

What Services Does Your GP Offer?



In May 2016 the Healthwatch Primary Care Volunteers investigated the availability of wound dressing and phlebotomy services at GP practices in the West and North Localities of Barnet. The volunteers first looked at the websites of each practice, then at the on-line practice leaflets and finally undertook a mystery shopping survey for a more accurate picture.

The findings revealed that many of the websites were not up to date and there was little or no information available, and there was a similar outcome from the on-line practice leaflets.

The mystery shopping survey whereby volunteers telephoned 40 selected practices, with a set scenario, within the borough revealed:

Wound Dressing Service

28 practices or 70% offer a wound dressing service, and 11 practices or 27% did not, with information unavailable for the remaining one. Where the service was unavailable, patients have to go to a local hospital or clinic.

Information from the CCG suggests that GPs should be offering a simple wound dressing service proportionate to the population of their practice. More complex care might need a specialist service which the CCG is looking into commissioning.

Phlebotomy Service



15 or 37% of practices offer a phlebotomy service, with 15 or 37% sending their patients to a hospital service for their tests. 2 practices offered a practice or hospital option. However, there were 8 other practices which imposed conditions on which patients they would treat for this service, including age limitations which ranged from 65+ to 80+, and 2 practices with postcode limitations regardless of age or need.

The phlebotomy service is currently being looked into by NHSE as some practices have historic funding and others not.

Size of Practices and Availability of Wound Dressing and Phlebotomy Services

We researched the services available by practice size to see if there was any correlation. For this survey, practices with 10,000+ patients were designated Large, those with 6,000 to 9,999 were Medium, and practices with 5,999 patients or fewer were Small.

Wound dressing outcomes by size of practice

	Large	Medium	Small
Yes	5	10	13
No	3	2	6

Phlebotomy outcomes by size of practice

	Large	Medium	Small
Yes	4	4	7
No	2	5	8
Conditions	2	2	4
Hospital + practice		1	1

Recommendations:

- That the practices that impose conditions on use of services include those less able to access services
- That the CCG and NHSE make the funding of these services clearer for practices
- That practices update their websites and make the availability of services they offer clear for patients
- That there is a much more even availability across all practices for both services



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