

## Healthwatch Devon Quarter 3 report 13/14 Executive Summary

This is Healthwatch Devon's formal report to the commissioners who fund our work: Devon County Council, the NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group. This report covers the period from January - March 2014.

**Our Vision** is better health and social care services through public involvement.

**Our Mission** is to be an independent, influential consumer champion of health and social care services in Devon. This work will be supported by:

- Our statutory powers
- Our unique system of intelligence
- Our active membership

### Baseline Service

Our baseline service is available to anyone, anywhere in the area that we cover. In Q4:

- There has been an increase in Speak Out feedback, with top issues being GP's/health centres, day care services and community mental health services.
- We continue to attract "Friends" of Healthwatch Devon, now over 2,000 people.
- Website visits increased to 6,000 in Q4, and we have over 1000 Twitter followers.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau has a growing health and social care caseload, with 90 cases dealt with by CAB Healthwatch Champions in the quarter.

### Engagement Service

Q4 was quieter for the engagement gateway. Topics covered included Devon Independent Living Integrated Service review, Day Centres review and Children's Centres review. At the end of Q4, the following areas of concern were identified.

### **Mental Health Services, including:**

- Better access to mental health services and places of safety during a crisis
- People being placed out of county
- Waiting times for psychological therapies

Evidence on these is being sent to the Care Quality Commission, to Commissioners and Healthwatch England.

### **GP Services, including:**

- Access to appointments
- Physical health checks for people with Learning Disabilities
- Access needs of the blind community

A full report illustrating what we have heard will be made available as part of our year one Speak Out review.

### **Hospital services, including:**

- Hospital discharge and need for improved multi-agency communication
- Better access to information for carers of patients with complex needs
- Waiting times for outpatients appointments

A full report illustrating what we have heard will be made available as part of our year one Speak Out review.

### **Social Care Services**

- Significant anxiety about possible closure of DCC residential care homes.
- Widespread concern about possible closure of DCC day service provision.

Feedback about proposed changes to day services has gone to Devon County Council as part of the service review.

### **Interpretation Services, including:**

- Deaf people's fair access to mental health services
- BME communities and interpreters during appointments with GPs and Midwives

This feedback has been shared with the RD&E and the CCGs and

there is now recognition of the need for interpretation services in the Maternity Commissioning Strategy .

## **Consumer Champion Projects**

We took people's views on the NHS England Care.Data scheme, which aims to hold personal medical records on a single national database. Our findings reflected a general unease about the scheme. Our [report](#) was passed to Healthwatch England.

Young people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community have spoken about their experiences of seeking help from health services. A short film, with powerful testimony, will be shown at Exeter Pride on 10th May.

We have submitted to NEW Devon CCG a report on the findings from our "Torrington 200" survey on proposals linked to the Care Closer to Home initiative. We look forward to receiving a formal response, and will soon publish our report.

Following new findings from Healthwatch England on use of A&E Departments for non-urgent care, we asked people about ease of access to GP's and understanding of the alternatives. A report will follow soon.

## **Developing HWD Organisation Structure**

Healthwatch Devon was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in January 2014. A membership drive brought in 300 members, and elections led to new trustees being announced at an inaugural General Meeting in March.

Q4 also saw the first meeting of the Joint Venture Board, with the Community Council of Devon. The Joint Venture Board will see HWD's move towards independence.