



Together

we're making health
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Wakefield

If you need this report in another format, please get in touch.

Front cover photograph © Jaydon Morris, Level 3 Photography, Wakefield College

Thank you to Wakefield College Students for offering us their photographs, including Jaydon Morris and Casey Doherty, and to Solomon Reynolds, their teacher at Wakefield College, for supporting this process.

Contents

<u>Message from our Chief Executive Officer</u>	4
<u>About us</u>	5
<u>Year in review</u>	6
<u>How we made a difference</u>	7
Advocating for fairer NHS dentistry	
Improving access for Deaf people	
10 years of improving care	
Working together in West Yorkshire	
<u>Listening to your experiences</u>	15
Adult Social Care Citizen Panel	
Hospital discharge	
Hospice engagement	
<u>Hearing from all communities</u>	23
Pakistani community voice on vaccines	
Sanctuary in Maternity	
<u>Advice and information</u>	25
How to guides	
Accessible information on community pharmacies	
Dementia information and advice	
<u>Volunteering</u>	28
<u>Statutory statements</u>	30
<u>Finances and future priorities</u>	33
<u>Thank you</u>	34

Message from our Chief Executive Officer

"Over the past year, we have witnessed significant changes in the delivery and commissioning of health and social care services at various levels, including at neighbourhood, district, West Yorkshire, and national levels. In response to these shifts, we have actively sought to amplify your voices and make sure that your experiences are heard and considered. To achieve this, we have increased our community presence, through initiatives such as expanding the number of settings visited by our volunteers. We understand the importance of listening to your concerns and feedback as the system evolves.



Gary Jevon
Healthwatch Wakefield
Chief Executive Officer

Our commitment to representing you remains steadfast, and we have actively engaged with key decision-makers on multiple levels to share your voice. For instance, in my capacity as Chief Executive Officer I have attended the Health and Wellbeing Board to advocate for your needs and priorities.

We believe that by actively participating in these discussions and engaging with decision-makers, we can bring about positive change and make a lasting impact on the health and social care services in our community.

Your voice matters, and we will continue to be your advocate as we navigate the evolving landscape of healthcare provision."



"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

About us

Healthwatch Wakefield is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and other 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.

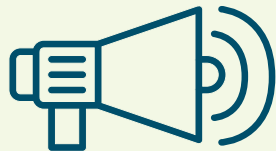


Our values are:

- **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



We heard **1,317 experiences** of health and social care services from people across our district, helping us to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

This includes **999 stories** about experiences of local health and social care services. And **334 responses** to surveys we created on specific topics.

169 people received support from our Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.

27,374 visitors went to our website.

Making a difference to care

We published **34 reports** about issues people were facing and improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Most popular was last year's Annual Report, but others included our Enter and View Visit to Spire Methley Park, our quarterly issue report 'What you are telling us'; and our report calling for dentists to improve access for NHS patients.



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have **56 outstanding volunteers** who gave up a combined 871 hours and 30 minutes or **36 days** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.

In 2022-23 we received **£285,664**, which is 9.2% more than the previous year. £52,629 of this is to deliver the Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.

On the 31 March 2023 we employed **11 staff** who carried out our work.



How we made a difference

Through our work we gather information about health and social care services by speaking to people across our District.

From Overton to Knottingley and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

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, new evidence shows 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.



“They sent me an email saying they are going fully private. Also, that it would take a £45 payment to secure an appointment for an examination. Then it recommends the plan I will be put on, which starts at £16 per month. I’ve heard stories about people not being able to find a dentist, so I paid the £45 to get an appointment in February.”

Local resident

We made renewed calls, locally and nationally to places like NHS England and the Department of Health and Social care to put a reformed dental contract in place.

Nationally, our Chief Executive Officer, Gary Jevon, spoke to a Select Committee Parliamentary Briefing, with The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP and Sir Robert Francis KC, highlighting local issues and discussing the new NHS dentist contract.

Changes to NHS dental contracts

Working closely with Healthwatch England, we 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 acting.

With these changes in place, it should be easier for people to find a new dentist taking on NHS patients, alleviating the stress and worry so many suffer when they cannot afford to go private. However, dentistry remains one of the key issues affecting local people, and we will continue to work on the issue until local NHS dental services are at a level people across our district deserve.

Improving access for Deaf people

Imran came to us because he wanted help to improve access to a local pre-diabetic screening service. His GP had referred him to Reed Wellbeing, where it was made clear that Imran was Deaf and would need a BSL interpreter.

Imran had emailed Reed many times to say he couldn't understand the complex information about the privacy policy, he wasn't able to hear the video explaining the service and couldn't phone them with any questions.

One of our advocates worked with Imran in filing a complaint to NHS England and Reed. His main concerns were, why NHS England hadn't checked that Reed met the Accessible Information Standard before giving them the contract, and how can the programme help him if it's not in a language he understands?

Reed acknowledged that the information provided by Imran was incredibly useful to them and that they will use it to improve their processes for Deaf and hard of hearing participants. NHS England said they were sorry that the provider did not meet the Accessible Information Standard and acknowledged that this was an oversight on their part. They confirmed that as a result, the issues will be shared with their commissioners to ensure learning from the complaint.

