

Hampshire Together
Healthwatch Final Engagement Report



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Introduction



Whether it's improving health and social care services today or helping to shape them for tomorrow, Local Healthwatch is all about local voices being able to influence the delivery and design of local services. Not just for people who use them now, but anyone who might need to in the future



Healthwatch was created under the Health & Social Care Act in 2012 to gather and represent the views of the public. It exists in two distinct forms - local Healthwatch and, at national level, Healthwatch England. The aim of local Healthwatch is to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their locality.

Local Healthwatch also:

- represents the views and experiences of people who use services, carers and the public on the Health and Wellbeing Boards set up by local authorities
- provides information and signposting to people about local health and care services, how to access them and how to find their way round the system
- reports concerns about the quality of health and social care services to Healthwatch England, which can then recommend that the Care Quality Commission take action.

Every voice counts when it comes to shaping the future of health and social care. Everything that your local Healthwatch does will bring the voice and influence of local people to the development and delivery of local services.

People need to feel that their local Healthwatch belongs to and reflects them and their local community. It needs to feel approachable, practical, and dynamic and to act on behalf of local people.

An independent voice

Maintaining independence

Healthwatch Hampshire is ultimately accountable to local people and it prioritises the work it does to reflect the intelligence and evidence it has gathered from local people. Its independence from the NHS and local authorities mean that it is not bound to adopt the priorities or messages of those bodies.

Context

Hampshire Together Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services is a programme focused on delivering a new hospital to serve the people of north and mid Hampshire it is part of the government's Health Infrastructure Plan to modernise NHS hospitals.

Healthwatch Hampshire recognises the need for public engagement and involvement in the programme and has ensured that it is engaged with Hampshire Together, this to date has included membership of the PSSAG, communications group and general communication promotion of the programme to the public.

Hampshire Together approached Healthwatch Hampshire to assist them in facilitating some additional focus groups with hard to reach communities of interest as part of the programme's engagement phase.

As part of this project we have established focus groups, and other methods of engagement to reach the following groups:

- Disability - Basingstoke Disability Forum.
- Gender Reassignment - Chrysalis, supporting people with their gender identity.
- Young Carers - Winchester Young Carers.
- Digitally Disenfranchised - *those people who are disadvantaged due to being digitally inexperienced or without access to digital equipment*

The aim was to have a minimum of 5 participants to facilitate conversations focussed on:

- An overview of the Hampshire Together Programme.
- Conversations about how far people would be willing to travel to access services.
- An overview of the outcomes from the options development programme.
- Conversations about how they might be impacted by options.
- Provide opportunities for participants to raise concerns and possible benefits.
- Introduce next steps - consultation period of the programme.

Methodology

Consideration was given to the most appropriate way of ensuring we reach as many people in the target groups as possible within the time period available (12/10/20 to 2/11/20). We were able to establish that the Basingstoke and District Disability Forum (BDDF) held a monthly zoom meeting, as did Chrysalis. BDDF set aside a separate meeting for their members to join us for an on-line workshop, and Chrysalis arranged for us to join towards the end of their usual social meeting so that members who were interested in the topic could stay and feedback their views. A power point presentation was created to inform the audience about the overview of the Hampshire Together programme.

We made contact with the Young Carers Groups in North and Mid Hampshire, and Winchester Young Carers advised that although their zoom sessions were already planned with content, they would be happy to engage with the young carers. Following discussions, we created an easy read questionnaire to capture their feedback which was uploaded onto survey monkey. The group leader advised this would be an easier method for the young people to respond too on their phones, rather than a word document via an email.

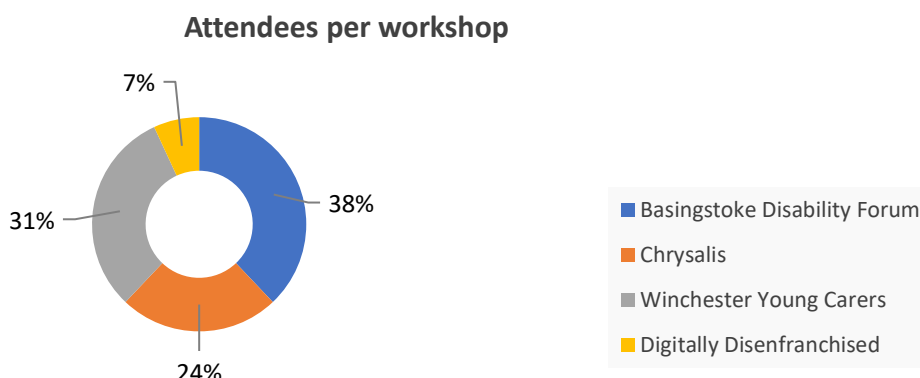
The digitally disenfranchised group was the most difficult group to reach as the time period was short, and we were unable to facilitate face to face meetings due to COVID restrictions. All phone calls to HW Hampshire go to our central hub who respond to queries and we asked the hub to identify callers who lived in north/mid Hampshire who did not have access to the internet. Unfortunately, only 2 callers were identified as meeting the criteria and we arranged to call them back and recorded their views. We established a link with a partner organisation who were prepared to consider issuing letters to members, however time constraints would not allow sufficient time for responses to be sent out and received via post.

All focus group participants providing feedback were offered a £10 voucher as an incentive to take part. This helped to increase numbers and the following comment was received from the leader of the Young Carers group about one of their members -

“He got some new headphones with a mic on which means he can connect with friends more online now and also attend our online groups without tech difficulties.”

Focus Group Attendees

In total we spoke to a total of 29 people across the four groups.



Focus Group Feedback from Basingstoke & District Disability Forum - 11 Attendees

Parking and Access

The biggest concern from this group was having appropriate access, and sufficient parking with requests for a multi-storey car park. Many found it difficult to access public transport and relied on being able to drive and park close to the hospital. People felt that lack of parking at hospitals added considerable stress to an already difficult situation. Requests were made to consider the size of standard parking bays and being more sensitive around the use of bays for those that have a condition (such as autism), who will not necessarily have a disabled parking badge.

- 🟢 *Having enough capacity for parking, is crucial.*
- 🟢 *I needed an extra hour to get a disabled space - only six spaces and I'm disabled and can't walk uphill.*
- 🟢 *Make normal spaces a bit bigger to accommodate wheelchairs, and introduce a space-saving system, one for people with wheelchairs or scooters, the other for those with a disabled badge/walking stick.*
- 🟢 *Also bays for people who are identified as having a 'known condition' of some kind, but do not have a disability badge - in other words design a more sensitive system*

Some members of the group relied on lifts from families and friends to attend appointments, however they report that the current drop off system does not always work, as generally taxis will block the time limited spaces. An improved drop off system

would be welcomed. People living with a long-term condition who have regular visits to the hospital also described the current drop off system as chaotic.

Appropriate access was described as the hospital being on one level, avoiding steps at all costs. This would make it accessible to all.

- 👉 *Don't forget, people are not always recognisable as 'disabled' - would be good to have physically disabled people/volunteers to go around with patients and see what happens - highlight and trial things.*

Interim Services

Concerns were expressed around the continuity of services if a hospital was built on the existing site, or a new site. If a brand-new site was chosen the group wanted to know if equipment would have to be moved from the existing site, and how this would affect appointments. Would this cause delays, or was there an intention that all equipment would be renewed? Also, if the current site in Basingstoke was utilised they could not see how the logistics of this would work without affecting current services.

- 👉 *There's a lot of new building going on already at the current Basingstoke site - what will happen while the building is going on - chaos?*
- 👉 *Will they be keeping both hospitals going while building the new hospital?*
- 👉 *Putting A&E in one place - won't this be overrun?*

Travel

Three people raised the issues involved in patients possibly having to travel further for treatment, especially if they could not access public transport, or were unable to drive. The overall feeling was that health services should be local.

- 👉 *Moving and centralising A&E raises the issue of distance - who is furthest away? They are going to be unhappy..*

Positive Feedback

- 👉 *Brilliant to think of a new hospital in a modern building, a disability aware and friendly hospital, built with the disabled in mind.*
- 👉 *All in one appointments would be very good news - so much time wasted normally! Roll things into one - its good time management basically.*

Participation

The group feel that it is important to involve disabled people in the design of a new hospital and have offered their support with this from consultation, building design, and use of technology and offered their ongoing support with this.

Ideas for the new hospital

- *Could the new hospital have one or more shops like Sue Ryder that raise funds for charities and employ disabled people?*
- *Could the new hospital have dedicated GP service / area for out of hours triage? Currently it is based in A&E.*
- *Can we have an onsite Pharmacy and Post Box. This would save endless trips to other sites which may be closed and to find a post box!*
- *The pharmacy could also be used by relatives and visitors who perhaps themselves may need over the counter medicines.*
- *Waiting rooms and corridors are noisy and people cannot hear their names being called. A screen announcing who is next would help, but of course not everyone can see everything. Training for staff re announcing might be a good idea.*

Focus Group Feedback from Chrysalis - 7 Attendees

All participants reported negative experiences with previous GP and hospital visits relating to lack of understanding/sensitivity of professionals and use of inappropriate language. Many reported that GPs were not willing to help and members often had to see numerous GPs before finding someone they felt understood their needs. Participants felt the burden was on them to educate professionals.

- *How many GPs do you need to see before you find someone who is willing to help?*
- *Even if people are understanding, the pressure is on us to do the educating. It puts me off going to my GP, as I am concerned they will mis-gender me - this is an extra anxiety. Is it my job to speak up, or should they be learning this stuff?*
- *Gender clinic gives information to patients and we have to give it to the GPs ourselves, there is no communication between them*
- *I would hate to go into hospital as people just assumed that I'm a woman and don't even ask.*

Feedback on how experiences can be improved

The group felt their experiences could be improved greatly through education of all hospital, and medical staff on the appropriate use of language, and hoped that in any new hospital this culture would be encouraged and should be the norm.

- *It's about evolving the language used by medical staff. Using the word people instead of men and women. Don't use generic language or make presumptions about people and their bodies.*

Ideas to improve experiences in the new hospital

- *You might have a trans man going in for a mammogram or an ultrasound as a man, in a whole waiting room full of women and that can be incredibly difficult. A waiting area that's mixed gender would work much better.*
- *Non-binary hospital wards would be good as male/female wards just don't fit in the modern world anymore. For example, you can get trans men going in for hysterectomies and they are put into women's wards.*
- *There are forms that you need to fill in medically, which say are you male or female, with no other choices.*
- *We live in a binary, gendered world - any steps that would mean we are not segregated would be welcome.*
- *It would be great to have the option to deliver surgery locally for trans men as it's only available in Harley Street. Have a surgeon from London come to the hospital to do it. Otherwise your family can't visit you and you have to go away.*

Focus Group Feedback from Winchester Young Carers Group - 9 Responses

Previous Experiences

Young Carers reported positive experiences about being in hospital themselves or visiting a relative in hospital. Comments around staff support and attitude were good.

- *Hospital staff were really friendly and supportive and helpful when I got lost or needed reassurance and handled anxiety and being overwhelmed really well.*
- *The nurses were nice, my mum and dad were allowed to sleep over in my room, I could watch the TV.*

- *The service from the doctors (broken toe). Did not have to wait too long and got crutches.*
- *They made my mum feel better and I could visit her and hug her and make sure she was better.*

Other positive comments included that the hospital is in walking distance and is therefore easy to access. One young person mentioned a waiting room which was big enough to play in, and a computer which they could use.

Negative Experiences

Young Carers from the Winchester area fed back that they found the current building difficult to navigate, and that it was lacking in colour. Comments were made that the car parking is too far away from A & E, and one respondent had to walk a long way from the car to A & E with a broken toe.

- *The building is too confusing, and I get lost trying to find where I'm supposed to go like it's a maze. There were signs and stuff but not everyone is good at reading.*

Two respondents talked about having to spend a long time waiting for an appointment, and there was nothing for older children to do, despite their being toys for young children.

- *Not a lot of stuff for bigger kids. The appointment is always late.*

One young carer was not happy with the attitude of the staff.

- *How most staff members didn't want to be there and how dull the hospital was.*

Travel

The group were very concerned about the effects of having to travel further to get to a hospital. Only two people said that their family could access public transport, and others advised that one of their parents would have to drive. Concerns were raised about the additional cost of this, and the extra time it would take. The cost of public transport was raised as being very expensive on a longer journey, which they could not afford. 55% said their families would struggle to travel further.

- *It would be more difficult if we had to travel further, it might cost more money and we would be away from home for longer and my mum is a carer for my sister so that could be tricky.*

- 👤 *We don't have money for travel.*
- 👤 *We would most likely go by train if we could afford it.*

Ideas for the new hospital

Top priorities include parking nearby, a bright, welcoming environment and a building that is easy to navigate. Good size waiting areas with engaging things to do including teenagers are important to this group.

- 👤 *Lots of parking close so my mum and me don't have to walk far.*
- 👤 *Big space to wait with stuff to do. Lots of parking close so my mum and me don't have to walk far.*
- 👤 *Modern buildings with easy paths and sectioning because I get lost easy.*
- 👤 *A colourful hospital not just for kids but adults too and a garden with lots of flowers you can go to with your family.*
- 👤 *Quick, short, snappy service. Welcoming and caring. Space for my brother to go, he is autistic.*

Digitally Disenfranchised Feedback - 2 respondents

Both respondents reported they were not happy with the current service being delivered and feel that there is a 'postcode lottery' of who gets the best treatment. They also commented that attitudes from consultants have been negative in the past.

- 👤 *There has been constant 'fobbing off', and I believe this is a 'common experience' for anyone using health services in Hampshire at the present time.*

Travel and Parking

Both cited as the major concerns with one respondent living near Winchester and the other near Fleet. Priorities are good public transport links and the need for adequate, affordable parking.

- 👤 *I do not drive so would be using the bus to go anywhere, or possibly a taxi. There is also a community transport scheme in the village, run by an elderly woman, but I doubt this would go Basingstoke.*
- 👤 *People need somewhere easy to park as parking adds enormously to their stress, which is further exacerbated by the expense.*

- ☛ *Would be happy to drive to the new hospital, but also aware of the poor transport links with Basingstoke - no direct bus link from Fleet where I live, and I'm concerned for those who are unable to drive.*

Access

An observation was made that people find long corridors and lifts tiring, and that a new hospital built on one level offering ample and easy parking would be an improvement on the existing situation.

Views on the options

Although concerns were made about the changes being suggested one person thought that change was positive and that something really has to be done. The resident that lives close to Winchester expressed concern that money has been spent recently on providing an improved outpatient service in Winchester, and she hopes this would not be a waste of money. She also felt that 'a massive place is unnecessary', but also thought that a new hospital would be 'easier to clean, and more hygienic.'

Use of IT

- ☛ *I do not reject the use of IT, quite the opposite, and can see how it might help in getting appointments etc, but I am nervous about it. IT just scares me.*

Healthwatch Hampshire would like to thank the following groups for their help in providing feedback - Basingstoke Disability Forum (BDDF), Chrysalis, and Winchester Young Carers.



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