

# eBulletin November to December 2025

## Great news to share to start the New Year...

We are delighted to announce that our contract has been successfully extended until **March 2027**. This extension reflects the continued confidence in Healthwatch's vital role as the independent champion for people using health and social care services across Staffordshire.



The renewed commitment ensures that Healthwatch Staffordshire can carry on listening to local voices, influencing decision-makers, and driving improvements in care for the community over the next 15 months.

We would love to hear from you, and your communities to help us identify topics that we should consider for our next round of deep dives. Please keep your eyes peeled for our upcoming poll.

## Update re National Petition

Thank you to everyone who has signed the ongoing petition to save local Healthwatch organisations. As this passed the 10,000 signatures a response has been issued by the Government which includes the following statements:



*"The number of organisations monitoring patient experience is causing confusion and risks inaction. We will close some organisations like Healthwatch to allow direct patient feedback to care providers."*

*"The Government will abolish Healthwatch England (HWE) and Local Healthwatch (LHW) in their current form. A new patient experience directorate within DHSC, will bring patient voice 'in house'."*

## Engagement Fund Success



Another big Thank You to all the Staffordshire groups and residents who have now taken part in engaging with us, through our Engagement Fund. We really appreciate your feedback and intelligence on local services.

During 2025/2026 we have made available and awarded **over £28,000 of funding** to engage with over **40 groups** within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector throughout Staffordshire.

Our fund is now closed for 2025/2026 but please watch this space as we shall be launching the opportunity to apply for our engagement fund again in the **2026/2027 financial year**, along with the chance to join our Intelligence Network. More information to follow next month.

Overleaf are just some of the groups we have engaged with over the past quarter who will become part of the network.

 <a href="#">Harvey Girls/ Dads4Dads</a>	 <a href="#">Girlguiding Staffordshire</a>	 <a href="#">MHA Communities North Staffs</a>	 <a href="#">Staffordshire Network for Mental Health</a>	 <a href="#">The Green Tree House Food Club &amp; Tea Room</a>
 <a href="#">As One CIC</a>	 <a href="#">Burton Unity</a>	 <a href="#">Menopause Café Lichfield</a>	 <a href="#">Hearts &amp; Hands, Tuesday Mixer Group</a>	 <a href="#">Newcastle Staffs Foodbank</a>
 <a href="#">Outlook (North Staffs Ostomy Support Group)</a>	<a href="#">Visit to Gypsy, Romany and Traveller Community</a>	 <a href="#">Biddulph Methodist Church</a>	 <a href="#">St Mark's Church</a>	 <a href="#">Sweetmore Meadow</a>
 <a href="#">Too Young To Pause</a>	 <a href="#">The Up Creative Community CIC</a>	 <a href="#">Burton Elim Church re-start</a>	 <a href="#">Futures2gether</a>	 <a href="#">Burton and District MIND</a>
 <a href="#">Circle of Friends (NUL)</a>	 <a href="#">Changes Leek</a>	 <a href="#">Dyslexia Association of Staffordshire</a>	 <a href="#">Stone Community Hub</a>	 <a href="#">WELLIES Leek</a>

## Volunteers

We now have **16 active volunteers** plus the **6 committee members**. Together they supported us for over **45 hours** in November and **9.5 hours** in December.

The activities included:

- Kate attended and represents Healthwatch at the Hoarding task and finish meeting.
- Kate & Val attended a PLACE assessment for MPFT
- Giri spent time at the control room reviewing 111 calls
- Giri and Helena attended Enter & View training
- Clara spent time in East Staffordshire at the Network Forum
- Helena attended the HUG meetings.

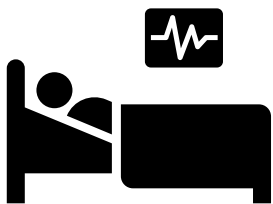
On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December, we had a small Christmas celebration with our volunteers where we had a buffet and played a Christmas quiz which everyone enjoyed.

Afterwards, the last committee meeting of 2025 took place – in which we wish to recognise all the dedication, support and drive members have in supporting our work.

## Reports and Surveys

### Enter and View Visit – High Intensity Users Team

In September we carried out an Enter and View visit at the High Intensity Users (HIU) Team at County Hospital, Stafford. The 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.



This service was implemented in response to the rising number of emergency admissions among the ageing population. It is recognised that hospitalisations can be distressing not only for physical health but also for emotional and mental well-being. Through multi-agency collaboration, the service seeks to address the root causes of high service utilisation, reduce unnecessary hospital admissions, shorten the length of stays, and ultimately improve individual outcomes while easing pressure on the healthcare system.

One HIU patient says: *“they have coordinated everything for me, if I am uncertain of anything I know they are at the end of the phone and will offer help. The staff member always knows when I am admitted to the hospital and always comes and checks in on me. I cannot fault the service”*

Read our [report](#) to find out more about this service and our observations.

### Dental Report – Translations



The [Easy-Read version of our dental report](#) is now complete.

We are also commissioning a British Sign Language version as well.

### Survey at Hazeldene House GP Surgery

This survey is now closed. There has been an amazing response with over 1000 patients responding.

Do you use  
Hazeldene House  
GP Surgery?

### Neurodivergent Women in Staffordshire – Report



We would also like to highlight this external report commissioned by Support Staffordshire which generated a lot of interest on our social media:

[Experiences of neurodivergent women living in communities of Staffordshire – Community Needs Analysis](#)

## Engagement Events

### Keele University Placements Fair

Emma, Robert and Anna attended a Careers Placement Postgraduate Fair at Keele University. They met plenty of students who were interested in placements or volunteering.



### Lichfield Menopause Group

Jackie visited a [Menopause Café Group in Lichfield](#) where she spoke about what Healthwatch do and our Gynaecological Diagnosis Deep Dive. She was able to get some surveys completed.



### YMCA Visits

As part of the Mental Health Deep Dive, Dave made three visits to [YMCA centres in Burton upon Trent](#). At George Williams House he met a group of young people living in supported housing and talked through their individual circumstances and the support they were getting through their link workers. Issues raised included support to learn to live independently, job hunting, support to go to college, sexual identity issues, violence in the community and leaving care.

He also met with a group of tenants at Milton House aged in their late 20s to mid-30s and made a final visit to the YMCA's James Court centre.



We are a charity committed to providing a supportive and safe environment for those who are homeless in East Staffordshire over our three housing sites.

### Quality Visits

Robert attended several Quality Visits with the Integrated Care Board (ICB). In-person visits took place with the North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare (NSCH) NHS Trust at the Darwin Centre and Bradwell Hospital Memory Clinic. Kelly joined him for an online visit to Learning Disabilities Assessment and Treatment Unit at Harplands Hospital.

There was a further visit to UHNM's Royal Stoke Hospital Accident & Emergency department.



## Healthwatch England News

Our colleagues at Healthwatch England have been busy and released the following blogs and articles during November and December.

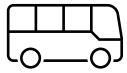


Parents across England are speaking up about the challenges they face [getting the right specialist support for their children](#) and how families are often left struggling to get the care their children deserve.

Their [latest research](#) shows that while most men turn to the NHS most often for information on staying healthy, one in five are now using platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube and almost one in 10 are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbots.



Veterans face unique challenges in getting the health care they need after they leave the military. Find out how Healthwatch teams across England have been [helping veterans to get the care they need](#). You can also read two very [personal stories](#) in Battlefield: Veterans' Struggles for NHS Care.



Travelling to healthcare appointments is challenging for some people. Read what people told Healthwatch England about their experiences – the [difficulties they face booking and using patient transport services](#).

One in seven patients who have been referred by their GP are stuck waiting for specialist care due to [GP referrals being delayed, lost, or rejected](#). Their [latest research](#) looks at whether changes to referrals over the last two years have improved the process for patients in this report.

