

# **A Report on Patients’ Experiences at Edgware Hospital**



**July 2018**

## Introduction

Healthwatch Barnet was established through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to give users of health and social care services a powerful voice both locally and nationally.

Healthwatch Barnet was established in 2013 and is part of a national network led by Healthwatch England. We are the independent voice for residents of Barnet who use health and social care services. Our vision is of a thriving and active community of Barnet people who want to influence and contribute to the development and delivery of quality health and social care in the borough.

Healthwatch Barnet want to engage with a wide range of local people about their experience of Health and Social Care in Barnet. To this end we set up a series of stalls in the Main Reception area of Edgware Community Hospital to talk to people as they attended the hospital. We undertook this engagement at the following times: morning of Friday 23rd February and afternoon of Tuesday 27th February.

We asked patients a small number of direct questions and also encouraged them to give us any more general comments about their experiences.

### **We asked people if they found the signage at the hospital easy to follow:**

120 patients gave us feedback on this with 75% (90 people) saying the signage was clear and easy to follow. Several patients had been to the hospital before and knew where they needed to go. Other patients told us they had asked for directions or clarification at the front reception desk, but were very positive about the help they received from reception staff. Some patients found the outside signage in the car park difficult to follow.

Patients reported they didn't see any signs outside for the Breast Screening Unit, so had to ask at reception.

Some comments we received were:

- "I'm a diabetic and my eyes aren't good, I didn't see the signage by the entrance it all needs to stand out a lot more"
- "It's difficult to see the hospital signage from the street when you are driving"
- "I have got a blue badge and the instructions in the car park about where you park seem to contradict one another"

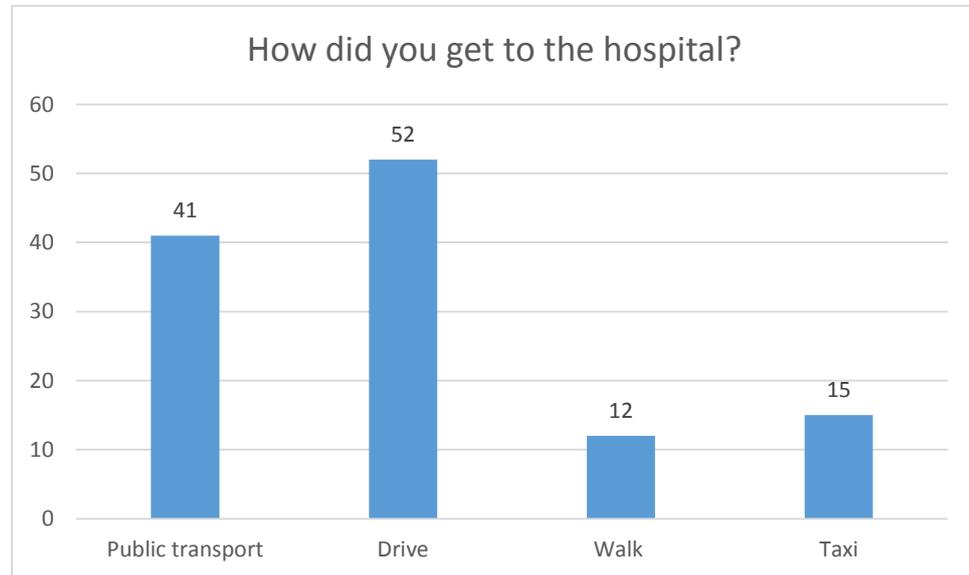
On both of our visits the reception closed for a period of time while the area was still quite busy. During these closures a number of patients asked the Healthwatch team for directions and information.

### **We asked people how they had travelled to the hospital:**

52 (43%) of the 120 patients who answered this question, drove to the hospital. 27 people (51% of those who drove) said that they had experienced problems finding parking, including being late for their appointments. Some patients prefer to use public transport as they found parking to be an issue. Other patients get dropped off and picked up by a relative or friend to avoid any issues with parking.

Patients who used public transport said the hospital is easy to access with lots of available bus routes.

15 (12%) of patients travelled to the site by taxi for convenience and 12 (10% of participants) walked to the hospital.



- “Took 10 minutes to find a parking space”
- “Free parking is limited, parked in residential street. Cannot park between 10-11 and 2-3”
- “Parking price is high. £2 up to 2 hours – sometimes difficult to find space”
- “Took bus as last time struggled to get a space”
- “Is a nightmare, high charge is a disgraceful for a hospital”
- “The instructions in the car park are very unclear”
- “Lost appointment because of parking”

## General Feedback

The main reception area was cold on both occasions we were there due to the heating not working. On Tuesday 27th there were three electric heaters to help but the reception area was still cold. Lower ground toilets were closed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. There was no sign but the doors were locked and the lights were out. We also noticed there were no hand gel dispensers in the main reception area.

**We received the following general feedback:**

### Parking

- “Staff parking also an issue – especially difficult for peripatetic workers who have to come and go at the hospital site”
- “Car park fees, can only pay for 2 hours. No short time fees”
- Apart from car park, everything is good”

### Appointment process

- “Took a long time to get appointment. First GP then assessment then consultant before finally getting appropriate appointment. Took 4-5 months in total”
- Very quick once I got here but it was difficult to make the appointment. They don’t answer the phone, I started to call after nine in the morning, it took a long time”

### **Appointments and staffing**

- “Very good, the doctor was cooperative and reassuring. I was well cared for and supported”
- “Extremely good, very friendly staff”
- “Waiting times: very good I was at the breast clinic and it was very quick I had to wait one week for a mammogram”
- “It’s always so welcoming here it’s clean and it’s nice to have a hospital of this standard and in a good state of repair”

### **Summary**

The majority of patients were happy with the treatment they received and their overall experience at Edgware Hospital. The outdoor signage in the car park and parking was an issue for a number of people. Parking for disabled people is confusing. Patients were very positive about the help received from reception staff but when the desk was closed it created difficulties.

### **Recommendations**

- Review the signage in car park to make it more noticeable and easier to read, particularly for blue badge holders.
- Ensure that there is clear signage to the breast screening unit.
- Ensure car parking is kept under review as this is clearly an issue for patients who find it costly and difficult to find spaces.
- Explore ways of maintaining staff cover at the reception desk during the main clinic hours.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Responses from NHS

### 1. NHS Property Services

Signage. We have been carrying out a huge project of signage over the last 2 to 3 years. It is a costly project thus we are having to do it in stages and we are still a long way from getting it fully correct.

Car Parking signage. We have carried out a fair amount of work already so it is disheartening that we still have not got it right. We will discuss it with colleagues who manage the car park and security, and look again.

As the breast screening unit is at the very back of the hospital site, trying to direct visitors to the unit from the front of the hospital is really quite a feat. We are in discussions about having something like a painted pathway similar to the current pedestrian signage we have around the site so at least we can tell people to follow the (for example) blue signage on the pathway. We need to have something that stands out sufficiently. We hope to have this implemented in this financial year.

Car parking charges. NHS Property Services are looking at a national car parking policy which may take into account the charging of visitors, though we are one of the lowest charging hospitals. We have two pay and display car parks and have regular patrols checking that spaces are being used responsibly. We do not accept staff parking in these spaces unless they have paid and displayed.

### 2. Central London Community Healthcare

We have noted the recommendations from the report, and have discussed them with the Assistant Director of Quality (North) and we have agreed that the report will be shared with our Patient Experience Co-ordinating Committee and it will be added to the next agenda for discussion on the 19th July. We will take forward the recommendations in the report regarding general signage and parking.

The issue of reception cover is still being followed up and will be updated in due course.