

# Insight into action

Report #2  
June - August 2020

# At a glance

We have ...

- Produced dedicated Covid-19 information and advice resources on our website including:
  - [Parents Reducing stress and non-accidental injuries during Covid-19](#)
  - [Covid-19 - Information for those with dementia and their carers](#)
  - [Coping with drinking habits during Covid-19](#)
  - [Support for new parents during Covid-19](#)
  - [Eating healthily during Covid-19](#)
  - [Maternity services and visiting Royal Berkshire Hospital](#)
  - [How to get an NHS dentist appointment](#)
  - [What you can expect when discharged from hospital during Covid-19](#)
  - [Royal Berkshire Hospital rebuild - your views count](#)
  - [How can you find an NHS dentist?](#)
  - [Coronavirus is affecting my mental health - what can I do](#)
  - [What you need to know about visiting care homes](#)
- Our Covid-19 survey had 174 responses. The survey asked the public their experiences of health and care services during Covid-19 and their experience of finding information. The report is being finalised
- Launched a mystery shop of GP and Dentist websites to find out if the information on those sites was accurate, easy to find and clear to understand. Findings will be published this month.
- Connecting the engagement team responsible for Royal Berkshire Hospital rebuild with local VSC partners to ensure seldom heard and vulnerable have a say
- Continue to connect with local VCS groups around health and care issues and share relevant advice and information
- Shared and raised issues of high concern for the public, specifically:
  - Problems finding an NHS dentist
  - Unclear and difficult to find information on health providers websites
  - Mental health deterioration
  - Covid-19 restrictions presenting barriers for deaf people who need to sign/lip read
  - Ongoing delays in CAMHS services
  - Contacting and accessing GP surgeries
- Worked collaboratively with other Healthwatch partners in Reading and West Berkshire
- Represented Healthwatch strategically with locality CCG's, Hospital Trusts and the Integrated Care System. As examples, with our Healthwatch partners in West Berkshire we have provided information to feed into the Berkshire West ICP Urgent and Emergency Care Board Recovery Planning exercise. We have also input to the Royal Berkshire Hospital discharge planning exercise and the hospitals rebuild plan public engagements

# Background

The way health and social care services operate has been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) with non-urgent treatment postponed, face-to-face appointments reduced and homes and services limiting public access.

For all of us here at Healthwatch Wokingham, the outbreak has also resulted in significant changes to our work, with much of our planned public engagement and visits to services paused and a greater focus on providing advice to the public (especially hard to reach groups) and supporting the local response to COVID-19. We have adapted and will continue to do so in order to meet the needs of the people and communities of Wokingham.

However, this does not mean that the work of Healthwatch to understand the experiences of the public has stopped. With a fast-moving response to COVID-19, real-time intelligence for services about the issues the public are facing is valuable. It is also important that health and social care services understand the impact these changes are having more broadly - especially when they concern people's safety or will have implications as services begin the return to normal. Healthwatch Wokingham is therefore clear that feedback we provide can help the NHS and social care services during this time by helping them spot and address issues caused by the COVID19 crisis.

## Our priorities

During this time, we believe Healthwatch services can play the most useful role by:

- Providing advice and information to the public
- Supporting NHS and social care services in their communications with the public
- Alerting services to issues that could impact on the safety of people or their experience of care
- Supporting the wider community response to COVID-19
- Supporting communities who find it hardest to be heard or get the support they need

This briefing aims to provide a snapshot of activity and our impact from June-August 2020.

# Advice and Information

In the last 3 months we have continued to have a greater focus on our information, advice and signposting service, to help people get the information they need from a trusted source. We have continued to utilise our social media presence to keep the public informed and updated regarding government and local health and social care services and where to get help and support from the voluntary and community sector. The number of interactions on our website and on social media has increased since the previous report figures.



**Our website - 3264 page views and 1451 new users**



Facebook - our posts reached over 15000 people



Instagram - our posts reached over 1700 people



Twitter - our posts reached over 12000 people

## Where is our insight coming from?

At present, our opportunity to directly engage with Wokingham residents has had to change due to social distancing requirements.

Our telephone based signposting service has remained open throughout the period and the helpdesk team have been responding to calls and emails from the public.

We also continue to actively seek insight about health and social care experiences through our website, newsletters and social media and through digital meetings with communities.

Community and Voluntary organisations are playing an even bigger role in being our partners and are currently supporting our “eyes and ears” campaign so we can capture and understand the experiences of those they support.

## What have people been telling us and what action have we taken

We have created specific Covid-19 advice and information documents on our website, working with stakeholders, based on what we are asked by the public and community and voluntary sector partners. We review our advice and information weekly to ensure it is current. We have also used social media to highlight advice and information to the public



### Health and Care Issues in the learning disability community

We have continued to work closely with CLASP (Learning Disability Group) and join them on their meetings to hear about issues related to learning disability community. Below is summary of the issues

that have come up. We have been offering advice and information and where necessary escalating to CCG, NHS England, Pharmacy Network etc.

