



Healthwatch Halton
Annual Report 2013/14



***“I
am really pleased
with the Healthwatch service.***

***It’s good to know that
we have someone
we can turn to
if we have any problems
with the health services
we use.”***

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Chair's Introduction



Welcome to our 1st Annual Report

This year has been a rewarding yet challenging year for Healthwatch Halton, starting with the establishment of a Community Interest Company and the election of a management committee that reflects the breadth and diversity of communities of interest within the voluntary sector and the wider community.

I would like to give special thanks to the members of the interim management committee, especially Paul Cooke, and Brian Miller, who put a lot of time, effort and commitment into establishing Healthwatch Halton as a Community Interest Company. I would also like to thank Mike Hodgkinson for accepting the post of Director and for the work he has done as lead on Enter & View and the CQC liaison.

I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to all those members who have throughout this year, supported the activities carried out by Healthwatch Halton.

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 all their hard work in helping the Directors and Management Committee members to plan and carry out events, consultations, surveys and task & finish groups. 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 appreciation to our statutory colleagues in the Health & Social Care Sector, who have proactively sought to use Healthwatch Halton to engage with the wider community and have listened to their views and concerns.

Thank you to all the individuals and organisations who have worked with us in the last year.

We look forward to continuing to work with you, to ensure that people's voices get heard..

Jim Wilson



About Halton

Halton is a local government district in the North West of England, with borough status and is administered by a unitary authority. It was created in 1974 as a district of Cheshire, and became a unitary authority area on 1 April 1998. It consists of the towns of Widnes and Runcorn and the civil parishes of Hale, Daresbury, Moore, Preston Brook, Halebank and Sandymoor.

Halton is divided by the River Mersey with historical cultural differences between Widnes, Runcorn Old Town and Runcorn New Town. Although Halton has been a unitary authority for over 16 years, crossing the River Mersey when the bridge is congested and cultural perceptions can still cause challenges when trying to engage with the community.

Healthwatch Halton took great care to ensure that the membership of the Management Committee would be inclusive and equitable to all residents of Halton.

Halton at a glance

- The health of people in Halton is generally worse than the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 6,800 children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.
- Life expectancy is 11.1 years lower for men and 10.8 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Halton than in the least deprived areas.



- Over the last 10 years, all cause mortality rates have fallen. The early death rate from heart disease and stroke has fallen and is worse than the England average.
- In year 6, 19.4% of children are classified as obese. Levels of teenage pregnancy, alcohol-specific hospital stays among those under 18, breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are worse than the England average.
- Estimated levels of adult healthy eating, smoking and physical activity are worse than the England average. Rates of hip fractures, smoking related deaths and hospital stays for alcohol related harm are worse than the England average. The rate of road injuries and deaths is better than the England average. The rates of statutory homelessness and excess winter deaths are better than average.
- Priorities in Halton include cancer, alcohol, falls, mental health and child development.

For more details see www.halton.gov.uk and www.haltonccg.nhs.uk

Governance

Healthwatch Halton has been set up as a Community Interest Company. It was registered with Companies House in February 2013, ready to take on the responsibilities of Healthwatch across Halton.

The Company has 3 Directors:

Jim Wilson, the former Chair of Halton & St Helens PCT, Paul Cooke and Mike Hodgkinson.

Jim was selected for his excellent knowledge and valued experience of health & social care.

Election of the Management Committee

Between April and June 2013 there was a Healthwatch Halton Board of Directors and an interim Management Committee, whose members worked hard to develop an accountable governance structure for Healthwatch Halton.

During June 2013, an election process took place to implement one of the governance arrangements agreed, to have a Healthwatch Halton Management Committee made up of 16 members to reflect the diverse range of voluntary & community groups concerned with health & social care in Halton, together with a fair distribution of individual members, who

also care about services and who can bring key skills and experiences to Healthwatch.

The election count took place on 1st July 2014 and the count was independently scrutinised.

The 16 places on the management committee include the three Directors; 7 organisational places, split into 'functional' constituencies (see list below), and 6 individual places (3 from each side of the borough, (North and South of the Mersey)).

During the past year there have been 8 Management Committee meetings and 16 Directors' meetings.

