

# Barons Pharmacy Enter & View Report

Part of a series of Enter & View visits to Community Pharmacies in



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## 1. Visit Background

#### 1.1 What is Enter & View

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to undertake 'Enter and View' visits.

Mandated by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the visits enable trained Healthwatch staff and volunteers (Authorised Representatives) to visit health and care services – such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation.

During the visits, we observe service delivery and talk with service users, their families, and carers. We also engage with management and staff. The aim is to get an impartial view of how the service is operated and being experienced.

Following the visits, our official 'Enter and View Report', shared with the service provider, local commissioners and regulators outlines what has worked well, and gives recommendations on what could have worked better. All reports are available to view on our website.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with safeguarding policies. If at any time an Authorised Representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they need to inform their lead who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

### 3.1 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date(s) set out. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

## 4.1 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham would like to thank the staff and customers at the Barons Pharmacy for their contribution and hospitality in enabling this Enter and View visit to take place. We would also like to thank our Authorised Representatives, who assisted us in conducting the visit and putting together this report.

The Authorised Representatives spoke to patients and staff. Suggestions have been made on how to improve the service and good practice has been highlighted.





## 2. Focus of the Visit

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2023, NHS England published their delivery plan for recovering access to primary care. The main purpose of this plan is to help patients access the help they need from primary care more quickly and more easily.

Community pharmacies are playing a key role in the recovery plan: since April this year, community pharmacists have been able to issue repeat prescriptions for oral contraception without the need for patients to see their GP. By the end of the year, subject to evaluation of the programme, pharmacists will also be able to issue a new prescription for oral contraceptive pill.

In addition to the contraceptive services, Blood pressure checks and Smoking Cessation Services can now also be provided by Pharmacy Technicians, and patients can be referred to community pharmacies for consultations on minor illnesses and urgent medicine supplies.

In light of these service changes, Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham initiated visits to community pharmacies within the borough to explore how these new pharmacy services have so far been experienced by the local residents and pharmacy staff.

Our visits focused primarily on finding out how people feel about visiting a pharmacy instead of seeing their GP, how easily they can access a local pharmacy, and their overall experience of pharmacy services.

From staff, we wanted to find out how they feel about providing these additional services, and if there is anything that could be improved to better support them with the additional workload.

## 3. Visit Details

Visit Details			
Service Visited	Barons Pharmacy, 3 Margravine Gardens, London W6 8RL		
Manager	Abhishek Limbu		
Date & Time of Visit	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023, 12-2pm		
Status of Visit	Announced		
Authorised Representatives	Yee Phyo, David Crawley		
Lead Representative	Yee Phyo		

## 4. Executive Summary

This section of the report details the key findings from our observations and the patient and staff feedback collected during our visit.

#### Observations

#### What has worked well

- The general environment of the pharmacy appeared clean and bright.
- Staff appeared friendly when interacting with customers even though there was only one member of staff working due to an absence.
- The information about the pharmacy services offered as well as information about student discounts and dementia services are displayed on the shop window.

#### What has not worked so well

• There is no step free access to the pharmacy and there is no ramp provided for people with mobility issues. We were told that staff assist patients with pushchairs or mobility issues to enter the pharmacy.

### Patient Feedback

#### What has worked well

- None of the patients reported having to wait to be seen.
- All patients told us that their query was resolved immediately.
- All patients positively commented on the general environment saying that it was clean, and organised and one person mentioned that the simple, minimalist environment helped them to calm down.
- The comments about staff were positive in sentiment with patients describing staff members as knowledgeable, helpful, and giving good advice.
- In terms of communication with staff members, patients told us that they felt listened to and comfortable asking questions.

#### What has not worked so well

• None of the patients who we spoke with mentioned being encouraged to provide feedback.

### Staff Feedback

#### What has worked well

- The staff member felt positive about the expansion of pharmacy services, and theoretically at least, it should help patients accessing healthcare services.
- The staff member felt that there is enough training provided and currently there is training taking place on Standard Operation Procedures. There are online training resources and in-person trainings as well which are usually provided by a third-party company. The owner of the pharmacy is also a pharmacist, so he values the personal development.
- We were told that patients seem happy with the help provided by the pharmacy. They have a good rapport with their patients as they are familiar with most of them. Staff go over and above for patients, for example, staff members have occasionally personally delivered medication to patients' home.
- Patients are encouraged to give feedback: there is a QR code for them to scan and leave a review. It reaches the management team.
- Complaints procedure is displayed above the seat near the pharmacy counter.

