

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Derbyshire
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from our chair

Following the extraordinarily challenging year of 2020/2021 when our health and social care services were stretched to the absolute limit, we all took time to reflect on our own experiences as well as those of other people in our communities. I was very pleased to be in a position to join the Board of Directors at Healthwatch Derbyshire (HWD) last October, at a time when we all hoped to have turned a corner and to see services able to return to some sort of normality. I have been really impressed with the dedication and hard work of everyone in the team.

As we all know, the rollercoaster of the pandemic was set to bring fresh challenges over the winter but HWD has continued throughout to engage with the public, to listen to experiences of health services and social care settings and to work on behalf of us all to bring key findings to the attention of those who can bring about positive change. During the past year, the HWD team of staff and volunteers has risen to the challenge of virtual meetings, reached out into the community via online platforms and found innovative ways to work with different sectors of the community.

Some of the most important projects have focused on the frustrations felt by those needing access to GP appointments, the issue of increasingly long waiting times for treatments and the challenge of finding NHS dentists across Derbyshire. The HWD report on dentistry was picked up by a local MP and we were delighted to be invited to address a cross-party group of Derbyshire MPs in March to outline HWD's findings and to raise the profile of the issues faced by Derbyshire residents – an excellent opportunity to encourage policy makers to effect change. In addition, HWD continues to play a key role in the changing health and social care landscape by working with all organisations involved.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the HWD team, including the many volunteers, who have worked so hard over the past year to report on the issues which are of most importance to the people of Derbyshire. It is testament to the strength of our team that we have recently been awarded the contract to continue our work at Healthwatch Derbyshire. We are delighted to be able to continue and develop our work and look forward to a very productive year ahead.

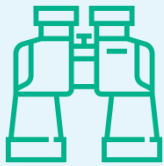


Denise Gould, Healthwatch Derbyshire Chair

About us

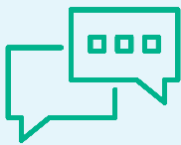
Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Derbyshire is your local health and social care champion. From the High Peak to South Derbyshire 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

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

We're here to find out what matters to people, and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.



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.

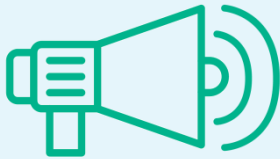
Acting on feedback and driving change.

Partnering with care providers, government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



1079 people

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

898 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as Covid-19 vaccinations, mental health support, access to dentistry and urgent and emergency care.

Making a difference to care



We published

7 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Dental Access Report

which highlighted the struggles people have finding an NHS dentist in Derbyshire.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

53

outstanding volunteers, who gave up **147 days** to make care better for our community.

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

£321,114

which is the same as the previous year.

We also currently employ

13 staff

who help us carry out this work.

How we've made a difference

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

Spring



We carried out a survey to understand why some people were not taking up the offer of the Covid-19 vaccine. We shared results with providers and commissioners.



Gathered experiences of patients and their friends, family members and/or carers who have been through a cancer diagnosis and/or treatment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Summer



Joined local Healthwalks to hear views and experiences of health and social care which in turn helped to form themes and future project work.



Supported the Mental Health Together team in their story gathering exercise into individuals experiences of accessing health and social care with a mental health condition.

Autumn



We asked how people are coping while waiting for planned care and what support they thought would help them to better manage their health.



We carried out research into the NHS 'find a dentist' web pages and enquired with dental practices about the issues surrounding out of date information.

Winter



We carried out a survey to understand whether people felt their emotional health needs were being met during medical appointments.



The return of face-to-face engagement with patients at a unit for acute mental health needs to hear the patient voice and share feedback with providers to take positive action in response.

Listening to your experiences

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



Vaccine Hesitancy – You Said, We Did

In December 2020, the NHS began the biggest immunisation campaign in history as it started the Covid-19 vaccine rollout across the country. In Derbyshire, this is being managed by the Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Whilst the majority of people have embraced the vaccine, others have been hesitant to get vaccinated. Between March and April 2021, we asked people about their attitudes towards receiving the vaccine.



50% of people

who had not had the vaccine or had concerns around taking it were worried about the long-term effects on their health.

After examining the data provided, we were able to identify two main areas of concern, worries around the effects on a person's own health and worries about the safety of the vaccine.

Respondents who raised concerns and who were hesitant about having the vaccine were asked: Is there anything that would make you change your mind about having the vaccine?

Many gave suggestions as to what may encourage them to be more likely to take up the offer of the vaccine.

- More research published with testing and results shown/evidenced over a longer period of time
- Clearer information for people to make their decisions that address their concerns
- Choice of vaccine
- Choice of venue to receive the vaccine, some prefer hospital settings in case of emergency or complications with existing condition
- Learning disabilities and mental health conditions taken into account and patients offered alternative venues or time slots to suit.

What difference did this make?

From the findings, HWD developed some frequently asked questions from the concerns raised. These were shared with Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD), Public Health bodies and the Covid Community Forums in Derbyshire allowing them to provide specific and directed messaging about the vaccine addressing those reported concerns and frequently asked questions.

HWD aimed to ensure that people were getting reliable information to allow them to make an informed choice in deciding whether to have the vaccine and to help remove any barriers to take up.

Access to Dentistry

Access to NHS dentistry has been one of the most significant issues raised with us by the public over the last year. In the past 12 months, Healthwatch Derbyshire has received over 100 contacts from the public with regards to lack of access to dentistry.

In December 2021 we published our report, How easy is it to find an NHS dentist in Derbyshire?

Our findings included:

- Limited capacity in Derbyshire for new NHS patients. At the time there were three areas without any provision for new adult NHS patients.
- Some practices listed as accepting new NHS patients were found to be only able to offer new patients an appointment in over a year's time.
- Sixty percent of the practices had no information on their profile about accepting new patients.

People told us they were frustrated with the search function on the NHS Find a Dentist website. They found many practice profiles to be inaccurate, often resulting in having to contact over 20 practices. The lack of capacity for new patients in Derbyshire was becoming apparent but establishing the actual availability for new NHS patients in Derbyshire was not possible by details provided on the NHS website alone.

We also heard from people who had been informed that their dental surgery was moving to private practice, and they would need to find an alternative NHS dentist. This, coupled with the lack of dentists accepting new patients, meant many people were left without access, and in some cases were experiencing difficulties accessing urgent or emergency treatment. Many people told us they simply didn't know where to turn to.



"We have today had a letter to tell us that our dentist is going private and we have to find new provision for my partner and 10-year-old son. After consulting the NHS website and ringing around several dentists in the area, only to be told that they are not taking new patients, we are stuck. There are several of our friends with children, all in the same predicament."



"I have called at least 10-15 practices from the NHS Find a Dentist website but none are taking on new NHS patients or emergencies. I have called 111, they gave a list of four practices treating people with emergencies today but by 9.20 am, all the emergency appointments had been taken."



Access to Dentistry

What did Healthwatch Derbyshire do?

The lack of provision for new patients and out of date NHS web information for patients was highlighted to Area Commissioners, Derby & Derbyshire Oral Health Steering Group, Local Dental Network, NHS England and Healthwatch England to support the campaign for dental reform.

Our volunteers continue to carry out bimonthly reviews of the Find a Dentist web page, identifying those local practices who are listed as currently accepting new patients, as well as those with out of date information. HWD staff then follow up with individual dental practices to highlight any inaccuracies and encourage practices to update their information.

We have also created an infographic to share with the public to offer guidance for those finding it hard to get a dentist appointment. This information has been approved by local Area Commissioners, and shared with the Local Dental Network and other Healthwatch organisations who have adapted a version for their own use.

As we continue to receive queries from the public surrounding access to dentistry we can share the approved guidance, as well as direct individuals to practices currently accepting new patients, as per the findings of our bimonthly Find a Dentist website reviews.



Meeting with Derbyshire MPs

In March 2022 HWD presented our findings to a cross-party parliamentary group meeting. We showed the lack of dentistry access throughout the county, and shared real experiences of patient struggles.

MPs were aware of the difficulties around access to dentistry as many of their constituents had contacted them directly.

We showed the most up to date findings around dental access and availability to give a current picture of the situation, with figures demonstrating 51 fewer dentists completing NHS work in NHS Derby and Derbyshire in 2021 compared with 2020.

We asked MPs to champion dental reform to address the issues discussed and the lack of access to dentistry in Derbyshire, and nationally and to 'ring fence' budget for NHS dentistry, including sustainable funding.

HWD continues to update Derbyshire MPs with the latest findings from our ongoing Find a Dentist website reviews to provide an accurate and up to date picture of access to dentistry in the county.

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.

Our push for people in Derbyshire to share how they are coping while they wait for care and what support they thought would help them to better manage their health resulted in 108 responses, 10% of the national response to the research. Recommendations have been highlighted and are being addressed by the Derbyshire Risk Stratification and Quality Assurance Group.



Getting services to involve the public

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

Four volunteers helped HWD and our local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) by sharing their stories of attending their GP appointment for Annual Health Checks for people with learning disabilities.

The volunteers were able to share their experiences in order to demonstrate what works well and where improvements could be made, as well as encourage others to attend by explaining the process. Two of our volunteers filmed a promotional video produced by the CCG to promote annual health checks. The video was shared widely across the county.



