

Healthwatch Representatives Feedback Form

Representative name	Martin Haddon
Meeting	Wandsworth BME Mental Health Forum
Date & Time	19 July 2018 3-5pm (the Forum meets every 2 months)
Who attended	An audience of 25-30 individuals consisted of service users, carers, community and faith leaders; voluntary sector providers, staff from the Mental Health Trust (including Talk Wandsworth) and Social Services. Hosted by WCEN and chaired by Malik Gul.
Key issues	<p>A follow- up from a reference in the minutes of the previous meeting.</p> <p>Malik discussed the discrimination faced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and the impact it had on mental health.</p> <p>A number of Forum members acknowledged the difficulty of addressing this topic, particularly for people of an older generation. There was more reticence within communities and families as a legacy of traditional intolerance, despite stigmatisation against the LGBT community, the issue of mental health was agreed to be important to discuss.</p>

A number of initiatives had been taken by the services, for example, the introduction of rainbow lanyards. This allowed staff to raise their awareness of these issues and their ability to discuss them.

Malik suggested holding a workshop over the summer to allow more considerate discussions.

Leon Gooding, manager of Wandsworth Council's mental health and social work team, produced a report that included views on the operation of the Mental Health Act.

When assessed, the act indicated that BME people are slightly (but not massively) more likely to be detained than White people. Gooding reached these conclusions after circulating the team's "dashboard" where figures were testimony to the fact that a disproportionate number of Black people (38.6% of referrals as against 10.6% of the population) continue to be referred for assessment under the Act. The cause of these referrals of BME individuals were primarily from public service agents i.e. the police, A&E and other services rather than concerned families.

Some Forum members were critical of police's ability to handle mental health problems but Leon suggested that by the time referrals for assessment are made BME individuals are acutely unwell and the real problem lies upstream.

It was deduced that what was missing was preventive work. Signs of mental health are not being recognised or acted on during the early stages in Black communities.

There needs to be more confidence in the system, especially when it comes to safeguarding procedures that can be

invoked when people's behaviour becomes dangerous to themselves or others.

The impact of austerity on social services had also been touched upon. Malik argued that emphasis had shifted too far towards safeguarding, but Social Services had begun to realise the need of a revival of a community-based approach: it will be important to prevent this becoming over-institutionalised.

I enquired about the numbers of individuals with mental health problems currently receiving social care packages. The dashboard appeared to show that the numbers in question had remained steady over the last two years.

The Forum thanked Leon for his contribution over several years and wished him well in his move to a new post- I east Sussex. He hoped his successor would be appointed by mid-August.

Gareth Jones, operational manager of Talk Wandsworth, circulated some data which had been requested on the ethnicity of people accessing the service and the breakdown between different types of therapy - these will need to be studied.

He introduced 3 young Black women newly recruited to the service's Wellbeing team, who were welcomed to the Forum, with the hopes of two more additional members to be joining shortly.

Malik briefly reported a follow-up work conducted on BME young people's mental health after the successful conference in April. He had been assured that the sudden departure of Wandsworth's Director of Children's Services would not affect this work.

He circulated a flyer for the 10th Black Mental Health Conference to be held on

	<p>25th of October with an intergenerational focus.</p> <p>STORM women's empowerment network announced their anniversary conference to be held on 15th of August.</p>
<p>Healthwatch Actions and What to Watch</p>	<p>We will study the information circulated and follow the issues raised.</p>
<p>The Meeting in one sentence (for blog, FB, Tweeter, newsletter)</p>	<p>Wandsworth BME Mental Health Forum continues to address challenging issues.</p>