



Together

we're making health
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
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and social care better**

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Annual Report 2022–23



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“

In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better.”

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

Introduction: This needs to be a short overview about the last year and how your organisation has adapted and thrived.

Here's what you could include:

- How you have listened to and included everyone in the local community
- Have you analysed people's experiences to spot trends and create change?
- Have you acted on feedback to drive change and improve services for people?
- How has your work made a difference to people's lives?
- How have you made sure that your local community is heard by your NHS at Integrated Care Systems level?
- How you have worked together with other Healthwatch to be effective and influence decisions taken by Integrated Care Boards and Partnerships?

[Try not to repeat anything that is detailed further on in the report.]



Name of Chair
Healthwatch [x] Chair

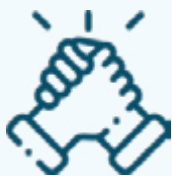
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“Sitting in the dentist's office, listening to the cost of treatments brought me to tears. Whenever I eat and feel a twinge my heart drops. I panic that something terrible is happening. MPs have money to get care if they need, most people don't. There's no version of private dentistry that's affordable.”

About us

Healthwatch [insert town] is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.

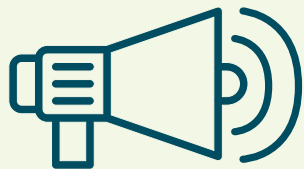


Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Year in review

Reaching out



[x] people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

[x] people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost of living crisis.

Making a difference to care

We published

[x] reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

[insert report name]

which highlighted the struggles people **on X**.



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

[volunteer number]

outstanding volunteers who gave up **[x days]** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

[£X,XXX]









which is **x% less / more** than the previous year.

We currently employ

[x] staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>From running advice lines to delivering medication, our volunteers helped combat COVID-19.</p>	 <p>We quickly alerted regulators about care homes using 'Do not attempt to resuscitate' forms without consent.</p>
Summer	 <p>With online appointments becoming the norm, our top tips helped professionals and patients get the most out of digital appointments.</p>	 <p>We supported the #BecauseWeAllCare campaign which saw 54,000 people come forward to tell us about issues they faced with services.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Teaming up with the British Red Cross, we called for improvements to make leaving hospital safer during the pandemic.</p>	 <p>We urged the Government to act after reporting a 452% increase in people struggling to see an NHS dentist.</p>
Winter	 <p>When people struggled to see their GP face-to-face we asked the NHS to confirm this right for all patients, resulting in updated guidance to practices.</p>	 <p>To support the COVID-19 vaccination programme we talked to different communities to understand their hesitancy towards the vaccine and published guidance to improve trust.</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Vaccine confidence

Our research exploring vaccine confidence with people from different backgrounds provided vital lessons for public health campaigns.

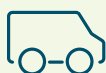


NHS admin

We highlighted the negative impact poor NHS admin can have and recommended five principles for services to improve people's experiences.

Patient transport

NHS England announced improvements to non-emergency patient transport services thanks to public feedback.



Waiting list support

After we and other organisations called for an urgent response to hospital waiting lists, and better interim communication and support, the NHS set out a recovery plan to address the backlog.

NHS dentistry

We continued to voice public concerns that improvements to NHS dentistry are too slow, leaving thousands of people in pain.





Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Sharon is a Healthwatch Hero for bravely raising her experiences with us and creating change so that no one else had to struggle as she did.

Sharon received her routine mammogram invitation in easy read, but when she was recalled for further tests the letters were not available in easy read.

We helped Sharon tell her story to both NHS England and NHS Improvement and as a result a series of follow up letters have been translated into easy read. This will improve the experience and safety of countless patients undergoing routine breast screening across the country.

Without Sharon sharing her experiences with us, we would never have known about the issue. Thanks to Sharon, women across the whole of England will now be able to better understand their care.



Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Advocating for fairer NHS dentistry

NHS dentistry is in desperate need of reform and this year we have successfully moved NHS dentistry up the political agenda, making it easier for people to find a dentist taking on NHS patients.

With living costs on the rise, our new findings show widening health inequalities as people in every part of the country struggle to pay for dental care.

We have seen a shortage of NHS appointments, which has affected people on the lowest incomes the most, meaning they were less likely to have dental treatment than those on higher incomes.

We made renewed calls on NHS England and the Department of Health and Social care to put a reformed dental contract in place.

Changes to NHS dental contracts

Our findings achieved widespread media attention and as a result NHS England announced changes, including:



- Increasing the payments for dentists when treating patients with complex needs, for example, people needing work done on three or more teeth.
- Requiring dental practices to regularly update the national directory as to whether they are taking new NHS patients.
- Moving resources from dental practices that are underperforming.

What difference will this make?

This announcement showed the power of people's feedback – with decision makers listening to your voice and taking action.

With these changes in place it should be easier for people to find a new dentist taking on NHS patients, elevating the stress and worry so many suffer when they cannot afford to go private.



"Sitting in the dentist's office, listening to the cost of treatments brought me to tears. Whenever I eat and feel a twinge my heart drops. I panic that something terrible is happening. MPs have money to get care if they need, most people don't. There's no version of private dentistry that's affordable."

Lydia, from Somerset

Positive changes to patient transport support

Getting to healthcare appointments can be hard for people who don't have private transport, and with the cost of living crisis more people are struggling to afford travel. Fortunately, recent changes will make it easier for people to access support and quicker for those who need to claim back costs.

For those who don't have private transport, live a long way from services or cannot afford public transport, getting to healthcare appointments is a struggle. This can often result in people missing appointments for vital care like chemotherapy or dialysis.

Our recommendations:

1. The NHS should always ask about transport support during the hospital discharge process, so people have a way to get home.
2. No one should be discharged from hospital at night unless transport can be arranged, so patients aren't stranded.
3. An eligibility criteria review of NHS Non- Emergency Patient Transport Services to ensure consistency across the country, so that people with long-term conditions can use this vital service.
4. Improvements to the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme so that people who need financial support are aware of the benefits and reimbursed quickly.

What difference will this make?

Thanks to our call for change, NHS England have announced changes including new clear and consistent eligibility criteria, quicker reimbursement to the travel cost scheme and a commitment to 100% zero emission journeys by 2035.

Our evidence also informed the new hospital discharge guidance, which now ensures patients have transport to get home from hospital.

By June 2022, 6,700 people had been offered transport costs when the care they were offered was not at their usual hospital, as a direct result of our recommendations. Without this, the choice to be seen sooner would be limited to people who could afford travel and accommodation.

These changes should ensure that people don't need to skip their appointments simply because they can't afford to travel there – giving them access to the care they need.



"I need information on transport for someone attending regular dialysis. They can't travel on public transport. It would require two buses and they are too ill. They also do not have anyone who can drive them there."

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Healthwatch Sunderland shared with the NHS experiences people had shared with them about the difficulties faced by some patients when accessing hospital appointments that had been relocated away from Sunderland. They shared June's story, which when presented in person really helped decision makers to understand the issues. This resulted in plans to commission a new transport service to assist patients and make it easier for them to attend appointments.

Getting services to involve the public



Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

Healthwatch Cumbria worked with a local group of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) to help ensure patients voices were heard. By doing this they improved communication and understanding of the challenges facing the practice and how they were tackling the issues together with holding discussions directly with patients to help resolve the problems. This has improved care locally, as well as relationships between the practices and their patients.

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Over the years, Healthwatch Sefton have been raising the issue of patients losing their property, such as hearing aids or dentures, whilst admitted to hospital. In response to our latest concerns Southport and Ormskirk hospital piloted the introduction of yellow cardboard personal property boxes, which were a success and rolled out across the rest of the trust.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Examples of reaching a community less often heard from
- Examples of reaching people struggling from socio-economic deprivation
- Example of how you have made sure the the voices from your local community have been heard by local NHS leaders and ICS.
- Example four

Better care for fishermen

There are 11,000 fishermen in the UK spending long unsociable hours at sea, which makes it hard for them to use public services. When Healthwatch Kent reached out to hear the experiences of local fishermen, many said getting a GP appointment was difficult because they were at sea during practice opening times. They also avoided making appointments because they wouldn't get paid for missing work.

