

APRIL 2018



Listening to Rural West Sussex

Listening and understanding how Pulborough, Petworth and Midhurst (and surrounding village) residents experience health and care - as heard in November/December 2017

Who we listened to

This was our third Listening Tour in West Sussex and is a “deep dive” to help us hear about local peoples’ health and care experiences.

We have created a [toolkit](#), using our learning, to support other organisations to involve local people and communities in their work.

Rather than survey people about specific things, we simply asked them to share their experiences of health and care, and we listen.

In this report we have drawn out common themes and highlighted good experiences and explored some areas where the health and care system can learn from local people.

650+
residents
talked to us
at events

22
separate
engagement
opportunities

Thank you

We would like to thank everyone in Pulborough, Petworth and Midhurst who supported us to listen and understand both what is working well and what could be improved in rural West Sussex.

Recommendation and good practice:

We anonymise peoples’ experiences (and have used other names) before sharing this valuable insight with those who plan, buy and provide local services, as well as with the local communities.

We recommended decision-makers look closely at the learning points (shown by the checklist symbol) and ask them to tell us what they have or will plan to do to make their services work better for local people.



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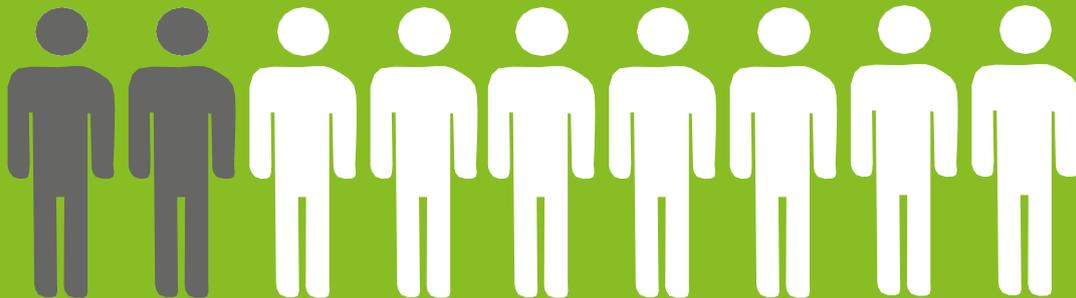
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Summary of Learning Opportunities

The health and wellbeing of people living in rural areas is explored in detail in a [case study](#) published by the Local Government Association in March 2017.



2 in 9 residents in England live in rural areas

Here are the learning opportunities gained from local peoples' lived experiences, which are explored in detail throughout this report. We have also included feedback and comments from the following, which shows they have understood the feedback and how they have or intend to use it.

- [Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group \(CCG\)](#) - who are responsible for planning, buying and monitoring much of the local health services
- [Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#) - who operate services at Worthing, St Richards (Chichester) and Southlands (Shoreham) Hospitals
- Local GP practices.

Recommendation



- Maternity stories have been shared with the [Sussex Better Births Programme](#) to help inform the work currently taking place to improve parents' experiences.

- Services to look at how they understand and take account of the ways people get to services and to discuss this with local people when referring to other services and making appointments.

The [Local Community Networks](#) may provide the opportunity to look at issues like transport, timing of appointments and contractual barriers that appear to add to the challenges residents are faced with.

- Pulborough Medical Centre staff look at how they can work with the community to see how the lobby area, signage and displays can be made more attractive and accessible to centre visitors.
- The Pharmacy and Pulborough Medical Centre to look at how to raise awareness of the different ways people can get their medication with a view to make it easier for patients.
- The Pulborough pharmacy to look at how they can improve their systems to reduce patient anxiety when medication cannot be found.
- Petworth Surgery to review the layout/working practices of staff in the open-plan area, to achieve better confidentiality.
- Petworth Surgery reviews its signage (perhaps by visiting other practices), to achieve consistency and the right level of visibility to help visitors navigate around the building.
- Riverbank Medical Centre practice team to look at investing time to become a dementia-friendly practice so staff and partners can communicate effectively with patients living with dementia and their family/friend carers.
- The Local Community Network to look at how health professionals can support local organisations when raising concerns for people when their cognitive abilities change in a way that could be putting them at risk.

What do local people think of their health and care services?

Local GP services

It is important to put the insight we have gathered from our tour in context to the number of people using GP services.

Together the three GP practices we visited during this tour have more than 31,000 patients registered; Petworth Surgery has 6034 patients, Pulborough Medical Centre has 13,016 patients and Riverbank Surgery has 13,016 patients. Of the total registered patients, 17% are under the age of 18 and 29% are over the age of 65.

In an average month in Coastal West Sussex there are approximately 250,000 GP appointments and 7,000 calls to the out of hours GP services.

From the personal stories people shared there were 85 comments relating to GP services. Of the personal accounts, there is an even split of very good experiences and less positive comments about peoples' interactions with GP services. The common areas of dissatisfaction were: communication (including a lack of information), consistency (particularly having to repeat health history) and getting an appointment.

The exception being Riverbank Surgery (Midhurst) where 70% of patients said they had a good experience. The less positive comments for this surgery were around dementia awareness and consistency.

During our tour we picked up a perception that GP services in these areas are prioritising children and younger peoples' health, over older people. This came from both young and older people and it was noticeable that when we visited the surgeries the waiting rooms reflected this perception.

Patricia's Story

I had a fall about four years ago and found the hospital staff to be very supportive and nothing seemed too much trouble and they were really kind. Unfortunately, I fell again the next year and as I had a suspected broken neck and other breaks I was transferred to Southampton Hospital, where they fixed my various breaks. Again, the staff were great. I was in hospital for a couple of months and when I came home I received help from the Home from Hospital Service that Age UK offer. This was excellent.

I had been suffering with my mental health which got worse after the falls. My GP would ring me up to check I was okay and the surgery put me in contact with Time to Talk and counselling. All of which have been terribly helpful. I am fine now when I go out and I make sure I go out every day, as I recognise that my depression gets worse if I stay at home.

All the publicity about mental health helps, as my family don't understand. Volunteering helps me, as I am able to support others and put on a happy face for those I help.



We heard



personal stories relating to hospital experiences.

Hospital Services

Over half of these were positive, with people describing their experiences in terms like “excellent”, “good as they fixed me”, “the staff were kind”.

By choice, residents prefer to go to St. Richard’s Hospital (Chichester), as [travelling](#) to other hospitals can be challenging.

Over half the accounts related to experiences in St. Richard’s Hospital services. Of these, there is an even split of good experiences and less positive

comments about peoples’ interactions with hospital services. The common areas of dissatisfaction were: poor communication (includes lack of follow-up) and cancelled appointments. Issues with eye surgery were raised. We are looking at this as a specific area for future work under new priorities from April 2018.

Glenda had an appointment at St. Richard’s Hospital for some tests due to breathing difficulties in early 2017, she chased up the results in Spring and again before the Summer.

I phoned and spoke to a secretary and was told I was in the middle of the waiting list but that the consultant had left and they were waiting for a locum. I have an appointment today (November 2017) with my GP to try to chase this up again.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard’s Hospital told us:

“We have had significant workforce challenges within the Respiratory Service and we have not been, and continue not to be, able to see patients within the timeframes that we aspire to. We continue to put effort in to recruiting staff (either permanently or locum) on a long-term basis at St Richard’s and Worthing Hospitals, as well as looking at diversifying our workforce to improve the service that we are offering our patients. However, we recognise that there are currently long outpatient waits. We are working with our GP colleagues to identify where patients need to be seen urgently.

- Jenny Powell, Care Group Manager for Cardiology and Respiratory Services

Maggie had a planned operation at St. Richard's Hospital at Easter

I was promised an ice pack after my surgery. However, there weren't enough to go around. By the second day I was in terrible pain, so I asked for some pain relief. I was told by the nurse that I could have morphine but whilst I was waiting for the medication I fell asleep. When I woke again I asked a different nurse for some pain relief and was told I would have to wait until the drug-round. I asked again in the evening and the nurse told me to wait my turn and she would get some. I called my son in tears and he rang the ward to find out what was going on. Two hours later I got some pain relief but by this time I'd had to go a whole day in pain.

Elizabeth has a long-term, age related eye condition which needs to be monitored every six months. She was referred and had an appointment at the Eye Clinic at St. Richards at the end of 2016. "After my appointment I was told I would be sent another appointment in the post. As I hadn't received anything at 6 months I phoned the hospital. I was in the telephone queue for 20 minutes one day and 20 minutes the next day. I kept trying to get through for a couple of weeks to no avail.

I rang the next month without success. Eventually I found a number for the consultant's secretary and due to her help I got an appointment letter the next week (however, this was some 4 months after it was due.) Before I left the clinic after my last appointment I asked them for an appointment date for next year to avoid the same thing happening again. I believe from speaking to other people that this happens frequently with the Eye Clinic. The reception staff and nurses are very rude."

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

"It is always disappointing to hear that a patient has experienced rudeness from staff within the Eye Unit, the team work hard to provide the best patient experience in a very busy unit and feedback informing us where we haven't achieved our standard is shared with staff to inform how we can further improve. The Ophthalmology unit do not book appointments in the clinic, this is undertaken by a separate team as the clinic is one of the busiest in the hospital, so our staff are focussing on looking after patients whilst they are in our department. Ophthalmology has huge demand on its services and we constantly review our clinics in an attempt to match the demand on our services. I am very sorry that it appears to have been difficult to contact anyone to arrange this appointment but I am pleased to hear that one of the administrators was able to solve this. The call centre number, which can be found on the appointment letters is 01903 205111 ext 85657 for St Richards Hospital."

- Donna Steeles, Head of Service, Ophthalmology

Bruce has been told he needs a pacemaker and is on the list for one at St. Richard's Hospital.

So far they have made five appointments for me and all have then been cancelled. The last one was only this week (November). I've told them this can't go on as it just adding to the stress.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

"A number of unanticipated short notice cancellations took place at the beginning of the year due to winter pressures. During this period of high demand a number of beds were used for patients coming through urgent care routes, resulting in procedures such as implantation of pacemakers, to be cancelled. We work very hard to try and prevent any cancellations from taking place, however, we do not always achieve this and can only apologise to Bruce for his experience and for the added worry that this will have caused.

- Jenny Powell, Care Group Manager for Cardiology and Respiratory Services

Sarah told us, I was bed-bound in St. Richard's for a couple of months. No one helped me, or any of the other patients on the ward, to clean our teeth or provided us with the tools to do this during this time.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

"The Trust currently has external funding for 'mouth care matters' project and the lead at St Richards Hospital, James Mcgoldrick, has now provided a lot of training and support across the wards. I am sorry for the poor experience that has been described by Sarah. We are seeking to continue with these valuable roles in providing the support and training for the wards and teams to help continue the positive inroads we have started to make on mouth care.

- Murray Seivewright, Head of Speech and Language Therapy

Childbirth

We spoke to parents at the Children and Families Centre and in the community during our tour. From this we heard only eight maternity experiences and some of these are reflected below. All the babies, but one, were delivered by midwives from Western Sussex NHS Foundation Trust.

Danielle, whose daughter is just under one, said her experience of giving birth at St. Richard's Hospital was good.

