

Wiltshire Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

8 July 2021

Subject: Heathwatch Wiltshire Annual Report 2020/21

Executive Summary

Healthwatch Wiltshire is the independent consumer champion for health and social care. We have a legal requirement to publish an annual report and this gives an opportunity to demonstrate to local people, stakeholders, and the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board the progress which has been made in 2020/21 and to look forward at our plans for 2021/22.

The Healthwatch Wiltshire Annual report highlights the range of activities that were undertaken during 2020/21 including:

- the set up of our mental health open forum
- a mystery shopping exercise by Young Healthwatch of mental health support websites
- hearing the experiences of those that had used the bluebell place of safety during the pandemic
- responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

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 promote the voice of local people with regard to health and social care services and has the opportunity to influence commissioners on the Health and Wellbeing Board. This opportunity is provided through Healthwatch Wiltshire's membership of the Board. As such it is important that the Board receive Healthwatch Wiltshire's Annual Report in order to make any comment, recognise the work undertaken to date, and confirm its commitment to listen to the voice of patients, unpaid carers and the wider community through Healthwatch Wiltshire.

Stacey Sims
Manager
Healthwatch Wiltshire

Wiltshire Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

8 July 2021

Subject: Heathwatch Wiltshire Annual Report 2020/21

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Health and Wellbeing Board the Heathwatch Wiltshire Annual Report for 2020/21 to invite comments, recognise the progress achieved during the last year, and confirm a commitment to listen to and take in to account the views of local people about health and social care services in Wiltshire.

Relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2. 1 The projects outlined in our Annual report fall into several themes within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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 can lead to people more responsibility for their own health, maintaining their own health and improving their health outcomes in the future.

Background

- 3.1 Local Heathwatch and Heathwatch England were established in 2012 as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Heathwatch England is the national body which provides leadership and support to the Local Heathwatch network. There is a Local Heathwatch organisation in each upper tier authority area of England. Local Heathwatch has an important role to listen to and share the voice of local people in the design of health and social care services, and in monitoring the quality of those services. Commissioners and providers of these services have a duty to listen to that patient and public voice.
- 3.2 Heathwatch Wiltshire was set up in 2013 to deliver the statutory activities of a local Heathwatch service. Wiltshire Council provides core funding to Heathwatch Wiltshire through a contractual agreement. It is important to recognise that the Council does not direct the work plan of Heathwatch Wiltshire but contracts the organisation to deliver the statutory activities.

- 3.3 Local Healthwatch must prepare an Annual Report by 30 June for the previous financial year (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021). A report template is provided by Healthwatch England. The Annual report must be submitted to several bodies including Healthwatch England, The Care Quality Commission, NHS England, BSW Clinical Commissioning Group and Wiltshire Council.

Main Considerations

- 4.1 The Healthwatch Wiltshire Annual report highlights the range of the activities that were undertaken during 2020/21 following a then and now theme. This demonstrated how work in previous years has fed into work undertaken over the last year. For the purpose of this report, the focus will be on the projects completed over the last year. These include:
- the setup of our mental health open forum
 - a mystery shopping exercise by Young Healthwatch of mental health support websites
 - hearing the experiences of those that had used the bluebell place of safety during the pandemic
 - responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
- 4.2 Our year in numbers:
- We heard from 1,753 people this year about their experiences of health and social care.
 - We provided advice and information to 8,513 people.
 - We engaged with and supported 520 people about their experiences of health and care services during the pandemic.
 - We published 12 reports which made 36 recommendations about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.
- 4.3 Wiltshire Open Mental Health Forum
Our online forum was set up in July 2020 and is a collaboration between us, service users and mental health service provider AWP, and is supported by a range of organisations including Wiltshire Council, Richmond Fellowship, Carer Support Wiltshire and Citizens Advice.
- 4.4 The forum gives service users the chance to share their experiences directly with the providers and commissioners and also gives the opportunity to get in involved in shaping and developing mental health services. These include:
- The redesign of the Recovery and Inclusion service, which is to be set up in response to an expected increase in demand for mental health services following the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - A new initiative by Citizens Advice to pilot a service providing extra support to help those with mental health to act on advice they have been given.
- 4.5 Forum members, many of them with lived experience of mental ill health, have also worked together to produce their own comprehensive guide to mental health and wellbeing services on offer in Wiltshire, as a way of

helping people who are struggling with their mental health to find the right support for them quickly and easily. This guide has been downloaded over 400 times.

“We have been really pleased with the way the forum is going and the willingness of people to join us virtually and get their views heard.”
AWP Local Involvement Coordinators Teresa Bridges and Christina Gregory

“I have found it very helpful to think we can help others with mental health problems.” Forum member

4.6 Young Healthwatch Mystery shop

When young people told us that being able to access information about their mental health and make informed choices was important to them, our team of young volunteers decided to review the online support available in Wiltshire in a mystery shopping project.

4.7 The Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers created a series of scenarios around conditions such as depression and schizophrenia, to review the Barnardo’s On Your Mind and Wiltshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) websites, identifying what information was useful and relevant, what was good about the websites, and what could be improved.

