



# Annual Report

2020-21

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

# Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Responding to COVID-19	5
Highlights from our year	6
Voice in action: Care home communications during the COVID-19 Pandemic	7
Voice in action: Information needs of vulnerable people during the pandemic	9
Volunteers	11
Finances	13
Next steps & thank you	14

# Message from our Chair



**This last year has seen unprecedented events which have shaken our communities, highlighted levels of health inequalities amongst our most vulnerable citizens and witnessed incredible dedication to providing continued health and social care by our front-line workers and volunteers**

At Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, we swiftly adapted our operations to ensure we could continue the vital work we do to elevate the voice of those who are seldom heard and ensuring that we added value and support to our health and social care system.

I am extremely proud of the team of staff, volunteers and Board members who have achieved so much during such difficult times. We have acted as a key source of information to support the people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. We have been quick to act on areas of concern such as the inconsistency in how information was communicated with care home residents and families. Through our work in speaking to residents and their families, we helped the local authorities to issue guidance on how best to communicate the complex and changing guidance for care home managers.

Similarly, we investigated the approach being taken to communicate with people who were vulnerable to COVID and who needed to shield. This work led to a commitment by the clinical commissioning group to undertake a winter wellness campaign and create signposting information to support people navigate the various support providers and guidance available. The ability of our team of staff and volunteers to reach into communities and have vital conversations was highly valued by our health and care partners and enabled swift sharing of insight as issues occurred, to support the development of more impactful communications and targeting of resources.

We continue to be alert to issues related to the pandemic and seeking to better understand how access to services has been impacted. We have spoken to many people leading to fast action and better communications throughout the pandemic. This continues as we support the vaccination programme and seek to better understand how people are accessing services and maintaining health and social care.



Never has Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire been more relevant and vital as now. We have listened, learnt and shared so many experiences from so many people and truly made a difference in how we have collectively risen to the challenges the pandemic has given us. I am so very proud of everything we have achieved this year and recommit to continue to be the voice of those so often ignored so that everyone can receive the best health and care services.

I would like to pay tribute to our Board member Eddie Dandy who sadly lost his life to COVID in February 2021, one of the many people who have left us too soon as a result of this crisis. Eddie was someone who dedicated his life to one of service to others, and in honouring him I wish to thank everyone who has carried on, helped others and been a lifeline to our most vulnerable citizens.

As we move towards the recovery and restoration of our health and care services, Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire remain committed to raising the voice of those who are struggling to be heard, raising standards of care and supporting our health and care system to better meet the needs of everyone.

**Sarah Collis**  
Chair

# About us

## Here to help make health and care better

Healthwatch Nottingham & Nottinghamshire is the local independent patient and public champion. We hold local health and care leaders to account for providing excellent care by making sure they communicate and engage with local people, clearly and meaningfully and that they are transparent in their decision making.

We gather and represent the views of those who use health and social care services, particularly those whose voice is not often listened to. We use this information to make recommendations to those who have the power to make change happen.

### 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.



“Looking back at the start of this period last year, we were just going into lockdown. We were very clear that our role at that point was to support the system in sharing key messages, but also in feeding back any issues as they arose. In addition to this very reactive work to support the system, we also spent our time developing a new business plan and strategic direction.

Then from about halfway through the year, we started to implement some of the things in that plan, for example building our new strategic volunteer role. Our strategic volunteers sit on a range of Boards across the patch to help us both identify and raise issues and ultimately support our impact on some big issues in our area.

Another key thing we've been doing, through our new Partnerships Manager, is to build much more systematic links with our community and voluntary sector partners.”

**Jane Laughton**

**CEO of Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire**



## Responding to COVID-19

**Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic.**

**The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.**

### **This year we helped people by:**

- Providing up to date information on the COVID-19 response locally.
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date sources.
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out by sharing information on how and where people could access their vaccination.
- Helping people to access the services they need.
- Seeking feedback from users of maternity services during the pandemic.

# Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

## Reaching out to our communities

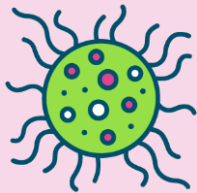


We heard from

**1570 people**

this year about their experiences of health and social care.

