

This update is split into the following sections:

- (1) Your Healthwatch: news about our work and that of Healthwatch England (page 1)
- (2) [Health and social care updates](#) (page 7)
- (3) [COVID news](#) (page 12)

(1) YOUR HEALTHWATCH

(A) Message from our outgoing Board Chair - Fran McCan



Dear colleague

I am writing to let you know that I am standing down as Chair of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove and that Geoffrey Bowden, a longstanding Director, is taking over on an interim basis, until the appointment of a new permanent Chair.

I have been the Chair of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove since its inauguration in September 2013. At that time it was a project of Community Works. I led it into the independent organisation it is now. My tenure as Chair came to an end in April last year, but I stayed on a further year because of Covid. It is now time to hand over the reigns.

The last 8 years have seen enormous changes in health and social care nationally and in this city: and Healthwatch, as a small organisation, has had to punch above its weight to rise to the challenges and keep up with the agenda. I hope you will agree Healthwatch is now well established as an authentic and credible organisation that can be trusted to provide independent, well researched and honest feedback on patients' and service users' experiences and what they would like to see improved.

I leave Healthwatch in good hands with an excellent Board of Directors and CEO, dedicated and professional staff and a cadre of volunteers, without whom, it could not manage. Bob Deschene, Finance Director, is also retiring with me and I would like to thank him for keeping the finances in order.

I would also like to recognise all of you for helping Healthwatch attain this status and for all your support and collaboration. I remain a Director until 31 March to ease the transition to a new Chair. I have recently become a Governor at the University Hospitals Sussex NHS

Foundation Trust, so maintain an interest in the health and care experiences of people in this area.

With best wishes.
Fran



Geoffrey Bowden, acting Chair said:

“Anyone faced with following Fran McCabe will be all too conscious of the old adage ‘a hard act to follow’, but it couldn’t be more apt in this instance. While I have been an HWBH board member for six years, I’ve agreed to take on the chair role on an interim basis with a clear objective of ensuring that a permanent chair is appointed as soon as possible, but certainly before my own term on the board finishes at the end of September.”

(B) Healthwatch helps Brighton patients’ campaign to increase GP access



Healthwatch has supported New Larchwood patients to voice their concerns to the Clinical Commissioning Group & Practice about a reduced service forcing patients to travel on 2 buses to the alternative surgery. As a result, the Practice has recruit new staff and increased the opening hours

On 1st April 2021, New Larchwood Surgery reduced opening hours from 7 sessions (a mixture of mornings and afternoons) to just 2 mornings a week. Patients were offered Carden Surgery as an alternative when New Larchwood Surgery was not open.

With support from the local Coldean Residents' Association, patients complained to the surgery about the following:

- Patients were informed late (patients received communication either on the day of the change or after the change had already occurred)
- Carden Surgery is further away (2 bus rides and a minimum of 25 minutes by public transport)
- Reduced access to a local surgery.

How did Healthwatch get involved?

The Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who commission primary care services such as GP surgeries across Brighton and Hove invited Healthwatch to get involved. We met with the Residents’ Association and the CCG and Practice Partners.

Healthwatch Brighton & Hove conducted a survey to gather the patients views. The Patients express concerns about travel cost and time to alternative surgery, mobility issues, carer

responsibilities and mental health concerns. This confirmed the negative impact of the Practice's changes.

As a result of our findings, the Practice has promised to recruit more staff and extend hours. Which means residents will have local access to care.

“

We are very pleased to see our residents' views are being listened to in such a meaningful way and thank Healthwatch for their work in highlighting how the reduced hours in New Larchwood Surgery in Coldean is having a detrimental impact on more than 2000 registered patients that use the service, and especially so for some of the more vulnerable groups. We support the recommendations from Healthwatch to revert to the original opening hours and reinstate the nurse practitioner role and call on the CCG to consider this seriously."

”

Councillors Zoe John and Martin Osborne



Head to our [website](#) to read our full report and watch patients' direct questions to the CCG and Practice.

The New Larchwood patient success story is also featured in the [Argus](#)

(C) Take our LGBTQ+ health and social care survey

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is working in partnership with Brighton and Hove LGBTQ Switchboard to deliver a project on behalf of the Care Quality Commission.

The purpose of this survey is to understand LGBTQ+ people's experiences of services such as GP surgeries, hospitals, and to improve feedback systems.

The graphic features the logos for 'healthwatch Brighton and Hove' and 'Switchboard' at the top. Below them is the text 'Take our **LGBTQ+** survey on health & social care'. To the left, it says 'Your views matter. Share your feedback.' To the right, it says 'Win 1 of 4 £25 gift vouchers'. At the bottom, there is a rainbow flag with a white circle and a black arrow pointing right. Below the flag, it says 'This project is a partnership between Healthwatch Brighton and Hove and Switchboard'.

We also wish to know if there is anything preventing LGBTQ+ people from sharing their feedback about services with the CQC and what would encourage them to do this more often.

Please take the time to complete this 10-minute survey, and you will have the opportunity at the end to enter a prize draw to receive one of four £25 gift vouchers. The deadline to complete the survey by is on **Monday 4th April 2022**.

[Complete the Survey](#)

(D) New report: How to deliver personalised end of life care for LGBTQ+ patients (February 2022)



Healthwatch has published a report which looks at how to deliver personalised end of life care for LGBTQ+ patients. The results are from a Healthwatch review of published literature. We have worked with our NHS Trust to examine our findings.

This project builds on the foundations of two earlier reports from Healthwatch Brighton and Hove on end of life care, which were published in [2020](#) and [2021](#).

As with our other reports, it is intended to support our local Trust - the University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust - in developing a fully inclusive end of life strategy, including best practice.

This report has already stimulated a conversation with our hospital Trust about the needs of LGBTQ+ people who are at the end of their life, and they have agreed to conduct further work in this area, including a consideration of our recommendations.

Key findings

This report is a compilation of more than 20 national and international literature which has examined some of the specific end of life support needs for LGBTQ+ people. Themes we identified are:

1. There is no specific LGBTQ+ end of life guidance produced by University Hospitals Sussex
2. Nationally, there is a lack of data about palliative LGBTQ+ experiences
3. LGBTQ+ people face discrimination in healthcare settings
4. Enhanced privacy rights exist to protect Trans people
5. It is unclear if the spiritual needs of LGBTQ+ people are always met
6. LGBTQ+ people need support to express their needs and wishes

We have made 7 recommendations and are continuing to work with the Trust to take these forward. You can read our full report [by clicking here](#)

(E) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Praised by Healthwatch England



In their 2021/2022 annual report, Healthwatch England praised Healthwatch Brighton and Hove and its volunteers for their work on the Hospital discharge project.

The hospital discharge project known as HOPS was set up at the beginning of the pandemic to provide support for many people leaving hospital. Between April and September 2020, a dedicated team of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove volunteers spoke to over 1,400 people who were referred to them

directly from the hospital. By teaming up with others, we were able to signpost vulnerable people onto extra care or support, such as help with food shopping or mental health services.

Find out in the Annual Healthwatch England's Report to Parliament how your feedback has helped NHS and social care services improve care and their plans for the future.

- [Read the 2021/2022 report](#) from Healthwatch England
- Find out more about our Hops project on [website](#)

(F) Many NHS Trusts not supporting equal access to care for deaf and blind people



New research shows that many NHS trusts are not meeting their legal duty to help people with additional communication needs.

Between September and November 2021, Healthwatch England submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to over 200 National Health Service (NHS) provider trusts to gather details on compliance with the Accessible Information Standard.

They contacted over 220 NHS providers, including acute, community, mental health, and ambulance trusts, to find out:

- Whether trusts complied with the standard.
- Whether they deliver the standard consistently.

Just under 150 trusts replied though some said that exemptions in the FOI meant that they did not have to answer key questions about their compliance with the standard.

People who are blind, deaf or have a learning disability are increasingly being failed by health services that are not meeting their communication needs, new research shows. The failure puts services in breach of their duty under the Accessible Information Standard, a legal requirement created by NHS England in 2016.

The standard requires that all publicly funded health and social care providers identify, record, flag, share and meet the information and communication needs of those who use their services, to ensure equal access to healthcare.

However, evidence shows that the statutory duty is being significantly compromised and that its implementation has been patchy.

Read the full report on this story on our [website](#)

(G) NHS sets out Elective Recovery Plan



With a record six million people currently waiting for hospital treatment, the NHS has set out a plan to address backlogs that built up during the COVID-19 pandemic and tackle long waiting lists for care.

The plan was developed with Royal Colleges, patient groups and health charities, including Healthwatch. It sets out how the NHS staff will make the best use of additional government funding to begin to address the Covid-19 backlog.

