



Annual Report 2024–2025

Your voice in health & care

Healthwatch Nottingham
and Nottinghamshire

A message from our Chief Executive

This year began with uncertainty, both within our organisation and across the wider landscape. The 2024 General Election brought a new government, alongside local and regional elections that were significant for our communities and the partners delivering vital services.

The economic situation has also remained a key concern, adding pressure to both individuals and systems. Amidst this, we were proud to secure the Healthwatch contract for another three years – recognition of our impact and the trust placed in us.

Internally, we've grown stronger. We now have a full staff team and a committed group of volunteers who share our vision for more responsive, inclusive health and care services.

We also introduced a new system for capturing and analysing public feedback. This has transformed how we track issues and demonstrates the difference people's voices make – enhancing how we engage with both communities and system partners. As technology continues to evolve, we are exploring how tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI) can support and strengthen our work.

Empowering communities to have a voice remains at the heart of everything we do. Through our Community Roadshows, targeted outreach, and partnership working, we've helped ensure that lived experiences – especially from those facing the greatest health inequalities – shape the services people rely on.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, and partners for your resilience and belief in our mission and to the hundreds of people who shared their stories with us.

Together, we are making change happen!



"In a constantly changing health and care system, our focus remains on empowering communities and tackling inequalities. By listening to people's experiences, we're making sure their voices influence decisions and drive improvements where they're needed most."

**Sabrina Taylor, Chief Executive,
Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire**



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"The feedback local Healthwatch hear in their communities and share with us at Healthwatch England is invaluable, building a picture of what it's like to use health and care services nationwide. Local people's experiences help us understand where we – and decision makers – must focus, and highlight issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. We can then make recommendations that will change care for the better, both locally and across the nation."



Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chair

This year has been one of reflection and renewal for Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. As our health and care systems continue to evolve, we've focused on strengthening how we listen to and represent our communities, especially those whose voices are too often overlooked.

A key development has been our renewed commitment to community-based engagement. Our Community Roadshows, under the banner Empowering Communities to Have a Voice, have helped us reach people where they are, gathering powerful stories that highlight both challenges and good practice across health and social care. We've used this feedback to identify trends, share insight with decision-makers, and influence positive change in services.

Using our powers to visit health and care services (known as Enter and View), we have reinstated our programme of activity, visiting care homes and health settings to see services in action and speak directly to people using them. Our volunteer recruitment drive will be essential in making this programme as impactful as possible.

Trustee recruitment is also underway, helping us ensure our board reflects the diversity and ambition of our organisation and those we serve.

We've kept a close eye on developments within the Integrated Care System, including the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) blueprint, to ensure that community voices are not lost in a shift towards regional decision-making.

Everything we do is rooted in our vision: to improve the quality and standard of care by ensuring the voices of people using services drive change. Thank you to everyone who shared their experience with us — you make our work possible.



"Our work is rooted in the belief that people's voices should drive change. By listening to communities and sharing their experiences, we're helping shape better health and care services across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire."

**Sarah Collis, Chair,
Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire**

About us

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is your local health and social care champion.

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



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

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



Our values are

Integrity: We are transparent and dependable.

Compassion: We value people's experiences and are committed to making a meaningful difference based on what we hear.

Inclusion: We respect and embrace diversity, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be heard.



Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 410 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 11 staff, and our work is supported by 37 volunteers.

Reaching out:



2331 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

64 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as how to raise complaints with providers and mental health support.

Championing your voice:



We published **2** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas of **Community Pharmacy** and **NHS Complaints**.

Our most popular report was the NHS Complaints Handling Hot Topic Report, highlighting the barriers people face in engaging with the official NHS complaints processes when they were unhappy with their care.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by Dept of Health & Social Care (DHSC) which gives money to local councils so they can commission an effective local Healthwatch Service. In 2024/25 we received a combined total of **£306,000** via **Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council** which is the same as last year.

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

In the previous year, we trained an ethnic minority women's organisation on running focus groups and collecting data, and this year, continued supporting their progress in gathering and representing community voices



We shared your feedback on Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) with commissioners to ensure your experiences and voices help shape more responsive and accessible mental health services for young people.



Summer

We made sure patient voices were heard during a GP handover, helping to ensure clear communication and continuity of care throughout the provider transition.



