

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from our chair



As I reflect on the last year, it is still shocking that we found ourselves adapting to a 'new normal' as the pandemic continued to affect most aspects of our health and care system.

Within this challenging environment, here at Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (HWNN) our volunteers, Board and staff adapted to listening to people on the phone instead of face to face, attending meetings on-line, at the same time dealing with the personal impact of COVID.

I am extremely grateful to everyone who has supported our work this last year. Your dedication to raising the voice of those who are seldom heard and ensuring we undertook meaningful engagement which targeted issues that were relevant and timely was outstanding as always.

This was demonstrated by the work we undertook on Long COVID, a new condition experienced by many following COVID and who now find themselves having to navigate a new and emerging landscape of clinical services and information on what is still a little understood condition.

Our approach to understand the experience of people living with this new condition was one that saw patients designing and leading on the patient engagement programme – co-producing an impactful report that demonstrated the challenges patients are facing in their Long COVID journey.

HWNN has an extremely wide remit of responsibility, scrutiny and engagement and could not operate without strong partnerships which enable us to capture diverse voices and perspectives. I look forward to forging new relationships within our communities to enable us to raise the issues that matter most when tackling health and care inequalities.

The year ahead brings a new era of integrated and transformational health and social care as the Integrated Care Board, Place Based Partnerships and Primary Care Networks shine a brighter light on the need for collaboration and co-production in the improvement of services across the system. HWNN will be actively working to ensure that patient and service user voices continue to be heard and valued, raising standards of engagement and co-production and design.

It will be a challenging and busy year ahead with new areas of scrutiny, more areas to add value, and our continued commitment to elevate the voice of those who face health inequalities.

To do this we need a diverse and skilled cohort of volunteers. I very much welcome anyone who is interested in supporting our vital work and can offer a wide range of opportunities to use existing skills and experience as well as providing an environment to learn more about our health and care system and the importance of lived experience in co-creating service improvement.

If you are interested, please get in touch!

Sarah Collis
Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Chair

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is your local health and social care champion. From Misterton to East Leake and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our mission

To champion the right of our communities to receive outstanding health & social care



Our role

Scrutiny - To hold local health and care commissioners and providers to account for listening to the public, as well as providing excellent care, signposting and total transparency.



Making a difference - To collect & provide insight into patients & communities, making recommendations to improve services for the public, patients and service users. Holding commissioners and providers to account for delivering these recommendations.



To work in partnership - Across local, regional and national networks of Healthwatch and the CQC to ensure big issues/opportunities are acted upon & best practice is shared, whilst ensuring that our independence is maintained.



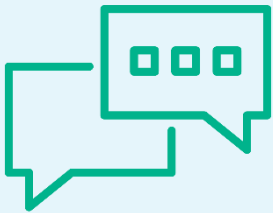
Our values

- **Inclusion** – we embrace and value difference where all voices can be heard.
- **Compassion** – we listen to and care about people’s experiences and seek to affect positive change
- **Integrity** – We are open, honest, and reliable.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



1188 people

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

2787 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

Making a difference to care



We published

5 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Health and Social Care needs of people with Long COVID

which highlighted the struggles of people who had experienced symptoms of COVID for three months or more (Long COVID).

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

42 outstanding volunteers, who gave up 106 days

to help make care better for our communities.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received:

£306,162

We also currently employ

14 staff

who help us carry out this work.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the highlights of our work from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



We wrote to the NHS to ask if further information can be shared with patients, when a practice closes or is taken over, to help reduce requests to register with a practice for which they would be 'out of area'.

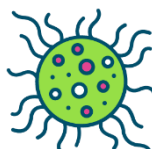


We shared a position statement to set out our concerns about NUH maternity services and met with the Interim Chief Nurse and Director of Midwifery to raise our concerns.

Summer



We facilitated a meeting of voluntary sector partners to discuss and explore issues, concerns and challenges for young people in our area. Key themes from the discussions were presented to system partners.



We published our report looking into the experiences of those with Long COVID symptoms. Our report findings were shared with local health and social care service providers and commissioners.

Autumn



We wrote to our Integrated Care System to help inform their proposed approach for engagement. We requested that our comments were recorded and actioned.



Working with local commissioners we scrutinised and give appropriate feedback on behalf of patients to ensure that risks were flagged up and mitigated against, as part of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).

Winter



In collaboration with partners in the City, we facilitated a meeting for voluntary and community sector organisations to discuss the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and to provide feedback proposals.



To support the COVID-19 vaccination programme we talked to different communities to understand their views and concerns towards the vaccine. We then shared insights with those planning and delivering the vaccine programme.

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 feedback to services to help them improve. Here are two examples of the work we have done this year in helping to highlight and amplify local voices.



Health and social care needs of people with Long COVID

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and Self-Help UK were partially funded by the East Midlands Academic Health Science Network, to work with people who have Long COVID symptoms; and to develop their skills in survey design, analysis and report writing. The aim was to gather their experiences and report the findings to local health and social care service providers and commissioners.

A focus group was held in February 2021 with a small group of people experiencing Long COVID symptoms. The themes identified in the focus group shaped the question design of an online survey. HWNN gathered the views of 37 people from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in March 2021.

The main findings of this survey were half of the people surveyed were happy with the care they received from primary care health professionals, although half of the people were unhappy with their care, citing misdiagnosis; or primary care providers giving conflicting or limited information, or not taking them seriously and not being able to refer them for specialist treatment and care.

Other findings included:



3 in 4 people

Said Long COVID had impacted their mental health and well-being.



1 in 6 people

Felt they were not believed by primary care providers.



