

Committee minutes - approved

16th March 2021, 10.30am to 12.30pm

Online via Zoom

Committee members present

Peter Deans (PD) Healthwatch Newcastle Chair

Terry Bearpark (TB)

Feyi Awotona (FA)

Alisdair Cameron (AC)

Gill Clancy (GC)

Apologies

Idah Dodzo (ID)

In attendance

Siobhan O'Neil (SO) Chief Executive Officer

Kim Newton (KN) Project Manager

Kate Beattie (KB) Finance and Administration Officer

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 The meeting began with a round of inductions via Zoom.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies were sent from Idah Dodzo (ID).

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

3.1 The minutes for the meeting were agreed as a true record.

3.2 Action: It was agreed that the committee need an understanding of the resources available to deliver against their priorities. PD outlined the work he is doing on Terms of Reference (ToR) for the committees. TB agreed to share a previous version. The draft ToR will be shared with committee members for feedback.

4. Priority setting

4.1 Context Setting

Committee members received an overview of the context we are working in. This highlighted the importance of place and collaboration.

Action: The Committee will further discuss 'place' as it relates to priority setting at the April meeting.

4.2 Process overview with timescales

KN and SO gave an overview of the process to develop priorities. This highlighted the involvement of committee members, and the use of information and evidence gathered over the past year which has fed into

the production of the longlist. The next step is to develop a shortlist to explore further. The resulting work will be presented to the committee before the April meeting to support final decision-making. Priorities will likely include longer term pieces of work, ‘task and finish’ approaches and collaborative and exploratory work.

SO outlined capacity issues and how these will be addressed:

- Rachel Wilkins is leaving next week (23rd March) which leaves gaps in the team.
- Associates/consultants have been identified who can be commissioned to address immediate gaps in capacity.

4.3 Decision making - overview of Toolkit & how we make an impact

KN gave an overview of the Healthwatch England Making a Difference Toolkit. Explaining how this can be used to focus on goals and outcomes and support us to understand the impact we can have in any given area. Using this will help committee decision-making.

5. Longlist - discussions and additions from committee members

Committee members each outlined 2/3 priorities from the longlist to focus on in the next phase. These were :

- Young people
- Inequality of provision
- Annual Health checks for people with a learning disability
- Access to GP services
- Pandemic changes to the delivery of health services, what will be carried forward? What are the implications of these at a local level? And what have people’s experiences of these been?
- Health checks for people with mental health issues
- Economic impacts on health
- Mental Health

5.1 Following discussion the following headline themes were chosen for further research and work before the committee makes final decisions in April:

1. Annual Health checks for people with a learning disability and those with mental health issues.
2. Access to GP services looking at two areas
 - a. Those facing greatest inequality / disadvantage because they are poorest either by area (e.g. most deprived wards / neighbourhoods?) or interest (e.g. homeless people, refugees, asylum seekers)
 - b. The changes resulting from pandemic transformation in GP services (digital, triage etc) and users experiences of these as we transition to a new normal, post-pandemic.

3. Mental health - people's expectations of services as the mental health impacts of covid-19 are widely discussed / referenced, vulnerability of young adults. We agreed greater exploration is needed on what user experience we are wanting to explore further.
4. The health and social care impacts of those who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Perhaps with a particular focus on newly unemployed people who have no previous experience of navigating the system: accessing benefits, accessing free dentistry, prescriptions and so on.

Additional comments

- We need to be mindful of what we can do now.
- We should affiliate and collaborate with the Universities and Colleges.

6. Next steps

The issues outlined in 5.1 above require further work; researching and understanding where within each issue Healthwatch Newcastle can have the most impact; who else is working in this space, opportunities for collaboration. This work will result in a series of discussion papers which set out:

- The issue
- Pros and cons of us undertaking this work
- What we are seeking to achieve (goal)
- What changes we want to see (outcomes)
- Type of work (research / task & finish / exploration) and what we will do in each (activities)
- Resources required / available
- Impact and how we will demonstrate this
- Recommendations for committee

Actions

- Circulate minutes
- Send overview of shortlisted issues and additional work for comment by close of play Friday 19th March 2021
- Agree sponsorship of themes by committee members
- SO, AC and GC will meet to look more into the mental health issues

7. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 22 April, 10.30am - 12.30pm.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.