

This update is split into the following sections:

- (1) Your Healthwatch: news about our work and that of Healthwatch England (page 1)
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(1) YOUR HEALTHWATCH

A) In your opinion, what are the three things you would recommend in order to improve mental health services in Brighton and Hove?

Have you **ever used** or are you **currently using mental health services** in Brighton and Hove? Or do you **know someone who is using these services**? If so, we invite you to answer the above question from this experience.

By mental health service we mean your GP, Brighton & Hove Wellbeing Service, Counsellor, Psychologist, Mental health nurse and/or any other mental health service etc.)



Healthwatch are currently exploring mental health services in Brighton & Hove and we are feeding back to providers regarding patient opinion on these services.

We would appreciate your response to the following question.

In your opinion, what are the three things you would recommend in order to improve mental health services in Brighton and Hove?



Please email us at office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk and we will enter you into a prize draw for a shopping voucher worth £25.

B) Healthwatch's response to the 'UK COVID-19 Inquiry draft terms of reference'

On 11 March 2022, the COVID-19 Inquiry team chaired by Baroness Hallett published its [draft terms of reference](#) for consultation, which sets out the aims and scope of the independent public inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom.



Healthwatch England responded to the consultation, emphasising just how important it is for the Inquiry to focus on listening carefully to the voices and experiences of the public who were directly and indirectly affected by the Government's preparation and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary of Healthwatch's response

Healthwatch England are of the view that the draft Terms of Reference do a reasonably good job of covering most of the issues that people/the public want the Inquiry to cover. In order for people to have trust and confidence in the Inquiry and its processes, it is imperative that they do not feel that the Terms of Reference have been influenced and/or manipulated by/for anyone who might be under investigation.

It is also important for the purposes of public confidence that the Inquiry is not seen to be excluding any aspects of an investigation which would provide resolution or clarity for the public and welcomed the consultation on the Terms of Reference itself.

Whilst it is imperative that families of the bereaved must be listened to very carefully and with empathy, it is also important that sufficient focus should be placed on those people (and their loved ones) who have been affected by the pandemic but have survived. Their views and experiences are of equal value.

Healthwatch will be looking forward to the opportunity to provide written and/or oral evidence to further support the work of the Inquiry and its secretariat as the process commences.

Read the full response [here](#)

C) Healthwatch England's chair to step down



Sir Robert Francis QC to step down from the Care Quality Commission Board and as Healthwatch's chair from 15th November 2022.

After over three years in the role, Sir Robert Francis QC has announced his intention to step down in November 2022 as Chair of Healthwatch England. He will also retire from the Board of Care Quality Commission (CQC) board, which he joined in 2014.

Appointed in October 2018, Sir Robert Francis QC joined Healthwatch with a strong reputation for advocating on behalf of others. With a background in medical law, Sir Robert previously chaired national inquiries into the care provided by Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust and the Freedom to Speak Up Review into the treatment of NHS staff who raise concerns.

Announcing his retirement, Sir Robert Francis QC said:



It has been a privilege to serve on the CQC Board and as chair of Healthwatch England. This unique position has enabled me to raise the issues which really matter to patients, service users and those close to them.

“People who use services must be central to NHS and social care decision-making. Their voice is crucial to understanding what works and how services can be better. Greater attention to listening and acting on public feedback has led to real improvements in policy and practice.

“However, the health and social care system continues to face challenges in meeting demand and in maintaining safety and quality. So, listening to people who use services and providing the resources to enable this to happen are ever more important. Not only will this help to prevent tragic failures in care occurring, but it will also result in better support and lives for many people in England.



Sir Robert Francis wrote to notify the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care of his intention to step down on 27 April 2022. Read his letter in full [here](#).

D) Lack of NHS dental appointments widens health inequalities

A new survey of public attitudes to NHS dentistry shows that half of the adults in England find dental charges unfair amid escalating living costs. Healthwatch have warned decision-makers that NHS dentistry is in desperate need of reform.



With living costs on the rise, Healthwatch's new findings show that health inequalities are widening as people in every part of the country struggle to pay for dental care. When people find it hard to access NHS dental care, they feel pressured to go private, which is not an option for many, even NHS charges can be hard for some to afford.

A representative poll of 2,026 adults based in England found nearly half (49%) of respondents felt NHS dental charges were unfair. The shortage of NHS appointments has hit people on low incomes hardest, meaning they are less likely to have dental treatment than those on higher incomes.

The new data also reveals a significant North-South divide regarding how affordable people find dental care. While one in five people (20%) living in the South of England said they could afford private dental care if they can't find an NHS dentist, just seven per cent of those living in the North of England said they could afford private treatment. Overall, 38% of the respondents feel they are less likely to visit a dentist, despite clinical guidelines recommending regular dental check-ups to keep people's mouths healthy.

Healthwatch have repeatedly raised concerns over the last two years as the twin crisis of access and affordability has continued to grow. Between October 2021 and March 2022, the Healthwatch network heard from 4,808 people about their experiences of dental care, many of whom were struggling to access timely care.



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove has been listening to your concerns. Our volunteers who monitor our info helpline have been working hard to try and help you. Queries from members to of the public to us about dentistry increased 270% between 2020/21 to 2021/22, and this remains one of the most common reasons why people contact us. We have shared your experiences with NHS England, the Local Dental Committee (which represents dental practices in the South East), city leaders for health and social care and we have asked 12 questions in Parliament to the Minister for Health with the help of Caroline Lucas MP's office - [read our report](#). We were quoted in a recent article in the [Argus](#). We are continuing to push for reform and better access to NHS dentistry

Healthwatch England is making renewed calls on NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care to put a reformed dental contract in place before formal responsibility for dental services passes to the 42 new Integrated Care Systems in April 2023. For more on the NHS crisis survey findings including our national director's response, [click here](#)

E) Steps that can help people waiting for NHS treatment



The latest figure from the NHS shows that the number of people waiting for NHS treatment has increased by 180,000 totalling to a record 6.36 million people who are now waiting for care.

The new NHS waiting times data showed that:

- Waiting time numbers have been steadily rising since May 2020 and are now a record for the NHS elective waiting list.
- The number of patients waiting over a year for treatment has increased by 6,808.
- The number of patients waiting over two years for treatment has decreased by 6,485
- The median wait has decreased by 1.1 weeks.

Responding to the figures, our National Director, Louise Ansari, repeated our call for more to be done to support people waiting for treatment:



"People know that NHS staff are working hard to clear the backlog in care, but patients also want more support while they wait.

"Too many of those waiting for care have told us that they have been left to cope with painful symptoms that worsen over time and that often they hear nothing from services and feel unclear about when they will get treatment.

"It's great to see that longer waiting times are coming down. However, we need a greater focus on supporting those in pain to manage, enabling patients to tell services when their symptoms get worse and improving communication, so patients don't feel left alone to cope."



What could help?

In our last report on the issue, Healthwatch recommended several steps to help manage the NHS waiting times backlog, including:

- Improve support while people wait, for example, help with pain management, physiotherapy, and mental health.
- Recruiting more admin staff and improving systems to tackle the administrative mistakes that can add to how long people wait. For example, avoiding being booked in with the wrong service or person.
- Improve communication, so people get updates, don't feel forgotten and can tell services when their condition changes.
- Promote services such as NHS111 First so people can access services and avoid waits for urgent care

Read our full response [here](#)

Carry on reading for health and social care updates!

(2) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

A) How can you find an NHS dentist?



Are you having trouble finding an NHS funded dentist? Below are some tips on what to do if you're facing problems.

Everyone should be able to get the care and advice they need to keep their teeth healthy. But people across the country are reporting being unable to get an appointment with an NHS dentist, with the situation getting worse in many areas.

Where's your nearest dentist?

Use the NHS website to [search for a dentist near you](#). The site also provides information on which dental practices are currently accepting new patients, whether they offer urgent appointments, and how other people have rated the service.

While this is a good starting point to finding a local dentist, people often tell us that these records aren't always kept updated, so you should contact the practice directly to find out more information. If the records are out of date, you should let the practice know.

You can also visit a dentist outside your local area if it's more convenient. For example, if you prefer to see a dentist near where you work.

What to do if you have a dental emergency?

If you need immediate care for your teeth, you should:

- Ask your regular dentist whether they can offer an emergency appointment.
- Phone NHS111 who can locate an urgent dental service.
- Visit A&E if you experience severe pain, heavy bleeding, or injuries to the face, mouth, or teeth.

Find out more about NHS dental access [here](#)

You can also read our [Dentistry - A Healthwatch guide to your rights and accessing the treatment you need](#)

B) Accident and emergency services in Sussex

The NHS in Sussex is calling on people to use the right services for their health needs at the right time.



