



healthwatch
North Lincolnshire



Annual Report 2024–2025

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

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire

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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 CEO

This year Healthwatch North Lincolnshire has continued to work towards our vision of equitable health and care services that meet the needs of every person within the diverse communities of North Lincolnshire.

Staff have worked hard to achieve this by gathering public voice at local community events, through engagements, surveys and conversations. They have reached out to vulnerable and seldom heard communities, including travelling communities, people that are neurodivergent and those that are visually impaired, ensuring everyone can have the opportunity to be heard. The team have been front and centre in shaping some of our local services, including care at home and ensuring residents in care homes have access to dental care. They have ensured that views, opinions and experiences are shared with decision makers and people that can make a difference.

Our dedicated volunteers provide strength in numbers to our small team, supporting them to reach out to the diverse communities within North Lincolnshire.

I would like to thank them, and everyone who has worked with our team over the past year, including those who have taken the time to provide feedback, complete a survey or comment on our social media posts.

Collaboration is the key to making a difference and we couldn't do it without you !



" It has been another busy year for the North Lincolnshire team who have gone above and beyond to make sure your voice is heard. I am looking forward to seeing the impact of their hard work in the next 12 months"

**Helen Grimwood – Chief Executive Officer,
Hull CVS and Meeting New Horizons**

About us

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire 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

Equitable health and care services that meet the needs of every person within our communities



Our mission

To give every person in North Lincolnshire the opportunity to have their voice heard and empower them to take an active role in shaping services in their community.



Our values

- We are proud to be independent and not afraid to speak up and challenge decisions that do not meet the needs of our communities.
- We operate a culture of transparency and openness, ensuring we are accountable to the communities in which we serve.
- Our work is evidence based –led by public voice and need.
- We are collaborative, working with organisations that share our vision of equitable health and care services that meet the needs of every person within our communities.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than **4425** people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ **3** staff, and our work is supported by **11** volunteers.

Reaching out:



2012 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

2413 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **how to find an NHS dentist**, how to make a complaint and how to access mental health support

Championing your voice:



We published **33** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas such as **pre and post diagnostic support for neurodiverse people**, and **Oral Health in Care Homes**

Our most popular report was **Neurodiversity**, highlighting people's struggles in **accessing pre and post diagnostic support and services in North Lincolnshire**

Statutory funding:



We're funded by **North Lincolnshire Council** In 2024/25 we received £117,350, 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 North Lincolnshire. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Our findings from the rural home care report were used to support the recommissioning of rural care at home across North Lincolnshire



Our health priorities survey highlighted issues around a lack of support services for Neurodiverse people which led to a research report being carried out over the summer



Summer

Our Neurodiversity research report was used in the development of North Lincolnshire's 2026 Autism pathway.



We attended a series of extraordinary health and Wellbeing Board meetings and voted for the proposed changes to Scunthorpe Hospital to be postponed.



Autumn

We completed 11 enter and view visits in care homes across North Lincolnshire to make recommendations to improve oral health standards for residents.



We celebrated the work of our volunteers and thanked them for their support and commitment throughout the year.



Winter

We attended the Safeguarding Adults Board conference and learnt how to be professionally curious and how to sign Makaton



We worked in conjunction with North Lincolnshire MIND to hold Every Voice Matters group which is a mental Health voice group for the people of North Lincolnshire



Working together for change

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

This year, we've worked with local Healthwatch to achieve the following:

Amplifying young people's voices in healthcare



Young people often feel overlooked when it comes to health and care services. That's why, with funding from NHS England, we supported a team of young volunteers (aged 14–25) to speak directly with their peers about what's working, and what isn't in local healthcare.

Over the course of the project, we heard from 887 young people across the Humber and North Yorkshire. Their honest feedback is already helping to shape services, with findings shared both locally and with the wider NHS through the Children and Young People's Transformation Programme.

This work means decision makers are now hearing directly from young people themselves, not just adults speaking on their behalf.

Listening to communities to improve cancer care



Early diagnosis saves lives, but not everyone has the same awareness or access to cancer information. That's why we worked with the Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance to find out what people know, and what they don't.

We listened to people often left out, including those in poverty, refugees, carers, autistic people, people with ADHD, people with mental health conditions, and those experiencing homelessness. We spoke to communities in urban, rural, and coastal areas so no one was left behind.

What we learned will help shape cancer services to be more accessible, inclusive, and shaped by real experiences.

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 North Lincolnshire 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.

The public of North Lincolnshire told us they were unhappy with the proposed changes of departments being moved from Scunthorpe General Hospital. The public felt that transport and vulnerable people with additional needs had not been fully considered within the proposal. As part of our role at the Health and Wellbeing Board we challenged the ICBs proposal, and this has now been referred to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

Getting services to involve the public



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

We worked with The Public Health team to ensure residents in North Lincolnshire that couldn't use online systems to provide feedback had the opportunity to share their opinions on their pharmacy needs. We took paper copies of surveys out to rural areas ensuring information and the opportunity to feedback was available for everyone using an accessible format, enabling as many people as possible to have their say.

