



Festival for Older people

7th October 2022

The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick

healthwatch
Central Bedfordshire

Content...



At a Glance

P3

Introduction

P4

Summary

P5

Feedback –
Visitors

P8

Feedback –
Stallholders & VIPs

P10

Thank You

P12

Festival
Stallholders

P14

Appendix A –
Survey results

P16

Appendix B –
Visitor feedback

P18

About
Healthwatch
Central
Bedfordshire

P23

The Festival for Older People 2022 – at a glance

**Over 255
visitors to
the event**



**Information/
advice and
products
from 45
Organisations**



**37 people
had blood
pressure
checks**



**People travelled
from 29 towns
& villages
across the
region to come
to the Festival**



**Over 80 people
gave feedback
about the
event by filling
out evaluation
forms**



**336 Facebook
'hits'**



Introduction

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB) was proud to host the 9th 'Festival for Older People' (the Festival). The Festival is held annually in October to coincide with 'International Older People's Day' that celebrates the achievements and contributions older people make to society; the theme for 2022 was 'the Resilience and Contribution of Older Women.'

The Festival is an opportunity for older people to find out more about the health and social care support services available to them within their local community. The event also offers activities, refreshments, entertainment and the opportunity to purchase handmade goods as well as pamper sessions.

HWCB also developed a snapshot survey called 'Access to Health & Social Care Services', which was distributed at the Festival, to enable us to hear more from visitors about the health and social care services they may have accessed in the last year. The results of the survey are summarised in Appendix A.



Visitor completing a survey

"Keep doing what you are doing and the reputation of the festival will grow each year. Thanks for a great day!"

Stallholder at event

We were able to secure valuable funding for the event this year from sponsors:

- Circle Integrated Services
- Flitwick Town Council

Cakes and pastries were once again donated by catering students at Central Bedfordshire College, volunteers and staff from HWCB, with all proceeds being donated to Macmillan. The Macmillan cake stand was manned by HWCB volunteers and friends with help from a young Healthwatch volunteer. Over £254 was raised for this worthwhile charity.



The Macmillan cake stall

Please see page 14 for a full list of organisations and stall holders that attended.

Summary

Planning for the Festival commenced in July 2022, which involved HWCB staff and volunteers meeting to discuss learning from the previous year's Festival, sharing new ideas and to plan publicity and promotion for the event.

The venue for the Festival was The Rufus Centre in Flitwick (Central Bedfordshire) which can accommodate larger numbers of people and has excellent disabled and parking facilities. The Macmillan cake stand was located in the Davis Suite.

The event was widely advertised across Bedfordshire and included a radio interview with **'Biggles FM'** – Alan Waring's weekday morning show, as well **BBC Three Counties** radio. Posters were exhibited in church halls, supermarkets, libraries, care homes and housing associations, and advertisements were placed in Town and Parish Council Newsletters, as well as local newspapers and community magazines including Flitwick Papers, The Villager and The Oracle, with stakeholders additionally promoting the event.

We also advertised on 46 local Facebook groups reaching over 9,500 people, with 106 event responses and 230 'engagements'. Visitors said they heard about the event via their local newspaper, word of mouth, the Sight Concern newsletter, doctors' surgeries, HWCB Just Ask events and via direct email. Over 146 exhibitors were invited to attend the event and were provided with posters and press releases, and encouraged to advertise the event via their networks.

We also regularly promoted the event in the weeks leading up to the Festival via our weekly eBulletin and on our website.

**"First visit - Excellent!
Really useful,
thank you"**

Visitor to the Festival

For those unable to access public transport due to a physical or learning disability, or less able visitors with walking aids, HWCB organised transport with Central Bedfordshire Council Transport Services, to enable them to attend the event.

Deputy Lieutenant Dr Robert Oakley OBE, and the Deputy Director for Healthwatch England, Chris McCann, officially opened the event. Chris attended in place of Healthwatch England's National Director, Louise Ansari, who was unwell and unable to attend. The Mayor of Flitwick, Andy Snape, and Lady Clifford, the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, also came along to offer their support for the event.



