

## Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees

# Podiatry Services Engagement Event 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017



## Introduction

Local Healthwatches have been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion with the aim to:

- Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services to better meet their needs.
- Support people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees works with local people, patients, service users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services. This does not just mean improving services today, but influencing and shaping services to meet the needs of the local communities, tomorrow.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is steered by a Board of volunteers, commissioned by the Local Authority and accountable to the public. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees are the only non-statutory body whose sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak-out on their behalf.

Healthwatch has:

- The statutory right to be listened to; Providers and Commissioners must respond to Healthwatch within 20 days of submission of requests for information or reports.
- The statutory power to Enter & View publicly funded health and social care services.
- A statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## Rationale

NHS Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commissioning Group (HaST CCG) are engaging with the public regarding the current provision of NHS podiatry services in Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees. The intelligence gathered will be used to help shape and influence changes to the service to better meet the needs of those using the clinics. HaST CCG approached Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees as a critical friend with a proven track record of public engagement to support with the engagement and consultation.

## Aim

To carry out engagement with NHS podiatry service users along with their family members and carers, to gather feedback to determine whether recommendations can be made to improve the service.

## Objectives

- Design a questionnaire (see Appendix 1).
- Publicise the questionnaire on social media platforms.
- Distribute questionnaires via several local support groups, including Age UK.
- Visit all the NHS podiatry clinics in Stockton-on-Tees.
- Hold an engagement event with service users along with their friends and family at North Shore Academy (see Appendix 2 for NHS presentation).

## Methodology

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees designed a questionnaire to distribute during NHS podiatry clinics across Stockton-on-Tees; they were also circulated on their social media platforms. Healthwatch staff circulated the questionnaire and gathered feedback from patients at the following podiatry clinics; Eaglescliffe Health Centre, Lawson Street Health Centre, Billingham Health Centre and Thornaby Health Centre. Healthwatch also hosted a public event which was supported by Catalyst and the NHS Community Health Ambassadors. NHS Community Health Ambassadors and Catalyst also supported the circulation of the survey, a number of community groups and Age UK also supported distribution.

## Observations

Healthwatch observed the podiatry clinic environments and the table below shows the findings.

	Ground level entrance and clinic	Adequate Parking facilities in close proximity	Separate waiting area for podiatry clinic patients	Separate reception area for podiatry clinic patients
Eaglescliffe Medical Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lawson Street Health Centre	Yes	Yes	No	No
Thornaby Medical Centre	Yes	No	Yes	No
Billingham Health Centre	Yes	No	Yes	No
University Hospital of North Tees	No	Yes	Yes	No

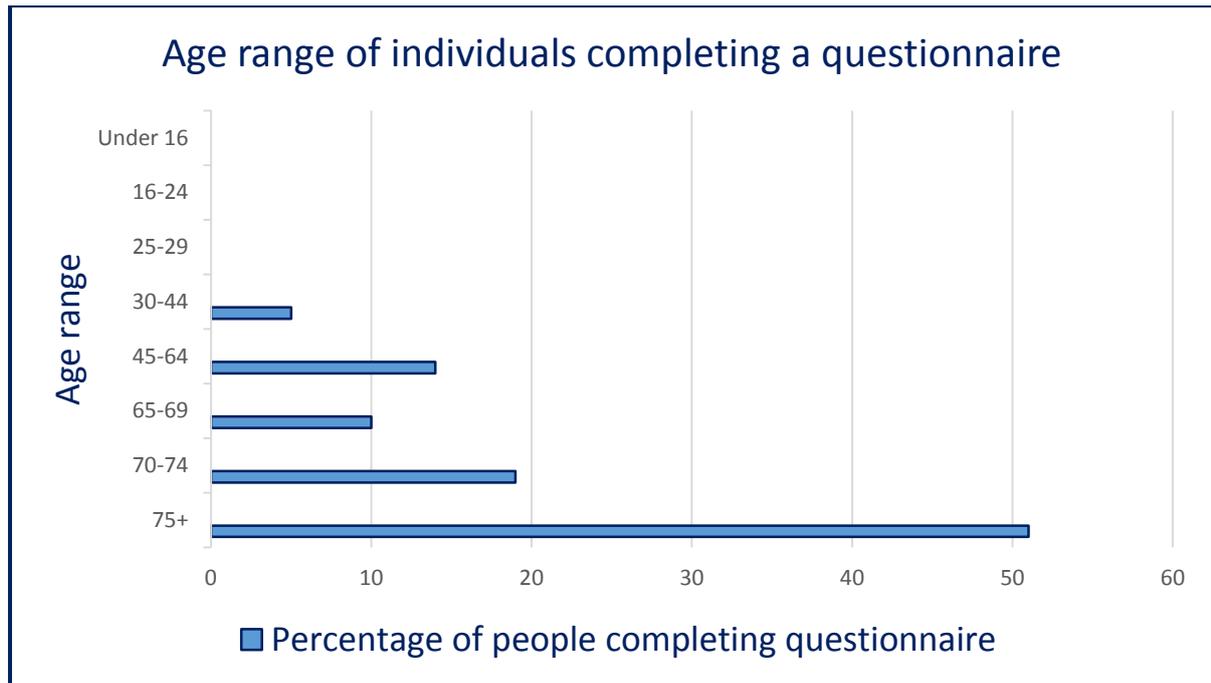
When Healthwatch visited Lawson Street Health Centre, patients were observed standing whilst waiting for appointments. The clinic does not have a separate seating area for the podiatry service. There are only two chairs at the North Tees

clinic and patients were observed to be standing whilst waiting for their appointment.

### Results

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees received a total of 77 responses in relation to local podiatry service provision. 55% of questionnaires were completed by females; 45% by males.

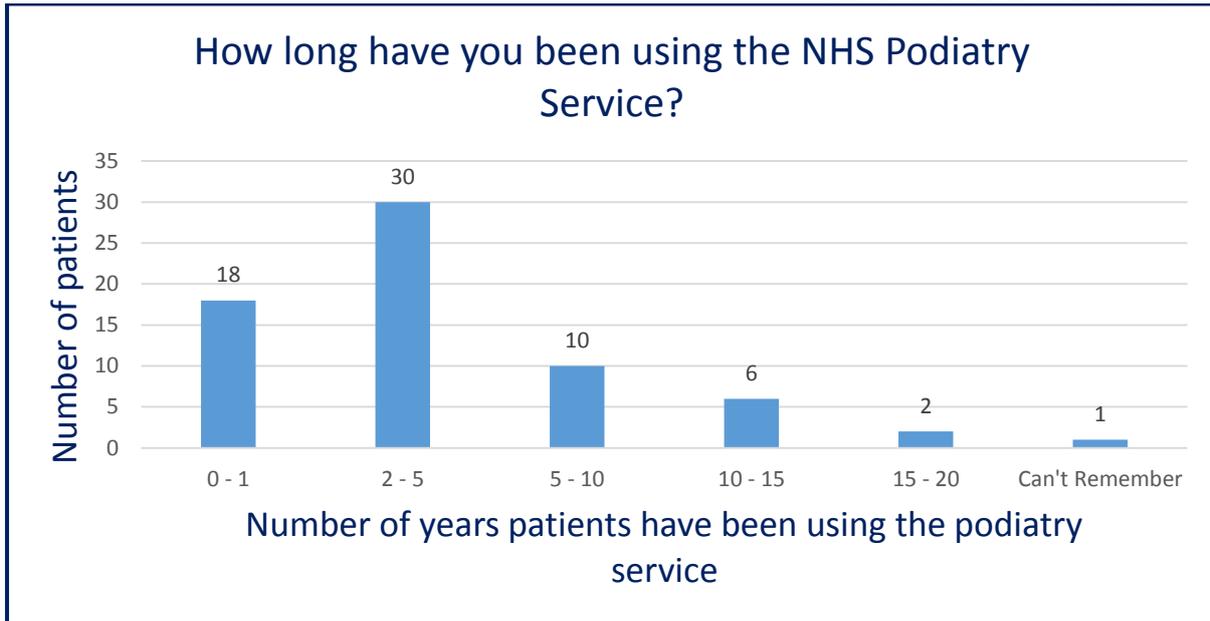
The majority of individuals completing a questionnaire were aged 75 or over.



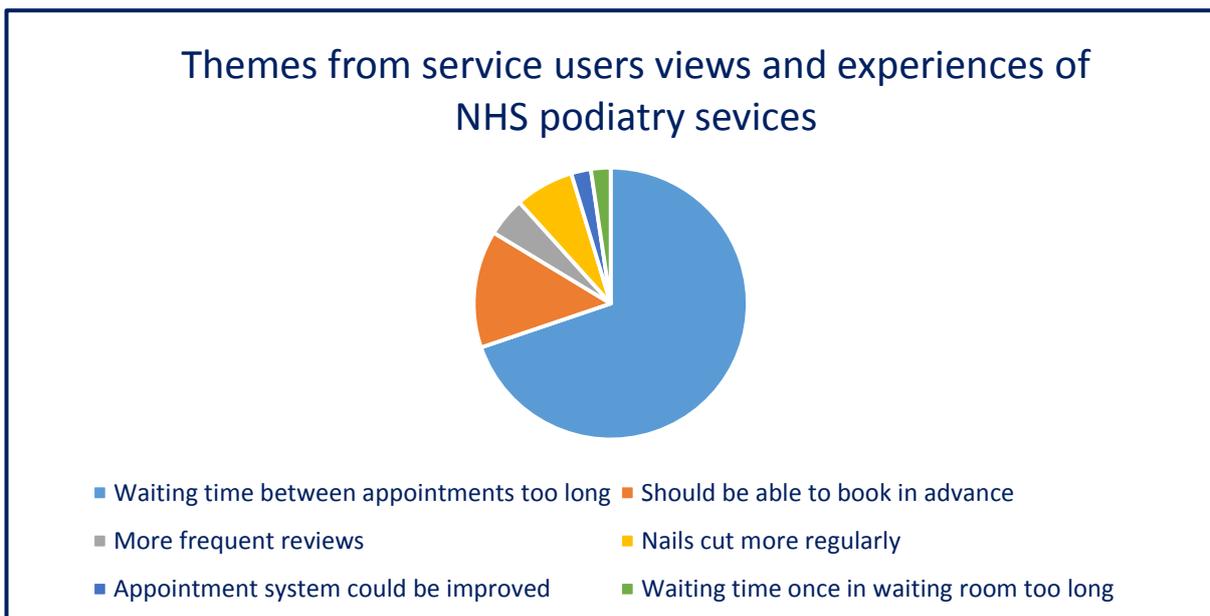
Analysis of the feedback identified common themes with regards to waiting times between appointments.

38 out of the 77 service users who responded, had more than one medical condition.

The majority of individuals completing the questionnaire had been using the NHS podiatry service between two and five years.



The chart below shows the range of themes on which patients gave their views and experiences:



The comments of NHS podiatry service users, regarding access to appointments and waiting times, are shown below:

**Difficulty in getting an appointment/waiting times:**

*\*Text in pink are actual quotes from patients, family, friends or carers*

*‘Issues, for me and my parents who also have diabetes, have always occurred around the actual appointment system, with appointments not being properly*

booked, miscommunication in preparation for appointments (for example, needing a HBA1C before an appointment and not having been told in the appointment letter), or not being informed of appointments in general'

'A better response time plus 16 weeks in between appointments is extensive and way too long for people who are unable to reach to cut their own toenails'

'Quicker appointments'

'Not having to wait 4 months (January last time) 3 months would be better for me'

'Getting a quicker appointment'

'Had to wait longer than expected'

'Could do with nails cutting more regularly'

'Very difficult to get an appointment'

'Waiting time once you have an appointment (can be in the waiting room for a while)'

'If possible reduce waiting time for a repeat appointment'

'Sometimes difficult to get an appointment due to not enough availability'

'Waiting times for initial appointment too long - waiting in pain at my age is no good'

'Improve waiting times for first appointment'

'Appointments should be every 12 weeks but you can't get in'

'Would like a shorter waiting time in between'

'Waiting list is too long'

'Should be able to book more in advance in Billingham'

'Be seen more often'

'Being given appointments in advance would be easier'

'You can't get an appointment without having to wait'

'16 weeks is too long'

'More frequent reviews for insole provision'

Healthwatch gathered positive feedback about the NHS podiatry service, service users comments can be seen below.

