

# Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Bury  
Annual report  
2021-22



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# Message from our Chair



**Last year, the Chair's statement reported a doubling in both our staff complement and numeric reach during the final quarter of 2020-21, as we stepped up in preparedness to support local communities and services through a global Pandemic. This year, we face difficult times once again and pledge to work alongside all those who live, work and volunteer in Bury, meeting local challenges with additional resolve and resource.**

Covid 19 continues to place pressure upon our healthcare system and Doctors have reported the effects that they are seeing of the squeeze in living standards upon peoples' health.

The risk that poverty presents to wellbeing has been confirmed by a recent national survey, conducted by the Royal College of General Physicians (RCP), with the RCP President cautioning;

"The fact that one in two people is already experiencing worsening health should sound alarm bells, especially at a time when our health service is under more pressure than ever before,"

Against this backdrop, Bury leaders are reinforcing local efforts to tackle health inequalities. I am relieved to be able to report that Healthwatch Bury has doubled the staff complement again, with a team of eight in post as I write. Going from strength to strength, yesterday we appointed six new volunteers to our Board of Directors, adding valuable expertise and capacity to assist us in strategically navigating the challenges that local people and services will face throughout next year and beyond. There is no room for complacency. These extra resources are in great demand and will be put to good use.



Reflecting back, this report charts our collaboration with local stakeholders and leaders, resulting in enhanced strategic impact with representation secured at all levels, in preparedness for the infrastructural changes ushered in by the move to an Integrated Care System.

Raising awareness of and involvement with Healthwatch Bury has been a key priority in 2021-22, during which time period we reached out to over a thousand people and had presence at 85 community events

With over 850 people responding over the last year to our questionnaires, we strove to ensure that the experiences and views of the public were both heard and taken into account as services were reconfigured or when decisions, with the potential to impact local services, were being made.

Our case studies illustrate a wealth of support provided to those at risk of experiencing a raw deal and poorer outcomes from healthcare. From January to March 2021, we launched a pilot, in partnership with Eagles' Wing, supporting over fifty issues through to a positive resolution, in regard to access to services or episodes of care for vulnerable migrants. This work has continued and identified much unmet healthcare need in marginalised communities.

Insight gathered throughout the year, however, confirms that the need for basic advocacy and system navigation prevails and is growing within all the communities of Bury, not least due to the legacy of the Pandemic coupled with long waiting lists, increased demand and extreme pressures on local healthcare services.



An early in principle commitment to mainstreaming this cutting-edge approach has been given by local leaders and we look forward to securing the resource to upscale and roll this out across our communities. The benefits to patients of our Health Advocacy and System Navigation approach are self-evident, bolstered by a reduction in clinician time spent on non-medical matters, coupled with increasing system efficiencies.

Another highlight of the year for me has been empowering people to directly share their experiences of healthcare. Constructive feedback, shared by a patient at a senior leader's board highlighted the barriers that she and other members of the deafened community face when accessing local healthcare services. This led to a pledge from service leads to work with Healthwatch and "experts by experience" to identify barriers and solutions. A dedicated officer has been appointed by Healthwatch Bury to conduct an access audit of local healthcare services in 2022-3 and to support the implementation of any adjustments that may be required in accordance with the Public Services Equality Duty.

There is much to be done and I'm looking forward to the challenges of this coming year, knowing that the need and support for our work is greater than ever. Finally, our programmes of work would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our staff team. Thank you. Your tireless work does not go unnoticed. I'm also thankful to our statutory colleagues with whom we have close and trusted relations. Your support is appreciated, as is the opportunity to be heard and to challenge appropriately.



**"The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities."**

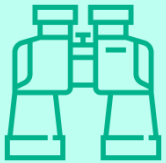
**Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England**



# About us

## Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Bury is your local health and social care champion. From Ramsbottom to Prestwich, Whitefield to Radcliffe and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



### Our vision

A world where people in Bury can all get the health and care we need.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better in Bury.



### Our values

- 🗣️ **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- 🗣️ **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- 🗣️ **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- 🗣️ **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- 🗣️ **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Our Team

In 2021, we grew our staff team from three people to five, and in 2022, we grew to seven. We are able to listen to more people now than we ever have, and with our volunteer team now growing too we will have the more capacity to assist local people to get the health and care they need and to help make services become as good as they can be.

## Adam Webb – Chief Operating Officer

'This coming year, I am looking forward to building on the great work we have been doing so far, and playing a positive role for the people of Bury in the move to integrated care systems in the area and in Greater Manchester. Whenever there are major changes to a system like the NHS and social care, there is a need for us to inform, explain and guide people through it so they can continue to access the care they require, and that is what I see as being a big part of 2022-23 for us.'



I am also looking forward to working ever more closely with our partners and stakeholders, to make sure that patients and service users are part of the continuing development and evolution of services in Bury, to make sure it is as good as it can be.'

## Annemari Poldkivi – Senior Research and Public engagement officer



'My goal for the coming year is to help to reduce barriers for people accessing health and social care services and supporting people from deprived backgrounds to thrive.'

I envisage achieving this by improving the quality of our research and reporting systems to ensure that system leaders come to Healthwatch as a first point of contact locally for patient feedback and including patients in care planning.'

