

The value of listening

Healthwatch Norfolk
Annual Report 2023–2024



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"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Chair and CEO

Making sure everyone has their say in the health and care they receive, and ensuring those views are passed on to key decision-makers, is at the heart of what we do.

We have received nearly 5500 pieces of feedback on different issues over the past year.

One of the most exciting projects was Three Hospitals Three Weeks which was a first for us, and we also think was a first for the Healthwatch network. It saw our whole team spend five days at each of the county's three acute hospitals. This gave us some very rich feedback and we will continue to work with all three hospital trusts on the action points from that.

My Views Matter was also a piece of work which has made a real difference. Following the tragic deaths of three residents at Cawston Park, we set up a programme of visits to care homes for those with Learning Disabilities and/or autism.

We fortunately found that the problems identified at Cawston Park around residents not having a voice were not reflected elsewhere. Using the feedback we gathered, we produced a report highlighting action points from each visit which meant changes ranging from greater personalisation to improved access were put in place.

Meanwhile we work hard to reach even more people with new programmes of engagement visits to both food banks and care homes. We will also be chatting to even more of Norfolk's younger residents starting with us launching the Youth Council for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn.

We would like to thank everybody we have worked with over the last year from people sharing their experiences to those decision-makers who have received (and hopefully acted on) what we have told them. We look forward to another 12 months of gathering people's experiences and working as a 'critical friend' to the health and social care network.



Chair Patrick Peal (left) and Chief Executive Alex Stewart (right)

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:

5417 different experiences

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

282 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as accessing NHS non-emergency dental care, and where to find mental health support.



Making a difference to care:

We published

58 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Three Hospitals Three Weeks

which saw us gather feedback for an entire week at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, James Paget University Hospital in Gorleston and Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

17

outstanding volunteers who gave up 185 hours to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2023 - 24 we received

£355,300

which is the same as the previous year.









We currently employ

14 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We suggested improved communication and a dedicated keyworker when young people move to adult care while looked after by Norfolk Community Health and Care.</p>	 <p>Better communication about Long Covid support in Norfolk was recommended after we asked people with the condition about their experiences.</p>
Summer	 <p>People who are homeless or have no fixed abode praised how easy it was to access care.</p>	 <p>Better communication between pharmacies and GPs was recommended after we spoke to pharmacy users across Norfolk.</p>
Autumn	 <p>People told us they wanted a Major Trauma Centre in Norwich provided hospital staffing and resources were not affected elsewhere.</p>	 <p>We fed back a wide range of observations after visiting three Norfolk hospitals for a week each talking to hundreds of patients, carers and staff.</p>
Winter	 <p>We gathered information about the value to patients and their families of the Benjamin Court re-enablement facility in Cromer.</p>	 <p>We delivered training to the Governors at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn to boost their engagement with their communities..</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch and our community to ensure the experiences of people in Norfolk influence decisions made about services at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with communities, organisations and groups across Norfolk to achieve:



Achievement one: We worked with food bank operators and providers across Norfolk so that we could talk to more people using them. This helped us discover the experiences of people that we may not have come into contact with before, to ensure their views are heard, and offering signposting support where appropriate.

Achievement two: Worked with health/care/housing/charitable leaders to develop ways of enhancing help for carers of those with Serious Mental Illness (SMI). Following this, we started to identify ways of doing this working in parallel with carers in this situation and senior figures at the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT).



Achievement three: Developed ways to ensure we can gather more feedback from those in social care. Working with care providers and Norfolk County Council, we visited an initial 20 care homes to talk to residents, share their experiences and report back on what we found to individual sites and commissioners.

Achievement four: Worked with governors and staff (especially those under 25) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn and young people in West Norfolk to develop a hospital Youth Council. They helped develop a structure and communications material ready for a recruitment campaign to begin in Summer 2024.





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.

Hearing from those living in residential care with Learning Disabilities and/or autism

Our report *My Views Matter* collated findings from visiting 25 residential sites for those with Learning Disabilities and/or autism. We have shared insight with each location as well as commissioners, meaning improvements, the approach and our findings being shared locally, regionally and nationally.

The study was triggered following the tragic deaths of three residents at Cawston Park. A review into their deaths showed the views of patients and families had been systematically ignored, and we wanted to see what was happening at other sites:

The good news



We found that the situation at Cawston Park was not happening elsewhere, there was positive feedback around communication and how residents and their relatives were listened to, but we did make some recommendations for improvement.

What did we recommend?

