



# A breath of fresh air for care

Annual Report 2017/18

# Highlights from our year

This year we've reached over **half a million** people on social media



**677** people told us what they think of their care



Our volunteers have contributed over **188 hours** worth £141,067\*



We've made **22** visits to local services



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from **carers** to **GP appointments**



We've spoken to **1000s** of people at events

We've given **381** people information and advice



\*Office for National Statistics Unpaid Work Calculator

# Who we are

it starts with  
**YOU**



**Healthwatch Slough is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We support people to have a say in how health and care services are designed and delivered.**

We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We take people's views and experiences to decision makers. We also help people find the information they need about services in Slough.

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

I've had Type 2 Diabetes for years. Healthwatch Slough listened to my whole story, focusing on me as a person, not looking at me as a patient. I was given the chance to air my point of view and issues.

## 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.

## Our Vision

- To be the 'go to' organisation for feedback about Slough health and care services
- To be a well led, high quality organisation that is effective
- To be well-known, independent and trusted and accessible to everyone in Slough.
- To be influential and respected by decision makers and service providers

## Our Values

**Inclusive - Influential - Independent  
Credible - Collaborative**

# Message from our Chair, Colin Pill

**My message this year starts with a big 'Well done' to all the members of the public who have made Healthwatch the success it has turned out to be.**

I've been chairman of many organisations over the years: Patient and Public Involvement forums, Slough LINK, and now the fifth year of Healthwatch. **Who would have thought that patient and public involvement would have got better year after year?** More people have the confidence to talk with our top-class team, which enables us to create a learning stream for the many organisations we monitor: from NHS facilities to care homes and more.

I find that, in all walks of life, we meet people who are sceptics. Some people don't believe that Healthwatch is truly independent. We were reminded of this at one of the patient assemblies we were commissioned to run. One member of the public made the comment that - in her words - "the whole thing is fixed and not independent". Our manager pointed to me and replied "There is our independence"!

I don't do the job I do for financial gain, because I'm not paid. I can't be told what to say, and if ever I was out of line I would expect my board to tell me so.

"Colin shows his passion for the health and wellbeing of the local community, and is often the first person to put himself forward to take part in our PLACE assessments, ward and service visits. Colin proactively seeks and shares the experience of people both in Slough and across the wider county.

Colin's tireless commitment and support inspires and motivates others and has made, and continues to make, a rich contribution to improving patient care, acting as a champion for those less able to be heard."

*Julian Emms, Chief Executive,  
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust*



**I think in the coming months and years the Healthwatch role will become harder** as the health economy continues to change, grow and its funds diminish, with - in the mix - continually changing regulations. So we can't become complacent.

**But one of the things that encourages me is the never-ending enthusiasm of our Healthwatch officers**, and the abundant amounts of energy and time our Healthwatch manager gives to Slough.

My last comment about this year is that **our town is growing**. I've spent my whole life here: I was born in Upton Hospital and, now in my sixty-fifth year, I'm proud of our town but even prouder to have represented its people.

And I'm very proud of one person - in addition to my wife - and that is Caris Thomas, one of our Healthwatch Slough officers, who is leaving for a new job. **Good luck Caris!**

*Photo: Colin Pill receiving the Mayor's Award for outstanding contribution to health and care in the local community.*

# Empowering the community

## Helping you find the answers

If you've got a question or need some information about a local health or care service, Healthwatch Slough can help. You can:

- call our helpdesk on 01753 325 333
- e mail [enquiries@healthwatchslough.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchslough.co.uk)
- download our "Speak Out Slough" App from the App Store or Google Play.

In 2017/18 we gave information to over 380 people. Some had straightforward queries and others had complex problems requiring a long time to resolve.

Having access to good, up-to-date information is vital. People can be confident that is what they get when they contact Healthwatch Slough.



## How we listen to people's views

We aim to be as adaptable, responsive and flexible as we can in our community engagement.

- Helpdesk open Monday to Friday, 9-5pm
- Speak Out freepost leaflet and app
- Numerous Pop Up shops around town
- Regular Wexham Hospital stall
- Summer Reading Challenge in all libraries
- 3 People's Assemblies (see overleaf)
- 4 tea parties for carers & vulnerable adults
- Several 'Calls to Action' asking for information on a particular topic.

We want to reach as many people as possible from all walks of life. Do let us know any ideas you have about other places we can visit.



## Making sure services work for you

Prospect Park Hospital in Reading is the main hospital for people in Berkshire with mental health conditions.

We worked in partnership with our Healthwatch colleagues across the county to carry 11 Enter and View visits over one week, talking to 41 adults to better understand the experience of patients with enduring or serious mental health conditions.

**One non-Muslim hospital patient wanted to select a Halal food option, as that was more appetising than the other options. But it wasn't allowed by the catering staff.**

What patients commonly mentioned as a positive feature of their stay was the caring attitude shown by staff; followed by getting treatment they needed; feeling safe; support from other patients; and the environment.

The improvement most often suggested by patients was increased staffing which would increase patient and peer support, escorted visits outside, and therapy sessions.

We made a number of recommendations to Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, who run the hospital, all of which were well received.



## People's Assemblies

Slough Clinical Commissioning Group asked us - due to the success of our other events - to run a new forum designed to gather views and feedback on care, and to relay important changes that will affect local people.

We made these events open, inclusive and engaging so that people can actively get involved and feel like equal partners in co designing care. We believe the Slough People's Assemblies have been an important catalyst for creating change.

If you want to find out and understand what people think about an issue, get in touch with Healthwatch Slough.

### People's Assembly 1: Future of General Practice in Slough

More than 70 people attended. They heard panellists share plans and priorities for the future of General Practice. A lively debate ensued.

### People's Assembly 2: Accident & Emergency- to go or not to go?

In a world café style event, audience members were able to talk about seven A&E-related topics with seven facilitators who fed back their discussions to the whole audience.

The Chief Executive of Frimley Health Foundation Trust spoke about the new Emergency Department opening in 2019.

**"It costs £300 a night to stay at the Wexham Park 'hotel'"**

### People's Assembly 3: Get involved with health & care

Almost 200 people attended Slough's Health & Care Fair to find out how they can get more involved in a leading a healthy lifestyle.

## Snippets from the public

**Access to appointments:** "You stand in the rain for 30 minutes...but still can't be seen the same day" (Mr A)

**Location/transport/convenience issues:** 'I would have rather waited two weeks': Ms B on having to go to Wexham Park for a blood test instead of her surgery.

**"I'm worried it won't work"** - Mr C concerned that plans to reduce numbers of hospital patients will place GPs under unrealistic pressure .

Ms B described the practical and financial **pressures on friends and neighbours** of a patient with terminal cancer sent home from hospital.



Free tasters of reiki, head massage, health checks, a dementia friends workshop, and seated yoga, enticed members of the public to Arbour Park Stadium after work on a Monday evening

## How Slough cares for its carers

Slough has over 11,626 carers: that's 14% of the population. All too often the voice of the carer doesn't get heard.

We undertook a "Carers Call to Action." We received 65 completed surveys. Each of these carers' accounts we received is valuable insight. More than half felt poorly supported as a carers. People found it confusing to know where to get information and some found a lack of support in the evenings, especially for carers under the age of 40 years old.

We wrote up their feedback and made a number of recommendations which the commissioner and provider organisations have committed to act on.

## Supporting Slough Wellbeing Board's campaigns

Healthwatch was part of the task group which planned four campaigns spanning the year - each one focusing on a priority of Slough's Wellbeing Board. The first one, #BeRealistic showcased the service available to support Slough people to make small changes to their lifestyle in order to manage their weight.



## Supporting the #AdEnough campaign

The weight of our young people is problematic. One in three of Slough's 10 year olds are overweight or obese. Healthwatch Slough was part of the campaign asking the government to restrict junk food adverts until after 9pm.



