

## Health Integration and Commissioning Select Committee 7 November 2018

### Working with patients to improve mental health services: An update on recent work by Healthwatch Surrey

#### Purpose of report:

To summarise what Healthwatch Surrey is hearing and doing in relation to mental health services. It also makes a recommendation about how the committee and Healthwatch Surrey might work together on this topic in the future.

#### Introduction:

1. Healthwatch Surrey (HWSy) is the local independent watchdog for health and social care services. Its volunteers give people in Surrey a voice to improve, shape and get the best from health and social care services.
2. It responds to the emerging issues related to people's experiences and more generally promotes the involvement of people in the design and delivery of services. It provides information, advice and advocacy services to residents.
3. HWSy also pro-actively pursues service improvements across four themes. A summary update of its work on these priorities can be found in Appendix 1. The organisation regularly publishes detail of its work through [quarterly activity reports](#), and the value of that work, through regular impact and [outcomes reports](#).

This paper focuses on the work that HWSy has done **to support improvements in mental health services** in the last 12 months.

#### What we've heard

4. Improving mental health services is a priority for residents and there is a substantial opportunity to improve, particularly when supporting people in the community after a period of mental illness and in Childrens and Adolescent Mental Health services.

#### A priority for local people

5. 3,824 experiences were shared with HWSy in 2017/18 across all health and social care services. This provides a broad and relatively well-balanced evidence base for the organisation to identify priorities. From these conversations it's clear that residents want to see improvements in mental health services.

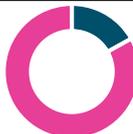
6. In a public consultation on its priorities in January 2018, HWSy heard that that majority of respondents (91%) supported the proposal to continue with a priority around mental health services. The level of support was the highest of all four priorities presented.
7. When HWSy asked residents “*What services would you like to see improved?*” during its most recent public-facing engagement events<sup>1</sup> between April and October 2018, 371 responded and ‘mental health services’ was the second most popular topic of the five options put forward by HWSy officers<sup>2</sup>.

### Comparison with other services

8. The sentiment people express about their experience of mental health services is substantially lower than the sentiment people express about other health services.

Table 1 shows the sentiment and number of experiences related to different service types in the last six months.

**Table 1: Sentiment of experiences in last 6 months**

Service type	Sentiment	No. of experiences
Primary care	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive</li> <li>■ Negative</li> <li>■ Neutral</li> </ul>	703
Hospitals	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive</li> <li>■ Negative</li> <li>■ Neutral</li> </ul>	994
Mental health	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive</li> <li>■ Negative</li> </ul>	142

### Specific themes and examples

9. People that access mental health services are more positive about the standard of medical treatment they receive than they are about other aspects of the service.
10. The most frequently mentioned topic is the support available within the community after periods of mental illness.
  - a) *“When I was discharged [from an inpatient mental health unit] I had the Community Mental Health Recovery Service visit me. They wouldn’t turn up on time and when they did they would stay for 10 minutes and would be constantly answering the phone. I didn’t get on with them and I got fed up of waiting around for them to arrive 2 hours late, so I asked them to stop coming to me in end.”*

<sup>1</sup> At high streets, supermarkets and outside health and social care service (GPs, Hospitals, clinics)

<sup>2</sup> The other topics in order of popularity: Getting an appointment with your GP, Waiting times in A&E, The hospital discharge process, Getting referred by your GP

- b) *“I was put on a general children’s ward when I tried to commit suicide as a teenager. I was seeing CAMHS (Childrens & Adolescent Mental Health Service) at the time so I guess the ward considered my counselling a discharge plan. I wasn’t consulted and I wasn’t told what the plan was past leaving the hospital. I just went back to my regular appointments. My counsellor didn’t mention my inpatient stay until I spoke about it.”*
  - c) *“I had a stay in a military mental health inpatient facility and then I was medically discharged. My GP picked up on this and made sure that I had a good discharge plan and follow up care in place. They made sure all the paperwork was in place and that I ‘didn’t fall through the cracks’”*
  - d) *“[My daughter] had one appointment with her local CAHMS after which there was no follow-up. They are woefully understaffed and underfunded. At least I hope that’s the excuse they have. Otherwise – unforgiveable”.*
11. Being able to get an appointment with an appropriate professional and the experience of the referral process are also frequently mentioned by people accessing mental health services.
  12. The Childrens and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) is the most frequently mentioned mental health service.

<b>What we’ve done</b>
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13. Worked proactively with service providers, commissioners and people that use services to better understand what’s important for people who have suffered a mental illness.
14. Alongside this work, HWSy has continually monitored its evidence to identify emerging concerns. These concerns have been shared and escalated to commissioners, regulators, elected members and the media as appropriate.

**‘How to help’ people with mental health problems**

15. In early 2018 HWSy staff and volunteers spoke to 70 people who recently used mental health services. People were asked to share views on what helps them to stay well after a period of mental illness, what works well about existing services and what needs to be improved.

The key findings from that work were that:

- a) The people providing mental health services are the service’s best asset. If they fall short, or leave, the ‘system’ (however well-intentioned) cannot easily repair loss of trust and wellbeing.
- b) More problems stem from services being unavailable (or simply not known about) than being ineffective. Patients and carers often want to know the full scope of services and help available, rather than simply being told ‘this is what we’ll do’.

- c) When people with mental ill-health and their carers are involved in care plans they are substantially more satisfied with services. However around half of the people we talked to, who has accessed services in the last 18 months, have not been involved in their care plan.
16. The report 'How to help...' (see Appendix 2) was published in June 2018 and documented detailed findings of this work. HWSy made seven recommendations in the report. Three of these are:
- a) Commissioners and service providers should review the way they assess the services they provide to ensure that they incorporate feedback reported directly by patients, on the issues that patients told us were important i.e. that they have:
- been involved in care planning
  - been listened to
  - been understood as an individual person
  - had calls / messages / texts returned
  - had consistency of advice
  - had continuity of staff
  - had swift access to care professionals (when needed)
  - had swift access to staff with suitable expertise to offer effective specialist care.
- b) Commissioners should consider undertaking research to better understand what good information looks like to different people and carers at different stages of emotional wellbeing
- c) Commissioners should investigate the low level of people reporting involvement in care plans (around half) within this report and further explore the reasons why people do not feel involved
17. HWSy is awaiting a formal response to the report from Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABP) and the relevant commissioners.

### **Sharing information**

18. HWSy has been meeting quarterly with a member of the executive team of SABP and all health commissioners in Surrey to share information about people's experiences. Information is also shared outside of these meetings when there are more urgent concerns about safety.

### **Escalating issues**

19. HWSy has an Escalations Panel<sup>3</sup> which regularly reviews the evidence it gathers to identify emerging concerns. The panel recommends actions for the organisation to take in response to concerns. Two examples of this can be seen below regarding CAMHS services and inpatient mental health services at the Abraham Cowley Unit.

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<sup>3</sup> A panel of HWSy volunteers, Board Members and staff meet 6-weekly to review themes, and some individual concerns, from the experiences HWSy gathers. It makes recommendations about what action the organisation should take on issues where sharing information would not be sufficient.

### **Example 1: Timely access to CAMHS**

After sharing concerns about waiting times for CAMHS services with the service provider and commissioners in early 2017, HWSy decided to escalate a concern at the NHS England Quality Surveillance Group (QSG) in July 2017.

The QSG decided to instigate a 'Quality Risk Profiling Tool' to better understand the issues. A series of meetings and workshops followed with the service provider. HWSy contributed more evidence as a result of a targeted 'call for evidence' put out on social media and amongst its voluntary sector networks.

HWSy continued to hear poor feedback about waiting times and presented its concerns to the Children and Education Select Committee at Surrey County Council in November 2017. These concerns have prompted significant and ongoing media coverage.

An independent review of the service was recently conducted which is informing a new strategy and service model.

### **Example 2: Enter & View visits to the Abraham Cowley Unit**

A small number of serious concerns about the quality of services at the inpatient mental health unit Abraham Cowley in Chertsey were reported to HWSy. The concerns were escalated and HWSy decided to invoke its statutory power to 'Enter & View' the service in order to gather a broader and more balanced picture of people's experiences.

During the visits 13 patients, three staff members, and one visitor shared their experiences of the unit. This enabled HWSy to substantiate concerns about the safety and wellbeing of patients in a report it published in October 2018 (see Appendix 3).

The service provider provided a substantial response which acknowledged the issues and included plans to address these.

20. HWSy maintains an active interest in these issues.

### **What we will do now**

21. HWSy will continue to meet regularly with members of the executive teams of service providers and commissioners, reporting on and escalating issues it hears via its evidence gathering channels:

- **Listening Events** in public locations
- **Outreach activity** with seldom heard groups
- **Calls for evidence** through online forums and other networks
- **Information, advice and advocacy** services that HWSy provides

22. Formal responses to HWSy's report 'How to help...' and subsequent discussions with commissioners, service providers and other key stakeholders will inform the scoping of a new project for 2019 to improve access to, and involvement in, mental health services.

## Challenges

23. When working with patients to improve mental health services, HWSy encounters many challenges, however the key challenges could be summarised as follows:
- Developing effective relationships with decision makers in the health and social care system – in a large, complex and changing landscape – which can usefully inform projects which elicit interesting and actionable insight
  - Balancing the competing priorities of people that use services, community groups, the health and social care system and HWSy volunteers
  - Understanding whether the responses of commissioners and service providers are appropriate, sufficient and effective; monitoring progress over time and the impact made by HWSy.

## Conclusions:

24. Healthwatch Surrey believes that improving mental health services is a priority for local people and that there is a substantial opportunity for improvement.
25. Healthwatch Surrey has concerns about the experience of people accessing CAMHS and people admitted to the Abraham Cowley Unit, though commissioners and service providers have plans in place to address these.
26. Healthwatch Surrey's work has led to a better understanding of what people value about mental health services and this now needs to be used by commissioners and service providers to inform future improvements.

## Recommendations:

27. It is recommended that the Health Integration and Commissioning Select Committee consider the key points raised and recommendations made at the Adult and Health Select Committee meeting of 7 November 2017 when planning further scrutiny of inpatient mental health services, in particular reviewing how performance is assessed from the patients' perspective.

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**Report contact:** Matthew Parris, Deputy CEO, Healthwatch Surrey

**Contact details:** [Matthew.Parris@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk](mailto:Matthew.Parris@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk), 01483 572 790

### Sources/background papers:

“How to help...”: Exploring how mental health services can support emotional wellbeing (June 2018)

<https://www.healthwatchesurrey.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/How-to-Help-Healthwatch-Surrey-June-2018-5-WEB.pdf>

Enter & View: Abraham Cowley Unit (October 2018)

<https://www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk/abraham-cowley-unit-october-2018/>

Minutes of Children and Education Select Committee in February 2018; including HWSy evidence on CAMHS

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/g6139>

Media reporting on Healthwatch Surrey activity on CAMHS

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-42153618>

<https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/this-situation-cant-carry-on-14064296>

<https://www.eagleradio.co.uk/news/local-news/2438149/concerns-over-mental-health-services-for-young-people-in-surrey/>

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