



healthwatch
Leicester

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Leicestershire

Insight Report

Accessing Health and Social Care Services:

Somali Communities

Accessing Health and Social Care Services: Somali Communities

Our access to Health care project is to listen and to explore how people have been accessing their health care and what that experience has been like for them.

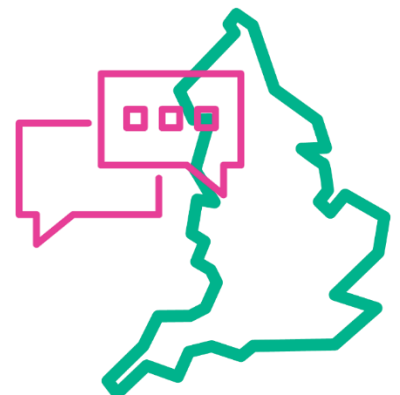
In November 2022, we attended a Somali women's groups in Leicester to seek their views on their experiences in accessing health care. We engaged with nine members of the community. This was a face-to-face focus group session which were culturally sensitive and community interpreters were used where required.

Experiences in accessing health and social care

Somali women from the communities in Leicester told us their experiences of social and health care services. As a group they raised their concerns about local GP's, dentists, hospitals and maternity services.

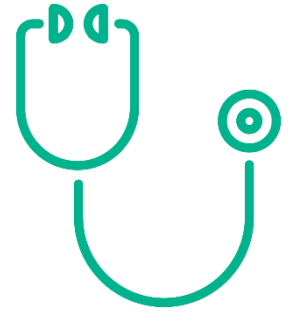
Comments were made regarding not getting GP and NHS dentists appointments, a lack of interpreters being provided and not being heard. One member of the group said,

"GP receptionists are not allowing interpreters for people using their service and there is no communication to patients about changes in staff. People have to move all the time because they are being treated badly in their GP and causing them to start all over again with translation and culture."



Accessing GP Appointments

Six members of the group had trouble either accessing appointments or with communication during their appointments. Whilst trying to access their GP, one member told us they are not able to get through on the phone but is always able to book again with their GP when they see them.



Another member had an appointment made for their son as he had fainted. During their appointment there was a communication issue due to a language barrier between the staff and the member. She felt that none of their son's needs were met. They were told to make another appointment and come back another day.

The group shared that there is a lack of interpreters for the community when accessing GP appointments. A member shared they had come over from Sweden and wanted to get their children's vaccinations up to date. During the appointment, they noticed they were being administered vaccinations they have already had. Whilst trying to explain which vaccinations were needed a member of staff began to shout at them telling them to, "go away, I don't understand you, come back for another appointment." She explained that she had to calm down and then another woman came along to help explain what the situation was.

Accessing Dental Appointments



The majority of the group mentioned dentists are not registering any NHS patients and not giving any NHS appointments, with one member saying, *"I can't get an appointment because I can't afford it. You only get an appointment if you pay."*

Other members of the group shared that they were removed their dentist NHS list and not told. Some had their children at a dentist but not themselves because they were either removed or refused NHS appointments.

Communication of Maternity Services



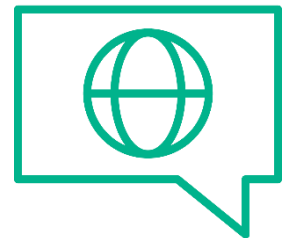
Members of the group shared that women from their community are having issues whilst giving birth at maternity services. A woman giving birth did not want people around her whilst giving birth due to female genital mutation (FGM).

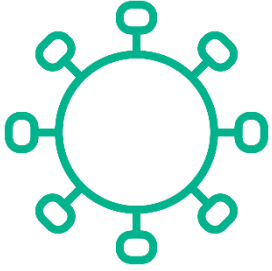
Due to previous trauma, she had requested a caesarean section. She told us that the FGM was not in her notes and therefore was not communicated to the staff during this time.

Quality of care

The majority of the group felt the quality of care received at health and social care services was low because of a lack of interpreter's, being treated differently to others that could speak good English and the availability of appointments.

Some felt receptionist staff were rude and on occasion pushed them away with no clear understanding as to why. There was also a comment about the overall poor customer service received at a hospital service when requiring surgery.





Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on services

People in the group felt that since the pandemic they have had to make their health issues seem worse to be seen by a GP.

Another member mentioned that referral times have increased and that they have been waiting three years for an iron transfusion.

As a group they said they feel mostly unheard now, when speaking with a doctor or a GP.



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