



Healthwatch Slough
Annual Report 2013/4



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Introduction from Colin Pill, Healthwatch Slough Chair

This year's annual report will be a reflection of how the first year of Healthwatch has progressed.

Our annual report provides an overview of the work that has been carried out during Healthwatch Slough's first year.

Context

At the end of March 2013, PCTs (Primary Care Trusts) and LINKs (Local Involvement Networks) were abolished. On 1st April 2013 CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) took over from the PCTs in a move to improve patient access to health and social care, and at the same time with ever decreasing funds.

This change did not take place overnight. I think it is so important to understand and recognise that an enormous amount of work took place in the months leading to the change to make sure that the CCGs were ready to hold and administer your future Healthcare funding, whilst remembering that other restructuring was - and is - taking place in the rest of the National Health Service.

There are also significant reforms taking place in Council social care and children's services - all in line to create both easier access and greater efficiency as the Council is also being required by central government to reduce costs.

(continued overleaf)





A champion is born! Healthwatch Slough is a CIC (Community Interest Company) put in place to look out for the interests of the Slough people, protect your rights and concerns, and to champion the voices of people who wouldn't normally be heard. This report shows what we've done in our first year.

Setting up & making an impact

During our first year Healthwatch Slough CIC has made some significant steps in embedding a new structure, starting a community interest company and fulfilling all of our contractual and governance requirements.

The strong commitment of the Healthwatch Slough Board who offer time, skills, knowledge and commitment have truly laid the foundations for the achievements during the first year.

As with any start-up operation, it takes time to establish a governance framework, recruit, induct and train a Board and a team, build capacity and develop work priorities to ensure future successes and effectiveness over the longer term.

During this first year the Board has received training to ensure they are equipped to carry out their function, have undertaken the business to set up the company, finalised contract details, agreed reporting arrangements, and agreed policies and procedures to make the best use of our resources.

We have considered how best to represent Healthwatch Slough at key meetings, and discussed how best to undertake our own work plan whilst also responding to those of others and contributing to inspections and other consultations.

With the available budget, within the diverse community that we serve, and with a very small staff team Healthwatch Slough, I am proud to say, has become widely known and has started to make its first impacts on health and social care services in Slough. We look forward to building on this first foundation year and continuing the work that we have started.

Looking ahead

With the resources that we have we will need to be 'SMART' going into our second year. To that end we have agreed a focused Work Plan. We work collaboratively with our key stakeholders and we will turn to the whole community to invest in and support Healthwatch Slough to carry out its role as their Consumer Champion.

Colin Pill
Chair, Healthwatch Slough

Background to Healthwatch Slough

Healthwatch is the new consumer champion for health and social care. It exists in two forms - local Healthwatch at local level, and Healthwatch England at national level.

Healthwatch was created under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, which aims to put the voices of people who use services at the centre of health and social care.

A consumer champion can help to make sure these voices, especially those who are vulnerable and speak more quietly, are heard.

What is Healthwatch Slough?

We are the independent consumer champion for health and social care for children, young people and adults living, working and using services in Slough.

The aims of Healthwatch Slough are to:

- Provide or signpost people to information to help them make choices about health and care services
- Listen and give citizens a stronger voice to influence and challenge health and social care services
- Gain views about people's need for, and experience of, those local services and represent these views to decision makers
- Give residents and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided
- Be involved in commissioning, provision or scrutiny of health and care services
- Represent residents of the Borough at the Health and Wellbeing Board & Health Scrutiny Committee
- Recommend to Healthwatch England (a body that will support local Healthwatch organisations and represent the interests of patients at a national level), or the Care Quality Commission (the regulator for health and social care), when special reviews or investigations should be carried out.
- Provide evidence-based feedback to commissioners and providers to influence, inform and, if necessary, challenge decisions and plans.



Our context

Key figures¹ about Slough

Slough's population density is among the highest in the country with 4,308 people per square kilometre, putting it above Birmingham (4,007) and marginally below Manchester (4,350). The total population in Slough is 140,200 with 95,700 of people aged 15-64 (68%).

Slough is one of the most ethnically diverse towns in the UK. The Pakistani and Indian communities are the two largest communities in the town.

Only 56.2% of households have all household members of the same ethnic group. Whilst many households have at least 1 member who speaks English as a main language, 15.5% of households do not include anyone for whom English is the main language.

Slough, therefore, has a unique population profile with high migration rates from different parts of the world; a young multi-ethnic population which presents a unique context for the health and social care system and for Healthwatch Slough.

‘Slough has a unique population profile which presents a unique context for health and social care’

¹Health and Social Care Information Centre (2009) Trends in Consultation Rates in General Practice 1995 to 2008: Analysis of the QResearch® database: <https://catalogue.ic.nhs.uk/publications/primary-care/general-practice/tren-cons-rate-gene-prac-95-09/tren-cons-rate-gene-prac-95-09-95-08-rep.pdf>

What is a Community Interest Company?

A Community Interest Company (CIC) is a limited company, with special additional features, created for the use of people who want to conduct a business or other activity for community benefit, and not purely for private advantage.

Healthwatch Slough's structure

Community Interest Company

All Healthwatch organisations across the UK are required to be independent legal entities in their own right. This required the creation of an entirely new company in Slough.

Healthwatch Slough CIC is a Social Enterprise, a Community Interest Company, created by the partnership of Help & Care and Citizens' Advice Slough.

It was the role of Help and Care and Citizens' Advice Slough to develop the service specification, to assign Help and Care as lead contractor in the partnership and to create an Independent Appointments Panel to appoint Independent Board Members to the new Company.

Healthwatch Slough CIC is limited by guarantee and has a statutory 'asset lock' to prevent any assets and profits being distributed (except as permitted by legislation). This ensures the assets and profits are retained within the CIC for community purposes.

In May 2013 Help and Care and Citizens Advice Slough appointed their member representatives. The Chair and Non-Executive Directors of the Board were appointed by the independent appointments panel. Together this formed the Healthwatch Slough CIC Board.



Healthwatch Slough Community Interest Company (CIC) was formally incorporated in September 2013.

Who leads Healthwatch Slough?

Healthwatch Slough CIC is led by a board of directors and lay members, comprising:-

2 Executive Directors

- Malcolm Rigg - Executive Director (Citizens Advice Slough)
- Marianne Storey - Executive Director (Help & Care)

3 Non-Executive Directors

- Colin Pill - Non-Executive Director (Chair)
- Sarah Brown - Non-Executive Director (Governance)
- Arvind Sharma - Non-Executive Director (Diversity & Engagement)

3 Lay Members

- Mike Connolly - Lay Member (Clinical Commissioning Group)
- Chaitra Dinesh* - Lay Member (Young People)
- Dolly Bhaskaran* - Lay Member (general)

*recently appointed

Other posts

We are currently seeking applicants for two other positions vacant at present:

- Non-Executive Director (Finance)
- Lay Member (general)

Board members & their role

Board members are appointed to provide a wide range of relevant and complementary business skills and experience from a range of sectors including health and social care. All Non-Executive Directors and Lay Members are residents of Slough.

The Board is responsible for the governance of Healthwatch Slough and the development of its priorities and strategy.

The Board's key principles

- Healthwatch Slough is the independent consumer champion for local health and social care services
- We are a strong voice for children, young people and adults, ensuring they get heard
- We influence decisions at senior strategic level and ensure that improvements are made
- We operate with integrity, independence and transparency



Our responsibilities

Healthwatch Slough has broad responsibilities to a diverse population.

We have a remit to consider a wide and complex range of health and social care services for an increasingly diverse population, including many who are often excluded and under-represented.

We have a duty to:

- Provide non clinical information, signposting and advice to all service users in Slough about access to services and support in making informed choices

- Gather people's views and experiences of the health and social care system and services in Slough through community engagement and research
- Provide evidence, understanding and insight in order to:
 - report our findings
 - influence local service commissioners
 - contribute to the Slough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies
 - promote better health and social care outcomes for residents of Slough



How we work

The Healthwatch Slough CIC Board works with two partners to deliver Healthwatch Slough services in Slough.

- **Citizens Advice Slough** provides face-to-face information, advice and support.

This service is delivered from the Citizens Advice Slough office by the Healthwatch coordinator, Arunjot Mushiana (25 hours per week) and supported by the advice team.

The Citizens Advice Slough outreach locations at childrens centres, Langley library, and St Georges Church in Britwell all take in and feed back Healthwatch enquiries. With its evidence-based, client advocacy and campaigning work, Citizens Advice Slough is well placed to support the aims of Healthwatch.

