



I now try and sort myself out as I do not want to go through the trauma of ringing the doctors.



Read one Sefton Residents experience with their GP, NHS 111 and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).



Patient 'A' lives in Sefton and told their story in November 2022...

I got up from my bed and didn't feel well and I had a bad cough and pains in my chest and back.

I phoned my surgery, the answer service said not to come in if you have a cough. I waited for a long time for the phone to be answered as I was in a queue.

The receptionist answered and I told her I didn't feel well and asked for an appointment for the doctor.

She replied this was impossible because I had to go through e-Consult first. I told her I had chest and back pain but she insisted I could only get a doctor through e-Consult.

"I kept telling the receptionist, I didn't feel very well to do this".

At this point I ended the call and went onto the GP website for e-Consult. I started to complete it and put that I had chest and back pains but at the end of the questions it said the form wasn't right and I had to re-do it. I went over it again and took out back pain and just left chest pain in as I thought it wouldn't accept both conditions that I was experiencing.

Throughout this process I was feeling so unwell and I was alone. At the end of the form filling it said it wasn't right again and to phone NHS 111.

"I was feeling so unwell and alone".

Patient A lives in Sefton and told their story in November 2022

I phoned NHS 111, they were very helpful and asked me questions.

111 said someone would be with me within the hour. I then realised and was shocked that she was sending an ambulance. I said I don't want to waste the service, I don't want an ambulance. I was just wanting to see a doctor or get advice, thinking maybe a prescription. I didn't think I was an emergency.

I then waited for the ambulance, they arrived within the hour. I apologized to them straight away, I was very upset with myself for phoning them. I just wanted to see a doctor.

The ambulance team came in and gave me an ECG, they were very good. They checked my breathing and told me I had a lung infection. They put me on oxygen and a nebulizer for 15 mins. After this I started to feel better. They said I needed anti-biotics and asked me which doctors I was with.

"If the ambulance team could tell it was a lung infection from listening to my breathing and checks, surely a GP could have."

I told them which surgery I was with. The paramedic then got on the phone but it took them half an hour to get through to the doctor's surgery. What a waste of their precious time and I felt I was abusing their time, this is how it made me feel.

When she got through she was able to order a prescription and had it sent to the chemist. It was pretty quick, the GP did it straight away. I suppose they felt they had to with it being a paramedic asking.

We asked...

How did this experience make you feel?

When a patient is saying I really don't feel well enough to be doing this, the GP receptionist should have listened to me. I feel this isn't good enough. I am 76 years old and I was on my own. There is no compassion or empathy.

I felt the receptionist had a speech and there was no moving away from this.

I felt exasperated, guilty and ashamed that an ambulance was coming. I was taking up two paramedics time and an ambulance.

"I felt embarrassed and guilty. I didn't want to waste the time of emergency services."

What was the impact on you?

I couldn't stop talking about it for days to people as I was so upset.

My first husband died of a heart attack and my second husband had a heart attack but survived. I kept thinking of both of them. The impact on me was terrible, it brought back my sad memories and I felt embarrassed and guilty.

I didn't want to waste the time of emergency services.

We asked...

How could your doctors surgery improve their services for you and other patients?

 I know they close the GP surgery on a Wednesday for training. They need this on the top of the list to train staff.

They need to think about different patient needs. What about a pensioner who cannot use a computer or has no access to IT. I was not even asked if I had access to IT. I just kept getting it repeated to me that I had to go on e-Consult.

I just wanted to see my doctor. I want to go back in time when you phone up and ask to see a doctor and the receptionist makes an appointment for you. You cannot get through to this surgery. I now try and sort myself out as I do not want to go through the trauma of ringing the doctors.

My husband has been unwell and has Alzheimer's – It is such a struggle to try and get through. I cannot ring when they ask you to as it is too early in the morning and my husband is up and it's too difficult. This system does not work.

The service I received from both NHS 111 and NWAS was fantastic and I could not have asked for a better service. 

"They need training for receptionists, especially" attitude. I know they must be fed up too, but the system needs to change. It is not the receptionist fault as they have to abide by the system, but the system is broken and it needs to change."

We recognise the value of listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.

The patient scored each service using the Healthwatch Sefton Star rating system. 1 star scoring the lowest and 5 stars scoring the highest.

Theme	GP Surgery	NHS 111	NWAS
Overall score	1	5	5
Treatment & Care	1	5	5
Staff attitude	1	5	5
Communication	1	5	5

"We believe that feedback has to lead to change. Listening for listening's sake is not enough." – Healthwatch Sefton

Your voice will make a difference!

What do you want me to do?

Your experiences can help improve care, share your experiences and stories with us.

If you would like share your story and be heard and listened to:

Contact us via

- Email us at info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk
- Telephone us and speak to Mandy on our Freephone number 0800 206 1304

Access our information and support via our website:

- www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk

"Recommend us to friends and family or even get involved and volunteer at your local Healthwatch."



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