

The Value of Listening

Annual Report 2023 – 2024

healthwatch
Wigan and Leigh

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"We absolutely value the engagement, knowledge, expertise and insight that Healthwatch Wigan & Leigh brings to our work, ensuring that the voice of patients and our local communities are heard and at the heart of everything that we do.

It is so important that this insight continues to shape services, and puts patients in control of their own healthcare wherever possible.

Wigan and Leigh Healthwatch are always seeking new opportunities to engage with residents of the borough and it's clear, that patients and local communities are always their number one priority.

Nicola Pigby

Programme Manager - Deal for Communities



A message from our Chief Officer

Hi Everyone

I would like to welcome you to Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh and give you an opportunity to see what our team has been up to over the past year. As always, we are busy trying to get the voice of residents and communities of Wigan Borough heard when decisions are being made about the planning and provision of health and social care services.

As part of our role, we attend many different meetings where system leaders try hard to improve things for the people of our Borough. During the year 2023 - 2024 we have represented the public voice at over a hundred such forums, to drive across the importance to include people in decision-making. I also work closely with my colleagues across Greater Manchester, as a member of the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester Collaborative.

This year we moved offices from Ashland House, and I would like to thank the Think Ahead Stroke team for always making us feel welcome there. We have made to feel extremely welcome at our new home in Sunshine House Community Hub.

Finally, I would like to thank our dedicated staff and volunteers for their continued hard work and commitment to Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh in raising the profile of the importance in hearing the thoughts, feelings and opinions of the people and communities of the Wigan Borough.

If you like what you read and would like to know more about what we do, then please don't hesitate to contact us.



Karen Parker
Chief Officer

Meet The Board



Ernie Rothwell - Director, Stuart Parsons - Director, Dr Kathryn Drury (Chair), Dave Suddell - Director, Lynne Hamnett (Vice Chair)

Meet The Team



Karen Parker
Chief Officer



Lacey Briscoe
Office Manager



Andrea Arkwright
Engagement Officer



Lisa Armstrong
Volunteer Co-Ordinator



George Sharp
Engagement Officer



Lee Whalley
Engagement Officer



Ann Lloyd
Engagement Officer



Kalina Carey
Independent NHS
Complaints Advocate

Youth and Community Development University Students

Leanne Worsley



In May 2023 we said goodbye to our Youth and Community Studies student Leanne .

Leanne spent two years with us on placement during her degree. We were thrilled and extremely proud to hear that Leanne secured a first-class degree and graduated in July.

Leanne went on to secure a role as Youth Development Officer at Groundworks, Wigan.

We still work very closely with Leanne on our work with young people and would like to wish her every success in her future career and say a big thank you for the work she did whilst here at Healthwatch.



Jessica Woods



In March 2024 we said goodbye to Jess. Jess completed her second-year placement with us. Jess was successful in securing her final year placement at YMCA St Helens alongside a paid role as a Youth Worker. Again, we wish Jess every success in her future career.



About Us

Healthwatch **Wigan & Leigh** is your local health and social care champion.

From Appley Bridge to Astley, and all areas in between, our mission is to ensure that your voice is heard by the NHS and Council leaders, as well as other decision makers, who use your feedback to make improvements in the care you receive.

We are proud to offer the following services:

Information and Advice: We provide easy-to-understand information and guidance about local services, helping you access the resources you need.

Complaint Advocacy: If you ever have concerns about NHS care, we offer a free and independent advocacy service. Our team will support you in making a complaint and ensure your voice is heard.

Our Mission:

We are the independent voice of local people to influence, challenge and question health and social care provision in the Wigan Borough.

Our Vision:

A health and social care experience that meets the needs of the people of Wigan Borough.

Our values are:

Empowered Leadership – provide citizens with the skills and knowledge to facilitate change and have their voices heard.

Integrity – Honest and selfless and act solely in terms of the public interest .

Accountable – open and transparent in everything we do.

Independent – in purpose, voice, and action.

Inclusivity – we will support communities that are not normally heard to have a voice and challenge inequality.

Objective – take decisions impartially and fairly without discrimination or bias.

