

Healthwatch Committee meeting

24 January 2019

Priority setting - paper 2

Presented by: Steph Edusei

Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Agree a shortlist of priorities for 2019-20

Quality statement: 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 24

We have gathered information relating to potential research priorities for 2019–20 from a number of sources:

- Reviews of health and social care services given by service users, relatives/carers and members of the public on our feedback centre
- Information given by service users, relatives/carers and members of the public at engagement and involvement events
- Discussions with the people who plan and buy services (commissioners) and with providers of health and social care services

Every year we ask Committee members to shortlist potential priorities. The shortlist then goes out to the public for prioritisation during February, March and April. We will also undertake a prioritisation exercise at our conference on 24 April. Once public prioritisation is complete, the staff team will review the results and then propose a final selection of two priorities to be taken forward for 2019–20.

Potential priorities for shortlisting

- **Children and young people's mental health (Gateshead and Newcastle)**
Lots of the changes will be occurring a year following implementation and this may be an opportune moment to review how this is going.
- **Prescription charges**
Prescription forms have not been updated since the change to Universal Credit. People have highlighted to us that both the process and the language on the back of the forms are confusing. This is leading to people completing the forms incorrectly and receiving fines and strongly worded letters. There is also nothing in place for people who do not have English as their first language.
- **Mental health**
Access to services has been highlighted by service users – mainly relating to waiting times. This has come through the feedback centre but also anecdotally, particularly around young people's services, young people's transgender services and adult crisis services.
- **GPs**
We continue to get a lot of negative feedback relating to GPs and access to their services. This ranges from booking issues, lack of appointment availability, waiting times, patient choice, etc.

- **Personal health budgets (PHBs)**
Our work on lack of funding for social care has highlighted that there are questions about how much choice and control people really have over personal health budgets? Further work would allow us to see how this has been implemented and is working locally.
- **Adult social care direct**
We have received a number of negative comments about social care direct (five since July 2019). This is the telephone-based system that people need to use to access social care support and advice. The comments have related to waiting times, staff attitude and processes used by adult social care direct to assess and put in place care.
- **Patient participation groups (PPGs)**
We have been approached on a number of occasions about supporting PPGs within GP practices. Other Healthwatch have done this work in the past, funded by their CCG.
- **Outpatient appointments**
It is likely that the NHS long term plan will require trusts to reduce the number of outpatient appointments they offer. This will mainly affect people who return following treatment for outpatient review appointments.