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 change.

After hearing the experiences of cancer patients during the Covid-19 pandemic, work with the decision makers at the hospital Trusts commenced for their response to participants, which subsequently helped shape our recommendations to the Trusts for improvements. We continue to work with the Trusts to address the unmet needs of patients.

Advice and information

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

This year we helped people by:

- Providing details of local dental practices accepting new patients
- Signposting people to organisations who can provide specialist support or guidance
- Supporting the Covid-19 vaccination programme and identifying reasons for vaccine hesitancy
- Speaking to people to understand the impact of waiting for care and how they could be supported.



Signposting people for access to dentistry

HWD was contacted by a concerned parent who was struggling to find a dental practice to see her son. Throughout the past year we have heard from many people over their struggles to access dental care. Dentistry is in high demand and many practices have limited appointment availability or are not currently taking on new patients.



Following our ongoing work to monitor local practices taking on new patients, via the Find a Dentist web page, we were able to advise the parent on practices that may be able to see her son.

The parent later contacted us to say that, "I cannot thank you enough for your support. I am just so grateful that my son is now registered with a dentist and given another 12 months of being on a waiting list, we will all be registered at the same dentist as a family. This is thanks to you."

Since January 2022 HWD has been able to answer 32 enquiries from people looking for access to dentistry. We have been able to signpost these people to dental practices currently accepting new patients.

Supporting 'My Right to Healthcare' with GP Access Cards

It is commonly thought that everybody needs to have certain documentation to be able to register with a GP such as photo identification and proof of address. This is not the case.



HWD supported a national NHS England campaign to ensure that people across Derbyshire are registered with a GP and do not miss their chance to receive their vital Covid-19 vaccination.

We reached out to over 70 networks, voluntary sector or private sector organisations that support people without a fixed address. We wanted to identify people who were not currently registered with a GP for a variety of reasons. Homeless people, gypsies or travellers, people with transient lifestyles and new arrivals in the UK were just some of the groups we were aiming to reach.

HWD acted as a hub for distribution of 220 information cards for individuals to use if they were having problems registering with a GP, as well as raising awareness that everyone has the right to register and receive treatment from a GP practice.

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch. 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 with our Vaccine Hesitancy Project whereby they undertook the tasks of planning, survey design and trial, and data analysis
- Carried out research and review of local dental services and assessed accessibility to new NHS patients
- Helped Derby and Derbyshire CCG to promote annual health checks for people with learning disabilities. Two volunteers appeared in a promotional video produced by the CCG
- Created digital content on our website and social media
- Conducted befriending calls to people feeling socially isolated due to the pandemic.





Katie

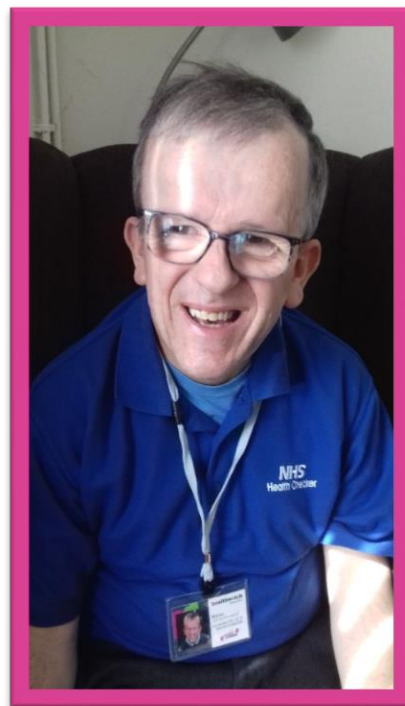
“Volunteering for HWD has been great. I have been offered a range of different tasks to be involved with including project planning, research, data analysis, and helping at events. I have also attended training courses. Healthwatch has been very flexible around my studies, allowing me to work from home and complete tasks within a reasonable time frame. All members of staff at Healthwatch are focused and reliable, with help always just an email away! Overall, Healthwatch is a great organisation to be involved with.”



“The experience I have had will be good to add to my CV and help me find future employment.”



Katie, Healthwatch Derbyshire Volunteer



Stephen

“I have been volunteering at HWD for the past six years. My learning disability has not prevented me from volunteering, and I have been involved in mystery shops and projects that have helped improve services for other people with learning disabilities. This year, HWD helped the local Clinical Commissioning Group with its campaign to raise awareness of Annual Health Checks and I appeared in a video to promote these. I like to help people and volunteering makes me feel useful and really makes a difference.”



Do you feel inspired?

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



www.healthwatchderbyshire.co.uk



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enquiries@healthwatchderbyshire.co.uk

Mental Health Together

Mental Health Together (MHT) was commissioned in 2017 to give service receivers and carers a greater say in the services they access; ensuring they are listened to and that their experiences are at the heart of service design and delivery.



Mental Health Together (MHT)

MHT is the Derby and Derbyshire Engagement service for mental health service receivers and their carers.

The service has undergone significant challenges since it was set up in 2017 due in part to fluctuating short-term funding. At the end of 2021 we were able to recruit two temporary engagement officers specifically to work on the Living Well project.

We keep in touch with our members through bimonthly e-bulletins and work more closely with a smaller group of Experts by Experience. Over the year our Experts have met both virtually and face-to-face, depending on the current Covid situation. We have now established hybrid meetings as the standard way forward giving flexibility to our Experts.

One member of our team, Aileen Power, has left over the past year to begin her nurse training. Two others, Kate Moore and Jaye Richardson, have joined the team to deliver the Living Well work.

Experts by Experience

Our Experts by Experience volunteers (Experts) are vital to the role of MHT and an absolute joy and privilege to work with. We have 26 Experts who have personal experience of living with, or caring for someone with, a mental health condition. Amongst them, they offer a wide range of experience of many different conditions and their insight is invaluable.

At MHT, our job is to match up Experts with the opportunities, which are out there to shape and influence the mental health and social care agenda. During 2021-22 we have supported Experts to attend a wide range of meetings and forums.

Although the virtual world has been a challenge for many, it has also provided an opportunity for others who experience increased anxiety during physical meetings but feel able to join meetings online.

Some examples of work:

- Designing a Safe & Well Plan for people experiencing a mental health crisis
- Working with Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (DHcFT) to improve their template letters and their 'waiting well' policy for community mental health services
- Supporting three of our Experts to become governors for DHcFT representing Chesterfield, Erewash and South Derbyshire
- Supporting two veteran Experts to attend and advise the Armed Forces Networks for Derbyshire Community Health Services and the University Hospitals of Derby & Burton.



Mental Health
TOGETHER
Engaging with Derby and Derbyshire

Living Well Derbyshire

Living Well Derbyshire is a new model of care for people who need mental health support and is gradually being introduced to all areas across Derbyshire, starting with the High Peak and followed by Derby City. The team responsible for delivering the project is known as the Collaborative, which includes a range of professionals and people with lived experience of mental health. At MHT we have supported people with lived experience to share their stories to inform the design of the new model of care and supported others to actually sit on the Collaborative, Governance Group and Steering Group. As an independent organisation, MHT is also able to gather and anonymously share honest feedback from both staff and those using the transformed service.

We have also supported the formation of lived experience forums, which will continue to give people with lived experience the opportunity to be involved in the service development as it moves forward.

Public Engagement Opportunities

The pandemic has limited the amount of face-to-face engagement that has been possible this year. However, we did attend the Head High Fundamental Event in Derby and Think Fest in Chesterfield, to promote the service and opportunities for members.

Alternative Mental Health Crisis Provision in Derbyshire

We have supported the team looking into alternative mental health crisis provision in Derbyshire by carrying out a survey to learn what people want from an out of hours service. The survey results are available on our website and are being used in development of a service specification.



"I am delighted to include in the Healthwatch Annual Report a section produced by the Mental Health Together Team (MHT).

The service exists to give mental health service receivers and carers a greater say in the health and care services they access. We ensure that people are listened to, and that their experiences are at the heart of the way that health and care services are designed and delivered.

Under my leadership, the Healthwatch and Mental Health Together Team will work together in 2022/23 to find out what matters most to people. We will understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services, and speak out on their behalf."

Helen Henderson, Healthwatch Derbyshire CEO



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		Expenses	
Funding received from local authority	£321,114	Staff costs	£218,000
		Operational costs	£62,109
Total income	£321,114	Total expenditure	£280,109

Top three priorities for 2022-23

1. Hearing from communities about what matters most to them after Covid-19
2. Working to hear the voices that we don't currently hear from, and voices that struggle to be heard
3. Using these voices to help the changing health and care system understand what people think and feel

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.



“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



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Derbyshire, Suite 14 Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Derbyshire, DE56 0RN.

Healthwatch Derbyshire 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 board consists of 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 on a quarterly basis and made decisions on matters such as finance, governance, and our ways of working.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We gather comments and feedback on public experiences of health and social care, using these to identify any trends or common themes, which then directs our work priorities.

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. We publish it on our website and share with groups and networks who we work with.

Responses to recommendations and requests

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

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



healthwatch

Derbyshire

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