



Speaking up for better care

Healthwatch Hampshire annual report
2025/26

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Acting Chief Executive
Chris McCann

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“The NHS plays a vital role in our lives, and we know it faces real challenges. Listening to people’s thoughts about their care is one of the best ways to improve services. Every comment, concern, and compliment helps health and care professionals see what works and what needs to change, so care can be safer and better for everyone.

“We want to say a heartfelt thanks to all the local people who have taken the time to share their experiences, and to the health and social care professionals who have listened and acted on that feedback. Your commitment has helped make a real difference for our community.”

A message from our chair

Wide ranging successes from our work this year include helping to improve understanding of the changing role of GP receptionists; reviewing and helping achieve improvements at QA Hospital new Emergency Department; raising the implementation of the National Accessible Information Standard leading to more staff training and public awareness; influencing older people's care to improve identification and support for those with frailty, dementia, and hearing and mobility needs; pushing for improved access to GP and dental care.

We made sure that community voices are heard at the highest level of decision-making both in the commissioning plans and in the organisations that provide care. This makes a difference by improving how services communicate, how accessible they are and how well they reflect what matters to local people.

Healthwatch Hampshire has had another successful year of seeking and representing the views of local residents about areas of health and social care that are important to them. We link with decision-makers to influence the choice and quality of care provided across Hampshire, speaking truth to power. My grateful thanks go to the whole Healthwatch team.



Chair
Liz Butterfield



“This year has shown again why independently seeking out community voices in an inclusive way, makes a real difference in shaping health and social care service to meet the needs of local people.”

About us

Healthwatch Hampshire is your local health and social care champion.

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

To stay informed about our latest projects, community feedback, and developments in local health and social care, subscribe to our [newsletter](#).



Our vision statement

A well-established, independent, reputable and 'go-to' service giving an effective voice for all people in Hampshire.



To effectively research what people need to know to understand their choices and how to act on these.

As system partners, share people's experiences of health and social care services with decision makers to recommend improvements and seek vital service changes.



To encourage involvement from the public to have their say, including underrepresented communities, to seek their views and show how feedback can influence and improve health outcomes that matter to them.

Our year in numbers

In 2025/2026 we supported more than 33,000 people to have their say and get information about their care. We employed **5** staff and, our work was supported by **4** volunteers.



Reaching out:

2493 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

30,650 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **registering with a GP** and **finding an NHS dentist by emailing, phoning, visiting our website or through social media**.



Championing your voice:

We published **3** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **home care, vaping** and **better public engagement around plans for a new hospital**.

Our most popular report was the Care at Home report, highlighting what is needed to listen to people's feedback.



Statutory funding:

We're funded by **Hampshire County Council**. In 2025/26 we received £249,518, which is 6% less than last year.

A year of making a difference

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

Spring

People speaking out about wheelchair services in Hampshire led to a more accessible website being developed, making it easier to navigate for service users.



Our information and signposting service meant that people were able to navigate the health and social care system more confidently.



Summer

We promoted surveys made by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board and Hampshire County Council.



Our Safeguarding campaign was released, including social media and blog posts, increasing awareness of safeguarding and how to get help.



Autumn

A report on vaping led by young volunteers was released and distributed to schools and local organisations to contribute to local work on vaping.



Our work on behalf of Frimley Park Hospital allowed them to understand barriers to community groups in getting care.



Winter

We produced guidelines for home care providers to use to gather feedback from their service users to improve their experience.



Our What Matters Most survey meant we heard diverse voices from across Hampshire, who told us their priorities for the upcoming year.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Hampshire and Isle of Wight are heard at the Integrated Care Board (ICB) level, and they influence decisions made about services at Hampshire and IOW ICB.

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) to achieve the following:



A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

Working collaboratively across Hampshire, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight and Southampton, the four local Healthwatch organisations have a strong partnership to support public engagement, funded by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight ICB. Together, we contribute to key system forums including the System Quality Group, Integrated Care Partnership, and a range of Transformation Boards.



A big conversation:

Through this collaborative approach, the four local Healthwatch have aligned their activity to gather, analyse and present patient feedback at scale. This includes for example, joint insight-gathering work on NHS dental appointment availability, supporting the ICB's flexible commissioning approach, and providing specialist patient and public involvement (PPI) support to system stakeholders.



Building strong relationships to achieve more:

In addition, our collaboration has driven Accessible Information Standard (AIS) work, supporting four priority workstreams and a dedicated steering group established in response to the findings. Across all of this work, we share insights with ICB leadership—who attend our quarterly meetings—using a combination of quantitative data, lived experience stories, and direct quotes from residents.

This collective evidence enables us to provide a richer, system-wide understanding of people's experiences and ensures that the patient voice is consistently embedded in decision-making to inform and improve local health and care services.

Working together for change

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

the
advocacy
people®



A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

The Advocacy People have provided consistent infrastructure, governance, and operational support to the seven hosted Healthwatch, enabling them to work both locally and collectively. This includes shared leadership, senior guidance, and coordination across contracts. We have created space for collaboration, ensured consistency where needed, and supported each service to retain its distinct local voice.



