

# news

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April 2016

## Our team report

On 1 April 2016 we celebrate our 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday since launching. Over the coming year we will continue providing a free, confidential and independent information and advice service; carry out project work on areas of concern to our local community, and provide NHS complaints advocacy to any Reading resident who wants help to resolve concerns or make complaints.

The projects we will focus on in the coming year were discussed at our organisation's board meeting on 15 March. We are aiming to talk to local people and their loved ones about their experience of end-of-life care, when people have been diagnosed as having less than 12 months to live. We are also planning to look at the issue of how much the public knows about, or uses, electronic prescribing. Another project plan is to talk to homeless people about how their health and social care needs are addressed. Our board - made up of community representatives - is also keen that Healthwatch staff keep a close eye on how well health and social services work together. Local people who have any views they want to share confidentially about any of the above topics, are encouraged to call us on 0118 937 2295 or email [info@healthwatchreading.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchreading.co.uk). We also heard from Rachel Spencer, chief executive of Reading Voluntary Action, who told us about council funding cuts to local charities taking effect on 1 June 2016. In this tough financial climate, charities had started to increasingly work more in partnership to avoid duplication and pool their expertise to most help local people.



**On 17 March, Healthwatch Reading hosted a panel of Reading people** from various backgrounds who were asked to rate how well South Central Ambulance Service performs on equality and diversity in delivering ‘better health outcomes for all’. The panel challenged SCAS in a robust but respectful discussion, and eventually gave it a ‘green’ rating for achieving this outcome, however the panel recommended SCAS undertake more effective data collection.

We continue to publish findings of our Enter and View visits to GP surgeries in Reading - in March we added: Pembroke Surgery, Kennet Surgery, South Reading Surgery, Long Barn Surgery. Visit our [web page](#) or phone 0118 937 2295 to be posted or emailed a copy.

Speaking of GP surgeries, we were interested to hear latest news about the proposed ‘GP Chambers’ being planned for Craven Road, at a presentation given by Dr Gerard D’Cruz from Pembroke Surgery, at the **South Reading Patient Voice on 30 March**. Dr D’Cruz has submitted a planning application to build a modern new health centre on a site near Royal Berkshire Hospital, which could co-house his practice, Kennet and London Road surgeries, and possibly more. The plans can be viewed via a search on the [planning portal](#) of Reading Borough Council’s website.

### **Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust rated ‘good’ by inspectors**

The trust providing community and mental health services to people in Reading has been given an overall ‘good’ rating by the national organisation that rates NHS services.

However, the Care Quality Commission said in its report published on 30 March, that inpatient wards for people with learning disabilities or autism at Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT) ‘require improvement’ overall, and were ‘inadequate’ in the specific area of being an ‘effective service’.

The CQC published earlier reports about two GP practices that BHFT runs under a temporary contract. On 21 January it said in a report that Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote ‘requires improvement’; while on 11 February it announced in a report that Priory Avenue was now rated ‘good’, following its earlier finding in July 2015 that it required improvement.

The CQC carried out its week-long inspection of BHFT in early December 2015.

Natasha Sloman, Head of Hospital Inspection for Mental Health, Learning Disability and Substance Misuse (South East) said BHFT had “much to be proud of. The trust has a committed senior leadership team and there are many skilled and enthusiastic staff throughout the organisation, working hard to manage day to day care, while always trying to improve services to meet the needs of their patients.” She added: “In the learning disability inpatient wards, there were concerns about how people were observed, communication with patients and management of physical health care. These services must improve.”



## New service launches to offer support to unpaid carers in Reading

Unpaid carers will be able to get information, advice and support from a new service launching in Reading from 1 April 2016.

The Reading and West Berkshire Carers Hub will provide a first port of contact to adult carers who provide vital unpaid care to friends, family and neighbours who are unwell, frail or who have disabilities.

The hub will have a helpline which people can call on 0118 324 7333 or carers can email [ask@berkshirecarershub.org](mailto:ask@berkshirecarershub.org). Advice aims to help carers access and get the most out of carer's assessments, personal budgets and health checks. It is also planning to offer, a carer's discount card, access to holiday homes, and gym memberships.

The new organisation is led by Carers Trust East Midlands, working in partnership with the existing local service, Crossroads Care Reading, which already runs clubs, respite breaks and sitting services. The hub's headquarters will be based at Crossroads in Albury Close in west Reading.

The new hub is taking over from Berkshire Carers Service, which will no longer operate in the area. Adult carers across Reading and West Berkshire, who need extra help, are being encouraged to get in touch with the new hub.

## Concerns raised about impact of latest NHS shake-up on local people

Reading patients and councillors have spoken out to oppose 'flawed proposals' to force Reading to work with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire on joint health plans.

NHS England announced on 15 March that it had created 44 'footprint' areas in England that would be required to produce five year 'sustainability and transformation plans (STP)' for their populations. Reading will be included in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area, covering 1.7 million patients, whose health services are currently planned and funded by seven local clinical commissioning groups. The new area will be led by David Smith, chief executive of Oxfordshire CCG.

Reading councillors criticised the 'fundamentally flawed' proposals as yet another 'top down reorganisation' that could mean Reading people's needs were overridden as the new larger planning area tried to balance budgets. The council voted on 22 March to register its protest in writing to NHS England's chief executive and the secretary of state for health. The council will also have talks with local NHS colleagues about how Reading's health resources can be ring-fenced and protected for Reading people.

Members of South Reading Patient Voice also voted at their last meeting, on 30 March, to raise the issue with local MPs and NHS commissioners. The group said it was concerned that workforce planning, primary care provider development and urgent and emergency care were being proposed as topics that the larger area would take responsibility for.



## Summary of other quality ratings for Reading Services published in March

**Lakeside Residential Home** in Whiteknights Road, residential home for up to 64 older people, some with dementia: **Good**. Inspectors praised the caring, positive atmosphere.

**Home Instead (Reading)**, providing home care to 26 people in Reading and West Berkshire: **Good**. Inspectors found robust recruitment checks and 'genuinely caring' staff.

**Peppard House** care home in Caversham, providing accommodation for up to seven people with learning disabilities: **Good**. People's wellbeing maintained and improved.

**Greenslade Services**, a home care agency: **Good**. People told inspectors they felt safe.

**Yew Tree Lodge** in Redlands Road, a care home offering crisis, respite or long-term stays for up to 16 people with mental health needs: **Good**. Inspectors observed good, caring practice by staff, and people said they felt listened to.

**MiHomecare - Reading** providing personal care to 180 people in their own homes in Reading and Newbury: **Requires improvement**. Care workers sometimes arrived late.

**Abbey Medical Centre**, a GP surgery in Russell Street covering around 2,250 patients: **Good**. Patients said they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and they were involved in their care and decisions about their treatment. Inspectors also told the surgery to ensure all staff who undertook chaperone duties had completed DBS checks and to ensure the phlebotomist was appropriately authorised to administer flu immunisations.

**Milman Road Surgery - Dr Mittal**, a GP surgery in Milman Road covering 9,500 patients: **Good**. The majority of patients said they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and they were involved in their care and decisions about their treatment. Inspectors recommended that the surgery encourage people to get involved in the patient participation group and to review how it identifies and registers carers.

**Melrose Surgery - Dr Dean**: a GP surgery on London Road that has taken over the patients of neighbouring, closed, practice of Dr FAB Williams: **Requires improvement**. Inspectors told the surgery to take steps on the safety of the building it works from, improve full recruitment checks, and also recommend providing information in different languages.

**The Willows Specialist Dementia Unit and Intermediate Care Unit** in Hexham Road, providing dementia care for up to 16 people, and intermediate care in 10 flats: **Good**. Staff were caring, kind, respectful and courteous, and knew people well.

**Supreme Healthcare Services**, an agency providing home care to 18 people: **Good**. People said they were treated with kindness and respect.

**Eldon Rd Surgery**, covering 2,300 patients: **Special measures**. Patients said staff were caring but problems with building and failure to meet many primary care health targets.

