



# Together

we're making health  
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–2023

**healthwatch**  
Walsall

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**"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."**

**Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director**

# Message from our Chair

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**Ross Nicklin – Chair  
Healthwatch Walsall Advisory Board**

Undoubtedly, this past year has been challenging for people when using health and social care services. The care system has faced unprecedented demands, whilst having to cope with insufficient resources.

Over the year, Healthwatch Walsall has continued to listen intently and inclusively to as many people, patients and service users as possible.

We have carried out our engagement work, both face to face through community outreach across the Borough and also by utilising as many mediums as possible in order to gather individual and collective experiences of when people use health and social care services.

Sometimes, things go wrong for people in their care process and we have to bring those individual stories to the attention of the provider or commissioner, in order that better practice can be learnt for the future. Equally, it's important that where possible, we share examples of good feedback so those stories can be built upon in practice.

The health and social care system is changing. Hospital Trusts, the Local Authority, GP services, social care providers, community services and the third sector, (which includes Healthwatch), are now mandated to work together collaboratively in shaping health and social care services for their citizens. The Integrated Care System, (ICS), brings all of these organisations together with the intention of providing joined-up care for everyone.

In order to better inform this process, Healthwatch Walsall has provided feedback to service commissioners via a number of key projects. For example; male suicide, hospital discharge and young people's experiences of accessing health and social care services.

# Message from our Chair

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In this new year, we will be seeking to widen our reach across the community, ensuring that we make every effort to listen to those who are seldom heard or excluded.

In addition, we want to ensure that our work focuses even more sharply on inequalities.

Over the next twelve months our projects will include a range of issues such as;

- Inequalities faced by Black and Asian women when accessing maternity services.
- Finding out if people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss are receiving information regarding their care in a format that is accessible to them.
- Gathering ongoing user feedback about NHS 111.

At the same time, we also need to consider those things that are important to people and are often in the headlines, such as GP appointments and communication around hospital waiting lists.

However, it's also vital that we don't lose sight of those minority service users with individual and specific needs.

We are fully aware that gathering feedback against such a broad spectrum of health and social care issues is challenging for us as an organisation. Notwithstanding this, a handful of your told experiences can often speak volumes about the care you are receiving.

Our Healthwatch Walsall team and small cohort of volunteers will continue to work tirelessly this year on behalf of Walsall citizens. Nevertheless, we are reliant on service user feedback and experiences. The more we gather, the greater the influence we can have on local health and social care services.

Finally, I would like to thank my predecessor Mandy Poonia, whose tenure as Chairperson came to an end in December 2022. She worked hard through a difficult period, which included the pandemic.



# About us

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## Healthwatch Walsall is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information, advice and support.



### Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and social care we need.



### Our mission

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

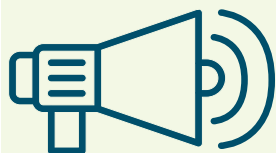
### Our values are:



- **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, commissioners and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Year in review

## Reaching out



**5,688 people**

were engaged with face to face across our communities or virtually on our themed online public meetings.

**27,765 people**

were engaged with via surveys, Enter and View visits, Newsletters, social media posts and more over the year.

**1,199 people**

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

**1,844 people**

were given advice, information and were signposted to support or services to help meet their health or social care needs.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**27 reports**

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



## Health and care that works for you



We are lucky to have been supported by

**25**

outstanding volunteers who have given their valuable time to make care better for our community.

We are funded by our Local Authority. In 2022-2023 we received

**£190,450**

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

**6 staff**

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



We increased our public presence to offer more information, signposting and advice opportunities to the public.



We continued with our Engage & Share initiative around virtual visits to Care/Nursing Homes.

Summer



With online appointments becoming the norm we assisted people to access appointments via different ways.



We supported the #BecauseWeAllCare campaign which saw 54,000 people come forward to tell Healthwatch about issues they faced with services.

Autumn



We recommenced our face to face Enter and View visits to Care/Nursing Homes and Learning Disabilities Homes.



We contacted a number of Walsall dentists to find out if they were taking on new NHS patients. We also wanted to find out if existing NHS patients were being retained.

Winter



We worked with a local training provider to support young people to gain skills for life, by raising awareness of health and social care issues and how to access services.



We expanded our public information and issued a regular round up bulletin providing readers with useful information and advice.

# How we've reached out to people this year

## Out and about and Online



We attended 219 face to face events throughout Walsall and hosted 20 online events such as our 'First Friday Focus' and 'Chat & Share' meetings.



We engaged with 5,688 people, face to face and across our online platforms.



We had 22,314 visitors to our website and 40,658 page views. Our new 'Have Your Say' patient experience platform went live.



We have 3,077 social media followers across the most popular platforms. We gathered patient experiences via a number of surveys over the year.

## Reports plus



We have produced 27 reports around the current work programme, Enter and View visits and Monthly E-Bulletins.



We produced 4 seasonal newsletters and issued regular online public updates.

## Meetings



We attended 95 meetings with commissioners, stakeholders, various boards and groups.



We held 4 Healthwatch Advisory Board Public meetings throughout the year and held our Annual Public Meeting (APM).



# 10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch Walsall. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to everyone who have contacted and supported Healthwatch Walsall. You have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights from the last 10 years.

## How have we made care better, together?

### Discharge from our Hospital



We have looked at our hospital discharge process 3 times since 2015. The latest work was during 2022/2023.

We captured patients, relatives and carers experiences and views .

A number of recommendations were made and some have been accepted by the Trust (2019).

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7mw2s7>

In 2017 we looked at discharge for patients with dementia. We recommended the development of a 'Blue Ribbon' that signified a patient had dementia and needed additional support and a process around their discharge was put in place.

### Diabetes peer support group



When delivering a project for Walsall Together we set up a peer support group that brought diabetic service users together to share and support each other and gain insight on how to manage their condition. This was very well received by service users.



### Deaf awareness cards

Following our Inequalities work in 2019 we liaised with the deaf and hard of hearing community to learn about issues they faced when accessing health and social care services. From this we produced a business size card that could be used to identify their communication needs.



### Disability groups input into new Emergency Department (A&E)

We enabled service users from disability groups to have direct input with the architects prior to the building of the new Emergency Department (A&E) at Walsall Manor Hospital.

They were able to share their previous experiences and put forward ideas to make accessing the service less stressful and more accessible to meet their specific needs.

They later attended a pre-opening tour of the new facility and were given information about how the new unit would work.

# 10 years of improving care

COVID19 and the lockdowns affected many people being able to access health and care services. Although it prevented many face to face engagement opportunities we still kept in touch with Walsall people. We had to work differently to meet peoples' needs and point them in the right direction to get support.

## How have we made care better, together?

### We worked differently during COVID19 to reach Walsall people



COVID19 led to lockdowns and stopped our outreach face to face programme for many months.

During this time we developed ways to still keep in touch with the public in Walsall. We developed an opportunity for the public to attend online service information and presentations through our 'First Friday Focus Meetings'. These were themed around services and support that people needed. All sessions were very well attended reaching different audiences depending on the topic.

We could not visit health or care venues under our 'Enter and View' programme, so we developed 'Engage and Share' which was a telephone/online review of services. This allowed service users to continue to share their experiences and have their views heard.

We also offered a telephone befriending service to the socially isolated and lonely. This continues today, keeping in touch with those who want to hear from Healthwatch Walsall.



### We raised awareness of male suicides

We visited local employers and shared information around the problem of male suicide.

We researched available support and where to access it and published a poster that was displayed by employers in the workplace.

To see more about this visit page 14 of this Annual Report.



### Signposting people to alternative GP access pathways

People struggled to see GPs but were not aware that there were other ways to access services. Healthwatch Walsall were able to signpost people to alternative options such as 'Extra GP Appointments'.

Other alternatives that they may have not considered or used were the local 'Walk In' option at the Hospital or by calling NHS111 to get the care navigation/support they needed. Information about these options were also given to the public.



# Listening to your experiences

Service providers 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 feed this back to service providers and commissioners to help them make improvements.

# Engagement with young people during the year

**At the beginning of 2022 we recruited 10 young listeners to help us obtain the views and opinions of young people from all around Walsall. We wanted to get a good idea of what young people were saying about services and to identify gaps. Our survey asked them to share their views on what worked and what didn't.**

They told us they were unaware of what services were available to them, particularly around mental health. When they did access mental health services waiting times were too long causing more anxiety. They also told us that lack of communication can create barriers.

Because there was a strong focus on mental health, we decided to hold a focus group on World Mental Health Day where young people came to meet with Healthwatch Walsall to share their experiences of mental health services. This was a safe space for young people to come together to talk in confidence, share ideas, support each other, gain knowledge of other services available and share how they think things could be improved.

"I turned up to access a service, and it was a group setting, my anxiety was too bad for that, I didn't know it was a group, I wasn't told. I sat in a room and other people started walking in. I waited 6 months for the service."



"I was given an anxiety leaflet when I didn't have anxiety."

"Felt super uncomfortable and overwhelmed, it was a weird environment, like CAMHS talked to me like a child, they then spoke to my mum about me in front of me, I never felt like I could open up then."

## What difference will this make?

Young people were given a safe space to engage with each other, to reflect on their shared experiences, to give encouragement and support to each other. They were also able to find out about services available to them. It was a very positive session where they felt comfortable to offer peer support and gave us valuable feedback.

Healthwatch Walsall were able to use the information the young people shared with us. It highlighted how important being listened to is for young people. So to take this forward and to find out if young people faced challenges because of communication issues, we chose this as a work priority for 2022/2023.

Young Person's Engagement Report

Link to report: <https://tinyurl.com/2hpw9akm>

# Engagement with young people during the year (Continued)

**In November 2022 Healthwatch Walsall along with our young volunteers created a communication survey. The purpose of this was to gain insight into the experiences and challenges young people face when accessing health and social care services. We also wanted to find out if young people are aware of alternative options for their wellbeing and how young people want to be communicated with by health and other professionals.**

We also visited workshops and held one-to-one sessions with young people to gain a better knowledge and understanding of what is important to them.

As young people had told us that because they didn't feel confident accessing health and wellbeing services and often would be inclined to "wait to get better", then we wanted to do something to change this.

In March 2023 Healthwatch Walsall were invited to host an employability workshop at a local training provider, Juniper Walsall. Over 2 days we and the group worked on a small GP access project. This involved the students making telephone calls and researching available services. They also went out into the community to undertake the survey and to raise awareness of Healthwatch Walsall.

"In the past a Teacher and Doctor have disregarded my mental health as not an issue"



"Make a judgement without knowing me and don't learn to communicate how I need them to"

"School doesn't know what the hospital tell them to do"

## Quotes from Young People, Walsall

## What difference will this make?

The work we undertook gave the young people the confidence to call a GP practice and confidently talk on the telephone. They researched other services that would be available and gained a knowledge of these and how they could be accessed.

This also resulted in young people having a greater awareness of their rights as patients and a good understanding about Healthwatch Walsall and how we can support local people.

Young Person Communication Project around Health and Social Care Services  
Report Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ecm6h>



# Male Suicide

National lockdown during Covid 19 had a significant effect on the levels of male suicide. Healthwatch Walsall working with Walsall Together were asked to carry out a project on male suicide. The work was in the form of a local campaign to raise awareness about male suicide for men aged 35-55.

We targeted local businesses and industry workplaces to display up to date information as this would give us the most direct reach to our target audience. Over 80 local businesses were happy to display the poster and many larger companies made copies to display in various locations across their networks.

## What difference will this make?

We received a very positive reaction to the campaign suggesting there is a real interest in practical information being made available in the workplace and other public areas about all aspects of health and social care.

We estimate that the information was made directly available to several hundred males working in one Primary Care Network area of the Borough, but alongside this the information will have reached thousands of males in the area.

This had a positive effect on awareness of male suicide and more importantly, the range of support options that are available.

Link to read or download the report visit our website using the link:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mru27ndu>

**Let's Talk about... Suicide Prevention**  
Suicide is preventable – if you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, this information can help you to get the right support.

Every year over 6,000 people in the UK take their own lives, with men nearly three times as likely to take their own lives than women, one reason for this is that men are less likely to ask for help or express depressive or suicidal feelings. Many other people will also attempt to kill themselves, or experience suicidal thoughts. Each life lost is a tragedy and represents a person who is experiencing emotional pain. Suicide has a devastating impact on family, friends and colleagues. There are multiple risk factors, including financial difficulties, emotional and relationship problems, physical illness, disability, mental health problems such as depression, social isolation and a history of substance misuse. Without suitable support people can become overwhelmed by the issues that they face.

