



News



February 2021

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Healthwatch Staffordshire

Staffing update

Simmy Akhtar, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Staffordshire, has left her role with Healthwatch Staffordshire in early February 2021.

As you may know Simmy was also the Chief Officer of Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent. Simmy has created effective working arrangements with our partners, commissioners, stakeholders and local organisations to grow the role and involvement of Healthwatch across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent leaving firm foundations behind. We wish her all the best in her new role and thank her for her endeavour and commitment to all things Healthwatch.

Simon Fogell has taken up post as the Chief Executive Officer Healthwatch Staffordshire and of Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent. Simon has many years of experience in delivering and having oversight of Healthwatch services across a number of regions of the country for Engaging Communities Solutions CIC.

Simon has said of the new role *"I'm very much looking forward to taking on the role of Chief Executive Officer for Healthwatch Staffordshire and Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent in supporting the public to make sure their views help shape the health and care services they need by being independent in purpose, voice and action."*

Simon added *"We are currently living in very uncertain times caused by the coronavirus pandemic that has created huge impacts on the health and care services we all need. We are seeing and hearing constantly the heartwarming stories of health and social care staff going that extra mile to continue to provide services that we all need but sometimes where things may not have gone as well as expected. This is where Healthwatch is so vital to collect both the good and not so good stories from members of the public that we can in turn share with providers and commissioners of services the best practice examples and suggestions of where and how things might be improved from the patient/services user perspective. So please, do share your stories and experiences with us and tell your friends how they too can share theirs with us as detailed in the different ways below..."*

Email: enquiries@healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 0518371

Feedback Centre: [Healthwatch Staffordshire feedback centre](#)

Facebook: [Healthwatchstaffordshire](#)

Twitter: [@HWStaffordshire](#)

Website: www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

Instagram: [hwstaffordshire](#)

Healthwatch Staffordshire

Survey on Dentistry

Have you accessed Dental Services during the Coronavirus pandemic?

Healthwatch Staffordshire have devised a new survey about public experiences of dental services during the Coronavirus pandemic. We are asking people to share any experiences, communications, or feedback whether positive or negative.

Link to the survey [Dental Care survey](#)

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic we have experienced major changes in the way dental services operate and dental care is given. All dental surgeries closed in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic necessitating a national lockdown leaving patients unable to access face to face treatment and only able to access remote consultations.

Residents have told us how they have experienced difficulties accessing emergency dental care sometimes waiting weeks for treatment.

People are invited to complete the survey which is focused on accessing dental services in Staffordshire during the Covid-19 pandemic and can include items such as:

- Accessing appointments
- Communication with dental staff and receptionists
- Signposting for emergency care
- Waiting times
- Receiving the care needed
- Support for vulnerable people

Coronavirus has led to unfamiliar changes to healthcare and the NHS, with regular services replaced with digital services and dental services switching to remote consultations, triaging, and strict risk assessments prioritising those most in need.

Capturing and sharing the voice of the people will ensure that we are better equipped to understand the full impact that coronavirus has had on people's lives and what could be better. We in turn will inform health services about what could be better and how this pandemic has impacted people's healthcare.

The Dental Care survey can be accessed below.

[Healthwatch Staffordshire Dental Care Survey](#)

Share your experience of accessing your GP surgery

Link to the survey: [Primary Care survey](#)

Between September 2020 and November 2020, Healthwatch Staffordshire and Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent each completed a Public Experience of Primary Care mini callout due to the number of people telling us that they were having issues accessing services at their GP Practice. People shared both positive and negative stories and as a result we have decided to look into patient experience of primary care during the pandemic in more detail to inform commissioners and providers about what does and doesn't work for you and what could be better.

The survey asks members of the public about their experiences of accessing primary care services in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Moreover, there is also a focus on waiting times, satisfaction of treatment and care and opportunity to engage with a relevant health professional.

It is essential that primary care services remain well informed of all ranging public experiences to demonstrate a compassionate and rational understanding of real time barriers, challenges and themed feedback opinions of accessing primary care. Successively, primary care services can continue to strive to meet patient needs through responsive and reactive shared community intelligence.

Considering this, we are calling out to residents of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to share their feedback experiences of accessing primary care services. Feedback items could include, small or large, positive or negative outcomes around:

- Successfully accessing an appointment
- Accessing digital appointments
- Failed attempts to access an appointment
- Obtaining appointments with suitable health professionals
- Barriers that prevented you accessing primary care
- Waiting times and delays
- Communications

The Access to Primary Care survey can be [completed here](#).

