

Success Regime
Listening Events
December 2015

your
voice
counts

Introduction

Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC) was commissioned by the Success Regime (SR) to deliver four listening events in the largest towns in West, East and North Cumbria during December 2015. The purpose of these events was to listen to the views of the public about the challenges faced by health and care organisations in west, east and north Cumbria in delivering excellent health care.

It should be acknowledged that the SR is working at pace and that this phase of engagement needed to be arranged and take place at very short notice and at a time in the year which would not normally be considered optimum for effective engagement. This position was further compromised when Cumbria was badly affected by flooding in early December.

Careful consideration was given as to whether to carry on with the planned engagement especially in the worst affected areas of Carlisle and Workington. It was agreed that the engagement should go ahead but that it would be appropriate to lead with an additional question at the Workington and Carlisle events asking how the public had been affected by the flooding and whether they required any help; for example, being signposted to relevant support services. The responses to these additional questions were not recorded as part of the SR feedback and so do not feature in this summary. However it was noted that the questions about flooding helped to build up a rapport with the members of the public and also that several members of the public in Carlisle were signposted to appropriate council and 3rd sector support services.

Methodology

HWC arranged locations for public engagement events where footfall would be greatest and HW/SR visibility most prominent. Over a two week period the following locations were visited;

Penrith 2nd December - Morrison's Supermarket

Whitehaven 3rd December - Civic Hall and town market

Workington 9th December - The Hub (Shopping Centre), Carnegie Theatre

Carlisle 11th December - Venues in the city centre, including The Crown & Mitre Hotel, Carlisle Library, The Lanes Shopping Centre, Marks and Spencer and House of Fraser.

HWC staff and ambassadors were pleased to have the support of colleagues from Freshwater and from the NHS who made themselves available to support the engagement activity at each venue. Refreshments were provided for the public when it was appropriate to do so with an emphasis on creating the conditions for relaxed conversations. It had been hoped that brief health checks could also have been provided but this proved to be difficult to arrange due to staffing pressures in the Trusts.

Facilitators introduced themselves and explained why they were asking for public views. They provided a brief summary of the SR goals and told people how they could be part of the process. The following 4 questions devised by the HWC team and approved by Freshwater were used to help stimulate conversations. The key issues raised and comments made were recorded on prepared feedback sheets and then transferred to the HWC data base.

Q1 - What do you think are the challenges?

Q2 - What do you think needs to be improved?

Q3 - What are your ideas?

Q4 - Any other comments? - (very few people added anything extra in response to this question)

Public Response

Over the four events HWC spoke to 452 members of public with 357 questionnaires being completed (the discrepancy being due to couples answering the survey together).

The geographical breakdown is below:

Penrith - 138 people engaged with, 122 completed questionnaires

Whitehaven - 95 people engaged with, 85 completed questionnaires

Workington- 63 people engaged with, 58 completed questionnaires

Carlisle - 156 people engaged with, 92 completed questionnaires

What follows is a summary of the key issues which were recorded during the conversations. A simple bullet point approach has been used in this summary so that the reader can quickly identify common themes but also identify variance of emphasis between each location.

Main Themes by Location

Penrith

Q1 - What do you think are the challenges?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Staffing/Recruitment
 - staffing levels and the need to attract staff to Cumbria
 - skills retention
 - staff morale
 - too top heavy in management staff
- Rurality
 - accessing services
 - transport and travel times
- Communication
 - between GP's and acute services
- Access to appointments
 - waiting times,
 - getting an appointment for a GP
- Lack of resources
 - funding to improve services in general

Other themes included access to dentists, car parking and staff attitudes.