Positive changes have been made to processes meaning Deaf people who use BSL now have access to this service. Reed has implemented a remote service through video calls specifically designed for people who are hearing impaired or Deaf. This service uses British Sign Language interpreters for the first contact which goes through the program and privacy policy. Reed Wellbeing is now better equipped to support Deaf patients and offers an improved range of options for them including small group sessions with a coach and interpreter, as well as a digital app.

Imran is pleased with the results for local Deaf patients. He told us:



"Thank you for everything, thank you for your hard work, and for taking the time to listen and make sure our voices were heard."

Imran Bhatti



Accessible Information Standard

The Standard gives people with disabilities or sensory impairments the right to receive healthcare information in a format they understand along with any support they need.

NHS England worked with the charity Sense to develop a [video](#) which gives a step-by-step overview of the Standard. The video includes subtitles and British Sign Language interpretation.



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:

Making care better together

Working with the Deaf Community



Our first report was written with our local Deaf User Partnership and with Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People. We are proud to have continued to work with both over the last ten years. These people truly champion the rights of Deaf people.

NHS dentistry



We have highlighted public concerns that access and improvements to NHS dentistry are too slow, leaving thousands of people in pain. This included giving evidence to Parliament.

Hospital Discharge



Working with partners in the System Discharge Oversight Group, based in the Integrated Transfer of Care Hub at Pinderfields. Talking to patients about their recent experiences of leaving hospital.



Connecting Care

Over 1,100 people were interviewed or took part in a focus group to look at how health and care services could become more joined up. This included care home residents, people receiving care in their home, and staff amongst others.



Compassion in Care

Created a task group of people across the health and care system with an interest in promoting compassion in care. Surveyed staff and the public about what compassion meant. Distributed 1,000 kindness cards from local school children to care home residents, patients, and staff.

10 years of improving care

Ten years ago, the then Health Secretary, our current Chancellor, announced that eleven hospitals were to be placed in special measures because of major failings; and separately administrators recommended the dissolution of Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust. These two things happened because those services were not good enough and needed change.



“Sometimes NHS systems can seem like a great monolithic block that can’t be changed. There is an old management cliché that says, ‘You can’t turn an oil tanker around quickly’.

I am now lucky enough to live opposite Liverpool Docks and watch daily some of the world’s biggest tankers and container vessels coming into port. Let me tell you, they can turn them round remarkably quickly, but they do not change course on their own.

They need the experience and guidance of several smaller tugboats to guide and nudge them in the right direction. Healthwatch has been a remarkably effective ‘tugboat’ guiding local health services in the right direction.

We can, and should, take time to reflect on the successes and lessons we have learnt from the first ten years, but it is the next ten years where focus must now lie.

There are stormy waters ahead and I know Healthwatch will continue to make sure that the patient’s voice is heard loud and clear by all health and care services and decision makers across the district.”

Peter Loosemore, Healthwatch Wakefield’s First Chair



Watch the Healthwatch video here:

‘Healthwatch Heroes – Making care better, one story at a time’

<https://youtu.be/8tOnSnDQrl4>

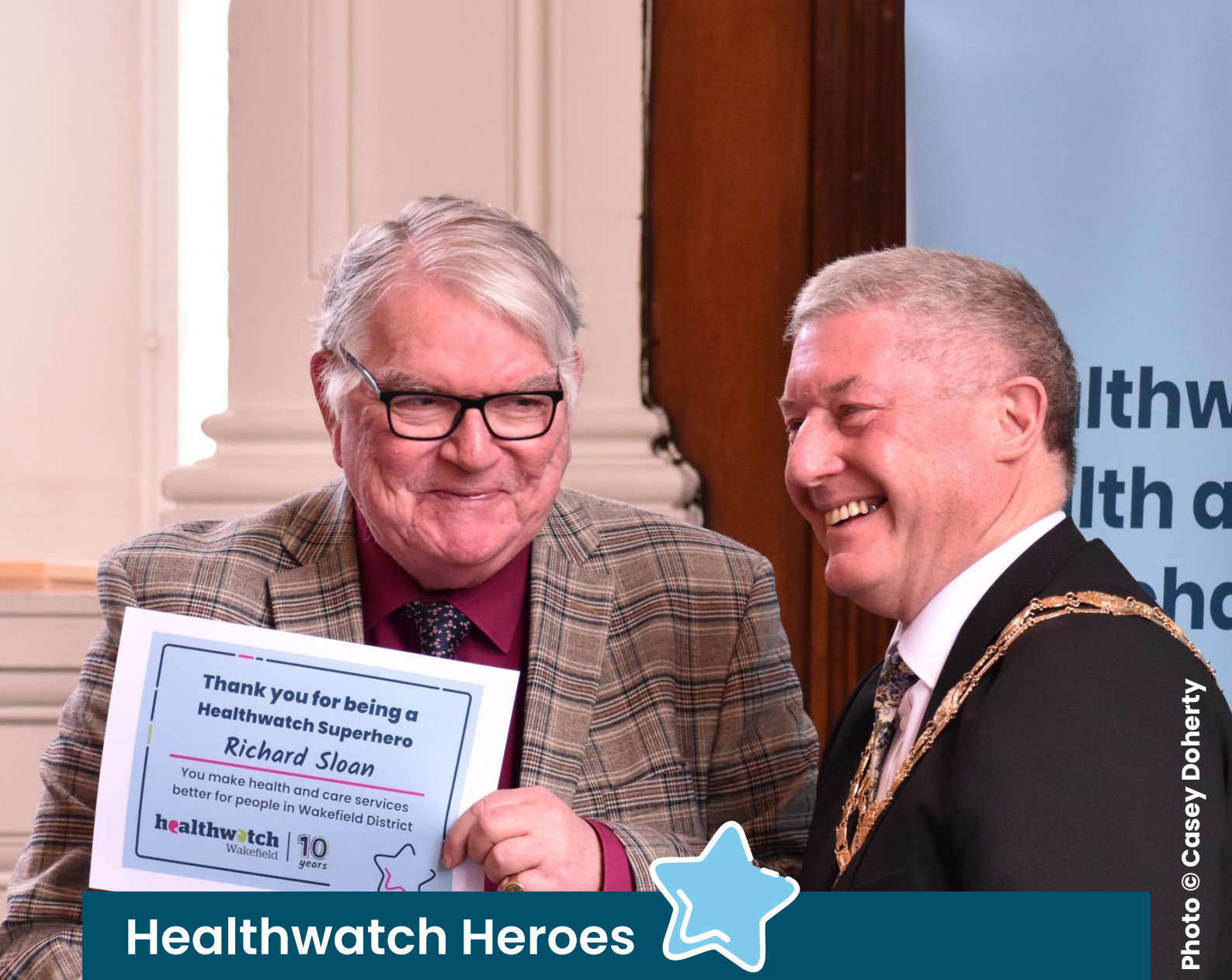


Photo © Casey Doherty

Healthwatch Heroes



Celebrating heroes in our local community

We have worked with many heroes over the past ten years, and we want to thank you all for your efforts. Some of these are Val Pratt, Imran Bhatti, David Leach, and Jill Jones-Leach, for all their efforts to make services accessible for Deaf people. Louise Toth for everything she does for people with learning disabilities and everything she does to help us be more accessible. Debbie Gilvarry for successfully challenging the continence policy, and for highlighting cross boundary issues of funding and equipment needs. Jan Archbold for what she does for people living with dementia and their carers. David Stephens for being a champion for disabled people and those using social care services for years. For all volunteers and members of Young Healthwatch, the Yorkshire Cancer Community, the Cancer Alliance Community Panel, the Adult Social Care Citizen Panel, and the Maternity Voices Partnership. And finally, to Richard Sloan MBE, FRCGP, pictured above with the Mayor, for a lifetime dedicated to patients, health services, and those who need to have a superhero onside.



Working together in West Yorkshire

Six local Healthwatch have collaborated for over seven years, learning from each other and coordinating our activities.

With new NHS decision-making at a West Yorkshire level, Healthwatch has made sure that people's voices and experiences are heard. The Integrated Care Board recognised this and created a coordinator role.

Together we have

- Produced and shared reports about what people told us is important to them when accessing health and care services.
- Fed into the refresh of the 5-year strategy.
- Developed a People's Panel for West Yorkshire.
- Held Engagement sessions on key topics such as GP access and dentistry with members of the Integrated Care Board.
- Represented Healthwatch on West Yorkshire boards and committees.
- Carried out work to find out about people's experience of health and care services across West Yorkshire.

Helped to shape the strategy refresh

Healthwatch played a key role in helping to refresh the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership's 5-year strategy. As part of the working group, we shared our insight report highlighting local people's issues. This strategy will shape how health and care services will work together to make sure people have long and healthy lives.

Launched the West Yorkshire Voice

We developed and launched a people's panel called West Yorkshire Voice. This is a network that brings together local people and organisations across the region to make sure their voices influence health and care decision-making. We involved local people and organisations in helping shape what the panel should look like, how they would like to get involved, and what it should be called.

Shared your voice at West Yorkshire level

This included producing reports and videos and listening to and inviting people to come along and talk to members of the Integrated Care Board.

Some of the topics covered were:

- GP access
- Children and Young People's Mental Health Support
- NHS Dental services

People's experiences have contributed to key discussions in the Board's meetings.

Listened to your experiences of palliative and end-of-life care

We looked at how well end-of-life care services are looking after people and what they can do better. We hope the final report and people's experiences will contribute to better services and support for everyone.

"As the independent champion for anyone using health and care services, Healthwatch is a key partner within West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership and ideally placed to do this essential work on our behalf. We really want to reach as many people as possible to make sure people's feedback and experiences of local services are heard at the highest level. This is ultimately all about making the right decisions and ones that make a positive difference to everyone's lives."

