



**Annual Report 2024–2025**

## **Unlocking the power of people-driven care**

Healthwatch Wokingham  
Borough

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"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**

## Healthwatch message

**This year has highlighted the true power of listening. By listening and putting people's voices at the heart of our work, we've tackled key issues, from GP access to women's health.**

Our GP access report led to clearer communication and more responsive systems. Engagement with South Asian women inspired the Community Connectors programme, helping to build trust and break down cultural barriers.

We supported the Women's Health Hub pilot, led by the Berkshire West PCN Alliance, and continue to advocate for inclusive, lasting services. Our Enter and View visit review of Wokingham Medical Centre showed how patient feedback can drive meaningful improvements.

We've helped shape the Community Vision, enhanced the System Alert process, and promoted inclusion through self-identification initiatives. We've raised concerns around dentistry and learning disability services and continue to push for transparency in the delayed hospital redevelopment.

We've strengthened relationships with local GP surgeries; Twyford, Shinfield, Wokingham Medical Centre, New Finchampstead and Brookside, supporting Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) to become more diverse and inclusive.

Aligned with our mission to reduce health inequalities, we supported the borough's aspiration to become a Marmot Borough, committed to fairness, equity and social justice to improve health outcomes for all.

None of this would be possible without our advisory group, partners, volunteers and borough residents. Thank you for being part of this journey.



"As we look ahead to 2025/26, we remain committed to listening, including, acting, analysing, and partnering—because when services listen, care improves."

**Jamie Evans, Healthwatch Area Director –  
Reading, West Berkshire, Wokingham Borough**

## About us

# Healthwatch Wokingham Borough is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

To stay informed about our latest projects, community feedback, and developments in local health and social care, subscribe to our free newsletter: <https://www.healthwatchwokingham.co.uk/#subscribe>



### Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



### Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences help make health and care better.



### Our values are:

**Equity:** We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

**Collaboration:** We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

**Impact:** We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

**Independence:** Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

**Truth:** We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

## Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 2300 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 3 part time staff and our work is supported by 11 volunteers.

### Reaching out:



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

**2065** people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **access to services** and **booking appointments**.

### Championing your voice:



We published 4 reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **sexual health, GP access** and **learning disabilities and dentistry**.

Most popular report: '**Empowering women: improving sexual health awareness and services**' about young women accessing sexual health services and information.

### Our key impacts:



Our Enter and View visit to Wokingham Medical Centre has led to WMC improving access and care for its 29,000 patients.

Our work on sexual health has led to collaboration with RBFT to improve sexual health services for young people.

Community dentistry's Reasonable Adjustment Passport is being considered for rollout for new patient assessments on the back of our work on learning disabilities and dentistry.

### Statutory funding:



We're funded by Wokingham Borough Council. In 2024/25 we received **£123, 232** which is **6.5%** more than last year.



# A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Wokingham Borough. Here are a few highlights.

## Spring

Collaborated with Healthwatch partners to write and challenge delays in a proposed Berkshire West Women's Health Hub plan which ultimately led to the delivery of pilot hubs, starting in November. 2024.



Advised the ICB Cytology Group on survey design, shared cervical screening feedback and distributed NHS materials locally, to raise awareness and increase uptake.



## Summer

Feedback from our survey and focus groups highlighted healthcare barriers for South Asian women. Insights will inform recommendations to improve inclusivity and health equity.



Launched our Healthwatch Youth project 'Empowering women: improving sexual health awareness and services' with an engagement programme, and online and paper survey.



## Autumn

Trained our first volunteer community connector (CC) as part of our ongoing CC programme, who started engagement with the diverse communities across the borough.



Presented our GP access project report to HOSC and the Health and Wellbeing Board. We worked on our recommendations and continue to track the report's impact.



## Winter

Facilitated a community conversation in the borough support Building Together Berkshire in scoping a new local hospital and gathering feedback.



Worked with Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to create an Easy Read version of our report 'Learning disabilities and dentistry' for the learning disability community.



# Working together for change

**We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in West Berkshire are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services at BOB ICB.**

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across Berkshire West to achieve the following:

## A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



We identified no NHS Women's Health Hub in Berkshire West had been established despite successful hubs nearby. Revisiting a 2023 NHS proposal, we partnered with Healthwatch Reading and West Berkshire to write to BOB ICB, raising concerns about delays, funding, and health inequalities. This resulted in a pilot hub from October 2024 to June 2025. We continue to lead on this through our work, including an upcoming 'Women's Hour' focus group.

## The big conversation:



We supported Healthwatch Reading on two major projects; 'NHS billing errors' and 'Language Matters' focusing on patient safety and translation services. This resulted in us starting discussions with leaders in Wokingham Borough. We also identified issues with residents affected by billing errors. Our joint efforts earned us both an Community Education Award, recognising our work to empower communities through health and wellbeing education, at Utulivu's 2024 Grassroots Communities Awards.

## Building strong relationships to achieve more:



Our PPG engagement officer working across Healthwatch in Berkshire West collaborated with and supported the re-establishment and growth of three PPGs. In Twyford, we partnered with surgery staff to relaunch a committed PPG group aiming to improve diversity. The Shinfield PPG appointed new leaders and agreed on terms of reference. New Wokingham Road Surgery PPG hosted a successful health marketplace event, resulting in a community service directory for residents.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

# Sharing and learning from colleagues

The Advocacy People hold the service contract for 7 Healthwatch; Hampshire, Portsmouth, Reading, Somerset, Southend, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough.



## Making services better together:



Healthwatch Wokingham Borough listens to what people think about local health and care services, like doctors and hospitals. We work with 6 other local Healthwatch teams, and we all get help from an organisation called The Advocacy People. They help us with things like training, HR and paperwork, so we can spend more time talking to people in Wokingham Borough and helping to make services better. Even though we get centralised help, Healthwatch Wokingham Borough still makes its own decisions based on what local people need.

## Learning and working as a team:



We work closely with other Healthwatch teams to share ideas and learn from each other. This helps us all get better at talking to the community, doing research, and checking how well services are working. By working as a team, we can make sure people's voices are heard and help make real changes in health and care services.

## Speaking up for the community:



One of our most important jobs is to listen to what local people are saying and share those ideas with the people in charge. We work with Healthwatch England and other local groups to make sure everyone's voice matters. Together, we speak up for people to help improve services now and in the future. We're proud to keep working for better care for everyone in Wokingham Borough.



# 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 Wokingham Borough this year:

## Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life:



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

Cervical screening uptake is low in the South Asian community. We partnered with BOB ICB to explore barriers by guiding a local patient survey and including the topic in our South Asian online focus group. Participants learned they could request a different speculum size or adjust their position—rights many were unaware of. This helped address discomfort-related barriers with participants saying they would use this information in the future.

## Getting services to involve the public:



### **By involving local people, services improve care for everyone**

Our report 'GP access: new ways of working' led to improvements. GP practices gained direct insight into patient frustrations and barriers prompting changes such as clearer communication, better appointment booking systems, and increased awareness of alternative care options. The report strengthened collaboration between services and the community ensuring patient voices shaped future service delivery and policy decisions like the Primary Care Strategy.

## Improving care over time:



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

Building on our work with the Wokingham Borough Community Vision 2035 from last year, we remain a committed partner and have continued to actively support the vision. We gather local feedback, identify service gaps, and collaborate with stakeholders to improve health and social care. Our work supports the vision's goals of enabling happy, healthy, and independent lives, and ensuring services are accessible and responsive across the borough. We raised awareness of the vision in the community through our engagement efforts.

# In pictures: Making a difference

Some examples of our work across Wokingham Borough this year, in pictures:





# Feedback from the community

## Bracknell and Wokingham Borough College

"Having Healthwatch Wokingham Borough attend Bracknell and Wokingham College during Sexual Health Week made a meaningful impact. Their presence helped raise awareness among our students about the vital services on offer and encouraged open conversations around health and wellbeing. It was a valuable opportunity for students voice any challenges they have faced when accessing services."

**Ashley Seymour-Smith, Student Enrichment Officer, Activate Learning, Bracknell and Wokingham Campus**

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## Involve Community

"This report [*Empowering young women: improving sexual health awareness and services*] is a truly interesting read with outlined realistic recommendations that could make a real impact if implemented. Ensuring an inclusive education offer (LGBTQIA+ as well as heterosexual) and sensitive sexual health delivery model will make all the difference to our young people.

"My thanks for sharing. I've nothing to add other than to thank the team for the work undertaken."

**Phil Bell, Chief Executive Officer, Involve Community**

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## Muslim Community Connect Wokingham (MCCW)

"We are truly grateful to Healthwatch Wokingham Borough for their continued support of Muslim Community Connect Wokingham (MCCW). Their presence at our events and their impactful work in championing community health and well being have a made a real difference.

"A special thanks to Natasha Khan whose dedication and warmth have been instrumental in building this meaningful connection."

**Sajad Mir, Founder and Trustee, MCCW**

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# Feedback from the community

## **Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust**

“The Trust’s strong and valued partnership with Healthwatch has proved especially rewarding this year with a number of key achievements bringing benefits to patients and ensuring the services we provide to our hugely diverse communities are as safe, accessible and of the highest standard [...]

Healthwatch have monitored the Accessibility content on our website and made valuable recommendations which have resulted in a number of improvements. For example, information about the Accessible Information Standard, our accessibility resources and instructions [...]

Access to healthcare within the community and close to home is another key focus for the Trust and a number of our gynaecology consultants are now working closely with partners in Primary Care and Healthwatch on a pilot Women’s Health Hub covering nine GP practices providing additional menopause and other support.

Specific support around how to shape sexual health services for young people was also provided by Healthwatch. Working with our sexual health service, the Florey Clinic, we ran a focus group to gain insights in to how we can improve services. In addition, the Florey team valued the input from Healthwatch Youth who provided a good understanding about young people’s sexual health education.

Healthwatch provided welcome support in co-hosting a briefing with local community leaders to consider the impact of the Royal Berkshire Hospital moving to an alternative site. This was part of wide-ranging public engagement carried out over the year [...] attract[ing] more than 10,000 responses.

[It’s been] a year of meaningful and positive engagement with Healthwatch [...] from which we have compiled a comprehensive action plan which we hope will lead to an equally rewarding and collaborative year ahead.

**Katie Prichard-Thomas, Chief Nursing Officer, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust**

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## **SEND Voices Wokingham Parent/Carer Forum**

“We were very pleased that Healthwatch could join us at both Local Offer Live and Wokingham Autism Day events. These events provided meaningful opportunities to connect directly with families, listen to their lived experiences, and share support. We look forward to working together again.”

**Terri Walsh, Joint Chief Executive Officer, SEND Voices Wokingham**

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# 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've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



"The feedback local Healthwatch hear in their communities and share with us at Healthwatch England is invaluable, building a picture of what it's like to use health and care services nationwide. Local people's experiences help us understand where we – and decision makers – must focus and highlight issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. We can then make recommendations that will change care for the better, both locally and across the nation."

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





# Listening to your experiences

## Empowering young women; improving sexual health awareness and services

**Our Healthwatch Youth team investigated young women's sexual health and well-being across Wokingham Borough and Reading.**

An online survey for women aged 16–24 years was completed by **135** women with **29%** from Wokingham Borough. An engagement programme took place across colleges, universities and recreational locations, including, Kimel Café and Wokingham Leisure Centre.

### Key things we heard:



**84%**

**were unaware they could call 0118 322 7202 for free contraception.**

**30%**

**are very/extremely comfortable discussing sexual health with healthcare professionals**

### What difference did this make?

- Florey Clinic will work with Healthwatch Youth to amplify young people's voices to improve sexual health services via dedicated youth focus groups.
- Opened discussions with Public Health Wokingham who want to explore the report data and feedback further.
- Amplified young voices to influence changes in sexual health services.
- Raised awareness of sexual health and local support services and encouraged open conversations around health and wellbeing.
- Young women felt more empowered about their sexual health and well-being after being part of this project
- Helped Healthwatch Youth grow its reach, build partnerships, and gain valuable skills.



"We value the insights provided by Healthwatch Youth and are eager to explore future opportunities for collaboration. We would welcome the chance to work with Healthwatch Youth and young people in Reading, Wokingham through focus groups. Such an initiative could provide valuable insights and serve as a constructive approach to identifying areas for improvement in sexual health and contraception services."

**Rachael Smart – Clinical Lead Nurse, Florey Clinic**

# Listening to your experiences

## Tackling health gaps for South Asian women

**Amplifying the voices of women from the South Asian community to explore the healthcare barriers they face and how healthcare access can be improved.**

Our 'GP access project: new ways of working' highlighted the challenge of not adequately hearing from ethnically diverse communities about their health and social care experiences, despite their significant populations in the borough and significant health inequalities.

