

About us

Healthwatch Leeds is here to help local people get the best out of their local health and care services by bringing their voice to those who plan and deliver services in Leeds.



Healthwatch Leeds is the independent voice of local people for health and social care services in Leeds. We make sure service providers and commissioners - the people who plan and buy health and social care services - listen to the concerns of people and use the information to shape and improve their services.

We work hard to make sure that we include the people whose voices are not usually heard.

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Introduction

This project was part of a wider review of sexual health services in the city. It provided an opportunity for Healthwatch to speak with people using the sexual health clinics and find out about their experiences of the service that they received. Over the course of 3 weeks in September 2016 we carried out 18 visits to clinics and spoke with 220 people about their experience of making an appointment, waiting times and the care and support that they received.

Key Findings

- There were high levels of satisfaction with the service and this further increased after people had been seen.
- Waiting times were identified as a key concern and people commented that they were sometimes waiting a long time to be seen.
- There was a lack of clear communication and information in relation to expected waiting times.
- There were high levels of satisfaction with the website.
- Privacy was highlighted as a concern for many, with less than half of all respondents saying that they could speak to the receptionist in private.
- There was a lack of clear signage in many of the clinics leading to

confusion about the location of the clinic reception and waiting areas.


- A large number of respondents felt that reception staff were welcoming and friendly. However concerns were also expressed about the attitude of reception staff in a number of the clinics.

Key Recommendations

We have made recommendations to address the following:

- Waiting Times
- Privacy
- Signage and communication
- Staff attitudes

A full list of recommendations can be found on page 13/14 of the report.



“Long wait time! The staff at the clinic were friendly and helpful.”

(Beeston)



Background

The sexual health team at Leeds City Council carry out comprehensive public and patient involvement reviews on their commissioned services approximately every 4 years. The last review took place in May 2012, so another review was due to take place in 2016.

This review was planned in light of significant changes to sexual health services in Leeds, after the new integrated sexual health service was commissioned - now known as Leeds Sexual Health. The service changes, beginning in July 2015, led to the opening of brand new clinics, with some established clinics closing, changing location and increasing their functions. It was felt that a review of services, a year into the new model, would give a good insight into how well users have understood and adapted to these changes and highlight any areas for improvement.

As the commissioners of the service Leeds City Council wanted an independent body to support them in this process to ensure that the review would be impartial and knew that recommendations from Healthwatch would be valued by the service and other stakeholders.

There are 5 sexual health clinics in Leeds, based at the Merrion Centre, Armley, Beeston, Burmantofts and at the Reginald Centre in Chapeltown. There is also a sexual health clinic for men held

once a week at the Merrion Centre and Citywise young people's clinic for under 19's held at the Merrion Centre four afternoons a week. The clinics offer a range of booked appointments and walk in sessions.

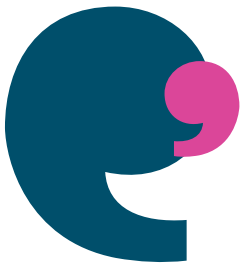
Why we did it

This project offered an opportunity for Healthwatch Leeds to work in partnership with Leeds City Council. It allowed us to get involved with and provide our impartial input into the citywide review of sexual health services.

This was an opportunity for Healthwatch to carry out a focused piece of work in the sexual health clinics. It enabled us to engage with members of the public that we might not otherwise be in touch with and find out about their experiences of using the sexual health clinics.

"The team here are lovely. Having a team like this makes all the difference."

(Citywise at Merrion Centre)



What we did

As part of the citywide review Healthwatch Leeds undertook a specific piece of work. We carried out surveys in the sexual health clinics in order to get feedback about these services from people that use them.

We worked with Leeds City Council to develop the survey. Visits were booked to all 5 sexual health clinics over a 3 week period. We carried out a total of 18 visits spread out over a range of times and days in order to engage with as many people as possible. A team of 1 or 2 volunteers and a staff member from Healthwatch attended each clinic for a period of approximately two hours to speak to people in the waiting areas.

The surveys were split into 2 parts; part 1 was completed with people waiting to be seen in the clinic waiting areas. This survey focused on their experience of booking an appointment, waiting to be seen, staff attitudes and communication. Part 2 was handed to people to complete after they had been seen. This part focused on their experience of treatment, the staff attitudes and communication and total waiting times. In order to encourage people to respond to part 2 they were given several of options to return this, including posting it back in a freepost envelope, completing it in the clinic or completing it online.

Who we spoke to

A total of 220 surveys (part 1) were completed during the visits and we received 81 completed part 2's.

We spoke to 118 people at the Merrion Centre clinic 34 at Burmantofts, 26 at Armley, 24 at Reginald Centre and 18 at Beeston.

Out of the part 2's that were received 43 were from Merrion Centre, 13 from Burmantofts, 6 from Reginald, 11 from Armley and 8 from Beeston.

Out of the 217 people who provided monitoring information 68% were female, 31% were male and 1% was transgender. While all the clinics had a higher number of female respondents there was one key difference between Merrion Centre and the rest of the clinics. All the other clinics had much higher numbers of female respondents ranging from 82% at Burmantofts to 100% at Beeston, however at the Merrion Centre clinic the male female ratio was almost evenly split with 51% of respondents stating their gender as female.

The majority of respondents were in the 16-24 age, with a total of 78% of respondents aged 16-34

The majority of respondents were heterosexual/straight (80%), but the sample also included gay people (11%) and bisexual people (9%). The majority of respondents reported that they had no disability (97%).



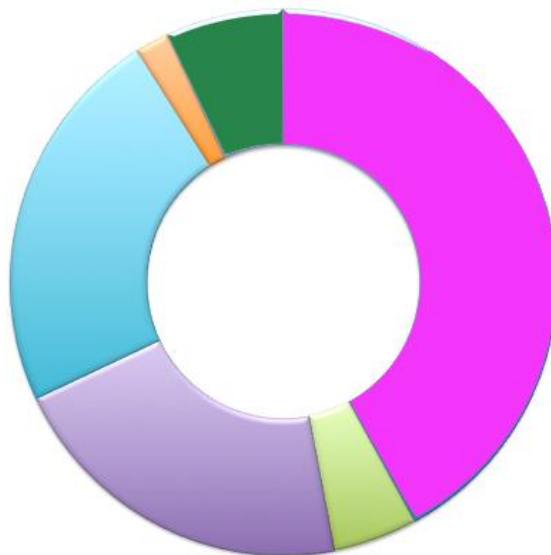
What we found

Before Attending the Clinic

54% of respondents said that this was not their first time visiting the clinic and of those that had visited before 53% said their previous visit had been in the last 3 months.

smaller numbers saying they had either been before and turned away (6%) or didn't want to wait (6%). Respondents were able to select multiple options for this question and some had tried a range of things before attending the clinic.

How did you hear about the clinic?



- Internet
- Poster/leaflet
- Walking by
- Friend
- GP/Health worker
- Another worker
- Other

