

# Newsletter - September 2023

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## Welcome to our September newsletter

This month our newsletter includes:

- [Directors Update](#)
  - [Latest news and updates](#)
  - [Healthwatch - What we have heard about health and care services in East Sussex](#)
  - [Our volunteer activity](#)
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## Directors Update

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The last month has been busy at Healthwatch East Sussex with lots of engagement underway.

Throughout September we have been out and about across Rye and the surrounding area listening to people's experiences of health and care services.



Thank you to everyone who has shared their views so far, everything we hear can help to improve local health and care services.

There is still time for your to share your experience with us through our [online survey](#), which will be open until the 15<sup>th</sup> October, after this date we will begin work on pulling together our insight and report.

I had the opportunity this month to attend the Healthwatch England Leadership conference. It was a great event and provided the opportunity to discuss important topics including access to primary care and the primary care recovery plan. It was also an opportunity to catch up with and hear from other Healthwatch teams across the country.

Remember, you can always your experiences from across East Sussex with us at anytime via our [Feedback Centre](#) or by contacting our [Information and Signposting Service](#).

### **Veronica Kirwan**

Executive Director

East Sussex Community Voice, delivering Healthwatch in East Sussex

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## Latest news and updates

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### Healthwatch Poll: Travelling to access health and care services

This month we want to hear how far you typically travel to use key health and care services.

Please share your experience with us via our one question poll.



[Click here to take our poll](#)

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### Rye Listening Tour 2023 Survey: Share your views

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> of September Healthwatch East Sussex have been out and about at various locations and community events across Rye and the surrounding villages.

Just a few of the places we have visited include;

- Rye Harbour Nature Reserve
- Rye Hospital
- Winchelsea Co-op
- Rye Market
- Camber Memorial Hall
- Fairlight Village Hall

There is still a chance for you to share your experiences and views of health and care services in and around Rye, via our online survey.

If you live in Rye or eastern Rother District, please tell us which services you have used, what your experience was (good, bad or mixed) and any aspects you would like to see change.

Using the feedback we receive we will:

- Share what we hear with health and care commissioners and the local authority
  - Make recommendations to local service providers to support positive change.
  - Champion the view and experiences of local people
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[Take our Listening Tour Survey here](#)

Survey deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

If you require the survey in a different format please get in touch by emailing [enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk) or by calling 0333 101 4007.

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## STAMMA - 'people who stammer face barriers to accessing GP appointments'

[STAMMA](#), the UK's national charity for people who stammer, have found that people who stammer face significant difficulties when trying to book a doctor's appointment. Difficulties which have led to distress, delayed appointments and even misdiagnosis.



Prompted by frustrations from one of their members, they surveyed their members to see whether problems in making a GP appointment were common.

- 41% of people who stammer reported they find it 'very difficult' using the phone to book an appointment (compared with 23% of people who don't stammer),
- 54% of people who stammer experienced mental distress using the phone to make appointments.

The full results are available [here](#).

STAMMA are now calling for;

- Alternative ways of contacting a GP, in addition to the phone.
- Training of receptionists to recognise and interact with disfluent callers.
- Implementation of opt-in patient record flags for people who stammer or who are disfluent.

STAMMA, have produced a short guide with practical tips and support for Practice Managers, receptionists and other staff, which outlines the steps which can be taken.

[Download the guide here](#)

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## Citizens Advice 1066 – Keep Warm and Well leaflet

In collaboration with the East Sussex Fuel Poverty Co-ordinator, [Citizens Advice 1066](#) have created a new Keep Warm and Well leaflet.

The leaflet includes information on the risks of living in a cold home and the support available (advice and financial) to keep warm this winter.



The leaflet cover features the 'keep warm and well' logo with a house icon and a QR code. The main heading is 'If you are struggling to afford to keep your home heated to at least 18°C...'. It is divided into three main sections: 'Plan to keep just one or two rooms warm safely', 'Keep yourself warm', and 'Ask us for help, advice and financial support'. Each section contains a list of practical tips and links to relevant services. The bottom of the leaflet has a red banner with the text 'We're here to help you keep warm and well this winter'.

**keep warm and well** ...in East Sussex

If you are struggling to afford to keep your home heated to at least 18°C...

**Plan to keep just one or two rooms warm safely**

- Check out the best way to use your heating system
- Use your heating controls and thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs)
- Maintain ventilation and air flow to avoid damp and mould

visit: [warmeastsussex.org.uk/keep-warm/diy](http://warmeastsussex.org.uk/keep-warm/diy)

**Keep yourself warm**

- Wear several light layers of warm clothes
- Keep active indoors
- Have hot drinks and meals
- Use hot water bottles or wheat bags

visit: [moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/heat-the-human-not-the-home-save-energy](http://moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/heat-the-human-not-the-home-save-energy)

**Ask us for help, advice and financial support**

**East Sussex Warm Home Check service** offers free advice, along with home energy efficiency visits for eligible households:  
[warmeastsussex.org.uk](http://warmeastsussex.org.uk) or 0800 464 7307 or text WARM to 80011

**Citizens Advice** offers energy advice, financial support and fuel vouchers:  
[citizensadvice1066.co.uk](http://citizensadvice1066.co.uk) or 01424 869 352

**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service** offers free home safety visits and electric blanket safety advice: [esfrs.org](http://esfrs.org) or 0800 177 7069

**Social Housing Providers:**

**Southern Housing:** [southernhousing.org.uk](http://southernhousing.org.uk) or 0800 121 60 60

**Orbit:** [orbit.org.uk](http://orbit.org.uk) or 0800 678 1221

**Details of other organisations and sources of cost of living support**

[eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving](http://eastsussex.gov.uk/costofliving)    [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk) (homeless support)  
[helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk](http://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk)    [www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs)

**We're here to help you keep warm and well this winter**

[Keep Warm and Well Advice](#)



## Third of people in England lack confidence they can access critical NHS services

New research from Healthwatch England shows worryingly low public confidence in being able to access NHS services. A third of adults in England lack confidence that they can access timely care, including GP services, mental health support and hospital care.

The survey suggests low public confidence in accessing GP services and preventative care, such as mental health service and non-urgent procedures, while a relatively high confidence in more urgent care, such as A&E and 999 services.

- Out of hours GP services scored the lowest public confidence, with half of people, 50%, lacking confidence in getting timely care from this service
- This is closely followed by non-urgent operations and procedures, 46%
- Mental health support, 44%
- GP services during the day, 42%
- Dental care, 39%
- Nearly a third of people were not confident in being able to access A&E, 31%, or an ambulance or paramedic, 30%

Across those services, an average of 32% of respondents said they were not confident or very confident that the 13 NHS services could provide timely care.

Around a third (31%) of the respondents said they are totally or very confident they could access timely care from those services.

[Read more](#)

**CHILDREN**  
A child may have sepsis if he or she:

- Is breathing very fast
- Has a 'fit' or convulsion
- Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
- Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
- Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch

**ADULTS**  
An adult may have sepsis if they show any of these signs:

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine (in a day)
- Severe breathlessness
- It feels like you're going to die
- Skin mottled or discoloured

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT SEPSIS:**  
Call 111 or contact your GP if you're worried about an infection.  
Call 999 or visit A&E if someone has one of the sepsis symptoms.

**JUST ASK "COULD IT BE SEPSIS?"**

## World Sepsis Day 2023

The 13<sup>th</sup> September was World Sepsis Day, a global day of raising awareness about Sepsis across the world.

Sepsis is the body's life-threatening overreaction to an infection. It used to be known as blood poisoning. Without timely treatment, it can rapidly lead to organ failure and death, but it's often treatable if caught quickly.

This World Sepsis Day, NHS Sussex asked people to be 'Sepsis Savvy' by knowing the signs and symptoms of Sepsis.

The symptoms of Sepsis vary between adults and children.

A child may have Sepsis if they:

- Are breathing very fast
- Has a 'fit' or convulsion
- Looks mottled, bluish, or pale
- Has a rash that does not fade when you press it
- Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch

An adult may have Sepsis if they show any of these signs:

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine (in a day)
- Severe breathlessness

- It feels like you're going to die/feeling of 'impending doom'
- Skin mottled or discoloured

Call NHS 111 or contact your GP if you're worried about an infection. If you suspect Sepsis, call 999 or visit A&E immediately.

[The UK Sepsis Trust](#) have a range of resources for people who have been affected by Sepsis, those who have lost a loved one or anyone who wants to help raise awareness.

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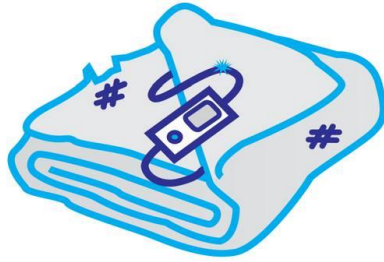
## **Electric Blanket Testing events across East Sussex this Autumn.**

During October, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have arranged free Electric Blanket safety checks at locations across East Sussex.

The checks are open to all, just take you electric blanket along to one of the events for a free safety check. For all of the upcoming dates and times click [here](#).

For more information about the events and advice on choosing and using your electric blanket visit the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service website via the link below.

