

Our Priorities
What you told us

January 2018



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healthwatch
Surrey

Background

In order to maximise its impact, Healthwatch Surrey focuses its work on a number of priority areas. We review these each year to ensure the issues remain relevant and that, within our statutory role, we are able to have a positive effect on services on behalf of people in Surrey.

Healthwatch Surrey's process for setting priorities involves an initial 3-year cycle for all new priorities. Priority areas are only replaced within the 3-year cycle if there is evidence that the issue is no longer relevant to local people.

At the end of the 3-year cycle a more considered review is undertaken which includes looking at what more can be done by Healthwatch Surrey on that issue and the appetite of local people for other issues to be considered.

The following priority has reached the end of its 3 year cycle: **Improving the experience of making a GP appointment.**

In order to review this priority, we ran a consultation to enable as many local people to participate in the priority process as possible. This report documents how local people have been involved in shaping the priority areas, the conclusions we are making based on what we've found and makes a recommendation on priorities for 2018/19.

How we promoted the consultation

We targetted voluntary, community and faith organisations and elected representatives to help encourage participation from as many parts of the community as possible,

Methods used to promote the consultation included:

- A dedicated page on our website
- Social media posts (Facebook and twitter)
- E-bulletin
- Telephone and face-to-face contacts
- Online forums (e.g. Mumsnet)
- Direct email

Healthwatch Surrey's existing priorities

- Amplifying the voices of care home residents
- Investigating the experience of hospital discharge
- Early intervention in mental health
- Improving the experience of making a GP appointment

For each area an issue, aspiration and plan of activity is set out in an annual Work Plan (available on our website).



What we asked

The questions asked were designed to enable people to share information that could usefully inform our decision making, including:

- Identifying potential flaws in the changes being proposed.
- Information that would support understanding any objections to our proposals.
- New information that had not previously been available or considered.
- A diversity of perspective, which helps to make the process more objective and fair.

The questions asked were:

- Do you agree that 'Amplifying the voices of Care Home residents', 'Investigating the experience of Hospital Discharge' and 'Early Intervention in Mental Health' are some of the most important priorities for the health and social care system in Surrey?
- If you answered 'No' to any of the above, please explain why.
- Do you agree that 'Improving the experience of making a GP appointment' is no longer one of the most important priorities for the health and social care system in Surrey?
- If you answered 'No' to the above, please explain why.
- Are there other priorities we should be working on? Please describe the issue(s). Please tell us about any evidence or examples that suggest this issue should become a priority for Healthwatch Surrey.

People were also asked whether they would like to be notified of the outcome of the consultation and if/or what on-going contact they would like with Healthwatch Surrey.



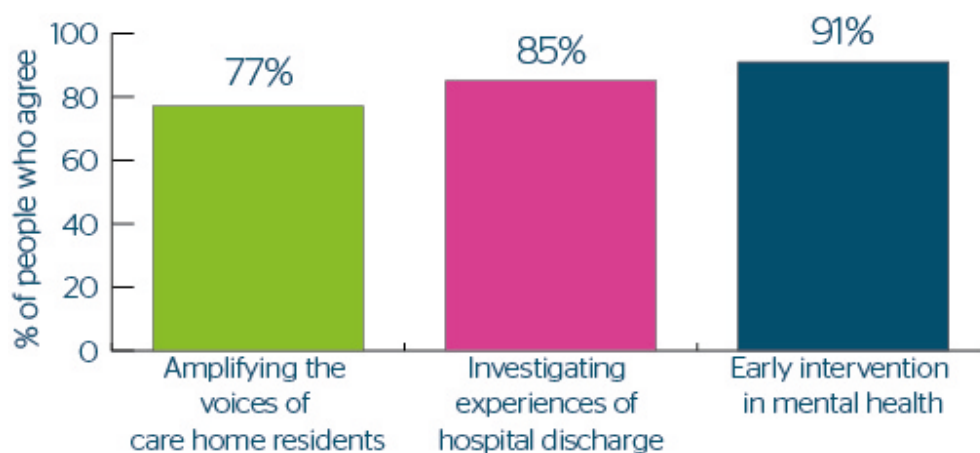
What we heard

During the consultation 148 people and two voluntary, community and faith sector organisations shared their views on our priorities.

Views on the proposal to retain three priorities

People were provided with an opportunity to object to the continuation of those priorities that are within a 3-year cycle.

Do you agree that 'Amplifying the voices of Care Home residents', 'Investigating the experience of Hospital Discharge' and 'Early Intervention in Mental Health' are some of the most important priorities for the health and social care system in Surrey?



1. There is considerable support amongst respondents for Healthwatch Surrey's proposal to retain three of the priorities for 2018/19.

Response

The existing priorities are the product of a process that brings together a number of different sources e.g. evidence from day-to-day conversations with people, involvement of volunteers in the decision making. This finding provides some validation for the process and lends support to the work of Healthwatch Surrey in 2018/19.

The comments of those objecting will be considered as we create the work plan for 2018/19. Comments included:

"My carer responsibility is for a 12 year old so I have different priorities."

This could suggest that:

2. The current priorities do not clearly address concerns of Carers and/or Children.

Response

Our work needs to be as inclusive as possible. More needs to be done to ensure the needs of Carers and Children are covered - and seen to be covered - in our work in 2018/19.

“Because inadequate [Hospital Discharge] can be solved if the relevant authorities start to take it seriously.”

This suggests that:

3. There are people who believe that Healthwatch Surrey does not have a role in challenging organisations to take issues more seriously.

Response

We believe that this is the type of issue where Healthwatch Surrey can effectively challenge to ensure that organisations are working together in the interest of people in Surrey.

“Extend voices of Care Home residents to include those with Learning Disability as well as the elderly.”

This suggests that:

4. The scope of the issues identified within the ‘Amplifying the voices of care home residents’ could be broadened to include residential services specifically for people with Learning Disabilities.

Response

Our work needs to be as inclusive as possible. More needs to be done to ensure the needs of people with Learning Disabilities and Autism are covered - and seen to be covered - in our work in 2018/19. We will need to do this in ways that ensure we remain focussed enough on a specific issue in order to have an impact. This could mean, for example, having a dedicated focus on Care Homes for people with Learning Disabilities in 2018/19.

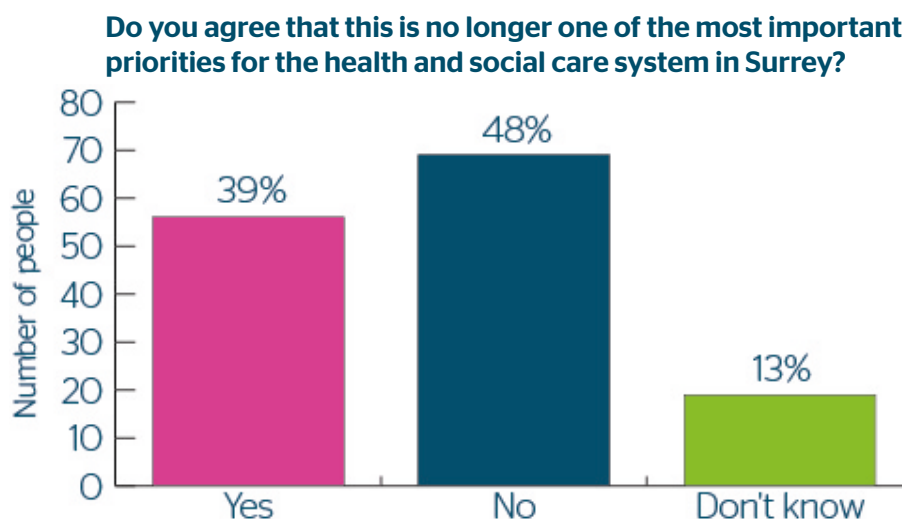


Views on the proposal to replace a priority

People were told about our proposal to replace the following priority area: **Improving the experience of making a GP appointment**

An assurance was given that Healthwatch Surrey would remain alert and responsive to emerging issues and themes across all services and issues. People were also provided with links to work we have conducted on this issue.

People were then asked:



5. More respondents disagreed with this suggestion (48%), than agreed with it (39%).

6. Many respondents put forward views and experiences about issues with making GP appointments (57), 13 of which shared a negative personal experiences of getting GP appointments.

Of the 66 responses that disagreed with this statement, people often:

- commented that this was an important aspect of service delivery as it is often the 'front door' and point at which other services could be accessed.
- referred to the ability for GP services and the appointment booking process to support prevention and reduce the need to use other services e.g. Accident & Emergency.
- expressed concern for people with specific needs e.g. people who are deaf, those with other communication needs, older people, people with learning disabilities and those without internet access.

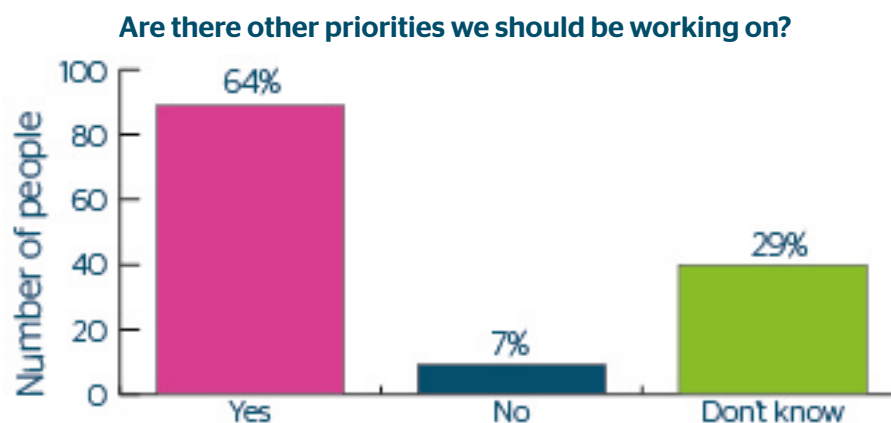
Two people expressed a belief that more could be achieved if a different approach to the issue was adopted, although no additional information or views were provided.

Response

This a reminder that issues and concerns remain about the process of getting access to GP appointments. It is also clear that it is a matter of great interest to people. Whilst progress has been made through the work of Healthwatch Surrey, there is no doubt that more can be done. The proposal to replace this priority was made in the belief that other issues in health and social care are now more deserving of our attention. This consultation suggests that this may not be the case.

Views on other priorities

The consultation sought views on whether Healthwatch Surrey should be working on other issues. People had the opportunity to describe issues and provide supporting evidence.



7. The majority of respondents indicated that there were other priorities that Healthwatch Surrey should be working on and only 7% of people responded that there were not.

8. 85 respondents proposed other issues that Healthwatch Surrey should be working on. Within these suggestions there were themes around mental health services for children, mental health services for people living in the community (i.e. not in an inpatient setting), support for Carers, support for people with Learning Disabilities & Autism and services for people being supported to remain living at home.

Evidence was provided to support these issues in the form of reports on personal experience and signposting to published reports.

9. Family Voice Surrey (www.familyvoicesurrey.org) shared evidence to suggest that parent carers are not routinely being offered Carers Assessments.

10. Sight for Surrey (www.sightforsurrey.org.uk) provided evidence to suggest that quality of provision of audiology services varies across the county and that there is a lack of choice.

Response

There is a strong desire for us to be working on other issues, with the majority of people putting forward new proposals for us to work on. We will be incorporating these views into our plans to ensure that, wherever possible, we can respond to these concerns within the existing priority areas. Where that is not possible, it will be necessary to prioritise.

Conclusions

The views expressed through this consultation support Healthwatch Surrey's proposal to retain the three priorities that are currently within their first 3-year cycle:

- **Amplifying the voices of care home residents**
- **Investigating the experience of hospital discharge**
- **Early intervention in mental health**

There is less support for the proposal to replace the priority area 'Improving the experience of making a GP appointment', however there was also strong support for us to be working on other issues with the majority of respondents suggesting new issues.

Whilst a number of 'new' issues could be addressed within some of the existing priority areas e.g. timely access to CAMHS, there is clear support for other competing priority areas.

Four themes emerged within these new issues:

- There is a lack of support for people living in the community with mental health issues.
- There is a need to focus on carers.
- There is a need to focus on people with learning disabilities and autism.
- Care services for vulnerable and older people living at home need to improve.



Recommendations

It is recommended that the Healthwatch Surrey Board:

1. Retain the priorities which are mid-way through an initial 3-year cycle through 2018/19. These priorities are:

- **Amplifying the voices of care home residents**
- **Investigating the experience of hospital discharge**
- **Early intervention in mental health**

2. Give consideration to the competing views expressed through this consultation when deciding whether to replace 'Improving the experience of making GP appointments' with another priority at its Board Meeting on 23rd January 2018.

Next Steps

A set of options for a new priority will be developed with Healthwatch Surrey volunteers, to support a decision on priorities for 2018/19 at the next Public Board Meeting in April 2018. These options will be driven by this consultation and the day to day evidence gathering done across the county in the last 12 months.



About Healthwatch Surrey

Healthwatch Surrey is an independent local watchdog that gives the people of Surrey a voice to improve, shape and get the best from health and social care services.

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