



Together

We're making health
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Rutland

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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

It has been another tough year for our health and care services. Teamwork and support from Healthwatch Rutland staff, board members and volunteers have been essential to our work helping Rutland people during difficult times.

We have been raising the profile of health inequalities experienced here in a rural county which is often dismissed as 'affluent'.

For several years we have informed providers of health and care that people in Rutland tell us about transport difficulties and high costs when accessing health care in the towns and cities outside the county. This year we re-framed this as a health inequality as people's circumstances or lack of transport are sometimes forcing them to decide between heating, eating or treating their health problems.

This persistence is beginning to pay off. Rutland Memorial Hospital has been refurbished and the X-ray facility has been reinstated. Plans are progressing for a mobile MRI scanner at the Oakham Enterprise Park.

We are a tiny Healthwatch in England's smallest county, but I feel that this last year, with care now moving closer to home as we have all wanted for so long, we at Healthwatch Rutland, together with Rutland residents, have all lived up to the county motto, 'multum in parvo' (much in little) with, hopefully, more positive outcomes to come for all.

I thank Healthwatch Rutland staff, board members and volunteers and all those people who have trusted us with their valuable feedback. I also thank the commissioners and providers of care who have worked through such a difficult year but continue to listen to our concerns.



Dr. Janet Underwood, PhD
Healthwatch Rutland
Chair

About us

Healthwatch Rutland is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and 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

Healthwatch Rutland is a strong and independent community champion. We give local people a voice and work in partnership to influence the design and quality of health and social care provision so that you can get the care you need



Our mission

To make sure the experiences of Rutland people helps to make health and care better

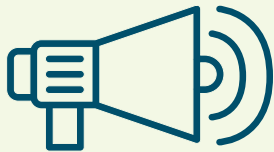


Our values are:

- Accessible and visible
- Independent and objective
- Open, honest and transparent in everything we do
- Inclusive and embracing diversity and equality
- Listening to and understanding the experiences of people in Rutland, especially if they don't always have their voices heard
- Speaking up for local people and enabling people to speak for themselves
- Seeking out and using evidence from local people to drive change and make health and care better

Year in review

Reaching out



380 people

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

1121 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and how to access NHS dentistry.

Making a difference to care

During the year we published

4 reports

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

Our most popular report was the

Oakham Urgent Care Centre Report



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have outstanding volunteers who gave up

1106 hours to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£72,600

which is the same as last year.

We currently employ

2 members of staff (1.6 full-time equivalent) who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring



We assessed the quality of services and patient safety, the effectiveness of treatment and the use of patient feedback, in our responses to the Quality Accounts of East Midlands Ambulance Service, Leicestershire Partnership Trust, North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust.

Summer



We continued to call attention to the lack of access to NHS dental appointments in Rutland with requests to our local MP Alicia Kearns, and the Local Authority Scrutiny Committee to highlight the issues further

We gained Cyber Essentials certification demonstrating that we have robust processes in place to protect our systems and the data we collect from cyber attack.

Autumn



We joined with volunteers from Healthwatch Leicester/Leicestershire to visit the Leicester Royal Infirmary Emergency Department and made recommendations for improvement to support Oakham Medical Practice.

To support Oakham Medical Practice with its improvement programme, we shared themes from public feedback to inform the Rapid Quality Review undertaken by the Integrated Care board.

Winter



We attended meetings and development workshops to bring the Rutland public's voice to the development of the Integrated Care Strategy for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

We brought our LLR wide dementia project to Rutland by joining with Age UK's Memory Café to listen to people with dementia and their carers about what changes they would like to see in local provision of dementia care.