4.8 While the volunteers saw the information provided as a good starting point, they thought it didn’t go into enough detail, particularly on some of the lesser-known conditions. They also thought the information could be more accessible, and better targeted towards different age groups.

4.9 Their suggestions for improvement included a search bar to aid navigation, and a chat function to provide peer support in a safe environment. They also wanted to see young people involved in the future design and development of the websites.

4.10 In response to the young volunteers’ findings, changes have already been made to the On Your Mind website with the introduction of a search bar, while a translation tool and chat function are currently being looked into. The young volunteers have also been invited to take part in future testing of the CAMHS website during its revamp.

“We are really grateful for the comprehensive and insightful feedback... We look forward to inviting the young people to join the future co-production and user-testing events alongside our Participation teams to look at the changes we have made in response to the report.”
Viki Laakkonen, Deputy Medical Director, Oxford Health Foundation Trust

4.11 Hearing the experiences of those that had used the Bluebell Place of Safety

Working with BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP), we conducted 32 in-depth telephone interviews with people who had been taken to the Bluebell Place of Safety in Devizes during the covid-19 pandemic.

4.12 We asked people to reflect on what happened before being taken to the Place of Safety, what they thought might have prevented them needing to be taken there, and whether they thought being taken there had been an appropriate course of action.

- Most people we spoke to felt that Bluebell provided a caring and appropriate environment for them at a time of crisis.
- Most said they understood their mental health assessment and its outcomes, although not everyone agreed with these.
- More than half said they had asked for help before going to the Place of Safety and mentioned difficulties accessing the right support.

4.13 Although situations are often complex, our findings suggest there may be instances where the need for people to be taken to a Place of Safety could be avoided, and our recommendations include improving access to community mental health support to enable people to get the right support quickly when they are in crisis.

“We are very grateful to Healthwatch for undertaking a fantastic piece of qualitative review work to help our system better understand the experience of people detained on a section 136... We will be using the report as a foundation to our system change to improve experiences and outcomes.”

Lucy Baker – Director of Planning and Transformational Programmes at BSW CCG

4.14 Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

4.15 This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the Covid-19 response locally.
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information.
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out, including sharing information on the local programme.
- Helping people to access the services they need.

4.16 Providing Insight

Between March and July 2020, we worked with Healthwatch Swindon and Healthwatch BaNES to collect feedback on what people thought about information, services, community support and their wellbeing. Our series of Covid-19 Insight Reports detail our findings, which were combined

with those from the CCG's Citizens Panel. These were shared with commissioners and providers to give them insight into local peoples experiences.

4.17 Advice and information

Early in the pandemic, our role quickly became much more focused on providing people with clear, consistent and concise advice and information on our website to help address people's questions and concerns. Over the course of the year, our advice and information pages have been accessed more than 8,200 times.

The key information people were looking for included:

- Latest Government and NHS advice on Covid-19
- Support available in the community
- Q&A on the Covid-19 vaccine

4.18 Highlighting care home good practice

Keeping care home residents in touch with their families and getting them involved in activities has been a huge challenge for care homes during Covid-19. We heard about the commitment of care home staff in caring for their residents and the strong relationships they've formed with them, and we received feedback about some of the innovative ways that care homes were keeping their residents in touch. Our report describes the initiatives put in place by local care homes to help residents stay connected and engaged.

4.19 Signposting to community support

During the early stages of the pandemic, our helpdesk received a call from Mrs S* who said she didn't have any food and that no one was able to get any shopping for them. They gave Mrs S two numbers for local community groups that offered support with shopping and sent further details by email. The helpdesk followed up the call and Mrs S said she had used the information, and someone was now collecting her shopping and medication. She thanked the helpdesk for their help.

4.20 Our volunteers

At Healthwatch Wiltshire we are supported by 44 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services. They contributed 1,134 hours of their time.

This year our volunteers:

- Promoted Healthwatch Wiltshire and our role within their local communities.
- Passed on advice and information and helped us gather feedback.
- Helped people have their say from home by carrying out interviews over the phone.
- Reviewed documents for us and our partners.

Next Steps

- 5.1 Our priorities for 2021/22 have been identified based on what we have been told by local people and they are:
- Mental health — Listening to experiences of mental health services and shaping service redesign.
 - Primary care — Gathering feedback on primary care services such as GP surgeries and dentists with a focus on access, both face-to-face and digital.
 - Children and young people — Young Healthwatch volunteers will identify areas important to them and seek the views of children and young people.
 - Hospital discharge pathways — Hearing experiences of the discharge process from acute hospital to home.
- 5.2 We are also looking to finish up projects that were postponed due to responding to Covid -19 such as our work to hear the views of people with autism.
- 5.3 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.

The Healthwatch Wiltshire Annual report can be viewed in full here:

<https://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/report/2021-06-28/equal-terms-annual-report-2020-21>

Stacey Sims
Manager
Healthwatch Wiltshire

Report Authors:
Stacey Sims, Manager
Healthwatch Wiltshire