

Increasing Diversity Project 2020/2021 – Summary

Healthwatch Herefordshire’s Diversity and Inclusion policy aspires to meet and exceed the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and in that spirit Healthwatch Herefordshire recognises that it needs to increase the diversity of people that share their experiences of health and social care with us and are involved in our work.

The primary focus of our project and recommendations is ethnic and heritage diversity but we note too, that Covid-19 has revealed numerous other areas of inequality of concern leading to health inequalities, including digital exclusion, social and economic deprivation, gender diversity, lifestyle, and cultural diversity. These recommendations should impact positively in these areas of multiple deprivation too. The main and key recommendation is to embrace these findings and as a team commit to improving our practice in equality, diversity, and inclusion by taking the actions set out in the listed recommendations that follow.

Recommendations and actions



Recommendation: Improve demographic recording and monitoring of diversity

Actions:

Starting immediately, record and monitor demographics and purposefully seek representative involvement by:

1. Including relevant demographic collection in each survey, engagement, and enquiry.
2. Use of Healthwatch England’s CRM (electronic customer relationship management system).
3. Including a review of demographics in project reports, quarterly and annual reports.

Recommendation: Improve inclusivity of language

Actions:

1. **BAME is no longer an acceptable term. Healthwatch will not use it in its documents, social media, and website except where an ethnically diverse group has decided to still adopt the term.**
2. **Healthwatch Herefordshire will keep informed and learn the language that is acceptable, welcoming, and respectful to people of different ethnicities and heritage. Staff and volunteer training will keep us informed and we will periodically review our language by:**
 - a. Dedicating time at development meetings to share shifts in language use.
 - b. Drawing attention to relevant workspace posts that inform and educate about language.
 - c. Consistency checking for language, which will be a part of project report editing.



Recommendation: Improve communication through social media as well as non-digital forms of communication to reflect and encourage equality, diversity, and involvement

Actions:

Starting in 2021:

1. Seek out and follow under-represented online groups in Herefordshire, sharing their content where appropriate to strengthen relationships and encourage mutual support.
2. Share trusted translated resources alongside English ones.
3. Use plain English where possible to help those with English as a 2nd language.
4. Use images of those who are ethnically and culturally diverse on social media, website, ebulletins and in printed resources. Additionally, aim to create our own image bank of local ethnically and culturally diverse people.
4. During Awareness Days/Weeks/Months, mention those ethnically or culturally diverse people who are more at risk. Additionally, identify, recognise and be sensitive to the fact that low uptake of certain tests/immunisations may be down to cultural issues and use appropriate language to reflect this.
5. Actively encourage ethnically and culturally diverse people to tell us about their experiences via the Feedback Centre, surveys, focus groups and general project participation.



Recommendation: Improve equality, diversity, and involvement policy application

Actions:

Starting immediately:

1. Identify yearly actions to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion.
2. Record Socio economic demographics where appropriate as well as identity demographics.



3. Advertise for posts in identified inclusive ways by involving diversity networks including standard equal opportunities statement.
4. Find an appropriate equality impact assessment to assess the way we engage by 2023.
5. Find an appropriate equality impact assessment to assess any major policy change by 2023

Recommendation: Improve engagement techniques and inclusion to build relationships and trust

Actions:

We will:

1. Develop a database of venues, organisations, and contacts and ensure that engagements incorporate these.
2. Identify and target diversity at the planning stage of every project to reach people who are from different demographics, ethnicities, and heritages.
3. Share lessons and specific learning about equality, diversity and involvement with all engagement workers and volunteers including reading panel prior to all new engagements or projects.
4. Be mindful in public spaces to counter personal sampling bias towards different demographic groups and ethnicities.
5. Recruit and involve volunteers (who may be short term helpers) from different ethnicities and heritage to help carry out targeted engagements and to help build trust and relationships. This may include translation services.
6. Recognise digital exclusion as a factor in effective engagement of some ethnic groups and devise alternative methods.



Recommendation: Improve influence within and across the health and social care system and our networks to share and learn

Actions:

1. Continue to learn from and network with colleagues in Healthwatch England, Local networks and the Integrated Care System by:
 - a. Sharing learning and positive stories in project, quarterly and annual reports.
 - b. Promoting the benefits of increasing diversity.
2. Continue to challenge and raise awareness in strategic meetings and networks by:
 - a. Asking how each project, quality report or new initiative consults, engages, involves and reports on different ethnic, heritage and demographic groups.
 - a. Questioning or correcting language used, stereotypes and poorly judged rationale or assumptions.
 - b. Offering support and expertise from ourselves or others where we can.
 - c. Encouraging organisations to keep up to date with language and learning.
 - e. Encouraging and highlighting the extra time, effort, and financial investment required to build trust and relationships in smaller ethnic populations or heritage groups.



Recommendation: Improve culture of Healthwatch Herefordshire to attract greater diversity and inclusion

Actions:

Organisation leaders will improve and develop culture by:

1. Supporting and investing resources in achieving above actions.
2. Challenging behaviours within Healthwatch that may counter a move to greater diversity.
3. Attending Healthwatch England awareness raising and board diversity development training opportunities to support culture change.
4. Monitoring progress in quarterly reports and development meetings.
5. Reviewing actions and demographics annually.
6. Be responsible for creating an annual action plan for Equality Diversity and involvement improvement. The action plan for 2022 will be the adoption of the recommended actions listed in this report. The action plans for 2023 onwards will be based on monitoring and reviewing the previous year's work.
7. Contribute to achievements in this area collectively across the Healthwatch England network by contributing learning with the Healthwatch England network through workplace, CRM, Annual Review, and project reports.



Healthwatch Herefordshire Leadership Response

As a board, we fully accept the recommendations that have come out of this report. We will support and challenge each other, and all Healthwatch staff, with regards to language use and approaches to all engagement work in order to reach the highest standards of inclusivity. We will also extend this commitment when working with other organisations and agencies, consistently sharing knowledge and best practice as it evolves. Our attendance at relevant Healthwatch England's training opportunities will be a significant part of our continued learning and will be prioritised.

We appreciate that becoming more inclusive will require investment in terms of finance, time and effort but we also recognise its necessity and value. Our success in reaching all groups will be monitored closely in internal meetings and quarterly reports wherever possible and we will create an annual action plan for equality, diversity and involvement improvement from 2023.