- The development of more specialist residential and supported living placements as there is a shortage within Norfolk.
- Making sure residents could maintain friendships with people where they lived personally, personalise their living areas, be supported to have romantic relationships, and still see their families.
- Ensure there is a wide programme of activities, help residents to try new things, and follow new interests independently where appropriate.

What difference did this make?

- The report has been taken on board by commissioners locally to continually improve services, and we have set up annual reviews of key areas working with people with lived experience.
- We published a best practice document to help those offering care understand what we had been told and improve things for those they look after.
- Individual homes acted on recommendations in our reports. Examples include Hillhouse Residential Home in Pulham Market redecorating and personalising areas, Astley Court at Little Plumstead working to reduce discharge delays into the community, and the Broadland Clinic also at Little Plumstead bringing in a mobile dentist.

Three Hospitals Three Weeks

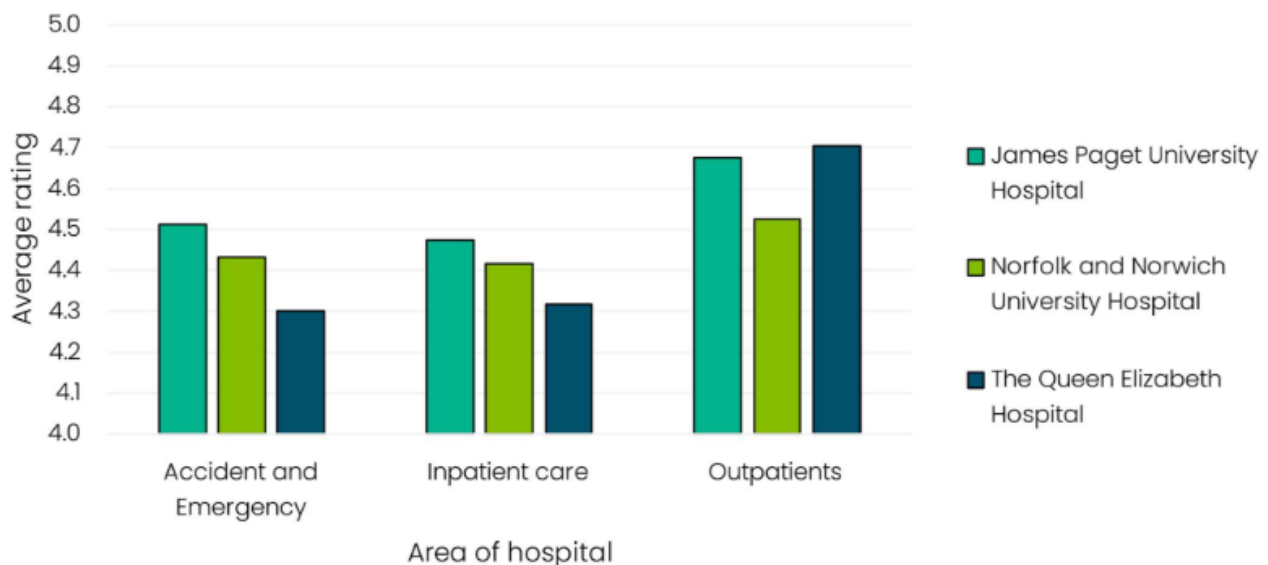
During the summer of 2023, we spent a week at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King’s Lynn, the James Paget University Hospital in Gorleston, and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital in Norwich, as well as a day at Cromer Hospital.

The team visited outpatient clinics, patients on wards, and Accident and Emergency departments, to speak with patients, their carers and visitors.

Most people we spoke to were happy with the care they received although opinions differed over how they were involved in their care. There were also concerns about cross-departmental communication, and waiting times in both Accident and Emergency and outpatient clinics. The difficulties of parking were also mentioned at all hospitals.

Our report summarises our findings based on 1416 survey responses, 56 observations, and 37 staff experiences.

As displayed below, patients across all hospitals on average rated their experiences in outpatients as higher than Accident and Emergency and inpatient care.



What did we find?

Average ratings at all hospitals were high, with most patients rating their overall experiences as five out of five (69%, 878). The average rating at each hospital was very similar with James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) having an average rating of 4.6, while NNUH and QEH had an average rating of 4.5.

Three ways we have made a difference in the community

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

Getting public reaction to a Major Trauma Centre

Ensuring the public can have their say on proposed health infrastructure is vital and people could share their views early on proposals for a Major Trauma Centre in Norwich.

We received over 1300 pieces of feedback. Overall, people told us they liked the idea as long as it was properly resourced and funded, had infrastructure in place, and did not affect any existing services. We could tell NHS England that the proposal was welcomed by those we spoke too, providing there was clear communication about its progress, and there was support for loved ones of those being treated there.



Understanding pharmacy experiences

Better communication between surgeries and pharmacies can help improve things for patients.

Based on general feedback we were receiving, we wanted to find out how well pharmacies were working, and we spoke to over 1000 people who use them, as well as nearly 50 people working in GP surgeries or pharmacies. While most people were happy, we heard the communication between surgeries and pharmacies was sometimes not good. Our engagement teams now check on this on a pharmacy-by-pharmacy basis. We also suggested pharmacies use multiple ways to talk to patients including social media and text message.



Talking to care home residents and their families

We wanted to make sure those people living in care homes could have their voice heard.

When analysing our feedback levels, one gap was among those people who are living in residential care. Our team have got in touch with sites across Norfolk to start setting up regular visits to chat with residents, and publish a report on each visit. This has already led to some changes including one home introducing a new system of resident alerts to cut the noise of buzzers which disturbed some people..



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



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 residents of care homes.
- Talking to people who are homeless or have no fixed abode.
- Shared the experiences of patients and loved ones who had used Benjamin Court in Cromer.

Supporting those with Long Covid

We were asked to find out what help was available for people in Norfolk with Long Covid, and what people thought about the support that was offered.

We heard from 286 people who shared their experiences. They felt knowledge and information was lacking (even from some health professionals), there was a need for more awareness of resources, and an understanding of the range of symptoms associated with Long Covid.

As a result of what people shared, Healthwatch Norfolk recommended:

- Asking patients for their feedback on current information and resources, and what else is needed.
- Investigate the idea of peer support so patients can help each other.
- Make sure all information and resources is in multiple formats to ensure accessibility.
- Increase the wider understanding of Long Covid symptoms to medical professionals.

Ensuring people with no fixed abode can access health care

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) asked us to find out whether people who are homeless or have no fixed abode can access care. We worked with Sanctuary Supported Living and The Salvation Army to gather feedback visiting five sites across Norfolk.

Some of the key points we heard were:

- A total of 70 per cent of people we spoke to (32) rated services as good saying staff were kind, and sometimes gave a lot of extra support.
- Around three-quarters of those we spoke to (36) said services were easy to access, although there were challenges getting both mental health support and dental care.
- Most told us they had never been asked to provide feedback about health and care services before, and would do so if they were asked in person or could give it by text message.



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 advising on NHS dental care, making a complaint, or choosing a care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

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

Creating change through our Impact Tracker

Here are just a few examples of daily engagement at Healthwatch Norfolk

Bobby's Story

Bobby* called Healthwatch Norfolk after being signposted to us by PoHwer. He said his mother has significant mental health issues including a bipolar diagnosis and he has been her carer for many years. He says she is refusing to allow him back home in Breckland and he wants to find independent housing and not be taken into care. Bobby, a college student in Norwich, said he is able to stay for 2 nights with a friend. He also said he has Aspergers, anxiety and ADHD.

Healthwatch Norfolk advised him to go to Norwich City Council for support. An email was also sent to him with contact details for organisations such as Mancroft Advice Project, Citizens Advice and Benjamin Foundation.

*Name changed

Elaine's Story

Elaine called Healthwatch Norfolk as she has not been able to source an alternative to Pfizer for her mother's Covid vaccination. She wanted this due to a bad reaction previously but was facing difficulty.

She turned up for an appointment being told that she could have an alternative vaccination, only to be told on the day that they only have Pfizer.

Her mother is over 80 and immunosuppressed so was getting very worried. We emailed the ICB to find out the situation and was told there is no alternatives at the moment. We passed on information that a new stock was expected shortly which put Elaine and her mother at ease.

Nuisance Calls Advice

Healthwatch Norfolk attended a carers event in Norwich where we met a gentleman who wanted some advice for his Dad's friend who was elderly, without a mobile phone or online access.

He mentioned that his friend was plagued by nuisance calls on his landline. We signposted the person to the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership with specific details about their call blocking device. This information was passed on to the Dad's friend, which meant we were able to reach him with the correct information despite him not having access to the internet.



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



"I really enjoyed being part of the recruitment campaign for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Youth Council. I am interested in working in the media and I had the chance to work with the Healthwatch Norfolk team and the hospital on creating and filming recruitment videos for both events and social media.

I enjoyed the chance to work with a professional videographer to make sure we created something that resonated with under-25s as well as getting an understanding of the whole creative process. I am looking forward to the Youth Council launch and will be interested to see how it progresses."

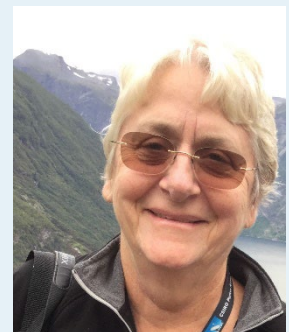


Paddy



"I am really passionate about making sure people get the health and social care they need. Living in North Norfolk, I go along to surgeries and events with the Healthwatch team and find out about people's experiences.

Meeting people is something I really enjoy, and it is important to me that people have someone to listen to their stories. Dan, from the Healthwatch team, is also looking at more ways that I can help him, so I am looking forward to a busier 2024-25."



Christine

Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers to work with us on a project-by-project basis. Get in touch at.

 www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/about-us/vacancies

 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	£584,458
Additional income	£387,313	Non-pay expenditure	£133,143
		Office and management fees	£31,761
Total income	£742,613	Total expenditure	£749,362

Additional income is broken down by:

- £11,200 to independently investigate a complaint for Norfolk Community Health and Care (NCH&C)
- £50,000 to pay for statutory work for the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board
- £3405 to evaluate a National Lottery project for Homestart Norfolk
- £8285 to find out whether those who are homeless or of no fixed abode feel included in healthcare, for the Care Quality Commission.
- £1350 from the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Board to carry out health inequalities training for Holt and Acle GP Practices
- £4332 to evaluate the Patient Partner telephone system for Reepham and Aylsham Medical Practice
- £30,000 to evaluate digital access to primary care for the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board
- £23,360 to carry out engagement on plans for a Major Trauma Centre in Norwich for the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- £60,552 to do Governor engagement and training for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn
- £40,000 for a project engaging with carers of people with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) for the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT)
- £74,234 to evaluate the transformation of community mental health for the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board
- £99,420 to evaluate areas of Adult Social Care for Norfolk County Council
- £88,160 to carry out a Patient Engagement Project for Norfolk Community Health and Care (NCH&C)
- £875 doing engagement work around a Community Diagnostics Hub, for Healthwatch England

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Working harder to reach younger people through engagement in schools, community events, and the launch of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Youth Council.
2. Understanding and helping shape the new Community Diagnostic Centres in Norfolk through patient feedback.
3. Ensuring we continue to engage with communities who can be harder to reach.



Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Norfolk, Suite 6, Elm Farm, Norwich Common,
Wymondham 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 of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 4 times. It made decisions on matters including:

- Making representations about the Right Care Right Person system ensuring people with mental health issues do not slip through the care net
- Ensuring there was a focus that the growth in digital support for health and care did not exclude some people.

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 ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form 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, send it to key partners in the system, create a video version to share online, and a summary of it will also be included in our Dental Summit public event in Norwich in September 2024.

Responses to recommendations

No providers failed to respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were also no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were 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 insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the various Health and Wellbeing Partnership meetings across Norfolk.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the People and Communities Committee at the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board as well as report back at a board 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 10 Enter and View visits. We made 11 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	Were any changes made?
St Brannock's Residential Home in Mundesley	My Views Matter	Wrote a report on the ways that the home takes people's views into account in specific areas.
Hillhouse Residential Home in Pulham Market	My Views Matter	Issues were flagged about a banging door, and the staff put a latch on it to stop the problem.
Broadland Clinic at Little Plumstead Hospital.	My Views Matter - some issues raised around accessing dental care	A mobile dentist has been found to visit and communal areas have been redecorated based on feedback and input from those staying there.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Norfolk is represented on the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board by Patrick Peal. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by ensuring the patients view is communicated around key policies. This included raising concerns around how the Right Care Right Person scheme providing mental health care is rolled out.

Healthwatch Norfolk is represented at the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board by Alex Stewart.


2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Pharmacy engagement	Forged closer links with those working in pharmacy and shared communication difficulties between some GP surgeries and pharmacies to stakeholders.
Exploring the concept of a Major Trauma Centre in Norwich with the Norfolk community.	Received hundreds of responses and provided rich feedback to NHS England which they welcomed.
Three Hospitals Three Weeks visiting each Norfolk acute hospital for a week.	Provided a range of feedback to each site which is being followed up and monitored for progress.
My Views Matter	Visited residential sites for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to ensure their voices were heard. Shared key learning as well as working with individual sites on improvements for res



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