

1) NHS Quality Accounts

During quarter one, Healthwatch B&NES undertook its role to receive, review and respond to the NHS Quality Accounts. These reports, which are published annually, capture the work that NHS providers are carrying out to improve the quality of care and treatment that they provide.

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Healthwatch has a role to provide an independent response to these reports as a 'critical friend', highlighting links to any feedback that they have received regarding NHS services, commending/ sharing best practice and identifying areas that require improvement.

Healthwatch B&NES responded to five Quality Accounts during this period, including:

- Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
- Arriva Transport Solutions Limited
- Care UK
- South West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

Alongside producing the responses, Healthwatch also asked a number of questions of providers to understand the work that was being undertaken, and the impact that it is expected to have on patient safety and quality of care. Healthwatch will arrange to meet with providers throughout the year to seek updates on the work that is being carried out and track their progress.

It is hoped that a closer working relationship with NHS providers around the Quality Accounts will enable Healthwatch to have a stronger understanding of the improvements that are being made locally, and the impact that patients can expect to see in the services that they receive.

2) Work plan: Healthwatch B&NES 2017/18

In March 2017, the Healthwatch B&NES advisory group met to discuss the project's work priorities for the year. Based upon feedback received from local residents and Healthwatch champions during the past 12 months; intelligence gathered by Healthwatch representatives and staff at meetings and boards; and consideration of the strategic priorities for health and wellbeing in B&NES, the following topics have been selected for staff and volunteers to focus on:

a) Mental health

Healthwatch B&NES is working with a number of local organisations to explore the possibility of setting up a forum for people that use mental health services and their carers/ relatives.

The aim of this forum would be to involve and engage people in discussions around the delivery of local mental health services, and provide an opportunity for them to help shape and influence future service provision.

b) Accessible Information Standard (AIS)

In addition to evidence from the national review of this legislation being undertaken by NHS England, Healthwatch B&NES is aiming to explore the impact that the AIS has had for people with communication needs when accessing health and social care services.

This work will include meeting with local people that have sensory impairments, communication needs or learning difficulties, to gauge their experiences of accessing services since the legislation came into being on 31 July 2016. The feedback that we gather will be shared with local providers to help them learn and develop their approaches based on best practice, and also identify areas for improvement that can be addressed in partnership with commissioners and the Care Quality Commission.

c) Urgent care

Healthwatch B&NES will work with BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group to implement the recommendations that were made in the Healthwatch engagement report on urgent from 2016/17. This will include supporting involvement of patients and their carers in development of the urgent care pathway, and the re-procurement process that is currently underway.

d) Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

To date, Healthwatch B&NES, in conjunction with its partners in Swindon and Wiltshire, has acted as a critical friend to the STP, with a particular focus on communications and engagement. We have committed to continue in this role during 2017/18, and hope to see some meaningful discussion and involvement with local people and voluntary sector partners around the STP work-streams.

In addition to these specific pieces of work, Healthwatch B&NES will also continue to deliver its statutory work around enter and view, and ensure patient and public representation on the Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Safeguarding Adults Board, Joint Primary Care Co-commissioning Committee, CCG Quality Committee and a number of other boards and groups.

3) Healthwatch B&NES annual report 2016/17

The annual report for Healthwatch B&NES 2016/17 has been written and published. To view the report W: <http://bit.ly/2uqhFIM>

4) New Healthwatch B&NES team

Following some staff changes at The Care Forum during April and May, I am pleased to announce a new member of the team, Dan Hull, who is joining us as Healthwatch B&NES engagement officer. Dan will work alongside Alex Francis (Team Manager) and Pat Foster (Volunteer Support Officer) to engage with the public, gather their views on local services, and help to promote the project and its role as an independent voice for local people.

Report prepared by Alex Francis, Team Manager - Healthwatch B&NES and Healthwatch South Gloucestershire, on Friday 14 July 2017.