The value of listening

Healthwatch Barnsley

Annual Report 2023-2024





healthwatch
Barnsley

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"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Manager

Welcome to our Annual Report, which outlines the work that we have carried out during the last year to influence improvements to health and care services.

This report also outlines some of the key challenges that people face in the provision of the health and care they require. We listen to people's experiences and present them (be they positive or negative) to the relevant providers and commissioners. In doing so, we champion service improvement where necessary, but we are also welcoming of good news stories to help consolidate good practice in health and care provision.

Locally, we have a position on the Place Partnership Board. At system (ICB) we have representation at both Board and Partnership levels. This has been made possible by the signing of a collaboration agreement between all the local Healthwatch (Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster and Rotherham) and the regular joint meeting of their officers. We have many plans for joint projects and we look forward to working with our Healthwatch partners for the benefit of local people.

The progress and accomplishments we make are also the result of a team effort amongst our staff, and I would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment to champion the voice of the public across Barnsley.

At the time of writing this report, we are in the process of change within Healthwatch Barnsley. Our previous advisory board is no longer in place and we are currently recruiting volunteers to form a new advisory group. In doing so, this will allow us a fresh perspective on our priorities and will ensure that we continue to work in a way that benefits local people, taking into account ever changing local issues. With this in mind, I would like to thank each and every member of our previous advisory board for their exemplary hard work and commitment to Healthwatch Barnsley; without their support over the past ten years, our organisation would not have the solid foundation that is has today.



"I will continue to work with our staff and Local Advisory Group in the coming year, along with stakeholders and partner organisations, together we will continue to help ensure the improvement of health and care services for our local people"

Lesley Cooper, Healthwatch Barnsley Manager



About us

Healthwatch Barnsley 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 and advice.

Our vision

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



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and 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, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



Year in review

Reaching out:

3368 people

Spoke to us about their experiences, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care

354 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

Making a difference to care:

We published

7 reports

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



Our most popular report was

Hygiene Poverty Report

which highlighted the struggles people are facing during the cost of living crisis.

Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

8

outstanding volunteers who gave up their time to make care better for our community.



We're funded by our local authority. In 2023 - 24 we received

£150,000

which is the same as previous years.

We currently employ

6 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year



We held 13 Community Conversations with underserved communities so their voice could be heard as part of the NHS 5 year Joint Forward Plan



We set up a monthly stand at Barnsley Hospital to collect feedback from residents attending Outpatients appointments.



We gave out free toothpaste and toothbrushes in Barnsley Market whilst speaking to residents about access to dentist in Barnsley.



We gathered feedback from recently discharged patients of the Acorn Unit. This was to see what they would like a new reablement/intermediate care service to look like.



We held another successful Hygiene Poverty event to see if anything had improved for residents. We then produced our updated report on this.



We published our dental report which helped to form part of a Healthwatch South Yorkshire presentation to South Yorkshire Dental Stakeholder Event.



We provided an update to Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board including case studies and a report on what Barnsley residents know about adult safeguarding.



We worked with NHSE/Healthwatch England and South Yorkshire ICS on a Partnership Support Programme looking at inequalities within the Deaf Community.

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in South Yorkshire influence decisions made about services at NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked together across Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield in the following ways:



Making sure your voice was heard as part of the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy, "It Starts with People" and hosting Community Conversations where we asked the question "What matters to you about your health and Wellbeing?". Between us, we heard from around 800 people whose views have helped influence the NHS South Yorkshire 5 year plan.

Better outcomes for our underserved communities in South Yorkshire. By working in partnership with our ICS, NHS England and Healthwatch England we are looking at inequalities within the deaf community and how we can make it easier for them to access health and social care. As part of this, we highlighted the lack of BSL interpreting in Opticians, and the NHS are now working with opticians to improve awareness of their duty to provide this.





