



Healthwatch Bolton Annual Report 2020-2021

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Message from our Chair

Healthwatch Bolton and the Covid 19 pandemic

Well what a year we've had! No one could have predicted we would be in the grip of a global pandemic in 2020. I am shocked and saddened by the impact this pandemic has had on not only the people of Bolton, but around the world, it is something I have never witnessed before. My thoughts are with those families everywhere who have lost a loved one.

I am immensely proud how we stepped up to help our colleagues in Bolton Public Health, Local Authority and Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group. We wanted to find out from our community how the pandemic was affecting their lives and the impact it was having. We did surveys and looked at feedback using social media which gave a real insight into the struggles people were having, but also the creativity and the community spirit that shone through. People started to come together like never before in helping one another, I was truly humbled by this.



The spirit of the community of Bolton was truly remarkable

Reconnecting with our Community



I'd like to thank our wonderful staff, trustees and volunteers for all their hard work this past year. They have worked in very difficult circumstances. Having to change the way they worked has been a learning curve but has also allowed them to explore new ways of working. We developed a partnership with The Flowhesion Foundation who helped us to get the voices that we seldom hear into our work. We looked at the impact of bereavement on those who have been adversely affected by this pandemic. We heard from Pakistani, Somali, Indian, Bangladeshi and Arab and Asian communities. You can read more about this piece of work in this report.

Finally I would like to say a few words about our dear member of staff Ian Hutchinson. Ian very sadly died in 2020, his death was unexpected. Ian was a much loved member of staff, he was cheerful, funny, clever, helpful and knowledgeable. He had a smile for everyone and would go out of his way to help anyone. He has left a big hole in Healthwatch Bolton and we will never forget the person he was and the contribution he made.

Jim Fawcett

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Bolton. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares their experience or seeks advice from us, to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



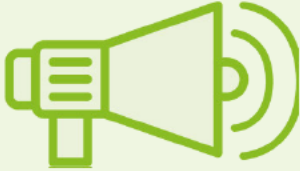
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

1,323 people

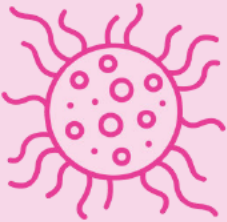
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

209 people

this year.

Responding to the pandemic

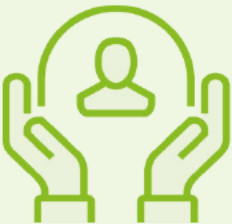


We engaged with and supported

Over 4000

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year, through our website, newsletters, direct contact and social media

Making a difference to care

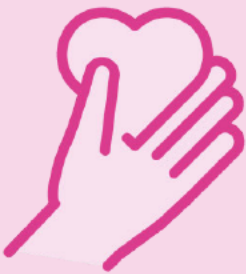


We published

Eight reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we made recommendations for improvement and escalated these to the appropriate organisations.

Health and care that works for you



12 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

We employ three staff

of whom two are full time equivalent, and one part-time.

We received

£150,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21



Then and now Cervical Cancer Screening



Then: Cervical Cancer Screening

Thanks to people sharing their views and experiences of cervical cancer screening, we were able to suggest a series of recommendations to improve uptake of screening and encourage the recruitment of community champions

Cancer screening was voted the top priority by the public of Bolton in 2019/2020. Our research showed that cervical cancer screening rates in Bolton in particular, were falling each year. To find out why, we worked in partnership with the Greater Manchester Screening and Immunisation Team (Answer Cancer), and Bolton CVS to undertake some engagement and information sessions to establish what the barriers to screening were and also to highlight potential community cancer champions. Between September and December 2019 we held 13 engagement sessions working with mainly minority ethnic and mixed heritage women from different community groups in Bolton including carers. As well as engagement sessions, we also received over 1300 responses to a survey for women unable to attend engagement sessions. We asked about what women understood the screening was for, how important it is, information and where to get it, the barriers to screening and how women have found previous screening experiences, and finally what can be done to help and encourage screening uptake.



Now: Cervical Cancer Screening

Thanks to patients sharing their views and experiences of cervical cancer screening, we were able to produce a useful report that has been commended by many health professionals. During the pandemic, some routine screening came to a halt but has now re-started. We found that the main issues for lack of uptake for cervical cancer screening were:

- Fear or pain and embarrassment
- Cultural and religious beliefs
- Accessibility
- Lack of information and understanding
- Past trauma and/or sexual abuse



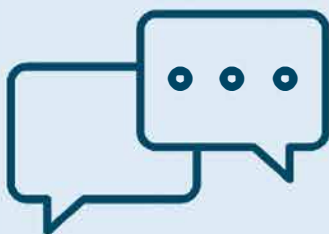
This piece of work around engagement with the community around cancer screening is invaluable and very much well received. In primary care we are doing a piece of work with the Primary Care Networks around improving cancer screening uptake – Dr T Bakht – Bolton CCG

Since our report was circulated there have been 2 requests for our help in improving uptake of cancer screening in Bolton. Our report was also referred to by Knowsley CCG who contacted us because they wanted to replicate the survey in their area.

One of the recommendations in our report was to increase awareness and information from people in certain minority ethnic groups and cultures. Bolton Council of Mosques carried out a community campaign and communicated this work via their social media channels, platforms that reach out to 33,000 Muslims in the Bolton community; and incorporated cancer awareness messages through their food campaign over 9 weeks and delivered translated leaflets to over 7000 families. Feedback from community members is the lack of awareness on the importance of screening, of the signs and symptoms, as well as to overcome anxiety for families to keep with appointments and support people going for screening appointments.

Bolton GP Federation also want to build on our work with us looking at how to break down barriers in communities around screening uptake by co-designing a pilot study with us.

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.



www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk



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The Impact of Bereavement during Covid 19 on people from different minority ethnic backgrounds

People have not been able to have the same freedoms due to the restrictions needed to keep people safe during Covid 19.

Some of these restrictions have meant that people have found it more difficult to be with family members when they have to go into hospital and even more difficult when a loved one has died. We decided to focus this project on people from different minority ethnic backgrounds in Bolton in response to the disproportionate affect of the Covid 19 virus on such groups.

Working in partnership with The Flowhesion Foundation, we carried out 30 interviews with people from Pakistani, Somalian, Arab, Bangladeshi, Indian, White and Asian backgrounds. We asked about the experiences when someone dies, communication and support and religious and cultural needs.

Impact of Bereavement during Covid 19

The results of the research showed that for most people the experience for them losing a loved one was made more difficult due to:

- Communication issues/Lack of information
- Lack of bereavement counselling
- Difficulty in accessing support
- Restrictions meaning religious and cultural routines were stopped



We were not allowed to attend the funeral. We have a big family, restricted funeral arrangements. Did not feel like we could mourn the death of a loved one”

Some of the recommendations included:

- Consider making a culturally appropriate bereavement counselling service available
- Health and care services need to understand different ethnic groups are not homogenous and should reach out and engage with them to understand their differing needs.
- Information about counselling should be made available across many health and care pathways and significant points in a patients’ journey
- Information about bereavement services need to be accessible in different languages and formats.
- Faith leaders must be at the heart of promoting ongoing safety messages.



The religious side was met, however the cultural side was not, because we were not allowed to gather”

The findings of the report have fed into work being done on the Population Health and Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention Strategy. It is being considered to assist in applying for funding to improve Bolton’s offer to people for bereavement services in Bolton.



To find out more read the full report here:

www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk



Hospital Discharge Process



Then: The Discharge to Assess Model

Right at the beginning of the pandemic, new guidance was issued to help hospitals free up 15,000 beds to cope with the demand from COVID-19 cases.

It sought to implement a nationwide roll-out of the 'Discharge to Assess' model, where people are helped to leave hospital faster by having their ongoing care needs assessed at home. Our research looked at what worked and what could be improved.

