

Carer Rights' Day and Ways to Wellbeing

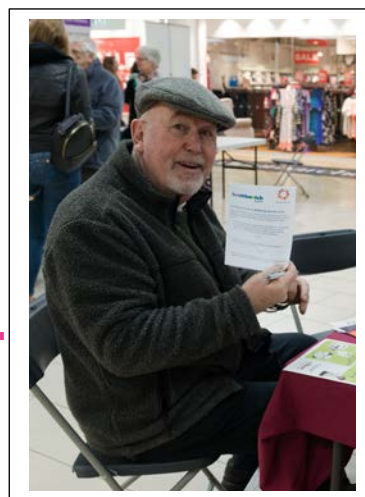
What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is here to **demonstrably influence commissioning, service provision or strategic decision making...** and this impact report shapes how we will attain this following engagement with Carers' Rights Day event.



We were delighted to be invited to the Carers' Rights Day which was organised by Carers Support Centre, a charity which provides support, information and advice to carers of any age living in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire areas. The day aims to help carers in their local community know their rights and find out how to get the help and support they are entitled to. It was a free event for carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. There was information on accessing direct payments and carers' assessments and an opportunity to learn more about mindfulness and view information stalls from various local organisations.

HWB spoke to attendees on the day about the Healthwatch emotional health and wellbeing project. We also spoke to them about Well Aware, AVoice and SEAP, an independent advocacy service which helps resolve issues or concerns they may have about their health and wellbeing or health and social care services.



Images: Staff and participant from Carers Support Centre.

"Strengthening Families and Strengthening Communities (SFSC) helped me with peer support/financial help which was most useful and helped me during a difficult period in my life!"

Service User

"Ways to Wellbeing group has had a huge impact in my life very positive as it helped me overcome my depression and isolation."

Service user

"Bristol Prospect Cancer support Group helped me with problems and situations and finding solutions to living better with cancer." Service user

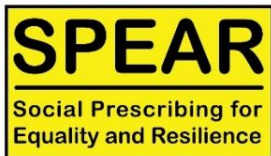
Advocacy helped referred me to LIFT for face to face counselling, which I hope will help me with my mental health"

Service user

Healthwatch Bristol speaking to attendees at Bristol Carers Rights Day.

Follow up

Healthwatch is here to demonstrably influence commissioning, service provision or strategic decision making... and this impact report shapes how we will attain this following engagement with Ways to wellbeing group.



Ways to Wellbeing provides a free and confidential social prescribing service to anyone over the age of 18 living in and around the greater Fishponds area of Bristol. HWB met the group at their regular coffee shop and discussed how they keep emotionally well. The results were collated and combined with our findings from the carers' event day. This helped us gain a better understanding of which services are helping support people within these groups. For more information on Ways to Wellbeing click on the link; <http://bit.ly/2powTZN>

What did we do?

Healthwatch Bristol spoke to attendees at the Carers' Rights Day event, thus magnifying the voices of carers and those of the people they are supporting, as well as to the Ways to Wellbeing group. We used our emotional health and wellbeing survey - <http://bit.ly/2BYqmxH> - to capture views on how support and services could be improved. Part of Bristol City Council's One City Plan is focusing on mental health around the city. With one in four adults and one in ten children affected by mental health this is an issue that affects everybody. People's answers will therefore help inform the development of services and will be part of our overall report, which will be published in May 2018. Here is an extract of our findings from the two events.

What did we hear? Q.1/2 Community groups/peer support/advice social activities. The majority of the 12 participants said they attended support groups such as Ways to Wellbeing, Carers Support Centre, SFSC, Disability Centre support, Walking for

Health groups, Advocacy, Prostate Centre support, Advocacy and Next Link. There was a great sense of how people who had felt depressed, low, or socially isolated, with little or no support from family or friends, and who were carers, required support, help and advice. Most said how the services they had accessed had helped them tremendously. One person felt there was a lack of support from Next Link when they had reached out to them for help when they were experiencing domestic abuse. Lots of positive feedback was given by people who accessed social prescribing, with one stating: "Excellent service it's the first time I feel someone cares!"

Some people stated how Carers Support Centre has been very beneficial for support, information and advice and that it helped them to be more aware of services that are available to them as carers, as well as for the people they care for.

Q.3/4 Health professional which help support. Three out twelve felt that their GP supported them very well. One stated "GP understands my needs and I am awaiting

Healthwatch Bristol's findings from the Carers' Rights Day and Ways to Wellbeing group engagement were combined to give us a better understanding of services used.

Follow up

cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to help me with my anxiety and depression.”

The majority felt their GP/nurse supported them quite well. One said: “GPs are pushed for time and cannot sit and listen!” Another stated how their GP could have referred them to social prescribing services, rather than just prescribing medication.

Another praised a ‘positive ageing and resilience’ course which she was referred to by Ways to Wellbeing. She said that this was extremely beneficial and had helped her with breathing and exercise relaxation therapies. A minority spoke about the difficulties of accessing appointments with their GP. Some people felt that GPs are hard-pressed for time and not able to sit and listen to their needs.

Q5 Asked if there was anything else they wanted to see

Many were happy with the services they used, however some people stated that more information and support services should be available and that this should not just be advertised online as not everybody uses the internet. Another participant thought

more outreach work would be beneficial and that carers should be readily available and funded by the council. Some people also felt that it was essential for more GPs to be informing patients about alternative therapies to help depression and low mood rather than only focusing on prescribing medication.

Summary.

This report highlights the importance of community and support groups, people accessing social prescribing and carers support groups, as well as other services available to them, in order to help aid their requirements. The need for support, advice and guidance from peers and professionals is paramount in meeting the needs of carers and the people they are caring for. There is evidence to support the fact that people use these organisations as a mechanism to support their mental health needs. Overcoming isolation by attending local services and participating in support groups resulted in people feeling emotionally well. It also clearly shows which health services they have benefitted from and how some GPs could inform patients of alternative

therapies to aid depression/low mood services, which could help support some people’s needs better.

Healthwatch will.....

All the feedback Healthwatch Bristol gathers is analysed and used to inform the Healthwatch Bristol quarterly reports, which are shared with Healthwatch Bristol partners including Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group, the Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board, Bristol City Council, the Care Quality Commission, NHS England and Healthwatch England. The quarterly report is also presented to the Healthwatch Bristol Advisory Group to propose further uptake of the issues identified in the report. The report will be available on the Healthwatch Bristol website:

www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk

It will also be circulated to our mailing lists via the monthly e-bulletin.

We’re asking the same questions of a range of participants as part of our mission to:

demonstrate range of community reach by developing

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Follow up

relationships with stakeholders

HWB will continue to work with social prescribing groups on

joint outcomes related to mental health.

Image: people enjoying their social prescribing social group session at their local café.



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