

Healthwatch Bedford Borough Work Programme 2023/24

April 2023 – March 2024

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STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF A LOCAL HEALTHWATCH

1. To obtain the views of local residents on health and social care services, to help shape the delivery and improve the quality of the design and commissioning of services.
2. To make recommendations to service providers and commissioners in developing, designing, shaping, and improving the quality-of-service delivery.
3. To support the involvement of local residents in the designing and commissioning of local services.
4. Provide information and advice to inform local residents on choices available to them.
5. To escalate findings to local commissioners and providers and nationally to Healthwatch England along with recommendations for service change.

Introduction

About us

Local Healthwatch organisations were established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to be a champion for people using health and social care services.

Healthwatch Bedford Borough is delivered by Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (known as ECS) - a Community Interest Company with a focus on delivering local Healthwatch, Social Research and Advocacy services. See here for further details:

www.weareecs.co.uk

Healthwatch Bedford Borough will champion the interests of people who use health and social care services and ensure that they have an opportunity to speak out about their concerns and health and social care priorities.

We will ensure that the views of the public and people are considered by those who commission and provide services.

Our responsibilities

By law, all local Healthwatch are required to:

- Provide information and signposting about health and social care services.
- Monitor concerns and complaints.
- Enable people to feed back about their experiences of health and social care services.
- Collate information and compile reports about people's experiences and views.

Local Healthwatch have the benefit of a national umbrella organisation, Healthwatch England, from whom we receive development and support. Healthwatch England collects intelligence from the Healthwatch network, identifying national themes and producing reports on common areas of concern. They can raise issues at a national level. See here for details: www.healthwatch.co.uk

We will meet our responsibilities by:

Listening to people from all communities in Bedford Borough; helping to involve people in decisions about their care and how it is delivered, giving people information to make choices about their health and care and working in partnership to make change happen.

As Healthwatch Bedford Borough, we will give critical challenge to highlight where improvements can be made, be the voice of the public, show the impact our work can make and work hard to listen to people throughout the Borough.

Strategic Aims

This year, our strategic focus is to:

- To raise the visibility of Healthwatch Bedford Borough to make people aware of our role, and remit and to ensure people know how to feedback on local NHS health and social care services.
- Support more people to have their say and provide clear information and advice to help them take control of their health and care.
- Provide an effective, high-quality local service as Healthwatch Bedford Borough, building local partnerships and networks to achieve change together.
- Work together with professionals, providing useful insight to improve the planning, delivery and support of health and social care throughout Bedford Borough.
- To increase public awareness (and choice) of local services for residents through an enhanced Healthwatch information and signposting service.

Priority areas from April 2023 to March 2024

In February and March 2023, Healthwatch Bedford Borough completed a priorities survey, talking to people about what they wanted us to focus our work on for the next 12 months. **We received 135 responses** to our survey (you can read the full priority survey report here) and this helped us to determine our local work priorities for the year ahead.

GP Access: (Quarters 1-4) This will be a year long project, focusing on all aspects of GP access across all four Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in Bedford Borough. In Q1, a survey is on the website, asking for feedback on making appointments and accessibility:

<https://www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk/news/2023-05-03/have-your-say-accessing-your-gp-practice-bedford-borough>

Different topics will be covered throughout the remainder of the year.

Dentistry: (Quarters 1-2)

In this project, we will seek to understand:

- The current information available online about NHS dentist for residents of Bedford Borough.
- The availability of dentists who are taking on new NHS patients in Bedford Borough and to identify gaps in provision.
- Whether practice website information is up to date regarding taking on new NHS fee paying or fee exempt patients.
- The experiences of the public in Bedford Borough in accessing NHS dentistry, and their experiences of receiving dental care.
- Public awareness and understanding of the NHS dental costs system and whether they were being provided with transparent information about the costs of treatment.

This project follows up our observational review of dentist practices in Bedford Borough in January 2022. A copy of the report can be read [here](#).

Young Peoples Mental Health: (Quarters 2-4)

Throughout the year, we will following on from our success with the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Youth Ambassador programme and will be developing our Youth Healthwatch volunteers, creating an improved social media platform, and following as well as co-producing the project plan with young people. This will ensure we focus our efforts on what matters most to young people in the borough.

