

Healthwatch Halton

Annual
Report

2014/2015







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Note from the Chair

This year has been both a year of consolidation and review of the work of Healthwatch Halton, culminating in a restructure of the Governance arrangements.



In June 2014, we moved from our offices in Runcorn and took a short trip over the River Mersey to our new base in the glorious surroundings of the former St Marie's Church in Widnes. The move initially didn't go quite as smoothly we had hoped causing amongst other issues, delays in getting the IT systems up and running which meant we had to resort to the tried and trusted method of using a pen and paper! Thankfully those first few weeks seem a long time ago and we're now fully operational.

We have built upon the foundations of the work we carried out in our first year and I know from the feedback we've had, and from my conversations with commissioners, providers and members of the public, that our work is beginning to make a real difference. I would particularly like to highlight the work undertaken this year by our 'Access to GP services' task and finish group. A tremendous amount of work went in to this project and the group produced a report that I believe had a big impact, with the Halton CCG taking on board all the recommendations and embedding them in its new GP Strategy review.

I would like to give special thanks to the members of the management committee for their combined knowledge, experience and support that has helped guide the activities of Healthwatch this year. My sincere thanks also go to my fellow Directors who have put a lot of time, effort and commitment into making sure Healthwatch CIC (Community Interest Company) has fulfilled its legal and statutory responsibilities within the framework of the Health & Social Care Act.

I'm sad to say that Bill Rathbone, one of our Management Committee members passed away in September 2014. Bill brought great commitment, enthusiasm and passion to his role and will be greatly missed by us all.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all those members who have supported our activities throughout the year. A lot of our work is not seen publicly, as Management Committee Members and volunteers have committed a significant amount of time ensuring statutory bodies understand the value and impact people's experiences can have in influencing and shaping service provision. It has been this involvement and commitment of members



that has led to the success of Healthwatch Halton as a recognised and respected voice in the community by users, carers, commissioners and service planners.

On behalf of the Directors, I would like to extend my thanks to the Healthwatch Support Team for their hard work through the year. All these activities have made sure that the voice of Healthwatch Halton continues to gain in strength and effectiveness.

Finally, I would like to pass on my gratitude to our statutory colleagues in the Health & Social Care Sector, who have pro-actively

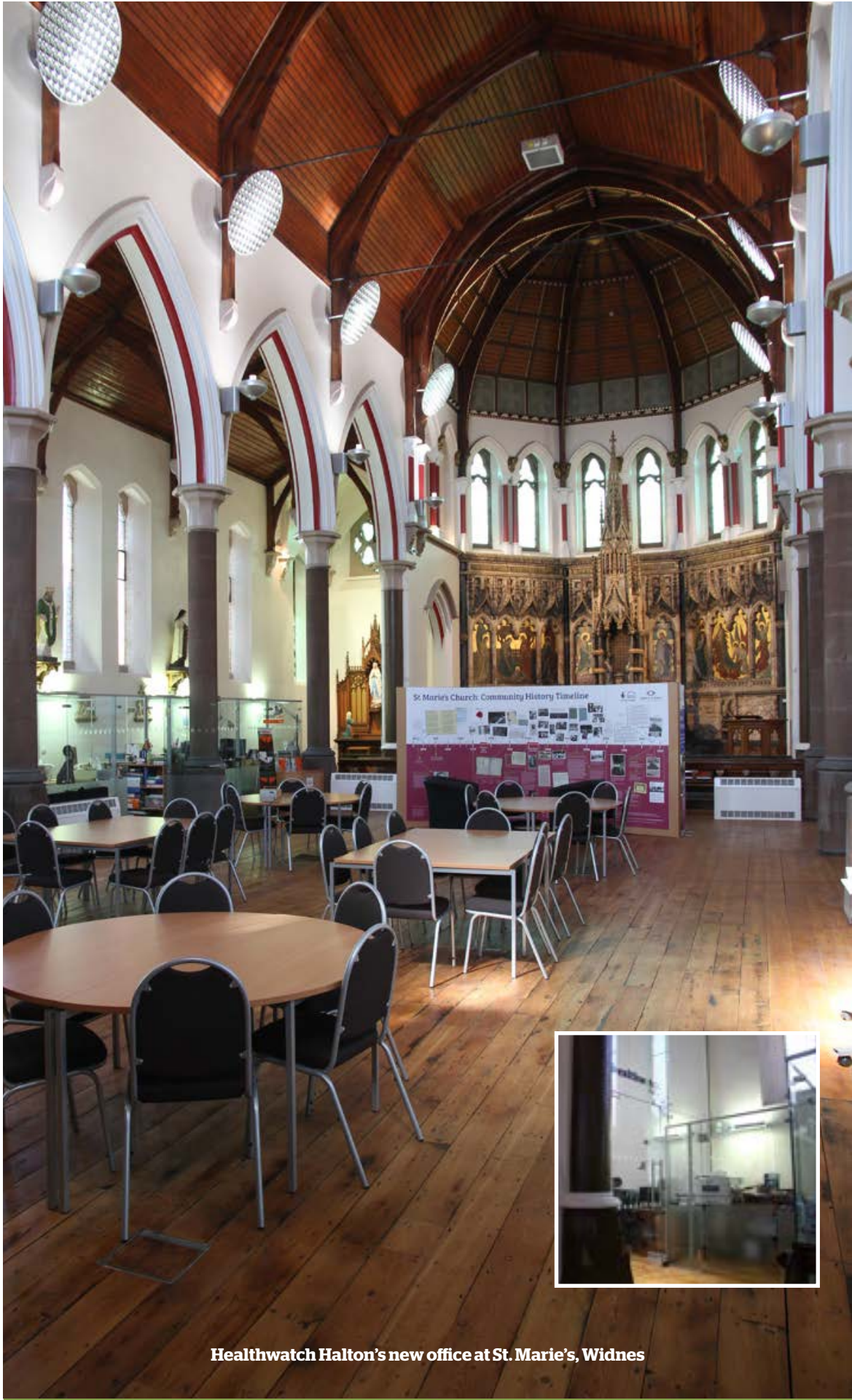
sought to use Healthwatch Halton to engage with the wider community. They listened to the views and concerns of local people, acknowledged our recommendations and produced action plans to address them.

Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, I have reluctantly decided to submit my resignation as Chair of Healthwatch.

I have enjoyed the challenge of establishing Healthwatch Halton as a respected organisation and I wish my successor well in the testing, yet exciting years ahead.

Jim Wilson

Chair, Healthwatch Halton



Healthwatch Halton's new office at St. Marie's, Widnes



About Healthwatch

We are here to make health and social care better for ordinary people. We believe that the best way to do this is by designing local services around their needs and experiences.

Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people and our expertise is grounded in their experience. We are the only independent body looking solely at people's experience across all health and social care.

We are part of a wider network, as there is a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

As a statutory watchdog our role is to ensure that local health and social care services, and the local decision makers, put the experiences of people at the heart of their care.

Our vision/mission

We will strive to be the lead organisation which helps all local people influence and change the way their health and social care services are delivered.

Healthwatch Halton seeks to be an effective, powerful and independent local voice for health and social care within Halton and its membership reflects the diverse communities in Halton. This can be summed up simply by 5 'i's, where we:

Inform; Involve; Investigate; Influence and we're Independent!

Our strategic priorities

Healthwatch Halton's strategic objectives for 2014/15 are as follows: -

1. Gather the views and understanding the experiences of patients and the public
2. Make people's views known, including those from excluded and under-represented communities
3. Provide information to patients and public about access to health and care services and promote informed choice in health and social care services
4. Support individuals to get information and independent advocacy if they need help to complain about NHS services
5. Act as a local consumer champion, representing the collective voice of patients, service users, carers and the public through its statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board
6. Exercise real influence on commissioners, providers, regulators and Healthwatch England, using our knowledge of what matters most to local people
7. Fulfil statutory duties and functions, holding providers and commissioners of health and social care services to account
8. Raise the profile of Healthwatch Halton to ensure that we are known to the public and strategic partners in Halton
9. Report concerns about the quality of local health and social care services to Healthwatch England which can then recommend that the Care Quality Commission take action.



Engaging with people who use health and social care services

Understanding people's experiences

Listening to and collecting people's experiences of using local health and social care services is one of our main activities.

We are regularly out in the local community, meeting with groups and talking with people about the services they use and asking for their experiences of what's good and what has room for improvement.

In January 2015 we officially launched our online 'Feedback Centre'. This new format of giving feedback has provided a simple way for people to share their health and social care experiences with us, rating different aspects of the services they have used.

Over the past 12 months, we have held over 60 outreach sessions, engaging with over 500 people at local venues including the following:

- Local GP practices.
- Halton Hospital, Warrington Hospital and Whiston Hospital.
- Local pharmacies
- Community Centres
- Riverside College
- AGE UK

Plus, we've met with the public when we've run stalls at other organisations' events such as:

- 5 Boroughs 'Ignite your life' event
- Halton Speak Out - Big Health Day
- Windmill Hill Festival Week

- Riverside College - Volunteer recruitment fair
- Halton Healthy Child Event
- Halton Borough Council's 'Party in the Park'
- Halton OPEN (Older People's Empowerment Network) Events
- Public Health 'Our Life' event

We've also given presentations about Healthwatch to many local groups such as:

- Stroke Support Group
- Care Home Providers Forum
- Vision Support Group
- Hugs Cancer Support Group
- Dementia Alliance Group

With our outreach activities we have engaged with more than **1500** people this year.

"Thanks to Healthwatch I feel I have a voice for the first time."

