

5 Listening Events

We listened to underserved communities, who live in wards characterised by high levels of deprivations.






Barriers encountered to access NHS services

Referrals & (Dis)integrated Care

All groups saw access to GPs as the only way to get access to treatment and services.





Examples of barriers include:

-  Not being aware of services available without GP referral
-  Not knowing about the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) service
-  People being referred around the system and ending up with no diagnosis or no support

Participants reported a lack of continuity of care, both within GP surgeries and with different NHS trusts/services not speaking to each other.

GP Access

All groups encountered great difficulties in accessing their GP, such as:




-  Lengthy queuing times when ringing for an appointment
-  Limited appointments, especially face-to-face ones
-  Overuse of video calls, creating issues for those with poor Internet access or a first language that isn't English
-  Lack of adequate professional interpreters

Women disproportionately carried the burden of trying to get an appointment alongside childcare responsibilities.

Maternity & Paediatric Health

Participants across all four locations raised issues with maternity care and infant health.

Mums-to-be experienced:

-  Feeling like a burden (sometimes due to staff attitude)
-  Difficulty accessing antenatal appointments while pregnancy affected their movement
-  Lack of continuity of care (e.g. meeting a new midwife at each antenatal appointment)

Once their baby was born, parents experienced:

-  Difficulty accessing health visitors
-  Face-to-face calls still being unavailable, with most babies not having a single home visit
-  Closures of local children's centres, leading to parents feeling isolated and unsupported

New mothers found closures / reduced NHS services particularly stressful, as there was nowhere to ask for help if they had questions about their baby's health.

The listening events revealed that austerity measures have taken a huge toll on underserved populations who are now unable to access NHS services.

Partners