

**Enter and View report:
Median Road Resource Centre
24 April 2015**



Enter & View Median Road

Place of visit:

Median Road Resource Centre

25 Median Road

E5 0PF

Visit date: 3 March 2015, 10.30am

Provision type: short-term residential facility for Hackney residents including interim, intermediate and respite care beds.

Reason for visit: Poor CQC inspection report in 2014. The CQC report contrasted with 'historic' (more than two year old) comments from Hackney residents who had received care at Median Road who variously described the unit as a 'good stepping stone' between hospital and home and 'a jewel in the crown' of local care services. Commissioners were considering the future of services at Median Road as part of Hackney's new Reablement and Intermediate Care Service (RICS).

Visiting team

Christine Compagnoni	authorised representative (HWH)
Terry Stewart	authorised representative (HWH)
Amanda Elliot	Healthwatch Hackney (staff)

Key facts

- Median Road is a 37-bed short term care unit that until recently provided four distinct but complimentary services to promote independence and *'meet growing local demand for short term residential provision'*.
- The unit is a familiar, well used and long standing feature of Hackney's local health and social care provision designed to help people return to independence, prevent delays in hospital discharge and avoidable hospital admissions.
- Until February 2014, services at Median Road included intermediate care (intensive rehabilitation), interim care (beds for people unable to return home for non-medical reasons) respite care and a day centre for people with dementia.
- The unit was mainly but not exclusively used for older people with a range of conditions and needs including cognitive impairment, stroke and Multiple Sclerosis.
- The council moved the dementia day centre into the Trowbridge day centre project in February 2014 as part of its plans for transforming day services.
- A CQC inspection in June 2014 (following a complaint from the relative of someone who had used the service) found the unit required improvement in five out of six CQC outcome areas. The unit only met the outcome that 'People should get safe and appropriate care that meeting their needs and supports their rights.
- The full CQC report from July 2014 can be viewed online [here](#).
- Between June and December 2014 MRRC's interim group manager implemented an improvement plan. The council was advised before Christmas that the unit was now compliant.

- Median Road stopped taking referrals for their interim beds in October 2014, though the unit continued to take intermediate care referrals until the end of January 2015.
- In December 2014 the CQC carried out an unannounced inspection, and found the service to be 'good' in all 6 areas of inspection.
- On 2 March 2015 the council announced via a statement published on its website that the unit would close on 31 March 2015 and all current service users were being prepared for discharge home or moved to other appropriate care or supported housing settings.
- The council said it was now *'examining potential uses for the building, including a proposal for a medium term conversion into temporary accommodation for homeless families, but the Council's intention in the long term is for it to become a residential care home, for which there is a real local need'*.

Background to recent changes to Median Road Resource Centre

On 22 April 2013, Hackney Council's cabinet approved plans to develop a new integrated Reablement and Intermediate Care Service (RICS) with Homerton Hospital.

[The cabinet report](#) said the RICS would promote recovery, prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and support timely hospital discharges. It would also *'secure Median Road's future as a key community resource for Hackney'*. Median Road would be redeveloped to be a *'central co-located hub for RICS.'*

On 2 March 2015, the day before the Healthwatch Hackney (HWH) Enter and View visit, the council announced that Median Road was no longer being considered as part of the RICS project. On the same day, staff who worked at the unit were notified the unit would close at the end of the month. Staff were previously advised on 28 January 2015 that the unit would no longer be part of the RICS

project. Staff will take part in a month long consultation over the redundancies. Some staff are expected to take voluntary redundancy.

Observations

- At the time of our visit, Median Road was being prepared for closure with only seven service users remaining. This was the end stage of a process that had started several months prior to our visit.
- All but two of the four ‘wings’ at Median Road were closed.
- Median Road is easy to access for Hackney residents and well served by bus routes. It is conveniently close to Homerton Hospital.
- The interim group manager appeared highly competent and, along with her staff, seemed committed to service users and had worked hard to improve the unit over the last year.
- The seven remaining service users were well cared for and treated with dignity and respect.
- Staff had learned the day before our visit that Median Road was closing and that jobs were being deleted. A few care staff were visibly very upset about the news of the full closure, which was unexpected [*We have been asked by Hackney Council to note here that staff were aware that there was some risk of redundancy for certain roles when staff were consulted about RICS in October 2014, the Enter and View visiting team were unaware of this at the time*].
- The three storey brick building is pleasant, surrounded by mature trees and shrubs and has gardens and patio areas for residents within the unit.
- The physical building appeared sound and in good condition and still suitable for care provision. It has good sized bedrooms and accessible en suite bathrooms. Only the décor needs updating.

- Those parts of the unit still operating were clean, well-organised and the service users well cared for.
- Healthwatch Hackney representatives felt the unit met the ‘friends and family test’; somewhere they would be happy to receive short term rehabilitation and care and recommend to friends and family.

Challenges

- It was difficult to engage with the service users as some had dementia and communication difficulties and found it hard comprehend the concepts including the closure. We discussed our visit in advance with the manager and we agreed that we had to be sensitive when talking to the service users about the changes at the unit.
- HWH representatives found the visit difficult to conduct because they had not received all the facts relating to future plans for services at Median Road and how decisions were being made.

Meeting with the interim group manager

The HWH representatives met two senior staff including the interim group manager who had been in post since May 2014 and senior care support worker. The manager oversaw work to improve the running of the unit following an unsatisfactory CQC inspection report of June 2014.

She had started work at the unit only a few weeks prior to the June 2014 CQC inspection. She was originally brought in to manage the change at Median Road to accommodate the new RICS services at the unit but, following the inspection, found herself in charge of a major overhaul of practices at the unit.

She said 120 clients were referred to Median Road during 2013 - 2014, and around 90 of these were cared for locally. The remainder were referred to other services

within the borough or placed in other care settings outside of Hackney. *[Hackney Council have asked us to note at this point that these figures are an estimate, and that some clients were also placed in care settings within Hackney]*

The manager described Median Road as a *'unique resource'*. She said it was sad the unit was closing. *'Median Road as we know it is going.'*

She said staff were predominantly permanent, very committed and many had worked in the unit for a long time.

Fresh food was cooked on site. Unit 1 in particular was dedicated to promoting self-help among service users.

Consultation

There was no formal consultation with Median Road service users, their carers, local people, Healthwatch Hackney or health and social care professionals on the closure of Median Road. Lay members of the RICS board were also not informed of the decision.

Staff and unions were consulted on the RICS proposals in October/November 2014 but the proposals did not include Median Road's closure.

Staff were unaware of the closure plans until the day before our visit. The service users we spoke to were aware they were being moved. We cannot say if the other service users were aware of what was happening to them or where they were going at the end of March.

There was no specific consultation with residents, health and social care professionals, carers or the public on the closure of Median Road.

What is happening to people currently using the service?

Two people using the service were due to move to local care homes before 31 March.

A further two people receiving care in Median Road were due to move into the new interim care service at Leander Court - housing with care however subsequently other suitable arrangements were made for them.

Three people receiving care at Median Road were moving into housing with care schemes as permanent tenants and another was returning home. All service users had undergone a process to re-assess their needs.

Intermediate care - future provision

At the time of our visit, the interim group manager told us that her understanding was that the first floor of Median Road was to house a 'bed based nurse led' rehabilitation service for people with intermediate care needs. She said architects had visited the building recently to take measurements.

Subsequently, the council has announced Median Road would no longer be part of RICS model. It is unclear when or why this decision was made and who from social and health services was involved in this judgement.

The council estimates 4,000 people in Hackney need some kind of reablement/ intermediate care each year and that most of these people can be supported at home with an 'enhanced community based model' of care.

The council originally estimated that 120 people a year would need bed based intermediate care. They now state that half of these (60) can be supported at home by a health-led community team operating extended hours. A further 60 people likely to need bed based care will be placed in St Pancras Hospital in Camden.

Interim care - future provision

Interim beds are used by people with care and support needs who cannot return home immediately. The manager told HWH these beds were always full prior to the unit ceasing to accept new referrals in October.

Following the closure of Median Road, people who need interim care will be placed in supported housing with care at Leander Court as a temporary placement until they are able to return home or are found a suitable placement.

The council has negotiated provision of five flats for interim care use at Leander Court, though it anticipates they will need a least another 10 temporary tenancies in supported housing with care to meet demand. Some care staff will transfer to Leander Court. Care staff ratios for these beds will be 3 staff per 10 residents including one senior staff member.

HWH asked where people needing interim care had been placed since October 2014. The manager said she wasn't sure but thought some people had been placed in interim care out of the borough, including in Romford.

Respite care - future provision

Median road used to have a dedicated respite unit to enable family carers to have planned respite and for emergency situations when care broke down. The manager said most recently respite/emergency beds had been used for a service user whose main carer needed to go to hospital for surgery and when the daughter of a service user had suddenly died. It is unclear where respite/emergency beds will now be found in the borough.

Service User's comments

Service User 1, White Irish Man, 90 - had been at the unit since he was discharged from hospital in April 2014. He said Median Road was: 'Very, very good. A1.' He added: 'In fact I would pay to stop here if I could...The food is very good. I can't speak too highly of them [staff]. If I could stay here permanently, I would. Staff are trying to get me a flat.' Staff were caring and considerate and met all his caring and social needs. He had visited the new flat with a community care worker. He said he thought they will give him independence but link him with services if he needs them. 'I prefer to spend time in my room doing crosswords

and chatting with staff.’ He said he visited his son and grandsons. Only distance prevented him for doing so more often.

Service User 2, White Irish woman, 83 - *said she liked the unit and felt very cared for by all staff members. She had been in the unit for just under four months where she was having care for her mobility needs. She said she ‘felt a lot better’ now because of the care and support at the unit. . She speaks to her sister in Ireland every week. She said she was a bit bored on the unit and wanted to talk more with staff and other clients. She knew about the move and was looking forward to moving to her new residential home.*

Former patient, 50+ African-Caribbean - *a former patient who spent several months rehabilitating at Median Road Resource Centre contacted Healthwatch Hackney to express his concern at the closure. He said ‘It is the worse news of the week. For me this was one of the most important stepping stones I had coming out of hospital with no fixed address to recover.’*

Staff comments

Therapy assistant: *‘I worked here for seven years. It is very sad. My post at the unit has been deleted and I have been accepted back into the community Therapy at Home team.’*

Domestic staff: *We were introduced to a staff member with learning difficulties. He told us he liked the unit.*

Senior care staff: *We spoke to several care staff who had worked in the unit. All were very committed to the service users and were shocked that the unit was closing. One member of care staff was visibly upset and crying. She told us that staff had only learned day before that the unit was closing on 31 March. She had worked on the unit for 16 years. On care worker said: ‘I am angry. Really sad.’*

Laundry staff: Median Road has its own well organised laundry area. The staff member in charge of the laundry had worked at the unit since it opened in 1990. The manager said the staff member was ‘very committed to residents’. She was ‘caring and played a big part’ in changing the culture, staff client relationships and working practises in the unit.

Recommendations and questions following enter and view visit including Hackney Council response

Healthwatch Hackney recommendations	Hackney Council response
1.Hackney Council should conduct a formal public consultation on the future of Median Road, covering the building and services located there, setting out clear options for its future use.	<p><i>We take note of these recommendations made [1-4 and 8] but respectfully decline to consider them as LBH did not have a duty to consult with the wider public at large</i></p>
2.The formal consultation should take account of the number of borough residents currently aged over 60 and address wider future provision for this group in the context of cuts to social, health and voluntary services.	
3.The council should also conduct a formal public consultation on interim care provision in the borough	
4.The consultation/s should show due regard to the Equalities Act 2010	
5.The council should carry out an exercise to compare the cost of purchasing intermediate care beds from St Pancras with the cost of in borough-bed based intermediate care services at Median Road	

<p>6. Meanwhile, the council should provide funding to meet the extra cost of travel to carers/families that have to travel to St Pancras to visit their family members receiving intermediate care at the hospital</p>	
<p>7. The council should provide carers with a letter setting out how they can get financial support for additional travel if their relative/loved one is placed at St Pancras for bed-based intermediate care.</p>	<p><i>This information has already been gathered and can be made available in due course</i></p>
<p>8. The council with the local health services should conduct an impact assessment to assess the cumulative impact of Median Road's closure on older people, alongside the proposed closure of four council day centres and changes to inpatient NHS mental health provision for over 65s in the borough including ELFT plans to move Larch ward to Mile End Hospital with a loss of local beds.</p>	<p><i>We take note of these recommendations made but respectfully decline to consider them as LBH did not have a duty to consult with the wider public at large</i></p>

Healthwatch Hackney Questions	Hackney Council Response
<p>1. Where will the council provide in-borough planned and emergency respite care to help carers who need a break from caring once the unit has closed? How many respite beds do the council currently have and where are they?</p>	<p><i>We feel that given that the Enter and View report is about the service that was visited and not the future of the services, commissioners will respond to the follow up questions through the RICS board, which includes a Healthwatch representative. A meeting is being organised by/with Healthwatch for the 11th June 2015.</i></p>
<p>2. Which council committee made the decision to close Median Road and where is the decision minuted?</p>	
<p>3. How many residential care homes are there in Hackney for older people?</p>	
<p>4. How many Hackney residents who are Hackney Council Adult Social Care service users currently are cared for out of the borough? Please also provide this as a percentage and broken down by age and service type (interim, residential etc)</p>	
<p>5. Where will Hackney's emergency residential placement beds be? It is our understanding the borough needs at least one or two emergency beds at all times. What is the current provision?</p>	
<p>6. Apart from specialist beds at St Pancras Hospital, will there be any</p>	

