

**Minutes of the Healthwatch Sefton Operations Group meeting.  
Held Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024. 10:30 – 12:30. Boardroom. Burlington  
House/Zoom.**

**Steering Group members in attendance:**

Maurice Byrne (MB)	Locality representative – Maghull/Meeting Chair
Brian Clark (BC)	Locality representative – North Southport
Georgia Ribbens (GR)	Sefton Young Advisors
Sharon Cotterall (SC)	Every Child Matters Forum
Vicky Keeley (VK)	Sefton Carers Centre
Will Mullen (WM)	Transforming Care Co-production Board
Jan Comer (JC)	Transforming Care Co-production Board
David Wilson (DW)	Student attending with WM and JC.
Barbara Rouse (BR)	Locality Representative – Bootle

**Staff team in attendance:**

Diane Blair (DB)	Manager
Wendy Andersen (WA)	Engagement & Participation Manager
Amanda Williams (AW)	Signposting, Information & Admin Officer

**Apologies:**

John Turner (JT)	Chairperson
Angela Keith (AK)	Equalities Director
Anne Major (AM)	Locality representative – Central Southport
Linda Wright (LW)	Locality representative – South Southport
Jan Sterling (JS)	Locality representative – Formby
Yael Edmonds (YE)/	Sefton Parent Carer Forum
Cheylne Bass (CB)	
Ken Lowe (KL)	Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens (SPOC)
Karen Christie (KC)	Health & Social Care Forum
Clare Blasbery (CBI)	Digital Communications Officer. Healthwatch Sefton.
Marguerite Dawson (MD)	Engagement & Participation Officer. Healthwatch Sefton.



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	<p>touch with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside and asked for a coordinated response. VK updated that this had not been progressed however there is an NHS commitment to carers meeting being held in March. <b>Actions:</b> VK to update at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p><u>Ambassador report: Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust – new structures:</u> DB has a meeting with Pat McGuiness from the trust in April. <b>Action:</b> DB to keep members updated on progress.</p> <p><u>Improving Information Group:</u> report has been shared with the group for review. <b>Action:</b> feedback to be shared with the group when available.</p> <p><u>North West Ambulance NHS Trust directory:</u> AM had provided apologies for this meeting. <b>Previous action:</b> AM to feedback at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Liverpool Dental Hospital referrals:</u> CB had provided apologies for the meeting. <b>Previous action:</b> CB to see if a meeting can be arranged so that Healthwatch can find out more about the referral process and eligibility criteria.</p> <p><b>Page 4</b></p> <p><u>Digital exclusion/request from Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens (SPOC):</u> DB had shared updates from Stuart McGrory with Ken Lowe and Jan Campbell from SPOC. This information had included updates from Cheshire and Merseyside, Liverpool University and a report from the consortium themselves. DB has asked Ken and Jan to let Healthwatch know if they require any further support. MB explained how access to digital services is becoming more and more important in order to access health services, and a more balanced approach needs to be available.</p>	<p><b>VK</b></p> <p><b>DB</b></p> <p><b>DB</b></p> <p><b>AM</b></p> <p><b>CB</b></p>
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	<p><u>Alder Hey NHS Children's Foundation Trust</u> – A supportive statement has now been received from Sefton Parent Carer forum. A meeting is now being arranged with representatives from the trust and then the report with a follow up action plan will be published. <b>Action:</b> update to be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Additional roles in primary care</u> – It was noted how further discussions were being planned with commissioners at Sefton place and across NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. SC felt that people were being pushed to use online platforms and apps. MB agreed that more work was required to share what roles are available in practices and what they can do to support patients. It was also noted by MB that GP practice website are still not up to date. <b>Action:</b> progress update to be provided at the next meeting.</p>	<p><b>DB</b></p> <p><b>DB</b></p>
<b>Themes and issues.</b>		
4.	<p><b>Emerging issues/themes from members/ outreach and Community Champion Networks.</b></p> <p>SC provided a useful update on new arrangements coming into place across children and young people services under the early help partnership. There are five pilot areas across Sefton in which schools are allocated a social worker and an early help worker. The aims of this is to build teams around schools. SC explained that this is going well.</p> <p>SC also updated on changes to children's social care. A conversational model is being introduced. Instead of referral forms, people will be encouraged to contact the service so information can be gathered, a triage model being in place to help gather information. At the next 'Every Child Matters' forum meeting, there will be an update on these changes with a presentation about family hubs. There will be three hubs, phase one looking at sites and how they will link in with current partners. Phase two will focus on connections and at the forum</p>	



	<p>meeting partners will take part in workshops to look at how the voluntary community and faith sector can link into this. SC also updated that in terms of the youth offer work, there is a current focus on waiting lists for mental health services and access to dentistry.</p> <p>MB asked if this had been linked to areas of deprivation. SC explained that it had been looked at from a locality point of view with links into special educational needs and disabilities services (SEND). WM asked if the hubs would support children with autism and learning disabilities. SC highlighted that one hub would be focused on this. MB highlighted that today statistics have been published for SEND and updated members that Sefton are working towards improving service offers, being aware of the issues that need to be addressed which include for example, home schooling.</p> <p>GR updated on their child poverty work. Forty elected members had attended a meeting at which the findings from the symbol report had been presented.</p> <p>WA updated on issues from outreach sessions and the community champion network. There are issues relating to accessing diabetes and podiatry services, both issues have been escalated to Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust. From discussions, there are also conversations taking place about diabetes awareness sessions taking place at Kindfulness coffee club.</p> <p>WA also updated that she continues to gather feedback about blister packs from local pharmacies being withdrawn. There are also issues relating to medication, including the nationwide issue of stock shortages and the impact this is having on our residents. For example, we have been told by one resident how they are unable to leave their house as they cannot access medication for epilepsy. VK also commented that carers had been sharing similar concerns about medication and how they</p>	
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	<p>are now looking to buy their medications online. This was noted as a health and safety concern. VK also spoke about issues in getting medication when being discharged from hospital which was causing delays. There is also a lack of communication back to GPs from the hospital which again causes delays.</p> <p>SC shared that another issue had been brought to her attention which potentially Healthwatch could develop into an in-depth patient story. <b>Action:</b> SC to get in touch with WA to progress.</p> <p>WA continues to hear about issues relating to GP access with residents telling us that they cannot get an appointment. Other who are offered a face to face appointment tell us that waiting rooms are often empty and they cannot understand why services are not back to what they were pre-pandemic.</p> <p>Positive feedback continues to be shared about North Park Health centre since the practice had a change in provider. MB noted that lots of outreach and engagement activities had been taking place and thanked everyone for sharing their key themes and trends.</p>	SC
<b>Spotlight on...</b>		
5.	<p><b>Healthwatch Sefton Signposting and Information Service.</b></p> <p>AW shared a presentation and provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On average 40 new enquiries are received every month via telephone, email <a href="mailto:info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk">info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk</a> and via comments on the website or questions related to news items</li> <li>• Enquiries are received from the public, referred to us by other health services or via internet search, from health professionals e.g. school nurse, community staff or</li> </ul>	Page6



	<p>community &amp; voluntary organisations staff. The service is also contacted by those who want to share feedback on services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacts include many from the 65 + age group and those who may struggle to access health care due to: social isolation and/or health conditions/ financial capacity/ access to technology.</li> <li>• On average 30% contacts are dental enquiries and they can come from: Pregnant women and children Frail, older people with damaged teeth/missing dentures Patients with underlying health conditions such as cancer requiring dental checks to commence treatment Adults and children with learning disabilities</li> <li>• A dental update is shared every two months and shared on the website: <b><u><a href="http://www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk/find-an-nhs-dentist/">www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk/find-an-nhs-dentist/</a></u></b></li> <li>• The service has links with local NHS dental team to support extremely vulnerable cases.</li> <li>• Common issues for residents in relation to GP surgeries include: Difficulty contacting practices for appointments /communication systems and technology barriers Following up medication requests or referrals to secondary care New patients or those taken off GP lists/ checking GP boundary areas Complaints process queries Occasionally we make contact on a patients' behalf if struggling to get through by phone</li> </ul> <p>AW also provided an update on how she provides support to those making initial contact with the complaints advocacy service by:</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advice on making NHS complaints, offering the support of the Independent complaints advocate if required</li> <li>• Contacting services for those who may need support: socially isolated, frail or housebound residents, people with a learning disability, or speakers of other languages</li> <li>• Supporting residents managing multiple health problems alone, long term physical and mental health conditions</li> <li>• Supporting those who have experiences of unhelpful, uncaring, even rude response when trying to access healthcare or support.</li> </ul> <p>AW provided some recent examples of help and support she had provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting resident whose first language is not English to progress appointments with the Gastroenterology department. at Aintree Hospital, contacting the secretary and helping with translation and understanding</li> <li>• Signposting enquiry from Anchor housing team with information on local NHS services and organisations to support with dementia diagnosis for partner</li> <li>• Assisting resident trying to book phlebotomy appointment in Churchtown as website currently unavailable</li> </ul> <p>AW added that sometimes people will contact the service as they struggle to access services as their 'pay as you go' mobile credit is about to run out and how sometimes enquiries are slightly outside of the services remit but she will do her best to support residents with the issue.</p> <p>SC had accessed the service as she had recently been removed from her dentist's list despite being a long-term patient/ attending regular appointments, whilst other members of her family remained on the list.</p>	
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	<p>BR who has had the same dentist for over 30 years explained that she could not understand why people are not attending their appointments. MB explained that its not that people are not attending, there have been issues with the NHS dental contract and pay and therefore more dentists have decided to just take on privately paid work and therefore NHS dental lists have been reduced with people finding that they no longer have a dentist.</p> <p>At the Healthwatch England National Conference Sara Hurley, the Chief Dental Medical Officer for England had explained how dentists are private businesses and how the NHS contract is not viable. MB asked if Healthwatch Sefton received feedback from the national surveys which Healthwatch England often sent to members online. JC had completed four national surveys this year. <b>Action:</b> DB to gain more of an understanding on this national work and how feedback is shared.</p> <p>SC updated that the 'children and care well-being group' is currently looking at access to dentistry for children in care. DW commented that once veterans come out of the army, they also have problems accessing NHS dental care and there is no priority for people who have served their country.</p> <p>Members thanked AW for her presentation, with BR stating that this had once again broadened her knowledge on the varied work undertaken by Healthwatch and what people had done before Healthwatch had been established.</p>	<b>DB</b>
<b>Operational Updates</b>		
6.	<p><b>Work Plan Update.</b></p> <p>DB updated that there will be a focus on the updated work plan at the next meeting taking place in April. <b>Action:</b> this was noted and will be on the agenda for the next meeting.</p>	<b>DB</b>



7.

**Key Issues log.**

The key issues log report had been tabled and was taken as read. DB provided the following updates for members;

DB updated that the meeting with Mike Ryan Deputy Director of Estates for Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had not taken place on the 20<sup>th</sup> February and had been rearranged. All actions to be discussed at this meeting within the log had therefore not been progressed.

Page 8: the issue relating to the pay machine out of order on the Aintree University hospital site will be closed as the pay machine is now working this being observed during a site visit on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023. CB will be providing an outcome story.

Page 10: DB has requested a meeting with colleagues from Aintree University hospitals Gastroenterology department to gain an update on the service and to provide assurance that the problem's previously experienced have been resolved. This will also provide an opportunity for Healthwatch to share the concerns that have been raised with us.

Page 14 DB has requested a meeting with Aintree University Hospital to ensure that Healthwatch has an update on the work stream which is reviewing patient information within appointment letters. JC updated that People First have also been working on this issue. They have been working with the Royal Liverpool Hospital looking at how the red flag system works for people with learning disabilities and autism and have been working on this for many years. JC also noted how people are not being invited to their learning disability checks at GP practices.

SC agreed that patient information and appointment letters can be confusing. BC highlighted that he has previously received



	<p>reminder texts for appointments so that he doesn't miss any. MB gave an example of how the online system 'DrDoctor' is used. SC felt that many people with complex lives do require face-to-face appointments and sometimes this results in people ending up in accident and emergency departments when their health issues have not been addressed.</p> <p>The other issues on the key actions log were noted, including the issues relating to the Seaforth locality, particularly the local pharmacy closing and the impact this will have on residents. The pharmacy first contract was discussed and MB shared how some pharmacies are closing nationally due to pressures placed upon them. This had been an issue discussed at the Healthwatch England National Conference. BR updated on how she had recently had a medication review at a pharmacy and how this had been a positive experience.</p> <p>DB updated that an additional item would be logged relating to Churchtown clinic and how the phlebotomy service was currently not available.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Ambassadors Reports (exception reporting)</b></p> <p>The reports from Healthwatch Sefton Ambassadors from key stakeholder meetings attended between October 2023 and February 2024 were noted. On page 29 DB updated that Healthwatch was awaiting a formal response to the quarter three feedback report submitted to Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. <b>Action:</b> report to be on the agenda for the April meeting for review and authorisation.</p>	DB
9.	<p><b>Update on Community Service Review (Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust).</b></p> <p>WA updated on progress since the last meeting, at which the report had been presented and authorised. A meeting with key</p>	



	<p>managers had taken place and a subsequent action plan had been drafted and sent across to Healthwatch. The action plan had been part of the meeting pack which members had been able to read in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>WA updated on some of the key issues, with the issue of booking Podiatry appointments across South Sefton being discussed. The action within the plan is focused on exploring how the service across South Sefton can be aligned to that currently used across Southport and Formby. WA updated that a further meeting will be held with senior managers to look at progress against the action plan and how the trust has incorporated the patient story relating to podiatry which People First helped Healthwatch to develop. <b>Action:</b> update to be provided at the next meeting.</p>	<b>WA</b>
<b>Authorisation of reports</b>		
10.	<p><b>Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust Listening Event Report.</b></p> <p>DB updated that this was a joint report with Healthwatch Liverpool. DB thanked AM for her support with this Listening Event. Healthwatch Liverpool had drafted the report and members were asked to make comment on any aspect of the report and any of the recommendations. Members agreed that the report be authorised and circulated to Healthwatch members and key stakeholders. <b>Actions:</b> CB to upload the report to the website and distribute. DB to ensure that recommendations are followed up.</p>	<b>CB/DB</b>
<b>Strategic Updates</b>		
11.	<p><b>Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust – Shaping Care Together.</b></p> <p>DB had attended a meeting of the communications and engagement steering group and shared key updates. Urgent and emergency care will be the starting point for this program</p>	



