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News from Healthwatch Barnet

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Barnet*Coffee time news***February/March 2018**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Healthwatch Barnet Newsletter for February.

We have had a busy start to 2018 and are looking forward to a good year.

Our first task for the year was to bid for the new Healthwatch Barnet contract which is due to start in April. We are keeping our fingers crossed and will let you know as soon as we have any news.

In the mean time we have been busy in lots of different areas!

Volunteer Groups

Enter and View

Enter and View (E&V) is where our staff and volunteers talk to patients, service-users, families and friends, staff and volunteers about their experiences at hospitals, GPs, care homes - wherever the services are being delivered.



The E&V team have been working on some new projects. We have all done some training with the Council's Care Quality team on good practice at mealtimes in care homes and have undertaken the first two visits to care homes observing mealtimes in some depth. These two visits - to [Sydmar Lodge](#) and Sunridge Court - have been really positive. The first report is already on the website. We plan to do some more of these mealtime visits. We have also been to Cricklewood Walk-in Centre which was very interesting and the report will be available soon.

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For more information about Enter & View visit our [website](#).

Primary Care Group

The Primary Care Group are continuing to meet monthly and are working on a variety of projects:

We are just starting some work on patient experience of continence care.

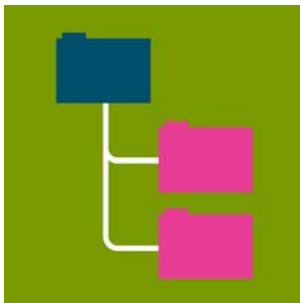
We have engaged with nearly 400 people at one of our GP practices (Millway) exploring people's awareness of different primary care services available to seek medical help without going to A&E. The report will be available very soon.



Some Middlesex University students have been helping us look at the most effective ways of engaging with their peers about health and social care matters.

We have had a stall at Edgware Community Hospital for two days recently to hear the views of patients and visitors about using the hospital.

We have also been working with Homeless Action in Barnet and exploring difficulties for people without a permanent address accessing GP services.



Several of our volunteers have been working with the CCG to develop a flowchart explaining the referral process for patients. The final draft has just been finished and it is going to be trialed at a couple of practices to see if it helps patients understand how the process works and who to contact with any queries. A copy is available [here](#).

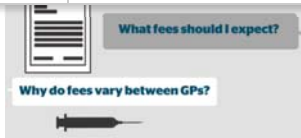


Our report on [Podiatry services](#) has been completed. We have shared it with the key stakeholders and have had some discussions with Public Health already looking at addressing some of the recommendations.



Transport for Cancer Patients. Following our recent [report](#) on this we are working with Macmillan at the Royal Free to review the leaflets available to cancer patients to try and improve communication about transport for this group of patients.

It's confusing for residents to understand what GPs can charge for and what is free. For example, GPs shouldn't charge for a Fit Note, to say you are absent from work through illness or a Death Certificate but can charge for travel vaccinations. We have produced this short leaflet which explains some of the

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For more information about The Primary Care Group visit our [website](#).

Healthwatch Representation at Health and Social Care Meetings

Healthwatch Barnet has a place on the Health and Wellbeing Board and Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group Board. Here is a summary from recent meetings:

Health and Wellbeing Board



Healthwatch has a place at this Board and Selina Rodrigues (Head of Healthwatch Barnet) attended the meeting in January. A variety of topics were discussed including plans to support Smoking Cessation (using online support and more intensive support for complex cases); plans for CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) service development; Public

Health Annual Report and an update on Care Closer to Home. Papers are available publicly [here](#).

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There was a meeting of this committee in early February and Selina Rodrigues attended. She presented our Healthwatch report on [Mealtime Experiences at Royal Free Hospital](#) which was very well received and the Members felt was a good useful report. Selina also updated the Committee on the [PPG](#) (patient participation group) project being run by CommUNITY Barnet. Other discussions were around the STP progress.

Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group Board



The Barnet CCG Board meeting in January was again attended by Selina. The papers are available [here](#).

There were discussions round the new ophthalmology service, care closer to home developments and the regular quality and performance reports.

We are very pleased that the 4 patient representatives for the CCG Public and Patient Involvement Committee have been appointed and the inaugural meeting will be later this month. CommUNITY Barnet worked closely with the CCG in supporting this recruitment.

These Governing Body meetings are public and anyone is welcome to attend - details of dates and venues are all on the CCG [website](#) if you are interested. The CCG would welcome more public involvement.

Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP)/North London Partners in Health and Care

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www.northlondonpartners.org.uk. The staff team are involved in several program boards and regularly liaise with our Healthwatch colleagues in NCL to try and ensure the patient voice is heard. Some new opportunities are coming up for engagement which we will advertise.

For more information about Sustainability and Transformation Plans visit our [website](#).

We also attend some other regular meetings such as the Safeguarding Adults Board, Barnet Council's Involvement Board, Barnet CCGs Clinical Quality and Risk Committee, Central London Community Healthcare Quality Stakeholder Reference Group and various other cross organisation meetings and working groups. These all help us to be aware of the Health and Social Care environment in the Borough.

Health Related Consultations

There are three consultation exercises going on currently which may be of interest:



1. The **Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)** for Barnet has now been drafted and Barnet Council are seeking feedback on it. It is a most interesting document and if you are interested it is available [here](#) and there is a short feedback questionnaire [here](#). **Closing date is 8 April 2018.**



2. NHS England are also consulting the public about **over-the-counter medicines**. They are asking for views on national proposals that some over the counter items should not be routinely prescribed by GPs. The proposals for over the counter medicines for short-term health concerns could save the NHS £569 million a year and encourage more people to self-care.

The consultation is part of a plan to develop new guidance on prescribing. This would mean items that are often routinely prescribed would only be provided where they are necessary and deemed to be 'clinically effective'. The list of minor illnesses or items for which prescribing could be restricted, along with full details of the consultation, are available [here](#). Barnet CCG will develop their policy based on the results of this consultation. **Closing date is 14 March 2018.**



3. Barnet Council are reviewing the **breastfeeding support service** and are holding a consultation event on Thursday 24 May 2018 from 10am to 12.45pm. Registration is required so please see the details [here](#).

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We are pleased to announce that the Barnet CCG funded project supporting Patient and Public Engagement has been extended for a further year which is great news! Robin Charnley runs this project and is employed by Community Barnet, working closely with Healthwatch in this area. He will be developing further his work supporting GP PPGs in Barnet.

This project has a separate newsletter which is well worth a read - please sign up by contacting robin.charnley@communitybarnet.org.uk

There are lots of [resources](#) available on the website, and you can also sign up to the [newsletter](#). Click here for more information about [Patient Participation Groups](#).



We hope you found this month's newsletter interesting. If you have any comments about your local services, please let us know by contacting us on **020 8364 8400** or using our online [form](#).

So there is a lot going on!

And as always a big thank you to all of our volunteers especially and to the friends of Healthwatch for all of your help and support.

With best wishes

Healthwatch Barnet Team
Lisa, Sara, John, Leah, Shilpa and Selina



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