



TEAM REPORT

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2017

We enjoyed meeting a large group of 16-24 year-olds, mostly childcare apprentices, at the Chiltern Training centre in Station Road, Reading. We explained our role, carried out a quiz about their NHS rights, and asked them to tell us about their experience of local health services. They told us they wanted quicker access to GP appointments and to be treated with respect, especially over mental health issues. As one person told us: "When I was in hospital I was treated very poorly by nurses, who referred to me as 'the anorexic' when speaking to other colleagues."

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We convened a roundtable of local voluntary sector organisations to hear how they have been coping with cuts to funding they get from Reading Borough Council and the impact this has had on vulnerable people in our town. We will be presenting details from this roundtable at the next meeting of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board, on 24 March.

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We took our portable info & advice stand to the launch of the Compass Recovery College at Greyfriars Church in Friar Street (see picture).

The idea of the college is to offer people who are recovering from mental health issues, a range of courses offered from various locations. Topics for the courses include: 'Mindfulness' and 'Making Sense of Voices'. People can get information or register on the first and third Monday of each month at New Directions in South Reading.



..Don't miss 9 March 2017: We urge people to grab an opportunity to hear what's planned for the NHS by those responsible for funding and planning Reading services over the next few years. The public event is on at the Town Hall, 10.30am-12.30pm and there'll be a chance to ask questions.

ALL CHANGE FOR PATIENTS IN SOUTH READING

Patients stand to gain from better access to more appointments and a choice of doctors under two separate mergers set to take effect from 1 April 2017.

London Road Surgery will close its premises and merge with Melrose Surgery, based one mile away. London Road said this was due to difficulties recruiting doctors and practice nurses and the risks associated with staff working alone in its building. The plans would mean there would be at least four doctors and

two nurses on duty at any one time.

In the other major development, Milman Road Health Centre will now operate as one single surgery, rather than two separate practices on different floors. So patients with Dr Croft and Dr Kumar, will become part of Dr Mittal & partners, offering eight GPs and other staff. Clinics will be offered on either floors.

The plans have to be approved on 8 March 2017 by the Primary Care Commissioning Committee.





WHAT READING PEOPLE THINK ABOUT ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING

Healthwatch Reading is challenging the local NHS to develop electronic prescribing service (EPS) to its full potential after surveying Reading people about their experience with the service.

We spoke to more than 200 people visiting local GP practices and pharmacies and found nearly three-quarters of people (72%) were aware of EPS but less than half (48%) had knowingly used the service. EPS is the system where a patient nominates a pharmacy where they would like their GP to electronically send their prescriptions. People can be signed up to EPS by either their GP surgery or their pharmacy. Separately, online repeat prescriptions involve patients using the internet to log into a secure system to send a message to their GP practice that they want their prescription renewed.



The survey showed that people think the biggest benefit of EPS is convenience, as it can save a journey to a GP surgery to pick up a paper prescription once requesting repeat medication. However people said the experience could be even better if pharmacies introduced a text messaging service to let them know when their medicines were ready to collect. Half of people surveyed reported that their medicines were not ready when they arrived to collect it from the pharmacy. Most people (60%) had heard about EPS from GPs rather than the pharmacies (23%), the survey also found.

<http://bit.ly/2m8eQYL>

NHS England said Healthwatch Reading's report was very useful as it showed how a new service was being used by local residents and it also highlighted the areas for further improvement. Local NHS England and NHS Digital staff would ask nationally whether a pilot could be carried out of a texting service to notify the public when their prescriptions were ready to collect.

CIRCUIT LANE UPDATE

Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote has been told it must urgently tackle 'unsafe' repeat prescription delays, patient paperwork and staffing levels, by the national regulator of NHS services.

On 17 February 2017, the Care Quality Commission published findings from its unannounced inspection of the surgery on 1 December 2016. On that day, inspectors found:

- 435 prescriptions waiting to be processed, some dating back to 25 October 2016, and some for vital medications such as warfarin;
- a backlog of 116 referral letters (used by GPs to ask other services such as hospitals to investigate patients' symptoms) had not yet been sent;
- the practice had no pre-bookable appointments until 23 December 2016;
- a request made on 16 November 2016 for a blood transfusion for a patient receiving end-of-life care had not yet been actioned;
- the surgery's management had failed to put in robust plans to respond to repeated concerns raised by staff;
- 156 of the surgery's patients had attended the Reading Walk-In Centre in Broad Street Mall during September, October and November 2016, which was significantly higher than the number from any other Reading practice, due to lack of appointments or staff directing patients there; and
- 'the practice was not providing safe services' and 'there were significant risks to patients' health and welfare'.

The CQC's report confirms evidence passed by patients to Healthwatch Reading and local councillors, since the company OneMedicalGroup took over Circuit Lane, and Priory Avenue, surgeries on 1 September 2016. The CQC also visited both surgeries in January 2017 to undertake fuller inspections, to help determine overall ratings for both, which will be revealed soon.





OneMedicalGroup has been given until 1 March 2017 to clear the backlogs for repeat prescriptions, medication reviews, and patient correspondence. It must also report by 22 March, findings of a review into how it will meet patient needs in the future.

PALLCALL - 24 HOUR SUPPORT FOR PALLIATIVE CARE IN BERKSHIRE WEST

A new service has been launched called PallCall, which provides a single point of contact and 24-hour support via telephone for people in the last twelve months of life, their families and carers. It also provides support for health and social care professionals.

Anyone who is receiving palliative care in Berkshire West, or anyone who is supporting a person receiving that care is entitled to access PallCall. If you would like more information on how to access PallCall, speak to your GP.

HOW THE NHS IS RESPONDING TO OUR REPORT ON A&E EXPERIENCES

Organisations have described how they have been making the A&E experience better for people as a result of recommendations from Healthwatch Reading.

Following on from the report *“Why local people go to the emergency department: findings of a seven-day survey at the Royal Berkshire Hospital”*

the Berkshire West CCGs and Royal Berkshire Hospital say they have been quick to action some of its findings. Here are some of the steps taken.

The CCGs and GP Practices:

- are looking to reduce inappropriate visits to the ED;
- exploring the possibility of letting patients not registered with a GP, register with a GP practice remotely from the ED; and



- launching a new Thames Valley 111 Integrated Urgent Care service in October 2017.

Royal Berkshire Hospital:

- is looking into the feasibility of purchasing a microphone system to make announcements calling patients in, to be clearer;
- will give patients clearer instructions at the entrance on how patients can book in;
- has provided customer care training for all reception staff;
- has told police to bring distressed patients to the rear entrance;
- has provided suitable toys and reading material for older children along with new signage showing what’s available;
- found new signage on how to request an interpreter;
- ordered an extra electronic board to display waiting times;
- is seeking additional seating;
- has installed a free taxi telephone;
- has found toilet and other signage; and
- reviewed cleaning schedules.

‘READING YOUR WAY’ SAVED FROM CLOSURE

The Reading Your Way (RYW) centre, which provides support to people with mental health problems, has been saved from closure following a new agreement between Reading Borough Council and the NHS. Service users had spoken about the potential negative impact of the closure.

FIRST STOP PROJECT HAS A NEW HOME

The FIRST Stop Project has moved from a bus in the centre of town to the Reading Minster church. The project aims to improve safety for the people of Reading, helping prevent unnecessary admissions to A&E by providing advice, reassurance and first aid.

The service is available on Friday and Saturday night between 9.00pm and 3.30am.





EXTRA NEWS ON CIRCUIT LANE AND PRIORY AVENUE SURGERIES

NHS sends patients an apology and action plan for Circuit Lane and Priory Ave surgeries

A senior NHS official has apologised to the thousands of patients registered with Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote and Priory Avenue Surgery in Caversham and says they have sent in a special team to help improve services.

In a letter sent out on 24 February 2017, Cathy Winfield, chief officer of Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups, writes: "We are sorry that the service at the surgery has not been what you should expect in recent weeks." Patients "should now be able to get your prescriptions within 48 hours", and there would be a renewed push to recruit permanent doctors and nurses at the surgeries, the letter adds.

The communication is the first of its kind from the NHS, since patients and staff first started raising concerns five months ago about patient safety issues including repeat prescription delays, lack of appointments, and backlogs of patient correspondence and referrals.

The letter says the CCGs have sent in a senior practice manager, a local GP and an experienced nurse practitioner to work alongside staff at both surgeries to make improvements. The nurse practitioner would be checking that patients with a chronic condition such as diabetes and asthma and are getting the checks that they need, working with the Reading diabetic nurse specialist and a Royal Berkshire Hospital consultant. The CCGs had also asked the community geriatrician to increase her input into Circuit Lane patients living in care homes, to help reduce the surgery's workload.

The letter comes a week after the Care Quality Commission, which checks the safety of NHS services, published findings of its unannounced inspections of Priory Avenue and Circuit Lane

on 1 December 2016. More detailed reports are due out soon from the CQC, following further inspection visits to the surgeries in January.

The full letters to Circuit Lane and Priory Avenue patients can be found on the CCGs' website at <http://www.nwreadingccg.nhs.uk/news/entry/circuit-lane-and-priory-avenue-surgeries>

The letter comes a week after the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which checks the safety of NHS services, published findings of its unannounced inspections on 1 December 2016, of Priory Avenue:

(http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/AAAG1016.pdf)

and Circuit Lane:

(http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/AAAG0618.pdf)

More detailed reports are due out soon from the CQC, following further inspection visits to the surgeries in January.



The above story was added after the original newsletter was printed.





LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

Domiciliary Care service Lifecarers (Reading, Caversham and Henley) rated 'Good'. The service has made the improvements required in the areas, Safe, Effective and Well-led since it was last inspected. Report published on 01 February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2kQxwMn>

Bluebird Care (Reading & Wokingham) has been rated 'Outstanding'. People benefitted from being cared for by staff who were consistently described as, "caring", "kind", "lovely" and "patient". Report published on 08 February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2luw4yd>

Westwood Road Health Centre rated 'Requires Improvement'. Specifically there were issues

around governance and health & safety. Report published on 10 February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2kQeaXD>

Rosebank House (independent hospital) rated 'Requires Improvement'. Improvements are required in the areas of safety, effectiveness and responsiveness. Report published on 14 February 2017: <http://bit.ly/2kQo4Zv>

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 MARCH

Wednesday 1 March 2017

South Reading CCG Governing Body Meeting in Public, from 9.30am - 12.30pm at the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, RG1 5EX. To attend phone 0300 123 6264.

Friday 3 March 2017

Sue Ryder 'Matters of Life and Death' Open Day, from 10.00am - 4.00pm at the Nettlebed Hospice, Sue Ryder Care Centre, RG9 5DF. Please call 01491 641 384 for more information.

Thursday 9th March 2017

Access and Disabilities Working Group, from 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading.

Monday 20th March 2017

Healthwatch Reading Board Meeting in Public, at 10.00am in the Conference Room at Reading Central Library.

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee Meeting, at 6.30pm in Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading RG1 2LZ.

Tuesday 21st March 2017

NWR CCG Governing Body Meeting, from 1.30am at the South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit, 59 Bath Road, RG30 2BJ.

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

