

News



Patient helpline raising standards says watchdog

DORSET'S 111 patient helpline has improved its overall rating following the latest inspection by the national care watchdog.

The non-emergency service was judged 'good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) having been rated 'requires improvement' in 2016 when two of its areas — whether it was effective and well-led — were found to be below par.

At the latest inspection the CQC only looked into the two areas that previously had been graded below standards and found both were now good, justifying the overall rating bump.

Inspectors said that the percentage of calls being answered within 60 seconds had been consistently better than the national and local averages since November last year, while call back systems had improved and were more responsive to callers' needs.

Complaints had been reduced and there was a low level of serious incidents. The inspectors were impressed by how staff from the ditched 111 Cornwall service were switched to Dorset's team.

They also noted the service had introduced systems to monitor and maintain compliance with the NHS Pathways licence, and engaged with external organisations to obtain feedback to evidence

where services needed improving.

Staff were supported more, but the inspectors did note that while morale was up, it had recently been detrimentally affected by "recent changes in the service provision and uncertainty of the imminent tendering result regarding the contract".

The 24-hour telephone line is run by the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) and serves a population of 1.3m people living in Dorset who need non-emergency medical advice over the phone.

It is free and is supported by highly trained advisers as well as experienced nurses and paramedics, who provide health information or assurance as to what callers should do next.

Ken Wenman, SWASFT chief executive, congratulated his staff, adding: "This is a fantastic achievement and is the result of a lot of hard work by everyone involved in delivering this service."

Ruth Rankine, CQC deputy chief inspector of general practice, said: "People who call the NHS 111 service are entitled to quick and easy access to healthcare advice and information, or access to urgent attention when that's appropriate."

Rescued Dottie's leap to stardom

Jack Russell cross is signed up for Great Britain agility team

BY CHARLOTTE BAKER

A DOG rescued by a New Forest woman has transformed into an agility star, with a helping hand from a local veterinary practice.

Rescue pup Dottie was found wandering the streets of Limerick, Ireland, aged just eight months and was adopted by Hythe resident Linda Evans (pictured left).

Nine years later and the pair have achieved countless successes in the sport of dog agility, where handlers and their canine companions negotiate an obstacle course at lightning pace.

Linda and Dottie — a Jack Russell cross — have won several national finals, and even competed at Crufts and Olympia International Show in London.

This year they were selected to compete for Great Britain for the first time at the World



Dottie competing at Crufts

Agility Championships, held in Italy last month.

Although a last-minute injury meant Dottie was unable to compete, the pair are still aiming for several prestigious events in 2018, including the Olympia International semi-finals in August at Rockingham Castle, Northants.

Linda has been supported with Dottie's care by Seadown Vets in Hythe, and the practice stepped in to sponsor the entire GB team for the World Championships.

Linda told the A&T: "Who'd have thought a £90 rescue from Ireland would have developed

into such a little star. I am so thrilled with her.

"The beauty of agility is that it showcases relationship and talent. It's open to everyone at every level and isn't about having a pedigree dog.

"Dottie is so special to me but we could not have achieved anything without the amazing support of all the special vets at Seadown, especially Rita Mesquita. When no one else would come forward to sponsor me, it was a mark of true loyalty, trust and a wonderful relationship that they helped me and the team.

"In the meantime, for Dottie, agility is just a game we play a couple of times a week — when we're not out on the Forest, finding smelly stuff to roll in!"

Practice director Kate McMorris, who is pictured (centre) with colleague Rita Mesquita, said: "Seadown were honoured to be sponsoring the GB agility team by providing their new shirts."

"Linda has been a long-standing client of ours, and when she approached us, we were very happy to help Dottie, who after a hard start in life has proved to be a little star."

Pre-school appealing for support

A PRE-SCHOOL for children with special needs is appealing for help from local businesses and organisations with the desperately-needed renovation of its premises.

First Opportunities based at Ashley Junior School says its kitchen is not fit for purpose and its play therapy room for youngsters with various conditions, some life-limiting, needs updating with new equipment and toys.

"We are launching a fundraising initiative asking

local companies, organisations, friends, supporters and the community whether they can support us", said the charity's chairman Catherine Bowell.

"We are looking to replace our kitchen section as it is no longer fit for purpose and our flooring to ensure our children have as much messy play opportunity as possible, and to redecorate our play therapy room."

