



# On equal terms

Then and now

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire

Annual Report 2020-21



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# Message from our Chair



I am very pleased to present the Annual Report for Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire for the year 2020-2021. With the impact of ongoing pandemic restrictions, the Healthwatch Advisory Board (HAB) and our staff remained active by moving to online meetings.

We recognised however that not everyone can access digital technology and therefore looked into areas of digital exclusion. I want to thank all our Board members for their continued passion and dedication to Healthwatch.

Our Board Members bring a broad range of skills, experience and skills to inform our priorities and decision making whilst also participating with various committees and organisations.

We are your voice to influence and make a difference to health and social care both across Leicester and Leicestershire.

**"We have adapted our way of working in the past 12 months due to the pandemic and have had to pause our Enter and View programme. The Healthwatch team and volunteers have supported our communities with food parcels, prescription collection and marshalling at the vaccination centres. We have hosted several online engagement events to hear about patient experiences, offer support and stay connected with our communities."**

We worked collaboratively with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and colleagues at Healthwatch Rutland examining the impact of Covid-19 and patient experiences in accessing primary and secondary care. We had over 1300 responses to the survey. The full report and findings can be found on our website.

Working with colleagues from Leicester Hospitals we carried out a desktop review of the Discharge Lounge at Leicester Royal Infirmary. While there was some improvement following our previous visit the year before, we do still have recommendations.

May I take this opportunity to thank all who have engaged with us at Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire in the last twelve months, those who shared their experiences, and all the providers who have made changes to improve services as a result of the feedback.

**Harsha Kotecha, Chair of Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire**



# About us

## Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Leicester and Leicestershire. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

## Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

### Our goals



#### 1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



#### 2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



#### 3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



**“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the Covid-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. Covid-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”**

**Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England**

# Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

## Reaching out



We heard from

**6272 people**

this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

**196 people**

this year.

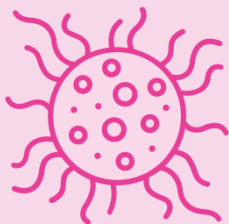
**11153 people**

Engaged through our website.

**3583**

Engaged with us through social media.

## Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

**16150**

People during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**8 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we made **39** recommendations for improvement.

## Health and care that works for you



**14 volunteers**

helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed 1,046 hours.

**We employ 6 staff**

100% of whom are full time equivalent, which is the same as the previous year.

We received

**£299,989.92 in funding**

from our local authority in 2020-21 which is 1.12% more than the previous year.



# Theme one: Then and now Hospital Discharge



## Then: Discharge from Hospital

**In July 2019, we visited the discharge lounges at Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester General Hospital and Glenfield Hospital.**

We wanted to understand the experiences of patients being discharged from hospital, how involved patients were in planning their discharge, if they were happy with the process of being discharge, and how comfortable they were with what was decided for their discharge in terms of where they were discharged to.

We found that most patient admissions were unplanned or emergency admissions. This would mean that their discharge planning would take place whilst they were in hospital and that no planning could take place prior to their admission as could happen with a planned admission.

Waiting for medication was a major cause for delays, with patients left in the discharge lounge for long periods of time with little or no information.

**We were shortlisted under the 'The impact our team makes' category in the Healthwatch Awards 2020 for the hospital discharge project which has helped an NHS hospital understand how they could improve their patient discharge process.**



## Now: Improvements to the discharge process

**In October 2020, we revisited the lounges to find out if there had been any changes or improvements. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the interviews were conducted by the Matron and her team at Leicester Royal Infirmary only.**

We found that University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) have introduced new Covid-19 pathways for all processes including discharge. The discharge lounges have been decorated since our first visit and they appear to be more comfortable and brighter for patients.

We have raised with UHL the need for better communications on the wards when organising the discharge for patients and the ongoing issues for patients having to wait for both medication and transport.

Nationally, the work is being used by NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care to support the review of the discharge guidance and has highlighted the need for greater support for those with low level or short term needs leaving hospital. This is due to be outlined in the refreshed guidance.

