



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.

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Summary

Introduction

This project was a follow up to the review of sexual health clinics that Healthwatch carried out in September 2016. The purpose of the follow up work was to check if the agreed actions from our previous visits had been implemented and to see what had changed or improved.

Healthwatch staff and volunteers carried out 12 visits to 4 of the sexual health clinics in Leeds and spoke to 146 people about their experience of the service. We also recorded our observations while visiting the clinics.

Key Findings

- There were some improvements and notable changes, especially at the Merrion Centre Clinic. This was specifically in relation to clear signage, options to talk in private and the informative TV screen in the waiting area.
- Overall there were high levels of satisfaction with the service, however there were variations between the clinics.
- The lack of clear signage was a consistent issue that was highlighted in all the clinics with shared premises.
- In some of the clinics it was not clear where to go or what to do upon arrival, causing additional stress and confusion for people.
- Some clinics did not appear to have clear and visible booking in systems when people arrived at the drop in sessions.
- We were told there was a lack of information and updates about waiting times and delays at all the clinics.
- The issue of privacy when talking to receptionists was highlighted at a couple of the clinics.
- We received many comments across the clinics about problems with making appointments, including telephone & online booking.
- There was high praise for the helpful and friendly staff that worked in the clinics.
- Many people liked the convenience of the clinics that were based in their local area.

Background

In September 2016 Healthwatch Leeds carried out visits to the 5 sexual health clinics in Leeds to find out about people's experience of making an appointment, waiting times and the care and support they received. These visits were part of a citywide review of sexual health services and were planned in light of significant changes to these services in Leeds.

During September 2016 we carried out 18 visits to the 5 clinics and spoke with 220 people about their experience. The key issues and concerns identified at that time were:

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

Following these visits Healthwatch Leeds produced a report highlighting the key issues and making recommendations for change. These were shared with the service providers and Leeds City Council as the commissioners of this service. Following this an action plan was produced (appendix 1).

As part of Healthwatch Leeds' commitment to improving services we follow up recommendations and action plans to check if changes have been made and actions have been implemented.

Following the initial work that we undertook in the sexual health clinics in 2016, it was agreed that follow up visits would allow us the opportunity to see what changes and improvements had been made.

We decided to undertake spot visits to the 4 clinics where issues had been identified and see if things had changed.

What we did

We developed a short survey that focused on the specific areas which required improvement so we could compare the results from the previous surveys. We also developed observation sheets which enabled the volunteers and staff to record relevant observations during the visits.

We carried out visits to 4 of the 5 clinics, as no issues had been identified at Armley so this was not revisited. The clinic at Beeston had also moved premises since the last surveys were carried out so we needed to visit the new clinic.

We informed the service provider that we would be visiting the clinics during March 2018 however we did not tell them the dates and times of the visits. This was to allow us to carry out spot checks at different times and dates when we were not expected.

We carried out a total of 12 visits to Beeston (3), Burmantofts (2), Reginald Centre (2) and Merrion Centre (5). We also completed an observation sheet for each visit which focused on some of the key issues from the previous visits such as waiting area, signage and communication and privacy. Our visits were carried out on different days and times and to a combination of walk in and appointment sessions, to get a good range of feedback.

Who we spoke to

A total of 146 surveys were completed during the visits. Out of those that we spoke to 54% were at the Merrion Centre clinic, 15% at Reginald Centre, 19% at Beeston and 12% at Burmantofts.

Out of those that responded to the monitoring information the majority, 67%, were female and 77% were aged between 16 and 34. A total of 89% said that their sexuality was heterosexual and 5% told us they had a disability.

(See appendix 2 for full monitoring information)

What we found

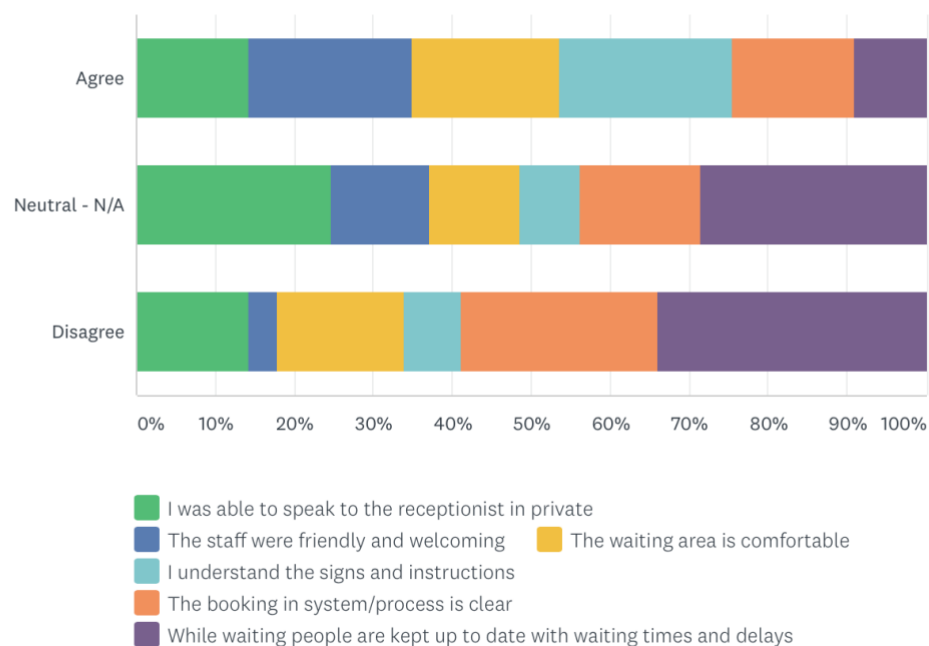
Merrion Centre

The Merrion Centre is the main sexual health clinic and runs a range of drop in and appointment clinics including a men's clinic and a young person's clinic. They also run an emergency drop in clinic on Saturdays. We visited the Merrion Centre on 5 occasions and carried out 2 visits in the morning, 1 in the afternoon, 1 in the evening and 1 on Saturday mid-morning. Out of those that we spoke to 47% had a booked appointment and 53% had attended a walk in clinic.