## Andrea Wilson – Administration and Social Media Officer

'As the member of staff responding to most of the information and signposting enquiries, I have a passion for helping people have their say over local health and social care services.'

Sometimes it can be hard to know where to look to find support. In our signposting, we try to help members of the public understand what they can expect from health and



care services. We often direct people to information that is hard to find, this includes information to help people understand any choices they may have regarding these services.

Where local people have issues, concerns or problems with health and care services, we signpost them to other services that might support them and if we don't know the answer, we'll try our hardest to find someone that does.

One of our objectives is to do more to seek the views of those who are not being heard. I will strive to continue delivering a quality signposting service and contribute to the wealth of online resources and guidance we provide'.

### **Shirley Waller – Engagement Officer**



I joined Healthwatch Bury as a part time Engagement Officer in July 2021. My background is as a Manager in Leisure Services and for the last 10 years, I have worked on health prevention and rehabilitation contracts for Public Health and Pennine Acute NHS Foundation Trust.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year in my new post and have focused on raising awareness of Healthwatch locally and getting out and about in parks and open spaces, visiting Community and Voluntary sector organisations and talking & consulting with local people on a wide range of local health issues and concerns.

I worked on local surveys carried out over the past 10 months by Healthwatch Bury which included digital access to healthcare, urgent care and AskMyGP, as well as a signage audit at Fairfield Hospital to evaluate how patients negotiate their way around the site.

I have attended lots of local open days and boroughwide events, and I hope I have helped local people to access information, advice and assistance on a wide range of issues over the past few months.

### **Charlotte Foster – Volunteer Coordinator**

'I have loved working for Bury Healthwatch and seeing the important work that is taking place in the local borough. We have a lot of plans to develop and work in a range of areas and I find it very exciting and rewarding to be a part of it!'



## Fay Almond – Project Officer (Disabilities and Carers)



'I have personal experience of the difficulty and guilt experienced as a carer for a family member whilst trying to juggle with all the other aspects daily life (which do not disappear).

In 2020 I had a life changing experience which meant that I am embracing life as a disabled person. I hope that these experiences will give me empathy and assist me to help others.

In my role as project officer, I intend to focus on listening to the voices of carers and disabled service users in our local community especially those who do not have a voice. This year I would like my focus to be on several projects and I have begun the process by arranging meetings, designing survey questions based on the experiences of service users and attending project planning training to aid my knowledge:

- 🗨 The communication barriers faced by the deaf and hard of hearing community while accessing GP appointments
- 🗨 The quality of life and mental health issues faced by disabled people in our community following their Assessment of Needs
- 🗨 The long-term physiotherapy follow up of stroke victims in the Bury area with regards to the signposting of services that could help with rehabilitation eg accessible exercise'

## Katherine Warburton Gibb – Engagement Officer

Katherine left her post in April 2022 having been transformative in our online presence and the way we communicate via social media, as well as doing some fantastic work with young people, community groups and improving our reach and representation with diverse and often under-represented people.

We wish her enormous success in her future career and say a big thank you for all that she accomplished with us.





# Our board

## Ruth Passman - Chair

'My pledge for this year is to lead Healthwatch Bury in supporting those facing health challenges to access help, information and advocacy at a time when the healthcare system has never been more stretched. I am deeply committed to working in partnership with local leaders and stakeholders in improving health and care services in Bury. I have over twenty years of experience of working at a senior level in the Department of Health and the NHS. This knowledge and experience is of tremendous value to me in this role.'

## Alan Norton - Treasurer

'I am an experienced and charismatic leader with great credibility as an expert in disabled living. I have had a successful business career and brought commercial acumen into my roles in the voluntary sector and I am now a respected champion of disabled people with an excellent national network of experts. I marry a passion for improving the lives of disabled people with realism and a pragmatic approach to delivering practical solutions to difficult challenges for people living with disability. As a result I am respected and valued by the disabled community, policy makers and politicians.'

## Tan Ahmed

'Having been Chief Officer of ADAB for over 10 years, I have a track record of engaging with people from the minority ethnic communities. Our overall vision is to support people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, including new and emerging refugees and asylum seekers. We help to build their confidence and independence to enable them to access vital services and to become more active in the community. We aim to broaden their knowledge and skills and assist them to move into education, training or employment; improve their health and wellbeing and develop their sense of belonging as a responsible and valued citizen of Bury.

In fact, we have a similar remit to Healthwatch Bury, aiming to provide a service to all the residents of Bury MBC which is why that combined knowledge and experience can help me in assisting to drive Healthwatch Bury forward.'

## Steve Treadgold

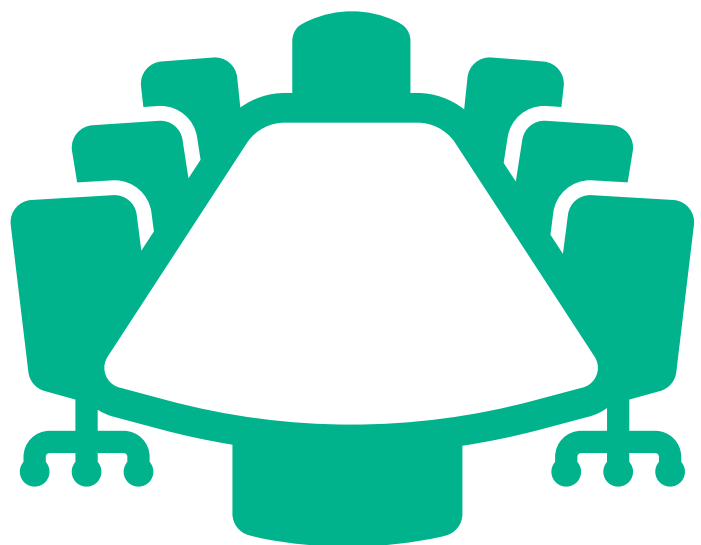
'I am a firm believer that the physical environment can promote healing in healthcare. I am a former Mayor of Bury and supporter of several Bury based charities. I want to make sure that the public in Bury has access to the first-class healthcare services they deserve.

Currently working in NHS temporary roles, a former substantive NHS Director of Estates and Facilities and a Chartered Electrical Engineer with a range of experience (40 years) in NHS estate and strategic functions at Board level. I am dedicated to maintaining high quality standards and excellent customer care.'

Having just completed a thorough recruitment process, we are pleased to announce six new directors will be joining the Healthwatch Bury board in July 2022. Bringing with them a wealth of very relevant skills, experience and expertise, we are very excited to get them involved and up to speed with our ambitious plans for the future.

We would like to give a warm welcome to:

- Jeff Glasser
- Florence Sokol
- Mahmoud Sanii
- Gita Bhutani
- Caron Blake
- Alison Slater



## Case study – Helping people in times of real need

Healthwatch Bury provide an Access Assistance drop-in service with the volunteer run service Eagle's Wing, to support asylum seekers and refugees to access vital health and social care services.

In our work at one of these sessions we came into contact with a lady who was homeless and needed urgent help. A 'refused asylum seeker', she had been told to move out from her current address. The lady, in her late 50's, spoke very little English, and was staying with her friend in another area but couldn't stay there indefinitely and needed rehousing urgently. This was impacting her health and wellbeing, and due to the lack of a permanent address, she faced barriers in accessing health and care services.



Healthwatch Bury spoke to the Bury Council Homelessness team on her behalf and was told that due to her destitute status she is unable to access any Bury Council support. They advised the lady to visit Bury Town Hall to check her immigration paperwork so they could see if there is anything they might be able to help with.

Our engagement officers visited the Town Hall with the lady to assist, but there we were advised to ring the Homelessness Team who had already stated that they were unable to help her. We then made contact with Booth House, and they gave us some options to try, and also made a referral to Boaz Trust for her. She was also receiving support via British Red Cross, but due to lack of evidence and complex background of this case, it was very hard for her to challenge her destitute status legally.

We were able to provide information about how to access health services even without any permanent address or proof of address so she could get any treatment she was in need of.

Two months later we received an update from the Boaz Trust to say that accommodation had become available for the lady, and she had now been housed.

Despite now residing outside of the Bury area, the lady still attends the Eagle's Wing sessions on a regular basis and is thankful for the assistance our team was able to provide.

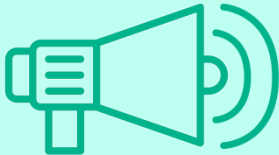


Our access assistance sessions at Eagle's Wing drop-ins take place on Thursday Mornings at Bury United Reformed Church (Parsons Lane, Bury, Greater Manchester). If you would like to know more, please get in touch.

# Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

## Reaching out



**1000+ people**

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

**350 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**4 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was our

**Bury GP service Mystery Shopping report**

which highlighted the struggles people have registering with a GP, especially when they have no proof of address or ID documentation.

## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**9**

outstanding volunteers, who gave up 6 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received:

**£122,000**

Which is the same as the previous year.

We also currently employ

**6 staff**

who help us carry out this work, which is one more than we ended last year with.

# How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



From running advice lines to helping people get vaccinated, our team helped combat COVID-19.



Our GP Mystery Shopping report alerted our commissioners and local system to issues with people being unable to access GP services without ID or proof of address.

Summer



We launched our new website, containing lots of information, guidance and advice for the people of Bury, as well as making it easier than ever to get in touch with us.



We began our programme of 'Facebook Live' sessions, engaging with services and providing information to the public around key issues. All sessions were made available on our YouTube channel.

Autumn



We visited Fairfield Hospital to evaluate signage and wayfinding on the site and produced a report with recommendations for improvement.



We contributed to GM wide and national reports, sharing Bury people's experiences of struggling to register with or be seen by an NHS dentist.

Winter



We began delivering our 'Access Assistance drop-in' sessions to help asylum seekers and refugees in Bury access the care they need.



A team of young people from Holy Cross came and developed a survey with us. They asked about young peoples' mental health during the pandemic and received more than 350 responses.



# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve



## Making GPs accessible for all

Many people can find themselves in a situation where they need to see a doctor, but don't have any proof of address – those who are homeless, fleeing domestic abuse, visiting friends or relatives, those who have lost their documentation or any one of many other scenarios. In England, anyone is entitled to access a GP, and NHS England is clear that you do not have to be in possession of identification or proof of address to do so.

Having heard from people in Bury that were struggling to get registered with a GP practice without proof of address, we decided to see what the reality of the situation was, so we carried out a 'mystery shop' of all (but one) of our local practices.



### Just over half of GP practices

In Bury initially said that some form of ID is required to register with them.

Practices can have a policy in place to ask patients to provide identification, *but they cannot insist* on seeing it to register them. Seeing some form of ID can however help to correctly match a patient to the NHS central patient registry and enable quicker access to any previous medical notes.



"Once I said the patient is not a permanent resident in Bury and from the EU country the GP receptionist didn't think the EU residents can register with the GP practice due to Brexit unless they have an indefinite leave to remain in the UK and they would have to access private healthcare."

Healthwatch Bury volunteer mystery shopper.



NHS England states:

*"all asylum seekers and refugees, students, people on work visas and those who are homeless, overseas visitors, whether lawfully in the UK or not, are eligible to register with a GP practice even if those visitors are not eligible for secondary care (hospital care) services."*

So we produced a report of our findings complete with four recommendations to improve information given to staff assisting people with no proof of address and to ensure that they are kept up to date with information around vaccinations etc.

#### What difference did this make

Local GP surgeries are now aware of their duties as part of the NHS constitution, and our partner agencies such as the CQC will be continuing to monitor that practices are making their reception staff aware of the requirements.

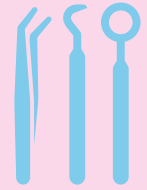




# Top areas that people have contacted us about

## Dentistry

More than any other aspect of health and care, we have heard most about people's inability to register with an NHS dentist, or to be able to get an appointment with an NHS dentist.



We have provided information to both our regional (Greater Manchester Healthwatch Network) and national (Healthwatch England) partners which have fed into reports picked up by national media. Our helpline has signposted many people to help them find information, whether it be on how to access emergency dental care, what might be needed to register with a practice or how to make a complaint.

## Foodbanks

Our helpline continues to regularly help and signpost people in need of foodbanks to feed themselves, their family or people they care for. Numbers are increasing, perhaps in relation to what is being described as a 'cost of living crisis' as prices of food, fuel and other essentials continue to climb, affecting the most deprived communities the hardest.



## GP services

From finding GP services nearby and helping people understand online access, to complaints about waiting times or lack of face-to-face appointments, GPs continue to be one of the services we are contacted about most often.

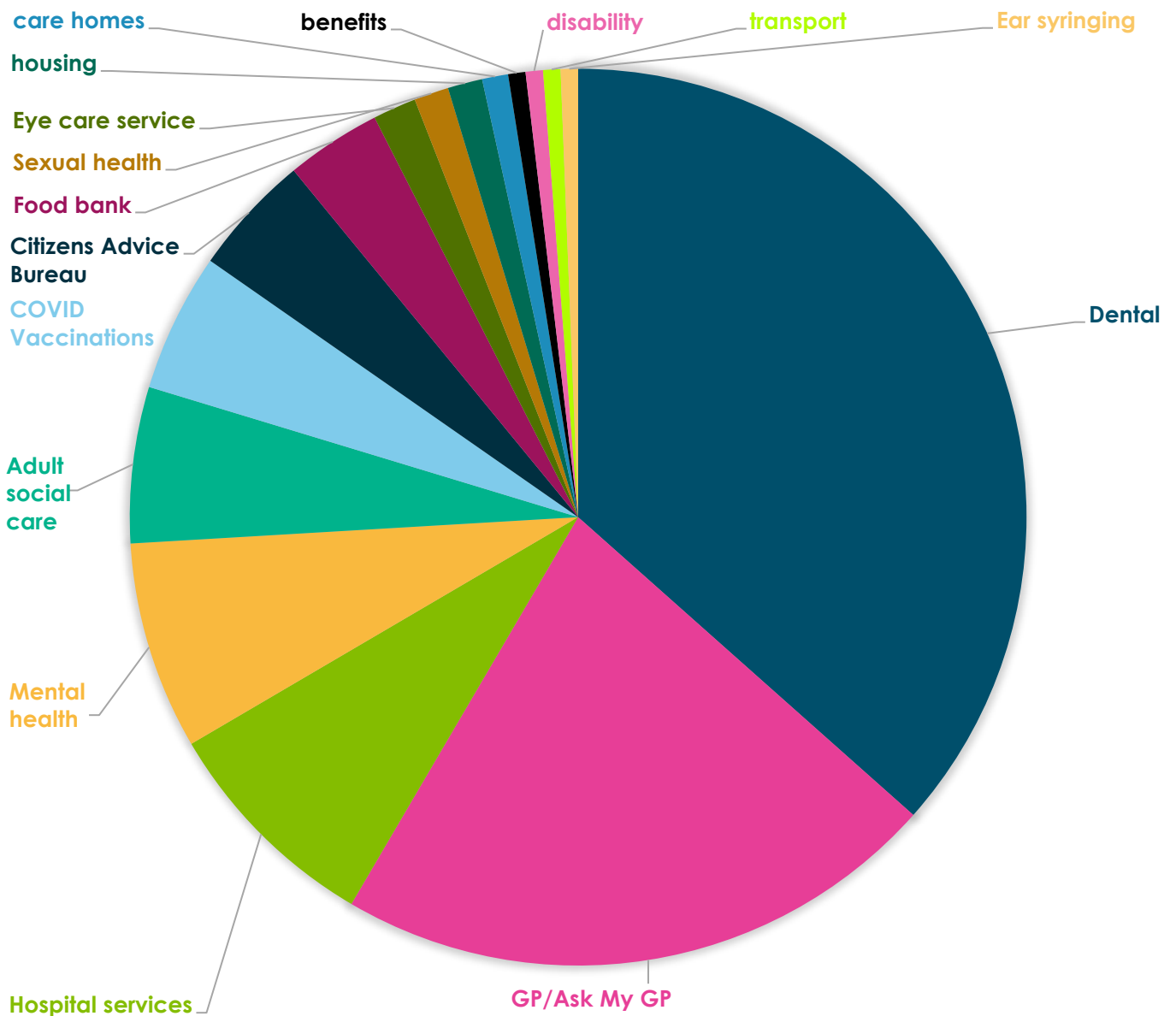


## Mental Health services.

Long waiting lists, lack of communication to those awaiting services and lack of options and continuity for people that have been through the system are all complaints we have heard. This includes CAMHS, where both parents as well as young people themselves have told us that the waits are an issue that need to be addressed.



## % OF COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS RECEIVED



### Notes.

Hospital services covers many service types and provision. They are together here in the table as one, however when we carry out our analysis, there have not been any strong patterns around particular service areas.

COVID-19 vaccination enquiries, comments and complaints have tailed off over the course of the year as the number of people eligible for the vaccine shrank following a strong delivery push.

## Three ways we have made a difference for the community

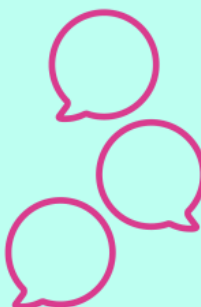
Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



### Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

**It's important for the NHS and social care services to step back and see the bigger picture, through hearing personal experiences, and the impact on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.**

As part of our Healthwatch Bury Carers Roadshow project, we used a case study video from Alan, one of our board members, who experienced difficulties in recruiting carers to help him to highlight the difficulties many people face when trying to get assistance to allow them to live independently. This video helps to convey the struggles people face on a daily basis which will help decision makers take a step back and see the people behind the statistics and decisions.



### Getting services to involve the public

Many services are under pressure following the covid pandemic, and the increasing waits for elective care services are a prime example.

We worked to include the experiences of patients on waiting lists or that had recently received surgery to produce a report with our partners at VCFA's social prescribing team the Beacon Service, to include experience in the local transformation programme. We also worked together to assist with the creation of the 'Waiting well' website and information resource, designed to help inform and improve outcomes for those on waiting lists.



### Showcasing lived experience

We have brought people to the Bury Locality Board to share their lived experience of the health and care system.

Commissioners and local decision makers get the chance to hear directly from people whose life has been directly affected by the care they have received and highlighting the importance to individuals of making a care system that works for everyone that needs it.

We have had people share experiences of disability in social care and how services deal with someone with hearing loss, and we plan to continue showcasing real lived experience at this and other important forums in the coming year.

# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Bury is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- 🕒 Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- 🕒 Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- 🕒 Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- 🕒 Helping people to access the services they need



## Signposting people who needed additional support

Our information and signposting service has continued throughout the pandemic helping people navigate the health and care system.

We have helped people access vaccinations, understand how to use online systems to book appointments, assisted with accessing prescriptions and many more scenarios.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, we provided information, guidance and signposting to over 300 people.

We also worked with our partners to help people with issues outside of health and social care when necessary, such as accessing foodbanks, housing help, benefits advice and more.



## Helping vulnerable people access the care they need

In January we began hosting a new weekly health advice and assistance drop-in session in East Bury to provide practical hands-on support on health and social care queries and issues—specifically aimed at residents of the Borough who can't speak English well or at all, refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers. We assist them to access services, help them to solve problems they have in finding the way through the system and signpost them to the most appropriate services to get them what they need.



The aim is to provide them with advice, information and assist with practical support to contact the right services or complete online application forms and help to provide long term improvements to their physical health and mental wellbeing.

The sessions have already proved to be hugely popular, and we have already assisted many with serious and complex problems, where their vulnerable status has led to them falling through the gaps in the systems. We are discovering where the issues within accessing services lie for those that are not familiar with things or who face communication barriers and we will work to minimise and improve these with our partners and stakeholders in the local care system.



This is a project funded by the *LET's do it!* community health fund.