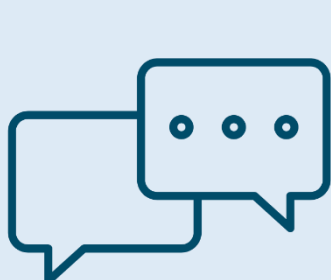


The discharge lounge at LRI



**"Listening and responding to patient feedback is integral to our transformational approach to service redesign. We will be using this feedback within our safe and timely discharge quality improvement work stream to shape our discharge services going forward".**

**Gill Staton, Head of Nursing, Patient Flow and Discharge, UHL**



### Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.



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## Theme two: Accessing and using Children and Mental Health Services (CAMHS)



### Then: What does CAMHS look like?

We wanted to understand the experiences of young people using the Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Leicester and Leicestershire.

We have received feedback from parents over several years about delays in accessing treatment for CAMHS.

In 2016, Healthwatch Leicestershire visited the CAMHS Unit and young people told Healthwatch that there was a positive relationship between them and the staff. We saw evidence of a well-developed programme of activities (therapeutic and social) for young people. Staff told us that Carers' Assessments are not routinely offered.

CAMHS was a national focus for Healthwatch England in 2017-18 and is an area of concern highlighted in several Healthwatch areas across the Midlands.

Work has been carried out by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) to address the delays within CAMHS. We received feedback to suggest this may have moved delays from waiting to be assessed, to waiting for treatment. Further investigation was therefore needed to see if this is the case.



## Now: Improved CAMHS services

We wanted to find out how people feel about different aspects of the CAMHS service. We attended clinics at Westcotes and Valentines Road to speak to people who were waiting for appointments.

90 people completed our survey. We shared our findings with LPT who reviewed and considered the findings and our recommendations.

### Some of the changes implemented:

The introduction of the Triage and Navigation service in May 2020 has enabled referrals for emotional and mental wellbeing to be appropriately directed to the right agency. This has resulted in a reduction of inappropriate referrals to Specialist CAMHS.

As part of the national response to the Covid 19 pandemic, LPT has operationalised an all age Urgent Care Hub for people in mental health crisis. This service offers urgent mental health assessment, initial treatment and signposting. This service is well utilised and will continue on a permanent basis going forward.

November 2020, saw the launch of 'The Beacon' – new mental health facility for children and young people in Leicester and Leicestershire. We asked for and received commitment to Young People being involved on the recruitment panel for the selection of staff who will be working at The Beacon.

Posters and information leaflets are now on display in all waiting areas advising Children and Young People (CYP) and their families on how to raise concerns or make a complaint.

The CAMHS website has been updated to include information on support services including Health for Teens and Chat Health as well as a clear link to accessing urgent mental health support through the Central Access Point which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

With regard to access to services, LPT have established a working group looking at improving access to CAMHS for CYP from black and minority ethnic communities.



**"Our vision at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) is to 'create high quality, compassionate care and wellbeing for all' – and our patients and families are at the heart of this. We are proud of our close relationship with Healthwatch and value their independent voice and supporting our priorities around patient involvement and experience. In particular, our Patient Experience and Involvement Team have worked more closely with Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire over the past 18 months and they have been integral at supporting and championing the Trusts patient experience and involvement agenda."**

**Kamy Basra, Associate Director of Communications, LPT**



## Responding to Covid-19

**Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.**

**This year we helped 16150 people by:**

- Providing up to date advice on the Covid-19 response locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Telephone befriending service
- Supporting the community volunteer response - we have given **42** hours of volunteer support and delivered **458** hot meals to families and individuals
- We reached **100,000s** of listeners with appearances on BBC Radio Leicester and Radio Seerah
- Participating in the Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK Leicester video which has had over **77K** views on Twitter

## Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



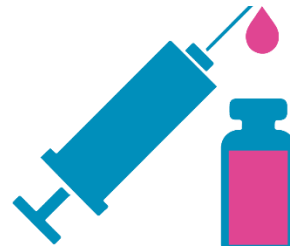
GP services



Dentistry



Support services



Vaccines

## Adapting to Covid-19



We adapted to new ways of working using online meeting platforms and new technologies, whilst also recognising those members of the public that increasingly became digitally excluded. Initial responses to getting information out to communities focused on traditional marketing and communications.

We 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.



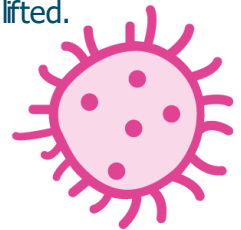
**“I have been on Healthwatch for a few months and was only able to join in Zoom meetings which I am pleased to discuss Deaf People’s problem with communications due to wearing masks. As I am the Chair for ‘Over 50’s Deaf Club’, I am aware that some do not have access to websites, computer or WhatsApp. With the lockdown I was able to contact them through Facetime or texting.” - Anne Lawrence**

## Using Health and Care service during Covid-19 lockdown

We wanted to understand how the national pandemic lockdown was impacting on how residents were accessing health and care services as well as how services were changing to meet the challenges of such restricted patient mobility.

In partnership with the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) we reached out to local people to share their views. We ran a survey between 29 April and 7 June 2021. In total 1383 responses were received with 835 responses from people across Leicester and Leicestershire who told us that:

- There was a good access to information available. However more consistent communications would have improved patient experience. There was almost too much information, so understanding what guidance to follow became much more challenging.
- Having a greater focus on online or phone triage within Primary Care services was seen a mostly positive for residents.
- A significant portion of residents have not sought help and support for health and care issues during lockdown. This is likely to impact on services once restrictions are lifted.
- It is widely felt that the pandemic has had an impact on people's mental health.



## BME Connect

The response to our survey from minority ethnic (BME) people was low and this limited our ability to analyse how the Covid-19 lockdown impacted on these communities. Therefore, to understand further the impact of Covid-19 lockdown on minority ethnic communities, we established 'BME Connect' – a platform for communities to come together to talk about the issues that matter the most to them.

This unique project began looking into mainstream methods of marketing and communication and its impact, influence and connectivity to BME community settings.

We have been working with NHS engagement leads, voluntary and community groups, De Montfort University (Stephen Lawrence Centre) "De-Centred" community podcasts and Leicester Community Radio to look at how minority ethnic communities are communicated with and involved by NHS and Council services.

We continue to work with different community representatives across the City and County to improve sustained engagement, access and communications.



### Contact us to get the information you need

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# Volunteers

**At Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire we are supported by 14 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.**

## **This year our volunteers:**

- Supported our online 'Healthwatch Hour' sessions, activities and events
- Carried out website reviews for local services on the information they provide
- Helped support our day-to-day running
- Discussed additional support needs e.g. Training
- Volunteers participated in an end of year festive get together and quiz



### Moraig Yates

"I am a long-time member of Healthwatch and over the past year I have been involved in Zoom meetings with the Forum and Enter and View teams. I have also enjoyed accessing GP websites for a survey we have been doing, finding out which ones have easy access to information, and which are more difficult."



### Mark Farmer, Healthwatch Advisory Board Member

"As someone with mental ill health, I have used my Healthwatch role to champion the voice of service users and carers in the provision of mental health services. I have been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that something is done about the high rate of male suicides, the long waiting times for secondary mental health services and that services focus on keeping well and happy. I am pleased to report that all these areas are going to be prioritised."

Due to the ongoing pandemic restrictions, The Healthwatch Advisory Board (HAB) moved to host online meetings. Towards the end of the year, we were sad to see Rita Patel leave to continue her role in research.

We have appointed a new member, Kash Bhayani who brings a wealth of board experience, and his early career was in social care working with various client groups who have difficulties including mental health, substance use, offending and domestic abuse.



### Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch.



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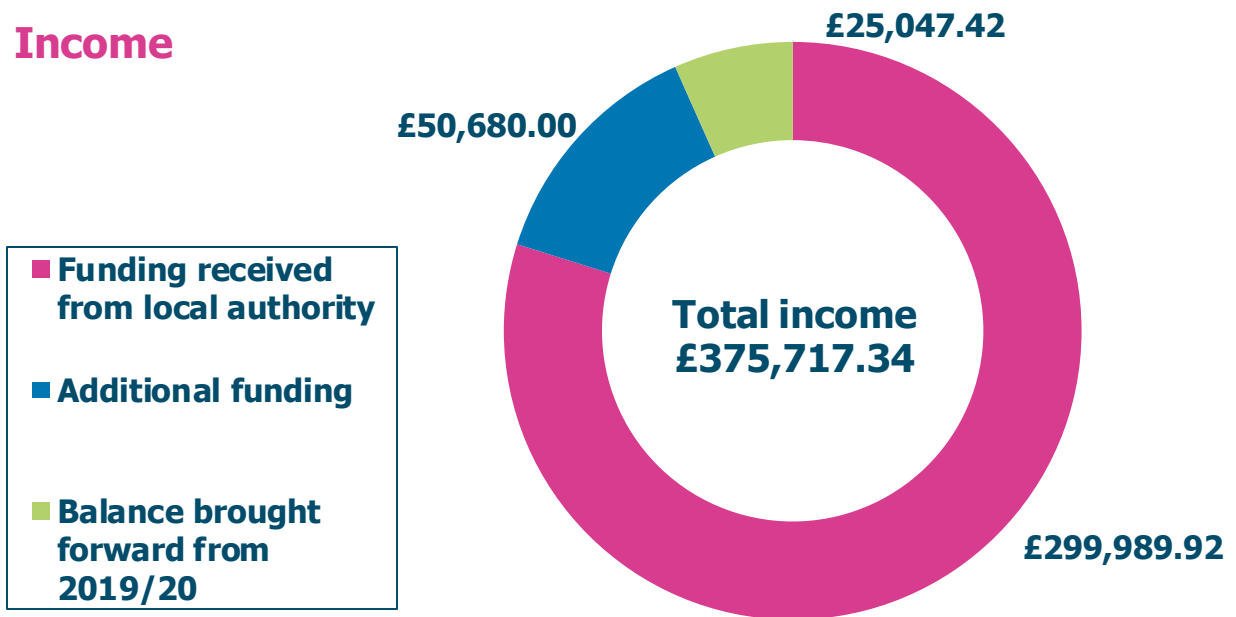
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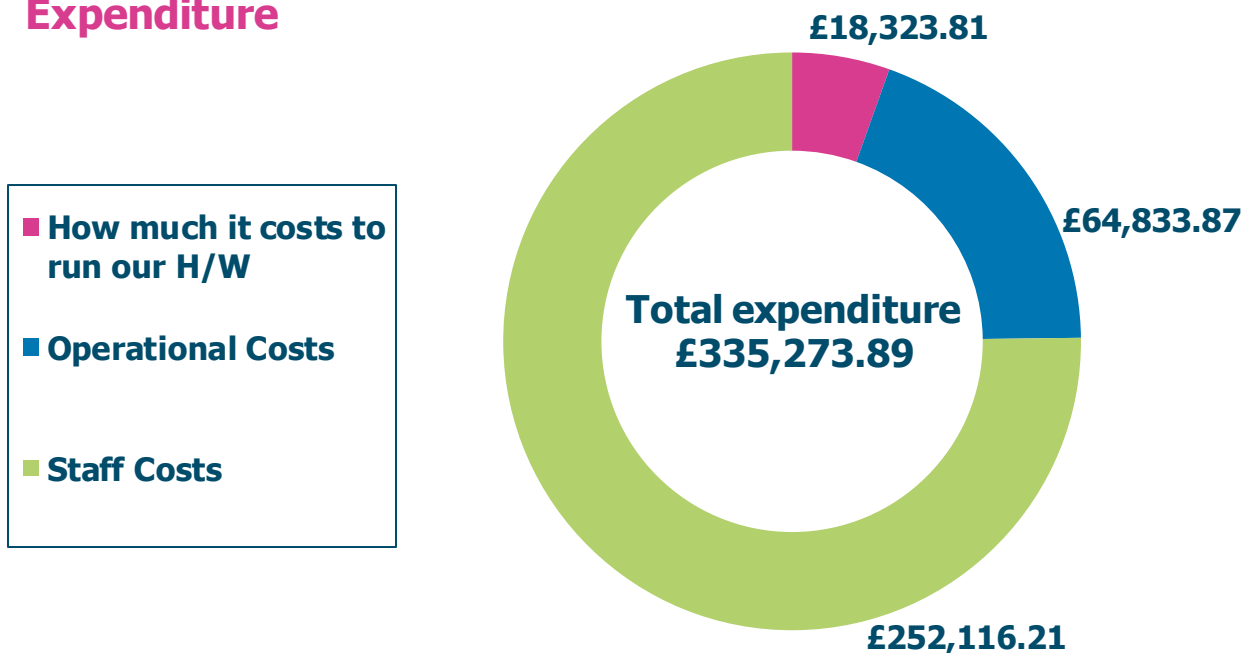
# Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

