

Northumberland Heath Medical Centre

Inspection report

Hind Crescent
Northumberland Heath
Erith
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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

Ratings

Overall rating for this location

Good



Are services responsive to people's needs?

Requires Improvement



Overall summary

We carried out an announced focused assessment of the Responsive key question at Northumberland Heath Medical Centre on 16 November 2023.

Overall, the practice is rated as good.

Safe - not inspected, rating of good carried forward from previous inspection

Effective - not inspected, rating of good carried forward from previous inspection

Caring - not inspected, rating of good carried forward from previous inspection

Responsive - requires improvement

Well-led - not inspected, rating of good carried forward from previous inspection

We recognise the pressure that practices are currently working under and the efforts staff are making to maintain levels of access for their patients. At the same time, our strategy makes a commitment to deliver regulation driven by people's needs and experiences of care.

Although we saw the practice was attempting to improve access, this was not yet reflected in the GP patient survey data or other sources of patient feedback. Therefore, the rating for the Responsive key question is requires improvement, as ratings depend on evidence of impact and must reflect the lived experience that people were reporting at the time of inspection.

Following our previous inspection on 2 August 2019, the practice was rated good overall and for all key questions.

The full reports for previous inspections can be found by selecting the 'all reports' link for Northumberland Heath Medical Centre on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

Why we carried out this inspection

We carried out this assessment in line with our inspection priorities, to look specifically at access and the other areas covered by the Responsive key question.

How we carried out the assessment

This assessment was carried out in a way without the need for a visit. We:

- assessed data
- spoke to staff using video conferencing
- looked at written evidence using video conferencing.

Our findings

We based our judgement of the quality of care at this service on a combination of:

Overall summary

- information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and
- information from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

We found that:

- The practice had adjusted services to meet patients' needs, but had not complied with the Accessible Information Standard as patients were not asked about their needs at registration.
- Patients were not always able to access care and treatment in a timely way.
- There were particular issues with the ease with which patients could contact the practice by telephone. The practice had made some changes to try to improve telephone access, but were constrained by the telephone system in place. The telephone system was due to be replaced, as part of a national initiative, by March 2024.
- Complaints were listened and responded to and used to improve the quality of care.

Whilst we found no breaches of regulations, the provider **should**:

- Revise patient registration form to meet the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard.
- Continue to monitor and take steps to improve telephone access.

Details of our findings and the evidence supporting our ratings are set out in the evidence tables.

Dr Sean O'Kelly BSc MB ChB MSc DCH FRCA

Chief Inspector of Health Care

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector who reviewed data and information and spoke with staff using video conferencing facilities.

Background to Northumberland Heath Medical Centre

Northumberland Heath Medical Centre is located in Erith in the London Borough of Bexley.

It is based in a purpose built building designed specifically for use as a GP surgery.

The practice is registered with the CQC for the following regulated activities: treatment of disease, disorder or injury, maternity and midwifery services, family planning, surgical procedures and diagnostic and screening procedures.

The practice serves a population of nearly 14,000 patients. According to the latest available data, the ethnic make-up of the practice area is (79%) White. The largest other ethnicities were Black (12%), and Asian (6%). Information published by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities shows that deprivation within the practice population group is in the fifth decile (five of 10). The lower the decile, the more deprived the practice population is relative to others.

The practice had slightly fewer working age people than the average practice in England or the local area (61%) and slightly more young people (22%) and older people (16%) than the average practice.

The practice has three GP partners, and employs 4 salaried GPs and 5 long-term locum GPs. The GPs are supported with medicines management by 3 pharmacists. The nursing team has a nurse practitioner, 2 practice nurses, a nursing associate and health care assistant. Management support is provided by a team of 3 staff covering practice management, finance and operations and strategic and business management. There is also a data team, a prescription clerk, care co-ordinators and a team of receptionists and administrators.

The practice is open between 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, with appointments available from 7am Monday-Thursday. Extended access is provided locally by a group of practices, and late evening and weekend appointments are available. Out of hours services are provided by a local service.

The practice offers a range of appointment types including book on the day, telephone consultations and advance appointments.