I did think it was hard to get into the maternity unit and I felt like I was using the triage every couple of hours. When I arrived at the hospital I was ready for a fight but as I was exhausted by this time, they just gave me everything I wanted.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

"There is such variability in how woman labour and we rely on our triage system to ensure that women do not come to hospital too early and risk being recommended to return home. It would never be our intention to leave an anxious woman at home and that is why we ask lots of questions about the pregnancy, contractions and consider any signs that might be concerning and need a mother to come to hospital. We do not always get it right and we are sorry that Danielle did not feel that we met her needs but it was good to hear that when she arrived in hospital she was given the care she wanted."

Lynn Woolley, Head of Midwifery

Sharon is a mother of three now, with her third child just turning one.

I think my last birth, which was at St. Richards's Hospital was the best birth I've had. I was induced as my baby was overdue. It was busy and my induction was pushed back because of the demand but the staff were very kind.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

"Maternity is very much an ebb and flow service where activity and acuity can change very quickly. Induction of labour does sometimes have to be delayed when there are other high risk things going on in the unit that mean that it is not safe for a mother to proceed with the procedure. It sounds like Sharon was incredibly understanding about this and that she had a great experience of birth once she got into labour."

Lynn Woolley, Head of Midwifery

Fiona has recently given birth to her second child:

I had my two year old at St Richard's Hospital. It was very busy at the time but I had an OK experience. I recently had my second baby at home, which was a much more enjoyable experience. I got good midwife support and follow-up.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

“Home birth is a really good option for mothers having their second babies, as it is convenient for them and the risks are generally low. We want to try and encourage more mothers to consider home birth as an option.”

Lynn Woolley, Head of Midwifery

Lorraine, whose baby was only weeks old described the care she had throughout her pregnancy as great but her treatment when she went into labour at St. Richard's Hospital was not so good.

I was booked in for an induction but this was continually put off for days. Whilst I understand this, I feel the communication was poor. When I finally made it to the birthing suite I spent half a day waiting around only to be told I would not be induced that evening due to low staffing levels (having been told, when I arrived that I could expect to see my baby in the evening). I feel the wait was unacceptable and that I was lied to. It was so upsetting to be asked to move. We ended up staying and I gave birth the next day.

My baby needed some extra care which was amazing. In contrast to the maternity ward, we were given lots of information and the communication by the staff was great.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

“As described in our response to Sharon's comments, we do sometimes have to put off inductions because it is simply not safe to proceed. Good communication with mothers is so important in these cases so that they understand the reasons why and we are so sorry that we did not get it right with Lorraine. It is good to hear that the care, information and communication was good after Lorraine had her baby and needed additional support.”

Lynn Woolley, Head of Midwifery

Caroline gave birth to her third child in East Surrey Hospital less than two years ago.

My waters broke at lunchtime and by teatime I was getting pain. I kept saying I needed to push but because I was only 1 cm dilated the midwives would not believe me and I was made to walk to the ward. I kept asking to be checked again but they refused. In the end I had to scream to get someone to come as I was pushing so hard. My baby was born on the ward and I was then taken to the delivery suite! I spoke to the midwife afterward to say that I had known I was having my baby and should not have been ignored. I felt that the midwife was very dismissive and just said 'we followed the processes'.

As Caroline told her story it was very obvious that this experience has, and still affects her deeply. We have shared her story, and the other stories with the [Sussex Better Births Programme](#) to help inform the work currently taking place to improve parents' experiences.

Children and Young People

We learnt from local workers about the positive relationships they have with local GP practices, and how this supports young people living away from home. However, it appears there can be issues that the health system could improve on.

Maria, a professional who works in a local college, told us: We have a really good arrangement with the surgery and they are always helpful and accommodating. We bring students here when they need to see a doctor, although we have our own nursing team and medical centre at the school.

We always feedback to parents and families when students attend services but we don't communicate back to their home GPs. This has caused issues and one of our students was de-registered by their home GP surgery (in Worthing) because he was a residential student. This is ridiculous because their home address was with their family and they were only with us during the week at term time. They went home at weekends.

We do use the 111 service a lot at the school for reassurance and out-of-hours support. We are all trained nurses though so we know what we're talking about and we sometimes feel that the staff at 111 don't respect our clinical knowledge. They almost always take hours and hours to call back.

Sonya is a care worker at a children's care home.

The young people (from 8 to 17 years old) I support can easily get appointments and care at our local practice. They are very good, even when we don't have a full history or background about some of the children.

I would say that, especially with the young people we work with, they would engage more with primary care if there were more accessible ways to engage via technology - Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime and so on. A lot of them are reluctant to actually come to the surgery and see a doctor face-to-face but they would email or chat via Facetime, without worrying too much about it, as they could remain in their own environment.

We use 111 occasionally and find it works OK for us but we are all experienced care and support workers who know how to use the system. I can see how elderly people may struggle and certainly some of the young people we work with wouldn't be able to navigate it themselves very easily.

We do find issues with CAMHS (Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Service) and struggle to get timely services for our young people. It can be a nightmare to access and then very difficult to navigate. Often our young people have to be in a crisis before they are eligible for any formal support.

Low-level support for things like ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is virtually non-existent and behaviours are often not understood by practitioner - or assumptions are made by them to fit young people into diagnostic boxes. Often behaviour is a symptom of an issue but it's not properly diagnosed and parents and other workers, like teachers, don't recognise it as a symptom of something, just as a problem to be addressed or punished. Often it's my team that gets it sorted, in respect of pushing for a formal diagnosis and fighting for support and help via CAMHS.

Finally, I would add that St Richards Hospital's A&E have always been really good when we attend with young people in our care. We do pop in there fairly regularly, for anything from scrapes and sprains, to overdoses and mental health crisis.

