

PRESS RELEASE - 8th JANUARY 2019

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove on the NHS 10 Year Plan

Commenting on the NHS ten year plan, **Fran McCabe**, the Chair of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, said:

"Yesterday, the NHS launched its detailed plan on how the £20 billion ear-marked for the next 10 years to save lives and improve health should be spent. Any injection of funds into the NHS is welcome and many of the proposals such as improving cancer and cardiac care, more services in the community and better use of technology, are welcome. An emphasis on inequalities would give an opportunity to address the preventive and treatment needs of the most vulnerable and provide fairer services for all. However, the reality is that nationally, and in this area, the NHS is running at a deficit already which will reduce the actual new money available for direct care. Experts are also saying that the funds do not keep up with inflation and so may only keep the show on the road rather than achieve the transformational change envisaged.

General practice is seen as a cornerstone for service delivery and change over the next 10 years, which in principle is welcome. But in practice, in Brighton and Hove GPs have been retiring at a much greater rate than new ones are joining the service. GP patient lists are already some of the highest in the country. Our statistics for screening in breast, bowel and cervical cancer lag and we are not yet meeting targets for people receiving treatment in 2 months. We have a significant backlog of people waiting for surgery, including cardiac, a priority in the NHS Plan.

Many of the initiatives identified in the Plan are already in place, such as nurses carrying out colonoscopies, but the task and workforce required to turn the NHS around at scale and embed innovations as part and parcel of normal practice is the big challenge. Clearly, there is a reality gap in thinking this new injection of cash in itself will be sufficient.

"Much of the principles in this Plan need to be supported, especially care closer to home. However, I started as a nurse in the NHS in 1964 and worked all my life in health and social care, and my big disappointment is that there is not a joined up plan for health and social care at the national level and that plans for the NHS, Public Health and Social Care are being published separately. In the community, all aspects of health and social care are intertwined and perpetuation of separate approaches makes it more difficult for staff to work together and to provide integrated services to those most vulnerable in our society. Healthwatch will use all of its opportunities in this period of change to ensure the patient and person focus is foremost."

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Roland Marden, Evidence and Insight Manager for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, said:

"Healthwatch has been tracking GP services for 4 years in the city using in-depth interviews with patients. We are about to carry out another large piece of work to talking patients. We and will take into account the aspirations of the plan in this work. We are also about to publish 'Let's get you home', an in depth piece of work about older peoples experiences of being discharged from hospital."

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove reports into NHS services can be found at:
www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/publications/healthwatch-reports

Contact for interviews and comment:

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Press release ends

