



ABOUT ME CARD PILOT REVIEW REPORT

Introduction



Healthwatch Warrington introduced the *About Me Awareness Card* to improve communication and promote person-centred care across local health services. The initiative supports patients who may have difficulty expressing their needs, particularly those affected by trauma, anxiety, neurodiversity, or communication barriers.

Working in partnership with North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust (formerly North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust (formerly Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust)), the card has been piloted across various

hospital departments. This report evaluates the effectiveness of the pilot by reviewing hospital usage data alongside direct feedback from service users.

The pilot was supported by Warrington Worldwide, who sponsored the initiative by covering all printing costs and producing the *About Me* cards. Their contribution played a key role in enabling the project to be delivered at scale and reach patients more effectively. Gary Skentelbery said: *"We were honoured to sponsor the About Me Card pilot initiative and provide all the printing and card costs for Healthwatch. It was a great success, and we wish the hospital and other providers continued success in the future. Well done, Healthwatch, for choosing to help vulnerable patients."*

In January 2025, Warrington Jobcentre began recognising and accepting the *About Me Awareness Card* as part of their support for service users. This development extended the reach of the initiative beyond healthcare settings, helping individuals communicate their needs more effectively when accessing employment and benefits services, and further promoting inclusive, person-centred support across local public services

Development of the About me card

Informed by the Healthwatch Essex 'Trauma Card' project, Healthwatch Warrington undertook local research and considered creating a unique

awareness card for medical professionals to support patients in having a person-centred experience when attending appointments.

The benefits applied to both patients and professionals, encouraging positive communication between patients and all staff.

Using Healthwatch Warrington's Virtual Voices, we asked residents their opinions on what the name of the card should be.

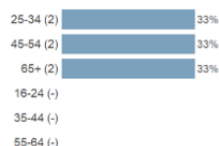
The Card Process



7% of people chose this name

"Triggers can be found from neurodiverse difficulties as well as trauma. I also feel like using triggers would make individuals who have experienced trauma like myself more likely to use it, as having a card which broadcasts the fact you've experienced trauma in broad letters can be off-putting for those who don't want everyone to know."

How old are you?



"I think trauma should be avoided, as people may have some triggers without seeing themselves as a 'trauma' victim."



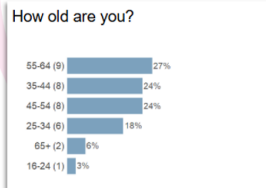
37% of people chose this name

"I think it's up to date & 'Heads up' is a nonthreatening saying."

"For me trauma and trigger card wouldn't be best to encompass lots of possible triggers. I feel the name heads up is better than about me as an about me card could be used for literally anything and may lose its purpose."

"Because trauma and trigger imply something major has happened to the person, whereas it may simply be a fear of loud noises for example and do calling it something with a dramatic name might stop someone from wanting the embarrassment of producing it to a healthcare professional."

"Personally, I wouldn't want pity, but I would still want my needs respected. 'Heads up' is a good balance of this."



53% of people chose this name



"The other 3 names create a label for the person, The about me card insinuates what it says it's about the person not a label"

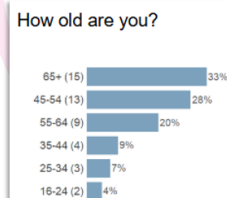
"The title is universal and inclusive, allowing everyone to share information that, from the 'my' perspective, is crucial and should be known by the medical professionals caring for me."

"The needs of the person should always be taken into account. I feel that "All about me" reflects that. The card should also be used by those who don't necessarily have trauma or triggers but will benefit from the card."

"Because I feel it best represents what the card is for, to alert people about my needs."

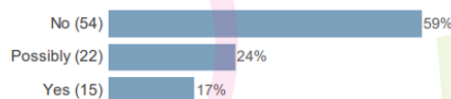
"No one wants a label or reminder of trauma, a trigger card can also be triggering in itself and creates a label and awareness card that suggests something is wrong with a person."

"Words such as 'trigger' and 'trauma' may feel stigmatising to the patient as well as limiting the perception of factors or additional needs that may be perceived as applicable to those categories"



Other feedback

Would the name of the card deter you from using the card?



"I wouldn't use a card that I thought would be stigmatizing."

