

## Wiltshire Council

### Health and Wellbeing Board

24 September 2020

---

#### **Subject: Healthwatch Wiltshire Update Report**

(Annual Report in Brief, Volunteer Led Military Families Project, Response to COVID-19 and Priorities, Young Healthwatch)

---

#### **Executive Summary**

- I. Healthwatch Wiltshire works to get the best out of local health and social care services by ensuring the people who use health and care services can influence the way they are delivered.
- II. We published our Annual Report in June this year detailing our work over the previous year.
- III. Our work last year included our first volunteer led project which looked at the experience of military families in Wiltshire.
- IV. The priorities for engagement this year have been tailored to take account of the views shared by local people during the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges faced by health and care services.
- V. Our Young Healthwatch team have played a key role in designing a current project that looks at online mental health resources for young people.

#### **Proposal(s)**

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Notes the key messages from the report.
- ii) Notes the contribution made by Healthwatch volunteers.
- iii) Confirms its commitment to listening to the voice of local people to influence commissioning and service provision.

#### **Reason for Proposal**

Healthwatch Wiltshire has a statutory duty to listen to the voice of local people with regard to health and social care services and then feed this back to commissioners and providers to influence change. Healthwatch Wiltshire therefore ask the board to receive our latest update, make comment and reaffirm its commitment to listening to the voice of local people.

**Presenter name: Julie Brown**

**Title: Acting Manager**

**Organisation: Healthwatch Wiltshire**

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

**24 September 2020**

---

#### **Subject: Healthwatch Wiltshire Update Report**

---

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Health and Wellbeing board on the Healthwatch Wiltshire's recent work and its priorities for the coming year.

#### **Relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

2. The projects outlined in this report fall into several themes within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Their findings provide insight into people's experiences of how services work together, their ability to access support and care and at a time and place that is suitable to them.

The views of local people shared in this report can be used to influence developments in health and care services. Active participation in health and care services by local people and communities and can lead to people more responsibility for their own health, maintaining their own health and improving their health outcomes in the future.

Our current project involving young people considers their views on mental health resources and how focussed they are towards young people. Such resources can play a key role in providing early support and may prevent longer term issues.

#### **Background**

3. Healthwatch Wiltshire is the local champion for health and social care. We listen to the views and experiences of local people with regard to health and social care and feed these back to providers and commissioners to influence change to services.

#### **Main Considerations**

##### **Our Annual Report**

5. We published our annual report in June 2020, which outlines our work last year, including gathering 3,792 comments about health and social care services.

6. Projects featured in the report include:
  - The Community Cash Fund scheme which provided funding for five health and wellbeing projects that have benefitted and supported people with a variety of needs.
  - Our report, Working Together to Improve Dementia Services in Wiltshire, details how strong partnership working between organisations has gone in to making these improvements.
  - Work evaluating the Improved Access to GP Services Scheme.
  - A volunteer led project that looked at the experiences of local people
7. The full Annual Report is available on our website:

<https://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/report/2020-07-01/our-annual-report-2019-20>

### **Our volunteer led military families project**

8. Last year we ran our first volunteer led project which looked at Military Families' Experience of Health and Social Care Transition. This represented a new way of us working with our volunteers. Four of our volunteers took part in all aspects of the planning, question development, approach, reporting and presentation of the project. They were supported through the project by an experienced research colleague at Help and Care and the Healthwatch Wiltshire staff team.
9. The key findings of their report were:
  - Most people we spoke to told us that they had been able to register with a GP and found this a relatively easy process.
  - Finding a dentist was reported to be much more difficult and over a third of our respondents were not registered with a dentist.
  - Transfer of records was reported as being problematic and causing delays and a lack of continuity of treatment.
  - The process of transferring on to a waiting list when moving from another area did not appear to be consistent.
  - The process of transferring on to a waiting list when moving from another area did not appear to be consistent.
  - Some of our respondents felt that there was a lack of understanding of military life among health and care services and that this affected their experience of using these services.
  - Information about how to access mental health support was not always available and accessing these services was reported as difficult for some people.
  - Information about available health, care and community services was not always available to people, and they told us that this would be useful.

The full report is available on our website:

<https://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/report/2020-09-09/military-families%E2%80%99-experience-health-and-social-care-transition>

## Recent work during the Covid-19 pandemic

10. The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic meant that health and care services have had to rapidly change and adapt their services, and we recognise the challenges that this has presented for health and care services.
11. The outbreak has also resulted in changes to our work, with much of our planned public engagement and visits to services paused and a greater focus on providing advice to the public and supporting the local response to Covid-19.
12. We created dedicated coronavirus advice and information pages on our website to make them easier to navigate and find the information that people are looking for. These included:
  - General government and Public Health England information, which has been updated regularly.
  - A community support page providing information on the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub and local voluntary groups.
  - Information on how people can stay in touch with their loved ones who are currently in hospital.
  - A dedicated page for mental health support and a page for children and young people's mental health.
13. During this time, we saw an increase in visits to our website and interaction with social media posts.
14. We also continued to gather the views of local people and regularly shared these through our reports.
15. Our key findings were:
  - Most people could find and understand the information they needed about Covid-19 but acting and keeping up to date with changes was more difficult.
  - There was a need for clear information about testing and looking after health and wellbeing.
  - Virtual appointments had worked well for many people, but there were some circumstances and individuals where these were difficult or not possible.
  - Some people were not accessing services due to fear of Covid-19, or fear of 'overloading' the service.
  - There was understanding of the pressures on services. Appreciation was given of the commitment, dedication and kindness of health and care workers.
  - As time has moved on, there has been more frustration expressed about delays to routine treatment and dentistry.
  - The pandemic has affected many people's mental health and wellbeing.

- Community Groups, voluntary organisations and volunteers have been a valuable source of support to local people.
16. We have used local people's views and experiences and the way that health and care services have needed to inform and adapt our priority areas for the future.

The full report is available on our website:

<https://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/news/2020-08-12/what-weve-been-hearing-you-during-covid-19-outbreak>

### **Healthwatch Wiltshire priority areas**

17. Our priority areas for the remainder of 2020/21 are:
- Primary Care - A project looking at people's experiences of different types of GP services including virtual, phone, face to face.
  - Autism - Hearing views of people living with autism around service provision and community support.
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing - engaging people regarding mental health and wellbeing including working in partnership with other organisations to develop an online forum.
  - Young People - A mystery shopping project that evaluates mental health websites for young people.
18. We have been working with commissioners and partners to develop these projects and welcome input with the aim of ensuring that the projects are useful and can support service development.

### **Young Healthwatch Update –Mystery shopping project**

19. In our recent work with young people they told us being able to access information and make informed choices was important to them.
20. We have set up Young Healthwatch, a group of volunteers, who want to make a difference to their community and have an interest in the wellbeing of young people in Wiltshire.
21. We are working with a group of young people to review selected mental health websites from a young person's perspective. These young volunteers are an integral part of the project and are involved with question development, engagement activity, collation of results and final reporting.
22. The project aims to identify young people's views about what information is useful and relevant, what they think is good about them and what could be improved for young people using these services.
23. We have linked in with commissioners and local providers of these services and our findings will be shared with them.

## **Next Steps**

24. We are in the process of developing a more detailed workplan and project proposals for these priorities.
25. We will continue to liaise with commissioners and providers within these areas to identify where we can add value and make an impact.
26. We look forward to continuing to work closely with system leaders to ensure our contribution to health and care services in Wiltshire delivers a positive impact for local people.

**Presenter name: Julie Brown**

**Title: Acting Manager**

**Organisation: Healthwatch Wiltshire**

---

Report Author: Julie Brown, Acting Manager, Healthwatch Wiltshire