#### What has not worked so well

- There are referrals from other services, which the pharmacist is not always notified of causing miscommunications.
- The staff member told us that in general there have been no changes to their working methods. The only change they mentioned is that the pharmacy has to communicate with GPs and hospitals more than before, which can be difficult for example when trying to make sure all service providers are synced.

## 5. Full Findings

This section of the report presents detailed information on our observations and patient and staff feedback collected during our visit.

During the visit we collected responses from 10 patients and 4 staff members.

We would like to thank the staff and management for their time and for their warm welcome and cooperation.

#### Observations

During our visit, our team of Authorised Representatives (ARs) made observations on Accessibility, General Environment and Facilities, and Safety.

#### Accessibility

- The pharmacy is located next to Baron's Court underground station and is close to bus stops.
- The external signage is very clear, and the pharmacy can be easily identified across the road, walking from Baron's Court station.
- There is no step free access to the pharmacy and there is no ramp provided for people with mobility issues. We were told that staff assist patients with pushchairs or mobility issues to enter the pharmacy.

The inside of the pharmacy appeared mostly spacious enough for

wheelchair or mobility aid users to navigate, although the space between the oral hygiene products and topical medications might be too narrow.

#### General Environment and Facilities

- The general environment of the pharmacy appeared clean and bright.
- Staff appeared friendly when interacting with customers. There was only one member of staff working due to an absence.
- There is a small seat for two people located near the pharmacy counter for



patients who are having to wait. However, during our visit we did not see anyone use it nor wait for more than 5 minutes.

- The walls were mostly bare. One section of the pharmacy, however, did have NHS leaflets available with information about Back on Track (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) service, Prescription Payment Certificates, and NHS Know Diabetes service.
- The information about the pharmacy services offered as well as information about student discount and dementia services are displayed on the shop window.



#### Safety

• We did not observe any safety hazards, but there was a digital weighing scale which was slightly protruding from the shelf and could therefore be accidentally knocked off the shelf.

#### Patient Feedback

We spoke with 5 patients during our visit.

This section of the report contains a summary of the feedback received.

#### Accessibility

- Two people we spoke with had come to the pharmacy on the day to collect their prescription medication and one person was there for emergency contraception. The two other people we spoke with were therefore some lozenges and toiletry products.
- Two people had contacted their GP before coming to the pharmacy to request a prescription.
- Most patients told us that they live less than 15-minute walk away from the pharmacy. One person had travelled 45 minutes by tube and had come to the pharmacy because they were in the area for other reasons.
- None of the patients we spoke with had additional accessibility requirements.

#### **Using Pharmacy Services**

- None of the patients reported having to wait to be seen.
- All patients told us that their query was resolved immediately.
- Most people told us they would visit a pharmacy for the following services: for prescriptions, information & advice, contraception, and minor illnesses such as cold, flu, aches, and pains.
- None of the patients we spoke with said they would visit a pharmacy for blood pressure checks.
- Two people told us that they sometimes visit the pharmacy instead of their GP due to the difficulty booking a GP appointment. However, two people told us they do not do this. One person had recently moved to the area and was not yet registered with a GP.

#### General Environment

- All patients positively commented on the general environment saying that it was clean, and organised and one person mentioned that the simple, minimalist environment helped them to calm down.
- One person commented that it would be helpful if the pharmacy opened earlier, and another said that the shop window has appeared unclean in the past but that it now seems to be cleaned regularly.

#### Staff

- The comments about staff were positive in sentiment with patients describing staff members as knowledgeable, helpful, and giving good advice.
- In terms of communication with staff members, patients told us that they felt listened to and comfortable asking questions. One person told us that the staff can be slow at times but that they have never been any less helpful.

#### Feedback and Complaints

- All patients told us that they did not know how to make a complaint but that they would just speak to the pharmacist.
- None of the patients we spoke with mentioned being encouraged to provide feedback.

## Staff Feedback

Only one staff member, a pharmacist, was present during our visit.

This section of the report contains a summary of the feedback received.

