



One collective voice
Information sharing protocol

© Healthwatch Newcastle 2015

Publication date: April 2015

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

You can download this publication at www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

‘One collective voice’: the voluntary and community sector and Healthwatch Newcastle

Introduction

Healthwatch Newcastle (HWN) is the independent champion for members of the public and users of social care and health services in Newcastle upon Tyne. We have a responsibility to ensure the voices of all Newcastle communities are heard and considered, both children and adults. We cannot achieve this by working in isolation. Voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations already work with diverse communities across Newcastle, and by working in partnership we can gather relevant information and ensure high quality local social care and health services.

There are many positive examples of VCS organisations working together to share knowledge and information in order to increase their influence on the statutory sector. An example of this is Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, DeafLink and HAREF gathering the VCS views and producing a report to influence the Better Care Fund proposals for Newcastle.

HWN wanted to test support for the idea of information sharing around social care and health service issues and experiences in order to develop an information sharing protocol. We met with representatives of Newcastle’s VCS during 2014. We use the broadest possible definition of VCS to include any non-statutory bodies that work with communities in Newcastle for the benefit of those communities, including those that would not necessarily see themselves as VCS organisations, for example, credit unions.

Discussions took place on how organisations working in communities in Newcastle could pass information and intelligence to us. The vision emerging from the meetings was one of a shared desire to benefit the people who live, work and learn in Newcastle by making the best use of local information and intelligence.

A draft protocol was drawn up and comments invited. This final version of the protocol outlines shared principles and values; how HWN will analyse the data and collaborate with the VCS where more information is required and action needs to be taken; and when to share and publicise key themes.










If you have any queries about this protocol or would like to share information with HWN please email info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

Principles and values

1. Build trust between collaborators with positive behaviours - is a two way process
2. Openness and transparency between collaborators
3. Parity and equity between collaborators, irrespective of size or role
4. Collaborators will be involved in any ongoing action resulting from information sharing
5. Confidentiality must be embedded - check with source before using shared information and/or publishing information on open forums
6. Share information when it is of benefit to the wider communities of Newcastle and the appropriate safeguards are in place
7. Always acknowledge others' work and contributions appropriately
8. HWN to provide feedback and information on:
 - Reported issues and priorities
 - How shared information has been used
 - Outcomes from action taken
9. There should be flexibility to use capacity within the VCS to carry out some of the analysis and reporting



What VCS organisations can expect from HWN

-  HWN will collate, interpret and disseminate shared information from the VCS about issues raised by clients, to identify any patterns or trends and take appropriate action
-  HWN will collate, interpret and disseminate shared information from the VCS about issues encountered when trying to resolve issues for clients
-  HWN will collate and disseminate shared information from the VCS about good practice identified in social care and health services
-  HWN will collect 'read only' copies of reports and case studies from the VCS to create a repository of evidence, by both client group and issue type, for publication on Newcastle City Council's 'Know Your Newcastle' website and the HWN website (for example, the Better Care' report by Newcastle CVS, Deaflink and HAREF)
-  HWN can call for further information about particular issues and ask if representatives from the VCS are willing to do some work around it
-  HWN will distribute information to collaborators using existing communication channels in addition to the Healthwatch newsletter, for example, Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service e-inform and 'On the hoof'; 'Involve NE community matters'; HAREF bulletin, etc. HWN may also produce text for organisations to drop into their own newsletters
-  HWN can collate and share information about VCS organisations' current projects/interests so that organisations can link up with each other where appropriate.
-  HWN will host two meetings per year for face-to-face exchanging of information and views with the VCS in Newcastle
-  HWN will ask collaborators from the VCS to review with them how the information sharing protocol is working

What HWN would like from the VCS

Anecdotal/informal information in the following circumstances:

- **Client raised issues - use the 1, 2, 3 method** 1 = first time it is heard about, log as an issue; 2 = a second report on an issue makes VCS organisations more aware; 3 = a third report suggests it may need investigation by either the VCS organisation or HWN, therefore report to HWN
- **Issues encountered when trying to resolve issues**
This may be more than one issue with same provider or the same issue with different providers
- **Feedback on good practice identified**

Copies of any reports/case studies produced (electronic versions)

These will be formally acknowledged as work produced by a specific VCS organisation and will be held as part of a repository of information by client group and type of issues. The documents will be available to the VCS and also to other organisations and individuals within the Newcastle health and social care system. If permission is granted by the VCS organisation/s, a copy will also be submitted to Newcastle City Council's 'Know Your Newcastle' website.

Regular information on current projects/areas of work/interest

A brief description to be shared with VCS organisations that have expressed an interest





Contact us

T 0191 261 0751

E info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

W www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

P Healthwatch Newcastle, FREEPOST RTCH-RKYA-YZCY, NE1 8AF

Registered office

Healthwatch Newcastle

Higham House, Higham Place

Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8AF

We use the Healthwatch Trademark (which includes the logo and the Healthwatch brand) when carrying out our activities. The Healthwatch logo is a registered trademark and is protected under trademark law.