

# Healthwatch Bedford Borough Work Programme 2024/25

April 2024 – March 2025

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## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF A LOCAL HEALTHWATCH

1. To obtain the views of local residents on health and social care services, to help shape the delivery and improve the quality of the design and commissioning of services.
2. To make recommendations to service providers and commissioners in developing, designing, shaping, and improving the quality-of-service delivery.
3. To support the involvement of local residents in the designing and commissioning of local services.
4. Provide information and advice to inform local residents on choices available to them.
5. To escalate findings to local commissioners and providers and nationally to Healthwatch England along with recommendations for service change.

# Introduction

## About us

Local Healthwatch organisations were established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to be a champion for people using health and social care services. Healthwatch Bedford Borough is delivered by Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (known as ECS) – a Community Interest Company with a focus on delivering local Healthwatch, Social Research and Advocacy services. ([www.weareecs.co.uk](http://www.weareecs.co.uk))

Healthwatch Bedford Borough will champion the interests of people who use health and social care services and ensure that they have an opportunity to speak out about their concerns and health and social care priorities.

We will ensure that the views of the public and people are considered by those who commission and provide services.

## Our responsibilities

By law, all local Healthwatch are required to:

- Provide information and signposting about health and social care services.
- Monitor concerns and complaints.
- Enable people to feed back about their experiences of health and social care services.
- Collate information and compile reports about people's experiences and views.

Local Healthwatch have the benefit of a national umbrella organisation, Healthwatch England, from whom we receive development and support. Healthwatch England collects intelligence from the Healthwatch network, identifying national themes and producing reports on common areas of concern. They can raise issues at a national level. [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

## We will meet our responsibilities by:

Listening to people from all communities in Bedford Borough; helping to involve people in decisions about their care and how it is delivered, giving people information to make choices about their health and care and working in partnership to make change happen.

As Healthwatch Bedford Borough, we will give critical challenge to highlight where improvements can be made, be the voice of the public, show the impact our work can make and work hard to listen to people throughout the Borough.

# Strategic Aims

## This year, our strategic focus is to:

- To raise the visibility of Healthwatch Bedford Borough to make people aware of our role, and remit and to ensure people know how to feedback on local NHS health and social care services.
- Support more people to have their say and provide clear information and advice to help them take control of their health and care.
- Provide an effective, high-quality local service as Healthwatch Bedford Borough, building local partnerships and networks to achieve change together.
- Work together with professionals, providing useful insight to improve the planning, delivery and support of health and social care throughout Bedford Borough.
- To increase public awareness (and choice) of local services for residents through an enhanced Healthwatch information and signposting service.

## Priority areas from April 2024 to March 2025

In February and March 2024, Healthwatch Bedford Borough completed a priorities survey, talking to people about what they wanted us to focus our work on for the next 12 months. **We received 113 responses**, which helped us determine our local work priorities for the year ahead.

### Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

This will be a yearlong project to include an in-depth look at Special Educational Needs and Disability provision (SEND), Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service provision (CAMHS), and 'team around a family' wraparound care.

Throughout the year, we will develop our Youth Ambassador volunteer programme, create an improved social media platform, and co-produce the project plan with young people. This will ensure we focus our efforts on what matters most to young people in the Borough.

### Primary Care (GP practices)

This will include continuing to evaluate access to services, cloud-based telephony updates, the redesign of the NHS App and its usage, communication of vital messaging around new roles in primary care and the ability of the current primary care estate to meet both local demand and challenges for the future.

## Primary Care (Dental)

This work will include access to NHS routine dental care and treatment, promotion of key information and messages, e.g., NHS dental charge bands, access to emergency treatment, and paediatric oral health.

## Rural Isolation

This will include Healthwatch Bedford Borough conducting a rural Outreach programme. We will investigate rural transport issues, particularly those related to access to clinical appointments at out-of-area hospitals and units, access to services for isolated communities, and digital exclusion.

# Measuring Impact

Through a detailed activity plan, we have set clear aims and objectives as delivery targets. These will be achieved throughout the year to ensure we maximise our impact in addition to our priority project work.

