



Influence and Impact Report

October to December 2022

“Helping shape health and social care services in Surrey”

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If you would like a paper copy of this document or require it in an alternative format, please get in touch with us.

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Hearing local voices



Over the past quarter, we have visited a wide range of locations, including hospital engagements at St Peter's, Royal Surrey and Frimley Park as well as two GP practices. In addition, we continue to visit people in the community, focusing on people identified as being at risk of health inequalities.

We met with residents at a coffee morning in Guildford, a venue which is receiving support as a 'warm hub' helping residents impacted by challenges with the cost of living. There were visits to a foodbank and community fridge in Knaphill, hearing that an increasing number of residents are being referred to such services. We spent a morning at the Hope Hub in Camberley, speaking to people who are homeless, and helped signpost them to a service that could refer them for dental treatment. We also visited a youth club in Spelthorne to speak with 14 to 16-year-olds about their experiences of health services.

'I'm so happy to be able to talk to you today. I don't have the time to go online [to give feedback]. I'm really glad you came here so I could say these things otherwise I wouldn't be able to. Thank you!' **Feedback from GP Practice Engagement, October 2022.**

During our community engagement, we are always looking for opportunities to connect people and to share ideas and services to help support people in the community.

Organisers of a foodbank told us about the increasing numbers of refugees in the area who are struggling to access support due to language barriers. We put them in touch with organisations known to us who support refugees, and they agreed to work with the foodbank to provide English language classes and other support where necessary.

We also created a new link with community leaders who are supporting armed forces veterans. They told us about health challenges for Surrey's veterans and we shared some advice and resources with them. We have also arranged for training to learn how we can support veterans better and ensure they are signposted to appropriate services.

If you would like the Healthwatch Surrey team to visit, please contact us. You can find our contact information on the back page of this report.

What we've been hearing

Every story matters. We endeavour to find the right forum to share the experiences we receive to ensure that patient and service user voices are heard.



This quarter 274 people shared their story with us

GP Access

This quarter we have heard that people with access needs are experiencing barriers in speaking with their GP. Residents who are deaf or hard of hearing have shared with us that they are being offered phone appointments and some people have had to rely on carers to support them getting appointments as they are unable to call up or do not have access to the internet.

We met with Surrey Heartlands primary care team to share residents' continued challenges with access to GPs. These experiences have now been shared with people tasked with supporting practices as they develop their new communications systems, to ensure that patients' concerns are integral in considerations about new services.



Dentistry

We hear there are still challenges for many in accessing NHS dental care. We continue to support Healthwatch England's national campaign to make NHS dentistry more accessible. In November, the Department of Health and Social Care announced new funding to provide NHS dentists fairer payments for complex treatments. The plans will incentivise practices to take on patients who require treatment the most.

Hospitals

Experiences shared with us on hospital care have focused on inconsistent communication, particularly for people who have been referred for further assessments or treatment.

This quarter we met with the patient experience leads from Ashford and St Peter's who told us the experiences will be shared across the Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS) and will form the basis for training staff on how to support patients better. We also met with East Surrey Hospital, where experiences we shared about a lack of empathy during end-of-life care will be shared with staff teams as part of new training sessions to improve communications with patients.

Maternity and Early Years Services



Health and care leaders had a renewed focus on maternity services in Surrey following the Ockenden and Kirkup reviews to ensure that the alarming experiences heard elsewhere in the UK are not happening in Surrey.

We visited family centres to hear from families at the highest risk of health inequalities. We heard positive stories about mental health support, but there were gaps in communication between services causing delays in care. We shared their experiences with the people leading maternity and early years services, who will share these throughout their team to help provide better support.

We also highlighted a poor experience from a mother for whom English is a second language. She was only offered a male translator and she was not comfortable speaking with them. Maternity leaders at the hospital involved recognised this was inappropriate and they agreed to contact the family involved to ensure the service is more appropriate for people's needs.

Public Health

Focusing our community engagement in communities that have been hardest hit by rises in the cost of living, has led to us hearing more experiences about the wider determinants of health such as nutrition, housing and transport.

We met with public health teams leading on a range of projects and the voices of Surrey residents that we shared with them are now being included within the drafting of the new suicide prevention strategy as well an assessment of emotional wellbeing services. Experiences we've heard from refugees will also be integrated into a needs assessment which is underway to best understand how services in Surrey can support new migrants in the county.

Enter and View

Enter and View visits are one of the powers local Healthwatch have to enable us to visit places not readily accessible, such as inpatient wards and care homes.

Beaumont Lodge

In December, we visited Beaumont Lodge in Camberley, a care home providing nursing and residential care for up to 43 people including people with dementia. Our staff and volunteers spoke with staff, residents and a full report of their experiences will be available on our website in the next quarter.