### What did we do?

We launched multilingual surveys and a focus group to understand South Asian women's experiences of accessing healthcare information and services. Over **100** South Asian women from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds from across the borough took part to share their experiences.

### Key things we heard:



**54%**

**live with diagnosed long-term health conditions – higher than the UK national average for women (50%)\***

**89%**

**wanted a wider choice of evening and weekend appointments**

**47%**

**felt that being able to be seen by a female practitioner would make access easier.**

### What difference did this make?

- Built stronger trust in local health and care services within the South Asian community.
- Informed the community of their NHS rights and feedback channels, improving engagement and outcomes.
- Raised awareness of how to access health services and information.
- Invited to share initial findings at the Wokingham Women's Health Network event with Public Health and BOB ICB.
- Helped shape a more community focused women's health Healthwatch workplan for the borough and beyond.

# Listening to your experiences

## GP access: what we found and how we are helping

**We are working to try and make GP services easier to understand and access by listening to borough residents' experiences.**

We continue to receive feedback telling us that accessing GP services, getting appointments, and trying to manage health conditions are people's top concerns in healthcare. While GP surgeries are under immense pressure locally and nationally, we've found that new ways of working, meant to help people, have in fact caused confusion.

Locally, many people don't understand these new systems, leading to frustration and mismatched expectations when they try to contact their GP surgery.

Our 'GP access: new ways of working' report, published with Healthwatch Reading and West Berkshire, uses resident feedback to explain new processes, support better GP communication, help people use the right healthcare services, and ultimately reduce complaints.

### What difference did this make?

- Contributing to the local Primary Care strategy.
- Informed our South Asian women's health project to address health inequalities (please see page 14 of report)
- Opened discussions (which continue) with health services to improve patient communication and GP access.
- BOB ICB is reviewing our recommendations on promoting digital GP services locally.
- Ongoing public engagement to reach a wider audience using a Healthwatch designed infographic and Dr Amit Sharma's video to explain GP service changes.



"At the heart of our Primary Care activity is an ongoing commitment to work with people and communities in equal partnership and to engage them at the earliest stages of service design, development and evaluation to ensure an enhanced patient experience is central to the Primary Care they receive."

**Sanjay Desai – Head of Primary Care Operations, BOB**

**ICB**

# Listening to your experiences

## Your voice matters: Wokingham Medical Centre responds to patients' experiences

**In last year's annual report, we highlighted our Enter and View (E&V) visit to Wokingham Medical Centre (WMC), survey and report.**

In January 2025, WMC provided us with a detailed update outlining improvements they have made to access and care for its 29,000 patients. These changes aim to modernise services, boost efficiency, and address patient needs.

### What difference did this make?

1. Introduced new digital systems, including:
  - An online consultation service handling 250 requests per week
  - A video appointment booking app
  - A booking system for 9,000 patients with long-term conditions to schedule convenient appointments
2. Improved telephone service with a call-back feature to reduce waiting time
3. Returned to face-to-face appointment options, with most appointments offered on the same day
4. Sent reminders for advance appointments however 1,388 missed appointments over 9 months resulted in 231 hours of unused time
5. Expanded access to a diverse clinical team, including:
  - Patient Services Team for initial triage
  - First Contact Physiotherapists, Paramedics, Physician Associates, Clinical Pharmacists
  - Partnership with the Community Pharmacy Scheme for additional support



"As with our colleagues across primary care, we are working in an incredibly challenging and demanding environment and are doing our utmost to ensure our thousands of patients receive a safe, modern and efficient healthcare service. To do this we regularly review our work and consider feedback from patients, and the findings from this Healthwatch report will feed into that process."

**Wokingham Medical Centre – Partners**

# Hearing from all communities

**We're here for all residents of Wokingham Borough. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to 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 year, we reached different communities, by:**

- **Being on the ground, in the community:** We took part in a range of local events and community gatherings to listen to people's experiences, gather feedback and understand what matters most to them. We were able to build trust through meaningful face-to-face engagement.
- **Listening and amplifying voices:** We hosted focused groups and had discussions with underrepresented communities to explore their views to ensure their experiences are heard, valued and actioned.
- **Turning feedback into action:** We launched community surveys to gather wider input and insights for our project work with feedback being shared directly to NHS leaders and key service decision makers, to action.





# Hearing from all communities

## Improving the use of system alerts for safer, more inclusive care

**Carers and people in the learning disability and deaf communities told us that vital medical system alerts are often missing, used inconsistently, misunderstood or ignored across local health services.**

System alerts are essential for ensuring people receive the right care, communication support, and reasonable adjustments. When not used properly, it contributes to gaps in care and puts patient safety at risk, with research by Kings College London (for the LeDeR programme, funded by the NHS) confirming this.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Accessible Information Standard services must identify and record patients' needs. In 2024, NHS England introduced the Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag (RADF) to record and share this information across the NHS, wherever a person is treated.

- We raised concerns with leaders at Royal Berkshire Hospital who confirmed ongoing RADF staff training but said issues are part of a bigger system problem.
- We partnered with the BOB ICB Primary Team to draw system wide attention to the urgent need of clear IT system alert visibility and system coding.
- Supported the rollout of the Inequalities Locally Commissioned Service which funds GP practices in deprived areas to improve coding for protected characteristics and track progress, ultimately enhancing patient safety and care adjustments.
- Partnered with Carers Partnership Wokingham to raise public awareness of sharing health needs with services, explore barriers, and to encourage healthcare services to be more inclusive.

### What difference did this make?

- Ensured the issue of system alert failure was given a wider focus and priority with NHS leaders, key decision makers and other local organisations
- Shared system alert information widely by helping to create materials, including screen messages and staff updates, to raise awareness and improve understanding.
- Initiated long-term changes to better support vulnerable patients across local healthcare settings/services.
- Amplified residents' voices to ensure they were and are heard by local senior NHS leaders.
- Built stronger partnerships with the NHS and local organisations to keep pushing for better care for everyone in the borough.

## Women's health matters

**In March 2024, a women's health project in Wokingham Borough prompted us to revisit BOB ICB's 2023 proposal for a Berkshire West women's health hub, part of an NHS England initiative publicly announced in September 2023.**

There are hubs already successfully established for many years in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire but no hub for women in Berkshire West.

We wrote to BOB ICB jointly with Healthwatch Reading and West Berkshire to seek clarity. Our concerns also focused on worsening health inequalities for women locally, and the use of NHS funding.

We discovered that a significant amount of the funding for a women's health hub had been used for its intended purpose – no women's health hub had been set up or even planned for Berkshire West.

### What difference did this make?

- Successfully influenced the ICB to restart the Women's Health Hub project even though some of the funding had been spent elsewhere.
- Helped secure and shape a Women's Health Hub pilot in Berkshire West, which ran from October 2024 – June 2025, offering menopause support and pessary services.
- Succeeded in pushing for the pilot's extension for an additional three months.
- Became part of a working group that collaborates on what can be done with the remaining funding to establish a permanent women's health hub.
- Worked (and continue to) with local partners, including the Berkshire West PCN Alliance and Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, to keep attention on the need for a Berkshire West women's health hub along with the need for better support and care for women across the borough and beyond.
- Pushed (and continue to) for a women's health strategy that reflects the voices of local women, with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough helping to shape and drive this forward.

# Hearing from all communities

## Learning disabilities and dentistry

**Our report detailing the findings of our small study (in 2023) with members of local charity CLASP on their dental experiences, was published, along with an Easy Read version.**

The report was shared with key local NHS dental and learning disability teams for review and was discussed by the local Dental Network to help improve services.

We observed that autistic people experience similar barriers, expanding the focus beyond learning disabilities.

### What difference did this make?

Thames Valley Community Dental Service (TVCDs) have created a Reasonable Adjustment Passport to make local dental care better for patients with specific needs, including individuals with autism and learning disabilities.

The passport is flagged on a person's digital record and tells the dental team about sensory preferences, communication style and support needs.

The passport was tested for 7 weeks, with patients feeling less worried and more in control during appointments. Dental staff reported feeling better prepared and confident in giving tailored care. Trust was built between patient and dental staff as they understood one another better. The passport is now being considered to be part of the standard new patient assessments across the local dental service from the back of this report.

# Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 2135 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

**This year, we've helped people by:**

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



## A carer in need

**Thanks to a carer's willingness to share her story with us, her feedback will help inform and shape future service improvements.**

A carer supporting her mother with dementia contacted us after receiving no support or guidance from her GP as she was struggling to afford incontinence pads which should be provided by the NHS. She was purchasing the incontinence pads with her own money.

We supported this carer by listening to her concerns, contacting the local hospital's continence team to explore support options, and signposted the carer to the service.

This carer's feedback has highlighted gaps between primary and specialist care and supports our call for improved GP awareness and public access to local continence services.

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## Vulnerable patient left without transport

**We ensured a vulnerable pensioner, who was left behind by Patient Transport Services (PTS), voice was heard.**

A local charity referred a pensioner to us after Patient Transport Services (PTS) left her behind at a local hospital following a routine check-up. Told by a nurse she had to stay overnight at the hospital or pay a £45 taxi fare, she decided to pay the taxi fare despite financial hardship because she was extremely worried about her cat being home alone.

We raised the issue with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), who confirmed transport should have been provided and agreed to investigate what went wrong.

We spoke up for a vulnerable person to ensure her voice was heard and that her experience can help prevent future issues. It highlighted the need for clear communication and safeguarding in patient transport.



# Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 109.4 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:

- Visited communities to promote awareness of Healthwatch
- Supported local communities to share their views and experiences
- Spoke with local communities about our project work and collected feedback



# Showcasing volunteer impact

## At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

"I enjoy volunteering and engaging with the South Asian community where there is a need to improve health and social care services. As a community connector I can give the community a voice so that they are heard."

Sofia, a stay-at-home mum, heard about Healthwatch through a friend and was inspired to join our Community Connector programme to help tackle health inequalities. Sofia brings valuable experience in early years, having worked for Sure Start for two years.

"I have enjoyed taking part in a variety of events and activities to help gather feedback with the flexibility to get involved in different ways. I am excited to continue volunteering and to explore more opportunities to help make change, with Healthwatch."

**Sofia – Community Connector**



"Volunteering with Healthwatch Youth has been a powerful journey. I have helped amplify young women's voices, raising awareness of sexual health barriers, stigma and the gaps in sexual health services and education in schools."

"Our work has also raised awareness of the availability of local sexual health services and the support, they offer."

"It was an honour to support lasting change. The project and its experience has deepened my commitment to improving sexual health awareness in our community."

**Jeanet – Healthwatch Youth**



### Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



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



0118 418 1418



[enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

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

## Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£123,232	Expenditure on pay	£86,217
Additional income	£16,667	Non-pay expenditure	£10,495
		Office and management fee	£24,542
		Reserves	£18,646
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£139,899</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£139,899</b>

- £2,000 received from Healthwatch England for work on a project
- £2,000 received from the local ICS for joint work on a project
- £800 funding received from a local charity to support their project

## Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across Berkshire West 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
PPG (Patient Participation Group) engagement programme across Berkshire West	£16,667

# Finance and future priorities

## Next steps:

**Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.**

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

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

1. Primary Care
2. Women's health
3. Men as carers

# Statutory statements

Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ.  
The Advocacy People, PO Box 375, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 9HU.

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough 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 Advisory Group has 3 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

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

Throughout 2024/25, the Group met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as our workplan and our engagement activities. 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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

During 2024/25, we have been available by phone, email and social media. We provided a web form on our website and attended 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, social media channels and our new upcoming newsletter.



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## Responses to recommendations

We had 0 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were 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.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the local Health and Wellbeing Board, Wokingham Borough Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and BOB ICB.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) and work with the other Healthwatch within this area to ensure voices are heard from all parts of the community. For example, we have a seat at the System Quality Group and BOB ICB Health Inequalities Board . We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough is represented on the Wokingham Borough Health and Wellbeing Board by Alice Kunjappy-Clifton, Lead Office, Wokingham Borough.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by sharing our work, future workplans and asking questions from the public perspective to ensure the public voice is considered in decision-making.

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough also collaborates with 4 Healthwatch in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) to ensure Wokingham Borough residents are represented at place level (Berkshire West) and Integrated Care Board level.

The 3 Berkshire West Healthwatch (Healthwatch Reading, Healthwatch West Berkshire and Healthwatch Wokingham Borough) is delivered through representation at place level which was and continues to be shared between Alice Kunjappy-Clifton (Lead Officer, Healthwatch Reading and Healthwatch Wokingham Borough), Fiona Worby (Lead Officer, Healthwatch West Berkshire) and Jamie Evans (Area Director, Healthwatch in Berkshire West).

