

Championing what matters to you

Your Healthwatch Leeds
Annual Report 2021–22



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Message from our Chair

"In one word, 'listening' is what Healthwatch Leeds does. And not just to those who come to us, we go out and talk with those groups who are heard less often. Then we work with health and care services to ensure that the voice of the people is central to the decisions they make and lead to an improvement in local services."

"In this Annual Report you can read about some of the ways in which we have worked with others, including the voluntary sector, to play a part in influencing what services are provided, and how they are provided, so that they meet the needs of the people of Leeds, especially those with the poorest health and the most excluded. Further details are on our website.

For the second year running Healthwatch Leeds won one of the national annual Healthwatch awards. This was for work on the devastating effect of the pandemic on the lives of people living in care homes. Care home residents were amongst the hardest hit during Covid, and restrictions on visiting resulted in increased isolation and loneliness for many. Even when the strictest guidance was relaxed some care homes were still not allowing the permitted family visits and this was continuing to affect the mental health of many residents. The way in which Healthwatch influenced care home practice is described on page 9.

As always my thanks go to Hannah Davies, our Chief Executive Officer, to each one of the staff team and to the numerous volunteers, including those in Youthwatch, who have worked so hard on our activities. Finally, I want to express gratitude the members of the Board who have continued to ensure that Healthwatch Leeds has the strategic vision to ensure that it remains totally focused on making sure the voice of Leeds citizens is heard loud and clear."



John F Beal
Your Healthwatch Leeds
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F Beal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.



"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."

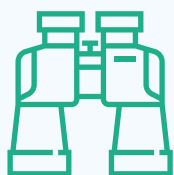
Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



About us

Your health and social care champion

Your Healthwatch Leeds is an independent champion, listening to people's health and social care experiences (good or bad). We work together with local services and organisations to ensure that people's voices are at the heart of shaping the health and social care services in Leeds. We also provide an information, advice and signposting service to help you understand and access health and care services in the Leeds area. You can find out more about us on our [website](#).



Our vision

Making your voice count in health and social care services in Leeds. We are here to help you get the best out of your local health and care services. We bring your feedback to those who plan and deliver services in Leeds.



Our mission

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



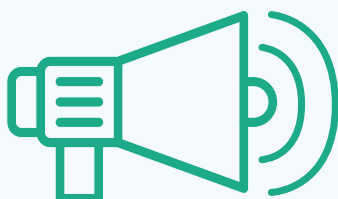
Our principles

- We are **independent** and work on the things that the people of Leeds tell us matter.
- We are **inclusive**, making sure we capture the voices of people experiencing inequalities.
- We work with partners to provide challenge and **support** to get health and care services right.
- We know that **collaboration** with partners is key to ensuring that people's voices are heard.

Highlights from our year

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



2,212 people

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

554 people

contacted us for clear advice and information about topics such as dentistry, mental health, GP access and COVID-19 (an increase of 80 from last year).

Hundreds of community partners

worked with us to ensure all our work was hearing the experiences of people who are experiencing the greatest health inequalities.

Making a difference to care



We produced

50 reports and briefings

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

The most popular [report on our website](#) was about

Visiting people in care homes

which highlighted the lack of awareness and understanding of the 'essential caregiver' role that all residents are entitled to.

Health and care that works for you



We are lucky to have

75

outstanding volunteers, who gave up **1528 hours** to make care better for our community.

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

£374,000

which is the same as the previous year.

We also employ

10 staff

who help us carry out this work.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. We believe listening to people's experiences from all communities of Leeds is vital to shaping health and care services. We have continued to work to make sure people's experiences are at the heart of how services plan to move forward coming out of the pandemic.



Parveen chatting to people at the Big Leeds Chat in the Reginald Centre.

Stopping care home residents feeling isolated



In November, our work on care home visiting during the pandemic won one of five national Healthwatch awards in the ‘tackling inequalities’ category.

With government guidance changing to advise care homes to gradually open, we set up a cross-sector working group to ensure that people living in care homes were getting as much meaningful contact with loved ones as possible. This work followed our report last year about the devastating impact on mental and physical health that friends and family visiting bans early in the pandemic had on people living in care homes.



60% of family members didn't know their relative's care home was enabling visits by essential caregivers.

[Shown in our 'Visiting loved ones in Leeds Care Homes' report.](#)

Over the last year we have:

- Worked with partners to develop video and ‘mythbuster’ resources for care homes and families, explaining the vital role of ‘essential caregiver’.
- Sent out 10,000 copies of our essential caregiver posters and flyers to all GP surgeries and care homes in Leeds. As a result, care home visiting has been one of the key issues that we have heard about via our information and advice service this year.
- Used feedback from residents and relatives to create an individual action plan for 16 different care homes to make improvements.
- Worked with the Leeds City Council Care Quality Team to set up informative web pages.
- Influenced Healthwatch England’s discussions with the Department for Health and Social Care on the issue of care home visiting.

What difference did this make?

We raised awareness about visiting rights amongst professionals and families of care home residents. This meant people could maximise contact with loved ones, and reduce the risk of isolation and detrimental effects on mental health.



“Shared this [survey] with a colleague, who found out she can be an “essential care giver”, which gives her more time with her dad in his care home. Big thanks to your community project worker who helped her sort this out. It will make such a difference!”

A Leeds resident who read our Facebook post





The Big Leeds Chat

Listening to the people of Leeds as we came out of the pandemic

Working with our People's Voices Partnership partners, we put on the biggest Big Leeds Chat yet!

The Big Leeds Chat brought senior leaders from across the health and care system together with the public as one #TeamLeeds. As we came out of the pandemic, we knew it was really important to get senior leaders into communities and listen first-hand about people's experiences, so we organised the third Big Leeds Chat.



Developed in 2018, it is a simple idea to take the most senior decision-makers into communities to listen and hear first-hand about what creates happy and healthy communities, but also for decision-makers to really connect with all the different communities of Leeds.

We had 40 different chats in communities across Leeds, including Bramley high street, the men's social group in Chapeltown, Wetherby high street, a youth club in Swarcliffe and many more.

We found 10 key themes which are being used as a key building block in terms of understanding of what creates happy and healthy communities in Leeds. Some of these are creating activities for children and young people, enabling all communities in Leeds to have safe, green spaces, ensuring good access to GPs, understanding the mental health impact on us all as we come out of the pandemic and more.

These statements identified by the people of Leeds will now be part of the new Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with decision-makers asked to report back on how we are doing as a city against each statement. [The report is available on our website.](#)



"So inspiring and amazing to be back out into communities too!"
Hannah Davies, Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Leeds



Services working together in Leeds

Thanks to people raising complaints, answering questionnaires and being filmed as part of our '[How does it feel for me?](#)' programme, we have helped NHS and Council organisations understand whether services feel joined up and delivered in a high-quality way.

Having things explained to you in a way that avoids jargon, not having to tell your story over and over again to different services and being treated with kindness and compassion are really key to ensuring people have good experiences with health and care services.

We lead a group that brings together the hospital, the council, the voluntary/third sector and mental health services to think about what it is like for the people of Leeds when they have to use lots of different services. One of the things we ask is whether services feel joined up and work well together.

We have followed the journeys of 7 people in Leeds to hear how it feels for them and videoed them over a 6 month period. The videos have profound impact in helping health and care planners understand what is working and what isn't and what's important to people.

In [Emma and Adam's first video](#), Emma talks about the label of borderline personality disorder. This video was shown at the city's leading mental health decision making group and the leaders agreed that the term should not be used in future mental health services.



This work has been recognised nationally by The King's Fund which is an organisation that shares best practice across England.



"For the past 8 months, doing this project has been very beneficial. You feel like you're getting your voice heard, at last, there's somebody there that actually cares about what's going on and about how you feel."



[Gemma, How Does It Feel For Me? participant](#)

What difference did this make?

- Due to our collective work, the importance of good communications with people waiting for treatment has been recognised by the lead planning group for this area.
- Leeds Community Healthcare which delivers a lot of NHS services in the community is focusing on getting communication right in their forward plan for 2023.
- The Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board have committed to identifying the top three actions that health and care services can do to take forward better communication in services.

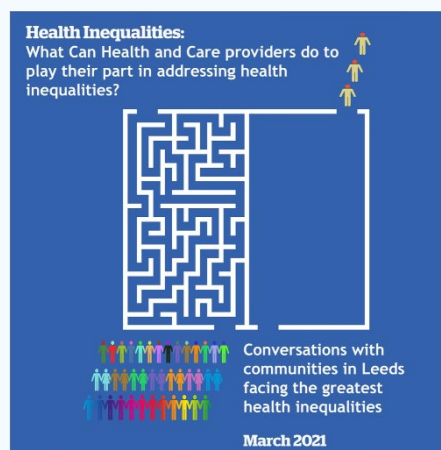
Getting access to services right

"There are no hard to reach communities, just hard to reach services," Victor Adebowale, Chair of the NHS Confederation.

We know how difficult it can be for people to access the care and information in a way that makes sense, especially for those with additional communication needs and preferences. We have done various projects to make sure services are easier to access and communicate in a better way.

Helping services understand inequalities

Our [health inequalities report](#) identified what health and care organisations can do to better meet the needs of people experiencing the greatest health inequalities. It was used throughout 2021 by the citywide Health Inequalities Group, Leeds Health and Care Partnership Executive Group and many other groups so that they can make services accessible for those with health inequalities.



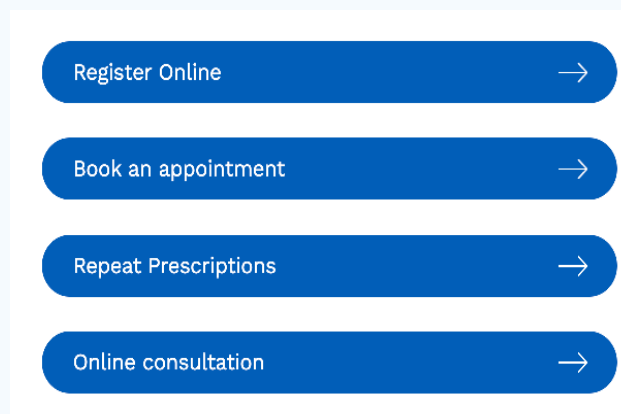
The importance of communication

We have recorded 20 new video stories this year: [Emma and Adam](#) told us about the importance of autism and mental health services using the right language. [Kari](#) told us about her experience of digital access to services. [Gemma](#) told us about her experience of services communicating with her and each other.

The videos have highlighted the importance of getting communication right.

Understanding digital tools on GP websites

We shared information gathered from GP websites with the Health and Wellbeing Board to give them an idea of how complicated remote health and care can be to navigate. We recommended that the city communicated in a more consistent way about how people can reach health and care digitally and we recognise that not everyone can or wants to use digital tools.





Helping GP practices communicate better

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is a law that requires services to find out how people want to communicate and respond to them in their preferred way. Taking on board our recommendations, a GP practice in Leeds has made improvements to better implement the AIS. Changes include adding accessibility functions to their website, training their staff on getting communication right for those with additional needs and improving a patient survey to record communication needs. We hope that we can improve other GP practices within Leeds.

“My mum is deaf and went to a GP appointment. All the staff were wearing masks so she couldn’t lipread and didn’t know what the staff were saying. A nurse asked if she could lipread and removed her mask so she could understand,” Gemma

Training health professionals to improve their communication

Together with Leeds Hearing and Sight Loss Service and Change at Advonet, we trained 250 health and care professionals and volunteers across West Yorkshire to enable better communication for those who have communication needs. This includes people living with a learning disability, a neurodiverse condition or a visual or hearing impairment.

**“I will be speaking to my team. I will make adjustments to be more inclusive,”
Education Mental Health Practitioner,
Calderdale**



Organisations working together to improve communication

Inclusion for All (IFA) brings together representatives from Leeds health and care organisations and individuals with lived experience to make sure the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) is rolled out across the city. Evidence from IFA meetings has also fed into a national AIS campaign initiated by Healthwatch England and NHS England’s AIS review.

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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



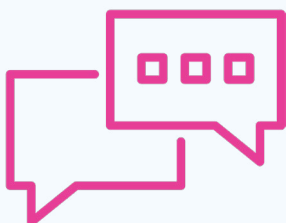
Getting to the heart of the issue – End of Life Care

It is important that people receive good end-of-life care, in the place of their choice and that carers and loved ones are supported.

During the "[Leeds Dying Well in the Community](#)" project, we collated people's experiences of end-of-life care in Leeds. These experiences were shared in a workshop about the next stage of this project. Some case study participants attended the workshop and were able to provide valuable input into discussions about the way forward.

Results include:

- Updating the service offer.
- Working to integrate community services in local areas.
- Developing a shared glossary of terms.
- Ensuring that all staff can recognise and support people who are at the end of life.
- Scoping a Citywide Single Point of Access for Palliative and End of Life Care.



Getting services to involve the public – Community Mental Health Transformation

We involve local people to improve care for everyone.

Mental health services are taking a new approach to supporting people, so they have the right support at the right time. The new approach is called the community mental health transformation.

A key part of this new approach is to make sure that the voices of people with lived experience and their carers are included in helping to design and deliver the new service. We spoke to 420 people in 3 areas of Leeds and found out about the most important things they wanted. [Our report](#) played an important role in shaping the development of the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme model.



Improving care over time – the three Cs

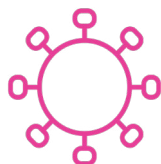
Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

In all the work we do, three themes keep coming up: Communication, Compassion and Coordination. We believe that if we, as a health and care system, can get these right then people's experiences will drastically improve. Therefore, we are working with our NHS and local authority partners to build the '3 C's' into the planning and delivery of services. By championing this at a strategic level (for example, at the five Population Boards) we hope to see a positive change over time.

Making a difference throughout the year

These are just a few of the other projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



We spoke to 80 people in [Gipton and Harehills](#) about the impact of the pandemic. Feedback was sent to decision makers to create a long-term plan for improvement.



We worked with Adult Social Care at Leeds City Council to see what could be done differently when supporting culturally diverse communities who use social care services.

Summer



We produced a number of reports for the NHS in Leeds to help them understand people's experiences of services under pressure.

"always essential to be reminded of the patient [experience] to focus actions to improve [services]." Leeds CCG



We shared [results on how covid impacted people during pregnancy](#) with the National British Pregnancy Advisory Service and in Leeds. Services have made changes to improve visiting, postnatal GP checks and communication of the perinatal mental health pathway.

Autumn



We shared papers on topics such as mental health and joined up care with a senior West Yorkshire decision making board. We also shared more throughout the year on subjects like the impact of poverty and the dentistry crisis in West Yorkshire.



[Youthwatch Leeds](#) made recommendations to Advonet to improve the design of their young people's health complaints advocacy leaflet which is targeted at young people aged 11 to 18.

Winter



We influenced the way [end-of-life care](#) is provided in the city by working with the Leeds Palliative Care Network to gather views from carers and relatives of people that died in Leeds over a 3 month period.



We met with the Chair of the Children and Families Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board to discuss the changes made as a result of the '[Being Black and Being Me](#)' video, inspired by our volunteer Tamirah. The video has impacted education and health, children's social work, early years work, Leeds City Council and Youth Justice services.

