



Healthwatch Gateshead 360 review (Oct 2016)

On the 04/08/2016 Healthwatch England sent out a 360 survey to Healthwatch Gateshead's stakeholders inviting them to express their views on the achievements and challenges of Healthwatch Gateshead. 26 stakeholders from across health and social care responded to the survey.

Key messages were:



Strategic context and relationships

The majority of stakeholders understood the rationale behind Healthwatch Gateshead's priorities and felt they were collaborative and added value, however not all knew the extent that Healthwatch Gateshead got involved in local decision making.

"Healthwatch colleagues sit on key groups within Newcastle and Gateshead and are heavily involved in our work [...] Managers also meet on a regular basis with Healthwatch colleagues to discuss projects and priorities. "

Community, voice and influence

Broadly, stakeholders agreed Healthwatch Gateshead get's local people involved, bases it's insight on the views of local people and adds value by doing so. However stakeholders told us they felt Healthwatch Gateshead could do more to work with seldom heard groups and promote that work.

"Aware of joint work with HW Newcastle seeking views of asylum seekers [...] there has been very little engagement with other seldom heard groups [...]"

Making a difference locally

In general, stakeholders weren't always aware of the extent that Healthwatch Gateshead made a difference with their reports or involved stakeholders in developing their reports.

"Healthwatch reports are highly professional, analytical, well structured and empathic, always exploring the experience of recipients of services and seeking to illustrate best practice as well as indicating how provision may be further improved."

Information and signposting

Stakeholders felt more could be done to promote this side of its service.

"The recent update to the Healthwatch database of services is excellent, but again I have been promoting it to those people who need to know it's out there- so marketing of it didn't quite reach those who would use it frequently."

A workshop with Healthwatch Gateshead and stakeholders was held on 03/10/2016 to agree findings and actions based on these survey responses. This table summarises the strengths, areas for improvement and suggested actions identified in that workshop.



Strengths

It was felt that Healthwatch Gateshead had a new proactive focus. It has good relationships with its stakeholders, particularly the CCG and strong involvement of local people.

Key strengths include:

- Representing the public's views on key issues
- Recruitment of a wide variety of enthusiastic volunteers
- Representing an independent view

Areas for Improvement

It was recognized that Healthwatch Gateshead is very much on a journey, especially with regards to stakeholder relationships and at times it struggles to communicate its work.

Healthwatch Gateshead's work with seldom heard groups, especially young and BME members of the public was discussed as an area for improvement.

Although health and social care stakeholders understand the role of Healthwatch Gateshead it was felt understanding in the local community was low

What next?

- *Overall there was agreement that Healthwatch Gateshead needs to investigate how it can do more to promote it's work amongst members of the public*
- *Healthwatch Gateshead should get representatives of seldom heard groups involved in Healthwatch Gateshead, it was suggested it could do this by talking to young people to find out the best way to communicate with them and do more to promote it's work with other seldom heard groups, especially BME members of the public.*
- *It was suggested in the workshop that Healthwatch Gateshead provide more detailed information on joining for prospective volunteers.*
- *It was suggested that Healthwatch Gateshead look into income generation (perhaps through public engagement linked to the local STP) and how it can work collaboratively with other local Healthwatch.*

Healthwatch Gateshead's response...

The Board and Team welcome and are pleased with the feedback received and acknowledge the input from interested Stakeholders

- This report clearly demonstrates to Gateshead residents that we are providing an “active” voice on their behalf and can influence service provision
 - The opportunities for further improvements had already been identified and this report helpfully endorses our previous thoughts - we recognise there is further work to do to make sure our “ active” voice is heard at all levels whether Commissioner, Stakeholder or most importantly the public of Gateshead
 - We feel we are a public resource and have made a conscious decision to broaden our volunteering options by employing an experienced Volunteer programme Manager to reach out to the Local Community
 - Our next challenge is to build further on and publicise our work with young people, seldom heard groups and the wider BME community along with our partners.
 - Finally we are using this report as a benchmark to gauge our progress over the following 12 months
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