Please share the details of this survey with your friends, family and colleagues.

The findings of the survey will be published on Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent and Healthwatch Staffordshire's websites.

Healthwatch Staffordshire

Virtual Community meetings

Our Community Outreach Leads, Ian Wright and Sarah Tingey, are holding a series of regular online meetings on alternate Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.

As you will see, these meetings have a theme to spark discussions – but please feel free to bring up any health or social care feedback.

For each topic we will hold two sessions in case one day or time is not convenient for you, although you're welcome to attend both if you wish!

The themes, times and dates for our upcoming meetings are as follows:

Dental services

Wednesday 10th February, 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Thursday 18th February, 2 pm – 3 pm

Hospital care

Wednesday 24th February, 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Thursday 4th March, 2 pm – 3 pm

Carer wellbeing

Wednesday 10th March, 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Thursday 18th March, 2 pm – 3 pm

How to join the meetings

To join any Wednesday morning session please use the following:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84695120332?pwd=aWFMdlBNZTFXbGovRXBESm5ydzRjUT09>

Meeting ID: 846 9512 0332

Passcode: 730042

To join any Thursday afternoon session please use the following:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84337613944?pwd=cUhSUUVHTINpOU5DSm1iQW15N0JrZz09>

Meeting ID: 843 3761 3944

Passcode: 016192

Healthwatch Staffordshire

Community Outreach News

Meet our new Community Outreach Lead

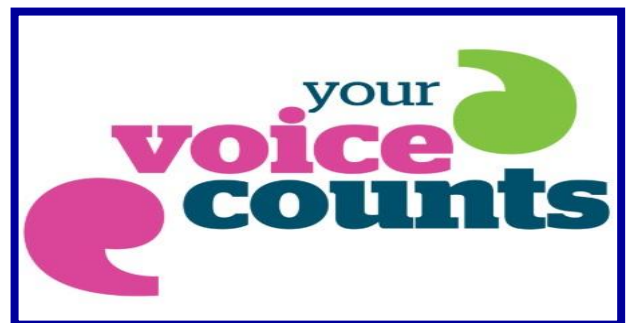
We would like to welcome Sarah Tingey as one of our new Community Outreach Leads. Sarah graduated from the University of Lincoln in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, which is where her passion for health and social care began. She then went on to graduate from the University of Nottingham in 2020 with a Master of Science in Mental Health Research and Practice.



Her work within the hospitality sector, together with her volunteer experience, has equipped Sarah with the necessary communication, organisation and interpersonal skills to work together with communities to achieve positive health and social care outcomes. Sarah is very passionate about ensuring every individual has the opportunity to have their voice heard by the right people.

Who is listening about what matters to you - have your voice heard

Healthwatch Staffordshire have started the year off with a campaign to reach people and groups who may sometimes be under-represented when it comes to giving feedback and views on health and social care.



We have identified over three hundred groups for Staffordshire people who may not always have their experiences and views represented. These groups include refugee and asylum seekers, homeless people, BAME communities, LGBTQ communities, prisoners and those on probation, young people, those with physical and sensory impairments, mental health, carers and new and expectant parents.

Ian and Sarah are in the process of contacting these groups to establish connections and invite them to join our mailing list to keep abreast of information, consultations and surveys that may affect the people they care about. They will also be able to provide feedback and experience of people who may not always find it easy to have their voice heard.

There are a considerable number of groups on the list who we already have contact with and many are on our mailing list, but this is a good opportunity to reconnect as people and their roles change within organisations and for Healthwatch to be up-to-date with all the appropriate contacts.

If you have contact with such a group, please let them know about this campaign and that we can be contacted at enquiries@healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

Staffordshire County Council

Dignity In Care awards

People across Staffordshire are being invited to nominate carers, work colleagues, young people, friends and family members for a prestigious award.

Staffordshire County Council have just opened up nominations for this year's Dignity In Care awards. The closing date for nominations is 28th May 2021.

The Staffordshire Dignity in Care Awards recognises groups and individuals who care for or support the most vulnerable of us, and who treat everyone with dignity, kindness, respect and compassion.

We welcome nominations from anyone who receives support and care in Staffordshire, their families, friends, or those who provide support and care to Staffordshire citizens. We want to celebrate the achievements of as many as possible.

Do you know someone who has consistently gone that extra mile, someone who has made a difference, someone who has had an impact on the delivery of high-quality services? This is your chance to recognise them. There are 9 categories in this year's awards, including :

- ❖ Dignity Champion
- ❖ Leadership Award
- ❖ Young Dignity Champion
- ❖ Informal Carer of the Year
- ❖ Home Care
- ❖ Extra care Dignity Champion
- ❖ Professional,
- ❖ Informal Carer
- ❖ Voluntary/Community support



For more information visit Staffordshire County Council website:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Care-for-all-ages/Dignityincare/home.aspx>

To make a nomination visit: [Nominating for Dignity in Care Awards 2021](#)

Staffordshire County Council

Dignity In Care awards

Johnny McMahon, Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing at Staffordshire County Council is also encouraging people to nominate someone for an award. Johnny said:

“Our Dignity in Care Awards are something we look forward to every year. They give us the chance to celebrate the best of the care sector here in Staffordshire and everyone who provides care.

“It’s an important event for the sector and everyone who works in it but last year’s and this year’s awards are even more special as we recognise those delivering care throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

“As in previous years, we are celebrating both organisations and individuals, whether it be an informal carer or those working in the profession. So whether you know someone who always goes the extra mile for someone they look after or a fabulous care company, then get them nominated.”

Anna Majkut, winner for Residential & Nursing Care Home Dignity Champion award last year, said;

“I always loved people, more than anything else and when I first started working in the care sector, it felt like a vocation. Working in care is a very rewarding profession, but it’s also a tough one.

“Being nominated for a Dignity in Care award and then being chosen as a winner made me feel incredible. I felt recognised, honoured and needed and I would now like to encourage others to nominate their friends, family, or anyone working in care for an award and to make them feel special.”

Nominating is quick and easy and can be done online at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/dignityincare. People can also request a hard copy of the nomination form by calling 01785 355795 or emailing dignity@staffordshire.gov.uk



Together We're Better update (29 January)



As many of you will know, Together We're Better is one of many Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) across the country. It is a partnership of NHS and local authority, working alongside the voluntary and third sector to improve local health and care services. There is a national mandate for STPs to evolve into Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) by April 2021.

Our system has this week reached a significant milestone in the development of an ICS for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The GP memberships of the six Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have voted to merge the CCGs. This will be to form a single Strategic Commissioning Organisation for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The vote has been independently verified by the Local Medical Committees (LMCs) and there was a majority in all six CCG memberships to support the merger.

The move requires a change to legislation in an act of parliament and will mean that GP practices will have more decision-making authority at a local level through Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). This means they will have more say over the local services needed to meet their patients' needs.

The CCGs will now submit a merger application to NHS England and NHS Improvement by the end of March 2021. If approved, the CCGs would formally merge by 1 April 2022.

We will keep you updated on how this develops, as we move through the processes to evolve into an ICS.

Together We're Better is the partnership of NHS and local government organisations, alongside independent and voluntary sector groups, that is working together to transform health and care services. You can find out more about us on our website:

