

Healthwatch Worcestershire Annual Report 2020/2021

Healthwatch Worcestershire is the people's champion for publicly funded health and social care services. We are independent of the NHS and Worcestershire County Council. We listen to your views about services. We tell the people who run or pay for services what the public think they could do better and what needs to change. Our purpose is to make care better for people.

Covid-19

Covid-19 has changed the way that Healthwatch Worcestershire worked during 2020/2021.

There were rapid and radical changes to the delivery of health and care services, which highlighted some new issues and concerns for patients. Understanding people's experiences, and telling decision makers what we found out, has never been more important.

For [information on Covid-19](#) visit our website and follow us on social media.

Listening to people who use health and care services

We have not been able to meet with people face to face, but we had contact with over 750 people using video conferencing and the telephone. We've increased the use of our website, with over 10,000 visits. Twitter and Facebook have also extended our reach.

NHS Question Time - Ask The Leaders

We invited speakers and submitted your questions to our Panel of NHS leaders from GP, Community Health and Hospital

services at our online event. As well as the 44 people who attended, over 100 people have [viewed this on You Tube](#).

Our Public Board Meetings have been held online and people can log on and join in. [Extracts are available on You Tube](#) and have been viewed over 300 times.

We know that not everyone can, or wants, to use the internet, so we have been actively reaching out to local communities, including through our Reference and Engagement Group - a network of over 100 organisations and “Experts by Experience” - to help us gather people’s views. We have produced bulletins, written fortnightly articles for the Worcester News and been on local radio.

We have made a special effort to reach:

- **Children and young people** - by working with schools, colleges and youth groups to promote our surveys and engagement with students at the University of Worcester
- **Older people** including through the Malvern University of Third Age and Wyre Forest Online Older People’s Showcase
- **People from Ethnic Minority Communities** - including through UP Foundation, Worcester Afro Caribbean Association, Like U, Integrating & Supporting Our Community projects, and community leaders
- **Faith Communities** - through Worcestershire Interfaith Forum and local Mosques
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) communities** - through Out2gether, Mermaids and Trans2gether
- **People with a learning disability** - with support from SpeakEasy N.O.W., Our Way and Where Next and by

attending meetings of Health Checkers and People's Parliament

- **People with Mental Health issues** - including through Home Group and Jigsaw
- **Carers** including through the Carers Partnership and Right Support for Carers

Our Reports and Recommendations in 2020/2021

Some of the projects that we had planned during 2020/21 did not take place due to Covid-19 restrictions and the exceptional pressure being experienced by NHS and care services. However, we have gathered over 3,160 experiences from patients, service users and carers. We have also sent in your views about 3 local and national consultations. All of [our Reports and the responses](#) to them are available on our website.

People's experience of health and care services during Covid-19

In early 2020 we focused on finding out people's experience of services during the first wave of the pandemic.

- We had over 2,400 responses to our Survey
- We provided the NHS and Worcestershire County Council with quick "Spotlight Reports" so they could rapidly act on our findings
- We gathered the experiences of people with a learning disability and Autism through an Easy Read survey
- We made recommendations about information, support, access to services and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- We later ran a Survey for young people aged 13 -19 about the impact of the pandemic on their emotional wellbeing

and mental health. We found out how they want to access information and support and their experiences of using support services

- Throughout the year we asked people to “Tell Us” about services including: Dentists, GP Practices, Covid-19 Testing, Hospital Outpatients, Mental Health Services and NHS 111
- We launched a Survey to understand people’s concerns about the Covid-19 vaccine

Read our Covid-19 Reports and Responses

[Covid-19 - People’s Experience of Health and Care Services](#)

[Covid-19 Learning Disability and Autism Report](#)

[Focus On: GP Practices Feedback Summary](#)

[Covid 19 -Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing](#)

[Dental Services During Covid-19](#)

Ruth Lemiech, Director of Strategy and Transformation at Herefordshire & Worcestershire CCG, said:

“From our perspective as a CCG it’s just incredibly useful to get that scale of feedback. It was an impressive suite of Reports and ... we fully accept the recommendations within the Report ...We are ensuring that all this information is captured, and we are, through our Partnership Board ...following up on these actions”

[Listen to Ruth Lemiech, speaking at our Public Board Meeting](#)

Tina Russell, Chief Executive Worcestershire Children First & Director of Children’s Services (Interim) said about our Covid-19 Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing Report:

“It is excellent that you have managed to reach the voices of 262 young people in this age group. Reaching this many young people can be very challenging and therefore your effective links to them are an important and helpful connection ... we

have noted the valuable content of your report and .. we share and accept its recommendations.”

Service User and Carer Experience of South Worcestershire Community Assessment and Recovery Service (SW CARS)

We surveyed 180 patients and 19 Carers to find out their [experience of SW CARS](#) . Feedback suggests more needs to be done to ensure patients have a Care Plan and Care Coordinator, that Carers details are routinely collected, and Carers are included, listened to and supported.

LGBT+ Experience of Health and Care Services

As a result of [recommendations made in our report](#) published in March 2020 health and social care organisations are improving their data capture in relation to gender and sexual orientation. The County Council is asking Providers to demonstrate how their services are supportive of LGBT+ people.

Making sure people are involved in planning and reviewing services

We have continued to support local people’s involvement in services by distributing local and national surveys, highlighting consultations and opportunities to feedback about services, and encouraging people to take part.

An example of this is Specialist Cancer Services

In future patients may need to travel to larger centres for more specialised cancer care. You told us you want to see services delivered locally wherever possible, and that the location of specialist centres should take into account the existing public transport network. The Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust took our views and these factors into account when deciding to partner with University Hospitals Birmingham for specialist cancer services.

Our HWW representative uses our work to make evidence based contributions at the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Improving the quality of health and care services

You told us patient safety and high-quality health and social care services are really important. We check this by:

- Asking for assurances about services including: the use of ReSPECT and Resuscitate forms for people with a learning disability, meeting demand for mental health services and plans to support Care Homes during the pandemic
- Regular meetings with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and contributing to the CQC 'Identifying and Responding to Closed Cultures' Guidance for Inspectors
- Attending and providing information to the County Council's committees which look at health services and social care services for adults and children and young people
- Commenting on the Quality Accounts of health providers
- Checking how patients are kept safe, and that any concerns are dealt with through feedback to and formal meetings with Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Worcestershire's Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England

A further example is our role in seeking to Safeguard Homeless Adults with Care and Support Needs

Since the death of Cardon Banfield, a rough sleeper, in 2016 HWW has sought reassurance about the quality of safeguarding homeless adults with care and support needs. In 2020 Worcestershire's Adult Safeguarding Board commissioned a thematic review of the multiple deaths and other incidents involving 'rough sleepers' in Worcestershire since 2016. [The report of the Review](#) has been published. HWW will work with the Board to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Report.

Healthwatch - the national voice

Healthwatch Worcestershire is part of the Healthwatch network. Healthwatch England (HWE) is the national organisation and provides us with information and advice. Local Healthwatch information is used by HWE to help build the national picture.

We have engaged with Healthwatch England by:

- Attending the West Midlands (WM) Network meetings for local Healthwatch
- Representing the WM Network on the West Midlands Cancer Alliance, which is reviewing the clinical pathways for all cancer services

Signposting people to advice and information

Over 360 people contacted us to share their experiences or for help/information about local health and social care services. This was an increase from previous years. We “signposted” people to the right information or organisation. We have produced guides in different formats about how to complain about health and social care services.

One of the users of HWW Signposting service said:

“I will always be grateful to you for the care and concern which you expressed when I was talking to you. I was "in a state" not knowing where to turn within the confusion of the various parts of the NHS ... you brought calmness and hope.”

Healthwatch Volunteers

Throughout the pandemic, our volunteers continued to play an important role in support of our work, for example involvement in survey development and report writing, or

provision of feedback to NHS partners on draft patient information.

Finances

In 2020/2021 Worcestershire County Council paid us £260,822 under contract to deliver local Healthwatch services. The main areas of expenditure have been:

Staff costs: £218,328

Establishment Costs including Depreciation: £43,921

Engagement and Volunteering Costs: £5,050

A Tribute to Peter Pinfield from our Chair, Jo Ringshall

“A great sadness for us this year has been the loss of Peter Pinfield, who passed away on 29th January 2021. Peter had chaired Healthwatch Worcestershire since its inception in March 2013.

As well as his outstanding personal qualities of integrity, compassion and leadership, Peter brought a wealth of skills and experience in health and social care to the role. He made an immeasurable contribution to services in Worcestershire, always championing the voice of patients and carers. The esteem in which he was held was shown by the sincere and moving tributes paid to him across the County. We will build on his legacy, and ensure he would have been proud of what, together, we will achieve for the people of Worcestershire.”

Get in touch - Your voice matters!

Telephone 01386 550264

Email info@healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk

Website www.healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk

Twitter @hwworcs

Facebook Healthwatch Worcestershire

Healthwatch Worcestershire

FREEPOST RTEE-GKAT-SRLR, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, WR10 1PT

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