

Together

healthwatch
in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

we're making health and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth
& Torbay at Wonford House
in Exeter with Devon
Partnership
NHS Trust



Contents

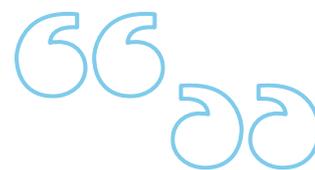
Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Highlights from our year	9
10 years of improving care	10
Listening to your experiences	14
Hearing from all communities	20
Advice and information	26
Volunteers	28
Organisations we work with	30
Statutory statements	43
Finances and future priorities	46



"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



“This year we celebrate 10 years of Healthwatch, and it has been a real pleasure to be part of the organisation’s journey.

This report describes the wide range of engagement, representation and impact undertaken by Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay over the past year. However, this has been the culmination of a decade of hard work and commitment by Healthwatch staff and volunteers.

The past few years have seen health and social care services recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Services have inevitably been under pressure in such exceptional circumstances and all concerned have recognised that new ways of working are required to meet changing demands and expectations. Healthwatch officers and volunteers have played a significant part in this new approach to health and social care across our county.

Healthwatch has consistently raised the crucial role of ongoing feedback on services to providers and commissioners in order to capture what is working well and what may need to be improved. We further recognise the potential of true co-design and co-delivery of services alongside our diverse communities. We have therefore worked closely with our local voluntary, community and statutory partners to ensure that residents’ voices, including the most vulnerable are marginalised, are taken into account.

The new 2022 Health and Care Act is a such a key change that is impacting all aspects of the way health and social care is delivered locally. It introduced new legislative measures that aim to make it easier for health and care organisations to deliver joined-up care for people who rely on multiple different services, building on earlier recommendations by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

The main purpose of the Health and Care Act is to establish a legislative framework that supports collaboration and partnership—working to integrate services for patients. Among a wide range of other measures, the Act also includes targeted changes to public health, social care and the oversight of quality and safety.

With these key changes to healthcare affecting us all, we therefore welcome the progress made by ‘One Devon’, our Integrated Care System, and much appreciate the openness of its officers and system leads. Our common objective is the wellbeing of our communities.

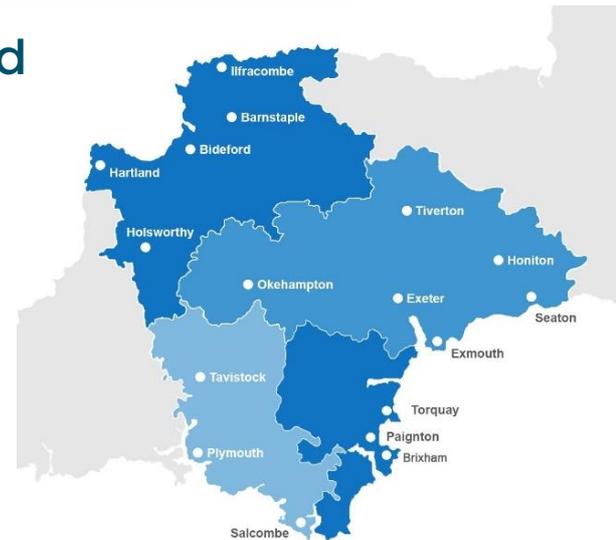
I would like to thank all those that have supported Healthwatch in our mission to monitor and improve health and social care. Relationships between local organisations are consequently robust, and we look forward to our partnerships continuing and strengthening. Together we really are making a difference, and I am confident that such progress is evident in our Annual Report.”



Dr Kevin Dixon
Chair of Healthwatch in
Devon, Plymouth & Torbay

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are your local health and social care champions.

From Ilfracombe to Salcombe, we exist to speak up for the 1.2 million people in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, making sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear their voices and use their feedback to improve care. We can also help them to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



In addition to our dedicated walk-in centres in Torbay and Plymouth, in wider Devon 'Healthwatch Champions' provide specialist support, guidance and advice in all aspects of health and social care. Part of Citizens Advice, the Healthwatch Champions have offices based in East Devon, North & West Devon, Exeter, South Hams, Torrington & Mid Devon and Teignbridge.



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.

Why do we exist?

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. Healthwatch exist on a national and local level, working towards the same goal of enabling people to have a voice about their health and social care systems.

Healthwatch England

Healthwatch England (HWE) are a statutory committee of the independent regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Their main statutory functions are to:

- Provide leadership, guidance, support and advice to local Healthwatch organisations.
- Escalate concerns about health and social care services which have been raised by local Healthwatch to CQC. CQC are required to respond to advice from the Healthwatch England Committee.
- Provide advice to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, NHS England and English local authorities, especially where we are of the view that the quality of services provided are not adequate. Bodies to whom advice is given are required to respond in writing. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is also required to consult Healthwatch England on the NHS mandate, which sets the objectives for the NHS.

Local Healthwatch

There are 152 local Healthwatch set up across each local authority in England. Their main statutory functions are to:

- Obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services. Local Healthwatch make these views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services.
- Make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
- Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
- Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them.
- Make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping us to carry out our role as national champion.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the CQC to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern.

One Healthwatch

Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch work together to share information, expertise and learning to improve health and social care services in England.

How it works in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

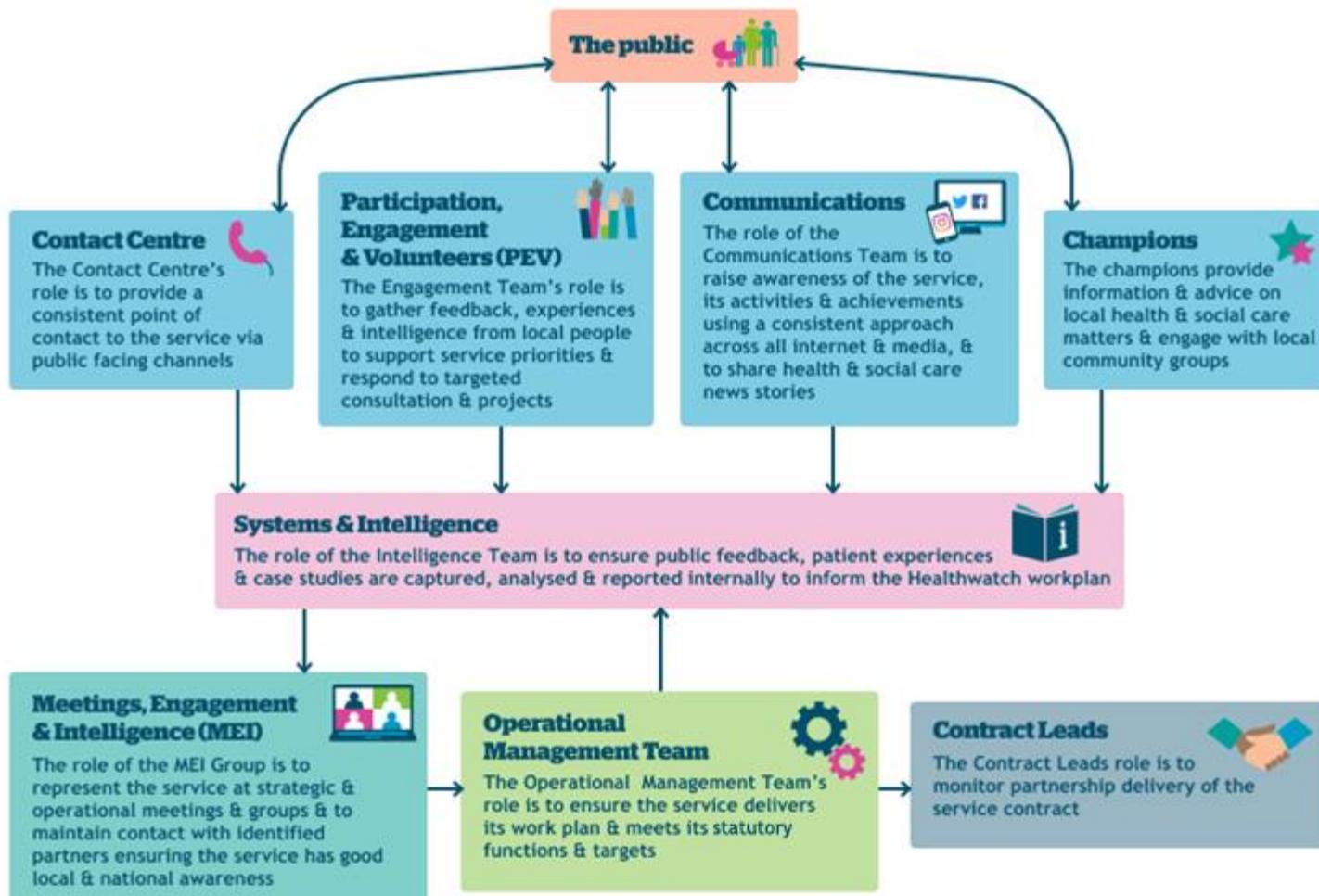
Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council jointly commission local Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. Although these three services are jointly commissioned, each local authority area retains the distinct identities of their own local Healthwatch.

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay are delivered by a collaborative partnership of Colebrook (SW) Ltd, Engaging Communities South West and Citizens Advice Devon.

The partnership provides the vision, infrastructure, staffing and overall governance, ensuring delivery of the contract as the hosted organisation. As Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are independent services driven by local people, an independent steering group has been set up in each locality - led by local lay people.

The role of each steering group is to support the delivery of its local workplan, priorities and statutory functions, working in partnership with the staff team to create a successful local Healthwatch to deliver the vision for the service. Our Steering Groups meet quarterly and use local insight to decide on engagement priorities for their area.

Our staff work in key specific areas to ensure the Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay service delivers its workplan, meets its statutory functions and achieves its set targets. These are highlighted in the service team structure below.



Who funds us?

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) fund the work of Healthwatch nationally. DHSC gives money to local councils so they can commission an effective independent local Healthwatch service.

This money is essential to ensuring each local Healthwatch has the resources to provide a high-quality service for you. Although local Healthwatch are funded by and accountable to local authorities, they are completely independent.

Funding Challenges

To enable the Government to track what is happening to its investment, Healthwatch England ask local Healthwatch every year how much funding they expect to receive and publish this information.

This report looks at the funding for each local Healthwatch in 2022-23, how funding has changed over time and the potential impact this is having. The report also provides recommendations for Government on what steps they can take in response to their findings.

Key Report Findings

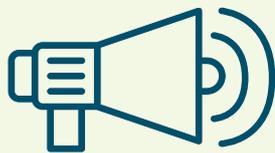
- The 152 Healthwatch in England report that they will collectively receive £25,400,000 from local authorities to carry out their statutory activities in 2022-23.
- Although funding in cash terms is projected to increase slightly on the figures we reported in 2021-22, once inflation is taken into account, overall funding has fallen by £3.7 million.
- Seventy-five local authorities have not fully passed on the funding they received from DHSC for local Healthwatch.
- Most local Healthwatch services have received an in-year real terms funding reduction.
- When local Healthwatch started work in 2013, the Department of Health and Social Care allocated £40,500,000 to fund local Healthwatch services. When adjusted for inflation, the real-term funding for local Healthwatch is now only 49% of what was initially allocated.
- Funding reductions risk impacting the ability of some local Healthwatch to carry out their statutory functions.

Recommendations

Healthwatch England have made several recommendations to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. These include enabling them to escalate concerns related to specific councils, updating local authorities' commissioning guidance, and exploring a more sustainable funding model for the local Healthwatch network.

Year in review

Reaching out



2,393 people

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

1,386 people

were provided with information, advice or signposted to other services who could help via our contact centre.

348,492 people

engaged with us on social media with **3,026 people** subscribing to our Email Bulletins.

Making a difference to care

We published

11 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Feedback from the Deaf Community



Health and care that works for you

We're lucky to have

27 outstanding **volunteers** who give up their valuable time

We're proud to have

Over 130 local community groups & organisations making up our **Healthwatch Assist Network**

We currently employ

17 staff working across **3** local Healthwatch



Just some of the differences we've made this year

Spring	 <p>We supported Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust by gathering feedback about the health and care services they provide.</p>	 <p>We released our Patient Experience Summary Report on Pharmacy Services in Devon after Pharmacy Services feedback increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Summer	 <p>We found out more about how elective care waiting lists impacted patients and how people would like these to be addressed.</p>	 <p>We supported the #BecauseWeAllCare campaign which saw 54,000 people come forward nationally to tell Healthwatch England about issues they faced with services.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We worked with North Dartmoor Primary Care Network to find out more about people's views on mental health services in Devon.</p>	 <p>We found out about the physical and mental impact of working from home, and how working from home has affected people's work/life balance.</p>
Winter	 <p>We worked with Mayflower Medical Group in Plymouth to help address patient concerns in accessing GP services and to ask for suggestions on improving.</p>	 <p>We learned more about the experiences of unpaid carers and the impact of providing care at home, sharing the findings of this report directly with those responsible for commissioning Carers services.</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. There are 152 local Healthwatch set up across each local authority in England. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences with us, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. Thank you to all our volunteers and champions that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are just a few of our highlights:

How we have made care better, together

Gathering your views



By launching a unique online feedback centre in 2014 via the three Healthwatch websites in Devon, where the public can rate and review a local health and/or social care service anonymously online. This feedback centre has acquired nearly 9,000 reviews of over 3,000 services in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, which have been shared with health and care providers and commissioners.



The three 'rate & review' feedback centres can be accessed via mobile via each local Healthwatch's website in Devon



Raising your concerns

Raising the concerns of local people nationally to influence national health and care policies. From sharing the experiences of those seeking help for gender identity issues with NHS England and commissioners in 2017 to Public Health England releasing new national guidance in 2015 on the complexity of the Shingles vaccination rollout, there are many examples of positive outcomes based solely on the feedback local residents shared with us.



We shared what people told us with those in charge of gender identity services in Devon, along with NHS England and those responsible for commissioning services nationally.

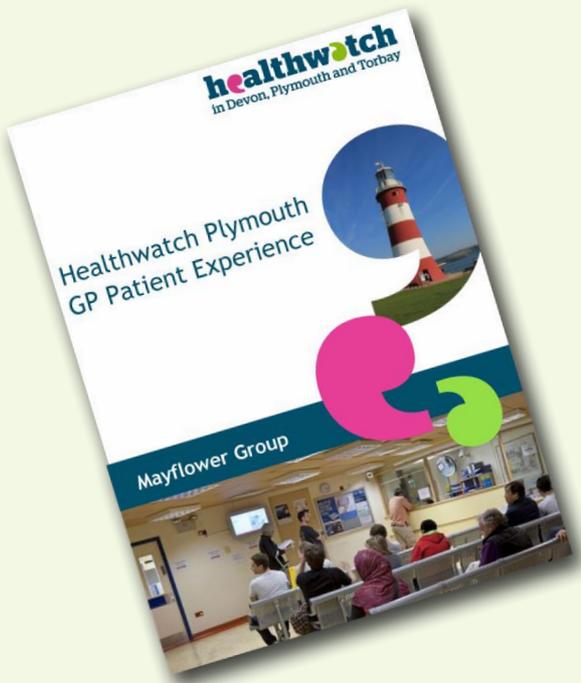
10 years of improving care

How we have made care better, together

Working with Providers



To help them understand how they can improve services, including hospitals, care homes and GP Practices such as the Mayflower Medical Group of five practices in Plymouth, where in 2022 hundreds of patients were surveyed by local Healthwatch in order to address long established patient concerns and frustrations in accessing GP services.



The report into GP Patient experience at Mayflower Group in Plymouth

Working with Commissioners



To gather the views of the public to be used for positive change. This includes working with NHS Commissioning Bodies in 2016 to host a 'New Model of Community Care' consultation in South Devon where thousands of local residents shared feedback that was directly used by NHS Commissioners to shape their model of delivering care in the local community. We conducted a follow up consultation in 2019 to cover wider Devon, where thousands of Devon residents' feedback was fed directly into the development of the NHS's local plans that explain how priorities set out in the NHS Long Term Plan would be delivered.



One of our community consultation events in Ashburton in 2016

10 years of improving care

How we have made care better, together

Winning Awards



Being nominated for and winning numerous national and local awards, including national Healthwatch England 'Highly Commended' Awards for Plymouth in 2015, our Torbay digital support project in 2018, our unique partnership with Citizens Advice Devon in 2019 and another in 2017 for highlighting concerns about local home care in Torbay and South Devon, which led to the Care Quality Commission placing the care organisation into special measures until improvements were made.



Helen Parker, award judge & Healthwatch National Committee Member, Pat Teague, Simon Culley, Sarah Bickley, Dr Kevin Dixon



One of our virtual BSL interpreted forums with the deaf community

Reaching Out

Working with vulnerable or seldom-heard groups throughout our 10-year existence to gather and share their valuable experiences, including carers, people with learning difficulties, those suffering with poor mental health, the elderly, children and young people and the Deaf community, where in 2022 online meetings were conducted with the help of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters to gather their views. Our 2018 independent inquiry into the causes of isolation and loneliness in Devon even inspired Devon County Council to launch the Devon Charter to End Loneliness.



One of our many reports on the healthcare experiences of children and young people, including sexual health education and services.

10 years of improving care

How we have made care better, together

Voluntary Sector Support



Working with partners in the voluntary sector and other organisations to ensure the views of real people are heard by those in charge. This includes extra support on offer during the COVID-19 pandemic and establishing a network of Healthwatch 'Assists' in 2020 consisting of hundreds of community organisations committed to linking with Healthwatch so they can gather information about the health and care services used by the people they support..



During COVID one of our own colleagues Ola become a local COVID 'Champion', translating vital information about COVID-19 into Polish for the local community.



Digital Support

Supporting people to access digital healthcare resources led to Healthwatch Torbay creating 'Digital Health Devon' in 2018 - a free online e-Learning resource complete with video and screenshot guides via www.digitalhealthdevon.co.uk - who also run a number of different digital initiatives in the local community.



One of our Digital Drop In community sessions in Bishopsteignton, South Devon.



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.

Reading our Annual Report Online?

Did you know if you click this image on the right when it appears on pages within this report it will take you directly to the corresponding report on our websites!



Advocating for fairer NHS dentistry

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

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 shared your feedback in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay around dental services with Healthwatch England, who 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

They collated our findings with other local Healthwatch around the country, achieving widespread media attention. 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.

House of Commons Health and Care Committee

Recently this year local Healthwatch and Healthwatch England representatives presented evidence from the Healthwatch Network in person to MPs about poor access to NHS dentistry to the House of Commons Health and Care Committee. MPs then questioned primary care minister Neil O'Brien and NHSE officials, often referring to Healthwatch evidence. He agreed that access needed to improve, especially in terms of people not being forced to travel long distances to NHS services and said the upcoming NHS workforce plan should help with this. We await the committee's published inquiry report and recommendations to government.

Listening to the views of the seldom heard



In 2022, Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay held a series of meetings with the South West representative of the Royal Association for Deaf People to discuss various concerns that were being raised around access to British Sign Language (BSL) qualified interpreters – including to support the complaints process.

We raised requests for information around the complaints process at the three Hospital Trusts in Devon and the responses indicated that there were differing procedures in place to supporting Deaf patients.

Following the success of previous engagement, we wanted to explore the experiences of the Deaf community in three further areas: complaints, GP services, and changing technology. Online meetings were conducted via Zoom and attended by 12 members of the Deaf community, alongside two British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters, two Healthwatch staff, one representative of the Royal Association for Deaf People and one representative of Living Options.

We then produced a report of our key findings and recommendations.

Our recommendations:

1. Processes on requesting an interpreter should be reviewed to ensure consistency and that a Communications toolkit is available for accessible information including a signed video.
2. Communication preferences should be easily accessible by staff on a patients record to avoid inappropriate communications. This should extend to the Devon and Cornwall Care Record (DCCR).
3. Share best practice and align policies and procedures as much as possible to ensure that processes on booking an interpreter are consistent from a Deaf patient's point of view.
4. Note the feedback within this report and audit Local Authority websites and services to ensure information is accessible to the Deaf community.



What difference will this make?

The findings, observations and recommendations in our report have been shared with NHS Devon, the three Hospital Trusts in Devon, Devon Partnership Trust and Livewell Southwest (who provide Mental Health Services in Plymouth) Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council and NHS England/Improvements South West Head of Stakeholder Engagement. All have expressed a desire to take on board the views contained within to benefit the deaf community in any future planned service changes.

Mental Health Support in Devon

In 2021, Healthwatch Devon and North Dartmoor Primary Care Network (NDPCN) worked together to find out about the health and wellbeing needs of local people; mental health support was found to be particularly important to the community.



Following this engagement, in 2022 NDPCN GP practices, health and social care partners, and other partners in the community, voluntary, and statutory sector wanted to find out more about people's views on mental health services locally and Devon-wide. This includes any service that can be accessed or has been accessed relating to mental health, either online or in person from the statutory services (NHS) or voluntary sector. By understanding what is done well, what could be done better, and what is missing, NDPCN can plan how to deliver local mental health services for the future.

Some Key Findings:

1. When asked what they would like to be available in their community, respondents said they would like more easily accessible services, (e.g. drop-ins and self-referral options), talk therapies and services for specific populations (e.g. people with complex needs, or young people), more appointments available to reduce waiting times, and more services available in the local area to reduce travel distances.
2. When asked what went well when previously using mental health services, respondents said they had positive experiences with talk therapies, supportive and helpful staff, good communication, quick and easy access.
3. When asked what could be improved, respondents said they would like more appropriate services, more joined-up care, greater availability of appointments, and easier access to services and information.



What difference will this make?

NDPCN and its stakeholders have since set up a weekend mental wellbeing drop in cafe for those experiencing mental health issues of isolation which runs every Saturday. This is a free service run by a trained facilitator, with no referral needed and everyone is welcome. This has also provided much needed support for patients over weekend where there were seen to be less services and support available.

They are also working closely with Community Links to make the culture around mental health more positive. There was also a need for more support for younger children and adolescents, so they recruited a children and young persons mental health coach to work across the patch ensure access to early intervention. The work around mental health is on-going and the PCN are passionate about improving services locally and will continue to do so with positive improvements made already.

GP Services in Plymouth

In May 2022, Healthwatch Plymouth (HWP) were approached by the new provider of Mayflower Medical Group (MMG) to undertake a patient survey.

The survey's focus was to address long established patient concerns and frustrations in accessing GP services at the five surgeries that form MMG and to ask for suggestions on generally improving the service and in particular improving access.



Some Key Findings:

1. Primary access routes for patients have been phone contact or eConsult. As patients can be directed to complete an eConsult on phoning or when accessing the surgery in person, use of this service is inflated in the results.
2. 82.61% (228 respondents) of patients stated they waited in a queue when contact by phone with 40.91% (99 respondents) of these stating they waited longer than 40 minutes.
3. 70% (182 respondents) stated that multi options when phoning was useful, but the current options need reviewing along with welcome messaging to speed up the process.
4. 294 respondents had used the online consultation process, but nearly 50% said that they found it not easy to use.
5. When told they would be contacted back by a member of staff, 65.20% of respondents stated they were not contacted within the specified timeframe.



What difference will this make?

Following the outcome of the survey Mayflower Medical Group have put in place an action plan to address the concerns that have been raised, in regard to access to the surgery. Mayflower Medical Group will work through the action plan with the key accountable individuals to explore what resolution could be put into place. Mayflower Medical Group will work closely with Healthwatch Plymouth to provide feedback on those areas so that this may be shared with their patients and the wider community.

“ Mayflower Medical Group would like to thank Healthwatch Plymouth for their support to work in collaboration and to gather a wider scope of patient feedback. It was imperative that a wider audience had been reached and sought for feedback and interaction on their experience of the primary care services.

Statement from Mayflower Medical Group

Last year Healthwatch Torbay were approached by Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust to support them in gathering feedback about the health and care services they provide.

The Trust provides joined-up care across Torbay and South Devon, delivering acute services from Torbay Hospital and community-based health and social care across a wide range of community sites and in people's homes. The Trust serves a population of approximately 286,000 residents, plus about 100,000 visitors at any one time during the summer holiday season. They have around 500,000 face-to-face contacts with patients in their homes and communities each year and see over 78,000 people in the emergency department annually. The Trust asked us to help them to understand what matters to local people in relation to health and care services, in order to plan services that are fit for the future.



Some Key Findings:

1. When asked what could improve people's experiences of using the Trust's services, the five most popular responses were better information sharing (69% of respondents), more joined up working between local organisations (63%), ensuring health and social care services are available close to home (59%), recognising and responding to individual needs (55%), and better communication following hospital discharge (54%).
2. 37% of respondents said providing feedback to the Trust was "easy" or "very easy," 34% described it as "okay," and 29% of respondents said it was "difficult" or "very difficult."
3. Respondents named social media (63%), newsletters (60%), and local newspapers (39%) as the three most suitable methods for communicating with patients, their families, and their carers.

[Click here to read the report online](#)

What difference will this make?

The feedback from the local community will support the Trust in shaping and developing how they use patient and service user experience of health and care services to develop their strategy and identify key priorities that matter to local people for 2022-2025.

“Thank you for the results of this report, the findings are very important... we will use this information to develop our patient and service user experience strategic plan and priorities. This will help us achieve our aim of empowering everyone to give feedback to improve health and care services in Torbay and South Devon.

Statement from Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation 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:

- Holding online BSL interpreted forums with the deaf community
- Holding consultations to find out more about how the Cost-of-Living crisis has impacted local people's health and wellbeing
- Reaching out to specific groups such as unpaid carers, those working from home, the male population, older people or those with learning disabilities
- Providing local NHS leaders with real face-to-face case studies of local people experiencing issues accessing their health and care.

Three ways we shared different voices from the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard. Here is a snapshot of some in the last year.

The views of those who care for loved ones

Nearly 85,000 people in Devon provide unpaid care, with one third (33.4%) providing more than 20 hours of unpaid care per week. To learn more about the experiences of unpaid carers and the impact of providing care at home, we developed a survey in conjunction with Devon Carers, Improving Lives Plymouth, and the Torbay Carers Service.



121 people answered the survey. Some selected key findings are:

- 55% of respondents said they felt their health and safety was at risk due to their caring duties, 25% felt it was "somewhat" at risk, and 20% felt it was not at risk.
- 69% of respondents said their caring responsibilities "frequently" or "always" affect their ability to relax at home, and 52% of respondents said their caring duties "frequently" or "always" limited their ability to leave the house.
- 72% of respondents said their physical health had been worse since becoming a carer and 30% said it had been "about the same." 84% of respondents said their mental health had been worse and 16% said it had been "about the same." No respondents said their physical or mental health had improved.
- 50% of respondents said they had not accessed any physical or mental health support services. 33% said they had accessed mental health support and 16% said they had accessed physical health support.

We shared the findings of this report directly with those responsible for commissioning Carers services for them to consider and respond to and will continue to monitor patient and public feedback about services and report that feedback to the Integrated Care System in Devon to inform service delivery and change.



Three ways we shared different voices from the community

Listening to those waiting for treatment

Dealing with the pandemic impacted the amount of planned care the NHS has been able to provide, resulting in longer waiting times for many patients. Last year we were asked by the Devon Integrated Care System (ICS) to find out how elective care waiting lists impacted patients and how people would like these to be addressed.

The ICS wanted to work with local people to develop plans to tackle the waiting lists. Working with Healthwatch, the ICS invited patients on waiting lists to share their experiences and thoughts about how best to approach the issue through a series of workshops.

The feedback from patients will be used to directly inform how the NHS in Devon address supporting patients and protecting elective care so they can be seen as quickly and effectively as possible.

Click here
to read the
report online



The impact of working from home

There are almost 370,000 people in employment in Devon, with the proportion of self-employed workers (14.7%) being higher than the national average (9.3%). The Covid-19 pandemic changed the way that many of us work; in spring 2022, 38% of working adults in the UK reported having worked from home at least once in the past seven days.

Healthwatch wanted to find out about the physical and mental impact of working from home, and how working from home has affected people's work/life balance.

We reported the feedback we gathered to the Integrated Care System in Devon to inform service delivery and change.

Click here
to read the
report online



Healthwatch Assist Network



The Healthwatch assist network gives Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay the opportunity to connect with a wider cross section of the local community.

The assist network is made up of over 130 local community groups & organisations, these include support groups, parent groups, sports groups, community centres, young people's groups and many groups representing the voice of those seldom heard members of the community. We regularly engage with the members of the network and we encourage an open channel of communication giving them the opportunity to share the voices of their community regarding health and social care services in Devon.

In 2022 we launched the first round of our **Healthwatch assist engagement grant**. The engagement grant aimed to support Healthwatch Assist members, with a payment of up to £250, undertake their own focused health and social care consultations or surveys within their communities on topics that matter most to them. The work they undertook gave them the opportunity to identify emerging or existing health and social care issues within their local communities.

The first round of the grant had five successful bids, all feeding information back on a wide range of topics:

The Youth mental health foundation – Used the grant to conduct a digital survey assessing self harm services for young people across Devon.

Devon in Sight – Used the grant to facilitate quarterly forums with their membership of the visually impaired & blind community. The forums were open and members were able share all experiences that they had with health care service in Devon.

North Devon Forum for autistic spectrum conditions & ADHD – Used the grant to fund a family day out for their members and gathered feedback on members experiences of health and social care services in a relaxed and informal environment.

Punk Against Poverty CIC – Used the grant to conduct a digital survey looking at the link between poverty and mental health, with a particular focus on the community of Torbay.

Recovery Devon CIC – Plan to use the grant to facilitate regular workshops to gather feedback on mental health services in Devon, along side creating a 'Letter of Choice'.

The Letter of Choice is to be a resource written by people with lived experience, with the support of mental health practitioners, to empower people on their mental health journey to know that they have choices in the paths they take to find recovery.

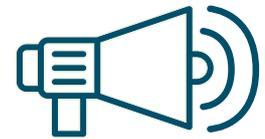
Calling all Community Groups!

We're looking for community groups & centres to join our Healthwatch Assist network & become part of our vital network of information!

Email hwassist@hwdevon-plymouth-torbay.org or call 0800 520 0640 to find out more

healthwatch
in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

Healthwatch Champions & Your Case Studies



We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. Healthwatch Champions are part of Citizens Advice and we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice. That's why we're here: to give people the confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem.



Healthwatch Champions in Devon provide specialist support, guidance and advice in all aspects of health and social care. The champions help clients resolve any health and social care enquiries. They have offices based in East Devon, North & West Devon, Exeter, South Hams, Torridge & Mid Devon and Teignbridge.

Case studies are an important way of highlighting the real issues that real people face locally. In this section there are a very small selection of some case studies gathered by our Healthwatch Champions in the past 12 months.

To contact a Healthwatch champion today please call 0800 520 0640.

Struggling to get a diagnosis

A lady who has been struggling for years to get a diagnosis and effective treatment for a head/neck injury, as a result of historic domestic violence, contacted a Healthwatch Champion for advice.

The lady explained she wanted effective treatment and diagnosis but has struggled to get this over the years. She said she felt alone with low mood and found everyday daily living activities difficult and how a diagnosis would help her get a befriender from 'Headway' (a charity that supports people with brain/ head injuries).

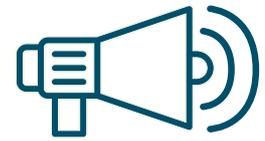
What difference did we make

A Healthwatch Champion wrote to the Client's GP on her behalf requesting a referral to a neurosurgeon and letter from GP confirming that Client had a brain/ head injury.

The client needed this letter to evidence to Headway that she has such an injury.

While waiting for GP letter, the Champion called Headway who advised the Client could phone their helpline for a chat if she needed to and an online support group was suggested that the lady was keen to join.

Two months later the Client reported that the GP has referred her to a neurosurgeon for diagnosis/treatment. The GP sent a letter as proof of injury and she was able to contact Headway with this evidence to arrange a befriender. Client will now be able to receive practical support at home and this will alleviate stress and worry.



Difficulty getting help at home

A lady contacted us after her partner received his first Covid jab and within 48 hours could not move. He reported symptoms of serious rheumatoid arthritis that were 'so bad that on some days he could not get out of bed'. The client was struggling to manage her caring role and job outside the home and the family were receiving no practical support at home. Client said that when she is at work her partner will not take his medication due to mental health issues.

What difference did we make

A Healthwatch Champion advised how as a Carer she could obtain practical help at home from Devon adult social care and also a carer's needs assessment and further advice and support via Devon Carers. The Client was also given information on the Vaccine Damage Payment, including information on eligibility, how to claim and time limits for claims and where to get legal advice.

As a result of advice, the Client now knows what practical help is available to the family and how to request it plus how to claim the Vaccine Damage Payment which if successful, would help to alleviate some of the family's financial pressures, stress and worry.

Access to Mental Health Support

A Client with a functional neurological disorder and Mental Health issues contacted us for help as he was unable to sustain a tenancy due to his Mental Health and had recently been homeless. He had approached his GP for Mental Health support and his GP referred him to the North Devon Community Mental Health Team (NDCMHT).

The Client was assessed by the NDCMHT and placed on the waiting list, but he had high levels of anxiety, and urgently needed face-to-face Mental Health support. His Mental Health was deteriorating, and he reported taking an overdose that required A&E CPR. The Client also disclosed historic child sexual abuse and that he had been told that Devon Rape Crisis would be unable to help him.

What difference did we make

A Healthwatch Champion wrote to NDCMHT on the Client's behalf stressing urgency of Client's case and when there was no response, the Champion made an official complaint. Two days after this the Client received a call from a manager at NDCMHT advising that he would be able to access face to face support from the Homeless Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN).

Our Client reported that he has seen the CPN and has further weekly sessions booked. Client has also been advised that the CPN can help him prepare for counselling/therapy from Devon Rape Crisis. Our Client is much happier now he is receiving regular face to face Mental Health support and this support should also help him sustain his tenancy.



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 a new GP Surgery, 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
- Promoting the Healthwatch England "your care your way" campaign on accessible information standards in health and care
- Working with local Learning Disability Ambassadors to review NHS 'easy read' letters in Dentistry and Primary Care.

How we share advice and information to the community

Here are just some of the ways we helped people access information in the last 12 months.

1,386 people were provided with information, advice or signposted to other services who could help via our **contact centre** – a dedicated, phone, email and online service. The online live webchat service is available via our three websites for people in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to find out more information. You can call the contact centre free on **0800 520 0640**.

Hundreds of thousands of people visited our three websites where they can view local services and rate their experiences with them anonymously.

Last year we improved the accessibility on our three websites following feedback from a partially sighted group coordinated by Devon in Sight. We improved our ‘Recite Me’ toolbar which allows adjustments to all elements of a webpage, including text, font, audio speech, graphics, language, and navigation.



Last year **13,925 people** followed us on social media via our three separate Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts for Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay, where we received an incredible **348,492 engagements** to our posts last year overall! Join our online community today!



3,026 people subscribed to our Email Bulletins where we share the latest updates from Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay and the health, care and voluntary sector locally every week. You can subscribe via our websites: www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk, www.healthwatchplymouth.co.uk, and www.healthwatchtorbay.org.uk.





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 Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out visits to local services to help them improve, including at local Emergency Departments in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay
- Reviewed health and care services websites and NHS 'easy read' letters to review accessibility Helped guide the future of Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay by meeting regularly via our Healthwatch Steering Groups. You can meet some of our Steering Group members on the next page.

