

The consumers' voice

Feedback on the Musculoskeletal Services covered by Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (Coastal CCG)

On Wednesday 3 September, Coastal West Sussex CCG announced the award of a contract for an integrated musculoskeletal care service to Buda CSH Ltd. There has been considerable media speculations around this announcement and local people have been sharing their concerns with Healthwatch West Sussex. It has been important for us at Healthwatch to focus not on the political storm surrounding this announcement but on the key issue, which is and must remain high on everyone's agenda, the need to ensure patients receive high quality services locally.

Whilst we are keen to understand local peoples' concerns about the new service we have primarily sought to gather and listen to peoples' experiences of using existing service to help inform the new service delivery. Healthwatch West Sussex will also be monitoring the transition closely to ensure patients are not adversely affected by the changes. To this end, we have carried out a series of activities to engage with the public and existing patients. This report details what people have told us previous and through this engagement.

What people had previously told us about MSK Services?

From September 2013 to September 2014 Healthwatch West Sussex received 63 individual accounts relating to musculoskeletal conditions and services, including orthopaedics; physiotherapy; pain management and podiatry. Not all these cases relate to services commissioned by Coastal CCG and cover a range of service providers:

Service provider	No. of cases
St Richard's Hospital	6
Worthing Hospital	6
Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital	5
Crawley Hospital	4
Princess Royal Hospital	4
Royal Sussex County Hospital	4
East Surrey Hospital	2
Horsham Hospital	2
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUH)	2

Table 1: in six cases, the provider was undisclosed

A selection of what people have told us about services commissioned by Coastal CCG

Positive:

- After being admitted with a number of fractures *“Doctor took the time to investigate and found that I had a rare bone disease ...he has taken a keen interest in me and my problems. At all times he has made himself available and he has done whatever he said he would do. The level of service he has given me has been far and above what I would have expected.”*
- Worthing Hospital patient had an injury caused by falling down steps and is still undergoing treatment and physio. *“Services have been prompt and helpful.”*
- Patient told us their very good experience when they went to St. Richards Hospital for a hip operation *‘very quick, very clean hospital. Very helpful staff.’*
- *“Doctor (at Coastal Practice) is very good and good to talk to and tries to give maximum help. Has sent me to Physio therapy but this worked for a short time only. After going back to the doctor, Doctor has now referred me for more tests/scans to try and sort out the problem. Doctor has also written to employer recommending changes at work. Am very pleased at the help received”.*
- In patient (orthopaedic) at St Richards Hospital told us their consultant, *“is caring and professional”* but felt the nurses, as caring as they were did not have the same time available for patient as those in The Nuffield Hospital.

Not so good:

- Someone told us they endured complications after surgery for a leg injury and struggled to find information about their situation. They also did not receive advice about exercises which would have aided recovery.
- A person has been left confused and in a lot of pain as they feel they had not been given proper medication for their osteopenia by their GP. They have undergone many tests and seen numerous consultants, but have not received any answers or support.
- No further support (such as walking aids) have not been given to a person whose knee operation was unsuccessful and they have been told nothing more can be done.
- The fracture on a person’s arm was missed at Bognor War Memorial Hospital.
- Person saw their GP with severe neck pain. Referred to a physiotherapist over six weeks later. The physiotherapist told them they needed an immediate, urgent MRI scan but it took a further month to get this done at Worthing Hospital. Cancer was diagnosed, but at subsequent appointments, it became clear that specialists had not been informed of this.
- My relative *“woke up in a confused, dementia-like state following a hip operation”*. They were concerned that something had gone wrong during the operation and had been lying in their own faeces and appeared to have been left for a long time.
- A concerned friend, of an elderly person receiving treatment for rheumatoid arthritis in Bognor Regis Hospital, witnessed the person going downhill during their stay. Medication giving a dry mouth has led to insufficient nutrition and they feel they were not been washed regularly.
- Person feels their rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis was disbelieved by several physiotherapists during an assessment at Bognor War Memorial Hospital, they felt they were saying there was nothing wrong. However, the conditions were confirmed by a doctor at St. Richard’s Hospital.

- A disabled individual was expected to sit up during an x-ray, which was physically impossible for them to do. They feel that if their files had been consulted, or if the process had been explained beforehand, a solution could have been devised.
- The arch of a patient's foot collapsed following surgery to lengthen a tendon and they have said that physiotherapists have made comments about other patients of the same surgeon experiencing the same issue.
- Following an injury to their neck, someone told us they had long waits at several stages of being referred by their GP, to physiotherapy, for an MRI scan and then to receive the results. They are in considerable pain and struggling to carry out their job due to their condition.

After a foot operation at Worthing Hospital an individual was subsequently diagnosed with a deep-vein thrombosis at A&E, and on a further visit, a bone fracture. Added to this, the person feels the doctor has lied and covered up the advice they previously gave.