Adult Social Care: (Quarters 2-3)

We will be conducting a range of Enter and View visits as part of this project, as well as delivering a focused project which will be scoped during Q2.

Preconception: (Quarters 1-4)

This is a year long project with a focus on promoting awareness of preconception, the support and advice available in Bedford Borough and working alongside BLMK ICB colleagues, Diabetes UK, and Tommy’s Charity to promote access to preconception toolkits.

Full details of these projects will be on our website [here](#) once project scoping and commencement takes place.

Measuring Impact

Through a detailed activity plan, we have set clear aims and objectives as our delivery targets to achieve throughout the year to ensure we maximise the impact we have, in addition to our priority project work.

Activity		Aims and objectives
Enter and View Programme	<p>The annual programme is determined by intelligence received, follow-up actions from previous Enter and View visits and our standard programme of work.</p> <p>The focus on the Enter and View Programme for 2023/24 will be care homes and acute NHS Trusts.</p>	<p>Aim: To carry out twelve Enter and View visits from April 2023 to March 2024.</p> <p>We will aim to analyse findings and report within 10 days to the provider and publish our report and recommendations on the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website 20 days after the visit has taken place.</p>
Public Feedback	<p>We will continue to encourage the public to feedback their experiences of using local</p>	<p>Aim: To collect the experiences of 1,000 people between April</p>

	<p>health and social care services. This feedback will form part of our regular reports to the Healthwatch Advisory Board (HAB) and be used to identify any themes and trends in local services.</p> <p>This feedback will also form part of reports sent to service providers, commissioners, and stakeholders.</p>	<p>2023 and March 2024 using multiple platforms, including Snap Surveys, Virtual Voices, the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website feedback portal, hardcopy paper surveys, interviewing and outreach activities and through working with third-party organisations.</p>
Reporting	<p>Healthwatch Bedford Borough will conduct independent reviews on various health and social care services. Reports will be published based on the intelligence we receive from members of the public and sent to the relevant Boards, commissioners, and contract monitoring officers.</p>	<p>Aim: To publish intelligence/insight reports on a quarterly basis.</p>
Promotion	<p>We will ensure our services are widely available and promoted in a range of formats.</p> <p>Our website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms will provide live updates on engagement topics, service delivery changes and enable networking with other organisations.</p>	<p>Aim: To see an increase in engagement numbers through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter followers.</p> <p>To ensure that the website is updated regularly with relevant topics and issues.</p> <p>To create a Tiktok account to meet the needs of the younger population. This will be co-produced with young people.</p>
Strategic Influencing	<p>Healthwatch Bedford Borough is represented on a wide range of Strategic Boards that oversee health and social care including Bedford Borough Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Our remit</p>	<p>Aim: To ensure Healthwatch Bedford Borough remains a strong public voice in strategic decision making.</p>

	is to work with these partnerships to ensure the voice of the public, patients, service users and carers are heard, and to provide advice, guidance, and assurance on how to achieve this.	
Healthwatch Advisory Board (HAB)	Develop a well-balanced HAB with a complimentary skill set and culture that allows collaborative working to enable effective decision making, and a platform in which the HAB will formally agree and implement a plan of work.	<p>Aim: To grow the number of HAB members by at least three and appoint a new Board Chair.</p> <p>To ensure the HAB receives necessary training and support to fulfil its role during the year.</p>
Volunteers	Volunteers play an essential role in the delivery of Healthwatch Bedford Borough. They add value and support us to achieve our mission and strategic objectives. By having an effective volunteer programme, Healthwatch Bedford Borough will provide opportunities for social inclusion, skills and confidence development and support routes into employment.	<p>Aim: To develop a wider range of opportunities for people to volunteer with Healthwatch Bedford Borough, including work experience placements for students and young volunteers.</p>
Additional funded projects	Healthwatch Bedford Borough will look at opportunities to take on additional funded projects or pieces of work that are aligned with our mission and values.	<p>Aim: To generate additional income of 10% of the contract value to help sustain the current contract delivery and enhance the delivery offer.</p>
Community Engagement	Face-to-face: Our staff and volunteers will visit a range of community groups and outreach events to seek patient and public opinions and views. We will ensure our engagement activities focus on Bedford Borough's diverse	<p>Aim: Face-to-face: To undertake at least 120 outreach activities from April 2023 to March 2024.</p> <p>Virtual engagement activities:</p> <p>To undertake a series of virtual focus groups and</p>

