

Healthwatch Bucks Feedback Report: Bringing Care Closer to Home Events, January-February 2018

Patients and the public must be at the heart of shaping the services of the future to ensure that the decisions made are the right ones.

Background and approach

In January and February 2018, the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust ran a series of six events. Attendees were told that Bucks Healthcare Trust would share progress to date on the community hubs in Thame and Marlow (where pilots are taking place). The Trust also wanted to hear views on plans for rolling out care closer to home in other parts of the county.

A representative of Healthwatch Bucks attended each meeting to help us understand patient views and to look at the approach used.

Each meeting followed the same format with a presentation about developing care closer to home, updating on the progress made since the first set of engagement events took place in 2016, on the basis of which a vision for community hubs was developed and two pilot sites started, and a film “Jean’s Story” about Jean’s experience of being treated at one of the pilot community hubs. This was followed by table discussions feeding back on what they liked and did not like from what they had heard about during the presentations and providing further thoughts and input into what a hub for their locality could look like.

What we heard

Attendance was very varied ranging from around 6 (High Wycombe) to around 50 (Thame and Buckingham). For more comments on attendance see next section. Overall the response from attendees was positive although there were some challenges to the model.

Discussion themes varied depending on the local area, however there were some key themes discussed:

- **Local resources** and community services and how these could support hubs
- **Location** - how hubs could be based across multiple locations (pop up services for example)
- **Transport** to and from hubs - and how this was going to work
- **Communication** about hubs - people wanted to know more both in areas with and without hubs
- **Voluntary Sector** - Working with the voluntary sector and how to take this forward
- **Service Provision** - who provided what services where
- **Access** to hubs - for the community and GP referrals/walk in/self-referral and signposting. People wanted to be able to self refer to hubs.
- **Financing and staffing** - given funding constraints and staff shortages how this would work

- **Data Sharing** between services - to allow truly integrated treatment at a hub

Particular focus areas for each locality included:

- **Buckingham** - location particularly in the context of the plans around the local surgery;
- **Thame** - boundary issues with Oxford
- **Marlow** - communications to the local community about the hub and developing a single information source to help people access services
- **High Wycombe and Stoke** - services that would be provided given that residents had such easy access to hospital services (and MIU for High Wycombe)
- **Wycombe** - diversity- how to create a community hub which genuinely serves the needs of such a diverse community
- **Chalfont St Peter** - the use of Chalfonts and Gerrards Cross Hospital and the large geographical area involved with associated transport challenges.

Healthwatch Bucks View

The events were professionally run. They benefitted particularly from:

- The engaging styles of the main presenters coupled with genuine commitment
- The compelling video about Jean's story
- Strong messaging around what works for you - the focus being on local need
- Listening to what was said and the use of a round table format to encourage participation
- Generally positive and constructive attitudes around the concept of hubs from participants
- Clarity of message, clear slides with little or no jargon or acronyms
- Good engagement from participants and constructive suggestions.

We would note the following areas as having potential for further development:

- **Diversity** - This was limited - all attendees appeared to be over 50 and almost all were white British in appearance and most were women. We understand the events are being supplemented by other activities which will talk to those not represented - this needs to include working age families as well as those more traditionally considered to be underrepresented.
- **Service Delivery** - people are genuinely confused about who provides what services where - a clearer explanation of this would help underpin constructive conversation about what should form part of a hub and what should be delivered elsewhere.
- **Benefits** - the data provided did not substantiate the longer-term benefits of the hub from a systems perspective - i.e. in terms of better outcomes or better use of resources. Greater

clarity around this would help answer challenges around financing, resources and bed removal.

- **Logistics** - looking at how the hubs work at a practical level in terms of transport and access - this was a key concern for users and links into the point below
- **Vision** - the current hub pilots are testing an aspect of the concept as described below with a focus on frailty and access via GP referral. These engagement events should support planning to deliver the broader vision in line with the needs of local communities.

Community hubs: The hubs will provide a local base for community staff and will help patients to access prevention services (Live Well, Stay Well), primary care services (as appropriate) and hospital services (such as outpatient appointments, wound care or diagnostic testing) that people may have previously had to travel to.

Bucks Healthcare Trust Leaflet

- **Communications** to areas where hubs are already in the pilot phase still needs improvement, despite engagement via a stakeholder group. In areas where a hub is planned communication needs to be enhanced so people can continue to be engaged around the idea rather than waiting another year for the next iteration.
- **Integration** - the meetings were very focussed on the community hubs primarily delivered by Bucks Healthcare Trust. There could have been opportunities to set the community hub activity in the context of integration as a whole and the overarching story to be told around Health and Social Care in Buckinghamshire.

We look forward to understanding how engagement around these important developments in health and social care is going to continue; what is happening with the feedback from these events; and how the conversation with local communities will continue.

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