

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin

Annual
Report

2014/2015





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Foreword from David Evans

The voice of patients, their relatives and carers is important if we are to make the right decisions on the healthcare needs of our communities.

Our aspiration is to make sure that we commission high quality services that prevent people becoming ill and help them to a speedy recovery when they do become ill.

We need to listen to people and our communities to achieve this.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin plays an important role in letting the voice of patients be heard by decision makers both as commissioners of services, as well as the providers of services.

They are one of the partners that the CCG engages with and listens to about the quality of care that people receive in all areas of healthcare.

Sitting outside of the NHS enables Healthwatch to be a 'critical friend' of the NHS, and in so doing makes sure that we do not forget the voice of patients when we consider our plans and strategies.

Healthwatch has made a valuable contribution to Future Fit, looking at how we can best provide acute and community hospital services in the coming years, and I am grateful for the time and commitment that they have put into this important project.



Dave Evans, Chief Officer, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group



Introduction from our Joint Chairs



Welcome to the second annual report of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin (HWTW). This document provides an account of our achievements and challenges during the 2014 - 2015 year for our partners and providers in the National Health Service and local government, and for the local voluntary and community sector.

We always have in mind our role to be the voice of the diverse community in Telford and Wrekin, so that we might express their views, concerns, experiences, and ideas on local health and social care services.

Local health services are undergoing big changes right now, and HWTW is making sure that the views of Telford and Wrekin residents are heard in both the Future Fit and Community Fit programmes. Our board members and staff attend a host of meetings and discussions on every aspect of health and social care to ensure that the voice of local people is heard.

We have also seen major progress in the development of our board. In addition to our joint chairs, we have recruited several new directors, with wide experience in a range of fields including the NHS, business, and Ofsted. Each board member has been assigned responsibility for a geographical region and field that suits their knowledge.

The year has not been without its challenges. There has been a reduction in our finances, although negotiations still continue between our key stakeholders. Our board has also been working hard on

plans for our independence and exciting plans for improving our ability to collect local views and make these available to our partners. Plans are currently delayed, but we remain determined to continue to improve our services for local people.

A major area for development has been our work with younger people. We have been taking the Healthwatch message to year 10 pupils at our local academies and we have established a Youth Network which now meets regularly. One of its first projects has been a sexual health survey, and they have taken ownership over our 'Draw Your Ideal Hospital' project.

Some of our concerns include the provision of services for older people and those with dementia, as well as local mental health services and the transition between child, adolescent and adult mental health services.

Finally we pay tribute to the unstinting efforts of our staff and our growing number of volunteers and our fellow board members and supporters. We look forward to the future with optimism - whatever the obstacles. Together we will overcome all of our challenges and work toward the best possible outcomes for the people of Telford and Wrekin.



Note from the Operational Lead



Volunteers are at the heart of all the work we do and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Directors, Authorised Representatives and volunteers who have supported the staff team in the delivery of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin over the past 12 months.

The HWTW team attend an average of 20 meetings each month. These include the Health & Wellbeing Board, Better Care Fund, Future Fit, Early Help Partnership Board, Carers Partnership Board and T&W Clinical Commissioning Group Health Roundtable meetings. This gives us a real understanding of the issues in Telford & Wrekin and the ability to put the patient/service user at the centre of decisions made.

Our key priorities over the last year have been:

- Future Fit
- Better Care
- Older People's Services and Dementia
- Mental Health
- Maternity Services and the Shropshire Women & Children's Centre
- Novation

Our engagement programme has seen us speak to more than 6000 people across the borough this year, collecting 828 comments, and we couldn't have done this without the sterling work of our engagement team, initially led by Cat Pert and now by Chris Hancock. Our team attend Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) twice a month to collect experiences from

patients and their families/carers in the Friends Cafe and the Bistro Cafe in the Women and Children's Unit. We attended a variety of events last summer which included the famous "Rick roll" at T-Live and a drenching at the Ironbridge Coracle Regatta!



We started a project in August asking people in Telford to tell us what a good hospital looks like. We were interviewed on BBC Radio Shropshire, and despite the rain we collected more than 20 "tiles" at T-Party. We continued the project through the summer and presented the tiles to David Evans and Caron Morton, Senior Accountable Officers of Future Fit in November. HWTW has been asked to continue with the project so that the tiles will be made into a permanent display at the hospital when Future Fit concludes.



About Healthwatch

We are here to make health and social care better for ordinary people. We believe that the best way to do this is by designing local services around their needs and experiences.

Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people and our expertise is grounded in their experience. We are the only body looking solely at people's experience across all health and social care.

We are uniquely placed as a network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

As a statutory watchdog our role is to ensure that local health and social care services, and the local decision makers, put the experiences of people at the heart of their care.

Our mission:

To make health and social care services in Telford and Wrekin as good as they can be.

We seek to accomplish this by...

- ... holding public engagement events.
- ... informing people where to go for help.
- ... sharing the views of the public in Telford and Wrekin with decision makers to drive change.

- ... keeping the people of Telford and Wrekin at the heart of decision making.
- ... reacting to concerns raised by the public in Telford and Wrekin.
- ... making informed and evidence-based judgements about the quality of local services.

We strive to be:

- Inclusive
- Focussed
- Challenging
- Independent
- Representative
- Caring
- Listening

Our strategic priorities

HWTW's strategic priorities are the same as all Healthwatch, the foundation stone of which is that health and social care work well when their support systems involve patients in decisions about their treatment and care.

HWTW's core strategy is therefore to build an organisation which will form a conduit to enable the health and social care systems to listen to its people's views and experiences, and act on them.

Thus, it will:

- collect people's views and experiences, being sure it reaches out to diverse and difficult-to-reach communities
- identify common problems with health and social care based on people's experiences

- recommend changes to health and social care services that they know will benefit people
- hold those services and decision makers to account and demand action
- escalate problems to HW England for nation-wide action

As a statutory watchdog, it is our objective to ensure that health and social care services, and the government, put people at the heart of their care.

This will require building or reinforcing our collaboration with other significant organisations in the Health and Care arena (such as Better Care Fund, Care Act, Future Fit and Mental Health).

A sub-strategy has emerged recently - the structure of HWTW will need to change for the future.

The routing of the funding which enables our activities needs to adapt to future new circumstances; the board will consequently be required to take on a role more akin to that of a conventional company's board, with responsibility for the finances of the company.

The HWTW board is looking to develop a strategy for marketing and defrayment of costs that can both support our user-facing consultation processes and improve the quality of data outputs.

Our Healthwatch team (from left to right): Kate Ballinger; Matt Lever; Chris Hancock.





Engaging with people who use health and social care services

Understanding people's experiences

Our engagement activity consists of community events, focus groups, presentation at meetings and school assemblies, and regular stalls in the Princess Royal Hospital. We have made a conscious effort to visit all areas of Telford and included the Coracle Regatta in Ironbridge and stalls at Waitrose in Newport for the first time this year.

In the past year, HWTW have engaged with 6036 people, and gathered 828 views and opinions across 84 events.

As part of a collaborative project looking at GP access, we were able to complete 241 surveys across 6 GP practices in November. The practices selected were:

- Dawley Medical Practice
- Wellington Medical Practice
- Stirchley Medical Practice
- Oakengates Medical Practice
- Leegomery Medical Practice
- Linden Hall Surgery

Mental Health is an ongoing priority for HWTW, and we have worked with local support organisations **MIND** and **TACT** (Telford After Care Team) to gather service user experience in this area. We also held a focus group where service users and their carers were invited to discuss their views on the closure of Castle Lodge.

HWTW recognised that our communication with young people in the borough was an area for improvement and launched a Youth Network in January this year. Now rebranded YOUTH (Your Own Unique Telford Healthwatch), the network has a membership of more than 60 young people and has recently collected 427 responses to their Sexual Health Survey, looking at what young people know about services in Telford & Wrekin. This fantastic response is due to the support of a number of partners, including schools and cadet groups.

HWTW regularly attends events organised by the Senior Citizen's Forum and has attended a number of relative/resident meetings in local care homes to gather information from older residents. All of our surveys demonstrate our ability to engage with older people - and as Dementia and Frail and Elderly residents remain priorities for HWTW, we will be continuing this work in the next year.

