

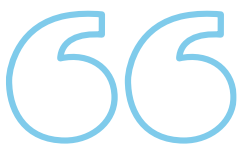
Together

**We are making health
and social care better**
Annual Report 2022–23



Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	5
Year in Review	6
Listening to your experiences	9
Hearing from all communities	13
Advice and information	15
Volunteering	17
Finances and future priorities	19
Statutory statements	20



"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

As the Chair of Healthwatch Newcastle, writing the Annual Report message allows me a chance to reflect on the past 12 months. Like most organisations, we have adapted, renewed, and shifted our delivery patterns as we re-adjust with the aftereffects of the Covid 19 pandemic. I am grateful that through the changes everyone has continued to be adaptive and proactively worked to ensure that Healthwatch Newcastle continues to make sure that people using health and social care services have a meaningful voice.

Healthwatch Newcastle continues to support the nine Healthwatch England national priorities through providing local data collection, supplying service users input and raising people's awareness of the issues.



Feyi Awotona
Healthwatch Newcastle Chair

Also at local level, through our rolling community engagement and outreach programme the Healthwatch Newcastle Committee has been picking up emerging issues and new trends that address local needs and then working with commissioners and local partners to ensure change.

We are committed to continuing to work closely with the Newcastle system, the Council, health and social care, voluntary and community sector partners, and particularly with the Newcastle Health and Wellbeing Board. Together we will continue to make a difference and work on tackling the health and other inequalities. We thank our partners for recognising our work and expertise and their willingness to involve us at a high level where we can have an influence on behalf of local people.

Engagement, Involvement and Outreach activities form the main function of Healthwatch Newcastle, throughout the year we have taken opportunities to reach out to local people and communities, gather views, and provide advice and information. It is through delivery of this work that as an independent partner within the Newcastle systems, we can effectively collaborate, influence, and have an impact on health and social care services. This year the report on the "Newcastle Carers' survey 2022 - Understanding carers' experiences during the pandemic" demonstrates our impact and the partnership working that we do, so that the residents' experience of health and social care service affect the design and implementation of services across the city.

Message from our Chair

I would like to thank our dedicated staff, volunteers, committee members and Tell Us North CIC directors who are fundamental to us delivering an effective Healthwatch service in Newcastle. Our new CEO, Yvonne Probert, joined in December 2022, and we are now in a time of renewal and looking positively to the future with an enthusiastic and dynamic new team.

Looking ahead we will continue to build on the relationships that we have within Newcastle, focusing on local people and communities, while working with others to amplify users' voice and experiences. I can assure you that Healthwatch Newcastle will continue to ensure local people have effective ways to influence and improve health and social care services. Our promise is to keep challenging ourselves to do even more to hear from all communities, and this means we face the coming year with confidence that we will make a difference in Newcastle.

Finally, I would like to thank the people of Newcastle who have taken the time to share their experiences of health and social care services with us.



Feyi Awotona
Healthwatch Newcastle Chair

About us

Healthwatch Newcastle is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear the voice and use the feedback from service users to improve care. We can also help people to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

We believe that users' views can improve health and social care services



Our mission

To demonstrate how user views can improve services in health and social care and to provide practical services, support, and advice to help that happen well

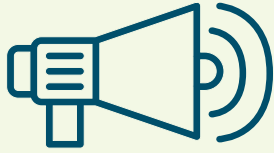


Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Year in review

Reaching out



451 people

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

109 people

came to us via signposting for clear advice and information about topics such as complaints, access to health services, and social care.

Making a difference to care

We published

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

- North East Ambulance Service: Experiences in Gateshead & Newcastle
- Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into NHS Dentistry
- Loneliness and Social Isolation in young people living in Newcastle and Gateshead
- Comparison of Newcastle and North Tyneside carers' survey data: Understanding carers' experiences during the pandemic
- Newcastle Carers' survey 2022: Understanding carers' experiences during the pandemic



Health and care that works for you

We're lucky to have

13

outstanding volunteers who gave up 50 hours to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£209,180

We currently employ

7 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring



We worked with Newcastle Carers to understand the experiences of unpaid carers across Newcastle during the pandemic.



We engaged with people with a learning disability and GP Practices in Newcastle to understand experiences of Annual Health Checks with a focus on user experience, continuity of care, and accessibility.