Making sure that the public views and experiences of dentistry are heard by decision makers. We take our intelligence and feedback on local dentistry to our ICS and also to the South Yorkshire Local Dental Network. In November, we presented what we'd heard to an NHS South Yorkshire Dental event, highlighting the dire state of NHS dentistry and the real consequences for people across our area.

"Our Healthwatch partners in South Yorkshire work tirelessly to ensure the voice of people from Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield influences health and care services. They are particularly crucial to the system in their ability to ensure we hear from our most underserved communities. They effectively balance working with us as partners and holding us to account where necessary, and are a very important cog in our system." – Katy Davison, Deputy Director of Involvement, NHS South Yorkshire ICB



healthwatch log years

10 years of improving care

2015



Barnsley Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat established.

2016



Healthwatch report on people's experiences of mental health crisis care.

2019



Joined the Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group looking at **Crisis Care**.

2020



Joined the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group looking at Mental Health Early Intervention and Prevention.

2021



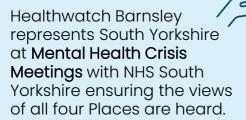
Saw the launch of Barnsley's Mental Health Partnership Delivery Group on which our Vice Chair represents Healthwatch Barnsley.

2022



Our Vice Chair was involved in producing the outline specification for the Mental Health Response Vehicle which was piloted in Doncaster.

2023



healthwatch 10 years How we celebrated 10 years

Save the date

Healthwatch Barnsley Anniversary

Wednesday 9th August at 9.30 to 11.30am Rigby Lounge, The Metrodome, Queens Road, Barnsley, S711AN

ou are invited to a continental breakfast meeting to celebrate our 10th and We will be showcasing the work we have done over the years and what planned for the future.

healthwatch 10











Healthwatch Barnsley Anniversary

Wednesday 23rd August 9.30am to 1.30pm Barnsley Town Centre, Cheapside

Come and meet our Healthwatch Barnsley team and celebrate with us.

We'll be telling people how we've worked together over the last 10 years to make health and social care better for you.

They'll be plenty of free goodies on hand too!

www.healthwatchbarnsley.org.uk 01226 320106







Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we have made listening to all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture. We then feed this information back to services, in order to help them improve.

Hygiene Poverty Project

Last year, we published findings of our Hygiene Poverty project, which highlighted how Barnsley people are facing difficulties during the cost of living crisis and how they are cutting back on essential items.

People shared worrying experiences with us that suggested a lot still needs to happen to make sure that people have enough money to pay for essentials. This includes prescriptions and transport to medical appointments. Many people were cutting back on heating, eating and leisure activities which has a detrimental effect on mental health and wellbeing.

44%

of respondents said their physical or mental health has been affected by the cost of living crisis.



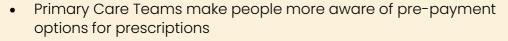
What did you tell us about health care?

- · 14% of respondents told us they were spending less on medication by not collecting their medication or making it last longer
- 13% of respondents told us they were avoiding a visit to the dentist because of charges.

We shared your responses with Healthwatch England to help build a national picture. We also shared with Commissioners and Service Providers locally.

What difference did this make?

Healthwatch England took the findings from local Healthwatch across the country and made the following recommendations to the Government.





- Dentistry Teams offer check-ups based on individual need to free up more NHS slots
- Make sure more people are aware of the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS).

Adult Safeguarding Engagement

In 2023, we welcomed Tracy our new Engagement Officer (Adult Safeguarding) with funding from Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board and Barnsley Council. This is a role focused on informing our residents about safeguarding, what signs to look out for, and how to raise a safeguarding concern.

Tracy has been busy attending events and local groups to give information and advice to our residents. Tracy has also been helping people to become aware of what is happening around them and the signs to look out for if they suspect someone needs help.

- Hoarding is a safeguarding issue and there are support services in place.
- Financial abuse is a safeguarding issue when a person is prevented from accessing their own money or assets.
- Domestic abuse is a safeguarding issue. Everyone has the right to live a life free from abuse and neglect.

Tracy is available to visit your group and give information about adult safeguarding.

What difference did this make?

During the past year, Tracy has attended 134 groups/events to talk about adult safeguarding where she has spoken to over 1,350 people. Tracy has also worked with 15 people to help them raise a safeguarding concern.

We have presented engagement reports and updates to Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board along with a number of case studies to evidence the work we have done. We were also granted funding for another year for the position which will continue until the end of March 2025.

One of the first people to approach Tracy after a talk at a local group was a young lady who was becoming increasingly concerned regarding her mum's hoarding. She was really upset and didn't know where to turn for support as things were at breaking point. Tracy agreed to meet up with mum and daughter away from the property to find out what support and signposting we could offer.

As a result of the meeting, Tracy worked with other services including Adult Social Care and Housing Officers to help the lady make a plan for moving forward. She was also referred to the NHS Health and Wellbeing Team, and attended her GP for a medication review. She is also considering joining the D'Clutter Club.



"Hi, thank you for coming out today you are a credit to the team you work for you have given myself and my mum hope for the future which is the most we have had in a long time so thank you! I've arranged a doctor's appointment for later this afternoon to discuss my mums tablets. Again thank you so much."

Text message received from the young lady who was concerned for her mum

Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

We spoke a lady in her 70s who told us she was having to make regular visits to the hospital for a urine dip test to check for infection. She used to have the tests carried out at her local GP surgery, which was more convenient for her, but she had since been told that they no longer do the tests. We spoke to the Practice Manager who told us this wasn't the case and it was a service they provided. She ensured that all Health Care Navigators were up to date with their training and added it to future inductions.



Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

We worked with Barnsley Hospital on their Care Partner Policy by making sure that people with lived experience were involved in creating the policy and were able to ask questions and make recommendations before it was approved. This worked really well and made Care Partners feel involved and part of their loved one's care.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Some of the residents we work with have complicated issues that need more support than just signposting. We are currently working with a lady whose husband has dementia which is now progressing at pace and she is finding it difficult to cope with him at home on her own. She is worried about finances, where to go for assessments, how she finds a good care home and what support she will receive. This is also affecting her own mental health. We are in contact with her every step of the way so she knows that she has that familiar support and we ensure her voice is heard.



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



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:

- Tailoring our engagement activities to specific seldom heard communities
- Attending sessions in different neighbourhoods including foodbanks, coffee mornings and libraries
- · Facilitating Community Conversations around "What matters to me" to enable residents to feed into the NHS South Yorkshire Start with People Strategy and the NHS South Yorkshire 5 year Joint Forward Plan.

Listening to people's experiences

The number of people presenting at A&E Departments has increased nationally and we wanted to find out what other (if any) services people had used in Barnsley, before attending A&E.

The majority of people were attending because they had been unable to secure a GP appointment or they thought this was the best place for treatment.

We also asked how long people had been experiencing symptoms before presenting at A&E. 25% of people we spoke to had experienced the symptoms for more than a week.

As a result of what people shared with us, we have:

- Cascaded our findings to Barnsley Hospital Urgent and Emergency Care Board, who are currently looking at redesigning the Urgent Care Pathways;
- Asked providers to look at opportunities to promote alternative services who are able to provide care, advice and guidance. (out of hours GP appointments, Pharmacy First and NHS111). This could help to reduce the number of people attending A&E.

Review of Intermediate Care Services in Barnsley

Intermediate care or reablement services in Barnsley have previously been provided on the Acorn Unit, which is housed within Highstone Mews Care Home in Worsborough.

The arrangement has now ended and has temporarily been relocated within Barnsley Hospital until new premises have been made ready. This gave us the perfect opportunity to speak to people who have previously used the Acorn Unit to see what their experience was and what they would like to see in a new setting. Due to Covid being present on the unit we were restricted to telephone conversations with the ex-residents.

We conducted a semi-structured interview asking about some of the things listed below:

- Length of stay
- Décor, fixtures and fittings
- Communications (and signposting on discharge)
- Did the unit meet their needs?

The participants told us that although the décor was a bit tired and equipment wasn't always available or working the way it should be, this did not have an impact on the care they received and the staff were amazing.

We asked what people would like to see in a new unit and the overwhelming response was to have space for socialising. This could be in the form of a communal room for residents to get together and play games, watch TV or have a chat. Physio was sometimes missed due to staffing issues so an area for communal gentle exercise could help to resolve this.



Advice and information

Where people are struggling to navigate health and social care services, Healthwatch can assist. We can provide confidential support and free information to help people understand their options and to access the services they require. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a care home for a loved one, we will do our best to point you in the right direction.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- · Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

Work on our priorities for 2023/24

In our last Annual Report we chose to work on three priorities. These priorities were from speaking with people, identifying any trends from the feedback we received and from talking to our partners in health and social care.

Priority 1

To set up a robust Enter and View Program

This is still work in progress, although we have made good inroads and we hope to be launching this service very soon. We have a training program in place and are seeking additional volunteers to help with the visits. Also, we are working with Adult Social Care Teams within Barnsley Council. This is to make sure the work adds value to their quality visits and that there isn't any duplication. We are also working with other Healthwatch leads in South Yorkshire to plan some joint Enter and View visits to secondary or specialist care services. These will be services that are accessed by local residents, even though the services are outside of the Barnsley borough.

Priority 2

Family Health including diet and hygiene

Our hygiene poverty events and reports have contributed to this priority. We have also worked with the Oral Hygiene Improvement Group and Public Health to raise awareness of oral hygiene, and our reports have contributed to the Oral Needs Health Assessment. We have attended Poverty Action events facilitated by Barnsley Council and promoted the work of local community foodbanks and pantries. We are also partners in the Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter.

Priority 3

Emotional and Mental Wellbeing for people with protected characteristics

Over the year we have engaged with different communities throughout Barnsley, attending their groups with information and activities to ensure their voices have been heard when planning the Start with People Strategy and NHS Joint Forward Plan for NHS South Yorkshire. We have regular contact with Thursday's Voice, My Barnsley Too, TransBarnsley, Chillypep, Refugee Council and B;Friends. We try to ensure (wherever possible) that we return to the group with feedback on the information they have given us, along with details of and how and when it has been used to help shape future services.



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Promoted Healthwatch Barnsley within their communities and shared what we have to offer
- · Attended meetings on behalf of Healthwatch Barnsley, where they have ensured the voice of local people is heard and considered for future plans and service changes
- Carried out Patient Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) at Barnsley Hospital



During the coming year we are looking to add to our volunteer family. As we review and renew our governance structure we are looking for volunteers to join our Local Advisory Group. We are looking for people who are passionate about health and social care services and making sure that peoples voices are heard when it comes to designing or transforming a service. Together we can make a difference. Please get in touch with us if you need more information or check out our website below for an information pack and details on the roles





This year we are trying to build up a pool of volunteer Authorised Representatives who can help us increase our Enter and View activity. Working with the Team, they will go on planned visits to places within Barnsley who provide NHS care or support (including care homes, GP practices, dentists and opticians). Authorised Representatives will speak with residents or patients and their carers about the care they are receiving, as well as their overall care experience.



Authorised Representatives will be fully trained and supported at all times. If you like talking to people from all different walks of life and have a few hours to spare each month, we would love to hear from you!

Do you feel inspired?



We are always looking for new volunteers, so please get in touch



www.healthwatchbarnsley.org.uk



01226 320106



hello@healthwatchbarnsley.org.uk



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	£150,000	Expenditure on pay	£170,425
Additional income	£37,443	Non-pay expenditure	£27,477
		Office and management fees	£15,478
Total income	£187,443	Total expenditure	£213,380

Additional income is broken down by:

• £5,000 received from South West Yorkshire Partnership (SWYFT) for work on a project looking at accessibility of their website particularly targeting views from people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism.



