Update on activity for the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee
March 2016

1. How are we doing? The Healthwatch Suffolk Stakeholder Survey 2016

Healthwatch Suffolk has launched its first ever stakeholder survey for professionals and the public. It is intended that the responses provided will help it to provide the best service possible and inform its service strategy for the next three years. The link to take part in the survey is: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/hws16 (Hard copies are available on request).

2. Healthwatch Suffolk is relocating

From 1st April 2014, Healthwatch Suffolk will be relocating from offices on the Lion Barn Industrial Estate in Needham Market to the Hillview Business Park in Claydon. The move will mean that it is located closer to key partners including Age UK Suffolk (with whom it will be sharing a building) and Suffolk Family Carers. It will also mean that Healthwatch Suffolk can save money, have more accessible parking for visitors and a greater focus on linking into Voluntary and Community Sector networks.

There will be no change to the services provided, although there are some changes to contact details. The new details with effect from 1st April 2016 will be:

Freepost RTTY-CEUT-LCRH
Healthwatch Suffolk
Unit 14, Hillview Business Park
Old Ipswich Road
Claydon
Ipswich
IP6 0AJ

Telephone: 01449 703949
Email: info@healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk
Website: www.healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk

3. Maternity project

The views of birthing partners are underrepresented. That is why Healthwatch Suffolk has been working with local hospitals to give fathers and birthing partners a say in the maternity pathway. In order to support this work it has been calling for fathers/partners, mums or anyone that has been present at a birth in Suffolk to share their experiences.

Early findings show that most dads and partners feel they were treated with dignity and respect across all maternity services but they have told Healthwatch Suffolk that there is a need for more information about potential emotional changes in partners and dads after the birth. Having a baby brings many changes to family life and this can be a shock to the system. Improved information would help families and partners to adapt to life with a baby quicker. People have also indicated that they were not given enough information about what to expect in regards to their own emotional needs after the birth and that they would like more flexibility in respect of overnight stays.

The final report from this project will be published within the next few weeks with recommendations for local services.

4. Informing the Care Quality Commission Inspection of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Healthwatch Suffolk has been taking a proactive approach to informing the first ever Care Quality Commission inspection of the East of England Ambulance Service, which is due to take place in April 2016. This engagement exercise has been particularly important as the CQC has not been able to extensively engage the public for views.
A condensed communications plan was developed and offered to all Local Healthwatch across the region. It had a clear aim to obtain views from patients and the public across the East of England and was based on the concept of #My999Story. The plan included a range of graphics, suggested Twitter activity, website and e-newsletter content. This short-lived campaign has been successful:

- Local Healthwatch promoted the campaign on Twitter and other social media. Tweets have been viewed in excess of 20,000 times.
- Information about the campaign was circulated by community newsletters to nearly 5,000 homes in Suffolk.
- The East Anglian Daily Times published an article to help us obtain views from people in Suffolk and parts of Essex.
- A number of local partners are supporting the campaign with communications including Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk Libraries and Suffolk Family Carers.
- Local Healthwatch have shared feedback and research reports with Healthwatch Suffolk.
- 79 individual comments have been recorded by Healthwatch Suffolk directly.

Healthwatch Suffolk has met with the CQC Lead Inspector to share early findings. A briefing document is currently in production that will bring together all of the feedback collated in Suffolk and from other Local Healthwatch.

In general, people have been largely positive about their overall experience of the service with the exception of a few particularly negative stories. High levels of positivity are very clearly evident within the feedback. Indeed, Healthwatch Suffolk Feedback Centre and NHS Choices data (up to 3rd March 2016) combined reveals a total of 59 five-star reviews out of a possible 79. The current overall rating on the Healthwatch Suffolk feedback Centre is four stars. In particular, analysis of the feedback obtained confirms an established understanding that people tend to be strongly positive about ambulance crews. People often described them as professional, reassuring and kind.

5. Joint project with Suffolk User Forum about the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Healthwatch Suffolk and Suffolk User Forum have published the final report from joint work through which Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust service users were engaged for their views and experiences.

To support the project, in November 2015, Healthwatch Suffolk and Suffolk User Forum ran a joint ‘Stepping Forward’ event that was attended by 48 service users, professionals and carers. The event consisted of four workshops in which people shared their experiences of referral and access to assessment, care planning, care reviews and discharge planning. The findings from the event have been incorporated into the final report.

