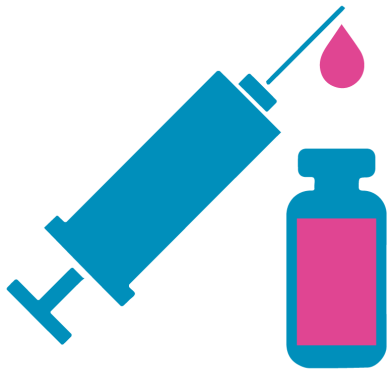




news
Local news from your local Healthwatch



On equal terms

Then and now

healthwatch
Knowsley

Healthwatch Knowsley Annual Report 2020-21

Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Highlights from our year	5
GP Access during COVID-19	6
Access to Dental Services during COVID-19	8
Responding to COVID-19	10
Volunteers	14
Finances	16
Statutory Statements	17
Methods & Systems for collecting information	18
2020-21 Priorities	19
Representation	23
Next steps & thank you	24

Message from our Chair



As everyone will fully appreciate, 2020-21 has simply been the most challenging year we have ever experienced. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the people of Knowsley has been significant. Issues such as loneliness, social isolation, anxiety, mental ill health, loss of independence and sadly bereavement have been close to us all.

Patients and community members have told Healthwatch about frontline health and social care staff going above and beyond to help people. It is appropriate here to again say a heartfelt Thank You to the staff and teams that have been undertaking roles to care and support our community members.

As a local Healthwatch, we have also been required to adapt as an organisation and individually to what we have faced. I am pleased to say that Healthwatch Knowsley has been part of the solution at a local level to responding to the pandemic and helping Knowsley residents in many ways. Working in partnership with Knowsley Council, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and voluntary sector colleagues, we have responded to needs and concerns of local people in the best way we could. The following report provides examples of this work.

To try and guide our response, during the spring of 2020 we added a new priority area into our existing business plan. This aimed to encompass the new ways of working that were beginning to take shape and guide our focus, time and resources. 'Communicate, Stay in Touch and Listen' summed up the new priority area added to our work plan. On this occasion, time was not available to engage on this priority decision due to COVID restrictions and also because we were confident that it was just simply the right thing to do. This priority area has encompassed activities such as welfare telephone calls to over 500 community members, Healthwatch staff members supporting the Volunteer Hub development for the borough led by Knowsley Council, and also working with CCG colleagues to promote and hear the views of people accessing the COVID-19 vaccination programme offer in Knowsley.

Healthwatch Knowsley in partnership with the Older People's Involvement and Knowsley Engagement Forum and Partnership Boards have undertaken key activities to stay connected with the local community and to hear people's experiences of 2020-21. This included Zoom based information and engagement sessions, online positive mental health sessions, e-bulletins including blogs from

local community members which provided a source of information and encouragement and connection. Where possible we have also undertaken paper mail outs to community members who we know are not able to access online resources.

Our surveying work and focus on Primary Care and the provision of a signposting services has also helped Healthwatch Knowsley to stay in touch with the important issues emerging locally.

Looking forward, the landscape in which we work looks set to change significantly with the publication of the White Paper Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all. Time was allocated to respond to the national consultation regarding the proposed changes to the Health and Care system. We welcome aspects of White Paper proposals but also hold concerns regarding the timing and rationale for the changes and important aspects such as Social Care provision which still seem to remain unaddressed. A challenge during periods of change and instability is holding onto the key relationships that are crucial to the work undertaken. Healthwatch Knowsley will be working in collaboration with Healthwatch colleagues across the Cheshire and Merseyside patch to ensure that the voice of local people is retained and maintained during this period of change.

Also during this busy year, I am pleased to announce that Healthwatch Knowsley CIC was successful in retaining the contract to deliver the Healthwatch function for Knowsley, along with the contract to deliver the Older Peoples Involvement Programme and the facilitation of the Partnership Boards and Engagement Forum for the borough. To say we are pleased to be continuing with this work is an understatement and we look forward to continuing to serve the residents of Knowsley in this way.

I hope this report is helpful in giving an insight to the work of your local Healthwatch. As always, I am grateful to the time dedication and commitment from my fellow Healthwatch Knowsley volunteers and staff. Your support and friendship over the past 12 months has made the difference.

Mary Spreadbury
Chair and Director
Healthwatch Knowsley CIC

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Knowsley. 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.

Our Values

- **Inclusive** – working with all communities across Knowsley
- **Influential** – we are responsive, setting the agenda and making change happen
- **Independent** – we act on behalf of consumers, listening carefully then speaking loudly on their behalf
- **Credible** – we value knowledge, seeking information and challenging assumptions with facts
- **Collaborative** – we work in partnership with health and social care organisations to keep the debate positive and we get things done

People are at the heart of everything we do. We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Undertaking surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with partner organisations
- Receiving patients views through our online Feedback Centre.

Our vision is simple

Healthwatch Knowsley will be an effective and clear voice for the community of Knowsley in relation to health and social care service provision and commissioning.

Our goals



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.



Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares experiences or seeks advice from us to receive a high quality service and understand the difference their views make.



Ensuring your views help improve health & 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

This section provides details about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

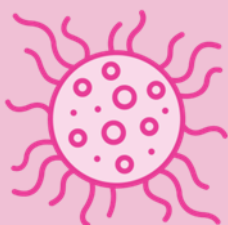
1643 people

this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

658 people

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

129,323

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year, this includes **57,640** via social media **70,080** via our website, **945** via welfare calls during the pandemic and **658** via our signposting and information service.