We can help prevent deaths by suicide in Walsall by supporting people who are in severe distress. Helping them get to appropriate services is their first step towards hope and recovery.

**Help and Support is available if you or someone you know are having suicidal thoughts or feel like harming yourself**

If you need urgent support: Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department (A&E) or Call 999 if you are at risk of harming yourself or others.

For non-emergency situations: Visit our website

**National support and helplines**

Samaritans: Tel: 116 123. Offering emotional support 24 hours  
Email: [info@samaritans.org](mailto:info@samaritans.org)  
SAD Helpline: 0800 824 7000. Provides mental health information and support between 4 pm – 10 pm  
Web: <http://www.samaritans.org/what-we-do/support/>

CALL M: 0800 58 58 58. National helpline for men to talk about any issues they are facing. Helpline and helpline open 7am to midnight, 24/7 days a year. <https://www.themanshelpline.org/>

Rethink Advice and Information Service: 0300 5000927. Opening hours are 9.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday <https://www.rethink.org>

Page One UK: 0800 368 4343 (under 25s) 0191 261 261. Text: 07 930 239907  
Email: [and@pageone.co.uk](mailto:and@pageone.co.uk). Page One UK provides a free 24/7 helpline for people in the Black country who require support on urgent mental health concerns. Text message 07 930 232 281.

**Local support available in the Walsall area**

Black Country 24/7 urgent mental health line: 0800 608 6016. This service offers a free 24/7 helpline for people in the Black country who require support on urgent mental health concerns. Text message 07 930 232 281.

Rethink Mental Health Walsall Treatment & Recovery Service: 01922 404475. We have a telephone helpline open to anyone living in Walsall who needs support regarding their mental health. Open Monday - Friday service, although our services in the evenings/weekends if there is demand, so please check with staff if you would like support, please call us.

The Sanctuary Hub: 3 Queens Parade, Blithwell, Walsall WS2 2JX - Open evenings 7pm - 10pm on weekdays including Bank holidays, Saturdays and Sunday 12pm - 4pm. The Hub is a safe place and friendly place you can go to access support from outside of usual mental health services hours. Feeling unable to cope? Lonely or isolated? If you're feeling overwhelmed and don't know where to turn to get mental health support and help, come to the Sanctuary Hub. Email: [info@sanctuaryhub.org](mailto:info@sanctuaryhub.org) 0300 802 2388

Men with Anxiety and Depression Support Groups: A place where men from Walsall suffering from Depression, Anxiety, low mood etc. can meet up for a brew and a chat. The group meets on Wednesdays from 4.30 - 6 pm at Mycroft Community Hub. For information contact Richard: 07948 021808 or Martin: 07948 334271.

Walsall Bereavement Support after a Suicide: Email: [blackcountryreport@rethink.org](mailto:blackcountryreport@rethink.org). Call 0800 208 4514

Walsall Bereavement Support Service: Offers support for those bereaved by suicide. <http://www.walsall.org.uk> 01922 724841

It's OK not to be OK - Make that call and get the help that is there for you

healthwatch Walsall

For more information visit <https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/useful-links/>

“It’s good to know someone is thinking about us blokes”



“We have nearly 200 employees, so we will make several copies to go in various locations throughout the premises”

Link to read or download the help poster visit our website using the link: <https://tinyurl.com/ymky5dnw>

# Discharge Process from Walsall Manor Hospital

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**Healthwatch Walsall received a great deal of feedback regarding this subject over the year and it was agreed that we would take another look at the discharge process from Walsall Manor Hospital.**

This project aimed to understand the experiences and views from the service users being discharged from hospital including the planning of discharge and the involvement of patients and relatives in those plans.

Participants were able to share specific experiences and to give feedback on any social care support that may have been required for when they were discharged into different pathways.

The work was undertaken over several months to see if there were any seasonal variations.

## Some of our recommendations:

1. A discussion with services users around discharge should commence on admission.
2. Ensure that any communication from staff is clearly understood by patients, relatives and carers.
3. Patients, relatives and carers should feel they are able to ask questions and receive answers.
4. Ensure discharge destinations are identified and communicated to all parties.
5. A discharge letter should be issued at the point of discharge for all patients.
6. Patient records are kept up to date and valid at the point of discharge.

We made a total of 18 recommendations to improve patient experience.

## What difference will this make?

On one particular visit to the Discharge Lounge a patient medication issue arose that required immediate escalation by Healthwatch Walsall to the Walsall Hospital NHS Trust. Following the escalation, the matter was investigated and a change to the pharmacy medication handling was made. This was as a direct impact to the escalation.

Our findings in the report, along with our recommendations will be presented to the Hospital Trust and we will seek a response. We hope that at least some of our recommendations are incorporated to make the discharge process as seamless as possible involving the patients, relatives and carers in the process.

To read or download the report visit our website using the link:

<https://tinyurl.com/2yt3zpyw>

# Ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences are not often heard.



As part of our volunteer programme, we supported a local training provider with student work placements.

This gave young people an opportunity to gain valuable experience within a work environment and a chance to work together as part of a team. At the same time, they were able to gather experience and knowledge around health awareness and issues and how they could deal with these moving forward.

*“Our students at Juniper really appreciated the work that Loretta, the Youth Engagement Officer did with them. The students covered a variety of activities over the two days from completing surveys with the public, calling GP services and role play to outline the importance of Healthwatch Walsall and what they do for the public. They developed teamwork, communication and people skills.”*



The Adult Social Care User Survey is an annual survey carried out by Local Authorities across England on behalf of NHS Digital in order to determine whether services are supporting people to live safely and as independently as possible.

The aim of the survey is to capture the experiences of people who reside in residential and nursing establishments or receive community-based support in their own home.

Healthwatch Walsall is pleased to have been undertaking the work on the Adult Social Care User Survey since 2018/2019. We contact the individuals with cognitive impairment to capture their views and make sure they have their voice heard.

In 2022/2023 Healthwatch Walsall contacted 214 people living in 41 different care homes, both within and outside of the Borough. The views and experiences of 103 people were subsequently collected allowing them to have their voice heard. Without our input the views of these service users would have been excluded.

Furthermore, Healthwatch Walsall acted independently whilst contacting and visiting individuals about the survey. We raised any adult safeguarding concerns and liaised with the Adult Social Care Quality in Care Team as and when quality and safety issues were observed.



# Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

**This year we have reached different communities by:**

- Listening to diverse communities across Walsall in the forms of arranged visits and engagement opportunities to the homeless centre, local Mosques, Afro Caribbean centres and more...
- Asking people how the 'Cost Of Living Crisis' is affecting them?
- Presenting past accessibility problems when visiting Emergency Treatment at our Hospital to architects of the new build Emergency Treatment Centre.

## Core Connector 20+

Healthwatch Walsall were successful in its bid to run the Core Connector 20+ work, in conjunction with Walsall Together. The project is designed to support the NHS in its goal to tackle healthcare inequalities.

The CORE20PLUS project in Walsall supports the process of removing barriers, accessing health services and creating opportunities with support from Community Connectors.

The communities that the project focuses on are:

- LGBT+
- Travellers
- Victims of Domestic Abuse
- Refugees
- Homeless

The work is around hearing from the above communities and finding out issues that they are facing. The aim is to help shape future service provision to better meet the needs of vulnerable communities who may experience barriers in accessing services.

CORE20PLUS have used different approaches, rather than targeting specific health issues we listen to service user stories relating to health 'outside to inside'. Initially, promoting and making the work of Community Connectors visible by building trust in communities and developing community participation.

CORE20PLUS continues to recruit volunteers. The best learning we've had is that 'we cannot do alone what we can do together', therefore recruiting people with lived experiences represents the best way to engage, build trust and help the communities further.







# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Walsall 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've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information from people they can trust.
- Helping people to access GP services they need.
- Helping people to access NHS dentistry services.

## Help to find NHS dental care in Walsall

Healthwatch Walsall were contacted by Walsall people who had learned they were no longer a NHS patient at their dental practice.

Healthwatch Walsall, supported by young volunteers contacted all dental practices in Walsall to see which dental practices were still taking NHS patients. This information was then shared with service users enabling them, where possible, to re-register as an NHS patient. For 2023/2024 we will be looking at NHS dentistry in more depth.

