

# Healthwatch Bucks update

January 2023

This paper summarises recent project work we have undertaken in relation to health and social care services, as aligned with the priorities of the Joint Health & Wellbeing strategy.

## Live Well

### Social Prescribing

This is the second project we have done this year looking at Social Prescribing. For this project, we wanted to find out about people's experiences of social prescribing in Buckinghamshire.

#### What we did

We developed a short survey and did 14 phone interviews with people who had talked to a social prescriber in 2022.

We also collected 16 responses in person at three social prescribing 'talking cafes' in July, August and September 2022.

A further 17 people completed a survey online after receiving a link from a social prescriber or voluntary organisation.

We also spoke to five social prescribers about the issues they face when trying to get people engaged with new activities or organisations that might be able to help them.

#### Key findings

- Most people told us they were happy or very happy about being referred to a social prescriber.
- Most people said they had a positive impression following their use of the social prescribing service.
- Respondents said they found speaking with a social prescriber helpful and appreciated their time and support – though there were some issues with getting more support afterwards.
- 86% of the people we spoke to said their health and / or wellbeing had improved because of the new activities or organisations they'd become involved with – and several said the social prescribing service should be better publicised.

#### Our recommendations

We've made recommendations to Buckinghamshire Council and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB).

These include:

- Recommendations on improving the provision of accessible, affordable transport

- Extending the support available to people who need help with claiming benefits, and
- Ensuring that social prescribing services are promoted and supported.

## Report and ICB response

You can read them [here](#).

## Young Onset Dementia

We wanted to find out about people's experiences of living with young onset dementia in Buckinghamshire.

The aim of our research project was to learn about the dementia support people had received and how helpful it was for them.

## What we did

We developed an online survey that was live from 25 October 2022 until 2 January 2023.

This was publicised through our monthly email newsletter and on our social media channels. We also contacted 27 GP surgeries who have patients with young onset dementia, as well as 42 voluntary and community groups.

The project was also promoted by Buckinghamshire Council's Dementia Strategy Group.

We collected feedback from people living with young onset dementia, as well as their relatives, carers and friends.

## Key findings

- Most people we spoke to said that when they received their diagnosis, it was difficult or very difficult to get information about the support that might be available for them.
- Of the people who said they'd been given information, less than half said they'd received anything about young onset dementia or their specific type of dementia. Less than half said they'd been told about making a will or power of attorney.
- Most people did not receive information about key issues such as:  
Employment rights, benefits, pension advice, peer or family support groups, how to keep fit and mentally stimulated and where to find age appropriate activities.
- Just over half of the people who were given information said that it was age-appropriate 'to some extent'. Only one told us the information was personal to the individual living with young onset dementia, and only one said the information and support was received quickly enough.
- Many people found it difficult to access the support they wanted later on;

Half the people who shared their views with us said they would like someone to contact them regularly and see how they were getting on.

Few of the people we spoke to attended any peer support groups.

Most didn't know any other individuals or families who were living with young onset dementia.

A few family members told us they thought that the person living with young onset dementia could benefit from socialising with their peers.

### Our recommendations

We recommend that Buckinghamshire Council works with dementia services to provide targeted, local support for people living with young onset dementia.

This could include:

- Providing information in a timely, personal and age-appropriate way, and bearing in mind that such information might be different from that required by older people living with dementia
- Ad-hoc, one-to-one support for issues faced by people with young onset dementia
- A named contact responsible for regularly reaching out to individuals living with young onset dementia, to see where any further information or support might be needed
- Connecting peers (either those with young onset dementia themselves, or their relatives, carers and friends) to create mini support networks.

We recommend that Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB):

- Encourages general practice to consistently code patients with young onset dementia on the EMIS system so that those who may need more support can be identified easily
- Ensures that, when someone is diagnosed with young onset dementia, Memory Clinics offer them and their support networks information about tailored support
- Encourages general practices and primary care networks (PCNs) to work together to connect those with a young onset dementia diagnosis, and their support networks, across localities.

You can read the report [here](#).

### Snapshot survey; making a doctor's appointment by phone

Healthwatch Bucks recently conducted a snapshot survey to find out about people's experiences of booking a doctor's appointment by phone.

Our online questionnaire asked Bucks resident to give us their feedback on:

- What kind of phone they used last time they called to make a doctor's appointment
- How long they had to wait for their call to be answered
- How worried they are about the financial cost of staying on hold with their surgery
- How satisfied they feel with the current process for booking doctor's appointments
- How they would prefer to make appointments in future.

The findings can be accessed [here](#).