

Homerton Foot Health Service Update

Service Summary

Foot Health Service provided by Homerton CHS

The service provides care, assessment, diagnosis, and advice for all conditions with a medical need, including developmental problems affecting the foot and lower limb.

Key care pathways are for **diabetes, vascular disease, rheumatology and surgical issues.**

General care is offered to patients who require care based on clinical/medical needs to prevent mobility issues, falls and allow for independent living.

The service access ranges from:

- daily walk in emergency clinic (Mon-Fri) as well as home visits including care homes and a homeless service.
- Satellite clinics are provided at Kenworthy Road, John Scott Health Centre, Greenhouse, the Homerton and the Neaman Practice

In normal times the service has extremely low wait times when compared to similar services in other boroughs – usually less than 2-3 weeks

Benefits patients by reducing pain, maintaining mobility and independence, and reducing diabetic foot complications

COVID-19 Impact

Impact of COVID-19 on service

In March in accordance with national guidance all routine services were suspended to protect staff and patients.

This meant that all satellite clinics were closed at Kenworthy Road, John Scott Health Centre, Greenhouse, the Homerton and the Neaman Practice. The clinic at St Leonards remained open during the pandemic.

High risk patients and new high risk referrals were prioritised and seen in clinic (St Leonards) or by home visits which were increased for the duration of the lockdown.

- Urgent is clinically defined as: high risk patients with active ulcerations/or likely to ulcerate
- The service continued to provide daily urgent clinics at St Leonard's Hospital but by appointment only, urgent domiciliary visits, and support to GPs and other clinicians by phone/email
- Where appointments were cancelled- the service called the patient or sent a letter- if they weren't able to make contact by phone
- The service provided appointments 'virtually' where possible – using the telephone or video consultations (Attend Anywhere)

Note: Hoxton Health, a local charity who provides some nail-cutting to patients not eligible for routine foot health care has temporarily closed its clinic services.

Recovery

Foot Health Service Recovery

The service has been working to recover from the suspension of routine services since June. New infection prevention and control measures need to be in place to protect patients and staff- this has taken time to set up at St Leonards and the satellite community sites and has the impact of reducing the number of patients the service can see per session due to social distancing requirements and other additional measures being in place (including additional cleaning and COVID 19 screening questions at point of entry). For this reason the previous urgent 'walk in 'service at St Leonards is now appointment only.

The service are prioritising patients and had over 1,000 higher risk patients to be seen first. This is why many **low risk** patients have been much waiting longer than normal.

Satellite Clinics:

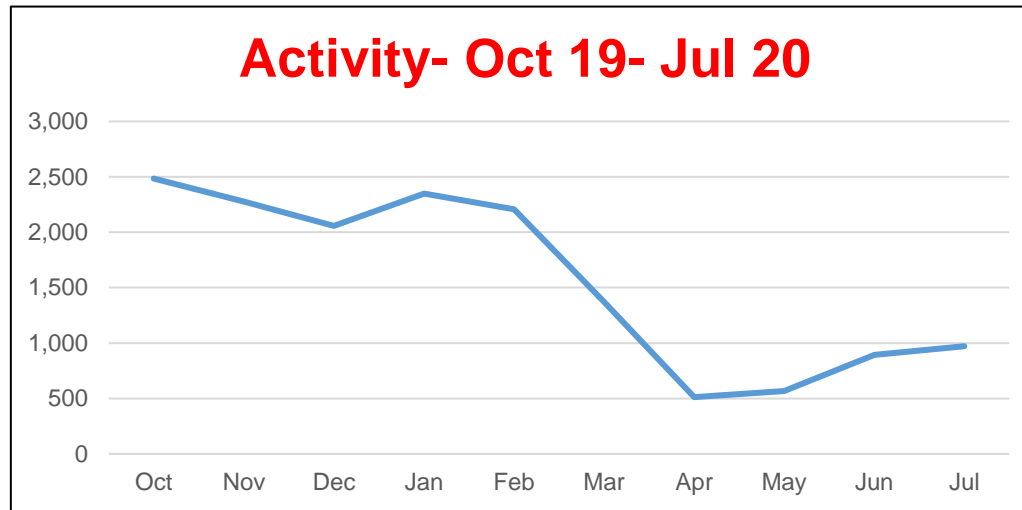
- Neaman Practice will re-open in November (low numbers attend and this sees less complex, low-risk cases)
- John Scott Health Centre is now open and will be the main site seeing routine patients
- City patients are being seen at St Leonards and the service is arranging transport for patients who need to travel
- The service is prioritising all high risk patients waiting and is working to clear the backlog of high risk waiters within the next 4-6 weeks .
- Waiting times for routine patients are currently longer than normal but the service is working towards returning to a 2-3 week wait by the end of this calendar year

Recovery

The CCG is monitoring the recovery with the Foot Health Service and reviewing options including:

- Additional resources to clear the back log at Foot Health
- Alternatives to podiatry, including preventative measures
- The CCG is in discussion with Hoxton Health in how to support them to reopen clinics and increase domiciliary visiting
- PCNs could consider recruiting a podiatrist via the PCN DES role funding that could help support general foot care outside of Foot Health. This will be raised and discussed.
- Better messaging – many routine patients who were used to being seen every 6-12 weeks have had to wait longer. These patients are generally low risk and will be seen again in the next 4-6 weeks.
- Supporting communication – to encourage patients to attend John Scott HC (where appropriate) and where capacity is available

Service Activity and Waiting Times



- Pre-COVID monthly activity: 2,300
- July activity: 1,000
- Feedback from service is more rapidly increasing activity with clinics re-opening
- Pre-COVID average waiting time: 2.8 weeks
- The service target average waiting time is 5 weeks
- Current waiting time: 10 weeks for routine appointments
- Approximately 500 high priority patients waiting to be seen (reduced from 1000)