



Orthotics Report

Experiences of patients using orthotics at the University of
Derby and Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



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1. Thank you

Healthwatch Derbyshire would like to thank all participants who gave their time to talk to us about their experiences of using the Orthotics Department at the University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust (UHDB). We also extend our thanks to the orthotics team/department who supported and cooperated with this engagement activity.

2. Disclaimer

The comments outlined in this report should be taken in the context that they are not representative of all patients, family, friends and carers who have experience of the orthotics services at UHDB but nevertheless offer a useful insight. It is important to note that the engagement was carried out within a specific time frame and therefore, this only provides a snapshot of patient experience collected at that point in time. The report outlines the genuine thoughts, feelings and issues that patients, families, friends and carers have conveyed to Healthwatch Derbyshire. The data should be used in conjunction with, and to complement, other sources of data that are available.

3. Background

Healthwatch Derbyshire is an independent voice for the people of Derbyshire. We are here to listen to the experiences of Derbyshire residents and give them a stronger say in influencing how local health and social care services are provided.

We listen to what people have to say about their experiences of using health and social care services and feed this information through to those responsible for providing the services. We also ensure services are held to account for how they use this feedback to influence the way services are designed and run.

Healthwatch Derbyshire was set up in April 2013 as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and is part of a network of local Healthwatch organisations covering every local authority across England.

The Healthwatch network is supported in its work by Healthwatch England who build a national picture of the issues that matter most to health and social care users and will ensure that this evidence is used to influence those who plan and run services at a national level.

3.1 What are orthotics?

According to NHS England (2015), "Orthotic services play an essential role in enabling quality of life for people with long term conditions, disabilities and limb loss ... Orthotics are a speciality involving application of external devices to the body to support and improve posture, function and mobility and manage pain and deformity. Orthoses is the term used to describe the external devices and includes insoles, braces, splints, callipers, footwear, spinal jackets and helmets. Compression hosiery can sometimes be provided as part of the orthotics service. Orthotists are generally the designated professionals responsible for the assessment, prescription, design, manufacture and fitting of orthoses to patients.

The role of the Orthotist is to consider and discuss with the patient the type of orthoses that will best meet his or her needs. Increasingly, this role is undertaken by other allied health professionals involved in a patient's care such as podiatrists, physiotherapists and others."

For more information, visit NHS England, orthotic services:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/orthotic-services/>

4. Rationale for the report

To ensure a diverse range of individuals are able to share their views on local health and social care services, Healthwatch Derbyshire undertake targeted pieces of work, paying specific attention to those who may otherwise struggle to be heard. The Intelligence, Insight and Action (IIA) sub group of Healthwatch Derbyshire, who regularly appraise all the comments and experiences received by the organisation, recommended this engagement priority to further explore comments received by Healthwatch Derbyshire and provide the UHDB with more independent patient feedback around the orthotics service to be incorporated into their service improvement plan.

5. What we did in brief

To collect consistent information, a series of questions (prompt sheets) were developed to provide a framework for discussions. These were based around the comments and themes already received by Healthwatch Derbyshire. Prior to the engagement, the prompt was shared with the UHDB to ask for comments or particular questions to be included as an addition. This was to ensure that the feedback received from patients would be valuable and be used to influence service delivery.

