
What we're hearing About East Surrey

March 2025



"I've got a severely disabled daughter. The service is really good here [at the Minor Injury Unit at Caterham Dene]. It's so much better than a main hospital which has a stressful environment and long waits. That's no good for my daughter. She needs a calmer environment, so this is great for her. It's easy to get here and to park here. I think it's great that you can go somewhere else for the small stuff. I don't know anywhere else like this."



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Report overview

This report provides insights into local people's views on, and experiences of, health and social care services in East Surrey. It is based on what people have told us at a series of engagement events during our East Surrey Spotlight month in January 2025.

In addition to speaking to people at these events, people have also shared their experiences of health and social care services through our Helpdesk, Independent Health Complaints Advocacy service, Giving Carers a Voice' engagement, online Feedback Centre and postal submissions.

Our report focusses on 5 key areas:

- Spotlight on First Community Health
- Continuity of care between acute and community
- East Surrey Hospital
- Mental health
- Spotlight on key neighbourhoods.

Please note: Any urgent or concerning experiences within this report have been escalated to the appropriate teams. All appropriate information and signposting has already been given.

If you would like more information or examples of what people have shared, please get in touch.

Insight summary and recommendations

The following table summarises some of the issues highlighted in this report and the outcomes which we would like to see for patients. Healthwatch Surrey would like to work with East Surrey to consider realistic ways in which these can be achieved.

Theme	What would be helpful?
<p>First Community Health</p> <p>1. Communication about MIU waiting times – page 7</p> <p>2. 0–19 years Single Point of Access triage (SPA). Waiting time and criteria – page 8</p>	<p>1. Consider ways to display up to date waiting times</p> <p>2. Review process for SPA – waiting list and criteria for acceptance</p>
<p>Continuity of care between acute and community health services – page 9</p> <p>3. Referrals for continence products</p> <p>4. Pathway for Cancer diagnosis</p>	<p>3. Follow up on the results from the review of the pathway for the provision of continence pads</p> <p>4. Review pathway for people with non-defined symptoms</p>
<p>East Surrey Hospital (access to care by marginalised people, responding to patients who complain of tight plaster casts and staff attitude) – page 10</p>	<p>5. Review accessibility and equity for people to all services at East Surrey Hospital from the prison system and /or challenging behaviour</p> <p>6. Review response to patients reporting tight plaster casts</p> <p>7. Treat people with kindness and respect</p>
<p>Mental Health – (continuity of care and communication with families, and equal access to Psychiatric Liaison Nurse) page 11–12</p>	<p>8. Consider ways to improve communication with families</p> <p>9. Consider equity of access to a Psychiatric Liaison Nurse in Emergency Department.</p>

What we've heard

Out of Surrey residents using East Surrey services

Many people we spoke to live on the Surrey border or outside of Surrey. They told us that they travel to East Surrey as services are closer and are more accessible. Services we have reported on include Caterham Dene Minor Injuries Unit and East Surrey Hospital which are located on the Surrey/Greater London (Croydon) border.

We have included experiences from out of Surrey residents as the experiences are valuable, demonstrate choice and challenges of the providers working across boundaries.

Spotlight on First Community Health

At a number of engagement events, in or around the key neighbourhoods of Tandridge and Redhill, people shared their concerns and priorities for health and care services.

Caterham Dene Minor Injuries Unit

We visited the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at Caterham Dene Hospital. We heard that people value the service offered. The people we spoke to have a good understanding of the most appropriate place to attend for their injury or illness. Many people told us they had spoken to their GP, a pharmacist or had been directed by NHS 111 before going to the MIU.

People told us that they would consider going to East Surrey Hospital, but felt it is difficult to park there, and is further for them to go. The people we spoke to were using the MIU appropriately, recognising they were not necessarily in an emergency.

Praise

"I dropped a concrete block on my foot on Saturday. I work for a builder's merchants so it's part of my job to move heavy objects. It was a very good experience. I didn't think about going anywhere else this morning. I just walked in."

227606 Tandridge resident

"I am here with my wife. She got bitten by a dog we are looking after yesterday. We went to the pharmacist this morning and asked their opinion, and they said to come here. We arrived 20 minutes ago, and my wife is now in triage. The other place we would have considered is A&E but we didn't think it was serious enough. I expected it to be busier here. It's welcoming. It's colourful and not all white and sterile and clinical."

227610 Reigate and Banstead resident

"I am here because of my daughter who has hurt her ankle. A friend advised us to come here as she had a similar injury. The only other place I would consider is Croydon Hospital A&E, but I didn't think it was serious enough for that and it would be a ridiculous wait. It is welcoming here. It's comfortable and there is a TV. I am happy to see they are moving through people here quickly and the room isn't full."

227602 Out of Surrey resident

"I've brought my mum in because she has had an accident and has hurt her right arm and foot after a fall. We're here for x-rays. We just walked in. We've been here 1.5 hours now and have been triaged, seen the nurse and had the x-rays. She's just come out and they've told us nothing is broken. They are sending the x-rays to East Surrey Hospital, and they will get in touch if there is anything they are worried about. All the staff here are helpful and courteous and the waiting times are reasonable."