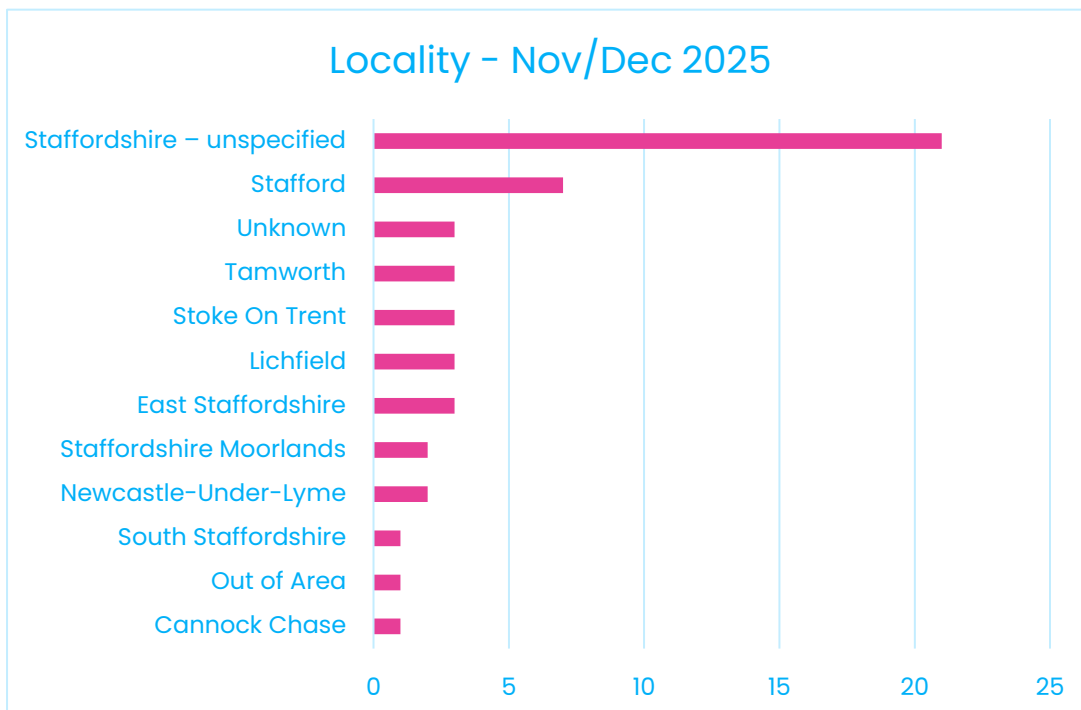
When it's hard to find an NHS dentist, many [people turn to urgent dental care to treat routine problems](#).



As always, please let us know your own experiences of these local services in Staffordshire using our [feedback form](#).

## November and December Feedback

50 responses were collected from across the County as follows:

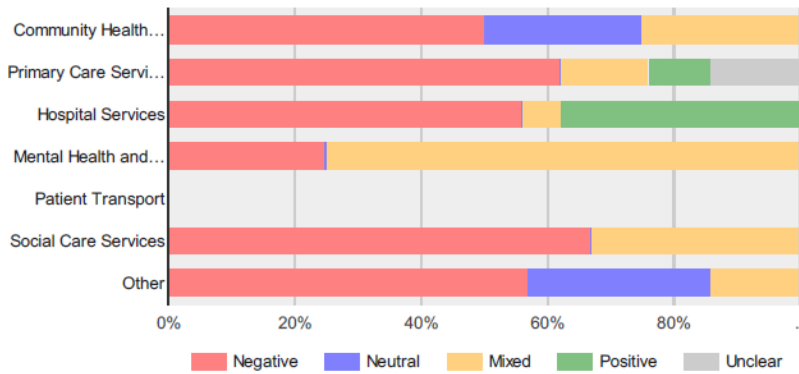


Please note that the feedback does NOT cover Enter & View Visits nor responses to Surveys.

## Service Categories

As usual most responses concerned Hospital Services (24) or Primary Care Services (22). Other feedback covered Other (7), Mental Health and Learning Difficulties (5), Community Health Services (4) and Social Care Services (4).

### Satisfaction by Service Type



Under **Hospital Services** the responses mainly covered Outpatients (5), Emergency Department including A&E (3), inpatient care (2), ophthalmology (20) and diagnosis/ screening (2).

