Welcome to the autumn edition of our newsletter which includes a round up of all the latest news from Healthwatch Norfolk.

Whether you are a service user or service provider, patient or carer, please share your experiences of local health and social care services with us at www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk or call us on 01953 856029. Your continued feedback makes all the difference.

**Patients given a voice on NHS transformation plans**

Patients across Norfolk and Waveney will get to have their say on plans to transform the region’s health and care system at a series of consultation events being held later next month.

The events have been organised by consumer champion, Healthwatch Norfolk, following public concerns over a lack of available information on future plans for local services under the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP).

Our health and social care services face some big challenges and the partner organisations involved in the STP are tasked with developing a five-year programme of change to meet the challenges ahead.

Healthwatch’s lively debate held at Blackfriars Hall in July identified the public’s desire to know more detail about the proposals and it was agreed with health bosses that further meetings would be held as plans were drawn up.

These first events will focus on urology, cardiology and radiology services, with a separate session at each venue devoted to the future of GP services.
Meetings are being held in Great Yarmouth, King’s Lynn and Norwich, at varied times, to make them as accessible as possible for everyone wishing to attend.

A host of further events are likely to follow later next year, as more information is forthcoming for other key priority areas such as maternity services and mental health.

All events are free to attend but tickets are limited so please book your place directly through Eventbrite, click on the links below or call us on 01953 856029 to reserve your place.

Full details of each meeting are as follows:

22 November at Roundwood Conference Centre, Taverham
• The Future of GP Services 3.00pm - 5.30pm
• Urology, Cardiology and Radiology 6.00pm - 8.30pm

27 November at Town Hall, King’s Lynn
• Urology, Cardiology and Radiology 3.00pm - 5.30pm
• The Future of GP Services 6.00pm - 8.30pm

1 December at Kings Centre, Great Yarmouth
• The Future of GP Services 10.00am - 12.30pm
• Urology, Cardiology and Radiology 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Each event will be chaired by former Norfolk Coroner and Healthwatch Norfolk Chair, William Armstrong, who will be joined by relevant clinicians and Antek Lejk, the executive lead for the STP.

William Armstrong, Healthwatch Norfolk Chair, said: “I made a pledge to the people of Norfolk and Waveney that further meetings would be held before the end of the year and I am delighted to see the STP partners honouring that commitment. This is a real opportunity for people to start to help shape the big decisions, and one which I hope they will take.”

Alex Stewart, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Norfolk said: “We are fully aware that there is no easy fix for the challenges facing the health and care sector and that there will undoubtedly be some difficult discussions that need to take place.

“Healthwatch Norfolk’s principal concern is enabling the public to be fully involved in that process. There has been little opportunity for public involvement until now, so these meetings represent real progress.”
Anyone can provide feedback to Healthwatch on any local health and social care service at any time by visiting [www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/services](http://www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/services)

This includes pharmacies, GPs and NHS dentists, as well as all hospital, mental health, community health, care homes and other social care services.

**AGM**

Thank you to those who attended our AGM at the beginning of October. The event was a great success! We were joined by MOMO theatre who did a fantastic performance on healthy eating for the children of Bignold Primary School. We were also joined by guest speakers William Armstrong (Chair, Healthwatch Norfolk), Alex Stewart (Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Norfolk) and Suzanne Meredith (Deputy Director of Public Health).

PowerPoint presentations are available on our website for those who were unable to attend on the day.
**GP Out of Hours**

We have recently launched a GP Out of Hours and NHS 111 Survey as part of our three ‘priority’ service areas for 2017-2018. The survey is for anyone who has tried to use, or has used, GP Out of Hours and / or the NHS 111 service. We are keen to understand how easy it is for people to access an appointment for an urgent health care need outside of normal working hours.

As always we would really appreciate you taking the time to feedback your experiences to us. Please visit [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/OutofHours111](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/OutofHours111) to take part in the survey online.

If you require a paper version of this survey, please call 01953 856 029 or email [enquires@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk](mailto:enquires@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk)

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**Engagement Team**

Our new engagement team have been getting out and about, touring flu clinics across the county. They have collected nearly 500 reviews in October alone!
Enter and View Visits of Care Homes

Part of Healthwatch Norfolk’s work programme is to carry out Enter and View visits to health and social care services, to see and hear how people experience care. The visits are carried out by our authorised representatives. We can make recommendations or suggest ideas where we see areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service. Equally they can occur when services have a good reputation, so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

We are carrying out a number of visits to care homes over the coming months to look at how the wellbeing of the residents is being catered for.

We will be looking at the environment and surroundings in the care home, the relationship between residents and staff and how residents are involved in decision-making about their activities and food choices.

We will speak to staff and residents about the meals they are served, the care they receive from the staff and the activities which are arranged for them both in the home and within the community.

We will also talk to family members and visitors if they are at the home when we visit.
Get Involved: NHS dental services for children in West Norfolk

We have just begun a project looking at NHS dental services for children and young people (anyone under the age of 18) in West Norfolk. We would like parents/carers to share their experiences with us to understand more about whether services are accessible for children and your views and experiences of your children’s NHS dental care. Your answers will help us to find out what is working well and what needs to be improved. Answers will be shared with those who are responsible for planning and delivering NHS dental services in your area.

Please follow the link to find out more and to complete the survey: [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WNDentalServices](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WNDentalServices)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Fennie Gibbs, Healthwatch Norfolk Information Analyst, as follows:
Have you served in the British Armed Forces?

