

## Healthwatch Gateshead quarterly report - 1 March 2020 to 31 May 2020

This report details the information we have gathered from members of the public via the feedback centre on our website, any phone calls or emails we have received, and via any community outreach or focus groups we have held between 1 March 2020 to 31 May 2020.

This report does not include the data we have gathered via specific surveys, such as the COVID-19 survey we are currently running. That data is summarised in a separate report.

The information we have gathered is grouped by service type and summarised below.

### Queen Elizabeth Hospital

We have received seven reviews/enquiries about Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Six of these reviews were very positive, focussing on short waiting times for appointments, great staff and good services, for example:

“I only waited a few minutes, I was seen almost straight away! I had a severe gash on my forehead.”

“The appointments are always on time. The nurses have a lot to put up with and still provide an excellent service.”

“I went for chemo and received great care.”

“The QE hospital is usually very women friendly, they have good advice and are helpful.”

The other two were enquiries about the opening hours of A&E and an appointment cancellation letter.

### Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

We received one review about Dryden Road Clinic (Community Treatment Team). This person said that their experience was great and that the staff are lovely.

“I have a mental health worker here at Dryden road and she’s amazing. Best point of help I’ve ever had.”

### North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

We have received ten reviews/enquiries about North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

Six of these reviews/enquiries were about NHS 111 and included:

- Difficulties getting through x 2
- Are there other ways to get in touch? x 2
- Long wait, but resolved the problem

- What is the website for NHS 111?

Three reviews/enquiries reflected positive experiences when calling for an ambulance and receiving care from paramedics. Two reviewers talked about the paramedics providing care within the home or in the ambulance, avoiding a hospital admission. The reviewers were pleased with this.

“The ambulance staff were very supportive and dealt with the situation at their home so he didn't have to go into hospital.”

The third reviewer said that she wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for the ambulance service.

The last review was about the Patient Transport Service. A service user got in touch to tell us that a taxi arrived to take her to her appointment but that she could not use it because it did not have a ramp. She asked what she should do in the future to avoid this happening again.

### **Social care**

We have received four reviews/enquiries about social care related issues and concerns.

Two of these reviews/enquiries were about personal protective equipment (PPE). There was a concern that care home workers were not being provided with enough or the right PPE and staff were having to share. A later review suggests that this is now improving, and staff are asking for the right PPE.

One review referred to over 65s being called by Gateshead Council to ask if they were okay and if they needed any help. This was a positive experience.

One review referred to a volunteer care worker calling to say she was not feeling too well. She was told to take paracetamol and to go to work in the care home that night. She sought further advice and did not go into the care home. Eventually she was tested for COVID-19 and the test was positive. The reviewer felt that the employer's advice was terrible and could have led to COVID-19 spreading within the care home.

### **GP practices**

We received 17 reviews/enquiries about GP practices.

Three of these reviews/enquiries were about Fell Tower Medical Centre. All wanted to know if the GP practice had changed its opening hours or was still open due to COVID-19. The callers called Healthwatch Gateshead because they could not get through to Fell Tower Medical Centre.

Two of these reviews/enquiries were about Bensham Family Practice:

“No waiting for the appointment. The nursing sister was a good listener.”

“I have been a patient at this surgery for many years and although GPs have changed over the years I can truly say that I have never had anything less than 100% commitment and professionalism from the doctors, nurses and receptionists. Well done to all the staff for working under extremely hard conditions.”

Two of these reviews/enquiries were about Blaydon GP Practice:

“I always have a great experience here. They make me feel very happy.”  
 “This is a great service, they are always on time. No faults at all.”

Two of these reviews/enquiries were about Whickham Cottage Health Centre:

“This service is very accommodating and they listen to you. They refer on when needed.”

“They are always on time and they listen to you. I never feel rushed at this practice, I always feel comfortable.”

Two of these reviews/enquiries were about Beacon View Medical Centre:

“I go to Beacon View GP and the GPs are very approachable, especially the male ones!”

“This practice has good, friendly people.”

Two of these reviews/enquiries were about St. Albans Medical Group. One reviewer felt they always had the time to discuss their issue, whilst the other reviewer felt like they were getting pushed out of a door as quickly as possible.

The last four reviews/enquiries were as follows:

Sunniside Surgery	This is a great surgery that makes accessing health care easy and stress-free. The staff at reception are friendly and very helpful. Contacting the surgery by telephone is a breeze and appointments are available. The doctors put me at ease straight away and endeavoured to help any way they could. This is the ideal setting for taking care of your health. Will recommend to friends and family.
Longrigg Medical Centre	The staff are always very professional and willing to go the extra steps for you. The doctors I've met are always kind, pleasant, and helpful. You never feel nervous at your appointment.
Birtley Medical Group	Caller asked if they could attend their GP given the current situation (COVID-19)
Bewick Road Surgery	Caller rang to ask why their GP practice is open over bank holiday when it has never been before

### Dentists

We received two reviews/enquiries about dental practices in Gateshead.

One review was about Village Dental Practice:

“They are really helpful and reassuring at this surgery.”

The other was an enquiry about Ann Millward Dental Practice and if it was still open despite COVID-19.

### **Opticians**

We received one review about Stewart Eyecare, simply telling us that it was a great service.

### **Pharmacy**

We received six reviews/enquiries about pharmacy services.

Four of these reviews were positive:

- They are always very helpful and considerate - Whickham Pharmacy
- Staff are always friendly and helpful and they always have my medications in - Lloyds Pharmacy, Coatsworth Road
- They are good. The medicine is always ready to be picked up. It is easy to go after seeing the GP - Rowlands Pharmacy
- Called in as I was concerned. I felt reassured - Boots Pharmacy, Blaydon

One person commented on Boots in Rowlands Gill. They were not satisfied that their repeat prescription was not ready again. They had to go without medicine for four days.

One person called to ask us if their pharmacy was still open despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Escalations**

**Healthwatch Gateshead has an experienced Project Manager and Outreach Worker who work closely together to ascertain the need for immediate action, and look to a resolution for individuals.**

This section highlights cases where we escalated issues directly to service providers, commissioners, the Care Quality Commission or Healthwatch England to highlight an issue or seek a resolution.

#### **Escalated case one**

The family of a woman had been given four weeks' notice to leave her care home. She was receiving Continuing Health Care (CHC) and the relationship between the care home and the family had broken down due to concerns about her care. We liaised with NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, Gateshead Council, and the family to coordinate a solution.

It appeared that the care home had not followed procedure regarding notice to move and the commissioning team stepped in.

The outcome was that the woman was able to stay in the care home with extra support from outside and a communication strategy was developed between the care home and family.

### **Escalated case two**

We received an email from a local resident who wanted to share her experience around community health care provision for people who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19.

We produced a letter and escalated this to:

- Healthwatch England
- Dr Lynn Wilson- Director for Gateshead System - Gateshead Council and Gateshead CCG

### **Escalation case three**

We were contacted by a family member because their mother had been refused patient transport by North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS), even though the patient could not weight bear. The family member had been advised to contact their GP to arrange transport then passed on by GP to hospital who has passed the issue back to NEAS.

We used our escalation process with NEAS to clarify the situation within 2 hours. The outcome was that all patients who needed to attend clinics needed the clinic to clarify that the treatment was **essential**. The patient's transport was arranged, and she was able to attend the fracture clinic.