

Board Report - Thematic Priorities and Project Development July 2021

Background

As our system partners move to longer-term planning of health and social care needs we are moving with them in our project work. The Insight Bulletin will continue as an output that shares short term concerns and emerging issues across the wider system, but our project work is now able to focus on our thematic priorities.

Insight Bulletin

After a pause for the local elections we have published bulletins for May and June. GP access has featured heavily in both of these. We have been keen to report the good as well as the challenging, and our analysis of the separate issues facing GPs has influenced Surrey Heartlands' project to codesign new approaches to GP access.

The bulletin has also featured

- Concern over communication of financial obligations to those receiving social care
- Our report on Pregnancy Loss
- Findings from our work on the cost of poor administration to the NHS (commissioned pre-pandemic by the Kings Fund/Healthwatch England)
- Findings on our mini project into how day centres support mental health and independence for older residents

Carers' experiences of hospital Discharge (Care at Home)

Our joint project with Action for Carers is close to publication. We are in the process of agreeing conclusions and recommendations with Action for Carers and expect to be starting to share our findings in the next few weeks.

The original focus of the project was "Discharge to Assess (D2A)" - the pathway that speeds up hospital discharge by delaying a final care needs assessment until the patient is settled at home. This process is likely to remain after the pandemic, and

early patient/carer feedback would contribute to optimisation of a pathway that has benefits for both patients and for acute trusts.

The focus of the study was the experience of carers rather than patients. We achieved 12 depth interviews (many well over an hour each) and 78 completed surveys.

Our early interviews revealed a number of weak points in the patient journey from admission to long term home care, often starting at the hospital front door. We had expected our main audience to be Surrey County Council/Adult Social Care, but we will be taking our findings and recommendations to the Acute Trusts where there are opportunities to improve patient outcomes and even reduce readmission.

Finding Information and Support in the early years after Dementia Diagnosis (Early Access to Mental Health Support)

This project is now well under way after being delayed by the second wave of the pandemic. It is being co-delivered by the volunteers: Robert Hill and Tessa Weaver are acting as joint managers and volunteers are undertaking a large proportion of the interviews. We are aiming to achieve 25+ depth interviews with individuals, are visiting and collecting soft intelligence from support groups, and will be talking to system leaders/providers such as Dementia Navigators to gain context.

We expect to report on the project in September. This will allow our findings to contribute to the Surrey Heartlands Dementia Strategy Board's strategy refresh: the Board are interested in and supportive of the project and expect our findings to influence the direction of the refresh.

Learning from What We've Heard about Remote Consultations (Access)

Our review of experiences relating to remote consultations will not result in a substantial report. The system is moving ahead fast, most of our experiences relate to the mid-pandemic landscape, and it's an area of heavy focus across the system. However, we have shared key findings relating to GP access by highlighting the three very different changes that have come about

- Changes to 'requesting' a GP appointment - from phone/surgery hours only to online/24:7 + phone (and often back again)
- Introduction of Total Triage, switching the system from patient-demand led to surgery as gatekeeper

- Changes to the mode of consultation

These three different changes all need individual consideration and management.

We will formalise the output of our review in the coming month.

Future Project Development

The next project should fall under either the Access thematic priority or should be built around an Emerging Issue. We will continue our ongoing listening, to the people of Surrey as well as the organisations supporting them, to identify suitable opportunities in the coming months.