

Evaluation

Healthwatch Sefton Community Champion Network
'Information Hub' – St Leonards Youth & Community
Centre

Thursday 29th January 2026



Putting people at the heart of Neighbourhood Care

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Healthwatch Sefton Community Champion Network

Healthwatch Sefton coordinate two Sefton Community Champion Networks. There is a south & central Sefton network and Southport & Formby network. The networks are about building trusted relationships in our communities and it provides an opportunity for Community Champion network members to find out about each other's services and explore opportunities for partnership work.

The network is made up of local VCF groups who help us to connect and build relationships across Sefton. Our Community Champion network members have trusted links in the community and ensure by working together local people's voices are heard by NHS commissioners and Adult Social Care. By setting up and co-ordinating the 'Network Hub's across Sefton we are making our engagement more inclusive, accessible and meeting local people's needs.

<https://healthwatchsefton.co.uk/community-champions/>

Healthwatch Sefton 'Information Hub'

Healthwatch Sefton have set up and coordinate 'Information Hubs' as part of its broader Community Champion Networks to make it easier for residents to share their health and care experiences and find out information on other VCF services that can offer advice and support them. We host the hubs in various locations including:

-  Community Champion Network venues
-  Libraries
-  Shopping Centres
-  Supermarkets
-  Health Centres

At each hub residents can pick up information and advice from local VCF groups and find out more about how to share their feedback with Healthwatch Sefton. The Hubs are an accessible local point for people to engage with us within their neighbourhood.

St Leonards Youth & Community Centre – Pantries

At St Leonard's Pantries, we're proud to be part of a community that looks out for one another. Every week, around 200 people walk through our doors, and in total, we help to feed approximately 490 individuals — from young families and single parents to older residents and those simply finding it tough to make ends meet.

But we're more than just a place to collect food. We're a welcoming space where kindness, conversation, and community come together.

A Warm Welcome, Always

When someone visits one of our pantries, they're greeted not just with a bag of groceries, but with a smile, a hot cuppa, and a listening ear. We offer free tea, coffee, and biscuits, and a safe, friendly environment where people can sit, relax, and connect with others.

It's not unusual to hear laughter echoing through the room — or to witness the joy of old friends reuniting after years apart. We've seen neighbours who hadn't spoken in ages reconnect over a table of digestives and tea. For many, these moments are just as nourishing as the food we provide.

What We Do

Our pantry is stocked with a variety of fresh, frozen, and long-life foods to help ease the pressure of rising costs. Members pay a small contribution in return for a basket of essential items, offering dignity and choice alongside support.

But food is only one part of what we do. The real value lies in building connections, fighting loneliness, and making sure that everyone who comes to us feels seen, supported, and part of something bigger.

Why It Matters

Food insecurity is a growing issue — and many who visit us never expected to find themselves needing this kind of help. We want our members to know: there's no shame in seeking support. Life happens. And when it does, we're here — with open arms and open hearts.

<https://stleonardsycc.org/pantries>

On the day...

Organisations providing information and support:

-  **Healthwatch Sefton** – is your local independent champion for health and social care, making sure the voices in Sefton are heard and listened to, to improve health and social care. [To find out more](#)
-  **Life's for Living** – Sefton-based organisation that supports ADHD, Autism and Neurodiverse individuals. To find out more [click here](#)
-  **Sefton Carers Centre** – Provide free advice and guidance, emotional and practical support, training and a range of holistic therapies for unpaid carers living in Sefton. To find out more about them [click here](#)
-  **Alzheimer's Society Sefton** – Organisation that supports people living with Alzheimer's and their families and friends, to learn more about them [click here](#)
-  **Galloways Society for the Blind** – A sight loss charity which has been supporting people with sight loss in the North West of England for over 150 years, to learn more about them [click here](#)
-  **Sefton CVS Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance** – Angela Delea, Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Alliance Action Lead. To learn more about them [click here](#).
-  **Cradle to Career** – Right to Succeed partners with Sefton in its [Cradle to Career program](#), a community-led initiative to address childhood inequality and provide young people in high-deprivation areas with better life opportunities. To learn more about them, [click here](#)

Who we spoke to...

-  Residents accessing the pantry (38 residents)
-  Volunteers and staff supporting the pantry (7 volunteers & 3 staff)

Outcomes from the day...

'Attending St Leonard's was a great way to pop up in the community to provide lowkey dementia info and support. I connected with several local folks. A couple of people were worried about their memory, so I gave them our memory checklist and info about diagnosis. Others were carers and needed encouragement and signposting to local support groups. One lady lived in Liverpool, so I referred her to our Liverpool team for support. It was also a good opportunity to network with other local services. Thanks for organising us Wendy and keep up the good work'!

Rosie Norman (Alzheimer's Society Sefton)

'I found it very useful joining other community-based colleagues yesterday as a contributor to the Information Hub. It provided me with an opportunity to chat with local residents of all ages, both male & female, at one venue. Sometimes there is a reluctance to engage people in conversations about cancer awareness, so being part of a wider information event is helpful. Conversations varied from family experiences of cancer diagnoses, to having the awareness and confidence to recognise when something is not right with your body and doing something about it. One gentleman, who had previously been treated for cancer, was experiencing worrying symptoms, and was grappling with making a decision to go to the GP. We talked about his fears and he was able to think more clearly about the importance of checking out those symptoms. Living alone, he thanked me for the opportunity to have our chat, as this had helped him to come to a decision'.

Angela Delea (Sefton CVS Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance)

'I found the whole market place experience at St Leonards extremely interesting, we got to meet the lovely community members and witness how a community pantry ran. (A lot of hard work and a dedicated team go into the running of this invaluable service) I chatted with their amazing volunteers and learned some valuable information which I was able to disseminate with my team.

I did chat with some carers who are already registered with the centre and I managed to register another two on the day and provide relevant information and advice as to where they can access support.

Also had a lovely morning networking with our partners and gained some insight into their organisations'.

Caroline Hesketh (Sefton Carers)

'It was great meeting and reaching out to people, within the community. Life's for Living, Sefton, felt that it was a heart-warming welcoming experience, for us as an organisation and for the local residents.

Life's for Living, Sefton, shared our support services, sign posted to our partners and other Sefton services, when appropriate.

Sefton Advice and guidance was offered, in collaboration with the other community champion connectors that attended. Resulted in offering a wide range of informative Sefton services and support information, to the residents'.

Mel (Life's for Living)

I just wanted to say I have had loads of great feedback from the Linacre hub day. It was a very positive event and everyone has said how good it was and getting to talk to so many different agencies and how good they all were as well.

I think it would be something to do again in the future!

Danny Corless (Pantry Coordinator, St Leonards Community Centre)

Healthwatch Sefton will continue to strengthen and support our established Community Champion Networks and broaden the reach of the 'Information Hubs' to ensure they are an accessible local point for residents to engage with us within their neighbourhood.

Photographs from the day....





