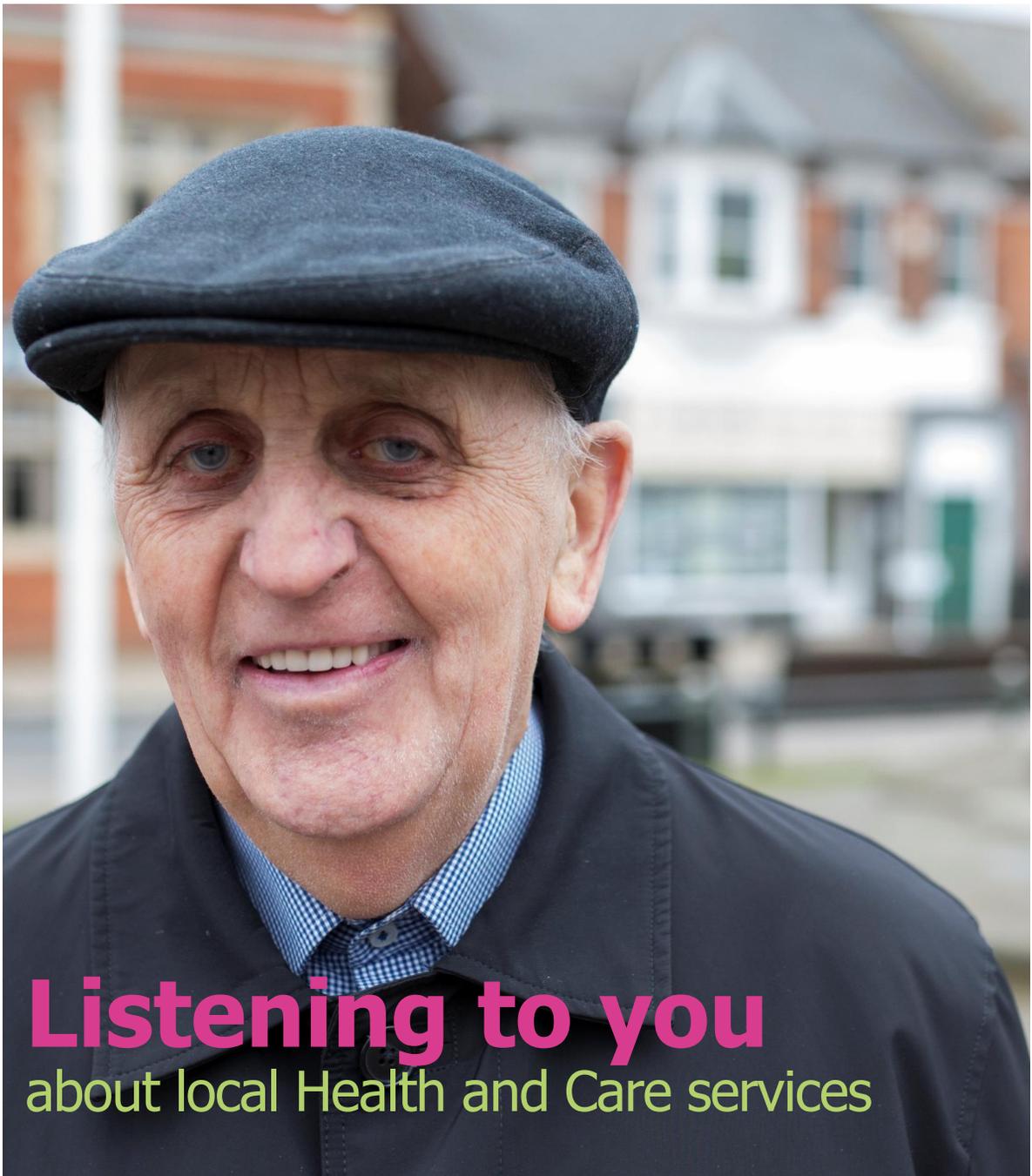


Healthwatch Warwickshire Annual Report 2020-21



Listening to you
about local Health and Care services

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Message from our Chair

The Annual Report for 2020 to 2021 reflects the truly exceptional work delivered by Healthwatch Warwickshire's staff and volunteers in what has been the most challenging of years. As the Chair of Healthwatch Warwickshire it has been a privilege to work with all involved and I remain immensely proud of their passion, dedication and achievements.

Our people were magnificent in responding to the additional pressures caused by the pandemic. They quickly altered the way they worked whilst ensuring they continued to listen to the people of Warwickshire and used this information to help influence change within the provision of health and social care services.

The team were able to increase their communications to Warwickshire people, helping to ensure that important messages, relating to COVID-19 from organisations such as Public Health England and the Department for Health & Social Care, were effectively shared.

'...They (Healthwatch Warwickshire) quickly altered the way they worked whilst ensuring they continued to listen to the people of Warwickshire'

Project work has continued throughout including Discharge Review, Shipston Engagement, Care Home Calls and the recent Carers' Project. We were one of a few local Healthwatch teams to work directly with Healthwatch England to develop a national COVID-19 survey which highlighted access to services, mental health and communication issues. The response we have received, from the people of Warwickshire, to our surveys has been exceptional and helps to ensure your voice is heard.

To enable, if required, quick decisions to be made Healthwatch Warwickshire's Board of Directors set up a Lockdown Task Group. During these bi-monthly meetings we were able to offer the staff any additional support, guidance or information they required to effectively manage their work.

Much of the year's work has taken place virtually and even our Annual General Meeting took place via Zoom. Working in this way does have some advantages but we all miss the face-to-face contact and look forward to the days when we can properly "meet" again.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Healthwatch Warwickshire.

Kind Regards
Liz Hancock, Chair



About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Warwickshire. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks information from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

2,711 people

this year about their experiences of health and social care. We provided advice and information to

11,120 people

through Signposting and visits to our website.

We engaged with

5,382 people

at 75 events and through our Newsletter.

Our Social Media posts engaged with

7,713 people

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with

1,117 people

via our Covid-19 survey and report, and supported

2,345 people

through our coronavirus information pages on our website.

Making a difference to care



We published

4 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we made 24 recommendations for improvement. 355 people requested to be kept informed of any follow up activity.

Health and care that works for you



14 volunteers + 8 board members

helped us to carry out our work.

We employ 8 staff

5.6 of whom are full time equivalent, which is an 0.7 increase from the previous year. This has been funded using reserves. Only the Chief Executive is full-time.

We received

£217,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21, the same amount as the previous year.



Then and now: Dentistry



Then: access to NHS dental services

Prior to the pandemic we would only occasionally hear from the public about NHS dentistry. The last year has seen a shift in that trend.



Now: access to NHS dental services

In the course of the year dentistry became one of the top four reasons why a member of the public would contact us. The main issues included: difficulties in booking routine and emergency appointments, registering with an NHS dentist, priority given to private patients and inaccurate information.

We raised the concerns we received with Healthwatch England. They undertook a programme of work in partnership with local Healthwatch and as a result this led to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) making it a mandatory part of the contract for dentists to keep the NHS website up to date and check it on a monthly basis. This should improve the information available to patients trying to find a dentist.

Healthwatch Warwickshire continue to collect feedback from the public about local dentistry provision. Alongside this we have called all NHS dentists in Warwickshire and will publish a briefing paper with our findings in June 2021. The findings will be shared with Healthwatch England, and Coventry and Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group.



Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, even more so through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners such as NHS services and Warwickshire County Council.

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
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Sharing up to date information on testing

Case study: Long Covid Support Group

“Just to say that I have completed the Covid-Survivors first course. Thank you to Healthwatch for suggesting this in the first place. I had never met any other Covid survivors before I took part in this group. I was the eldest, and I felt very humbled to share the time with other much younger survivors who are struggling so much with the symptoms of Long Covid like myself. It has helped me to come to terms with how I am feeling, and to talk freely and in confidence with each other has been hugely beneficial. As I was a disabled person before I had Covid, I have been able to, maybe, understand the Long Covid debility which seems to have affected us all. Most of the Group were fit, young and well before Covid struck them down, and I could see how much they are struggling, even a year later with Long Covid. Thank you once again for putting me in touch with this Group. I am not continuing as I feel that after this Course I don't need to attend, and that will free up a place for another sufferer.”

