

## Response Report to Health Watch Visit – March 2024

### Summary:

Health Watch are an independent organisation who gather feedback from service users to help service providers understand their experience and what can be improved. We (South Tyneside MSK Service, Connect Health) invited Health Watch to interview service users at two of our clinics across 3 days at Cleadon Park Primary Care Centre and Flagg Court Health Centre. They then collated this information and provided us with their report, including service user demographics and feedback provided.

### Respondent profile/demographics:

71% of those interviewed identified as female and 29% male. The majority, 77.42% of those interviewed, were aged 46-75. 0% of those interviewed were aged 16-30. Of the respondents 96.77% were British and 3.23% were Asian. 51.61% of respondents were retired with 32.26% in employment (full or part time) and 12.91% not in paid employment.

### Recommendations:

- Of respondents there were no 16–30-year-olds and a minority sample of 31-45 (3%) and 90+ year olds (3%). Only 32.26% of respondents were in employment. Future public engagement and feedback events should look to engage this population. We have done multiple public engagement events in the past and historically it has been challenging to capture this feedback from the younger population who may have work/childcare/study commitments.
- We know from our recent health inequalities report that 4% of the South Tyneside population are from BAME backgrounds. This snapshot report gained feedback from 3.23% Asian only demographics so future feedback events should look to engage with a more diverse BAME population, including the Bengali population who account for 0.5% of the total 4% noted.

### Self-Referral:

Respondents were asked if they were aware that they could self-refer for our services via telephone or online. 48.39% responded with yes, 35.48% responded with no and 16.13% were 'not sure'. Some of this population may have been patients referred into our MSK CATS team whom we cannot accept self-referral as they require referral via either their GP or physiotherapy team in tier 1. However, we have not captured how many of the percentage questioned were in this cohort. Awareness of the ability to self-refer is a focus of one of our ongoing public engagement initiatives.

Service provided by:

### Recommendation:

- Continue to work with the local population, charities and local services/GP practice to promote our self-referral service which allows ease of access and timelier assessment.
- In future patient feedback events/Health Watch reports it may be valuable to ask this question again for comparison

### Accessibility:

Respondents were asked how easily accessible they found the venue, for example lift access and provisions for those with mobility issues, walking aids or wheelchair users. 96.77% found the venue easily accessible. 3.23% reported they did not find the venue accessible. There was a common theme that individuals were not aware they needed to check in at reception downstairs prior to their appointment. 2 years ago, there was a reception upstairs so this is a reasonably recent change but there is clear signage given instructions regarding this at the bottom, middle and top of the stairs as well as on the old reception area and the wall above the seated area for the physiotherapy department as seen below. Staff will also always call in the reception area for patients regardless of whether they have checked in or not at reception.



Regarding accessibility, one respondent said they felt the clinic should be on the ground floor. Unfortunately, as our service independently hires our clinic space, and the venue is full there is no capacity for us to move to the ground floor. However, we are looking at sourcing a new venue in future so will consider ground floor accessibility in our search.

One respondent also commented that they use a blue badge and felt there were not enough blue badge spaces. Cleadon Park provides 9 blue badge spaces in close proximity to the entrance. These are marked clearly for use.

### Recommendations:

- We have spoken to Cleadon Park Estates team to ensure the signage for the blue badge parking spaces is made clearer. Senior estates manager Richard Brown

advised this is the responsibility of the local council, although he believes this is something they will be actioning as soon as possible

- We have fed back to staff to provide instructions where possible when booking patients in about the reception area's location and requirement to check in before appointment downstairs.

### **Appointment availability**

Respondents were asked if they were able to get an appointment at a time and date that suited their needs. 93.55% of respondents said yes, 6.45% said no. Those who said no were asked what their preferred appointment time would be. Of those 80% said morning appointments suited them best and 20% said they were not sure. We provide morning appointments 8am-midday Monday-Friday at Cleadon Park. However, we do not control when these morning appointments are available; appointments are allocated first come first served. Patients may have to wait longer for a morning appointment, but this wait should not be substantial.

### **Meeting Appointment Expectations**

96.77% of respondents who were asked if the appointment met their expectations responded with yes. Common positive themes were that service users felt well listened to, they felt their clinician was knowledgeable and took the time to explain things clearly and they received caring and empathetic care. One respondent commented that they received information regarding Age Concern exercise/social classes which is encouraging as we have been focusing on social prescribing and using external services to support our service users so this is evidence of this. Unfortunately, no negative or constructive feedback was provided by the 3.23% who responded no to this question.

### **Treatment options and shared decision making**

100% of respondents reported they felt they were given all of the treatment options and information to allow them to make the best decision regarding their care. 100% of respondents also felt they left with a clear plan to help them move forward with their problem. These responses reflect our ambition as a service in providing consistent shared decision making and clinical excellence.

### **Social prescribing/voluntary sector referrals**

Respondents were asked if they discussed self-help information or other services that can help them with their wellbeing. For example, weight support services, escape pain or talking therapies. 58.06% of respondents replied yes. Service users commented that they had discussion regarding menopause, healthy lives classes and escape pain classes. Whilst we aim to make every contact count and have these conversations with as many people as possible, only 12.9% of people said they didn't have the conversation but felt they would have liked to. 29% of people said they felt it was not appropriate/applicable. Therefore, from this sample we had a high percentage of conversation around lifestyle factors and onward referrals to support behavior change. The service was described as "more than just physio" when describing additional information received alongside that to support their condition. As mentioned, in the past 2 years we have focused on educating staff and building relationships

with the South Tyneside social prescribing team and voluntary sector services, so we hope this reflects our learning.

### **Summary of findings**

Overall, the service users who responded were happy with the service and quality of care they received. The answers reflect our ambition to provide shared decision making and evidence informed care to our patients. A strong focus on sign posting and social prescribing is also demonstrated with a high percentage of conversations around onward referral to support behaviour change.

This report has highlighted some areas that we can improve on and actions that we can take including liaising with Cleadon Park estates team to ensure clear signage and correct amount of blue badge parking spaces, helping patients to find their way to appointments at Cleadon Park via clear communication from staff when booking appointments. A focus of future engagement events will also be to improve public knowledge of the ability to self-refer to our service when needed.

Our findings will be fed back to our clinical team during our fortnightly team meetings to ensure Health Watch's findings can be noted and learnt from.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the friendly and professional staff that work for Health Watch that helped to interview our service users and put together the excellent quality report that they produced. Health Watch has provided tangible advice and feedback which we have been able to use to guide our quality improvement projects and make adjustments to help improve our service and the experience our service users receive.