Value for Money – make the best use of our resources, working collaboratively with other stakeholders to avoid duplication.

Critical Friend – We will be constructive as well as challenging to service providers and the system.

Year In Review

375

People that shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

People that came to us for information and signposting relating to health and social care services.

259

5

Reports about the improvements people would like to see within health and social care

We're lucky to have in total

27 **Volunteers**

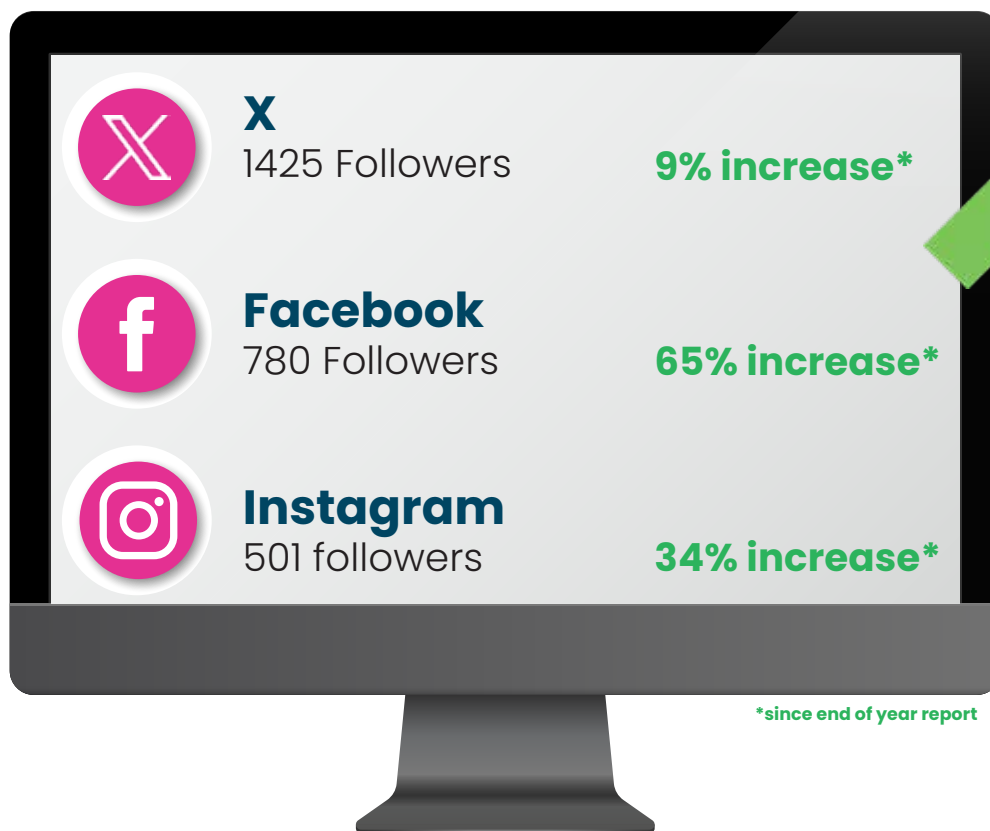
who gave up 172+ days to make care better for our community. This equates to over

£13,800

of time



Our Online Reach



Our Website



21,000 Views, 2800 Direct searches ,
19,000 Organic views , 1200 Social media referrals

Best performing page (5,000 views) "Drink & Needle Spikings"



How We've made a Difference



Mental Health

A comprehensive project was undertaken to better understand those using mental health services provided by Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust (GMMH) for residents of the Wigan Borough.

This was in response to concerns raised by national media regarding negative experiences of patients accessing mental health services across Edenfield Hospital, Prestwich by the same mental health trust.

We spoke to a significant amount of people during this project and 130 of those agreed to share their stories and for us to record them. We used focus groups and interviews allowing everyone to share their journey, experiences, and thoughts in a way that they felt comfortable with. People said that there were some challenging and distressing experiences



within the mental health services, particularly at Atherleigh Park. It's clear from their account that there are several issues, including issues with the quality of care, staff responsiveness, involvement and delivery of care plans, illicit substances on the wards, poor communication, and concerns about not being able to give their experiences of the care they have received in an easily accessible way.

Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust were keen to facilitate access to all areas of service to enable to complete this work. They gave considered, full and thorough responses to the 15 recommendations that were made by Healthwatch. The full report and including recommendations and responses can be found on our website.

How We've made a Difference

Sexual Health

HealthWatch became aware of the intention to recommission the sexual health services at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2023. George Sharp, our Engagement Officer, worked alongside council staff talking with young people and encouraging them to give their thoughts on the service they would like.

Subsequently the draft specification was sent to three members of the Healthwatch Advisory Committee who made many observations on how the specification could be clarified and some additions made to improve the potential service. Most of these were taken on board and George was asked to participate in the process to select the successful tenderer later in the year. This shows some effective representation by the Advisory Committee, the value of attending the Overview and Scrutiny meetings (without which we may not have been aware of the tender process), and of engaging with the council to try to ensure the specification meets the needs of local people.



Origin of the project

Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh undertook a piece of work around the current, controversial issue around young people vaping. The Vaping project derived from a meeting with Public Health, where Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh gave feedback from a previous piece of work we carried out around addiction.

This feedback highlighted a gap in support for those that seek help around stopping vaping.

As it stands, there is no current service provided for supporting people who want to stop vaping.

What we did

We held a meeting with the head of Public Health Rachel Musgrave, to discuss the current support that is in place around people who use vape, in particular young people. We agreed to undertake some engagement sessions out in the public to discover what people's views of vaping are, and what they may need from a service that would be beneficial for them to quit vaping. In total we spoke to 117 people about their opinions on vaping and what they think should be in place, should a vaping support service be implemented



30%

of those who vape or sometimes vape have done so for 1-2 years.

55%

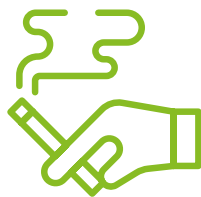
of those who vape use disposables vapes.

88%

of those who vape do so daily.



50% of people questioned said they couldn't stop vaping without help



35% started vaping to stop smoking cigarettes



61% live with others who smoke or vape



22% of people started vaping to be socially accepted



25% of people prefer fruity flavoured vapes.



27% of those who vape believe they have vaped THC oil.



35% choose their vape based on the cost.

“I feel addicted to smoking even when there is no nicotine content”

“I feel worried when i can’t vape”

“I smoke because I like doing tricks”

Access, safety and availability

- **50%** of people buy vapes from corner shops and newsagents.
- **8%** of people are given vapes by friends.
- **9%** are bought vapes by family members.
- **46%** of people are not worried about the long term health consequences of vaping.
- **54%** of people think vaping is safer than smoking cigarettes.



CDC – HWWL Visit

Jan / Feb 24 – Ann Lloyd (E & V Rep) Lisa Armstrong (Staff)



Departments visited;

Sleep services / Radiology (Ultrasound / MRI / X-ray)

Patient Feedback

Interaction with staff: extremely complimentary. Welcoming, friendly – explained procedure clearly and what would happen next in terms of results. Comment that walking stick had to be left in changing room and then walk (unaided) to scanner. No staff assistance.

Appointments: Most appointments were confirmed within the time frame expected following referral – longest wait was 8 weeks in radiology. Most patients felt well informed about what to expect from the appointment except for sleep services (patients’ unsure what appointment was for).

Inconsistent approach for patient choice around date or time of appointment. Most patients had travelled less than 30 minutes to the Leigh site – commented about the very busy car park. (one out of action), Comment about disability spots – not enough or close enough (more than 6% ratio)

Waiting rooms comfortable – one patient commented on the TV screen available, but not turned on. Some patients waiting (sleep services / X-ray) were able to hear receptionists’ conversations with other patients. Comments included could be brighter and more available toilets (ultrasound).

Signage to departments very clear / name badges on all staff / WWL volunteers available to direct – assist if needed.

Results: all patients felt well informed of when they would receive feedback – some had a phone call the next day from the GP / others waiting for a letter up to 3 weeks later.

Other comments – accessible information in different formats?

Feedback comments – family and friends (no pens)

Care Home

There had been anecdotal reports of ongoing difficulties by some care homes in accessing several services, for example podiatry, dietetics and speech and language services, to name but a few, since restrictions of Covid-19 have been lifted. It was identified at HWWL Advisory Board that given this situation it would be appropriate to conduct an engagement activity to explore this further. We engaged with Care Home residents, relatives/friends, and staff to determine the current situation regarding residents' access to health care services post pandemic. A cross section of homes was aimed for with the intention of providing representation across Wigan Borough. The aim of the project was to understand the experiences of care homes and the impact on their residents. We wanted to give a voice to care home residents and significant others in identifying any real or perceived gaps in access to healthcare services and care home visiting arrangements. After capturing this feedback and having the opportunity to listen to the situations that care homes were managing this work produced 7 recommendations. These recommendations are considered and monitored by our local Care Home Support and Improvement Board. 5 out of the 7 recommendations are being acted upon. To view a copy of the report please see our website.



Impact Statements



- Mental Health supported living contracts. We provided some statements from the mental health project to form part of the mental health supported living contract/tender with Wigan Council.
- I want to see what the supported accommodation looks like before I go to live there. Don't just send me.
- I want you to get to know who I am, not just my diagnosis.
- I want to feel safe.
- Brookfield Supported Living Manager commented around the impact the feedback session had on the residents. "Some of the residents said it felt like a therapy session and it was helpful to be able to "get things off their chests" and be heard". Some said that it felt "therapeutic" and feel now that they can move on from some of the challenges they have experienced.

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Greater Manchester influence decisions made about services at Greater Manchester Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester to achieve:



Gathered opinions from across our local communities and used our knowledge to contribute towards the development of the Greater Manchester Dementia United Quality Standards, the Greater Manchester ICS People and Communities Engagement Strategy and the Shanley Report.

Undertook a Greater Manchester Children and Young Peoples (CYP) Mental Health Project, with a focus on on pathways to mental health support. This project gathered peoples lived experiences of existing service provision across Greater Manchester. Recommendations and findings will be fed back to GM and local commissioners and providers to help shape future service delivery.



The appointment of 3 key roles to the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester partnership. These include an Independent Chair of the Network, Chief Coordinating Officer and Administration and Data Officer. These roles will drive forward the leadership, coordination and delivery of the All Age Strategy 2022-2025 alongside partnership working across the Greater Manchester Healthwatch Network.

Worked in collaboration with Greater Manchester Patient Services to co-produce ongoing reports throughout the year which identify challenges and share the lived experiences of the people of Greater Manchester. We have and will continue to ensure their voices are heard throughout the Greater Manchester ICS through their Quality and Performance Committee.



Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.



