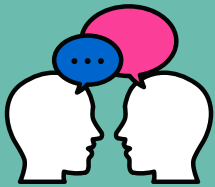


Access to Health and Social Care Services for Latin American Communities in Southwark Report

Summary

We engaged with 67 Latin American residents in Southwark through a survey, 1-1 interviews and a focus group.

We found that the majority of Latin Americans in Southwark have experienced barriers to accessing healthcare, particularly GPs. These barriers can be broken down into three main categories:



Communications:

- Language barriers - i.e. communicating with staff, accessing information and completing paperwork.
- Lack of information about migrants' entitlements.
- Online communications - i.e. e-letters and forms are difficult to use.



Diversity and Inclusion:

- Inhospitable behaviour from service providers - dismissive of patients' concerns.
- Lack of different Latin representation in diversity monitoring.



Appointments and Charges:

- Complicated appointments systems, referrals and lack of staff continuity.
- GP charges for documents.

“The community needs a lot of help to complete forms, call the GP, and get the services they need. The big problem is the language barrier.”

Recommendations



1. Provide information about healthcare services in Spanish and Portuguese online, in community media and in places that Latin Americans already visit.
2. Make interpreters more easily available and hire more Spanish-speaking staff. Primary care services should reflect local communities.
3. Provide information about migrants' entitlements to healthcare in Spanish and Portuguese.
4. Reintroduce postal letters.
5. Increase face-to-face appointments.
6. Work with Latin American community organisations to improve links and share information between Latin Americans and healthcare services.
7. Record country of origin and dialects spoken in diversity monitoring.
8. Diversity and inclusion training for health staff, e.g. receptionists.
9. A GP booking system which gives patients more flexibility for when they can make a booking and the date and time of appointments.
10. Improve staff continuity and administration to make referrals easier.
11. Scrap charges for letters and documents, particularly for low-income patients.

