



TEAM REPORT

8
MAR
2017

We joined local people marking International Women's Day, at a special event run by Reading Refugee Support Group (RRSG) at RISC in London Street. RRSG provides advice,

drop-in sessions and support in a crisis and we have recently shared information with them about the NHS rights that people have if they have been trafficked to the UK.



17
MAR
2017

We were on hand to observe the start of a consultation with residents of Focus House in Castle Crescent, a small care home for people living with mental health issues. Reading Borough

Council is proposing to close Focus House, and is giving people 90 days to respond. It was clear from the residents that they see Focus House as an important lifeline and regard staff as family. We will be returning to help people have their say about the service's future.

22
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2017

We went to an excellent event about end-of-life issues, in Caversham, organised by the Balmore Park Surgery Patient Participation Group. Around 100 members of the public came

along to hear a range of speakers, including a GP, solicitor, hospice manager, and funeral director. A Q&A session at the end included people asking about advance wishes on resuscitation and the rights of relatives when unwell people don't have capacity.

24
MAR
2017

We presented a report to the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board, on the ability of local voluntary sector organisations to meet the needs of vulnerable people, since council funding was cut to charities in June 2016. We said that the voluntary sector had maintained its "can-do, open-door, and problem-solving approach", but it was dealing with increasing numbers of people with multiple problems - such as benefit cuts, disability, and housing needs. Charity staff also spent much of their time challenging the quality of social care assessments or trying to get mental health or safeguarding teams to respond to people in crisis. Council leader Jo Lovelock, responding at the meeting to the report, said: "We would like to pay tribute to the work the voluntary sector does - we don't want to make cuts and we thank people who are managing to do what they do, with less money."

JOB VACANCY: HEALTHWATCH READING ADVOCACY SERVICES MANAGER

We are looking to recruit an Advocacy Services Manager, to support our local advocacy services. The post is time-limited till December 1st 2017, with potential for further extension and development

dependent on future funding arrangements. This is a part-time post for up to 20 hours a week. The starting salary is £27,668 pro rata. For more visit <http://bit.ly/2nLy8Du>





A ROUND-UP OF LOCAL NEWS BY NUMBERS

1

APRIL 2017: the date of the launch of a DEDICATED HOME BIRTH SERVICE, staffed by midwives who will solely concentrate on supporting women choosing this option, rather than also being expected to cover hospital births. <http://bit.ly/2nwh0Rt>

9

The NUMBER OF DOMESTIC ABUSE REFUGE PLACES being cut, (from 24 to 15), from 1 October 2017, after Reading Borough Council agreed in March, a 22% funding reduction. This came despite 700 people signing a petition, 120 people giving feedback online and 45 going to a special meeting, who nearly all raised concerns about the cuts in refuge places. <http://bit.ly/2neqkab>

10%

The proportion of HOSPITAL OUTPATIENTS that look set to be reduced under a project run by the new 'Berkshire West Accountable Care System (ACS)'. A draft ACS strategy published in March says it will be "fundamentally reviewing the purpose of outpatients and developing alternative delivery models". The ACS is a new partnership between GP-led clinical commissioning groups that fund and plan services, the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The strategy also talks about letting patients book appointments seven days a week with new 'primary care hubs' of GP practices working together. <http://bit.ly/2o1RXqu>

17%

The PROPOSED REDUCTION in Reading Borough Council spending on homeless support services, as part of its wider cost-cutting that the council says is driven by central government austerity measures. The plans would mean a cut to the number of beds available to rough sleepers, but the council says it hopes a redesign of its services will help people meet their needs. A public consultation ended on 31 March 2017. <http://bit.ly/2o7cbPX>

30

The NUMBER OF NURSES, ALONG WITH 10 MIDWIVES, recruited by Royal Berkshire Hospital during an open recruitment day in March. The hospital is also attempting to recruit around 100 nurses from the Phillipines see page 42 of hospital papers <http://bit.ly/2ndfksD>

2,666

The amount of PEOPLE ADMITTED AS INPATIENTS from the Royal Berkshire Hospital emergency department (ED) in one month - around one-third of those arriving, according to latest figures (for February 2017). The hospital - like many others in England, has been unable to meet national targets to see 95% of ED patients within four hours. See page 38 of hospital board papers: <http://bit.ly/2ndfksD>





COMPANY GETS £400,000 FROM NHS FUNDS TO PROP UP PATIENT CARE

The company running Circuit Lane Surgery and Priory Avenue Surgery has received £400,000 from local NHS budgets to turn around its underperforming services.

