



# Together

we're making health  
and social care better

Annual Report 2022

**healthwatch**  
Luton

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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

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Another year has passed, and we have another year to look forward to. Time seems to pass quickly. It doesn't seem a year ago since our last annual report.

Whilst the COVID pandemic has 'passed', it is a fact that the virus still remains present and is affecting our lives, still, in one way or another.



**Phil Turner**  
**Healthwatch Luton Chair**

We should all remain vigilant and take the necessary precautions to protect ourselves and others. Remember that it affects some people more than others.

As a society, throughout the world, we are entering and coming to terms with the 'new normal'. That new normal has affected our task at Healthwatch Luton as I am sure it has other organisations. Many support groups that existed prior to the pandemic have not restarted and it is yet to be seen if they will or whether that task will be taken on by others.

Our primary mandate is to listen to the voice of the population of Luton and reflect views both positive and negative to Health and Social Care organisations. Our aim remains to carry out this function in order to influence the provision in such a way as to improve those services for the benefit of all. We also sit on many boards and committees to provide a watching brief and be a critical friend to work collaboratively in ensuring that we get the best from the services offered.

I have often said that I wish I could wake up tomorrow and all that has been spoken about and planned was in place. Then we would have a system that met our needs and provided the service we all wish for. Unfortunately, this is not realistic. Health and Social Care provision is a huge and complex system and things take time to implement and change in a way that we would like. I do feel confident, however, that everyone is doing their best to get there and one day our vision will be achieved.



## Message from our Chair Continued

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Over the past year there have been changes in Healthwatch Luton. Some staff members have left and some new ones joined. Our core methodology, however, remains the same. To seek your views and to influence change. There are many good provisions and we encourage learning from those to support and improve the services of those that do not meet the high standards we expect.

Our volunteers and board members continue to support the staff. During the pandemic that has been limited as many are in the vulnerable category. As we move forward we expect to increase the involvement of this group. It must be said that they remain incredibly enthusiastic and willing to be fully involved in the activities.

Of course Primary Care access remains the major concern of everyone and we are committed to doing our part in addressing this situation and helping where necessary.

Our mandate will only be met with the help and continued involvement of the population as a whole and we ask that this continues.

My sincere thanks to all Staff and Volunteers at Healthwatch Luton for their continued dedication to the task in hand.

  
P.S. TURNER  
CHAIR



**"I did not even know that Healthwatch existed until I needed them the other day – I am so grateful they are around. Healthwatch Luton were informative positive and courteous in helping me access the care I needed."**

# About us

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## Healthwatch Luton 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

A world where we can all get the health and care we need. And a town where people receive the health and care they deserve.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better in Luton, and nationally.

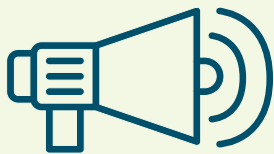


### Our values are:

- **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.

# Year in review

## Reaching out **441 people**



shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care on **96 health and care services**

## **190 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost of living crisis.

## **32,000 people**

Engaged with us online, via platforms, website or online feedback and forums, an increase of nearly 5000 residents

## Making a difference to care

We published

## **15 reports**

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

Our most popular engagement on social media was

## **GP Access in Luton**

Which stimulated over 6000 residents engaging with us regarding our Listening Event



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**9** outstanding volunteers who gave 122 days to make care better for our community.

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

**£122,000**

which is unchanged

We currently employ

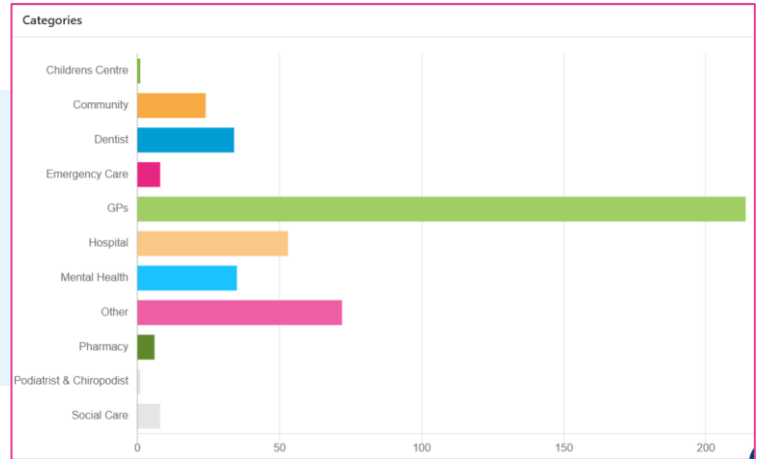
**4 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# Year in review – Luton Themes

## Categories of Feedback

Our leading feedback in 2022 was on GPs (mainly on access, referrals and treatment and care). We also had an increase in dental, hospital and mental health feedback



## Themes of feedback

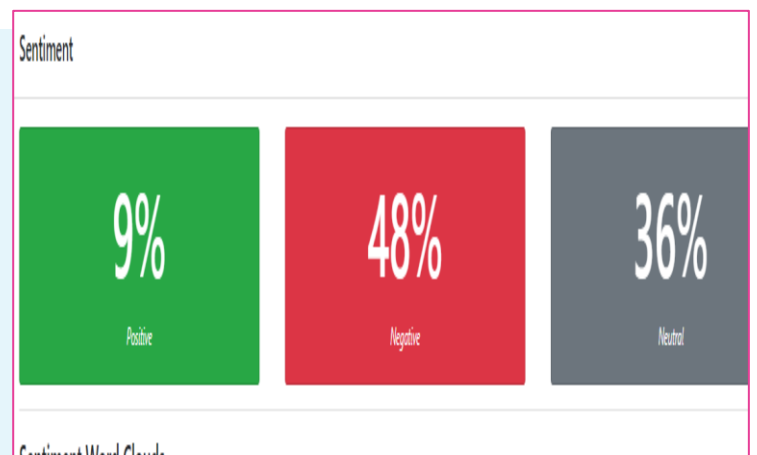
For all providers and feedback, our main theme was around access. Following this was treatment and care, administration and staffing and communication.

Access continues in Luton to be a leading issue across all health and care in Luton



## Sentiment of Luton Feedback

Overall, the 2022 feedback has been mainly negative, with more neutral feedback than 2021. The positive sentiment is mainly associated with staffing and staffing attitudes, as well as when accessing services is not negative, the positive sentiment is marked around their experience of being treated.



## Sentiment Word Clouds

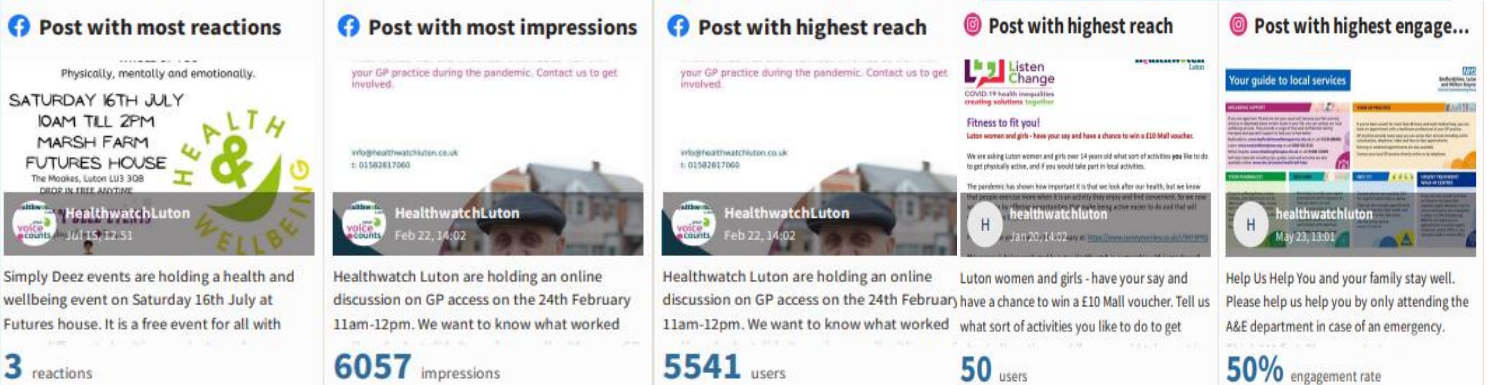
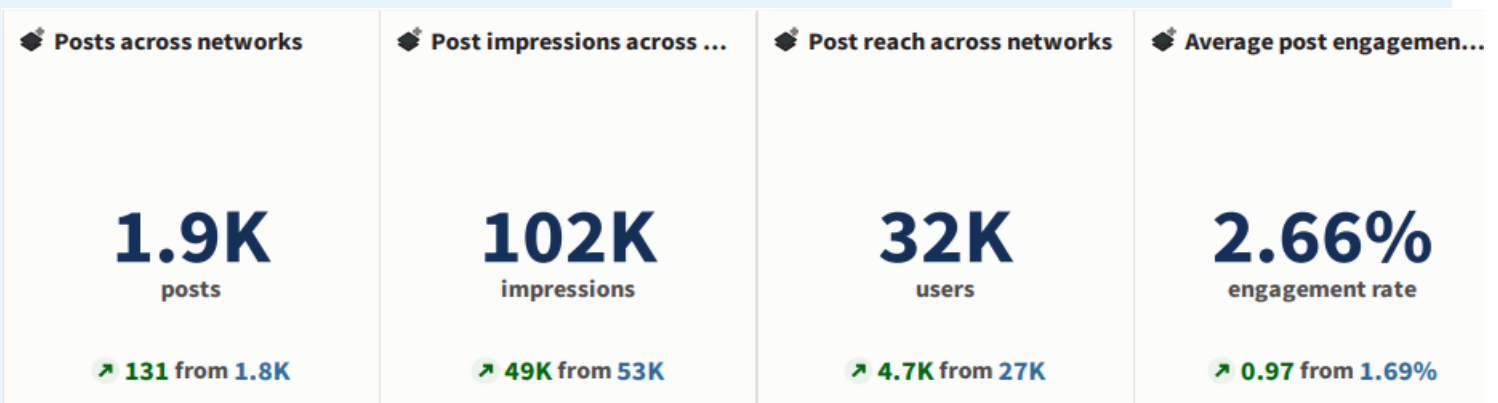
The word cloud picks the most used words in feedback provided to Healthwatch – with positive weighting on good level of knowledge (equated to staffing) and 'queues' and 'lack of access' being the negatively weighted words



# Healthwatch Luton Reach Online




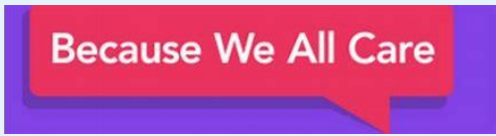



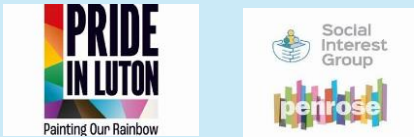
## During COVID-19 we moved more resources online

Through Listening Events, Information events, developing our website, engagement with the public on social media channels – we have adapted our routes to accessing more feedback on more providers from a more diverse and eclectic mix of Luton residents. We now have over 32,000 residents engaging and using our channels for information, and even more accessing our information posts and shared provider information to the public. Our most successful post on social media was around GP Access, which we will support at our AGM in July 2023, as well as our highest engaging post being on the Talk Listen Change programme.