Amid rising demand on services and high COVID-19 rates, all health services in Sussex are extremely busy and there continues to be a steady rise in people being admitted to hospital and those attending emergency departments. Staff across health and care continue to work extremely hard to provide the best possible care for those who need NHS help.

That's why, the NHS in Sussex is issuing an urgent plea over to the public to only use emergency services in a true emergency.

Anyone with an urgent medical need that's not an emergency is being urged to use NHS111 by phone or online. It is available 24/7 and offers advice and guidance for patients experiencing non-emergency urgent healthcare needs and can advise on local NHS services, connect patients to a medical professional, arrange appointments and offer self-care advice.

If you need urgent medical attention, but it's not life-threatening you can go to your nearest minor injuries unit or urgent treatment centre near to you. Click [here to find your nearest centre](#). They deal with conditions such as:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken limbs
- minor head injuries
- cuts and grazes
- bites and stings
- minor scalds and burns
- ear and throat infections
- skin infections and rashes
- eye problems
- coughs and colds
- high temperature in child and adults
- stomach pain
- being sick (vomiting) and diarrhoea
- emergency contraception

More information on available treatment centres can be found [here](#)

C) How should your hospital prevent and respond to falls during your stay?



Did you know that over 2,000 people over the age of 60 fell and fractured their hip while staying in hospital in England and Wales in 2020?

The National Audit of Inpatient Falls (NAIF) audits the delivery and quality of care for patients over 60 who fall and sustain a fracture of the hip or thigh bone across England and Wales. NAIF reviews the care the patient has received before their fall as well as the post fall care in an inpatient setting.

The [patient and carer panel](#), who advise the Falls and Fragility Fracture Audit Programme (FFFAP), chose the three most important findings of the [most recent report](#) to help you understand what your hospital should be doing to prevent falls and how to respond to a fall if it does happen.

How should your hospital prevent and respond to falls during your stay?



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How can falls be prevented?

People who may be at risk of falling should receive an assessment that looks at factors known to increase the risk of falling, so the hospital can address these risk factors.

The hospital should assess six key factors:

- Vision
- Blood pressure
- Medication
- Mobility (including walking aids)
- Continence
- Delirium

What should happen after a fall?

Immediately after a fall happens, the hospital should do the following:

- 1 Check for and identify injury before moving the person from the floor.
- 2 Move the person safely from the floor using a recommended technique.
- 3 Make sure assessment by a medical professional takes place within 30 minutes of the fall.



How can I help to improve care in hospital?

Hospitals are required to make improvements to their services. They often have a patient and public involvement group who advise them on patient feedback.

Anyone who is able to provide constructive feedback and suggestions for hospitals to improve the care they provide should consider joining the patient and public involvement group.



National Audit of Inpatient Falls (NAIF)



For more information on the content of this resource, you can refer to our [Autumn 2021 annual report](#).



Compare your local healthcare provider's performance against others using our [charts](#).



For further explanation on any of the terms above, you can refer to the [FFFAP glossary](#).

D) Does the NHS have to provide an interpreter?

Do you know about your rights to language support in NHS settings?

High-quality translation and interpretation are vital to ensuring that people access the health and care services they are entitled to and understand their treatment.



But did you know that healthcare providers must provide patients with translation and interpretation services?

Right to an interpreter

It is your right to have a professional interpreter help you at every stage of your healthcare journey. It is the responsibility of your healthcare provider to arrange an interpreter for you.

The NHS has a [legal responsibility](#) to make sure that the services they provide are equally accessible to all sections of the community. [Guidance](#) to services also makes clear that a professional interpreter should always be offered where language is an issue in discussing health matters.

What should I expect?

You have a right to expect that the NHS provides timely interpretation support. Additional time should be provided at appointments when an interpreter is required.

Your healthcare worker should also record in your healthcare record:

- your preferred spoken language (including dialect)
- your preferred written language
- whether you require an interpreter.

This information should be passed on when you get a referral to other health or social care services.

You should never have to pay for language interpretation services.

Further information on language support can be found [here](#)

E) Carers Week 6–12 June 2022



This year to celebrate the role of unpaid carers in our city, numerous events will be held in and around Brighton and Hove

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much needed support.

The Sussex Carers Partnership understands how crucial it is to work together and involve unpaid family and friend carers, in the design and delivery of local carers' support services. This year the Making Carers Count is led by Carers Trust and delivered in partnership with its network of partners (local carer organisations) and Carers UK. They have organised a festival full of activities for carers and the project will run until March 2024.

