

Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group

What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is here to **demonstrably influence commissioning, service provision or strategic decision making...** and this impact report outlines how we will achieve this following engagement with Service Users at Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group (BBWG).



Healthwatch worked in collaboration with Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group, speaking to its service users to find out how they keep emotionally well. The group is self-funded, and its aim is to help support Bangladeshi women engage in community activities, empowering them to look after their health and emotional wellbeing.

What did we do?

Emotional and mental health can be a tough subject to speak openly about in certain cultures and is still a taboo subject, especially if people are experiencing difficulties. We used our [emotional health and wellbeing survey](#) to speak to members.

As it is sometimes a hard topic to discuss HWB spoke with service users one- to-one. We also gave them the

choice to give written feedback about their emotional health and to hand the surveys in at the end.

This proved the most effective way to capture people's feedback. Space was also provided for service users to speak to us privately. All information collated was anonymous, another important factor, which encouraged people to

"I joined the BBWG 26 years ago and was invited by one of the members when I was new to Bristol. I didn't know many people and didn't have many friends, the group was very welcoming! They made me feel like I was part of a special family! They empowered me and resulted in many years of improving my health and emotional wellbeing! I am proud to be a member and I feel more confidential about myself now!"

Service user

"The group is like a second home to me! When not at the group we keep in touch very effectively through WhatsApp and Facebook."

Service user

"My children and I both attend the culture events it's great celebrating together and helps my children identify with our culture!"

Parent carer

Healthwatch Bristol spoke to Bristol Bangladeshi Service users to listen to their views on their emotional health and wellbeing.

Follow up

be involved. Once service users were clear their names would not be used it made a huge difference to how open they were prepared to be.

HWB also informed members about [Well Aware](#). This is an interactive health and well-being website for local people. Well Aware is run by The Care Forum, a health and social care voluntary organisation working in partnership with the area's local authorities and clinical commissioning groups.

So what did we learn?

The women raised the importance of being part of the Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Groups and how it has had a good effect on theirs and their children's emotional health and wellbeing. Members stated that having their children join in community daytrips and being part of the group is like being part of an extended family. Parents also praised the Saturday Bengali class for their children, saying it was a great service which helped and supported their children to learn their mother tongue. Many spoke about being able to do stress-free shopping on

the weekend whilst their children attended the class.

People were also grateful that the venue is convenient and very accessible for them. Parking is easy, particularly if they have prams or wheelchairs.

Feedback from children was that they look forward to attending their class and enjoy having fun through learning. Some also spoke of not having siblings and how the class provides opportunities for them to meet other children from the same community. Many said how it makes them feel they belonged and are proud to be part of the organisation whilst enjoying cultural events, trips and activities.

Some service users also said how they thoroughly enjoyed the walking group and felt that this had a positive impact on their physical and mental health and were grateful to the organisation for providing this.

The majority spoke about coming together to celebrate cultural festivals and events, such as Eid. Eating out together and celebrating as one was remarked upon as

being a particular highlight and benefit of being a member of the BBWG.

The importance of Community

Many spoke about the importance of peer support and being able to chat over a cup of tea while the classes for children are run. They said how if they had any concerns or issues they were able to raise them with other members. They felt that these were supported within the group or that these remained within the confines of a handful of people to discuss. Some added that they helped to support and give each other advice; "supporting one another mentally and emotionally on many issues such as health, parenting and how to be more active." With 70 members one said how they try and be supportive through any family issues, bereavements, occasions or weddings.

They told us several valuable pieces of feedback about amenities and services which support them and also how provisions could be improved upon.

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Many women also spoke about the walking group and said how they found it helped them to keep active. They found it very relaxing and rewarding. Walking with their peers in small groups was also great for keeping their morale up.

When asked which health and social care services people used to help support them some said they would visit their GP for general issues. Many said that they were disappointed when trying to get appointments for themselves and that this would sometimes deter them from seeing their GP. However, children were given appointments when requested without having to wait for weeks. Many women felt there was definitely room for improvement and more appointment should be available.

Healthwatch would like to congratulate Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group on recently celebrating their 30th Anniversary. May they continue to flourish as evidence shows from our survey that they are doing a fantastic job in supporting

Bangladeshi women in Bristol.

What will we do with our findings?

The information collated is anonymous. All the findings received from the emotional health and wellbeing survey will be added to the year's research focusing on mental health and will help feed into a final report by Healthwatch Bristol.

This will help inform us which community groups, organisations, peer support advice, social and health services are accessed to help aid them with their mental health, and which of these could be improved upon.

Some negative feedback was received about interpreters, saying that they do not always explain the patient's issues clearly enough, resulting in the patient feeling their voice was not being heard. Consequently they often left their GP appointment feeling disheartened and low.

Impact

Healthwatch strengthened the voice of Bengali children and young people, as well as

parents and carers to ensure that their opinions and experiences were heard.

Recommendations

GP surgeries should try and provide priority appointment to parents/ carers. They are not always addressing their own problems and avoid booking appointments because of the long waiting times.

Some areas of the interpreting services could be improved upon as some patients feel unrepresented by them.

HWB also encouraged the women to see their pharmacist about issues some said they would but many said that they would prefer to see their GP as they preferred their issues to be addressed in one place.

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

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Follow up

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](#).

We're asking the same questions of a range of stakeholders as part of our mission to

demonstrate breadth of community reach by developing

relationships with stakeholders

HWB will continue to work with Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group on emotional health blogs and case studies. Healthwatch upcoming topics and themes.



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