



# LET'S DO IT COMMUNITY FUND

Healthwatch Bury Health Advice  
& Assistance Programme:  
Quarter 3 July - September 2022

LET'S  
do it!

Shirley Waller  
October 2022



## Contents

Introduction to Healthwatch Bury .....	2
Background.....	3
Delivery .....	4
Results .....	5
Demographic information (total individuals).....	5
First Language .....	5
Country of Origin .....	5
Assistance required .....	6
Issues arising .....	7
Case studies .....	9
Project impact .....	11
Contact us.....	12





## Introduction to Healthwatch Bury

This report has been produced by Healthwatch Bury. The Healthwatch network consists of 152 Healthwatch organisations across each of the local authority areas in England. It also has a national body called Healthwatch England based in London. We are all independent organisations who aim to help people get the best out of their local health and social care services, whether it's improving them today or helping to shape them for tomorrow.

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 in Bury. As a statutory watchdog, our role is to ensure that local decision makers put the experiences of people at the heart of their care so that those who buy (commissioners) and provide our services (NHS Trusts, GPs, the voluntary sector and independent providers) can benefit from what Bury people tell us. Our reports on various elements of health and social care in Bury can be found on our website at the following link: [healthwatchbury.co.uk](http://healthwatchbury.co.uk) or by contacting us directly using the details on the back cover.





# Health Advice & Assistance programme

## Background

A weekly health advice and assistance drop-in session in East Bury which commenced on 20th January 2022 providing practical hands-on support on health and social care queries and issues, arising on routine and complex health matters for residents of East Bury. The programme is funded from the Let's Do It Community Health Fund until September 2022.

The programme is specifically aimed at residents of the Borough who can't speak English well or at all, refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers and will assist them to access better health and social care and access support from the most appropriate services in the Borough.

The aim is to provide them with advice, information and assist with practical support to contact the right services or complete online application forms and help to provide long term improvements to their physical health and mental wellbeing.





## Delivery

The programme is delivered in partnership with Eagles Wing, a well-established Friendship and Support group for Asylum seekers and refugees, operating weekly from the United Reform Church in Bury.

Delivery commenced on 20/01/2022 after an initial meeting with meeting with Eagles Wing to agree times and room hire and this report includes data and information up to and including 29/09/22 when funding for this programme ended.

<b>Dates</b>	20/1/22	27/1/22	03/2/22	10/2/22	24/2/22	03/3/22	10/3/22	17/3/22
<b>Queries</b>	6	5	5	6	7	3	6	5
<b>Cumulative totals</b>	6	11	16	22	29	32	38	43
<b>Dates</b>	24/3/22	31/3/22	07/4/22	14/4/22	21/4/22	28/4/22	05/5/22	12/5/22
<b>Queries</b>	6	5	2	0	4	6	4	2
<b>Cumulative totals</b>	49	54	56	Prestwich outreach	60	66	70	72
<b>Dates</b>	17/5/22	26/5/22	2/06/22	9/06/22	16/6/22	23/6/22	30/6/22	07/7/22
<b>Queries</b>	4	4	0	6	2	2	2	7
<b>Cumulative totals</b>	76	80	BH	86	88	90	92	99
<b>Dates</b>	14/7/22	21/7/22	25/7/22	01/8/22	18/8/22	25/8/22	01/9/22	08/9/22
<b>Queries</b>	4	4	4	1	3	5	4	2
<b>Cumulative Totals</b>	103	107	111	112	115	120	124	126
<b>Dates</b>	15/9/22	22/9/22	29/9/22					
<b>Queries</b>	6	3	3					
<b>Cumulative Totals</b>	132	135	138					

The total number of requests for assistance is 138 over 34 weeks and the number of Individuals supported is 50 over this period. The complexity of some health issues has meant that some individuals have attended multiple times so we can assist with different health needs and/or repeated attempts to get the help they need.

Quarter 3 analysis shows an increasing number of males attending the session to seek assistance, indicating increasing confidence in this service and a willingness to seek advice & assistance from male refugees and asylum seekers around health issues for themselves and their families.

2 case studies are included which detail the assistance given to 2 individuals in the last quarter.

In addition to the Individuals supported, assistance has been given to 31 additional family members as GP, dental requests and form completion requests have included children and partners.



## Results

### Demographic information (total individuals)

Male	Female	Ages 24-39	Ages 40-59	Age 60+
18	32	26	15	5
White British	White Other	Other ethnic	African	Not known
1	2	21	22	4
BL9	M26	M45	OL10	Not known
25	6	2	3	14

### First Language

English	Arabic	Russian	Amharic	Kurdish	Swahili	Farsi
1	24	1	1	2	2	2
Thai	Swedish	Italian	Urdu	Tigrinya	Oromo	
1	2	1	2	3	2	

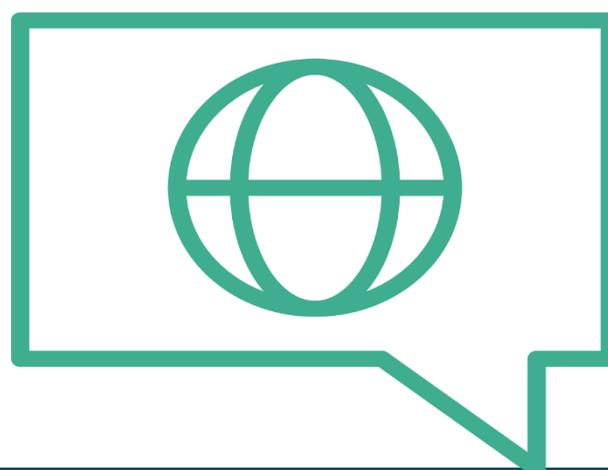
### Country of Origin

Kuwait	Ukraine	Eritrea	Iraq	UK	Sudan	Thailand
2	1	2	3	1	12	1
Yemen	Congo	Morocco	Iran	Unknown	Pakistan	
2	1	1	2	2	2	
Algeria	Sweden	Italian	Syria	Palestine	Ethiopia	
1	2	1	6	2	2	



## Assistance required

Sexual health	Free prescription application HC2	Referral to 111(Interpreter requested)	Dental access	Hospital booking (Interpreter)	Read & explain letter & forms
7	6	2	13	14	10
GP app. (Interpreter)	GP registration	Child health information	GP app for child (Interpreter)	PIP application assistance	Referral to mental health services
13	10	6	3	6	1
Universal credit health assessment form assistance	Housing/ Homelessness	Hospital complaint	Opticians appointment (with Interpreter)	Dental charge correction	Book patient transport
5	10	1	1	1	4
Repeat prescription	Referral to Red Cross	Referral to Fightback4 Justice	Travel vaccinations	Referral to Trading Standards/ CAB	Application for Healthy Start vouchers
1	4	5	1	3	1
Youth Justice letter/ interpretation	Emergency dental appointment	PCR test for travel	IVF online consent forms	TfGM travel pass	Referral to Beacon service
1	2	1	2	1	2
First Aid advice					
1					





