

## **Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

**19 April 2017**

### **Healthwatch Havering - Enter & View programme: visits to GP practices**

Over the past year, Healthwatch Havering has expanded its programme of Enter & View visits to cover GP practices and surgeries. Visits have been carried out at the following:

Berwick Surgery, Rainham

Greenwood Practice, Harold Wood

High Street Practice, Hornchurch

King's Park Surgery, Harold Wood (including the co-located pharmacy and the waiting area for the Harold Wood Polyclinic)

Mawney Road Surgery, Romford

Maylands Health Centre, Hornchurch (including the co-located dental practice and pharmacy)

Modern Medical Centre, Rush Green

Mungo Park Practice (at South Hornchurch Clinic)

North Street Surgery, Romford (as both local practice and part of the GP hub service)

Petersfield Surgery, Harold Hill

Rosewood Practice, Hornchurch (two visits) (as both local practice and part of the GP hub service)

Straight Road Surgery, Harold Hill (Drs Gupta and Prasad)

Suttons Avenue, Hornchurch

The visits were prompted for various reasons - for example, the Maylands visit followed the catastrophic flooding there in June last year, to see what had

happened and how the practices and pharmacy were dealing with the aftermath. In other cases, the visit followed publication by the CQC of an inspection report. Not all of the reports of the visits have been published as there is an extensive pre-publication process for them to go through. Visits to a number of further practices are planned for the coming months.

Every practice/surgery is different but some common themes have emerged. For example, in many cases the premises are in need of upgrading (both in terms of accommodation and equipment) and joint working with other, nearby practices might be beneficial for patients. Other concerns include inadequate car parking facilities (especially for patients who have mobility difficulties), possible lack of resilience within practices' business plans to take account of unforeseen disaster (which is also an issue for the CCG to consider) and the adequacy of practice opening times from the patients' perspective.

According to the *Health Service Journal*, a respected professional periodical, Havering has the highest number of GP practices inspected to date by the CQC that have been rated "Inadequate" or "Requires Improvement" in England (although it should be noted that the neighbouring/nearby boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Thurrock and Waltham Forest have similar, though lower, proportions). Some practices have been rated "Good" but none (so far) has been rated "Outstanding".

A significant number of practices in Havering are operated by a single GP or a small number of GPs working together.

There are of course concerns at national level about the significant reduction in doctors entering General Practice and the number of existing GPs who are approaching retirement age. This is not an issue that can be tackled by local action alone although the CCG is understood to be actively seeking to recruit new GPs.

One particular issue appears to be the historic model of general practice operating as small, local businesses, usually professional partnerships; anecdotal evidence suggests that new GPs may be reluctant to take on the responsibilities of small business ownership, preferring to remain as employed locums concentrating on their clinical expertise. Again, this is a national problem for which local action may not be feasible, although an increasing number of practices are being acquired by health service provider companies (working under contract to the NHS) that then employ GPs to provide the actual clinical service but themselves provide

administrative and support services (one example is the Hurley Group at the King's Park Surgery/Harold Wood Polyclinic).

Healthwatch volunteers have worked with several practices to secure improvements for patients. In particular, they worked with partners and staff of the Rosewood Medical Centre in Hornchurch, where considerable improvements have been secured.

**Ian Buckmaster**  
**Executive Director and Company Secretary**  
**Healthwatch Havering**

### **Background papers**

**Enter and View reports (see <http://www.healthwatchhaverling.co.uk/gp-surgeries-and-health-centres>):**

GP Hubs and associated services - visited May-July 2016

Berwick Surgery (Rainham) - visited 18 November 2016

The Greenwood Practice (Harold Wood) - visited 7 November 2016

Rosewood Medical Centre - visited March 2016

Straight Road Surgery visited 9 November 2016

High Street Surgery, Hornchurch, visited 14 November 2016

***Health Service Journal: GP quality - London: CQC ratings confirm challenge in East London - 28 March 2017***