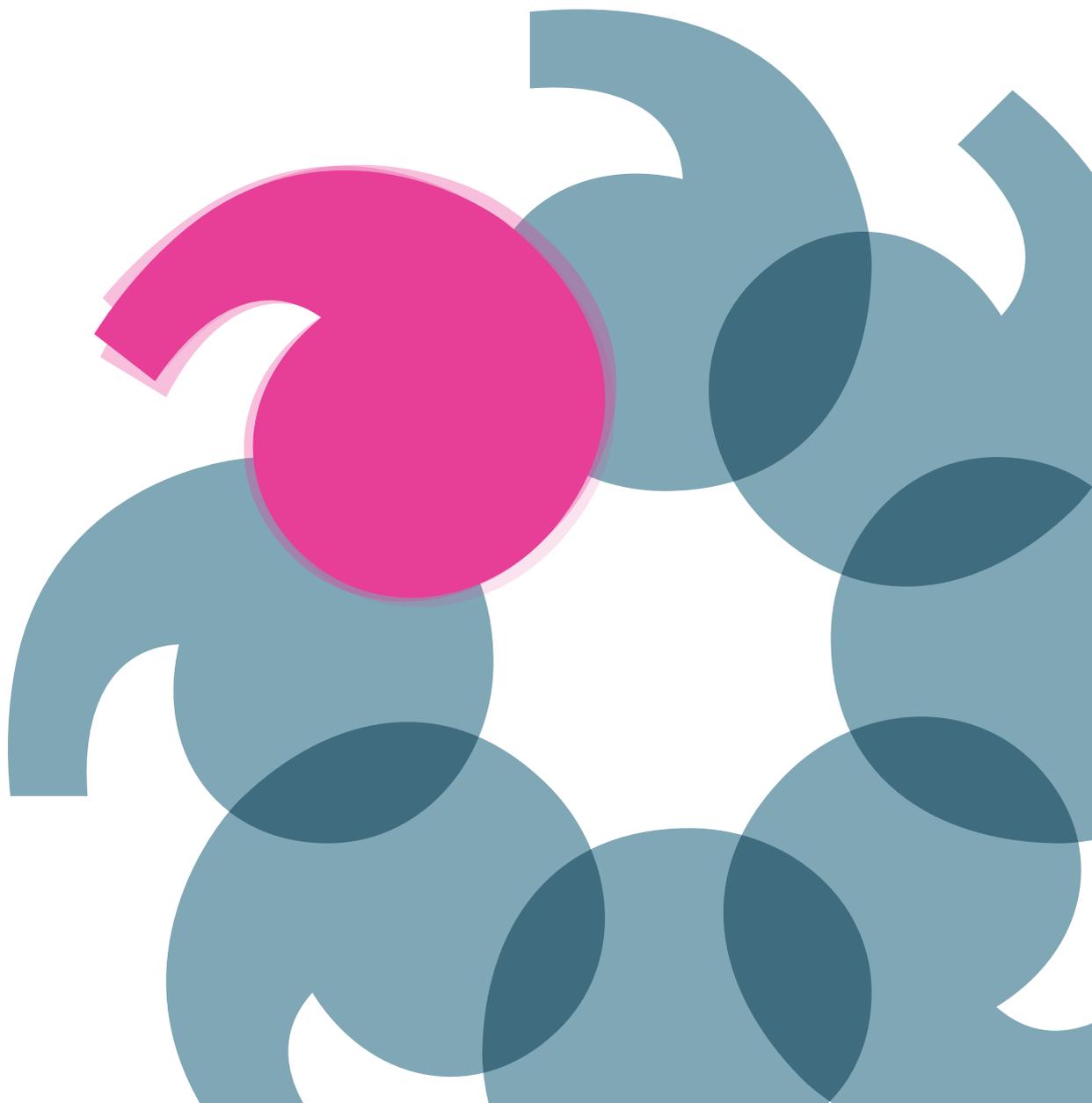


Urgent and same day GP services

- Additional feedback from Deaf patients and users of the walk in centre
- Mystery shopping registering for a GP



Healthwatch Islington

Healthwatch Islington is an independent organisation led by volunteers from the local community. It is part of a national network of Healthwatch organisations that involve people of all ages and all sections of the community.