"As long as it wasn't trauma"

"Because trauma and trigger imply something major has happened to the person, whereas it may simply be a fear of loud noises for example and do calling it something with a dramatic name might stop someone from wanting the embarrassment of producing it to a healthcare professional."

"May cause unwanted attention - perhaps in waiting area or busy A&E for example."

Other feedback

Do you think there should be space on the back for you to personalise the card?



Yes (80) 89%
No (10) 11%

"Because we are all individuals with differing needs."

"The card would be of minimal use if the help required isn't specified, and many people in this situation may have difficulty in voicing their needs."

"Because trauma and trigger imply something major has happened to the person, whereas it may simply be a fear of loud noises for example and do calling it something with a dramatic name might stop someone from wanting the embarrassment of producing it to a healthcare professional."

"Because not every phrase can represent the needs of an individual and fit into a 'tick box'."

"This may be a way for a medical professional to listen to you and provide the correct care."

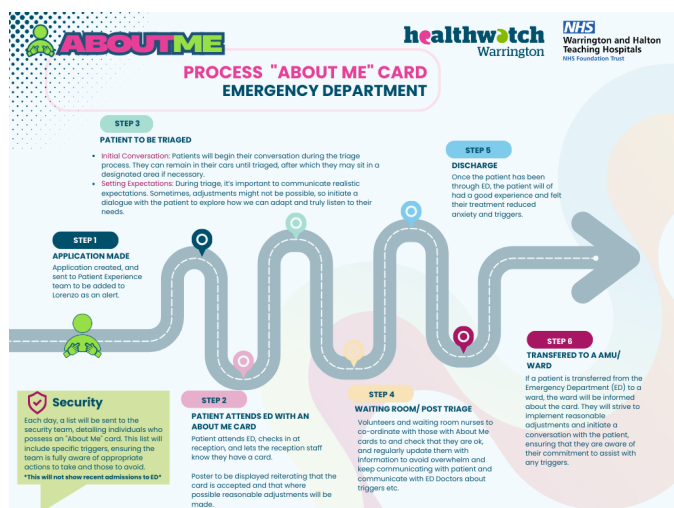
Development plan of the card

The screenshot shows the 'About Me Card Registration' form on the Healthwatch Warrington website. The form is titled 'About Me Card Registration' and features the 'ABOUT ME Awareness Card Pilot' logo. It includes a section for 'About Me Awareness Card Application' with a 'Please Note' section. Below this is a 'Your Details' section with fields for Title, First Name, Last Name, Address, Address 2, City/Town, ZIP/Postal Code, Telephone Number, Email, Age, and Date of Birth. The form is designed to collect personal information from individuals who want to use the 'About Me Card'.

A structured application process was developed to ensure that the *About Me Awareness Card* was provided to individuals who would benefit most. Potential cardholders were invited to apply for the card through Healthwatch Warrington, providing relevant information about their communication needs, triggers, and any required reasonable adjustments. Each application was reviewed to ensure eligibility against the agreed criteria. Once approved, the *About Me* card was issued and sent directly to the individual. At the same time, the individual's key information was securely shared with North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust (formerly North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust (formerly Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), where it was recorded

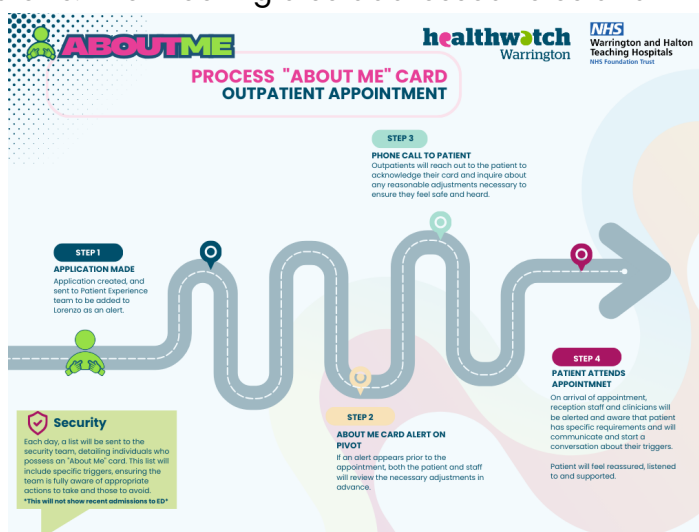
and flagged on the patient system to alert staff and support appropriate care.

For individuals who confirmed they were also accessing support through Warrington Jobcentre, the same process was followed, with relevant information shared to enable staff to recognise the card and respond appropriately, ensuring a consistent and person-centred approach across both healthcare and employment support services.



An initial planning meeting was held between Healthwatch Warrington and North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust (formerly Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) to establish how the About Me Awareness Card would be implemented in practice. During this session, both organisations worked collaboratively to map out the patient journey and agree clear processes for

how the card would be recognised, recorded, and acted upon across departments. This included developing structured pathways for Emergency Department and Outpatient settings, ensuring staff understood when and how to respond to the card, and agreeing how information would be safely shared via existing systems such as patient alerts. The meeting also addressed roles and responsibilities, communication between teams, and the importance of maintaining patient confidentiality while ensuring that key information, such as triggers, communication needs, and reasonable adjustments, was accessible to staff at the point of care. This collaborative approach ensured a consistent, person-centred process was designed prior to launch.



Overview of the About Me Card

The About Me card allows patients to:

- Share personal triggers and communication needs
- Highlight reasonable adjustments required
- Support staff in delivering tailored care

The pilot has been implemented across:

- Emergency Department (ED)
- Outpatient services

Hospital Data and Usage Findings

During the pilot period, hospital teams recorded indicative usage and outcomes associated with the About Me card:

Total alerts issued: Approximately 120–150 patients across departments

Departments with highest uptake:

- Emergency Department (highest usage due to acute anxiety cases)
- Outpatients (particularly for planned appointments)

Common needs identified through cards:

- Quiet waiting areas (approx. 40% of users)
- Clear, simple communication (approx. 55%)
- Additional time during consultations (approx. 35%)
- Reduced sensory stimulation (lighting/noise) (approx. 30%)

Staff-reported outcomes:

- Improved understanding of patient needs prior to interaction
- Reduction in distressed or escalated situations
- More efficient consultations when needs were known in advance

Impact on service delivery:

- Improved patient cooperation during treatment
- Better patient-staff relationships

User Feedback and Comments

Feedback collected from patients demonstrates the real-life impact of the About Me card:

Positive Feedback

"It helped me explain things I usually can't say when I feel overwhelmed."

"Staff understood me straight away without me having to repeat myself."

"I felt calmer knowing they already knew what I needed."

"It made my hospital visit much less stressful."

Impact on Confidence

Many users reported increased confidence in attending appointments:

"Before, I would avoid appointments. Now I feel more able to go."

"It gave me reassurance that I would be understood."

Support for Hidden Needs

Users with non-visible conditions found the card particularly helpful:

"People can't always see my anxiety, but the card explains it clearly."

Strengths of the Initiative

- Improved Communication
- Enables patients to express needs clearly without verbal pressure.
- Enhanced Patient Experience
- Reduces anxiety and improves comfort during healthcare visits.
- Supports Staff Awareness
- Gives clinicians immediate insight into patient needs.
- Inclusive Approach
- Addresses a wide range of hidden disabilities and conditions.

In January 2025, we launched the card with the Warrington Job Centre; they began to accept the card, and we were able to send over, with the permission of applicants, their information for them to input into their system.

Sara LaRosa, a disability employment officer for the DWP (Warrington Job Centre) stated

"We've had really positive feedback from our neurodiversity groups about the "About Me" card. In our sessions, we've focused a lot on self-advocacy and self-care, which has helped people feel more confident, like they have a voice and that they'll be listened to.

The card has also been useful for sharing information about additional needs and support, especially regarding Universal Credit. It helps make sure the right support is in place and understood.

It's also made a big difference for work coaches. Having that insight means we can work more closely with customers and tailor the support better, so it feels more joined-up and person-centred.

Overall, it's been a valuable tool and has made a genuine difference to the people we support. I'd absolutely support it continuing and growing.

Thanks again for involving us in something that's had such a positive impact, it's a great piece of work."



Areas for Improvement

Staff Training and Consistency

Some users reported that not all staff were familiar with the card:

"Not everyone knew what the card was at first."

Visibility and Awareness

Increased promotion is needed across all departments.

Expansion Beyond Hospital Settings

Users suggested extending the card to:

- GP practices
- Community health services

Ongoing Data Collection

More structured and consistent data tracking across all areas would strengthen evaluation.

Impact and Outcomes

The pilot demonstrates clear benefits in both quantitative and qualitative terms:

- Reduced patient anxiety
- Improved communication and understanding
- Increased patient engagement with services
- Better overall patient experience

The About Me card has proven particularly valuable for individuals with:

- Anxiety disorders
- Autism and neurodivergence
- PTSD or trauma-related conditions
- Communication difficulties



North Cheshire and Mersey

NHS Foundation Trust

North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust would like to thank Healthwatch Warrington for leading this innovative initiative and for the collaborative partnership throughout the About Me Card pilot.

The trial has demonstrated the positive impact that simple, person-centred interventions can have on improving communication, reducing anxiety and supporting patients to receive care that meets their individual needs. During the pilot, approximately 150 patient records were updated to record an About Me Card alert. The feedback indicates improved staff understanding of patients' communication needs, fewer distressed situations and enhanced patient experience. We look forward to continuing to further develop and expand the initiative to support our patients



Case Study: Supporting Access Through the *About Me Awareness Card*

During an outreach session at the Living Well Hub, a Healthwatch Warrington representative engaged with an individual who expressed a strong interest in obtaining an *About Me Awareness Card*. The individual explained that completing forms was a significant challenge and often caused feelings of overwhelm. To support this, the representative took time to sit with the individual in a quiet space and worked through the application together, ensuring the process was accessible and manageable.

Throughout the interaction, it became evident that the individual experienced significant difficulties in processing and retaining information. The individual described a pattern of attending appointments, particularly GP appointments, where there was a tendency to agree and nod along without fully understanding the information being shared. This often resulted in missed appointments, delayed care, or waiting until health concerns became more serious before seeking further support.

With the individual's consent, Healthwatch Warrington took an advocacy role and engaged with the GP practice on the individual's behalf. A request was made for reasonable adjustments to be added to the patient's record, including the

provision of easy read information, extended appointment times, and written summaries following consultations. Initially, the GP practice advised that these adjustments would need to be requested at each appointment and could not be routinely recorded.

In response, the issue was escalated to the Senior Commissioning Manager (Primary Care), highlighting the patient's statutory rights under the NHS Accessible Information Standard. Supporting information was shared, including guidance emphasising that patients have a right to receive information in a format they can understand. Clarification was sought on the correct protocol and how best to support not only this individual but others facing similar barriers.

Following this, the GP practice reviewed the request and agreed to record the individual's communication needs on their file, ensuring these needs would be flagged on the system. However, it was noted that not all reasonable adjustments could be accommodated universally for every patient.

Conclusion

This case highlights the wider impact and potential of the *About Me Awareness Card* in supporting vulnerable individuals. It demonstrates how a simple intervention, combined with advocacy and system awareness, can lead to meaningful improvements in patient experience. Greater adoption of the card across GP practices and other services could help reduce barriers, minimise anxiety, and enable individuals to access care in a way that is safe, dignified, and person-centred. One simple action, recognising and responding to communication needs, can make a significant difference in helping patients access the care they need, when they need it, without fear or stigma.

Conclusion

The About Me Awareness Card has shown significant promise in improving patient experience within Warrington Hospital. By combining simple design with meaningful impact, the initiative empowers patients to communicate their needs while supporting staff to deliver more personalised care.

Hospital data indicates improved service efficiency and reduced patient distress, while user feedback highlights increased confidence, comfort, and trust in healthcare services.

While there are areas for improvement, particularly around staff awareness and wider rollout, the overall success of the pilot supports further development and expansion. With continued investment, the About Me card could become a vital tool across health and social care settings, ensuring that every patient is seen, heard, and understood.

Next Steps

- Expand pilot to additional services
- Introduce staff training programmes
- Strengthen data collection and reporting
- Increase public awareness and accessibility

With Thanks

We would especially like to thank the staff at Warrington Hospital for working closely with us to roll out and develop the About Me card. Warrington Job Centre for accepting the card and their feedback. We would like to thank the volunteer/lived experience working group who helped design the card and to our sponsor, Warrington Worldwide, for the financial support'