

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board - For information	Dated: 15/11/2024
Subject: Healthwatch City of London Progress Report	Public
Report author: Gail Beer, Chair, Healthwatch City of London	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on progress against contractual targets and the work of Healthwatch City of London (HWCoL) with reference to the end of Q2 2024/25, and October 2024.

Recommendation

Members are asked to: Note the report.

Main Report

Background

Healthwatch is a governmental statutory mechanism intended to strengthen the collective voice of users of health and social care services and members of the public, both nationally and locally. It came into being in April 2013 as part of the Health and Social Care Act of 2012.

The City of London Corporation has funded a Healthwatch service for the City of London since 2013. The first contract for Healthwatch came into being in September 2019 and was awarded to a new charity Healthwatch City of London (HWCoL). HWCoL is registered on the on the Charities Commission register of charities as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is Licenced by Healthwatch England (HWE) to use the Healthwatch brand. The current contract for Healthwatch City of London was awarded in September 2024.

HWCoL's vision is for a Health and Social Care system truly responsive to the needs of the City. HWCoL's mission is to be an independent and trusted body, known for its impartiality and integrity, which acts in the best interests of those who live and work in the City.

1 Current Position

1.1 Healthwatch City of London

The HWCoL team continue to operate from the Portsoken Community Centre and through hybrid working – both at the office and home working.

The communication platforms continue to provide residents with relevant information on Health and Social care services via the website, newsletters, bulletins, and social media.

1.2 Contract with the City of London Corporation

The new contract has been awarded to Healthwatch for a three-year term with the option of a two-year extension. The contract value remains unchanged at £93,000 per annum.

The contract was awarded via direct award following approval at category board, and a published notice to which no objections were received.

2 Public Board Meetings

On 18th October HWC_{oL} held its AGM and Annual Public Meeting. The meeting was held in St Giles Cripplegate church in the Barbican and was very well attended by residents, health professionals, voluntary sector, and Councillors. However, representation from Mansell Street and Petticoat Lane was limited

The Chair, Gail Beer, outlined the achievements of Healthwatch in 2023/24, presented the annual accounts, thanked the Board, the staff team, the volunteers, and the City of London Corporation for their support.

The priorities for 2024/25 and the projects the team are currently working on were outlined.

The AGM was followed by the Annual Public Meeting. The keynote speakers were Mary Durcan, Chair, City of London Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), and Dr Sue Mann, National Clinical Director for Women's Health and Consultant and Clinical Lead for Women's Health, City and Hackney.

Mary gave an overview of the HWB, its membership and priorities for the coming year and answered several questions from the audience which ranged from the use of the private healthcare providers to reduce the wait times in the NHS, to why City and Hackney are paired together for service provision.

Dr Mann introduced her role as National Clinical Director for Women's health but kept the focus of her presentation to her more local role in City and Hackney. She highlighted the importance of women's health, in particular increasing the awareness of women's health issues. Webinars as well as referral sessions are currently being held to discuss all aspects of women's health, such as menstrual cycles, fertility, contraception, and menopause.

In the subsequent Q&A Dr Mann described how women are able to access those sessions, which can be through a referral through a GP.

Attendees raised the need for an increase in services within the City, an example of this was the Menopause Café, located in Homerton Hospital, which although provides important services and care, is hard to access from the City. The main take away was that services are not as well advertised or sign posted as they could be.

Members of the public appreciated the speakers' willingness to answer questions.

The event was also supported by local service providers and voluntary organisations who had stalls for attendees to visit for information and advice. These were Imago, Age UK City of London, City Advice, Family Information Service, Together Better Programme and the OPRG.

The team at HWCoL would also like to thank Ellie Ward for her support with the event.

3 City of London Corporation Boards

3.1 Adult Social Care Assurance Board

HWCoL met with new Independent Chair of the Adult Social Care Assurance Board, John Goldup, to discuss how service users views and experiences can be fed to the Board. It was agreed that HWCoL would attend the Board meetings and report back any insights and information from projects or resident/service user feedback.

3.2 Health Scrutiny Committee

HWCoL attended the last Health Scrutiny committee to give an overview of the 2023/24 annual report, projects, and achievements. The report was well received by the committee.

4 Communications and Engagement

4.1 Patient Panels

Patient panels are designed as information sessions on topics of concern or interest to residents They also enable residents to give feedback on those services and share ideas for improvements.

4.1.1 Patient Panel September – Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training with the LAS. Another very well attended session with the London Ambulance Service. Another session is scheduled for March 2025.

4.1.2 Panels scheduled for Winter 2024/25 include:

- 21st November: Diabetes Advice and Information with Roz, a volunteer from Diabetes UK who will be presenting on diabetes and highlighting the services you can access in the City. (World diabetes day 14th Nov)
- 5th December: Mental Health support over the festive season with Katie Pomeroy from City and Hackney Talking Therapies.

