



The unfamiliar NHS health system felt uncaring and confusing

We use people's stories to highlight problems, and encourage the NHS to change and improve its services.

Tell us your story today.

healthwatch
Calderdale

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Healthwatch Calderdale was asked to find out about the experiences of Syrian refugees when they **try to access health services. This is one person's story, which was told with the help of an interpreter...**

Mrs B lives in Halifax with her husband, and had been suffering from severe head pain. She tried to make an appointment with her doctor, but she had to wait for a couple of days before she could see him as there weren't any appointments available. When she saw the GP she was just given pain killers, and told that if they didn't work to double the dose. She thinks the doctor should have checked the real reason for the head pain and not just handed out painkillers.

Then three months ago she had severe pain and dizziness and fell to the floor. Her friend phoned the ambulance but they started asking her questions, like "Put your hand on her heart and see if it is still beating". Then when no ambulance arrived they had to get a friend to take Mrs B to A&E at the hospital.

She was told she would have to wait three hours for treatment but she refused as she was in a lot of pain, so they brought her a doctor who just asked her a few questions then gave her painkillers. She thinks the medication didn't work well because she was not checked properly by the doctor at the hospital.

'In Syria where we used to live, and in Jordan which we travelled through, the health services seemed much better. Here the ambulance doesn't come quickly, you might be nearly dying before it gets to you. Somebody has nearly died and they take him to the ambulance and start asking him what is your name, what is this, what is that - Just take him to the hospital!'

What did this mean for Mrs A and the NHS...?

She did not feel that her symptoms were taken seriously by the GP or hospital

She could have taken too many painkillers without realising the dangers

She has little faith in the way the NHS works, so may not access services in the future when she really needs to.

Healthwatch Calderdale will contact Calderdale Local Medical Committee and Calderdale Clinical Commissioning Group regarding the feedback about GP Practices, and Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust regarding the feedback about hospital services, to ask them how they plan to address the issues identified.



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