

**Healthwatch Luton
Seldom Heard Report
September-December 2016**

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Who we are

Healthwatch Luton (HWL) exist to make health and care services work for the people who use them.

Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people. Our sole focus is on understanding the needs, experiences and concerns of people of all ages who use services and to speak out on their behalf.

We are uniquely placed as a national network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

Our role is to ensure that local decision makers and health and care services put the experiences of people at the heart of their work.

We believe that asking people more about their experiences can identify issues that, if addressed, will make services better.

Our vision

Healthwatch Luton are working toward a society in Luton which people's health and social care needs are heard, understood and met.

Achieving this vision will mean that:

- People shape health and social care delivery
- People influence the services they receive personally
- People hold services to account

Our Mission

Healthwatch Luton are the consumer champion for health and social care.

We represent YOUR voice on health and social care services by:

- Listening hard to people, especially the most vulnerable, to fully understand their experiences and what matter most to them
- Influencing those who have the power to change services so that they better meet people's needs now and into the future
- Empowering and informing people to get the most from their health and social care services and encouraging other organisations to do the same
- Working with the Healthwatch network to champion service improvement and to empower local people

Our Team

Healthwatch Luton are a team of 3 staff and 10 dedicated Champions (volunteers) and 9 Board members. We work extremely hard to ensure people in Luton, particularly the seldom heard and most vulnerable have a voice, and that it is heard.

Why the Seldom Heard?

This report highlights Healthwatch Luton's findings from the 'Seldom Heard' communities we have engaged with over the last 3 months (September-December 2016)



Our general demographic of feedback comes from white, British, middle aged and middle classed people in Luton, which HWL knew didn't reflect the demographic of the town.

Healthwatch Luton have dedicated their resources to gathering feedback from the local community of Luton on a range of health and social care services.

Healthwatch Luton embarked on an intelligence gathering model, to ensure our priorities and work would be evidence-based, and responsive to the community of Luton's needs, and reactive to Luton's trends of issues.

We provide intelligence logs to our Board to aid on strategic direction, and provide Provider Feedback reports to service providers, to ensure those voices are heard, to hope to influence change in service provision.

Based on Healthwatch England's Quality Statements¹, and Healthwatch Luton's understanding of seldom heard, Healthwatch Luton wanted to focus on aspects of the Luton community that rarely were heard, or rarely listened to.

What does Seldom Heard mean?

The term, 'seldom heard groups' refers to under-represented people. They are often referred to as 'hard to reach' groups, though this term has been criticised for implying that there is something about these people that makes their engagement with services difficult.

'Seldom Heard' places more emphasis on agencies to engage these service-users, carers and potential service users. Many factors can contribute to people who use services being seldom-heard, including:

- Disability
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity
- Communication impairment
- Mental Health problems
- Homelessness
- Geographical isolation²

¹ <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.c>

² [o.uk/files/20160222_quality_statments_poster_2.pdf](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.c/files/20160222_quality_statments_poster_2.pdf)

HWL focus of Seldom Heard

Based on intelligence gathered over 2015-2016, Healthwatch Luton needed to focus on areas within the Seldom Heard communities, as due to resources would not be able to cover all aspects of Seldom Heard.

For 2016 HWL focused on:

- Mental Health
- Young
- Homeless/Poverty

Our engagement strategy linked HWL to community organisations already set up and supporting these people, ensuring we could meet and engage with them in a comfortable surrounding.

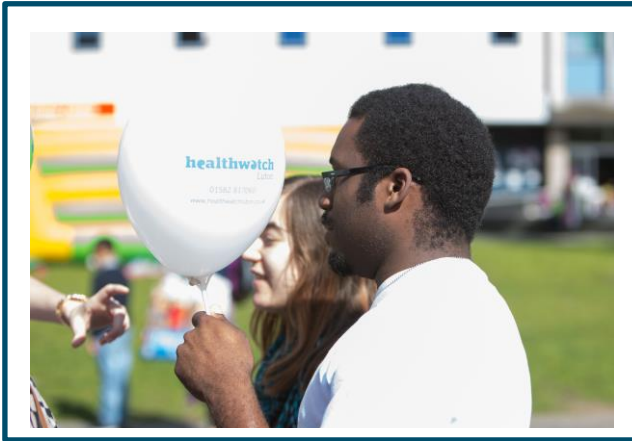
Rather than standing at the hospital or The Mall and waiting for people to come to us to give us their views, our dedicated staff and volunteers spent months building relationships with partner organisations, and those using those community groups to gather up to date and relevant feedback.

Terri Brooks, our Engagement Officer spent 3 months visiting the following community organisations to focus on the Mental Health, young and Homeless/Poverty:

- Youthscape
- TOKKO
- MIND
- Carers (Hospital)
- NOAH
- Greenhouse Mentoring



Our Findings



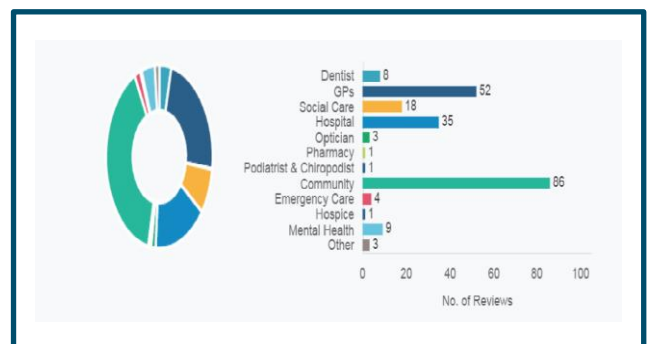
Overall, the nature of the feedback on health and social care services, on the whole, are mainly positive.

However, there are various aspects that the data shows some serious concerns, which we have addressed with individual providers.

Our intelligence shows us that prior to targeting the seldom heard, the main area of concern for people in Luton was Access to the GP. This area has remained a concern from speaking to the Seldom Heard communities, but we have seen a shift in issues with regards to treatment and care of the young, Dentist access for cost and treatment and care, and the transition of mental health from children services to adult.

Main Areas of Concern from Seldom Heard:

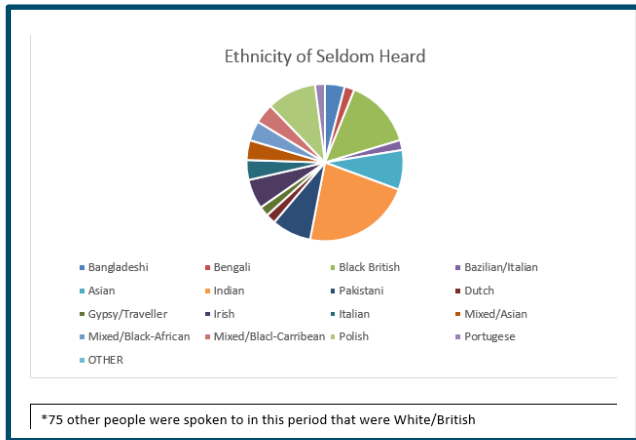
- Access to a GP, and Communications
- Discharge from Hospital
- Transition from CAMHS
- Language barriers for accessing general health and social care
- Cost of NHS Dentist and Treatment and Care, and Access
- Attitudes from staff on young/homeless
- Social Care and referrals in care and transport



Those we engaged with also provided feedback on the community organisation setting we were in, for example, those we spoke with at MIND also gave feedback on the MIND services, which we have provided feedback to the relevant provider.

Emerging issues around dentistry access, language barriers, and delays in access or referrals seem, from our intelligence, only relevant to those in the seldom heard communities.

The demographics of the Seldom Heard we have spoken to over the past three months are below:



TOKKO

TOKKO provides opportunities for young people from across Luton and the surrounding areas to learn and develop their own skills and talents, in a safe, friendly and inclusive environment.

We spoke with over 45 people from TOKKO, who gave feedback on 22 health and social care services in Luton, and their main feedback regarded:

- GP's - Access, Treatment and Care, Staff attitudes
- Hospital - Treatment and Care
- Mental Health - Referrals, Treatment and Care, Transitions
- Dentists - Treatment and Care and Communications
- Social Care - Referrals

Overall the feedback on TOKKO itself was positive and this has been fed-back to the provider.

Overall the feedback from those attending TOKKO was positive regarding health and social care services in Luton. This cohort rated general sentiment of feedback as

- 47% positive and 21% negative

There were concerns regarding access to GP's and generally about communications with receptionists and staff attitudes to the young. The treatment and care received for those providing feedback was generally positive regarding GP's.

