



## Annual Report 2024–2025

**Your voice is more  
important than ever**

Healthwatch Leeds

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"This year has been another year focusing on the key issues that matter to the people of Leeds: dentistry, mental health, access to GPs, health inequalities and seeing real changes to services as a result of the feedback that you have shared with us. Looking ahead it is a time of continued challenges for the NHS and social care and so keeping your voice and experience at the forefront of that will be our core aim. We look forward to hearing from you, working with you and supporting all communities in Leeds to have a voice."

**Hannah Davies, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Leeds**

## A message from our Co-Chairs



"We are pleased to introduce our annual report. Healthwatch Leeds continues to listen to you; we have taken your feedback on health and social care to the key decision makers in the city. The powerful 'How Does it Feel for Me?' films are shared at the beginning of key meetings and result in action to improve services. These films and our reports reflect the need to strengthen the Leeds 3C's, Coordination, Compassion and Communication. In a time of increasing challenge to the concepts of equality and diversity, we know that people from the most excluded communities continue to have the poorest access and the worst outcomes. We are committed to involving, hearing from, and feeding back from these groups and working to address these inequalities; one example in this report is of our work with GP practices, to ensure the accessibility of their websites.

We thank the incredible staff team and volunteers, who have worked tirelessly in the face of substantial uncertainty. This report sets out how much they have achieved despite challenging financial circumstances and significant changes in the NHS and social care. We also thank our supportive colleagues on the board and our partners in neighbouring West Yorkshire Healthwatch.

As we absorb the recent news of the intended closure of Healthwatch we will work with local partners to ensure the voice of people continues to be heard loudly across Leeds."

**Jane Mischenko and Jonathan Phillips, Co-Chairs,  
Healthwatch Leeds**



## About us

### We listen to your feedback about health and social care services in Leeds

**We make sure that those in charge of NHS and social care services hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.**

Our strong partnerships and influence with health and care organisations are key to ensuring your voice is truly heard and makes a difference. Not only do we provide recommendations on how services could be improved but we work with organisations to find solutions to issues that people face and highlight what is working well.



#### Our vision

Leeds to be a city with effective and fair health and care services for all. People's experiences to be at the heart of how services are planned, changed, and improved.



#### Our mission

We work with people and communities to understand how services in Leeds can make their experiences of health and care better.



#### Our values are:

We are **independent** of health and care providers, the government, and the third sector, and we work on things that matter to people.

We are **inclusive**, making sure everyone's voice is heard.

We **act with integrity**, and we provide challenge and community-led ideas, speaking truth to power.

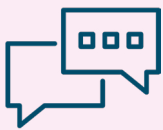
We are **collaborative** with the public and partners so that we can support them to get health and care services right.

We hold services to account by **driving for changes**, tracking those changes in real time and letting people know what changes happen.

# Our year in numbers

We currently employ **10 staff** who help us carry out our work and we are lucky to have **79 volunteers** who gave up their time to make their community better in 2024 to 2025.

## Reaching out



**1628** people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

**979** people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as where to go for hearing aid services in Leeds and how to get GP appointments.

## Championing your voice



We published **27** reports, videos and briefing papers outlining the improvements people would like to see in areas such as ordering repeat prescriptions, where to go for mental health crisis services, and what it is like for people with chronic pain.

Our most popular publication was the **'Communicating Change' briefing paper**, highlighting the impact of poor and untimely information provision about three significant changes in healthcare services. You can read more about this paper on page 11.

## Statutory funding



We are funded by Leeds City Council. In 2024 to 2025, we received **£374,000**, which is the same as last year.



# A year of making a difference

**Making improvements to health and care services is a constant process. Our team is actively making a difference all year, from significant influences to minor changes, which collectively improve people's experiences of services in Leeds. Here are just a few examples:**

## Spring

After the Single Point of Access (SPA) service helpline for mental health crisis closed to the public, we ensured communication about this change improved and actively collected feedback about the new service.



We partnered with ZEST, Leeds Cookery School, the Jamie Oliver Foundation, the William Templeton Foundation, and Nourish to develop a dietary intervention workshop for young adults struggling with their mental health.



## Summer

We helped develop a University Social Care course: "Thanks to Healthwatch for their invaluable support in setting up three consultations to advise on the development of our MA in Social Work."



Eight volunteers completed 11 inspections, visiting locations across hospitals and mental health units, and offering independent views on the settings' general environment and service improvements.



## Autumn

Our young volunteers gave feedback on oral health resources and improve the accessibility of the Healthier Together website. Our feedback made the website more understandable and child-friendly.



We produced case studies on the severe impact of long waiting times, which the Health Foundation used to influence national waiting times and support for people while they wait.



## Winter

We completed a mystery shopping exercise to review how well people can access Leeds Adult Social Care and the support provided. Our recommendations are being used to improve the service.



We reviewed the way WellWave, a young people's sexual wellness service, communicates with young people. Other services are using our report recommendations to interact better with young people online.



# Working together for change

**This year, we have continued to work with the other local Healthwatch in West Yorkshire to make sure people's voices influence decision-making at the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and its wider partnerships.**

Some of our highlights of working with Healthwatch across West Yorkshire are:

## Improving end-of-life care



We made sure that people's experiences were clearly understood in end-of-life care and contributed to an event about end-of-life care following the important report we published. The event launched the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board End of Life Health Needs Assessment, which was heavily influenced by our [Healthwatch End of Life report](#).

**"The Healthwatch report was instrumental in capturing these insights, forming a vital part of the health needs assessment."**

**Amy Kenyon, Macmillan Transformation Lead for Palliative and End of Life Care, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**

## Informing the Integrated Care Board



The Integrated Care Board plans and funds NHS services in West Yorkshire. We gathered feedback from people who are at risk of unfair health and care (also called health inequalities). Our reports have helped to evidence unfair access and experiences and provided recommendations for funders and providers.

Examples include access to patient transport, support for people with disabilities, neurodivergent people's experiences, and various age groups' access to health and care.

## A West Yorkshire report improving Leeds maternity



We presented our '[before, during and after pregnancy](#)' [West Yorkshire report](#) to the Leeds Quality Committee. At the meeting, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust stated that they are using the report at their maternity improvement board to inform their actions. They have asked us to join future meetings to help check that they continue to improve. Leeds Health and Care Academy is using the report to find gaps in their maternity staff training.

**We also continued to grow West Yorkshire Voice, our brilliant network of individuals and organisations across West Yorkshire who want their voices to be heard in health and care.**

In the last year, our network within West Yorkshire has used their voice to:

### **Developing the new Equity and Fairness Strategy**

Focus groups across West Yorkshire informed the strategy, aiming to ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice are central to all aspects of health and care services. The new strategy reflects what people told us they wanted, including more recognition of people's experiences and clear accountability processes for monitoring change.



### **Connecting professionals with the community**

West Yorkshire Voice involves people in different ways through its newsletter and social media platforms.



**"Being a part of the West Yorkshire Voice Network enabled us to be connected to young people and find out more about their experiences of mental health and what they think about the services."**

**Project Coordinator, Children and Young People's Mental Health**

### **Hearing from all communities**

We reached out to organisations supporting people who experience challenges which make it hard for them to stay healthy and access services to improve community-based care. Examples are: Gypsy and Traveller communities, Roma communities, sex workers, those with addiction, homelessness and people in the criminal justice system.



### **Join West Yorkshire Voice**

Find out more and how you can get involved



[info@westyorkshirehealthwatch.co.uk](mailto:info@westyorkshirehealthwatch.co.uk)



call 0113 898 0035 or text 07496 403 341



[www.wypartnership.co.uk/get-involved/west-Yorkshire-voice](http://www.wypartnership.co.uk/get-involved/west-Yorkshire-voice).





# Making a difference in the community

**We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.**

Here are some examples of our work in Leeds this year:

## Bringing people's experiences of chronic pain to life



**Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues people face.**

People with chronic pain face unseen daily physical, emotional and social challenges. Working with Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, we filmed **Rob, Rita, Rameesah, and Parveen**, sharing how pain affects their lives and how their services can better support them.

The videos recommend that all services be more compassionate, work together, and offer mental health support and support for families.

## Getting services to involve the public



**By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.**

We improved GP website accessibility for a group of GPs in North Leeds by involving people who are deaf, blind, have learning disabilities, or are non-English speakers in the testing process. They helped us make recommendations that will make websites more usable for everyone.

Following our independent review, local GP practices produced an action plan to improve their website accessibility, adding guidance, clear sections, a reasonable adjustments page and tailored communications options.

## Improving NHS dental care over time



**Change takes time. We work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.**

Despite long-standing issues with access to NHS dental services in Leeds, our **children and young people's oral health project** helped to secure funding to boost school-based oral health education and expand access for children. We continue to work to improve access for all in Leeds. This work was shortlisted for a Child Friendly Leeds Award for 'Exceptional Contribution to the 12 Wishes'.

# Listening to your experiences

**Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.**

This year, we listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what is working and what is not, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.





## Communicating changes

### People turned to us for help after three significant changes.

The public raised concerns about changes to children's orthodontics, the local audiology provider and the mental health crisis phone line.

Children faced up to eight months without contact or continued treatment. The new audiology service was only reachable by telephone and email, inaccessible to those with hearing loss or limited online access. GPs were not informed about the Single Point of Access mental health crisis line. Additionally, some people distrust the new NHS 111 system, saying call handlers lack training, and that they prefer local services.

### Key things we heard

Poor communication left people distressed, confused and unsupported.

**"Three months since his braces were fitted, and had no contact with the new provider. His braces are now broken, causing him pain. I resorted to using wire cutters in his mouth." Parent – Orthodontics**

**"I am now seriously considering stopping wearing my hearing aids as I feel nervous about putting them in my ears every day without an audiologist I can contact with any concerns." Hearing aid user**

**"A patient attempted to reach the [SPA] team via the 111 line but was put on hold and eventually gave up and booked to see me" Local GP**

We gathered and recorded people's experiences, presenting them in a '**Communicating change**' briefing paper to health and care commissioners and providers.

### What difference did this make?

- The audiology service provided walk-in hearing aid clinics.
- This year, we guided over 900 people to the NHS audiology service.
- Leeds Single Point of Access Crisis service improved its automated message to be more compassionate.
- The briefing prompted health and care organisations to seek feedback on further changes: including the new 999 'push-pull' model, changes to the urgent eyecare service, and the launch of the Leeds Sexual Health Digital Hub with easy-to-read information for people with learning disabilities.



## How Does It Feel For Me?

Following people's journeys through health and care to understand their experiences and whether services are working together



**Mercy**, who lives with severe sight loss and diabetes, shared challenges being visually impaired and online systems.

**Abdul** spoke about recovering from a stroke and cancer, his wife's caring role and the importance of culturally competent care.

**Laura**, who cares full-time for her son, James, highlighted the financial, emotional, and practical challenges and how poor service coordination affects families.

These powerful stories are being used across Leeds.



## What has changed as a result?

**Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust** uses the stories in their Patient Assurance Programme to improve services. Mercy's feedback led to a new Eye Clinic Liaison Officer for visually impaired patients. Laura's feedback improved communication and support for families using blended diets and improved how scans are done without anaesthesia.

**Leeds Nursing Associate Apprenticeship** students are trained using the videos to learn about dignity, compassion and real-life examples of care.

**Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust** (LCH) included the videos in their 2024 to 2027 Quality Strategy. Thanks to Mercy, accessibility for people with communication needs has improved. LCH also assured the continuation of Mercy's podiatry care to avoid further deterioration.

**Primary Care Network** added notes and alerts to highlight communication needs on people's health records and is redoing assessments to address gaps in accessible communication. They are running Cultural Competency training and Mercy now has a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Coach, greatly improving her experience at the GP.

**Carers Leeds:** Laura's story is now part of carers awareness training and Carers Leeds shared videos with Carers Trust and the Carer Poverty Coalition.

"The high quality of the work, truly being alongside people, accompanying them and representing their views and experiences, along with the helpful distillation of issues, provides really useful prompts as to how we might improve."

**Director of Strategy, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

# Communication, Coordination and Compassion – the 3Cs

We identified three common themes underlying poor experiences of health and care which we call the 3Cs.

This was informed by our 'How Does It Feel For Me?' programme and the various ways people share feedback, such as through complaints, Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALs), and other Healthwatch activities.



## What difference did this make?

- **Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT)** made the 3Cs their top priority for improving patient experience. All departments in LTHT now measure how well they are doing on each of the 3Cs. A trust-wide 3Cs campaign was launched in 2024. The 3Cs are part of the eligibility criteria for LTHT's charity grant for patient experience projects.
- **Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust** added the 3Cs to its incident reporting system and discuss them regularly. The 3Cs are now built into the annual improvement planning across the Trust. Feedback from the 'How Does It Feel For Me?' stories directly informs this work.
- **Carers Leeds** integrated the 3Cs into their annual survey. Findings from the survey further strengthen the need for 3Cs in health and care, not just for the person receiving care but their family too.
- **Leeds Palliative Care Network's** Inclusion and Diversity Group committed to using the 3Cs as a key element of their new strategy.