Healthwatch Islington gathers local people's views on the health and social care services that they use. We make sure those views are taken into account when decisions are taken on how services will look in the future, and how they can be improved.

Some of our volunteers are trained as mystery shoppers. Mystery shoppers engage with health and care providers, posing as service users. This enables them to assess how well the providers perform in terms of customer service and information provision.

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Introduction

Healthwatch Islington published its first report on urgent and same day GP services in October 2018. We have since undertaken some additional research at the request of Islington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Islington CCG intends to redistribute the urgent appointments currently offered from the walk in centre at Ritchie Street (Angel Medical Centre) to GP practices or GP hubs across the borough. Islington's Health and Care Scrutiny Committee asked the CCG for more information on how this change might affect three groups of service users:

- 1.** Existing users of the walk in centre, and young adults in particular (the walk in centre is a popular choice with students and other young adults who are not necessarily engaged with other services)
- 2.** Deaf patients
- 3.** Patients who are not registered with a GP in Islington

Healthwatch went back to the walk in centre to speak to more patients about the service. We spoke to 80 Islington residents over the course of six visits in November and December. 34 of these residents were aged 30 or below.

We held a focus group for Deaf service users in December.

In our first report we had raised concerns about how the needs of unregistered patients would be met, should the walk in centre model not be recommissioned. As such, in phase two of this work, we also visited and phoned a selection of GP surgeries to see how easy it might be to register.

The findings of these three pieces of work are shared here.

Revisiting the walk in centre

We spoke to 80 Islington residents over six visits to the service. Participants were self-selecting, we spoke to whoever was willing to speak to us. Most (73) were registered with a GP. These included a range of local practices.

Thirty were registered at Ritchie Street (the practice which shares the space), with one respondent having registered there that day. Several were using the walk in centre because they had not yet registered since moving. They said that they simply hadn't thought about it, and hadn't needed to before the day of the interview. Some were students in the borough. The NHS recommends that students register at a practice near their university address as they are likely to spend more of the year there. They would then need to register as a temporary patient elsewhere if they go away during the summer. During the six visits carried out over a two-week period, we also counted 63 non-Islington residents at the centre during the times we visited.

Ages of participants

16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 to 60	61 to 80	80+	Total
3	31	25	8	7	4	1	79

Sex of participants

Female	Male	Did not say	Total
53	22	5	80

Ethnicity

Arab	1
Asian/ Asian British	5
Black/ Black British	12
Mixed	3

White British	35
White Irish	3
White Other	19
Other	2
Total	80

Did participants identify as disabled?

Yes	No	Did not say	Total
3	72	5	80

Did participants have a long term health condition?

Yes	No	Did not say	Total
13	62	15	80

What patients told us

▶ First visit

For 37 respondents this was their first visit. The other 43 had been before.

▶ Why respondents had come to the centre

61 respondents saw a GP, nine saw a nurse and six weren't sure (and four did not answer).

29 reported that they couldn't get an appointment at their own GP. 'No appointment at my GP' - In one case this meant no same-day appointments offered at my GP practice and in another it meant emergency appointments for that day had run out at their practice. For one person this meant that their GP practice wasn't open on weekends and they didn't want to wait till Monday and take time off work to be seen. Eight reported that it's generally difficult to get appointments and so they find walking in easier.

16 reported that they had attended for something that needed urgent attention, and in some cases respondents noted that they hadn't wanted to attend A&E. 'Urgent' - in some cases this meant, I didn't want to take time off work but wanted to be seen soon.