Q2 - What do you think needs to be improved?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Communication - this covered all aspects of communication within the system and with people
- Waiting times for appointments for GP's and consultants
- Resources (such as NWAS - waiting times)

- Access to dentists
- Mental Health services

Q3 - What are your ideas?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Services close to home
 - GP home visits
 - using community hospitals
- Recruitment
 - less management more frontline staff
 - training
 - funding
 - bring matrons back
 - workforce redesign (more administrators)
- Communication
 - better public relations
- Improve GP access

Workington

Q1 - What do you think are the challenges?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Rurality
 - have to go to CIC for minor things
 - more equipment locally
 - ambulance times affected because of location
 - getting cut off in bad weather - recent floods
- Staff/recruitment

- can't attract staff such as consultants
- not enough funding/resources
- staff feel demotivated and disengaged
- worried about reputation
- poor attitude of senior management

Q2 - What do you think needs to be improved?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Communication
 - Patient information
 - communications from NCUHT about new hospital
 - Operational leads need to engage and communicate information to staff better
 - feedback to public on Success Regime
- Staff
 - Massive push on recruitment needed
 - training for mental health nurses and better support
 - recruit staff with the rights skills in management positions

Q3 - What are your ideas?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Staff
 - More training for nurses
 - more staff
 - improve admin and IT support to free up clinical staff
 - apprenticeships for nurses

Whitehaven

Q1 - What do you think are the challenges?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- **Rurality/Infrastructure**
 - difficulty travelling from west to north
 - traffic and poor road links
 - travel times
 - geography of large rural area
 - need special consideration
- **Staffing/recruitment**
 - Staff recruitment challenging
 - underfunding and lack of staff
 - not enough GP's
 - failure to attract good staff
 - too much government involvement
 - difficult to recruit to a failing Trust
 - retention of good staff
- **Equality of Care**
 - too many services moving from west to north
 - health service inequality perception in west
 - gradual withdrawal of services from west
 - can't provide a sustainable, safe and viable service
 - no equality of treatment

Q2 - What do you think needs to be improved?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Staff
 - Better methods to attract staff and retain staff
 - not good enough to say we can't get staff
 - one team should be working across the hospital trusts
 - staff morale is low
 - better management with accountability and responsibility
- Communications
 - keep staff better informed
 - there is a culture of keeping staff in the dark
 - more public consultation/patient participation
 - communication needs to be positive and improved for patients, between services
 - GP's need to listen
- Rurality
 - need full set of facilities
 - too far to travel
 - areas of deprivation not accounted for
 - lack of public transport
 - journeys can take up to 90 minutes

Q3 - What are your ideas?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Keep services Local

- Ensure sustainability of local services
- keep maternity services at WCH
- CIC consultants should travel to WCH
- more localised ambulance service
- patients locations need to be considered
- Funding
 - for Ambulances and Adult Social Care
 - ring fence funding
- Staff
 - Involve and appreciate staff more
 - staff training and development needs to improve
 - people have lost faith
 - needs total reshuffle of management
 - more nurses and health care assistants

Carlisle

Q1 - What do you think are the challenges?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Appointments
 - waiting too long for GP appointments
 - difficulty in getting GP and consultant appointments
 - administration awful
 - long waits at CIC
 - cancelled appointments
- Staffing
 - short staffed
 - too much management

- staff underappreciated
- shortage of dentists
- too much agency staff
- low morale
- better pay

Q2 - What do you think needs to be improved?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Staff
 - more staff
 - less bosses
 - would like to see GP at weekend
 - bring back matrons
 - cutbacks
 - more staff on nightshift
 - need to retain good staff
 - no consistency
 - poor attitude of consultants
- Communications
 - should be better between wards
 - don't hear back from doctor for months
 - CIC not good communication
 - details not updated
 - communication between staff and patients poor

Q3 - What are your ideas?

Responses to this question were themed as follows;

- Staff - More staff

Note: There were a significant amount of very positive comments and feedback on various services, these included;

Carlisle

- nurses do a great job
- GP appointment access is good
- Excellent service at CIC
- Lot of work to be done, but my experience was good

Workington

- all services at WCH are good
- WCH great, we need these facilities
- Wigton hospital fantastic
- GP's give a good service

Conclusion

Despite the four different locations having different identities, cultures and different geographic and demographic footprints there were a number of consistent themes which emerged from the conversations.

These were;

- Rurality, geography, infrastructure and travel implications must be taken into account when planning service provision
- Recruitment and retaining of all staff, the public are unaware of how the NHS is addressing this issue
- Communication, there should be honest, open information between the NHS and the public and staff, including positive stories
- Resources -the system needs more resources
- Focus on what should be provided at WCH
- Appointments, access to appointments, waiting times, poor administration
- Access to, and equity of sustainable services, location of services (incl. mental health and dental services)