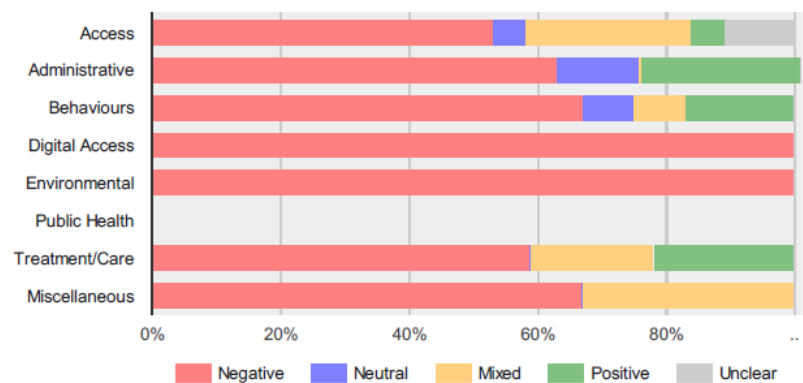
In **Primary Care** the responses were mainly about GP services (17) with PALs, optometry, dentistry, pharmacy and out of hours each getting one mention.

## Themes

Various **Treatment and Care** themes were mentioned 71 times, and within this area, the topics mentioned most often were:

- Quality of treatment (14)
- Caring, kindness, respect and dignity (8)
- Person centred care (7)
- Waiting for appointments or treatment/waiting times (6)
- Medication, prescriptions and dispensing (6)
- Complaints (4)
- Communication with patients treatment explanation/verbal advice (4)
- Waiting times, punctuality and queuing on arrival (3)
- Consent, choice, user involvement and being listened to (3)
- Assessment process (3)

### Satisfaction by Theme



Access to services was mentioned 19 times, staff attitudes and performance 12 and administration 9 (mostly referrals - 3).

## Positive Feedback from November and December

Well done to Royal Stoke Hospital who received 4 out of 8 positive comments this month.

Outpatients: *"Everything went well and smooth, staff couldn't have been better, went out their way for me and ensured and was comfortable and cared for during my stay".*

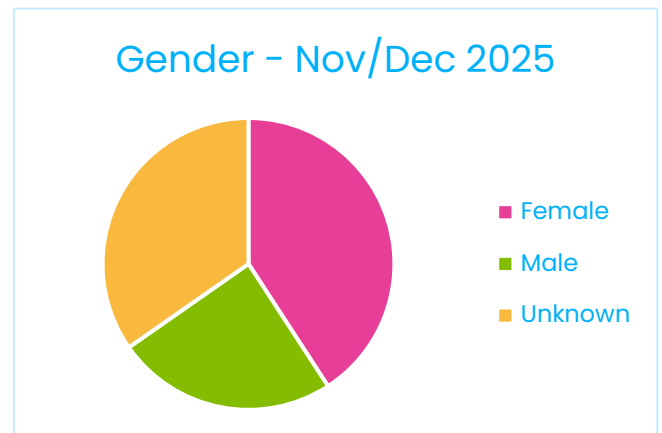
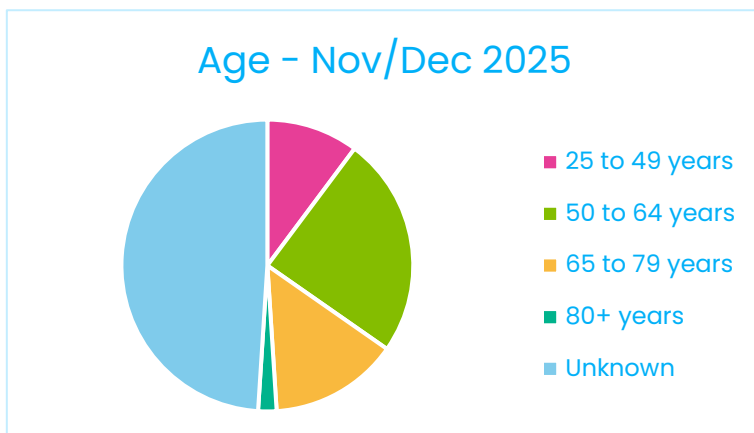
Inpatients: *"In the last two years I've had four operations, three minor ops and one more serious ... I could not fault the procedures, the care, empathy and understanding by the surgeons and nurses was and is truly outstanding".*