The extra money, plus support from a special external team, has helped to improve the availability of patient appointments, tackled a backlog of clinical paperwork and reduced the turnaround time for repeat prescriptions. But it is still unknown whether OneMedicalGroup will receive extra money for the remainder of the 10-year contract to run the surgeries.

The extra funding was outlined in a finance paper published by the Berkshire West federation of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). CCGs fund and plan local services, including GP surgeries. The paper states: 'One Medical Group have reported that they are currently running the services at a loss.' This was due to the surgeries not having as many patients as first anticipated as well as the cost of paying high locum rates to cover staff gaps, and the new cost of hiring an extra GP as directed by the CCG. 'One Medical Group have indicated that they are unable to continue on this basis and are therefore seeking further financial support from the CCG... The detail of this is still being worked through with the provider but it is proposed that a cap is set on this of an additional £400k.'

A patient representative asked the CCGs on 8 March if the extra funding would be to the detriment of other local patient services. In a written reply, the CCGs said they were talking to NHS England about extra financial support, but in the first instance, the money would come from 'primary care reserves'. These are shared across four CCGs - including the two in Reading, plus Newbury and District, and Wokingham.

The GP chair of North and West Reading CCG, Dr Andy Ciercierski, said in a BBC Radio Berkshire interview on 9 March, that it could take up to two years to fully improve the surgeries.

LOCAL SERVICES AWAIT ARRIVAL OF EXTRA FUNDS ANNOUNCED IN UK BUDGET



Reading stands to get an extra £4m over the next three years to fund more social care packages that will help get patients out of hospital more quickly. A GP service could also be set up in the emergency department of Royal Berkshire Hospital by this October, as a result of other funding also announced in the Budget on March 8.

The government has said it will provide an additional £2 billion to councils in England over the next three years to spend on adult social care services, £1 billion of which will be provided in 2017-18, ensuring councils can take immediate action to fund care packages for more people, support social care providers, and relieve pressure on the NHS locally. Reading's potential share of this money was discussed at the 24 March meeting of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Budget also revealed an extra £100 million to the NHS in England in 2017-18. NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens has said he wants hospitals to set up GP facilities in emergency departments by October 2017 to better assess arriving patients.

Healthwatch Reading wants to know what local people think extra NHS and council money should be spent on - email us on info@healthwatchreading.co.uk.





LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

Here are the latest ratings for Reading services from the Care Quality Commission (CQC):

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Prospect Park Hospital inpatient wards rated 'Good'. Inspectors say improvements have been made in a follow-up inspection. Report published on 27 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2nuZhYT>

Reading Walk-in-Health Centre rated 'Good'. The inspectors found that the centre had made improvements since the last inspection in April 2016, when the centre was rated as 'requires improvement'. Report published on 16 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2nv1HXy>

South Reading Surgery on Whitley Wood Road has been placed in special measures and rated as 'inadequate'. Inspectors found that patients were treated with kindness, respect and compassion, but they were at risk due to some systems and processes not being in place.

Report published on 16 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2oaFpxG>

Shinfield Health Centre rated as 'Requires Improvement'. The health centre shares resources and appointments with South Reading Surgery. Report published on 6 March 2017: Report <http://bit.ly/2obdHR5>

The CQC is the national body that checks how NHS and social care services are performing.

All health and social care providers must be registered with the CQC.

The commission has powers to put under-performing organisations into 'special measures' or even close them.



UPCOMING EVENTS IN APRIL

Tuesday 4 April 2017

Wellbeing Forum for the Voluntary and Community Sector, from 9.15am - 1.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU.

Friday 7 April 2017

Older People's Working Group, from 2.00pm - 4.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU.

Wednesday 19 April 2017

Blood Doning Session, from 1.00pm - 3.30pm and 4.45pm - 7.45pm at St Andrews Church Hall, Albert Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7PL.

Thursday 27 April 2017

Berkshire Community Engagement Forum run by South Central Ambulance Service, from 3.00pm - 4.30pm at the Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Chalvey, SL1 2SP.

If you would like to publicise an upcoming event via our newsletter or website, please contact us on 0118 937 2295 or email info@healthwatchreading.co.uk