**Deputy Lieutenant Dr Robert Oakley OBE
officially opening the Festival**

Dennis Lee, Director of HWCBC and a qualified fitness instructor, provided a session of seated Tai Chi based exercises. Kezia Jolly, of Creative Connections, provided a session of seated dancing specifically designed for people with Parkinson's disease and dementia, however everyone joined in! There were several exhibitors selling hand made goods including 'Scrity' and 'Chrissy B'.

A woman in a white police uniform with a 'Metropolitan Police' badge and a red lanyard, holding a red pole, speaking to a group of people.

Visitors were advised that if their blood pressure was higher than a previous test they may have had elsewhere, or if they felt the result was abnormal, it was suggested they make an appointment to see their doctor, and two visitors said they would do this.



Page 6



Also offered were hand massages by HWCB's Communications Officer, express manicures by Vickie Wood Holistic Therapy vw-holistics.co.uk, and weight management support by MoreLife more-life.co.uk/what-we-do/our-services/in-your-area/bedsmk/.



Visitor receiving an express manicure

Over 255 visitors attended the event travelling from 29 different towns and villages across Bedfordshire and other counties. Most visitors arrived by car.



Visitors to the Festival

All visitors were asked to complete an evaluation form about the event and 81 forms were completed. All forms were entered into the prize draw to win a hamper.

Exhibitors were also asked to complete an evaluation form during or after the event and, of the 45 exhibitors that attended, all exhibitors have already asked to rebook in 2023.



Visitor to the Festival receiving advice and information

You can hear from visitors, staff and exhibitors to the Festival, as well as the opening speeches from Dr Robert Oakley and Chris McCann, by clicking on the link to the Festival for Older People video: <https://youtu.be/wGXVYzgsk2g>



“It’s more a comment to myself to take a colleague with me as I ran out of my voice at the end.”

Stallholder at event

Feedback – visitors

To encourage feedback from visitors they were offered the chance to win a hamper via a prize draw (donated by Waitrose, Ampthill and the Co-op in Barton and Silsoe) by completing an evaluation form. This year the hamper was won by a lady from Clophill.



Winner from Clophill

All visitors and exhibitors were invited to provide feedback about the event which allows HWCB to evaluate what worked well and what could be improved for future Festivals. Some examples of this feedback is summarised as follows:

Of the 81 evaluation forms that were completed by visitors:

- ◆ 72% thought that the event was 'excellent'
- ◆ 18% thought that the event was 'very good'
- ◆ Over 95% said they were able to visit all of the stalls
- ◆ Just over 6% said that they could not visit all of the stalls although reasons given were not clear

Of the 29 evaluation forms completed by stallholders:

- ◆ 70% rated the organisation of the event as 'excellent'
- ◆ 28% rated the organisation as 'good'
- ◆ 100% of exhibitors said they would like to attend in 2023

Only a small number of visitors completed the 'Access to Health & Social Care Services' survey and the results are summarised later in the report.

Overall, the event was very well received and enjoyed by visitors and exhibitors. Positive comments from visitors included; **'fun', 'informative', and 'well organised'**. However, a few people thought that the venue was **'overcrowded', a 'bit loud'** and **'very hot'**.

It was also noted that a few visitors found that wheelchair access could be improved and more seating provided. Other comments given as follows:



'Diabetes information wanted'

'It is always the highlight of the calendar year!'

'Very useful, very informative, enjoyed finding and talking about things happening in the area.'

'Great Festival – every health issue was covered, and I really enjoyed it'

A full list of visitor comments can be found in Appendix B.

Our Response

Some arrangements and details for the event cannot be changed for various reasons but it is important to let people know their comments and feedback about the event is taken into consideration when planning future events. In answer to particular comments received this year:

- ◆ The diabetes team were invited and due to attend. Unfortunately they had to cancel on the morning of the event – **they will be invited to attend next year.**
- ◆ The Rufus Centre is one of the largest venues available to us within Central Bedfordshire which has the amenities we need, that is centrally located in a suitable area for all to easily access from across Central Bedfordshire – **Over the years we have investigated other venues but unfortunately they do not meet all our requirements.**
- ◆ Due to the high volume of visitors, the venue did become very busy at times and subsequently became over warm in some areas – **Doors and windows were opened where possible and visitors moved along to other areas that were less crowded.**
- ◆ Once again, due to the high volume of visitors, more people had to use the lift to gain access to the entertainment/refreshment area on the first floor; this caused some congestion and made wheelchair movement more difficult – **This will be looked at when planning for the Festival next year to see how we can mitigate or ease congestion in this area.**

- ◆ Additional seating was provided by Bluebird Care in their offices as well as in the exhibition rooms themselves – **Due to limited space around the stall areas it is difficult to provide additional seating, although we will look at this when planning next year's Festival.**

“I just wanted to say how very, very much myself and two friends thoroughly enjoyed our day spent at The Rufus Centre today. We would like to express our gratitude to everybody who made the whole day such an enjoyable one. Thank you all very, very much indeed”

Resident of Manor Court,
Marston Moretaine



Visitors to the Festival

Feedback – stallholders & VIPs

Approximately half of all stallholders confirmed they had promoted the Festival mainly via their Facebook, website and posters.

86% of stallholders confirmed they had adequate room on and around their stand.

Over 96% of stallholders said that the positioning of their stand was suitable for their requirements, with only one stallholder who did not respond.

100% of respondents said that the event met their expectations.


Additional comments received from stallholders and VIP's as follows:

 ***'On behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, I would like to thank you for the kind invitation to attend your Festival for Older People 2022. Your team at Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire arranged an excellent and most enjoyable Festival. I was made very welcome by Diana and her team and despite my own medical background, I was amazed at how much I learned as I travelled around the large number of stalls on display. It is comforting to know that we have so much support available in Central Bedfordshire and beyond.'***

The attendance numbers were huge, and I don't think I have seen so many attendees at a function since pre-pandemic days and it is reassuring that the elderly now feel confident to attend as we now return to the near normality of 2019.

Very many congratulations to you and your team for arranging such an excellent Health Festival.'

Dr Robert Oakley OBE Deputy Lieutenant, Chairman Bedfordshire Lieutenancy QAVS Panel

 ***"Tyler and I, who represented Home Instead at the Festival really enjoyed meeting all those who visited our stand as well as others in various parts of the Rufus Centre. We very much look forward to our continuing relationship with Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and have put the date in our diaries for next year.***

Well done to all the Team involved in the organisation – the video record definitively shows what a valuable event it is.'

Maria Collins, Director, Home Instead Luton & Central Bedfordshire



'...it sure sounds like the day went well, the video is great, I have shared with the two volunteers that attended the day on behalf of the ambulance service, their feedback was also very good.'

'I have added next year's date to the diary already, I am hoping to be there myself with our volunteers. Do keep us updated if you have anything else that is coming up in the near future that we might be able to attend'.

Gillian Langley, Patient & Public Involvement Officer, East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust



'I have just watched it (video) a great success and that isn't because I feature in it either! Well done to all, it is one of my favourite events each year!'

Nicola Mills, Manager, Respite at Home Volunteers



'I wonder if I can add some additional feedback. I understand there was transport provided (I don't know who by) and we had groups of people from other areas of Central Beds. I feel we were underprepared and had most information relating to Flitwick library services. For next year it would be very helpful to know if transport is being put on, where it is coming from. That way we can be prepared with information relating to services at their local libraries.'

Central Bedfordshire Council Libraries

Our Response

We would like to sincerely thank all the stallholders and VIPs for their feedback and for contributing to a very successful event.

As the event attracts people from across all areas of Bedfordshire we invite organisations that cover a wider area to bring as much information with them as possible to be able to provide each visitor with information about the local services to them.

We are aware that more vulnerable members of our community may not be able to attend the Festival due to physical or learning disabilities and we work closely with Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) Transport Services to help people to attend who otherwise would not be able to. CBC Transport Services kindly agree to transport individuals, or groups of people, to the Festival who had advised us in advance that they required additional support. Clearly we are restricted in the areas that we can cover (there are only a certain number of buses available), although we always attempt to organise people into 'groups' to enable as many people as possible to attend. Information is also provided, via all the advertising undertaken for the event, to contact us for support with transport, so it is open to anyone to request support if needed.

In previous years attendees have travelled from over 42 towns and villages, including eight from outside Central Bedfordshire. Buses provided by CBC cover only a few areas, and are not representative of all those that actually attend the event. This year they covered the following areas:

- ◆ Henlow – group of 11
- ◆ Shefford – group of 6
- ◆ Harlington – one individual
- ◆ Houghton Regis – group of 10
- ◆ Marston Moretaine – group of 4

If you would like HWCB to consider a transport request for next year's Festival please get in touch with the team at info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk



The Festival continues to benefit from several organisations who support the event in a variety of ways.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to **'Circle Integrated Services'** who have, for the sixth year, provided sponsorship for the Festival.



Seated exercises session

We thank **Waitrose in Amptill** and **Co-op in Silsoe** for their generous donations of grocery items for a hamper and the **Co-op in Barton** who provided bags of chocolates for the raffle prizes.

Thank you to **Barton House Group Practice** for loaning their blood pressure machine.



Luxury Hamper

Many thanks to those who baked, donated and helped out on the Macmillan stall, raising **over £254** on the day. Particular thanks go to:

- ◆ **HWCB volunteers who looked after the stall**
- ◆ **Catering students at Central Bedfordshire College**



Delicious cakes donated for Macmillan fundraising

Many thanks also to **Bluebird Care**, located at the Rufus Centre, who opened their doors to visitors, offering information, refreshments and a place to rest and relax during the day.

Special thanks to **Central Bedfordshire Council Fleet Transport Services** who once again kindly provided transport to and from the Festival for our more vulnerable residents.

The Festival would not be as successful or popular without the support, commitment and contributions from our volunteers, not only their support on the day but also throughout the planning and organising stages.

VOLUNTEER




Our volunteers meet and greet visitors, give out 'goody' bags and help to direct people to various stalls, refreshments and entertainment areas.

The volunteers also supervise the car park ensuring that visitors and stall holders, arriving in cars and buses, are parked appropriately and directed to the correct areas.



HWCB volunteer giving out 'goody' bags



HWCB volunteers helping with tea/coffee requests

Due to school commitments just two Young Healthwatch volunteers joined us at the event, and volunteers and friends of HWCB supported the Macmillan cake stall refreshment stand.

We would like to sincerely thank all of our volunteers who helped to support the Festival in 2022.



Young Healthwatch volunteer helping at the 'feedback wall'



HWCB volunteers ready to greet and direct visitors to the Festival

Volunteers also help to provide drinks and distribute lunch to visitors as well as providing seated exercises and hand massage to ensure that everyone has a great time.

For further details on how to volunteer please go to the following link: <https://healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk/volunteers>

Festival Exhibitors

Information and Advice

- + AAA Screening
- + Age UK Bedfordshire
- + Amphill and District Inner Wheel
- + Baycroft Care Home (Flitwick)
- + Bedfordshire & Luton Recovery College
- + Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
- + Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Charity
- + Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- + Blind Veterans UK
- + BLMK ICB – Continuing Health Care
- + BLMK ICB – Health and Care Partnership



Carers in Bedfordshire stall

- + Carers in Bedfordshire
- + Central Bedfordshire Council teams, including:
 - * Active Lifestyles
 - * Community Engagement
 - * Libraries
 - * Safer Communities & Partnership Team
- + Circle Integrated Care
- + Community Catalysts
- + Community Voluntary Service



Central Bedfordshire Council's Active Lifestyle stall

- + Disability Resource Centre
- + East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- + Flittabus
- + Flitwick and District U3A
- + Flitwick Town Council
- + Home Instead Luton & Central Beds
- + Hub Care Support – Milton Keynes & Bedfordshire
- + Keech Hospice
- + Luton & Dunstable Prostate Support Group
- + Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership & Beds & Herts Community Rail Partnership
- + Mind BLMK
- + Morelife
- + Multiple Sclerosis Society
- + National Energy Foundation
- + Respite at Home
- + Sensory Services
- + Sight Concern Bedfordshire
- + Small Acts of Kindness
- + SSAFA
- + Stevenage Leisure Centres – Flitwick branch
- + The Royal British Legion
- + Tibb's Dementia Foundation
- + Victim Support Bedfordshire



Young Healthwatch volunteer being interviewed for Festival video



"A great opportunity to gather informative and ask in-depth questions, thank you."

Visitor feedback

Market Stalls

- + Chrissy B
- + Scritsy



"Everything works really well, great footfall of visitors. Love coming to this event."

Stallholder feedback

Health and Wellbeing

- + Blood Pressure Checks
- + Hand massage by Debbie Hull
- + Manicures by Vickie Wood Holistic Therapies



Visitor receiving a relaxing hand massage



Exhibitors and visitors to the Festival

If you require any further information about the exhibitors who joined us at the Festival please do get in touch with Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire by email to info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk or call 0300 303 8554, and we will signpost you.

Appendix A

Survey results – Access to Health & Social Care Services

HWCB developed a snapshot survey called '**Access to Health & Social Care Services**', which was distributed at the Festival, to enable us to hear more from visitors about the health and social care services they may have accessed during the last year. Unfortunately, the number of visitors who completed the survey was fairly low as the majority of visitors were busy visiting the stands or joining in with the entertainment, and some were hesitant about interacting with staff, due to lingering concerns relating to the pandemic.

The results of the survey can be found below:

Question 1 asked visitors if they had tried to access any health and social care services (or for someone they care for).

All respondents had tried to access health and social care services. When asked which service they had tried to access services for, 33% said they had accessed a GP for themselves, 33% said it was for a relative, and 33% said they had called an ambulance.

Question 2 asked visitors how happy they were with the speed of the response.

66% said that they were 'very happy', and 33% said they were 'not very happy'.

Question 3 asked if they (or the person they care for) received an appointment from the service that they contacted.

Of the 66% that said they were happy with the speed of response, both people received an appointment from the service they had contacted. Unsurprisingly, the 33% that were not happy had not received an appointment.

Question 4 asked what the outcome of the appointment was e.g., referral, further appointment, hospital procedure.

Of those that had not received an appointment there were various outcomes including being moved to a different GP with a subsequent referral to hospital, and as a consequence, being seen within two weeks.

Other patient outcomes included a six week hospital stay; also a new telephone being fitted with larger numbers due to being partially blind.

Question 5 asked if they (or the person they care for) already had a scheduled hospital procedure e.g., surgery/ treatment, and did it take place as planned.

The people who completed the survey who had hospital stays, confirmed that their scheduled hospital procedure took place as planned.

Question 6 asked visitors how they would describe their gender (or the person you care for).

All respondents were female.

Question 7 asked the age of the visitors? (or the age of the person they care for).

66% of respondents were in the 70–80 year age group, and 33% respondents were in the 50–60 year age group.

Question 8 asked which area of Central Bedfordshire they live in (or the person they care for).

66% of respondents live out of county and 33% live in Ampthill.



Appendix B

Visitors Feedback

The Festival for Older People generated a lot of feedback, with over 70 comments from visitors who were encouraged to comment via our 'Graffiti Board' sited in the entrance to the Festival. In 2022 you told us:

Worthwhile attending!

Very impressed!

All good, this is the 3rd year for me

Very good

Excellent event – loved it!

Wonderful – plenty of interesting things to watch

Excellent information

Lovely time, lovely food and a lovely day

3rd time visit, excellent

Great, organisation was good, had a lovely day

Very good, informative and fun

Improve wheelchair access within the event

Limited gluten free food

Need to sort out congestion at top of lift

Might be less crowded to have the lunch in the canteen

Not enough seating considering we are all of a certain age

Not enough room for disabled chairs etc.

Overcrowded – could be over two days

I missed Elvis, loved the Spanish song by the singer May

A bit loud

More activities and exercise information

Diabetes information wanted

Most enjoyable afternoon

Great experience, lovely to engage with so many local people

Lovely venue

All excellent really enjoyed it

Great big thank-you!

Very useful, easy to access

Well organised, very enjoyable, thank you!

