

Together

We're making health
and social care better

Annual Report **2022**–**2023**

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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

“Welcome to this year’s annual report for Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire (HWNW). It has been another very busy year for us with lots of challenges. I took up the post of Interim Chair, with Professor Will Pope as the Vice-Chair, and we expanded the Advisory Board at the same time to help support staff meet those challenges. More information about our Board can be found on page 30.

We engaged with the public this year on many issues. One of the main issues was, and still is, access to dentistry. We wrote to all our local MPs in the summer to raise this issue with ministers on your behalf, continue to attend the Northamptonshire Oral Health Alliance and feedback all the public concerns raised with us throughout the year. This will continue to be high on our agenda for 2023/24 too.

266 people completed our GP Access survey and many more of you contacted us throughout the year raising this as one of your major concerns. We will continue to discuss this with the local Integrated Care System in Northamptonshire (ICS), Local Medical Committee (LMC) and others to highlight the need for better communication between GPs and patients to work together to improve access to local services.

In January 2023 we used our statutory powers of Enter and View and carried out two unannounced visits to the A&E departments at Northampton General Hospital (NGH) and Kettering General Hospital (KGH).

We did an announced visit to Corby Urgent Care Centre in February 2023 with our neighbour Healthwatch Rutland, which is a good example of where we work with our partners on cross-border issues.

Young Healthwatch also completed its project in East Northamptonshire on health and wellbeing.

More detailed information about all our projects and visits is contained later in this report.

My special thanks go to my colleagues on the HWNW Advisory Board for all their help and support this year, our volunteers on our Planning Group who are the eyes and ears of the organisation, and to the staff that have stepped up to cover illness or absence to keep us on track.”



Morcea Walker
Interim Chair

Morcea Walker OBE
Interim Chair of HWNW
Deputy Lord Lieutenant

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

About us

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire is your local health and social care champion.

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



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.

“Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire will be a strong, resolute, and independent community champion. We will give local people a voice and work in partnership to influence the design and quality of health and social care provision so that all local people have an opportunity for an improved quality of life”



Our mission

To make sure people’s experiences help make health and care better.

We have five strategic priorities within our mission:

- To deliver our statutory functions
- To champion the views of all people who live in or use health, social care or wellbeing services in Northamptonshire and commit to prioritising issues related to health inequalities
- To recruit and develop staff and volunteers in Northamptonshire to continue to build the capacity of Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire as an independent consumer champion of health, social care and wellbeing
- To work in co-production for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for adults, including vulnerable adults and carers
- To work for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for children, young people and families



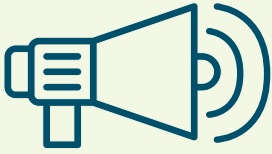
Our values:

- We will be accessible and visible
- We will be independent and objective
- We will be open, honest, and transparent in all that we do
- We will be inclusive and embrace diversity and equality, reflecting the diverse needs of local people
- We will listen to and understand the views and needs of local people
- We will speak up for local people and enable people to speak for themselves
- We will be fair and credible
- We will seek out and use evidence, including that from the public, to inform our work
- We will strive to make a positive difference and champion the best possible health and social care for local people



Year in review

Reaching out



682 people

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

1343 subscribers

to our monthly newsletters

22,569 impressions

on our social media pages, including Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire

2 appearances

at local focus groups

90 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis

Making a difference to care



This year we published

5 reports

regarding the improvements people would like to see in local health and social care services.

Our most popular report was:

Accessing GP Appointments in Northamptonshire

Where we created a short survey to gather the public's views on the accessibility of GP services in the county.

To read our reports:

www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/news-and-reports

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have **14** outstanding active volunteers and lots more we can call on for other things. Our volunteers worked extremely hard throughout the year giving up their own time to ensure that the voice of the public was heard by commissioners and health service providers.

They voluntarily gave over **1200** hours of their time in 2022/23 by attending meetings and events, reading papers and commenting on documents, and visiting premises on behalf of the public. This equates to 160 days' work (7.5 hour per day) and a substantive cost saving to the county.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£195,000

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

6 part time staff

who help us carry out our work.



“I love working across different communities and seeing the difference it makes. My work has been a kaleidoscope of activity. I haven't got a favourite moment but I love working with people.”

How we've made a difference this year

Spring



Visited KGH and NGH A&E unannounced after issues were raised both locally and nationally.



Visited Corby Urgent Care Centre and made recommendations for improvement

Summer



Supported Young Healthwatch with their Health and Wellbeing Project in East Northamptonshire .



Responded to the Quality Accounts of all local health providers e.g. KGH, NGH and NHFT.

Autumn



Attended meetings with Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN) on the development of the 10-year strategy for the county.



Worked with the ICN on the development of the new Community Diagnostic Centres to ensure that they are publicly accessible.

Winter



Met with the ICN and Local Medical Committee (LMC) about our GP Access Report.



Worked with the ICN to upload all our reports to the new Insight and Engagement library.

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

126 reports published

We have published 126 reports on topics such as mental health, hospital care, and COVID-19



Worked with young people

We have pioneered several community projects in collaboration with Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire



Been awarded the Investing in Children accreditation

We were the first organisation in Northamptonshire to receive this accreditation



Won and been shortlisted for numerous awards

We have won and been nominated for several awards for our hard work in making a difference



Gained more than 12500 responses

We have received more than 12500 responses to our projects and surveys

Over the past 10 years we have been recognised and awarded **16** times, you read about several of our achievements below:



Kate Holt, Chief Executive Officer, collecting an award for our work with volunteers

- In 2020 we were shortlisted for a national award for undertaking 43 visits to 50 wards and departments at Kettering General Hospital (KGH) between April 2019 and March 2020.
- Healthwatch Northamptonshire was a finalist in the East Midlands Academic Health Science Network Awards in 2015 for “Patient identified innovations” and received a “Highly Commended” for “Making a difference in diversity and inclusion”. Both awards related to the engagement work with children, young people and families.
- Healthwatch Northamptonshire won the “Helping people have their say” category at the Healthwatch England awards for engaging with 500 new parents to gain and share their views on maternity services.

We have also gained many accreditations:



Investing in Children

Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire was the first group in the county to obtain the **Investing in Children** accreditation in 2018.

Cyber Essentials

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire were accredited with **Cyber Essentials** for the first time in 2023. This accreditation shows that we can protect against common cyber threats.

Investing in Volunteers

Healthwatch Northamptonshire again received the **Investing in Volunteers** accreditation in 2022. Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations involving volunteers.



Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Advocating for fairer NHS dentistry



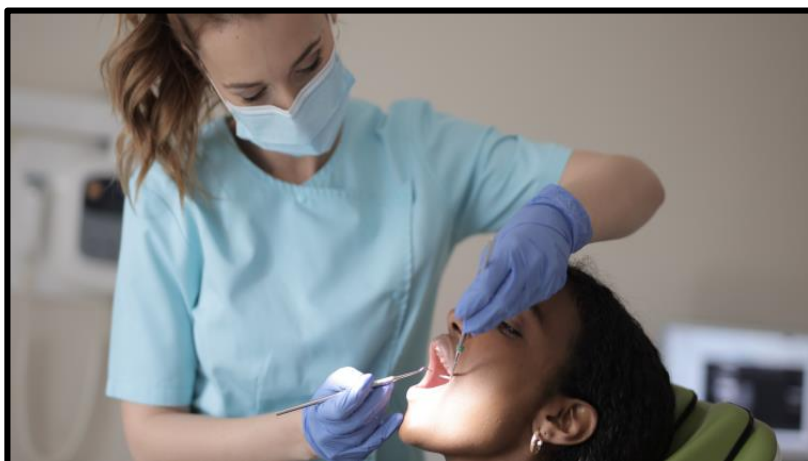
In 2022/23 access to dentistry was a big issue for everyone in Northamptonshire and across the country. 113 people contacted us raising issues about being unable to access a dentist for themselves or a loved one.

In September 2022 the HWNW Advisory Board wrote to all MPs in Northamptonshire to raise the issue with them. We received responses from 4 MPs in total, Philip Hollobone MP, Rt Hon Michael Ellis MP, Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP and Tom Pursglove MP. We received 1 response from NHS England via Philip Hollobone MP and were then invited to meet with Daisy Pierce the Chief of Staff for Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP in December 2022 who said they would raise the issue with Ministers. We then received a response via Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP from the Department of Health and Social Care regarding this matter in March 2023.

Dr Judith Husband BDS, from the Northamptonshire Local Dental Committee and an Executive Member of the British Dental Association General Dental Practice Committee, also attended our Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Planning Group meeting in September 2022 to give us an update on the situation and the issues with the NHS dentistry contract for services which were adding to the problem. Our Healthwatch volunteer, Chris Drage, also attends the Northamptonshire Oral Health Alliance meetings and the meetings with the NHS Commissioners and the Local Dental Network chairs

Along with Healthwatch England, we are calling for:

1. **A more rapid and radical reform of how dentistry is commissioned and provided** – recognising that the current arrangements do not meet the needs of many people who cannot access NHS dental care in a timely way and acknowledging issues faced by the dental profession.
2. **The use of the commissioning reform to tackle the twin crises of access and affordability** – ensuring that people are not excluded from dental services because of lack of local provision or difficulty meeting charges. Currently, there are significant inequalities that must be tackled. **New arrangements should be based on maximising access to NHS dental services, particularly reducing inequalities.**
3. **Greater clarity in the information about NHS dentistry** – improving information, including online, so that people have a clear picture of where and how they can access services, as well as the cost. **The reform must address dentistry 'registration' which causes significant confusion for both services and patients.**
4. **The possibility of using dental practices to support people's general health** – harnessing opportunities, like the development of Primary Care Networks, to link oral health to other key issues, such as weight management and smoking cessation.



Read about Healthwatch England's position on NHS Dentistry:

www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/2022-10-12/our-position-nhs-dentistry

How we made a difference

From 1st April 2022 until 1st April 2023 Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Published 5 reports.

These were:

- GP Access
- Unannounced visit to KGH.
- Unannounced visit to NGH
- Young People's health and well-being survey
- Corby Urgent Care Centre

Accessing GP appointments in Northamptonshire

In response to the issues raised about problems accessing GP appointments in the county, Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire created a short survey in 2022 to ask the public their views about what was working well and what could be improved to enhance the accessibility of GP services in the county.

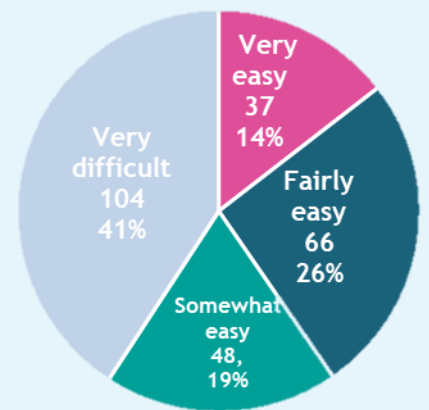
The survey was completed by 266 people in Northamptonshire. Additionally, another 53 pieces of feedback, both positive and negative, were received between April 2022 and December 2022. People told us about their experiences, from accessing appointments, to the care they were provided. Along with the issues raised, there were also some very positive comments about the patient experience.

We found the main concerns in Northamptonshire were related to difficulties in getting a response to telephone calls with the phone lines often being continuously engaged. Other issues highlighted were the difficulty in getting pre-booked face-to-face appointments, concerns about having a long wait for an appointment, and the inability to see the practitioner of their choice.

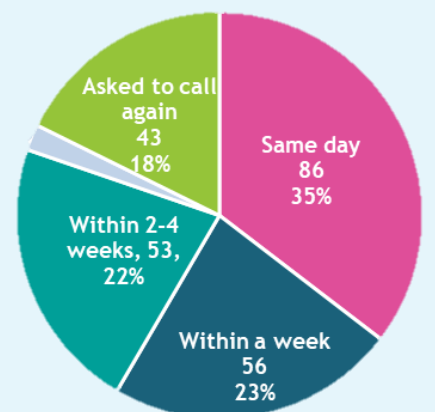
Suggestions for improvements included working to implement reduced waiting times when telephoning for an appointment; more face-to-face GP appointments, the facility to book online, better support for those with long-term conditions in securing appointments, and facilities for wheelchair users.

Unfortunately, this report reflected many of the same findings as our report 'Patient Experiences of GP Services in Northamptonshire' undertaken in 2015.

The ease of getting a GP appointment



How long after contacting the surgery patients received an appointment



As part of our report process, we sent the draft report to both commissioners and providers of NHS services in Northamptonshire on 5th January 2023. No formal response to the report was received by the time of publishing. (23rd March 2023)

- The telephone systems appear to be inadequate. Several patients spoke of long waits for a response – sometimes up to an hour, only to be told there were no available appointments and to ring back the next day
- Patients with non-urgent conditions said that they would have been happy to have a pre-booked appointment but accepted an on the day slot as that was all that was on offer
- Patients said waiting to be given an appointment and no indication when that would be caused anxiety
- There were occasions where patients tried to explain why they needed an appointment but were not listened to by the receptionist



☞ I'm a nurse and only call when I need to be seen. The GP needed to physically examine me, but the receptionist still put it down as a telephone consultation, even though I explained and it was obvious it would need looking at. I was then given an appointment with a nurse who then said I need to see a GP, but she couldn't book the appointment, so I then had to start the process of calling to book to see a GP. ☞

To read the full report please follow the link:

[Final GP Access Report March 2023.pdf \(healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk\)](https://healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/Final%20GP%20Access%20Report%20March%202023.pdf)

Unannounced visit to Northampton General Hospital Accident and Emergency Department

Volunteers from Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire visited Northampton General Hospital's A&E department unannounced using their statutory power to conduct Enter and View visits on 31st January 2023.

