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Contact Person	Libby Dunstan or Emma Taylor
Company Name	Healthwatch Leicestershire
Telephone Number	01162 574989 or 257 5042
Fax Number	0116 257 5059
Email Address	libby.d@valonline.org.uk or emma.t@valonline.org.uk
Web site address	www.healthwatchleicestershire.co.uk

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Healthwatch Leicestershire sheds light on mental health service

In a new report local health and social care watchdog Healthwatch Leicestershire found that changes to the service provided by Richmond Fellowship are resulting in service users feeling less cared for.

Richmond Fellowship is a national organisation supporting people with mental health problems. The support Richmond offers includes preventative services. Healthwatch Leicestershire visited Richmond in August 2015 to listen to patients and service users. The visit took place a year after a re-commission of the service which resulted in a new provider.

In comparison to the previous provider, Richmond Fellowship now offers a far more independent, ‘arms-reach’ support style where service users are asked to do more for themselves.

Some service users told Healthwatch that the transition could have been smoother and said that adjusting to the new style has been difficult. One service user said: “Whilst Richmond Fellowship staff are excellent workers, there aren’t enough [of them].”

The report also identified positive feedback from service users. For example, 82% of service users Healthwatch surveyed identified something that motivated their recovery.

Healthwatch also spoke to staff during the visit. Some staff also told the watchdog that they could benefit with more training, particularly when taking over a support group. One staff member noted that staff would benefit from having time to discuss their experiences on a regular basis.

Rick Moore, Chair of Healthwatch Leicestershire said: “Our independent study has found that there is a need for greater communication between commissioners and providers as well as relevant support and training for staff that benefits service users’ recoveries. In its absence service users reported they feel less cared for.”

“I hope that this report will encourage stakeholders within mental health services to better understand the service users experience and use these insights for a more coordinated and responsive service.”

Healthwatch Leicestershire's full findings are available in its report, *Lost in Translation*, which is available online at:

<http://www.healthwatchleicestershire.co.uk/resources>

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Editor notes

About Healthwatch Leicestershire

Healthwatch Leicestershire is an independent consumer champion for health and social care in Leicestershire. The organisation helps to shape and improve local health and social care in our community. Healthwatch Leicestershire is part of the Healthwatch national network, established by the Government to ensure local patients and users have a greater input to shaping and designing local services.

About Healthwatch England

Healthwatch England is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in England. The organisation has independent statutory powers, as stated in the Health and Social Care Act 2012, to ensure the consumers' voice is heard and best practice is delivered in health and social care nationally. Healthwatch is also focused on providing leadership, guidance and support to the development of the Healthwatch network. To find out more please go to www.healthwatch.co.uk.