# How we've made a difference this year 2022

Spring	 <p>We began a series of Lectures at the University of Bedfordshire for Masters students in Health and Social Care, outlining Healthwatch role</p>	 <p>We developed further relationships with local CQC inspectors for local services in Luton</p>
Summer	 <p>We completed a Patient and Participation Observation exercise on GP Surgeries to outline the gaps in patients being involved in provisions</p>	 <p>We supported the #BecauseWeAllCare campaign which saw 54,000 people come forward to tell us about issues they faced with services.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We partnered with Keech Hospice to run a survey on the quality of their care for end-of-life support in Luton</p>	 <p>We supported the Healthwatch England intelligence from Luton residents urged the Government to act after reporting a 452% increase in people struggling to see an NHS dentist.</p>
Winter	 <p>When people struggled to see their GP face-to-face, we added our feedback to Healthwatch England who asked the NHS to confirm this right for all patients, resulting in updated guidance to practices.</p>	 <p>We supported the ICB programme and partnered with Luton Pride and Penrose to gather views of LGBT+ residents to feed into ICB planning and commissioning of service</p>

# 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 and for residents sharing their views. Here are a few of our highlights:

## How have we made care better, together?

### Hospital Experiences

In 2013 we had nearly 60% of our feedback as negative on the Luton and Dunstable Hospital experiences. In 2023, it was 23% negative and 45% positive – with some neutral experiences. Our developed relationship with the hospital has improved access and quality of care for Luton residents.



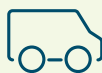
### Mental Health

In 2013 we had a large amount of feedback around stigmatisation on Mental Health. And poor access to community therapy. In Luton, HWL support Reimagining Mental Health, Luton Mental Health Strategy and ELFT MH quality meetings to ensure people feel less stigmatised, and more lower tiered support is available.



### LD and Autism Health Checks

When HWL began in 2013, around 13% of those we spoke to with LD or Autism were receiving health checks via their GP. With work in 2018-2019, we have now over 70% of health checks being carried out.