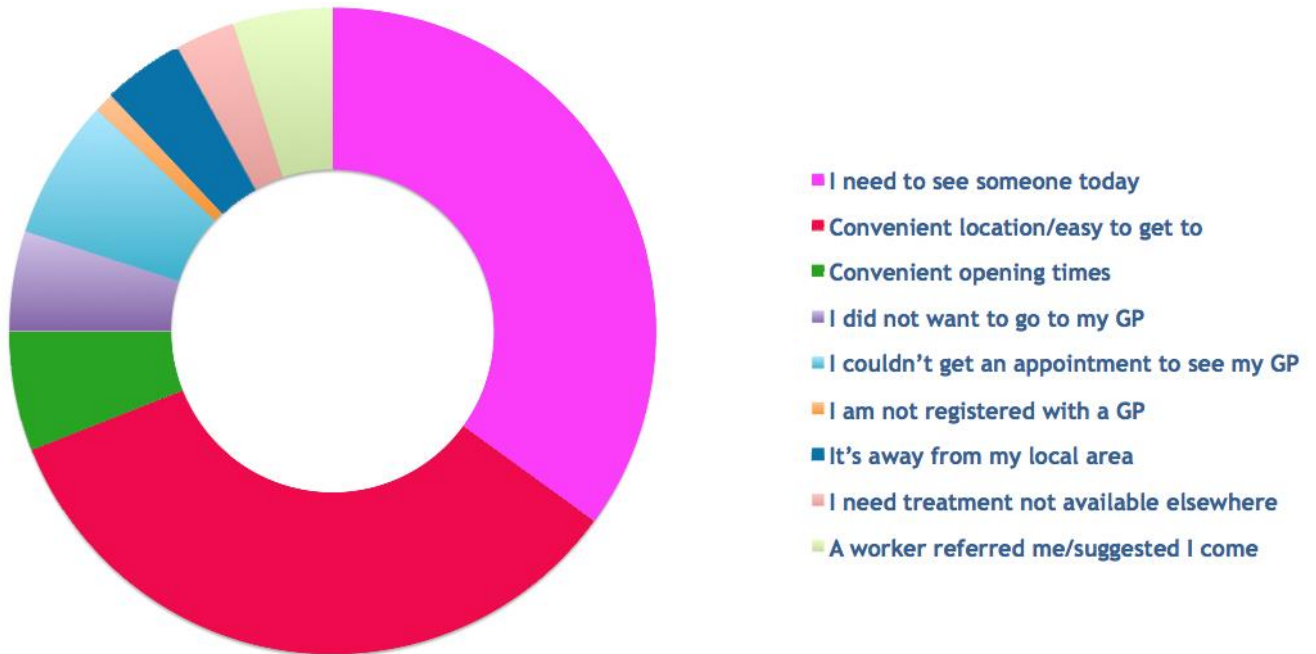
The majority of respondents heard about the clinic through the internet. Above is a breakdown of how people had heard about the clinic. Under the other category some of the responses given included; used it before, university, family, through another clinic.

The majority of respondents (64%) had tried other things or looked at information before attending the clinic. Almost half (48%) said they had looked at information on the sexual health website before attending. Others had tried a different service first (14%) with

From the 136 respondents who stated that they had used the Leeds Sexual Health website 90% said they found it either 'very useful' or 'quite useful'. Others had highlighted some issues with the website.

"The website does not make clear which appointments are available when."
(Merrion)

What is your main reason for attending today?



Reasons for Attending the Clinic

Respondents stated the main reasons for visiting a specific clinic were needing to see someone that day and the convenient location of the clinic. A full breakdown of reasons for visiting a particular clinic are listed in the pie chart above.

In relation to why respondents were attending the clinics, reasons included talking about contraception (41%), talking about sexually transmitted infections (36%), and talking about emergency contraception (8%). Other reasons stated included, pregnancy test, routine check-up, implant removal, blood test, hepatitis injection.

Appointment or Walk In

A total of 152 (69%) respondents had used the walk-in service, while the other 68 (31%) had booked an appointment. However it is worth mentioning that the majority of sessions we attended were walk in sessions.

The most common way to book an appointment was by phone (51%), with others choosing to book online (15%) or use other methods (34%) including coming into the clinic to book an appointment, making appointment after last visit, referrals from other clinic/GP.

Out of the 68 respondents who had booked an appointment, 79% of them rated the experience as 'good' (28%), 'very good' (28%) or 'excellent' (23%). A further 16% said the experience was



