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# Insight Bulletin – November 2022

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## About Healthwatch Surrey

One of the statutory duties of Healthwatch Surrey is to share residents' experiences of health and social care with the people and organisations who make decisions about those services.

This bulletin highlights a selection of the themes we've heard about recently.

## Praise and thanks

Last month we received 138 reports of people's health and social care experiences. We frequently hear from people who are very happy with the care and support they have received.

This month's praise highlights the value of patient-clinician partnership, good listening and good signposting:

I saw the consultant that had written to me and I felt like they really had a good grip about what was going on and had read my notes. They were professional yet relaxed and we chatted rather than me being 'told'. He is going to refer me on to other services and he also consulted with a colleague whilst I was there, after listening to my thoughts. I found the whole thing very reassuring, and I was left with all the information I need.

**Community Engagement, Hospital**

I'm being looked after by the Urology consultant..., getting treatment for cancer. Absolutely [expletive deleted] fantastic care... They've looked after me really. They've given me all the information I need.

**Community Engagement, Hospital**

GP service is really good here. My doctor was a real sweetie today, he put everything in a language I could understand. I'm having all the tests done at the minute - you name it, I'm having it. I'm happy with the next steps.

**Community Engagement, GP surgery**

The insoles which the podiatrist suggested and said would order did not

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arrive... So in the end I went down there and handed in a letter for the podiatrist at reception. The member of staff that was on duty said, would I mind if she opened it or did I want to explain to her and see if she could help, as the podiatrist is only sporadically there. I explained and the receptionist went back through all the orders but couldn't find one for me. They spent ages and ended up saying go home and we will call you. ... They were true to their word and called me back later on that day. They hadn't been able to find the order but had placed the order for me I thought she went above and beyond, couldn't be more helpful.

**Community Engagement, Hospital**

## Dentistry – the challenge continues

Earlier this year the problems faced by people looking for dental care were at the forefront of the news nationally, and we shared your concerns about NHS dentistry with Surrey's MPs. Following this, representatives from the Adults Health and Select Committee followed our lead in escalating this issue further. You can read more about our [Influence and Impact in our quarterly report](#).

The media focus may have moved on to fresh issues – waiting lists, social care, the cost of living crisis – but problems with dentistry have not gone away:

I live in Leatherhead and am currently undergoing treatment for cancer. Oral hygiene is very important and I've been trying to get an NHS dentist to obtain an appointment – without any success after trying many. I have not seen a dentist now in almost 3 years

**Helpdesk**

My mum has been going to the same dentist her whole life (she is now 62). She has always been an NHS patient as she is on benefits. She had an appointment scheduled for Oct 22, they phoned a couple of weeks before to say that she now needed to pay to see the dentist. £50 for the consultation. She needs 2 fillings at £160 each and had to pay a £150 deposit. Luckily she had just got her PIP through and got the higher rate, otherwise she wouldn't have been able to afford it.

**Community Engagement, Hospital**

After lockdown I tried to get a dentist appointment but my previous dentist had updated their books and removed any patients that had not been for an appointment for a few years. They did not contact me prior to doing this so I am now left without a dentist.

**Helpdesk**

## **Avoiding poor wait-time management**

People know they will have to wait for treatment; many people we hear from are stoic about waiting, delighted if treatment happens quickly, and able to appreciate the care they receive even if they have had to wait to receive it:

I had to call an ambulance and it took six hours for it to arrive!!! They took me to A&E where I had to wait a long time but I received great care there. Really, I think our NHS is great. I really can't complain.

**Community Engagement, Community Café**

Where we do hear negative comments is when transparency, good administration or patient-centred thinking could make a wait shorter or less stressful:

We had to wait two years just for the assessment and now we've been waiting another six or seven months for the treatment referral. We've decided to go private now as it seems the only way. It would have been helpful to have an honest conversation at the start of the process about what are options are. They should say here's the NHS route and here are the private options, then we can make the decision.

**Community Engagement, GP Surgery**

I was at the walk in ... it took me 70 minutes to reach the desk ...no staff came down the line to check who was waiting until after nearly an hour. When the staff came down the line, they saw two women with babies or toddlers. They quickly told them, you shouldn't be here, we don't see children here. The women were upset having waited and said there was no signage or communication to say this and they were right.

**Community Engagement, Community Hospital**

Paraphrased for brevity:

- Early July • ear blocked with wax, made appointment with GP surgery who had previously carried out syringing
- July 19th • nurse appointment at GP, told syringing no longer available. Referral would be made to another surgery.
- August 5th • chased GP surgery; told referral made July 27th; told to contact receiving GP
- August 6/7th • 3 attempts to call receiving surgery (including 45 min wait for phone to be answered). Told there was a long wait list for ear syringing.
- August 10<sup>th</sup> • appointment received for 15<sup>th</sup> September  
• contacted private microsuction clinic. Same-day appointment, issue resolved on the day.
- August 16<sup>th</sup> • 3 further phone calls to the surgery to cancel the appointment for the 15<sup>th</sup> September

**Helpdesk**

## Learning from grassroots providers

Our agenda-free listening often takes place at community-run services such as cafes, day centres and food banks. As well as talking to the people using the services, we talk to the people running and staffing the services – care workers, local volunteers, community centre staff. Their insight is especially valuable when it comes to understanding the gaps in more formal service provision, or changes in user groups.

