

North End Pharmacy Enter & View Report



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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 North End 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 9th 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	North End Pharmacy, 100A North End Road, West Kensington, W14 9EX
Manager	Pradip Pandit
Date & Time of Visit	1st December 2023, 12-2pm
Status of Visit	Announced
Authorised Representatives	Mari Tiitinen, Dillon Gill
Lead Representative	Mari Tiitinen

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.
- It was easy to locate with a large sign displaying the name of the pharmacy, and the sign was easy to see when walking towards the pharmacy.
- On the door to the private consultation room, there was a small poster providing information on where to go for medical advice, for example, when to see a GP, call NHS 111 or go to see a pharmacist.
- The staff appeared friendly, approachable, and helpful with customers.
- The pharmacy counter has designated areas for prescriptions and advice with signage above the counter indicating these.
- The pharmacy has a license to play music at the premises and this gave it a nice atmosphere.

What has not worked so well

- There is a slight slope and a raised threshold at the entrance which could make access to the pharmacy slightly difficult for people with mobility issues.
- The carpeted floor in the pharmacy could do with an update or a replacement.
- Due to the small space, the pharmacy does seem a bit cluttered. During our visit, the pharmacy was relatively quiet, so we did not observe how the small space works during busy times or if it causes any issues.
- There is a small consultation room which has a glass door. This could potentially mean that it is not completely private if other patients can see what is happening in the consultation room.

Patient Feedback

What has worked well

- Patients told us that they were seen immediately and that their query
 was resolved immediately with one patient saying that their prescription
 was ready on time and another saying that they prefer to come to the
 North End Pharmacy instead of going to Boots.
- Everyone we spoke with said they would come to the pharmacy before going to their GP with one person particularly saying that they would only go to their GP if they were "really suffering".
- Patients described staff as friendly, helpful, and efficient. One person said that the service is always delivered quickly.

What has not worked so well

- None of the people we spoke with knew how to make a complaint but they also told us that they had no reason to complain.
- None of the patients we spoke with mentioned being encouraged to provide feedback.

Staff Feedback

What has worked well

- The staff felt positive about the expansion of pharmacy services, in particular, they were looking forward to the upcoming change in January 2024 which means pharmacists will be able to prescribe new medicines for minor ailments. They felt that this new service will enable them to provide a more satisfactory service for their patients.
- The staff felt positive about using technology to their advantage by, for example, using YouTube videos to provide information and advice on medical treatments, and using Google Translate to translate information for those who are not able to communicate in English.
- Staff told us that patients are encouraged to give feedback either online or face to face, but that they were also exploring better ways to encourage more customers to provide both positive and negative feedback.

What has not worked so well

 We were advised of shortages in some medicines, for example, in ADHD medicine. This can be a cause of frustration for patients, but the

- pharmacy staff assist them by writing down the name of the alternative medicine before referring the patient back to their GP.
- The staff would like to have bigger premises due to lack of space, but it is hard to come by in Central London. This would enable them to have a bigger consultation room and make the space more comfortable for patients.

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 5 patients and 2 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

- Pharmacy is located on North End Road which is a busy main road, and is close to public transport including West Kensington tube station and bus stops.
- It was easy to locate with a large sign displaying the name of the pharmacy and the sign is easy to see when walking towards the pharmacy.
- There is a slight slope and a raised threshold at the entrance which could make access to the pharmacy slightly difficult for people with mobility issues.
- The pharmacy is very small and there is just enough space for wheelchair or mobility scooter users to enter the premises, but there is not enough space for them to move around as the shelves are so close to each other.

General Environment and Facilities

- The general environment of the pharmacy appeared clean, but the carpet could do with an update or a replacement.
- Due to the small space, the pharmacy does seem a bit cluttered. During our visit, the pharmacy was relatively quiet, so we did not observe how the small space works during busy times or if it causes any issues.
- The pharmacy counter has designated areas for prescriptions and advice with signage above the counter indicating these.

- The pharmacy has a license to play music at the premises and this gave it a nice atmosphere.
- There were two seats available for customers who were waiting.
- There is a small consultation room which has a glass door. This could
 potentially mean that it is not completely private if other patients can
 see what is happening in the consultation room.
- On the door of the consultation room, there was a small poster providing information on where to go for medical advice, for example, when to see a GP, call NHS 111 or go to see a pharmacist.
- The staff appeared friendly, approachable, and helpful with customers.
- There were two TV screens one which displayed the CCTV footage and one which was turned off.
- The complaints policy, privacy notice, and what to expect when visiting a pharmacy- poster were displayed at the pharmacy counter.
- There were some posters displayed on the shop front with information about child and travel vaccinations, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), drug and alcohol services, needle exchange and naloxone* service, and mental health services including Back on Track.



However, some of these posters were placed at the bottom of the glass front which made them hard to read.

- There were stickers attached to the plexiglass at the pharmacy counter encouraging people to get a flu vaccination.
- We observed a magazine called 'Your Health, Your Pharmacy' which contained information about things like fitness, gut health, how to get ready for winter, and how to keep your brain active. Copies of the magazine were available in a box right by the front door, however, we felt that these could easily be missed by customers.

*Naloxone is a medication used to reverse or reduce the effects of opioids, for example after overdose.

Safety

- There were some plastic boxes with products in them on the floor, but these were clear to see.
- There is a plexiglass in front of the pharmacy counter which protects both staff and customers.
- There is a CCTV installed and a sticker on the front door informed customers of the CCTV.



Patient Feedback

We spoke with 5 patients during our visit.

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

Accessibility

- Most people we spoke with had come to the pharmacy on the day to collect their prescription medication.
- Some had contacted their GP or a dentist before coming to the pharmacy to request a prescription.
- Most patients told us that they live less than 10-minute walk from the pharmacy, but one patient had travelled 30 minutes by bus.
- None of the patients reported special accessibility requirements.

Using Pharmacy Services

- Patients told us that they were seen immediately and that their query
 was resolved immediately with one patient saying that their prescription
 was ready on time and another saying that they prefer to come to the
 North End Pharmacy instead of going to Boots.
- Patients said that they would visit a pharmacy for the following services: for prescriptions, information & advice, and flu vaccinations. and minor illnesses such as cold, flu, aches, and pains.
- None of the people we spoke with said that they would visit a pharmacy for contraception and blood pressure checks.
- Everyone said they would come to the pharmacy before going to their GP with one person particularly saying that they would only go to their GP if they were "really suffering".

General Environment

• The comments on the general environment were all positive in sentiment with patients describing it clean, warm, and organised.

Staff

- Patients described staff as friendly, helpful, and efficient. One person said that the service is always delivered quickly.
- In terms of communication with staff members, patients told us that staff are straightforward and listen to their concerns.

Feedback and Complaints

•	None of the people we spoke with knew how to make a complaint but
	they also told us that they had no reason to complain.

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

Staff Feedback

We spoke with two staff members during our visit: the Pharmacy Manager/Pharmacy Superintendent and a Shop Assistant.

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

New Pharmacy Services

- The staff felt positive about the expansion of pharmacy services, in particular, they were looking forward to the upcoming change in January 2024 which means pharmacists will be able to prescribe new medicines for minor ailments, such as antibiotics for certain infections such as Cellulitis.
- They felt that this new service will enable them to provide a more satisfactory service for their patients, as currently, patients need to be sent to their GPs to obtain a prescription for these minor ailments which pharmacists are qualified to identify.
- On the other hand, prescribing antibiotics will need to be carefully monitored to avoid overuse of them which can lead to people becoming more resistant to antibiotics.
- The staff members felt that the pharmacists' reputation has become increasingly positive in recent years and therefore patients feel more confident and prefer to come to the pharmacy for assistance instead of having to book an appointment with a GP.
- The staff felt positive about using technology to their advantage by, for example, using YouTube videos to provide information and advice on medical treatments, and using Google Translate to translate information for those who are not able to communicate in English.
- The staff are provided training in things like blood pressure measurements to free up pharmacists time, but that they are waiting for more details on the new services in order to make changes to the way they work.
- If a patient is not happy with the help and/or information they have received, they will be referred to their GP or signposted to another healthcare professional. For example, the pharmacists can typically make a judgement call on whether a patient may need a blood test.
- The staff felt that there are more people being referred to the pharmacy for emergency prescriptions, for example, for people visiting London who need a few days' supply if they have run out of their medication. The pharmacy also receives referrals from GPs.

Assistance for patients with additional communication requirements

- We were told that the staff members speak languages such as French, Arabic, Hindi etc.
- The staff also use Google Translator.
- There are no leaflets provided in different community languages.
- Staff help people in wheelchairs or with a mobility scooter to access the pharmacy by opening the door for them.
- The staff told us that they have a regular customer with a hearing impairment and that they have never encountered a problem in communication with them.

Feedback and Complaints

- Staff told us that patients are encouraged to give feedback either online or face to face, but that they were also exploring better ways to encourage more customers to provide both positive and negative feedback.
- Complaints procedure is displayed at the pharmacy counter.

Anything else?

- We were advised of shortages in some medicines, for example, in ADHD medicine. This can be a cause of frustration for patients, but the pharmacy staff assist them by writing down the name of the alternative medicine before referring the patient back to their GP.
- The staff would like to have bigger premises due to lack of space, but it is hard to come by in Central London. This would enable them to have a bigger consultation room and make the space more comfortable for patients.

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 a slight slope and a raised threshold at the entrance which could make access to the pharmacy slightly difficult for people with mobility issues.

Recommendation 1: Perhaps lowering the threshold could make accessibility easier for those in wheelchair or mobility scooter.

Recommendation 2: Installing an automatic door would also further improve the accessibility to those with walking aids, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters as well as customers with prams and pushchairs.

General Environment and Facilities

The carpet floor in the pharmacy could do with an update or a replacement.

Recommendation 3: We feel that replacing the carpet with vinyl or laminate flooring could create more fresh appearance in the premises and it is easier to maintain compared to a carpet flooring.

Due to the small space, the pharmacy does seem a bit cluttered. During our visit, the pharmacy was relatively quiet, so we did not observe how the small space works during busy times or if it causes any issues. The staff also mentioned the need for bigger premises which would enable the pharmacy to have a bigger consultation room and more comfortable space for patients.

Recommendation 4: We understand that obtaining bigger premises is a challenge due to a limited space in Central London and the high rental rates. However, with the expansion of pharmacy services, the footfall is likely to increase which could create issues with the limited space available. Therefore, we would recommend re-configuring the current space as a short-term solution and consider whether it is a possibility to move to a larger premises as a long-term solution.

There is a small consultation room which has a glass door. This could potentially mean that it is not completely private if other patients can see what is happening in the consultation room.

Recommendation 5: We believe replacing the glass door with a door that is not see through could enhance patient privacy.

Feedback and Complaints

Although staff members told us that customers are encouraged to provide feedback, none of the customers we spoke with mentioned this.

Recommendation 6: Encouraging customers to provide feedback would help to inform staff of areas that can be improved. We would advise to consider 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.

Prescription Services

We were advised of shortages in some medicines, for example, in ADHD medicine. This can be a cause of frustration for patients as patients need to go back to their GP to obtain a new prescription.

Recommendation 7: We would recommend that the local Integrated Care System (ICS) ensures GPs have access to information regarding medication that is stocked by local pharmacies as this would improve the prescription medication service and avoid patients having to waste their time reordering their prescriptions.

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.

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