

# healthwatch

North Yorkshire



# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022



## Your local health and social care champion

Welcome to our latest newsletter, bringing you up to date with our work as the independent champion for people using health and social care services in North Yorkshire.

Thank you to those who have shared their feedback and experiences at our engagement events, focus groups, through surveys, via phone, or by email. People have important stories to tell – that we share with our health and social care partners to help bring about service change and improvements. Issues such as the shortage of NHS dentists, access to GP services, and delays in hospital treatment remain areas of concern for the public.

In May 2022, we launched our young person's mental health report during the mental health awareness week. It reinforced the high number of young people who face mental health and well-being issues across North Yorkshire. Which has been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pressures of school and college, alongside inadequate access to timely support and therapy, are impacting younger people's mental health and well-being. We will be working with partners, including young people, to help bring about positive changes to young people's support and services over the coming year.

It has been great to get out and about across North Yorkshire, meeting many different people across the county. Hearing your experiences about health and care services and the care you have received has been – and continues to remain so important to us. It is this insight that we act upon, and helps shape our future work and priorities. So, thank you to everyone who has taken the time to meet and speak with us at the various fetes, fairs, and shows we have attended.

If you are familiar with our past work, you will know that dentistry has been one of our priorities over the last few years. We repeatedly hear from people who have not been able to access or register with an NHS dentist, and hear of the adverse effect that this is having on their lives. We recently published a new dental report entitled 'An oral health crisis'. This report examined the negative impact that a lack of NHS dentistry has had on people's lives and significantly their health and well-being. See page 5 for a summary of this report.



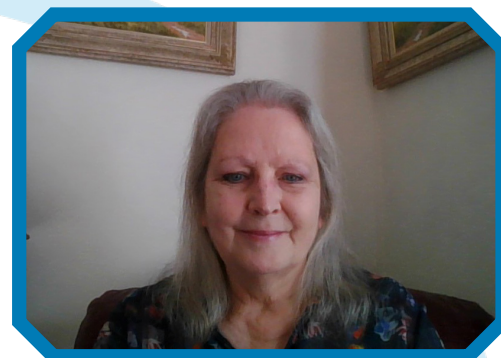
## Trustee profile:

I have always believed in 'putting patients first' and expected staff to 'go the extra mile' for all patients. I feel that Healthwatch, in gathering views from local people with the aim of achieving change - fulfils a worthwhile role and I am pleased to have recently become a Trustee.

Having been a volunteer with Healthwatch North Yorkshire since 2019, I have participated in a range of activities and projects - all of which I have enjoyed. In addition to working with Healthwatch staff, I have particularly enjoyed working in a team with other volunteers and firmly believe in the benefits of volunteering. I also appreciate the fact that I can volunteer with Healthwatch as much, or as little, as I am able to at any point in time.

My Healthwatch volunteer role has included: gathering patient views face to face; visiting hospitals, to review the environment from a patient perspective; talking with community groups; researching various topics; producing reports; providing representation at meetings such as equality, diversity & inclusion plus safeguarding; talking with care home managers; reviewing patient leaflets; reviewing GP websites. All have provided some valuable insights.

As a new Board member my aim is to provide helpful, if at times challenging, views based on my own knowledge and experience. I am keen to help Healthwatch continue progressing its aims - to improve access to and the quality of health and care services for people living across North Yorkshire and to provide relevant information to local people, when needed.



**Linda Wolstenholme,**  
**Board member.**

## Enter & View

Healthwatch North Yorkshire is pleased to be undertaking Enter & View visits this summer. These are legal powers to visit health and social care services and see them in action. This power to complete Enter and View visits offers a way for Healthwatch to meet some of its statutory functions and helps identify how services are working well and what could be improved.

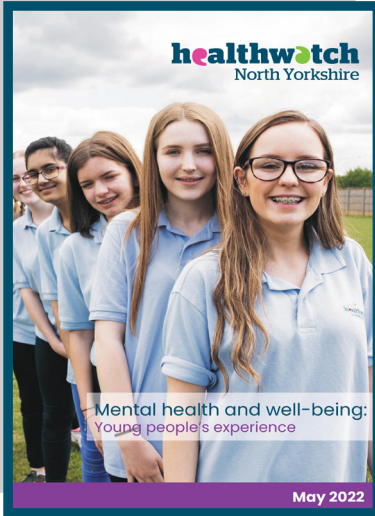
We will be visiting some of the 200 care homes across North Yorkshire and will focus on:

**We are interested in talking to residents of care homes, their friends & family, and staff. If you would like to invite us to visit you, or find out more, please phone 01423 778 128 or complete a contact form on our website.**

- Observing how people experience the service through watching and listening.
- Speaking to people using the service, their carers, and relatives to hear more about their experiences and views.
- Observing the nature and quality of services.
- Reporting our findings to providers, regulators, and the local authority.



# Young people's experiences of mental health and well-being



In May 2022, we published our 'Mental health and well-being: Young people's experience' report. It outlined the mental health and well-being issues young people (aged 16-24) are faced with.

More than two thirds (72%) of the survey respondents said they had experienced mental health or well-being issues in the past 12 months. Of the respondents only half said they had sought help.

Reasons given for not seeking support included long waiting times to access support; the stigma surrounding mental health; and not knowing where to go.

Of those who did seek support, most respondents sought help from their GP, talked to friends and family, or got support at their college, school or university.

Mental health issues amongst young people are a rising national concern, and this report echoes concerns that young people are facing immense pressures without knowing who or where to turn to for support.

**Helena, a 21-year-old student involved with the research shared her own mental health experiences in a case study for the report:**

## Helena's mental health issues:

"I always found schoolwork and exams stressful but I never learnt helpful ways of coping with and understanding this. My OCD started to develop during exams in Year 11. I remember crying over a shut window and getting my dad to check it was shut. I had no idea what these feelings were, it was very overwhelming. I felt like I had no one to talk to and I didn't want to talk about it because I didn't understand what was going on. I then developed anxiety and low mood."

To read the full case study visit <https://bit.ly/3suyijb>, or scan the QR code.

## Some of the recommendations outlined in our report include:

- Significantly reduce waiting times for assessments and support as soon as possible.** In the meantime, provide more support or signposting to other means of support during any waiting period and particularly when young people are moving between services.
- Improve the transition between child and adult services and from crisis support to longer term support.** Ensure that there is better communication and support between services to help prepare young people for any change in the care they will receive.



**Scan the QR code to read the report and complete list of recommendations.**

# Urgent Treatment Centre Selby

Healthwatch North Yorkshire has been working with partner organisations, including the Vale of York CCG to support the transformation of urgent care services in Selby. Part of this work involved helping the Selby Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) find out more about why people chose to go there for their minor injuries and illnesses.

We worked with the Centre Manager to develop a questionnaire, and a team of seven staff and volunteers spent 22 hours, over five days talking to 116 people about their experiences.

Most people (59%) were there with an injury and most (57%) had chosen to attend themselves. That was often because they felt it was the best place to deal with their health concern, they had been before and found it positive or because they struggled to get hold of their GP, or felt they would not get a timely GP appointment.

More than a third (39%) of people we spoke to were referred directly by their GP. Often, they were told there weren't any available GP appointments, or that the UTC was the right place for them to be seen.

For anybody arriving at the UTC they must first be assessed by a medical professional and then wait to see the appropriate practitioner depending on their issue. The Centre aims to see people as quickly as possible but prioritises those in most clinical need. When we were there the waiting times varied between two and four hours.

However, people arrived at the UTC and generally no matter how long they waited, they were very positive about the experience and the service provided. Almost everyone said they would recommend the UTC to others and many already had.

Almost everyone thought the centre was excellent and the staff very helpful and friendly and would recommend the service. The negative comments were mainly about waiting times.

## Comments included:

- Can't praise the staff highly enough.
- It is lovely here. The treatment is good, and staff (particularly receptionists) are helpful.
- Fantastic service (been with children before). They prioritise children and have not been so busy when I've been before.
- Brilliant service but waiting time is an issue. Can't blame staff.
- Always been amazing. It is a vital service for the community and saves a lot of people having long waits as they would have to go to York.