Concerns shared across the villages

Understanding and taking account of how people can get to services

'Sparsity and the increasing scarcity of public transport links are recognised as having a significant impact both on daily living costs of rural households and on access to services.

... In rural towns and fringe areas, 14% of households do not own a car or van ... compared with 33% in urban [locations].

(p.20, Local Government Association's Health and wellbeing in rural areas)

Local residents shared some of the challenges they experience in accessing services and how this is affecting their wellbeing:

George (an older gentleman) had the week before had a cataract removed in Southlands Hospital (Shoreham) when we spoke to him:

I would have preferred going to St Richards Hospital (Chichester) but was told that if I asked to be treated there, the waiting time would be significantly longer. The hospital and the operation was good. However, I wasn't happy that I'd only been given one bottle of eye drops (to be used 4 x daily for 4 weeks) and told to contact my GP for more drops. I live out of the village and so have had to make a special trip into Petworth to collect my prescription and then the drops from the pharmacy.

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for St Richard's Hospital told us:

"We undertake all types of Eye Surgery at St Richard's Hospital. The new building at Southlands Hospital has two theatres dedicated to Eye Surgery, whilst at St Richard's Hospital we have just the one theatre available. At St Richard's Hospital we treat all our patients who require a General Anaesthetic and all our Paediatric patients, which reduces the capacity for other types of surgery. We will always offer patients a date for surgery at the hospital where they can have surgery sooner. At the moment we have a short waiting time for Cataract Surgery at Southlands Hospital, which is why patients are being offered this option even though we appreciate that this will be further for them to travel.

- Donna Steeles, Head of Service, Ophthalmology

Sally (who is in her 60s) shared a similar concern to George, as her husband had also had a cataract operation and they had become very anxious over the experience

My husband was sent to the new Shoreham Clinic. They asked everyone to attend at 13.45 and he had to wait 3 hours to be seen. It takes us over an hour and half to travel to Shoreham as there are no public transport links. We understand St' Richards Hospital have stopped eye surgery.

(Please read above response from the Trust.)

Sandra is in her 60's and told us she gets very stressed when her GP (at Pulborough Medical Group) sends her for scans at St Richards Hospital or Bognor War Memorial Hospital, as these hospitals are too far for her to travel to.

Georgina, who is over 90 still lives independently in Midhurst but depends on carers since being in hospital over 3 years ago.

I try and get a doctor's appointment on Tuesdays because otherwise I don't have any way of getting to the surgery. I sometimes have a friend that can give me a lift.

Marjory, who is in her 80s, told us she was concerned about getting to a hospital appointment. She was unaware that she may be able to get some help in getting to her appointment. We discussed the Pulborough Community Transport service and were assured that the group leader would be giving her the telephone details. We have included [details here](#).

Wynne, is in her 70's and told us It's very difficult to get to St Richards Hospital by public transport as there is no direct bus and the train station is the other end of the town and too far to walk.

Wynne was also not aware of the Pulborough Community Transport service or other assistance she may be able to get.

Bob, who is in his 70s, shared his experience with his GP surgery in Petworth. If you need a GP you can always see someone so long as you can get there. If you phone most appointments have gone, you can wait until after the morning or afternoon surgery. As I could not get to the surgery I was told to phone 999.

Frank, is in his 70s, and had an appointment for a scan at St Richards Hospital in Chichester, which was then cancelled. A few days later he received a date for another scan but at Worthing Hospital. Worthing Hospital is not my first choice, as it is a long way to go but it will be good to get the scan done.

Simon is a patient at Riverbank Surgery (Midhurst). It's a good service but it's a shame it's out of town. The walk is difficult from the bus stop so I have to rely on friends and family to get me there.

Recommendation



- Services to look at how they understand and take account of the ways people get to services and to discuss this with local people when referring to other services and making appointments.
- The [Local Community Network](#) may provide the opportunity to look at issues like transport, timing of appointments and contractual barriers that appear to add to the challenges residents are faced with.

Pulborough Community Transport

<http://www.pdcca.org.uk/community-transport/>
[Pulborough & District Community Care Association](#)

Volunteer drivers use their own cars to help local people who may have difficulty in using public transport, to get to essential appointments such as hospital, doctors and dentists. We also have a wheelchair accessible vehicle enabling transportation of wheelchair users. This can also be made available for social purposes. A charge per mile is made to cover expenses. For people who may be on assisted pensions or other government help, travel costs may be refundable by the NHS. A modest charge is made to cover expenses.

Where: By arrangement for journeys within the Pulborough District and as far afield as all our local hospitals.

When: By arrangement.

PLEASE GIVE AS MUCH NOTICE AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN AND, IN ANY CASE, AT LEAST 48 HOURS, TO ENSURE YOUR JOURNEY CAN BE COVERED.

Contact: You can e-mail Christine Lindsay, co-ordinator, at christinelindsay1@talktalk.net or call our mobile number, 07591258409 between 09:00 and 17:00. Please leave a message if



Mike Clenshaw (former co-ordinator) with our wheelchair accessible vehicle

requested to do so, giving all details of your requirements and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

If you telephone our previous landline number the call will be automatically diverted to the new mobile number (above).

Volunteering: Please join the band of dedicated people, many of whom have been serving the local community for many years. Meet others who value your help and know that you are making a very worthwhile contribution to village life. E-mail or call Christine Lindsay, Co-ordinator, as above. Expenses can be paid.

The *'identified tendency for older people to present to health services in moments of crisis, resulting in significant challenges to health services providers and often necessitating more intensive, immediate, invasive and complex responses'* (Rural England, Older people in rural areas: vulnerability due to poor health) needs careful consideration.

