

March 2018 Heads Up



We'd like to acknowledge and praise the commitment of staff across the NHS and care services in our area in dealing with the recent adverse weather conditions and the resulting additional pressures and knock-on effects. We are mindful this may have effected peoples' planned care and impacted timescales for development of services across Sussex.

What's coming up...

- We'll be participating in the **Better Births Leadership Programme** (20/21 March) - our Local Maternity System is running systems leadership days to explore some of the complex challenges in delivering change across maternity services- workforce capacity and capability, data and digital infrastructure and choice and personalisation. Local Healthwatch will help maintain a patient centred approach.
- We are supporting the ongoing development of [Local Community Networks](#) in the Coastal are of the county with people and patient engagement strategies.

Burgess Hill - Carers and Primary Care Services

We attended the annual [Carers Pamper Day](#) hosted by Burgess Hill Girls School and the Town Council. With over 100 attendees we heard valuable insight from carers. This event also gave us an opportunity to establish links ahead of our proposal to do a listening tour later in the year.



Afterwards we accepted an invitation to extraordinary meeting of the Town Council (for the next day) which included local GPs and [commissioners](#), to further hear about local health experiences. We heard local primary care services differ greatly across the town - with some appearing to exceed patient expectations, whilst patients at other practices experience challenges and frustrations. Attendees also heard from a local developer about the ambitious town centre regeneration programme, incorporating the redevelopment of the Martlets Shopping Centre. There seems to be a willingness to include health care services, as well as retail and leisure facilities and the developers extended an invitation to local services/commissioners to discuss options.

Listening to local people and communities

Engaging with local people is key to hearing what's really going on. Given the rurality of areas of our county, we have set up our **It Starts With You Network** to provide two-way communication route. This enables people in hard to reach areas and group to have their voices heard and to receive information about what is going on in health and care locally. We are delighted to welcome five new groups to Network:

- Midhurst Pathfinder Area
- Ehlors-Danlos Support Sussex
- Littlehampton Open to All Carers Support
- Age Concern Hassocks
- Action for Deafness



Find out more about our work and activities at
www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk



We're currently working on developing resource packs to support Its Starts with You Group leaders in discussing health and care with members and how to make it simple to give feedback to us.

If your group is interesting in joining our Network please call us today on 0300 012 0122.

Our dedicated Authorised Representative Volunteers are readying themselves to be in the right PLACE

'Every NHS patient should be cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean, safe environment... PLACE assessments (Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment) will provide motivation for improvement by providing a clear message, directly from patients, about how the environment or services might be enhanced.'

<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/PLACE>

We've been supporting improvements at local hospitals since the introduction of PLACE because good environments matter. Here's the difference this can make:

[Shepherd House](#), in Worthing, offers inpatient and community recovery support for people living with a severe mental health disorder. Through PLACE we flagged the poor state of the garden and outdoor space and how this was affecting the people who used the service and garden. For two years, PLACE reports detailed negative feedback and observations and subsequent action plans reflected the desire to address the issue. A lack of money stopped this from changing.

Our team offered advice and suggestions about '*thinking outside the box*' and being bold in exploring opportunities for improving the garden in partnership with community organisations or groups who could potentially help.

By teaming up with a community project called [Breathing Spaces](#), Shepherd House has empowered residents and people who use the garden to design, plan and create a total garden makeover. This project became part of the recovery programme for some and has produced a fantastic greenspace for current and future residents and users to enjoy and work together to maintain the space. The garden offers sensory stimulation and provides a way for people to grow their own vegetables, fruit and herbs. This in turn promotes and encourages their independence.

If you are interested in giving some time to this work or in another way to help local people and communities please [get involved](#).

What should we be working on during 2018/19?

Thank you to everyone who has already taken the time to complete our short survey. If you haven't shared your thoughts on what health and care areas we should focus on next please click [here now](#) - as this survey is closing soon.

It's important we make sure our decisions are informed by understanding what local people believe we should be looking at and the experiences of those who use services.

Articles you might have missed

- [CQC's state National action required to ensure local services work together to support children and young](#) 8 March 2018
- [What are people's concerns about proposed changes to NHS prescriptions?](#), 6 March 2018
- CCGs have a useful [podcast for parents](#) to help take control of our health and wellbeing.

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