

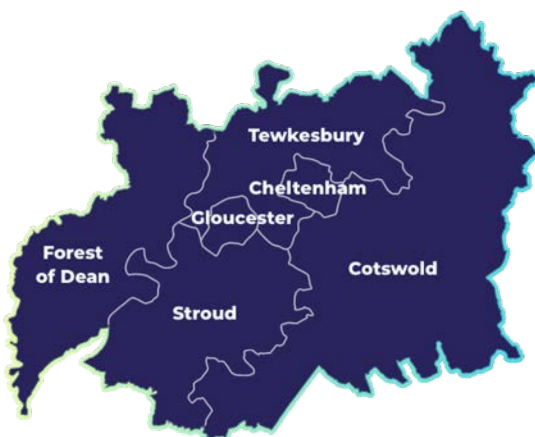
Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Gloucestershire
Annual Report 2021–22



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Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion. We are part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England. We cover the geographical area of Gloucestershire County Council, which includes the districts and boroughs of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury.

Message from our Chair

As the health and care system in Gloucestershire puts into effect plans for recovery following the pandemic, Healthwatch Gloucestershire has been a key player in ensuring that local voices have been heard and responded to. We have asked people specific questions and shared stories (anonymously) with system leaders, about people's experiences, good and bad.

The future holds major challenges, but some of the new ways of working resulting from the pandemic also present opportunity. We need to learn lessons from this period and work with communities to seize the opportunities and benefits that are right for them.

We are proud of the work we have done to start conversations with communities who are not heard from as often as others. This includes our Young Listeners Project and we helped facilitate conversations, led by a local community volunteer, with other seldom heard communities, about how they want local services to better understand how to engage with them.



Within the new Integrated Care System, Healthwatch Gloucestershire is seen as a critical partner and an important stakeholder in ensuring local people can shape health and social care in Gloucestershire. We will continue to share your stories and to ask the, sometimes difficult, questions.



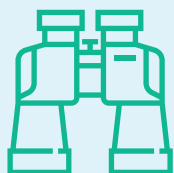
It has been an eventful 12 months and we want to thank everyone who has been involved in our work or shared their stories. We would also like to recognise the hard work and commitment of staff across the system. I would like to add my thanks to Helen and the team, our fabulous volunteers and to the Board.

Nikki Richardson
Healthwatch Gloucestershire Chair

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is your local health and social care champion. From Abbeymead to Yorkley and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

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



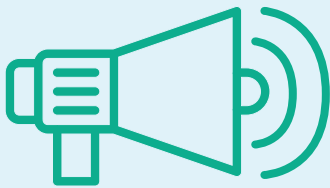
Our values

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

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



1,790 people

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

1,068 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as dentistry, mental health and COVID-19.

Making a difference to care



We published

6 reports

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

Our most popular report was about

Post-COVID syndrome

which highlighted the struggles people have finding treatment and support for the condition.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

25

outstanding volunteers, who gave up **74 days** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received

£209,908

We currently employ

2 full-time & 2 part-time staff

who helped us carry out this work in the previous year.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring

We heard from over 900 people about their attitudes to the COVID vaccination. Their feedback helped shape the county's approach to making sure that everyone had the information they needed and the opportunity to get their vaccination.



We asked people to share their experiences of social isolation and loneliness, an issue intensified by COVID-19. We used their feedback to show how people could be supported. We are liaising with Gloucestershire Healthy Communities about how to tackle social isolation.



Summer

Working with Healthwatch England and other local Healthwatch, we gathered patient feedback on the blood pressure monitoring at home programme piloted by NHS England. This will help shape the future of remote monitoring of health through digital devices.



We asked patients and carers about their experience of being discharged from hospital and moved between services for ongoing care. They told us it can be confusing, disjointed and stressful.



Autumn

As more people are diagnosed with post-COVID syndrome (long COVID), we asked local people how they have been affected by the condition and what care and support they have received and need.



We helped Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Adults Board set their strategic priorities, based on our consultation with the public.



Winter

Through our Young Listeners Project, we supported young people to directly influence positive change in the health and social care services they use.



We asked people to tell us about their experiences of care at home services, and how they find out about care that's available. We will use their feedback to tell health and care leaders what people think good care looks like and how services could improve.



Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve.



Improving services for people with post-COVID syndrome

Thanks to people sharing their experiences with us, we helped local services understand how to provide patients with the best possible care from diagnosis to treatment.

Symptoms of post-COVID syndrome can last for weeks or months, and for many the condition is debilitating and life-changing.

