

Health and Wellbeing Board

14 May 2015



Healthwatch County Durham - Update

Report of Judith Mashiter, Chair, Healthwatch County Durham

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the organisation, activities and outcomes of Healthwatch County Durham during the period October 2014 to March 2015.

Background

2. Since the previous update report was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2015 there has been an intense period of preparation for organisational independence.
3. Between April 2013 and March 2015 Healthwatch County Durham was operated under contract to Carers Federation, commissioned by Durham County Durham. On 1 April 2015 Healthwatch County Durham Community Interest Company, an independent social enterprise, took on the delivery of the local Healthwatch contract for the county.
4. The board, staff and volunteer team of Healthwatch County Durham continues to evolve and develop in response to experience and better understanding of the stakeholder landscape.
 - An Advisory Board of five new members has been appointed to strengthen and extend the skills base of the organisation.
 - In a previous report the roles of Healthwatcher, Helper and Enter & View Authorised Representatives have been described; the number within each category is now 17, 41 and 11 respectively. Healthwatcher venues are diverse and include a busy hair salon, a Down Syndrome Education Centre, a Dales rural café and a city-centre coffee house.
5. The three strands of local Healthwatch work are:
 - Listening – to patients of health services and users of social care services to find out what they think of the services they receive.
 - Advising – people how to get the best health and social care for themselves and their family.

- Speaking up – on consumers' behalf with those who provide health and social care services.
6. The strategic priorities for 2014/15 to 2016/17 are:
- Integrated health and social care.
 - Making sense of it all' (knowledge, understanding, accessibility and navigation around the systems).
7. The three priority groups of people with whom Healthwatch County Durham will engage are:
- Those seldom heard.
 - Children and young people.
 - The elderly and those with dementia.

Activities and outcomes, October 2014 to March 2015

8. Listening.
- Healthwatch County Durham has engaged with 1,533 people.
 - This engagement was through a variety of events, workshops, drop-ins etc and included activities with:
 - The Health and Wellbeing Board's Big Tent event
 - The Tees Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust Learning Disability Conference
 - Teesdale School and Sixth Form
 - Police and Fire Service safety carousel
 - 2D Christmas Fair
 - Carers' Rights event
 - Youth Focus 'Change your mind'
 - Health awareness (Shotton)
 - People's Parliament
 - Durham Sixth Form Centre
 - 'Just for Women' group in Stanley (mental health and domestic violence focus)
 - Spennymoor Youth Council
 - Learning Disability Carers Forum (led by Inclusion North)
 - Whitworth Park School, Spennymoor (social care students)
 - Cubs/Beavers (8-10 year olds, at Coxhoe)
 - Children and Young People's Network
 - Tin Arts (Learning Disability Day service)
 - LGBT group at DISC
 - North East Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome
 - GOALS (learning disability group run by DISC)

- *Children and Young People Engagement Report* was published in January 2015 (attached at Appendix 2). This collated all the comments Healthwatch County Durham received from young people during 2014 and highlights what young people think and need in respect of health and social care services. The report was widely distributed and its contents and recommendations warmly and positively received: by the Primary Quality Surveillance group, whose General Practitioners (GPs) and Care Quality Commission representatives committed to using the findings to help with communication with children and young people; and by the local professional networks, especially the Ophthalmology Chair. A follow-up report will collate all the feedback received from service providers in response to the report.
- *Young Carers: their thoughts on health and social care needs* was published in December 2014 (attached at Appendix 3). The report was widely distributed and its contents and recommendations warmly and positively received by: North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (ND CCG) engagement team; and by Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group (DDES CCG) who will use the findings to help promote Healthwatch to school nurses and health visitors and to inform their roll-out of the Young Carers' Charter in GP practices and to raise awareness of young carers.
- Healthwatch County Durham conducted face-to-face surveys with 38 Intermediate Care Plus service users in nursing homes across the county. This piece of work contributed to the wider review of the service by Durham County Council Children and Adults Services. In addition to the completed questionnaires, observations of the engagement staff, relating to the physical environment, and of comments made to them by residents, relating to medication administration, were reported.
- The staff team, support by volunteers, engaged with patients waiting at the four Urgent Care Centres within the DDES CCG area. Visits took place on all seven days of the week and the schedule included morning, afternoon and evening visits. Responses to the 167 questionnaires completed are being analysed by DDES CCG as part of its wider review of Urgent Care. In addition to the completed questionnaires, observations relating to confusion over signage and terminology and public perception and understanding of the care system (Urgent Care, Accident & Emergency, GP access), were reported.
- A separate piece of work engaged young people about the features and functions they would like to see in any app, which Healthwatch might develop, targeted at their age group. Over 200 responses were received. Work on this is pending and progress will depend on a further review of what is currently available or being developed, available funds and staff resources for development.

