

## Coronavirus

During the period (early May to early September 2020) Healthwatch Portsmouth has been striving to provide information to the public about available services and support and to gather feedback on people's experiences of health and social care during this unprecedented period of COVID-19. We have been taking part in online strategic level meetings, being the 'voice of the patient' in discussions and decision making. It has been an extremely challenging period and this will continue for some time while the health and care services and the public adapt to the new way of living and protecting ourselves from COVID-19. We are not yet back in the Healthwatch Portsmouth office in Southsea; all our communication is digital at present and will be until further notice. That, in itself, brings pressures and reduces the social engagement aspect that we all treasure and which provides the opportunity for patients to feel listened to. I have provided a report (below) of the activities that we have undertaken between March and end of June according to the Interim Delivery Plan. We have been busy in July and August working out what is possible in the every changing landscape in health and care services and in relation to staff and volunteer safety and social distancing measures.

[Updated HWP Interim Delivery Plan: March - June 20](#)

We hope later in September to have a (adaptable) workplan for the remainder of the activity year that we can present to Board members for comment and sign-off.

During the summer though I was able to provide 2 quarterly reports to Portsmouth City Council on the previous 6 months' activity (Sept'19 -March '20) and [Annual Report 19-20](#)

NHS services have been through a series of seismic changes since the end of April when we received notice of NHS England's intention to bring some of the hospital-based services for patients, while still observing strict social distancing regulations. HWP has been challenging the NHS Trusts providing care to patients in Portsmouth to ensure that information on the availability of services and how it is provided is kept up to date since so much of what the public were trying to find out was only accessible via websites and social media. We have had notable successes with improvements to patient information provided by 3 providers: Portsmouth Hospitals Trust, Solent NHS Trust and Care UK.

At the end of August NHS England issued a Third Phase response to COVID-19 to Trusts. [NHSE response to COVID-19 Phase 3 letter August 2020](#) - (essentially a return to full provision) A draft summary plan of how NHS Trusts will respond to NHS England's requirements in its Phase 3 response to COVID-19 was due by 1<sup>st</sup> Sept (and final version for DHSC due 21<sup>st</sup> Sept)

Healthwatch England provided a helpful analysis of NHSE's Phase 3 directive and what it means for local Healthwatch [HWE guidance 6.8.20 NHS Third-Phase-response](#)

Many national surveys have run during the COVID-19 period, with the risk to the public of 'survey fatigue' but the local Healthwatch in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area wanted to undertake a specific survey to find out how COVID-19 had affected their access to information and services locally. Here are the results [Hampshire and IOW Covid 19 Healthwatch Survey Report with Portsmouth findings](#)

On a national scale a report has been produced with findings on the impact of COVID-19 on Community Services. The report, written by the NHS Confederation, NHS Providers and Community Network promotes the need for more resourcing of community services. [Impact of COVID 19 on Community Services Aug 20](#)

Further on with this then the NHS has been thinking about its 're-set' period and how it needs to forge a new relationship between NHS, people and communities: learning from COVID-19 [People and communities: NHS Reset, learning from COVID-19](#). We will be looking at this carefully and finding ways to influence decision making on involvement.

Along with NHS England's service re-set planning they have published '*We are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21 - action for us all along with Our People Promise*', which sets out practical action for employers and systems as well as NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England.

It includes specific commitments around:

- Looking after people - with quality health and wellbeing support for everyone
- Belonging in the NHS - with a particular focus on tackling the discrimination that some staff face
- New ways of working and delivering care - making effective use of the full range of skills and experience
- Growing for the future - recruitment and retention, and welcoming back colleagues who want to return

[Visit the NHS England website for more information.](#)

## **Strategic matters**

Healthwatch Portsmouth Board members have been busy representing the views of patients and the public of Portsmouth in a wide range of strategic level meetings across the city during this COVID-19 period, participating in online hosted meetings and calls. We have made an impact with the Shared Assurance Improvement Programme, Mental Health Military Alliance, COVID-19 Mental Health Alliance and its Community Engagement Sub Group, Positive Minds steering group, the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Portsmouth Adults Safeguarding Board, Portsmouth University's graduate health and social care recruitment programme, the University's Patient and Service User Forum, Portsmouth City Council's Health and Wellbeing Board, Portsmouth City Councils' Local Resilience Forum Health Projection Board's Local Engagement Board Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group's Primary Care Commissioning Committee, Solent NHS Trusts' Community Engagement Committee and the Patient Family Carer Collaborative (PHT).

## Operational matters

### Healthwatch Portsmouth Operating Framework 2020

It has not been possible to significantly make progress since the first Task and Finish Group meeting in January with regard to reviewing what Healthwatch Portsmouth does well and could improve upon due to the change in activities that we find ourselves doing during the Coronavirus outbreak. We will resume with the Operating Framework review later in the year and organise for the previously mentioned 'Board and staff member Awayday' to discuss how Healthwatch Portsmouth currently operates in relation to the Framework developed by Healthwatch England and what could be done on areas of weakness.

### Healthwatch Portsmouth Officer - changeover

Maria Ganderton has very recently left Healthwatch Portsmouth and Charolotte Mair has now started as the new Healthwatch Portsmouth Officer. I am sure you will all wish Charlotte a warm welcome.

### Investing in Volunteers - Help and Care's application for approved status

Help and Care, Healthwatch Portsmouth's host organisation applied for the Investing in Volunteers standard. In February a self - assessment was submitted. The assessor's feedback overall was positive. Some actions are needed to meet the standard, such as having a more consistent approach. There are additional actions required that are now being planned for by the small project team at Help and Care. An update is now available [Investing in Volunteers July update](#)

### Healthwatch Portsmouth Volunteers

Have been gathering feedback from their networks and providing intelligence on what is happening locally and the impact that COVID-19 is having on patients' access to local health and care services. In 'mid August a group of our volunteers completed their 'desk based review' of GP Surgery websites in Portsmouth to find out how easy they were to find out key information for patients as well keeping well during COVID. The results are due to be published later in the autumn.

Healthwatch Portsmouth held its online volunteer drop-in events in June and July. We will resume in September with another online meeting until we can meet face to face.

Volunteer recruitment has had to wait while we are in this period of COVID-19.

HWP was proud to have published the community research that was co-produced by the Healthwatch Portsmouth volunteers and staff team on patient awareness in GP surgeries of the new Extended Access Service at Lake Road offering additional GP appointments.

[Extended Access Service research FINAL](#)   [Table 1 graph](#)   [Table 2 results](#)

## Healthwatch Portsmouth's digital reach during COVID 19 period

Month	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Totals
Facebook Page views	251	229	173	89	91	136	100	<b>1069</b>
Facebook New likes	27	10	11	11	3	13	8	<b>83</b>
Facebook Post reach	3,192	246	556	832	469	1,299	411	<b>7005</b>
Facebook Post engagement	507	372	631	760	448	518	143	<b>3379</b>
Twitter Impressions	4,988	4,014	7,397	3,941	7,007	9,307	588	<b>37,242</b>
New Twitter followers	0	6	4	2	9	3	1	<b>25</b>
Twitter Retweets	11	16	8	11	11	3	0	<b>60</b>
Twitter Profile visits	106	106	63	66	40	22	1	<b>404</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9082</b>	<b>4999</b>	<b>8843</b>	<b>5712</b>	<b>8078</b>	<b>11301</b>	<b>1252</b>	<b>49267</b>

### Calls to Healthwatch Portsmouth

I have received information from the Helpline Hub service (provided by Help and Care's Healthwatch Hub team) which receives calls on Healthwatch Portsmouth's landline number. Statistics received so far show that between March and June there were 43 calls directly to Healthwatch Portsmouth asking for information. These were mostly asking for information about access to local dental services.

### Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service

NHS Complaints handling activity in every NHS Trust in England was suspended at the end of March until the end of June, re-starting on 1<sup>st</sup> July. We have continued to support clients between the end of March and end of June with those complaints where they were seeking the support of the Advocate in preparation for submission when the NHS resumed its complaints handling activities. Whilst since the start of July we have seen an upturn in the number of people contacting the service to talk about accessing our support to make NHS complaints we are hearing a reluctance from those callers (who want to make an NHS complaint) feeling it is inappropriate to do so in the current period due to the impact of COVID-19 on society and what the NHS has been doing to care for people, both prevention and response. This is an interesting outcome.

In July the Parliamentary Health Services Ombudsman launched a public consultation on their draft Complaints Standards Framework which has been developed in partnership with a wide range of organisations, to create a single, consistent vision for best practice in NHS complaint handling. The Framework sets out a single set of standards for NHS complaints staff to follow. We have publicised this framework and would still welcome your views until 'mid September. You can comment on the Framework via this link .

The public were encouraged to provide their feedback with Solent NHS Trust setting up a virtual forum to enable local people to connect online and speak to others about their thoughts on the framework. Healthwatch Portsmouth took part in this online stakeholder engagement event at the end of August. We were the only local NHS Complaints Advocacy service attending. From the discussions we have concluded that it is not a well-known service locally even to those voluntary sector organisations providing advocacy support to their local community.

## Mental Health

### COVID-19 Mental Health Alliance for Portsmouth and South East Hampshire

At the end of April Solent NHS Trust invited partners in the city to help develop a 'Wellbeing and Recovery Strategy', working with partners from the commercial and business sector, emergency services, health and social care, 3rd sector organisations and police and criminal justice services. Healthwatch Portsmouth have been Healthwatch Portsmouth will monitor develops of services and approaches and report to subsequent Board meetings.

Update from Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group's Primary Care Commissioning Committee's Board meeting in July on the Mental Health Assessment Unit (MHAU):

Supporting Mental Health Patients to receive support from the right skill set, in the right place at the right time, first time. Primarily to establish a longer-term Mental Health Assessment Unit Aims and objectives of MHAU service

- To provide a 24/7 safe and supportive alternative space to emergency departments for individuals experiencing an episode of mental health distress who require an enhanced mental health assessment and crisis intervention
- SCAS and the Police to provide advice and guidance for individuals who require their mental state to be assessed in a suitable environment rather than presenting at the Emergency Department.
- To provide a facility for a mental health assessment for service users who attend the unit with a mental health crisis.
- To facilitate timely discharge from the S136 Suits, once service users are deemed medically fit, and therefore reducing number of breaches that can be attributed to delays in accessing appropriate mental health interventions.
- Where appropriate and within the Mental Health Act Code of Practice, provide a more conducive environment for further assessment and support
- Staff operating within the MHAU will liaise closely with Crisis teams to optimise opportunities for crisis intervention and crisis resolution, and provide alternatives to admission wherever possible.
- To facilitate extended comprehensive multi-disciplinary/multi-agency assessment for service users with a complex presentation and/or diagnosis.

#### Crisis Project:

The final details of this project are still to be scoped out. Outlined below describes the previous scope of the project (which was paused in Nov 2019). This project is very closely related to the MHAU and will need to consider the Mental Health ED redirect capability.

Previous Scope of Project: This project will aim to combine the Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Solent NHS Trust crisis functions into a single service model that improves responsiveness and consistency for adults of all ages across the PSEH footprint. This may include:

- a. 24/7 needs led crisis service with response time standards
- b. Home treatment as an alternative to admission
- c. Same service for everyone living in Portsmouth and South East Hants
- d. Self-referral to support self-determination of crisis
- e. Support for carers
- f. Peer support to promote recovery and hope
- g. A supported workforce with the right skills to deliver person centred support and empower self-care

HWP have been concerned about the speed of development of the COVID-19 Mental Health Alliance activities, that Portsmouth City Council's Local Outbreak Plan didn't include a plan for mental health which we feel is an omission. We feel that the Local Resilience Forum didn't have sufficient attention paid to support mental health recovery and that the COVID-19 Mental Health Alliance's action response to the Healthwatch Portsmouth critique lacked measurable outputs and outcomes. We have taken our concerns to the July meeting of the COVID-19 Mental Health Alliance Communications and Engagement Sub Group.

## **Positive Minds**

The Positive Minds drop-in service has just re-opened in Portsmouth and is receiving referrals from In regard to referrals to Positive Minds, referrals are received via all of those routes you mentioned, although often the care navigators and social prescribers will supply the patient with a self-referral form.

## **Community**

### **Portsmouth CCG MCP Board update:**

We met in early August with the facilitator of the Multi-speciality Community Provider (MCP) project Board to receive an update about the projects they are concentrating on during the emergence from COVID-19:

- An integrated Primary Care supporting the Out Of Hours and Extended Access Service's new clinical advisory service with increased GP appointments which complements the drive locally to encourage patients to contact 111 first to receive a booked appointment for their non-life threatening urgent care need.
- MSK Triage Service - the hugely popular service which has relieved demand on GP surgeries is due to re-start soon offering direct patient access to physiotherapy.
- Enhanced Care Home support project - offering GP or nurse-led proactive support for care homes. This service, which was offered remotely during the COVID-19 crisis period, virtually via telephone and video consultations has been extremely helpful. The telehealth equipment that had been purchased in December 2019 has been so very useful in care homes to help monitor residents' health.

- Future plans include a reviewed Long Term Conditions Hub and a ‘Serious Leg Ulcer clinic’, both of which had been paused in March due to COVID-19. The MCP Board will look at the early findings from delivery of the Hub since opening last December and develop an improved model. HWP has been asked to take part.

## Dental Services in Portsmouth

We received a copy of an update from NHS England’s Wessex area Dental Committee that was prepared for Portsmouth City Council’s Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel regarding the awarding of new dental contracts further to the procurement process earlier in the year:

“We have received and evaluated bids for contracts to provide general dental services in the city and following this process have identified preferred bidders. There has been a delay in awarding the contracts due to managing the response to Covid-19 but we are now continuing the process and aim to award contracts by the end of July.

This is some 6 weeks later than originally planned due to consideration of wider procurement issues and the impact of COVID-19 on NHS capacity. It was originally envisaged that the successful bidder would have 3-6 months to mobilise the new contracts and start to deliver services. However, as a result of COVID-19, and the potential financial impact to providers, it will be necessary to undertake additional due diligence. This is to ensure that preferred bidders are still in a position to proceed and to assess any revision to mobilisation timescales in light of the impacts of COVID-19 (e.g. delayed building works, workforce issues etc).

This will be completed in discussion with the preferred bidders to enable the resilient provision of services at the earliest possible time and therefore aim to avoid the need to enter into a re-procurement process. The timeline for contract start is as yet unknown and cannot be determined until discussions have taken place with the preferred bidders and COVID-19 impacts are understood.”

## Primary Care

Extended Access Service - Healthwatch Portsmouth community based research on patient awareness has been received by the CCG and they are circulating the report to generate a discussion about the key learning from the research findings - namely that a more robust publicity campaign would have been preferable in order to have reached at least the target audience (patients waiting in GP surgeries for primary care appointments). We hope to return to the GP surgeries later in the year but due to COVID-19 and social distancing requirements it is not possible to know yet if we will be able to organise face to face community based research.

[Extended Access Service - Healthwatch Portsmouth research 19-20](#)

[Extended-Access-Service-research-19-20 Table 1 graph](#)

[Extended Access Service research 19-20 Table 2 \(results\)](#)

NHS England have stated in their Phase 3 response to COVID-19 that Primary Care services in GP surgeries are to restore activity to usual levels where clinically possible and reach out to clinically vulnerable people whose care may have been delayed during COVID-19 to provide care where is needed. In Portsmouth, there are 2 GP branch sites which remain closed but plans are in place for them to re-open. All main surgery sites are open and available for patients to be seen face to face where required. The NHS letter was very clear that face to face appointments must continue to be offered as well as digitally based appointments in GP surgeries to meet the needs of patients.

## **Primary care services during covid-19 period - an update from the CCG:**

For the Acute Visiting Service the CCG has worked with the service and infection control colleagues to put in place new procedures and measures so that the service can safely attend patients in their own residence whether they are suspected of having Covid-19 symptoms or not, ensuring the service could respond to all home visiting demand during the pandemic.

The Extended Access Service at Lake Road has continued to operate throughout the duration of the pandemic, continuing to remotely triage patients over the phone and see those patients who require a physical examination. This was by adopting a hot and cold zoning within the site and in line with the GP practice policy at Lake Road. The service has focussed on seeing acute, same-day demand; however, we are currently in discussion with practices in the city about how best to transition to more routine appointments being made available via the extended access service (we just need to ensure this is done in a sensible way that mitigates the potential risk of spreading covid).

Practices are still seeing patients face to face where something could not be done remotely. The NHS England letter detailing its Phase 3 response to COVID-19 asks that all Primary Care services are to be resumed as much as possible from September onwards, encouraging surgeries to reach out to those patients who were considered clinically vulnerable and have been shielding a will need encouragement to engage again (from a safe distance) in society and access health/care services.

## **Secondary Care (and community based care)**

### **Carers**

During the Coronavirus outbreak the Carers Centre report that they are in touch with clients who have requested weekly or fortnightly welfare telephone calls to them by a Carers Centre staff member.

Here is the August update we received from the Carer Centre which we uploaded onto our website

[Portsmouth Carers Centre update August 2020](#)

## Providers

### Portsmouth (University) Hospitals Trust

#### Update on the Government's published final reply on the Urgent and Emergency Care Clinical Standards review since March:

We were expecting the final report of the NHSE clinical standards review this week but heard that there was some back and forth between DHSC and No 10 about when to publish it. HWE were told that the reply needs to be published when parliament is sitting, and with parliament going into recess at the end of July it is likely to be September when there is a publication date.

As far as Healthwatch England can tell for their discussions with NHS England on the findings of the national report we helped to produce it would appear that a plan to drop the use of the 4 hour wait target will ahead, with the Royal College of Emergency Medicine having dropped their opposition to the initial proposals. There are other, more detailed adjustments such as separating out the mean time in department measure for admitted and non-admitted patients, and an added measure for time to assessment (with a threshold for patients assessed within 15 mins), something that Healthwatch England had been keen to see changed.

#### Portsmouth Hospitals Trust awarded 'University Trust' status: 29.07.2020

A statement from the Trust:

The newly named Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust (PHU) will continue to provide high quality, compassionate care while driving further improvements in research and education. This is a watershed moment with two of the most important institutions in the city working in partnership to provide significant benefits to patients, students and colleagues in the local community.

Achieving university hospital status is the first step in a long-term programme that will enhance research partnerships to drive innovation and develop new treatments more quickly, as well as investing further in academic partnerships to strengthen the future workforce.

To enhance the strategic links, I have been appointed to the Trust as an Associate Non-Executive Director and Mark Cubbon, Chief Executive of PHU, will be appointed as an external Governor of the University from 1 August. These appointments demonstrate the continued commitment by both organisations to strengthening our existing 10-year relationship even further. The University's flag will be flown alongside the NHS Trust flag at Queen Alexandra Hospital. This is an important symbol of our commitment to improving health, wellbeing and opportunities for our local communities across Portsmouth and South East Hampshire.

## **Portsmouth Hospitals Trust Emergency Department (ED) Transformation Plan - update on progress**

Healthwatch Portsmouth will resume involvement in the development of the ED Transformation project, inputting patient family and carer perspective, once the current pressures due to the Coronavirus pandemic for QA Hospital have eased and the trial phase for the NHS 111 First service has been completed. (see below)

### **NHS111 First: Early Mover site: Portsmouth (University) Hospitals Trust**

Healthwatch Portsmouth were first informed in June by PHUT about their plan to host the national trial for the 111 First scheme for improving patient access to non-life threatening urgent care services in an Emergency Department, reducing the risk of patient infection from COVID-19 by practicing social distancing in the department and reducing overcrowding in A&E waiting areas. The scheme comprised of Phase 1 (in early July testing the new system) and Phase 2 (September onwards - communicating with the public about the new way to access urgent care services in hospital).

We have been involved in very detailed discussions with the Chief Nurse about the way in which the service is being developed and communicated to the local population. We have been specific about our concerns for a potentially negative patient experience in the early weeks of the trial while systems are put into place and a comprehensive communications campaign is launched in the likely patient catchment area for PHUT.

The Manager prepared a [briefing to HWP Board members on Early Mover site at QA Hosp for NHS111First](#) in which we raised concerns and asked if these could be addressed by PHUT with a re-assessment of how to implement the new scheme or from the evidence gathered during trial days showing the new system can work. We are waiting for additional information from both PHUT and the NHS England 111 First trial team. We will provide further updates to the Board on this important new scheme for patients in Portsmouth to access urgent care services in QA Hospital's A&E Department.

We understand that NHS England is keen for a national roll-out of the scheme to be done by the end of 2020.

## **Solent NHS Trust**

### **Chief Executive Secondment to NHS England and Improvement**

We have just heard today that Sue Harriman, Chief Executive of Solent NHS Trust has been seconded to the national NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) team to work with the COVID-19 Vaccination Team for between 4 and 6 months. Sue is delighted to have been asked to contribute to the national effort to combat COVID-19. While Sue is on secondment, the Deputy Chief Executive at Solent, Andrew Strevens has been asked to step up to the Chief Executive role while Sue is away. Many congratulations to Sue!

### **Chief Medical Officer**

Healthwatch Portsmouth was invited to attend the stakeholder event in March which formed part of the selection process for the Director level role of Chief Medical Officer. Healthwatch Portsmouth asked questions about patient engagement.

The new Chief Medical Officer at Solent was appointed in July. Dr Dan Baylis comes from the University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) where he is a consultant physician, working in medicine for older people. Dan also led the Emergency Department at Southampton General Hospital. He has a strong passion for providing the very best quality of care and will be a tremendous support to our outstanding team of staff. We met Dan in early September and discussed patient engagement, the importance of influencing service planning and his passion for providing the best quality of care for patients across the Portsmouth & SE Hants Integrated Care Partnership area.

### **Solent Trust Community Engagement programme**

HWP meet online in early April with the Associate Dir Patient Experience and Chief Nurse and heard about the following:

Solent Trust is working closely with carers to provide support during this particularly difficult time. Solent will have a closed feedback gathering/issues raising session to find out what carers need now and to structure future support for carers.

[Solent NHS Engagement Event 31st July report](#)

Another meeting is planned for early September.

## **Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust**

Southern Health's new chief executive, Ron Shields is being introduced to local Healthwatch today at a meeting earlier in the day! We are told that Ron is an experienced NHS leader, who led Dorset HealthCare to an 'outstanding' CQC rating.

## **Portsmouth City Council**

Portsmouth City Council has been responding to the Coronavirus outbreak with a dedicated team to support the city's needs, spearheaded by the Local Resilience Forum. Here is link to the information page that is regularly updated:

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19> Details of which services have been suspended and those that continue appear here.

As members of the Health and Wellbeing Board we have been written to with details of proposed changes to the operating model at the Clinical Commissioning Group and City Council. Dr Linda Collie will be providing some more information to the meeting and be available to answer questions that Board members will have and receive your feedback.

Here is a link to the proposal document

[Health and Care Portsmouth proposal to change Operating Model](#)

Senior Management changes in Portsmouth Health and Care:

Following a review of director-level roles in our Directorate, Angela Dryer, Director of Adult Care has made the decision to leave adult services and the council after some 20+ years in PCC. Angela will leave her current role on the 30th September. Andy Biddle has been appointed as Director of Adult Care, leading the delivery of adult social care services for Portsmouth. Andy will start this role on 1st August with Angela stepping away from the day to day operations and undertake some strategic work prior to leaving.

To support the further integration of health & care, Jo York will be the Deputy Chief of Health & Care Portsmouth from 1st August, acting as the formal deputy to Innes Richens, Chief of Health and Care. Jo York will lead the implementation of the transformation work programme required by Portsmouth CCG and Portsmouth City Council adult care to deliver and refresh the Portsmouth Blueprint and integrated commissioning. Below is a diagram, showing the senior level structure in Portsmouth Health and Care.

[Health and Care Portsmouth Directorate Senior Structure July 2020](#)

**Care homes:** new national guidance on visiting care homes can be found [Here](#)

The main points include:

Prior to visits being allowed in care homes, the Director of Public Health in each Local Authority should disseminate their view on the suitability of visiting in their area taking into account infection rates and the wider risk environment.

This process of considering visitors should be led by the relevant local director of public health, who should give a regular professional assessment of whether visiting is likely to be appropriate within their local authority, taking into account the wider risk environment.

To limit risk, where visits do go ahead, this should be limited to a single constant visitor, per resident, wherever possible. This is in order to limit the overall numbers of visitors to the care home and the consequent risk of infection.

Where, for whatever reason and at any time, an individual or group of care homes is/are considered to need to restrict visiting, either temporarily or permanently, the director of public health should communicate this advice in writing to commissioners of all the relevant care homes, or in the absence of a commissioner, direct to the registered manager as quickly as possible.

