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**South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust**

Southwark Directorate  
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Dear Ruman,

Thank you very much for taking the time to attend our recent Southwark Adult Mental Health Clinical Governance Meeting to share Healthwatch Southwark's report: 'Access to Health and Social Care services for Latin American Communities in Southwark'.

We very much appreciated the information and the space to consider how we are supporting our local Latin American Communities to access our services. We have shared the report within our directorate and have encouraged our local teams to consider ways to improve access to and experience of our services for local Latin American people.

Below, we have outlined our response to your recommendations where they are applicable to our mental health services. However, we see this as the start of ongoing communication about how we can continue to work on the issues raised through your report. As ever, we welcome continued feedback from Southwark Healthwatch.

Yours sincerely

**Peace Ajiboye**  
Service Director

**Emily Finch**  
Clinical Director

Southwark Adult Mental Health Services  
**South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust**

## Response to Healthwatch Recommendations

Provide information about healthcare services in Spanish and Portuguese online, in community media and in places that Latin Americans already visit.

### Online information

- The content of both the Trust website and the Talking Therapies Southwark website is available in Spanish & Portuguese. An accessibility statement covers access to different languages.
- Virtual carers surgeries have enabled Latin American families both in the UK & abroad to speak with ward staff and get information/support for themselves. Families have access to interpreters for the surgeries.

### Hard copies of information:

- The guide for carers of people using inpatient services is available on the wards in both Spanish and Portuguese
- Translated materials available to print/download from the website in Spanish & Portuguese include the leaflets: "what to do in a crisis" leaflet, and "how to make a complaint". There are information sheets about medications in Spanish & Portuguese and a link to the NHS site with health information in other languages. Staff can print these to offer in team settings, but there is currently no system to routinely take & share this information in local community sites.

**Going forward:** We recognise that there is work to do to ensure that our local communities understand what is on offer and how to access it. Our Recovery College [www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk](http://www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk) is keen to identify some funding and resource to develop workshops in Spanish and Portuguese. We will also continue to develop relationships established through South London Listens (see below), to support our communities to be informed about mental health, wellbeing and access to services.

### Make interpreters more easily available and hire more Spanish-speaking staff.

The Trust has a contract with DA Languages to provide interpreting and translation services including telephone, video and face to face. This is available for all services. They say: "We have over 20 years of experience providing Latin American translations and interpretations to a wide range of clientele. We can also assist with the rarer South American languages and dialects." Our staff have access to resources such as language identifiers and guidance such as "guidelines for working with interpreters for psychologists and psychotherapists". Where there are issues with interpreters staff can use the process agreed with the provider and the contract is overseen centrally within the Trust.

Talking Therapies Southwark have a number of therapists who speak other languages and can be matched with service users. If this is not possible, they can use interpreters or make use of their partnership with Waterloo Community Counselling Multi-Ethnic counselling service.

In terms of recruiting more Spanish speaking staff, this is not a specific target, but the Trust is committed to developing a workforce that represents the community that it serves. Some of the programmes to support this include:

- Diversity in Recruitment Champion (DIR'S) are an integral part of the interview process for all posts band 8a and above. The DIR's take part in the shortlisting, sit on the interview panels and helps formulate the interview questions for the role.
- We have launched Positive Action (under the Equality Act 2010) for all recruitment band 8a and above. The Trust is committed to challenge and focus on inequalities in relation to the under-representation of BME staff in senior bandings within the Trust, specifically bands 8a and above.

Talking Therapies Southwark IAPT are committed to offer sessions wherever possible by Spanish or Portuguese speaking therapists, avoiding the barriers posed by using interpreters. Over the past few years they have recruited therapists that provide interventions at both step 2 and step 3 levels in either language. They have been able to offer a psychoeducation group in Spanish and are evaluating this project with a view to it becoming a regular intervention

#### [Provide information about migrants' entitlements to healthcare in Spanish and Portuguese.](#)

There is currently no specific information about migrants entitlements to healthcare in Spanish and Portuguese available on the Trust website or routinely available in paper form provided by the Trust.