Reception/Waiting Area

Tell us about the clinic's reception/waiting area

Answered: 75 Skipped: 4



There were good levels of satisfaction with the reception and waiting area and staff welcome. Many people also agreed that the signs and instructions were clear, however there were lower levels of satisfaction with the booking in system and communication about waiting times.

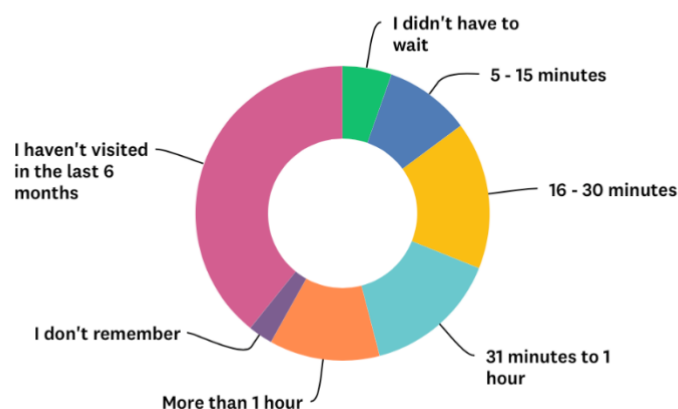
The biggest issue that people commented on was around being kept informed and updated about waiting times. Some people told us that they were not informed of delays and had to ask about waiting times.

While people felt the staff were friendly and welcoming we were told by a couple of people that some staff could do better at making people feel comfortable and less embarrassed. There was an issue about privacy due to the physical layout of the reception and waiting area that was commented on by some people we spoke to.

Waiting Times (Last 6 months)

If you have visited the clinic in the last 6 months how long did you have to wait to be seen on your last visit?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 5

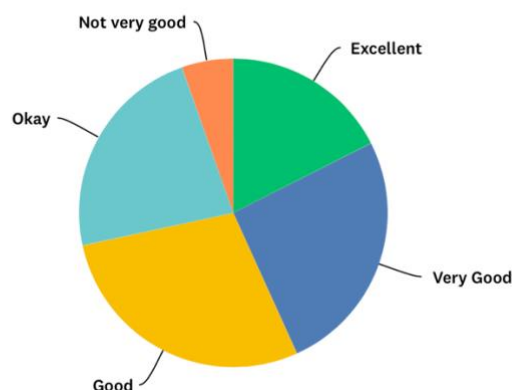


Almost 40% told us that they had not visited the clinic in the last 6 months. Out of those that had visited the majority had waited between 16 minutes and 1 hour to be seen with 12% stating they had waited over 1 hour.

Overall Experience

How would you rate your overall experience so far?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 5



There were high levels of satisfaction with the service and over 70% rated their experience as excellent, very good or good with nobody rating it as poor.

What works well

When asked what works well one of the key areas highlighted by many at Merrion Centre was the option to walk in and have urgent issues dealt with immediately. Also people liked the location and accessibility, especially the late opening times. Positive comments were received about the friendly and helpful staff both clinical and reception and the clear signage in the clinic. A few people also liked the fact that there was the option to have private conversations when needed.

The observations made by the Healthwatch staff and volunteers also indicate that overall the signage and systems are clear and the reception staff work hard to maintain privacy although the physical layout does sometimes mean conversations can be overheard. The television screen and information shared was also noted to be helpful and informative.

What could be different

There were a few issues highlighted that people felt could be better. This included more privacy when talking at the reception desk and shorter waiting times in the clinics. A number of comments were received about the lack of information and updates about waiting times and some felt the booking in system could be clearer.

Healthwatch staff and volunteers also noted on occasions that the walk in clinic filled up very quickly into the session and people were turned away, sometimes only 20 minutes after the clinic had opened. We were advised that this was due to there only being a limited number of people that could be seen during each walk in session. There was also a lack of information about waiting times and when this was available it was not very clear.

Recommendations - Merrion Centre

Key Messages	Recommendations
On some occasions there was a lack of information and updates about waiting times and delays	Have clear and consistent systems for providing updates on waiting times and delays
There was a lack of privacy in the waiting area when talking to the reception staff	Ensure that the option to have a conversation in a private room is clear and available to people at all times.
People were turned away shortly after the walk in clinic opened as they were full.	Give clear and consistent information about how many people can be seen and why people may be turned away.
Problems with making appointments both telephone and online.	Review the current systems to ensure they are efficient and user friendly and provide as many options as possible for making appointments.

