



# healthwatch

Bath and North East  
Somerset

Healthwatch B&NES report to the Health and  
Wellbeing Select Committee – March 2016

## INTRODUCTION

This report will demonstrate the progress made by Healthwatch B&NES to promote the needs and views of local people.

Input from the B&NES Health and Wellbeing Network is included alongside the Healthwatch update, to demonstrate how the views of providers, patients and the public are being woven together by local Healthwatch to create meaningful improvements in how health and social care services work into the future.

Healthwatch is the statutory, independent champion for patients, carers and the public. The Health and Wellbeing Network hosts provider organisations, in both the statutory and community/voluntary sectors, to debate current issues and recommend actions for progress.

### **Summary of activity: January – March 2016**

Over the last quarter Healthwatch B&NES has carried out a range of activity as follows:

#### **Helping to improve patient engagement**

Last year Healthwatch B&NES carried out its first Enter and View visit to a primary care setting – Oldfield Dental Practice in Bath. Following the release of the Enter and View report in the autumn, mydentist (formerly IDH Dental) the company that owns the practice, contacted Healthwatch B&NES to discuss approaches they can use to improve patient engagement in order to better understand their experiences.

mydentist is the largest corporate dentistry in the UK with approximately 670 practices, 30– 40 of which are located in the west of England. During the meeting we discussed mydentist's current approaches to patient engagement and suggested some additional pieces of work that could help to enhance how they respond and react to the feedback they receive. Examples of this included:

- displaying 'you said we did' information in waiting areas so patients can see how the practice is responding to the themes and comments that have been received about their service
- trialing patient participation groups to enable patients to engage directly with how the service is run and developed, and
- linking with Independent Complaints Advocacy Services (ICAS) to understand any themes emerging through NHS complaints, and the

experiences of more 'at risk' patients who may not have felt confident or able to contact mydentist directly.

mydentist expressed their hopes to engage with local Healthwatch projects across England in order to enhance independent scrutiny of the services they provide. We secured agreement to promote local Healthwatch information in all mydentist practices across the west of England region. The Care Forum holds local Healthwatch contracts for B&NES, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Somerset - and Swindon from 1 April 2016. We also shared details with mydentist for neighbouring Healthwatch projects in North Somerset and Wiltshire too. We provided contact details for Healthwatch England's regional development officers to help facilitate engagement with local Healthwatch projects across the rest of the country.

Finally, we discussed an online tool that can be included on organisations' websites to allow feedback to be gathered directly by local Healthwatch projects. mydentist have taken this information away and are considering it for the B&NES area.

### **Increasing Healthwatch representation**

During the last quarter Healthwatch B&NES has recruited four new volunteers who will help with Enter and View visits across the district and represent the patient and public voice on various boards, committees and meetings. Healthwatch volunteers bring a wide range of experience and skills to the project, with many coming from a career in health and social care or building on their own experience of using, or caring for some that has used, services including mental health, acute nursing, dementia care and child support.

### **Sustainability and Transformation Plans**

Healthwatch B&NES has started discussions with NHS BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to explore how public consultation can be built into the development of the area's Sustainability and Transformation Plan. These conversations will develop during April in conjunction with CCGs and local Healthwatch projects in Wiltshire and Swindon.

### **B&NES Health and Wellbeing Network update**

Work is being done to support collaboration and networking between local groups in relation to the development of a volunteer hub for B&NES and also for Mental Health Awareness Week, which is from 16 – 22 May.

The idea of a Volunteer Hub is initially as a collaborative, to support organisations that work with volunteers to, for example, share training and develop routes of progression for their volunteers across organisations. The first step is setting up a steering group of organisations to develop the idea and the steering group has now met. The Hub would work closely with the B&NES Volunteer Centre.

Following an initial discussion between organisations, which The Care Forum helped to facilitate, a group has met to talk about ideas for Mental Health Awareness Week. Primarily we want to use

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the opportunity to promote many of the projects that are currently helping to support people locally. We want to raise awareness of local services and, through people's stories, to explain what people's experiences are and how local services have helped. Representatives from local NHS organisations, the council and voluntary, community and social enterprise groups are already taking part, including Healthwatch B&NES. The next step will be to share the plans more widely and gather more information. Some of the ideas so far include a calendar of events on a website, posters promoting local activities and using social media to share information locally.

For more information on these areas of work please contact Ronnie Wright, Project Coordinator for the B&NES Health and Wellbeing Network T: 0117 9589 333 or E: [ronniewright@thecareforum.org.uk](mailto:ronniewright@thecareforum.org.uk)

### **Implementation of the Accessible Information Standard**

The Care Forum is working with B&NES Council to plan and deliver a network to raise awareness and share experiences of implementing the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). We have also produced an information sheet about the standard to inform people of the legislation and requirements to be in place from July W: <http://bit.ly/22HFfIF>

The Accessible Information Standard comes into force in July 2016. It aims to ensure that disabled patients receive information in formats that they can understand and have appropriate support to help them to communicate. All NHS and adult social care services must follow AIS by law, under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The AIS sets out how organisations that provide NHS and publicly-funded adult social care services should give disabled patients and service users information that they can access and understand, and receive appropriate support to help them to communicate.

Healthwatch B&NES would welcome feedback from patients following implementation of the AIS in July to understand the support that has been put in place by health and social care providers across B&NES and the impact that it is having on disabled patients.

Report prepared by Alex Francis, Interim General Manager, Healthwatch B&NES  
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