



Enter & View Report Elgin Clinic

January 2024

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

healthwatch
Westminster

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Practice Details

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Practice Manager:

Debbie McCarthy

Date and Time of Enter & View Visit:

24 January 2024
10AM-1PM

Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea Authorised Representatives:

Ruth Daniel (Engagement & Volunteer Coordinator)
Blessing Ogunoshun (Healthwatch Westminster Lead Officer)
Giovanna Pascarella (Engagement and Communications
Coordinator)
Gaenor Holland Williams (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 December 2023 - January 2024, Healthwatch Westminster visited three GP surgeries in Westminster, including Elgin Clinic.

These visits focused on evaluating the accessibility of GP clinics and identifying any challenges patients may encounter when accessing their GP. We were particularly interested in evaluating experiences of those who are vulnerable or have disabilities. Each 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 13 December 2023, Healthwatch Westminster conducted an announced visit to Elgin Clinic. Unfortunately, our team was unable to complete the visit as planned due to a small number of scheduled patient appointments and some staff members being on leave. Despite this setback, we gathered observational material and made plans to return another day.

On 24 January we returned to the surgery and gathered feedback from both patients and staff, and conducted observations of the clinic, which form 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.

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 Elgin Clinic is situated in the Westminster Local Authority, within a residential area with convenient transport links. Registered with the CQC, the clinic offers regulated activities including diagnostic and screening procedures, maternity and midwifery services, and treatment of disease, disorder, or injury.

Aligned with the North West London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the clinic serves approximately 4,653 patients under a General Medical Services (GMS) contract, fulfilling its commitment to delivering essential services to the local community. Staffed by two GP partners, a practice nurse prescriber, a healthcare assistant, a shared care worker and substance misuse advisor, a practice manager, as well as administrative and reception staff, the clinic operates as part of a Primary Care Network (PCN).

Methodology

During the announced visit, Enter and View representatives engaged with 10 patients and 4 members of staff including the practice manager to gather feedback.

Westminster 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 Elgin Clinic. 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

Elgin Clinic is demographically diverse; the latest data indicates that the ethnic composition of the clinic's patient population is 51.8% White, 15.8% Black, 12.9% from other ethnic groups, 12.7% Asian, and 6.7% Mixed. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) rates the level of deprivation within the practice population groups as three on a scale of one to ten, with level one representing the highest level of deprivation and ten representing the lowest.

Appointment Management

Appointment booking at the Elgin Clinic was found to be convenient and flexible, with patients able to book online, by phone, or at the reception during surgery hours. Home visits are available upon request for housebound or terminally ill patients, and a triage system ensures timely access to care for urgent issues.

Additionally, patients have the option to request video or phone consultations instead of face-to-face appointments.

Upon arrival to the clinic patients check in with reception staff and wait for the doctor to come out and call out their name when the health provider is ready.

Interpretation services, including British Sign Language (BSL), can be arranged in advance for face-to-face or telephone appointments.

Visit Summary

During the initial visit to the Elgin Clinic on 13 December, the Healthwatch team was warmly received by the staff. The Practice Manager escorted all Healthwatch Staff to her office and clarified that the afternoon might be less busy due to most patients attending in the morning and some staff being on leave. It was mutually agreed that another visit would be arranged if sufficient patient engagement weren't feasible.

Despite limited client interaction during the first visit, the second visit proved fruitful, allowing for the completion of the entire 'enter and view' visit, with participation from 10 patients. Overall the visit was successful the Healthwatch team was able to observe the surgery on two occasions and conduct all the questionnaires for patients and staff.

Enter & View Observations

Location and External Environment

Elgin clinic is situated on a busy road with great bus links. There are residential flats on both sides of the clinic, which can make it difficult to find because it can be easily mistaken for a residential building. To address this, there is a plaque sign on the building with the clinics name.

The area benefits from excellent public transport links, and road access allows for convenient drop-off and pick-up. However, there is no designated bay for disability parking at the clinic entrance as it's on a busy road.

Access into the building is level from the footpath, ensuring ease of entry for wheelchair users and individuals with limited mobility. The practice itself is located on the ground floor so no lift is needed. And there are accessible doors that automatically open and close. However, the first door has to be pushed open and is less wide than the second door which is automatic.

Internal Environment and Waiting Area

Upon entering the clinic, you go through two doors before reaching the seated reception area, there are two separate areas to talk to Reception through the glass.

Both parts of the reception are separated by a transparent door. This means there is a private area to speak to Reception staff if required.

There is ample space in the seating area, with chairs spaced out enough for patients to practice social distancing.

There is a display screen in the reception area, that was working on the day we arrived and displayed patients name and room to go to when it was their turn. Their name was also called out.

Informational materials are prominently displayed around the waiting room, predominantly clinical in nature, with some information pertaining to the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and the Friends and Family Test (FFT).

While the hearing loop service was available, it was not in use, leaving patients who need to use the hearing loop service at a disadvantage.

Patient Involvement

Engagement between staff and patients was observed during check-in procedures, more vulnerable patients were helped and guided to their seat in the waiting area.

Healthwatch representatives engaged with 10 patients during our visit, although more patients could have been interviewed, as several were called into their appointments before completing the questionnaire. Additionally, some patients declined to participate after the purpose of the questionnaire was explained.

Patients who interacted with the Healthwatch team were at the practice for various reasons, including consultations with GP or other healthcare professionals and general inquiries.

Patient feedback

How did you make your appointment?

Among the patients interviewed, nine had arranged their appointments via telephone, and one made their appointment face to face at reception. Eight patients found the appointment scheduling process for their visit on that day to be easy. Two found it difficult.

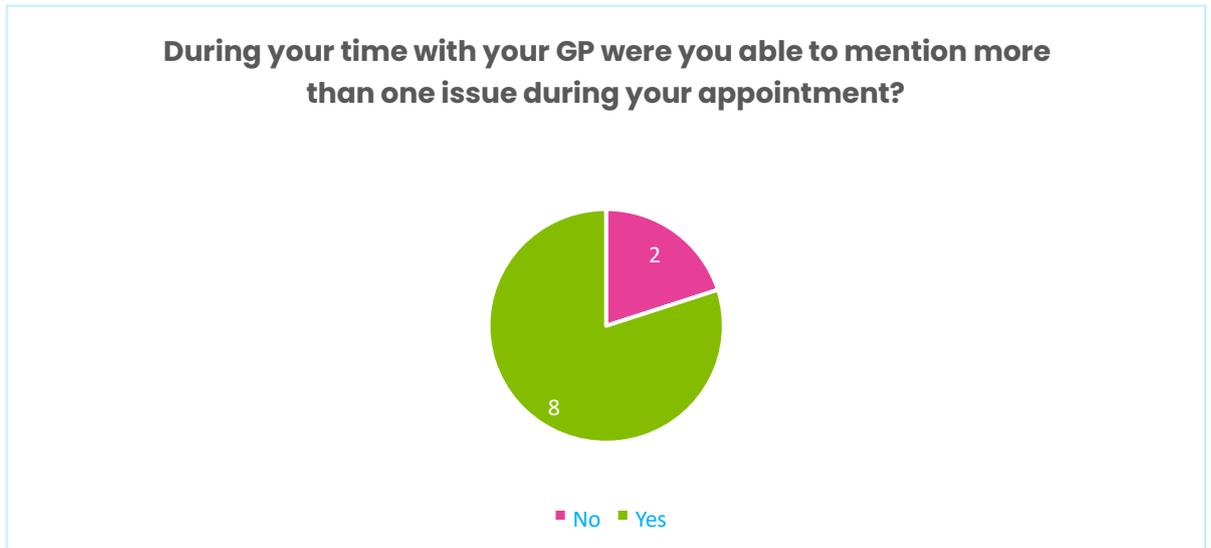
When asked what you would do if you couldn't get an appointment, one patient stated:



"I would go to A&E, if I could not get an appointment."



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



Eight patients said they could address more than one health concern in a single visit. The remaining two said they would need to make future appointments to discuss more issues.

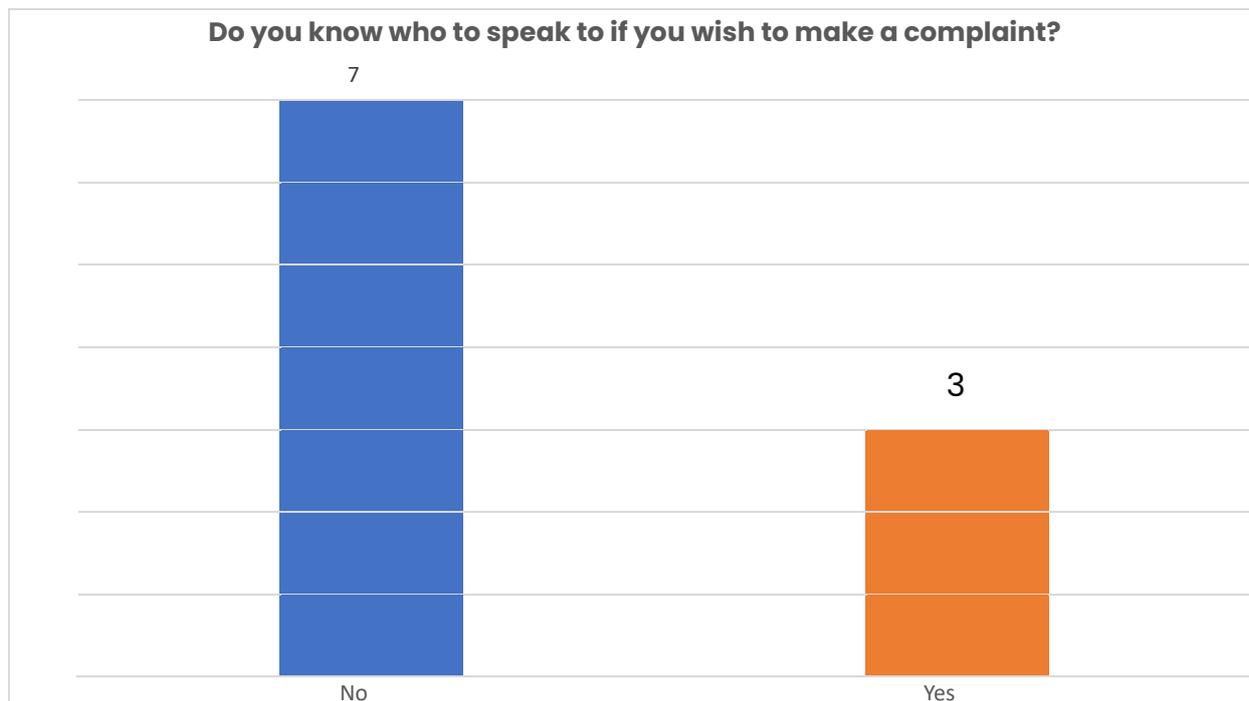
Are the reception staff easy to communicate with?

Of the 10 patients surveyed on communication, all 10 reported positive experiences with staff member on duty.

Are you aware of Social Prescribing?

Only one of the patients were familiar with Social Prescribing, none of the other patients were aware of it.

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



Three patients stated that they were aware of whom to contact in the event of a complaint. Seven patients, however, acknowledged that they were unsure of how to file a complaint. Elgin Clinic has a complaint process, but it is not visible to patients who visit the surgery.

Suggestions for improvement

When asked how the service could be improved, most patients said no they were happy with the service they were receiving. Two patients commented with the following responses:

“More time with the doctor to discuss all concerns”.

“Nothing to change. everything is great and well organised”.

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?

One staff member mentioned supporting patients by providing personal assistance with using the online system. They expressed satisfaction with the support provided to patients in this regard.

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 was up to date.

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

All three staff members commented there was nothing to be improved.

Does this GP Surgery have a personalised Care Plan for the elderly?

All staff members answered that this was in place.

Summary and Recommendations

Based on observations of the environment and questionnaire feedback from patients and staff, we have identified the following strengths and areas for improvement.

Strengths:

- Appointment booking is convenient and flexible, allowing patients to book online, by phone, or at the reception during surgery hours.
- Home visits are available upon request for housebound or terminally ill patients, and a triage system ensures timely access to care for urgent issues.
- There is a suggestion box which is visible near reception to post feedback.
- Large seating space in the waiting area, good for social distancing.
- There is an accessible toilet available for patients.

- All ten patients we spoke to on the day were overall happy with the service they were receiving.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Establish a clear point of contact for the named Practice Manager at Elgin Clinic, potentially by displaying staff structure with photographs alongside posters delineating clinical and non-clinical roles, facilitating patients' quick reference to staff members they may encounter.
- 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.
- Improve accessibility for patients with disabilities by implementing an accessible notice board positioned at eye level for individuals in wheelchairs, ensuring they can easily access information about available services.
- Look into having two automatic doors instead of just one, to allow better accessibility for wheelchair users or anyone with a mobility issue or baby pram.

Provider response

Feedback received from The Elgin Clinic in response to the recommendations we provided:

Regarding the request for clear points of contact and photos of staff:

The Elgin Clinic has considered the suggestion but has decided not to display staff photos due to staff members' concerns about privacy.

However, all staff names and roles are readily available on the clinic's website, and they will continue to review this aspect.

Regarding complaints procedure:

The Elgin Clinic's policy is accessible on their website, and there is always a staff member available to provide patients with complaint forms and information about whom to contact. To further enhance visibility, they will display a poster featuring the Practice Manager's name.

Regarding addressing concerns about the electronic front door:

The Elgin Clinic acknowledges limitations due to the building not being owned by them. Consequently, the clinic may incur expenses for alterations. However, they have an intercom system in place for patient assistance, ensuring accessibility into the practice.

Unaddressed Recommendation:

The Elgin Clinic has not addressed the recommendation to improve accessibility for patients with mobility disabilities by implementing an accessible notice board positioned at eye level for individuals in wheelchairs or unable to stand.

Acknowledgements

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