

Communications Report

September 2020 to August 2021

Purpose

1. This report is an overview of communications activities undertaken during the last 12 months to support the promotion of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough. Data included is from the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.

Key issues

2. Continued to have a big focus on supporting the system through the pandemic, sharing information and resources with people to help them manage their health.
3. Supported key Healthwatch activities including the publication of reports, the promotion of events and the development of integrated campaign activities to engage local people.
4. Continue to develop a positive relationship with local stakeholders, including media organisations, to increase the number of earned media opportunities we achieve, e.g., articles in local papers, on the radio and in voluntary and community sector partner publications.

Action required by the Board

5. The Board is asked to:
 - Note the report.

Author

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Communications and engagement strategy

6. Developed a new communications and engagement strategy to support the overall strategic plan, with a number of short, medium and long-term objectives, including increasing the number of health and social care experiences shared by patients and service users with a minimum target of 2,000 experiences shared via online and offline means in the first year. This we achieved with more than 2,700 experiences shared. Short-term objectives are due for review at the end of September.

Campaigns and promotional focus

7. The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to shape our communications, both in terms of our content and our routes to reaching people with our messages. Whilst our digital engagement has grown significantly in this period, it has been more of a challenge to reach those who are digitally excluded.
8. During the last 12 months, we have supported the publication of eight reports, including: 'Your care during Covid' final campaign report, 'Giving GP websites a check-up', our 'Leaving hospital during Covid-19' report and more recently our 'Autistic Voices' report.
9. We have focussed on developing the information and advice part of our service, developing and keeping up to date a range of advice articles to support people find the information / services they need. This was one of the objectives of our communications strategy, and in this period we had more than 60,000 users access our information and advice articles, with ones on Covid vaccinations, coronavirus regulations and finding an NHS dentist remaining consistently the most popular content.

Digital - websites

10. **The two new Healthwatch websites have been visited by more than 72,900 people in the last 12 months**, an increase of 160% on the previous period. The websites perform well in search engines, with 81% of Peterborough users finding us through a search engine, and 53% in Cambridgeshire. There's also significant increase in users who are accessing our website via mobile (67% in Peterborough and 46% in Cambridgeshire).
11. **The websites have significantly increased our ability to engage with people online** and as a result, over the last ten months we have collected an average of 86 experiences a month via our online webforms. With the previous websites, we collected around 120 experiences over the whole year, so this is a significant improvement.

12. Although men and young people are currently under-represented in the number of feedback experiences we receive, they are visiting our websites and accessing our information resources. **Demographic data collected by Google** shows more men (57%) access the websites than women (43%). It also shows that between 12 - 18% users are under 24 years, and between 29 - 30% users are aged 25-34. There is a confidence gap in this data and its indicative of a trend only as collected from around 33% of website users. But the evidence over who is visiting the website and the most popular content shows us how we can adapt our website to encourage more people to share their experiences, take part in our events and get involved in Healthwatch.

Digital - social media

13. Social media is a significant element of our digital engagement strategy, and we use a variety of platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube to target different stakeholder groups.

14. Blog and video content performs particularly well on social media, and we have analysed what kind of message best resonate with different users on each platform to help increase engagement. Pandemic conditions have made vlog development more difficult, and we are hoping to do more here now restrictions have eased.

15. In the last 12 month, more than 15,000 people have reacted to, commented on, shared our content, viewed a video or clicked a link on our social media content, which is more than double the previous same period. Of these, more than 10,000 users visited our website and Google data shows that these contributed to more than 2,380 website conversions. A conversion is an activity on the website we want to measure such as people reading advice articles and people sharing an experience.

16. We were recently asked to present on our social media strategy at a Healthwatch England training session to share our successes on social media. Healthwatch England's analysis of all the local Healthwatch using the new website template had showed that we were amongst the Healthwatch generating the most visits to our website as a result of social activities.

Digital - E-newsletters

17. We have continued to provide a monthly e-news to local stakeholders, segmented to each local Healthwatch area, with the focus on the information needs of patients and service users. Between September and August, readership has grown by 2% and the newsletter is received by over a thousand people. The low growth on the mailing list is reflective of the lack of face-to-face engagement events where we promote the e-news.

Earned media and advertising

18. Continued to build on positive relationships with traditional local media organisations (radio and newspapers), with more than 65 articles in the press / radio in this period, although we do have gaps in consistent coverage in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This is an area that needs more work to address.
19. We also work closely with stakeholders such as voluntary and community organisations, NHS, local authority, and community newsletters to promote Healthwatch services and engage people in our work. In this period, we had more than 70 articles in other stakeholders' publications.
20. We've undertaken some advertising activities during this period, but this has primarily been focussed on social media.

Hardcopy materials

21. There has been more limited development of hardcopy material in this period due to the constraints of a Covid-19 safe ways of working, although we have sent hardcopy information out on request.
22. However, we will be reviewing all our hardcopy engagement material over the next few months, including leaflets, pop up banners and merchandise to support face-to-face engagement activities.
23. We will also be reviewing the possibility of restarting a regular hardcopy newsletter once we are able to ensure distribution of these safely.

Accessible information

24. We endeavour to ensure that our information, events, and services are accessible to people with information access needs, or to those whose first language is not English.
25. We produce easy read versions of our main reports, and in this period have produced an easy read version of our Annual Report, our Keep on Moving report, and our Giving GP websites a check-up report.
26. During this period, we have worked with Cambridgeshire Deaf Association to add a British Sign Language Interpreted survey to our websites to make it easier for Deaf people to share their views.

Brand refresh

27. Over the last six months, Healthwatch England has been undertaking a review of the Healthwatch brand. This has involved two elements – a review of the tone of voice, or how we speak about Healthwatch. They have completed this part of the refresh and we have undertaken some initial training with staff on this and look to roll out the changes locally over the next few months. They are currently consulting on the visual changes to the brand. We are waiting for this to complete before we develop any new hardcopy literature.