

My Voice Counts Tour



Consumers champion for health and social care

July 2014 – September 2014

Overview

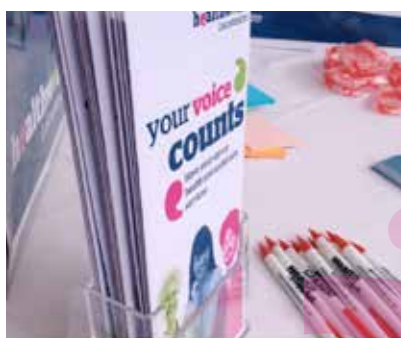
Healthwatch Leicestershire (HWL) visited communities across the county during July, August and September 2014 as part of the 'My Voice Counts Summer Tour'. We engaged in conversations with patients and members of the public and listened to their views and opinions on health and social care services.

The experiences and comments that were gathered will be used to highlight the issues to key commissioners and service providers in health and social care throughout Leicestershire.

Our aim

The 'My Voice Counts Summer Tour' aim was to:

- Raise awareness by promoting Healthwatch Leicestershire
- Gather valuable experiences of local people
- Build Healthwatch Leicestershire membership



Methodology

Healthwatch Leicestershire attended events in all seven districts/boroughs of Leicestershire. We spoke to over 350 people and a variety of under-represented groups and individuals including Children and Young People, Black Minority Ethnic (BME), Working Parents and Vulnerable Adults.

We attended a diverse range of events in order to capture and gather public opinion. The events attended were as follows:

- **Market Harborough, by the Sea**
Market Harborough 2 August 10am - 4pm
- **'Snapdragon' Children & Family Festival**
Hinckley 6 August 9am - 5pm
- **Age UK Coffee Morning**
Melton Mowbray 12 August 9am - 12pm
- **Melton by the Sea**
Melton Town Centre 15 August 10am - 4pm
- **Loughborough Mela**
Loughborough Town Centre 17 August 10am - 5pm
- **Supersonic Boom Youth Festival**
South Wigston 20 August 11.30am - 4pm
- **Whitwick Party in the Park & Scarecrow Festival**
North West Leicestershire 6 September 11am - 5pm
- **Over 50s Day**
Hinckley 19 September 10am - 4pm
- **PPG Awareness Day**
Blaby 20 September 10am - 1pm

In order to capture a range of experiences, we asked an open question, which was based around identifying what the public would change or improve, if anything, about the health and social care services that they use.

What we heard was placed against our priority theme areas, which are:

- Access to services
- Coordination of services
- Information and Advice
- Voice and Advocacy



Background to Healthwatch Leicestershire priority themes

In 2013 Healthwatch Leicestershire (HWL) held consultation events with patients, stakeholders and members of the public to identify key issues, which would inform HWL priorities and the development of their future work plan.

The consultation was combined with a programme to promote awareness of HWL and increase the membership. The public were consulted through a combination of consultation events in each of the seven Leicestershire districts, an online survey was available and hard copies of the survey were placed in strategic locations. The consultation materials were developed to allow patients and the public to drive the agenda, whilst also providing links into other priorities identified by key statutory bodies with whom HWL will be working.

Respondents were first asked to identify the biggest issues in health and social care in Leicestershire from their own perspective. The overall issues raised at engagement events were categorised in to what now forms our broad priority areas.

The priority areas are:

Access to services

- Availability of services locally – cuts/reductions in local services, increasing centralisation of services e.g. walk-in centres
- Capacity of services e.g. GPs
- Transport to access services (especially rural areas)
- Waiting time for referrals
- Securing GP appointments
- Continuity of care

Co-ordination of services

- Co-ordination of individuals healthcare between different services/professionals
- Links between GP and other health services
- Lack of joined up approach with social care services, particularly discharge arrangements and delays in setting up care packages

Information

- Patients getting the right information
- Improved information for families and carers about social care services
- Access to local information points
- Information following discharge from hospital and other services

Voice and advocacy

- Advocacy for vulnerable patients e.g. elderly patients, mental health
- Concern over patient voice in hospitals
- Healthwatch as an important mechanism for patient voice, which needs to extend its reach
- Staff attitudes, including response to equalities issues



Key Findings from Summer Tour 2014

This report reflects the comments that we heard and received at the 'My Voice Counts' Summer Tour. We asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services they receive. The issues we heard have been grouped into the four priority themes of HWL.

Access to services

- Local people told us that they had poor experiences with the process and procedures leading up to an appointment.
- Gaining a GP appointment on the day that patients rang was a major issue. Linked to this was the waiting time to access an appointment. Patients mentioned that they would like to see the same GP but that this was often not the case. They did state that if they were prepared to wait even longer for an appointment, that they could see their regular GP.
- Stemming from the poor access to appointments, people told us that they would simply give up after attempting to make an appointment by phone, as they could not get through. These tended to be elderly patients.
- People told us that they would attend the walk in centre or accident and emergency due to not being able to get a GP appointment the same day.
- Local people wanted to see more out of hour's services. Some local services were not available on the weekend and therefore they had to travel to other areas, city hospitals or accident and emergency.
- Local people told us that they felt services were actually being reduced locally, forcing them to travel to appointments.

Coordination of services

- More local based services are something that many people spoke of. Often many elderly people have to travel far afield to regular appointments.
- People told us about forming better transition/ links between hospital services and community services.

- People told us that the patient transport for non-emergency appointments was very poor and needed improving.
- There are still examples of people being discharged from hospital and not having the appropriate care in place, which has at times led to readmission. Some patients felt abandoned and unaware of their options.

Information

- People told us that receptionists could often be the difference between having a good or bad experience in health facilities.
- Lack of communication between the hospitals and patients. Patients repeating their case history or referral letters not being received, were highlighted as key issues. Not being kept informed when physically waiting at the hospital as to what is happening with their care was also an issue highlighted.

Voice and Advocacy

- A lack of consistency of care was noted, mainly regarding compassion.
- A concern with the inconsistency of domiciliary care along with the erratic timings, which means that a patient could be asked to eat lunch and dinner two hours apart, has a real negative affect on the patient's experience. The reality of this oversight is that the patient may well be too full to eat and therefore miss a meal.
- Many people told us that although they were being treated for their conditions, they did not feel that they were being cared for.

Positive Experiences

Overall members of the public are aware of the enormous challenge to deliver health and social care services that meet the needs of every individual and are sympathetic to that challenge.

Below are some of the positive experiences that were captured:

- Many of the public that we spoke to told us that they receive a good personal one to one service once they are with the doctor or nurse.
- GP surgeries that have a morning drop in session (for example between 8.30am -10.30am) were very well received with patients. Many thought that it offered a good balance and flexibility to the appointment system.
- People told us of their support for the NHS, as it does a great job for our society.

"Whitwick Health Centre is very good. A family practice, which means I get to see the same GP and have continuity of care. You are also able to get emergency appointments when needed"

"Long Lane Centre is very good and is doing a lot of proactive work and tests. I am very impressed"

"My GP was very patient when I was very afraid and had a stroke"

My husband had Parkinson's Disease and received excellent care. Before he died he told me "we cannot let the NHS go, it is too valuable"

"Ambulance service was very good, the paramedics are hard working, kind and patient"

"My knee operation at the Glenfield was fantastic; I was in at 3pm on a Saturday and home by 8.30pm"

Public comments and suggestions

- Some people are not aware of cheaper more affordable transport options and in the past have used a regular taxi service. For elderly patients, hospitals could provide transport options when sending a letter to attend an appointment. i.e. hospital, private or voluntary organisations that provide transport.
- Better privacy for patients when informing receptionists of issues would put many patients at ease.
- More pharmacies attached to, or next-door to GP surgeries as many patients have found this to be very beneficial.
- Mental health patients could be allocated longer appointments to allow them time to open up and feel comfortable.
- A children's play area in GP surgeries would benefit many parents, especially in purpose built surgeries, as it is hard to entertain children whilst waiting for an appointment.
- There could be an over 60's clinic that is specific to physical health, wellbeing and emotional needs of patients. This could be in the form of a drop in clinic and could offer patients more time to discuss their concerns and illnesses.

“I want people to share as much information as possible about my condition with me without any jargon”.



Patient Stories

- I am diabetic and due to the cuts my GP has changed the brand of needles and medicine that I usually take to a cheaper brand. This concerned me as I was used to the brand that I had been on for a long time. I asked my GP how much the saving amounted to per year and I was told it would save £30. I offered to pay the £30 in order for me to remain using the brand that I was used to. I was told that it is government policy and that I would need to change. Surely there should be an option for me to pay the extra to receive piece of mind.

- Mrs Jones who is 85 years old needed transport to the hospital from her home. When the transport came, she was wheeled to the side of the vehicle in her wheelchair and then asked to stand up and enter the vehicle. Mrs Jones refused and asked that they use the lift, as this was the procedure that she was used to. Mrs Jones felt that they did not care about her wellbeing and that the attitude of the staff was nonchalant.

When Mrs Jones arrived at the hospital she was given a wheelchair with no sides/ arms, which she felt was a bit unsafe.

After her appointment she had to wait two and a half hours to be transported back home. Mrs Jones felt that the overall experience was very negative although the doctor that she saw provided a very good service.

- Mr Smith is over 80 years old and uses an electric scooter to travel, which can't fit on the regular public transport bus, as it is too big. In order to get to his Physiotherapy appointment he pays £18 return for a taxi.

Mr Smith has said that both the financial worry of attending the appointment by taxi and the lack of compassion within the care meant that they would probably not go back to their next appointment as they already have a copy of the exercises that they need to do. No information has been shared with Mr Smith about his travel options noting this may have encouraged him to continue his physiotherapy.

- A neighbour receives Domiciliary Care and said that on the weekend their breakfast would be delivered late and their dinner would arrive early. This had happened on more than one occasion and had resulted in food being wasted, the person not eating enough or eating too early and left them feeling quite helpless at a time when they were trying to be more self sufficient.
- My daughter was overweight and I found out that she was eating extra (going back for more) at school lunchtimes. As a family we were given support around diet and nutrition and I am proud that my daughter lost the excess weight. I think that schools should be better at monitoring what children are having at lunchtimes and a system is put into place to help prevent overeating. More local education and support is needed for families.
- It is quite often very difficult to get an appointment with the doctors by phone. It is often more successful to physically get to the surgery at 8am and queue up before they open at 8.30am even though the wait is long. There have been occasions especially in the winter months that I have needed to take my hot water bottle with me due to the cold weather. As an elderly person I tend to feel the cold quicker than I used to.
- I am undergoing Retinopathy treatment. Every time that I go to the GP for a screening, I pass out. When I had the same treatment at the hospital it seemed to agree with me, as I did not pass out. So I asked for my next appointment at the hospital instead. The service has now been contracted out and I have been waiting 12 months for an appointment, but I do not want to have the treatment at the GP's because I fear what will happen.

“I felt that they were not interested in me or my care and wanted to get my session over and done with as soon as they could”.

District Breakdown

Healthwatch Leicestershire visited each district/borough of Leicestershire as part of the roadshow tour.

The following information is what was captured from members of the public at each event.



Harborough

When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in Harborough if anything, they said:

GPs

- GP appointments to be more accessible and timely, being able to see the doctor on the day that you call
- More after hours GP appointments available
- More referrals for weight reduction sessions

Hospitals

- Shorter shifts for nurses in hospital would help them and their patients
- Car parking charges at hospitals is too high and there is a lack of parking spaces at the hospital in Market Harborough

Other

- People should support the NHS as it does a great job for our society
- Excellent service, would not change anything
- Have an interpreter available when making appointments
- More health visitors for babies
- Better school education on healthy eating and dinners
- 1,800 new homes being built, do we have the capacity within the various health services in Market Harborough to support this growth?

Blaby

When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in Blaby if anything, they said:

GPs

- It is really hard to get a GP appointment when you want one and to see the doctor that you want to see. There must be a better system than phoning up early in the morning to find all the appointments have already gone

Hospitals

- Patients with Dementia / Alzheimer's Disease who are in hospital need to be treated differently. They cannot make food choices for themselves, my husband ended up with food he didn't like and couldn't eat. He was also left alone too much without any stimulation and became depressed
- How do the people in Accident & Emergency (A&E) know if a patient is on End of Life Care? My mother was taken into hospital from her nursing home and the A&E doctors were not aware that she was receiving End of Life Care
- Why aren't there ambulances based at the hospitals to take people home? It would save people having to wait for hours when they are discharged

Other

- The cost of dentists is far too high

Hinckley & Bosworth

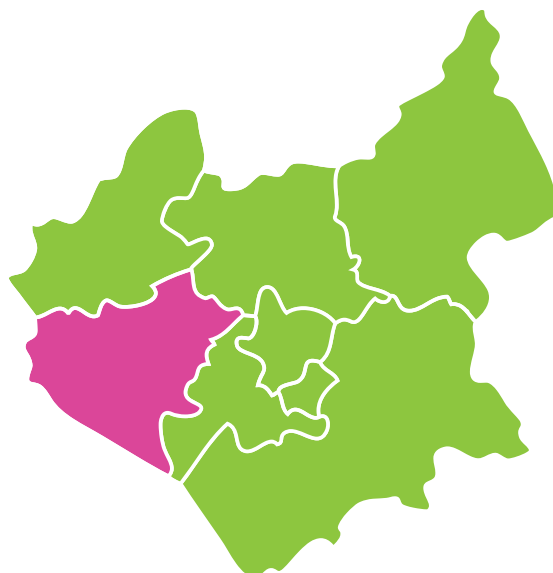
When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in Hinckley and Bosworth if anything, they said:

GPs

- A children's play area in the GP surgery would be nice as it is hard to entertain your children whilst waiting for your appointment
- Burbage walk in sessions are very useful
- Access to the doctor is restricted at times and instead patients are referred to a nurse. Sometimes patient's just want to see a doctor
- Seeing the doctor on the day that you call as you can not always get an appointment
- More out of hours GP appointments available
- GP home visits
- Too many patients for the amount of doctors
- Calling times to book appointments should be earlier for children that attend school and appointments for children should be looked at differently
- Doctors need to listen to patients, as we sometimes know what we are talking about
- Doctors should listen to the patient and not look at the computer screen.
- I have a bad back and it still has not been diagnosed for over a year. The pain is still there but I am just living with it, as I have received no joy from the doctors
- There should be an over 60's clinic that is more understanding and specific to our needs. Maybe like a drop in centre

Hospitals

- Very good service and experience at the George Elliot Hospital
- Lack of choice when it comes to psychiatrists
- My husband had Parkinson's Disease and received excellent care. Before he died he told me "we cannot let the NHS go"
- Do we even have a walk in centre in Hinckley? If we do, then I do not know about it. We also need an A&E department in Hinckley instead of having to travel to Leicester



Other

- Would like a Walk in Centre in the area
- Lack of joined up services (disjointed) and different funded posts that deliver various services for the same person
- Imbalance between mental health services and physical health services
- More services for older people
- Arriva transport public meetings should be held in the evenings so that more people can attend
- There are too many websites that advise me or direct me to health services. Leicestershire should have one website as a central point for all health concerns locally.
- Many of us use cross border services such as Rugby, Nuneaton and Warwickshire
- Excellent health service overall.



Melton

When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in Melton if anything, they said:

GPs

- Making GP appointments - Quicker to walk to the doctors rather than ring by telephone. Melton GP surgery is a very large facility, with many doctors. Is there enough phone lines to accommodate the patients?
- The GPs in Melton are very good
- GPs should refer patients to other services quicker
- GP receptionists need to deliver better customer service
- My GP will not treat more than one thing at a time. However I have a bad knee, which has resulted in my back hurting, but they will not look at my back in the same appointment
- My GP was very patient when I was very afraid and had a stroke. He came out for a home visit within two hours
- Waiting times can be quite lengthy and the environment is depressing to wait in
- Having to explain my issues in an open reception area is off putting
- Very good doctors at the local surgery
- A pharmacy next to all GP surgeries would be beneficial
- GP appointments to be more accessible and timely especially if you want to see your own doctor
- Need to use the local hospital for more services
- No x-rays available locally at the weekend

Hospitals

- My treatment at hospital has been fantastic
- My knee operation at the Glenfield was fantastic, I was in at 3pm on Saturday and home by 8.30pm
- I had an MRI scan at the General Hospital and four weeks later I am still waiting for the results. I would like to know how long this should take as it may be causing more injuries
- There is no A&E department in Melton



- Leicester Royal Infirmary is too big to deliver consistent care
- Very bad experience in hospital
- I was expecting a referral letter and I received nothing. I was left in limbo. Then I was told that the letter had never been sent to me
- I think the noise from televisions on hospital wards is bad
- When you're over 80 years old you worry about things more, cancelled appointments have a knock on effect both emotionally and for subsequent appointments

Other

- I would like to see the same NHS dentist
- I have been diagnosed with cancer and I could not fault the service
- You receive excellent service once you get an appointment but the administration of the process is poor
- Long waiting time for the dentist
- Slow diagnosis of disease.

Oadby & Wigston

When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in Oadby and Wigston if anything, they said:

GPs

- Wigston Central GP Surgery drop in sessions work very well between 8.30am – 10am. I can turn up and wait any morning and be seen
- Is there national guidance on the number of GPs per member of the public? When new homes are built I do not see an increase in facilities and GPs
- Overall a good thing that four GP surgeries are joining up in a new facility however my travel time has increased and means I have to walk further when I am not well
- The nominated GP rule is not working as well as hoped, as I still do not see the same GP when I visit. You would have to wait weeks to be able to stick to your own GP. I would like to see the same GP for consistency, especially at my age (80+)
- I have to wait two to three weeks to get an appointment to see a doctor at the GP Practice
- Improve GP services to enable us to get an appointment, they get paid good money to provide a service
- I don't always get to see my own GP and I have to see a locum doctor which I don't always want to do

Hospitals

- Cancelled hospital appointments – I had three eye appointments cancelled in a row and I know of a few people who have had the same problem. The issue seems to be bigger than one person and is not acceptable
- Can hospitals send out information about the best ways for patients to travel to hospitals with their appointment letter?
- I heard on the radio that there are going to be less beds available in hospital when they start to move services back in to the community. The public needs to hear these messages and understand what it will mean to them. Services need to be actually up and running in the community before others are taken away
- The hospital complaints system should be easier so that people can say what they need to in their own language



- The eye clinic at Windsor Leicester Royal Infirmary hospital has terrible waiting times and chronic issues
- I want to see the same consultant at the hospital. When I saw a consultant at Leicester General Infirmary, I had to explain my whole history to them which I had already done at a previous appointment

Other

- Home Care/ Domiciliary Care is not as consistent on the weekends. A neighbour had told me that on the weekend the breakfast would be delivered late and the dinner would arrive early. This had happened on more than one occasion
- Age UK Home Care services is very good including the home library service
- Social services need to provide a consistent standard when delivering services. I worry about what service my son will get and would rather pay for the service from someone else
- Ensure pathways for secondary care are effective
- I am struggling to see an NHS dentist. I am on a waiting list for an appointment and have to wait until September
- My dentist is excellent
- Getting updates from receptionists. They are not medically qualified to interpret information and answer any questions I have. Also there is the issue of confidentiality

Charnwood

When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in Loughborough if anything, they said:

GPs

- Who is the service being run for? GPs are doing what they want and not for the people
- Being able to get an appointment on the day that you ring
- I like that fact that our surgery has an online booking service where you can book appointments in advance if non urgent
- I attend the walk in centre because I can not get an appointment with the GP
- GPs should work longer hours
- Mental health patients should be offered slightly more time during appointments to give them time to open up to the GP
- Seven day services especially for serious conditions
- GP surgery: Alpine House, Mountsorrel is marvellous
- Having to call an 0844 number, this should be a local number
- Telephone triage with GP is fantastic, very happy with GP services and surgery
- Not seeing the same doctor
- Had to wait three weeks for an appointment
- Very rude receptionists
- I want to feel that the doctor listens to me
- Trying to make an appointment at the doctors is an utter nightmare and they should open on the weekends
- Receptionists are not gatekeepers, we are entitled to our services
- More say in our treatment
- Woodbrook GP Surgery, limited time to book appointment by phone. Need to improve access
- Gorse Covert Practice, difficult to get appointments. There are lots of GPs but hard to build relationships so I don't bother going

Hospitals

- My treatment at hospitals has been fantastic
- Out of Hours service do not do x-rays, which means people are using A&E instead of local services
- I had to visit the Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) for a blood test when I could have done this at the GP
- LRI should improve communication and interact with patients
- Don't get ill on a Friday



- Poor communication between Glenfield Hospital, patients and primary care
- Loughborough Hospital, please do what you say you will do
- Communication whilst waiting a long time is really important - LRI
- Bad cleanliness in hospitals
- I shouldn't need to keep repeating my case history to different hospital staff
- Pay nurse's more money
- I would like a care package to have been in place before leaving hospital

Other

- More care in the community, not having to travel to Leicester or other areas
- Midwives - you never see the same one twice
- Dentist - University dentist is good and organised
- More suicide bereavement care
- Stop privatisation
- The system is flawed, very difficult to get treatment and after care
- Sexual health clinic is very good and staff are supportive and kind
- Nothing but fantastic care across the board
- Actual service is fine but the process is poor
- Local services for local people
- Prescriptions for older people. Reviews needed, as they may not always take their pills. Also more information given so that they know what they are taking and why
- Better, honest and open communication with patients/ service users
- More improved out of hours services
- I want more support for mums of children with colic rather than just being told to 'try to take it easy and get more sleep'. Could the health visitors put together a list of things that mums can attempt to try to soothe their children? This at least gives mums some ideas when you're child won't stop crying and you're exhausted?