## Income



## Expenditure



# Next steps & thank you

## Top three priorities for 2021-22

1. Reviewing the new models of care (changes in response to the pandemic)
2. Male Suicide, particularly in ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ communities
3. Homelessness – Access to primary care

## Next steps

Each year, Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire develop and deliver special projects based upon and informed by local feedback as well as identification of issues, gaps or barriers.

This work is in addition to our core programme of work and is supported by and agreed by our commissioners within Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. Our initial focus will take into consideration the following areas.

1. Access to dentists
2. Personal health budgets
3. Social isolation and loneliness

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire continue to play an effective role championing the patient voice, especially influencing health service engagement priorities in areas such as inclusive and accessible marketing and effective communications. Throughout the various phases of lockdown, we have continued to champion local people's views and concerns including hospitals and maternity reconfiguration and consultation activities.

The new management team and staff have worked hard to overcome initial challenges of staff turnover and the impact of the pandemic including completion of outstanding projects and work priorities. We have forged closer relationships and partnerships across health and social care and continue to work closely with our colleagues at Healthwatch Rutland.

Our new programme of activities for 2021-22 will see increased patient and community empowerment and engagement, work with Children and Young people, work with Homeless and Rough Sleepers, Male suicides as well as continuation of work on Covid-19 and Safeguarding. We will also be working more closely with Health and Wellbeing Boards and other committees to represent and increase the patient and public voice.



# Statutory statements

## About us

Engaging Communities Solutions (ECS) is the contract holder for Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire. The ECS corporate office is based at: Unit 42, Staffordshire University Business Village, Dyson Way, Staffordshire Technology Park, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST18 0TW - [www.weareecs.co.uk](http://www.weareecs.co.uk)  
The local office is based at: Clarence House, 46 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, LE1 3PJ.

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

## The way we work

### **Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.**

Our Healthwatch Advisory Board consists of five members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met on a monthly basis with every other meeting being a public meeting. We implemented a new decision making policy and made decisions to approve areas of work to address health inequalities and other areas of focus informed from community feedback and enquiries. In particular we were instrumental in influencing the use of short Covid-19 advice videos with presenters reflecting diverse staff and people instead of the traditional use translations by service providers.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities by carrying out independent research and evaluations of health and social care. We rely on your feedback and experience of health and social care services to influence how services can be improved and how best practice can be shared. This is done via;

- Online consultations, feedback from social media, our feedback centre, direct conversations, forums, networking, collaborative meetings and community radio group interviews.
- Issues identified from phone messages and within reports or committee meetings.



## Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by identifying individuals and diverse organisations previously not known to the health and social care system.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website at [www.healthwatchll.com](http://www.healthwatchll.com) and share it with relevant committees.

### Responses to recommendations and requests

We had 0 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire is represented on the Leicester Health and Wellbeing Board and Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board by Harsha Kotecha, Chair and Mukesh Barot, Chief Officer.

During 2020/21 our representatives have liaised with local authority democratic service officers and other leads to discuss papers for presentation and discussion at board meetings.






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