

# Insight Bulletin – September 2022

## About Healthwatch Surrey

One of the statutory duties of Healthwatch Surrey is to share residents' experiences of health and social care with the people and organisations who make decisions about those services. We share what we hear in regular meetings with providers and commissioners, with ICS (Integrated Care System) Boards and in system oversight meetings.

This bulletin highlights a selection of the themes we've heard about recently.

## Praise and thanks – spotlight on GPs

It's no surprise that we hear about GP surgeries more often than any other health or care sector. Despite the current pressures and negative media, we hear of many surgeries providing excellent care and swift access:

I needed some help for a problem recently so I called up [my GP practice] got seen straight away, when I went through my symptoms they referred me immediately. I've got an appointment in a couple weeks.

**Community engagement, community hospital**

I went to my local pharmacist and asked to speak directly to him. He observed the skin rash and...suggested it might be shingles...the pharmacist rang my GP surgery and asked if they could assist me that day, explaining that although he knew they were busy, he felt this should be a priority...The surgery agreed to speak to me and then asked me to send in a photo. Within minutes I had a text allowing me to submit the photo and within an hour had received confirmation from the doctor that whilst she didn't think it was shingles, she wanted to see me within the surgery and asking if I could attend within the next 15 minutes.

**Helpdesk**

My daughter had what looked like a stye and it wasn't getting better. I sent a message online to the surgery with a photo to ask if it needed medical intervention or if it would get better by itself. Received a response via text message almost immediately diagnosing it as a chalazion, with a link for more information and assurance that it will get better.

**Website feedback form**

Since [granddaughter has been in the UK] I've taken her to our GP for her health check when she was registered and they have been wonderful. They jumped into action and she has been referred to the Jarvis Centre, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist and she is due her two-year health check and is having it on Friday. The health visitor has been really supportive and has said to call if I need anything.

**Community engagement, Children's centre**

## Health inequalities and GP access

The Kings Fund described health inequalities as “differences in the care that people receive and the opportunities that they have to lead healthy lives” ([What are health inequalities? | The King's Fund \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/what-are-health-inequalities/)) Access to GP services is fundamental to people's health, but we still hear that access is not equal. Two barriers we hear about regularly are digital access, and language:

Trying to get an appointment at the doctors is a joke. I don't have a computer as I can't afford one and I'm really bad with online things any way because of my dyslexia. I need help to book things and my friend does help me...Why don't services know that because of my dyslexia I need extra help and time? Don't email me – ring me.

**Community Engagement, Giving Carers a Voice , Children's Centre**

They say email but I can't use email and my kids and husband are out all day so can't help me.

**Community Engagement, Asian Women's Wellbeing Group**

I found my husband used to do a lot of online things and I find the whole thing baffling myself. I have got a tablet and I'm OK with texts and can send and receive those.

**Community Engagement, Community Centre**

I have been trying to get feedback from the GP and book a second blood test (*time-critical, requested by GP*). I think that because I can't speak English that I am just fobbed off. I don't have a computer.

[Experience taken through an interpreter]

**Community Engagement, Asian Women's Wellbeing Group**

## **Urgent and Emergency Care – confidence and experiences**

As we approach what is expected to be a challenging winter, Healthwatch England have published the results of their survey into public confidence in services such as A&E, ambulances and NHS 111.

Their main findings were:

- People feel confident they will receive high-quality care...
  - o but they believe they will have to wait a long time to receive it
- Confidence has increased among those who have used services...
  - o but older people have lower levels of confidence.

The full report can be found here

[https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/20220921\\_What%20are%20people%20telling%20us%20about%20UEC%20services\\_0.pdf](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/20220921_What%20are%20people%20telling%20us%20about%20UEC%20services_0.pdf)

When people tell us of their experiences in emergency/urgent care the speed of receiving care has a strong impact on their view of the experience, both positive:

After a fall in the shopping centre, they called an ambulance, as I had cut my head...The ambulance came quickly and then they glued me up and I only had to wait 30 mins. I was seen quickly and I was happy with the care I received.

**Community engagement, community café**

and negative:

He had signs of a stroke, and she [ex-nurse] called an ambulance – she called 3 times and one still didn't come so she and a friend got him into a car and took him to Frimley Park Hospital because it is the centre for Stroke patients. He was triaged within 15 minutes there and then they sat in the department for 2 and a half hours. During that time, no patient was moved out of the waiting room. After 2 ½ hours she felt her husband had

recovered – that it hadn't been a stroke, but a vasovagal attack and decided they might as well go home. So, she went through the doors into the department itself, where she says all staff were on computers.

**Community Engagement, Community Centre**

When I had a heart attack, I called an ambulance and waited for two hours but it never arrived. My husband and daughter then drove me to the nearest hospital which is the Royal Surrey. The hospital told me I just had indigestion and I waited in A&E for 8 hours with no treatment. I was in agony. After 8 hours, they finally saw me and then they decided to transfer me to Frimley hospital. Frimley diagnosed straight away that I had had a heart attack. Because they had left me so long without treatment, I then had to have a stent inserted.