Joan - Healthwatch Halton Member



During December 2014 we carried out visits to the A&E Departments of Whiston Hospital and Warrington Hospital.

Our aim was:

- To find out from patients why they were attending A&E.
- Ask if they had they had sought alternative help first, such as their GP or Walk-in-Centre/Urgent Care Centre?

We also wanted to check whether residents of Halton who use those A&E departments were aware of the plans for two new Urgent Care Centres in Halton.

The two reports from these visits, **'A&E, Accident & Emergency or Anything & Everything?'**, are available to download through our website, www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk

We have held another 4 of our popular 'Fact or Fiction' events attended by over 350 people. These events looked at MSK Services, Care Homes, The Care Act and the Halton General Practice Strategy Review.

We have also carried out work specifically to make sure we are gaining the views of

- Young people (under 21)
- Older people
- Disadvantaged or vulnerable people
- People who are seldom heard

However, we have not carried out any work specifically targeted at gaining the views of those who volunteer or work in Halton but may not live here. However, we have promoted Healthwatch and encouraged feedback from people through media articles within in-house magazines produced by large local employers such as Halton Borough Council, Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS FT, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust and 5 Boroughs Partnership FT. We also know from our outreach work and the feedback and comments we have received that these groups of people are represented in the information we gather.



Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS FT 'Your Hospitals' Magazine - Summer/Autumn 2014



Working with young people

During 2014 we held outreach sessions with students at Riverside College to raise awareness of the work of Healthwatch and to gain students views on the services they use.

Irene Bramwell, our outreach officer, attended the college and gave presentations to over 200 students, explaining the role of Healthwatch and why it was important for younger people to have their say on local Health & Care services.

Pauline Ruth, our Healthwatch lead on Children & Young People, has promoted Healthwatch through the Halton School Governors network, with the aim of setting up a small task & finish group to gain the view of young people and look at the best and most appropriate ways of getting more young people involved in our work.

Work with Older people

We have a responsibility to make sure that the voices of older people are listened to.

AGE UK Mid Mersey hold a place on our Management Committee and we work closely with them to ensure the views and experiences of older people are collected by Healthwatch.

We have engaged extensively with older peoples groups across the community such as Halton OPEN (Older People's Empowerment Network), Four Estates Vintage Group, St Bedes Over 50's Group and Broome Court Support Group.

As part of Healthwatch England's Special Inquiry into unsafe discharge we spoke with 9 care homes to gain their experiences of elderly residents being discharged from hospital.

Work with disadvantaged or vulnerable people

Close links have been built with SHAP's Social Inclusion Group. SHAP aims to enable homeless, vulnerable, or disadvantaged people to take control of their own lives and to receive high quality housing and support. The Social Inclusion Group supports adults with learning disabilities. We have held meetings with the group to gather their experiences of using local services and they have been actively encouraged to attend and take part in our 'Fact or Fiction' events to ensure they have their voice heard by the commissioners and providers of local services.

We have also given presentations to and engaged with Halton Speak Out, a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities, and gathered their feedback on local services.

For the past year we have been heavily involved in work with the 'Umbrella Halton' group. This group, which is supported by Halton Borough Council, enables individuals from Halton's BME community to have a clear and effective voice on the issues that concern and affect them, including health and social care issues.

End of Life 'Friends & family test' project

We were approached by Halton CCG to undertake a piece of work for a pilot scheme of the 'Friends & Family Test', aimed at people who were receiving palliative care. This work consisted of one to one meetings with a total of 13 people who were receiving palliative care, or their family members. This was a sensitive piece of work with a group of patients who are normally overlooked for their views on service provision.



Case Study One

Polish Family Support Group - Umbrella

The ‘Umbrella Halton’ group, supported by Halton Borough Council, enables individuals from Halton’s BME community to have a clear and effective voice on the issues that concern and affect them, including health and social care issues.

As part of the ‘Umbrella’ group, a Polish Support Group meets monthly providing Polish families and individuals who live in Halton the opportunity to socialise, maintain their cultural traditions and access additional practical support. We have attended a number of meetings with the group and with the support of one of the group, who is now a Healthwatch volunteer, we have been able to gain the experiences of the group and the issues they face when using local health and social care services.

Through our work with the group we gained a Polish volunteer for our ‘Enter & View’ team and this volunteer has also undertaken extra training to take part in the PLACE inspections and training to take part in the Equality Delivery System (EDS) reviews we have carried out on local NHS Trusts.

Through Healthwatch, another of our Polish volunteers was put in touch with our local community radio station, Halton Community Radio (HCR). He has since undergone broadcast training with HCR and now delivers a two hour radio show in Polish to the Polish Community in Halton and beyond. In his programme he has been able to promote Healthwatch Halton, passing on details of engagement events, consultations etc., to the Polish community, giving them

the opportunity to share their health and social care experiences with Healthwatch Halton.

We also met with the Polish Family Support Group when we carried out our ‘Access to GP services’ survey to ensure they had an opportunity to take part in the survey.

“I have found volunteering with Healthwatch Halton a very positive and supportive experience. Through my volunteering I have been able to secure employment in statutory and private agency Care Services, looking after cared for children and teenagers and have recently secured a place at university, to develop my career further.”

Hubert Gabryszewski, Volunteer





Enter & View

Healthwatch has statutory powers to carry out 'Enter & View' visits to health and social care services used by the people of Halton.

Our Authorised Representatives are:

- Sue Ellison
- Hubert Gabryszewski
- Mike Hodgkinson
- Lyndsey Bushell
- Sue Parkinson
- Lorna Plumpton
- Doreen Whimperley

Our Enter & View team have been fully trained and receive ongoing support from members of the Healthwatch Support Team.

Three members of the Healthwatch Support Team are also trained and authorised to take part in the Enter & View visits with our volunteers.

During the past 12 months visits have been carried out to:

Service	Date visited
Ryan Care Residential Home This visit was carried out to engage with service users of Ryan Care and understand how dignity is being respected in a care home environment.	April 2014
Simonsfield Care Home This visit was carried out to engage with service users of Simonsfield and understand how dignity is being respected in a care home environment.	April 2014
Woodcrofts Care Home This visit was carried out to engage with service users of Woodcrofts and understand how dignity is being respected in a care home environment.	October 2014
Halton Hospital - Phlebotomy & X-Ray Departments This was a follow up on a previous enter and view visit to see if the recommendations from the previous visit have been implemented.	November 2014
Leahurst Care Home This visit was carried out to engage with service users of Leahurst and understand how dignity is being respected in a care home environment.	February 2015

No further action or escalation was needed as a result of any of our visits.

Following each visit a report is produced by the Enter & View Team. These reports are published on our website and distributed to relevant parties.

Our intention for this year was to have carried out more Enter & View visits than we did. A number of different factors led to a six month break in our Enter & View visits. We are now reviewing our plans for Enter & View for 2015-16 and are looking to increase our team of volunteers, particularly targeting recruitment of young people and people from disadvantaged groups.



Providing information and signposting for people who use health and social care services

Helping people get what they need from local health and social care services

We provide an office based information service with calls and emails answered by members of the support team. Visitors are also welcome to drop-in to see us if they need any information or signposting help.

We also provide information to people about local health and social care services when we hold or attend events and when we carry out outreach activities in the community.

During 2014-15 we received 194 requests for information, via email, telephone and face to face enquiries.

A small example of the type of enquiries we dealt with included:

Complaints

- A caller wanted to know the procedure involved in making a complaint against a local hospital trust. We gave information on the complaints procedure and offered Advocacy support if needed.

Access to Services

- A caller rang to seek out information on hospitals across the country that had wide bore MRI scanners. We did some research and were able to give the caller a list of hospitals to contact.

Dental services

- A caller wanted to know of any local dentists who could offer a Home Visit Service. We gave them contact details of dental services that could help.

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Halton





Case Study Two

Supporting Individuals

A member of the public contacted Healthwatch Halton after being signposted to us by the Halton Carers Centre.

They had been diagnosed with a serious neurological condition following spinal surgery as the spinal cord was damaged during surgery which led to them being permanently catheterised. They explained that they needed to use Peristeen equipment and had undergone training for this. However, they had recently undergone planned surgery for a damaged wrist, and prior to admission they had become very concerned that they would be unable to use the Peristeen equipment which needed to be used on a regular basis. The patient was reassured prior to discharge that district nurses should be trained to use this particular equipment and if not nurses would be trained prior to the patient being discharged home.

Following the surgery, the patient was discharged home only to be informed by the district nursing team that they had not yet been trained to use the equipment, but a referral had been made to the manufacturer for training. The patient could not manage the equipment on their own, due to the surgery on their wrist. The patient contacted the manufacturer of the equipment who

stated that no referral been made for training.

The patient was becoming very distressed and made an appointment to see their GP. The GP then contacted the local Hospital Trust and was informed hospital staff had not been trained to use equipment despite the danger that the patient's bowel could perforate.

We contacted the Hospital Trust commissioned to deliver community district nursing and spoke to the clinical manager to explain the situation. Following our call the Hospital Trust then contacted the patient to explain that training had now been arranged and would take place urgently.

The patient contacted us a few days later to say that training had taken place for a nurse and also a close friend to use the equipment.. They thanked us for our help and support in getting the issue sorted.

We also put the patient in touch with the Healthwatch advocacy service as they wished to make a complaint regarding her care after discharge.





Influencing decision makers with evidence from local people

Producing reports and recommendations to effect change

Healthwatch Halton publish reports on the work we have done and the feedback we have received on services. Where appropriate we also make recommendations for improvements to the providers and commissioners of services.

All our reports are available on our website and publicised through our e-bulletins and newsletter.

We have produced the following reports during this year:

- Enter & View Report on Ryan Care Residential Home - Apr 2014
- Enter & View Report on Simonsfield Care Home - Apr 2014
- Enter & View Report on Woodcrofts Care Home - Oct 2014
- Enter & View Report on Halton Hospital - Phlebotomy & X-Ray Departments - Nov 2014
- Access to GP and Out of Hours Service Report- Dec 2014
- Report on our survey of A&E Patients at Warrington Hospital - Dec 2014
- Report on our survey of A&E Patients at Whiston Hospital - Dec 2014
- Enter & View Report on Leahurst Care Home - Feb 2015

“Halton Borough Council recognises the positive contribution Healthwatch Halton is making, and in particular their work around the issue of access to GP’s; to developing health and social care services in the borough.”

Steve Eastwood - Halton Borough Council, Commissioning Manger





Case Study Three

GP Access & Out-of-Hours provision report

Why did we do it?

While we were out and about gathering people's views on services a recurring comment came up time and again, 'I have difficulty booking an appointment with my GP'.

Having made note of the findings from national surveys and the local feedback we were receiving, it was agreed by our management committee that we set up a task and finish group with the aim of gathering the views of Halton residents on Access to GP Services and the Out of Hours GP Provision.

What did we do?

Between March & June 2014 we undertook a survey looking at access to local GP services and out of hours provision.

The survey was made available both online and in printed format. It was sent to over 1400 Healthwatch members, either electronically or as a hard copy, through our mailing list. News articles promoting the survey were included in the local media and it was also distributed across a wide range of local voluntary groups and organisations and promoted across the local NHS networks. We also carried out outreach sessions with some 'seldom heard' groups to make certain they had the opportunity to take part in the survey and give their views.

We received a total of 491 completed surveys.



What did we find?:

We found that people really value a good and easily accessible service from their GP but don't always get it.

- 56% of people rated it as 'very difficult' or 'not easy' to book an appointment with their GP
- 33% of people rated the time it took to get through to their GP practice as 'poor' or 'very poor'
- 62% of people would like their practice to be open longer, particularly weekends and evenings
- 61% of people would like to receive a text reminder about their appointment
- 75% of people would like to be able to order repeat prescriptions online
- 32% of people were unhappy with the way their complaint was handled, these figures are very much in-line with national findings
- People's general satisfaction level with their GP was over 90% across a range of questions.

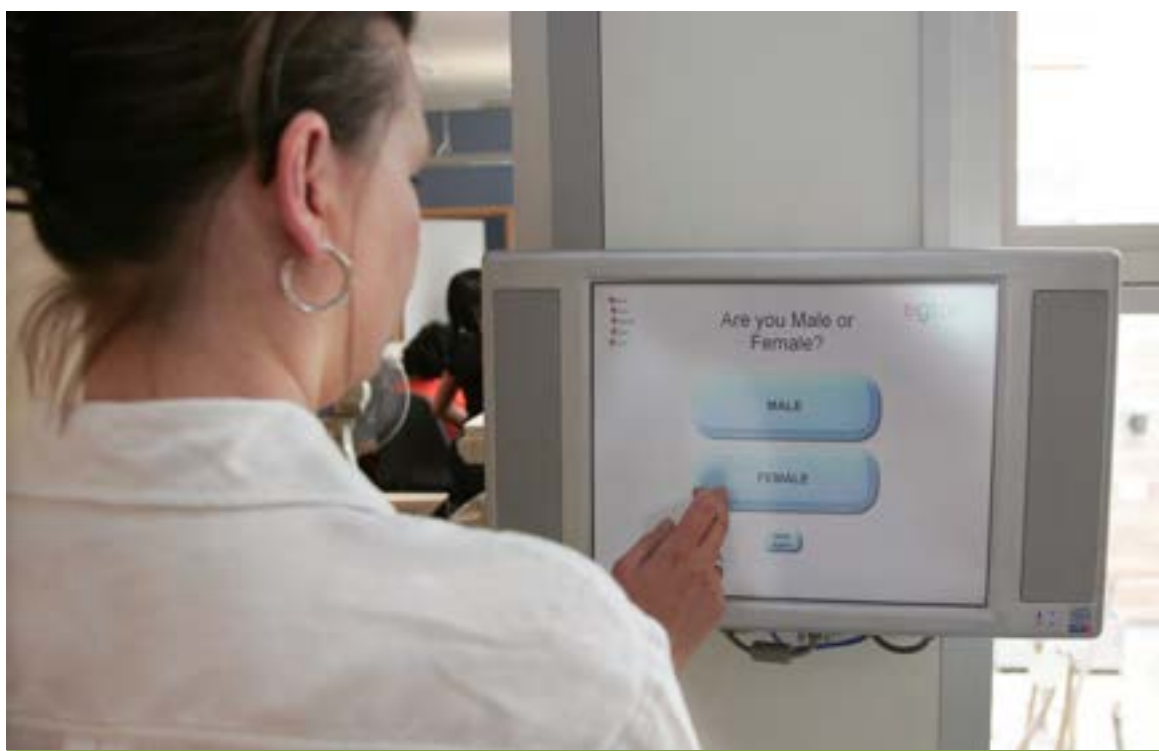




Using the findings from the survey our GP task & finish group produced a finished report, published in October 2014, with a number of recommendations for change. The report was sent to Halton CCG for an official response.

In December 2014, members of the task & finish group gave a presentation on the report to a meeting of Halton Borough Council's Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following this piece of work, a report was presented to the Halton CCG with a number of recommendations for change. In January 2015 Halton CCG responded in full to the report saying that they would be embedding all the recommendations made by Healthwatch in to their GP Strategy review.

In February 2015, Derek Twigg, MP for Halton, mentioned Healthwatch Halton and our GP access and out-of-hours provision report in a backbench debate on GP services in the House of Commons, quoting our findings as part of the debate.





Putting local people at the heart of improving services

As well as carrying out our own work, we actively support the wider involvement of local people in the commissioning, provision and management of local health and care services. Our management committee consists of a number of organisational representatives and also local people who represent the views of the wider public of Halton.

Within our website, e-bulletins and newsletters, we advertise details of opportunities for people to get involved by taking part in local and national consultations or becoming involved with NHS Trusts through the likes of the PLACE (Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment) visits.

We have held four 'Fact or Fiction' events where we invite health and social care services to come and talk about their role and give the public the chance to put their questions directly to services.

“Healthwatch Halton have been incredibly supportive of the development of the General Practice Strategy, engaging in and contributing to the process throughout. They organised and helped run engagement sessions with the public and through those forums, we were able to gain invaluable patient and local population input to help shape the emerging Strategy. Healthwatch Halton have been a real asset throughout the work.”

Rob Foster (General Practice Strategy Programme Lead/Prime Ministers Challenge Fund Programme Lead)





Shape the Future - April 2014

In April 2014 we held a joint event with the Health & Wellbeing Board, attended by over 100 people.

The event gave people the chance to hear about the work of the Health & Wellbeing Board and their priorities. As part of the event we ran an interactive session where people had the chance to vote on the priorities they thought were important.

The feedback gathered from the event helped in the planning of the Health & Wellbeing Board priorities for the next 12 months.

‘Very informative. Uplifting. Great community involvement in the direction of policy and practice.’

Feedback from the ‘Shape the Future’ Event - April 2014

Care Home Conference - October 2014

In October 2014 we organised a ‘Care Home Conference’ in conjunction with Halton CCG, as part of their Primary Care Strategy, to gain an understanding of those that live, work and input into care homes, so that future services could be planned for the needs of Halton’s care home residents. Attendees took part in two workshops looking at what the current situation was and what could be improved. A report and recommendations from the event has been fed through to the Halton CCG to inform the current review of Primary Services in Halton.

‘Healthwatch Halton were superb to work with. Their expertise in engagement ensured that we were able to gather really useful information for our report’

Jenny Theodore,
Care Home Project Co-ordinator



Shape the Future Event - April 2014



Musculoskeletal Services (MSK) Event - December 2014

NHS Halton CCG are currently in the process of reviewing its musculoskeletal (MSK) services. As part of this review we facilitated and supported a number of engagement sessions on MSK services, including a large-scale event, community focus groups and 1-1 interviews.

Following on from the MSK event we have also produced a short video where 3 users of the MSK service give a key message that they would like the providers and commissioners to listen to. The video can be seen at <http://www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk/news/msk-the-patients-view/>

“NHS Halton CCG are in the process of reviewing its musculoskeletal (MSK) services. MSK conditions place a huge demand on healthcare services and significantly impact peoples’ daily lives. As such it was necessary to undertake the appropriate level of engagement with our population to understand current perceptions of MSK services, what is working well and the areas for improvement. Healthwatch Halton acted as an independent facilitator in this process and used their expertise in service user engagement to ensure that we were reaching as wide a spectrum of the population as possible. To do this, Healthwatch facilitated and supported a number of engagement sessions including a large-scale event, community focus groups and 1-1 interviews providing the CCG with a rich picture of the views on MSK services in Halton.”

**Emma Alcock, Halton CCG
Transformational Change Manager**

CCG Engagement Event - March 2015

In March 2015 we held a joint event with Halton CCG to allow people to find out more information on the changes proposed to General Practice in Halton under the CCG’s ‘One Halton’ review.

