

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board – 08 June 2023

Healthwatch Staffordshire Update

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a. Consider and comment on the progress made in 2022-23 by the new Healthwatch Staffordshire service; and
- b. Consider and comment on the Healthwatch Annual Report and may wish to give a view on the progress made within the annual report.

Background

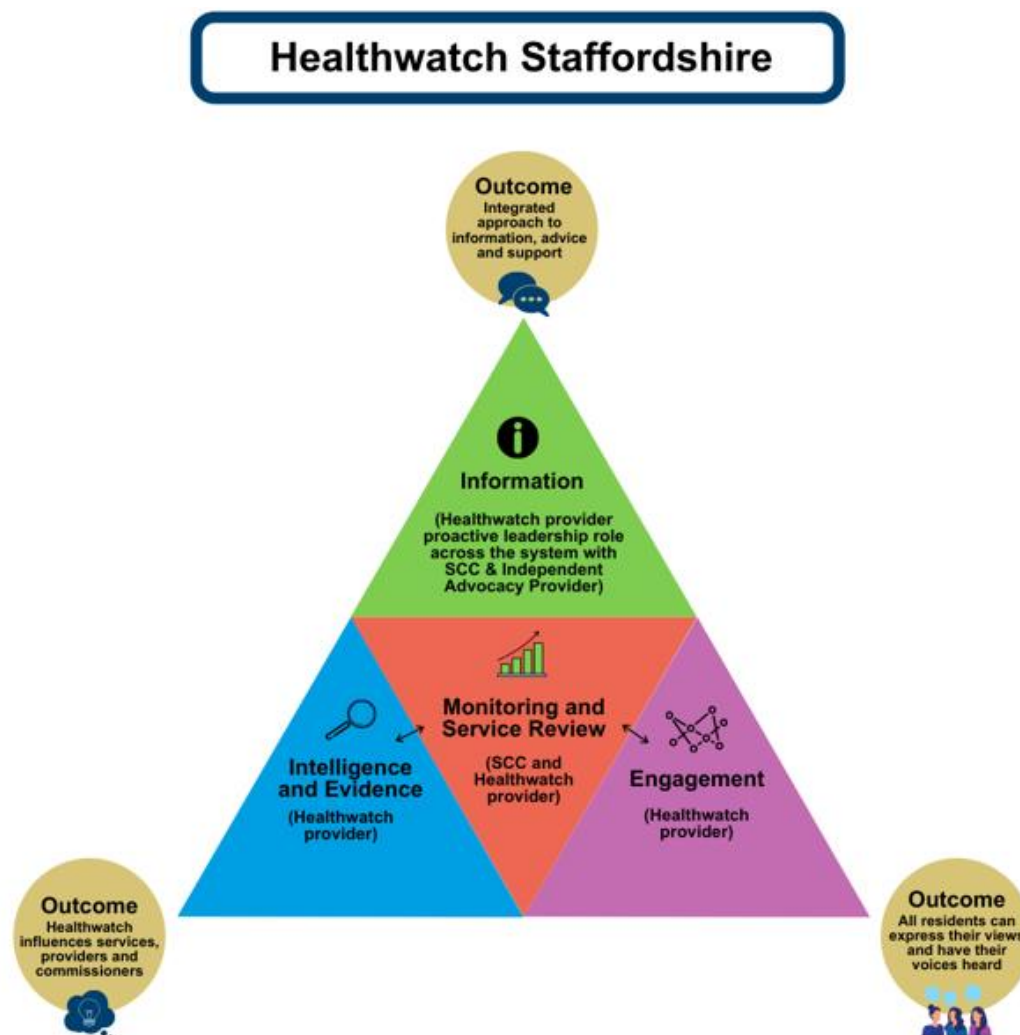
1. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Healthwatch network is required to involve and engage with the general public as to their experiences of health and care services. In Staffordshire, Support Staffordshire holds the contract to deliver the Healthwatch service on behalf of Staffordshire County Council.
2. The purpose of this report is to update members of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Healthwatch Staffordshire's 2022-23 Annual Report, and the progress being made by the new Healthwatch Staffordshire service. It also highlights Healthwatch Staffordshire's 2023-24 emerging outline focus.

Delivery and Governance

3. An independent Healthwatch Committee has been established (as part of the Support Staffordshire governance), which holds delegated decision-making powers to set the Healthwatch agenda. This committee consists of four (unpaid) Support Staffordshire trustees and three independent lay members. A total of 7 members now make the Healthwatch Committee.
4. Healthwatch Staffordshire produces a statutory annual report that summarises the achievements, which is subsequently made publicly available on the Healthwatch website. The 2022-23 report is now available and has helped inform the below progress update.
5. The overarching vision is 'To help people get the best out of their local health and social care services; both to improve them today and helping to shape them for tomorrow', and high-level outcomes (see also figure 1) are:

- a. **Engagement** - all patients/residents can express their views and have their voice heard.
- b. **Intelligence and evidence** – harnessing the patients/residents voice to influence services, providers and commissioners.
- c. **Information** – an integrated approach to information, advice and Support (including through the Staffordshire Integrated Advocacy Service).