Summer



We welcomed a new team in summer 2022 tasked with helping us achieve our mission of engaging with local people to help improve health and social care services in Newcastle.



We engaged with young people aged 16 to 25 to understand their views and general experiences of loneliness and social isolation.

Autumn



We engaged with local people to understand their experiences booking and receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations in Newcastle.



We launched online monthly forums where we invited local health and social care organisations to share information about their services. Each month we focus on a specific topic area and welcome local people along to learn more about what is available.

Winter



We fed into the submission of evidence to the House of Commons Cross-Party Health and Social Care Committee Inquiry into Dentistry. Our recommendations for the local Integrated Care Board and NHS England were grounded by the experiences of local people.



In line with our newly developed Engagement Strategy, we made a targeted effort to speak to one of the seldom heard groups, young people aged between 16 and 25, through the launch of phase one of our Youthwatch Project.

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch Newcastle. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?



We gathered carers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our report was sent to Newcastle City Council, so they were aware of carers' needs when tendering for new provider contracts



"I just wanted to say thank you very much for coming to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board today to talk through your report. It provoked a good discussion and the information in the report will be useful to inform our strategy and our future commissioning intentions. I look forward to updating you in due course on our future plans and appreciate your support for our domestic abuse work in commissioning the report."
 Joan Flood, Community Safety Lead
 Violence Against Women and Girls/Hate Crime, Newcastle City Council

**CELEBRATING
SUCCESS
10 YEARS OF
HEALTHWATCH**



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 feed this back to services and help them improve.

Understanding Autistic People and People with Learning Disabilities Experiences Accessing and Using GP Services in Newcastle.

We engaged with autistic people and people with learning disabilities in Newcastle to understand their experiences accessing and using GP services. We wanted to understand awareness around reasonable adjustments and whether adjustments were put in place.

Our findings showed that overall levels of awareness about what reasonable adjustments were and how to request them were poor. The reasonable adjustments people wanted tended to focus on communication and interaction, access to services, and changes to the physical environment.

What actions did we recommend?

- Raise awareness of reasonable adjustments among all patients to create a culture whereby anyone who needs reasonable adjustments to access the service are able to do so. GP practices should be proactive in removing barriers to patients accessing their services.
- The importance of annual health checks should be made clear among autistic patients and patients with disabilities. Efforts should be made to increase uptake of the annual health check and used as an opportunity to help understand any reasonable adjustments a patient may need.
- Maintain a record of a patients preferred contact method and ensure that the method is used when any information is communicated.
- Where reasonable adjustments are not possible, this should be clearly communicated to patients in a way they understand. If alternatives are possible, these should also be shared with patients and the offer to implement alternatives should be made.

What difference will this make?

The project has received a lot of attention both through our work with local organisations who provide support to autistic people and/or people with learning disabilities and through the media. With this in mind, we feel the impact will extend beyond the recommendations made in the report and beyond GP practices themselves.

Being able and comfortable to access GP services through the implementation of reasonable adjustments will help autistic people and people with learning disabilities access services in a timely manner before conditions have worsened.

GG *I often feel like we are requesting the impossible in the tone and nature of response. Currently my parent manages my difficulties in accessing the environment etc & advocates on my behalf, as a non-verbal [person]. But often, even then it's an impossible task."*

Accessing Dental Services in Newcastle

The Health and Social Care Committee launched an inquiry into dentistry following a survey that showed 90% of dental practices across the UK were not accepting new adult NHS patients. MPs explored the possible impact of changes to make the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) and Integrated Care Boards (ICB) responsible for the provision of dental services.

Our findings echoed those that prompted the inquiry into dentistry, with most of the local people we engaged with having mentioned issues around access.

The COVID pandemic discouraged some from visiting the dentist; with some local people noting that their dentist was not prioritising routine check-ups and others reported that they did not want to add to an already burdened system.

Our recommendations:

As the inquiry included the role of local ICS and the ICB in the provision of dental services, our recommendations focus on the role the ICS could play in fulfilling our recommendations which included:

- Ensuring the public are informed about personalised recall intervals and the importance of regular dentist visits.
- Ensuring barriers to access are addressed and seldom heard groups are given the opportunity to share their experiences.
- Ensuring patients have access to user-friendly and up-to-date information through a variety of different mediums.

