

GP Surgeries

You Said

I have to wait 2 to 3 weeks to get an appointment with my GP.

Townfield Doctors Surgery uses 0844 numbers which cost me 4p a minute to call from my mobile phone.

Uxbridge Health Centre has a ramp it is too steep to get up. Reception desks are so high people with wheelchairs can't see over them.

Acorn Medical Centre was asked to send text message appointments to a deaf patient, but they continued to ring her.

We Did

We have been encouraging GP Networks to deliver improved access to GPs for all Hillingdon residents. We have been told they will do this, and we will make sure they are doing it!

Townfield Surgery was the last doctor's surgery in Hillingdon to use 084 phone numbers. We asked the practice to follow NHS England Guidelines to stop using this number but, despite several reminders, they did not stop. This meant we had to ask NHS England to write to the practice to support our request. After this the surgery agreed to stop using the number.

One wheelchair user recently told us they were unable to get treatment from the Community Dentist at Uxbridge Health Centre because the dentist's room was too small for their wheelchair. This has led to further delays with their treatment, which they have already waited more than 6 months for.

We need to hear from more wheelchair users about which health services they have difficulty using as well as any experiences they have of using the Community Dental Service at Uxbridge or Ickenham.

We spoke to the practice manager at Acorn Medical Centre who told us that their deaf patients' medical records have a note requesting they be contacted by text. They also told us that they let the hospital know if a patient is deaf and requires a sign language interpreter for their outpatient appointments.

You Said

GP would not book/pay for a British Sign Language interpreter.

GP asked 10 year old child to interpret for their deaf parent.

Vital health checks are missed because of communication problems.

It can be hard to get care in local care homes for people with Downs Syndrome and Dementia.

We Did

Since last summer, we have done a lot of work to raise awareness of the gap in sign language translation services for Hillingdon's deaf community. We sent evidence to the North West London Quality Surveillance Group, highlighting the risk to patients' safety. We also sent feedback to NHS England about their draft standards which aim to improve the quality of interpretation services in Primary Care (GP's, Dentists, Opticians, and Pharmacists).

We have heard from other members of the deaf community that they are unable to get an interpreter for an eye test or when going to the dentists. We spoke to a number of opticians and found they were unaware that legally they must provide interpreters or how to book one. NHS England (who are responsible for putting in place interpreting services for dentists and opticians) have failed to properly inform them of the correct process. We have been working hard to address this. We worked closely with a local optician to make the process clearer, which resulted in one of their deaf patients having an eye test with an interpreter.

We have updated our deaf community factsheet with information to help other deaf residents get interpreters for eye tests and dental treatment.

We were unable to follow this up, as we had no specific details. We have however, begun to look very closely the standard of care residents get in care homes. If you are concerned about the care a friend or family is receiving in a home, please contact us at any time. We will keep your information in confidence.

Thank you again for your valuable feedback!

If you have any further problems, please talk to Healthwatch Hillingdon on 01895 272997 or visit our shop in the Pavillions Shopping Centre, Uxbridge by TK Max (open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm).