



Healthwatch Milton Keynes Annual Report 2019-20

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Message from our chair



This is my first introduction as your new Chairperson, and I would like to welcome you to the Healthwatch Milton Keynes 2019-20 Annual Report. Healthwatch Milton Keynes is your independent champion for health and social care, promoting your involvement and engagement, and sharing your experiences and views as evidence of how services can better meet the needs of patients, service users and carers.

Our priorities in this year included increasing engagement with young people, raising our profile as an advice and signposting service and demonstrating our impact. Our successes included engaging with over 600 young people which has given us a huge evidence base of what young people experience and need from local services. We also doubled our reach across social media and are a trusted

source of information and guidance to over 30 community groups on Facebook. One of our greatest achievements of the year was being able to demonstrate that at our follow up visits to local health and care services 87% of the recommendations we published had been actioned, resulting in the positive changes service users wanted to see.

Sadly, the Coronavirus pandemic impacted on some of our activity later in the year which included putting on hold our Enter and View visits to Learning Disability Homes. It has also meant service providers have been unable to respond to recommendations in our reports. Enter and View is an essential tool for us to reach and hear from some of the most vulnerable members of our community and we will resume our programme when appropriate.

I would like to thank our CEO and her team for their hard work and achievements over the past year, our much-valued volunteers whose enthusiasm and commitment is invaluable to the work of Healthwatch, and my fellow Trustees on the Board for their input and expertise. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor as Chair, Hilda Kirkwood, for her significant contribution over the past decade as she relinquishes her role as Trustee.

Thank you to all who engage with Healthwatch, and please continue to let us have your observations and feedback.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mary Legge', written over a white scribble.

Mary Legge
Healthwatch Milton Keynes Chair

Our 2019/20 priorities

Last year 1,254 people told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20. These were our six priorities and goals for the year.



Young People: Strengthen our engagement with local young people and develop an evidence base of their health and care experiences and needs.



Enter and View: Demonstrate that service providers change the way they deliver services based on recommendations from our Enter and View activities.



NHS Long Term Plan: Empower and enable local people to inform what the NHS Long Term Plan priorities should be for Milton Keynes.



Social Care Partnership Boards: Empower service users and carers to input into, and challenge service design and delivery of health and care services.



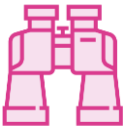
Advice & Signposting: Improve the navigation, quality and content of our advice and signposting service with a new look website.



Membership: Increase our membership with a particular focus on improving proportional representation of our whole population in our membership.

About us

Here to make care better



Our vision is simple

Health and care in Milton Keynes that works for you. People want health and social care support that works - helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



Our approach

People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with Healthwatch Milton Keynes to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, we'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to us. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.



Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

Twitter: @Healthwatch_MK

Facebook: @HealthwatchMK

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.





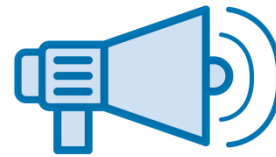
We have engaged with 1,853 people in the local community to explore their experiences of care, 600 people more than 2018/19.



We have 29 volunteers helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave us 900 hours of their time.



3,281 people accessed Healthwatch Milton Keynes' advice and information online, or contacted us with questions about local support, over 5 times more than 2018/19.



87% of the recommendations we made in when we visited services in 2018/19 had been demonstrably acted on, at the point we reviewed progress.



Our total membership increased by 36% from 2018/19.



Our social media reach extended to over 205,000, over double the reach in 2018/19.

How we've made a difference



Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change. Take a look at how your views have helped make a difference to the care and support people receive in Milton Keynes.

Supported Accommodation

Residents' voices embedded in the remodelling and development of new services

We were commissioned by Milton Keynes Council (MKC) to deliver engagement activity with people who currently use Mental Health Supported Accommodation and Employment Support services in Milton Keynes, to support commissioners in the remodelling and development of new services.

From the conversations we held with 18 residents in support accommodation, it was evident that some of the premises we visited did not demonstrate a consistent model of supporting and empowering residents to live independently. From the experiences that residents shared with us, the placement system appeared to depend on availability rather than the level of support or type of living space required. Furthermore, we observed a level of developing institutionalisation among residents who had been in the accommodation for more than a year.

Our concluding report set out 11 recommendations which included:

- Developing robust support plans with each client before placement begins. This should include having conversations about what the client would like their life to look like and setting ambitious goals which are supported with plans and pathways to achieve these
- Support staff regularly and

frequently check in with residents to ensure that any barriers or risks to achieving their goals are identified.

- Plans for mitigating or removing barriers that are put in place are agreed with the client. For example: identifying problems with, and resolving issues with transport to enable access to activities agreed within the client's support plan
- Milton Keynes Council could explore offering goal-orientated activities such as adult apprenticeships. Such activities could support clients to raise their aspirations, particularly where mental ill health may have been a barrier to them taking opportunities at a younger age

Following our engagement activities and report, Milton Keynes Council has embedded the recommendations outlined in this report into the Council's action plan for these services.

Commissioners told us that as part of a new service specification for supported accommodation providers will be required to discuss what independent living means for each person supported, and how the service will support them to achieve realistic goals. Services that have been "hands off" will be required to be more proactive in supporting people to achieve their goals.

“A great opportunity for us to get independent feedback from people who directly use these services on how we can do things better in the future.” - Commissioner Response

Standing up for peoples' rights to register with a GP without ID is an ongoing priority for Healthwatch Milton Keynes

In our 2018-19 Annual Report we let you know about the outcome of our 'My Right to Healthcare' project and the actions that the Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (MK CCG) and the Milton Keynes GP Federation (MKGP Fed) had pledged to undertake following the publication of our findings.

Taking action, the Lead Practice Manager from MKGP Fed brought together Healthwatch leads, GPs, Receptionists and Registration staff in Milton Keynes to collaborate on the development of a standard GP registration form which removed references to providing identification as a requirement and also supported GPs to better identify people at risk of homelessness. The GP Federation also ran

a training event for GP Practice staff regarding registration and applying the NHS rules appropriately.

Despite these positive steps people contact Healthwatch Milton Keynes regularly about being denied registration with a GP because of issues with ID. But what has been great to hear is that presenting our 'My Right to Healthcare' card, and letting reception staff know that Healthwatch Milton Keynes had been contacted has enabled many people to assert their rights and successfully register with their GP.

Unfortunately, we've found that many local GP Practice websites have not yet been updated with the correct information about your rights to register with a GP without identification. We've been advised that this delay is a result of practices waiting for a new website platform that will be rolled out this year. We will continue to work with practices to ensure the new websites contain the correct information.

Your Right to Access Healthcare



Action on Gluten Free Prescribing

Following a public consultation in 2017 Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (MK CCG) restricted the prescribing of all gluten free food items, meaning that many Coeliac patients were no longer able to access gluten free foods via their GP. Back in 2018, Healthwatch Milton Keynes facilitated two focus groups with patients with known gastro-intestinal medical conditions, with a view to understanding the impact of the changes to gluten free prescribing and published a report of our findings, with recommendations, in May 2019.

MK CCG's initial response to our report fell short of a clear commitment to implement our recommendations in full. We challenged the response and as a result, the CCG's Prescribing Group agreed to review the recommendations.

The Prescribing Group took the following actions:

- Healthwatch Milton Keynes recommended that MK CCG improve the quality of information to patients about the restrictions to gluten free prescribing and encourage them to share their concerns and health experiences with their Doctor. A poster was created in 2017 to inform patients about the changes to gluten-free prescribing. However, the poster did not offer any more information about where people could go to seek more information about the decision-making process, and how to feedback their concerns. The

In June 2019 50% of those who had applied for funding had subsequently received bread and flour mixes on prescription.'

Prescribing Group agreed to add this information to posters, reprinted and redistributed posters to GP practices.

- The Prescribing Group also updated the information available to affected patients on their website and made it easier for people to navigate their way to the relevant information.
- The Prescribing Group gave assurance that if a GP feels that a patient is at risk of dietary neglect, they can complete a funding application to be prescribed bread and flour mixes. MK CCG operates a small local panel, made up of MK CCG staff, who look at these funding applications. In June 2019, 50% of those who had applied for funding had subsequently received bread and flour mixes on prescription.



Milton Keynes
Clinical Commissioning Group

Over the counter medicines

What's changing?

Over Gluten-free foods such as gluten free bread, rolls, bread mixes, crackers, pasta, pizza bases, breakfast cereals and oats are **no longer funded on an NHS prescription.**



Why?

- It is now **much easier for people to buy gluten-free foods** alongside their normal grocery shopping.
- Stopping the gluten-free food service will save the NHS in Milton Keynes **£100,000 a year.**

If you have any questions or concerns about this change, please speak to your GP or contact the CCG Complaints Team:

01908 278684

mkccg.complaints@nhs.net

Complaints Team, NHS Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group, Sherwood Drive, Bletchley MK3 6RT



Improving Communication for Lip-readers

Healthwatch Milton Keynes worked with the Hard of Hearing Group to produce a resource which aids communication in health appointments.

Healthwatch Milton Keynes regularly attends the Hard of Hearing Group's meetings and we heard from people that they regularly had difficulty with professionals' understanding and awareness of their communication needs when it came to lip-reading. At one of the meetings the Healthwatch representative observed that one of the members was wearing a badge stating that they could lip read. We asked if having a printed card at GP reception with "I'm a lip reader, please face me" type script on it to take into the consulting room would be useful.

The group welcomed this suggestion and agreed settings where people with hearing impairments would benefit from having a card like this with them.

The card was designed as a prompt to remind those of us, including health and care professionals, without any hearing difficulty of the reasonable adjustments

that we can all make in everyday situations to improve communication with people who are struggling to take part in a conversation.

We approached the Milton Keynes GP Federation (MKGP Fed) who saw the benefits for hard of hearing patients in attending GP appointments. They helped design the card and produced an information leaflet to be distributed to all GP Practices across Milton Keynes.

Healthwatch Milton Keynes organised a larger print run so as well as being available in GP services, individuals themselves can now carry their own cards to use wherever they need them.

These cards are available to anyone who could use them by contacting Healthwatch Milton Keynes, the MKGP Federation or the Hard of Hearing Support Group.

“She was wearing mask so I produce the card and told her I couldn't hear her with mask. She quickly removed mask and I was able to read her lips”
- Service User



Improving the Provision of Social Activity in Residential Care

This year, Healthwatch Milton Keynes published a Thematic Report highlighting best practice in the provision of residential care.

In 2018-19 we visited 16 Care Homes and heard from residents about their lives in residential care. Our thematic report is intended to be used as guidance for best practice in the provision of care, from the resident's perspective, with an emphasis on social engagement.