Advice and information

If you feel lost, or don't know where to turn as you navigate the health and social care system, Healthwatch Leeds is here for you.

We provide a confidential [information and advice line](#) to help you understand your options and give you advice on things like how to make a complaint, what your dentistry options are or how to access social care services. We're here to help!

This year we helped 554 people by:

- Giving people clear advice on accessing dentistry
- Sharing information on being an essential caregiver
- Navigating the health and care complaints system
- Providing information about Covid



Call us on this number to speak to our team.

Access to NHS dentistry

Thanks to our advice, information and signposting service, accessing local NHS dental treatment has been made easier.

304 people contacted us for advice on dental services. They reported most local practices not taking on new patients and some with waiting lists of 2 to 5 years.

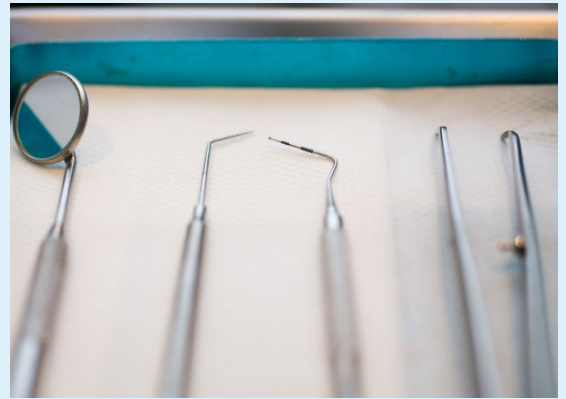
The impact of delayed treatment has resulted in people living with considerable pain, developing medication resistance, and dental conditions worsening, having a knock-on effect on physical and mental health.

**“I’m so embarrassed about my teeth. I can’t leave the house. I’m so depressed about this,”
Shannel, Leeds Resident**

Our advice has enabled those who require urgent treatment to know what options they have locally and all to have clear information.

“Thank you for all the information you gathered to help me make an informed choice about treatment for my tooth,” Lynn, Leeds Resident

We have met and regularly shared information and feedback with the Yorkshire and Humber NHS England dental commissioning team, Healthwatch England, local and regional dental committees and the British Dental Association and presented findings to a Scrutiny Board workshop on dentistry. We hope that action is taken to improve access to NHS dentistry.



Even one experience can make a difference

Improving communication between the LTHT Cancer Team and patients

When we receive feedback to our advice, information and signposting service, we anonymise and share people's experiences with our health and care partners. We have good relationships and often get responses telling us what they are doing with that feedback.

One person shared his experience of the cancer pathway so that his experience doesn't happen to others. He felt that whilst the clinical care has been excellent, the administration needs to improve as it seems currently to be reliant on individuals being able to navigate the system alone. He wanted the hospital trust to be honest and open with timescales, give patients clear information about the pathway and the contact details of the key people to find information about appointments, results and so on and to find a better system for booking operations.

The response from the hospital was swift, saying that they will share this more widely within the cancer team as a way of learning about how to better communicate the current waits with their patients. They also pledged to take on board the comments about better information on how the pathway works.

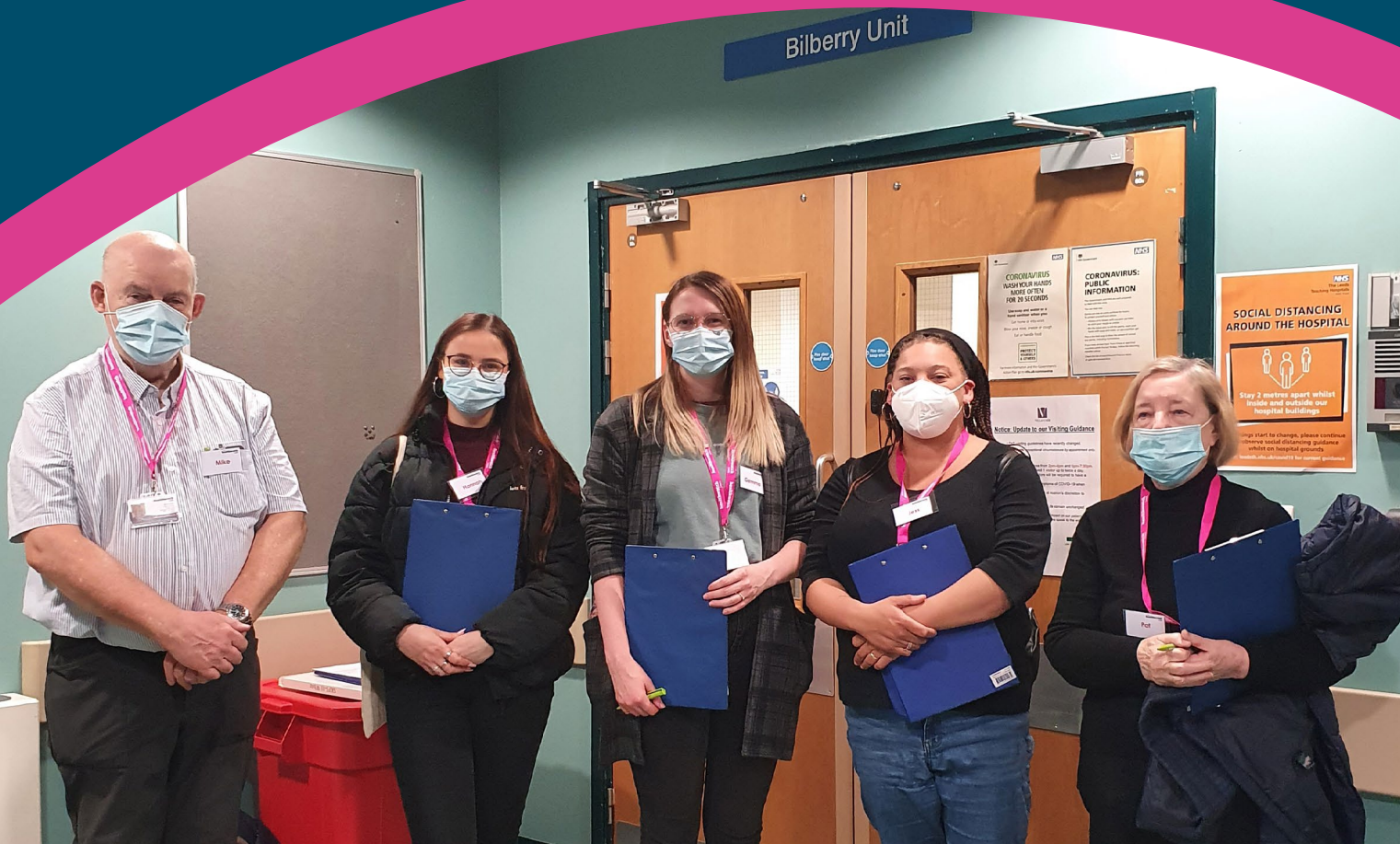


Volunteers

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:

- Marshalled at Covid Vaccination hubs/health centres.
- Created videos for our How does it feel for me? project.
- Reviewed surveys, reports and the functionality of GP websites to highlight examples of good practice and make sure they are accessible and easy to understand.
- Represented us remotely and in person at meetings such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Scrutiny Board, Local Care Partnerships, Future in Mind meetings and many more.
- Youthwatch had virtual and hybrid meetings to feedback the voice of young people.
- Supported with our themed health and care weekly check-ins.
- Continued to help with volunteering efforts supporting vulnerable people with food parcels, shopping and prescription deliveries.



Our volunteers, ready to speak to people at Wharfedale Hospital.



Jess

"I started to volunteer with Healthwatch because as a parent of a child with a health condition I have come across so many hurdles and issues. I wanted to be a part of something that could help make a difference to our health and care system.