We worked in partnership with Healthwatch England (HWE) and the British Red Cross to do a national piece of work on this. HWE launched a patient survey together with the Healthwatch network. In addition to this we carried out interviews with Bolton hospital, social care and patient transport staff to get their experience of the process and ensure their experiences were fed into the final report



Now: Discharge to Assess Model

The research found that:

- 82% of people didn't receive a follow-up visit or assessment
- 61% didn't receive any information about the new discharge process during their hospital stay
- 19% felt they were not ready to leave hospital



The biggest challenge to us has been getting everything in place for patients that are coming home as in getting a GP to see them and prescribe medication if required because they don't always come home with everything they need" - District Nurse - Bolton

Some of the recommendations included:

- Provide everyone leaving hospital with a follow-up contact
- Routinely offer and arrange patient transport
- Improve the administration of medication
- Increase follow-up visits and assessments of people's health and care needs
- Review and clarify discharge pathways



I believe the challenge of the pandemic focussed minds on using all your options -- it's been a very interesting time. [I am] looking back to see what worked, what did not work, how it felt for patients and how it impacted patients is important" - Patient Transport representative

The work is being used by NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care to support the review of the discharge guidance and has highlighted the need for greater support for those with low level or short term needs leaving hospital. This is due to be outlined in the refreshed guidance.

We also used the evidence from the review to join forces with other organisations and successfully secured an extension of the Covid discharge fund with an additional £594 million from the Treasury granted to support discharge arrangements for the first six months of 21/22.



To find out more read the full report here:

<https://www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk/report/2020-12-19/hospital-discharge-during-covid-19-report-2020>



Bolton Care Home Websites Review

Because of the pandemic we were unable to utilise our Authorised Representatives to undertake any Enter and View visits this year.

So instead, our volunteers embarked on a project looking at care home websites. With the absence of face-to-face interaction due to the Coronavirus, more than ever, there has been (and will continue to be), a strong reliance on virtual access and engagement.

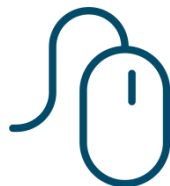
In the light of this, it is important that relevant and up-to-date information can be found on websites so people are aware of their available options which will enable them to make informed decisions about theirs or their loved ones' care. Our volunteers reviewed 57 adult care homes contracted to Bolton Council, to ascertain whether, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, their online information was both relevant and up to date.

Bolton Care Home Websites Review Cont'd

We made a series of recommendations:

- For all care homes to clearly display what activities they have on offer.
- For all Bolton care homes (contracted to the Local Authority) to have a presence on carehome.co.uk website.
- Healthwatch Network to consider approaching Healthwatch England regarding having a link on the carehome.co.uk website.
- Healthwatch Bolton to have a link on their website to the carehome.co.uk website.
- Care homes with a website and/or Facebook page should make clear how people can make compliments, complaints, or concerns.
- Care homes with a website and/or Facebook page to consider having a link to Healthwatch Bolton.
- Healthwatch Bolton will engage with care homes by sending each care home (contracted to the Local Authority) information to let them know who we are, what we do and how we can offer advice and guidance to residents, their family, and friends

We will consider doing a follow-up project on this next year to ascertain if any new information has been added to the website and if our recommendations are taken on board



Find out more:

[https://
www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk/
report/2021-06-10/bolton-care-
home-website-reviews](https://www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk/report/2021-06-10/bolton-care-home-website-reviews)



Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped over 4000 people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Supporting the community volunteer response
- Helping people to access the services they need

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



15% on GP services



45% on Dentistry



24% on other enquiries



16% on Vaccines

Case Study – Accessing food when shielding



Early in the pandemic, we heard from many people asking about food parcels and how to get help whilst they were being asked to shield.

Some people did not have any family or neighbours or even friends that could help them out.

We were able to help by putting people in contact with Bolton's Covid 19 response hub where they could access help from volunteers who could do shopping or they could access a food parcel.

We also shared lots of information via our newsletters and people were particularly grateful for information about places to get their shopping home delivered by local small shops and markets.



Contact us to get the information you need

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.



