

1) TRANS HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY

In 2017, Healthwatch B&NES worked with other Local Healthwatch in Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire to jointly commission a survey into the health, care and wellbeing needs and experiences of local Trans* and Non-binary** people. This work was carried out by The Diversity Trust, a local organisation that specialises in engaging with equalities groups.

*Trans is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression diverges in some way from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Non-Binary refers to any gender that is not exclusively male or female. A similar term is gender neutral or gender queer. Some other non-binary identities include: agender, bigender and genderfluid.

Over the course of eight months, 225 Trans and Non-Binary people from the West of England and surrounding districts took part in an online survey, interviews and focus groups. 17% of which were from Bath and North East Somerset. Participants were recruited, through a range of methods, including social, community and support groups; online; and through social media.

HEADLINE FIGURES:

- 205 people took part in an online survey
- 20 people took part in interviews and focus groups
- Age range from <16 to 80 years. Average age - 36 years
- Transgender identity - 71%
- Cisgender identity - 25%
- **Note:** A breakdown of the cisgender category included people who identified as cross-dressers and included non-binary participants.
- Other gender identity - 4%
- 27% have waited a year or more for a first appointment. 31% have not yet been seen
- 33% of participants had a physical health condition
- 47% of participants had a mental health condition
- 71% of participants had sought help for anxiety or depression
- 57% of participants had self-harmed or self-injured themselves
- 71% of participants had thought about suicide. 40% of participants had planned suicide
- 16% of participants frequently used alcohol. 5% of participants felt they used alcohol too much
- One in five participants said they felt unsafe. One third feel unsafe in some situations
- 60% of participants had been called names in the street. 13% of participants had been subject to violence
- 60% of participants said they felt discriminated against because of their gender identity
- 47% of participants felt discriminated at work
- 30% of participants felt discriminated against in health care.

A series of recommendations have been made as a result of this survey, including:

- the need for transgender awareness training for health, care and wellbeing staff
- the need for service providers to develop policies on challenging transphobic bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination in line with the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011).
- A recommendation for service providers to develop a Trans Inclusion Policy, involving and consulting with Trans staff and patients, on best practice in supporting Trans colleagues and patients through their transition.

This is just a snapshot of the findings and recommendations that have been made. The full report makes for a tough read but gives comprehensive insight into the experiences that Trans and Non-binary people are having when using health and social care services.

To read the report in full W: <https://bit.ly/2OzE39h>

2) LAY INVOLVEMENT WITH HEALTHWATCH B&NES

Following the recommissioning of Healthwatch B&NES from 1 April 2018 we have reviewed our governance and the roles that lay people play in how Healthwatch B&NES is run. Our newly established Executive Board provides leadership, sets work plan objectives and oversees the delivery of Healthwatch B&NES to ensure that it effectively captures the public 'voice' and uses its role to influence and shape the provision of local health and social care services.

The Board comprises nine members, five of whom are lay representatives. The lay representatives and their roles are as follows:

Roger Tippings	Lead for Enter and View and Quality
Vacant	Health and Wellbeing Board representative (<i>Alex F currently attending</i>)
Diana Hall Hall	Provider link: Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS FT
Ann Harding	Provider link: Virgin Care
Nick Ramsey	Provider link: Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

The provider link volunteers aim to work closely with key Trust personnel to help facilitate regular dialogue, share feedback from the public (and receive a response where possible), and increase understanding around the work that each organisation is doing.

This approach has worked well with the RUH, with our lay representative being a valued member of the Patient Experience Group, having regular meetings with the Trust Chair and Head of Patient Experience, and being involved more widely in RUH activity, e.g. recruitment of a new Complaints Manager.

3) 'What matters to you?' public event

On 4 July 2018 Healthwatch B&NES held an open meeting in Saltford for members of the public and representatives from VCSE organisations to share their experiences of using local health and social care services, or those of the people that they work with or support.

Topics or concerns raised by attendees, included:

- Prescribing policy reviews and the implementation and consistency of prescribing across the district

- There was some confusion about what is happening locally and what is being done by NHS England. One particular example was around emollients, which one attendee reported were no longer being prescribed by their GP and would therefore result in a personal cost of £70 per month to buy.
 - Attendees were unclear whether the prescribing reviews were being led locally or nationally, and whether there should be more local consultation to establish people's needs and identify groups that could be adversely affected, e.g. people on low incomes.
 - Attendees also questioned how GPs are supported to implement prescribing policy changes, for example whether they are provided guidance to be followed at GP discretion or more formally. Attendees also asked if GPs are made aware of exclusion criteria and if it is clear.
 - There was also a question about exceptional circumstances, appeals etc. Healthwatch explained the Individual Funding Request (IFR) process, but the questions from attendees was more about patients' rights to appeal where prescribing has changed.
- **Non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS)**
 - Attendees wanted clarity around the timeframe for the NEPTS re-procurement, information about whether it is being done B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire wide, and if there will be any public engagement and consultation.
 - Healthwatch received five calls during Q1 from B&NES residents who used to be eligible for NEPTS but are not anymore. VCSE partners are also highlighting this and the unprecedented demand in requests for transport that are now being received by community transport providers.
 - Attendees were particularly concerned about inequalities, rural isolation and vulnerable people being adversely impacted by any changes - and the need for these people to be able to input to future service provision.

Healthwatch is seeking answers to these questions, and the others that were raised, from B&NES Council, BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group and service providers, and will share any responses with attendees and the public via our website. Healthwatch's Executive Board will also consider this feedback and identify if there is any further engagement work that can be carried out during the year to understand people's experiences around these issues.

Healthwatch will hold another public event in the autumn in another part of the district.

GET IN TOUCH

To talk to us in more detail about anything contained in this report:

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This report was prepared by Alex Francis, Team Manager, Healthwatch B&NES and Healthwatch South Gloucestershire, on Friday 21 September 2018.