**Going forward:** Our communications department is keen to understand how this information could be developed across the integrated care system and then made available across our Trust. Locally our community services would like to develop information on this, perhaps linking with the Southwark Wellbeing Hub.

#### [Reintroduce postal letters.](#)

Letters through the post are routinely available to our service users on request. Care co-ordinators discuss and note people's communication preferences.

#### [Increase face-to-face appointments.](#)

Since the end of the pandemic, the re-introduction of face to face appointments has been steady, with the provision of online consultations remaining an option for those who prefer it. There is a trust target to increase face to face appointments and the Southwark Community teams are working hard to meet this.

#### [Work with Latin American community organisations to improve links and share information between Latin Americans and healthcare services.](#)

The South London & Maudsley is a key partner in an initiative called South London Listens which was started during Covid-19 to support and enhance people's mental wellbeing [South London Listens](#). The programme covers South London boroughs including Southwark and the priorities and actions have been developed by local communities. One of the initiatives is to set up a team of "be well champions" who are members of local communities and who can be a catalyst for wellbeing. Over 40 people have participated in Spanish language training sessions for "be well champions". This work has been supported by Talking Therapies Southwark. There are a number of "Be Well hubs" in Southwark where Be well champions are sited including PACT which offers Spanish speaking space for parents. A pilot 6 week "mindful mamas" course has been run in Spanish "mamas empoderadas".

South London Listens programme has also piloted – community embedded staff where mental health professionals offer time in community groups to build relationships and offer support. There has been one community embedded staff member in Southwark.

**Going Forward:** To further relationships with communities, the local services would welcome contact with local community organisations / community leaders.

#### [Record country of origin and dialects spoken in diversity monitoring.](#)

The categories for our ethnicity monitoring have recently changed from 81 categories to:

<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	<b>Mixed Race/ Mixed Race British</b>
Bangladeshi	White and Asian
Chinese	White and Black African
Indian	White and Black Caribbean
Pakistani	Any other mixed background
Any other Asian background	<b>Other Ethnic Groups</b>

<b>Black/Black British</b>	Arab
Caribbean	Any other ethnic group
African	<b>White</b>
Any other Black background	British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	Gypsy or Irish Traveller
Not stated	Irish
	Any other White background

The categories were changed because the old categories impeded effective ethnicity data collection and analysis. They conflated ethnicity and nationality, included a 'Not known' category that reduced recording and generated service user & staff complaints. The new categories were chosen to align with :

- [The Mental Health Service Data Set \(MHDS\)](#). These are the categories that NHS Digital requires all NHS organisations to use to record service user ethnicity.
- [The 2011 Census](#). This current governmental approach to categorising ethnicity and provide data we use to compare access to our services with our local populations.

Country of birth can still be recorded to provide data on the nationalities that are no longer listed as an ethnicity. There is no requirement to ask or record dialect spoken.

#### [Diversity and inclusion training for health staff, e.g. receptionists.](#)

Anti-Racism and Equality Diversity and Inclusion is embedded in all of the training we deliver and the new Trust Learning and Development board will have a standing item to review and discuss all training through an anti-racism lens.

All Trust staff are required to undertake level 1 Seni Lewis Training “to improve experiences of mental healthcare and safety for everyone”: service users, staff, family members and carers. It focuses on fundamental principles of engagement & building positive relationships

#### [Improve staff continuity and administration to make referrals easier.](#)

Our Southwark Talking Therapies (IAPT) service have made changes to their referral system by translating a number of their letter templates into Spanish and Portuguese. They have developed specific treatment pathways for clients in these two languages, which specify the treatment modalities and bring together the therapeutic material on offer in both Spanish & Portuguese.

Staff continuity remains a challenge in the current climate.