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Living with COVID-19

Early on in the pandemic, we did some work with Bolton Public Health in gathering timely feedback from the public to help Public Health and Bolton CCG tailor Covid 19 information and messaging.

We produced four snapshot reports and one larger report which provided information on:

- Peoples physical and mental wellbeing
- Access to health and care services
- Understanding of Covid 19 information and messaging
- How people find support from their community



We found using local social media groups a great source of intelligence to find out how people were coping during the pandemic.

Engaging & Connecting with our Community

This year we reviewed our connections with our community, refreshing our contacts and seeking out new ones. We endeavoured to find new groups/organisations and individuals whose voices are seldom heard in our work to ensure inclusivity and diversity. We want to ensure we reflect our rich and diverse community in everything that we do.

- We reached out to over **424** groups and organisations, many who have never had contact with us before
- We made new connections with youth groups, minority ethnic groups, disability groups, activity groups, support groups and some new individuals
- We worked in partnership with organisations who helped us hear the voices of those whose first language is not English



Next year we will strengthen our presence in the community, bearing in mind the possible limitations and restrictions of the pandemic. We will continue to seek out new connections wherever we can, and work in partnership to utilise the expertise of other organisations.



Volunteers

At Healthwatch Bolton we are supported by 12 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Provided feedback to us by using intelligence on Social media
- Carried out website reviews for local services on the information they provide.
- Helped carry out research for our Information, Advice and Guidance Service

Board member – Ann Schenk

I have been a trustee of Healthwatch Bolton for 6 years.

Healthwatch has an important role to play in local communities. It also assists individuals who are having difficulty navigating the “system”. It aims to raise awareness, and regularly publishes useful information, guidance and news on local services. Where it is useful, Healthwatch Bolton works with other Healthwatch organisations in Greater Manchester to tackle common problems.

As a Healthwatch trustee, I also sit on the Board of Governors of the Bolton Foundation Trust. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the development of local services, and helps to ensure that Healthwatch keeps up-to-date on changes that may affect the experience of the people of Bolton.

As we anticipate another round of NHS reorganisation nationally, I believe it is important to safeguard the role of Healthwatch as an independent and informed voice of the public and the patient.

Helping online - Yasmin

I started volunteering with Healthwatch Bolton on a student placement at the very start of the Covid-19 pandemic. I helped gather feedback on social media - this was an extremely important piece of work researching, capturing, and recording valuable data, identifying themes linked to health and social care, food, transport, support and experiences shared during the pandemic. This gave us an insight into people’s stories, concerns, and experiences. I was very grateful to Healthwatch Bolton as this opportunity allowed me to progress with my assignment.

After my placement ended, I requested to stay on in a voluntary capacity as I had enjoyed and found the work very interesting, and worked alongside a very supportive, caring and compassionate team which made a great difference. An opportunity further came up for me to work within the organisation for a part-time role which I welcomed. My role involves reconnecting with our community, seeking out new groups who have not engaged with Healthwatch in the past and setting up a new database of new contacts and groups which I am enjoying immensely.



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at

www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk

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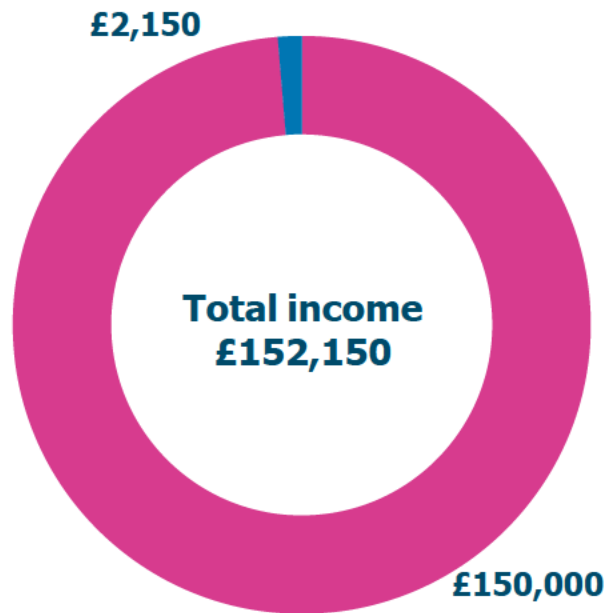
info@healthwatchbolton.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

