



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Sefton

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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

A message from our Chair

Our network of volunteers at Healthwatch Sefton have been gathering feedback and listening to real life experiences that shape, influence and importantly monitor, many new developments across health and social care.

Our cost of living survey highlighted the struggle of far too many, attempting to access NHS dentistry. Fewer people are receiving regular checks or preventive treatment, to reduce the future risk of serious dental health problems and our signposting service has been contacted by many residents seeking support.

The soaring numbers of type 2 diabetics has become a public health priority, to which Healthwatch has responded by finding out more about improvements in patient information and education and we will continue to work with partners to explore this further.

Our local report on improving GP access was produced in collaboration with People First Merseyside, a wonderful self-advocacy organisation run by, and for people with learning disabilities, and we want to thank everyone for engaging in our projects to gain feedback about local GP practices and Litherland Urgent Treatment Centre.

Sefton is a really great place to volunteer and we value our close relationship with our host organisation, Sefton Council for Voluntary Service.



“I am reluctantly coming to the end of three enjoyable years as Chair of Healthwatch Sefton and would like to say just how much I have appreciated working alongside all those staff and volunteers, who make team Healthwatch such a valuable and worthwhile organisation.”

(Dr) John Turner MA FRCP
Chair, Healthwatch Sefton

About us

Healthwatch Sefton 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.



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 3,500 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 5 staff members and our work is supported by 45 volunteers.

Reaching out:



We engaged with **3098** residents with **1707** sharing their in depth feedback and experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

431 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as finding urgent NHS dental care and support for long term conditions. We signposted to **759** organisations and groups to support people to make informed choices.

Championing your voice:



Listening to your concerns about accessing your GP practice, we made this our focus, whilst also making sure service providers acted on our recommendations ensuring that community voices are never lost or ignored.

Our most popular report was about **Litherland Urgent Treatment Centre**, highlighting residents experiences of accessing urgent care and their suggestions for improving waiting times and pathways.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by **Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council**. In 2024/25 we received **£143,379**.

A year of making a difference

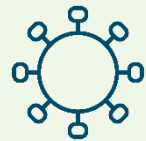
Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in **Sefton**. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

In response to feedback about difficulties using the NHS App, we secured agreement from our primary care commissioner for digital support training to be delivered in community settings, improving access and confidence for local residents.



In response to local concerns about the long COVID service being decommissioned, we secured assurance that NHS Cheshire and Merseyside followed their policy and completed equality and quality impact assessments.



Summer

Following concerns raised in a patient story about the lack of diabetes care, Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust confirmed staff access to diabetes education and specialist support.

The in-depth patient story we shared, was picked up by the education team and was used in nursing huddles to reinforce the importance of diabetes care, with two of the three diabetes link nurses booked into diabetes study days to strengthen ward-level expertise.

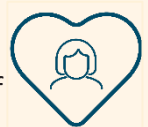


Autumn

Our advice to the 'Shaping Care Together' programme, led to an easy read survey being developed, enabling People First Merseyside members to contribute their views and be included in the engagement process.



We delivered a well-received online 'lunch and learn' awareness session for the Sefton Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board. The session strengthened connections and increased understanding of how Healthwatch can contribute to safeguarding efforts.



Winter

With the planned closure of Lincoln House, we worked with commissioners to ensure patients had a voice in the process and were informed about their options, including which GP surgery they would be moved to and supporting when there were concerns.



We shared feedback from 20 parent carers about transition concerns between Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Trust and Royal Liverpool Hospital Inflammatory Bowel Disease services, leading to director-level awareness and action.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Sefton are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they can influence decisions made about services at NHS Cheshire and Merseyside.

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across **Cheshire and Merseyside** to achieve the following:

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

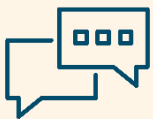


Cheshire & Merseyside is the third largest ICS area in England. During the last 12 months, the nine Healthwatch organisations have continued to work together to provide a strong voice for the 2.5 million people who live, work and use health and care services across our region. A 'Memorandum of Understanding' and data sharing agreement enables us to collaborate on a wide range of issues.

This means the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for NHS Cheshire & Merseyside hears what matters to local people on a much wider footprint, to provide equitable services.

Healthwatch Chief Executives and Managers meet weekly to keep up to date with all things health and care related, and to brief each other on the ICS meetings we have attended. We also use this time together to exchange information with invited colleagues from the ICB, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and other partners attending.