www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/

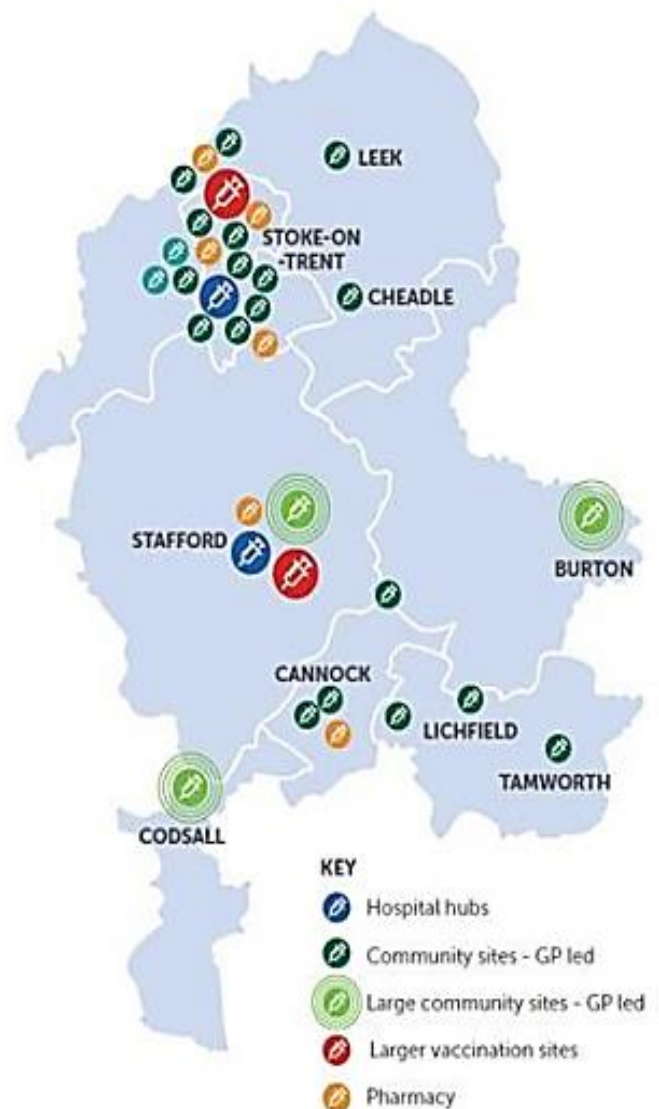
Together We're Better update

Getting on to a big topic at the moment – COVID-19 vaccinations. Every care home for older residents in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent has now been offered the COVID-19 vaccination. Some residents were not eligible at the time for the vaccination but they will be revisited. With around 330 eligible care homes in the area, this represents a major undertaking. To have achieved this by the beginning of February is a really good result.

Some more good news on the subject of COVID-19 vaccinations this week was the opening of our second large community vaccination site at the Kingston Centre in Stafford. Preparations are ongoing to open a third large site, subject to the national assurance process.

Two more pharmacies are also due to go live this week.

You can see all the COVID-19 vaccination sites that are currently in operation on the map.



If you don't receive the regular COVID-19 vaccination bulletins you can sign up to receive them by emailing mlcsu.staffscovidcomms@nhs.net. Read further information in this weeks' bulletins via the links below:

- [Monday 1 February](#)
- [Friday 5 February](#)

It is really important that everyone is aware and remembers that, until the Government advises otherwise, everybody should follow the guidance including social distancing, wearing face coverings, hand washing, and getting tested regularly – regardless of whether they have had their first, or both doses of the vaccine.

Together We're Better update

Residents who need to be out and about in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent during the lockdown, for example for work or caring responsibilities, are still being urged to have regular COVID-19 tests. Testing is also available for all residents in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent who do not have any symptoms of coronavirus.

If you do not have symptoms, you can book a test here: [Welcome to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Community Test Sites Appointment System \(zipporah.co.uk\)](https://www.zipporah.co.uk). You are allowed to leave home to take a test. If there is no availability, you can book a traditional test at one of the national sites (the two local Regional Testing Centres are located at Stoke City Football Club's South Car Park in Stoke-on-Trent and the Stafford Education and Enterprise Park in Stafford) via the national booking portal, www.nhs.uk/coronavirus, and choose the option "my council has asked me to book a test".

If you have symptoms you must only use the national booking portal above. Anyone who is self-isolating as a close contact should only book a test if they develop symptoms and this should be through the national booking portal only.

We are all aware that the whole of England is in a national lockdown and it is more important than ever that everyone takes personal responsibility and does their utmost to protect themselves and others from the virus. The majority of people are sticking to the rules and adhering to the national lockdown restrictions.

The rules are there to protect all of us and the minority of people who think that the rules do not apply to them are putting everyone at risk. Only by everyone sticking to the rules will we be able to beat this virus.

The police can, and are, taking action against people that are meeting people outside their household or support bubble for social reasons. This includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines. Don't run the risk of spreading the virus. Follow the rules. Do it to get back to what you love. Find out more information about the local compliance campaign, 'Do It For What Matters', here: [Stopthespread.doingourbit.info](https://stopthespread.doingourbit.info).

Public Health England (PHE) has published [new guidance](#) for everyone to help reduce the risk of catching coronavirus and passing it on to others.

To keep yourself aware, you can find out about COVID-19 scams on the [National Trading Standards Website](#)

Follow this link to [read how the NHS will contact you when it's your turn for the vaccine](#)

Community testing for people working through lockdown

Staffordshire Leaders Call for People Working Through Lockdown to Get Tested

The leaders of Staffordshire's county, borough and district councils have joined forces to appeal for all workers who can't work from home to book a regular Covid test – as part of the rollout of mass testing of people without symptoms.

With new Community Testing Centres open across the county, council leaders are calling for workers in all places allowed to stay open, to make testing part of their regular routine in efforts to identify more people who may unknowingly be carrying the virus.

The appeal is being backed by Alan White, Leader of Staffordshire County Council, George Adamson, Leader of Cannock Chase District Council, Duncan Goodfellow, Leader of East Staffordshire Borough Council, Doug Pullen, Leader of Lichfield District Council, Simon Tagg, Leader of Newcastle Borough Council, Brian Edwards, Leader of South Staffordshire District Council, Patrick Farrington, Leader of Stafford Borough Council, Sybil Ralphs, Leader of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Danny Cook, Leader of Tamworth Borough Council.

Alan White, said: "Councils across Staffordshire have worked together like never before during this pandemic, to do everything we can to protect lives and livelihoods across each and every district and borough area.

"While cases have started to fall in lockdown, they still remain worryingly high. We know that across the country hospitals are becoming overwhelmed – with reports nationally that someone is now being admitted to hospital with Covid-19 every 30 seconds.

"There is good news on the horizon with the vaccines, but we cannot become distracted by this, as it will be many months before we know and feel the benefits.

"The national lockdown means we must stay at home as much as possible. However, we all recognise that some people simply can't work from home. That is why we are appealing to everyone who is out working in Staffordshire this week to book a test. It is free, quick and has never been easier to book one.

"One third of people who have the virus don't show any symptoms and you could be one of them. So, please get tested now. It may just protect your workmates, your community and your family when you return home at the end of the day."

The seven day rates recorded at 24th January were: Staffordshire 341 per 100,000 of population; Cannock Chase 412; East Staffordshire 468; Lichfield 356; Newcastle 310; South Staffordshire 544; Stafford 405; Staffordshire Moorlands 198 and Tamworth 307.

The county council has now opened Community Testing Centres in all eight districts and boroughs. These are at: Cannock Chase Leisure Centre, Hillfield House, Burton, Burntwood Leisure Centre/Lichfield FC, the Seabridge Centre, Newcastle, Wombourne Library the Kingston Centre Stafford, Biddulph Leisure Centre and Tamworth Campus/Wilnecote Parish Hall – with the aim of offering testing seven days a week for people without symptoms.

The council's fleet of Lets Get Tested vans will also be setting up mobile Community Testing Pop-Ups across the county. You can find out more and book now at [Welcome to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Community Test Sites Appointment System \(zipporah.co.uk\)](https://www.zipporah.co.uk)

Dr Richard Harling, Staffordshire's Director of Health and Care, said: 'We all need to stick to the basic rules of hands, face and space, work from home where we can and get tested if you are out working through lockdown.

We are seeing the biggest increases in the 19 to 34 year-old bracket, with many in this age group not only likely to be working but also seeing more people, so we would appeal to working people of this age group in particular to get tested on a regular basis."

Information about Vaccination

How you will be contacted for your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination

The NHS will contact you when it's your turn to have the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination.

The vaccine is being offered at larger vaccination centres, pharmacies and some local NHS services such as hospitals or GP surgeries.

When it's your turn, you'll be contacted by letter, text or email with information on how to book your appointment.

More people are being offered the vaccine every week

By letter, text or email

If you're invited to have your vaccination at a larger vaccination centre or at a pharmacy, you'll get a letter.

If you're invited to have your vaccination at a local centre such as a hospital or GP surgery, you'll usually get a text or email. You may sometimes get a letter.

You can choose to go to a larger vaccination centre or pharmacy, or wait to be invited to go to a local NHS service. More places are opening all the time.

Spotting a Scam

The COVID-19 vaccine is free of charge on the NHS.

The NHS will never ask for:

- Your bank account or card details
- Your pin or banking password
- Copies of personal documents to prove your identity such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay-slips

If you think you have been a victim of fraud or identity theft, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

Information about Vaccination

If you have received a letter but not booked an appointment

You may get a phone call from the NHS Immunisation Management Service. This call will be from 0300 561 0240.

This will be a reminder to book your COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

The person you speak to will see if you need any help and support.

They will not call you to book appointments over the phone.

What happens at the appointment

Your appointment should last for around 30 – 45 minutes.

You'll be asked some questions about your medical history.

It's important to tell the staff giving you the vaccination if you have ever had a severe allergic reaction or you are pregnant.

If your appointment is at a vaccination centre, you'll be asked for your booking reference numbers.

You will then be given an injection of the vaccine into your upper arm.

All places that offer COVID-19 vaccinations will help keep you safe from COVID-19. There will be regular cleaning and social distancing in waiting areas.

After the vaccination

You may be asked to wait for 15 minutes after having the vaccination. This is in the unlikely event you have a serious reaction to the vaccine.

Research has found it's rare to have a serious allergic reaction to the vaccine. If this does happen, it usually happens within minutes.

The team will be trained to deal with reactions and treat them immediately.

You will also be given a leaflet about what to expect after your vaccination to take home with you.

Your thoughts on the vaccine – complete the survey



Your thoughts on the coronavirus vaccine – help us encourage people to take it up

We would like to know whether you intend to have the coronavirus vaccination when it is your turn, and if not, what concerns you have.

Getting the COVID-19 vaccination is safe and the best way to protect yourself and your family against Coronavirus. We are working incredibly hard to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible, and those most at risk are being vaccinated first. [Read more about the vaccine and how you will be contacted online.](#)

We really value your thoughts and would be grateful if you could spend 10 minutes completing [this online survey](#). This survey will remain open until Friday 12 February.

Feel free to share the survey among your network to help us gain a real insight into our population's views on the vaccine, and ensure the uptake of the vaccine is successful.

Total Voice Staffordshire

NHS Complaints Advocacy

**Do you need to make a complaint about your NHS care and treatment?
Are you unhappy about how you or your relative have been cared for by the NHS?**

Do you want to tell the NHS that you are unhappy with your care and treatment but don't know where to start?

You can get help and support with NHS Complaints from your local advocacy service.

What is an advocate?

Advocates are independent professionals who work with people to help them understand their options, know their rights and say what they want. This helps to make sure that people are involved as much as possible in decisions about their health and care. VoiceAbility provide specialist advocacy for people who may wish to complain about their care and treatment by the NHS. We also provide other types of statutory advocacy.

How can Voiceability help you to complain about your NHS care and treatment?

- The Independent Health Complaints Team at Voiceability can help you to understand how the complaints process works.
- We can explain what outcomes can be obtained and can advise you on what sort of questions you need to ask.
- We can help you to write letters or we can write letters for you if you find this difficult.
- We can help you to look at the response to your complaint to decide if your questions have been answered and you have achieved the outcomes you requested.
- We can support you if you want to have a meeting to discuss your complaint with the service provider. We can attend the meeting with you or we can help you to prepare for the meeting if you want to go on your own or with someone else.
- We can chase responses and speak to the Trust on your behalf.
- We can discuss your options regarding taking your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman.

Total Voice Staffordshire

NHS Complaints Advocacy

Your Independent Health Complaint Advocate will work with you in a way that suits you best and meets your needs. Some people may need help throughout the complaints process, while others may simply need someone on the end of the telephone to discuss aspects of the complaint.

We can visit you at home or we can use telephone or email if you prefer. We will remind you that we are there to support you and you will always be in control of your complaint.

Things we cannot do:

- We cannot make your complaint for you.
- We cannot investigate your complaint.
- We cannot give legal advice or help you to get compensation.
- We cannot ask for disciplinary action against NHS staff.
- We cannot deal with complaints to other organisations.

Anyone who wants to make a complaint about an NHS-funded service can get our help. The episode of care must have taken place within the previous twelve months and they must live within the county of Staffordshire.

People can find our NHS complaints self-help resources on our website, or we can post a copy.

www.voiceability.org

You can email us at: helpline@voiceability.org

You can write to us at:

VoiceAbility, Unit 1, The Old Granary, Westwick, Oakington, Cambridge
CB24 3AR

If you would like to speak to someone about making a complaint, you should contact our Helpline and an Advocate with call you back. Telephone 0300 303 1660.

Total Voice Staffordshire is a combined advocacy service, delivered in partnership by VoiceAbility and Asist. Please contact our Helpline for information on our other advocacy services.

East Staffordshire District
Patient Engagement Group Helpline



East Staffordshire
District Patients Engagement Group

Website: districtpatientsgroup.org

NEW PATIENT HELPLINE

Open from 1st February 2021

Telephone number: 07359021283
Hours: 9.30am - 19.00 pm.

**Open to all patients in East Staffordshire's
18 GP Practices.**

Open for:

- (i). General Health related questions.**
- (ii). Queries around COVID-19 and vaccinations.**
- (iii). Local information.**
- (iv). Signposting.**

We can't discuss specific illnesses, or give medical advice.

**If we don't know the answer, we will find out and ring
or text you back.**

Get in touch

Staffordshire University Business Village, Dyson Way,
Staffordshire Technology Park, Stafford, ST18 0TW

Email: enquiries@healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 0518371



Website www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk



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