter who was not very 'unapproachable'.
- Some patients said the interpreter often undermined their interaction and communication with the GP by not being objective eg..challenging, dismissing commenting on their questions without conveying their questions to the doctor
- On the day of our visit Turkish speaking patients told us the booked interpreter had not shown up and the practice staff failed to communicate this to them
- Some patients felt rushed during the consultation
- Patients told us they could not always see a specific doctor

Physical environment/cleanliness/hygiene

- Interior was airy, light with brightly coloured walls and comfortable seating.
- Waiting area was clean and tidy.
- One of the three toilets shared by both Heron and Cedar practice was out of order
- No cleaning rota sheet in any of the shared toilets. One toilet seat was dirty and there was no mirror
- Heron practices dedicated accessible toilet was fully equipped and hygienic

Transport

- Practice is located off the main road with quick links to busses and within walking distance from Manor House Tube station
- Car park is available for patients at the rear of building

Patient centred care/dignity/safety

- CCTV operates around the building
- Reception had low and high desks to serve patients near the entrance
- Most patients were **checking in** at the lower reception desk and the area became crowded when there were more than four patients queuing
- Confidentiality was hard to maintain due to the reception location

Communication with patients/ Information

- Reception staff spoke to patients respectfully
- Noticeboards with plenty of information but nothing on 'How to complain'
- Other practice policies were on display
- Up to date leaflets in racks
- Community Noticeboard with interesting information including where to get hot meals.
- The practices website provides Google Translate option for patients with English is their second language
- Practice is using text messaging service to send reminders and updates to patients
- Most patients expressed satisfaction with the communication with the practice
- Accessible information standard information was available in the practice's handbook

Access issues (physical or accessible information)

- Confusing entrance area for a new patient/visitors especially if a patient is visually impaired, disabled or has a pushchair
- Pathway and pavements outside may cause an obstacle for visually impaired and disabled patients to navigate when visiting the building.
- Information on the Accessible Information Standard was available in English only

Appointments system

- Most patients we spoke to were attending emergency appointments booked early in the morning and were content with the booking system
- Parents attending the under-5s walk-in from 8:30am expressed satisfaction with the access to the GP

Patient feedback

Patient 1 *'I've been registered here for more than 17 years and am here for my blood test follow up. I was given the appointment for today 15 days ago. The doctors are nice and kind. There's usually an interpreter available for me, but when there is not my son helps me. I am not aware of the complaint procedure but never needed it to be honest. I'm happy with the receptionists too. The prescription is usually always ready. The place is nice and tidy. But I never heard of the PPG. All good'* 5/5

Patient 2 *'I've been waiting for interpreter for 40 Minutes now. And I am not surprised, because the interpreter is always late, or will not show at all, so just waiting. This obviously delays my consultation and may lead to delaying treatment. I come here because I am in pain and now I don't even know if I will be seen at all. Doctors here are also different than before. They are too busy and 10 minutes consultation is not enough, especially when we have to deal with the interpreter too. Being dependent on the interpreter stresses me sometimes. There needs to be more interpreters and trained on being compassionate and doing their jobs properly. I don't know anything about PPG.* 2/5

Patient 3 *'I like the doctors and the nurses here. They seem great and treat me well. But the problem is the interpreter. First, they are always late, second, I never feel comfortable with the interpreter. There is only one interpreter to interpret for all Turkish speakers visiting the building – Cedar, Nurse, Homerton services. I always feel that not everything I say is passed on to the doctor. The interpreter will often cut me off and respond instead of the GP. This affects my psychology and obviously my health too, because I don't feel comfortable asking questions about my health. I feel that the interpreter sometimes is laughing at my complaints and concerns'. Not aware of the PPG.'* 2/5

Patient 4 *'I don't speak English well; therefore need the help of interpreter. Booking an appointment with one can take quite long and then on the day of the appointment the interpreter will be always late or not show at all. Very sad and disappointed. On the other hand, the doctors here seem nice and kind but not very interested in patients' concerns, especially when repeated several times. My two brothers were registered in the neighbouring practice and for many years have been going to their GPs complaining about constant headaches, vomiting and so on, insisting on MRI referrals but always refused. Then they went to Turkey and paid for the MRI there. One ended up having tumor on their brains. They have been suffering and begging doctors for check-up for five years. Now I have had the same symptoms for quite long time, I told this to my GP and requested a referral for a MRI because I am extremely worried but every time he refuses and diagnoses me with depression. This stresses and depresses me a lot. And adding to it, the interpreter's attitude, things are not brilliant at all. I have no money to go to Turkey and do whatever is necessary. If I had I would go. No one told me anything about PPG.'* 3/5