4. 2 Neighbourhoods Programme engagement

HWCoL attended the Neighbourhoods City action group chaired by the new Shoreditch Park and City Neighbourhoods co-ordinator. Attendees emphasised the need to engage with City residents on their priorities for the programme. It was agreed that an overview of the programme would be produced to send to residents via the Corporations engagement channels, following that a forum would take place to allow discussion on the priorities.

5 Issues raised on behalf of residents

5.1 Staying Steady classes

M.R.S Independent Living are currently the only organisation who provides fall prevention and strengthening classes to older residents in the City. The course is a

24-week weekly class. They are funded by City and Hackney Public Health team who have informed them that funding for the City provision will stop in early 2025. HWCOL have written to the Public Health team and the CoL Corporation to ask for the funding to continue.

HWCOL are waiting for M.R.S Independent Living to provide attendance numbers and more specific information of the work they carry out in the City.

HWCOL believe that this is a vital provision for the older population in the City, it also falls into the new Governments' priorities of moving from sickness to prevention. The Board are asked to note the possible change to service.

5.2 Covid vaccination

HWCOL have raised the issue with the Neaman Practice and the PCN on the availability of options when having the Covid vaccinations. Currently the only option offered by the PCN is the Moderna vaccination. For those who have reactions to the Moderna vaccination currently have to pay for an alternative. HWCOL have received reports that this is costing up to £98. The PCN are looking into making the Pfizer vaccination available for the drop-in vaccination day on 19th November at the Neaman Practice, but this is far from guaranteed.

The HWCOL team have signposted to alternative venues to receive the Covid vaccination other than Richmond Road for those living in the west of the City. These include many easy to reach local pharmacies in the City and the vaccination centre at Guys Hospital.

6 Projects

6.1 Digital Apps in Healthcare

This project focuses on the plethora of apps used by both Primary and Secondary Care services. The team are exploring accessibility, integration, and usefulness.

The report has been completed and is currently with the designer for production. This will be published in November 2024.

Key findings are:

The number of apps/digital platforms that are now used is confusing.

The different apps/platforms do not connect to each other; therefore, patients have to access several to get the information needed.

There are issues with accessing information for the cared for by their carers and specific info not being given for appointments.

Similarly, proxy access is not always simple to obtain and when granted, it is not always possible to see the same information that the patient would be able to, which is needed in cases of carers etc.

The level of information is different according to who is providing it and what service it is linked to.

There is a lack of language and disability access options.

Multifactor authentication/complex verification processes are increasingly becoming a barrier to accessing digital services.

There are many worries about data storage and privacy with little information available regarding this.

Ordering medication/repeat prescriptions has become easier for patients

Booking a GP appointment is usually easier than calling at 8am

The text reminders for appointments are helpful

The report also highlights the need for further work in this area including access to social care.

6.2 Awareness of Men's Health Campaign

HWCoL are working with colleagues across Health services to highlight the importance of men's health. There was an event scheduled for late November, however due to lack of speaker availability this has been postponed until early 2025. The event will feature speakers who provide health and wellbeing services specifically for men. The inability to find a speaker is perhaps an indication that more work needs to be done to raise awareness and to determine the level of planning of services for men's health and wellbeing.

6.3 Patient Advice and Liaison services

A HWCoL volunteer has undertaken a project to assess the accessibility and information provided by PALS services in Healthcare settings attended by City residents. The report is very detailed with some interesting insights into the different levels of provision across the NHS Trusts

HWCoL will be producing a summary to residents to access, with the full report being sent to providers, Healthwatch England and NEL ICB.

7 Enter and View programme

Healthwatch have a statutory function to conduct Enter & View visits to health and care services to review services at the point of delivery.

7.1 Barts Health NHS Trust Cardiology Department

The enter and view visits took place in June and July. The report with its recommendations is currently with the Cardiology department for comment on its recommendations, after which the report will be published.

7.2 Neaman Practice

HWCoL have discussed conducting an Enter and View visit to the Neaman Practice in Q4 this year. The visit is scheduled to take place in February.

8 Q2 Performance Framework (Contractual Obligations)

There has been no notable change in performance as measured by the Key Performance Indicators. 22 green indicators and two amber indicators. Attendance at public HWCoL has significantly increased over the past two quarters. The Patient Panel series have proved particularly popular with new people attending each time.

9 Planned activities in Quarter 3 2024/25

In support of the delivery of the business plan during Q3 the team at HWCoL will:

- Publish the report into Digital Apps.
- Publish the Enter and View report from the Barts Cardiology Department visit
- Publish the PALS research project and summary report carried out by a volunteer.
- Continue with the Patient Panel Series covering diabetes care and mental health and wellbeing support over the festive period.
- Hold a festive party to bring together the community.

10 Conclusion

In conclusion it has been a busy few months at HWCoL, producing the reports on the digital apps project and Enter and View visit to St Bartholomew's and hosting the AGM.

Gail Beer
Chair
Healthwatch City of London
E: gail@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk

Rachel Cleave
General Manager
Healthwatch City of London
E: rachel@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk