

Health and Wellbeing Board

6 October 2016

Report from Healthwatch Brent

For endorsement

Wards Affected:
ALL

Healthwatch Brent update:

Patient experience of phlebotomy services and the self-directed support of residents living with mental health conditions

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1.0. Summary

- 1.1. Healthwatch Brent is the independent voice through which Brent residents can share their experiences of using health and social care services.
- 1.2. CommUNITY Barnet is commissioned by the London Borough of Brent to deliver the local Healthwatch contract.
- 1.3. The contract commenced from 1 July 2015 for an initial period of 12 months and then extended for a further 12 months. This report presents the findings of three action research projects funded through the Community Chest prepared by Healthwatch Team (Phlebotomy Services in Brent); Brent User Group (Self-directed Support – A Survey) and Brent Centre for Young People (A mental health needs assessment of young Irish people at Lynton Close)
- 1.4. The reports are attached as appendices for reference.

2.0. Recommendations

2.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the progress Healthwatch Brent has made in delivering the contract
- Note the contents of the reports for information.

3.0. Context

- 3.1. Healthwatch Brent works with 11 of Brent's charity, voluntary and community organisations.
- 3.2. It is delivered by a Brent-based central core team, a partnership of Brent based voluntary and community organisations and a team of volunteers.
- 3.3. The work programme of Healthwatch Brent aligns to all five priorities of the Brent Health and Wellbeing board namely:
 - Giving every child the best start in life
 - Helping vulnerable families
 - Empowering communities to take better care of themselves
 - Improving mental wellbeing throughout life
 - Working together to support the most vulnerable adults in the community
- 3.4. Healthwatch Brent is delivered on a Hub and Spoke model. The Hub is the first point of public access and delivered by the core team located in Wembley. The Spokes consist of two groups – the Healthwatch Brent Advisory Board whose role is to support the core team and shape the work programme around the needs of Brent residents. Membership of the Healthwatch Brent Advisory Board includes Age UK Brent, Brent User Group; Brent Patient Voice, Mosaic LGBT Young People's Group; Community Health Action Trust.
- 3.5. The Promotion and Reach Partners with their strong and vibrant networks are able to cascade messages from Healthwatch Brent to local residents. The partners include: Ashford Place, Brent Carers' Centre, Elders' Voice, Jewish Care, Brent Mencap.
- 3.6. Our strategic priorities for Healthwatch Brent include:
 - Encouraging greater participation in health and social care
 - Collecting evidence of increasing engagement with those residents from under-represented communities
 - Demonstrating that Brent residents feel more able to express their views and to report they are listened to
 - Showing how Healthwatch Brent has been able to make a constructive contribution to support and enable informed decision making through the representation of the authentic voice
 - Healthwatch Brent offers value for money
 - That Healthwatch Brent service offers added value
- 3.7. As part of our delivery, Healthwatch Brent committed £20,000 to establish a Community Chest which aimed to increase the capacity of local organisations to provide evidence based reports from less heard communities, increasing public awareness of Healthwatch Brent and increasing the number and range of views we gather. We created two grant programmes:

- 3.7.1 Large Grant Programme (maximum £3,000) to fund activities to support good practice or identify the needs of a service group. These applications were required to provide clear evidence of need and had to be approved by the Advisory Board.
- 3.7.2 Small Grants Programme (maximum £600) would raise awareness of the role of Healthwatch Brent. Applications have been approved by the Healthwatch Brent team.

4.0. Brent phlebotomy report

4.1 As a response to concerns raised at Healthwatch Brent's public meeting in October 2015, Healthwatch Brent looked into the phlebotomy service and patient experience.

4.2 Surveys and interviews with patients and professionals were carried out.

4.3 Key findings included:

- patients being largely unaware that they could have their blood tested at alternative GP practices (40% said their practice did not offer this);
- patients were generally satisfied with the phlebotomy service – 83% rated it as good;
- some patients show signs of isolation and might be frequenting clinics to overcome loneliness
- there was a mixed experience of waiting times in acute settings
- In GP practices waiting times for booking appointments varied according to how they were booked – patients booking at a GP reception were given their appointments more quickly
- At the GP practices that offered online booking of blood test appointments, patients were not necessarily aware of this service

4.4 The following recommendations were made:

For Commissioners:

- To commission voluntary schemes to address social isolation and tackle loneliness

For acute providers:

- at Northwick Park Hospital - to identify ways waiting times can be shortened, and to clearly communicate with patients
- to refer more patients to Central Middlesex Hospital Phlebotomy Clinic

5.0. Self directed support

- 5.1 Brent mental health User Group (BUG) carried out this research using the Community Chest funding as anecdotal evidence indicated that individuals using mental health services in Brent are utilising and benefitting from self-directed support in a range of creative and imaginative ways to meet their social care needs.
- 5.2 A survey was circulated to everyone who had made successful applications for self-directed support between 2013 and January 2016. Key staff in Brent's mental health services were interviewed. Analysis of anonymised data from Brent's self-directed support database was used.
- 5.3 Self-directed support was seen as positive overall, but some changes could be made, ensuring the individual would get they thought was right for them.
- 5.4 Recommendations from the report include:
- Ensure that staff maintain the ethos of self-directed support, enabling individuals to use direct payments in ways that they feel will meet their social care needs
 - Individuals need to have more choice about their personal assistants and staff need to work with them to ensure they feel in control of their relationship.
 - Staff need to work with individuals to enable them to identify and utilise personal assistants to do what they feel motivates them as opposed to what staff think will motivate people
 - Individuals need to be actively involved in measuring their progress; flexibility to meet individuals changing needs also needs to be incorporated
 - The role of personal assistants needs to be distinct from that of staff in specialist mental health services
 - Where individuals are using personal assistants via agencies, the role of the agency needs to be clear

6.0. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications as all costs are within the current agreed contract.

7.0. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Healthwatch Brent was established through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to give users of health and social care a powerful voice both locally and nationally and formally launched in 2013 as an independent charity.
- 7.2 From 1 July 2015 its services have been delivered as an arms-length department of Community Barnet (CB) a charity and company limited by guarantee.

7.3 Financial and contract accountability remains with CommUNITY Barnet's Board of Trustees and delegated through the Chief Executive Officer to the Head of Healthwatch.

7.4 The contract is expected to run until 30 June 2017.

8.0. Diversity Implications

8.1. The reports presented reflect Healthwatch Brent's commitment to equalities and believes that they support Brent Council in meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined in Section 148 of the Equality Act 2010.

9.0. Staffing / Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

Background Papers

Background papers are available on request.

Contact Officers

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