A big conversation:

The 7 local Healthwatch hosted by The Advocacy People have worked closely together in the last year. We have been proactive in our learning objective which was to understand the changing landscape for Healthwatch in response to Government proposals announced last July to transfer the functions of local Healthwatch to Integrated Care Boards and Local Authorities.



Building strong relationships to achieve more:

The Advocacy People supported the seven Healthwatch to lead meaningful community conversations by providing practical tools, coordination, and strategic oversight. This included enabling shared knowledge, supporting engagement planning, and facilitating the exchange of approaches and learning. We ensured local teams were equipped to respond to community priorities while linking these insights into a broader, coherent narrative at a regional level.

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 Hampshire 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.

People speaking out about wheelchair services in Hampshire led to a more accessible website being developed, making it easier to navigate for service users. Their stories enabled the service to better understand the issues they were facing and encouraged them to make change.



Getting services to involve the public

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

Our engagement work on behalf of Frimley Park Hospital allowed them to understand barriers faced by community groups in getting care, and how to make future engagement accessible, respectful, and meaningful. They are planning to build a new hospital and want to make sure they know the best way to engage with community when the process starts.



Improving care over time

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

In 2024, we ran a survey for wheelchair service users in Hampshire to listen to their experiences and make recommendations to the service provider. We have continually engaged with the provider since to ensure they are making the changes needed, and this year they developed a more accessible website, making it easier for service users to navigate. A new survey has been released based on this work, to ensure more people's voices are heard before the re-commissioning of wheelchair services.

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.



Ensuring people using care at home services have their voices heard

Last year, we championed the voices of Care at Home users and worked together with the companies who provide the care to produce a feedback guide to benefit the residents of Hampshire.

What did we do

We visited social groups for older people and support groups for carers and family members. During these sessions, we spoke with 30 people about care at home services and gathered ideas and preferences on how they would like to give feedback about their care. We also worked in partnership with Hampshire County Council and the Hampshire Care Association to create an online survey. This was sent to home care providers across Hampshire. We received responses from 30 organisations, who shared practical tips and examples of what works well for them when gathering and using feedback from clients and family members.

Key things we heard:



People viewed feedback as an opportunity to open dialogue and initiate changes in their care.

Clients and families prefer direct channels such as telephone, email, and in-person conversations.

Feedback questions should be short, focused on topics that are important to people, and available in a range of formats.

Our work also showed that closing the feedback loop is very important. Clients and families should be told what changed as a result of their input, using communication methods they prefer.

What difference did this make?

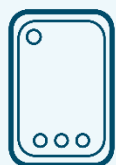
Responses from these engagements have been brought together to produce a guide for home care providers who may be new to gathering feedback or looking to improve the quality and level of feedback they receive about their services.

Action on vaping after young people speak out

Children and young people say more education and information are needed to highlight the risks of smoking and vaping.

Two proactive young Youthwatch volunteer recognised the impact that vaping was having on their peers and wanted to take action. They developed a series of questions to explore how much young people understood about the risks and dangers of vaping, and to gather ideas on how to improve the information and advice available to them. In total, 387 responses were received from young people aged 11 to 20 and above.

Key things we heard:



Although many young people felt that teenagers are generally aware of the risks, they also spoke about peer pressure, addiction, mental health issues and social image as being major reasons why young people continue to vape.

They don't feel that current information is sufficient and suggested more engaging and relatable education, stronger regulation and better support services would help their peers make better choices.



"I think they need to see a real-life scenario of it and share the effects of vaping in real life."

Overall, the results indicate that while many young people are aware of the risks, current information is not enough to change behaviour, and more impactful approaches are needed.

What difference did this make?

Our report was sent to schools, colleges and local organisations working on smoking and vaping to contribute to wider efforts to provide students with better resources to support them.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Hampshire. 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:

- Holding engagement events with underreached groups, such as the local Gurka community, to ensure their voices are heard.
- Targeting our engagement towards communities experiencing the highest levels of multiple deprivation, including parts of Gosport.
- We made sure local community voices were heard by NHS leaders and the Integrated Care Board by feeding resident insight into strategic meetings and system groups.



Improving access to healthcare within Gurkha communities

We spoke to members of the Gurkha community about barriers to healthcare.

Members of the group shared about language being the main barrier, and that the use of interpreters was inconsistent. We were told that they often took younger family members to help interpret, but this wasn't ideal, especially when sensitive information was being shared.

What did we do?

We raised these accessibility concerns among others we had heard at the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) Steering Group and continued to challenge providers on complying with the AIS.

Raising the voice of people with dementia and their carers

Again and again, we heard from patients with dementia and their carers about difficulties they were experiencing.

We listened to their concerns including long waits for an assessment, and concerns around hospital treatment including hydration, nutrition and person-centred care.

What did we do?

We raised these concerns through our contribution to the Hampshire Dementia Strategy, and our contributions were listened to and included in the strategy.