Activity		Aims and objectives
<b>Enter and View Programme</b>	<p>The annual Enter &amp; View programme schedule is determined by intelligence received, follow-up actions from previous Enter and View visits and our standard programme following discussion with the CQC.</p> <p>The focus of the Enter and View Programme for 2024/25 will be care homes and acute NHS Trusts.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To carry out twelve Enter and View visits from April 2024 to March 2025.</p> <p>We will aim to analyse findings and report within 10 days to the provider and publish our report and recommendations on the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website 20 days after the visit has taken place.</p>
<b>Public Feedback</b>	<p>We will continue to encourage the public to give feedback on their experiences of using local health</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To collect the experiences of 1,000 people between April 2024</p>






	<p>and social care services. This feedback will form part of our regular reports to the Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB) and be used to identify any themes and trends in local services.</p> <p>This feedback will also form part of reports sent to service providers, commissioners, and stakeholders.</p>	<p>and March 2025 using multiple platforms, including Snap Surveys, Virtual Voices, the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website feedback portal, hardcopy paper surveys, interviewing, focus groups, and Outreach activities through working with third-party organisations.</p>
<b>Reporting</b>	<p>Healthwatch Bedford Borough will conduct independent reviews on various health and social care services. Reports will be published based on the intelligence we receive from members of the public and sent to the relevant Boards, commissioners and Contract Monitoring Officers.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To publish intelligence/insight reports on a quarterly basis.</p>
<b>Promotion</b>	<p>We will ensure our services are widely available and promoted in a range of formats. Our website, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms will provide live updates on engagement topics, service delivery changes and enable networking with other organisations.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To see an increase in engagement numbers through Facebook and Instagram.</p> <p>To ensure that the website is updated regularly with relevant topics and issues.</p> <p>To create a TikTok account to meet the needs of the younger population.</p>
<b>Strategic Influencing</b>	<p>Healthwatch Bedford Borough is represented on a wide range of Strategic Boards that oversee health and social care including Bedford Borough Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Overview and Scrutiny</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To ensure Healthwatch Bedford Borough remains a strong public voice in strategic decision-making.</p>

	<p>Committee. Our remit is to work with these partnerships to ensure the voice of the public, patients, service users and carers are heard, and to provide advice, guidance, and assurance on how to achieve this.</p>	
<p><b>Independent Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB)</b></p>	<p>Develop a well-balanced ISAB with a complimentary skill set and culture that allows collaborative working to enable effective decision making, and a platform in which the ISAB will formally agree and implement a plan of work.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To grow the number of ISAB members by at least three and appoint a permanent Board Chair.</p> <p>To ensure the ISAB receives the necessary training and support to fulfil its role during the year.</p>
<p><b>Volunteers</b></p>	<p>Volunteers play an essential role in the delivery of Healthwatch Bedford Borough. They add value and support us to achieve our mission and strategic objectives. By having an effective volunteer programme, Healthwatch Bedford Borough will provide opportunities for social inclusion, skills and confidence development and support routes into employment.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To develop a wider range of opportunities for people to volunteer with Healthwatch Bedford Borough, including work experience placements for students and young volunteers.</p>
<p><b>Additional funded projects</b></p>	<p>Healthwatch Bedford Borough will look at opportunities to take on additional funded projects or pieces of commissioned work that are aligned with our mission and values.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To generate additional income of 10% of the contract value to help sustain the current contract delivery and enhance the delivery offer.</p>
<p><b>Community Outreach &amp; Engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Face-to-face:</b> Our staff and volunteers will visit a range of community groups and outreach events to seek patient and public opinions and views. We will ensure our engagement activities focus on Bedford Borough's diverse</p>	<p><b>Aim: Face-to-face:</b> To undertake at least 120 outreach activities from April 2024 to March 2025.</p> <p><b>Virtual engagement activities:</b></p>

	<p>communities and continue to earn their respect.</p> <p>We will also continue to seek the views of people, who in the past, have been in the minority in intelligence gathering, e.g., people with learning disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), people living with mental illness and people with sensory impairment.</p> <p><b>Virtual engagement activities:</b></p> <p>We will provide platforms for focus group activity using mediums of Microsoft Teams and Zoom. This is to ensure we reach a larger target audience, including those who are in employment, carers and those living with long-term conditions.</p>	<p>To undertake a series of virtual focus groups and discussions online from April 2024 to March 2025.</p> <p><b>Virtual Voices</b></p> <p>By signing up to be part of our new Virtual Voices platform, participants will be invited to complete regular email polls, online questionnaires and surveys that will delve into how health and social care bodies deliver their services. This feedback will then be taken on board to make improvements and help ensure services across the Borough are of the highest possible standard.</p>
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# Linking Healthwatch Bedford Borough to BLMK priorities

We will work to contribute to the BLMK shared priorities through our work as Healthwatch Bedford Borough.

 <p><b>Start Well</b></p> <p>Every child has a strong, healthy start to life: from maternal health, through the first thousand days to reaching adulthood.</p> <p>→</p>	 <p><b>Live Well</b></p> <p>People are supported to engage with and manage their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>→</p>	 <p><b>Age Well</b></p> <p>People age well, with proactive interventions to stay healthy, independent and active as long as possible.</p> <p>→</p>	 <p><b>Growth</b></p> <p>We work together to help build the economy and support sustainable growth.</p> <p>→</p>	 <p><b>Reducing Inequalities</b></p> <p>In everything we do we promote equalities in the health and wellbeing of our population.</p> <p>→</p>
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No.	BLMK Theme	Healthwatch Involvement
1	<p><b>Start Well</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring that all mothers, parents, children and young people have access to the support they need to achieve good family health and wellbeing.</li> <li>2. Improving educational achievement across the whole of our population to better prepare children and young people for employment.</li> <li>3. Supporting children, young people and their families who are most vulnerable and need support from a range of services</li> </ol>	<p><b>Children &amp; Young people’s mental health and wellbeing. We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at access to CAMHS provision pre and post-referral.</li> <li>• Work with Community Paediatrics at Cambridge Community Services (CCS) to look at access to services and diagnosis, as well as after-care for children, young people and the wider family post diagnosis.</li> <li>• Work with the Oral Health Improvement Team to examine children's and young people’s oral health in accordance with JSNA oral health recommendations and support media campaigns.</li> <li>• Offer volunteer opportunities for our Youth Ambassador Programme.</li> <li>• Continue to offer student work experience placements.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Live Well</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring that local people and communities play a significant role in their own health and well-being.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Living Well. We will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a Diabetes health education and research event in September 2024 in conjunction with Health Innovation East, BLMK ICB, the Clinical Research Network, Diabetes UK and other partners.</li> </ul>

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Giving our partners in the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations a more significant role in supporting our population to stay healthy.</li> <li>3. Spreading innovation relating to prevention, building on best practice examples both within BLMK and from other areas of the country.</li> <li>4. Including links to tools, services and information that can support people to stay well through our website.</li> <li>5. Building on our work during Covid to connect into local communities, with a focus on helping people to stay healthy and active, including maintaining a healthy weight.</li> <li>6. Developing the skills of our staff to deliver preventative and personalised care.</li> <li>7. Integrating the use of digital tools to help people to stay healthy, including support for self-management of long-term conditions.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a bespoke focus group on the Secure Data Environment (SDE) for Health Innovation East/NIHR/ CUH to examine local residents' views on the storage of personal data in research.</li> <li>• Host bespoke focus groups looking at MSK provision for working aged men (16-49y) and Gig economy workers.</li> <li>• Provide a FREE signposting, advice and guidance service to local residents and professionals.</li> <li>• Provide social media platforms detailing local service delivery changes, opportunities to attend sessions, groups and events, and provide feedback.</li> <li>• Attend VSCE events to promote Healthwatch Bedford Borough as a trusted brand.</li> <li>• Attend meetings to support the ICB/ICS and providers, to support them to better understand the diverse needs of the Bedford Borough communities.</li> <li>• Offer volunteering opportunities.</li> </ul> |
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# 3

## Age Well

1. Support and empower older people to manage their own health as well as tackling ill health and long-term conditions amongst older people.
  2. Identify those who need more support to maintain good health and wellbeing, and focus on personalised care planning based around what matters most to people.
  3. Identify and manage frailty and people who have several health conditions at once
  4. Deliver consistent and co-ordinated care to people in their own home where possible and support those people who are no longer able to live in their own homes.
  5. Ensure people at the end of their life have a health and care offer which supports the wishes of the individual and their family/carers.
- Work with rural communities including the farming communities of Bedford Borough to look at access to services in relation to rural isolation and digital exclusion. This will include partnering with Bedfordshire Libraries.
  - Provide Outreach activity in rural parishes to support awareness raising.
  - Conduct a minimum of 12 Enter & View visits, this year focusing on a standard programme of works looking at Care Home facilities. These visits have been decided upon based on discussion with CQC and Care Standards colleagues.
  - Promote a Marie Curie End of Life survey for carers during July and August.

# 4

## Reducing inequalities

1. Ensuring continuity of care for women from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities and the most deprived groups
  2. Ensuring annual health checks for people with SMI
  3. Driving uptake of vaccinations and earlier diagnosis of cancer
  4. Investing in local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to support people in different, proactive ways
  5. Working with Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to identify and target high priority cohorts.
- Continue to host the purpose-built website page for Planning for Pregnancy, which includes materials in other languages and easy-to-understand informational videos.
  - Continue to promote Tommy's Tool and Diabetes UK materials in other languages.
  - CEO assigned as Independent EDI/EDS Advisor to the BLMK ICB as part of Denny phase II.
  - Work on Denny translation evaluation.
  - Support the ICB with creation of accessible Comms collateral for the local population.
  - Sharing updates on social media and producing surveys in accessible formats, including BSL and plain English.
  - Support access to primary care and secondary for marginalised communities and groups.
  - Provide inclusive outreach to diverse communities and work with faith and community leaders to improve access to care and support health literacy.







# healthwatch

## Bedford Borough

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