



healthwatch
South Gloucestershire

HANHAM CARERS GROUP

1 MAY 2017

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire attended the Hanham Carers Group run by Bristol and South Gloucestershire Carers' Support Centre

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Healthwatch South Gloucestershire spoke to the carers' group, outlining their role to represent the patient and public voice around health and social care services, and explaining how this information is used to aid improvement and influence service delivery now and in the future.

Bristol and South Gloucestershire Carers' Support Centre runs several carers' support groups, which offer a safe, confidential space for people to meet with other carers and access information. These groups are facilitated by trained staff. An important aspect of the groups is sharing with others how you feel about being a carer, and the experiences you have had.

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire visited the Hanham Carers' Group to:

- inform members about Healthwatch South Gloucestershire
- gather feedback about members' experiences of health and social care services
- share opportunities for members to volunteer with Healthwatch South Gloucestershire.

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire would like to thank the members of the group and Bristol and South Gloucestershire Carers' Support Centre for talking to us.

FEEDBACK FEED FORWARD

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire will share the feedback from Hanham Carers' Group with the local authority, NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and local service providers, in order to help improve services for carers so that they receive the support they need.

You said....

Healthwatch received a range of feedback from the group during our visit, the comments have been broken down by service area as follows (direct quotes are written in **bold**):

General

- The commentator expressed their feeling that overall a good service exists to support carers at GP practices, although there are GPs that lack understanding of mental health conditions.
- Communication is a real issue and problem for carers; **“Health professionals don’t seem to communicate about patients’ needs and history of care”**.
- Commentator stated they were told by their GP that the NHS transport service had gone private on 1 April, the commentator felt this was not communicated to its users and patients.

Orchard Medical Practice

- Commentator stated it took two weeks to get an appointment with their GP about a knee condition which was severely painful. At the appointment the patient felt they needed an X-ray but was told by their GP to “learn to live with it” and that the only thing they could offer was a prescription of morphine.
- Commentator stated there was no support from GPs for their partner, whom they care for, who is experiencing long-term mental health issues.

Hanham Health

- Commentator noted the very good service Hanham Health has for registered carers at the practice.

Willow Tree Surgery

- Commentator stated it takes as much as one month to get an appointment with a requested GP.

Southmead Hospital

- Commentator stated they went for a scan regarding their arthritis at Southmead Hospital, whilst at appointment they were told two different things by two consultants. One consultant said it was fluid in the knee not arthritis, whilst the other said it was severe arthritis. The commentator waited eight weeks for a check-up and then was told nine months until they could have surgery on their knee.
- Commentator said they attended Southmead Hospital for an appointment to have a catheter fitted. When they arrived for their appointment they were told that the hospital had made a mistake and this was an outpatient clinic. The commentator reported the

hospital saying ‘we thought you were a new patient, not an existing one’ therefore they could not fit their catheter that day.

- The commentator, who cares for their partner, often takes them to appointments at Southmead Hospital. “When we are referred to different departments in the hospital, each consultant or member of staff does not know my partner’s medical history, there seems to be no communication so we are having to explain things to every new professional we meet.”

Emersons Green Treatment Centre

- Commentator had knee surgery at Emersons Green Treatment Centre and stated that the care and support they received whilst they were there was perfect.

Breakdown of the comments Healthwatch received

11 comments were received during this visit:



Key themes and recommendations

Listed below are the key themes from the feedback that Healthwatch received. Where possible, recommendations have been made outlining how the learning from these themes can help to shape services and improve patient experience:

Theme one: Communication and information sharing	Comments: Healthwatch received four comments regarding communication, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ lack of communication between health professionals/ departments within an organisation, e.g. Southmead Hospital ❖ reliance upon patients to share information, needs and medical history, rather than service providers having access and awareness of this information ❖ lack of communication to patients and the public about service changes, e.g. new transport provider
	Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Where a patient is accessing different departments within an organisation, a multi-disciplinary approach should be taken to ensure that care is person-centered. This includes maintaining an up to date and comprehensive patient record, and ensuring that referrals are made and the accompanying administration carried out in a timely manner to ensure all parties are informed.

	<p>❖ Where service changes, e.g. a new provider, occurs information should be shared through a wide range of communication channels, including statutory and voluntary sector partners, and through community-based assets. Where it is recognised that a specific audience will be affected, targeted communication should take place to ensure that they are aware. Healthwatch South Gloucestershire can support this through dissemination of information to its network, and via its website and social media.</p>
<p>Theme two: Understanding of mental health within primary care</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Healthwatch received two comments regarding the support available and the level of understanding within primary care around mental health. This is a particular concern for carers where they are supporting someone that is living with mental health problems.</p>
	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Primary care professionals access the support and expertise that is available locally around mental health, including the work of local voluntary sector organisations, e.g. Mind, Rethink, Second Step etc. ❖ Primary care professionals are encouraged and supported to access information services, such as Well Aware (W: www.wellaware.org.uk) to signpost patients and carers to the local services that can help them. ❖ Primary care is engaged with local partners, e.g. South Gloucestershire Council's Public Health team and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, to stay abreast of local mental health projects and the services that are available to patients and their carers. Much of this can be found on South Gloucestershire Council's webpages around mental health and emotional wellbeing W: http://bit.ly/2tSFupD

From the feedback gathered, the following themes were also noted:

- Good practice of supporting carers through primary care, with specific examples noted at Hanham Health.
- Concern around waiting times for GP appointments, with delays ranging from two weeks to one month.
- Errors in appointment administration within secondary care, including patient history and the department that patients were referred to.
- Delays in Referral To Treatment (RTT), with patients given estimated times of up to nine months for a procedure.
- Positive patient experience at Emersons Green Treatment Centre.

Healthwatch will....

The feedback that Healthwatch South Gloucestershire gathers is used to inform Healthwatch Feedback Feed Forward quarterly reports. These highlight themes from the feedback that Healthwatch has received, best practice and areas for improvement. Reports are then shared with key stakeholders and partners, including South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, South Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, South Gloucestershire Council, the Care Quality Commission, NHS England and Healthwatch England.

Where a service is named, Healthwatch will share feedback with them directly to highlight best practice or areas for improvement, and seek a response to the comments that have been received.

The quarterly report is also presented to the Healthwatch South Gloucestershire Advisory Group to propose further uptake of the issues identified. The report will be available on the Healthwatch South Gloucestershire website (www.healthwatchsouthgloucestershire.co.uk) and circulated to our mailing lists via the monthly e-bulletin. To sign-up for the e-bulletin W: <http://healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk/contact/>

Looking forward....

Plans for future work between Healthwatch South Gloucestershire and the Hanham Carers' Group

Healthwatch welcomes and encourages members of the Hanham Carers' Group to continue to contribute their feedback using the communication methods included at the end of this report.

Healthwatch also supports members of community groups to become volunteer champions so that they can represent the experiences and needs of their community group. If you would like to find out more about volunteering with Healthwatch, please contact us using the details below.

Tell Us Your Story...



Text us - text SG followed by your message to 07860 021 603



Email us at info@healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk



Call us: 01454 543 402



Write to us at: Healthwatch South Gloucestershire, The Care Forum, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ

Or visit our website to see more at: www.healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk