

Brief report for Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission –

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire

February 2022

Role and Remit

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire is your local health and social care champion. If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services in your area, we want to hear about your experiences.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice. Last year, the Healthwatch network helped nearly a million people like you to have your say and get the support you need.

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country. We're here to listen to the issues that really matter to people in Leicester and Leicestershire and to hear about your experiences of using local health and social care services.

We're entirely independent and sensitive information which you share with us is confidential. Healthwatch uses your feedback to better understand the challenges facing the NHS and other care providers and we make sure your experiences improve health and care for everyone - locally and nationally.

The legal foundations of Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Engagement and Communication

We are committed to improving communications across all channels and increasing public engagement across all our work streams and projects.

We have established working relationships with strategic partners, local councils, the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) and voluntary and community organisations.

The Covid-19 pandemic arrived without warning and has changed how we engage with our local communities. We have adapted our engagement methods, having to become more innovative in how we do this.

Leicester City is recognised as one of the most diverse cities in the country. Traditional standards and approaches to communication require thinking beyond the norm. By working with our local partners, we want to improve our reach to local people and ensure that they are informed and involved in activities.

Workplan 2021-22

The table highlights our project areas for 2021-22 as well as core work activities.

Quarter	Projects	Core work
Q1 Apr - June	Impacts of COVID-19 and the new models of care Social Isolation and Loneliness	Stakeholder engagement and management Board meetings and representation Volunteer Recruitment
Q2 July - Sept	'Summer Tour' Access to GPs Domiciliary Care Male Suicide	Enter & View Programme Workstreams – Carers, Mental Health and Young People Quick Surveys Healthwatch Hour sessions
Q3 Oct - Dec	Youthwatch Access to Dentistry	Signposting and Information service Governance
Q4 Jan – March	Homelessness and access to services 'What matters most' – reflections from communities	

Our Board members have a lead area of work and sit on Boards and Committees relating to these work areas.

Healthwatch Advisory Board Member	Lead areas	Represents HWLL at
Harsha Kotecha	Children and Young People Acute & tertiary care	CCG Governing Body ICS Partnership Board Health & Wellbeing Board Joint HOSC UHL

Mark Farmer	Mental Health	LPT Mental Health Delivery Board
Joe Johal	Cancer Care	N/A
Kash Bhayani	Carers	UHL - PIPEAC Carers Delivery Group
Alexandra Partner	Learning Disabilities	Learning Disabilities Partnership Boards - City and County

Projects

Examples of projects undertaken this year.

Summer Tour

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we were unable to conduct face to face engagement and outreach. When we were able to restart in July 21, we embarked on our summer tour with the aims of raising awareness of Healthwatch and finding out people's experiences of local health and social care services.

- We attended outdoor events as lockdown restrictions eased across the city & county
- We had our stand at local parks, markets, city centre events, town centre events and shopping centres
- Engaged with 2421 people across 35 events
- 19 events were held in Leicester City
- People were concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on NHS services and people highlighted the change in services they were now receiving i.e., telephone consultations with GPs, unable to access dentists, changes to prescription services
- We gathered people's feedback on their GP Practice through our 'GP Access' Survey
- We heard from 351 people about their GP Practice

The 'GP Access' report will be shared with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), and we will ask for responses to our recommendations.

We will be using the evidence gathered to visit GP Practices as part of our Enter & View programme.

An examination of GP Practice websites

During lockdown we worked with our volunteers to review GP Practice websites to see how informative and accessible they are for people. People told us that it is difficult to get

through to the GP Practice on the telephone, they are unsure of the online booking procedures and do not know who to contact to raise a concern or complaint.

- We reviewed 118 GP Practice websites across the city and county
- Our volunteers reported a big difference in the quality and quantity of information available
- Key information was easy to find and access on most of the websites.
- Volunteers felt that details of how to make a complaint was not always easy to find and felt hidden on the website.
- Volunteers felt there needs to be an explanation about triage and the process available on all websites.
- We found that the coronavirus information was not always current and up to date. Information on the vaccines was variable and there was limited information on vaccine hesitancy.

The findings were shared with the CCGs.

One of the next steps listed in the CCG summary document for the primary care survey is to consolidate our website research with their research and action plan to make service improvements for patients - <https://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/primary-care-survey/>

Male Suicide

The aims and objectives of this project were:

- To understand the purpose of the LLR Suicide and Prevention Group (SAPG) and its role in the prevention of suicide across Leicester/ Leicestershire, identifying any gaps in the prevention pathway.
- To identify and contact suicide prevention services across the city and county and identify any gaps in service provision.
- Give a voice to people who have used or attempted to use services to tell us of their experiences
- Identify and potential barriers to that prevent men from coming forward to access services
- Explore ways to raise awareness of services and suggest appropriate tools to promote services.

To achieve this contact was made in person as well as online with;

- Police service lead for suicide prevention
- Lead Nurse Suicide Prevention Leicestershire Partnership Trust
- Leicester Samaritans
- Armed Forces Lead Leicestershire NHS Partnership Trust
- CEO Loughborough Well Being Centre
- Project Lead Tomorrow Project
- Richmond Fellowship Leicester/ Leicestershire Lifelinks
- Harmless project
- Rural Community Council
- Survivors of bereavement by suicide

- Lead A&E consultant and Lead Nurse and Mental Health team Coordinator at University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL)
- Public Health leads in Leicester and Leicestershire city and county councils.

