



## Podiatry Hot Topic Report

Healthwatch Shropshire

January 2018

## Hot Topics

Healthwatch Shropshire (HWS), through its Intelligence Committee, will choose a particular service or area of Health and Social Care on which to focus for a 2 month period. HWS will then concentrate publicity and engagement efforts around that service and its users.

The committee felt that Podiatry Services would be an appropriate subject for a Hot Topic for November and December 2017. Healthwatch Shropshire had received very little official feedback but there were hearsay reports of difficulties in accessing the service. It was unclear from these whether the access problems were from those who were entitled to the service.

The call for feedback was sent out in a press release to local papers, magazines and media organisations. It was advertised with posters and fliers distributed to hospitals, General Practice surgeries and pharmacies.

This resulted in the collection of 21 experiences.

## Background to the provision of podiatry services in Shropshire:

“Since April 1 2013, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) were given the power to decide what footcare services to commission for their local area.

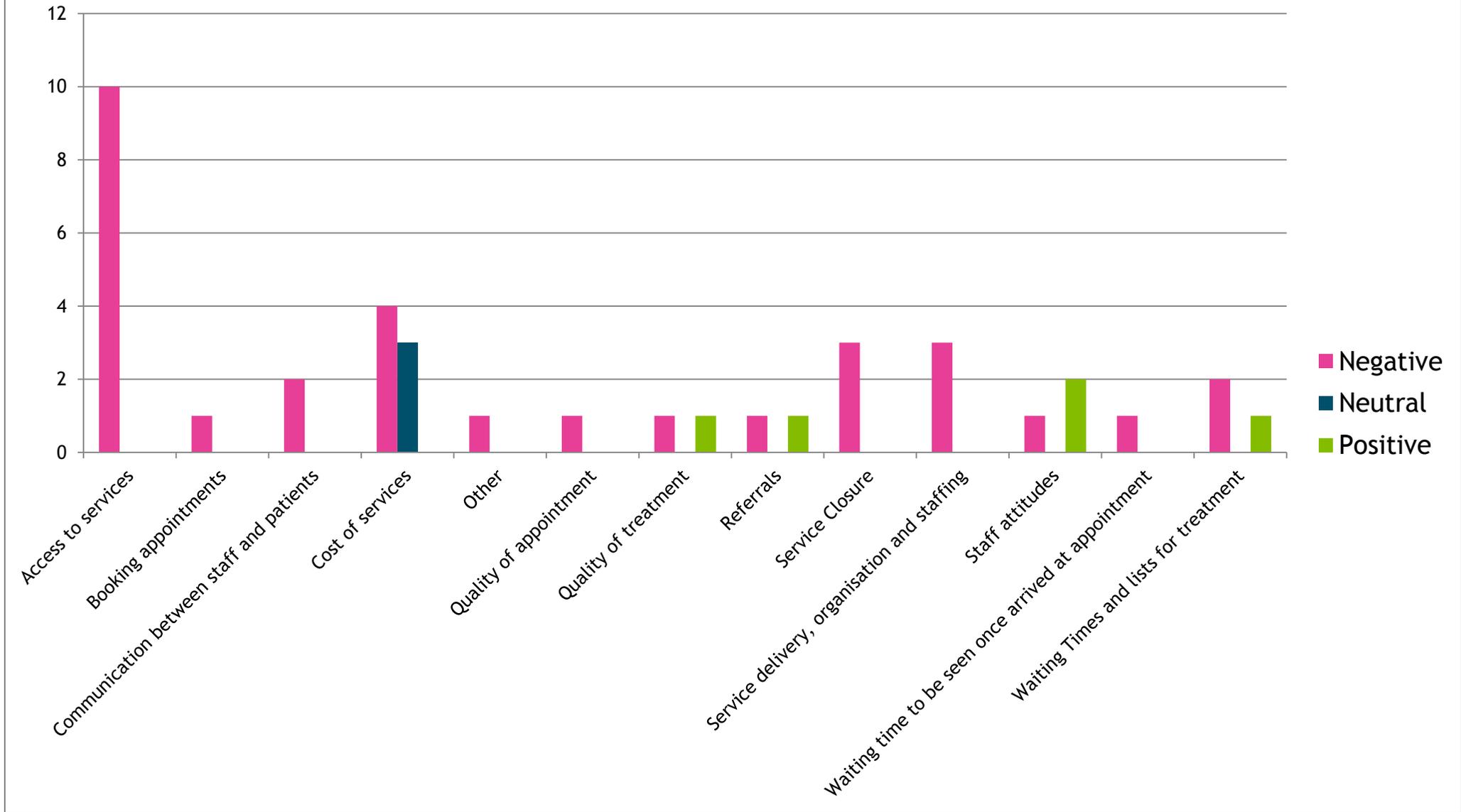
Guidance by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that footcare services related to long-term conditions such as diabetes, peripheral arterial disease and rheumatoid arthritis should be available on the NHS.

