

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Luton
Annual Report 2021-22



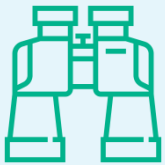
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About us – Healthwatch Luton

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Luton is your local health and social care champion. We make sure NHS and Care 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, signposting you to informed choices and options, empowering you to make decisions about your own health and care needs.



Our vision

For a world (and Luton town) where people's health and care needs are heard, understood and met



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 advocate.

Message from our chair: Phil Turner

'This last year has again been one of unique challenges. As an organisation and society in general we learned to adapt to the ever-changing situation. We had moved from the unknown to the hopes of the introduction of the vaccine and the freedoms that would bring.

Healthwatch Luton has developed into an adaptable and flexible organisation. It faces all challenges with a view of optimism and understanding that it can adjust to meet the need of the time. We talk about a 'new normal' and I believe that we have adjusted to that position and also taken the opportunity to learn from the challenges over the past couple of years. This has allowed us to improve our approach to meet the current needs and anticipate what ever may come over the horizon in the future.

All of our staff have faced up to the challenges with a positive and energetic attitude. They have adapted and together with others have learnt the art of virtual conferencing. New into our language must be 'you are on mute'.

Obviously, the pandemic put a stop to our face-to-face meetings with both the public and providers. Innovative approaches were developed to carry out our main objective of obtaining feedback from the public on their experiences in obtaining and receiving care from the Health and Social Care sector. Listening events are the latest introduction and are proving to be very successful when focusing on specific topics. These will continue and help in providing feedback to providers.



"The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



Our volunteers have not been so active during this period as they primarily focus on face-to-face meetings which have not been happening. They have, however, been active behind the scenes in carrying out web reviews for many primary care providers.

Our remit also includes involvement in the development of services and being active participants on various boards and committees that decide the quality of delivery of services as well as changes that may affect the service that is provided. It is valuable to be able to input to these groups from a lay perspective and armed with the feedback that we receive.

The changes from local CCG's to a system wide Integrated Care System has its hurdles to overcome. Healthwatch Luton is working in collaboration with other Healthwatch organisations across the area to ensure that views are considered for all. Additionally, the Luton Place Board focusses on the specific needs of the local population. We have built excellent relationships with those statutory organisations that enables our voice and therefore the voice of Luton residents to be taken on board.

Transformation of services is taking place across many services. This transformation is targeted at ensuring the provision of services meets the demands of the future. Healthwatch Luton have active participation in all of these transformation projects. The Luton Fairness initiative and Luton 2040 are also being attended.

A big thank you has to go out to our Chief Exec and all the staff and volunteers that have weathered the storm of this last year and continued to do an outstanding job in supporting the people of Luton.'



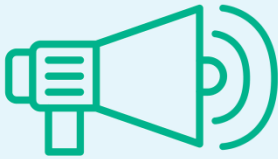
Phil Turner
Healthwatch Luton Chair



Highlights from our Year

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out and Engagement



675 people

shared their experiences on nearly 100 Luton health and social care services, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

158 people

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

33,000 residents

engaged with us online either via social media, online forums, Listening Events, surveys or targeted engagement.

Making a difference to care



We published over

10 reports

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

Over

54% of recommendations

Were agreed by providers and commissioners, acted upon and reviewed by our internal processes to have measured impact.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

10

outstanding volunteers, who gave up over 1070 hours this year to make care better for our community.

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

£119, 325

We also employed

5 staff

who help us carry out this work – 4 part time and 1 full time.

Hearing all of Luton

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

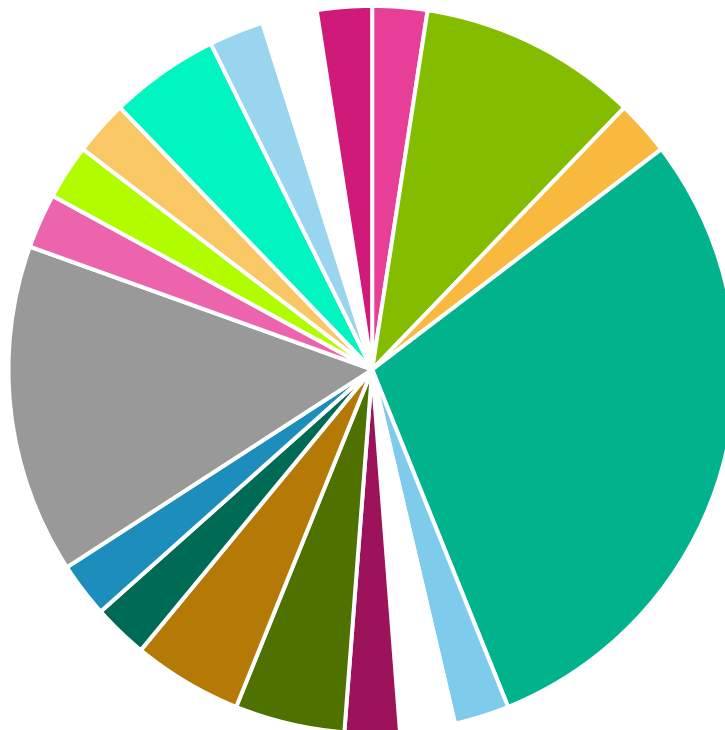


Gathering views from those disproportionately affected

We have gathered feedback from over 30,000 Luton residents this year, and have ensured we have captured all views representative of the Luton population. During COVID, we highlighted real inequity of the health and care received in Luton – leading to us supporting Luton Council’s Public Health’s Talk Listen Change Project with the University of Bedfordshire, which has led to more work on Population Wellbeing, Health Inequalities Board work and work with the BLMK Clinical Commissioning Group on the Denny Review – ensuring people from all backgrounds have their views heard.



HWL Detailed Ethnicity from HWL Feedback



- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ Asian and Black | ■ Asian | ■ Black-British |
| ■ Pakistani | ■ Chinese | ■ Other White |
| ■ British Asian | ■ British Pakistani | ■ Bangladeshi |
| ■ English | ■ Black African | ■ Indian |
| ■ Black British | ■ Mixed white/asian | ■ Mixed white/asian-British |
| ■ Mixed white/Black African | ■ Mixed White-Black British | ■ Mixed White/Black Caribbean |
| ■ Spanish | | |

Young People Vaccines Hesitancy

During COVID 19 we supported the system by asking young people in targeted engagement programmes about their hesitancy to vaccinations and boosters. We spoke to a wide range of young people to ensure the system understood the changes required in communication, publicity and approach for young people to feel informed and choices made available to them regarding their concerns on the COVID vaccine.

Many young people supported our research and involved themselves in providing views which shaped how they were communicated with.

Other Feedback:

Over the year we have also focused our work on speaking to people about **Women's Health** and the **Menopause**, feeding into the council's approach to Menopause in working women across the town. We have also spoken to **Carers** for the Carers Strategy re-fresh and fed into the national project on **Unmet Social Care Needs** <https://www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/blog/>

We supported the national campaign from Healthwatch England on **Accessibility** to information and service delivery, as well as worked across BLMK on various projects for the CCG around Denny Review – hearing from those **disproportionately affected by COVID 19**.

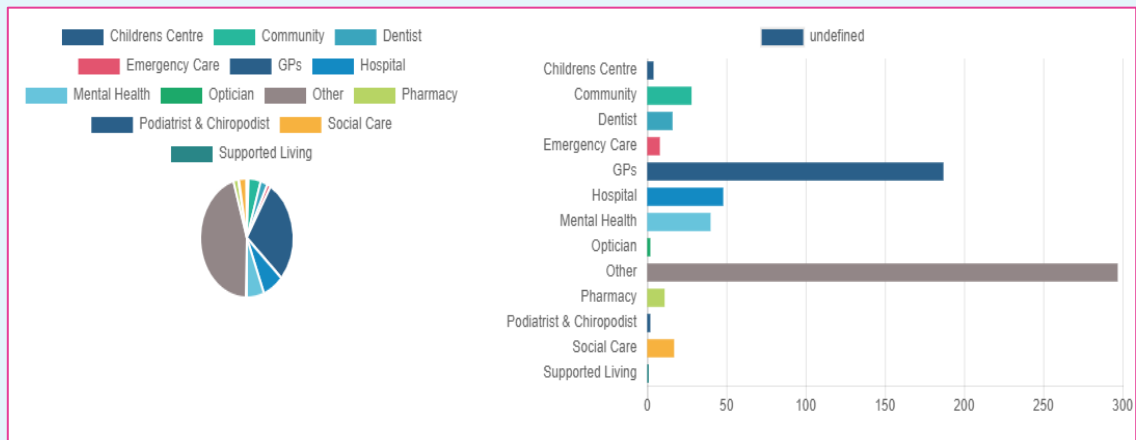
We have worked with NHSE on **Cancer Outcomes** for Luton residents, and worked alongside MacMillan in supporting engagement on various community groups, alongside ensuring people with Mental Health illness in Luton are continued to be heard.

A link to all our project and reports can be found here: [Reports - Healthwatch Luton](#)



Main Theme – 2021 – GP Access/ Primary Care Access

Access to primary care has been our leading feedback for many years, but in 2021 this was by far the most discussed subject for Luton residents leaving feedback with Healthwatch Luton. 'Other' was around COVID-19, vaccinations, boosters and general COVID-19 related feedback.



We worked on a range of projects to support Luton residents accessing their GP surgery, including but not limited too

- THIS Institute Operational Failures engagement - [New collaboration with Healthwatch on daily challenges faced by GPs \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)
- Highlighting to NHS England and the local Clinical Commissioning Group on Access meetings and groups, as well as escalating nationally to Healthwatch England - which led to changes in offering face to face appointments: [More GP appointments to be offered face-to-face to those who need it | Healthwatch](#)
- Supporting and gathering feedback from Luton residents who felt Digitally Excluded, raising concerns to commissioners and NHSE and Healthwatch England: [Locked out: Digitally excluded people's experiences of remote GP appointments | Healthwatch](#)
- [Digitally-Excluded-Q2-011021.pdf \(healthwatchluton.co.uk\)](#)
- Observing the GP websites and ensuring these were up to date with correct information; and informing the surgeries and Patient Participation Groups when this was not done, ensuring Luton residents had up dated information: [GP-Website-Reviews-2021.pdf \(healthwatchluton.co.uk\)](#)
- Review of Pharmacy and Dental services and information provision to support providing up to date and correct information: [Dental-Website-Reviews-November-2020-V1.pdf \(healthwatchluton.co.uk\)](#)
- [Pharmacy-Website-Reviews-January-2021-V1.pdf \(healthwatchluton.co.uk\)](#)

• We continue to promote Luton concerns and access to health and care in our 2022

ACCESS to health and care report due out later this year. We will also be using resident views to make recommendations to support Luton residents.

BLMK wide Healthwatch have this as a leading feedback across the area, so we hope to focus on further work in 2022 -2023 in supporting patients receiving and accessing primary care more easily ongoing.



The Difference We Make

Healthwatch Luton input into many areas of work and providers; ensuring Luton resident views are heard and used in all work we are asked to independently do. Here we outline all our programmes of work using Luton views and experiences and representing those views to different provider programmes.



All work we have achieved this year

An overview of all our projects and workstreams completed in line with our 2021 Workplan

2021-2022 programmes of work

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
THIS Institute – GP Operational Failures	Fed into wider national picture by the THIS institute; resulting in changes to GP management: New collaboration with Healthwatch on daily challenges faced by GPs (cam.ac.uk)
Observation Reports: Website reviews for GPs, Pharmacy, Care Homes and Dentists	Informed system where information was not kept up to date over COVID – and reviewed in 2021. Services amended information online and kept residents updated. Reports - Healthwatch Luton
Vaccines: Hesitancy / Booster Experiences	Feedback from young people and those with mental health and digitally excluded – fed into local system COVID communications to public and adapted according to recommendations: Reports - Healthwatch Luton
Womens Health: Menopause: HWL captured information from surveys and forums on people’s experiences	Fed into LBC Menopause workstream and helped form strategy for womens health and menopause: Menopause-survey-2021-2022-LH-1.pdf (healthwatchluton.co.uk)
Unmet Social Care Needs: HWL fed into the national social care programme with Healthwatch England using Luton voices	National report and response to Government’s Ten Year Vision for adult social care – using Luton views to shape the national and local picture on unmet needs: Social care: What is in the new plan? Healthwatch https://www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/blog/

All work we have achieved this year

An overview of all our projects and workstreams completed in line with our 2021 Workplan

2021-2022 programmes of work

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
<p>Access to Health and Care</p>	<p>HWL ran Enter and View, surveys on GP access, and used over 1000 views to summarise Luton resident issues on accessing any health or care. Report to publish July 2022.</p>
<p>Carers: HWL ran forums and surveys for carers in Luton</p>	<p>Views fed into Luton Councils refresh of the Carers Strategy: Carers- March-2021-Report-V1-1.pdf (healthwatchluton.co.uk)</p>
<p>Talk, Listen Change – University of Bedfordshire and Luton Council Public Health</p>	<p>HWL fed into the system COVID feedback during the pandemic, highlighting inequity of care in Luton. Nationally it was recognised that COVID did not affect all population groups equally./ HWL supported this engagement and steering group: COVID-19 Talk Listen Change community engagement (luton.gov.uk)</p> <p>This work led on to the BLMK Clinical Commissioning Group creating the Denny Review: Which HWL are engaging for.</p>
<p>Digital Exclusion: Capturing views of communications through COVID Digitally Excluded Q2 011021.pptx (sharepoint.com)</p>	<p>HWL ran a series of interviews with people unable to be accessible online during COVID: Fed this into wider health and care system on communications and Access programmes Reports - Healthwatch Luton</p>
<p>Accessibility Campaign – National Healthwatch Programme #YourCareYourWay Are people getting their right to accessible information? Healthwatch</p>	<p>We fed into and provided insight into the 6000 people nationally who informed HWE on Accessibility of Health and Care information: This has led to NHS England and HWE discussing the Information Standards</p>

