

Healthwatch Bradford and District Video Transcript: Involvement

Narration:

Healthwatch Bradford and District is an independent organisation working across the local authority area to give people a stronger voice on the health and social care services that matter to them.

Andrew Jones, Manager of Healthwatch Bradford and District:

“We’ve got a great team of staff who are out and about all the time in the Bradford district, listening to people’s experiences of health and social care services. But another really important part of the way we do that is to work with groups of volunteers from different parts of the community, who are out in different health and social care settings asking people what’s good, what’s not so good, and what needs to be improved.

Narration:

Healthwatch is a small organisation with a big job to do, so we really value all our volunteers. We’ve trained young people to volunteer with us, and the whole team has enjoyed seeing them gain valuable experience and grow in confidence.

Mehvish Akhtar, Healthwatch Volunteer:

“I first heard about Healthwatch when Afsana and Marcella came to Bradford College and told us about Healthwatch and asked for volunteers for the BRI outreach programme. I wanted to volunteer because, at that time, I wanted to be a children’s nurse. I thought that being in a hospital environment would give me experience and more confidence, you know just volunteering basically and talking to the people.

“When I first started at BRI it was really nerve wracking. But you get used to it in the end because, you know, different patients have different stories to tell. The elderly tend to want to talk more than the young ones, but yeah, it’s been great.”

“The other things that I have done whilst volunteering is the BRI walkthrough; where I walked through the Children’s Ward, and ending up writing a report on the improvements they could make. Healthwatch sent it to BRI hospital, who have read through the report and actually followed through on some of the recommendations. And being part of those improvements felt great because it showed that the hospitals actually listening to what people had to say. Because it was not just us making those recommendations, we talked to some of the patients and families and they had things to say which we wrote down. So it shows that the hospital is listening to patients and families, as well as us.”

Narration:

It’s vital that Healthwatch reaches out to different communities, particularly in a diverse district like Bradford. Often we do this in partnership with other local organisations, that help us to connect with people and hear about their experiences.

Jane Williams, Support Worker at Bradford People First:

“Bradford People First and Healthwatch have worked together by joining in with events together to promote the services. We’ve also become Healthwatchers and this enables us to get information and stories from people with a learning disability and pass on that information to Healthwatch, both good and bad stories, to try and help improve services.”

Andrew Jones, Manager of Healthwatch Bradford and District:

“One example of where we’ve worked with people who may not normally give voice to their experiences is our work with people with learning disabilities. And we’ve worked with People First in both Bradford and Keighley, in partnership with them, which is a user-led organisation run by and for people with learning disabilities.

“And we’ve trained them to become what we call Enter and View Representatives, who go out and visit local services and give us their perspectives on what’s good and what needs improving.”

Narration:

A group of our volunteers recently carried out a visit to a social care services in Bradford, called the Learning Zone, which provides leisure, learning and employment opportunities for people with a learning disability.

Katie Matthews, Healthwatch Volunteer:

“Well we came to the Learning Zone today because we’ve heard it’s one of the newest services, from September, and we knew a few people that come here for the day centres and the courses that they do. And we’ve basically come to see, to ask them questions, to make sure that the service meets their needs and their requirements.”

Tim Pickles, Healthwatch Volunteer:

“It makes me feel important when I’m asking questions and that.”

Narration:

Our volunteers can make a real difference, by gathering important feedback from others and by using their own insight and experience to improve the services that matter to them.

Katie Matthews, Healthwatch Volunteer:

“I have Downs Syndrome myself, though I don’t require any services, but my brother required a lot of services and I cared for him for many years. His experience with his services wasn’t actually as good and as effective as they should have been, which encouraged me to get involved with something like this. I didn’t want anybody else to be affected the way my brother was.

“To be honest, being part of the Healthwatch team, and the other charities I’m part of, I think we’re like one big family really. We’ve all come together with one aim - to give people with disabilities a voice. And for us to do that together, and to celebrate our differences - that is the main priority why we are here, and that’s why I love what I do.”