



# Together

We're making health and social care better  
March 2024

**healthwatch**  
Leicester

**healthwatch**  
Leicestershire

# What is healthwatch?



A national and local patient champion to give people and communities a stronger voice to influence



An independent body with statutory functions



Set up by the Health & Social Care Act 2012



Challenges how health and social care services are provided



Healthwatch England (influences national policy & guidance and provides leadership, guidance & support to local Healthwatch)



Local Healthwatch (currently over 150 throughout England)



## Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



## Our mission

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



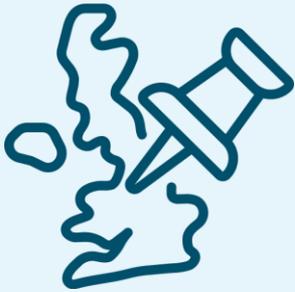
## Our values

- **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.

# Working nationally and locally

The Healthwatch network is present in every community.

## Nationally



**40**

staff work with the public, policymakers and partners to improve care

## Locally across 153 services

**595**

Full-time equivalent staff deliver the Healthwatch service for local communities

**3,700**

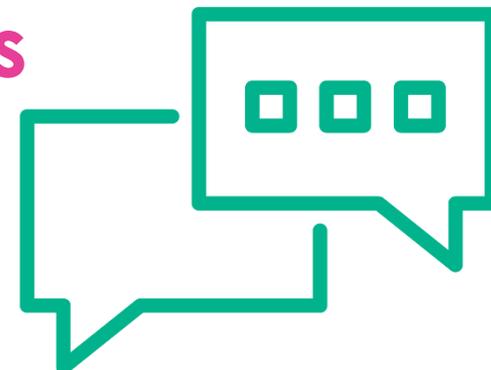
Volunteers kindly give up their time to understand local people's views, provide advice and help improve services.

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On average each local Healthwatch has four full-time equivalent staff.

# How we carry out our functions

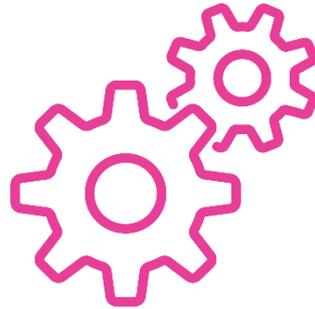
- Enter and View Programme
- Information and signposting
- Community outreach events at local services
- Public engagement and Community Partnerships
- Referrals to Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy
- Research projects on local priorities
- Have a seat on the local Health and Wellbeing board to influence commissioning decisions by representing the views of local stakeholders



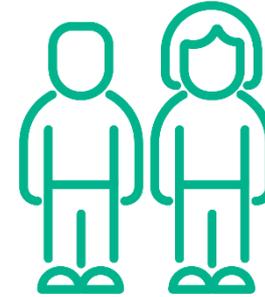
# Local challenges



**Primary Care  
Access**



**Mental Health  
Services**



**Ageing  
Population**



**Emergency  
Services**



**Cost of living**



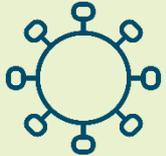
**Language  
Barriers**



**How we're  
making care  
better**

# Our impact in Leicester and Leicestershire

Last year, we supported more than 30000 people to access advice, information and to have their say on care.



With the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacting Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities and vaccination uptake remaining consistently low, we reached out to these communities to hear their stories.



Over the years, we have been raising the issue of access to dentistry. We have advocated for clear advice for patients and details of local NHS provision. We continued to work with HWE to voice public concerns that improvements to NHS dentistry are too slow, leaving thousands of people in pain.



On World Mental Health Day we visited three train stations to share information about local services and engaged directly with 600 people.



Our Chair went on local radio to highlight the concerns around 'delays in emergency care at A&E'. We then visited the Adults Emergency Department at Leicester Royal Infirmary in September 2022 and heard from 139 people. We revisited the department in September 2023 to see what improvements had been made.

# Our impact in Leicester and Leicestershire

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Over 200 young people have shared with us their views on mental health services. We have raised concerns with the service provider about young people's services.



We spoke to over 350 people about local Dementia Services and the impact that COVID-19 has had on local service provision.



We worked with a local Lipoedema support group to help raise awareness of the condition amongst the medical profession and other women who may have the condition misdiagnosed or undiagnosed.



We have reached different communities by: Engaging with Polish communities at their local centre, talking to Somali women about how they access primary care services and meeting with the Deaf community to understand how they navigate the care system.



healthw@tch  
Leicestershire  
YOUR LOCAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNER  
**Share YOUR experience**  
Belgrave to Bosworth and everywhere in between  
make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers  
hear your voice and use your feedback  
to improve our services

healthw@tch  
Leicestershire  
What do you want from your  
local health and social care  
services?  
STOP

# Partnering for Change

# Partnering for change



## World Mental Health Day – ‘RU OK?’ campaign

In October, twenty organisations in locations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland hosted events to mark World Mental Health Day.