Patient 5 *'Doctors here are good, nice and polite but not the interpreters. They get upset often when I say something or ask a question. Once it happened when I was trying to explain that I get sharp pain on my back which makes me fall on my knees, is that painful, but the interpreter was getting angry and asked me several times 'how come I fell from the pain?'. Well if I knew how to say this in English I wouldn't need her help, would I? I believe this is the reason she is interpreter for Turkish people, should know our [cultural] expressions and so on. This often stops me sharing or asking further questions. They are always late, sometimes even with 50 minutes or so. I even think they laugh at my problems. Sometimes I come with my daughter and feel definitely much better. Otherwise I am happy with the treatment and feel well listened to by doctors. My medication is always ready for me. The receptionists are always friendly and helpful'. Don't know what PPG is'* 2/5

Patient 6 *'Generally I am happy with the treatment I receive here. But I don't like the fact that receptionists ask me so many questions before giving me appointment. I know this is what they are told but I don't feel comfortable talking about it in front of many people. There is no confidentiality at the reception desk. The doctors are great and I never felt rushed. I do trust them I had an emergency last week and their action was quick and I received excellent treatment. Never had to complain, therefore don't know what the procedure is but probably I would talk to the practice manager. She seems approachable. I am not aware of the PPG'* **4/5**

Patient 7 *'I am diabetic and it is easy for me to get an appointment every two weeks with an interpreter arranged. I am happy with the treatment from doctors and nurses. I feel listened to they explain my condition. I feel respected by everyone. I have never had to complain therefore I am not aware of any practice procedures. Never heard of PPG too. The place is always clean and tidy.'* **5/5**

Patient 8 *'They are already 45 minutes late calling me for my consultation. And no one came out to tell me that my appointment will be that late or to apologise for the wait. It would be great if they did that. They need to communicate with patients better. They can possibly use this electronic board to notify patients. I have serious issues and complain about repeat prescription. My prescription is always missing when I come to pick it up from here. Last time I came, I ordered it four days before my medication finished, when they ask us to do it 2 days before last pill. When I came here they couldn't find it. The same person who took it from me four days ago was telling me I didn't provide them with the paper. This of course affects my health condition and as I miss my medicine. I don't find them very useful here at the reception. I am aware of the complaint procedure but see no point of doing it as nothing will change. I have never heard of the PPG but it sounds interesting. I would like to take part but I can't see any info around. There are no decent appointments available. There are not enough doctors for the high demand. It's really hard to get through on the phone in the morning to book one. I waited 45 minutes on the line and when was my turn there were no more appointments left. If luckily I get an appointment I will only have 10 minutes to tell my GP what is wrong with me. I feel rushed and uncomfortable. Sometimes I don't hear my name when the doctor calls me. I guess all this is happening because of the cuts to the staff and services which obviously affect badly our health'.* **1/5**

Patient 9 *'This is my second time here for two years. I wouldn't come here if I didn't have to. I was sent back to my GP from the A&E to get a referral for scan. I suspect I have hernia, but it needs to be checked. I was here almost 2 years ago with cyst which I wanted to be taken off, but the doctor preferred to give me medicine.. This cyst is been showing on from time to time and is not the best thing to have, but he did not refer me. I need a specialist but who cares. It would be great if doctors worked on quality rather than the quantity services and patients. Now I am waiting for the doctor to call me rather than see me and tell me what to do. To be honest, don't expect much, but have no other option. I don't find the doctors competent enough. Otherwise the reception staff are nice and kind and really try to help.* **1/5**

Patient 10 The patient visits the surgery every 2 months and always feels welcome. He has been coming to the surgery since he was a child and the staff know him. He finds making an appointment to see his doctor very easy and is 'able to see the doctor I want to see' and it is effective. He could not think of anything that was 'bad' about the surgery.**5/5**

Patient 11 The patient had been coming to the surgery for 2 years and was unhappy because her 18 month old had a fever She was sent away and had returned to ask again to see the doctor. She said 'usually it is easy to see the doctor for the children and the doctors are good with the children' but today was hard. 'Adults have to wait 2 weeks for an

appointment and do not always see their own doctor'. She felt the surgery needed more doctors. She said reception staff were 'sometimes iffy'. **4/5**

Patient 12 The patient has diabetes and had an appointment with the nurse for test. His arm swells when he has blood tests but it wasn't a problem if they took bloods from his finger. He has told the doctor and nurse but they have ignored him. When he attends Homerton Hospital the nurses take blood from his finger. 'Sometimes the computer for logging in doesn't work'. He was happy with the waiting time and his doctor. **4/5**

Patient 13 'I have been coming here for 10 years even though I have moved and it is not my nearest doctor but I don't want to change. They are very good with children and there is a baby clinic at 8.45am. I can get an appointment on the same day and if it is busy they call you.' She said the new receptionist was 'cheerful and friendly'. There is a good prescription service'. We talked about the merits of toys for the children but she felt she prefers there not being any as then there is no danger of infection. 'A few magazines would be nice'. **5/5**

Patient 14 had a baby and was waiting to see the nurse for baby's vaccinations. 'I have no complaints about anything. They are good with the baby.' **5/5**

Patient 15 'I have to wait 2 weeks to see my named doctor but appointments are easy to get'. His wife did not speak English. I asked if she had used an interpreter. He said his wife was his carer. They were always together so 'no problem'. I asked what happens if she had medical issues did not want to share with him? He told me how the doctor had made them have an interpreter for his wife when she was pregnant with their 9 year old son. Everyone was 'polite and courteous' and 'careful and understanding'. Once when he was unable to get in for an appointment they had sent a taxi for him. **5/5**

Patient 16 The surgery was 'efficient, helpful and friendly' but sometimes it was hard to get an appointment. The patient had a pre-arranged appointment from 2 weeks ago. He has been a patient here for 3 years and was happy with the service. If he had a complaint he said he would check the website. **5/5**

Patient 17 The patient was waiting for the doctor. They had been a patient at the practice for a year. He found staff polite and the place clean but added: 'I feel too rushed with not enough time to talk' and 'I need more time to get across what I want to say'. **4/5**

Patient 18 The patient has been registered with the surgery for 4 years. He said the receptionist was good but the old one (in August) was rude and 'put the phone down on me'. 'The doctors are good but I have to wait to see the one I want'. They always give me paracetamol'. He said he had made a complaint, in writing, but had not heard anything yet. He said he 'needed more time' to discuss other issues like the effects of medication. **3/5**

Staff comments

Staff 1 We spoke to the practice manager Amanda Lawrence. She was open with information and aware of NHS England changes. The practice is Dementia Friendly thanks to one of the [general?] practitioners who chairs the Dementia Alliance Strategy Group for City and Hackney.

Nurses and HCAs are mentored by GPs. Excellent professional development is reflected in staff retention.

- **Complaints:** The practice manager prefers to deal with complaints in person, signposting patients to the NHS Independent Complaint Service. Reception and admin staff discuss patients' issues at monthly meetings
- **Friends and Family** test results are discussed with practice team monthly (we were shown an email sent from the practice manager to all practice members with bullet points of the main patient complaints from Friends and Family tests)
- **Interpreters:** No funding is allocated for interpreters. Homerton University Hospital does not communicate appropriately with the practice to notify patients for Interpreter delays. When interpreter is late or fails to show up, patient appointments are delayed and sometimes have to be cancelled
- **PPG information:** GPs approach specific patients and invite them to get involved with PPG. Information is also publicised on the website. The practice is proud to have over 100 members on their Virtual Patients Forum who actively respond to questions such as patient's opinion on the Practice's opening hours, quality of care and services received etc.
- **Staff Training:** One GP partner had undergone learning disability training and had passed the information to other team members which led to creating short instructions for reception staff on how to speak to patients with learning disabilities. Practice staff have also had dementia training.
- **Patients not able to see their specific doctors in a timely manner.** Because some of the doctors are part time, this can lead to delays and late appointments
- **Communication with patients** - Patients with learning disabilities are given longer appointments and staff are trained on communication issues.
- **Information within the practice:** Due to restrictions imposed by NHS Property Services, (who are responsible for maintaining the building) the practice cannot make full use of the wall space which limits the amount of information displayed.