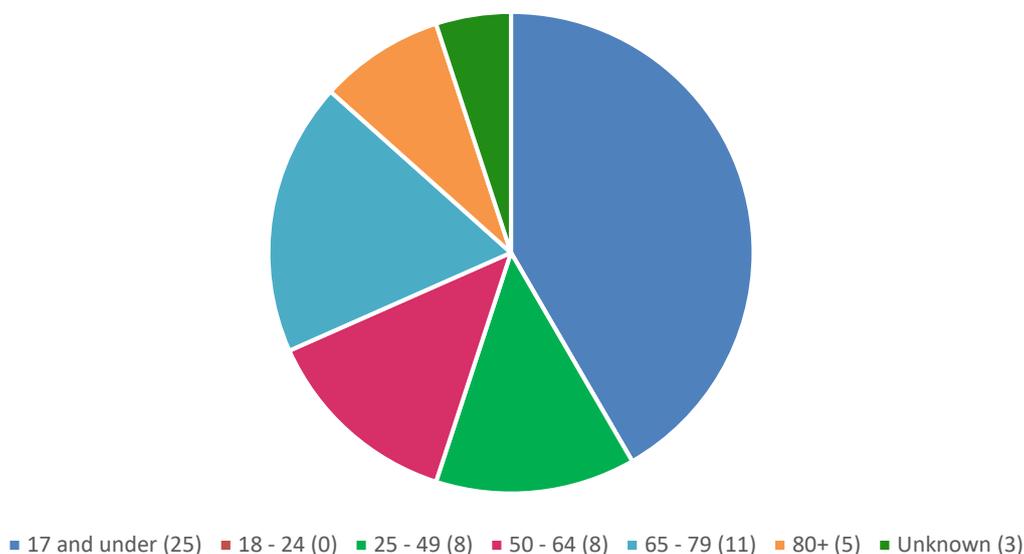
5.1 Methods of engagement

The engagement was carried out by two engagement officers (EOs) between 28th November 2018 and 16th January 2019.

EOs spoke to 60 patients in total about their experiences of orthotic services during this period and conducted a total of seven visits to the orthotics clinics at UHDB in which time was spent within the waiting areas talking with patients before and after their appointments.

The chart below shows the age of the participants:

Age of participant



The report is divided into two sections:

- Children and young people (CAYP) aged 17 and under
- Adults aged 18 and over.

6. Key findings

- Most CAYP received their initial appointment within six weeks, whilst others had to wait several months. In terms of adults, some were seen quite quickly and others had to wait up to six months for their initial appointment
- Many people (both CAYP and adults) explained they would appreciate an acknowledgement of referral
- All CAYP and adults using orthotics felt their needs were properly assessed during their initial appointment
- Most CAYP and adults were happy with the length of time between their first appointment and receiving their orthoses. This was particularly the case for people requiring insoles
- People appreciated being provided with an estimated time for the wait for their initial appointment
- Experiences varied with regards to the orthoses being 'right the first time' for both CAYP and adults. However, parents highlighted the importance for this to be the case especially for CAYP as this can cause the original measurements to be no longer correct
- Most CAYP who required repairs and/or replacements of their orthoses felt they had to wait 'too long' compared to adults who were usually happy with the length of time in which it took to receive their orthoses. However, some adults explained

the most time consuming aspect was getting the initial appointment for the new measurements

- Many CAYP and adults were unsure as to how many orthoses they were entitled to
- It seemed that people appreciated when staff were honest with regards to long wait and delays
- Most people were happy with the quality of their orthoses, however some CAYP felt there was limited choice on footwear and some adults explained they only had one pair of footwear and therefore easily become 'worn out'
- Majority of the CAYP and adults explained their orthoses had made a positive difference to their lives
- All CAYP, their parent/carers and adults explained how friendly and helpful they found all the staff within the orthotics department at London Road Community Hospital (LRCH)
- Some parent/carers had concerns around leaving answerphone messages as they were unsure as to when they would hear back
- Some adults were not told when to expect their next appointment, and there appeared to be a difficulty in contacting the department to chase this up
- LRCH seemed to be in a good location for the orthotics department.

7. What people told us

7.1 Children and young people (aged 17 and under)

We spoke to a total of 25 children and young people. Majority of the CAYP we spoke to were either on their first appointment (five) or second appointment (six) and the other CAYP had been using the service between three and 15 years.

A high proportion of CAYP were under orthotics for insoles, footwear and splints. However some received braces, helmets and standing frames.

➤ **Waiting times for first appointments**

In terms of the CAYP who had started using the service within the last 12 months, most received their initial appointment within six weeks, whilst others had to wait several months. Some people described their wait as, 'quite quick/not that long' and others explained the wait was simply 'too long'.

Sample of comments:

- "About three months. I chased up the referral as I was unsure if it had been made. I wish there was way of confirming the referral."
- "Two to three months but it doesn't really bother me because people probably wait much longer than me. I am just grateful for getting the support."

- “About three months. I chased up the referral as I was unsure if it had been made. I wish there was way of confirming the referral.”
- “We did have to wait a while, I think it was about five months. I had to chase it up a few times through the doctors.”.

