

Members of the Board are asked to:

1. Note the contents of the report

The past three months have been very busy, as usual, for the whole team.

Our research

Work has started on all of the agreed priority areas for 2016–17: children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); care homes; intermediate care; and urgent care. Young Healthwatch Newcastle are looking at access to health services.

- Children and young people with SEND – Luke Arend is leading work to look at parents' and young people's experiences of the implementation of education, health and care (EHC) plans. These were introduced as part of the SEND reforms that were in the Children and Families Act (2014). We decided to take this particular focus within the wide SEND agenda following a series of interviews, meetings and focus groups with parents, carers and teaching and social care staff. A questionnaire is being sent to all parents/carers of children and young people who have been through the EHC process and a separate, accessible, questionnaire sent to young people aged 16–25 years who fall within this group.
- Care homes – Lyndsay Yarde is working with our Research Champions to look at how people in care homes and their relatives are involved in their own care/care of their relatives and in the running of the care home. We have shared three surveys: one for care home residents; one for relatives; and one for care home managers. We have also started a series of visits to a representative group of care homes to seek further views and information. The residents' and relatives' surveys are available online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/care-home-residents and www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/care-home-relatives
- Intermediate care – we are working as part of the system integration design labs in Newcastle (a collective of health, social care and voluntary community sector organisations) and have started some work to find out about people's experiences of discharge from hospital. This is a small scale study, focussed on one GP practice. We are calling people that have been recently discharged from Newcastle hospitals, and who consent to be part of the study, three times over the course of seven weeks to ask a series of questions about their experience. The information gathered will be used to improve discharge processes and support.
- Urgent care – we are working with Healthwatch Gateshead to ask people how quickly they expect to see a healthcare professional when the need is urgent and the patient is themselves/a child/a vulnerable relative. This research will help to inform NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group's work on urgent care. The survey is available online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/urgent-survey

- Young Healthwatch Newcastle are currently looking at issues of access to health services after this came out as a theme in their work to identify young peoples' social care and health priorities. Young people are being asked to complete a survey and the group is visiting schools and colleges to promote this. There is also an online survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Health-access. Young Healthwatch Newcastle also plan to hold some focus groups to get more in depth information on this subject. The group is currently being delivered in partnership with Children North East, however, we have decided that we will take over this support from October 2016. We'd like to thank Children North East for all the work that they have done to build the group and to produce some great research work.

Outreach

We have continued to get out and about in the community over the summer with a stall at Northern Pride (shared with Healthwatch North Tyneside) and stalls at the Newcastle Mela and Walker Park Festival. We are also continuing with a programme of listening events and have recently worked with young people and the Chinese community. Regular listening events have taken place at sheltered schemes throughout the city, as well as at an East End women's group and an African women's group.

Healthwatch England conference

We ran a breakout session about our GP appointments work at the Healthwatch England conference in July and received a great reception. The NHS England National Director for Patient Experience, Neil Churchill, was at our session and paid close attention, including tweeting about the work.

Listening event

We held our second listening event on 6 July where we brought together members of the public with commissioners and providers of care. The event was well attended, although there were a few no-shows, but initial feedback has been great. We are hoping to see some concrete actions resulting from the discussions. We plan to review this event to make sure that it delivering outcomes for both the members of the public and for commissioners and providers.

Deciding Together

NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG took the decision on the configuration and location of inpatient specialist mental health beds in June 2016. We were delighted that they have listened to the concerns of service users, carers and local people and will be retaining inpatient beds in Newcastle/Gateshead, based at the St Nicholas Hospital site. We have been very involved in the advisory group that oversaw the engagement and consultation and are satisfied that, although it got off to a rough start and there is always room for improvement, it was a good quality process.

Healthwatch Newcastle contract

We have been successful in securing the Healthwatch Newcastle contract for a further three years with the option to extend for a further year. We are delighted to be able to continue and build on our work. We will be establishing a fully independent community interest company (CIC) to deliver this contract – Tell Us North CIC – and are busy with all of the administrative and organisational work that is needed to get this up and running.