



TEAM REPORT

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2017

We welcomed Nisha Sharma to our offices, to hear about her role as the South Reading Macmillan Cancer Educator. Her work is funded by South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group, which wants to improve the rates of early diagnosis of cancer, especially among ethnic minority people. Too often, people may only be diagnosed when they turn up to the emergency department at hospital with advanced cancer. Nisha is going out talking to different communities to find out what they know about cancer, to educate them about how to spot symptoms and when to see a GP. We think this outreach approach is a great idea.

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We went along to hear, and ask questions about, latest decisions about primary care, at a meeting of the Primary Care Commissioning Committee. One issue discussed was a review of how new contracts were awarded to the organisations running Circuit Lane, Priory Avenue and South Reading surgeries, which are currently rated 'inadequate'. Lessons learned included ensuring in the future, that patients are better informed, before, during and after an organisation takes over their GP surgery.

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We were bowled over by the enthusiasm from students when we took part in the University of Reading Freshers week. Almost 100 students (see photo)

completed our latest public survey, which asks people what they know about tuberculosis (TB). Reading has high rates of TB and young adults can be particularly affected.



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We were one of many local organisations who held information stalls at Royal Berkshire Hospital's open day for members (members of the public who want to have a say, or are interested in, how the hospital is run). We were able to speak on the hospital radio about how we work and our project on TB. We chatted to many members of the public and it became clear how many Reading people value the chance to be involved in how local health services are run.

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Last but not least, we also attended Reading College Freshers' Fair and had a wonderful afternoon meeting more young people to find out their views about TB. The survey runs until the end of October - please contact us if you want to take part or find it on our website.

PATIENTS CONSULTED ABOUT PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WHITLEY WOOD SURGERY

Patients are being asked to have their say about the proposed closure of Whitley Wood Surgery due to problems recruiting enough permanent full-time GPs.

Whitley Wood is a satellite site of Westwood Road Health Centre in Tilehurst. The practice told Healthwatch Reading that the inability to recruit full-time doctors, and also a shortage of practice nurses, had made it difficult to maintain a service at Whitley Wood.

Patients who usually go to Whitley Wood Surgery

have two options: stay with the practice and be seen at the Westwood Road Health Centre, two bus journeys away. Or they can apply to join a surgery closer to them, such as Milman Road Health Centre, Long Barn Lane Surgery, South Reading Surgery, University Health Centre, Chancellor House Surgery, or the Shinfield branch of Swallowfield Medical Practice.

A patient survey runs until 27 October 2017, before the practice seeks formal permission for the closure.





A ROUND-UP OF LOCAL NEWS BY NUMBERS

£5m: the amount Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is set to get from the government, to help its patient records at the hospital to go 'paper-free'. Trust chief Executive Steve McManus said: "We have ambitious plans for using digital technology in innovative ways to make a real difference to patient care, and for integrating and sharing information both internally and with our local health and social care partners."

6 Reading GP practices are interested in recruiting doctors from overseas to fill vacant posts. Local NHS officials are now deciding whether to apply to take part in a national overseas recruitment campaign being organised by NHS England. The figures were revealed at the latest meeting of the Primary Care Commissioning Committee, a mostly doctor-led group of decision-makers. The practices who expressed interest are: Chatham Street, Circuit Lane Surgery, Kennet Surgery, London Street, Priory Avenue Surgery and University Medical Group.

43 annual health checks for people with learning disabilities were carried out by Reading GP practices in the first three months of 2017-2018 - a very small number out of 1,053 eligible people. A local action plan is now being drawn up to increase this number to ensure a national target is met of 75% of eligible people having this check, by 2020. People with learning disabilities often have difficulty in recognising illness, communicating their needs and accessing services, but regular checks can help discover treatable conditions and get people used to visiting health professionals.

40% of pregnant women who gave birth in hospital did not know they had the right to choose which hospital to have their baby at, according to a national survey. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) - which checks the safety and quality of hospitals - arranged the research as part of a new campaign, called #Yourbirthplan, aimed at educating women that they have the right to make choices about where they give birth, whether that is at home, at a midwife-led unit, or a hospital ward overseen by a consultant. CQC reports can help women compare the quality of maternity services. Healthwatch Reading research has previously found that some women are 'diverted' away from their preferred place of birth due to staffing problems. We know that the local NHS is trying to recruit more midwives, but there may still be times women are denied a choice. If you want advice about this, call our team on 0118 9372295.

246 hospital admissions were avoided, as a result of people being helped earlier by the Street Triage service, according to latest figures. Street triage refers to a service where clinical mental health professionals (MHPs) accompany and/or assist police at incidents where the possible mental ill health of an individual gives rise to concern. Thames Valley Police (TVP) in partnership with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT) provide a street triage service in Berkshire West (Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading LA areas) providing dedicated MHPs working alongside police. The service will target incidents reported to police where individuals appear to be in immediate need of support for their mental ill health or following a mental health welfare/incident call made to the police.

83,000 extra GP appointments in the evening or at weekends were made available to people in South Reading in the last year. This is according to figures made public at the annual general meeting of the South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group.





READING PATIENTS FACE CHANGES TO WHICH MEDICATIONS THEIR GP WILL OR WON'T PRESCRIBE

Local GPs have voted to stop prescribing some medicines and items to people in Reading following a public consultation which attracted more than 750 responses.

The consultation indicated that local people agreed with all the changes (see box), except a plan to stop pharmacies managing repeat prescribing, which some warned could negatively affect elderly or other vulnerable people. Doctors agreed not to go ahead with that idea for now.

The changes were voted on at September meetings of the doctors who manage the NHS budget for Reading people.

They agreed:

- to cease funding gluten-free foods on the NHS for adults and children
- to stop prescribing over-the-counter medicines, such as: paracetamol for headache or fever (although GPs may still decide to prescribe paracetamol to treat long-term conditions like osteoarthritis); loperamide for one-off diarrhoea; senna and macrogol for one-off constipation; antihistamines for minor allergic responses; head-lice treatments; and antifungal creams and powders for athlete's foot and verruca
- to stop providing travel vaccines for free on the NHS, except a list of national exceptions set out on the NHS Choices website. Patients are set to face charges for all other travel vaccines from 1 October 2017
- reduce prescribing of vitamins and other supplements
- stop making sunscreen available on the NHS, except for certain patients with sensitive skin such as those who have albinism or vitiligo, rosacea or photosensitive dermatitis, lupus, or those whose skin is made sensitive by taking certain medications
- cease all prescribing of the combined treatment of levothyroxine and liothyronine for thyroid issues, as well as Armour Thyroid (dried thyroid hormone extracts), due to a lack of evidence of effectiveness
- stop prescribing camouflage creams and

powders on the NHS, although GPs can make 'individual funding requests' to prescribe these for patients emotionally affected by severe disfigurement of the face caused by birthmarks, hyperpigmentation, melasma, vitiligo, or scars from surgery, accidents, skin diseases, acne, violence or burns.

The Berkshire West prescribing policy is coming in before the outcome of a national, public consultation on similar medicines due to end on 21 October.

RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION:

- 64% agreed with not funding gluten-free foods on NHS
- 77% agreed GPs shouldn't prescribe medications you can buy in chemists
- 38% disagreed with banning pharmacists from re-ordering some patients' prescriptions

PEOPLE NEED MORE HELP TO HARNESS THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR GIVING FEEDBACK ABOUT GPs

People need more 'simple' opportunities to give feedback about GPs, according to research for the national patient rights organisation, Healthwatch England (HWE).

The public wants to help make the NHS better, with 76% keen to share feedback. But only 23% have, because they are unsure how to do so, according to the YouGov survey of more than 1,800 people carried out for HWE.

Of those who had given feedback, most preferred a traditional comments box (44%), followed by face-to-face feedback to reception staff (18%) or to their GP themselves (16%). Only 3% had used social media such as Twitter or Facebook.

Imelda Redmond, National Director of HWE, said: "People tell us they want providing feedback to be simple, clear and confidential. Healthwatch is here to help busy surgeries not only improve how they seek feedback but also help GPs and practice managers explain how this insight is being used to give people the care they want."

A Healthwatch Reading project has previously led to GP surgeries introducing changes suggested by patients, such as posters advertising Saturday opening hours or customer service training for reception staff.





LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

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

1 Uppingham Gardens: rated 'good'.

Uppingham Gardens is a care home which is registered to provide care (without nursing) for up to seven people with a learning disability. Staff treated people with kindness and respect and had regular contact with people's families, where possible and appropriate, to make sure they were fully informed about the care and support their relative received.

Report published 30 August 2017.

Supreme Healthcare: rated 'good'.

Supreme Healthcare is a domiciliary care agency. People are treated with respect and their privacy and dignity was promoted. People said their care workers were kind and caring. Staff were responsive to the needs of the people they supported and enabled them to maintain their independence as much as possible.

Report published 4 September 2017.

Westwood Road GP surgery: rated 'good'

Increased patient satisfaction has helped Westwood Road Health Centre gain an improved quality rating after a re-inspection. In a report published on 5 September, the CQC said that patient feedback about Westwood Rd had 'improved significantly'.

Report published 5 September 2017.

Rosebank House Caversham: rated 'good'

Rosebank House is an independent hospital that provides inpatient rehabilitation for 13 adults with severe and enduring mental health problems. It provides 24 hour care and support.

Patients reported liking the unit and said the staff were kind. One patient said the staff were great and all patients reported feeling safe on the unit and felt listened to.

Report published 8 September 2017.

New Support Solutions: rated 'good'

New Support Solutions, a small home care agency in Reading, has been rated 'good' for the personal assistance it provides to people. In particular, it was praised for providing the same care worker to people, who said this continuity was important to them and made a positive difference to their lives. The report published on 13 September 2017, said that staff also protected clients' privacy and dignity.

Report published 13 September 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 OCTOBER

Sunday 1 October 2017

Walking for a world without dementia, 10:00 am for 11:00 am start. Join the walk at Kings Meadow, Napier Road, Reading RG1 8DF

Thursday 5 October 2017

Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education Committee, 6:30 pm at the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading RG1 2LZ. For more information email committee.services@reading.gov.uk.

Monday 9 October 2017

National Older People's Day, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Ave, Reading RG1 8EQ. For more information call Nina Crispin on 0118 937 2383

Thursday 12 October 2017

Tea Dance for Carers with the Denton Dancers, 5:30 pm at Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Ave, Reading RG1 8EQ. For more information call 0118 9454 209

