

# healthwatch

North Yorkshire

## NEWSLETTER

Winter 21/22

your  
voice  
counts

about your  
services, whether it be  
your views or ideas for i



Your health and social care champion



# Improving health and social care together

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

We have been as busy as ever over the last few months. Since we published our report in August entitled, 'NHS Dentistry in North Yorkshire: A review of public feedback 2020-2021' we have continued work to improve access to NHS dentistry across North Yorkshire. This has included working in partnership with the NHS commissioners to support the procurement of new dental services across the county. These new services should be starting in Helmsley, Thirsk, Sherburn, and Tadcaster in April 2022.

In January we published our report on the care home sector, entitled 'COVID-19 and care homes: Lessons from an unprecedented time' (see page 10). This report highlighted how care homes in North Yorkshire have adapted and innovated their services to meet the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, ensuring that they provided the best care and support for their residents.

We worked with Healthwatch York to raise awareness of the new COVID-19 vaccination legislation, requiring all staff, volunteers, and people working in care homes to be fully vaccinated, to find out what impact this would have on an already fragile care home sector and workforce.

In September, we held our Annual General Meeting, online via Zoom, due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. A big thank you to everyone who participated. The event was successful with lots of participants attending to hear about our work. We received a lot of feedback, with the highlights being the Q&A session with a panel of health and social care experts from across North Yorkshire, and our volunteer network discussion.

It has been good to get out in the last few months to speak with people, face-to-face, from across the county, including in Scarborough and Selby. We hope to be able to continue this when the country hopefully begins to return to normality, after another difficult year for many people. We would encourage people to continue to follow Government guidelines around COVID-19. This includes wearing face masks in crowded areas, having both vaccinations, and for those people who have already received both vaccinations to get their booster jab if appropriate.

We have begun to work with and hear from younger people in North Yorkshire, including several students at colleges and at engagement events that we have held in the local community. We will continue this work in 2022 to help us paint a picture of some of the health issues facing younger people to ensure we begin to address these going forward and for younger people to have a say in their health care.

# Healthwatch Life Stories



We understand that people's experience of health and care isn't just a one-off event. We all have contact with health and care professionals on our or our family's behalf throughout our lives.

Healthwatch North Yorkshire wants to understand how local and regional health and care services work together or don't work effectively across North Yorkshire through listening to people's experiences over time.

So, if you are in contact with health or care services on a regular basis for yourself or your family, we'd like you to get involved and become one of our Life Story sharers. We want to hear from people from across North Yorkshire and people of all ages and experiences, including people with physical and mental health issues.

Healthwatch Life Stories is about staying in touch with people to hear about their contact with health and care services over time. It isn't just about a one-off GP appointment or hospital visit, but all your experiences over time and your ideas about how things could be improved and work better.

We plan to keep in touch as often as our Life Story sharers want but hope that we could have a conversation every couple of months or when you've had an appointment or been in touch with health or care services. And we'll keep in touch in the best way for you – it could be phone calls, online meetings, or even meeting face to face. Life Story participants can share as much or as little information as they want and stop at any time.

We would like people to share who they are but understand if you want to be anonymous. The most important thing for us is to understand people's experiences and the resulting impact on their and their family's life and their health and wellbeing in the broadest sense.

The Life Story sharers' experiences will be part of the information we feedback to health and care service providers across North Yorkshire and will help show the positive and negative aspects, including what could be better. By getting involved, you will be part of shaping health and care services for the future.

**If you'd like to share your experiences and story with us, please get in touch with our engagement officer, Ruth. Contact by email [Ruth.Stockdale@hwny.co.uk](mailto:Ruth.Stockdale@hwny.co.uk) or by calling 07458 301393.**



# Meet Our Trustees

I am a retired nurse of 44 years, with experience in many nursing roles – including the last 30 years, working as a Community Public Health nurse, working with families and their communities.

I have held several strategic level roles within large NHS organisations in Acute Care, Mental Health, Community, Primary Care, and several years working for the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), nursing's regulatory body, as a member of their Fitness to Practice Panels, and latterly as an NMC Council Board member for England, elected by my peers. I am a Board member at York Housing Association, and until recently, I was the Local Authority Governor of Sheriff Hutton school.

I count myself very lucky to have spent many years working with families in their communities. Other people's stories have always fascinated me. The happiness, the pain, and the difficulties that some families experience, quickly led me to think "one size does not fit all" which in many areas of life, is the only offer available.

I suppose that's where I began to question the status quo and why I became involved at a strategic level with organisations that have the power to influence people's lives, both positively and negatively.

I am also a volunteer within York and Scarborough NHS Hospital Trust and with Martin House Hospice. Throughout my varied professional experience, I have recognised that 'health inequalities' are ultimately the difference in the status of people's health. Fundamentally, it's the social, economic, and environmental conditions in which people live that impact their health. COVID-19 has certainly highlighted these underpinning health inequalities.

Healthwatch, nationally and locally, aims to act as an independent champion for people who use health and social care services. I am proud to contribute my varied experience, to support the delivery of this aim.

When I think of the main drivers throughout my professional life and what has continued to motivate me since I've retired, it has been to influence change and consider and question established thinking.

It's difficult to list your achievements, it feels like boasting, however, bringing myself back down to earth, I will always be humbled by the resilience and strength of many of the families that I worked with.



**Pat Southgate, Trustee.**

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## Accessible Information

**Have  
your  
say**

Accessible information is essential to help people make decisions about their health and care.

Since 2016, the Accessible Information Standard has given people with a disability or sensory loss the legal right to get health and social care information they can understand and support if they need it. But is the standard being delivered by services, and does it go far enough?

Healthwatch North Yorkshire is working to help services understand the answer.

We are gathering information to find out whether people are getting accessible information in the format they need.

**Share your views with us!**

**e: [admin@hwny.co.uk](mailto:admin@hwny.co.uk)**

**t: 01423 788 128**

## SHORTLISTED FOR NATIONAL AWARD

Healthwatch North Yorkshire was shortlisted under the 'Engagement' category in the Healthwatch Awards 2021, which are run by Healthwatch England.

We were nominated for a prestigious national award for ensuring local decision makers understood the challenges people were facing to see an NHS dentist and the changes needed to improve access.

Ashley Green, CEO of Healthwatch North Yorkshire, said: "We are delighted to be shortlisted for this Engagement award. It's been a turbulent year for us at Healthwatch North Yorkshire - with the pandemic and not being able to engage with people in our usual way.

This nomination shows how hard the team and our volunteers have worked to make sure that the voices of people across North Yorkshire are at the forefront of health and social care services."



### Wordsearch Puzzle:

FIND ALL THE WORDS RELATED TO HEALTHWATCH NORTH YORKSHIRE!

S P A R T N E R S H I P H N H  
 E I S C A R B O R O U G H C E  
 L X E X P E R I E N C E C R A  
 B H A D V I C E E S O C I A L  
 Y B Q P U B L I C I Y J T V T  
 I N F O R M A T I O N P H E H  
 H P G H A M B L E T O N L N R  
 A A C V J F Y O R K S H I R E  
 R T L O S V O L U N T E E R H  
 R I R I C H M O N D S H I R E  
 O E V C H E A L T H W A T C H  
 G N Q E R Y E D A L E R N A E  
 A T T J E C H A M P I O N R N  
 T V J R S E R V I C E H N E O  
 E M C I N D E P E N D E N T A

- |               |             |             |             |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Richmondshire | Healthwatch | Independent | Partnership |
| Experience    | Information | Yorkshire   | Champion    |
| Ryedale       | Hambleton   | Service     | Public      |
| Volunteer     | Social      | Care        | Scarborough |
| Harrogate     | Patient     | Health      | Advice      |
| Craven        | Selby       | Voice       |             |



# Finger on the pulse



Mental health, GP services, COVID-19, and care are some of the priority issues facing people across North Yorkshire, revealed in our first Pulse [Report](#) published in November.

The report brought together feedback from organisations across North Yorkshire sharing experiences from the people they are working with and from individuals who are part of our new individual influencers network who told us about their experiences of treatment delays resulting from COVID-19.

This report is the first of our Pulse Reports and Pulse Briefings, which will provide a snapshot of the issues facing people across North Yorkshire. Each piece of work will have a different focus, and in December we produced a briefing looking at people's experiences of booking a GP appointment.

The feedback for our first report highlighted the impact of COVID-19 and delayed treatment and care on people's mental health. Organisations reflected that COVID-19 had increased the number of people suffering from mental health issues and exacerbated existing issues for some people. This placed more demand on mental health services which were struggling to meet increased demand, with one organisation identifying issues with 'patchy, confusing and inconsistent statutory mental health support'.

**“Lots of anxiety & depression - some ongoing but some new as a result of the challenges of COVID”.**

More than a quarter of people who experienced delayed treatment or care said it had affected their mental health. This was reflected by organisations who said that people's mental health had been affected by delays to treatment. However, no-one who responded had received support for their mental health while waiting for treatment.

The impact of COVID-19 on services and care came out strongly in the feedback we received. With case numbers and hospitalisations rising, the impact will continue to be felt across health and care services. Several people expressed their concern about digital exclusion for people who can't access GP and other services online. Others raised issues about misdiagnosis following telephone appointments. We know that GP practices across North Yorkshire are working hard to ensure everyone can access the right services for them.

Care – social care, care homes and hospital care – all appeared in the list of priority issues and taken together would have been the second most pressing issue behind mental health services.

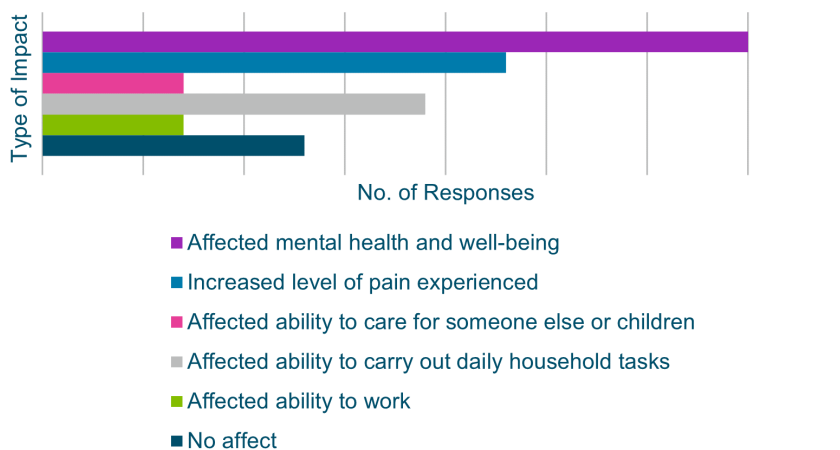
The issues surrounding care were mainly related to staff shortages and lack of capacity, resulting in people being admitted into care homes when they could be cared for at home. We are also starting to hear about this issue for people remaining in hospital when they should be discharged, but aren't, because there are not enough care staff available to support them when they return home.

Every organisation who responded told us that health and care services were either the same as before the pandemic or had got worse. Organisations who work with vulnerable people including older people, those with learning difficulties or dementia all felt that services were worse (or getting worse) for that group of people.

**“Annoyed that everything is expected to be done online which is not possible for many elderly people and certainly not for those with early-stage dementia”.**

Delayed treatment and care was a particular focus of our first Pulse Report, linking to a national survey by Healthwatch England. Our survey found a variety of experiences with some people waiting for more than a year for treatment and others waiting for up to four months. Treatment delay length also differed depending on which district in North Yorkshire people were from, with those from Scarborough district more likely to experience longer delays. For more than half of respondents, the reason for waiting was for an operation or appointment with a consultant. As above the impact of the waits on people was significant for people's mental health. But people also experienced increased pain, and some were not able to carry out household tasks, couldn't work or struggled to look after family.

### Impact of Delays



We heard that some people had paid for treatment or travelled outside North Yorkshire to get treatment more quickly.

“I have had people paying for hip replacements in order to continue being able to work. Also paying for counselling services due to wait at GP surgeries”.

Finally, we asked people to let us know about other issues that were affecting them. Unsurprisingly, access to NHS dentists was raised by several respondents. As seen in our previous report, NHS Dentistry in North Yorkshire, this is an issue affecting the whole county and something we have raised with the commissioners at NHS England.

Our Pulse Report has been shared widely and particularly with those who provide and commission services in North Yorkshire. We have had some

excellent feedback so far and it has been called ‘informative’, helpful’ and ‘a brilliant report’. We’d like to thank everyone who responded to our Pulse Report surveys and provided feedback.

We are planning to develop the reports over time and want to get feedback from more organisations and people. If you aren’t currently part of our networks, then now is a good time to join.

We have a network for organisations who will be asked quarterly for their impressions of health and care services based on what they are hearing from the people who use their services or are part of their organisation. Individuals can join our individual influencers network to answer a short survey monthly. If you want to get involved get in touch with our engagement officer, Ruth on [ruth.stockdale@hwny.co.uk](mailto:ruth.stockdale@hwny.co.uk) or 07458 301393.

**#SpeakUp**

Please get involved so, together, we can ensure that the organisations who develop and deliver services take your experiences and ideas into account.



**SCAN ME**



**SCAN TO READ OUR FIRST PULSE REPORT!**

# Volunteering at Healthwatch North Yorkshire

## Are you interested in volunteering?

As a volunteer, you will support Healthwatch North Yorkshire in fulfilling our purpose of being the champion for people using health and social care services. You will make a difference 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.

