

**Minutes of the Healthwatch Sefton Operations Group meeting.**  
**Held Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. 10:30 – 12:30. Boardroom. Burlington**  
**House/Zoom.**

**Steering Group members in attendance:**

John Turner (JT)	Chairperson
Brian Clark (BC)	Locality representative – North Southport
Anne Major (AM)	Locality representative – Central Southport
Linda Wright (LW)	Locality representative – South Southport
Maurice Byrne (MB)	Locality representative – Maghull
Linda Wright (LW)	Locality representative – South Southport
Georgia Ribbens (GR)	Sefton Young Advisors
Yael Edmonds (YE)/ Cheyln Bass (CB)	Sefton Parent Carer Forum
Vicky Keeley (VK)	Sefton Carers Centre
Will Mullen (WM)	Transforming Care Co-production Board
Jan Comer (JC)	Transforming Care Co-production Board
Ken Lowe (KL)	Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens (SPOC)

**Staff team in attendance:**

Diane Blair (DB)	Manager
Wendy Andersen (WA)	Engagement & Participation Manager
Amanda Williams (AW)	Signposting, Information & Admin Officer
Kate Grace (KG)	Independent Complaints Advocate

**Apologies:**

Angela Keith (AK)	Equalities Director
Jan Sterling (JS)	Locality representative – Formby
Sharon Cotterall (SC)	Every Child Matters Forum
Karen Christie (KC)	Health & Social Care Forum
Barbara Rouse (BR)	Locality Representative – Bootle
Clare Blasbery (CBI)	Digital Communications Officer. Healthwatch Sefton.



Marguerite Dawson (MD) Engagement & Participation Officer. Healthwatch Sefton.

Agenda Item	Notes	Action
1.	<p><b>Introductions and apologies.</b>  JT welcomed everyone and introductions were made. JT highlighted the code of conduct, noting previous declarations.</p>	
<b>Governance</b>		
2.	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting for approval.</b>  The minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record with the amendment that Anne Major be removed from the list of attendees.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Action Tracker.</b></p> <p><b>Page 2</b></p> <p><u>Patches:</u> DB provided an update from the Sefton Primary Care Forum. There are 40 GP practices across Sefton and four different online systems are being used. The systems are called Econsult, Patches, Blinx and Accurx. This is practice driven and Jan Leonard would find feedback on how the systems work very useful. MB asked why different systems were being used when we have primary care networks and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. They should be telling them what to use. KL agreed and felt that PPGs should be involved too. Ainsdale Medical centre will have online appointments available from tomorrow and they have a new telephone system in place</p> <p><b>Page 3</b></p> <p><u>2-hour urgent community response service:</u> VK told members that this issue had not been resolved. VK had recently raised</p>	



	<p>this again and there is a further meeting next week. <b>Action:</b> VK to keep the group updated.</p> <p>VK provided information on an NHS England new coding system. The system uploads emergency plans for unpaid carers for both health and social care. VK has been in touch with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside and has asked for a coordinated response. JT explained that Professor David Croisdale- Appleby is also involved in carers work. VK shared information about funding available for unpaid carers. <b>Actions:</b> Healthwatch to support Sefton Carers Centre if they don't get a response. Funding information to be shared with DB.</p> <p><u>Ambassador report: Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust – new structures:</u> There had been a limited response to the request to find out if a session would be useful. Members agreed during the meeting that they would like a hybrid meeting to be arranged. <b>Action:</b> DB to organise a session.</p> <p><u>Improving Information Group:</u> when the report on today's agenda for Mersey Care is authorised, this report will be shared with the improving information group to review so that we can improve the readability of our reports. <b>Action:</b> report to be shared with the group.</p> <p><u>North West Ambulance NHS Trust directory:</u> <b>Action:</b> AM to make enquiries to find out if the trusts directory would be available to support the Healthwatch signposting service.</p> <p><u>Liverpool Dental Hospital referrals:</u> CB had been asked to find out if an easy read referral form was available and if not, could one be developed. Healthwatch had requested information about referrals and eligibility so this could be promoted. CB explained that they have been going out into deprived areas to provide treatment. <b>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>	<b>VK</b> <b>DB</b> <b>AM</b> <b>CB</b>
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Digital exclusion/request from SPOC: Stuart McGrory from VOLA has been in touch. He thinks there are just some general headline figures about digital exclusion. Stuart has agreed to follow this up. **Action:** update to be provided at the next meeting.

DB

Alder Hey NHS Children's Foundation Trust – Once the report on the agenda today has been authorised, the next step will be to develop a news release and social media posts to encourage more people to share their feedback about the provider.

**Action:** news release to be drafted.

CBL

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Additional roles in primary care – This had been discussed at the last team meeting and with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside colleagues. National promotional material has just been launched which needs reviewing. There has also been a discussion with Southport and Formby Primary Care Network (PCN). Healthwatch raised the need for promotion at last week's 'primary care forum' meeting. Sefton's Local Medical Committee agreed and asked if practices could try and change the way the person answering calls, addresses the caller, for example by saying "I am a member of the care navigation team". They had also asked if there could be a qualification for this new role.

JT agreed that this would help both parties. He updated that there is a change to the funding formula to support telephony. The deadline for this is Autumn 2025. Members discussed how patches, the online service can be problematic and many patients are unsure of its aim, is it just for triage for example?



	<p>MB updated on how access had been one of the key issues discussed at the Healthwatch national conference.</p> <p>YE reminded members that some patients don't want to use digital methods.</p> <p>KL felt that it was important to look at three key areas: people process and systems. This is used in organisational psychology.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> the staff team will continue to look at ways in which the additional roles in primary care can be promoted.</p>	<b>Staff team</b>
<b>Themes and issues.</b>		
4.	<p><b>Emerging issues/themes from Steering Group members/Community Champion Network.</b></p> <p>WA updated on emerging themes from the July meeting. There was general feedback about the lack of dentists providing NHS treatment. MB updated that at the Healthwatch national conference, the dental officer had provided an update and had spoken about the need for hybrid approaches including community dentists. This area of the NHS requires innovation. There had also been a discussion about how dental practices don't receive any capital costs.</p> <p>KG spoke about a charity that the staff team had come across which could support access issues. It was generally agreed that supply of NHS dentists had lessened as many go into cosmetic/private work. There was a discussion about how a scheme could be run which was partially staffed by locally salaried dentists via NHS Cheshire and Merseyside.</p> <p>WA also shared that GP access continues to be a key theme for the network. Network members asked why face to face appointments could not be provided and how they were having trouble accessing appointments.</p> <p>Issues were raised relating to prescriptions and the shortages of certain medications.</p>	Page 5



	<p>Another area discussed had been the lack of support for older people.</p> <p>It was noted that there has been confusion about how to access COVID vaccinations and many people had just given up. There was a general discussion about access and JC felt that it depended on the practice you were registered at. For example, some practices had been sending text messages to their patients but no letters had been sent out. JC was aware that some pharmacies were providing walk in sessions. BC was also aware of this and explained how patients would need to look this information up. KL knew of people who had gone along with the person they cared for and had been asked if they also wanted the vaccination.</p> <p>MB also felt that there was confusion with how to access the shingles vaccine and the rules that were in place. There had been recent changes and people he spoke to didn't understand if they could access this vaccination. KL felt that this had always been a complex area but felt that GP practices should be contacting vulnerable patients. It was agreed that this would likely change next year when more GPs would be able to give vaccinations direct.</p>	
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## Spotlight on...

5.	<p><b>Healthwatch Sefton Complaints Advocacy Service.</b></p> <p>KG provided an overview of the service and gave examples of some of the cases and issues that people need support to complain about. Some of the areas for example include mental health service provision and primary care. KG updated on some of the themes that have come through from supporting residents with NHS complaints. Communication is a key theme.</p> <p>From one case we are currently working on it has become apparent that at Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, they do not have a coordinator role. This would support</p>	Page 6
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	<p>parents who have a child/ children with multiple health and care issues under the care of different departments and specialities. We are currently working with the trust and have highlighted this issue to them. LT asked if the trust had any complex care posts, KG updated that there were no roles.</p> <p>KG explained how time scales can be an issue when waiting for replies to complaints. KJ also spoke about complaints procedures in acute care and the differing approaches complaints teams have in place.</p> <p>AM asked if Healthwatch received information on PALS queries and complaints so that we can review trends. DB explained how this information came through attendance at patient experience group meetings.</p> <p>WM asked if there is information available about complaints in easy read formats as this would help many people.</p> <p>JT shared how complaints can be seen as confrontational and how local resolution meetings may help to address concerns. This would help to avoid formal complaints being made and encourage the correct level of communication. This needs to be coordinated and sympathetic with elements of compassion and understanding.</p> <p>KG was thanked for her verbal update.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</b></p> <p>YE explained how the current trend for parents is taking their agenda into public meetings. Freedom of Information requests for minutes that they cannot access for meetings not held in public are being requested. Sefton Parent Carer Forum is being perceived as being in Sefton Council's pockets. YA explained that this is a national issue with similar forums across the country.</p>	Page 7



