

Healthwatch Staffordshire

Annual Report





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Healthwatch Staffordshire welcomes you to this Annual Report.

Support Staffordshire has proudly delivered the Healthwatch Staffordshire contract since 1st April 2022, on behalf of Staffordshire County Council, for the people of Staffordshire. During this time, we have engaged with many people, as well as local commissioning and the delivery of statutory health and care services. To achieve this, we have worked closely with organisations such as the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, Healthwatch England, local NHS Trusts, care providers, Staffordshire County Council and most importantly the residents of Staffordshire, who have shared their health and care experiences with us.

Elaine Day, Chair of the Healthwatch Staffordshire Committee, who is also member of the Support Staffordshire Board, said:

“I believe the independence of Healthwatch Staffordshire is central to seeking patient views and I am honoured to be asked to Chair the Healthwatch Alliance in Staffordshire”



Elaine Day, Chair of the Healthwatch Staffordshire Committee.

Baz Tameez – Healthwatch Staffordshire Manager

I have passionately believed that people who provide NHS and social care services make the best decisions when they listen to the people they care for. It has been a privilege to be the manager at Healthwatch Staffordshire. The Healthwatch Intelligence network has allowed us to work with dedicated staff and volunteers, who ensure people's views are used to make a genuine difference. I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Sir Robert Francis the outgoing Chair at Healthwatch England for his significant contribution not only to Healthwatch, but his absolute commitment to excellence in health and social care.

Read our Annual Report to see how your feedback has helped decision-makers prioritise what matters most. We have demonstrated the power of public feedback to help services understand what's working, spot issues and think about how care can be better.

Interview with Sir Robert Francis QC - Back to our Roots



Healthwatch Staffordshire manager Baz Tameez interviews Sir Robert Francis QC about how Healthwatch came about in 2013. Sir Robert led a public enquiry into serious failures in care at Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust.

It was this enquiry that led to Healthwatch being set-up.



“People were not listened to. By people I mean patients, their families, staff.”

When asked what Health and Social Care should be doing to avoid this happening again, Sir Robert replies “People who are leaders ... they need to encourage people who work for them to speak up, and to listen to what they have to say”



Sir Robert Francis QC, former Chair of Healthwatch England

Click here the full interview or go to Healthwatch Staffordshire website:
<https://healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk/healthwatch-interview/>

Meet the Team

Meet the team responsible for delivering Healthwatch Staffordshire.

This group provides advice on:

- Healthwatch priorities
- The Enter and View programme to monitor the quality of care
- Identifying key public concerns
- Community engagement activity

They act as the voice of the people and make sure that Healthwatch Staffordshire adheres to the core principles of confidentiality, respect, feedback, transparency, and influence.

Engagement Officers

Emma Ford North

Daniela Ballantine South West

Chris Sherwood Social Care

Dave Bassett South East

Baz Tameez Healthwatch Manager

Claire Hill Data Analyst

Regions on map: Newcastle, Stoke, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford, East Staffs., South Staffs., Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Tamworth.

Healthwatch Staffordshire

About Us

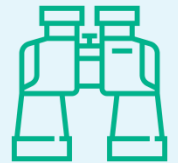
Your Health and Social Care Champion

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. As an independent body, which is statutorily required across England, we have the power to make sure that those making the decisions, listen to your feedback and improve standards of care.

To work with partners to promote positive practices and encourage members of the public to share their experiences – whether good or bad, happy or sad. We use this feedback to better understand the challenges facing the NHS and other care providers. To make sure these experiences improve health and social care services for everyone.

Our vision

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



Our mission

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



Our values

- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- Including everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- Analysing different people's experiences, to learn how to improve care.
- Acting on feedback and driving change.
- Partnering with care providers, government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

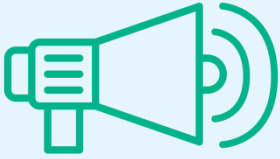


Our Year in Review

From GP access to mental health and dentistry, to hospital discharges and adult safeguarding, maternity services on social media, the annual report is packed with news and information about the work we have undertaken to improve health and social care services for residents.

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



1475 people

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

We gave good Information, Advice and Guidance about topics such as mental health, A&E, GP Access, Dentistry, Pharmacies, Hospital Discharges, Safeguarding concerns, issues with transport, COVID-19 and more.

We published:

7 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. Our most popular report was:

Gender Affirmation

which highlighted the anxieties people had when health services were unsure how to support them with their treatment options.

Volunteers

We're lucky to have outstanding Volunteers, who gave up their time to make care better for our community.

We have welcomed our Volunteers on board and they have helped:



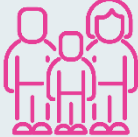






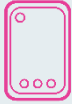
- by distributing Healthwatch leaflets at Flu Vaccination Clinics
- by supporting at Social Care consultations about strengths-based co-production
- by giving feedback on NHS Trust Quality Accounts

Making a difference

to care



Healthwatch Engagement 2022 - 2023

Engagement Events		People Engaged		Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)	
	61		1475		77
Social Care Events		People Engaged re Social Care		Seldom Heard Groups	
	15		349		16
Strategic Meetings		Volunteer Hours		Social Media Followers	
	87		120		3668
Healthwatch England Engagement				Digital Engagement	
Meetings		Reports shared			~18K
20		5			

Our Partners

David Pearson - Chair of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB



Partnership working is at the heart of our integrated care system so this year we have really welcomed the opportunity to work even more closely with our colleagues at Healthwatch. Working together, Healthwatch has been that independent critical friend helping us to both improve the patient experience of services but also to facilitate conversations with people and communities.



Healthwatch provide an invaluable link between the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the VCSE sector and this year we have strengthened data sharing between us, enabling rich, grass roots insight to be fed back to the system, which is having a really positive impact. They have also supported quality monitoring through joint enter and view visits, acting as an independent observer, to ensure patients are receiving safe and high-quality services from a range of local providers.

During our recent consultation on the future of inpatient mental health services, Healthwatch supported us by representing the patient voice and added real value to the patient feedback we received. They have also played an active role in our campaign around primary care access by providing good information, advice and guidance around the different ways to access primary care, helping to reduce patient anxieties in the community.

Healthwatch continue their support to the ICB by attending our board meeting, as an independent observer, as well as representing the public on many of our programme boards, including our Palliative End of Life Care Programme Board and our winter planning system group. They're also a valued member of our People and Communities Assembly, which advises the ICB on its approach to engaging with the public.

I was delighted to support Healthwatch this year in their recruitment of lay members to the Healthwatch Committee, as this further strengthened the partnership working between Healthwatch and health. I look forward to continuing to work alongside Healthwatch as the ICB and the wider integrated care system develops.

Building on the work that we have already started, I think together we can drive real and positive change for our communities and succeed in our joint desire to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and tackle inequalities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Garry Jones - Chief Executive at Support Staffordshire

When Support Staffordshire was considering whether to tender for the delivery of Healthwatch Staffordshire back in 2021, we had to weigh up the merits and demerits of our prospective offer, and it wasn't a simple decision at all. Over 18 months on, I am therefore delighted to see that the benefits of having Healthwatch join our family of services and support, are now beginning to come to fruition. I am even more delighted that benefits we hadn't even thought of, are also emerging from partnership working within the organisation and more widely in the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.



In particular, I would wish to highlight the strong and growing Healthwatch Intelligence Network which is grounded in the local VCSE organisations who already have powerful and established roots into Staffordshire communities. Be they user-led and health specific groups who can have their existing voice amplified through Healthwatch, or the hidden communities of place or identity who would have plenty to say about health & care, if only someone would listen. It's the latter groups, by working together, we are now better placed to enable to be heard, and we plan to supercharge their voices into year two, through our VCSE grants programme which was a key component of our successful tender.



Creating a Stronger Staffordshire

learn, evolve, or even come into being, based upon insight from those who live it. This collaboration, increasingly coordinated through the new Healthy Communities Forums, reduces duplication, fills gaps in support and improves quality, but it also provides a strong collaborative platform to challenge statutory partners when necessary.

The second highlight for me is the triangulation of resident (sometimes patient) perspective, with our VCSE world and that of the NHS and social care provision. Not only does resident voice enable hospitals and GP's to do better, but so too can community groups

I want to thank all those involved in delivery of Healthwatch this year and look forward to seeing what great things we can do next year together.

John Wood Chair of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board

Healthwatch makes an important contribution to the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB), which is a broad partnership of local organisations that work together to help to protect adults in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The SSASPB's role is to assure itself that safeguarding partners act to help and protect adults who:



- have needs for care and support.
- are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- as a result of those care and support needs, are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding adults is about the development of a culture that:

- promotes good practice and continuous improvement within services
- raises public awareness that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- responds effectively and swiftly when abuse or neglect has been alleged or occurs
- seeks to learn when things have gone wrong
- is sensitive to the issues of cultural diversity
- puts the person at the centre of planning to meet support needs to ensure they are safe in their homes and communities

Safeguarding concerns are often hidden and when they do come to light, are difficult to substantiate due to the capacity and vulnerabilities of the adult concerned. When adults with care and support needs have experienced abuse or neglect, it usually occurs in their home, whether their own or a care home, and perpetrated by someone who they know and should be able to trust – either a member of their own family, or friend, or someone working in a position of trust. It is important that all safeguarding partners are vigilant and look out for the signs of abuse and neglect and take positive action when it is found and Healthwatch has a key role.

Healthwatch colleagues play a vital role in contributing to the Board and sub-groups and demonstrate a willingness to actively engage, constructively challenge and importantly to be challenged as to the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

This is a link to the SSASPB website where you can find out much more about their work [Home \(ssaspb.org.uk\)](https://ssaspb.org.uk)



Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board

Abuse must stop

Staffordshire County Council

Working closely with County Council Healthwatch undertook an engagement programme gathering insights into care home residents and the things that are important to them. The aim was to establish what good practice in a care home looked like by engaging with residents and their carers/families. The feedback could then be used to inform the current contract redesign and the emerging County Council Social Care Strategy for 2024. We have shared regular intelligence and issues with key partners to further influence services, providers, and commissioners. This increasing focus of the new Healthwatch service has also helped to inform the County Council's focus on embedding co-production across adult social care.



Asist



Asist work alongside people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health conditions to ensure that there is support for people who have difficulty speaking out. Advocacy is about enabling people to speak up and make their own, informed, independent choices. Healthwatch and Asist will share information to support people.

Our Priorities during 2022/23

- To listen to the public's feedback on health and social care provision and voice their experiences to decision makers.
- To offer good quality Information, Advice and Guidance.
- To signpost to appropriate services
- To be proactive on 3 Deep Dive Focal Investigations:
 - *Access to Primary Care*
 - *Seldom Heard patient/resident in the Health and Care system*
 - *Root causes of good and poor teenage mental wellbeing and health outcomes when you've been in care as a child*



Reports Published during 2022-2023 Based on Your Feedback

**** Please click on the report titles to view the full reports on our website ****

Report on Gender Affirmation Survey, January 2023



In June 2022 Healthwatch attended Stoke Pride. It was at this event that we spoke with a resident of Staffordshire who was experiencing difficulties with aspects of their health care, as they were on the waiting list for gender reassignment. This was the starting point for our investigation as it was apparent that other people were having the same negative experiences. A short survey was designed to gain further insight into people's experiences of going through gender affirmation. This was distributed via various social media platforms and other public events were planned. Issues that were raised by

residents regarding their gender affirmation journey were:

- Lack of knowledge in Primary Care;
- Long waiting times to be seen by specialist care and the impact this has on individuals' health and wellbeing.



Issues/challenges with Patient access to IAPT

Healthwatch Staffordshire	
Report Issues/Challenges with Patient access to IAPT Date: 01/11/2022 Engagement Officer: Robert O'Leary, South West Staffordshire	
Background info:	Healthwatch Staffordshire has received several complaints regarding patient access to IAPT services. Patients have reported long waiting times for appointments and some have reported being forgotten for appointments. Some patients have also reported being referred to the GP instead of the IAPT service. Healthwatch Staffordshire is supported by a Social Prescriber.
Issues/Problems:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication via telephone Waiting times for appointments Referrals to the GP instead of the IAPT service
Summary:	Patients have reported long waiting times for appointments and some have reported being forgotten for appointments. Some patients have also reported being referred to the GP instead of the IAPT service. Healthwatch Staffordshire is supported by a Social Prescriber.

Healthwatch Staffordshire has received complaints regarding mental health service provision access for patients, waiting times and communication. These have come from different areas within Stafford & South West Staffordshire and is supported by a Social Prescriber. Patients told us that they were not getting through in a timely manner.

We recommended:

- A more effective telephone answering system and timely response to voicemails left.
- Text communication where possible, which may reassure patients that although they are waiting for an appointment they have not been forgotten, and less likely to increase to a scale stage 4.
- Clear dialogue with referring professionals, so patients are correctly referred to the IAPT service and not returned to the GP (scale stage 1-3).



Enter and View Reports

County Hospital, Stafford 10th February 2023

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of our findings of the discharge process at the County Hospital and highlight some of the common issues we identified and how these might be overcome, to improve the patient experience. During our visit, we have seen evidence of elements of best practice, which will be highlighted through the report, in the relevant sections. Our visit was focused on gaining an organisational perspective within the hospital and the trust.

Safeguarding Leads – we have seen evidence of boards displayed within various wards, including within the emergency department (ED), informing who the safeguarding leads for that department were and contact names and useful information and links, regarding safeguarding policies and procedures.

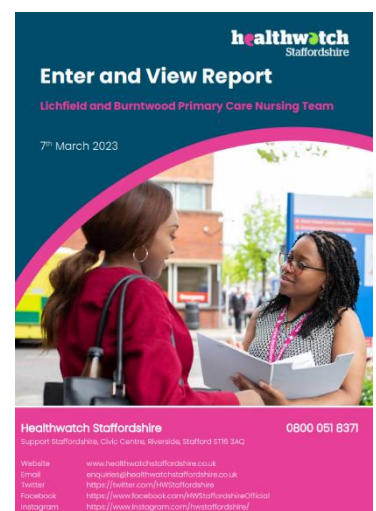
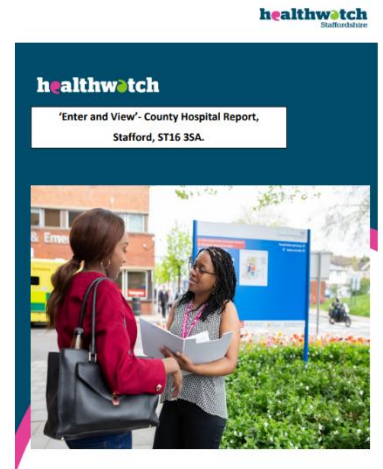
Patient's Stories: 'Staff have been very friendly and caring, and I am really grateful.'

Healthwatch would rate the County Hospital as 'good' and were pleased with the work that is being done at the hospital, despite the current pressures. We were pleased to receive positive feedback from the patients and staff at the hospital.

Lichfield & Burntwood Community Nurses 10th February 2023

Strengths:

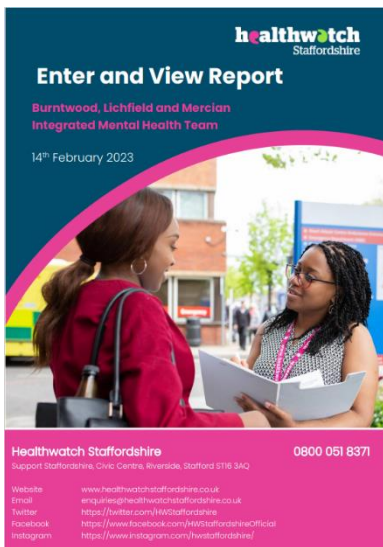
- The nursing team are delivering a responsive high-quality service while managing staff shortages.
- The team is caring, compassionate and professional.
- The team are well connected within the communities of Burntwood and Lichfield and use strong partnership working to enhance the experiences of their patients.



Needs:

- Staff recruitment is a constant challenge with a 16% vacancy factor.
- Staff report that they have issues with the reliability of the Wi-Fi system in the office that they rely upon.

Burntwood, Lichfield and Mercian Integrated Mental Health Team 14th February 2023



Both Healthwatch and the MPFT Quality Team are producing their reports individually and this report is an independent view from Healthwatch. Thanks goes to all MPFT staff who made us welcome and participated in the process.

As part of the Community Mental Health Transformation, MPFT has positioned Integrated Mental Health Teams to work within neighbourhoods to deliver place-based care, based on need rather than diagnosis.

The team provides assessment, intervention, and treatments for people experiencing complex mental health difficulties which significantly impact their daily life. This may include anxiety disorders, complex trauma, mood disorders, psychosis, and other complex mental health conditions.

Strengths

- A significant reduction in the waiting list from over 120 to around 40.
- Proactive management of referrals by the multi-disciplinary team on a weekly basis.
- Evidence of positive team management that has created a supportive environment within which staff and partners operate.

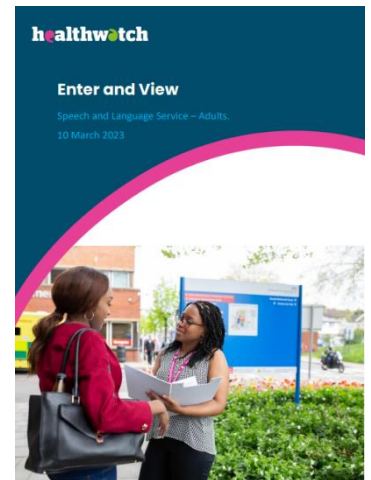
Needs

- Staff report that they have issues with the reliability of the Wi-Fi system in the office that they rely upon.
- More timely communication with service users when appointments cancelled due to staff sickness, which has been an issue for some patients.

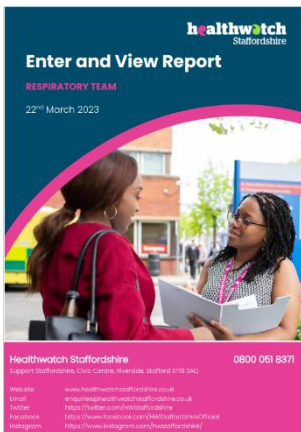
Adult Speech and Language Therapy, MPFT, Staffordshire County-Wide 10th March 2023

This visit was done jointly between Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT), who were conducting an internal quality visit and Healthwatch Staffordshire who were conducting an independent Enter and View. The main aim, by combining the visits, was to gain a comprehensive view of the service, with minimal disruption to operational delivery.

The joint quality visit by Staffordshire Healthwatch with the MPFT's Quality Team has been very positive. The visit was able to demonstrate considerable progress in meeting the challenges of moving from a diagnosis led service to an approach that is needs led, thus focusing on the rehabilitation of patients with speech and language disorders, or any other communication conditions.



Respiratory Service, MPFT, Staffordshire 22nd March 2023



This visit was also carried out jointly with MPFT, although Healthwatch's Report was produced independently.