## The impact of the cost of living crisis in Walsall Borough

**The 'Cost Of Living Crisis' has hit everyone, but especially low income families, single people, the unemployed and those who are most vulnerable.**

Healthwatch Walsall wanted to know if people were making adjustments to their healthcare such as cancelling medical appointments, putting back check ups or reducing their medication purchase because they could no longer afford to pay for them. We put together a short survey available online and via a paper copy which ran over a few months. The results of the survey have been shared with our partners to see what support or information could be given the Walsall public to cope with their needs.

Link to read or download the report: <https://tinyurl.com/5n75ba2c>

## Patients still not able to see their own GP and unaware of alternative options

**Many patients were telling us that they could not get a timely GP appointment or an appointment at all.**

After asking if patients knew how to access alternative GP appointments it became clear there was a lack of awareness of what was available and how to access the alternative services. Healthwatch Walsall shared the various options available to them such as Extra GP Appointments, NHS111, use of E-Consult/Accurx or the Walk In Centre at Walsall Manor Hospital .

## Raising awareness and sharing information

**Continuing raising awareness and sharing information with the public, we maintained our 'First Friday Focus' meetings**

Guest speakers/presenters talked about themed subjects providing the public with insight and information around conditions such as Bowel Cancer, Bereavement Services and much more.

Access to services and updates were shared and members of the public could ask questions directly which gave them the opportunity to be fully informed and to feel more involved.



# Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. We extend our thanks to them all for their efforts in the community in helping us understand what is working and what needs improving.

## This year our volunteers supported us by:

- Collecting experiences and supporting their communities by listening to the views of the public and to pass this back to Healthwatch Walsall.
- Being actively involved in our Enter and View programme.
- Reviewing GP and dentist websites to find out about patient accessibility.
- Collecting the most up-to-date information on changes to services.
- Supporting the creation of surveys, projects, marketing materials, inputting of data, proof reading, community outreach and raising awareness of Healthwatch in the communities of Walsall.

As stated before, we thank them all for their valuable contribution and for supporting us throughout the year.



## Tegan Higgins

"I really enjoy volunteering with Healthwatch Walsall because we help to make Health and Social Care services better for the people in Walsall. I enjoy doing this because it gives me a better understanding of how to access services and it definitely encourages young people to speak up about their negative experiences. I think it's a great opportunity to meet new people through the events we go to and our social media campaigns. I have also gained a great deal of office experience, project administration experience and communication skills."



## Abi Lewis

"Volunteering for Healthwatch has been great. As someone who regularly uses health services in Walsall it's been lovely to see the efforts the Healthwatch team go through to improve services for all. I have enjoyed working with the team on projects and looking towards improving services for those who use them. It's great to feel as though you are making a difference in your local community, and I look forward to further projects as we continue to work towards a better future for Health and Social Care services in Walsall."



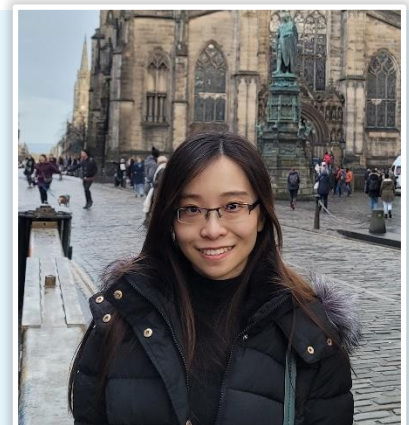
## New Healthwatch Advisory Board member Marie Clare Kofi

"I recently joined the Board and have enjoyed working together with the local team to ensure local services are meeting people's needs. The experiences that Healthwatch Walsall collect are invaluable to shaping conversations with system leaders and to ensure we have a good understanding of the needs of the community in our local area. I will encourage everyone that access local services to get into the habit of providing feedback as this is the only way we can promote good practice, learn from mistakes, and make improvements."



## Connie Lee

"Having moved to a new environment, I have recently joined Healthwatch as a volunteer. The activities organised by Healthwatch have a strong focus on engaging communities and utilise the feedback gathered to improve overall service delivery. I am glad to have the opportunity to participate and contribute to the community. The recent tour at the new Urgent and Emergency Care Centre at WMH was a memorable experience and I look forward to my volunteering journey with Healthwatch."





## Healthwatch Walsall Hero – Roger

Roger is a valued volunteer and our 'Healthwatch Walsall Hero' and we are very pleased that Roger has been supporting us over many years. Roger regularly attends and supports many of the public events we organise, as well as actively supporting past work projects by interviewing patients and relatives. He is now taking part in our Enter and View programme as an "Authorised Representative" and will attend visits to various health and social care settings.

Roger is also a Warden at Saint James Church in Brownhills and works at the local foodbank, The Lamp helping those in need during these difficult times.

“Volunteering with Healthwatch Walsall has four ongoing benefits for me. First it provides me with an opportunity to support the excellent work which Healthwatch Walsall undertakes. Secondly through the gatherings I have attended both live and online I have learned a lot about the way in which health and social care operates in and around Walsall. Thirdly, I have been provided with advice and guidance on my own health; I have two underlying health issues. Finally, it has provided me with information about the availability of advice and services in and around Walsall which I have been able to pass on to people with whom I have contact in my work with the Church and the Food Bank.”

**Roger**



# Finance and future priorities

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

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£190,450	Expenditure on pay	£180,804
Additional income	£25,292	Non-pay expenditure	£19,289
Balance brought forward	£22,705	Office and management fee	£21,253
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£238,447</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£221,346</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>£17,101</b>		

## Next steps

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

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work in tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce barriers when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or ethnic background.

## Top three priorities for 2023/2024

1. Experience of maternity services and post-natal care for Black and Asian women
2. Accessible Information Standard
3. Teenage Pregnancy



# Statutory statements

Engaging Communities Solutions CIC holds the contract to deliver Healthwatch Walsall and is based at Blakenall Village Centre, 79 Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall WS3 1LZ. Healthwatch Walsall uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



Engaging  
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# The way we work

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## Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 6 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local communities. Throughout 2022/2023 the Board met 3 times and made decisions on matters such as agreeing our forthcoming year work projects and signing off any finalised reports to be shared with commissioners, stakeholders and members of the public.

## Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

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 using services. During 2022/2023 we have been available by phone, email, a webform on our website and through a range of social media platforms, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and present it at an Annual Public Meeting as well as providing hard copy reports as requested.

## Responses to recommendations

We made 87 recommendations to providers in the reports we issued over the year. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so therefore no resulting reviews or investigations.

## Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our Local Authority area for example we take information to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board, System Quality & Oversight Committee, Quality in Care Committee, Walsall Safeguarding Partnership, Information Sharing Meetings and the Walsall Place Information Assurance Operational Group.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in Walsall Together and we also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

## Enter and view

This year, we made seven Enter and View visits. We made thirty eight recommendations as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What we did as a result
Drake Court Care Home	CQC rated Requires Improvement	Online Engage & Share. Report published
Anson Court	CQC rated Inadequate	Enter & View visit undertaken and report published.
Whitehorse Road Care Home	CQC rated Inadequate	Enter & View visit undertaken and report published
Delves Court Nursing/Care Home	Inspected but not rated by CQC	Enter & View visit undertaken and report published
Willow Rose Care Home	CQC rated Good. Visit undertaken to identify what "Good" looks like.	Enter & View visit undertaken and report published
Blakenall Family Practice	Much service user intelligence about inability to access services.	Enter & View visit undertaken and report published
Touchwood Pharmacy	First use of newly designed Enter & View paperwork.	Enter & View visit undertaken and report published

## Healthwatch Representatives

Healthwatch Walsall is represented on the Walsall Health and Wellbeing Board and the Walsall Safeguarding Board by Ross Nicklin, Chair Healthwatch Walsall Advisory Board.

Healthwatch Walsall is represented on the Walsall Together Integrated Care Partnership Board by Aileen Farrer, Manager Healthwatch Walsall who is also the representative on the Black Country Integrated Care Board. This representation is on behalf of the 4 Black Country Healthwatch.

## 2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Outcomes
Walsall Manor Hospital Discharge	Change in Pharmacy practice at the Hospital
Young Persons Communication	Presented to partners and published
Cost of Living Crisis Report	Presented to partners and published





**healthwatch**  
Walsall

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