Functional Constituencies

Carers:

Carl Harris, Halton Carers' Centre

Cultural & Environment (e.g. sport/arts/ community):

Sue Ellison, Centre 8 Theatre

Mental Health & Wellbeing:

Hitesh Patel, Halton Citizens Advice Bureau

Minority Groups:

Sue Parkinson, Shap Ltd

Older People:

Dawn Kenwright, Age UK Mid Mersey

Specialist Needs:

Bill Rathbone, Alzheimers Society (Halton)

Younger People:

Currently vacant - Pauline Ruth acting Lead

Individuals

Bernadine Mitchell

Brian Miller

Doreen Shotton

Pauline Ruth

Roy Page

Tom Baker



*“Healthwatch
Halton seemed to be
the only people that cared
about my need for surgery. I feel
my operation would not have
been performed as soon as it
was, had I not
contacted
them.”*

Community Membership

Any person who works or accesses health and social care services in the borough can become a Community Member of Healthwatch Halton.

Membership is open to individuals, groups and organisations across Halton.

Total membership at 31/03/2014 was **1372**.

Members receive copies of our newsletters and ebulletins either electronically or through the post,

They also receive regular updates on events we are organising or work we have planned.

We currently have 47 volunteer members or ‘Healthwatch Champions’.

Outreach work carried out over the past 3 months with our local colleges is likely to lead to a large increase in the number of volunteers we have.





What we do

We actively seek feedback from people who live and work in the borough, recording their comments, good and not so good, and feeding the information back to decision making bodies.



We also provide information about local health and care services, signposting members of the public to the services they need.

We are here to give people a stronger voice to influence the health and social care services that matter to them:

- We ask people about their experience of health and social care, going out and talking to people and communities.
- We listen to people's experiences and look for patterns that show where change needs to happen.
- We tell organisations in charge of health and social care what the public think works well and what needs to change.
- We check that these organisations are listening to people's views and using this information to improve services.

Signposting & Information

Our work is driven by what people tell us about health and social care services in Halton, both good and bad experiences.

We received **168** enquiries for information on local services. The majority of these have been from members of the public although we have also received enquiries from professionals looking to direct their patients to suitable services.

Examples of signposting include:

- Hospital outpatients struggling to access patient transport for their appointments
- Members of the public looking for dentists who carried out home visits
- Enquiries regarding local support groups for mental health users
- How to access specialist diagnostic equipment



Feedback

Gathering views from the public is an important part of how Healthwatch Halton will improve health and social care services.

We received **473** comments about local services. These help inform the focus of our work.

To make sure we gather these views from all parts of our community we use a number of different engagement methods:

- We have spoken at dozens of community groups and meetings, gathering people's views about the local health and care services they rely on.
- We hold regular 'Fact or Fiction' information events on local care services, allowing people to ask questions of those services, and also feedback their views on the services.
- People can share their views with us by phone, email or through our website.
- Our 'Share your Story' leaflet gives people information about us and allows them to share their experiences of local services by returning it to our freepost address.
- We work with a wide range of groups and organisations across Halton to ensure we gather views from all parts of our community.



North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)

From April 2013 onwards we began to receive comments and enquiries by patients trying to book the Patient Transport Service (PTS) provided by The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

The evidence received from the cases across the area suggested that people were being excluded from accessing the service due to a change in implementing the eligibility criteria.

Healthwatch Halton contributed to a joint report compiled by Cheshire & Merseyside Healthwatch organisations which resulted in a meeting between NWAS, Healthwatch representatives and the service commissioners. (These meetings are now on-going).

Remedial actions were agreed at the joint meeting, and we are continuing to monitor patient experience.

NWAS agreed to take part in one of our popular 'Fact or Fiction' events, held in March 2014. They gave a presentation on the PTS, explaining the eligibility criteria and how to access the service, and then took part in the Question and Answer session of the event.



Outreach to GP Practices

During 2013 we carried out outreach visits to a number of GP Practices to gain the experiences of patients and promote the role of Healthwatch.

The biggest single issue raised by patients across all the practices was the difficulty in actually accessing GP services.

This feedback was reinforced by the comments we were receiving when carrying out general outreach and engagement across the borough.

These concerns were taken to our Management Committee and it was decided to set up a Task & Finish group to look at 'Access to GP services' across Halton.

In March 2014 we launched a survey to gather the views of the public. Surveys were distributed to all our members, either electronically or through the post. The survey was made available on our website, and promoted through the local press.

At the time of writing this report the survey is still taking place. The survey ends in June 2014 and a report will be produced by the T&F group later in the year.



Complaints - Advocacy

Anna, our Healthwatch Advocate has been supporting clients in her role of Healthwatch Independent Complaints Advocate since June 2013

During the year our Healthwatch Advocacy Service has provided support for 34 new cases. These have ranged from providing self help information, i.e. leaflets, web sites information etc., through to more in depth support i.e. people with mental health problems or frail elderly people who are very distressed due to illness or bereavement.

Weekly Healthwatch advocacy drop-in sessions now take place at community venues across Halton.



Who we've worked with

In our first year we have heard from a wide range of people from right across Halton, and we've actively sought views from some groups whose voices aren't usually heard:

- older people
- children and young people
- minority ethnic communities
- people with physical and sensory disabilities
- carers
- people using mental health services

Our work with groups has ranged from giving them presentations and information packs on our services to carrying out more in-depth focus group work and providing access to advocacy support.

Over the next couple of pages we've covered some of the groups we've worked with:

Involve

INVOLVE is a participation group whose role is to act as a critical friend to Halton's Children's Trust on participation, and has strong links with Halton Safeguarding Children Board. The group can also act in an advisory capacity on participation, advising on how best to involve parents, children and young people in decision making processes.

The participation group is made up of lead engagement and participation professionals and Young person and parent/carer representatives from a range of organisations, including Healthwatch Halton.

Disadvantaged or vulnerable people

We worked with the BME Floating Support Officer from Plus Dane to help provide weekly drop in sessions at the traveller sites across Halton.

Lunch Bunch Support Group

We recognise the difficulties that some vulnerable adults (including individuals diagnosed with dementia) experience in giving their views

We worked with the Lunch Bunch, a local

organisation that supports carers, cared for and former carers, who care for individuals diagnosed with dementia, to gather their comments on the refresh of the Dementia Strategy in Halton.

Deafness Resource Centre Halton

The Deafness Resource Centre contacted us to highlight the fact that there are times when family members were being asked to interpret on behalf of relatives, during appointments at hospital, which compromised patient confidentiality. We raised their concerns with the Equalities and Diversity, (E&D), Lead at Warrington Hospital and he agreed to look in to it.

A meeting was arranged between the E&D Lead and Deafness Resource Centre to discuss this issue.

Following on from this meeting it has been agreed that the Deafness Resource Centre will inform the Hospital of any impending appointments for the profoundly deaf community to ensure that appropriately qualified interpreters are booked.

Following our recommendations there are currently discussions taking place between the Hospital Trust and the Deafness Resource Centre to look at commissioning future interpretation services.



"I am really pleased with the Healthwatch service. It's good to know that we have someone we can turn to if we have any problems with the health services we use."

SPARC (Supporting People Achieving Real Choice)

SPARC is a project working with young people with low to moderate learning disabilities to help build their resilience, confidence and self-esteem. We met with the project team and explained how their group could get involved and feedback their group's comments to Healthwatch Halton.

Polish Family Support Group

Since January 2014, Irene Bramwell and Hubert Grabryszewski, a Polish resident, a trained translator and Healthwatch Volunteer, have been engaging with the members of our Polish community. The family support group provide an opportunity for Polish families in Halton to socialise and engage in English lessons. With the support from Healthwatch Halton the group have been able to take part in our surveys and consultations and feedback their views on local health and care services.

Social Inclusion

It was agreed by our Management Committee that we would raise public awareness of the proposed changes to local Urgent Care services through our website and our outreach visits across the community.

We engaged with a wide range of people, including seldom heard individuals and groups, the local community were encouraged to send in their individual responses to the proposed changes to the CCG.

We realised that some vulnerable adults including adults diagnosed with learning disability may have difficulties in feeding back to the review.

Working with SHAP (St Helens Accommodation Project) we organised a focus group meeting to gather the views of the Learning Disabilities Group.





Riverside College

We have undertaken a number of outreach visits to the local colleges giving presentations to students regarding our role, as well as holding drop in sessions in the college foyer.

Students had the opportunity to take part in our 'Access to GP services' survey, 68 students completed the survey. 6 students have volunteered to take part in our 'Enter & View' training, and a total of 43 students expressed an interest in becoming 'Healthwatch Champions'.

Young Womens Group - Catch 22

Halton Young Women's Group is organised by Catch-22 on behalf of Halton's Children's Trust and Halton Council as part of an on-going commitment to improve opportunities for all children and young people living in the borough.

We met with the group to find out the views of the group on the health and care services provided for young women in Halton and it

was agreed that the group would feed back to Healthwatch Halton any issues they became aware of. Some members of the group have expressed interest in volunteering with Healthwatch Halton and taking part in training for the Enter & View Team.

Age UK Mid Mersey - Support Groups

Halton has many socially isolated and lonely older people in its borough. Age UK Mid Mersey aims to reduce the effect of social isolation by enabling older people to meet other people in the local community by facilitating OPEN (Older People's Empowerment Network)

We've given presentations to three of the Age UK Mid Mersey support groups since January 2014. These groups have given us valuable feedback on our local health and care services.

Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum

The Halton Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum (CYPVSF) is a partnership network consisting of representatives from voluntary, community and statutory sector organisations that provide services and opportunities for children and young people in Halton.

Currently, Irene, our Outreach Officer, attends the monthly meetings of the CYPVSF. A Management Committee member, Pauline Ruth, also attends meetings of the Children's Trust, CAMHS Steering Group and the Safeguarding board.



Parents' Voice

This group links into Halton Children's Trust, representing Halton Parents 'Voice' on a wide range of agendas and topics. Formally known as 'Halton Parents and Carers' it provides the opportunity for parents and carers to have a "Voice" in the planning, development and delivery of services for children and young people 0-19 years and families. Membership is open to all residents living in Halton who have a child 0 - 19 years of age.

Voluntary and Faith Sector Groups

In addition to the groups already mentioned in our report, we've worked with groups such as:

- Deafness Resource Centre Support Group
- Halton Carers Centre
- Parkinson's Support Group
- All Saints Church Runcorn, Coffee Morning
- Hope Corner
- St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)

Face to face work

We can only carry out our work well if local people trust us, work with us and are willing to take part.

To build our relationship with local communities, we keep the public updated about our work and let them know how the experiences they have shared with us have helped to shape and improve services.

During the past 12 months we have been out and about across the borough at many events with our information stand.

- We attended 6 Local Area Themed Forums
- We took part in Disability Action Day 2013 at Walton Gardens
- Signed up over 40 new members at Party in the Park in Runcorn (as well as handing out over 350 Healthwatch Halton pens!)
- Held drop-in sessions at local GP Practices

We've been at lots of other events too:

- Our Healthy Halton Event
- Hope Reach Open Day
- Halton Open Day
- Vintage Group - 4 Estates
- Information stall at Green Oaks Shopping Centre
- Carers Mental Health Forum
- Disability Partnership Event
- Halton Health & Wellbeing Board - Shape the Future Event
- 5 Boroughs NHS Foundation Trust Event
- Safeguarding Children Trust Event



Statutory Powers

Healthwatch was established through legislation which gives us statutory powers and a strong position to influence decisions on health and social care.

Health and Wellbeing Board

We have taken our place on the Health and Wellbeing Board since it became fully operational in April 2013, with the seat taken by Jim Wilson, the independent Chair of the new Healthwatch Board. He is supported by the Healthwatch Manager and is briefed prior to each meeting.

Older People's Planning Board

Three committee members attend meetings of this board which is one of the health and social care boards which reviews reports prior to their submission to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

CQC

We have not made any formal requests for the CQC to undertake investigations. However we have established a good working relationship with the CQC and share information both ways.

Mike Hodgkinson, the lead director for CQC liaison, has attended CQC consultation events in Preston and London. A local CQC representative attends bimonthly meeting with Healthwatch Halton.

In 2013/14, we have fed in our knowledge of patient experience to CQC inspections at both Bridgewater Community NHS Trust and North West Ambulance Service.



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.

Local Healthwatch use Quality Accounts to support discussions about NHS healthcare matters in the area.

Our Quality Account Sub Group meets to look and comment on a number of local NHS Trust Quality Account Reports and also one from our local hospice, Halton Haven.



Equality Delivery System

Healthwatch Halton has a scrutiny role to ensure that local Hospital Trusts are meeting their duty and complying with the Equality Act (2010) which it does through the 'Equality Delivery System'.

This means that each year local Hospital Trusts submit reports to Healthwatch Halton which demonstrates how they are trying to meet the needs of the parts of the Halton community covered by the Equality Act (2010) including the BME communities in Halton.



PLACE (Patient Led Assessments of the Care Environment)

PLACE, is the new system for assessing the quality of the patient environment, it replaces the old Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT) inspections. The assessments apply to hospitals, hospices and day treatment centres providing NHS funded care.

The assessments see local people go into hospitals as part of teams to assess how the environment supports patient's privacy and dignity, food, cleanliness and general building maintenance. It focuses entirely on the care environment and does not cover clinical care provision or how well staff are doing their job.

The assessments will take place every year, and results will be reported publicly to help drive improvements in the care environment. The results show how hospitals are performing nationally and locally.

We were approached by Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Knowsley & St Helens Hospitals NHS Trust to take part in the PLACE inspections. Nine volunteers took part in training for the PLACE visits at local hospitals. Our volunteers have now taken part in PLACE visits around four local hospitals.

Newsletters & E-bulletins

People who share their experiences with us or who want to know more about our work can also sign up to our mailing list. We send regular e-bulletins to those who have email, letting them know about our work, sending out copies of our reports, and inviting them to events.

We also produce a quarterly printed newsletter which is sent by post to another 600+ members while another 500+ copies are distributed through local organisations and groups.

Online

Our digital media presence includes our website, e-bulletin and social media. In our first 12 months usage of our website has grown from 179 sessions (visits) in April 2013 to 605 in March 2014. We've had over 24,400 web pages viewed during the year.

We've also noticed that more people are using their mobile phones and tablets to keep in touch with our work, increasing from 9 sessions a month in April 2013 to 65 sessions per month by the end of March 2014.

Our twitter account @hwhaltonnow has 760+ followers.

Website Accessibility

In January 2014 we added 'BrowseAloud' capability to our website to improve accessibility for the 20% of the population who are unable to easily interact online.

BrowseAloud helps to ensure that those who are hardest to reach are not excluded from accessing information on our website, i.e. those with Mild Visual Impairments, Dyslexia, Low Literacy, the Ageing Population and those with English as a Second Language.

It gives people access to a wide range of accessibility tools such as translation of 75 languages, 33 with a supported voice, a PDF reader, Text Magnifier, Simplifier, Screen Masking and the ability to save text to voice as mp3 files.





Local Media

We've been interviewed a number of times this year on the weekly voluntary sector show on Halton Community Radio.

News articles on Healthwatch have been published in:

Both our local papers - The Weekly News and The World

We've been mentioned in magazines from:

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust

Halton Borough Council - Inside Halton

Liverpool Housing Trust magazine

5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust - Members Magazine

Warrington & Halton Hospital NHS FT - Members Magazine

Halton Carers' Centre - Newsletter

Halton & St Helens VCA - Health 'E' Times

Use of the Healthwatch trademark

When undertaking activities Healthwatch Halton use the Healthwatch trademark, which comprises of the logo and the Healthwatch brand. Materials we have used the trademark on include:

- Banners
- Board agenda & minutes
- E-bulletins
- Management meetings agenda & minutes
- Marketing materials, e.g. pens etc
- Promotional leaflets and posters
- Reports - Internal & External
- Stationary
- Social Media
- Website



Delivering our statutory activities

In the past 12 months:

- 7 new volunteers have been trained to undertake Enter and View activities
- 5 Enter & View visits to local Care Homes have taken place
- 5 volunteers have undertaken Effective Listening Training
- 6 volunteers have received training and taken part in PLACE visits around local Hospitals

Looking ahead - the coming year

Our plans for the next 12 months include:

Access to local GP Services

The results from the 'Access to GP Services' survey we are currently carrying out will be the starting point for more in depth work looking at the provision and access to GP services across Halton.

Enter & View visits

With the increase in the number of volunteers in our Enter & View Team we'll be looking to increase the number of visits undertaken. Our visits will also take in local hospitals this year.

Healthwatch Champions

We're aiming to increase the number of Healthwatch 'Champions' to support our network and expand the engagement we undertake in our community. We're also planning to build on the relationship we've built with local colleges to increase the number of young people involved with Healthwatch Halton.

To find out more about Healthwatch Halton visit www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk or call us on 0300 777 6543.

To find out more about the Healthwatch network visit www.healthwatch.co.uk

Contact us on
**0300
777 6543**





Healthwatch Halton - Income & Expenditure 2013-14		
Income	£	£
Unrestricted Grants		-
Restricted Grants		134,715
Bank Interest		-
Total Income		134,715
Expenditure		
Salaries & NI	95,474	
Staff Travel	1,250	
Staff Training	750	
Vol Expenses/Training	1,692	
Office Accommodation	6,432	
Line Management	7,788	
Printing, Stationery & IT	5,175	
Telephone & Postage	1,652	
Activities: VBS	320	
Activities: Networks	500	
Insurance	1,094	
Activities: RH	1,366	
Travel & Expenses	353	
IT & Communications	2,866	
Bank Charges	64	
Equipment	1,259	
Refreshments	7	
Sundry Expenses	114	
Stipend	5,000	
Total expenses	133,156	
Surplus/Deficit on activities		1,559
Fund balance b/fwd		-
Fund balance c/fwd		1,559



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