Some of the activities planned around Brighton and Hove to celebrate the role of unpaid carers in our city includes:

- St Augustine's Arts & Events Centre, Stanford Avenue, Brighton, BN1 6EA - Thursday 9th June 2022 - 12.30pm - 5pm
- Tai Chi & Qi Gong - Every Monday, 11am via Zoom,
- Monthly Meditation Group - Every 2nd Thursday of the Month, next on Thursday 16th June 2022 10.30–11.30am via Zoom
- Carers' Book Club - Every second Tuesday of the Month via Zoom
- Music Appreciation Group - Every Third Thursday of the Month via Zoom

A list of full activities can be found [here](#)

F) Age and Dementia Friendly Cafe news!



Brighton City Council is supporting East Brighton Café, in East Brighton Park, to become an age and dementia friendly cafe. It will be the first café in the city to be newly recognised by the council as having a suitable and accessible environment for older people and people living with dementia.

The café has long been a favourite for locals and particularly for people living with dementia and their loved ones. It now has new specially designed signage alongside other dementia friendly adaptations which will also benefit all customers. More adaptations,

such as new chairs with armrests in the quiet room, will be completed in the coming months.

Café owner **Marilyn Chelliah**, said:

“I’m touched and honoured to be recognised as an age and dementia friendly café. The café is already well used by the local community, including by people living with dementia and the people who support them because we welcome them with a separate quiet area away from the noise of the coffee machine and the till.

“My ambition has always been for the café to be a hub for the community and recently it’s already become an informal contact centre for residents to meet, so this new age and dementia friendly status is the icing on the cake for us all.”

”

Fran Hamilton, Dementia Specialist Occupational Therapist audited the café for the council with two members from the Switchboard LGBTQ dementia peer support group. They determined what changes needed to be made to make the café more dementia friendly.

Fran said:

“I’m so pleased to see that the recommendations made are being put into place, including signs to aid wayfinding, chairs with arms to increase ease of getting up, and offering a comfortable, quieter area for those who need it. Changes which support people with dementia will also benefit other people using this lovely cafe.

Reducing isolation

“People living with dementia can experience many issues which may impact their day to day lives. Memory, concentration, perception, and mobility may all be affected. Simple changes can make public spaces more accessible for people living with dementia. Remaining engaged with the local community makes a huge difference to people’s wellbeing, reducing isolation and enabling independence.”

”

East Brighton Café alongside many other local businesses and organisations, are supporting the Councils ambition for Brighton & Hove to be a place for people to age well by helping them to support people in our community.

Read the full story [Here](#)

G) Let's talk about Health and wellbeing in 2022! Have your say



As restrictions have been lifted and there is a sense of moving back to normality, Sussex Health and Partnership will want to understand the impact of the pandemic on your health and wellbeing.

They are interested to hear about your experience of health care during the last 12 months; what went well and where can be improve.

Make your voice count by Sharing your views and experiences of services by completing this short [Survey](#)

H) Physical activity, sport, and exercise opportunities in the city

Brighton & Hove City Council has launched a citywide consultation to find out how they can better support people in Brighton & Hove to move more and enjoy being active for life.

Over the next three months they want to find out people's attitudes, the types of opportunities you would like to see and what support you need to become more active.



Get involved and have your say

As well as completing the online survey and discussions there will be opportunities for you to talk to the team at events taking place across the city.

- [Join the conversation online](#) or at an event by Sunday 31 July.
- Follow the Healthy Lifestyles team on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) to find out more.
- Call the Healthy Lifestyles team on 01272 294589
- [Take part in the Let's talk: Active for Life consultation.](#)

Your views from the online survey and other engagement events will be used to create a Brighton & Hove Sport & Physical Activity Strategy.

I) Mothers Uncovered peer support group

Mothers Uncovered will be running a 5-week peer support group in Hanover Community Centre, Brighton this June/July.

The group, run by past participants, is a chance to explore experiences of motherhood in a supportive, non-judgemental environment.

The sessions combine facilitated discussion & writing exercises to help process feelings, and no previous experience is necessary.

The group is for any and all stages of motherhood and babies up to 15 months can be brought to the sessions. There are low cost and free places available.

