

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 4)
- (3) [COVID news](#) (page 10)

## (1) YOUR HEALTHWATCH

### (A) Work with us - Chari of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove

If you haven't applied yet there is still time to do so. Visit our [website](#) for more information.

#### Chair role

This is a volunteer role with a £4K pa stipend available. The role is typically home based, with attendance at Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Board and other external meetings. This is an exciting opportunity to lead Healthwatch at time when health and social care services are facing unique challenges.

**Closing Date: Monday 7th February 2022 at 5pm**

### (B) Because We All Care Campaign



The [Care Quality Commission](#) and [Healthwatch England](#) has relaunched the **#BecauseWeAllCare** campaign to help improve care by encouraging everyone to share their experiences of health and social care services.

The campaign has already resulted in over 50,000 people sharing their experiences. Information which has helped inform how CQC

regulates services, as well as the recommendations Healthwatch has made at a national and local level to professionals about service improvements. Your ongoing feedback has been vital to helping improve care throughout COVID1-9 and ensure patients receive the support they need.



Please continue to help the campaign by sharing your experience of NHS and social care services with Healthwatch England by completing the [survey](#).

Join the conversation by using: **#BecauseWeAllCare**

## (C) Dental services



The government has announced a £50 million funding injection to deliver thousands more dental appointments to help the recovery of services.

It is stated that the funding will secure up to 350,000 additional dental appointments allowing people suffering from oral pain, disease, and infection to get the care they need.

Children, people with learning disabilities, autism, or severe mental health problems, will be prioritised as part of a dentistry treatment push over the coming months, with the one-off funding available until the end of the financial year.

Locally, NHS teams will use the funds to secure increase care capacity amongst local dentists already operating to help patients suffering from oral ill-health.

Dentists involved in the scheme will be paid more on top of their normal sessional fee for delivering this care outside of core hours, such as early morning and weekend work.

Funding for the South East region is £6.9 million. However, the funding is only available for the remainder of the current financial year.

This is good news, but well overdue. In part, this announcement follows a campaign by the entire Healthwatch network to tackle the dental crisis - using your feedback to highlight the impacts this has had for you.

It remains to be seen how successful this investment will be. It will be optional for dentists to join the scheme, and we are already aware that many dental practices have already said they are under immense pressure; that staff morale is low and staff shortages are affecting the delivery of services. **Our question is how many practices are likely to join the scheme to deliver extra hours/more appointments?** We are currently liaising with the office of Caroline Lucas MP who has agreed to ask questions about this announcement in Parliament. We will update you on this work.

[Read more about this story](#)

[Read out patient guide to dental services](#)

[Read about the work of Healthwatch on dentistry](#)

[Healthwatch learns that no local dentists are offering NHS treatment to new patients](#)

## (D) Putting good communications with patients at the heart of service change Report



In November, we published our report of patients' experiences of being referred for an outpatients' appointment and the communications they had received. It showcased the core standards that patients themselves recommend should be applied to all communications.

Since then, we have shared our report with University Hospital Sussex NHS Trust, those in charge of Planned Care and outpatients' transformation, the Clinical Commissioning group (CCG) and Council.

Our local Trust has agreed to look at the recommendations and create an action plan to implement these. The CCG's Cancer and Planned Care Insight and Improvement Forum is also tracking our recommendations as part of their work on patient communications. **We will continue to push for systematic improvements.**

Our work also feeds into the Accessible Information Standard which is mandatory for all organisations that provide NHS or adult social care - you can read more about the Standard below.

[Read our report here](#)

**Carry on reading for health and social care updates!**

## (2) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

### (A) Integrated care systems explained

#### Integrated care systems explained: making sense of systems, places and neighbourhoods

Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships that bring together providers and commissioners of NHS services across a geographical area with local authorities and other local partners

to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their population.

The central aim of ICSs is to integrate care across different organisations and settings, joining up hospital and community-based services, physical and mental health, and health and social care. All parts of England are now covered by one of 42 ICSs.

ICSs are intended to bring about major changes in how health and care services are planned, paid for and delivered, and are a key part of the future direction for the NHS as set out in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). It is [hoped that they will be a vehicle](#) for achieving greater integration of health and care services; improving population health and reducing inequalities; supporting productivity and sustainability of services; and helping the NHS to support social and economic development.

ICSs are part of a fundamental shift in the way the health and care system is organised. Local Healthwatch will be involved in the new ICSs to ensure that the patient voice continues to be heard and helps to influence decisions.

To learn more about ICS's the Kings' Fund has produced an article which you can read in full by clicking [here](#).

### (B) Where to go for support when you have an eating disorder



Eating disorders are complex mental illnesses that anyone can develop, regardless of age, income, and ethnicity. According to [Beat Eating Disorders](#) there are an estimated 1.25 million people in the UK with an eating disorder. Eating disorders vary person to person and can be challenging to identify.

Here are some common signs of eating disorders to look out for:

- distorted beliefs about your body.
- eating massive quantities of food at once.
- getting rid of the food eaten through making yourself sick, frequent fasting, going to toilet after meals or other unhealthy means
- or a combination of all the above.

### Where to go for support

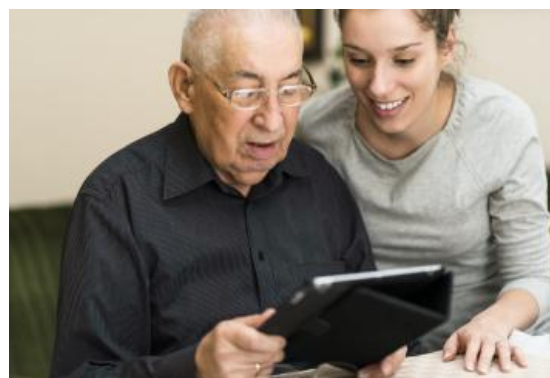
- Contact your GP
- Talk to a friend or family member
- Talk to an advisor: The UK's Eating Disorder Charity has advisors who can help. And they can be contacted on:
  - Adult Helpline: 0808 801 0677 or email: [help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)
  - Youth line: 0808 801 0711 or email: [fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

To read more on the type of help you can receive from services visit our [website](#).

## (C) The Accessible Information Standard - what you can expect from services

**The Accessible Information Standard is mandatory for all organisations that provide NHS or adult social care.**

The standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand and that they get any communication support they need from health and care services.



### What do health and care organisations have to do?

1. Ask if you have any communication needs and asked how these needs can be met.
2. Record your needs in a clear and set way and highlight these needs in your file or notes so people are aware and know how to meet them.
3. Share information about your communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care when they have consent or permission to do so.
4. Deliver information to you in a way you can access and understand, with the option for communication support if needed.

### What should you expect?

So, if you are speaking to a dentist, doctor, care home manager or any other provider of health and social care, here is what you can expect:

1. You should be able to contact, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways, for example via email or text message.
2. Information and correspondence should be given in formats you can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read, or large print.
3. You should be supported by a communications professional at appointments if this is needed to support conversation, for example, a British Sign Language interpreter.
4. Health and care staff and organisations should support you to communicate, for example, to lip-read or use a hearing aid.

Find out more on communications needs and what can be done if they are not meet on our [website](#).

## (D) My Care Passport

Patients with learning disabilities and/or autism are particularly vulnerable to experiencing poor health outcomes. The National Learning from Deaths programme has identified that 50% of deaths of people with learning disabilities are from either a treatable or preventable causes.

It is essential that hospital staff can easily identify whether a patient has a learning disability and inform the learning disability nurse. The [My Care Passport](#) provides key information about a patient's preferences, care needs and the adjustments that are required to provide safe care. By taking along a My care passport, hospital staffs will better understand how to meet your care needs.

You can read more by clicking on this [link](#).

## (E) Have your say on physical health services for children and young people across Sussex



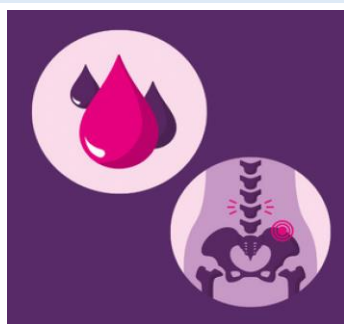
Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups Children's and Young Peoples (CYP) Physical Health Services are inviting Children and young people and parents/carers to tell them about their experiences of using the physical health NHS services in Sussex for. This is for children and young people between the ages of 0-25 years.

You can share your experiences on the following services:

- GP Surgeries
- Hospitals - which include A&E, paediatric (children's) or adult wards for a daily visit or staying overnight
- Community services - examples include physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, audiology, nurses visiting you at home.

To have your say on any of the services, [Complete the survey](#).

## (F) Cervical Cancer Prevention Awareness



[Jo's Trust](#) is raising awareness of cervical screening and encouraging women and people with a cervix to have their smear test.

Cervical screening is available from 25 years to 64 years in England are invited regularly to have a cervical test known as

smear test. The smear test can help detect cervical cancer early. And the earlier cervical cancer is found, it easier it is to treat.

### What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?

Although Cervical cancer may not cause any symptoms, or the symptoms may not be obvious. Nonetheless, the most common symptoms of cervical cancer include:

- vaginal bleeding that is unusual for you, including after the menopause, after sex, or between regular periods
- changes to vaginal discharge
- pain or discomfort during sex
- unexplained pain in your lower back or between your hip bones (pelvis).

Although these symptoms may happen for reasons other than cervical cancer, but it is important to contact your GP straight away if you have any of these symptoms, so they can give you reassurance and support.



Visit the Jo's cervical cancer trust for information and guidance on Cervical cancer [Cervical Cancer Symptoms | Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust \(jostrust.org.uk\)](#)

## (G) A 'Virtual Ward' approach to supporting vulnerable and at-risk groups in the community



During the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting the ways which nursing staff support people in their own homes has been vital in continuing to provide high quality care, good patient experience and minimising transmission of COVID-19.

Within County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust the established 'Virtual Ward' offered a systematic approach to providing enhanced support using local intelligence, for vulnerable people in the community especially those with the most complex medical and social needs. Virtual Wards offer 'wrap-around' support to people in their homes ensuring they can receive care that meets their needs in a timely fashion with the aim of reducing the need for avoidable hospital admission.

This new way of working has strengthened partnerships between nursing and social care teams across, who have all welcomed the use of the 'Virtual Ward' approach during the pandemic and plan to continue and expand it for the future.

You can read more about this development by clicking on these links:

- [A 'Virtual Ward' approach to supporting vulnerable and at-risk groups in the community](#)
- [Virtual Wards](#)

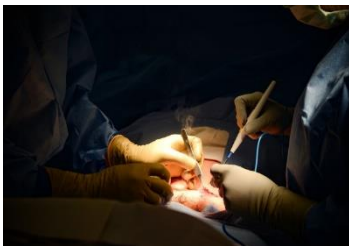
## (H) Better Health Food Scanner App campaign



The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)'s new childhood nutrition campaign has been launched.

The campaign focuses on using the Food Scanner app to help families make healthier food swaps to make positive changes to their diet. The [Children's Healthier Eating Toolkit](#) which has ten fun, easy to run activities, is aimed at children aged 2-11 years, and is perfect for use in children's centres, libraries, leisure centres, breakfast and after school clubs and other similar locations. The mobile phone app is also available to download now.

## (I) Opportunity to shape national audit



The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) is looking for people who are affected by conditions that affect blood circulation to help with the National Vascular Registry (NVR).

This includes people with conditions such as peripheral arterial disease, occlusive carotid arterial disease, abdominal aortic aneurysms, and anyone who has had vascular surgery.

The aims of the NVR are to improve the quality of care of patients undergoing treatment in hospital vascular services. It does this by collecting data from patients before and after surgery.

NHS England funds this audit and HQIP is looking into what the audit will look like and who will run it. HQIP wants to involve patients and members of the public in its work and would like to hear from people who have experienced vascular surgery as a patient or carer. HQIP will use the information shared to inform the design of the renewed audit.

If you want to feedback on this audit, please contact Kim Rezel on [kim.rezel@hqip.org.uk](mailto:kim.rezel@hqip.org.uk) who will send you a short questionnaire.

## (J) Free support for fuel poverty and other essential costs

Brighton & Hove City Council - help with food, fuel, and other essential costs 'Household Support Fund'. Extra help is available this winter for households struggling to pay these essential.





The funding is part of the government's Household Support Fund and is available until 31 March 2022. The council can offer vouchers or advice on how to access to essential goods and services. The support is available for people who are not on benefits, as well as those who are.

To find out more and apply, go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/household-support-fund](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/household-support-fund) or call the Community Hub on 01273 293117 (option 2).

### **Disabled Facilities Grant**

The council is also offering a wide range of help for older and disabled people, including a Warm Safe Homes Grant, as well as grants to help prevent falls and injury in the home and assist hospital discharge. These are all non-repayable grants with a simple application process.

To apply, contact the Disabled Facilities Grant Team at [disabledfacilitiesgrant@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:disabledfacilitiesgrant@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or call 01273 294366. For more information about the range of assistance on offer go to [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/care-and-support-adults/changes-your-home](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/care-and-support-adults/changes-your-home).

For the hospital discharge grant, contact Possibility People on 01273 069851 or [HDS@possabilitypeople.org.uk](mailto:HDS@possabilitypeople.org.uk)

To find out more on the other types of help available this winter, visit their [website](#).

**Carry on reading for COVID updates!**

### (3) COVID NEWS

#### (A) England has returned to Plan A



England has returned to Plan A following the success of the booster programme.

Plan B measures have been removed following millions getting the booster, which gives strong protection against Omicron.

