

This update is split into the following sections:

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## (1) YOUR HEALTHWATCH

### (A) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove are recruiting



We are recruiting for Directors and a new chair to join our existing Board.

The deadline to [apply](#) by is Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

All positions are voluntary, and you can find out more by downloading the Role Description and Person Specification on our [website](#). You can also talk to the current Chair, Fran McCabe, who can be contacted on [frances.mccabe@icloud.com](mailto:frances.mccabe@icloud.com).

#### More detail

We wish to appoint a new Chair who can continue the growth and success of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. We are in exciting and challenging times with COVID-19 still with us, health and care services trying to recover, a Health and Care Bill on the horizon and funding for social care to be resolved. This is an ideal time for a Chair to shape the next era of Healthwatch.

You will have knowledge of the health and care agenda, strategic vision, and a passion for championing users views, along with excellent leadership and communication skills and experience of leading a Board.

We work to get the best out of local health and social care services responding to local voices. From improving services today to helping shape better ones for tomorrow, we gather, analyse and act upon the feedback provided by patients and the public in our city, and use this to influence decision-making and drive improvement in local Health and Social Care Services. This includes services like GPs, pharmacists, hospitals, dentists, care homes and community-based care. If this is something you would like to get involve in, here is an opportunity.

**(B) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove has been shortlisted for two prestigious national awards which celebrate our volunteer team.**



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove has been shortlisted for two prestigious national awards which celebrate our volunteer team and recognise our work supporting people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Healthwatch Awards 2021 are run by Healthwatch England.

Our nominated projects have helped over 1700 people, helped improve discharge processes, signposted people to community support and aided our local NHS Trust’s hospital discharge team and local authority during lockdown. They also demonstrate our close collaboration with other partners across the network.

This annual event celebrates the difference Healthwatch’s 4,000 plus staff and volunteers across England have made over the past year. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is one of only 30 local Healthwatch out of a total of 152 across England to be in the running for one of the awards. We are one of just a handful of Healthwatch teams to have been nominated in two separate categories. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will find out whether its award bids have been successful during Healthwatch Week, which runs from Tuesday 9 November 2021.

[Read the full story here](#)

**(C) New Healthwatch guidance on NHS dentistry launched**



**Healthwatch team across Sussex have joined together to launch a new guide to your rights and accessing the NHS Dentistry treatment you need**

Over the last 18 months, dentistry has been the second most common reason people have contacted Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. Reasons have included challenges accessing dentistry services during the lockdown, problems finding NHS dentists accepting new patients and delays getting access to emergency dental treatment.

One of the key lessons for Healthwatch has been that many members of the public, including those who regularly attend dental services, are not clear on what dentistry services are available via the NHS, what treatment is included and what charges apply.

In response, Healthwatch across Sussex (Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex) have worked together with local dental organisations on a detailed guide to help everyone get the treatment they need.

The guide explains:

- The impact of COVID-19 on NHS dental appointments
- The difference between NHS and private dental care
- How to find and register with an NHS dentist
- NHS dental charges and exemptions (correct as at June 2021)
- How to feedback or complain about a dental service
- Useful links and emergency dental services

We hope the full guide will answer most of your questions about NHS dental care. There are also some useful tips about keeping teeth and gums healthy.

If you do not have time to read the whole guide you can find the basic essentials in our shorter 'What you need to know' leaflet.

[Access our new guides here](#)

This month, Healthwatch England co-signed an open letter addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for a recovery plan for NHS dentistry. [You can read this here.](#)

## (D) Care Home Wellbeing project: Overarching report



Healthwatch in Sussex held a series of webinars between September 2020 and March 2021 on behalf of informal carers (families and friends) of care home residents. You can now read our summary reports

The purpose of the webinars were to:

- Share unpaid carers' views and experiences of visiting (or not visiting) their relative or friend in a care home during the pandemic.
- Enable unpaid carers to ask questions and gain answers from health and social care representatives about current and future access to care home residents.
- Have access to timely, accurate information around official and local visiting guidelines.
- Raise any concerns about wider care home service improvement; and Influence decisions made by health and care leaders during the pandemic.

[Read the report on the Staying Connected Webinar held in November 2020](#)

[Read the overarching report on all our Care Home work under Covid here](#)

## (E) Patient Transport Services - how your views are helping to reshape services

A year on from our patient survey on Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services, we take a look at what impact our reports have had.

In August 2020, Healthwatch in Sussex carried out its fourth review of Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (PTS).

In our latest report we take the opportunity to describe:

- Some of the impact that your feedback and our subsequent reports had
- The work we have been doing on PTS since then
- How your feedback and our reports have influenced a national review of PTS, which highlighted the importance of the service.

### What has happened since the Healthwatch in Sussex review?

Healthwatch raised your concerns and suggested improvements for the PTS service with Sussex NHS Commissioners and the current provider of the service (South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, SCAS).

We also shared your ideas for changing the service with potential bidders for the new contract in October 2020, and our results were fed back to those leading a national review of PTS.

Since our reports were published, we have been working more closely with Sussex NHS Commissioners and SCAS who have provided responses to some of our findings. This collaboration has created a better shared understanding of running a PTS service. Looking forward, we will continue to work with SCAS and Sussex NHS Commissioners to deliver patient forums.

[Read more here](#), where you can also access our latest report



**On 13 October, we joined the provider of patient transport services, South Central Ambulance Service, and Sussex NHS Commissioners to deliver an online patient forum.**

The forum was a fantastic opportunity for members of the public from across Sussex to have their questions answered, raise concerns and learn more about the operation of patient transport, including possible future changes that are being considered as part of the recommissioning of the service in 2023. Healthwatch believes that all service providers benefit immensely from hearing directly from patients and this event demonstrated that perfectly. We look forward to working with SCAS, Commissioners and the public to deliver future events.

**Carry on reading for health and social care updates!**

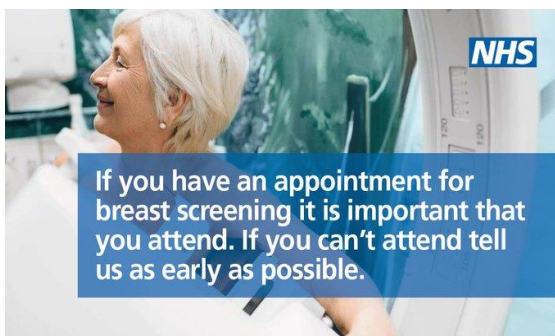
## (2) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

### (A) Remember to only use A&E for emergencies



Our emergency services are very busy at the moment. If you need help but it isn't an emergency NHS 111 provides instant health and care and advice online and by phone. Trained advisers can support you to get the right care.

### (B) October is breast cancer awareness month



Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in the UK. Most women diagnosed with breast cancer are over the age of 50, but younger women can also get breast cancer. About 1 in 8 women are diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime. There's a good chance of recovery if it's detected at an early stage. Meaning it is vital that women check their breasts regularly for any changes and always have any changes examined by a GP.

In rare cases, men can also be diagnosed with breast cancer. Find out more about [breast cancer in men](#).

Breast cancer screening is still going ahead in the UK. Screening aims to find breast cancers early to provide the best chance of being cured.

### **What is breast screening?**

Cancer screening involves testing apparently healthy people for signs that could show that a cancer is developing.

Breast screening uses a test called mammography which involves taking x-rays of the breasts. Screening can help to find breast cancers early when they are too small to see or feel. These tiny breast cancers are usually easier to treat than larger ones.

Breast screening is for women between the ages of 50 and 70, it is also for some trans or non-binary people.

Overall, the breast screening programme finds cancer in around 9 out of every 1,000 women having screening.

[Read more about screening here](#)

### **(C) Alcohol awareness week is coming up on 15<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> November**

The logo for Alcohol Awareness Week features the words 'Alcohol', 'Awareness', and 'Week' stacked vertically. 'Alcohol' is in white text on a black rectangular background, 'Awareness' is in white text on an orange rectangular background, and 'Week' is in black text on a white rectangular background. The entire logo is set against a yellow background.

Alcohol and relationships are closely linked. Many of us associate alcohol and socialising, and alcohol can become a big part of our connections and interactions with those around us. But when our own

or a loved one's drinking starts to negatively affect our relationships or stands in the way of us taking action on our own drinking habits, it can have a very negative impact on our life.

On top of this, research shows that many of us have found ourselves drinking more to deal with feelings of loneliness and isolation during the pandemic. As we leave lockdown and return to normal life there will be new pressures too - pressures to drink, 'sober shaming', and pressures we put on ourselves to get back to 'normal' socialising.

So this Alcohol Awareness Week, we'll be sharing stories, factsheets, tips and more to help us better understand the ways in which alcohol can affect us and our relationships with those around us, and the benefits of cutting down.

[Read more on Alcohol Awareness Week](#)

### **(D) Cookery Book by Chomp Moulsecomb - free online**

The logo for East Brighton Trust features the words 'East Brighton' in a small, blue, sans-serif font above the word 'Trust' in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font.

**Chomp Moulsecomb - Recipes for our Community is a great book, jam-packed with tasty, nutritious recipes.**

After successfully running a lunch club for families feeling financial pressure during the school holidays, families asked for a recipe book to help them cook healthy meals on a budget, so Chomp Moulsecomb partnered with East Brighton Trust and other local organisations in the area to make one [Read for free](#)

## (E) What is adult social care?



**Do you or a loved one need help with social care? Find out answers to key questions about who can access adult social care and how to pay for it**

Social care can be very different from the health care you receive from the NHS. Although it can include medical help, social care offers more practical support to enable people to live independently. These services are usually provided in people's homes, care homes or elsewhere in the community, rather than at a GP practice or hospital. If you or someone you live with needs social care, it's important to understand what types of care and support are available, where to find the correct information, and how services are paid for.