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## Free Electric Blanket Testing

Monday 9th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Heathfield Fire Station	High Street, Heathfield TN21 0UP	10.00am - 12.00pm
Herstmonceux Fire Station	Hailsham Road, Herstmonceux BN27 4LJ	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Tuesday 10th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Crowborough Fire Station	Beacon Road, Crowborough TN6 1AF	10.00am - 12.00pm
Uckfield Fire Station	Bell Farm Road, Uckfield TN22 1BA	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Wednesday 11th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Bohemia Road Fire Station	Bohemia Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1EX	10.00am - 12.00pm
Battle Fire Station	London Road, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0EE	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Thursday 12th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Bexhill Fire Station	Beeching Road, Bexhill on Sea, TN39 3LG	10.00am - 12.00pm
Polegate, United Reformed Church Hall	Victoria Road, Polegate, BN26 6DA	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Friday 13th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Hailsham Fire Station	Victoria Road, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2AY	10.00am - 12.00pm
Eastbourne Fire Station	Whitley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 8LA	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Monday 16th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Lewes Fire Station	North Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2PE	10.00am - 12.00pm
Seaford Fire Station	Cradle Hill Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 3JA	2.00pm - 4.00pm
Tuesday 17th October 2023		
Station	Address	Time
Hove Fire Station	English Close, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 7EE	10.00am - 4.00pm
<i>Please note: Unfortunately, Brighton Station will not be holding an event this year due a refurbishment taking place at the station.</i>		

Bring your electric blanket along for a free safety check at any of the above events.

If you are unable to attend an event, have you asked a family member, friend, carer or neighbour if they are able to bring your electric blanket along for you?

[www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)

**East Sussex Fire and Rescue – Electric Blanket Testing**



## Baby Loss Awareness Week 2023

The 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023 is Baby Loss Awareness Week.

This globally recognised event that provides an opportunity to come together as a community and give anyone touched by pregnancy and baby loss a safe and supportive space to share their experiences and feel that they are not alone.

[The Baby Loss Awareness Week website](#) provides an array of information and signposting for accessing support.

Every year Baby Loss Awareness Week ends with [Wave of Light](#), an opportunity to light a candle to remember all babies that have died too soon. This year Wave of Light is taking place on the 15<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm.

Ahead of this years Wave of Light a member of the Healthwatch East Sussex Team wanted to share their experience and the importance of Wave of Light. You can read their story [here](#).

For any support or advice please visit the Baby Loss Awareness Week website here: <https://babyloss-awareness.org/>

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## Brighton and Sussex Health Research Partnership Conference: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023

The second Brighton and Sussex Health Research Partnership Conference will be held on Thursday 19 October 2023 at the Bramber House Conference Centre on the University of Sussex site in Falmer between 9.30am and 3.30pm.

It will be an opportunity to:

- Learn about the Partnership's strategy for developing Health and Care Research in Sussex 2024-2030





- Find out how the Partnership can help you develop your research
- Help shape the work of the Partnership
- Hear about different areas of health and care research across Sussex
- Highlight your research and strengthen its impact
- Build collaborations across the Partnership.

Book your place at the conference [here](#).

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## Healthwatch East Sussex - Your guide to Shingles

We have recently received some enquiries asking about Shingles Vaccinations, so have put together a quick guide to Shingles.

Shingles is an infection that causes a painful rash.

Within our guide we have included information on:

- The symptoms of shingles
- Where to go to get help and advice if you think you have shingles
- Information on getting vaccinated against shingles



[Read our guide here](#)

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## Healthwatch - What we have heard about health and care services in East Sussex

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We have recently shared the August edition of our 'You Said, We Did' resource which highlights how we have responded to enquiries received by our [Information and Signposting Service](#), as well as some of the wider actions we have taken in response to cross-cutting health and care issues.

Below are two examples of the actions you have helped us deliver during August:

- We were contacted by someone needing help travelling to a hospital appointment. They didn't drive

and due to their medical condition couldn't access public transport. We shared information and contact details for the Non-emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS), outlining the eligibility criteria and explaining how to book transport.

- We worked with colleagues at other local Healthwatch to raise the issue of increasingly long waits for outcomes to complaints referred to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). We have asked Healthwatch England to raise this issue nationally with NHS England.

Read the full August document on our website, via the link below.

['You Said, We Did' - August 2023](#)

## Tell Us Your Experiences

Please tell us your experiences of local health and care services via our [Feedback Centre](#) and let us know how this has been for you.

We want to hear if it has been good, bad or indifferent.

## Help and support with Health and Care

If you need help or support related to health or care, then please contact our [Information & Signposting Service](#) via

0333 101 4007 or [enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk)

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## Our volunteer activity

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**Do you want to make a difference to health and social care in your area?**

Then join our wonderful volunteer team!



Our volunteer opportunities are really flexible, you can do as much or as little as you want and it can fit around what you already do.

We work across the county and can match you with opportunities that work for you.

Whatever your age or background we would love to talk to you.

**Here's what our volunteers have to say about their experience:**

*"I get a lot of satisfaction knowing what I am doing is ensuring that the patients voice is heard and represented in a constructive way. I also like working as part of a volunteer team making a difference to health and social care I have made lots of friends and met like-minded volunteers who also believe that patients need to be represented and heard to enable change in our community"*

*"Young Healthwatch has given me insight into the importance of the public voice in improving the health and social care services they use... Young Healthwatch has motivated me to take forward what I've learnt (specifically about having independent champions of patient voices) to my career"*

To find out more click the button below, email [volunteering@escv.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@escv.org.uk) or call 0333 101 4007

[Get Involved with Us](#)