

Engagement Fund Progress & Deep Dive Research

September has signified the start of our Deep Dive research and engagement sessions and events aiming to capture people's direct experiences within our Gynaecological and Mental Health Surveys as well as general feedback.

We have managed to award over £11,000 to the VCSE sector within Staffordshire.

A huge thank you to the following groups for engaging with the fund and inviting us to support/hear feedback from their participants:

- Borderland Voices, Leek
- Project 93, Hanley
- Bumps n Babes, Loggerheads
- Burton & District Mind, Burton
- Circle of friends, Newcastle
- Leek & District Foodbank, Leek
- Changes – Tamworth
- Wellies Project, Staffordshire
- Staffordshire Sight loss Association, North Staffordshire
- East Staffs Patient Participation Group
- Burton Caribbean Association
- Reaching CIC, North Staffordshire



Figure 1 Christine and Clara at the Burton Caribbean Association

We have lots more sessions that we are looking forward to. While engagement on our gynaecological and mental health research projects is ending in November, there will still be opportunities to be involved in giving general feedback on health and social care services, going forward. For those who haven't yet applied, grants from our Engagement Fund are available as follows*:

Could your group use up to £300, just for sharing your experiences of Health and/or Social Care with us?



We are looking for community groups in Staffordshire, particularly those whose members have experience of gynaecological diagnosis and staying well after mental health problems

healthwatch
Staffordshire

£200 For Healthwatch to visit your group and hear general feedback.

£300 For Healthwatch Staffordshire to attend one of your sessions to gather feedback on current research themes of Gynaecology and/or Mental Health.

£250 For service users of your group to complete our surveys in Gynaecology & Mental Health.

To get involved complete your contact and bank details on our [form](#).

* Please note that funds will be given out on a first come first served basis and maybe subject to change if in high demand.

You may be aware of the ongoing **petition** to save local Healthwatch. Healthwatch Leeds have said that "[For the government to take action, each local](#)

Healthwatch needs to get around 700 signatures." Please help us by signing and sharing the petition to [Review decision to abolish independent local Healthwatch](#)

Enter and View Visits

In September we published reports from our visits to [Lanrick House Residential Home](#) in Rugeley and the [follow-up visit to Littleton Lodge](#) Care Home near Hednesford.

Christine and Emma conducted an Enter and View at the **High Intensity User (HIU) team** at County Hospital, Stafford (the team also operates from the Royal Stoke Hospital). The HIU team assists individuals with one or more complex health conditions that require various health and social care services. Any individual with three or more hospital admissions or who has spent a total of forty days as an inpatient over the past twelve months can be included in this service.

Volunteers

We would like to say Thank you and Farewell to Pauline Blakemore & Jack Barber who have decided to step down for the moment. This leaves us with 17 active volunteers plus the 6 committee members. Activities in September included:



Engagement: Val, Giri, Pearl, Mick, Helena and Kate all joined the Healthwatch Team for a meeting about Enter and View visits. Clara helped at the Burton Caribbean Macmillan morning event, engaging with the community.

Research: Rebecca U. researched women's issues for the Gynaecological project. Cecilia O, began her research for the Mental Health project, reviewing the 5 ways to wellbeing.

Other: Giri attended the End-to-End call review with DHU for NHS 111. Marianna Sabova from VAST also met with some of our volunteers: Mick, Andrew, Cecilia O, and Giri.

Engagement & Signposting

Cycles and Stories at Burton on Trent



Twelve women attended the Cycles and Stories event at the Brewhouse Arts Centre in Burton on Trent where they were joined by Community artist Ali Woolacott. The session blended creativity and food with shared reflections on their gynaecological diagnoses. We would like to extend a special thank you to Gulsoom for organizing this event, making all the arrangements and finding participants to attend.

There are some similar events, "Drawn Together" running in October and November for Pen Drawing with Kate Dawes, and food.

Use the QR code on the right to book a place on our session in Rugeley.

3 November 2025 6:30 to 8:30pm

Savannah Café
Market Street
Rugeley
WS15 2JH



<https://DrawnTogetherWorkshop3.eventbrite.com>

Our final “Drawn Together” session will be hosted by the early menopause support group “[Too Young to Pause](#)”. Book a place using the QR code below.



The group usually meets face to face at Stafford Rugby Club on the second Wednesday of every month 7–9pm.

