



Annual Report 2020-21

On equal terms

Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Highlights from our year	5
Our priorities and projects 2020-21	6
Responding to COVID-19	11
Volunteers	16
Finances	19
Statutory statements	20
Next steps	22
Thank you	23



Healthwatch Dorset is your health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other health and social care decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care.

Message from our Chair

An extraordinary and productive year

When reflecting on the last extraordinary year, it is satisfying to recognise how much Healthwatch Dorset has achieved despite the pandemic. Our staff have been wonderfully flexible, diverting their energy to projects that helped our partners in health and social care respond to the needs of local people, despite the restrictions.

Care during COVID-19

We investigated life during COVID-19 for those using health and care services, including people experiencing homelessness and those living and working in local care homes. Subsequently, we launched a new survey to capture people's feedback about the local vaccination programme.

Giving people a voice

I am particularly proud of our approach to our work, seeking always to work directly with those who find it most difficult to have a voice. A good example is our contribution to a local review of mental health services for young people. We made sure that the views of young refugees and those excluded from school were included, and that the voluntary sector contribution is fully recognised.

Focus on young people

During the year, our young volunteers achieved national recognition for their work raising awareness about what it is like to live with type 1 diabetes. This focus on young people continues, as this year we will be gathering young people's views to help shape local services through our new Young Listeners project and through a project for the Wessex Cancer Alliance.

Turning information into action

Lastly, our helpline continues to receive a steady stream of calls from the public. As we provide people with guidance about local services, they alert us to current issues, which we feed in to local and national sources to help drive service improvement.



I hope you enjoy reading about our work last year and the work we have planned for the coming year, as we continue putting the needs of local people at the heart of social and health care in Dorset.

Viv Aird
Chair, Healthwatch Dorset Steering Group

"Healthwatch Dorset has gone from strength to strength this year and faced the challenge of listening to people during a worldwide pandemic, head on. Louise and her team, with support from Evolving Communities, have continued to gather a wealth of lived experience from people, particularly in relation to issues brought about by COVID-19, and used this to positively influence local health and social care services."

Nicky Mitchell, Commissioner, BCP Council

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Dorset. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference that their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health and care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



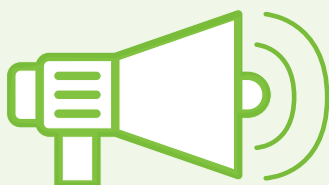
"Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

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

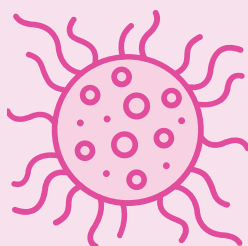
Reaching out



This year we heard from
1,826 people
about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to
1,302 people

Responding to the pandemic



In total, we engaged with and supported
3,128 people this year;
1,903 of these were COVID-19 related comments and enquiries.

Making a difference to care



We published
6 reports about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

From this, we made
19 recommendations for improvement and these are all being used to redesign services in Dorset.

Health and care that works for you



97 volunteers helped us to carry out our work.

In total, they contributed
132 days (1,261 hours)

We employ
5 staff, 4 of whom are full-time equivalent.

We received
£201,928 in funding from our local authorities in 2020-21.



Our priorities and projects 2020-21

At the start of the year, in response to COVID-19, we adapted our public engagement programme so that we could continue gathering public feedback to support the improvement of local and national NHS and social care services.



Mental health in community care

We investigated the mental health care needs of people experiencing homelessness and those who use drug and alcohol services, to inform Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) development of community mental health services.

We spoke in-depth to 27 people who use support groups across Dorset. Common issues included long waiting times to access services, no access for people who are using drugs and/or alcohol, the routine prescription of medication instead of therapy and no regular reviews, a lack of continuity of care, and people feeling they are not listened to.

- "Healthwatch Dorset coming out to speak to me is the most that anyone has ever asked me what I felt."
- "The community mental health team put me on an SSRI antidepressant, but they never reviewed it. I was on it for four years, but the GP said I shouldn't have been on it for that long, so now the GP is trying to get me off it. There was a lot of heavy side effects from SSRI too."

How have we made a difference?

We spoke to people who can find services hard to access and who do not feel listened to, giving them an opportunity to influence how services are delivered. As a result of this project, we have been invited by Dorset CCG to chair a 'Seldom Heard' project group which will help redesign local community mental health services.

