

**TITLE OF REPORT: Healthwatch Gateshead**

**REPORT OF: Wendy Hodgson, Operations Manager.**

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### **Summary**

1. To update the Care Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the work of Healthwatch Gateshead.
  2. To inform the Committee about the priority setting process for Healthwatch Gateshead in 2018/19.
  3. The OSC is asked to receive this report for information.
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### **Background**

4. 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.
5. Priorities for Healthwatch Gateshead in 2017/18 were established at the beginning of this financial year. The staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Gateshead have focused on two key priorities during 2017/18; carers' assessments and NHS Continuing Health Care. We have also supported discussion around Mental Health by holding "fringe events" to help engage the community in Deciding Deliver, Delivering Together, reporting their views and experiences into the Rapid Process Improvement Workshops.
6. **Progress to date.**

### **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'.

Both Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle had received feedback, issues, concerns and points of view from residents about their experiences of the CHC process and this topic was voted by the community

as a priority area for both Healthwatch in 2017/18. Feedback from service users and their carers indicated experience of 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. We have made CHC a focus for our work, with a Healthwatch Gateshead Project Manager leading on the project, which spans both Gateshead and Newcastle. She has made key contacts with lead officers in Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (NGCCG), the Queen Elizabeth Hospital District Liaison Team, and both councils.

A survey was produced for completion by people who had been through the CHC pathway in the past 12 months or were starting the process. We also consulted local partners with experience of supporting carers and services users.

A report, including the results of the survey and recommendations is currently being drafted. This draft will initially be shared with the key stakeholders for their comment and to check for accuracy. A final version of the report will be produced in the spring and will be shared publicly.

## **Carers**

Healthwatch Gateshead received feedback, issues, concerns, and points of view from residents of Gateshead during 2016/17 regarding their experiences of accessing a carer's assessment (as introduced in The Care Act 2014). Feedback indicated that, whereas some residents were aware of their right to an assessment, some had experienced difficulties in obtaining the assessment, and or receiving the support identified on having been assessed.

Healthwatch Gateshead has carried research in support of the the NGCCG and Gateshead Council review process, looking at how they can better support informal carers.

The findings from our research can be found in the attached report which has been shared with key stakeholders and the public. We hope that the outcomes and recommendations from our work will be reflected in the carers' support service specification that Gateshead Borough Council is due to publish.

## **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). 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 fringe events have

been held in the evenings and online to facilitate involvement of people who cannot attend the daytime sessions.

## **7. Outreach**

Healthwatch Gateshead connects with the public in various ways and relies upon the support of our volunteers (Healthwatch Champions). Under the direction of our Outreach and Engagement Officer, Champions are trained to represent Healthwatch, to gain feedback about services by using our feedback forms, or by hosting focus groups, and have the confidence to signpost on to other services when necessary. Our engagement priorities in 2017/18 have been Men; Families and Young People; and the BME community.

We have also supported public consultation processes by hosting events, including those for the Great North Care Record and the Blaydon GP Practice consultation.

## **8. Healthwatch Gateshead Priority Setting for 2018/19**

How we set priorities.

We gather information from:

- What people have told us about local services
- What people who plan and provide services tell us are their priorities for the year
- What we hear nationally

The Healthwatch Gateshead Committee prepares a shortlist of issues and service areas based on the above which we use as a basis for consultation from February through to the end of April. Local people are then asked for their views against the shortlist and this is shared through outreach, newsletters and social media. We also hold an Annual Conference and attendees are asked to take part in the prioritisation exercise. The Healthwatch Committee, supported by the staff team, review the public prioritisation results and make a final decision on the coming year's priorities.

The short list of priorities is included with this report and includes:

- Access to services – impact of waiting times
- Children and families use of urgent care
- Impact of austerity on health and wellbeing
- Lack of funding for social care
- Low take up of cervical screening
- Mental health services
- Public health services

When we have completed the priority setting exercise, Healthwatch Gateshead will adopt at least two priority areas to focus on for research / project work as we did in 2017/18, and the exercise will also help inform where we will target our outreach and engagement work.

## **9. Healthwatch Annual Conference**

This year our joint conference with Healthwatch Newcastle will focus on the theme of “excellence in engagement”.

This will showcase how we have involved people in having their say on health and social care services and share examples of best practice to engage and involve local communities. There will be an opportunity to help us set our work priorities for 2018- 2019.

The conference will take place on Wednesday, 25 April 2018, 9am to 1pm at St Mary’s Heritage Centre, Gateshead, NE8 2AT.

Registration is between 9am to 9.30am. To register your attendance please visit: <https://healthwatch2018.eventbrite.co.uk>

## **Recommendations**

1. The OSC is asked to note the contents of this report.
2. That the OSC agree to receive a further report to include the Continuing Health Care report and the finalised Healthwatch Gateshead priorities for 2018/19 at a future meeting.

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