Making a difference to care



We produced

31 reports

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

Health and care that works for you



12 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

We employ 7 staff

Note that 5 team members deliver on the Healthwatch contract and 2 contribute to additional engagement contracts held.

We received

£171,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21 for the core Healthwatch functions.

GP Access during COVID-19



Accessing Primary Care Services

Patients being able to get an appointment with a GP has been a priority for Healthwatch Knowsley since it was first established in 2013. The arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we all access GP services, placing even more pressure on phone lines and a greater reliance on technology at home. Healthwatch Knowsley opted to look into these issues after noticing increased levels of feedback regarding access via the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre.

During the year, Healthwatch Knowsley received 937 comments regarding Primary Care services, 140 comments relating to the use of alternative means of consultation, as well as 14 additional comments provided via the 'Health and Wellbeing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey'. In general, the reviews received for Primary Care show a positive picture with an average overall star rating for April 2020-March 2021 of 4.3 out of 5.

From January 2021 onwards, a number of concerns were raised by patients unable to get through to their practices over the phone. In a number of cases, patients referenced having to phone over 50 plus times to get through to the surgeries. It is understood that during this period Primary Care has been experiencing increased demand, and also provided some of their staff resources to support the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Community members also voiced concerns over the length of time in which face-to-face GP appointments have not been available. The comments received have provided both positive and negative experiences of using these services during this period, key issues highlighted have included:

- Lack of access/knowledge of online services/apps
- Communication/miscommunication issues
- Reduced access to services , e.g. physiotherapy, smear tests
- Information/guidance about eConsult, e.g. accessible formats such as easy read
- No contact after completing eConsult forms or extended waiting periods to hear from the GP
- Missed appointments leading to having to begin the appointments process again
- Length and complexity of online forms (aimed at the clinician ease of use rather than from a patient point of view)
- Complexity of online forms and language barriers to non-English speaking patients
- No appointment times given for telephone consultations. Just an indication that a clinician will contact you on a named day.

It is also important to note that a number of people provided positive comments about the care, communication and treatment they have received during lockdown and some reviews welcome the use of the alternative methods of consultation and treatment. Key positive themes have included:

- Better communication with staff
- Easier to access to medication with prescriptions going directly to pharmacy
- More time to speak to clinicians

Some of the comments received include:

"I didn't like e-consult at first, but now I am used to it, I think it is really good. They send it to you so you see what you've said, so I can check and they also keep it on record. Always get back on time."

"During the pandemic telephone consultation is now the norm. Why can't this surgery give you a time slot? When asked was told NO. I want to discuss my health in private not in work. Totally unacceptable a one or two hour time slot for the GP to telephone is surly possible. Hospitals can do it, what's the difference with GP. very poor service received by this practice since the start of the pandemic."

"Understand the embracing of technology, however, patients who do not have mobile/internet/laptop/tablets etc. are being discriminated in terms of accessing care. Repeat prescriptions only being available electronically? This is poor in terms of support to the patient population served by this practice. Equally e-consult does the same, try being elderly, hard of hearing and having to get support from very unhelpful reception staff (very short, not patient, forget that patients are ringing for help) to complete this over the phone. No respect or support for patients. Try getting an appointment when the doctor has requested to see you again - same rigmarole, fill in e-consult...no the GP has requested an appointment, this should be booked by the admin team not put more admin burden on the patient. The doctors however are lovely in their manner, although joined up care and reviewing of elderly patients with multiple co-morbidities does leave something to be desired. Please do better."

In summary, the responses provided have been both positive and negative with 54% (79 of 140 comments) highlighting positive experiences of using eConsult and telephone consultations. However, there are genuine concerns raised about accessing telephone consultations and the accessibility of eConsult, particularly in relation to vulnerable/older patients.



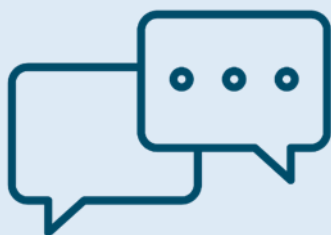
eConsult & Digital Services

This continues to be a regularly reported issue, as more and more patients are sharing their experiences when accessing their GP. With patients focusing on the importance of continuity in care, as well the need for face to face appointments to help with any diagnosis and assessment, which has also had an impact on communication with their practice.

Next Steps

Towards the end of the reporting year, we recognised that increasing numbers of feedback regarding Primary Care could be requested via text messages sent directly to practice patients through the surgery. We also plan to use this route in our work with the Care Quality Commission during 2021-22.

The feedback received regarding access and the online barriers that may be encountered will continue to be shared with the Primary Care Committee for Knowsley CCG.



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. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch Knowsley is here for you.

www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk
0151 449 3954
enquiries@healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

Access to Dental Services during COVID-19



Access to NHS dental services

We would like to record our thanks to people sharing their experiences of dentistry and contacting us through our signposting and information service. In response we were able to work in partnership with NHS England and commissioners to try and support patients to access NHS Dental care during the pandemic.



Over the year, Healthwatch received 30 reviews about 17 different dental services, which have provided an overall rating of 3.2 stars (OK). Further to this, 60 signposting requests relating to accessing dental care have been received during 2020-21. This has become an area of real concern and it is clear that the impact of COVID-19 has been significant with this service area, which was paused and then limited for periods in 2020-21 following national guidance.