Through our engagement work at Princess Royal Hospital, HWTW listens to feedback from patients living in Shropshire, Powys, Staffordshire and the West Midlands. We met a patient from Essex on one occasion. This feedback is collated and shared appropriately.

HWTW are committed to listening to the "seldom heard" and where voices are not obvious, we will go and find them.



Enter & View

Healthwatch has the statutory power to ‘Enter & View’ (E&V) any publically funded health or adult social care premises. Our authorised representatives visit service locations to talk to patients, residents, service users, and their families, friends, and carers about their experiences, observe for ourselves the services being delivered, and produce evidence-based recommendations in reports for the service providers.

“It’s good to see that they (residents) can speak up for things that are good and for those that need addressing.”

Authorised representative

The reports are published online for the community to read, and are distributed to our commissioners, other partners and regulators such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), council quality teams, and Healthwatch England.

You can find our published E&V reports on our website:

www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.org.uk/enter-view-reports

In the space of a year, we have gone from a small group of trained, but inexperienced, authorised representatives and not having a functional E&V programme at all, to having an effective and growing team having visited 16 different services in the 2014/15 year. Most visits were “announced”, but we also conducted two “unannounced” visits, in response to concerns raised by members

of the public, and intelligence from partner agencies and service providers.

Our E&V programme was agreed by a committee which included staff and volunteers. They prioritised the visits following concerns or feedback from service users and relatives, as well as from health and social care professionals, and intelligence from partner agencies.

For 2014/15, the programme of visits looked at dignity and respect in care, residential, and nursing facilities including those with dementia care. The outcome of the visits was to highlight good practice, and to encourage improvements where necessary; improvements that will affect the lives of people now and in the future.

Protecting the safety and quality of life of vulnerable adults is always a concern for our E&V visits, and we have made several referrals to Adult Safeguarding, as well as follow-up visits to check that service provider referrals have been received.

We heard many positive comments about good quality care and compassionate staff. We have consistently highlighted the problems around staffing numbers, delays responding to call bells, and the use of agency staff - both in hospital wards, and in some care homes. Some small changes have been made based on visit observations - bins that people with disabilities can use at PRH, for example.

“Enter and view for me makes me feel I’m doing something to make things the best they can be for patients and residents, and for the people of T&W.”

Authorised representative



The views and experiences of local people also play a vital role in shaping formal CQC inspections, and using the stories and experiences we have collected, we were able to give the CQC our views in advance of their inspection of Princess Royal Hospital.

Four workshops were organised during the year for our E&V representatives. These provided an opportunity for further training and coaching, for volunteers to get together to benefit from shared lessons and experiences, and to discuss suggestions for improvements to our approaches and procedures.

Our Enter & View representatives are committed and passionate about helping to make the health and social care services of the borough as good as they can be.

“Each Enter & View is different. I always think if it was me or one of my family how would we like to be treated in this environment.”

Authorised representative

For 2015/16 we look forward to a busy programme of visits, and we will be following up some prior visits, and the reported issues and concerns raised, with the people responsible for the services, to identify if there have been any improvements.

YOUTH

As a result of engaging with young people in Telford and Wrekin via visits to schools/colleges, an inaugural meeting of the Youth Network was held during the early part of 2014, where it was decided to establish a new Youth Network (since renamed, by its members, ‘Your Own

Unique Telford Healthwatch’, or YOUTH). Regular monthly meetings have taken place since then, which have been well attended.

Following on from the successful launch of YOUTH, the group held a successful young people’s ‘world cafe’. All local youth groups were invited which included the Telford Young People’s Forum, Young Carers, Upstart and RAFT, Stay, and Young Health Champions, as well as students from local schools.

Following short presentations from Barry Parnaby and Kate Ballinger, the leader of Telford & Wrekin Council - Cllr Kuldeep Sahota - welcomed the attendees to the event.

The main event was organised around four facilitated, interactive stations, each of which focused on specific health and social care topics.

The event was very successful and it allowed us to gather a considerable amount of information and feedback to share with the appropriate agencies.

It also highlighted the priorities to be addressed by YOUTH members, and has enabled an annual plan of activities to be developed for the forthcoming year.

Some members have undertaken Enter & View training and have been involved in engaging with service users in a variety of settings.

Cllr Sahota, in his closing speech, congratulated the attendees and stated that he was pleased with the attendance and outputs of the event. He added T&W Council greatly appreciated the efforts made by everyone involved with Healthwatch, and that he and his fellow councillors valued the feedback given to them from direct engagement with service users.



Providing information and signposting for people who use health and social care services

Helping people get what they need from local health and social care services

One of our statutory responsibilities is to help people find the services they need. Whether you're looking to make a complaint, find your nearest GP practice, or figure out how to navigate some NHS process or another, it's our job to point you in the right direction.

“We work with a range of local voluntary and statutory organisations to ensure that the information we have is up to date and relevant.”

Kate Ballinger, Manager,
Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin

Sometimes this is accomplished over the phone, as people find our information on leaflets and posters around the borough and call us up with their question.

Increasingly we are signposting people who we meet during our engagement events. To make sure we are recording this information more accurately than before, we have developed a handy engagement sheet for staff and volunteers to fill in at the time, allowing them to easily make a note whenever they help somebody and then report their efforts

back to the office for inclusion in the database.

A folder of useful information and contacts is taken to all engagement events now, allowing staff and volunteers to quickly and easily find the most commonly requested information and services.

Our website has been revamped to include a more functional online service directory, divided into collapsible categories to make it easier for people to find the services they need.

Take a look at our improved online directory - and the new 'how to complain' page - for yourself and tell us what you think:

www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.org.uk/content/find-services

And more recently, we have introduced a 'How to complain' page, which details the complaints procedures for each type of NHS and social care service provided in Telford and Wrekin. We hope this will make it easier for people to figure out which service to approach when something hasn't gone right.

During the 2014/15 period we recorded 97 signposting activities - and with our more effective recording methods and training, we anticipate this figure will grow considerably next year.



Influencing decision makers with evidence from local people

Producing reports and recommendations to effect change

The majority of reports HWTW publishes are Enter & View reports, which give clear recommendations and have influenced many positive outcomes for service users.

These include:

- A GP surgery which replaced speakers in an upstairs waiting area to improve confidentiality for patients.
- A care home which is replacing chairs with more comfortable coverings.
- A ward at Princess Royal Hospital will “ensure robust systems and processes are in place to ensure that the specific dietary requirements are given full consideration when supporting patients with menu choice”.

HWTW is also able to evidence service change prompted by HWTW input to meetings across the local Health and Social Care economy including consideration of an additional Urgent Care Centre site in Telford & Wrekin by the Future Fit Programme Team.

Putting local people at the heart of improving services

HWTW uses social media, its own website, newsletters and engagement activity to ensure that information about opportunities to be involved in decision making is widely accessible. This is

especially important at a time of huge changes to services provided in Telford & Wrekin.

- We signpost people to their local Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and encourage them to join.
- We encourage service providers to listen to local people.
- We gather patient and service user feedback and report it to providers

Our representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board is Jane Chaplin, Joint Chair of HWTW. We participate in the Health and Wellbeing Board Advisory Panel, giving HWTW the opportunity to influence upcoming agendas. HWTW staff and board members meet regularly to ensure a common understanding of relevant local issues, enabling our representatives to contribute to a wide range of discussions.

HWTW offers a range of volunteering opportunities to local people including:

- Director
- Enter & View Authorised Representative
- Engagement
- Office support
- Meeting attendance and report back
- Multi-skilled volunteer

“The Health & Wellbeing Board is an important new initiative and Healthwatch has the



opportunity to ensure that local people’s views, opinions and concerns are informing members. This gives real people the chance to influence service provision.”

Jane Chaplin, HWBB Representative

HWTW uses its position on the Health and Wellbeing Board to remind the local council and Clinical Commissioning Group that information presented in the public domain should be accessible and understandable to the population of Telford & Wrekin. We have also been able to raise the views of local people on a number of issues, including the Better Care Fund and Future Fit.

HWTW is able to add value to the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board by undertaking a range of projects which then inform decisions made by commissioners. This is evidenced by our work on sexual and mental health services.

