

# Patients endure years of 'carport clinic'

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Carports are for cars, not humans.

These were the words shared by patients who were thoroughly disgruntled at the health services provided at Greenfields clinic on Monday.

Thousands of East London residents have had to endure all sorts of weather conditions for more than four years after full clinic operations were removed from BCM's community services building, which also houses the Robbie de Lange hall.

Residents told of how they sit for long hours under torn carports before they are assisted in four rusty shipping containers as there is no clinic in the area.

Infants and elderly people were worst affected, saying they often left the clinic sicker than when they arrived after having to endure adverse weather.

Some of the containers have



**INSIDE AND OUTSIDE: Residents sit and wait to be attended to at the Greenfields Clinic.** Pictures: ALAN EASON

broken windows, and male and female patients have to share one faulty toilet.

Nophumzile Ndamani said on Monday: "We are freezing here, the situation is bad.

"We have to bring small blankets when we come here because we are basically outside."

A mother from Leaches Bay, Nomazizi Mtuzula, said: "People miss their clinic dates because of this situation.

"If it's cold we don't bring our infants for immunisation because we know we will sit outside for hours and we can't risk them getting sick.

"We sit outside for hours, camping outside the gate to

make sure we are among the first people to be attended.

"Carports are for cars not humans. We want a roof over our heads. We are forced to share space with rats that roam around in the yard as we are in their space now."

Another resident, Nophumzile Mjoleni, said the government was failing the residents of West Bank.

Some people would be going home wet on Monday.

Mjoleni said: "There is not enough space, even in the containers they use for consultation. We get cold camping outside the gate and we get cold waiting for consultation, there is just no relief.

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"The nurses are friendly but there is no proper facility for them to work in. "We vote like other citizens, yet this is the poor service we get."

The Eastern Cape health department blamed BCM for the crisis while BCM referred questions to the department, saying all clinic services were transferred there years ago.

Provincial health spokesperson Sizwe Kupelo said: "The site is still owned by the municipality and the department is still waiting for the municipality to transfer the rezoned clinic site next to the hall, as the department cannot build on land it does not own.

"In fact the department is still

awaiting the transfer of all 26 fixed clinic buildings that were provincialised in January 2012, as the department has been responsible for provision of services since then in those formerly municipal-run clinics.

"The old clinic inside the hall is still being used mainly as a pharmacy store area and as an office.

"The services were taken outside in the form of containers because the existing clinic, then inside the hall, was just a two-roomed venue.

"The department can't fix fixed assets until they are transferred."

BCM spokesperson Samkelo Ngwenya said: "There is no land

rezone for a clinic.

"The department of health must submit a written application to us requesting us to make land available to construct a clinic.

"In the absence of an application, as the city we will not be able to dispose of land. This is a legal process that any government department follows when they want to build.

"That written application must come straight from the department of public works.

"After a submission we must then check if the land is appropriately zoned for the intended purpose; if not a rezoning process must be initiated."