We also contacted organisations active in the community who are not members of the SAPG but with people who have mental health issues or provide community based services which encompassed people who may be deemed 'at risk' These groups included;

- The Adhar Project Leicester
- The LGBTQ Centre Leicester
- Andy's Man Club (National)
- Health and Well Being Centre - Leicester City Football Club
- Everards Brewery Leicester
- Equality Action
- Inini Initiative

Three peer support groups were attended as facilitated by Richmond Fellowship life links. These were attended by 24 people of mixed gender but were majority male attendance, from this we held 121 follow up interviews with eight men. We also spoke to a further three men who contacted us through our social media. We also spoke to three mothers whose sons had died by suicide and the project coordinator of the Tomorrow project who work with people bereaved or affected by a death by suicide.

Outcomes we are working to include:

- 'Turning the Tide: Male Suicide' Report to be published on 3 February to coincide with Time to Talk day.
- Work with Leicester City Football Club (LCFC) to link into the mental health portal being developed with United Leicester to establish a link into 'Start a Conversation' website linking to all prevention services available. Public Health leads have been linked into the wellbeing lead at LCFC.
- Everard's Brewery developing beer mats, drip mats and posters with QR code linking to the 'Start a Conversation' website. Launch event on 3 February at Everards Brewery with key partners.
- Working with Equality Action has been fruitful and an initiative involving a young BAME group to develop a rap song has been developed aimed at raising awareness and giving key suicide prevention messages to young people.

Access to Dentistry

Access to dental care has been highlighted as a national issue by Healthwatch England on a number of occasions, most recently publishing updated research in December 2021 that says four out of five people are struggling to access NHS dental care; some dentists have used up their NHS capacity and are asking people for private fees; and many people are find it hard to get up to date information on which practices are taking on new NHS patients because websites are not updated regularly and are contacting local Healthwatch for information.

From the telephone calls and email enquiries to our signposting service, the emerging themes from the enquiries were:

- People not being able to find a dental practice that is taking on new patients, this is the major issue and dominates the numbers.
- People trying to find a dental practice and are told they are no appointments, but they could be given a private appointment.
- People have tried to go to a dental practice they have been with for some time, but if they do not go back for over 12 months, so they are removed from the patient list.
- People are often not aware that if they are in pain, there are seven Emergency Dental Services in Leicester and Leicestershire.

We launched a survey and heard from 167 people. Whilst there were 167 responses to the survey this sample does not provide a representative sample of the whole population. The sample were selected using opportunity sampling and were in effect self-selecting.

We were unable to access more than one care home to undertake interviews with residents and care home managers. This was due to a reluctance on the part of care homes to allow access with ongoing Covid-19 risks.

The report will be launched in March 2022.

On 20 January 2022, Harsha Kotecha, Chair spoke to BBC East Midlands today about some of our findings from the report - <https://healthwatchll.com/news/nhs-dentistry>

Reports published 2021-22

We have implemented new ways of working within our research and project teams to improve our engagement methods. We have ensured that we are exploring appropriate communication channels to reach people to gather their views and feedback. There have been limitations in our outreach activities throughout 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to the Covid-19 pandemic but we feel that we have been able to work through this and have improved the quality of our reports and findings.

Report	Publication Date	Numbers engaged with
Hospital Discharge Report	April 2021	23 surveys completed
An Examination of GP Practice Websites	July 2021	118 GP Practice Websites reviewed
Digital Exclusion and Access to Primary Care During the Covid-19 Pandemic	November 2021	8 People engaged with
'You are next in the queue' - GP Access Report	February 2022	351 survey responses

Turning the Tide' - Male Suicide Report	February 2022	20 organisations, 6 peer support groups, 29 people spoken to
Comorbidities Report	February 2022	60 survey responses
Enter & View - Latham House Medical Centre	March 2022	1138 survey responses
Access to Dental Care in Leicester and Leicestershire	March 2022	167 survey responses
Homelessness	March 2022	TBC

Details of future work and projects planned in Leicester

What Matters Most

In February 2022, we will be consulting with the people of Leicester and Leicestershire to give them the opportunity to share their views about what key themes they would like to see us focus on in the next 12 months.

We are holding three online listening events:

Monday 21 February 11am-1pm

Monday 21 February 6pm-8pm

Wednesday 23 February 10 am-12noon

Following these events, we will compile our list of city projects for 2022-23.

Healthwatch Diversity Inclusion Health Network

Exclusion continues to impact on some communities leading to access issues, negative experience and more importantly, higher prevalence of health inequalities.

Our aim is to develop a platform for marginalised voices to be heard and empower people through regular and ongoing engagement and involvement. This intervention will therefore influence and inform services providers via a credible platform developed in co-production with marginalised people and Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire whilst also supporting the developing Integrated Care Systems agenda.

In March 2022, we will be holding an event and will invite communities we have been working with over the past year to contribute to get involved and share their experiences of services.

Publicity Campaign

We are in the process of refreshing our publicity materials and will be creating information packs for communities across the city.

We have produced and distributed our “Improving and shaping health and social care in Leicester and Leicestershire” guide and will continue to disseminate our directories across the city.

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