

Healthwatch Surrey Priorities 2021-2022

Key areas of work under our local Healthwatch contract

Our approach

Hearing more

- Listening to people, making sure their voices are heard
- Including everyone in the conversation, especially those who are at risk of health inequalities.



Sharing more

- Analysing people's experiences to learn how to improve care
- Sharing insight in the right place, at the right time, with place-based systems and Surrey-wide.



Thriving

- Working with our system and VCFS partners to make care better whilst retaining our independence
- Championing public involvement in system change
- Being a respected and valued critical friend.



Mental Health

- We will carry out our agenda-free listening to those who are receiving services and those who are struggling to access services or have been discharged, to find out what is working well and less-well.
- We will share themes with the mental health trust on a regular basis.
- We will carry out in-depth listening with people who are living with dementia, focussing on information and support they value in the early years after diagnosis. We will seek to understand what information they receive from the system, the sources and resources they use after discharge, and what they find most valuable.
- We will support people who need to make a complaint about mental health services via our Independent Health Complaints Advocacy service, and work with the mental health trust to help ensure people get a timely response.
- Our Young Healthwatch will amplify the voices of young users of mental health services and those who might need early intervention via our involvement on the Young Adults Reference Group.



Care at Home

- Social care is in the spotlight: the pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for reform of our social care system. The bulk of funded social care takes place at home, and this is set to increase as residential care suffers under funding pressures and the negative experiences of care and isolation during Covid.
- We will publish the results of our survey, in partnership with Action for Carers and Surrey County Council Adult Social Care, into how discharge from hospital has worked from a carer's point of view during the pandemic. We will take this to all the "place" systems and work with them on implementing any learnings on what needs to improve.
- We will continue our interest in whether people receiving care in their home feel confident to feed back, complain and have their voices heard. We will ask commissioners how they will be monitoring and assuring that people know how to give feedback, are supported to do so, and that their feedback is acted upon.



Access to health and care services

- The unfolding pandemic had a dramatic impact on health and social care services. The changes have been extensive, but they have also happened at speed and without the usual opportunities for public/patient consultation. In the year ahead we will focus on how people access health and care services, advocate for robust public involvement in change, and listen out for those who feel unable to access care.
- We are particularly interested in helping the system ensure equitable access to primary care for all, and making sure that at all stages of the process - contacting the GP surgery, triage, and subsequent care - all patients are enabled to get access.
- We will continue to advocate for good communication and support for those who are on waiting lists.



Listening to all and being a bridge

- We will continue to ensure that users of all health and care services in Surrey have an independent conduit for feedback, and will be an effective “bridge” to commissioners and providers.
- With the support of our volunteers, we will continue to listen to as many people in Surrey as possible, across all types of services, and will move around Surrey covering each of our places in turn. We will have a particular interest in reaching those who are less well-served by services, live in areas of deprivation, who may be at risk of health inequalities, face barriers to access or to having their voices heard.
- We will signpost to established complaints procedures, encourage people to feed back directly, and support them to do so. We will work closely with voluntary and community organisations to amplify voices.
- We will meet regularly with providers and commissioners across our system to share what local people have told us, feed themes into quality monitoring systems, and escalate particular issues of concern to try to secure improvements for all.



Empowering local people to get involved, and being critical friend to involvement and engagement across our system

- As the NHS system, and the relationships between our local places and Surrey-wide decision-making and monitoring evolves, we will champion the place of citizen and patient/service-user voices at decision-making tables. As many of the changes brought in rapidly during the pandemic are evaluated and considered, we will champion robust and meaningful involvement of local people.
- Through our Citizen Ambassador programmes and our volunteer Community Influencers, we will continue to empower local people to become more involved in their communities and in the design, delivery and monitoring of their local services.



Empowering local people with information, advice and advocacy services

- We will continue to provide an independent source of information and advice on how to navigate and get the best out of NHS and social care services, to signpost people to the right sources of help, and support those needing help to pursue a complaint through our Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service.