Nine reported not having a local GP, either because they were yet to register or because they were students and in the borough temporarily. For several of those registered with Ritchie Street, they felt it was quicker or easier to come in for a walk-in than to make a regular appointment.

▶ How did you hear about the service?

23 were directed by a healthcare professional (GP, receptionist, hospital or pharmacy). 15 had found the service after an internet search, 12 were told about it by friends/ family or colleagues. Nine stated that they used it because their own practice was next door (Ritchie Street) and five because they had been before.

▶ Experience of getting an appointment

Most were happy with the experience of getting an appointment, thought there was some frustration about waiting times and how these were managed.

▶ If you hadn't come here what would you have done?

If the walk in centre wasn't there, half (41) would have waited for an appointment elsewhere or waited to see if the problem got worse. 10 didn't know what they were to do and several could not answer this question. Nine reported that they would attend A&E/ the Urgent Care Centre.

▶ Knowledge of other services for minor conditions

33 were aware of other services, and 37 were not. Services listed included 111, 999, A&E, pharmacy and other GPs in the area suggesting people aren't really clear about what's on offer for different needs. What made people pick the Walk-In Centre over those options included one finding their own GP.

People who couldn't get an appointment

We spoke to 12 people who attended the walk in centre but couldn't get an appointment. One had a disability and three had a long term condition.

Ages of people who couldn't get an appointment

16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 to 60	61 to 80	80+	Total
0	5	3	1	1	1	0	12

Sex of participants

Female	Male	Did not say	Total
7	5	0	12

Ethnicity

Black/ Black British	4
White British	4

White Other	3
Chinese	1
Total	12

Five had used the service before and seven were using it for the first time. 10 were registered with a GP, but two were not. Of the 10, three were registered with Ritchie Street, and two were registered out of borough even though they were living in Islington. The two unregistered had come to register. All were given information about other places to go.

Asked what they would do next, five said they would go to hospital, five said they would try again tomorrow (either at the walk in centre or their own practice), one had made arrangements through the extended hours service and one planned to wait.

When asked where they could have gone instead of coming to the walk in centre some suggested having come earlier, some suggested their own GP, and less suggested hospital than in the previous question.

Non-Islington residents

Although non-Islington residents were not included in the survey, we counted the number of non-Islington patients during each session we attended. Each session lasted for four hours except Friday 30th November (early morning short session) and Monday 3rd December (short session after appointments closed).

Mon 19th	Tues 20th	Wed 21st	Thurs 22nd	Sat 24th	Fri 30th	Mon 3rd	Total
10	10	12	12	6	6	7	63

Observations



It seems that demand varies a lot from day to day. A high proportion of patients were from Ritchie Street or out of borough.

On the first day, although there was only one doctor on duty, appointments did not appear to run out. A lot of people using the service were non-Islington residents.

On the second day lots were turned away and many of them were non-Islington residents. It was noted that a lot of patients or potential patients seemed to be from Ritchie Street (the practice located in the same building). It seemed there had been some cancellations at the Ritchie Street practice. The notice they put up when walk in centre appointments had all been taken described the service as 'Angel Urgent Care/Open Access Centre'.

On the third day, there were some very busy times. The queue for reception was coming out of the door at around 11.30am. People visiting the walk in centre had been told the wait was 45 minutes but some waited for two hours or more. There were long waits for the Ritchie Street practice too. It was a bit chaotic. Some people were not bothering to wait and so didn't get an appointment, but not because they were all full but because they were being told at 12 to come back at 2pm and expect to be seen after 3pm. They weren't giving people later in the day appointments apparently. People were a bit frustrated at times.

On the fourth day, lots of patients were out of borough. The practice was on time with appointments which helped, but by 11am the wait was over an hour. Later in the day, when we went back, the waits were very long (over three hours) and a number of people just got fed up and went home. This meant that when a young couple came in at around 6pm, despite the sign saying it was full, they got told to wait and that they would be seen at 6.30pm (which they were).

On the fifth day, Saturday morning, there were still a lot of non-Islington people, but perhaps fewer than weekdays. There were a lot of parents with young children, who were less willing to stop and talk. There was a little bit of confusion about what services were available (walk in/ IHUB).

On the sixth day it was surprisingly not all that busy first thing, and there were two walk in centre GPs. Not so many patients were out of borough at that time of the morning - I counted six. People were saying that the walk in centre was 'very handy' for work. Ritchie Street appointments ran out at about 8.30 a.m. so a lot of the walk in centre patients were overspill from Ritchie Street.

On the seventh day, a 2pm visit, all appointments had gone when I arrived and the sign was up.'

[Notes from Healthwatch representative]

Summary

- ▶ People using the service valued it. They appreciated being able to be seen when they felt they needed to be seen and generally their issue was resolved by the visit.
- ▶ The majority of people using the service were registered with a GP.
- ▶ Large numbers of the patients we spoke to were registered at the Ritchie Street practice, suggesting that the service may be better promoted here.
- ▶ Patient flow seemed to be fairly unpredictable, with the service very busy at some times and not very busy at others.
- ▶ There was some frustration about the capacity of the service.
- ▶ There was limited awareness of other local services that may meet similar needs.

Focus group with Deaf patients

'We just want to get what hearing people get'

Feedback from focus group participant, 12 December 2018, Resource for London

Background

The focus group was commissioned by Islington Clinical Commissioning Group, and organised and facilitated by Healthwatch Islington. It was advertised as an informal 'coffee morning' for Deaf people to discuss their experiences of accessing primary care services in Islington. Recruitment was via the Islington Sign Language Interpreting Service which also provided sign language interpreters on the day.

Participants

11 people came to the meeting – ten Deaf people and one relative. There were six Deaf women and four Deaf men and a mix of ethnicities and ages. From the discussion, it was evident that participants lived in various locations around the borough.

In addition to the participants, facilitator and interpreters, there were two observers including a commissioner from Islington Clinical Commissioning Group.

Overview of the session

The meeting lasted 1 hour 45 minutes; one person left after 1 hour 30 minutes, but the rest stayed for the full time.

All participants shared their views and had much to say on the topic of accessing primary care.

The following issues were covered:

1. Accessing primary care services Monday to Friday

that is, regular services at their local surgery. This was the main focus of the discussion.

2. Accessing emergency, same day and out of hours services, in particular the walk in centre and the IHUB out of hours service.

Very few participants (just two) had used the walk in centre and only one of them knew about the IHUB service; none had used it.

All participants had an Islington GP, with varying experiences. The practices used included Village, Ritchie Street, Central, Barnsbury, Miller, Goodinge and Bingfield. There was a general consensus that Deaf access to GP services had improved in recent years:

'It's much better now because I can text. I want to say thank you for that'
'Islington's a fantastic borough for Deaf people'.

But it was still considered far from ideal:

'I still don't have any direct access to my GP'

'I find it difficult and frustrating to book a GP appointment. They won't accept emails ...'

'I have to rely on members of my family to do it for me; I want to be independent and make bookings for myself'

'I do have a problem if there's an emergency, if it's first thing in the morning, or late at night'

'What happens at night? I'm completely stuck – I have no access whatsoever'.

In terms of urgent and same day services, just two had heard of and used the walk in centre, and none had used the IHUB services (one had heard of it 'because I was at the Healthwatch meeting'). Comments on learning about these services included:

'I know about it but I can't use it because I can't get an interpreter on the same day'

'I was really surprised to hear about this'

'I have never heard about this service'

'A walk in centre at Angel – well I never!'

'You say hearing people don't always know about these services either, but I bet that those that do use them are hearing people. We are always one or two or ten steps behind everyone else finding out about things'

Two themes emerged from this discussion:

1. What makes primary care accessible in Islington
2. What the current problems and barriers are.

These are detailed below and include booking appointments, accessibility at the surgery and more general issues. The two themes do inter-relate and overlap at times, but have been separated out for transparency.

At the end of the session the participants were asked individually to state 'one thing' which would make primary care services more accessible to them. This 'wish list' – a mix of 'quick wins' and longer term, more structural issues – is also included.

What makes primary care accessible?

- ▶ Being able to book appointments – and an interpreter – using the Islington Sign Language Interpreting Service via Facetime ('it's brilliant') or text: all but two of the participants booked their appointments this way; one walked in as she was able to communicate without BSL, and the other was through a third party (relative) – 'it works great in the week'.

- ▶ Communication by text rather than phone: if you could text to book appointments. The surgeries themselves text to confirm the appointment, but it's not possible to send them a text directly.
- ▶ Having reception staff and GPs who understand Deaf issues and have had Deaf Awareness training, e.g. an identifiable person at the front desk who is covered if on leave or moves on: 'I go in person because you can't phone or text, then you get this whole mess up at reception'
- ▶ Having a video link to an interpreter at the end of a video phone line* - 4 practices out of 31 have this at the moment.
- ▶ Getting experts in to sort out issues with the video phone link, which one practice has done: 'Quality has not been great on video phones in the past, but it's much better now'.
- ▶ Receptionists who are alert to a Deaf person waiting who may not know they are being called through
- ▶ And/or a vibrating device or similar to alert Deaf people that they have been called through for their appointment or to look at the screen display
- ▶ Supplementing face to face interpreting with reliable online access to interpreters
- ▶ Better use of existing and emerging technology, e.g. remote access to interpreters via tablets for all health services, including GPs
- ▶ Making sure that patient documentation highlights Deaf people's communication needs, is prominently displayed, and always referred to.
- ▶ For some, having a hub (like the Central Medical Centre) where services and help for Deaf people are concentrated (but other felt it should be universal).

What are the problems/barriers at the moment?

- ▶ Deaf people don't get to hear about new services (e.g. IHUB) and how they can access them - Deaf people need a mobile number to text, a generic landline number is no good to them (as in the I:HUB flyer).
- ▶ Having to go to the surgery in person when ill, rather than being able to phone like anybody else
- ▶ Making appointments online is not accessible for Deaf people; also there is no opportunity through the booking process to request an interpreter so it fails at this point. Such frustrations 'exacerbate health issues for Deaf and other people'
- ▶ Email is available sometimes and works for some people, but only if the practices reply to it, which doesn't always happen.

- ▶ Lack of awareness of Deaf issues and how Deaf people present to reception: 'Reception always ignores me' and 'No one comes up to you in the waiting room if you're Deaf'
- ▶ Broadband is not always good enough for video links at surgeries and there are often delays in communication: 'I always have to wait' and 'It makes it even more stressful when you're wanting to talk about health issues'
- ▶ 'Putting pen to paper is not an appropriate substitute - English is not our first language'
- ▶ 'It is much more difficult to get an interpreter at short notice so same day services aren't a lot of use unless interpreting is set up too'
- ▶ Being 'shunted down the list' while waiting for an interpreter; patients may be first in the morning queue for a same day appointment but by the time they have arranged an interpreter they have dropped to fifth on the list: 'I end up waiting another two hours' and 'it gets put back and back - it's often very late that I manage to get an appointment'
- ▶ Visual cues calling people in for their appointment are of limited use; it means having to look at it all the time while waiting for the appointment, which is tiring and stressful: 'You've got your appointment, now you're afraid you can miss it ... I'm constantly watching that screen'
- ▶ Non GP primary care services, e.g. blood tests, give you a number, but you don't know if that number is being called: 'it's really stressful actually'
- ▶ Not all surgeries have a video link* and it would be disruptive and unsettling to have to change GPs to access one that does
- ▶ Having to rely on others throughout the process, from booking appointments to being called in the waiting room, etc.
- ▶ Not having access to any primary care services after 1 pm on a Saturday : 'we want the same hours as hearing people have'
- ▶ Deaf people are unable to access services out of hours because they rely on the Sign Language Interpreting Service to communicate for them and the service is not 24-hour.

'Wish List' for the participants:

- ▶ Being able to choose a same sex interpreter, and one who is not from Islington and not familiar, because of personal issues/confidentiality
- ▶ Access to interpreters (even if remotely) out of hours e.g. after 1 pm on Saturday - find ways to get 24 hour access, e.g. through shift working etc.
- ▶ GPs and nurses who are trained and can communicate in sign language, even if at a basic level: 'wouldn't that be wonderful?'

- ▶ Rolling out Deaf services to all GPs: 'I don't want to change GPs and go to one the other side of the borough even if I hear good things about it. Why should I have to?'
- ▶ 'Being able to text my GP'
- ▶ A gadget which will let Deaf patients know when their appointment has come up
- ▶ Being treated like everyone else, and being able to access services like everyone else: 'we feel like sub-standard, lesser people'
- ▶ Having more opportunities to talk to other Deaf people: 'I don't have access to meetings like this very often to hear what other Deaf people are saying'

Other issues for consideration

Although not within the remit of the meeting, Deaf people were keen to talk about other health services e.g. routine and emergency hospital visits and what happens if the GP refers them to secondary care. Deaf people experienced a lot of the same barriers here as they did with primary care, but there were also what they felt were basic errors, for example sending letters asking people to call to make an appointment, without checking their notes for example, where their communication needs would be detailed.

The group also commented on the inaccessibility of the 111 service to Deaf people and were encouraged to hear that it is being trialled online and there will be video phone and text access, but it would work for the Deaf community only if 'you could piggy-back interpreting on the back of that'.

The interpreters pointed out after the session that they felt not all participants understood the nature of *the proposed roll-out of video phone links to all surgeries. This was welcomed by the patients attending the meeting, but the interpreters felt it was important to stress this is only accessible to Deaf people if there is video interpreting as well as the video link. They were not sure the entire group had understood this.

Follow up

A number of participants were keen to have a regular or a follow up session to find out more about what was being done to improve Deaf patients' access to primary care:

'We can share with them how things are working. We'll be waiting'.

The Commissioner from the Islington CCG advised that he would be talking directly to the providers of the services discussed to see how improvements for Deaf patients could be made.

On behalf of Healthwatch, the facilitator offered to send out information via the Sign Language Interpreting Service about the urgent care and same day services available in Islington and how to access them, which was welcomed.

Mystery shopping - registering for a GP

As part of our engagement work on potentially re-distributing appointments currently allocated to the walk in centre (Angel Medical Centre), Healthwatch had raised concerns about how the needs of unregistered patients would be met. As such, in phase two of this work, we visited a selection of GP surgeries to see how easy it might be to register.

Since 2016 practices can choose not to set a practice catchment area. However, it is not possible to obtain a list of practices participating in this scheme in the borough. We approached NHS England for a list and were advised that this is not recorded, and that patients would need to phone practices directly to find this out.

We wanted to know whether practices would register patients, and if not, whether they would give them advice on how and where they could register.

Commentary

Ten practices were contacted in late November 2018. They are anonymised in this report. Five were visited in person. Five were contacted by phone. The contact was made at different times of day - but avoiding early mornings and any lunchtime closing.

Overall observations were that most were friendly, and none were unhelpful - though the degree of helpfulness varied. Practices B and J stood out as being particularly helpful. Interestingly, none of the practices we spoke to told us we could use the walk in centre without being registered.

The tables that follow set out the findings from each of the practices.

Summary of findings

Responses were mixed. Three practices were willing to register the patient regardless of where they lived. For those that could not register the patient, the information and advice given about registering varied and was generally only given when prompted. Work on this might be needed when the walk in centre appointments are re-allocated (whether to practices or to hubs).

