



Healthwatch Bedford Borough

Annual Review 2019-20



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In normal times this Annual Review would cover the Financial Year, which in the case of Healthwatch Bedford Borough (HBB) is from the 1st March 2019 to the 29th February 2020.

However, with the onset of the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and the change both in the level and nature of it's activities, HBB has thought it appropriate to include commentaries etc. which extend beyond the recognised reporting period.

Message from our Chair

Welcome to this seventh Annual Review from Healthwatch Bedford Borough.



As I write this, I am conscious that for most people their life, be it at home, work or as a patient of the National Health Service, has changed beyond what any one of us could have imagined at the start of the year.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the repercussions from it, will be with us all for some considerable time to come.

Whilst this Review focuses on work that Healthwatch Bedford Borough (HBB) has been engaged with since last year, it is inescapable that the last few months have cast a long shadow over our lives in general. Like most organisations, our staff had to commence working from home from mid March 2020. I am really proud to say that even despite difficult circumstances, HBB has continued to play its role through a variety of means.



"I am really proud to say that even despite difficult circumstances, HBB has continued to play its role by a variety of means"

However, returning to Autumn 2019, HBB planned and executed the region's first large scale Health & Wellbeing Fair in partnership with ACCM (UK). This took place with funding from Big Lotto (Awards 4 All), Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), BLMK ICS, Bedford Borough Council Community Chest and East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST).

Professor Mayur Lakhani CBE, President of the Royal College of General Practitioners provided a keynote address to the delegate breakfast session. The main public event was formally opened by Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England. During the course of the day, just shy of 1,000 people visited the Fair. In our strategic planning process, HBB identified the need to improve knowledge around local service provision, not only from the statutory service providers, but the large number of community and voluntary organisations, who in their turn provide vital services.

Message from our Chair continued

It was therefore gratifying to receive the overwhelming amount of positive feedback, particularly about how having attended the Fair, people felt far greater informed about local services that are available in the Borough. In tandem, expressions of gratitude were also received from the vast array of exhibitors who had experienced a unique opportunity to provide information about the services that they offer. The consistently repeated comment was "*when is the next one to be held?*"

I must take this opportunity of thanking my fellow Directors for the way in which they support both me and the organisation. As volunteers they give a tremendous amount of their time and effort to ensure that HBB functions effectively and efficiently. The organisation was saddened to lose Richard Winter during the year, who with his very vast experience of NHS senior leadership is greatly missed.

It was pleasing to welcome John Wright, who has joined us as a Director. His experience working within Housing Services and also with Social Services will be a real asset to the organisation moving forward.

I would wish also to thank the staff of HBB, who have continued to provide an

excellent service, particularly during these challenging times.

If I may close, by returning to where I started this introduction, in these very uncertain times it is heartening to see how our local health and social care service commissioners have been able to support service providers in many positive ways.

It would be remiss of me not to mention at this point the incredible support network that form Bedford Borough and the innumerable voluntary and community organisations that operate locally. Also the wonderful diverse population Borough and the communities in which we serve.

With my warmest regards and hoping that you all stay safe and well.



Chair, Healthwatch Bedford Borough



**"Amazing event.
Excellent attendance"**

Foreword from Director of Public Health

This Annual Review summarises the work that Healthwatch Bedford Borough has done over the past year. It includes information about the very successful Health and Wellbeing Fair and their valuable contribution to the NHS Long Term Plan at a local level.

Healthwatch Bedford Borough has continued to work with a wide range of partners to help local people get the best out of their health and social care services. They are able to influence the short and long term planning and commissioning of these services and help people access, and make choices about their care through signposting and engagement activities.

Through its signposting service, Healthwatch Bedford Borough has continued to support local people to access services that they may not otherwise have been aware of, and help them to take control of their own health and wellbeing. The comprehensive and highly successful Health and Wellbeing Fair in September attracted a wide range of exhibitors providing hundreds of people with a wide range of advice and information on mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing.

Another of their key roles last year was to support public engagement on the development of the local NHS Long Term Plan. At a time when the NHS faces an increasing demand for its service, with more people having long-term conditions and illnesses linked to inequality and lifestyle factors, it is even more important that people have the opportunity to help by taking more control of their health and care.



"It is now more important than ever that the voices of residents are heard and acted upon"

Healthwatch Bedford Borough has been able to support local NHS partners to get a better understanding of what local people need, and how and where they would like it delivered.

It is now more important than ever that the voices of residents are heard and acted upon, particularly the more vulnerable members of our communities, and that they are empowered to better look after themselves. Even in the difficult times we currently find ourselves in responding to COVID-19, I am confident that as a health and wellbeing system, we can make a difference. Healthwatch Bedford Borough continues to be an important part of that system.

Muriel Scott
Director of Public Health
A shared service for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Councils

Message from Sir Robert Francis QC

Here to make care better

The Healthwatch network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan, shows the power of the network in giving seldom heard communities a chance to speak up.

The #WhatWouldYouDo Healthwatch campaign saw a national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented at local levels. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch, we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review – sparking a national review of this from NHS England.

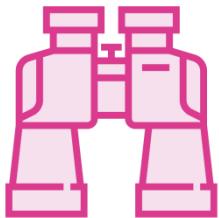
We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts of our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local branch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

 "I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level"



Sir Robert Francis QC,
Healthwatch England Chair

About us



Our vision is simple

Health and social care services that work for you. Helping you to stay well, get the best out of service provision and manage any long-term conditions you may have.



Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need, whether it is improving them today or helping to shape them for tomorrow.



Our approach

People's views come first – we support this, especially in the case of those who find it difficult for their voice to be heard.

We champion what matters to you and work with providers and commissioners to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making a difference.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Having seats on relevant Boards and Committees
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Liaising with community and faith leaders
- Regular liaison with NHS and social care leads
- Going out into communities and working with other local organisations



Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

Twitter: @HealthwatchBB

Facebook: @HealthwatchBedfordBorough

Instagram: @HealthwatchBedfordBorough

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way in which we have engaged and supported local people during 2019/20.



How we do what we do



5 volunteer Directors

helping to carry out our work.

We employ

5 members of staff

3 of whom are full time equivalent and 2 part time equivalent. Which is the same as the previous financial year.