➤ **Needs assessed during first appointment**

In terms of the initial assessment, all CAYP and parent/carers felt their needs were properly assessed.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes, nothing was missed.”
- “Yes, they measured my feet and I asked the questions I wanted.”
- “Yes, they were very good with him and he did not get distressed.”.

➤ **Length of time before receiving orthoses**

There appeared to be mixed experiences regarding the length of time between a first appointments and receiving the orthoses. Most CAYP received their orthoses within a few weeks (usually within six weeks), this seemed to be the case for many CAYP who used insoles and splints. However, there were a few CAYP who had to wait a little longer.

Sample of comments:

- “The shoes take over six weeks and once it took three months.”
- “A reasonable amount of time. I have never thought it was too long.” (splints)
- “It is a long wait for the casting, I think we waited about six weeks.” (splints)
- “Three weeks which is very good as it is over the Christmas period.”(insole)
- “We are here (on their second appointment) to pick them up, so it has only been a few weeks.” (footwear).

➤ **Receiving the orthoses**

In terms of orthoses being ‘right the first time’ again experiences varied. Some CAYP explained their support was fine the first time, whereas other had to have alterations due to the support not fitting correctly.

Some parents explained the importance of orthoses being ‘right the first time’ especially for children because if a child is left waiting for a lengthy period of time without the correct support their original measurements may no longer be correct, causing additional alterations and an even longer wait.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes so far, I am walking more confidently already.” (insole)
- “The shoes are usually right but the insoles often are not. My daughter needs an individualised one and it was disappointing that we were just given a standard one and told to ‘see how it goes’. It will take more weeks to get it sorted and this will be lengthened because of Christmas and New Year. This is not good enough for children and my daughter is not able to be mobile without the insert as she is in so much pain.”
- “In the past they were mainly correct. However as he is now growing quickly it gets harder. He will come for his fitting and the few weeks it takes for the splint to be delivered he will have grown again. Now there are amendments required almost every time.” (splints)
- “Sort of, but we have had a lot of trouble with rubbing. Sometimes the size can be a bit out and they can start to rub so they are sent off for amendments but this can take quite a few weeks.” (splints).

➤ **Repairs and replacements**

Over half of the CAYP who have required repairs and/or replacements of their orthoses felt they had to wait ‘too long’ to receive their orthoses. Many explained the difficulties that delays and long waits cause, as CAYP can be in pain due to their orthoses no longer fitting correctly and in some cases, when orthoses are being repaired it can leave a child without the required support.

Furthermore, one parent explained that they had to ‘fight’ to get an additional pair of footwear for their child. It was felt that children should be able to have more than one pair, due to how quickly they can need repairing. In contrast, another parent was unhappy as her child had only been provided with one insole but had two pairs of shoes and felt this made ‘no sense’ and caused her daughter to have to repeatedly change her insoles throughout the day.

Sample of comments:

- “As said before, many repairs have been required to the shoes with regards to durability as they often have to have the soles and heels redone. This is difficult when they only have one pair of shoes.”
- “It [the splint] was causing him a lot of pain, he was also out growing them so I phoned for an appointment. This was before the six weeks holidays and we only had the appointment for his casting three to four weeks ago. I am usually really happy with them but because the splint was really rubbing he could not wear them, so he has been falling over and injuring himself.”
- “Yes, when my son has out grown his splints, it can take about three months to get an appointment and this is too long.”

- “Over the years repairs have been needed and they always take longer than I would like. It is not the fault of the staff but because there is not enough resources put into orthotics.” (footwear and insoles)
- “We had to fight to get two pairs of shoes as usually you are only allowed one. This is not good for someone to wear the same shoe all the time.”
- “It is not healthy to wear the same shoes/insoles all the time ... I would like more resources put into orthotics especially for children.”

➤ **Long waits and delays**

In terms of whether long waits and delays were communicated to patients, most people were aware of the potential long waits/delays however, there were a number of people who felt that long/waits delays were not communicated. It seemed that people appreciated when staff were honest with regards to waiting times.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes, the receptionists at LRCH are very good, open and honest with things.”
- “Yes, they told us today that the workshop will be closed over Christmas so we may need to wait one or two weeks longer.”
- “Most of the time they have over the years but sometimes not which is why we were asked to contact the manufacturer direct. It is not a delay as such but it takes six weeks to get an appointment and then about four weeks to get new shoes. This is a long time for a fast growing child.”

➤ **Quality of products**

In terms of the quality of orthoses, most CAYP and parent/carers explained they were happy with the quality and rated them as good. However, some people felt there was limited choice particularly in terms of footwear. Also, for CAYP who require splints there seemed to be a few issues with regards to comfort.

Sample of comments:

- “The shoes are good and the insoles are okay when they are made specifically for my daughter. It is a shame that my daughter cannot have sandals and only has a limited choice of shoes to pick from the catalogue.”
- “They are good but we have had quite a bit of trouble with splints, they could do with more padding. Especially in the summer when it is hot and he starts to swell a bit, they really rub him.”
- “We have had a few issues with one of the screws/bolts coming out and it rips her skin. This has happened a couple of times and it means she can no longer wear it and this means she has to use her wheelchair.” (splints)

- “I am happy with them and my son gets to choose the type of design on them. The shoes were hard to put on at first but he now has the ones where the back comes down and this makes them much easier to get on and off.”
- “Not as good as I would hope as the manufacturers do not take into account how hard young people are on their shoes as they are very active, more so than adults.”.

➤ **Difference made by orthoses**

All CAYP and parent/carers explained their orthoses had made a positive difference to their lives, except one young person who struggled to walk in splints.

Sample of comments:

- “Splints hindered him a bit as he struggled to walk with them and he tripped over quite a bit. So we are happy he is going to get some boots.”
- “Yes she cannot walk without her splints.”
- “Yes definitely, her curly foot is nearly straight so hopefully this may be her last pair of boots.”.

➤ **Staff approach**

All CAYP and parent/carers explained how friendly and helpful they found all the staff within the orthotics department at LRCH.

Furthermore, it was explained that if people had any questions they were always answered satisfactorily by a member of staff with the department.

Sample of comments:

- “Brilliant, we came the other week and there was a queue, the receptionist made eye contact with us and said 'be with you in a minute' it is nice to know you are being acknowledged.”
- “They are very nice and explain things to me.”
- “Everyone over the years have been very nice and they clearly explain things to my daughter now she is getting older.”
- “Yes, [named professional] is absolutely brilliant at explaining things, he has a great manner and he speaks to me and not my dad.”
- “Nice, friendly and were happy to answer all the questions I had.”
- “They were lovely and very kind to him as he easily gets distressed.”
- “Yes we have questions and they are always answered properly.”
- “I am very grateful, on my first appointment they were very considerate of me, I struggle with anxiety and they were aware of that and made sure I was okay.”.

➤ **Communication**

In terms of contacting the orthotics department, most people found it easy to do so, and many people felt there had never been a need to contact the department over the phone as they were provided with all the information they need within a written letter.

However, some parent/carers explained they had left answerphone messages when they were unable to get through to the department which have always been picked up. However, some people felt this caused worry as they were unsure whether they would hear back or not.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes LRCH receptionists keep me updated and leave me messages on my phone if I can’t pick up.”
- “They do a great job, they always tell me what I need to do and what I need to bring for the appointments.”
- “It is frustrating when you have to leave a message and then you worry if they are going to get back to you or not.”
- “It can be difficult, I think sometimes they are under staffed.”
- “It is much easier to get through to the department since they moved to LRCH.”
- “It is okay, they have got back to us when we have left messages and queries.”

➤ **Improvements to communication**

In terms of possible improvements that could be made in regards to communication a number of suggestions were made which include:

1. Better communication between the manufactures and NHS staff to speed up production
2. To have a commitment on how soon the department will return answer phone messages
3. To receive text reminders for appointments and reviews
4. To receive an acknowledgement once a referral has been made so people are aware of how long they may be expected to wait before their first appointment
5. To make patients aware of cancellations, as this would reduce the waiting time for people.

➤ **Location of clinics**

It would appear that most parent/carers felt that it was easier to travel to LRCH rather than the Royal Derby Hospital (RDH). LRCH seemed to be in a good location (near to the city centre) so people were able to travel by bus, and also people commented on how it was much easier to park at LRCH.

