

Healthwatch is the new independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public, patients, relatives and carers. Healthwatch plays a role at both national and local level and makes sure that the views of the public and people who use services are taken into account.

Healthwatch Stockport is a membership organisation run by volunteers with an interest in health & social care. They are supported by a team of staff to offer help to members carrying out activity on behalf of the organisation.

Healthwatch Stockport has, amongst others, the following responsibilities;

- Promote and support local people to be involved in monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services
- Obtain local people's views about their needs for and experience of local care services
- Tell agencies involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of care services about these views
- Produce reports and make recommendations about how local health and care services could or should be improved

Introduction

Healthwatch Stockport thanks Arriva Transport Solutions for providing the opportunity to comment on this Annual Quality Account. We recognise that Quality Account reports are a useful tool in ensuring that NHS healthcare providers are accountable to patients and the public about the quality of service they provide. We fully support these reports as a means for providers to review their services in an open and honest manner, acknowledging where services are working well and where there is room for improvement.

We share the aspiration of making the NHS more patient-focussed and placing the patient's experience at the heart of health and social care. An essential part of this is making sure the collective voice of the people of Stockport is heard and given due regard, particularly when decisions are being made about quality of care and changes to service delivery and provision.

Our wish is therefore that Healthwatch Stockport works with its partners in the health and social care sector to engage patients and service users effectively and to ensure that their views are listened to and acted upon.

At times, we have had difficulties in our communication with Arriva Transport Solutions, and, although disappointing, this has improved over the past year. We hope to develop this working relationship to make sure that the voice and experience of patients and the public is heard throughout the provision of services, as required within legislation.

The Quality Account

Healthwatch Stockport is aware of many issues that patients have raised with us across Greater Manchester about the service they have received from Arriva Transport Solutions. We are pleased to see that the Governance and Quality team has put in place a number of measures to improve the quality and format of information received through their incident management systems (*Introduction and statement of quality*) and we hope that this will directly translate to an improvement in the experiences of patients.

Healthwatch Stockport note that the Arriva Transport Solutions' Information Governance Assessment Report overall score for 2014/15 was 66% and graded satisfactory (*Statements of assurance from the board*). We would ask what action is to be taken to improve this score.

Although it is positive that satisfaction levels of comfort, care and communication have all improved in 2014/15 compared to the 2013/14 figure - an increase of 4% overall (*Priority 3: Patient experience (Part 1)*), we are aware that under *Priority 3: Patient experience (Part 2)*, the rate of response against the number of journeys made was only 0.2%. In addition, 84% of the breakdown of contacts made to Arriva Transport Solutions, by type, were complaints.

In a service designed to take people with no other means of getting to a health appointment, it is essential that the patient arrives in good time, and to be collected before the department closes. Healthwatch Stockport support the work being done to tackle long pick up waiting times and aborted journeys due to patients not being ready (*Priority 3: Patient experience (Part 2)*).

During 2014/15, Healthwatch Stockport carried out three Enter & View visits of Arriva Transport Solutions at Stepping Hill Hospital. The aim of the visits was to further inform Healthwatch Stockport about the service, give Healthwatch Stockport the opportunity to see the service in action and speak to patients after they had been in the ambulance or were waiting for transport home both from and to Stepping Hill Hospital. Enter & View representatives also spoke to staff and patients in the setting where the services were used as well as asking about the booking system. Recommendations were made to Arriva Transport Solutions, Stepping Hill Hospital and Stockport Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) relating to the experiences shared by the patients spoken to on the day, in particular communication with patients, waiting times and lack of information leading to the hospital choosing to use other providers of patient transport.

Healthwatch Stockport is pleased to see that Arriva Transport Solutions are tackling the issues leading to the use of other providers (*Priority 3: Patient experience (Part 2)*) trialling a text message service and call ahead initiative to ensure patients are aware and prepared for their transport. However, more work is needed in this area for those within access to text message services.

Patient safety incidents, reported by staff, rose dramatically to 907 in 2014/15, apparently due to training on reporting, but the actual number causing physical harm was 83 which includes 11 serious incidents (*Patient safety - incidents*). We hope that Arriva Transport Solutions are able to learn from the incident reports to help improve services.

Healthwatch Stockport is pleased to see many references to planned improvements in 2015/6 including training; compliance monitoring; volunteer drivers and documentation.

Conclusion

Healthwatch Stockport thank Arriva Transport Solutions for the opportunity to comment on this document and request consistency in reporting next year to enable a direct comparison of the information.

If members of the public have any queries or questions or concerns resulting from this report or annex, Healthwatch Stockport can be contacted by e-mail at info@healthwatchstockport.co.uk, telephone on 0161 974 0753 or you can visit our website at www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk.

Healthwatch Stockport