

Healthwatch Lincolnshire

Thematic Statement from the November report regarding:	Patient Comments related to :Dental, Mental health, ULHT and Social Care
In response to:	Patient feedback Healthwatch Lincolnshire representative internal feedback
Date prepared:	14 th January 2019
Statement circulation for response	Lincolnshire East, South, South West and West Clinical Commissioning Groups, Lincolnshire County Council

Why is Healthwatch Lincolnshire bringing this to your attention?

HWL believes that it is our role as the independent public voice to continue to raise concerns. Whilst we appreciate that many, if not all of these issues raised, will not be new, we are mindful that we are not seeing changes in the experiences of patients, carers and service users we talk to in the ‘here and now’.

It is for these reasons we are raising these issues with your organisation. This paper includes questions which we believe are in the interest of the public, and also services and commissioners as they provide a mechanism for dialogue.

1. Dental, irrespective of the circumstances around the reasons for closure the issues appear to be:

- Communication - with patients, patients are given a variety of numbers some of which are inaccurate causing confusion and anxiety for patients, the number for PALS on the last communication for Bupa in Mablethorpe was incorrect.
- Communication - practices that patients have been signposted to need to be readily prepared to talk to patients.
- Communication - Closed lists for dentists is something we hear shouldn't happen, how should practices be explaining this to patients?

What has HWL done already?

We have shared for some time our concerns about the fragile dental services for parts of our county. We currently share feedback with NHSE, LDN and going forward with the Dental Alliance.

How do we feel it affect patients?

We are frequently told how important oral health is for our general health and wellbeing, however in pockets of our county like Spalding and Mablethorpe where we are currently seeing severe gaps in services which is causing distress for local people. There is access to emergency dental however routine preventative care is becoming increasingly scarce which in turn will have an impact on more people experiencing inequitable services and need for more urgent care.

Questions

- a) We are concerned that upon granting the contracts that there isn't more assurance that staff can be appointment to fulfil the contract. What will change to ensure this is more manageable?
- b) We are also concerned about the lack of on-going messages to the public and other local providers as to the state of the service. What is happening to ensure we are communicating effectively with everyone?

2. Mental Health, irrespective of the reassurances given by LPFT and the recent CQC report. We continue to hear patient experiences which contradict this, issues raised this month included:

- Delayed appointments and waiting times for interventions (young people's services)
- Limited discharge procedures and appropriate information and signposting for patients.
- Comment related to postnatal depression and the suggestion that medication rather than alternative therapies seems to be the automatic option.

What has HWL done already?

We are still awaiting feedback from the questions raised in the November report relating to mental health services.

How do we feel it affect patients?

We hear about patients and families that are struggling to cope with day to day lives because of their issues related to mental health and accessing services. When these issues aren't resolved there is a chance they will result in crisis which is a position which individuals, families and services do not want to be in.

Questions

- a) We would kindly request a response to the questions raised in the November report and those issues raised in this December report.

3. ULHT, various issues both positive and negative but thematic areas for escalation related to:

- Car parking, we hope that the changes that have put in place will now be monitored closely to ensure no issues are passed to those using the facilities either in terms of stress, time delays or extra expense.
- Cleanliness of the departments, wards and facilities was seen as an issue during this report along with reports of 'food/meal time' related concerns.
- Concern about the procedures when it comes to cancellation of appointments and the lack of notification for patients.
- Concerns raised over the use of community midwives on the wards and what impact this has on community midwifery.

Questions

- a) We would specifically like to ask what the challenges are around the reports that community midwives are being used on the wards which is therefore impacting on community based services.

- b) We would also like to understand what some of the challenges are around cleanliness, in addition to the comments within the report we have also experienced various causes for concern related to cleanliness as part of our mystery shopper visits to the Trust.

4. Social Care, an increasing number of issues raised by both patients, families and professionals this month on the management and provision of social care including:

- Care homes sharing patient discharge challenges into care homes from hospital.
- Lack of service awareness and signposting related to social and community support.

This statement has been prepared on behalf of Healthwatch Lincolnshire

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