

Health and Wellbeing Board

April 2022

Healthwatch Walsall - Update April 2022 Work Plan 2021/2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress of Healthwatch Walsall's work delivery plan 2021/2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the progress in delivering the Healthwatch Walsall work plan for 2021/2022.
- 2.2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board supports the work plan of Healthwatch Walsall.

3. Report Detail

This year we continue to strive to have even greater positive impact for the communities and the people we serve. We aim to continue to strengthen partnerships with providers and commissioners of services, further increase our public engagement, increase escalations / issues to decision makers to impact on change.

Healthwatch Walsall priorities are identified through public engagement, intelligence gathered and discussions with partners and from this the key areas of work for 2021/2022 were agreed as:

3.1 Black Country Healthwatch Young People's Experience of Mental Health Project

This is a collaborative project with Healthwatch Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton and is looking at the experiences of young people in transition.

By undertaking a joint piece of work the impact for Healthwatch in Walsall and across the Black Country will be strengthened. Staff from each of the Healthwatch involved met with representatives from the Black Country Healthcare NHS Trust to ensure there would be no duplication of work and that the project will add value to the organisation.

Each of the Healthwatch were set targets to hold two focus groups with up to 10 attendees at each of the groups. Individual interviews were to be held and a survey would be provided and promoted to ensure that as much intelligence as possible was garnered.

It is pleasing to report that Healthwatch Walsall achieved all targets set and all responses have been submitted to Healthwatch Wolverhampton as lead Healthwatch for the project.

Healthwatch Walsall attended an online workshop and the Mental Health Awareness Day at Walsall College (October 2021), both these events gave young people the opportunity to share their experiences.

The data is being analysed and the report will be available early in the new financial year. As always, the report will be shared with key stakeholders and partners and published on the Healthwatch Walsall website.

3.2 Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC)

This work priority project scored second highest in the online poll early in 2021 when our work programme priorities were being agreed. There were 32 respondents who suggested this should be an area for Healthwatch Walsall to work on and this sat alongside information received that there had been a continued increase in patient presentations at the UTC.

Healthwatch Walsall met with the UTC Manager and linked in with the CCG regarding the issues being faced by service users. The aim of the project therefore was to look at waiting times, communication and quality of work. Alongside this however, Healthwatch Walsall also wanted to identify why people were presenting at UTC to see if this was linked to GP access issues, patients not wanting a telephone consultation and whether there were inappropriate referrals from NHS 111.

The methodology used was primarily via online and paper surveys, but since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, face-to-face engagement has been undertaken at the Centre. A First Friday Focus session was held on this subject which allowed service users to share their experience and as a result of comments made about the cleanliness of the UTC, additional cleaning services have been commissioned.

The work was carried out until the end of February 2022 and the analysis is currently underway. The final report, findings and recommendations will be sent to the provider, commissioner and to our extensive network of contacts. The work will also be published on our website.

3.3 Diabetic Eye Screening Procurement

Following attendance at a Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee early in 2021 where there was a presentation from NHSE/I on the diabetic eye screening procurement exercise, the Walsall HAB agreed that Healthwatch Walsall would support this by way of obtaining the views of service users.

The work was undertaken by an online and hard copy survey which ran during July 2021. The views of 50+ service users were obtained, the data was collated and sent to NHSE/I to support their procurement exercise.

The impact of undertaking this work was enabling service users to have their say and to help shape future service provision.

3.4 Walsall Together (WT)

Healthwatch Walsall was commissioned to deliver Walsall Together to support partner organisations in the commitment to ensuring patient engagement/voice is incorporated into the integrated care partnership.

We have continued to engage with patients and service users through online workshops whilst extending our reach through support from Walsall Together Partners. We have extended our messages around the importance of the patient voice. We have continued to make good progress in being able to engage with service users to look to widen our engagement during 2022.

Walsall Together Service User Group meetings take place, and we continue to widen the representation on the group. Key discussions have been around the case for change, progress to date, patient engagement and what Walsall Together means for the wider health and social care economy. We have also had a detailed presentation from the Walsall Together Programme Team on Walsall Together as a whole, communications. This is available on our website.

3.5 ICS

Healthwatch Walsall attend the ICS Quality & Oversight Committee and is represented at a number of other ICS sub-Board Committees.

3.6 Volunteer Recruitment

We continue to work with a group of passionate and active volunteers, a small cohort of whom supported our work although providing suitable volunteering opportunities during Covid-19 has been difficult. A number of our volunteers are regular attenders at the First Friday Focus sessions.

Engaging Communities Solutions holds the Investing in Volunteers accreditation which is valid until April 2023.

3.7 Enter & View

At the present time, since Covid-19 our Enter and View programme has been suspended.

Enter and View paperwork was previously revised in order to provide more information and includes Healthwatch asking residents how often they have contact with their families. This further amendment will be included in our Enter and View visit paperwork once we can resume the programme of visits.

Time will be included in our future work programme to ensure we follow up on all recommendations made with care providers to see if they have acted upon them and if not, we will seek a response as to why they have not been implemented.

3.8 Engage and Share

As noted in the previous section, a function of Healthwatch is to undertake Enter and View visits to health and social care premises to obtain the views of service users about the services they receive. That said, since the pandemic all face-to-face engagement was suspended to protect the safety of everyone. However, to fill this void, Healthwatch Walsall have come up with a virtual concept of Engage and Share. This is a much more concise set of questions that we ask service users, relatives, staff and home managers just to gauge the current situation and how service users are feeling during these very difficult times.

From intelligence received this form of engagement commenced late in 2021 with two of the care homes in the Borough and the reports have now been published.

In line with the Local Authority advice, face-to-face engagement is still not taking place and a further plan of Engage & Share visits is being compiled and will continue until such time as we receive permission to re-enter care homes.

3.9 First Friday Focus

In June 2020 Healthwatch Walsall commenced its First Friday Focus online digital coffee mornings to provide a means of providing updates to the public of Walsall on a range of topics and to listen to their experiences of health and social care services in the Borough.

These have been very well received and have continued on a monthly basis to date. We have reached different audiences on each session and have made many new connections and given the public the means to have their voice heard.

There have been positive impacts from these sessions, namely:

- Adult changing room included in the new A&E build at the Walsall Manor Hospital
- Additional cleaning services provided at the UTC.

3.10 Strategic Engagement

Healthwatch Walsall has built up a working relationship with a number of strategic level organisations and committees. These include the Health and Wellbeing Board, Walsall Together Board, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee, Safeguarding Partnership, CCG Governing Body, Primary Care Commissioning Committee in Common, A&E Delivery Board and CCG Quality & Oversight Committee. Our remit is to work with these partnerships to ensure the voice of the public and patients are heard, and to provide advice, guidance and assurance on how to achieve this, to work collaboratively to maximise resources and to avoid duplication.

Healthwatch continues to be a strong voice for patients and service users in strategic decision making.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

Good joint working and partner relationships have and continue to be crucial in the delivery of Healthwatch Walsall work plan. We continue to act independently with a strong Board to champion the public/patient voice but engage in partnership activities to improve and enhance health and social care. Hence combining the roles as a critical friend.

5. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:

- Commitment to supporting the HWBB priorities.
- Healthwatch Walsall support the promotion and delivery of initiatives to support the improvements in health identified in the JSNA.
- Enable those at risk of poor health to access appropriate health and care, with informed choices.
- Empowering and signposting people to appropriate services to support positive health and wellbeing.
- Remove unwarranted variation in health care and ensure access, with consistent quality.
- Enable those at risk of poor health to access appropriate health and care services, with informed choice.
- Marmot objectives: Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health, including education, occupation, income, home and community. enabling all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. (Healthwatch Walsall delivery around Care Assessments and Hearing Impairments – Access to Health and Social Care).

6. Safeguarding

- Healthwatch Walsall have a seat on the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Performance Quality & Assurance Committee
- The Healthwatch Manager has links with the Safeguarding Partnership Business Manager and meet on a regular basis. Healthwatch Walsall and the WSP actively support and promote the work of both our organisations.
- Healthwatch Walsall, via intelligence escalate safeguarding / issues of concern to the relevant authorities.

Background papers

All reports are published on our website: www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

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