



healthwatch

Bath and North East
Somerset



Healthwatch B&NES report to the Health and
Wellbeing Select Committee – May 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.

Continuing to champion the patient and public voice

The Care Forum is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a new two year contract to deliver the Healthwatch function in B&NES, taking its provision of this service up to spring 2018. The next two years will be a crucial time for health and social care in B&NES with implementation of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan, launch of the new community healthcare services contract, developments in primary care, expansion of services provided at the Royal United Hospital, Bath and much more.

The Care Forum is delighted to be able to continue engaging with B&NES residents around health and social care services, identifying best practice, areas for improvement and working in partnership with statutory and VCSE organisations to ensure that the patient and public voice is heard.

The Healthwatch B&NES advisory group is currently working to set the priorities for the project during 2016-17, in line with the strategic focus established by the B&NES Health and Wellbeing Board and the organisational objectives and values of The Care Forum.

Primary care, preparing for the future

In January 2016 Healthwatch B&NES hosted a joint meeting with NHS BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for members of the public and lay representatives to receive an update on the work of B&NES Enhanced Medical Services (BEMS+) following its launch last year.

An event report has been produced which incorporates feedback received from the 20 people that attended. In addition to some comments regarding the BEMS+ service, the group also discussed a wide range of primary care services, sharing their thoughts on what is being done well and where things could be improved or delivered in a different way. The key points from this report are as follows:

Access to services

Concern was expressed regarding how people access services, including:

- i)** convenience of appointment times within GP surgeries and outpatients clinics
- ii)** a perceived lack of clarity around the appointment booking systems that are in use within GP surgeries
- iii)** the convenience of appointment locations and the opportunity to have more community-based services, e.g. diagnostic tests and screening
- iv)** waiting times for referrals and clarity around the process
- v)** flexibility of services to enable access by people that work or have caring responsibilities; and
- vi)** the need to provide more person-centred services to support vulnerable people, such as those with mental health problems.

Commissioning and provision

There were specific questions raised around the BEMS+ commission, including eligibility to receive support and/or who could be included in the service, particularly the weekend working pilot. There was also discussion about other services that BEMS+ could be aligned with and financially supported by due to the impact that it is having on the wider health system, with particular reference to the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust.

Communication

A need was expressed for more information and clarity around services, such as:

- i)** community-based (private) providers that people can access without needing a referral from their GP, e.g. opticians and audiology assessments
- ii)** what services are available at GP surgeries (increasingly more important as the focus moves towards developing more locality-based provision)
- iii)** when to access which service, e.g. minor injuries, urgent care and Accident and Emergency
- iv)** ensuring health professionals are advised about the services their patients can access in order to live more independently and self-manage their conditions

Coordination of services following discharge

The importance of making sure that care packages and plans for reablement are in place prior to people being discharged from hospital, with specific reference to older people and those that are at risk.

The key points from the report were shared at the recent NHS BaNES CCG Joint Primary Care Co-commissioning Forum, together with feedback that the CCG had gathered through its Patient

and Public Involvement group, Your Health Your Voice. The themes from these reports have been fed into the CCG and NHS England's discussions about primary care and its continual evolution to suit current and future needs, with particular focus on development of the B&NES primary care strategy.

Supporting quality

During the last month Healthwatch B&NES has fulfilled its role in reviewing Quality Accounts for three service providers in the area, including Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and South West Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust. Healthwatch is still waiting to review Quality Accounts for Arriva Transport Solutions Ltd and Sirona care & health C.I.C.

Healthwatch B&NES values the opportunity to have sight of these documents and provide constructive feedback on the quality of the services that are being provided to the residents of B&NES. In particular, Healthwatch B&NES has been reassured by the commitment that providers have shown over the last year towards patient and carer/family engagement in order to help continually improve services. Healthwatch B&NES has also highlighted some concerns, particularly regarding staff morale and/or themes raised through annual staff surveys, a reduction in uptake of the Friends and Family Test in certain wards/departments and breaches in achieving some key performance indicators.

Despite this Healthwatch B&NES notes the dedication that is being shown by NHS staff at this very challenging time to tackle these issues and improve the safety and effectiveness of patient treatment across services and settings. This has been demonstrated particularly well through the achievement of a number of Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) initiatives during 2015-16, which have helped to secure further extension of these work streams and the ongoing improvement of patient outcomes over time.

Healthwatch B&NES volunteers have also been working with providers to support patient-led assessments of the care environment (PLACE) at various NHS settings over the last few weeks, including Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust's Ward 4 at St. Martin's Hospital

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