The hospital feedback was generally positive with treatment and care rating neutral.

Mental health services featured in the feedback from those attending TOKKO, and mainly related to the treatment and care of the CAMHS service, along with the transition process from children to adult services.

Generally, referrals from the mental health service (whether into the service from the GP or out of the service to other providers) was rated positively.

Those we spoke with at TOKKO also mentioned dentists as an area to feedback on, rating communications from dentists as positive but treatment and care was slightly negative. It was raised first here that even the NHS cost of seeing a dentist is not expensive, the cost still affects the patients considering having their teeth assessed when in relation to other living costs.

People from TOKKO also mentioned Social Care negatively mainly in regards to referrals.

NOAH

NOAH (New Opportunities and Horizons) is a Luton based charity offering hope and support to people struggling against homelessness and exclusion.

We spoke to nearly 20 people accessing NOAH, regarding 8 services in Luton, which was with people mainly classed as 'street' homeless, and their main feedback regarded:

- NOAH (as a provider)
- Hospitals - Treatment and care, Discharge
- GP's - Treatment and Care, Staff

Overall the feedback from those attending NOAH was positive regarding health and social care services in Luton. This cohort rated general sentiment of feedback as

- 63% positive and 16% negative

Overall the feedback from this group was positive, particularly around treatment and care from both the hospital and the GP experiences. The main area of concern for the hospital was discharge (namely around timings of people being discharged) and the coordination of services surrounding discharge process.

Overall the feedback on GP's was positive, however more assistance was noted as being needed for some regarding accessing the GP services. Some of those we engaged with admitting to presenting at the Walk In Centre due to not being able to access a GP local to them.

Youthscape

Youthscape is a national youth work organisation working for the good of young people of all faiths and none. The charity was founded in 1993 in Luton and over the last two decades have built an organisation based on the belief that all young people are created equal, and deserving of equal opportunity and care.

Healthwatch Luton spoke with 19 young people accessing Youthscape regarding 8 health and social care services in Luton, and overall found that their feedback was positive, but the communications could be improved. Overall the feedback was around:

- Youthscape (as a provider)
- Hospitals - Treatment and care
- GP's - Treatment and care / Facilities and Communication
- Dentists - Treatment and care and access
- Mental Health service - Referrals and Facilities

Overall the feedback from those attending Youthscape was positive regarding health and social care services in Luton. This cohort rated general sentiment of feedback as

- 68% positive and 21% negative

Nearly all the feedback we received from this cohort was positive regarding most aspects of experiencing care. In particular, the treatment and care they received from the hospital, GP's and dentists was good, but the communications (mainly staff attitudes) toward them was rated neutrally or not at all.

Some people highlighted how they felt their age could be a barrier to them receiving a high standard of care, but this was not a theme from all feedback.

Feedback from those at Youthscape mentioned facilities and surroundings negatively at both their GP and Mental Health services.

Carers (L&D)

Healthwatch Luton visited the Luton and Dunstable Hospital and joined the carers lounge, as well as other engagement activities for carers.

We spoke with over 10 carers who mainly provided feedback on:

- Hospital - Facilities and surroundings, Access and Treatment and Care
- GP's - Access
- Social Care - Treatment and Care

Overall the feedback from those attending the L&D Carers Lounge was positive regarding health and social care services in Luton, although this cohort had more negative experiences to feedback on. This cohort rated general sentiment of feedback as

- 45% positive and 27% negative

Those we spoke with reported more negative experiences of treatment and care within the hospital, and regarding social care which mainly involved transport and referrals.

There was a noted issue with GP access but the feedback was once an individual got into see a GP the treatment and care was rated positively.

Surprisingly, some of this group of people found accessing the hospital difficult and some rated access as positive. They also rated some of the treatment and care received within the hospital as negative.

MIND BLMK

Healthwatch Luton visited groups held at MIND BLMK. MIND BLMK offers a range of services across Luton and Milton Keynes aimed at meeting individual needs and promoting mental health recovery, well-being and independence.

We spoke with 30 people regarding their feedback on 6 health and social care services in Luton.