The Report found that the service itself, and the knowledge of the Team Leader, could not be faulted. However, there were two gaps in service provision which Healthwatch would recommend be addressed.

**** Please click on the report titles to view the full reports on our website ****

Our Work with Healthwatch England



This year we worked with four Healthwatch England Campaigns:

- [#YourCareYourWay](#) was all about the Accessible Information Standard and we promoted this on Social Media.
- **#BecauseWeAllCare** was a long-term project of joint research with the Care Quality Commission and has had several phases. It has recently focused on people with long-term health conditions and their experience of getting a GP referral for tests or support. We publicised this phase of the survey on Social Media.
- [The Cost Of Living Survey](#) was another National Survey from HWE. This time they provided a template which we could adapt. We circulated our version locally and were able to share 28 responses with HWE. We will be completing our own analysis of this data shortly.
- **#MaternalMHMatters** was a National HWE survey which looked at [Maternal Mental Health](#). We promoted this campaign locally in the Autumn of 2022 and received back 51 responses for Staffordshire (out of 2693 nationally), which we will be evaluating during 2023-2024.



#BecauseWeAllCare

“The survey found that more than half (54%) are not being regularly asked by services to feed back about their care, and almost two-thirds (62%) do not know how to. However, most people (71%) said they would be willing to provide feedback to help the care and services improve”



Training & Networking

Healthwatch England also provides training and networking meetings for our staff, as well as a range of resources including report templates, posters and social media graphics. They also publish all of the reports produced by Local Healthwatch on their website.

Amongst the training staff have attended this year has been:

- Introduction to Health & Social Care
- Qualitative & Quantitative Analysis
- How to Make Your Communications Accessible
- Enter and View training – for Healthwatch visits.

HWE Networking Meetings include:

- RING – Research and Insight Network Group
- CAN - Campaigns and Communications Ambassador Network
- Report Showcases
- HW Engagement Leads Networking
- Ask the Network

Healthwatch Staffordshire have also been visited by staff from Healthwatch England:

- Regional Manager Chris Gorman joined us for one of our Team Meetings early in the year.
- In December, Sarah Fowler (Title and training HWE) gave us a workshop on Engagement Techniques.

The Healthwatch Team have all undertaken training with Support Staffordshire such as: Safeguarding, Workplace Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Stress Management and more.

National Issues

Changes to the organisation of Health & Social Care

Since the Health & Social Care Act 2012 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area. This led to Engagement Officers attending their local Clinical Commissioning Group's Patient Congress.

At the start of July we saw the introduction of the Integrated Care System (ICS) which shakes up how health and social care is organised. According to the [NHS England website](#):

Integrated care systems (ICSS) are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.

From July 2022 we have been working with our local Integrated Care System, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICS; the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have been replaced with Integrated Care Board (ICB). For more information on these changes please visit www.staffsstokeics.org.uk



Safeguarding

Staff from Healthwatch Staffordshire attended the following Training:

- Staffordshire County Council Adult Safeguarding Briefing
- North Staffordshire Mind's Suicide Awareness and Prevention

The Healthwatch team regularly work in partnership with CQC to share information prior to CQC or Enter and View visits to various care homes or NHS business centres. We will share any safeguarding concerns and good practice.

Healthwatch attends the monthly Quality and Safeguarding Information Sharing Meeting (QSISM).

We attend the quarterly Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB) to work together and help to protect adults in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The Board's role is to assure itself that safeguarding partners act to help and protect adults who:

- have needs for care and support.
- are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- as a result of those care and support needs, are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Local Engagement

Our Engagement Officers were involved in various engagement activities over the year, from working with Patient Participation Groups and Social Prescribers, attending VCSE Locality Forums and speaking on local radio, to meeting the public at a range of events and community groups across the county.

Patient Participation Group (PPGs)

Our Engagement Officers have further extended our contacts with Patient Participation Groups around the county, building a wider set of contacts, both receiving and giving feedback on issues of interest or concern. We will continue to develop this work going forward, linking in with our deep dive project on Primary Care Access.

In some localities (East Staffordshire for example) there are regular meetings of groups of PPGs who are in dialogue with the local hospital and community providers making positive suggestions for service improvements and offering volunteering support to vaccination programmes, such as Covid 19. In one instance we were able to link a local PPG directly with managers at the ICB, to address a specific local issue.

We engaged with 77 PPGs across Staffordshire wide. The team engaged with over 600 patients who participated. Some key highlights on the engagement and feedback was:

- Patient waiting times for GP appointments
- Seating arrangement in the GP reception area
- That patients need a bottom-up driven approach
- The struggles of people with ADHD and Autism
- Waiting times for an ambulance
- Discharge from hospital for the elderly
- Transfer from child to adult mental health services
- The lack of NHS dentistry (and other issues relating to this service)

We also met with Oxfordshire Healthwatch, to hear about some of their work with PPGs, taking some learning from their experiences.

Social Prescribers

Our Engagement Officers have been creating links with the Social Prescribers in their area. Social Prescribers are based in GP Surgeries, and they help to link people with non-medical services that may help their well-being. This is another way in which Healthwatch can gain a general feel of what is happening in health and social care, whilst at the same

time providing signposting to services that social prescribers may not be aware of. This work continues into 2023-2024.

VCSE Locality Forums

Staff attend these quarterly forums, to meet with the public and our partners. Arranged by Support Staffordshire, they take place in all 8 Districts of the County: Tamworth, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Stafford, Cannock, South Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands.



Media Coverage

One of Healthwatch's Engagement Officers was interviewed about our work on Churnet Valley Sounds. They spoke about why Healthwatch exists and our current work priorities.

Healthwatch were also interviewed jointly with Healthwatch Stoke on Hitmix Radio, when they attended a Dementia Awareness Week at Affinity, Talke. We again spoke about Healthwatch's work and encouraged people to come and meet us at the event.

We go and speak with people where they meet:

In our efforts to find out what people think of health and social care services, Healthwatch's Engagement Officers will go and speak with established groups. We want as much feedback as possible about local services.

Amongst the groups that we have visited this year, have been:

- Lifeworks Coffee Morning.
- Alice Charity's Big Cup Toddler and Parents Playgroup, Audley.
- Audley Coffee and Chat Group.
- A group for carers of people with mental ill health.
- Knutton Foodbank.
- Biddulph, Leek and Werrington Libraries.
- Loggerheads Craft & Chat.
- Homestart Kidsgrove.
- The Newcastle Travellers Site.
- Places of Welcome at Rugeley Library and other similar venues.
- The Chase Leisure Centre – Inspiring Healthy Living (IHL).
- Avon community centre – Healthwatch with SuS & Everyone Health.

- South Staffordshire College, Cannock – Open Days and Job Fairs.
- Carers' Support Groups in Cheadle, Tamworth & Lichfield, Burton & Uttoxeter including a visit in Tamworth with 'Staffordshire Together for Carers'.
- Lichfield Cathedral and Burntwood Library – Volunteering Fairs.
- Tuesday Mixer Club in Stafford for over 55's.
- Monthly Alzheimer's Support Evenings (MASE) Group in South Staffordshire.

Events Attended – Highlights from the Year

Dementia Action Week 2022

Last May, Emma attended the Dementia Action Week event at Affinity Shopping Centre in Talke. The event was to raise awareness of Dementia and to let people know the support that is available. During the day she spoke with people who did, and did not, have a diagnosis of dementia. We signposted people to organisations where they could find social support, ones where they could receive advice on benefits, and heard that not everyone has access to 'smart phones and computers', which leads to being excluded from certain activities.



Diabetes & Me

In June, Dave attended an awareness event called "Diabetes and Me" at Pirelli Stadium, organised by East Staffordshire and Surrounds Diabetes UK Patient Network Group. This highlighted patient experiences both locally and abroad and reminded us that Diabetes and its complications consume around 10% of the whole NHS Budget.



The group successfully highlighted gaps in the provision of a community diabetes service in the Southeast of the County. These are now being addressed in partnership with the local NHS.

Event with Royal Association for Deaf & HW Stoke

A presentation of "What is Healthwatch?" was given by Healthwatch Stoke in partnership with Healthwatch Staffordshire to a welcoming audience from the local deaf community. The audience then shared their own personal experiences of health-related matters. For 90 minutes we captured a variety of stories and trends that impact on the Deaf community.



Dave's stand at the **Lichfield Locality Forum** in July.



Last Summer we attended **Pride Events** in Chase, Stoke & Lichfield. Emma & Sarah met residents and heard peoples' experiences of using local health & social care services.



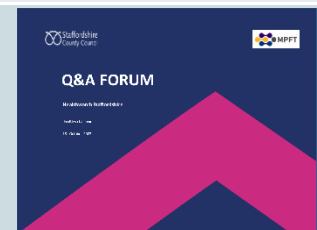
Sarah and Rob last September at a **Freshers' Fayre at the Stafford and Newcastle Colleges** where we met with a younger audience.



Biddulph Energy Day in October in the North of the County. Here, we were able to meet residents and make them aware of our work. We also heard issues regarding access to GP's.



Baz hosted a Q&A session on Teams for the **MPFT Social Work Learning Academy** last October, attended by over 80 people.



**Staffordshire
Sight Loss**

Emma and Sarah attended an event organised by Staffordshire Sight Loss Association (SSLA).

In November, Sarah went to the **Twilight Market in Biddulph** with our partners Asist.



Dave attended Health High Street Events at hospitals in Lichfield & Tamworth.



At the **Compassionate Communities Event** in December, Daniela spoke to members of the public of their experiences around loss, grief, and coping mechanisms; we produced a [guide regarding support available in the local area](#) and publicised it on our Healthwatch website.



Dave and Daniela at the January **Volunteering Fair** at Lichfield Cathedral



In January Rob, Baz and Daniela, attended the **'Supporting People Through The Cost of Living Crisis'** in Stafford, offering information, advice and guidance about support services and signposting; we also completed several Surveys with residents.



Working in partnership to develop the SCC's **Disability and Neurodiversity Plan for Staffordshire** 'Living My Best Life' by taking part in the workshop activities, surveys and follow-up tasks, alongside a wide range of partners, including from Staffordshire County Council, NHS and the voluntary sector.



At the **'Health Inequalities Stakeholder Event'** in January, Daniela participated to the workshop discussions and coproduction, contributing ideas towards tackling health inequalities.



At the end of January, Emma from Healthwatch, attended Newcastle North PCN's **Health & Wellbeing Day** at the Affinity Shopping Centre in Talke.



At the **'Places of Welcome'** at Rugeley Library in February, Daniela spoke to a support group from the local area about their socialising needs and how to avoid isolation and loneliness.



In February, Dave also met with the public at the **Community Champions' Health & Wellbeing Fair** at Burton Albion Community Hub in Burton-upon-Trent.

Dave attended the **"Meeting Point" group** at Handsacre Methodist Rooms in March, to talk about what Healthwatch does. He presented the National Primary Care Survey data on the Horsefair group of GP practices that cover the area and showed how it compared with figures for Staffordshire and Nationally.

Deep Dives

Healthwatch Staffordshire priorities from November 2022 – 23 are to undertake 3 Deep Dive focuses. We will aim to publish our findings in November 2023. Below is an update on what we are currently picking up or aiming to focus on.

‘Being a Seldom Heard/LGBTQI+ patient/resident in the health and care system’.

This deep dive is focusing on three seldom heard groups; this is to fit with our earlier Gender Affirmation Report. The three sections of the community we decided to work with, were: Romany and Travellers (as we do not hear issues from this community), people who live in rural areas (as we understand there are issues in accessing services due to lack of public transport) and, because of conversations we have had, people who are neurodiverse. Our Deep Dive Report will be published in late 2023.

‘Accessing Primary Care face to face’ (“When I want to and when I need to”)

For generations, primary care has been at the heart of our communities. In Staffordshire and Stoke, 143 GP practices between them, deliver over 27,500 appointments a day, acting as the first point of contact for most people accessing the NHS and providing an ongoing relationship to those who need it.

Despite this, there are signs of genuine and growing discontent with primary care - both from the public who use it and the professionals who work within it.

The frequently quoted 8am scramble for appointments has become the focal point of patient frustration.

Published in May 2022, the Fuller Stocktake report sets out the next steps for integrating primary care with the initial government focus on access.

- **streamlining access to care and advice** for people who get ill but only use health services infrequently.
- **providing more proactive, personalised care with support from a multi-disciplinary team of professionals** to people with more complex needs.
- **Helping people to stay well for longer** as part of a more joined up approach to prevention.

Through engagement with users and carers around the county, Healthwatch is developing a guide to assist patients to get the best out of primary care services within the resource constraints that exist.

‘Root causes of good and poor teenage mental wellbeing and Health outcomes when you've been in care as a child’.