	<p>It was acknowledged how parents are desperate to get a diagnosis to support with education health care (EHCP) plans.</p> <p>An update was provided on 'special educational needs and disabilities information advice and support service' (SENDIASS). Barnardo's are the new provider and will be taking over the service tomorrow. Sefton Parent Carer Forum updated that Barnardo's hadn't turned up for a coffee morning they had organised. VK told members that the contract had been granted for one year and that this had not gone out to tender. This is a pilot and needs to be looked at and monitored to make sure that it has the impact required. The service was perceived as being well funded. It was agreed by members that they didn't want parents to be left with no support. VK updated there is a website but no further information or leaflets have been shared. Barnardo's deliver the service in both Knowsley and Liverpool.</p> <p>KG gave some background information on the service. Previously this service had been run by Sefton Council and had been really good. KG had looked on the Barnardo's website and had found information to be very generic.</p> <p>CB felt that there had been no communication with parents and parents have been sharing feedback on gaps in service provision, for example paperwork missing for tribunals.</p> <p>MB updated that there was a Children's and Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) meeting coming up and how beneficial it will be to feed in the discussion that had been held today.</p> <p>VK explained that Sefton Carers Centre had some recent cases where they were supporting families with complex needs. It wasn't just the child who had complex needs but parents too. This is more common than one would think and puts pressure on families. Families need to be looked at as a whole and VK</p>	
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	<p>had challenged Sefton council about this as part of their duties under the Care Act. Sefton Advocacy have been supporting with cases And Sefton Council will spot purchase services to support parents. VK updated that information on the service offer will be developed and shared with members. AW gave an example of a client which Healthwatch was supporting who may fall into this category and require support.</p> <p>It was also noted that there had been no communication about shortages with ADHD medication to Sefton residents and this was causing confusion. The emphasis seems to be placed on parents and CB felt that it will be likely that there would be fatalities.</p> <p>JT thanked members for the lively discussion as it supported Healthwatch understand current issues in relation to SEND.</p>	
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## Operational updates

7.	<p><b>Visit from Healthwatch England Chairperson – Professor David Croisdale-Appleby.</b></p>	
	<p>This item was not discussed.</p>	

  

8.	<p><b>Ambassadors Reports (exception reporting)</b></p>	
	<p>The report was taken as read and the actions agreed by members. <b>Action:</b> DB was asked to progress all actions within the report.</p>	DB

## Authorisation of reports

9.	<p><b>Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust. Community Services. What you told us. August 2023.</b></p>	
	<p>WA gave an overview of the report which shared feedback on accessing services from local community health centres. This included feedback from staff working at the centres and People</p>	



	<p>First Merseyside. 127 reviews were received about community services across South Sefton and five health centres were visited. 61 reviews were received across Southport and Formby, with four centres being visited.</p> <p>Services were rated 4 out of 5 and positive feedback had been provided about treatment and care and staff attitude. Patients were happy to receive services that were local in the community. Concerns were shared with us in relation to Phlebotomy, Podiatry and disability access.</p> <p>WA updated that a follow up meeting with the provider would be held to discuss the recommendations, an action plan being drafted. Members commented on the work which had been undertaken by WA and MD and congratulated them on the report. Members agreed to authorise the report. <b>Actions:</b> the report to be circulated to Healthwatch members, key stakeholders and be uploaded onto the website.</p>	CBL
10.	<p><b>How the prescription system works at Alder Hey NHS Foundation Trust. Feedback from Sefton Parent Carer Forum.</b></p> <p>This report details feedback from Sefton Parent Carer Forum about the issues with the prescription service at the hospital. The feedback within this report strengthens the emerging theme that there are problems relating to access, transition to adult services and more concerning is the feedback in which parents are purchasing medication from other sources whilst others are lending medication to others whilst they wait for theirs to become available. The report has been shared with the provider and the response from the Director of Nursing, Pauline Brown is included within the report.</p> <p>The report and response had been previously shared with Sefton Parent Carer Forum so that they could review the information and support the response.</p>	Page 10