Based on feedback from the public, and other service providers, including comments posted on social media platforms, the Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire (HWNW) Advisory Board agreed to use their statutory powers to undertake an unannounced visit to the NGH A&E department.

The hospital was informed before the visit that it would be taking place and by whom but did not know the date or time of the visit before it happened.

The volunteers spoke to 15 patients about their experiences of the service, from the parking and waiting times to the care they were provided.

Three volunteers, including 2 Advisory Board Members (the team) from Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire, visited the Northampton General Hospital Emergency (NGH) department for an unannounced visit on 31st January 2023, starting at 11.30 am.

The volunteers spoke to several patients about their experiences. This report, written by our volunteers, is a snapshot of the hospital's Emergency Department on that day along with the team's recommendations to improve the patient experience locally. It is not a comment on the situation nationally, Government policy or the need for additional resources in Emergency departments across the country.

We made 3 recommendations which were:

Recommendation 1: Signage appears to be a perennial issue for hospitals. There was not sufficient signage outside of the department to make it easy for patients or their relatives to know which entrance to use. We recommend that someone unfamiliar with the ED area is asked to say where the best place should be for signs to be placed so that anxious patients know immediately where to go.

Recommendation 3: In the waiting areas, patients asked us what would happen to them next in regard to their treatment/ visit. We recommend a board be placed on the wall or leaflets made available describing the process.

Recommendation 2: Staff should be encouraged to continue to inform patients about what is going to happen to them next during their treatment or visit– they may find this a bit tiresome, but patients are understandably anxious and need a lot of reassurance whilst in the Emergency Department. Patients do not always hear what is said to them the first, or even the second time.

We are conscious that the new Emergency Department Steaming Hub opened on 26th January 2023, which was shortly followed by the Healthwatch visit on 31st January 2023.

We have also been informed since the visit that the following actions are underway and are being overseen by the Director for Estates and Facilities:

- A review of all signage around the Emergency Departments including Springfield.
- Car parking and vehicle flow around the Nye Bevan and ED routes are to be reviewed
- A report of the car park ticket machines covering 3 months of performance will be requested and analysed for any specific recurring issues to relay back to the supplier / Estates team
- A request to be made of our NGH Communications team to create a holistic 'bumble bee' journey approach for patients with conditions such as learning disabilities, autism, etc

We also received the below response from the provider:

“Northampton General Hospital (NGH) welcomed the opportunity of this external review of our Emergency Department services by Healthwatch and we are grateful for the findings and recommendation made as part of the visit. This unannounced visit came within the same week as NGH opened its new Streaming Hub for the Emergency Departments as part of our plans to improve patient pathways and their experience whilst in our care. We have taken onboard the observations noted within the report and will be working with our nursing and clinical leads within the Emergency Departments alongside our Estates and Facilities team to enhance the service further. ”

Christine Johnson Head of Patient Experience and Engagement

To read the full report please follow the link:

[NGH A and E January 2023 \(healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk\)](https://healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk)



Unannounced visit to the Kettering General Hospital Accident and Emergency Department



This unannounced visit was conducted for the same reasons as the unannounced visit to NGH. Two volunteers, both Advisory Board Members (the team) from Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire visited the Kettering General Hospital (KGH) Accident and Emergency (A&E) department for an unannounced visit on 31st January 2023.

The hospital was informed before the visit that it would be undertaken and by whom but did not know the date or time of the visit before it happened.

The volunteers spoke to 11 patients about their experiences.

We only had one minor recommendation:

At one point in our visit a patient was called to be triaged and tripped and fell over a low table that was situated at the end of a row of chairs. We suggest the table would be more appropriately placed between two chairs rather than at the end of the row.

Commissioner/provider response:

“Thank you for taking the time to complete the recent visit to our Accident & Emergency department. We always strive to improve our patients’ experiences by listening and acting on feedback, so this is very helpful to us. We have noted the recommendations given to us by Healthwatch and can confirm that the table in our ED department has been moved accordingly. We note that some of the patients the volunteers spoke to raised issues regarding waiting times on recent visits, and we always try our best to keep waiting times to a minimum where we can. We are so pleased that our patients felt that they were treated with dignity and respect by our staff members and that our department was a calm environment. We will ensure we consider these findings to improve services as we believe that patients’ voices can help to shape a better Healthcare Service for the future.”

Lucy Jones Head of Patient Experience and Engagement

To read the full report please follow the link:

[KGH A and E January 2023 \(healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk\)](https://healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk)

Corby Urgent Care Centre

Three volunteers and a member of staff from Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire and Healthwatch Rutland visited the CUCC. The HWR team visited on Saturday 11th February 2023 and the HWNW team on Friday 17th February 2023. The visits were at the request of CUCC as part of their commitment to engage with, and get feedback from, members of the public as part of their programme of continuous improvement.

