

People at the heart of choosing their own care provider



Project Duration: December 2018 - March 2019
13th December 2018 - 31st March 2019

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DISCLAIMER: This report only represents the observations and views of the people we spoke with during the dates and times as detailed in this report.

Working in partnership with:

 Blackpool Advocacy Hub

 Blackpool Council

PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES



Project Lead for Healthwatch Blackpool: Sarah Thornley working with Healthwatch Blackpool
Volunteer: Mike Verity

Project Manager Healthwatch Blackpool: Sheralee Turner-Birchall

Blackpool Council Commissioning Support Officer: Naomi Houldsworth-Gregson

Advocacy Lead: Diana Evans

Advocates assigned to this project: Georgina Kidd and Leane Geoghegan

Evaluator: Alistair Blaza, Lancaster University MSc Economics Student

THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT

As outlined in at the start of the project in December 2018, Blackpool Council's On-Site Extra Care Service delivered at a single residential dwelling at Geldof Drive, Blackpool and a complex of eight bungalows within a gated community on Crichton Place and Greystoke Place, both in Blackpool, is to be recommissioned with the new contracts to be in place by the 1st of April 2019.

The dwellings currently provide independent living to 12 adults who have physical disabilities. The current provision that is part of the On-Site Extra Care Service contract has been held for five years and is about to expire. It has been determined that the services are to be delivered as 'stand alone' contract(s) due to the uniqueness of the service offered at both sites and to better meet the needs of residents'.

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT

The aim of this project is to directly involve the twelve service users who reside at the dwellings in a process by which they have a voice, an influence and a decision making role in the recommissioning of the On-Site Extra Care Service they receive. This innovative new way of working will provide a means where the service users can share the power and take shared responsibility for choosing their own care provider to offer personalised care and aid independent living.

Blackpool Council as part of the tender process, is required to undertake a rigorous selection process which often presents as bureaucratic and inaccessible to service users. Undeterred the commissioner wished to involve the service users to have 'their say' by enabling them to share their individual likes, dislikes and care needs to aid the commissioner in achieving the best outcome for the service that will be delivered to them from the 1st April 2019.

WHAT WE PLANNED TO DO



This project brought together the twelve service users receiving care under the current Care Watch service contract, Healthwatch Blackpool, Blackpool Advocacy Hub and Blackpool Council's Commissioning Team.

We intended to undertake the following:

- Blackpool Council to inform the service users of the change to the contract for their current service delivered by Care Watch, highlight the possibility of new provider(s) delivering their service as of the 1st April 2019 and invite the service users to actively be involved in the selection of their new service provider
- Blackpool Council and Healthwatch Blackpool to reassure service users that it is still 'business as usual' for the duration of the tender and that the service users still have a 'home for life'
- Healthwatch Blackpool to proactively make ourselves available to service users throughout the duration of the tender process with the intention of gathering:
 - 'Pen pictures' (short individual description) of individual service users likes, dislikes and their care and support needs
 - Information that will inform the presentations delivered by potential new providers at the 'provider choice events'
 - expectations of the choice event
- Healthwatch Blackpool would introduce and refer service users to the Blackpool Advocacy Hub, should the service user wish to opt for this support at Provider Choice Events
- By the end of January Healthwatch Blackpool to present the Pen Pictures, service user likes and dislikes and needs to Blackpool Council
- Service Users to be invited and enabled to attend Provider Choice Events on the 14th February 2019
- Blackpool Council to share with service users a scoring system to be used at the Provider Choice Events
- Two Provider Choice Events, with potential providers presenting to a tender evaluation panel comprising the Council's Commissioning Team and service users and their representatives who were family members or Advocates from Blackpool Advocacy Hub. These events to be held in the afternoon on the 14th February at The Solaris Centre, Blackpool, facilitated by Healthwatch Blackpool
- Healthwatch Blackpool to undertake an evaluation of the service users involvement in the tender process leading up to and including the Provider Choice Events
- Healthwatch Blackpool to work with service users to assess the impact of Healthwatch Blackpool's involvement in the project
- Healthwatch Blackpool to schedule on-site visits for six months commencing from the 1st April 2019, to meet with service users to gain feedback on their experience of the new contract. Healthwatch Blackpool to feedback to Blackpool Council's Quality Monitoring Team comments and feedback from service users

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED



Having completed the schedule of events Healthwatch visited the service users on 7 occasions detailed below;

