

## Meeting

Southport & Formby Community Champion Network Meeting  
10am on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 held on zoom.

### **Themes: Sefton Carers Strategy, Healthwatch Complaints Service**

#### **Chair**

Brian Clark OBE (BC)

Locality Representative North Southport

#### **Attendees**

Anne Major (AM)

Locality Representative Southport Central

Linda Wright (LW)

Locality Representative Ainsdale & Birkdale

Julia Fahey (JF)

Southport Macmillan Centre

Helen Stanbury (HS)

Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure

Tony Wright (TW)

Southport Centre for the Deaf

Terry Nicholson (TN)

Asperger's Support Group

Louise Heritage (LH)

Sefton CVS Community Connector

Sharifa Begum- Miah (SB)

The Life Rooms

#### **Healthwatch staff member(s)**

Marguerite Dawson (MD)

Healthwatch Sefton Engagement Officer

Amanda Williams (AW)

Healthwatch Signposting & Information Officer

#### **Guest Speakers**

Eleanor Moulton (EM)

Assistant Director of Life Course Commissioning

Kate Grace (KG)

Healthwatch Independent Complaints Advocate

#### **Apologies received**

Bob Wilkinson (BC)

Southport Samaritans

Andrea De Cort (AD)

PPG representative for Ainsdale Medical Centre

Ken Lowe (KL)  
Lesley Curran (LC)  
Simon Walker (SW)  
Caroline Hesketh (CH)  
Jenny White (JW)

Ainsdale Medical Centre PPG  
People First Merseyside  
People First Merseyside  
Sefton Carers Centre  
Galloways

## **1. Introductions & Housekeeping**

BC welcomed all members to the January 2024 Southport & Formby Community Champion meeting being held on the zoom platform. Introductions were made by all attendees. The themes for the January meeting are Sefton Carers Strategy and Healthwatch Complaints Service.

## **2. Code of Conduct / Declarations of Interest (in line with agenda items or changes)**

BC asked all members to abide by the Kindness and Respect Guidelines and follow the Healthwatch Sefton Code of Conduct policy.

No declarations of interests were made.

BC welcomed EM to the meeting

## **3. Eleanor Moulton- Sefton Carers Strategy consultation update**

EM updated on the ongoing Sefton Carers Strategy Consultation.

EM explained that in the last 12-18 months Diane Blair Healthwatch Manager has been part of the group including NHS, Acute Trusts and dedicated Carers Lead on how MerseyCare intend to support carers. The group is chaired by Cllr Cummins. The group considers a number of issues facing carers, including the needs of carers around discharge and whether service users will be able to be cared for when they are discharged. To support work around the workforce and how we support the workforce. To look at strengthening HR policies and carers leave, also looking at the DWP model, the carers passport. Vicky Keeley is the lead representative for Sefton Carers Centre on the steering group. The group is linked in to the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB workstream. The steering group includes carers representatives.

EM reiterated that Sefton needs a robust Carers Strategy and it is up to the people living in Sefton to define this whilst following national best practice. Sefton already have a 1<sup>st</sup> new draft All Age Carers Strategy for supporting unpaid carers in Sefton over the next three years 2024- 2027. Sefton are now asking for consultation on whether the draft is appropriate. EM asked have we got it right? What is working well and what improvements are needed?

Sefton Carers Centre is leading on the delivery and plan. Local residents are being asked and encouraged to share their comments on the draft strategy and this is being promoted across health and social care organisations in the community to increase response rates. Once the consultation review results are compiled this will then go to the Health and Well Being Board for governance. The Strategy should then become live from 31<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

EM shared the following link for the consultation referenced at the meeting; [Have your say on Sefton's All Age Carers Strategy](#)

**Action: MD shared the link in the group email following the meeting.**

A question, comments and answer session then took place in the meeting.

Q. KG asked if there was support available for ex carers? How are you going to role out planning and training? Continuity of what direct payments can be used for is needed.

A. EM answered that the strategy talks about training and there has been the success of Dementia Friends and what being a carer means. There are some gaps that will need looking at but it is an all age carers strategy. There is also the SEND continuous improvement programme and the Local Offer to improve consistency and helping to steer and challenge practice. Direct payments are governed by legislation and should be able to be used by whichever way the social worker defines, this could include music lessons, football tickets etc.

**Action: MD shared EM's contact details with KG for further discussion regarding direct payments as agreed at the meeting.**

Q. LW commented on the extra care needed for SEND transitions in to adulthood and shared an experience/ example.

A. EM reiterated that the SEND- continuous improvement programme for age 16-25-year-old is an area that needs particular attention, with analyse of the 0-25 pathway. This can mean a range of ways of supporting individuals from minimal support such

as support to manage a tenancy with the help from a floating support worker. EM said the team are working on the supported living programme for individuals with a learning disability/ autistic spectrum disorder/ mental health issue. Recommissioning is to provide a rigid model which also needs to be flexible. The complex care team work with individuals and there is a high demand for support, a remodel is being looked at including lower level needs in supported living, and also for bespoke support to be provided.

**Action: It was noted the SEND- continuous improvement programme team should be invited to update at a future community champion meeting.**

BC thanked EM and handed over to KG.

#### **4. Kate Grace- Healthwatch Complaints Service Overview.**

KG introduced herself as the Healthwatch Sefton Independent Complaints Advocate. AW also provides Tier 1 support for the service as part of her role as Signposting and Information Officer for Healthwatch.

What is Independent Complaints Advocacy? (ICA)

KG explained the service provides a confidential/ free of charge service for people who wish to make or raise a concern or make a complaint about the National Health Service (NHS). The service is independent of the NHS.

For example- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) issues, NHS dental complaints and concerns, KG might contact a hospital to speak to the staff regarding a concern raised by a person such as staff attitude, vegetarian menu options on the menu, delayed cancer appointments, a patient with dementia being left to wander around the hospital when attending as an inpatient. KG explained that support can also be offered writing letters and structuring letters and (depending on the needs of the individual) preparation support for meetings and attendance at meetings

AW provides information and signposting for the advocacy service and posts out self-help information packs.

What we don't do?

KG explained the advocacy service does not offer medical or legal advice or investigate complaints as this is typically done by the hospital or provider. The service only covers NHS services not private medical care. The service would not be involved in the disciplinary action against NHS staff as the hospital or provider would lead on this.

Questions, comments and answers were then asked by the group in the meeting.

Q. BC asked does the service accompany people to meetings in person?

A. KG responded that yes, the service can support with preparation and attendance at meetings when needed, friendly support. Clients also wish to take the lead. KG also makes telephone calls on behalf of people to mediate. The service offers diverse support and can signpost people to other legal routes. There are Tier 1 and Tier 2 types of support. KG said the service generally does get an apology from the service provider. KG said she frequently acts as a mediator between the person and the NHS service which is of benefit to the hospital or service provider. KG said they try to find a solution, which does not always end up in as a complaint but the individual would like the feedback recorded on the Healthwatch feedback which will then be shared with the service provider/ commissioners.

TN and LW both commented on the great benefits of the service for people.

Q. LW asked what is the response time for the service?

A. KG explained that the service aims to get back to people within 5 working days from their initial contact and that this generally works as the service usually provides support for complaints/ advocacy over a number of weeks depending on the needs of the individual. The service is not an emergency service. They receive referrals from individuals and other agencies e.g. Social prescribers, Sefton advocacy, Sefton carers centre, Pals.

See advocacy presentation below:



Advocacy  
presentation - Oct 2

**Action: MD shared the presentation and contact email addresses for the advocacy service in the group email following the meeting as agreed.**

BC thanked KG and AM

## **5.Community Champion updates and themes**

National Autistic Society- Support Group Sefton- TN shared an update on the website <https://www.seftonautism.com/> relaunch date/ flyer and contact email address: [sefton.group@nas.org.uk](mailto:sefton.group@nas.org.uk)

Action: TN shared the NAS relaunch information with MD following the meeting for the group email and Healthwatch website.

Dental update- AW shared news of no change for adults NHS dental services in Sefton whilst a few dentists are registering/ have a waiting list for children. See Healthwatch website- <https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/find-an-nhs-dentist/>

Action: MD to continue to share any further information with community champion members in the group email/ Healthwatch communications.

## **7. Healthwatch Sefton Updates**

HWS updates January 2024-

Engagement/ updates/ outcomes

Some examples of key themes/ issues collected from outreach/ the feedback centre/ Southport & Formby community champion network meetings.

- GP access and staff attitude - patients unable to book appointments in advance, options not being offered by care coordinators/ reasonable adjustments for patients that may need additional support by GP practices (LD/ ASD/ MH/ hearing/ visual) this has been shared with Sefton Place/PCN
- Lack of NHS dentists, increase in private dental care, NHS dental patient with an exemption certificate made to feel uncomfortable.
- Communication- at Southport & Ormskirk hospitals- appointment letters not clear/ signage problems (Ormskirk)/ lack of communication and long waiting times in A & E/ staff training needed to support people with disabilities, radiology department negative patient experiences (HW raised with Patient Experience Matron who took this straight to the department and raised it at the senior management meeting) Long waits for referrals and cancellation of hospital appointments, all raised with the hospital Trust by Healthwatch.
- Access to medication reviews- Healthwatch raised this issue with Sefton Place following it being raised through outreach and by this network previously. The Medicines Management team have been providing medication review clinics for targeted groups in GP practices but have now decided medication review

clinics should be available to all patients. This information has been shared with all 40 Sefton GP practices. (Sefton Primary Care Forum Update).

-Landlines switch over to internet based digital telephone system from traditional copper wire lines. Silver voices a non-political web-based organisation has launched a campaign and government petition to extend the timetable for at least 5 years due to the impact the switch over may have on vulnerable customers as it may affect carline and burglar alarm systems. Apparently, some providers have paused the digital switch over in response and they advise customers to write to their provider.

**Action: MD shared the website address in the group email following the meeting for information.**

-Patients concerns regarding the merger of Southport and Ormskirk hospitals to Mersey and West Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS Trust- and patients travelling to different sites. The Trust continues to confirm that patients should not be asked to travel for routine appointments, unless an earlier appointment is offered or for specialist care clinics.

All raised by Healthwatch at patient experience committees, with Sefton Place, the accessible information working group/ with PCN's.

Southport hospital listening event- Healthwatch are planning a listening event at Southport hospital to talk to patients and gather their experiences. We are compiling a list of questions for a survey using the key themes/ issues that we are hearing. Healthwatch to update.

Healthwatch held a thank you event in January 2024 at Waterloo community centre which was well attended (including Southport & Formby community champions) and gave people a chance to chat and catch up informally.

MD reminded members to ensure they are signed up as Healthwatch members/ residents can join on the Healthwatch website link.

<https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/get-involved/online-membership/>

MD is looking for more outreach venues in Southport & Formby and asked for information on local groups/ events that Healthwatch can attend.

MD asked for suggestions on future guest speakers at network meetings.

**Action: MD to keep community champion members updated.**

## **7. Community Champion network notes for approval**

The notes from the meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were previously circulated to all members for comments or amendments. Members today agreed them as accurate.

**8. Previous emerging issues / questions taken forward to Healthwatch Steering group.**

None. No new emerging themes noted.

**9. Information exchange/ any other business**

None noted.

All Community Champion members were thanked for attending.

Close of meeting.

Next Meeting: TBC

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 at 10am

on zoom