We spoke to 24 people/patients over the 2 days that we visited, and 14 people filled out our short online survey. Overall patients were very satisfied with the service received.

We made 9 minor recommendations for service improvement:

1: We suggest that the provision of hot drinks should be considered. The coffee shop closes at 2 pm and there are no other refreshments available except water

3: In the Clinical waiting area toilets, one of the taps was wobbly and hard to use, and needs to be fixed

5: The women's toilet did not have a cleaning schedule in it. We suggest that one is put up

7: There are male and female toilets at the main entrance but they are not well signed and some new signs would make it clear that the toilets are there

9: Communications with patients could be improved to keep them better informed whilst waiting

2: Two of the gel dispensers needed refilling in the Clinical waiting area, dispensers need to be checked regularly

4: There is good disabled access. However, the chairs are joined together so you cannot move the seats around to sit next to a person in a wheelchair

6: The staff notice board at the end of the corridor was crowded with leaflets and posters and we suggest they could have been more tidily arranged and updated

8: Staff need to be reminded that using terms of endearment to patients and visitors may cause offence and should not be used

"I was seen within an hour of arriving which was brilliant. The gentleman I saw was professional, capable, and very thorough with my eye injury. I am so very grateful to have this amazing urgent care facility in Corby"



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to ensure we hear from everyone within our local area.

We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Listening to children and young people through Young Healthwatch and their project
- Change Grow Live Project – Homeless and substance misusers views of the service

Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire (YHWN)



Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire ensures that the voice of children and young people is heard in health and social care services. They engage with and represent young people to help improve services in Northamptonshire.



This year Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire gathered the views of young people aged 11–19 year-olds living in East Northamptonshire using a short survey. The survey asked about young people’s physical health, lifestyle, emotional health, and how they manage difficult emotions.

The young people provided important information about services and how they believe that they could help them to cope with anxiety and other issues. Many of the respondents commented on what they feel would work for them and how they would like to receive health and wellbeing services in the area.

This information received will help inform and shape services in East Northamptonshire to better care for young people’s health and wellbeing.

Young people's mental health is extremely important. Mental health issues affect many people. One in four people will suffer from some sort of mental health illness at some stage of their life, including young people.

The demands on young people today have never been as high; from social media to exams to relationships. Many of these issues lead to poor health and wellbeing and the need for more and more support services.

Combined with this are young people living in areas of deprivation, which can be both social and financial deprivation and/or multiple deprivations, where they are exposed to poor diets, smoking and other substances, along with a lack of exercise and health inequalities are at more risk.

The survey included questions about how young people engage with leisure activities locally. The survey asked young people about their health and habits, and the health and emotional issues they think affect young people.

Taking into account the limitations of the project and the relatively small number of respondents, it was difficult to make definitive recommendations for commissioners and providers of children's services in East Northamptonshire.

There were several issues raised:

- Long waiting times and poor availability of support services outside of school hours.
- Over half the respondents answered 'yes' to suspecting a friend was self-harming.
- Self-harming is common for young people.

Teachers and parents, followed by counselling services (e.g., Service Six) are the top three choices for young people to approach to discuss issues with and therefore should continue to be where resources are focussed to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people going forward.



Commissioner/provider response:

'It is widely acknowledged that the early years of a child or young person's life will affect their health and care outcomes for life and how a range of factors, including health, education, community and family life, contribute to a child's sense of health and wellbeing. We believe that the best way to fully understand these factors is through the voice of our county's children and young people. Engagement with our young people is central to our work in delivering better health outcomes and as such we welcome the publication of this report. It provides us with a powerful lens through which to reflect, focus and plan our work and many of the themes highlighted within the report; will be pivotal in addressing priority areas (including those outlined in the Northamptonshire Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Local Transformation Plan) and in the development of effective co-produced services and initiatives that best meet our children's needs.

We would like to extend special thanks to the young people involved in this valuable piece of work and congratulate you all on your tenacity in completing it during such an unprecedented time of challenge for all.'

Sian Heale - Senior Transformation Officer on behalf of the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board



In total we received 28 responses to the survey between March 2020 and September 2022. To read the full report please follow the link below:

[YHW report Feb 2023.pdf](#)
(healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk)



Change Grow Live (CGL)

We were commissioned at the beginning of 2023 to do a small piece of work with the Change Grow Live organisation. (CGL drug, alcohol and substance misuse service).

They are keen to use the independence of Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire as an opportunity to hear the voice of those that seek their support and to inform future service planning and provision to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable people in Northamptonshire.