What difference will this make?

Raising public awareness around dentistry is key. Personalised recall intervals will help ensure patients are seeing a dental professional on a regular basis suitable to their needs. Ensuring information is up-to-date and user-friendly will ensure local people have access to timely and correct information. While pooled resources will help unburden the system and can help in the early diagnosis of major oral health issues, including oral cancer.

“It is nigh on impossible to get a routine check-up and thus my teeth have suffered. My dentist is now more expensive due to filling crack worsening and now cannot be refilled and I need a crown. Treatment is very expensive. I was already anxious, going to the dentist did not help my mental health one bit.”

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.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.



Healthwatch Newcastle contacted Newcastle GP services and the Clinical Commissioning Group to help a social worker facilitate a COVID-19 vaccination for an elective mute patient living in Newcastle. The patient had not left the house in two years and contact with the public caused feelings of heightened anxiety.

By following up, Healthwatch Newcastle were able to support the social worker in getting the patient added to the housebound patient list so they could receive their vaccination. The social worker said, *"Thank you so much for being the only service I have interacted with that actually took the time out to listen instead of passing me to someone else"*.

Getting services to involve the public

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



Healthwatch Newcastle engaged with local people to understand their experiences and opinions of the Northeast Ambulance Service (NEAS). The engagement focused on public trust in the service, and we ultimately recommended that any actions should focus on delivering transparently and building trust. NEAS are working on engaging with the local people. Through our engagement with local people, we were able to share with NEAS what trust means to people and areas that need to be addressed to develop trust.

Improving care over time

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



In 2022-23, Healthwatch Newcastle started engaging with local people through short research projects. One of these projects included the topic of Heart Health. We found that understanding of CPR and confidence carrying out CPR was poor among local people. To help combat this, we worked to remind people of the range of free resources to help people increase their awareness around this valuable lifesaving skill.



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 reached different communities by:

- Developing specific targeted programmes of work focusing on specific seldom heard groups
- Developing working relationships with organisations working directly with specific groups of interest

Getting young people involved in improving services

This year we launched Youthwatch in an effort to get young people involved in influencing the future of health and social care services. There are around 57,000 young people in Newcastle. The views of these young people aren't always heard and as a Healthwatch we wanted to change this.

Phase one of our Youthwatch project has seen us understand what is important to young people in the area. Phase two of Youthwatch (due to launch in 2023-24) will enable young people to get involved in projects that are important to them and bring the information to decision makers in a timely manner.



“I think the health services are good but could be improved more to reach each person’s needs without discriminating because of their age or gender.”

Diverse Communities. Diverse Experiences.



In 2022-23, Healthwatch Newcastle have engaged with diverse communities across Newcastle including Sikh, Hindu, Pakistani, Bengali, Muslim, Chinese, and African. We have worked with organisations supporting people seeking asylum and those who are refugees.

We have utilised the language skills of team members to help members of the local community overcome language barriers and share their health and social care experiences.

The profile of Healthwatch Newcastle has increased among diverse communities across the city and we are now hearing from a diverse range of communities.



Advice and information

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

This year we've helped people by:

- Helping people develop awareness of services in the local area through our online forums.
- Providing signposting information and advice through our website, email & telephone lines.
- Reaching out to our connections within the health and social care system to resolve specific issues.
- Developing our presence within local communities, providing an opportunity for people to share their experiences face-to-face

Building relationships to support local people together

Healthwatch Newcastle have been contacted by local people presenting complex needs and don't know where to turn. To offer the best possible service, as part of our signposting role, we have been working to develop strong relationships with advocacy services in the Newcastle area to ensure local people receive the right support at the right time.

Without tailored support and guidance many of the local people who contact us have difficulties navigating the complex health and social care system.

Through the development of these strong relationships, Healthwatch Newcastle, also gained insight to wider health and social care issues from the advocacy services.

These relationships also extend beyond advocacy services as Healthwatch Newcastle have begun to map services within the locality to ensure the support network is as robust as possible.



Keeping Warm with Healthwatch

Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead worked jointly to host a Keeping Warm with Healthwatch event this year. The event brought together several organisations across the areas to share information and advice with members of the local community.

The event was recognised as a great networking opportunity with organisations in attendance connecting with one another and learning about the services each other provide. The event also enabled many attendees to gain more awareness about services that they may not have otherwise known.

Engagement highlighted issues around the cost-of-living and the impact on day-to-day and social activities. Following on from the event, we began scoping a cost-of-living and winter pressure research project that is due to launch in the first quarter of 2023-24.





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 communities to promote their Healthwatch Newcastle and what we have to offer.
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views.
- Created a Healthwatch young people's survey to better understand the views of 16–25-year-olds.
- Helped collect views through surveys, discussion groups and at community events.

Iqra

"Volunteering for Healthwatch Newcastle has given me experience when looking for my first job. I have recently secured an apprenticeship within the NHS. Volunteering for Healthwatch has given me a head start into my new career."



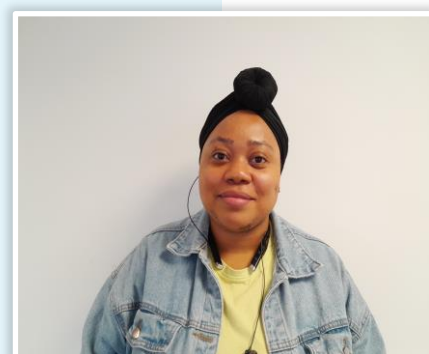
Raj

"I have an interest in Stroke Awareness and as a volunteer for Healthwatch I have carried out radio interviews and awareness presentations. Healthwatch Newcastle has given me opportunities to help raise awareness"



Mariam


"I recently joined Healthwatch as a volunteer as I am studying public health. I enjoy helping at events and on information stalls sharing information about Healthwatch and the work they do. I have collected many people's views through surveys."



Do you feel inspired?

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

 www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

 **0808 1789 282**

 info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

Finance and future priorities

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

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Newcastle council	£209,180	Expenditure on pay	£157,726
		Non-pay expenditure	£3,754
		Office and management fee	£70,082
Total income	£209,180	Total expenditure	£231,562

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch Newcastle was launched, we have demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackle the inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers faced when accessing care, regardless of whether that is because of where you live, your income or your race.

Emerging priorities for 2023–24

- Hospital Discharge
- Access to GPs
- Mental Health
- Accessible Information Standards
- Health Literacy



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Newcastle
MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Organisation holding the Healthwatch Newcastle contract:
Tell Us North CIC (company number 10394966)
MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS
Email: info@tellusnorth.org.uk

Healthwatch Newcastle 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 Newcastle Committee consists of 4 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

We include 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 have the opportunity to tell us about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending face to face meetings at community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, provide paper copies, promote it at meetings as well as via social media and in our newsletter.

Responses to recommendations

This year 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 insight and experiences that have been shared with us at Healthwatch Newcastle.

We take information to various groups and committees such as the City Futures Board, Collaborative Newcastle and Newcastle Neighbourhoods. In addition, we take insight and experiences to other decision makers in the Newcastle system. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

The way we work

Influence and Impact via the Newcastle Health and Wellbeing Board and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Healthwatch Newcastle is an active representative on these 2 groups by the Healthwatch Newcastle Chair and the Chief Executive Officer of Tell Us North CIC.

During 2022–2023 our representatives have effectively carried out this role of representation by attending meetings and contributing to actions and decisions in order to improve the wellbeing and health of everyone in the city, particularly focusing on reducing health inequalities.



Thank You

We would like to extend our thanks to :-

- Newcastle Carers
- Newcastle City Council
- Newcastle Vision Support
- NHS Newcastle Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Staff
- North East Autism Society
- North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- Newcastle Parent Carer Forum
- Primary Care Networks and GP Practice Managers
- Quadrant Leisure CIC
- RNIB
- Skills for people
- The Lawnmowers
- The staff at PRS café, MEA House
- The Twisting Ducks Theatre Company
- Throckley Primary Care
- Welford Centre
- Your Voice Counts



Healthwatch Newcastle
MEA House
Ellison Place
Newcastle Upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE1 8XS

www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

Freephone: 0808 178 9282

Text: 0755 105 2751

Post: Freepost Healthwatch Newcastle, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Email: info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk



HWNewcastle



@HWNewcastle

healthwatchnewcastle



healthwatch-newcastle