The big conversation:



NHS Cheshire & Merseyside recognised the value of a collaborative approach to gathering feedback in relation to primary care access recovery and commissioned the nine local Healthwatch to engage with the 2.5m people across the area. The survey was designed in collaboration, each Healthwatch promoting and distributing the survey with Healthwatch Cheshire East and West analysing and drafting the combined and individual reports. The impact of this report will be recognised locally and on a Cheshire & Merseyside footprint. We will report more on the outcomes from this work in our next report.



"Healthwatch have undertaken a vital survey with our population on how they perceive access in our GP practices. This is a temperature check on whether the investment and new ways of working are meeting the needs of the residents. The ICB is using the information to inform future plans to make care more responsive and accessible for those who need it. Thanks, as ever, to the Healthwatch team who support and offer constructive challenge to our work, and ensure we listen to the patient voice at all times."

**Clare Watson. Assistant Chief Executive
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside**

Working together for change

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



We continue to build relationships within the wider ICB structure and attend the NHS Cheshire & Merseyside board and various sub-groups. We share responsibility and rotate our attendance at these meetings. In addition, we maintain well established relationships and seats on local boards and groups across Sefton.

In November 2024, we met with the Chair of the ICB Quality & Performance Committee, to start discussions about how patient feedback collected by the nine local Healthwatch can be incorporated into the discussions and work of the committee.

“On behalf of the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of our nine Healthwatch organisations for your challenge, insight, and advocacy on behalf of our residents. Your work has been instrumental in ensuring that the voices of people across our communities—particularly those who are seldom heard—are not only listened to but acted upon. Whether through your detailed reports, community engagement, or your presence at our Board and Committee meetings, you have consistently brought forward the lived experiences that will help to shape better, fairer, and more responsive services.

Over the past year, your contributions have helped us navigate complex challenges—from recovery planning and service redesign to addressing health inequalities and improving access. Your role as a critical friend has strengthened our accountability and sharpened our focus on what matters most to the people we serve.

As we move forward into a period of transformation resulting from the national changes to ICBs, the impending publication of the 10 Year Plan, the development of Neighbourhood focussed health partnerships and the financial challenges the local system faces, your continued partnership will be vital. We look forward to deepening our collaboration as we work together to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities across Cheshire and Merseyside.

Thank you for your dedication, your professionalism, and your commitment to the people of our region”

Raj Jain
Chair.
NHS Cheshire & Merseyside

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 Sefton this year:

Improving care over time



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

Seaforth Village Practice had been closed for an extended period, prompting us to gather feedback from local residents. In May 2024, we engaged directly with residents to listen to their concerns. Their anonymous feedback was compiled into a report and shared with both the provider of the practice, and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. While there was initial hope that the practice would reopen without delay, we were informed in October that structural issues, including significant roof leaks, would hold up the reopening until after Christmas.

We continued to engage with residents throughout this period. Many reported considerable difficulties in accessing the alternative site at Litherland Town Hall Health Centre, including; lack of direct public transport, personal mobility challenges, concerns about crossing a busy dual carriageway and the absence of reasonable adjustments for submitting repeat prescriptions in person.

Additionally, a number of patients raised concerns about digital exclusion, some being unable to use remote services such as the NHS App. By consistently raising these concerns at the Sefton Primary Care Forum, and sharing residents' experiences, we have now received confirmation that Seaforth Village Practice will reopen in May 2025.

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.

Following a discussion about Pharmacy First at our Community Champion network meeting in June, People First Merseyside (a group for adults with learning disabilities), requested a tailored session, so members could ask questions directly. As a result of one member sharing their experience with executives from Community Pharmacy Sefton, this prompted liaison with a local pharmacy, ensuring epilepsy medication is prescribed in a timely and consistent way to ensure all patients have access to a critical prescription to manage long term and life-impacting conditions.

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.



Listening to your experiences

Turning Feedback Into Action At Litherland Urgent Treatment Centre!

Last year, we worked in partnership with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust to make improvements to the Urgent Treatment Centre based in Sefton.

With feedback about access to GP appointments being a key issue for Sefton residents, we decided to focus on what impact this was having on the centre and its capacity and treatment pathways.

What did we do?

Between July and August 2024, we independently reviewed care and treatment at the centre, using a survey co-produced with the trust, speaking to over 100 patients, family and friends

Key things we heard:



68%

of users rated their experience as good or excellent.

71%

reporting personal convenience as the main reason for the time they chose to attend.

Clinical care was rated highly with triage taking place within 30 minutes of arrival with staff being described as professional, polite and caring. Both reception and security staff were also friendly and helpful.

Concerns were raised about long adult and child waiting times (up to 5+ hours), poor communication, lack of privacy, and an unclean, uncomfortable waiting environment. Patients queued before 8am for treatment, with unclear triage processes and safety issues in the children's area also highlighted.



"The team and I have found the report to be extremely helpful in identifying clear recommendations to take forward. This will inform improvement plans based on the experience of patients attending Litherland Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) for care and treatment. The team will commit to working through the recommendations to ensure the best possible care is provided to the local population in Sefton."

**Trish Bennett. Chief Executive Officer
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.**

Listening to your experiences

Turning Feedback Into Action At Litherland Urgent Treatment Centre continued.....

What difference did this make?

Well-Being Checks

Staff now come into the waiting area to check in and make sure everyone is okay.

Clear Call System

When it's your turn, a member of staff will come into the waiting room and call your name in person.

Updated Waiting Times

TV screens now show updated waiting times every 2 hours. 96% of patients are now seen within 4 hours!

Your Journey Leaflet

You'll be given a leaflet called 'Your Journey' to explain what should happen during your visit. A new version is coming soon!

Triage-Only Visits

If the centre is only offering a triage service, you'll receive an information slip explaining what this means. Plans are in place so you can return for treatment (available after June).

Better Staffing

Staffing levels have been reviewed and increased and there are currently no staff vacancies.

Wound and Stitch Care

For those attending the centre for wound and stitch care, you may be offered an appointment at Sefton Road Health Centre to prevent long waits.

Daily Cleanliness Checks

The housekeeper logs cleaning checks every day, and extra cleaning hours have been added to the contract the trust has with their cleaning company. You should find a clean environment at any time of day.

Snacks & Drinks

A vending machine will be installed (if not already) to make it easier for you to access refreshments whilst you wait.

Improved Children's Area

Sensory toys and activities are now available to help keep little ones entertained.

Safer Seating

Chairs in the waiting area are now safer and have been re-covered. Additional signage is in place to help keep children safe.



Listening to your experiences

Access, Care and Communication. What Hightown Patients Told Us!

In 2024, we received feedback from patients and family members which highlighted ongoing difficulties in booking appointments at the surgery. Feedback indicated that patients were frequently advised that no doctor or locum was available.

In January 2025, we held four sessions at the Alt Centre in Hightown, during which we gathered 46 detailed patient stories. These accounts provided a snapshot and valuable insight into current experiences. A report was produced which highlighted key areas for improvement, including continuity of care, communication, access to services, health inequalities, and challenges with repeat prescriptions.

Key things we heard:

73%

of comments on treatment and care were **positive**.

86%

of comments on the booking process were **negative**.

82%

of comments about staff attitude were **positive**, however,

100%

of comments about staffing levels were **negative**.



"We work closely with Healthwatch and value their support in proving feedback from patients and residents on local services. The team at Healthwatch Sefton always advocate for patients regardless of the size or scale of the issue and have a wide reach through their groups and forums. We particularly value the work they do with inclusion groups. It is a pleasure to work with the team and we look forward continuing the close work in the future."

Jan Leonard

**Associate Director Primary Care and Community Integration
NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (Sefton Place)**

Listening to your experiences

Access, Care and Communication. What Hightown Patients Told Us continued.....



"We are grateful to all patients, families, and carers who contributed their feedback. Your voices help us shape and improve the services we provide. Primary Care 24 remains committed to listening, learning, and delivering high-quality care to the Hightown community".

Primary Care 24.

What difference did this make?

Patient concerns prompt a formal review

In considering the report and the individual feedback shared, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside indicated that patient experience was falling short of what they would expect. They agreed to review this in detail at the next contract meeting (June 2025).

Improved telephone access

The telephone system has been upgraded, and staffing levels have been adjusted to help reduce call wait times.

Practice closure concerns addressed: surgery to stay open

We gained assurance from the provider of the surgery (PC24) that they have no plans to close the surgery. (Patients had expressed their concerns about the future of the practice).

Consistent call handling

To support continuity and improve patient experience, the provider has assigned consistent staff members to handle calls from the Hightown Surgery hub each morning, ensuring familiarity with patients and their needs.

Improved access to patient information

A patient information board was installed in the practice, with the provider committed to publishing regular newsletters to keep patients informed. Posters about in-house and community services will be displayed.

Full website review underway

The provider agreed to conduct a full review of their website to ensure it is user-friendly and includes key information such as how to make a complaint.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Sefton. 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 have reached different communities by:

- Ensuring we increase the reach and membership of our community champion networks.
- Setting up our community hub in Bootle, strengthening our partnership approach to support local people.
- Listening to residents who have a learning disability to find out what its like for them to access their GP practices across Sefton and sharing this feedback with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside (Sefton).



Amplifying Voices, Driving Change: Our Community Champion Networks.



At Healthwatch Sefton, we are here for all residents and that means actively reaching out to those whose voices are often underrepresented. Over the past year, we have strengthened our efforts to engage with, seldom-heard communities, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to share their experiences and influence how services are designed and delivered.

Our community champion networks, covering Southport & Formby and South & Central Sefton, are a proven model of community-led engagement, built in collaboration with over 60 trusted Voluntary, Community, Faith (VCF), and grassroots organisations. These networks are strategically designed to reach people where they live, through the groups they already know and trust. This approach supports the fulfilment of public sector equalities duties and was recognised as national best practice by Healthwatch England in 2013.

Network members represent a wide range of lived experiences, including: mental health and neurodiversity, disability, care experience, poverty and social exclusion, ethnic and cultural identity and long-term health conditions.

We embed our presence in everyday community spaces including; foodbanks, libraries, supermarkets, warm hubs, and through partnerships with initiatives like Strand By Me. We also run pop-up sessions in hospitals and health settings, making it easier for people to speak up where they already access support.

This targeted, inclusive approach ensures that the experiences and priorities of diverse communities directly shape health and social care improvements across Sefton.

You can find out more about the community champion networks and meet the member organisations making a difference by visiting our website or by contacting us using the details at the back of this report

Working Together to Reach Underserved Communities: The Bootle Partnership Hub.

Collaborative community support tackling health and social inequalities in south Sefton

To better support communities whose voices often go unheard, this year, Healthwatch Sefton developed a partnership hub as part of our south and central Sefton community champion network. The hub covers Bootle, an area of South Sefton facing significant socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment and poor housing.

The hub brings together trusted local organisations to offer joined-up, place-based support and for our pilot phase we have worked with:

- Parenting 2000 – A respiratory health worker provides practical advice to reduce risks from poor air quality and mould in homes, particularly where children are affected.
- Sefton CVS (Community Connectors) – Supports residents aged 18+ to build confidence, connect socially, and access local activities.
- Salvation Army (Employment Plus) – Offers personalised employment and volunteer support, helping residents overcome barriers and reach their goals.



“Being part of the hub has been such a good opportunity to promote the respiratory health pilot further, it has facilitated the development of the pilot to network further in collaboration with Healthwatch Sefton. The pilot has now reached more people who now have more awareness of respiratory health and managing the home environment as a result of the hub.”

Mary Sinclair.
Parent Mentor /Respiratory Health Parent Champion
Parenting 2000

What difference did this make?

Centrally located in the busy Bootle Strand Shopping Centre, this pilot project has already reached out to over 70 local residents.

In January 2025, Healthwatch Sefton was invited to provide support to people experiencing homelessness and to refugee communities at a local church in Bootle.

Due to its success, the model will now be extended to other parts of Sefton to widen its reach and impact.

Supporting Self-Management: Raising Awareness of Low-Carb Needs in Hospital Care.

Using community feedback to drive more personalised and inclusive hospital care.

Through our Southport & Formby community champion network, concerns were raised by patients with type 2 diabetes who follow a low-carbohydrate approach to manage their condition. Some patients reported that during hospital stays, they were not offered suitable dietary options and, in some cases, were advised to increase insulin or chose to fast rather than eat what was available. In response, and with support from our Southport Locality Representative, Linda Wright, we invited Dr David Unwin, a nationally recognised GP and low-carb advocate from Norwood Surgery, to share his evidence-based approach with staff, volunteers, and network members in November. Dr Unwin has led a successful low-carb programme since 2013, helping patients achieve remission from type 2 diabetes and improvements in weight, blood pressure, and overall health.

What difference did this make?

As a result of this local insight, we contacted Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to share the experiences of patients and highlight the need for more flexible and inclusive catering standards. The Trust responded positively, recognising the need to listen more closely to patient preferences and confirmed plans to work with us and engage further with the local community around inpatient dietary provision.

Ensuring Inclusive Access: Sefton Road Clinic to Undergo Inspection.

Healthwatch follow up highlights gaps in previous improvements

In 2023, during a review of community services, concerns were raised at Sefton Road Clinic about the reception desk being too high for many patients and a non-functioning hearing loop in place. Although Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust initially confirmed the issues had been addressed, a follow-up mystery shop in March 2024 found this was not the case.

What difference did this make?

In response, the provider has now agreed to carry out a full health and safety inspection in May, and their contractor will review the hearing loop system, which may be outdated or faulty. This action follows continued engagement and ensures that accessibility concerns are being properly addressed.

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 431 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



Information and signposting

Helping residents overcome digital barriers to access the dental care they need.

An older resident, Joe, had broken a large piece of tooth but had been unable to access dental care since losing his regular dentist two years earlier. Although he had been promised a call back after trying daily for a cancellation, this was never followed up. When he reached out to other local practices, he was given a website link but without internet access, he couldn't search for help himself.

As Joe was digitally excluded, we stepped in to support him. We searched for available NHS dentists and looked up public transport routes to help identify the most suitable options.



"Thanks so much, I was given a website but I haven't any access to the internet so I can't check it. Thank you so much, you have been really, really helpful."

Making GP appointments more accessible for patients with mobility issues.

By supporting Brian to speak with his GP practice about the barriers he faced, we helped ensure his needs were recognised and a more accessible solution explored.

Brian, a resident with multiple long-term health conditions, was struggling to book GP appointments by phone, often finding all the slots gone by the time he got through. He was advised to visit the surgery in person before 8am, but due to his mobility issues and reliance on his scooter, this wasn't a realistic option. He would have needed to leave home by 7:20am, which posed a significant barrier.

We supported Brian to raise his concerns directly with the practice manager, helping to ensure Brian's specific needs were understood and addressed. As a result, steps could be taken to make booking more accessible for him.



"Thank you for listening to me. It's helped me so much."

Information and signposting

Improving access to local services through better online information.

Thanks to feedback shared through Healthwatch, important updates were made to the Living Well website to help more people access the service with ease.

A resident Mike, wanted to attend the Living Well Bus for a vaccination but found the online information unclear, with limited detail about exact locations. This made it difficult for residents like him to know where the service would be and how to access it.

We raised this with the team responsible for the service, and as a result, clearer and more specific location details were added to the website. This small change is now helping more people to confidently find the bus and access the care they need.



“Amazing help and support and extremely kind... go out of their way to really help you out, deserve all the praise and I am grateful for your help.”

Pathways that make a difference.

Through our established pathway with the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside dental team, we were able to support a young asylum seeker and her family in accessing urgent orthodontic treatment.

A family seeking asylum from Sudan contacted us about their 14 year old daughter, Amira, who had braces fitted two years ago that were now broken and causing her pain and discomfort. They had tried to access help through a dentist, but were told she needed to see an orthodontist. Unable to find one, they were signposted to us by Liverpool Dental Hospital.

Thanks to the pathway we have in place with the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside dental team, we were able to escalate the case quickly. As a result, an orthodontist appointment was arranged for Amira.



“Thank you, thank you. I really appreciate what you have done for us.”

Communicating what matters!

We use a variety of ways to communicate messages to members, volunteers, residents and stakeholders.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Switching up our social media strategy slightly, we are no longer posting on X/Twitter as it no longer aligns with our organisational values.
- Publishing the press release with the findings of our cost of living survey, which was sent to regional press, stakeholders, our members and our community.
- Posting out the printed version of our summer newsletter to residents signed up as community members who did not have an email registered with us.
- Continuing to send out a weekly e-newsletter to our members and key stakeholders.



Letting people know what we do

Communicating in a variety of ways

From impactful social media campaigns, to informative newsletters we communicate our messages in a variety of ways.

We conducted our own 'cost of living' survey, which expanded on the themes of the Healthwatch England survey.

We surveyed over 100 Sefton residents using a variety of methods including social media, newsletters, news articles and through our engagement activities.