- **Help and Care** provides information, advice and signposting from the Healthwatch Slough helpdesk and website. This service is delivered by a team of Help and Care advisors.
- **Help and Care** is responsible for bringing together information from the Slough community and to identify trends and themes. This information is based on:
 - the experiences of patients, service users and carers, and their views; and
 - data and feedback from a range of local and national sources

Community research and engagement activity Healthwatch Manager & the Healthwatch Community Engagement Officer - Caris Thomas & Manvinder Sagoo.

Their work includes delivering projects, producing reports, media liaison and marketing, and recruiting volunteers to support engagement and Enter and View work

What we've done this year

Provided information & advice

Healthwatch Slough has been providing information, advice and signposting via the helpdesk and Citizens Advice Slough since 1st April 2013.

Throughout the year the team of advisors at the Helpdesk have received 229 calls and Citizens Advice Slough have spoken face to face with 113 people about their health and social care queries.

As the health and care system can be complicated, people are often unaware of what services there are or how best to access them.

Information support workers answering Healthwatch calls therefore assist callers who:

- Need help to navigate their way through the complex NHS system
- Want non clinical information about local health or social care services
- Want to find out more about their local Healthwatch
- Want to provide feedback/comments/experiences of local services,
- Want support with finding out services available to them
- Want guidance or help to make a complaint
- Need signposting to another organisation



Different ways of getting in touch

The Healthwatch role within Citizen's Advice Slough is a natural and complementary function of a service that has been traditionally provided by the Bureau.

The difference now is that the Bureau can now explore in much more detail the experience of people about health and social care in particular and make use of this information in a meaningful way to improve services for all.

The Healthwatch telephone helpdesk is a new service which also allows us to record specific issues and experiences that people tell us over the phone, by email, or through the website.

Communicating the voice of the public

By offering information and advice to clients through all these routes, stories can be collated and analysed and themes fed back to planning and commissioning boards.

In this way the process can identify gaps in service provision that require attention and thereby put the voice of the public at the heart of health care.'

Health and social care providers deliver critical and essential services to consumers who often do not have the choice go elsewhere to receive that service.

Many of the services provided are to those who are the most vulnerable or disadvantaged. It is essential that the end users have a voice in the design, delivery and monitoring of services and have access to clear information on services.



Gathered views

Community research and engagement

Healthwatch Slough has been promoting Healthwatch Slough, meeting decision-makers, undertaking projects, planning for and recruiting volunteers, representing Healthwatch at meetings and contributing to CQC inspections.

This work started with a launch event at the end of March 2013 which celebrated the transition from Slough Local Involvement Network to Healthwatch Slough. The success of this event provided the Healthwatch Slough team with the opportunity to start to network with key stakeholders and community groups.

Slough is a town that is supported by many community groups and support services. Healthwatch Slough has invested in networking and building relationships with local groups.

The aim has been to raise awareness of Healthwatch Slough as an organisation via which people can share their views and that those views will be used to influence positive change.

We are promoting Healthwatch Slough using the most cost-effective means possible. We have not distributed thousands of leaflets - we believe we have used our budgets effectively by going out and talking to people and by providing online resources. Our website www.healthwatchslough.co.uk is a key resource for us to communicate with individual groups and providers. It has Browse Aloud functionality to read the information aloud in many languages.

Our Facebook page also displays information about our role and informs people on the ways to contact Healthwatch Slough. We use Twitter to inform people of our Healthwatch events and news stories. We have gained nearly 500 followers during our first year.

In the community

We go out and talk with the Slough community about Healthwatch Slough so that people know who we are, what we do and how to contact us. We wanted to ensure that people know we are a trustworthy organisation so that they share their views and stories with us.

It has been a key priority in our first year to ensure that people and organisations know who we are and what difference we can bring to shaping future services. This has been a critical exercise in laying the foundations for our future work.

We have talked to the general public, young people, older people, community groups, decision makers, the voluntary sector, groups who represent the seldom heard and our neighbouring Healthwatch organisations.

We have developed strong links with the voluntary sector. This has provided us with the opportunities to meet with 25 key organisations and groups in Slough.

We have talked to our neighbouring Healthwatch organisations

Working with neighbouring Healthwatch organisations

We have built and continue to strengthen our relationships with local Healthwatch organisations which are close to us geographically or share services with us. We share intelligence where the information could be useful to a neighbouring Healthwatch.

