

# Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Warwickshire  
Annual Report 2021-22



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# Message from our chair

This year we listened to local people and communities through our information and signposting service, giving people up to date and accurate information on everything from COVID vaccinations, GP access, hospital discharge, to dentistry. We seek to use the information given through this service to analyse and spot trends, and where issues emerge, to escalate these issues at a local and national level where appropriate.

We believe that everyone in our local area needs to be part of the conversation, especially those who we may not hear from as often. This year we have listened to LGBTQ+ communities, Carers, people who are deaf or experience hearing loss and people with Diabetes, to understanding what barriers there are in accessing health and care services. We plan to extend this work moving into 2022-23.

We continue to raise our profile within a changing landscape in health and social care by getting involved in the development of the new Integrated Care System for Coventry and Warwickshire, as well as maintaining our key roles at the Health & Wellbeing, Health Overview & Scrutiny and Safeguarding Boards. This ensures that when we listen to and analyse feedback through our work, we can escalate issues and report best practice to decision makers, in order to improve services.



Liz Hancock  
**Healthwatch Warwickshire Chair**

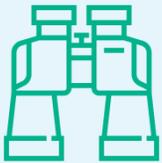
Thank you, as always, to Healthwatch Warwickshire's team of Staff, Volunteers and Board who continue to work with passion and dedication to help enable the voice of Warwickshire people to be heard.

**Liz Hancock, Healthwatch Warwickshire Chair**

# About us

## Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Warwickshire is your local health and social care champion. From Polesworth to Shipston-on-Stour and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



### Our vision

Health and social care services where everybody's voice matters.



### Our mission

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



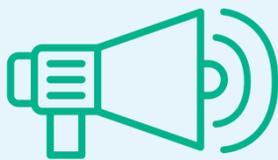
### Our values

- 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.
- A strong ally – understanding that by working with other organisations and community groups we can gain more insight – and make positive change to health and care services collectively.

# Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

## Reaching out



**1,410 people**

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

**30,602 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**10 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Following our annual report our most popular reports were the

**South Warwickshire Community Beds Reports**

## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**14 outstanding volunteers and 9 Board Directors, who give up their time to make care better**

for our community.

We're funded by Warwickshire County Council. In 2021-22 we received:

**£221,340**

Which is **2% more** than the previous year.

We also currently employ

**8 staff, (5.6 FTE)**

who help us carry out this work.

# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve



## Carers – understanding your health and wellbeing needs

Caring for a relative, friend or neighbour may be very rewarding, but we know it can also be emotionally and physically draining.

Carers are more than twice as likely to suffer from poor health compared to people with no caring responsibilities.

We asked carers to tell us if they know what support is available to them, if anything is lacking in that support and what, if anything, might stop them asking for help. 239 people responded.

Working with Warwickshire County Council, the feedback from carers helped them understand how their services could better support carers health and wellbeing needs.



### 82% of carers

**told us they don't spend enough time on their own health and wellbeing**

Carers told us :

- They needed better access to breaks or respite
- “Not having time” was the main reason carers didn't access support
- Carers are more likely to tell family and friends or their GP they care for someone
- Organisations only step in when the carer had reached crisis point
- There was a lack of understanding as to what having caring responsibilities means. An expectation from organisations and friends and family that the person caring will ‘cope’
- Over half of carers told us they had to stop working or reduce their hours because of their caring role

### What difference did this make

Warwickshire County Council will use this feedback to redesign Carers support services in Warwickshire.



“The findings of this survey will help us to design and commission the right services enabling health and care professionals and community partners to continue to support carers through the provision of targeted advice and local services.

**Cllr Margaret Bell, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health**



## Carers and Hospital Discharge

This year we interviewed 23 local carers about their experience of hospital discharge. The feedback received has and will help health and care professionals recognise the important role carers play in the patient's care.

The interviews showed that **each carer is an individual**, and understanding their needs and the patient's, is key to ensuring a good outcome.

Carers told us the importance of being **well informed** about the patient so they know what needs to happen before and after discharge.

Creating **trusted spaces** to have honest conversations with professionals about how the carer is coping and where they can go for support if they need it.

Creating a culture that removes **bias or assumptions** based on relationship, age or culture of the carer or patient.

This work was fed back to local decision makers and services and formed part of a larger project being undertaken by NHS England.