Key improvements:

- More than 100 diagnostic centres will also be rolled out, with 66 set to be in use across England by the end of March - 26 more than previously planned.
- The NHS will increase capacity to deliver more procedures and scans in each of the next three years, to around nine million more tests and checks by 2025.
- Teams of specialists will be deployed to help patients prepare for their op, and groups of clinicians and teams will be able to get instant access to test results, offering patients faster clinical advice.
- New surgical hubs will also be added to the network of 122 already operating across the country. The hubs focus on high-volume routine surgery so more patients can get seen more quickly, making efficient use of taxpayer resources, and creating extra capacity so emergency cases do not disrupt operations and cause cancellations or delays.
- A new My Planned Care digital service will be launched later this year to tell patients when they should expect treatment and signpost them to support that can help them while they wait.

The plan will also give patients greater control over their own health, giving them the right to swap to a different provider if they are waiting too long, providing a more personalised service, and freeing up appointments for those who need them.

Your feedback makes a difference

Last year Healthwatch England set out recommendations to NHS England on how to improve the experience of people waiting for treatment, as part of their plan to tackle the NHS backlog. Thanks to your feedback we could identify that many people and their loved ones were not getting the help and information they needed while they were waiting for care, making them feel anxious, ignored and forgotten.

We are pleased to see that NHS England have listened to many of your concerns and that our asks were key to the plan's recommendations.

[Read more](#)

Carry on reading for health and social care updates!

(2) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

(A) Cancer Plan - call for evidence. Share your views



Department of Health & Social Care

The government has launched a call for evidence for the 10-Year Cancer Plan. This call for evidence will inform the development of the government's 10-Year Cancer Plan for England. Rather than a formal consultation on specific proposals, it constitutes a request for ideas and evidence.

One in every two people in this country will be told they have cancer at some point in their lives. The NHS Long Term Plan, published in 2019, set an ambition to save thousands more lives each year by dramatically improving how cancer is diagnose and treated. The Department of Health and Social Care is seeking the views of individuals, professionals, and organisations to understand whether and how we can do more to make progress against this ambition, and to build on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Everyone aged 16 and over can participate in this call for action by completing the survey.

The Deadlineline is 11:45pm on 1 April 2022.

[Click here to take the survey](#)

(B) Cervical and Prostate Cancer awareness campaigns



Cervical Screening Awareness Campaign 14 February-14 March 2022

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers, yet in England two women die every day from it. Screening can help stop cancer before it starts which is why the Department of Health and Social Care, together with NHS England and NHS Improvement, have launched a **Help Us Help You - Cervical Screening Campaign**.

Don't ignore your cervical screening invite, and if you missed your last one, book an appointment with your GP practice today. Cervical screening saves lives. For more information visit [nhs.uk/cervical screening](https://nhs.uk/cervical-screening)

[Cervical Screening - Helping You Decide](#) are translated leaflets available available to download in the following languages: Arabic, Bengaqli, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, English, Gurati, French, Polish, Portugese, Punjabi and Urdo

Prostate Cancer Awareness campaign runs until 31 March

Prostate Cancer UK (PCUK) and the NHS have joined forces to launch a campaign to find the 14,000 men who have not started treatment for prostate cancer since the beginning of the pandemic.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men but it is very treatable if caught early - early diagnosis saves lives.

It's important for men to know their risk because early prostate cancer often has no symptoms, so PCUK is encouraging men to check their risk using a [risk checker](#) which takes just 30 seconds to complete.



(C) New online platform and support to help people waiting for treatment in Sussex

My Planned Care

Helpful information and guidance for patients waiting for a hospital consultation, treatment or surgery.

A record six million people are currently waiting for hospital treatment. The NHS has set out a plan to address backlogs that built up during the COVID-19 pandemic and tackle long waiting lists for care.

The plan will give patients greater control over their own health, giving them the right to swap to a different provider if they are waiting too long, providing a more personalised service, and freeing up appointments for those who need them.

[Click here to read the NHS plan](#)

[Click here to read the Healthwatch response to the NHS plan](#)

In response to the plan, the [Sussex Health and Care Partnership](#) is working to ensure you get the care you need as soon as possible. While you are waiting for a hospital appointment, there is now more support available via a new online platform and website. You can also check average waiting times at local hospitals for the specialist area you need.

A new My Planned Care website

Built in conjunction with patient groups, the national **My Planned Care website** allows patients and their carers to access information ahead of their planned appointment, operation or treatment.

The platform will be expanded in the coming months to include more specific information for specialties and how patients can contact hospital departments and teams. This will also include signposting to existing community support, public health wellbeing services, the voluntary and community sector and non-acute provider services for advice and support for physical and mental wellbeing.

A new website providing advice and resources for Sussex

Health and care partners in Sussex have also launched a new online advice service to support people as they wait to help them to stay well. It includes advice on how to manage symptoms, a focus on mental health and wellbeing and how to manage other demands or pressures while they wait.

Alternative formats for people without online access and hard copies of the advice will be provided in community locations, and on request.

Targeted packages of support will be rolled out to support those patients waiting for procedures with the longest waits or those with the greatest need.

GPs and primary care teams will also be able to access the information through the My Planned Care platform and on the Sussex Health and Care Partnership website, helping them to have more informed conversations with their patients.

[Click here to visit the new My Planned Care website](#)

[Click here to visit the new advice and resources website for Sussex](#)

(D) The cost of living is rising

Help with energy costs

With household energy bills likely to rise significantly this year, many people are understandably worried about fuel costs. Heating your home to at least 18°C (65°F) is important for your health and immune system, especially if you are 65 or over, have reduced mobility, or an existing health condition such as heart or lung disease.

Help with food, energy bills and other essentials

Help through the government's Household Support Fund is available to everyone, whether you are currently receiving benefits, until the end of March 2022. If you are struggling to pay for food, fuel, and other essentials, please contact our Community Hub www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/coronavirus-help. If you cannot get online, call 01273 293117 (option 2) Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm. Phone interpreters are available on this number.

Check if you qualify for a discount

Find out if you can get a discount on your fuel bills at www.brightonhove.gov.uk/help-with-fuel-bills. You can also find advice on help if you cannot afford your energy bills from Ofgem at www.ofgem.gov.uk and on www.gov.uk - search for 'support for energy bills.' For advice on help with paying your water bill, visit www.southernwater.co.uk/account/help-paying-your-bill.

Book an advice call or home visit with a LEAP advisor

The Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) is a free advice service helping people keep warm and reduce their energy bills. Visit www.applyforleap.org.uk or call freephone 0800 060 7567.

Tips on saving energy and reducing your fuel bills

The Energy Saving Trust provides free and impartial advice to help you reduce the amount of energy you use at home and lower your bills. Visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk.

Government energy bill boost

Every household in Council Tax bands A to D will receive £150 towards rising fuel costs, likely to be in April or May. We will publish more information on the council website when the details are confirmed.

Money and debt advice

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/debt-advice.

Food, shopping, meal deliveries

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership www.bhfood.org.uk. Impact Initiatives www.ageingwellbh.org 01273 322947.

Free School Meals

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/free-school-meals 01273 293497.

Healthy Start Vouchers

www.healthystart.nhs.uk. There's also information on local organisations providing support with everything from food and shopping to money advice and loneliness at www.covidbrightonhove.org.uk.

Mental health support: Talk to someone (freephone 24/7)

- Sussex Mental Healthline 0300 500 0101.
- Mental Health Rapid Response Service (freephone 24/7) offers mental health crisis support 0300 304 0078. Samaritans 116 123.
- Preventing Suicide for anyone at risk or concerned about someone.
- www.preventingsuicideinsussex.org. Community Roots www.communityroots.org.uk 0808 196 1768.
- Online advice and resources Every Mind Matters www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

(E) The cost of living is rising- Stay Strong, Stay Steady, Stay Independent



Stay Strong, Stay Steady, Stay Independent is a local campaign running from 25 to 29 April. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of strength and balance exercises to support healthy ageing.

Did you know that as we get older, our muscle strength and balance reduce? In fact, it starts from about age 30. Then from about age 55, we lose about 1% of our muscle mass every year. This increases our risk of having a life-changing fall.

The good news is that there are lots of easy, affordable ways to keep strong and steady. This includes exercises to do at home, via zoom, or at one of the activities across the city. Many of these activities are a short walk or bus ride away such as strength and balance classes, racket sports, chair-based exercise classes, dance, Thai chi and more.

- To choose your own way to build strength, balance, and age well, visit the ageing well website on www.ageingwellbh.org or phone 01273 322 947.
- For more information about how we support this campaign locally, send an email to publichealth@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Carry on reading for COVID updates!

(3) COVID NEWS

[Read the weekly statement by the Public Health team based on COVID-19 cases](#)

(A) Living with Covid

All remaining legal restrictions in England have been removed as part of the prime minister's "Living with Covid" plan.

It means people who test positive for Covid in England are no longer legally required to self-isolate, although they are still advised to do so.

How are the rules changing in England?

The government has set out its ["Living with Covid" plan](#).

From 24 February:

- people with Covid are not legally required to self-isolate
- however, guidance recommends that those who test positive stay at home and avoid contact with others for at least five full days
- self-isolation support payments of £500 for those on low incomes have stopped
- routine contact tracing has ended - people in contact with someone with Covid will no longer be advised to self-isolate or take daily tests
- workers are not required to tell their employer if they need to self-isolate
- face coverings are [not mandatory on Transport for London's tubes, trains or buses](#), but they are still "strongly encouraged"

From 1 April:

- PCR and lateral flow Covid tests will no longer be free for most people
- Covid passports will no longer be recommended, except for international travel
- employers will no longer have to consider Covid as a separate risk when working out how to keep employees safe

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised an additional spring booster dose for the most vulnerable individuals in the population. Over-75s and people with a weakened immune system [are also being offered an extra Covid booster jab this spring](#), six months after their previous dose. You can read the JCVI's advice [here](#).

As we learn to live with Covid-19, there are certain things we can all do to limit infection and keep one another safe. Get your vaccine, let fresh air in, wear a mask in crowded spaces, stay home if you are unwell and keep washing your hands regularly.

[#KeepSussexSafe](#)



(B) 5 to 11 year old COVID-19 vaccinations in Sussex



It has been announced that all 5-11 year olds will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine. We would like to hear from parents, carers and guardians of children in this age group to understand where you would prefer to take them for their vaccination in Sussex. This will inform our planning as we prepare to offer the vaccine to this age group.

Take the short survey <http://ow.ly/nxro50HYncC>

On Wednesday, 16 February, the government [announced that all 5 to 11 year olds will be offered the COVID-19 vaccination\(External link\)](#).

This follows a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that all 5 to 11 year olds should be offered two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech

paediatric vaccine. The two doses should be given with an interval of at least 12 weeks between doses.

Although this age group is generally at very low risk of serious illness from the virus, a very small number of children who get infected do develop severe disease. Latest evidence suggests that offering the vaccine ahead of another potential wave will protect this very small number of children from serious illness and hospitalisation - and will also provide some short-term protection against mild infection across the age group.

The recommendation should not displace the delivery of other non-COVID-19 childhood vaccinations, or any other part of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. For example, uptake of some non-COVID-19 childhood vaccination programmes, such as MMR and HPV vaccinations, have been affected by the pandemic. The committee has advised that the addition of a COVID-19 vaccine rollout to this age group should not impact the recovery of these programmes.

This is not yet live, and there will be further national announcements of when this vaccination will be offered. Parents are urged not to contact their GP practice to ask about these vaccinations; more information will be shared soon.

(C) Vaccinated people less likely to have long COVID than unvaccinated

A new review by UKHSA shows that people who have had one or more doses of a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine are less likely to develop long COVID than those who remain unvaccinated.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has undertaken a rapid evidence review looking at the effects of vaccination against long COVID or post-COVID symptoms. The [review includes 15 UK and international studies](#) that were undertaken up until January 2022.

An [estimated 2% of the UK population](#) have reported symptoms of long COVID or post-COVID syndrome, which can last for more than 4 weeks after their initial infection. The 3 most common symptoms are fatigue, shortness of breath and muscle or joint pain.

[Click here to read more about this story.](#)

(D) Your views about mobile vaccination services



Have you received your 1st, 2nd and/or booster COVID vaccine at one of the Mobile Vaccination Units (such as the converted ambulance as pictured above) in Brighton & Hove? If yes, then please share your experience in our short survey to help us improve and shape these service for the future.

Everyone who has used the Mobile Vaccination Service and completes a survey can be entered into a prize draw for the chance to receive a £20 shopping voucher. If you would

like to be entered in the draw, please provide your contact details at the end of this survey.

This survey is only for people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine using one of the Mobile Vaccination Services as pictured, and does not include the larger main services in the city.

Click this link to take the survey

https://yoursaysussexhealthandcare.uk.engagementhq.com/covid-19-mobile-vaccination-services-in-brighton-hove/survey_tools/brighton-2



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