

# Together we can

Healthwatch Bristol, North  
Somerset and South  
Gloucestershire

Annual Report 2022–23

**healthwatch**  
Bristol

**healthwatch**  
North Somerset

**healthwatch**  
South Gloucestershire



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**“With NHS and social care services facing such big challenges, your feedback is more critical than ever. By sharing your experiences, you can help the professionals that commission and run services put themselves in your shoes, understand your reality, and make improvements where there are issues that need tackling.”**

**- Vicky Marriott, Chief Officer**

# Message from our Chair

2022-23 has been a year of recovery from the pandemic and for important changes in the organisational structure of health and care systems nationally.

The new Integrated Care System (ICS) is led by the Integrated Care Board which has partners from across health and care, including NHS trusts, local authorities and Healthwatch representing the three areas. With health and care working formally together at a strategic level, the ambition is to have services integrated together, which is better for our local population.

The year has seen the system commission more services locally based on a greater understanding of local needs, and there are opportunities for providers to work together, 'joining up' services for the benefit of all.

Healthwatch has worked across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire to listen and act on people's experiences – especially those whose voices are least heard. We have further developed our coproduction toolkit and improved our data and insights reporting, encouraging providers and commissioners of services to ensure voices are listened to, from design to delivery, and in ongoing reviews of services.

Our staff team, supported by our volunteers, are keen to reach out and hear from people in a variety of ways appropriate to them. This has helped us focus on some key areas and facilitate change. Topics we have worked to highlight this year have included patient and family experiences of discharge from hospital, carers from minority groups, dignity in hospital, and maternity services. These and other pieces of more detailed work have enabled Healthwatch to make recommendations for change and to continue to follow through to actions.

During the year, with our aim to be more accessible to the public, we moved our base to The Galleries in Bristol. This is offering opportunities for us to work more closely with our colleagues in the voluntary sector and bring partners and the public together in a central space. Please call in or contact us via our websites or social media to meet our talented and enthusiastic team and share your health and care experiences.



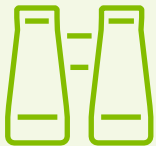
**Georgie Bigg**  
**Chair of Trustees for**  
**Healthwatch Bristol, North**  
**Somerset and South**  
**Gloucestershire**



# About us

Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire is your local health and social care champion.

Our representatives, carrying out our work in a voluntary or paid capacity, perform their duties to the highest standards and treat the public with dignity and respect, being honest and impartial, supporting our values.



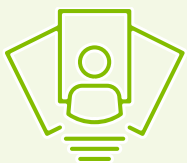
## Our vision

**Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire is a place where people's experiences help improve health and care.**



## Our mission

**By offering all people of Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire a strong voice, we will improve the quality of local health and social care.**



## Our values are:

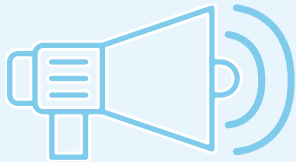
In everything we do, we uphold our values. These are about being **transparent, non-judgemental, and independent.**

We are **inclusive**, dedicated to **co-production**, and strive for continual **improvement.**

We adhere to the Nolan Principles, also known as the Seven Principles of Public Life. This means that we carry out our work with **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.**

# Year in review – Bristol

## Reaching out



**586 people**

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

**78,533 people**

reached out for our advice and information about issues such as digital access, dental care, mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**2 reports**

Our most popular report was '[Charting the experiences on a Pathway 3 care route from hospital](#)' which highlighted the barriers faced by people and their families at the time of discharge from hospital into a care or nursing home. Our second report heard what '[Dignified care](#)' in hospital should and does look like to people with protected characteristics.



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**27**

outstanding volunteers who gave up 75 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

**£119,155**

which is the same as the previous year.

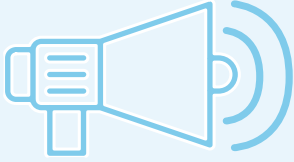
We employed

**3.5 full time equivalent staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# Year in review – North Somerset

## Reaching out



**131 people**

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

**1033 people**

came to us for clear advice and information and many received signposting so that they could make informed choices.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**1 report**

Our [‘Unheard carers from minority groups in North Somerset’](#) report highlighted the experiences of carers from the local Traveller community, Asian carers, Syrian refugee carers, and carers who have a disability themselves.



## Health and care that works for you



We’re lucky to have

**8**

outstanding volunteers who gave up 39 days to make care better for our community.

We’re funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

**£54,284**

which is the same as the previous year.

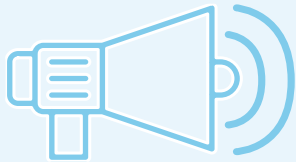
We employed

**2 full time equivalent staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# Year in review – South Glos

## Reaching out



**76 people**

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

**866 people**

came to us for clear advice, information and signposting to help them with issues such as GP access, mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**1 report**

Our ['Lessons from health visiting during COVID-19: the experiences of South Gloucestershire residents'](#) report highlighted the impact of the national redeployment of staff and impact on mothers in areas of higher need, and their access to mental health support from maternity and health visiting services.



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**2**

outstanding volunteers who gave up 10 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

**£54,936**

which is the same as the previous year.

We employed

**2 full time equivalent staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring

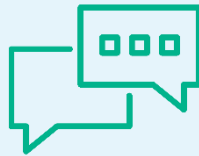


Contributed to a national local government association taskforce looking at hospital discharges. Our work was described as an important missing piece of the jigsaw.



Spoke to older people from minority ethnic groups about the quality of care in hospital and how their dignity needs could be better met.

Summer



Helped our local Integrated Care System promote a nine-week public engagement exercise, which asked residents: 'what keeps you happy, healthy and well?'



Created a public 'how-to' guide with step-by-step advice on how to register and access online GP services through services such as the NHS app, Patient Access, and askmyGP and E-consult.

Autumn



Shared public feedback about Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision with the Care Quality Commission, informing an inspection and identifying areas for improvement.



Shared local information on how to find warm and welcoming spaces. Gave out information packs related to health and care during the cost-of-living crisis.

Winter



Conducted Enter and View visits at two GP surgeries in Weston-super-Mare to follow up on patient feedback and to evaluate progress and learning from a visit in 2020.



Prompted South Gloucestershire Council to provide information reassuring new mothers after concerns were raised about the future of local breastfeeding groups providing peer support.



# 10 years of improving care

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In 2023, Healthwatch celebrated 10 years of listening to the public, gathering their feedback, and sharing it with local services. Change for the better can take time and despite incremental improvements, some issues continue to persist.

## Increasing mental health support for young people

As early as 2014, through our workshops and focus groups, children and young people in North Somerset told us about the limited mental health support available to them. They wanted more information and help to maintain good mental health.

In 2019, our qualitative research with young students led to a recommendation that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG, replaced in 2022 by the Integrated Care Board) apply for national funding for Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools. North Somerset was the only part of the CCG that had not bid for this 'Trailblazer' funding.

After bidding and winning the funding, which included money to train practitioners, MHSTs began working with local schools. Their role is to offer support for young people who have mild to moderate mental health concerns. Nationally, MHSTs have been evaluated and are being strengthened. The BNSSG Integrated Care Board's (ICB) 'Long Term Plan' for children and young people aims to provide an MHST service to 25% of all school-aged children by 2023.



"We researched what support is available for young people and were surprised to find out how little there is."

- Student who created a display about depression for our 2015 event at Weston College.

## Addressing the NHS dental crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing issues around access to NHS dentistry, causing a collapse in capacity and a subsequent fallout for millions who could no longer get an NHS appointment. Since 2021, we have been raising the issue by representing patients at South West (SW) Local Dental Network meetings, and raising concerns with NHS England SW. We joined Healthwatch England in calling for dentists to update their profiles on the NHS 'Find a dentist' website and be transparent about NHS service availability. In July 2022, it became a requirement for practices to do this at least every 90 days, so patients can find practices accepting new patients.

In March 2023, we submitted public evidence to the [Parliamentary Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry](#) into dentistry, along with 33 other local Healthwatch. We continue to push for fairness by sharing data with the local ICS as it commissions dental care from April 2023. Our biggest concerns are for access in areas of deprivation where health outcomes are already low and for access for our young people.

## Ensuring pharmacies services are accessible for everyone

Each area conducted a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) in 2022 looking at whether pharmacy and chemist services meet the needs of local people. Our anonymised patient feedback and data formed a key part of local PNAs, highlighting the impact of pharmacy closures and identifying where improvements are needed. As pharmacies will now be able to offer additional services to reduce pressure on GPs, regular monitoring of provision is essential. We continue to collect feedback around pharmacy service access and work with local commissioners to make sure the public can use the services of a pharmacy in their community, when they need one.



# Listening to your experiences



"Services can't make informed improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have expanded our team to focus on producing clearer and easier-to-share data and insights. This allows us combine themes with experiences, collate rich pictures about local issues, and understand who from our population groups are facing significant gaps that services and commissioners should know about."

Vicky Marriott, Chief Officer for Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

# Lessons from health visiting during COVID-19

## New mothers told us that there were issues with the transition from maternity care in hospital to the health visiting service in the community.

Parents told us they didn't know what to expect, there was limited information and reported that the service wasn't responsive to them. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, some mums had no contact with a health visitor at all.

Parents who had been seen by a health visitor said they wanted to spend more time discussing their mental health and the types of support available. Thanks to [118 people who shared their feedback with us](#), we raised the issue of mental health support for new parents with Sirona care & health, and with their partners in the Community Children's Health Partnership.

## Key recommendations



- Ensure that there is mandatory training in mental health for health visitors so that they feel confident discussing mental health conditions.
- Take steps to standardise and normalise the signposting and recording of support for women with existing mental health conditions.
- Have a process to check mother's engagement with support for mental health.
- Health visitors help to build awareness of the local Maternity Voices Partnership.
- Make postnatal handovers from the maternity staff to the health visiting service effective and supportive.

## What difference have these findings made?

The employment of three health visitors for perinatal and infant mental health across BNSSG in 2022 has brought in specialists who have acted on our insights. They provided training to public health nursing staff, supported the parent-infant relationship, and helped staff with their holistic assessments and support skills, patient referrals, patient signposting and record keeping.

This team undertook scoping and audits of two areas that our report had pinpointed.

- ✓ Improving the pathways for patients into mental health support. The Sirona team audited the standard of the assessment questions, and an updated pathway has now been introduced. There is now renewed importance given to asking mental health assessment questions, to fully support families experiencing challenges with their emotional wellbeing or mental health.
- ✓ Improving health visitor practice with families and other professionals. This has led to better training opportunities, better referrals and a more joined-up approach with midwifery and the third sector.

Our report findings aim to influence the mental health workstream for the new family hubs and 'Start for Life' programme, and work on a BNSSG-wide perinatal and infant mental health multi-agency pathway.



"The Healthwatch report for South Gloucestershire contributed a valuable insight which has informed approaches to staff training and liaison pathways."

**- Dr Jo Webb, Lead for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, Public Health Nursing, Sirona care & health**

# Improving maternal mental health support

**Delays accessing mental health support can have a devastating impact on new parents. We reached out to local women about issues around continuity of care, mental health support, and having agency and access to information.**

As part of a wider piece of work by Healthwatch England, we spoke in-depth to five mothers who had given birth in the last two years and had experienced mental health issues before they gave birth. In addition, we helped distribute Healthwatch England's national survey, asking new mothers and parents about their experiences of mental health before, during, and after birth. 69 people across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire completed the survey.

Healthwatch England filed Freedom of information requests to explore uptake of post-natal health checks, explored their use for checking mothers' mental health which helped to understand differences in the provision of mental health support across the country. This snapshot of how services and commissioners monitor and track postnatal consultations was published as a report called '[Left unchecked: why maternal mental health matters](#)'.



## Of 69 respondents from our area:

- 60 said they had the six-week check
- 44 of those said mental health and wellbeing were not mentioned or not enough time was spent talking about it
- 12 said mental health support in the postnatal check was 'just right'

## What difference will this make?

We have shared our findings and the experiences of the women we spoke to with key local organisations including:

- Our local Integrated Care Board
- the Perinatal Mental Health Board
- the System Quality Group
- the local Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Family Hub teams
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Partnership
- University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust
- North Bristol NHS Trust
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations



"I cried every day while pregnant and felt trapped. Everything overwhelmed me once I gave birth. All I was told was to reach out to groups that allowed you to speak to other mums in the same boat. But I needed real counselling."

**- Tanya, from Bristol**

# Commissioned work to improve planned and emergency care

**As communities change, services must adapt to meet people's needs. In North Somerset, the census shows an increase in the number of older adults – with many of those people living with multiple health conditions.**

In 2022, plans were drawn up to bring about the next stage of the development of Weston General Hospital, and we were asked to facilitate the inclusion of local views and experiences to ensure any changes would benefit people of all ages and levels of need.