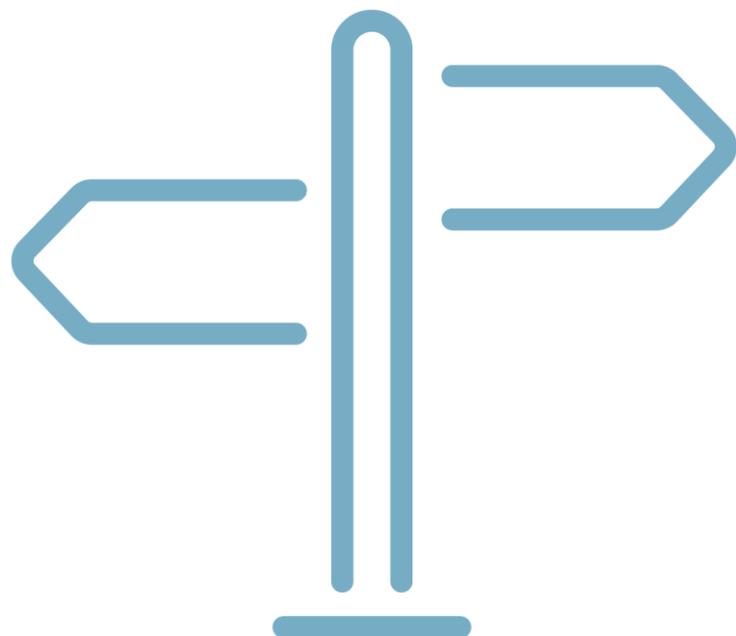
## Issues arising

### Ongoing issues yet to be satisfactorily addressed:

- **Dental enquiries** – requests for whole family dental registrations. We only have dentists accepting under 18's at the present time. No adult NHS places are available locally. Awaiting information on new government funding and take up by Bury dentists. We will contact those who have requested this assistance when we have confirmation of places available. 3 patients have now been signposted to 111 & GM Emergency Dental service for nurse triage for severe dental pain but are unable to receive follow up dental procedures.
- **Access to appointments** – this includes hospital, sexual health clinics, dental and GP appointments. Patients are struggling to get the help needed as language barriers via telephone mean they cannot explain the problem without Interpreter support. Call backs are often missed as they are often reluctant to answer unknown callers or cannot understand the call-back. Healthwatch has spent a lot of time waiting for calls to be answered by GP Practices to explain issue and request call back or appointment with Interpreter present. Issues dealt with but very time-consuming.
- **Housing/Homelessness issues** - this is not part of this programme but is a major issue affecting the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers with different issues affecting those in transition from asylum seeker to refugee, refugees, asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers who are destitute. We have been asked to help by patients desperate for assistance but are struggling to navigate local and regional options for people. Assistance in dealing with this area of need is urgently required.
- **Requests for Patient Transport** – we have booked several journeys for hospital appointments out of the local area but have been made aware that Patient Transport is not available at weekends (this was regarding a visit to a Wirral hospital on a Sunday for a patient who is a refugee and is partially sighted with no other means of transport). We had to change the appointment to a weekday with a further delay to his treatment of 2 weeks adding to his distress.
- **Universal credit queries** – increasing number of queries regarding Universal credit & benefits which we have found difficult to deal with as not our area of expertise. Attendance by FightBack4Justice now at the drop in sessions has helped with these enquiries and referrals have been made to both Red Cross and Fightback4Justice on several occasions. As of September 2022, Fightback4Justice is no longer funded to provide this service and are now charging £76 for assistance with PIP applications which is unaffordable to many of our patients.



- **Digital and online applications** – Healthwatch Bury has had numerous requests for assistance in completing online application forms for a wide variety of services, such as free prescription applications (renewable every 6 months), healthy start vouchers, PIP, IVF consent forms, Universal credit journals. As online & digital services continue to expand, consideration must be given to Patients with language needs, illiteracy as well as age-related, disability and sensory requirements to ensure equal access to services.





## Case studies

### Case study 1

Patient A first attended the Access Assistance & Advice session in February 2022 to request assistance completing a PIP (Personal Independence Payment form). The form was completed and the Patient was successful in his application. He had broken his shoulder several months previously and has no movement in his dominant shoulder, arm or hand, is in constant pain and cannot cook, dress, bathe or prepare



Figure 1 Healthwatch staff and volunteers set up ready for the session

food. He has numerous medical reports and Consultant reports and is awaiting surgery. Due to the complexity of his surgery, 4 Consultants are involved as he has nerve damage which is also affecting his sight in one eye. His appointments are out of area and he requires Patient transport to attend due to his sight and restricted mobility and movement.

He has visited the drop in session almost weekly since February with requests for assistance to chase up or reschedule appointments due to hospital cancellations, complete forms for MRI scans, book patient transport, read and explain letters between Consultants detailing his scans, extent of the damage, surgical options and proposed complex surgeries. He has suffered acute distress due to repeated delays and constant pain, compounded by not understanding letters and NHS procedures and requires ongoing support and reassurance that his case is proceeding but complex. He is on medication for depression and has been assessed as fit to work by Job Centre despite receiving PIP and Care assistance to help dress, prepare food etc, further adding to his distress.

After numerous appointments and assessments and a recent referral for pain management services, he has had his pre-op and we await a surgery date. He will require ongoing support for some time as this is the first of 2 or 3 surgeries with aftercare needs.



## Case study 2

We had a request for assistance from one of the Volunteers at Eagles Wing who is supporting an Elderly disabled man (Patient A). The patient had been approached on his doorstep and had signed a contract for gardening and thought it was cheaper than it actually was. Patient A paid £500 and the Contractors wanted another £1500 that day and a further £6000 for the full contract. Patient A did not understand what he signed and felt intimidated. He was told they will come back for another payment this lunch time.

Healthwatch Bury rang the company ON BEHALF OF Patient A and they became very defensive and abusive. We followed up the call by contacting the CAB consumer helpline for further advice. They advised us to ring the company to notify that we will cancel the contract in writing on Patient A's behalf (as a part of 14 days cooling off period and because he didn't sign the waiving his rights form). Healthwatch Bury rang the company again informing them of the action we were taking, and they became very defensive and said they will accept the loss and consider the contract to be cancelled and they want to just leave the 'poor man alone'.

Healthwatch Bury also contacted Trading Standards and made them aware of this company. They will list as a bogus company. We sent out the contract cancellation email and the company confirmed on the phone they will no longer pursue a payment from Patient A.

