Dear Reader, I’m Jack Firth and I am the current chair of Healthwatch Bolton. We have been working extremely hard to set up Healthwatch Bolton and we are continuing to go from strength to strength. We have a strategic plan of how we see the work of Healthwatch Bolton progressing. If you would like to see a copy of this, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Do you fancy playing a strategic role in Healthwatch Bolton? If so you might like to know that we are going to be recruiting for new trustees plus an Independent Chair who will oversee the work of Healthwatch Bolton. Watch out for more information or please don’t hesitate to contact us for an informal discussion.

On behalf of the board of trustees of Healthwatch Bolton I would like to wish you all the very best for this holiday season and for a happy, peaceful and prosperous new year.
Hello and welcome to the December newsletter.

I have been with Healthwatch Bolton for just over two months now and have met some, though by no means all of the members. For those who don’t yet know my background is originally in international humanitarian aid, where I worked on projects in Africa and Asia, coordinated emergency call ups of health personnel and ran a membership organisation of those active and interested in international health. Following that I have worked in the UK statutory and voluntary sectors across the North of England as a trainer and researcher working on equalities, migration and community cohesion and as the North West Regional advisor to Comic Relief.

I have lived in the Bolton Area for 10 years and am happy to be working both close to home and in an organisation that has the potential to influence change for the better in the way services are run.

My first few months at Healthwatch have been busy working with staff, Board and volunteers try to develop the structures required by the new Healthwatch mandate and trying to meet as many people as possible. We have made good progress in many areas; supporting the Local CCG, LA and CVS to carry out interviews and run focus groups, working with specific interest groups on collecting patient stories, holding listening events at Bolton Hospital and at community pharmacies responding to almost 250 enquiries on our information and signposting helpline, developing links with organisations representing patients of all stripes (from young to old, those with specific conditions and those with none), and establishing opportunities for Heathwatch Representatives to sit on many decision making bodies.

In the new year Healthwatch Bolton will be registered as an independent Charitably Incorporated Organisation. We have a big task ahead, with national guidance suggesting that Healthwatch needs to reach 10% of the people of Bolton (some 14,000), people we need to look at new ways of organising our activities and presenting the information and opinions we hear about local health and social care services.

With this in mind we have plans to re-invigorate the membership by providing new ways for existing and new members to interact with Heathwatch Bolton. Watch out for a special membership renewal form that will be coming to you in the post. Please take time to fill this in as it will help us to better understand your individual interests and tailor future events to better represent these. And look out too for our first Members Forum which will take place towards the end of January and will give you all an opportunity to come and see how our plans for more and better public participation are shaping up.

Alice Tligui
Healthwatch Bolton Manager
Whether you want to craft, draw, paint, sculpt or photograph
we’d like you to produce a piece of art which to you, represents health and wellbeing.

Art-making stems back to over 40,000 years ago, when the first recorded paintings were conceived and it has been used as a means of communication ever since.

We are interested in people’s experiences of their own health and wellbeing, and of using health and care services in Bolton. Can you create a piece of work which expresses or represents your story or experience?

Healthwatch Bolton would like to bring health and the arts together by displaying art produced by local people and groups to brighten our large meeting room. We have lots of blank white wall space and 2 large window areas which we would like to fill with your creations. So if you live in Bolton or you are part of a group or network within the Borough share your ideas and experiences with us.

There will be 4 prizes awarded, one to each of the following:

- **Over 21 yrs Group Award**: £100 voucher of choice
- **Under 21 yrs Group Award**: £100 voucher of choice
- **Over 21 yrs Individual Award**: £50 voucher of choice
- **Under 21 yrs Individual Award**: £50 voucher of choice

Entries should be submitted by **Friday 31st January 2014** and the winners will be announced at the end of February 2014 following our public exhibition. For an entry form please contact us or download one from our website:

[www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk)
Over the festive season Healthwatch Bolton will be closed... However we appreciate that during this time there may be services you may need to access.

**Emergency Dental Treatment**

The number to call is 01204 463222 - This is not a walk-in service. It is by appointment only. This number is the same for Lever Chambers Centre for Health and Waters Meeting.

- **Christmas Eve** - Tuesday 24th December 2013, 1pm - 5 pm (Lever Chambers) - emergency appointments commence from 2pm - 5pm - the first hour is for triaging.
- **Christmas Day** - Wednesday 25th December 2013, 8:30am - 12:30noon (Waters Meeting) - emergency appointments commence from 9:30am - 12:30noon - the first hour is for triaging.
- **Boxing Day** - Thursday 26th December 2013, 8:30am - 12:30noon (Lever Chambers) - emergency appointments commence from 9:30am - 12:30noon - the first hour is for triaging.
- **New Year’s Eve** - Tuesday 31st December 2013, 1pm - 5pm (Lever Chambers) - emergency appointments commence from 2pm - 5pm - the first hour is for triaging.
- **New Year’s Day** - Wednesday 1st January 2014, 8:30am - 12:30noon (Waters Meeting) emergency appointments commence from 9:30am - 12:30noon - the first hour is for triaging.

**GP Out-of-Hours**

Please contact your GP surgery for the emergency out-of-hours telephone number if your GP surgery is closed. Your GP surgery will have a recorded message on their answerphone message detailing the appropriate action to take.

**Looking after your emotional-wellbeing over Christmas**

Christmas is a time for merriment and catching up with ourselves, friends and family, yet it is also a stressful time for many reasons. Help is at hand. The Samaritans provides confidential emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress and despair, including those which could lead to suicide. Please contact 01204 521200 or email jo@samaritans.org – the mailbox is read every day by trained volunteers, using the name 'Jo'. Messages are read and usually replied to within 12 hours. For more information please visit: [http://www.samaritans.org/branches/bolton-telephone-samaritans](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/bolton-telephone-samaritans)

**National Domestic Violence Helpline** – available 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247

**Sexual Health**

Integrated Sexual Health Department
Royal Bolton Hospital
Tel: 01204 390771
Useful Information

Free Computer Training for Healthwatch volunteers

Fancy trying something fresh in the new year? Maybe learning a new skill or improve on existing computing skills? If so, why not pop down to Healthwatch Bolton and try free 1:1 computer lessons with our ICT volunteer. Topics on offer range from basic computer skills, internet, e-mail, Skype, Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Office packages.

Training on your tablet or I-pad is also offered. Each session is tailored to your needs so you only learn what you want to learn. If you are interested please contact Healthwatch Bolton on 01204 394603 or email: info@healthwatchbolton.co.uk

Pharmacy Opening times over the Christmas Period

Whilst many other shops and services will be closing down, there will be a number of chemists open in Bolton on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Here is a comprehensive list of those that will be available.

Christmas Day
Cohen’s Chemist, Waters Meeting Health Centre, Bolton 10am - 9pm
Deane Pharmacy, Horsfield Street, Deane 8am - 11pm
Nash Pharmacy, Castle Street, Bolton 9am - 10pm
Hooton’s Chemist, Lee Lane, Horwich 10am - 12pm

Boxing Day
Cohen’s Chemist, Waters Meeting Health Centre, Bolton 10am - 9pm
Deane Pharmacy, Horsfield Street, Deane 8am - 11pm
Asda, Farnworth 9am - 5pm
Asda, Middlebrook, Horwich 9am - 5pm
Asda, Manchester Road, Bolton 9am - 5pm
Asda, Moss Bank Way, Astley Bridge 9am - 5pm
Boots, Middlebrook, Horwich 9am - 8.30pm
Boots, The Gates, Mealhouse Lane 10am - 5pm
Boots, Trinity Street Retail Park 10am - 6pm
Boots, The Market Place 9am - 5pm
Sainsbury’s Pharmacy, Trinity Street 10am - 5pm
Asian Elders Celebration Event

In November we presented the actors from the Asian Elders Resource Centre with ‘Oscars’ for their outstanding performances in the drama ‘raising awareness of dementia’. The event was a fantastic way of bringing together the community and encouraging networking.

Engagement events at Bolton Hospital

In November we visited Bolton Hospital and spoke to patients, staff and visitors about Healthwatch Bolton, what we do and how people can share their experiences of care. We spoke to many people over two days and we will be in the hospital each month next year to continue to listen to your views.

Blood Donor Sessions 2014 & Pharmacies

Look out for us in 2014 as we will be attending some of the blood donor sessions taking part across Bolton. We will also be visiting various Bolton pharmacies to promote healthwatch and listen to your view.

Dates for your Diary

2014 Healthwatch Bolton Trustee Board Meetings will take place on the following dates, all held at our offices at 12.30pm to 3.00pm except the January meeting.

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We are in the process of setting up a monthly members forum. Please see the back page of this newsletter for further information.
Healthwatch Bolton wants to develop links with GP practices and their Patient Forums and is developing a Patient Forum Network. As well as supporting engagement with patients and people who use health and social care services. The Network will allow members to share good practice, pool information, collate issues raised via the patient forums and coordinate patient representations to commissioners.

Healthwatch Bolton will support and facilitate the Network which will provide regular updates on developments in health and social care via a newsletters and through Healthwatch Bolton’s website and social media channels.

This new Network will offer the opportunity to develop partnership working between patients forums GP practices, Healthwatch Bolton and the Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and we hope that all existing Patient Forums will join. All practices are invited to send patient reps, practice staff and/or clinicians to an inaugural meeting on Tuesday 21st January 2014 to discuss the frequency and format of future Patient Forum Network meetings.

Further information on the time and venue will be circulated as soon as possible. If anybody would like more information please do not hesitate to contact Karen Wilson at Healthwatch Bolton on 01204 394603 or email karenw@healthwatchbolton.co.uk or Lucy Ettridge, Head of Communications and Engagement, NHS Bolton CCG on 01204 462026 or email Lucy.Ettridge@bolton.nhs.uk

Bolton Lads and Girls Club Youth Café seek volunteer for catering

Bolton Lads and Girls Club are looking for a volunteer catering assistant to support their busy youth club café.

Bolton Lads and Girls club have recently seen an increase in members coming to the club for hot, healthy meals. To meet the high demand the club are looking for volunteer catering assistants to work alongside the on-site chef. You don’t have to have any experience or qualifications in catering, just the desire to learn new skills and cook homemade meals. You will receive training and it will be a perfect opportunity to develop knowledge and experience in the kitchen (you must aged 18 or over). For further information or to show interest in the role please contact Katherine Howell, Volunteer Recruitment Officer on 01204 540132
We will be holding regular members forums in the new year. So if you are a member of Healthwatch Bolton and would like to come along, the first one will be on 22nd January 2014 from 10.00am to 2.00pm (lunch included). This is an opportunity to meet other members, find out what Healthwatch is doing and take part in various workshops if you wish to. **Booking is essential, please contact us to reserve a place—01204 394603**

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Healthwatch is the new independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public in health and social care planning.

Healthwatch will play a role at both national and local level and will make sure that the views of both the general public and the people who currently use services are taken into account.

We are here to give your voice strength, help us to help you. Sign up for our newsletters and receive information about our events and those of other community groups that we work with.