Healthwatch Norfolk is currently undertaking an evaluation of the acceptability and effectiveness of acupuncture as a treatment for veterans from the British Armed Forces who are living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The ancient Chinese practice of inserting needles into the body is more commonly associated with the treatment of back pain and headaches in the UK, but acupuncture is used across the world for a range of therapeutic and preventative purposes. In the United States, the military use acupuncture to relieve pain and stress for troops both on and off the battlefield.

Naji Malak, co-founder of Norwich based charity Stand Easy, uses these same techniques to treat local veterans experiencing PTSD and has seen the positive effect it can have on the ex-service men and women his organisation supports. Healthwatch Norfolk’s study, funded by the British Acupuncture Council, will now measure the effectiveness of the treatment provided by Stand Easy to identify whether it should become more widely available for veterans across the UK.

The study is open to all Norfolk based veterans of the British Armed Forces who have been diagnosed with PTSD or who feel in a constant state of trauma. Participants will receive all acupuncture sessions free of charge and will just need to answer some simple questions about their experience of using the service.

Veterans who are interested in taking part in the study should contact Stand Easy directly, as follows:

Email: mail@standeasy.org.uk
Telephone: 01603 666546
Website: www.standeasy.org.uk
Address: 64 Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NR
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD Project)

We are currently undertaking a priority project focussed around Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) services. We are looking to gather a greater understanding of people’s experiences of local ASD services across Norfolk. We know that ASD can affect many individuals and families, which can often define what services both them and their child may need and come into contact with. We know that having access to the right help and support at the right time can really make a difference to families. There are many families across Norfolk accessing services in relation to ASD, therefore our primary focus is to understand families’ experiences.

We are interested in hearing the views of parents and carers of children/young people (0-18 years old) with ASD or suspected ASD in Norfolk. We want to understand parents and carers experiences of three areas:

1) Their experiences of accessing any health and social care services across Norfolk (e.g. GP practices and/ or children’s services).

2) Their experiences of accessing ASD specific services:
   - For those who feel their child may have ASD and may need support.
   - For those currently accessing ASD diagnosis services and assessments are underway.
   - For those who have accessed ASD diagnosis services in Norfolk and received an outcome.

3) Their experiences of accessing post diagnostic support and what support they feel they need.

From now until February 2018 we will be looking to engage with parents and carers through a variety of methods to capture their experiences of what has worked well and what has not worked so well. We would like to welcome any parents and carers who would like to be involved in this work to contact us. If you have any questions or just want to understand more about what’s involved, please contact Steph Tuvey on 0808 168 9669 or by emailing steph.tuvey@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk
Healthwatch Norfolk provides signposting across the county and we have recently been developing our awareness of Autistic Spectrum disorder (ASD) services and support locally. At a recent Autism aware event we attended we were made aware of a service Norwich airport provides specifically for individuals with ASD, physical and/or hidden disabilities. Norwich Airport have been working closely with a range of local and national charities to ensure that individuals have fair access and an enjoyable experience using the airport.

Norwich Airport offers free support and familiarisation visits (a tour) to anyone who may have concerns regarding air travel due to physical or hidden disabilities, such as individuals living with ASD, Dementia, Learning Disabilities or Physical Disabilities. Individuals can contact Norwich airport to discuss their concerns and arrange a familiarisation visit. In these visits individuals and families are taken on a tour of the airport demonstrating the process passengers would follow when using the airport to travel by air. This would include climbing on board an aeroplane if there is one available on the day.

Norwich airport has been working in partnership with Autism Anglia and has signed up to the autism charter to commit to making their services autism friendly. As a result airport staff have undertaken ASD awareness training across all departments of the airport to heighten understanding of ASD and how to support individuals.
effectively. During the familiarisation visits individuals and families are given blue wristbands to identify that they have ASD and if families have younger children they also receive a ‘Suzie/Sammy goes on an aeroplane’ story book to take home.

Individuals interested in this free service are advised to contact the PRM services team at Norwich airport on 01603 420672 or by emailing prmservices@norwichairport.co.uk
We would love to hear of your experiences if you use the service in the future.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Improving crisis care together**

Healthwatch Norfolk, the consumer champion for health and social care, is bringing together medical professionals from across the region for a learning event aimed at improving patient care in times of mental health crisis.

Taking place on November 7, the event was set up following a report published by Healthwatch earlier this year entitled ‘*Using urgent and emergency services at times of mental health crisis*’.

Commissioned by NHS England’s Urgent and Emergency Care Network (UECN), this extensive piece of research gathered together experiences from over 680 service users and their families, along with a host of additional insight from local care providers.

The information collected gave a very mixed picture of people’s experiences with a great deal of praise in some areas, along with some troubling accounts in others.

The report found that many different services are being used at times of mental health crisis and the pathway to help and support is not always clear. Almost half of those surveyed did not know who to contact in an emergency and did not currently have a ‘crisis care plan’ in place.

The findings of the report will be presented to service providers and commissioners at next month’s event before discussing how this can be translated into tangible improvements in patient care.

William Armstrong, Chair of Healthwatch Norfolk, said: “It is vital the views and experiences of service users are taken into account.”
“We are doing what we can to ensure the failings in crisis care highlighted in our report are learned from and acted upon.

“Given the CQC’s latest inspection of the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust, it is more imperative than ever that services work together to improve patient care, particularly in times of crisis”.

For more information about Healthwatch Norfolk events, please visit our [website](http://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk).

This newsletter

If you have a suggestion about this newsletter, or something that you would like to be included in a future edition, then please contact [rachel.morris@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk](mailto:rachel.morris@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk)

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