

Healthwatch East Sussex High Weald Listening Tour

June 2019

Overview and summary of findings

Report Date: 28th November 2019

For: East Sussex Health & Wellbeing Board meeting on 10th December 2019

Healthwatch East Sussex *High Weald* Listening Tour

A Listening Tour is a programme of extensive engagement activity developed to generate diverse and inclusive public feedback on their experiences of health and care services, including the wider social determinants of health.

Over two weeks in June 2019, Healthwatch East Sussex (HWES) visited various locations centred around Crowborough in the High Weald area of East Sussex.

The area falls within the Wealden District Council borders and is mostly within the High Weald Lewes & Havens Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) area, with some overlap with the Hastings & Rother CCG area.

As with previous Listening Tour activity, we looked at data that already exists, such as Public Health East Sussex information. We also undertook *Community Observation Walks* to inform our engagement planning and delivery.

The High Weald area has a large number of elderly residents who enjoy relatively good health outcomes and life expectancy, compared to other parts of the county and indeed the rest of the UK.

However, according to Public Health records, residents in the Wealden ward of Hailsham East have the highest levels of health problems and disabilities in East Sussex at 39% compared to a 21% average across the county.

The High Weald has one of the lowest percentages of households able to access a GP within 15 minutes by public transport and has the lowest percentage of residents accessing East Sussex NHS general dental services.

Emergency admissions for accidents and injuries, and for falls injuries in older people are similar to the rest of the County. The High Weald has one of the lowest percentages of unpaid carers providing 20 hours or more care per week.

Delivering a rural Listening Tour

To assist with the logistics of delivering a rural Listening Tour and raise the profile of Healthwatch East Sussex (HWES) in the area, we enlisted help from 'Chatty Van' a mobile engagement resource that *Healthwatch Cumbria* hire out.

'Chatty Van' visited Crowborough, Heathfield, Mayfield, Wadhurst, Ticehurst, Burwash, Forest Row and Groombridge, at different days and times during the two weeks in June 2019.

Partnering with colleagues in the voluntary sector, our outreach teams visited: Nutley, Stonegate, Burwash Common and Hartfield.

The **key benefit** for undertaking this activity is the unique value of the insight gathered. The vast majority of people we engaged with have rarely if ever given feedback about the health and care services they use or heard of HWES.

Crunching the Numbers

Engagement opportunities:

- 23 different events over 16 different locations
- 7 NHS Dental Practices
- 4 Community Pharmacies (Wadhurst, two in Crowborough and Heathfield)

Total 34

Partner involvement

We were delighted to work with a diverse range of **25** partners including:

- Staff from statutory organisations such as East Sussex County Council (ESCC), NHS and Wealden District Council
- CQC Inspectors and Managers
- Representatives from the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS); and
- Private sector businesses

We Listened to the views of

- A total of **407 local people** completed our mini and more detailed surveys
- **62 local people** when we visited seven NHS Dental practices in the area; and
- 4 Community Pharmacists
- We held conversations with an additional **240 local people** who declined to complete a survey
- On Social Media activity - our messages reached **over 9,000** people

Our Findings

What we heard

- A significant minority of people in the area spoke about having private health insurance, therefore not always accessing NHS services
- A lot of praise for local community hospitals (Crowborough and Uckfield) by well-informed residents
- Access to GPs featured often in the responses, with a mix of positive and critical reviews, where many people found it difficult to get an appointment
- Local pharmacies received positive mentions, they are valued by local people in the area for not only administering prescriptions but for advice, information sharing and acknowledgement of the role they play in supporting GPs and A&E departments
- During conversations with people around Adult Social Care most (57%) said in the event they became frail or disabled, family members would care for them, and 41% said that 'Family' members would pay if they needed to live in a care home

How did people share their feedback with us?

We asked people to complete a mini survey relating to the NHS and Adult Social Care (ASC), or spend more time to complete a longer survey about their experiences using services, or the experiences of the person they cared for.

- **365 people** completed our Mini Survey.

Some of the top answers include:

What's the best thing about the NHS?

- Top answer was 'Free at the point of entry' with 32% followed by 'Accessible to all' at 16% and third was the 'Dedicated staff' at 11%.

What's the worst thing was about the NHS?

- The top response was 'Waiting times' 25% followed by 'Underfunded 9.3 %' and 'Understaffed' 6.3%

What one change would improve the NHS?

- Joint top was 'More staff' and 'More funding' both 9.5 %. Third was 'Improve communication' where people listed improving communication within NHS systems and more joining up of services with local councils.

We also asked about Adult Social Care services;

If you or someone you care for become frail or disabled, who would look after you?

- 207 (57%) said 'Family'
- 53 (14%) said NHS,
- 31 (8%) said Friends
- 21 (6%) Council
- 38 (10%) said they 'Don't know).

Who would pay if you needed to live in a care home?

- 119 (41%) said Family
- 62 (21%) said Don't know
- 42 (14%) said Council
- 39 (13%) said *other; and
- 25 (9%) said NHS

**Where respondents ticked 'other' most common responses here was 'myself'*

What one change would help you to live at home for as long as possible?

- 107 (48%) people said - Care services at home; NHS and ASC
- 31 (14%) said 'Equipment and home adaption; and
- 25 (115) said Money - more investment in services

Headline responses to the supplementary Rural Village survey

42 people completed the full Listening Tour survey, 11 (28%) declared themselves as a carer.

34 (94%) had used local services in the past six months which included:

- 31 (91%) GP
- 22 (65%) Local Dentist
- 23 (68%) Local Pharmacy
- 12 (35%) Acute hospital services such as outpatients, clinics and A&E

When asked which acute hospital they used, the following responses received were:

- 10 visited Eastbourne District General Hospital (EDGH), some returning patients
- 5 visits to the Conquest Hospital in Hastings (including 1 attendance at the Maternity unit)
- 2 visits to Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury
- 1 to William Harvey hospital in Ashford
- 1 visit to Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath; and

- 1 visit to Uckfield Community Hospital

The survey went on to ask about how satisfied people were with the services they used, whether they found it easy to access information and advice they needed about health and care services and being able to access the right care and support when needed.

Responses were largely positive from people regarding satisfaction with the service and access to information. *Accessing the right care and support when needed was divided with a 57% response strongly agree/agree and the remaining, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and a small number strongly disagreed.*

The service receiving the most positive responses was patients visiting their GP service with 25 (87%) very satisfied or satisfied.

There is more data available in the full report, this is just a flavour of some of the responses.

New for 2019

We included in the Listening Tour a short review of **NHS Dentists** in the area, eight High Street practices were identified and seven were visited using HWES's enter and view duties. (One practice declined).

Our research data on dental practices in the area indicated, not everyone had positive experiences

- accessing NHS dentist treatment; and
- received high quality treatment.

Mystery shopping research we conducted also indicated that patients did not always receive high quality, up to date information on:

- how to access emergency dental care; and
- information explaining the different charging bands.

To gather further insight, follow up visits by our Authorised Representatives were made to the NHS Emergency Dental Service in Eastbourne over a two-week period in August.

Key findings from all the visits will be included in the full **Listening Tour report** when it is published in January 2020. This paper represents a short summary of all the Rural Listening Tour activity.

Healthwatch East Sussex
28th November 2019.