

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH) – 15 OCTOBER 2024

### Update from Healthwatch Sefton

- We have presented a report to Sefton Primary Care Forum (September) sharing feedback from People First Merseyside, their members being keen to see if any learning/ adjustments could be made in GP practices for those with a learning disability. Practical issues include difficulties booking appointments and checking in at the practice when they have a face-to-face appointment. Using online services that GP practices have in place can be difficult and concerns about how the flag system on IT systems wasn't consistently used to record and implement reasonable adjustments. 4 key questions requiring answers are listed below and after presenting them at the forum meeting, Jan Leonard will be sharing a formal response with us:
  1. How are patients with a learning disability told that they can ask for longer appointments?
  2. Are staff being trained to recognise patients with a learning disability or other hidden disabilities? (A number of members in the group said that through their involvement with People First Merseyside, they felt comfortable asking the receptionist to book them in for their appointment. It was suggested that staff in the GP reception need to be willing to show patients who struggle to use the patient self-check-in system. It was shared by members that some patients with a learning disability cannot use the check-in system and that they felt staff were not trained to help patients with a learning disability.)
  3. Booking appointments online, members shared that this is great for patients who can use it but asked because of this system is that why there are no appointments left when they ring?
  4. Medication reviews for patients with a learning disability – is there a policy in place for this?

- Through our community champions based in the Seaforth locality we know that residents are feeling neglected, with Seaforth Village Surgery closed and one of their local pharmacies closed (Boots). We therefore spoke with and listened to residents living in Seaforth, holding during outreach sessions. We were also invited to a sheltered housing scheme to talk to residents about the on-going closure of Seaforth Village practice and the impact this was having on them. Healthwatch has been asking both PC24 and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside when the Seaforth practice will re-open. In the interim, patients in the locality have been telling us about difficulties travelling to Litherland Practice, this including;
  - No direct public transport to the Litherland Practice
  - Patients with mobility issues or no personal transport
  - Difficulties and safety for residents crossing the busy dual carriageway
  - The subway, although this can be used, residents shared safety reasons for not wanting to use it during the evening.

They also told us that the Litherland practice has not been proactive in putting reasonable adjustments in place with patients having to travel there, examples including having to travel to Litherland to hand in prescription requests, this impacting those patients with no access to digital services. After listening to the residents of Seaforth, we agreed to put forward the following areas to be considered:

- Being open and honest in a timely manner with Seaforth residents, to send out regular communications to patients, including those with no IT access, with an update on progress and when Seaforth Village practice will open.
- Ensure front line staff at the Litherland practice are briefed so that they are able to answer patient questions on the opening of Seaforth Village practice
- Put into place reasonable adjustments for Seaforth patients and ensure they are aware they can ask for this.
- Keep stakeholders, including Healthwatch up-to-date on progress with the opening of Seaforth Village practice.

The draft report was sent for review and a request for a formal response to PC24 (Sharon Poll, Head of Service, Primary Care) using our statutory powers of a response within 21 working days. This was breached. A response has since been received which is being reviewed but further communication with PC24 is needed as we still do not have a date for the reopening of the practice which if opened could provide wider support for residents health and care needs in this locality.

- We are supporting NHS Cheshire and Merseyside and Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to evaluate the experience of patients, their family members/ informal carers who are referred into the Southport Transfer of Care Hub (TOCH) to support the coordination of their discharge to ensure safe and timely discharges. The project has commenced and we await details of those who wish to share their independent feedback. A report will be produced at the end of the pilot.
- For Adult Safeguarding week, we are working with Sefton Adults Safeguarding Partnership Board, to lead on a 'Lunch and Learn' session for staff. We are engaging with Healthwatch Knowsley, Liverpool and Wirral who will join our session to find out more about the role of Healthwatch, our structures and how staff can engage with us. The session will be held at 12 noon on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November.
- Healthwatch Sefton has promoted the face-to-face and online meetings being held to engage on the 'Shaping Care Together' programme and has been encouraging residents and organisations to engage. Through Healthwatch input, we were able to get the programme to draft and produce an easy read survey to accompany the easy read version of the options appraisal. We have encouraged People First Merseyside to hold a session and they have completed surveys which we will be sharing back with the programme team.

- Our Annual Report was published in July and if you already haven't read this, you can find it on our website

<https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/reports/annual-reports/>

John Turner, Healthwatch Sefton Chair said: "During another demanding year of continuing health and social care pressures, Healthwatch Sefton has responded positively and vigorously and we wish to thank all our staff and volunteers for their contribution. Our vibrant network of locality based champions and community ambassadors, listens, gathers and responds to the in-depth real life individual experiences of our residents"

### **Reports / Research from our national body, Healthwatch England.**

[A local diagnosis: Learning the lessons of Community Diagnostic Centres \(September 2024\)](#)

[https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/20240828\\_A-local-diagnosis-Learning-the-lessons-of.pdf](https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/20240828_A-local-diagnosis-Learning-the-lessons-of.pdf)

Community Diagnostic Centres could provide another pathway to care at a time when people are struggling to access services. But how do we maximise their potential?

In Healthwatch England latest research, we unpack people's experiences of diagnostic hubs and put forward recommendations. Discover what diagnostic hubs are teaching us about community-based care – and how we can apply these lessons to the broader care landscape

[Healthwatch England Survey reveals: Women in England want at home cervical screening tests on the NHS \(September 2024\)](#)

<https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/news/healthwatch-england-survey-reveals-women-in-england-want-at-home-cervical-screening-tests-on-the-nhs/>

A poll of 2,444 women hesitant about cervical screening has shown that three-quarters, 73%, would use a home testing kit if it was

available free on the NHS. Healthwatch England commissioned the poll to provide solutions to address hesitancy about cervical screening in a drive to support NHS England's ambition to eliminate cervical cancer by 2040.

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