

Healthwatch Solihull



Annual Report
2014/15



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Jacqueline Aldred - Chair



Far-reaching changes to health and social care provision continue to be an overarching theme. We hear of requirements for partners

to deliver better health outcomes and joined-up services, while at the same time as having to cut budgets and reduce the number of staff delivering services.

These, and many other changes, pose a number of challenges for partners in the future as they look to find different ways of working. Some of these key areas include, harnessing technology to support productivity, integrating health and care services and co-locating teams.

Putting people at the centre of these changes is fundamental to the way in which Healthwatch Solihull works. Our role involves monitoring how partners engage with those people who use services, as well as facilitating and coordinating engagement activity to enhance the decisions service providers have to make.

The position of Healthwatch Solihull is unique. Our independence means that we are ideally placed to act as a consumer champion, presenting probing questions about new plans and services and their possible impact, whilst at the same time acting as a critical friend and holding providers to account where necessary.

We have developed a strong collaboration with our Solihull partners to support joint working across the borough and to establish two forums in which to take some of this important work forward. Our plan for the next year is to build on this work in order to help local people, service users and carers get the best out of health and social care services in Solihull.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped Healthwatch Solihull in its work this year. They include our volunteers who have attended events, meetings and have been involved with our Enter and View activity, along with our staff team, who have continued to develop the organisation and provide a friendly responsive service to local people. I would also like to thank our Board members who have provided guidance and leadership to the organisation.

And finally, but by no means least, I would like to thank the many hundreds of local people who have taken part in our engagement activity and have provided their views and experience on issues that are important to them and to us.



About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Solihull is an independent watchdog that has been created to make local health and social care services better for people by ensuring that their views and experiences are taken into account by those entrusted to design and run services.

Healthwatch Solihull was established in April 2013, in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and is one of 152 local Healthwatch organisations in England.

Healthwatch Solihull has a seat on a number of strategic groups and boards responsible for the design and delivery of health and care services, including the statutory Health and Wellbeing Board.

Our presence as a statutory independent watchdog on these groups and boards enables us to ensure that local voices influence health and care decision makers.

At a national level, Healthwatch Solihull works closely with Healthwatch England, a statutory committee of the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Our vision/mission

The vision of Healthwatch Solihull is based on local consultations prior to April 2013.

Healthwatch Solihull will ensure that there are improvements in health and social care services for local people by providing a voice

for local people that influences decisions and increases choice.

Our strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities for 2014/15 were based on the following criteria:

- The views and experiences of local people
- Evidence based information about local services
- Local objectives which are based on key priorities. These are listed in more detail below.

Our key priorities for 2014/15 included the following:

Reaching and listening to a wider audience of local people

- In November 2014 we launched a new website and feedback centre which provides an opportunity for local people to register their opinion on a range of health and care topics on-line. The website also provides a directory of local services.
- In January 2015 we established a young person's forum called, Young Healthwatch Solihull, in collaboration with Solihull Sixth Form College. This forum represents the views of young people on a range of health and care issues.
- In January 2015 we began to shape a new Engagement Forum in partnership with Solihull Together for Better Lives partnership board.



Focussing on key evidence-based issues brought to us by local people

• In November 2014 we held the first of two public events called, 'The Shape of things to come?' The event was the vehicle for the launch of a borough-wide survey into patient experience of local GP services. This survey is a cross-border study which we are working on with our neighbours, Healthwatch Birmingham. It will be completed in August 2015.

Building on key relationships and adding value to work on local priorities

• During 2014 we have continued to develop our map of groups and services in Solihull with a view to strengthening relationships with existing agencies and networks including patient participation groups, engagement

forums and provider organisations. This ongoing work is helping us to build a picture of public, patient and service-user activity throughout the borough.

Our work in 2014/15 has also seen us contribute to the following health and care issues and reports:

- The review of services provided by West Midlands Ambulance Service in Solihull
- The review of Urgent Care at Solihull Hospital
- The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- Adult Social Care Local Account
- The Peer Challenge, Adult Social Care
- Solihull Together for Better Lives

Our Healthwatch Team: Martin Clarke, Claire Boden, June Mole, Margaret Sheikh





Engaging with people who use health and social care services

Understanding people's experiences

Healthwatch Solihull launched its own GP Survey in November 2014 to understand in more depth local people's experiences and satisfaction of GP services in Solihull.

Feedback from our ongoing Service Watch survey, along with discussions with Healthier Communities Scrutiny Board and national sources, has led Healthwatch Solihull to recognise some growing concerns amongst the general public with access to and satisfaction with GP services.

Up to September 2014, half of the respondents to our Service Watch survey made reference to their experience of GP practices - with a third of those expressing dissatisfaction.

Using this feedback, along with our own in-depth breakdown of the national GP Patient Survey, has led us to find that local satisfaction levels were generally aligned with national norms.

