

**Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Annual General Meeting held on  
Tuesday 16 October 2018 at Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre, Newbiggin –on  
– Sea, Northumberland**

**Present**

**Supporters and representatives of health and social care organisations**

Eunice Storey, Susan Case, Lorraine Henderson, Anne-Marie Johnstone, Karen Stuart, Lesley Thompson, Helen Pearce, Denise Robson, Hazel Rogerson, Jennifer Coe, Frances Davies, Carol Morgan, Liz Johnston, Alun Davies, Judith Coates, Ann Gunning, Graham Huntley, Patrick Munley, Stephen Ward, Revd Max Shepherd, Denise Cowans, Danielle Gallagher, Lisa Jenkinson, Una Armstrong, Mary Ormston, Connie Hovsepian, Janette Wood, Suzanne Davey, Jill Henderson, Chris Judson, Tony Hood, Cllr Jeff Watson, Lynne Harding, Karen Bower, Keith Dalton, Jean Wright, Chris Wilkinson, Maggie Wailes, MA Wailes, Derek Bramley, Julia Marley, Chris Walker, Stephen Rickitt, Annie Hart, Norman Dunn, Angela Hara, Colin Nevin, David Stamper, Claire Prime, Sharon Mackinson, Elaine Bell, Ann Wainwright, Michelle Cadby, Anne Gunning, Mark Burdon, Julia Redfern, Elaine Dobson, Joanne Mackintosh, Patricia Rigg, Tom Roll, Heather Alabaster, Angela Bandeira, Yvonne Hush, Marjorie Charrada, Glynis Gaffney, Dianne Thompson, Carol Blake, Lindsay Oliver, Sandra Lonsdale, Ann Murphy, Linda Ball, Hazel Hood, Barbara Dickson, Jean Hedley, Dorothy Mills, David Shovlin, Jean Lovie, Trudy Graham, Deb McGarrity.

**Healthwatch Northumberland Board Members**

David Thompson (Chair, Healthwatch Northumberland), Kevin Higgins (Policy Lead, Northumberland County Council), Liz Prudhoe (Adapt NE), Debra Blakey (Carers Northumberland), Ann Lyall (Northumberland CVA ), Harry Wilson (Independent Member), Margaret Young (Independent Member), Hayley Brown (Independent member).

**Staff members**

Derry Nugent (Project Coordinator), Claire Jackson (Communication and Marketing Officer), Anne Armstrong (Engagement Officer), Tania Porteous (Engagement Officer) Lesley Tweddell (Engagement Officer), Jean Pearson (Administrator).

**Information Stalls**

Seaton Park Medical Group Patient Participation Group, Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), Northumberland CVA, Northumberland NHS Clinical Commissioning

Group (CCG), Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Year of Care, Northumberland Cancer Support, Adapt (NE) and Independent Complaints Advocacy Northumberland (ICAN), Ageing Well in Northumberland, Carers Northumberland, Action on Hearing Loss, Age UK Northumberland, Northumberland County Blind Association, Community Pharmacists.

## **Apologies**

Jen Mclean, Mhari Derby-Pitt, Guy Kirk, Ken Jarrold, Stephen Young , Yvonne Ormston, Audrey Barton, Cynthia Atkins, Carol Pitkeathley, Jim Mackay, Allan Richardson, Janet Guy, Dame Jackie Daniel, Sir John Burn, Tessa Sowerby, Angela Hara, Angela Todd, Katherine Bell, Pete Woods, Margaret Milner

## **1. Welcome – David Thompson, Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Healthwatch Northumberland Annual General Meeting especially Councillor Jeff Watson, Chair, Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the partner organisation which have provided information stand, Board members with a particular thank you to Carol Pitkeathley (former Vice Chair Healthwatch Northumberland) and Sharon Spurling (Carers Northumberland, former Healthwatch Northumberland board member).

David explained that Healthwatch Northumberland is here to find out what really matters to communities in Northumberland, be the eyes and ears of people using health and social care services in the county, championing what is right in terms of health and social care and challenging where necessary.

The Chair explained that the priorities for Healthwatch Northumberland are:

GP Access

Access to Mental Health Services, particularly for young people

Dementia Services

And talked of cross border working, Integrated Care Partnerships and self-care.

The Chair spoke about the difficult decisions and challenges that providers and commissioners need to make, but made a plea to never forget vulnerable people in our county, those who are lonely, unheard or rurally isolated.

## **2. Overview of the Year – Derry Nugent, Project Coordinator**

Derry Nugent presented an overview of the work carried out by the Healthwatch Northumberland staff and board 2017. Presentation available at [www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk)

### **3. Break/Information Stands/Raffle entry**

Stephen Blackman drew the raffle ticket for the hamper prize. The winner of the pamper hamper from Lilac & Thyme was Dianne Thompson.

### **4. Speaker Stephen Blackman, Chief Officer, North of Tyne Local Pharmaceutical Committee**

Stephen Blackman made a presentation on the services provided by Community Pharmacies. He said Community Pharmacy's Vision in Northumberland is to:

- Build a healthy future for all through community pharmacy
- Work with other providers as part of well-connected, integrated clinical networks
- Collaborate on a regional plan to upscale community pharmacy services for the benefit of patients and the NHS

Medicines Supply – providing a clinically safe dispensing service is paramount and why there can sometimes be a short wait. Pharmacists are reliant on manufacturers and wholesalers for supplies but on balance have an efficient distribution network.

Pharmacy nomination:

- You can ask your GP to send all of your prescriptions to your nominated local pharmacy
- Electronic prescription service allows paperless communication between GP and pharmacy – order repeat medications online
- Electronic repeat dispensing allows a GP to authorise up to 12 months of prescriptions so they are ready for collection or delivered every 28 days

Other services provided by community pharmacies:

- Health & wellbeing hubs
- Supporting primary and acute care capacity
- Flu vaccinations

- Stop smoking
- Emergency contraception
- Weight loss

There are 193 pharmacies across North of Tyne and 78 in Northumberland. 88% of the population is within 20 minutes of a community pharmacy. Pharmacists are highly trained clinicians and the pharmacy team includes a range of skills.

It is important to shift perceptions of where to go as a first port of call for healthcare - without pharmacy minor ailments services, 1.4million more people would visit a GP each year, so the service is supporting other providers and relieving system pressures. Pharmacies should be seen as a first port of call - No appointment needed.

### **Questions to Stephen Blackman**

Stephen Blackman answered questions that had already been submitted to Healthwatch Northumberland:

**Q: What is the regime for going into secondary schools, colleges, comprehensives and sports schools to promote careers within pharmacies?**

A: local pharmacists have been in to schools to talk about the role of and careers in pharmacy.

**Q: In the event of Britain's exit from EU how will it affect the staffing in pharmacies? Currently, a number of EU nationals work in the UK on exchange arrangements - are there plans to address this and any potential staffing shortfall which may emerge?**

A: Funding cuts and increase in national minimum wage are more likely to impact staffing than Brexit, however, we're definitely seeing less incoming migration which is making roles harder to fill.

**Q: Why do prescribers order 84 tablets when they are supplied in packs of 100?**

A: 28 day prescribing to minimise waste, however, manufacturers are international and not all supply 28 day packs.

The Chair asked the floor for any questions for Stephen Blackman.

**Q: Heather Alabaster: Sometimes GPs recommend a medication which the pharmacist then says they are unable to supply.**

A: Stephen Blackman: A licence needed under clinical guidelines to prescribe particular medicines. The pharmacy sometimes has a different licence to a GP and may not for example, be able to supply particular age groups.

**Q: Are pharmacists on board with this – people coming to them first before consulting a GP?**

A: Stephen Blackman: It's part of the contract, to give advice and give greater focus to service delivery rather than supply of medication.

**Q: Norman Dunn: Why can I only get 28 days' worth of a medication I've been taking for years? Surely it's more paperwork for the pharmacist and I have to order online then go and fetch it.**

A: Stephen Blackman: 28 day prescribing is cheaper for the NHS, less waste. For long term conditions, advised to ask GP to authorise electronic repeat dispensing and nominate a pharmacy.

**Norman Dunn: In north Northumberland some prescriptions have to be collected from hospitals. The designated hospital for someone living in north Northumberland area can be Wansbeck, why can't it be collected from a local hospital?**

Stephen Blackman – Hospital pharmacies are independent, completely different to community pharmacies and so we have no control over them.  
Healthwatch Northumberland to follow up with Mr Dunn.

**Q: Keith Dalton: I order my prescription with pharmacy online, the packaging is too big to fit through my letterbox and more than is needed for the medication inside. I've been told this is a standard size of packaging and can't be altered. I'm often at work when it's delivered.**

A: Stephen Blackman: It's partly about protecting the goods in the post. I'd advise you to try a different supplier, maybe speak to your local community pharmacy, they deliver.

**Q: Who decides the allocation of flu vaccinations?**

A: Stephen Blackman: The vaccination for over 65s was changed by the NHS at the last minute. Pharmacies and GPs had to place new orders with one manufacturer, to be

delivered in three batches – 20% in September, 40% in October and 40% in November. GPs and pharmacies may be asking over 65s to come back at the end of November.

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 October 2017**

Keith Dalton asked for a written response to his query regarding planning and primary care. Derry Nugent will provide this.

Rev Max Shepherd asked for a correction to the 2017 minutes to refer to Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust. Derry Nugent will ensure this change is made.

### **Close**

The Chair thanked all market stall holders, Healthwatch Northumberland staff and board members, and to everyone attending and asking questions.

Lunch was provided with an opportunity for further networking in the marketplace afterwards.