



**Guy's and St Thomas'**  
NHS Foundation Trust

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Dear Ruman

Thank you for sharing Healthwatch Southwark's report 'Access to Health and Social Care services for Latin American Communities in Southwark', which provides valuable insights into Latin American communities' experiences of accessing healthcare in Southwark.

We have reviewed your recommendations and hope you will find our responses, provided in the table below, helpful. There is always more work to do to ensure that all of our patients can equitably access services regardless of their language or other social determinants of health. We have also identified several actions we will take forward and commit to completing between now and June 2024.

We have recently implemented a new Electronic Health Record called Epic. We are still embedding this into our organisation, but this will provide greater potential in future for patients to personalise how people wish to interact with their healthcare information and how we can best communicate with them.

We have not included a response to **Recommendation 9** of the report, as this relates to services provided by GP practices / primary care.

We will review the above actions and update Healthwatch Southwark on our progress by the beginning of March 2024.

Thank you again for the report and alerting us to the health inequalities currently faced by our Latin American community.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Austin  
Chief Executive Integrated and Specialist Medicine  
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Cc. CEO, Healthwatch Southwark

No.	Healthwatch recommendation	Summary of the Trust's response / actions to be taken, where applicable	To be completed by (date)	Lead / department
<b>Theme: Communications</b>				
1	Provide information about health and social care services in Spanish and Portuguese online, in community media and in hard copies disseminated in spaces that are frequented by Latin American communities.	<p>The landing page of the Trust's website has a link to our language support services. It provides advice on how to access information in different languages including Spanish and Portuguese and how we can provide interpreters at appointments. We also have a Language Robot in our Emergency Department as well as a tanyo to facilitate language support (inclusive of Spanish and Portuguese).</p> <p>There are already some areas of good practice - for example our sexual health services have developed leaflets in a number of languages and these are sent via a link in an SMS. However, we know there is always more we can do. We will initiate a review of services across the Trust to understand the extent to which patient information leaflets are available in different languages. We have though recently implemented a new Electronic Patient Record called EPIC and are currently stabilising the use of the system. In the future we will be able to better serve these patient groups by enabling them to identify their preferred language for communicating with the Trust.</p>	Ongoing  June 2024  April 2024	Trust Communications  Service Managers/Trust Communications  EPIC
2	Improve accessibility of interpreters. Recruit more Spanish-speaking staff where possible, as respondents specified they want to be able to communicate with healthcare providers directly. Primary care services should reflect local communities and Spanish-speaking staff should be available on site.	We have contracts in place with external providers for telephone, video and face to face interpreting. We additionally have 3 full time interpreters to supplement these contracts, who provide face to face interpreter services in Portuguese and Spanish.	Ongoing	Medical Specialties

		<p>Although we employ staff who speak Portuguese and Spanish, it is not possible to confirm the exact numbers, as this information is not recorded in HR records.</p> <p>The Trust is currently in the final stages of introducing a new provider for our interpreting services. This new contract will centralise the services under one provider and provide a larger pool of interpreters and languages to support our patients. We are awaiting a start date for this contract. The procurement process has been managed through the ICS. We will provide an update in February 2024.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>February 2024</p>	<p>HR Directors</p> <p>Medical Specialties</p>
3	<p>Provide information about migrants' entitlements to health and social care in Spanish and Portuguese. Coordinate with Latin American community organisations and the Home Office to disseminate this information.</p>	<p>Presently, we do not provide written information regarding the entitlement of healthcare to migrants in Spanish or Portuguese languages. At the time of response, we are awaiting further confirmation from the Trust Communications team and if no material available across the Trust, we will look to produce this to support Latin American communities going forward.</p> <p>We deliver <u>urgent and emergency care (including urgent maternity treatment)</u> to those patients in need regardless of their immigration status.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>Trust Communications</p>
4	<p>Reintroduce offline communications such as postal letters.</p>	<p>The Trust continues to send letters by post for both appointment confirmation and post appointment outcome letters, summarising the clinical detail of a visit.</p> <p>Some years ago, we established a process that sends patients a link via a text message to an electronic version of the appointment confirmation letter. This provides secure access to a portal where the patient can view their letter. This has reduced the use of paper</p>	<p>All Ongoing</p>	<p>EPIC</p>

		<p>as part of our sustainability pledge. However, if a patient does not access their letter electronically within 48 hours of being sent this link, we will automatically print and send the appointment confirmation letter.</p> <p>As part of our recent EPIC implementation we have changed our provider supporting this process, but ensured that we were able to retain this function to support patients and carers who may be unable to or chose not to access digital letters.</p> <p>Patient choice remains important and the option for printed correspondence is available upon request and telephone lines remain available to liaise with departments, as required.</p>		
5	Increase the availability of face-to-face appointments, particularly for patients with additional needs.	<p>Most interpreting services are carried out over the phone, including or face-to-face appointments, The Trust will provide reasonable adjustments to all appointment bookings when an additional need is identified, which includes face-to-face interpreting. Clinical teams can also request face-to-face interpreters for appointments where bad news may be being discussed or where information is particularly complex.</p>	Ongoing	Medical Specialties
6	Liaise with Latin American community organisations to disseminate information to Latin Americans in Southwark and facilitate ongoing review of health and social care accessibility for this group.	<p>The Trust would value the opportunity to explore this recommendation further, in collaboration with colleagues from Healthwatch Southwark, Partnership Southwark and organisations who support Latin American communities in the borough.</p>	March 2024	ILS
<b>Theme: Diversity and inclusion</b>				
7	Revise diversity monitoring forms to include Latin Americans and capture internal differences such as country of origin and dialects spoken.	<p>We are still understanding the breadth of functionality that our new EPIC system will enable. We will review what is possible in our current build and also with our new interpreting contract when it comes into place.</p>	April 2024	EPIC
8	Facilitate diversity and inclusion training for service providers, particularly patient-facing staff such as receptionists. This training should include a focus on	<p>The Trust offers 5 training programmes available to all staff. These form part of a wider suite of courses that available to staff. These trainings are accessible via the</p>	Ongoing	Education & Training Lead

	cultural awareness and supporting people who do not have English proficiency. Latin American community organisations/members should be deliverers of this training where possible.	College of Healthcare. The first 4 are optional and the 5 <sup>th</sup> one is listed as mandatory training for all staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active Allyship</li> <li>• Micro Aggression</li> <li>• Beyond Bias</li> <li>• Cultural Competence</li> <li>• EDI Statutory/Mandatory programme module</li> </ul>		
<b>Theme: Appointments and charges</b>				
10	Improve staff continuity and handovers to streamline referrals, particularly for patients with additional needs.	<p>The Trust has recently launched EPIC – an electronic healthcare record system. The benefits are yet to be realised, but it should improve communication across teams such as GPs and local authority. Whilst primary care will not have direct access to EPIC, they will be able to view patient information in greater detail than before. The system also enables smoother communication between the primary care systems and EPIC.</p> <p>The EPIC system we have implemented is shared across GSTT and King’s College Hospital (including the Princess Royal University Hospital), this means that we are able to better manage the care for individual patients across our two hospitals. We will also be able to better use data to understand our population and ensure equity of access.</p> <p>EPIC will link with the NHS spine (central reference system to obtain all records nationwide linked to a single NHS number) which will also allow staff to flag additional needs secondary care to a long-term disability. All of these benefits will enhance continuity of care, handovers and streamline referrals to help us to meet people’s additional support needs.</p>	<p>February 2024</p> <p>February 2024</p> <p>February 2024</p>	<p>EPIC/Quality &amp; Safety Leads</p> <p>EPIC/Quality &amp; Safety Leads</p> <p>EPIC/Quality &amp; Safety Leads</p>
11	Scrap charges for letters and other documentation, particularly for low-income patients.	There are no charges for letters and other documentation.	Ongoing	Directors of Operations