We designed and launched a survey and held two focus groups with service users in March. This work and the final report will be completed in 2023.



For more information on CGL and the Substance to Solution service please see the link below for their website:

www.changegrowlive.org/substance-to-solution-northamptonshire/northampton



Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) Pilot

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is a national programme that was started in 2010 by the Local Government Association and ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Care). They are a sector-led initiative which aims to develop an outcomes focus to safeguarding work, and a range of responses to support people to improve or resolve their circumstances. Whilst much has been done to ensure that safeguarding for individuals is outcome-focused and not solely process-driven, Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) were keen to evaluate how embedded MSP is in the county, to ensure that the individual's outcomes are at the heart of any interaction.

We were asked by the NSAB to undertake a pilot project to seek feedback from service users at the end of section 42 safeguarding enquiry. Social workers asked the adult, or their representative, if they would be happy to be contacted by Healthwatch on behalf of NSAB, to discuss their experience of going through the enquiry and whether they felt they were listened to, and now felt safer.

Although the response to this has been smaller than hoped, we will continue working with NSAB in 23/24 to ensure that service user feedback remains a priority.

To read about the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board's role in the community, follow this link: www.northamptonshiresab.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx





Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote Healthwatch and what we do
- Collected experiences and supported communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Attended meetings
- Wrote reports
- Responded to consultations and NHS provider Quality Accounts

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Advisory Board consists of 9 members chaired by Morcea Walker OBE who all work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met quarterly and made decisions on matters such as raising the issue of access to dentistry with MPs and responding to consultations.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

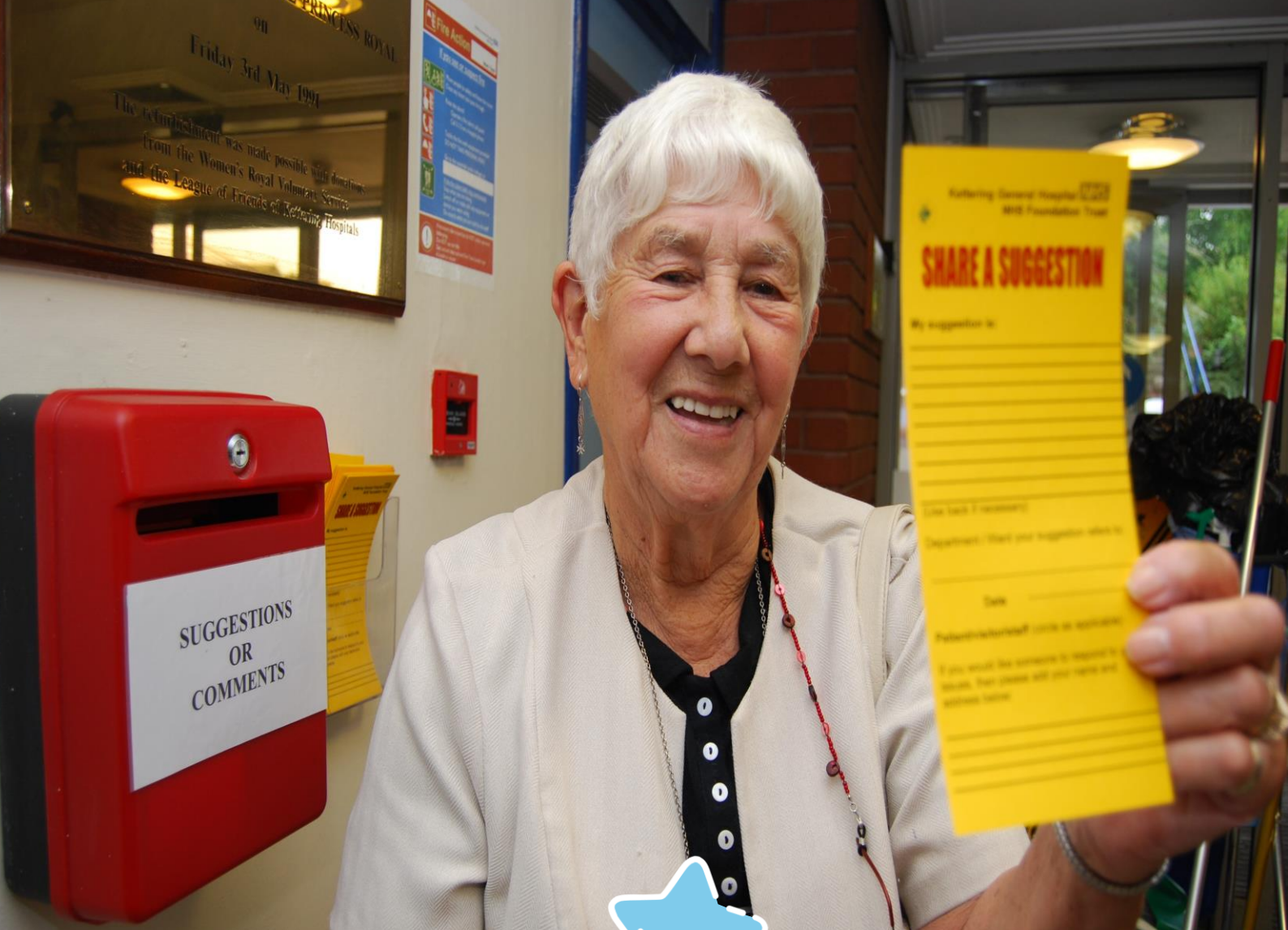
Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Boards

Representatives from Healthwatch West and North Northamptonshire are invited to attend the Health and Wellbeing Board Meetings which are held quarterly.

These two Boards receive reports and proposed plans from Health and Care organisations across the county. The HWBBs hear presentations updating work in various areas, and proposed plans for new initiatives. Papers are considered by the Boards and noted or approved. Members are invited to ask questions about the presentations. Members of the public can also ask questions but these must be submitted in advance of the meeting.

Some of the papers will be relevant to both Boards when they refer to a countywide proposal or organisation. Some will be relevant to the North or the West only. These are some of the discussions we have been involved in this year:

- The Director of **Public Health Annual Report** giving feedback on the Health and Equalities was approved
- **The Direction of Travel – three-year strategy being put into place by Public Health across Northamptonshire was approved.**
- **Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Annual Report** was approved
- Information on the start of the **Community Wellbeing Forums and Local Area Partnerships** was noted in November 2022 and an update given in March 2023 was approved
- The **Better Care Fund Plan**, transforming North Northants Council Adult Services was approved in November 2022 and the **Additional Winter Discharge Fund** report in March 2023 approved in March when the CEO of Kettering Hospital thanked services in the community for the additional provision during winter months.
- In March 2023 the Board received **the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board 5 Year Forward Plan** which was approved



Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Sheila White is a Healthwatch Hero, she has been a Healthwatch member since 2013. Some words from Sheila about her time with Healthwatch:

☞ **Friends who know me well will tell you that I am a 'people' person. Communication is my mantra. Over the last ten years of volunteering with Healthwatch, I have had so many opportunities to meet with people from all walks of life and to listen to what they had to say about the health and social care services and, sometimes more importantly, shared some of their personal experiences with me. It is not the meetings and committees I attend as a Healthwatch representative but the people I meet along the way. It is the friends I have made over the years. It is the relationships built up with the staff during the years we have undertaken the 15 Steps Challenge Audits at Kettering Hospital that will be the things that I will always remember.** ☞

Our Advisory Board



Morcea Walker – Interim Chair

Morcea was born in Jamaica and moved to England when she was nine years old. She was a founder member of the Northampton West Indies Parents' Association and was heavily involved with the Northants Black History Association. Morcea was awarded an honorary degree from The University of Northampton in 2008 for her outstanding contribution to education and training in Northamptonshire and as a leading member of the African Caribbean community. Morcea also resurrected the Northampton Carnival in 2005 – She is a Trustee of Autism Concern and Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust and was a director of the Community Law Service (Northampton and County).



Professor Will Pope – Vice Chair

Professor William Pope is the Chair of Connected Together CIC and is currently the vice chair of the Healthwatch Northamptonshire Board. He has a wealth of experience, leadership and expertise gained from senior roles within industry, the NHS and academia, including at chairman and chief executive level. and was Chief Executive Officer of the UK's largest integrated health, safety and environmental business for 10 years. and is a four times winner of the "Technology Fast 50" awards for the fastest growing companies.), Chairman of Healthwatch Northamptonshire (2013-17) and is a Board member (now Vice Chairman) of East Midlands Pathology (2012-date).



Dora Shergold

Dora lives in Wellingborough and was the main carer for her late Husband for many years, she was a work-place first aider for 35yrs alongside working as a credit controller. She was a former secretary of the Kettering and District Prostate Cancer Support Group and Carers Voice member for several years, she has been a Carer representative with NHFT for 10yrs and counting, on the Health Watch Board since 2014, 3yrs ago she became a member of the East Midlands Academic Health Science Networks Peoples Senate, more recently becoming a Regional Representative for the EMAHSN. She has advanced Arthritis caused by Ehlers Danlos Syndrome and puts her wheelchair to good use by helping the NHS with accessibility inspections.



Dr Marcella Daye

Dr Marcella Daye is Senior Lecturer in Tourism Management and Co-Chair of the race equality network known as the Global Ethnic Majority at the University of Northampton. As Co-Chair of the GEM, Marcella is the coordinator the annual Black in the Ivory conference at the University of Northampton which is held in observance of Black History Month. Marcella holds a Masters with distinction in Tourism Planning and Development and a Ph.D in Tourism Marketing from the University of Surrey. Her research interests are in Place Branding, Risk Communication, Participatory Action Research and Race Equality.



Ishver Patel MBE

Ishver has worked in social care for over 40 years, moving into training and development and subsequently becoming Head of Organisation Development for one of the London authorities, overseeing training and development, across children and adult services. He has supervised social work student placements, as part of their undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and supervised/mentored newly qualified social workers during their first year in practice. As an independent organisation development consultant, he has worked across private, voluntary, and statutory sectors, delivering training, mentoring and coaching support. He is currently Patron to Better Lives Foundation, working in Sierra Leone and continues to support health and social care projects in UK and overseas



Susan Hills

After a successful career in the world of information science and project management at the British Library, Susan moved into the NHS as Chair and subsequently Non-Executive Director of Primary Care Trusts in Northamptonshire. She volunteered with Healthwatch Northamptonshire so that she could continue to help join up and improve the health and social care services provided locally. Susan has worked in the voluntary sector with the Citizens Advice Bureau, Northamptonshire Network 50+, and other organisations for some years. She believes that the voluntary sector can provide a lot to help an individual have a more fulfilled, active and enjoyable life.. Susan is also a lay member with the Employments Tribunals service.



Wendy Patel

Wendy is a retired registered General Nurse with vast experience in nursing and management. She has a particular interest in bringing quality care into the workplace. She trained at Kettering General Hospital where she held a series of senior roles before moving to South Wales where she obtained a degree to teach nursing. She has held a number of positions including Lead Nurse Education Independent Sector; Investigator of complaints in the health service and Investors in People Advisor. She undertakes a lot of voluntary work including work with the Samaritans, Healthwatch: 15 steps challenge at Kettering General Hospital as well as being a patient representative



Caroline Gooch

After working for 6yrs as a Ward Clerk at Princess Marina Hospital in the dementia assessment ward Caroline took her degree in Occupational Therapy graduating in 2011. She has worked within Age UK Northants (AUKN) since January 2012, initially managing volunteers before moving into roles managing paid staff. As Senior Coordinator for the Collaborative Care Team (CCT) she worked across Wellingborough, Kettering and East Northants. Receiving referrals from GP surgery staff: focussing on patients who needed support to access both statutory and voluntary sector services. Since April 2022 she has been a Senior Service Manager for AUKN with teams covering the county who visit people in their homes or their local community. They offer a similar type of broad support to the CCT. This includes the Age Well teams and Social Prescribing Link Workers across the GP surgeries in the North of the county.

"Being part of the Healthwatch team has been very rewarding, especially as I am a recent member. It is a pleasure to work with people who share the same passion in making a difference to the lives of people living across Northamptonshire." – Ishver Patel MBE

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Local authority funding	£195,000	Staffing	£138,189.12
		Non-staffing costs	£61,410.68
Total income	£195,000	Total expenditure	£199,599.80
			a deficit of -
			£4,599.80

In 22/23 the expenditure, even with staff vacancies, again exceeded the yearly local authority contract of £195k and left Connected Together CIC with a deficit of £4,599.80. Fortunately, during the year, we brought in additional income through commissioned work of approximately £31k to cover the shortfall.

Next steps

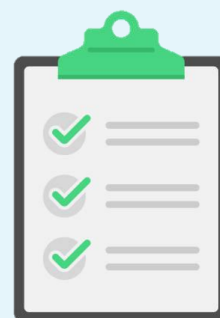
In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work tackling inequalities that exist and will work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless of whether that is because of where you live, your income or your ethnicity.

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Maternity visits
2. Dentistry remains high on our agenda
3. Mental Health Services





Statutory Statements

Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ.

Connected Together Community Interest Company is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire.

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending 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, on social media and in our newsletters.

Responses to recommendations

We had 2 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to patient experience groups at Northampton General Hospital (NGH), Kettering General Hospital (KGH) and Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT) We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN), and all our feedback reports go to the CQC, commissioners and providers as well as sharing our data and information with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire are represented on several different Boards and meetings across Northamptonshire.

For example:

- The Community Diagnostic Centre Programme Board
- Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire
- KGH, NGH and NHFT patient experience groups
- Place development, community wellbeing forums and Local Area Partnerships
- Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Executive Board
- ICP Strategy Development Board
- North and West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Boards

The full list of meetings can be found in our annual workplan :

www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/news/2023-04-26/our-annual-work-plan-2023-2024 .

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