227608 Out of Surrey resident

Accessibility and adjustments

We heard from one person who lives just outside Surrey, about accessibility and adjustments, but they chose Caterham Dene MIU as the unit was able to accommodate the needs of their severely disabled daughter.

"I'm a runner. I fell over on Saturday and hit the pavement and hurt my shoulder, knee and hand. I've got a severely

disabled daughter. The service is really good here. It's so much better than a main hospital which has a stressful environment and long waits. That's no good for my daughter. She needs a calmer environment, so this is great for her. The only thing is that they don't do paediatric medicine here so we would have to go elsewhere depending on the problem. It's easy to get here and to park here. I think it's great that you can go somewhere else for the small stuff. I don't know anywhere else like this."

227604 Out of Surrey resident

Information about waiting times

People told us that they were happy with the waiting time which was shorter than going to a local Emergency Department, however, they would like information about waiting times to be made available.

"It would be useful to see an LED screen giving waiting time updates because it allows you to make that decision."

227617 Tandridge resident

Orchard House 0-19 service

Praise

We visited Orchard House in Salfords where there were several clinics running. People attending for an appointment with their children were very positive about their experience and about the accessibility of Orchard House.

"My son is a few months old. He has spent 2 months in the Royal Brompton Hospital as he has a specific condition [not disclosed]. The Brompton gave us lots of information and support then made referrals to more local services. We have felt very well supported and looked after here."

227690 Tandridge resident

People told us that booking an appointment was quick and easy and that there was good availability:

“I am here for the 27-month check. I was phoned for the appointment and was given lots of different options. I came here for my antenatal appointments and check-ups once my baby was born.”

227716 Reigate and Banstead resident

“We have come for the 2-year check. I phoned for an appointment and was given one straightaway. I did a questionnaire beforehand. The advice line is very useful. The venue is easy to get to and the parking is good.”

227726 Tandridge resident

Referrals

We spoke to one parent who had been referred for physiotherapy through Single Point of Access, but the referral was declined after a 4 week wait. The family sought private support, who recommended that the original referral had been made appropriately. The time it takes to get issues like this resolved are often stressful to family's who are concerned about the wellbeing of their child. It can also erode confidence in services and processes when given conflicting information:

“We have come for physiotherapy today. We saw the GP at Hawthorne Surgery who said they would refer to physiotherapy. We waited for 4 weeks and were then declined. We then went to a private physio who said we should be re-referred.”

227700 Reigate and Banstead

Continuity of care between acute and community

This person was frustrated that their episode of care was prolonged, and that removal of stitches caused further issues, and they were signposted to A&E:

“I have recently had an experience with toe fusion surgery which I would like to share. I had a cyst between toe joints. Aspiration didn't work so I had a surgical procedure to remove cyst at [GP practice], but this didn't work. I was then referred to Orthopaedics and the surgery was performed

under local anaesthetic [at Crawley Dene Hospital]. After 2 weeks I saw a nurse for removal of stitches and the rod came out. They told me to go to A&E.”

227710 Tandridge resident

Another person told us about problems they had experienced since a hysterectomy and being unable to get continence products. For note, in September 2024, we raised the difficulty that a Lingfield resident had in accessing continence products and recommended a review of the pathway for the provision of continence pads.

[What We're Hearing about East Surrey - September 2024 - Healthwatch Surrey](#)

“I have been under a Urologist since 2019 when I became incontinent after a hysterectomy. At each visit I asked for pads to be supplied on prescription and each time I was refused. Common excuse was that I was in the wrong postcode! I have no feeling in the bladder whatsoever and am unable to tell when it needs emptying. I kept being told to do pelvic floor exercises which, with no feeling, are impossible. As far as I am aware, at no time did any of the many doctors, mostly locum I discovered, take notes so at each call/visit I had to go through it all again.”

222323 Tandridge resident

Diagnosis

We heard about frustrations in getting a cancer diagnosis and the distress delays in the pathway had caused:

“My sister has been unwell since April. She has seen the GP 4 times, been to A&E 3 times [at East Surrey] and called 111. She has been in pain since April and has also lost the use of her hand, so she can't drive or take part in any of her normal activities. She saw the GP who took blood and sent her for a colonoscopy and endoscopy (when they tore her stomach lining). She eventually got an MRI scan at the end of October 2024 which showed stage 4 kidney cancer, which has spread to her bones and spine. I don't know if being seen

earlier would have changed this, but she has been in so much pain and no one believed her. Now she is in hospital, and she has already got a pressure sore. The staff keep giving us different information and they have been slow doing the biopsy, so they know how to treat it.”

224482 Out of Surrey resident

East Surrey Hospital

One person experienced difficulties accessing care when they were in the prison system and have been unable to access care since being released due to their behaviour which has been caused by anxiety. This has left them in a vulnerable position:

“I have had a cyst, that was supposed to be removed while I was in prison, however the prison cancelled it. I have now been released and was referred to have it removed at East Surrey Hospital. However, I went into the hospital to have wound care but became anxious and then I come across as stand offish. So, they are now not helping me. My wound is still open and is not healing because of frequent infections.”

