

Annual
Report
Summary

2014/2015



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Given the huge pressures on health and social care services change has been inevitable and Healthwatch Portsmouth plays a vital role in ensuring that users of these services can influence change. The last year has helped us to recognise that as a small organisation we can play a vital role working with other organisations on changes to health and social care.

The year has been a challenging one; the first few months involved a process of learning and development for the new board and manager, with time spent finalising the governance structures. We saw the election of new board members, the co-option of additional members, significant staff changes and confirmation that we will face a budget cut in the new financial year beginning in 2015. We have been seeking to establish Healthwatch Portsmouth and were fortunate to retain the services of three of the interim board members, originally involved in the establishment of Healthwatch, which has provided continuity for the board.

Our aim has been to use information given to us by local people to help decide where our focus lies. We also wanted to raise our profile further with the public so that we are clearly recognised as somewhere to go if you have a concern about health issues.

A number of community surgeries were established to make Healthwatch staff available in public spaces. The success of these has continually improved over the course of the year as the service has gained feedback from members of the public on how their needs can be best met. Healthwatch Portsmouth has engaged with a diverse range of Portsmouth residents through attending over 140 events during 2014 -2015.

We also conducted a number of focused activities examples of which include work with Breakthrough, Veterans Outreach Service and the Beneficial Foundation who work with disadvantage groups such as those with learning and other disabilities, and the Portsmouth Disability Forum who offer a wide range of services for disabled individuals and their families.

Examples of community partnerships can be found with work undertaken with Carers, and BME groups including the Cross Cultural Womens Group, Migrant Intervention Project, Carers Council and Carers Centre.

Portsmouth, in recognition of future challenges posed by changing demographics, is transforming services with a view to supporting an aging population. Healthwatch Portsmouth has worked hard to ensure it built appropriate channels to engage with residents who will be impacted by changes to services. We have spoken with residents in care homes, at a range of lunch clubs and user groups, and undertook targeted work on dementia. One of our team is a Dementia Friends Champion and provided Dementia Friends information sessions to groups within the city.

Healthwatch Portsmouth's most effective channel for providing information on local health and social care services has been through its online directory. The directory consists of over 700 Health and Social Care services and is continually growing as we discover new organisations offering support within the city. There were a total of 11,465 searches made on the Healthwatch Portsmouth online directory which is jointly updated with input from Portsmouth City Council.

Healthwatch Portsmouth has also been involved in a partnership project called Wessex Community Voice. The Partnership includes NHS England Wessex sub regional team, the Wessex Clinical Senate and Strategic Clinical Networks and five local Healthwatch that operate across the region; Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Southampton.

This innovative project developed a framework for good practice and a step-by-step guide to Patient and Public engagement in commissioning that has since been well received by stakeholders across the region.

Local people received in-depth training over a series of five one day sessions that covered the commissioning process and support their understanding and ability to engage in the design of services. More information can be found via this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Gw4DjSUvIQ>

As an independent organisation Healthwatch Portsmouth was able to voice patient experience, identify learning points and areas for improvement. We have instigated a commitment to identify Mental Health Champions within a Trust's Community Care Services and contributed on a serious recent case review panel to ensure that agency action was challenged and identified areas for change.

Healthwatch Portsmouth has also been active in monitoring CQC findings and reports to supplement its knowledge of the local Health and Social Care landscape.

Opportunities and challenges for the future

Healthwatch Portsmouth continues to build positive working links with providers of services within the city. Our strategy has been to pursue a partnership approach to investigating and resolving those issues reported to the service. It is our belief that through encouraging joint ownership of user experience the service enables change by forming a consensus on any required change.

We will face a significant challenge this coming year having received a 30% cut to funding. To meet these challenges we will need to place increasing emphasis on recruiting and training volunteers to increase capacity and deliver more for less.

Regular activities will be appraised and rebalanced to account for the loss of staff, and outreach increasingly targeted to suit the available resources

New contract performance indicators agreed with Portsmouth City Council will support us to put local voice at the heart of projects, and success will be measured in terms of the change the service is able to effect.

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