






Barriers encountered within NHS services

Language & cultural barriers

4 out of 5 groups reported language as a considerable barrier for effective communication and navigating the healthcare system.

They recounted:





-  Long waits for interpreters, leading to delays and appointment cancellations
-  Being matched with an interpreter who didn't speak their language
-  Overreliance on English-speaking family members, due to lack of adequate professional interpreters
-  Rushed healthcare professionals speaking too fast due to time constraints
-  Phone consultations being more difficult to follow than face-to-face ones when English is not the first language

This, alongside a lack of cultural competence has led to an overall lack of trust in the NHS.

Lack of trust in quality of care

Participants described losing trust and confidence in the NHS and found it difficult to feel 'looked after' or like their health concerns were taken seriously.

They felt the NHS was deteriorating, with:

-  No family GPs with whom they could build a relationship
-  Lengthy referral times, making patients feel overlooked
-  Communication issues (e.g. not communicating cancelled appointments, or referrals getting lost in the system)
-  Lengthy queuing times, especially in A&E, making patients feel unsafe

Many felt uncomfortable or even scared to access healthcare and relied on family members for medical advice, with some looking to alternative medicine over NHS treatments.

5 Listening Events




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



Staff attitudes & behaviour

Participants said they met a lot of friendly experienced healthcare staff, but also encountered poor staff attitudes across multiple services and on a number of occasions.

Participants experienced:




-  Feeling unwelcome or like they were a burden
-  Both subtle and direct rude staff behaviour
-  Receptionists talking loudly, assuming they didn't speak English

Several women experienced being told off by midwives for wasting their time and condescending looks while asking about pain or reduced movements.

Subtle rude behaviour examples:

-  Indifferent tone of voice
-  Poor body language
-  Avoiding eye contact

Direct rude behaviour examples:

-  Sighing
-  Rude language
-  Rolling eyes

The listening events revealed that NHS staff shortages can have a negative impact on patients' experiences of healthcare.

Partners