

Talk to us



Volunteers and Community Links

Our Volunteers and Community Links play a vital role in our success. Up to 19 volunteers supported our work this year, helping us engage with communities and gather valuable feedback.

We strengthened our volunteer programme by updating policies and processes and introducing a more personalised approach to support and development.



healthwatch
Worcestershire

Annual Report

2025/2026



Your Voice Made a Difference This Year

This year, people across Worcestershire shared their experiences of health and social care with us, helping to shape real improvements in local services. From influencing system-wide strategies to strengthening hospital discharge processes, improving access to services, and raising concerns about patient experience, we ensured that local voices were heard where decisions are made.

Healthwatch Worcestershire is the independent organisation championing the views of people who use health and social care services. Our role is to listen to people's experiences, provide advice and information, and work with partners across the system to improve services and outcomes for local communities.

How we engage with you

Gathering Feedback

Listening to local people remains at the heart of our work. We gather feedback in a variety of ways to ensure people can share their experiences in a way that works for them. We do this by:

- Visiting community groups and attending events across the county
- Speaking to people face-to-face, by phone, and through digital channels
- Carrying out surveys, focus groups, and targeted engagement activity
- Hosting Public Board Meetings to ensure transparency and accountability
- Working with our Reference and Engagement Group of around 100 organisations and community representatives
- Using local media, social media, and digital platforms to reach wider audiences

We continue to develop our approach to engagement, ensuring we reach people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Advice and Information

We supported people across Worcestershire to access the help, information, and services they need.

- **553 enquiries** supported through advice, information, and signposting
- Helping people navigate complex health and social care systems
- Providing clear, accessible guidance, including our complaints guide

This work not only supports individuals but also highlights recurring issues and system pressures, helping us identify where services need to improve.



Get in touch

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Worcestershire

Your Independent Health And Social Care Champion

OUR MISSION	Speaking up for people, particularly the most vulnerable. Making a difference. Improving health and social care for all.		
OUR VISION	People in Worcestershire have their health and social care needs heard, understood and met.		
OUR VALUES	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Independent Actively Listening Evidence Based Improvement</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Inclusive Confidentiality Influencing Transparent</td> </tr> </table>	Independent Actively Listening Evidence Based Improvement	Inclusive Confidentiality Influencing Transparent
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At a Glance 2025–26

We gathered insights from people across Worcestershire

We engaged with over **1,100 people face to face** at community events

Over **1,000 people** registered for our newsletter

553 calls to our advice and information service

Over **12,000** visits to our website

Around **100 organisations** in our engagement network

Our social media following grew to **1,300** on Facebook and around **200** on our LinkedIn page

We engaged across all ages from under **18 to over 75 years old**.

System Influence

We played an active role in shaping how services are designed and delivered across Worcestershire.

We contributed to key system programmes, including the **Outpatient Services Strategy** and **Community Hospital Transformation Programme**, ensuring the patient voice was represented in future planning.

We also carried out **joint emergency department visits**, working with system partners to understand patient experience and support improvements, including concerns around corridor care.

Improving the Quality and Safety of Health and Care Services

We continued to use people's experiences to influence improvements in the quality and safety of local health and care services.

Our work led to:

- Greater clarity in how people access the ADHD pathway
- Influencing a review of Adult ADHD processes
- Prompting a review of mental health response policy
- Supporting improvements to hospital discharge processes
- Highlighting inequalities in access to screening services
- Strengthening engagement between services and the communities they serve

Through this work, we have helped ensure that people's voices shape safer, more responsive care.

Championing Worcestershire Voices Regionally and Nationally

As part of the Healthwatch network, we work closely with Healthwatch England and partners across the West Midlands to ensure Worcestershire residents' voices inform regional and national discussions.

We contribute local insight on quality, safety, and patient experience, represent the network on the **West Midlands Cancer Alliance Board**, and take part in regional work exploring the development of **Integrated Care Systems** and **Health and Wellbeing Boards**.

This year, we also strengthened our team with the appointment of a new Director and three Engagement Officers, increasing our capacity to engage with communities and ensure more voices are heard.

Reaching Different Communities

We are committed to ensuring that all voices are heard, particularly those who may face barriers to accessing health and social care services:

Children and young people – through surveys and partnerships

Older people – engaging through community groups and settings such as carer groups

Diverse communities – exploring barriers to access and awareness

Men's health – working with local groups to understand barriers to early diagnosis and raise awareness of conditions such as prostate cancer

We also extended our engagement into workplaces and community settings, helping us better understand how different groups access services and the challenges they face.

Our Reports and Impact

This year, our reports focused on access, communication, and people's experiences of using services, helping to highlight where improvements are needed and where good practice can be built upon:

Accessing NHS Information – Improving Communication

We explored how people use the NHS App and access NHS services, including GP out of hours and minor injury services.

Many people feel confident using NHS services and the App. However, some find it difficult to choose the right service, particularly for urgent care. Barriers such as unclear or inconsistent information, limited digital access, and additional needs can make it harder for people to find and use the support available.

Impact: Our findings are informing improvements to how information is shared with patients, supporting clearer, more consistent, and user-friendly digital communication across services.

Parent Carer Needs Assessment – Strengthening Support

We gathered feedback from parent carers about their involvement in assessments and the support available to them.

People told us they wanted clearer communication, greater involvement in decision-making, and more consistent support.

Impact: Our work is supporting discussions with local partners to improve how parent carers are engaged and supported throughout the process.

Community Mental Health Services – Improving Access

We explored people's experiences of accessing community mental health services, including waiting times, communication, and continuity of care.

People highlighted delays, a lack of clarity about pathways, and challenges in accessing appropriate support.

Impact: The findings are contributing to ongoing work to improve access, coordination, and responsiveness across mental health services.

Prostate Cancer and PSA Testing – Raising Awareness

We worked to understand awareness and access to PSA testing, particularly within communities less likely to come forward for early diagnosis.

Impact: This work is influencing conversations about early diagnosis, awareness, and reducing inequalities, supported by further engagement activity including podcasts and follow-up research.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) – Improving Processes

We gathered feedback from families navigating the EHCP process.

People told us they experienced delays, unclear communication, and inconsistent support.

Impact: Our findings are informing discussions with partners to improve the clarity, timeliness, and consistency of the process.



Finances

Healthwatch Worcestershire is commissioned by Worcestershire County Council.

Contract Value: **£330,000**

Staff Costs: **£256,791**

Establishment Costs including

Depreciation: **£51,458**

Engagement Costs: **£7,206**