#### **We heard**

People with a learning disability were finding it difficult to get easy read information about going for a dentist appointment.

#### **We did**

We provided an easy read document about going to the dentist which was produced by NHS England. We also sent CLASP an easy read document entitled 'Getting NHS Help When You Need It During Coronavirus Outbreak'.

#### **We heard**

When attending the CLASP zoom meetings some of the group mentioned their anxiety and worry during the COVID pandemic.

#### **We did**

We contacted Public Health England and asked if they had any easy read resources on the subject of anxiety. They directed us to one of their easy read documents titled 'COVID 19 Looking after your feelings and body' which we shared with CLASP. We also passed on resources from Learning Disability England website

#### **We heard**

We were asked at a zoom meeting where they can find clear information about what individuals can and can't do after 4<sup>th</sup> July when the government lockdown restrictions were changed.

#### **We did**

Healthwatch passed on the official information and advice from the government website.

#### **We heard**

Individual enjoys independently managing their own medication. The pharmacy withdrew their NOMAD pack and the automatic re-ordering of their medication. This caused distress for the individual due to the change in routine and lost independence. This was included in previous report but hadn't been resolved at time of publication.

#### **We did**

Healthwatch reported to CCG and NHSE Pharmacy Lead who informed us the NOMAD should not have been removed. Now liaising with Thames Valley Pharmacy Committee. [Update](#). Healthwatch, working with the Pharmacy Committee Healthwatch were able to find an alternative Pharmacy locally that would provide the NOMAD packs and deliver to the patient.

### **Dentistry**

#### **We heard**

As reported previously, there continues to be a lack of clear information and communication about dentistry during COVID-19. People were telling us that they couldn't find information about the current status on dental appointments. Once dental practices started resuming services we were hearing that people couldn't find an NHS dentist to register with.

#### **We did**

Healthwatch created advice and information documents on the subject to help inform the local community. One person reported, "I couldn't find the dental information I was looking for until I found it on the Healthwatch website". In addition, we have carried out a survey of Wokingham Borough dental websites to check how clear and accurate the information is. A report will follow.

## CAMHS

### We heard

We heard from a resident about the current 2 year wait on the ADHD pathway before getting an appointment for her child. These aren't isolated incidents.

### We did

Healthwatch have contacted BHFT who asked for details of the individual. After getting individuals permission details were passed to BHFT who were going to speak to the individual directly.

## Pharmacies

### We heard

Daughter whose mother lived in sheltered accommodation was not receiving her medication which should be delivered to her home. The daughter tried to resolve it, but the Pharmacy was not taking phone calls. She emailed head office but did not get a response. The daughter then contacted Healthwatch for help. Healthwatch contacted Thames Valley Pharmacy Committee and explained the problem. They contacted the daughter directly and resolved the problem.

### We did

Healthwatch have discussed with Thames Valley Pharmacy organisation. They have said there is now good availability of medications.

### We heard

Healthwatch heard about some poor communication and customer service.

## Deaf and hard of hearing

### We heard

Currently the Covid 19 restrictions have imposed severe barriers for D/deaf people who need to lipread or sign, i.e. telephone and video consultations, use of face covering P.P.

### We did

Healthwatch raised this issue directly with the deputy accountable officer at the West Berks CCG.

## GP Surgeries

### We heard

We continue to hear that people are finding it difficult to communicate with GP surgeries because you can't enter a GP surgery to talk to a receptionist. Additional concerns for those who have to wait outside, particularly the elderly and vulnerable in terms of shelter and toilet facilities. We are also hearing that people have difficulty getting accurate, clear information from websites, specifically in terms of safety protocols.

### We did

In terms of access and plans for shelter and facilities we will be following this up with GP surgeries to find out their plans going forward. In terms of information on websites, Healthwatch have carried out a survey of Wokingham Borough GP websites to see how clear and accurate the information is. Report to follow.

## Royal Berkshire Hospital

### We heard

Healthwatch received feedback that people couldn't easily find information on Royal Berkshire Hospital website, that it was difficult to navigate and information wasn't always timely. This left people particularly from vulnerable groups frustrated and not sure where to get their information. Healthwatch also found it difficult to find information and navigate the website when trying to find information to inform the local population

## We did

In our regular meetings with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, along with our colleagues from Healthwatch Reading and Healthwatch West Berkshire, we fed back our concerns on the quality of the website. The trust plans to improve the website have now been brought forward and the website is to be re-built. They are in the process of engaging with the public about what they want from a new website, Healthwatch have fed into that process. They expect the new website to be ready in the Autumn.

# For help, advice and information or to share your experience

We're the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they need. We also help people find the information they need about services in Wokingham Borough.



Here to help you on the next step of your health and social care journey

We've the power to make sure that the government and those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

**Telephone:** 0118 418 1418

**Email:** [enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk)

**Facebook:** @Healthwatchwokingham

**Twitter:** @HWwokingham

**Web:** [www.healthwatchwokingham.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwokingham.co.uk)

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