	<p>The response from the provider felt like parents were being blamed for the issues. YE explained that many years ago she had met with Lisa Cooper from the hospital with DB and this response felt like we had gone backwards.</p> <p>VK gave the example of adults receiving medication for dementia. For three months they are under the care and treatment of Mersey Care until deemed adequate and then at 12 months they have a review. A shared care agreement is put in place. VK asked why this could not be put in place by Alder Hey?</p> <p>Next steps were discussed and it was agreed that Sefton Parent Carer Forum would produce a statement in response to the report to support its publication by Healthwatch. A meeting with Alder Hey was felt to be the next best step with both Healthwatch and the parent carer forum attending. DB suggested that we try and involve the Associate Director for Quality &amp; Performance in Sefton, Kerrie France as she may be able to support the conversations. GR agreed that it was a good idea to involve other partners in this work.</p> <p>Members formally approved the report and the next steps as outlined above. <b>Action:</b> DB to arrange a meeting with Alder Hey and ensure that the report is circulated widely and uploaded onto the website.</p>	DB
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## Strategic Updates

11.	<p><b>Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust – Shaping Care Together.</b></p> <p>DB provided an update. There has been a rescope of the program and the focus moving forward will be on urgent and emergency care. The program board has agreed to complete an option's appraisal by Spring 2024 including a pre-consultation business case.</p>	Page 11
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	<p>There is a meeting of the communications steering group this afternoon and DB will be attending. There were no further questions from members. <b>Action:</b> DB to keep members updated on progress.</p>	DB
12.	<p><b>Chairperson report.</b></p> <p>JT provided a verbal update. There was an update on progress to procure bed based intermediate care for north Sefton. 35 beds will be available, this care supporting people's recovery and rehabilitation. JT updated that he has been pushing the commissioner to get the procurement completed as soon as possible, as January is the busiest time for delays with hospital discharges and it's important to have this in place. MB asked a question about costs, JT indicating that there would be no cost to the individual for accessing intermediate care.</p> <p>JT updated that traditionally previous winter funding had been short term. There has been good news recently in that the Health and Well-Being Board would be using funding from the 'Better Care Fund' to support services and ensure services are available over a longer period of time.</p> <p>An update was provided on a Healthwatch England meeting at which Louise Ansari, (Chief Executive) and professor David Croissdale-Appleby (Chair) had attended. JT had highlighted our local model of community champions and our ambassador role at this meeting. One of the main issues discussed was funding.</p> <p>MB explained that at the national conference, the future direction of both Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch had been discussed. Funding is not ring fenced and a lack of consistent funding had been highlighted.</p> <p>JT dated members on the message of support from us to Healthwatch Cheshire in light of the outcome of the Lucy Letby</p>	



	case. NHS providers not listening to patient safety concerns was discussed by members.	
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### Any Other Business

13.	<p><b>Any Other Business.</b></p> <p>Due to limited time left on the agenda, DB agreed to send an email out to all members about meetings in 2024.</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	DB
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### Attendance Tracker

Name / Representing	<u>June</u> <u>2023</u>	<u>Sept</u> <u>2023</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>2023</u>
John Turner. Chairperson	✓	✓	✓
Brian Clark OBE. Locality representative: North Southport	✓	✓	✓
Anne Major. Locality representative: Central Southport	x	✓	✓
Linda Wright. Locality representative: Ainsdale & Birkdale	✓	✓	✓
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	x	x
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	✓	✓	✓



<b>Name / Representing</b>	<u><b>June</b></u> <u><b>2023</b></u>	<u><b>Sept</b></u> <u><b>2023</b></u>	<u><b>Oct</b></u> <u><b>2023</b></u>
Ken Lowe - Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens	✓	✓	✓
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