We set up and supported over three months a patient and public reference group, which met to look at the proposed improvements of the Healthy Weston 2 programme. A public engagement exercise was then held and over 5,000 members of the public took part.

## The improvement programme focused on three key areas:

1. Becoming a centre of surgical excellence. Aims to provide thousands more planned operations for adults of all ages at the site in Weston-super-Mare.
2. Becoming a centre of excellence for older people's care. Aims for Weston Hospital to provide specialised older peoples care, and a range of services for people of all ages.
3. Helping people who come to hospital in an emergency get an assessment and be treated more quickly. Pathways straight into wards for older people.

## What difference will this make?

The Healthy Weston 2 programme adopted a whole-system approach, and both clinical and non-clinical colleagues across BNSSG helped design the model. Outcomes are:

- Hospital and community teams will improve pre-discharge planning in the hospital through an 'integrated discharge team'. It is in the best interest of patients to be in hospital for as short a time as possible. Management therefore starts at admission.
- Increase the amount and type of planned operations and procedures at Weston General Hospital.
- Make Weston General Hospital a more dynamic and attractive place to work, help build a diverse workforce, provide training and career opportunities to help retain staff there.



"It's essential for new services to be designed and shaped by taking both clinical expertise and personal experiences into account."

**- Annabel Plaister, Healthy Weston 2 Patient and Public Reference Group participant**



# Connecting older adults to online health services and guides

**Over a period of a year and across three local authorities, we offered older adults opportunities to learn and develop digital skills. We connected them to digital resources such as the NHS app and other online appointment booking services. We created 'HealthClick' workshops, teaching over 1000 people including staff in healthcare settings.**

We'd heard over many years running up to the pandemic how older people felt locked out from the digital options available in GP surgeries. We highlighted this digital exclusion in a report in 2018 and created a simple set of 'how to' guides. During the lockdowns in 2020, digital skills became more essential than ever, and exclusion deepened. We won funding in 2022 to provide group sessions for local people and staff to help them to make use of digital health opportunities.

## People learnt how to:

1. Download and use the NHS app
2. Book GP appointments
3. Order prescriptions
4. Access consultations by phone or video
5. View medical records
6. Receive test results
7. Find trusted advice for managing their health conditions
8. Be confident online



**Supported 1023 people and held 147 learning sessions**

## What difference has this made?

The project has helped to reduce the time and money used on calls to GP surgeries and has helped people from diverse communities, many with reduced financial circumstances, receive care and advice when they need it.

Our free HealthClick ['how-to' guides](#) explaining how to set up the NHS app, askmyGP, Patient Access, Accurx, and E-consult are now highly prized and were valued by attendees who made notes on the pages and could save passwords and tips. The guide has been translated into Chinese and Somali, and can be downloaded for free on our websites. A [recorded presentation](#) is also available.

People attending pulmonary rehabilitation groups were given HealthClick sessions on using lung health apps and the NHS website to give them the skills to look up and potentially help understand and better manage their own conditions. Wider impacts are likely to be a reduced reliance on services, and higher levels of resilience and self-care.

We taught staff in 14 GP practices and seven care homes how to support patients and residents to use online health resources. Community groups provided up to 50 volunteers during the project who continue to support people's digital skills with ongoing sessions in their communities.



"Having the NHS online makes me more confident. It stops me having to wait on the telephone for ages for a response from someone. I have found it very helpful."

**- HealthClick session attendee, aged 75**

# Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Our work targets people whose experiences aren't often heard.



## Improving the hospital discharge process

Last year we spoke to 141 patients, family members, carers, and NHS staff about the hospital discharge process. More than 75% said they felt delays in admission or discharge had a negative effect on them.

Following our recommendations, local hospital trusts and providers of community care have committed to ensuring staff, patients and their loved ones know what discharge pathway a patient is on, and what this means for their care. New communication resources, including [new leaflets](#) explaining the discharge pathways and new systems like 'Tablets to Take away' have been designed to speed up the process.



## Supporting carers from disadvantaged communities

Many people who look after a loved one don't see themselves as a carer and may not be receiving the help they're entitled to.

Our work with carers including Syrian refugees, Asian carers, carers from the Traveller community, and carers with a disability themselves, has informed North Somerset Council's Carer's Strategy. The council told us the report 'highlighted a need to ensure we are proactive in engaging with seldom heard groups and communities and that actions are co-produced to remove barriers and reduce inequalities.' They also said the report had informed their anti-racist action plan.