- A drop-in schedule for 2015 has been publicised and includes a variety of venues including acute hospitals, community hospitals, Citizens Advice Bureaux and leisure centres. The leisure centre sessions are to date proving very fruitful as people are willing to stop to chat.
- Promotion of the Freephone telephone number as the main route to signposting continues.
- Healthwatch County Durham has joined the Durham Advice Network to raise awareness of its signposting service amongst other advisers and so increase referrals.
- Requests from local councillors for ad hoc drop-in provision are responded to appropriately.

9. Speaking up.

- Issues which Healthwatch County Durham gathered views and information about, and about which it then spoke up, included:
 - Ambulance response times and requests for ambulances. The Chief Executive of North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) has met with Healthwatch County Durham to learn more detail and a statement of response and action plan to address the issues is awaited.
 - On-going issues with access to appointments at three GP surgeries are being monitored and proactively pursued.
 - A letter reporting positive comments about the GP Exercise on Referral Scheme was issued to the service provider and commissioner.
 - Problems with the physical environment and waiting times at Bishop Auckland Hospital Eye Clinic. Healthwatch County Durham carried out an Enter & View visit and received an action plan in response from the Foundation Trust. Monitoring will take place to assess any impact of our work. (Healthwatch County Durham - Enter & View Ophthalmology Report is attached at Appendix 4).
 - Providing comments based on the Healthwatch County Durham evidence base (including a specific 'call for comments via social media which elicited 41 responses) to the Care Quality Commission prior to its inspections at both County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and Tees Esk and Wear Valleys Mental Health Trust.

- Healthwatch has worked directly with numerous stakeholders to champion consumers' views. For example:
 - Healthwatch continues its involvement with the dementia strategy implementation group and the health needs assessment working group. Healthwatch will attend GPs' protected learning time to share its dementia signposting information, including the Dementia Road Map tool. Healthwatch was pleased to influence recent public engagement including a drama production from Durham University that highlighted dementia issues and stimulated discussion groups.
 - Healthwatch County Durham actively contributes to the work of: the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust Patient Experience Forum; the Securing Quality in Hospital Services project; the University Hospital of North Durham Unscheduled Care Project Board and the recently formed joint CCG Primary Care Commissioning Group.
- The Healthwatch England Special Inquiry into Unsafe Discharge for hospital, specifically as it relates to the elderly, to homeless people and to those with mental health issues, will be published in June. This national major piece of work will form a framework for a strong focus locally by Healthwatch County Durham on this issue.

10. Advising.

- Healthwatch County Durham received 80 calls to its Freephone Information and Signposting service between October and March. A recent informal survey across local Healthwatch showed that the national average number of calls per month was 10.
- Requests for signposting and information have included: several related to dental services (mobile provision, urgent dental care provision and transport to urgent dental care); help in changing GP; challenges to and issues caused by changes to patient transport eligibility criteria application; healthy activities for children; the speech and language team, Stepping Stones (CAB family mediation); MIND; Talking Changes and the Pioneering Care Partnership.
- Healthwatch has signposted people to a wide range of services for a wide range of issues, including: Citizens Advice, Independent Complaints Advocacy, British Tinnitus Society, NHS England, Age UK, NHS Choices, local authority complaints team, British Red Cross, podiatry services, Durham Family Information Service and NEAS Patient Transport. Several requests have related to information about mobile dental services.

Recommendations

11. The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- Note the activities and outcomes of Healthwatch County Durham's work in gathering views, advising people and speaking up for health and social care service users.
- Note that Healthwatch County Durham Community Interest Company is now operating as an independent social enterprise.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

No implications

Staffing

No implications for Durham County Council

Risk

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications

Accommodation

No implications

Crime and Disorder

No implications

Human Rights

No implications

Consultation

No implications

Procurement

No implications for Durham County Council

Disability Issues

No implications

Legal Implications

No implications