

The value of listening

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire
and Peterborough
Annual Report 2023 - 2024



healthwatch
Cambridgeshire

healthwatch
Peterborough

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Message from our Chair

With the difficulties facing patients as they negotiate a highly challenged health and care system, our work at Healthwatch has never been more important than it is now.

This year, we have continued to gather people's lived experiences and share feedback with service providers with the aim of effecting positive change. We are an independent organisation championing the public voice to improve health and care services.

How do we do this? Through the dedication and hard work of all our staff, volunteers, and Board members, who I would like to thank for all their efforts. They engage with people to learn about the issues that matter most to them through our local health and care forums, partnership boards, community events, and focused projects. Our Information and Signposting Team also plays an important role in hearing from people and directing them to the advice or support they need.

This is an ongoing process and, with a focus on patients in mind, we work in partnership with our local Integrated Care Board and health and care service providers to highlight issues and opportunities.

Our two-way conversation was illustrated at our annual summit in October which provided a platform for members of the public to interact with healthcare professionals and get their messages across.

In early 2024, we were delighted to welcome the Chair of Healthwatch England, Professor Croisdale-Appleby, to visit our Healthwatch. During his visit, he met our team and local system leaders and was able to see the impact of our work at first-hand when he visited one of our local Health and Care forums.

I hope you will enjoy discovering more about our activity during 2023-24 in this report.



"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



"This year, we have continued to gather people's lived experiences and share feedback with service providers with the aim of effecting positive change. We are an independent organisation championing the public voice to improve health and care services."

Stewart Francis, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough



About us

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 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

Health and social care services should work well for local people. Where we hear services are not meeting people's needs, especially for vulnerable groups, we speak out.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better. We encourage services to listen and learn from patient and public feedback, including complaints, so they can make improvements where they are needed.



Our values are:

- **Independence** from local authorities and all health care and social care services, providers and commissioners.
- **User focus** championing the voice of local people, patients and service user groups.
- **Inclusivity** working with the many patient and service user groups across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- **Respect** we respect the opinion of all people and work collaboratively with all groups to pursue common goals.
- **Credibility** local people, commissioners and partners can trust the reliability of our information.
- **Transparency** open and accountable in all we do.



Year in review

Reaching out:

2216 people

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



586 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as access to GP appointments and NHS dentistry.

Our Engagement Team attended **195** community events.

Making a difference to care:

We produced

2 reports

about Access to Primary Care Services and Digital Inclusion. Both reports are currently awaiting publication.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

94

outstanding volunteers, including Independent Partnership Board members and Non-Executive Directors. They gave up **1783 hours** of their time in 2023-24 to make care better for our community.

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

£499,432

We currently employ

18 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Our signposting service has helped people to access the Household Support Fund.</p>	 <p>Following our calls for change, as part of a national campaign, the NHS has approved a plan to improve the quality and safety of maternity and neonatal services.</p>
Summer	 <p>The lived experience of a member of our Sensory Impairment Partnership Board has led to staff training at a local hospital to support visually impaired patients.</p>	 <p>We have set up a Youthwatch volunteer group to find out the concerns young people have about health services that affect them.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Our annual summit focused on adult social care. The event gave the opportunity for carers and service users to share their experiences with professionals in the sector.</p>	 <p>We held our first Young Persons Wheelchair User Forum to help highlight issues raised directly by young people about the service they receive.</p>
Winter	 <p>Our Youthwatch volunteers organised a vaping survey for young people aged 11-25 to learn more about their understanding of its impact upon their health.</p>	 <p>The success of our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultural awareness training programme has led to extra funding to continue its rollout. We also received a Healthwatch Impact Award for this work.</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch and other organisations to ensure the experiences of people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough influence decisions made about services at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with others to achieve:



Achievement one Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and Healthwatch Leeds supported us in setting up our Youthwatch group. Leeds assisted with policy training and guidance on working with young people. Central Bedfordshire mentored us in how to set up projects. We also contributed to local council youth strategy reviews and Sheffield Hallam University's research around vaping and young people.

Achievement two We have made great progress working with local Integrated Neighbourhoods. Many of our volunteers now sit on their Boards, ensuring the patient voice and Healthwatch perspective are heard. By collaborating with these Boards, we've helped support their work towards their goal of bringing integrated care to everyone.



Achievement three This year, we have worked closely with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, helping them get set up and share best practices. Through our Health and Care Forums and PPG network meetings, we've kept them informed about local patient issues. We've also developed a toolkit to support their work.

Achievement four We joined the 'Let's Talk Royston' steering group, an ICB campaign to engage with local communities about health and care services in and around Royston, and part of wider work looking into the NHS estate and operational planning in the area.





Pictured: Attendees sharing their views at our Health and Social Care Summit in October 2023

Listening to your experiences

We use what you tell us to help influence improvements in health and care services.

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.

Improving access to GP services

In the last year, we conducted our Primary Care Access survey, with support from NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The findings have been widely shared within our local health system in order that it can learn from public feedback on access to GP services and make changes where necessary.

We received 1,767 responses to our survey.

We have consistently called for improvements to make it easier for people to access their GP practice and related services. It is the subject that we hear about most from the public. In addition to our Primary Care Access survey, the feedback you have provided has helped inform the latest NHS primary care recovery plan which includes a commitment to making it easier to get an appointment with your GP.

47%

of our survey respondents told us they preferred to book appointments by telephone. However, many highlighted delays and difficulties in using this method of contact.



What did you tell us about accessing primary care services?

- Respondents called for improvements to NHS 111 services, better information and signposting about services, and a more convenient out-of-hours system.
- 61% of respondents said they did not use the NHS app to book appointments, view test results, or access their health records.

What difference did this make?

- Based on the findings of this survey, we have produced recommendations and shared them with local health system leaders for their consideration.
- We intend to produce and publish a summary of the report, in collaboration with the Integrated Care System, which will be made available to the public.

What is the impact of digital inclusion?

We live in a digital age. As health and care services continue to adapt and harness the benefits that technology can bring, our digital inclusion survey investigated how this shift is impacting service users. The aim was to gather insights to inform future service improvements, thus ensuring a more inclusive and accessible healthcare environment for all.

The survey revealed the level of access to technological devices and use of online services to access healthcare services. Key points raised included:

- Respondents expressed a preference for services that combine digital, telephone, and face-to-face interactions.
- Respondents called for training in using digital services, particularly for older people and those less confident in using online platforms.
- Respondents requested quicker responses and simplified processes, such as reference numbers for follow-ups and straightforward systems for booking appointments.



“Give people a choice over the way they want the service provided. It could be a mixed model of digital, telephone, and face-to-face, but ultimately it should be down to the individual to choose how they’d like to receive their care.”

Respondent to Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough digital inclusion survey

Our recommendations, based on the findings of this survey, include taking steps to increase public awareness of digital services, making digital platforms more user-friendly and flexible, and improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

The survey highlighted the need for digital inclusion to be widened across communities and address the diverse needs and preferences of our local population

What difference did this make?

- The North Care Partnership will consider those who cannot use or don't have access to digital services in their work moving forward.
- We have been invited to share our results at the Cambridgeshire County Councils Digital Strategy launch
- A PPG in Huntingdonshire has organised an NHS App training day in collaboration with their Integrated Neighbourhood.

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.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

Regular attendance at three local drop-in sessions for Gypsy Travellers by our dedicated project manager over the last 18 months, in partnership with the Cambridgeshire Traveller Health Team, has enabled trusting relationships to be built with people from the Traveller community.

We have raised awareness of Healthwatch with the community directly and attend events held specifically for the Travelling community, such as a swimming gala and summer fair. Building these relationships has enabled community members to share their experiences of health and care with us, with many Gypsy Traveller voices being included in recent Healthwatch surveys. We have also provided our information and signposting service effectively as outreach.



Getting services to involve the public

Partnership Boards help get voices heard on barriers to travel.

The Partnership Boards address wider issues affecting access to health and social care, such as barriers to travel. Since our 'Keep on Moving' report was published in 2021, the Sensory Impairment Partnership Board has regularly met with transport providers, local councillors and other organisations to remove these barriers.

Partnership Board members gave their feedback to the e-scooter pilot project in Cambridge. This resulted in an app being developed containing information that people who use their e-scooters must read, including what red/white striped canes mean, and how to move around guide dogs, etc.

As part of the stakeholder holder group, we also met with Cambridgeshire Police and emphasised the importance of taking action on the illegal use of e-scooters.



Improving care over time

2019 report evidence helps lead to introduction of dental van.

Our 2019 'Finding an NHS dentist' report concluded there should be more routine and emergency dental appointments made available, as well as better education around children's dental hygiene. This report was part of the data gathered nationally by Healthwatch England and presented to the House of Commons Select Committee inquiry in December 2022, and its call for action to address these issues.

This fed into the NHS Dental Recovery plan, and locally it has led to a dental van being introduced in Cambridgeshire to ensure people get the care they need.





Pictured: Audience listening to Question Time panel at our Health and Social Care Summit in October 2023

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. Our Engagement Team regularly attend community events to help us do this.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Conducting a survey among young people, aged 11-25, about vaping and its impact on their health. The survey topic was chosen by our Youthwatch group and we received 766 responses.
- Gathering experiences of people struggling from socio-economic deprivation in the process of conducting our Primary Care Access and Digital Inclusion projects.
- Supporting people, through our Health and Care Forums and Partnership Boards, to speak directly to decision makers. Their ideas and experiences help commissioners and providers improve services.

Health and Care Forums bring local people and service providers together to achieve powerful impact

Representatives from Cambridge University Hospitals Foundation Trust (CUH) have visited our four local forums at various design phases of a new cancer treatment Hospital in Cambridge to ask people their views.

On the second visit to our Peterborough Health and Care Forum, a number of concerns were raised about access to services at the new hospital for people based in Peterborough. We contacted the Integrated Care Board, which resulted in a full response to the concerns being provided by CUH, giving reassurance to forum attendees. We have also linked CUH with other organisations for further input.

A further impact was achieved through a presentation and Q&A session provided by the Bowel and Bladder Service to another of our forums in response to issues raised about provision of continence products.

A full written response was also received from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust, addressing individual concerns raised.

Partnership Boards play a key role in the design of services

The Sensory Impairment Partnership Board met with managers of Virtual Wards at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. They want to make the technology more accessible to people with sensory impairments.

Suggestions from the Sensory Impairment Partnership Board included everything from ‘bump dots’ for people with a visual impairment to how to explain things to patients in an accessible way via Easy Read or British Sign Language.

The Young People’s Wheelchair User Forum raised a concern about communication from the Wheelchair Service once the assessment has been completed.

The service provider has now tasked a team member to be the key contact and they are updating the families on a regular basis and following up on issues.

Members of the Carers Partnership Board supported the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership to develop support for carers experiencing domestic abuse.

This support is now included in the Carers Strategy. The work has been submitted as an item of good practice to the Association of Directors of Social Services as part of their Carers Challenge in the East of England.



Pictured: Members of our Engagement Team with Community Nurse, Chloe Hammond at a local event

Advice and information

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

This year we've helped people by:

- Empowering people with knowledge to navigate the health and social care systems.
- Providing people with information to make decisions about their care.
- Helping people understand the services and care available to them.
- Listening to people's concerns about health and social care services and sharing these with those who have the power to make changes.
- Helping people to find services local to them.

Signposting support following traumatic accident

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were able to provide a person who experienced a traumatic accident with information about making a formal complaint, as well as seeking advocacy support to do this.

Fay needed information about how to make a complaint about her care and treatment, as she had felt that she was discriminated against by the hospital involved.

Fay believed that there had been some negligence in her care, and we were able to signpost her to a leading charitable organisation specialising in this area.

The impact of her life changing injuries meant that Fay needed both physical and emotional support. We signposted her to a range of NHS mental health support services, as well as charitable counselling service providers to support her wellbeing.

We also provided information about a range of council-run physical exercise classes suitable for people with disabilities and additional needs.

Fay was most appreciative of the information and signposting we were able to provide.

Highlighting services to combat isolation

Through signposting an isolated older person to a range of support services, we have helped him to access more meaningful engagement in his local community, and to feel safer in his home.

Our engagement team were approached at an event by Brian, who has a sensory impairment, as well as several long-term health conditions.

Despite being mobile, Brian explained he was lonely, and had minimal social contact. He would visit cafés in the hope of meeting people, but frequently this didn't happen.

We signposted Brian to the social prescriber at his GP surgery to identify and provide access to local support to meet both his sensory loss and social needs.

We made him aware of the Bobby Scheme and the local fire service, who carried out assessments of Brian's home, thereby ensuring that he felt safe and more secure.

In addition, social services offered him information about aids and equipment making life easier and safer.

*** Please note that for reasons of privacy, the names of the people referred to in both of the case studies above have been changed.**



Pictured: A group of our volunteers and staff meeting Healthwatch England Chair, Professor David Croisdale-Appleby

Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers, including the Non-Executive members of our Board, 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 gain their experiences of health and care services.
- Promoted our volunteering opportunities and increased the diversity of our volunteer cohort through their work within their communities.
- Collaborated with our Non-Executive Directors to set up a Youthwatch group.
- Developed their skills through our training programmes, allowing them to take on new and different roles within Healthwatch.



"I volunteer as a Community Researcher working with diverse local communities across Peterborough, and I recently worked as part of a team on our Digital Inclusion project. Everyone is friendly, supportive and professional, and I've gained confidence to communicate with the general public and develop my interpersonal skills.

My volunteering experience has been great. I supported residents who struggled with using GPs digital services and heard their views about improving digital inclusion. I've also shared my thoughts about the issue with staff. I trust my involvement will have an impact in my local area and I look forward to more opportunities to help our communities."



Bilal – Community Researcher



"Becoming a volunteer for Healthwatch is one of the best decisions I have made. As a community listener and researcher, I am part of a great team successfully gathering information through surveys and attending organised events. We encourage people to feed back about their experiences, including complaints, so that improvements can be made where needed in their local healthcare and social services by the appropriate authorities.

Championing and promoting the course for a better, accessible and improved healthcare service for everyone, including vulnerable people in my local area, is rewarding and refreshing."



Olubunmi – Community Researcher

Do you feel inspired?



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

www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk

0330 355 1285

enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.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	£499,432	Expenditure on pay	£534,360
Additional income	£194,067	Non-pay expenditure	£103,792
		Office and management fees	£88,703
Total income	£696,599	Total expenditure	£726,855

Additional income is broken down by:

- North Care Partnership - £25,000
- Partnership Boards - £90,773
- National Lottery funding - £49,341
- Other grants and bursaries - £6,453

ICS funding

Healthwatch across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough also receives funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
ICS Engagement funding	£22,500
Maternity mental health project	£3,100

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. Promoting independence and self-care through our information service and website.
2. Promoting improved access to primary care services through intelligence sharing.
3. Involving people in redesigning services through research projects.



Statutory statements

Our local Healthwatch services are provided by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CIC, The Maple Centre, 6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon, PE29 7HN.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 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 a Chair and eight Non-Executive Directors 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 four times and made decisions on matters such as policy direction and strategic priorities.

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 by 11th July 2024 and hard copies will be made available.

We will send a copy to Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, our local Integrated Care Board, Cambridge County Council, including their Adults and Health Committee, and Peterborough City Council, including the Peterborough Health Scrutiny Committee.

Responses to recommendations

All providers responded to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so no reviews or investigations resulted.

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 Management Executive Committee, the Quality, Performance and Finance Committee, and the Health Inequalities Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System. For example, we share information with the North and South Accountable Business Units of the Integrated Care System. 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 did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity. However, we do intend to recommence Enter and View activity in 2024-25, and a training programme has been put together for our volunteers to enable them to support in this aspect of our work

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is represented on both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Boards by our Chair, Stewart Francis. During 2023/24, he has effectively carried out this role by taking insights from your feedback to meetings where NHS and other senior leaders make decisions about services.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is represented on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Partnerships by our Chair, Stewart Francis, who is a non-voting member of the Integrated Care Board (ICB). We also have representatives who sit on the ICB's Accountable Business Units (North and South).



Pictured: Volunteers and staff gather together to celebrate national Volunteers Week

healthwatch

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