75 people took part in the event. The CCG gave details of the ‘One Halton’ proposals. We then asked people to take part in an interactive session using our ‘audience response’ voting buttons, which are always a popular part of any events we hold. A question and answer session finished off the day with the CCG using all the views and feedback they received at the event to help in shaping the new GP Strategy.

‘Very well organised event. Very informative of what is going on in health and social care in Halton.’

Feedback from CCG Engagement Event - March 2015



Question time at our MSK event - December 2014



Working with others to improve local services

We have worked hard to develop good working relationships with our key stakeholders offering services in Halton. Healthwatch Halton wants to be regarded as a 'critical friend' whose voice is valued and useful. This requires building trust and is not a short-term fix, but requires consideration and respect from all parties. The desired outcome is that Healthwatch Halton members, commissioners and planners work well together to improve services for the residents of Halton.

Our partnership working with the statutory sector means we have Healthwatch representatives sitting on the Health & Wellbeing Board; the Overview & Scrutiny Committee; the Merseyside Quality Surveillance Groups; the NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Board and numerous inter-agency strategic committees. We also have representatives on Patient experience groups in a number of NHS Trusts that serve the population of Halton. We contribute to the Equality & Diversity requirements of these Trusts.



As well as working with our statutory partners, we put great emphasis on engaging with members of the public:

- To inform them of service provision through our 'Fact or Fiction' workshops, which allow people to ask for information directly from service providers and commissioners.
- Hold focus groups and host and facilitate consultation workshops
- Give presentations to a wide range of voluntary & community groups
- Have stands at community events to raise awareness and gain feedback on services
- On-line Feedback system; e-bulletins; Facebook and Twitter
- Carry out surveys/questionnaires
- Produce newsletters & ebulletins

During the past 12 months no provider or commissioner has failed to respond to our information requests.

"Healthwatch Halton has a valuable and integral role in helping us transform health and care in Halton. They are also a welcome and valuable voice for local people in our decision making and governance processes. Our two organisations work closely together and we value them as a critical friend and 'watchdog' for local health services."

Simon Banks - Halton CCG Chief Officer



Health and Wellbeing Board

Health & Wellbeing boards act as a forum where key stakeholders in the health & care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities.

Jim Wilson, Chair of Healthwatch Halton, is our representative on the Health & Wellbeing Board.

Jim receives regular information and briefings from the Healthwatch Support Team on the work and issues raised which enables him to provide effective representation of the feedback, views and experiences of the public.

In April 2014 we held a joint event with the Health & Wellbeing Board, attended by over 100 people. The event gave people the chance to hear about the work of the Health & Wellbeing Board and their priorities. As part of the event we ran an interactive session where people had the chance to vote on the priorities they thought were important.



Health and Policy Performance Board Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

Tom Baker, a member of our Management Committee has been co-opted on to the OSC in a non-voting capacity. Healthwatch attends the OSC as a no-voting co-optee.

Both Healthwatch Halton & the OSC are committed to developing effective communication and possible joint working arrangements in order to best carry out their functions and ensure that the people of Halton receive good quality health and social care services.

Quality Surveillance Group (QSG)

The Quality Surveillance Group brings together commissioners, regulators, local Healthwatch representatives and other bodies on a regular basis to share information and intelligence about quality across the system. This includes the views of patients and the public, with the aim of proactively spotting potential problems as early as possible.

We are actively engaged in the QSG, through our chair, Jim Wilson, and we contribute to discussions by raising concerns and issues brought to us by the public and by providing regular intelligence reports for the group.



Work with the CQC

We gathered feedback from the public prior to the CQC inspection of Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in January 2015



We publicised and attended the listening events that took place prior to the inspection and we are due to take part in the Quality Summit meeting that is planned for early July once the final report has been published.

We have also passed on intelligence to the CQC, on other local health and social care providers, when they have been carrying out inspections, including a number of local care homes.

During the past 12 months we have made no recommendations to the CQC to undertake special reviews or inspections.

Quality Accounts

A Quality Account is a report about the quality of services by an NHS healthcare provider. The reports are published annually by each provider, including the independent sector, and are available to the public.

Quality Accounts are an important way for local NHS services to report on quality and show improvements in the services they deliver to local communities and stakeholders.

The quality of the services is measured by looking at patient safety, the effectiveness of treatments that patients receive and patient feedback about the care provided.

Healthwatch has the right to scrutinise and comment on these reports and our commentary has to be included in each Quality Account.

This work is undertaken by members of our Quality Accounts sub group. This year they have reviewed and commented on :-

- Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS FT
- Knowsley & St Helens Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS FT
- 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS FT
- Halton Haven Hospice





Our plans for 2015/16

Opportunities and challenges for the future

During the latter half of this financial year, it was decided to review the efficacy of our governance structure, so we held an independently facilitated workshop which resulted in the proposal for a new structure. Two further workshops were held to finalise a proposed organisational structure with Portfolio Leads instead of an elected Management Committee. This proposal was agreed by the Healthwatch Management Committee.

It is hoped this new structure will drive forward the activities of Healthwatch Halton, with each Portfolio Lead, taking the lead in one of the following areas: Acute Hospitals; Primary Care; Public Health; Adult Social Care; Children & young people; Mental Health and Older People. Underpinning the Board, it is hoped to have an Engagement Forum which will be open to Healthwatch

members, voluntary and community groups and the wider public.

Like the rest of the country, working in these times of austerity will bring its own challenges as Healthwatch, because of its success and raised profile, is being asked to participate in a growing range of activities with the statutory sector as well as signposting increased numbers of individuals who contact us with a wide range of queries and concerns.

The opportunity to grow our membership, recruit volunteers and seek funding to develop our services further, is to be actively pursued.

However, for Healthwatch to continue its growth we need your help! We need to hear your views; your hopes; your ideas. Healthwatch Halton is your chance to make a positive difference.

Please get in touch.





Our governance and decision-making

Our board

A Community Interest Company was registered with Companies House in February 2013. The Company has 3 Directors including the Chair, Jim Wilson, who was the former Chair of Halton & St Helens PCT. Jim was selected for his excellent knowledge and valued experience of health & social care.

The elected the Management Committee, consisting of representatives from the 'functional' constituencies:

Mental Health & Wellbeing; Carers; Cultural & Environment; Minority Groups; Older People; Specialist Needs and Younger People, together with six individuals from north & south of the Mersey and Directors provide an accountable governance structure for Healthwatch Halton.

Healthwatch Halton CIC Board

- Jim Wilson - Chair
- Paul Cooke
- Mike Hodgkinson

Healthwatch Halton Staff Team

- Lyn Williams, Manager
- Irene Bramwell, Outreach & Intelligence Officer
- Julie Doyle, Administration
- Dave Wilson, Communication & Information Officer

Management Committee 2014-15

The Management Committee consists of members of the Healthwatch CIC board plus

- Sue Ellison - Cultural & Environment
- Roy Page - Individual
- Carl Harris - Carers
- Pauline Ruth - Younger People
- Dawn Kenwright - Older People
- Hitesh Patel - Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Sue Parkinson - Minority Groups
- Doreen Shotton - Individual
- Brian Miller - Individual
- Bernadine Mitchell - Individual
- Tom Baker - Individual
- Bill Rathbone - Specialist Needs
- Vacant - Individual

Sadly, Management Committee Member Bill Rathbone passed away in September 2014. Bill, who represented Alzheimer's UK on our Management Committee, brought great commitment, enthusiasm and passion to his role and he will be greatly missed by us all.

One of our internal priorities was to review and evaluate the work and structure of Healthwatch Halton and as a result of much discussion it was decided to restructure the organisation for the forthcoming year to enable it to carry out its activities in a more focused way.



How we involve lay people and volunteers

Decisions made by Healthwatch Halton are informed by the feedback and experiences we receive from our local community. Our workplan priorities come from the evidence we gather from the people of Halton.

We have regular planning sessions involving board members, the management committee and staff to review our workplan priorities and consider which services we will cover, and how to best carry out our activities.

For new pieces of work the board and management committee may set up a small 'task & finish' group to project plan work on issues.

For instance:

- A task & finish group was set up to look at access to GP services across Halton. This group looked at the best way to carry out the project and held meetings with NHS England, Halton CCG and local GP Practice Managers to ensure they were fully aware of our plans.
- Enter & View volunteers meet with the staff support team to plan up and coming visits to services.

Reports produced by Healthwatch Halton have a huge input in from volunteers taking part in those projects, helping draft the reports and deciding on the recommendations within the reports.





Financial information

INCOME	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	134,715
Additional income	5,158
Total income	139,873

EXPENDITURE	£
Office costs	27,600
Staffing costs	88,657
Direct delivery costs	23,901
Total expenditure	140,158
Balance brought forward	-285



A few stats from our year


1500+

We've engaged with over 1500 people

700+


people have taken part in our surveys & questionnaires


60+

outreach events held


1100

Followers on Twitter


6200+

visits to our website

300+


feedback comments received

1426


members receive our newsletter or e-bulletin


8

reports produced on local services



Contact us

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Website: www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk

We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2015 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our local authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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your **voice** counts

We want to hear about the treatment and care you receive from our local health and care services

Hospitals, GP's, Dentists
Opticians, Social Care Services
Non-emergency services

Whether you've had a positive experience or there is room for improvement, have your say on the Healthwatch Halton website today.

You can even leave feedback anonymously!



Leave feedback now:

www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk

Telephone: 0300 777 6543 Email: enquiries@healthwatchhalton.co.uk
Healthwatch Halton, St Maries, Lugsdale Road, Widnes, WAB 6DB