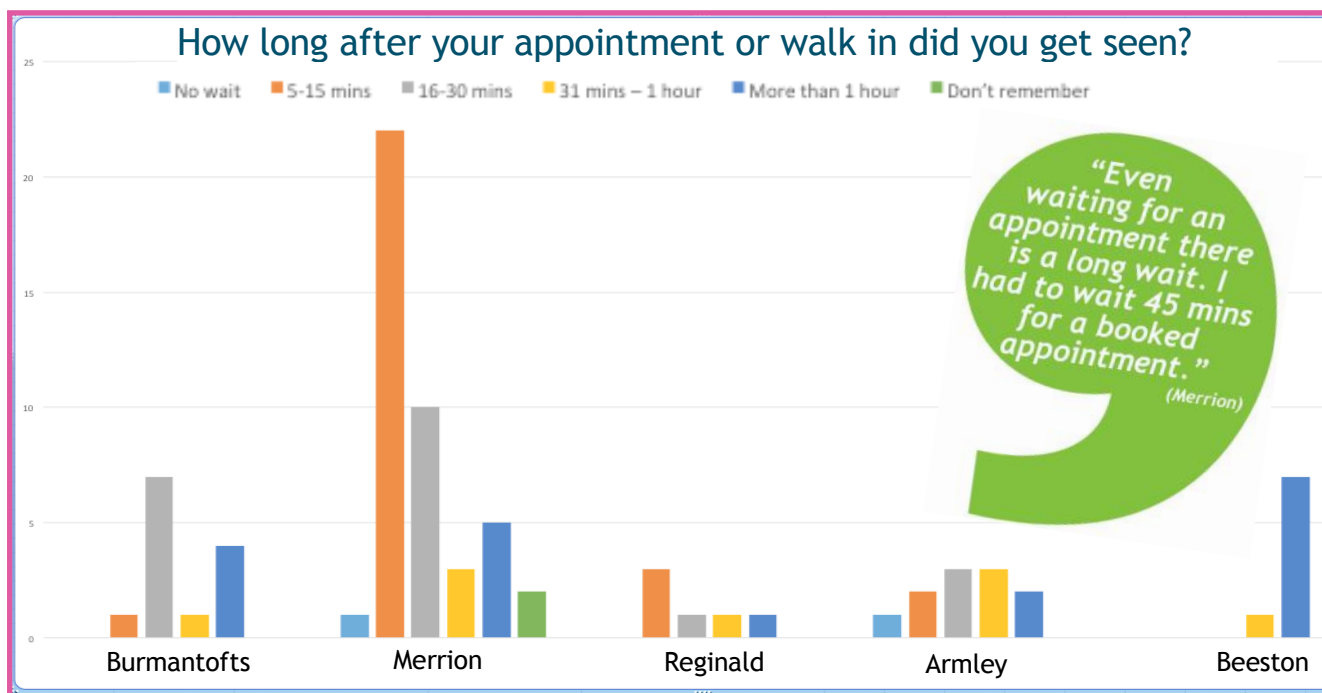
ok, with 4% rating it as not very good and only 1% rating their experience of making an appointment as poor.

Waiting Times

Respondents told us that waiting times were an issue and on many occasions people were waiting long periods of time to be seen. The graph gives a breakdown of the clinics and how long people waited to be seen.

Out of the 81 respondents that provided this information 23% had to wait over an hour to be seen and 37% were seen within 15 minutes. The longest wait times were at the Beeston clinic where 7 out of the 8 people who responded to this question waited over 1 hour to be seen. The shortest wait times were seen at the Citywise clinic for young people at the Merrion Centre where 7 out of 8 respondents were seen within 15

minutes. Overall the wait times were shorter at the Merrion Centre where 33 out of 43 (77%) of people told us they were seen within 30 minutes and Burmantofts also had shorter waiting times with 8 out of 13 (62%) respondents being seen within 30 minutes. Over half of the 81 respondents (52%) said they had not been told or kept informed about any delays or how long they would have to wait to be seen. 35% agreed that they were kept informed on estimated waiting times and possible delays 13% answered not applicable to this question. Even though the sample is small, this issue was highlighted at the Beeston clinic, where only 1 out of 8 respondents said they were kept informed about delays and waiting times.





What we found

Privacy

This issue was highlighted by many people and came up in the comments on several occasions. This was also observed and logged by Healthwatch Leeds staff and volunteers carrying out the surveys to be a concern. On several occasions we were able to clearly hear the conversations taking place between the receptionists and people attending the clinic.

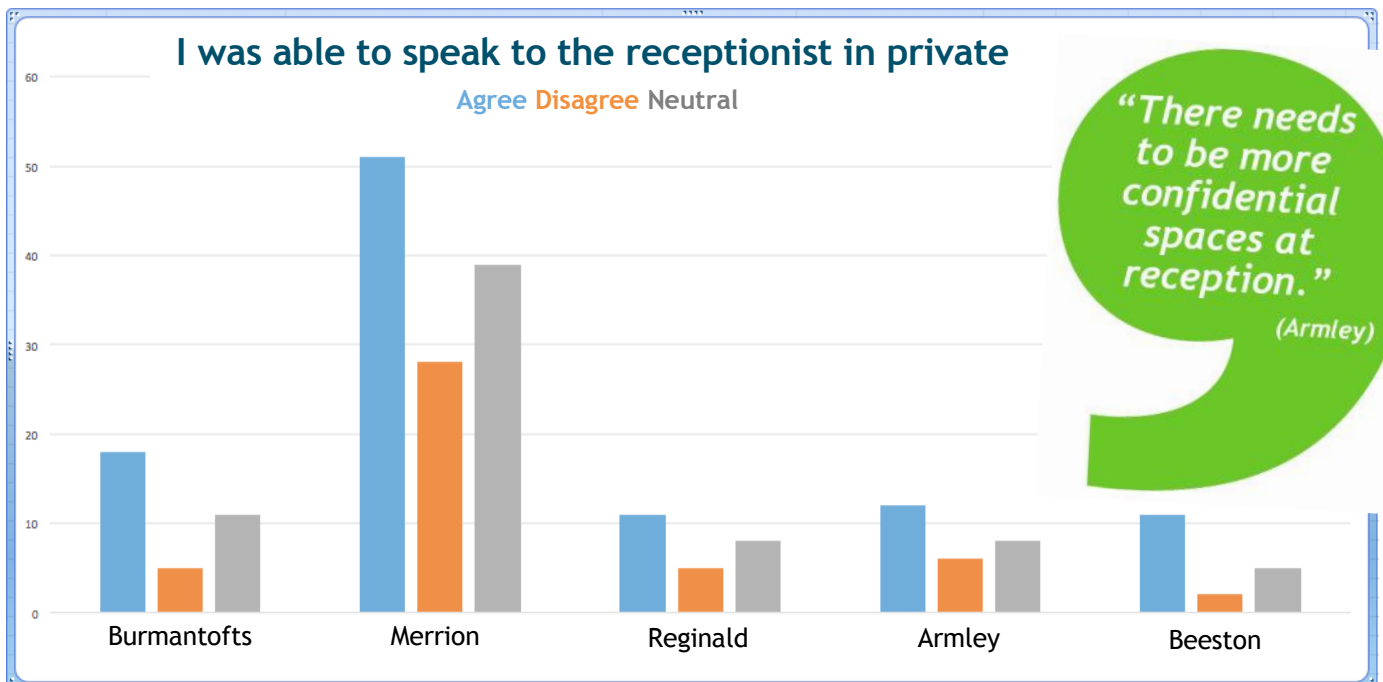
Less than half of the 220 respondents (47%) agreed that they could speak to the receptionist in private and this figure was even lower at the Merrion Centre where only 51 (43%) of the 118 people we spoke to there felt that they could speak to the receptionist in private.

This was less of an issue at Beeston where 11 out of 18 respondents (61%) felt they could talk to the receptionist in private. This is possibly due to the fact that the reception desk is located away from the waiting area at Beeston therefore allowing more privacy.

There were some comments from respondents at the Reginald Centre Clinic relating to the lack of privacy in the waiting area, which is part of an open plan area that people walk through and where other events and clinics are also held.

Signage and communication

While the majority of respondents (73%) stated that they understood the signs and instructions at the





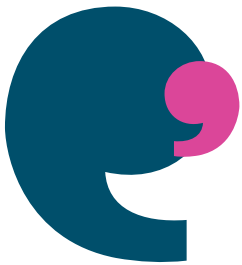
clinics, there were many comments made about the lack of clear information, signage and confusion about what to do at the clinics. This was an issue noted by the volunteers and staff during their observations. The most clearly signposted clinic was Armley where it was easy to follow signs to the reception and waiting area. This was reflected in the responses for Armley where none of the 26 respondents stated that they did not understand the signs or instructions.

The lack of signage was especially a concern at Beeston and the Reginald Centre where we observed many people attending the clinics, not knowing where

to go. and being directed by our staff and volunteers. Burmantofts was slightly better signposted, but again the signage was not obvious when entering the main reception area. Merrion Centre was well signposted and many people knew where it was, however there was a lot of confusion about what to do once someone had come inside. Over the course of our visits we observed the process to be confusing and it appeared to change from day to day.

These issues were highlighted in the comments that we received from the people that we spoke to at all the clinics.





What we found

Attitude of Reception Staff

The majority of people that we spoke to (77%) stated that reception staff were friendly and helpful. However there were a significant number of people who either felt that the staff were not friendly and welcoming or chose to not give a response to this question (23%).

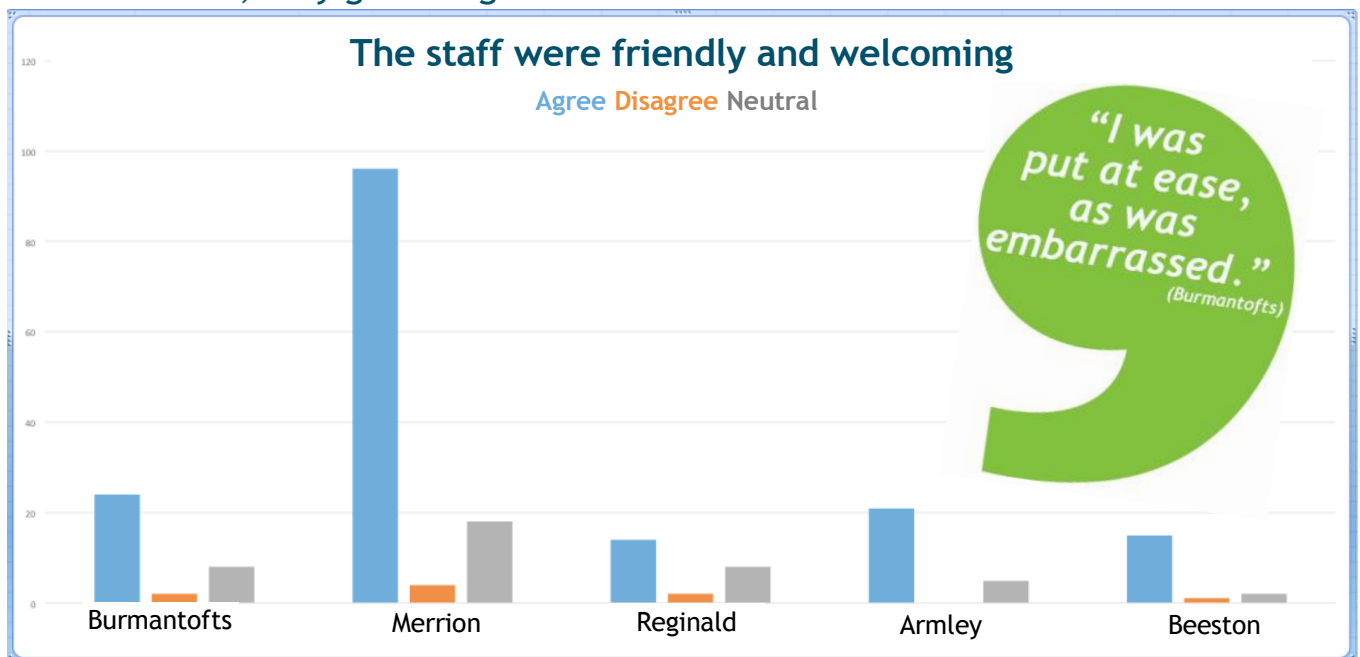
A large number of the comments about staff attitude related to the clinic at Merrion Centre, with some comments about other clinics. The clinic at Armley received no negative comments in relation to the attitude of reception staff.