In April 2015, and with more than 400 responses at the half-way review stage, Healthwatch Solihull met with Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group to share our draft findings.

Again, the survey revealed mixed views from respondents about access to services, with some issues being common to most GP practices.

When we complete the survey by the end of the summer 2015, we will expect to be able to

provide evidence-backed recommendations to NHS England, Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group and the Care Quality Commission.

Our GP survey found a third of respondents were dissatisfied with their GP practice.

Enter & View

As part of our commitment to championing best practice and encouraging improvement in health and social care, Healthwatch Solihull started a programme of Enter and View.

Enter and View visits are designed to encourage, support, recommend and influence service improvements through capturing and reflecting on service users' experience and issues with an independent and trusted ear. Our visits are also there to recognise and highlight good practice in health and social care settings, and to use these as a beacon for others to follow.

Each visit is conducted by a Healthwatch Solihull representative and one trained volunteer, who observe a number of areas including:

- Environment
- Privacy, dignity and respect
- Promotion of independence
- Recreational activities
- Interaction between residents and staff
- Food and choice



In October 2014, we reviewed our Enter and View policy and changed a number of items. A pre-visit to the service we intend to Enter and View was introduced. The pre-visit allows Healthwatch Solihull to meet staff and advertise our presence with service users, carers and family members.

The new Enter and View policy was piloted in December 2014 at Swallows Meadow Court Nursing Home which cares for 70 elderly people with physical disabilities or dementia. It was a planned visit and residents, their families and staff alike were notified. Members of staff, residents, and their families, took part in the visit,

“It was a very positive experience,” said Deputy Manager Mary Foroghi, following the Enter and View visit.

“Margaret Sheikh from Healthwatch and Mary Pratty the volunteer were very approachable and friendly. They conducted their visit around the home carrying out observations as well as speaking to staff, residents and relatives.

“Staff were provided with feedback and a full report was produced after their visit.”

The Healthwatch report concluded that staff interacted well with residents in a caring and friendly manner, and that they were supportive to individual needs to enable residents to be as independent as possible.

One resident interview said, “The staff make this place” and a family member added they had recommended the home to others.

The 2015-16 programme of Enter and View from Healthwatch Solihull aims to include other care and nursing homes, hospitals and GP practices.

“It was a very positive experience. Staff were provided with feedback and a full report was produced after their visit”

Mary Foroghi Deputy Manager
Swallows Meadow Court Nursing Home





Providing information and signposting for people who use health and social care services

Helping people get what they need from local health and social care services

In the last 12 months, Healthwatch Solihull launched a brand new website and online feedback centre at our public event in November 2014. The new pages have been designed with clarity and simplicity to make it easy for people to access a database of all of the borough's health and social care providers.

The website and feedback centre has the potential to transform the way in which Healthwatch Solihull collects valuable data from the public. More steps are currently being developed to help promote and direct more traffic to the website, as well as engaging with the public on our social media platforms. We hope to introduce these during the course of the next 12 months and beyond.

Our new website provides a database of contact details for all of Solihull's health and social care providers.

In January 2015 we launched our new look eNews. The eNews bulletins have been a valuable source of information for the public, third sector support organisations and healthcare professionals alike. At present 753 people are registered to receive eNews, with an average open rate of over 30 percent.

Public Events

Healthwatch Solihull has had a visible presence at number of borough wide public community events during the last calendar year. We attended Chelmund's Day, Solihull Carnival and Shirley Carnival to promote the work of Healthwatch Solihull and to inform the public, provide information, along with collecting feedback on local services.

We held two main public events in 2014, the first of which in June focused on the ongoing situation with West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). An update was given to local people on the status of readiness of the deployment of ambulance hubs in Solihull.

The meeting was a follow-up to an earlier event which we held in 2013 following concerns about the closure of two Solihull-based ambulance stations and fears that delays would occur due to ambulances being deployed from Erdington or further afield.

Around 50 local people attended the update event, and those attending commented that they felt better informed. Since the meeting we have continued dialogue between some residents and organisations due to the continued slippage in the timescales of WMAS proposals.

In November 2014, 70 people attended the Healthwatch Solihull GP Services event which included two guest speakers, along with our



own Chair, Jacqueline Aldred, who launched our new-look website and feedback centre along with the GP Survey.

The first speaker, Fay Baillie from the NHS West Midlands Strategic Clinical Network and Senate, discussed the 15 step Challenge for GP practices in the borough, while Kerry Turner, CEO of Citizens Advice Solihull, spoke about her involvement with social prescribing and the health benefits it can offer.

Feedback from the event was excellent, with 96 percent of delegates stating that they were likely, or certain, to attend another Healthwatch Solihull event.

In March 2015, Healthwatch Solihull Chair Jacqueline Aldred was invited to be Chair of the Solihull Together for Better Lives Awards judging panel.

The inaugural ceremony was developed to recognise and celebrate outstanding work

by individuals and organisations in Solihull to support older people in the community. Care Professional of the Year and Primary Care Service of the Year, were some of the many categories that were shortlisted.

Solihull Together for Better Lives is a partnership of local health and social care organisations that have come together. It is a means of improving the lives of people living in Solihull through joined up care between health and social care services and Healthwatch Solihull is very much a part of the partnership.





Influencing decision makers with evidence from local people

Producing reports and recommendations to effect change

One of the most important ways in which Healthwatch Solihull can influence and effect change in the way health and social care services are delivered in the area, is through our regular involvement in Solihull Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Board and other Scrutiny Board meetings.

In April 2014 we gave evidence to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Board about the Urgent Care review where we shadowed Solihull CCG's public consultation.

Healthwatch Solihull produced an independent structured evaluation of the CCG's consultation where, as a 'critical friend,' we questioned the consultation's effectiveness, transparency, inclusiveness, accountability and whether it was proportional and coherent.

The CCG were appreciative of this work and gratified that this approach had been taken which had helped to make its consultation more robust.

At a Scrutiny Board meeting in September 2014, Healthwatch Solihull gave evidence concerning the future of West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) based on a report we produced on public perceptions of the service compiled following our public events with WMAS in June. Overall the survey showed that the public were largely satisfied with services provided.

This contribution to the Scrutiny Board meeting has helped to advance the public voice in service design. The Board also made a commitment that it would resolve to be involved at an earlier stage in future perceptions consultations conducted by Healthwatch Solihull.

In December 2014 the Scrutiny Board reviewed the impact and effectiveness of Healthwatch Solihull and service user engagement mechanisms. It was viewed that Healthwatch Solihull was fulfilling the seven core functions and progress was being made. The Scrutiny Board outlined its full support of the development of the Healthwatch work plan.

Putting local people at the heart of improving services

Healthwatch Solihull has begun a process to co-produce, in collaboration with health and social care services in the borough, the creation of a new Stakeholder Group.

It is hoped that this new Stakeholder Group will have an impact on all levels in the future planning, development and delivery of health and care services for Solihull.

Working with others to improve local services

In September Healthwatch Solihull gave evidence concerning West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) based on a



report by Healthwatch on public perception of services provided by the WMAS. Overall the survey had showed public satisfaction with the services being provided by the Trust. The contribution helped advance the public voice in service design in that the Trust also resolved to be involved at an earlier stage in future public perception consultations conducted by Healthwatch Solihull.

In December the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Board considered “An overview of the impact and effectiveness of Healthwatch Solihull” in which it was noted that feedback from key activities and events this year had been positive. This included the public event at Bentley Heath in June which focussed on the future of West Midlands Ambulance Service’s deployment covering Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

The CCG were appreciative of Healthwatch Solihull working as a critical friend and also appreciative of all the work carried out by the project team .

Prompted by the delays and lack of public information, Healthwatch Solihull invited Den Jenkins, WMAS area manager, to update the local audience. The event, attended by over 30 people, sparked an interest which continues to this day to progress the ongoing development of the local community ambulance station. Healthwatch Solihull is continuing to update people as advised by WMAS.

Urgent Care Review

Earlier this year Healthwatch Solihull gave evidence about the Urgent Care review where we shadowed the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) public consultation in April.

Healthwatch Solihull produced a report from a structured evaluation of the consultation. The evaluation sought to answer the questions about the consultation such as: Is the consultation effective, transparent, proportional, inclusive, accountable, and coherent?

The CCG were appreciative of Healthwatch Solihull working as a critical friend and also appreciative of all the work carried out by the project team. They also commented that they were gratified that this approach had been undertaken.

Healthwatch Solihull provided independent evaluation of the CCG Urgent Care consultation producing a report which set out the quality assurance process, methodology used, channels of communication and responses made by the CCG during the life cycle of the engagement plan.





Impact Stories

Case Study One

The launch of Young Healthwatch Solihull



Members of Young Healthwatch Solihull

Healthwatch Solihull launched its young people's forum, Young Healthwatch Solihull in 2014, demonstrating our commitment to helping young people get involved and voice their views on health and social care in the borough.

The forum currently has 12 members who are all students and health ambassadors at Solihull Sixth Form College. They share a keen interest in health and social care, particularly with matters relating to young people.

This new programme aims to support their ambitions by providing visits to universities and hospitals, along with offering master classes, taster sessions and talks from visiting speakers. The opportunity for them to become involved in the aims and objectives of Healthwatch Solihull has been gratefully received by the group.

One of the biggest pieces of work the group has been involved with since its inauguration has been the GP Patient Survey which they conducted amongst students at Solihull Sixth Form College in November 2014.

“It was a great opportunity to take part in the meeting which gave us a real insight and chance to express our views”

Zoe Moles, Chair Young Healthwatch

The responses from students largely mirrored those of adults, in that there was a high degree of satisfaction in GP services in the borough. Yet some negative comments that were highlighted included some young people feeling that they were 'fobbed-off' by staff and 'talked down to.' Some also reported a feeling of 'lack of staff empathy'.

Youth Healthwatch Solihull members have also taken part in a number of other activities throughout its first year, including a meeting with local councillors at the Civic Suite.

During this meeting they raised key issues about the difficulties young people sometimes have with accessing health services and finding relevant information on matters which concern them.





Case Study Two

Clinical Commissioning Groups Cross-Boundary Issues



John and Muriel Carter with Councillor Ken Hawkins.

Healthwatch Solihull stepped in to help a couple who were struggling to get the care they needed due to cross-boundary issues with two Clinical Commissioning Groups.

John and Muriel Carter, both in their eighties, have lived in Tidbury Green for over 60 years and have been registered with the same GP practice in Wythall for just as long. Yet when John was taken ill in March this year, they encountered a problem with his health care they had not expected.

The couple's GP required daily blood tests to monitor John's condition. Yet as John's health had left him with very little mobility, a district nurse was needed to visit his home every day to administer the tests. However, as John's practice was in Wythall, and came under the control of Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), yet his home address came under the Solihull CCG area, both CCGs denied responsibility for providing the district nursing service, much to the worry

and frustration for John and Muriel, and his GP and practice staff.

After trying unsuccessfully to resolve the situation herself, Muriel contacted her local Councillor, Ken Hawkins, who took up the case. Cllr Hawkins made numerous calls to various organisations but all to no avail.

"I felt the system had let John down," said Cllr Hawkins. "Then I remembered a briefing about an independent consumer healthcare champion, Healthwatch Solihull, so I decided to give them a call.

"I spoke to Margaret Sheikh at Healthwatch who was super," continued Cllr Hawkins.

"Within a day or so the problem was solved - thanks to Healthwatch and Margaret's efforts."

Margaret made a series of calls to both CCGs, and to the Quality and Safety Manager about John's situation. Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG soon agreed that they would be looking after John's care and would provide the district nurse service.

"I had not heard of Healthwatch before, but it's great to know that there is an organisation that can help and make a difference"

Muriel Carter





Our plans for 2015/16

Opportunities and challenges for the future

Our key priorities for 2015/16 will be to ensure that local commissioners and service providers engage and involve their communities in discussions and plans about changes to local health and care services.

We will also be focusing on the following areas;

Young People

Healthwatch Solihull will continue to support young people to express their views and opinions and share their experiences about health and social care services with their peer group.

The Young Healthwatch Solihull forum, created in 2014, has already supported some of the work being carried out around patient experience in our GP Survey.

The forum has identified the following key areas of interest to young people which it will focus on during 2015/16:

- Health inequalities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Access to GP services

Care Act 2014

We will continue to monitor the provision of up-to-date, sensitive and timely information about local health and care services, in light of recent and future changes brought about by the Care Act 2014.

Patient discharge from hospitals

Healthwatch Solihull will focus on speaking to patients following their discharge from hospital to find out whether patients are receiving the support they need to help them to recover well. We will be working closely with Solihull's Adult Safeguarding Board, as well as Healthwatch England and other partners.

Enter and View

Following our review of Enter and View activities in 2014/15, which has included the full training of seven dedicated volunteers and creating and launching our Enter and View pilot scheme, the programme will now focus on:

- Patient and carer experiences of dementia services
- Patient experience of GP services





Our governance and decision-making

Our board

Chair - Jacqueline Aldred

Vice Chair - Dave Pinwell

Director - Katie Buckingham

Director - Geraldine Davies

Director - Ashleigh Knibb

Director - Mike Smith

Enter and View volunteers make observations, along with talking with people who use services, including residents, family members, carers and friends, and feed these comments into the end of visit reports.

How we involve volunteers

Healthwatch Solihull has a network of 24 active volunteers who contribute enormously to our work plans and achievements. We have various areas where we require support from our volunteers. This includes community events, Enter and View programme, mystery shopping exercises and general administrative office duties.

We have three levels of volunteer and they are categorised as general, community event based and Enter and View. Additional training and safeguarding checks are required for Enter and View volunteers.

Enter and View Volunteers

Enter and View volunteers visit establishments for the elderly and vulnerable and appropriate safeguarding checks such as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) are administered.

Volunteers receive training to give them knowledge, awareness and understanding of health and social care issues to support them in the visits.



Financial information

INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities		154,050
Additional income		166
Total income		154,216

EXPENDITURE		£
Office costs		37,319
Staffing costs		99,269
Direct delivery costs		19,355
Total expenditure		155,943
Balance brought forward		40,825



Contact us

Get in touch

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