Figure 1- Healthwatch Staffordshire approach 2022



- 6. The new Healthwatch contract is between 2022-2025. In the first few months of 2022 Healthwatch focused on implementing the new delivery model. This included recruitment and TUPE of existing staff.
- 7. There was a focus on organising and streamlining the work program. This was all informed by engagement with communities and in response to feedback from Staffordshire’s Health and Wellbeing Board, Health and

Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and key health and social care partners. Healthwatch remains committed to close and collaborative working with the VCSE, public and private sectors in the pursuit of best practice and to help influence high quality care, informed by the public's opinion and resident feedback.

8. Highlights and impacts from 2022-23 include:

- a. **Healthwatch has engaged with statutory organisations and partners**, as the Independent voice at several key partnership boards / groups. To advice on good practice consultation, emerging issues and using its reach to promote engagement. Presented findings and influencing system change. In addition to council structures these include; Health & Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board and Partnership, NHS Patient Engagement structures, NHS Quality Teams, District Councils, HW Stoke-on-Trent and HW England.
- b. **Directly supported Healthwatch England's national work**, including Dentistry, Cost of Living, Social Care, GP referrals, and Maternal Mental Health. Healthwatch Staffordshire have helped to ensure that input from more seldom heard voices, such as young people and people from ethnic minority backgrounds, is heard. 113 surveys were completed to inform this and reports such as 'Gender Affirmation' were produced and shared with HWE. Healthwatch Staffordshire also contributed to HWE national work on Dentistry. HWE collectively received 700 queries or experiences shared by people nationally about dentistry in the past year through local Healthwatch's. HWE presented the evidence in person to MPs at the House of Commons Health and Care Committee on NHS dentistry about the lack of access to NHS dentistry. Highlighting;
 - i. 20% of all feedback is now dentistry related.
 - ii. People having to travel further and take time off work to see a dentist.
 - iii. Patients having to choose between heating or paying for dental care.
 - iv. And an unfair system not prioritising people with the greatest needs.
- c. Working closely with County Council Healthwatch undertook an **engagement programme gathering insights into care home residents and the things that are important to them**. The aim was to establish what good practice in a care home looked like by engaging with residents and their carers/families. We visited 12 care homes in total, these were 7 nursing homes and 6 residential homes across 7 of the 8 districts in Staffordshire. These ranged in capacity from 6 to 89 residents, with an average of 53 residents. The feedback could then be used to inform the current contract redesign and the emerging County Council Social Care Strategy for 2024. Healthwatch

was able to engage with 53 people. We conducted 44 interviews and 9 obtained surveys. The key insights from residents were around having 'more outdoor activities' and opportunities to engage in 'religious worship of their chosen faith'. We were also looking to identify people who could get involved in the redesign, through a panel. 3 people showed interest to share their experiences of care homes to influence the commissioning of future contracts.

- d. Wider **social care engagement has progressed positively**, including building on the engagement programme with care home residents, we have shared regular intelligence and issues with key partners to further influence services, providers, and commissioners. This increasing focus of the new Healthwatch service has also helped to inform the County Council's focus on embedding co-production across adult social care.
- e. Following engagement with communities, feedback from Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny, Staffordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board and key health and social care partners, Healthwatch has **agreed on and progressed "Deep dive" initial work programmes in three focus areas**. Healthwatch will continue to work with key stakeholders to deliver these programmes and validate findings, concluding this later in 2023. This further demonstrates Healthwatch's proactive work to harness the residents voice, in addition responding to key issues identified by wider engagement. The 3 focus areas which intend to further help inform and influence system change include:
- i. Accessing Primary Care in person – including to inform further development of the Integrated Care Boards Primary Care delivery portfolio.
 - ii. Seldom heard patient and resident experiences – working with partners to gather the voice of these groups, including to inform the County Council's co-production work.
 - iii. Teenage mental wellbeing and health outcomes for those in care as a child – views gathered will also inform delivery of the Mental Health Strategy, and will include engagement with young people through the 'Voice Project'.
- f. **Website and social media channels are now well established, including to support information, advice and guidance (IAG)**. This intends to help patients/residents to access appropriate services and available support in managing their own wellbeing, and where possible this is being joined up across the system, signposting to support delivered by other organisations (including the Staffordshire Integrated Advocacy Service) and within communities. The Healthwatch freephone number is available for those unable to access

IAG digitally. In our 'independent' role we have supported a range of individuals with specific issues, for example medication management for patients and carers. As a result, people have been signposted to use the practice pharmacist more often, where previously they were seeking GP appointments for medication. This is proving to be a faster route to meet needs, reduced a lot of stress and anxiety for people, whilst also saving GP time and helping to reduce waiting times, further demonstrating how Healthwatch's approach is supporting the NHS.

- g. **Healthwatch Staffordshire newsletter has been established** and shared regularly with Healthwatch England, partners, communities, and on our website. This promotes the service and communicates key information, such as outcomes of Healthwatch work and key themes reflected from the public (e.g. Access to Primary Care, NHS Dentistry, delays in hospital transitions, long A&E waiting times, access to Mental Health services, cost of living impacts, as well as impacts of NHS strikes across services).
- h. Positive progress in systems and networks have been set up, **including establishing the new 'Healthwatch Intelligence Network'**, as the primary vehicle for gathering the views of communities to shape decision making, commissioning and provision of services. Engagement officers are in post, with responsibility for undertaking place-based engagement across the county, as well as developing relationships across the health and care system to ensure existing community intelligence and voice mechanisms are utilised alongside Healthwatch's direct engagement activities. This initial work and foundations will be built on to further harness the voice and insight of a number of VCSE Groups involved with health and social care locally, along with PPGs, who all play a crucial role in resident and patient voice.
- i. 2 Healthwatch engagement officers are also Community Champions in their own designated areas. Community Champions are a Staffordshire County Council initiative and this is on the County Council website. Community Champions recruit people from the community to pass on reliable information, to empower local people, to make good health decisions.
- j. **Whilst maintaining our legal power to 'enter and view', Healthwatch have also shaped a refreshed wider approach** to greater coordination with statutory quality and safety teams across the NHS and the County Council. In support of this a number of joint Quality Assurance / Enter and View visits have taken place working closely with MPUFT, focusing on various services, such as Mental Health, Speech and Language Therapy, and Respiratory Services. This has supported further independent patient feedback and observations

highlighted some positive service delivery. Where recommendations were made, these are being implemented, such as in further designing and improving Care Pathways for people accessing the Speech and Language Therapy service. Findings are also informing part of Healthwatch's input on behalf of patients and residents to the consultation on the future provision of mental health services in Southeast Staffordshire. This overall approach and learning has been shared with national and regional partners. In the coming year Healthwatch will be working with UHDB to carry out joint Quality and Assurance / Enter and View visits as this joint way of working is having a positive impact to improving the patient voice being heard.

9. Below are a number of key measures achieved by Healthwatch Staffordshire in 2022-23:

- a. 1475 people have been engaged, including sharing their health and social care story (with 349 people specifically engaged around social care)
- b. 53 organisations or groups became part of the Healthwatch Intelligence Network, as well as 15 PPGs. Overall, this is anticipated to grow and develop further, and is the primary vehicle for gathering the views of communities to shape decision making, commissioning and provision of services.
- c. 14 volunteers actively helped Healthwatch to carry out their engagement work, a number of which used this as an opportunity to enhance their skills and relevant experience in support of their studies or wider employment.
- d. 5 Enter and View visits completed, the findings are reported to the Providers and Commissioners of services and where appropriate, to regulators, as well as reports being available on the website.
- e. Through the Healthwatch website and social media platforms, we have a potential reach to over 10,000 people. This allows us to have a greater reach to communicate Healthwatch Staffordshire's role and outcomes to the public.
- f. Patients and residents were supported with advice or information digitally, as well as 117 people through the freephone number, with people being signposted to other services that provide support. Most common requests were linked to Primary Care Access, Lack of NHS Dentistry appointments, Access to mental health services, social care and care homes.

Healthwatch Staffordshire Year 2

10. Healthwatch Year 2 planning will be influenced by resident and patient views and insights gathered to date. We will also be working closely with

County Council, statutory and community services to further support this.

11. Emerging priorities include:

- a. Ongoing focus and completion of "Deep dive" work programmes, and shaping future focus
- b. Increased focus on seldom heard voices (including LGBTQI+, neurodiverse individuals and Travelling communities)
- c. Integrated Care System consultation activity, (e.g. exploring Hospital Discharge, Transport and Mental Health)
- d. To continue increasing social care engagement focus to promote best practices and to influence high quality care
- e. Expanding the 'Healthwatch Intelligence Network', further harnessing the voice and insight of residents and patients
- f. Increased 'enter and view' activity, including the refreshed joint approach with NHS Trust (MPUFT, UHNM and UHDB) and County Council statutory quality and safety teams
- g. Further promoting the service and communicating key outcomes, including bringing together key themes emerging from engagement activities, as key evidence to help shape and influence service delivery and future priorities of the health and care system
- h. Informing and supporting Healthwatch England's key priorities (e.g. Focus on Social Care, Access to Primary Care, cost of living and access to healthcare, Women's Health (Maternity), and opportunities for further join-up between NHS and social care to deliver better care for patients)

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