(p.24, Local Government Association's Health and wellbeing in rural areas)

Sylvia's Story

I live in a hamlet outside of town. I like and value living here independently but when things go wrong it can be difficult to get the help I need.

I had a fall late (over 36 hours ago) and my skin is so thin, it split open and bled everywhere. I managed to get myself up and patched it up with whatever I could find. I didn't want to make a fuss, so I waited until today to call the surgery when it re-opened. I called because I think the dressing needs changing and doing properly. Also, I'd like someone in the know to look at it.

When I called the Reception team were very kind and helpful, and said the duty doctor would call me back. Then I got a call about half an hour later, telling me someone else was going to be calling me from the practice. I was happy with that, so I waited. About an hour later I got a call this time telling me she had been told to advise me to call the 111 number to get some advice.

I called the 111 people and we went through a whole load of useless questions before they said they couldn't help me but they gave me another number to call.

I called the other number straight away - it was a local number but I don't know who it was for. They were also very nice and caring and they said that they would send a nurse to my home, which I thought was really good, seeing as I had already been round the houses to get some help! But then they dropped the bombshell - they said the nurse would call at my house in four days' time. Can you believe it!

Anyway, I was quite upset by this time and I called my friend who said she'd bring me into the surgery straight away. So I called my lovely reception lady friend back and said that I was on my way in and I didn't care who I saw, I just needed to see someone! So that's why I'm here.

The people here are lovely but if you're old you're on the scrapheap. If you're young or you have young children you will get to see someone very promptly. If you are over 90, they just want you to go away because you'll be dead soon anyway.

Pulborough

Pulborough Medical Centre

We spent time in the surgery talking to patients and heard from other patients in the community.

We recorded



personal stories relating to the medical centre.

This practice occupies the first floor, with other health and care services located in the same building. There is limited parking and it is on the perimeter of a local Tesco and a Shaw Health Care residential care home. The Tesco store has a one-hour limit on parking.

We heard from people some challenges in getting an appointment, particularly if they need a home visit.

Megan and her family transferred to the surgery at the beginning of the year and have been very impressed by the service.

Zoe told us My family are registered as patients at the centre. It's really good and I can always get a same day appointment for my 11 month old.

Barbara went to see GP (name given) recently as she felt slow and didn't seem to be recovering after her operation The GP listened and explained that it would take time to recover and if I didn't feel better before Christmas to come back and see him again. They told me that as I was in the recovery stage, I need to give my body time to heal.

John told us the doctor had forgotten to refer his wife to the agreed service four months ago. I wonder if this was due to being too busy or a computer issue, as I've heard this has happened to other people locally.

We observed and heard people describe their access difficulties with the drop off point outside the centre.

One person told us 'I need to prop my husband at the barrier whilst I park the car and then return to help him into the surgery. The GP surgery is on the first floor so I have to support him into the lift. I feel the centre has been very badly designed.'

Patient stories showed some challenges but also the value and importance local people give to the support from their GPs, with many sharing positive feedback.

The accounts with less than positive comments could suggest the pressure GPs are under.

Janice told us It's very difficult to see the same GP for a problem. I prefer to wait 2-3 weeks to see the same GP as they sort things out and have put me on a course of medication and I'm fine now.

Harriet who is in her 60s told us: The first time I had to see (name given) they spent most of their time on the computer and not engaging with me. So I will not be remembered!

Denise told us the Centre used to have a Well Woman Clinic which was great You could ask anything especially when you didn't need a GP but just some reassurance. Don't know why they stopped this?

Healthwatch observations of the Centre

The ground floor of the building has a large lobby, which appeared cluttered with staked chair and mobility aids (zimmer frames), which gave a sense of being untidy, underused and unloved. Once inside, the building it is more easily accessible but we found the signage was not obvious. Our team members who had not been to the building before did not easily find the practice entrance and reception.



The reception area is staffed by two dedicated receptionists. There are no telephones on the desk, as all calls go through to a team located in another office. There is a privacy barrier and patients are requested to wait behind this, until called.

The self-check-in screen is located in the stairwell on the first-floor land and may not be easily found or accessed for patients using the lift.

The waiting area is vast. There are plenty of seats, although limited in variety.

The state of some of the upholstered chairs gave the team some cause for concern, in respect of infection control (tears, worn fabric with padding showing through.)



The signage was clean and clear but on the small side, so people needed to be relatively close to read the signs. There were no hanging signs along the long corridor, which meant patients had to walk through to look at each door to find where they needed to go.

Some patients were called to consultation via a display/bleep and for others the clinician came and called their name.

Posters and information were relevant but could have been displayed more clearly.

RECEPTION





There was a small complaints poster which appeared a little lost amongst all the other colourful displays. There was also a poster about the Practice's Patient Participation Group, known as the Pulborough Patients Link (PPL).

The practice may wish to review how information could be displayed in a way that enables people to focus their attention to important information.

Healthwatch was impressed with the two letterboxes in reception for repeat prescriptions and comments/feedback. We thought this was a good idea but they were quite high-up on the wall and some patients may have struggled to access them independently.

Recommendation



- The Pharmacy and Medical Centre to look at how to raise awareness of the different ways people can get their medication with a view to make it easier for patients.
- The Pulborough pharmacy to look at how they can improve their systems to reduce patient anxiety when medication cannot be found.

Alan Bolt, Managing Partner at Pulborough Medical Group told us:

Here are the improvements made:

We meet with our [Pulborough Patient Link](#) every two months. Just before Christmas the members agreed to take on the downstairs lobby, which is owned by all five tenants, not just Pulborough Medical Group, and in particular, to tidy up the notice board.

We would like to thank Dr Bolt for also supplying information for this report.