Improving care over time



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

In 2019 we ran an oral health in care homes project. In 2024 we revisited the project to see how our recommendations had improved care over time. It was pleasing to see that over the 5 year period all staff had completed oral health training; every home had an oral health policy in place and almost all care homes had registered their residents with either the community dentist or the domiciliary dentist.

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 been out and about listening to voices from every corner of our community – from rural villages to people experiencing homelessness and those in travelling communities.

We've been at large local events like the Ongo Carnival, Like Minds Festival, and Pride, and we're proud to hold weekly listening sessions at Scunthorpe General Hospital and The Ironstone Centre.

Every story shared and every experience told shapes how we support care in our area. It's how we spot what's working well and what needs to improve.



Listening to your experiences

Shaping services for Neurodivergent people

Last year, we listened to the voice of Neurodiverse people in North Lincolnshire.

During 2024 we received feedback that people who have a neurodiverse conditions were struggling to get the help and support they needed, contributing to poor mental health of these individuals.

What did we do?

We produced a survey that was available via a scannable QR code and a printed paper version, which we also made available in easy read. Wherever possible, surveys were also handed out during regular engagement sessions. We attended groups and events to speak to people in person and gather their experiences of the support available in our area.

Key things we heard:

75%

Of respondents felt they had suffered with their mental health whilst waiting for support services

31%

Rated the level of support available as very poor.

50%

Of respondents felt they would benefit from support to understand their diagnosis

Our work highlighted several areas for improvement that are needed to support neurodiverse people in North Lincolnshire to maintain good mental health. This includes those who are waiting for a diagnosis and those already diagnosed. There is a lack of commissioned services for Neurodiverse people in North Lincolnshire, this has a significant impact on their daily living experiences.

What difference did this make?

The report initiated conversations with RDASH, CAMHS and Cloverleaf Advocacy to discuss the findings in more detail and make changes at service level. Our findings report is being used to develop North Lincolnshire's 2026 Autism Strategy.

Listening to your experiences

Oral Health in Care Homes



Back in 2019 we investigated issues around dental access and oral health support for people living in residential care homes in North Lincolnshire.

In 2024, with dental access still an issue for the general population, we wanted to revisit our previous work, to see if access, and oral health care had improved for those living in residential care.

What did we do?

We carried out Enter and View visits at the same 11 care homes visited in 2019. The aim was to see if there had been further developments and improvements in the standards of oral care in the care homes over the following 5-year period.

Key things we heard:

80%

Of staff had completed oral health training . This is an improvement of 50% since 2019.

9

Of the 11 care home managers told us that the NICE Oral Health Guidelines were either fully or mostly implemented within their homes.

100%

Of the homes we visited had a full oral health policy that sets out to promote and protect the oral health of its residents.



"I feel very confident with assessing residents' oral health needs"

What difference did this make?

Our follow up report highlighted that the enter and views completed in 2019, and the recommendations made had made a positive impact on the oral health in residents living in care homes in North Lincolnshire. The 2024 visits highlighted an improvement in staff training and oral health policies. It was positive to see that most residents were now registered with either a community or domiciliary dental service.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of North Lincolnshire. 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;

- Actively engaging with residents of our rural communities across North Lincolnshire, by attending village halls, groups and rural hubs
- Reached out to the travelling community through engagement at a travelers site in Brigg.
- Holding a regular weekly engagement session at The Ironstone Centre, an area of high deprivation in Scunthorpe North.



Hearing from all communities

Improving understanding of cancer within the travelling community

We worked with Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance and St Johns University to gather feedback from the travelling community about their understanding of cancer signs and symptoms and how to access support.

People told us they had difficulties getting professionals to listen to them, struggles with technology and having to prioritise finance and travel to the job centre over their health.

What difference did this make?

People were able to talk at ease to an independent organisation without fear of repercussions. The information was taken anonymously and contributed to the Cancer Awareness measurement survey compiled by St Johns University in conjunction with Healthwatch and the Cancer alliance. The findings of this work will help shape future cancer advice, guidance and services.

Understanding the pharmacy needs of our rural communities and those who are digitally excluded

We spoke to over 60 people through public engagement as part of the North Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025. This was to understand the views and needs of local people regarding pharmacy provision in our area.

We spoke to people who were living in rural areas and who were digitally excluded and not able to use electronic versions of surveys. We took paper copies of the survey to allow everyone to have the opportunity to have their say.

What difference did this make?