Previous Enter and View Visits

We visited Greathed Manor in August 2022 and were working with colleagues at the CQC to follow up on our recommendations. The [full report](#) is now available on our website.

We also continue to hear experiences about care homes across Surrey through our [friends and family survey](#), which is open until March 2023. If you would like a paper copy of the survey, please use the contact information on the back page of this report.



**Friends and Family
Care Home Survey**



healthwatch
Surrey

Research Projects



Maximising Learning from Complaints

In December we published our [latest project](#) exploring how health and care organisations could learn from the people who accessed our Independent Health Complaints Advocacy service for support in making a complaint about their care. We heard, in depth, from each of our dedicated advocates and reviewed over a hundred cases they have supported over the past year, leading to three recommendations that we have made to health organisations in Surrey:

- 1) Information on how to complain should be accessible, easy to understand, with a clear distinction between what is feedback and what is a complaint.
- 2) The Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (IHCA) Service should be widely advertised to ensure people are aware of support for a complaint should they need it.
- 3) Organisations must regularly update complainants with the progress of the complaint – even if it is only an acknowledgement to say their complaint is waiting to be addressed.

Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS) are developing a new network for complaints and patient experience leads to come together to discuss ideas; what's working and what can be improved. We hope that our report may inspire further collaborative working.

Waiting for Hospital Care

We continue to share our report on [experiences of waiting for hospital care](#) and our recommendations for how to improve services for Surrey residents.

Following the sharing of our research, a meeting in December brought together health and care leaders to discuss the key challenges affecting people waiting for care and sharing ideas on how best to improve support for patients.



Wider Influence and Impact

Healthwatch Surrey are involved in a wide range of networks, boards and system meetings representing all the residents of Surrey. Surrey is a large and diverse county and we are also engaged in smaller scale groups, to ensure that local services remain responsive to the specific needs of their community. Here are some examples of how we have supported change at a local level.

Supporting User voices



Healthwatch Surrey continue to champion opportunities for people to have their voices heard. We have encouraged organisations across Surrey to facilitate more avenues for residents to share their experiences about services. We have supported the establishment of a stroke survivors and carers panel, which brings together people who have experience of strokes, their families and carers along with decision-makers and healthcare professionals from the Integrated Stroke Delivery Network.

We also welcome Surrey's mental health provider, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, hosting a complaint process review session, inviting a range of partners including people who have used mental health services, along with their families and carers. We attended the session with other voluntary sector partners to help ensure that future complaints are handled in a more sensitive and effective manner.

Sharing Positive Stories

Our insight bulletin was cited by Healthwatch England as an example of best practice in providing a balance of feedback to the system. The insight bulletin specifically provides a section on 'praise and thanks' to ensure that

there are things learnt from good practice as well as correcting the not so good.

We took the opportunity of our annual Christmas card to share positive messages about a variety of services to ensure that that praise we hear from Surrey residents reaches the people that need to hear it:

‘Thank you for sharing this lovely piece of feedback. [The staff] really need to hear it at the moment so great timing.’

Care Quality Commission

We continue to develop our positive relationship with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This quarter we visited a GP practice which the CQC had identified as needing improvements and further support. We spent a morning speaking to patients and their families, many of whom referenced the difficulties the practice had gone through, but also noted how it was improved. We then provided a summary of these findings to the CQC.

In summer 2022, we shared a concerning experience regarding a supported living facility in Guildford. We were particularly concerned the resident didn’t have an opportunity to raise their concerns directly with the provider and we also noted that the provider did not include its CQC rating on their website.

This led to a subsequent inspection of the organisation, where inspectors spoke with residents and staff, ensuring that residents and their families were heard and that the CQC rating was properly displayed.

Our Volunteers

This quarter, our dedicated volunteers gave 519 hours of their time which equates to approximately £12,895 in social value.



Assessing Health Services

Our volunteers are all committed to supporting health and care services to improve. This quarter several volunteers supported PLACE assessments.

Healthcare organisations have initiatives where they evaluate their services and identify how they can improve. One initiative is a Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) and this quarter, our volunteers supported four such assessments: Haslemere Hospital, Milford Hospital, Royal Surrey County Hospital and Horton Haven Rehabilitation Centre.

The assessment went well. We assessed two [inpatient] wards and two day wards. Main area of concern we raised was the lack of dementia friendly adaptations. It was almost non-existent in some areas. The team therefore had a challenging discussion about this. The facilities manager offered that if [Healthwatch Surrey] wanted a tour of sites and to see how they work then we can contact her.

Helpdesk and Advocacy Services

This quarter 156 people have received information and advice through our Helpdesk, and our Independent Health Advocacy Service.

Helpdesk
92

Advocacy
64

Each quarter, our Helpdesk provides support and advice to Surrey residents who have questions about services or who are having difficulties with their care.

Helpdesk

Richard's experience

Richard called Helpdesk for help, as his daughter had chipped a tooth and had been unable to find an NHS dentist in her area. Our advisor provided him with a list of available dentists and further information on how to search for NHS dentists and their availability.

Outcome

Richard contacted us again to say he has been able to find a practice reasonably close to them who agreed to accept his daughter as an NHS patient.

If you have an experience to share, contact our Helpdesk via:

Phone: 0303 303 0023

SMS: 07592 787533

Email: enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk

Website feedback form:

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

Advocacy

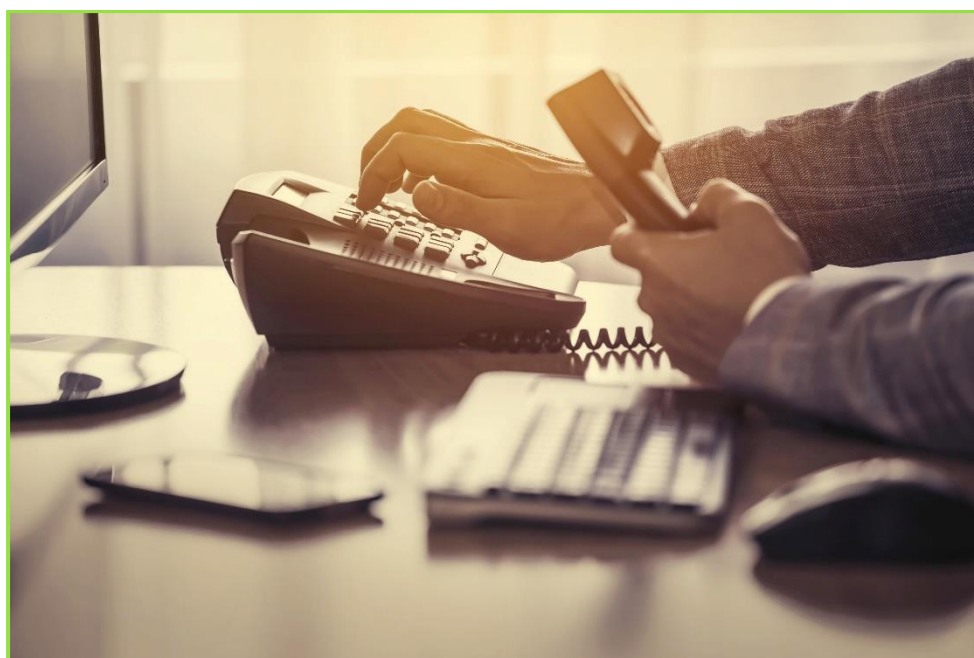
In circumstances where people wish to complain, we also provide free advocacy support to ensure complaints are handled appropriately.

Carl's experience

Carl had some questions to ask his GP practice about his treatment, however repeated attempts to engage with them were left unanswered. Carl had then tried to submit a formal complaint but had not received any acknowledgement of this. He then contacted the advocacy service for help. The advocate spoke with Carl and the practice manager to assess what progress had been made and provide advice on the process.

Outcome

The complaint was acknowledged by the practice, and the advocate liaised with both Carl and the practice throughout to provide updates. The practice provided a response to Carl's complaint and he was pleased he could now move past the issues.



Henry's experience

Henry was diagnosed with Macular Degeneration in September 2019. His condition has been monitored regularly either face to face or by phone. He was told his condition was stable, but on reporting increased distortion in left eye, he was told no treatment was necessary. The hospital then suggested

changing quarterly checks to annual checks. Henry disagreed and asked for a follow up for 5 months' time. Following a routine eye test, their optician made an urgent referral. The hospital review scans of his eye and said no action was needed at this time. Henry has now lost central vision in left eye, has had to semi retire from work and may lose his driving license.

Henry wants to know why no action was taken after the referral and also why monitoring was going to be extended intervals when he had expressed deterioration in his eye.

Outcome

The hospital has acknowledged his complaint and an initial review has revealed that an older scan was reviewed following his referral, as the newer one had not been uploaded correctly. Henry's case is now being investigated more thoroughly and the advocate will continue to monitor the response from the hospital to keep him informed of any progress.

* Names have been changed to protect identities.

Need help to make a complaint?

If you live in Surrey and are unhappy with the NHS treatment you have received, our Independent Health Complaints Advocacy service can provide free, confidential and independent support to help you to make a complaint. This is provided in partnership with SILC (Surrey Independent Living Charity).

Contact the team via:

Phone: 01483 310 500

Text (SMS): 07704 265 377

Email: nhsadvocacy@surreyilc.org.uk

Website: www.surreyilc.org.uk

Healthwatch Surrey – Contact us

Website: www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk

Phone: 0303 303 0023

Text/SMS: 07592 787533

Email: enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk

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