Our thematic report also serves to support families looking at Care Homes for a loved one gain a deeper understanding of what a good home looks like from the perspective of those living in Care Homes.

This year we launched a follow-up programme with the Care Homes we had previously visited, to find out how homes had acted on our recommendations and what positive impact our visits, and our thematic report, had made.

Examples of the changes as a result of visit and recommendations:

We said: Ensure that residents' suggestions for new activities are properly considered and responded to.

They did: Introduced 'Make a Wish' programme which gives residents the opportunity to fulfil their wishes. Through this, a 103-year-old was recently taken horse-riding.

We said: Develop a programme of outings to meet the needs of specific groups of residents

They did: Sought the provision of a taxi service (paid for by Sanctuary Care) to allow residents to go on trips, including afternoon tea at the local church

We said: extend activities to provide more stimulation, particularly for residents who are mentally and socially alert

They did: purchased a number of Amazon 'Alexas' for residents to enjoy in their rooms and helped them to create their own personalised playlists

🗣️ It's better now, thank you for sorting it out. I get noticed now." - *Care Home Resident, Burlington Hall*



Improving the Environment of Maternity Services

We spoke with 37 women to explore their overall experience of care received when delivering their baby at Milton Keynes University Hospital.

Healthwatch Milton Keynes carried out an Enter and View visit to the maternity wards at Milton Keynes Hospital to speak to women as they were receiving care on the wards. We also made visits to Health Visitor led Baby Clinics at Milton Keynes Council's Children and Family Centres, as part of the programme, to talk to women who had had more time to process and reflect on their experience at the hospital.

Families told us they felt safe and supported by passionate and dedicated staff. Areas identified for improvement were mainly practical and environmental

issues and the quality of care was highly praised.

Milton Keynes Hospital were grateful for the real time feedback from women using their services. In response to the 9 recommendations in our report, the Hospital committed to:

- Improve the orientation of, and patient awareness of facilities. This includes providing a 'Welcome to Ward 9 and 10' booklet at the bedside on arrival and investing in new signage to direct families and visitors to the Family Room
- Undertake audits to explore patient's and their families' understanding of tests
- Declutter the midwives' station to make it more welcoming
- Order additional chairs to facilitate partners staying overnight



Campbell Centre Enter and View

We heard from 25 inpatients at the Campbell Centre about their experiences whilst within the care of the local acute mental health inpatient service

Healthwatch Milton Keynes made four Enter and View visits over the course of a month to speak to inpatients at the Campbell Centre, listening to both their experiences and views of care within the Centre and to observing daily life at the Centre.

Our Enter and View authorised representatives reported the Campbell Centre to be a clean, bright and well-equipped facility with a popular programme of activities.

Those our representatives spoke to were complimentary of many Nurses, Peer Supporters and the Occupational Therapy Team, and it was evident that these people had made a positive impact on the lives of the patients they supported.

However, representatives found a stark contrast in people's experiences of care from their Consultants and Doctors, with a majority of patients reporting feeling they are not listened to or involved in decisions around their care.

Our report set out 12 recommendations to provider Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), including:

- Provide greater clarity for patients around the status of their stay, ensuring non-sectioned patients are aware of their freedom and are not automatically deprived of their liberty through the blanket application of policies
- Find ways to ensure patients are offered regular (at least weekly) one-to-one meetings with their Consultant, as recommended in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines
- Consider extending staff development and training to empower ward staff to engage with patients, setting clear guidance on appropriate mobile phone use and expectation of duties.
- Explore ways to better utilise the premises' main garden and make it a more appealing space. Consider involving patients in an art project to create a mural for the corrugated walls.

“I’m not allowed to leave, as apparently, I’m not safe but I’m not detained, and my Consultant has been trying to discharge me. It makes no sense to me.” - Inpatient



Blakelands Hospital

Whilst supporting Blakelands Hospital with information about their own Patient Participation Group, Healthwatch Milton Keynes carried out an Enter and View visit to give an independent review of patient experience.

We spoke to 15 patients and our authorised representatives reported Blakelands Hospital to be a well-run service based within an easily accessible, clean and modern facility. We recommended that, in order to enhance the excellent service currently enjoyed by patients, Blakelands Hospital:

- Take steps to actively involve the Patient Participation Group (PPG) in meaningful co-produced activities and to make the information about the PPG, and the work they are doing, easily accessible on the service's website
- Ensure there is a private space

available for breastfeeding mothers who do not wish to use the waiting area, and publicise this clearly

In response to our recommendations Blakelands Hospital has:

- Involved members of the PPG in carrying out annual Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) audits to inspect the hospital, and in the running of a MacMillan coffee morning.
- A new noticeboard has been dedicated to inform patients about the PPG, the role of being a member, and how to sign up
- A sign has been placed in the reception area that informs patients that a private space can be arranged for breastfeeding

“ [Consultant] was a very nice man. He explained everything to me and what was going on. He listened to me and we decided on the best course of action together.” - *Service User*



Enter and View in Learning Disability Residential Care Homes

Our programme of work aimed to hear from residents about the support they receive with personal goals and aspirations as well as opportunities for social interaction and engagement with the community.

Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, this Enter and View programme of work was postponed after 4 of the planned 10 visits. We will continue with the remaining visits once it is safe to do so.

In advance of our programme, our authorised representatives attended Signalong (sign-supported) training provided by Milton Keynes Council to increase awareness of communication methods that can be used with adults who have learning disabilities.

We also consulted with professionals with extensive experience in this field during the planning of the project, one of whom joined the visiting team of authorised representatives.

Initial findings from our first visits evidence that the biggest barrier to leading more socially active lives is the limited number of community based activities and accessible activities for those people who are unable to access mainstream events.

We have recommended that managers and staff at some Care Homes be more proactive in organising reviews of care assessments with the Council so that each resident can be supported adequately as their needs change.

“They treat me like an adult. I don’t like to be treated like a child -that’s why I moved here.” - *Service User*

NHS Long Term Plan

#WhatWouldYouDo

The Government is investing an extra £20bn a year in the NHS until 2023. The NHS has produced a Long Term Plan, setting out all the things it wants health services to do better for people across the country.

For these plans to work, the NHS needs to shape local plans based on local needs. We heard from nearly 1000 people #WhatWouldYouDo to improve local services in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK).

Improvements to local care that Milton Keynes residents told us they wanted included:

- Better access to services, particularly availability of appointments at GPs, local provision of services (including

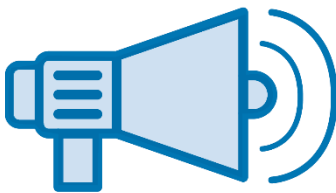
drop-ins) and social care (including home care, personalised care & continuity of care)

- a greater focus on the community with localised services (including specialists), community services and involvement
- Better communication between professionals but also to patients including those who have different communications needs.
- Easier access to health professionals - including direct access to consultants - and health care professionals holding local clinics at surgeries.

As a result, the NHS has committed to take the following steps:

- To plan services and pathways from a patient perspective to allow better access to services and support 24/7
- Implement better communication and signposting

Highlights



More than 40,000 people shared their views nationally with Healthwatch



861 people from Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes shared their views with us through a survey



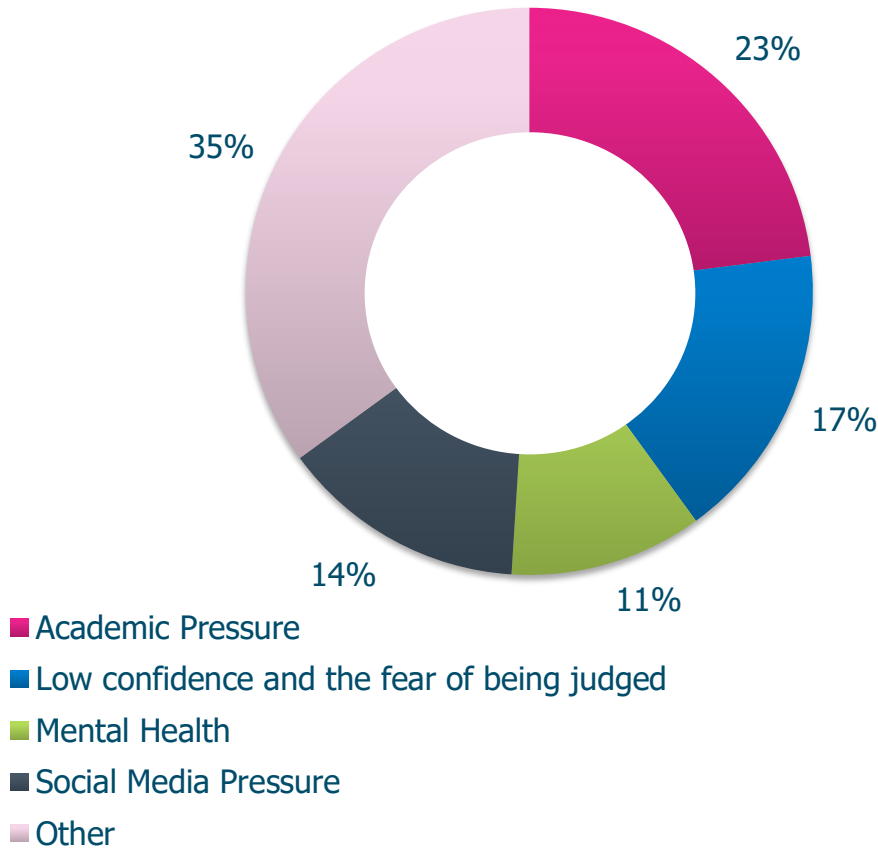
160 people attended 12 Focus Groups across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes

Read the full report here: www.healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk/report/2019-08-08/blmk-nhs-long-term-plan

Young People



Most common concerns for young people:



We asked young people about their wellbeing related concerns for the future. Young people mentioned the themes above most frequently during our engagement.

Young people told us they feel under a lot of pressure: from parents and schools to do well academically and meet expectations; from peers to conform to the social hierarchy; and from social media pressure which exacerbates insecurities about their body.

- “failing my exams and disappointing my parents” - young person
- “being judged for the way I look” - young person

Mental wellbeing was an underlying theme throughout with young people

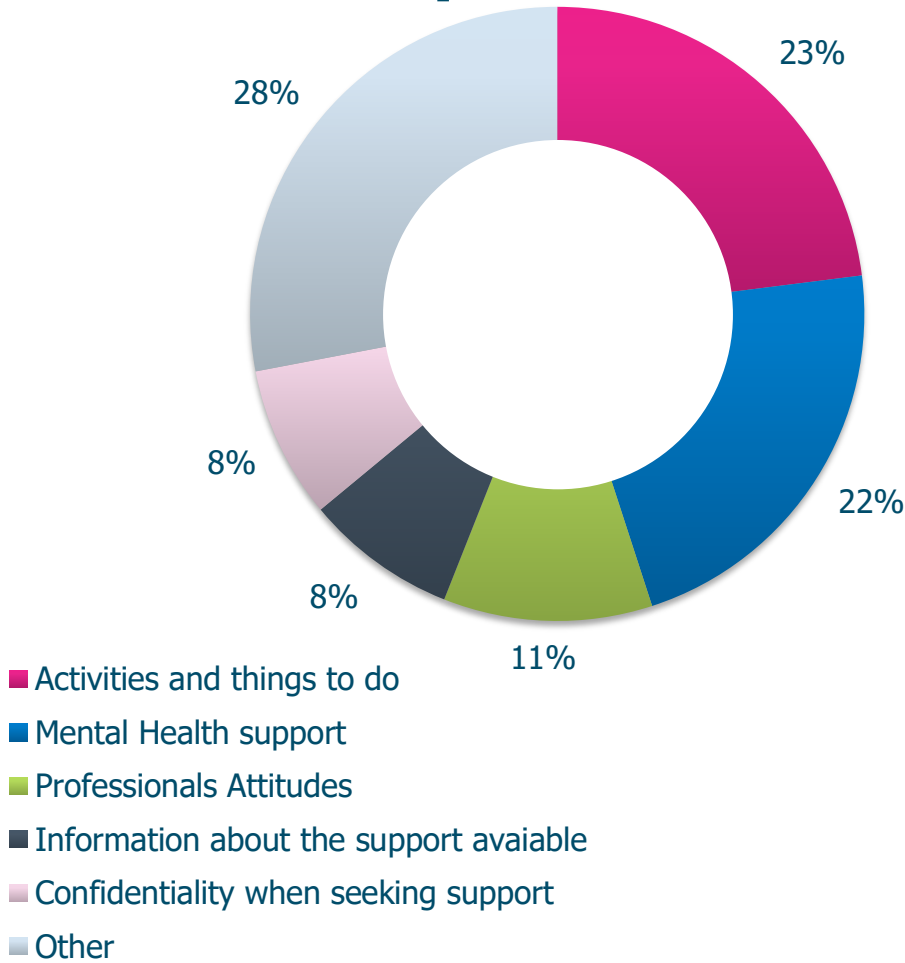
readily acknowledging the negative impact their biggest concerns were having on their mental health. However, comments relating to mental health in itself were the third most common.

To improve mental wellbeing, young people told us they want more support available from the beginning to prevent problems escalating. They also want more counselling available, particularly within the school setting and more free counselling available.

Unaccompanied young people settling in Milton Keynes can be presented with unique concerns, often relating to language and culture.

Young people in this situation told us that information about services must be available in different languages and there must be structured opportunities to practice language skills.

Young people’s priorities for service improvement:



We asked young people about the changes to services that would have a positive impact on their lives. These suggestions were themed; the most frequently raised themes are shown in the graph above.

The young people we heard from had limited awareness of the support already available to them in Milton Keynes. For example, they were largely unaware of some local free support available, such as Kooth, an online counselling service specifically designed to meet these lower level needs.

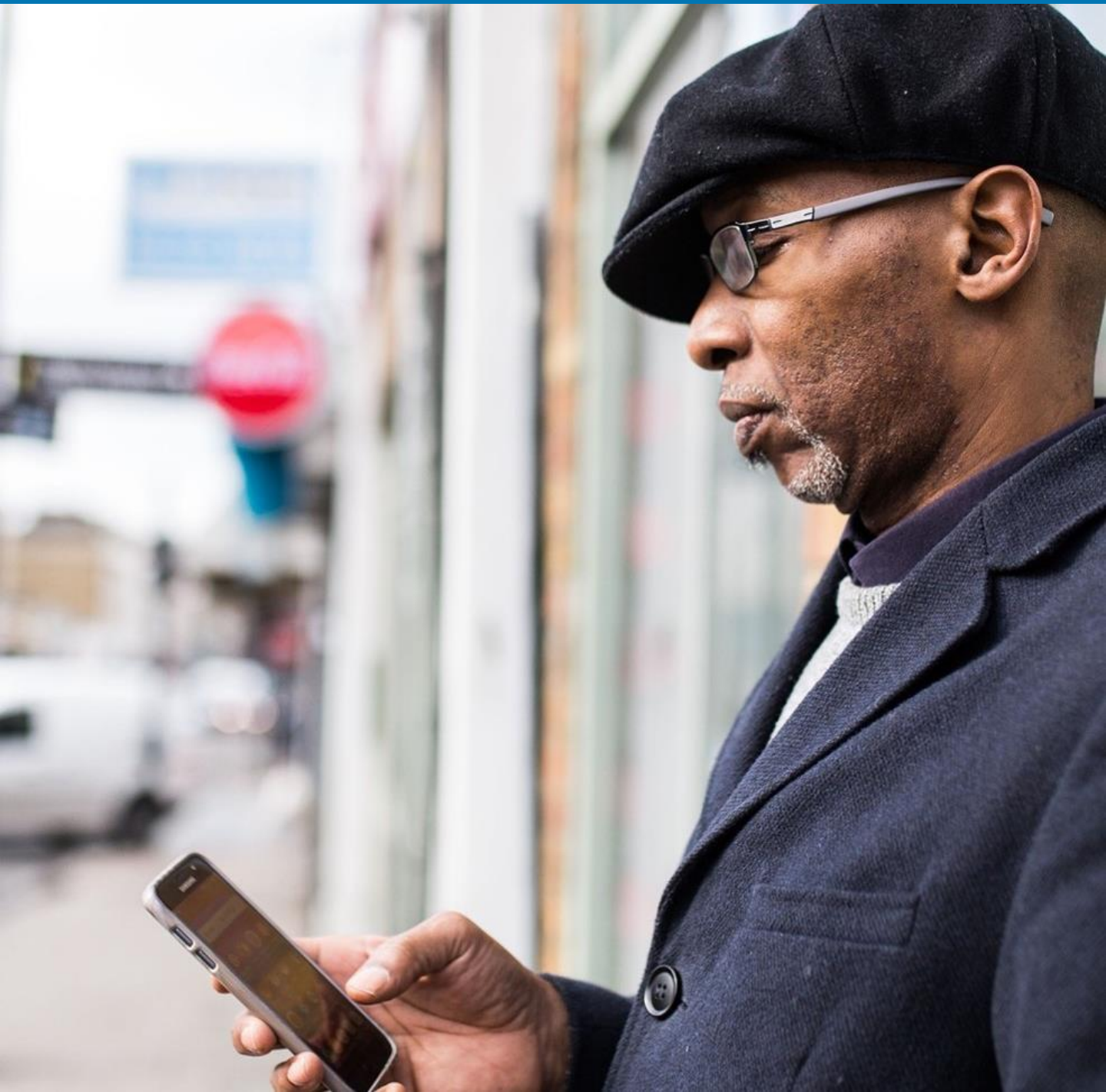
There is a need to promote the services that already exist for young people

more effectively. We heard that services need to review the online platforms used to communicate services. For example, we were told that Facebook should be used to inform parents of the support available for their children, but is not an effective way of keeping young people, who use platforms such as Instagram or Snapchat, up to date.

Young People told us that they recognised the value in service providers working more closely with schools to inform young people of their offer.

Finally, young people shared with us the importance of educating parents about the services and support available, as many of them go to their parents for advice and support in the first instance.

Helping you find the answers



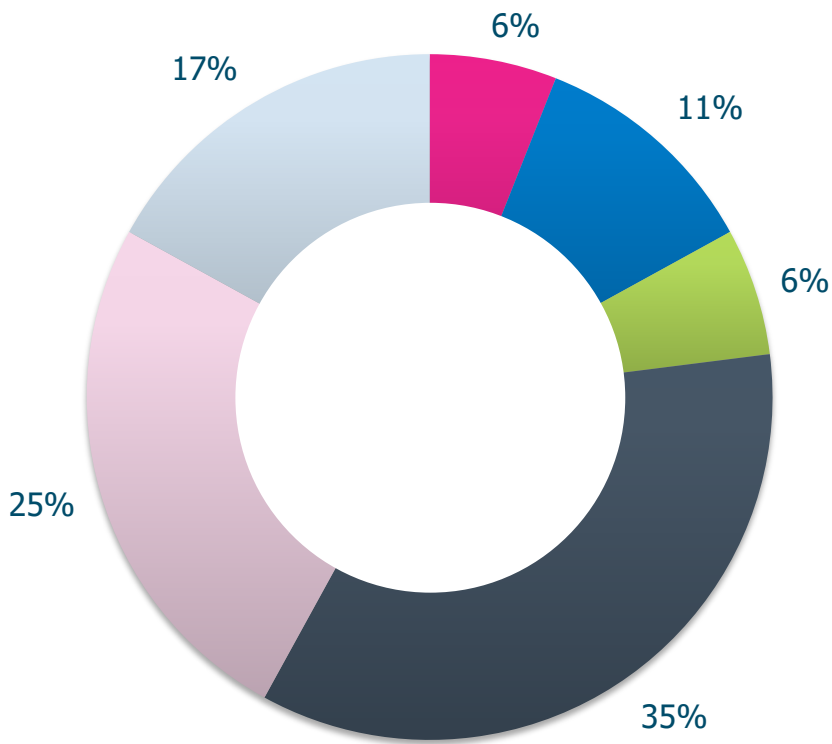
Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful.

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.

This year we helped 3,281 people get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people’s queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community events.
- We reached a further 205,000 people on our social media.

Here are some of the areas that people asked about:



- Adult Social Care
- District Nursing
- MKUH
- Mental Health
- GP Practice
- Other

Improving Access to Information for the Hindu Community

Healthwatch Milton Keynes helped over 100 people from the Hindu Community to access information about local health and social care services.

Early in the year, with the help of our Gujarati speaking volunteer, we attended a local community group - the Dosti Club - to hear from people about their experiences of finding out about and using health and care services. We found that accessing information was a barrier for some members of this community, even though it is considered a well established community of Milton Keynes.

“I felt at ease asking so many of my queries but was all answered accurately” - attendee

In collaboration with Milton Keynes Hindu Association, we organised a wellbeing event for the Hindu community. On the day, there were 19 health, social care and voluntary organisations represented at the event.

When we invited the organisations to come, we advised that we would be providing interpreters to be available throughout the event. Many of these organisations then made sure the staff that attended spoke Hindi or Gujarati,

and some were able to provide printed information in these languages.

Advice and information was available on a wide variety of issues such as mental health, diabetes, weight management and the Council’s Shared Lives projects. The community also benefitted from receiving flu jabs, physical health checks (e.g. Body Mass Index) and breast screening.

“I was so glad to attend breast clinic, so many of my queries were answered and I learnt a lot from it” - attendee

It was fantastic to be part of an event where the health, social care and voluntary sector worked collaboratively to listen and give advice and information to this community. As a result of this event, many of the organisations present found further opportunities to provide ongoing information and support to this community.

“We were greatly appreciated by those we spoke to for coming and raising awareness of mental health; our physical health nurses had queues of people... we have all been asked to return in some capacity to talk further in the community’s specific groups” - Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust



Some of the ways we were here for you:



Getting my smile back:

We received an email from a local gentleman after we worked with our Dental Commissioner to find him a new dentist: “...So please accept my sincere and heartfelt thanks for your positive approach and the brilliant use of your seemingly endless and diverse contacts! I am now officially feeling happier and seriously looking forward to getting my teeth back and then my smile which has gone missing for the last five years”



Young Carer’s relief:

We were contacted by a Carers MK staff member who was trying to organise some support for a Young Adult Carer (YAC) whose parent was at end of life. The YAC was struggling to work, attend University, and provide palliative night nursing on top of that. We were able to use our knowledge of the system, and our relationships with the providers to get this organised. The Carers MK staff member said: “My YAC is very thankful, so I am sharing their gratitude.”



Reasonable Adjustments:

We were able to help a Healthwatch member who was having difficulty when staff at their GP Practice did not apply the agreed reasonable adjustments when booking an appointment. These included seeing a specific GP and having communications through text or letter. After we spoke to the Practice Manager, we received this feedback from our member: “Once again, I thank you for all your endeavours, which I know have made a big difference to the outcome”



Deregistration during COVID:

One of our local Parish Councillors contacted us after finding one of their residents had been deregistered by their GP Practice, and due to the pandemic restrictions was left without medication or a GP.

We worked with the MK CCG Patient Experience and Complaints Lead who was able to get the patient re-registered with her GP, for at least the duration of the restrictions.



My 12 year old is struggling:

We were contacted by a worried parent who was struggling to find some counselling for their child. We were able to signpost them to Kooth (online counselling service), to Young Minds, and to local charity, Youth Information Service (YiS) for appropriate mental health support.



Historic Abuse:

We were contacted through our website by a person who had suffered historic abuse, and felt they had been failed by the local health system at the time. We were able to signpost them to our local Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Service, to NHS England and the Healthwatch in the area the incident had taken place.



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or social care service or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

Website: www.healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

Telephone: 01908 698800

Email: info@healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

Working with others





Our survey to explore the prescribing of antipsychotic medication to people with a Dementia diagnosis shows there are still questions around what other options have been explored before prescribing, who is prescribing, and whether the quality standards around reviews are being adhered to



The Mental Health Transformation Board is committed to making sure that the transformation of services are service user led. To this end, we, and the Chair of the Mental Health Partnership Board have been made voting members; this means that no decision can be agreed without the voice of service users being embedded



2361 MK citizens completed the 2019 Community Safety Survey. This work was coordinated by the Voice Board, a multi-agency group led and chaired by Healthwatch MK as a partner within [MK Together](#)



To inform the work of the Carers Partnership Board, we ran a survey to find out how services could be better for carers. The three main improvements Carers said they would like were: more respite opportunities, more information about the support available to carers, and more mental health support for the cared for.



The Mental Health Partnership Board provides a unique space for providers, commissioners and service users to discuss issues and improvements. The attendance grows constantly and the information shared is incredible value to all who attend



We chair Milton Keynes Patient Participation Group Network 4 times per year. This year, the PPGN discussed and shared learning on Primary Care Network development, district nursing and health checks



We provide volunteers to various locations, including Milton Keynes University Hospital, to take part in 15 Steps and PLACE, important patient-led environmental assessments.



In response to concerns raised at the Carers Partnership Board, we hosted a focus group to explore how the direct payments process could work better for Carers. 10 people attended.



The Joint Targeted Area Inspection Young People’s Mental Health was a significant multi-agency inspection covering Mental Health provision in children’s social care, health, education, youth offending team and the police. Healthwatch Milton Keynes arranged for 18 voluntary and community organisations to share their views with the Care Quality Commission and OFSTED inspectors.



Healthwatch Milton Keynes works with other local Healthwatch across Bedfordshire and Luton to ensure that the patient’s voice is heard as services are better integrated and a single commissioning group is developed.



Healthwatch Milton Keynes is a member of the Dementia Pathway Improvement Group which is working towards making Milton Keynes a dementia friendly city.



Transport is consistently raised as a concern at the Older Persons’ Partnership Board. 87 people completed our transport survey to inform providers and commissioners of the changes that would have a positive impact on their lives.

Our volunteers



At Healthwatch Milton Keynes we are supported by 29 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what people would like to improve, about services in their communities.

This year our volunteers:

- Raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community, and with health and care services.
- Visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support.
- Helped support our day-to-day running e.g. governance
- Listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.

Volunteers review Dementia Information Service

The Dementia Information Service at the Alzheimer's Society is commissioned by the Milton Keynes Council to provide information to people who need support relating to dementia.

When the Dementia Information Service (DIS) came up for a review of how well they were delivering the support, the Council turned to Healthwatch Milton Keynes for an independent approach.

We were given a list of clients, who had consented to their information being shared, and we divided them among a group of our volunteers. Many of those who offered to make the calls had a special interest in Dementia, or had family members living with a diagnosis of Dementia.

While this was not a prerequisite, it did mean that the volunteers picked up on

cues that prompted a fuller conversation around other issues the family might be facing due to the Dementia diagnosis.

The results of our review of the DIS were overwhelmingly positive with everyone who answered the question saying they would definitely recommend the service. One person told us they had just given the DIS details to a friend.

Because of the guided conversation skills of our volunteers, we did signpost a number of people to other Social Care services or community support, such as the Volunteer Driver Service, to provide further assistance.

Healthwatch Milton Keynes has always been very lucky to have the calibre of volunteers that we have. Their work allows us to continue to be the high achieving organisation we are.



Volunteer with us

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

Website: www.healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

Telephone: 01908 698800

Email: info@healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk

Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear what they get up to.



Karen

Karen brings a wealth of experience in the area of Learning Disabilities to her role as an Enter and View Authorised Representative.

“My volunteering Role has exceeded my expectations; the access to a wide range of online training, a support network of volunteers, plus the respect shown to volunteers and the warm welcome. I have been able to share my knowledge and skills and in return I have learnt more about Healthwatch and helped to improve Health and Care.”



John

John is an Enter and View Authorised Representative and attends the Mental Health Partnership Board as a Healthwatch representative.

“Volunteering as part of the Enter and View team at the Campbell Centre proved to be very challenging but worthwhile. I would recommend anybody who has time available and wants to improve health and care to volunteer for Healthwatch Milton Keynes.”



Fatema

Fatema uses her local networks to encourage the public to share their experiences with us. She has also supported our engagement with the BAME community through her interpreting skills.

“Volunteering with Healthwatch MK has given me the chance to do something truly positive for others. It has been a rewarding opportunity that I will never forget and I look forward to continuing to volunteer with them”

Our finances



We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012).

Last year we received additional income to support the management of Milton Keynes Council's Mental Health, Carers, Older Persons, Dementia and Carers Partnership Boards, to engage with local people on the Long Term Plan, to engage with people in supported living and to support Healthwatch England in cataloguing a large library of Healthwatch reports published across the country.

Income	
Funding Received from Local Authority	£158,644
Other Income	£16,726
Total	£175,370

Expenditure	
How much it costs to run Healthwatch Milton Keynes	£32,771
Operational Costs	£12,682
How much we pay our staff	£134,156
Total	£179,609
Balance at 31st March 2020	£31,601

At the close of this year Healthwatch Milton Keynes had maintained reserves levels from 2018-19 and carried over funds of £10,984 committed to the delivery of MK Council's Partnership Boards.

Our plans for next year



Message from our CEO



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the delivery of health and care services in Milton Keynes, our communities and how we live our daily lives. The social contact restrictions put in place to protect ourselves, our loved ones and the services that help us also have a huge impact on how an organisation like Healthwatch Milton Keynes can engage with local people, listen to their voices and influence change.

It is vital that Healthwatch Milton Keynes continues to champion your views and experiences now and into the future. Now, more than ever we need to be focused on ensuring that the voices of the under-represented are heard as inequalities in our society, as well as those in health and care services are laid bare.

It is the very nature of a Healthwatch to be flexible and responsive to people's needs and we've adapted our 2020-21 business plan and put in place alternative plans to prioritise:

- Delivery of high quality, accurate and locally relevant information about COVID-19 to you
- Delivery of virtual activities to gather evidence about your experiences of health and social care during the pandemic to both inform services about what people need now, and in the future
- Being that point of contact for your concerns, particularly whilst NHS and other health and care complaints systems are restricted

We shall be returning to our earlier plans and priorities as soon as we can, but we recognise that the country has changed and we need to revisit all our planning in the light of that change, in a proactive and responsive way. I would like to thank our Trustees, Staff and Volunteers for not only their dedication to Healthwatch MK's work last year, but also for their proactive and resilient approach to work during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The views and needs of patients, service users and carers have never been so at risk of being unheard, overlooked or ignored whilst the health and care system struggles to cope with the pressures of the pandemic and maintaining high quality care. You can help strengthen the evidence and influence of Healthwatch Milton Keynes by becoming a member, sharing your story or joining our team of volunteers.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Maxine Taffetani'.

Maxine Taffetani
Healthwatch Milton Keynes Chief Executive Officer

Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of social care, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work.
- Milton Keynes College, Ousedale school, The Hazeley Academy, Transitions UK, SEND IAS and Service Six for their support to reach over 600 young people in Milton Keynes
- Laura Lucas, Practice Manager Lead at Milton Keynes GP Federation for her support of the 'My Rights to Healthcare' project and the standardised GP registration form, and of the Lip Reading Card.
- Ros Bloor, founder of the Hard of Hearing Group for her work with us on the lip reading card.
- Milton Keynes CCG Prescribing Group for their actions regarding Gluten Free prescribing.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to our Trustee, and former Chairperson Hilda Kirkwood. Hilda stepped down as Chair at the end of 2019 and will step down from the Board at our AGM this July. Hilda not only led our organisation to realise the ambition of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2017 but has gone above and beyond to guide and support the Board and Chief Executive in the development of an independent Healthwatch Milton Keynes. She will be truly missed on our Board of Trustees and we wish Hilda all the best, and a well-deserved rest.

With thanks



Healthwatch Milton Keynes Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer.

Contact us

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This report is available online on our website.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us on the details on the above.

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