



LEICESTER CITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD DATE

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| Subject: | Together: We are making care better report |
| Presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board by: | Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire |
| Author: | Gemma Barrow |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

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 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 activities.

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 Apr - June | Transition Recruitment Drive Volunteers week | Stakeholder engagement and management Board meetings and representation Governance Volunteers Enter & View Programme Young People's Healthwatch Training Community network Signposting and Information Service Social media and communications |
| Q2 July - Sept | 'Summer Tour' Enter & View Access and communication Diversity and inclusion sessions | |
| Q3 Oct - Dec | 'Autumn Tour' World Mental Health Day activities Diversity and inclusion sessions | |
| Q4 Jan – March | 'What matters most' – reflections from communities 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 (Chair) | Children and Young People Acute & tertiary care |
| Mark Farmer | Mental Health |
| Joe Johal | Primary Care and Community |
| Kash Bhayani | Adult Social Care |
| Alexandra Partner | Learning Disabilities |

Activities

Examples of activities 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 medical professionals 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 on identifying people with symptoms resulted in Healthwatch signposting people to the Lipoedema support group.

Asylum seekers' experiences with local health and care services

Our access to health care project is to listen and explore how people have been accessing their health care and what that experience has been like for them. We have identified groups and seek to listen and outline what the specific issues are for those communities.

Our focus for this engagement was to engage with asylum seekers who have been accommodated in hotels in Leicester.

We aimed to listen to people's experiences of accessing primary care services, mental health support and their awareness and access to health services. The aim of the visits was not intended to provide an in-depth analysis of the situation, but rather to gain insight from people into the pressing issues and common themes.

The visit teams consisted of staff from Healthwatch, the Neighbourhood Mental Health Leads from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) and the Leicester City Council Public Health team.

In August and September 2023, we visited three hotels in Leicester and spoke to 65 people. We also visited the Leicester City of Sanctuary in October 2023 and spoke to 25 people.

Key findings

Barriers to Access: The reports identify barriers that hinder asylum seekers' access to essential health and care services. These barriers include language barriers, lack of cultural competency among healthcare providers and insufficient awareness of available services.

Mental Health Challenges: Asylum seekers often face heightened mental health stress due to the uncertainties surrounding their status. The report highlights the importance of tailored mental health support within local healthcare systems.

Recommendations for Improvement: To address the identified challenges, the reports offer a set of practical recommendations for local health and care services. These recommendations emphasise the need for language support and increased collaboration between service providers and community organisations.

[Read our reports](#)

Details of future work planned in Leicester

Healthwatch Diversity Inclusion Health Network

Exclusion continues to impact some communities leading to access issues, negative experiences and more importantly, a higher prevalence of health inequalities. We aim 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 held a workshop with Bangladeshi men on the 6 December at the Italian Café Bar in Highfields. We spoke with 22 men who shared with us their concerns about GP appointments and access to dentists. We noted that time is an issue and they are not aware of local services that the NHS is offering. We will be looking at the findings and doing more work with this community.

We will be continuing these sessions into 2024 with different communities across the city.

What Matters Most

In February 2024, we will be consulting with the people of Leicester to allow them to share their views about what key themes they would like to see us focus on in the next 12 months. We will have face-to-face and online opportunities for people to engage.

Following these events, we will compile our list of city engagement activities for 2024-25.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board note the report and presentation.

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