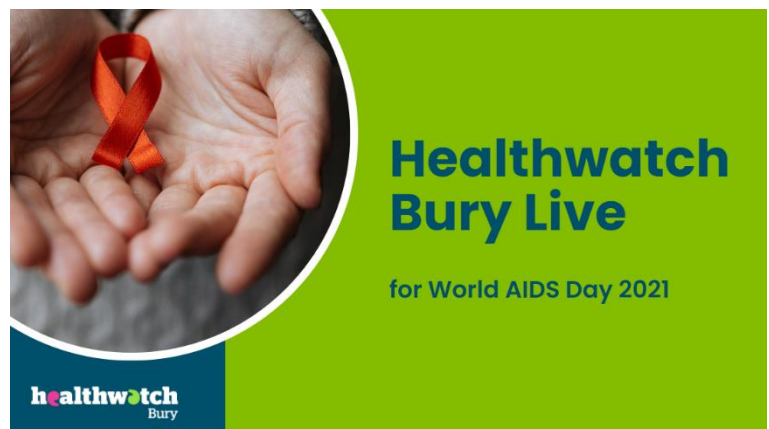
## Improving information online

### Facebook live & YouTube

We recognise that these days information is often found in different ways for some people than we might have been used to in the past. The rise of social media like Instagram and YouTube have shown that many people are more comfortable with learning about news and developments and gaining knowledge from visual sources like video. So to ensure we take advantage of this and not get left behind, as well as to ensure that people who might otherwise not be able to attend events and presentations following the Covid-19 pandemic, we launched our Facebook live programme.

It is an opportunity to showcase local services and organisations that help people with health and wellbeing in Bury, as well as providing people with a platform that they can engage with 'live' by asking questions, making comments and sharing info as they happen.

Once the sessions are complete, we load them onto our YouTube channel. This gives anyone who missed it live a chance to catch up, but also for us to build a library of informative videos covering a diverse range of services: From Sexual Health services, Bury Hospice and young people's mental health to breastfeeding help and Long Covid support.



[Follow our YouTube Channel](#) to see the whole collection of our live sessions and to be informed when new ones are added.

### New Healthwatch Bury website

In the Summer of 2021, our website was completely redesigned and rebuilt. Working with Healthwatch England, we created a more comprehensive online resource for people wanting to find information about health and social care in Bury.

At the heart of the redesign was a desire to make providing feedback about experiences of services as easy and clear as possible, and to make finding information and signposting simpler. We ensured that it is as easy to access as possible – offering many languages with the translate feature, full compatibility with screen-readers and a simple to follow navigation system.

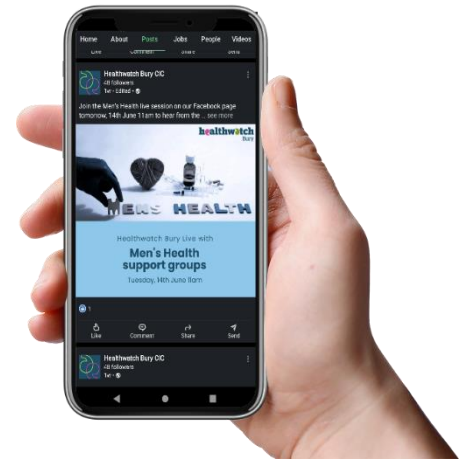
We also transferred hundreds of news stories and updates from the old site and added all of the reports we have produced in recent years.

We have had plenty of positive feedback, and we hope everyone that needs it will find it really useful. [Healthwatchbury.co.uk](https://www.healthwatchbury.co.uk)

## Keeping LinkedIn with our partners

We have begun reporting on our engagement, research and other work that we are undertaking on our LinkedIn organisation page.

The idea is to keep an ongoing feed of where we are and what we are involved in updated, so our partner organisations, key individuals and funders can be kept up-to-date. It also gives other organisations another channel to communicate with us, in a more professional manner, where our focus isn't on the wider public like it is on our other social media channels.



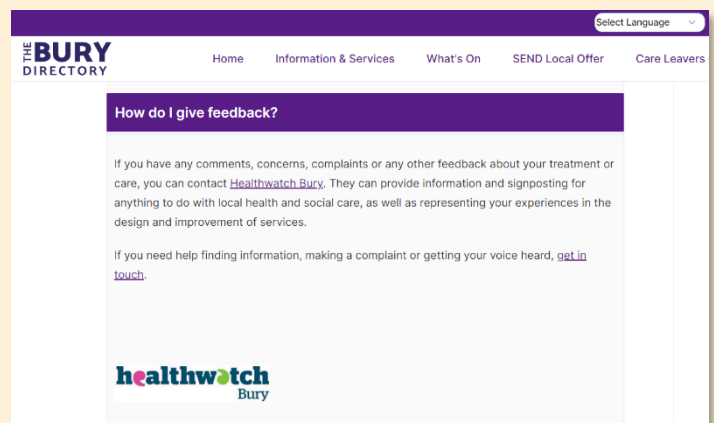
Follow us at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/healthwatch-bury>, where you will be able to see what we have been doing, where we will be and see our reports as soon as they are published.

## Waiting well website work

In Bury, waiting times for elective operations have grown sizeably during the Covid-19 pandemic. More people are facing longer waits, which can potentially negatively impact peoples outcomes or risk factors for undergoing surgery. It can also leave people feeling out-of-the-loop, not knowing what to do whilst they await their operation.

The NHS in Bury decided they wanted to provide a resource to provide reassurance to people waiting, with information about their procedures, waiting times locally, support groups and organisations that can help with factors around the issues caused by the need for the surgery and information about how to use their wait to improve their chances of a positive outcome.