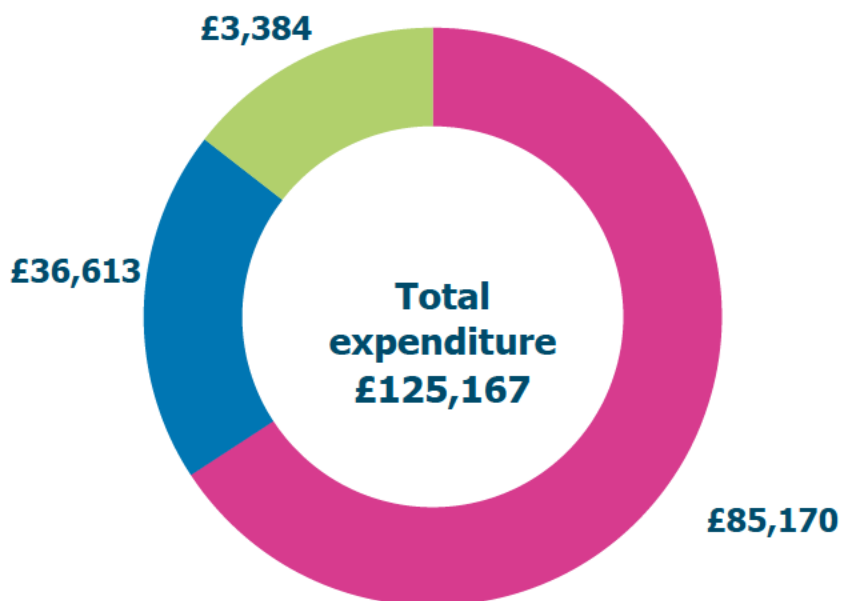
Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration



Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22

1. Primary Care
2. Secondary Care Services
3. Adult Mental Health

Next steps

- As we recover from the pandemic, we are also mindful that we also have to live with it. We aim to change the way we work to reflect the need to keep people safe, to explore new ways to engage safely, and to be mindful of those who are discouraged by the use of technology.
- We will follow-up last years recommendations and continually report on any impact. We will also look to build on work already done.
- We will continue our work on re-connecting with our communities and seeking out the voices of those we don't usually hear from. We will work in partnership with other organisations to ensure we can do this effectively.
- We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work by giving us views and experiences of using health and care services.



“there is much work to be done in recovering from the pandemic. We aim to help wherever we can, working with our colleagues in health and care ensuring they hear the voices of our community in shaping plans for recovery. We do wish to thank the hard-working health and care staff and all front-line and key workers who have worked so tirelessly throughout the pandemic”



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Bolton, 27 Silverwell St, Bolton, BL1 1PP. Contract held by VOICE Local, charity number 1157070

Healthwatch Bolton uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch board consists of nine trustees who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met six times and the management committee met six times and made decisions on matters such as approving finance to pay for some partnership working on one of our priorities and approving the recruitment of new staff to boost community engagement.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We run a digital survey each year to ask people to vote and give feedback on their top three health and care priorities. In addition to the digital survey, we also engage with our local community and seek out the views of new groups and those whose voices are seldom heard. We work in partnership with local organisations to help us to reach a wider audience by utilising language and interpreter skills. Much of our intelligence is also derived from our information, Advice and Guidance service.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, working in partnership with organisations who have links with people whose first language is not English. They have provided interpretation and ensured that people have been able to contribute to both our priority survey and our work on mental health.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website with links on social media.

Responses to recommendations and requests

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Bolton is represented on the Bolton Health and Wellbeing Board (now known as the Active, Connected, Prosperous Board), Jim Fawcett, Chair. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by ensuring Healthwatch Bolton has the opportunity to share reports and intelligence.



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