

TITLE OF REPORT: Healthwatch Gateshead - Interim Report

REPORT OF: Wendy Hodgson, Operations Manager.

Summary

1. To inform the Care Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the priorities set for Healthwatch Gateshead in 2017/18 and to update the Committee on progress achieved since 1 April 2017.
 2. The OSC is asked to receive this interim report for information with a view to receiving a further report at the March 2018 meeting.
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Background

3. Tell Us North CIC (TUN) is a community interest company which was successful in securing the contract to deliver Healthwatch Gateshead from 1 April 2017. TUN also holds 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.
4. Healthwatch Gateshead has a dedicated staff team of 5, including a new Operations Manager. We have recruited a new committee with 8 members, and we currently have 6 volunteers (Healthwatch Champions).
5. 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 with the initial list having been informed by comments, concerns and points of view gathered from residents during 2016/17. Consultation resulted in the key work priority areas for Healthwatch Gateshead in 2017/18 being established as:

- Carers
- NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC)
- Mental Health
- Young People
- End of life

Progress to date.

6. NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC)

NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) is a package of ongoing care that is arranged and funded solely by the NHS where the individual has been found to have a 'primary health need'.

Healthwatch Gateshead has received concerns and comments from residents about their experiences of the CHC process. This feedback has included issues around delayed funding, decisions not to fund, delays to hospital discharge and the availability and quality of information to support families through the CHC process.

Healthwatch Gateshead held a "One Collective Voice" event in August 2017 to talk to representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector to gather more views. The findings suggested that there were issues being reported locally which further evidenced the need for this area of work to become the focus of a programme of work.

A Healthwatch Gateshead Project Manager is leading on this piece of work, and has made key contacts with lead officers in Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (NGCCG), the Queen Elizabeth Hospital District Liaison Team, and Gateshead Council.

Healthwatch Gateshead have already made some initial recommendations to NGCCG and Gateshead Council with respect to the provision of information on CHC. We have highlighted a film produced by Enabled City who worked with Greenwich CCG and NHS England to create a motion graphics film about NHS Continuing Healthcare. The film aims to explain better to patients and families how the NHS decides if someone is eligible for NHS CHC. We believe this is a good example of accessible information which could perhaps be embedded onto NGCCG websites.

We have produced a survey for people to complete if they live in Gateshead and have been through the CHC pathway in the past 12 months, or are starting the process. We will be running the survey throughout October to December 2017: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NHS-CHC

We are working closely with Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group and Gateshead Council, having representation on a newly formed strategy group on CHC, where we will be able to contribute to any changes. The first meeting will be held in November 2017.

A full Healthwatch Gateshead report on this work priority will be ready in Spring 2018.

7. Carers

Healthwatch Gateshead received issues and concerns from residents of Gateshead during 2016/17 regarding their ability to access services and support of their caring role. There was also evidence to suggest that carer's were not aware of their right to receive a carer's assessment (as introduced in The Care Act 2014), and that where residents were aware of their right to an assessment, some people experienced difficulties in getting the assessment, and or receiving the support identified on having been assessed.

The Healthwatch Committee agreed that we prioritise research into people's experiences of accessing carers assessments and the follow up support received as a result of the assessment.

Previously Newcastle Gateshead CCG and Gateshead Council had met with carers of all ages, providers and health and social care professionals to ask them about the role of an informal carer. Feedback supported that an important part of supporting carers is to have a carer's assessment that looks at what an individual may need in order to care for someone, as well as looking at how better support for informal carers can be put in place regardless of age or the condition of the cared for person.

Healthwatch Gateshead has been supporting the current NGCCG and Gateshead Council review process, looking at how they can better support informal carers. We have adopted a mixed approach to our research, with the primary source of data collection being obtained via a survey. The aim of the survey was to gather the experiences of carers and carer's assessments in Gateshead and to provide evidence for providers and commissioners to improve access and service provision. We have worked closely with Gateshead Council, NGCCC and voluntary sector organisations, including Age UK Gateshead, The Carers Trust, The Stroke Association and the Alzheimers Association to ask them to advertise the surveys and where appropriate engage people to complete them. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Community Care Team has also worked with us to help us reach carers in the community.

The survey was conducted over a 5-week period in July and August 2017. Carers of all ages were invited to take part and in total 264 valid responses were received of which 56 had experiences of carers' assessments. Alongside the surveys, two engagement events were held for organisations who provide information, advice and support to informal carers in Gateshead. The events were organised in conjunction with NGCCC, Gateshead Council and Involve North East.

The findings from this research are currently being analysed and Healthwatch Gateshead is in the process of drafting a report which will include recommendations. We will share the draft report with our partners and will share a final version with this Committee as soon as it is available.

8. Mental Health

Healthwatch has worked very closely with Deciding Together, Delivering Together, the next stage of the redesign of specialist mental health services in Newcastle and Gateshead (the first stage was Deciding Together). This stage of the work has focused on services delivered in the community. There have been four, week long, workshops in September and October, each focusing 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

Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle have been running “fringe” events to enable 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. These events have been held in the evenings and online to facilitate involvement of people who cannot attend the daytime sessions.

9. Young People

Young People’s work ranked highly in our feedback and consultation exercises, however there has not been any service user feedback to indicate what the focus of a specific piece of work might be. Working with Healthwatch Newcastle, we are making young people an engagement priority for this year. We intend to hold a joint event to engage with young people to ask them what their priorities are, and to encourage young people’s participation in the work of Healthwatch Gateshead, including the opportunity to volunteer as young Healthwatch Champions.

10. End of life

Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group is currently undertaking a review of end of life services and we are involved in this work. Rather than make this the subject of a research project, the Healthwatch Gateshead Committee agreed that we should continue with this involvement.

Recommendations

1. The OSC is asked to note the contents of this report.
2. That the OSC agree to receive a further report to be included at their March 2018 meeting.