

Speaking up for better care

healthwatch
Kingston upon Hull

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull
Annual report 2025/26

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Acting Chief Executive
Chris McCann

“

“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 CEO

This year, Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull have worked to ensure that the independent voice of the public is represented, especially focusing on the views from the seldom heard groups who are often overlooked.

This has been achieved by:

- Engaging with the local community by attending events, meetings and regular engagements across the health and social care network.
- Working within Adult Social Care including conducting Enter and View visits at local Care Homes and General Practices, both providing the opportunity for the service user's voice to be taken into consideration and used for future service improvements.
- Conducting a project around Autism and Mental Health; this gave an insight into the challenges faced and provided clear suggestions for improvement.
- Working with other Healthwatch teams to understand how the changes in national criteria for Non-Emergency Patient Transport are affecting people's access to services.



Helen Grimwood
Chief Executive Officer,
Hull CVS



“At Healthwatch Hull, we are on a mission to tackle health inequalities. We are reaching out to the most seldom-heard groups in our community. I want everyone to know that your voice matters, your experiences are valuable, and your feedback drives real change.”

About us

Healthwatch **Kingston Upon Hull** 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 Kingston Upon Hull the opportunity to have their voices heard and empower them to play an active role in shaping services in their community.



Our values are:

- 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 or equitable health and care services that meet the need of every person within our communities.

Our year in numbers

In 2025/2026 we supported more than **717** people to have their say and get information about their care. We employed **3** staff and, our work was supported by **6** volunteers



Reaching out:

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

523 People came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **finding an NHS dentist** and **community transport options**.



Championing your voice:

We published **5** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **Priority Survey, Youth Healthwatch, and Autism and Mental Health improvements**.

Our most popular report was **Autism and Mental Health report** highlighting people's struggles in **diagnosis, waiting well and support**.



Statutory funding:

We're funded by Hull City Council, In 2025/26 we received **£135,000**, 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 **Kingston upon Hull**. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Healthwatch Hull improved accessibility for visually impaired residents by raising concerns about large-print communications, prompting healthcare partners to review and improve information access.



Healthwatch Hull engaged residents, families, staff and care providers to shape residential care recommissioning, ensuring future services better meet local needs.



Summer

Healthwatch Hull gathered feedback from residents, patients and communities to improve mental health, autism support, GP services and residential care provision.



Healthwatch Hull gathered views from residents, families, staff and stakeholders to help shape a new residential care framework to meet future needs.



Autumn

Healthwatch Hull obtained feedback as part of the Priority Survey. The outcomes included the reliance on pharmacies, concerns about access, waiting times, and communication, especially for dentistry and mental health.



Through engagement, care home visits and partnership working, Healthwatch Hull ensured local voices shaped service improvements and influenced future health policies.



Winter

Healthwatch Hull completed the Autism and Mental Health Support project, sharing findings with the Local Authority to improve services and support neurodiverse residents.



Healthwatch Hull gathered views through GP engagements, ensuring service user feedback informed recommendations for future improvements.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighboring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in **Kingston upon Hull** are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services at The Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire to achieve the following:



Capturing patient voices on non-emergency patient transport:

Since the eligibility criteria changed in April 2025 some residents have had difficulty accessing non-emergency patient transport. Four local Healthwatch conducted a survey looking at accessibility. This, combined with other feedback provided by Humber and Wolds Rural Action and the North Lincolnshire Experts by Experience group, has informed our work. Overall, the feedback provided was negative. Information will be shared with ICB staff to help inform future service planning.



A Collaborative approach to making service improvements:

A significant increase in negative feedback about the PALS service has been identified across all four Healthwatch areas. Monthly meetings with the PALS team have been established to address concerns and manage emerging issues. Joint surveys are being developed to understand key challenges and inform an action plan for improvement. Findings and recommendations will be shared with the ICB upon completion of the project.



Working together to do more:

In spring, we shared the findings from our Cancer Awareness Measure Project, which we ran with the Cancer Alliance, with decision-makers at the Integrated Care Board. We now have a direct contact with the cancer lead at the ICB and local people will have fresh representation at ICB level, with the four Healthwatch across the Humber taking on this important role. We look forward to continuing to work together to improve care

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 **Kingston upon Hull** 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.

A key project focused on Adult Social Care, where we carried out care home Enter and View visits and GP engagements to gather residents' experiences. Feedback was shared directly with providers, ensuring local voices influenced future service improvements. This helped identify concerns, strengthen accountability and support better quality care, communication and outcomes for local people across Hull.



Improving Mental Health Services Through Lived Experience

How listening to the voices of the public has influenced ongoing improvements across mental health services in Hull.

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull used public feedback to improve understanding of how autistic people access mental health services, while also identifying wider health and care system changes needed to make services more accessible, person-centred and responsive.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We work in partnership with services to bring about change.

Healthwatch Hull has partnered with NHS, local authority, and community services to gather public feedback, identify concerns, and influence service improvements. Through engagement, quality assurance visits, co-production, and strategic partnerships, it has helped shape more accessible, person-centred health and social care services that better reflect local people's experiences and needs.

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.

Priorities Survey Report

Last year, we gathered patient voices to explore the public's health priorities and experiences within health and social care services.

This project was needed to ensure the public's voice shapes local health and social care. Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull's core mission is to make sure people are at the heart of care by listening to their experiences.

What did we do

We distributed a short survey at community engagement events, via email to contacts/volunteers and on social media to understand public health priorities and experiences with local health and social care. This feedback was embedded into the 2025/26 workplan with the priorities raised for Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull.

Key things we heard:



Make GP's more accessible & make it easier to make appointments

More availability of NHS Dentists & Appointments

Easier access for patients with a disability, accommodate carers more for planning care.



Get rid of stigma and judgement. People should be treated with kindness and compassion regardless of addiction, homelessness and multiple unmet needs.

Our work identified priorities for Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull from opinions and experiences of the public. This feedback was essential for creating Healthwatch Hull's workplan and ensuring it addressed the most pressing local needs.

What difference did this make?

The survey found high use of services, heavy reliance on pharmacies, and persistent concerns about access, waiting times, and communication, especially for dentistry and mental health. People want services that are joined-up, responsive, and respectful, with practical accessibility for disabilities and carers. These insights will shape Healthwatch Hull's 2026/27 priorities and projects.

Public Report on Cancer Awareness in Hull

This work was to understand the public awareness of cancer symptoms and risk factors, alongside barriers of seeking help and participating in screening.

York St John University and Healthwatch Hull conducted a regional survey across Humber and North Yorkshire using a mix of phone interviews, online panels and targeted outreach to harder-to-reach communities. This was further supported by engagement from Healthwatch and voluntary organisations to include voices often underrepresented, such as people experiencing homelessness and those with learning disabilities.

Key things we heard:



43%

of Hull respondents contacted their GP within six months of symptoms (vs 49% regionally).

70%

of respondents secured an appointment within a week (vs 73%) and 23% reporting difficulty getting an appointment (vs 15%).

14%

Fewer respondents said nothing delayed them (vs 22% regionally), indicating greater perceived barriers to accessing care in Hull.



A total of 6,167 people across the region of Humber and North Yorkshire responded to the survey, including 1,028 who live in Hull (16.7%), and 98 individual one-to-one conversations.

What did we find?

Overall, respondents in Hull show lower awareness of cancer symptoms and face greater challenges in accessing care compared to the wider Humber and North Yorkshire population. They are less likely to seek help promptly, more likely to report difficulties securing GP appointments, and more likely to experience barriers that delay seeking medical attention. In addition, screening uptake is consistently lower, indicating a need for targeted action to improve awareness, access to services, and engagement with cancer prevention and early detection programmes.

Autism and Mental Health Project

Healthwatch Hull initiated this project in response to feedback highlighting that people with autism face difficulties accessing mental health services in Hull.

People with autism reported multiple barriers when interacting with mental health services, including long waiting times for referrals and limited support during this period. Services were often perceived as unsuitable, with approaches such as group sessions feeling too generic to meet individual needs. Many individuals felt there were excessive hurdles to access support, and some believed their mental health concerns were either not considered severe enough or were too complex to be properly addressed by services.

