



TEAM REPORT

It's been a busy month for Healthwatch Reading.

On 21 November, we attended a public consultation meeting about a proposed new health and wellbeing strategy for Reading.

The three-year plan suggests seven priorities including healthier lifestyles to combat obesity, smoking, and tooth decay; reducing loneliness; and cutting the number of people with TB. One of the main challenges raised at the meeting with Reading Borough Council, which has drafted the plans, is whether the priorities truly reflect what is needed for local people or have been chosen as 'easy' projects.

On 22 November, we held a public meeting of the board of Healthwatch Reading.

One of the liveliest discussions centred around current quality of GP services, especially at Priory Avenue Surgery in Caversham and Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote. Both surgeries were taken over by a company called OneMedicalGroup on 1 September 2016. Our board agreed that we should undertake 'Enter and View' visits to the surgeries if concerns are not addressed soon. The board also agreed that our next main project should be meeting homeless people to find out how they experience local NHS or social care services.



On the evening of 22 November, we also gave a presentation to the Caversham and District Residents Association meeting about our role. Our talk followed an overview given by Emmer Green GP Dr Andy Ciercieski, who is also chair of the North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group, which makes local health

spending decisions. The audience were keen to find out exactly how new roles will work in primary care - such as 'physician associates' or 'prescribing pharmacists', who might increasingly take over some of the workload of GPs due to local (and national) shortages of permanent GPs.

We took our pop-up information stand to the Carer's Rights Day event on 25 November at St Laurence's Church in the town centre. One of the key aims of the day was to help people understand the 'carer's assessment' process. For more information telephone the Reading Carers Hub on 0118 324 7333.

We ended the month by heading to London for a conference on 28 November held by our umbrella body, Healthwatch England (HWE). The purpose of the conference was to discuss 'sustainability and transformation plans' (STPs), which are being drawn up to save money and deliver health care in a more innovative way. Locally, Reading Borough Council has raised concerns about our STP (covering West Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, or 'BOB') diluting the local focus on our services, or even taking away NHS money from our area. At the HWE conference, we were impressed by the messages given by key speaker, Lord Victor Adebawale, who sits on the NHS England board to champion public engagement, and who is also chief executive of the charity Turning Point. He said STPs would fail if they did not engage with the poorest and most disadvantaged in society about how to best address their health needs.

This is our last newsletter for 2016; we wish the public a safe and happy Christmas. Our office will be shut on all bank holidays, and open on the 28, 29, and 30 December and will reopen on 3 January 2017.





WE FIGHT PATIENTS' CORNER ON NHS 'TRANSFORMATION' PLANS

Healthwatch Reading has been raising concerns for months, about the lack of public input into new sustainability and transformation plans (STP) for local NHS services that could lead to cuts.

The plans were published by Reading Borough Council (RBC) on 16 November 2016, ahead of their 'official' release. Councillor Graeme Hoskin, RBC's lead member for health, said the plans appeared to be "a crude cost-cutting exercise under the guise of transformation" and the council wanted the plans immediately out in the open so the public could properly debate them.

Healthwatch Reading chief executive Mandeep Kaur Sira, said Healthwatch had consistently warned that patients had not been consulted on, or involved in co-producing a STP for patient services across our new NHS region known as BOB (Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire).

These warnings included:

- On 14 June 2016, Healthwatch Reading said it was essential that there was proper consultation with local people on the plans, at a public meeting of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board
- In late July 2016, Healthwatch Reading met with officials from our national body Healthwatch England, to warn that the first draft plan for our area had not been shared with the public before it was submitted on 30 June to NHS England
- On 13 September 2016, Healthwatch Reading again warned of lack of public consultation and queried how local Healthwatch would have a place on the new STP's governance structure, at a closed session of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board
- On 30 September 2016, Healthwatch Reading wrote to Reading's two MPs with an update which included concerns about the STP process.

Ms Sira said: "Ever since STPs were proposed, we have been calling for local people to have a say on STP proposals that could have far-reaching consequences on patients. Now that the plans are in the public domain, we call on BOB STP leaders to start openly explaining what the 112-page plan means in terms of any cuts or changes to services and to start involving people in how care should be delivered in the future."

The plan confirms that the first priority for public engagement will be over:

- Proposed changes to obstetric services and paediatrics at the Horton Hospital in Banbury
- Options for the Horton Hospital
- New roles for Oxfordshire community hospitals
- Review of Berkshire West community hospital provision
- Development of community hubs in Buckinghamshire
- Consultation on bed closures at Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust
- Potential changes to specialised commissioning pathways for cancer and cardiology.

AMBITIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR MATERNITY CARE



Improving maternity care for women in Reading and the rest of the Thames Valley will be "challenging" in the coming years, according to a meeting held in late October.

The Thames Valley Strategic Clinical Network held the meeting to bring together

health professionals, women, and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) - which plan and fund maternity services - to discuss future care. Healthwatch Reading attended the meeting, which heard about the new national maternity review report, *Better Births*.





These include:

- personalised care for women in pregnancy, birth and after birth;
- continuity of carer (one midwife who cares for the woman through pregnancy, at the birth and after the birth);
- and better mental health care for women in pregnancy and after birth.

NHS guidance for 2017-19 also contains a list of 'must do' items for CCGs, which are now being rated on how well they perform on maternity. Reading's two CCGs are currently rated as 'requires improvement', particularly on the measure of offering women choice over their place and type of birth.

The network meeting heard that the number of births is expected to rise across the Thames Valley, including in Reading, at a time when there is a national shortage of midwives and obstetricians. So planning both the shape of services - to reflect the move to a more 'community-based' service recommended in *Better Births* - and staffing of the service will be quite challenging, we heard. The strategic clinical network is already involved in projects such as planning for the future workforce of midwives and doctors.

The network is also working on reducing the rate of avoidable stillbirths, for example, by helping women to stop smoking when pregnant.

MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENTS ARE BEING DENIED ADVOCACY

Mental health inpatients are being denied advocacy and a say on their care.

More than one-quarter of psychiatric inpatients are not involved in their own care planning, and 12% are not informed of their right to an independent mental health advocate (IMHA) according to a new national report.

Under the Mental Health Act (1983), patients who are 'sectioned' in hospital against their will, have the right to an IMHA to help them have their say about their care and understand

their rights. But the Care Quality Commission said for 515 of the 4,344 patients it interviewed during visits to mental health hospitals in 2015-16, there was no evidence that they were informed of their right to an IMHA. The CQC also found no evidence of patient involvement in care planning in 1,214 (29%) of the 4,226 records. One in 10 care plans (452 out of 4,407) also showed that patients' needs had not been considered.

PRIVATE COMPANY PULLS OUT OF BID TO RUN NHS 111 HELPLINE

Care UK has pulled out of bidding to run the NHS 111 helpline called by Reading people seeking advice on health problems. It is believed that the South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) will be kept on to run the service.

The helpline is supposed to be a first port of call for people seeking health advice or when their GP is closed. Currently it is provided by SCAS across the Thames Valley, under five separate area contracts. However, these are now merging into one single Thames Valley 111 contract that aims to provide a better designed service for patients.

One of the ideas is for a new clinical 'hub' to ensure people who call the helpline get to speak to the right person, whether that is a paramedic, nurse, mental health professional, prescribing pharmacists, dentist or GP. The service may also be able to directly book GP appointments on behalf of patients if they need to be followed up after their 111 call.

The current 111 service run by South Central Ambulance Service, was rated 'good' in a Care Quality Commission report published in early September.



**The NHS
non-emergency
number**





LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

Grovelands Medical Centre rated 'Good'

A well managed and facilitated practice that treats its patients effectively. <http://bit.ly/2fJcnfV>

Dr Kumar, Milman Road 'Requires Improvement'

A safe, caring and well led practice that still has yet to fully demonstrate improvement in clinical outcomes. <http://bit.ly/2fJjzIW>

Concept Care Practice Ltd rated 'Good'

A care agency which provides staff to support people in their own homes. <http://bit.ly/2gh3YEq>

Circle Hospital Reading rated 'Good'

A private hospital that does some NHS work. <http://bit.ly/2gh1Ufi>

Royle Care Limited rated 'Good'

Royle Care Limited is a local care agency that provides safe and supportive care to older people. <http://bit.ly/2gt97qy>

Parkview Care Home rated 'Good'

Parkview is a small care home in Tilehurst that is judged to have outstanding health care. <http://bit.ly/2gF1LzA>

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 DECEMBER

Wednesday 7th

South Reading CCG - Governing Body Meeting in Public at the Museum of English Rural Life Redlands Road, Reading RG1 5EX from 9:30am - 12:30pm. To attend this meeting, or submit questions relating to the agenda, please email: southreadingccg@nhs.net by 12pm the day before the meeting.

Tuesday 13th

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee meet in the Council Chamber Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU at 6:30pm

Tuesday 20th

North & West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group - Governing Body Meeting in Public in the North & West CCG Offices, 59 Bath Road, Reading RG30 2BA from 1:30pm - 4:30pm. To attend this meeting, or submit questions relating to the agenda, please email: ppiteam.berkshire@nhs.net or call 0118 982 2709 by 12pm the day before the meeting.

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