Healthwatch Kent recommended that GP opening hours should be extended, and more health check sessions should be held at the local docks to allow fishermen to get the medical checks they needed.



“I could do with going to the GP about my elbow. But nowadays the GP wants you to call at 8:30... I just can't call at that time. By the time I'm back on shore, all the appointments have been taken.”

Local fisherman



Breaking down barriers to life saving screening

Cervical cancer screenings save around 2,000 lives a year in the UK. But uptake in Bolton was lower than the national average, particularly in Rumworth, an ethnically diverse area, due to religious and cultural reasons.

With the help of local groups, Healthwatch Bolton hosted sessions in the community to break down the barriers. A local mosque was used to hold screenings, creating an environment where women felt comfortable and could speak to health professionals without feeling judged.

Due to the success of the project, women can now access life saving screenings for cervical cancer and build a trusted relationship with a medical professional they can go to when other health issues arise.

“I did not plan to have my screening test done when I attended the pop-up clinic; however, seeing how helpful the staff were, I decided to have my test done. I felt more comfortable and relaxed than going to my health centre.”

Local resident



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

Help to find dental care in Leeds

Healthwatch Leeds had 304 people contact them for advice and information on dental services. The public reported to them that most practices were not taking on new patients, and that some had waiting lists of up to five years.

The impact of delayed treatment has resulted in people living with considerable pain, developing medical resistance and dental conditions worsening.



"I'm so embarrassed about my teeth. I can't leave the house. I'm so depressed about this."

Shannel, Leeds resident

Healthwatch Leeds's advice and information has meant people who need urgent treatment know their options and have clear information.



"Thank you for all the information you gathered to help me make an informed choice about treatment for my tooth."

Lynn, Leeds resident

Healthwatch Leeds have met regularly and shared information with the Yorkshire and Humber NHS England dental commissioning team and the British Dental Association. They also presented findings to a Scrutiny Board workshop.

Helping residents in poverty cope with rising energy bills

Islington Somali Community partnered with Healthwatch Islington on their Winter Wellness project. Across the partnership they helped over 700 residents, giving out information in a wide range of community languages.

One of the residents who Islington Somali Community supported had been through a difficult time during the pandemic. The family were struggling financially, and the bills kept piling up. She had tried to stay on top of things and most of her bills were paid. However, her energy bills were too much for her, and the amount she owed kept increasing due to extra fines.

Islington Somali Community tried reasoning with her energy provider who demanded the full payment. They eventually said there was nothing they could do because they had passed her account on to debt collectors.

Islington Somali Community found out about Step Change, a specialist debt charity, through Healthwatch at one of our Winter Wellness information briefings.

As a result, they were able to advise their client to apply to Step Change for support. After the client signed up for Step Change, Islington Somali Community contacted her energy provider and managed to set up a repayment plan.



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote their local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Reviewed GP and dentist websites to review accessibility
- Collected the most up-to-date information on changes to services, such as whether NHS dental appointments were available at a practice

Cathy

"Volunteering for Healthwatch has given me skills I can put on my CV when looking for my first job when I finish university later this year. Helping with their social media has taught me so much about campaigns and given me a head start into my new career."



Gary

"Helping other people to share their experiences with Healthwatch is so important to me. I did, and my local GP centre changed its opening hours to be more inclusive as a result of patient feedback. People are often surprised when I explain to them that sharing their feedback really does lead to change. I enjoy doing my bit to make sure local services in this area are the best they can be."



Susan

"I recently joined the Board and have enjoyed working together with the local Health and Wellbeing Committee to ensure local services are meeting people's needs. The experiences that Healthwatch collect are invaluable to shaping these conversations to ensure we have a good understanding of the needs of the community in our local area."



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 www.healthwatch.org/localname

 **0123 456 789**

 **Email@email.com**

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£3,377,309	Expenditure on pay	£2,089,576
Additional income	£219,929	Non-pay expenditure	£776,448
		Office and management fee	£283,362
Total income	£3597,238	Total expenditure	£3,149,386

Additional funding is broken down by:

- **£4,000 funding** received from Healthwatch England for work on a project
- **£800 funding** received from a local charity to support their project

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

Top three priorities for 2023–24

1. List your top three priorities for next year
2. These could include tackling health inequalities further
3. Or plans to reach areas of the community you currently don't hear from.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ
[Include name of company holding local Healthwatch contract if different and any sub contractors].

Healthwatch [insert name] uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of [number] members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met [number] times and made decisions on matters such as [provide two examples of decisions which were made].

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain peoples experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website [include details of anywhere else it will be made available].

Responses to recommendations

We had [number] providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example we take information to [give some examples of committees or other places where you share what you have heard with decision makers at local authority level.]

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in [name of Integrated Care System]. For example, we [give details of committees or other places where you share information at ICS level and explain where this is in collaboration with Healthwatch in other areas within the ICS]. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Enter and view

This year, we made [number] of Enter and View visits. We made [number] recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
GP Practice – Willowbank	Patients raised safety concerns	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these and patient safety improved.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch [name] is represented on the [name] Health and Wellbeing Board by [provide name and job title]. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by [provide a brief overview of their activities].

Healthwatch [name] is represented on [name] Integrated Care Partnerships by [provide details] and [name] Integrated Care Boards by [provide details]. [If you have a seat within any other system level body mention them here]

2021–2022 Outcomes

Project / activity	Changes made to services



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NE1 4PA

www.healthwatch.co.uk

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 @HealthwatchE

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchE](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchE)

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Annual report template 2022–23

InDesign version

Read and delete this page before publication

About this template

Your annual report is a chance for you to report on your statutory activities over the last year. You should show how your work has made a difference to the commissioning, provision and management of health and social care services in your area.

We know that it can be hard to showcase the impact of our work – quite often it doesn't fit into one annual year. This template gives you a suggested structure for your annual report to help showcase your impact from projects over time and takes into account the legislation that sets out the information you are required to include.

Supporting resources

You can download the following resources from the [Communications Centre](#). You will need to log in to download the template, there is only one log in per Healthwatch.

If you need help accessing the communications centre, please contact hub@healthwatch.co.uk

- A PowerPoint version of the template.
- An InDesign version of the template.
- A range of graphics to help showcase your work visually.
- You can also access a range of images via our [Photo library](#).

Ensure your content is in plain English

Before you finalise your document, it is a good idea to make sure that you have used accessible language, and that your words are clear and readable. There are a number of tools that can help you:

1. Guidelines:

[New brand guidelines](#)

[Our tone of voice guidance](#)

2. Online tools such as:

<https://rewordify.com>

<https://www.grammarly.com>

[Hemingway app](#)

[Readability Test Tool](#)

[Plain English Campaign](#)

Using our design font Poppins

This template has been designed using our design font 'Poppins'. This is a Google font and easy to download at no cost. However, you will need to install it on your computer before you can use it.

Download Poppins from [Google fonts](#)

Writing your case studies

Choosing your case study

This section allows you to pick two projects that you want to talk about in more detail in your annual report. It's important to focus on projects where you can talk about what has changed for people as a result of the project rather than getting caught up talking a lot about the process of what you did and how you did it. Remember your readers are far more interested in the outcomes – how did it change things for local people?

Your story should address these points:

What and Who?

- What is the issue that you are focusing on? E.g. Access to GP appointments or advice for carers on where they can go for support.
- Who is the group of people you are referring to? E.g. Under 25s or the Gypsy and Traveller community.

How?

- How did you conduct your research? E.g. A survey or focus group.
- Did you work with other organisations?

Key findings:

- What have you found? E.g. What did people tell you about X?

Recommendations:

- What recommendations did you make?
- Did the service take them on board?
- How have these recommendations improved care for people?

Top tips:

- Focus on impact and keep this as the main point of the story. Avoid including too much detail.
- Has this work received any feedback or been commended? Think about incorporating a short quote from someone you helped or worked with.
- What happened as a result of your work?
- Make each word count. Avoid unnecessary detail. E.g. internal decisions.

When selecting a case study, you should show how you have understood the experiences of different communities. Highlight how you have worked with other groups, including those who are defined under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Carers