Winter Ready Events

As we come into the Autumn, local Primary Care Networks have been starting to promote how to stay well in winter with “Winter Ready Events”. Emma attended sessions in Leek and Chesterton, Jackie visited Silverdale and Christine went to Madeley and Rugeley.



As pressures mount for the busy winter period, this [MPFT Podcast](#) on Facebook explains about the role of integrated care coordination for Urgent Care.

Freshers' Fairs

To involve young people, we visited various Freshers' Fairs during September focussing on local Colleges. We visited Newcastle (Kelly/Emma), Stafford (Christine) and Leek (Emma). Engagement officers spoke to several individuals regarding our service and what we did. We also had some limited feedback regarding Mental Health and Gynaecological issues.



Locality Forums

We also joined various Locality Forums organised by Support Staffordshire for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises. Jackie attended Stafford, Emma went to Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle under Lyme, and Dave visited the Lichfield, Tamworth and East Staffordshire events.

Healthwatch England News

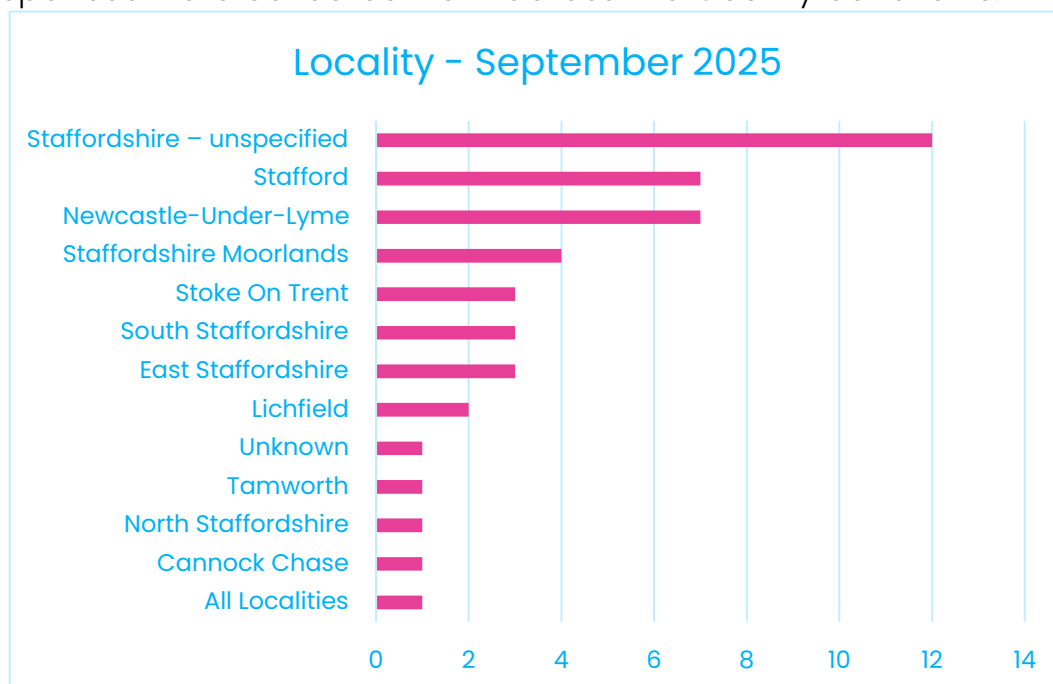
September blogs from Healthwatch England included articles on living with chronic pain and understanding cancer care from the patient's perspective.

“Living with chronic pain can limit your ability to live and work, yet it is a reality for millions of people in England.” Find out [here](#) the problems people are facing and what services can do to better support people living with pain.

“Patients often report positive experiences for cancer treatment services. In the most recent national cancer survey, respondents scored NHS cancer care services higher than the previous year, scoring them an average of 8.94 out of 10.” Find out [here](#) what people have told us about their experiences of cancer care.

September Feedback

46 responses were collected from across the County as follows:



Please note that the feedback does NOT cover Enter & View Visits nor responses to Surveys.

We had several cases this month where people were interested in the **weight loss injection** but had not been able to get this from their GP unless they were diabetic, even when they had other weight-related conditions. Even someone who needed it for Diabetes had been told to go privately and was then having issues with Shared Care (getting ongoing prescriptions from the GP afterwards).