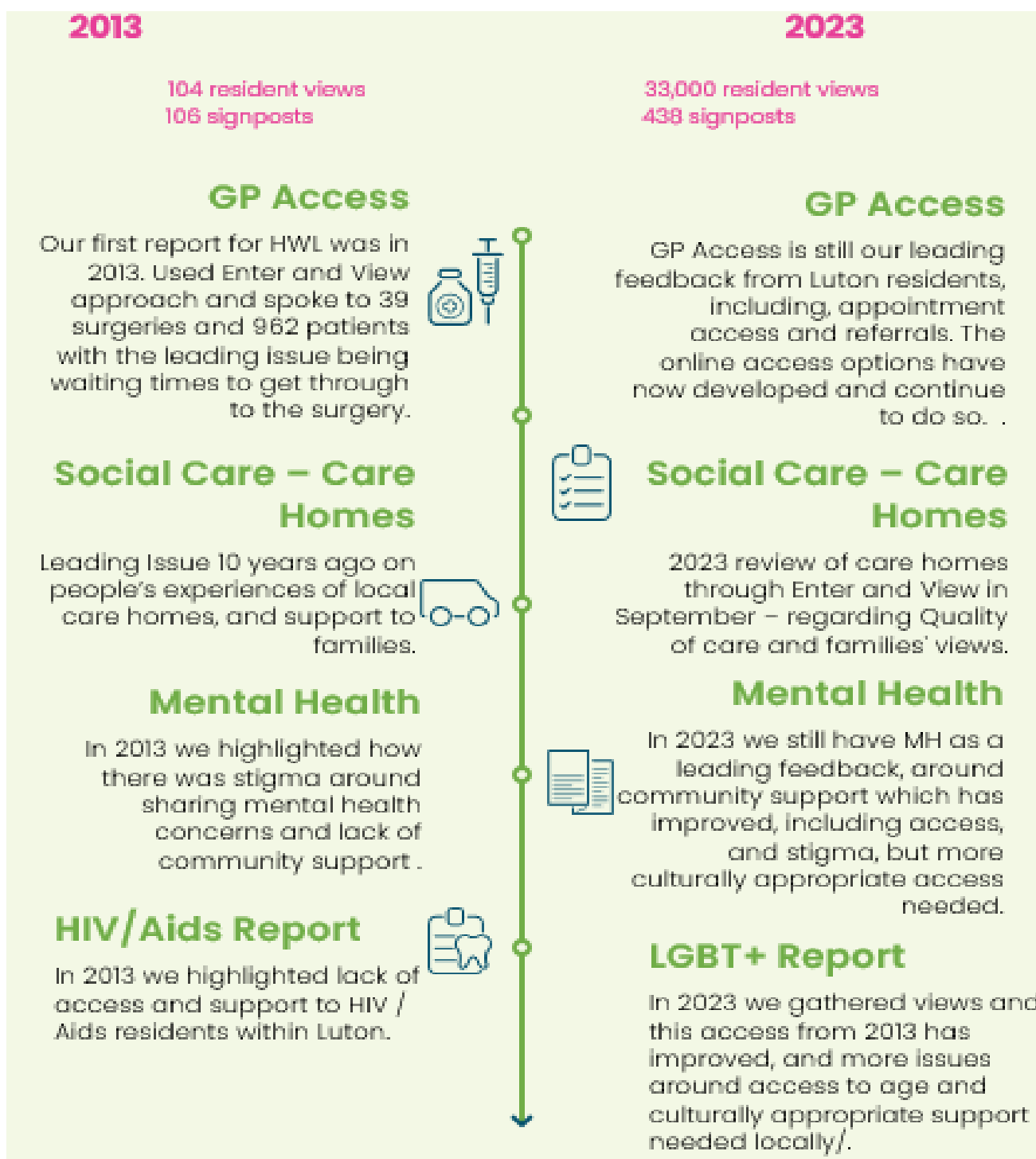
### Womens Health

10 years ago, Women's Health was not seen as a needed review – but HWL along with HWE and other Healthwatch across the country supported the review of Women's Health and progression of Women's Health Hubs to be set up. HWL also supported the local council Menopause survey and strategy.



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# 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.



# Who have we listened to?

## Young Residents

We spoke to many young residents in Luton in 2022 – asking about their vaccination experiences of COVID-19 vaccinations (CHUMS) as well as partnering with the University of Bedfordshire to run lectures on health and care and Healthwatch. We also visited the Sixth Form college to gather feedback.



## Elderly Residents

We spoke to many elderly residents regarding their booster vaccination experiences, surveyed and created input into the Menopause Strategy with the council, as well as ran Listening Events on Diabetes, Men's Health, Women's Health and Fibromyalgia and the integration of health and care.



## Maternity

We listened to mothers and families for the Healthwatch England Maternity Campaign – which enabled us to hear from people about their experiences in Luton. This led Healthwatch Luton to develop our Parental Mental Health Campaign, partnering with the Maternity Voice Partnership, MIND BLMK, and the East London Foundation Trust to ask more questions about people's parental journey

### Have you used maternity services?

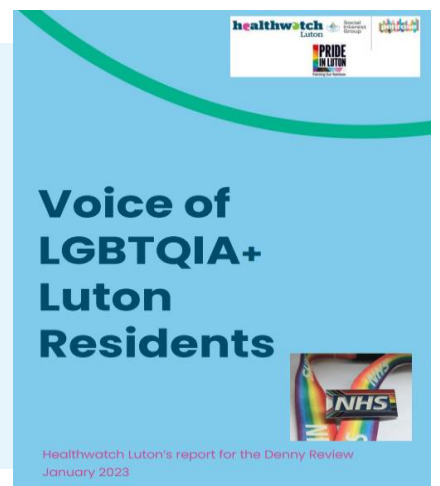
Healthwatch Luton are holding an online event on the 23rd February 7-8pm and want to hear your experiences.

Book your place  
[info@healthwatchluton.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchluton.co.uk)  
01582817060



## LGBT+

We spoke to those who identify as LGBTQIA+ in Luton, gathering views on how they access care, and how they could support and co-produce service delivery. This fed into a wider report for the Integrated Care Board on LGBT+ experiences in Luton, and those being disproportionately affected by their protected characteristic and their health and care.



# Who have we listened to?

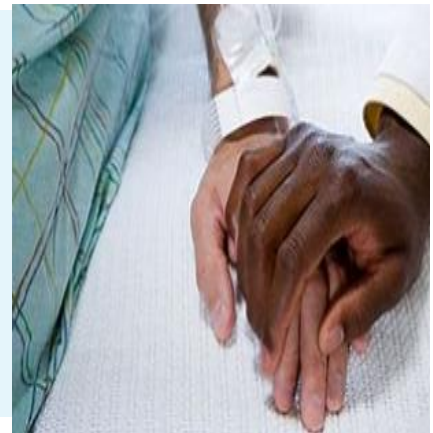
## Dental Experiences

Feedback in 2022 increased from Luton residents on dental access and trying to find an NHS dentist post the pandemic. This led to Healthwatch Luton feeding in their Luton feedback to Healthwatch England on a wider national campaign, and work with NHS England.



## End of Life Experiences

We supported some community led work with the University of Bedfordshire on gathering views and research of End-of-Life care in Luton and Bedfordshire, with people who were from Black, Asian and Ethnic cultures, and their experiences in a system which favoured mainly white British approaches to supporting families with end-of-life care



## Carers Experiences

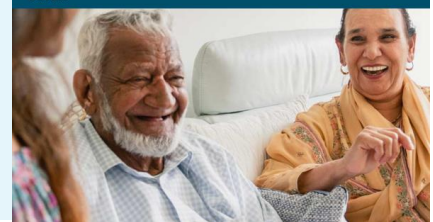
We ran some Listening Events for carers and supported the local council in running an independent survey for carers on their needs to feed into a wider Carers Strategy. We continue to support this work alongside other partners like the DRC and Voluntary groups who help shape how the Carers Strategy will embed in Luton, and support carers across the town.



**Are you a carer?**

Join our online event: 9th Feb 12-1pm

Healthwatch Luton are running an online listening event where we want to hear about your health and social care experiences and whether you have felt supported as a carer.



## Diabetics

We ran a Listening Event and Information Event on gathering people's views of Diabetic services in Luton in partnership with Healthier You, the provider of the pre-diabetic service in Luton. We gathered thematic views from the audience and provided information on the current range of services available, informing the public of the new programmes available. In 2023 we will continue this work and partnership



**Diabetes Prevention Information Event**

Healthwatch Luton are holding an online Diabetes Prevention Information Event where a speaker from the NHS Diabetes Prevention programme will be talking about the diabetes support services available and how you can access them. You will also have the chance to ask any questions.

Contact us to book your place.

**Date: 1st December 1:30-2:30pm**  
info@healthwatchluton.co.uk  
01582817060



# Who have we listened to?

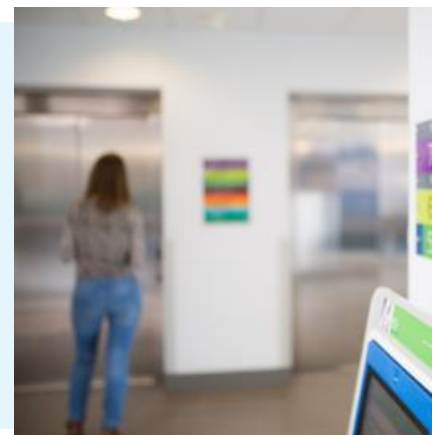
## Menopause Experiences

We supported the Public Health team in Luton gather independent views of people's experiences of Menopause and their health and care, through an independent survey and listening event. The findings fed into the council wide Menopause Strategy.



## Mental Health experiences

Mental health is a common theme running through many of our independent feedback, and we support the local Mental Health Strategy, the ICB Strategy and work alongside community mental health organisations, and ELFT (East London Foundation Trust) to ensure patient views are represented on service commissioning and delivery.



## Fibromyalgia

We held an online Listening Event for the Luton residents to provide feedback on their experiences around Fibromyalgia in Luton. We had over 7 people attend the event outlining their experiences, including dis-jointed care, referral and diagnosis lengths of time, and support needed for a more updated and holistic view and support needed for this condition.



## Men's Health

We ran a Listening Event on Men's Health which was not widely attended but provided valuable insight and recognition to the men's approach to health and care. Men's health continues to be a priority for the health and care system and these feedbacks provided insight into why some Luton residents struggle with the services, as well as highlighting positive feedback.



# 2022: Advocating for fairer NHS dentistry



**NHS dentistry is in desperate need of reform and this year we have successfully used Luton residents' experiences, sharing them with Healthwatch England and NHS England, moving NHS dentistry up the political agenda, making it easier for people to find a dentist taking on NHS patients.**

With living costs on the rise, our new findings show widening health inequalities as people in every part of the country struggle to pay for dental care.

We have seen a shortage of NHS appointments, which has affected people on the lowest incomes the most, meaning they were less likely to have dental treatment than those on higher incomes.

We made renewed calls on NHS England and the Department of Health and Social care to put a reformed dental contract in place.

## Changes to NHS dental contracts

Our findings (along with the Network of Local Healthwatch and Healthwatch England) achieved widespread media attention and as a result NHS England announced changes, including:



- Increasing the payments for dentists when treating patients with complex needs, for example, people needing work done on three or more teeth.
- Requiring dental practices to regularly update the national directory as to whether they are taking new NHS patients.
- Moving resources from dental practices that are underperforming.

## What difference will this make?

This announcement showed the power of people's feedback – with decision makers listening to your voice and taking action.

With these changes in place, it should be easier for people to find a new dentist taking on NHS patients, elevating the stress and worry so many suffer when they cannot afford to go private.



I have contacted Healthwatch as I am unsure where to turn now. I can't access my dentist because of COVID I haven't been for three years, and now I can't access any without being in severe pain or bleeding. I think they just need to be more honest about access to health and care."

**Luton Resident, July 2022**





# 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 their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

**This year we have reached different communities by:**

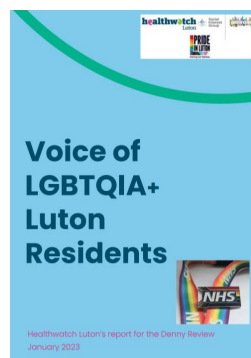
- Partnering with Voluntary sector organisations in the community to hear LGBT+ views
- Gathering views from a resident with learning disabilities and supporting them to access medication
- Supporting deaf individuals access services
- Highlighting the impact Menopause has on women and the work that needs to
- Helping the elderly and young people access vaccines

# 2022: DENNY ENGAGEMENT – LGBT+ Value of Voice

**Healthwatch Luton began focused and targeted engagement with the LGBT+ community in Luton, based on our 2021 feedback highlighting a lack of feedback from this community.**

Healthwatch Luton were then commissioned by the Integrated care system to work in partnership with VCSE groups on gathering more information. We partnered with Pride in Luton and Penrose.

Our report is on our website, but feeds into a larger report commissioned by Lloyd Denny to be published in July 2023.



## Our findings:

1. There was perceived to be a distinct lack of culturally appropriate support for varying ethnicities and identities in Luton; many services and communications were not culturally reflective
2. There was a common theme of diagnostic overshadowing from health professionals to the community
3. Cis-normative language and communications in general health settings led to disengagement with health services
4. Terminology understanding meant a lot to many of the community – providing assurance and trust for people experiencing different gender affirming / dysphoria expressions

## What difference will this make?

Our report will be added to other Healthwatch reports who were also commissioned to do engagement with communities who are disproportionately affected in health and care; leading to an overall report for the Integrated Care Board to review and action from July 2023.

Healthwatch Luton will continue to partner with the LGBT+ community and individuals who wish to help support shaping service commissioning and delivery, and the BLMK ICB have already funded some Training for front line staff on terminology in 2023 – using local community services.

We hope to continue to raise the views of those within this community, so services can be reflective and supportive of the needs of this community; to ensure they are no longer disproportionately affected in their health and care journey.



# LGBT : Young Pakistani CASE STUDY



## 7. Case Study 1

Profile: 24, Female, Pakistani, Queer/Questioning

We spoke to one lady who outlined various barriers she had faced in her own community regarding her own identity. She was very articulate and welcoming of having the opportunity to speak about her experiences, but highlighted the need to spend more time developing trust from any members of Luton residents to ensure more views could be captured.

All our case studies have been summarised, edited and stylised to produce an outline of the hour interview conducted.



### Young female, Questioning, Asian (Pakistani)



“Being an Asian woman in a white British town creates, for some, a particular sense of invisibility when it comes to health and care anyway.

**If you grow up seeing white women who don't reflect your family or self, in every image, text book or media image, you learn to dis-engage very early on. Having said that, I have to admit more cultural appropriate images have been seen on health messages more recently – but I wouldn't say it's the norm.**

**With this early dis-engagement and invisibility, layered with being queer, or questioning your sexual orientation or identity, just adds so much aloneness to feeding into anything that you think may change. We are constantly told Luton has more Asian people than other towns, and yet everything I still encounter is white – white messaging, hetro-normative messaging – nothing that ever speaks to me as a young questioning Pakistani.**





## LGBT : 50 Year old male, Black, Bisexual

healthwatch  
Luton

### 11. Case Study 3

Profile: Male, Black, Bisexual

We met anonymously with a gentleman who provided some insight into his experiences (outside of case study / collaborator interaction)

All our case studies have been summarised, edited and stylised to produce an outline of the hour interview conducted.



### Male, Black Caribbean, Bisexual



“The largest thing I can say is how much being different affects your general mental health from the moment you wake up – to how you interact with every element of your life.



**Accessing culturally appropriate services cannot be under-rated. Watching particularly young people I know trying to navigate their own identity journey in a world where all we see is white – cis normative people, it is more highly damaging than I can express.**

**Being from the culture I am, being how I am is viewed so differently to how British people view it. But if you want to really understand how it makes us feel, then change some how you present the world to us.**

**My mental health has not ever been in crisis state but I could have appreciated some more culturally relevant support – having British white women or men sympathise with me, has not been conducive. Not everyone who is Black and Bisexual will feel the way I do – I hope this review and report highlights that – I can only speak for me. And for me, I don't trust many things, because you always start everything on defence, in case you are attacked.**





# Making a Difference

Measuring how Healthwatch make a difference has always been a hard process; and sometimes our recommendations take longer than a year to have impact and change within the health and care system. However, we never stop gathering Luton views, and ensuring they are heard by those within the health and care world to ensure patient views shape the services they receive.

# 2022 Menopause work with Public Health Luton:

Women's Health has been under researched and under focused for many decades, including acknowledging a natural process for ALL women, the menopause. Healthwatch Luton were approached by the Public Health Luton team who wanted to understand the needs of women in Luton going through the menopause.

Healthwatch Luton ran an independent survey and collated the responses, along with running a Listening Event and some independent case study interviews.



## What difference did this make?

Creating a survey and running independent events to gather views, fed into the wider Luton Council Strategy on Menopause. This resulted in a full web page with links to support for all those affected by the menopause in Luton, a continued Steering group assessing guidelines to Luton employers and support for staff, as well as sharing information on NICE guidelines and Luton based support in the town.

We also shared our findings nationally and fed into the wider Department of Health 'Let's Talk About it' Women's Health survey which discussed elements of women's health such as access, comfort of discussing women's health elements, health in the workplace and other factors like education and information to health professionals.

This has led to the development of Women's Health Hubs in some areas of England, as well as more research particularly in gynaecological conditions for women in Luton and the UK.

# 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.



## Fibromyalgia Residents

**We ran a Listening Event with people who were affected by Fibromyalgia and captured their experiences in Luton**

There was an overall view that Fibromyalgia as a condition could do with more education and training within the health and care workforce. Most responders outlined depending on the knowledge and progressive actions of their health provider, would depend on the length of their diagnosis and support offered during and post diagnosis. More work was recommended on supporting people with this condition



## End of Life care in Luton – Partnering with KEECH Hospice

**We ran an independent survey for the local Hospice regarding the quality of their care at End of Life**

Running this independent survey allowed the Hospice to ascertain independent reviews of their care, working toward their workplan and strategy and patient focus. Understanding more needs around End-of-Life care fed into wider programmes of work with the University on diverse communities in Luton and end of life care.



## Carers Voices

**Independent gathering of carers views in Luton fed into the wider Luton Carers Strategy**

Our independent survey fed into the strategy created by Luton council around caring support and needs. This led to a Carers Handbook being produced for people in Luton in a caring role, to support and signpost them to get more information and advice around their role and implications on funding and access to services



# 2022 COVID Vaccines – Booster Experiences in Luton

The COVID vaccination programme which ran across the country and in Luton ran through 2021 and into 2022 and residents were encouraged to get vaccinated and have boosters. There were many mixed experiences of the booster campaign in Luton – mainly all positive, and it outlined overall a positive approach, based on the community targeted approach of the COVID programme, meaning overall residents felt supported in getting their booster vaccinations.



## Experiences

### Case Study Five

This is written by a working age lady, in Bengali.

একজন কর্মজীবী মহিলা, স্থানীয় ফার্মেসিতে তার বুস্টারের জন্য গিয়েছিলেন। কোনো অ্যাপয়েন্টমেন্ট বুক করা হয়নি। ফার্মেসিতে পৌঁছানোর পর, তাকে স্টাফরা অভ্যর্থনা জানায় এবং তাকে বসার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হয়। 5 মিনিটের মধ্যে ভদ্রমহিলাকে একটি ছোট ঘরে ডাকা হল। কয়েকটি প্রশ্ন করা হয়েছিল, তথ্য যাচাই করা হয়েছিল। টিকাদান প্রক্রিয়া দ্রুত এবং মসৃণ ছিল। বুস্টারের পরে কোনও কাগজপত্র বা ভ্যাকসিন কার্ড সরবরাহ করা হয়নি। পার্শ্বপ্রতিক্রিয়ার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে, ভদ্রমহিলা ইনজেকশন সাইটে বাথা অনুভব করছিলেন। প্রায় 48 ঘণ্টা ক্লান্তি ছিল। তার ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতা হল এই প্রক্রিয়ার সাথে জড়িত প্রত্যেকেই একটি চমৎকার কাজ করছে।

### Translation to English:

*A working woman went to a local pharmacy for her booster. No appointment had been booked. On arrival at the pharmacy, she was received by staff and requested to sit down. In 5 minutes the lady was called to a small room. A few questions were asked, the information was verified. The immunization process was fast and smooth. No documents or vaccine cards were provided after the booster. In view of the side effects, the lady was feeling pain at the injection site. There was fatigue for about 48 hours.*

*Her personal experience is that everyone involved in this process is doing a wonderful job.*



## What difference did this make?

Many residents had a varied response to the Booster campaign; and overall, the walk-in options provided out in the community enabled more people to access the booster vaccines. Some people still struggled to understand the importance of the booster, in line with the Government guidelines changing, but our independent views helped shape the programme.



# 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:

- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

## Help to find urgent dental support in Luton; through 111

Healthwatch Luton were contacted by a resident requiring urgent dental care due to pain as a result of crowns falling out of their mouth, during the pandemic

They were unable to register as no surgeries were 'taking' new patients or supporting those with urgent needs. The patient was now unable to eat or speak well due to their pain becoming unbearable. Healthwatch signposted the resident to 111.

“No one seemed to be accepting new patients – even though COVID had meant I couldn't be seen

**Luton resident**

Healthwatch Luton's signposting to 111 allowed the resident to be informed about the 111 service and offer; and the patient felt triaged correctly and provided urgent support

### What difference did this make?

Healthwatch Luton provided the resident with the information available which allowed that resident choice in their actions and understanding of the health system. Through 111 the patient was able to register at a dental practice, and ongoing their whole family were supported in registering as well. They said Healthwatch were 'positive, informative and courteous.

## Helping getting sick note from a GP when can't access surgery

Healthwatch Luton were contacted by a resident who could not access his GP surgery to obtain a sick note for his work

The individual had tried to speak to the receptionist as well as the practice manager on several occasions yet was unable to access appropriate support.

They expressed the negative impact that this had on their mental health and the stress the individual felt.

“Thankfully Healthwatch responded so promptly, and kept me informed, I am grateful

**Luton resident**

### What difference did this make?

Many residents struggle to access their GP Surgery for various reasons – and this is being reviewed with the ICB and ongoing Primary Care planning and strategy plans.





# 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, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

## This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities and held information stands to promote Healthwatch Luton
- Gathered feedback from social media and signposted residents to contact their local Healthwatch for support.
- Created blogs about their experiences on our website
- Collected the most up-to-date information on changes to services, such as whether NHS dental appointments were available at a practice
- Represented Healthwatch Luton in local and stakeholder meetings
- Supported online Listening and Information Events
- Reviewed feedback to ensure residents are receiving the support they need from us
- Carried out Hospital Place assessments and site visit to review a newly opened service

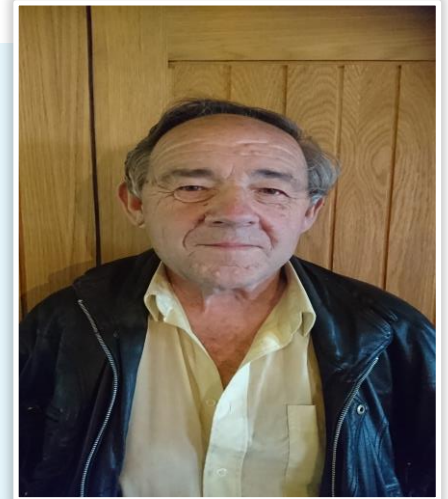
## Angela

"I have been a volunteer with HWL for ten years. Having joined from day 1. I enjoy all aspects of the work especially Enter and View in the Hospital, Care Home and GP surgeries. Getting the experiences – good or bad from members of the public and staff. Also engaging with other organisations. I work with very caring, helpful and supportive staff members and other volunteers. I hope to continue as long as possible."



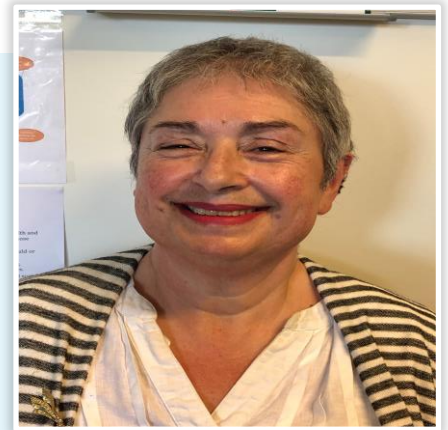
## Alan

"On retirement wanting to stay active, I become a member of LINK which was a government funded group dealing with local health and social issues this later became Healthwatch for whom I have been volunteering for ten years now. Although as a volunteer I continue to have an interest in all subjects. My main interest is in learning disability and which I find rewarding. I find being active keeps me healthy and fit in body and mind.."



## Andy


"I have volunteered with Healthwatch Luton for ten years. I first joined and became a board member because I have a daughter with learning disabilities. As time has gone on, I came to realise that it was important for the voice of the residents to be heard, which is what we do by sitting on a number of Boards and representing Healthwatch Luton.."



### Do you feel inspired?

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

 [www.healthwatchluton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchluton.co.uk)

 **01582 817 060**

 [info@healthwatchluton.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchluton.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	£122,000	Expenditure on pay	£90,256
Additional income	£11,500	Non-pay expenditure	£30,465
Carried Forward	£26,136	Office and management fee	£11,135
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£159,636</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£131,856</b>

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£10,000 funding from ICB for project work**
- **£1,500 funding** from HWE for civi database

## 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

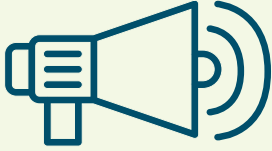
1. Continue work with the LGBT+ community to help shape health and care
2. Elderly Care and Enter and View support for Care Homes in Luton
3. Womens Health and GP Access to review



# 2023 Workplan

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## LGBT+



Healthwatch will continue partnering with individual collaborators who don't access local community groups, as well as leading community groups serving the LGBT+ community, and gather their views on health and care. We will focus a project area on ensuring views are heard, and help shape service delivery in Luton

## Elderly Care in Luton

Healthwatch Luton will focus on gathering views from elderly residents in 2023, focusing on supporting our Enter and View of Care homes in Q3, as well as run specific Listening and Information events to support elderly care in Luton. We will report on all our findings with recommendations from those in Luton we speak to ensure the best quality care is in place.



## Womens Health

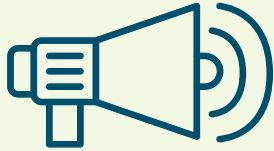


Healthwatch Luton will focus on gathering views from more women in 2023 – to ensure women's health remains top of the agenda for the health and care system. With the development of women's hubs these views will feed into more national programmes on health for women.

# 2023 Workplan

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## GP Access



Our leading feedback again in 2022 was GP access, and we will continue to work on supporting the system and the residents in understanding accessing primary care. We will be supporting the THIS institute in their programme on **GP Operational Failures**. We will also support resident need for dental appointments on the NHS.

## Preconception

Alongside the Women's Health focus, we will also be supporting work with the ICB on their Preconception programme, working with the local Maternity Voice Partnership in gathering mother's views on health and care preconception, conception and post birth. This will also feed into our **Parental MH Survey** and study.



## Educating Health and Social Care Students



Healthwatch Luton hope to continue sharing knowledge and information in their Lecturing role at University of Bedfordshire to the Health and Social Care Masters / Post Graduate students. This enables us to share ongoing Healthwatch work and importance, as well as encourage volunteering from a younger network of residents.



# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Luton uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.  
Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ



# The way we work

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## Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 4 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. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as [strategic plan, responses to the ICB, and legal and financial decisions](#).

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

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

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 using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website [www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/our-reports](http://www.healthwatchluton.co.uk/our-reports)

## Responses to 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 [Luton Place Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Health and Social Care Review Group](#).

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in [BLMK ICS](#). For example, we [attend the Health and Care Partnership Board, the Working with People and Communities group, and various Primary Care Boards](#).

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level. We attend National and East of England events.

We also work with our local CQC Inspectors regarding health and care services in Luton

# Who is Healthwatch Luton

## Lucy Nicholson – Chief Executive/ Board Director

Lucy joined Healthwatch Luton in 2015, became COO in 2017 and CEO in 2018. Lucy oversees the operational running of Healthwatch Luton, and as Board Director supports the strategic direction as part of the wider Board of Directors



## Sudha Auro – Volunteer & Development Officer

Sudha manages and supports all our Volunteers, including Champions and Board Directors. She also oversees a lot of the operational management within the organisation, supporting the signposting, communications and community engagement roles.



## Abby Nesarasa – Communications Officer

Abby manages our communications and publicity to the Luton residents, supporting our website and social media, as well as promoting all our events. She has increased our online engagement from 1k per year to over 35k per year in less than 3 years



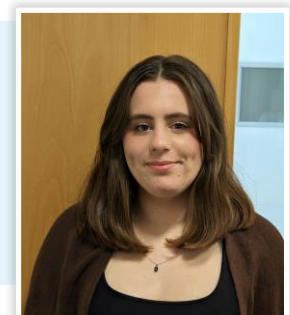
## Marina Galvin – Community Support Officer

Marina supports our engagement and community relationships, ensuring Healthwatch Luton are engaged at a local level in community events and supports gathering feedback from targeted groups of individuals to ensure we understand Luton's views and experiences.



## Laurie Kirby – Signposting Officer (2023)

Laurie is joining Healthwatch Luton in 2023 to develop our signposting role, being the first point of contact through our website, phone lines and emails. She also supports our general administration, and community events and Communications.



## Volunteers: Board and Champions

Our team also include our 4 Board Directors and 5 Champions, supporting all our work including events, signposting, Enter and View, communications, reviews and strategic and operational direction.





Healthwatch Luton

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