



# Eastbourne Listening Tour: Commuter Survey

Published - March 2023

**healthwatch**  
East Sussex

# Introduction

## Our rationale for exploring experiences in Eastbourne

Each year Healthwatch East Sussex undertakes a dedicated 'Listening Tour' to explore the health, care and wellbeing themes within a specific location or community.

In 2022, following an interruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we undertook our first face-to-face Listening Tour since 2019. Our focus was the experiences of residents, community groups and professionals in Eastbourne Borough.

Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022, we focused on '*meeting people where they are*' and visited a wide range of organisations and locations across the Borough so that we could hear as many voices as possible.

Our goal was to learn as much as we could and use this information to identify local issues and priorities that we will share with decision-makers.

### Our aims were to:

1. Explore (and raise) awareness of Healthwatch amongst local people and groups
2. Capture a snapshot of people's experiences of health and care services
3. Identify people's current and future priorities for health and care services
4. Explore the impacts of the 'cost of living' crisis on people's lives and wellbeing

# What we did

## Our survey methodology

Between the 15<sup>th</sup> October and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Healthwatch East Sussex ran a short commuter survey to gather the health and care experiences of people using Eastbourne Train Station.

Our goal was to access 'hard-to-reach' working age people commuting to and from work and who may be less likely to be reached by other engagement activities used during the Listening Tour. Our three questions were developed through reviews of previous Listening Tour surveys, engagement with partners and piloting with local people.

We used question postcards to capture people's responses. They included freepost addresses for anyone wishing to take one and return it to us, as well as QR codes so that they could complete our short survey directly online. These were distributed at various days and times.

We asked people:

1. **What is the best thing about the NHS?**
2. **What is the worst thing about the NHS?**
3. **What one change would improve the NHS?**

**35 responses** were received by the 13<sup>th</sup> November deadline.

This report summarises the experiences of the respondents and identifies our key findings.



# What we heard – Our key findings


## ***What is the best thing about the NHS?***

- The most common response we received was people's appreciation for the NHS being free at the point of access [except for prescriptions/dentistry for some people].
- The range of services offered via the NHS was highlighted as one of its strengths, with the ability to move between them, but to remain in the same system.
- People gave positive examples of how the NHS had helped them with support, advice treatment and procedures, and they commented on their appreciation for these. A good quality of care was frequently mentioned.

## ***What is the worst thing about the NHS?***

- Waiting times and delays were the most common themes in the weaknesses of the NHS. Comments highlighted long waits for many NHS services, and this was a major source of frustration, as well as having a negative impact on people's physical/mental wellbeing.
- Some respondents highlighted that they had resorted to using private healthcare in a bid to overcome the delays and waiting times.

## ***What one change would improve the NHS?***

- The most common change people identified was an increase in funding and resources, and this was linked to the recruitment and retention of staff, improvements to pay and conditions, and upgrading of facilities.
  - Specific improvements were sought in mental health, access to GP appointments, CAMHS, NHS dentistry, improved facilities, and a greater focus on improved education and self-help.
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**EASTBOURNE**

**What is the best thing  
about the NHS?**



# What is the best thing about the NHS?

*"It exists! There is so much positive to say but experience varies. I am proud to live in a country that has an NHS."*

*"Having access to all sorts of medical care, including specialist care."*

*"Treatment during COVID."*

*"Very good have nothing but praise."*

*"Always very helpful and hard working, provides a range of support."*

*"Free to use/reliable regardless of income."*

*"The fact anyone and everyone can get the medical help they need without having to give being able to afford it a thought."*

*"No trouble with it. Had two knee operations which went well."*

*"Staff can be good once you manage to get appt."*





**What is the worst thing  
about the NHS?**





# What is the worst thing about the NHS?

*"Can't get NHS dentist appointment - hasn't had dentist in 6 years. Moved here from Brighton, no-one in Eastbourne is taking patients."*

*"Not comprehensive/consistent (change what say before and after treatment)."*

*"The amount of time it takes to get seen at the hospital."*

*"Waiting times, outpatient appointments."*

*"Most problem - long waiting lists, therefore have to go private."*

*"Really difficult to get an appointment with a gp."*

*"Wait times, for everything. The service itself is there and excellent, but everything takes too long."*

*"Mental health service are rubbish."*



**What one change would  
improve the NHS?**





# What one change would improve the NHS?

*"Separate acute and chronic and integrate into community more. Make each person more responsible for their health and well-being."*

*"Re-organisation along Dutch or German universal insurance lines."*

*"Recruitment and investment in staff and new equipment."*

*"Easier access to GP for consultation."*

*"Better mental healthcare."*

*"Getting our doctors back. More doctors, more nurses and more hospitals."*

*"Maybe a little more offered support to help teenagers and children's additional learning and mental health needs."*

*"Receptionists in the surgery need more training and not to be rude."*

*"Funding, they deserve the money to go to the nurses and on wards not on corporate bosses."*

*"More talks at schools about NHS to explain better how works."*

# For more information

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