## Responding to the pandemic



We provided information to

**1871 people**

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**8 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services. From this, we made **63** recommendations for improvement.

## Health and care that works for you



**31 volunteers**

helped us to carry out our work.  
In total, they contributed **544** hours.

**We employ 11 staff**

We received **£306,000 in funding**  
from our local authorities.



## Voice in action: Care home communications during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**In the first few months of the pandemic, we heard many stories from those who had loved ones in care homes about the increasing problems communicating with the residents, where precautionary measures meant visits were either stopped or became very limited in scope.**

To help identify good examples of communication we spoke with friends and relatives of care home residents, with the intention of encouraging all care homes in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to implement these ideas.

We spoke with people to find out:

- What information friends and relatives had regularly received
- How they had been communicated with
- Whether the information they had received was sufficient, and if not, how this could have been improved



## Voice in action: What we were told

**While there were some good examples shared, the people we spoke with confirmed there was no standard communication procedure in place across all care homes and it is left to the discretion of the care home manager or owning company as to how this is carried out.**

- People told us of some excellent and innovative examples of communication where homes had been proactive in contacting relatives/friends of residents and ensuring that this communication was personalised.
- It was clear there was no standard communication procedure in place across care homes. This resulted in unwelcome variance in how well or poorly care homes communicated.
- An example was the use of generic newsletters by companies that owned the care homes, rather than communications specific to the home. These newsletters contained information about government regulations that were being followed, rather than updates about the care home that their loved ones were resident at.
- In some cases, there had been no contact at all. This led to frustration and distress for those trying to obtain answers about the care of a loved one.

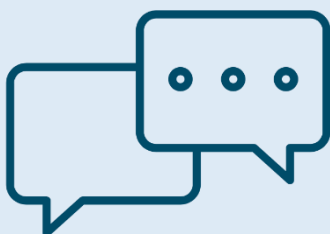


"I have not received anything directly from the care home during the pandemic. I do receive a generic letter from the parent company every 4-6 weeks. This relates more to confirming government guidance but is not specific to the home."

**Comment from respondent**

We published a report, which can be viewed on our website, to share our findings and recommendations with Adult Social Care.

The report helped Nottinghamshire County Council to develop a guidance document 'Top tips for good communication' which was shared with care home providers.



### Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch.



[hwnn.co.uk](http://hwnn.co.uk)

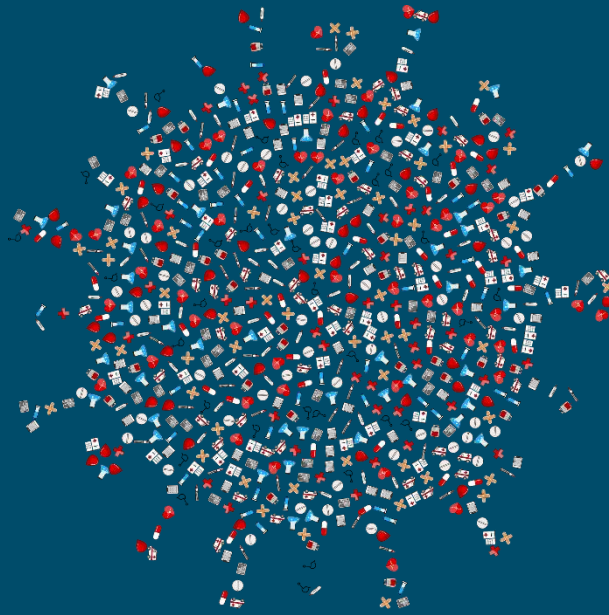


0115 956 5313



[info@hwnn.co.uk](mailto:info@hwnn.co.uk)





# Voice in action: Information needs of vulnerable people during the pandemic

**In order to understand the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and to inform local and national responses, Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (HWNN) carried out a short survey between April and May 2020 to find out:**

- Whether people knew how best to keep themselves safe, in relation to their risk group
- Whether those in the highest risk group received an NHS letter on 'important advice to keep you safe from Coronavirus'
- Whether people surveyed understood official COVID-19 information
- What are the unmet information needs of people surveyed
- Whether GP and hospital appointments had been cancelled or changed

We made contact with vulnerable people through community groups, online groups, existing contacts and through our volunteers. A total of 435 people from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire responded to the survey - 383 via an online survey and 52 were reached through phone calls.



## Voice in action: What we were told

**We found that a significant proportion of people did not know if they were in the highest risk or increased group for COVID-19. This indicates that the messaging was not sufficiently clear, resulting in people failing to identify the risk factors which apply to them.**

Some people (around one in ten) did not receive support on how to manage their existing conditions while they were shielding or isolating. This may have caused their conditions to deteriorate, and for some, it led to experiencing anxiety.

This was of particular concern where those conditions were known risk factors for developing more severe symptoms of COVID-19, or made managing their daily lives more difficult to control their exposure to Coronavirus.

Nearly half of the people who responded to the survey had unmet information needs, particularly around managing existing health conditions, accessing repeat prescriptions, and accessing mental health support.

Those with caring responsibilities also struggled to access information.



"I found it difficult to assess whether my asthma was mild and therefore whether it increased my risks. The guidance on the website, which I heard about from the doctor on the radio, is complex when you have to select your medicines and hence potential risk category."

**Comment from respondent**

As a result of our COVID-19 Vulnerable People's Report, our local system committed to run a Winter Wellness campaign that aimed to meet the information needs highlighted in the report.

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group also responded to our recommendations by developing comprehensive information which they signpost people to on their website <https://nottsccg.nhs.uk/covid-19/>. This includes translations of the COVID-19 letter and a set of questions and answers.



### To find out more

Visit our website  
[hwnn.co.uk/reports](https://hwnn.co.uk/reports)

### Or you can call us

Telephone  
**0115 956 5313**



# Volunteers

**At Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire we are supported by 31 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to see being made to services.**

## **This year our volunteers:**

- Helped people have their say, by carrying out surveys over the telephone and online while working from home.
- Represented Healthwatch at meetings to support our insight and scrutiny functions
- Contributed to our strategic planning



"The value of our volunteers is far beyond the skills and experience they bring to our work. It is the insight, enthusiasm, passion and challenge they bring that makes the Healthwatch team unique. Thank you all for your time and commitment through a very difficult year."

**Deb Morton - Volunteer Manager**

## Volunteer - Ann Whitfield

"We've been made to feel part of the Healthwatch team by being involved in meetings and being able to contribute to meetings via these virtual formats. I haven't felt that we've missed anything by not having face-to-face contact and by valuing us and what we can offer, by attending some of the team meetings and some of the briefings, has made me feel quite a valued part of the Healthwatch organisation."

## Volunteer – Chester Howarth

"I've been really lucky to be involved with three really interesting projects... ...the skills that I developed and put into practice as an Evidence and Insight volunteer have been really helpful for me with my career, so since graduating earlier this year I have become a researcher at the Director of Social Change in Liverpool... ... so, thank you Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire"



### Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch.



[www.hwnn.co.uk/volunteer](http://www.hwnn.co.uk/volunteer)

0115 9565313

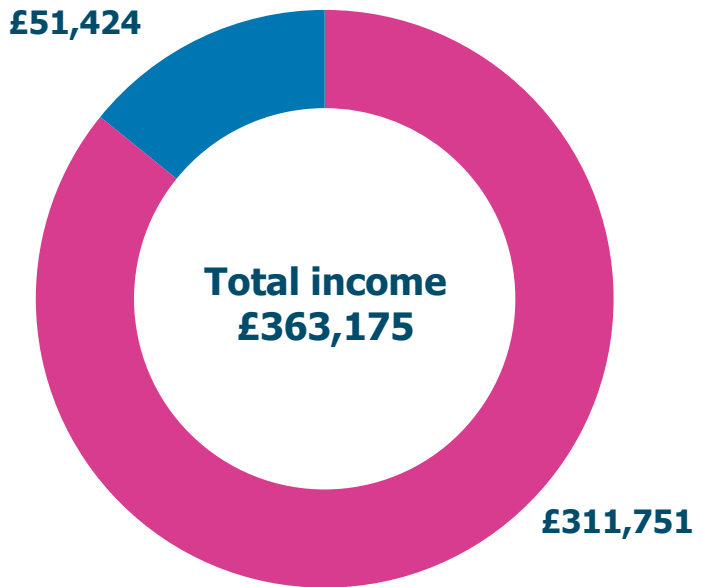
[deb.morton@hwnn.co.uk](mailto:deb.morton@hwnn.co.uk)

# Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

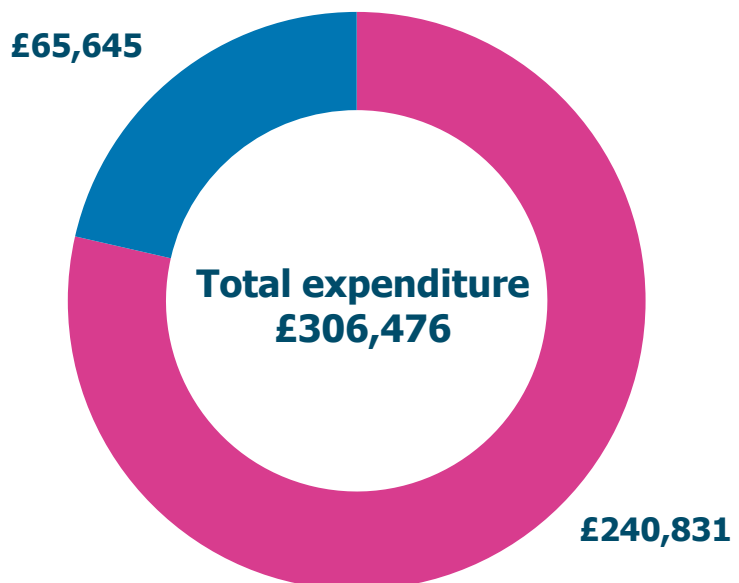
## Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional income



## Expenditure

- Staff costs
- How much it costs to run our Healthwatch



# Next steps & thank you

## Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Working effectively with our local system and focussing on impact
- Listening to our communities and being a voice for the 'voiceless'
- Being reactive and responding to the 'bigger picture' issues

## Next steps

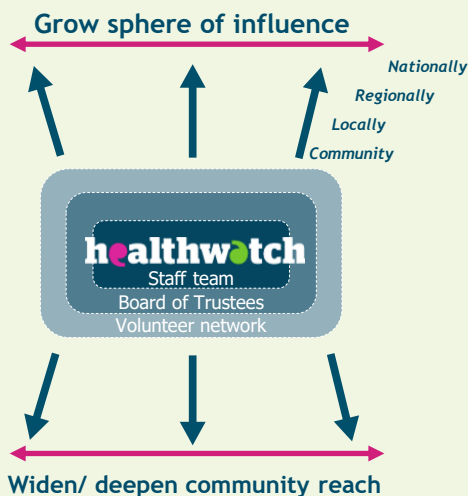
Last year one of our key achievements was the development of a new business plan, in which we restated our ambition to make a difference for our local communities.

In 2020 we started a new approach to logging and raising issues in a focused and effective way, which has raised our profile and influence in the health and social care community.

Next year, we aim to build on our achievements in 2020 by:

- widening and deepening our reach to the communities we serve
- growing our sphere of influence, and
- working effectively as a whole team across staff, volunteers and the Board

## Making an impact by growing our influence and reaching communities



### Channels of influence

- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Health Scrutiny Committees
- Safeguarding Boards
- Integrated Care Partnerships
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Trusts
- Adult Social Care
- Public Health



### Community mission

We reach out to listen to communities and raise their concerns to those who can make decisions. We prioritise those who face health inequalities, the vulnerable, the disengaged and seldom heard.

## Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work



# 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 public priorities survey 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.

# healthwatch

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

---

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

[hwnn.co.uk](http://hwnn.co.uk)

t: 0115 956 5313

e: [info@hwnn.co.uk](mailto:info@hwnn.co.uk)

 [@\\_HWNN](https://twitter.com/_HWNN)

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchNN](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchNN)