

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

### **REPORT OF HEALTHWATCH LEICESTER & HEALTHWATCH LEICESTERSHIRE**

#### **HEALTHWATCH LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE UPDATE**

##### **Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of recent changes at Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire, along with an outline of the current structure and future plans for 2021.

##### **Recommendation**

2. The Board is asked to note the contents of the report and comment on Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire's approach to promoting the needs of patients and communities across Leicester and Leicestershire.

##### **Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire Structure**

3. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire was established to champion the views of patients and social care users in Leicester and Leicestershire, with the goal of making services better and improving health and wellbeing. The organisation provides information, advice and signposting support to members of the public, recruits volunteers to support identification of key priorities from public insight and stakeholder discussion this through the Healthwatch Advisory Board, and also to build meaningful relationships with strategic partners and stakeholders.
4. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire operate under Engaging Communities Solutions, an independent Community Interest Company (CIC), with the Healthwatch Advisory Board including a non-exec Chair.
5. Following recent changes, the organisation staffing structure now includes a Chief Officer, Deputy Manager, four substantive Community Outreach Leads and a Senior Analyst.
6. The organisation has a pool of 11 volunteers to support activity such as "Enter & View visits" although these have not been possible due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
7. Due to Covid-19, we continue to work remotely with members of the public being able to access us and leave messages on our office answerphone, send emails, use social media or via our Facebook page.

8. Our Health Advisory Board also continues to meet remotely to ensure public representation and connectivity. We are also diverting phone calls from the office to connect directly with our remote working staff.

### **Activity**

9. At the beginning of 2020, and prior to Covid-19, the following activity took place:

#### *Surveys*

10. Healthwatch conducted Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) surveys at the Valentines CAMHS crisis centre on Anstey Lane as well as specialist services located at the Westcoates Centre. LPT's response to the review has been positive and the action plan produced is being considered as part of a separate report on the Board's agenda.
11. Additionally, a survey was undertaken to gain an understanding of the experience of people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in finding and visiting dentists across Leicester and Leicestershire.
12. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire was also shortlisted for a Healthwatch England national award for its "Enter and View" report on Hospital discharge lounges at Glenfield Hospital and Leicester Royal Infirmary. This report supported by volunteer involvement, highlighted gaps and recommendations that led to key improvements for patients.

#### *Disability Access*

13. An "access to information and services" event targeted at people with a Disability was held within the main hall within the Age UK Clarence House building. Various services and charities had stalls to promote their services and the event was well attended with attendance in excess of 120 participants

#### *Covid-19*

14. The global pandemic has considerably affected key areas of our work: particularly in patient and community engagement as well as volunteer involvement. The sudden impact of Covid-19 could not be planned for and significantly affected our major programs.
15. We adapted to new ways of working using online meeting platforms, new technologies whilst also recognising those members of the public that increasingly became digitally excluded. Initial responses to getting information out to communities focussed on traditional marketing and communications.
16. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire were instrumental in voicing the communication needs of Disabled and marginalised communities and suggested use of alternative methods such as the use of videos with presenters that reflect the communities being targeted. This has been very effective in reaching and influencing behaviours and awareness of Covid-19.

17. Following feedback from members of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community, we highlighted to service providers that translations may not address the needs of generations who no longer read or write their language from heritage. Where translations were developed, it was clear that consideration had not been taken on the distribution of material within community settings or the design of material (font size and difficult to read colours).
18. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire took into consideration the national impact of Covid-19, especially on BAME communities and established via a dedicated community reference group, the “BAME Connect” initiative. This unique project began looking into channels of communication and influence and relevance to BAME community settings.
19. The project has attracted the keen interest and involvement of Leicester De Montfort University (Stephen Lawrence Centre) as well as Leicester Community Radio. A research funding bid has been made to the National Institute for Health Research to look at patterns of prevalence within BAME communities (Hypertension).

#### Community and stakeholder involvement

20. We have organised coffee clubs, attended interviews on Leicester Community Radio, generated awareness of placing an advert in Charnwood News and initiatives such as “Lockdown Getting You Down”.
21. We continue to work with stakeholders including weekly meetings with Clinical Commissioning Group engagement leads where we continue to champion the patient voice and highlight access issues.
22. In December 2020 we organised two online consultation events to give members of the public more opportunities to have their say on the Hospitals and Maternity Reconfiguration plans before the final consultation deadline.

#### General messages and concerns from the public

23. The majority of messages received predominantly relate to people who have experienced difficulty in accessing GP and Dental appointments or having experienced negative behaviour. This includes patients feeling they have been treated badly by reception staff, not being given information on complaints procedures or a complaint form or suddenly told they are outside of the practice catchment area.

#### Special Projects

24. Armed Forces Veterans: A revised look into issues affecting Armed Forces Veterans includes a shift away from passive meetings/reports to a more pro-active approach to nurture sustainable participation of veterans.
25. This includes establishing an online Armed Forces Veterans Forum as an engagement platform and vehicle to develop regular participation and intervention initiatives. This includes a call out for veterans to submit video clips using their mobile phones to highlight their experiences and access to health, especially areas

such as mental health. The videos would then be collated into a mini documentary to raise awareness and also attract potential funding for creative/innovative projects e.g. an artist to work with veterans to design an Armed Forces Veterans Mural. This would attract media attention to raise awareness of veterans needs whilst also having the potential to attract sponsorship/funding.

26. Mental Health: We are also looking at the area of Mental Health and this includes areas previously defined as Mental Health in Crisis. With the ongoing limitations of lockdown and pressures on the health and social care system, we are developing an approach to include surveys and identifying connection with patients and carers via networks and community forums/support groups. There is also the challenge of connecting with domiciliary care although we are looking at connecting via Home Help, Meals on Wheels providers as well as local authority leads.
27. Safeguarding: Similarly, we have adapted our approach to look into the area of safeguarding. A survey is now on SNAP Survey and ready to go with supportive posters and a video. In anticipation of accessible information, we have identified translation resources and contact for translations services. Forum development will also be part of the delivery of this theme.
28. Multi Morbidity: A survey has now been drafted. Our initial approach was going to be on focus groups but we cannot deliver outreach work for the foreseeable future. A contacts list has been established and initial contact has been made with Diabetes UK.
29. Our timelines for completion of some of the projects highlighted is within the first quarter of 2021. Other projects such as BAME Connect are ongoing developments

### **Initial thoughts/plans for 2021**

30. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire firmly believe that priority projects should be identified and agreed as a result of priorities identified by patients and public. It is therefore likely that we will consult and encourage patients and public involvement to inform our priorities whilst also taking into account feedback from our contracting authorities and stakeholders.
31. Our ongoing emphasis will remain on the various impact of Covid-19 such as mental health due to isolation, worries about the vaccines as well as ongoing information and awareness, especially amongst marginalised communities, homeless/rough sleepers, migrant workers and Gypsy and Traveller communities.
32. Quality of care for people in care and digital exclusion are other areas that are being considered.
33. Future plans will be further considered and agreed by the Health Advisory Board.

### **Officer to Contact**

Name and Job Title	Mukesh Barot, Chief Officer
Telephone:	07732 683452
Email:	<a href="mailto:Mukesh.barot@healthwatchll.com">Mukesh.barot@healthwatchll.com</a>

**Relevant Impact Assessments****Equality and Human Rights Implications**

34. Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire value and are committed to Equality Diversity and Human Rights and seek to embed the requirements of the Equality Act 2020 and ensure all protected characteristic groups are within the focus of our recruitment and service delivery.

**Partnership Working and associated issues**

35. With the ongoing impact and challenges of Covid-19 and its variants, it is absolutely vital for continued partnership working and positive scrutiny.

This page is intentionally left blank