Cathy Elliott, Chair of the NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

"Across West Yorkshire, we are committed to learning from people experiencing palliative and end-of-life care. We are especially interested in hearing from people who may find it hard to access services and people experiencing health inequalities. We are so pleased Healthwatch, in partnership with our voluntary, community, and social enterprise colleagues, is leading discussions about how support and services could be improved."

Charlotte Goulding, Palliative and End of Life Care Programme Manager, West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership



Photo © Casey Doherty

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.

Adult Social Care Citizen Panel



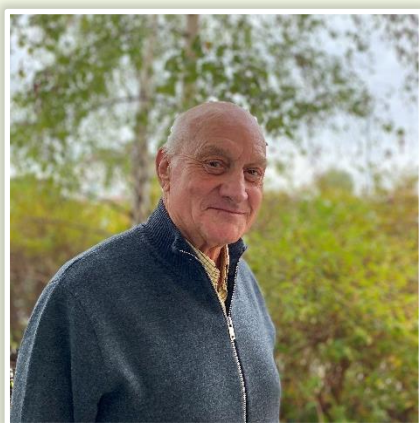
Fiona

Previously there was no mechanism for involving the public or service user voice in local social care services, other than a complaints process. There was nowhere impactful for experiences being shared with us to go and there is no formal complaints advocacy for social care.

Following joint work and research with the Service Director for adult social care and others, we were commissioned to create the Citizen Panel, currently 18 people. It meets monthly and is made up of a diverse group of people with lived experience, adult social care service users, carers, and staff.

Over the last year the panel have suggested many changes and improvements and have fast become a 'go to' group to ask. Members are people who have used adult social care and have knowledge and experience of services and processes. All of them have stories of how difficult accessing and understanding these can be, many saying they had to struggle to become 'experts' in order to navigate systems.

Their aim is to use their knowledge and experiences to make things easier and more supportive for all, especially for those in crisis.



John



Julia

“The panel have been vital in developing clear and accessible communications both to carers and other people accessing adult social care. The robust and honest conversations that take place about the challenges that they themselves face alongside their lived experience have helped form communications including a new leaflet for carers, the refreshed connect to support Wakefield website and key messages around the care reforms.”

Julia Charlton, Business Communication and Engagement Lead, Wakefield Council

Continued...

Some of their work

Booking non-emergency patient transport

Yorkshire Ambulance Service used the information and advice offered by the panel to develop their questions for patients. A summary was also shared with NHS England and will be included in the overall national review outcomes.

Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme

Yorkshire Ambulance Service fed back ideas to the national team looking at this scheme.

Online financial assessment tool

Wakefield Council received great suggestions of a chat box and frequently asked questions, important as often carers would be completing forms on an evening. Changes to some of wording was suggested to make it clearer. The new Council website includes a 'paying for care' page and an updated 'Online Financial Assessment' page also using suggestions.

Annual Carers Survey

As a direct result of speaking to the panel Wakefield Council are now sending the carers survey out to all 4,000+ carers rather than a random selection of 1,200.

Connect to Support website

Feedback helped shape the redeveloped website. The suggestion of having 'care pathways' for specific conditions were created and the idea has been shared with other councils across the Yorkshire and Humber region, many of which now feature these on their sites.

Communications

Reviewing lots of health and care literature including letters and booklets such as the local carers leaflet, hospital discharge information, and paying for care letters. All are now being reviewed to incorporate the changes suggested.

The panel also learnt about the Integrated Care Board, the Adult Autism Strategy, and the NHS Peer Leadership Development Programme, and took part in the District wide 'Big Conversation'.



Eve



Thomas



Lynn

Continued...



"The Adult Social Care Citizen Panel has hugely enhanced our work over the last year. They provide a no holds barred, honest mirror up to our services, which gives us greater clarity on what we're doing well and not so well and reinforces our sense of urgency in getting things right for people.

They provide practical help and guidance, including improving how we communicate with people and how we make our services easier to understand and access. One example this year was a challenge to us to extend our annual survey of people who use adult social care and their carers beyond the usual sample size of around 10%. We therefore sent the survey out to everyone this year making sure that every single person who wished to, had a voice. This was important not just for Wakefield but nationally, as the survey is used to benchmark experience of adult social care throughout the country.

I really enjoy coming to the panel with ideas and updates because I know they will listen carefully and offer excellent and thoughtful advice."

Nichola Esmond, Service Director, Adult Social Care Strategy and Transformation at Wakefield Council



"I am very grateful to the panel members for helping me to understand how social care works, how to navigate the system and how to advocate for my mum and myself to get the care and support we need. They are extremely knowledgeable and a force to be reckoned with. It's obvious they are in the business of improving services for the good of all of us. It's great to see experience in action, making a difference. And they are so kind and understanding, which is really appreciated when you're up against it."

New user of Adult Social Care Services



"I am very proud to coordinate this panel. They are a very inspiring, wonderful group of people who volunteer their time in order to make a difference in adult social care services.

The group have already in their short time made an impact locally and I can't wait to see what the future holds for them. Do get in touch if you want to find out more or to join us!"

Michelle Poucher, Adult Social Care Citizen Panel Coordinator

Hospital discharge

Between August 2022 and March 2023, we talked to people who had recently been discharged from our local hospitals. This was part of the larger piece of work being carried out by the System Discharge Group under the lead of Wakefield District Health and Care Partnership.

The aim was to gather the views and experiences of adults, and their families, who had recently been discharged from Pinderfields, Pontefract, or Dewsbury Hospital.

Each month, these experiences were fed back into the System Discharge Group to make sure that the patient's voice was heard and to help with changes being made to improve the patient's experience.

Different information was collected through telephone surveys, with 111 people taking part up to the beginning of March 2023. Six case studies were also written up at this time.



“Staff were working hard and trying their best.”

We spoke to people that had been recently discharged from Pinderfields or Dewsbury hospitals. There were several issues around people being moved from Pinderfields to Dewsbury Hospital and families not being informed.

30% of people who had been in hospital for more than four weeks felt that they had been in too long.

30% of people didn't feel that they had everything they needed in place when they were discharged, and 36% didn't feel emotionally prepared. Similar reasons were given for both, with people feeling that they would have liked information to have been communicated better, more support or follow-up, or that they felt they needed more time in the hospital.

“I would have liked more information, it felt very rushed, I felt like I had to guess what was going on. Because of covid, there were no visitors so that didn't help.”

Continued...

There was a clear split in feelings of satisfaction regarding communication and information about discharge. 45% of respondents felt satisfied whilst 45% felt dissatisfied.

Those who had been in the hospital for less than a week were happiest with communication. Positive things about communication and information were:

- Staff.
- Being kept up to date with questions being answered.
- Generally everything working well.

Things that could have been improved about communication and information were:

- More communication and better communication.
- More information about the length of stay and discharge date.
- Staff attitudes.
- The amount of time waiting around and waiting for medication.
- More information about transfer between wards or hospitals.
- Better written information and discharge notes.
- Wanting a further referral.

Only 38% remembered being given written details of who to contact if they needed further advice or support after leaving the hospital.

This was despite the interviewer explaining what the leaflet looked like and when they should have received it.

However, 75% of people had received further care and support since being discharged, and 75% of them felt that they were receiving the right amount of care and or support.

It is often common for people to want to talk about negative experiences more than positive ones. This can lead to feedback feeling more negative than is the case. We feel it is important not to lose sight of the many positive comments we heard.

This work is continuing for another six months, at which point the eight recommendations in the report will be revisited.

Find the whole report here [Healthwatch Wakefield Hospital Discharge Patient Engagement Report](#).

Thank you to everyone who has taken part so far and to those who take part in the future. Your experiences and sharing them with us makes a difference.



"The communication was good. I knew that they were trying to organise a care package for my mum and that this was taking some time to sort out. I asked if my mum could be discharged before the care package was in place as I could look after her in the meantime. This was listened to, and she was able to leave a week before the care package was in place. This was really good as my mum has dementia and is partially sighted so I really appreciated her being able to get home as soon as possible."

Continued...



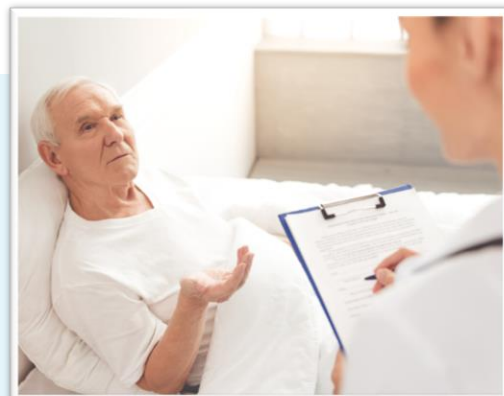
"The discharge work in Wakefield District is overseen by the System Discharge Oversight Group and under this there are several workstreams. Key in relation to the work with Healthwatch is the 'Integrated Transfer of Care Hub

Development Group', and 'Work as One'. The Integrated Transfer of Care Hub Development Group focusses on the transfer of people from inside to outside of hospital and has several work streams underneath it. The group have seen and discussed the Healthwatch report findings and each workstream have been asked, where appropriate, to consider how they can incorporate the feedback into their planned work.

This group will also be looking at a piece of work where we develop a series of videos which could be shown to patients or they could access via internet, which would be bite size clips that give information to patients about any aspect of their discharge in a different way. For example, what you can expect from a social work assessment, how we might help with transport to get you home, what you can expect from a discharge to assess interim bed, and so on.

'Work as One' focusses on the internal discharge procedures in Mid Yorkshire NHS Teaching Trust and where the communication issues in the report are being picked up. The report has been reviewed and the Trust are looking at how to include and incorporate the Healthwatch feedback into their processes. The videos mentioned above will help here too, but audits are also being undertaken to understand more fully which areas of communication are most challenging for people in hospital and how effectively written information is offered to and received by them."

Belinda Jones, Head of System Transfer, Wakefield Council



Hospice engagement

We had the pleasure of working more closely with The Prince of Wales Hospice and some of the people who use their services. The Hospice in Pontefract provides palliative care and support for patients with life limiting illnesses, along with support for families and carers.

Always keen to support anyone who needs them, they wanted to engage with more people who are at the early stage of their diagnosis. Particularly people with a life limiting illness who have a life expectancy of over a year. They wanted to make sure that the services they offer, and the way they are promoted, are as appropriate and supportive as possible.

Between August and January, we worked with the Hospice to hear the views of people who may have used their services, or know someone who has; but also, to get the views of others in the community who may not have had any contact with them.

A survey was created to find out what people thought. It was published online and promoted through social media, but also through local GP surgeries, our hospitals, Castleford Heritage Centre, St Mary's Pontefract, Kellingley Club, The Chesney Centre, Normanton Town Council, Featherstone Town Council, Castleford Tigers, and local libraries.

People completed the survey, and some of them also came forward to take part in one-to-one telephone interviews. Most had heard of The Prince of Wales Hospice and were aware of in-patient and bereavement services.



However, there were many areas of support that people weren't aware of such as outreach, support for families and carers, the Lymphoedema clinic, and complementary therapies on offer.

Many people mentioned that open days and more information about services on offer would encourage them to have a look around.

We also delivered training to Hospice staff so they would be better able to show the impact and value of the amazing work that they do.

Find the report, including what people shared and our recommendations here [**The Prince of Wales Hospice Engagement Report 2023.**](#)

Thank you to everyone at The Prince of Wales Hospice for inviting us in to work with you, and to all those people who shared experiences and suggestions.



"It's worth having a look, I was very reserved about going to look around but was completely amazed at what I found."



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from a wide variety of people across our district. It's important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to get their feedback and make sure their voice is heard.

This year we have done that by:

- Targeting engagement at particular groups, such as attending groups for disabled people, autistic people, and the 'Every Voice Matters' group.
- Research with specific communities like targeted work with members of the local Pakistani community, and the carer community.
- Actively seeking wider representation by tracking demographics in our studies such as the work on doctor patient communication.
- Continuing to recruit new volunteers and members from different backgrounds to our community panels and partnerships.

Pakistani community voice on vaccines

Healthwatch Wakefield spoke to Wakefield residents identifying as members of the Pakistani community to explore their experiences of the COVID-19 and the flu vaccination services, including the then current booster programme. The study was part of a series conducted across the country in collaboration with NHS England and other local Healthwatch exploring Covid-19 with communities who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.



"We will be using this information to better improve access to vaccination services and delivery, both locally and nationally."

NHS England



Sanctuary in Maternity Course

Healthwatch Wakefield collaborated with City of Sanctuary to facilitate a session within the Sanctuary in Maternity Course. This course aimed to empower individuals seeking sanctuary by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to advocate for themselves and others in the maternity system. The goal was to foster a more inclusive and safer environment for everyone accessing maternity healthcare.

As part of this initiative, the Chair of the Maternity Voices Partnership, which is hosted by Healthwatch Wakefield, conducted a session for a group of ten participants. The session aimed to raise awareness about the purpose and impact of a Maternity Voices Partnership in improving care within a maternity setting. The women were encouraged to actively engage with the Maternity Voices Partnership program to make sure their voices are heard in relevant decision-making processes going forward.



"We had excellent feedback about the session, she was wonderful and a clear asset to your team. The women were very engaged, and it was really beneficial to them."

Katherine Letley, Maternity Consultant, City of Sanctuary UK



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, we're 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 dentist, how to make a complaint, or finding good care 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, including help with communication support.
- Helping people access NHS dentistry.
- Supporting people to look after their physical and mental health during the cost-of-living crisis.

How to guides

Throughout the year we listened to the feedback you were telling us, and what the common issues you faced were when calling for our support. As a result, we created two 'How to' guides to help you get more out of local health and care services.

GP services and getting the most out of your appointment

A guide to make sure patients can maximise their time at the GP. It includes a list of the different healthcare professionals you might meet, some key advice about what to do before, during, and after, your appointment, and where you can go for more support.

Hospital appointments and travel and transport help

A guide to support people planning their travel to local hospitals services. Published during the cost-of-living crisis, we made sure to highlight the financial support available to people when attending their hospital appointments.

Both guides have been distributed across the district and are available on our website, under 'Info & Advice'.



"The guides have been very beneficial; helping address feedback and queries we have received from local people around accessing GP services. We have used the 'Getting the most out of your GP appointment' guide to let people know about the different healthcare professionals who are available to support them in addition to a GP or a practice nurse and to help them maximise their appointments."

Dáša Farmer, Senior Engagement Manager, Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership

Accessible information on community pharmacies

This year, we wanted to make sure that your opinions and voices were considered when creating the Wakefield Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. Also known as the PNA, it is a document that outlines local need for pharmaceutical services.

We also wanted it to be more accessible when it was published, so we created an Easy Read version that was widely shared. This version was designed to be easier to understand for everyone and is available on our website.

We also represented your interests in a series of national workshops. These workshops were aimed at developing the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's new vision for pharmacy professional practice in England. By taking part in these workshops, we were able to contribute to the establishment of goals and measures that will bring about positive changes both locally and nationally.

Our aim throughout was to make sure that your voices were heard, and that your experiences and feedback were used in shaping pharmacy services and professional practices for the better.

Dementia information and advice

We were invited to take part in activities for dementia roadshows taking place across the district. These were part of a bigger review of dementia services being undertaken by the Alzheimer's Society to look at what was available and what local people needed.

At the same time, we had become aware that information was hard to find. In particular it was difficult to find information about the memory assessment process and what would happen at different stages. A horribly confusing situation being made worse. Many people were relying on a local voluntary organisation, the Memory Action Group, to find out where support could be found. We were grateful to Jan who started the group for giving us access to information she had put together over the years.

From that point we knew we could develop a new section on our website to bring together information, advice, and support that would be useful to anyone who wanted to find out more about dementia and what support was available locally.

We also took part in focus groups for carers, a meeting to look at the dementia service review, and a session where outcomes were fed back to people living with dementia and their carers.

Listening to local people with experience of dementia, we were able to develop resources throughout the year and now have a section on our website that covers:

- Information and advice
- Services
- Activities
- Emotional support
- Practical support
- Research and other things including books and films

We are delighted that over 800 website visits have been made to look at this information over the last year. We will continue to develop this resource and check it with local people to see if it still meets their needs. We also aim to create a printed resource in partnership with the Memory Action Group.

What to expect from the memory assessment process

If you are wondering what to expect from the memory assessment process and need information, have a look at this fantastic resource from [**Next Steps**](#).

It is called [**What to expect from the memory assessment process**](#) and looks at the process, what will happen in an assessment, and who you will see on the day.

You can also find organisations who can help, including steps you can take right now. Next Steps has been created by [**DCAN**](#), which is the Dementia Change Action Network. Next Steps helps you to find the right support, at the right time, while waiting for your memory assessment appointment.

[**www.nextsteps.org.uk**](http://www.nextsteps.org.uk)



Healthwatch Wakefield and Young Healthwatch volunteers, Francesca, Paul, Ali, and Abbie, outside the Spectrum sexual health service

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.

Some of the things our volunteers did this year include:

- Visiting health and care settings to speak to patients and help services improve, including taking part in national audits of local services.
- Delivering speeches to the local Integrated Care Board on primary care and dentistry.
- Reviewing materials before they were published or used, such as videos aimed at patients, and SMS messages from NHS England.
- Helping improve local health services for pregnant women, their families, and babies. Our Maternity Voices Partnership regularly did '15-step' visits, and the ward implemented their recommendations. The area was then described as "calm and pleasant, a much brighter and a nicer space".

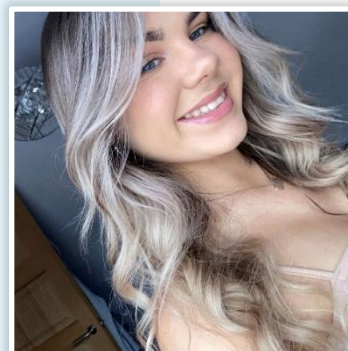
Ross

"I am a patient panel member with the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance. Since volunteering with Healthwatch I have been involved in recruitment for the Cancer Alliance and conducting interviews, as well as the development of patient videos for the NHS website regarding CT scans. I was part of a group created around faster diagnosis and making the two-week diagnosis pathway more streamlined and accessible. Because I had to figure out so much of my recovery on my own, it felt very important to offer my experience to any groups that may be involved in improving care for others in the future."



Abbie

"Whilst being a member and volunteer for Healthwatch Wakefield I have been provided with numerous opportunities that have gifted me with unforgettable life experience and has encouraged me to develop new skills. Being a part of the Healthwatch team has further benefitted me as a university student and has allowed me to develop personal skills such as my confidence and emotional intelligence whilst also providing me with transferable knowledge and skills that I have used throughout my degree and will continue to use throughout my future."



Steve

"I started volunteering around five years ago through my place of work, NHS Business Services Authority. I took part in a Patient Safety walkabout at Pinderfields. I have since completed walkabouts in GP practices, gathering feedback from patients on what works well, what could be improved, and their overall experience of visiting the surgery. It helped me to understand some of the wider workings of the NHS and I've learnt things that I can apply into my workspace. Overall, I have enjoyed being part of the Healthwatch team and feeling like I'm giving a little something back through my time and input to my volunteering."



Do you feel inspired?

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



www.healthwatchwakefield.co.uk



01924 787379



enquiries@healthwatchwakefield.co.uk



Photo © Jaydon Morris

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Wakefield, The Plex, 15 Margaret Street,
Wakefield WF1 2DQ

Young Lives, Lightwaves Leisure and Community Centre,
Lower York Street, Wakefield WF1 3LJ

Healthwatch Wakefield 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 up to 12 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities.

Our Board makes sure that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022-23 the Board met eight times and made decisions on matters such as the Maternity Voices Partnership and the Parent Carer Panel delivery mechanisms.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to make sure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022-23 we have been available by phone, SMS text for Deaf people or those with hearing impairments, email, through our website and social media, as well as attending events and meetings of community groups and forums.

We make sure that our annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and publicise it through all our communications channels with the offer of other formats being available on request.

Responses to recommendations

All providers responded 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.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership, the Wakefield District Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Wakefield Connecting Care Executive Group. We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board. We have a seat on the West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership, along with other programme boards at this level. We collaborate, through a distributed leadership model, with other Healthwatch across West Yorkshire to increase our effectiveness at this level. 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 two Enter and View visits. We made six formal recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
LivingCare service within Northgate Surgery	Part of a joint patient safety walkabout	Wrote a report with three recommendations which the service followed up on.
Spire Methley Park Hospital	Part of a joint patient safety walkabout	Wrote a report with three recommendations which the service followed up on.

We play an active role in local patient and resident safety walkabouts where volunteers attend visits to health and care settings organised by commissioners.



"Having volunteers from Healthwatch be part of our quality visits to various places – hospitals, community clinics, GP practices and care homes – has been extremely valuable over the last year. They have helped us ensure services are of good quality by talking to people about their experience of care and seeing care through the lens of the people receiving it. A big thank you from the quality team for the volunteers who give up their time to make our visits more rounded – we are extremely grateful for your support."

Laura Elliott, Head of Quality, Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership

We also toured Spectrum Sexual Health Clinic with our volunteers in a more informal visit. Our volunteers gave great feedback and suggestions to the service.



"Thank you Healthwatch for attending our clinic tour. It is our aim that patients in Wakefield always feel comfortable and confident when accessing our sexual health service. It is through hearing honest and creative ideas like yours that we can improve the experience for all our patients."

Andi Cope, Relationships and Sex Education Lead

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Wakefield is currently represented on the Wakefield Health and Wellbeing Board by Gary Jevon. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by supporting the implementation of the refreshed strategy, for which Healthwatch Wakefield provided the public and citizen engagement information, and numerous other activities through the year.

Healthwatch Wakefield is represented on the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership by Gary Jevon, and representation on the Integrated Care Board is provided through a distributed leadership model in collaboration with the other West Yorkshire local Healthwatch organisations.

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	£233,035	Expenditure on pay	£343,159
NHS Complaints Advocacy Service	£52,629	Non-pay expenditure	£30,538
Additional income	£137,256	Office and management fees	£72,249
Total income	£422,920	Total expenditure	£445,946

Additional income includes:

- Funding from Healthwatch England for work on a project.
- Funding from the local Health and Care Partnership to support their projects.
- Funding from West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board to support their projects.

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we have demonstrated the power of public feedback. This is 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 make sure 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 in tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you might face when accessing care.

Top priorities for 2023–24

1. **Access** to health and care services across the district, including primary care, dental, and mental health and learning disabilities, amongst others.
2. **Communication** between service providers and service users, including frequency, availability, and accessibility of information.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has shared their experiences with us, and everyone who supports us. We appreciate it.

Together we can make a difference.

"I was overwhelmed by the support provided by Healthwatch Wakefield. They were very understanding to my situation and gave me lots of support."

"Thanks to Healthwatch who came along to our weekly coffee morning at Bembridge House. It was a really positive meeting, and we were able to share our stories. Especially about accessing the local surgery and getting to the hospital and things like that."

"Thank you so much for your professional help and support you've been truly amazing every step of the way."

"Always lovely to have Healthwatch Wakefield at our events giving people the opportunity to chat about their experiences. The important thing is that they actually listen and above all really engage with people. They doesn't just sit there at the stall waiting for people to come. They are a real asset, and we love that they come to our events."

"Thank you, I really appreciate everything you have done, you are the only one who has listened, thank you."

"It is really good that there is an organisation like Healthwatch around as it is important to be listened to and it has been really great to chat to you today about my experiences recently at Pontefract Hospital. I think it is a great idea I didn't know that there was somewhere I could say this before I talked to you."

"Thank you! The service was refreshingly simple to access and was supportive and informative. I had great confidence in the service which was a valuable emotional support at a time when I felt bewildered and abandoned."

"You have helped me so much by being patient.... It has been a pleasure talking to you and thank you for treating me with dignity and respect."

"Everything you are doing is fantastic thank you."

Please get in touch if you think we can make a difference for you.



On Healthwatch Wakefield evidence provided for the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy Refresh

“All of the evidence was presented and discussed in a deliberative workshop involving Health and Wellbeing Board members and a range of stakeholders, including public representatives, VCSE, police and commerce.

The public feedback was also discussed with Adult Services, Public Health and the NHS Overview and Scrutiny Panel. This helped to provide a balanced perspective of what statistics about population health tell us people need and what people feel is important to them. The public feedback demonstrated that there are a wide range of things that make a difference to people’s sense of wellbeing and their ability to maintain good health.

These include social connections, good housing, enough money to live on and feeling safe in their communities, as well as having access to good care. This has helped us to shape a strategy for improving population health which focuses on collaboration between health services, the Council, voluntary sector, housing, and other parts of the community to tackle issues that lead to poor health.

This feedback has helped shape all the discussions at the Health and Wellbeing Board, keeping it focused on what matters to people.”

Ruth Unwin, Director of Strategy for Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership



healthwatch

Wakefield

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We are social people, find and follow us.