"Really brings home the importance of person centred communication for large numbers of our patients, so powerful!"

**Krystina Kozlowska, Head of Patient Experience, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

If we can get communication, coordination and compassion right, we will significantly improve people's experiences as well as saving money and improving people's health.

# Hearing from all communities

**We are here for everyone in Leeds. That's why we are especially mindful of hearing those communities whose voices may go unheard.**

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs. This is core to how we do all our work at Healthwatch Leeds.

**This year, a few examples of how we have reached all communities are:**

- Working with community groups (e.g. culturally diverse, older people, learning disability and sensory impairment) and attending many community events including autism, mental health and LGBTQ+ events.
- Supporting health researchers to work with communities at risk of unfair access to health and care and may not have previously been involved in research. Examples of these communities are people with sensory impairments, learning disabilities or people whose first language is not English.
- Using our diverse staff and volunteer team and hiring interpreters to speak to people whose first language is not English.
- Playing videos of people's experiences (from diverse communities) at meetings with senior decision makers.





# Helping communities who struggle to be online, so they don't get left behind

Over the years we looked at how people are being excluded by services moving online.



This year, people told us that they were only being given the option to order their repeat prescriptions online, a sudden change from previously ordering by paper slips.

We found that people's confidence in ordering online was significantly lower among people aged 65+, people with disabilities, minority ethnic communities, and those from low-income areas. When combining these factors, 100% of the people we heard from were unable to order their prescription.

Many other services are encouraging people to use online hubs and apps such as PATCHs, SystemOne and the NHS app.

## What difference did this make?

We have shared this '[Repeat Prescriptions' report](#) with health and care leaders to raise awareness that people who are unable to use technology are being left behind.

"I will make sure that this report is not only shared with the service lead – our Head of Medicines Management, but also our Head of Digital and new Chief Digital Information Officer – as there is learning in here for those who do transact digitally with the NHS, but don't feel confident and indeed, for those who don't feel confident at all."

**Paul Hemingway, Deputy Director of Communications and Involvement,  
West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**

## Making things right



**We have to ensure that people have a choice in how they access health and care services so that no one is left behind.**



# Improving the new GP Interpretation and Translation Service

**Making sure that people receive information they understand helps them to remain independent and look after their own health and care.**

We worked with the NHS to feed into the local service specification for the new GP Translation service in Leeds called DALs.

## What difference did this make?

Changes include strengthened confidentiality and trust, a new complaints process section, and acknowledgment of the need to improve recording communication needs.

"I am really appreciative of the time taken to look over and review. I wanted to make sure you knew that your contribution is very much valued and changes have been made as a result."

**Senior Manager Primary Care Integration, System and Pathway Integration, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**

## Leading the way in Leeds

**Leeds was chosen as one of two national test areas to pilot the new Accessible Information Standard (AIS) Self-Assessment Framework.**

The self-assessment framework is a tool for health and care organisations to measure how well they meet the legal requirement (AIS) to ensure that people who are d/Deaf, visually impaired or who have learning disabilities get information in a way they can understand.

While we found the assessment framework needed improvement, all 40 organisations that took part tested it out and were able to identify where they could do better.

