Commissioners' Report: 2026–27 Quarter 1

Healthwatch Worcestershire
Prepared by: Chief Officers
For: Worcestershire County Council Commissioners

Executive Summary

QUARTER 1 KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

HEALTHWATCH ABOLITION

We continue to monitor national developments regarding the planned abolition of statutory local Healthwatch organisations. An organisational Exit Plan has now been developed, setting out arrangements through to 31 March 2027. Directors and senior staff have been allocated responsibility for different aspects of the closure programme to ensure an orderly transition, maintain business continuity and support the effective management of organisational knowledge, assets, contracts and stakeholder relationships during this period.

QUALTY AND PATIENT SAFETY

During Quarter 1, we submitted responses to the 2025/26 Quality Accounts for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, and West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust. These responses drew on feedback received from local people throughout the year and highlighted areas of good practice as well as opportunities for service improvement, ensuring the patient voice continued to inform quality and safety priorities across local NHS services

REPORTS

In June, we published our Men's Experiences of PSA Testing and Prostate Cancer in Worcestershire report, based on feedback from 154 men across the county. The report explored experiences of PSA testing, diagnosis, access to support and information, and highlighted ongoing variation in awareness, advice and access to testing. Findings showed that while many men reported positive experiences, others described delays, inconsistent information and challenges accessing support. The report made recommendations aimed at improving awareness, earlier diagnosis, clearer communication and more consistent approaches to risk-based testing.

Alongside the report, we produced a prostate cancer awareness podcast featuring Healthwatch Worcestershire Director Chris Byrne and Phil Goodall from the Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group. The podcast used lived experience to raise awareness of prostate cancer, encourage conversations around PSA testing, and support engagement with the project. A short video clip from the podcast reached more than 3,500 views.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITES

We held a Public Board Meeting in May, providing an opportunity for members of the public, partners and stakeholders to hear about our work, discuss local health and care issues, and raise questions directly with the Board. Public meetings remain an important part of our commitment to transparency and accountability.

We engaged face-to-face with **412** patients and carers across **14** events during the quarter. Our largest engagement activity was the Health Awareness Day at Worcester Cricket Club, where we engaged with **105** members of the public.

We continued to prioritise communities experiencing health inequalities, attending events across Worcester, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Malvern and Kidderminster. We are also increasingly aligning our engagement activity with Worcestershire's District Collaboratives, meeting with local health, care and voluntary sector partners to understand local priorities, reduce inequalities and ensure residents' views help inform place-based service improvement. This included attendance at the BARN collaborative event in Bromsgrove and we look to broaden our attendance to these over the summer.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 126 people contacted Healthwatch Worcestershire for signposting, advice and patient experience
- 4,958 website visits
- 1,024 signed up to our newsletter
- 91 members in the Reference and Engagement Group
- 1,339 followers on Facebook
- 412 Face to face engagements

Introduction

This report is submitted to Worcestershire County Council as part of Healthwatch Worcestershire's statutory role as the independent champion for people who use health and social care services.

The report is structured around the agreed **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** and sets out: delivery data and evidence; public feedback, analysis and impact; and examples of influence on commissioning, quality and system learning.

All intelligence is gathered in line with confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection requirements.

KPI 1: Increased Public Awareness of Healthwatch Worcestershire and its' Role

Delivery

- **Public meetings and events**
  - Public board meeting held on 26th May 2026.
- **Volunteers**
  - 10 active volunteers (engagement and delivery).

- **People registered for information** (see Appendix 1)
  - 1,024 registered for information and updates.

- **Reference and Engagement Group (REG)** (see Appendix 1)
  - REG members: 91
    - 85 organisations
    - 6 Experts by Experience

- **Advice, information and patient experience enquiries**
  (see Appendix 1 – "Signposting" section)
  - 126 contacts in total:
    - Patient experience only: 80
    - Advice/info/signposting only: 3
    - Both Patient experience + advice/info/signposting: 43

- **Digital reach** (see Appendix 1 – "Website" & "Social Media" sections)
    - Website: 4,716 visits
    - Facebook: 1,339 followers / 129,820 views
    - LinkedIn: 206 followers

KPI 2: Increased Stakeholder Awareness of the Importance of Healthwatch Worcestershire

Evidence

- Member of the **Health and Wellbeing Board**.
- Attended stakeholder meetings across health, social care and VCSE (full list available on request).
- Signposting data shared with partner organisations:
    - ICB – see Appendix 4
    - H&CT – see Appendix 5
    - Acute Trust – see Appendix 6

KPI 3: Promoting and Supporting Public Involvement in Planning, Policy, Commissioning and Scrutiny

Evidence of Involvement and Influence

- **Men's Experiences of PSA testing and Prostate Cancer in Worcestershire**

    - 154 men's responses gathered on PSA testing and Prostate Cancer
    - Signed off at Public and Closed Board meetings

Impact: The report gives direct insight into where improvements are needed and provides patient-based evidence to inform future service development, awareness campaigns, and early diagnosis initiatives. Alongside the report, our **prostate cancer awareness** podcast helped extend the reach of this work, encouraging conversations about prostate cancer and prompting men to

consider their own risk, with a promotional clip reaching more than 3,500 views locally.

All reports were shared with Healthwatch England and added to the national library.

KPI 4: Enabling People to Share Their Views and Experiences of Local Services

Evidence

- **Total public contacts recorded: 518**
  (see Appendix 1 – "Contact Channels" section)

- **Channels used:**
  - Face to face: 412
  - Healthwatch England referrals: 34
  - Phone: 38
  - Website: 15
  - Social media: 0
  - Email: 19

- **Enquiry Outcomes:** (see Appendix 1 – "Signposting" section)
  - Support to access information/services: 57
  - Provided detailed patient experience: 83

- **Signposting complexity** – estimated time supporting enquiries
  (see Appendix 1 – "Complexity" section)
  - Total cases assessed: 126
  - 112 up to 2 hours
  - 11 more than 2 hours and up to 4 hours
  - 3 more than 4 hours and up to 8 hours
  - 0 more than 8 hours

Impact: Our Advice and Information Service not only helps people access the support, services and information they need, but also provides valuable insight into people's experiences of health and social care. This gives us a real-time picture of what is happening across Worcestershire and helps ensure patient and public feedback informs discussions with NHS and social care decision-makers.

Theme based information gathered through this service is fed back to commissioners / providers of services in data form to provide evidence of the issues that matter most to the people that contact us - see Appendices 4-6 for example reports (please note that these are provided for illustrative purposes only and are confidential).

KPI 5: Formulating Views on the Standard of Local Services and Producing Reports and Recommendations

Evidence

Reports and briefings published this quarter:

- Men's Experiences of PSA testing and Prostate Cancer in Worcestershire
- Responses to the Quality Accounts of the Worcestershire Hospitals NHS Trust (page 78), Health and Care Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service
- Response to consultation about NHS Online Trust

All reports were shared with commissioners, providers, and Healthwatch England.

KPI 6: Ensuring Local Views Influence National Policy

Evidence

- Quarterly return: all signposting and patient experience data uploaded to Healthwatch England.

Impact: This ensures Worcestershire residents' experiences inform national insight, policy advice and regulatory intelligence.

KPI 7: Providing Advice and Information to Support Informed Choices

Evidence and Impact

- Enquiries supported: 126

KPI 8: Escalation to Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission

Evidence

- Quarterly CQC meetings (director lead).
- All reports shared with Healthwatch England.

KPI 9: Good Governance and Quality Assurance

Evidence

- Board membership, decision-making policies and minutes published on the Healthwatch Worcestershire website.
- Public board meetings and policies are accessible to residents.
- ISO Accreditation – external audit passed Jan 26 (no non-conformances or observations)
- Cyber Essential Accreditation (renewal due Q2)
- In light of current uncertainty surrounding the future of Healthwatch Worcestershire, an Exit Plan has been prepared to manage the transition process. Additionally, the Company and Contract Risk Registers are being reviewed more regularly.

KPI 10: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Evidence (see Appendix 2)

- **Volunteers:** 10 active volunteers

Conclusion

During Quarter 1, Healthwatch Worcestershire has continued to ensure that the experiences of local people inform decisions about health and social care services across the county. Through engagement with 412 patients and carers, support provided through our Advice and Information Service, and the publication of our report on men's experiences of PSA testing and prostate cancer, we have gathered and shared evidence that highlights both good practice and opportunities for improvement.

Our work this quarter has influenced discussions on quality, patient safety and service development through contributions to NHS Quality Accounts, consultation responses and ongoing engagement with system partners. Alongside this, we have maintained strong governance arrangements and developed an Exit Plan to manage the planned closure, ensuring continuity and responsible stewardship throughout the period ahead.

As we move into Quarter 2, we will continue to champion the patient voice, focus on communities experiencing health inequalities, and work collaboratively with commissioners, providers and the voluntary sector to support improvements in health and social care services for Worcestershire residents.