

Welcome to Healthwatch Cornwall's February 2015 newsletter.

“Putting you at the heart of health and social care”

“Orth agas gorra yn kres gwith yehe ha socyal”

Remedy for mental health gaps

People visiting their doctor in Cornwall about their mental health should now receive more support.

Research conducted in early 2014 in to how patients with mental health worries felt their GP handled their concerns, and further evidence following the publication of the report in August 2014, indicated a gap in services for people who would not benefit from short interventions but were not seen as severe enough to need acute services help.

Debbie Pritchard, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Cornwall said: “These people inevitably attend GPs for support who have little available to offer them.

“After discussing this with NHS Kernow, they informed us of a new working practice between Cornwall Partnership Trust and Outlook South West whereby they meet regularly to agree the most suitable care for those with this type of need.”

GPs in Cornwall are also meeting monthly to determine that care for a patient is relevant and outcome focussed.

In response to Healthwatch Cornwall's formal recommendations, NHS England said that a more proactive programme of care to benefit those who are most at risk was being implemented, along with a named accountable GP, while Health Education England instigated further training for GPs to include communicating effectively with distressed young adults, and new teaching material for all GPs.

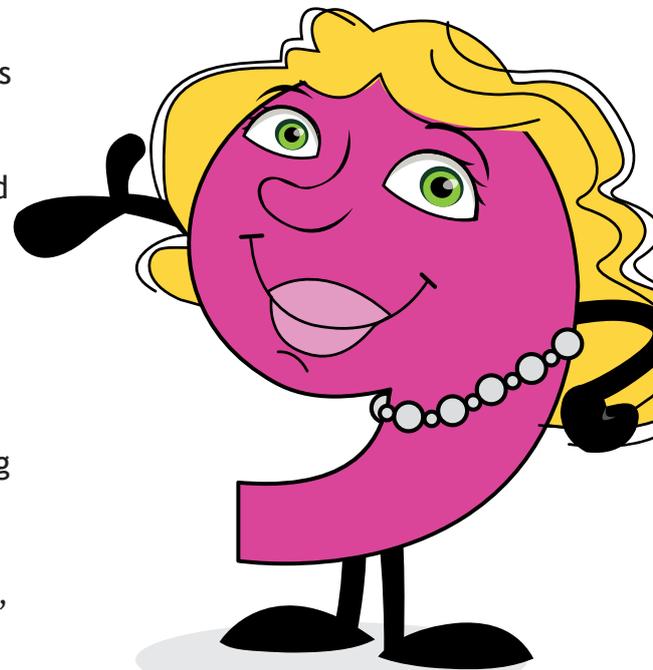
The Education, Health and Social Care directorate explained how mental health is being addressed in pastoral education and its plans to involve public health, the health promotion service and voluntary sector providers in future work, as well as its work with young people and GPs to further Healthwatch Cornwall's recommendation on ensuring appointment-making is much easier for them.

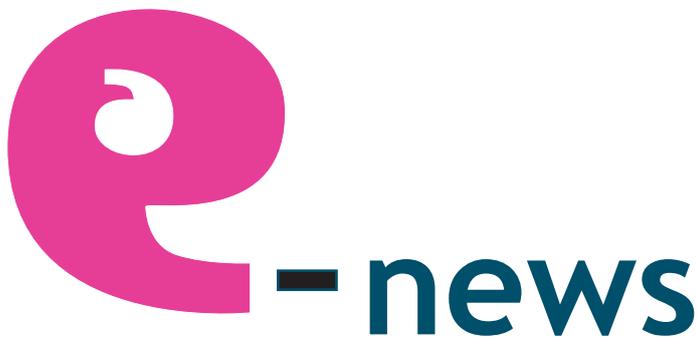
Ms Pritchard added: “It fantastic to see commissioners and providers acting on the feedback people share with us - it is, after all, what Healthwatch Cornwall has been created for.”

Call Healthwatch Cornwall's freephone information line on **0800 0381 281***.

Get in touch to have your say.

*mobile networks may charge





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Working for you

The research into urgent care services in Cornwall is currently being collated and the final report will be available in March.

Enter and View planning took place on February 9 to discuss visits to GP practices. These visits are being conducted in response to feedback people have shared about their ability to book a GP appointment. The network of 152 local Healthwatch organisations when asked by Healthwatch England to outline the biggest health and care issues for local people, identified this problem as the key concern for 2015. Proposals to rectify the problem have included GP drop-in centres in supermarkets or 24 hour access by Skype.

Healthwatch Cornwall is currently finalising a questionnaire it will be using as part of its focus on discharge from hospital following attempted suicide or serious self-harm. Visit www.healthwatchcornwall.co.uk to keep up-to-date with work in progress.

An interim report will be available in March with a focus on feedback from home care providers about the current issues affecting provision in the county. Healthwatch Cornwall is still keen to hear from those working as domiciliary care workers and those being cared-for. You can **share your story** anonymously but all feedback will be used to inform and influence commissioners and providers to bring about improvements where needed.

Transitions from children's to adult health and social care services continues to be a focus for Healthwatch Cornwall. Young people and families can share their experiences of moving on to help Healthwatch Cornwall inform those that commission or provide services of any changes for the better that may be needed.

Visit healthwatchcornwall.co.uk/have-your-say/ or call **0800 0381 281** to share your thoughts and experience.

In February, Healthwatch Cornwall's outreach team and volunteers attended community hospitals and libraries to gather feedback, with a number of new volunteers taking part. Outreach officer Charlotte Gamble said: “We want to say thank you to all of our volunteers for their help and the hospitals and libraries for being so supportive. We have enjoyed meeting people and hearing their stories which all add to our influence when representing people's views.”



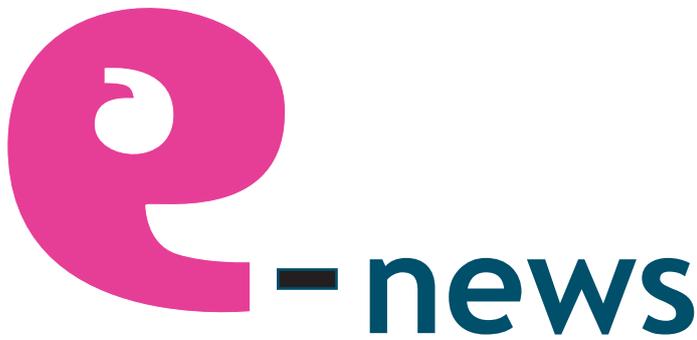
Healthwatch Cornwall - in the news

In February, Healthwatch Cornwall shared the positive response it received from commissioners and providers of mental health services in relation to the recommendations it made in 2014 following its research in to how GPs deal with patients presenting with mental health problems.



This was featured in the **Western Morning News**. Chief Executive Debbie Pritchard also spoke with the BBC and ITV regarding patient discharge problems at the Royal Cornwall Hospital, and staff also took part in the regular Health and Wellbeing Show slot on Pirate 2.

You can hear all about Healthwatch Cornwall on the Pirate 2 digital radio Health and Wellbeing Show - if you didn't catch the February sessions you can listen again at www.pirate2.co.uk.



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Other health and social care news

Following a review by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) in to NHS complaint handling, Healthwatch England’s Chief Executive Dr Katherine Rake has called for a “complete overhaul of the complaints system”. More than a third of probes into deaths or avoidable harm at hospitals were found to be “inadequate”, according to the PHSO investigation.

Dr Rake said: “Our research shows that tens of thousands of people every year are being failed by the NHS and yet never report it because they have no faith the complaints system will make any difference.”

The interim PHSO findings are part of a major review into the way the NHS deals with complaints from patients and their families. Visit www.ombudsman.org.uk for more details.

NHS England has launched a new consultation about how it will prioritise which specialised services and treatments to invest in.

It directly commissions around 145 specialised services and in order to ensure the maximum number of patients benefit from new innovative treatments it needs to make choices about which of these to fund.

Visit www.engage.england.nhs.uk to take part in the survey.

An average of 70 people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly take their own lives each year. To help their family and friends come to terms with this loss, NHS Kernow has commissioned Outlook South West to deliver The Suicide Liaison Service, the only NHS-funded service in England and Wales. It will provide face-to-face contact, information, practical support and guidance to help sort out personal affairs, such as dealing with the Coroner’s Office.

Visit www.outlooksw.co.uk/suicide-liaison-service or call 01208 871905 to find out more.

Have your say about GP services in St Austell by March 15 as part of an NHS England consultation. Proposed changes include the merger of three practices, with potential benefits of doing so including access improvement and continuity of care for patients. Visit www.engage.england.nhs.uk to have your say and influence the outcome.

Speak Up / Out-of-hours

A number of people and organisations have been eagerly awaiting Sir Robert Francis’ **report** about how whistleblowers are treated in the NHS and his proposals to rectify the system to give them more support.

Its publication has caused a stir, including on Healthwatch Cornwall’s Twitter page @HWCornwall. Go to healthwatchcornwall.co.uk to read the full review.

NHS Kernow has announced the new provider for **out-of-hours** as Cornwall Health. This is a social enterprise partnership between Devon Doctors and Kernow Health and will begin in June.

Chief Executive Debbie Pritchard said: “We are pleased the commissioners took into consideration feedback about out-of-hours support that people had shared with us.

“We will continue to monitor the delivery of service to make sure patients receive the best care possible.”

Healthwatch Cornwall will be publishing its Urgent Care survey results in March, of which more than 600 people took part to share their stories.

Events and outreach



#HCsimonsays
Get in touch
today

Are you Young at Heart (but over 65)? Do you feel low or lonely? Then find support at sessions throughout March to boost your health and wellbeing. Visit

www.outlooksw.co.uk/young-heart or call 01208 871904.

Ever wondered what happens in a Forest School session? Find out at Nature Workshop's free Forest School Training Taster Day on March 28 at Idless Woods, near Truro. Email events@natureworkshops.co.uk or call 01209 215211 for more information and to book.

A six week Living with Sight Loss Course will take place, depending on take up, at The Shire Hall in Bodmin from Wednesday, March 18.

The course, run by Action for Blind People, is open to visually impaired people who wish to learn more about services in their area. It will give participants the chance to meet practitioners and organisations who can help them in their everyday life. The course also provides confidence boosting activities and peer-to-peer support.

Email exeter@actionforblindpeople.org.uk, or call 01392 458060 or Ben Gavan on 07738 854842 to book.

Tourettes Action hosts support group meetings in Cornwall for those living with Tourettes Syndrome and their families and friends. The meetings provide a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and refreshments are available. The next meeting will be at Helston Community College on Saturday, March 7 from 11am to 1pm.

Contact ellie@tourettes-action.org.uk for more information and to register for free places.

You can share your health and social care experiences, whether good or bad, with Healthwatch Cornwall by **email**, **online**, or by calling **0800 0381 281***.

*mobile networks may charge

PLEASE NOTE:

The Healthwatch Cornwall freephone information and signposting service uses an answerphone when it is not manned.

Please leave your message or feedback and a member of the team will call back if requested.

In March, Healthwatch Cornwall's outreach team will be focussing on visiting the 10 locations with the lowest feedback results. The aim is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn more about how Healthwatch Cornwall can help to improve health and social care services and to give people the chance to share their experiences of care.

To find out more visit www.healthwatchcornwall.co.uk or call 0800 0381 281*.