



TEAM REPORT

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2017

1 April: Healthwatch Reading celebrated its 4th birthday, along with 151 other local Healthwatch in every local authority area of England. The mission of the Healthwatch network is 'to work towards a society in which people's health and social care needs are heard, understood and met'. We have statutory powers to carry out 'Enter and View' visits to capture people's experiences as they visit GPs, hospitals or care homes and locally we are included in many top-level NHS and council decision-making meetings, where we continually speak up for the rights of local people, share their experiences, and argue for changes or improvements.

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2017

7 April: Our team ran a focus group with people who use Cirdic, the homeless drop-in centre in central Reading, to hear their experiences of using local health and social care

services. We ran a further two focus groups on 27 April, at Willow House, a 38-bed unit run by the Salvation Army. We will describe what they told us in a forthcoming report. The project has illuminated to us that the route to homelessness is varied and can affect people from all walks of life and we thank the participants for sharing their stories frankly with us.

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18 April: We returned to Focus House, a home for people with mental health issues, to hear their thoughts on Reading Borough Council's consultation to close the residence. The plans have mobilised the people who live there to defend the value of Focus House, which many say prevents them from experiencing further crises. A petition launched by one resident on the change.org website, has attracted more than 200 signatures (see <http://bit.ly/2p3zuch>)

PHARMACISTS WARN THAT ELDERLY AND DISABLED PEOPLE 'MOST AT RISK' FROM PRESCRIBING PLANS

People who are elderly, housebound or who have learning disabilities are most likely to be adversely affected by 'draconian' plans to stop pharmacists ordering repeat prescriptions on behalf of patients. That was the warning from Pharmacy Thames Valley, representing local pharmacists, after the Berkshire West federation of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) - which plan and buy NHS services for our communities - said it wanted to stop pharmacy involvement in ordering repeat prescriptions, to cut down on 'waste' caused from order-ordered and unused medication. But Pharmacy Thames Valley said 'there may be a safeguarding risk to vulnerable patients who may not be able to manage with the changes to repeat prescriptions', or who were not IT literate and able to order repeat prescriptions online. These patients would turn to GP surgeries or adult social care teams for help, placing extra burden on these already stretched services. The plans would 'have the biggest

impact on our most at-risk patients i.e. the elderly, housebound, those with learning disabilities and those who rely on their pharmacies to help them manage their medication'.

The CCGs say up to £1.8m a year could be saved across Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire. As well as repeat prescribing changes, the CCGs want to ban GPs from prescribing over-the-counter medications such as cold remedies, gluten-free food, camouflage preparations for skin conditions, and travel vaccines.

A public consultation on the plans ended on April 28 2017. Healthwatch Reading will report on the final decision when it has been made.





A ROUND-UP OF LOCAL NEWS BY NUMBERS

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May 2017: The date of a 'Walk and Talk' event in Reading town centre, that people are being encouraged to get involved in as part of the Brighter Berkshire Year of Mental Health. The initiative aims to get the public talking openly about mental health issues and to raise funds for charities and projects that have a positive impact on people.

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The number of key actions that NHS clinical commissioning groups and NHS England must take to better involve the public in their own health and care under new statutory guidance published on 6 April. 'The challenge now is to shift the focus of care and support services from 'what is the matter with you?' towards 'what matters to you?,' the guidance states. 'It means focusing on what matters to the individual within the context of their lives, not simply addressing a list of conditions or symptoms to be treated.' Involvement could range from helping a person make an informed decision about whether to have an operation, through to jointly developing a plan to help manage a long-term condition. Even if people were unable to be fully involved because of severe disabilities, the views of those who knew them best should be sought.

£996,000

The amount awarded to Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust by the Department of Health to help boost its emergency department. The Royal Berks was one of 70 NHS hospitals named on 21 April 2017 that will receive a share of £55.98m, from a new £100m A&E fund revealed in the spring Budget. The funding aims to help hospitals cope with higher numbers of patients who attend emergency departments during the winter, and ensure they meet the March 2018 target of seeing people within four hours of arriving.

£53,000

The amount cut from Reading Borough Council's public health budget for 2017-18 specifically for the Beat the Street scheme that had previously encouraged schoolchildren and adults to take up walking and other physical activity. The council said that Reading's NHS clinical commissioning groups had also decided not to fund the scheme this year, leaving its future uncertain. The amount was confirmed at an RBC policy committee meeting on 10 April 2017. In all, £479,000 has been cut from the public health budget.