- There is increased demand with some young people experiencing crisis point, due to a multitude of factors.
- Referral backlogs.
- Difficulties with Transitioning from CYPMH (Children) services to AMHS (Adults Mental Health Services).
- Young Persons generally want to see a professional, to support their MH and Emotional Wellbeing; however, often, unsure where to go.
- Telephone access impacted by referral queries from care experienced young people (CEYP) and reported ‘long waiting times’ to be seen.
- Digital access via website and its effectiveness.
- Continued impact of Covid-19, with some sessions still conducted via teams, while other sessions organized face-to-face i.e. Talking therapies, CBT.
- Looking at support networks around the young person and building resilience - liaise with family, friends, professionals, other support groups.
- Aiming to improve Health outcomes for care experiences young people, by bringing about systemic change within the relevant organisation.



Other Findings/Work

Mental Wellbeing - George Bryan

Healthwatch are involved in the public consultation to ensure the public voice is heard around the long-term solution for the inpatient mental health services previously provided at the George Bryan Centre in Tamworth. This centre previously provided services for Southeast Staffordshire, which includes Burton, Uttoxeter, Lichfield and Tamworth.



Over the past year our engagement officers have been feeding in comments and concerns to the MPFT steering group about mental health issues, picked up from engagement with members of the public. The public response is summarised as:

- Acknowledgement that community mental health support has started to improve as the effects of Mental Health Transformation are being implemented. This was evidenced by Healthwatch on a recent "Enter and View" visit to the Lichfield and Burntwood Integrated Mental Health Team.
- The voluntary and community sector willingness to engage in supporting service users in the community.
- Travelling to Stafford on public transport is difficult and time consuming.
- Some people are digitally excluded.
- Need to increase public awareness on how to access mental health services locally and more work on prevention is also needed.

Staffordshire and National Dentistry

Parliamentary Enquiry - written evidence on Dentistry

Healthwatch Staffordshire received feedback from over 70 local residents on NHS Dentistry and this was submitted to Healthwatch England. In the last 8 months we received feedback and experiences from local residents who have been struggling to get dental care even with urgent problems. We have worked with our community dental colleagues to signpost people to emergency appointments. The government needs to look at preventive dental treatment, to avoid long term dental ill health. We have had parents of toddlers who want to introduce their child to the dentist at an early age who cannot get them in to see a dentist anywhere they can travel to. Care home residents are struggling to get dentistry services.

Healthwatch Staffordshire has been working alongside Healthwatch England (HWE) to share this patient feedback. HWE collated 700 queries and experiences nationally and presented this to the final session of an inquiry held at the 'House of Commons Health and Care Committee' on NHS dentistry about the lack of access to NHS dentistry, Highlighting:

- 20% of all feedback is now dentistry related.
- People having to travel further and take time off work to see a dentist.
- Patients having to choose between heating or paying for dental care.
- And an unfair system not prioritising people with the greatest needs.

The primary care minister Neil O'Brien, and NHSE officials, often referring to Healthwatch evidence responded with:

- There was 'a lot to fix' in NHS dentistry but he believed more dentists were doing NHS work than last year
- His priority was to help people with complex dental needs who currently didn't have any contact with an NHS dentist (but he didn't detail how this would be achieved)
- He agreed that access needed to improve, especially in terms of people not being forced to travel long distances to NHS services
- The upcoming NHS workforce plan would extend the roles of dental hygienists and therapists to take on some of the workload of dentists.

Information, Advice & Guidance

With good Information, Advice and Guidance, Healthwatch intends to help patients/residents to access appropriate services and available support in managing their own wellbeing, and where possible this is being joined up across the system. Signposting to support delivered by other organisations (including the Staffordshire Integrated Advocacy Service) and within communities. The Healthwatch freephone number is available for those unable to access IAG digitally. In our 'independent' role we have supported a range of individuals with specific issues, for example medication management for patients and carers. As a result, people have been signposted to use the practice pharmacist more often, where previously they were seeking GP appointments for medication. This is proving to be a faster route to meet needs, reduced a lot of stress and anxiety for people, whilst also saving GP time and helping to reduce waiting times, further demonstrating how Healthwatch's approach is supporting the NHS.

How we make a difference

- **We listen to YOU** – your views and your experiences, to know what is working well and what could be improved.
- **We then use the information you share** with us to provide intelligence-based reports to those who plan, pay for or deliver care in our area, **to highlight where services are not meeting people's needs.**
- Because **we're independent** and cover **all local NHS and social care services** we can see, and highlight, concerns that others may not be able to.
- We are able to raise our concerns **directly with those with the power to make changes happen.** We also run projects to look closely at certain types of care when we need to find out more.

What we can't do

- We can't help with individual complaints **BUT we can** help you to understand the complaints process.
- We can't act as an advocate for you **BUT we will** signpost you to those who can.
- **We can't influence change in local care without hearing from people just like you!**

Access to Dental Care

Access to dental care remains an issue across the county. Unfortunately, this is a national problem which Healthwatch England have taken up with the Department of Health.

The advice is to try and get on a waiting list at several dentists for when they do start to take on new patients.

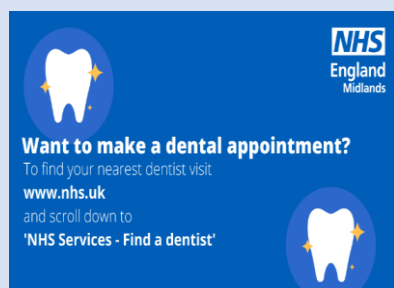
In the meantime, if you are experiencing dental problems, please visit

<https://www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/dental-services> Alternatively you can ring them on 0300 123 0981. They will provide you with details of how to access emergency dental care in Staffordshire.



Access to Dental Care

The access to dentistry remains a national problem. However, this is being addressed in the Midlands where a scheme has begun to create **3,800 additional weekend appointments** from now until the end of March 2023. It should mean that around 12,000 more Midlands people can access the dental care they need.



We have also had a couple of people who have been treated privately on the NHS, and who wanted to make complaints about the private healthcare they received.

Proof of Covid Vaccination for Travel

Since the easing of Covid restrictions more people are travelling abroad again. For some countries, proof of vaccination has been required. Usually, this can be found through the NHS App, but we were approached for help on a number of occasions, by people who couldn't secure proof they needed. Through liaison with the local vaccination coordinators, we were able to assist people to find the proof they needed and go on to enjoy their holidays. You can find the latest walk in clinics on our website news.

[News Articles Archive - Healthwatch Staffordshire](#)



Making Complaints



We have received feedback from several Staffordshire residents and organisations that they would like clarity on the difference between NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) and NHS Complaints and how to access them. In response we have produced a leaflet explaining the difference and listing the contact details for the main NHS organisations that deliver services to Staffordshire patients.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (or PALS) is a free, informal, confidential help and advice service for patients, carers and their families. It is there to help when you need advice or have concerns about health-related matters, or simply don't know where to turn.

PALS will:

- help you get the information you need about the NHS
- listen and respond to your concerns, suggestions, queries or compliments
- sort out problems quickly on your behalf in an informal and friendly manner
- use your feedback to help improve services
- tell you how to get more involved in your own healthcare
- help you to make a formal complaint
- signpost you to other agencies or organisations who can assist you.

Please contact them via one of the methods below and they will be happy to help.

Freephone: 0808 196 8861

Email: PatientServices@staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk

PALS is open from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Signposting to Grief and Bereavement Services

To provide quality, caring and confidential bereavement support service to the local community.

To help clients who access services to make positive differences to their lives as they experience difficult times.

[Bereavement support - Staffordshire County Council](#)

[Bereavement & Loss Support | SDB&LSS | Stafford \(staffordbereavementsupport.org.uk\)](#)

Signposting to Asist Advocacy Services

Asist work alongside people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health conditions to ensure that there is support for people who have difficulty speaking out. Advocacy is about enabling people to speak up and make their own, informed, independent choices. Healthwatch and Asist will share information to support people.

[Advocacy | ASIST Advocacy Services In Staffordshire | Stoke-on-Trent, England](#)





Digital Communication

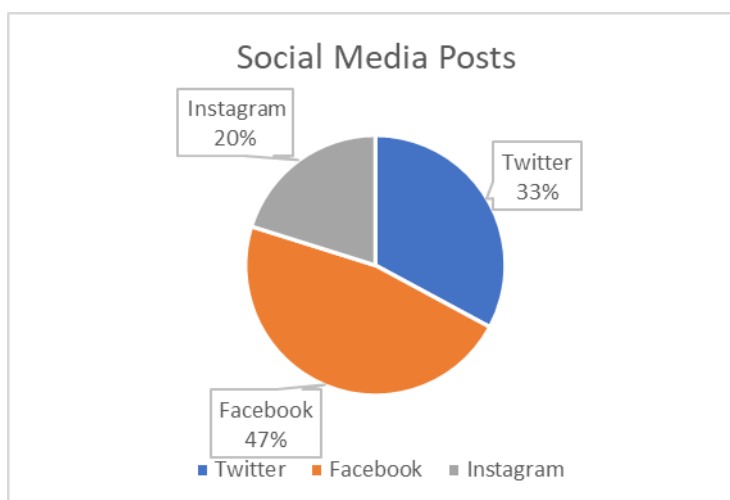
Digital Highlights throughout 2022 – 2023

This was a year of change for our digital communication with a new database, a new online survey tool, a change of website supplier, new branding from Healthwatch England and the introduction of our new eBulletin.

Social Media

We regularly posted across three social media platforms: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

Platform	# Followers (Mar 23)
Twitter	2847
Facebook	209
Instagram	612
Total	3668



Our posts covered a variety of local and national topics around health and social care. We used materials from the Department of Health & Social Care Campaign Resource Centre to promote national health awareness campaigns such as 'Lift Someone Out of Loneliness' from Better Health (Every Mind Matters) and the Bowel Cancer Screening campaign.



We also shared posts from NHS England, NHS Midlands and local Health Trusts, as well as the County and District Councils, local Libraries and Service Providers. We promoted local consultations like

the George Bryan Consultation and 'Have Your Say on Staffordshire's Disability and Neurodiversity Strategy'.

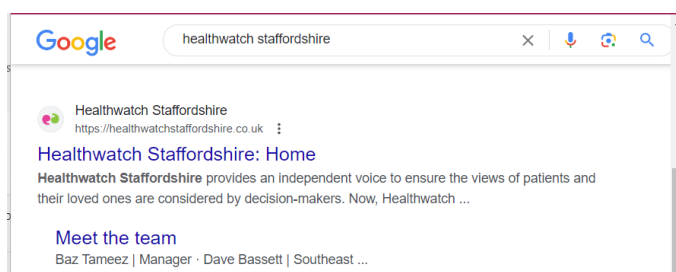
We participated in Healthwatch England Campaigns such as 'Maternal Mental Health Matters', 'Because We All Care', 'Cost of Living' and 'Your Care Your Way'. We promoted events we are attending, surveys we undertook and other local matters and events such as Warm Spaces. We also publicised health awareness campaigns such as 'ADHD Awareness', #TimetoTalk and #YoungCarersActionDay.



Website & Google Business Profile

Early in the year, we updated our [website](#) and Google Business profile to reflect the change of provider to Support Staffordshire last April. In October we moved our website to a new supplier. Extra pages were added to the website included [Signposting](#),

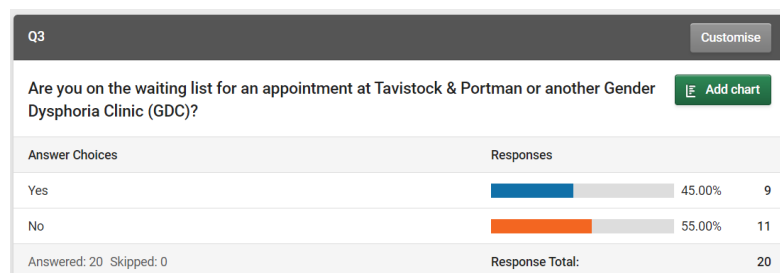
the [eBulletins](#) and links to [online surveys](#). We also had a major effort to get all the historical reports back onto the website. We added a link to the Support Staffordshire eBulletin and gained our own area on their website.



Since May 2022 our Google Business Profile had 2756 views, 677 interactions and 859 search results.

Smart Survey

Our first Smart Survey questionnaire was the Gender Affirmation Survey we ran last Summer.



We also received local results back from the Healthwatch England Maternal Mental Health Matters campaign we promoted.

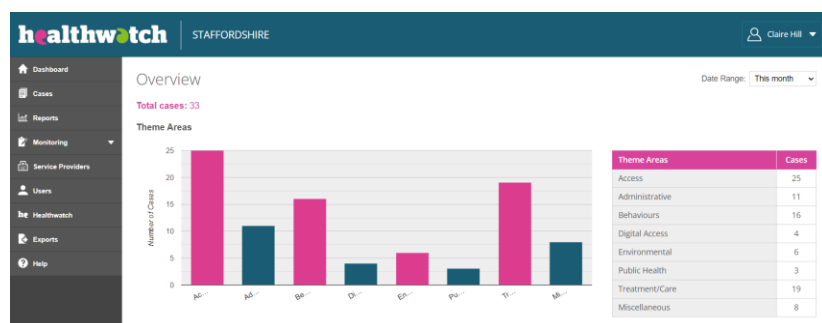
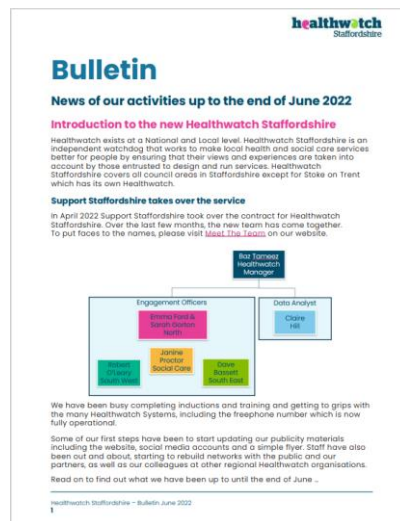
This was followed up with a Social Care Survey and Care Homes Survey. We also used a Healthwatch England template for a local Cost of Living Survey and sent our data back to them.

eBulletin

In July we published our first eBulletin covering the 3 months from April to June. Further editions followed and in January this became a monthly newsletter.

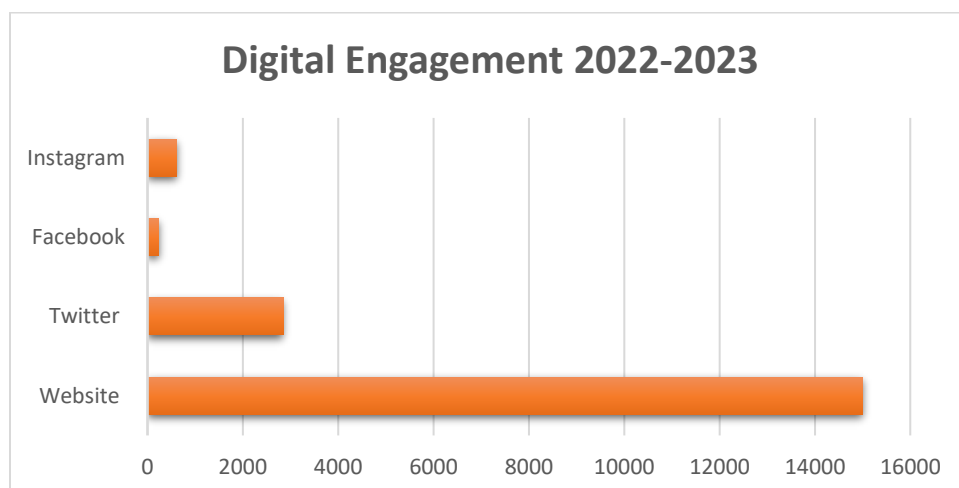
Database of Feedback

In March 2023 we moved over to our new database IMP due to the imminent retirement of the previous HWE tool CiviCRM. The Team is finding this much easier to utilise, to record feedback and generate reports.



Overall Digital Engagement

By the end of March 2023, we had 3668 social media followers and over 15,000 pageviews on our website.



Finance

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

Income	
Funding received from local authority	£199,525
Additional income	£0
Total income	£199,525

Expenditure	
Staff costs	£125,795.67
Operational costs	£17,878.86
Support and administration	£26,337.33
Total expenditure	£170,011.86

Balance carried forward to 2023-2024	
Balance from 2022-23	£29,513.14
Grants to be allocated to Seldom heard	£15,000
Ongoing expenses	£14,513.14



Next steps

Healthwatch planning will be influenced by resident and patient views and insights gathered to date. We will also be working closely with County Council, statutory and community services, to further support this.

Emerging priorities include:

- Ongoing focus and completion of "Deep Dive" work programmes, and shaping future focus
- Increased focus on seldom heard voices (including LGBTQI+, neurodiverse individuals and Travelling communities)
- Integrated Care System consultation activity, (e.g. exploring Hospital Discharge, Transport and Mental Health)
- To continue increasing social care engagement focus to promote best practices and to influence high quality care.
- Expanding the 'Healthwatch Intelligence Network', further harnessing the voice and insight of residents and patients.
- Increased 'enter and view' activity, including the refreshed joint approach with NHS Trust (MPFT, UHNM and UHDB) and County Council statutory quality and safety teams.
- Further promoting the service and communicating key outcomes, including bringing together key themes emerging from engagement activities, as key evidence to help shape and influence service delivery and future priorities of the health and care system.
- Informing and supporting Healthwatch England's key priorities (e.g. Focus on Social Care, Access to Primary Care, Cost of Living and Access to Healthcare, Women's Health (Maternity), and opportunities for further join-up between NHS and social care to deliver better care for patients).

Statutory statements

About us

Support Staffordshire is the organisation holding the Healthwatch Staffordshire contract for 2022- 2023.

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

Healthwatch Staffordshire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



The way we work

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

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Healthwatch network is required to involve and engage with the general public as to their experiences of health and care services. In Staffordshire, Support Staffordshire holds the contract to deliver the Healthwatch service on behalf of Staffordshire County Council.

An independent Healthwatch Committee has been established (as part of the Support Staffordshire governance), which holds delegated decision-making powers to set the Healthwatch agenda. This committee consists of four (unpaid) Support Staffordshire trustees and three independent lay members. A total of 7 members now makes the Healthwatch Committee.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches, to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media, face to face and at events.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. We have a grant fund available and will be using this to help increase the level of feedback to appropriate levels.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Staffordshire is represented on the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Baz Tameez, our Healthwatch Staffordshire Manager. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively delivered the role on the Health and Wellbeing Board using the statutory seat to ensure the public's voice was heard.



Healthwatch Staffordshire

Support Staffordshire

Stafford Civic Centre

Riverside

Stafford

Staffordshire

ST16 3AQ

www.healthwatchstaffordshire.co.uk

The contract to provide the Healthwatch Staffordshire service during 2022 to 2023 was held by

Support Staffordshire

www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk

t: 0300 777 1207

e: info@supportstaffordshire.org.uk

 Twitter

@SupportStaffs