Working with others to improve local services

HWTW’s work includes many collaborative relationships with stakeholder organisations, the major ones being:

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

HWTW hosts regular meetings with the CQC to share local intelligence. These led to our involvement in the CQC Listening Event for the inspection of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust (SaTH). We are also contacted regularly to request intelligence before inspections of local care providers. HWTW was invited to be part of the CQC Thematic Review of Crisis Mental Health Services in Shropshire,

contributing both at the stakeholder event and in interviews.

We have not had occasion to make specific recommendations to the CQC requesting special reviews or investigations of services, but are confident that our relationship is now sustainable and we would have no issues should evidence requiring such come to light.

NHS England

HWTW meets with NHS England regularly to discuss the local situation, and we are looking forward to building this relationship following the restructure of NHS England boundaries.

Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Gill Stewart, HWTW director, attends all of the CCG board meetings on our behalf. We also hold regular meetings with Dr Mike Innes, Chair of the CCG board where local issues can be discussed.



Gill Stewart, Director of HWTW

HWTW is invited by the CCG to take part in reviews of services, most recently a review of Audiology Any Qualified Provider (AQP) services, and see this as an important part of HWTW’s role as a “critical friend”.

Gill will be holding the Healthwatch seat on the CCG Primary Care Commissioning Committee in 2015/16.



“Attendance improves partnership working across the local area and provides scrutiny and challenge within this committee.”

Gill Stewart, Director of HWTW

Safeguarding

HWTW, through its Enter & View work, has established a role in Large Scale Investigations, and is invited to contribute to review meetings. In 2015/16 HWTW will take a seat on the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Adults Board.

Scrutiny

HWTW has a co-optee position on both the Telford & Wrekin Health and Care Scrutiny Committee, and the Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee across Shropshire.

LA/CQC Liaison Meetings

These meetings look at local service provision and inform areas of concern across Shropshire/Telford & Wrekin. Both Healthwatch organisations are able to contribute findings from Enter & View activity, and indeed, HWTW was mandated to carry out an Enter & View visit by the meeting.

Early Help Partnership Board

A subcommittee of the Health and Wellbeing Board, HWTW attends these meetings and has recently been part of a Task & Finish group looking at services for parents in the borough.

Carers Partnership Board

Another subcommittee, these meetings enable HWTW to have a good understanding of the issues facing carers in Telford & Wrekin. This influences our

Enter & View activity and the questions we ask in other meetings.

Health Roundtable

HWTW has an ex-officio seat on the Health Roundtable, which is a subcommittee of the T&W CCG. We supply a report giving details of our activity to the patient representatives on the Roundtable. It is hoped that 2015/16 will see a joint project undertaken by HWTW and the Health Roundtable.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin attended a minimum of 3 meetings every week in 2014/15

We also attend meetings with South Staffordshire and Shropshire Foundation Trust (SSSFT - mental health service provider), SaTH, local and regional Healthwatch organisations, and local voluntary sector organisations.

“Healthwatch adds value to the meetings we attend by keeping service users at the heart of discussions.”

Kate Ballinger, Manager HWTW

All our requests for information have been responded to, and we continue to build constructive relationships across the health and social care economy.

During this year we have escalated issues related to Gender Identity services to Healthwatch England, and HWTW is represented in several national bodies looking at NHS provision as a result of this.

Reports produced by HWTW are shared with local providers and commissioners and copied to Healthwatch England.



Impact Stories

Case Study One

Shropshire Women & Children's Unit

Women and Children's services transferred to Princess Royal Hospital (PRH), Telford, in September 2014.



Shropshire Women and Children's Centre

Following our involvement in the Maternity Services Review last year, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin was keen to make sure that the new services would be everything that had been promised.

Our Enter & View representatives were invited to visit the new children's ward at PRH before the children moved in. We produced a report which was shared with the project team and made available on our website.

“A great deal of thought has been given to the needs of children of different ages in the design of the building”

Healthwatch visit report

We undertook a further visit to the centre before services were moved in September, and our E&V volunteers again commented on the facilities. We drew particular attention to the bins available in the disabled toilets. The pedal bins provided were not suitable for wheelchair users and as a result of our conversation, additional, hand-operated swing bins were installed before opening.

HWTW held engagement stands in the unit during opening week, speaking to families from across Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Powys. We now hold monthly engagement events in the unit, which have provided some rich feedback about the services available and enable Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin to contribute to the Maternity Engagement Group on a quarterly basis.