North West Leicestershire

When we asked the public what they would change or improve about health and social care services in North West Leicestershire if anything, they said:

GPs

- I have a problem getting an appointment
- Services are generally okay, longer opening hours would be useful
- Whitwick Health Centre is very good. I get to see the same GP and so have continuity of care. You can also get emergency appointments when needed
- I have lived in Whitwick all my life and my doctor is great, I have no issues
- Long Lane Centre is very good and is doing a lot of proactive work and tests. I am very impressed

Hospitals

- I really appreciate the Leicester Royal Infirmary Eye Department specialists
- I had an appointment at Glenfield hospital and I am allergic to latex but they had no alternative gloves. I was then sent to Leicester Royal Infirmary hospital, which again had no non latex gloves
- Coalville hospital is under utilised. What is happening with the closure?
- I would like an Accident & Emergency department at Coalville
- Stop closing wards at small hospitals. Why not use them as recovery units after major surgery
- Once I was discharged from hospital there was no follow up care information. I was not advised to see a nurse or my GP. Subsequently my internal bleeding was missed
- Coalville hospital and North West Leicestershire seem to be taking away the local services causing people to be transferred and having to travel out of the area
- My treatment was good, the doctors were very quick and on time
- Car park charges and how to get a refund is unclear



Other

- I want people to share as much information as possible about my condition with me without any jargon
- Continuity - I would like to see the same person each time and not having to repeat my story
- I want more health meetings to happen in our area. We have local venues but they get forgotten
- Patient transport for non emergency appointments is very poor and needs improving
- Ambulance service was very good, hard working, and kind to patients
- More communication between services for example; children and young people and those with disabilities and special needs
- Care homes to do more activities with the residents
- I was given incorrect information in regards to the location of my appointment, which differed between my letter and what my doctor told me. I ended up paying three times for car parking!



Conclusion

The 'My Voice Counts Summer Tour' has encouraged greater feedback from members of the public and in turn delivered more information for our board members and Healthwatch representatives to cascade to the relevant strategic levels. Stakeholders and partners also commented that Healthwatch Leicestershire is more focused and active within communities.

The My Voice Counts summer roadshow was a success, we have:

- Recruited 33 new members from across Leicestershire
- Gathered public experiences from over 350 people
- Raised awareness of Healthwatch Leicestershire by being visible in all county districts at nine events attended by thousands of county residents.

We will be organising a Winter Roadshow - which will include:

- Public consultations that will allow individuals to attend specific events in East and West Leicestershire and to share their concerns about the services they receive.
- Engagement within universities and colleges so we are directly visiting places of education and gathering the youth voice.
- Engagement with social groups and user groups in an environment that is comfortable to them, which will encompass vulnerable service users and seldom heard groups.

Healthwatch Leicestershire representatives have a strong voice on strategic partnership and stakeholder boards. We will share the experiences of the public by having direct conversations with those that provide services and those that commission services regarding the key issues raised by local people at the 'My Voice Counts' summer roadshow.



My Voice Counts Tour

We're on the road

Healthwatch Leicestershire is touring the County during August & September 2014. Come and see us, bring the family and tell us about your experiences of Health & Social Care Services in your local area.

Stay in touch:

0116 2574 999

info@healthwatchleics.co.uk

www.healthwatchleicestershire.co.uk

[@HWLeicShire](https://twitter.com/HWLeicShire)

[#YourVoiceCountsTour](https://twitter.com/YourVoiceCountsTour)

Come & See Us

Market Harborough

2 August 10am - 4pm

Market Harborough
by the Sea - Common
Health Day

The Square, Market
Harborough, LE16 7PA

Hinckley

6 August 9am-5pm

'Snapdragon' Children
& Family Festival -
Various locations around
Hinckley

Melton Mowbray

12 August 9am-12pm

AgeUK Coffee Morning
Gloucester House, 3
Norman Way, Melton
Mowbray, LE13 1JE

Melton Mowbray

15 August 10am-4pm

Melton by the Sea,
Melton Town Centre

Loughborough

17 August 10am-5pm

Loughborough Mela
2014, Loughborough
Town Centre

South Wigston

20 August 11.30am-4pm

Supersonic Boom Youth
Festival, Blaby Road Park,
South Wigston

Whitwick

6 September 11am-5pm

Whitwick Party in the
Park & Scarecrow
Festival, Whitwick Park,
North Street, Whitwick

Hinckley

19 September 10am-4pm

Over 50s Day, Green
Towers, Richmond Road,
Hinckley, LE10 ODZ