



# NHS Long Term Plan What Would You Do?

## Report May 2019

Report produced by the  
Healthwatch St Helens  
Support Team



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## Background

With extra pressure on the NHS, such as an ageing population and more people living with long-term conditions, changes need to be made to make sure that everyone gets the support and treatment they need.

The Government is investing an extra £20bn a year in the NHS. The NHS has a Long Term Plan for what it wants to do better, including doing more to help people stay well and better support for people with long term conditions.

Our local NHS needed to know what local people think the changes should look like in their communities, so local Healthwatch was tasked with finding out. The work we were asked to do involved having 250 surveys completed and holding two workshops/listening events.

Healthwatch St Helens wanted to find out from local people:

- What you would do to help people live healthier lives
- What would make health services better?
- How would you make it easier for people to take control of their own health and wellbeing?
- What would you do to make support better for people with long-term conditions?

## The surveys

Two different surveys were designed for local Healthwatch to use; one was a general survey and the other was for people living with long-term conditions. They could be completed online via a link or on paper, with the Healthwatch Support Team then inputting the content. Some of the people we spoke to told us they found the surveys too long, confusing and some of the questions were ambiguous.

With support from partners across the Borough the link to the online surveys was shared far and wide and paper copies were available at community events and distributed by local organisations such as our local colleges, The Health Improvement Team, Hope Centre, Deafness Resource Centre and many more.

The Support Team went to great lengths to make sure that as many people as possible had the opportunity to complete a survey. VCA colleagues were relentless in their support, particularly on social media, as well as those who lived in St Helens completing a survey and asking their families to. St Helens Rugby League player, Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook came in to the office to have his photograph taken completing a survey so that we could use it on Twitter and Facebook, with the hashtag WhatWouldYouDo.

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## The Listening Events

We were asked to hold a general workshop and another workshop targeting a specific group of people. We chose people who use, or know someone who uses mental health services, as our targeted cohort, as accessing mental health services is a significant issue in St Helens.

Paul Steele, the Engagement, Involvement, Communications and Patient Experience Lead for St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) gave a presentation about what's happening to improve services locally. He explained St Helens Cares, Contact Cares and the Shared Care Record.

Following on from Paul's presentation, we held workshops that focused on 3 questions:

- What's good about services in St Helens?
- What's *not so good* about services in St Helens?
- What would you do to make services better?

We then asked everyone to choose one thing that they would do, above all others, to improve services.

## Feedback from workshops

(Direct quotes from people who attended)

### 24<sup>th</sup> April - general listening event.

#### What's good about services in St Helens?

- ✓ Hospitals are excellent (acute care).
  - ✓ Continuity of acute care across the community is really good.
  - ✓ Getting reminder calls about appointments.
  - ✓ Hospital appointments come through really quick.
  - ✓ Hospital appointments are now available in the evenings and at weekends. Don't need to take time off work.
  - ✓ Contact Cares is a really good idea.
  - ✓ Moved recently to area. Registering with GP has been smooth.
  - ✓ Lots of extras at my GPs.
  - ✓ No complaint about primary, secondary and specialist care, referrals etc.
  - ✓ Got urgent treatment centre so now a GP available.
  - ✓ Good weight management service (ABL).
  - ✓ Phlebotomy services are very good.
  - ✓ Newton Hospital were great for an x-ray or a scan. Waiting times were very short.
  - ✓ Healthwatch events - people listen to what you say!
  - ✓ Weekend appointments for hospital appointments, easier to park, no fuss.
  - ✓ The knowledge that pharmacists have, sometimes they can advise rather than make an appointment at GP.
  - ✓ St Helens is lovely.
  - ✓ The fruit and veg stall is a great idea, outside the hospital.
  - ✓ The Urgent Care Centre is a valuable asset to our community.
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### **What's *not so good* about services in St Helens?**

- ✓ GP service is not very good.
- ✓ Waiting time for a GP appointment.
- ✓ Shouldn't have to speak to the receptionist about what is wrong with you.
- ✓ If you are computer literate it is easy to get an appointment, if not you have to get up early to either ring or go to the surgery for an appointment.
- ✓ GPs sometimes cancel appointments without letting you know even though they have your contact number. This has happened more than once.
- ✓ Sometimes discharges from hospital at the weekend have no continuation of service or no medications.
- ✓ Communications.
- ✓ Prescriptions - if you get in hospital you have to pick up in hospital and this can sometimes take hours.
- ✓ Have to wait a while to get through to Contact Cares on the phone.
- ✓ Mental health services need improvements. Emergency phone at Peasley Cross doesn't have an emergency number.
- ✓ In hospital it's very difficult to get diabetes managed.
- ✓ Access to emergency dental care is poor. This has to be triaged over the phone in Manchester.
- ✓ End of life care not good (over 3 years ago).
- ✓ Less than 50% of people with learning difficulties get an annual health check. Take up is poor and quality is poor.
- ✓ GP appointments are ridiculous. It is virtually impossible to get through.
- ✓ Shortage of GPs.
- ✓ Transport system to the hospital.
- ✓ Lots of gaps in specialist services.
- ✓ Signage in Whiston Hospital is not very good.
- ✓ Difficulty in negotiating where you are going in Whiston Hospital.
- ✓ Mental health services for children and adults.

### **What would you do to make services better?**

- ✓ Contact Cares - option to leave a message rather than hold on for a long time.
  - ✓ Need more people answering the phone at Contact Cares.
  - ✓ More social workers - people waiting a long time for an assessment. People are sometimes in crisis.
  - ✓ Look at improving the way GPs communicate with patients.
  - ✓ Need someone in GP surgeries to help with putting their App onto your phone.
  - ✓ Have a way of re-using aids. Look at somewhere they can be washed ready to go out again.
  - ✓ Medication wastage - look at how this can be improved.
  - ✓ Need more preventative services.
  - ✓ Biggest lack of information is around nutrition - lot of confusion. Needs consistent information.
  - ✓ More wrap-around care including health and social care. Also person-centred care.
  - ✓ Family carers need to be equipped to care in the community. Plus emotional support for carers.
  - ✓ There should be equality in training, research, funding and provisions generally for mental health as for physical health.
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- ✓ Make a better transport system to enable people to get to their place of treatment.
  - ✓ Break down the localities into smaller pockets, focus on smaller areas.
  - ✓ Make use of local amenities to advertise events etc, tailoring to local need.
  - ✓ Make bigger investment in mental health services, both adults and children services.

#### **To make services better in St Helens I would...**

- ✓ Have pop-up Doctors Surgeries, maybe once a week in all community centres.
- ✓ Have regular and ongoing opportunities for people to learn about nutrition as the key way to maintain a healthy body and mind. "Let food be your medicine and medicine by your food".
- ✓ Treat Mental Health equally in terms of funding, research, staff and training.
- ✓ Make sure that family carers are trained (or at least equipped) to look after members of the family with long term conditions. This will vastly reduce re-admissions.
- ✓ Request to re-visit processes within each trust to prevent duplicity and reduce waste. Equipment/aids wasted - can it be re-used?
- ✓ Drastically improve the way GPs and their practices work.
- ✓ I think services are pretty good as they are.
- ✓ Improve and expand community services to keep people well and support people to stay out of hospital.
- ✓ Ensure that the people of Rainhill have services commiserate with their needs.
- ✓ Make it easier to be able to get appointments at GPs.
- ✓ To put more money into improving services in mental health - adults and children.

#### **30th April - mental health service users**

##### **What's good about mental health services in St Helens?**

- ✓ Mental Health pharmacist at Peasley Cross very good. Very knowledgeable and work closely with physician.
  - ✓ Community Mental Health Services eg. MIND is very supportive.
  - ✓ Physical facilities are very good as an inpatient e.g. own rooms etc.
  - ✓ Own bathrooms within residential Mental Health care.
  - ✓ The wellbeing/lifestyle nurse in mental health is fantastic.
  - ✓ Once you are in, you're in. Initial crisis team was very good.
  - ✓ 'Together' offer a great service, but you can only stay in services for a short time.
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### What's *not so good* about mental health services in St Helens?

- ✓ Access to therapies (IAPT and in general - for voluntary good group support).
- ✓ Counselling should be part of NHS service as well as CBT.
- ✓ Huge waiting list for therapies therefore go privately.
- ✓ 'CBT' seen as a 'cure for all'.
- ✓ Wait 12 months for a review - should be more frequent e.g. every 6 months.
- ✓ My diabetic meds interfere with psychiatric meds. No-one to deal with this.
- ✓ 6 months ago I went to the GP and was told that mental health was not within his remit (no skill set). No alternative was given - regarding meds. Physical and a mental problem.
- ✓ Confusion around friends/family can act as an interpreter (Polish). Also a problem with confidentiality.
- ✓ Being diagnosed with a long term condition - no follow up support.
- ✓ Access to mental health services is very poor.
- ✓ My husband had an emergency appointment - the GP was very racist.
- ✓ Why do we have CBT service with a different provider? No continuity of care.
- ✓ People are being pulled by the police for 'legal drug driving'. GPs give meds out like smarties.
- ✓ My GP will give me any drugs I ask for.
- ✓ Needs more money putting in the 'bottom end of services'.
- ✓ Having to self-refer when you are in crisis point is no good. Someone should do this for you.

### What would you do to make mental health services better?

- ✓ Putting counselling with IAPT services, and not just dotted about within the voluntary sector.
  - ✓ Individual approach to mental health treatment and offer better choice in therapies.
  - ✓ Funding. Need to be a parity of funding between physical and mental health.
  - ✓ Ongoing training for all staff.
  - ✓ Attracting professionals to the area and profession.
  - ✓ What qualifications need to have? Have to have a degree.
  - ✓ Shouldn't be all post grad, there is a wealth of other people out there.
  - ✓ GPs should have a responsibility to pass on to another GP if they haven't got the skill set.
  - ✓ Each practice should have a Mental Health nurse or practices to share a group of nurses.
  - ✓ Every three months a letter should be sent out to let you know where you are on the waiting list - this would reduce anxiety.
  - ✓ A mental health professional in every GP surgery.
  - ✓ Doctors should update DWP.
  - ✓ Promote independent living.
  - ✓ Make youngsters aware of self-care at a young age.
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### **To make services better in St Helens I would...**

- ✓ Make it easier to get an appointment with a GP or practice nurse. I have found it almost impossible.
- ✓ Parity and funding and provision between mental health and physical health.
- ✓ Look to ways of recruiting consultants and mental health not just trained in CBT.
- ✓ Encourage GP practices to share their expertise for the benefit of all patients.
- ✓ Mental health included in physical health reviews.
- ✓ Like to see prevention at an early age in infant schools, so crisis at teenage/early 20s won't be so high.
- ✓ Invest in prevention services.
- ✓ Give back to patient the option to help themselves.
- ✓ Put a mental health nurse in every GP surgery who will assess at triage level, referrals and repeat prescriptions.

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With the target for completed surveys being 250, Healthwatch St Helens collected 503, meaning that 503 St Helens people had the chance to have their say.

The findings from our surveys and from the listening events have been shared with NHS England via Healthwatch England.

This report will be shared with colleagues at St Helens CCG, will be on our website and available on request to members of the public.

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### **Thanks to:**

Paul Steele & Debbie Rigby - St Helens CCG  
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**Special thanks to everyone who completed survey or came along to our listening events.**

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