Using the comments received via the Feedback Centre alongside the details of the calls received relating to dental care, we produced a report highlighting the experiences received. This showed that some people have had problems accessing a dentist during this period, particularly people who had not visited a dentist in a long time, and in relation to specific needs, such as dentures, tooth removal and root canal treatment. Concerns have been raised about patients attempting to be put on waiting lists to join practices, lists being closed to NHS patients with people stating that they had struggled to find a dentist local to them and in some cases going out of the area to get the care needed, or visiting primary and emergency help for pain relief.

Case Study

I was in pain with my teeth and the dentist had taken me off their list as I had not been in a while (Kirkby). I attended Everton Road Dental Access Service for an Emergency appointment but they were only able confirmed the situation via a scan and advise me to register at a practice for the treatment needed. The painkillers were making the situation worse and it has been really difficult to register at another dentist.

Healthwatch supported the person to search for a dentist on the NHS England website walking through the list but all options had been tried with practices either not taking on or charging privately. Contact details were shared for the NHS England directly in the hope that support could be accessed and the situation resolved.

Patient experience submitted to the Healthwatch feedback centre.



“Can’t get any appointments. Reception staff unprofessional & rude, no customer care at all. When you do get an APPOINTMENT your kept waiting far in excess what is acceptable, with no apology.”

Our report also highlighted some positive experiences, and some positive outcomes in relation to signposting requests, due to working directly with a contact for dental care at NHS England. A number of the comments mention the excellent care they have received, particularly during the pandemic, as well as the attitude of staff within the dental surgeries.



“Despite the country facing a pandemic, staff welcomed me at Liverpool Dental Hospital on Easter Saturday. Each and every one of them made me feel at ease but most notably the two male dentists that tested and diagnosed me and the lady on the X-ray reception desk who offered me tea and tissues as I wept like a baby in my pre treatment agony. Thank you so much. I’ve had immediate relief since my procedure and am so grateful for everyone’s kindness and expertise.”

Following the concerns received, Healthwatch Knowsley staff have contacted all the dental surgeries within Knowsley to request information about accepting new patients. Unfortunately all surgeries have reported that they are not taking on any further patients at this time. On a case by case basis colleagues from NHS have worked hard to try and support individuals to access the help they need and in many situations supporting very vulnerable people to receive treatment and care.

Next Steps

Although we understand that the pressure and waiting times experienced have been a direct cause of the impact of COVID-19, Healthwatch Knowsley have escalated this situation to the Cheshire and Merseyside Quality Surveillance Group and will continue to support Knowsley residents, working in partnership with NHS England colleagues.



Contact us to get the information you need

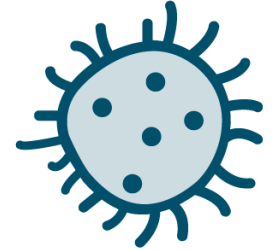
If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch Knowsley is here for you.

www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

0151 449 3954

enquiries@healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

Responding to COVID-19



Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need regarding Health and Social Care services. Our signposting service has proven to be a vital means of support for Knowsley residents, especially through the pandemic. Our role in gathering patient and community insight has also been important this year to contribute to the planning and response to local needs.

We have continued to share the insight collected with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible and are accessible during the pandemic. It is worth noting that all information shared is anonymised.

In response to the emergence of Coronavirus, a number of changes were made to the normal everyday activities of Healthwatch Knowsley. Throughout the year, we have been supporting people in new ways and this has demanded that we were flexible and responsive to each situation faced. The following section provides an overview of these activities undertaken to help local people.

Communicate, Stay in Touch and Listen

Much of our work is undertaken with vulnerable groups who are potentially unwell or have multiple long term conditions and therefore at a greater risk if they were exposed to the virus. Healthwatch Knowsley therefore has continued to temporarily suspend face-to-face activities until it is safe to resume. Following national guidance, all the Healthwatch Knowsley staff team members have worked from home and adapted the delivery of activities.

The organisational Business Plan and Communications Strategy for the year 2020-22 have been refreshed in light of the challenges faced, to reflect the priority of 'Communicate, Stay in Touch and Listen'.

Therefore, focused work has continued throughout the pandemic to keep in touch with members of Healthwatch Knowsley (over 2100 members) and Knowsley Older People's Voice (500 plus older people) and the wider community to both check on their wellbeing and support with any signposting needs.

During this time, the staff team have been supporting Knowsley residents through ongoing information provision and signposting, proactively contacting vulnerable groups and community members who we have had contact with and undertaking welfare calls (945 people contacted). The combined resources and capacity of Healthwatch Knowsley, Older People's Involvement and Partnership Boards (additional contract areas held by Healthwatch Knowsley CIC) staff group have worked together to respond to the presenting needs of local people.


To deliver against our statutory activities, the signposting offer has continued to operate through the diverting of the main Healthwatch contact number to home based staff team mobile phones. This line has remained active and has supported people with a range of Health and Social Care concerns.

An updated signposting resource, alongside the Outreach for Our People resource, has been produced and used by our staff to effectively signpost community members. This has been regularly updated in light of any new local and national guidance relating to COVID-19.

We have continued to contact members of Healthwatch Knowsley and Knowsley Older People's Voice to check on their wellbeing and support them with any signposting needs. Regular e-bulletins have continued to be produced, a total of **127** during 2020-21, providing relevant information and updates from Knowsley Council, Knowsley CCG and other organisations. The e-bulletin is also published on the Healthwatch Knowsley website and is highlighted through social media, which has 3611 followers.

A new feature within the e-bulletins has been the inclusion of blogs written by Healthwatch volunteers. The aim was to share people's ongoing experiences of living with lockdown and the restrictions faced in 2020-21. Contributions also included blogs from the Clinical Commissioning Groups Chair and the Director of Public Health for Knowsley. This proved to be a popular group of articles and also a source of encouragement and vital information. Many positive comments were received from people accessing the E-bulletin including:

 **Can I just say that I'm really enjoying Mary's and Roy's blogs. They could become celebrity bloggers!**

 **Thank you for keeping me in touch. I look forward to the blogs and seeing how others are coping and filling their time.**

 **Thank you for the update I am enjoying reading all parts of news.**

An example of a blog included in regular e-bulletins during lockdown

Blog from our Chair: How am I coping with Social Distancing?




It is time again for reflecting on my day and what cunning plan will come up with for my self-preservation! After saying that I felt I was ahead of the game last week adding structure in my day. I heard Stephen Fry on the radio today, who I believe has a mental health condition, he was talking with Andrew Marr and had very interesting points about how to structure your day and handle the situation we 'Twelvies' are in at the moment. He advised to stay in touch with the news but do try and avoid having a constant news feed which may become wearisome.

The worry about people having to socially-distance for 12 weeks, and avoid all face to face contact with other people, including friends and family is the possible effects on our mental wellbeing. I think it's going to be a hard task, but if we want to get through this safe and well, we will have to work out daily routines that are going to suit our own personality and situation and I hope some of my own experience might help.

Personally, I love the radio program Desert Island Discs on radio 4 (it's been going for years). It is about what you would take with you if you were cast away on a desert island. You have to choose your favourite records a favourite book and a luxury item. It's interesting listening to celebrities, academics, scientists and so on, giving the reason for their choices, so that is what I'm going to do today.

Maybe you could link up by phone or Alexa with someone and talk about some of your favourite music, books, and why they are your choice, or something that brings a smile to your face. I won't bore you with all my answers but I will give you one of the recordings I would take, Matt Monroe singing "Born Free" because it reminds me of sailing to South Africa back in the sixties, of course England winning the World Cup, and all the people I had in my life at that particular time.

I've just answered the front door, (6ft distance) it was a friend bringing me a hot meal, (I live in Kirkby). He said they will be doing that for the foreseeable future. How kind people are! There will be people doing the same in your area. Check with Knowsley Council if you are struggling in anyway. A new freephone number is available 0800 073 0043. It will help Knowsley residents who need additional support during the outbreak.

 **Just to say I really appreciate your weekly bulletin, keep it up!**

Daisy Chain Project:

We developed and supported a telephone buddying project to help people stay in touch during COVID-19. The project linked Knowsley residents together to support each other and overcome the feeling of isolation due to lockdown. It provided an opportunity for residents to share information from the regular Healthwatch Knowsley e-bulletins to people who did not have access the internet. Across the first lockdown and period of shielding for older and vulnerable residents, 21 pairs of community members buddied up and pledged to speak to each other over the phone weekly. Engagement in this activity was voluntary and was encouraged to last for as long as the buddy couple required. Some couples found a really positive connection and have continued to stay in touch and plan to meet up for a coffee when it is safe to do so.

Online Community Zoom Sessions:

In recognition of the need to continue to engage with Knowsley residents, we moved quickly to ensure that we had a route through the online Zoom platform to stay in touch with both the members of the Older People's Involvement Programme key forum, Knowsley Older People Voice and also with the community members engaged with the forums we facilitate. Our online Zoom sessions have been really well attended and received and the areas covered during 2020-21 have included:

-
- Community Insight Sessions - including Focus groups with Community members and Knowsley Council reflecting on people's experiences of dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak
 - Help for the most vulnerable residents during the COVID-19 outbreak - helping to launch the Knowsley Volunteer Hub initiative.
 - Meet the Commissioner - Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group with a focus on the White Paper - Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all
 - NHS 111 First Service — presented by North West Ambulance Service
 - Information session featuring the UK Census 2021
 - Help stop the spread of Coronavirus—Public Health Knowsley
 - Health Service Update from Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group – focusing on Care Homes
 - Returning to normal at local hospitals— St Helens & Knowsley NHS Hospitals Trust

COVID-19 Testing:

Since the introduction of COVID-19 testing throughout the UK, Healthwatch Knowsley along with other Healthwatch organisations nationally have experienced and noted an increased number of contacts, calls and queries in relation to testing from community members. The majority of the contacts received relate to people who are unsure on where to start to access a test or are lost in the system and have tried a number of available avenues to access the help they need. In response to the amount of signposting requests, contacts and feedback, Healthwatch Knowsley produced a full report to highlight some of the key themes and issues that had been raised by community members. This report was shared with Knowsley CCG, the MP for Knowsley, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care (Knowsley) and Healthwatch England. Some examples of comments received included:

“My daughter cannot go into school as she has symptoms, I work in a nursing home and have been online and it is saying that it is busy at the moment. Advised to keep trying. I am a carer for my vulnerable mum who has a pre-op later today.”

“There was no help, it was awful, I couldn't get through to 111 or 119 and the appointments were too far away.”

“Nicola is blind and needs to access a COVID test for her son who attends (name omitted) School. She is unable to use the online route to book a test.”

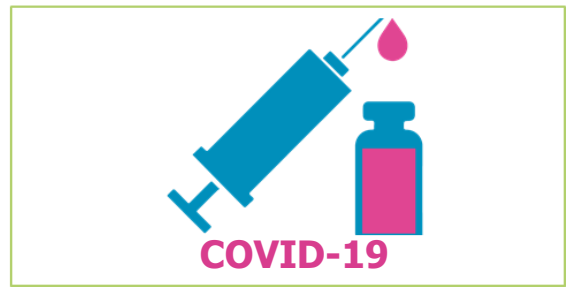
This report was also shared with Healthwatch England and supported the development of a COVID-19 Insight report for the Healthwatch network across the country. The report is available on the Healthwatch Knowsley website: www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk.

Overall the key message at that time (September 2020) described that an online access route to testing, and no access at that point to walk in testing facilities was a barrier to many very vulnerable people. Over the coming months, the physical access to testing was significantly improved through the availability of SMART testing centres across the borough.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme:

Following the rollout of the vaccination programme, Healthwatch have proactively shared key communication messages via social media and e-bulletins (including paper versions) from both the NHS and the Local Authority in relation to the programme. The vaccination rollout has been highlighted as a key priority for Healthwatch England. To understand people's attitudes towards the vaccination programme, a template was produced and shared with all Healthwatch organisations nationally. Healthwatch Knowsley utilized this template to produce a survey and

the online tool Survey Monkey was used to circulate as widely as possible. The content of the survey looked specifically at people's views of vaccinations overall, as well as their views on the Coronavirus vaccine. The survey link has been shared via e-bulletins, social media, as well as local networks and services and to date there has been 1765 surveys completed. Initial results have shown that a majority of people feel positive about Coronavirus vaccinations in general, with most stating that they had already received the vaccination or they would accept it if given the opportunity. Some of the reasons given for getting the vaccine have included;



- to protect against COVID; to protect my friends and family from getting COVID-19
- to protect people who are vulnerable/at higher risk of getting COVID-19
- it will help society in general to get back to normal again

Other people have also highlighted their concerns about getting the vaccine, issues have included;

- Health reasons
- Impact on fertility
- Long term side effects, including blood clotting
- Phobia about injections
- Lack of confidence in both the validity and testing of the vaccine

Over 62% stated they were positive about the COVID-19 vaccine, when asked how they would rate the vaccination programme the majority of people rated it as 5 stars (excellent). Additional work was undertaken to look at capturing the views of community members who had specifically experienced receiving their vaccinations, which would help to establish an overall rating for the vaccination service within Knowsley. A further survey was produced to understand people's experiences of the following:

- Vaccination Service
- Issues accessing health and social care services
- Wellbeing over the last 12months

The survey was circulated at two vaccination hubs within Huyton and Kirkby, to members of Knowsley Older People's Voice, and to various supported living accommodation within Knowsley. To date there have been 406 responses received and work continues to be ongoing in collating the information from this survey. This information will be used to help identify any concerns. All of the surveying activity has been used to shape a piece of insight work undertaken by Knowsley Council and develop the Coding Framework for a set of interviews with Knowsley residents focusing on Vaccination Hesitancy.

Work with the Care Quality Commission (CQC):

Healthwatch Knowsley has continued to work with the CQC during this period, particularly within the area of Primary Care, by providing overview reports about Primary Care services. Work is ongoing with the CQC to encourage services to share the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre with their patients, in order to capture feedback directly from the community and support the inspection process. This area of work will be starting within 2021-22 with profile reports being produced for services to encourage ongoing dialogue regarding patient experience.



Volunteers

At Healthwatch Knowsley we are supported by a Management Committee of **12** volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

Our Governance Structure and Decision Making

Healthwatch Knowsley CIC has continued to be directed through a volunteer board and a community led management committee. This structure is supported through a staff team seconded from Sefton CVS to Healthwatch Knowsley CIC.

Board of Directors



Mary Spreadbury

Chair and Director and Health and Wellbeing Board representative



Martin McDonagh

Director and representative on Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee



Tom Best

Director and Healthwatch representative on the Knowsley Engagement Forum

Volunteers

Management Committee

This committee sets the direction for the day to day activities of Healthwatch and uses a champion's model to ensure key priority areas are led by the community members involved. The Committee has met on a monthly basis to feedback in detail on areas of work via Zoom sessions.



Pauline Burrows
Management
Committee Chair



Janet Tildsley
Management
Committee Vice Chair
and Champion for St
Helens and Knowsley
NHS Trust



Paul Coogan
Chair of Audit
Committee and
Representative to
Knowsley CCG
Governing Body



Roy Davies
Champion for Enter
and View Activities



Pat Blair MBE
Champion for Older
People and Chair of
Knowsley Older
People's Voice



Geoff Lyon
Champion for
Community Services



Pauline Whittaker
Healthwatch Knowsley
Champion for Liverpool
University Hospitals
Trust



Rosemary Sowerby
Champion for Primary
Care Services



Chris Whittle
Champion for Mental
Health Services



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 at Healthwatch Knowsley.

www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

0151 449 3954

enquiries@healthwatchknowsley.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.

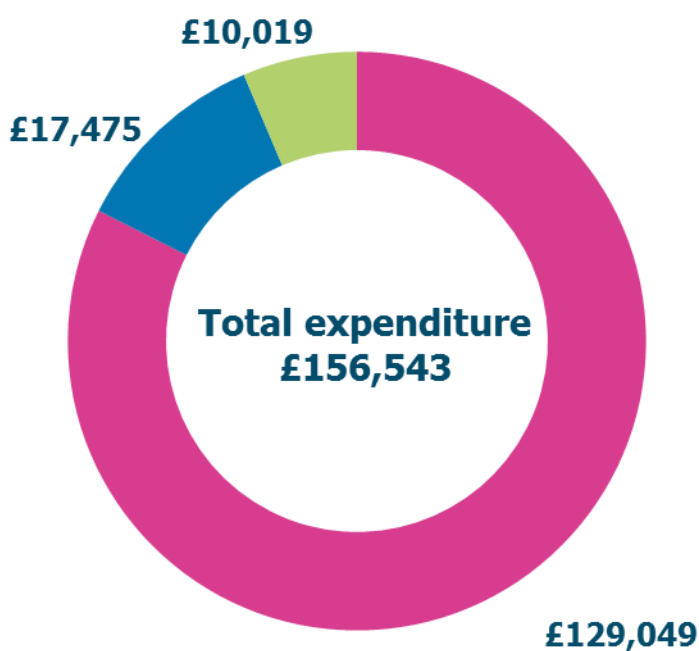
Income

- Funding received from local authority



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration



Statutory statements

What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is the independent community champion created to gather and represent the views of the public on Health and Adult Social Care. We play a part at both a local and national level to make sure that peoples experiences of Health and Adult Social Care are taken into account by both service providers and commissioners.



How do we make a difference?

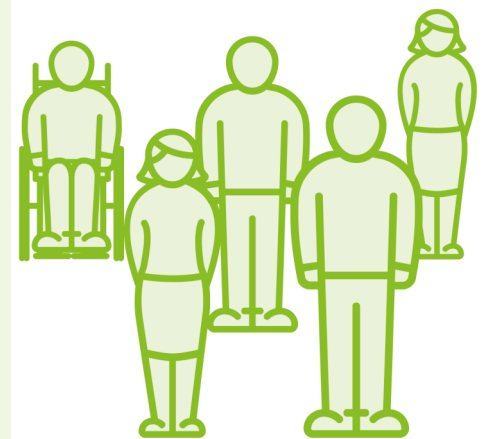
- We are part of, and answerable to the community
- We improve local health and adult social care services through community feedback
- We provide information about the care choices the community have
- We talk and listen to people from every part of the community
- We hold services to account for the care they provide

Why do we do it?

Healthwatch Knowsley has been developed to give the people of Knowsley a stronger voice in influencing and challenging how health and adult social care services are provided within our region.

What we are responsible for

- Enabling people to share their views and concerns about health and adult social care services in Knowsley
- Helping build a picture of where services are doing well and where they can be improved
- Providing authoritative, evidence based feedback to organisations responsible for commissioning or delivering local health and adult social care services
- Working with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) and social care providers amongst others to help make sure that services are designed to meet local people's needs.



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

Healthwatch Knowsley has sought to ensure that service providers, commissioners and regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission hear the voice of the local community and patients clearly. To enable this to happen we have the following routes available for people to share their views.

Feedback Centre

Our Feedback Centre, jointly commissioned through Knowsley Council and Knowsley CCG, provides an easy online route for people to share their comments with Healthwatch or understand how patients feel about their services. It is worth noting that the system also allows us to upload paper based feedback received via outreach activities. We now have 9027 reviews recorded about 254 NHS, Social Care and voluntary sector services.

The Feedback Centre also allows services to respond to patient comments and in many cases resolve concerns. Since the Feedback Centre was launched, it has enabled just over 1888 replies from service providers to the comments left by patients.

Face to Face

Outreach to the local community has been an important aspect of our service, however due to the impact of COVID-19, face to face work with community members has not been possible during 2020-21. This has changed the way we work and Healthwatch Knowsley have been working with service providers and the Care Quality Commission to look at other opportunities to capture feedback from the community. This has included;

- Utilising Survey Monkey to produce surveys relating to health and wellbeing, as well as the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme
- Working with GP surgeries to send out text messages to patients to capture feedback about their service.
- Providing welfare calls to vulnerable community members
- Sharing regular information via e-bulletins, social media and the Healthwatch Knowsley website.
- Development of the Daisy Chain project—a telephone buddying project that helps people stay in touch during COVID-19.

How feedback has been captured during 2020-21

In the previous year (2019/20), a majority of the reviews (1609) received were captured through face to face outreach, the total number of people accessing the Feedback Centre to directly share their experiences was 396, which accounted for 20% of the comments received during 2019/20.

Throughout 2020-21, Healthwatch had to adapt to capture the experiences of community members, in relation to health and social care services. The majority of reviews (1324) have been captured through people directly sharing their experiences via the feedback centre, which equates to 80% of the comments received during this year, this highlights the increased use by community members in the use of the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre.

How we use Feedback

All the feedback captured is logged onto the Healthwatch Feedback Centre and moderated to ensure the content fits with our policy and terms of use. It is important that the patient feedback does not identify a member of staff or put anyone at risk. This data is then analysed and reported to the relevant commissioners or service providers.

2020-21 Priorities

Access to Primary Care

During 2020/21, there has been 951 patient experience comments captured about Primary Care, a majority of this has been captured through direct feedback to the Healthwatch Knowsley website. We are grateful to the practices who have opted to work in partnership with Healthwatch over the past year and have sent text messages to patients asking for their feedback. The text message provides a link to the Healthwatch Feedback Centre and this approach has captured some vital and positive patient experience.



Healthwatch Knowsley is working with the CQC to look at new ways of gathering further information from practices, to encourage patients to utilise the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre to capture feedback about their service. This will also help support the inspection process for the CQC and provide valuable information prior to future inspections.

Ongoing work in this area is highlighted further on page 6 of this report.

Mental Health

Due to periods of lockdown, nationally there has been an increased concern over mental wellbeing, in response to this Healthwatch has looked at opportunities to highlight this issue. However because of COVID-19 restrictions, Healthwatch Knowsley has not been able to complete any targeted outreach focusing on Mental Health Services. In order to capture feedback about mental health in general, Healthwatch undertook pieces of work throughout the year to identify any issues regarding mental wellbeing, which was completed via various surveys.



Initially, within April/May 2020, Healthwatch produced a survey looking at health and wellbeing during lockdown, the main subject areas cover how the pandemic has affected people's access and experience of health and social care services, how they have been communicated with and how residents are finding their wellbeing and mental health. The survey received over 360 responses from community members, the information from this survey was highlighted in a report to the Knowsley Health & Wellbeing Board (received in July 2020). The survey asked respondents to rate the impact of the virus on their mental health and wellbeing. 60% of respondents considered that there had been a slight or moderate impact on their wellbeing. 19.5% considered that there was no impact and 20% felt significant or very significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing. The responses over this period highlighted the following:

- There are frequent references to increased anxiety, feeling stressed or "fed up".
- The majority of respondents are feeling the effects of being distanced from family and friends.
- There are people with existing mental ill health who's condition feels exacerbated by the restrictions.
- Where respondents have previously used exercise to boost their mood and are now shielding, this is impacting on their wellbeing.
- Residents have referenced contact from support groups (e.g. First steps) as well as check-ins from friends and family as sources of support. When asked what kind of support they have accessed to help them cope with daily life, 61% of respondents identified friends and family as

the main source, followed by their GP (46%) and then their pharmacy (36%).

- Responses have been received from people who are used to living alone, but who are feeling the impact of not going out as much as they would like.

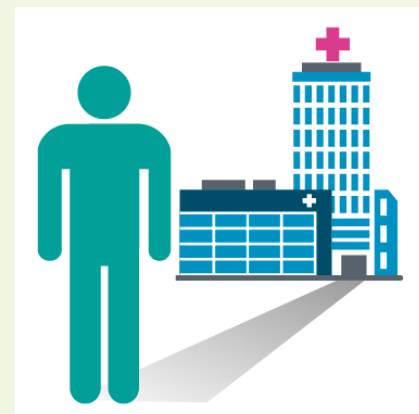
In December 2020, Knowsley Older People's Voice (KOPV) and Healthwatch developed a Christmas project for older people, which involved preparing individual Christmas bags for older people, as part of the project a survey was also included within the bag, this provided an opportunity to obtain valuable feedback from residents about their physical and mental wellbeing in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was designed to understand the impact of loneliness and social isolation being experienced, and was seen as an opportunity to provide data for the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review focusing on Mental Health, Social Isolation and Loneliness with Consideration of the Impact of COVID-19, which took place in mid January 2021. The survey produced 42 responses, of which when asked how people would rate how they were feeling from 1 to 10 (1 being not so good and 10 great), a majority scored 7 and above. The survey asked 'have you experienced feeling lonely or isolated during this period', although most people stated they had not felt lonely, as they had been supported by family and neighbours, though some people did mention feeling isolated during the pandemic.

In March 2021, Healthwatch looked at opportunities to gather feedback specifically with patients accessing the vaccination service, as mentioned previously a survey was produced which included a section specifically looking at wellbeing during the pandemic. This again has provided a further opportunity to understand the wellbeing of community members and address any issues and concerns from the feedback received. Initial responses have shown that the majority of people have said that they have felt lonely and isolated at periods of time but overall felt ok during the pandemic, this is at the point of completing the survey.

Hospital Care & Discharge

Healthwatch Knowsley has received 147 responses about 9 different hospitals. Patient experience comments have been captured for the Trusts through contacting community members during the pandemic, as well as via direct feedback to the Healthwatch Knowsley website. It is worth noting that during this period due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have been unable to provide information stands at the local Trusts and speak directly with patients.

During 2020-21, Healthwatch Knowsley have continued to maintain good relationships and communication with the local Trusts:



St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Work undertaken across the year has included:

- Representation and reporting at the following groups has been encouraged by the Trust; Patient Experience Council; Patient Safety Council; Healthwatch Quarterly Meeting; Cancer Patient Experience and Quality Assurance Group and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group.
- The Trust has continued to be pro-active in responding to and resolving issues raised by Healthwatch Knowsley on behalf of patients.
- The Trust has supported Healthwatch around key communication activities, for example sharing the COVID-19 Vaccination survey.

Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Work undertaken across the year has included:

- Representation at both the Patient Experience Functional Group and Patient Operational Group on a monthly basis with the opportunity to provide verbal updates.
- Regular meetings also take place with the Patient Experience Manager and other local Healthwatch organisations on a bi-monthly basis, which includes an update from the Trust, as well as providing an opportunity to raise any issues.
- The Trust are responsive to comments and helped resolve issues for patients.
- The Trust has supported Healthwatch around key communication activities, for example sharing the COVID-19 Vaccination survey.

Information, Advice & Signposting

One of the statutory functions of a local Healthwatch is to provide a signposting offer to local residents. With the aim of supporting choice around the Health and Social Care Services accessed. During this year, Healthwatch Knowsley has received 660 calls to the signposting and information service, key issues have included:

- Testing Service
- Vaccination programme
- Accessing Dental Services
- Accessing Mental Health Care
- Podiatry Treatment



This points to Healthwatch being a trusted resource for people who are potentially lost within local health systems and in some cases stressed about lack of access to the services they require.

Enter & View Activities

Healthwatch Knowsley's usual methods of gathering resident and patient information has been altered and paused by the pandemic restrictions, resulting in a Healthwatch England policy change to halt Enter and View visits to care settings.

To ensure that the views of Care and Residential Home residents were included in the community insight provided by Healthwatch Knowsley, we worked in partnership with Knowsley Council Service Commissioners to contact all care homes and request a Zoom based conversations with residents. During 2020-21, Healthwatch were able to begin this process and complete a number of 'Enter & Zoom' sessions with Knowsley care home residents, during this year 4 sessions were completed with residents of local care homes.



Residents provided feedback on how they had experienced COVID-19, what their main concerns were and what they hoped for the future and Healthwatch has reported any key themes to the Quality Assurance and Standards Committee. The feedback gained included really positive views on the care and support received during this period. It has been interesting to hear that for some care home residents they feel relieved to have staff and other residents to speak to whereas if they were at home in their community they would be very isolated during the pandemic.

Communicate, Stay in touch and Listen

During March and April 2020, the Board of Healthwatch Knowsley acknowledged that the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic could potentially be far reaching in terms of its impact on Healthwatch Knowsley's ability to meet its stated priorities. It was clear that for a period of time the focus needed to be staying in touch with people through any available means and listening to their experiences to help inform our activities on an ongoing basis. During this period some of the activities relating to this priority included:

- Development of the Daisy Chain Project
- Online Zoom Sessions
- Welfare calls with vulnerable community members
- Regular e-bulletins and updates
- Supported the Knowsley Volunteer Hub
- Updated signposting resource

In response to the pandemic, Healthwatch Knowsley have been working to proactively engage with community members and share information and updates throughout the year. Further details regarding this priority can be found on page 10 of this report.



Representation

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Knowsley has continued to be represented on the Knowsley Health and Wellbeing Board by Mary Spreadbury, Chair of Healthwatch Knowsley. During 2020/21, we have contributed to the work of the board in a number of important areas. Providing community insight information taken from our Wellbeing during COVID-19 Survey and sharing the experiences and the impact that local community members have had. Our annual report and business continuity plans have also been presented to the board, giving details about how we have adapted and worked in partnership during the pandemic.



Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group

The work we undertake with Knowsley CCG provides Healthwatch with a route to influence commissioning decisions. Paul Coogan is the Healthwatch Champion for the work with the CCG. Paul attends the Governing Body and also the Quality Committee. For the Governing Body a formal Healthwatch report is a regular agenda item and this give the opportunity to highlight key trends across any of the local services, during the year Healthwatch have provided regular overview reports, with a particular focus on our response to COVID-19. Through the Quality Committee, Healthwatch has provided patient experience stories to the meeting and have been able to share comments reflecting a wide range of experiences. It is felt that the challenge provided through Healthwatch Knowsley is valued and responded to effectively through the CCG both on the individual concerns that we come across in the community to the ongoing commissioning issues around key service areas such as mental health, cancer care and community based services.

Reporting to Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Healthwatch has been requested to provide insight to two scrutiny activities during this period. The first was to provide an overview of the patient experience information captured in relation to Aston Healthcare (group of 6 GP Surgeries). A verbal overview of the information held was provided to a scrutiny session in September 2020.

Evidence was also presented to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review into Mental Health, Social Isolation and Loneliness with Consideration of the Impact of COVID-19. This was held in January 2020. Themes reported were captured with the 'Health and Wellbeing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19)' survey and referenced Employment and Financial Pressures, Depression, Anxiety and feeling low, Bereavement during COVID-19, restricted Access to services and Not being able to see Family, friends and Loved Ones.

Next steps & thank you

Next steps

Planning and the activities undertaken across 2020-21, have very much been focused on reacting to the pressing priorities emerging through the pandemic. Due to continued uncertainties and the impact of COVID-19 variants, the Board of Healthwatch Knowsley have agreed to again carry over the business plan and the broad priority areas in place for a further year into 2021-22.

Emerging focal points, which will feature within the defined priority areas, will be a focus on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Plans are in development to work in partnership with the Lee Cooper Foundation, mental health support organisation for young people in Knowsley, to capture the views of young people regarding their experiences with mental health services.

Under the priority of Primary Care, we hope to utilise partnership working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure that patient experience information captured is continuing to inform the work of key partners.

The unknown impact of the Health and Care Bill features within our organisational Risk Register. We are accustomed to working within an ever-changing NHS landscape but concerns exist over the loss of key relationships across a transition period to the establishment of Integrated Care System for the Cheshire and Merseyside area. It is hoped that the strength of relationships currently in place with Knowsley CCG can help to ensure that a clear route is in place for the views of Knowsley residents to continue to be heard clearly.

We are also mindful that changes are also taking place with mergers of service providers for acute care, mental health and community services. Activities are also planned to attempt to understand the experiences of patients throughout these service transitions.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of 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 and service providers that have contributed to our work.**
- **Our commissioners and partners who have supported our work throughout 2020-21**



healthwatch

Knowsley

Healthwatch Knowsley
The Old Schoolhouse, St Johns Road,
Huyton,
Knowsley,
Merseyside
L36 0UX

www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

t: 0151 449 3954

e: enquiries@healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

 [@HWKNowsley](https://twitter.com/HWKnowsley)

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

 [Instagram.com/hwknowsley/](https://www.instagram.com/hwknowsley/)