## Making annual health checks easier and more accessible for people with a learning disability

Our checklist has increased the number of people with a learning disability who are attending their annual health check (AHC).

The easy read checklist is available and used by many GPs who can access the resource via computer systems linked to every surgery. GPs send the checklist out to people with a learning disability or their carer before the AHC. The aim of the AHC is to promote good health and ensure better and longer lives. In 2023, our area boasted an 83% completion rate of AHCs – the highest rate in the South West. 98% leave AHCs with a health action plan, compared to 53% previously.



# Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from as many people as possible across our local area. We have made it our business to reach out to communities and go to where they are. We aim to build trust, listen with empathy, and then share experiences anonymously. That way services can hear about everyone's needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Meeting people face-to-face, in the community at places of their choosing
- Translating materials into languages including Polish, Somali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, and Gujarati
- Providing resources in formats such as Easy Read and British Sign Language
- Working alongside community link workers inside settings and local places
- Hosting community organisations out of our new engagement hub in the heart of Bristol



## Increasing opportunities for face-to-face engagement

Our new 'Healthwatch hub' in Bristol offers a space for the public to come in and share their experiences with us face to face.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to adapt to collecting feedback and engaging with the local community online. But we found it hard making connections with more disadvantaged communities, especially those who are digitally excluded.

This year, we opened our engagement hub in The Galleries shopping centre. Volunteers and staff are available from 9:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, to talk to the public and provide information about local services.



“The new space has helped us reach people from across the area, including those previously unaware of our work or who may struggle to be heard. As well as welcoming local guest organisations, it’s wonderful to sit down and get to the heart of people’s stories and concerns.”

**- Julie Bird, Engagement Programme Manager for Healthwatch BNSSG**



## Breaking down barriers to sexual health care

**Sex workers are a highly marginalised and stigmatised group who may not seek or receive the healthcare they need.**

We made contact with a local charity to hear from sex workers about their use of health and care services. Some said they struggled to get support, and that judgements about their occupation was affecting access to certain treatments such as PrEP (a preventative medication which greatly reduces the risk of acquiring HIV infection). They told us healthcare questionnaires could be insensitive, asking uncomfortable and intrusive questions. They felt that more information or education for professionals around how to work with people in their occupation would help reduce the trauma some of these appointments had caused.

We shared this feedback with Unity Sexual Health, the provider of sexual health services in our area and with University Hospitals Bristol and Weston Trust. Unity reached out to the sex workers providing a better explanation of the process for providing PrEP and why a full history is needed to start treatment.

Unity also addressed concerns which were raised around the practice of asking people to queue outside the sexual health clinic, in full view of the public. The service has begun offering an appointment-only service. Vulnerable people and those without use of a telephone are invited for an assessment face-to-face with a clinician and a care plan is created to address their needs.



# Advice and information

People can feel lost in the system, and don't know where to turn. Healthwatch has been giving confidential support and free information to help people understand their options and get the help they need.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing information about local schemes designed to help people manage their health, including free blood pressure and diabetes checks, stop smoking advice, and information available in languages other than English
- Offering summaries in accessible language of key sources of information such as Care Quality Commission reports
- Sharing resources to help people cope with the cost-of-living crisis, such as 'warm' and 'welcoming' spaces
- Helping people navigate the NHS 'Find a dentist' website
- Signposting to advocacy services and official complaint processes



## Improving the comfort of patients awaiting surgery

When a patient contacted us to say she'd been uncomfortable waiting for a planned operation because her hospital gown was too small, we raised this the local Integrated Care Board.

Barbara told us that the doctors and nurses looking after her ahead of her operation were fabulous, but she found that the hospital gown she was given was too small.



"The indignity of being on a mixed ward in a gown too short while waiting five hours for a procedure to happen was demeaning and embarrassing."

- **Barbara, local resident**

We queried this with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), who contacted the local hospital trusts in our area. Both trusts said they will ensure staff and patients know that there are different sizes of gowns available, and that staff should tell patients that they can ask for an alternative gown.



"Both North Bristol Trust and University Hospitals Bristol and Weston are committing to internal communications updates to ensure people are aware of the gowns available."

- **Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB**

## Good communication promotes dignity and is central to the patient experience

Following public feedback, we investigated experiences around dignity for inpatients in our two local hospital trusts. People told us that some experiences were very good, while others had issues around reasonable adjustments, access to British Sign Language and interpreters. Some had had to rely on family or friends to translate private medical information.

Our '[Dignity in Hospital' Care](#)' report recommended that professionals have better training and use digital systems to flag patients' communication needs, such as a visual or sensory impairment or language barrier. Both hospitals said they will ensure all patients are told about services for interpreting or BSL and provide better learning opportunities for staff.



"Hospital staff did not, despite all our efforts make reasonable adjustments, add a note to our files, or communicate with us via our preferred methods."

- **Patient who stayed at Southmead Hospital**



"I was in ICU, they phoned my husband regularly, and when I came home, gave me a care diary so I could read what they had done, when they had turned me over, every couple of hours, that type of thing....fantastic".

- **Patient who stayed at the Bristol Royal Infirmary**



# Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts, experience, and knowledge we are able to expand our capacity and carry out our wide Healthwatch remit to the best of our ability.

## This year our volunteers:

- Attended and contributed to our priority setting meetings
- Provided information and guidance to the public
- Worked with disadvantaged and marginalised communities, ensuring their experiences and feedback were heard
- Took part in our first Enter and View visits since before the COVID-19 pandemic to observe care and talk to patients
- Supported us with data inputting and given NHS communications help with patient-friendly language
- Helped us achieve 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation



## Melanie (Bristol)

"When I retired 15 months ago, I missed the team I worked with (Adult Social Care Occupational Therapy). I also missed interacting with the public, so my role in Healthwatch has ticked both boxes. I take statements from people who stop by the hub in The Galleries and I go to consultation events when I'm free. I'm interested in how priorities are set for projects & have taken Enter and View training. It's so important to listen to people's experiences. It's a win-win situation when the person can offload, and we can collect evidence. Words direct from a patient or service user are very powerful."



## Suzanne (North Somerset)

"As a former nurse, I have always been very interested in listening and understanding the needs of individuals who access health care. I have also had experience from a patient perspective, so can understand the frustrations that people face at what can be a very difficult time in their lives. Healthwatch helps to give patients a voice, to make sure that they feel they are being listened to; this is why I wanted to volunteer my time as it is an ethos that really resonates with me."



## Raquel (South Gloucestershire)

"Volunteering allows me to develop new skills and resilience, which has a huge impact on my wellbeing and mental health. Contributing to the improvement of health and social care services motivates me and builds my confidence. Being a Trustee able to make decisions at strategic level is a huge responsibility that I feel proud to undertake. My main role is Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), currently looking at how Healthwatch develops engagement skills to hear from people who have the worst health outcomes."



### Do you feel inspired?

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



**The Galleries, BS1 3DX (9:30am – 4:30pm)**



**03300 553251**



**Jacqui@healthwatchbnssg.co.uk**



# Finance and future priorities

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

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£229,070	Expenditure on all pay	£269,110
Additional income	£105,843	Non-pay expenditure	£50,200
Interest	£441.00	Office accommodation	£12,242
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£335,354</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£331,552</b>

Additional funding is broken down by:

- ~ **£4,018 funding** received from Healthwatch England for a project to understand maternal mental health experiences.
- ~ **£73,750 funding** received from Ageing Well Programme (ICB) for HealthClick. Support digital skills in older adults and increase use of health apps and online health services.
- ~ **£11,270 funding** received to involve patients in the plans to improve Weston Hospital General Hospital.
- ~ **£14,700 funding** received to support a Bristol Health Partners' staff role working with service users on redesigning stroke services.
- ~ **£2,105 funding** for A&E work at North Bristol Trust.

## Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, monitor issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges from depleted workforces and a growing backlog. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from people in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements.

We will strive to tackle inequalities that we know exist structurally, and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, whether that is because of where you live, your income, your race, education level, sexuality, faith or other factors.

## Top priorities for 2023-24

1. Bristol: investigate the quality of and access to mental health services for adults.
2. North Somerset: understand the public experience of backlogs, waiting for appointments, consultations, and procedures in secondary care.
3. South Gloucestershire: understand issues people have relating to social care assessments.
4. BNSSG-wide: examples of GP access and communication with patients. Provide awareness about the positive developments of non-GP roles in surgeries, services in pharmacies and work with the third sector to deliver hyper-locally.
5. Carry out Enter and View observations.



# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, Unit 21, Union Gallery, The Galleries, Broadmead, Bristol BS1 3XD.

Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



# The way we work

Our Healthwatch Board of Trustees are seven members from across the three local Healthwatch regions who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and governance. They ensure that we have frameworks for managing finance, policy development and human resources. Throughout 2022–23 the Board met 12 times and discussed relocating our office, a staff restructure and recruitment drive, and overseeing business diversification. In 2022 a consultant carried out a strategic review and helped to develop an action plan.

## How we ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities:

- Our Prioritisation Panel is an assembly of volunteers, staff and Board members. They meet bi-monthly to discuss public feedback, identify trends and log issues. They use a scoring matrix weighted towards people with protected characteristics or facing health inequalities.
- When actions are recommended these may be escalations to regulators or to strategic partners, information gathering or targeted outreach.
- The Panel may highlight risk or concern by sharing data with the Integrated Care System, services or commissioners, or logging the item for ongoing monitoring.
- The Panel selects and helps to plan Enter and View visits based on local feedback.
- An annual meeting for our workplan looks at sources of evidence including the JSNAs, and system priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Boards, Integrated Care and our Local Voices reports. The Panel sets region-specific or BNSSG-wide qualitative research topics.
- This decision-making policy is published on our websites.

## Methods and systems used across the year to obtain peoples experiences

During 2022–23 we have been available by phone, email, and webforms provided on our websites. We provide sealable leaflets for people who want to write about their care which they can post back to us free of charge. We go out into communities and meet people to gather feedback, and our office is a dedicated face-to-face engagement hub in a shopping centre in central Bristol. It is where volunteers and staff collect feedback and offer information and guidance. We attend meetings of local community groups and take part in wider activities such as Pride, and International Women’s Day. At all times we aim to collect demographic data about the people we hear from. We offer training to our engagement staff and volunteers to help them confidently explain the impact that demographic information can have once it is linked to feedback. We aim to empower people and communities who may otherwise feel invisible.

We use QR codes on posters and SmartSurvey online to give people digital access to our research. We share upcoming activities in a newsletter, available to all, and our website has an events calendar. This annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and send details out via social media. We will also have printed copies available.

## Responses to recommendations

We have received responses to requests for information or our report recommendations from the Integrated Care System, the Acute Hospital Trusts, Sirona Care & Health, VitaMinds, Local Authority Adult Social Care, and Public Health – in 2022 we made contact with the Patient Experience staff team at Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust and look forward to building ties with them. Dental feedback was escalated to Healthwatch England which resulted in an inquiry being held by the House of Commons Health and Care Committee in April 2023. Bristol Special Educational Needs and Disabilities feedback and autism-related service feedback has been escalated to CQC in 2022.

## Enter and view

This year, we made 2 of Enter and View visits. We made 16 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
GP Practice Graham Road Surgery (Pier Health Group PCN.) North Somerset.	In response to patient feedback around poor access, communication issues, appointment concerns and delays. Follow up on previous E&V visit in January 2020.	The recommendation report was shared with the Primary Care Development team at the Integrated Care System and Primary Care Strategy Board. The findings have been taken up by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in North Somerset. The Care Quality Commission have revisited and the surgery is being supported to improve in several areas.
GP Practice Horizon Health Centre (Pier Health Group PCN.) North Somerset.	These two surgeries are located in neighbourhoods of income deprivation.	As above.

## Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch BNSSG is represented on the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Overview Scrutiny Committees by our Chief Officer, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. During 2022-23 our representatives have effectively carried out this role by providing common themes from public feedback and qualitative findings from research reports.

### 2022-2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Changes made to services
Dignity in hospital care project – Accessible Information	North Bristol Trust in 2022-23 trained 100 staff in supporting patients with visual impairments and hosted several Deaf Awareness sessions with Sign Solutions. They launched an e-learning package on LEARN, the trust's online training platform for accessibility which hosts NHS England's Accessible Information Standard Introduction and Towards Excellence sessions. They have co-designed a Visual Impairment Awareness session and plan to add a deaf awareness and digital accessibility session.
Lessons from health visiting during COVID-19 project	Sirona have updated perinatal mental health and infant pathways. They have also completed audits which have improved support and training for nurses, and led to better referrals to mental health services and liaison with midwives across BNSSG.
Unheard carers from minority groups project	Informed North Somerset Councils anti-racist action plan and contributed to their Carers Strategy.

**healthwatch**  
Bristol

**healthwatch**  
North Somerset

**healthwatch**  
South Gloucestershire

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