### 1. Community Engagement and Outreach Volunteers

You will play an important role in talking to people in the community to capture their views on local health and care services. You will speak to people in a range of settings including libraries, market stalls, Healthwatch North Yorkshire, and community events.

### 2. Feedback Collector

As a Feedback Collector, your role will be to collect people's experiences of health and social care services which will contribute to the intelligence and information Healthwatch North Yorkshire uses to inform our work.

### 3. Healthwatch Ambassador Volunteer

Healthwatch North Yorkshire Ambassadors are our eyes and ears on the ground, in the community sharing what we do as well as sharing back information collected from our communities.



Scan QR to download our volunteer handbook

## Meet Our Volunteers:



Diane (left), Lada (right)

### Diane

I have been volunteering with Healthwatch North Yorkshire for almost 10 years, and I have seen many changes during my time here.

I studied for a MSc in Medical Physics, and my husband and daughter are (or were) health care professionals - hence my interest in the NHS and patient pathways.

I first heard of Healthwatch North Yorkshire as a Trust member of York Hospital and decided I would like to join their training programme. A group of about 10 of us trained in the Selby district, and the training became more intensive with the introduction of the Health and Social Care Bill. I, along with several others, chose to do the extra training to become an authorised Enter and View representative - a role I have very much enjoyed.

Also, we received training to give simple advice on some aspects of healthcare (e.g., smoking and drinking awareness) and to signpost people needing help. Much of this work, together with information gathering, was carried out by having a stall at local events - again enjoyable and satisfying work.

Other tasks have included proof reading patient information leaflets and being a Healthwatch representative, undertaking PLACE and TAPE assessments for the trust.

I enjoy talking to people, including staff, patients, relatives, and care home residents, to hear about their experiences of health and social care - both positive and negative.

I am looking forward to volunteering with Healthwatch North Yorkshire in the future.



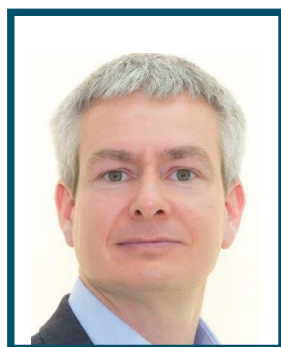


## Meet the team:

**healthwatch**  
North Yorkshire



**Gemma Hutcheson,  
Marketing, Communications and  
Business Support Officer**



**Ashley Green,  
Chief Executive Officer**



**Ruth Stockdale,  
Network and Engagement  
Officer**



**Lada Rotshtein,  
Volunteer Officer**



**Alicia Rose,  
Research and Intelligence  
Officer**

## Scarborough - ideas on help to be healthy

Thanks to everyone in Scarborough who filled in our survey or shared their experiences and ideas at our engagement events last year. Nearly 300 people responded to tell us why good health is important to them, their views on local services and what could help them to be even healthier.

The activities were carried out in partnership with SeeCHANGE, part of the Healthier Communities Together programme which is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and The King's Fund. SeeCHANGE brings together a broad coalition of voluntary and community sector organisations, business representatives and the statutory sector who are committed to boosting the health and wellbeing of people living in Scarborough. It aims to do this by working with the community to co-design a way to bring people with good ideas together with the people who can bring those ideas to life.

We have produced a [report](#) from the feedback we received which gives idea and insight that is relevant to everyone who wants to be healthier or is working to support people to be as well as they can be.



scan me



# Care homes and COVID-19: Lessons from an unprecedented time



In January we published our care home [report](#), which shows how many care homes across North Yorkshire made innovative changes to keep their residents safe and well even when they faced acute and often devastating challenges at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report was based on interviews with five care home managers to find out the innovative ways that care homes responded to COVID-19. The report shows that many of the changes have had a long-term positive effect.

Care home residents remain some of the most vulnerable to the virus and the report acknowledges that this was a “traumatic period” for all involved. But it also highlights the ingenuity and dedication of care home managers and staff who pulled out all the stops to create a safe and welcoming environment for residents even at the height of the pandemic.

Homes we spoke with provided visiting pods, repurposed buildings and developed communications for connecting residents and family in new ways - using IT equipment like tablets and iPads.

Staff found that some of these initiatives led to improvements in the wellbeing of residents, providing access and information at a time where face-to-face connection was reduced, or not available.

One care home manager explained how important technology was during the pandemic, and how it helped to connect loved ones to residents during end-of-life care. These positive initiatives have resulted in long-term changes to practices.

Care home managers frequently told us that without COVID-19 they would not have made the changes they have and that they will keep the changes going forward.

For example, one care home manager described plans to renovate a visiting pod that had been introduced during the pandemic. They wanted to utilise the space and create a stimulating and enjoyable environment for residents, and which could also be a place for involving the wider community.

The pod had been decorated by local children with lots of vibrant, pictures and paintings. “It’s always a focus on colour and anything to do with children, for people with dementia you are likely to get a response,” said the manager.

As well as carrying initiatives forward into the COVID-19 recovery period and beyond, we hope that the themes identified in the report can be used as inspiring ideas for other care homes to reflect on, and to consider ways they can utilise the lessons learned in their own circumstances.

**Ashley Green, Chief Executive Officer at Healthwatch North Yorkshire, said:**

“This project was important, as we wanted to give a voice to the people who have been at the forefront of health and social care services during the pandemic. It has been an exceptionally difficult year for those working in the care sector, and this report shows the bravery and dedication that staff have demonstrated to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities remain protected.”

A working group, with representatives from North Yorkshire County Council and the care home sector, supported this work and were involved in each stage of the project.



Visit our website and sign up to our monthly e-newsletter to keep up to date with the latest health and social care news across North Yorkshire.

## Stroke services across North Yorkshire:



In November we supported North Yorkshire CCG and East Riding CCG to hold two online engagement events for the public covering Harrogate and district and the East Coast, including Scarborough to help explain what stroke services are available across North Yorkshire. The events included short presentations covering the patient journey from signs and symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and care, and finally to rehabilitation in the local community.

As well as hearing from clinical experts from across stroke care the public were able to ask questions about the stroke services in their local area and how they would be supported.

There was lots of interest from the public about their local stroke care and we would encourage anyone who has any feedback – good or not so good – to get in touch with us so we can share your feedback and experiences with those responsible for commissioning and providing stroke care across North Yorkshire.

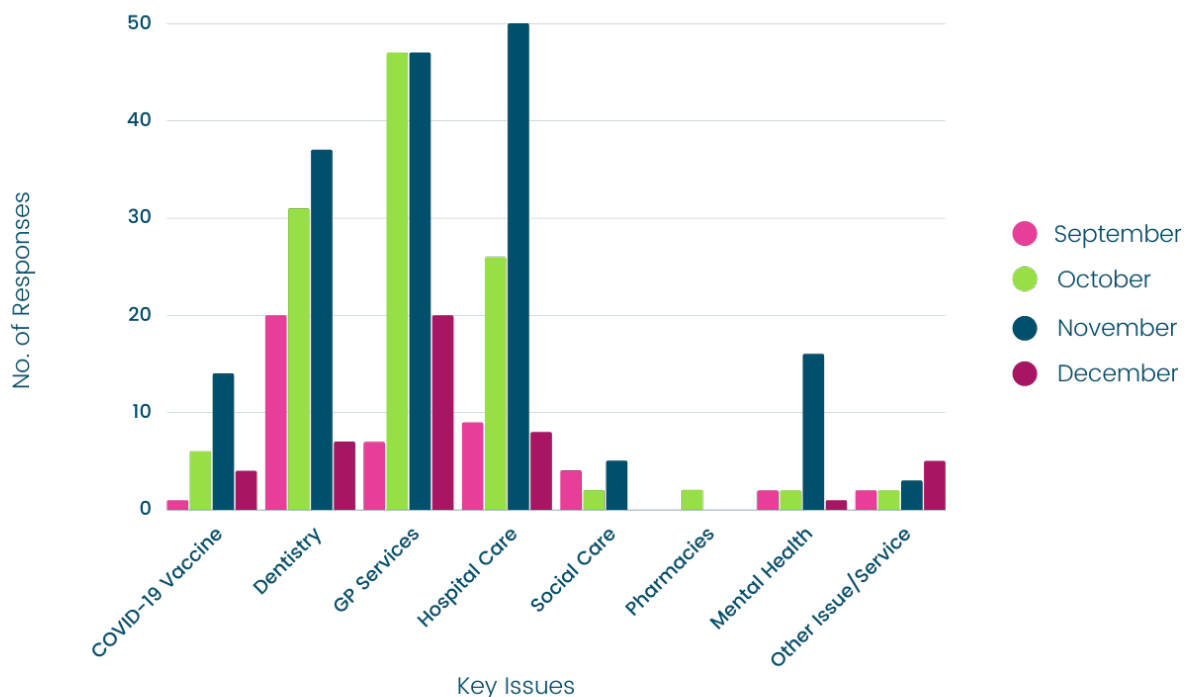
## What you've told us...



We have received lots of feedback from people across North Yorkshire over the past four months.

We are so grateful to those who shared their experiences of health and social care with us. The key health and social care themes we have heard about can be seen in the graph below.

Feedback received September – December 2021



# 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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