219681 Surrey resident

Orthopaedics

We heard a number of experiences with Orthopaedics and how people felt they were not respected and listened to:

“Lovely people, was only there 2.5 hours with a broken wrist BUT cast was put on too tight despite my telling them my fingers had gone dead. 8 days later had to have a carpal tunnel decompression with no certainty that my fingers will ever feel right again. May need a further operation.”

225136 Out of Surrey resident

“Fracture clinic couldn't have cared less about me. Super aggressive on the phone when I called because my cast was on so tight I'd lost all feeling in 1.5 fingers. Zero respect for time, every single visit was over 3 hours. Zero respect for me as a person, including the doctor walking away as I was

asking a question, after giving me literally 90 seconds of his time after I'd waited all afternoon."

226935 Out of Surrey resident

"I had heel bone repair (plate & screw broken bone together) in January 2023. The surgery incision wound was left open & festering for 14 months and then more surgery to remove plate and screws where they found MRSA in the plate and the bone. Required an isolated 3 week stay in hospital on intravenous antibiotics 24 hours a day. Still in pain and extreme discomfort but now under a different hospital and scheduled for further surgery at the end of October."

222083 Surrey resident

Mental health

This person told us about their sister's experiences with Mental Health Services in Reigate and how there has been a lack in care continuity and communication with the family:

"The Mental Health Service in Reigate has been very poor. There has been a lack of continuity of care, i.e. Psychiatrist off sick for nearly a year, locums coming and the Approved Mental Health Professional Service (AMPHS). AMPHS have in the past been quite good but at the last admission I was not informed of her admission and as nearest relative this should have been done. There has been a poor engagement by the team with my sister who has severe mental health problems and has deteriorated recently and is losing contact with those few people around her."

227718 Reigate and Banstead resident

During a visit to East Surrey Hospital Emergency Department, we spoke to a Psychiatric Liaison Nurse who told us about the pressure they are under:

"The team are the busiest across Surrey, there are 33 people in under the team today. Last week there were 70. Generally, the presentations are half and half from Surrey and Sussex.

This means we have to try and speak to services and arrange beds etc in both areas. We also get people from out of area, including people from overseas as we are so close to Gatwick. Having people from outside the local area makes things even more difficult. We are having increasing problems getting people assessed under the Mental Health Act (MHA) and currently we have been waiting 4 days for someone to be assessed. This makes it very difficult as we don't have the appropriate legal framework to keep the person here. If someone is assessed and referred for a bed, they can wait quite some time for a bed to be available, especially people from Sussex. If they are waiting for a bed, we see them frequently so that shows in our activity as one person will have multiple reviews.”

227784 Soft Intel

Diagnosis for autism or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) continues to be an area of discussion with people waiting long times for assessment which vary across area. The following person had been waiting since April 2024. Whilst we have heard that other areas in Surrey have longer waiting times, the parent we spoke to was anxious about the wait for a diagnosis and felt it was impacting on accessing services. They were hopeful to get a diagnosis soon.

“My boy is 4 years old. I think he is autistic, and I am waiting for a diagnosis, his older brother is diagnosed as autistic. We have come for a speech therapy assessment today at Orchard House, then we have an appointment in 1 weeks’ time with a developmental paediatrician who will then make a diagnosis. We got an appointment for speech therapy within a week. We were referred for an autistic assessment in April 2024.”

227691 Reigate and Banstead resident

The Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service support people to make a complaint about their NHS care. They have been supporting on the following case:

“My son underwent an autism assessment, in January 2024, however I was under the impression that an assessment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) would be conducted at the same time. When we returned in February to receive the results, a diagnosis of autism was given. I was concerned to discover that the ADHD assessment had not been completed.”

220719 Tandridge resident

Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who gave their time and shared their experiences with us.

We would also like to thank our volunteers who supported us on these visits/during our engagement session and to the staff teams in East Surrey who welcomed us.

About Healthwatch Surrey

Healthwatch Surrey champions the voice of local people to shape, improve and get the best from NHS, health and social care services. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure decision makers listen to the experiences of local people.

We passionately believe that listening and responding to local people's experiences is vital to create health and social care services that meet the needs of people in Surrey. We seek out people's experiences of health and care services, particularly from people whose voices are seldom heard, who might be at risk of health inequalities and whose needs are not met by current services. We share our findings publicly and with service providers and commissioners to influence and challenge current provision and future plans.

We also provide reliable and trustworthy information and signposting about local health and social care services to help people get the support they need.

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We are proud to be commended in the National Healthwatch Impact Awards, recognising our work helping to improve local NHS and social care. You can view [our video](#) highlighting how feedback has enabled us to make positive changes to health and social care services.



We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an audit so that we can be certain of this.

Luminus

The Healthwatch Surrey service is run by Luminus Insight CIC, known as Luminus.

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