[Click here to read more](#)

## (F) New Every Mind Matters campaign to improve people's mental health



**A new campaign has launched after half of adults in England say that the pandemic negatively impacted their mental health.**

The campaign empowers people to look after their mental health by directing them to free, practical tips and advice. By answering 5 simple questions through the Every Mind Matters platform, people can get a tailored 'Mind Plan', giving them personalised tips to help deal with stress and anxiety, boost their mood, sleep better and feel more in control.

New research commissioned by OHID reveals nearly half (49%) of adults in England said the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on their mental wellbeing. And more than a third of all adults in England (34% or 15.1 million) said they did not know what to do to help improve their mental wellbeing.

Younger adults reported struggling the most, with 57% of 18 to 34 year olds saying their mental wellbeing was negatively impacted by the pandemic, and just under half (44%) reporting that they did not know what to do to help.

This is the first campaign delivered by the new Office for Health Improvements and Disparities, which was launched on 1 October with the aim of tackling health inequalities across the country.

[Read more here](#)

## (G) Budget 2021: NHS in England to receive £5.9bn to cut waiting lists



The NHS in England is to receive an extra £5.9bn in this week's Budget, the government has announced. The money will be used to help clear the record backlog of people waiting for tests and scans, which has been worsened by the pandemic, and also to buy equipment and improve IT.

Health bodies welcomed the latest pledge but said it would not solve the problem of staff shortages.

More than five million people are waiting for NHS hospital treatment in England, with hundreds of thousands waiting more than a year.

The £5.9bn is on top of the £12bn a year [that was announced in September](#). That money will be raised through tax increases - the rise in National Insurance and, from 2022, the Health and Social Care Levy - and will be spent on resources such as staffing. The £5.9bn will be used to pay for physical infrastructure and equipment - not day-to-day spending.

Healthwatch has previously reported that millions of people have had their treatment delayed by the pandemic. We asked for [your views](#) which are now being analysed. We also published information [about what to expect when waiting for care](#). In June, we published a report where patients from Brighton and Hove shared their diagnostic experiences, and views about new [Community Diagnostic Hubs](#) which are intended to improve diagnostics across England.

**Carry on reading for COVID updates!**



### (3) COVID NEWS

#### (A) Vaccinations for 12-15-year-olds



Parents can book COVID-19 vaccinations for their children online.

Bookings through the online booking system are an additional way to get protected over half-term and beyond.

A number of vaccination centres and services are also offering jabs to 12- 15 year olds.

Letters are being sent to parents and guardians of 12 -15-year-olds inviting them to book a vaccination online through the National Booking Service while many families will have already received letters from their child's school about getting vaccinated.

The booking service provides an additional option for parents to book a vaccine for their child, alongside the schools' programme which has already vaccinated nearly half a million young people and visited thousands of schools in the UK.

If a child has already been invited through their school, they do not need act on their invite unless parents wish to get their child vaccinated outside of school.

Go online to book your child in today [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination)

A special website has been set up to answer common questions: [Vaccinations for children and young people aged 12 to 17 - Sussex Health & Care Partnership \(sussexhealthandcare.uk\)](http://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk)

A new website has been launched to engage young people on the vaccine. [Everything COVID](http://www.everythingcovid.uk) also covers information about testing and aims to be a one stop shop for young people. All of the content has been produced by young people with facts signed off by NHS England.

## (C) The COVID-19 booster vaccination



People who are at greater risk from COVID-19 in Brighton and Hove, including over 50s, those with underlying health conditions, carers and health and social care workers are being called forward to receive booster vaccinations to top up their protection ahead of winter.

COVID-19 booster vaccinations are being offered to people in the eligible categories if they received their second vaccination 182 days (six months and one week) ago. There are three main ways for eligible people to access their booster vaccination:

### 1. Use the National Booking System

The NHS will contact you to let you know when you are eligible to use the National Booking System by going online or calling 119.

You may receive a text or a letter inviting you to use the system, where you will be able to [log on to the website](#) or book over the phone.

You will be able to see available appointments at vaccination centres, pharmacy led services, and some GP led services.

If you are eligible and it's been longer than 182 days since your last vaccine dose, but you have not been contacted yet, please try to book your appointment on [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination) or if you can't use the website, by calling 119.

The system is being updated every day, so do not worry if it currently says you are not eligible, please keep trying.

### 2. Wait to be contacted by your local GP led vaccination service

Some GP vaccination services are not using the National Booking System to arrange their appointments. If this is the case for your GP service, they will contact you directly to book your appointment.

### 3. Attend a walk in session

If you fit the eligible criteria and had your second vaccination over 182 days ago (six months and a week) you can attend any walk in vaccination service near you. No need to book an appointment, you can simply turn up

## (D) Pregnant women encouraged to have the COVID vaccine



One in five of the most critically ill COVID-19 patients in the UK are unvaccinated pregnant women.

Pregnant women from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be admitted to hospital with severe COVID-19 infection.

Chido decided to have the [#NHSCOVIDVaccine](https://nhs.uk/covidvaccine) to protect her family.

Get yours today: <http://nhs.uk/covidvaccine>

## (E) N Winter Vaccines Explained - with Dr Amir Khan, Dr Dawn Harper and Dr Karan Ranj

Dr Amir Khan, Dr Dawn Harper and Dr Karan Ranj explain why it is more important than ever for people to get their winter vaccines (flu and COVID-19 booster) as soon as possible this autumn as both viruses have the potential to cause serious illness and hospitalisation.



## (F) Flu vaccinations



The NHS in the Sussex is reminding people with that this year it's more important than ever for them to have their free flu vaccination.

Every year the flu virus kills on average 11,000 people and hospitalises many more. It is estimated that those who catch COVID-19 and flu at the same time are twice as likely to die. This year it is therefore even more important to have a flu vaccination. Catching flu is more serious for those with a long-term health condition.

It is best to have the vaccine before flu starts to circulate, which is usually from December onwards. But, if it is later in the season than this, it is still worth having.

**Those eligible for the free flu vaccination on the NHS this year (2021 to 2022) are:**

- all children aged 2 to 15 (but not 16 years or older) on 31 August 2021
- those aged 6 months to under 50 years in clinical risk groups
- pregnant women
- those aged 50 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline health and social care staff

[Click here for more information](#)

## (G) COVID cases in Brighton and Hove

**A message from the Public Health team for our city**



**28 October 2021**

In the 7 days up to 22 October (based on data published on 27 October) we had 1232 confirmed new cases of COVID-19 in Brighton & Hove. This is:

- up 32% on the previous 7 days
- equivalent to a weekly rate of 422.3 per 100,000 residents
- lower than the South East which was 534.8 per 100,000
- lower than the rate for England, which was 481.5 per 100,000

Positive cases have risen again and this week we've seen a rise in all age groups. We all need to do what we can to stop cases rising further and keep each other feeling safe.

Alongside vaccinations and testing we should keep following the hands, face, space and fresh air guidance where we can. It really does make a difference. I'd recommend that everyone should still be wearing face coverings in busy places including public transport. It's not difficult for most of us, and by wearing a mask you're not only protecting others but also helping many people feel safer to be out.

Regular testing using lateral flow tests helps to identify cases early and break the chain of transmission. For those returning to secondary school or college, or even heading into to work after a half-term break, please take a lateral flow test before you go back.

**What you can do to help keep Covid cases down and reduce the spread**  
**Get your Covid vaccines, your booster and your flu jab when you're offered it.**

- First and second doses (after 8 weeks) are available to [book online](#) or [find a walk-in session across the city](#).
- Covid boosters are available for people aged 50 and over, health & social care workers and those with underlying health conditions where it's been 6 months since your 2nd jab. If it's been 182 days since your second dose you can [book online](#) or [attend a walk-in session](#).
- Vaccinations for 12-15 year olds are being organised through schools or you can now book an appointment through the national booking service. [Find out more about vaccines for 12-15 year olds](#).
- Flu vaccines are also free for many people. [See who's eligible and how to book](#). Many people are eligible for both the flu and the COVID-19 booster vaccines. If you are offered both vaccines, it's safe to have them at the same time.

**Wear a face covering in crowded or enclosed places, including on busy buses and trains.** It's not just about protecting yourself, it can also help make sure others feel safe.

**Meet outside where possible, or let fresh air in.**

**Keep taking twice-weekly lateral flow tests and report your results.** If you test positive you must self-isolate and order a PCR test.

- [order free test packs online](#) to be delivered to you at home
- pick packs up from Jubilee Library or Hove Town Hall
- collect packs from a pharmacy - you need to [register for a collect code before picking up tests from a pharmacy](#)
- [get a supervised test at a pharmacy](#)
- Students and staff should get their tests from their schools and must test before returning after the half term

**Get a PCR test if you have any symptoms, even mild, or if you test positive from a lateral flow test.** Then stay at home and isolate for 10 days if you test positive. If you have any symptoms it's important that you get a PCR test and don't use the LFD home test kits.



## Join Healthwatch

You can sign up to receive regular bulletins and information from Healthwatch.

Please email [office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

Share your experiences of health and social care services with us:

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