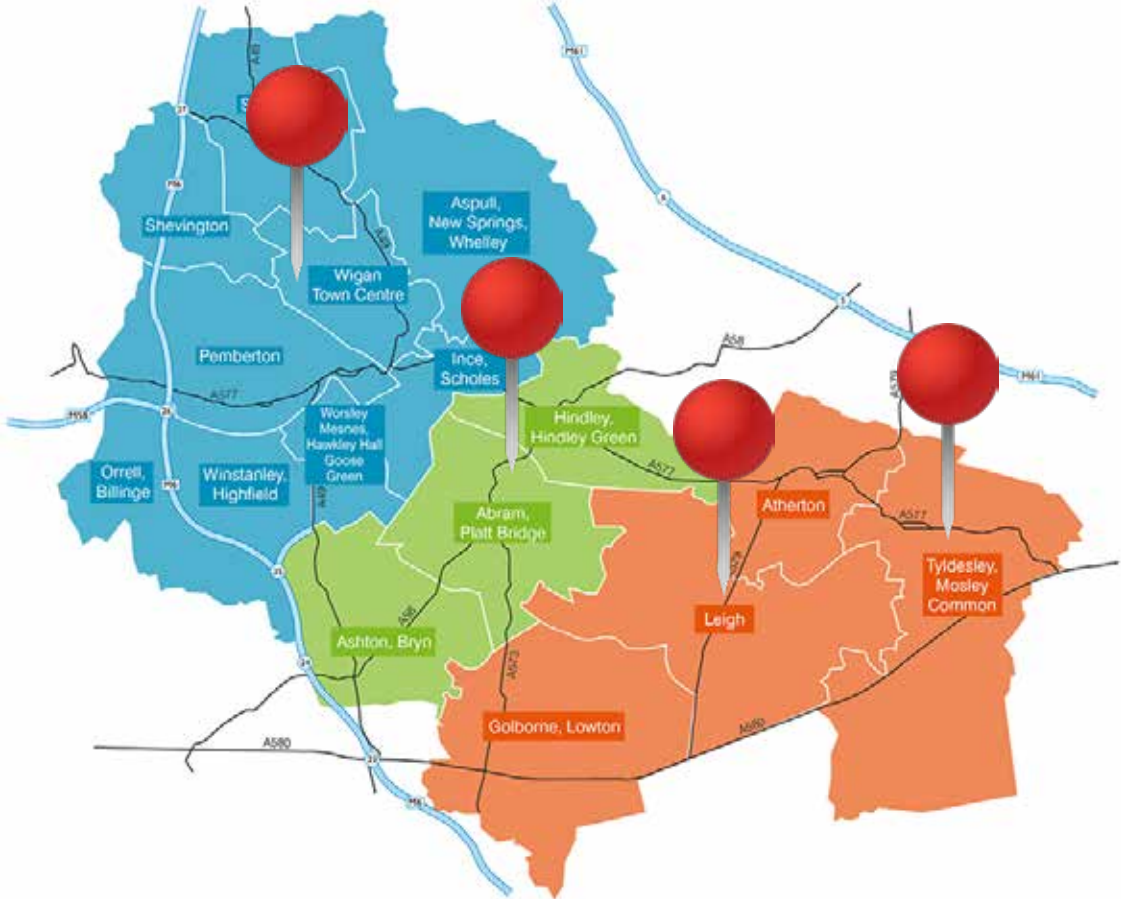
150
Venues
Visited





Engaging within all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard, and services meet their needs.



Linking the All Different All Equal Project with two Local Deaf Clubs.

Healthwatch challenged the organizers of the All Different All Equal project to consider whether they had engaged with the local deaf communities to ensure their voices were included in the project’s development. The organizers expressed a desire to engage with the deaf community but admitted they were unaware of the relevant groups. Healthwatch offered to link them with the two local deaf clubs, which the organizers gratefully accepted. Both local deaf clubs, Ashton and Leigh, were pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the All Different All Equal project.



Advice and Information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.



A member of the public called for help in contacting the Continuing Healthcare service as they would like to request urgent respite care for a family member under this service.

The family explained that they were having issues in contacting their social worker and asked if we could provide support in this matter. HWWL contacted the service on their behalf and this resulted in the Matron making contact with the family and access to respite care in a local care home was arranged for the following day.

The Assistant Director Individualised Care contacted our Chief Officer to inform that progress had moved on considerably since the client had raised their initial concern with HWWL. We were informed that the Matron had made contact with the client and the patient is due to access respite in a local care home the following day. The service lead explained that the issue around the delay and lack of response from the team is being looked into.



A member of the public came to us for advice and support in navigating the social care system as they were at a loss as to what their options were.

They explained that they have learning disabilities, mental health issues and they felt that their current carers were not providing the support that they required. They had requested additional help and support whilst out in the community and asked HWWL (Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh) for help and advice on the options available to them to access alternative care from another care agency.

Members of the HWWL team met the person to gather their experiences and we then shared the experience with the service leads. The person expressed that they felt their situation had improved since their Healthwatch visit and a new support plan with a new support worker was in place. Additional hours were being looked into so the client would not feel time restricted when out in the community and could therefore go further from home.

Help to access urgent respite care

Healthwatch Wigan Leigh had a member of the public contact to ask for help in accessing urgent respite care for a family member who was in receipt of Continuous Care.

Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh made contact with the NHS integrated Care Service for the Wigan area which resulted in the service making contact with the family and access to respite care in a local care home was arranged for the following day.

Helping resident to access a Glaucoma referral

The family of a local resident contacted Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh for help and assistance in accessing an NHS Glaucoma service at an out of area hospital, the resident was experiencing difficulty in accessing an urgent appointment at the local eye services clinic. Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh provided the resident with the options available to them, advised to contact their local GP and Ophthalmologist to discuss their choices and signposted to Urgent Referral clinics if this was deemed necessary.



I am very grateful for your assistance last week and would hope if I require your help and service on this issue I can call on your assistance once more”

Wigan Resident

Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This is brilliant.
Thank you so much for your support and input with this, it is very much appreciated and certainly the approach we wanted to take in co-designing it.

It is reassuring to know that you have tried out the information and we can see what works and what needs to be changed from a user's perspective. I will have a go at making the changes and keep you informed of the progress.

Our volunteers:

Co-Designed a Carer Conversation Toolkit Leaflet

Represented Healthwatch at the opening of Aspull Health Centre

Represented Healthwatch on a tour of Salford Trauma Unit

Represented Healthwatch on the development of the Community Diagnostic Centre, Leigh

Represented Healthwatch on the development of the VIP Red Bag Scheme at WWL

Co-Designed the new Sexual Health Tender for Wigan

Supported the work of the Mental Health Project

Led and delivered the Care Home Project

Volunteering

PPG Project Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) play a crucial role in primary care by facilitating communication and collaboration between General Practice, their patients, and the wider patient community. Generally, a PPG is a group of patients registered at the practice, who work together to support the practice to develop. However, beyond this, there is no specific description of what constitutes a PPG, what it can do, or how it should be organised.

Wigan and Leigh have **52 General Practices** which serve more than **329,000 residents**. Historically, Wigan has had good representation from PPGs across the borough with various networks facilitating access to support and development opportunities. The pandemic had a significant impact on PPGs and how they operate. While this presented challenges, it also highlighted the resilience and adaptability of some PPGs in ensuring that patient perspectives remained integral to General Practice decision-making and service delivery.

Post pandemic Health Watch Wigan and Leigh want to identify;

- If all residents of the Wigan Borough can attend a PPG.
- How patients access and get involved with the group.
- What the PPG 'looks like' at different practices.
- The roles and functions carried out by the PPG members.
- How the PPG is a stimulus for improvement within a practice.
- What is the evidence of the impact the PPG has on patient experience.

A team of 7 of our volunteers took this piece of work forward. If you would like to see the final report this can be found on our website.



WE NEED YOU!



Do you want to listen to the local issues that really matter to people?

Do you have an interest in adult health and social care services?

Would you like to help us to support improvements to services and standards of care in your area?

Do you enjoy working as part of a team?

Our volunteer roles are flexible to suit you. Get in touch today to find out more

 **01942 834666**



 **info@healthwatchwiganandleigh.co.uk**

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.



Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual Contract from Local Authority	£200,000	Expenditure on Pay	£195,200
Additional Income	£1573	Non-pay Expenditure	£23,279
	£111,000	Office and Management Fees	£48,000
Total Income	£312,573	Total Expenditure	£266,479

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences. We will also focus on how we can improve the issues that concern local people the most.

We will also work together with partners and our local Healthier Wigan Partnership to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Out top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Young Peoples Experiences of accessing help for their mental health.
2. Tackling Health Inequalities
3. Hearing from those that are delayed on their discharge from hospital.

Statutory Statements

Wigan Borough Healthwatch Community Interest Company, Heaton Room, Sunshine House, Scholes, Wigan, WN1 3SA uses the Healthwatch Trademark. Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making. Our Healthwatch Board consists of 5 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 6 times. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.



Your voice for social care and health services in Wigan & Leigh

healthwatch
Wigan & Leigh

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Scan Me



Volunteer opportunities available
Please contact us for more details

www.healthwatchwiganandleigh.co.uk