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Patient transport

Our encouragement led commissioners to remove eligibility barriers that were preventing Rutland residents registered with Lincolnshire GP practices from accessing NHS transport because their GP was outside Rutland



Breast screening

After the COVID-19 lockdowns we highlighted that Rutland women were being directed to Leicester for screening, the mobile service in Rutland was then reinstated



National quality accreditations

We gained Investing in Volunteers and Cyber Essentials certification to support our robust approach to quality



Vaccine Confidence

Our signposting and advice service gave people the information they needed about how and when to access local COVID-19 vaccination centres



GP practice access

After we and many other Healthwatch organisations called for an urgent improvement in access to GP practices, particularly face to face, national and local NHS developed recovery plans



NHS Dentistry

Using evidence of how people are excluded due to lack of local provision, we have called for the reform of how NHS dentistry is provided





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 this back to services and help them improve.

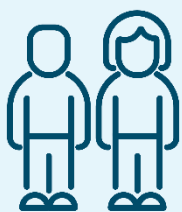
Living with Dementia

Our recent research shows that people living with dementia, and their carers and families, want to be able to access information and support services that are appropriate for their individual needs and at the right time.

In a joint project with Healthwatch in Leicester and Leicestershire we explored what local services currently exist and spoke to many families to identify strengths and gaps in provision. Across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) we heard from more than 350 people living with Dementia, their carers and families, and found wide inconsistencies in the way in which services are available and accessible.

You told us that:

- There are inconsistencies across LLR in the speed and types of diagnostic pathways
- Access to specialist mental health services is difficult
- Information is difficult to find, and families can feel abandoned after diagnosis
- Adult Social Care is difficult to access and can be slow to respond
- People with dementia want holistic care across all primary, secondary and community care services for both physical and mental health care needs



356 people took part across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland including people living with dementia, carers and family and friends. Of these, 33 were from Rutland

Read **[Living with Dementia in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland](#)**

Our survey found some notable differences between the experiences of Rutland residents and those living in Leicester City and County:

- Only a third of carers in Rutland were happy with the length of time to get a diagnosis against 47% in Leicester City and County
- More Rutland respondents received information about support before the diagnosis
- Fewer Rutland respondents felt well supported in their caring role than their counterparts in Leicester City and County
- All Rutland respondents knew about the Admiral Nursing Service and half had accessed and valued it highly, compared with 11% for Leicester City and 22% for County

Read **[Living with Dementia in Rutland](#)**

What difference will this make?

Your feedback is being used to help formulate the new LLR Dementia Strategy which will be consulted upon widely this summer. Action plans to support the strategy will be monitored through the LLR Dementia Programme Board of which Healthwatch Rutland is a member.



“On the behalf of the LLR Dementia Programme Board I would like to thank Healthwatch Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for undertaking this engagement exercise. The timing of this [...] research has allowed us to integrate the findings into our LLR Joint Dementia Strategy refresh ensuring that the wide breadth of voices of those living with dementia and their carers is captured in our strategic priorities.”

Graham Johnson and Bev White, Co-chairs, LLR Dementia Programme Board

Locally in Rutland, the findings and recommendations are informing a new Proactive Care pilot which is seeking to bring back dementia diagnostics into Rutland clinics and provide a wrap-around information and support offer for people with dementia, carers and families.



“I would like to thank those who have engaged in this report, your voice is important in helping us deliver dementia services for Rutland.”

Kim Sorsky, Director of Adult Services and Health, Rutland County Council



Supporting clear pathways for Urgent and Emergency Care

After listening to public confusion and frustration about how and where to access urgent care, we designed our Enter and View programme around understanding more about people's experiences with local urgent and emergency care services.



At our visits to Leicester Royal Infirmary Emergency Department (ED) in September 2022 teams from Healthwatch Rutland and Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire talked to 139 people.

Read [**Leicester Royal Infirmary ED Visit Report**](#)

- There was high praise for staff and the quality of treatment
- We heard criticism of booking in and the triage processes, communication during lengthy waits, the environment and accessibility
- Just under three quarters of people we spoke to had tried to get help elsewhere first but had been unsuccessful and were using ED as a last resort

Our recommendations included:

- Improving wheelchair access within the ED and on the external route to the Minor Injuries and Minor Illness Unit (known as MIAMI)
- Clear communication of the patient journey through ED including the triage process and more understandable information on the screens
- A process that allows for and reassures patients that they will not lose their place if they step out to eat, drink or go to the toilet etc.



We engaged with 49 people about their experiences of the Oakham Urgent Care Centre in January 2023.

Read the [**Oakham Urgent Care Centre Report**](#)

- Most people we spoke to had made an appointment through NHS 111 or their GP practice and there were no delays
- 76% of the people we spoke to were very satisfied with their care
- There was criticism that the service is limited and people who had not visited before were confused about both what treatment is available and navigation to the site

Our recommendations included:

- Providing clarity to the public about the urgent care and minor injuries services available in Rutland
- Improving signage outside the building and around the town
- Improving accessibility to the building for wheelchair users



In March 2023 we teamed up with volunteers from Healthwatch Lincolnshire to engage with 27 people about their experiences at the Stamford Minor Injuries Unit (MIU)

Read the [**Stamford Minor Injuries Unit Report**](#)

- Staff were praised by many for their friendly and caring approach to patients
- Access for people with physical disabilities is good
- Parking can be limited during busy periods
- Arrangements in the waiting areas are cramped with inadequate seating at busy times

There is some confusion about what is meant by minor injury and who can attend. Our recommendations included clarifying what injuries can be treated by the MIU, so the patient is clear what the service offers.

We also conducted joint visits with Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire volunteers to the Corby Urgent Care Centre in March, for which the report will be published soon.

What difference will these Enter and View visits make?

The providers will use your feedback to improve people's understanding of the services, enhance experiences of service users and make the facilities more widely accessible. Each report contains a response from the provider detailing the changes they will make.

Healthwatch Rutland will further draw upon your comments from these visits to feed into the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board consultation on urgent and same day services expected later in 2023. We will be advocating for a much simpler, clearer offer for same day and non-life-threatening urgent care and minor injuries needs, so people can be seen at the right place at the right time.



“I didn't know that I was allowed [to attend Oakham MIU]. I thought you had to be a patient of Oakham Medical Practice. I am a patient of Empingham so I thought I should come here [to Stamford MIU].”

Patient at Stamford Minor Injuries Unit, 25–49 years, female

Ways we are making a difference to the community

Change takes time. Often our work starts with some feedback or research and then we work behind the scenes to consistently raise issues to bring about change in how commissioners and providers are designing and delivering care.



Improving local care over time

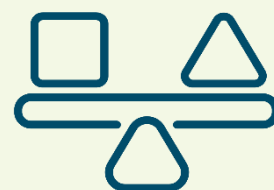
Since our *What Matters to You?* research in 2021, we have been working with the Health and Wellbeing Board and local partners to keep the patient voice at the heart of all local health and care delivery planning. We attend all the main Rutland partnerships such as Children and Young People, Staying Healthy, Mental Health, Strategic Health Developments and Communications and Engagement.

By 'being in the room', we ensure that your priorities of bringing healthcare into Rutland settings to reduce travel, improving communication across county borders with other healthcare providers, improving access to primary care (to name a few) are central to health and care planning. It also puts us in a position to challenge where progress and change is not happening.

We are pleased that the annual report for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and delivery plan shows just how much progress is being made in Rutland in delivering on those changes that you, and therefore we, asked for.

Building equality into new health initiatives

The new NHS Virtual Ward programme involves a team of professionals looking after patients at home, using a combination of digital monitoring equipment and home visits. Patients can leave hospital earlier to recover at home, whilst receiving the same level of care that they would have on a ward.



Throughout start-up we worked with the Clinical Reference Group to develop operating procedures that are sufficiently accessible and personalised to ensure that no patients are excluded from the Virtual Ward services as a result of factors such as digital exclusion, language or accessibility barriers, home circumstances etc.

