



healthwatch

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest

#Speakup January 2018

Carers' views

# National Priorities

Local Healthwatch collects feedback from local people and users of local services. Healthwatch Bracknell Forest uses this feedback to represent the public at health and social care meetings, boards committees where decisions about local services are made; in their design, implementation and evaluation.

This ‘intelligence’ is also shared, in an anonymised format, with Healthwatch England. Using the information from the local Healthwatch network (152 organisations across England) Healthwatch England have identified the top five issues people want to see addressed over the next 12 months.

1. Mental health services
2. Social care services
3. Services working better together
4. Hospital care
5. GP and dental services

Locally GP and dental services, along with other primary care services, remain the services we receive the most feedback on and much of the work we do and the Clinical Commissioning Group meetings we attend are around the development of these services. Our priorities for 2017/18 included mental health services and discharge from hospital; which incorporates the remaining three national priorities.

The Ark Trust Ltd, who host Healthwatch Bracknell Forest, also provide information, advice and support to local unpaid carers through the SIGNAL4carers project. The feedback on services that carers provide is invaluable as it not only gives us their perspective as a user of services - with their own challenges of balancing their own health and wellbeing needs as patients/users with those they care for and how supportive services are of this role - but also their outside perspective

when their cared for are patients/users of services and how services include them during this time.

In response to the Healthwatch England #speakup campaign we held a focus group session at a carers lunch held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 with 76 current carers. These carers provide support to people with a number of different health conditions with varied support needs including: dementia, mobility issues, Parkinson's disease, COPD, other long term health conditions, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, autism, mental health issues and substance abuse.

We asked them, under the headings of the five priorities identified by Healthwatch England, what makes these services good/how these services could be improved when:

- Accessed by themselves, taking into account they provide unpaid care and support to another person.
- Accessed by the person they care for, taking into account the support and care they (the carer) provide for that person on a regular basis.

We also looked at the individual feedback carers have provided us with in the last six months and our feedback from carers that attend the recently launched Mental Health Forum and the independent Bracknell Forest Mental Health Carers support group.

Individual experiences have also been collected and added to our intelligence resource but are outside the scope of this report.

From this we have produced some points for services to remember.

**Although these points are arranged under the five priority headings as carers raised them, many are relevant to all services**

# Mental health services

## When accessed by the carer - for their own health and wellbeing do:

- Acknowledge the additional stress the caring role can place on existing mental health conditions.
- Provide as much notice as possible for appointments. (*This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for*).
- Open up the secure online portal SHaRON for all mental health carers (This is a Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust service).

## When accessed by the cared for - from the perspective of the carer do:

- Provide condition specific information and details of support for carer not just the patient.
- Make sure that after discharge from specialist services that the GP is able to prescribe and manage any treatment.
- Encourage and offer the police training in mental health conditions as they are sometimes called to incidents in the middle of the night.
- Get crisis teams to listen to carers - who often recognise the signs of an impending problem before anyone else.
- Develop good links between dementia health services and adult social care services.
- Share as much information with carers as possible (with patient's consent) including possible side-effects of medication.
- Provide support and strategies to help parent carers of young adults who will not engage with services.
- Work towards the minimum waiting time for CAMHS autistic spectrum condition assessments.
- Provide carers, as well as patients, with contacts for times of crisis.

- Ask people if they have someone who cares/provides them with support.
- Provide as much notice as possible for appointments. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*

## Social care services

### When accessed by the carer - for their own health and wellbeing do:

- Maintain contact with carers after initial acknowledgement / carers assessment.
- Look at the needs of the family as a whole.
- Look at providing financial support through the carers assessment process to pay for additional costs to cover household tasks carers maybe unable to manage as they are focused on their caring role (e.g. cleaning).
- Make support from an Intermediate Care Team when, for a short period such as discharge from hospital, care needs increase/change and carer cannot meet all needs accessible and widely known. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Ensure adequate staff resource for support of young carers.
- Ensure Carers Support services are able to provide more extensive support - not just information, advice and signposting.
- Help with both emergency and future planning.
- Make sure outcomes of carers assessment are clear and always provided in writing.
- Provide additional training for staff who are carrying out carers assessments (locally these are carried out by the social care team that supports the cared for).
- Make it clearer to carers, during a carers assessment, what support could be offered. *“I don’t always know what I need or what options are available to me.”*

## When accessed by the cared for - from the perspective of the carer do:

- Provide free disabled parking.
- Ensure adequate staff resource to work with young people in transition.
- Provide more free disabled parking spaces (which carers report is decreasing) - not just in the town centre.
- Look at providing financial support through the needs assessment process for types of help to support mobility (e.g. gym membership).
- Make support from an Intermediate Care Team when, for a short period such as discharge from hospital, care needs increase/change and carer cannot meet all needs accessible and widely known. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Consider other factors, not just cost, when awarding contracts for care providers.

## Services working better together

### When accessed by the carer - for their own health and wellbeing do:

- Work towards all services spanning health, social care and community and voluntary sector communicate and work together.
- Make health records accessible to all services. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Compile useful directories of services.
- Make sure that the first person who answers the telephone are experienced Information, Advice and Guidance workers and can correctly direct the carer to the right place without delay.

- Provide health and social care consultation and information meetings at a variety of times to accommodate carers - especially working age carers.

### When accessed by the cared for - from the perspective of the carer do:

- Make dementia awareness training available across all services.
- Provide accessible information on services available - particularly for younger adults.
- Make health records accessible to all services. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Provide accessible transport.
- Speak to the cared for first, even if they do not have capacity or have difficulties understanding.
- Try to align systems across different services
- Recognise that individuals can have more than one condition.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication (forms etc.)

## Hospital care

### When accessed by the carer - for their own health and wellbeing do:

- Work with other services to ensure the person I care for is looked after if I have to stay in hospital.
- Help arrange for the person I care for to visit me if I am staying in hospital for a period of time.
- Provide as much notice as possible for appointments. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Make sure carers are seen promptly at appointments.

## When accessed by the cared for - from the perspective of the carer do:

- Help arrange for me to visit the person I care for if they are staying in hospital for a period of time.
- Provide free disabled parking.
- Provide additional support on medical wards for people with additional support needs such as dementia and learning disabilities.
- Involve carer in discharge plans as soon as possible.
- Discharge at an appropriate time (not late at night) and, if necessary, provide suitable accessible transport.
- Ask people if they have someone who cares/provides them with support.
- Provide as much notice as possible for appointments. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*

## GP and dental services

### When accessed by the carer - for their own health and wellbeing do:

- Work with other services to enable some routine tests (e.g. blood) to be carried out at the surgery which is often easier. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Ask if a person is a carer
- Refer carers to local carers support service.
- Help carers to understand hospital reports for the people they care for (subject to consent from patient if applicable).
- Make sure carers are seen promptly at appointments.

**When accessed by the cared for - from the perspective of the carer do:**

- Provide dental surgeries that are accessible and accept NHS patients
- Work with other services to enable some routine tests (e.g. blood) to be carried out at the surgery which is often easier. *(This was felt to be important for both carer and cared for).*
- Provide reliable interpreter services for the hearing impaired, allowing them to attend appointments without their carers.
- Provide Deaf Awareness training for all staff - not just medical.
- Ask people if they have someone who cares/provides them with support.

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