



April 2025 Newsletter

Hello!

Welcome to the April edition of our new newsletter!
This month marks our 12th year of being an independent organisation, here to listen to you.

Please, take a moment to share your feedback with us on what you want us to work on this year.

We cover all areas of health and social care and want to make services better for you and the people around you.

You can also let us know what we've done well so far, and how we can do things better.



www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/haveyoursay



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Healthwatch Luton supported Fun days in Luton!

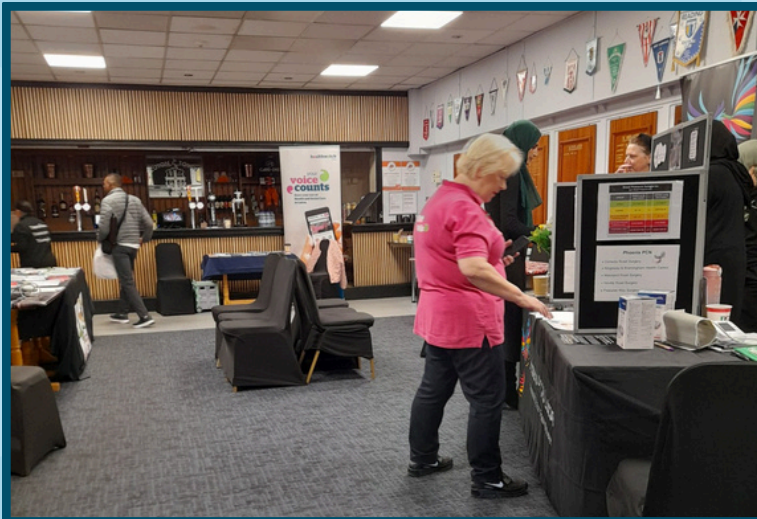
Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th April

Bury Park Community Centre.



Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th April, Luton Town Football Club!

There was the opportunity for children to join in fun activities. The fire service and police were there with a fire engine and police car for children and parents to explore!



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Healthwatch Luton wishes Nicky all the best for her retirement.

A huge thank you for the support you have given to the people of Luton!



Nicky is a true believer in the involvement of all to ensure the best possible provision of services. Never flinching from a challenge and always on hand to offer help and support when needed. She will be sorely missed and always in our minds.



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There was the opportunity to talk with Primary Care Network's Social Prescribers and Total Well-being and get your blood pressure checked.



**An ideal blood pressure is under 120/80mmHg.
Do you Know Your Numbers?**

An estimated 6 million people in the UK have high blood pressure, and don't know it!

Every day in the UK, 350 people have a stroke, or heart attack, that could have been prevented.

We believe every adult in the UK should know their blood pressure numbers, in the same way they know their height and weight.



When you Know Your Numbers you can take steps to look after your blood pressure, and lead a long and healthy life.



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From our Community Engagement Officer, Sandra: "A High Note!"

Healthwatch Luton attended many great events this year, and its only April. One of which included Music 24 a non-profit organisation that provides music therapy and other music-related activities.

As always HWL was greeted with such a warm welcome from staff, volunteers, attendees and a crescendo of live music.

Their sessions are so interactive it was hard for us not to get on our feet and do a few twirls and sing-alongs.

This energetic experience had our wonderful volunteers: Angela on the "shaker" and Cass on "tambourine".



Diabetes Uk booklets, diabetes recipe cards and "Pharmacy first" information was displayed, amongst other leaflets relating to accessing health and social care services within the town.



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Phoenix PCN Luton's Social Prescribers organised a Breast Cancer Awareness event Saturday 10th May at Kokni Community Centre.

This event was well organised, attended by 40 women, with two speakers. The first gave a great introduction to the work Social Prescribers do for the Phoenix PCN. The second gave a fantastic talk about breast cancer, and the importance of screening.



This was followed by the opportunity for the ladies in the audience to ask questions. So many good questions were asked, with wonderful and reassuring answers.

Two women spoke about their experiences of Breast Cancer. These were really from the heart and explained how in general life we really should be aware of what our breast looks and feel like and how we feel. Both ladies explained their different experiences well and demonstrated an inner strength to share their experiences to encourage women to get checked.

Following the talks, there was an opportunity to have advice on checking your breasts.

Of course, Healthwatch Luton had our table there with information on diabetes, health services and Healthwatch Luton!



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April is Autism Awareness Month: ASD Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism is a developmental disorder with symptoms that appear within the first three years of life. Everyone with autism experiences their own unique strengths, symptoms, and challenges.

Two main symptom areas:

- **Deficits in social communication and interaction**
- **Restricted, repetitive behaviours, interests, or activities**



To mark Autism Awareness Month, East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) has collaborated on Sensory (available on YouTube), a short film about autism co-produced with a neurodivergent cast.

Developed in partnership with Inner Eye Productions and the University of Bristol, the film highlights the importance of understanding and adapting care for autistic patients, and how small changes can improve patient experience.

You can read the full press release on their website:

www.elft.nhs.uk/news/powerful-film-screening-marks-world-autism-awareness-day



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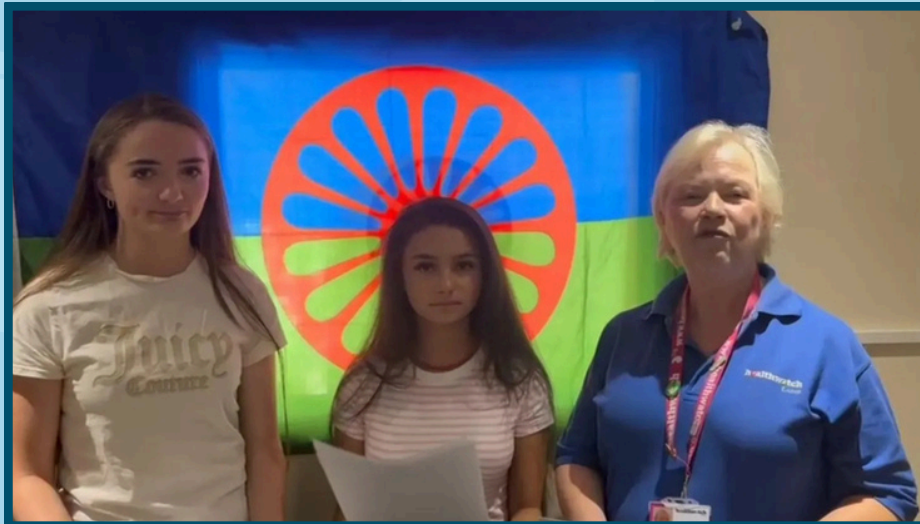


Reports

Healthwatch Luton recently took feedback from the English Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities. Feedback from the communities varied, with some residents being happy with the service provided.

Many residents stated they found it difficult to get an appointment. We are working with eQuality PCN to improve health outcomes for the community.

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/your-voice-counts-st-thomas-gypsy-traveller-community



Healthwatch Luton recently spoke with service providers, service users, and relatives about the availability of Interpretation and translation services available in Luton.

Many Primary services, including pharmacists and opticians, did not know about the services that are available to them. HWL observed services being used secondary services.

<https://www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/translation-and-interpretation-service-review/>



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Healthwatch Luton recently completed Enter and Views on Mental Health Wards in Luton. Many residents enjoyed activities, using the gym and therapies being offered.

Some residents identified areas for improvement. You can read about our findings and how HWL are working with ELFT to improve care:

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-ash-ward

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-coral-ward

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-crystal-ward

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-evergreen-ward

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-jade-ward

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-onyx-ward

www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/report/enter-and-view-luton-mental-health-wards-2024-willow-ward

May brings both Maternal Mental Health Week & International Midwives Day!

HWL have recently completed Enter and View of maternity wards, report to be published soon.



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From our Board Chair, Phil: “Healthwatch Luton Activity Over the Winter Months”

Healthwatch plays a pivotal role in ensuring community health and well-being, particularly during the challenging winter months. The focus during this period is twofold: efficient communication strategies to inform and educate the public and the provision of warm spaces to support those in need. This document looks at Healthwatch's activities over the winter months, highlighting winter communications, warm spaces initiatives, and community engagements.



Effective communication is crucial during winter, a time often marked by health challenges such as seasonal illnesses and adverse weather conditions. Healthwatch implements a robust winter communication strategy to keep the community informed and prepared. Key aspects of this strategy include:

- **Information Dissemination:** Healthwatch utilizes various communication channels, including social media, and community engagement, to disseminate information about health services, vaccination programs, and preventive measures for common winter ailments.
- **Engagements:** Campaigns focusing on topics such as flu prevention, managing chronic conditions in cold weather, and mental health support. These engagements aim to empower individuals with knowledge and resources to maintain their health during winter.

Warm Spaces Initiatives

The provision of warm spaces is a critical initiative by many organisations to support vulnerable populations during winter. These spaces offer a safe and warm environment for individuals who may be struggling with heating their homes. Key components of the warm spaces initiative include:

- **Identification of Warm Spaces:** Healthwatch identifies and partners with local organizations, such as community centres, libraries, and churches, to utilise warm spaces accessible to the public.

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- **Resource Provision:** These warm spaces are equipped with essential resources, including heating, hot beverages, blankets, and information on available support services.
- **Community Outreach:** Healthwatch conducts outreach programs to raise awareness about the availability of warm spaces and encourages those in need to utilize these facilities.

Community Engagement

Engagement with the community is at the heart of Healthwatch's efforts to enhance health provision during winter. By actively involving community members, Healthwatch ensures that services are responsive to local needs. Key engagement activities include:

- **Public Consultations:** Healthwatch organizes public consultations and forums to gather feedback from the community on health services and winter-specific challenges. This feedback informs service improvements and policy decisions.
- **Partnerships with Local Organizations:** Collaborating with local organizations, Healthwatch leverages collective resources and expertise to address health needs effectively.
- **Volunteer Programs:** Healthwatch recruits and trains volunteers to support winter initiatives, such as assisting with communication and gathering feedback from the community.

Conclusion

Healthwatch's activities over the winter months, including winter communications, warm spaces initiatives, and community engagements, play a vital role in supporting the health and well-being of the community.

By ensuring access to information, providing essential support, and fostering community resilience, Healthwatch makes a significant impact on health provision during this challenging season.



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Healthwatch Luton Engagement for May 2025

Thursday 1st May, Gypsy and Traveller Engagement/ Videos

Tuesday 6th May, 9:00–11:00, Toothbrushes at Ferrars Junior School

Thursday 8th May, 10:00–11:30, Toothbrushes at Stopsley Baptist Church

Friday 9th May, 11:00–12:00, Disability Network

Saturday 10th May, 9:30–12:00, Kokni Community Centre

Wednesday 14th May, 11:00–13:00, Well & Wise Room at Luton Library

Thursday 15th May, 13:00–15:00, Mixes Hill Court – Supported Living

Thursday 15th May, 17:00–19:00, Tokko

Monday 19th May, Toothbrushes at Marsh Farm Foodbank

Wednesday 21st May, SENSational by eQuality PCN, Wigmore Church

Wednesday 21st May, 11:00–13:00, Well & Wise Room at Luton Library

Wednesday 28th May, 10:00, Hatters Health Network Hockwell Ring

Community Centre

Wednesday 28th May, 11:00–13:00, Well & Wise Room at Luton Library

Wednesday 28th May, 11:30–5:00, Revive All Women's Group at Bury

Park Community Centre

More dates to be confirmed.



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