Luton’s Independent Health & Social Care Champion

Update on the family we met at Saints Community Centre, Luton

Luton Borough Council’s Children & Disabilities Team contacted us after reading the headlining article in our September 2014 Newsletter which related to a family who were struggling to manage all the care needs of their disabled son.

The Council’s Children & Disabilities Team are now working with the family. An assessment of their youngest son took place in September.

Following the child’s assessment an Outreach Worker from London Road Resource Centre has now been appointed and will be offering respite to the family for two hours per week, the worker appointed will take the child to the local park, library and other short outings. This will give the child’s mother the chance to unwind, rest or spend time with her other son.

Luton Borough Council have also referred the family to the Edwin Lobo Centre, the results of this assessment have not been received to date.

We also signposted this family to Headway Luton who provide a service to individuals who have an acquired brain injury. Headway provided the family with information about the Child Brain Injury Trust.

The family have spoken to a representative from the Child Brain Injury Trust. We are hoping the Trust’s Child & Family Support Co-Ordinator will be visiting the family within the next few weeks to see if there is any support that they can also offer.

The Luton Irish Forum, Welfare Team were also able to assist this family and provided independent welfare advice and guidance to them.

If you are a parent experiencing similar challenges we would like to hear from you.
Tel: 01582 817 060
Email: info@healthwatchluton.co.uk

Your independent local consumer champion

Do you have an interest in Health & Social Care?

BOARD MEMBERS REQUIRED (3-5 hours as a minimum a month)

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction, operational oversight and jointly with Luton Irish Forum works to ensure that the smooth running, delivery and activities of Healthwatch Luton comply with legislation and works to deliver its objectives both locally and nationally.

Healthwatch Luton has been praised nationally for the impact it has made in its role as health and social care champion in Luton to date. If you have strategic board or management level experience and want to help us continue to improve services that meet the needs of Luton residents, we want to hear from you.

For an information pack please email: nisar.mohammed@healthwatchluton.co.uk or call: 01582 817 060
Closing Date: 19 December 2014    Interviews: W/C 12 January 2015
The Healthwatch England rights draw on the UN guidelines for Consumer Protection and were developed in consultation with patients and service users. The eight health and social care consumer rights issued by Healthwatch England are a right to:

- Essential Services
- Access
- A safe, dignified and quality service
- Information and education
- Choice
- Being listened to
- Being involved
- A healthy environment

**Update on methotrexate service change**

In our last edition we included a piece on Mrs Stephanie Power and the difficulties she had in accessing a service to manage the safe disposal of her sharps box (safe storage of medicines waste). This was due to what appeared to be a sudden change to the service - the medicines waste from methotrexate injections (or other medicines classed as hazardous waste) that are prescribed by the GP or dispensed by a community pharmacy, can no longer be disposed of at the Luton and Dunstable hospital pharmacy. Unfortunately no information was given to Mrs Power about this change and it took some time and a lot of phone calls to identify a safe way for Mrs Power to dispose of her medicines waste.

Mrs Power was then told that she could return her sharps box to her gp practice. Mrs Power is continuing to do this however it is unclear whether this is a long-term arrangement. Luton Clinical Commissioning Group have advised us that they are meeting with Luton Borough Council, Community Pharmacy and GP contract leads to identify a long-term arrangement for the disposal of hazardous medicines waste and have provided the following statement:

*An initial meeting has been held with Luton Borough Council, Community Pharmacy and GP contract leads to explore possible long-term arrangements for the disposal of methotrexate injections administered by patients. We are currently looking into all possible options for the disposal. Unfortunately this is taking longer than we anticipated as we want to ensure that patients have a safe and convenient way of disposing of their medication waste. Please be assured that resolving this issue is high on our agenda and we are working to resolve this issue as quickly as possible.*

Head of Medicines Optimisation, Luton CCG

**Do you use services from a registered homecare company in Luton?**

If you do, or know someone that does, then please contribute to our review of homecare services in Luton

To find out more click here:

Call 01582 817 060 or

Email: nisar.mohammed@healthwatchluton.co.uk

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**Healthwatch Luton Board Meeting**

Tuesday 16th December 2014 - 6.00pm—7.30pm
Venue: Luton Irish Forum, 102 Hitchin Road, Luton LU2 0ES

An invitation to all members and the general public to join us at our next meeting
Tel: 01582 817 060 Email: info@healthwatchluton.co.uk Web: www.healthwatchluton.co.uk

Christmas Break:
Our office will close on Friday 19 December 2014, we will re-open on Monday 5 January 2015

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
On the 13th November Healthwatch Luton staff members Nisar Mohammed and Kay Kokabi attended the East of England Ambulance Trust as observers for emergency call outs. This is what they had to say about their experience.

