

May 2016

Our team report

On 1 April 2016 we celebrate our 3rd birthday since launching. Over the coming year we will continue providing a free, confidential and independent information and advice



Maternity services at Royal Berkshire Hospital still require improvement

Maternity services at the Royal Berkshire Hospital are still beset with staffing shortages that force women to give birth elsewhere, according to national quality inspectors.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) published [findings](#) on 25 April 2016 about a follow-up visit in November 2015 that it undertook to check if maternity services had improved since the CQC last [visited in 2014](#). Inspectors said while some improvements had been made, and they heard positive feedback from women about their care, maternity services at the hospital trust would remain at a rating of 'requires improvement'.

The hospital had closed the maternity unit 29 times between May 2015 and October 2015, the CQC said, because there were not enough midwives to staff a safe service. According to [women's stories](#) published by Healthwatch Reading in November 2015, being diverted to a different, unfamiliar place to give birth is very stressful for women and sometimes led to delayed follow-up checks of their babies when they got back home.

The CQC also said it had also learnt that there been a large rise in cases of major obstetric haemorrhages (bleeding) reported, which had prompted the trust to carry out a major review to find out why.

Inspectors had told the trust to take action to protect confidentiality of women's electronic patient records, after they witnessed staff on one occasion leaving a nursing station completely unattended when they had not logged out of records.

The CQC added that it had observed some outstanding areas of practice, including encouragement of breastfeeding.



New service launches to offer support to unpaid carers in Reading

Unpaid carers will be able to get information, advice and support from a new service launching in Reading from 1 April 2016.

The Reading and West Berkshire Carers Hub will provide a first port of contact to adult carers who provide vital unpaid care to friends, family and neighbours who are unwell, frail or who have disabilities.

The hub will have a helpline which people can call on 0118 324 7333 or carers can email ask@berkshirecarershub.org. Advice aims to help carers access and get the most out of carer's assessments, personal budgets and health checks. It is also planning to offer, a carer's discount card, access to holiday homes, and gym memberships.

The new organisation is led by Carers Trust East Midlands, working in partnership with the existing local service, Crossroads Care Reading, which already runs clubs, respite breaks and sitting services. The hub's headquarters will be based at Crossroads in Albury Close in west Reading.

The new hub is taking over from Berkshire Carers Service, which will no longer operate in the area. Adult carers across Reading and West Berkshire, who need extra help, are being encouraged to get in touch with the new hub.

Concerns raised about impact of latest NHS shake-up on local people

Reading patients and councillors have spoken out to oppose 'flawed proposals' to force Reading to work with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire on joint health plans.

NHS England announced on 15 March that it had created 44 'footprint' areas in England that would be required to produce five year 'sustainability and transformation plans (STP)' for their populations. Reading will be included in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area, covering 1.7 million patients, whose health services are currently planned and funded by seven local clinical commissioning groups. The new area will be led by David Smith, chief executive of Oxfordshire CCG.

Reading councillors criticised the 'fundamentally flawed' proposals as yet another 'top down reorganisation' that could mean Reading people's needs were overridden as the new larger planning area tried to balance budgets. The council voted on 22 March to register its protest in writing to NHS England's chief executive and the secretary of state for health. The council will also have talks with local NHS colleagues about how Reading's health resources can be ring-fenced and protected for Reading people.

Members of South Reading Patient Voice also voted at their last meeting, on 30 March, to raise the issue with local MPs and NHS commissioners. The group said it was concerned that workforce planning, primary care provider development and urgent and emergency care were being proposed as topics that the larger area would take responsibility for.



Summary of other quality ratings for Reading Services published in March

Lakeside Residential Home in Whiteknights Road, residential home for up to 64 older people, some with dementia: **Good**. Inspectors praised the caring, positive atmosphere.

Home Instead (Reading), providing home care to 26 people in Reading and West Berkshire: **Good**. Inspectors found robust recruitment checks and 'genuinely caring' staff.

Peppard House care home in Caversham, providing accommodation for up to seven people with learning disabilities: **Good**. People's wellbeing maintained and improved.

Greenslade Services, a home care agency: **Good**. People told inspectors they felt safe.

Yew Tree Lodge in Redlands Road, a care home offering crisis, respite or long-term stays for up to 16 people with mental health needs: **Good**. Inspectors observed good, caring practice by staff, and people said they felt listened to.

MiHomecare - Reading providing personal care to 180 people in their own homes in Reading and Newbury: **Requires improvement**. Care workers sometimes arrived late.

Abbey Medical Centre, a GP surgery in Russell Street covering around 2,250 patients: **Good**. Patients said they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and they were involved in their care and decisions about their treatment. Inspectors also told the surgery to ensure all staff who undertook chaperone duties had completed DBS checks and to ensure the phlebotomist was appropriately authorised to administer flu immunisations.

Milman Road Surgery - Dr Mittal, a GP surgery in Milman Road covering 9,500 patients: **Good**. The majority of patients said they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and they were involved in their care and decisions about their treatment. Inspectors recommended that the surgery encourage people to get involved in the patient participation group and to review how it identifies and registers carers.

Melrose Surgery - Dr Dean: a GP surgery on London Road that has taken over the patients of neighbouring, closed, practice of Dr FAB Williams: **Requires improvement**. Inspectors told the surgery to take steps on the safety of the building it works from, improve full recruitment checks, and also recommend providing information in different languages.

The Willows Specialist Dementia Unit and Intermediate Care Unit in Hexham Road, providing dementia care for up to 16 people, and intermediate care in 10 flats: **Good**. Staff were caring, kind, respectful and courteous, and knew people well.

Supreme Healthcare Services, an agency providing home care to 18 people: **Good**. People said they were treated with kindness and respect.

Eldon Rd Surgery, covering 2,300 patients: **Special measures**. Patients said staff were caring but problems with building and failure to meet many primary care health targets.

