



Supporting and working with community groups and clubs to promote a deeper understanding of local health and care needs and experiences

Spotlight on Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust Carers Health Team

Are you caring for a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems?

The NHS Carers Health Team offers professional support and guidance to maintain your health and wellbeing.

We know that at present due to the COVID 19 crisis that carers are having a really tough time as all of the support they usually rely on such as: visits to the home, or respite at day centres and clubs has ceased to exist with no clear picture as to when they will resume. We know that carers feel very alone with increasing feelings of frustration and stress, and feel guilty for feeling that way.



The NHS Carers Health Team can currently support carers with a telephone assessment of their health and wellbeing needs (or put them on our waiting list for a face to face assessment when our team returns to normal business). We can offer advice and signposting to many organisations that can provide help and support.

If a carer is struggling with their own health we can offer specific health advice or refer them to the appropriate health care professional or team. We can help carers think about contingency planning for emergencies and ensure they have a back-up plan in place, or refer them to the relevant organisation if they do not have any family/friend emergency support available.

The carers can self-refer by calling our office number, or organisations can refer into us on the carers behalf as long as they have consent to do so. Carers must be registered with a West Sussex GP and be over 18 years.

Case Study

We (Carers Support Team) received Sylvia's referral from the British Red Cross. Sylvia is 89 and cares for her husband, Bob, who has dementia.

Bob has recently been in hospital and, since he has been at home, they have received support from the Red Cross which has now become a full time care package.

When we first met Sylvia we found that she had some physical health needs and also some social and emotional needs that we could help and support her with. We talked through her needs and included Bob in these conversations too. It was helpful for us to talk together about all aspects of Sylvia and Bob's life and we were able to come up with a plan together.

Our team referred Sylvia to her GP to address and follow up her immediate health concerns and we also introduced the couple to a number of community services including RVS Good Neighbours and Age UK. A referral for a social care assessment was made to see if Bob could access a day centre and we suggested that they may be able to access emergency respite from Crossroads, to give Sylvia a break from her caring role.

The plan was agreed and implemented and our team reviewed Sylvia's case 3 weeks after the initial assessment. At the review we were able to offer further support, advice and a referral to the Proactive Care Team.

Sylvia and Bob now have much more support to keep them well and enable them to live a more comfortable life. They know that they can call us if they need any further help.

The NHS Carers Health Team contact details are:

Phone: 01243 623521

Email: sc-tr.carerwellbeing@nhs.net

Website: sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/carers

All of the insight we collect from people across West Sussex is collated and anonymised and forms part of the evidence that Healthwatch gather to identify common themes around what works and what could be improved for local people. **This insight is used to influence service development and can feed into**

- West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board
- HASC - Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee
- WSCC Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Safeguarding Adult Board
- Sussex Health and Care Partnership workstreams (the NHS Integrated Care System for Sussex).

Healthwatch West Sussex also share reports with the Care Quality Commission (who are responsible for the registration and inspection of services which deliver regulated activities) and to Healthwatch England to form part of the national picture used to influence national developments, such as the NHS Long Term forward plan.



Not only do we collect the experiences of local people, but we can also provide free information and guidance just call: **0300 012 0122**.

Email helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk,

Website www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk.

healthwatch
West Sussex

You can also follow our social media channels:

Facebook [@healthwatchwestsussex](https://www.facebook.com/healthwatchwestsussex)

Twitter [@healthwatchws](https://twitter.com/healthwatchws)

If you are setting up or would like to share news of a similar project we would be interested to hear from you. Please contact Cheryl Berry, Community Partnership Lead, email: cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk