

healthwatch

Blackburn with Darwen

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.



I'm really pleased to introduce you to two new members of the team and share updates on our current projects now that we are getting back to some kind of normal!

We are also looking for an enthusiastic and dedicated Projects Officer to join the team as well as volunteers to support our work across the borough - find out more below!

Sarah Johns
Chief Officer



In September we welcomed Liam and Michelle to the Healthwatch Team.



Michelle is the new Enter & View Project Officer. Having previously worked at Healthwatch Lancashire in the same position, Michelle is looking forward to bringing that successful practice to her new role. Michelle has a background in community-based support work, criminal justice, and domestic abuse prevention. Whilst working in domestic abuse worked alongside Action on Elder Abuse.

Michelle will bring lots of knowledge and experience to support the people and services in Blackburn with Darwen.



Liam is our new Administration Assistant and joined us through the Kickstart scheme. He is a graduate from the University of Central Lancashire where he gained a Master's Degree in film production. He enjoys filming and creating video content around social issues and has recently produced and directed a documentary which focuses on eating disorders and the rising diagnosis in the LGBT+ community.

Alongside working here at Healthwatch, Liam has secured a Policy Assistant role with Kate Hollern MP to gain experience and a better understanding of the local health and social care landscape.

Covid-19 in Blackburn with Darwen

- As at 9th October confirmed case data for Blackburn with Darwen is 277.3 cases per 100,000. Blackburn with Darwen remains lower than the national England average and lower than the Northwest average
- Although there has been several small increases over the last couple of weeks it would appear that these are mainly from school aged children
- We urge everyone eligible, to get the flu vaccine. Protect yourself against illness over the coming winter months.
- Vaccination of healthy 12-15 year olds has begun in BwD schools, through the NHS School Age Immunisation Service, and will continue after half term and into November. Consent forms are being sent to parents and carers of children aged 12-15 together with NHS guides to the vaccination programme.



Enter & View has recommenced in Blackburn with Darwen

Under the 2012 Care Act local Healthwatch have a legal power to carry out Enter and View visits to publicly funded health and social care providers. At Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen we use these visits to see services in action and talk directly to families, carers and staff about their experiences.

Due to the pandemic we have been unable to enter into any of the residential care homes across Blackburn with Darwen until now. The Enter & View Team have recently inspected Birchfield Care Home and St Andrews Court Care Home, both Blackburn. The team have several more planned over the next few months.

Once complete the reports can be found on our website [Enter and View reports 2021/22 :: Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen](#)



Call out for volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in helping people have their say on health and social care. Volunteering with us here at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen and we can help you develop skills, gain experience and make a difference to your community.

Help people in your community have their say on health and social care

Many Healthwatch volunteers spend time in the community finding out what people think of local services so that Healthwatch can raise any concerns with service providers. Our volunteers play a vital role speaking to local people about their experiences and giving them a platform to share their views and ideas for how services can improve.

- **Report on local health and care services**

Some Healthwatch volunteers are trained to visit health and social care services and report on the experiences of people using those services. You might be observing the service, gathering the views of patients, residents and staff, and contributing to reports which highlight your findings.

- **Help raise awareness of Healthwatch**

As a volunteer, you could be attending community events to raise awareness of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen and encourage people to share their feedback on health and social care in their community.

- **Develop your professional skills in an office environment**

Our volunteers can support us by sharing their professional skills like design, marketing and communications work. This is a great way of developing your skills while helping ensure that people are able to shape the health and social care services they use.

If you are interested in joining us as a volunteer email info@healthwatchbwd.co.uk

Study into the long-term effects of Covid has been launched

We want to speak to people who are suffering from the long-term effect of viral infections, like Covid, so we can use your experiences to help us improve health services in the borough.

Covid is raising new questions about how people can be supported and posing new challenges for services. There is much more to learn about how people are affected long-term after having a virus and how they are supported by health services.

According to the Office of National Statistics more than one in every 100 people in the UK report experiencing long term symptoms after having had Covid with symptoms ranging from chronic fatigue, headaches, tiredness, inability to concentrate, shortness of breath and aching muscles.

If you have had prolonged symptoms following a viral infection over the past year – and these symptoms have lasted more than 12 weeks - then Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to hear from you.

New research shows there could be around 2 million people with Long-Covid with findings from the REACT-2 studies showing over a third of people who had coronavirus (COVID-19) reported symptoms lasting at least 12 weeks, for some

To help health service providers support you better, those who have been affected by Long Covid are being encouraged to take part in a study. A link to a survey can be found here

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HW3G2SR>

Lancashire and south Cumbria Hospitals Programme

Healthwatch Together have been out and about in Lancashire this week meeting residents across Lancashire to hear your views on the Lancashire and South Cumbria New Hospitals programme.

Hospitals are for everyone and its important that everyone has the opportunity to share their views. If you want to know more then follow this link <https://tinyurl.com/3p4ka3px>

Lancashire & South Cumbria
New Hospitals
Programme



Can't find the support you need?

Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can be there to find you the best place to go for help, find the health and social care information that you need or advise on how to make a complaint or where to go for extra support. Get in touch here..

<https://tinyurl.com/tucn94w3>

and last but not least... we are looking for a new Project Officer.

The closing date is Friday 22nd October at 5pm. Further information on how to apply click [here](#)