



**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 10th July 2024
Hebburn Central**

Present:

John Lowther (JL)	Chair	Sheila Scott (SS) Operations Manager
Arthur McKean (AMc)	Vice Chair	Bev Cook (BC) Business Support/ Engagement Officer
Tracey Grainger (TG)	Director	
Carl Buckley (CB)	Director	
Angela Fahey (AF)	Director	

Guest Speakers:

Jennifer Owen (JO) Chair of Northern Region Local Dental Committee, Gateshead and South of Tyne.

Anna Hargrave (AH) Divisional Director, Division of Community Services South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust.

Agenda Item		Actions
1	<p><u>Welcome and apologies for absence</u> JL opened the meeting and welcomed everyone noting apologies from Barbara Tennet (Director HWST), Nafizah Ahmed (Director HWST), Elaine Smith (A Better U Volunteer), Tori Bradison (Northern Cancer Voices), Francesca McGarey (Resident), Wendy Hadlington (Healthwatch Sunderland), Debbie Burnicle (Healthwatch Sunderland), Cllr Ruth R Berkley (Lead Member Adults, Health and Independence, South Tyneside Council), Ryan Houston (Young People IAS Officer SENDIASS), Hazel Cuthbertson (Service Manager Early Help), Delana Lawson (Quality Assurance & Regional Manager Healthwatch England), Margaret Bell (HWST Volunteer), Joanne White (STSFT), Lynda Reay (STSFT), Elizabeth Sunduzwayo (New Hope Church),</p>	
2	<p><u>Guest speaker</u> Jennifer Owen, Chair of the Northern Regional Local Dental Committee including Gateshead and South of Tyne</p> <p>Presentation: Why Can't I see an NHS Dentist Jennifer talked about her personal passion for NHS dentistry services. She outlined the difficulties facing NHS dentists during 2023/24 which impacts on the general population and their access to oral and dental healthcare across the UK.</p>	

	<p>A number of reasons why NHS dentistry is financially unstable were given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dentists are allocated a set number (units of activity) that they can see in a year. • These funded units are now 22% lower than they were in 2010, making a financial loss to their practice. • As more practices move to private care, increased pressure is applied to the remaining NHS practices. • Areas of high deprivation are successfully converting their practice into private care. • NHS Dentists work at a loss to see complex patients. <p>Jennifer pointed out that dental care is the single biggest reason why patients call 111.</p> <p>She can understand why many NHS dentists are turning to private practice as in real terms 30% of private patients will cover the cost of seeing 70% of NHS patients.</p> <p>Nationally, there are 90% of practices who are not accepting adult NHS patients and 80% not accepting child NHS patients.</p> <p>Regionally there have been 14 contract hand backs in the last financial year.</p> <p>Other factors include negative social media messages creating pressure for practices recruiting and retaining staff. This needs to be reversed and used to get positive messages out.</p> <p>The Dental Recovery Plan introduced by the previous government in February 2024 didn't go down well with the public. The national plan identifies a range of new methods though there is not the workforce to deliver and the process to bring in overseas dentists is complicated.</p> <p>In Jennifer's opinion, moving forward, urgent care could become the focus.</p> <p>Jennifer's presentation is available on request.</p> <p>A question-and-answer discussion took place.</p> <p>Q. What can dentists do for ageing people?</p> <p>A. Implants have always been private as the NHS won't fund. Insurance can be taken out, but the cost is significant. The only solution is either to have dentures fitted or no treatment if it cannot be afforded.</p> <p>Q. As a community how can we help the public?</p> <p>A. The public are not all aware that they can call 111 which can be a considerable saving to dental care. Communication and information sharing is key.</p>	
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	<p>Q. Region wide we have some rural areas, how does this work? A. We are trying to keep dentists who operate in rural areas as NHS dentists so that older people do not have to travel long distances.</p> <p>Q. What does a contract hand back mean? A. A dentist won't see any NHS patients.</p> <p>Q. Is there an increase in extractions. Is there a reduction in self-care? A. People do expect the NHS to pick up their care. Having no appointments for regular check-ups creates further difficulties.</p> <p>Jennifer was thanked by the Chair and those present.</p>	
3	<p>To note appointments to the Board of Directors.</p> <p>JL proposed Angela Fahey as a new Board member. Date of appointment 8 January 2024.</p>	
4	<p>To Receive Healthwatch South Tyneside's Annual Report and Accounts</p> <p>Agree and approve minutes of AGM held 19/7/2023. The minutes were agreed as a correct and accurate record.</p> <p>Chair's Reflections on the year JL reflected on the year and thanked everyone involved for their commitment and hard work during this time. JL mentioned a number of programmes such as Best Start in Life, Age Friendly Forum and HAF (Holiday, Activities and Food) recognising the valuable support received from commissioners and service providers. He highlighted how the value of listening to the experiences of the public is where Healthwatch can make a difference.</p> <p>Next Steps and top three priorities for 2024-26 TG outlined the three top priorities for the next two years. These are: Adult Mental Health, Young Peoples Mental Health and Pharmacy First. Through these projects HWST hope to bring back valuable insight to be used to identify initiatives to reduce health inequalities. This will be done through joint collaboration, attending networks and sharing the objectives raised by our communities.</p>	