“When we arrived at the ambulance headquarters on Cosgrove way at 6am we were both nervous and excited. Nervous because we had no idea what would happen and excited for the same reason! We were greeted by the locality manager - George Turner who introduced us to the ambulance crews we would be accompanying. Nisar was allocated to Lorraine Allan-Scott and Dave Jadidi and I had the pleasure of accompanying Mick Bunker and Darren Emerton. We were warmly received and immediately felt comfortable as the staff were so welcoming and friendly.

When the first call came in for our teams to be despatched the mood and atmosphere changed. Everything became quick and ran with military precision. We were out of the station in less than a minute and on our way. Even though the blue lights were on and the ambulance was weaving in and out of traffic, I was surprised that everything felt incredibly safe. It looks scarier than it is and it was clear that safety for the ambulance and other road users was very important. I was informed that the national guidelines are that the ambulance can only travel up to 20 miles per hour faster than the road speed limit. The only thing that took some getting used to was the very light suspension of the ambulance which could make a passenger feel a bit motion sick. It felt like being on a boat. Thankfully neither Nisar or I felt sick but we can see how this could affect some people.

One of the complexities for both ambulance staff and observers is that you never really know what you will be attending. We attended Road Traffic Collisions, people who had self harmed, people having seizures, a small child who had fallen and needed stitches and a lady who had severe abdominal pain. All of the patients that we attended to needed hospital treatment. Initially the transfer at the L&D hospital was smooth and quick - well within the 20 minute target. But as the day moved on and the beds became full there were delays. This is a problem as the ambulance staff are not allowed to leave the L&D until the transfer of the patient and handover has been completed. In practical terms this means that we have one less ambulance on the road.

When we arrived at the scene of emergency call outs, the ambulance staff maintained professionalism and complete transparency, informing us, and more importantly informing the patients, of what they were doing and why. We were really pleased to see that they did not shy away from working as they would on a day to day basis. It was clear that the ambulance staff that we accompanied were very passionate about what they did. They were very honest about informing us of the complexities and challenges that they face and we felt that we were in safe hands.

This was an amazing learning experience for us both and we are incredibly thankful for the opportunity to join the crews on emergency call outs. We always appreciated the job of ambulance staff and now having experienced it first hand, our appreciation and respect has increased tenfold. We would like to thank all the staff at the ambulance trust for their hard work, dedication and for being kind enough to give us the opportunity to peek into their world - keep up the fantastic work!
Loud and Clear: making consumers’ voices heard

In this second Annual Report to Parliament Healthwatch England are able to tell the story of the Healthwatch network as a whole.

This report describes the work Healthwatch have been doing to help bring about change—building on the best and changing the rest, on a national level.

Healthwatch Luton is very pleased to have our work highlighted as a case study in this report: How our powers helped improve GP surgeries in Luton

Click here to view a copy of the full report.

If you like a hard copy of this Annual Report, please telephone 01582 817 060 or email.

Healthwatch Luton Signposting Service

We offer a signposting service that enables people to take more control of their own health, treatment and care, promote access to services and choice.

Many of us don’t know where to go if we have a problem or concern to raise.

We signposted 106 people to 139 local and national departments and services during our first year.

Please telephone our office on 01582 817 060 for independent advice and guidance on all health and social care related queries and concerns.

Email: info@healthwatchluton.co.uk
Web: www.healthwatchluton.co.uk

Luton Donor Centre:
Tel: 01582 631 900

For thousands of people this Christmas, the only gift they want is the gift of blood.

Do something amazing and give the gift only you can give.

Book online here

Do you have an interest or use Community Health Services or Mental Health Services in Luton?

You are invited to join the mental health and community health stakeholder group. The next meetings are:

Community Health Meeting: Monday 15th December 2014 – 12.15pm - 3.20pm, including light lunch
Mental Health Meeting: Monday 15th December 2014 - 10.30am - 12pm
Meeting room 1, The Lodge, George Street West, Luton, LU1 2BJ
BOOK YOUR PLACE HERE

NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

A simple scan can tell you if you have an abdominal aortic aneurysm. This is an enlargement of the main blood vessel in the abdomen and if left untreated it can be fatal. Men aged 65+ are most at risk.

- AAA was offered to me at my GP surgery earlier this year, I was very nervous to have exam carried out, easy test scan routine carried out by two lovely nurses. Instant test result—all clear! Allan Brandham, Healthwatch Member
- My daughter told me about the AAA screening programme, my brother had passed away following an aneurysm, so it was extremely important for me to get the test. An appointment was booked straight away and the test itself was all clear. Terry Pamplin, local resident

Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes AAA
Tel: 01234 792227
Email: aaascreening@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk
Web: aaa.screening.nhs.uk
or talk to your GP