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## Enter and view

We made no Enter and View visits this year. Other methodologies better suited our work priorities such as reaching out to residents through focus groups, surveys and engagements. For the work year 2025/2026, we'll be thinking about the best ways to ensure our primary care recommendations are actioned as well as focusing on gathering views for our other projects. We don't expect these themes to require an Enter and View methodology.

## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project	Outcomes achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Women's Health and Women's Health Hub</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Raised concerns with BOB ICB about women's health inequalities and NHS funding use</li><li>Uncovered misallocation of women's health hub funding, prompting action</li><li>Successfully influenced BOB ICB to restart the Women's Health Hub project</li><li>Helped secure and shape a Women's Health Hub pilot (Oct 2024 – June 2025) offering menopause and pessary services</li><li>Achieved a 3-month extension of the pilot</li><li>Joined a working group to explore options for a permanent women's health hub</li><li>Continued collaboration with local partners to advocate for long-term women's health support</li><li>Driving development of a women's health strategy that reflects local women's voices</li><li>An online survey will be launched in the new work year to gather feedback from local women for women's health hub requirements.</li><li>Going forward into 25/26 a 'Women's Hour' focus group will be conducted to discuss women's healthcare needs in the local area.</li></ul>

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## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Healthwatch Youth: Empowering women: improving sexual health and services across Reading and Wokingham Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florey Clinic to collaborate with Healthwatch Youth to improve sexual health services through youth focus groups</li> <li>• Initiated engagement with Public Health Wokingham to explore report data and feedback</li> <li>• Amplified young people's voices to influence sexual health service changes</li> <li>• Increased awareness of sexual health and local support services</li> <li>• Encouraged open conversations about health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Empowered young women regarding their sexual health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Strengthened Healthwatch Youth's reach, partnerships, and skill development.</li> </ul>
GP access: new ways of working (collaborative project with Healthwatch Reading and Healthwatch West Berkshire)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported development of local Primary Care strategy</li> <li>• Informed our South Asian women's health project to tackle health inequalities</li> <li>• Initiated ongoing dialogue with health services to improve communication and GP access</li> <li>• BOB ICB is looking at the recommendations for promoting digital GP services</li> <li>• Continued public engagement using infographic and video to explain GP service changes.</li> </ul>
Enter & View visit and report review: Wokingham Medical Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WMC implemented service improvements to modernise care, increase efficiency, and better meet the needs of 29,000 patients.</li> </ul>

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## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
South Asian women and health inequalities project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched multilingual surveys and focus group to gather South Asian women's healthcare experiences</li> <li>• Built stronger trust in local health and care services within the South Asian community</li> <li>• Improved awareness of NHS rights and feedback channels</li> <li>• Increased understanding of how to access health services and information</li> <li>• Shared findings with Public Health and BOB ICB at Wokingham Women's Health Network event</li> <li>• The full report when published will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Inequalities Board, with a 12-month follow-up to track progress in improving health outcomes for South Asian women across the borough.</li> <li>• The report will shape our wider Women's Health workplan for the borough and beyond, to ensure it reflects community needs.</li> </ul>
Dentistry and Learning Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our report led to the Reasonable Adjustment Passport being considered for inclusion in standard new patient assessments in community dental services.</li> <li>• Increased accessibility and engagement by producing an easy read version of the report, enabling more people to understand and use the information.</li> </ul>



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## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
IT system coding and RAD flags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Raised awareness and priority of patient safety risks from improper use of system alerts and reasonable adjustments</li> <li>•Highlighted the need for clear IT alert visibility and accurate coding across NHS systems</li> <li>•Engaged Royal Berkshire Hospital on RADF staff training and systemic challenges</li> <li>•Partnered with BOB ICB Primary Team to advocate for system-wide improvements in alerts and coding</li> <li>•Supported rollout of the Inequalities Locally Commissioned Service to improve coding and care in deprived areas</li> <li>•Collaborated with Carers Partnership Wokingham to raise public awareness and promote inclusive healthcare</li> <li>•Developed and shared educational materials to improve staff understanding of system alerts</li> <li>•Initiated long-term improvements to better support vulnerable patients in local healthcare settings</li> <li>•Amplified residents' voices to ensure representation at senior NHS leadership levels</li> <li>•Strengthened partnerships with NHS and local organisations to drive ongoing improvements in care</li> </ul>

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