	<p>SS reinforced that the three top priorities mentioned by TG were set by feedback received by the general public.</p> <p>Comment: We have an ageing population and waiting lists are long. Response: The government are saying in their objectives that waiting lists are reducing. It is other political pressures such as junior doctor strikes which has an impact.</p> <p>Comment: Investment is needed in schools and youth services early to support youth mental health. Practitioners are not always medically trained in this field. Response: Joint collaboration is needed as this is a joint issue with health and social care.</p> <p>Comment: Computer systems are not linked</p> <p>Cllr Paul Dean commented that he hopes that the NHS doesn't give up the fight for funding and that our dentistry and NHS services continue.</p> <p>Comment: Healthwatch can help by getting message across, attending networks and having our own objectives raised by our communities.</p>	
5	<p>Appointment of Accountants JL recommended the reappointment of Quantum Accountancy Services Ltd. This was unanimously agreed.</p>	
6	<p><u>Guest Speaker</u> Anna Hargrave, Divisional Director - Division of Community Services South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust.</p> <p>Presentation: Community Division - overview of services for South Tyneside Residents</p> <p>As the Divisional Director Anna is responsible for all community services. The transfer of the Care Hub following Covid was explained and is working well. To navigate, the services are divided into four directorates. She gave detailed information about the wide range of services held within each directorate, where there have been improvements and where further improvements would like to be made. Through this service patients are cared for by a multidisciplinary team. The focus is home first</p>	

	<p>following hospital discharge rather than a patient going into a care home.</p> <p>Anna informed those present that she is very keen to work collaboratively confirming that she would be in touch with HWST to gather insight.</p> <p>Annas presentation is available on request.</p> <p>A discussion took place.</p> <p>Comment: We always hear about bed blocking in the hospital. It is reassuring to hear your domiciliary care plans. These are well thought out to get people home.</p> <p>Response: Home first is a big piece of work.</p> <p>A good news story was shared, showing how well the system is working.</p> <p>Comment: Over the last five years I have seen a difference in how long my Nana stays in hospital. She now receives oxygen therapy at home, and this has made a massive impact being able to get the support at home.</p> <p>Comment: Good news needs to be pushed more to encourage positivity and more support from the general public.</p> <p>Comment: NENC ICB are the best performing in the country.</p> <p>Anna and her team were congratulated on their domiciliary care plans to get people home sooner.</p> <p>Anna was thanked by the Chair and those present.</p> <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The opportunity was taken to invite further engagement with the range of statutory and voluntary organisations and public representatives present.</p>	
7	JL brought the meeting to a close, thanking those in attendance and the staff and board for their continued hard work at HWST.	
8	Date and time of the next meeting TBC	