Practice A - Visit took place at 3.50pm, 3 reception staff	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	I had to specifically ask for advice as they did not volunteer it initially. They just told me to use the internet, put my address in, and find the nearest practice to where I lived. I asked whether I just use Google, and they said go to NHS Choices. This would give me GPs in my area. They did not tell me what information I would need to do to register with them.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	They did not tell me about any practices I could approach. I asked how I would find out the catchment area etc. and they told me that the website would show the nearest GPs to my home. I would need to contact the practices directly to find out whether they would take me.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	As far as they went, yes. Pleasant. But did not give me much information.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	No. There was one person in front of me and I waited about half a minute to be spoken to. The other two receptionists kept their heads down while I was there waiting.
5. Observations?	Not unfriendly, but not particularly welcoming environment

Practice B - Visit took place at 12.50pm, 2 reception staff	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	Yes they did advise. They looked up the address I had given them on the computer and told me it was outside of their catchment area (see 2 below). I asked what I would need to do to register and they said I would need photo ID and proof of address.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	Without prompting, they looked up local practices and suggested Ritchie Street - 'it's at Angel, near the Sainsbury's') and Killick Street - 'it's just off Pentonville Road') as near to the address I had given. They printed off information on these for me, without being asked.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	Yes, very.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	No. There were a few people in the waiting area. I overheard the other receptionist advising a patient that there were no appointments available until over a week away.
5. Observations?	Clean, warm. Professional staff.

Practice C - Phone call made at 12.15pm	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	Firstly, they asked me to restate my query, then spoke briefly to a colleague. They told me how to register with them: they told me to come into Reception, or to 'go online'. I asked for the website address and they gave it to me. They then told me that it would all be processed within 48 hours. They did not give me any other information.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	No. I told them where I lived which was the other side of Islington, but worked locally. I was told that it would be ok to register with this practice*. They did not ask my actual address.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	Yes, if they information they gave me was correct*. However, I assumed I would be outside of their catchment area, so it might not have been so helpful once I tried to register.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	Not known. I got through quite quickly, within a couple of minutes. The receptionist gave their name on answering the phone.
5. Observations?	The initial phone number was incorrect. When reaching the practice, there was a recorded message, then music and lots of different information (but none of it about registering). *It is not known whether the advice I was given was correct and I was eligible to register at the practice.

Practice D - Visit took place at 1.15pm, 2 reception staff	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	No, they didn't give any advice. They asked for my postcode, and then told me they didn't take anyone outside N7 or N19.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	No. They advised to 'just put your address in when you go online'. 'You need to go to a GP in that area'..
3. Was the staff member helpful?	Not particularly.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	No. Very quiet. Just one person in the waiting area.
5. Observations?	Friendly enough, but not much helpful information given.

Practice E - Phone call made at 11.45am	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	They gave advice on prompting. They told me I was 'way outside of the area' that they just dealt with 'N' postcodes, and to go online and search for a practice in my area. I asked them to tell me what information I would need to register and they told me I would need my NHS number but that the practice concerned would be able to tell me.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	No. They advised to 'just put your address in when you go online'. 'You need to go to a GP in that area'.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	As far as they went, but did not give me much info. They didn't ask me any questions..
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	I was held in a phone queue for a couple of minutes.
5. Observations?	It was not clear that I had come through to Reception when the phone was answered. The person who answered was very quiet, and quite difficult to hear.

Practice F - Phone call made at 10.40am	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	Not much advice given. They asked my new postcode and then told me I was outside the area and would need to find a more local GP.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	When I asked, they said they could not tell me about local practices. They said I should find a local pharmacy 'as they liaise with them' to advise me.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	As far as they went. But they did not give me any advice at all unprompted.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	I was in a phone queue but the call was answered within about 30 seconds.
5. Observations?	None.

Practice G - Visit took place at 1.45pm, 1 then 2 reception staff	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	Advice was given when prompted. They told me I would need photo ID, e.g. passport, driving licence and something with my address on, but that might be waived if I was new to the area. Told me I was 'just outside of catchment area' when I told them my address.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	Yes. When I asked how to find out about practices I could register at, the receptionist spent a long time looking it up for me on Google from my address given. They then gave me a post-it note with one local practice's details on it, including address and phone number.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	Yes, they tried to be helpful. Very friendly.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	No, just a couple of others in the waiting area. There was one receptionist who was on a somewhat involved phone call with a patient. They did not look up or make eye contact while I was waiting. After 3-4 minutes another receptionist came to the desk and was the one who dealt with me.
5. Observations?	The receptionist said to me in an aside: 'if it were up to me, I wouldn't have a catchment area at all, and take everybody'.

Practice H - Visit took place at 3.00pm, 1 reception staff	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	The receptionist did not know whether I was in the catchment area to start with. I explained where the address was and what I thought the postcode was, and she said they only dealt with N postcodes, so I would be outside of their area. They offered no further info without prompting. I did ask what information I would need and was told 'proof of ID and address'.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	When I asked how to find out about practices nearer my home, they said to put my 'postcode and GP' into Google and then ring up those that came up in the results. .
3. Was the staff member helpful?	As far as they went. But did not give me much info without prompting.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	No. Quite quiet. Waited a couple of minutes (see below).
5. Observations?	A bewildering number of notices in reception saying things like 'Do not talk to reception about x'. There may have been something about registering, but there was so many I did not spot anything. While I was waiting, there were some slightly agitated patients who were trying to register a child with the practice. They were told they were not able to as neither were the parent of the child. The patients asked to see a more senior member of staff, who was called and was dealing with them while I was speaking to the receptionist.

Practice I - Phone call made at 12 noon	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	Yes they did, but did not ask my address first. They told me I would have to book an appointment ('you can't just come in') to see a nurse who would do some basic health checks and I would then fill in some forms. I asked what info I would need to bring and they said address and photo ID. But they did not ask me where I lived.
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	No. Because they didn't ask where I lived, I volunteered the information after they had told me the registration process. They then asked the postcode. I said I didn't have the full postcode (I gave 'WC1') and they said they couldn't confirm I could register until I could give them a full postcode.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	Initially so, but could not tell me if I was eligible for registering at the practice.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	It was difficult to get through initially.
5. Observations?	There was a long recorded message, which suggested contacting GP walk ins at Ritchie Street and Whittington Urgent Care. The message also said the call may be recorded for monitoring or training purposes.

Practice J - Phone call made at 2.50pm* (see below)	
1. Did the practice advise on how to register? If so, what information did they give?	Yes. They asked me if I'd had a GP before in the UK, and told me I could register as an out of area patient. They told me that they couldn't treat me for chronic conditions or do home visits though. They said I would need my NHS number, could 'pop in' and fill out some forms. I would also need to take my own blood pressure using the equipment in reception. They told me they were 'here from 8 till 8' and 'weekends from 9 till 6 pm.'
2. Did they suggest any particular practices?	This was not necessary as they said I could register with them.
3. Was the staff member helpful?	Yes, very friendly and forthcoming.
4. Was it a particularly busy time at reception?	*The phone lines were quite busy. This was my fourth attempt. I tried on three separate occasions at different times of day. I gave up after waiting for five minutes plus each time without getting an answer. Routing on the menu was not clear, as there was no number for 'registering'.
5. Observations?	The receptionist did not mention the walk in centre.

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Islington

Copyright © Healthwatch Islington 2019
200a Pentonville Road, London N1 9JP
020 7832 5814
info@healthwatchislington.co.uk
www.healthwatchislington.co.uk
 [@hwislington](https://twitter.com/hwislington)