



## Enter & View Report

### Talkback

March 2022



#### What was the project about?

Healthwatch Bucks wanted to find out about people's experiences of attending Talkback community opportunities.

#### Why did we do the project?

In 2021-22 we are looking at Covid19 response and recovery in Health and Social Care. Together with our cross-cutting interest in lesser heard voices, we decided to visit locations where community opportunities are provided. These had to close in 2020 during the pandemic and then adapt to changing circumstances as they opened through 2020 and 2021.

We wanted to hear the from those who attend day care provision in Buckinghamshire. We wanted to hear what they gain from the experience and how it promotes well-being and self-reliance, one of the aims of [Our Ambition | Buckinghamshire Council \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](https://www.buckscc.gov.uk). In this, Buckinghamshire Council are looking to develop “meaningful and appropriate day and employment opportunities in the community to enable people to live fulfilling lives. We want to support a culture of choice for individuals rather than the current culture of dependency and having to fit in to services”.

We also wanted to identify good practice and ways to improve service delivery.

#### What did we do?

Our Enter & View visit to the service on 10<sup>th</sup> February was planned with the provider in advance. For more details on Healthwatch Enter and View and full details of the visit, including the names of our authorised representatives, please see Appendix 1.

We attended the Talkback session taking place at Buckingham Park Community Centre in Aylesbury. We talked to 7 members (clients), and 2 members of staff. We also observed the interactions between these people, 3 other members and 2 other staff members. Some members chose not to talk to us. Our authorised representatives used a set of questions to guide their conversation with members. It covered topics such as:

- what did they like doing at Talkback?
- what skills had they improved since attending
- what would they like to change?
- how did they feel about the service?

#### What did we discover?

Talkback supports young adults with learning difficulties and/or autism through community opportunities. They have various sites within Buckinghamshire. Their aim is to enable members to develop a social network as well as integrate within their local communities. They promote

independent living and the basic skills associated with this. On the day we visited a Sports Academy session, sport was being used to encourage people to develop a positive can-do attitude. Whilst a variety of activities took place, the majority involved physical movement and keeping members active.

## How people were treated

Members and staff were very relaxed in each other's company. The atmosphere in the hall was welcoming and friendly. Everyone seemed to know each other well. Staff asked about what members were doing elsewhere and knew which other Talkback groups they attended, "How was your trip to the theatre X?" At the front of the room was a white board showing, in pictures and writing, the timetable for the day. We saw a staff member encourage a member to read the words on the board out loud. Staff continually encouraged members to do things for themselves. "Do you want me to do it, or can you do it?" "Me do it" was the reply. Where people needed reassurance, this was also provided, "You give me [a] hand?" "Yes, we'll help you." Members were encouraged to drink regularly during the exercise and sport sessions. They were also offered tea and coffee during the break. Whilst the drinks were made by staff because the break was short, members were encouraged to decide and get the drink themselves. "Would you like a drink? You go up and get one then." Staff were also quick to praise member's efforts, "You've done really well X."

People's choice to get involved or not was respected. We observed staff allowing members to participate at their own pace throughout the morning. One person shooed all members of staff away during the craft exercise but was first to alert them to someone knocking on the door later. We also observed this same person being very independent and helpfully clearing tables during the lunch break. One person wrote notes during a film discussion whilst another slept. During activities and drink breaks, we saw staff mostly standing next to members rather than sitting alongside them when having conversations .

## What do you like doing?

After a drink on arrival, there was a 'Wake up, Shake up' exercise routine to music. This starts every session. Exercises were themed around sports movements such as rowing a boat, bowling and boxing. Whilst some members were up on their feet immediately, some took their time, but most were involved by the end.

After a short video about keeping going no matter what, there was a craft session where members glued positive pictures and phrases onto an outline of a 'positive thinking' baseball cap. One person told us this was their favourite activity of the morning. At the end, several members were confident enough to stand at the front and show their work to the rest of the group. Members were very attentive to the two video clips shown. The second, from the film Trolls, encouraged many to get on their feet and sing along and join in with the actions.

Another person said they liked ball sports. They were doing exercise and activities "to look after my figure". Another member said their favourite sport was playing tennis. Two others said they "really enjoyed coming here". They had a jovial relationship with lots of humour. We were told that another person, absent on our visit, enjoyed the Talkback exercise videos on YouTube, particularly during lockdown.

## What have you got better at since coming here?

Two members present were training to become member coaches. They helped staff get kit out, encouraged other members and supported staff. They had a set of targets. When qualified as a member coach, we were told they had an option to work towards a national Level 1 NVQ award.

Staff played a short a video showing (a) people being unsupportive of a professional basketball player, then (b) supportive of an amateur player. We heard staff explain the effects this negative or positive behaviour had on their thoughts and performance. Members then took it in turns to be blindfolded and shoot at a low basketball hoop. Everyone cheered no matter whether the ball went in the hoop or not. Then the individual removed the blindfold and had another go. They were told to visualise the ball going into the net, “If you think you can win, then you can.” Everyone continued to cheer and be supportive of each other. Again, staff reinforced people were working as a team to support each other. It was easy to tell that members were enjoying this. Some people chose to have more than one turn. Even one person who didn’t want to join in, turned their chair round to watch, after a little while, and was laughing along with everyone else.

A staff member told us that members had been to High Wycombe badminton centre and had improved their badminton skills. Many had not tried this sport before. Two people were now being encouraged to join local badminton clubs. Staff also linked the message in the film - which was about not giving up - to the members’ previous experiences learning netball over several weeks. They were reminded that they had started not knowing anything but “you kept trying and were playing as a team by the end”. As well as exercise and sport, we were told that this group also learns about healthy eating and healthy relationships.

## What could make your experience better?

Only one person could think of any ideas when asked this question. They said they would like to turn into Hermione Granger (Harry Potter) and wave a wand to make all the sports equipment come alive.

A staff member said that although one person had not joined in that morning, that person had texted them during the session, to say they’d like to play rounders later.

## How do you feel about the service?

Several people told us they enjoyed attending the sports sessions, “It’s fun.” There was certainly lots of laughter during the blindfold basketball exercise where members encouraged each other through clapping and shouting. Two members, who seemed particularly good friends, were very enthusiastic about all the sports activities; “We have so much fun” and “It’s the best thing.” They told us that their sports skills had improved a lot.

Members also seemed to enjoy the social side as well as the sports on offer. In the break, we saw members chatting to eat other, “How’s your mum?” and “My mum’s fine”.

It was very notable how warmly they all welcomed a late comer who arrived in the middle of the ball activity.

## Our recommendations

Based on what members told us and our observations, we recommend Talkback:

- staff sit alongside seated members during activities /whilst talking with them, to encourage participation, rather than stand up.

## Service Provider Response

Thank you for the report and for the comments and time taken and I talked to a number of our team who were pleased to see the outcomes.

I know I should just let it go re the recommendation as it is insignificant. Each person is unique and the same as everybody else. One of the good things is our team use a variety of methods to get someone moving.

For me the recommendation is an opinion. Not an irrefutable technique that is guaranteed to work above standing. And on another day with another member we may have done something different.

It is recognised with people with learning disability that it is not good modelling to sit next to someone and ask them to get up and engage. Mirroring what we are doing works as a tried technique. We would not encourage anyone to sit down unless last resort based on our experience. I would still stand and use my body language and gestures to help get them up. Same as we would not go and get a wheelchair and sit in it if I were talking to someone in a Wheelchair or grab a walker etc. Therefore we encourage our teams to try different approaches and the fact you saw everyone up is the outcome we want.

It's a very small issue but in our world these are things we spend a lot of time on.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank Talkback members and staff for their contributions to this Enter and View visit.

## Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all members and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

## Appendix 1: Enter and View Background and Visit Details

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to watch how services are delivered and talk to members, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues, however, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

Details of visit:	
<b>Service Provider</b>	Talkback
<b>Service Address</b>	Amersham Community Centre Chiltern Avenue Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 5AH
<b>Date and Time</b>	10th February 2022 9.45am - 12.30pm
<b>Authorised Representatives</b>	Alison Holloway Meady Waterhouse

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