Getting medication

Some local people were unaware of the repeat prescription delivery service. Other people had experienced other issues:

Wendy told us that the pharmacy in Pulborough always has problems finding prescriptions when people have double or triple barrel names.

Liz, who is in her 70s, and is a patient at the Pulborough Medical Group
Currently, if I need a repeat prescription, I have to climb the hill to the surgery to hand in a request. I can use the telephone service but have to wait a little longer. In France they provide a medication sheet and if a medication is needed for a period of time this is indicated and the pharmacy fulfil from this.

Liz's story shows that some people are unaware of the pharmacy services that can be available to them, which is something we heard from other local people. Here is some further information.

Local Pharmacy Information

Kamsons - <http://www.kamsons.co.uk/section.php/149/1/pulborough>

Pulborough Medical Group

Patient can find the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) and online services under the medical group's Prescriptions tab. <http://www.pmgdoctors.co.uk/prescriptions1.aspx?t=2>

Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) is an NHS service. It gives you the chance to change how your GP sends your prescription to the place you choose to get your medicines or appliances from. Please register with a pharmacy now.

What does this mean for you?

If you collect your repeat prescriptions from your GP you will not have to visit your GP practice to pick up your paper prescription. Instead, your GP will send it electronically to the place you choose, saving you time. You will have more choice about where to get your medicines from because they can be collected from a pharmacy near to where you live, work or shop.

You may not have to wait as long at the pharmacy as there will be time for your repeat prescriptions to be ready before you arrive.

Is this service right for you?

Yes, if you have a stable condition and you:

- don't want to go to your GP practice every time to collect your repeat prescription
- collect your medicines from the same place most of the time or use a prescription collection service now.

It may not be if you:

- don't get prescriptions very often
- pick up your medicines from different places.

How can you use EPS?

You need to choose a place for your GP practice to electronically send your prescription to. This is called the nomination.

You can choose:

- any Pharmacy
- a dispensing appliance contractor (if you use one).

Ask any pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor that offers EPS. You don't need a computer to do this. All our local Pharmacies can help register you.

Can I change my nomination or cancel it and get a paper prescription?

Yes you can. If you don't want your prescription to be sent electronically tell your Pharmacy. If you want to change or cancel your nomination speak to any pharmacist or dispensing appliance contractor that offers EPS. Tell them before your next prescription is due or your prescription may be sent to the wrong place.

Is EPS reliable, secure and confidential?

Yes. Your electronic prescription will be seen by the same people in GP practices, pharmacies and NHS prescription payment and fraud agencies that see your paper prescription now.

Sometimes dispensers may see that you have nominated another dispenser. For example, if you forget who you have nominated and ask them to check or, if you have nominated more than one dispenser. Dispensers will also see all the items on your reorder slip if you are on repeat prescriptions.

If you are unhappy with your experience of nomination

You can complain to the pharmacy, dispensing appliance contractor (DAC) or GP practice. You can also complain to NHS England or their local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) if your complaint cannot be resolved www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/

Any questions - please ask your Pharmacy, not the Doctors Surgery

To register for this system, speak directly to your local pharmacy who can register you on the system. Alternatively, download and complete the [form](#) and hand it over to your chosen pharmacy. DO NOT HAND TO YOUR GP PRACTICE, this form is go to direct to your chosen pharmacy.

Petworth

Petworth Surgery

We spent time in the surgery talking to patients and heard from other patients in the community.

We recorded



personal stories relating to the medical centre.

Half of the accounts were positive, with people describing their experience as **I'm very happy with service, amazing.**

Some of the accounts show disappointment in the loss of continuity since staff changes have happened, which means people are now having to go over historic illness details.

The less than positive accounts are too identifiable to include. One account suggests there may be a need for the practice team to look at their communication around charging.



Hayley told us The surgery is amazing although it is sometimes difficult to get an appointment over the phone and it's sometimes easier just to go in. They are very good with appointments for the children though.

Mavis, who is in her 80s said The way I'm treated by this surgery makes me feel no one cares.

Healthwatch observations of the surgery

This practice is a little off the beaten track and the entrance is not easy to see from the road if you are not familiar with the area. One of our team members drove past it three times before spotting the driveway. The signage is not clear from the road. There is adequate car parking and level, easy access to the front door.

From listening to patients, we heard that at busy times the reception queue goes through the front door, as the desk is in close proximity to the doors and there is only room for 4 or 5 patients to stand in the line.

There is an open-plan area behind the reception desk, with two or three workstations and we observed staff having work-related, and therefore patient-related, conversations in an open area in hearing range of anyone standing at reception. The self-check-in screen was opposite the reception desk.

In the main, the environment was clean and tidy and there were a range of chairs to meet the needs of different sized patients, for example raised-height chairs.

Healthwatch felt the noticeboard appeared unkept and some displays were rather sparse, and a little 'tatty'.



There were two doors from the waiting area to the consulting rooms and corridor. Patients were either called personally by their clinician or were called via a display/bleep.



Signage appeared general good, although there were different colours and our team were unsure if there was a relevance to this, or if some had simply been replaced and different colours had been used.

There were a few temporary signs, which were printed; laminated and stuck onto doors or over existing signs, which obviously does not present as well as the permanent signs and may give patients the perception that the practice is unsure if the doctor is staying long term?

The patient toilet was clean and there was a disabled toilet and baby changing facility, which were all in good order.

Recommendation



- Practice to review the layout/working practices of staff in the open-plan area, to achieve better confidentiality.
- Practice reviews its signage (perhaps by visiting other practices), to achieve consistency and the right level of visibility to help visitors navigate around the building.

