

Healthwatch Central West London

Dignity Champions



1. Introduction

Healthwatch Central West London (Healthwatch CWL) is the independent consumer champion for health and social care services and has nearly 6,000 members who share a passion for improving these services in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the City of Westminster.

The Healthwatch CWL Dignity Champions are a group of local volunteers who work to improve people's experiences of health and social care in the borough. Under the auspices of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Dignity Champions carry out peer-led qualitative assessments of local health and social care services using our 'enter and view' power. Healthwatch CWL then produces a report on our findings and makes recommendations for improvements to the service.

The report is then submitted to the provider of the service for twenty working days. Within that timeframe the provider should respond with an action plan for improvement. After that time, Healthwatch CWL publishes the report and the response on our website (<http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/about/our-work/reports/>). A copy of both documents is also sent to the commissioner of the service for follow up via their contract monitoring arrangements. Please see the flow chart at Appendix A for further detail.

The Dignity Champion project has been running for the past 5 years and in that time has been recognised with a 'Dignity in Care' award from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and at a national level by Mr Paul Burstow MP, former Minister for Care Services. Healthwatch Central West London (CWL) is keen to continue to build on the great work of this project in the future.

Healthwatch Central West London is commissioned to conduct three 'enter and view' visits in each of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. Adult Social Care services in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea grant funds Healthwatch Central West London to conduct nine 'enter and view' visits for local residents.

2. Who are the Champions?

The project supports volunteers who are often 'experts by experience' to collect service users experiences as part of our commitment to ensuring that service users have a strong voice when it comes to monitoring the standards of services that providers deliver.

We currently have over 100 Dignity Champions who conduct Enter and View visits, each of them has gone through a recruitment and training programme, including

‘Disclosure and Barring’ checks and safeguarding training, to ensure the quality of the project. Many of them have also gone through specialist training around mental health and/or dementia to ensure adequate knowledge when assessing specialist services. The project is coordinated by a part time member of staff who plans a schedule of assessments, organises the recruitment and training of new volunteers and provides supervision of the Dignity Champions.

3. How do the Champions measure dignity?

Our Dignity Champions’ key priorities are to listen to and understand the views and experiences of local residents, and to speak up about dignity to improve the way services are organised and delivered. The Healthwatch CWL Dignity Champions follow the 10 standards set out in the Department of Health’s ‘Dignity Challenge’¹.

The Dignity Challenge

High quality care services that respect people’s dignity should:

1. Have zero tolerance of all forms of abuse
2. Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family
3. Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service
4. Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control
5. Listen and support people to express their needs and wants
6. Respect people’s right to privacy
7. Ensure people feel able to complain without fear or retribution
8. Engage with family members and carers as care partners
9. Assist people to maintain confidence and a positive self-esteem
10. Act to alleviate people’s loneliness and isolation

To maintain the quality of our assessments we hold quality circles with our champions to ensure they can debrief on their findings and to continuously review the suitability of our methodology.

Assessments typically take place over one or two weeks and will involve multiple visits at varied times of the day and often on weekends. A typical visit will consist of between two - five Dignity Champions (supervised by a member of Healthwatch staff) speaking to service users about their experience of the services and making observations about the physical environment of the service and the behaviour of staff. Dignity Champions use assessment tools tailored to an individual service to

¹ http://www.dignityincare.org.uk/Dignity_in_Care_campaign/The_10_Point_Dignity_Challenge/

collect appropriate information but will also have free form conversations with service users to collect more in depth qualitative information. Dignity Champions will also speak to the carers and family members of service users to seek their views on the service being assessed.

Healthwatch will then publish a report based on information collected during the visits complete with recommendations for service improvement. This report will be submitted to the service provider who will then have a statutory 20 day time limit to provide a response and action plan to Healthwatch. During these 20 days the report is private and confidential. After that time Healthwatch makes the report public and shares our findings with the commissioners of the service.

Over the past 12 months we have assessed the following local services:

Health

- Hammersmith Hospital²
- St Charles CNWL Mental Health Unit³
- Chelsea and Westminster Hospital (cancer)⁴
- Chelsea and Westminster Hospital (Nell Gwynne)
- Hammersmith and Fulham Mental Health Unit (WLMHT, Charing Cross Hospital site)⁵

Social Care

- Forrester Court⁶
- Farm Lane⁷
- Carlton Dene Elderly Resource Centre⁸
- St Vincent's House⁹
- Ellesmere Care Home (report awaiting publication)
- Urgent Care Centres (report awaiting publication)
- Tri-Borough Home care Services (ongoing).

4. Case studies:

² <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Healthwatch-CWL-DC-assessment-of-Hammersmith-Hospital.pdf>

³ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Redwood-report-finalMC.pdf>

⁴ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Dignity-Champions-assessment-of-ChelWest-cancer-services.pdf>

⁵ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/HF-MH-Unit-WLMHT0314.pdf>

⁶ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Forrester-Court-final-Post-visit-with-Beata.pdf>

⁷ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Farm-Lane-report.pdf>

⁸ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Carlton-Dene-Report-Final-Feb14.pdf>

⁹ <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/St-Vincent-Spot-Check-Final.pdf>

4.1 Assessment of the service user experience of Tri-Borough home care services

Over the last four years (as LINK and as Healthwatch), we have spoken to hundreds of local home care users about their experiences and needs from the new contract. We established a project group of home care users and their representatives and co-produced the new contract with commissioners. We also empowered local users to speak to market testing events to ensure potential providers were clear on the customer need.