We received

£94,760 in funding

from the local authority in 2019/20.

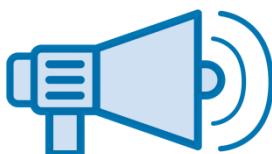
Providing support



Around 130 people

shared their health and social care stories with us this year.

Reaching out



Around 17,000 hits

On our website

Over 120,000 hits

On our **social media** and we have engaged with over **3000** people at **community and faith events** this year.

Making a difference to care



We published

2 Enter & View reports and 2 Quality Assurance reports

and from this, we made multiple recommendations for improvement to service delivery.

Facebook



Followers:
1105

Twitter



Followers:
1477

Instagram



Followers:
301

Bedford Health & Wellbeing Fair 2019



Wednesday 25th September 2019 played host to Bedford's first Health & Wellbeing Fair. This event, held over three floors at Bedford Corn Exchange, was hosted by Healthwatch Bedford Borough, in partnership with ACCM (UK). The event saw a delegate breakfast session, entitled 'Working in Synergy', for NHS and local authority professionals and statutory organisations with attendance from those at the top of their field across the East of England and South East. Dave Hodgson MBE, Mayor of Bedford Borough, welcomed chief guests, including Sir Robert Francis QC and Professor Mayur Lakhani CBE, President, Royal College of General Practitioners. The session looked at the benefits of multi-agency working in synergy to improve health outcomes for all communities. The main part of the day consisted of a FREE open event to the public. After Sir Robert's welcoming address, members of the public were able

to engage with local service providers across fifty eight exhibition stands in the main auditorium. As well as this, there were three clinic rooms in the lower ground floor, including 2D ear scanning, Audiology testing, sexual health service screening and full liver scanning facilities.

Seven wellbeing practitioners offered a scheduled programme of FREE 30 minute taster sessions in the Howard Room. This included postnatal yoga, breathing & meditation, womb yoga and heartfulness. The event was the first of its kind for the area and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

 "All the feedback that I have received is that stallholders and the public enjoyed the event and found it useful" – Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE

Comment from Sir Robert Francis QC



"I was blown away by the scale and ambition of what the Fair achieved"

It was a delight to attend the Bedford Health and Wellbeing Fair 2019. As chair of Healthwatch England I am naturally a keen supporter of the vital work local Healthwatch does up and down the country, but I was blown away by the scale and ambition of what the Fair achieved. Healthwatch, both locally and nationally, has the dual role of not only ensuring that people's experiences and views inform the decisions that are made about the provision of health and social care services, but also ensuring that people can get the advice they need about those services. The Fair managed to combine both roles in an event which was not only welcoming, inclusive and free-flowing, but also great fun! It gave community leaders, many of whom I was privileged to meet, an opportunity to discuss with each other and with Healthwatch issues of common interest. I was very encouraged to witness the constructive relationships between health and local authority leaders and their communities which are so vital to the development of integrated services in the future. But this was not just about people in suits. The enthusiasm and interest displayed by the many members of the public who came to tour the stands set up by all sorts of charities and services was great to see. Some will have come to seek specific advice – others more out of curiosity. All will have gone away enriched by the experience. This fair was a living demonstration of the power and effectiveness of teamwork as opposed to things done singly. I particularly welcomed the sight of young volunteers playing their part in welcoming and assisting visitors. Healthwatch and everything connected with our health and well-being could not happen at all without the commitment of volunteers, young and not so young, and we cannot thank them enough. I would like to pay tribute to the hard working leaders and staff of Healthwatch Bedford Borough for all they did to make the day such a great success.



Sir Robert Francis QC giving his presentation at the 'Working in Synergy' delegate session

Comments from Dignitaries



"I want to congratulate the organisers of the Bedford Health and Wellbeing Fair for putting on an outstanding event"

"I am delighted to have supported and opened the delegate session of the Bedford Health and Wellbeing Fair 2019. As a working GP and President of Britain's largest Medical Royal College, I know how important community health and wellbeing is. This is going to be even more important with the emphasis on social prescribing in the NHS Long Term Plan and the new GP contract and Primary Care Networks. I want to congratulate the organisers of the Bedford Health and Wellbeing Fair for putting on an outstanding event. It is really important to understand and engage with the wider, social determinants of health. It is clear to me that the fair led the way in raising awareness of the importance of 'people-power' in tackling health and wellbeing, as well as creating a wide range of effective partnerships with communities and local institutions. Thanks also to all the many volunteers who made this a great success. There was much on offer with practical relevant content."

Professor Mayur Lakhani CBE FRCP FRCGP

"I am delighted to have been at the Bedford Health and Wellbeing Fair 2019. I would like to thank Healthwatch Bedford Borough & ACCM (UK) for organising the event. Health and wellbeing is important for all the residents of Bedford Borough. My vision of health and wellbeing is very straightforward, and is based on the principle that everyone in the Borough has an equal right to good health. The event clearly had lots of people attending and engaging with a wide variety of public bodies and third sector organisations. All the feedback that I have received is that stallholders and the public enjoyed the event and found it useful. This type of event showing the options available to people is key if we are to help our residents achieve a healthy lifestyle."

Mayor Dave Hodgson MBE



"This type of event showing the options available to people is key"

Bedford Health & Wellbeing Fair 2019

List of Exhibitors:

- Access Bedford
- ACCM (UK)
- Active Travel (Bedford Borough Council)
- Age UK Bedfordshire
- Angelo's Catering Services
- Art of Living & Sri Tatty UK
- British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO)
- Barre Yoga
- Bedford Borough Council Sports Development Team
- Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG)
- Bedfordshire Council of Faiths
- Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum (BBPCF)
- Bedford Radio
- Bedford Open Door
- Bedford Samaritans
- Bedfordshire Doulas
- Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Bedfordshire Older Peoples Community Mental Health Teams
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)
- Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service (IAPT)
- Beds Prostate Cancer Support Group
- Benedickters Catering
- Big Lotto Awards 4 All
- BLMK ICS
- Bhagwan Valmik Sabha (BVS)
- CAMHS Bedfordshire
- Carers in Bedfordshire
- Circle Integrated Health
- (MSK)
- Dave Hodgson, Mayor – Bedford Borough Council
- Develop Bedford
- Diabetes Education Team - Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Dementia Intensive Support Service (DISS)
- DKMS Beds Hub
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST)
- ELFT – Recovery College, Diverse Cultures Community Support Team & People Participation
- ELFT Body Image Project (Eating Disorders)
- ELFT Crisis Services (Twinwoods)
- Ember Therapies
- Fitter Me
- Food First & the Hydration Project, Nutrition & Dietetics – Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Heartie Bites
- Home Births & Midwifery Led Birthing Unit, Maternity - Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- iCash Bedfordshire
- Institute for Sport and Physical Activity Research (ISPAR) - University of Bedfordshire)
- Jai Ma Yoga
- Janssen Pharmacy
- Karma Nurture
- Lauren Aimee Yoga & Dance
- Lindleys Pharmacy
- Macmillan Cancer Support, Primrose Unit - Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Mind BLMK
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Oral Health Improvements – Bedfordshire Community Health Services (BCHS)
- Organ Donation Teams
- Our Minds Matter
- ParkRun
- Parkinsons UK Bedford & District Branch
- Pathway to Recovery (P2R)
- Podiatry Services – Bedfordshire Community Health Services (BCHS)
- Public Health/Health Protection – Bedford Borough Council
- Rani's Kitchen (Indian Catering)
- Redstone Therapies
- Royal British Legion Bedfordshire
- SEND Local Offer - Bedford Borough Council
- Sight Concern Bedfordshire
- Specsavers Bedford
- SRCM Heartfulness
- Sukyo Mahikari & Crystal Healing
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- The Lifestyle Hub - Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Tibbs Dementia Foundation
- Tissue Viability - Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- 5k Your Way

Bedford Health & Wellbeing Fair 2019

Some of our key findings:

Nearly **1,000** people attended this event and **98.6%** of these indicated that they would recommend Bedford Health & Wellbeing Fair 2019 to family, friends and colleagues.

The scheduled wellbeing programme and unique range of exhibitors and specialist clinics, attracted people from a wide age range from **15-91**.

34.7% of attendees were from a BAME background. This reflects the diversity of our local population.

89.6% of attendees stated that they had gained information and knowledge about services relevant to their needs.

Having a central location in Bedford town centre, encouraged attendees to use a **range of travel** options.

99.2% of people wanted to see more educational events like this in the Borough.

86.9% of attendees now feel confident to be responsible for their own health, thus promoting self-care.

It was an opportunity for those delivering local services to **engage, learn and share** information.



"It was a privilege to be part of such a fantastic event"

Bedford Health & Wellbeing Fair 2019

The Fair managed to combine opportunities for community interaction, health education and offered a strong voice in local decision making. Thus allowing vital contributions to be made to the local health and wellbeing agenda. This helps to build control and resilience, buffer against disease and influence health related behaviours. By offering a wide range of information, both clinical and non-clinical, people reported to have felt empowered to take necessary steps in the management of their long-term conditions. The organisation of the Fair midweek and on a market day was a conscious decision made by the Steering Group, as many of the seldom heard communities are known to use the town centre.

The use of personal invitations to community and faith leaders ensured that people felt welcomed and wanted. This is reflected in the feedback in the multiple ways people reported to have learned about the event. By looking at the wider determinants of health and using a collaborative local model between the statutory, voluntary and community sector, this raises awareness to vulnerable groups, supports people to 'live better for longer' and goes some way to improving outcomes for all. Meeting all seven objectives and attendance (please see boxes below) by the target audience are clear evidence of the resounding success of Bedford's first Health and Wellbeing Fair. Feedback would indicate that to continue to empower residents of Bedford Borough, such events need to be a regular occurrence.

Aims + Objectives

- **To encourage and empower local communities in the area of health and wellbeing.**
- **To include and promote 'self-care' and health education to seldom heard communities in the local area.**
- **To promote health and wellbeing (physical, mental and spiritual) by providing opportunities for education and learning in a non-clinical, friendly environment.**
- **To develop partnerships between health, local authority, other statutory services and the voluntary/charity sector to foster strong links and promote synergy.**
- **To provide diagnostic checks and advice services with relevant professionals.**
- **To bridge the gap in terms of health and socio-economic deprivation.**
- **To better understand the needs of seldom heard communities**

Bedford Mental Health Fashion Show 2019

On 10th October 2019, Healthwatch Bedford Borough supported World Mental Health Day by attending a fashion show to promote the message of body positivity.

This event was held in Bedford's Harpur Shopping Centre and was aimed at those with mental health issues surrounding body image, such as eating disorders. The purpose was to empower people to accept themselves for who they are.

Healthwatch Bedford Borough were invited to participate in the event organised by Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College which was led by Hannah Brown (Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College Peer) who has herself suffered with an eating disorder.

The show featured models of different body shapes, sizes, backgrounds and ages who all wore clothes that had been 'upcycled' and branded with messages of positivity.

We supported this event by holding a stall with positive activities such as a '1 thing I love about myself' wall, where members of the public were encouraged to think of at least one aspect of themselves that they loved. We hope this helped people to think more positively and feel more confident in their own skin.

We also encouraged the public to put across their views on local Mental Health services and support in Bedford Borough, by asking them to fill in a short survey with the incentive of winning one of two raffle prizes. We hope that this feedback will prove invaluable towards the continued improvements being made in the area of Mental Health across Bedford Borough.

(Please see key findings from our survey on next page)



Bedford Mental Health Fashion Show 2019

Some of our key findings from feedback received at the event:

Majority of the public felt that there was **not enough mental health support in Bedford Borough.**

English was predominantly the most spoken language, however numerous other languages were selected such as **Punjabi, Yoruba, Bengali, Twi and Greek.**

Majority of respondents were in the **46-59 age group but we also had great feedback from the **15-19** age group.**

Several recommendations were made by the public around potential **Mental Health support changes in the Borough.**

There were many respondents from BAME groups such as members of the Caribbean, Bengali, African, Pakistani and Indian communities



#EveryDayHeroes #TeamBLMK Covid-19 Campaign

On the 16th April 2020, Healthwatch Bedford Borough joined a tailored social media campaign looking at local heroes from across the NHS, social care and statutory services. The purpose of this campaign was to showcase the sterling work of local individuals during these unprecedented times. Healthwatch Bedford Borough strategically planned and showcased many varying roles across these sectors. These heroes have continued to work on the frontline during Covid-19 and on behalf of the organisation we would like to thank them for their dedication.



Working with local communities

Bedford faith group delivers 100 daily meals to NHS staff –

Alex Pope, Writer for BBC News Online

A faith group has said it will deliver hundreds of meals to ambulance staff every day for as "long as it takes" during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha group in Bedford has been making 100 daily meals since 2 April.

A combination of vegetarian curries are being sent to staff working for the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) in Bedford and Kempston.

Group president Jaswinder Kumar said: "It's our duty to give something back."

Every day at its community centre in Guru Ravidass Lane, three volunteers make the food, which is then transported out.

Mr Kumar, who also works full-time as a postman, said: "The ambulance service are very busy. They never get a chance to order food, due to long shifts and are not eating properly.

"We are trying our best with what we can; it is our duty to be able to give something back.

"We are confident we can carry on, for as long as it takes. We are happy to do it."

Every Tuesday it donates 30 hot meals to staff at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital, as well as delivering help to vulnerable and self-isolating people in Bedford and

surrounding areas.

Emma Freda, from Healthwatch Bedford Borough, said it put the "amazing" group in touch with the EEAST as it was desperate to help.

"This is an excellent example of a wonderful collaboration from a local faith community offering emergency assistance to frontline staff during these unprecedented times," she said.

Marcus Bailey, chief operating officer for EEAST, said it was getting "wonderful support at this difficult time".

"We've seen many stories around the region of notes of appreciation and even small gifts being left on ambulance windscreens," he said.

Local and national businesses were "doing a great job" in helping its staff, he added.



BBC

NEWS

How we've made a difference



CASE STUDY 1: "I had more information at my hospital appointment, thanks to Healthwatch"

NHS and social care organisations are obliged to provide accessible information for certain patients and service users. This is called the NHS Accessible Information Standard (DCB1605) and applies to those living with mental health illness, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and carers.

"I felt unsure about my hospital appointment. I have general anxiety and sometimes it's really difficult to take in what I'm being told. I don't like the hospital atmosphere either. However friendly the staff are, I feel myself

tense up as soon as I walk into the hospital.

I talked to Healthwatch Bedford Borough and they explained that I can ask for a 'reasonable adjustment'. They got in touch with the hospital to start things off for me. At first we had talked about a longer appointment. Eventually it was agreed that a member of staff from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) would come with me so that they could help me remember what I had been told. It meant the appointment went much smoother."

 **"I have general anxiety and sometimes it's really difficult to take in what I'm being told"**





CASE STUDY 2: "I had a serious complaint and didn't know who to turn to"

When there is a serious complaint, service users often want to alert outside authorities and ask them to investigate. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) does not usually look at individual cases but does accept feedback from the public via its website. If there is a concern about an individual member of staff then the General Medical Council (GMC) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) also have powers to investigate.

"A mistake was made and although

the organisation accepted my complaint, I still felt that they were investigating themselves and that didn't feel right. I talked to Healthwatch Bedford Borough and they understood. I contacted the CQC, the commissioners and the GMC.

Healthwatch Bedford Borough also let me know it helps to be realistic – complaints take a long time. But with advocacy help, I'm hopeful that we will get answers."



"I talked to Healthwatch Bedford Borough and they understood"



CASE STUDY 3: "Healthwatch gave me details of the emergency dentist"

From the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, Healthwatch Bedford Borough has worked with local service providers to kept track of service changes. This was particularly pertinent for regular dentistry services which were mostly closed because of the very high risks involved in dental care. Healthwatch spoke to several people suffering with tooth pain who were asking about antibiotics and advice on pain-killers. As only severe cases were being dealt with,

we explained the process for referral to the local Community Dental Services (CDS). "I had mild tooth pain at the beginning of the outbreak but as time went on it became worse and worse. I am staying with family during the outbreak which means I couldn't even rely on my regular dentist. Healthwatch gave me the details of the emergency dentist in Bedford and let me know what to expect and what I could ask for. I felt better knowing that they were supporting me."



"I felt better knowing that they were supporting me"

Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

Website: www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

Telephone: 01234 718018

Email: enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk



Healthwatch NHS Long Term Plan Project 2019



Healthwatch NHS Long Term Plan Project 2019

Healthwatch Bedford Borough wish to thank all those who gave up their time during our NHS Long Term Plan project, either by filling out surveys online, on hard paper copies or those who attended our facilitated discussions. A grand total of 249 surveys were completed by Bedford Borough residents. Varying communities took part, including the seldom heard, local support groups and multiple patients and service users across varying medical conditions were represented.

HBB listened to people's personal journeys. These included examples from the Deaf community and some brilliant examples of outstanding local GP's and Practice Nurses who went the extra mile during mental health crisis and very quick cancer diagnosis turnaround times from Bedford Hospital.

Some key themes came through in relation to NHS training & development gaps, poor communication and issues with unsuitable terminology being used locally with NHS providers, particularly with mental health patients and service users.

We looked in depth Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services, suicide prevention, health education gaps, youth mental health needs, the needs of carers of children with complex

disabilities and transitioning young people, LGBTQ+ voice, perinatal & maternity provision, local Doula's experiences, elders social isolation and the complexities around this, veteran's needs, neuro patient needs, faith and BAME community needs, to name but a few.

During the facilitated discussions, HBB drilled down and looked at workforce including WRES gaps around poor BAME representation in some areas, staff attitudes, lack of current Making Every Contact Count (MECC) provision for primary care, digital innovation including trusted health Apps, poor uptake of access to summary care records, local NHS funding issues, Patient Participation Group (PPG) involvement, prescribing challenges and issues with the distinct lack of 'prevention' models instead of just reactive, curative measures.

We created surveys and facilitated discussions alongside other local Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Healthwatch colleagues relating to the following 3 themes:

- **General Health**
- **Cancer Care**
- **Mental Health**

Ciaran's story had a major impact on this project. We thank him for sharing his story...

Ciaran's i-story: Making care better for people with sensory impairment

"Mainly I want professionals to see me as a patient first and not just see my disability"

Ciaran told Healthwatch Bedford Borough that "living as a patient with profound Deafness can be a challenge for me at times. Having depression and social anxiety has meant frequent visits to local health services for me. I would like to see more training for staff in providing suitable environments for people with hearing impairment and better understanding of the needs of the Deaf population of Bedford Borough.

I want to be treated with respect and dignity, and listened to by those who are providing NHS services. This includes receptionists at the surgery and hospital appointments. Many of them are not Deaf aware at all and either mumble, talk with their hands over their mouths or don't face me when they are speaking. They try to make me call for an appointment. Obviously I am unable to do this!

I need them to understand that I am legally entitled to free text service or email communication and when I come for an appointment with the doctor, a qualified BSL Interpreter should be there waiting for me if it is on my records and they know I am unable to hear. This is law.



Ciaran is profoundly Deaf. He shares his views about what would make NHS services better for people with hearing impairment.

I have had some wonderful care from dedicated caring staff, but there have been gaps in provision. Services such as mental health services are stretched very thinly. I would like to see more training for staff in recognising and working with people with profound hearing loss and providing suitable adjustments, such as hearing loops, paging systems and Level 1 BSL training".

Finding information and support used to be a worrying and stressful process for Ciaran, before he met Healthwatch Bedford Borough through Hear Me Out and Access Bedford and used HBB's WhatsApp messaging service to gain access to support and guidance.

He advised that "for vulnerable communities like mine, finding help can be even more difficult. It's vital that Deaf people shouldn't have to struggle to get the help they desperately need and deserve.

CIARAN'S i-story continued:

Why do we have to fight to get the same treatment as a hearing neighbour?"

He goes on to say "Bedford is an urban town with a large mix of different communities, so it is essential that provision is spread equally and is inclusive for all of us".

Service delivery

With limited understanding of what would be deemed the most appropriate level of care, the Deaf population struggle to access equitable service provision. For many in this seldom heard community, particularly the older generation, education often meant being placed at the back of a classroom in a mainstream setting. Many years ago, the complexities of sensory impairment were not fully understood.

Ciaran advised "in my case, I am the only one in my family that is profoundly Deaf. I have an older brother, who is 3 years older than me. He is hearing. My Mum and Dad are both hearing too, however one of my parents have missing genes. This has led to me being born profoundly Deaf and also being diagnosed with borderline Asperger's during my nursery school years in Luton. My family are extremely supportive in terms of my health, however as I am now a young adult, I would like to be able to take responsibility for my own health and wellbeing and be able to access services that hearing friends can.

Four years ago I was diagnosed with mild depression and social anxiety. This has made me feel lonely and isolated. I have lost my confidence in going out with friends and other people. I have been referred to ELFT for support, but I am still waiting for counselling 11 months later. I am anxious about going when my appointment finally comes through, as I know that I will have to have counselling with another person in the room, a BSL Interpreter. In other parts of the country, I have been made aware that SignHealth provide BSL Healthy Minds. This means that the Therapist's are BSL trained themselves and are paid for by the local CCG.

I think the NHS locally need to understand the impact that being made to have counselling with another stranger in the room has on my community. For me, I already have anxiety. This thought has doubled my anxiety levels. Let me ask the commissioner, would you want to have counselling with someone else sat in the room listening to your personal thoughts? No, didn't think so!"

*Ciaran's patient i-story was filmed by Mandrill Media Ltd, in conjunction with the BLMK ICS and Healthwatch Bedford Borough and release has now been put back to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This will form one of several short films for the NHS Long Term Plan for BLMK.



"Mainly I want professionals to see me as a patient first and not just see my disability"

Volunteers



Our volunteer Directors

Our Board are all volunteers, who work with our staff to ensure that we are delivering services effectively and influencing service development and improvement. Meet the Board and hear what they get up to...



Anne Bustin

Anne is our Chair of Directors and has a keen interest in social care, encouraging all services to put the resident or patient at the centre of what they are doing, whilst breaking down barriers between organisations.



Linda Hiscott

Linda leads on the work we do looking at Adult health and social care facilities, which includes the hospital. Mainly made up of the Enter & View work, from 2019 we also started to do some work with BCHS and CCS* with the BCCG* Quality Team, undertaking a planned programme of visits to community services, inpatient wards and outpatient clinics.



Ashok Khandelwal

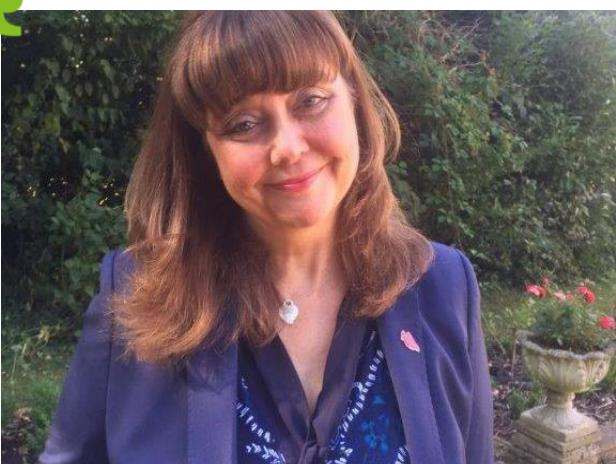
Ashok has a seat at the Bedford Health and Wellbeing board where we are able to influence the plan for health and social care and champion the voice of vulnerable and seldom heard communities.

Our volunteer Directors



John Wright

John focuses on the scrutiny of current services in Bedford Borough as well as working regionally with the other Healthwatch's and the new Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group.



Tracy Cowan

Tracy is our non-Executive Director. She leads on interaction with the third sector via our Healthwatch Reference Group. We are currently reviewing this to encourage a wider group of people and organisations to be involved.

*BCHS – Bedfordshire Community Health Services
CCS – Cambridgeshire Community Services
BCCG – Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

“A strong voice for local people”

Enter & View visits

2019/20

The Enter & View visits begin with an introductory discussion with senior staff members about the service provision, the care of residents, patients and users of their service. This allows an opportunity for HBB to ask relevant questions ahead of the visit and raise any issues which HBB have previously been made aware of by members of the public.

These visits are an opportunity for HBB to review the provision of care holistically, including health, choice, meals, visitors, leisure and dignity. HBB peruse the setting and speak to residents, patients and users of the service and their families at random.

Conversations also cover the aesthetic of the setting, details of their service provision and any recommendations and suggestions about the service. Questionnaires are used as a means of collecting data. These include both open-ended and closed questions. Both provide quality comparable data which can be easily analysed. Prior to undertaking this questionnaire, we ask the interviewee for consent.

Hepworth House

23rd January 2020

Room: Accommodates 18 residents

Authorised Representatives from HBB:

Faiza Al-Abri & Emma Freda

Description of care /service provided:

Residential care home providing accommodation for older people, who may be living with Dementia, a sensory impairment or a physical disability, who require support with personal care. During the visit there was one short stay respite care resident.



Summary

Overall HBB found Hepworth House to provide a caring environment for residents.

Whilst some rooms at the time of visit had been recently refurbished offering a new and modern touch, HBB suggested other rooms needed to be given equal attention. Despite some improvements, there was still a vast amount of building work needing to be undertaken on various features within this home. There also needs to be further work on health provision, the introduction of person-centered care and further staff training and development.

HBB suggested staff job descriptions be reviewed where responsibilities are made clear and concise. Health provision needs close attention in particular, access to primary care, secondary care, and dental and optical provision. Care plans required immediate review and more details need to be included in order for residents to receive the best person-centred care. Currently the home appears to be running a one size fits all approach which limits residents choice and reduces satisfaction.

HBB spoke to residents individually and raised any arising issues with the Home Manager during the visit itself.

It was exciting to notice the amount of digital transformation being introduced within the home, such as 'Alexa', Smart TVs and iPads. Technology has proven to be a great way of providing and storing data with its many tools to guide care delivery.

However, in regards to the residents, it is important to keep in mind what they are familiar and comfortable with. As well as infusing the home with a modern aspect, keeping with current times, HBB advised the importance of also continuing with and increasing activities residents are familiar with.

HBB were impressed with the dementia friendly features of the home such as the bus stop wall mural that has been added upstairs.

It was very clear to see the initial impact the Home Manager has had on the home in the short period she has been employed. Residents highly compliment her efforts. Her plans for the future of the home appear promising and full of hope.

Milton Ernest Hall Care Home

17th May 2020

Rooms: Accommodates 29 Resident
Authorised Representatives from HBB:

Faiza Al-Abri & Linda Hiscott

Description of care / service provided:

Older people, physical disability, sensory impairment, cancer care, palliative care, Epilepsy, auditory impairment, Motor Neurone Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinsons Disease, Stroke, visual impairment, speech impairment, convalescence and respite Care.

Summary

Milton Ernest Hall Care Home appears to be well run, with an exceptional team of staff. Residents and families were asked what they would change about the home, almost everyone said they wouldn't change anything. The home appears safe and calm "very homely" expressed one resident. Residents seem happy at the home, they expressed that they feel respected and are given a choice in the service they receive. Such as, choice of activities, meal options and whether or not to have snacks in-between meals. They all voiced that they feel comfortable to ask for a sandwich or snack at any time if they still felt hungry after main meals. HBB noticed the menus were not picture based and queried this with management. They explained that their residents have the appropriate capacity for picture-less menus.

Families of the service users also said they felt comfortable at the home and were welcomed every time they visited. This was demonstrated by them being offered meals or drinks when they visited during meal times.



They feel "the home does their best to keep them updated regularly" as quoted by a visiting family member. There are no visiting restriction at this setting.

When seeking privacy with their visitors, residents expressed they feel comfortable to sit anywhere in the home including the communal area, dining area, library and conservatory even in the garden with or without visitors.

It was pleasing to see the home use a card system called 'Pocket Pals' for staff to carry around. The card includes essential information to help staff remember key material such as the ethos of the home, code of conduct, infection control and care information in general. HBB were very impressed with this innovative system. A special thanks and personal compliments go to all the staff at Milton Ernest Hall Care Home for the excellent service they provide to residents and their adherence to ensuring their needs are at the centre.

This is an example of some of the recommendations made to both homes during the visits.

- To introduce some new homely seating and resources for family and friendly activities when accessing certain lounge areas during visits.
- That homes share their card system 'Pocket Pals' with other homes as it would be very useful.
- For homes to consider or continue to find ways to further capture residents and their families' views and involvement.
- Gardens need to offer a dementia-friendly safe space for residents that are easy to get around for those with limited mobility and is closed off so residents feel safe.
- The use of a notice board in the communal area to create positive communication opportunities between employees, residents and families/visitors.
- The maintenance of appliances need to be looked at closely such as laundry appliances to ensure they are functioning well.
- More attention is needed on the dietary cultural needs of residents.
- HBB suggest a GDPR compliant Data protection sign in book, as a means of concealing visitor's sensitive data.
- A wider variety of activities should be offered, taking into consideration music, quizzes, arts & crafts and gardening.
- Uniform policy needs to be revised and adhered to consistently, as it makes the home look unorganised with no clear authority.
- Ensure call bells are placed in residents reach.
- To de-clutter the upstairs room and ensure it is then put to good use, for either residents or staff. Potentially even as a hair salon for residents.
- A registered interpreting service should be sought for residents who cannot speak English or communicate with staff.
- Resident's religious beliefs need to be taken into consideration and options to continue practicing their chosen faith needs to be offered.



Quality Assurance Visits

Introduction

In May 2019, Healthwatch Bedford Borough in partnership with Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) started to work closely with Bedfordshire Community Health Services (BCHS) and Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) to draft a programme of Quality Assurance visits for 2019/20.

During the following months, visits were planned across multiple teams for 2020. However, due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the vast majority of these planned visits have had to be postponed and moved back to 2021/22.

The visits that have been undertaken and reported on thus far are as follows:

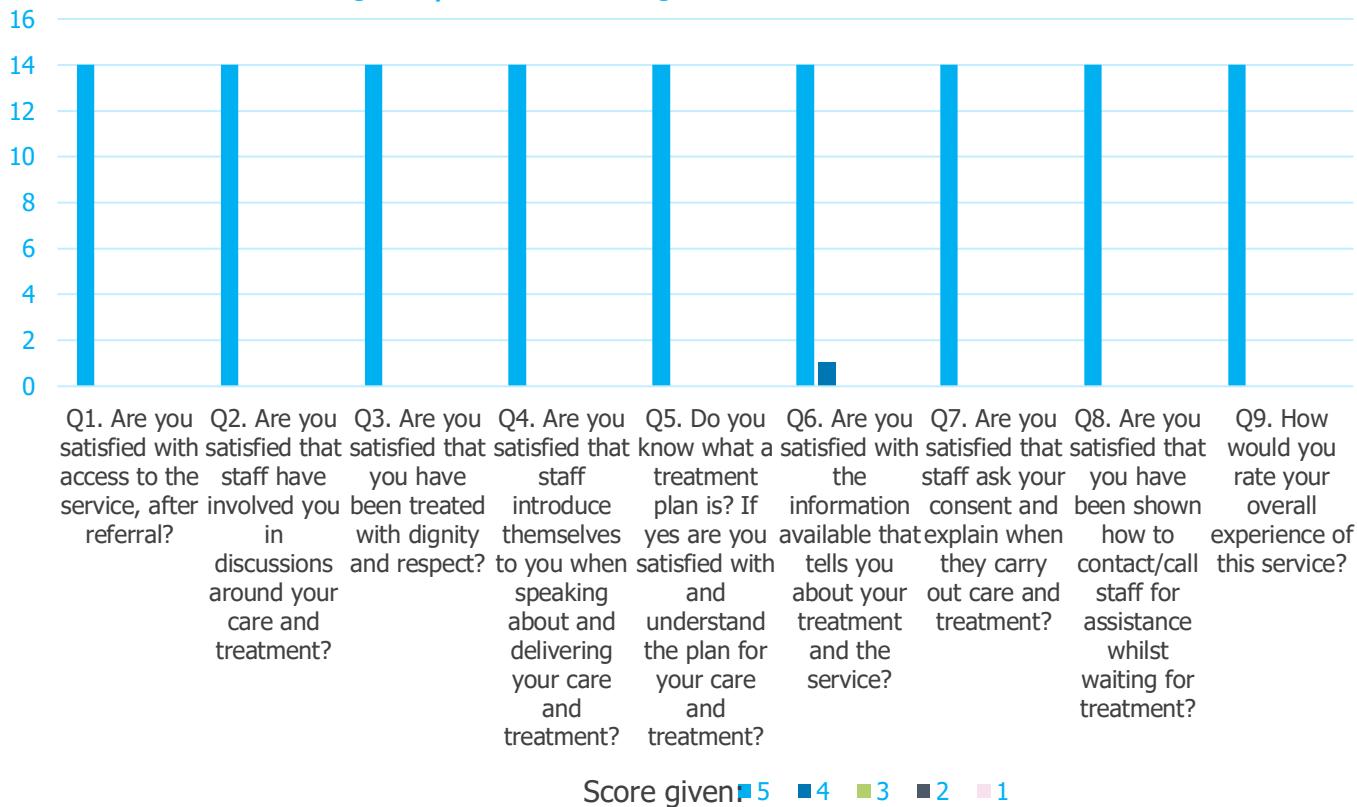
Warfarin Clinic (Holy Cross Church) 13th January 2020

Summary

During the visit, 19 patients were present at the service. 13 patients provided feedback to Healthwatch Bedford Borough. The patients we spoke to on the day were all very satisfied with the service they are receiving and were clear on their treatment. Patients spoke very highly of the staff, saying that they are polite, respectful and that they felt cared for. All patients indicated that this was an exemplary service.



Quality Assurance Questionnaire Feedback



Score given ■ 5 ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1

Case study:

One patient described her successful journey with this clinic. The patient was a long-standing Warfarin user and had used previous provision, which she wasn't entirely satisfied with. Particular mention was given to the expert knowledge of clinical staff, including an example of being taken unwell when on holiday and finding local support unable to completely meet her clinical needs. This culminated in contact with this clinic, who arranged an immediate response and titration advice from Bedford. Patient was able to successfully continue her trip.

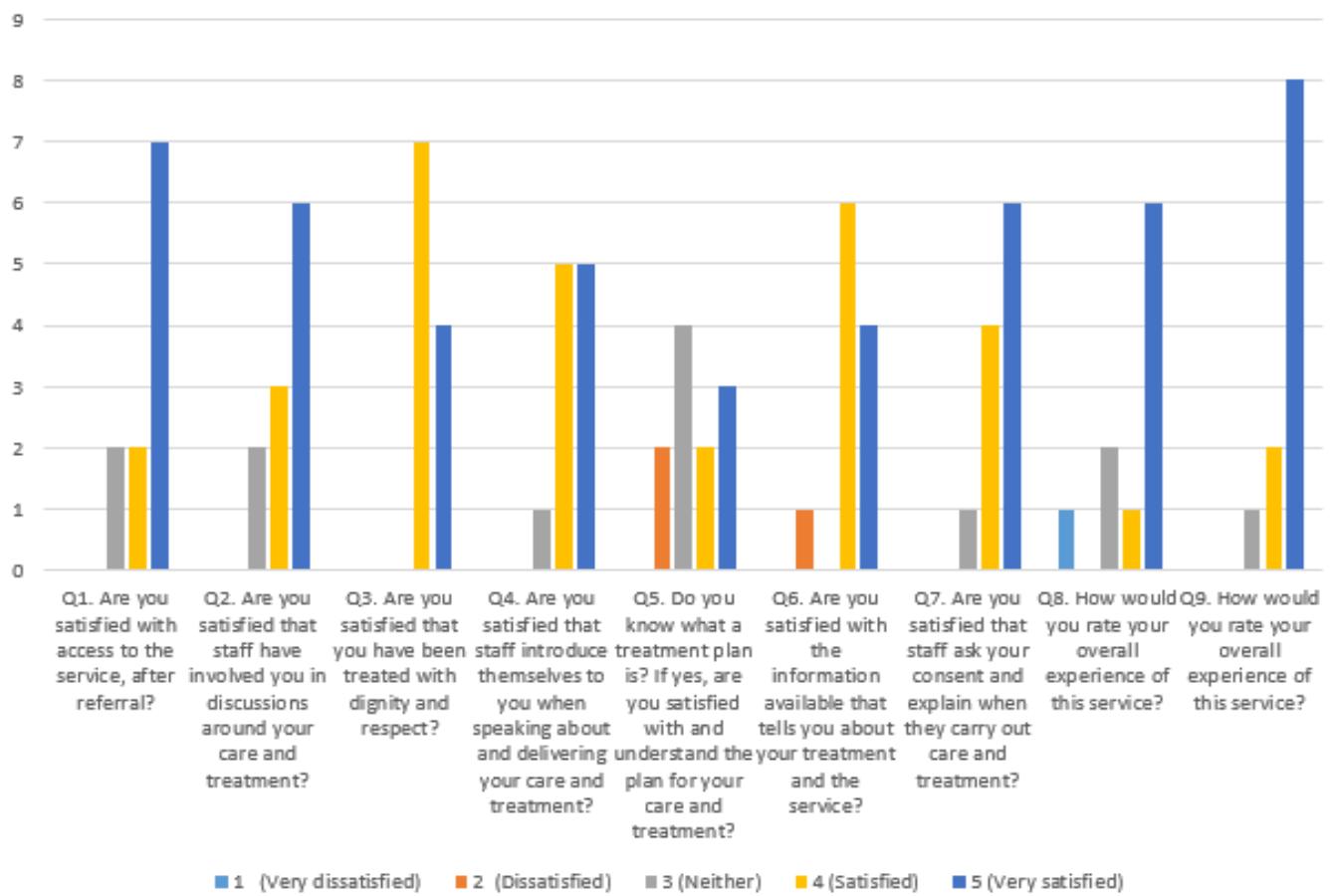
Archer Unit

30th January 2020

Summary

During the visit 11 patients provided feedback. This report gives the outcome of only the Bedford Borough Patients. Patients generally appeared happy at Archer Unit. Staff were very engaged with patients and effective communication skills were apparent. It was a pleasant visit.

Quality Assurance Questionnaire Feedback



Case study

One patient who has undoubtedly been through a lot, described his referral to Archer Unit as "excellent". In total he has been in hospital for 9 months, in a coma and ICU for months and only recently transferred from a London hospital. He described the staff at Archer Unit as "very friendly and kind". He is happy with the food and commends the physiotherapist. After being bed bound for 9 months, he finally walked for the first time a few days before we spoke, with the help of staff at Archer Unit.

Finances



To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2019-20 we spent £106,332. We also received £15,256 of additional income.

- | Income | Expenditure |
|---|-------------------------|
| + Funding received from the local authority | + Our operational costs |
| + Additional income from other sources | + Our staffing costs |
| | + Our office costs |

Income	£
Funding received from the local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	94,760
Other income	15,256
Total Income	110,016

Expenditure	£
Operational costs	13,373
Staffing costs	87,281
Office costs	5,678
Total expenditure	106,332
Balance brought forward	3,684

Our plans for next year



Our priorities

Last year many people told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services. These are our top priorities for the year ahead based on what you told us.



1.) Covid-19 lessons learned



2.) More focus on our ageing population and 'living well'



3.) Mental health access for seldom heard communities (e.g. Deaf, homeless and refugees)



4.) Improving further local BAME work in healthy living and access to health and social care services



5.) Regular patient i-stories

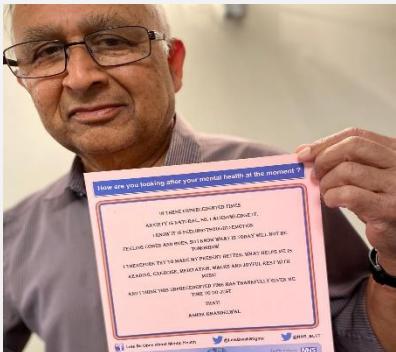


6.) Recruitment drive for Volunteers

Gallery pages



Gallery pages



With grateful thanks..

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put the public at the heart of health & social care services, including:

- Access Bedford
- ACCM (UK)
- Age UK Bedfordshire
- British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO)
- Bedford Borough Council
- Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum (BBPCF)
- Bedford Council of Faiths (BCoF)
- Bedford Faith Communities
- Bedford Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Bedford Hospital Radio
- Bedford Indian Community (BIC)
- Bedford Locality (BCCG)
- Bedford Maternity Voices Partnership
- Bedford Open Door
- Bedford Radio
- Bedford Samaritans
- Bedfordshire Community Health Services (BCHS)
- Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG)
- Bedfordshire Doulas
- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Bedfordshire Libraries
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)
- Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service IAPT
- Beds Prostate Cancer Support Group
- Big Lotto (Awards 4 All)
- BLMK ICS Partners
- CAMHS Bedfordshire
- Carers in Bedfordshire
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Circle Integrated Care (MSK)
- County & Parish Councillors
- CVS Bedfordshire
- Dave Hodgson MBE. Mayor Bedford Borough Council
- East London Foundation Trust (ELFT)
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST)
- ELFT Recovery COLLEGE, Diverse Cultures Community Support Team and People Participation
- Faith communities of Bedford Borough
- Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
- Healthwatch England
- Healthwatch Luton
- Healthwatch Milton Keynes
- Hear Me Out
- Icash Bedfordshire
- In2Beats Community Radio Station
- Institute for Sport and Physical Activity Research (ISPAR) University of Bedfordshire
- King's Arms Project
- Local Primary Care Practices
- Local Pharmacies
- Local Pharmaceutical Committee
- Mature Citizens Action Group
- MIND BLMK
- Mohammad Yasin, MP
- Multiple Sclerosis Society Bedford Branch
- Neuro Network
- Older People's Partnership Board
- Our Minds Matter
- Parkinsons UK Bedford and District Branch
- Polish British Integration Centre (PBIC)
- PLCA (Polish Language and Cultural Association)
- POhWER (Advocacy Agency)
- Project 229, Kempston
- Public Health England
- Public Health, Bedford Borough Council
- Royal British Legion Bedfordshire
- Sight Concern Bedfordshire
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- Tibbs Dementia Foundation

Contact us



21-23 Gadsby Street, Bedford, MK40 3HP



01234 718018



enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk



@HealthwatchBedfordBorough



@HealthwatchBB



@Healthwatchbedfordborough



www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

Address and contact details of the organisation holding the local Healthwatch contract as of 31/03/2020.

01234 718018
enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

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Healthwatch Bedford Borough
21-23 Gadsby Street
Bedford
MK40 3HP

www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

t: 01234 718018

e: enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

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