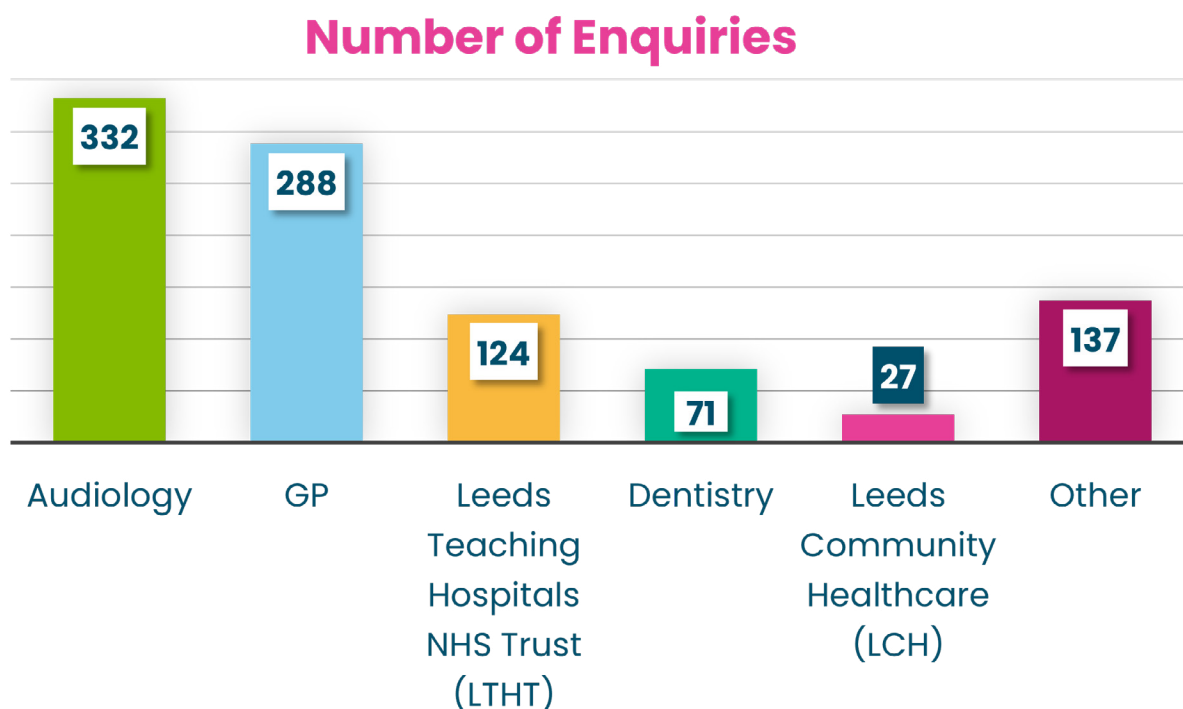
## What difference did this make?

Our **AIS pilot** supported improved accessibility for people with learning disabilities, deaf people and those with visual impairments. We also worked with Leeds City Council and groups with communication needs to test the usefulness and effectiveness of making the assessments available to the public on a website, so that these people know what reasonable adjustments organisations can provide for them. Our **AIS self-assessment website review** found that people liked the idea and found it easy to access.

# Information and signposting

**Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, finding out how to make a complaint, or telling us about your experience in a care home, we are here to listen.**

This year 979 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services. The graph shows what people have been speaking to us about.



Other includes Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust (LYPFT), Adult Social Care and mental health services. We have also taken 806 cases from Care Opinion, a health and care service feedback website, that we have used to influence health and care decision-making in Leeds.

## **This year, we have helped people by:**

- Providing 332 people with information about where to go for hearing aids and checks after the service changed from Specsavers.
- Advising people on how to find an NHS dentist and how to get NHS dental care without having a regular dental practice.
- Signposting people to the right place to raise a complaint.
- Helping people find mental health support.
- Providing up-to-date information and advice on our website.

## Supporting people who have complex mental health

**When a family felt no one was listening during their loved one's mental health crisis, they turned to us.**

The person has complex mental health needs, has been through the criminal justice system and was falling through the cracks. We raised concerns with the health and care organisations that we felt should be involved in supporting the family.

Their story helped shed light on the need for services to work together. Most importantly, their family member is now safe and is currently doing well.

## Helping someone access the COVID-19 vaccine they needed

**After three months of trying to obtain information from GPs, hospitals, helplines, and more, one person was left confused and distressed about how to access a non-mRNA COVID-19 vaccine through the NHS.**

A non-mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is a type of vaccine that does not have messenger RNA technology to trigger an immune response. Some people prefer or medically require a non-mRNA option. These vaccines have been harder to access in recent NHS rollouts.



They told us, "Healthwatch Leeds were the only ones who replied and helped. I'm extremely grateful." Their experience highlights why clear, accessible information is crucial, and how we help people navigate complex systems when they are unsure where to turn.

## Breaking barriers to healthcare in Holbeck

**Did you know that you do not require proof of address or ID to be able to register with an NHS GP practice?**

At a local outreach event, a community worker told us families new to the area were struggling to register with a GP. This was stopping them from getting vital healthcare. We stepped in to let them know ID is not required, and we raised the issue with the NHS Leeds Primary Care Team.

As a result, the GP practice changed its online registration form and added a clear note on its website to reassure people. Now, more families can get the healthcare they need.

# Listening saves lives

**When people speak up, we listen – no matter where they are from. Sometimes it's not just about gathering feedback, it's about making people's voices heard and acting with care.**



A person from outside Leeds contacted us when experiencing suicidal thoughts and wanted to give feedback to our NHS 111 Mental Health Crisis survey. We reached out immediately, made them feel heard and contacted the safeguarding team in their area. Thanks to that quick response, the person went to the hospital and received a mental health assessment. Their feedback was also shared with their local Healthwatch to make sure their experience does not go unnoticed.

This highlights how services sometimes fail individuals until they reach the point of crisis, which makes our work, feeding back to the 111 Crisis Line and other services, all the more important.

## Feedback about our service

**As an impartial information and signposting service, we want to make sure we give people correct, trustworthy advice in a compassionate way.**

As part of our service, we encourage people to give their feedback on how we did, to see what we are doing well and if there is anything we can do to improve. Here is what a few people have said:



"I felt respected and cared about in the call. I came away with a better understanding of what my rights were and what was proper procedure."

"Lovely, caring, empathetic lady on the helpline."

"I do not think I could have asked for any better response. Thank you."

"The person who took my initial call listened carefully and seemed to fully understand the nature of my query. She told me she would pass my query to a colleague and that they would contact me. She established the best way to contact me. She clearly did exactly what she said she would do, and in a timely manner, as I received a response from her colleague, giving me the information I had been seeking. Thank you, you have provided a fantastic service."

## Helping people online

**Our website and social media channels are a great way to share advice and information with people.**

Our website has thousands of people visiting every year. Many of these people are in search of advice and come to us for help. **11,500** people clicked to view our website.

### Finding an NHS dentist



Our advice page on [how to find an NHS dentist](#) remains the most popular page on our website, with many people across Leeds struggling to find an NHS dentist that is accepting new patients. Many people don't fully know how the dental system works and that they can still get emergency treatment, even without having a regular dental practice.

In the past year, this page had over **3,000** visits, helping many people get the urgent treatment they need.

### Where to go for hearing aids and consumables



The service that provides NHS Audiology in Leeds has changed several times over the past year, resulting in people turning to us for advice. Following these changes we have maintained an up-to-date webpage, telling people who the current service provider is.

This year, we have had over **600** visits to the [audiology advice page](#), in addition to **332** people contacting us by telephone.

### Followers and subscribers



We often share information and the impact of our work on our social media. We also promote our surveys and opportunities for people to share their experiences.

**13,141** people followed and subscribed to our social media accounts and we had **1,121** newsletter readers.

Our People's Voices Group has a membership of over **400**, allowing people to contribute to hundreds of different health and care involvement opportunities which support health and care improvement in Leeds.



# Showcasing volunteer impact

**79 fantastic volunteers have given 2,400 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.**

## **This year, our volunteers:**

- Reviewed GP websites, looking at how easy to use, up-to-date and accessible they were. The GP practices have acted on their feedback.
- Supported Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust hear from patients to help services improve. These Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) inspections, visiting locations across hospitals and mental health units, provided an independent view on how the environment and service can improve.
- Represented us on various boards, groups, panels and conferences to ensure people's voices are heard in these meetings.
- Mystery shopped Leeds City Council Adult Social Care in Leeds to assess the accessibility and supportiveness of the service.
- Helped raise awareness of Healthwatch Leeds in the community by supporting information stalls at events.



## At the heart of what we do

From finding out what people think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have highlighted community concerns to improve health and social care.

"Volunteering helped me develop so many new skills. Through YouthWatch, I completed a project on **young people's sexual health**. This improved my skills in designing surveys, analysing data and writing up reports. I also attended focus group **discussions on the Accessible Information Standard**. Healthwatch has given me so many opportunities and helped me develop new skills for my future career."



Katie

"I joined with a desire to make a positive impact and get involved in the community. I didn't know what exactly to expect, but it's been nothing short of a fantastic experience so far. I particularly enjoy volunteering because it has opened up a world of compassionate people who care about uplifting and improving their community. As a result, I have grown my confidence and skills such as communication, collaboration and speaking to large groups of people."



Sidra

"I joined as a new volunteer Board Director because, as a GP, I'm passionate about improving the way health services are delivered and making sure patients' voices are heard. This has given me the broader perspective needed to contribute to strategic decisions, especially around complex issues surrounding patient access to Mental Health support via 111/CRSIS."



Philip

### Want to volunteer?

If you feel inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can get involved.



[healthwatchleeds.co.uk](https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk)



call 0113 898 0035



text 07717 309 843



[craig@healthwatchleeds.co.uk](mailto:craig@healthwatchleeds.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Leeds City Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

## Our income and expenditure

Income	Amount	Expenditure	Amount
Annual grant from Government	£374,000	Expenditure on pay	£456,000
Additional income	£262,000	Non-pay expenditure	£28,000
		Office and management fee	£54,000
Total income	£636,000	Total Expenditure	£538,000

\*3 staff were on maternity leave over the year.

