

Appendix D

GP Extended Access Feedback - ASISST

Introduction

At the focus group with ASSIST (Autism and Sensory Support in Southern Staffordshire) on Friday 2nd February, 22 deaf adults looked at the six questions from the GP extended access survey.

Those who attended were registered at practices in Cannock, Codsall, Lichfield, Newcastle, Stafford, Stone and Wolverhampton. Two of the members were mothers of young children and two had physical disabilities.

To facilitate discussion and the sharing and exploring of ideas, two interpreters from ASSIST led a discussion around each of the questions in turn. The members then indicated which options they preferred by a show of hands. This was followed by a general discussion, which allowed the members to raise any other issues they felt needed to be taken into consideration.

Everyone who came to the meeting was involved in the discussion, but not everyone gave an answer for every question. Some of the answers were qualified with a caveat.

Everyone's feedback and additional comments, thoughts and ideas are below. The results will be shared with the people at the meeting.

Question 1 – If you could book a routine doctor's appointments outside normal opening hours (Monday to Friday) which times would be best for you?

4 x people chose 7am to 9am. (But all raised a concern about whether interpreters would be available outside normal opening hours)

10 x people chose 3pm to 5pm.

4 x people chose 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

0 people chose none of these times

Question 2 – If you could book appointments (with a doctor or a nurse) at the weekend, which times would be best for you?

11 x people chose Saturday morning – 2 additional people said they would choose Saturday morning if that is all that was available and they hadn't been able to see the GP in the week

8 x people chose Saturday afternoon.

No-one chose Saturday evening or any time on a Sunday for routine appointments

Additional comments on this question were:

- "I would use appointments at the weekend but it depends on whether interpreters are available."
- "You would have to account for other needs as well – I am disabled and my interpreter drives me to my appointments as well. If they are not available – I can't get there."
- "You wouldn't choose to go to the GP on a weekend unless you needed it"
- "The bus service is not great on Sundays for those without their own transport."

Question 3 – How far would you travel for routine appointments outside normal opening hours, if you had to go to a different doctor?

17 x people chose less than 2 miles.

1 x person chose 3 to 5 miles.

0 x people chose 5 to 10 miles.

0 x people chose none - I only want to go to my own doctor.

Generally people did not want to travel too far for appointments – one said he wasn't too concerned about the distance as he didn't drive but if his interpreter wasn't available – he couldn't get there.

Question 4 – How far would you travel for an urgent same day appointment outside normal opening hours, if you had to go to a different doctor?

11 x people chose less than 2 miles.

10 x people chose 3 to 5 miles.

0 x people chose 5 to 10 miles.

0 x people chose more than 10 miles.

0 x people chose – none, I only want to go to my own doctor.

One person commented that if it you needed to see a GP urgently, you would want to be there as quickly as possible

Question 5 – Would you be interested in using the internet (like Skype video chat) to speak to a doctor instead of having to travel to the surgery?

10 x people said they would be interested in accessing a GP remotely but it would have to address the interpreter issue. One lady was concerned about how a GP would communicate with deaf people over skype without the use of an interpreter

4 x people said they were open to the idea but didn't understand how it would work

6 x people said they definitely wouldn't

Question 6 – Any other thoughts and ideas on GP opening hours?

All other comments collected:

- A lot of concern about interpreters being available outside normal opening hours – for both GP appointments and also with the pharmacists.
- “Some practices use the Interpreter Now Service but not all of them – is this something they could look at?”
- “I suffer from panic attacks and sometimes it builds up to the point I need to see a GP urgently but wouldn't be able to go the practice. When this happens I can't seem to get through to them and have been begging for a GP to come out but they don't.”
- “Appointments are not long enough for those with communication issues – even with an interpreter it takes longer to get the information across than it would for those without.”
- “The system to get results doesn't work for deaf people. My practice refuses to send them via text or email but I can't phone to get them so have to go in.”

- “Even when you manage to get an interpreter or take along a family member there are third party issues – some won’t divulge information to a third party.”
- “If the results are not good – I might not want my family member to know about it because of the impact it might have on them.”
- “When I take my family member, the GP ends up talking to them instead of me and I just sit there with the conversation going on over my head.”
- “Lots of deaf people can’t access GP online – so this is not an equitable service.”
- “I only use text and there is no text facility at my practice, even when I have asked them for it. This means that I have to go into the practice in person even to book an appointment and then I have to go back for the actual appointment, which all adds a delay.”
- “When my support worker phones the practice to book an interpreter – the practice (Newcastle) says I can only use Deaflink – I want to use ASSIST and I should be able to use the interpreter of my choice.”
- “Although this is planning to offer extended access and more choice, we will still have to book appointments around the availability of interpreters so might not have the same choice as others. This could turn into another example where we are disadvantaged just because we are deaf.”
- “My interpreter comes along to the pharmacy with me if I need to collect medication – this could cause a problem if the appointment is outside normal hours and the interpreter is not available- especially if it is a new medication.”
- “Some practices still call your name to go in for the appointment – not all of them have the appointment screens.”
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