'Spotlight' Report

Summer Engagement -Public Health Messaging

1. Background Information
As Healthwatch Worcestershire [HWW] we are the independent champion for people who use publicly funded health and social care services who live or work in Worcestershire. Healthwatch Worcestershire carries out several statutory functions which can be summarised as:
- Gathering peoples' experiences of health and social care services on which to make recommendations to the NHS or Worcestershire County Council as to how services could or should be improved,
- providing information & Advice to people about how or where health & social care services can be accessed, and
- monitoring the quality and safety of those services on behalf of local people**.**

During the summer we go out and about around the county visiting local events such as Family Fun days and the Worcester Show etc talking to people about their experiences of health & social care services. Every year we develop a survey around a universal service (such as access to GPs, dentistry, vaccinations etc). This year we decided to look at Public Health messaging: how people find out about public health messages and what factors affect whether those messages are heard. The effectiveness of health messaging is key in supporting people to live longer, healthier lives through helping them to make healthier lifestyle choices and treating avoidable illness early on. It is especially relevant to those sectors of the population experiencing health inequalities.

This is a summary report of key findings from the survey.

2. Methodology and Key Findings:

We consulted with Public Health at Worcestershire County Council and they suggested public health campaigns that we could use to develop the survey: Worcestershire Health Walks and WOO Mental Health Support Service. Both services are available in the county and have been the subject of Public Health Campaigns.
Worcestershire Health Walks
WOO

The survey also asked questions about where people looked for information about more general health and wellbeing both online and in person.

We talked to a total of 567 people including 54 members of Speakeasy NOW a Learning Disability Support Charity and 55 people with visual impairments from Sight Concern and Malvern Macular Groups.

Awareness of Public Health Messaging: This varied across different topics, probably due to differences in campaigns – longevity, targeting etc. The detail of this will be included in the final report.

When we looked at this by gender, women showed consistently greater awareness of Public Health messaging across all campaigns.

Financial status did have an impact on awareness of Public Health messaging. Those people who **never** struggled to pay at least one of their household bills, or to meet their monthly outgoings, were **consistently more aware** of Public Health Messaging with around 40% awareness across all topics. Those with the greatest financial struggles were consistently least aware of Public Health Campaigns with only 5-10% awareness.
As soon as any financial uncertainty was a factor, awareness became much more variable between Public Health Campaign topics.

Where people look online to find out information about Health and Wellbeing:
- Nearly 70% of people asked would use Google.
- 56% would use the NHS England website.
- 29% would use their GP Surgery website or the NHS App
- 56% said they would look for information about Health and Wellbeing on social media including YouTube. Facebook is still the most popular social media channel for our respondents.

Where people look in-person to find out information about Health and Wellbeing:
- 72% of people asked would go to their GP or other healthcare staff at the GP Surgery for in-person information about Health and Wellbeing.
- 35% still found information on leaflets or the surgery noticeboard.
- 46% would look for information at their pharmacy.

3. **Next Steps:**

- Discuss detailed report findings with WCC Public Health including fact checking where appropriate.

- Publish detailed Report and findings