This approach allowed for face-to-face conversation with those living in rural areas and those that are digitally excluded to have their say and have their voices heard. The findings from this report help to identify and address gaps in current pharmaceutical services and to plan for the future needs of our community

Hearing from all communities

Empowering young people to shape services

This year saw the launch of our Long-Term Conditions forum. This collaborative project with Healthwatch Hull, East Riding and Northeast Lincolnshire saw 7 young people aged between 13-25 attend a face-to-face forum to discuss personal experiences of their healthcare journeys, whilst living with a long-term health condition. A small number of local NHS professionals attended to capture the voice of the conversations, with the hope of their voice being fed into future NHS changes. Several issues were raised, such as **some professionals will not listen to young people**, and **they don't feel believed**. They also described poor communication and long waiting times across services. A discussion between health professionals and the young people took place to produce some realistic ideas for solutions. The attendees took part in an activity to shape the 'Healthier Together' webpages of the ICB website to ensure it is user friendly and meets the communication needs of young people.

What difference did this make?

Young people feel valued and listened to. They can voice their opinions on what is working well for them and what could be improved upon and share their lived experiences. The information they provided was shared directly with leaders and people that can make changes.



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 2413 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing the public with up-to-date information they can trust
- Sharing provider and organisation information on services, groups and events that are available and running locally.
- Making referrals to appropriate agencies to further support the individuals needs.
- Signposting people to additional support services



Helping unpaid carers to access the right support

Geoff felt alone in his struggle to care for his brother

Our Project Officer met Geoff during engagement at the Ironstone Centre. Geoff told us how caring for his brother was becoming harder.

"My brother is becoming increasingly forgetful. I am having to hide his tablets under cups, so he doesn't take too many. I think he needs a box to keep them all in, but I don't know where to get one from. I have been caring for him on my own for over 30 years now"

We provided contact details for Carers Support Centre and Adults Social Services, who then arranged a social care assessment for Geoff's brother. We also suggested contacting the G.P to book an appointment for a review for his brother and walked across to the pharmacy within the Ironstone Centre with him to arrange setting up a dosette box for his tablets.



"That's the most help and advice I've received in a long time – thank you" – Geoff

Supporting a patient to access travel vaccinations

Travel vaccinations offered through the NHS are an important way of preventing the spread of infectious diseases into the UK. One patient told us how she was denied the vaccinations through her GP practice.

When attempting to make an appointment with their GP Practice nurse for travel vaccinations, a patient was misinformed and told that the practice do not offer this service, and they would need to have this done at a local pharmacy.

However, when the patient contacted Boots pharmacy, they were advised that they would have to pay privately for all the required vaccinations including Tetanus, Hepatitis A and Typhoid at a great expense to the patient.

Healthwatch contacted the practice to find out what their policy is around providing travel vaccinations on the NHS. They confirmed that they do offer this, and that the patient was misinformed. The patient went on to receive her vaccinations in time for her holiday.



All OK now, I've just had a call from a nurse, and we've been booked in. Surprising how they can suddenly assist after your contact.

Many thanks for your assistance, it really is appreciated.

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given over 120 hours of their time 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:

- Carried out Enter and View visits at 14 care homes, 1 nursing home, 1 G.P practice and 2 hospital wards to help them improve their services.
- They supported our team with report writing following the enter and view visits we completed
- Collected experiences and supported their communities at various events and engagements throughout the year



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.

Healthwatch is a fantastic organisation to volunteer for. I enjoy being useful and making a real difference. I particularly enjoy my enter and view involvement. To be a voice for the ordinary person who may not always be heard is a great privilege. I have never been pressured into volunteering more time than I can offer and always feel valued for my contribution. When I first started in 2013, I remember my confidence was low, Healthwatch has helped increase my confidence and offer the chance to meet new people.

Maybe I will see you at our next social gathering or training session!

Denise



Retirement gave me the free time to pursue volunteering opportunities; I like seeing the difference I make. I have learnt patience and understanding, I hope.

Do it. It gives you the opportunity to try different things and meet people of interest.


Carol



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.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

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 enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from North Lincolnshire 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	£117,350	Expenditure on pay	£105,555
Additional income	£7400	Non-pay expenditure	£4238
Brought forward from 2023-2024	£24,000	Office and management fee	£37,418
Total income	£148,750	Total Expenditure	£147,211

Additional income is broken down into:

- £7400 received from York St Johns University for the Cancer Awareness Measurement project.

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. To continue to reach out to, and build further relationships with minority ethnic groups, the travelling community, people with mental health issues and lived experience groups.
2. Continue with a robust engagement and event plan throughout the year to allow for maximum public engagement and the opportunity to gain feedback and patient voice.
3. Keep the people of North Lincolnshire informed and considered in decisions that are made that affect their health and wellbeing. Challenge leaders and decision makers around these decisions when the public voice does not agree.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, The Strand, 75 Beverley Road, Hull HU3 1XL
Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is contract managed by Meeting New Horizons (MNH)

MNH is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hull Community and Voluntary Services Ltd. MNH is a trading name of Meeting New Horizons CIC. MNH Meeting New Horizons CIC is a community interest company, registered in England, No 7605054

Registered Office, The Strand, 75 Beverley Road, Hull HU3 1XL

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire 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 Board of Trustees provide direction, oversight, scrutiny and governance to the work of Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, ensuring we meet our statutory requirements. Throughout 2024/25 the Board of Trustees met four times. In addition to this, our Healthwatch Independent Advisory Group (IAG) consists of 2 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our IAG ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities through engagement and observation of trends and themes of intelligence.

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 will publish the report on our website, social media platforms and share the document via email with our partner organisations. We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and organisations as possible.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had two 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 Health and Social Care Standards Board, Experts Together Partnership, Learning Disability Partnership, All Age Autism Steering group and the Safeguarding Adults Board

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care System. For example, we attend Northern Lincolnshire joint place Quality Group, monthly meetings with Humber North Yorkshire ICS, and the Humber Health Partnership Patient Experience Group. The Humber and North Yorkshire ICS groups and forums are attended by all 6 Healthwatch within the ICS area. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is represented on the North Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Lucy Wilkinson Delivery Manager. During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending strategic meetings, challenging issues and amplifying public voice.

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is represented on Humber North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership by Ashley Green, Healthwatch North Yorkshire Chief Executive Officer and Humber North Yorkshire Integrated Care Boards by Helen Grimwood, Hull CVS, Chief Executive Officer. Siân Balsom, Healthwatch York Manager sits on the System Quality Group meeting which addresses concerns about the quality of care across Humber and North Yorkshire.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Care home – Carseld	Patients' relatives raised care concerns	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient safety improved.
Ward 27 Scunthorpe Hospital	Patient and relative feedback regarding patient care and safety needs	Report written with recommendations around patient interaction, Communication , Storage and Privacy Follow up visit to be arranged.
The Grange Care home	Patient feedback raising care concerns	Report written with recommendations on communication with patients, the environment, and patient privacy. The home advised they would consider implementing the recommendations over a period of time.
Amber House	Oral Health Project	Report written with findings and recommendations to continue working within the NG48 Guidelines. No further actions were required.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Lowfield House	Oral Health Project	Report written with findings and recommendations to register the home with the domiciliary dentist. The home is now working with the care co Ordinator and ANP nurse to seek an alternative dental service for their residents.
Ascot House	Oral Health Project	Report written with recommendations to support the maintenance of good oral hygiene standards.
Holly House	Oral Health Project	Report written with findings and recommendations. Oral health training has now taken place..
Norwood House	Oral Health Project	Report written with recommendations regarding maintenance of good oral hygiene standards and registering patients with either the community or domiciliary dental services.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Sycamore Lodge	Oral health Project	Report written with findings, recommendations to continue to work within the NG48 Guidelines
Applegate House	Oral Health Project	Report written with findings and recommendations to continue working within the NG48 Guidelines.
The Manor	Oral health Project	Report written with recommendations to discuss further funding options for one-to-one hours for a specific service user, and maintenance issues.
The Willows	Oral Health Project	Report written with findings and recommendations to consider registering the home with a domiciliary service or the community dental service., visual menus, activities planners and employing an activities coordinator. The home now has all residents registered with a dentist.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Lincolnshire House	Oral Health project	Report written with findings and recommendations regarding staff oral health training and initial oral assessment tools. The deputy manager informed Healthwatch and agreed to put all staff through oral health training.
The Mount	Oral Health Project	Report written with findings and recommendations for training. The Mount responded by saying they were working with all staff to complete the recommended training.
Castlethorpe Nursing Home	Healthwatch were invited by the care home to complete an Enter and View visit.	Report written with findings recommendations to implement an activities plan. The home has since implemented a weekly activities planner which has been well received.
Ward 27 Scunthorpe General Hospital	Follow up visit from June visit	Escalated to the Care Quality Commission and The Safeguarding Team. Awaiting a response.
Cambridge and Messingham Medical Practice	Healthwatch were invited by the G.P practice to complete an Enter and View visit.	Report written with recommendations. Regarding signage and directions within the surgery. Awaiting outcomes.

Statutory statements

2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)	Healthwatch staff spoke to over 60 people through public engagement as part of the North Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025, to understand the views and needs of local people regarding pharmacy provision in our area. We spoke to people who were not able to use electronic versions of surveys. This approach allowed them to have their say and be heard.
Rural Care at Home project	Feedback received from the public regarding their concerns around access to rural care at home was used to support the recommissioning of rural care at home support across North Lincolnshire.
Priorities Survey 2025	The findings from this report highlighted patient dissatisfaction with G.P appointments including telephone consultations. This instigated a telephone appointment project and survey.

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Healthwatch North Lincolnshire



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