We re-launched the ‘RU OK?’ campaign with the aim for people to have conversations with family, friends and colleagues on the day and ask them how they are feeling.

Healthwatch spent the day listening to commuters at Loughborough, Leicester and Market Harborough train stations.

We were joined by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) and Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) staff throughout the day.

We had some great conversations with people about their mental health and local services. We documented the day across our social media channels and we distributed over 600 biscuits and 1000 leaflets to commuters.

# Partnering for change

World Mental Health Day – ‘RU OK?’ campaign



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## NHS Dentistry



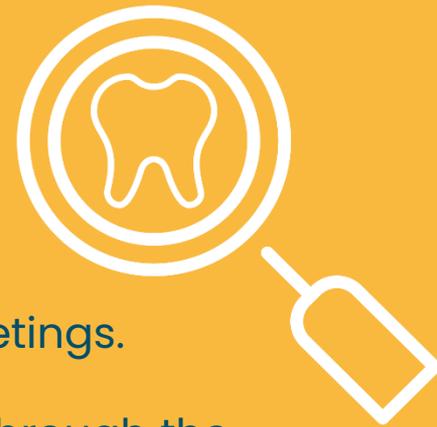
- Dentistry access was one of the top issues reported by the public to Healthwatch.
- Thousands of people have spoken up about their struggles accessing an NHS dentist over the last few years.
- Dentistry continues to be the key issue for a lot of patients across Leicester and Leicestershire as they are still not able to access NHS Dental Services.
- People are telling us that they are unable to access an NHS Dentist in Leicester or Leicestershire.
- People are concerned about where this is all moving to and the cost implications. People are finding private dentistry but there are considerable costs attached which some people are unable to afford.

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# NHS Dentistry - actions



- Regular East Midlands Healthwatch & commissioner update meetings.
- Locally, we have joined the Oral Health JSNA task group to work through the recommendations and action planning.
- We have shared our data and findings with the wider Healthwatch network.
- Healthwatch has repeatedly called for fully resourced dental contract reform to tackle these deep-seated problems. The NHS Dental recovery plan was published in February 2024.

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Healthwatch position: *“The dentistry recovery plan is a good start in addressing these serious problems. To widen access to NHS dentistry to those experiencing the greatest health inequalities, it’s vital dentists take up the new premium payments, promote availability of appointments to new patients and prioritise slots to people most in need... However, in the long run more radical solutions are needed to get NHS dentistry back on track. We welcome the Government’s to commitment to consulting with the profession on the contract and urge this to happen as soon as possible.”*



# Partnering for change



## Asylum seekers engagement

- Our focus for this engagement was to engage with asylum seekers who have been accommodated in hotels in Leicester and Leicestershire.
- We aimed to listen to people's experiences of accessing primary care services, mental health support and their awareness and access to health services. The aim of the visits was not intended to provide an in-depth analysis of the situation, but rather to gain insight from people into the pressing issues and common themes.
- The visit teams consisted of staff from Healthwatch, Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) and the Neighbourhood Mental Health Leads from Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT).
- In July and August 2023, we visited five hotels in Leicestershire and spoke to 85 people.

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# Partnering for change

## Asylum seekers engagement

### Key findings

**Barriers to Access:** The reports identify barriers that hinder asylum seekers' access to essential health and care services. These barriers include language barriers, lack of cultural competency among healthcare providers and insufficient awareness of available services.

**Mental Health Challenges:** Asylum seekers often face heightened mental health stress due to the uncertainties surrounding their status. The report highlights the importance of tailored mental health support within local healthcare systems.

**Recommendations for Improvement:** To address the identified challenges, the reports offer a set of practical recommendations for local health and care services. These recommendations emphasise the need for language support and increased collaboration between service providers and community organisations.



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# Our plans for 2023-24



## **Access and communication**

We will explore if people's needs of health and care services are being met in Leicester and Leicestershire. We have identified groups and we will seek to listen and outline what the specific issues are for those communities.

## **Supported Living**

We want to engage with people who are in receipt of supported living to hear their experiences of the services provided.

## **Enter and View**

Enter and observe health and social care services as they are being delivered. We have a programme of visits to GP Practices, care homes, Community Diagnostic Centres and Mental Health units.

## **Community engagement**

Diversity and inclusion networking sessions and winter tour.



**Get involved**

**Volunteer**

**Join the community network  
sign up to our newsletter**

# For more information

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