



Work Plan 2023/2024

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Dear Reader

I am pleased to share with you the Healthwatch Walsall workplan for 2023/2024 which will shape the direction of our work to provide the citizens of Walsall an opportunity to have their voices heard about health and social care services.

The work programme has been compiled from information received by the public via a number of means and as an independent organisation this approach is important. The information in this workplan has been agreed by our Healthwatch Advisory Board which is in line with our governance process.

The workplan highlights the work that will be delivered as part of our core statutory duties but does not include any commissioned pieces of work which Healthwatch Walsall intend to bid for during the forthcoming year to March 2024.

Your feedback on this workplan is welcomed. The impact of our work is crucial to inform change which we want to keep you involved with. This can be done by a number of ways particularly by attending our public Healthwatch Advisory Board Meetings or accessing our website and reading our reports. Further information for this can be found by accessing www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Aileen Farrer
Manager
Healthwatch Walsall

HEALTHWATCH WALSALL WORKPLAN 2023/2024

Introduction

The information in this document highlights the key workstreams Healthwatch Walsall will undertake in 2023/2024.

This year we aim to have even greater positive impact for the communities and the people we serve. We aim to strengthen partnerships with providers and commissioners of services, further increase our public engagement, and raise and escalate these issues to decision makers to affect change.

We will design our work to ensure impact for service users. We will use the feedback we receive to make recommendations for future improvements for the people of Walsall.

Priority Project

Access to Maternity Services and Post-Natal Care for Seldom Heard, Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. The aim of this work is to understand patient experience from the seldom heard communities about access to services.

Priority Project

Young Person Projects to be identified during the first half of the year to mobilise the work during the second half of the year.

Priority Project

Accessible Information Standard (AIS) Disability and Sensory Loss. The aim of this project will be to ascertain whether health and social care services are meeting information and communication needs. The work will be undertaken by community outreach along with online and hard copy survey which will also be made available in easy read format. The work will be undertaken throughout 2023/2024.

Along with the above work priorities, further work will be carried out on the following areas:

New Emergency Department Walsall Manor Hospital

Healthwatch Walsall will seek to gain public experience of the new Emergency Department at Walsall Manor Hospital to determine impact of the new facility on waiting times. This work will be carried out through an online and hard copy survey throughout the year with engagement taking place during Quarter 2 of this financial year.

NHS 111 First

Healthwatch Walsall will seek to gain public experience of NHS 111 First since the transfer of provider. Again, this work will be undertaken by community outreach in the second half of the financial year with an online and hard copy survey being available throughout the year.

Long Covid

Healthwatch Walsall will be looking to find out the issues being faced by service users suffering from Long Covid. This work will be undertaken by online and hard copy survey only and will run throughout the full year.

Any work requested by commissioners and providers beyond this workplan will need to be agreed by the Healthwatch Walsall Advisory Board to ensure adequate resourcing. This agreement will be sought under the governance process and decision-making policy.

Any commissioned work will need to be agreed by the Healthwatch Walsall Advisory Board, through the Decision-Making Policy to ensure there are no conflicts of interest and no impact upon the delivery of the core functions of Healthwatch Walsall.

Enter and View Programme

Our unique and added value is our independence and ability to speak to residents and their families, to give voice to any concerns they may have, as well as raising awareness of potential risks to residents.

We have a very good relationship with the Quality in Care Team, and we link in with them prior to any future visits being scheduled. We share intelligence on a regular basis and enjoy a very fruitful two-way dialogue with the Team.

Healthwatch Walsall will be looking to expand the Enter and View programme to include NHS Dentistry, GP practices and Pharmacies during this current year.

The forward plan of Enter and View visits will be approved by the Healthwatch Advisory Board at its public Board meetings.

Communication

Effective communication and marketing are vital to delivering this workplan.

We will continuously develop and promote Healthwatch Walsall, its brand and independence to all citizens and communities of Walsall.

We will communicate the impact of Healthwatch Walsall work and activities to stakeholders and the public.

We will support citizens of Walsall with health and care messages and information.

Volunteering

Volunteers recruited to support the Healthwatch Walsall work are recognised as a valued resource, key to our ability to deliver the annual workplan. Volunteer week takes place between 1-7 June and Healthwatch Walsall will be actively supporting this campaign by daily social media postings, promoting how volunteers can help Healthwatch Walsall and we will be holding a face-to-face engagement event with existing and new volunteers on the last day of the campaign.

A recent contact has been made with all Healthwatch Walsall volunteers to ascertain if they wish to remain an active volunteer and although a number of volunteers have moved on it is pleasing to note that we are increasing the number of young people volunteers.

We continue to provide a full induction for new volunteers and will work with them to understand how best their time and skills can be utilised.

Information and Signposting

Offering information and advice is a statutory part of our work. We will:

- Provide an appropriate response to anyone who contacts us with a health or social care query. Contact can be made by telephone, post, social media or in person when we are at an engagement event.
- Provide individuals independent and impartial information and support about choices available to them.
- Promote the information and signposting service to make sure citizens know how we can help them.

Community Engagement

To enable service users and the public to share their views and experiences of health and social care services, our Community Outreach Lead works closely with communities in the Borough and health and social care establishments.

We proactively engage with and respond to the different communities in Walsall to understand and help meet their health and social care needs and we adopt the following principles of engagement:

- Work in collaboration with others – we will work with partners across all sectors to make the most of our capacity for engagement and involvement.
- Engage digitally – we will continue to develop our digital activity.
- Engage in person – we will continue to try and reach all local people of different ages and different demographics across all locations in the Borough.
- Plan engagement – to help us listen to what the citizens of Walsall are telling us about what matters to them.
- Information and Signposting – to make the public aware of their rights and what health and care they should receive. Also, to signpost them as appropriate.
- Involve Volunteers – to provide a variety of volunteer roles to add value to our engagement.

Strategic Influencing

Healthwatch Walsall has built up a good working relationship with a number of strategic level organisations and committees. These include the Health and Wellbeing Board, Walsall Together Board, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee, System Quality & Oversight Committee and the Black Country Integrated Care Board. Our remit is to work with these partnerships to ensure the voice of the public and patients are heard, and to provide advice, guidance and assurance on how to achieve this. Regular meetings continue to be held between the HAB Chair/Manager with key strategic Chief Executive Officers/Chairs and relationships continue to be strengthened.

Promotion of Healthwatch – Social Media

Our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts have grown considerably and help us expand our reach, network with other organisations and provide live updates on our engagement activities, local health news and national campaigns. Tying our social media activity in with trending topics helps us to get the message out to more people and ensures that what we are focused on remains relevant to members of

the public. It also makes us more accessible, as people can message us at any time to seek advice or information, and we can quickly signpost them to other organisations.

Healthwatch Collaboration

We recognise that we will benefit people by working collaboratively and in partnership with others. We aim, to do this by:

- Having an active role in the West Midlands Healthwatch network, learning from and sharing good practice and impact with partners.
- Working with other local Healthwatch to manage our collective resources to engage effectively with wider partnerships.
- We may set joint priorities and work with other Healthwatch where this will produce better outcomes.
- Working and supporting Healthwatch England campaigns.