

UPDATE REPORT FROM HEALTHWATCH SEFTON – 3 JANUARY 2023

Emerging themes and our focus.

Healthwatch continues to engage with local residents across the borough and is back to holding engagement stands at local hospital sites. Access to services continues to be one of the top themes which residents are concerned about.

Access to primary care (GP practices)

- We continue to gather feedback about appointment booking systems at practices and the bottleneck caused with patients phoning at 8am every day to try and book an appointment before they are taken. At our South & Central Community Champion meeting (30th November), we shared feedback to commissioners about one of our local practices who on their telephone messaging, actively ask patients to phone each day at 8am. We also shared the details of a practice which offers a call back system, so patients are not waiting to get through to speak to reception staff but are called back. One of the key issues which we are told about is that the appointment systems in place do not make it easy to pre book a non-urgent appointment.
- We have been supporting the Care Quality Commission (CQC) by sharing feedback to support their work with practices.
- We have received the report from NHS Cheshire & Merseyside GP General Access report for Sefton and this was an agenda item for our Steering Group (December). We have agreed to hold a single item meeting to discuss GP access.

Access to NHS Dentistry

- An increase in calls to our Signposting & Information service has been seen, (44% of calls in November) and an update from our recent mapping exercise of local access has been uploaded onto our website. This update can be found [here](#). From this work we found that one dentist in Southport and one in Maghull are now registering children as NHS patients but a couple in south Sefton have closed their registrations to children. There are no Sefton based dentists who are registering adults for NHS treatment.
- NHS England have been able to help with a couple of referrals for patients who need urgent treatment, appointments being provided from one of their supporting practices in Liverpool.
- We meet with NHS England on a regular basis to update on our local position, gain updates and discuss the transfer of NHS Dentistry to NHS Cheshire & Merseyside, which will be taking place next year.

Aintree Hospital Accident & Emergency Department

- We have organised a listening event at the above department (Friday 16th December), 10am – 1pm. This visit will be undertaken in partnership with Healthwatch Knowsley, who will also be supporting the visit to the New Royal Liverpool hospital (Wednesday 14th December), Healthwatch Liverpool taking the lead. The aim of the visit will be to speak to patients and follow their journey throughout the department.

Focus on community service provision (Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust)

Between August to November 2022 feedback has been shared on the following issues:

- Treatment not as good from Sefton Road Family Health Clinic compared to other south Sefton clinics
- Difficult to make appointments with the Podiatry service, patients being told to ring back to book appointments, there being long waiting times between appointments.
- Difficulty for patients with a Learning Disability to book appointments with the Podiatry service.
- Difficulty to book Phlebotomy appointments using the phone line.
- On a weekly basis, there are not enough reception staff on duty at Netherton Health Centre. Sometimes the number of staff on duty is reduced to one. The reception staff have to be provided with a lunch break which often leaves the reception area open to the public but no staff available to help.
- Healthwatch visited Thornton Health Centre to drop off posters (September) and the community services window was closed. A patient we spoke to in the waiting area commented that it was always closed.

After reviewing the feedback we were receiving, we approached Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust to request Healthwatch feedback posters be displayed in health centres to support further independent feedback. This was agreed and posters were distributed to all South Sefton Health Centres during September 2022. Unfortunately there has been no feedback received as a result of this. We have now contacted the Trust to arrange an engagement plan across all centre across Sefton and this work will commence January 2023.

We also produced a report for submission to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to support the well-led inspection of the trust, which took place 6-7 December 2022.

Waiting times for treatment

With patients concerned about their referrals for treatment, long waits and the lack of communication surrounding this, we will be ensuring that our local NHS providers are working to the quality principles for long waiters as part of the NHS Waiting Well Programme. Healthwatch across Cheshire & Merseyside had previously supported NHS England to draft the principles. Residents just want to know that they are still on a waiting list and receive regular updates. We will be ensuring that principle nine (9) is being implemented: We will communicate and engage with our patients and public to

ensure that whilst they are awaiting treatment they are supported to manage their condition and kept informed of their treatment plan and signposted to resources that may support their well-being whilst waiting.

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Freephone:0800 206 1304



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