



On equal terms

Then and now

Healthwatch Bury annual report 2020-2021

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Message from our Chair

Healthwatch Bury have had a very busy and successful year. Throughout 2020-21, we joined the people of Bury in expressing our heartfelt thanks to the wonderful frontline staff in health and social care who worked tirelessly through an unprecedented global Pandemic.

The Pandemic shone a light upon and amplified existing health inequalities and social deprivation; the COVID death rate for Greater Manchester has been 25% higher than the rest of England. Life expectancy in the North West fell by 1.6 years for men and 1.2 years for women in 2020, underlining the need for Healthwatch Bury to further amplify the patient voice, support the Bury healthcare system to 'build back better' in 2021-2 and ensure that patients continue to be placed at the heart of services.

Our case studies illustrate positive ways in which we have helped people in the community this year and how we have flexed to respond to the need to work digitally at the peak of the Pandemic. In recognition of the need for face-to-face support, including to those who are digital excluded and socially isolated, we have adapted in order to engage the public in outdoor spaces whenever practicable, for example our launch of the Healthwatch Bury Virtual Roadshow in Clarence Park in February 2021. We ensured that we are represented on the local Vaccine Equality group and fed back issues faced locally with COVID tests and vaccinations. This included a Quarter 4 Mystery Shopper exercise to identify and feedback where people had been denied access to Primary Care and specifically to the COVID-19 vaccine, despite the clear national policy that everyone is entitled to register with a GP and to have the vaccine regardless of ID, housing, status, GP registration or NHS number.

At our Annual General Meeting in early November, we bid a fond farewell to Barbara Barlow, who led our organisation from its inception. I accepted the nomination to chair Healthwatch Bury through to November 2023 and we promptly set ourselves ambitious challenges to build upon the 'in year' successes described in this report. There is much work still to be done and we continuously strive to improve, whilst taking this opportunity to reflect upon the successful outcomes of our Strategic Plan, first crafted by the Board in December 2020 in order to steer our course through to April 2022.

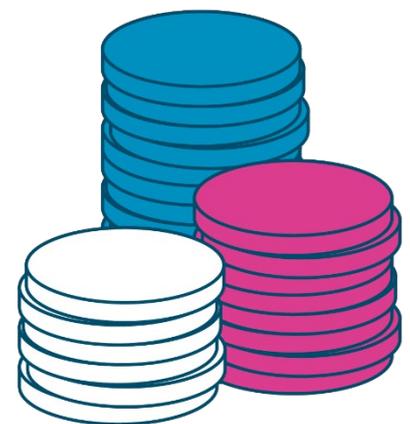
Achievements:

Finance and Sustainability:

- An efficiency contracts review which yielded savings of 6 % of our annual budget - with further transparency and efficiency measures built in, going forward.
- A sustainable 2-year funding agreement negotiated with Bury Council to replace a 12 month provision.



Ruth Passman, Chair of Healthwatch Bury



Strategic Impact:

- Enhanced strategic impact working in collaboration with leaders from the healthcare system, the public, voluntary and community sector and a range of local stakeholders.
- A renewed engagement with CQC to ensure we are best placed to receive and provide local intelligence on matters of concern regarding local health care services and provision.
- A commitment to work with Bury MBC, to deliver a Level 2 Health Improvement programme for local volunteer Health Champions as part of the Bury 2030 strategy.
- An offer of Equality and Health Inequalities impact training to the local NHS and care services.



Engagement, Communication and Support:

- A new Chief Officer, Adam Webb, came into post in Quarter 4 with a Board commitment to recruit 2 dedicated engagement officers, commencing post on the day that this report is published, to implement 'Take Five';
- A 'Take Five' Roving Engagement programme, delivering a minimum of five public engagement outreach sessions per week, with a team of five staff reaching into the five townships and to all the communities of Bury with 'Park Bench' surgeries, Market Stalls, meetings and virtual contact.
- An expanded reach, including a doubling of our telephone contacts from members of the public seeking advice and information about local Health and Care services in the final quarter of 2020-21.
- A launch of the Healthwatch Bury Virtual Roadshow initiative in February 2021, led by Board member Alan Norton, to ensure that unpaid carers have access to the support they need and that people with disabilities can access information to enable them to live as independently as possible.
- A new website, launched toward the end of this reporting period which contains enhanced information and feedback facilities, enabling everyone to record their experiences of health and social care provision.
- Engagement work with Inclusion Health communities during the Pandemic, working alongside local groups like Europaia, the Eagle's Wing, the Caribbean and African Health Networks, and the Greater Manchester NHS Values group.
- A Primary Care / Digital Exclusion project commenced in Q4 to tackle ongoing health access challenges, particularly from seldom heard communities and those who are less well served by services;

So there is much work to be done during the coming year to make healthcare services better now and in the future. We very much hope that you will join us as a member, volunteer or supporter of the Bury Healthwatch 100.



If you have any questions or comments about our work, please get in touch. We would like to hear from you.





Our vision

Vision / commitment statements

- ✓ Using the information we hear from patients, carers and the public to strategically influence service configuration and decisions made at local level on health and care.
- ✓ Ensuring we have the most up to date information about services so we can signpost people to where services are and clarify access issues if needed.
- ✓ Understand what new access arrangements and Digital First actually means for Bury patients and carers, flagging issues, barriers and inequalities.
- ✓ Ensure those that are seldom heard have the opportunity to share their experiences and views so services can keep improving and working for us all
- ✓ Ensure patients voices are heard at every level and make a tangible difference
- ✓ Strong working relationships with Bury MBC, the VCSE, commissioners and providers who are keen to work in partnership with us.
- ✓ Challenge as a critical friend, where needs be, fostering mutual respect so we will be listened to as the main 'go to' organization to hear from and engage with people who use healthcare services.
- ✓ One phonecall or webclick away from excellent signposting and help for people in navigating a complex system, in particular on access to health issues and inclusion health groups/ people who often get a raw deal from services to access the help they need.
- ✓ Act as a trusted broker for health professionals.

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Bury. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.



Our goals



Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares can experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



Ensuring your views help improve health and care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



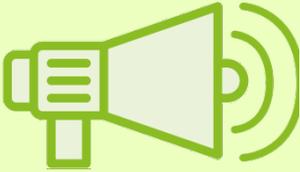
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21

Reaching out

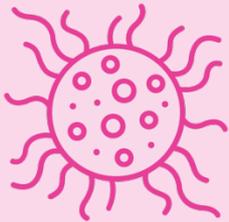


We heard from 332 people this year about their experiences of Health and social care with our surveys and questionnaires.

We provided information and advice directly to **194 people** this year.

Our website was visited **19,668 times** this year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged and supported

291 people who needed help

during the COVID-19 pandemic

Making a difference to care



We published a report about the **improvements people would like to see to health and social care services**. From this we made three recommendations for improvement.

We also contributed to Greater Manchester-wide reports.

Responding to the pandemic



9 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

We employ 3 staff.

1 of whom is full time, which is a 40% increase from the previous year.

We received

£122,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21, the same as the previous year.



Case study: Prescriptions

Sue* rang Healthwatch Bury in December shortly after Christmas due to not being able to obtain her prescription. She had been given Healthwatch Bury's telephone number from the hospital.

Sue has a rare health condition and has been prescribed a particular medication for years from Fairfield General Hospital but has recently been moved under a different hospital in Greater Manchester.

The new hospital had not seen the patient face to face yet due to COVID-19 pandemic and had been sending Sue back to her GP, asking them to prescribe the medication. The GP was unable to do so as medication was on a red list. The hospital PALS referred the patient to Healthwatch Bury under the assumption that the blockage lay with Bury clinicians.

The patient concerned was very distressed when she was finally signposted to us after over six weeks of reportedly trying to get the hospital to prescribe prior to her medication running out on that day.

We spoke with the secretary in cardiology at the hospital and the patient's GP surgery. We found a way through for this particular patient and she was able to pick her prescription up the very next day.

The patient was very grateful on the phone and couldn't thank Healthwatch Bury enough. Not having her medication caused her to have a lot of anxiety and distress as well as concerns about suddenly stopping her medication and the impact this might have on her heart's health.

 The patient stated: **'You have been amazing and helped me so much. You have been absolutely brilliant and I couldn't thank you enough. I will be recommending you to anyone who needs any support with accessing health and social care services.'** 

We also informed the Bury Clinical Commissioning Group who flagged up this issue with the Medicines Management group to ensure this does not happen to other patients in the future. Sadly Sue had a repeat of this distressing experience several months later when the cardiologist was on leave. At the same time, she received a phone-call to say that her disability support was to be discontinued; causing her anxiety and distress. Once again, Healthwatch was able to step in and ensure that this 'out of process' termination of support was reviewed. It was then reversed within 24 hours and she was also helped to once again obtain her required medication.

*The service user's name has been changed for anonymity.

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



10% on GP services



16% on Dentistry



27% on Food banks



13% on COVID-19 and Vaccines



Helping our community



Part of what we do is provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them. We wanted to ensure this was continued during challenging times.

In particular we wanted to make sure that unpaid carers had access to the support they needed to carry out their caring role as effectively as possible. Equally, we wanted to ensure that people with disabilities could access the information that allows them to live as independently as possible.

Consequently, we set up the Bury Healthwatch Online Roadshow, which contains videos and vital information from organisations about the wide range of local support people can access. We hope this will also benefit the health and social care professionals who will be able to signpost their clients to the videos to help and support their local community.

The Roadshow concept has received national acclaim and was developed by and for carers by Trevor Clower who set up the virtual carers roadshow in Nottingham. We are planning to develop this further to encompass more support services for more people in the borough. You can see our treasurer Alan Norton (pictured above) in action in the Introduction to Healthwatch Bury video on our Youtube channel at [youtube.com/watch?v=JQHwe8INGqA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQHwe8INGqA).



Case study: GP and vaccination access

Alf and Maggie were stuck and needed help. They had found themselves back in Bury during a pandemic after a long time living away. We were on hand to help.

The couple contacted us originally as they had been living in Spain for the last 15 years and had come back to the UK during the coronavirus pandemic. They wanted to get themselves vaccinated, but didn't know how due to them not having a GP in the UK.

A problem presented itself as the couple couldn't register with their local GP as they didn't have NHS numbers. This was needed to get them onto the required systems so that they could book appointments.

We were able to help them in gaining temporary NHS numbers and assisted in arranging for them to have their vaccinations



done. They registered as temporary patients at the GP practice and were able to access GP consultations.

This was not the end of the story however, as further barriers arrived for the patients. They were unable to update their address details on the temporary NHS number as they were not permanent, which meant they were unable to access some essential services that they needed, such as prescriptions from their pharmacy.

We were able to find out the steps that would be necessary to fix the issues from the GP practice and NHS England and gave them details of what they needed to do. We walked them through the process and provided the contact details and information that they needed

Alf got in touch with us to thank us for our help.

'Many thanks for your time and the further enquiries you have looked into with regards our NHS numbers.

We do fully understand now our situation... We also understand we can extend our temporary health care for our medical needs.

Many thanks once again'.

- Alf

Following this, both the GP practice and us at Healthwatch Bury have a thorough understanding of the process and will be able to help anyone going through a similar situation get the treatment and care they need.



Contact us to get the information you need

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



[Healthwatchbury.co.uk](https://www.healthwatchbury.co.uk)



0161 253 6300



info@healthwatchbury.co.uk



Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped more than 6000 people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally by regularly updating the website and social media sites with information and guides specific to what to do in the local area.
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information.
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out by being an active part of the COVID-19 ‘Vaccination Promoting uptake’ group and the ‘Vaccine Assurance Group’.
- Supporting the community volunteer response by providing the information and signposting service and linking people to appropriate organisations.
- Helping people to access the services they need by providing up to date information and helping to resolve any COVID-19 testing and vaccination related enquiries.



Volunteers

At Healthwatch Bury we are supported by 8 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Created digital content on our websites and social media.
- Carried out website reviews for local services on the information they provide.
- Attended meetings and forums on behalf of Healthwatch Bury representing local patients' voices and contributing to Healthwatch Bury work programme.

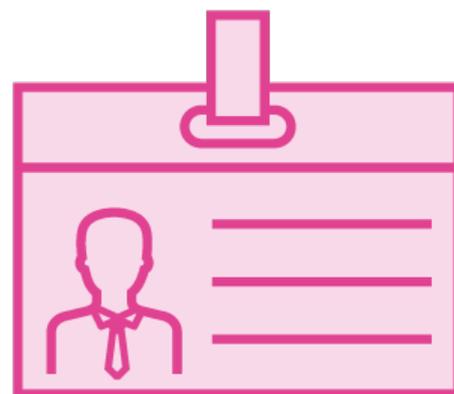
GP Mystery Shopping Exercise

Healthwatch Bury volunteers also supported a piece of work around GP access. The aim of this mystery shopping exercise was to determine whether, when registering new patients, GP practices in Bury were following the Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual (PGM) (v3) produced in 2016 (revised in 2021). The aim was to record these experiences initially to get an overview of the local practices. The feedback was gathered in February and March 2021.

There are 29 GP Practices in Bury. To understand patient experience of surgeries, we focused on the phone lines & websites as it was felt these were the two places a patient would go to for advice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Healthwatch Bury volunteers and staff members telephoned practices to enquire about how to register without ID, housing or immigration status information. This helped us to produce a snapshot of access provided across the borough.

The volunteers and staff contacted GP Surgeries in Bury as 'mystery shoppers' and one volunteer contacted the surgeries on behalf of Healthwatch Bury. In this context, mystery shoppers engaged with health and social care providers, posing as service users or friends of service users. This enabled them to assess how well the providers perform in terms of customer service and information provision. Calling was not specific to one time of the day and it is important to note that this will not provide a comprehensive overview of how each practice registers people without identification, status, an NHS number or a fixed address. However, our findings can be helpful in informing the areas requiring further research.



Key Findings:

1. 61% (17 out of 28) of the GP practices initially said that some form of ID is required to register with the GP practice. However when prompted 7 of those practices elaborated further to say they would register patients without ID too.
2. 68% of the GP Practices advised that the COVID-19 vaccination would be arranged once registered with the GP. 11% of the surgeries advised to contact 119 number for further information.
3. 18 Bury GP Surgeries are registered as homeless friendly practices www.homelessfriendly.co.uk However this information cannot be found from the GP surgeries' websites.

🗨️ *When asked what would happen if the person was homeless the receptionist said they'd try to get a number for them. Or, if they came to the front door of the surgery they could tell them how to book a vaccine. Homeless people can give a hostel or project address.*

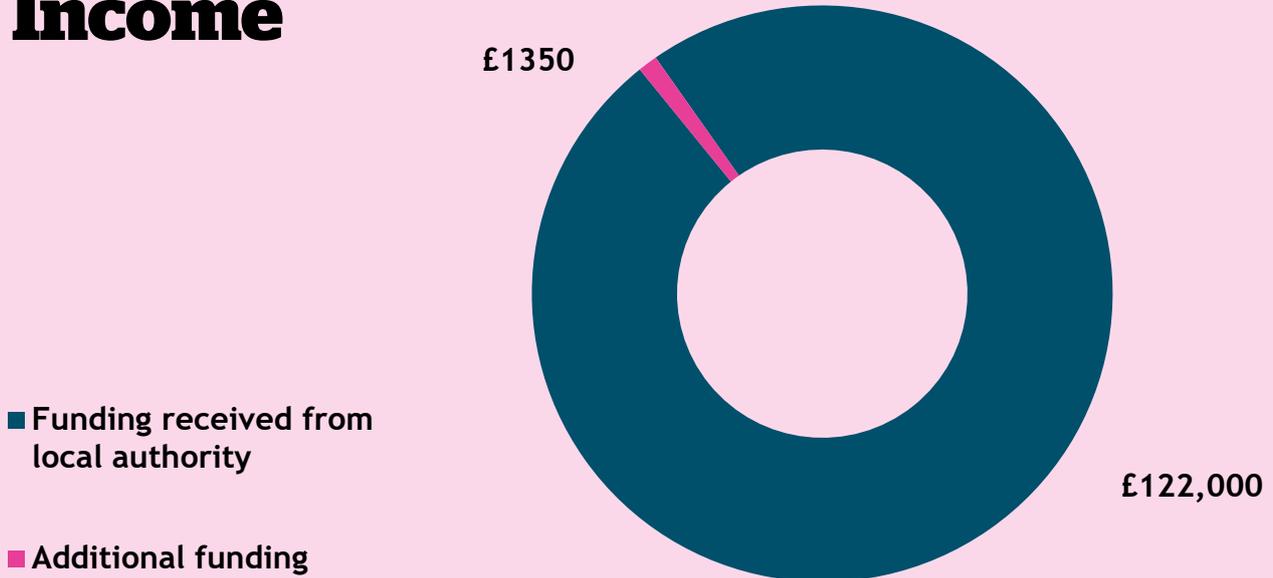
Recommendations:

- 🗨️ **No ID needed** - GPs to register patients without ID or address in line with Primary Care contract.
- 🗨️ **Use NHS Standard Information** - GPs could use registration information from the NHS website.
- 🗨️ **Offer practice address to register** - GPs should use practice address for those with temporary address or no fixed address.
- 🗨️ **Provide training for GP surgeries front line staff** so they are clearer about the General Medical Service contract terms & how to best advise people about this.

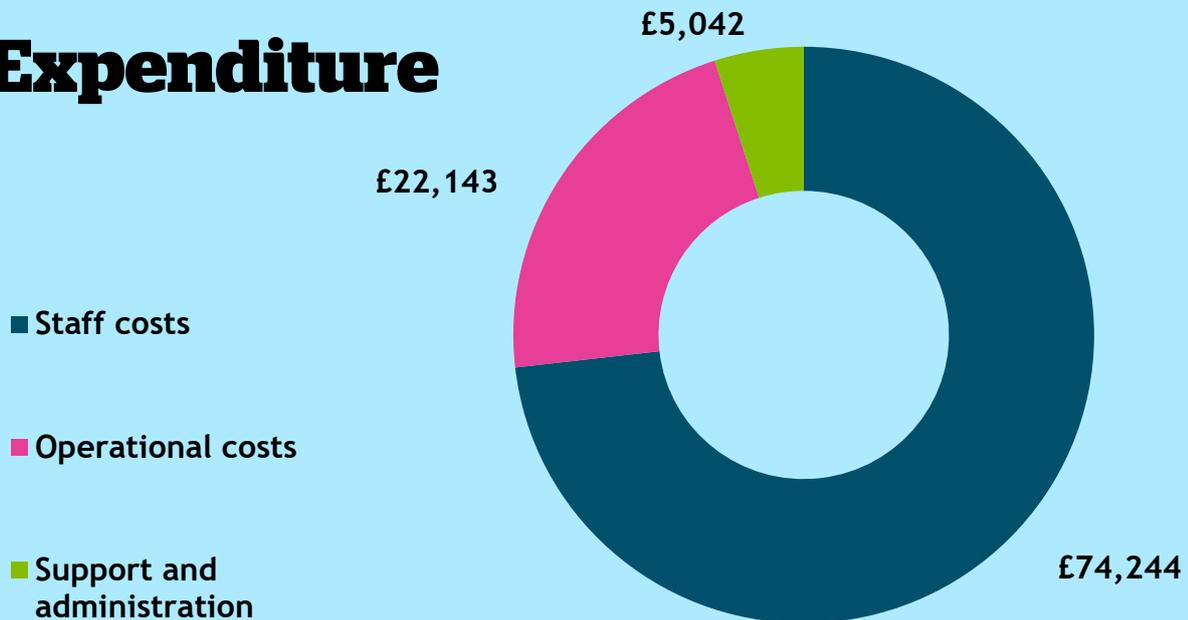
Finances

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

Income



Expenditure



£21,921 deferred to projects in 2021-22



Next steps & Thanks

Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Digital access and isolation - looking at how people use online services to access health and social care and how it is working.
- Including local people in service redesign - from Urgent care service remodelling to transformation in elective care waiting lists, we will put patient and public voice at the heart of it.
- Focus on the seldom heard voices - ensuring we amplify the voice of diverse and sometimes underserved communities and groups of the borough and look at the specific difficulties they face.

Next steps

- We will dramatically increase the amount of in-person engagement so we can hear more from those that might not have engaged with us throughout the pandemic.
- We have built a new website and will populate it with guides & materials to make it easier than ever to get valuable information and help from us.
- We will expand and promote our online carers roadshow, which gives short video guides to illustrate services and groups available to help carers and will include more groups and services.

"Tackling unfair health differences will need those in power to listen.

To hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives, and then to act on what has been learned."

Message from the Chief Operating Officer

Everyone at Healthwatch Bury would first and foremost like to make it known how impressed and thankful we are at the hard work, persistence and kindness of the NHS, local authority and social care staff throughout this difficult time. They have dealt with an extreme situation dutifully and diligently, and that hard work and sacrifice is not lost on us.



Chief Officer Adam Webb

Whether it be working extra hours, having to get used to workplaces and systems that have changed (or are regularly changing) completely or taking on more than their regular role, these staff deserve much acclaim for their efforts. Because of them, so many people have recovered and have been able to go home, and many others have avoided a potentially serious condition in the course of their treatment and care.

With that in mind, we also pay our respects to those staff who were lost to coronavirus - their efforts will never be forgotten. And our thoughts are with all the people that have lost and suffered at the hands of this virus.

One positive thing the pandemic has done is to give us all an opportunity to evaluate the way we work, how we operate and what is important to us. We are taking full advantage of the opportunity and are taking the things we have learned from the last 18 months or so and used it to shape our plans for the coming year. But we haven't forgotten the importance of what we have missed, and we are eager to get back to engaging with the people of Bury in person as soon as we are able - we want to hear from all of you!

We will also be taking our place amongst the new structures that provide the health and care system in the borough at every level, ensuring independent scrutiny and accountability as well as representing the voice of patients and service users in the transformation and delivery of those services.

We have grown our staff team and we will be spending the next 12 months trying to hear from and involve more people in the borough than ever. We have a new website coming too, which you will be able to interact with in the coming weeks.

We are all excited about the coming year and what we can achieve, for our partners and stakeholders, for the services recovering from the pandemic, and of course for the people of Bury.

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Bury,
St Johns House,
155 - 163 The Rock,
Bury BL9 0ND.

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. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met 12 times and made decisions on matters, including crafting a Strategic Plan at its Development Session in December 2020 in order to steer our course and shape delivery through to April 2022.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use intelligence gathered through feedback collected in Bury as well as from our local & regional networks and partners to decide what areas should be our focus, where we need to undertake a pieces of work or where we can work with our partners on an issue.

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 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual 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 Eagles Wing, a charity that works with asylum seekers, to gather experiences and help inform them of what services they can access.

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 at healthwatchbury.co.uk, is sent to our members and partner organisations and is also available from us when we attend events.

2020-21 priorities

Project / activity area	Outcomes
Covid 19 We will carry out a survey of people's experiences. This will also give us the opportunity to make people aware of what we do.	Survey carried out and fed into Greater Manchester report and also fed into Healthwatch England work.
Intermediate Care - working with the local authority on planned changes to Intermediate Care in Bury	Project postponed due to Covid.
Continuing Health Care - exploring people's understanding and experiences of the process	Project postponed due to Covid. Due to be restarted later in 2021
Enter and View Team - Home Care Experience We plan to use our Enter and View team to speak to people about home care services	All Enter & View operations postponed due to Covid. Replaced by redeploying the team's expertise, including via the GP mystery shopper exercise.
Commissioning or Partnership Working - We plan to work with a local group that focuses on deaf people's issues and needs.	104 responses gathered in survey with Communic8te, report pending.

Responses to recommendations and requests

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.

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

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Bury is represented on the Bury Health and Wellbeing Board by our Chairs who have effectively carried out this role in 2020-21.



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