- An initial hip operation had failed, and therefore the person attempted to book a follow up operation using the "Choose and Book" system. More than 18 weeks later, they still have not heard back. They were told by staff they should have chased, and that there are now no appointments available with the consultant they had originally chosen.
- Operation cancelled by St Richard's Hospital on two separate occasions, each time after having waited for several hours. Person was then referred to Queen Alexandra Hospital and had to wait over four months, despite severe pain and mobility difficulties.
- Underwent shoulder surgery and was told a care package would be in place after discharge. However, this did not start until after the weekend. They also did not receive any guidance about how to maintain the bandages or to wear a sling and the pain relief given proved insufficient. A scheduled visit from Social Services did not happen. This combination meant the person was taken back into hospital.
- In addition to suffering a Bi-Polar Disorder, a patient stated they received poor quality treatment during a hip replacement, which eventually had to be repeated and this has caused them pain and poor mobility.
- Left with a cracked femur after a hip operation and the person tells us they are in significant pain and permanently unable to walk unassisted.
- An individual waited nine months for a spine operation with Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Trust, during which time the problem worsened.
- An operation on a person's foot was not successful because a plaster cast was not applied, resulting in their foot did not recovering and them having to have a second operation and several additional months off work.
- A person diagnosed with a terminal illness and Chronic Pain Syndrome, was told there was an 18-month waiting list for referrals to the pain management clinic at Worthing Hospital.

Key themes drawn from comments

Diagnosis

- Problems being missed because tests or other checks are not conducted
- Delays in conducting 'urgent' scans
- Late diagnosis of problems
- Tests undertaken but no diagnosis or advice received
- Test results and diagnoses not being passed on to specialists

- Conditions not being taken seriously

Appointments

- Waiting times for appointments, treatment or results
- Appointments being delayed or cancelled

Quality of care & treatment

- Problems or mistakes during surgery
- Poor care received on orthopaedic wards (hygiene, nutrition)
- Lack of support, information and advice after treatment
- Lack of equipment and resources

Engaging with Local People

We committed to undertaking the following activities within the community during the last week of September 2014 and the first two weeks of October 2014:

- Stand in the outpatients and physiotherapy departments in Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital
- Stand at Shoreham Community Market
- Visit to Age UK Laburnum Centre, Bognor Regis
- Visit to a local meeting of Alzheimer's Society in Worthing
- Visit to Age UK Littlehampton
- Stand at Worthing Voluntary Action AGM
- Directly with local Southlands residents

In total we reached over 400 people and spoke directly to 17 people about their experiences relating to this service, including staff at Bognor War Memorial Hospital. As we distributed a large number of promotional flyers we expect there to be a significant number of replies using the 'tell us your story' forms following this visibility campaign.

In addition to this, we covered this news story on our website and we also received a number of retweets on twitter, and gained new 'followers'. These would have further highlighted this issue.

Through these engagements we were also able to direct people to Coastal CCG's website to enable them to find the latest information and highlighted that the information was being updated regularly.

The key themes emerging

Older people are incredibly concerned services will move further away. They raised concern that it is already difficult to get to appointments in Worthing or Chichester from other coastal towns, and that it is also expensive. People have told us that in some cases it is not possible to get to either of these areas other than by taxi. Many people rely on relatives, but with many having no local relatives, this is not an option.

In Bognor the Voluntary transport provider is SAMMY, and there were some complaints about this provision. People are also required to pay a membership fee which some considered hefty (£14 was cited).

During our engagement, we were also approached by staff who raised concerns that their positions based in Bognor were at risk and we would be concerned that this may become visible to patients.

There is a general feeling amongst many older patients that St Richards is going to completely close, and that everything is transferring to Worthing. There wasn't any feeling from patients that this was the fate of Bognor Hospital though.

Most people did not really understand the specifics of the contract, but just had a general feeling that it was all being privatised. Most people consider BUPA a private company and did not recognise this as a not-for-profit organisation.

Very few people had actual concerns about the service provision, although a number of times we were told people saw this as a cost saving exercise and staff would go as part of the process.

Hydrotherapy

In addition to the above, we have also been dealing with a detailed case on the Hydrotherapy pool in Worthing. We have been told a group of approximately 200 people, who previously used the pool on a weekly basis for therapy over a large number of years, were denied the chance to continue this therapy from November 2013. This appears to be due to a contract issue enforced by Western Sussex Hospital Trust and the reporter has told us this has become a stalemate situation.

Connected to this case, we are hearing there is a shortage of Physiotherapists at Worthing Hospital.

Healthwatch West Sussex Conclusions

- MSK providers need to recognise the impact of local transport difficulties/costs and factor this into any future appointment systems
- Whilst Healthwatch West Sussex recognises the new contract specification has been designed to remove a lot of the inter-provider complications it is important that Coastal CCG explore some of the quality issues mentioned in this report to ensure new services are the best they can be for every patient
- Coastal CCG should consider this evidence in their current retendering of the non-emergency patient transport service specification
- Coastal CCG should seek to encourage providers to minimize impact of reviewing existing arrangements, such as the hydrotherapy sessions, and find ways of enabling citizens to have a range of options in managing their conditions

Healthwatch West Sussex

14/10/14