The findings of the assessment have been presented to Tri-Borough commissioners and to Councillors at Policy and Accountability committees in Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.

From summer 2014 onwards, we have been conducting an updated assessment of the service user experiences across the three boroughs. Our Dignity Champions have been interviewing service users in person and over the phone. The purpose of this work has been to set a baseline for the re-design of the Tri-Borough Homecare service.

We plan to support users to engage with commissioners as part of the procurement process and through implementation. We are currently planning an event to support the new providers to meet the local community to help awareness and the delivery of person centred outcomes.

We will also produce a charter for service users/customers so people are clear on their rights and responsibilities including how to comment and complain. We hope that through triangulating data from Healthwatch (users and representatives), providers and contract management, Officers will have a better oversight of the new service.

This collaborative work between Healthwatch, service users, providers and commissioners provides a positive example of the kind of co-production in service monitoring and improvement and commitment to the principle of using service user views to deliver better services that the Dignity Champion Project represents, in this case service user feedback has directly influenced the Tri-Borough service specification and provided a template for ongoing service user involvement in the monitoring of this service.

4.2 Central North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust - Redwood Ward

Redwood ward is a mental health ward for older people based at St Charles in North Kensington. Our Dignity Champions assessed the ward in July 2014, speaking to patients on a variety of service issues including, the physical environment,

patient safety, relationships and communication with staff, care planning and discharge.

The assessment was carried out shortly after the Care Quality Commission lifted their restrictions on the provider. However, we found there was scope for further improvement.

The report generated by the assessment has acted as a galvanizing force in pushing forward service improvement, eliciting a positive response and action plan from the provider CNWL and being presented to the commissioners of the service, West London Clinical Commissioning Group at their Quality, Patient Safety and Risk Committee. This demonstrates how an assessment and report can bring together service user views, providers and commissioners to look at how a service can be improved.

4.3 Care UK care homes

Over the last year, Healthwatch has assessed three of the four local Care UK homes. Our champions alerted the local safeguarding team to concerns at all three homes at the time of our visits. Whilst we received action plans in response to our recommendations from all three homes, outstanding concerns remained. Through our role on the Safeguarding Information Panel we notified commissioners of issues we had observed at all three homes relating to the organisational culture. We also had concerns about the quality of the action planning received from the provider.

As with all our reporting, we notified the Care Quality Commission once our reports were published. The CQC use our intelligence to inform their schedule of inspections. Although some of the sites had been inspected in recent times, the CQC visited again and confirmed our findings.

A working group was established in Westminster to pick up on concerns. Adult Social Care met with the directorate for Care UK to agree next steps. This issue is now for the attention of Scrutiny/Policy and Accountability colleagues.

5. Next steps:

In a time of reduced resources and a changing health landscape, often patient experience is the first sign of an issue, quickly followed by patient safety. The dignity champions, as local volunteers, have a pivotal role in acting as the local eyes and ears in services and independently informing commissioners and the Care Quality Commission.

As the Labour Manifesto states ‘ *There are many skilled people in Hammersmith and Fulham looking to share their talents with the local communities.*’ We support over 100 people to volunteer for the benefit of their wider community.

We want to protect, and where resources permit extend, this activity as part of our core offer as we have started to embed in health and care quality assurance processes.

‘Develop partnerships with government agencies, the third sector, business and others to use resources better and take a more focused and joined-up approach towards tackling social exclusion.’

And

‘Currently, too much NHS, public health and adult social care activity is undertaken separately in silos.’ (Labour Manifesto)

We note that on page 17 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Labour Party manifesto¹⁰ under ensuring high home care standards it states:

“We will ensure that users of the council’s home care services receive high standards of care by giving service users, their carers and families a formal voice in ensuring that home care providers deliver those standards”

Healthwatch Central West London supports these pledges and believes that the aims and outcomes of our Dignity Champion project works directly to these manifesto pledges.

Healthwatch is entering in to our third year; a year of transition with the agreed aim of achieving full independence from our parent charity Hestia. We have recently been conducting a scoping study to inform our business planning. The peer-led research element of dignity champions combined with our statutory powers and unique position as the only dedicated user involvement organisation in the three boroughs means we are well placed to build on this foundation. Pending funding, the potential future development of the dignity champions’ project could go in many directions such as champion’s visits to prisons or to developing a complementary befriending service to ensure we receive real time feedback between assessments.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about our future direction. In the interim, please see:

¹⁰ <http://gallery.mailchimp.com/f29e63ad0717fb2c8bb51fe61/files/5d4e2853-a38b-4ffa-ad4d-e87126e2425f.pdf>

A full list of Healthwatch CWL reports: <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/about/our-work/reports/>

Older Dignity Champion reports: <http://healthwatchcwl.co.uk/dignity-champions/>

6. Contact details:

Paula Murphy

Director
Healthwatch Central West London

Ph: 020 8968 6771

Email: paula.murphy@hestia.org

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