

Healthwatch Committee meeting 6 October 2020 Newsletters – paper 9

The Healthwatch Newcastle newsletter is published monthly (I also send out ad hoc newsflashes – e.g. to gather young people’s experience of health services).

It is currently circulated digitally to 669 people and generally has an open rate of 25%-30%. Approx. 40% of subscribers are individuals, the rest are connected to an organisation. There’s also a postal mailing list of 54, however, no hard copies are currently produced due to staff working from home.

The primary aim of the newsletters is to promote the work of HWN. The articles are concise and usually link to more information online, either HWN or third-party websites. Third-party information is also included in the newsletter, especially where this has a local flavour, or is something that readers may be able to participate in (e.g. a local event or an online survey).

Staff are asked to contribute and provide regular updates on aspects of their work and project outcomes. Volunteers are also invited to submit an article about themselves or some aspect of their volunteering with us.

There is also the opportunity for Committee members to contribute. Members might like to consider writing an article on a regular or ad hoc basis, which could be published on the website and summarized in the newsletter. I could also tweet about the blogs and drive traffic to the website; this will help to raise the profile of HWN and the Committee.

Examples of article content could include:

- About volunteering as a Committee member.
- A health or social care subject you are passionate about.
- Something highly topical (will need to bear in mind the newsletter publication dates if there’s anything date-dependant).
- An HWN priority (especially if you are/have been a project sponsor) - could outline about what you’re doing to promote any reports/recommendations to key stakeholders?

When writing an article please bear in mind some key pointers (this is particularly important for search engine optimization):

- Minimum of 300 words.
- Don’t write long passages of text; break up with bullet points and sub-headings.
- Write in plain English, in sentences containing fewer than 20 words.
- Avoid too much repetition, particularly at beginning of sentences and use of pronouns such as I, we, etc. Re-write sentences to avoid this.
- Use active rather than passive voice (maximum of 10% passive) – for examples see <https://yoast.com/the-passive-voice-what-is-it-and-how-to-avoid-it>

In light of current recruitment, a contribution from a Committee member from their perspective on being part of the Committee would be most welcome for the October newsletter (submission deadline Wednesday 14 October).

Newsletters are also produced as a podcast, with team members recording this in turn. Again, Committee members are welcome to participate in this if they are interested.