	<p>as this is the directorate most under strain and strategic leaders have agreed if they can get this right, this will support other parts of the system. Some of the challenges currently faced include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's urgent and emergency care is not provided 24 hours a day/ seven days a week from the Ormskirk site</li> <li>• There are issues in relation to staff shortages and the trust needs to ensure safe care.</li> <li>• There is work to look at financial sustainability over a longer term.</li> <li>• Many of the people treated across the trust are older and therefore occupy beds over longer periods, and wait for support for hospital discharge.</li> <li>• There is a new program director in place and the consultancy firm Freshwater has been commissioned to provide further engagement support to the program.</li> <li>• An update had been provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for adult social care and health.</li> </ul> <p>There were no further questions. <b>Action:</b> DB to provide further updates at the next meeting.</p>	<b>DB</b>
12.	<p><b>Liverpool Women's services</b></p> <p>Healthwatch Sefton alongside colleagues from Knowsley and Liverpool have been invited to be a member of the communications and engagement group supporting the review of the Liverpool Women's' service review. DB attended the first meeting and will be the Sefton representative moving forward. The first meeting was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September.</p> <p>The program has been looking at serious incident reviews trends and issues related to the hospital being on a separate site. A new case for change is being developed and they are planning to have a lived experience panel to contribute to this work. A dedicated website will be developed. There is a specific</p>	



	<p>update page on the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside website but DB explained that this is hard to find so DB will share the link</p> <p><b>Action:</b> DB to share the weblink with members.</p>	<b>DB</b>
13.	<p><b>Chairperson report.</b></p> <p>MB provided the Chairpersons report. The update included a measles warning from Sefton Council and an update on vaping. MB stressed the importance of the prevention agenda for young people in taking up vaping, especially when we don't know what the longer-term health effects will be. JC agreed and felt that its hard to break habits.</p> <p>JT had attended the Sefton CVS conference at Linacre Mission and had the opportunity to speak with a number of funders about potential funding opportunities. An update had been provided to the Board of Directors.</p> <p>JT has attended the open day of People First Merseyside at the Investment Centre in Bootle and described People First as a vigorous, thriving charity run by and for people with learning disabilities, noting their enthusiasm and commitment being impressive. JT had met with WM and Phillip Hume during the visit and had found attending a fun occasion. JT had participated in activities including, fish the duck and kick the bucket and had seen some interesting memory lane collages.</p>	
<b>Any Other Business</b>		
14.	<p><b>Any Other Business.</b></p> <p>There was no other business. MB thanked everyone for their contributions and DB thanked MB for chairing the meeting.</p>	



### Attendance Tracker

<b>Name / Representing</b>	<b><u>Sept</u> <u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>Oct</u> <u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>Feb</u> <u>2024</u></b>
John Turner. Chairperson	✓	✓	x
Brian Clark OBE. Locality representative: North Southport	✓	✓	✓
Anne Major. Locality representative: Central Southport	✓	✓	x
Linda Wright. Locality representative: Ainsdale & Birkdale	✓	✓	x
Jan Sterling. Locality representative: Formby	x	x	x
Locality representative: Hightown & Ince Blundell	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Kevin Halewood: Locality representative: Crosby	x	x	x
Locality representative: Seaforth & Litherland	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Barbara Rouse: Locality representative: Bootle	Vacant	x	✓
Locality representative: Netherton	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Maurice Byrne: Locality representative: Maghull	✓	✓	✓
Karen Christie - Health and Social Care Forum	x	x	x
Yael Edmonds/ Cheylne Bass - Sefton Parent Carer Forum	✓	✓	x
Ken Lowe - Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens	✓	✓	x
Vicky Keeley/ Racheal Darvill - Sefton Carers Centre - Carers Voice	x	✓	✓
Georgia Ribbens - Sefton Young Advisors	✓	✓	✓
Transforming Care Co-production Board Will Mullen and Jan Comer	✓	✓	✓
Sharon Cotterall – Every Child Matters Forum	x	x	✓
Angela Keith – Equalities Director	x	x	x