Written by a member of the public. Thank you!

COVID-19 – our response

Thanks to the public, patients and local organisations who fed back the challenges they faced and continue to face during the pandemic.

Between May and July 2020, 1,117 people shared their experiences of health and care with us, from across Coventry and Warwickshire. In the report '[How has Covid-19 affected the health and wellbeing of people in Coventry and Warwickshire?](#)', the main issues included:

Access to, or keeping up to date with information to keep them safe during the height of the pandemic

- Information was not available in alternative formats, easy-read, other languages etc.
- Poor communication from services, including misdiagnosis or changes to appointments

Lack of access to services or support

- Concerns over delays to treatment, coping with pain, or deteriorating conditions

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Increased anxiety and depression
- Coping with responsibilities such as caring, parenting and working from home



“We wanted to find out directly from the public what their main concerns were at the height of the pandemic. The findings have been shared with Healthwatch England, NHS, and Public Health Warwickshire, as well as being presented at local strategic Boards. This work should inform the restoration of services locally” Healthwatch Warwickshire

COVID-19 - Positive feedback for services

This year, more than ever, we received positive feedback from the public. Below are some of the comments received from the public.

“All services, NHS111, emergency services, A&E and GP were all exceptional.”

“My husband has been in ICU at Warwick hospital on life support as he has COVID 19 and they have been brilliant”

“Food delivery came within a few days of me making a call to say I could not leave the house, even with a shielding letter. The food was nice. It really helped.”

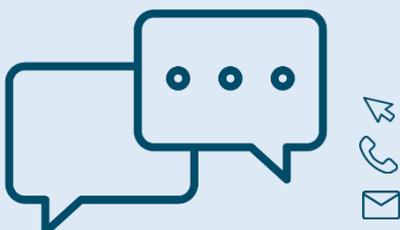
Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/share-your-views

01926 422823

info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk





Shipston Health and Wellbeing Centre – views from the public



We heard from 550 people, who told us what support and services they would like to see in the development of a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in Shipston.

The key themes that we identified in our report included:

- Mental Health support for all ages: this consistently came up as a need in the evidence gathered in our survey
- Support in managing long-term health conditions: using advice and information, peer support and ways to self-manage
- General support for health and wellbeing initiatives: outdoor spaces, group activities and support for all ages
- Physiotherapy was mentioned throughout responses as a way of supporting people in their communities
- Support for parents, families and children: health visitors, support services and group activities for children

Our full report is available on our website, which includes the recommendations made to South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT). The [report](#) was accepted and presented to SWFT Board who welcomed the findings. The report has been viewed 136 times on our website.

How we make a difference

At Healthwatch Warwickshire we hear from the public everyday about their experiences of health and care in Warwickshire. We use this information to identify trends and raise issues with services where appropriate. This year we have continued our work in making a difference within our local communities. Here are some examples of our work:

Helping the public

We were contacted by a member of the public following the death of a family member at a local hospital. Following our advice to write a witness statement and a letter, the coroner decided to open an enquiry into the cause of death.



Working with GP Practices

An outreach worker who works with people experiencing homelessness contacted us to tell us about challenges in getting appointments at a GP surgery. The current system due to the pandemic involves getting a call back from the GP which is not always suitable for people without access to a telephone. Healthwatch Warwickshire contacted the GP surgery which resulted in the GP offering to prioritise these calls and being invited with the outreach worker to do an information session for the GP Practice.



Working with providers

Having received feedback from Warwickshire Pride that there was a lack of understanding from local mental health practitioners around gender identity, we raised the issue at the Coventry and Warwickshire Quality Surveillance Group where the issue was taken up by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust who met with us and as a result met with Warwickshire Pride to understand the issues and who agreed that there would be training for practitioners. This should result in better services for those accessing mental health services.



Read more about our work

<https://www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/news-and-reports>

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info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk



Then and Now: Enter and View



Then: Enter and View Visits

Local service providers have a duty to allow Healthwatch organisations to 'enter and view' their premises, so that our Authorised Representatives (including volunteers) can see and hear how local people are experiencing the services provided. Premises where health and social care is publicly funded and delivered include residential care homes, hospitals, GP surgeries, Dentists, and Opticians.



Now: Supportive calls to Care Homes

During the pandemic we could not carry out face-to-face visits, but we knew it was more important than ever to hear about what was happening in care homes.

A group of our volunteers, alongside the Enter and View Lead, planned a project that enabled us to:

- offer support
- hear about what was happening
- find out how residents were being supported to stay in touch with family and friends
- celebrate what was working well
- raise issues on their behalf
- let the Managers know we were here if they needed us in the future

We wrote to the Registered Managers of care homes and our volunteers followed up with confidential and supportive phone calls.



Now: Supportive calls to Care Homes

Over the course of six months, we spoke to over forty-five Care Home Managers, many of whom were glad to be called and very open and honest about how difficult the pandemic had been for everyone in the home. They talked about how they had all coped, residents they had lost, and the measures they were taking to keep people safe.

We used our [website](#) to share the things care homes were doing to keep residents and relatives in touch, such as embracing technology and building visitor pods.



“The Covid pandemic sadly prevented us from carrying out our usual Enter and View visits of Care Homes, but we were still able to keep in touch with them through our phone calls. It certainly has been an excellent project and the telephone meant that we were able to make new contacts, find out how the pandemic was impacting on the homes and what help and support was needed. It has been a different way of working but it has been extremely worthwhile to be part of the project.”

-Jackie Prestwich, Authorised Representative

We asked if there was anything they needed and raised issues with the relevant people on their behalf.

We heard how the support from Warwickshire County Council and Public Health Warwickshire had been excellent and was really appreciated.

All the Managers we spoke to said there had been a lot of extra work over the last year and that at times, it had been tough. The local community and relatives have shown their thanks in many ways. These thoughtful gestures have all been warmly received and have helped staff to stay motivated and positive.



“The support from outside has been phenomenal. We had lots of letters from the local people saying they hoped we were okay. The residents wanted to give something back, so they wrote messages on leaves and we put them on trees around the local community.”

-Mockley Manor, Henley in Arden

Our Authorised Representatives are now making calls to supported living homes for adults with learning disabilities, making connections, that we can build on in the future, when we can carry out face-to-face visits again.



Leave us your feedback

If you work in a care home, you can also leave your feedback with us (anonymously if you wish) by answering our short questionnaire.

<https://bit.ly/3w1QKP5>

01926 422823

info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



25% on Hospital Care



24% on GP Services



11% on Dental Care



9% on C19 Vaccines and Testing

Vaccination experience



In February 2021, we heard from one of our volunteers, Jackie, after she received her first COVID-19 vaccination.

“Delighted to have just received my COVID vaccination at The Warwickshire Golf Club and Conference Centre, Leek Wootton. Everything is extremely well organised, and people also have a choice of remaining in their car and having a ‘drive-through’ vaccination. It is such an efficient system and people are very well looked after. I would like to thank all the staff and volunteers who are working so hard to enable us to have our vaccinations.”



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.



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Photo taken prior to the Covid-19 pandemic

Our volunteers

At Healthwatch Warwickshire we are supported by 14 volunteers who are fundamental in helping us deliver our contract.

This year our volunteers have continued to help us in a variety of ways:

- Made supportive telephone calls to Care Home Managers
- Provided constructive feedback on our priority work including Covid-19 survey, Shipston Health and Wellbeing Centre as well as being a forum to sound our prospective work such as our Carers project
- Called Dental Surgeries throughout the county to help us find out about local dentistry provision
- Assisted with the successful (online) recruitment of staff
- Kept us informed about what was happening in their communities, at their GP Practices and in Patient Participation groups
- Made scrubs for NHS staff and supported people in their community, in a personal capacity



Challenging year– Gill

"I've been hugely impressed how the office team have adapted our work to gain the views of those using and delivering Health and Care services. Whilst I've had a few wobbles this last year myself (like many), it's been great to be able to make a small contribution to keeping lines of communication open and helping to share stories about successes and challenges in our work and ensuring those key findings and learning is shared and gets to the places it needs to."



New board member-Katy

"My motivations for joining the Healthwatch Warwickshire (HWW) board were to improve healthcare and to enhance networking between researchers and Healthwatch. Since joining, I have learnt more about how HWW engage and empower local people to share their views in order to enact positive change in the community and improve services for those using them. The current pandemic has undoubtedly exacerbated health inequalities; HWW takes an active role in spotlighting and reducing these and strives for inclusive and equitable care provision for all. I look forward to continuing to work with HWW to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalised in our community are supported and heard."



New volunteer-Terry

"I felt volunteering at Healthwatch Warwickshire would allow me to make a difference to others' quality of life. I joined and bang, along came Covid, the team quickly adapted and arranged for us to work virtually. More recently I was asked to chair the quarterly Volunteer Forum which has given me the opportunity to integrate more. One of the important things in life is the relationships we develop through working in teams and I am grateful to HW Warwickshire for giving me that opportunity."

Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch:



www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk/volunteers

01926 422823

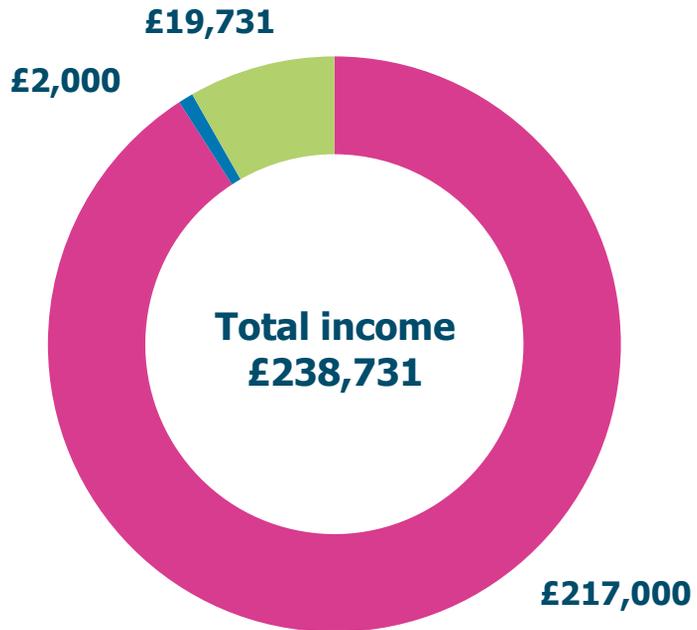
info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding
- Use of reserves



Expenditure

- Staff costs (inc pensions)
- Operational costs



Note: All figures provided are subject to audit

Next steps

Top three priorities for 2021-22

- To provide appropriate channels for patients and public to continue to feedback and inform Healthwatch Warwickshire about their lived experiences of health and care
- To develop and maintain consistent and pro-active two-way channels of communication with key stakeholders, ensuring that patient views are represented at the meetings we attend
- Focus on projects that will result in positive outcomes for users of health and care services in Warwickshire

What are our plans as we move away from national restrictions?

Healthwatch Warwickshire has continued to provide a service throughout the pandemic but alongside others we have had to restrict the face-to-face engagement activities and visiting care homes in line with Government guidance. We will restore these activities once Government restrictions have been lifted and we are confident that our activities will not have a negative impact on the public, staff or volunteers.

What is our commitment to equality and diversity and hearing from seldom heard communities?

Healthwatch Warwickshire is committed to ensuring that the views we collect are representative of the local population. We aim to collect views free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We work with local communities and organisations to gather the views of seldom heard groups. Through our information and signposting service we hear from people every day who may be considered as seldom heard but we also focus our project work on reaching seldom heard groups. This year we will be looking at people who experience hearing loss/deafness, and carer's health and wellbeing.

"2020/21 has been a year like no other in health and social care. 18 months ago we could not have imagined the many ways in which NHS and Local Government services would have to change in a very short space of time. The experiences of patients and the public have also been greatly affected by the speed and scale of change.

Healthwatch has responded vigorously and effectively to these enormous changes. Never losing our focus on the needs and lived experiences of patients and the public we have continued to provide a high quality of support to people. Working with our Partners we will continue to do so in the future."

-Chris Bain, Chief Executive Officer

Thank you

Board directors, volunteers and staff

We give thanks to all our **Board Directors** for their continued support and direction.

During the year we have lost two Board Directors, Bob Malloy and Trevor Wright, and brought on another, Katie Weetman. We thank Bob and Trevor for their work and wish them all the best in the future. We welcome Katie to the Board and look forward to gaining insight from her research background.

We would like to thank all our **Volunteers** for their continued support and help. This year we have increased the number of volunteers we have to 14. Welcoming, Anita Vig, Judy Timson and Liz Oxborough.

We would like to thank all our **staff** for their continued effort and dedication to their roles. In the year, we have said goodbye to Jessica Brooks, who we wish well in her future career and give thanks for her hard work and passion whilst at Healthwatch. We welcome Deborah Key who is our Insight and Communications Lead and brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to the role.

Public

We thank the public for continuing to contact us with their feedback about local Health and Care services. Your feedback is integral to the work we do.

Partners and key stakeholders

We would like to thank local partners and key stakeholders for their continued feedback and positive approach to ensuring that patient/public voice is heard in decisions relating to health and care services, this includes but is not limited to:

- Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The Place Partnership Boards
- Voluntary sector organisations and community groups
- South Warwickshire Foundation Group
- University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire
- Warwickshire County Council
- Warwick Medical School
- Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Coventry and Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- GP Federation
- Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust
- Healthwatch England
- Care Quality Commission



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Warwickshire CIC, 4-6 Clemens Street, Leamington Spa, CV31 2DL. We are a community interest company and our company number is 8181496.

Healthwatch Warwickshire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Our Healthwatch board consists of 8 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met formally 6 times and made decisions on matters such as the continued use of reserves to fund the additional engagement and outreach officer post and agreeing our priorities and engagement work for the year. The board met more frequently throughout the year through our informal board meetings and our Covid-19 task group.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We gather feedback from the public through a variety of means. An example of which is our information and signposting service which allows us to talk directly to the public, gaining insight and evidence to inform our priority areas of work. We heard from the local deaf community (Royal Association for Deaf People) that they had experienced barriers in accessing health and care and are now working to form a rights-based approach project to look at the issues and how they can be addressed.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website:

www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

2020-21 priorities

Project / activity area	How our work informed services/public
Survey: How has Covid-19 affected the health and wellbeing of people in Coventry and Warwickshire?	Our work informed local providers about how the public were responding to the pandemic. It illustrated issues around dentistry, maternity and mental health.
Rights to Access Project report: Homelessness	This work has informed users of primary care services and organisations of the right to treatment.
Discharge review	Our work fed into the Healthwatch England report on discharge from hospital.
Calls to care homes	We worked with our volunteers to call local care home providers to offer our support and to find out what had worked well and where they would like to see improvements. Information on the calls can be found on our website .
Shipston Health and Wellbeing Centre- views from the public	This work has informed South Warwickshire Foundation Trust on what the public would like to see in their local Health and Wellbeing Centre.

Responses to recommendations and requests

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity. Any intelligence received from the public has been passed on to either/both the Care Quality Commission or Warwickshire County Council.

We raised several issues with Healthwatch England this year, we informed them of our Covid-19 survey results, raised issues around dentistry, discharge processes during the pandemic, NHS 111 services, access to GP Practices, issues around diagnostic services (including cervical screening) and community mental health services. We also continue to raise issues of concern at Healthwatch regional meetings. As a result Healthwatch England have used some of this feedback to inform their work.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Warwickshire is represented on the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Liz Hancock, Chair of Healthwatch Warwickshire.

“Healthwatch has a statutory place on the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Board offers an incredibly important opportunity to ensure that the lived experiences of patients and the public are at the forefront of the thinking when designing and implementing new service provision. Healthwatch will continue to be an active and involved member of the Board and a positive force for change in Warwickshire.” – Chris Bain, Chief Executive Officer



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