

Healthwatch Committee meeting
15 January 2020
Outreach update – paper 1
Presented by: Felicity Shenton

Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report

Quality statement: 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17

Volunteer and outreach activities

13 September 2019 to 31 December 2019

Since the last meeting we have attended six focus groups, attended one training/awareness-raising session with asylum seekers and held one Champions meeting. We have engaged with approximately 50 people from a diverse range of backgrounds including members of Newcastle's Chinese community, Roma women and adults with learning disabilities.

In October, 23 people attended a focus group to discuss their personal experiences of health services relating to their diabetes. This identified a few key areas where Healthwatch could help the group engage services. Many of the group did not regularly seek help or support to help manage their illness. For example, very few considered changing their diet or taking regular exercise. Reasons given for this were language barriers and a lack of information on where to get help from.

Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NUTH) runs Diabetes Education and Self Management (DESMOND) courses for ongoing and newly diagnosed people with diabetes. No one was aware of this free service, although everyone should be referred for a consultation with the DESMOND dietitian by their GP or Practice Nurse when they are diagnosed with diabetes.

As a result of this focus group, we are arranging a further information-sharing session in April 2020. We plan that over 50 people from the local Chinese community will attend to hear talks from Diabetes UK representatives, a dietitian, a DESMOND nurse, a dentist and one of our volunteers who has had diabetes for a long time. We also hope to arrange for a podiatrist to attend.

Action Foundation is a Newcastle-based charity that supports refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants. We have been working with them recently and this will continue on a monthly basis in the New Year. Action Foundation has arranged for relevant organisations to attend health drop-ins for asylum seekers and share information on services available to them and their family.

Developing a volunteer handbook and volunteer policy

Work has been ongoing to produce a volunteer handbook with useful information and resources for current Healthwatch Champions. The volunteer policy is also being reviewed. Drafts of both of these documents have been completed and are awaiting amendments and sign-off.

Work is also underway to review the specific roles for Champions, such as Research Champions with a specific remit to be involved in research activities.

Future work

Several discussions and focus groups are arranged for 2020, including a volunteer and careers fair at Jesmond Park Academy (formally Heaton Manor School). We also plan to have our annual stall at the Chinese New Year celebrations at the end of January.

Melanie Bramley

Mel left us at the end of 2019 after working as our Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator for the past three years. Mel's work has been invaluable in gaining information about people's experiences of health and social care services. She built up very good relationships with the local voluntary and community sector which have allowed us to hear from people and communities who would not normally engage with us. Mel has moved on to a position with the Byker Community Centre. We wish her all the best and look forward to being able to work with her in her new role.

| Date | Organisation | Type of event | Community | No. attended | Ward | Comments |
|------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| 03/09/2019 | Job Centre | Focus group | Asylum seekers | 10 | Gateshead | General info sharing |
| 09/09/2019 | Action Foundation | Focus group | Mixed group of asylum seekers | 6 | Gateshead | General feedback |
| 11/09/2019 | Freshers Fair | Stall | Students 18–24 years | 15 | Monument | General feedback |
| 12/09/2019 | Action Foundation | Focus group | Asylum seekers and refugees | 8 | Gateshead | General feedback |
| 16/09/2019 | Scotswood Garden Group | Focus group | Older people | 6 | Benwell and Scotswood | Health care feedback |
| 15/10/2019 | Job Centre | Focus group | Asylum seekers | 10 | Gateshead | Raising profile of Healthwatch an recruiting volunteers |
| 29/10/2019 | Better Days | Focus group | Adults with learning difficulties | 13 | South Jesmond | ICS work |
| 29/10/2019 | Riverside CHP | Focus group | Roma | 9 | Elswick | ICS work |
| 31/10/2019 | South Mountain Group | Focus group | Older Chinese community 55 years plus | 23 | Monument | Diabetes |
| 06/11/2019 | Scotswood Community Garden | Focus group | Mixed group | 3 | Benwell and Scotswood | General feedback |