54

the number of 'mixed-sex accommodation breaches' in the month of March 2017 reported by Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust. The figure is an improvement, representing nearly half the previous month's 95 breaches. Trusts are required to report how many cases where male and female patients have had to sleep within the same ward or area of a hospital. Latest figures were published on 20 April.





PATIENTS INVITED TO PUBLIC MEETING ABOUT CIRCUIT LANE ISSUES

Patients at Circuit Lane Surgery in Southcote will get the chance to question the head of the company running the practice, as well as a local NHS official, at a special public meeting being held at 7pm on Thursday 4 May.

The meeting comes a month after it was revealed that Circuit Lane, and Priory Avenue Surgery in Caversham, which OneMedicalGroup both run, had been rated 'inadequate' and placed into 'special measures' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC is the national independent body that checks quality and safety of health services.

Reading West MP Alok Sharma is holding the public meeting, at St Matthew's Church, 205 Southcote Lane, Reading, RG30 3AX. He said Rachel Beverley-Stevenson, chief executive of OneMedicalGroup, and Cathy Winfield, chief officer of the Berkshire West federation of NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), would be attending, to talk about work being undertaken to address patient concerns over issues such as repeat prescription delays and appointment availability.

"As at other meetings I have held, there will be an opportunity to put questions to the panel," Mr Sharma said.



People wishing to attend the meeting have been asked to email alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk or telephone his office on 0118 941 3803.

Ruth Rankine, the CQC's deputy chief inspector of general practice said during the inspections in January, the surgeries "were both failing to provide the fundamental aspects of good care that patients have the right to expect from their GP practice". However, OneMedicalGroup had taken the findings "very seriously and immediate steps were put in place to ensure the urgent improvements required will be implemented", she added.

GENERAL ELECTION

With the General Election looming on 8 June, we remind our community that Healthwatch Reading is apolitical - meaning we do not back any political party, nor will we make any comments in the run-up to the election about any party's local record on NHS or social care issues.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN MAY

Thursday 4 May 2017

Public meeting for Circuit Lane Surgery patients, 7pm, at St Matthew's Church, 205 Southcote Lane, RG30 3AX. Organised by Reading West Alok Sharma, confirm attendance by email alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk or telephone 0118 941 3803.

Tuesday 9 May - Monday 15 May 2017

Dying To Talk Week, Reading: a series of events to help people talk about dying, death and bereavement (www.facebook.com/groups/dyingmattersRdg)

Wednesday 31 May 2017

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust board of directors meeting in public, 9.30am, in the hospital's boardroom, and the trust's council of governors meeting in public, 6pm, seminar room in the trust's education centre. To attend either, contact Emma Sampson, on 0118 322 5364.

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.





LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

Long Barn Lane Surgery rated 'GOOD'. Since its last inspection the surgery has made the required improvements.

Report published on 21 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2pZZ696>

Caremark (West Berkshire & Reading) rated 'GOOD'. The home care service provides safe, respectful and friendly care to 120 people.

Report published on 21 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2q041Xm>

26 St Barnabas Road (Voyage 1 Limited) rated 'GOOD'. The care home has addressed its underperformance after a follow-up inspection.

Report published on 22 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2p0pst9>

Total Health & Support Training Services rated 'REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT'. Staff are not provided with the appropriate training necessary for them to carry out their duties.

Report published on 27 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2q0aHVn>

Berkshire Independent Hospital/Ramsay Healthcare rated 'GOOD'. The staff work hard to make the patient experience as pleasant as possible.

Report published on 28 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2q1TNZx>

Quintiles Health Management Services rated 'GOOD' and users of the home infusion service said that the nurses were "fantastic".

Report published on 28 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2p0jOqG>

Chatham St Surgery has made improvements but will remain in 'SPECIAL MEASURES' until a full reinspection.

Report published on 30 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2q03wN8>

Radis Community Care rated 'GOOD' having made the required improvements to ensure care workers seek consent from clients.

Report published on 31 March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2q9P2cX>

159 Wensley Road (Residential Care Home) rated 'GOOD'. The residents, who have learning disabilities, receive a caring service.

Report published on 5 April 2017: <http://bit.ly/2oHWtHK>

Priory Avenue GP Surgery rated 'INADEQUATE' and has been placed in 'SPECIAL MEASURES'.

Report published on 6 April 2017: <http://bit.ly/2q1GFUo>

Circuit Lane GP Surgery rated 'INADEQUATE' and has been placed in 'SPECIAL MEASURES'.

Report published on 6 April 2017: <http://bit.ly/2pgMdt6>

Focus House, a care home for people with mental health issues, rated 'GOOD' and has improved since its last inspection.

Report published on 18 April 2017: <http://bit.ly/2oG5P69>

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.

