

Health and Wellbeing Board

April 2021

Healthwatch Walsall - Update April 2021

Work Plan 2020/21

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 2020/21.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the progress in delivering the Healthwatch Walsall work plan for 2020/21.
- 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 2020/21 were agreed as:

3.1 Access to GP Services

This project was undertaken following intelligence received from citizens in the Borough about the difficulties they were having in contacting a number of GP surgeries/practices in Walsall. It is important to note however, that this intelligence was gathered prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. Nevertheless, during Covid patients were reporting they were finding it difficult to contact their GP for diagnostic investigation and results, repeat medication and other issues. In addition, there has been a greater move to online use of services which may not be available to everyone for a variety of reasons.

The methodologies used for the work project were an online patient survey with set questions and a free text box to obtain further insight or comments. The survey was

also available on our website and was disseminated through social media platforms and shared through our contact networks.

The work was also supported by a small group of volunteers and Healthwatch Walsall staff undertaking a “mystery shopper” exercise calling a selection of surgeries that had been drawn from a GP list provided by Walsall CCG. We spoke to 44 out of a possible 52 surgeries and attempts were made to call each of the surgeries one day per week in the morning and afternoon over a 6-week period. The calls were made on different days and a record was kept of the number of attempts taken to get through to a practice and length of time it took for a call to be answered.

The work was undertaken during the autumn of 2020 and resulted in the final report being published in mid-December 2020. The report, including recommendations, has been circulated to our stakeholders and partners and Healthwatch Walsall will present the findings to a future place-based CCG Governing Body meeting.

3.2 Communication between Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and Service Users

Again, from public intelligence received, concerns and issues were raised with Healthwatch Walsall about various communication problems between Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and patients. The Walsall Healthwatch Advisory Board agreed that a piece of work would be undertaken into how communications have affected patients within a range of departments at the Hospital. The aim of the project is to highlight good practice or to identify any problems faced by patients. Members of the senior management team at Walsall Manor Hospital are aware of the project.

It should be noted that this is a very broad piece of work at this stage which may culminate in a more specific piece of work being undertaken in the future once the findings have been analysed.

Due to Covid-19, the methodologies used for this work priority were by an online survey, individual case studies and 3 online focus groups being held. The work was carried out until mid-March 2020 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 Covid-19

From early on in the pandemic to the end of October 2020, Healthwatch Walsall ran an online survey seeking the views of the public about how Covid was affecting them. We received 70 survey responses from which it is apparent that mental health, isolation and loneliness have been the biggest issues for the citizens of Walsall.

Our final report was produced and shared with partners across the Borough, and it has also been published on our website.

During the pandemic all members of the Healthwatch Walsall team signed up as volunteers with One Walsall, three members of staff were deployed in volunteering

roles making befriending calls to isolated citizens and one member of staff was involved in the Walsall Hospital NHS Trust family liaison pilot project.

There is a dedicated Covid-19 page on the Healthwatch Walsall website that is kept up to date and provides the public with information and advice on a local, regional and national basis.

3.4 Young people's experience of Health and Social Care services

Healthwatch Walsall recognise the importance of engaging with young people in order to gather their views about health and social care services.

Due to the barriers experienced in engaging with young people to date this work continues and it remains our aspiration to develop a Youth Forum and to engage wherever possible with young people.

3.5 Public involvement in the Black Country Sustainability Transformation Partnership (STP)

The STP brings together organisations across primary care, community services, social care, mental health, acute hospitals and specialised services across the Black Country. The STP aims are to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of local people
- Improve the quality of local health and care services
- Deliver financial stability and efficiency throughout the local health care system

Healthwatch Walsall continues to be involved in the STP by attending the Programme Board meetings and the local BCWB STP/Healthwatch meetings. We support any engagement opportunities linked to the workstreams.

3.6 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 2021.

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.

3.7 Volunteer Recruitment

We continue to work with a group of passionate and active volunteers, a small cohort of whom supported our work on access to GP services. Due to Covid-19 however, the volunteer recruitment drive has been put on hold until such time as we are in a position to offer a varied portfolio of volunteering opportunities. During the early part of March 2020 we were fortunate to recruit a young Healthwatch volunteer who will be working with the team to reach out to other young people.

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

3.8 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 at a CQC/HW meeting held last year, a request was made for HW to start 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.

The E&V lead followed up with care providers to see what recommendations they acted upon and it was pleasing to note that Cedar Falls had implemented 13 recommendations made as follows:

1. Subject to residents consent, curtains are opened in their rooms in the day.
2. Red plates are provided for the residents that need them.
3. Pictorial menu in place and pictures are being updated in line with new menus.
4. Least restrictive observations are taking place and if assisting a resident, staff sit at the residents level rather than standing whilst assisting.
5. Condiments are available on all tables.
6. Walking frames are not stored in the lounge and are now placed with the person.
7. All walking frames contain a label identifying who the frame belongs to.
8. Hoists are not stored in rooms whilst residents are in there. They are stored in the downstairs corridor.
9. Breakfast trolley has been revamped and more options are available. Juice and drinks are made available. Due to Covid-19 fruit is not left out, but tinned fruit is available on the breakfast trolley.
10. Cleaning hours and schedules have been updated.
11. New windows are on order (at the time of the response being provided, they had not been delivered due to the pandemic).
12. Crash mats and falls mats are cleaned daily.
13. The flooring has been replaced as has the stair carpet.

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.

3.9 Engage and Share

One of the functions 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 and as noted above, since the pandemic all face-to-face engagement has been suspended to protect the safety of everyone. However, to fill this void, Healthwatch Walsall have come up with a new concept that is being branded as Engage and Share. This is a much more concise set of questions that we will be asking 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 we are going to commence this form of engagement with a small cohort of learning disability homes in the Borough and if this pilot project goes well, it is our intention to extend this to all learning disability homes and service users' homes within the Borough.

The set of questions can also be adapted to suit a variety of commissioned services and will enable Healthwatch Walsall to provide intelligence and produce reports that will be shared with commissioners of services and published on our website.

3.10 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 with the current schedule confirmed up to and including April 2021. 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 will be a cumulative report written to ensure that intelligence and feedback received is captured and this can then be shared with partners.

3.11 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, Quality Surveillance Group, CCG Governing Body in Common, Primary Care Commissioning Committee in Common, A&E Delivery Board and CCG Quality Assurance Committee, Safeguarding Partnership and the CCG Health Board. 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 Adult and Children Safeguarding boards.
- Healthwatch Walsall Chair and Manager have quarterly meetings with the Safeguarding Partnership independent Chair and Business Manager.
- Healthwatch Walsall hosted a First Friday Focus session on safeguarding issues presented by two members of the Safeguarding Team.
- 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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