

Vision in View

Full
Report

August
2015





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Background

There are an estimated 5,570 people living with sight loss in Torbay - 710 are living with severe sight loss (blindness). By 2020 the number of people living with sight loss in Torbay is projected to increase to 6,890 and severe sight loss to 900. 870 people are registered as blind or partially sighted in Torbay.

In March 2012, the UK Vision Strategy team was funded via the Department of Health's Voluntary Sector Investment Programme to support the Commissioning for Effectiveness and Efficiency (CEE) project" (CEE), which aimed to develop effective and efficient approaches to the commissioning and provision of eye care services.

CEE worked with three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Bedfordshire, Gateshead and South Devon and Torbay to develop sustainable collaborative commissioning of eye care services that met local demand.

At the end of September 2012, project officers were placed within each of the three CCGs to support all stages of the commissioning process, based on guidance established by the cross-sector developed website commissioningforeyecare.org.uk.

The project officers reinforced the findings of an independent evaluation, which showed that the success of the CEE project was dependant on:

- An evidence-based approach to eye care commissioning through the production of an Eye Health Needs Assessment.
- Developing eye care partnerships that work collaboratively to deliver improvements to services.
- Embedding eye health and sight loss as a priority across health and social care.
- **Bringing the patient voice into decision making processes so that services are able to effectively meet the needs of the local population.**

To fulfil the latter requirement, South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) wanted to consult with patients of the Torbay Eye Clinic to evaluate patient views of shifting acute services into the community, as part of the Integrated Ophthalmology Strategy.

It was recognised that a robust consultation mechanism would need to be established and a proposal was made to Healthwatch Torbay to secure this.

Healthwatch Torbay recruits and trains community ambassadors, to gather the views and experiences of health and social care service-users from as many sections of the community as possible. Healthwatch ambassadors gather patient experience and feedback with the groups and organisations they support. Healthwatch Torbay has a dedicated Visual Impairment (VI) ambassador with several established links into various local eye health and sight loss communities and services. The VI ambassador for Healthwatch Torbay worked closely with the CEE project to deliver an effective model of patient engagement for the South Devon and Torbay CCG.



Healthwatch Torbay's Lesley Adams at a Vision UK Conference



Key Findings

The main results indicated that most people were satisfied with the services they received but very few had received information at the eye clinic about the services available to them in the community. This information supported the need for an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer “ECLO”.

Healthwatch Torbay were delighted to attend a Stakeholders event held by Action For Blind People on 12th June 2015 welcoming the new ECLO service to Torbay Eye Clinic.

Methodology

The VI ambassador for Healthwatch Torbay took a pivotal role in the development of a service-user questionnaire, working with the VI local population and people with sight loss to inform accessibility and content. The ambassador then ensured inclusive distribution of the questionnaire to various patient groups, organisations, societies, services and community leaders.

The questionnaire was conducted in March 2015 with specialist VI focus groups, to a total of 21 members of the public. Participants were both male and female and lived across both Torbay and South Devon (including Torquay, Paignton, Brixham, Teignmouth, Bovey Tracey, Chudleigh, etc.).

A summary of results is available in the next section. The main results indicated that most people were satisfied with the services they received but very few had received information at the eye clinic about the services available to them in the community.

This enabled a collection of in-depth, independent and inclusive patient intelligence to inform effective service improvement for the South Devon and Torbay CCG. They welcomed this partnership with Healthwatch, and intend to use the model for future patient intelligence to inform commissioning decisions.



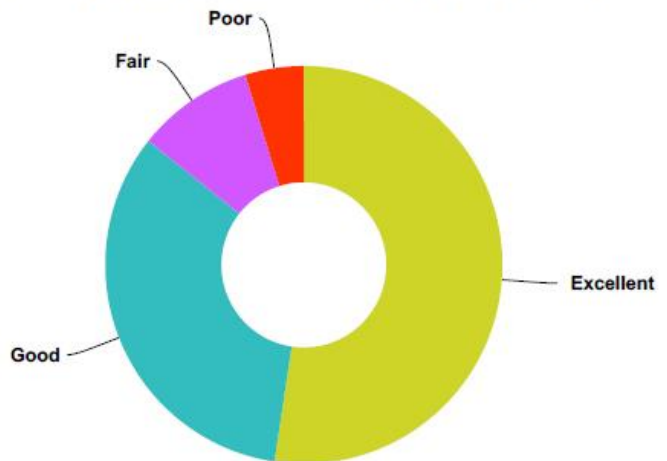
Key Results

- The majority of participants - 87.1% - rated their confidence in their Optometrists knowledge and advice as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.
(See diagram on the right)
- Over 80% also rated the eyecare service they currently receive as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

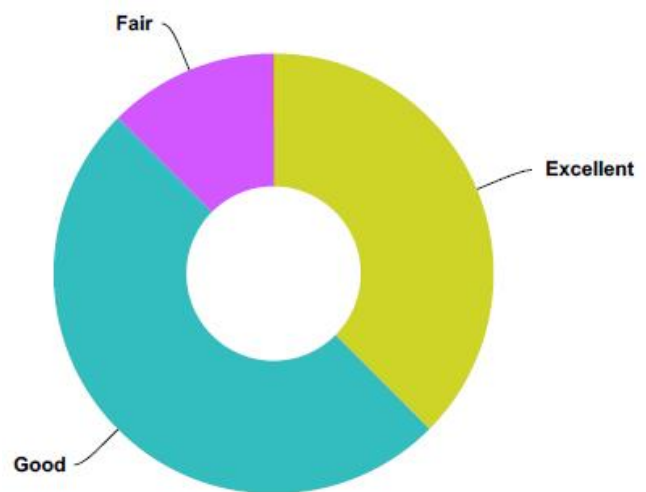
Eight of the participants were currently attending the **Torbay Hospital Eye Clinic Service**, all for routine appointments, with:

- All of them stating that this is a convenient location for them.
- Two of these stated they had come into difficulty accessing this service before, due to both transport issues and long delays between appointments.
- Three of the eight stated they had difficulty getting convenient appointment times.
- Seven of the eight rated the service they received as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. (See diagram on the right)
- Six of the eight, however, did not receive any information or support in the eye clinic of the eye health and social services available to them.
- All eight respondents stated that an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer would have been very useful to them.

How would you rate your confidence in the Optometrists knowledge and advice?



How would you rate the service?



"There is a great need for a signposting service at the hospital eye clinic after diagnosis of eye condition"

Survey Respondent, March 2015

Summary & Recommendations

The Healthwatch Torbay approach to patient engagement encouraged and supported people with sight loss to get involved in shaping local eye care services and effectively informed the CCG what local people have recommended to help improve care.

The information Healthwatch Torbay collected supported the need for an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer “ECLO” and Healthwatch Torbay were delighted to attend a Stakeholders event held by Action For Blind People on 12th June welcoming the new ECLO service to Torbay Eye Clinic.

Following the project, Healthwatch Torbay were invited to showcase their approach by speaking at the seventh annual Vision UK conference at Central Hall Westminster, London and make pledges of continuing support to deliver the UK Vision Strategy, with Healthwatch Torbay making the following pledges:

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- 1. To support the work of the Torbay ECLO by providing patient feedback to the service.**

 - 2. To assist and support the re-establishment of the Low Vision and Sight Loss Torbay Task Group, including hosting events**

 - 3. To attend the local Action for Blind People Living with Sight loss course to promote patient feedback**

- 4. To sit on the Local Eye Health Network and share experiences and issues arising from Healthwatch intelligence**
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5. To actively promote the National Eye Health Week in September

Following the conference we were invited to attend South Devon and Torbay CCG’s Eye Health Stakeholder’s meeting. We were able to feedback patients concerns.

Concerns had been expressed around lucentis injection appointments and the process of getting those appointments. Each attendee described their service and the challenges they faced and were heartened to hear that the Torbay Eye Clinic had recruited six more doctors.

The meeting decided to re-establish the Low Vision and Sight Loss Task Group with the CCG hosting the meetings, and feeding into the Local Eye Health Network, which Healthwatch will attend. We offered to conduct any patient surveys via our Healthwatch VI Ambassador.

We now have a regular spot at the Action for Blind People’s Living with Sight Loss course, and have arranged for attendees to have a one to one session with us if they have any concerns, issues or complaints about health and social care services.

In order to promote National Eye Health Week we will be hosting a Guide Dog’s My Guide Training session for Healthwatch and Paignton Carers Service staff and volunteers.

Recognition

This project was recognised nationally as an example of good practice and developed into a Toolkit for use in the “Driving local change for effective and efficient eye care services - sharing our learning from the Commissioning for Effectiveness and Efficiency (CEE) project” document. Healthwatch Torbay was invited to share their experience at the national “Commissioning Live” conference in November 2015 in Manchester.

Healthwatch Torbay was invited to showcase their approach by speaking at the seventh annual Vision UK conference which took place on 18 June 2015 at Central Hall Westminster, London. Titled ‘Working Together to Deliver the UK Vision Strategy’, it was the largest Vision UK conference to date and welcomed more than 550 attendees.



Healthwatch Torbay CEO Pat Harris in London



Chris Sumner speaking at the Vision UK conference

Our Visual Impairment Ambassador Chris Sumner (above) gave the opening speech on his experience as a recipient of eye care services and bringing to the audience’s attention the importance of patient engagement in engaging and involving communities in the planning, design and delivery of local services. In stream 1 - Making the case for improving eye health, Pat, Lesley and Chris outlined Healthwatch Torbay’s approach to patient engagement.

We were also delighted to attend the Poster Awards ceremony at the conference where Devon Local Optometry Committee won the Outcome One section with their “promoting the eye care in Devon” poster.



Devon Local Optometry Committee winning

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