

Public questions – South Staffordshire PCCC – 24 September 2020

John Bridges - Vice Chair East Staffs CCG Patient Board and East Staffs District Patient Engagement Group

I have had a number of queries re ear syringing at the GP's. The main comment has been that why can't it be by the GP surgery but can be at Boots and Specsavers. Was able to check and confirm that GP's tend to use water which under COVID restrictions is not possible and also has risks in terms of possible damage to the eardrum etc whilst both Boots and Specsavers use a suction method which is safe to use and also less risk.

The costs associated with this are £50 Boots, £55 Specsavers. People who have been making these inquiries have also asked will this be the norm going forward and in future will not be available via the GP??

If this becomes a chargeable service there will be people who can't afford the charge and are going to become even more lonely and isolated which will enormously impact their health and wellbeing. Many older people rely on TV's or the radio as their only company, can you imagine if they can't hear it? There is also the danger of further health complications by not having the syringing done.

In addition, the above company's may push people into buying hearing aids which may not be necessary

Going forward why do surgeries not consider changing to the suction method for ear syringing?

CCG Response: Lynn Millar advised that this is not a service provided in primary care however there are community services that do provide this service. There does appear to be a gap in East Staffordshire however and this would be discussed with Nicky Harkness, Managing Director for East Staffordshire and an updated provided at the next Committee.