Healthwatch Cheshire Pride Report

Healthwatch Cheshire is proud to support Pride and the LGBTQ+ community and to have taken part in celebrations across Cheshire over the past few years. Although we are sad that we can't be part of the celebrations in person this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we will be joining the virtual celebrations and will continue to support Pride across Cheshire.

Healthwatch Cheshire, consisting of Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West, is an independent consumer champion for health and care across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England. Our role is to make sure that those who run health and care services understand and act on what really matters to local people.

We undertake continuous engagement activities with the public to hear about concerns and compliments regarding health and care services. The information we gather is then analysed so that we can identify and act upon trends and common themes, by presenting our findings to decision makers in order to improve the services people use.

Our Cheshire Pride Survey

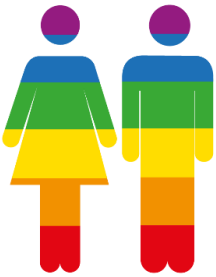
Between June 2019 and September 2019 Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West attended the five Pride events taking place across Cheshire. As part of our ongoing commitment to engaging with a wide range of people across our communities, we wanted to hear their experiences of health and care services. Our aim was to understand if people felt their needs were being met and what, if any further work need to be done with the LGBTQ+ community. We spoke to 162 people in total, 91 of whom told us they lived in Cheshire East and 71 in Cheshire West.

Where did the Pride events take place?

The Pride events took place in Macclesfield, Crewe, Congleton and Nantwich in Cheshire East, and Chester city centre in Cheshire West and Chester.

What did people tell us?

- Transgender people told us that there is a general lack of signposting of information regarding treatment and support from the NHS and their local GP's websites.
- Feeling that some GPs had a lack of understanding and sensitivity concerning Trans people and provided some evidence of 'deadnaming' *(use of a Trans person's birth name without their consent)*.
- Lack of joined up working between private Gender Specialist and GPs.

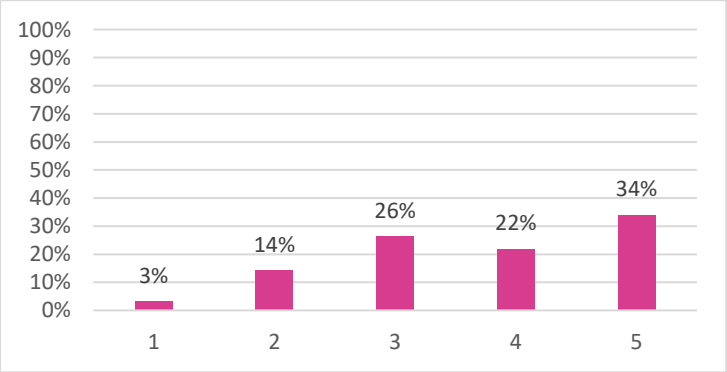


- **The Recovery College** was praised highly in providing excellent counselling, diagnosis and support with mental health.
- A number of people told us about negative experiences they had had with their doctor when they had declared their sexuality.
- **56% of respondents in Cheshire East** rated Health and Care services as 4 star and above.
- **59% of respondents in Cheshire West** rated Health and Care services as 4 star and above.

What you told us in Cheshire East

In Cheshire East there were four Pride events, these took place in Macclesfield, Crewe, Congleton and Nantwich. We spoke to 91 people who told us that they live and access services in Cheshire East. We asked people to rate these services using a 5 star rating and sought feedback on their experiences

Rating of Health Services by Cheshire East respondents (with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent)



56%

Rated their health and care services at 4 star or above

What did people tell us about their experiences of healthcare in Cheshire East?

Signposting and information provision

"I am a trans male/female - GPs find it difficult to find information for treatment and support".

"I wanted to find info on LGBT health concerns but the web page search index does not give any result when Trans or LGBT is inputted".

"There appears to be no clear signposting for Trans issues or concerns on any of their websites".

"The webpage on Leighton Hospital with regards to being kept up to date is appalling. How do people find out what is on, where to go?".

"Not enough signposting for Trans issues or concerns".

GP and Hospital Services

"The hospital is brilliant. I am from Poland but live in Crewe. The NHS at Leighton are fantastic. Thank you!"

"Spoke to a doctor, told them I was gay, their behaviour was suddenly different and they had a poor attitude towards me".

"When I attend my GP Practice, I rarely see the same doctor, so I feel I have to 'out' myself all the time. This isn't right and so I feel I am being treated differently; I am nervous".

"I spoke with one doctor; told them I was gay and their attitude suddenly became poor".

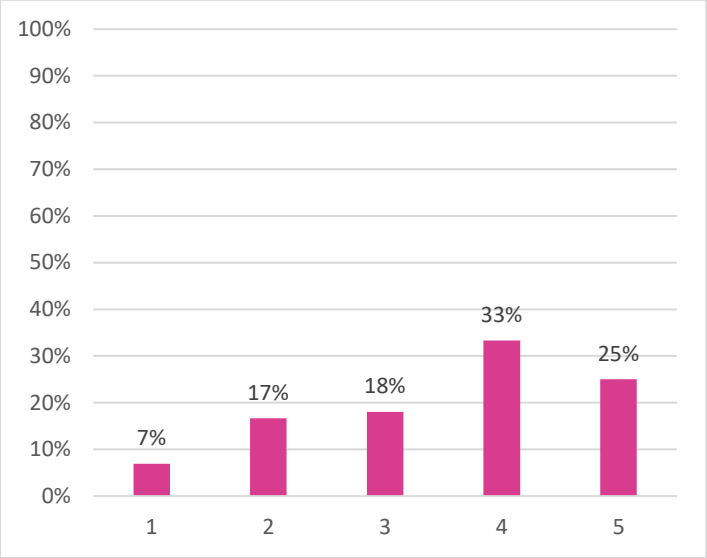
Recovery College

"The counselling, diagnosis and recovery college is excellent. I have been attending for 18 years. The new team who just started did a full assessment and were great, however I had to go over the whole story of drugs and alcohol issues. It has been nice to talk to someone, you need this from time to time".

What you told us in Chester West and Chester

In Cheshire West and Chester, we attended the Pride event held in Chester city centre. At the event we spoke to 71 people who lived in the Cheshire West and Chester area. We asked people to rate their experiences from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

Rating of Health services by Cheshire West & Chester respondents



58%

rated their health and care services at 4 star or above

What did people tell us about their experiences of healthcare in Cheshire West and Chester?

Transgender support

"I'm transgender and several months ago I asked for them to change my title to Mr (what it now legally is by deed poll) and after a lot of fighting they only changed it to 'Mx', which is extremely humiliating to see popping up on the board".

"Lack of signposting. I am a trans male/female, it is so difficult to find information for treatment and support".

"I need them to sort out shared care with a private Gender Specialist, who has attempted to contact the GP who said she would help with blood test and hormone prescriptions. But upon the specialist contacting the practice and myself giving his email in at reception, the messages and emails were 'lost', which hinders my healthcare and is putting my mental health in a lot of danger".

"Doctor was very negative asking, was I sure about coming out as trans, partner would leave me and I'm older?"

GP and NHS Services

"Nurse and reception work together to make sure my level of care is superb".

"Daughter is in a same sex marriage and wants to start having children. Went to see GP - not supportive. Said that he had not come across a same sex couple wanting to have children before. Needs more training."

"I find the NHS and GP's website difficult to follow. Can they have an easier version (easy read) for people with learning difficulties".

"The service at St Werburgh's is brilliant, not every surgery wants us (Homeless) but Werburgh's takes time to listen and help. Thank You".

Conclusion

There was a general consensus that people feel positive about their local services across both Cheshire East and Cheshire West. What was most apparent however, is that Trans people feel that there is a general lack of outreach, information and support for them particularly online and this requires improvement.

We also heard of occasions when members of the LGBTQ+ community felt 'judged and unsupported' by health professionals. Whilst this may not be widespread it can have a significant impact on individuals health and wellbeing.

Recommendations for Cheshire East

- Provide consistent and easy ways to find information within GP Practices and their websites to support the Trans community.
- Improve existing knowledge across the Clinical Commissioning Group of supporting the LGBTQ+ community around their specific health needs to increase confidence of people using the service.

Recommendations for Cheshire West

- Provide consistent and easy ways to find information within GP Practices and their websites to support the Trans community.
- Improve existing knowledge across the Clinical Commissioning Group of supporting the LGBTQ+ community around their specific health needs to increase confidence of the people using the service.