13th December 2018, 12pm-2pm
20th December 2018, 10am-3pm
8th January 2019, 1pm-4pm
9th January 2019, 1pm-4pm

10th January 2019, 10am-12.30pm
15th January 2019, 2pm-4pm
22nd January 2019, 1pm-3pm

On the 13th of December 2018 representatives of Blackpool Council along with Healthwatch Blackpool aimed to introduce themselves and personally deliver the Notification of Intention to Tender and Frequently Asked Questions to each service user. On arrival at the Geldof site, Care Watch were unable to welcome the project representatives and explained that they had only that morning been informed of the commencement of the re-tender process and had not had the opportunity to share widely with staff, service users and their families. It was agreed by Blackpool Council and Care Watch to delay notification until a slightly later date, taking into account the required timelines for commissioning.

On the 17th of December Blackpool Council personally delivered the notification of intention to tender and Frequently Asked Questions to each service user, apart from one, who was issued this the following day.

On the 20th of December at site visits, Blackpool Council formally introduced Healthwatch Blackpool to service users and Care Watch. We noted that both sites were clean, well presented and maintained.

On this occasion the Care Watch staff at the Geldof Drive were welcoming and cooperative. Throughout our visit we were offered refreshment by staff and service users. The same welcome was experienced at Crichton Place and Greystoke Place. We met with eleven of the twelve service users. At this first engagement visit we were able to ascertain the needs and favoured methods of communication of each service user, due to considerations related to visual impairment, short term memory issues, the use of bespoke aides for communication and physical mobility issues.

During our visit we explained the role of Healthwatch Blackpool and how we would be involved in the project. We also offered information about Blackpool Advocacy Hub, taking a number of referrals resulting in five service users requesting advocacy support. Mindful that one service user had not had the opportunity to engage with Healthwatch Blackpool and the festive period was approaching, we mailed a letter of introduction about Healthwatch Blackpool and Blackpool Advocacy Hub to this service user.

Blackpool Advocacy Hub arranged appointments with five service users, two then declined Blackpool Advocacy Hub's service and then meetings were arranged with three service users.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED



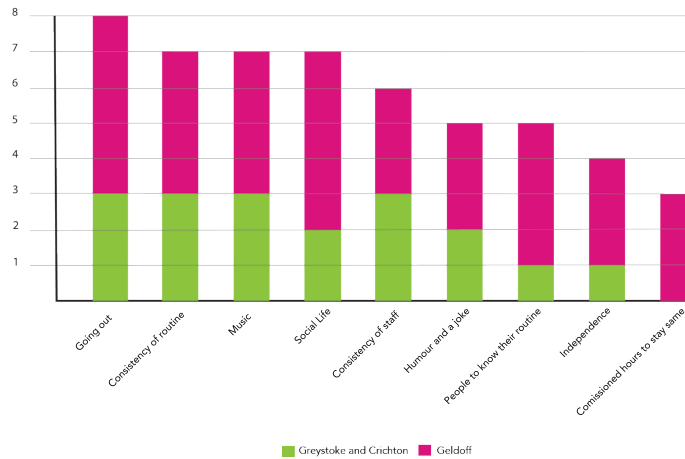
Sadly, at the end of December one of the service users from Geldof passed away.

During week commencing the 7th January 2019 and throughout January, Healthwatch Blackpool engaged with eight of the eleven service users to gather pen pictures of individual service users likes, dislikes and their care and support needs. Three service users were not available throughout Healthwatch scheduled visits. The information collected from the pen pictures would be used to inform the presentations delivered by potential new providers at the Provider Choice Events. During on-site visits Healthwatch Blackpool observed and heard about practices of the current provider, and as the 'consumer voice' has a statutory responsibility to share these observations and feedback to the relevant authorities.

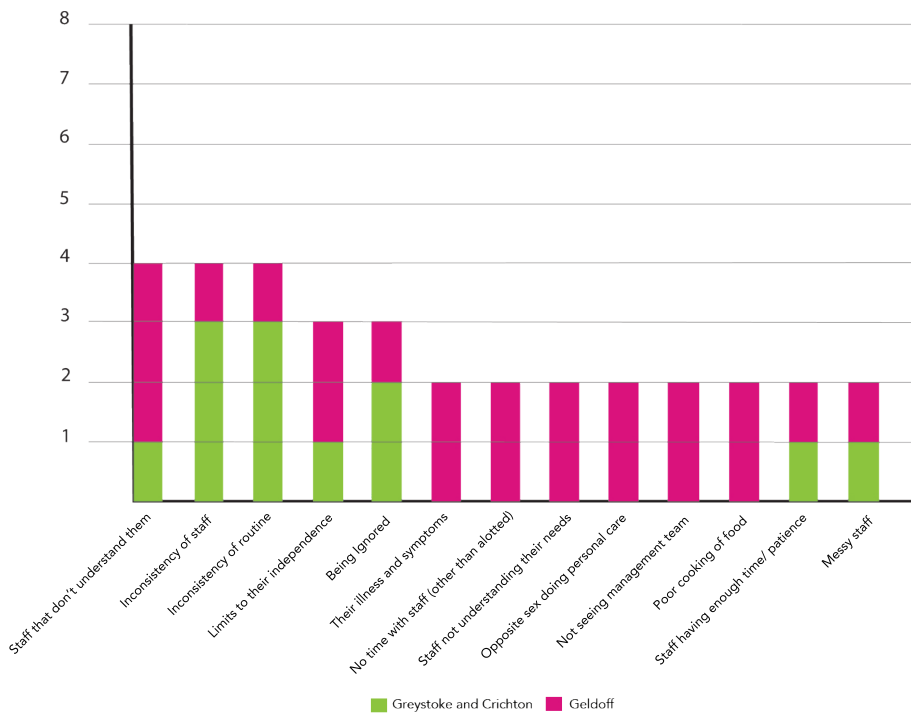


From our initial research, through "pen pictures" we gathered the following findings.

Common likes the service users expressed

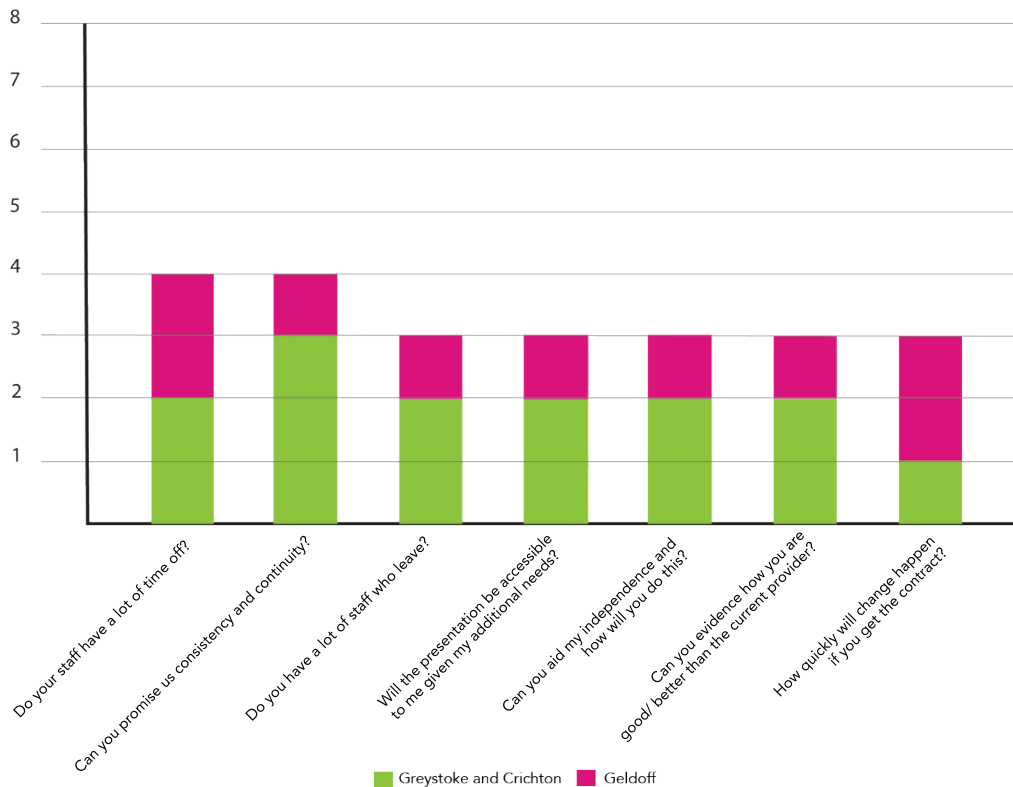


Common dislikes the service users expressed





Common questions the service users asked



From our initial research we also identified some key trends and themes;

