

Audiology patient engagement report

December 2015

Bromley CCG leads involved

Peter Lewis – Senior Contracts Manager

Daniel Serdoz – Contracts Support Manager

Trish Watts – Communications and Patient Engagement Manager

Background

Nationally, the Action on Hearing Loss report 'Hearing Matters' states, that in 2011, hearing loss affected more than 10 million people in the UK (one in six of the population). By 2031, it is estimated that this figure will have risen to 14.5 million. The World Health Organisation predicts that by 2030, adult onset hearing loss will be in the top 10 disease burdens in the UK and other high and middle income countries, above cataracts and diabetes.

In Bromley, there are over 31,000 adults over the age of 18 years with moderate or severe hearing impairment (predicted to rise to 35,000 by 2020) and a further 698 with profound hearing impairment (predicted to rise to 813 by 2020).

The majority of people with hearing loss are in the older age groups and as the numbers of older people in Bromley increase, there is a need to minimise and address the consequences of hearing impairment, such a social isolation, depression and dementia.

The aim for Bromley CCG is to review our current service and ensure that we are providing a comprehensive patient-centred direct access adult hearing service for age related hearing loss in line with national guidance and local requirements.

The vision for people with age related hearing problems is for them to receive, high quality, efficient services delivered closer to home, with short waiting times and high responsiveness to the needs of local communities, free at the point of access.

In order to achieve our vision, we need to listen to and understand patient experience and feedback on the current service and recommendations for improvement. Bromley CCG started to gather this valuable feedback by holding a patient focus group.

Audiology focus group feedback (30 November, 2pm – 3pm, Meeting Room C)

Attendees:

2 x (Patient)

Ben Reeves (Business Support Officer)

Daniel Serdoz (Contracts Support Manager)

Emily Yolland (Business Support Officer)

Helen McCalvey (GP lead)

Peter Lewis (Senior Contracts Manager)

1 x (Patient and also PPAG member at Chislehurst Medical Practice)

Rosaline Josephs (Lip Speaker)

Susan Craney (Patient and Executive Director of Deaf Access in Bromley)
Trish Watts (Communications and Patient Engagement Manager)

Key points to consider from this focus group are:

- There are updates to hearing aids needed. A lot of the hearing aids issued are not as advanced as newer models; this gives people less confidence and results in them not wearing it.
- As part of an assessment, it would be wise for GPs to look into underlying causes for the hearing loss. Some hearing issues can come from other health issues and these are often ignored which will lead to unnecessary journeys down a pathway that is not beneficial for the patient.
- Deaf Access has received feedback that the service at Specsavers could be better. There have been many complaints that patients having a hearing test can hear traffic at the same time. Other feedback is around the follow up care not being helpful, especially for those not using their hearing aids properly.
- Hearbase have received some good feedback. They are currently sponsoring batteries for hearing aids which Deaf Access staff are allowed to give to Specsaver patients that are not receiving them. Hearbase also have booths in GP surgeries which is very convenient.
- Patients do not currently feel empowered. There is a 40% increase in developing dementia if you have hearing loss so it is imperative that patients do not become isolated.
- Communications is important when patients are discharged. If people need further assistance where do they go? They may end up on a new pathway to start over again when this could be avoided.
- The transition to over 50s services is confusing. A patient representative had experience of Specsavers signposting to the GP and the GP signposting to Specsavers.

Themes from this focus group are:

- the general consensus is that, despite some problems, being able to access services on the high street with a choice of location and appointments is well supported
- patients seemed to support GP referrals into the service rather than self-referrals
- there is a need to ensure that better information is provided to patients throughout the pathway (e.g. leaflets) to allow them to make better informed decisions about their care and to signpost them to other relevant services (such as lip reading courses) including the voluntary sector
- compulsory deaf awareness training for all staff providing the service
- As a CCG we need to ensure that the requirements of the spec are implemented and delivered across all providers

Next Steps

- to identify areas of improvements in the current service for Bromley
- to use the feedback from the group to propose changes in the way the service is delivered
- to await publication of the Commissioning guidance from NHSE, DOH and the third sector (expected in April 2016) to ensure our services are aligned with national and local strategies
- To communicate the outcome of this review to those involved. (completed March 2016)