

TEAM REPORT

May was a busy month for our staff team:

12
MAY
2017

We attended a patient experience workshop run by Royal Berkshire Hospital to discuss how patients could be more involved in designing services, such as upcoming changes to the emergency department. One of the questions that came up from hospital staff was, 'how do we talk to 'hard-to-reach' communities?' We are asked this a lot, and our answer is always the same: communities aren't hard to reach - you just have to go out to where they are, help them overcome barriers to having their say, and then listen.

19
MAY
2017

We attended an excellent dementia conference, hosted by Acre (Reading's equalities organisation). A diverse audience of 120 people heard talks on topics such as young-onset dementia and the importance of diet and faith in dementia care. There was also a great Jamaican choir that reinforced the therapeutic nature of music.

30
MAY
2017

We gave a presentation to a Reading Advice Network meeting at the Civic Centre. RAN aims to connect local charities to discuss common issues and share best practice. Our presentation gave an overview of supporting people with mental health needs. This ranges from self-referral to services like Talking Therapies or Reading Your Way, through to seeking a referral from a GP for specialist care for serious problems. If you're unsure who can help you best, Healthwatch Reading's team is always happy to talk things through.

SAVE
t h e
DATE

18 July 2017 is our annual general meeting open to the public, and we're pleased to announce the guest speaker will be Steve McManus, chief executive of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust. We'd love to hear what burning questions about hospital services you'd like him to answer - send us your suggestions to info@healthwatchreading.co.uk or telephone us 0118 937 2295.

SAVE A LIFE AND GAIN FIRST-CLASS SKILLS BY SIGNING UP TO REWARDING VOLUNTEER ROLES



Healthwatch Reading is proud to announce that it is working in partnership with the South Central Ambulance Service Charity in 2017 on its latest project.

The charity is looking for more people of all ages, backgrounds and walks of life to volunteer as Community First Responders, Car Drivers or Charity Supporters. All you need is the desire to get involved and have some free time - the charity will help with the rest, to ensure that volunteering suits your lifestyle.

Visit this special page, <http://bit.ly/2qn8BxK>, on our website to watch a film of real-life volunteers talk about the flexibility and rewards of the roles. You'll also find all the information you need on how to sign up.

South Central
Ambulance
Charity





A ROUND-UP OF LOCAL NEWS BY NUMBERS

2 out of 3 people with a long-term physical condition also have a mental health problem - a need that local NHS funders hope to address in a new scheme announced on May 10. The Talking Therapies service will now be extended to people with COPD, Type 2 diabetes and cardiac conditions. Talking Therapies is run by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and can include traditional counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy and web-based support. Judith Chapman, BHFT's clinical director in this area, said: "Stress, anxiety and depression are increasingly prevalent in our modern lifestyle. For people also dealing with the extra strain of a long-term illness, things can be even more difficult. We want to make a difference by giving people the knowledge and skills to take care of themselves and increase their resilience."

9 The number of newly organised community midwife teams that have been set up by Royal Berkshire Hospital to provide better care for expectant and new mothers in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire. The aim of the teams is to provide better continuity of care for women throughout their pregnancies and immediately after birth, from a small team of 4-6 midwives. These teams will get to know women through appointments in convenient locations, such as GP surgeries, children's centres, or at home. Women will also be able to email their team seven days a week.

14% of GP appointments are related to musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions - but are patients happy with the care they receive from various NHS services to treat these? That was the question put to a discussion event held for the public by the federation of Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups (which plan and fund NHS services in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham). MSK conditions cover more than 200 different problems affecting the human frame, including joints, bones, muscles, soft tissue problems, rheumatology, chronic pain and orthopaedics. The meeting was attended by 16 patients and feedback included carparking problems at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, difficulties people face with limited mobility in getting around different hospital departments, hospital letters going missing, and also concern about the limited number of therapy sessions, for example, six sessions and that it's even if you still have issues.

400 people felt moved to have their say in a public consultation on reducing the number of Children's Centres, in Reading. Details on the feedback are revealed in papers going to a committee meeting at Reading Borough Council on June 6. Just over 90 per cent of respondents raised concerns about moving away from the 'open door' policy of welcoming any new parent and child to a Children's Centre, towards only offering targeted support to certain families. People were worried this would stigmatise Children's Centres and put people off going. It could also prevent the chance to spot the extra support people needed at different times. As a result of the feedback, RBC now says it will keep offering 'universal access' to new parents and babies up to the age of 1.

658 new homes are needed each year up until 2036, according to a draft Local Plan drawn up by Reading Borough Council. Half of these are proposed to be in central Reading, 20 per cent in South Reading and the rest in other areas. This raises big questions about how our local health services will cope. 'Almost none of the practices in South Reading' and 'most GP practices' in central Reading could not cope with this population growth, the plan states. People have until 14 June 2017 to give feedback on the plan, which can be found on the RBC website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/newlocalplan>.





PALL CALL SERVICE FOR DYING PEOPLE IN READING CLOSED DOWN BY NHS FUNDERS

A new 24/7 helpline for dying people and their families in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire, has been closed by local NHS funders, according to a new report published by Healthwatch Reading.

Pall Call, which had been run by Sue Ryder, only launched in October 2016 and was shut down on May 5th 2017, just days before the launch of Dying Matters week on 8 May 2017.

The service had started to meet its aims of preventing dying people from being unnecessarily admitted to hospital as emergency cases, by giving them access to timely advice from a dedicated team of expert nurses, on how to deal with care needs at home. The helpline had received more than 560 calls. An initial analysis showed it had prevented 42 hospital admissions and 60 contacts with GPs.

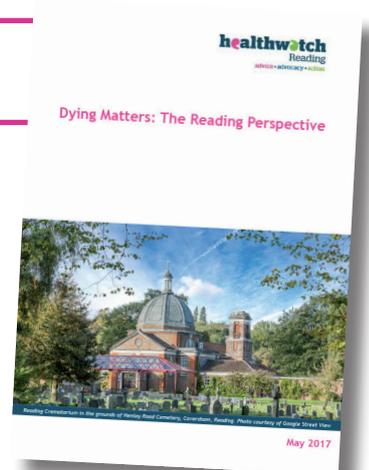
The Berkshire West federation of NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups took the decision to close Pall Call due to ongoing problems recruiting enough nurses. A revamped 111 telephone service is also due to be launched locally in October 2017

that could offer 24/7 access to similar expert end-of-life advice.

Healthwatch Reading team manager Rebecca Norris said: "We had been involved in the steering group overseeing Pall Call's launch, including helping to develop a patient survey to evaluate how useful people and relatives found it. It is a shame that this valuable addition to existing palliative care services has been stopped at this time and we hope the learning from this project can be carried into plans for the new 111 service."

The report also highlights how patient and carer-led initiatives have got the public talking about end of life issues, which can be seen as a 'taboo' topic. This includes a successful public event organised by Balmore Park Surgery's Patient Participation in March 2017.

The report can be found at <http://bit.ly/2pjJz79>



CIRCUIT LANE SURGERY AND PRIORY AVENUE SURGERY UPDATE

Healthwatch Reading went back to speak to patients at Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote and Priory Avenue Surgery in Caversham in late May to find out if they feel enough improvements have been made.

We spoke to around 50 people over two days and collected a range of experiences. We will be sending our findings to the company running both practices - OneMedicalGroup - to give them a chance to respond before we make the details public.

The visits came just after the Healthwatch Reading board - made up of people who act as the 'eyes and ears' of our community - spent the morning quizzing local NHS officials about what they had been doing to address the poor quality of patient experience identified in an inspection visit in January. Both practices are currently rated as

'inadequate' by the Care Quality Commission. We were pleased that the GP chair of North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group, Dr Andy Ciecierski and two of his CCG colleagues, agreed to come and speak with us. They said improvements had been made to areas such as repeat prescription turnarounds but there was still a challenge with recruiting enough staff - not just in those two practices, but across Reading. We made several suggestions, mainly around communication with patients and complaints handling, and the CCG has agreed to look further into this.

The CQC is due to revisit the practices soon to check if they have made required improvements. A public meeting for Circuit Lane patients was due to be held in early May but was called off at the last minute due to General Election rules.





LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

South Reading Surgery rated 'INADEQUATE'. The surgery has made improvements but there are still some concerns.
Report published on 10 May 2017: <http://bit.ly/2rY4ARV>

Hazeldene rated 'GOOD'. The service is extremely responsive.
Report published on 15 May 2017: <http://bit.ly/2qStbK6>

Summerfield Care Home rated 'GOOD'. The people felt safe and one said "Oh yes, we are safe here, absolutely, the staff are so kind."
Report published on 18 April 2017: <http://bit.ly/2qSiYxo>

VJ Carers rated 'GOOD'. The service has made improvements to address the areas of concern raised in the previous inspection.
Report published on 22 May 2017: <http://bit.ly/2qZnEjr>

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 JUNE

Wednesday 7 June 2017

South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body Meeting in Public, 9:30am - 12:30pm, at The Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, Redlands Rd, Reading RG1 5EX. To attend, please register at <http://bit.ly/2sgqSym> by 12 noon the day before the meeting.

Sunday 11 June 2017

Special remembrance service for families who have lost their babies, 2:00pm, at Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading RG1 5AN.

Monday 12 June 2017

Open support group (part of Carers Week), 7:00pm - 8:30pm, at The Travellers Rest, 180 Henley Road, Reading RG4 5DL. Open Support Group for people who are unpaid carers to loved ones.

Wednesday 14 June 2017

Carers Week Event (part of Carers Week), 11:00am - 3:00pm, at Civic Offices, 19 Bridge Street, RG1 2LU. There will be talks on fire safety, dementia, mental health, social isolation and more.

Primary Care Commissioning Committee, 1:00pm - 4:30pm, at The Oakwood Centre, Woodley RG5 4JZ.

Saturday 17 June 2017

Reading Disability Awareness Funday, 11:00am - 3:00pm, at Civic Offices, 19 Bridge Street, RG1 2LU. Connecting people with disabilities, their families and carers to local services.

Tuesday 20 June 2017

North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group - Governing Body Meeting in Public, 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm, at North & West CCG Offices, 59 Bath Road, RG30 2BA. To attend, please register at <http://bit.ly/2rE36jz> by 12 noon the day prior to 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.