However, there is no NICE guidance for foot health provision that is not associated with a long-term condition. This means that each individual CCG will decide on what to make available on the NHS, depending on local need.” NHS Choices, <https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/fothealth/pages/foot-problems-podiatrist.aspx>

Shropshire CCG commission Shropshire Community Health Trust to provide Podiatry services in Shropshire. A full description of the services offered can be found at <http://www.shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk/rte.asp?id=10070>

Services not offered in Shropshire: “Personal care defined as toe nail cutting and skin care, including the tasks that healthy adults would normally be expected to carry out as part of their everyday personal hygiene. ... We provide treatment for toenails that are assessed as pathological e.g. painful or infected in-growing toenails or painful thickened toenails. We do not provide a service to cut normal healthy toenails as this would be carried out as part of personal hygiene care.”

## Podiatry Hot Topic Themes raised in comments received Nov - Dec 2017



## Themes raised most frequently in overall feedback

Each piece of feedback was coded against a standard set of themes defined by Healthwatch England. A piece of feedback may raise multiple negative or positive themes. The following is a short overview of the themes raised most frequently.

### Access to services

This was the theme in many negative comments, often the issue related to individuals not being able to access NHS podiatry for nail care as they found it difficult to care for their own nails due to long term infirmity and / or mobility issues.

Examples include:

- 'Person is in their late 80s and unable to cut their toe nails themselves.'
- 'I have arthritis and cannot use my hands and cannot cut my nails anymore.'
- 'I have trouble cutting my toe nails. They are hard and difficult to cut.'
- 'Two of my clients who live at home. The parent, who is over 90, cares for an adult child who is in their 60s. Carer can't cut nails because it is impossible to get down to the floor'.

The issue of nail cutting was raised by someone who has access to podiatry services while also being unable to cut their nails due to arthritis:

- 'I needed an ingrowing toe nail released. Out came a brand new pair of stainless steel clippers off came the offending bit but when I asked if [podiatrist] could possibly cut my other toe nails [podiatrist] was adamant, No! So the brand new clippers were thrown into the sharps box for disposal. More than the job was worth, [podiatrist] had been forbidden to cut toe nails.'

### Cost of services

This again relates generally to nail cutting. There seems to be a variety of charges ranging from £17 to £30 for a private podiatry appointment provided at a clinic. It is unclear what the costs are for domestic visits but one carer commented that two of her clients

- 'are paying a lot of money to have someone come to their house. But we do not know how much they pay. They are vulnerable so could easily be scammed.'

Another carer commented

- 'we are not allowed to cut people's toe nails or do foot care. Sometimes we are the only people who see people in their homes.'

### Service Closure

Several people reported that they had been informed that the podiatry clinic at Princess House Shrewsbury had closed. One person was unsure what to do and one person had found a private podiatrist in the local paper but was concerned that the costs were unsustainable on a pension. According to the published SCHAT clinic list podiatry services are still provided at Princess House

### Recommendations for Shropshire CCG and Shropshire Community Health Trust

- Publish a clear explanation of the criteria for the treatment of nail conditions and ensure patients are aware of this when discharged.
- Publish a directory of local private Podiatrists, available in paper copy, so those ineligible for NHS treatment can easily find a service.
- Consider the provision of nail care services during a treatment session for patients with a pathological podiatry issue.
- Consider enabling home carers to provide simple nail care services for those they visit with mobility issues which prevent them from carrying out their own nail care.