Eye surgery: *"I had eye surgery at Royal Stoke Hospital as a day case and outpatients appointments. Was seen promptly every time and was in awe of the skills of all the staff. Given lots of very useful information. Every member of staff was friendly and caring. Cannot fault anything about the care received. You saved my sight, so a heartfelt thank you".*

A&E *"the triage nurse Mark was great and soon sent me to AEC and all the staff there were fabulous, friendly, polite and professional, Tim on reception was particularly brilliant as you could see him put people at ease. The staff were very patient with everyone even though it was busy."*

Other services complimented included NHS 111: *"They have always been very professional and helpful"* and local cataract surgery *"My optician referred me for NHS cataract surgery which was carried out by a local private cataract centre. From first referral to surgery took only 10 days and the whole experience was exemplary."*

## Demographics



We reached 5 carers. We spoke with one member of the LGBTIA+ community. Under ethnicity, one respondent was Polish, all who specified were white. Nobody was pregnant, breastfeeding or had given birth in the last 26 weeks.

Specified conditions included: Mental health (6) including psychosis, PTSD and anxiety; musculoskeletal (6 including dislocations after falls, hip replacement cancellation, prolapsed disc); autism (4), ADHD (3); dementia/cognitive loss (4), infections (3); physical disability/mobility issues (3); incontinence (2); sepsis (2); cancer (2 – bowel/skin); eye surgery (2); cardiovascular disease/heart failure (2); pain (2), hearing loss (2); tinnitus (1); respiratory issues (1); epilepsy (1);

Parkinson's (1); hypoglycaemia (1), root canal filling (1); dyspraxia (1); pneumonia (1); high blood pressure (1); toe amputation (1).

## Social Media Catch-up

### Highlights you may have missed:



Staffordshire County Council has produced a [new winter leaflet](#) designed to help people stay healthy and safe during the colder months.

Remember that hospitals remain under serious pressure during the winter months. Here is a summary of which NHS service to use in different circumstances to keep the pressure off Accident and Emergency Departments.

- **NHS 111** – for urgent advice if you're unsure what to do
- **Pharmacies** – for quick help with minor illnesses
- **GPs** – for ongoing or long-term health concerns
- **Minor Injury Units (MIUs)** – for sprains, small cuts, or broken bones
- **999 / A&E** – for life-threatening emergencies only



Choosing the right service means quicker care for you and helps the NHS help everyone. ❤️



You can also help by getting the vaccinations that you are entitled to. You can find out: if you are [entitled to the flu vaccine](#) here; about [vaccinations in pregnancy](#) for flu, RSV and whooping cough and how to [get a flu vaccine at a local pharmacy](#). Some pharmacies are now offering walk-in flu jabs for 2-3 year olds

For people who suffer with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), this can be harder to manage during the winter. [Find out more about what can help here.](#)

A huge amount of medicines are wasted unnecessarily in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent each year. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System needs your help to reduce this. [Find out more information here.](#)

Discover trusted advice, resources, and support for parents and caregivers at [Best Start in Life](#). From pregnancy to early years, there is help to give your little one the foundation they need to thrive.

### Awareness campaigns with useful links:

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Macmillan Cancer Support has more [information about Lung Cancer](#) and you can also learn more about [local screening in Staffordshire](#).

Mouth Cancer Action Month is held in November every year and is supported by the [Mouth Cancer Foundation](#) and the Oral Health Foundation. Download this [simple 2-minute self-check guide](#).



In this video for World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week GP Dr Steve Fawcett explains [why antibiotics aren't always the answer](#) – and how using them wisely protects us all.

The [Good Grief Trust](#) runs an annual National Grief Awareness Week (NGAW) at the start of December. The theme this year is 'Growing With Grief' – working together to find ways to become stronger, healthier and laying down roots for the future.



## Get in touch

### Healthwatch Staffordshire

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

**0800 051 8371**

[www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk)

[enquiries@healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk](mailto: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/>