The Trust has committed to open and transparent dialogue with Healthwatch Suffolk and Suffolk User Forum at a senior level to explore all of the issues raised in this report and other feedback both in terms of practical improvements and to increase staff awareness of the perspectives of service users. It has responded to the report as follows:

1. NSFT acknowledge that, although there was a small number of people, the feedback is nonetheless significant and highlights important areas for it to focus on.

2. The Trust would welcome an extension of the initial survey, which would allow further involvement from NSFT clinicians in production with Healthwatch and SUF an opportunity to develop a qualitative evaluation of service user views, experiences and understanding of needs to inform future care. The Trust considers that it would be particularly useful to look at what people think would help prevent difficulties, what maintains problems and what is needed to remain resilient and well in communities.

3. The Trust believes that this partnership approach will serve to improve clinical care, support recovery and communications.
4. It will also commit to sharing the report with managers and frontline staff via their quality governance meetings, ensuring discussion, learning and reflection. The summary outcomes of this will be shared with us by the Director of Operations for NSFT in June 2016.

5. To address the differing perceptions of what constitutes a “care plan” amongst service users, carers and mental health professionals, the Trust will explore the development of further information that it can send out to people who use its services and their carers. This would help people to know what to expect in respect of care planning and support from the Trust.

6. Diabetic foot care in Suffolk

Healthwatch Suffolk is working with Dr. Gerry Rayman (Consultant Physician of Diabetes and Endocrinology at the Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust Diabetic Centre) on a new project to explore local experiences of using diabetic foot care services in Suffolk.

Good foot care is essential for people living with diabetes because it can lead to major complications caused by high blood glucose levels including damage to nerves and blood vessels. In fact, active foot disease is one of the leading causes of amputation in the UK amongst people with the condition. It is important therefore that people are able to access the right services and at the right time because they prevent the need for expensive urgent care in the future.

That is Healthwatch Suffolk is keen to explore whether people at high risk of developing such complications in Suffolk are receiving appropriate care in line with national guidelines. It is interested in experiences about the full range of services that may care for people’s feet and this includes those accessed in GP practices, hospitals and in the community.

Approximately 5,000 patients receive foot care in the community from Suffolk Community Healthcare, which is helping Healthwatch Suffolk to reach people currently using its services. It is also being supported by other partners including the NHS West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group. The ultimate aim is to ensure that these vital services are informed by the experiences of the people using them.

7. Engaging young people in Sudbury at the Thomas Gainsborough School

In December 2015, Healthwatch Suffolk worked in partnership with Unity and Diversity and the Thomas Gainsborough School to collect the views of pupils about their use of services as well as the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Transformation Plan. It spoke to over 400 students, who had the opportunity to take part in a live interactive survey. From this engagement:

- 265 comments were recorded from young people about their use of local health and social care services.
- 300 students completed a ‘health topic’ tick sheet and helped us to prioritise seven topics that were taken from the CAMHS Transformation Plan.

Healthwatch Suffolk returned to the school in January 2016 to contribute to an assembly about Healthwatch and the importance of sharing experiences of accessing health and care services. It engaged with four groups of 15-20 GCSE Health and Social Care students about Healthwatch and asked for their views on the CAMHS Transformation plan. Information from the first visit to the school informed the engagement and the students were asked to discuss five topics which were mental health, sexual health, self-harm, eating disorders, and stress in schools. Within these topics, the students were asked to consider some key questions based on ideas seen in the CAMHS Transformation Plan. The preliminary results show some key trends that appear in all topics:

1. Generally, students did not know how to access services. Almost all students said that they would have to go to their GP. This was seen as a barrier to accessing services and finding help.
2. Other barriers included being too scared and embarrassed to seek help—many pupils mentioned that they would not want their parents to find out. Also, many thought that they did not have anonymity if they were to see their GP.
3. The students welcomed an app, online forum or 24-hour emailing service to discuss their problems. The main reason for this was that they would not have to talk to someone face-to-face,
which would reduce their embarrassment and that they felt that these modes of communication provided more anonymity.

4. Students noted that they do not have enough Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education lessons (three enrichment days per year). They thought that if these were to increase and informed them of mental health and wellbeing, then issues concerning eating disorders, stress in schools, etc. would decrease.

5. Regarding the workshops, students wanted to hear real stories from peers. There was a consensus that hearing real stories would break down stigma, be informative and increase students’ awareness of services throughout Suffolk.

Each stage of the engagement at the school has been filmed. It is hoped that the process will inform other initiatives in the county while also giving the students involved a short film to reflect on and share throughout their community.

The project completed on 22nd March 2016, when students from the school presented a showcase event to highlight issues of mental health and wellbeing among young people. Young people have to navigate a complex society, facing challenges and pressures in numerous aspects of their lives. The event included opportunities to hear about Healthwatch Suffolk and to connect with organisations that provide support in the local area.

8. Gluten Free Products on Prescription

Gluten free products on prescription are being withdrawn in east, west Suffolk and also Great Yarmouth and Waveney. Sarah Sleeth (Chief Executive of Coeliac UK) wrote to Healthwatch Suffolk about this issue, highlighting concerns about the impact the change in policy is likely to have on the quality of life of patients. The response to the letter is published on the Healthwatch Suffolk website.

Upon receipt of negative feedback, Healthwatch Suffolk contacted the CCGs to engage them in a discussion about the issues raised. From this, it was able to help the CCGs identify that some patients had not been notified about the changes, how they could seek support or challenge the decision against their own individual circumstances.

Healthwatch Suffolk considers that there has been a lack of notice and consultation about the changes that has made the transition to coping without NHS support more difficult for some patients in the county. Furthermore, it believes the CCGs have not taken sufficient steps to properly inform patients about alternative diet options. This apparent lack of consultation is something that Healthwatch Suffolk has been challenging commissioners on to ensure patients are central to decisions about their care in future.

Healthwatch Suffolk is continuing a dialogue with the CCGs on the basis that this policy change experience should be used as a learning point to inform any future key decisions made by them.

9. Changes to Repeat Prescriptions Clinical Commissioning Groups Pilot

The Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG are piloting new arrangements for the management of repeat prescriptions. Healthwatch Suffolk has secured space within a letter that will be sent by practices involved to all patients affected. The paragraph encourages patients to share their experience of the pilot with Healthwatch Suffolk as an independent body so that it can help the CCG to monitor impact.

10. Informing local Orthotics services

NHS England issued a call for local commissioners to improve how orthoses are provided to people, alongside a suite of guidance and resources to help them do so. Healthwatch Suffolk welcomed the report, which followed work undertaken as a result of concerns raised by the wider national Healthwatch network.

Healthwatch Suffolk contacted local commissioning groups in Suffolk to ask them to respond to the recommendations with any improvements they can make for people accessing the services in Suffolk. NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group has responded to state that it has
been reviewing the current service provided to patients against the guidance. It is in discussions with the provider of orthotics services (James Paget University Hospital Foundation Trust) and is developing a service specification that will take account of the recommendations set out in the new guidance. It is anticipated that the new service specification will be in place early in the new financial year.

NHS West and Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups told Healthwatch Suffolk that the recommendations would be considered by the CCG Executive to decide on whether orthotics is an area to review in the future. The guidance will also be referenced in service specifications in order to ensure those managing the Musculoskeletal system are aware of the learning opportunities.

11. Obtaining views from users of Care UK services

Healthwatch Suffolk and Care UK are working to encourage feedback from residents, relatives and staff working within Suffolk care homes. Each care home will be appointed Healthwatch Suffolk Ambassadors who will be responsible for talking and listening to residents and relatives as well as colleagues about their stories and experiences.

12. Enter and View

Healthwatch Suffolk has visited the following services:

- Chilton Croft Nursing Home
- Mildenhall Lodge Residential Care Home
- Davers Court
- Woodfield Court

A number of reports will be due for publication in the near future. All reports from Enter and View visits are available to download from: [http://www.healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk/our-reports/](http://www.healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk/our-reports/)

13. Annual Report

The Healthwatch Suffolk Annual Report 2015/16 will be made available to the public, and a copy provided to the Committee, at the end of June 2016.

Future content

- **The Sustainability and Transformation Plan** Healthwatch Suffolk is engaging local commissioners in discussions about the engagement aspects of the Sustainability and Transformation plan as well as components of it such as the Connect pilots in Sudbury and IP3/4 area. It wants to assist partners to engage patients effectively for their views on the future integrated provision of health and care services in Suffolk. More detail on this will be offered in the next Healthwatch Suffolk update to the Health Scrutiny Committee.

- **Coproduction in mental health services** The next Healthwatch Suffolk update will offer views and perspectives on coproduction in mental health services.

For further information on any of the content featured in this update, please contact the Information Team at Healthwatch Suffolk on 01449 703949 or by email to info@healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk.