



Annual Report 2024–2025

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

Healthwatch Slough

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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 Head of Healthwatch

This year, Healthwatch Slough has continued to ensure that people's voices remain central to health and care decisions. Our dedicated staff and volunteers have worked hard to reach out to a wide range of communities—especially those we don't usually hear from—building trust and strong relationships.

We've gathered views through face-to-face conversations, surveys, Enter and View visits, and research projects, focusing on key areas like Primary Care, Urgent Care, and Accessible Information. Listening to people from all backgrounds is essential to making services equitable and effective.

Our engagement has helped influence strategic decisions locally and contributed to national policy change. We are proud to maintain our independence while building collaborative relationships that lead to lasting improvements in health and care. This year's work has shown that when people are meaningfully involved, change happens.

We've welcomed new Advisory Group members and volunteers, bringing fresh energy and ideas. Our achievements are a testament to the commitment of our team, our volunteers, and the many residents who shared their experiences with us.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to advocating for a responsive, inclusive health and care system. In 2025-26, we'll continue pushing boundaries, embracing innovation, and working to ensure that everyone in Slough has access to high-quality, person-centred care.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.



When we listen to every voice, especially those often unheard, we drive real, lasting change. Your shared experiences have shaped more compassionate, inclusive services, proving that people-powered insight is the key to transforming health and care for everyone.

Neil Bolton-Heaton – Head of Healthwatch

About us

Healthwatch Slough 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 57,566 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 6 staff and, our work is supported by 13 volunteers.

Reaching out:



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

57,143 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **pharmacy** and **waiting times**.

Championing your voice:



We published **6** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **Care Homes**, **Urgent Care** and **Accessible Information**

Statutory funding:



We're funded by **Slough Borough Council**. In 2024/25 we received **64,439**, which is **the same as** 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 Slough. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Shared feedback about care in hospital resulting in improved patient experience.



Re-started our Enter and View program at Windmill Care Home.



Summer

Shared information with the public and providers about what to expect during GP collective action.



Our advisory group member co-chaired the social isolation and loneliness group, helping to reduce the impact of loneliness in Slough.



Autumn

Shared a report of unregulated GP practice with the CQC and Frimley Integrated Care System (ICS), helping to improve patient safety.



Supported Frimley's community engagement project by sharing feedback from carers and the people they care for.



Winter

Listened to women at Café Mama about their experience of women's health services, sharing their thoughts on how services and information could be delivered in the future.



Helped people to understand the NHS complaints process and access advocacy support.



Working together for change

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

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across **Frimley**, with the **Frimley ICS** and with the **Slough voluntary sector** to achieve the following:

Frimley Re-connect, Re-set, Re-build



We held a range of group discussions and fed back key themes to the ICS as part of an effort to Reconnect, Reset, and Rebuild priorities for health and wellbeing together. The recent Darzi review, Grenfell recommendations, and work towards a new 10-year plan for the NHS, all provided an opportunity to open up a new conversation that could encourage a deeper understanding of our local communities and identify what matters to them. We ensured young carers had a voice in this strategy development.

Representing residents



We have represented resident's views and experiences of healthcare at the Frimley ICS System Quality Group. Healthwatch is a member of this strategic forum, and we have provided quality and intelligence reports and shared case studies of resident's experiences of care and support provided by Frimley services. This has ensured that patient and public voice is at the centre of quality improvement.



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

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 **Slough** 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.

This year we [published findings](#) of the experiences the public shared with us during 12 Months of visiting Frimley, Heatherwood and Wexham Park hospitals. NHS Frimley ICS will use the information to improve service, giving this response- "We commend the dedication of Healthwatch in capturing these voices and highlighting areas for improvement. This patient-centred information will guide our ongoing efforts to enhance delivery within our system."

Getting services to involve the public



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

We worked with an urgent care centre to better understand people's experiences of the service and identify any access issues. We heard from 42 patients and identified that physical access to the sign was difficult for some however 100% were satisfied with the care received from GP's. Read the report [here](#).

Improving care over time



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

Enter and View is one of a range of options available to Healthwatch to enable us to gather information about health and social care services and to collect the views of service users, their carers, and their relatives. We have continued to develop the programme and will expand further. You can read our summary Enter and View report [here](#).

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

Accessible Information

The accessible Information Standard aims to ensure that people with disabilities, impairments, or sensory loss receive information in formats they can understand and communicate effectively with health and social care services.

Healthwatch in East Berkshire (Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead, Healthwatch Slough and Healthwatch Bracknell Forest) undertook a piece of work to find out if the standard is being delivered as it should be to those residents in East Berkshire who need accessible information. We delayed the release of our 2023 [report](#) to include a deaf resident's account of issues with accessible information, presented as a Patient Story at the end of the report. The report highlights widespread problems in the provision of accessible information across health services.

