

Healthwatch Bradford and District

Healthwatch was created as part of the health and social care reforms to give people a stronger voice to influence the health and social care services that matter to them. Since April 2013 there has been a local Healthwatch organisation in every local authority area in England, with Healthwatch England supporting the 152 local organisations and acting as the consumer champion for the public on health and social care at a national level.

In Healthwatch Bradford and District:

- We ask people about their experience of health and social care, going out and talking to people and communities.
- We listen to people's experiences and look for patterns that show where change needs to happen.
- We tell organisations in charge of health and social care what the public think works well and what needs to change.
- We check that these organisations are listening to people's views and using this information to improve services.
- We provide information about local health and social care services to members of the public through phone, email and outreach sessions in hospital outpatient departments, GP practices or libraries.

In our first year Healthwatch has heard from a wide range of people from right across Bradford district, and we've actively sought views from some groups whose voices aren't usually heard:

- children and young people
- minority ethnic communities
- older people
- disabled people
- visually impaired and blind people
- carers
- people using mental health services

Healthwatch Bradford and District works with a range of partner organisations from the voluntary sector work with us to share feedback about health and social care services from their communities. And whilst we remain an independent organisation we also work closely with the CCGs, NHS England, NHS providers, Bradford Council and other commissioners and providers of social care services, feeding in service user experience, asking what action is being taken, seeking improvements in local care.

In our first year we have done a significant amount of work on primary care, described in our report "Invisible at the Desk" and secured a range of commitments from NHS commissioners to improve access and personalise care. We have talked to people using A&E services in Bradford Royal Infirmary and worked with Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the Care Quality Commission to make changes. We have done "enter and view" visits to a number of facilities, leading to changes for example in the care of people with dementia in Airedale NHS Trust. We are working with partners such as BAVIP, Bradford Talking Media and the Strategic Disability Partnership to improve access and communication for visually

impaired and deaf people. We are working with Barnardo's and the CCGs on an innovative project to involve vulnerable young people in making improvements to GP services.

Through its seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and in other places Healthwatch has championed the need to pull together information on public experience of health and social care currently held by many different agencies. Whilst we feed information into mechanisms like the CCG's "Grassroots" process, much more needs to be done to share intelligence about what local people think is good and what needs changing in the local health and social care system. We all hold one piece of the jig-saw; we need to find ways of putting these pieces together to get a clearer picture of service user experiences and aspirations in all parts of the health and social care economy, particularly those whose voices are not always heard.

Andrew Jones
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