**Positive Feedback:**

‘Generally I found the on the ground staff to be excellent, compassionate and well versed in their subject matter’

‘Really thorough examination’

‘All staff obliging’

‘Really happy with service’

‘Can’t complain - have had good attention - very good to get in so quickly’

‘Service is great from podiatrist’

‘Speedy service’

‘Very good service’

‘Found service in general, good. Had very good treatment’

‘Can be put on cancellation list’

‘If you ring the main Hartlepool number, you can get straight through’

‘Never wait in waiting room’

‘Call GP every 5 weeks to make appointment and get in straight away’

‘I like that there a podiatrists based in several GP’s so you don’t have to travel far’

‘I am wheelchair bound and the access is good at Eaglescliffe Medical Practice’

‘Surprised at how soon my first appointment was’

‘Happy with service, walking on air’

‘There are more podiatry clinics nowadays’

‘Eaglescliffe is excellent - you can always get parked and there is a disabled bay’

‘If you ring the main number in Hartlepool, they give you options of different clinics’

‘Hartlepool helped in arranging appointments in more convenient locations’

‘Service is always available for advice, even if you don’t need an appointment’

Healthwatch also gathered negative feedback from NHS podiatry service users; these comments are below:

**Negative Feedback:**

‘I waited over 5 months for my first appointment and then the podiatrist cut my nails on an angle rather than straight, causing pain due to nails digging in’

‘I don’t like Lawson Street, they have security on the door and there’s no parking’

‘Can’t get parked at Lawson Street, especially on a Fridays when prayers are on’

‘There are no appointments when you ring in’

‘Need more staff’

‘I was told it would be a 6 month wait, but it was longer’

‘I have a lifetime injury due to the length of wait’

‘Queens Park Medical Centre stopped offering podiatry service’

‘Haphazard service’

‘Lawson Street isn’t nice - lots of unsavoury characters around and there’s no car parking’

‘I had a bad experience at Lawson Street 4 years ago’

‘Never referred by the same person’

‘Needs better system for follow-up appointments, particularly after surgery’

‘Can never get parked at Lawson Street - end up missing the appointment’

‘Ended up ringing myself; waiting for a referral but never got one’

‘Booking an appointment at Eaglescliffe is difficult’

### Event overview

Healthwatch hosted a public engagement event with support from Catalyst and the NHS Community Health Ambassadors. The event consisted of a presentation about NHS podiatry service provision changes, in the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees localities. The presentation was delivered by Claire Wong, Commissioning Manager of NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit.

This was followed by a question and answer session. Those attending had opportunity to fill out a questionnaire at the event. This information has also been included in the statistics within this report.



## Conclusion

50% of individuals completing the questionnaire and feeding back on the NHS podiatry service were over 75 years of age. Waiting times for appointments were highlighted as the biggest issue for service users, with many feeling that a 16 week gap between their appointments was unacceptable.

A number of patients confirmed that they access private services in between their NHS podiatry appointments. Patients new to the service who were diabetic or had multiple conditions, or referred as urgent, were happy with the process from referral to first appointment. Healthwatch noted that the waiting time for these patients was within 2 weeks.

Overall feedback gathered about treatment and podiatry consultants was very good. Positive feedback was also received regarding the way the calls were dealt with at Hartlepool when patients ring to book their next appointment. Many welcomed the option of being able to choose a clinic location with the new system which has been in place around a month. Although feedback suggested that parking facilities at Eaglescliffe were encouraging patients to favour that clinic, and some felt disappointed that at the Eaglescliffe clinic it was more difficult to obtain an appointment. Some service users stated they would prefer the original appointment system, where the patient would be given their next appointment from the receptionist after consultation. It was highlighted to Healthwatch that the new system of calling Hartlepool and not obtaining an appointment confirmation letter or card was causing some difficulties for frail, elderly patients who have support with numerous appointments from carers or family members to access the services.

There appeared to be confusion around booking and appointment availability. Patients are asked to book their next appointment before the booking facility is available so are told to ring back. Many stated when they ring back the

appointments are often taken for their chosen clinic, this results in longer waiting periods between treatments.

