

UPDATE REPORT FROM HEALTHWATCH – 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

Current concerns

GP Access.

- The June meeting of our South and Central Sefton Community Champion network was dedicated to primary care, with members receiving presentations from our NHS Clinical Commissioning colleagues and Primary Care Networks.
- Current concerns being shared with us from residents include access via telephony and the limited availability of online services (e-consult). Patients are encouraged to use the online service but during a recent Healthwatch mapping of access across the borough, there are a number of practices who have this option turned off consistently and we will be sharing this information with Jan Leonard, Head of Primary Care in the coming weeks.
- There is a common feeling that patients are being patched up rather than their real health issues being addressed or other issues being picked up via GP face to face consultations.
- Another issue which is emerging is the lack of reviews taking place, particularly medication reviews. This has been raised and there will be a formal discussion on this at the September meeting of the Sefton Primary Care Committee (Healthwatch is a member).

Access to NHS Dentistry

- This issue continues to be of grave concern, with a continued 75% of calls into our Signposting and Information service being about access to either emergency or routine care. We are working with NHS England on this and have shared the themes which we are currently picking up. Current concerns which are coming through are:
 1. Patients who have been referred via the urgent care service to a local dentist for emergency treatment, but need further care and are then advised to ring Healthwatch to find a local NHS dentist to complete the on-going treatment. This is raising patient expectations and we have nowhere to signpost people.
 2. Crosby Village Dental practice has lost all NHS dentists at present, so their patients have been contacting us. They have told us they are struggling to recruit, but this is very difficult for their patients who again are contacting us.

3. Patients with damaged dentures, there being nowhere for often elderly, frail patients to get help, which then impacts on their ability to eat and leads to weight loss.
 - We have highlighted to NHS England that their communications to patients do not support local understanding of the current access issues.
 - We are aware that Dentistry commissioning will be picked up at some point next year by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside and all 9 local Healthwatch are keeping a watchful eye on this.

Strategic updates.

As part of the newly emerging health and care structures, Healthwatch Sefton currently has seats at a Sefton Partnership level at:

- Sefton Partnership Board
- Sefton Programme Delivery Group
- Sefton Policy and Performance Group
- Sefton Primary Care Committee
- Sefton People and Communities Group (formally EPEG)
- Sefton People and Communities Working Group
- Sefton Adults Safeguarding Board.

We also have representation on the following NHS Cheshire and Merseyside meetings (with representatives from the 9 local Healthwatch across Cheshire and Merseyside nominated to sit on various boards and committees):

- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Primary Care Committee
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Quality Committee
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside System Quality Group.

All 9 local Healthwatch Chief Executives/Managers will be meeting with Clare Watson (NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, Assistant Chief Executive in October.

Operational update

Chairperson recruitment

We have successfully recruited a volunteer Chairperson and we hope we will be able to introduce you to him soon. John Turner has joined us and has considerable experience of working within the NHS. Living in Sefton for 45 years, John has held senior roles for over 40 years as a NHS Consultant Physician, including 'Clinical Director of Medicine and Head of Medical Services' at Aintree University Hospital NHS Trust. John was also a senior care reviewer for the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust enquiry, his work contributing to the landmark Francis Enquiry (2013). John describes himself as warm, empathetic and approachable with a good sense of humour.

Diane Blair BA (Hons) MSc

Manager

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