Overall Experience

The overall satisfaction rating of people's experiences was high with 75% of respondents rating their experience prior to being seen as excellent, very good or good. This

rose even higher after they had been seen to 88% stating their experience as excellent, very good or good. All but one of the people that responded to part 2 stated that they would recommend the service to someone else and they would use the service again.

While these figures indicate high levels of overall satisfaction, especially with the treatment that was received, there were some key areas of concern highlighted, even by those that had stated an overall high satisfaction rating of their experience. The main issues identified were around waiting times, privacy, unclear signs and lack of communication and attitudes of reception staff.





Our key messages / recommendations

The key findings of these surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction with the service that is provided at the sexual health clinics. The service is well known and valued by those that use it and people's experiences are mostly positive.

However there are some issues that need to be addressed to make the service better and improve the overall experience of those using the clinics. Many of these issues can be addressed through small changes and better communication. Listed below are some key recommendations that would help to address the issues highlighted:

Waiting Times

- All clinics should operate a system, suitable for their clinic and environment, which allows them to keep people informed of expected waiting times and delays.

Privacy

- A private space should be made available for people to speak to someone and this should be made clear when booking in.
- When clinics are in shared spaces, waiting areas should be located in separate rooms or screened off to give people waiting some privacy.

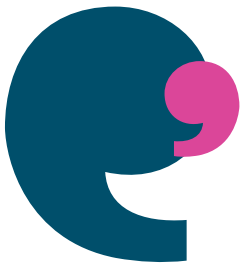
- Reception staff should follow set protocol to ensure the privacy of people using the service is always respected and maintained.

Signage and communication

- All clinics should have clear signage indicating the location of reception, the waiting area and opening times.
- Every clinic should operate a simple, clear and consistent system for people to register/book in and be seen.
- This system should be made clear to people upon arrival through the use of signage or any other method suitable for people using that clinic.

Attitude of Reception Staff

- All reception staff should undergo relevant training on dealing with service users in an appropriate manner and there should be regular refresher training.
- Guidelines for good practice when dealing with members of the public should be produced and made available to reception staff at all clinics.
- Adherence to the good practice guidelines should be monitored by service managers



Next Steps

The report will be shared with Leeds City Council as the commissioners of the service and the service provider. It is hoped the report and recommendations will be widely shared with all the services mentioned in the report.

The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Leeds website.

This report will feed directly into the city wide review of sexual health services and it is hoped it will have a significant impact on the key messages in that report.

We will agree the key outcomes and actions to be taken in response to the recommendations. We will work with the commissioners and service providers to ensure any agreed actions are followed through and implemented. We will undertake any follow up work required to ensure there are real changes made to the service so that it is a good experience for everyone.

Leeds City Council Response

We would like to thank Healthwatch for their hard work in producing this report and recommendations. We are extremely pleased to see high levels of satisfaction with the service. This reflects the dedication and commitment to improving sexual health that we have observed from

Leeds Sexual Health staff. However, the areas for improvement highlighted must be addressed as a matter of urgency. We will continue to support the service to ensure that these issues are resolved, to improve the experience of the service for all users.

Acknowledgements

This report has been written by Sharanjit Boughan, Community Project Worker at Healthwatch Leeds, in collaboration with our volunteer Helen Dannatt

We would like to thank all the volunteers that took part in this project and carried out the surveys with people in the clinics. We would also like to thank Leeds City Council for working in partnership on this and supporting us in getting access to the clinics.



Appendices

Appendix 1—Selection of Comments

Waiting Times

“Waited more than two hours and they missed me.” (Beeston)

“Walk in centre on an evening only once a week, people being turned away all the time. More evening walk in’s or allow booked appointments for consultations.” (Beeston)

“The waiting time is significantly high.” (Burmantofts)

“Even waiting for an appointment there is a long wait. I had to wait 45 minutes last time I was here for a booked appointment. This was very frustrating.” (Merrion)

“When you walk in and wait, could be given an approximate appointment time to go away and come back (I was told to come back at 11 but am still waiting an hour later).” (Merrion)

“Could have been informed maybe via text that it was running 45mins late.” (Merrion)

“Some indication of when you might get to see someone, you might be sat waiting a long time.” (Beeston)

“Advised there was a wait but not as long as it actually was.” (Reginald Centre)

Privacy

“There should be a bit more privacy in waiting area. Greater distance between reception desk and seats. I can hear everything people are saying when I’m sitting in the waiting area.” (Merrion Centre)

“Names should not to be announced - perhaps give people numbers instead for confidentiality.” (Merrion Centre)

“Privacy with receptionist was an issue. Didn’t feel I got the best service or what I wanted as I couldn’t explain my needs or situation. Reception should be before, or separate from, waiting area.” (Merrion Centre)

“More confidential space at reception.” (Armley)

“Make seating area more private as it’s where everyone walks past.” (Reginald Centre)

Signage and communication

“I didn’t realise that I had to sign in so ended up waiting longer than I needed to.” (Merrion Centre)

“It was unclear what to do at reception when the door was closed.” (Burmantofts)

“Reception very unclear.” (Reginald Centre)

“There is nowhere telling you where the reception is. A sign would be helpful.” (Reginald Centre)

“There are no signs”. (Beeston)

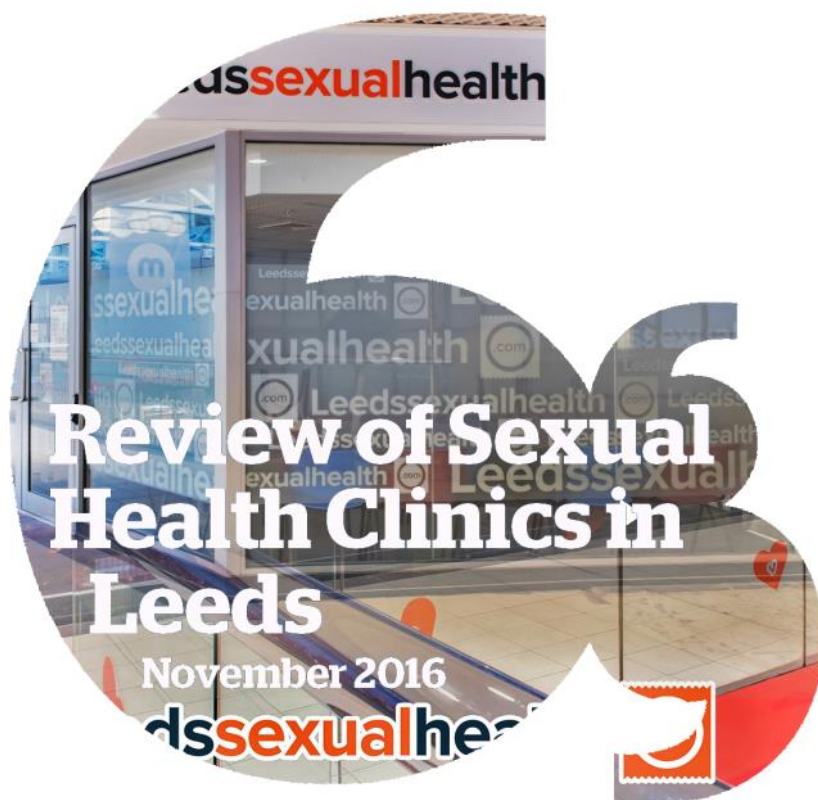
Attitude of Reception Staff

“Twice I came before and the receptionists were very patronising, not discreet and unprofessional. I complained to the doctor.” (Merrion)

“Didn’t feel I got the best service or what I wanted as I couldn’t explain my needs or situation.” (Merrion)

“Reception service is rubbish however when seen at the appointment they’re great.” (Merrion)

“Receptionist should stop being rude.” (Burmantofts)



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