### **Recommendations**

- Healthwatch recommend the booking process be overviewed. Intelligence gathered suggests appointments are not released within the time scales needed to book follow up appointments causing unnecessary delays.
- Alternative methods of booking be made available for those patients who find using the telephone difficult. Confirmation of appointments be offered in a variety of formats including by post, text reminder.
- Parking information provided for each venue during booking process.
- Appointment choice of venue reminders to go to each patient on a regular occurrence or at least made clear at first appointment booking. Venues with smaller waiting lists be offered when first choice has a long waiting list.

### **Response from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**

Thank you for providing the CCG with a copy of the Podiatry Engagement Report.

As you are aware this engagement activity was undertaken in conjunction with the CCG as part of our review of the podiatry service. We note the four recommendations that are included in the report and can confirm that the CCG's accepts these recommendations and will seek to address them as part of the redesigned service specification currently being developed. The service specification is due to be discussed by the CCG Governing Body on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and following approval of this, the CCG will work with the provider of services to ensure that the recommendations included in the report are implemented.

Appendix 1

# healthwatch

## Stockton-on-Tees

### Podiatry Services Survey

This survey is to ask people in Stockton their views on the NHS podiatry services they receive. The information you provide will support us to influence change, helping to improve services for all.

1. Please provide the first part of your post code (Example TS18)

2. Age

- Under 16    16-24    25-29    30-44    45-64    65-69    70-75    75+

3. Gender

- Female  
 Male

4. Please provide brief details of any medical conditions you have

Appendix 1 continued

6. From the time of referral in to the service, how long did you wait for an appointment with the podiatrist?

7. Is there anything you would change about the service which would improve your experience?

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Appendix 2

## Podiatry Services - Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees



## Podiatry

Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees CCG commission North Tees and Hartlepool trust to provide a podiatry service for the local population.

Podiatrists are health care professionals who have been trained to diagnose and treat abnormal conditions of the feet.

The service currently manages a comprehensive range of conditions from those with low level to complex care needs.

Over the last 2 years, the CCG and the trust have been working together in order to review what we currently have in place. We have developed proposals for a new model that ensures the service is quality driven and sustainable in line with current National guidance.



## Current Pressures

### Service Cost

The service currently costs in the region of £1.3 million

### Activity

Podiatry Contacts are currently in the range of 56,000 per year and are delivered in a variety of different venues

### Improvements required in:

- Waiting times (6-18 weeks)
- Reducing DNA rates (as high as 250-300 missed appointments every month)
- Improving capacity to see patients who are considered as being at an increased risk
- Reducing amputation rates across the HaST locality
- Reducing inequity across Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees localities



## Local Picture

We have an ageing population and individuals inevitably have increasing complex care needs. In our locality, diabetes and peripheral arterial disease (PAD) are increasing in incidence year on year. These conditions put patients at a significant risk of developing foot and lower leg problems. These individuals therefore require close monitoring in order to prevent any long term problems such as ulceration or even amputation.

We therefore need to re-prioritise services to ensure those with most need or those at risk are managed effectively and those without a 'health care need' receive appropriate signposting to alternative services.



## Potential new model

In order to make these improvements, the service has been remodelled and as a result and in line with other locality areas, the following cohort groups will no longer be routinely managed;

- those who are low risk and asymptomatic
- those who are low risk with slight podiatric need
- a small proportion of those who are low risk with moderate podiatric need

### Treatment examples;

**Low Risk / asymptomatic**  
Nail cutting

**Low Risk / slight**  
Callous (dry skin)  
Seed corns  
Curvature of nails  
Verrucae

**Low Risk / moderate**  
Heavier Callous  
Corns  
Hyperkeratosis (thickening of skin)  
\*(depending upon severity)



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## What does this mean?

All patients will be risk assessed and care will not be provided to those individuals who are identified as being at low risk.

It **WILL NOT** affect individuals that are assessed as being at risk, for instance – those with diabetes / peripheral vascular disease

### Benefits of doing so;

- improved capacity to manage patients with increased need / risk (approximately 8,000 - 10,000 additional appointments)
- improved prioritisation
- reduction in waiting times
- improved patient journey
- improved patient outcomes



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Any Questions?



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