

## **What do visual impaired people think about the proposals for five urgent treatment centres in Leeds?**

### **Why we did this**

Healthwatch Leeds has been a member of the Unplanned Care & Rapid Response Programme Board and Unplanned Care and Rapid Response Steering Group in Leeds since they started.

Urgent care is care that someone feels is needed on the same day but their illness or injury is not life threatening. The board want to hear people's thoughts and views on their proposals to establish five urgent treatment centre in Leeds.

Healthwatch Leeds took the initiative to add a question about the proposal as part of the survey we carried out with people with sight loss.

We hope the findings from these can inform the decision making for the opening of these centres, taking into account the needs and views from people with visual impairments.

### **What we did**

We have asked individuals from different backgrounds with a range of visual impairments, for example Age Macular Degeneration, about the proposal for five urgent treatment centres in Leeds. We have also discussed this topic in two focus groups.

Out of 113 people we spoke with, including those in the focus group settings 72 people offered their thoughts and opinions on the proposal. Some spoke of their experiences of the urgent treatment centre. Others have suggested things that the commissioner and provider need to consider and address when opening these centres to meet their needs.

### **What we found (themes that arose from comments about the Urgent Treatment Centres)**

1. The vast majority of respondents said

- The centre needs to be an accessible service and on regular bus services and routes.
- They prefer no stairs when accessing the service. A ground floor venue would be good for visually impaired people.
- They preferred a local venue since travelling by taxi or bus can be expensive and are inaccessible for some.
- A local venue is particularly important for those who have mobility issues as well as visual impairments.
- "I can't use public transport after suffering a big illness"

2. 29/72 people (40%) made specific comments about wanting bold signage on an accessible waiting area

Clear and bolder signage guiding patients to rooms from waiting areas; using highly visible markings on floors and walls reassures sight impaired patients and lessen the stress of finding where to go.

"Yellow and black bold signage and being on the flat on ground floor would help"

"LGI and St James is appalling to navigate now for those with Physical Sensory Impairment"

3. 8/72 people (11%) asked for a 24 hour service

Opening urgent care centres to 24 hours dealing with vulnerable patients as alternatives to A&E would ensure a person's needs are met.

"A&E is problematic so this could be a beneficial"

4. 8/72 people (11%) requested volunteer assistance

A group of individuals wanted Volunteers' assistance when assessing/using the centre

“To insure I’m going to be sat in the right area when coming in an urgent treatment centre” as there can be multiple waiting areas/ lines to follow that many are unable to do alone.

People suggested that having a “Trained volunteer to meet you and take you to the department” may enhance people’s experience of attending the centre. The patient’s first impression would be of a friendly service.

#### 5. Some people said

- Would consider using the pharmacy before an urgent care centres
- A group of people want to actively get involved in making the centre fully accessible.
- Information about the proposal needs to be communicated widely to the public.

#### 6. Positive experience of using Urgent treatment Centres

Some people already use urgent care centres and feel positive about their experience.

“One in Otley worked well but patients need educating”

However, limitations of the centre was its accessibility.

#### 7. Negative Experience

People we surveyed spoke of their negative experiences, one woman fell and “the urgent care centre could not deal with her injury and had to transfer her to A&E”. Knowing what urgent care centres specialise in would see patient’s needs cared for in a suitable environment and decrease waiting times for others.

## Suggestion from patients

The suggestions from people with visual impairments about the urgent centre corresponding to the findings:

- A single floor venue with bold signage for directions to access different services.
- Locating urgent care centres on popular bus routes are very important for people with visual impairments.
- Patients accessible needs should be shared with the urgent treatment centre.
- Some people wanted a 24 hour service from these centres.
- Some would prefer assistance from volunteers after arriving at the urgent treatment centre
- Offer facilities to monitor eye conditions locally so patients don't need to go to GP or A&E unnecessarily.

One person said the ability to “call in to the urgent treatment centre to check in intraocular pressure” would be good as it can reduce admission to eye casualty.

## Recommendation from Healthwatch Leeds

- Ensure information about the urgent treatment centres, i.e. location and purpose of the centre is communicated widely to the public in accessible formats.
- Consider working with a group of visually impaired individuals when designing the layout of the centre to ensure urgent treatment centres are fully accessible.
- Consider recruiting volunteers at the reception of the urgent treatment centre to meet and greet patients, especially those with sensory loss.

## Equality Monitoring Data

The demographic of people who participated our engagement work:

### Condition

- 35 people are living with Aged Macular Degeneration/Macular Degeneration
- 13 people are living with Glaucoma
- 9 people are diabetic
- 6 people had some damage to their eye(s)
- 4 people had cataracts
- 46 people did not specify their condition

### Gender

- Male: 34
- Female: 72
- Prefer not to say 7

### AGE

- 17-24: 5 People
- 25-49: 11 people
- 50-64: 17 people
- 65-79: 41
- 80+: 30
- Prefer not to say 9

### Ethnicity

- White British: 68 people (60%)
- Other British: 10
- BME: 22 people (19%)
- People with different nationality: 5
- Prefer not to say: 8