

healthwatch
Halton

**your
view
counts**

Communications Strategy

2025 – 2027

healthwatch
Halton

Contents

Who we are..... 3

Our mission, vision and values..... 4

The purpose of this document 6

Future goals..... 6

Target audience..... 8

How we communicate..... 9

Working with partners and the media 10

Measuring impact 11

Reporting and review 11

Who we are

Healthwatch Halton is your local health and social care champion.

We listen to people's experiences of GPs, hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes and community services — and we use what we hear to help improve them.

We're independent, impartial and here for everyone in Halton. We make sure NHS and social care leaders listen to what local people say and use that feedback to make care better.

We're part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England, each working to make sure people's voices are heard at every level of health and social care.

Our mission, vision and values

Our vision:

A Halton where everyone can get the health and care they need, and people's experiences shape how services are delivered.

Our mission:

To make sure people's voices are heard and used to improve health and care for everyone.

We do this by:

- Listening to people to understand what matters most to them.
- Influencing those with the power to make changes.
- Informing and supporting people to get the best from health and care services.
- Working with partners to make services better while keeping our independence.

Our values:

- **Listening** – we value what people tell us.
- **Including** – we reach out to everyone, especially those who are seldom heard.
- **Analysing** – we learn from what people say to understand what's working and what isn't.
- **Acting** – we use feedback to drive positive change.
- **Partnering** – we work collaboratively while maintaining our independence.

What we do – Why communication matters

Communication underpins everything we do.

It helps us build trust, reach more people, and show how feedback leads to action.

Good communication helps us to:

- Increase public awareness and visibility.
- Build credibility with professionals and partners.

- Encourage participation in surveys, events and consultations.
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability.
- Show how people's voices are improving services locally.

Our goals and objectives

Goal 1 – Raise awareness

Ensure that everyone in Halton knows who we are, what we do and how to contact us.

Objective: Increase awareness of Healthwatch Halton by 15% over the next two years through digital growth, outreach and partnership promotion.

Goal 2 – Strengthen engagement

Encourage more people to share their views and stories.

Objective: Increase by 10% year-on-year the number of people who tell us about their experiences.

Goal 3 – Build professional trust

Strengthen our relationships with NHS, Council and voluntary partners.

Objective: Increase the number of our recommendations acted on by services by 5% year-on-year.

Goal 4 – Show our impact

Make sure people see how their feedback makes a difference.

Objective: Publish at least six clear "You Said, We Did" updates each year and feature engagement outcomes in every quarterly report.

The purpose of this document

This communications strategy provides a framework for the delivery of effective communications which are clear, appropriate and help the organisation achieve its goals.

Effective communications will help to:

- Increase awareness of Healthwatch Halton and its work
- Increase Healthwatch Halton's reputation as an independent, professional and credible organisation
- Continuously build meaningful two-way communication with the public, patients and carers to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding to share their views which will help influence the shaping of health and social care services in Halton
- Ensure that we work closely with seldom heard groups to champion their voices and enable them to be heard
- Ensure we work closely with commissioners, so services are designed with the people in Halton who use those services.

Future goals

Over the past 12 years Healthwatch Halton has built a strong and credible presence with providers and the public, but there is still much to be achieved, especially in the rapidly changing landscape of health and social care. Over the next three years we are committed to improving communications across all channels and increasing public engagement participation across all work streams.

Healthwatch Halton aim to achieve this by establishing closer working relationships with their strategic partners, like: Halton Borough Council, One Halton, NHS Halton Place, local Health and Social Care service providers, and the Cheshire & Merseyside ICS.

There will also be increased collaboration with our neighbouring Healthwatch across Cheshire & Merseyside, and with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) and communities of common interest.

By working with these partners, we will enhance the profile of the Healthwatch Halton and improve its reach, enabling all members of the public to be well-informed and involved in work streams.

