



JULY 2017 NEWSLETTER

FIND OUT WHAT OUR STAFF TEAM HAVE BEEN UP TO IN THE PAST MONTH:

12 JUNE 2017: We took our pop-up info & advice stand to an event at the Royal Berkshire Hospital designed to inform staff about local organisations that support the public with their wellbeing or health care. It was great to meet frontline staff, including physiotherapists and occupational therapists, who are key to making sure patients can experience a smooth discharge from hospital to home, rehab or care.

14 JUNE 2017: We also took our stand to a Carer's Week event held at Reading Borough Council. Unpaid carers in Reading are relatives, neighbours or friends who provide vital, regular support to people who are unwell, frail or have a disability. This can include help with dressing, eating, washing, shopping, medication, getting out and about or emotional support. If you are an unpaid carer and need help, start off by phoning the Reading Carers Hub on 0118 324 7333.

14 JUNE 2017: Every three months, developments about GP and other primary care services, are discussed at the Berkshire West Primary Care Committee. Healthwatch Reading is a non-voting member of this committee, which means we get to ask questions about how decisions will affect the public. The latest meeting was on 14 June: see page 2 of this newsletter for full details.

15 JUNE 2017: We headed out to the Sainsbury's SavaCentre in Calcot to help volunteer community first responders (CFRs) for South Central Ambulance Charity, demonstrate to the public what their role involves. CFRs volunteer to be on-call during hours of their own choice, to respond to certain 999 calls close to their home or workplaces. They are usually first on the scene and might provide lifesaving treatment with a defibrillator, as well as reassurance to people, until paramedics arrive. More volunteers are needed across Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham, and people who sign up get first class training from paramedics. Visit this page on our website <http://bit.ly/2qn8BxK>, or call 01869 365000 to find out more.



30 JUNE 2017: We headed to a public meeting held for patients at Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote, hosted by re-elected Reading West MP Alok Sharma. Managers from OneMedicalGroup told people that staffing had improved and the patient newsletter would re-start in August. Patients reported some ongoing prescription and appointment issues.

A ROUND-UP OF LATEST NEWS ON GP SERVICES

£45m: The value of a new national pot of money designed to transform the way the public interacts with GP surgeries by using digital technology. This could mean people in Reading have free WiFi in their GP surgery's waiting room. Doctors might also start encouraging patients to use apps such as 'Cigbreak Free' to encourage people to stop smoking. The other main purpose of the extra funding is to fund 'online consultations', but this is not exactly what it says on the tin. Most people might think of it as a way for patients to talk to a GP in real time through a video call, but Healthwatch Reading has established that in 'NHS-speak', it covers a broader range of online help. GPs and IT experts explained that a trial is running at a Newbury surgery, where patients log in to an online portal where they can get self-care information for symptoms, or where they can electronically send a message to their GP, nurse or receptionist, to ask a question about medication, request a review for asthma, diabetes or other long-term condition, or ask for a sick note to be completed. Eventually these innovations will come to Reading.

7: The number of days per week that people in Reading will be able to book GP appointments on, by 2020, as part of changes ordered by NHS England. Progress is expected to be made sooner for patients in South Reading than those in North and West Reading, according to latest plans we've seen. Between July and December this year, South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is aiming to start offering bookable appointments all week for patients at one-third of its GP surgeries, increasing to more than 60 per cent of practices by June 2018 and all by March 2019. This appears to be due to a new South Reading Alliance that involves GP practices working closer together to offer joint services to patients. Practices in North and West Reading CCG are not due to start initiating full extended hours until April 2018. Also, some extra government funding won't be available until 2019-2020. One of the key findings of Healthwatch Reading's major inquiry into primary care last year, showed five surgeries at the time did not offer Saturday appointments, and none offered Sunday appointments.

12: The number of months that Theale Medical Centre wanted to keep its doors shut for, to any people moving from other Reading surgeries. Theale said it was struggling to cope with the extra workload created by taking on patients who had left Circuit Lane surgery at the height of its troubles. However, Theale has been told it can only temporarily stop taking on patients from other Reading surgeries, for three months - the same time as other surgeries have been granted, including Western Elms and Balmore Park surgeries.

£400,000: The amount of local NHS money which is set to be given to OneMedicalGroup during 2017-18, to cover locum staffing costs at Circuit Lane and Priory Avenue surgeries. This is part of an action plan designed to meet patient concerns and to address safety issues uncovered by quality inspectors. The practices also received emergency funding of £400,000 in 2016-17.

These developments came up at the 14 June meeting of the Berkshire West Primary Care Commissioning Committee. It next meets in public on 13 September 2017.

LAST CHANCE TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS FOR OUR AGM

Our annual general meeting takes place on Tuesday 18 July 2017, and we're giving the public one last opportunity to submit questions about any hospital-related issues, to our guest speaker, Steve McManus (pictured), chief executive of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Send us your suggestions to info@healthwatchreading.co.uk or telephone us 0118 937 2295.

Please also tell us if you plan to attend the AGM, which runs from 10.30am-12midday on the 3rd floor, Reading Central Library, 18 July.



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR

Did you know that more than 300 people contacted us for advice, information or support with individual issues during 2016-17? This and other highlights, as well as information on our finances and future priorities, can be found in our latest annual report, published on 30 June 2017, on our website. Call us to request a paper copy.

313 people contacted us with individual feedback or complaints about local services



We engaged with more than 1,600 people for our projects



We supported 50 people referred by social workers, for Care Act Advocacy, through partnership working with other charities



Our website attracted over 3,500 visitors, who have made 13,598 page views



Our projects have covered experiences in A&E, electronic prescribing and primary care



We now have 1,761 followers on twitter



WE'VE BEEN SHORTLISTED FOR A NATIONAL AWARD!

Healthwatch England has shortlisted us for a national award - from 150 entries - for our project collecting patient feedback in A&E. Winners are named on 6 July.

LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

Reading Smiles is deemed to be a safe and caring dental practice.

Report published on 1 June 2017: <http://bit.ly/2tHNoVL>

Respite Services (home care agency), is rated 'good'. The care home can provide respite care services for up to five adults with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder, at any one time.

Report published on 31 May 2017: <http://bit.ly/2tHYaeA>

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 JULY

Wednesday 12 July 2017

The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Annual General Meeting, 6.00pm - 7.30pm, in the Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital. To reserve your place email foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk or call 0118 322 7405.

Thursday 13 July 2017

The Reading Families' Forum, REACH Wokingham and West Berkshire Parent Carer Forum, consultation with Steve McManus CEO of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, 7.30 - 9.30pm, The Hilton Hotel, Drake Way RG2 0GQ.

Wednesday 14 July 2017

Health & Wellbeing Board Meeting, 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, RG1 2LU.

Tuesday 18 July 2017

Healthwatch Reading Board Meeting in Public and AGM, 10.30am - 12noon, Conference Room, Reading Central Library. Guest speaker Steve McManus CEO of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust. Book your place at <http://bit.ly/2sinPJx>.

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.