<p>other bed based intermediate care provision within the borough?</p>	
<p>7. What does ‘enhanced community provision’ mean?</p>	
<p>8. Could the council explain how they arrived at a revised figure of 60 Hackney residents who would be likely to need bed based intermediate care each year? Was this figure reached following input from the NHS?</p>	
<p>9. Which wards will provide Hackney’s intermediate beds at St Pancras and how will these be funded? Will they be funded by health or social care?</p>	
<p>10. Will the hospital social work team at Homerton Hospital provide social work support to patients on these wards or will these be carried out by Camden social workers?</p>	
<p>11. Will people who need interim placements have secure tenancies in housing association ‘with care’ housing? While people are in interim placements will there be a charge for their services?</p>	
<p>12. Who will pay the rent for the interim beds as patients are likely to be already paying rent for their own homes while awaiting an appropriate placement?</p>	

<p>13. Outward Housing and Hackney Council jointly run Leander Court which has 33 flats. If 10 (a third) are used for interim placements how will the Council address the reduced availability of permanent specialised supported housing for Hackney residents?</p>	
<p>14. What happens when a person placed in an interim bed in extra care housing is unable to return home but their needs can no longer be met within the setting? Where will they go?</p>	
<p>15. Median Road residents referred to the intermediate care service could be easily moved to the interim care service within the same building if they could not go home. Under current proposals, this type of transfer could entail a number of moves between St Pancras, Leander Court and possibly on into residential care. Would the council agree that this could be disruptive to residents who are older, frail and who have a dementia diagnosis? What plans does the council have to address this?</p>	
<p>16. The manager talked about a new clinical-led bed-based reablement service with a different skill mix,</p>	

<p>possibly including ‘bed based assistants’. What are ‘bed based assistants’ and where and how would they be used? Are they less skilled than a healthcare assistant or a care worker? Employed by health or social care?</p>	
<p>17. In 2013-14, Hackney ranked 112/151 for delayed transfers of care from hospital and 136/144 for delayed transfers of care attributable to social services (HSCIC data 2014). Please provide Healthwatch Hackney with the delayed transfers of care data for 2014-15. We would also like to request this data for the period April-June 2015 as soon as this is available.</p>	

Further issues raised by Hackney Council about Median Road unit Enter and View visit with responses from Healthwatch Hackney

1. *Issue raised by Hackney Council regarding the purpose of the Enter and View visit: “We are concerned about the fact that the ‘purpose of the visit’ to MRRC [Median Road Resource Centre] states that it is as a result of the poor CQC Inspection Report in 2014 which prompted the Healthwatch Hackney inspection. However the report does not appear to address any of the issues raised in the CQC report and instead raises issues/concerns with the closure of MRRC. The CQC inspection was based on 6 outcomes of which MRRC only passed 1 outcome at the time - People should get safe and appropriate care that meets their needs and supports their rights. The Healthwatch report makes no mention of the actions taken to become complaint with the other failed 5 outcomes as highlighted in the CQC report”*

Healthwatch Hackney response: The Healthwatch Hackney Board agreed in 2014 that an Enter and View visit to Median Road Resource Centre should be carried out after the unit’s poor CQC 2014 inspection report, and to inform the patient representatives on the Re-ablement and Integrated Care (RICS) Board. This is why the purpose of the visit is listed as both the CQC report and the re-commissioning of Median Road through RICS.

Due to staff capacity issues, Healthwatch Hackney was unable to conduct the visit to MRRC until March 2015. After we had planned the visit we received informal information about a positive CQC report from an inspection in December 2014, and we then heard, just prior to the visit, about the plans to close the unit. We decided to go ahead with the visit as we felt a Patients’ Report could add useful information to an unclear situation, but realising that there were only a few service users left at MRRC, and that there would be communication issues.

Following our visit, the CQC published its report from the December 2014 visit, showing that in all areas Median Road was now compliant, being rated 'good' in all six categories.

- 2. Issue raised by Hackney Council regarding Future Provision of Intermediate Care: "The Enter and View visit was about the service as it is and not future commissioning intentions which are being managed through a commissioning board which one of your representatives sits on"*

Healthwatch Hackney response: The Enter and View visit prompted the questions from the patient representatives on the visit about alternative arrangements for people who had previously been cared for at Median Road. One of the reasons the Department of Health introduced Enter and View visits was to enable local residents to assess the impact of a change in service, and while this was not our original intention, it would have been remiss in the circumstances not to pass on these very natural questions.

While Healthwatch Hackney does support 1 of the 2 representatives on the RICS board, the Council will be aware that both representatives have expressed the lack of involvement they have felt in the work of the RICS board, and particularly how they were excluded from the decision to remove Median Road from the Reablement and Integrated Care Service. Overall we saw the Enter and View Report as a way of giving additional information to these RICS representatives.