



## A DOUBLE CELEBRATION!

Healthwatch Reading is celebrating its 5th birthday on 5 July 2018, the same day as the nation marks 70 years since the launch of the NHS.

The double celebration is being marked at our annual general meeting, where we are revealing highlights from our annual report for 2017-18. The report shows:

- 44% of people contacted us for information and advice
- 23% of people contacted us for help in making an NHS complaint
- our successes included helping stop the closure of a popular residential home for people with mental health needs.

In our own tribute to the NHS 70th birthday, we are also publishing '70 Patient Power Actions' (see pages 2,3 and 4), which aim to give the public ideas on how to get involved in a huge variety of ways, to improve health or social care services.



## PRIORY AVENUE PATIENTS DISPERSED AS SURGERY CLOSES DOORS ON 30 JUNE

Priory Avenue Surgery in Caversham closed on 30 June 2018 following years of instability.

Most patients living north of the river chose to join Balmore Park Surgery or Emmer Green Surgery. However some patients did not respond or make a choice about which GP surgery they wanted to join, so that decision was made for them by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (BWCCG), which oversees primary care in Reading.

The CCG was due to allocate people who had not replied, or found another surgery, to Balmore Park or Emmer Green, or practices south of the river, including Melrose Surgery, Reading NHS Walk-In Centre or Chatham Street Surgery. Patients should have received a letter from BWCCG now telling them where they have been sent.

Priory Avenue had been struggling with quality issues during its time being run by OneMedicalGroup, a Leeds-based firm, since September 2016. Before that it had been temporarily run by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

On social media, former Priory Avenue patients described the 'refreshing' experiences at their new surgeries. One said they had joined University Health Centre where 'first impressions are fabulous' and their new, named GP 'is not a locum!'

If patients are still unsure of their new GP surgery, they should contact the BWCCG Patient Advice & Liaison Service on 0118 982 2720, or you can phone Healthwatch Reading if you want to get free, independent and confidential advice about any concerns with your move.



1. Join your GP surgery's Patient Participation Group for a chance to have your say over the most commonly used NHS service!

2. Attend a public meeting about local NHS changes to get information & question local decision-makers

3. Go to the next governing body meeting in public of Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning to see how local GPs & others spend the NHS budget for Reading

4. Tell the NHS how you prefer it to use your confidential records under 'data opt-out' rules that came in on 25 May 2018

5. Take part in the annual Reading canal walk organised by Sport in Mind to help support people with mental health needs

6. Start a conversation with friends, family and health or social care professionals about 'what matters to me' so they don't just focus on 'what's wrong with me'



7. Put a question about Reading GP surgeries to the next open meeting of the Berkshire West Primary Care Commissioning Committee

8. If you have a concern or feedback to give about care or admin at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, a good first step is to call its on-site Patient Relations department on 0118 322 8338

9. Come along to our AGM (and NHS70 birthday celebrations!) on 5 July 2018 to hear how we've helped Reading people have their say - we'll give you cake as well!



10. Help develop the latest innovation by sharing your own lived experience with the Oxford Academic Health Science Network on its projects

11. If you're aged 50 or over, go along to the regular meetings of the Older People's Working Group held at Reading Borough Council to find out about, and have your say, on local services

12. If you have concerns or feedback about community or mental health services run by Berkshire Healthcare Trust, then phone its PALS service in the first instance on 0118 9605027



13. Volunteer your time with us here at Healthwatch Reading - you could help improve services for the whole community

14. Drop into an information and advice session for carers - there's an annual Reading Carers Week every June helping people understand rights and support available to you

15. Look after yourself if you spend a lot of time looking after others who are unwell, frail or have disabilities, by taking part in free pampering sessions for carers

16. If you're an unpaid carer, get support from people in the same boat by attending one of the various support groups held around Reading

17. If you get asked after a GP or hospital appointment to do a Friends and Family survey, take two minutes to respond. Watch this YouTube video at [bit.ly/2LEwufq](http://bit.ly/2LEwufq) to find out why

18. Sign up to get the NICE newsletter, so you know when you can have your say on which drugs and treatment should be available on the NHS



19. If you have a disability or support someone who does, join the Access and Disabilities Working Group, chaired by a Reading councillor, to influence local improvements

20. Find out if you have the right to get help with costs for dentists, sight tests, prescriptions and more, by using the NHS Health Costs website's online checker

21. Let the NHS know (and those closest to you) if you support organ donation

22. Give up a few hours for one of the 16 voluntary roles available at Royal Berkshire Hospital - everything from mealtime helpers, patient survey team, or 'patient actors' for new nurses

23. If you're sent a survey after a hospital stay, please share your experience as it helps inform the national annual Inpatients Survey to show what works well or not in NHS hospitals

24. Share your experiences about any calls you've made to the NHS 111 helpline run by South Central Ambulance Service, in its annual patient experience survey

25. Go along to an event run by a patient participation group - various Reading PPGs have run them on topics such as dementia, end-of-life and heart disease

26. Read the NICE Quick Guide with pictures on Understanding Intermediate Care, if you or a relative want to know how to get it and how it can help you recover from illness or injury

27. When you're discussing options with your doctor, ask: what are the benefits, risks or alternatives, or what happens if I do nothing?

28. Measure first impressions of mental health wards in a '15 Step Challenge' as a volunteer for Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

29. If you're thinking of making an NHS complaint, first read the online guide on our Reading Voice advocacy website, to understand your rights & options



30. Support the #TreatMeWell campaign run by learning disability charity Mencap by signing a petition, checking out your rights or asking NHS staff to become champions of better care

31. Tell South Central Ambulance what you think of its patient transport service (which brings eligible people to hospital appointments, for example) in its yearly public survey

32. Have your say about a NICE guideline, such as its latest proposed changes to the way people should be treated for post-traumatic stress disorder

33. Go along to the Royal Berkshire Hospital AGM to find out what it's done over the past 12 months

34. If you or someone you know has dementia, read the new NICE dementia guideline and discuss it with healthcare professionals to get the care that you or a loved one needs

35. Go along to the next full council of Reading Borough Council meeting (or watch it online) - it's where it discusses things like its strategic plan for public health, vulnerable adults and more

36. Visit the newly refurbished South Reading Community Hub in Whitley to find out what support and services are there for your wellbeing

37. Consider shopping online through a special site that helps raise cash for the local charity Age UK Reading

38. Take part in an NHS England 'webinar' (a live, online exchange of ideas) or online training course aimed at people wanting to get more involved and informed

39. Become a Cochrane Citizen Scientist and contribute to healthcare research even if you only have a few minutes to spare

40. Attend a Healthwatch Reading listening session - at the last one we held, people with experience of mental health issues shared their stories with us

41. Watch a short film by Healthwatch England to find out why sharing your story with us can help improve health and care services

42. Take a look at the prospectus for Reading's New Directions to find out about short courses that could improve your health - like 'Deaf Awareness', 'Mindfulness' and 'Meditation'

43. Help raise funds for mental health charities by going to a Bengali Cultural Society event at Rivermead Leisure Centre, 14 July

44. If you believe apps, trackers or other technology can improve people's health, then apply to help develop a new NICE national guidance - they want young people's views especially



45. Print out and display, or electronically share, the latest Healthwatch England poster to help spread the word about our role

46. Go along to a free disability awareness event at the Weller Centre in Caversham on 8 August - there'll be information stalls, entertainment & activities

47. If Care Quality Commission inspectors turn up at a GP surgery, hospital or residential home where you're being cared for or treated, fill in their comment cards to help inform their quality rating

48. Read the Healthwatch England guide to 6 things you should expect from social care services, to check how your experience matches up against them

49. View amazing photos of patient care before the NHS to see how far we've come, at the Historic England Archive

50. Watch a short NHS England video featuring consultant Toby Young talking about future medical advances we can expect - like whole genome screening for cancer

51. Read the Healthwatch Reading annual report to find out how many Reading people we helped in 2017-18 & how we worked to improve local health & social care services



52. Help combat loneliness in Reading by volunteering to help at one of Age UK Reading's social clubs, especially on a Saturday

53. Learn how to give 'mental health first aid', by taking a course at Reading Community Learning Centre - the next one's on 16 & 17 July

54. Go along to the regular meetings of RBC's Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education committee to hear about latest issues, policies or to ask questions - next meeting is 11 July 2018

61. Consider becoming a governor of Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to ensure it gives local people the mental health & community services they need

62. Leave a review about your dental surgery, GP practice or hospital on their NHS Choices website listing to help inform others & to prompt a reply from the service

63. If you want to represent your community's views on NHS & social care, then think about standing as a local councillor in future elections

64. Tell a friend if we've helped resolve your NHS complaint, given you helpful advice or listened to your experience, so we can reach even more Reading people

55. Sign up for Healthwatch Reading's monthly newsletter to get details of our latest work, facts & updates on local services, and events - we can send it out by email or in the post



65. Look out for future governor vacancies at Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, if you want to give public insight on patient care, help choose its chairperson and set executives' pay

56. Contact your local MP - Alok Sharma for Reading West or Matt Rodda for Reading East - if you want them to campaign in Parliament on NHS or social care issues

66. Submit a question to the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board, where councillors, the NHS and our own representative, vote on how to improve the town's health

57. If you have concerns about any Reading NHS service, give feedback to the organisation that funds them, Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group, via its PALS team on 0118 982 2720

67. Read the NHS Constitution & its handbook to know your rights as a patient on wait times, involvement, medical records, complaints and more

58. If you've recently given birth, consider sharing your experience with Reading Maternity Voices, which works to improve local services



68. If you're passionate about better services, join the board of Healthwatch Reading to act as the 'eyes and ears of the community' and guide our work in giving local people a greater voice

59. Contact the national social enterprise, Beacon, for free expert advice about applying for NHS Continuing Health Care funding for specialist nursing, therapies or care homes

69. If you can afford it, spend 99p to download the 'NHS Voices' single, With a Little Help From My Friends, to show thanks for 70 years of the NHS & raise money for charities

60. If you or a relative are sectioned at Prospect Park Hospital, make sure you know your rights and how to access one of our Independent Mental Health Advocates by calling 0118 937 2295



70. Speak up about the good stuff too! Tell us the latest way the NHS in Reading has helped you or a loved one

**GET IN TOUCH:** Please contact us in you want more information, phone numbers, or web links about any of our 70 Patient Power Actions, by phoning 0118 937 2295 or email [info@healthwatchreading.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchreading.co.uk).