I have taken part in some Enter & View visits and loved the experience. It was so insightful, and I learnt so much."



Will

"When I looked into the organisation, it was clear to see the main objective was to do good, create more opportunities for people's feedback and to improve health and care in Leeds. I have learned a lot through my volunteer experience, I have found it very fulfilling. I have met a lot of great people - the staff team and other volunteers. The experience has given me a lot to talk about when going for job interviews."



Val


"After retirement volunteering with Healthwatch is giving me the opportunity to keep up to date and learn more about what is happening across the health and social care sector, and step into new territory as a volunteer where hopefully we can collectively 'be the change we want to see.' The issues that Healthwatch focus on are issues that matter to me!"



Do you feel inspired?

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

 <https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk/about-us/volunteering/>

 0113 898 0035

 craig@healthwatchleeds.co.uk

Finances and Priorities

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



Your Healthwatch Leeds post-it note and pen

Finance from April 2021 to March 2022

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£374,400	Staff costs	£348,492
Additional funding	£76,795	Operational costs	£66,233
		Support and administration	£10,959
Total income	£458,195	Total expenditure	£425,684

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 to reduce the barriers you face, whatever reason behind them.

Our priorities for 2022–23



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Leeds is a Community Interest Company citywide service. We are based at The Old Fire Station, Gipton, Leeds, LS9 6NL. Our funding comes from the Department of Health commissioned by Leeds City Council.

Your Healthwatch Leeds uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



Our staff team 2022

The way we work

Our [Healthwatch board](#) consists of 12 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.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use the insight we have collected over the year from our engagement activities, our information and advice service, the People's Voices Partnership and our health and care partners to shape our work plan. We also carry out a 360 review where we ask our volunteers and members of the public to tell us what they'd like us to work on in the coming year.

Doing our work in partnership

By working together with other organisations and teams who listen and capture people's experiences of health and care, we can better understand and improve health and care services in Leeds. It was set up by the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board, a group of people who lead on involvement from across all the health and care organisations in Leeds so they can work together as one team, under the name of the People's Voices Partnership (PVP). Our shared aim is to put people's voices at the centre of health and care decision making in Leeds, especially those experiencing health inequalities. Working together means that we don't duplicate and don't ask the same questions, we share feedback and we pull it all together to give a clear picture of what is happening in Leeds. Healthwatch Leeds chairs this group and coordinates many of the working groups and programmes of the PVP including How does it feel for me?, the Big Leeds Chat, the mental health PVP subgroup and the digital inclusion PVP subgroup. For more information about the PVP or to get involved please visit: <https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk/our-work/pvp/>

How we influence

Getting your views and feedback into the heart of decision making is what it is all about. We do this in many ways but a really important way is by being members of the key health and care decision making groups in Leeds. We are active members taking your views into groups such as:

- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board
- Leeds Partnership Executive Group (this brings together all the Chief Execs of health and care in Leeds together to work as one team)
- Leeds Committee of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- Population Boards for Leeds – Children and young people, Healthy adults, People with long term conditions, People living with frailty and End of Life Board
- Groups that look at GP access, mental health services and people waiting for hospital treatment
- Adults and Health Scrutiny Board.

These are just a small selection of the different places your views are being heard.



People's Voices
Partnership



Your healthwatch Leeds

Your Healthwatch Leeds
Community Interest Complanly 9542077
Ground Floor
Old Fire Station
Gipton Approach
Gipton
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS9 6NL

<https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk>

t: 0113 898 0035

e: info@healthwatchleeds.co.uk

 [@HWLeeds](https://twitter.com/HWLeeds)

 [Facebook.com/healthwatch.leeds/](https://facebook.com/healthwatch.leeds/)

 [@healthwatchleeds](https://instagram.com/healthwatchleeds)

 [Healthwatch Leeds](https://linkedin.com/company/Healthwatch-Leeds)