

# 'You Said, We Did' – July 2024

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 changes you have helped us to deliver during July 2024.

## You Said

We heard from a parent concerned that the local Audiology department will only accept patient correspondence via telephone. This is preventing her deaf daughter from booking an appointment.

We heard from an individual trying to find out how they could access treatment for ear wax removal as it was affecting their hearing, but whose GP practice said they no longer offered this service.

We heard from someone who had spent nearly a year trying to establishing whether they could access [a Personal Health Budget](#) to support them with their mental health aftercare but was struggling to make progress.

We heard from an individual concerned about their child who exhibits severe negative, risk and self-harming behaviours, but whose request for an ADHD assessment was declined as it did not meet the threshold.

## We Did

We offered to raise the concern that patients' communication support needs are not being met, with NHS Sussex. We also signposted to our [complaints advice guidance](#) and the [Independent NHS Health Complaints Advocacy Service](#).

We advised that some GPs provide ear wax removal services, and some have agreements for practices that don't to refer patients to them. This may be worth exploring. Alternatively, ear wax removal can be done by a private provider such as Opticians as a paid-for service.

We engaged with Health and [Social Care Connect](#), the mental health team, the enquirers social worker and their GP, but struggled to get clarity on how an individual can access a Personal Health Budget. We have escalated this to service commissioners to share their experience and clarify the options available.

We shared information clarifying the right to choose a pathway for an ADHD assessment, as well as information on the different options around feedback, complaints and advocacy. We also shared details of local support groups for parents of children with mental health difficulties.

## Our Contributions and Interventions

As part of our ongoing work to learn more about the experiences of residents of HMP Lewes, we held discussions with those with additional health or care needs. It focused on their access to and use of health, care and wellbeing services. We heard what is working well and what may need improvement. We will share a report of our findings with the Prison Service, prison health provider and other decision-makers.

We met with NHS Sussex to learn about the development of [Women's Health Hubs](#) in Sussex, which are a ten-year initiative for improving the health and wellbeing of women and girls. We highlighted the need for clear communications with patients and practitioners on what they do and do not offer, flexibility of delivery, and the importance of regular evaluation to assess take-up, outcomes and effectiveness.

We published [our report](#) into people's experiences of treatment for ear wax which calls for improved self-help guidance, clarity on NHS treatment availability and exploration of the impacts on health inequalities for those using paid-for services. We shared the report with the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of their forthcoming review of Audiology Services in East Sussex.

We researched options for upfront financial support to people on low incomes to access health and care services and appointments, after we heard from people unable to afford to travel, especially for treatment at distant sites or at peak times. Most travel support schemes such as the [Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme](#) operate on a reimbursement basis where people pay upfront and claim money back. We have escalated the need for upfront financial support to NHS Sussex and Healthwatch England so those on low incomes aren't unfairly disadvantaged.

**"Thank you so much for all of this information, it's really useful and you have been so helpful!"**

### 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](mailto: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](http://www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk) or contact us via:

Email - [enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk)

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### Reports and publications

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