

Update from Healthwatch York on progress made against implementing recommendations arising from previous Healthwatch York reports.

Health and Wellbeing Board – 2nd December 2015

Access to health and social care services for Deaf patients

Recommendations from the report have been taken up by both providers and commissioners locally.

City of York Council held a meeting with Deaf people on 26.02.15 to discuss ways of improving their involvement in the design and delivery of services. At the meeting, an agreement was reached with Jorvik Deaf Connections to join the Equalities Advisory Group.

NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group have accepted the report, and confirmed that;

“Further development is needed to establish joint objectives with the NHS England’s Local Area Team, particularly where issues have been raised regarding GP services (e.g. the Healthwatch York report about access to health services for Deaf people; and also the requirements or support for GPs to provide interpreters at appointments).

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has, through their Access to Service Group, developed an action plan to improve the experiences of Deaf patients. The plan has now passed to their Fairness Forum for monitoring. One of the key actions is to develop and enhance access to interpreting services such as sign language interpreting, Braille / Audio, Typetalk and hearing loops.

Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust also confirmed they have made changes as a result of the report;

“As a result of the access to services for Deaf people report we are in the process of re-designing our child / adolescence health delivery.”

We are still receiving concerns from Deaf patients. The majority of these relate to access to GP services and refusals to provide interpreting services. However, we have also received very positive responses from some GP practices. For example, John McEvoy of Haxby Group attended our Annual Meeting and sat with a group of Deaf patients. They have since provided interpreters at their own practice Patient Participation Group for some of their Deaf patients who have welcomed the opportunity to help shape local services.

We are currently asking members of the public for feedback about local GP services through our Access to GP services survey (available here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YorkGPs> or ask us for paper copies), and hope this will provide more data on this issue.

Discrimination Against Disabled People

We have not to date received any feedback from local organisations regarding how they have addressed the recommendations in this report. We would welcome an update from local providers or commissioners who have addressed these.

Loneliness – A modern epidemic and the search for a cure

City of York Council has established a working group, as per the first recommendation within the report. The most recent meeting was postponed, but there is a clear will to bring together those who can play a role in addressing loneliness.

NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group and **Priory Medical Group** are supporting a social prescribing scheme being run through York CVS, and a Health Navigator pilot. Both have the power to help link people with support services that can help them and build community resilience. We welcome these initiatives.

NELLI (New Earswick Less Loneliness Initiative – which emerged from the JRF work in New Earswick) is going from strength to strength. Our volunteers now attend their community café monthly, and help put people in touch with local organisations including health and care services.

Safe Spaces Scheme – work is ongoing to establish a Safe Spaces Scheme in York

Dementia Friendly Communities – this work is continuing.