

## Quality Assurance Visit Report

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**Service: Foot Health Clinic**

**Date: 05.09.2018**

**Time: 10:00am**

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### **Summary**

Healthwatch Newham (HWN) visited the foot health clinic at University of East London, Clinical Education Building, 1 Ferns Road. The aim of our visit was to find out about patients' referral pathway experiences as part of our joint Quality Assurance Project with Newham Clinical Commissioning Group (NCCG).

The foot health clinic has an open referral system, meaning that they accept self-referrals, GP referrals and referrals from other health professionals. Patients must be registered with a Newham GP and the clinic accepts patients from all ages.

The clinic offers assessment and treatment for a range of foot problems, from Diabetic ulcer care to in grown toenail removal and musculoskeletal evaluation. The clinic does not have a standard appointment system as appointments are patient specific and are made according to the patients' treatment plans.

On the day of the visit, HWN were able to speak with 7 patients. Please note that not all service users were able to complete the referral pathway questionnaire as they were at the clinic for their first appointment and had yet to begin their treatment. In addition, there was also language barriers that prevented patients' from being able to complete the questionnaire.

### **Understanding of the service**

All the patients we spoke with said that they understood why they were referred to the foot health clinic. In relation to receiving information, choice and options on where to go, 90% said that their GP explained why they were being referred and knew that they required foot health care. The other, 10% also received information from their physiotherapist and was referred to the clinic as it was the nearest one to their address. All users said that they were informed about their appointment through a letter.

### **Referral Process**

In relation to referrals to the foot health clinic, 90% said that they were referred by their GP, and 10% were referred by their physiotherapist.

In regards to the length of time patients had to wait from being referred to attending their appointment, 80% said that they did not have to wait a long time. When asked what they meant by this, they said 'up to two weeks'. 10% said that they have to wait 3 to 4 weeks but were not sure why when asked. The remaining 10% were unable to comment due to the fact there was a language barrier.

### **Services working together effectively**

From the patients we spoke with, 40% said that they felt the health services liaised with each other effectively. The evidence patients used to support this was the fact they did not have to repeat information and the clinicians were aware of their conditions. The remaining 60% could not comment as they were attending the clinic for their first appointment since being referred.

In terms of being treated with dignity and respect, 40% said they felt that they were and the other 60% could not comment due to the fact they were at the clinic for their first appointment.

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In regards to the foot health clinic addressing all the needs of the patients, 20% said that they did. A comment we received was that the patient preferred receiving texts regarding appointments and the service took this into consideration and sent them updates via text messages accordingly. The remaining 80% had yet to begin their treatment at the service so were unable to comment.

### **Patient Health Plan**

20% of the patients we spoke with said that they understood their health plan with the foot health clinic. The patients said the clinicians informed them about their next steps and were clear about their treatment plan. The remaining 80% could not provide us with feedback on their health plans as they had yet to begin their treatment with the foot health clinic.

### **Access needs**

10% said that the service addressed their access needs. For example, a patient said that they requested a translator, which was booked in advance, and they were provided with their details. Another user said that they did not have access needs so this was not applicable to them. However, if they did, they felt that they service would be accommodating due to the good manner they treated the patient with. The other 90% could not address this question as they were attending the clinic on the day HWN visited for their first appointment.

### **Signposting**

In relation to being signposted to other organisations for additional support, 10% said that they were not interested in other services. A further 10% said that the service had yet to signpost them to other local organisations. The remaining 80% could not provide HWN with comments due to the fact they had yet to start their treatment with the clinic.

### **Conclusion**

20% of the patients we spoke with rated their referral experience as 'Excellent'. The only suggestion a patient had was to have transport available after appointments for those with mobility issues as they have to call a cab, which can take a long time to arrive. The patient who made this suggestion found it difficult to call a cab service because of difficulties with their hearing. The other 80% could not provide an honest rating due the fact they were unable to answer all the sections of the questionnaire.

### **Patients' comments about the service**

*'I am very pleased with the service and have no complaints'*

*'Appointment system is easy'*

*'They send letters to remind you of your appointment which is helpful for me'*

*'More regular and weekly appointments'*

### **Recommendations**

Discussions could be had about whether arranging transport on behalf of patients who requested it, would be possible.

### **Service response**

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