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-bulletin October 2013

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News from Healthwatch Southend

Calling all commuters

If you regularly commute long distances to work, then you may have struggled to get a GP or hospital appointment that fits in with your lifestyle. You may even have been left with no option other than to take time off work.

Partly because of this issue, we have been keen to raise awareness of Healthwatch among those people who make the daily mass migration to-and-from London, or to parts beyond.

On the morning of Thursday 7th November, Healthwatch Southend will be operating a stand in Southend Victoria Railway Station. Members of our staff will be on hand to listen to any comments and concerns that people may have on local health and social care issues.

We will be at the station from 7am onwards and hope that even if people don't have the time to stop and talk to us, they will take one of our leaflets, and will keep us in mind for the future.

Healthwatch Southend welcomes Scarlett McCarthy

This month we welcome a new member to our team: Scarlett McCarthy is a trained health complaints advocate. She will join fellow advocate, Jo Murphy, in offering guidance and assistance to members of the public who want to make a complaint about poor healthcare, or NHS-commissioned services.

If you need advice on making a complaint you can contact us, during office hours, on **01702 220104**.

You can also download our self-help advocacy pack, which offers advice on how to complain about health or social care: [Download our self-help advocacy pack here](#)

Correction: e-bulletin September 2013

In the September edition of our e-bulletin we incorrectly stated that membership of the Southend CCG consisted of both GPs and laypeople. In fact it is the 36 GP practices in Southend that form the membership of the CCG.

The PDF version of the e-bulletin, which appears on our website, has been amended to reflect this.

Healthwatch in the community

Charities and volunteer-run groups are often the unsung heroes of local healthcare

Here at Healthwatch Southend one question that we continually try to answer, when confronted with a health-related story in the media, or some abstract piece of healthcare policy, is: How will this affect people living in Southend?

A good example of this is a study that was published earlier this month on the website of The British Medical Journal, under the unwieldy title: *Comparative effectiveness of exercise and drug interventions on mortality outcomes: metaepidemiological study*.

The article makes some guarded claims for exercise being as effective (and in some cases more effective) than drug treatment in the secondary prevention of coronary heart disease, the rehabilitation of stroke, and the prevention of diabetes.

It got us wondering whether there were any local exercise groups for people with these kinds of long-term health conditions.

Having asked around, we heard about a weekly exercise class which is aimed specifically at helping the recovery of people who have had strokes. The class, which operates under the auspices of the national charity, Different Strokes, has been running for about 15 years. It is currently managed by Carol Rosson, who is herself a former stroke patient. When we spoke to her she was quick to point out that exercise groups like this are “few and far between” in Essex. She went on to explain how the class works and what the benefits are for the people who attend:

“It's very relaxed, it's not regimented. Some people stand. Lots of people sit in their chairs. We're all at different stages. We have a trained fitness instructor who comes in, although obviously we don't do a full cardio dance routine. The exercises help make your body move and any movement is good movement. Even if you can't do everything you do what you can.

“The idea of the exercise class is to get people ready so that they can go back to work. Lots of our younger members have actually come through the class and improved that much that they've gone back to their jobs.

“It's just for an hour from 3 'til 4 and then we have a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit and you can sit and chat to each other. Lots of people like to come for the social bit. It's only half an hour but it's a reason to get out.”

Lorraine Ayres, Group Development Manager, for Different Strokes said:

“Exercise can help stroke survivors with general well-being, flexibility, coordination and balance, long after physiotherapy has finished.”

We asked Carol whether any members of her Different Strokes group had been made aware of it, either by Southend Hospital, or by one of the GP surgeries in town.

She mentioned that although it had been difficult in the past to drum up interest from local healthcare providers this seemed to be changing. A week prior to our conversation, one of the stroke consultants from Southend Hospital had paid the exercise class a visit.

Carolyne Dawson - Stroke Case Manager for the Community Stroke Team said:

“We give our Clients information on all four of the Stroke groups within our area (Southend, Rochford and Rayleigh and Castlepoint) on a regular basis. This includes the Different Strokes group in Westcliff.”

If there are any other exercise groups similar the one run by Different Strokes in Southend, then Healthwatch Southend would love to hear about them.

Useful Information

- The **Southend Different Strokes exercise class** runs every Saturday at St Peters Church Hall, 28 Eastbourne Grove in Westcliff (behind the hospital).

Classes run from 3pm to 4pm, but they ask people to arrive by 2:45pm. After the class there is tea and biscuits. The class is run by a qualified instructor. The group invite a fee of between £3 and £5 to help with costs.

For more information contact: southend@differentstrokes.co.uk

- The **Different Strokes** charity can be contacted by telephone at 0845 130 7172 or 01908 317618, or on their website: [Different Strokes](#)
- The NHS Change For Life campaign promotes healthier, more active lifestyles. The website gives general advice on how to improve your fitness levels and incorporates a search engine allowing you to find fitness activities in your local area. [Click here to visit the Change For Life website](#)
- If you are prepared to wade through pages of obtuse medical terminology, then the British Medical Journal article on the benefits of exercise over drug therapy for certain conditions, can be found at the following link: [Comparative effectiveness of exercise and drug interventions on mortality outcomes: metaepidemiological study](#)

Local health and social care news

Flu vaccination programme for children underway in Essex

Children aged between 4 and 11, who live in Southend, Castle Point and Rochford, are being offered the flu vaccination as part of a pilot programme.

The Fluenz vaccination programme, which will include up to 33,000 children, began on the 16th September and will finish in the first month of January, 2014. It is being piloted by South Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's (SEPT) South East Essex Immunisation Team at schools and community sessions.

The vaccination comes in the form of a nasal spray. Part of the programme will involve testing the best way of administering it to children.

Theresa Smith, Director of Integrated Services- Children, Young People and Families said: "The aim is to reduce the impact of seasonal flu in children and reduce transmission of flu within the community. To date we have had a very positive response from parents and children."

Earlier this month the BBC reported that the rollout of the vaccine in Glasgow had been delayed after some Muslim parents had raised concerns that it contained pork gelatine.

Healthwatch Southend contacted SEPT and asked how many children in Essex had opted out of the vaccination programme because of this issue. We received the following reply (*this information dates from the 9th October 2013*):

“ In answer to the question posed- three parents have withdrawn their children from the flu programme due to Fluenz containing gelatine. One of the children is in a high risk clinical group for complications of Flu and will be offered an inactivated flu vaccine.

It is important that we highlight that Fluenz® offers the most effective protection against Flu and is therefore the recommended vaccine for all children under 18. For children under 18 who are declining on the basis of gelatine and are in high risk clinical groups that means they more likely to suffer serious complication from flu e.g. children with Asthma or diabetes, it is

important that the children receive an inactivated flu vaccine to protect them.”

In a response issued on the 4th October, Public Health England said: “Porcine gelatine has been certified as acceptable by many multi-faith groups.”

The statement goes on to refer to a 2001 report from the World Health Organization in which over 100 Muslim scholars were consulted and confirmed that the gelatine, when used in this context, is considered transformed and therefore appropriate for use.

The statement also quotes the Rabbi Abraham Adler from the Kashrus and Medicines Information Service, who said:

“It should be noted that according to Jewish laws, there is no problem with porcine or other animal derived ingredients in non-oral products. This includes vaccines, including those administered via the nose, injections, suppositories, creams and ointments.”

The full response from Public Health England can be read on the gov.uk website at the following link: [Vaccines and gelatine: PHE response](#)

For more information about the vaccination programme in Essex, contact the Immunisation Team on 01702 220181.

General information about the flu vaccine for adults can be found on the NHS website by clicking on the link below:

[Who Should Have The Flu Jab?](#)

In-depth inspection methods yield mixed results for local hospitals

Southend Hospital is meeting standards of care in nearly all areas, while Basildon Hospital needs to make urgent improvements.

This is according to new inspection methods which are being used by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to assess the performance of NHS Foundation Trusts.

Intelligent Monitoring uses over 150 different indicators to build up a detailed picture of the performance of a hospital, and the experiences of patients and staff.

Indicators can be things such as the frequency of Never Events (serious breaches of care that should never occur in a hospital), mortality levels, the number of readmissions, and the quality of compassionate care. A full list can be found by following the link at the bottom of this article.

The CQC uses this information to organise NHS Trusts into one of six bands, with hospitals in band one being the worst performing (requiring urgent improvements) while those in band six are either meeting or exceeding standards of care.

Intelligent Monitoring Reports for every NHS Foundation Trust are hosted on the CQC website. The information is displayed in chart form, which clearly demonstrates the areas where hospitals are falling short.

Southend Hospital is currently in band five, meaning that the Trust is up to standard in all but a few areas. Elevated risk indicators were the large number of never events that occurred earlier in the year, and incidents of whistleblowing among staff.

Basildon Hospital is currently in band one: The Trust was placed under special measures by the CQC in July and instructed to make immediate improvements. It will be inspected again in 2014.

Useful Links

For more information about Intelligent Monitoring and the relative performances of Southend and Basildon hospitals, click on one of the text links below:

- [A question and answer sheet from the CQC website explaining Intelligent Monitoring](#)
- [A list of the different indicators used by the CQC to assess the performance of hospitals. \(This is a lengthy document and the language isn't always clear\)](#)
- [Intelligent Monitoring Report for Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Intelligent Monitoring Report for Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals Foundation Trust](#)

Technology and new builds help pave the way towards a better Basildon Hospital

Basildon Hospital is continuing to drive forward improvements with the introduction of computer technology aimed at providing better information about patients, and the construction of a new ward.

Electronic boards have been installed on 18 inpatient wards at the hospital. The screens are located in the nursing stations and replace the old whiteboards where patient details were hand-written using marker pens.

The boards gather together information about patients from a broad range of sources that can be called up instantly either by using a touch screen, or a keyboard and mouse. They are expected to cut down the amount of time spent duplicating information on paper and noticeboards, freeing up more time for nurses to spend looking after patients.

The boards are also being used by bed managers to monitor the progress of patients so that they can be discharged promptly when they are well enough to go home.

The project has been nominated for the HSJ Award for Enhancing Care by Sharing Data and Information, the HSJ Award for Improving Care with Technology and the Guardian Public Service Award for Digital Excellence, the results of which will be announced in November.

Elsewhere in the hospital a new 28 bed ward is rapidly taking shape thanks to a modular design which allows it to be quickly slotted together. When finished the (as yet unnamed) ward will form part of the Trust's provision of 67 additional inpatient beds to meet the predicted increased demand for emergency care over the winter.

These improvements follow in the wake Keogh report which found "fundamental breaches of care" at 14 NHS trusts and saw Basildon hospital placed under special measures. The hospital is currently working with Monitor, the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts, in a bid to improve the service. In addition to the improvements to technology and infrastructure, the Trust has made numerous operational changes and aims to recruit about 200 nurses by November.

Southend Hospital Stroke Team wins national award

The Stroke Team at Southend Hospital has lifted the trophy for 'best use of IT to support clinical treatment and care' in the finals of the *E-Health Insider* awards.

The prize was awarded for an innovative referral system aimed at helping patients who are showing signs of transient ischaemic attack (TIA), or mini stroke. The system aids GPs by calculating a patient's risk and advising them on what action to take.

For more details see our September 2013 e-bulletin, which can be accessed on the Healthwatch Southend website by clicking on the following link: [Healthwatch Southend September 2013 e-bulletin](#)

Resources

(Click on the underlined blue text below to view these webpages or documents)

- **Southend Mencap Hate Incident Reporting Centre** offers trained support for people with learning disabilities who have been the subject of hate-related incidents.

The centre is located at 100 London Road in Southend and is open Monday to Friday, between 9am and 4pm. Telephone: (01702) 341250.

- Read the latest edition of Southend Hospital's magazine: [The Look](#)
- Our self-help advocacy pack can be useful if you need advice on how to complain about health or social care, or require information on how to access your medical records. [Download it here](#)

- You can comment on health and social care in Southend by using our online [Speak out form](#)
- We have created a simple chart that explains in plain English how Healthwatch Southend uses your opinions to help improve local health and social care: [Read it here](#)

Contact Healthwatch Southend

You can contact Healthwatch Southend using:

- the [speak out](#) or [contact us](#) tabs on our website
- our [Facebook page](#) (not confidential)
- our [Twitter feed](#) (not confidential)
- by telephone on 01702 220104
- by email on info@healthwatchesouthend.co.uk
- by letter to Healthwatch Southend, Prittlewell Chapel, North Road, Southend, Essex SS0 7AF
- in person when we're out and about at groups, meetings and events

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