



healthwatch

**Healthwatch  
Blackburn  
with Darwen**  
Annual report  
2017/18



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# Message from our Chair

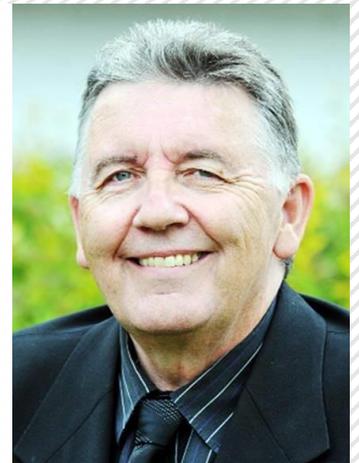
## An Introduction from Sir Bill Taylor

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen continues to grow from strength to strength, maintaining strong partnerships with all key stakeholders, including residents of Blackburn with Darwen, the local health sector, local authority and voluntary sector as well as other Healthwatch organisations in the North West region.

Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds from our community continue to play a key role in the delivery of our work and we are keen to build on this engagement in the coming year and involve residents of Blackburn with Darwen in all our activities.

The highlights of 2017/2018 include: -

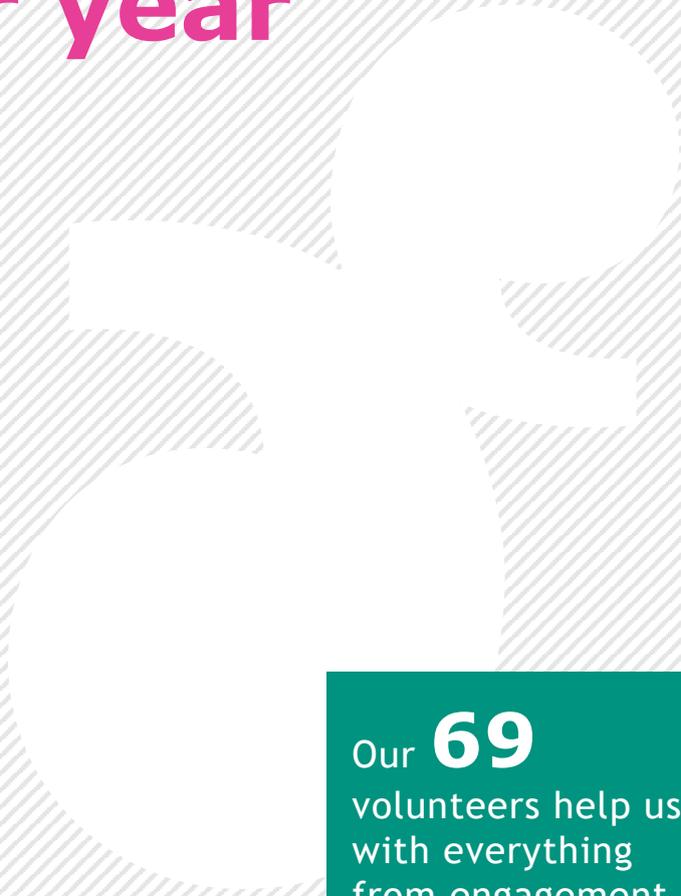
- A volunteer led review of our asylum seeker and refugee community's experiences of health and social care which emphasised the importance of the role of the voluntary sector in supporting their access to mental health provision
- Recommendations from our spotlight on both Children's and Adults' Accident and Emergency department at Royal Blackburn Hospital were highlighted in the local press
- An offenders report which flagged up the need for a whole family early support intervention for young people at the risk of offending and will lead to further work looking at housing of ex-offenders in the coming year's workplan



- Over 60 active volunteers, including 25 young Amplify champions, who donated 2,783 hours of time in the year
- The Amplify projects were a great success covering a wide range of subjects important to the young people of our borough
- Improved reach of our information and signposting activities - spending time in several education and youth settings, local libraries and supermarkets as well as agencies accessed by the most vulnerable members of our community

I would like to thank my fellow Directors and hard-working team of staff and volunteers for all their effort and success. Finally, I would like to thank all the people of Blackburn with Darwen, who have in so many different ways shared their experiences with us. We value the trust placed in us and know we have more to do on your behalf. We will continue to actively listen to and share your views and experiences to the best of our ability, ensuring that these are heard by local health services.

# Highlights from our year



This year we've reached **2,760** people on social media



Our **69** volunteers help us with everything from engagement to admin



We've visited **53** local services



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from eating disorders to veterans' health and wellbeing



We've spoken to **4,023** people about local services

We've given **479** people information and advice and signposted **100** people to local services



# Who we are



**You need services that work for you, your friends and family. That's why we want you to share your experiences of using health and care with us - both good and bad. We use your voice to encourage those who run services to act on what matters to you.**

As well as championing your views locally, we also share your views with Healthwatch England who make sure that the government put people at the heart of care nationally.

## **Health and care that works for you**

People want health and social care support that works - helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.

## **Our purpose**

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.

People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

# Your views on health and care





### Listening to people's views

In 2017/18 we collected residents' experiences of using health and care services and identified their needs through eight targeted engagement projects on a range of topics affecting local people, 10 Enter and View visits to local healthcare settings and information and signposting events delivered each week in over 15 locations across the borough.

We have worked with diverse communities in our area including the asylum seeker and refugee community for whom accessing mental health provision can be challenging, veterans who often struggle to make the transition back into civilian society and ex-offenders who lack the knowledge and confidence to access support for their health and wellbeing.

Our Amplify Project, led by young people, continues to ensure young people have a voice on issues that affect them, focusing this year on eating disorders, children's experiences of A and E and gathering the views of young people with learning disabilities on their access to health and social care provision.

*"Working with Healthwatch has been an amazing opportunity for me to build my confidence and work on many important skills. I have been taking part in projects for just over three years now and my leadership skills and general ability to communicate with others have vastly improved.*

*By being able to have a say in many important choices within the school and Amplify, I began to build an impressive CV for my future. My list of projects and activities is now extensive and still growing.*

*Since working with such a great organisation and meeting some wonderful people, I have improved both as a person, and as a worker as I now have more knowledge of things in my local area - and my grades have benefitted. It has been an amazing experience and I hope to continue this in future."*

*Abbie, 14*



**'Volunteering at Healthwatch has been tremendous for Abbie's skills development, confidence and ability to speak out about mental health issues of young people in the borough', Linda Mason, Learning Coach, Darwen Aldridge Enterprise Studio School**



## Making sure services work for you

Our Enter and View programme is used as both a stand-alone piece of work responding to concerns of residents about health care settings or responding to referrals by the CQC and to add value to other Healthwatch BwD projects.

Healthwatch staff and Enter and View volunteers all have DBS checks and undergo additional training to give them the skills and knowledge to visit services.

In 2017/18 we carried out Enter and Views at: -

- Darwen Ward, Pendle View, Royal Blackburn Hospital
- Dr Alam's GP Practice, Darwen
- Accrington Road Dental Surgery, Blackburn
- Brookhouse Medical Centre, Blackburn
- Limefield Surgery, Blackburn
- St James House Residential Care Home, Darwen
- Old Gates Care Home Blackburn
- Stroke Unit, Royal Blackburn Hospital
- Accident and Emergency, Royal Blackburn Hospital
- Children's Ward, Royal Blackburn Hospital

Through these visits we engaged with 244 members of the public to gather their opinions on the quality of provision. The Enter and View of the Children's Ward at Blackburn Royal Hospital was facilitated by some of our Amplify Champions.

These visits gave us the opportunity to make recommendations for improvements in working practices and communication with patients, better engagement of residents through Patient Participation Groups and the chance to praise good practice.

*"Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen volunteers and staff are thanked for the work undertaken to support the Trust in highlighting positive findings from patients, carers and families, as well as highlighting areas for improvement.*

*We take all feedback very seriously and constantly strive to ensure all our patients and relatives have a good experience when using the Trust's services and will be taking on board all the comments received.*

*The findings have been shared with the Senior Nursing Team for the Children's Unit and the following action plan developed in response to the specific recommendations made."*

*Meg Davey, Assistant Director of Patient Experience for East Lancashire Hospital Trust*



# Helping you find the answers



## How we have helped the community get the information they need

We have maintained over 15 access points across the year for residents to learn about the work of Healthwatch BwD and get information they need about local health and social care services.

These have included a range of healthcare and community settings including schools, libraries, supermarkets and agencies accessed by the most vulnerable members of our community including Shelter and Care Network Dementia Hub.

Signposting opportunities have been maximised through public health and community events across the year as well as local and national themed days. We also make a significant number of referrals and signpost residents to local agencies through our telephone service.

## Volunteering at Access Points

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen relies on the generous time our volunteers dedicate to the organisation and could not carry out its work without their support.

Volunteers work with the team at each of our access points to gather people's feedback on local services and signpost them to relevant services where appropriate.

### Case study

Mr A called our office to register a complaint regarding the treatment and service he has experienced from his GP surgery. He was prescribed medication which deteriorated both his physical and mental health. He felt the GP did not listen to him and rushed the appointment. In A&E he felt undervalued and was sent home with other medication which caused him not to be able function normally. Urgent Care was called again and they sent a GP for a home visit who immediately referred him to the hospital. He was required to stay in hospital for 4-5 days.

Mr A disclosed he had times where he felt like giving up and ending his life. Our staff member discussed his options and the support that is available to him, which made him feel hopeful and empowered to challenge his treatment.

Since his call to the office, Mr A has since been to another GP whom he trusts and he feels respected as a patient.



# Making a difference together



## How your experiences are helping to influence change

This year we have worked with residents, volunteers and professionals across the borough on the following projects:

### The Health & Wellbeing of Adults Who Have Offended or Are at Risk Offending -

Key findings were that a whole family early support intervention would be of benefit to young people at risk of offending and as adults, ex-offenders still expressed the need for support for their mental and physical health and wellbeing and would benefit from signposting to services available including training and housing support.

### Mental/Physical Wellbeing of Asylum Seekers and Refugees -

From consultation with asylum seekers and refugees, we found that health and social care providers should make greater use of available translation services to meet the language needs of asylum seekers and refugees; that 'safe spaces' provided by voluntary sector organisations should be maximised as signposting opportunities to mental health provision and counselling.

### Spotlight on A & E -

Through consultation with over 600 residents, we identified good practice at both adult and children's A & E and identified areas of improvement around communication of waiting times, cleanliness of waiting rooms, availability of drinking water in Children's A & E and better promotion of out of hours GP appointments to alleviate pressure on the department.

### Amplify Youth Voice -

The Amplify project grew in strength across the year with an expanded reach into more primary and secondary schools and youth work settings. There were 25 active Amplify volunteers across the year who led on projects covering eating disorders, Children's A & E, young offenders and the experiences young people with learning disabilities accessing health and social care services. In 2017, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen also attained the Investing in Children Award.

### Your View Your Voice -

Bi-monthly forums on specific topics including dentists, prescribing, frailty of older people and respiratory issues were delivered across the year at the Care Network Hub and the Hub was used as an access point for signposting events in order to engage with residents accessing health and social care services covering a wider range of services according to the needs of residents.

### Mental Health -

3 forums were delivered across the year which brought together volunteers and professionals to discuss mental health and wellbeing. A monthly forum of professionals has now been established to share best practice.



## Working with other organisations

Healthwatch BwD has continued to maintain strong partnerships with all key stakeholders which includes partners from the health sector, local authority and voluntary sector as well as other Healthwatch organisations in the North West region.

The Chair of Healthwatch BwD has been instrumental in setting up a forum of Chairs and Chief Officers of all the local Healthwatch organisations in the North West region. This forum meets on a quarterly basis and includes representatives from Healthwatch England. The forum has been established to discuss issues arising at both a regional and national level, how the local Healthwatch organisations can work in better collaboration and share best practice both locally and with Healthwatch England.

The Amplify project has worked with several primary and secondary schools and youth organisations across the borough with young people working with the team to deliver workshops and gather young people's views on issues affecting them.

We continue to work closely with the CQC - providing updates on our projects and undertaking Enter and Views based on CQC intelligence.

Our relationship with Shelter continues to grow in strength and we regularly deliver signposting events in partnership.

We have been working closely with Healthwatch for a couple of years. They are a great agency who support our clients with their health needs and voicing their opinions. They have impacted on our clients by pointing them in the right direction of things like dentists and Doctors which is greatly needed for our homeless clients and this supports our advisors to be able to focus on their housing problems. We have supported them in their projects and look forward to continue doing this in the future. It is a great partnership and a great service. Emma Garner, Shelter

## How we've worked with our community

We continue to embed ourselves in the local community, engaging a wide group of residents in our work through both our membership and volunteer programme as well as speaking to increasing numbers of residents to gather their views of local services. Our membership has a good representation from across the borough and a diverse mix of gender and ethnic backgrounds.

The team attended Blackburn with Darwen Health and Wellbeing Board meetings across the year to give regular feedback on patient experience and engagement on key health topics.

*"I found myself at a loose end once my children were all in full time education and decided it was time for a new challenge. I attended a summer fun day at Witton Park where I met Sharon Hardman, Volunteer Coordinator, who was busy signposting for Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen. I decided this would be an ideal opportunity to gain some experience and confidence in the workplace since being out of work for almost 14 years. At Healthwatch BwD I chose to be a Creative Facilitator which has enabled me to refresh the skills I learnt at university and apply them in a work environment. I have been involved in many projects which includes creating posters for the Enter and View at the children's ward and Accident & Emergency. I also helped signposting at different venues, such as Blackburn College Volunteer Fair. I enjoy working here at Healthwatch BwD and hope that I can continue to volunteer and make a difference to my local town. Volunteering has led me to find part time employment at Pleckgate High School which fits in with my life as well as gaining all the things I set out to achieve and more."*

**Saima Gulfam-Mir, Volunteer**

it starts with  
**YOU**



“I wanted everyone to know where to turn to for help when dealing with their mental health concerns. Our recommendations to improve support received great feedback, and reached the Houses of Parliament.”

### #ItStartsWithYou

Through our work with residents and volunteers we try to ensure that people access the services they need but also help us deliver projects on key issues across the borough.

As part of our work we regularly engage with residents at access points and via the telephone in the office.

Local people's views and experiences of healthcare are central to all of our work and are key to shaping our annual work plan.

We are pleased to share with you a great example of how young people from Blackburn with Darwen have helped develop and continue to shape our work on mental health and influence the work carried out by agencies in the borough.



### Case study

#### Action

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen delivered workshops in schools and youth groups across the borough, consulting with 837 young people aged 8 to 25 to gather their views and experiences on the issues affecting their health and wellbeing. The feedback from young people at these sessions was that self-harming, experiencing a mental health condition, taking drugs and having a life limiting condition were the four most important issues for young people.

#### Result

Based on this feedback, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen has made young people's mental health a priority in its 2018/19 workplan and raised this as a priority with health and care partners across Pennine Lancashire as a focus for co-production. We are also training young people to co-deliver workshops on Adverse Childhood Experiences in schools and youth groups.

#### Impact

East Lancashire CCG have agreed that a revision of the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service will be co-designed with children, young people and their parents and carers. Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is continuing to meet with commissioners and providers to make sure improvements to the service happen and that young people are fully involved.



# Our plans for next year



## What next?

Our workplan for 2018/19 has been designed to make a positive contribution to the successful local achievements of outcomes set out in national frameworks for the NHS, primary care, adult social care and public health. The workplan is fully aligned against the three main strands of Blackburn with Darwen's Health and Wellbeing strategy:

- Start Well
- Live Well
- Age well

Our top priorities for next year are highlighted below.

In addition to these engagement projects, we will be carrying out and building on our signposting and information provision on a weekly basis in a minimum of 15 locations across the borough and undertaking a minimum of 15 Enter and Views in a range of settings. We will continue to build our Amplify project to support more young people across the borough and ensure that their voice is heard.

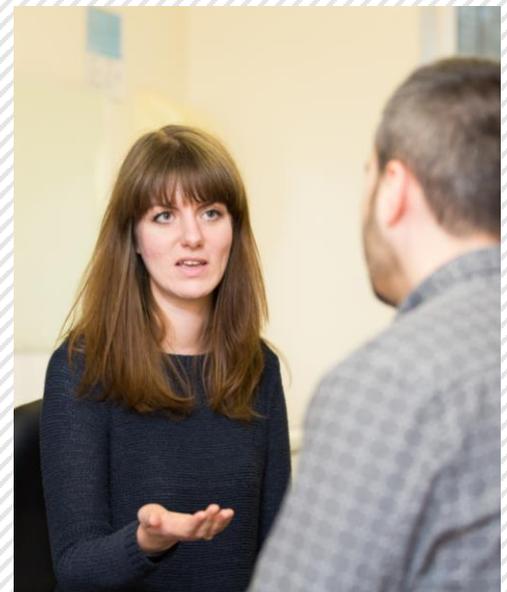
“Blackburn with Darwen Healthwatch have continued to make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of local residents over the past year. Despite some challenges, they have operated well across a wide range of roles including - constructive critics of local services, a voice of the people, a partner in prevention, gatherers of research, insight and intelligence and as public communications champions on key health and wellbeing issues.

They continue to take a leading role in health and social care transformation across Pennine Lancashire -we are confident that their service will go from strength to strength over the coming year.”

Dominic Harrison, Director of Blackburn with Darwen Public Health

## Our top priorities for next year

1. Vulnerable young people and access to healthcare
2. Residents' GP experiences - customer service and appointments
3. Young people's and families' experiences of dental care
4. Young people's experiences of access to health care for mental health support
5. Experiences of hospital discharge of residents living with dementia
6. Experiences of ex-offenders of access to appropriate housing and health provision
7. Young people's and families' experiences of asthma care



# Our people



## Decision making

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen board of Directors are responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and oversee the running of the organisation. This includes overseeing the finances, human resources, technology and back office functions.

Each board member has a designated speciality and responsibility, ensuring their skills and experiences are best utilised. All Board members are volunteers and are committed to a minimum of one day a month for Healthwatch BwD duties.

The Board met three times in public in 2017/18 with all the decisions made at public Board meetings. This allowed members and local residents the opportunity to have a say on our governance, ask questions of the Board and ensure the organisation is open and transparent.

## How we involve the public and volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role within the organisation. We recognise the value our volunteers bring and actively support them through our annual training programme. Our volunteer opportunities currently comprise of:

- Board directors - focusing on strategic planning, developing working protocols, and policies and managing the strategic direction of Healthwatch BwD.
- Enter and View team - visiting health and social care services to observe the service and gather views and experiences from staff, patients and carers
- Engagement team - supporting the staff team on specific projects gathering views and experiences of residents across the borough
- Representing Healthwatch within the community - supporting our signposting and information sessions with residents and informing them of our work
- Administration support - all aspects of administration and social media support in the office
- Student placements - placements for students across the borough to learn valuable skills in a real work environment
- Amplify Champions - young people in schools and colleges are able to deliver our Youth projects in partnership with our staff team
- Interviews - volunteers sit on the panel during interviews, welcome candidates and give feedback on appropriate candidates.



# Our finances



Our financial information for last year is in the table below.

However, these figures are not fully audited at the time of publication.

We have plans in place to fully use our available resources to improve our service and carry out our duties.

<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	165,000
Additional income	29,816
<b>Total income</b>	<b>194,816</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Operational costs	36,819
Staffing costs	148,831
Office costs	12,302
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>197,952</b>
Balance brought forward as at 31 March 2018	<b>81,930</b>



**The views and stories  
you share with us are  
helping to make care  
better for our local  
community**

**Mike Smith**  
Healthwatch Volunteer



# Contact us

Get in touch

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Twitter: @HealthwatchBwD

## Address of contractors

Our annual report will be publicly available on our website by 30 June 2018. We will also be sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our local authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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