

Work plan update (paper 1)

This update outlines the strategic and internally focussed work which the staff team is progressing.

Trend analysis

This spreadsheet will allow staff to analyse the information Healthwatch Newcastle receives from organisations and members of the public so that common themes can be identified and acted upon. This spreadsheet will also ensure that we work from an evidence base.

The team aims to complete the spreadsheet by 15 September and all staff will be trained to use it.

Engagement with the voluntary and community sector

Two events with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) have been held. A report was written stemming from the first event and it can be read on our website at www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk/one-collective-voice-event

This work has led to the production of an information sharing protocol which some VCS organisations want to start using. The events have also allowed us to address issues and concerns and the team is considering:

- Working on a draft flowchart that shows what we can do for the VCS
- Writing up case studies of work we have already carried out that can help us to demonstrate to the VCS the added value of working with Healthwatch Newcastle
- Exploring ways that VCS organisations that have a regional remit can speak to all of the Healthwatches in the region at one time and in one place
- Exploring the need for a VCS page on our website that can be used to upload and download information
- Planning a survey to find out how VCS organisations would prefer to communicate with Healthwatch Newcastle

Street survey

Seven Healthwatch Newcastle Champions have been out on Northumberland Street, Old Eldon Square and Monument completing a short survey with passers-by. They have been asking people:

- Have you heard of Healthwatch Newcastle?
- Where did you hear about Healthwatch Newcastle
- What do you think Healthwatch Newcastle does?
- How can you get in touch with Healthwatch Newcastle?

186 surveys have been completed, which is 30 more than last year. Data is currently being typed up and analysed.

NHS Choices work

Some local Healthwatches have been noticing that the quality of information available on the NHS choices website is poor, specifically regarding GP practices. The team saw potential for our Champions to do some primary research on this. Seven Champions are

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now looking at Newcastle-based GP practice profile pages and completing a pre-prepared questionnaire. On return we will analyse this data and consider the next steps.

The regional eating disorders services unit at the RVI

Over the last few months members of the public have expressed concerns to Healthwatch Newcastle about the way eating disorder beds are commissioned and the potential closure of the eating disorders unit at the RVI. Healthwatch Newcastle wrote to NHS England expressing these concerns. Service users have also campaigned for the service to remain. This has been successful and the following statement was published.

Joint statement from NHS England and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust about the eating disorders services in the North East

Tuesday, 15 July

“A meeting has been held between NHS England and the two current providers of eating disorders services within the region - Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV).

As a result of this meeting, NHS England is going to commission 20 in-patient beds in the region; this will include the existing 15 beds in Darlington provided by TEWV and five beds currently open in Newcastle provided by NTW at the RVI.

It has also been agreed that NTW will continue to work to establish a new intensive day-care service in Newcastle, which it is hoped will be open to patients in early 2015.

Both providers and NHS England will work together on reviewing patients currently admitted in the North East and out of the region. The aim will be to identify those who can be discharged safely to intensive day care within the region as greater capacity becomes available.

NHS England is committed to minimising the number of people who are sent out of the region for inpatient care. However, it is clear that it will not always be possible to do this given the significant pressure on beds nationally and that on occasions it will still be necessary for patients to be admitted to units outside the North East.”

Progress has also been made with regards to:

- Children and young people’s engagement
- Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust’s mental health service changes
- English for speakers of other languages module - how the NHS works
- Position statement - GP practices in the West End of Newcastle
- GP mystery shopping

Updates on these will be presented later on in the agenda.

Future work

Care Act 2014

The team will be familiarising itself with the implications of the Care Act so that it can consider how Healthwatch Newcastle can effectively be involved.

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GP practice review

This work is set to commence in January 2015. The team will be talking to the new Chief Executive about the timescales for this work.

Presentation at Wellbeing for Life Board meeting

Healthwatch Newcastle will be delivering a presentation at the next Wellbeing for Life Board meeting in October. The presentation will cover some of Healthwatch Newcastle's successes and touch on the main themes and issues Healthwatch Newcastle is picking up from members of the public.

CCG merger

Newcastle North and East, Newcastle West and Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have been authorised to merge by NHS England. This means the three CCGs will become a single statutory body from 1 April 2015. Healthwatch Newcastle is concerned that this could affect the way services are commissioned in our area. We are in discussions with Healthwatch Gateshead about the implications of the CCG merger.

GP out of hours

A procurement process for this service has been halted because there is a need to design and commission a new service that better reflects the new requirements of urgent care and ensures the best possible healthcare and health services for the people. We have written to the CCGs about this to ask how the public will be involved in designing and contributing towards a new model of care. We will continue to engage in this work as it progresses.