

The value of listening

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Annual Report 2023–2024



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"Over the last year we have developed different ways of engaging with our local communities, with the purpose of empowering them to have a voice. With our Community Roadshows, Capacity Building activities and detailed reports we are helping to unlock the power of people's voices and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Sabrina Taylor, Chief Executive at Healthwatch Nottingham & Nottinghamshire



Message from our Chair

Introduction:

At the start of the year, Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (HWNN) was keen to maximise the opportunities that better partnership working with communities creates. To that end, our Community Roadshows are now central to our new approach.

Bringing community and voluntary organisations together in specific localities to showcase their work, highlighting the issues affecting local people and shining a spotlight on local people working together to achieve change, we have been greatly encouraged by the response and participation at our first two events in Bassetlaw and Radford & Hyson Green in Nottingham. We believe this is a blueprint for how we can all work in greater partnership to reach out to excluded people and empower communities to raise their own voice!

We remain in challenging times following on from the pandemic with additional financial constraints faced by our health and care system. Issues highlighted across the country such as access to dentistry and primary care are significant in our area and so the concerns of our communities and those most affected are vitally important to ensure greater equity of access to services.

Our staff team and volunteers are truly there to be 'Your Voice in Health and Care'. We continue to act to raise your concerns and use insights gathered throughout our communities to amplify the voices of those who have experienced unacceptable care. Our independence of the system ensures that we are trusted to listen to and use individual experiences to understand trends and highlight underperformance.

To do all of this we need a diverse and skilled cohort of volunteers. If you have lived experience of the health and care system, we want to hear from you. Hearing people's real-life experiences can be one of the most important and effective ways of improving services.

If you are interested, please get in touch!



“As I reflect on the last year, I have noticed that quality and standards of health and care is still of concern for us at HWNN. As we bring our Enter & View function back online, we will be talking to even more patients in the year ahead.”

Sarah Collis, Healthwatch Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Chair



About us

Healthwatch Nottingham & Nottinghamshire 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:

- **Integrity** We are open, honest and reliable.
- **Compassion** We listen to, and care about, people's experiences and want to make a positive change.
- **Inclusion** We acknowledge and value difference where all voices can be heard.



Year in review

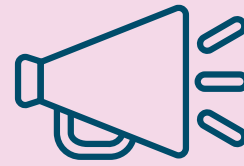
Reaching out to seldom heard communities and marginalised groups:

960 people

Shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, through contact forms, telephone calls, emails, survey's, interviews and face-to-face interactions

498 people

Came to us for information and signposting about topics such as mental health and primary care challenges



This year, we have reached

2,001 Under-represented People

543 people

Engaged with us through our outreach activities and events which created opportunities to build stronger connections within communities

Making a difference to care:

We published

3 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Severe Mental Illness Report

Which highlighted the struggles people face on accessing mental health care in the community and elsewhere.



Health and social care that works for you:

We were lucky to have

53

outstanding volunteers who gave over 1000 hours to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our two local authorities.

In 2023 - 24 in total, we received

£306,000

which is the same as the previous year.









We currently employ

10 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We highlighted the hidden suffering and challenges faced by older people with vision loss and other barriers to accessing healthcare.</p>	 <p>We drew attention, both nationally and locally, to the ongoing difficulties people are facing in accessing NHS dental care and the impact on health inequality.</p>
Summer	 <p>We worked with our system partners on Phlebotomy services following a change of service location which caused concern to patients, especially those with added vulnerabilities.</p>	 <p>We supported a National Charity working with people who stammer by sharing data and linked to leads for primary care and health inequality within our ICB.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Following feedback from local groups on physiotherapy services, we held meetings with local providers and contacted relevant system leads for a response which we received.</p>	 <p>Having received patient concerns regarding neurology services, we played an instrumental role in the development of a new referral pathway that better meets the needs of the patients.</p>
Winter	 <p>Following patient feedback on face-to-face GP appointments, we wrote to our ICB Primary Care lead, requesting a reminder be sent to all GPs on this issue.</p>	 <p>We hosted a stakeholder presentation for local and national leads on Digital Inclusion, influencing design and accessibility issues on the NHS App .</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

As the only Healthwatch in our patch, we collaborate with all our stakeholders to ensure the experiences of people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (N&N) influence decisions made about services at the N&N Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with health and social care partners and VCSE's (Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise's) across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to achieve:



This year we developed a new community engagement & partnerships strategy that has partnership at the heart of it. This has enabled us to:

- Reach more and diverse community groups and organisations.
- Raise the profile of the role of Healthwatch and how we can support and work with communities to amplify their voice and raise what matters to them with decision makers
- Partner up with community groups, with practical offers such as free training to enhance community assets



We engaged with several of our key stakeholders on NHS complaints processes, following patient feedback, which led us to undertaking a project into NHS complaints, the findings of which are to be published in due course.

We have developed a closer relationship with an increased number of partnership meetings with Care Quality Commission (CQC), resulting in wider discussions with commissioners and a forthcoming inspection on a service we raised within GP services.





**Welcome
to our
Community
Roadshow**

← This way

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 to feed this back to services to help them improve.

Empowering patients to manage their own insulin in hospital

We took part in an information session around diabetes, organised for local people to better understand the disease. The event was aimed both at those living with diabetes and those interested in understanding the condition better.

Diabetics using insulin to manage their diabetes found that it was distressing being an in-patient in hospital. Patients did not feel they were in control of managing their own insulin usage and instead, were dependant on nursing staff to provide injections. This made people feel nervous and less in control of something they normally manage every day.

How does it feel to a patient?

“It’s scary to go into hospital and suddenly not be in control of something you rely on to keep you alive!”



What we did?

- We raised this with our largest hospital trust, explaining how the situation feels to patients living with diabetes. This conversation prompted high level discussions amongst nursing staff in the trust, with an undertaking to put in place a system to respect patient choice.
- The trust has now settled on a policy whereby patients on a ward can request that they manage their own insulin usage, and this will be respected unless there are overwhelming clinical reasons not to take this option.

What difference did this make?

- Training is being rolled out to all nursing staff to help them understand the options and reassure them around any worries they may have in letting a patient take control of their own medication.
- Planning has involved the hospital pharmacy department to cope with the prescribing side of insulin availability.
- Importantly, active steps will be taken to let patients know that this is an option they have, and that they can choose not to take it up if their disease makes it difficult for them.
- This discussion has also raised the more general question of patient agency and capacity whilst being treated in hospital, which we hope to pursue.

Specialised Community Mental Health Services

In 2022/23, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) was undertaking a transformation programme of the delivery of mental health services across adult pathways. The ethos of the transformation programme was 'no wrong door', aiming to deliver integrated, personalised, place-based, and well-coordinated care. This came on the back of the NHS Long Term Plan (2019¹), alongside N&N ICS (Integrated Care System) Integrated Mental Health and Social Care Strategy (2019²). Concerns had also been raised previously by the Care Quality Commission about some of the Trust's services³.

What we did?

In 2023, the Trust commissioned HWNN to undertake a research project that aimed to understand people's experiences of accessing and using Specialist and Community Mental Health Services in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire. We heard from 367 people via interviews, an online survey and through focus groups.

"I've been constantly trying to manage my own life whilst almost begging for help with it. I feel like I've done more of the work than the people who are actually paid to do it" (man, late teens)

"I felt the GP's empathy, compassion, and support in relation to mental health was limited, which was an invalidating experience when I had taken a difficult first step to seeking support" (woman, twenties).



The report highlighted gaps in various areas of care between how service providers think they are doing and how the service users perceive or experience it. We have had and continue to have ongoing dialogue with the Trust and with other relevant partners on the implementation of our recommendations, most of which have since been repeated by the Care Quality Commission.

What difference did this make?

The findings and the recommendations from the report have had a significant impact and generated much attention and discussion amongst our stakeholders. Our report has been cited and used as supplementary evidence by the CQC as part of its latest special review of mental health services at Notts Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, which was triggered by (among other things) the murders of three innocent people in Nottingham in the summer of 2023.

¹<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/the-nhs-long-term-plan-summary.pdf>;

²<https://www.strategyunitwm.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/ICS%20Mental%20Health%20and%20Social%20Care%20Strategy%20FINAL.PDF>

³ Trust - RHA Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (25/11/2022) INS2-12325588311 (cqc.org.uk)

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.

Improving the experiences of carers and their families

A member of the public reported to us stress associated with the carers assessment provided by one of our Local Authorities. We contacted the service lead who provided us with information regarding Adult Carers Assessments. They informed us that they had recently undertaken an engagement exercise with people accessing the service and the feedback confirmed a need for improvement. The service told us that the issue Healthwatch raised was not in line with 'our aim to provide excellent support to carers' and thus improving the experience of carers is now one of the department's top 6 priorities.

The provider informed us that they have co-designed new standards of practice with people and carers who draw on support, which have been shared with all teams and include communicating with compassion and empathy.



Getting services to involve the public to adjust services to meet the needs of different groups

We received communication concerning a group of older people with vision loss who reside in a rural part of Nottinghamshire. We visited and heard directly from group members on some of the challenges they were facing in accessing appointments in their local GP's and the added stress of vision loss and digital exclusion which made booking appointments online or on the phone difficult. We convened an urgent meeting with key leads both from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and from primary care to put mitigative mechanisms in place to improve care and access for this vulnerable group of patients. One of the key actions was to facilitate regular touch points between the group and service leads.

We were pleased with the joined-up efforts with our partners to address this issue.



Improving care over time – NHS dental service

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Since 2021, we have continued to highlight and influence system partners both locally and nationally about the concerns patients raise with us on access to NHS dental care. This includes sharing regular data with key leads, being part of a regional forum looking into dental care and highlighting the issue in different settings including via the media.





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 engaged with **44** community organisations by:

- Hosting Community Roadshows in placed-based localities
- Delivering training to grass-roots community groups
- Visiting community organisations to learn about their experiences of health and social care services

Community Roadshows: Amplifying Local Voices

HWNN has been dedicated to bringing community voices to the forefront through our Community Roadshows held in Place Based Partnership localities. To date, we have hosted two impactful events, providing a platform for local community organisations to showcase their important work, both to the public and to the health and social care service providers.

Highlights from Our Roadshows:

- **Inclusion and Diversity:** Our Roadshows have reached diverse groups across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, fostering community and inclusivity. Organisations from various cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds have presented their initiatives, shared success stories, and highlighted the challenges they face.
- **Engagement with Service Providers:** Health and social care providers attended, offering direct communication with community organisations, allowing them to better understand local needs.
- **Community Impact:** The Roadshows raised awareness of crucial local work, enabling organisations to showcase their initiatives to service providers and the public, while also providing an opportunity for community organisations to connect, support and learn from each other's work. This also helped the public understand what services are available to them.

With this new way of working, we have brought together the community, service providers, commissioners and other relevant stakeholders:

128 people attended, and **30** community groups participated in the two events held so far.

Training: Empowering Community Partners

During our Annual Showcase event, we asked attendees which communities we should prioritise. The highest voted communities were young people, ethnic minority communities, asylum seekers and refugees. Following this, we visited organisations within these priority communities to ask about their experiences with health and social care services. One of the organisations requested training and we responded to their ask.

Over the last year, we have delivered training to support local organisations, exemplified by our collaboration with a local women's organisation serving ethnic minority communities. Through free bespoke training sessions, we focused on data collection, analysis, utilisation, and on facilitating focus groups.

These training sessions have:

- Enabled the organisation to better understand their community's needs, gather evidence to support their work, and advocate for necessary changes effectively.
- Helped the organisation understand how to provide a structured platform for women to share experiences and concerns, gathering qualitative data reflecting the lived experiences of women in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.



Information and signposting

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire 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 signposting them to:

- GPs and Dentists
- Mental health and crisis services in the community
- Physiotherapy services
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and complaints advocacy services

The importance of patient centred communication in clinical decisions

It's essential that people have clear, accurate communication about their care.

We heard from patients whose referrals were rejected and sent back to the GPs. However, patients were not clear on why, couldn't necessarily figure out the reasons from the notes on their NHS App and were becoming more and more frustrated. After HWNN raised the issue with the relevant lead and had various subsequent meetings, emphasising that clinical decisions need to be communicated through the patient lens, this referral pathway has now improved with a new protocol.

Thanks to our efforts on presenting the views of patients who use neurological services, communication between GPs, neurology departments and the patients has improved significantly to put the patients at the heart of those processes.

Starting with the offer

Here at Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, with a local population of over 1.1 million people, we receive countless contacts from partners seeking or enquiring about engaging with the public or segments of it. And we always ask, "what is the offer?"

We tell commissioners and service providers that true engagement involves investing time and resources in communities, understanding their perspectives, valuing their time, and starting with an offer rather than a request. We take pride in our innovative approach to community engagement and our commitment to consistently championing the voices of patients, the public, and communities in all our interactions. Starting with the offer helps foster trust and collaboration from the very beginning.



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 local communities to promote Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Were trained to carry out Enter and View visits to local services to help services to improve



"The work that HWNN is doing is exactly what I want to do - collect the voices of patients to understand how they feel about the health and social care service, and use their feedback to improve the service, which can improve the patients experience and health outcomes. I feel this is such valuable work."



Siyi –
HWNN Volunteer



"I chose HWNN as it sounded interesting and more worthwhile than just volunteering in a charity shop for example. I hope to make a difference by helping improvements to services that need them so that service users get the service they need. I hope to gain a sense of purpose from volunteering as I have time to spare and would like to use it in an effective way"



Juliet –
HWNN Volunteer



"I feel that it is important to support the voice of patients / service users, their families and carers as they are the people who are actually experiencing service delivery. There are many inequalities and inequities across health and social care, and I think that this extends to people being able to speak up about their health and social care experiences. I am keen to support more people to be able to do this."