## How the NHS engage with patients about the closure of GP surgeries

We produced a "*Best Practice Guidance to Public Consultation*" to ensure that there is meaningful public engagement in decision making in Slough.

People attended public meetings about the planned closure of surgeries & initially felt their views could influence the decisions being made, but subsequently told Healthwatch they felt duped as the decision to closure surgeries had already made. These opinions were expressed to Healthwatch as a trusted organisation that can represent people's views collectively.

## Working with neighbours to improve Hospital Discharge

We collaborated with six other local Healthwatch organisations, from Buckinghamshire to Hampshire, to look at the hospital discharge issues in both Wexham Park Hospital & Frimley Park Hospital.

There are many factors that can lead to a patient experiencing a delay in being discharged from hospital. In the year 2016, the most common reason was having to await further services such as community support, mental health care, intermediate care or rehabilitation services. This made up 18.3% of all delays.

A number of good practices were highlighted and our recommendations for improvement - focusing on record keeping, how medication is dispensed & discharge plans - were turned into a "you said, we did" document.

## Working with secondary schools to manage stress around exam time

Healthwatch Slough distributed copies of the "*Little Blue Book of Sunshine*" to all secondary schools in March 2017. Lynch Hill Academy and Slough and Eton College invited us in to deliver assemblies on stress, anxiety and the local support available. We connected with 1000s of young people and recruited some new Healthwatchers!



# Slough Stories: care closer to home



## CASE STUDY

### Chris - wife, mum and grandma

**“I live for my family and want to be as active and mobile as I can. Like most people I hate going into hospital and would do anything to not have to go.”**

Chris lives with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) which means that her airways are narrowed and she finds it hard to breathe. Chris is prone to catching colds which can easily develop into chest infections, resulting in her having periods of time where she is quite poorly.

In order to make breathing easier Chris is registered as an oxygen-user and can administer oxygen therapy at home. This makes it easier to carry out activities that might otherwise be difficult and help reduce symptoms such as the build up of fluid.

Chris had had several hospital admissions due to her medical condition. She hates going into hospital and is always worried about how long she might have to stay.

After her latest stay in hospital, a doctor suggested she self-refer to the Respiratory Service who offer a rapid response if a patient's lung conditions deteriorates at home.

The Air Nurse Team came to Chris's home and carried out a full assessment, including monitoring oxygen levels and listening to her chest to manage her breathing.

They prescribed some emergency steroid antibiotics so that if Chris felt a chest infection coming she could start treatment straight away, following a phone consultation. This greatly reduces the need for another hospital admission.

For some time health and care reforms have been talking about shifting care closer to home, to reduce pressure on hospitals. Berkshire Healthcare's Respiratory Service is an excellent example of how new ways of caring for people - away from hospital, in their own homes - can support people to maintain their independence, improve wellbeing and reduce the need for hospital stays.

**“I can't believe that I never knew the Air Nurse Team existed before! They have made such a difference in me being better able to manage my condition at home, and preventing the need for me to deteriorate to such an extent that I end up being treated in hospital.”**

**Healthwatch Slough showcasing good practice in action**

# Our People

As a Slough resident you have the right to express your views and experiences on services. We are determined to involve and empower more people in Slough to have their say in the changes that are affecting their local health economy.

## Our volunteers

We could not have achieved what we have done this year without our volunteers. Here, two of them explain what they have gained through being involved with Healthwatch Slough.



“My role in Healthwatch is to support the team at events and pop up shops, we collect the experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and speak out on their behalf.

I’ve gained so much from my experience with Healthwatch Slough, providing people information in the job centre, library and restaurant.”

Misbah Latif, Healthwatch Champion

“Volunteering for Healthwatch has changed my views on the impact it has on the people out there that are not being given the right care and information. I have listened and directed them in the right direction which they had no idea there was help out there. Had they not heard of Healthwatch they would not have gotten the help they needed to get a satisfying outcome.”

Zhora Jefferies, Healthwatch Champion



## Individual Healthwatchers

Our effectiveness and evidence base comes from individual residents of Slough who tell us their experiences of care.

We depend on you to give us your feedback: every time you go to the doctor, the dentist, the hospital, your nan’s nursing home, any service which provides care.

“I am housebound due to my ill health and have struggled to engage health, care and welfare services.

The Healthwatch team visited me, listened to my story. They were clear that they did not do casework but by highlighting my plight could help others in similar situations.

Healthwatch provided useful information both to myself and to organisations about how they communicated with me. They supported me to set up meetings to take things forward.”

Caroline Wynn, Healthwatcher



# What people say about us



“This year Healthwatch have helped us shape our Carers Strategy & the Slough Wellbeing Board’s media campaigns. It is great to have access to the voices that we might not ordinarily get to hear through our usual channels of communication and engagement.

Joint working with Healthwatch has helped to promote all the services that already exist in Slough and to highlight opportunities to build, grow, develop and respond to what people want and need. As health and social care changes over the coming months and years, it is essential that Healthwatch continues to provide the needs of local people.”

**Alan Sinclair**  
Director Adults & Communities  
Slough Borough Council



“Having worked across a number of Healthwatch organisations across the South of England, I get to experience different operational styles. Whilst Healthwatch Slough is one of the smallest in the country they have a big impact. Their approach to connecting with people is really refreshing. The relaxed style really gets people to open up and share what they think.”

**Emma Leatherbarrow**  
Director, Help and Care



“I have found working in partnership with the Healthwatch Slough team a breath of fresh air. They really care about people’s experiences with health services and are relentlessly searching for how services can be improved. Slough really needs their energy and innovative ideas.”

**Paul Sahota**  
Director  
Home Instead Slough & Uxbridge



“Fantastic, helpful and always willing to support where possible”

**Dan Jones**  
Assistant Practice Manager  
Manor Park Surgery

Healthwatch Slough is part of our SENDASS steering group and supported the engagement and consultation around what parents of children with special needs. They contribute new ideas and shaping how the group can run effectively. They always champion the parent and child voice in the meetings always bringing it back to them.”

**Pride Sumbachundu**  
Advice & Support Coordinator  
Slough SENDASS



“I first got involved with Healthwatch Slough at their Health and Care Fair. It was great to speak to so many people who were passionate about wellbeing. I spoke to lots of people I ordinarily would not have come into contact with.”

**Hassan Fazeel**  
Slough Youth Parliament



“Through our links with Healthwatch Slough we have gotten more involved in what is going on in the community and are now manning a water station at the half marathon in October!”

**Ben, Manager Buzz Gym Slough**



# Our Finances

The total expenditure for the financial year was £95,493. The main funding comes from the Council. We secured £5,000 from the Slough Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver three People’s Assemblies.

Over 90% of our costs are fixed and under 10% is discretionary for us to use on project work and promotion.

Healthwatch Slough will continue to ensure that value for money is achieved in undertaking all its activities.

Income	£
Funding from Slough Borough Council	89,595
Other income from NHS	5,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>94,595</b>



Nicola Strudley & Arun Mushiana with Slough MP Tan Dhesi

# Our future

Over the coming 3 years we want to make the biggest difference by:

- 1. Supporting you to have your say**
- 2. Providing a high quality service**
- 3. Ensure your views help improve health and care**

To deliver our goals, we will produce a yearly work plan setting out our priorities and telling you how we are doing. We will focus on four key areas:

Get more people comfortable & confident in using Healthwatch Slough’s website and app in order to share their experiences of care.

Improve the utilization and experience of volunteers through an effective volunteer management programme.

Enhance the involvement of Slough people in decision making around future of services by running three more People’s Assemblies

Establish ways to measure the effect of our work so we can demonstrate the value of speaking up in improving the quality of services.

# About this report

This annual report is publicly available from 30 June 2018. It has been sent to Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Slough Borough Council, Slough’s Wellbeing Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

If you require this in an alternative format please get in touch.



# Contact us

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