“Any urgent concerns are addressed immediately”

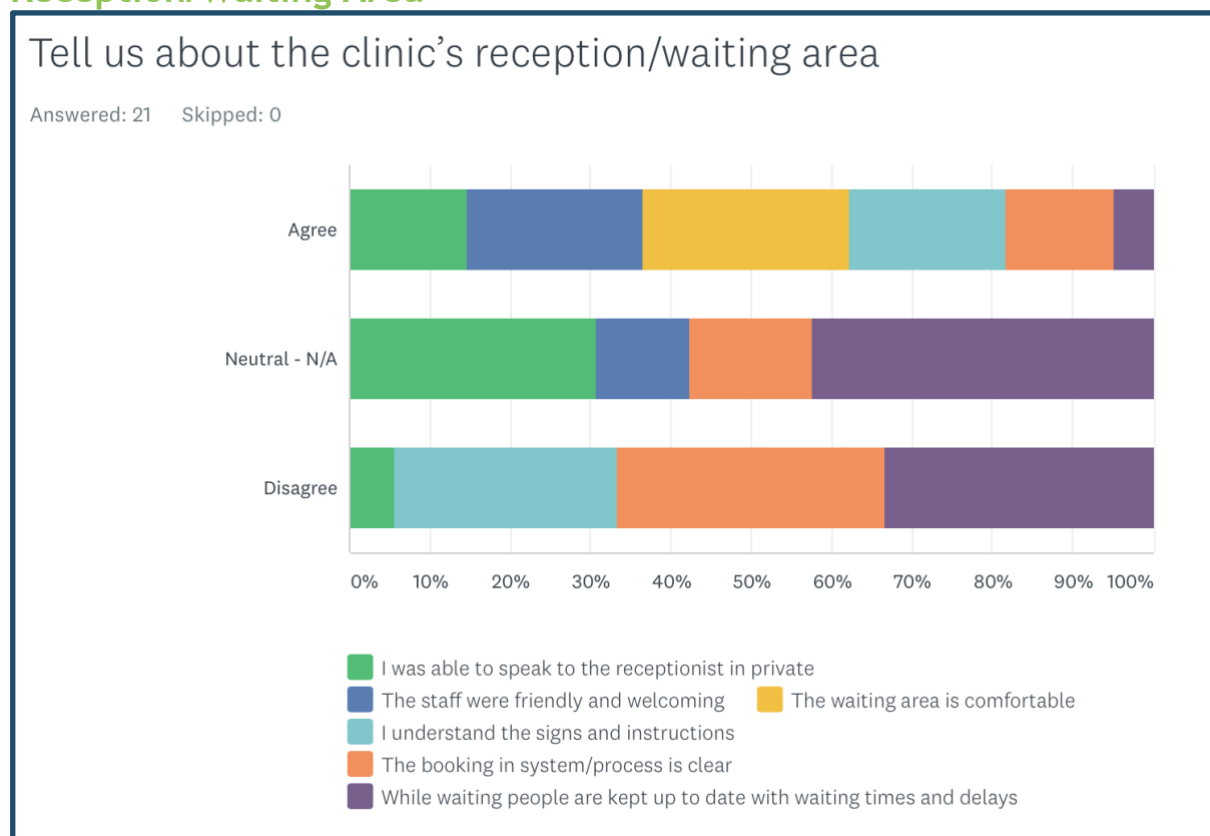
“Last time had to wait for 35 minutes without any mention that there would be a delay. I had to ask.”

“Reception staff are good. When you ring up they get you an appointment quickly.”

Reginald Centre

The sexual health clinic at the Reginald centre runs a drop-in service every Tuesday from 12.15 to 7.30pm. We visited this clinic on 2 occasions at different times during the drop in session. The vast majority of people we spoke to told us they had walked in and waited although a couple of people did have an appointment.

Reception/Waiting Area



There were very high levels of satisfaction with the reception staff and the waiting area where 100% of people agreed that the waiting area was comfortable. However people were less satisfied with the signs, instructions, booking in system and process. The numbers of people who felt that they were kept updated of waiting times and delays was also very low.

The main concern raised by people about the reception area was the lack of clear signage and no clear reception area, so people did not know where to go or what to do. This was observed by Healthwatch staff and volunteers during both visits where people who were attending for the first time were unclear where to go or what to do. There were some handwritten and laminated signs pointing to the

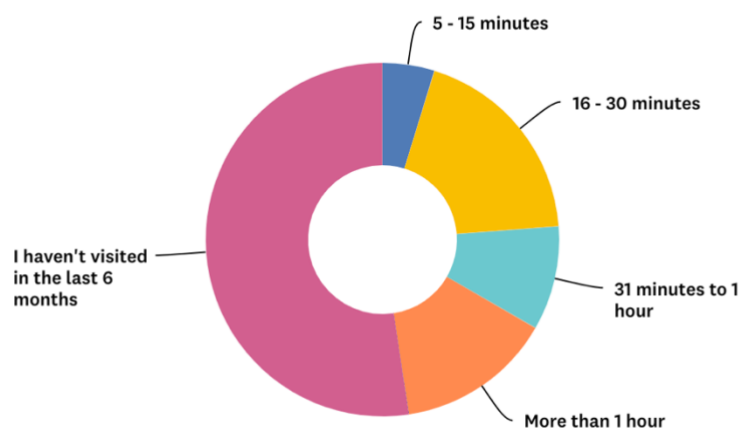
clinic and the reception area, however on both visits we observed some of these signs being put up after the clinic had been open a while.

The clinic is located on the first floor, however there is no signage when entering the building on the ground floor. Many people told us they did not know where to go and had to ask at the main reception downstairs. Others told us the system for taking a number and waiting was not clear or obvious when entering the clinic and this had to be explained to them by others in the waiting room. We also observed that this was not obvious or clear mainly due to the lack of signage and the location of the numbers that people needed to take and wait.

