

Place of Safety open day, 9 August 2016

Response to the Joint Borough Scrutiny Committee: Lewisham, Lambeth, Croydon and Southwark

Dear Cllr Rebecca Lury,

Local Healthwatch worked in partnership with SLaM to organise an open day of the new Place of Safety Unit on 9 September 2016. The aim of the event was to gather feedback from mental health service users and local residents to help shape a better, patient led service.

Between local Healthwatch and SLaM we ensured that the event was widely publicised through a variety of communication channels with emphasis put on encouraging participation from seldom heard communities.

The event seemed quite well attended though it was not always possible to tell how many attendees were service users. A couple of young service users attended which was encouraging. Unfortunately due to issues with the building, the event was not held in the new facility, so we hope that everyone who wanted to attend was able to find their way. There were frequent tours of the unit itself. One person did tell Healthwatch that they would have liked more prominent basic information on the unit (what it is for, how many beds etc.)

Healthwatch staff were positioned in the room so as to prompt discussion around discharge from the Place of Safety, though many people talked to us more generally about Section 136 and crisis care. Healthwatch ensured that people's comments at the event were recorded.

Overall Healthwatch is pleased with the results of the engagement and we were given the opportunity to comment on the resulting draft report.

Healthwatch felt that the report was clearly written and while it did not cover the rationale for the merged Place of Safety, it contained much detail about the environment and operation of the unit and how potential users have been involved in designing these. We suggested that it should also include:

information on the number of carers/users who attended the open day

information on the protocol for when children and young people are on the unit (p12)

a larger range of comments from the open day (particularly the stress many people placed on the importance of better mental health training for police, plus some points about the

building, carer involvement, etc.) stronger emphasis on the need for fast callbacks after discharge (3 days is not soon enough).

Going forward, we welcome the opportunity to the new service by listening to the patients' views and experiences.

Healthwatch Lewisham, Healthwatch Southwark, Healthwatch Lambeth and Healthwatch Croydon.