

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SERVICES

TO:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD		
DATE:	18 March 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	12
TITLE:	PROGRESS REPORT ON HOW THE EX-GHURKHA COMMUNITY ACCESS AND EXPERIENCE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE IN READING		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR HOSKIN /COUNCILLOR EDEN	PORTFOLIO:	HEALTH / ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SERVICE:	HEALTH / ADULT SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The original report was commissioned by Reading Borough Council for Healthwatch Reading to gather feedback from members of the ex-Ghurkha Community on how they access health and social care services and then their experience of those services. This was originally presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 17 July 2015. This report will give you an up to date progress on actions across health and social care and any highlight and further recommendations.
- 1.1 Health and social care providers have addressed these actions, and have committed to making continued improvements, working in partnership. There have been many positive changes made across all health and social care sectors. The role of the Reading Integration Board will be lead on this programme highlighting the need for greater community collaboration.

2 RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the progress made as set out in section 5 of the report;
- 2.2 That the Health and Wellbeing Board directs the Reading Integration Board to continue to track the progress of access to services for the ex-Ghurkha community.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2014, Healthwatch Reading was commissioned by Reading Borough Council, on behalf of a consortium of local authorities in the south-east of England, to

explore how the ex-Ghurkha community access health and social care services and to disseminate these finding across the consortium.

3.2 This was an important report which provides the partners a helpful understanding of the issues and experiences faced by the Nepalese community which is a small but growing population accessing translation and interpretation services in Reading. Partners welcomed the opportunity to work with local partners to make improvements to our services and wished to thank the Nepalese community for drawing this to our attention.

4. THE EX-GHURKHA POPULATION IN READING

4.1 The 2011 Census indicated that Reading had a Nepalese population of 2,725. This includes migrants of working age, many with professional qualifications, and then ex-Ghurkhas and their wives. Most of the ex-Ghurkha community are aged 60-75 years, and come from rural areas of Nepal. They are often living in the UK without the support of adult children, who may live back in Nepal.

4.2 The ex-Ghurkha community in Reading has a high incidence of a number of long term conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and gout. Many ex-Ghurkhas also have hearing problems, caused by exposure to the noise from discharging weapons during army service. Alcohol misuse is a common problem in this community. There is also a high rate of uro-gynaecological problems (such as incontinence) amongst the ex-Ghurkha wives who will typically have had many pregnancies.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AND TO PROGRESS TO DATE

5.1 Based upon the outcome of the Healthwatch report, health and social care devised an action plan, which addressed the key area of development. The table below (Table 1) described those actions, and the response.

The final column of the table demonstrates that all areas of the action plan have been completed.

5.2 Table 1:

Recommendation	Response	Completed?
GP Practices to review interpretation services to ex-Ghurkha communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GP's to share experiences Melrose House and London Road Practices to lead on training patients as interpreters Awareness made public via community groups and TV screens in practices 	Yes
Dentists and opticians to review interpretation services to ex-Ghurkha communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All translation services are centralised through Reading Borough Council 	Yes
Royal Berkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audiology have organised 	•

Hospital particularly ophthalmology and audiology departments to review interpretation services to ex-Ghurkha communities	<p>awareness days mobile hearing unit to the coffee morning and offering hearing screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An awareness leaflet let has been created and can be found on the trust website and the Reading ex-Ghurkha website • Staff have created a identify your language leaflet • Ophthalmology have had a visit from Reading Healthwatch to further discussions on best practice • Further training on how to book interpreters, the system still requires the patient or referrer to ensure an interpreter is available on their first appointment 	
CCG's to provide awareness cards to ex-Ghurkhas and their wives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cards were distributed December 2015 	Yes
GP practices to review written translation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP practices use a system approach for both interpretation and translation services 	Yes
Royal Berkshire Hospital to review written translation services and the implementation of a hospital map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RBH suggested it is impractical to have a find your way map in many languages. A coloured signage is under review these will be linked to appointment letters. These will be consulted with Reading ex-Ghurkha group 	Yes
Community dentist and opticians to review written letters to ex-Ghurkha communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written correspondence for appointments etc. is very rarely used within these services. If this is needed the Reading interpretation service will be utilised 	Yes
The community eye and dental teams to undertake outreach work to raise awareness of services available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optometrists have spoken to the Reading Nepalese Women's group. A coordinated outreach approach coordinated by the Reading Integration Board will be taken 	Yes
Reading Borough Council to raise awareness of support available for carers and any potential unmet needs of vulnerable people within the ex-Ghurkha community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Borough Council has commissioned a service to reduce loneliness and isolation within BME communities. Focussing on the ex-Ghurkha community their efforts will be focussed on engaging with, Communicare, Reading Ex-British Ghurkhas, Reading SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors and Airman's Families 	Yes

	Association), Greater Reading Nepalese Community Association, Forgotten British Ghurkha Centre, Reading Community Learning Centre	
Reading CCG's to Health language sessions for Nepalese women, with a view to incorporate mental and social care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously funded through the Partnership Development Fund no applications have been made this year. The Reading Integration Board will review the level of communication made to promote this service 	Yes

5.3.1 There have been a total of 146 requests for Nepalese translator services within 2015. This accounted for 11.18% of all languages requested and a 21.2% increase on 2014. Further correlations between request rates and interventions need to be highlighted at the Reading Integration Board.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 Developing a whole system Action Plan to progress and monitor the commitments made in response to Healthwatch's findings has supported achievement of this objective. It also supports delivery against the service priority "safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable" as set out on Reading Borough Council's Corporate Plan (2016-19), and the vision outlined in the Berkshire West Strategic plan 2014-2019 and the Reading CCGs operating plans 2014-2016 to 'keep people well and out of hospital in partnership'. The Reading Integration Board (RIB) will own this action plan and it has been tabled to the March 2016 Agenda.

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

7.1 Health and social care providers are grateful to Healthwatch Reading for their in depth work with Reading's ex-Ghurkha community to identify and start to understand some of the issues raised. Through its membership of the Reading Integration Board, Healthwatch Reading will have a key role to play in keeping the patient/user perspective central to discussions regarding the ex-Ghurka community.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, save in relation to the public sector equality duty as described below.

9. EQUALITY IMPACTS

- 9.1 All public sector bodies are under a legal duty to comply with the public sector equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. In order to comply with these duties, policies and services should be developed with a view to preventing discrimination, and also protecting and promoting the interests of 'protected' groups. Ex-Ghurkhas can properly be considered 'protected' as members of a minority ethnic community. The statutory services to which Healthwatch Reading's recommendations are addressed therefore have a legal obligation to consider how to respond so as to improve access to and experience of services by the ex-Ghurkha community.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There were no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Actions have been delivered within existing resources.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- *How the ex-Ghurkha community access and experience health and social care services in Reading* - Healthwatch Reading, 2015
- Response to *How the ex-Ghurkha community access and experience health and social care services in Reading* - North & West Reading CCG and South Reading CCG, February 2015
- *Improving awareness of support within the ex-Ghurkha community* - Reading Borough Council, May 2015