

SURGERY



Enter & View Report Dr Ramasamy & Partners

December 2023

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.

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Practice Details

Contact details:

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Tel: 02089692058

Practice Manager:

Avi Joshi

Date and Time of Enter & View Visit:

7 December 2023

12PM-3PM

Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea Authorised Representatives:

Ruth Daniel (Engagement & Volunteer Coordinator)

Anna Velkova (Volunteer)

Shamoly Aaron (Volunteer)

Introduction

At Healthwatch Kensington and Chelsea, 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 views about a service. The goal of an Enter & View visit is to gather feedback and insights from both patients and staff of a service, while also observing and assessing the quality of the environment.

During our Enter & View visits in November and December of 2023, Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea visited three GP surgeries in Kensington & Chelsea, with Dr Ramasamy & Partners being one of them.

These GP visits focused on evaluating the accessibility of the practice and identifying any challenges patients, may encounter when accessing their GP, especially for those who are vulnerable or have disabilities. All the Enter & View visits were conducted by authorised representatives who have the authority to visit health and social care facilities, whether announced or unannounced.

On 7 December, 2023, an announced visit was conducted by Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea to Dr Ramasamy & Partners. Led by Healthwatch staff member Ruth Daniel, the team gathered feedback from both patients and staff and conducted observations of the clinic, forming the basis of this report.

The report presents areas of good practice and identifies potential areas for improvement.

As an independent organisation, Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea does not make judgments or express personal opinions. Instead, we rely on the feedback received and objective observations of the environment. The report is shared with the manager to provide them

with an opportunity to respond before it is published on the Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea website at www.healthwatchrbkc.org.uk

Additionally, we will schedule a revisit to assess the progress of any recommended improvements. The report is also made available to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England, and any other relevant organisations.

General Information

Dr. Ramasamy & Partners offers wheelchair access, with all patient areas conveniently located on the ground floor. Currently, the surgery shares space with another GP Surgery, but the partnering surgery will soon be relocating to a different space.

Following this move, Dr. Ramasamy & Partners intends to undergo renovations to modernise and enhance its current facilities. Despite limited space in the current building, plans are already in progress to reconfigure existing space for clinical consultations once the move takes place.

At present, Dr. Ramasamy & Partners is operated by five GPs along with two nurses, two healthcare assistants, a My Care, My Way senior case manager and health and social care assistant, a diabetes nurse consultant, and a part-time nurse educator. The surgery also employs a practice manager, two pharmacists, and seven administrative staff members.

Methodology

During the announced Enter and View visit of Dr Ramasamy & Partners. Healthwatch representatives engaged with eleven patients and three members of staff to gather feedback. A patient questionnaire was utilised and adapted to capture individual experiences and assess the accessibility of Dr Ramasamy & Partners; 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, Healthwatch Kensington and Chelsea 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.



10 Patients
3 Staff
1 Practice Manager

Summary

Surgery Demographic

Dr. Ramasamy & Partners is affiliated with NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group, and serves a diverse population, with 49% of patients belonging to non-white minority ethnic groups; The surgery serves a sizable Arabic community. Situated below a block of flats, the GP surgery operates in an area characterized by high levels of deprivation.

Additionally, a significant portion of patients have English as a second language, with many having limited or no proficiency. The practice also caters to a considerable number of registered unemployed patients, highlighting the significant need for health services among patients.

Appointment Management

For day-to-day appointments, patients may be seen by either a nurse or a doctor, depending on the nature of the issue. The surgery nurse team is specially trained to assess and treat a wide range of health conditions, so patients are not always scheduled to see a doctor.

In case of emergency appointments, patients can contact the surgery between 8 am and 6 pm to schedule an appointment. They can also walk in and inquire at the reception desk or use the online PATCHS system. Upon calling, patients will be booked to see either a nurse or a doctor based on their specific needs. Home visits are available upon request for housebound or terminally ill patients, and the surgery's triage system ensures timely access to care for urgent matters.

Consultations with a doctor or nurse can be conducted via phone, face-to-face at the surgery, or through telephone appointments at enhanced access hubs available on weekends or outside regular hours. Additionally, appointments via video call are also an option. For patients

needing interpreter services or support for communication needs, assistance is offered upon request in advance of an appointment. Upon arrival at the surgery, patients check in with reception staff and wait in the shared waiting area with another GP Surgery, which is relatively small. The doctor or nurse will then call each patient by name when it is their turn to be seen.

Visit Summary

During Healthwatch visit to Dr. Ramasamy & Partners on December 7, the Healthwatch team received a warm welcome from the staff. Emma filled the position of The Practice Manager along with two doctors, introduced themselves, and were open to answering any questions the Healthwatch team had. Ten patients and three staff members participated in completing the questionnaire. Overall, the visit was successful, and the Healthwatch team was able to supplement their findings with observational notes.

Enter & View Observations

Location and External Environment

Dr. Ramasamy & Partners is located on a busy road with convenient bus links, and it occupies the ground floor of a three-story block of flats, with residential units above. Its location among residential buildings can make it challenging to identify, as it may appear similar to surrounding residences.

The signage outside is clear but may still be confusing for first time visitors who are unaware that it is part of the Golborne medical centre shared with another surgery. Upon entering, it may not be immediately apparent which reception

desk to approach. The area benefits from excellent public transport options, and road access allows for easy drop-off and pick-up, with a designated bay for disabled access parking available right outside the surgery. Entry into the building is level from the footpath, facilitating access for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility.

Although the practice is situated on the ground floor, the doors are not automatic and require holding open, and they are not very wide, potentially necessitating assistance for some patients. None of the Healthwatch team members observed patients using wheelchairs or prams entering the surgery, so the accessibility of the doors and any necessary support remains unobserved.

Internal Environment and Waiting Area

Upon entering the surgery, you pass through two doors before reaching the seated reception area. There are two separate reception areas for the different surgeries; Dr. Ramasamy & Partners' reception is the second area, which features a larger desk and is situated away from the main entrance. The reception area is enclosed with glass, providing limited privacy during conversations with staff if someone is behind you.

The waiting area is relatively small and lacks separate seating; instead, there is a single long curved seating arrangement accommodating approximately 10 people. This seating area is shared with patients from the other surgery, as there is no designated seating for each practice, leading to challenges in maintaining social distancing. Informational materials are prominently displayed in the waiting room, and there is a complaints box available for patient feedback at Reception, alongside other useful materials.

A shared notice board for both surgeries primarily contains clinical information, with some details regarding the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and various community health support services. Additionally, a hearing loop service is provided for those in need.

Patient Involvement

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

Healthwatch representatives engaged with ten 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.

Patient feedback

How did you make your appointment?

Among the ten patients interviewed, all ten had arranged their appointments by phone. All ten patients found the appointment scheduling process for their visit on that day to be easy.

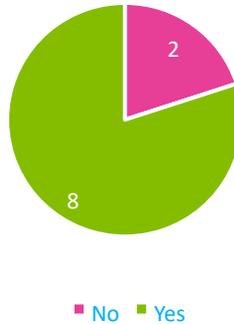
When asked have you used the online PATCHS system to contact the GP Practice, all ten patients said no, with one stating:

 *"I always call to make my appointments".*



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

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



Out of the total number of patients, eight 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 ten patients surveyed on communication, all ten reported positive experiences with staff member on duty.

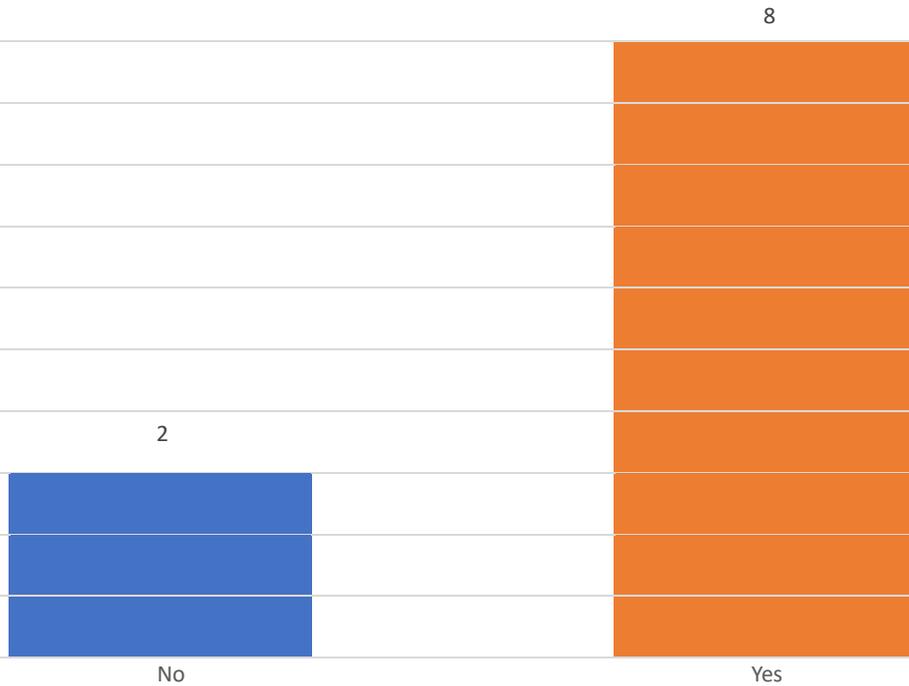
Are you aware of Social Prescribing?

Only one patient was 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?

Of the patients questioned, eight stated that they were aware of whom to contact in the event of a complaint two patients, however, acknowledged that they were unsure of how to file a complaint. Dr Ramasamy & Partners has a complaint process, and a complaints box at reception which is visible to patients who visit the surgery. There is also a complaints section on their website.

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



Suggestions for improvement

We asked patients how the service could be improved, most patients said no as they were happy with the service they were receiving. Two patients commented on what could be improved:

“More time with the doctor to discuss more than one concern”.

“Was given wrong referral to the wrong clinic, more organisation at the surgery so the mistakes don’t happen”.

Staff feedback

During the Enter & View visit, Healthwatch Kensington and Chelsea 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 have 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. Another staff said patients were sent links to support them to use the App and patients were also supported at reception. They all 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 they have received adequate training and it is 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 three staff members answered 'yes' to this question.

Recommendations

Based on observations of the environment and questionnaire feedback from patients and staff, the following recommendations have been developed for Dr Ramasamy & Partners:

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 complaints box which is visible near reception to post feedback.
- The table at reception with flyers and information allows accessibility of information for patients that cannot stand and read the notice board information or would like to take important information away with them.
- All ten patients we spoke to on the day were overall happy with the service they were receiving.

Recommendations:

- There is no baby changing facility in the bathroom. Providing a space where parents can change their babies would make the surgery more accessible to parents with small children.
- Provide a water dispenser. Having a water dispenser in the waiting area benefits patients by providing hydration, comfort, convenience, and a positive experience. It also ensures accessibility for all patients, including those with mobility issues.
- Look into having an automatic door to allow better accessibility for wheelchair users or anyone with a mobility issue or baby pram.
- Improve waiting area consider incorporating separate seating area so patients can practice social distancing.

Provider response

Feedback received from Dr. Ramasamy & Partners' in Response to our recommendations.

Regarding the absence of a baby changing facility:

There is actually a baby changing unit available in the patients' toilet, situated between the two entrance doors just before accessing the reception area.

Regarding installing an automatic door:

They are currently in negotiations with the landlord and the ICB, as their neighbouring practice will be relocating before the end of 2024. The expansion of their practice to occupy the entire building is anticipated, with plans to implement automatic doors as part of the refurbishment in early 2025.

Regarding improving the seating area and adding a water dispenser in the waiting room:

The recommendation aligns with their plans for refurbishment, which also include replacing the current seating arrangements'. While the provision of a water dispenser had been under discussion without confirmation, the input will certainly push them to include this amenity as part of their refurbishment plans.

Acknowledgements

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