We will be sharing the results of this work soon and will be working with our Health and Well Being Board to ensure the findings can support the refresh of their Health & Well Being Strategy.



X is out and the sky is looking blue! Earlier this year it was decided to make some changes to our social media platforms. Having been early adopters of X/Twitter, we decided that the platform no longer aligned with our values.

We have pursued a new avenue for communicating through BlueSky and are building our following on there, you can follow us here:

<https://bsky.app/profile/healthwatchsefton.bsky.social>



Reaching the digitally excluded is still a really important communications issue, and we are striving to find different ways to reach Sefton residents who are not online.

We pitched for further funding which allowed us to post out another edition of our printed newsletter.

Our board agreed this as one of the main aims for this year, as it was so well received by our members, who are experiencing digital exclusion.



Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 1682 hours of their time this year to support our work, providing an economic value of £28,476 (*Based on median hourly earnings reported by the ONS). 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:

- Supported our outreach visits, especially across Southport and Formby, to ensure we reach as many residents and organisations as possible.
- Collected experiences and feedback, promoting Healthwatch and the support we can provide.



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.

Welcome to Linda, our new locality representative for Hightown & Ince Blundell

After retiring, Linda volunteered with the Hightown Parish Council, becoming Chairman and presently Deputy Chairman. Linda currently runs the Altcar Community Centre and Library.

Before retiring, Linda worked for Barclays Bank in both administration and finance for a number of years and then trained as a clinical coder, whilst living in Ireland in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda

"I joined Healthwatch Sefton to make a difference to my local community. Hightown has an ageing population and I wanted to make sure their voice is heard and to keep all residents informed regarding the services and help available in Sefton."



Linda Munro.

Listening to our volunteers about what would support them further in their roles, we have held dedicated peer support sessions for our locality representatives. The sessions are held every two months, and provide an opportunity to exchange information and updates, provide support and advice and also an opportunity to share best practices and make suggestions which would support them further.

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.healthwatchsefton.co.uk/get-involved



0800 206 1304



info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Sefton Metropolitan 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	£143,379	Expenditure on pay	£124,753
Additional income	£5166	Non-pay expenditure	£19,397
		Office and management fee	£12,504
Total income	£148,545	Total Expenditure	£156,654

Additional income is broken down into:

- £1,666 received from NHS Cheshire and Merseyside for work on the GP Access survey.
- £2,500 received for the Champs Public Health Collaborative Smoke free Community Engagement Project.
- £1000 received from University of Hull to support the WISE Provocation event Liverpool and Sefton.

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across NHS Cheshire and Merseyside received funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Healthwatch Cheshire & Merseyside GP Access (Primary Care Access Recovery Plan) survey	£15,000*
*The share of this allocated to Healthwatch Sefton (£1666) is included within our additional income above	

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. Expanding our 'Enter and View' visits to more care homes across the borough to ensure quality and safe services are being delivered.
2. Support the local engagement and consultation work taking place across Sefton to improve supported living.
3. Continue to review access to services including GP and dental services.

Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Sefton, Sefton Council for Voluntary service (CVS). 3rd Floor, Suite 3B.
North Wing, Burlington House, Crosby Road North. Waterloo, Liverpool L22 0LG**

Healthwatch Sefton 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 8 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Operations Group consists of 20 members which ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met 3 times and the Operations group met 6 times (every two months) and made decisions on matters such as where to focus our enter and view visits to local care homes and a decision to establish a monitoring panel which would ensure recommendations are monitored, and outcomes are recorded and promoted. 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 and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, 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, and share copies directly with residents signed up to receive our newsletter, key stakeholders and local voluntary, community and faith groups.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

All providers responded 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 Sefton Partnership Board and its groups, including the Primary Care Forum and Quality and Performance Group. We are also key members of the Sefton Public Engagement and Consultation Panel and the Sefton Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in NHS Cheshire & Merseyside. For example, we work with our Healthwatch colleagues across Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure representation at the NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB Board, Quality & Performance Committee and Primary Care Committee. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Sefton is represented on the Sefton Health and Wellbeing Board by (Dr) John Turner Chair.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings, sharing the key issues which our residents have shared with us, contributing key issues into the refresh of the Health & Well Being Strategy and engaged in discussions regarding tobacco legislation and the impact of vaping on young people.

Healthwatch Sefton work in collaboration with Healthwatch covering Cheshire and Merseyside and are represented on the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership and NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board.

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