



Local news from your local Healthwatch

Welcome to the quarterly Healthwatch Blackpool newsletter! We've been really busy writing up our 'Resident's Voice' care home reviews, organising the MacMillan and Healthwatch On Tour drama production, reviewing A&E as well as substance misuse services. We've also undertaken a joint visit to The Harbour with Healthwatch Lancashire. Thank you for your feedback about which services you think we should be looking into which we sent in December, we've been asking the public what they would like us to look into over 2016/17. We'll be collating these and making a plan of work for the next year!



Anish & Steven in A&E!

January - March in pictures!

Macmillan cancer awareness day!



Voting with a visual impairment!



We completed 11 care home reviews in December, and the results are now available on our website at www.healthwatchblackpool.co.uk. The pilot went really well and the residents absolutely loved engaging in conversation about their care. We found out so much about daily life in a care home, from food and activities to dignity and care practices. We saw some excellent practice, and room for improvement in others. We will be rolling out the *Resident's Voice* survey across all care homes in Blackpool this year. We will be saying which homes and when we will be visiting on our website and on social media.

With other local Healthwatches (Lancashire, and Blackburn with Darwen), we teamed up with MacMillan Cancer Support and AFTA Thought drama company to bring a drama production to hard-to-reach communities. Healthwatch Blackpool facilitated a production to adults with learning disabilities at [Empowerment](http://www.empowerment.org.uk)'s Friendship Club. The wider learning disability community was invited, and the day was well attended. The service users really enjoyed meeting Joe, a life-size puppet with a brain and a heart! Afterwards people gave their feedback, including those who had personal experiences of cancer and said they now knew how to check themselves. The report will soon be available on our [website](http://www.healthwatchblackpool.co.uk). We will also be making a brief video!

We have also had stands at International Women's Day and at The Harbour, and attended Blackpool Council's event about voting with a visual impairment!

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Do you want to make a difference to your local health and social care services? Join us today! Visit www.healthwatchblackpool.co.uk

We're here to listen to your health and social care issues, concerns and experiences (good or bad). Contact us today on 0300 32 32100

Healthwatch Blackpool

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What we have been doing

Reports and Publications

We have finalised our Accident and Emergency findings, and are awaiting feedback from the department. We performed 3 visits at different times of day. We found that community health services and other hospital departments do not appear to be joined-up with A&E resulting in a burden on the emergency service. Based on responses given the issues appear to be: A high volume of NHS 111 referrals with A&E not seeming to be able to adapt to that demand on their service, lack of explanations of choice before attending A&E, GP surgeries quickly exhausting their amount of available same-day emergency appointments and an apparent inability for other services (such as GP surgeries, cardiac centre etc.) to make bookings at Primary Care or alternative services. We were also told that 111 were unable to book out-of-hours appointments until 6.30pm. Some people were told at alternative services that they require an x-ray, then went to A&E to wait to be told once more that they required one, then waited to receive one (doubling the triage). Other in-house hospital services send patients to A&E when they are unable to provide a bed. Many patients also waited with a lack of communication between triage, nurse and consultancy stages of treatment. We have put our findings to the Patient Experience team, and are awaiting a response. The full report will be available shortly on our [website](#).



We are also finalising our Substance Misuse Services findings, sending them to Horizon (the drug and alcohol service provider) for comment. We will also be sharing this with the Blackpool Commissioning team, CQC and Healthwatch England. Overall the comments about the support available were overwhelmingly positive. However there were concerns around the closure of community-based detox houses, with clients saying that rural detox houses remove them from their problem for a short time, but that they simply come back to the same issues again. Some clients who were further on in their treatment had an issue with mixed stage groups, where they would be around intoxicated clients or would be able to smell substances/alcohol on them, which made their own recovery harder. They also felt there was a lack of prevention and referrals at early intervention stages such as GPs, and only found drug and alcohol services when they got to more serious stages of addiction and required services such as the hospital. The full report will be available shortly on our [website](#).

Our visit to The Harbour went very well, and we found a range of results. The full report will be produced by Healthwatch Lancashire. From the service users we spoke to, the activities on offer appeared to be very good (social, art, crafts and the gym), and the staff were praised for their support. Some people did not wish to be in the Harbour however, and tended to take a negative view of it.

Healthwatch Blackpool AGM and induction of Board Members

Healthwatch Blackpool held their 2014/15 Annual General Meeting, and outgoing chair of the Board Joan Rose led the meeting by giving details of the work carried out over that year, and gave a speech thanking everyone at Healthwatch Blackpool and wishing us luck going forwards. We are thankful to Joan for the support she has provided in her years in post, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours. Healthwatch Blackpool have inducted several new board members, whose information (biography and backgrounds) will be appearing on our website soon!

Word from Steven Garner, the new Healthwatch Blackpool Manager

I am delighted to be taking over from Claire Powell as the manager of Healthwatch Blackpool in April, and I am thoroughly looking forward to the task ahead of raising the voices of everyone across Blackpool to ensure that their experiences of services are heard by those who run and commission them. I am convinced that in order to understand how well a service operates and can improve, the fundamental way to do this is by listening to those who have been through them. I am truly honoured to represent your views at this level and encourage positive change within services for everyone.



What's in store for the future

We will be working further with Public Health on drug and alcohol strategies, and with the End of Life strategy group ahead of Dying Matters week in May. We are currently undertaking a review into dementia services, and GP access. We will be making a full plan of work for the next year based on the results of our public consultation. You are still able to let us know what you think we should look into by completing our survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HWBpriorities>. In the mean time keep up to date with us by following our regular updates on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). And please get in touch if you want to help us on our mission!

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