We will look to strengthen our feedback loop, ensuring impact and outcomes are reported to patients, service users, stakeholders and the wider public

Target audience

People living, or working, in Halton

- Adults, older adults, young people
- Carers and families
- People with disabilities or long-term conditions
- Seldom-heard and protected characteristic groups

Partners

- NHS Halton Place / One Halton
- Halton Borough Council
- NHS Trusts and primary care providers
- Bridgewater, WHH, Mersey Care, and voluntary sector partners

Community

- Voluntary, community and faith groups
- Social prescribers and community connectors
- Local media and neighbourhood networks

Internal

- Staff, volunteers and Independent Strategic Advisory Board members

Key messages

- Healthwatch Halton is the independent champion for people who use health and care services.
- We listen to what matters most to local people and make sure their voices help shape better care.
- We help people find the information and support they need.
- We use feedback to influence how health and social care services are planned and delivered.
- We are independent, impartial and free to everyone.

Our tone:

Friendly, approachable and plain-English. We speak with — not at — people.

How we communicate

We use a mix of channels so everyone has a chance to hear from us and get involved:

- Website and online forms
- Monthly e-bulletin
- Social media
- Printed reports and leaflets
- Community events and outreach
- Partner newsletters and networks
- Media coverage and radio interviews
- Board and stakeholder meetings

Each communication should:

- Be inclusive and accessible
- Be clear about purpose and next steps
- Use real stories and local examples
- Highlight how feedback has been used

Digital communications

Our website (www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk) is a key platform for information, feedback and transparency.

We will ensure it:

- Is regularly updated with news, reports and opportunities to get involved.
- Lets people easily share experiences or request advice.
- Includes our quarterly and annual reports.
- Is fully accessible and mobile-friendly.
- Reflects our local work with photos, case studies and “You Said, We Did” updates.

Social media

Social media helps us reach more people quickly and share information in real time.

We use:

- **Facebook and Instagram** – for local community news, updates and photos from events.

- **X (Twitter)** – for sharing news, partner updates and report launches.
- **LinkedIn** – for professional and stakeholder communications.
- **YouTube** – for short clips and awareness campaigns.

We use these platforms to:

- Promote events and reports
- Encourage feedback and discussion
- Share our partners' health messages
- Show our work in the community

All use follows our Social Media Policy, ensuring accuracy, professionalism and respect.

Publications and regular updates

We produce regular publications to keep people informed and involved:

- **Quarterly Reports** – sharing trends, outcomes and engagement data.
- **Annual Report** – a summary of our impact each year.
- **E-bulletin** – monthly updates, opportunities to get involved, and partner news.
- **Project Reports** – published throughout the year to show specific findings and recommendations.

All materials use our Healthwatch Halton branding, colours and fonts, and are available online and in print where needed.

Working with partners and the media

We work closely with NHS, Council and voluntary partners to share accurate information and highlight key issues raised by the public.

We will:

- Share stories of local impact jointly where appropriate.
- Use partner channels (e.g. Halton Borough Council, NHS Place newsletters) to widen reach.
- Offer media comment on local issues and respond promptly to requests.
- Build positive working relationships with journalists and local media outlets.

Measuring impact

We'll measure how effective our communications are through:

- Website analytics (visits, downloads, feedback submitted)
- E-bulletin statistics (opens and click rates)
- Social media reach and engagement
- Feedback from partners and the public
- Volunteer and Board feedback
- Tracking how many people hear about our work through outreach and referrals

Impact will be reported quarterly and reviewed annually alongside our Engagement Strategy.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We're committed to making our communication clear, accessible and open to everyone in Halton.

We will:

- Use accessible formats and plain English
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Reflect Halton's diversity in our imagery and stories
- Consider cultural and digital barriers
- Work with community and faith groups to reach seldom-heard voices

Reporting and review

At each Board meeting

- Communication updates will be shared alongside engagement highlights.

Quarterly

- Progress against communication goals will be reviewed and reported publicly.

Annually

- Communication performance will form part of our Annual Report and review.

This strategy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect new priorities, technologies and feedback from our communities.



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