3 in 4 people

Said that a one-stop Long COVID clinic for assessment and treatment would help meet their health needs as opposed to having many separate referrals.



1 in 2 people

Said that more information is needed about Long COVID.



"I have had no real help from my GP or anybody else and have had to do my own research on the Internet and trial things for controlling the symptoms"

Comment from a local patient.



Experiences of Maternity Services during COVID-19 pandemic

We work very closely with the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) which is a team of professionals and parents who work together to improve maternity care.

Through the MVP we have talked to parents to find out their views on care, both during and after pregnancy, to understand their experiences of maternity services during COVID restrictions that were brought in, many of which were nationally mandated.


We worked with 10 mothers to design and distribute a survey which asked local families how they experienced these changes. We received a staggering 354 responses which is the highest return we've had in three years of supporting the MVP and indicates quite how important this issue was to those people.

Our findings through this work have added significant evidence to the importance of having partners present at scans, to having partners present at appointments, at induction, at labour, and following birth.

What difference this made:


This project has led to a number of impacts for local families:

- Visiting restrictions have been adjusted as national guidance was updated throughout the pandemic.
- Through this work, MVP now has representation on the Midwifery department at the University of Nottingham.
- It has also helped to inform future work for the MVP for example there will be a focus on personalised care plans



“The report highlighted women’s highly varied experiences of receiving care remotely (either by phone or video call). Some women appreciated the convenience of virtual appointments and felt that they enabled partners to be included.

Many others however felt that remote care felt impersonal or rushed and did not fully meet their needs. A funded study led by the University of Nottingham is now underway to consider the different ways in which remote care should, or should not, be used in maternity services.”



Dr Catrin Evans, Associate Professor, The University of Nottingham.

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.

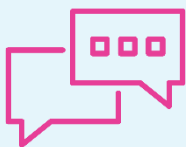


Speaking up for vulnerable people affected by planned changes to primary care in Nottingham

Listening to patients is key to ensuring that the needs of vulnerable groups are not lost.

Concerns were raised with us about proposals for changes to primary care which would have a significant impact on a vulnerable patient group, particularly for those with severe and multiple disadvantages. Along with partners, we shared our concerns which helped to influence a Stakeholder Group being established to guide engagement in the transition process, which Healthwatch chaired.

To ensure a smooth transition, the contract was extended to allow more time for vulnerable patients to be dispersed to other practices with the suitable mitigation in place to lessen the impact.



Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

We have facilitated workshops to enable health and care services to hear what communities are saying, including a workshop for the voluntary sector across Nottingham City and a workshop for groups representing young people.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

We have followed up on the recommendations we made last year; so far **70.7%** of our recommendations have been acted on.

An example of our longer-term work: In 2018 we undertook a survey to understand people's attitudes towards accessing health services using digital means. We appreciate that we have all had to think differently over the ways we access services during this ongoing pandemic. So, this year we decided to work with Digital Notts to understand how people who already had access to the internet were choosing to use digital technology to assist in their health and care. Our findings enabled us to identify groups who may need additional support to access health and care information and services. We plan to speak to these groups to help identify and share the barriers these cohorts face.

Volunteers

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

This year our volunteers:

- Enabled people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Assisted with literature reviews and provided analysis on the data we collect.
- Have worked with local Trusts to help make information more user friendly and representative.
- Created digital content for use on our website and social media.
- Helped us to hold local decision makers to account and helped to ensure that patient voice is part of the foundation for local decisions.





Tim Holloway

“As well as enjoying what I do immensely, I’m also very aware that the experiences I’m having, and the skills I’m developing, in a professional work environment, are making my CV look very good.

“I also get great satisfaction from the opportunity to be involved in research with people and groups, who traditionally don’t have any meaningful voice in their support or care, and help shape better services for our communities.

“This is important, we make a difference, and I find this is really rewarding for me..”



Sue Tribe

“As a member of the board I have been able to bring the experiences from my professional roles and personal experience to enable me to work closely with others to facilitate several roles in Healthwatch.

“I am one of the HR group which makes certain we are meeting our statutory responsibilities alongside trying to ensure we are fair and good employers.

“I also work to ensure Equality Diversity and Inclusion are held at the forefront of our work both internally and externally and that the critical friend role we are often tasked to undertake in various sectors holds this in its vision.

“Currently, working with the Chair and CEO in an appreciative enquiry role within a health setting, my former experience as a nurse in this field has given me valuable insight and understanding of many of the issues that we are working alongside.

“I am proud to be a small part of Healthwatch and all that it encompasses and achieves.



Do you feel inspired?

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



hwnn.co.uk/volunteer



0115 956 5313



volunteer@hwnn.co.uk

Statutory statements

About us

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

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire use 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 7 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.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities through our information gathering and monitoring, and annual planning event.

At our annual planning event the information used includes issues and intelligence we have collected from the public throughout the year along with local and regional intelligence gathered from various sources, including voluntary and community sector organisations.

Areas of interest are identified from these sources and a shortlist of potential work priorities is created.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

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 health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have engaged with over 100 communities to help to ensure the 'the voice of the voiceless' is not lost. In particular reaching ethnically diverse communities, the LGBT+ community, young people, frail adults, people suffering mental health issues, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, the homeless and those living in financially and socially deprived circumstances.

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.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£306,162	Staff costs	£293,243
Additional funding	£57,690	Non-staff costs	£70,005
Total income	£363,886	Total expenditure	£363,248

Top priorities for 2022-23

1. Domiciliary care
2. Young people
3. Mental health

Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, income or race.



healthwatch


Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

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