- £23,895 received from BMBC to host an Engagement Officer Adult Safeguarding, a public facing post informing residents of the importance of safeguarding, different forms of safeguarding and how to raise a safeguarding concern.
- £6,000 received from NHS South Yorkshire for work on the Start with People Strategy Refresh and update the NHS Joint Forward Plan by facilitating Community Conversations with seldom heard communities.
- £2,548 received from Health Education England for hosting a 3rd year Medical Student Community Placement during November and December 2023.

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

Mental Health (including Dementia)



Adult Social Care (including support for carers)



GP Practices (and how they work)





Statutory statements

Healthwatch Barnsley, 23 Queens Road, Barnsley S71 1AN is hosted by Barnsley Community and Voluntary Services (BCVS), 23 Queens Road, Barnsley S71 1AN.

Healthwatch Barnsley uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of eight members during 2023/24, 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 community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met six times and made decisions on matters such as taking work forward on hygiene poverty and collecting feedback from service users of the Acorn Unit.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, email, a web form on our website, and through social media. We have attended 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 share with partners, service providers and commissioners. We will also publicise the report on our social media channels for people of Barnsley to view.

Responses to recommendations

We have not had any providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so 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 insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Quality Improvement Board for Adult Social Care, Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board, Barnsley Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Autism and Dementia Partnership, Barnsley Engagement Equality and Involvement Group and Urgent and Emergency Care Board. We share insights with our Health and Wellbeing Board, Place Partnership Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board for example, in collaboration with Healthwatch Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield. We are represented at the Integrated Care Board, Integrated Care Partnership, System Quality Group and Quality Performance, Patient Involvement and Experience Committee. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Barnsley is represented on the Barnsley Health and Wellbeing Board by Adrian England, Chair of Healthwatch Barnsley Strategic Advisory Board. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending quarterly meetings of the Board and being an active member of any related workshops.

Healthwatch Barnsley is represented on:

- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership by Fran Joel, Healthwatch Doncaster
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board by Lucy Davis, Healthwatch Sheffield.

We are also represented at other NHS South Yorkshire system meetings including:

- South Yorkshire System Quality Group by Lesley Cooper, Healthwatch Barnsley
- Non-Surgical Oncology Transformation Engagement Cell by Lesley Cooper, Healthwatch Barnsley
- South Yorkshire Mental Health Strategic Delivery Group by Kym Gleeson, Healthwatch Rotherham

2023 - 2024 Outcomes

2023/24 has been a great year for Healthwatch Barnsley getting out and about in our local communities and building strong relationships by providing information and feedback. This will enable us to gain a better understanding of our residents and some of the difficulties they face.

During our Community Conversations we have been able to hear first-hand how the wider determinants of health have implications on how and where people are able to access health and social care. This includes access to public transport, anti-social behaviour and poverty.

We have also been able to hear what matters to people regarding their health and wellbeing and lots of people mentioned access to green spaces and parks along with social activities and meeting up with friends. We have provided details of these conversations to NHS South Yorkshire and they have been used to help formulate the Start with People Strategy and also the NHS South Yorkshire Joint Forward Plan. We were able to go back to our communities and feedback how these conversations have been used.

Our engagement team have been working with Barnsley Hospital to see how we can improve patient experience and waiting times within the Accident and Emergency Department. This work is ongoing and options are currently being explored. We hope that by summer the Board have agreed a plan to take the preferred option forward.

We have also been building up relationships with Adult Social Care in Barnsley and are represented on the Quality Improvement Board. We are looking at how we can provide feedback on their services and provide case studies via our Adult Safeguarding Engagement Officer.





Healthwatch Barnsley 23 Queens Road Barnsley **S71 1AN**



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hello@healthwatchbarnsley.org.uk





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