



### TEAM REPORT

**3 OCT 2017** We met with Steve McManus, chief executive of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, as part of a regular quarterly meeting to share patient feedback. A&E, and prevention strategies - which aim to stop people developing serious health problems - were among topics discussed.

**5 OCT 2017** We visited a homeless hostel in Reading to ask people what they know about tuberculosis (TB), as they can be at higher risk of getting this infection. We have got the views of more than 300 people locally through outreach activities and we are now analysing the findings to see how effective current public health campaigns are.

**5 OCT 2017** We attended a regular meeting of the Thames Valley Patient Experience Oversight Group, which brings together people from different organisations, including NHS England, to share latest public feedback on the NHS.

**9 OCT 2017** It was great to meet local people who visited our info & advice stand at the Reading Older People's Day event at Rivermead Leisure Centre. The event was very lively, with attendees taking part in sit-down exercises, walking rugby and table tennis. It was also great to network with other local charities, including Support U (pictured), which advises and supports on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues.



**11 OCT 2017** We were at the Royal Berks to take part in an A&E workshop, which was looking at how to improve people's experience on arrival at the emergency department. All sorts of issues were discussed including layout, signage and staff communication with patients. Our input was guided by the public views evidence we collected during our week-long visit to A&E last year.

**13 OCT 2017** We listened to powerful testimonies from three local people - Mo, Lisa and Bernard - at a World Mental Health Day event at Reading's Hexham Community Centre. They spoke about what it's like to have suicidal feelings and live with mental health needs. Their talks are part of an encouraging trend to get more people talking openly about these issues so people do not have to suffer in silence and seek help when needed.

**16 OCT 2017** We were visited by Imelda Redmond, director of Healthwatch England (for the second time in as many months!). She is touring local Healthwatch to let them know what kind of support our umbrella organisation will offer to resist cost cutting of Healthwatch services, at a time when public demand is growing for one-to-one help with complex issues about health and social care services.



**23-29 OCT 2017** We joined our peers from across Berkshire to carry out visits to Prospect Park Hospital to talk to inpatients about their care. This group of people is not often asked directly about their experience of psychiatric wards and an important part of our role is giving a voice to those who are seldom heard. Previous inpatients of Prospect Park, and/or their carers or families, are also invited to complete an online survey at <http://bit.ly/2yOAKz6>. Findings will be made public over the coming months.





*NEWS BY NUMBERS: Highlights from the 6 October meeting of the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board*

**6** October: the first day of operation of a new monthly drop-in clinic, for women affected by female genital mutilation (FGM). Known as the Reading Rose Centre, it runs from Oxford Road Community Centre, 9:30am-12:30pm on the first Friday of every month. Women will be able to learn about FGM in practising communities, challenge the practice and access advice and support. A doctor with experience of FGM issues, from Royal Berkshire Hospital, will also attend the monthly sessions. Local people have donated equipment and furniture and helped decorate the rooms, to make the centre a welcoming place for women to come and talk about this sensitive subject. The centre's motto is "No Woman Turned Away". For more information, telephone Victoria on 07903675676.

**70%** of school-children aged 5-6 across Reading got a flu vaccine last winter, thanks to efforts of nurses from Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust who visited schools. However Reading failed to meet a target to ensure 75% of all people aged over-65 received immunisations, and the number of vaccines given to pregnant women and under 2-year-olds went down. To help prevent flu outbreaks during this winter, a Berkshire Flu Plan has been drawn up, which says the public needs more information about 'myths and misconceptions' about vaccines, and that patients 'should be invited for vaccination in a way that suits them'.

**30** per cent of smokers in Reading are in routine or manual jobs and will be a target group for upcoming stop-smoking public health projects. There will also be a focus on reducing smoking in pregnancy, and local NHS clinical commissioning groups (who fund NHS care for local people) 'are considering limiting elective surgery for patients who continue to smoke'. A Stop B4 The Op campaign will be relaunched, to allow GPs to refer patients who smoke and need planned hospital operations, for rapid help from a stop-smoking service.

**133** : The number of patients registered as veterans at Reading GP surgeries, compared with the 378 veterans believed to be living locally. Action is now underway to identify more veterans, for several reasons. Firstly, veterans have a greater likelihood of illnesses such as hearing loss, limb and joint problems, and mental health needs. Veterans are also entitled to priority NHS hospital treatment for conditions related to their service, and can also access expert care from a dedicated veteran's clinic. People attending flu clinics this autumn and winter will be asked if they are veterans, and GPs will also have to adopt new registration forms that ask about armed forces service, when new people join their surgeries.

**44** weeks: the average length of time a local child needs to wait for an autism assessment, according to an update about children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). This wait is shorter than the national average of 3.5 years, but is longer than local NHS funders and the CAMHS service would like. Extra weekend clinics have been held to cut waiting times but assessment referrals are still rising.

**400** : the number of NHS staff in Berkshire who have volunteered to wear a fitness tracking device (Fitbit) 24 hours a day, for one year, as part of a pilot project run by the NHS and Microsoft. The volunteers will have their blood pressure, heart rate, activity and sleep levels monitored to see if wearing such devices can improve health and wellbeing and be encouraged in the general population.





## HEALTHWATCH READING RE-ISSUES SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE BOOKLET AS NEW STRATEGY IS LAUNCHED

Healthwatch Reading has updated and published its *Support after Suicide* booklet to coincide with the launch of a new Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy, on 17 October 2017.

The booklet was first published in September 2013 in response to concerns raised by families that they felt stranded and overwhelmed after the deaths of loved ones who had taken their own lives. The booklet gives simple advice and information about what immediately happens after a suicide, how it is investigated, the role of the coroner, sorting out finances, planning a funeral and where to get emotional support. A range of Reading and national charities are listed in the booklet. Contact details and weblinks have been checked and updated in the latest version of the guide, available on Healthwatch Reading's website to download and share.

When the booklet was first launched, a Reading mother described the impact on families. "Suicide is messy, painful and agony for those left behind." She added: "I found myself in the early hours of the morning alternating between desperate searches on the Internet, seeking answers, and crying to The Samaritans." She worked with Healthwatch Reading to launch the booklet, as a tribute to her 24 year old daughter, who had stood in front of a train after leaving

an escorted community trip of inpatients from Prospect Park Hospital.

The new Berkshire Suicide Prevention Strategy, signed up to by agencies in six areas including Reading, aims to reduce suicide by at least 25% by 2020. This is more ambitious than the nationally-set NHS target of a 10% reduction during the same period.

Councillor Graeme Hoskin, Reading's Lead Member for Health and Reading's Mental Health Champion, said: "Suicides are a tragedy. Each suicide directly affects many more people. It is important that we strive to remove the stigma around suicide and promote good wellbeing across Reading and the whole of Berkshire."



Support  
after **Suicide**



## SEARCH IS ON FOR SOUTH READING 'CANCER CHAMPIONS' TO BOOST COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

The search is on for people in South Reading who are interested in becoming 'cancer champions' in their community to improve the number of people who are diagnosed and treated at earlier stages of disease.

The champions will receive training from Macmillan Cancer Education on how to work with their local communities on sharing information about signs and symptoms of cancer and promoting the importance of going to cancer screening appointments in the hopes that more people will be diagnosed earlier.

The cancer champion project is funded by South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group (the group of local doctors who fund and plan NHS services in South Reading) and provided by Rushmoor Healthy Living, in partnership with Macmillan. If you are interested in becoming a cancer champion, telephone Nisha Sharma, on 01252 362 660 or 07935 409743 or email [nisha.sharma@rhl.org.uk](mailto:nisha.sharma@rhl.org.uk).





## LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

**Creative Support Reading: rated 'good'.**

The agency has taken over regular personal care of older people living in private flats at Cedar Court, Oak Tree, Chimney Court and Corner Stones, in addition to its existing service supporting people with learning disabilities living in a shared home. The Care Quality Commission said it had seen evidence that the agency had responded to client complaints about one staff member within the new services it had acquired, by instigating disciplinary procedures.

*Report published 13 October 2017.*

**Northcourt Lodge Nursing Home: rated 'good'.**

The CQC said people at Northcourt Lodge described it as "a wonderful place to live". Residents were treated kindly by staff who had worked at the home for a long time. Residents also thought the food and activities were good, and added that call bells were answered quickly, even in the middle of the night.

*Report published 3 October 2017.*

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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

**Friday 3 November 2017**

**Older Peoples Working Group**, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading RG1 2LZ. For more information call 0118 937 2383.

**Tuesday 21 November 2017**

**Healthwatch Reading Board Meeting in Public**, 11:15 am - 12:30 pm at the Conference Room, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BQ. For more information call 0118 937 2295 or email [info@healthwatchreading.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchreading.co.uk).

**Wednesday 22 November 2017**

**Improving your Cancer Care Experience**, 10:00 am - 4:30 pm, hear great speakers and take part in lively workshops at the Royal Berkshire Conference Centre, Madejski Stadium, Reading RG2 0FL. For more information email [jbackhouse@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:jbackhouse@macmillan.org.uk).

**Friday 24 November 2017**

**Carers Rights Day**, 10:00 am - 12.30 pm at the Church of Jesus Christ, 280 The Meadway, Reading RG30. For more information call 0118 324 7333 or email [ask@berkshirecarershub.org](mailto:ask@berkshirecarershub.org).

**Wednesday 29 November 2017**

**Royal Berkshire Hospital Board of Directors Open Meeting**, 9:30 am at the Boardroom, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Craven Road, Reading RG1 5AN.

**Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust - Council of Governors Open Meeting**, 6:00 pm Seminar Room, Trust Education Centre, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Craven Road, Reading RG1 5AN.

**Thursday 30 November 2017**

**Access and Disabilities Working Group**, 2:00 pm at the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LZ.

*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](mailto:info@healthwatchreading.co.uk)*