At a Carers event, we showed how public feedback drives service improvements, highlighting one of our reports. The group welcomed our recommendations to support their scrutiny of key providers



Autumn

After we raised concerns about communication, a local hospital began co-producing resources with patients to improve understanding and support across emergency and inpatient care.



We supported women's health events focused on gynaecological wellbeing, helping raise awareness, share resources and ensure women's voices were heard in shaping future care.



Winter

We shared some feedback on 'chestfeeding' terminology with local trusts, encouraging thoughtful use of inclusive language so everyone feels respected and represented in care.



Access to dentistry remains a significant challenge for our population. Through the Oral Health Steering Group, we have continued to press for improved access that matches patient need.



Working together for change

We've worked with community groups to ensure people's experiences of care in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services at Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICS.

Here is how we have worked in collaboration with other community organisations to influence change:

Supporting patient groups during service transition:



Amid changes to Cardiology, Heart Failure, Respiratory, Pulmonary Rehab and Palliative Care services, patients raised concerns about continuity of care. We supported the 'Breathe Easy' patient group to share their experiences directly with commissioners, leading to greater understanding of the impact of service transition. This input influenced re-commissioning decisions and ensured a smooth transition. Regular follow-ups have since provided reassurance and improved satisfaction among patients.

Empowering communities through knowledge sharing & skills development:



In our 2023–24 Annual Report, we shared how we supported the Nottingham Muslim Women's Network through training on data collection and running focus groups, as part of our commitment to empowering communities to have a voice. This year, we've continued working with them to monitor the impact. They said: ***"Both workshops were crucial for us as a small charity, as they empowered management to better support the team on these key topics."***

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



In January, we welcomed our new Enter & View project officer who, as part of her induction, sought support from other Local Healthwatch to relaunch our own program of visits. Healthwatch Derbyshire invited us to shadow them on an Enter & View visit and provided multiple resources to assist with our own activity. We thank them and are looking forward to more opportunities to work with our neighbouring Healthwatches in future.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.

Here are some examples of our work in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire this year:

Improving lived experience engagement tools



"The recommendations were grounded in lived experience but also realistic and actionable, which is exactly what we needed... brought a lot of credibility and depth to the work we were undertaking around engaging people with lived experience."

We provided detailed feedback on a survey being developed by the Nottingham Safeguarding Adults Board to engage people with lived experience. Our input focused on improving accessibility, ensuring inclusive language and refining the questions to capture meaningful insights.

Ensuring patient voices help shape GP service



We supported the CQC to engage local people and make sure their experiences influence improvements in primary care.

We were invited by the CQC to accompany them on their inspection to Fairfield's GP practice to listen to the voices of the patients using the service, recognising HWNN's expertise in amplifying the public and patient voice. We gathered useful insights that may not have otherwise been heard. We found that patients were overall satisfied with the service however improvements could be made.

The impact of locality-based collaboration



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

During this reporting year, we ran a number of 'place-based' Community Roadshows in collaboration with locality Place-Based-Partnerships and local Community and Voluntary Services. This was to bring community organisations and service leaders together and for locality-based partners to outline key initiatives and future plans, enabling communities and local providers to connect, share and network whilst showcasing their work.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. When people share their experiences of care with us, this helps us to understand what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

Hearing What's Not Being Said

What's stopping people from sharing concerns about their NHS care?

We heard increasing feedback from people expressing dissatisfaction with the NHS complaints process or its outcomes. So, we carried out a survey to explore how local people engage with the NHS complaints process and explore why people don't speak up, what happens when they do, and how the system can be improved.

Key things we heard:



3 of 4

respondents were unhappy with NHS care in the past 2 years.

1 in 3

of those dissatisfied with their care raised an NHS complaint.



"I have been totally fobbed off! Disgraceful"

*"The process was long, laborious and still unresolved...
[complaint services] make it painful and exhausting."*

Our work showed that while many people are dissatisfied with NHS care, only a minority go on to make a formal complaint—often due to fear, confusion, or lack of confidence in the system. It also revealed major gaps in how services communicate with patients throughout the complaints process, leaving many feeling unheard or dismissed, which adds to their distress and erodes trust in the NHS.