Overall the feedback received was positive (but this was mainly on MINK BLMK service itself, and overall they rated the general feedback sentiment as:

- 47% positive and 23% negative

The main areas people provided feedback on were:

- Mental Health service - Treatment and care, Staff (positive) and facilities (negative)
- Social Care - Referrals and Transport

Those we spoke with mainly discussed the mental health provider, noting that the treatment and care sometimes received was negative, but that staff and staff attitudes were mostly positive.

They also mainly discussed social care in Luton being negative regarding referrals (mainly waiting times and the referral process) and transport.

Most of those who left feedback did so on the MIND BLMK service itself, and this was resoundingly positive, mainly around staff and activities provided.

Greenhouse Mentoring

Healthwatch Luton visited groups within Greenhouse Mentoring. Greenhouse Mentoring was started in 2000 and was originally called the ‘Pupil Support Project’ and funded via the On Track/Children’s Fund. In 2002 it was named Greenhouse Mentoring and implemented a volunteer training programme. It then became a ‘Mentoring and Befriending Foundation’ and received Approved Provider accreditation in 2006 and again in 2010 and 2014.

Healthwatch Luton spoke with 5 people on 3 services, and overall the feedback was largely positive:

- 60% positive and 20% negative

The main areas people provided feedback on were:

- Mental Health service - Treatment and care
- GP’s - Access to services and Treatment and Care

The people we spoke with were mainly positive in their feedback, particularly regarding Greenhouse Mentoring.

They also stated positive feedback on treatment and care from mental health services, and treatment and care from GP’s.

The only negative feedback provided was from accessing GP’s.

Family Cooking Taster Session

Healthwatch Luton ran a successful funded community event in the October 2016 half term. The aim of the event was to gather feedback from those who struggle on the poverty line, to feed their children nutritious food during the school holidays. It was funded by also ensuring cohesion in the community, as well as providing a free event to those who could not afford to learn about cooking healthily in their family.

We spoke with nearly 50 people on the day but gathered feedback from 14 people on 7 services.

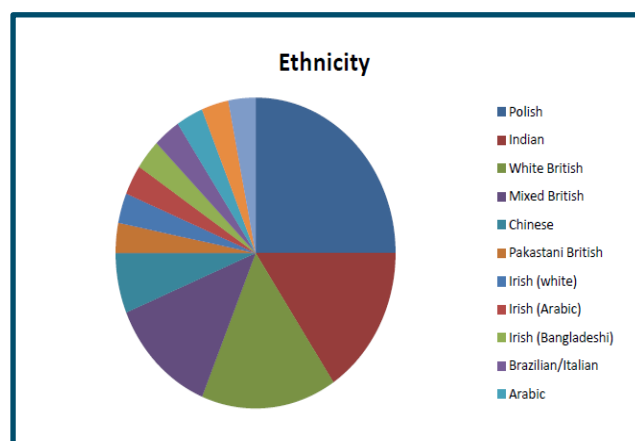
The main areas they discussed were:

- GP’s - Access and language barriers
- Hospital - Access and Communications
- Mental Health - waiting times and access (from referral)

Generally, the feedback from this group was negative, particularly around accessing services regarding language difficulties and barriers. In the main, this was in relation to accessing services from via reception/booking point of view, but also included waiting times from referrals.

Ethnicity of those who attended our Family Cooking Taster Session:

Our FCTS report is available on our website.



Seldom Heard at a glance

This is based on just under 3 months of collecting feedback from a small section of Luton that Healthwatch Luton would categorise as Seldom Heard

We reached over 200 people in the community in 10 weeks



Our volunteers have supported us visiting over 10 community organisations



On average, we are now collecting over 65 people's feedback per month (was 10/month)



We send Provider Feedback reports on all the feedback we gather



We are developing our income generation to ensure we can reach communities more creatively



The feedback gathered was mainly on GP Access, discharge from L&D hospital, transition from CAMHS, language barriers, dentists and attitudes toward the homeless



What difference does it make?

Provider Feedback reports

Healthwatch Luton embarked on collecting feedback from the community, and dedicated time and resources to hear the voices of the Luton's seldom heard. We did this so we could ensure the service providers could also hear the voices of those not only accessing the services, but those who had difficulty in accessing the services.

We ensure our providers, when we have enough intelligence, are given a Provider Feedback reports which details (anonymously) all the findings on their service. Initially we were supplying this report for the providers to consider, but from 2017, Healthwatch Luton will be adding 'Suggestions' or 'Recommendations' based on the findings to ensure some outcomes can be generated from the feedback we receive.

Essential Services

To ensure the seldom heard are receiving the essential services they are entitled too, this report has fed-back to the providers to ensure their voices are heard.

Access

We are working with the Luton Clinical Commissioning Group and the CQC to ensure that access to services for residents in Luton is tackled, whether regarding GP access or accessing care due to language or other barriers, this will be a focus for Healthwatch in 2017.

Safe, Dignified, Quality Service

We have fed-back to providers but will be looking to ensure people no matter of what age, circumstance or ethnicity or background all receive the same safe, quality and dignified service in 2017.

Information and Education

Our core purpose is to signpost people to information and advice and guidance to help them receive the best health and social care. Everyone we spoke with, where needed, was offered support or guidance on how to get information or education on care services.

Choice

Ensuring people understand they have a right to choose, but also to ensure the providers are aware when this choice is limited due to being seldom heard.

Being Listened to

The aim of this report is so that all providers can see the seldom heard do have a voice and can still make a difference to the services they receive.

Being Involved

We will be dedicating time next year in ensuring we capture those we engage with to potentially join our volunteer programme, and ensure understanding of providing feedback means being involved in changing and shaping services in Luton.

A Healthy Environment

We will strive to ensure people in Luton are aware they should be and are entitled to be held in a healthy environment, whether at home, at school or in a care setting and will work to ensure people are aware of this in 2017.

Enter and Views

We will use our feedback from the Seldom Heard groups we have spoken to and dedicate our time into using our Enter and View powers to investigate further on areas highlighted.



Provider Responses:

- Access to a GP, and Communications
- Discharge from Hospital
- Transition from CAMHS
- Language barriers for accessing general health and social care
- Cost of NHS Dentist and Treatment and Care
- Attitudes from staff on young/homeless

Luton Clinical Commissioning Group:

Healthwatch Luton spoke with the Luton Clinical Commissioning Group (LCCG) regarding GP Access. This is something the LCCG are working jointly with NHS England on, are aware of, and are planning a new integrated urgent care services from next year which will assist with the way people in Luton access GP surgeries when they have an urgent health need. Healthwatch Luton will support these changes and assist in communicating these changes to the wider public.

With regards to issues of Communications, including language barriers, the LCCG outlined how the new model of integrated services will be linked to 'Language Line', an organisation that will provide a translator from the point of picking up the telephone. At the moment, there are options available for people to request a translator for their appointment, but this new model of care will ensure people calling to access urgent care will receive a translating service.

With regards to hospital discharge, the LCCG confirmed a ward is being provided at the hospital dedicated to Discharge, to make this process work better for patients. Whilst Luton on the whole does not have many delayed discharges (compared to UK wide), the LCCG are aware of these issues raised. There are many components of discharge for a patient, and many support services affecting this area.

Regarding transitions from children to adult care in Luton, particular in mental health services, the LCCG acknowledged the issues faced and confirmed there is a big transformation and restructure of this service. There has been added funding from central government to support the transformation of the CAMHS and Eating Disorder services in Luton, and we are now finishing year 1 of this transformation programme.

East London Foundation (ELFT) Mental Health Services in Luton response:

ELFT advised that a specific transitions policy has been formulated to govern this process safely, plans regarding transition to adult Mental Health services commence at least six months before an adolescent service user's 18th birthday and in some cases 12 months before depending on levels of complexity. The transition arrangements continue for a further six months after transfer to an adult MH team to ensure that all relevant clinical information has

been shared and relationships have been formed with the service user and family during what can be an unsettling time.

Luton and Dunstable Hospital were asked for a response. Awaiting response.

Contact us

Get in touch

Address: Healthwatch Luton
102 Hitchin Road
Luton, LU2 0ES

Phone number: 01583 817 060

Email: info@healthwatchluton.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchluton.co.uk

Facebook: [hwluton](https://www.facebook.com/hwluton)

Twitter: [#hwluton](https://twitter.com/hwluton)