- "Currently, primary and community mental health services don't always meet everyone's needs. The experiences and views of local people are vital in helping us to understand what is working well and what needs to be improved. We are very grateful to Healthwatch Dorset for helping us to reach out." Di Bardwell, Principle Programme Lead, Primary & Community Care Directorate at Dorset CCG
- "Thank you for the valuable insight gathered during the visits to the HealthBus. We would like to acknowledge the sensitive, caring and professional way your engagement officer interacted with some of our most vulnerable and complex patients. The feedback given will help us shape our services in the future." Kate Hibbitt, Operations Director at HealthBus

Read our report

Mental Health in Community Care - Working together to improve mental health support in our community (December 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/reports-publications.
Read the project blog: ***My diary: conversations about homelessness and health***
healthwatchdorset.co.uk/my-diary-conversations-about-homelessness-and-health



Share your views with us

Tell us about a recent health or social care experience, or share your views about local services to help make care better.

- healthwatchdorset.co.uk
- 0300 100 0102
- enquiries@healthwatchdorset.co.uk



Your Mind, Your Say: Young people's views of mental health services in Dorset

We published a report in August 2020 about young people's experiences of mental health services in Dorset, to inform the development of services in the county.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, we visited youth groups and local community organisations across Dorset. We talked to 23 young people who don't always have a strong voice, including those excluded from school, young offenders, care leavers, young asylum seekers and young people experiencing homelessness.

They told us that they would like shorter waiting times to access help, they want to see the same person, and they would like a more flexible approach to mental health sessions, held in a place where they feel comfortable.



- "It's frustrating when your psychiatrists, doctors and mental health workers are constantly changing. I went through three care co-ordinators in six months, and it really slows down progress... I feel like I am repeating myself over and over again and opening up my trauma."
- "The rigidity of only having six sessions is not very good. You're put in a room at a certain time, told you've got 45 minutes to open up about everything and then you are expected to go back to school."

How have we made a difference?

Our recommendations are being used by Dorset's Clinical Commissioning Group to inform future service plans, which will be designed together with young people and their families.

- "It was great to receive the report and recommendations from Healthwatch Dorset and we are grateful to those who shared their views... (these) will be used to inform future service plans, which we will design with young people, their families and other stakeholders."
Elaine Hurl, Principal Programme Lead for Mental Health at Dorset CCG

Read our report

Your Mind, Your Say: Young people's views of mental health services in Dorset (August 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/reports-publications



'Mental Health: It's OK to talk'

Last year (2019-20), 17% of all enquiries we received were about mental health services. Our volunteers decided to share their own stories of mental health to raise awareness and encourage more people to speak up.

On World Mental Health Day, October 2020, we released a film featuring Healthwatch Dorset volunteers Shannon, Will and Elaine talking candidly about their experiences and how they manage their mental health.

Shannon spent most of her twenties in a wheelchair due to a chronic back problem; thankfully she has regained almost full mobility. Will lost family members at a young age, and Elaine was left in a coma after a sudden illness. They all believe that talking about their feelings to doctors and friends was a great help in their recovery.

