Healthwatch Brent

Social Media Strategy

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1 Introduction

Social media gives us a platform to raise awareness of who Healthwatch Brent are and what we do, and to share key messages and campaigns. Using our social channels effectively means that we can connect with our existing supporters and partners while also reaching out to a wider audience of local residents and interested members of the community.

We see the primary benefits of social media as:

- The ability to grow our network by engaging with people outside our usual sphere of influence
- The ability to engage directly with our supporters and with key local communities and organisations, both through our owned channels and through groups/pages
- The opportunity to promote core Healthwatch Brent activities and campaigns such as surveys and focus groups to a wider audience

Growing follower numbers across all of our channels is important, but we also need to ensure that these followers come from a diverse group, reflecting the diversity of the audience that Healthwatch Brent serves. In addition to growing the audience, we need to invest time into improving our engagement – ensuring that the content we post has a real impact.

We will adopt some core principles to allow us to maximise the impact of our social media presence:

- Regular, consistent posting across all platforms
- Clear, simple and engaging messages
- Real, human stories that reflect the experiences of our audiences

- Bright, eye-catching visuals
- Content that is tailored to each individual platform

Our existing network also offers an opportunity to grow our audience and increase engagement. By encouraging our partners to interact with our content – both by tagging them in posts and by making an explicit ask for people to share posts with their communities – we can greatly improve the reach of our content and build awareness of what Healthwatch Brent offers to local people.

2 Our channels

Developing our existing channels

Facebook

Facebook is still the most active social media platform in the UK and is a great place to engage the general public and supporters with information about our activity, the impact of our work and upcoming events. It is also a good channel for sharing individual stories and more emotional content.

Organic reach can be limited, which means it's important to be creative about the content we post and the way that we share it. More interactive formats such as videos and polls tend to out-perform simple text/image posts. We can also reach larger audiences by sharing directly to relevant community interest groups and forums.

We can test different types of posts, including different kinds of images, messages and call to action to determine what performs best with our audiences.

Next steps:

- Begin posting 3-5 times a week to build a strong bank of content with an aim of increasing to 1-2 daily posts
- Create a list of relevant community groups to share to
- Run tests to determine what type of content delivers the highest engagement
- Begin to share more interactive content, including videos (this could include simple animations of key stats) and polls

Twitter

Twitter is a highly conversational platform, where people will often share posts from others in their network. This means that it gives us an opportunity to start building brand awareness by tagging key members of the local community who are likely to share our messages. It is best for interacting directly with partners and stakeholders.

Due to the strict character limit, content on Twitter performs best when it is short and direct, with a clear message or call to action. We should focus on sharing punchy messages that link out to longer pieces of content, alongside bright, eye-catching visuals.

We can also use Twitter to strengthen our connection with local partners by sharing their content and engaging with their posts.

Next steps

- Begin posting 5+ times a week to build a strong bank of content. Twitter posts have a short lifespan, so it is fine to post multiple times a day when required
- Utilise tags and hashtags in every post to encourage sharing from partners, supporters and members of the public
- Refresh banner and profile image to make it as engaging as possible
- Test different types of image and posting times to optimise content

Building new channels

Nextdoor

Nextdoor is a unique social media platform which offers people the opportunity to connect with people from their local neighbourhood. With a business account, we can share highly targeted posts advertising events and surveys to people from specific neighbourhoods within Brent.

Other local Healthwatch groups report having had a lot of success in running surveys and polls on Nextdoor. Engagement on Nextdoor is typically good, as it allows you to interact with an audience that is specifically interested in local/community events and topics. Unlike other networking sites, you don't need to build up a follower base – content is automatically shared to those in relevant neighbourhoods. This makes it possible for us to get up and running with Nextdoor quicker than with other new platforms.

Next steps

- Set up our Nextdoor account and join relevant neighbourhood groups
- Share surveys and events to relevant neighbourhoods
- Test posting times and different types of content to optimise for engagement

Instagram

Instagram gives us an opportunity to connect with younger audiences. In order to use the platform effectively, we need to share eye-catching visuals and emotive stories. Photographic images tend to perform best, although infographic content with a strong message and striking visual style can also work well.

Instagram limits the ability to share links, which means it is less useful for promoting surveys/events from our website. However, it offers a strong platform for growing our brand and awareness. We can also use Instagram stories to run in-platform polls and Q&As, offering a new format for our surveys. Instagram users are willing to engage with long-form content, which means case studies and news stories can be shared without needing to link out to the website.

Next steps

- Set up our Instagram account
- Build up a base of initial posts so that the page has content when we begin to build followers
- Promote the page across our existing channels
- Begin posting 2-3 times per week
- Build a bank of useful hashtags/ accounts to tag to help us build our page. Healthwatch has its own hashtags, and there are many others we can tap into
- Develop our Instagram stories content to make our page more interactive

WhatsApp

WhatsApp offers a unique opportunity to communicate instantly with the most engaged members of our audience. Setting up dedicated WhatsApp groups to share key messages with networks such as our volunteers or Grassroots Community Voices.

We do need to be conscious of not overwhelming people with messages that are too frequent. For some groups, it may make sense use admin-only post settings, while for others we will benefit from the two-way nature of conversation.

Next steps

- Agree which groups/networks need a dedicated WhatsApp channel
- Collect consent from those who are interested in joining the relevant groups

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is lower priority for Healthwatch Brent, but once we have built up our other channels, adding LinkedIn into the mix will let us build our connection with stakeholders. Having a presence on LinkedIn could help us demonstrate the impact of our work to our partners and other relevant services. It is also a useful channel for encouraging partners to share our key messages.

3 Content themes

There are three key threads that should run through our social media content. These different themes are relevant to all channels – while the format of the posts may change to appeal to different audiences, the overarching topics will be similar.

When developing our monthly content plans, we will create posting schedules which contain a good mix of all three types of content. This will allow us to keep our content varied and interesting, and ensure that we are developing our brand, sharing the impact of our work and signposting users to important advice and information.

What Healthwatch Brent can offer

- Sharing our goals and purpose
- Introducing our teams and volunteers
- Promoting surveys and focus groups
- Outlining our projects and priorities

Your health matters

- Making people aware of important local health initiatives
- Sharing the details of other local services
- Signposting people to places where they can get more information
- Sharing relevant news stories related to health and social care in Brent

Our stories

- Demonstrating the impact of our work, both through reports/infographics and through individual stories
- Highlighting the stories/profiles of key members of our community, including volunteers and supporters
- Highlighting partners/community groups that we work with

4 Campaigns

Social media campaigns are an important way for us to raise awareness of key projects among our supporters. Tying closely to the three themes listed above, our campaigns will bring together clear and straightforward messages or calls to action with strong graphics. Each campaign should have a distinct style, as well as dedicated hashtags. When sharing our campaign content, we'll link in with other relevant organisations by tagging them and sharing their content.

Our campaigns will be developed alongside our projects. In the short term, we will focus on three initial campaigns:

Speak up (tell us your views)

What do you think about health and social care in Brent? It's time to #SpeakUp

This campaign is an opportunity for us to share our survey, as well as other ways people can share their views such as the drop-in-sessions and focus groups.

It consists of simple, clear calls to action, asking people to speak up and giving them a clear and easy route to do so.

Where possible, it should also include strong quotes from members of our network explaining what happens when you decide to speak out for your community. This would help us to demonstrate the impact of sharing information even if we don't currently have stats.

Imagery for this campaign consists of simple, eye-catching graphics with a strong call to action.

Become a local health champion

Could you help us build a healthier Brent? Support Healthwatch Brent and become one of our #BrentHealthHeroes

By encouraging people to become local health champions, we are building the idea of Healthwatch as something that the whole community can be a part of. We need to start telling people about the different ways to support Healthwatch Brent – not only by sharing your views, but also by signing up to the newsletter and encouraging others to speak out against health injustices. Local community organisations can also join our Grassroots network.

We'll explain that supporting Healthwatch Brent gives people a chance to make sure their concerns get noticed. We can help people become a part of the conversation about improving health and social care in Brent. All we ask is that they help to spread the word and encourage people from their networks to speak out.

As part of this campaign, we will put the spotlight on our Brent health heroes. These will be case studies/profiles of people or community groups that are doing their bit to make a difference in the area. It could include partner organisations as well as individuals such as volunteers. It will provide us with an ongoing stream of content, with a new hero story posted each month.

GP access

Can you get a doctor's appointment? We want to know more about #GPAcess in Brent – tell us about your local doctor's surgery

GP access is an important upcoming priority for Healthwatch Brent. Our campaign will make bold, proactive statements about the importance of GP access for residents across Brent, and our intention to help ensure that people are getting the service entitled to. If

possible, we will also share some of the personal stories of people who need GP access, underlining why it is so important.

This campaign will include a clear call to action for people to share their own experiences with accessing a local GP.

Imagery will include profile images, either of the individuals sharing their stories or stock images that give illustrative examples.

5 Evaluating success

This strategy focusses on growing our audience across all channels and improving engagement by encouraging our audiences to interact more with our posts. To evaluate how well our social media is performing, we need to be able to compare our monthly stats. We will include these stats as part of our monthly communications summary, outlining what activity has had the best response from our audience, and how our figures compare to the previous month.

Testing different types of content and posting schedules will be key to optimising our content. We will run regular tests to understand what type of content is most engaging for our current audience, and include the headlines from these tests in the communications summary.

6 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion statement

Healthwatch Brent is committed to ensuring all decisions made are free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Healthwatch Brent will monitor this policy to identify whether it is having an adverse impact on any group of individuals and act accordingly.