**Community Engagement, Community centre**

I rang for an ambulance for myself as I had a thunder clap headache. I was still conscious and was just about able to speak. I was advised an ambulance would be 9 hrs and to get myself to A & E at Royal Surrey. I am a single parent with an 11 year old. She rang my sister who lives 20 mins away who came and took me. I had a CT scan and I had a subarachnoid haemorrhage which is urgent, an ambulance should have been sent when I needed it.

**Healthwatch Surrey Website**

## **Mental Ill-Health – impact on those close to the patient**

A wider consequence of mental ill health is the impact it can have on those close to the patient. We regularly hear of situations where long waits for assessment or treatment, or lack of consultation, contribute to carer and family stress:

In the last 2 weeks... [preschool age] Daniel<sup>1</sup> has bitten my face leaving a scar, beaten his brother with a metal and glass saucepan lid... removed his bedroom door, clean off the hinges, tried to strangle me with a blind cord, pushed a [small child] in the lake after they walked too close to him, attempted to rip off his own ball sack during a meltdown, [attacked a passer-by in the street], ran across a main road.... We are on the wait for ELSA [Emotional Literacy Support Assistant], we are on the wait for

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<sup>1</sup> Name changed to protect anonymity

Outreach, we are on the wait for an EHCP [Education Health and Care Plan], we have missed his age for Portage [[What is Portage? | National Portage Association](#)]... To be very clear, Daniel is being failed by a broken system and incompetence. Daniel's brother is in danger.

**Helpdesk**

His GP has prescribed Melatonin for insomnia but is reluctant to do anything else until a psychiatrist has become involved. No other interim resources appear to be available...The whole family is suffering because their son is being failed by the NHS.

**Helpdesk**

My sister is currently being actively supported by SABP to come off all antipsychotic medication. Family excluded due to lack of her consent to share information and from decision making. Sister lacks any insight or capacity and SABP know that she is going to relapse... This will be her fourth sectioning; each and every time the family carers are ignored and dismissed, despite anguish and ill health caused by the lack of any treatment plan for her. SCC or SABP do not give carers any information on their rights and hide behind confidentiality and consent, they ignore Triangle of Care policy...

**Twitter**

## Gathering and sharing our insight

Locations and dates of our upcoming engagements are below.

We gather feedback through many channels including our agenda-free outbound engagement events, our Helpdesk, website, and social media. We continue our series of care home visits, which see us visiting one care home each month. We also distribute flyers, advertise, engage with groups through our partners and contacts, and initiate focus groups.

If we hear a case of concern regarding patient safety, we immediately signpost the sharer to the appropriate body and escalate the case with the provider/commissioner.

We share our wider themes with Trusts, ICSSs, Surrey County Council, Public Health, CQC, and in various boards and groups across Surrey.





Our spotlight for engagements in October is North West Surrey and in November we're in Guildford and Waverley.

Please note: these dates may be subject to change.

DATE	PLACE	TIME
03.10.22	St Peters Hospital, Chertsey (Outpatients)	10.00 – 12.00
06.10.22	Spelthorne Youth Club, Staines	18.00-20.00
10.10.22	Holy Trinity Church, Knaphill, Community Fridge and Foodbank	10.00 – 12.00
12.10.22	Runnymede Foodbank at Café Revive, Beacon Church, Chertsey	10.00 – 12.00
TBC	White Gates, Laleham (Enter and View Visit)	TBC
17.10.22	Walton Community Centre	10.00 – 12.00
25.10.22	St David's Family Practice, Stanwell	10.00 – 12.00
01.11.22	Royal Surrey County Hospital (Main Entrance)	10.00 – 12.00
09.11.22	Rowley's Community Centre, Cranleigh	10.00-12.00
15.11.22	Merrow Park Surgery, Merrow, Guildford	10.00 – 12.00
22.11.22	The Oak Drop in Café, St Peters shared Church, Stoke, Guildford	10.00 – 12.30
28.11.22	Farnham Centre for Health, Farnham	10.00-12.00
TBC	Brownscombe House Nursing Home, Haslemere (Enter and View Visit)	TBC

To share an experience with us, people can also contact us in the following ways:

Phone our helpdesk: 0303 303 0023

Send an SMS to our helpdesk: 07592 787 533

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk)

Share your feedback via our website:

<https://www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk/feedback-centre/>

## Friends and Family Care Home Survey

Please share our survey for friends and family of those living in care homes.

The survey can be accessed via this QR code or found on our website -

[Friends and family care home survey - Healthwatch Surrey.](#)



**Friends and Family  
Care Home Survey**



**healthwatch**  
Surrey

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