Recommendations

All recommendations are based on patient feedback and our observations

Recommendation 1 The practice should consider having two receptionists during busy times (patient 1)

Recommendation 2 The practice should take steps to ensure patients do not feel rushed during consultations so patients can fully express their needs and concerns

Recommendation 3 Practice should strive to provide effective interpreting services for patients where English is not their first language

Recommendation 4 Accessible Information Standard information should be translated in to the most common languages used by patients

Recommendation 5 The practice should communicate better with waiting patients when there are delays (Patients 2,5,8)

Recommendation 6 The practice may consider reviewing its current patient list and identifying (if any) patients need a longer consultation time

Recommendation 7 The practice should consider providing placements for students on the Community Interpreting Course to enable a better service for patients with language needs

Recommendation 8 Patient Participation Group information should be displayed more visibly to ensure patients who are not using the website are also aware of the group

Recommendation 9 The complaints procedure should be visibly displayed in the waiting area

Recommendation 10 Complaint forms should be made available in the public waiting area

Recommendation 11 The practice should take steps to maintain patient confidentiality at the reception at all time

Summary of demographic/equality information collected

Ethnic category	
White	5
White Other	7
Mixed	
Black or Black British	3
Asian or Asian British	2
Other Asian	1
Arab	

Gender	
Male	12
Female	6

The Heron Practice Action Plan 30 October 2017

Healthwatch Hackney recommendation	Practice Response/Action Plan
Practice should consider having two receptionists during the busy times (patient 1)	The practice has implemented a system to enable two receptionists to be at the front desk at busy times.
Practice should take steps to ensure patients do not feel rushed during consultations so patients can fully express their needs and concerns	The Senior Partner has written to all clinicians reminding them to make sure that patients do not feel rushed during consultations. Rather than being 'rushed' patients should be advised to book a follow up appointment
Practice should strive to provide effective interpreting services for patients where English is not their first language	The Practice Manager has written to Homerton Hospital Community Services regarding the patient feedback received in relation to the advocacy and interpreting service. Clinicians will continue to use language line if needed.
Accessible Information Standard should be translated in to the most common languages used by patients	The Practice Manager has requested assistance from the City & Hackney GP Confederation to translate this document into Turkish; the most common language used by patients other than English.
Practice should make sure better communication with patients (Patients 2,5,8)	The Practice Manager has written to Homerton Hospital Community Services regarding the patient feedback received in relation to the advocacy and interpreting service. The practice has a system in place for advising patients when clinicians are running late; the Practice Manager has written to all staff to reaffirm this.
The practice may consider reviewing its current patient list and identifying (if any) those patients who need a longer consultation time (other than learning disabilities)	The practice already provides longer consultations for specific cohorts of patients in addition to those with learning disabilities ie cancer care, pregnant patients, mum and baby checks, the elderly and frail. We will review our patient list to determine if there are any other cohorts of patients who need a longer consultation time.
The practice should consider providing placements for students on the Community interpreting course in order to enable better The practice is happy to consider this. Can Healthwatch Hackney provide further information on how we can follow this up access to services for patients with language issues	The practice is happy to consider this. Can Healthwatch Hackney provide further information on how we can follow this up please?
Patient Participation Group information should be displayed more visibly to ensure those	The PPG information has been updated and has been displayed more visibly throughout

patients who are not using practice's website are also aware of the group	the practice.
The Complaints procedure should be visibly displayed in the waiting area	The complaints procedure has been displayed so that it is visible in the waiting area. The procedure also remains available via the practice website.
Complaint forms to be available in the public waiting area (this will ensure confidentiality and independence of patients concerns and complaints)	Complaint forms and information leaflets are available to patients in the waiting area. These forms also remain available via the practice website.
Practice should take steps to ensure patients' confidentiality is kept and maintained at the reception at all time	The Practice Manager has contacted NHS Property Services, who own and manage the building, to discuss/identify ways in which we can improve patient confidentiality at the front desk.