

TITLE OF REPORT: HealthWatch Gateshead Annual Report 2016/17 and Priorities for 2017/18

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Health & Wellbeing Board about the priorities set for Healthwatch Gateshead in 2017/18 and to update the Board on progress achieved since 1 April 2017.

Background

2. Tell Us North CIC (TUN) is a community interest company which was successful in securing the contract to deliver the Healthwatch Gateshead contract from 1 April 2017. TUN also delivers the contract for Healthwatch Newcastle, and this allows us to work across Gateshead and Newcastle when required, sharing resources, skills and knowledge whilst ensuring that both geographies remain distinct.
3. At the start of this financial year, Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle held a joint annual event and conducted additional engagement activities to involve the community and our partners in setting our priorities for 2017/18. A “long list” of possible priorities were considered and based on the comments, concerns and points of view gathered from residents during 2016/17.
4. In June 2017 Healthwatch Gateshead produced our Annual Report (tabled) which describes the work carried out during 2016/17 under the direction of the previous contract management organisation. It also sets out (on page 21) the short-listed priorities which emerged from our engagement and consultation work in April.

Progress made since 1 April 2017

5. A recruitment and selection process has taken place and an 8-strong committee has been appointed to oversee the work at Healthwatch Gateshead. Our committee members have a complimentary range of skills and experience which will of great benefit to our work and the strategic governance of the organisation. We hope that a Chair will emerge from the committee members.
6. The staff team consists of two Project Managers, a Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, a Finance and Administration Officer and an Operations Manager. Our close working relationship with Healthwatch Newcastle has given us extra capacity and allowed specialist skills to be shared efficiently, as well as the ability to do some joint project work.

7. Members of the Healthwatch Gateshead team have begun working with partners, hosting and attending events and gathering views to help raise awareness of our work

Working on our Healthwatch Priorities

8. NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC)

NHS continuing health care (CHC) is a package of care provided outside of hospital that is arranged and funded solely by the NHS for individuals aged 18 years and older who have significant ongoing healthcare needs. When someone is assessed as eligible for CHC, the NHS is responsible for funding the whole package of health and social care.

Access to, and outcome of CHC assessments ranked highly in our engagement processes with residents and partners across both Gateshead and Newcastle and our committees agreed that this subject should become the focus of a project for 2017/18.

The work is being led by one of our Gateshead Project Managers, and will span both areas. We have begun to gather evidence by talking with stakeholders in the Local Authorities, NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (NGCCG) and Hospital Trusts across Newcastle and Gateshead. We have been asking partners about their understanding of how the process around CHC should work. We have also referred to national guidance and best practice, including the National Framework for CHC.

In August, Healthwatch hosted an event under the banner of “One Collective Voice” which enabled us to hear from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations who support residents to access services, information or support and guidance around the CHC process. We have received very positive feedback from VCS representatives who attended the event and they were enthusiastic about the concept of “One Collective Voice”, and would be keen to engage in this way again on a themes basis.

The information we are gaining will help us to design a questionnaire for service users and carers to gather their experience of the process, and the information available to help them. Findings will be the subject of a comprehensive report which will be shared with stakeholders and providers for comment before it is published before the end of the financial year.

9. Carers

This topic was ranked highly in our public / delegate prioritisation exercise and as such has become the focus of our second piece of project work, led by one of our Project Managers. The work will focus on Gateshead residents and will review the service users experience of receiving carers assessments to better understand the barriers to taking-up a carers assessment. It became a statutory duty of local authorities to provide carers assessments (Care Act 2014). However, to date there has been a low uptake in Gateshead and the numbers are dropping.

Gateshead Council and NGCCG are reviewing the present carer offer and have carried out some engagement with service users and providers. A tender specification is to be written and presented to cabinet in September 2017. Healthwatch Gateshead is working closely with partners with a view to influencing

the quality and quantity of carers assessments conducted in Gateshead. This project will also feed into the content of the tender specification.

We are currently conducting a survey of carer's which is complimentary to the work completed by the council. The findings will feed in to the consultation process the view expressed by carers on the actual carers assessment process and help identify the barriers to up-take. Healthwatch Gateshead will give residents an independent voice, whilst other reports and surveys have been conducted by stakeholders. The response rate to the survey has been excellent, with around 250 responses having been received to date, over a very short frame of time.

This project is an excellent example of the advantages of flexibility of workforce between Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle as we have drawn in additional support from a Newcastle based Project Manager to allow us to meet the timescales required by the tender process.

10 Mental Health

Mental Health ranked highest in the prioritisation exercise following feedback gathered by Healthwatch Gateshead in 2016/17 and was primarily highlighted because of comments from residents about long waiting times. With the CCG about to start moving towards delivery of the 'Deciding Together, Delivering Together' process for adult mental health, the Healthwatch Gateshead Committee decided that further research in this area might be better after this work has been implemented. Healthwatch are taking a very active approach in Deciding Together, Delivering Together by helping to ensure that residents views are heard. Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle are holding "fringe events" to complement the CCG-led four, week long, workshops in September and October. Each week will focus on a different aspect of the service:

1. Getting help when you need it
2. Understanding need and planning support
3. Getting support
4. Staying well

The Healthwatch 'fringe' events will allow more members of the public, experts by experience, and voluntary and community sector representatives to make their voices heard and contribute to the new service design. Healthwatch will also be making it possible for people to contribute to the discussion and decision-making process via social media if they can't get along to the events.

Volunteering, Outreach and Engagement

11. Healthwatch Gateshead will be building up our volunteering offer for residents of Gateshead. We currently have seven volunteers who have joined us/stayed with us since April as Healthwatch Champions. Our volunteers are supported by our Volunteer and Outreach Officer. A key priority of our work is the roll out of our "Feedback Centre", which we will be using to gain feedback from Gateshead residents about the health and social care services that they access. The information they provide will be shared with the people who plan and deliver health and social care services.

Our Volunteer and Outreach coordinator is developing an outreach and engagement strategy to meet residents and gather their views, and feedback forms will be distributed to partners. The form can also be completed electronically at www.healthgateshead.co.uk. During 2017/18 we aim to greatly increase awareness of Healthwatch Gateshead and further support resident's voices to be heard.

12. The Healthwatch Gateshead AGM is planned for the morning of 31 October 2017.

Proposal

13. It is proposed that the Board receives this report for information, and receive the Annual Report for 2016/17.

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