The care home's visiting policy should be made available and/or communicated to residents and families, together with any necessary variations to arrangements due to external events. To further support providers, the Care Provider Alliance have published a sector-led [protocol for enabling visiting](#) based on this model.

In the event of an outbreak in a care home and/or evidence of community hotspots or outbreaks leading to a local lockdown, care homes should rapidly impose visiting restrictions<sup>2</sup> to protect vulnerable residents, staff and visitors.

HWP received PCC's draft guidance for homes in Portsmouth, made comments and recommendations about notification of relatives, carers friends of the rules, how the info was to be communicated, in good time, asking for feedback from visitors if they felt it was safe, and asked for PCC to ask more rigorous questions about risk assessment. We hope that these have proved useful for the Council.

## Homelessness

With the announcement 'mid March that there was additional Government funding (see link below) we have been able to find out from our contacts at the Homelessness Unit in Portsmouth that an extension to the out of hours cover has been provided from the beginning of April in view of the Coronavirus pandemic. Hotel accommodation had been secured from 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/3-2-million-emergency-support-for-rough-sleepers-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Healthwatch was seeking news from PCC about ensuring that homeless people and rough sleepers are considered both in the COVID-19 response and beyond. PCC's Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023 remains on their website without an update. The Health and Wellbeing Board meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> June discussed the need to align the strategies of homelessness and rough sleeping and having a twice yearly report back to HWB. But it didn't report back on what actual support was being given to homeless/rough sleepers during COVID and what was planned for the future. So Healthwatch Portsmouth asked for a briefing from the Homelessness Unit in August:

We were told that at new Homelessness Healthcare Team comprising of GPs, nurse practitioners and Mental Health nurses, a psychologist, health navigator and peer mentor (focussing on mental health and substance misuse support) has been put in place in the city since the spring.

A combined support team from Solent NHS Trust, East Shore GP Partnership, Society of St James' and Two Saints created a multi-disciplinary team supporting a homeless day service next to Hope House Hostel. During the COVID-19 crisis period it was not

possible to retain this co-located team. Two hotels in the city (from the IBIS chain) were commissioned by Portsmouth City Council to provide accommodation for 220 homeless people in the city. Nurse-led clinics were set up with screening for blood-borne viruses, TB and hepatitis C. Due to the IBIS Hotel's anti-smoking policy in hotel rooms and the sprinkler enacted smoke detection system that was operating in the hotel there were some early problems when the recently accommodated homeless people continued to smoke in the hotel. A total of 80 vaping starter kits were offered to the new residents with 14 people stopping smoking altogether. As a result of the need to social distance the original arrangements at Hope House Hostel of accommodating up to 27 people in 7 rooms overnight has had to be reviewed with plans for the provision of 7 single rooms at the hostel when it is possible to re-open the hostel. Anyone wishing to stay at the hostel will be tested for COVID-19 prior to permission being given for an overnight stay. There are plans to provide 24/7 support for homeless people with the combination of provision from the Homeless Day Centre (9am - 4pm) Rough Sleepers Initiative provision (4pm - 9pm during which time an evening meal is provided) and the homelessness night shelter (9pm - 9am) to avoid the previous problem of homeless people having nowhere to go between 4pm and 9pm. We await further details but applaud the very significant support of Portsmouth CC's Homelessness's Unit during COVID-19. HWP has asked to receive information about the Unit's Outreach Team to publish on our website. Today we have heard the fantastic news that the Council will house all 200 homeless people in empty student accommodation in the city.

## **Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainability and Transformation Partnership - transition proposal to become an Integrated Care System**

Healthwatch Portsmouth had been informed that the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (HIOW STP) would be providing a formal proposal for a transition from the Partnership to become an Integrated Care System covering the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area, including Portsmouth. We had wanted to send out details of the proposal to our Healthwatch Portsmouth membership, our Board members and upload the documentation on our website and social media platforms, encouraging feedback from the public but to date we have not received a copy of the proposal on which feedback is required from Healthwatch Portsmouth towards the end of September.

### **Ends**

8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Siobhain McCurrach, Healthwatch Portsmouth Project Manager.

[www.healthwatchportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchportsmouth.co.uk)