



# Health insights with the deaf community

27th January 2025





# Who are Healthwatch Milton Keynes?

Healthwatch Milton Keynes are your local health and social care champion. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We're also a registered charity.

If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services in your area, we want to hear about your experiences. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.





# Why is your voice important?

We use your feedback to better understand the challenges facing the NHS and other care providers and we make sure your experiences improve health and care for everyone – locally and nationally. We can also help you to get the information and advice you need to make the right decisions for you and to get the support you deserve.

It's really important that you share your experiences – whether good or bad, happy or sad. If you've had a negative experience, it's easy to think there's no point in complaining, and that 'nothing ever changes'. Or, if you've had a great experience, that you 'wish you could say thank you'. Remember, your feedback is helping to improve people's lives. So, if you need advice, or you're ready to tell your story – we're here to listen.





# A quick thank you

Today's session was made possible thanks to the funding from Great Linford Parish Council. They have acknowledged the importance of amplifying the voices of our deaf community in Milton Keynes.

A special thank you to both of today's BSL interpreters, Clare and J'enna.





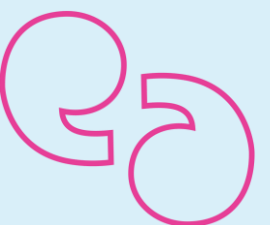
# What we aim to cover today

We like to tailor these sessions to your needs.

We reached out to Carron Huggett and asked what the deaf community in Milton Keynes wanted to hear about, learn about and discuss.

Today we'll be talking about:

- 🗣️ Dementia
- 🗣️ Heart health
- 🗣️ Mental health
- 🗣️ What Healthwatch has been hearing about





# Louise Bates

**Communication & Volunteer Lead,  
Alzheimer's Society.**





# Dr. Andrew Potter

**MBBS, MRCP, MRCP, MFSRH and accredited in  
Community Echocardiography, Whaddon  
Healthcare.**



# Heart Health

- Hypertension
- Lipids (cholesterol)
- Exercise and lifestyle
- Symptoms to watch for
- Should I buy a smart watch to keep a check on my heart?



# Hypertension – high blood pressure

- Extremely important
- Biggest cause of cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and stroke)
- Blood pressure of 120/80 is now considered “elevated”
- Taking your blood pressure at home can be really helpful. If it averages more than 135/85, please see you GP
- Keeping your weight down, plenty of exercise, low salt and high potassium diet really helps

# Lipids - cholesterol

- Vital for our body to function
- Too much can form dangerous particles that narrow blood vessels leading to heart attacks and stroke
- Certain foods, lifestyle, alcohol, smoking
- Eating well, exercising and keeping the weight down all make a big difference

# Exercise and lifestyle

- Most heart problems are made worse with poor lifestyle choices
- Regular exercise is the most important tool to help prevent heart problems
- However, it is important to note no amount of exercise can undo the damage caused by:
  - Regular alcohol (when it becomes a habit rather than a treat)
  - Poor diet and high amounts of junk and ultra processed foods
  - Smoking
  - Stress and loneliness

# Symptoms to watch for

- Signs your heart might be struggling:
  - Chest pains
  - Palpitation
  - Shortness of breath
  - Ankle swelling
  - Funny turns
  - Tiredness

# Activity trackers/medical devices – good or bad?



- Can be helpful in picking up heart problems – mainly heart rhythm problems
- However, they can be wrong and lead to worry and concern
- I feel a home blood pressure monitor is the most useful (but not used too often!)

Any questions?



# Healthwatch Milton Keynes

As part of our core work at Healthwatch Milton Keynes, we have been engaging with our residents about a range of different topics including:

- 🗣️ Research in communities
- 🗣️ Diabetes research
- 🗣️ Mental health
- 🗣️ Men's health
- 🗣️ Translation services



# Research in communities

In August, our focus was on research in the community. This was an online session which included a presentation from HWMK on what we mean by research, opportunities and any barriers people may encounter when joining programmes.

We were joined by Dr. Oliver Mytton who gave a talk about opportunities to get into research local and some of the issues that the provider may face.

## Diabetes research

- Q Diabetes education
- Q Information of what research is
- Q Information about how participants can get involved
- Q Overview of current diabetes research
- Q Capture interest from attendees in becoming Diabetes Research Champions in the future
- Q Demonstrate active Diabetes Research Champions and showcase their experiences.







## Mental health

October saw us attend MKUH's health event at Unity Place where we spoke to over 35 people who kindly shared views on their own experiences with mental health services, what issues they have faced and support that they have found useful.

We will be continuing our work around mental health over the next year.

## Men's health

In November we collaborated with The Man Cave. The conversations we had with those who attended provided valuable insights into service gaps as well as elements that functioned effectively. The session was designed as a safe space, allowing the gentlemen who approached us to share their thoughts freely, resulting in open discussions. Given that men often tend to keep their thoughts private, this environment encouraged candid communication.





# Translation services

Working in partnership with the other local Healthwatch in BLMK we will map services and their effectiveness across health and care service providers and core VCSE providers. The ICB will be provided with a final report, with recommendations to ensure that translation and interpreting services are commissioned and supplied in such ways that they are both reliable and effective for the people that need them.

## Outcomes

- 🗨️ The ICB acts on clear evidence and recommendations to implement an effective translation service for Milton Keynes (within BLMK) that provides consistency
- 🗨️ People in our community that require access to interpreters and translators have their needs met, without delays that compound health inequalities





# What's happening next at Healthwatch MK

A fun, family-friendly day in Milton Keynes where your health takes centre stage! Find out more about health services in MK. Confirmed so far:

- Q CNWL (mental health and community services)
- Q Carers MK
- Q Diabetes UK MK
- Q Help using the NHS app and getting to grips with online health services
- Q Maternity Voices Partnership
- Q iCaSH (sexual health)
- Q Public health at Milton Keynes City Council (inc. social care services)
- Q Live demos from South Central Ambulance Trust crews
- Q Get practical support including blood pressure checks
- Q Fun stuff for the kids
- BSL interpreter throughout



Registered charity number: 1166148

## healthwatch Milton Keynes

### Your health, Our community

**A fun, family day in Milton Keynes where your health takes centre stage!**

**What's on offer?**

- Practical, in-person health support from health services
- Information on local health & care services
- Free blood pressure checks

**Sat 15 Feb, 11am - 3pm**

**Conniburrow Community Centre**  
37-39 Conniburrow Blv,  
MK14 7DX

**Fun stuff for kids**

**Help using the NHS app/online health services**





**Is there anything else you wish to discuss?**



**Thank you for your participation.**

