

# Board Report – Projects

## Recent and current activity

In the past quarter we have:

- Published **Insight Bulletins in January and March**
- **Received and published responses to recommendations made in Carers Experiences of Hospital Discharge** from all our acute hospitals and from Surrey County Council
- **Presented at and taken part at the Surrey Carers and Providers Network Event meeting**, where our recommendations formed the basis for discussion of fresh solutions to issues raised around hospital discharge. The workshop had an attendance of over 50 commissioners, providers, VCFS and carers.
- **Seen our key recommendations included in the Dementia Strategy** for Surrey, which was signed off in March.

Our current priorities are:

- Plan **Insight Bulletins for early May and late June** (May elections prevent us publishing an April bulletin)
- **Complete our ‘waiting well’ survey**, and publish a report in May
- **Identify and develop future projects**, especially around CYP and Social Services.

## Insight Bulletins

All Insight Bulletins start with a “Praise and Thanks” section. We do hear many positive stories of high quality care, especially now we are undertaking agenda-free engagement in the community, but in January it was gratifying to hear some praise for our own service.

"I am very impressed with the service I have received this afternoon, which is the first time I made contact after seeing the details about Healthwatch. I am sure I will come back to you again in the future if I need more health-related information and know where to direct anyone else who needs this sort of information."

Our bulletins have covered:

- **The crucial role of unpaid carers** – a reminder that the NHS and Social Services rely on unpaid carers to keep people safe, well and at home

- **People seeking urgent dental help** – lack of NHS dental care is old news, but we are hearing increasing reports of people needing care for acute problems
- **The impact on patients when services don't collaborate** – including examples where services seem to be at crossed swords rather than working together.
- **Local experiences of 'inaccessible information'** – to build on the Healthwatch England survey on the Accessible Information Standard.
- **Experiences of death in hospital** – 4/10 deaths still take place in hospital and while staff can be compassionate and caring, we do hear distressing stories of poor support and poor communication.
- **Access to GP complaints procedures** – GPs must have a complaints procedure in place, but people have told us that this can be difficult to access.

### Carers Experiences of Hospital Discharge

**We received very full responses to our recommendations** from all acute hospitals and SCC, with several examples of initiatives that had been triggered or boosted by our findings. A summary of the responses has been published.

In February we attended the Surrey Carers and Providers Network Event meeting. This was run as a workshop, with presentations from a range of speakers followed by breakout rooms to discuss initiatives. **Our recommendations were used as conversation-starters in the breakout rooms.** The wide attendance and commitment from attendees was very encouraging.

We aim to recontact the providers in a year's time, for an update on their progress towards improving the experience of discharge for carers.

### Finding Information and Support in the early years after Dementia Diagnosis

The first draft of the new Surrey Dementia Strategy featured our report, and the structure of the strategy was unusually well focussed on actions and objectives. However, we felt our recommendations were not well reflected in the draft.

Following our response and further discussions with the lead authors **several of our recommendations were embedded directly in the Dementia Strategy**, and this was signed off in March 2022. We will maintain our presence at the Dementia Strategy Board meetings to track progress of the actions relating to our recommendations.

## Waiting Well

Our Waiting Well survey is live – we plan to close it at the end of April, with a report to be published in May following the local elections. As of late April, we have around 170 good quality responses to the survey.

Waiting for treatment is inevitable; we need **to ensure our report guides providers to help people to wait well** – reducing deterioration, retaining confidence – and does not restate the obvious negatives people feel about waiting months or even years for treatment.

Our original plan was to undertake some depth interviews and create a video patient experience to supplement the survey results. This is under consideration and a decision will be made in the coming weeks, but we are not convinced either of these will add value to our findings.

## 2022/23 Project Development

At the February Board Workshop, we proposed a fresh approach to project identification, and this approach was approved by the board. **We will move away from Thematic Priorities and focus more on individual project selection**

- Aiming for balance across physical health, mental health and social care
- Aiming for balance across priority/demographic groups
- Assessing project value in terms of potential outcomes (system need, timing) and freshness of insight as well as our ability to deliver well

**We are currently canvassing for new project topics**, networking with a wide range of providers and asking for input from all stakeholders and system partners. We are particularly interested in projects relating to Children and Young People and Social Care, but our minds are open to ideas from all quarters.

New project ideas will be recommended to the board for final decision making.