## Talk to us...

We produced a brief summary of our findings for the UTC manager including recommendations based on people's feedback - some of which have already been taken on board.

You can find out more about the service in Selby and the Minor Injury Unit in Ripon at <https://bit.ly/3FxEUST>

**For further information or to find out how Healthwatch North Yorkshire can support you, or your organisation, contact us via email, [admin@hwny.co.uk](mailto:admin@hwny.co.uk) or call 01423 788 128.**



# Oral health crisis

Dental access and oral health continue to be the subjects we hear most about in our feedback from the public. Unfortunately, accessing an NHS dentist remains a huge issue, both locally and nationally, and this is having a detrimental impact on people's health and well-being.

Since our work on dentistry last year, we have been involved in three evaluations for new NHS dental services covering Helmsley/Thirsk, Sherburn/Tadcaster and Scarborough by being part of the evaluator panel for NHS dental procurement. We have also joined a newly established NHS England dental network that covers the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care System (ICS) footprint which includes stakeholders from across commissioning, dental providers, local authorities and Healthwatch.

Despite these positive steps forward, many of the core issues relating to NHS dentistry sadly remain unchanged from the issues highlighted in our last dentistry report, published in August 2021. A large majority of people across North Yorkshire are still unable to find a practice taking on new NHS patients, with some dental practices having up to 1,000 people on their waiting list. This means people have to travel very long distances to access NHS dental services, are forced to pay for private treatment or cannot access dental services at all.

Our report, published in May 2022, explored the impact that the dentistry crisis is having on people's health and well-being across North Yorkshire. We gathered 85 case studies over a two-month period, which uncovered the pervasive impact on many different aspects of people's lives and the actions people resorted to due to not being able to access an NHS dentist.

In the report, 42% of respondents explained how issues with their teeth had a detrimental impact on their physical health. 26% of respondents reported that the dentistry issues they have experienced have had a negative impact on their mental health and well-being. The report also indicates how this crisis is impacting children's health and the actions people have taken due to not being able to access an NHS dentist.

Access to information regarding where you can register with an NHS dentist continues to be poor, and the online NHS service finder to search for a local dentist often has out of date information. There are also concerns around NHS 111 and that 'urgent' problems are often not considered urgent enough, meaning people are living in pain.

Sadly, these issues are not unique to North Yorkshire, with Healthwatch England and other local Healthwatch, including Healthwatch York, having recently published reports that further reinforce the above issues.

The recommendations outlined in our report are:

- **A dental task force for North Yorkshire that aims to tackle the underlying issues identified, both in this and previous reports.**
- **A collaborative approach to addressing the dental crisis across the Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care System to ensure the commissioning of services meet the needs of the wider population.**



READ REPORT

# Digital access to healthcare

Earlier this year, Healthwatch North Yorkshire ran a survey to better understand how people are using digital methods to access online health services, including GP online services or the NHS app.



Most people who used online services found them easy to use and convenient. But some would like them to be simpler and involve users in developing the technology. In our survey 97% of respondents use other online services (shopping, banking, and social media), but only 66% use NHS services online. So, the NHS can definitely learn from other sectors in making technology more user-friendly.

Three quarters of respondents were interested in trying new digital health services for example, at outpatient appointments. Nearly two thirds were also interested in using technology to help manage or monitor their condition at home, but more information was needed.

However, there was a clear message that digital doesn't work for everyone and must be only one of several equal options for engaging with the NHS. Many respondents were concerned about digital becoming the only option, particularly for those who can't use or don't have access to online services. People also stressed how important face-to-face contact is for

## Have you downloaded the NHS app?



It's FREE to download and is a safe, secure and easier way to book appointments at your GP surgery, order repeat prescriptions, and view your medical records.

You can use the NHS App to:

- Book appointments
- Access your health record
- Order repeat prescriptions
- Access your COVID-19 passport



For more information, and to find out how to get started, visit: <https://bit.ly/3D5JUwQ>

**Are you worried about sharing feedback about your local health or social care service? Don't be. @HealthwatchE want to understand your experiences so they can help make a difference to the care you receive. Share your experiences in this short, confidential survey #BecauseWeAllCare <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/have-your-say>**



# Accessible Information Standard

The Accessible Information Standard states that health and care organisations are legally required to provide a consistent approach to identifying, recording, sharing, and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

Healthwatch North Yorkshire, Healthwatch York and North Yorkshire County Council are aware that many people are not getting information from GPs, hospitals, dentists, care providers and others in a format that they can access without help. And so, they have been working together to understand the situation and work with others to improve things.

At Healthwatch North Yorkshire we were inspired by talking to Marnie, a student at Henshaw's College in Harrogate who is blind. She shared her experience and got involved in shaping this work and research project. Marnie helped design our survey and helped us to launch the report in June. She wrote a poem and a rap about how important it is to get information that she can understand.

Marnie was delighted to be part of the project: **“When I was included in the Accessible Information project, I felt very, very happy. I was excited about it and felt very proud to be involved.**

**“I liked creating the survey about accessible information, and I enjoyed doing the zoom and face to face meetings. I enjoyed being part of this project and I am so proud of the incredible things I have done.”**

More than 200 people responded to our survey and we spoke to 12 different groups about their experiences and four people, including Marnie, in more detail including what their recommendations for change would be.

Ian, who has Motor Neurone Disease which affects his speech, would like the option to email health organisations about appointments, rather than only being given a phone number. He said: **“The system doesn't anticipate that not everyone can use the phone. It is a legal requirement of the Equality Act that NHS Trusts make reasonable adjustments by providing alternatives to use of a telephone.**

All the feedback we received is included in our report, which suggests actions to ensure everyone can get information from health and care providers in a way they can access themselves.

Healthwatch North Yorkshire has called on organisations to develop and deliver action plans to achieve our recommendations and we have encouraged them to get people with lived experience involved in finding sensible and practical solutions.

**healthwatch**  
North Yorkshire

**You should be told about your healthcare in a way you can understand.**

**#YourCareYourWay**

To read our reports visit:  
<https://bit.ly/36U4uEz>



# Volunteering at Healthwatch North Yorkshire

The support we receive from our volunteers is incredible, and we couldn't achieve what we do today without their hard work and dedication – so thank you to everyone who has volunteered with us. Our volunteers have contributed to a wide range of our projects and research, including helping at engagement events, representing us at health and social care meetings, partaking in the design of surveys, and contributing to the development of new services across North Yorkshire. They have played a key part in our work at Healthwatch North Yorkshire.

We are always welcoming new volunteers who would like to provide their support to a small team – working across the largest county in England.

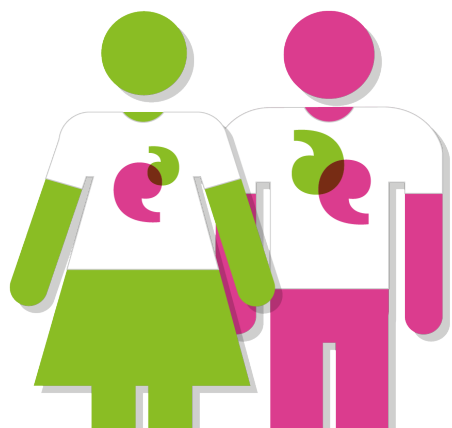
## Top 3 benefits of volunteering with Healthwatch:

- 🗨️ **Giving something back.** Whatever your background or your own experience with local health and social care services, offering your time and skills to support Healthwatch work could make a real difference in your local community and offer you the chance to give something back.
- 🗨️ **Health and wellbeing.** Whilst volunteering is good for your local community, it is also good for your health. Recent research has shown that doing a good deed for others leads to improved physical health and increased feelings of emotional wellbeing. So, volunteering makes you happy!
- 🗨️ **Making a difference.** There are lots of roles in the Healthwatch North Yorkshire and you do make a difference. You will make it by connecting with people in your local community, including those whose voice is seldom heard, so their experiences can help make health and care better or by contributing to one of the projects.

Our volunteering roles are flexible and fit your schedule. Ideally, our volunteers would be able to make a regular commitment to the role on a weekly or monthly basis. We will always work closely with you to ensure your volunteering role fits with your other personal and social commitments. The process of recruitment is easy and enjoyable, and an easy read handbook and volunteer agreement are designed to make volunteering accessible for everyone.



If you are interested in volunteering at Healthwatch North Yorkshire, or you would like to find out more, please contact Lada Rotshtein via email, [Lada.Rotshtein@hwny.co.uk](mailto:Lada.Rotshtein@hwny.co.uk) or by calling 07458 301397.



# Our work and impact

To review the influence of our work over the past 2 years we have produced our first impact report. This report explores how our work has been used by service providers and commissioners to help inform their planning and decision making, as well as our reach and engagement from 2020-2022.

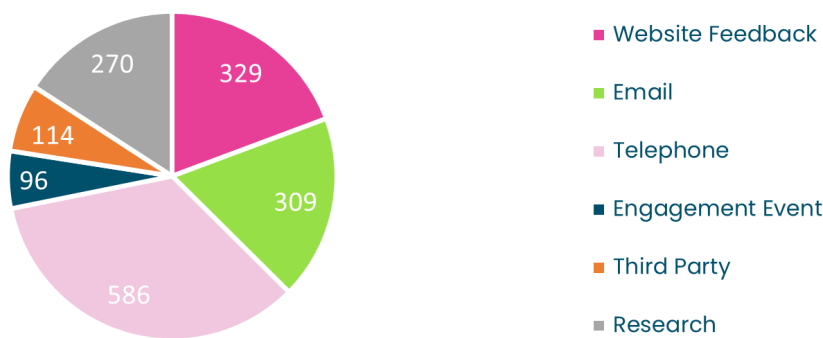
The report is framed around the 5 values of Healthwatch, and the impact we have had in each of these key areas:

1. **Listening:** We recognise the value of listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
2. **Including:** We value inclusivity. Listening to the first-hand experiences of diverse groups improves care for everyone.
3. **Analysing:** We value the insight that's gained from analysing many different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
4. **Acting:** We act on feedback and drive change. Listening has to positively affect outcomes and influence important decisions about people's care.
5. **Partnering:** We value strong partnerships with care providers and Government – serving as the public's independent advocate.



Reviewing the impact of our work over the past two years has helped us understand our strengths and areas where more work is needed, both of which will be used to ensure the future work we carry out is as influential as possible.

Type of Feedback



We heard from 2,235 people from April 2020- March 2022, via our telephone line, through email, our website and research and engagement events. Third party in the chart below refers to any feedback we have received via Care Opinion.

As well as receiving feedback via responsive methods we also received 1,249 responses to our surveys from April 2020- March 2022.

Over the past two years we have signposted 582 people to a variety of services.

## Changes to your health and social care services

The government's new Health and Social Care Act 2022 was agreed by Parliament in spring and will mean that from July local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) will be replaced by more regional structures known as Integrated Care Systems (ICS). Across England there will be 42 ICSs.

Whilst you shouldn't notice any changes to the services you receive and access, the aim of this structural change is to enable all local partners to work together in one geographical area, including hospitals, GP practices, community services, pharmacies, mental health providers, and local authorities to meet the needs of the population by coordinating and planning care services together.

In many areas across England this coordination of service planning and delivery is already happening, but what this new act will do is to provide the structures, support and means to expand on this to ensure services are delivered to greater improve the health of people and reduce health inequalities.

**North Yorkshire will be part of the new Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care System, which will also include the areas of York, Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire, and Northeast Lincolnshire. The area of Craven will be part of the West Yorkshire ICS, which will include Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield.**



**Thank you to those who continue to share their experiences of health and social care. As your local independent health and care champion, it's important that we hear your stories – so we can share with local partners and inform change.**

**If you would like to share views with us, please get in touch with us via email: [admin@hwny.co.uk](mailto:admin@hwny.co.uk), telephone: 01423 788 128, or by visiting our website: [www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk)**



# healthwatch

## North Yorkshire

Healthwatch North Yorkshire is your local health and social care champion. From Scarborough to Richmondshire and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear **your voice and use your feedback to improve care.**



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



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