There were five cases of people suffering with chronic pain. Most complained about lengthy waits for the **pain management clinics** (both at County and Royal Stoke Hospitals as well as Birmingham City).

Three people found they were not eligible for **patient transport** to hospital appointments, even the person who needed to attend for cancer treatment for 20 consecutive days.

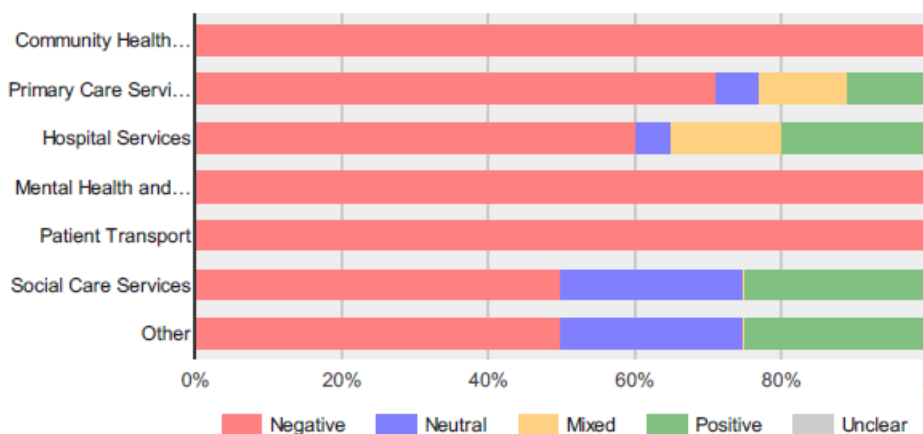
There were issues with people not being given a choice of **care home near their family**, whether this was after their own funds had been depleted (causing a move to different council-funded accommodation) or for a discharge to assess and possible subsequent permanent admittance. Someone also had problems accessing the right equipment and care after discharge from a private hospital.

Patients with stomas reported issues getting reliable repeat prescriptions, the signposting to support groups after surgery, the benefits of sunflower lanyards for hidden disabilities and a GP who stopped prescribing build-up drinks.

Service Categories

Hospital Services had most responses (27) followed by Primary Care Services (17). The other responses were for Social Care Services (5), Patient Transport (4) Other (4), Mental Health and Learning Difficulties (2) and Community Health Services (1 – Health Visitors).

Satisfaction by Service Type



Under **Hospital Services** the responses mainly covered Outpatients (7), Inpatient care (6), PALS (2), Discharge (2), Pain management (4) and Emergency Department including A&E (1).

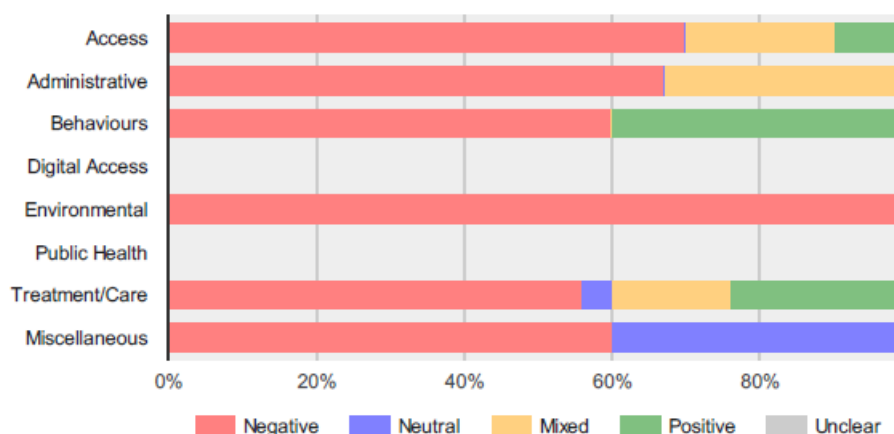
In **Primary Care** the responses were mainly about GP services (16) with a single comment about ear syringing services.

Themes

Various **Treatment and Care** themes were mentioned 50 times, and within this area, the topics mentioned most often were:

Quality of treatment (11), Medications, prescriptions and dispensing (6), Person-centred care (6), Consent, choice, user involvement and being listened to (5).

Satisfaction by Theme



Positive Feedback in September

County Hospital Stafford – “3 visits recently as an outpatient myself and for my son. Excellent experience by all. Consultant saw my son, sent him to x-ray and reported on findings in less than an hour. I couldn't



believe it. How it should be done everywhere instead of all of this back and forth"

"The hand clinic at County is really good, the only issue is the distance you need to travel - one is needed at Royal Stoke."

Wallsall Manor Hospital – "Quickly assessed and sent for chest x-ray. After 1 hour admitted to AMU. Spent 1 night and day there before being transferred to ward 17.

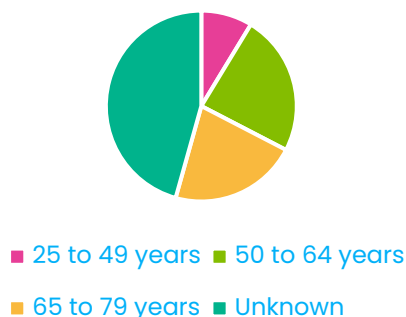
NHS 111 – "I contacted 111 this morning. The person I spoke to really put me at ease and was so helpful. I was very anxious and worried. She was excellent. Professional, caring got me the help I needed via out of hours GP service. The GP was excellent. Thank God for the NHS."

Perry Trees Residential Care Home – "My father had Dementia and was put into this residential care home, last August. He spent his last year there and passed away in August this year. The staff from the management to carers, cleaners, were amazing, they looked after dad so well, the end-of-life care was all we could ask for."

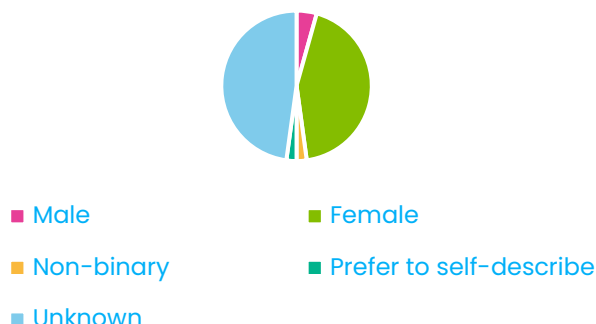
Waterhouses Medical Practice - "reliable professional help"

Demographics

Age - September 2025



Gender - September 2025



We reached 11 carers. We spoke with at least 3 members of the LGBTIA+ community. Of those who specified an ethnicity, all but one (mixed Asian and white) were white.

There were 8 people with an unspecified long-term condition and 5 who considered they had an unspecified disability. Specified conditions included chronic pain (5), obesity (4) cancer (3, 1 with breast cancer, 1 with prostate, 1 bowel), 4 people with a stoma, 3 with mental health conditions, 4 with dementia, 1 with sensory impairment, 1 with Autism, 1 with Diabetes, 2 with hypertension, 1 with musculoskeletal problems. Other cases included an eye condition, gender dysphoria, asthma/respiratory issues, sleep apnea, high cholesterol, carpal tunnel syndrome and a hip replacement.

Social Media Catch-up

Highlights you may have missed:

- Sign up for the [5 Ways to Wellbeing email challenge](#) from Staffs County Council.
- Watch a [video](#) from the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent ICB to help you understand Bowel Cancer screening.
- Find out if you are eligible for the [flu](#) and [Covid 19](#) vaccines.
- Sign up to help with NIHR health research through the Support Staffordshire “Be Part of Research” QR code (see right).



Figure 2 - Be Part of Research QR Code

Awareness campaigns with useful links:

- [Myeloma UK video](#) for Blood Cancer Awareness Month.
- [Facebook page for Cannock Versus Arthritis](#) for World Osteoarthritis Day.
- Every Breath Counts for [Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month](#).
- Samaritan's [Resource for Interrupting Suicidal Thoughts](#) for World Suicide Prevention Day.
- [Signs, Symptoms and Support for Gynaecological Cancers](#) Awareness Month from the Eve Appeal.
- [Childhood Cancer Awareness Month](#).

Get in touch

Healthwatch Staffordshire

Support Staffordshire, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ

0800 051 8371

www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

enquiries@healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

X <https://x.com/HWStaffordshire>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HWStaffordshireOfficial>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/hwstaffordshire/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/healthwatch-staffordshire-22b9ba269/>