Waiting Times (Last 6 months)

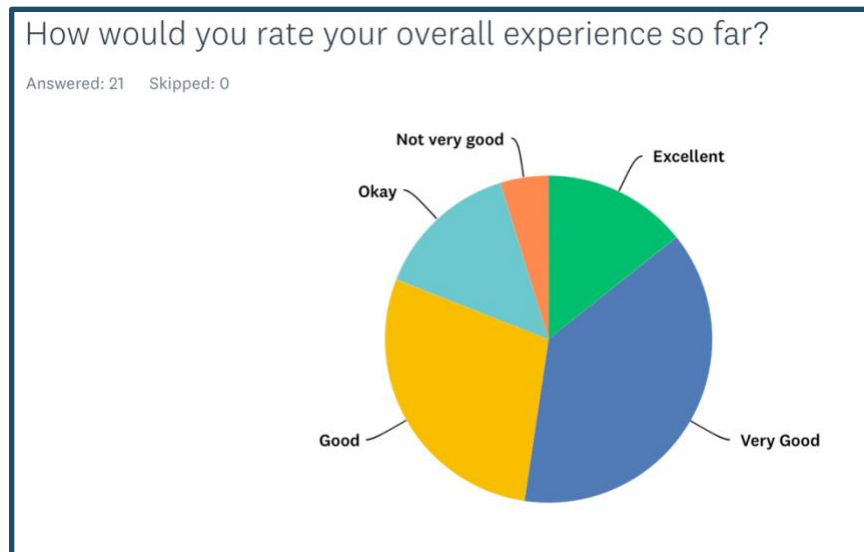
If you have visited the clinic in the last 6 months how long did you have to wait to be seen on your last visit?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



Over half (52%) of the people that we spoke told us that they had not visited the clinic in the last 6 months. Out of those that had visited the majority had waited between 16 minutes and 1 hour to be seen with 14% stating they had waited over 1 hour.

Overall Experience



There were high levels of satisfaction with the service and over 81% rated their experience as excellent, very good or good with nobody rating it as poor.

What works well

When asked what works well at the clinic people gave a range of responses. The key things that were highlighted as positive in this clinic were the friendly helpful staff, that the clinic was not too busy and it was local and the familiarity that people had built up with staff.

What could be different

The main areas that people highlighted as requiring improvement were the signage and knowing what to do upon arrival. People commented that it was not clear when entering the building where to go and once arriving upstairs at the clinic it was quite disorientating and again unclear where to go and what to do. We observed people arriving in the open waiting area and having to ask at the main reception or check with other people in the waiting area where the clinic was. People also commented that the signage for the clinic could be clearer and any mobile signs needed to be out before the clinic opened.

The booking in ticket system was also not clear or obvious on arrival and many people did not realise this was the system. There was also a check-in screen but this was not in use on both occasions that we visited.

Recommendations - Reginald Centre

Key Messages	Recommendations
Lack of signage when entering the main building and in the clinic waiting area.	Wherever possible provide clear signage to direct people to the clinic. Ensure there is clear and consistent signage at the clinic indicating where the waiting area and reception are located.
The booking in ticket system not always clear or visible. The self check-in machine not always in operation	Have a clear and consistent booking in system and ensure this is placed in clear view when people enter the clinic. Ensure the self check-in machine is working
People not kept updated of waiting times and delays	Provide a system for keeping people updated on waiting times and delays wherever possible.
Problems with making appointments both telephone and online.	Review the current systems to ensure they are efficient and user friendly and provide as many options as possible for making appointments.

*“No signage
- I waited in
wrong queue
on the wrong
floor”*

*“They know me,
as I attend regularly
and they treat me as a
friend.
Everything is private,
there is no public
reception desk”*

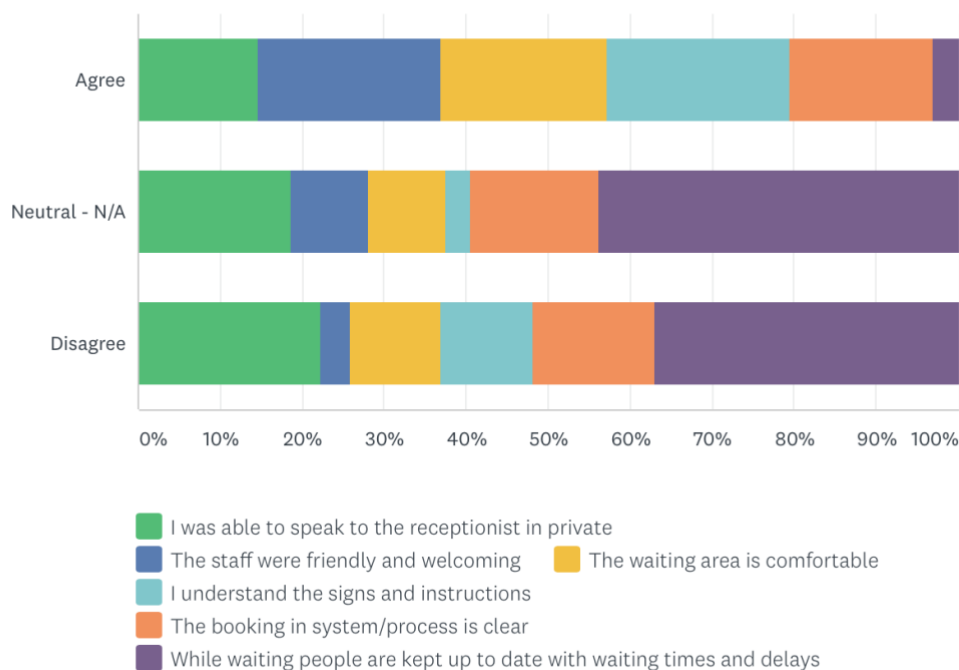
Beeston

The sexual health clinic at Beeston Hill Medical Centre moved here from its previous location at Beeston Village Medical Centre in September 2017. The clinic is open for drop in and appointments on 3 days per week at a range of times during the morning afternoon and evening. We carried out 3 visits to the Beeston clinic during the morning, afternoon and evening. Out of those that we spoke to the vast majority, 93%, were attending the drop-in clinics and the remaining 7% had booked appointments.

Reception/Waiting Area

Tell us about the clinic's reception/waiting area

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1



There were very good levels of satisfaction with the reception staff, understanding the signs and instructions and the comfort of the waiting area. However the satisfaction levels were significantly lower with the booking in system and being able to speak to the receptionist in private. The numbers of people telling us they were kept updated on waiting times and delays was very low at 11%.

We received a number of comments relating to the two key issues of privacy and lack of updates and information in the waiting area.

People felt that conversations with the reception staff were not private due to the physical environment of the waiting room and it being in a large open plan area. Many people commented that they had no updates on waiting times and some told us that when they asked about waiting times the receptionist was not able to provide this information.

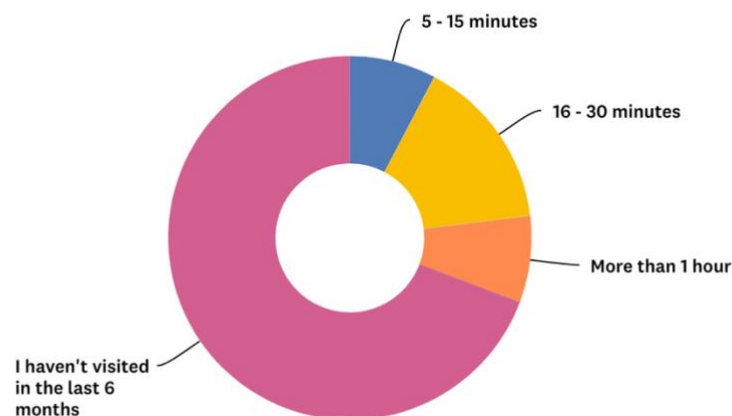
People also felt that the booking in system was not clear and they did not know what to do on arrival. There is a self-check in machine, however this was not working on 2 of the three sessions that we attended.

Others commented on the lack of signage when entering the building and therefore not knowing where the clinic was located and this was also noted in our observations.

Waiting Times (Last 6 months)

If you have visited the clinic in the last 6 months how long did you have to wait to be seen on your last visit?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 2

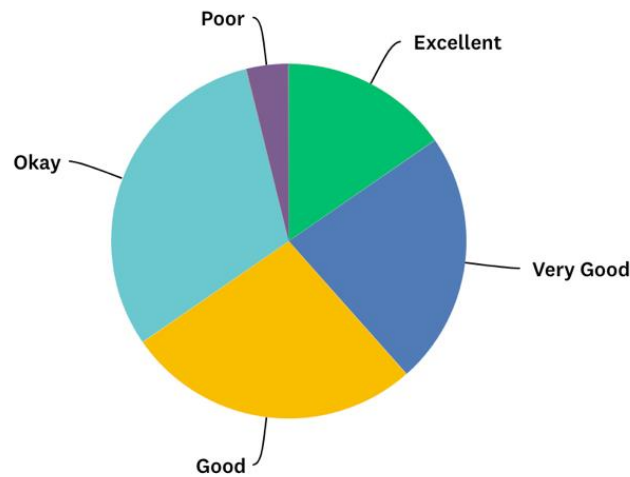


62% of people that we spoke told us that they had not attended the clinic in the last 6 months. Out of those that had attended the majority had been seen within 5 to 30 minutes with the rest telling us they had waited over an hour to be seen.

Overall Experience

How would you rate your overall experience so far?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 2



The levels of satisfaction with the service varied, with 65% rating their experience as excellent, very good or good. It was rated as okay by 31% and 4% told us their experience had been poor.

What works well

We received a mixed response when asking people what they thought worked well at the clinic. The main areas highlighted were around the convenience of the service being local, it being a nice clean environment and the helpful and friendly staff.

What could be different

When asked what could be different people told us that there needed to be more privacy when speaking to the receptionists. There also needs to be clearer signage when entering the building so people know what to do and where to go and a clearer booking in system would be helpful. The information and updates on waiting times and delays needs to be better so people know what to expect.

Our observations also noted similar issues with signage and privacy in the waiting area where conversations could be over heard and there was confusion about the booking in system.

Recommendations - Beeston

Key Messages	Recommendations
No clear information or signage when entering the main building on where the clinic is located.	Provide clear signage to direct people to where the clinic is located.
There was a lack of privacy in the waiting area when conversations could be overheard by others in the waiting area.	Provide an option to have a conversation in a private room if possible and ensure this is clear and available to people at all times.
The booking in system is not clear. The self check in machine is not always in operation	Have a clear and consistent booking in system and make this clear to people on arrival. Ensure the self check in machine is working
No updates on delays and waiting times are provided	Have a clear system to give people updates on expected waiting times and any delays.
Problems with making appointments both telephone and online.	Review the current systems to ensure they are efficient and user friendly and provide as many options as possible for making appointments.

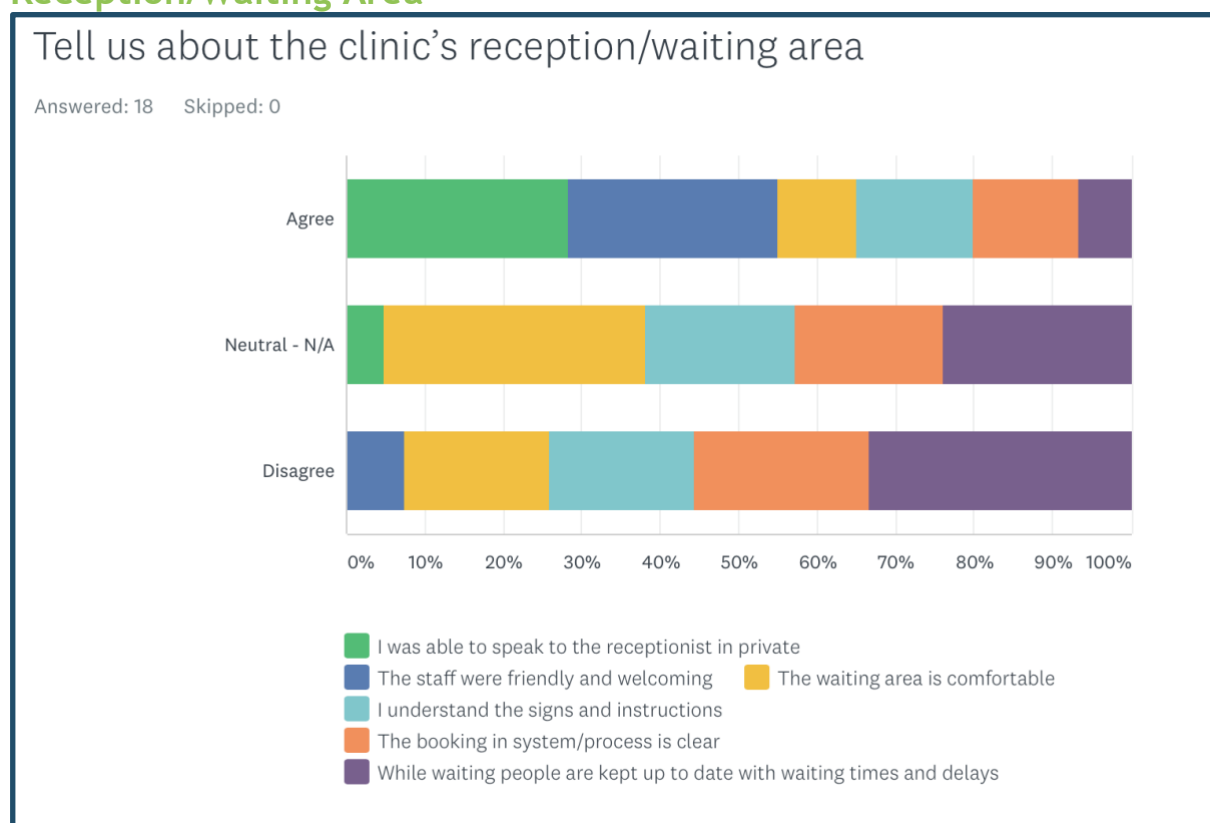
“Walk in times are long, so could come after work - not available at all clinics”

“They aren't proactive in giving us updates on waiting times you have to ask.”

Burmantofts

The sexual health clinic in Burmantofts is located in Burmantofts Health Centre. The clinic is open every Thursday for drop in from 11.30am to 7.00pm. We carried out 2 visits to this clinic, one in the early afternoon and one in the evening. Over 83% of the people we spoke to were there for the drop in service while the rest had booked appointments.

Reception/Waiting Area



There were large variations in people's responses to the questions about the reception and waiting area. 94% of people told us they were able to speak to the receptionist in private as this is located in a separate room and 89% of people felt the staff were friendly and welcoming.

However there were very low levels of satisfaction when it came to the booking in system and being kept updated about waiting times and delays. There were also low levels of satisfaction with the waiting area and many people felt the instructions and communication were not very clear.

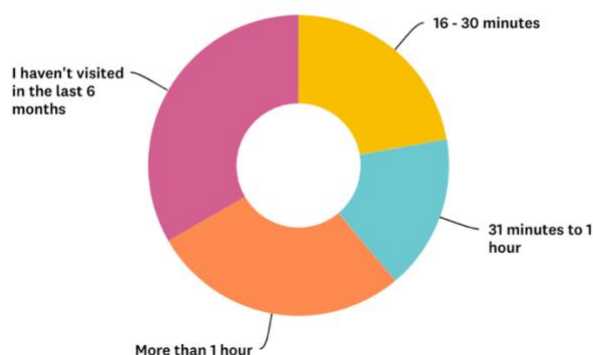
People commented on the waiting area environment which was felt to be crowded and poorly laid out and the box with the number tickets was difficult to see or locate as was the signage to the reception. On one visit we noted that there was a box and a sign asking people to take a number but no numbers in the box.

The Healthwatch staff and volunteers also noted issues around lack of signage when entering the building making it difficult to locate the clinic and the waiting area. We also noted people not being able to locate the reception room or being unaware that they needed go and speak to the receptionist.

Waiting Times (Last 6 months)

If you have visited the clinic in the last 6 months how long did you have to wait to be seen on your last visit?

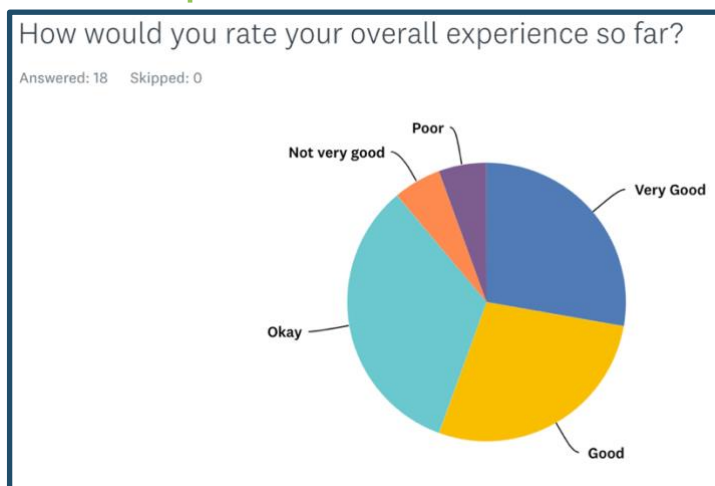
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



About a third of people we spoke to had not visited the clinic in the last 6 months. Out of the rest who had visited most had waited between 16 minutes to 1 hour to be seen, however there were a significant number who had waited over 1 hour to be seen.