Meet some of our Steering Group Members

Angie

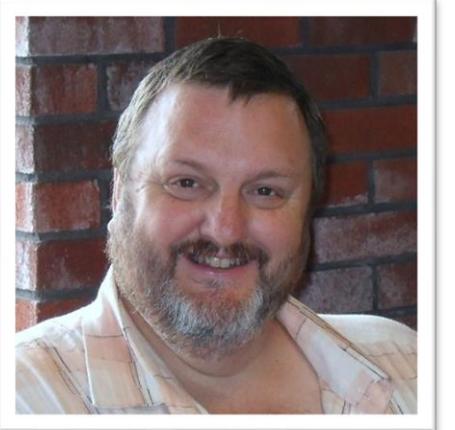
Angie founded 'What's Your Problem' C.I.C. in 2015 to ensure that people in our community had equal and fair access to justice. She Chairs both the Torbay Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Community Forum and the Standing Tall Community Partnership, supporting families affected by Domestic Abuse.

"I have joined the Healthwatch Torbay steering group as I'm keen to ensure that services in Torbay are people-led wherever possible."



John

John is a member of the Healthwatch Plymouth Steering Group. He was born and raised in Plymouth before gaining a BSc degree at Cardiff University. He then went on to serve for 30 years with Surrey Police where he was an Inspector and Chairman of the Federation. In his time with the Police he was a lead on Business Continuity & Strategic Planning, and was an advocate in various tribunals and hearings.



Malcolm

A member of the Healthwatch Devon Steering Group, Malcolm was a senior health & social care professional providing services to people with disabilities, learning disabilities, hearing loss, older adults in various settings, including Care Homes with Nursing. He now works as an independent advocate for people using services.

"I'm keen that people's voices are heard and they have a direct say in how services are developed."



Do you feel inspired?

We are always looking for new volunteers, so please get in touch.



0800 520 0640



Info@hwdevon-plymouth-torbay.org



www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk
www.healthwatchplymouth.co.uk
www.healthwatchtorbay.org.uk



Organisations we work with

We work with many voluntary organisations across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay representing the views and experiences of local people to influence change in a positive way. To enable us to do this effectively we have continued our representation at key groups and committees, both strategic and operational. This involvement allows a patient perspective to be presented and opportunities for patient involvement to be identified.

Statements from Partners

In June 2022 we were delighted to host our national partner Healthwatch England (HWE) who came to Devon to visit local services and find out more about the way real public feedback is used to improve care in the region.

NHS Devon worked with us to host HWE Chair Sir Robert Francis QC and the national HWE committee meeting, which included site visits to local services such as the COVID-19 vaccination site at Exeter Mosque, the Torbay community helpline, a new Mother and Baby Unit called Jasmine Lodge and other services at Devon Partnership NHS Trust, and NHS Nightingale Hospital in Exeter.



(Above) Members of Healthwatch England and ICS Devon Chair Dr Sarah Wollaston visit Exeter Mosque. (Below) Members of Healthwatch England and Healthwatch DPT with local NHS and ICS partners at the Committee Meeting.



“A huge thank you for your help, support and hospitality in making the visit by the Healthwatch England team an enjoyable and informative experience. It is a visit that they will not forget in a hurry.

Thanks also to [those NHS representatives] for taking the time to show the team around the various sites and to give them insight to the wonderful work that is being done in a collaborative way in Devon. I’m sure that other Healthwatch, ICS and voluntary organisations will be looking to follow your models of engagement.”



Healthwatch England Statement to Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay and NHS Devon

Statement from Partners

“The NHS in Devon has undergone a major organisational change in the past year in establishing an integrated care system and Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay has provided vital continuity for the patient voice in this.

“It is a board member of the One Devon Partnership, a new committee that includes a range of organisations and groups who can influence people’s health, wellbeing and care. The committee’s primary aim is drive integration by producing a strategy to join-up services, reduce inequalities, and improve people’s wellbeing, outcomes and experiences.

“Healthwatch continues to provide important feedback from patients, on big themes and small, so that as we redesign services we can better tailor them to meet the expectations of our local population.

“This has become even more crucial in the last year as the cost of living crisis threatens to have a disproportionate effect on those who are already at some disadvantage. Our mission at NHS Devon is to provide equal chances for everyone to live happy, healthy lives, and we need ‘critical friends’ such as Healthwatch to help achieve this.

“As an example, Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay launched a consultation early this year on mental health services – focussing on access, waiting times and quality of care.

“People using these services do often experience real inequality, and the information that Healthwatch uncovers in this consultation has a direct impact on our future design of mental health services across the county.

“We look forward to another year of close working with our partners in Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.”

Jane Milligan
Chief Executive
NHS Devon



One  **Devon**

Statements from Partners

In April 2023, senior members of Healthwatch visited Wonford House in Exeter for a tour of the site and to find out more about the work of Devon Partnership NHS Trust (DPT) – which commissions and delivers mental health, learning disability and neurodiversity services in the county (excluding Plymouth). The tour included visits to the Mother and Baby Unit and the Place of Safety, as well as a very productive discussion with members of DPT’s Executive Team.



Members of Healthwatch with NHS staff at DPT.

“We were delighted to welcome our Healthwatch colleagues as both of our organisations are keen to work more closely together.

As well as talking about some of our services and the people we support, we had a very useful discussion about how Healthwatch can support our work by representing the patient voice to positively influence and shape services.

There were also discussions about identifying possible areas of collaboration and about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – and we very much look forward to working more closely together.”



Melanie Walker
Chief Executive
Devon Partnership NHS Trust



Devon Partnership
NHS Trust

Statements from Partners

“The Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust welcomes the opportunity to provide a statement for the annual report produced by Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay for the year 2022/23.

It is extremely important to us that we listen to what matters to our local communities, and Healthwatch has once again provided us with invaluable insights and support to help us better understand how our patients are experiencing our services, which has enabled us to implement improvements across our services. This includes supporting system wide engagement in our emergency departments to understand our patient’s needs.

Healthwatch will continue to play a vital part in our plans for the future and will support us to achieve our commitment of ensuring that the patient voice is at the heart of the services we deliver.

We’d like to thank Healthwatch for their continued support and look forward to further joint working with Healthwatch colleagues in the future.”



Carolyn Mills
Chief Nursing Officer
Royal Devon University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust


Royal Devon
University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Statements from Partners

“We have continued to work closely with Healthwatch during the last 12 months. Their in-reach into the community and their work to support us in delivering services that meet the needs of our local population is much valued and includes:

- Healthwatch have repeated a vital piece of insight work for us with patients using Emergency Care. which will give us valuable understanding and trend data, building on a similar exercise they undertook in summer 2021. Devon Clinical Commissioning Group have again commissioned Healthwatch to understand people’s use of the Emergency Department at Derriford Hospital and all the emergency departments across Devon with an ambition of speaking to a total of 500 patients. As per summer 201, during spring 2023, the Healthwatch Engagement team came in and asked patients questions about their visit to the department, including whether they sought advice or treatment from any other services before arriving, if they were unable to access any other services, and if their visit was related to hospital treatment they are waiting to receive or have recently received. This time we worked with Healthwatch so they also asked for more of a narrative history from patients about what had brought them to the Emergency Department and, where patients were willing to give their NHS number with the researchers, a senior Emergency Department consultant and local GP have followed up with clinical validation of each patient’s visit (after that visit had ended) to understand if there are instances where patients could have been better served by another service . The findings will once again be instrumental in shaping communications with patients and the public and be fed back to operational managers to help them understand how services are used currently and how they might be improved
- In their regular newsletters, Healthwatch have continued to share news of our major capital developments such as the building of our REI and Urgent and Emergency Care Centre and our engagement work around this.
- Healthwatch continue to attend our Patient Experience Committee and provide feedback on the experiences of the users. In addition, we have used Healthwatch to undertake a complainant survey to understand how we can make improvements to our complaints process from a user point of view. The survey has now been completed and the results of this survey are pending.

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust values its great working relationship with Healthwatch and, as these examples demonstrate, has worked with them over this year closely and for the benefits of our patients and those we serve.”



Statements from Partners

“Engaging with our communities has never been more important. We want to put the voices of local people at the heart of everything we do and the services we deliver. Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay is a crucial part of helping us achieve this.

During the year we have worked with Healthwatch on a number of areas and topics that are incredibly important to our communities. We know that by furthering our understanding of people’s needs, we will be able to improve their experiences and outcomes.

We continue to work closely with Healthwatch and our system partners to understand people’s reasons for attending our emergency departments. This work is so important in understanding the demand on our urgent and emergency care services and is shaping future planning and decision making for these pathways.

A survey on men’s understanding of their health again provided an insight into the knowledge of conditions and awareness of support available among men in our communities. This highlighted men’s apprehension to seek help, which resulted in some targeted messaging and work to encourage men to engage more with health services.

Working with Torbay Carers Services and other Devon organisations that support unpaid carers, Healthwatch were able to highlight the impact that providing unpaid care at home has on people through their survey and report. Torbay Carers Services have been able to use this to inform the support, guidance and advice they offer.

Receiving Healthwatch’s findings following feedback from our deaf community on their experience of accessing our services was incredibly useful as part of our work to make our services as accessible as possible.

They are a welcome contributor to our feedback and engagement group, and we are very grateful for their invaluable insights.

I would like to congratulate Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay on another successful year and thank them for their continued support and contributions towards our vision of better health and care for all.”

Liz Davenport
Chief Executive
Torbay and South Devon NHS
Foundation Trust



Torbay and South Devon
NHS Foundation Trust



Statements from Partners

“Healthwatch have provided Devon County Council with valuable insight into the experiences of people receiving adult social care support from Devon County Council which has helped inform the way in which we commission, plan and deliver our services.

There is no substitute for hearing directly from the public and the way in which Healthwatch have captured, collated and presented information to us on issues including domiciliary care, support for carers and the effectiveness of our care management processes has helped us reflect on our performance.

We are pleased to have Healthwatch involvement in this summer’s Peer Challenge which will in turn help prepare us for future inspection by the Care Quality Commission.”



Tandra Forster
Director of Integrated
Adult Social Care,
Devon County Council



Statements from Partners

“This year has been very challenging, while many of us have slowly returned to what would be close to our pre-pandemic lives some of us are still very much living with COVID-19. We have also had a cost-of-living crisis which has impacted all of us, but similar to COVID-19, it has impacted the most vulnerable members of our society the hardest. This has resulted in more people and families living in fuel poverty and with food insecurity with the collective impact being an increase in health inequalities. Throughout the pandemic many people delayed seeking medical help and we know the health and care services faced significant disruption, and as a consequence there has been a significant rise in demand for health and care services.

To help address the widening inequalities it is important that the health and care system, working with key partners such as Healthwatch, actively support, enable and encourage people to come forward to have the delayed health checks, health screenings and vaccinations. Early detection of disease to enable optimal treatment is essential to achieve the best possible outcomes for people and we know those in greatest need are often the individuals who struggle most to access the services they need.

Healthwatch has a vital role in ensuring the health and care system have the insight and intelligence to ensure services focus on those in greatest need and the patients voice is a critical success factor.”



**Steve Brown,
Director of Public Health,
Devon County Council**



Statements from Partners

"I am delighted to recognise another year where Healthwatch have worked with us to ensure that the voice of those using services across the system are listened to and understood.

Healthwatch have provided insight into the health and wellbeing of our population, and the experiences that they have had with a range of services. They have worked alongside us, providing feedback, insights and challenge, helping to keep us on track in terms of a person-centred approach.

Healthwatch in our area have provided local stakeholders with a range of reports which were themed to help us to answer questions around experiences; from experience of access to children and young people's services, to the physical and mental health advantages and disadvantages of working from home. Of particular importance was a survey of unpaid carers, which highlighted that 72% reported that their physical health had worsened since becoming a carer and 84% that their mental health had suffered. Despite this, half had not accessed the support services that are there- meaning that we have a long way to go, to ensure that the support is there and is accessible for the people who would benefit from receiving it.

We look forward to continuing our work with Healthwatch."



Ruth Harrell
Director of Public Health,
Plymouth City Council



Statements from Partners

“Plymouth City Council is committed to continually improving services for local people, in ways which reflect their needs, priorities and lived experience. The role of local Healthwatch as an independent champion for the voices of patients, service users, carers and the wider community has continued to be invaluable in helping shape our commissioning and delivery of services in 2022/23.

The reach of the Healthwatch network of committed staff and volunteers has enabled a wealth of feedback and insights to be captured and shared with us, informing our understanding of what’s working well and where we still have more to do. The Council’s corporate priorities for the year ahead include working with our NHS partners to improve access to health, care and dentistry in the city.

Healthwatch will remain a vitally important stakeholder as we progress this work and we very much appreciate their ongoing commitment to help us get it right for local people.”



Anna Coles
Service Director for Integrated
Commissioning,
Plymouth City Council



Statements from Partners

“Torbay Council continues to focus on working with local people to ensure that we are delivering what is important to local communities and that our plans are based on the voice and experience of those people that matter most.

Healthwatch has been a strong and committed voice for people who may use services and their carers. Healthwatch has kept our partnerships talking about the vulnerable residents' experiences of local Health and Social Care services.

We are certainly better for Healthwatch's voice and my sincere thanks for the commitment and focus shown. We look forward to many more conversations moving forward.”



Joanna Williams
Director of Adult and Community Services,
Torbay Council

TORBAY COUNCIL



Statements from Partners

“I am pleased to receive this report from Healthwatch and congratulate them on another year of tireless work to ensure that people who use health and care services, and their carers, can meaningfully shape how these services are developed and delivered.

In the past year, Healthwatch has continued to reach out to communities and groups that are sometimes overlooked in our considerations about service delivery. These include unpaid carers, people with learning difficulties, those suffering with poor mental health, the elderly, children and young people, and people with hearing impairment. Healthwatch seeks to foster partnerships where these communities can be empowered to co-produce services with providers.

In the last 12 months we have continued to grapple with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic complicated by further stresses caused by the Cost of Living Crisis. The insights and relationships that Healthwatch has gained helped us to better communicate with the public about the programmes that Torbay Council and partners had in place to support people affected by these shocks.

We look forward to working in partnership with Healthwatch to understand what matters to our residents and how we can ensure delivery of inclusive services that improve access, experience and outcomes for all.”



Dr Lincoln Sargeant
Director of Public Health,
Torbay Council

TORBAY COUNCIL



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay are provided by Colebrook Southwest in partnership with Engaging Communities South West and Citizen's Advice Devon, r/o Restore Milehouse, St Levan Road, Plymouth, PL2 3BG.

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay use the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

The way we work

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

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay are delivered by a collaborative partnership of Colebrook (SW) Ltd, Engaging Communities South West and Citizens Advice Devon. The partnership provides the vision, infrastructure, staffing and overall governance, ensuring delivery of the contract as the hosted organisation. As Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are independent services, driven by the voice of local people, an independent steering group has been set up in each locality in Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay – led by lay people.

The role of each steering group is to support the delivery of its local workplan, priorities and statutory functions, working in partnership with the staff team to create a successful local Healthwatch to deliver the vision for the service. Our Steering Groups meet quarterly and use local insight from public information and signposting enquiries to decide on engagement priorities for their area.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's 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, both face-to-face and virtually.

This year for example we held a series of online meetings via Zoom and attended by 12 members of the Deaf community, alongside two British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters, two Healthwatch staff, one representative of the Royal Association for Deaf People and one representative of Living Options.

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 each of our websites – www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk, www.healthwatchplymouth.co.uk, and www.healthwatchtorbay.org.uk.

Responses to recommendations & Quality Accounts

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

As part of the annual statutory Quality Account process for NHS Trusts and specific service providers, we provided **nine** responses to these reports in 2022–23. These included the five NHS health trusts in Devon, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, Express Diagnostics, Rowcroft Hospice and Livewell Southwest.

The way we work

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.

This year for example in our local authority areas we have taken information to each of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay [Health & Wellbeing Boards](#), [Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Boards](#), [Safeguarding Adults Partnerships](#), [Local Outbreak Engagement Boards](#) and [Local Care Partnerships](#).

As well as being on the [Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board](#), we also take insight and experiences to other decision makers in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. For example, this year we have shared the public voice on the [Learning Disability Partnership Board](#) in Devon, the [Carers Strategic Partnership Board](#) in Plymouth and have been a key founding member of the voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE) [Health & Wellbeing Network](#) in Torbay.

We also share our data with the [Care Quality Commission](#) (CQC) and [Healthwatch England](#) (HWE) to help address health and care issues at a national level and are part of the regional HWE South West Network with our neighbouring local Healthwatch.

Enter and view

This year we made **20** Enter and View visits by way of Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) at local health trusts and providers including University Hospital Plymouth (UHP), Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and Livewell Southwest.

We made a number of different recommendations or actions as a result of this activity at each of the different sites we visited, which included general hospitals, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Mental Health inpatient Units.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch [Devon](#), Healthwatch [Plymouth](#) and Healthwatch [Torbay](#) are represented on numerous different relevant meetings locally, regionally and nationally.

For example, we are represented on all three of our respective Health and Wellbeing Boards by [Jess Crowley](#), (Communications Officer), [Tony Gravett MBE](#) (Systems and Intelligence Lead) and [Pat Harris](#) (Strategic Lead). During 2022/23 our representatives has effectively carried out this role by becoming a key part of their local Health and Wellbeing Board, reporting to the rest of the Board, commenting on subject areas and raising local issues, trends, concerns and feedback.

Healthwatch [Devon](#), Healthwatch [Plymouth](#) and Healthwatch [Torbay](#) are each represented on the [Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board](#) by [Pat Harris](#) (Strategic Lead) and [Devon Integrated Care Board](#) by [Tony Gravett MBE](#) (Systems and Intelligence Lead) by way of attendance on several different Integrated Care Board sub-committees, such as the [Quality & Patient Experience Committee](#), the [Primary Care Transition Committee](#) and the [System Quality & Performance Group](#). New to this year, we are now represented on the strategic [Devon Digital Inclusion Steering Group](#) by [Simon Culley](#) (Digital & Communications Lead).

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	
Funding received from local authority	£560,000	Staff costs	£426,931.41
Devon	£348,573	Operational costs	£38,724.81
Plymouth	£115,427	Support and administration	£119,884.28
Torbay	£96,000		
Additional income	£4,148.24	Total expenditure	£585,540.50
Carry in	£45,046.05		
Total income	£609,194.29		

NB. Accounting changes increased carry in into 2022/2023

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£4,148 funding** received from Healthwatch England for work on a 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.

Our top priorities for 2023–24 feature on the next pages

Our future priorities

To help us carry out our work we have agreed on the following engagement priorities for the Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay service in 2023–24.

Top Priorities for in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

1. Development of Mental Health Services under the Community Mental Health Framework.
2. Recovery of Health Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including waiting times for outpatient appointments and elective surgery.
3. Recovery of Social Care Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including individual and carer assessments, funding, and care home visiting.
4. Development and integration of Children & Young People Services such as emotional health & wellbeing, children development, special educational needs, and lack of engagement with young people. Also Transition from Children to Adult Services including Health Care Plan.
5. Waiting times –NHS Dental, Mental Health, GP, Diagnostic Services, Community Services etc.

To help us carry out our work as three individual local Healthwatch organisations we have agreed on the separate local engagement priorities for each of Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth & Healthwatch Torbay in 2023–24. These are detailed on the following two pages.

Our future priorities

Local Priorities for



1. Development of Mental Health Services under the Community Mental Health Framework.
2. Development of the Integrated Care System including changes to services, Locality Care Partnerships and devolvement of national and regional service commissioning to Integrated Care Boards.
3. Development and integration of Children & Young People Services such as emotional health & wellbeing, children development, special educational needs, and need for engagement with young people. Also Transition from Children to Adult Services including Health Care Plan.
4. Recovery of Health Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including waiting times for outpatient appointments and elective surgery.
5. Recovery of Social Care Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including individual and carer assessments, funding, and care home visiting.

Local Priorities for



1. Waiting times –NHS Dental, Mental Health, GP, Diagnostic Services, Community Services etc.
2. Recovery of Health Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including waiting times for outpatient appointments and elective surgery.
3. Recovery of Social Care Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including individual and carer assessments, funding, and care home visiting.
4. Development of Mental Health services under the Community Mental Health Framework.
5. Development and integration of Children & Young People Services such as emotional health & wellbeing, children development, special educational needs, and need for engagement with young people. Also Transition from Children to Adult Services including Health Care Plan.

Our future priorities

Local Priorities for **healthwatch** Torbay

1. Waiting times –NHS Dental, Mental Health, GP, Diagnostic Services, Community Services etc.
2. Development and integration of Children & Young People Services such as emotional health & wellbeing, children development, special educational needs, and need for engagement with young people. Also Transition from Children to Adult Services including Health Care Plan.
3. Recovery of Social Care Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including individual and carer assessments, funding, and care home visiting.
4. Recovery of Health Services due to COVID-19 pandemic including waiting times for outpatient appointments and elective surgery.
5. Development of Mental Health Services under the Community Mental Health Framework.

"Thank you for reading our annual report. 2022/2023 marks the third successful year of our partnership delivering the three local Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

The contents of this report is testament to how all three local Healthwatch have continued to pull together against the backdrop of ongoing challenges for health and social care services. Our team have continued to gather feedback and provide information and guidance to our communities.

The result of this can be seen in the varied and influential projects showcased in this annual report, both at a local Healthwatch level and across the region. We are particularly proud of some of the projects in partnership with local services that have helped create positive change in health and social care.

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, steering group members and partners this past 12 months. We look forward to an equally successful year in 2023/24."



Pat Harris
Strategic Lead for
Healthwatch in Devon,
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healthwatch

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