

## Brief report -

## Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire

September 2023

### Role and Remit

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire (HWLL) 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 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 impartial, and anything 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 participation across all our work streams and projects.

We have established working relationships with strategic partners, local councils, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and voluntary and community organisations.

Leicester City is recognised as one of the most diverse cities in the country. Traditional standards and approaches to communications as well as engagement 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 2023-24

The table highlights our activities for 2023-24 as well as core work.

| Quarter           | Activities  | Core work   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Q1<br>Apr - June  | Transition<br>Recruitment Drive<br>Volunteers week  | Stakeholder engagement and management<br>Board meetings and representation<br>Governance<br>Volunteers  |
| Q2<br>July - Sept | 'Summer Tour'<br>Enter & View<br>Access and communication<br>Diversity and inclusion sessions | Enter & View Programme<br>Young People's Healthwatch<br>Training<br>Community network<br>Signposting and Information service<br>Social media and communications |
| Q3<br>Oct - Dec   | 'Autumn Tour'<br>World mental health day activities<br>Social care project                    |   |
| Q4<br>Jan – March | 'What matters most'<br>– reflections from communities<br>Social care project                  |   |

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   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Harsha Kotecha                    | Children and Young People<br>Acute & tertiary care |
| Mark Farmer                       | Mental Health                                      |
| Joe Johal                         | Primary Care and Community                         |
| Kash Bhayani                      | Carers   |
| Alexandra Partner                 | Learning Disabilities                              |

## Projects

Examples of projects undertaken this year.

### Living with Dementia

Local people shared their views and experiences of Dementia services in our new report 'Living with Dementia in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland'.

In the report we have identified wide inconsistencies across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) in the way diagnoses are made and what services are available and accessible for people living with dementia from the first suspicions of memory problems onwards.

We heard from more than 350 people living with Dementia, their carers and families. Thanks to people sharing their experiences we have identified wide inconsistencies in the way in which services are available and accessible for people living with dementia.

Supporting and helping those living with dementia and their carers remains a priority for LLR's health and social care organisations which includes the Dementia Programme Board. The LLR Dementia Programme Board aims to address all the recommendations and the report findings will inform the development of the revised Dementia Strategy in 2024.

### Dentistry

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change. Over the years, we have been raising the issue of access to dentistry. We have continued to work with the NHS Local Dental Committee (LDC) and provide concerns from patients. We have advocated for clear advice for patients and details of local NHS provision. We have produced up to date advice which has meant people who need urgent treatment know their options and have clear information.

### Lipoedema

We worked with a local Lipoedema support group to help raise awareness of the condition amongst the medical profession and other women who may have the condition misdiagnosed or undiagnosed.

Working with medical students from Keele University, we undertook surveys to assess awareness of the condition. One was with medical students at Keele and St George's (London) universities, and one was aimed at healthcare allied healthcare professionals to gauge their knowledge and understanding of the condition.

35 medical students and 102 allied health professionals responded to the surveys and as a result of their responses two information posters were developed and distributed to the universities, GP surgeries and clinics across Leicestershire. In addition, a survey focused at identifying people with symptoms resulted in Healthwatch signposting people to the Lipoedema support group.

## Details of future work and projects planned in Leicester

### East Midlands Healthwatch Regional Mental Health Enter and View

In partnership with IMPACT and supporting NHS England to conduct an in-depth look at the care provided and experiences of those who are present within Mental Health Inpatient wards across the

East Midlands region. The opportunity to work across the midlands region to listen to inpatients in the 48 low and medium secure Mental Health Inpatient (MHI) wards within the localities of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Leicester and Leicestershire.

### **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.

We held our first NHS complaints event at the Highfields centre on 17 August. We were joined by representatives from University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL), Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) and PoHWER Advocacy.

We had 20 attendees and feedback was positive from the participants and partners.

We will be continuing these sessions with different communities across the city.

### **What Matters Most**

In February 2024, 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. Following these events, we will compile our list of city projects for 2024-25.