I think the whole thing was very well organised and very enjoyable

A lot more info than expected

Fabulous cakes

Just how well organised the event was, well done

Very, very good. Must have been very hard to organise



Exhibitors and visitors to the Festival

Venue very hot

Excellent but very hot and just could have done with a chair to sit on when talking

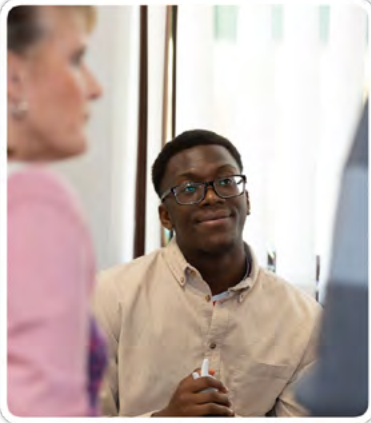
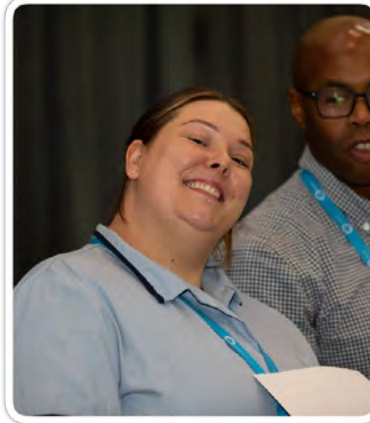
Any information on a good grief café

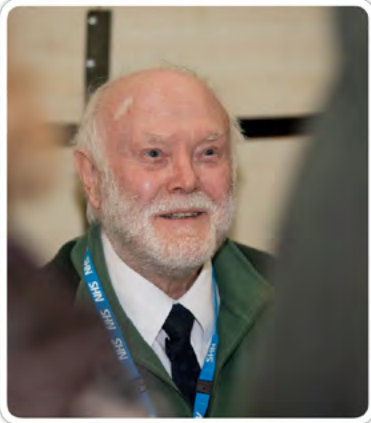
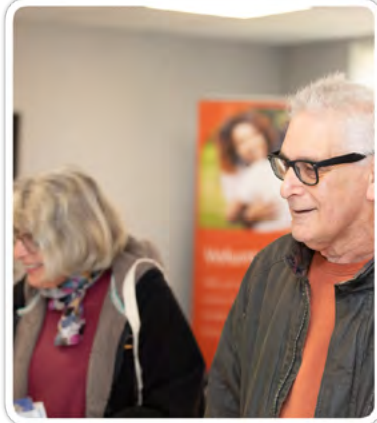
Too busy – not advertised as craft stalls. Fine for people who don't know the care system.

Too crowded, alternative room for the lunch would be better, it was too hot upstairs



Exhibitors and visitors to the Festival







Are you passionate about Health and Social Care?

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, from talking to people about their experiences of local health and social care services and helping at our community outreach events.

Volunteering is flexible, so you can talk to us about how much time you want to give.

it starts with
YOU

T. 0300 303 8554

www.healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk

E: annette.brown@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk

healthwatch
Central Bedfordshire

About Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is the local consumer champion promoting choice and influencing the provision of high quality health, social care and wellbeing services for all across Central Bedfordshire.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB) has significant statutory powers to ensure that the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and care services. HWCB engages and consults with all sections of the local population so that a wide cross-section of views are heard, understood and acted upon. Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people and our expertise is grounded in their experience.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is one of three local Healthwatch in the County of Bedfordshire and belong to a network of local Healthwatch. Healthwatch England leads, supports and guides the Healthwatch network which is made up of the national body and local Healthwatch across each of the 152 local authority areas in England.

Healthwatch is the only body looking solely at people's experience across all health and social care. 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.

healthwatch
Central Bedfordshire

healthwatch

Central Bedfordshire

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire	www.healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk
Capability House	tel: 0300 303 8554
Wrest Park	e: info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk
Silsoe	 @Healthwatch_cb
Bedfordshire	 Facebook.com/Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
MK45 4HR	 hw_centralbeds

Registered Address: Capability House,
Wrest Park, Silsoe, MK45 4HR
Registered Company No: 08399922
Registered Charity No: 1154627



Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire