

Health and Wellbeing Board

21 January 2016



Update from Healthwatch County Durham

Report of Judith Mashiter, Interim Chief Executive, Healthwatch County Durham

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the strategic direction, structural changes, activities and outcomes of Healthwatch County Durham during the period April to September 2015.

Background

2. On 1 April 2015 Healthwatch County Durham Community Interest Company (CIC) became the body commissioned by Durham County Council to deliver the statutory local Healthwatch service. The contract is due to finish in March 2015 and, at the time of writing, plans are being made for arrangements beyond that time.
3. The board, staff and volunteer team of Healthwatch County Durham continue to evolve and develop in response to experience and better understanding of the stakeholder landscape, changing policies in the health and social sector and an increasing base of evidence from consumers.
4. The three strands of 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 commission and provide health and social care services.
5. Healthwatch County Durham publishes a news bulletin every month and its Annual Report 2014/15 was published in June 2015 and presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2015.

Strategic direction

6. Healthwatch County Durham published 'Our Plan', setting out its strategic priorities for 2014/15 to 2016/17. Priorities are being reviewed and a refreshed 'Our Plan' will be published in March 2016. For the period covered by this report the Healthwatch priorities align with those of many key organisations within the local health and social care economy. The two priority issues on which Healthwatch County Durham has been gathering people's views are: Integrated health and social care; and 'Making sense of it all' (knowledge, understanding, accessibility and navigation around the systems). The three priority groups of people with whom Healthwatch County Durham has been engaging are: Those seldom heard; Children and young people; and The elderly and those with dementia.

Governance, organisational and staffing changes

7. Healthwatch County Durham CIC was formed with the specific purpose of delivering the local authority's statutory Local Healthwatch service. The organisation is an independent, free-standing social enterprise.
8. In the early part of 2015/16 four Advisory Board members became Corporate Board members and since that time the Corporate Board has been quite stable in membership and oversees both the Healthwatch consumer champion service delivery, and the business, infrastructure, governance and finance functions which will enable the organisation to delivery its consumer champion activities.
9. Due to 'natural causes' such as retirement, maternity and job progression, there has been a high turnover of staff in recent months and this led to the additional appointment of the Chair to the interim role of Chief Executive. In January 2016 a recruitment campaign will be launched and new appointments made to Chair, Chief Executive, Engagement Leader and additional board member posts.
10. Volunteers are a valuable resource to Healthwatch County Durham. A review of volunteer activity has resulted in six new volunteer role descriptions: Enter & View Authorised Representative, Engagement Volunteer, Meeting Representative, Administrative Assistant, Mystery Servicer User and Healthwatcher. A volunteer event was held in September 2015 to reinvigorate the volunteer programme and learning from that continues to be applied.

Activities and outcomes, April to September 2015

11. Listening:
 - Healthwatch County Durham has engaged with 1,475 people through face-to-face, telephone or personal email contact (i.e. excluding social media 'broadcasts', e-bulletins or mail-outs).

- This engagement was through a variety of events, workshops, drop-ins etc., and included new activities with:
 - Mental health service users.
 - Willowburn Hospice service users.
 - A Bishop Auckland market stall to engage with members of the public.
 - Patient Reference Groups.
 - Dementia clubs.
- The use of the Healthwatch 'comment box', operated by a volunteer in their community, supported by Healthwatch County Durham staff, has continued to develop and at the end of September there were 13 Healthwatchers. New venues for the comments boxes included Chester-le-Street library, the Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome and Willowburn Hospice.
- Engagement at University Hospital of North Durham and at Bishop Auckland Hospital continues on a regular basis. Engagement at the county's community hospitals has been incorporated into the engagement programme where possible.
- Initial attempts have been made to have a named Healthwatch volunteer as a link person with each Area Action Partnership, especially those with health and wellbeing as a priority. Tentative success has been achieved with Teesdale and mid-Durham.
- Preparatory work is underway to begin engagement with offenders in County Durham's prisons.
- Engagement with employees of Durham County Council has been piloted, with lunch-time events at County Hall and at Spennymoor offices.
- Engagement Leaders have worked with Durham Foodbank and sought views from and offered help to foodbank clients on health and social care issues.
- A survey on patients' and carers' experiences of Patient Transport Service was launched as a result of consumer comments. Analysis will be completed and results published. Where appropriate, challenge will be made to the Chief Officers of the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).
- On behalf of NHS England Healthwatch hosted an online survey of views on access to emergency dental service over the Christmas holiday period. The response rate was extremely low.

12. Speaking up:

- Issues which Healthwatch County Durham gathered views and information about, and about which it then spoke up, included:
 - Ambulance response times and delays (5 negative consumer comments). Correspondence and meetings are ongoing with North East Ambulance Service through the service's Healthwatch Forum and directly with the Chief Executive.
 - The content and tone of the Blue Badge renewal letter issued by Durham County Council was brought to the attention of Healthwatch by a frail, elderly resident.

- Healthwatch has worked directly with numerous stakeholders to champion consumers' views. For example: the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) Patient Experience Teams has welcomed Healthwatch commenting on draft patient literature and on regular reports on complaints from each Care Group. Joint working to review to complaints process has been requested following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of CDDFT. Healthwatch provides input to the Local Dental Network, the Local Pharmacy Network and the Local Eye Health Network. In collaboration with other local Healthwatch in the Darlington and Tees Valley area, intelligence is fed to the Acute, Primary Care and general Quality Surveillance Groups of NHS England. Healthwatch County Durham has been invited to represent the patient interests on the Urgent and Emergency Care Network (including the Vanguard programme) and the Better Health Programme. Links have been established with both Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) Research and Innovation committees in order to identify potential opportunities for consumer views to be sought and to feed in relevant intelligence. Healthwatch is actively involved in the Engagement Strategy development and commissioning intentions consultation of both CCGs. In preparation for our statutory input to Foundation Trust Quality Accounts, Healthwatch maintains contact with the relevant four trusts - CDDFT, North Tees and Hartlepool (NTH), Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) and NEAS and attends Quality Account in-year events.

- The Healthwatch County Durham team has been asked to contribute to a range of local, regional and national research projects and staff have been proud to do this. In July 2015 the report, 'Safely Home' from the Healthwatch England Special Inquiry into Unsafe Discharge from hospital, was published. Healthwatch County Durham coordinated and collated input to the Inquiry based on evidence gathered locally, and a board member was part of the Inquiry panel.

- A follow-up report on previous Children and Young People's survey work was sent to stakeholders in May 2015.

- Healthwatch County Durham has accepted non-voting roles on both CCGs' Primary Care Commissioning Committees.
- Healthwatch County Durham represents all Durham, Darlington and Tees Valley local Healthwatch on the Securing Quality in Health Services / Better Health programme board and is committed to working closely with the team working on pre-consultation engagement.
- Regular meetings for exchange of intelligence are held with: Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys Foundation Trust, Care Quality Commission, North East Ambulance Service and NHS England.
- Healthwatch is pleased to be involved with the Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG's engagement strategy refresh.
- Healthwatch was invited to present on the Enter & View programme to all Practice Managers in the Durham Dales, Easington & Sedgefield CCG.

13. Advising:

- Healthwatch County Durham received 68 telephone calls to its Information and Signposting service between April and September.
- Work is in progress to update the two health and social care service directories for each of the two Clinical Commissioning Group areas. This work is in conjunction with Healthcare Publications Ltd. Consideration was given to producing a separate directory of mental health services, but the decision was made to contribute intelligence to and support and publicise the Locate web-based service in order to avoid duplication and to keep information current. Healthwatch will offer assistance to any consumer who would benefit from using Locate but are without internet access.
- Healthwatch has signposted people to a wide range of services for a wide range of issues, including: Independent Complaints Advocacy, GP practice managers, County Durham Carers, British Red Cross, Stroke Association, Durham Advocacy Service, Learning Support Team, Local Dental Network, Podiatry service, Cancer support, Age UK, Social Care Direct, Emergency Medical Transport, NHS England, Community Dental service, Care Quality Commission, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Prescription Exemption Service, Yoga classes, Autism Society and MIND advocacy.
- A loop presentation about Healthwatch County Durham is now displayed on waiting area screens throughout County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust premises.

- Healthwatch County Durham fliers are being distributed by County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service at their 'Home Fire Safety Check' visits to vulnerable people and effectiveness of this awareness raising will be assessed through ongoing 'where did you hear about us' monitoring.

Recommendations

14. 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 became an independent social enterprise on 1 April 2015.

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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