

Members of the Board are asked to:

1. Note the contents of the report
2. Agree the revised strategic objectives

Changes to mental health services

Healthwatch Newcastle (HWN) has been closely involved in an advisory and scrutiny role in the work undertaken by the Newcastle and Gateshead clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to review specialist mental health services, Deciding Together. This work started in the summer of 2014 and took some initial faltering steps that raised concern with mental health service users, carers and representative groups. However, the CCGs have reviewed their approach and have taken steps to undertake a detailed engagement and involvement exercise to date. This work is subject to a number of constraints regarding time and scope which has meant that it is only covering a reasonably small sub-set of mental health service provision. We have asked that the risk assessment and rationale for taking this approach is shared with us so we can be assured that any implications for other services have been considered.

Steph Edusei also formally wrote to the Newcastle CCGs to seek clarification on a number of points about the engagement and consultation process:

- That an independent body would analyse the data gathered via the consultation work
- That a final 8 week formal consultation on the future model of care would occur in early summer 2015
- That decisions would not be made about changing or closing services until the after the final consultation detailed above

Assurance on the first two points has been received and it is clear that the timescale and duration of any formal consultation will be decided on once the possible new models of care have been designed.

'There's more to Healthwatch than health' Healthwatch Newcastle conference

Our first conference was held on 5 March 2015 with the aims of:

- Raising awareness that Healthwatch deals with adult's and children's social care
- Hearing the views of a wide range of people and organisations on social care in Newcastle
- Helping to inform the 2015-16 priority setting for Healthwatch Newcastle

A separate briefing is part of the agenda for this Board meeting.

Intrahealth - Grainger and Scotswood GP practices

Intrahealth won the NHS England contract to run these two practices and took over the management on 2 February 2015. Intrahealth staff met with Steph on 4 February to introduce themselves and discuss their plans to engage with the registered patients and have asked for a further meeting in March. It is good to see this level of early engagement and the HWN team will keep a watching brief on developments.

Newcastle City Council budget - hospital social workers

HWN Board and management team members discussed concerns about the proposed reduction in the number of hospital based social workers, and the potential impact this change will have on keeping delayed transfers of care between health and social care to a minimum, identifying people who required social care support and, building strong working relationships between social workers and health care staff.

Following this discussion these concerns have been communicated to the council and assurance regarding the actions taken to mitigate these risks and measure the impact of the changes is awaited.

NHS training modules for recent migrants to the country

The problems and challenges that a lack of knowledge and understanding about the NHS and how it works was highlighted to Healthwatch Newcastle during conversations with people who had recently come to the UK. This has led to us commissioning JET (Jobs Education Training) to develop bespoke training modules on the NHS. Module one, that gives a general background to the NHS, has been tested and is being refined, and a further two modules, on primary care services and appropriate use of NHS services, are about to be tested.

Speech and language therapy services review (SALT)

Newcastle City Council and the Newcastle CCGs are jointly reviewing the provision of speech and language therapy services with a view to co-commissioning these from early 2016-17. Healthwatch Newcastle is part of the SALT engagement task and finish group. The timescales for this work are currently extremely tight and this may cause issues should the redesign work lead to the need to re-procure the service. However, the council and CCGs are working to ensure that the final service is co-designed with a number of representative groups, parents and young people.

HWN strategic objectives

The strategic objectives were reviewed at a Board development session held in January 2015 and have been proposed as:

1. To ensure that service users, patients, carers and the public are involved and engaged in the design and delivery of social care and health services
2. To provide accessible information that helps people to make choices about their own and their family's social care and health needs
3. To support the improvement of the quality of social care and health services by identifying and prioritising key issues
4. To be a valued, influential and challenging critical friend to providers and commissioners of social care and health services and contribute to the representation of the views of Newcastle people
5. To be a transparent, effective and well governed organisation

Measuring our impact

It is essential that HWN has a reliable and robust way to measure whether it is meeting its objectives and impacting on the provision and design of services. Therefore the Board and management team members will be looking at how they can do this over the coming months.

Board member recruitment

Board positions have been re-advertised and applications were due to close on 13 March. One of the vacancies is for a vice Chair and it is hoped that at least one additional Board member will be recruited.

Associate register

Healthwatch Newcastle will shortly be advertising for individuals and organisations to become members of our associate register. The register will allow us to quickly identify and secure additional capacity or skills to help us deliver our work plan. The team has identified a number of areas where they feel that there are either skills and knowledge gaps, or where we require additional capacity and this will be shared as a guide for potential register members.

Healthwatch Newcastle Champions

Our Champions are a vital part of the team and support us in various ways and with a number of projects. Over the last six months, due to staffing shortages, there has been a reduction in the amount of work that Champions could be involved in. We now have a full establishment of staff and Rachel Head, Champions' Support Worker, is working to ensure that our Champions have the necessary support to help us deliver our objectives. We are currently reviewing the demography of our Champions and will be targeting recruitment to address any gaps.

Healthwatch Newcastle team

Interviews for an apprentice administrator were held on 19 February 2015 and the team is delighted to welcome Beth Nichol as a colleague. It is hoped that Beth will be working with us in mid to late March.