

'You Said, We Did' – December 2023

We regularly review the experiences you told us through public events, surveys, [Feedback Centre](#) and [Information & Signposting](#) enquiries.

These help us understand where things are working well and where they need to change. We hear positive stories about how services have supported and assisted you, as well as mixed experiences, and where things need to be better.

Healthwatch uses your feedback with health and care decision-makers to seek a positive difference, and this document sets out the issues you helped us raised and any changes you have helped us to deliver during December 2023.

You Said

We Did

We heard from an individual concerned they were not eligible for the shingles vaccination on the NHS, despite receiving Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations due to low immunity.

We contacted NHS Sussex to clarify eligibility criteria and whether GPs have any flexibility to offer vaccination to those outside of these but at increased risk. NHS Sussex confirmed GPs have no flexibility outside the eligibility criteria.

We heard from a person who had a negative experience of visiting a dentist, highlighting poor communication, lack of accessibility and a failure to respond to a complaint.

We recorded the feedback and highlighted the options available. With their consent, we referred the enquirer to The Advocacy People for Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (IHCA) and gave them a copy of our [Complaints Guide](#).

We heard from the friend of someone with neurodivergence who was extremely anxious about required dental treatment, both in terms of potential cost and the process.

We shared a copy of our [Dentistry Guide](#) so they could be clear on what is covered by NHS treatment. We also shared details of the [Sussex Dental Helpline](#) so they could clarify NHS options for root canal costs and sedation.

We heard from someone with complex health needs and limited mobility who was anxious about their ability to access health services or the ability of services to deliver services to their home.

We spoke to NHS Sussex who arranged for the practice manager at their GP surgery to contact the enquirer and explore support options. We also explained options around social care and health complaints if concerns escalated.

Our contributions and interventions

We held our quarterly liaison meeting with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and social care in England. They shared details of the new Single Assessment Framework, and the forthcoming assessments of local authorities and Integrated Care Boards. We highlighted the common themes we've heard about access to primary care, mental health and emergency services, and shared details of services where we have specific concerns based on feedback.

We met senior staff at University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust to understand the status of the current Police investigation and concerns about the Emergency Department and maternity care. We discussed patient safety, actions the Trust is taking and communication with patients. We highlighted the need for clear and simple pathways for patients to ask questions and discuss their options.

We met with local NHS, ESCC and voluntary organisations at our quarterly Healthwatch Advisory Group meeting and discussed the impacts of increases in cost-of-living on health and wellbeing, especially transport and travel to appointments, paying for prescriptions and medication, costs of dental treatment and indirect factors such as the reduced use of heating and lighting, changes in the quantity and type of food consumed, and reduced exercise/activity.

We shared feedback and experiences on several themes with Healthwatch England so they could be used to strengthen patient voice. Issues included ongoing issues around challenges accessing NHS dentistry, people's experience of telephony services at GP practices and concerns around the accessibility of NHS services and information and whether the Accessible Information Standard is met.

"Thank you for taking the time to talk today regarding my situation."

Share your experiences with us

Used a health or care service recently? If so, please tell us about your experience by leaving a review on our dedicated [Feedback Centre](#).

Support and assistance

If you need support in accessing health and care services, please contact our Information & Signposting service via:

enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk or 0333 101 4007

Contact Us

To find out more about Healthwatch East Sussex, please go to: www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk or contact us via:

Email - enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Phone - 0333 101 4007

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Reports and publications

All our reports are published on our website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/>