

Healthwatch Worcestershire Annual Social Value Report 2019/20

Healthwatch Worcestershire (HWW) is committed to developing social value as a core function of its work. Through its engagement with people and patients from a diverse range of communities across Worcestershire, HWW seeks to increase social capital by enabling the patient voice to be heard in relation to the improvement of health and care services.

HWW demonstrates its commitment to improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local area in the following ways.

Social

Volunteers

HWW has 11 volunteers who support its work in face to face and online engagement, they also utilise their expertise in specific project work as appropriate. The volunteers are valued and included in:

- Training opportunities with staff and Directors
- Safeguarding training prior to the commencement of specific projects
- Twice yearly volunteer thank you events

Volunteers feedback that being part of HWW gives them an opportunity to engage with people about something they care about and consequently feel they are helping to make a difference. One volunteer recently provided valuable suggestions in relation to the COVID-19 response, which was acknowledged by a reply email from our Managing Director. The volunteer subsequently said how much they had appreciated the communication and recognition at a time of social isolation.

During the lock down period of the Coronavirus pandemic we have kept in touch with our volunteers by phone to provide personal contact, this has been particularly appreciated by those living alone.

Reference & Engagement Group

HWW has established a Reference & Engagement Group [REG]; a network of some 90 plus voluntary and community organisations which have an interest in health and social care. The REG acts as a sounding board for HWW activities and empowers those associated with the member organisations to have a voice in their health and social care services.

HWW had also recruited a number of 'Experts by Experience' to its REG. Experts by Experience, of which at any one time number around 10-12, are either individuals who are professionally qualified in a relevant business area eg clinicians and an architect or have lived experience of complex health conditions. The Experts by Experience volunteer specialist advice to HWW and in return achieve self - fulfilment.

Company Membership Scheme

Membership of HWW's membership scheme as a company limited by guarantee is open to those who play an active part in the business of HWW, either as an organisation or an individual; the Directors, volunteers and members of the REG.

HWW had 6 volunteer Co-opted Board members who represent the following voluntary and community organisations as members of HWW's Reference & Engagement Group.

- St Pauls Hostel - Worcester
- The Sandycroft Centre - Redditch
- Young Solutions - countywide
- Swallow's - Cancer support group for head and neck cancer
- Families in Partnership

Co-opted Board members benefit from the opportunity to engage with the strategic work of Healthwatch which in turn can benefit their service users by enabling their experiences to influence service development. Conversely, HWW benefits by gaining knowledge and awareness of the specific health inequalities experienced by these communities.

Community Engagement

HWW seeks to meaningfully engage with diverse communities and where possible organise training to enhance its awareness and understanding. All staff, directors, Co-opted Board members and volunteers are invited to attend, the following training has been provided during the last year:

- Awareness and understanding of LGBT+ community - provided by Out2gether an LGBT+ support group in Worcestershire
- Awareness and understanding of the Gypsy Roma Traveller community - provided by Rural Media Training and community member
- Dementia Friends

Health & Well Being

HWW is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of staff and volunteers and have staff and volunteer handbooks containing relevant information and policies. Its Occupational Health policy is continuously reviewed to ensure best practice is included; a recent example of this is the addition of a Menopause policy.

HWW provides flexible working arrangements and has invested in IT systems to support remote working. This has been invaluable and ensured continuity of service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We promote good practice in the workplace, examples include:

- Membership of Working for Carers - supporting carers in the workplace
- Time 2 Change - supporting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace

All Healthwatch employees are residents of Worcestershire and have a vested interest in local health and care services.

Economic

HWW seek to source all services locally and where possible from micro or small/medium enterprises, examples include:

- Aspens catering
- Attwoods Accountants
- Lucid IT Support
- Office space and Payroll - Wychavon District Council
- June Mills HR Solutions
- Modus - website hosting
- PSU Business Technology - telephone system

Our spend with local providers for 2019/20 totalled £39,791 [15% of annual turnover]. Staff are all Worcestershire residents thus also contributing to the local economy.

Environmental

Office efficiency measures include recycling of:

- glass, plastic, paper and confidential waste via Wychavon DC recycling points

HWW moved to a paper free environment and utilises electronic Board meeting papers. During the lock down period HWW has become proficient at hosting virtual Public Board meetings via ZOOM and internal team meetings via Microsoft Teams.

HWW operate a flexible working from home policy to support a reduction in the company's and employee's carbon footprint and where possible it utilise's car sharing.