



Together

we're making health
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Norfolk

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

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair and CEO

We continue to hear from thousands of people across Norfolk about their health care and every piece of feedback helps to shape our focus and priorities. Thank you.

We have also talked to people from a range of communities including:

- Those with no fixed abode to find out their thoughts on the Norwich Walk-In Centre
- Non-English speakers about their access to translation services while being cared for
- People with lower leg wounds or pressure ulcers (and their carers) about what help they would like.
- People awaiting orthopaedic care in South Norfolk and Broadland about the Waiting Well system
- People aged 40 to 74 about the free NHS Health Check system
- People from the LGBT+ community at Pride events about their health and social care experiences



Patrick Peal
Healthwatch Norfolk
Chair



Alex Stewart
Healthwatch Norfolk Chief Executive

“

Norfolk County Council is very clear that our role is to hold the health and social care system to account on behalf of all of you. We will do that with the help of your stories and experiences which give us vital data on everything from dentistry and mental health care to appointment delays and technology problems. Thank you for sharing your experiences which are vital to our work. ”

About us

Healthwatch Norfolk is your local health and social care champion.

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



Our vision

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



Our mission

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

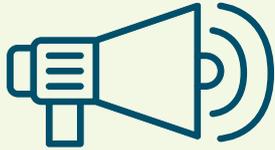


Our values are:

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

Year in review

Reaching out



2656 people

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

471 people

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

Making a difference to care

We published

56 reports

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

Our most popular report was the

GP practice report

which highlighted the concerns of some patients around communicating with their practice.



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

20

outstanding volunteers who gave up 111 days to make care better for our community.

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

£355,300

which is **2% more** than the previous year.

We currently employ

16 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Provided community feedback to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn on how to improve patient communication.</p>	 <p>Mapped out digital patient support to improve accessibility for people</p>
Summer	 <p>Highlighted the need for improved translation services in hospitals and GP practices.</p>	 <p>Identified a number of ways the Norfolk health system can support residents to prevent serious illness.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Visited GP practices across Norfolk to get an insight from patients and shared those findings widely.</p>	 <p>Suggested improvements to Waiting Well, a pilot scheme supporting patients awaiting orthopaedic treatment.</p>
Winter	 <p>Explained the Norwich Walk-In Centre consultation and ensured the survey was more accessible.</p>	 <p>Carried out a detailed survey of the free NHS Health Check service and suggested improvements to encourage more people to participate.</p>

10 years of improving care

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

How have we made care better, together?

Medication support

We supported patients with thyroid issues to get the medication they wanted funded by health bosses.



Covid-19

We supported people with advice and information during the pandemic.



Young people's views

We worked with 6500 young people across Norfolk to help understand their views of health and social care.



NHS Walk-In Centre

We highlighted concerns about the accessibility of the NHS Walk-In Centre in Norwich as well as encouraged patients to participate.



NHS dentistry

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





Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Tony is a Healthwatch Hero who helped support our My Views Matter project.

He heard about the project through our work with About With Friends and wanted to get involved.

Tony joined our team visiting residential settings for those with learning disabilities or autism.

He gave the project an additional perspective as well as being able to empathise strongly with residents.

This helped give us richer feedback for our reports and we are very grateful to him for giving up his time to support us.

Tony, along with other Healthwatch Heroes, will be formally recognised at our Healthwatch Norfolk Live event in autumn 2023.



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.

Pushing for fairer access to NHS dentistry in Norfolk

Over half the enquiries we received this year were from people struggling to get NHS non-emergency dental care in Norfolk.

We carried out a survey of practices to find out what availability was like and found:

- No NHS dentists were accepting new patients.
- It was virtually impossible to get NHS non-emergency care if you are not registered with a practice.
- Practices are at capacity, struggling to get new NHS contracts, or cannot recruit staff to expand their NHS provision.
- The rural nature of Norfolk and poor public transport makes accessing dental care challenging. The shortage of NHS appointments has had a significant effect on many people.

Our recommendations were



- A full and urgent review of the NHS dental contract
- A campaign by Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System (ICS) which aims to ensure joined-up health and social care, to encourage more dentists to work in Norfolk
- A requirement for all practices to update their websites showing whether they will accept new NHS patients
- Further discussion about a dental school in the East of England.
- A feasibility study into schemes like Happy Smiles run by John Plummer and Associates practices across Norfolk which teach children about oral health.

What difference will this make?

We want these recommendations to be at the heart of planning future dental care in Norfolk as the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) takes delegated responsibility for commissioning and managing dentistry from this year. Delegated responsibility means the board, which ensures health and social care works together, is responsible for this work on behalf of NHS England.

“Our NHS dentist closed, and I cannot find an appointment at any other NHS dentist for my child. They are both five years old and have only been to the dentist twice.”

Julia, from South Norfolk

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Enhancing patient voice at GP practices

With support, patients can do a lot to help with feedback and communication for their GP practice. Finding that support has been a challenge, particularly post-pandemic.

We wanted to find out what could help Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) do more work to act as the eyes and ears of those communities supporting the practice team.

We spoke to over 1000 people and a lot of our recommendations related to communication.

Our recommendations included:

1. Communication tools and support to help PPGs keep people informed about their work and developments in the practice.
2. PPG forums to help groups work more closely sharing expertise and information..
3. Show how any suggestions from PPGs are actioned so people can see their value.
4. Explore an ICB PPG 'Champion' to act as a point of contact.

What difference will this make?

Healthwatch Norfolk has created a toolkit for PPGs to use. This has already been used by a number of groups to help them spread the word about their work through newsletters, websites and social media.

Our team have also attended a number of PPGs since the study to feed back on the survey and give additional advice/information.

Many PPGs have already been pro-active with some changing meeting dates/times to encourage more attendance while others have developed projects to increase further engagement with their communities e.g. support groups for people recently diagnosed with cancer.



“Members bring their comments, concerns and difficulties to us so we can discuss general issues openly. If there is a big problem in one area, we can decide on the way forward.”

PPG member, West Norfolk

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



Through our engagement, people were telling us the Blue Badge application process was proving tricky and we wanted to help.

Blue Badges help people with disabilities or long-term conditions park closer to their destination. People were not clear about the criteria for having one, were experiencing delays and were also being signposted to libraries for help, who were often dealing with a lot of enquiries. We set up a meeting with the Norfolk Blue Badge Team who created a clearer web-page, talked through the criteria, and said staff were helping clear the backlog.

Getting services to involve the public



Making sure people have their say on the future of the Norwich Walk-in Centre and accompanying services.

Consultation over the future of the Norwich Walk-In Centre created a lot of concern among the county's communities. We pressured the Norfolk and Waveney ICS to ensure the consultation materials were more accessible to all communities. We also did our own communications campaign to explain the changes clearly to people.

Improving care over time



Helping to spread the word about NHS Health Checks.

We helped to spread the word about the NHS Health Check system. Patients were not always aware of its benefits, and we created both digital and media content to help people understand how they can help people make positive lifestyle changes. This work will continue in 2023-24.



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.

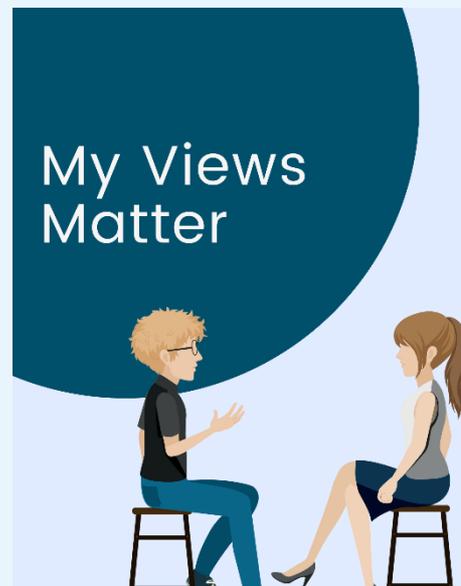
This year we have reached different communities by:

- Talking to people who do not speak English about whether they can access translation services
- Making sure people with severe mental health issues and their carers are part of transforming community mental health
- Talked to residents of care settings for people with Learning Disabilities and/or autism about their care

Hearing from care home residents with LD and autism

We have been talking to people with Learning Disabilities (LD) and autism staying in residential care. Our work called My Views Matter aims to make sure the views of residents, along with their carers, are looked at in detail. The study follows the deaths of some residents in long-term care..

Healthwatch Norfolk is publishing reports on each of its visits, and will also publish a report pulling together key themes across the visits which will be published in summer 2023.



“I cannot praise them highly enough. My relative is really happy at Phoenix House in Snettisham. He loves it there.”
Relative of resident



Highlighting the need for interpreters at medical appointments

We were asked to look at accessible information as part of a national study and during this work, we discovered an inconsistency around translation services.

Access varied depending on which GP practice offered it, and the same was true of hospitals with patients at some saying it was provided, while the service was refused at others.

We called on all providers to offer appropriate services and will do another check later in 2023 to see what has been implemented.

“My GP surgery would not let me in without an appointment. I had one, but I could not say that in English. I got stuck in front of the door. All I could say was ‘Help.’ That is the only word I knew how to say.”

Polish speaker, Great Yarmouth



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 advice on emergency NHS dental care, how to make a complaint or organisations that can give you specialist advice – 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
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

Sharing fire safety information

Norfolk Fire Service raised concerns about electric heater safety following incidents where people had been injured or lost their lives.

Keeping a heater at least 1 metre away from people or furniture can have a major impact on keeping people, particularly the elderly, safer.

“Some emollient skin creams are highly flammable and can also absorb into clothing, surfaces and skin.”

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Healthwatch Norfolk worked with the fire service to distribute information about portable heater safety to those it engages with in person and digitally.

This also created a new link for both organisations to share information about each other with the communities they engage with.

Healthwatch Norfolk and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is also going to work together sharing resources and stands at major community events where possible.

Helping patients understand the prescription journey

Through our face-to-face patient engagement, people were telling us they were struggling to access pharmacy services and were sometimes waiting too long to receive prescribed medication.

We wanted to explain the process to patients so they understood the different stages and time-scales associated with dispensing medication. The team at Pledger Pharmacy in Horsford let us spend a morning with them finding out more and filming a video.

This was then used to help spread the message in print, digitally and online about how prescriptions work. It provided patients with clear information about each step of the process as well as talking about emergency prescriptions and the time-scales of each piece of work.

It was released in tandem with a piece of research which saw Healthwatch Norfolk visit pharmacies across Norfolk to gather patient feedback. A report on the key themes we discovered, and some recommendations will be published in Summer 2023.



Volunteering

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

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote their local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Reviewed leaflets to ensure accessibility and clear language
- Attended meetings helping to gather feedback and intelligence to help improve services

Carol

"I got involved with My Views Matter through my son Tony who was a volunteer. I had worked for the Care Quality Commission as a Specialist Adviser for Learning Disabilities and was interested in helping too. I enjoy working with people who are dedicated, professional, and have a real passion for improving care, and highlighting and supporting good practice."



Josh

"I really enjoy spending some of my spare time helping Healthwatch Norfolk. During school holidays and some weekends, I help the team at events, dress up as our mascot Nelson, and have been filmed as him in different videos. It is great to meet all sorts of different people at the events including ambulance crews, police, hospital staff, lifeboat crews. I even chatted to Vikings (not real ones)."



Do you feel inspired?

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

 www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

 **0808 168 9669**

 enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

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	£355,300	Expenditure on pay	£547,743
Additional income	£274,302	Non-pay expenditure	£128,842
		Office and management fee	£36,874
Total income	£629,602	Total expenditure	£713,549

Next steps

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

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

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

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Continuing to identify and tackle health inequalities
2. A full week of detailed engagement at each acute hospital in Norfolk
3. A detailed report on experiences on residential care experiences of those with Learning Disabilities and/or autism



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Norfolk, Suite 6, Elm Farm, Norwich Common, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0SW.

Healthwatch Norfolk 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 11 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met four times and made decisions on matters such as going ahead with the My Views Matter project to gain feedback from residents of residential homes for those with Learning Disabilities/autism, and creating a three-year Healthwatch Norfolk strategy.

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.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, make paper copies available at public events, and can create accessible versions in other formats on request.

Responses to recommendations

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

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

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

In our local authority area for example we take information to the Norfolk Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board, and Norfolk's network of Health and Wellbeing Partnerships.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board. 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 24 Enter and View visits as part of our My Views Matter project visiting care settings for those with Learning Disabilities and/or autism. We made 4 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Charlton House, Norwich	My Views Matter project	Wrote a report and praised it as an example of good practice
Swanton House Care Centre, Swanton Novers	My Views Matter project	Wrote a report and found good practice, making just one recommendation to include residents in some decision-making about decoration of rooms.
John Grooms Court, Norwich	My Views Matter project	Overall, residents gave very positive feedback. A few minor recommendations including more personalisation of areas and more parking.
Decoy Farm and Barn, Browston	My Views Matter project	We wrote a report highlighting the positive feedback, and stability following staff changes.

Healthwatch Norfolk is represented on 1 Integrated Care Partnership by Alex Stewart and 1 Integrated Care Boards by Alex Stewart

2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Changes made to services
Prevention project looking at prevention good practice across Norfolk and Waveney, and suggesting improvements	These were fed into Norfolk's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-22
A number of GP engagement projects talking to people about their experiences	A number of changes ranging from improved car-parking to the setting up of patient liaison groups.
Talking to patients with lower leg wounds/ulcers and their carers about the care they receive	Recommended more communication, and improved training around signposting.
Transformation of community-based mental health care	Created an evaluation plan to help with this process



Our year

2022-2023

The images show just some of the events, conferences and places we have visited over the last 12 months to gather people's health and social care experiences.

healthwatch

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