	<p>communities and continue to earn their respect.</p> <p>We will also continue to seek the views of people, who in the past, have been in the minority in intelligence gathering, e.g., people with learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), people living with mental illness and people with sensory impairment.</p> <p>Virtual engagement activities:</p> <p>We will provide platforms for focus group activity using mediums of Microsoft Teams and Zoom. This is to ensure we reach a larger target audience, including those who are in employment, carers and those living with long-term conditions.</p>	<p>discussions online from April 2023 to March 2024.</p>
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Linking Healthwatch Bedford Borough to BLMK priorities

We will work to contribute to the BLMK shared priorities through our work as Healthwatch Bedford Borough.

				
SOME OF OUR SHARED PRIORITIES IN BLMK	Mental health	Mental health and emotional wellbeing	Mental health and wellbeing	Mental health and emotional wellbeing
	Healthy behaviours throughout life	Healthy behaviours throughout life	Healthy behaviours throughout life	Healthy behaviours throughout life
	Long term conditions prevention, detection, management	Long term conditions prevention, detection, management	Long term conditions prevention, detection, management	Long term conditions prevention, detection, management
	Independence and resilience for older people	Supporting older people to remain independent	Technology-enabled care to promote independence and self-management in older people	Independence for older people, prevention of frailty
	Social isolation	Loneliness and isolation	Social isolation	Social isolation and connectedness
	Homelessness	Housing and homelessness	Housing	Quality affordable housing
	Employment opportunities for people with autism	Health-related worklessness and workplace wellbeing	Workplace wellbeing	Access to employment
	Green spaces and public transport www.luton.gov.uk	Green and open spaces and active travel	Health and wellbeing is planned into new developments	Active travel and the natural environment Luton

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No.	BLMK Theme	Healthwatch Involvement
1	Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLMK ICS Mental Health Strategy • ELFT Community Mental Health Transformation Programme • Support staff and volunteer health and wellbeing via access to Health Assured provision • Hosting and attending listening and engagement events
2	Healthy Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote local and national initiatives around healthy lifestyles • Support the work of colleagues across Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Public Health and the Health Protection teams • Support outreach activity in relation to sport and physical exercise,

		<p>continuing to promote courses and sessions provided by BeActive and Bedford Borough Sports Development Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support academic researchers from the University of Bedfordshire's Institute for Sport and Physical Activity Research (ISPAR) unit
3	Long-term conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer programme support on relevant Boards • Work with ICS partners from relevant divisions e.g., Diabetes Education Team, community nursing teams and commissioners procuring services • Support outreach activity in relation to management of long-term conditions • Continue to support local pharmacy in the promotion of healthy living pharmacy services and medicines management
4	Older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the needs of the digitally excluded when planning activities • Promote Healthwatch Bedford Borough materials in a range of settings where elderly residents frequent e.g., libraries, supermarkets, community groups and faith settings
5	Social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the needs of those with poor access to transportation, including public transport in rural parishes • Consider the needs of those living with mental illness when planning activities or offering day-to-day support via our signposting service
6	Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote local housing organisations • Signpost residents to support services in relation to homelessness, debt, and finance
7	Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer volunteering opportunities within the organisation



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Jobs Hub and local third-sector organisations • Promote our work experience offer through local schools, sixth forms, colleges, and the University of Bedfordshire
8	Environment and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local authority active travel strategy, in particular, supporting Active Travel England's task of ensuring half of trips in England's towns and cities are walked, wheeled, or cycled by 2030 • Support the work of Sustrans, Bike ability, Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire • Support Bedford Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy 2020-2030



healthwatch

Bedford Borough

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