All work we have achieved this year

An overview of all our projects and workstreams completed in line with our 2021 Workplan

2021-2022 programmes of work

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
<p>Luton Cancer Outcomes: Working across the region with NHS England and supporting people to engage with changes on cancer care</p>	<p>Supporting engagement and decisions on care pathways with NHS England, providing Luton insight and representing views at the Steering Group with NHSE Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Review: Luton Cancer Outcomes - YouTube</p>
<p>Dental Care: HWL have increased feedback on issues with access to NHS dentists in Luton – and have fed this to NHSE and HWE</p>	<p>All feedbacks are discussed and ongoing issues have been resolved with contract discussions and further guidance from NHSE to local dental practices Dentistry and the impact of COVID-19 Healthwatch</p>
<p>EEAST – Ambulance Service Healthwatch Luton have worked with other Healthwatch in the region of East of England providing insight and support the changes within the service, supporting leadership and understanding patient views</p>	<p>HWL worked with the other Healthwatch in the East of England region to support ongoing Ambulance service internal changes. We took part in internal engagement and helped support the service provide Patient View insight into their service programmes. Working with Healthwatch (eastamb.nhs.uk)</p>
<p>111 Service Review: HWL were asked to independently review HUC’s 111 service website</p>	<p>HWL volunteers supported HUC in their 111 service feeding into the national picture on how the 111 service is being delivered to patients, both online and during use Is NHS 111 First making a difference? Healthwatch</p>

How we've made a difference throughout the year

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

Spring



To support the COVID-19 vaccination programme we talked to different communities to understand their hesitancy towards the vaccine and published guidance to improve trust.



We ran a vaccine hesitancy survey in young people to support the local system approach to communicating to young people on vaccines

Summer



Digital Exclusion: We gathered views via interviews on those who were digitally excluded and fed these to NHSE and Healthwatch England



We supported the #BecauseWeAllCare campaign which saw 54,000 people come forward to tell us about issues they faced with services.

Autumn



Enter and View: We ran a series of Enter and Views at the hospital regarding people accessing A&E for our Access report – but this had to be put on hold due to COVID



We fed feedback to HWE who urged the Government to act after reporting a 452% increase in people struggling to see an NHS dentist, supporting the national report with Healthwatch England

Winter



When people struggled to see their GP face-to-face we asked the NHS to confirm this right for all patients, resulting in updated guidance to Practices via Healthwatch England.



Our Observation reports on providers websites outlined information available to the public during the pandemic

Developing the best Healthwatch

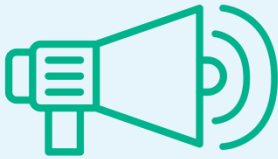
Internally developing and ensuring we are running a high quality service for Luton residents is a key priority for Healthwatch Luton. We integrate with Healthwatch England, and follow statutory and national guidance, as well as support both BLMK and East of England network developments.



Developing the best Healthwatch Luton

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Quality Framework



Healthwatch Luton have completed the national network framework on ensuring we are running a high quality Healthwatch for Luton residents. We completed this a year ahead of needing too – and are working on an Action plan with the Board of Directors to ensure we have an ever better service delivery within the network. Our Quality Framework across all Healthwatch in the country ensures people receive the same high level care wherever they are. Many Healthwatch are now completing their Quality Framework – but Healthwatch Luton will continue to develop and adapt their action plan to ensure we continue to lead on quality across the network.

Adapting Online/Hybrid Engagement



Healthwatch Luton adapted in COVID to online engagement techniques, allowing us to still engage with over 2000 residents since March 2020 when the pandemic and first lockdown. This is via interviews or internal phone calls and emails. In 2021 – this reduced to just under 1000 residents, as our engagement plans were continually altered depending on COVID numbers rising across the town. We managed to run a series of online forums, surveys and interviews to capture resident views – but in 2022 we have moved to hybrid model of both online and face to face engagement.

Website Review



During 2021 we updated our website and feedback centre, planning a lot of new information pages and consultation guidance. Our new website is Live – [Home - Healthwatch Luton](#); and we continue to amend. We now offer the ability to translate the whole website into over 1000 languages, and ensure we meet the Accessibility requirements.

Our website is much more accessible, and provides up to date information and advice relevant to Luton residents [Information and advice - Healthwatch Luton](#)

We will also be developing further community pages and share local information across our site.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views, and we use your views to help shape service delivery and commissioning. Here are some examples of the work we have done over the last year, using your input and feedback.



Case Study : James Knight – Carer/ Volunteer

‘There is a big gap on the understanding of how to get the help’:

Healthwatch Luton volunteer and Carer, James. reflects on his experiences of the social care system in Luton

James cares for his partner, who needs his constant care and assistance due to learning disabilities and mobility problems. He reflects on his experiences of the social care system in Luton.

James is a full time carer for his partner. His partner has mobility needs and was diagnosed with learning disabilities later in life, meaning there was not the support needed for her throughout her life.

James has fought tirelessly to get his partner the diagnoses for her conditions, to enable the right assessments to take place for her.

James’s physical and mental health took a downhill turn whilst he was trying to find the right support for his partner. James did not feel listened to by their GP and was unable to find any local support for his partner. Initially, James was offering some support to his partner, but now, especially since the pandemic, his partner’s needs have increased as her physical condition has deteriorated.

‘Sometimes just doing it by yourself can be a bit soul destroying’

James initially contacted the local authority but was not able to get any assistance and was told there needed to be a referral from a professional. Thankfully, James’ GP was able to make the referrals and social services were able to do the necessary needs and social care assessments. James feels a lot of knowledge he has of what is available in the local area is down to his proactive interactions with local organisations such as Age UK and the Disability Resource Centre. James feels there is a lack of services within Luton, and also those services that are available are poorly advertised or hard to find out about. James feels that even when being referred into an organisation, they are so stretched that there can be a long wait to get help or support.

‘There is a big gap on the understanding of how to get the help’

James’ partner is currently receiving 10 hours of support in the form of a personal assistant. This takes the strain off James, and gives James an opportunity to do things for himself, such as volunteering, or support his elderly neighbour in some of his activities. In an effort to try to encourage his partner to maintain her independence, James had been given information about local activities, such as a lunch club locally, which she attends with her PA.

Throughout all of this, despite some struggles, James has kept a positive attitude, and is able to exercise the knowledge he has gained to support his partner and others he meets. James stated that before the assessment and getting support for his partner, he would score the challenges he was facing as a nine out of ten for how difficult his life was in supporting his partner and getting her needs met, whereas now, since having an assessment and being able to access some social care support, that has reduced down to a two or a three.

‘...while I can care for her and look after her then I will do that role.’

This feedback fed into changing service delivery and provision by:

We fed James story into the Healthwatch England national project on Unmet Social Care needs, which is being shared with the wider national system

[Social care: What is in the new plan? | Healthwatch](#)

Access to health and care in Luton: Our Research

We know nationally accessing health and care during and post pandemic has been difficult across the country. In Luton, we feel it has been even harder.

We know that the NHS is setting plans to improve GP Access: [NHS sets plan to improve GP access | Healthwatch](#); but for people in Luton, whilst residents await these plans to come into fruition, many are struggling with the acuity of their chronic or acute condition – and are finding it harder to access any health or care.



95% struggled to receive support from their GP in 2021*

*Of those who left feedback with Healthwatch Luton

Many of those we spoke to wanted more information advice and support when waiting for a clinical diagnosis or referral. The main concerns were around lack of access, lack of patient choice and extreme waiting times to be seen.

This led to issues around continuity of care, medication issues, acuity of illness, and issues around referrals.

Many of those we spoke to also outlined issues with their Dental Surgery and finding an NHS dentist open and willing to see them: [Lack of NHS dental appointments widens health inequalities | Healthwatch](#)

Many we spoke too also struggled to be seen in outpatients for continued care; and or referred into Hospital: [People living in the poorest areas waiting longer for hospital treatment | Healthwatch](#)

Healthwatch Luton continue to work with the health and care system to support their plans and adaptations to services = to provide access to health and care. However, our Access to Health and Care report – to be published in 2022 – will inform the system further on how Luton residents need to access health and care, to ensure they can feel informed, supported and helped either in diagnosis or post diagnosis.

What difference will this make

We hope our up to date feedback across the year will help shape new Integrate Care System planning of primary care across Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes from 2022 onwards



“I don’t actually care who I get seen by – as long as I can feel supported in managing my condition. Sometimes when you’re ill trying to get care is so exhausting.”

Anon, Feedback Provider – Feb 2021



Women's Health in Luton – Menopause

Healthwatch Luton ran a survey and Forum for women to discuss their feedback on their health and their Menopause experiences. These fed into the wider local Menopause Strategy with Public Health and developed further support.

In August 2021, Healthwatch Luton were approached to be part of a Menopause Working Group, to look at what people's experiences are of menopause in Luton, what works well and what needs to be done to improve services and experiences. During the first meeting there were discussions about how the experiences of individuals could be found to understand what is needed to further support residents of Luton. It was agreed that Healthwatch Luton would create a survey that would look at the experiences of treatment and care of individuals who had been or were going through the menopause, and what they felt they needed more support in. The survey was made live late 2021 and was open for six weeks. There were nine questions that were free text for individuals to offer their personal experiences.

What did people tell us?

We spoke to nearly **100 women in Luton** who were going through or had been through the Menopause.. The main findings can be found: [Menopause-survey-2021-2022-LH-1.pdf](https://healthwatchluton.co.uk/files/2022/02/Menopause-survey-2021-2022-LH-1.pdf) (healthwatchluton.co.uk)

The main findings were people felt:

Stigma The subject of the menopause appears to still be a taboo subject. There is not enough conversation about menopause and the different symptoms people can have. **Knowledge** It was felt there was not enough knowledge by professionals and employers alike, as well as individuals not knowing what to expect. There was a lot of research independent of medical professionals needed to understand the menopause and how it affected them. **Understanding** People felt that there was not enough understanding from their peers, workplace, friends and family about the menopause and how it was affecting their daily lives. Workplace challenges and capacity concerns have affected the careers of women and relationships have been affected. **Equal access** Depending on where people live in the county, there is a disparity of the services available. Luton sits within the BLMK ICS, however, those who live in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough have access to a menopause clinic within Bedfordshire, which is not available to those who live within Luton local authority boundaries. **Working** A high number of women felt their working life was affected by the menopause and there was not enough support in the workplace for them. It was felt there was a pressure to reduce hours or retire due to the effects of menopause on the individuals. **Medication** HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) isn't easily available and the side effects aren't widely discussed or known. There could be more treatment options to manage the symptoms or conditions associated with menopause



What difference did this make

Public Health have a new Women's Health strategy and our own feedback has been shared nationally on the Department of Health's Women's Strategy engagement. We have also ensured many health and care services in Luton now have a Menopause Strategy in place – ensuring women are supported through this time. A Women's Health strategy has also ensured many organisations in Luton are providing free or discounted support in their health and wellbeing.

Advice and information

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

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need



Signposting, Information and Advice:

Healthwatch Luton signpost people every day to services in Luton, who can support or provide choice to them on their health and care. We also provide people with information and advice on how to access health and care – and we speak on average to around 20 residents a week. We have signposted or provided information and advice to over 600 residents on nearly 100 services in the last year.

Signposting Example: Deaf resident needing support

Healthwatch Luton were contacted by a charity trying to organise a deaf resident who needed BSL interpreting for a GP appointment in Luton, but was struggling to attain support. Healthwatch Luton signposted them to their Practice Manager of the surgery. HWL also raised with the clinical commissioning group to inform them of standardisation across Luton. The CCG contacted the charity and the patient, supported by the practice manager and organised the interpretation. We also signposted them to other local support options.

The Clinical Commissioning group then went on to remind all practices regarding interpretation services available

Healthwatch Luton caught up with the patient and charity after the appointment – and they had a good experience and their health was improved.

'It was so helpful to have someone like Healthwatch support us.'



Informed choices for Luton residents: Info & Advice

With so many residents struggling to access health and care services, for many reasons, it is important for residents to know how to support themselves whilst waiting for clinical diagnosis or referrals.

Healthwatch Luton have amended their website to provide up to date information and links to local and national support, what to do whilst waiting, and who to contact if they need more help: [Information and advice - Healthwatch Luton](#)



Healthwatch Luton have a dedicated Community Support Officer now in place – so we hope to make more relationships and rebuild community links in 2022.

IF you would like to share your details with us, we can share your events on our E-Bulletin, Website or social media channels, and to our contacts.

Please contact info@healthwatchluton.co.uk for more information.

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Luton. 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:

- Created case studies for the digitally excluded report by carrying out interviews over the telephone.
- Helped the local vaccination efforts by making videos.
- Carried out website reviews of local GP practices, pharmacies, dentists and care homes and helped publish reports based on the reviews.
- Gathered feedback from social media channels and created blogs for our website and reports.
- Reviewed, as part of the Advisory Sub Group, all the reports prior to being published.





Maureen

“Looking back, it is obvious to say it was a year like no other. The need to be there for the help and support we have always tried to provide but groups and organisations were not available due to the restrictions. We did what we could virtually, but the personal approach is necessary. The longer the distancing continued the more apathy crept into the world around us. However, Healthwatch volunteers do not give up easily. We maintained our team spirit, we adapted to the circumstances, and we found ways round obstacles continuing to provide the support and information that was and is needed. We have learnt a lot we have developed and are now ready to move on.”



James

James has been volunteering with us for about a year and a half now. Despite the limitations of the pandemic and not being able to meet face to face, James has made a massive contribution by collecting feedback from social media and he also helped create a case study for the unmet needs in social care project that highlights the gaps in information and support available for carers.



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch with Sudha, our Volunteer Officer.



www.healthwatchluton.co.uk



01582 817 060



info@healthwatchluton.co.uk

2022 Priorities and Finances

What have you asked us to do:

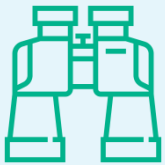
We have used our stakeholder feedback survey alongside over a thousand feedbacks where we have spoken to you, and engaged with over 30,000 residents online to decipher what we will focus on in 2022.



2022 Priorities

Focus Areas for this Year

Healthwatch Luton dedicate all their time and resource in capturing feedback from Luton residents to shape their agenda and priorities. Our full workplan is available online. We use a range of methods to shape our agenda, and use patient and resident views in all aspects of our work. Whilst we will continue to support the NHS and Social Care systems in their own work and development, our key priority areas this year will be to:



1. Support improving Health Inequalities

We will ensure we use feedback gathered to reduce inequalities within the town for health and care, and focus on ensuring people's experiences are more equitable



2. Gather feedback

We will continue to gather feedback from all of Luton, increasing our reach of 14% of the Luton population to over 20% across the year. We will focus on capturing feedback around:

- Access to services
- Awareness of services
- Person Centric approach to care
- Value of the Voice: Ensuring people's views are heard



3. Improve Health and Care for Seldom Heard

We will focus on those less heard and disproportionately affected by health and care issues, namely for 2022

- LGBTQIA+ community in Luton
- BAME LGBTQIA+ community in Luton

We will co produce a workplan with these cohorts to help shape how to improve health and care; and ensure their Voice is used to shape service delivery.

Finance and future priorities

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

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£119,325	Staff costs	£86,573
Carried Forward	£7,849	Operational costs	£13,784
Additional Funding	£3,635	Support and administration	£4,305
Total income	£130,799	Total expenditure	£104,662

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Improving Health Inequalities in Luton
2. Gathering more feedback from seldom heard
3. Improving health and care for those disproportionately affected: LGBTQIA+.

Next steps

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 aim to gather more feedback than ever before, refocusing on engaging face to face with the Luton community – and offering hybrid methods of engagement both online and in person to ensure we capture those voices that are hardest to reach.

Our focus will be in ensuring our resources are spent in the right place at the right time, improving health and care for all with particular focus on those seldom heard.

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Luton uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement. Healthwatch Luton are registered at Futures House, Marsh Farm, LU3 3QB

Healthwatch England are registered at 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ



The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch board consists of 5 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met monthly, and then quarterly and made decisions on matters such as financial decisions affecting operations, and project workplan agreement.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use a range of stakeholder involvement to create and delivery our workplan priorities, such as stakeholder survey, signposting and information provision, online forums, interviews, calls, emails, surveys and engagement. We engaged with over 40,000 Luton residents this year; nearly 20% of the Luton residents.

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 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, 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.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. Please ask for different formats.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We send all our reports to our providers and commissioners and review their responses monthly.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did use our Enter and View powers in line with our Access to secondary care investigations, but due to COVID this programme was ceased. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Partnerships

Thank you

We can't thank our stakeholders and residents enough for all the feedback, insight and partnership working.



Healthwatch Luton work closely with many stakeholders across Luton to ensure we have the right information and advice for residents, and we link on all the work we do ensuring Luton residents support us to make change in service commissioning and delivery.

Luton Public – residents

We cannot do our work without the Luton public sharing their experiences with us – either anonymously on our website, or through targeted engagement, online forums, interviews and case studies or through our Listening Events. Without the 700 direct feedbacks or the over 30,000 reviews and engagements we have received, we could not help shape services across the town. Now more than ever the health and care sector want to hear your views – so we hope to capture even more in 2022 and beyond.

Luton Council and Luton Public Health

We work with the council and public health teams to support a range of local Place based initiatives, ensuring Luton views affect Luton service provision. We sit on the Health and Wellbeing Board, Health Inequalities Board, Adult Safeguarding Board and support the Marmot Advisory Group – supporting Luton to become a Marmot town. Without the experiences of the public, we would not be able to inform these boards of the views of Luton residents.

BLMK Clinical Commissioning Group

We work closely with the BLMK CCG – which commissions health services in Luton. We work both at Place (Luton) and regionally across Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes – supporting the health system at regional level in population health management. We have worked tirelessly with the BLMK CCG on vaccination and COVID campaigns, as well as many programmes of work – ensuring Luton residents receive the health services they need. As the CCG disbands in July 2022, and becomes an Integrated Care System – Healthwatch Luton, and the Healthwatch across BLMK will support the residents in understanding the changes that affect them.

BLMK Healthwatch and the Healthwatch Network

We work together across the network both in the East of England, but more focused in the BLMK NHS group. The Healthwatch across BLMK meet weekly to discuss operational overview in each area – and support each others work to feed into the wider health and care system view of residents health and care experiences. We also support and work with colleagues across Bedfordshire, BLMK – and East of England region, joining up to provide feedback to wider providers, such as NHS England on dental care or EEAST – the Ambulance service engagement programme. We also work hard with Healthwatch England, feeding Luton views in to national campaigns like the Accessible Information campaign, national dental campaign and hospital discharge, ensuring Luton views are heard at national policy level.

Community and Voluntary Sector

We have continued to support and work well with our community groups and contacts – ensuring the views of residents using community or voluntary sector organisations are also highlighted to the wider health and care arena. We believe in co-production and have worked well with many groups, such as the Disability Resource Centre and MIND to ensure we are using the best expertise when working with the different communities in Luton.

Other Partners

Other Partners contribute to our work and we thank all the stakeholders we engage with in supporting us across the year.

- Bedfordshire Hospitals Trust – Luton and Dunstable ([Enter and View](#))
- CQC Local Inspectors and National support
- Cambridgeshire Community Services for community services and engagement
- Total Wellbeing
- DRC for our engagement programmes
- Carers Central for our Carers Forums
- NHS England on Dental care and Cancer Outcomes work
- Adult Social care teams at Luton Council for our Carers Strategy work
- Many community support groups sharing our communications and engagement

Healthwatch Team

In 2022 we have already received confirmation of successfully holding the Healthwatch Luton contract for the next few years. Along with this, staff have sadly left us and new staff have joined us.



Staff left and new starters



Lisa Herrick, Project Officer – Left 2022

Lisa Herrick left Healthwatch Luton this year to pursue personal interests and challenges working in the arena of children and welfare.

Lisa was an immensely exceptional member of the Healthwatch team, overseeing all our programmes of work and managing many operational project functions.

Lisa had such impact in our team, such as organising Luton’s first Young Person’s Festival in 2018, winning awards for this work in 2019, running intense projects with the mental health inpatient wards and patients, and supporting many programmes like the Menopause work and Carers strategy project. Lisa will be missed but we wish her all the best with her future.



Marina Galvin – Community Support Officer

Marina re-joins the Healthwatch Luton team as our lead in community relationships and engagement. Marina has a varied background and a lot of experience, providing Healthwatch Luton with some knowledgeable insights and great relationship management back out into the community after the pandemic.

Marina will focus on linking to local community groups providing support information and events and will be managing our Information Events programme, AGM and general engagement. We are delighted Marina has joined us.

Marina.Galvin@healthwatchluton.co.uk

Healthwatch Luton Staff



Lucy Nicholson – Chief Executive

Lucy has been with Healthwatch Luton since 2015 – managing the internal operations and strategic functions with the Board of Directors. Lucy has seen through two independent awards of the Healthwatch contract, and hopes we continue to develop and support Luton residents in 2022 and beyond

Lucy.Nicholson@healthwatchluton.co.uk



Sudha Auro – Volunteers & Development

Sudha manages all our volunteers, as well as oversees internal training and development, ensuring our processes are developed and internal structures aligned.

Sudha has been with Healthwatch Luton for 4 years and supports all staff in integrating volunteers and workforce to ensure we connect as one team.

Sudha.Auro@healthwatchluton.co.uk



Abbyramy Nesarasa – Signpost & Research

Abby joined Healthwatch In 2019 and is one of our first points of contact, exceptionally knowledgeable sign poster, communications lead (digital) and has been supporting and running our Listening Events. Abby has also recently redesigned our website making it more accessible and translatable

Abby.Nesarasa@healthwatchluton.co.uk



Moonmoon Nath – Administration

Moon also joined us in 2019 and initially provided office administration support. Since the pandemic and the team working from home, Moon supports collation of Brief Summary Reports, contacts sheets and insight collection from signposts.

Moonmoon.nath@healthwatchluton.co.uk




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