"It's so hard when assumptions come from medical professionals, we also need support and respite and the resources to help, we want access to it. Don't assume we are caring out of the goodness of our hearts"



Quote taken from a carer interview

### What difference did this make

- Hospitals and support organisations want to put in place systems that involve the carer as an equal partner throughout the patient's care
- Improving carer recognition at GP and Hospitals through developing 'Carer Passports'
- Improving support and signposting for carers throughout their caring journey
- Better monitoring of carer identification and support offered to carers by health professionals
- Working more closely with young carers to improve their quality of life as a carer

## Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



### Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for the NHS and social care services to step back and see the bigger picture, through looking at personal experiences, and the impact on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

We have worked with people who are deaf or have hearing loss to understand their experiences of health and care services in Warwickshire. This year we have captured views through a survey and worked with support services to create an event for people who are deaf, supported by a BSL interpreter, to understand the challenges faced when accessing health and care.



### Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

We worked alongside South Warwickshire Foundation Trust to gather experiences and views on community beds in South Warwickshire. We captured and shared where things had gone well and where they could be improved from people with lived experience. We asked people about their views and their expected needs. Following our reports there is now going to be a formal consultation process.



### Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

As part of our involvement in the Diabetes Strategy Group we were asked to gather the views of people with Diabetes on how technology could help support them. Our findings illustrated a desire for a wider availability of wearable technology to help assist people with the management of diabetes. As a result of our work there are now plans in Warwickshire to trial the rollout of wearable technology for patients.

# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Warwickshire is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need



## Connecting local services

Through strong working relationships we were able to facilitate better connections between Voiceability (local advocacy service) and the Care Quality Commission. As a result, Voiceability are now empowered to raise concerns directly with the Care Quality Commission and feed into their impending inspections based on the feedback they see and hear as part of their work.



“Your support was so important to me and gave me crucial information. I feel I now have the tools should things change.”  
**HWW caller**

## Assisting those with English as an additional language

We attended a session for Afghan women (run by a social prescriber at the Sydney Centre in Leamington). We shared with the group what we do to support people accessing health and care services. We informed the group that they can request interpreters for medical appointments and self-refer for things like Physio. Based on feedback we signposted to Carers Trust for help and support.



“HWW ...is a great resource and they have helped several of my clients to deal with complaints or other issues in both NHS and social care settings.”  
**Outreach Worker, Citizens Advice South Warwickshire**

## Helping families stay connected

We were contacted by a member of the public through our information and signposting service who was trying to contact their parent who had been admitted to a local hospital. They had no response from the parent or patient liaison service at the hospital.

With the individual's permission we contacted the hospital and as a result the person was able to understand what was happening to their parent and get updates on their progress since being admitted.



# Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Warwickshire. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped us carry out calls to Warwickshire dental practices to find out about access to services. This allowed us to escalate local issues nationally.
- Interviewed a carer for our carers discharge project.
- Carried out website reviews for local GP services in North Warwickshire and Rugby on the information they provide and assessing their accessibility.
- Assisted as part of 'Readers' Panels' – checking our reports and surveys to ensure they are fit for purpose and accessible.





### Anita

"I am passionate about, and have gained so much from, my voluntary role for Healthwatch Warwickshire. I have researched GP websites and helped to raise awareness of the digital divide. I also enjoyed raising awareness of the need for reasonable adjustments. I'm enthusiastic to minimise disadvantage and empower individuals and I'm proud of Healthwatch Warwickshire, we listen and are the voice for individuals within the locality."



### Robin

"The skills I gained working as a senior manager in Policy and Finance seem to be sought after qualities in governance work. I was school governor for 20 years whilst working. Since I left full time work, I have served on governing bodies in Probation, the Police and the NHS. I enjoy using my skills and keeping my brain busy as a new director of Healthwatch Warwickshire."



### Dilys

"Volunteering with Healthwatch during Covid restrictions has been a different experience to previously but nevertheless a rewarding one. I have been particularly pleased to be involved in contacting learning disability facilities and reporting on the varied and sensitive ways they have supported their clients. Healthwatch has been helping me as well, I am currently learning how to enter information into spread sheets."



### Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.



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



01926 422823



[info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk)

# Finance and future work

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

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£221,340	Staff costs (inc. pension)	£189,479
Additional funding	£16,492	Operational costs	£43,270
Total income		Total expenditure	
	£237,832		£232,749

## Our main objectives for the year ahead

1. To find out the experiences of people needing or using health and care services
2. To seek the views of those who are not always heard and reduce barriers they face in accessing health and care services
3. To act on what we hear to improve health and care policy and services
4. To ensure that the resources we receive are used for greatest impact.

Our priority areas of work as set at our strategy day include, GP access, Learning Disabilities and the Integrated Care System. These are reviewed annually and agreed by the Board.

## The year ahead – Chris Bain, Chief Executive

“This coming year we will continue to listen and gain insight on what matters to local people when it comes to accessing health and care services. We will highlight issues where they arise and champion good practice.

We are committed to ensuring that patient and carers lived experiences are used to inform decision making in Coventry and Warwickshire. We will work hard to understand the changes within health and care and what they mean for patients, carers and the public. Our goals are to help reduce inequalities in health and care, to make sure everybody's voice is heard, and to ensure that decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of where you live, and who you are.”

# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Warwickshire C.I.C. 4-6 Clemens Street, Leamington Spa, CV31 2DL  
[Company number 08181496].

Healthwatch Warwickshire 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.

Our Healthwatch board consists of 9 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met formally 6 times and made decisions on matters such as approving our annual budget, agreeing our work priorities and approving policies. We also have informal board meetings bi-monthly and two sub-committees that meet, Finance and Audit, and Operations.

Our volunteer base consists of 14 volunteers who have been instrumental in helping us deliver key parts of our contract. They are our eyes and ears out in local communities as well as helping us with work such as calls to dentists and sitting as a volunteer representative at Board level.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use the insight from our information and signposting enquiries to inform our work. We host and attend events to hear from people on topics related to health and care. We open our Annual General Meeting to the public and we work alongside key organisations and the voluntary and community sector to understand what issues are important to people in Warwickshire when it comes to health and care. These different approaches helps us to understand what issues we should be focussing on and allow us to decide our work priorities.

## 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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual and physical meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

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. This year we have done this by, for example, working with people who are deaf or experience hearing loss, listening to people with eating disorders, working alongside members of Warwickshire Pride to understand challenges specific to the LGBTQ+ communities.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website as well as sending it out to key partners. We accept any reasonable requests for printed copies and would endeavour to provide this report in alternative formats as requested.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. We have however continued to share feedback with Warwickshire County Council and the Care Quality Commission when received.

We have raised concerns with Healthwatch England over the provision and access to health and care services. This year we have escalated issues around access to dentistry and advance decision making statements.

## Our influence

Healthwatch Warwickshire prides itself on building relationships with local decision makers to ensure that when we need to escalate issues we have somewhere to take them. This means that we sit on a number of local boards and groups as well as meeting regularly with leaders in the local Trusts. The list provided below is a sample:

Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board	Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Place Executives – Warwickshire North, Rugby and South Warwickshire	Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership
Carers Strategy Board	System Quality Group for Coventry and Warwickshire
Joint Place Forum	Chair Healthwatch Regional meetings for West Midlands

## Thank you

We would like to express our thanks and gratitude to everyone who has taken part or contributed to our work this year.

### Public

We would like to thank members of the public who have taken the time to contact us about their experiences of health and care services in Warwickshire whether that was through our information and signposting service, providing feedback through our surveys or by social media or email. Every contact is appreciated and makes sure we are looking at the issues that matter most to you. Our express thanks to participants in our carers discharge work for taking the time to be interviewed.

### Board, Volunteers and Staff

We give our thanks to all our Board Directors for their continued support and direction.

During the year one director, Katie Weetman, has resigned. We wish Katie all the best in her future work.

We were joined by Robin Verso who brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise in governance and finance. He has already made a significant contribution in taking up the joint position of Vice-Chair.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our volunteers for their continued help and support. We have said goodbye to Caroline Pell and Liz Oxborough. We wish them all the best for the future.

We would like to express our gratitude to the hard work and determination of our staff team.

### Partners and key stakeholders

We would like to thank local partners and key stakeholders for their continued development in ensuring that patient/carer/public voice is heard in decisions that affect them.



# healthwatch Warwickshire

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