Julie<sup>1</sup> is a senior staff member at the [Learning Disability Support] Centre, so often hears problems other staff have... lots of the other staff ... help customers with accessing GP which they aren't technically resourced for but don't mind getting involved with as their role is to enable and support. She says that workers can often get more involved because they care about the people they support.

### Interview for Concerning Case

Stoke ward is the poorest ward in Surrey, I know I worked at the council for years. All the new investment went into the family centre which doesn't benefit the older members of the community, there are no facilities and community link officers don't seem to be here in the area. Everything is

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<sup>1</sup> Name changed

running out of Park Barn and The Hive, but that's no use to local residents here, they don't drive and they don't always know where to go... I go to the meeting point here [church] on a Thursday as well, it's a good group, very supportive of each other but when I've asked others if they want to come some are put off by the church.

**Community Engagement, Community Café**

I work at the Safe Haven, it was very busy last week... with people not known to us/ new and presenting for the first time with complex needs. For instance I saw a student who was new to the area, they were registered with a local GP but their notes didn't seem to be there ... one of things they mentioned was that they were worried about their medication and the fact the new GP didn't have their notes yet, it's like starting again and somewhere new, with no support network nearby.

**Community Engagement, Community Café**

I'm a support worker for people with learning disabilities. They wouldn't be able to get doctors appointments without support...They don't have the confidence and need a support network. Some of the older ones don't have family to help them. They really struggle to access the internet and that is their biggest barrier.

Before COVID they were able to phone and have face to face appointments. Very few would be able to access and use a computer independently. They also have limited reading and writing. Paying by card is a big issue too now as most things are cashless.

The move to have everything self service isn't good for people with learning disabilities.

**Community Engagement, Nursery**

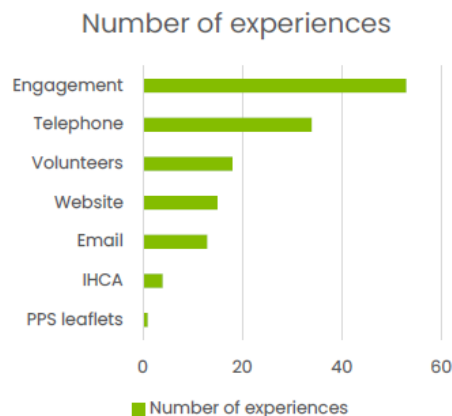
## Gathering and sharing our insight

### Who are we hearing from?

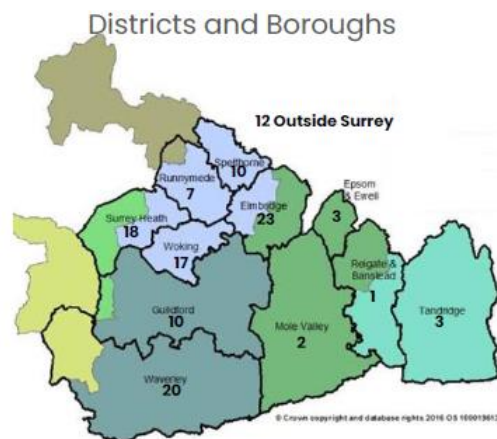
We have heard from 138 people this month.

- 44% of people told us they have a long-term condition
- 24% of people told us they have a disability
- 16% of people identify as a carer
- 13% of people are from minoritised ethnic groups

We receive experiences in a number of ways. The chart below shows the majority of these this month were via our engagement sessions and telephone calls to our Helpline. We also received contacts via email, our website, our Independent Health Complaints Advocacy team, from our volunteers, through Healthwatch England and via our Problem, praise or suggestion (PPS) leaflets.



Our spotlight for engagement sessions in November was Guildford and Waverley. The map below shows the different areas we received experiences from. The highest numbers this month were from Elmbridge and Waverley.





If we hear a case of concern regarding patient safety, we immediately signpost the sharer to the appropriate body and escalate the case with the provider/commissioner.

We share our wider themes with Trusts, ICSs, Surrey County Council, Public Health, CQC, and in various boards and groups across Surrey.

## Our engagement sessions



Our spotlight for engagements in December will be Surrey Heath.

Date	Place	Time
01.12.22	High Cross Church café, Camberley	10.00 – 12.00
05.12.22	Frimley Park Hospital	10.00 – 12.00
07.12.22	Shifa Support Group, Camberley <b>Group members or residents only</b>	1.30 – 3.30
09.12.22	St Mary's Church, Pop up community café, Ash Vale	10.00 – 12.00
15.12.22	The Hope Hub, Camberley	11.00 – 1.00
W/C 12/12/22	Beaumont Lodge nursing home, Camberley (Enter and View) <b>Group members or residents only</b>	TBC

Please note: these dates may be subject to change.

To share an experience with us, people can also contact us in the following ways:

Phone our helpdesk: 0303 303 0023

Send an SMS to our helpdesk: 07592 787 533

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk)

Share your feedback via our website:

<https://www.healthwatchesurrey.co.uk/feedback-centre/>

## Friends and Family Care Home Survey

Please share our survey for friends and family of those living in care homes.

The survey can be accessed via this QR code or found on our website -

[Friends and family care home survey - Healthwatch Surrey.](#)



**Friends and Family  
Care Home Survey**



**healthwatch**  
Surrey

## Our distribution list

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[vicky.rushworth@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk](mailto:vicky.rushworth@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk)