

# The value of listening

Healthwatch England  
Annual Report 2023–2024



**healthwatch**  
Bedford Borough

---

# Contents

---

Welcome from our CEO	3
Message from the Interim Chair	3
About us	4
Year in review	5
How we've made a difference this year	6
Your voice heard at a wider level	7
ECS in numbers	8
Listening to your experiences	9-12
Hearing from all communities	13
Advice and information	15
Volunteering	17
Finance and future priorities	19
Statutory statements	21-26



**"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."**

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



# Welcome from our CEO

## Welcome to Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Annual Report.



"We achieved our goal this year by continuing to listen to seldom-heard communities across Bedford Borough and asking them how they feel about their experiences when accessing health and social care services and what matters to them.

The work we have undertaken on preconception and Women's Health has meant Women have had a powerful voice locally when considering planning for pregnancy and in supporting positive maternity outcomes. We know nationally from the 'MBRRACE-UK: Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care 2023' report in relation to lessons learned to inform maternity care from the UK and Ireland Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths and Morbidity 2019-21 that Women living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to die during pregnancy and in the year after birth, compared to women in the most affluent parts of the country. The team's dedication to this year-long project has been really powerful and we hope can go some way into supporting the Women's Health agenda and improve lives.

We have joined forces with other peers to work more closely on the topic of research this year and will continue to do so in 2024/25, recognising that clinical research is of great importance to the current day but also to generations to come. This is especially pertinent when looking at disease prevalence and access to research for marginalised communities and groups.

Our work on the Denny Review Phase II has begun in earnest and we look forward to seeing how this work will continue to support equity across our local communities and making lasting change in future service provision to irradicate health inequalities. We know that when people are involved in how local services are run, care is better and people remain healthier for longer. We are proud of our growing relationship with the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board (BLMK ICB) and the work that we are undertaking at Scale with Healthwatch colleagues across the BLMK footprint.

As a team we have said goodbye to colleagues and welcomed new ones. The world of health and care is ever evolving, and we have developed roles to enable us to adapt to the changing needs of the local population. Our signposting, enquiries and guidance service remains busy and supports local families to navigate their way to the most appropriate service for them.

I hope you will enjoy reading this Annual Report in which you will read about the wider team and some of the work that that has been undertaken over the past year. Having been at Healthwatch Bedford Borough since 2014 now, I am proud of the work that has been undertaken in such an ever-changing environment and hope you will continue to support us in our endeavors."

*Emma*

Emma L. Freda, CEO  
Healthwatch Bedford Borough

## Message from the Interim Chair

**Harsha joined Healthwatch Bedford Borough as our new Interim Chair in August 2023. She has been a valued member of our Board, having been the Chair at Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire for some years.**



**"I have a strong commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion among the residents of Bedford Borough. I have worked with colleagues on the Independent Strategic Advisory Board and the staff team to ensure the diverse communities across Bedford Borough bring their voices to the table.**

**I believe that to ensure that we fully consider equity in service provision and a reduction in health inequalities, we must work in an open and transparent environment, with integrity and honesty, where everyone is respected and accountable to each other and the organisation."**

Harsha Kotecha, Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB), Interim Chair,  
Healthwatch Bedford Borough



# About us

Healthwatch Bedford Borough is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and 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 we can all access the health and care services we need and see an end to health inequalities.



## Our mission

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



## Our values are:

- **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 voice.



# Year in review

## Reaching out:

**1,445 people**

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

**17,489 people**

came to us for specific signposting, advice and guidance on topics such as access to mental health support and dentistry in person and via our website.



## Making a difference to care:

We published

**13 reports**

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

Our most popular report was

**The Denny Review: Hidden Voices**

which highlighted the struggles people face in relation to health inequalities.



## Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

**5**

outstanding volunteers who gave up **30 hours** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2023 - 24 we received

**£104,825**

which is 10.7% more than the previous year.





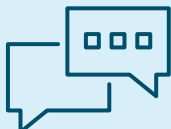



We currently employ

**4 staff (2.5 FTE)**

who help us carry out our work.



# How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Planned, designed, and delivered a SNAP survey, in partnership with the BLMK ICB Place Team (Primary Care) on GP access. This was shared via our website, social media platforms and outreach activities.</p>	 <p>Discussions and workshops were undertaken with the Denny Review Steering Group partners and the wider BLMK ICB.</p>
Summer	 <p>Planning, designing, and delivering a dental survey to gain feedback on local residents' experiences of dental care.</p>	 <p>Created a bespoke informational web page, in relation to planning for pregnancy.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Facilitated Affinity Trust &amp; Creative Support's LD/ Autism Supported Living focus groups &amp; Chaired Bedford Borough Council's Experts by Experience Group for Supported Living.</p>	 <p>Employed a new Community Outreach Officer with a background in health inequalities to start reaching out to local rural parishes and seldom-heard communities.</p>
Winter	 <p>Scoped opportunities for further work across BLMK, including participation via existing community groups and research interests for local diabetes support.</p>	 <p>Published our Supported Living Feedback Report and Easy Read recommendations, which were co-produced with local service users and their parents,</p>

# Your voice heard at a wider level

## We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Bedford Borough influence decisions made about services at BLMK Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) to achieve:



The delivery of community engagement work to improve preconception health, the development and hosting of a bespoke service user survey, the promotion of planning for pregnancy campaign materials via social media & our website, to include promotion of Diabetes UK and Tommys Tool literature in translated languages, the delivery of key health messages via a Women's Health event, and the publication/promotion of planning for pregnancy support via local settings.

The recruitment of a part-time project officer for 9 months at Healthwatch Bedford Borough from March 2024 to deliver against the project brief, the CEO began working on Denny Phase II as an independent Advisor looking at Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and the Equality Delivery System, domain 1.

The Digital Comms Officer began to support the BLMK ICB Comms team with the preparation of Comms materials.



Healthwatch Bedford Borough undertook an intense mapping exercise of current face-to-face and virtual support groups for patients and their families living with diabetes. We met and spoke with multiple community and faith leaders as well as professionals to source intelligence in early 2024.



**"The BLMK Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) has worked with Healthwatch Bedford Borough to deliver a bespoke programme to promote the importance of preparing for pregnancy and other messages around Women's Health.**

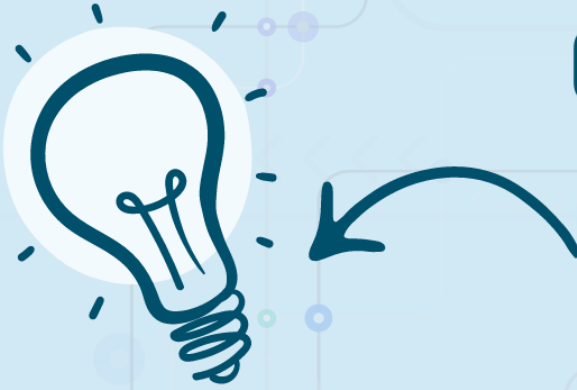
**In partnership and collaboration with leadership from Healthwatch, we were able to take these important messages into diverse communities to try to encourage better outcomes for Women. Healthwatch Bedford Borough conducted a year-long survey with Women which has given us insight into what support women need before they plan for a healthy pregnancy."**

Dr Sanhita Chakrabarti MRCOG FFPH Deputy Chief Medical Officer BLMK ICB Women's Health Champion BLMK ICB Clinical Lead.

# ECS in Numbers

2023/24

ECS are the providers of 7 local Healthwatch services and this shows the overall reach across the whole business.



**WEBSITE VIEWS**

http:// 

180,446 website views

1

**SIGNPOSTING**



35,736 people signposted by local Healthwatch

2

**ENGAGEMENT**



16,238 people engaged with in person

3


**RESEARCH**




200 people took part in additional research projects

4

**ONLINE ENGAGEMENT**

 14,872 people engaged with online

 28,628 Social Media Followers

5

**FEEDBACK**



82 Volunteers provided 1111 hours of support

6





# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we've made listening to feedback from all areas of Bedford Borough a priority focus.

This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and to help them improve.

# Planning for Pregnancy

Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board (BLMK ICB) commissioned Healthwatch Bedford Borough to support their aim of improving outcomes for Women and other people who are thinking about starting a family, by improving pre-pregnancy health and conducting an independent survey.

As part of this project, we co-designed a survey with the BLMK ICB, local Healthwatch and Maternity Voices Partnerships (MVPs) across the area and published it on our website and social media platforms.

Running in parallel to the survey, we produced a bespoke website page containing information and advice on planning for pregnancy. We created an Easy Read animation video designed to support women with a limited understanding of written English to improve health outcomes.

We designed one full video and then cut it down into individual chapters which we shared on our social media platforms. The videos gave tips for planning for pregnancy in an Easy Read format on topics such as:

- the benefits of reducing/ stopping caffeine and alcohol intake
- benefits of being physically active
- the importance of taking folic acid
- the signs of pre-eclampsia
- the importance of checking with your GP about existing medication while pregnant



These videos are on our YouTube channel and have subtitles to improve reach within ethnic communities in the following languages: Bangla, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, English and Romanian.

3,676

people have accessed our website and social media posts in Bedford Borough in relation to planning for pregnancy support.



As part of this workstream we helped to create an Easy Read informational leaflet for BLMK ICB to use for promotion. This was provided to patients and staff encouraged them to fill out the planning for pregnancy survey.

**63**  
Responses  
from a diverse group of  
Women responded to our  
survey



# Women's Health & Wellbeing Event

As part of this project, we successfully hosted a Women's Health & Wellbeing event on 23rd January 2024 at the Addison Centre, Kempston. The event was a resounding success, with dozens of Women from various communities, including those from socio-economically deprived wards, attending.

This event hosted two dozen Health and Wellbeing exhibitors from the NHS, Local Authority, and VCSE sectors. It featured two FREE yoga and relaxation taster sessions that were well attended by all communities.

Event attendance was indicative of the cultural mix that makes up Bedford Borough, with Women attending from various ethnic origins

Event attendance met the original target audience of those from socio-economically deprived wards.



## Women reported their ethnic origins to be:

- Pakistani
- Kashmiri
- Indian
- Bangladeshi
- African (non-specified)
- Italian
- Estonian
- Caribbean
- Polish
- White British



## On analysing the sign-in postcode data, we found that attendees resided in the following wards:

- Queens Park (highest figure)
- Cauldwell/Kingsbrook (second highest figure)
- Putnoe/Goldington/Castle
- Brickhill
- Bromham



Event feedback received was excellent from professionals and communities alike, with **100%** of those asked reporting that they would attend Healthwatch Bedford Borough events again.

# Three ways we have made a difference in the community

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

## Listening Survey

Healthwatch Bedford Borough undertook a Listening Survey during February & March 2024, looking at what residents, patients, carers, and professionals felt that Healthwatch Bedford Borough's priority areas for the year ahead should be. The survey only closed on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024, and we received **113** responses.

Having analysed the data, the 2024-25 strategic priorities\* were decided by the wider Healthwatch Bedford Borough team at the Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB) Development Day on April 5, 2024.

\*See page 20 for strategic priorities for the year ahead.



## 360 Stakeholder Survey

As part of Healthwatch Bedford Borough's continuous improvement, a stakeholder 360 survey was undertaken to gather feedback from partners, understand how they see Healthwatch Bedford Borough, and identify any areas for improvement.

**22%** of respondents were from BLMK ICB, **14%** were from the Local Authority, **14%** were from the Voluntary, Charity, and Social Enterprise sector, **7%** were from the Health and Wellbeing Board, **7%** were from NHS Trusts, and **36%** were from other organisations.

Overall, the feedback was excellent and showed Healthwatch Bedford Borough to be an organization that stakeholders value.



## Outreach Activity

We have stepped up our outreach activity in rural parishes having recognised that many of the services are centred around urban Bedford. By attending Parish Council meetings over from the Autumn of 2023, we have increased our visibility and promoted our services to those whom might not have been aware of our organisation.



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



# Hearing from communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from communities within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to gather feedback and make sure different voices are heard, and services meet the needs of our growing population.

**This year we have reached different communities by:**

- Engaging with Learning Disabilities and Autism service users living in Supported Living in Bedford Borough
- Having a tailored plan of outreach activity, engaging with those less often heard from
- Supporting health education for Women living in socio-economic deprivation
- By engaging with the seldom-heard communities that were highlighted by the Denny Review



**BLMK Integrated Care Board welcomes our growing partnership with Healthwatch Bedford Borough. This was strengthened by the signing of our landmark Memorandum of Understanding.**

**We are particularly proud of our work together on the future of musculoskeletal services, and on tackling health inequalities in response to the Denny Review. In both these areas and more, Healthwatch Bedford Borough's expertise is supporting the ICB to engage with marginalised communities. Emma and the team have also delivered several powerful events, including one in support of the Women's Health agenda in January this year. We look forward to continuing our partnership in 2024/25.** Dominic Woodward-Lebihan, Deputy Chief of Strategy & Assurance, BLMK Integrated Care Board

---

## Tailored Outreach Activity

Having now moved past the COVID-19 pandemic, our commitment to face-to-face outreach activity has grown twofold.

The uptake for our surveys during the year has vastly improved as Healthwatch Bedford Borough recognises that local people often prefer to undertake surveys in person with support.

We have introduced a new virtual platform for local residents to have their say about health and social care provision, with monthly snapshot surveys, and a chance to be entered into a prize draw to win LoveBedford vouchers.

Outreach has been vital for signing people up to our Virtual Voices platform which has laid the foundation for the year ahead.



---

## Reviewing Supported Living Through Experience

In June 2023, Healthwatch Bedford Borough began working in partnership with Bedford Borough Council's Strategic Commissioning and Procurement Team, and Voiceability, Bedford Borough's chosen advocacy and involvement service. The focus of the activity was to capture the service user and carers voice within Supported Living provision and co-produce the new Supported Living Framework Specification with people accessing these services.

As a team, we designed two personalised surveys, one standard version and one Easy Read version. These were loaded onto Healthwatch Bedford Borough's SNAP survey portal and sent out via email to each Supported Living service provider, as well as a hard copy Word version for those service users who wished to take part on paper, with the support of a carer, support worker, parent or guardian. In addition to the survey, 3 focus groups took place for Learning Disability, Autism and mental health service users.

### Outcomes

With the renewed commitment to transforming the way in which care and support is delivered to people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism in line with the Care Act 2014, the focus of this project has been on outcomes, personalisation, wellbeing, and choice.

By speaking to service users, carers, parents and support staff to research whether these key areas are being met, and after careful evaluation of a considerable amount of data, we conclude that there is a need to strengthen the Supported Living provision to support service users in Bedford Borough to avoid crises further down the line.





## Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Bedford Borough 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, making a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one, you can count on us.

### This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

---

# Reassuring patients and families

## The family needed reassurance regarding diagnosis and waiting times.

A concerned family member contacted Healthwatch Bedford Borough via our enquiries service about the lack of correspondence and updates on the father's assessment and diagnosis.

The family contacted us to notify us that the family GP felt the father had early onset dementia and was being referred to the Memory Assessment Clinic at the East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) and was informed they would receive an appointment within 2 months. At the time of their contacting Healthwatch Bedford Borough, it had been 6 months, and they had not yet received any correspondence, information, support or guidance on the wait time or what they could do in the interim.

The family member came to us looking for advice or signposting to other local agencies that could support them. We explained that wait times aren't normally given to dementia patients as they can increase anxiety and panic. We also explained that if the patient's symptoms worsened, they should contact their GP. Having ascertained that this wasn't the case we were able to offer them assurance that the team were making contact with those on the waiting list that week and they should expect to hear within the next 10 days.



**"I appear to be a lot more worried than he is, so thank you for helping to calm some of this anxiety. This is a wonderful service you provide, and I appreciate you must deal with much more serious and time-sensitive enquiries, but I really wouldn't have known who to contact if you weren't there."**

Concerned Family member

---

## Extra Vaccination session at school

### We received intel that 100+ primary school pupils at a local school missed out on their flu vaccine due to communication issues regarding consent sign-up.

Healthwatch Bedford Borough were alerted of this issue and informed that the alternative generic vaccination session offered in a village on the outskirts of the Borough was inaccessible. It was reported that many parents/carers had no access to transport and were struggling on benefits, therefore unable to attend the session which meant children missing out on vital vaccinations.

When parents/governors contacted the provider themselves, they were told there was no capacity to hold an extra session. Our CEO stepped in and raised concerns in relation to risk implications, negative perceptions of immunisation schedules being given, and EDI concerns for those families with literacy and/or language barriers with Public Health (Health Protection and Disadvantaged Groups) for Bedford Borough, who in turn reported it as a concern to the NHS England Immunisation Lead and the provider.

### Outcome

An additional vaccination session was hosted for the primary school in question. Consent requests went out to parents via the school.







# Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts on Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB), their core work includes setting strategic priorities for Healthwatch as aligned to the statutory and contractual requirements; reviewing and modifying strategic plans; and observing the execution of work programmes.

The ISAB is responsible for maintaining and safeguarding the independence, probity, and transparency of Healthwatch Bedford Borough, and ensuring that delivery is focused specifically on the needs of local people.

# Outreach volunteers



"I decided to volunteer with Healthwatch because it was a great opportunity for me to help others and contribute to improving their lifestyles. It has been comforting to know that there are individuals in society who care for the well-being of others and that I could be part of this.

I was happy to discover such an organisation that has allowed me to learn about the NHS in depth. As a foreigner in the UK, I know there is much to learn about the local health and social services culture of this nation.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people, and with Bedford Borough's cultural diversity, I feel blessed to mix with everyone. I feel part of the broader community, and it's been very fulfilling working now as a team member."



Patricia- Outreach Volunteer  
Healthwatch Bedford Borough

**healthwatch Bedford Borough**  
Your local health and social care champion

## Get involved

**Volunteer with Healthwatch Bedford Borough**

### Opportunities for everyone

There are lots of different ways you can get involved as a Healthwatch volunteer, from speaking to people about their experiences of health and social care to using your skills to support Healthwatch Bedford Borough.

**Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB)**  
Play a key role in advising on our strategy and priorities. This ensures the involvement of local people in our work and decision-making, and helps us to make key decisions about how to use our statutory powers effectively whilst upholding our independence. We support multi disciplinary partnership working and Healthwatch Advisory Board members represent us in wider stakeholder engagement and decision-making structures. i.e., BLMK Integrated Care Board (ICB), Local Authority Boards and committees, and NHS Trust committees and working groups.

**Enter & View Authorised Representative**  
Authorised Representatives are volunteers who carry out visits to NHS and social care services to see how they are delivered and gather experiences from people using the services. This is known as Enter and View.

**Youth Ambassadors**  
Ensure that young peoples' voices are heard and help to influence change to make Health and Social Care services better for children and young people.

Scan more information

## Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

- [www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk)
- 01234 638 678
- [enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.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.

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from the Local Authority	£104,825	Expenditure on pay	£85,489
Additional income	£30,025	Non-pay expenditure	£23,167
		Office and management fees	£21,486
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£134,850</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£130,142</b>

### Additional income is broken down by:

- £1,500 received from Healthwatch England for CRM.
- £24,205 received from the local ICB for joint work on several projects.
- £4,320 Circle MSK for an independently commissioned evaluation of the service provision.

## ICB funding

Healthwatch Bedford Borough received funding from our Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICB funding	Amount
Preconception/ Women's Health	£6,955
Denny Phase 1	£750
REN Phase 1	£4,000
Denny Phase 2	£12,500

## Next steps

**Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.**

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

### Our top four priorities for the next year are:

**1 Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing**



**2 Primary Care (GP practices)**



**3 Primary Care (Dental)**



**4 Rural Isolation**





# Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Bedford Borough, 21-23 Gadsby Street, Bedford MK40 3HP – Engaging Community Solutions (ECS) Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford, TF3 4HS**

**Healthwatch Bedford Borough 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

Healthwatch Bedford Borough's Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB) consists of **5** members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our operational activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2023-2024 the Board met quarterly and made decisions on matters such as work programme priorities and Enter & Views scheduling.

### Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2023-2024, we were available by phone, email, Business WhatsApp, via our website feedback portal, through interaction on our social media platforms, and through face-to-face activity via attendance at events, meetings, community groups and forums.

We ensure that this Annual Report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, as well as provide hard copy reports, as requested.

### Responses to recommendations

We had **0** providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

### Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Bedford Borough Health and Wellbeing Board, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Adult Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the monthly local Healthwatch and Integrated Care Board Strategic meeting, as well as other meetings.

We also share our insights and experiences with decision-makers at the BLMK Integrated Care Board, for which the CEO of Healthwatch Milton Keynes currently represents all four BLMK Healthwatch. We have a data-sharing agreement with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level with policy makers.

---

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Bedford Borough was represented on the Bedford Borough Health and Wellbeing Board by Emma Freda, CEO, and Harsha Kotecha, ISAB Interim Chair.

## Enter and view

This year, we made 9 of Enter and View visits. We made 44 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Bushmead Court Care Home	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that staff name badges are easy to read for residents. This means clear font and bright colour due to worsening eyesight and memory loss. For professionals and relatives having the photo board that you have containing photos of each staff member, their full names and roles on the existing notice board in the entrance is good practice. Name badges however should ideally be in the format of the "My name is" yellow badges, displaying first names to make them easy to see and read.</li> <li>2. The management team are encouraged to have more faith when needing to report concerns to NHS providers and safeguarding. Whilst we recognise that you have had multiple issues in the past, Healthwatch Bedford Borough will ensure that you are listened to, and that your concerns are validated, acted upon and investigated by relevant teams moving forward. Should you not be happy with the outcome of discussions with NHS providers and continue to believe that your patients are being compromised by external professionals, we would encourage you to report to safeguarding and the Care Quality Commission. We have provided correspondence details for our Deputy CEO; who will fully support you to raise concerns/complaints, should you require assistance.</li> <li>3. Consider re-investigating the move to electronic care plans in the near future, in line with Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) digital transformation plans. Whilst we fully recognise that pen and paper are the preferred option for most of the workforce, we are mindful that as everything these days is moving online, Bushmead Court will be left behind and that this would eradicate a proportion of time chasing results and updates as they would be available at the click of a button. We are also mindful of the fire risk of having everything in paper files as opposed to backed up in the cloud.</li> <li>4. Consider investment in website redesign. Whilst we appreciate the benefits in good old-fashioned door knocking, your website is extremely basic and would benefit from external IT redesign support. This will ensure that anyone looking for a care home can see the fabulous services, team, setting and activities that Bushmead Court have to offer, and for any professionals wanting to check anything, information is at hand.</li> <li>5. Consider basic menopause awareness training for all staff. With such a large workforce experiencing multiple day-to-day struggles with perimenopause and menopause, whilst we recognise how wonderfully supportive the management team and owner have been in managing staff living with this often-debilitating period in their lives, we feel it would benefit all staff to undergo some basic awareness training, to enable them to have a deeper understanding.</li> <li>6. Consider basic introduction to British Sign Language (BSL) training in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard (DCBI605). Particularly pertinent for Bushmead Court due to having a member of staff who's primary language is BSL. Healthwatch Bedford Borough are happy to provide details of reputable trainers locally.</li> <li>7. Consider semi regular drop-in advice clinics from Healthwatch Bedford Borough for residents, relatives and staff, to support them to access wider health and care services and allow them to have their say on local service</li> </ol>

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
<u>Waterloo House Care Home</u>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that all visitors, relatives, residents know who the staff by the staff always wearing a name badge and having photos of each staff member and their roles on a notice board. Name badges to be in the format of "My name is" yellow badges</li> <li>2. The Manager to consider stepping back from her original carer role and taking a stronger leadership role in terms of the workforce.</li> <li>3. Consider moving to electronic care plans in the near future, in line with Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) digital transformation plans.</li> </ol>
<u>Lilibet Lodge Care Home</u>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider sourcing British Sign Language (BSL) Level 1 for all staff.</li> <li>2. Consider delivering training to all staff on how to deal with residents who are aggressive, giving the staff more knowledge and confidence. (Conflict Resolution training).</li> <li>3. Consider revisiting the Dementia champion training so all staff, relatives and residents have further Dementia awareness.</li> <li>4. Consider the addition of noticeboard, displaying photographs of all of the workforce, displaying names and job titles.</li> </ol>
<u>Holly tree lodge Care Home</u>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Front garden – Due to the unsightly-looking front garden, despite the ongoing building works, we would recommend a garden tidy-up and temporary signage. This would improve the aesthetic and visibility of the front of Holly Tree Lodge from the road for visitors, staff and residents.</li> <li>2. We recommend that the Manager seeks further clarification from the new provider on the proposed timescales to undertake the programme of work, paying particular attention to residents personal living spaces.</li> <li>3. Other homes that we have visited have shown visible signs of personalisation in the décor, through having artworks, photographs which were meaningful to residents and soft furnishings. We recommend that these items are considered for Holly Tree Lodge, in regard to the rooms which have already been refurbished to eradicate the clinical feel.</li> <li>4. We recommend that Holly Tree Lodge looks to implement the inclusion of a notice board being erected in the entrance hall, with photos of each staff member and their role. Name badges to be worn in the format of the "My name is" yellow badges, featuring first name only.</li> <li>5. We recommend that Holly Tree Lodge requires more investment in a formal activities programme, looking at the educational and wellbeing requirements of residents with complex needs.</li> </ol>



Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
<u>Milton Ernest Care Home</u>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that staff are wearing name badges which are easy to read. This means clear font and bright colour due to worsening eyesight and memory loss. For professionals and relatives having a photo board that contains photos of each staff member, their first name and surname, and job titles on a notice board near the entrance is good practice. Name badges should then ideally be in the format of the "My name is" yellow badges, displaying first names only to make them both easy to see and read.</li> <li>2. Consider offering semi regular drop-in advice clinics from Healthwatch Bedford Borough for residents, relatives, and staff, to support each group to access wider health and care services and allow them to have their say on local service provision.</li> </ol>
<u>The Houghtons Care Home</u>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider dementia awareness training for all staff.</li> <li>2. Consider holding staff meetings at various times/days of the week to accommodate all staff, including those working evenings and weekends.</li> <li>3. Ensure all staff have ID badges and wear them throughout their shifts.</li> <li>4. The home may want to consider a noticeboard, displaying photographic imagery and the names of all staff.</li> <li>5. The provider to ensure maintenance is carried out in a timely manner.</li> <li>6. The provider to ensure that Managers are allocated adequate time in staff meetings to update on events that will include their residents.</li> <li>7. Consider restarting the residents and relative's meetings.</li> <li>8. The provider to consider recruiting a Housekeeper to give the care staff more time to spend with residents.</li> </ol>
<u>The Glades Care Home</u>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure all visitors are asked to sign in when entering the home for fire risk and safety.</li> <li>2. Consider holding the staff meetings at various times of the day/days of the week to accommodate all staff including those working evenings and/or weekends.</li> <li>3. Ensure all staff have ID badges and wear them throughout their shifts. The home may want to consider the addition of a noticeboard, displaying photographic imagery of all of the staff members, displaying names and job titles.</li> <li>4. Consider restarting the relatives meetings to ensure regular feedback is captured and decision making involves residents and their family members.</li> <li>5. Consider having more than 1 staff working throughout the night. The ARs understand that a contingency plan is in place, however due to the layout of the home, there were concerns regarding how 1 solitary member of staff would be able to hear from one end of the home to the other.</li> <li>6. Consider keeping the gate to the home closed at all times due to health and safety risk.</li> </ol>

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
<a href="#">Kimbolton Lodge Care Home</a>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Look into Oliver McGowan training for staff.</li> <li>2. Consider the welcoming aspect of the front entranceway to families, visitors, and potential residents. We would recommend more regular external groundskeeping.</li> <li>3. Consider introducing a “You said, we did” board for all residents and relatives, that would include any changes that have been made from comments and complaints received but also explain if you are unable to achieve the desired outcome and why.</li> <li>4. Consider engaging with the residents around bedtime routines, especially whilst you are awaiting the new lift installation.</li> <li>5. Consider engaging with relatives to understand why they are not attending the meetings planned, e.g. is this because of the time of the day/ days of the week meetings are being held and the format in which they are hosted (i.e. Face-to-face, MS Teams/ Zoom)</li> </ol>
<a href="#">Cinnamon Lodge Care Home</a>	As part of a standard programme of work, in discussion with the CQC Local Area Team.	<p><b>Wrote a report with the following recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider having a “You said, we did” board by the comments box.</li> <li>2. Consider having a ramp from the dining area to the conservatory</li> <li>3. Consider putting up signs to exit routes inside the house</li> <li>4. The manager to consider re-arranging their office to limit the electrical cables from their computer being shown, especially as they have residents who often go into the office.</li> </ol>



**Scan to read all the above reports.**

# healthwatch

Bedford Borough



ECS




Healthwatch Bedford Borough  
is a hosted Healthwatch delivered by  
Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (ECS)  
Meeting Point House  
Southwater Square  
Telford  
TF3 4HS  
W: [www.weareecs.co.uk](http://www.weareecs.co.uk)  
T: 0800 470 1518  
X: @EcsEngaging

# healthwatch

Bedford Borough

Healthwatch Bedford Borough  
21 – 23 Gadsby Street  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK40 3HP

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

 t: 01234 638678

 e: [enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk)

 @HealthwatchBB

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchBB](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchBB)

 [Healthwatchbedfordborough](https://www.instagram.com/Healthwatchbedfordborough)

 Team Healthwatch Warrington