## Additional income is broken down into:

Source	Description
Health Partnership Team	Leading the 'How Does It Feel For Me?' Programme.
Leeds Trinity University	Social Care Student Course engagement.
NHS England/Leeds City Council	Accessible Information Standard Self-Assessment Framework Pilot.
National Institute for Health Research	Various engagement support, hosting Engagement worker and supporting SEISMIC project.
West Yorkshire ICB	End of Life Project and Waiting Time Engagement.
Leeds Community Healthcare	Chronic Pain Videos.

## Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across West Yorkshire also receive funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Ongoing involvement and leadership on key West Yorkshire Boards and Programmes	£5,000
Employment of West Yorkshire Associate Directors and associated costs	£60,000
Managerial Oversight of West Yorkshire Associate Director	£6,000
Coordination of West Yorkshire Voice and delivery of intelligence/insight gained	£32,000

## Next steps

**Over the next year, we know there will be significant changes in NHS and social care planning and funding. Our role is to ensure that people's voices are at the centre of these changes and to highlight the impact of these changes on people's experiences.**

We will continue to work with communities all across Leeds to make their voice count.

### **Our top three priorities for the next year are:**

1. Ensuring people can stay well and have good access to care in their local areas as part of the citywide Neighbourhood Health priority.
2. A focus on social care including listening to people with learning disabilities in supported living.
3. Measuring the impact of any significant changes to services, especially for those at risk of unfair access to health and care.



"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

**Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England**



# Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Leeds, The Old Fire Station, Gipton Approach, Leeds, LS9 6NL.**

**Healthwatch Leeds 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**

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 16 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority work areas reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the Board met nine times and made decisions on matters such as agreeing on our sustainability strategy and approving the work plan. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. The public shapes our work plan via the insight we gather and a yearly review.

## **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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

Our main focus is working with communities, in communities, and for communities. We have strong links with many community organisations, health and care organisations and elected councillors across Leeds and we work closely with them in all our work. We also attend community group meetings, forums, and events, all across Leeds. People contact us by phone, text, and email, our website and through multiple social media mechanisms. For all our work we use a variety of these different means to hear the voice of the people of Leeds.

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 and offer alternative formats upon request.



## Responses to recommendations

We had no providers fail to respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, and therefore, 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 insights and experiences shared with us. We profile people's experiences and are active members at all the senior health and care boards and groups in Leeds. Our work is used throughout health and care organisations. We are seen and recognised as key partners in the Leeds health and care system.

We also take insights and experiences to decision-makers in the West Yorkshire Integrated Care System by collaborating with other local Healthwatch and West Yorkshire Voice. The Integrated Care Board dedicate time in their committee meetings to listen to people's experiences before decision-making discussions.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address national health and care issues.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Leeds are active members on all the main boards and groups that plan the citywide health and care services in Leeds. In each of these roles, we ensure that your voice is heard and challenge services to be fair, speaking truth to power.

Healthwatch Leeds is represented on the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board, the Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board and the Leeds Committee by our Co-Chairs, Jane Mischenko and Jonathan Phillips.

During 2024/25, our representatives have effectively carried out this role by acting as a public voice in challenging where appropriate, presenting our feedback, reports, videos and recommendations and actively taking part in discussions around changes to health and care in Leeds.

Hannah Davies, our Chief Executive, represents Healthwatch Leeds on the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and the Leeds Health and Care Partnership Leadership Team (formerly Executive Group). We are represented on the Population Boards for Leeds by various members of our staff team and board directors. Population boards focus on health and care for specific groups – Children and Young People, Healthy Adults, People with Long-Term Conditions, People Living with Frailty, Planned Care, People with a Learning Disability or Neurodiverse Conditions and End-of-Life.

We also provide strategic leadership and challenge in other meetings. Just a few examples of where Healthwatch Leeds is represented are the Leeds Mental Health Partnership Board; Quality and People's Experience Committee; Community Mental Health Transformation Board; the Strategic Communications Group; Operational Communications Group; Third Sector Communications Group; Person Centred Care Expert Advisory Group.

We also take a strong leadership role in the city around people's voices, including:



- People's Voices Partnership, a partnership between organisations putting people's voices at the heart of what they do and working together as one system in Leeds.
- Mental Health People's Voices Partnership subgroup, ensuring that there is no duplication of listening to people's experiences of mental health services in Leeds.
- 'How Does It Feel For Me?' programme looking at people's experiences of whether health and care services are working together.
- City-wide Complaints subgroup, bringing complaints leads from across the city to share learning, expertise and good practice. This group was formed from the 'How Does It Feel For Me?' programme.
- Big Leeds Chat working group, leading work to get health and care leaders out into communities.
- West Yorkshire Healthwatch Communications Group coordinates information that is shared at a West Yorkshire Level.
- West Yorkshire Healthwatch Volunteer Managers Group, sharing best practices for recruiting and involving volunteers across the region.

## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

In addition to the achievements outlined through this report, your feedback has made a significant impact in other ways:

### Enter and View

'Enter and View' is a statutory right that Healthwatch organisations have so that trained authorised representatives can visit premises where health and care are provided, to observe the nature and quality of the services.

Following our enter and view visit in February 2024, the [North West Recovery Hub](#) has acted on our recommendations and did the following:

- Started a cycle of Dementia Care Mapping to personalise care for people with dementia, to help staff teams to understand their perspectives and experiences.
- Providing cultural awareness training to all staff.
- Created a welcome letter that provides people with a good overview of the service as well as information about who the Manager is and how best to contact them.

### Improving health and care regionally and nationally

- Shared the [Community Mental Health Transformation reports](#) with the NHS 10-Year Plan Physical Infrastructure Group to inform community-aligned health estates planning.
- Provided feedback to the West Yorkshire Care Homes Quality Group on bringing resident and carer voices into social care planning.
- Contributed to the West Yorkshire Patient Transport Consultations.
- Engaged youth groups and West Yorkshire Voice to inform the [Children and Young People's Asthma Report](#), to share with the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.
- [Mercy's video and summary report](#) were used in a national campaign, raising awareness of Black African, Black Caribbean and South Asian communities being at greater risk of developing causes of sight loss.

## Clear and correct information

- We reviewed the new [All Things Stroke website](#) and prompted improvements to broken links and support group listings. Provided feedback to Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust to improve clarity and empathy in dialysis service letters.
- Following our [Cost of Living check-in report 2023](#), Leeds Health and Care Partnership developed a page on their website to let people know about support with costs relating to health and care, including support for carers, cost of transport, prescriptions and dentistry
- Provided the Person Centred Care Expert Advisory Group with letters and texts to give real examples of good communication and where communication can cause confusion. The group are using these to make communication with people better and simpler.
- Informed Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust to update their automated email, ensuring that people waiting for an ADHD diagnosis can access mental health support.
- Improved communication about the temporary ADHD service closure, ensuring that the needs of neurodivergent people are considered in a letter and the development of an FAQ page.

## Accessibility and Inclusion

- Our recommendations were implemented when reviewing a citywide GP feedback form for people with learning disabilities.
- Influenced updates to the Leeds and York Partnership Foundation NHS Trust's [Deaf Mental Health Assessment webpage](#) for greater inclusivity.
- Assisted 'Fifth Sense', a national charity, to understand why people from ethnic minority communities are not accessing support for loss of smell and taste.
- From our [care home visiting report in 2020](#), [100% Digital Leeds](#) is working with care homes to embed digital inclusion, support residents' wellbeing, independence and social connection, upskill staff and support digital social care records.
- LTHT PALS has introduced a text phone for d/Deaf people to raise concerns and complaints, following our suggestion.
- A housing organisation used our videos in staff training to support tenants with mental health needs.



## Putting your voice into planning and changes

- Our work, highlighted at the NHS Providers Conference in Leeds, showed that the 'Home First' model achieved 90% of patients receiving care from a single team, compared to earlier feedback that it felt fragmented.
- By sharing local and regional organisations, we supported a mental health support project for people affected by cancer.
- Contributed to a city-wide report on priorities for bereavement counselling.
- Advocated with other organisations at the frailty board, helped secure ongoing funding for Maecare and Touchstone dementia support.
- Following our [work on Home Care services](#), Leeds City Council continue to involve our participants as part of a citizens panel.

**Some content in this report was summarised and refined with support from AI tools to help condense information and improve readability.**





## Committed to quality

We were awarded a committed to quality marque from Healthwatch England. To obtain this we did an in depth audit which will be reviewed.

### Your **healthwatch** Leeds

**Healthwatch Leeds**  
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