

Healthwatch County Durham
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Dear Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member

Re: Concerns and recommendations regarding stroke services in Co Durham

Healthwatch County Durham has received 46 letters from stroke survivors, expressing their concerns that the service they currently receive from the Stroke Association is being decommissioned. These concerns include:

- Communication – when contacting CCGs people have been signposted to the website with a response which hasn't answered their concerns. They were frustrated to be signposted to Locate, which they have not found accessible
- Timescales – people wanted to know if the new services will offer them the same level and range of support for the same length of time as they have had previously. In addition they wanted to know if there will be a gap in provision, or a seamless transition
- Process – people are telling us they are quite angry about the way this has been handled and asked if the correct process has been followed
- Engagement – people asked about plans to engage with service users and involve them in the design of new services, to make sure that their needs will be met

Having contacted both CCGs, we met with DDES's Director of Commissioning and received a written response, which was discussed by our Board on 1st June. It was decided that the response did not address the issues raised or outline a plan to deliver meaningful service user engagement. We therefore wish to escalate our concerns to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and make the following recommendations:

- An extension to the current service of at least three months, until the replacement service is in place that will meet the needs of users
- Meaningful engagement to take place with stroke survivors so that users are at the heart of designing a new service
- A user friendly information pack to be produced, for all patients when they are discharged from hospital, with clear information and signposting to support available in the county
- A user friendly letter to be sent to all stroke survivors with clear information about when the new service will be in place and how to access it

We will attend the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 7th July and look forward to your consideration of our recommendations.

Yours faithfully,

BJackson

Brian Jackson, Chair

Healthwatch County Durham

