



Our Workplan

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

About us

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough is your local independent service for everyone who uses publicly funded health and care services. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

How we work

If you use GPs, hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services in your area, we want to hear about your experiences. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice through our signposting service.

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England. Last year, the network helped nearly 1 million people have their say and get the support that they needed. We are here to listen to issues that really matter to people in Wokingham Borough about their experiences of health and care. We are independent and impartial, anything you share with us will remain entirely confidential.

It's really important that you share your experiences – whether good or bad, happy or sad. If you've had a negative experience, it's easy to think there's no point in complaining, and that 'nothing ever changes'. Or, if you've had a great experience, that you 'wish you could say thank you'.

We pass your feedback to the providers and have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen and use it to improve standards of care – your feedback is helping to improve people's lives.

Where possible, we will let you know when changes are planned to services in our community and help you have a say. We encourage

those in charge of local care to involve you when changes are being planned to services.

So, if you need advice, or you're ready to tell your story, we're here to listen.

Our approach

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.

We champion what matters to you and work with others to find ideas that work.

We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

Introduction

After a successful first year where we focused on getting a team of staff and volunteers in place; making Healthwatch Wokingham Borough visible to local residents, and further developing our understanding of the health and social care issues local people are facing, the year ahead will see an increased focus on specific areas of work.

You can read our Annual Report for 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 [here](#).

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough is hosted by The Advocacy People who also host Healthwatch West Berkshire and Healthwatch Reading. This means that we are working efficiently and effectively across the three areas known as 'Berkshire West' to bring the public and patient voice to decision makers locally and more widely across the 'patch'.

Of course, whilst most of our work is about hearing feedback on other services, we also want to know what we can do differently so that we too can continually improve what we do.

Our Advisory Board of volunteers are responsible for ensuring that Healthwatch Wokingham Borough sets appropriate priorities, adheres to its principles and purpose and operates in an ethical way in the services of the local community.

Our objectives

Objective 1: Obtain the views of local people about their experiences of local health and social care services

We will:

- Raise awareness of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough across all communities, through a range of activities including:
 - Attending local events and meetings
 - Distributing leaflets and information in places local people visit
 - Increasing our presence on social media
 - Developing our working relationships with voluntary sector organisations
- Ensure there are a range of ways people can contact Healthwatch Wokingham Borough: phone; email; in person; via social media; website form.
- Identify local barriers that result in certain groups going unheard and how we can help overcome them
- Ensure our staff are trained to use the appropriate engagement techniques to meet the needs of individuals and engage outside support as appropriate, eg translation/interpretation
- Undertake more detailed public engagement on emerging topics and themes

We will check how successful we are by monitoring:

- how people are contacting us and where from to ensure we are hearing from a cross-section of local residents
- numbers of people contacting Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
- changes made as a result of sharing information with services.

Objective 2: Make the views of local people known to those who make decisions about health and social care services and recommend how those services could or should be improved

We will:

- Share feedback, good and bad, with the relevant services and ask for a response.
- Work with local policymakers, commissioners, and health and care professionals to access and act on the evidence that we provide.
- Feed the public voice into health and social care decision making and scrutiny forums locally, across Berkshire West and the wider Buckingham, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS).

We will check how successful we are by monitoring how our feedback is used and what changes have been made as a result of sharing information with, or asking questions of, services – ‘You said, they did’.

Objective 3: Promote and support the involvement of local people when decisions are being made about local health and social care services

We will:

- Work with the other 4 Healthwatch in the BOB ICS area to ensure public and patient voice is represented at system level and there are clear routes for feedback.
- Share local consultation activity and encourage participation.
- Check organisations are seeking public views when changes are being proposed and, if they are not, ask them to do so.

We will check how successful we are by:

- Recording when we ask questions of services and what changed as a result – ‘You said, they did’.
- Checking meeting minutes reflect questions we have asked and following

up thereafter.

- Sharing what changes we have made as a result of asking questions – ‘You said, they did’.

Objective 4: Provide information and advice to local people about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them

We will:

- Keep up to date with and share information about local and national health and social care services and developments, online via social media and our website.
- Share information published by other credible sources to help ensure public health messages are reaching a wide audience.
- Respond to enquiries from members of the public via phone, email, website form and in person.

We will check how successful we are by:

- Recording queries and responses so we can audit the quality and take action if required, eg staff training
- Asking people who contact us to complete a short survey to tell us how we did
- Sharing “You said, we did” information in response to feedback about our service delivery

Objective 5: Make the views and experiences of local people known to Healthwatch England so that they are fed into the national picture

We will:

- share with Healthwatch England our

- anonymised quantitative data (the numbers) on themes and trends on a quarterly basis
- reports and Annual Report
- support Healthwatch England activity such as national surveys
- respond to requests for qualitative data – local stories behind the numbers.

We will check how successful we are by:

- Recording queries and responses so we can audit the quality and take action if required, eg staff training
- Work with Healthwatch England to ensure our information is shared in a timely way in an agreed anonymised format
- Meeting the deadline for completion and submission of the Annual Report.

Our priorities to 31 March 2024

- We will publish the findings and recommendations from our **Enter and View** of Wokingham Medical Centre which we conducted in February and March 2023.
- Our public survey showed that **GP access** is one of the main priorities for local people. We are therefore going to explore this further during September to November 2023.
- Access to **dentistry** for people with learning disabilities and pregnant women.
- Healthwatch England has published a report on **maternal mental health**. We have published local findings alongside the Healthwatch England report and will be following up with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.
- To support the **All Age Transformation of Continuing Healthcare** programme, we will be doing a small scale exploration of the

experiences of people who have had an application turned down.

- We have also been made aware of issues regarding **accessible information** and organisations not meeting the standard. This is a big topic so we will be raising concerns with individual organisations as and when they arise.

Local 'watchlist'

We have identified the following as key areas of priority for the coming twelve months. We will monitor feedback received and escalate issues as appropriate.

One of these areas, or indeed new themes, may emerge over the coming months as a topic/topics for more in-depth exploration. Many of the highlighted issues are present nationally, as well as locally. We are very aware of the breadth and depth of concerns about health and care services and therefore will react accordingly within our capacity to do so.

- Berkshire West **health inequalities** work focusing on cardiovascular disease to ensure local people are involved in the design of new services.
- **NHS dentistry** – a national and local issue, we are keeping abreast of developments and availability of NHS emergency and routine appointments, sharing information as we receive it.
- **Asylum seekers** – physical and mental health and wellbeing for asylum seekers living in local Home Office Contracted Accommodation.
- **Cost of living crisis** – impact on local people and subsequent impact on local health and social care services.
- **Support for carers** to have time out to pursue interests outside caring, through provision of respite and other support services.
- **Mental health support for children and young people.**
- We are keeping abreast of developments in **Building Berkshire Together** on the future of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

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