Getting medication

Betty, who is in her 70s told us The Petworth pharmacy is only able to provide a service to people who live within a certain radius of the centre. I have to collect a prescription and take it to the nearest pharmacy about a quarter of a mile away.

Dougie lives outside the village and has to make a special trip into the village to collect his prescription. The pharmacy isn't great at getting my prescriptions right, particularly my special-order medications.

NHS England's Local Pharmacy Team has responded to Betty's story to explain how local dispensing services work:

“Dispensing medication is controlled by the NHS Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Service Regulations 2013 and NHS England is required to ensure that NHS dispensing services are compliant with these national regulations.

In rural areas, (known within these regulations as ‘controlled localities’) a GP practice can request to provide a dispensing service. This means, some patients are able to collect their prescribed medication from their GP surgery rather than the local pharmacy. Only patients living beyond 1 mile (measured as a straight line or radius measurement and not actual travelling distance) from a local pharmacy (within the controlled locality) can use this service.

The exception to the distance rule is if a patient can show they would have serious difficulty in obtaining their prescriptions from a community pharmacy either due to ‘distance or inadequate means of communication’. In such cases, NHS England are responsible for considering an application from a patient who wishes to apply to collect their medication from their GP practice.

If you are unsure if you would be eligible to get your medication from your GP practice, if they provide a dispensing service, you should firstly speak to the practice, who will be able to check this with NHS England's Local Pharmacy Team if they are unsure. (The team would need your address, including post code, so that an appropriate check can be made.) If your GP practice provides a dispensing service and you wish to apply to NHS England to collect your medication from the practice, because you feel you would have serious difficulty getting your medication from a pharmacy, your GP practice should be able to provide you with a copy of an application form that you can fill in and which your GP will need to sign, so that it can then be sent to NHS England for consideration.”

Many community pharmacies and internet pharmacies that provide NHS repeat prescription services now also provide a free collection and delivery service to peoples' homes (see page 21 for local details). Details of all pharmacies that provide NHS Services can also be found on the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk This report is shared with Healthwatch England and we have highlighted this as it is a national issue.

Dental needs

'57% of rural residents live within 4km of an NHS dentist, compared with 98% of the urban population.

(p.24, Local Government Association's Health and wellbeing in rural areas)

Susan is in her 60s and lives in Hampers Green (situated on the Northern edge of Petworth)

I'd like to know why there is no NHS dentist in Petworth. I am registered with a NHS dentist in Surrey and it takes me a whole day to travel, there and back on the bus.

Midhurst

Riverbank Medical Centre

We spent time in the surgery talking to patients and heard from other patients in the community. We recorded 24 personal stories relating to the medical centre.

We recorded



personal stories relating to the medical centre.

Most people spoke highly of the services at this Medical Centre. The account with less than positive comments were around dementia awareness amongst staff. Other comments were too identifiable to include.

Jenny, who is a health professional, described the surgery as brilliant I can always get a same day appointment especially for my children and I've never felt rushed in any appointment.

We heard similar comments from other parents.

Sandra told us I have no problems with the surgery except I feel they need more training on dealing with people with dementia, as my mother's care wasn't great.

We heard a similar comment from someone whose husband has dementia and also when talking to community organisations, that offer vital support to older people, some of whom are living with dementia.



Healthwatch observations of the surgery

This surgery is located on the outskirts of Midhurst town. It shares an access road and car park with Midhurst Community Hospital, an independent pharmacy and an independent MSK clinic (chiropractitioner).

Healthwatch felt that the signage from the main road was not particularly good and unless you knew the surgery was here you would not be able to find it from the road.

The access road is the width of a single vehicle, with passing places. As such it seems rather hazardous for pedestrians, as our team found out!

Parking is adequate, but the carpark was very busy. The building is in good repair and has easy; level access.

There is a large lobby area, which houses a great deal of information leaflets; literature and banners, as well as a couple of wheelchairs for patients to use.

The information table appeared overstocked and some items were out of date.

Inside the entrance is a large reception desk, with waiting areas either side. The staff team were welcoming and friendly.

There are several work stations behind the reception desk and the staff in this area were observed acting professionally and we did not hear any inappropriate conversations taking place.



Recommendation



- Practice team to look at investing time to become a dementia-friendly practice so staff and partners can communicate effectively with patients living with dementia and their family/friend carers.
- The Local Community Network to look at how health professionals can support local organisations when raising concerns for people when their cognitive abilities change in a way that could be putting them at risk.



Kath, Riverbank Medical Centre's Practice Manager responded to above by saying:

Thank you for sending a copy of the report through. We discussed this as a practice and didn't feel there was anything specifically we needed to add but the suggestion of increasing the awareness of dementia with the staff has been noted and will be something I will look into doing. With the triage system we do arrange appointments around the needs of all patients, including carers, so if you have any more specific pointers as to what the patients were saying that would be great.

I note the comments about the access road, there is a separate lit footpath to the medical centre away from the road (separated by the trees) for pedestrians. The road is owned by the Community Trust so not under our control, however we do report issues with it as they arise.

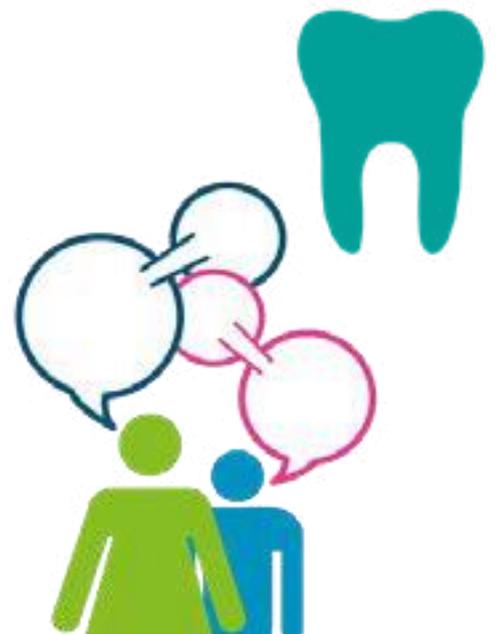
Healthwatch would encourage family and friend carers, supporting Riverbank Medical Centre patients living with dementia, to talk directly to the surgery. Or you can call us on 0300 012 0122 (or see back of this report for other ways of sharing experiences) with us about specific things that would make the practice easy to use if you have challenges relating to dementia.