#### **New Pharmacy Services**

- The staff member felt positive about the expansion of pharmacy services, and theoretically at least, it should help patients accessing healthcare services.
- We were told that the pharmacy has seen an increase in patients being referred to them, especially because Barons Pharmacy is located on the main road so people can easily drop in for advice.
- The increase in item numbers also indicate that the pharmacy is giving out more prescription medications.
- There are referrals from other services, which the pharmacist is not always notified of causing miscommunications.
- The staff member told us that in general there have been no changes to their working methods. The only change they mentioned is that the pharmacy has to communicate with GPs and hospitals more than before, which can be difficult for example when trying to make sure all service providers are synced.
- The staff member felt that there is enough training provided and currently there is training taking place on Standard Operation Procedures. There are online training resources and in-person trainings as well which are usually provided by a third-party company. The owner of the pharmacy is also a pharmacist, so he values the personal development.
- We were told that patients seem happy with the help provided by the pharmacy. They have a good rapport with their patients as they are familiar with most of them. Staff go over and above for patients, for example, staff members have occasionally personally delivered medication to patients' home. We were also told that the pharmacy usually is the first point of contact for many patients in the area.

#### Assistance for patients with additional communication requirements

• Some of the pharmacists are multi-lingual and can help with customers who have language barriers. Otherwise, the pharmacy uses Google Translate. For example, if a patient needs help with reading a leaflet, the staff take a photo of the leaflet and translate it for them.

#### Feedback and Complaints

- Patients are encouraged to give feedback: there is a QR code for them to scan and leave a review. It reaches the management team.
- Complaints procedure is displayed above the seat near the pharmacy counter.
- If patients are unsatisfied with the help pharmacy staff have provided, they can be referred to another point of information, for example, another pharmacy, NHS 111, or if it is regarding the COVID vaccine, 119.
- If a patient presents with a problem that the staff cannot solve, they are directed to go to their GPs, for example, patients with skin conditions that can be quite ambiguous.



## 6. Recommendations

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham would like to thank the service for the support in arranging our E&V visit.

Based on the analysis of all feedback obtained, we would like to make the following recommendations.

## Accessibility

There is no step-free access to the pharmacy.

**Recommendation 1**: To make accessibility easier for patients with mobility issues, the installation of a ramp should be considered. This would also help free up staff members' time.

Response: "We have forwarded this suggestion to the head office who have assured us that this will be looked into and might even apply this idea to other branches as well."

### Feedback and Complaints

We were told that patients are encouraged to provide feedback and there is a QR code that patients can scan to leave feedback. However, none of the patients we spoke with mentioned being encouraged to leave feedback.

Recommendation 2: Encouraging customers to provide feedback would help to inform staff of areas that can be improved, such as the accessibility issue. We would advise considering ways staff members can be more proactive in obtaining feedback from customers in different formats including verbally, online, and on paper whilst ensuring that this can be done anonymously.

Response: "We have included a tablet/electronic device within our pharmacy near the entrance which allows users and patients to give feedback and review their experience directly. It also allows them to input any suggestions that can be looked into. Patients have easy access to it and doesn't need to scan any QR codes or anything."

### **New Pharmacy Services**

We were informed that patients are referred to the pharmacy from other services, but that they are not always notified of this which can cause miscommunication.

**Recommendation 3**: We would recommend that the local Integrated Care System reviews the current referral system to ensure that it is actively used by all service providers.

We were told that the pharmacy now has to communicate with GPs and hospitals more often than before, which can be difficult for example when trying to make sure all service providers are synced.

**Recommendation 4:** The difficulties with the communication between different healthcare service providers is ongoing, and this should be thoroughly investigated and systems put in place to improve patient experience and the continuity of care.

Response: "Communication within the GP, Pharmacies and other health services including emergency referrals have been made easier these last few months due to the addition of services such as Pharmoutcomes! which allows smooth experiences for patients and the healthcare staff ensuring patients can receive care in a timely manner. GPs and pharmacies have been communicating via emails and phone calls constantly so things are a lot better these days."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> PharmOutcomes is a secure clinical service platform for community pharmacies and commissioners to capture outcomes data for local and national services.

## Glossary of Terms

AR Authorised Representative

CCG Clinical Commissioning Group

CQC Care Quality Commission

GP General Practitioner

Enter & View E&V

## Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public and is shared with our statutory and community partners. Accessible formats are available.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences, please contact us.



# healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham 141-143 King Street Hammersmith W6 9JG

www.healthwatchhf.co.uk t: 0203 886 0386

e: info@healthwatchhf.co.uk

@HealthwatchHF

f Facebook.com/HealthwatchHF