



Local peoples' lived experiences of NHS and care services in West Sussex

November 2017

Health and care impacts us all

Pick up a paper or switch on the news and there's bound to be an NHS or care related story. But, what do local people really think about their services?







What do local people say about their experiences? To answer this....

- We have looked in detail at what local people told us over the last 12 months
- We have used insight from our own observations throughout the year
- In October 2017 we asked people to share their views and experiences, via social media, ahead of the Health and Wellbeing debate and review of priorities, held after the public meeting on 6 November 2017.






**Local people are unsettled,
confused and struggling to
find or access the treatment
or care they need**





This is understandable when:

- there is **confusing** and **different language** used across our county
 - key clinical, professional roles are **under-resourced** or **unfilled**
 - Even when people have an understanding of where to go, they are **being given conflicting advice**
 - Lots of **negative stories** about health and social care in the media but a **lack of timely local information** to address or balance this
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**Peoples' expectations are set
by social change and the
media**

**Services locally have not
kept pace with these changes**





We are also living in a society that offers prompt and responsive solutions

- we can shop when and where we like - only limited by our own individual mobility, motivation and means.
- the internet gives us access to information and cheaper alternatives.
- social media information is instant but not always accurate and this influences our views and opinions.

Most health and care doesn't respond in this.






We listen to discussions on the need to manage peoples' expectations.

How the NHS needs people to use the right services, at the right time but these are not always available.

However, people tell us how they tried to get an appointment at their GP surgery ... only to be told there are none available and they were signposted to A&E.





The Health and Wellbeing
Board's priorities do not
mirror local peoples'


This is reflected in the
waning of public interest in
the meetings and work done
here







Using our routes into closed Facebook pages, our online Poll (w/c 16 October 2017), with 94 options selected showed:

Most important


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1. Getting an appointment at a GP surgery (48%)
 2. Mental Health Services (21%)
 3. Support at home and in the community (19%)
 4. Better communication between NHS organisations, staff and patients (6%)
 5. Children's health (5%)


There was a strong response from Horsham and East Grinstead. However, the top two reflect what we hear from local people in other areas.





It's sometimes difficult to join in the conversation or to get people and community voices into the debate, as we are not working in an open and receptive system






Locally, there is not a common approach or understanding of how to get people and communities involved in decision-making.

We are still seeing engagement of local people, in many work plans, as an after-thought and not part of the initial phase of project work.

Our experience of getting people heard, in a non-tokenistic way, is mixed. It often feels like a ‘tick box exercise’ and not meaningful involvement.


Changes do happen, when people who know the local situation, and have a vested interest in what’s happening locally.





Engagement appears to occur mainly with historic or existing and well-known patients - when involving people needs to be with established; new and future, users of services





There is a focus on engaging with adults, particularly of an older age, who often come with historical knowledge.

There seems to be little involvement with young people (other than within specific services, and through PACESETTER) and working age people.

We recognise the demand of West Sussex's aging population is having on services. However, only focusing on this will not future-proof services or support the prevention agenda amongst other generations.

It will also fail to generate creativity ways of doing things.





Significant changes are coming and discussions around those changes have started

Let's make sure these changes are right for local people






Healthwatch West Sussex doesn't work in isolation

We can be found prompting people to avoid duplication and to stop working with a silo mentality.

We're not here to point fingers but to support positive change

We monitor best practice across the country, working with other local Healthwatch teams across the region - particularly our neighbouring areas.

We've a whole army of resources that can be tapped into, for example our really experienced volunteers provided the equivalent of over £100k of input to the system each year. Those who offer us insight can also be keen to get involved.





How do we all ensure people and communities are partners in the discussions and developments undertaken here and across West Sussex?

Collectively we can bring rich and important insight



How to get in touch and be involved

Please contact us at helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk
or call

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For more information about our work and how this makes a difference visit our website or follow us on social media

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