Manager of HWTW, Kate Ballinger, with HRH Princess Anne at the opening of the Shropshire Women and Children's Centre





Case Study Two

Gender Identity Services

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin has escalated issues with Gender Identity Services, commissioned by NHS England Specialised Commissioning, to Healthwatch England.



Transgender status is protected under the Equality Act, 2010

HWTW was approached by several transgender patients who have experienced delays in treatment, discrimination in services, and issues with their medical records.

We responded to each issue and have been able to facilitate positive outcomes for two patients who were waiting for appointments at the Gender Identity Clinic. One patient had been waiting 6 months for acknowledgment that they were even on the waiting list!

“I can’t tell you how relieved I am to find out that they have my name - Thank you!”

Patient 1

- HWTW contacted the Gender Identity Clinic at Charing Cross hospital to ask about waiting times, and confirmed that the patient’s details were held correctly. We were also able to give them a better idea of when

they might expect an appointment (6-12 months).

- HWTW raised the issue of patient records with the hospital trust, and received assurances that systems would be reviewed to avoid errors by front line staff.
- HWTW contacted services to advise reported discrimination, and was able to confirm that correct procedures had been followed. The service provider has reviewed their protocols to ensure that communication with patients is handled in a more sensitive manner.
- HWTW escalated concerns about Gender Identity Services to Healthwatch England.

While we understand the reasons for having surgical centres of excellence, it seems unreasonable that other services such as speech therapy, electrolysis and specialist counselling cannot be delivered closer to home.

It is hoped that Healthwatch England, with evidence from Telford and Wrekin and other local Healthwatch, will be able to influence NHS England Specialised Commissioning in the future.

Does the 18 week referral to treatment target apply to Gender Identity Pathways?



Our plans for 2015/16

Opportunities and challenges for the future

“We are trained to think of the future as a promised land... not as something that everybody reaches at a rate of sixty minutes an hour whatever we do and whoever we are”

C.S. Lewis, Screwtape letters 1942

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin will reach the future in the coming year with luck!

- Becoming an independent body, with a local Board serving Telford and Wrekin.
- To do all we can to work with patients and the community to plan future health and social care changes.
- To raise our profile and voice so everyone, including influence leaders, knows our name and roles.
- To work with our partners and stakeholders to maximise and source resources for our work.
- To value all our volunteers and to celebrate what we have achieved together.
- To listen and represent the views of local people, to improve the quality of health and social care on offer from childhood to older age, and to base services in the home and local community.





Our governance and decision-making

Our board

Joint Chair, older people, dementia, and mental health

David Bell



Joint Chair, responsible for external representation

Jane Chaplin



Board member, responsible for volunteer coordination

Mark Boylan



Board member, responsible for Enter & View and IT

Carolyn Henniker



Board member, responsible for finance and income generation

David Jeffries



Board member, responsible for YOUTH and Adult Safeguarding

Barry Parnaby



Board member, responsible for operations and health services

Gill Stewart



Martyn Withnall



Martyn was one of the first directors appointed to the Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin board in June 2013. His passion for making things better was infectious and although he was still working full time when he joined us, he made time to attend meetings and take part in projects for Healthwatch.

Martyn was very excited to be retiring last year, telling us that he would be able to spend more time on Healthwatch. He didn't let us down either, despite taking on trustee of the Crisis Network as another voluntary role.

Probably Martyn's greatest contribution to Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin was his ability to listen to, and encourage people to share their experiences of Health and Social Care services with us.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is a better place because Martyn was one of our Directors and we miss him.



Mark Boylan's story

Having suffered with panic attacks, acrophobia, OCD, depression and chronic anxiety for many years it all came to a head around four to five years ago.

I found it hard to leave the house unless either with diazepam or with a drink inside me.

Mark Boylan, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin

I had been self medicating with alcohol just to get through an average day. This made me alcohol dependent, which continued for 10 or so years. Keeping down a regular job within a government contract, my situation remained unnoticed until eventually it was starting to stop my day-to-day functioning.

It was really hard to get the right treatment as they were unable to treat my mental health issues whilst I was still drinking - but drinking was the only way to keep my anxiety, panic attacks and fear under control. So detoxing and then waiting for treatment was always going to be a problem.

It took many attempts and with the best will in the world it wasn't going to be easy to give up something that made me feel normal and helped me to function. Once, I came off a detox and went straight into the pub.

Eventually, after years of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), trips to A&E and the Crisis Team, it was time to change and to try and get the correct treatment. Doing this meant going privately for a therapist and a psychologist to get a diagnosis and the correct help and medication.

Understanding why things were the way they were and that there was no miracle cure made it easier to understand and cope with my condition. Having addressed the issue at the start would have saved a lot of time, effort and a lot of cost to all areas involved.

I started the green gym around three years ago, initially going out for an hour a week, as this is all I could manage with my anxiety. This increased over time to three days a week, eventually becoming a voluntary support worker.

I became registered with 'Tackle your Health'; at first helping out before eventually becoming a registered volunteer coach. Last year I raised over £1000 in a charity football match for Severn Hospice.

I got involved with boxing to improve my fitness in December 2014, then progressed to fighting in an event in front of 700+ people on May 10th this year - winning the fight with a 40 second knockout!

That match raised £1250 for Cancer Research UK, in memory of my uncle William Weir, who passed away due to prostate cancer last March.

Average training per week - (Gym/Boxing/Football/Swimming)

3+ hours per day.

5 miles a day running.

Hour a day in boxing gym 6 rounds sparring twice a week.

7th January 2015 93.3kg = 14 stone 7 lbs.

10th May 2015 70.0kg = 11 stone 0 lbs. (Fight Night).



I also stood for election for the first time in May 2015, and was successfully elected as a councillor for Ketley and Overdale.

The whole experience was great! Having struggled with anxiety and panic attacks for many years, it managed to change my focus. Having a brain that never switches off physical exercise, the outdoors and keeping busy is ideal!



The whole experience gave me a reason to get out of bed daily and once I settled into a routine, I found it took up a big part of my weekly schedule! I made a lot of friends along the way! Losing weight was quite easy with training; I didn't have to starve myself, just eat sensibly and the right food at the right time to aid in my training! This also benefited my health and mental well being.

I got involved with Healthwatch in spring this year. I find it gives me an opportunity, as with my other projects, to give something back to society - and hopefully what I have learned means I can help and share with others, showing where I have come from and what is achievable.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. It's just a case of getting the right engine to drive you on the correct rails.

I am now looking to the future and looking forward to returning to my previous role within the government contract.

How we involve lay people and volunteers

Volunteers

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is led by a board of volunteer directors made up of community leaders, specialists and lay people. Directors represent HWTW in a variety of meetings across the Health and Social Care economy, and use feedback gathered to ensure that the voice of people in Telford & Wrekin is at the heart of decisions made locally.

Volunteers currently support the work of HWTW in a number of different roles. These are:

- Director
- Authorised Representative
- Engagement
- Meeting attendance and report back
- Office support

HWTW are keen to develop our relationship with our volunteers and using the expertise of Mark Boylan as Director with responsibility, we will be reviewing our volunteer roles in the coming year.

Governance

All decisions about the governance of HWTW are made at board meetings which are held in public on the first Monday of each even month (February, April etc.). Meetings take place at 18:00 in the Quaker Room at Meeting Point House.

Documents for board meetings are published in advance on our website and paper copies can be provided on request.



Financial information

INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	160650	
Additional income	600	
Total income	161250	

EXPENDITURE		
Office costs	5169	
Staffing and Management costs	110204	
Direct delivery costs	35575	
Total expenditure	150948	
Balance brought forward	10302	



Contact us

Get in touch

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Southwater
Telford TF3 4HS

Phone number: 01952 739540

Email: info@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.org.uk

Website URL: www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.org.uk

Address of contractors:

Parkwood Healthcare
Parkwood House,
Berkeley Drive,
Bamber Bridge,
Preston PR5 6BY



We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2015 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our local authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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Your feedback

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is keen to find out how useful this report has been to you, and/or your organisation. Please provide feedback below or via email.

We found the report to be:

Useful / Not useful

Why do you think this?

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Any other comments?

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Your name, organisation and contact details

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Please email to: matt.lever@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.org.uk

Or post to:

Matt Lever

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