"The waiting area is terrible - scattered chairs Ticket box and sign on top of a warm radiator"

Overall Experience



The satisfaction levels with the service were not very high, with 56% rating their experience as good or very good, but nobody rating it as excellent. A further 33% said their experience was ok and the remaining 11% were split between not very good and poor.

What works well

We received a low response when asking people what worked well in this clinic. People told us that the staff were friendly and helpful and one person mentioned the long opening hours as a good thing.

What could be different

When asked what could be different, people told us that there needed to be clearer signage when entering the building, the reception area needed to have more seating and the booking in system should be clearer. People also wanted better updates and information about waiting times and the option to book appointments.

These issues were also reflected in our observations around the confusion on where to go and what to do when attending the clinic. The waiting area was observed to have a lack of seating and on one visit we observed people standing around leaning against the walls in the waiting area. A few people also told us they had been waiting a long time and had received no information as to how long they may have to wait.

Recommendations - Burmantofts

Key Messages	Recommendations
No clear information or signage when entering the main building on where the clinic is located.	Provide clear signage to direct people to where the clinic is located.
The waiting area was crowded at times with a lack of seating.	Update the waiting area to be more comfortable and have adequate seating.
The booking in system is not clear and the ticket box is not visible or has no tickets in it.	Have a clear and consistent booking in system and place the ticket box in a clearly visible location. Ensure there are tickets in the box and if the clinic is full communicate this to people upon arrival.
It was not clear where the reception area was located.	Provide clear signage indicating where the reception area is located.
No updates on delays and waiting times are provided.	Have a system to give people updates on expected waiting times and any delays.
Problems with making appointments both telephone and online.	Review the current systems to ensure they are efficient and user friendly and provide as many options as possible for making appointments.



Our key messages and recommendations

The key messages of these follow up surveys indicate that some changes have been made since the previous surveys were carried out and this has resulted in improvements in certain areas. However the findings indicate large variations between the clinics with the key changes and improvements being seen in Merrion Centre.

While some issues have been addressed and improvements made at the main clinic at Merrion centre the other clinics that we visited continue to have issues with signage, waiting times, privacy and communication. Steps have been taken to provide signage in the other clinics, however this remains one of the key issues in the local clinics along with a lack of information about waiting times and delays.

There are some consistent themes across the clinics such as issues with making appointments, but there are also variations between them. For this reason we have made specific recommendations for each clinic to address the outstanding issues. Some of the recommendations do overlap, however others relate to a particular clinic.

Next Steps

The follow up 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.

We will work with the commissioners and service providers to ensure any agreed actions are followed through and implemented. We will follow up and check as required to ensure there are real changes made to the service so that it is a good experience for everyone.

Leeds City Council Response

It is clear that Leeds Sexual Health staff are providing excellent care in challenging circumstances and are mindful of the practical issues they need to resolve. We can see that positive steps have been taken to improve service users' experience in accessing the clinics. However, this report has again highlighted that there are still issues to address, where small alterations and considerations could have a big impact on how easy it is to navigate clinics, appointments and waiting times. We will continue to support and challenge the service to realise these changes, avoid complacency and to continue to be responsive to service user feedback. We would again like to thank Health Watch for their valued insights and recommendations.

Acknowledgements

This report has been written by Sharanjit Boughan, Community Project Worker at Healthwatch Leeds.

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 - Action Plan from previous report

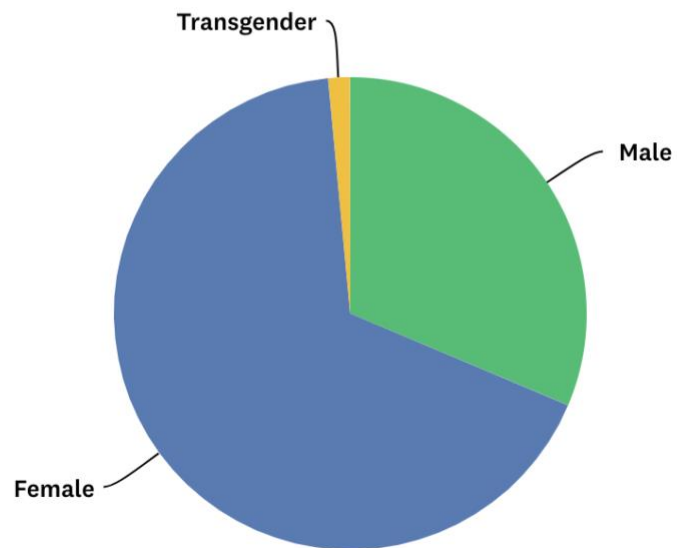
Healthwatch Leeds Recommendation	Service Provider Response
Waiting Times	
All clinics should operate a system suitable for their clinic and environment, which allows them to keep people informed of expected waiting times and delays.	Display to be designed to inform patients how long their visit is expected to take. Admin staff actively informing patients verbally of delays at all sites. TV in Merrion to be used to be able to regularly update on capacity, DNAs (Did Not Attend) and expected length of visit which will include waiting time. We will be displaying DNAs in all sites and have just purchased some display stands for the reception desks to give updated information. We have just designed and are in the process of printing a patient expectation leaflet to give to patients and display on the website which answers questions about the attendance including how long they should expect a visit to sexual health clinic to take. We will produce different spoke specific leaflets.
Privacy	
A private space should be made available for people to speak to someone and this should be made clear when booking in.	Notice up in Merrion Centre Clinic, patients made aware of this by reception staff and taken to private area if felt necessary Reginald, Beeston and Burmantofts have a private reception room, Armley has a private area/empty consulting room that can be used.
When clinics are in shared spaces, waiting areas should be located in separate rooms or screened off to give people waiting some privacy.	This is not always possible in the buildings we use for our spoke sites due to the design of the building. We have redesigned the reception desk in the Merrion Centre to improve privacy. It is not possible to screen the waiting area at Reginald or Beeston Village as they are not areas we solely use. We are in the process of relocating the Beeston Village spoke to Beeston Hill and we will be the only service using the area on the clinic days which should improve this feedback.
Reception staff should follow set protocol to ensure the privacy of	Reception staff to be monitored internally to ensure they maintain standard, this is expected behaviour and

people using the service is always respected and maintained.	how staff are currently trained. Any staff members not meeting this standard will be managed through a performance process.
Signage and communication	
All clinics should have clear signage indicating the location of reception, the waiting area and opening times	Signage in the process of being renewed. Due to the shared nature of the spoke site buildings it is not always possible to display opening times, these are available on the website.
Every clinic should operate a simple, clear and consistent system for people to register/book in and be seen.	This is in place currently. Will be reviewed/monitored in light of report to ensure consistency. At all sites patients take a number, in Merrion and Armley they complete a triage form due to the layout of reception. In Beeston, Reginald and Burmantofts the reception area is more private and therefore the receptionists are able to have a conversation with the patients regarding their needs. For booked appointments patients should be using the touch screens as far as possible.
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.	Improved and displayed since Healthwatch visits. Better display and signage at Merrion in particular. Signs displayed at Beeston, Reginald, Armley and Burmantofts
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.	Refresher customer service training planned for reception staff. Part of induction plan for new staff.
Guidelines for good practice when dealing with members of the public should be produced and made available to reception staff at all clinics.	These are in use for phone contacts in the form of a standard script. Staff have received customer service training regarding the use of positive language when greeting patients and this is being used consistently. The service will investigate the availability of these guidelines within the organisation and if not already produced will undertake and share a standard operating procedure for reception staff.
Adherence to the good practice guidelines should be monitored by service managers	Currently in place and ongoing

Appendix 2 - Monitoring Information

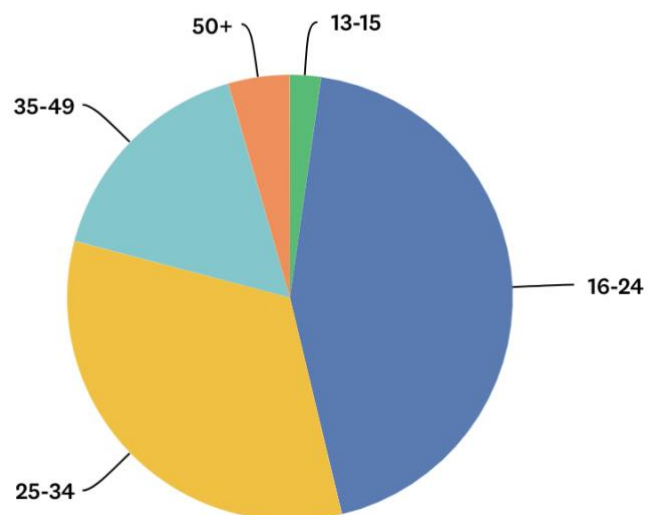
Gender

Answered: 134 Skipped: 12



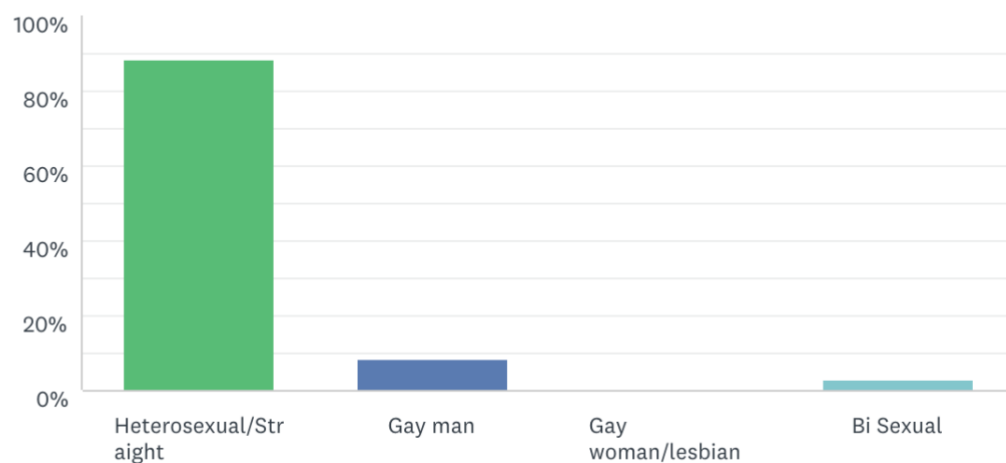
Age

Answered: 134 Skipped: 12



Sexuality

Answered: 130 Skipped: 16



Do you have a disability

Answered: 131 Skipped: 15