Building in equality of access allows the service to increase hospital bed capacity and enables the widest range of patients to receive the timely treatment they need in their own homes.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

Outreach has been a big part of our work as we sought to get out and about into communities and groups that we had previously had to engage with virtually during the pandemic.

We have also been building links with Patient Participation Groups at local GP practices to broaden our reach and understand how we can better work together.

"Thank you so much. It's a much-needed thing ... and I really think it's amazing you're offering open and honest discussions. I hope people see the drop-in sessions and attend."

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Joining the Rutland Explorer Scouts and Youth Council to talk about things that matter to young people regarding their health and care
- Listening to the maternity and birthing experiences of Rutland women at a mum and toddler group
- Attending community cafes and running pop-up events in Oakham, Uppingham, Greetham, Ryhall and Ketton
- Speaking at parish meetings in Empingham, North Luffenham and Ryhall
- Attending Ukrainian drop-ins to share translated information about Healthwatch signposting and advice services
- Joining partner support groups and events with Age UK and LOROS to listen to people's experiences
- Visiting sheltered living sites to talk to occupants about their health and care

Let's Talk... Maternity

With 274 births to Rutland women recorded in 2021 compared with 4,172 in Leicester City and 6,794 in Leicestershire, we felt that their voices need to be sought out to ensure they are not lost within overall LLR numbers.

We attended several toddler group sessions run by the Visions Children's Centre to hear about the mums' experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care.

With small numbers involved we were looking to understand if any themes emerged that warrant closer examination, rather than specific recommendations for change.

Some of the themes included:

- 'Really friendly and positive' care from midwives at Rutland Memorial Hospital
- Problems accessing medical help in the post-natal period
- Variable experiences with the 6-week post-natal checks for mums and babies
- Long waits for contraception





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've helped people by:

- Listening to people's concerns about services and sharing them with decision-makers
- Helping people navigate the health and social care services they need
- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people find services local to where they live

Helping people to get the right care in the right place for their loved ones

One Rutland resident contacted us, anxious because they were struggling to facilitate their parent's wish to be cared for at home after a hospital inpatient stay.

The parent had received step-down care at a Rutland care home after being discharged from hospital, but against their wishes, was still there six months later.

Services had been responsive and had modified the home to make it suitable, installed equipment, and agreed a care package. However, a final risk assessment had delayed the process without any clear communication with the family explaining why.

We helped the resident to make their case to the local authority and ask for clear communication and a plan of action. As a result, the parent left the care home and is now being cared for at home.



"My [parent] got home this afternoon, it's such a relief and doesn't seem real... I'm sure your involvement made a difference."

Using patient stories to improve NHS 111 call handling

During the Spring of 2022 several negative reports of patient experiences involving NHS 111 were brought to us. In each case the patient or carer had received confusing or inaccurate information about how to access urgent care which had resulted in unnecessary journeys, wasted time and anxiety.

In response we collated their stories into an escalation paper to commissioners and DHU Healthcare, the provider of the local NHS 111 service. We called for better training for NHS 111 operators on urgent care services for Rutland and the treatments they offer.

As a result, DHU made changes to the Directory of Services used by NHS 111 operators regarding the location, opening times and treatment facilities of urgent care services for Rutland people, and operator training was improved.

Rutland callers to NHS 111 can now be more confident that they will be guided to the closest and most appropriate setting for their health need.



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community and their help with our projects, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote Healthwatch Rutland and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported people to share their views at our community outreach sessions
- Carried out enter and view visits to local urgent and emergency care services to help them improve
- Attended many Integrated Care System meetings and partnership boards to influence the development of plans at system and local levels
- Assisted with focus groups and interviews for our research projects
- Collected the most up-to-date information on services, such as whether NHS dental appointments were available at local practices

Georgia



"I've lived in Rutland for 7 or 8 years now and have needed to use many local services in that time, including Adult Social Care, Community Mental Health and of course my GP Practice.

I've always liked helping people and thought with my own experience, I could help others to speak out as I know sometimes people won't do that without being encouraged.

I'm especially interested in the Enter and View visits because as a wheelchair user myself, I know about the access difficulties that anyone with any kind of mobility issues can have. The limited travel options we have in Rutland makes the accessibility of local buildings so important.

I'm also really keen to make sure people with learning disabilities or mobility needs are not disadvantaged and I hope my work with Healthwatch can make things better."



Do you feel inspired?

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

📧 www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk

☎ **01572 720381**

✉ info@healthwatchrutland.co.uk

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.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£72,600	Expenditure on pay	£85,785
Additional income	£3,666	Non-pay expenditure	£20,436
Total income	£76,266	Total expenditure	£106,221

Total expenditure exceeded core funding by £29,955, a shortfall which was subsidised with income from additional commissioned work and funding from Connected Together CIC to ensure that Healthwatch Rutland benefits from professional support e.g., Investing in Volunteers, Cyber Essentials accreditation and communications support.

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Scope our research project to understand how the quality of people's communication with health and care services affects their health outcomes and wellbeing
2. Continue our Enter and View work expanding the scope to mental health settings
3. Further develop our outreach programme to engage all voices in the local community



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Rutland, The King Centre, Main Road, Barleythorpe, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7WD.

Connected Together Community Interest Company is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch Rutland: Moulton Park Business Centre, Redhouse Road, Northampton, NN3 6AQ.

Healthwatch Rutland 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

The Healthwatch Rutland Advisory Board comprises four volunteer board members, including the Chair, who receives a modest annual honorarium. The Advisory Board provides strategic direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities, ensuring that decisions about our work reflect the concerns and interests of our local community. Through 2022/23 the Advisory Board met four times and made decisions on matters such as:

- Highlighting NHS dental access problems in Rutland with the Rutland Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee and with Alicia Kearns, MP who raised the issues with ministers in parliament.
- Prioritising Enter and View visits to urgent care facilities used by Rutland people following a series of comments and complaints from the public.

Identifying annual work priorities is driven by our volunteers and for 2023/24, we invited wider public involvement through several Listening Events in February. This, along with the public feedback we received over the year, enabled us to hear which health and care themes mean the most to local people and has shaped our plan of work going forward.

Methods used across the year to obtain people's views and experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight into their experiences of health and care services.

During 2022/23 we have been available by phone and email, provided a feedback webform on our website, attended meetings of community and parish groups, support groups and youth forums, 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, including those who are often not heard by health and care decision-makers. This year we have done this by, for example, attending drop-ins for refugee families and coffee mornings with people living in sheltered living accommodation and their carers.

We ensure that this annual report is made available as widely as possible by publishing it on our website, by email to newsletter membership and stakeholders, via social media and directly to the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England.

Responses to recommendations

Throughout the year all providers responded to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example we take information to the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board where we are represented by our Chair, Dr Janet Underwood.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care System. We do this by regular attendance at the Integrated Care Board and some of its sub-groups, the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, System Quality Group, the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, quarterly meetings with local Trusts and several NHS design groups and collaboratives. A full list of the boards and meetings we attend can be found in our annual plan.

We collaborate with colleagues at Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire to ensure that between us, Healthwatch is present at all major system decision making forums.

We also routinely share our research and feedback data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Rutland is represented on the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board by our Chair, Dr. Janet Underwood. During 2022/23 Janet effectively carried out this role by regularly attending Health and Wellbeing Board meetings and taking an active part in all discussions, representing public feedback about their experiences. Janet also represented the Rutland voice in the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and a Health and Wellbeing Board workshop on health inequalities. She has championed the need to improve access to NHS dentistry in Rutland and to address interoperability issues between health and care providers in Rutland and those in neighbouring ICS areas outside of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

As Chair, Janet also represents Healthwatch Rutland on the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care board and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.



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