Information and signposting

When you're struggling to find an NHS dentist, looking for help about how to make a complaint, or need advice about a good care home for a loved one – we're your first port of call.

This year 58 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services. These conversations also help us to understand where, and how, your care can be made better.

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



Supporting people to find local support

People have contacted us when they don't know where to turn, and we always try and help them find the right support. We heard from a local resident who has Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) and was struggling to find information and support. She explained that there seemed to be a lack of available information on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight NHS website and she didn't know where to go.

We supported her to raise this herself with the ICB and also shared contact details for two ME support groups in Hampshire.

Helping people to access dental care

NHS dentistry was the second most common topic that people contacted us about over the year. People contacted us to share their experiences and to ask for our support in finding an NHS dentist. One individual said that there was no NHS dentists in their town and they had to phone 20 dentists in the surrounding area to find one taking patients.

Another individual contacted us to ask for our help to find a suitable dentist, having tried all local practices and repeatedly being told that they were not taking on new adult patients. We spent time on the phone with her looking through the list of NHS dentists and were able to find some alternative options for her to contact.



Cannot get a NHS dentist within 25 mile radius. We travel 85 miles each way to our old dentist in our old home city. This will become too hard as we get older.

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 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:

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Our Advisory Board members have attended strategic meetings to ensure the voices of Hampshire residents are heard at decision-making level
- Young volunteers promoted and contributed to our vaping survey, the results of which were collated into a report
- Joined collaborative projects with Hampshire County Council including Accessibility Ambassadors




Mike


"I like volunteering at HWH because it does me good! Of course it's important for a huge machine like the NHS to have lay people who can look at the experiences that massed data can't give you. But it also feels like a good use of my own time and makes me feel I can be helpful to others. I recommend it!"

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.healthwatchhampshire.co.uk

 01962 440 262

 enquiries@healthwatchhampshire.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Hampshire County 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	£249,518	Expenditure on pay	£162,128
Additional income	£21,776	Non-pay expenditure	£124,456
		Office and management fee	£95,217
Total income	£271,294	Total Expenditure	£380,869

Additional income is broken down into:

- £17,626 Received from Healthwatch England for the Secondment of a staff member
- £2650 from Luminus Insight CIC for pre-engagement proposal for Frimley Park Hospital project

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

- Healthwatch across **Hampshire and Isle of Wight** also receive funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including: £1500 from Hampshire and IOW ICB for Engagement in best practice advice & supporting community engagement activity.

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Engagement in best practice advice & supporting community engagement activity	£1,500

Finance and future priorities

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. Use people's top concerns: GP services, emergency and urgent care, children and young people's mental health, and dentistry to plan our work for the upcoming year.
2. Identify gaps in our engagement through highlighting areas of highest deprivation in Hampshire and planning engagement in those areas.
3. Engage new youth and adult volunteers to carry out projects based on their ideas and preferences combined with our priorities.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Hampshire, hosted by The Advocacy People
PO Box 375, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 9HU

Healthwatch Hampshire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch Advisory Board consists of 4 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

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

During 2025/26, the Board met 4 times and made decisions such as which recommendations as a focus in follow-up to Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust reply on our 'walk-thru' report of QA Hospital Emergency Department; to seek local data to compare Hampshire with national statistics on annual health checks for frail patients. In this way we ensure wider public involvement in decisions in 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 2025/26, 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.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We were pleased that all providers responded to requests for information or our recommendations. We escalated one issue to the Healthwatch England Committee - on Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (HIOWH) recruitment practices – who were seeking only internal candidates to fill clinical roles. We felt this did not broaden the demographic staff profile of the NHS Trust. HIOWH now invite external applications for clinical roles.

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. In our local authority area, we take information to the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board, Hampshire Adults Health and Care Governance Board – Experts by Experience Group, Hampshire Dementia Strategy Steering Group and the Hampshire Adults Health and Care Strategy Steering Group.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System. We give the Joint Quality Committee of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board our headline data on intelligence gathered and the issues behind the numbers. We work with the other three Healthwatch in Hampshire and Isle of Wight to provide system level summary data. We share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Hampshire is represented on the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Siobhain McCurrach, Healthwatch Area Director Hampshire, Portsmouth.

During 2025/26, our representative has effectively carried out this role by bringing to each of the quarterly meetings our intelligence from feedback gathered, linking it each to time to the issues being raised in the meeting. Ideas were then offered to encourage joint working between provider organisations and within Hampshire Adult Health and Care services to improve the way residents can access health and care support.

Healthwatch Hampshire is represented on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Partnership by Siobhain McCurrach, Healthwatch Area Director.

Enter and view

This year we have not had capacity within the team to carry out the program of enter and view visits. We have recently reviewed and updated the training for enter and view and successfully delivered the training to our new Healthwatch Hampshire volunteers, with the view to establishing enter and view visits in the next financial year.

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Queen Alexandra Emergency Department walkthrough	Improvements to the emergency department based on recommendations
Accessible Information Standard work	More staff training and public awareness
Influencing older people's care	Improved identification and support for those with frailty, dementia, hearing and mobility needs

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