This means that people are no longer advised to work from home and from 27 January face coverings are no longer mandatory indoors and that NHS COVID Passes will be voluntary for large events

For more information visit the [government website](#)

#### (B) Covid self-isolation in England cut to five full days



The self-isolation period for people who test positive for COVID-19 has been cut to five full days in England

From Monday 17th, people will be able to leave isolation after negative lateral flow tests on days five and six.

The self-isolation period was cut from 10 to seven days with negative tests on days six and seven back in December.

Visit the [NHS website](#) to learn more about self-isolation rules

#### (C) Care home restrictions to be eased in England

COVID restrictions on adult social care will be eased in England from Monday 31<sup>st</sup>, the government has announced.

There will be no limit on the number of visitors allowed at care homes, self-isolation periods will be cut and care homes will only have to follow outbreak management rules for 14 days, not 28. The change is the latest rolling back of Plan B curbs in England.

[Read more about this change here](#)

## (D) Latest COVID updates from the Sussex Health and Care Partnership



Thousands of appointments are available on the National Booking Service [website](#) or by calling 119 for this week and next.

There are also many walk in sessions across our communities - both for adults and for 12 to 15 year olds. At community centres, supermarkets and in town centres, the pop up clinics are open for first, second and booster vaccinations.

See a [full list of specific walk-in sessions in Sussex for 12 - 15s](#).

For more information on vaccinations for children and those under 18, go to the [Sussex Health and Care Partnership website](#)

[Click here for the latest walk in sessions](#)

### Update on vaccinations for children aged 5 to 11



The Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended that COVID-19 vaccination is offered to children aged 5 to 11 in a clinical risk group (as defined in the [Green Book](#)), or who are a household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed.

The recommendation is that children in these groups are offered two doses of paediatric Pfizer (10mcg), 8 weeks apart. If a child has recently had COVID-19 they should wait 4 weeks after testing positive before having a vaccine dose.

GPs and hospitals, including community paediatricians, have now been asked to identify those children at risk and will be contacting them directly over the next few weeks to invite them to come and receive their vaccination at a local vaccination site. These vaccinations will be offered at vaccination services, and not through school visits. Families are asked to wait to be contacted and their local service will contact them to arrange an appointment for their child.

Confirmation of deliveries of the paediatric Pfizer are awaited but it is the expectation that appointments will be offered throughout February for first doses.

If anyone has any questions or concerns please contact the Vaccine Enquiries Team on [sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net) or call 0800 433 4545 (open 9am - 4pm, Monday to Friday).

If anyone has an urgent need in exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to make individual arrangements. Please contact the Vaccine Enquiry Team on the details above to discuss.

How will I know if my child is eligible?

- GPs and hospital specialists have been asked to identify 5 to 11-year-olds who are eligible. For children eligible as a household contact, the NHS will write directly to the person who is immunosuppressed.
- Parents and guardians will be notified if their child should get the vaccine and told how they can book an appointment. The NHS will be in touch in the coming weeks if your child is eligible, so it's important that parents wait to hear from us and do not contact their GP.

[Click here to read the latest COVID-19 vaccination programme update for Brighton & Hove from the Sussex Health and Care Partnership](#)

Much more information about the vaccination programme is available on the SChP website, including details of the [services available in each area](#), [latest data](#), [stakeholder briefings](#), answers to [frequently asked questions](#) and links to all the national leaflets and materials.

## (E) How to look after your mental health while self-isolating with COVID-19



The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may cause you to feel worried, anxious, or scared. Healthwatch England has issued tips on how to look after your wellbeing when self-isolating.

Self-isolating can be difficult for anyone, from feeling bored and lonely to being frustrated and restless. So, it is important to remember this time will pass and what you are doing is vital in protecting yourself and others.

### Top tips to keep in mind while self-isolating:

- **Be practical:** think about how you will manage practical everyday tasks that you might not be able to do while self-isolating. From letting your work know you have tested positive to ordering an online grocery shop or your repeat prescriptions. Find out more about [what self-isolating means for you](#) .
- **Stay connected to others:** If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of [helplines](#) you can try instead.
- **Stay on top of difficult feelings:** For more ways to deal with anxiety, read the [NHS advice](#) to find out more.
- **Continue doing things you enjoy:** It is not easy but try and relax and do things you enjoy

Remember, this time will pass, and many people are in the same boat. Look after yourself and keep in mind that what you are doing is helping save lives. For further support and advice, read the NHS advice piece: [Mental wellbeing while staying at home](#). You can also find more resources on mental health support and/or share your experience of how COVID-19 impacted the care you received, by visiting our [website](#).



## Join Healthwatch

You can sign up to receive regular bulletins and information from Healthwatch.

Please email [office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

Share your experiences of health and social care services with us:  
[Have Your Say](#)

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Call 01273 234040

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