Anette –
HWNN Volunteer

Do you feel inspired?



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

 www.hwnn.co.uk/volunteer

 0115 956 5313

 info@hwnn.co.uk

Enter and view

This reporting year, we spent time and effort in recruiting to and reconfiguring our Enter and View programme, following a pause since the pandemic. We now have our E&V team ready, and we are in the process of reporting on our first E&V project which took place on 19th and 20th April 2024 and hence, postdates this reporting period.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is represented on the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Health and Wellbeing Boards by Sarah Collis, HWNN Chair. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings and using it as an opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and raise the voices of citizens and patients based on local intelligence.

Healthwatch Nottingham & Nottinghamshire is represented on Integrated Care Partnerships by Sabrina Taylor, CEO and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Boards by Sabrina Taylor/Sarah Collis. HWNN is also a member of the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) Alliance, whom the ICS are required support across the geographical patch.

2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity/Issue	Outcomes achieved
Urgent Community Response: We interviewed people to understand if the service was meeting needs and wrote a report and made recommendations.	Lack of information and contact details was the main concern for those who received the service. Following our recommendations, the provider issued a service information leaflet explaining the nature of the service, key contact and how to seek support when needed.
Annual Showcase 10th Anniversary Celebration: In July 2023 we hosted our yearly event in Nottingham City with 73 people attending from various community organisations and system partners.	Raised awareness of the extensiveness and significance of our work and had the opportunity to gather further feedback from the public to help inform our future priorities.
Bassetlaw Community Roadshow: Our first Roadshow, which set the ball rolling for our new engagement model. This was hosted in November 2023, with 59 people attending from the local area and beyond.	We forged stronger and more meaningful connections with the Bassetlaw community, which we will continue to build upon, ensuring we reach and connect with citizens from more rural parts of the County.
Concerns about Musculoskeletal and Pain services in Nottingham was raised with HWNN as an issue at a local community event. The service was deemed inadequate and difficult to obtain as it involved a referral through the GP.	By writing to the commissioners, we were able to provide clarity about the triage and referral process directly through the first contact physiotherapists. This knowledge empowered the affected people to navigate the system better and make better use of the available services.
Long waiting times/gaps for speech and language therapy, neuro-developmental pathways, occupational therapy, etc. was brought to our notice by an Ofsted/CQC report.	Raised the profile of this SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) issue by expressing our concerns directly with the ICB and increasing public awareness by publishing a social media statement.
GP's growing list sizes and suggestions of list closures was a matter of concern for several people as the communication on this aspect was not clear.	Raised this issue on multiple occasions with the ICB and various GP groups to make sure that the patients are well informed about changes in the services they receive.



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	£306,000	Expenditure on pay	£299,928
Additional income	£17,684	Non-pay expenditure	£49,177
		Office and management fees	£21,733
Total income	£323,684	Total expenditure	£370,838

Additional income is broken down by:

- £15,684 received from Nottingham Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for work on the Mental Illness project and Report.
- £2000 received from ICB for our work on Urgent Community Response which was delivered in 2022/23.

ICS funding

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire did not receive any funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) this year.

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
	£0

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 and Social Care 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. Empowering Communities to have a voice using our developing Roadshow Model.
2. Understanding the Social Care landscape in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire utilising our re-established Enter and View function.
3. To reach areas of the community we don't currently hear from.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, Unit 1, Byron Business Centre, Duke Street, Hucknall, Nottinghamshire, NG15 7HP

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire 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 6 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, with an additional 3 subgroup meetings (Finance and HR) and made decisions on matters such as reviewing and signing off our reserves policy and endorsing our strategic direction in adopting the 'Community Roadshow Model of Engagement'.

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 multi-sector forums.

We run an 'Issues Meeting' bi-weekly where we code and escalate different issues with different leads. Where there is a theme emerging, we consider turning it into an Insight project. Also, we host Community Roadshows and Annual Events where we seek feedback on what and who should be our priority, in terms of communities and issues.

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.

Responses to recommendations

We had 0 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 insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to our City and County Health Scrutiny Committee (elected members) at the local authority level, as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System, CQC, Safeguarding Boards and at regular touch points with leaders of health and social care in our area. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.


healthwatch

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire




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10 years of **healthwatch** Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

Over **38,300**  people have come to us for advice and/or signposting

87  Reports Published

We've heard feedback regarding **700**  service providers in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

We have hosted and attended over

475  Community events

Over **13,000**  people have participated




Attended over **2500**  meetings about health and social care in our community





We have worked with over **4400**  young people (0-25)

Volunteers have given us over **8500**  hours of their time

We have made **334**  recommendations **65%**  were adopted/implemented

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