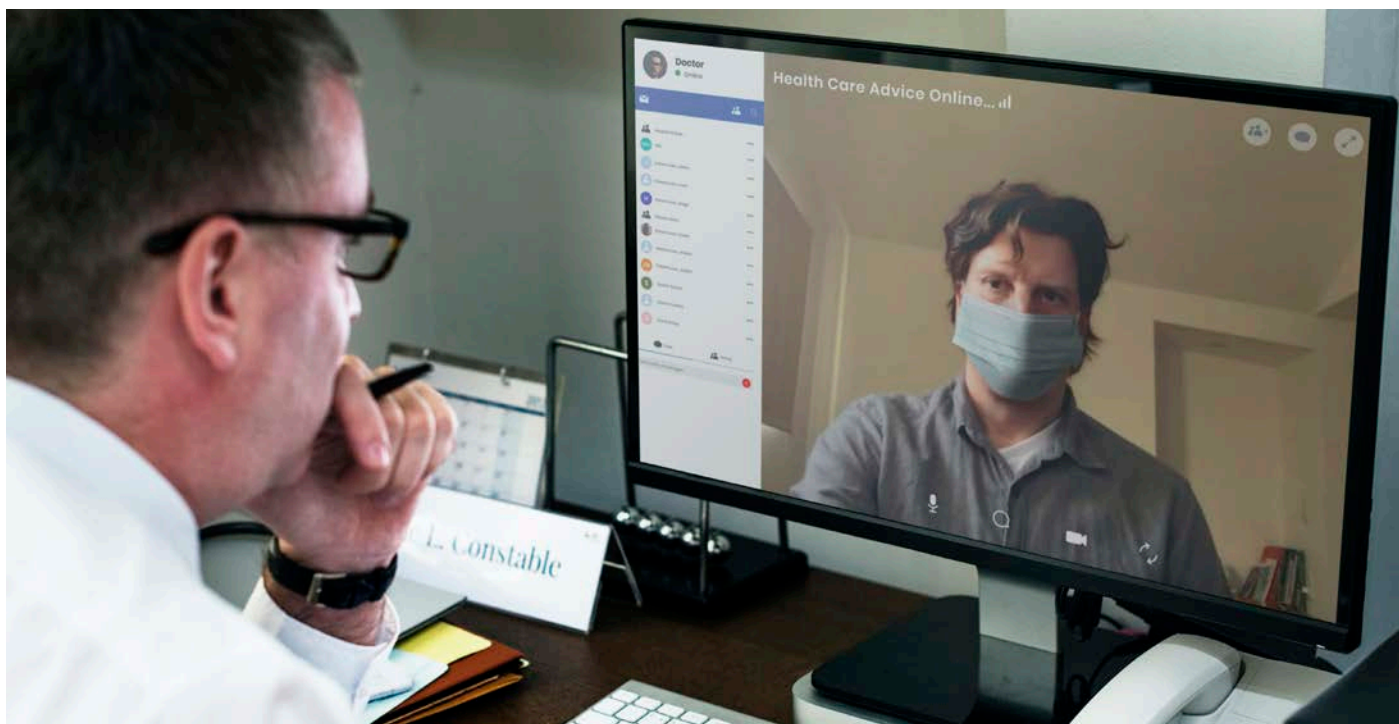
- "I wanted to take part in the film because I knew that talking about my mental health on camera would take me out of my comfort zone, and by talking about it, it would help me and other people." Shannon, Healthwatch Dorset volunteer
- "I'd been struggling for a long time, but didn't realise what it was because I hadn't spoken to anyone. When I opened up to people, that's when they started saying we can get you help." Will, Healthwatch Dorset volunteer

How have we made a difference?

We used our film to raise awareness of the different mental health challenges people face and the benefits of seeking support, especially the value of talking. We were interviewed by BBC Radio Solent with our volunteer Elaine, to talk about the film which has been watched by over 240 people. The film complements our ongoing work investigating people's experiences of mental health services in Dorset.

Watch our film

Mental Health: It's OK to talk (October 2020). Visit our website: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/our-projects/other



The Doctor will Zoom You Now

As many health care appointments are now delivered over the phone or by video call in response to COVID-19, we want to make sure this new way of providing care meets everyone's needs.

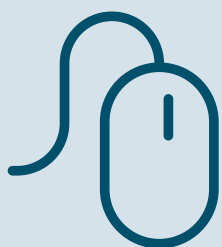
During summer 2020, we took part in a national study with Healthwatch England and National Voices, to understand patients' experiences of virtual and remote health consultations. We recruited five local people who had experienced remote consultation during lockdown. They completed an online survey, one-to-one telephone interviews, and online workshops.

How have we made a difference?

By taking part in this study, we contributed a local perspective to help build understanding nationally of how to deliver good quality care virtually. Using people's experiences, Healthwatch England and National Voices created some tips for patients and health and care professionals on how to get the most out of digital consultations.

Read more

Visit our website to read the full story: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/the-doctor-will-zoom-you-now-healthwatch-dorset-supports-national-research-to-improve-virtual-health-care



To find out more >>>

Read top tips for digital consultations: *The Doctor Will Zoom You Now*
Go online to: healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/The_Dr_Will_Zoom_You_Now_-_Insights_Report.pdf



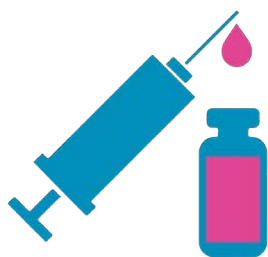
Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch Dorset 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 1,903 people by:

- Providing up-to-date advice on the COVID-19 response locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Supporting the community volunteer response
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Gathering people's feedback and using it to help services support people during the pandemic

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



64% on COVID-19 and vaccinations



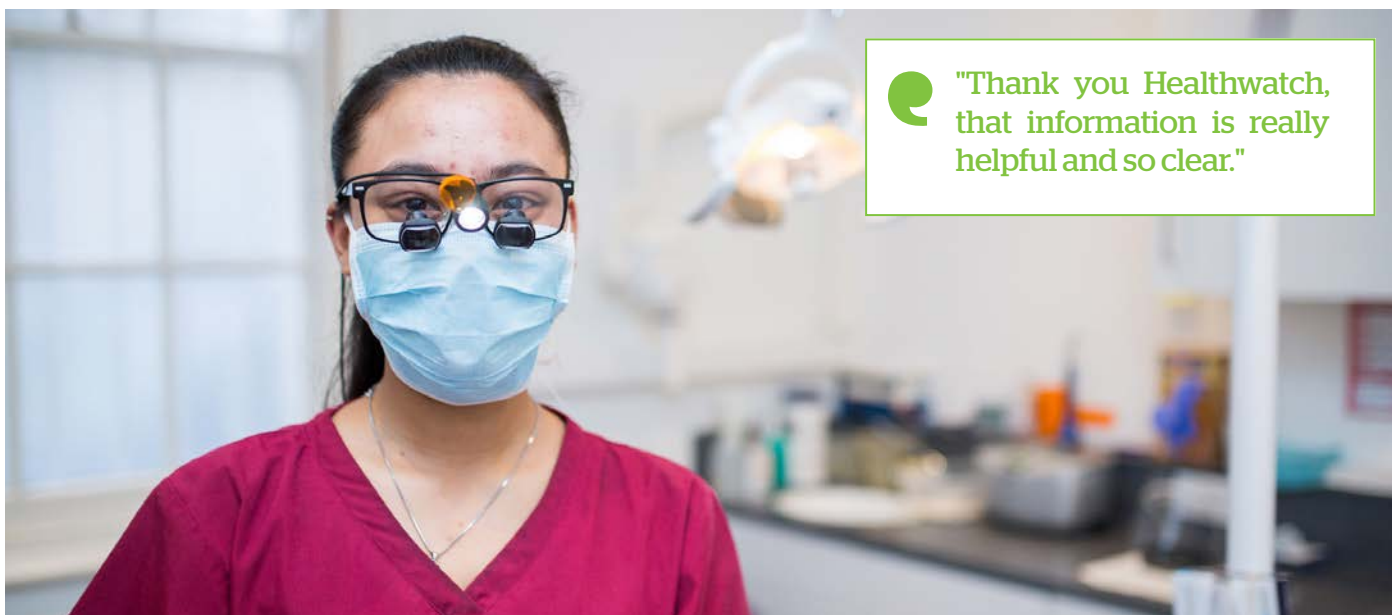
18% on access to GP services



11% on dentistry



7% on mental health services



"Thank you Healthwatch, that information is really helpful and so clear."

COVID-19 vaccine

"I had my first injection and have headaches, nausea and fatigue. I have taken Paracetamol which has eased the headache a bit. Please can you advise what else I should do and how long this is likely to last? I was only expecting a couple of days discomfort!"

We have been sharing NHS guidance on what to do if you experience side effects and advising people to contact NHS 111 if they are concerned. We are also encouraging people to complete our vaccine survey to feedback about their experiences (see p.15).

Dentistry

"I find myself with the symptoms of a tooth infection/pain and called 111 for emergency dental care, who transferred me and an appointment was made to visit a Dentist... antibiotics were prescribed. The Dentist stated the tooth needs to be removed, but I was told to find a private dentist as NHS treatment was not possible. NHS cost for tooth extraction is £62, private cost is £200 - money I do not have, and I can't find an NHS dentist who is taking on new patients."

We have been unable to find dentists in Dorset who are taking on new NHS patients. We share feedback and highlight the issues raised with South West Dental Commissioning Team and with Healthwatch England, who have produced two national reports this year. Visit the Healthwatch England website to read the full reports: ***What people are telling us: July-September*** (December 2020) and ***Dentistry during COVID-19 insight briefing*** (May 2021).

GP services

"I broke my wrist. Poole Hospital treated the break, but when the cast was removed, because of COVID-19, there was no physiotherapy available. The NHS wrote to tell me they were contacting my GP to arrange an appointment, but I didn't hear anything. I decided to see GP for a health check and over the phone he told me to self-refer to mskdorset.nhs, which I did, and saw a very nice physio who told me he would write to my GP suggesting a hospital scan or a thorough physical. I have still not heard from GP. I feel that I am being ignored, and no help is being offered from my surgery. I live alone, and nearest relative is a 45 min drive each way. Can you please advise a way forward?"

We advised the client to contact the GP Practice Manager. The GP has now referred the client for a hospital scan, and the client was very grateful.



Contact us to get the information you need

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

🌐 healthwatchdorset.co.uk

☎ 0300 100 0102

✉ enquiries@healthwatchdorset.co.uk

Using feedback to inform response and recovery



The pandemic required health and social care services to adapt at speed to care for people with the virus, while trying to reduce infections and maintain care for sick and vulnerable people. Changes were made quickly to how services were delivered to local people.

Accessing care during COVID-19

Between April and September 2020, we investigated how the pandemic was affecting people's experiences of local care. 179 people responded to our online survey, in addition to feedback gathered through enquiries and information requests.

Key themes included concerns about changes and delays to treatment, confusion over shielding advice, the benefits and barriers of remote and digital communication, and the value of voluntary and community groups. The top four services we received feedback about were GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, and dentistry.



-  "I repeatedly tried to set up electronic prescriptions with my pharmacy and surgery. Prescriptions keep failing to be sent and I get passed between the pharmacy and surgery."
-  "I am a carer for my elderly and vulnerable 85-year-old grandfather. I've been self-isolating with him. We've had weekly calls from the local Day Centre, which has been great. The service is still suspended which has affected my grandfather's wellbeing."

How have we made a difference?

We identified where changes to services worked well and where improvements could be made. Our findings have been used by the multi-agency Dorset Health & Care Silver Group and the Quality Surveillance Group to improve local communication and information for people during COVID-19. Our report has also been shared with Healthwatch England to inform changes nationally.

-  "We'd like to thank Healthwatch Dorset for the work that they have been doing during COVID-19 to seek the views of the public across Dorset on health and care services, and very much value the insights and feedback that they have provided." Vanessa Read, Director of Nursing & Quality at Dorset CCG

Read our report

Dorset health and social care during COVID-19: What local people told us (November 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/reports-publications



Working in a care home during COVID-19

We wanted to understand more about the impact of COVID-19 on care home residents, their families and the staff supporting them.

In June 2020, we conducted in-depth phone interviews with six care home managers. In July 2020, we held a virtual focus group with care home managers and staff from across Dorset. Common themes emerged around access to PPE, problems with testing, challenges around delivering effective care across services, new ways of communicating with families, and the value of community support.



"It's been really time consuming and hard work to get all the PPE we need to be safe."



"One of our residents went into hospital, not COVID-19 related, and I had to fight to get her retested before she was discharged."



"We had to implement new technology, which worked well and is now our new normal."

How have we made a difference?

During this exceptionally challenging time, we gave care home staff the opportunity to speak about their experiences and share their views with those responsible for improving social care policy and delivery.

Read our report

What is it like to live and work in a care home during COVID-19? (July 2020). Visit our website to read the full report: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/reports-publications



Dorset's COVID-19 vaccination programme

We asked local people to share their views and experiences of Dorset's vaccination programme to help health and care providers understand how to meet people's needs.

We opened our online survey at the start of March 2021 and by the end of March we had received 731 responses. (Survey will remain open until the end of Summer 2021.) Common themes so far have been around transport to vaccination centres, the booking system, and the quality of information, particularly around side effects and the definition and eligibility of carers to receive the vaccine.



How have we made a difference?

We gave people the opportunity to feedback and to ask questions, signposting them to accurate information and support. We shared our interim findings with Dorset NHS to inform planning locally, and we will share our final report with Healthwatch England to help influence national policy.

Read a summary of our initial findings

Dorset health and social care during COVID-19: What local people told us (March 2021). Visit our website to read the interim summary: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/reports-publications



Volunteers

At Healthwatch Dorset we are supported by 97 volunteers. They help us find out what people think is working well, and what improvements people would like to make to local health and care services.

This year our volunteers:

- Have contributed 1,261 hours of their time to support our work.
- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Reviewed websites, leaflets and documents for NHS, councils and other organisations to make sure public information is clear and easy to understand.
- Created informative articles, films and content for our website and social media, to raise awareness of health and care issues and campaigns.
- Helped with local volunteering, shopping and collecting prescriptions for those self-isolating or shielding.



Sharing knowledge to raise awareness

Our volunteer Richie was named as one of Healthwatch England's 'Healthwatch Heroes' this year, for the valuable contribution he made with his informative blog writing, tying in his studies in Nutrition and Behaviour with our campaigns calendar and workplan.

Read Richie's blogs on our website:
healthwatchdorset.co.uk/category/blog

"Volunteering for Healthwatch Dorset has allowed me to share the knowledge that I'm learning on my university course with a wider audience. It has helped me to think about ways to explain certain concepts for a diverse audience which doesn't necessarily have a background in nutrition, psychology, or science. Another really positive aspect is that I've learnt about many local health services and I am frequently updated with volunteering opportunities."



The challenges of being a carer

During national Carers Week in June 2020, Steering Group member Naomi shared her story of being a full-time unpaid carer during lockdown. She cares for her 12-year-old son George who has multiple disabilities, she also has a 15-year-old daughter who is dyslexic and an active nine-year old son. George was on the COVID-19 vulnerable list during lockdown, so the whole family had to self-isolate for 12 weeks. Naomi helped us raise awareness of the challenges faced by carers, and she encouraged others to seek support and speak up about their experiences to help influence change in local services.

Read Naomi's story on our website: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/naomis-story-of-caring-during-covid-19/

National award for our work with volunteers

This year, we were one of only four local Healthwatch out of 152 across England, to be 'highly commended' for our work with volunteers at the Healthwatch England awards. In particular, for our project that helped local young people raise awareness of what it is like to live with type 1 diabetes.





The Healthwatch Dorset Steering Group (pictured left to right): Viv Aird, Naomi Patterson, Sue Warr, Ebi Sosseh, Margaret Guy, Peter Greensmith, Amanda Shirlin-Brown, Richard Selby and Lauren Bishop.

Meet our Steering Group

The Healthwatch Dorset Steering Group leads and oversees our work to represent patients and the public to inform improvements in local health and care. Steering Group members are volunteers.

Read more about their work on page p.20 and visit our website to find out about their experience and expertise: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/about/steering-group

Young Listeners

Between January and March 2021, we recruited 11 young volunteers aged 16-25, to lead and deliver our new Young Listeners project. They will engage with other young people from across Dorset, listening to their health and social care experiences and gathering their ideas on how services could work better for young people.

Read more about the project on our website: healthwatchdorset.co.uk/project/young-listeners/



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 with Healthwatch Dorset.

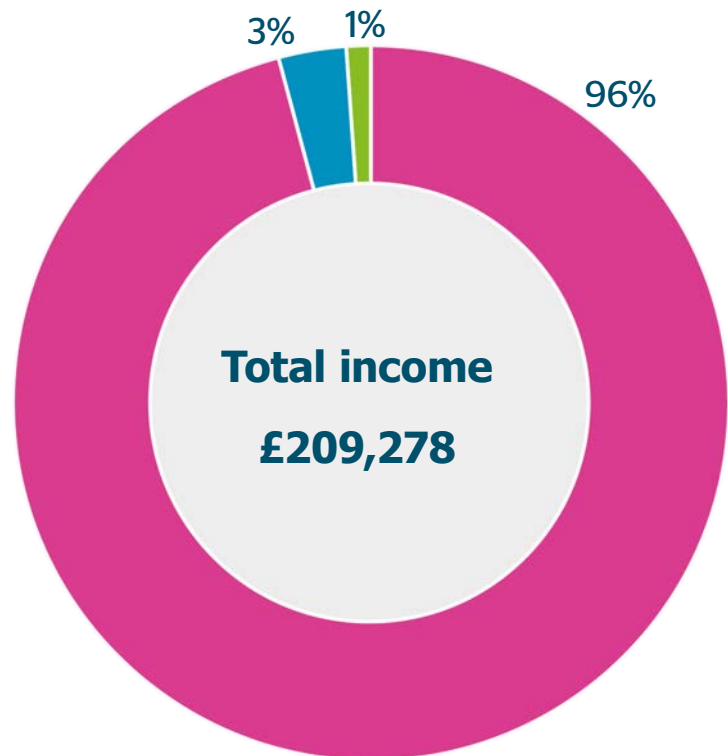
- 🌐 healthwatchdorset.co.uk
- ☎ 0300 100 0102
- ✉ enquiries@healthwatchdorset.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authorities, Dorset County Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council (BCP), under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income

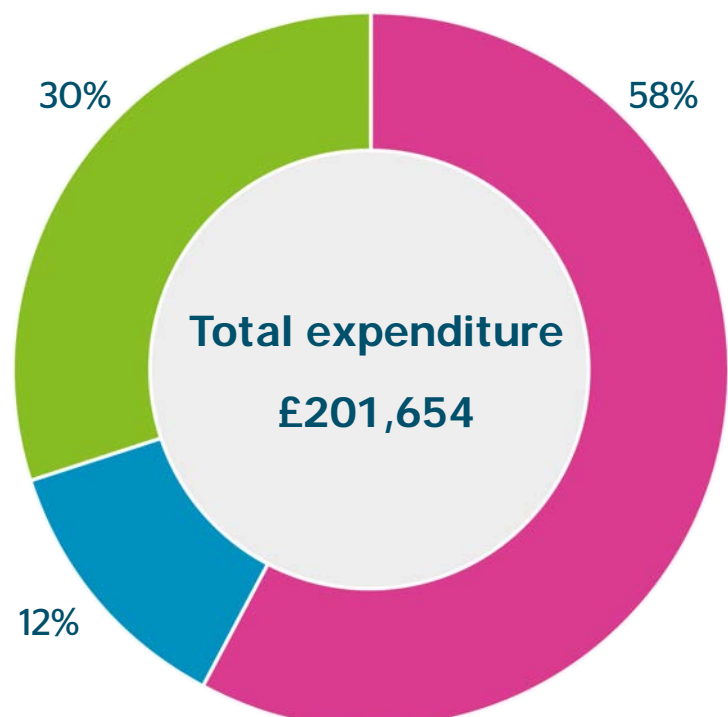
- Funding received from local authorities £201,928
- Additional income £5,250 (Macmillan Cancer Support)
- Additional income £2,100 (Wessex Voices)



Expenditure

- Staff costs £117,424
- Operational costs £23,650
- Support and administration £60,580*

* Central support services include research and insight, HR, finance and communications.



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Dorset, The Bridge, Chaseside, Bournemouth, BH7 7BX.

Healthwatch Dorset is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602. The registered office is at: Unit 2, Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH

Healthwatch Dorset 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 Dorset Steering Group consists of nine members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our steering group ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020-21 the steering group met six times and made decisions on matters such as gathering feedback on people's access to health and care services during COVID-19 and developing a Theory of Change plan for this year's work programme.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use insight gathered from information and signposting enquiries across the year to identify our key areas of focus in our project work. We work closely with partner organisations and stakeholders to understand their priorities and areas of focus to ensure representation of people's voice informs service development and improvements.

Methods and systems used across the year 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 2020-21 we have been available by phone and email, provided a feedback form and online surveys on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public on 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 done this by, for example, taking part in a national project to gather insights on digital consultations, by engaging with local people who are experiencing homelessness, and by reporting the experiences and views of young people who encounter health inequalities in the 'Your Mind, Your Say' project.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and announce this via press, social media and our monthly news bulletin.



2020-21 priorities

Project/activity area	Changes made to services
<p>Young people’s views of mental health services in Dorset</p> <p>We engaged with young people who are excluded from school, young offenders, care leavers, young asylum seekers and young people who are experiencing homelessness, to gather their views about the way young people’s mental health services are delivered (see p.8)</p>	<p>Our recommendations are being used by Dorset CCG to inform future service plans, which are being designed with young people, their families and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>Mental health in community care</p> <p>We worked with local support groups and spoke to people experiencing homelessness across Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset, to find out more about community mental health services in Dorset (see p.7)</p>	<p>We have been invited to chair a 'Seldom Heard' project group which will help redesign local community mental health services.</p>
<p>Dorset health and social care during COVID-19</p> <p>We gathered public feedback during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided information that health and care services could use as learning going forward (see p.14)</p>	<p>Our report findings have been used by the multi-agency Dorset Health & Care Silver Group and Quality Surveillance Group to improve local communication and information for people during COVID-19.</p>
<p>Dorset’s COVID-19 vaccination programme</p> <p>At the beginning of March 2021 we launched a survey to collect public views on the COVID-19 vaccine programme in Dorset; 731 people had responded by the end of March. (The survey will remain open until the end of summer 2021.) (see p.15)</p>	<p>The Dorset COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Programme Board has shared our interim findings with the national team and regional NHSE/I leads to improve the overall experience for local people.</p>