Services are still learning how to treat and care for people with this newly defined condition. Our snapshot research, including a survey and in-depth interviews, provided valuable insight for local services to learn from about the improvements people would like to see.

- Raise public awareness of the NHS support available.
- Make sure GPs are aware of services and support groups, and share this information when patients first present with symptoms.
- Services should adopt a more active approach to care and share practical tips with patients.
- Communicate clearly about waiting times between referral and support.
- Provide more face-to-face support so that people feel less isolated.
- Continue to provide advice and information events as people found these helpful.



I wish there was more support sooner.
It is very hard to access help and then it only lasts a while.
I have been ill for over a year now.
At times it feels very hard to keep finding the right support.
Wait times for services are too long.



What difference did this make

Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust run the Post-COVID Assessment Service in the county, and they wanted to find out what worked well for people and what could be improved. We worked with them to design this project and we have shared our findings to inform service development.



We have taken on feedback and interventions have been updated. We recognise that the assessments, including completing the questionnaire, can be emotionally challenging and understand the importance of physical and mental health assessment and support.

Deputy Service Director for Urgent Care & Speciality Services at Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust



Making health and care better for young people

Young people rarely have the chance to speak for themselves about health and care issues. We gave them the opportunity to directly influence improvements in the services they use.

We recruited and trained a group of young volunteers to become Young Listeners. They designed and delivered a peer-to-peer engagement project to find out how young people in the county would improve the health and care services they use. They focused on areas important to young people: mental health, relationship support, GP attitudes, inclusivity, and accessibility.

They gathered feedback from 85 young people, and identified key areas where young people want to see change and improvement.



- Young people are not always taken seriously or listened to by GPs
- Services focus on critical care rather than early intervention, especially with mental health
- Most young people don't know what services are available in their area
- Those not in education get less support from social care services
- The transition from child to adult services is bad, with poor communication
- There is a lack of support with the emotional and physical transition into adulthood
- COVID-19 had a huge impact on young people, including on relationships and mental health
- Young people want to be involved in promoting and creating the services they use.



They seem to dumb us down a lot, do not listen and always ask me what do my parents think.
There needs to be more preventative measures to stop mental health issues spiralling into early adulthood.



What difference did this make

We are working with health and social care leaders to ensure this feedback is used to make care better for young people in Gloucestershire. Our Young Listeners have paved the way for us to continue our own work on young people's mental health services.



This report comes at an excellent time to influence [the new One Gloucestershire ICS] from a young person's perspective. It is clear from the report recommendations that young people want services and support organised in ways that are more accessible and relevant to them.

**Associate Director for NHS Gloucestershire
Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**



Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

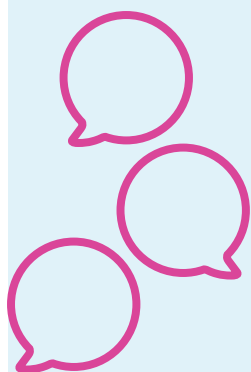


Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for the NHS and social care services to step back and see the bigger picture, through hearing personal experiences, and the impact on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

Finding an NHS dentist and getting dental care remains a challenge for many people. Susan needed urgent root canal treatment. She was passed from one service to another, in pain and anxiety. The delays dangerously affected her health and she ended up in A&E followed by a stay in hospital.

We presented this case study to the NHS England and Improvement South West Dental Reform session, to highlight the challenges people are facing and the consequences of delays in treatment. There are plans to change the commissioning arrangements to help improve access to dental services and we are proud to have played our part in helping this to happen.



Getting services to involve the public

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

We helped Gloucestershire County Council Public Health team to consult local people about pharmacy services. We guided them to ask the right questions and to promote their engagement so that they reached and connected with people in the community. The feedback they collected will help shape the future of Gloucestershire's pharmacy services.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

We know that continual work is needed to reach people who are seldom heard. We worked with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to understand the experiences of the Deaf community in Gloucestershire. A focus group hosted by Gloucestershire Deaf Association told us which health and care services they use, what they expect from those services, what barriers and challenges they face, and the changes they would like to see. The insight we gathered will help the CQC tackle inequalities in health and care, and it is informing our work with Gloucestershire's NHS Trusts to improve the accessibility of communication and services.

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Gloucestershire is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we will listen and can provide confidential, free information and guidance to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding a local service or discovering how to make a complaint – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information on COVID-19 and vaccine rollout
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting people to feel listened to
- Helping people to access the services they need.



Supporting you when navigating care feels overwhelming

Jenny was finding it difficult to get the care she needed. Her mental health was deteriorating, and she needed support with housing issues and personal care. She felt angry and wanted to "lash out or self-harm." She was "overwhelmed and lonely", especially as the pandemic and a recent bereavement had limited her social life.

We listened and advised her where to get the help she needed, including local mental health services and advocacy support, and we explained the complaints process. She called again to let us know that she was feeling better. A care plan had been put in place, she had completed a course of telephone counselling, had self-referred for local voluntary support, and was organising day care support which worked for her mobility needs.



Using your feedback to help improve dentistry

Shauna couldn't find a local NHS dentist for her and her two children. She doesn't drive so attending a dentist outside of town isn't easy. Every dentist she contacted was not taking new NHS patients, and they would not add the family to a waiting list, but would see them if they paid as private patients. Shauna wanted Healthwatch to advocate and push for better dental services.

We told Shauna of the best routes to find dental care locally. We explained how we would use her feedback to help push for change, locally and nationally, including at the NHS England South West Dental Reform meeting and through our work with Healthwatch England.



Providing the information you need about COVID vaccines

Liam has autism and couldn't get his COVID-19 vaccination because the vaccination centres were too crowded. He asked us if there were late night appointments and/or autism-friendly centres.

We talked to Liam regularly, about his options for getting a vaccine and transport, and over time, helped build his confidence to attend his first vaccine clinic.



Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Gloucestershire. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the phone and online.
- Reviewed information provided by local services to improve quality and accessibility, making it easier to read and understand.
- Carried out research to support our engagement projects.
- Shared their insight and ideas to inform the new ICS Working with People & Communities Strategy.





Jo

"I feel we can be the bridge between the strategic level of the NHS and the 'end user'. This provides a way to flag up issues and question service providers as a critical friend, subsequently making a difference (e.g. reviewing documents through the Readers' Panel).

"There are many ways to participate, diverse areas of involvement and opportunities to meet and interact with a wide variety of people. I enjoy using knowledge gained though my working life alongside my experience of living with a long-term health condition."



Sarah

"I started volunteering a few months ago, after a long career in health and social care. It's been very interesting finding out more about how Healthwatch operates, and I'm very much looking forward to getting involved with the work this year.

"I really value the fact that I can put my previous experience to good use. Everyone has been supportive and friendly, so it feels like a really good way to put something back into the community."



The expectations placed on local Healthwatch as part of the new Integrated Care System (ICS) arrangements provide an exciting opportunity to collaborate with system partners to support the delivery of the engaging with people and communities strategy. In preparation for this, Healthwatch Gloucestershire have continued to build on their strong track record of working in partnership to ensure that the public voice is at the heart of ICS decision making.

Sarah MacDonald, Senior Commissioning Manager (Public Health), Gloucestershire County Council



Do you feel inspired?

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



healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk



0800 652 5193



volunteering@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authorities under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This year, we also received additional funding from the Care Quality Commission to support an engagement project with the Deaf Community in Gloucestershire.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£209,908	Staff costs	£110,309
Additional funding	£850	Operational costs	£29,694
		Support and administration	£62,972
Total income	£210,758	Total expenditure	£202,975

Top priorities for 2022–23

In 2022–23 our priorities will be focused on people rather than services. We will be looking to understand the health and care experiences of:

- **People living with autism**
- **Refugees and asylum seekers**
- **Young people with mental health issues**

We will also undertake a project on digital inclusion for the One Gloucestershire NHS Integrated Care System (ICS).

Championing better care for everyone

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard. Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, income or race.

We will continue to shine a light on people's experiences as the Integrated Care System comes into being in Gloucestershire this year. We have already helped shape their Working with People & Communities strategy that aims to bring people to the heart of health and care service design and delivery, and we will continue to support this work going forward.



We welcome that Healthwatch Gloucestershire decided to include health inequalities as a focus for the year. The vulnerable in society have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic; we will gain a better understanding of how services can improve to meet the needs of those facing inequality.

Sarah MacDonald, Senior Commissioning Manager (Public Health), Gloucestershire County Council



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Gloucestershire, 13 Wheatstone Court, Davy Way, Waterwells Business Park, Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AQ.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire 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 Gloucestershire 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 Gloucestershire Board consists of seven members and advisors who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. During 2021/22 they met four times and made decisions on matters such as creating a Quality Assessment Framework and Risk Register, and developing our 2022/23 workplan.