What difference did this make?

Our findings were shared with the major NHS trusts in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, prompting a review of local complaints procedures. As a result, reforms have been introduced to align policies more closely with NHS guidance and our recommendations. These changes aim to make the system more supportive, transparent and responsive to patient needs.

Listening to your experiences

Community Pharmacy: At the Heart of Patient Need

Community pharmacies are widely used and valued, but access barriers persist for some, particularly for vulnerable groups who need it most.

In response to access issues and pharmacy closures, we gathered feedback from 284 local people across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. They highly value community pharmacies not just for prescriptions, but also for advice, minor ailments, and as a first contact—especially when GP access is difficult.

Key things we heard:



2 in 5

respondents were affected by medicine shortages leading to stress & multiple visits.

25%

of those who pay for prescriptions struggle with affordability.

While the Pharmacy First scheme offers a valuable route for timely treatment of minor conditions, many respondents were unaware of the service or unsure about the conditions covered, highlighting the need for better promotion and clearer guidance.

Notable trends

The report identified that people with disabilities, long-term conditions, as well as carers and those they care for often face greater challenges in access, medicine shortages and dispensing tailored to their needs.

The findings highlight the need for clearer pharmacist–patient communication and greater transparency on medicine shortages and pharmacy closures.

What difference did this make?

Our report ensured local voices were reflected in the Pharmacy Needs Assessment, highlighting patient challenges and priorities. It informed the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICB and local pharmacies via the Local Pharmaceutical Committee. Nationally, findings were shared with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pharmacy and Healthwatch England to support improvement.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Nottingham & Nottinghamshire. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Engaging with underrepresented voices, including women from ethnic minorities, carers, people living with sight loss and disability groups, by meeting them in community settings and partnering with trusted local organisations.
- Prioritising people facing health and social inequalities by ensuring their voices influence decision-making, by feeding the experiences of those living with long-term conditions and mental health issues to the Integrated Care Board.



Understanding the healthcare challenges for Muslim women

We arranged and facilitated a meeting for Muslim women to help understand and offer guidance on accessing healthcare for them and their families.

The women told us that they struggled to book appointments with primary care services because of language barriers, and not understanding how services fit together.

What difference did this make?

We invited a district nurse to an information session who identified the challenge for these women to access basic health check-ups. The nurse taught a member of this group to be able to take blood pressure measurements and gave them a device so they can help themselves. We have also worked to facilitate access to sexual health services.

Carers fear for loved ones living with dementia in hospital

Carers shared the challenges they face when a family member living with dementia has an in-patient stay.

We listened to a local dementia group and, after discussions, shared these concerns with a hospital trust. They worked to explain the processes that take place to protect patients living with dementia. We returned to the carer group to explore how their needs were being met and invited them to comment on the hospital response.

What difference did this make?

The hospital trust gained insight into what concerns a carer might have, particularly around nutritional needs and the impact on cognitive decline. The group has produced a guide for carers to help them understand what they should expect for their loved ones, which the trust has agreed to share with families.

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, providing signposting to make a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 64 people have reached out to us for information and support or help in finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



Improving SEND assessments

Jenny's feedback has enabled the ICB to take a closer look at how the SEND assessment journey feels for parents and explore ways to improve it for other families...

Jenny's child was referred for a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) assessment in 2021 and had to wait for nearly three years for an hour-long phone assessment, followed by ineffective workshops and a confusing referral process. Communication was poor throughout, and venue access issues added to their frustration.

After we shared this feedback, the ICB expressed interest in learning from the experience and are now directly engaging with Jenny for system learning.



"If it prevents others from having to fight and advocate so insistently then I'd be happy to help invite some change."

Supporting patients speak up about GP issues

Noah's experience sparked a wider conversation about long GP waits, and the helplessness which people face when they don't know how to raise concerns.

Patients regularly told us about long waits for GP appointments and the frustration of repeatedly calling without resolution. While pressures on the system are acknowledged, this was creating a sense of despair.

In response, we published a widely shared article outlining ICB guidelines and how patients can raise concerns with their practice managers and included a template to support them. By equipping patients with the right information, we have helped improve awareness and health literacy and encouraged self-advocacy.



"Getting to see a GP is almost impossible, I've been in tears after trying to get an appointment by phoning every morning at 8 for a whole week and not been successful."

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given over 234 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Attended system meetings to ensure the communities' voice is heard
- Supported the team by sharing intelligence and insights
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Ensured good governance & oversight in their roles as Trustees on our board



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

"With over 30 years in health, I'm proud yet aware of system shortcomings. I've worked to reduce inequalities and barriers. Healthwatch plays a vital role in amplifying underserved voices and holding services to account... I want to support that."

Deborah



"I am extremely proud to say I am a trustee for this small but mighty organisation - I know I have learnt a lot and really grown personally and professionally by volunteering at HWNN."

Karla



Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.hwnn.co.uk



0115 956 5313



Info@hwnn.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding via Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£306,000	Expenditure on pay	£286,317
Additional income	£12,546	Non-pay expenditure	£85,423
Total income	£318,546	Total Expenditure	£371,740

Additional income is broken down into:

- £250.00 contribution to HR costs
- £948.60 from University of Sheffield for student internship fee
- £200.00 Sale of old IT equipment
- £250.00 contribution to our Community Roadshow programme
- £10,450.00 from Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for project work
- £448.00 bursary from Healthwatch England for attendance at Conference

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

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

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of our community, 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; and where leaders enable staff to do so.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Continue to strengthen our connection with local communities and groups using our Roadshow model of engagement.
2. Amplify voices to influence change, especially those from marginalised communities.
3. Build and strengthen our reach and impact through the use of our powers to *Enter and View*

Statutory statements

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

Healthwatch Nottingham & 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 consisted of **6** members who work voluntarily 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 2024/25, the Board met **4** times with an additional 3 sub-group meetings (Finance and HR) and made decisions on matters such as signing off updated policies and agreeing our forecasted budget for the year.

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 2024/25, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and multi-sector forums.

We run a bi-weekly 'issues' meeting where we code and escalate different issues with different leads. Where there is a theme emerging, we consider turning it into an insight project. We also host community Roadshows and annual events where we seek feedback on which workstreams and which communities should be our priority focus over the next year.

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.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to 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 shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information and insights to Health Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Boards (City & County).

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System, the Care Quality Commission, Safeguarding Boards, Children and Adults Mental Health Partnership 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 representatives

Healthwatch **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire** is represented on the **City & County** Health and Wellbeing Boards by **Sarah Collis, Chair of HWNN**.

During 2024/25, Sarah has effectively carried out this role by actively contributing to discussions on integrated care, health inequalities, and mental health priorities, and shared insights gathered through Healthwatch's engagement activities. Sarah's role as a representative is to champion the voices of local people at a strategic level, ensuring public and patient feedback informed the City & County Health and Wellbeing Board's decisions.

Healthwatch **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire** is represented on **N&N** Integrated Care Partnerships and Integrated Care Boards by **Sabrina Taylor, CEO**.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Newark – Beaumont House Hospice	Invited by the provider	Wrote a report with recommendations, which the service followed up on.

The Relaunch of our Enter and View Programme

This year, we placed a renewed focus on social care, utilising our powers to 'Enter and View' health and care settings. For the first time, we have appointed a dedicated Project Officer to lead this work—marking a significant step in strengthening our presence in both health and social care settings.

A key strategic objective for us is to expand the number and reach of visits, with a particular focus on amplifying the voices of those often least heard, such as care home residents. We believe meaningful service improvement must be rooted in the real experiences of those receiving care. Our role is to listen carefully, observe directly, and bring these insights to those with the power to make lasting change.

2024 – 2025 Other outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Flagged unclear signage from car park to A&E at a local hospital	Triggered a full review of external signage to improve wayfinding and accessibility, creating a better experience for everyone arriving at the hospital.
Queried incomplete appointment info on NHS App	Led to clearer campus location details being added, reducing confusion and missed appointments.
Promoted community dental service info across platforms	Raised awareness about referral routes, especially for patients with specific needs.
Organised modern slavery training for HWNN staff and volunteers	Improved staff capacity to identify and respond to signs of exploitation effectively.

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



<https://hwnn.co.uk>



0115 956 5313



Info@hwnn.co.uk



/Hwnotts



@healthwatchnotts



@hwnn

