

Programme Manager report (paper 1)

This Programme Manager's report outlines the strategic and internally focussed work which the staff team is progressing

Business plan consultation

The Healthwatch Newcastle (HWN) business plan has been sent out for consultation to all key stakeholders. This consisted of the plan itself and questions about specific sections of the plan. A number of stakeholders were also contacted by phone to gain their views and opinions. The consultation was due to close on 17 March and the staff team will endeavour to provide a quick update at the Board meeting.

Joint working protocol

A joint working protocol between the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, Wellbeing for Life Board and Healthwatch Newcastle is being finalised and will be presented at the next Healthwatch Newcastle Board meeting. This protocol consists of a main document outlining the detail of the roles and remits of each of the three organisations, how they will work together and illustrative case studies. A less formal document will be produced which will state how joint working will take place.

Working with children and young people

HWN is commissioning a voluntary sector organisation based in Newcastle to engage with children and young people across the city and gather their views about health and social care services. This builds on our commitment to representing the views and experiences of children and young people in our work.

HWN wants to commence this proposal as soon as possible and has allocated £5,000.00 in 2013-14 and £5,000.00 in 2014-15 for this work.

Engaging with the voluntary and community sector (VCS)

A workshop is being planned for 8 April 2014 with key VCS representatives to follow up what has previously been discussed at the meetings between VCS organisations and Jill Remnant, Vice Chair of HWN. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that those who have not yet had an input are involved and to scope out a compact agreement around information sharing between Healthwatch Newcastle and the VCS in Newcastle.

Trend analysis

A spreadsheet is being developed to allow information from all our sources (phone and email contacts, gathering of community priorities, etc.) to be input and analysed together as one data set.

Newcastle Future Needs Assessment

Partners in Newcastle, led by the Wellbeing for Life Board, have committed to working together through a single policy approach called the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment (NFNA). As a process, the NFNA provides an integrated, coherent and evidence-based means of partners working together to determine priorities in the city. The NFNA is the way in which Newcastle fulfils the statutory responsibilities for undertaking a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, but it is also being developed to fulfil other requirements for assessments or evidence-based planning.

A key element of the NFNA assessment is a web-based information resource - Know Your City - that includes statistical insights about people in the city and acts as a repository of narratives and other reports. It is clearly important that Healthwatch Newcastle and the wider VCS contribute to this resource. Initial discussions with the VCS have focussed on Healthwatch being the funnel for information from the VCS to be fed in, distilled and trends and priorities identified. It seems appropriate for this process to be integral to the Know Your City resource and discussions with the VCS and representatives from Wellbeing for Life Board will take place to develop this.

Quality Accounts

Healthwatch Newcastle is contacting Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust to find out about their Quality Account plans and timelines so we can plan this into our work programme. Further updates will be given to Board members as appropriate.

Staff development session with Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Independent Complaints Advocacy service (ICA)

A morning session is being organised for Healthwatch Newcastle, PALS and ICA staff. The purpose of the session is to gain an understanding of what each organisation does and to decide how we can work together and share information. The session will happen in May.

Work with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

HWN is still aware of the work of the CQC in our area and communicating that to our stakeholders where appropriate. There are currently no services of immediate concern in Newcastle. A joint session with the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny, Healthwatch Newcastle and the local Care Quality Commission is also being progressed and will take place in the near future.

Investigation of future work

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) - proposed service changes during 2014-15

NTW is proposing several significant changes to its services which include movement of wards and closing of units. This is complicated and the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has asked NTW to complete a new form which has been developed by the Scrutiny Committee and Healthwatch Newcastle as part of the development of the joint working protocol. This form asks several questions about the trust's intended engagement with users, carers and wider public on these changes. Healthwatch Newcastle will receive these documents automatically and will then consider how to get appropriately involved and also work closely with the Scrutiny Committee.

Joint work with Healthwatch Northumberland

Healthwatch Northumberland is undertaking work about inappropriate discharges from hospitals. Some hospitals identified have been in Newcastle but at the time of writing no further details are known. However, a meeting is taking place between staff from Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Northumberland to discuss this and Board members will be kept updated on this piece of work.