



Initial Impact of Investigation to Improve Mental Health Services for Birmingham Service Users.

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Healthwatch Birmingham



What is Healthwatch Birmingham?

Healthwatch Birmingham is the independent champion for health and social care services. We exist to ensure people are at the heart of care. We provide service users and the public with ways to feedback and have a stronger say about the services they use. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved. This could be about general practices, hospitals, dentists, opticians, pharmacists, nursing and residential homes or care you receive in the community.




We have the power to ensure that those organisations that design, run or regulate NHS and social care listen to people's views and act on them. People's experiences prompt and lead our activities and investigations, with our reports focusing on improving services for everyone. We also encourage services to involve service users and the public in decisions that affect them.

Through our Information and Signposting Line, Healthwatch Birmingham also helps people find out the information they need about services in their area.

People sharing their experiences can make a big difference. Our aim is to help make health and care services better for service users, their families and their community.

Speaking to Healthwatch Birmingham is easy. People can feedback about specific services through our online Feedback Centre (www.healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk), by calling us on 0800 652 5278/0121 636 0990, by emailing us at info@healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk or speaking to us in person at our community engagement events.

In summary, Healthwatch Birmingham is here to:

-  Help people find out about local health and social care services.
-  Listen to what people think of services.
-  Help improve the quality of services by making peoples views known by those designing, running and regulating services.

Reports and Investigations

Healthwatch Birmingham's investigations and reports highlight important issues about service and care quality. Working in conjunction with the health and social care system, our investigations and reports enable us to highlight where services are working well, and where they can be improved. We also hold service providers and/or commissioners to account for changes they state they are making because of our reports.

Initial Impact of Investigation to Improve Mental Health Services for Birmingham Service Users.

Executive Summary

Through our Information and Signposting Line and online Feedback Centre, we heard from six service users and carers who were not satisfied by the level of service provided by the Zinnia Centre, an Integrated Community Care and Recovery service provided by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT). As the feedback collectively indicated a cause for concern, we ran two focus groups of asked third-sector caseworkers to share their knowledge about the level of service provided to their clients by the Zinnia Centre. We discussed the six issues we heard with BSMHFT and shared them with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection

Manager for Mental Health Hospital in the Central West Region, who also discussed these issues with the Trust.

The Trust addressed each concern and put appropriate plans in place to improve their service (see Box 1). Following this investigation, the Trust is sharing the learning at this centre with the other Integrated Community Care and Recovery services to improve the level of service for service users and carers across the City. Healthwatch Birmingham will share further impact following this report in a follow-up impact report in February 2019.

Box 1: 'We heard, they did'

We heard about six issues:	Action taken by BSMHFT:
1. Medication management: dispensed late, inflexibility of pick up times, wrong medication.	<p>The CMHT and pharmacy are working together to increase timely dispensing. Changes to the system are being trialed.</p> <p>The Zinnia Centre staff now inform service users and carers in advance if the medication has not arrived.</p>
2. The inflexibility of pick-up times for medication.	<p>The Trust management has requested Zinnia Centre staff to be more flexible, offering alternative times for people who cannot make the drop-in clinics.</p>
3. The difficulty of making telephone contact with the Zinnia Centre staff and having calls returned.	<p>The Trust are upgrading their phone system on July 18th 2018. This will improve the time it takes the switchboard receptionists to answer incoming calls. They will continue to answer the calls as proactively as possible.</p> <p>The Trust management commissioned a specific project across teams to agree on a new phone response protocol that supports service users/carers/visitors to get an appropriate response.</p>
4. Poor access to mental health assessments.	<p>The Trust informed us that they should only provide assessment and treatment if the service user's primary issue is mental health, and not drug/alcohol related. However, they were happy to review the specific case if a name is provided to them.</p>

We heard about six issues:	Action taken by BSMHFT:
5. Poor follow-up of service users, including missed home visits. Unsafe discharge. Not being able to obtain appointments.	<p>The Trust is working towards ensuring that staff follow the DNA policy.</p> <p>The Trust management has stated they are happy to meet with these service users to discuss the issues if that helps with their future care.</p>
6. Poor staff attitudes.	<p>The Trust management have spoken with the relevant members of staff to improve staff attitudes.</p>

Why did we investigate this service?

The Zinnia Centre is one of thirteen Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT) run by BSMHFT. CMHTs provide assessment, specialist support, treatment and care planning for service users (aged 25+ in Birmingham) with functional mental health problems such as depression and psychotic mental illness. The Zinnia Centre also provides crisis resolution, day treatment, and inpatient mental health services. It is based in Sparkhill, an inner-city area with a large population of ethnic minorities, mainly of South Asian origin, but also Afro-Caribbeans and Somalis.



Initial feedback heard by Healthwatch Birmingham.

Between May 2017 and January 2018, Healthwatch Birmingham heard from six people through our Information and Signposting Line and our online Feedback Centre. Issues raised included concerns regarding medication management at the CMHT (specifically Clozapine), concerns with the phones, and poor access to appointments. This feedback collectively was enough to indicate a cause for concern.

Providers can respond to the feedback left by their service users on the Healthwatch Birmingham online Feedback Centre. The Trust had responded to all feedback, and these are included below.



Box 2: Online Feedback to Healthwatch Birmingham

Online Feedback to Healthwatch Birmingham

Worse than useless

Don't follow through on promises. Difficult to contact. Their admin is useless.



17th January 2018

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

We are really sorry to receive your feedback. Our Customer Relations team will be happy to help you and try to get things swiftly sorted, they are available on 0800 953 0045.

Unprofessional

My daughter is trying to get assistance for her mother's long-term paranoia her mother refuses to take her medication causing great stress and is detrimental to my daughter's health. Promises are made to come out on home visits and not kept. Obtaining repeat medication takes two weeks from the original request and being constantly told to call back tomorrow, even then the medication was incorrect



(feedback left by the service user's husband)
17th October 2017

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

We are concerned to read your feedback. Could you please contact our Customer Relations team on 0800 953 0045 so that they can take further details about these incidents. We will then be able to involve a senior manager to investigate.



Staff are unreliable and unhelpful

I have to collect my medication from there on certain days between certain times and I work full time. They refuse to let me pick it up on way into work and tell me I should use my annual leave to pick it up. On the occasions I have picked it up it has not even been ordered and have gone days without meds. This is causing me to be unstable and the longer it goes on the worse I get. The staff do not care what so ever. I leave messages and never contacted back. This has not happened once but several times. Also appointments are few and far between and my last one was cancelled by them and they never rebooked. I have requested numerous times for appointment but getting nowhere.



28th September 2017

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

We are concerned to read your feedback. We would be grateful if you could contact our Customer Relations team on 0800 953 0045. They will take further details from you and a senior manager will investigate. Our Customer Relations team will also ensure a new appointment is booked for you.

Lack of communication within the team

Same advice and same ways. This is the second time my spouse is under Home Treatment at Zinnia and in the space of 7 months for the same reason and there is no difference in their way or method. My spouse is not getting any better but in some ways getting worse and I'm left to deal with it alone. Lack of communication within the team causes problems. Missed visits and changed days of visits are an issue.



25th July 2017

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

Our Customer Relations team are available Mondays to Fridays 8am to 8pm on 0800 953 0045. They are always able to take further details and liaise or investigate concerns on your behalf. Please do not hesitate to contact the team if they can help or support in any way.

It's just terrible and under staffed

I went there from Xarupa and felt like nobody cared, the staff just didn't have chance to look after my dear son.



27th May 2017

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

We are sorry to read your feedback regarding our Zinnia Centre. It would help us to know a little more about this situation. Our Customer Relations team are on 0800 953 0045 and can take some details and investigate your concerns.

Initial feedback heard through our Information and Signposting Line

A member of the public contacted Healthwatch Birmingham through our Information and Signposting Line to share his experience of the care provided to his father by the Zinnia Centre. The father has mental health problems and is under the care of the Zinnia Centre. In the three months prior to his call to us, he shared that his father's care had been more chaotic, and they have specifically had problems accessing medication for him. This medicine, Clozapine, requires a blood test prior to the staff dispensing it.

Without the Clozapine, his father will not rest properly, and this has a knock-on effect on the whole family: if his dad does not sleep, nor will the rest of the family. He felt that the Zinnia Centre does not appreciate this knock-on effect.

On three occasions, the Zinnia Centre staff had asked the carer and his father to wait for long periods for the medication; and then did not have the medications in stock. This meant that they had to return later. The Zinnia Centre staff kept the son waiting for two hours before telling him that the medication was not ready. He told Healthwatch Birmingham that it was particularly upset that the staff had turned him away without his father's medication on Eid.

Another time he went to collect the medication on a Friday and the staff told him come back on Monday, then on Monday to come back on Tuesday. When he went back on Tuesday, the Zinnia Centre staff told him that they do not give out medications on Tuesdays. At last, he was eventually 'let through' on that Tuesday, although he had to wait another hour to get the medication.

Once, when the medication was delayed, and he spoke with somebody at the Zinnia Centre they blamed the pharmacy, saying that the pharmacy had not been able to provide the medication. He waited for four days and then checked with the pharmacy, and they said that they were not at fault and the Zinnia Centre had not sent the order. When he confronted the Zinnia Centre, they told him that the blood test had not come through; they had changed their reason for the delay in access to medication. He thinks that since a particular member of staff who dealt with prescriptions left the Zinnia Centre the quality of the treatment has declined. When the staff member worked there, they used to take the blood and order the medication. The son also felt that there were staff shortages and lack of training.

What did we do?

Healthwatch Birmingham hears a wide range of issues from service users and members of the public using Birmingham health and social care services. People's experiences prompt and lead our activities and investigations, with our reports focusing on service and care quality improvement.

We share all feedback with commissioners and regulators, and select a small number for further investigation, with the aim of improving services for the people of Birmingham. We carried out this investigation as the issues service users and carers raised regarding the Zinnia Centre indicated cause for concern regarding quality and safety. We were keen to explore if other service users and carers using this service experienced these issues.

We are fully aware that this client group are very vulnerable and often struggle to share their stories. As a result, we decided to hear the experiences of individuals through their advocates and caseworkers. These professionals are best placed to share their client's experiences, and the challenges the caseworkers face supporting these vulnerable individuals. Therefore, we contacted Shelter (a national charity that provides advice and support to people struggling with bad housing or homelessness) and Anawim (a centre that supports women in Birmingham). We conducted separate focus groups with the Shelter staff team and with the Anawim staff team.

What did caseworkers tell us?

Caseworkers described issues regarding medication management at the CMHT, issues with the phones and poor access to appointments. They also highlighted issues about access to mental health assessments, the follow-up of service users, and discharge procedures at the Zinnia Centre (see Box 3).

Box 3: Caseworkers' feedback

Caseworkers' feedback

Issues with medication management

'I had a client that was receiving oral antipsychotics and was receiving a depot injection as well. They were meant to be reducing it, but they didn't.'

'I have a client on depot injection, she is going through a massive crisis, she is out sex working, but she's not going in for her depot, as that's not at the forefront of her mind at the moment. We have asked for her to have a home visit, but we've been told that if she is well enough to go out sex working then she's well enough to attend the centre for her depot. So she hasn't had one since November.'

Issues with assessments

'It is difficult for drug users [sic] to have an assessment. It's impossible, as they won't do this if the person is withdrawing.'

Issues with access

'The problem that I have is getting through to them on the phone. I can be sat trying to get through for hours!'

'The difficulty we found is trying to get people appointments at the Zinnia Centre. I have contacted the Zinnia Centre this and last week, on behalf of a client, and they haven't got back to me. I haven't even got a phone call back.'

Discharge procedures

'One of our clients was sectioned, and then six days later he let himself out, he was then discharged 10 days later. The Zinnia Centre didn't tell us that he had been let out. They didn't notify any agencies that were involved with him. He was very paranoid, and the Zinnia Centre discharged him because he said he was going to go and see his father. He doesn't actually have a relationship with his father.'

Follow-up of service users

'I had a client that is so ill that she isolates herself in her flat. She doesn't go out, so she didn't attend her psychiatrist appointments. When she did see the psychiatrist she said, why didn't you chase me up? The psychiatrist said because you didn't come I assumed that you didn't need the appointments. This was to someone who had been mentally ill for most of their life!'

'This was in the last year. She tried to kill herself. If I have seen this client then the CPN seems to think "that's okay, I don't need to see her, Anawim has seen her", that's the impression I get.'

'There was one client that we were struggling to help, and we had some professional's meeting there. They said they would section her, and then later they said, "no that's not going to happen". We contacted them again, and they had changed their minds. That person was still a danger to themselves. She still is a danger to herself, and this was last March (2017).'

'People can be referred to assessments at the Zinnia Centre, then they don't attend due to their mental health, and when they don't attend the Zinnia Centre don't follow up. This isn't specific to the Zinnia Centre, it's the same for most CMHTs. They are invited for assessment and then they don't attend due to their condition. The CMHT won't inquire why the patient hasn't attended their appointment.'

'My client had over-dosed and the Community Psychiatric Nurse came out straight away, and then we had to call out emergency services. I think that's because the client has a history of overdosing though.'

Further online feedback from service users and carers

We continued to receive online feedback directly from service users and carers regarding the Zinnia Centre (see Box 4). These included two recent pieces of positive feedback via our online Feedback Centre. This highlighted that although the negative feedback above is of concern, some service users are satisfied with their care. However, other feedback indicates that there were still issues with the telephone system.

Box 4: Further online feedback

Really good help always



25th April 2018

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

Many thanks for your kind comment. We will let the team at Zinnia know.

Very Caring and good service and a great team

I enjoyed my stay at the Zinnia Centre and would never go anywhere else if I am sick.



13th May 2018

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

Thank you for your kind feedback. We will let the team know.

They never answer the phones

They keep u on hold for ages and don't pick up. I have been in crisis twice and no one has helped at all. I think that this centre should be closed down and the staff should get dismissed.



4th April 2018

Response from Lead for service user, carer and public engagement, The Zinnia Centre

We are concerned to read your feedback. Our Customer Relations team on 0800 953 0045 can look into this on your behalf. Please contact them if you have any difficulties accessing our teams at busy times. We have a dedicated Home Treatment team at Zinnia and if you are referred to that team a dedicated phone line is offered.

What did we do with this feedback?

Healthwatch Birmingham shared this feedback with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), (Hospitals; Mental Health (Central West) Central Region) who wrote to the BSMHFT to raise Healthwatch Birmingham's concerns relating to the Zinnia Centre. The Trust conducted an investigation in response to our concerns.

Response from BSMHFT

1. Concerns regarding medication management at the CMHT

The Trust acknowledged that there have been difficulties regarding dispensing of medication on time and the ability for service users to collect medication. There is a medication drop-in clinic held on Mondays and Fridays to facilitate service users picking up medication. Service users are encouraged to use these clinics, however, if people are working this might not be possible. Because of this feedback, the Trust raised with the Zinnia Centre staff the importance of being flexible and ensuring they identify and offer alternative appointments for individuals who cannot make the drop-in clinics. Alternatives should be available for individuals outside of

2. Concerns regarding Clozapine specifically

The CMHT team manager has acknowledged the difficulties that mainly relate to the turnaround times of Clozapine blood samples being taken and tested, and then the prescription being issued. The pharmacy can only issue Clozapine medication once the blood results are checked and approved, so this is a very tight turnaround for services. The Trust management have spoken to both the pharmacy department and the CMHT team manager to review the process. Pharmacy and the CMHT have worked together to try to reduce the issues with timely dispensing.



- The Trust has implemented changes to the system for taking blood samples, testing and medication dispensing. They are now undertaking Clozaril bloods a week earlier so that medication can arrive on time. This change is being trialed and monitored for effectiveness and upgraded where needed. This will result in a longer turnaround time for pharmacy to issue the medication. This has helped minimise the issue. However, it is still in a trial period, so further adjustments may be required.
- The Trust management have asked staff to ensure they inform service users and carers in advance if their medication has not arrived on time, so they are not having a wasted journey and that the medication is delivered to their home, where possible.
- There is now a dedicated nurse overseeing the ordering of medication for the team, which has alleviated the situation but has not resolved all the difficulties in receiving medication for pharmacy in the required timeframe. The Head of Pharmacy is to review progress on reducing the concerns experienced.

3. Issues with the phones

There is to be an overall upgrade of the Trust phone system in July, which should solve the technical difficulties experienced with call waiting, and reduce the time it takes for the switchboard to answer incoming calls. The Trust was already aware of the issues relating to the phone system at the Zinnia Centre. In response to Healthwatch Birmingham's concerns, the Associate Director of Urgent Care at the Trust observed switchboard receptionists take calls. She detected that there was a technical glitch with the switchboard. This meant that some calls were not appearing on the display board. Receptionists had assumed that these calls were people who had terminated their call, which was not the case; they were going unanswered.

The Trust commissioned a specific project across teams to agree on a new phone response protocol that supports service users/ carers/visitors to get an appropriate response. This was to address the problem of callers not being able to talk with the correct staff, particularly where there are multiple teams. The Trust will continue to monitor and test this protocol once in place and, once they have ratified it, will share it with Healthwatch Birmingham.

4. Access to mental health assessments for people with drug/substance misuse issues.

The Clinical Commissioning Group do not commission BSMHFT to provide a drug and alcohol service. The Trust should only provide assessment and treatment if the service user's primary issue is mental health, and is not drug/alcohol related. However, they are happy to review the specific case if a name is provided to them. Healthwatch Birmingham will ask caseworkers, service users or carers (as appropriate) if they wish to provide contact details for us to pass on to the Trust.

5. The follow-up of service users and unsafe discharge

The Trust informed us that if service users do not attend (DNA) an appointment then the staff should implement the Trust's DNA policy. This requires follow-up from clinicians enquiring as to the service user's safety and well-being and planning further appointments/visits. The Trust is working towards ensuring their staff follow this policy. The Trust told us that, without the service user's names, it is hard for them to investigate fully the incidents we shared with them. The Trust is happy to discuss these cases with Healthwatch Birmingham and apologised for the experience that the service users had, and is happy to meet with these service users to discuss the issues if that helps with their future care. Healthwatch Birmingham will ask caseworkers, service users or carers (as appropriate) if they wish to provide contact details for us to pass on to the Trust.

6. Poor staff attitudes

The Trust management have spoken with the relevant members of staff to improve staff attitudes.

The Trust welcomes feedback from organisations such as Healthwatch Birmingham. From the feedback we received, we were able to be clear about the actions required to improve service users' and carers' experiences of our services. This is incredibly valuable, as the greatest measure of our success in responding to people's needs is their feedback, both positive and negative, to create the change that is required.

Mary Elliffe, Associate Director of Urgent Care, BSMHFT.



Following this investigation, the Trust is sharing the learning at this centre with the other Integrated Community Care and Recovery services to improve the level of service for service users and carers across the City.

Next steps

Healthwatch Birmingham will hold BSMHFT to account for changes they state they are making because of the concerns we raised. Specifically, we will be interested to know from service users and carers over the next six months:

- 🗨 Is there flexibility in picking up medication from outside the drop-in clinic times?
- 🗨 Are there delays picking up Clozapine from the CMHT?
- 🗨 Do staff inform them in advance if their medication has not arrived on time?
- 🗨 Do the Trust deliver medication to service user's homes, where possible?
- 🗨 Do staff answer phones within a reasonable time?
- 🗨 Has the new phone response protocol improved service users/carers/visitors getting an appropriate response? That is, is it possible to talk with the correct staff member or leave them a message? In addition, do staff respond to messages and return calls?
- 🗨 Are staff implementing the Trust's DNA policy? That is, are staff following up service users who DNA?
- 🗨 Do service users and carers feel staff treat them with dignity and respect?

We will share further impact following this report in a follow-up impact report in February 2019.

Healthwatch Birmingham will seek to hear further feedback from Shelter and Anawim caseworkers, and directly from service users and carers through our online Feedback Centre, our Information and Signposting Line and our Community Engagement work.

If you are a service user or carer please do share your experiences with us of the Zinnia Centre (as well as other services provided by BSMHFT in Birmingham).

We also encourage you to share your feedback directly with Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust. You can do this by contacting the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):



We would like to thank the service users and carers of the Zinnia Centre who contacted us through our online Feedback Centre or Information and Signposting Line. We are also grateful to Shelter and Anawim for their time and feedback, the Care Quality Commission (Hospitals; Mental Health (Central West) Central Region) for collaborating with us on this investigation, and Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust for addressing the concerns we raised.

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