This waiting well website was created in collaboration with us at Healthwatch Bury, where we provided feedback on patient experience to assist on the design, as well as reviewing its accessibility and providing recommendations to how to let people know about it. It also includes our details for if people wish to provide feedback or need support if they want to make a complaint.



The resource went live last year and was the first in Greater Manchester. You can see it on the Bury Directory at:

<https://theburydirectory.co.uk/whileyouwait>

## Case study

### Access to services for deaf people and those with hearing loss.

Healthwatch Bury held a session with the charity Communic8te, the local organisation that provides support and representation for deaf people in Bury, so we could understand any issues deaf people were facing in accessing essential services.

Many of their members told us about their experiences of accessing health and social care services and barriers they have faced. One of the members said how they had a heart attack, but his wife was unable to ring an ambulance due to her hearing impairment and instead had to run to their neighbour and ask them to call emergency services.



This also highlighted some issues faced by people with hearing loss who don't consider themselves to be deaf.

To begin with we contacted the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust and arranged a meeting to highlight some of the issues raised during the session. They welcomed the opportunity and arranged a focus group in the future to hear about people's experiences.

In addition, we contacted the North West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NWAS) to find out what they have in place for people with communication issues. NWAS sent us an extensive list of different communication options they have put in place, including emergency text service, which we then shared with Communic8te and their members. NWAS also put out an offer to participate in the future focus group for any accessibility information standard discussions with patients who have experienced any barriers.

As part of this work, we organised for someone with hearing loss to speak to our local locality board to talk to commissioners and providers directly about their experiences and barriers they had faced. Organising that in itself showcased some of the issues people with hearing loss face regularly, with no face-to-face meetings available, and all the online options offered lacking captioning/subtitling options.

We will in this coming year add to this work by beginning a long-term project looking at service delivery and deaf awareness in Bury as part of our wider work addressing accessibility of information from healthcare and social care providers.



## Talking to people in their own environment

As part of our regular engagement work, we have been holding 'park bench surgeries' all around the borough to talk to people who otherwise wouldn't necessarily take the opportunity to speak to us.

In addition to our work engaging specific groups and talking to people about particular issues that have been raised or that they have complaints about, we also want to hear from people that have experienced care but didn't feel it was worth making a special effort to share.

We have found out lots of really useful feedback, and also helped people access some services they otherwise wouldn't have been able to – such as registering people with their GP surgeries online system or giving information about support services they didn't even know existed.

Our programme will continue over this coming year, and you can find out where we will be and when on our website, or via our social media.



## Helping services listen more effectively

We were contacted by the management of Bury's intermediate care facilities and the rapid response team to talk about how we could assist them in gathering feedback from their service users and their families, and how they can use that more effectively in improving the experience they offer patients.

Healthwatch Bury met with them regularly and assessed their current methods, information and processes and looked at where there were opportunities to make experience gathering easier.

We also looked at how that experience data could be reviewed and shared to ensure that the whole team had the ability to learn and understand it, share ways of improving and make sure that there was a process to ensure lessons were learned when appropriate.

This has seen the use of improved surveys, QR codes and more formalised discussion at team meetings implemented so far, and more self-evaluation and improvement to follow.



# Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- 🕒 Helped people have their say, carrying out surveys online, in person, over the telephone and over social media.
- 🕒 Created digital content on our website and social media.
- 🕒 Continued to help with the local volunteering efforts supporting those who were self-isolating
- 🕒 Gathered information for and wrote reports on the findings of surveys and events.
- 🕒 Helped us at events and drop-ins, engaging with people and providing info.



## Bury pride survey report

We conducted a survey about the experiences of health and social care for LGBTQI+ at the Bury pride event, and the survey data was collected together.

Our volunteer Hannah analysed the information and presented the findings in a report, which we have since published.

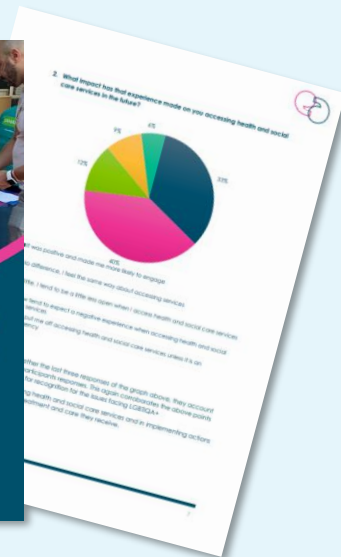
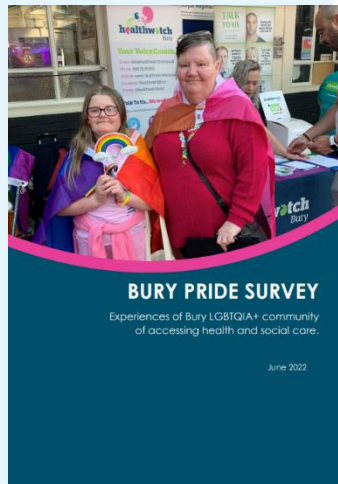
You can the full Bury Pride Survey report on our website at [healthwatchbury.co.uk/news-and-reports](https://healthwatchbury.co.uk/news-and-reports)



*'It has been really useful to use my research background to volunteer for Healthwatch Bury.*

*The work experience is very valuable to me and it has been very rewarding to learn about Healthwatch and the work that they do and to be part of it'*

- **Hannah**



## Outreach with asylum seekers and refugees

As part of our project providing assistance accessing health and social care via the drop-in at Eagle's Wing, our volunteer Adediwura has helped people communicate with services, understand their rights and find ways to get the help they need.



*'I have been looking for work experience in health and social care to help me develop skills and gain employment. I have really enjoyed the outreach work with Eagles Wing and can see how it really helps vulnerable people'*

- **Adediwura**



## Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch with our engagement officer Charlotte today.



[www.healthwatchbury.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbury.co.uk)

0161 253 6300

[Charlotte.foster@healthwatchbury.co.uk](mailto:Charlotte.foster@healthwatchbury.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income		Expenditure	
Core funding received via Bury Council	£122,22	Staff costs	£79,229
Additional funding	£6,000	Operational costs	£21,783
		Support and administration	£7,506
Total Income	£128,000	Total expenditure	£108,518

## Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Reducing inequalities in health and social care experience
2. Improving the accessibility of communications for patient and the public from health and care services
3. Investigating unmet care needs

## Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, your income or race.

# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Bury, Bridge House, Yeargate Industrial Estate, Heap Bridge, Bury, BL9 7HT.

Companies House number: 08886952

Registered in England and Wales.

Healthwatch Bury uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



## The way we work

### Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch board currently consists of 4 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. This number will increase to 10 once our newly recruited directors take up their positions. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as deciding to invest in additional dedicated engagement staff to work on specific projects areas, and upon our areas of focus, such as working with young people at Holy Cross, a local 6<sup>th</sup> form college.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. Our priorities are informed by intelligence we collect and analyse to show where people are facing barriers, difficulties or poor experiences, and we look at ways these can be addressed. Our intelligence is made up of feedback that we collect ourselves (such as via surveys, face-to-face at events, via our helpline, from social media etc.), as well as that we collect from other external sources (such as from Healthwatch England and other Greater Manchester Healthwatch, Partner Organisations, Regulatory bodies, services themselves, published statistics and reports from various sources and the media/social media). We analyse what we have and look for patterns and trends, which we then investigate. We then look at what we can do to positively influence change and decide on our plan of work.

### Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual and actual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual and in-person activities and engaged with the public through social media.



We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, working with organisations representing the interests of people with disabilities, LGBTQI+, Carers, Dementia, Long-term conditions, different ethnic minority and community groups. We

have engaged with them and their service users, given platforms for them to share information and to bring concerns they are hearing to us.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website, distribute it to our partners and stakeholders and can provide printed copies and alternative formats upon request.

## Responses to recommendations and requests

We have not had any providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

## Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Bury is represented on the Bury Health and Wellbeing Board by Ruth Passman, Chair, Healthwatch Bury. During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by championing the experience of patients and the public.



# Message from our Chief Operating Officer



This past 12 months has been one of many changes throughout the landscape of health and social care in Bury, in Greater Manchester and across the entire country. Following new waves of coronavirus causing further lockdowns, more extreme pressures on services and giving staff across the NHS and care sector little respite.

But easing of restrictions, the relative success of the vaccination programme and the slow return of a sort of normality to life has brought us to a point where we need to learn from our experiences and use them to make services as good as they can be in the 'new normal'.



We again have to say a huge thank for the hard work, persistence and kindness of the NHS, local authority and social care staff who have continued to battle staffing shortages, demand pressures and disrupted lives while providing care. Their ongoing efforts are greatly appreciated.

Our team at Healthwatch Bury has grown and we are going to build on this last year where we returned to engaging with the people of Bury in person, at events and groups that have returned following the

pandemic hiatus. Our plans are to hear from more people, from more areas and different backgrounds than we have ever done before this year.

We will continue to build on the information and signposting service we provide, bringing more to our online offering we have worked hard to create this year. This will include more video information via our Facebook Live/YouTube channel where we showcase local services, more news and information on our website, as well as making it easier to feedback your experiences in more ways that before.

We are also very excited to build our volunteer capacity, which will enable us to achieve even more and help us to involve more of the people of Bury in what we do. We are particularly excited to relaunch our Enter and View programme, which



will give us first-hand insight into services in the area and let us share what we learn via reports which will be made available to the public.

This coming year brings many changes to the health and social care infrastructure in the shape of Integrated Care Systems replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Care Organisations. We want to make sure we are represented at every level of the system in Bury to ensure that the experiences and views of the public are listened to in the decision making processes, to provide quality assurance and accountability and to inform the public of developments that will affect them. We will also represent the people of Bury at a Greater Manchester level via our GM Healthwatch Network, which has new and robust ways of working and a reporting structure that will enable transparency in everything we do.



We have lots of important pieces of work underway, from focussing on accessibility of information provided to patients and service users, unmet care needs and access to GP's to addressing inequalities, engaging with and representing seldom heard groups, and listening to the needs of young people.



So we look forward to working hard as a team, with our volunteers, our partner organisations, our stakeholders, patients, service users and the public to make a really positive difference to the health and care system in Bury.

**Adam Webb, Chief Officer Healthwatch Bury**





# healthwatch Bury

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