Key things we heard:



Face-to-face interaction aids communication.

Many services don't ask about patients' information needs.

Some individuals avoid disclosing their needs due to lack of awareness or discomfort.

Even when information is provided, it often doesn't meet people's needs.

Inadequate information access negatively affects health and service use.



People often rely on family or friends for communication.

There's limited awareness of rights under the Accessible Information Standard.

Health settings rarely promote the standard or provide complaint guidance.

"I doubled up my blood pressure pills as was not sure about the amounts as I didn't understand the information" - male with learning disability

"Had a big heart attack and aftercare offered afterwards was difficult for me to understand it all because of my sight and communication need." - female with sight loss

Listening to your experiences

Accessible Information, cont'd

What difference did this make?

In the response provided by Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust and the NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board they told us about the following actions -

The Trust is in the process of creating a new website, and the design phase will include exploring options for how our information will be accessible for people with varying communication needs. We have updated the current website to include information about the Accessible Information Standard.

Patient information has been identified as a key area for improvement this year, with additional resource being dedicated to this. Ensuring compliance with the Accessible Information Standard will be part of this workstream.

NHS Frimley work closely with a wide range of health and care providers including primary, secondary and community care. We are committed to ensuring that we continue to raise awareness of the Accessible Information Standard and, as a result of this report, will share further information through our internal staff and stakeholder networks.



“As is the usual circumstance deaf people give up and don’t bother.” – a deaf person

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Slough. 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:

- Listening to carers about their experiences of health and social care.
- Attending the Café Mama group at JMIC Mosque to hear views on how women's healthcare could be improved.



Hearing from all communities

Listening to carers

We partnered with NHS Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS) to support their engagement project- Reconnect, Reset, Rebuild

We attended the Cippenham Carers Group to listen to people's experiences of health and social care services. Some of the priorities people told us about included: improved communication, improved GP access and appointment availability, a holistic approach to care, more training for healthcare staff and better dementia and social care support.

What difference did this make?

The findings have been shared with Frimley Health Integrated Care System to be considered alongside other feedback received as part of the project and will be presented to their board for consideration.

Women's health dialogue at Café Mama

This year, we prioritised women's health to amplify women's experiences and influence local services. To address the under-representation of Asian women in the national survey, focus groups were conducted to ensure their perspectives were included.

We attended the Café Mama group who meet at JMJC Mosque and spoke to women about issues such as fertility, maternity, contraception and menopause – listening to their ideas for how care could be improved..

What difference did this make?

These reflections will form part of our Women's Health report and will help to shape the delivery of services going forwards. *"There is not enough information for women it all seems to be hidden, and you have to search for it. Women are supporting and making their own community for one another."* The full Women's Health Report will be published shortly and will be available [here](#).

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 57,143 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



Step-by-step complaints guidance

A Slough resident was unhappy with ADHD and ASC referral advice provided by their GP – feeling as though their concerns were ‘swept under the rug’.

Having received two different sets of advice from different GPs on accessing mental health support for possible ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Conditions, and recently obtaining a referral requested almost two years ago, the resident wished to make a formal complaint. Our Hub provided comprehensive advice and signposting around how to submit feedback to their GP Practice as well as how to approach their local Integrated Care Board. Fact checking information was also given, regarding queries around ADHD medication and what may meet the threshold for progressing a complaint to the General Medical Council. After the phone call with our Hub the resident had a variety of options to progress their concerns and enable their voice to be heard.

Sharing information for a better night's sleep

Tiredness contributes to around 20% of accidents in the workplace and poor sleep is a major source of health and wellbeing challenges for many.

In support of the Sleep Charity's annual Sleptember campaign, Healthwatch Slough shared communications on a wide range of free support and resources available locally as well as promoting the Safe Sleep Programme.



“Sleptember raises awareness of how to get a good night's sleep and why it is important for our health. Think you need better sleep? Take a look at the free support available across Frimley Health and Care, including Sleepio.”

Showcasing volunteer impact

We're supported by a team of 12 amazing volunteers who are at the centre of everything we do. They help us to reach more people and communities. Our fantastic volunteers have given 829 hours of their time.

This year our volunteers have:

- As Authorised Representatives took part in Enter and View visits, helping us to fulfil this important function.
- Collected experiences and helped communities to share their views.
- Attended meetings and groups, raising awareness of Healthwatch and the feedback we have received.
- Provided strategic decision making and advice via our Strategic Advisory Group.



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 have been a volunteer for Healthwatch right from the beginning, I went along to the launch of Healthwatch England, was inspired by the event and joined.

I enjoy talking to people and listening to the problems they have with local services. I get satisfaction from helping people solve issues via Healthwatch.

I am proud to be a Healthwatch volunteer, it gives me joy and I am pleased I can help the local community. I also enjoy Enter and View, especially when they act on our recommendations. I feel happy and worthy.



Dolly

I started volunteering for Healthwatch around 10 years ago. I didn't know anything about it before, but I received an invitation and went along to an event where I found out it was all about helping the community, I was interested!

Since then, I have gained a lot of knowledge and have attended events at varied places including community center's, care homes, libraries and hospitals.

I most enjoy speaking to people and helping to guide them to the information or care they need. My main passion is helping the community.



Misbah

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.healthwatchslough.co.uk



0300 0120184



enquiries@healthwatchslough.co.uk

Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

Jaspreet – one of our Strategic Advisory Group Volunteers
(Photography has been changed to maintain confidentiality & privacy)

What brought you to Healthwatch volunteering?

I was drawn to Healthwatch because of my passion for patient advocacy and healthcare policy. With my background in medicine and experience in both clinical and non-clinical healthcare settings, I wanted to contribute to improving patient experiences at a local level. Healthwatch provides a great opportunity to engage with communities, understand their challenges, and ensure their voices are heard in shaping healthcare services.

What have you enjoyed being involved in this year?

This year, I've really enjoyed working on youth engagement and introducing young people to Healthwatch. Many young people aren't aware that they have a voice in shaping healthcare services, so being able to bridge that gap and get them involved has been incredibly rewarding.

Are there any local communities that you are passionate about hearing from or are involved with through other work or volunteering?

I'm particularly interested in hearing from young people and underserved communities who may face barriers to accessing healthcare. Through my work with Healthwatch and my role as a secondary school governor I've seen firsthand how important it is to ensure these voices are included in decision-making. I'm also passionate about understanding the experiences of those navigating the NHS as first-time users, whether that's migrants, students, or individuals with complex health needs.



Be part of the change.

If you would like to be part of our Strategic Advisory Group, please get in touch with us.



www.healthwatchslough.co.uk



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Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Slough 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	£64,439	Expenditure on pay	£54,915
Additional income	N/A	Non-pay expenditure	£11,260
		Office and management fee	£5000
Total income	£64,439	Total Expenditure	£71,174

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. Supporting patient and public involvement in the design and delivery of primary care services.
2. Children and Adult Mental Health services.
3. Waiting for treatment.

Statutory statements

Help & Care hold the contract to deliver the Healthwatch Slough contract. Help & Care, Airfield Way, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 3TS.

Healthwatch Slough 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 Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) consists of 5 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

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

Throughout 2024/25, the SAG met 5 times and made decisions on matters such as our strategic priorities and our Enter and View programme. 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, promote it through social media and provide copies to commissioners and providers of Health and Social Care services locally.

Statutory statements

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 **Health and Wellbeing Board and Place Committee**.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in NHS Frimley **Integrated Care System**. For example, we attend the Patient Experience Forum, Quality Committee and we share all our reports and findings with the Integrated Care System. We also share our data with Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch **Slough** is represented on the **Slough** Health and Wellbeing Board by **Claire Shropshall – Healthwatch Slough Manager**.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by **attending Health and Wellbeing Board and associated subgroups and focus groups**.

Healthwatch **Slough** is represented on **Frimley** Integrated Care Partnerships by **Claire Shropshall** and **Frimley ICS Quality Committee** by **Claire Shropshall**.

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Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Windmill Care Centre	Rated by the CQC as "good" in 2019. Discussions with the local authority.	Published report with recommendations. Report can be found here .
Langley Haven	Rated as 'Requires Improvement' by the CQC in 2020. Discussions with the local authority.	Published report with recommendations. Report can be found here .

2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Coproduced information resources for young people accessing primary care.	Young people are better able to manage own healthcare resulting in independence, self esteem and improved health.
Presented on our Enter and View program to Care Home Support team across Berkshire.	Raised awareness of Healthwatch and it's impacts.
Raised concerns with the Frimley ICS regarding lack of communication regarding pharmacies during GP call to action.	Improved planning and communication between providers allowing them to prioritise public care.
Co-chaired Social Isolation and Loneliness Panel and fed into the needs assessment.	Supported the process of developing an action plan to tackle both social isolation and loneliness and propose next steps for any future local work in this area.
Shared learning on engaging with maternity service users with Public Health lead for sexual and reproductive health needs assessment.	Public Health team upskilled and enabled to engage with more diverse population - involving them in service design and delivery.

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