

# Talk to us



## Thank you to our co-opted board members, volunteers and community links

This year, our co-opted Board Members have played a vital role in shaping our work, actively contributing to decision-making through their regular participation in Public Board Meetings.

Alongside them, 19 dedicated volunteers and our network of Community Links have generously given their time, skills, and passion to help us listen to the public and improve local health and care services. Their contributions are central to everything we do—ensuring that local voices are heard and have a real impact on how services are shaped and delivered.

As part of National Volunteering Week our Senior Engagement Officers expressed their thanks to our volunteers, we would like to extend

this 'Thank You' to everyone who has worked with us and influenced positive changes to our health and social care services in Worcestershire.

You can see the video on [You Tube](#)



## Get in touch

- 01386 550264
- [info@healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk)
- [www.healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk)
- Healthwatch Worcestershire
- LinkedIn
- @hwworcs

Healthwatch Worcestershire  
FREEPOST RTEE-GKAT-SRLR  
Civic Centre  
Queen Elizabeth Drive  
Pershore  
WR10 1PT

If you require this Report in an alternative format please contact us.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark when carrying out our work.

© Copyright Healthwatch Worcestershire 2025



Worcestershire

Your Independent Social Care Champion

<b>OUR MISSION</b>	Speaking up for people, particularly the most vulnerable. Making a difference. Improving health and social care for all.
<b>OUR VISION</b>	People in Worcestershire have their health and social care needs heard, understood and met.
<b>OUR VALUES</b>	Independent Actively Listening Evidence Based Improvement

Inclusive  
Confidentiality  
Influencing  
Transparent

**healthwatch**  
Worcestershire

# Annual Report

## 2024/2025



Healthwatch Worcestershire is an independent, not-for-profit organisation championing the views of the people of Worcestershire on publicly funded health and social care services.

Our core purpose is to ensure that the voices of patients, service users, and their carers are heard and used to improve health and care services for everyone. We do this by gathering experiences, providing clear information and advice about accessing services, overseeing service quality and safety, and making recommendations for improvements in health and social care across the county.

## How we engage with you

### Gathering Feedback

Actively listening to your views is one of our values and we do this in a variety of ways:

- Visiting groups and meeting people face to face
- Video conferencing and telephone calls
- Carrying out surveys and focus groups
- Online Public Board Meetings
- Our Reference and Engagement Group - a network of over 100 organisations and "Experts by Experience"
- Featuring on radio and television

We have also expanded our online activities to reach and engage more people.

- Launched our new website which received 10,195 visits with an average of 3,902 page views per month
- We have over 920 followers on Facebook and reached 49,000 people
- Our YouTube channel had 500 views
- Quarterly digital newsletters
- Said goodbye to X (formerly Twitter) and launched LinkedIn

### Advice and information

- 515 people contacted us to share their experiences or to seek information about local health and care services via our website, the Healthwatch England website, email, phone, or Facebook Messenger.
- Our signposting service directed individuals to organisations or services that could support their needs.
- Our comprehensive complaints guide for NHS and social care services in Worcestershire, is available in various formats and published on our website.





# Who we engaged with



We engaged with **3666** people

## Tackling Health Inequalities Through Community Engagement

Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes between different groups of people.

Over the past year, we've prioritised addressing health inequalities by engaging with a wide and diverse cross-section of our community. Our activities are designed to reach people of all ages and backgrounds, with a focus on amplifying underrepresented voices.

To support this, we've built a network of local voluntary organisations, community groups and "Experts by



Experience" through our Reference and Engagement Group, now 100 members strong. These individuals and groups represent patients, service users, and carers, and play an active role in shaping our work.

Some highlights include:

- **Children and Young People** - We engaged children and young people via online surveys, workshops, and group sessions and worked with organisations such as Speak Easy NOW, Malvern Cube Youth Café and the University of Worcester.
- **Older People** - We worked with organisations to reach out to older people by attending Dementia Cafes which provided valuable insights for our Dementia report.
- **Diverse Communities** - Conducted a focus group with South-East Asian men to explore cultural and systemic barriers to PSA testing, providing valuable insights into improving access and awareness in minority communities.

We also extended our reach into workplaces. We were invited by the Amazon distribution centre in Redditch to speak with employees and gather their perspectives on healthcare which gave an insight into how working adults access healthcare.

## Championing Worcestershire Voices Regionally and Nationally

As part of the Healthwatch network, we work closely with Healthwatch England and actively participate in the West Midlands Healthwatch group. We contribute to regional and national conversations by sharing our work on quality and patient safety, and we represent the network on the West Midlands Cancer Alliance Board. We are also involved in a regional study evaluating learning from Integrated Care Systems and Health and Wellbeing Board development across the West Midlands.

## Improving the quality and safety of health and care services

You told us that patient safety and access to high-quality health and social care services matter deeply. In response, we've taken a proactive role in monitoring and influencing the quality of health and care services across Worcestershire. Over the past year, we have:

- **Sought assurances about patient safety** by sharing your feedback and raising concerns directly with local NHS bodies through formal meetings.
- **Contributed to local accountability** by attending and informing Worcestershire County Council's health and social care scrutiny committees, covering services for adults, children, and young people.
- **Reviewed and commented on NHS Quality Accounts**, helping to ensure transparency and continuous improvement in service delivery. For

- example, we recommended future Quality Accounts for Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust includes sepsis care, reflecting national focus and the introduction of Martha's Law.
- Shared your experiences with the Care Quality Commission, ensuring that your voice is considered as part of their inspection and regulatory processes.
- Our directors attend the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board to champion co-production as a core principle in health and care planning.

Through these actions, we've helped ensure that your concerns are heard and that services are held to account for delivering safe, effective, and compassionate care.

# Our impact

## Report and recommendations

We use what people tell us to guide our work and decide which areas of health and social care need a closer look. All our reports are shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which inspects health and care services, and with Healthwatch England, to help build a national picture of people's experiences across the country.

You can find the reports and responses on our website.

### Pharmacy Summer Survey

Our summer survey explored public awareness of community pharmacy services, including accessibility and the Pharmacy First initiative. Overall, feedback was positive, with many respondents highlighting the helpfulness of pharmacy staff. However, some concerns were raised regarding long wait times, communication challenges, and limited privacy.

Report Outcomes: NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire committed to the 12 recommendations and clarified their position and actions on each one.

### Young People's Health and Emotional Well Bring Report

This report aimed to understand young people's views on their physical and emotional health, where they seek information—both online and in person—and whether they feel any important topics are missing. It also provided a platform for them to share their experiences accessing mental health and emotional wellbeing support. A key finding was that young people strongly prefer one-to-one, in-person support and are generally unwilling to engage with video calls or group sessions.

Report outcomes: All 26 recommendations from our report are included in the Improvement Plan and that we will continue to follow up to ensure implementation.

### Information and Support for people living with Dementia and their carers after diagnosis

This report looked at access to support following a diagnosis of dementia which varied depending on the diagnostic pathway. We also explored referrals to key services—such as the Dementia Wellbeing Service and Worcestershire Association of Carers— and found they were not routinely offered. Awareness and implementation of Care Plans and GP Annual Reviews were inconsistent, despite their potential to address many of the expressed needs. There was also limited understanding of the role of Adult Social Care and how it can support both current and future needs.

Report outcomes: The majority of the recommendations in our Dementia Report were adopted by the Dementia Programme Board, which subsequently established four workstreams to implement and embed these recommendations. We continue to monitor the progress of their implementation.



## Impact and influence through engagement and networking activities

- We secured clarification that parents are not required to complete a parenting course for their child to access the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) pathway.
- Our Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) testing report was adopted by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) to follow up with GPs.
- We raised concerns about the Adult ADHD pathway; Integrated Care Board (ICB) responded by reviewing reassessment requirements for patients transitioning between providers.
- We prompted a review of police policy on non-attendance at mental health incidents through our attendance at the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- We facilitated a working group to improve hospital discharge to care and nursing homes and where domiciliary care is provided to people in their homes. The group brings together key people from social care with the NHS to work together to improve processes.
- In response to concerns raised by us, HOSC reviewed the NHS dental services recovery plan and subsequently requested that the ICB enhance public communication regarding access to NHS dental care, particularly for urgent treatment.
- Initiated dialogue with the ICS on improving engagement with underrepresented communities, including contact with the Head of Health Inequalities and Prevention.
- Engaged with an MS Support Group to has identified barriers faced by people with physical disabilities in accessing cervical and breast screening services; these concerns are now being raised with commissioners at a regional level to encourage more inclusive screening access.

## Finances

Worcestershire County Council has a statutory duty to commission a local Healthwatch service.

In 2024/25 the contract value was **£289,000** to deliver local Healthwatch services. The main areas of expenditure have been:

Staff costs: **£242,240**

Establishment Costs including Depreciation: **£59,011**

Engagement Costs: **£8,126**