

## East Sussex Better Together: Public Reference Forum 6 month report

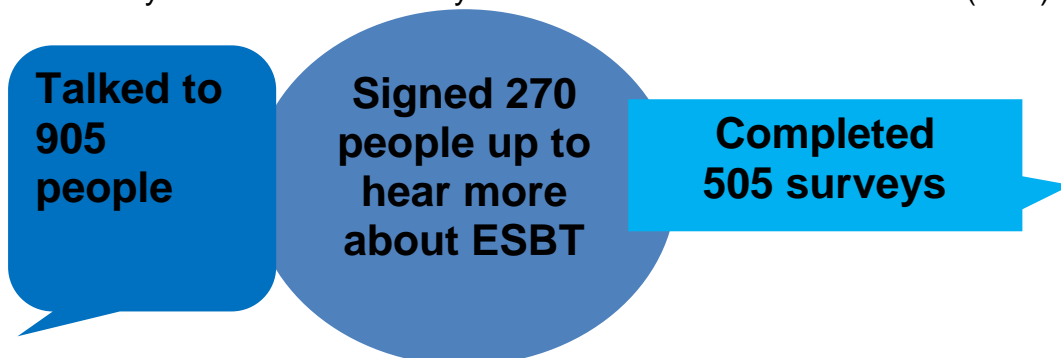
### Background

In June 2015, an East Sussex Better Together Public Reference Forum was launched to increase ways for local people to have a say and inform the development of local services. This arrangement builds on work already underway to increase understanding about East Sussex Better Together. Its focus has been to increase the number of local people interested in joining clinicians and professionals to co-design health and social care services.

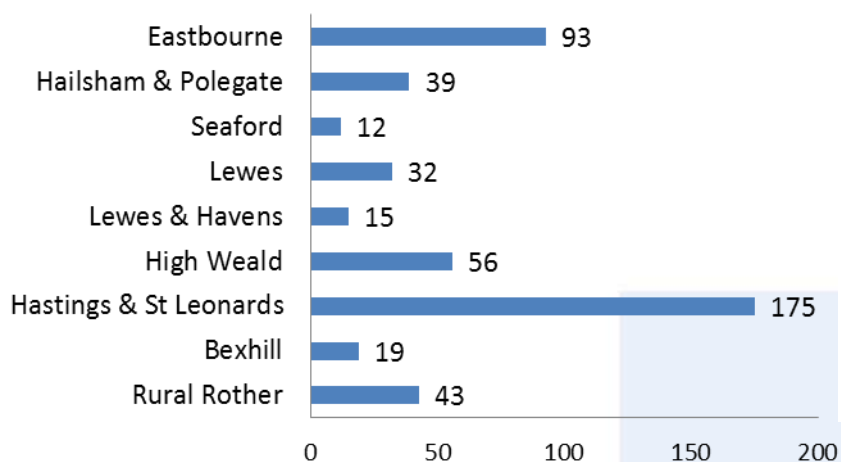
The forum is managed by East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV), which is also the provider of Healthwatch East Sussex.

### What we've done

Between 20 July 2015 and 20 January 2016 the Public Reference Forum (PRF) has:



### Survey responses by location



*Following changes to the governance and membership of East Sussex Better Together, subsequent reports will only include data from the Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG and Hastings and Rother CCG areas,*

## What people said

We asked people a range of questions about health and social care in East Sussex, and about East Sussex Better Together.

	More than half of the people who responded said they wanted to be kept informed of the programme's progress, and nearly 20% were willing to get actively involved.
	The feedback we got from the survey suggests that people have mainly neutral views about health and social care. However, a small majority have strong feelings – both positive and negative.
	There is a lack of knowledge across the county about changes to health and social care, and on what East Sussex Better Together aims to achieve.

Appendix 1 gives a summary of the responses. A more detailed summary is available on request. Please contact [rob.hustwayte@nhs.net](mailto:rob.hustwayte@nhs.net).

## What has worked well

- Flexibility of the Public Reference Forum**  
 By being adaptable and flexible, the public reference forum has managed to talk to people who were not initially aware of ESBT, but have shown a willingness to support it, and stay informed.
- Independence**  
 People said they enjoy the knowledge they are not speaking to the 'establishment', and that it enables them to feel free to speak their minds. The independent nature of the forum is therefore crucial.
- Having centrally produced materials**  
 The ESBT newsletter has been well received by local people. It has allowed them to take information away, although additional, more visual materials would be even better (see 'What can be improved').
- The Healthwatch East Sussex Red Bus**  
 The forum joined the Healthwatch East Sussex Red Bus in September 2015, and it gave the forum the chance to meet more than 10% of the total number of people it has met. The event will be re-run in July 2016.

## What could be improved

- **Access to GP surgeries**  
Access for the Public Reference Forum to GP surgeries (to talk to patients in waiting rooms) has not always been straightforward, and the PRF is working with the ESBT Programme Board to make improvements.
- **More visual digital content to share**  
The Public Reference Forum has been using Twitter to cover events and promote relevant content, but there have been fewer opportunities to gather video and pictures. Now that ESBT is moving into the delivery phase, there are more opportunities and plans for this.
- **How we ask for equalities information**  
Gathering equalities information from people has not been particularly easy, and in some cases has been a barrier to obtaining any feedback. However, we recognise that this is an important tool so we'll continue to look at the way this is discussed.
- **Numbers of people**  
Footfall in some locations and the British weather all impact on numbers. East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust providing wider access to patient areas will support increased engagement, and a move back to more outdoor events will again provide additional opportunities.

## Director's comment – Julie Fitzgerald, East Sussex Community Voice

The Public Reference Forum has provided an independently led innovative experience, where local people have been actively sought out across the county. It has enabled them to become better informed about what East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) is aiming to achieve, and how they can be kept up to date, and to get involved.

The forum will shortly have spoken to over 1000 local people. The feedback of those who completed the survey indicates an information gap for the public, with only 11% aware of changes to health and social care, and even less (5%) having heard of the East Sussex Better Together programme. However, what should not be overlooked, is that of those who completed the survey, 17% were willing to get actively involved in the programme, and over half (55%) expressed a wish to be kept informed about its progress.

The recommendations for the next six months are designed to increase awareness of ESBT and secure greater levels of public buy-in. There is also a need for increased buy-in to the programme from GP surgeries. In our role delivering Healthwatch East Sussex, we know that local people look to their local GP as a trusted source of information, and so GP practices actively being seen to support the programme is crucial. The opportunity is that with one clinical commissioning group already receiving fully delegated commissioning responsibilities of local GPs from NHS England; and the other moving into this position

from April 2016, member engagement can provide the space to grow the energy and support needed.

Finally, a lot of interest and local knowledge has been generated during the last six months, although wide spread opportunities to get involved have mainly been limited to the shaping health and social care events. The imminent full launch of the integrated locality teams, engagement on community resilience and on urgent care re-design, will all provide genuine environments for people to get involved. The challenge to East Sussex Better Together will be to demonstrate that the ambitions shared by local people, can be seen to actively influence service design.

## Recommendations

1. The ESBT programme should consider an increased media campaign, to support the ambitions of local people to be kept informed about the programme and how to get involved.
2. Review the ESBT action plan for informing staff groups, in particular GP surgery staff.
3. Use the clinical commissioning groups' member engagement function to engage GPs, and promote the positives of supporting the public reference forum to be in the surgery speaking with patients.
4. Continue developing the newsletter, website and visual materials.
5. Consider a redesign of the survey. With on average five minutes opportunity with most people, the signposting and information officer should now focus on encouraging people to attend the integrated locality team, community resilience and urgent care re-design events, and any others that are planned; and
6. Consider a review through the ESBT advisory group, to ensure that messages are reaching people and communities who fall under the Equality Act protected characteristics.

## Response from East Sussex Better Together

Our shared ambition is to develop a fully integrated health and social care system in East Sussex by 2018, ensuring every patient or service user enjoys proactive, joined up care that supports them to live as independently as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. We are committed to ensuring that decisions we make as part of East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) are informed by ongoing engagement with local people, alongside NHS and social care professionals and partner organisations.



We would like to thank the Public Reference Forum for all the work and information provided so far. To have spoken to nearly 1,000 people across the county is a great achievement. The proactive and independent approach of the Forum has enabled people who may not have known about ESBT to provide feedback about their experiences of health and social care and make suggestions going forward. That so many people want to be keep up-to-date about the programme and become actively involved is a real opportunity to build on what the Forum has achieved so far.

We welcome the Forum's work in identifying ways we can involve more people in the programme. It provides us with some robust recommendations for improving awareness of ESBT and encouraging more people to engage in the programme's work. Importantly, the valuable feedback about local NHS and social care services collected via the Forum is directly informing the various workstreams of the programme.

Over the next six months we look forward to working with the Forum and all our key stakeholders to ensure our communications, networks and engagement mechanisms provide increased opportunities for people to become actively involved in developing and influencing the design of local services that suit the needs of the community.

## Thanks

With thanks to all the partners who have helped to develop this service, and with special thanks to the public who shared their views so willingly.

## Disclaimer

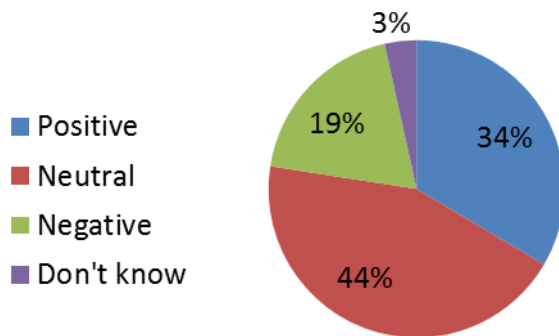
This report relates to findings observed on the specific dates set out in the report. The report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

**Prepared by East Sussex Better Together**

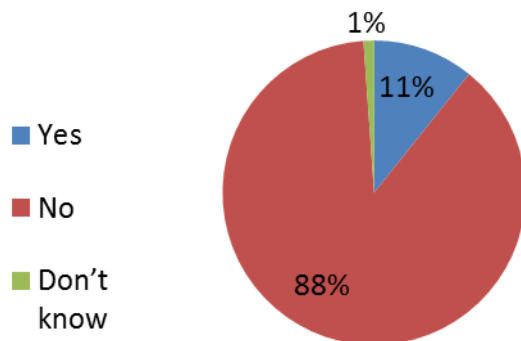
## Appendix 1: Survey results

We asked people:

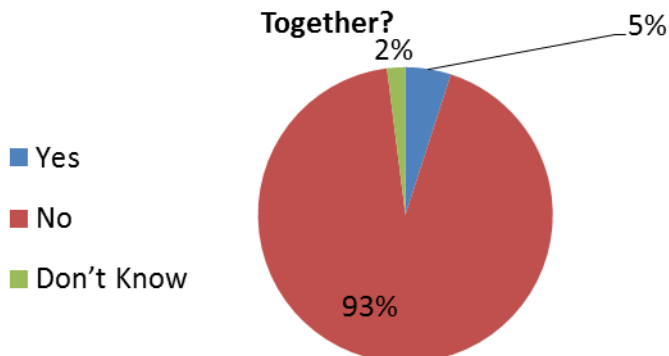
What is your view of local health & social care services?



Are you aware of the changes in local health & social care?



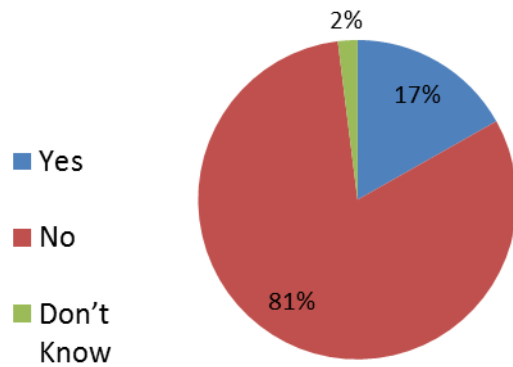
Have you heard of East Sussex Better Together?



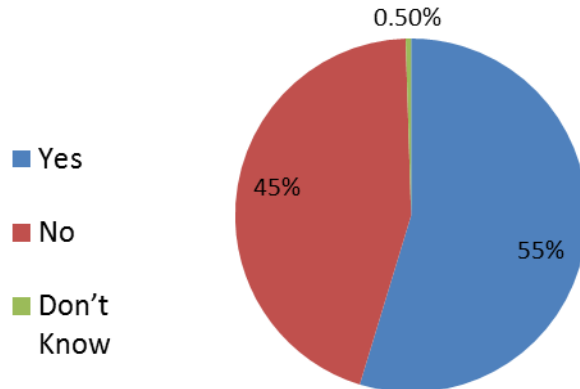




**Would you like to be involved in helping to shape and design services for health and social care in the future?**



**Would you like to be informed about the progress of East Sussex Better Together?**





**What are your top areas of interest when it comes to better health and/or social care?**

Overall	
Category	Rank
Dementia care	1
Accident and emergency	2
GP services	3
Hospital services	4
Mental health	5
Wheelchair service	6
End of life care	7
Care of the elderly	8
Continuing care	10
Cancer services	10

“Other” category highlights include: maternity (count 31) and diabetic services (count 28), so only just short of sitting in the top ten. Categories registered with a count of at least 10, included district nurses, paediatrics, health visitors, community nursing and the continence service.