



‘The Big Health and Care Question Time Event’: A summary of the themes we heard

Part of the Healthwatch East Sussex
Eastbourne Listening Tour 2022

healthwatch
East Sussex

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For two weeks starting on the 15th October, Healthwatch East Sussex engaged with residents, community groups and professionals across Eastbourne as part of its 2022 Listening Tour.

As part of our engagement programme, we organized a 'live' question time event where members of the public, community leaders and others could ask questions on health and care issues to a panel of key local decision makers and service providers.

We promoted the event extensively via our website, social media channels, at all of our face-to-face engagement sessions and undertook a local radio interview to encourage as many people from diverse backgrounds as possible to attend.



Our goal was to provide our invited panelists and the public with opportunities to:

1. Hear from local people about their burning issues and 'Hot Topics'
2. Respond to the big health and care questions
3. Share organisational plans and aspirations
4. To provide engagement with Healthwatch East Sussex staff and volunteers

The Question Time Event

Thursday 27th October 2022 from 6pm – 8pm

Held at Eastbourne Town Hall, a total of 52 people attended.

Joining us on the night were a mix of members of the public, voluntary and community organisations and health and care professionals. Healthwatch staff and volunteers also attended.

It was positive that many of those attending had previous contact with Healthwatch at other events undertaken during the Listening Tour.

Following introductions to the panel, we went straight into questions in the room.

A number of questions were received in advance and were also put to the panel.



The Big Health and Care Question Time Panel

Our Question Time chair was **Dr Neil Churchill OBE**, who is the Chair of [Care for the Carers](#) and Director for Experience, Participation and Equalities at NHS England.

Our panel of local leaders and decision-makers was made up of:


- **Jessica Britton** – Executive Managing Director for East Sussex, [NHS Sussex](#)
- **Joe Chadwick-Bell** – Chief Executive Officer for [East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- **Amy Galea** – Chief Primary Care Officer for [NHS Sussex](#)
- **Steve Hare** – Chief Executive for [Age UK East Sussex](#) and Vice Chair of [East Sussex VCSE Alliance](#)
- **Samantha Williams** – Assistant Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Supply Management, [Adult Social Care and Health, East Sussex County Council](#)
- **Cllr David Tutt** – Leader of [Eastbourne Borough Council](#)

The panel was selected to include representatives from those who purchase and those who deliver NHS and Social Care services, including those with specialist service remits and a representative from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector.



Key Themes from The Big Question Time Event

The following themes formed the main discussion points at the event and our panelists gave their responses to several questions related to these:


1. **Looking after your own health and wellbeing**
 2. **Accessing GP Services**
 3. **The move towards more holistic, joined up care**
 4. **Improving access to services for disabled people**
 5. **Hospital discharge**
 6. **Educating young people about Health and Social Care**
 7. **Dealing with complaints**
 8. **Other topics**
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1. Looking after your own health and wellbeing

- When people have a health need it is important that they **come forward to seek help**
- A&E or **Emergency Departments** deal with life threatening emergencies
- For **Urgent Care** health needs, people should **call 111** first
- It is important for patients to keep and **attend appointments** once arranged
- Where possible, access to **self-management** help and advice should be pursued, including from pharmacists
- You can **self-refer** to some services, without the need to see a GP, such as Health in Mind, which supports people with mental health difficulties

2. Accessing GP Services


- You do not need a permanent address to **register with a GP**
 - There is a **GP allocations Team** at NHS Sussex who can help if you have been unable to register with a GP Practice
 - The use of **Electronic (e) Consult** can work very well to access GP appointments
 - If those that can use e-consult do, then this can **free up phone lines** for others
 - Practices are now offering appointments with **other professionals**, such as physios, social prescribers or mental health workers, which may better meet people's health needs
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3. The move towards more holistic, joined up care

- Primary Care Services are moving **away from a medical model** towards a more **social model of care**, which will better support people's overall health and wellbeing
- All organisations and sectors, including community and voluntary organisations, should be **equal partners**
- The patient and carer voice should be heard via **collective conversations** and the **co-design of services**, with the professional workforce working closer with unpaid carers
- There is work taking place to increase the **sharing of information** between health and care organisations, including the development of a digital record sharing tool
- There is a need for more opportunities for statutory organisations to **engage and work with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector**

4. Improving access to services for disabled people


- Work is in progress to **address specific access issues** at certain GP practices
 - Service providers and staff should consider the needs of people who might have a **hidden disability**
 - Health and Care staff need better access to **disability training and development opportunities**
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5. Hospital discharge

- If required, care arrangements may need to be put in place before a patient can be discharged.
- Current **capacity and workforce issues in the care sector** make hospital discharge challenging
- Need **safe places** to move people who are medically ready for discharge - some care homes have been closed due to Covid, even recently, which limits bed availability
- The care sector needs to be a **more attractive sector** to work in
- To help address workforce challenges, the council have supported overseas recruitment, which has resulted in **additional health and care staff**, but this is still not enough to meet current demand

6. Engaging young people with Health and Social Care


- There should be opportunities for young people to learn about how to navigate health and social care and **learn about possible career opportunities**
 - Work is in progress to look at the possibility of **employing 16 and 17 year old's** in health and care support services (which has traditionally been 18+), which could provide a career path for young people and help to address workforce capacity issues.
 - There is a **Health and Care careers hub** which can direct people to opportunities and roles
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7. Dealing with complaints

- Specific NHS Trusts have a **Patient Advice and Liaison Service** (PALS) for patients to raise issues or concerns
- Each health and care organisation should have a **complaints policy** for the public to see and follow for making a complaint
- There is also **free and confidential advocacy support** available from [The Advocacy People](#) when making a complaint about Health services
- Healthwatch East Sussex plan to work with **East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust** to undertake an **independent review** of the complaints process in the near future

8. Other topics

- The new **Health and Care Assembly** provides an opportunity to facilitate joint action to improve health and care services in Sussex, due to the broad alliance of organisations working together (including VCSE)
 - The **NHS Sussex Winter Plan** identifies how services can be delivered in a safe and efficient way, whilst under pressure throughout this winter
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Next steps

This report will be shared with panellists and attendees of the Q&A event. It will also be placed on our website and promoted to other local stakeholders.

We will feed the issues raised into our day-to-day work and also consider them during our priority setting and the development of our work programme.

Our panellists took away several actions relating to some of the themes discussed.

These will be collated and shared along with any updates in the main Listening Tour report due out in early 2023.

The full report from our 2022 Listening Tour will be presented to East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2023 and Healthwatch will return to Eastbourne in the Autumn of 2023 to share updates on what has changed at a 'One Year On' event.

Feedback from attendees

“Thanks to HWES for the excellent Hearing Loop and BSL provision offered this evening”

“Really welcomed the opportunity to ask questions”

“Very interesting... I would like to find out more about Healthwatch”

“It was really good to have the opportunity to hear from our local NHS and social care leaders”

“Please pass on our thanks to the panellists for their willingness to take part during a difficult time for our services”

For more information

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