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**News Release**

**1 November 2024**

**Healthwatch Enter & View report
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – The Beacon Unit**

## Children and young people’s mental health is a priority focus area for local Healthwatch. Healthwatch Leicester, Healthwatch Leicestershire and Healthwatch Rutland visited the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – The Beacon Unit at Glenfield Hospital to gather young people’s views and experiences of the service provided and to observe the environment and operation of the facility.

## The unit, which opened in November 2020, serves young people aged 13-17 with acute mental health needs. Despite having 15 beds, it has never operated at full capacity due to staffing shortages and the introduction of intensive community services, which have successfully reduced the need for inpatient care, as told by Matron.

## The visit highlighted a welcoming environment with well-maintained facilities, including classrooms, therapeutic spaces, and a secure garden area funded by local initiatives. Staff appeared supportive, and patients generally reported positive interactions, although food quality emerged as a significant concern.

## Patient and staff feedback during the visit emphasised the importance of consistent care and better meal options. While staff acknowledged a supportive team culture, they also pointed out challenges like reliance on agency workers and variability in care routines. Overall, the sentiment from the visit reflected a committed service working under challenging conditions to provide tailored support for young people.

Following the visit, we have made several recommendations including:

1. Revise the food menu using feedback from the young people, to include more appealing, age-appropriate food options that can be pre-ordered to avoid waste.
2. Implement standardised routines and practices across all staff to ensure consistent care for patients, reducing confusion and variability in patient experiences.
3. Develop a plan to increase the utilisation of The Beacon, allowing it to provide dedicated support for young people and adolescents with moderate symptoms who do not require inpatient treatment.

### **Harsha Kotecha, Chair, Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire said,**

*"Our recent visit to the CAMHS Beacon Unit allowed us to hear directly from young people and observe the services and facilities first hand. We remain committed to working closely with local health providers to ensure that these services meet the needs of all young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland."*

### **Dr Janet Underwood, Chair, Healthwatch Rutland said,**

*“It was encouraging to hear positive feedback from young people in the unit about daily activities and how supportive staff are. Our representatives found the setting to be appealing and well-equipped. Food choices are an area for improvement and we encourage the unit to work with the young patients to make it more palatable.”*

Read the report <add link>

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**About Healthwatch**

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved, and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire is provided by Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL).

You can contact us with your views and experiences via telephone 0116 257 4999, email enquiries@healthwatchll.com or website [www.healthwatchll.com](http://www.healthwatchll.com)

The Healthwatch Rutland service is provided by Connected Together Community Interest Company.

You can contact us with your views and experiences via telephone 01572 720381, email info@healthwatchrutland.co.uk or website [www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk)