

Healthwatch Cumbria District Update - COPELAND

July 2014

Together for a Healthier Future

Healthwatch Cumbria in partnership with the North Cumbria Programme Board (Cumbria Health and Care Alliance) carried out a series of 13 public engagement events in North Cumbria during May and June 2014. The purpose of the events was to provide the public with an opportunity to share their views on health and social care issues, which would then inform the development of a five year plan.

Healthwatch Cumbria in partnership with the North Cumbria Programme Board undertook a large-scale engagement programme across 13 sites in North Cumbria. This consisted of face to face, structured conversations with members of the public at key venues in towns across North Cumbria. A cross range of the public were approached to ensure, as much as possible, the views from all ages and social groups were included.

Pre-set questions, which were agreed with the Programme Board were used to give direction to the conversation without leading towards particular responses. There was also opportunity for the public to share with interviewers their own experiences of NHS and social care services and thoughts about how services could be improved.

The events were held in the major towns and in some cases where acute trusts or community hospitals were based.

Event Locations:

Workington, Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Mayport, Cockermouth, Carlisle, Keswick, Wigton, Penrith, Silloth, Alston, Brampton and Kirkby Stephens.

Additional engagement as part of the Together for a Healthier Future consultation included Learning Disabled Week presentations and discussions at day centres, Cumbria Pride and the Youth Zone.

Copeland District Findings:

Whitehaven- 52 people engaged with Healthwatch on the 17th May. Of the 52 people who shared their views, 32 had a positive experience, 10 had a Negative experience, and 10 had a Neutral experience. 37 people were aware of the issues affecting health and social care services and 15 people were not.

The key themes from conversations with the public at this event where:

- Low staffing levels at West Cumberland Hospital, specifically front line nursing staff
- Lack of specialist/consultants at West Cumberland Hospital, which resulted in travel to Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle or out of the county (i.e. Northumberland, Middlesbrough, Hexham)
- Concerns about the 'new hospital' which services would stay and which could be transferred elsewhere. The lack of communication from the NCUHT regarding the possible changes was highlighted also.
- Travel between NCUHT sites (Carlisle and West Cumberland) for services that should be available at each site, timing of hospital/ambulance transfers between services i.e. length of time taken and the timing, during the night in some case
- Access to GP's, availability of appointments and attitude of practice staff

Cleator Moor - 23 people engaged with Healthwatch Cumbria on the 23rd May. Of the 23 people who share their experiences and views 10 had a positive experience, 10 had a neutral experience, and 3 had a negative experience.

In Cleator Moor 11 of the 23 people engaged were aware of the issues affecting health and social care services and 12 people were not

The key themes from conversations with the public at this event where:

- Access to GP's, availability of appointments was the major concern in this area
- Many people felt that there should be more local specialist services rather than having to travel to Carlisle or out of the area for appointment and treatment.

What can Healthwatch Cumbria do in response to these concerns?

- The Alliance's 5-year plan will be made public imminently
- HWC can carry out independent consultation with the public in response to the plan and present findings to the Alliance.
- We can challenge the plan and decision making process once it becomes public
- Analyse the 5 year proposals to consider the extent to which they will address the key issues raised in Copeland

What support do you need from the Healthwatch District groups and what support can you give?

Healthwatch District Meetings (Copeland) - Issues and concerns raised

You told us:

Cancer & Oncology Services

Oncology services were inconsistent across NCUHT, patients travel from West Cumbria to Carlisle for treatment and are sometimes turned away, and radiology services are not fully operational. There are many other issues relating to this service area. You told us to speak to Cancer Advisory Panels and you told us to look at research already carried out.

- We are carrying out research into local performance against national benchmarks
- We have a programme of Enter & View visits scheduled for July - 4 sites included
- We have met with the Cancer Advisory Panel (Chris Wood-Chair) and have attended several meetings with the group and continue to communicate with members.
- We have gathered experiences from the public and are using this to strengthen our evidence base.
- We will collate the findings from engagement activity, enter & view and from the Cancer Advisory Panel along with views and experiences from other support agencies.
- We will present our findings and recommendation for service improvement to decision makers.
- We will make our findings public and share our reports with Healthwatch England and other appropriate bodies.

NWAS - Transport

Transport between NCUHT sites (West and Carlisle) was causing great concern. The length of time taken for patient transfers was far too long and took place at inappropriate times, elderly patients were being transported to care home through the night, and in many cases patient transport was no longer available to those who had accessed the service previously due to the new eligibility criteria. Many issues interlinked with the transfer of service from West Cumberland Hospital to Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle.

- HWC has provided a report to the Care Quality Commission in preparation of the inspection due to take place from the 7th July.
- We recently attended a CQC listening event in preparation of the forthcoming inspection.
- We have gathered patient experience of NWAS and continue to collect evidence

- We are taking part in a Healthwatch England Special Enquiry into unsafe discharging for the Frail and Elderly which we are sure will provide even more evidence of transport issues.
- We will develop a task and finish group to research issues and to strengthen our evidence base - **Please support us with this activity**
- We will present our findings and recommendation for service improvement to decision makers.
- We will make our findings public and share our reports with Healthwatch England and other appropriate bodies.

Car Parking

Healthwatch Cumbria received a significant number of complaints and concerns about parking facilities at West Cumberland Hospital and Cumberland Hospital Carlisle. We received many concerns from patients and families affected by the lack of parking spaces and the management of parking facilities.

- We created a task and finish group, which is chaired by Healthwatch Ambassador David Day and supported by Engagement Officer, Marie Blackburn.
- The group has carried out extensive research into the issues raised and presented findings to the Healthwatch Manager and CEO.
- A HWC group (David Day-HWC Ambassador, David Blacklock-HWC CEO and Sarah Allison-HWC Manager) presented the issues to the Chief Executive of North Cumbria University Hospital NHS Trust - Ann Farrar and the Corporate Director of Facilities - Steven Bannister at a meeting which took place on 23rd May. An open discussion took place during which Steve Bannister shared plans for additional car parking using land on the existing sites (Carlisle and West Cumberland).
- The NCUHT presented these plans and strategy document at their board meeting on the 24th June and the plans are now public.
- Healthwatch Cumbria will continue monitor progress of plans and also monitor the parking situation at both sites.
- Will be carrying out public/patient consultation on parking at West Cumberland Hospital and Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle during August.

Hospital discharge

Concerns were raised at the Copeland district meeting and elsewhere in the county about inappropriate or unsafe discharging. We have also received feedback and experience from patients and families about inappropriate discharging and poor communication between services and between services and patients.

- We are taking part in the Healthwatch England special Inquiry into unsafe discharge for the frail and elderly. We hope that through this project we will build our evidence base.

- We have designed a survey/questionnaire for the Special Enquiry based on the framework provided by HWE and will ask 3rd sector organisations and support groups to help us in obtaining views from service users.
Please support with this work - questionnaires are available from your engagement officer and arrangements will be made for collecting completed forms.
- We have already highlighted concerns at a recent Risk Summit meeting with CCG, NHS CNTW Area Team, NCUHT and CPFT and suggested closer working and communication to ensure that discharge procedures improve.
- We will present our findings and recommendation for service improvement to decision makers.
- We will make our findings public and share our reports with Healthwatch England and other appropriate bodies.

Access to GP appointments

HWC has received numerous concerns about access to GP's, appointment times, attitude of staff, waiting times and so forth. We have a substantial evidence base have raised concerns with NHS CNTW Area Team and commissioners.

We are aware that these issues are not unique to Copeland or to Cumbria for that matter. The recruitment of GP's is a national issue and one that the NHS are trying to address nationally and regionally.

- Whilst there is little we can do on a practical level in relation to recruitment we can make recommendations for GP practices to improve the attitude of staff, perhaps through customer service training, sharing of best practice and so forth.
- We will carry out Enter & View visits to GP surgeries and health centres - likely to begin in Dec/Jan 2015.
- We have already contributed to the CQC's revised inspection framework review with 4 other Local Healthwatch.
- We have provided the CQC with local intelligence for the first round of GP inspections which took place earlier this year and we will continue to provide intelligence where appropriate.

Staff Recruitment

Equally the recruitment of nursing staff is a national issue, however we know that we have a greater challenging in attracting staff in Cumbria as a result of the current status of our acute trusts

We know that joint recruitment campaigns have taken place which have been fairly successful in attracting nursing staff. We also know that specialist staff have been recruited by NCUHT.

Enter & View

Healthwatch Cumbria has recently completed a programme of Enter & View Visits to care homes in West Cumbria. Each home has received an individual report and an overarching summary of findings has been published. The reports have been shared with the appropriate bodies.

Recommendations for service improvement included:

- Increase staffing levels where possible to ensure quality of care (N.B. there is no legislation to state the number of staff required and it is not the statutory responsibility of Healthwatch to monitor for compliance, we refer concerns to the Care Quality Commission)
- The handling and monitoring of complaints, concerns and compliments varied significantly and we recommended the introduction of complaints/concerns monitoring as a means of improving services
- Giving greater emphasis to activities, mobility and exercise to suit all resident needs.
- Ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained and their training updated appropriately.

Complaints Handling

Healthwatch Cumbria with members of Overview Health Scrutiny Committee and lay representatives have established a task and finish group to research and investigate complaints handling across Cumbria based health and social care services.

Each service was invited to present their complaints handling procedures to the task & finish and to provide answers to a number of questions raised by the group in advance of the presentations.

The following services provided presentations:

- University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust Foundation
- Cumbria Partnership NHS Trust Foundation
- Cumbria Health on Call
- Cumbria County Council - Adult Services
- Cumbria County Council - Children's Services
- North West Ambulance Service
- NHS England

North Cumbria University Hospital NHS Trust provided a policy on complaints procedures for staff and the Trust policy for complaints and PALS

- We have collated findings from the presentations and will make these public in the next 2 weeks.
- We are about to embark on the second stage of the process which will involve contacting a sample of complainants from each service/trust to find out more about their complaint and how their complaints were handled

- We will check with each service/trust that learning from complaints has been shared and embedded within the organisation.
- We will present our findings and recommendation for service improvement to decision makers.
- We will make our findings public and share our reports with Healthwatch England and other appropriate bodies.

For those of you who regularly attend Healthwatch District meetings we have a new member of the Team who has been newly appointed as successor to Janet Thompson, who I am sure many of you were familiar with.

Sue has previously been working for a National Drug & Alcohol Charity working with Families and Health and social Care Service providers across West Cumbria.

Sue will be covering the Copeland area as Senior Engagement Officer.

This report has been produced to give an overview of activity taking place in a particular district. Healthwatch Cumbria can provide a county-wide report on request.