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Dear Pete

Thank you for sharing with us the Healthwatch Sutton 'Snapshot 1' report, giving an overview of local people's views, opinions and awareness of change in health and social in Sutton.

It was of course heartening to read that more than 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of local hospital services is good. Although the number of comments regarding hospital services was relatively low, from the perspective of Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, there were several areas of the report that are of particular interest and that will feed into ongoing work.

2020-2030 and local hospital services in south-west London

It was very positive to see that such a high percentage (64%) of respondents said they are aware of the engagement work we have undertaken to support us in securing a sustainable future of our hospitals ('Epsom and St Helier 2020-2030'). The views of our local communities are an absolutely integral part of this work, and we are committed to ensuring that we have the facilities and are able to provide the standard of care that local people deserve.

'Epsom and St Helier 2020-2030' forms a key part of wider work regarding the future of NHS services in south-west London. The 'Snapshot 1' report also provides useful feedback about this wider work, including that we need to make it clearer in the next stage of engagement (which will be led by the CCGs) how all of this fits together across south-west London. Through our Director of Communications and Patient Experience, Lisa Thomson, we will ensure that the feedback about 2020-2030 and the future of the NHS in south-west London from this report is included in ongoing work in this area.

Service integration and Sutton Health and Care

We were very pleased to see that 30% of respondents said they were aware of Sutton Health Care, which is a very exciting development that will bring together healthcare across Sutton in a new and innovative way.

We know that services do not always integrate as well as they could, which is reflected in feedback in the 'Snapshot 1' report. Sutton Health and Care (SHC) was formed so that local health and care providers can work together to deliver high quality health and social care for Sutton residents. Care will be co-ordinated around the individual's needs and not the organisations providing the care.

Having seen Epsom Health and Care go from strength to strength, and the difference it has made to our patients, and our working partnerships, we absolutely believe that integration is key to great patient care. The SHC Alliance is already starting to deliver innovative services in Sutton that will provide joined-up care. The first of these is Sutton Health and Care at Home which went live in April.

We are looking forward to continuing to work closely with our partners in SHC, and are pleased that Healthwatch Sutton will play a central role in helping us monitor the impact of SHC.

Carers

Although the feedback about carers was not specific to hospital services, we fully recognise the importance of working in partnership with and supporting carers. In 2018-19, we have made how we work with carers one of the priorities in Quality Account, setting ourselves specific objectives around how we can better engage with and involve carers. To do this, we will:

- Develop an expanded carers survey to understand and inform where improvements can be made;
- Work with local carers groups to gain feedback and suggestions for improvements;
- Develop a carers participation network to inform changes;
- Relaunch the Trust Carers Guideline; and
- Support staff engagement with carers through strengthening advice, guidance and training.

Progress against these objectives will be monitored quarterly through the Quality Account and at the Improving Patient's Experience Committee (IPEC), at which I know Healthwatch Sutton is represented.

Experience of Accident and Emergency (A&E) services

A&E was mentioned in a number of comments in 'Snapshot 1', despite there being no specific question about these services – further evidence of how important A&E services are to local people. Some of the comments fall within the remit of 2020-2030, addressed above, but there were a number regarding people's experience of A&E.

During 2017-18, patient feedback showed a negative trend in patient experience in our A&Es, with fewer people saying they would recommend the service (Friends and Family Test). It is important that we understand the reasons behind this and in turn proactively pursue opportunities to make and embed improvements, as well as build on existing good practice (which the report recognises there is lots of).

To do this, we will:

- Work with Healthwatch to understand the drivers for the patient feedback and experiences;
- Draw together feedback from the FFT, Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), complaints, and the national Emergency Department Survey to identify key areas of focus;
- Benchmark with other busy two-site Emergency Department facilities to learn from their experiences and the actions they take/have taken to improve; and
- Develop a patient and public participation group to inform improvements.

As with our work with carers, progress against objectives to improve patient experience will be monitored quarterly through the Quality Account and at the Improving Patient's Experience Committee (IPEC). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Healthwatch Sutton and Merton, particularly the volunteers, for the hard work that has gone into surveying/talking to people about their experience in the Emergency Department and Acute Medical Unit (AMU) at St Helier Hospital. I look forward to seeing the results and feedback, and know that our Patient Experience Team will work closely with the frontline teams to ensure that action is taken in response to the feedback received.

Mental health

There is increasing national and local awareness of the challenges regarding knowledge of and access to mental health services, something which affects a large number of people and every corner of health services. I am also aware that mental health was identified as one of the top priorities for local people in your 'What Matters to You' survey in 2015-16.

At Epsom and St Helier, we maintain a close working relationship with South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust, as well as Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust. However, we know that, as evidenced in the 'Snapshot 1' report, a key area of concern is mental health services for children and young people.

I understand that you are now in direct contact with our Head of Nursing for Neonates, Children and Young People, Lorna Bramwells, who with her team is leading on some promising cross-organisational work in this area. This includes developing stronger links with CAMHS, highlighted by involvement with the CAMHS Youth Advisory Group and subject-specific training for staff. I am aware that Healthwatch Sutton has undertaken a significant piece of work with local schools, aimed at helping local services better understand the emotional and mental health needs of young people. I know that Lorna and Adam Watkins, our Head of Patient Experience, are keen to hear more about this piece of work and opportunities for further involvement/learning that may help us as we seek to further improve our services for children and young people.

We will of course keep you up-to-date on all of the above, either through the Improving Patients' Experience Committee or Adam in his role as Head of Patient Experience, whom I know you now meet with regularly.

In closing, I would like to thank you and the team at Healthwatch Sutton for completing this snapshot exercise and report. We truly value the opportunity to work in partnership with Healthwatch and our local communities, and remain grateful for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Elkeles', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel Elkeles
Chief Executive

CC Lisa Thomson – Director of Communications and Patient Experience