Healthwatch has been raising the Footpath issue through the national Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) Programme visit outcomes with Sussex Community Foundation Trust for a number of years. As the pedestrian access is partly footpath and partly a section on the side of the road (with no kerb or separate pavement) it makes people feel vulnerable on the section that are on the road. We are following this up through this year's PLACE (which runs from now until June 2018) and if necessary, we will escalate the matter to get this changed.

Dental needs

Whilst talking to people in Midhurst we heard four accounts from dental patients at Church Hill Dental Care Ltd.

Peoples' stories are all very negative and this is not normally what we would expect to hear when carrying out general public engagement. Looking across the internet for other reviews we were unable to find any positive comments and noted some job advertisements that could suggest staffing issues.



Michelle told us My family are registered with this dental surgery. I've had our last two check-ups cancelled by the surgery. When I've tried to book new appointments, I was told that my two eldest children have been deregistered for missing appointments but on raising the matter further I was told that my children had been taken off their list and they have deleted their records, so could not tell me why this has happened!

Another patient told us they have had many dental appointments cancelled at short notice and no reasons was given.

Lynda had some dental work done about a year ago and told us The dentist drilled the wrong tooth and caused me lots of pain and distress. Despite raising an issue I didn't hear back from anyone until very recently.... I'm annoyed that it has taken so long to be contacted.

David told us that he has now moved back to his original private dentist and has spent thousands of pounds to fix the damage and mistakes made. He told us he had lost teeth due to the 'patchwork repairs' carried out by a dentist at this surgery.

NHS England's South-East Team has responded to this insight:

“Our team is sorry to learn of the concerns raised by patients' experience of using services at the Church Hill Dental Practice in Midhurst.

We expect dental practices that deliver NHS services to provide the best possible care and treatment to patients and following this feedback, we have raised their concerns with the Church Hill Dental Practice and sought assurance from them that improvements would be made. Patients should start to see an improvement in services as a result, but we will continue to monitor the provision of services at this practice.

We would encourage any patients who have concerns about the service or care they have received to raise this with the practice directly, so that they can use this feedback to develop and improve their services. Patients can also submit any complaints about local dental services direct to NHS England, if they prefer to do so, using any of the following contact details:

- **By post:** NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT
- **By email:** england.contactus@nhs.net (please mark the email as being for the attention of the complaints team in the subject line of the email)
- **By telephone:** 0300 311 2233

Further information about making a complaint via NHS England is available on our website at www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint.

Getting free, independent help with making an NHS complaint

Local residents can contact Healthwatch West Sussex to access our **Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service**.

Our skilled advocates can talk through the options available to you to resolve your concerns and provide support, so you can get your voice heard if you feel something has gone wrong with your NHS care and treatment.

You can also find lots of useful [information](#) on our website, including complaint letter templates and guides. Our full contact details are shown at the back of this report.

Since Touring Rural West Sussex

We go on 'tour' so we can listen to what local people say about their lived experiences of health and care services - your doctor, your hospital, your mental health service.

You told us we needed to be closer to local people, and by spending more time in a particular city; town or cluster of villages, we have found that we can more fully understand peoples' experiences and concerns - what works well for them, and what doesn't. This is one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways of speaking to local people.

Having gained this understanding, we must take action and work with those that plan, buy, provide and monitor local health and care services to make positive changes.



The insight and learning opportunities gained from this tour was shared with:

- **NHS Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)** who are responsible for planning, buying and monitoring many of the local health services
- **Local GPs** and through the Local Community Network
- **Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** who are responsible for the delivery of services at Worthing, St Richards and Southlands Hospitals
- **Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** who are responsible for the delivery of local acute and community mental health services for adults and children
- **South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust** who are responsible for the delivery of 999 and 111 services locally
- **West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board**, which leads on improving the co-ordination of commissioning across the NHS, social care and public health services
- **West Sussex Health and Social Care Select Community**, which is the means by which proposed decisions are scrutinised, the effectiveness of existing policy is reviewed and the budget and performance monitoring of service delivery is undertaken.

These organisations were invited to consider the insight in a draft report and the learning opportunities, and to tell us how they intend to respond to what has been said. Some of these responses have been included.

Our work does not stop with this publication and we will continue to use influencing platforms, along with our statutory powers to make positive changes for local people.

We want to continue to hear from local people about their experiences and if any of the changes have worked better for them. If you would like to comment on this report in any way please contact us on 0300 012 0122.

Our publications are also shared with the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England.

We recognise the pressures local services are under and are always pleased to help support practices and services by sharing best practice and using our communications channels to spread the word in communities about services available that can help patients to have a better experience (community transport, prescriptions etc).

We are always listening

Simply inviting people to share their experiences of health and care has enabled us to get closer to what is happening in these villages and we will continue to make sure we use every opportunity to amplify what people have told us about their experiences.

Please contact us if you want to be part of our growing team of local residents who are getting involved in making positive changes.



helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk



0300 012 0122



@healthwatchws
@NHSadvocacy



@healthwatchwestsussex

www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Billingshurst Centre, Roman Way, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9QW