Accessing seldom-heard voices

We met with people who work with groups who are seldom heard:

- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board
- Slough Physical Sensory Needs Group
- Deaf Positives
- Floating Support
- Creative Support and P3 Supported Living

We have used many methods to collect the community voice. These have included:

- presentations
- talks
- event Stands
- surveys
- information Cards - 'Tell us your views'
- feedback forms
- social media



Provided evidence, insight and understanding

We represented Healthwatch at key meetings:

- Slough Wellbeing Board
- Health Scrutiny Committee
- Health Priority Development Group
- Adults' Safeguarding Board
- Children's Safeguarding Board
- Children and Young People's Partnership Board



Board and staff members have attended these forums during the year and taken part in discussions. The meetings provided us with information on what was happening and about planning for the future.

The meetings have provided Healthwatch Slough with the opportunity to meet providers of health and social care, directors and leads. It has offered the opportunity to build, develop and strengthen relationships. We informed these key stakeholders of work that Healthwatch was planning or delivering which had resulted in projects being shared to a wider network of stakeholders.

Healthwatch Slough has been building its bank of evidence so that in future it can request formal responses and provide recommendations through these meetings.



Connecting with decision-makers

We have:

- attended Governors meetings with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT)
- participated in the Care Quality Commissioning (CQC) listening event and focus group for Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust
- had effective meetings with commissioners and providers including with the Head of Adult Social Care, Chief Executive of Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital, Deputy Locality Director Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- delivered presentations to the Health and Well Being Board, Health Scrutiny Committee, Clinical Commissioning Group, Partnership Boards, and the Learning Disability Providers forum

During 2013-14 Healthwatch has collected feedback including data, experiences, feedback forms, stories, and we began to identify themes and trends from the information we received.

Whilst the numbers of stories were too few during the course of the year to draw reliable conclusions for influencing decision-makers, we did use the data to verify decisions we made to start particular projects. These are detailed later in this report.

Local and national activity

Slough Wellbeing Board

We are a key partner at the Health and Wellbeing Board and Colin Pill, our Chair, is the Healthwatch Slough representative on the Board. He has been supported by the locality manager to deliver presentations and papers. The Board has requested information from Healthwatch and we have been able to participate fully in discussions with our local knowledge and experience. Healthwatch is seen as a critical friend.

Healthwatch Slough was able to support the Wellbeing Board plans for delivering two community fetes in the summer where Healthwatch will attend to collect the views on health and social care.

Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Mike Connolly, the CCG Board's lay member for public & patient involvement, has joined the Healthwatch Slough Board (see page 7 above). He helps to ensure good links between the two organisations. There is frequent contact between our respective chairs and staff, and over the year we attended two CCG Board meetings and helped disseminate information about CCG events.

Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

We did not hear or see anything which provided us with any evidence to make any referrals for investigations to Healthwatch England or the CQC during 2013/14.

Enter & View team

- authorised representatives

The Healthwatch staff team attended the Enter and View training delivered by Healthwatch England. The Healthwatch Chair and Healthwatch Coordinator attended the Enter and View training delivered by Healthwatch Wokingham.

Involving volunteers

We held 3 volunteer recruitment events and have recruited 15 volunteers to support Healthwatch Slough. During 2013-14 these volunteers worked directly on community engagement and been involved in planning ways to collect community views, including the content of feedback forms.

Our volunteers help us to:

- Support our community engagement
- Feedback the views of local people
- Influence the design of our publicity
- Carry out desktop activities such as identifying improvements for the website

In February we launched our Healthwatch Community Champions volunteer initiative. Champions will:

- Represent Healthwatch at Meetings
- Attend key events (without a staff member)
- Be part of the Enter & View Team



Projects

Access to GP appointments

In March 2013 our predecessor the Slough Local Involvement Network (LiNk) produced a report on mapping patient access to GP appointments in Slough.

Engagement with the public throughout 2012 highlighted that Slough residents were continuing to have difficulties booking a GP appointment in Slough.

The LiNk made a number of recommendations and Healthwatch Slough has continued the project based on these recommendations.

- Healthwatch Slough made a presentation incorporating the LiNk findings to the CCG public meeting in April 2013
- The individual comments from the report were sent to the CCG for findings and comments to be used

with the CCG commissioned report by Verve

- Slough practices are providing extra capacity to help respond to patients' urgent care needs
The CCG are undertaking a project to reduce unnecessary A&E admissions
- The CCG have set up a website where patients can determine which healthcare path to choose going by their symptoms at www.symptomguide.co.uk
- Healthwatch Slough has invited the CCG to a further meeting
- Healthwatch Slough has formally requested a response from the CCG and is awaiting a reply
- Healthwatch continued to collect data and by the end of March 2013 determined that 36% of feedback to was referred to GP appointments.



Provision for people with sensory needs

We took forward an issue identified by our predecessor, the Slough Local Involvement Network.

The LINK met with Directors of Slough Borough Council Adult Social Care, Berkshire County Blind and Berkshire Guide Dogs to raise the concern around commissioned services for visually impaired people in Slough.

Healthwatch Slough has continued to seek progress this issue through ongoing discussions with Slough Borough Council

- Healthwatch was informed that Slough Borough Council is looking at the commissioning for Sensory Loss. This will include recruitment of new roles to support people with sensory needs.
- Healthwatch was also informed that Slough Borough Council is realigning its delivery of ASCS (Adult Social Care Survey) including Sensory Needs to meet the requirements of the Health & Social Care Bill which is scheduled to be implemented April 2014-15.
- Healthwatch plans to ascertain the provision by Slough Borough Council for 2014-5 and compare these to last year to see where improvements have been made.

Our funding

Local Healthwatch organisations are commissioned by local government.

In 2013/4 we received £113,163 from Slough Borough Council.

Of this total, £82,638 was paid to Help & Care and £26,525 to Citizens Advice Slough to deliver our services. The remaining £4,000 budget was retained and managed by Healthwatch Slough CIC.

Total expenditure across the whole of Healthwatch Slough for 2013/4 totalled £112,660.

(The Board wishes to carry forward the £503 underspend into 2014/5 in order to help follow through priorities identified in its work plan.)

Our full financial accounts for the year will be published separately on our website.





Our plans & challenges

For the year ahead, Healthwatch Slough has set its strategic objectives and an ongoing work plan.

Healthwatch Slough has a requirement to prioritise activity to optimise value. Where Healthwatch Slough makes an intervention, the intervention will be based on the following guiding principles:

- We will focus on the consumer experience
- We will look for trends or problems that are not being addressed by anyone else
- We will collaborate with other stakeholders where appropriate and feasible in investigations that involve the consumer interest
- We will cover 4 key areas (young people, adults, health and social care) within a 12-month period

Using these principles Healthwatch Slough will strive to achieve the following objectives:

- We will raise awareness of issues in the local community and among key partners e.g. Community Groups, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Patient and Public Groups and Local Authorities.
- We will build our engagement and reach by increasing our mailing lists, monitoring social media and by signing up Healthwatch Champions and volunteers in local communities
- We will establish Healthwatch Slough as a high quality provider of impartial non-clinical health and social care advice and information on services
- We will ensure value for money by being able to demonstrate positive impact locally
- We will carry out strategic reviews e.g. Strategic exploration of selected Wellbeing Board priorities to ensure consumer interests are adequately covered; as well as tactical reviews on services already in place

Each of our project activities will be based on one or more of the following six themes:

Our six priority themes:

1. Access to services including timeliness
2. Information about service provision and treatment
3. Quality (including process and outcomes)
4. Integration of health and social care
5. Grievance and redress i.e. complaints process and outcomes when things go wrong
6. Dignity/respect

Our current projects at the start of 2014-2015

The initial work plan for Healthwatch Slough in 2014-15 includes the following projects:

- Wexham Park Hospital Discharge Project - exploring the patient experience of the Discharge Lounge
- GP appointments - gaining the patient views about their experience of the Walk-In Centre to inform the CCG review
- Strategic exploration of a selected Health and Wellbeing Board priority - to test one of the Board's priorities to ensure it matches the priorities and views of local people
- Healthwatch Community Funding - to work with Community and Voluntary Groups to hear the voices of their communities
- The voice of health and social care in Slough - to undertake a wide-spread survey to hear the public's views on health and social care.

The full content of the Healthwatch Slough Objectives & Work Plan can be viewed on our website. The plan will be updated with progress reports and information on new projects in Summer 2014.

Our Contact Details



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Healthwatch Slough

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Partner registered offices

Citizens Advice Slough

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Berkshire
SL1 1PL
Registered Charity no. 1106150
Registered Company no. 5188179

Help & Care

896 Christchurch Road
Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 6DL 27
Registered Charity no. 1055056
Registered Company no: 3187574
Telephone: 0300 111 3303

Healthwatch trademark

Healthwatch Slough uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by our licence agreement with Healthwatch England.

This Annual Report will be made available to the public on our website.