

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board - For information	Dated: 07/02/2025
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 Q3 2024/25.

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.

The team are fully staffed and have a team of volunteers.

2 Public Board Meetings

On 18th October HWC_oL held its AGM and Annual Public Meeting. This was reported at the last HWB.

3 Work with City of London Corporation

3.1 Adult Social Care Assurance Board

HWC_oL will now attend the Board meetings and report back any insights and information from projects or resident/service user feedback.

3.2 Adult Social Care Advisory Group

HWC_oL have agreed to set up and Chair a Social Care Advisory Group on behalf of the City of London Corporation. The group will discuss social care provision to residents of the City of London and gain feedback on specific services at the request of the corporation. Invitations to join the group will be sent by the Corporation with the annual survey early 2025. The inaugural meeting has been scheduled for March 2025 where the terms and reference of the group will be agreed. The group will be Chaired by Gail Beer.

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 November Managing Diabetes Patient Panel with Diabetes UK

Charlotte Burford, Communities and Volunteering Manager gave an overview on diabetes awareness, including the management, risk factors, and available resources that patients can access. The advice and leaflets given during the panel are available for all residents on our website.

4.1.2 Patient Panel November City of London Corporation's Adult Social Care strategy consultation

Patient Panel on the draft strategy for Adult Social Care from the City of London Corporation. Scott Myers, Strategy officer and Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance from the City of London Corporation to discuss the new strategy and gather feedback from City residents on their thoughts and concerns over the draft of the strategy.

Key areas of discussion included the accessibility of services, digital exclusion, the role of technology in supporting independence, and the need for better coordination in care services. City residents were able to share their experiences, highlight current and potential challenges, and proposed ideas in order to improve the social care that residents are currently experiencing.

4.1.3 Patient Panel December. Mental Health and Social Isolation over the Festive Period

Patient Panel on mental health, and how to stay well during the festive period, which can be an especially hard time for many. The session was held via zoom and were joined by Katie Pomeroy and Khudaja Ismael from Talking Therapies City and Hackney and Talking Therapies Tower Hamlets. Also joined by Valentina Ines La Mela, from the Together Better Programme, who highlighted the work her team does in City and Hackney to engage with patients.

4.1.4 Patient panels scheduled for the Q4 24/25 include:

- 16th January Neaman Practice new booking system with Dr Hillier In addition two focus groups on the new system in late January early February
- 21st March: Cardio- pulmonary resuscitation training with the London Ambulance Service

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. HWCoL have requested an update on this workstream.

4.3 Festive Party

On 12th December HWCoL held a festive lunch at the Golden Lane Community Centre. The informal event was really well attended with over 25 residents and volunteers joining us.

5 Issues raised on behalf of residents

5.1 Staying Steady classes/ Falls Prevention service

Following our last report on the cessation of the M.R.S Independent Living provision of the Staying Steady class, HWCoL have joined the City and Hackney Falls Prevention group which is made up of City and Hackney Public Health team and falls prevention service providers. The group is designing the new falls prevention offering from the City and Hackney Public Health Team.

HWCoL will also be carrying out resident engagement on behalf of the City and Hackney Public Health team to ascertain the services residents would like to see, and what level of understanding they have of the services already provided. This will be via an online survey followed by some deep dive focus groups.

The Board are asked to note that the current provision will end in March 2025.

5.2 Podiatry Service at the Neaman Practice

HWCoL have been made aware that the current Podiatry Service provided at the Neaman Practice will discontinue in March 2025.

HWCoL raised concerns with the Charlotte Painter, Head of Live Well, City and Hackney Place Based Partnership who was meeting with the Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust who are the providers of the service and Dr Chor from the Neaman Practice. The following response was received, and reasons were given for the service being stopped.

'The service is only provided once every three months at the Neaman and has 8 "historical" patients in it. Any new podiatry referrals that meet the clinical criteria are seen at St. Leonards. There is an option for patients to get transport there and the service also offers home visits for patients who meet the criteria.'

It is not a good use of their resource to send a clinician and equipment just to provide this service (for example the next clinic at the end of January only has 2 patients booked into it but would take up the resource of a podiatrist for ½ day). They are therefore proposing to disband the clinic and offer the existing patients alternative arrangements – none will need to be discharged from the service. They undertook to make sure each patient has an individual plan for future care identified. Homerton also assured that should the needs of the population change in the City of London; they would be open to reviewing clinic locations in the future.'

HWCoL received assurance that patients will be informed of the change to service and that patient transport is offered to any current and future patients.

5.3 Hearing support discontinued at the Neaman Practice

HWCoL were made aware that the Hearing support service provided at the Practice will no longer be available. RNID who provide the support, which checks hearing aids and provides help for those who are hard of hearing, have had their funding withdrawn. HWCoL spoke to Dr Chor who has said that patients who require hearing support will be referred to the NHS provision at St Leonards.

5.4 New online booking service at the Neaman Practice

In December the Neaman Practice rolled out a new way for its patients to book appointments. Total triage allows patients to request an appointment between 8 – 6 daily or to submit an admin request (repeat prescriptions, fit 'sick' notes, test results).

Requests are monitored throughout the day with the request being sent to the appropriate healthcare professional or the admin team. The Neaman Practice are pleased with the effectiveness of the new system; however, residents were not informed of the changes by the Practice. HWCoL held a Patient Panel with Dr Amy Hillier who went through how to use the system and answered questions, and it is holding two focus group sessions in January to have a deep dive into any issues raised by patients.

HWCoL have also offered support to the Practice with ongoing communications including for those who are not digitally connected.

5.5 Limited use of text messages

The issue on the limitations placed on GP practices on the use of text messages remains. HWCoL is concerned that patients will not receive adequate information about appointments or from the surgery due to the limitations. HWCoL has previously raised the issue with NEL ICB and NEL ICP but has not received a response. The Board is requested to note our concerns.

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 'Digital Apps: A help or hindrance? Understanding and accessing digital healthcare apps' has been completed and is being presented to CIO's from across NEL NHS and the PCN on 14 February. The report is attached.

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 originally scheduled for late November, however due to lack of speaker availability this has been postponed until early 2025. Following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, of the intention to create a strategy for men's health, we believe that we will now get more traction and support for this. HWCoL are in discussions with Barts Health to support this event.

The event will feature speakers who provide health and wellbeing services specifically for men.

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. This report will be published in Q4.

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 2024. The response from Barts Health to the recommendations in the report was delayed. These were received in early January; therefore, the aim is to publish the report in Q4.

7.2 Neaman Practice

HWCoL will be conducting an Enter and View visit to the Neaman Practice on 13th February. The visit will be carried out by the HWCoL team and Board members. The visit will involve interviewing Practice partners, admin staff, operational staff and patients.

8 Q3 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 4 2024/25

In support of the delivery of the business plan during Q4 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 report
- Submit the Charity Commission Trustees report before the 31 January deadline.
- Continue the patient panel series
- Hold objectives review and planning session with the HWCoL staff team and Board.
- Set up the Adult Social Care Advisory Group
- Carry out public engagement on the falls prevention service
- Carry out an Enter and View Visit to the Neaman Practice.

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 raising several issues with service providers on behalf of residents.

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