

## Healthwatch Solihull's response to the National Disability Strategy consultation

Healthwatch Solihull welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the National Disability Strategy. Our key role is to make sure that patients, the public, service users, and carers are at the heart of service improvement in health and social care. In line with our role, we have focused our comments on:

- Patient and Public Involvement.
  - The extent to which the proposed plans address the needs of people with disabilities.
- *How effectively is the Government communicating with disabled people and involving them in the implementation and further development of the strategy?*

Healthwatch Solihull are pleased to see that the consultation has been available to respond to for several weeks, giving the public time to consider and respond.

If other engagement activities have taken place, Healthwatch Solihull would like to see these publicly and clearly displayed to inform.

The responses to this consultation need to be assessed to see if they are representative of citizens in this borough, as well as the demographic of people with disabilities. If the responses are not representative, then further engagement work needs to be held. This could include targeted engagement for certain populations.

Healthwatch Solihull would like to urge you to not only listen to people's views but also demonstrate how these views have affected the final proposal. This will ensure that people feel part of the decision-making process not just rubber-stamping decisions that may have already been made.

Healthwatch Solihull therefore believes that there needs to be clear guidance about how to access and communicate with the public about the development of the strategy, so they do not face unnecessary hurdles and they understand exactly how changes may impact their future care. Otherwise, only those able to understand the changes to the system are likely to adequately advocate for themselves to get support - increasing the likelihood of inequality/ inconsistencies across the UK.

- *How should the needs of disabled people be reflected in the post-pandemic recovery and other flagship Government policies such as Levelling-up?*

Healthwatch Solihull would like to see an emphasis on using the insight, experience and involvement of people with disabilities, to drive service design and continuous improvement through the life of this strategy. As such it should be clearly noted who will be responsible for ensuring this feedback is collected and the process for considering the feedback, improving service design and feeding back to the public the changes their feedback has made.

Yours Sincerely,



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Project Officer



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