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1st November 2023

Dear Rumanjeet,

Re: Healthwatch Southwark report 'Access to health and social care services for Latin American communities in Southwark'

Thank you for sharing your report on access to health and social care services by Southwark's Latin American communities that has been considered at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust's Patient Experience Committee. We have welcomed the opportunity to review your findings and by means of this letter, I am writing to provide you with the Trust's response to the recommendations that apply to us:

- *Recommendation 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.*

Patients of King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust can request for information to be provided in a language of their choice. This can be done by contacting our Patient Advice and Liaison Service by calling 020 3299 4826 or e-mailing at kch-tr.interpreting@nhs.net. We would really appreciate Healthwatch Southwark support with promoting this and the information is available in Spanish on our website at www.kch.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/help-and-support/interpreting/.

- *Recommendation 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.*

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has an interpreting contract in place where access to interpreters is available on demand 24/7.

- *Recommendation 3: Provide information about migrants' entitlements to health and social care in Spanish and Portuguese. Co-ordinate with Latin American community organisations and the Home Office to disseminate this information.*

Information about overseas visitors and their entitlement to healthcare is available on our website at www.kch.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patients/overseas-visitors/. This information can be provided in Spanish and Portuguese upon request by calling 020 3299 4826 or e-mailing at kch-tr.interpreting@nhs.net.

- *Recommendation 4: Reintroduce offline communications such as postal letters.*

At King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, we recognise the diverse needs of our communities. We therefore have systems and processes in place that do not discriminate against individuals based on their access needs or preferences. Our patients can choose to receive correspondence via text, e-mail or post.

- *Recommendation 5: Increase the availability of face-to-face appointments, particularly for patients with additional needs.*

At King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, we offer a range of appointments to our patients including face-to-face, telephone and video-conferencing. For many services, patients also can request follow-up care by themselves. Furthermore, our new healthcare record system makes it easier for administrative staff to identify patients' access needs so that the most appropriate appointment type can be offered, including providing additional time for consultation.

In addition, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is available to support patients to organise the most appropriate type of appointment for them. More information about Patient Advice and Liaison Service is available at www.kch.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/help-and-support/pals/.

- *Recommendation 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.*

It is our strategy to enhance our engagement with local people and communities and we would welcome utilising the links developed by Healthwatch Southwark to better involve the Latin American community in helping us to improve the quality of care that we deliver at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

- *Recommendation 7: Revise diversity monitoring forms to include Latin Americans and capture internal differences such as country of origin and dialects spoken.*

Our new patient record system includes demographic questions on ethnicity with options for South and Central American countries including Columbia, Brazil, Bolivia, Cuba, Mexico and Puerto Rico. In addition, patients are able to indicate their preferred and written language with options for Spanish and Portuguese.

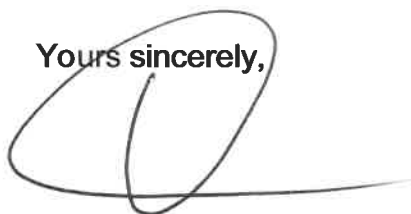
- *Recommendation 8: Facilitate diversity and inclusion training for service providers, particularly patient-facing staff such as receptionists. This training should include a focus on cultural awareness and supporting people who do not have English proficiency. Latin American community organisations/members should be deliverers of this training where possible.*

Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team is in the process of rolling out 'Cultural Intelligence' training programme, which will be available for all staff to book from January 2024. The programme aims to equip our staff with tools to assess and improve effectiveness in culturally diverse situations. We would however welcome the opportunity to work alongside the Latin American communities to finesse our training offer and would appreciate Healthwatch Southwark support with this.

Once again, thank you for bringing the voices of the Latin American communities to influence our ways of working at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Although several of your recommendations have already been implemented, your report has identified further opportunities for us to work more closely and I hope that you will reach out to Patricia Mecinska, our Assistant Director of Patient Experience, to take this work forward. Patricia can be contacted via e-mail at patricia.mecinska@nhs.net.

Please note that as your recommendation 9, 10 and 11 relate to primary care, they are excluded from this response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tracey Carter', written over a horizontal line.

Tracey Carter
Chief Nurse and Executive Director of Midwifery