- 6 out of 8 of the residents of Crichton and 4 out of 8 Greystoke liked consistency of staff and routine respectively
- 4 out of 5 of the residents of Crichton and Greystoke liked people to know their routine
- All the residents across Crichton and Greystoke mentioned they liked going out and being supported to do so as part of their care package
- All of the residents mentioned that they required help taking medication and with general day to day tasks
- All the residents of Geldoff wanted to ask the potential service provider if they could promise consistency and continuity
- Half of all residents asked if staff had a lot of time off
- 3 out of 8 of all residents asked if the presentation would be accessible to their additional needs

Throughout January 2019 representatives of Healthwatch Blackpool periodically communicated and met with Blackpool Council's Commissioning Team to update and review the project and to discuss the scoring system to be used at the Provider Choice Events.

On the 29th January Healthwatch Blackpool presented Blackpool Council with Pen Pictures and all relevant Information.

Research



Prior to the Provider Choice Events, Blackpool Council and Healthwatch Blackpool engaged in a discussion regarding the involvement of Healthwatch Blackpool as facilitators at the events. The council as commissioner had felt the need to review the involvement of Healthwatch Blackpool due to considerations around confidentiality and commercial sensitivity. This resulted in Healthwatch Blackpool not facilitating or being present at the events, with Blackpool Council taking on this role. It was agreed however, that Healthwatch Blackpool, as part of the project evaluation, would discuss with service users their experience of the events. On the 14th of February the first of the Provider Choice Events took place, this was held at Geldof Drive in the morning. The arrangements for this event were changed from the original plan, which had been scheduled to take place at the Solaris Centre in the afternoon. Whilst this change benefitted the service users in terms of transport, the change to arrangements at short notice prevented one family member from being able to be present and represent his relative.

The second Provider Choice Event took place in the afternoon of the 14th February at the Solaris Centre, for the service users of Greystoke Place and Crichton Place.

On the 14th February service users' scoring choice were confidentially confirmed as a result of the provider presentations.

On the 28th of February 2019 the outcome of the contract award was formally published.

HOW WE EVALUATED THE PROJECT



Throughout March 2019 Healthwatch Blackpool met with 11 service users to capture their views on how they felt about the process of being involved in selecting their new care provider. We also made postal contact with the service users' family and friends who had been involved within the process to gain their feedback.

The aim of the evaluation has been to:

- Ensure that the service users were meaningfully involved in the tendering of their service
- Understand the effectiveness of the whole process and gather learning for future service user involvement in commissioning of services.
- Identify what value Healthwatch Blackpool added to the process

To enable this process to be robust and have integrity, we called on the services of an impartial evaluator.

Evaluation Introduction

As a first step towards co-production in the care provider tender process, the project can be judged as a success by the fact that at both sites the service users had the final say on selecting the care providers they felt would be best for providing their service. This is best reflected in the service users' feedback, 9/10 of whom understood and felt involved in the provider choice event.

Healthwatch Blackpool's involvement in this area was appreciated in particular by one resident who told us:

"I did understand the process and what was asked of me because Healthwatch Blackpool helped me understand and were patient with me and gave me a voice."

With regards to specific aspects of the process:

Informing the Service Users

All eleven service users stated that they were happy about the way they were initially notified about the new contract, in particular the verbal and in person delivery of the news was appreciated.

One of the Geldof residents said:

"I appreciated and respected the fact that we were visited in person to be told the news and given the letters. We felt that the verbal explanation from Blackpool Council was good as two of us are visually impaired and one has communication problems."

Service users requesting the support of an advocate

Three service users requested an advocate, all of whom expressed they would want both Healthwatch Blackpool and Blackpool Advocacy involved in any future such processes. One resident stated: "They were extremely useful helping us and our family members understand the process."



Healthwatch Involvement

Healthwatch involvement was mentioned positively by 7 out of 8 service users who took part in the information gathering exercise (Pen Pictures), they said:

"They are nice people and helped me understand, I wasn't alone."

"Healthwatch Blackpool let me join in to ask all of my questions and helped me lots, I did not need an Advocate"

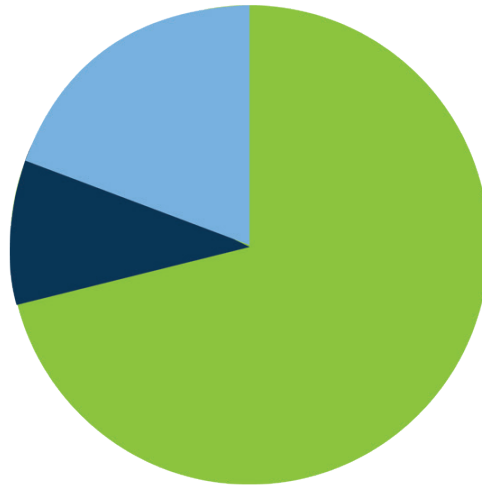
"I feel that Healthwatch Blackpool talked the whole process through with me and made me feel much more comfortable."

"I was happy to see Healthwatch, they kept me up to date. I would like Healthwatch involved again, everything they did was helpful they care about us and listened to me."

However, some criticisms on the process were given by service users who could not be engaged for the initial information gathering exercise due to other commitments. One service user told us that she was unaware of Healthwatch invitation for a group meeting and would have liked that.

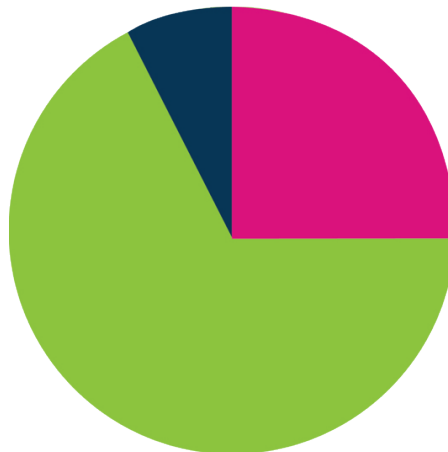
As a learning point for future similar engagement it may be useful to offer more verbal and tailored contact to ensure we engage as many individuals as possible.

Number of service users involved in the tendering process



■ Fully involved ■ Unwell ■ Could not be contacted for initial information (pen picture)

Participation and satisfaction with Healthwatch Blackpool



■ Did not fully participate ■ Fully participated and happy with Healthwatch ■ Could not remember Healthwatch

Greystoke and Crichton Provider Choice Event

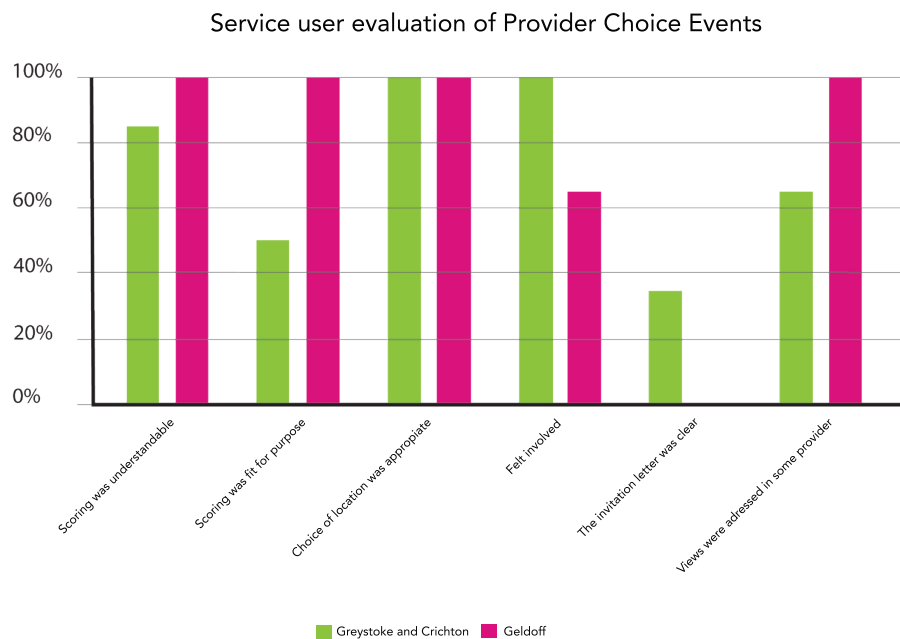
5 out of 6 service users from Greystoke and Crichton stated that the scoring was understandable, however only half felt that it was useful in coming to a final conclusion.

One service user told us:

"I understood the scoring process and it kind of worked. I prefer people to speak to me one to one instead of the scoring process. I feel I was ignored a bit due to my communication needs. I am happy with the change of provider and I got what I wanted from the Provider Choice Event. I had mixed experiences about the process but overall good."

All the service users felt that the Solaris Centre was an acceptable or good choice of location for the event.

Ultimately all the service users felt involved in the final decision.



Geldof Provider Choice Event

The service users from the Geldof site stated that the letter describing the event was confusing as it incorrectly suggested that no questions at all could be asked at the event. They did appreciate the question time at the end of the presentations as they had concerns they wished to be clarified.



Having requested it, the service users from the Geldof site appreciated that the location was changed to Geldof Place. They said:

"We appreciated Healthwatch Blackpool's support to voice our wishes to have the meeting at our home, rather than the Solaris Centre. We also appreciated Blackpool Council being able to achieve this so there was less disruption to their routines."

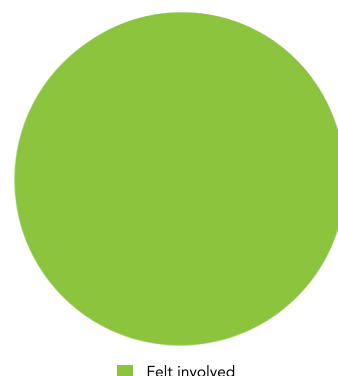
Although the service users from the Geldof site felt the scoring was understandable and fit for purpose they were concerned that they were not given any opportunity to ask questions about the scoring method and felt that they were presented with a 'fait accompli'

Only 2 out of 3 service users felt involved in the final decision, this was because they felt the third service user was not represented during the first two presentations as his family member arrived late due to the change of timing of the event. This family member also missed important information including the staff TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) arrangements. This led to him being a little confused and concerned about why iCare was chosen as the preferred provider and he feared that his brother would lose continuity of care.

Geldoff Provider Choice Event



Greystoke and Crichton Provider Choice Event





Three service users' family members responded to the request for feedback on the process, they stated that they were happy with and understood their involvement in the tender process and were happy with the scoring system. The family members also told us that they felt the service users were fully involved in this process and that Healthwatch involvement was positive and helped the process run smoothly.

Learning for the Future

Overall the process was fairly successful in its core aim of having the final say of who would provide care to the service user; 9/10 service users felt they were involved in the provider choice event. However, there is certainly some learning to come from this process and improvements that can be made for the future.

1. Service users consistently mentioned the importance of having communication delivered in their preferred way. Delivering the initial message that there would be a new provider, verbally and in person was appreciated by the service users. However, this could have been improved at the Provider Choice Event.
2. Overall the majority of service users felt the scoring system was understandable and fit for purpose. However, half the residents of Geldof and Crichton felt it did not help them come to a conclusion. A suggestion the Geldof residents made would be involving the service users in designing the scoring system which would ensure it was both fit for purpose and move towards a truer version of co-production.
3. A number of service users were unhappy with the approach of the existing provider in their presentation; they used personal detailed experiences, without permission, to provide examples of how they would be able to provide continuity of care. On this point the residents of Geldof said: **"We felt that this was extremely rude and that all providers should have acted as though they had no prior knowledge of us as service users."** Five service users stated that they were unhappy with the delay of an hour and the overrunning of some of the presentations. This meant that one individual's family member was unable to support them during the presentation. This feedback is an important learning point for stakeholders in future projects who should treat service users with the same professionalism as all individuals involved in the tendering process.

NEXT STEPS

Healthwatch Blackpool volunteer assigned to undertake regular Pop Ups scheduled for a period of six months from 1st April 2019 to gain residents feedback regarding the new contract holders' performance from a service user perspective.

Healthwatch Blackpool's Projects Team to liaise with Blackpool Council's Quality Monitoring Officers to share service user feedback and Healthwatch observations obtained at the Pop Ups.

Response from Commissioner



Blackpool Council are pleased Healthwatch Blackpool were able to provide support to the residents during a recent procurement process for a care provider in the two residential schemes. The Healthwatch role was to provide independent support to the residents and ensure they understood the procurement process, and were given access to advocates for the provider choice event where they were able to agree the final choice of provider.

The overwhelming feedback that all residents felt involved in the provider choice event and able to influence the choice of provider is very encouraging.

Jo Humphries, Divisional Commissioning Manager (Adults) at Blackpool Council



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