The groups are not drop-ins, interested participants should register via <https://tinyurl.com/9zmm8xbf>

Enquiries can be made to admin@mothersuncovered.com or WhatsApp/text to 07907 492992



**MOTHERS UNCOVERED
DISCUSSION & WRITING GROUP**

The group runs for 5 weeks on Wednesdays, starting on the 8th June

- A safe space to come together with other mothers, to share the challenges and joys of parenting.
- Each session will include discussion & writing exercises and will be facilitated by two peer supporters.
- It is a chance to reflect and process your experiences.

Dates: 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th June, 6th July 2022
12pm - 2pm
Hanover Community Centre, 33 Southover Street BN2 9UD

Get in touch to book a place
admin@mothersuncovered.com
WhatsApp / Text 07907492992
www.MothersUncovered.com
Facebook: @MothersUncoveredUK
Instagram: Mothers_Uncovered
£40 full course (£25 concession)
Free places also available



J) Carer's research: Do you provide care for an older person? If so, we would like to hear from you.



Anneliese an employee of Connected Places Catapult and the University of Brighton, is working on the 'Homes for Healthy Ageing' project and would like to hear your voice.

The aim of the project is to find out what might help older people stay living in their own homes for longer if they want to and what will help the people who care for them.

For this project, they would like to speak to you if:

- you provide care for someone aged over 65
- and you are not paid for the care you provide.

They want to ask you about your life as a carer, what helps you and what challenges you face. This will help them design ways to support people who are providing care that are helpful and consider your opinions and experiences.

You can take part over the telephone, in person or on a video call, or you may be asked to take part by keeping a diary about what you do in a day as a carer.

All the information shared will be confidential and none of your personal information will be included in the findings.

A £25 shopping voucher will be offered for taking part.

If you are interested in taking part: please contact Anneliese Levy by Telephone: 07876367914 or email: anneliese@thoughtfulcontent.co.uk.

K) Ripple Effect- Fulfilling Lives Impact reports

The Ripple Effects reports summarize eight years of hard work of the Fulfilling Lives Southeast (FLSE) Project, trying to change systems supporting people with multiple and complex needs in Southeast England.

The reports share the project's reflections on what enables and supports systems change and on methods that can be used to achieve tangible change. As part of their legacy work, the two reports are among a range of reports and resources, including best practice studies, training resources, co-production toolkits and method reports.

1. **Ripple Effect: The Systems Change Principles and Methods of Fulfilling Lives Southeast Project**

This report covers how do we instigate, nurture, and achieve systems change. How we build momentum and shift systems that were previously thought to be too fixed or too big. What systems change methods can be used to achieve better outcomes for those experiencing multiple and complex needs (MCN)?

2. **Ripple Effect: The Systems Change Impacts of Fulfilling Lives Southeast Project**

This report shows how systems change is put into practice and draw attention to where we feel support systems still need to change to improve outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantages in the following areas:

- Health Inequalities
- Domestic Abuse and Complex Needs
- Criminal Justice and Repeat Offending
- Treatment Pathways and Coexisting Conditions
- Unsupported Temporary Accommodation
- Repeat Removals of Children into the Care System

Read the full reports by clicking the links below:

[Ripple-Effect-themes systems change impact](#)

[Ripple-Effect-overview systems principles and methods](#)

Carry on reading for COVID updates!

3.COVID NEWS

A) Support and treatment for Long Covid



It's easy to feel isolated and alone when struggling with Long Covid, but support and treatment options are available.

What is Long Covid?

To learn more about the symptoms of Long Covid, visit the NHS [website](#) for advice and information for everything you need to know about this new condition.

Should I speak to my doctor about my symptoms?

If you are concerned about any of your symptoms, contact your doctor. You can also speak to other healthcare professionals like community pharmacists.

If your doctor thinks you have Long Covid, they will look at your medical history and ask questions about your symptoms and the impact they are having on your day-to-day life. They may also examine you and arrange for tests to be undertaken, such as blood tests, measuring your blood pressure, measuring your oxygen levels or a chest X-ray.

What support should I receive after I've seen my doctor?

After you have seen your doctor, they will talk to you about what they think is happening and discuss any support they think you need. They will also rule out any other conditions or illnesses that might be causing your symptoms.

Your doctor may give you advice about how to manage and monitor your symptoms at home.

If your symptoms are having a big impact on your life, you may be referred for:

- Support from primary care services, community services or mental health services.
- Specialist care.

If you need specialist care you may be referred to a Post COVID Service, where you'll be looked after and supported by a range of health care professionals.

Find out how [here](#)



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