

what would you do?

It's your NHS. Have your say.



NHS Long Term Plan

Focus Group Healthwatch Doncaster Volunteers



Wednesday 8 May 2019

1 Introduction

1.1 Description of the engagement activity

Group Name: Healthwatch Doncaster Volunteers

Short description: A group discussion took place around the NHS Long Term Plan Survey. In attendance were 13 volunteers, more information about the demographics can be found in section 2.5 Data and Information Summary.

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Doncaster would like to thank their volunteers for their valuable contributions to the discussion around the NHS Long Term Plan.

2 What was the purpose of the session?

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this group was to engage with the volunteers about the NHS Long Term Plan and gather their views and opinions on the proposed changes. The session also provided an opportunity to respond to the question “What would you do?”

2.2 What did you do?

The session focused on the survey, with more time being taken to discuss the areas that were of greatest interest to the group. Cards printed with YES and NO were used for ease of capturing responses to questions requiring this response. The session was a general discussion facilitated by The Volunteer Co-ordinator, notes were taken by a main note taker with supplemental notes being captured by the facilitator.

2.3 Results of the activity

An interesting discussion took place with the group around prevention, in principle the group felt that investing in preventing avoidable illness was a good thing. However, the participants felt that health services and education should go hand in hand and they all need to work together to educate individuals from an early age. The group felt that some consideration should be given to training some NHS staff to deliver a prevention programme in schools as teachers do not have the time or the necessary skills to incorporate health into the curriculum.

It was also suggested that the re-introduction of a more in-depth Health Visitor programme would help new parents to introduce and embed healthy lifestyle behaviours in their children, which they felt would help prevent problems developing in adulthood. Concerns were also raised around the lack of suitably trained staff to carry out this area of work.

When asked what people would need to be able to take greater control of their health and what services could do differently the group responded by saying that better GP access, with more appointment time to enable them to fully discuss their health concerns would go some way to helping them manage their own health. They also wanted to be able to discuss more than one issue during an appointment to dispense with the need to come back for multiple appointments.

Easier access to information and support around prevention was also suggested as a means to helping people to have more control over their own health.

The discussion around local services and support highlighted that almost all participants had consulted their local pharmacist and were very pleased with the outcome. However, one participant felt that GP's need to work more closely with Pharmacists in order that they (Pharmacists) can be better equipped to advise patients by being better informed about a patients current medication. This would allow them to deal more confidently with enquiries from patients as the current situation relies on patients remembering/disclosing any medication and pre-existing health conditions which may be contra indicators to any interventions that the Pharmacist can offer.

The discussion around mental health concluded that earlier identification of post-natal depression could be assisted if there were more Health Visitors within the community. The group were unanimous in their support around the proposals for more support being available in schools and colleges, 24/7 crisis support and that an individual's physical and mental health should be treated together.

The group expressed concerns around relying on online services to treat mental health conditions, they felt that a face to face approach was much better to enable professionals to make a better assessment of the support needed for individuals experiencing any difficulties associated with their mental health.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion the group felt that there needed to be a return to more joined up working between health professions (many of the group are retired NHS workers). They felt that since the introduction of Trusts there has been too much of a shift towards working in silos and greater co-operation would reduce duplication and provide a better outcome for patients.

They also felt that some of the money being fed into the NHS going forward should be used to train frontline staff and where this happens gain a commitment from newly qualified staff that they will work for the NHS for an agreed time period. They felt very strongly that the monies should not be spent on creating more Management positions.

2.5 Data and information summary

Date of Engagement Session	Wednesday 8 May 2019
Group name	Healthwatch Doncaster Volunteers
Description of the group or session	Discussion/Focus Group
Life stage	Living Well, Ageing Well
No. of attendees	13
Theme area	General

Age 45-54	1
Age 55-64	1
Age 65+	11

White British	13
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I do not have a disability	8
I have a disability	4
Did not respond	1

Male	3
Female	9
Did not respond	1

Mental Health	1
Learning Disability, Autism	1 (ADHD)
Long Term Condition	7