The charity offers children and their families vital therapy and support, ensuring each child has an individual therapy

plan to help them achieve their maximum potential. The youngsters have a wide variety of conditions including autism and Down's syndrome.

"We are totally dependent on community support to be able to offer this essential service," Catherine said.

Anyone who is able to help or fundraise for new toys or equipment can call 01425 629632 or email firststopp@hotmail.com

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New Milton Baptist Church 5:30pm and 7:30pm
 Kathy 07528 832540
 New Milton Baptist Church, 90 Old Milton Road, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 6DX

Tuesdays
Bashley Village Hall 9:00am and 11:00am
 Janice 01425 270714
 Bashley Village Hall, Bashley Road, Bashley (New Milton), Hampshire, BH25 5RY

Womens Institute Hall 6:00pm
 Michelle 07795275633
 Womens Institute Hall, Ashley Lane, Hordle (Lymington), Hampshire, SO41 0GA

Wednesdays
Brockenhurst Village Hall 9:30am
 Tina 01425 277946
 Brockenhurst Village Hall, Highwood Road, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, SO42 7RY

New Milton Community Centre 6:30pm
 Michelle 07795275633
 New Milton Community Centre, Osborne Road, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 6EA

The United Reformed Church 6:30pm
 Jon 07946143849
 The United Reformed Church, High Street, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 9AG

Thursdays
The Guide Hut 9:30am
 Michelle 07795275633
 The Guide Hut, Priestlands Road, Pennington, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 8HY

The United Reformed Church 5:30pm and 7:30pm
 Jon 07946143849
 The United Reformed Church, High Street, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 9AG

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Belinda Neal is set to share her slimming success

A slimmer who gained control of her eating habits and finally found the eating plan that would enable her to remain comfortable and happy in her own skin FOREVER is now using her success, coupled with her passionate enthusiasm, to help other people change their lives and achieve their weight loss dreams too.

Belinda Neal joined her local Slimming World group in New Milton 22 months ago and dropped from 10st 2lbs to 8st 9lbs in 8 months.

Belinda has now trained as a Consultant for Slimming World, the UK's largest group-based weight loss organisation, at their national training academy in Derbyshire. She is all set to open her own group in Lymington at The Lymington Centre on Monday 2nd July at 7.30p.m.

The latest government figures reveal that around one in four adults are obese and it is estimated that, by 2034, this will increase to one in three. Belinda says her new role has never been more important.

She says: "Obesity is becoming such a huge issue across the UK. When I first joined Slimming World as a member, I never dreamed that I would end up becoming a Consultant but now I just can't wait to get started. In today's society, with so many conflicting opinions about healthy eating, weight and exercise, it is easy to become overwhelmed about what is best. Food and fitness is thrust at us from every angle and can leave many in a sea of confusion and misery. Having found an eating plan that has enabled me to lose weight and now maintain a healthy weight is life enhancing. It is super easy to follow, it makes sense, it fits in with me and my family's lifestyle and it works. Having completed my training I now have the knowledge, and understanding to go with my experience and boundless empathy and support. It will be such a privilege for me to be able to pass this on and guide my members on their hugely exciting and rewarding weight loss journey."

"Support is really the most important thing. It all starts with feeling that you're not alone. I couldn't have lost the weight without the weekly help, encouragement and understanding of my own Consultant and group. As someone who has lost weight and is continuing my weight loss journey, I know the challenges people can face, which is why, along with the group, I will be there to support every one of my members all the way to their chosen target weight. Setting targets, sharing recipes and other ideas, and working together as a group to overcome challenges and celebrate success is so important to a successful journey. That's why, at my Slimming World group, there'll be tons of support, encouragement and fun."

"Like a lot of slimmers, I had tried to lose weight so many times before by following numerous diets but they were never sustainable because I'd always get tired of restricting what I ate."

Belinda's Slimming World group will be held at The Lymington Centre every Monday evening at 7.30p.m. from 2nd July. For more information or to join Belinda's group please do not hesitate to drop a text or give her a ring so that she can meet you at the door. - 07970 949407 Alternatively, come along and meet her there. For more information about Slimming World visit www.slimmingworld.co.uk or call 0344 897 8000.