Key things we heard:



'Everything is a battle, I was waiting 3 years for a diagnosis then when we finally got one, it was another battle again to get a psychiatrist'



'It (the wait times) is impacting me immensely. To know that there could be something available for me that could help me and not have access to it is cruel and ridiculous'



'Since my autism diagnosis, I have noticed that my GP takes me less seriously and keeps information from me. I need to ask for follow up appointments to discuss findings/referrals and read my notes online'

Throughout our engagement we spoke to a total of **79** people in Hull who had a diagnosis of autism and had required support from mental health services or had a child who had required support. We spoke to **18** stakeholders from organisations who support people with a diagnosis of autism and/or mental health need.

What difference did this make?

The report highlighted key recommendations that we have shared with the stakeholders. Healthcare services for individuals with autism and co-occurring mental health conditions show positive progress in accessibility. However, key improvements are required to ensure patients receive effective care. Providers must standardise communication and train staff to interact more effectively with autistic individuals.

Long waiting times for diagnoses and medication must be reduced, and services must actively support patients while they wait for treatment.

Additionally, immediate transparency is needed regarding Shared Care Protocols to prevent patients from facing unexpected fees for NHS medication. Finally, services must adopt a person-centred approach, treating patients as individuals and evaluating new symptoms objectively rather than dismissing them as part of existing diagnoses.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of **Kingston upon Hull**. 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:

- Attending a range of community groups, and meetings to gather experiences. This has included Age UK, Butterflies Memory Loss Support Group, Blossoms, Hey Endo and Welcome House.
- The Healthwatch Hull Priority Survey, offered local residents the opportunity to share their views on health services, either in person at various engagement events and via an online survey with a QR code shared across all social media platforms.
- Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull gathered young people's experiences of health services as part of the Young Healthwatch initiative. Feedback from this has allowed us to share findings with NHS and education leaders, influencing service reviews, recommendations and future improvements.



Residential Care Reimagined

We examined residential and nursing care homes across the city.

We engaged directly with residents, families, staff, and wider stakeholders to define the core elements of high-quality care. Through this engagement, we identified operational pressures, obtained frontline ideas for improvement, and provided these insights to inform the re-commissioning of residential care services.

What difference did this make?

Our findings highlight that many care homes deliver warm, person-centred care in a safe and welcoming environment. The success of these facilities include high staff stability, supportive management, and collaboration with GPs, community health services, and local voluntary organisations.

Care providers face pressure from resident complexity alongside funding and pay challenges. This combination drives high staff turnover, and reliance on agency staff, and reduced capacity for meaningful care.

Staff can feel under-prepared for specialized care requirements —such as dementia and end-of-life care, due to gaps in training and emotional support. Funding models may also compromise resident personal allowances, creating financial insecurity that hinders planning and can impact daily quality of life.

Secondary Care and Mental Health Engagements

Healthwatch Hull have developed a robust programme of engagement within Secondary care.

This engagement across Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill hospital allows for a deeper understanding of patient experience from a cross section of secondary care areas.

What difference did this make?

The intelligence gathered from these engagements is analysed and trends and themes are identified to assist with intelligence gathering.

Feedback is escalated through appropriate channels where required. These engagements help to build a picture of secondary care and mental health services in the area and support in driving improvements.

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 523 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



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Healthwatch Hull have received concerns about the PALS service, including delays around communication and effective responses to complaints.

There has been an increasing trend of negative experiences raised around the PALS service. This has been raised at the Patient Experience Group meetings with the Humber and Health Partnership.

We are working with the PALS team to collaboratively find a resolution and improve the standard and timescale for responses.



“Complaint regarding access to services. Waited five months to be told the referral was rejected. Errors have also been recorded incorrectly in medical records.”

Non-Emergency Transport is impacting Kingston upon Hull healthcare access

Healthwatch Hull have obtained feedback regarding local residents’ transport experiences, highlighting missed appointments, rising travel costs and accessibility barriers affecting healthcare access.

After gathering experiences detailing the challenges of the non-Emergency Transport Service, Healthwatch Hull has shared the experiences with stakeholders to work collaboratively to improve services for local residents.



“My mother-in-law requires the use of patient transport services to get to her hospital appointments. There are occasions where they are late to collect her with no warning, they just come when they like. We've recently had to call the hospital to change her appointments around so she can still get seen. It causes her so much anxiety, she's worried that she won't get seen if she turns up late”

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 35 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Visited community settings to promote our work and supported them to share their views
- Interpreter volunteers played an important role in collecting feedback from people who speak English as a second language
- Supported the office teams with public engagement events
- Carried out Read/Well tasks to ensure NHS and Public Health information is accessible to as many people as possible.



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.



Liz

“Volunteering with Healthwatch helps me feel that I make a positive impact in our community.

It’s been fantastic to see the positive outcomes and recommendations put forward at both local and national levels, that link back directly to the feedback gathered by Healthwatch team. All told it’s been a very rewarding experience!”

Liz

“Being a volunteer interpreter for Healthwatch has given me the opportunity to contribute to a cause that genuinely values people’s voices in shaping health and social care services

This role has also allowed me to grow personally by enhancing my communication and listening skills, and by learning to engage with people from all different backgrounds with sensitivity and respect. Healthwatch is more than a national organisation –it’s a movement for inclusive, community-led improvement in healthcare”.

Hadeel



Hadeel

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.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk



01482 595505



enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from **Hull City 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	£135,000	Expenditure on pay	£73,909.13
Additional income	£0	Non-pay expenditure	£1,714.71
		Office and management fee	£52,326.20
Total income	£135,000	Total Expenditure	£127,950.04

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. Continue working with the Kingston Upon Hull Neighbourhood Health Partnership Steering Group on their Strategic Plans identified by Locality Area Leads
2. Provide the Adult Social Care Improvement Board with “independent voices” from local people on the improvements that Adult Social Care are making across the Local Authority.
3. PALS service – we will be conducting an in-depth review of the PALS service to collaboratively work to improve this services across Kingston Upon Hull and the other Healthwatch areas. We will be engaging with service users & service providers and making recommendations for service improvements in our report.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull, Kingston Upon Hull, The Strand, 75 Beverley Road, Hull, HU3 1XL.

Contract holder: Hull CVS Ltd. The Strand, 75 Beverley Road, Hull. HU3 1XL.

Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull 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 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.

Throughout 2025/26, the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as workplan priorities and funding allocations. 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 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, and we will publish it on our website.

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 the Health and Well Being Board, Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee, Safeguarding Adults Board and the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership Board. For example, we are members of the Hull and East Riding Joint Place Quality Group, Neighbourhood Health and Care Delivery Group, LPC Committee, and the Patient Experience and Learning Group. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull is represented on the Hull City Council Health and Wellbeing Board by Ellie the Healthwatch Hull Manager

During 2025/26, our representative has effectively carried out this role by contributing to discussions and strategic decisions, raising issues and providing information on Healthwatch activities.

Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull is represented on Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership by Ashley Green, Healthwatch North Yorkshire Chief Executive Officer and Humber by Helen Grimwood, Hull CVS Chief Executive Officer.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
St Mary's Care Home	Visit was based on concerns raised by a relative of a resident	Wrote a report with recommendations – this was shared with the care home and the local authority.

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Residential Care Reimagined Report	Recommendations were shared with the care homes involved, and with the local authority. The service followed up on these actions and improvements have been carried out
Priorities Survey Report	Recommendations obtained to inform the priorities for Healthwatch Hull over 2026/2027.
Healthwatch Hull and Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance	Healthwatch Hull supported the Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance to strengthen their cancer strategy through public insight. This input directly informed the Alliance's strategy and led to improvements in the accessibility and clarity of cancer-related information and screening services for the public.
Autism and Mental Health Report	Provided insight and recommendations on how people with Autism and Mental issues can be better supported in Hull.

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