



Lack of an interpreter led to repeated visits to the GP and medication being taken incorrectly

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

Mrs E lives in Halifax with her family, and has been struggling to get treatment from her GP. She had **been to see him several times but she didn't have anyone to interpret for her, so she was advised by her supporter to ask the GP practice to use a telephone interpreting service in future.**

Mrs E said *'Once the GP did use a telephone interpreter when I went for my stomach ache, but the line was cut off after two minutes so it didn't work well. I was given medication and told to go back if I didn't feel better after two weeks. After two weeks I went back to the GP again and he tried to use Google Translate as he couldn't understand me, but I couldn't understand him as it wasn't accurate.'*

After this Mrs E had some tests done which showed that she needed treatment, so she was sent a message on her mobile to collect some medication. When she got the medication no one explained to her how to take it, so she tried to read the instructions but misunderstood them and took only one spoon twice a day, instead of two spoonful's four times a day which would have been the right dose. She then developed a very severe pain in her stomach.

'I then had another GP appointment with my son, so I took my medication with me and told him I had taken it but was still not well. Because there was no interpreter the GP thought I wanted a repeat medication but he still didn't tell me how to use it. Then my supporter read the information with my medication and told me how to take it. Then I went back to my GP with my supporter and told them what had happened, and they promised to phone an interpreter in future. Today I had to go to the GP for a blood test because I am losing my hair, but they didn't use an interpreter...'

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

Mrs E had to make repeated visits to the GP for the same condition because of a basic lack of communication

Without the help of her support worker Mrs E might not have been able to take her medication correctly, or explain her communication needs to her GP

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



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