

## Healthwatch Worcestershire Annual Report 2021/2022

Healthwatch Worcestershire is your local health and social care champion. We are independent of the NHS and Worcestershire County Council. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

### Listening to people who use health and care services

Across the year we have had contact with over 3,400 people.

Whilst Covid-19 continued to affect the way we worked we have listened to people's views through:

- Visiting groups and meeting people face to face where possible
- Video conferencing and telephone calls
- Carrying out surveys and focus groups
- Online Public Board Meetings - people can log on and join in - over 180 people viewed [extracts on You Tube](#)
- Our Reference and Engagement Group - a network of over 100 organisations and "Experts by Experience"
- Healthwatch Worcestershire website – which had over 12,000 visits
- Twitter (we have over 1,100 followers) and Facebook (our posts regularly reach over 5,000 people)

We have produced 14 Newsletters, written fortnightly articles for the Worcester News and been on local radio and television.

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 visits to the Evesham Older People's Forum, Wyre Forest Older People's Showcase and Dementia Cafés
- **People from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Communities** - including through Integrating & Supporting Our Community projects, Asian Women's Group (Redditch), the Horizon Centre and our links with community leaders
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) communities** - through Out2gether, Mermaids and Trans2gether

- **People with a learning disability** – by meeting with members of SpeakEasy N.O.W. and Our Way self-advocacy organisations
- **People with Mental Health issues** – including through Home Group, Behind the Smile and Jigsaw
- **Carers** including through the Worcestershire Association of Carers and Carers Careline

We have reached over 1,300 people through our engagement activities.

Example:

Out2gether, a community group for adults who are LGBT+, told us about how their relationship with HWW benefits their members. [Watch the video](#)

## **Our Reports and Recommendations**

We have used the information people have told us to decide which areas of health and care to find out more about.

## **Digital Access to Healthcare**

712 people shared their experiences of accessing health information online and of remote telephone and video call health appointments. Whilst digital services work for some, they don't suit everyone. Thanks to our report the NHS in Worcestershire have pledged to: make systems and online information easier to use, help people access digital services, develop staff understanding of why some people find digital access difficult, increase engagement with patients and ensure that face-to-face appointments are available for those who need them.

*'This was an important survey as it provides both a local and post pandemic understanding of our population's experience of digital healthcare services.'* NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group

Hyperlink:

[Digital Access to Healthcare Report | Healthwatch Worcestershire](#)

## **People's experience of leaving Worcestershire hospitals during Covid-19**

Based on what 142 people told us about leaving hospital during Covid-19 we have made 29 recommendations about how hospital discharge could be improved. These covered better communication and information during and after people's hospital stay, improved planning for when people leave hospital, support at home, more dialogue with care providers and support for carers. We are working with the Acute Hospitals Trust on the update to their Inpatient Discharge Policy, to help make this safer for everyone.

*"I welcome the recommendations that you have set out.... I am pleased to enclose a system-wide response to these recommendations in the form of an action plan ...noting that many of the recommendations are applicable across our local system."*

*Simon Trickett, Chief Executive, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS*

Hyperlink:

[People's experience of leaving hospital during Covid-19 – Hospital Discharge Report | Healthwatch Worcestershire](#)

## **Young People's Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

202 young people, age 13 to 19, told us about the negative impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on many aspects of their lives. They also told us what kind of information and support they would like, their experiences of support for emotional wellbeing and for some what has prevented them accessing support. We have made 26 recommendations for Worcestershire's health and social care services based on our findings.

*'The feedback has helped us to identify specific actions that we can take to improve service across Worcestershire for young people ... I hope the response to your recommendations demonstrate our collective commitment to acting upon the feedback provided within your report... thank you ... for your ongoing support in seeking to improve services for young people across Worcestershire.'*

*Simon Trickett, Chief Executive, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS*

Hyperlink:

[Young People's Health and Emotional Wellbeing Report | Healthwatch Worcestershire](#)

## **Why people “walk in” to Accident & Emergency Departments in Worcestershire**

323 people told us why they had “walked in” to A&E. Most had first contacted another health service, and were sent to A&E. Of those who hadn't, some may have been able to be treated at one of the Minor Injuries Units in the County. However, not everyone knew about these, or were unsure if the Unit could treat their injury, or they were too far away. We made 15 recommendations for improvement.

*“Thank you for sharing your Healthwatch Report... The feedback has helped us to identify specific actions that we can take across the system to help reduce demand on our busy Emergency Departments.”*

*Simon Trickett, Chief Executive, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS*

Hyperlink:

[What patients told us about why they “walk in” to A&E Departments in Worcestershire | Healthwatch Worcestershire](#)

## **Covid-19 Vaccine Survey**

We wanted to understand the reasons why some people felt hesitant about having the COVID-19 vaccination. Concerns expressed included vaccine safety and its long term effects. The local NHS used these findings to provide information to reassure people about these issues.

We send all our reports to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), who inspect health and care services and to Healthwatch England, to help build the picture of services at a national level. We follow up on our Reports to check that actions promised are delivered.

Hyperlink:

[COVID-19 Vaccine Summary Report | Healthwatch Worcestershire](#)

## **Making sure people are involved in planning and reviewing services**

We sit on Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board. They set priorities about health and care in Worcestershire. These will be set out in the forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2032. We made sure that:

- The new Strategy will look at the causes of ill health and not just the symptoms
- The findings of our Reports and your feedback informed the Strategy
- People had enough time to have their say about the Draft Strategy

We have been checking that people are **involved in how services could be changed for the future**, holding local NHS bodies to account.

Example:

### **Relocation of Hospital Services**

We ensured that the Acute Hospital's Trust kept their commitment to properly consider patient transport, access to services and communication when deciding to relocate hospital services.

*"I wanted to thank .. Healthwatch for all the work you have done to represent the views of patients and residents as Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust considered options for the future permanent location of the Garden Suite"*

*Rachel Maclean, MP*

## **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 through:

- Checking how patients are kept safe, and that any concerns are dealt with through feedback to and formal meetings with local and national NHS bodies and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Attending and providing information to the County Council's committees which scrutinise health services and social care services for adults and children and young people
- Commenting on the Quality Accounts of health providers

Example:

### **Assuring Mental Health services**

People told us of the difficulties they had getting mental health services when they needed them. We asked Hereford and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust to attend our Public Board Meeting to explain about waiting times. The Trust told us how they plan to reduce these, including through new online support for people who can use this, and plans to fund additional “low level” support via voluntary and community organisations. New ways to help more people train to work in mental health services are also being explored. Watch the video [Adult Mental Health Services in Worcestershire - YouTube](#)

### **Healthwatch – the national voice**

HWW 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
- Producing a Case Study, sharing what we learnt from using the HWE Quality Framework, which helped us to assess and improve how we work

### **Signposting people to advice and information**

Over 400 people contacted us to share their experiences or for help/information about local health and social care services. 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.

Example:

Patient feedback has resulted in a project to train community nurses in wound management to avoid unnecessary A&E visits

## **Volunteers**

A big thank you to our Healthwatch Volunteers, who have given their time and expertise across the year. Particular thanks to those, including our Co-opted Board Members, who have been involved in our decision making.

## **Finances**

In 2020/2021 Worcestershire County Council paid us £265,000 under contract to deliver local Healthwatch services. The main areas of expenditure have been:

Staff costs: £220,608

Establishment Costs including Depreciation: £46,880

Engagement Costs: £5,624

## **Every voice matters**

There is a gap in life expectancy between the most disadvantaged people who live in Worcestershire and the least. The reasons are varied, but many of the differences in people's health are avoidable, and due to unfairness. We have done more to listen to people experiencing health inequalities, getting to know people and letting them get to know us, visiting organisations regularly and having lots of conversations.

## **HWW Community Links**

Our Community Links are people who are well connected in their communities and chat with a lot of people about health and care services! We invite them to relay this feedback to us in the way that works best for them. We have been piloting this role with Kerry, a resident of St Paul's Hostel. She has provided rich feedback from people who experience rough sleeping and homelessness and is a brilliant pioneer of the role. We also now regularly attend services who support this community of people. [Watch Kerry talking about being a Community Link](#)

These relationships are helping us learn more about people's experience, so we are better able to highlight issues and concerns.

## Get in touch

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