Board members regularly attend the Health & Wellbeing Board, Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Quality Scrutiny Group, NHS Reference Group, Primary Care Commissioning Committee, NHS Foundation Trusts' Public Boards, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Governor meetings, ICS planning meetings, Working with People & Communities Advisory Group, Fit for the Future Advisory Group, a number of Partnership Boards and the Collaborative Partnership Board. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities by using insight from our information and signposting enquiries, surveys, focus groups and engagement activities throughout the year.

Methods and systems used across the year's work 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, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities, and engaged with the public through 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, face-to-face engagement with people who are Deaf and hearing impaired, and through our Young Listeners project, engaging with young people across Gloucestershire, including young people at the National Star College which supports people with disabilities. 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 promote it to the press and on social media, and we share our report with partners across health and social care in Gloucestershire.

Responses to recommendations and requests

All providers responded to requests for information or recommendations. 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 our Healthwatch to the Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is represented on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board by Nikki Richardson, our Healthwatch Board Chair. During 2020/21 our representative effectively carried out this role by playing a full and active part in meetings, taking a system-wide view and making sure that the public, patient and service user voice is included in the thinking and decisions of the board.

2021–2022 Outcomes

Read all our reports: healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications

Project/activity area	Changes made to services
<p>Hospital discharge in Gloucestershire: Local people's experiences. (Report, July 2021)</p>	<p>Our representative at the Hospital Trust's governors meeting and Board continues to track this issue. It links with the concerns around deconditioning and delayed discharge due to the difficulties in social care provision. We continue to work constructively with our partners to address system needs and seek solutions for patients, their carers and family members.</p>
<p>Social isolation and loneliness in Gloucestershire: People's experiences and what more could be done to help? (Report, Sept 2021)</p>	<p>Our report featured in a presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board by NHS Gloucestershire CCG, on identifying priorities for Enabling Active Communities. We've had follow up meetings with the Healthy Communities Programme office to continue to offer insight and be a critical friend.</p>
<p>Post-COVID syndrome: People's experiences of health care and support in Gloucestershire. (Report, March 2022)</p>	<p>Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started to provide their assessment questionnaire in a variety of formats • Reviewed and updated their interventions so people have more practical advice • Changed their referral process so that people can access the service after a face-to-face GP appointment. <p>We will continue to track changes through our representative to the Trust.</p>
<p>Young Listeners project: How would young people improve the health and care services they use? (Report, March 2022)</p>	<p>Gloucestershire's Integrated Care System will use the insight and findings to inform service improvement for young people. The impact was felt by the Young Listeners themselves, who gained skills and confidence in advocating for improvements in health and social care.</p>
<p>Promoting the voices of the Deaf community in Gloucestershire: Working with the Care Quality Commission to tackle inequalities in health and social care. (Report, May 2022)</p>	<p>Insight was shared with service providers. We have been following up with our quality lead partners through regular meetings to ensure people's needs are met. CQC are using our findings to inform their future strategy for tackling health inequalities.</p>

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
<p>People’s experiences of blood pressure monitoring at home. (Report, May 2022)</p>	<p>Our Gloucestershire focused report is based on wider work with Healthwatch England that will help to shine a light on the benefits and challenges of using technology to support healthcare. It has been well received and NHS Gloucestershire CCG have commissioned us to undertake an in-depth project on digital inclusion.</p>
<p>Gloucestershire’s Care at Home services: How do people find out about and access these services, and what do they think about the quality of care? (Report due, summer 2022)</p>	<p>Findings will be shared with Gloucestershire County Council and leaders of One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System.</p>

Thank you

We want to thank everyone who has shared their stories with us this year, and asked us for information, advice, and support. Health and care services need to know your experiences to understand what works well and how to make positive changes. Your feedback really does help to improve health and care in Gloucestershire and nationally, so do please continue to get involved.

We also want to thank those who work in health and social care, for providing such vital services, for valuing the voice of local people and patients, and for contributing your insight and experience to help make care better.



Over the past 12 months, the Healthwatch Gloucestershire team have done fantastic work to gather feedback about local health and social care services. In particular, through the Young Listeners project, which explores the experiences of young people using services in Gloucestershire.

As the country learns to live with COVID-19, it is inevitable that the need and demand for health and care support will continue to increase and Healthwatch Gloucestershire is well placed to provide valuable insights on what is and isn't working well in our system, in order to shape and improve local services.

Sarah MacDonald, Senior Commissioning Manager (Public Health), Gloucestershire County Council



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