Sample of comments:

- “It is easier to get to LRCH.”
- “It is fine at LRCH, much better than at RDH we would probably still be trying to park now.”
- “It is very easy to get to LRCH much better location than RDH.”
- “I prefer to come here (LRCH) rather than RDH it is just much easier and easy to get to by car.”.

7.2 Adults (aged 18 and over)

We spoke to a total of 35 adults, most of the adults we spoke to were either on their first appointment (nine) or second appointment (four) and the other adults had been using orthotics between ‘a few months’ and since they were a child.

A high proportion of adults were under orthotics for insoles and footwear, whilst others used splints, callipers and braces.

➤ **Waiting times for first appointments**

In terms of adults who had started using the service within the last 12 months, some described their wait as ‘very quick’ however, others had to wait between two and six months for their initial appointment.

Sample of comments:

- “Six months, but I think this was due to poor communication between different departments. We struggled to get through to LRCH to chase the referral.”
- “About six to seven weeks. Very happy with wait.”
- “About six months. I went to the GP to say my insoles were no longer working and rather than just getting replacement I felt I needed a new fitting. I went in June and forgot about the appointment. I have heard nothing in between and that is why I forgot.”
- “About three months. I was OK with the timescale as it was not urgent.”
- “I have been waiting five months. I was told there would be long wait so I was happy with that. If it was urgent I hope I would not have to wait for so long.”.

➤ **Needs assessed during first appointment**

In terms of the initial assessment, all adults felt their needs were properly assessed and majority found their first appointment to be informative and straight to the point.

Sample of comments:

- “They were very informative and I have another appointment next Monday (less than one week) to collect the insoles.”
- “Very good as I did not have to ask any questions as they were straightforward with me.”
- “Yes, a very thorough assessment. They used a tape measure to measure my foot. I was confident in the member of staff.”
- “Yes I feel someone has actually listened to me for the first time in ages. They have scanned my foot today and hopefully it will now begin to improve.”
- “Yes I did, but I thought they would have had more of an idea on pain relief and pain management, I did think the first appointment would have been more useful but it was just about measuring.”.

➤ **Length of time before receiving orthoses**

Majority of the adults we spoke to, who had started to use the service within the last 12 months, were happy about the length of time they had to wait between their initial appointment and receiving their orthoses. Some adults who needed insoles received them on the day, whilst others had to wait several weeks however, it seemed people were made aware of an estimated time for the wait at their initial appointment, so they knew how long they could be expected to wait.

Sample of comments:

- “Six weeks altogether fantastic service.” (insoles)
- “It would have been quite quick (few weeks) but I had to cancel and got another appointment for early January, which was quite easy to do.” (footwear)
- “Hopefully it will be about five weeks but they are not 100% as mine is a bit more complex.” (footwear and insoles)
- “I was given one straightaway on my first visit to take home and try. After two weeks they rang to see how I was and they said I could come and collect my individual one.” (insoles)
- “I have been given something today but I was expecting to wait for a few weeks.” (insoles)
- “It is usually around six to eight weeks for the shoes.”.

➤ **Receiving the orthoses**

In terms of orthoses being ‘right the first time’ experiences varied. Some adults explained their support was fine the first time, whereas others had to have alterations due to the support not fitting correctly.

A number of adults were unable to comment as to whether their support was 'right the first time' as they were advised that they would need to try it/them for several weeks and return for alterations if needed.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes but they come as a basic package I believe, so they have to go back for alterations. For the alterations it is maybe about a fortnight to a month, just depends how busy they are I suppose.” (footwear and insoles)
- “I have found not, I usually have to have them adjusted.” (footwear and insoles)
- “It fits fine but I have got to try them out for six weeks.” (footwear)
- “It did have to go back a time or two, but it didn’t take that long.”(footwear)
- “No this time around it was totally wrong and so I had to be measured again and everything so it took another two months. I don’t know why it was so wrong. It must have cost a lot in staff time and money to make it completely wrong and my time of coming out of work.” (brace).

➤ **Repairs and replacements**

The majority of the adults we spoke to had needed a replacement of their orthoses at some point. Most adults were happy with the length of time in which it took to receive their replacement however, some felt the most difficult aspect was getting the initial appointment to see the orthotists for the new measurements, once this stage had passed everything seemed to happen fairly quickly.

It could also be suggested, that not all adults were aware of how many pairs of footwear they were entitled too.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes, I have had to have a few replacements maybe about two or three times now, because I have lost some more toes due to my diabetes. It seems to happen quite quickly.” (footwear)
- “Several amendments and replacements over the years. Usually sorted within the month.” (splints and insoles)
- “It has taken me six weeks to get an appointment to be measured and now I have got to wait again to get the shoes, so it can be quite long.” (footwear)
- “Sometimes you only get one pair of shoes so they do become worn out quite quickly as you only have the one pair to wear. I have now been told I can have up to three pairs. I rang up in early December for an appointment and I am here today (early January) for a fitting so I got this pretty quickly.” (footwear)
- “The longest thing is waiting to see the orthotists, once you have been measured everything else happens quickly.” (footwear).

➤ **Long waits and delays**

Experiences of whether long waits and delays were communicated varied. Some people were fully aware of how long they could be expected to wait, whereas others felt they had not been informed and therefore had to ring the department to chase.

It would appear that people prefer when staff provide an 'estimated waiting time' and communicate delays effectively.

Sample of comments:

- "I was not told about the long wait for the inserts and I had to keep chasing it up. They did eventually ring to say they had arrived."
- "No, not about the wait to get an appointment and why do they not let you know about cancellations?"
- "Yes, they let you have a timeframe."
- "Yes, when you ring up they do explain the current waiting times to you."

➤ **Quality of products**

In terms of the quality of orthoses, most adults were happy with the quality. However, there appeared to be a number of issues with footwear as many people explained they only had one pair, so due to having to wear them every day they can begin to look quite worn out fairly quickly and they are not always suitable for all weather conditions.

Sample of comments:

- "Okay as they last about a year but I have to constantly change them between shoes." (insoles)
- "Very good, they are really comfy but I do a lot of walking and I only have one pair." (footwear)
- "I have got wool ones as they are more flexible, but they are not good in the winter, your feet get wet and they do not look smart." (footwear)
- "They didn't look like this in the catalogue, they are a lot bulkier than on the pictures. It could knock my confidence. But I am grateful for the support and hopefully they will do the job." (footwear)
- "Insoles are okay but for the shoes, there should be more choice and better design to make them look 'normal'. You also have to be so careful with them because you only get one pair, so you wear them all the time and you have to be careful not to scuff them." (footwear)
- "Yes very happy with the quality of the shoes."
- "The pictures in the shoe catalogue do not truly represent what the shoes look like on arrival. In this age orthotic shoes should be more realistic and not look institutionalised ...".

➤ **Difference made by orthoses**

Not all adults were able to comment around whether or not their orthoses had made a positive difference to their lives due to only very recently receiving their support. However, all that commented explained how much of a positive difference their support had made to their life.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes it has but I do have to be careful where I walk so my foot doesn’t get wet.”
- “Yes, much better than walking off balance.” (footwear)
- “Yes, I am walking better already.” (insole)
- “Very much so, I would not be able to get them from anywhere else.” (insoles and footwear)
- “Very much so, I am a diabetic with flat feet so the discomfort has gone away since I have been wearing these shoes.”

➤ **Staff approach**

All adults explained how good and helpful they had found the staff to be within the orthotics department at LRCH.

Additionally, most people explained that if they had any questions they were always answered satisfactorily by a member of staff within the department. However, there were a few comments where additional steps could have been taken to ensure the patients were fully informed.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes, the staff are helpful.”
- “They are very polite to me.”
- “They are very helpful and they answer my questions well. I did have an appointment for yesterday but as I have to use public transport I was too late yesterday. I explained the situation and they understood and I managed to get a cancellation for today.”
- “They are very good here and very obliging, we are very lucky.”
- “The staff are very helpful, my questions are always answered, they give you options. For example, I am allowed two pairs of shoes so if the ones I have now help me, I will be able to look at getting another pair and I could maybe get a summer shoe that isn't as bulky.”
- “Yes it is pretty clear but they tell you everything verbally and very quick. Being old I sometimes forget things and I wish they would write the instructions down of what to do. I know it is quite simple but I would prefer just a few bullet points to remind me what to do and when, for example whether to wear them (splints) in bed or not.”

- “Yes usually, though they could have emphasised over the years the importance and long term significance of me wearing the support and so it may have had more of a positive effect.”
- “Brilliant, they are informative, I know what to expect and there is no surprises.”.

➤ **Communication**

In terms of contacting the orthotics department, most people found it easy to do so, and many explained they had a direct number for the department but had not yet felt there had been a need to contact the department.

A number of comments suggest not everyone was told when to expect their next appointment, and there appeared to be a difficulty in contacting the department to chase this up.

Sample of comments:

- “Yes very easy, I have a direct number for the clinic.”
- “Yes I can get through when I need to. It is easier to get through to LRCH.”
- “Yes, but they do not let you know about appointments as you have to contact them.”
- “I came in person to make an appointment as I had not heard anything and I was at the hospital within another department.”
- “Sometimes it is hard to get through, I once tried over four times and there was no answer.”.

➤ **Improvements to communication**

In terms of possible improvements that could be made in regards to communication a number of suggestions were made which include:

1. Written instructions on how and when to wear support
2. To receive an acknowledgement once a referral has been made so people are aware of how long they may be expected to wait before their first appointment
3. For staff to promote the positive effects orthoses can have on patients, as this could encourage people to wear them correctly for the right amount of time
4. To ensure that all patients are aware of potential delays
5. Better communication between the manufactures and NHS staff to speed up production and to ensure the orthoses are correct
6. To receive text reminders for appointments and reviews.

➤ **Location of clinics**

It would appear that most people felt that it was easier to travel to LRCH rather than the RDH. LRCH seemed to be in a good location (near to the city centre) so people were able to travel by bus, and also people commented on how it was much easier to park at LRCH.

However, some people who had less mobility and were not able to walk from the city centre seemed to prefer RDH due the fact they were able to get off the bus directly outside the hospital.

One person explained they preferred RDH as this is where the workshop is located and she used to be able to sit and wait for small amendments to be done, however they now have to be sent between LRCH and RDH which causes an additional wait. Also, another person explained that at LRCH, there is a lack of space within the consultation room to test the orthoses out within the appointment before going home, compared with RDH where there is plenty of space to walk/move around within the room.

Sample of comments:

- “I used EMAS [East Midlands Ambulance Service] patient transport and I am very happy with the service, they bring us right to the department and collect us so it works very well.”
- “I got the bus which dropped me off a few minutes’ walk away and I was able to find the clinic okay.”
- “Parking was so easy I could not believe it. Maybe there could be some better signs on how to get to the clinic from downstairs between the lifts and the stairs to ensure new patients know where to go”
- “Dead easy, parking can be difficult sometimes but you usually get a space within one minute, it is nothing like the Royal.”
- “Fine, it isn’t far from the bus station, but I do find it much easier to go to RDH because I can get the bus right outside.”
- “I think it is fine here, it is much easier than RDH.”
- “It is not as good for me at LRCH, they have the workshop at RDH so they used to do some of my changes there and then for me, now I have to have an appointment for measurements and they have to be sent back to the workshop, so I have to have more and more visits to get it right. It can result in me waiting up to a year for alterations rather than a few months. But I do understand it is very complex and it does take a long time.”
- “Fine I come by car, I used to be able to pick my boots up from Swadlincote Health Centre which was much easier for me.”
- “One thing they do lack here at LRCH is the space to try things out, the rooms are all quite small so you can only do one or two steps but at RDH they have rails and things to help you.”.

8. What should happen now?

1. Look to provide acknowledgements of referrals, so people know they are on the system and how long they could be expected to wait for their initial appointment
2. Work to ensure orthoses are ‘right the first time’ and minimise the amount of amendments required (where possible)
3. Ensure all patients are aware of how many orthosis they are entitled to
4. To consider providing written instructions on how and when to wear orthoses if required
5. For staff to promote the positive effects that orthoses can have on patients, as this could encourage people to wear them correctly for the right amount of time
6. To ensure systems are in place to notify people of potential delays or long waits
7. Better communication between the manufactures and NHS staff to speed up production and to ensure the orthoses are correct
8. To send text or letter reminders to patients for appointments and review are due
9. Look to see if an answerphone message could be recorded to let people know when they can expect to hear back
10. To make patients aware of cancellations, as this would reduce the waiting time for people.

9. Response from service provider

Thank you for your recent report that we have found very informative and useful for managing our department in the future. Orthotic Services at UHDB deliver approximately 10,000 patient contacts per year. This key out-patient service plays an integral part in many of the Trusts pathways such as Orthopaedics, Paediatrics, and Diabetes. Structured patient feedback contained within this report is most welcome and has provided valuable insight into the areas of both good practice, and those that require further consideration. Please find below a discussion of the points 1-10 highlighted as “what should happen now”.

What should happen now?	What we (UHDB, Orthotics) are doing
Look to provide acknowledgements of referrals, so people know they are on the system and how long they could be expected to wait for their initial appointment	Currently the waiting time for new appointments is approximately 6 weeks. Our aim is to send an appointment out to patients within seven days of the receipt of the referral. This appointment letter will provide the acknowledgement of referral. If we are unable to achieve this target then we will send out an acknowledgement letter of referral to our new patients.
Work to ensure orthoses are ‘right the first time’ and minimise the amount of amendments required (where possible)	Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We acknowledge that we should be working to the “right first time” principles as much as possible. With this in mind we have recently started a process of BS9000 quality assurance registration. This assurance programme will further ensure that the orthotic devices are manufactured to a standard agreed quality. However, many of our devices are bespoke and individual to our

	patients and therefore minor adjustments are inevitable. Fire regulations have prohibited us from installing a workshop within the current location of Orthotic Services. We are currently evaluating alternative solutions to overcome this problem.
Ensure all patients are aware of how many orthosis they are entitled to	The entitlement of the number of appliances that should be supplied to patients is governed by the purchasing contracts from the CCG's. We can make this information more visible by placing a poster in the clinic area that details entitlements.
To consider providing written instructions on how and when to wear orthoses if required	We have a number of templates developed within our clinical notes package that detail instructions to use orthoses. This system automatically personalises the information sheets with name and date and saves it to the clinical notes system. Unfortunately, the Orthotists have not been printing these instructions due to a lack of printers in the clinic rooms. We intend to source further printers and ensure the Orthotists use this available documentation.
For staff to promote the positive effects that orthoses can have on patients, as this could encourage people to wear them correctly for the right amount of time.	Promotion of the orthotic devices and the benefits of their use are discussed by the Orthotists during the consultations. Further information will be added to the information sheets discussed in section 4 to help with promoting the positive effects of the issued devices.
To ensure systems are in place to notify people of potential delays or long waits	Significant work has been undertaken recently to reduce the length of time that patients are waiting for a review appointment. During clinics, the receptionist will inform patients of any delays in clinic running times by writing on the white board or verbally saying we are running behind. The White board is to be updated with new information signs to say which staff are in attendance, also stating staff members job role.
Better communication between the manufactures and NHS staff to speed up production and to ensure the orthoses are correct	All of the insoles and ankle foot orthoses that are prescribed are manufactured onsite and by the Trust. Manufacturing times are coordinated with appointment times, so any delays to patients are not related to the manufacture of the devices. We currently use one shoe manufacturer, as we do not have the facility to manufacture or adjust footwear onsite. This manufacturer has a two week turn around time
To send text or letter reminders to patients for appointments and review are due	All patient appointments are registered on our patient administration system Lorenzo. Lorenzo automatically sends out text reminders to patients of their appointment date and times. A

	Poster has been placed in reception area advising of this and how to opt out of text messages
Look to see if an answerphone message could be recorded to let people know when they can expect to hear back	Following your advice, the message on the orthotics answer phone has been updated to include advice that the call will be returned within 24 hours
To make patients aware of cancellations, as this would reduce the waiting time for people.	Our administration staff do reallocate any cancelled appointments to ensure that patient appointment slots are not left empty. We also ring round patients 2 days before appointments to ensure that they are still required, and reallocate any of these appointments that become available.