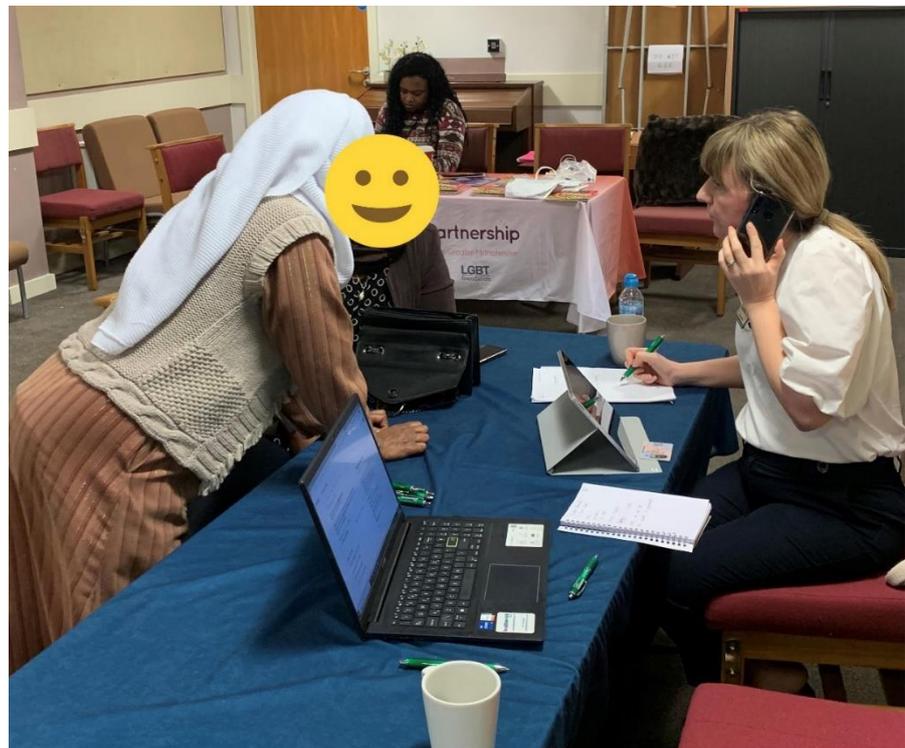


Figure 2 Healthwatch staff assisting with an issue



## Project impact

This project has been run alongside Eagles Wing, a local Friendship and Support group, and has provided an invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

We continue to see between 2 and 6 people each session (average 4) but may deal with 3 separate requests for each individual at times, ranging from completing Infant Development forms, explaining letters from School Health Teams, registration forms for Nurseries, NHS appointments, booking Interpreters, booking Patient Transport, explaining medical jargon and Consultant letters etc. Most of the requests are concerning health or social care issues and we have a full spreadsheet of requests, actions and resolutions available which provides a detailed record of the work undertaken (this can be anonymized and provided on request).

As we have built up trust within the local community, the requests have become more complex and we are approached now with a wide range of requests for assistance, some of which are outside our remit and expertise. We try to help with signposting or if urgent, have taken action ourselves to try to resolve an issue.

Two Patients have attended the sessions almost weekly with 23 & 27 separate requests respectively due to complex and as of now, still unresolved medical issues.

Our case studies on this report, focus on these issues and ongoing support needs.

We have been able to refer some issues directly to Red Cross and Fightback4Justice who also attend Eagles Wing and having the expertise from these organizations has been a valuable resource and one that is appreciated by Healthwatch Bury and Eagles Wing.

We have also partnered with The Black Health Agency who attend once a month to carry out HIV testing and give advice around sexual health providing added value to the programme.

The funding for this project has now ended and without it, we would not have been able to provide this level of support to some of the most vulnerable residents in our Borough. Our thanks to Bury Council Let's Do It Community Fund and East Bury Locality for the opportunity to assist and learn more about the health needs of the local Refugee and Asylum Seeker Community.

Healthwatch Bury cannot continue with the same level of intensive support now the funding has ended but we will continue to provide a monthly drop in service from October 2022 to March 2023 as we believe this valuable service is very much needed. Our telephone service will, of course be available for support at other times.

## Contact us

---

If you require this information in an alternative format,  
please contact our office via the details below.

---



**healthwatch**  
Bury

Healthwatch Bury CIC  
Bridge House  
Yeagate Industrial Estate  
Heap Bridge  
Bury BL9 7HT

[Healthwatchbury.co.uk](http://Healthwatchbury.co.uk)

Tel: 0161 253 6300

Email: [info@healthwatchbury.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbury.co.uk)

Tweet: [@healthwatchbury](https://twitter.com/healthwatchbury)

Find us on Facebook

© Healthwatch Bury 2021

Companies House number 08886952.

Registered in England and Wales.