Responses to recommendations and requests

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by Healthwatch Dorset to the Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations. However, we regularly share anonymised data, reports and recommendations with Healthwatch England so that these can be fed into the national picture.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Dorset is represented on the BCP and Dorset Health and Wellbeing Boards by Louise Bate, Healthwatch Dorset Manager, and Margaret Guy, Healthwatch Dorset Steering Group member. During 2020-21 our representatives have effectively carried out this role by taking part in virtual meetings and workshops and sharing local people’s views through our reports.

Next steps

We will continue gathering public feedback and sharing this with key partners across the health and care system locally and nationally, to ensure that local people's views and experiences are used to drive change and improvement in services. We will also help people navigate health and care services through our information and signposting service.

Top priorities for 2021-22

We will investigate four priority areas of health and social care, with a focus on seldom heard communities and access to services as we move away from national restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accident and Emergency Care (A&E)

We will investigate A&E patient experiences at Poole Hospital and Dorset County Hospital. We will share our findings and recommendations for improvement with these hospitals, with University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust, and with NHS England Improvement. Dorset County Hospital will use our report to inform redevelopment of the Emergency Department.

Children and young people's health and social care services

We will ask young people about their experiences of Dorset's health and social care services and gather their ideas on how services could work better for them. The project will be designed and delivered by a group of volunteer 'Young Listeners' aged 16-25, with our support and training.

Access to Primary Care

We want to raise public awareness around how to access healthcare and we will also explore how lack of access to primary care, like GPs, impacts health inequalities. We will investigate the benefits and challenges patients experience when using digital methods of communication and consultation and find out how the patient experience can be improved, for example, by reducing barriers and waiting times for booking appointments. Another area of investigation will be the lack of access to NHS dentistry in Dorset.

Transport

Transport is a key theme that local people raise with us. We will continue to monitor access to health and care services for disabled and older people, including those living in rural communities. This year, we will focus on the quality of the information and provision of transport support for the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Other projects

In addition to our priority projects, we intend to explore:

- The introduction of '111 First', encouraging people to call NHS 111 to book a time slot for visiting A&E
- Changes to the process for discharge from hospital and the introduction of Home First
- The impact of COVID-19 on informal carers
- Proposed rapid access 'pop-up' hospital clinics.
- Working with Our Dorset, the local Integrated Care System (ICS), to prepare for the changes established in the Government White Paper ***Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all*** (February 2021).

Thank you

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

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us
- Our amazing staff and volunteers
- The voluntary organisations who have supported and contributed to our work
- Our partners including:
 - ◇ Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council; and Dorset Council
 - ◇ NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
 - ◇ Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Health and Wellbeing Board
 - ◇ Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board
 - ◇ Our Dorset
 - ◇ The Dorset NHS Foundation Trusts, including University Hospitals Dorset, Dorset County Hospital, Dorset Healthcare University, and South Western Ambulance Service



"NHS Dorset CCG is hugely appreciative of the collaborative relationship we have with Healthwatch Dorset as the county's independent health and care champion. Their insights and feedback help inform our role as health service commissioner for Dorset to understand the experiences of local people, which is why it's so valuable. Thank you to Healthwatch Dorset." Charles Summers, Director of Engagement and Development at Dorset CCG



☎ 0300 111 0102

✉ enquiries@healthwatchdorset.co.uk

🌐 healthwatchdorset.co.uk

Healthwatch Dorset
The Bridge
Chaseside
Bournemouth
BH7 7BX

If you need this report in an alternative format,
please contact us.

Find us on social media:

📘 [HealthwatchDorset](#)

🐦 [@HWatchDorset](#)

📷 [healthwatch.dorset](#)

🌐 [healthwatchdorset](#)