

Health and Wellbeing Board

March 2023

Healthwatch Walsall - Update March 2023 Work Plan 2022/2023

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress of Healthwatch Walsall's work programme for 2022/2023.

2. Recommendation

That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the progress in delivering the Healthwatch Walsall work plan for 2022/2023.

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 when necessary / issues to decision makers to impact on change. For key numbers see below:

- **Attended 193 face to face events in the community**
- **Held/attended 25 online sessions including our popular First Friday Focus**
- **Engaged with 5,146 people in person and online**
- **Had 21,401 visitors to our website with 39,058 page views**
- **Have 3,126 social media followers across 5 platforms**
- **Published 31 reports including Ebulletins, Newsletters and Weekly Updates**

The full details are as outlined in Appendix 1, also attached to the report is the February Insight Bulletin as Appendix 2.

Healthwatch Walsall priorities are identified through public engagement, intelligence gathered and discussions with partners and from this the key areas of work for 2022/2023 were agreed as:

3.1 Discharge Project – Walsall Healthcare Trust

Public intelligence was received about the discharge process from Walsall Manor Hospital and the Healthwatch Advisory Board agreed this to be the first work priority

project for Healthwatch Walsall. This decision was made at the public Healthwatch Walsall Advisory Board Meeting held on 7 April 2022.

In order to gain a full picture it was agreed the project would not just focus on service user experience of discharge from Walsall Manor Hospital, but would also look at the pathways which service users are discharged in to with the aim of identifying experiences throughout the process.

Work commenced during Quarter 1 when desktop research was undertaken and contacts made. The patient engagement element of the project was mobilised at the end of July 2022 and will run to the end of February 2023. The lengthy timescale was intentional to give us an opportunity to look at the systems during the summer and majority of the winter months to gain a full insight.

The work is being carried out by staff and volunteers and we have been supported by the Hospital itself and Red Cross by way of distributing surveys to people they are in contact with and who have recently been discharged.

During the course of patient interviews some issues of concern have been raised and these have been brought to the attention of the Trust.

The final report will be completed circa the end of March 2023, and will be distributed to partners, stakeholders and uploaded onto the Healthwatch Walsall Website.

3.2 Young Persons Communication Project

At the start of April 2022, Healthwatch Walsall recruited to the post of Youth Engagement Officer, with a remit of enrolling 10 young volunteers which has been achieved. The role of the young volunteers was to obtain intelligence about health and social care issues amongst their peers and feed this back into Healthwatch Walsall.

From initial work undertaken listening to young people about health and social care services it became clear that there is communication barrier to accessing services. From this, and guided by the young people, a Young Persons Communication project was commenced.

Some of our young volunteers have liaised with their schools and Head of Year and have had agreement to let them have some time to engage with fellow pupils to do some research and use our Young People Communication survey.

The work will run to the end of February 2023 and the findings will be used in our final report. Our plan is to use the data to highlight what services can do to make themselves more accessible to young people. We also hope to create a better awareness around services available so that young people can understand the options that are available to them when they need services.

3.3 Cost of Living Crisis

Whilst not in our work programme, Healthwatch Walsall realised that with the cost-of-living increases, this would impact service users and their families and expose health inequalities within the Borough. We therefore commenced a cost-of-living survey in October 2022, and this will run to the end of February 2023, following which an analysis of findings will be undertaken and shared with partners/stakeholders.

3.4 Integrated Care Board

Healthwatch Walsall has a participatory (non-voting) seat on the Integrated Care Board and the Manager of Healthwatch Walsall is the Black Country representative at these meetings. There is the same representation at the ICB Quality & Oversight Committee, and the 4 Black Country Healthwatch have a MoU in place for this purpose.

3.5 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.

As noted previously, we are delighted to have a cohort of 10 young volunteers working with Healthwatch Walsall.

Engaging Communities Solutions holds the Investing in Volunteers (IIV) accreditation which is valid until April 2023. ECS has successfully achieved re-accreditation of the IIV award which will be valid until April 2026.

3.6 Enter & View

Face to face Enter and View visits have resumed following the Covid-19 pandemic when these were suspended. In the preceding period, we commenced our virtual engagement project "Engage & Share".

Healthwatch Walsall are undertaking a series of visits to care/nursing homes and primary care services throughout 2023 and reports from all visits will be shared with partners and uploaded onto our website 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.

3.7 First Friday Focus

During the pandemic when face to face engagement was suspended, Healthwatch Walsall commenced First Friday Focus online digital sessions 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 were well received and proved popular with the public. However, once we were able to return to face-to-face engagement, these sessions were stood down. It has become apparent, from what we are being told, that these sessions are very important

to service users so in February 2023, we resumed our FFF sessions. This first session gave members of the public to tell us about health and social care issues they had been facing.

We will resume a monthly schedule of FFF sessions and put together a forward plan which will be disseminated through partners to attract different audiences.

3.8 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, Integrated Care Board, ICB Quality & Oversight Committee. We are also involved in other Walsall Together and Local Authority groups supporting their work.

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 are 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
- Healthwatch Walsall, via intelligence escalate safeguarding / issues of concern to the relevant authorities.

Background papers

Appendix 1 – Key Points

Appendix 2 – February 2023 Insight Bulletin

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

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