

Overview of Covid-19 work to date

This paper summarises the work we have undertaken in relation to health and social care services during the pandemic, as aligned with the priorities of Joint Health & Wellbeing strategy.

Live Well

- **Your experiences of services during Coronavirus outbreak** [Your experience of services during the coronavirus outbreak – Healthwatch Bucks](#)
An online survey which ran from 1st May - 23rd June. We asked people for their views on 1) information and advice during the Coronavirus outbreak 2) experience of healthcare services and of social care support 3) mental health and wellbeing support. We received 520 online responses in total and made 6 recommendations to commissioners and providers on ways services could improve in the future.
- **Coronavirus Community Voices report** [Coronavirus Community Voices Report – Healthwatch Bucks](#)
We worked with selected charities in Bucks to find out; 1) what their beneficiaries and staff were worried about most in accessing health and social care services during the lockdown period (from 23rd March to 31st July), 2) how their services were affected by lockdown restrictions, 3) if we could share any information about their local services. We contacted 40 VCS organisations by email and had in depth discussions with 20 about the impact of the pandemic on their service provision to patients and their carers and the effects on their services. We made 6 recommendations to service providers and commissioners on ways that support for more vulnerable individuals could be improved.
- **Information about services on dentist and GP websites during the coronavirus outbreak** [Information about services on dentist and GP websites during the coronavirus outbreak – Healthwatch Bucks](#)
Local health and social services provided a wide range of information during the coronavirus outbreak. The results from the 'Your experiences during the coronavirus outbreak' survey showed that websites of local organisations were important to people looking for information they could trust. Using a mystery shopper approach to review dentist and GP website, we looked to see 1) what information there was on dentist and GP websites about how to get treatment when the surgeries had to be closed 2) what information there was on dentist websites about how they were working when they could reopen 3) what GP websites said about how they were delivering services. Our recommendations were aimed at improving the way websites present changes to services and ensuring that patients knew that websites could be relied upon to give up-to-date information.

- **Open for Business? Your experience of GP and hospital appointments during the coronavirus outbreak** [Open for Business? – Healthwatch Bucks](#)

We wanted to hear from people about their experience of appointments during the first lockdown period. The survey ran from 15th June until the 20th July and we had 479 responses from Bucks residents, or from people who used Bucks services.

We asked people about 1) the communications and advice they received about their appointment 2) the precautions that were taken if it was a face-to-face appointment, and how safe they felt 3) whether the appointment had been successful or not, and 4) whether there were any effects on their health and wellbeing if the appointment was cancelled or postponed.

- **Working in a Care Home during the coronavirus outbreak** [Working in a care home during the coronavirus outbreak – Healthwatch Bucks](#)

We heard from staff about their experiences of working in a care home during the coronavirus outbreak. We asked for feedback for the period of 16th March and 31st May when care homes made the greatest changes. We worked with 3 staff members from Fremantle Trust care homes to co-design the survey questions.

We asked staff about 1) Covid19 testing 2) Hygiene, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and training 3) Raising concerns, mental health support and staffing 4) Movement around the care home, meaningful activities and visitors.

We heard from 152 members of staff; positive feedback was given in many areas that we looked at. Our recommendations focus on ways the current provision could be improved based on the more negative aspects reported to us.

Age Well

- **Living in a Care Home during the coronavirus outbreak** [Living in a care home during the coronavirus outbreak – Healthwatch Bucks](#)

We wanted to hear about the experiences of people who lived in Buckinghamshire care homes, and/or their relatives who would normally visit these homes. Feedback was collected between 16th March and 31st May when care homes made the greatest changes. We worked with 4 residents and 2 relatives from 3 different Fremantle Trust care homes to co-design the survey questions. We asked people about 1) communication 2) movement around the home 3) meals and snacks 4) meaningful activities and visitors and 5) keeping safe, hygiene and staffing levels.

We heard from 208 people and made a number of recommendations to providers and commissioners which were mindful that services delivered in care homes may have changed since people initially responded to our survey.

Community Engagement

- **Joint webinars with Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust on Cancer services & Planned (elective) surgery during the pandemic -**

Cancer Webinar - [Surgery webinar a great success! – Healthwatch Bucks](#) The aim was for members of the public who were concerned about cancer services in the county to hear from specialists and to have the opportunity to put questions to cancer services specialists. 65

people joined the event on the 20th October and the webinar is now available to access on our website.

Planned (elective) surgery webinar - [Surgery webinar a great success! – Healthwatch Bucks](#)

The aim was for members of the public who were waiting for an operation (and/or their relatives) to hear from specialists and have the opportunity to ask questions. 43 people joined the event on the 12 November and were able to put questions to the eight panellists. The webinar is available to access on our website.

- **Veterans Report [Lesser Heard Voices - Veterans – Healthwatch Bucks](#)**

In 2019 Healthwatch Bucks created the role of Community Engagement Lead to work with groups identified as ‘Lesser Heard Voices. This role involves building long term relationships with community organisations and leaders, attending meetings and forums and gaining trust over time. In August 2020, we published a report that looked at veterans’ experiences of Health and Social Care in Bucks. We spoke to over 150 people, including veterans, their spouses and others with Armed Forces and veteran connections. The project received ‘Highly Commended’ status at the national Healthwatch England awards.