

This update is split into the following sections:

- (1) Your Healthwatch: news about our work and that of Healthwatch England (page 1)
- (2) [Health and social care updates](#) (page 6)
- (3) [COVID news](#) (page 11)

(1) YOUR HEALTHWATCH

A) We have published our Annual Report for 2021-22 - have a read!

We release our Annual Report covering the period to March 2022, which highlights the work over the past year.

Read about our achievements - and the amazing contribution of our volunteers.

Highlights this year

- 71 volunteers contributed 6,722 hours of their time to support our work - an incredible 282 days!
- 20 reports published, and 62 recommendations made to improve health and social care - based on your feedback shared with us.
- 72 newsletters and bulletins issued and over 1200 social media posts giving you information and updates about services and COVID-19.

We helped:

- Over 400 people who contacted us via our helpline.
- 2,603 people discharged from hospital.
- Over 1,400 people with their COVID-19 related queries.
- Overall, we engaged with nearly 9000 people this year.

Read our full report [here](#)



Healthwatch has continued to make a significant difference to the way in which services are delivered in the city, drawing together insight on challenges and barriers people face across health and care services in our city, whilst constructively challenging delivery plans to ensure they meet the needs of our population." – Lola Banjoko, Executive Managing Director Brighton & Hove CCG



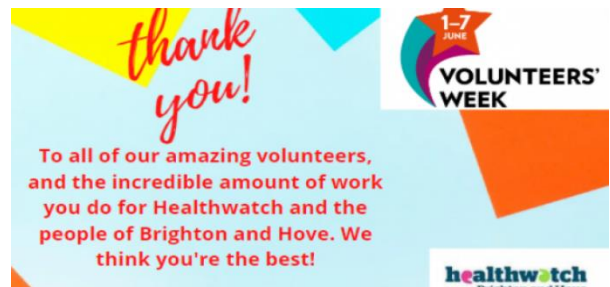
Annual Report

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove
Annual Report 2021-22



B) A big thank you to our hard-working Healthwatch volunteers

For Volunteers' Week 2022, we wanted to say a huge thank you to our hard-working, dedicated team of Healthwatch volunteers.



“ Healthwatch Brighton and Hove fulfils the vital role of being champions of NHS and social care services users. We have a small hardworking home team, that can only punch above its weight as a result of the equally dedicated input from all of our volunteers. Whether it is collecting the data that informs all our work, or providing wise counsel around the board room table, volunteering is at the core of what we do. Without the tireless energy and enthusiasm of our volunteer support, the quality of our work would be severely compromised. For this Healthwatch Brighton and Hove raises its collective hat and salutes its volunteers not just during Volunteers Week, but for every day of the year!
– Geoffrey Bowden, Healthwatch Chair ”

“ The hospital discharge follow-up calls I make are most enjoyable and rewarding. It's fantastic to be able to signpost folk for any post-hospital help or services they may require to make this challenging time easier. I also love having a friendly chat to many who have little social contact and really appreciate our thoughtful service. I am 100% convinced that everything I do in this volunteer role is making a positive impact on people's well-being and lives. It's simply a brilliant project.
– Caroline Trimby, Healthwatch volunteer ”

C) A shortage of GPs in Brighton leaves patients struggling to get an appointment.

We issued a press release after a recent [BBC article](#) reported [Nuffield Trust data](#) showing that Brighton has some of the fewest GPs in England, with just 44 GPs per 100,000 patients.

This comes on top of news from the [Kings Fund](#) which showed low levels of satisfaction amongst patients with GPs, at just 38%.



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove has for many years raised the impact of reduced GP hours and the number of practices in the city. In 2020, our last [review of GP practices](#) in the city, revealed that

- patient caseloads had increased from 2,394 patients per doctor in 2017/18 to 2,479 in 2018/2019. This was against an England average of 1,825 per doctor.
- the number of GP Practices had decreased from 48 to 35 from 2015 to 2019.

We recently stepped in to support patients of [Coldean's New Larchwood Surgery](#) after they had expressed their concerns about changes to opening hours, which were forcing them to travel for up to 30 minutes and on two buses to the alternative service at Carden Surgery. This helped to reverse a decision by the Practice to reduce its hours and services. But more action is needed to reverse the reduction in GP practices across the city which has been ongoing for years.

Following our press release David Liley, CEO was interviewed on BBC Radio Sussex Breakfast Show about GP shortages and for Latest TV.

“ Behind these figures is someone's story. In the last year, concerns or requests for advice concerning GPs and GP practices were the 4th main reason why people contacted us for help and support. And in this last week, we were contacted by someone who told us they had tried to join a GP practice in their area and were told they weren't taking on new patients. He asked, “what am I meant to do?” Last year, Healthwatch in Sussex published a report which revealed that people who were experiencing delays in obtaining GP appointments were going to A&E instead, placing unnecessary strain on hospital resources. GP staff have faced unprecedented challenges and worked tirelessly to provide help and support during the COVID period, but are their workloads are increasing to unmanageable and potentially unsafe levels

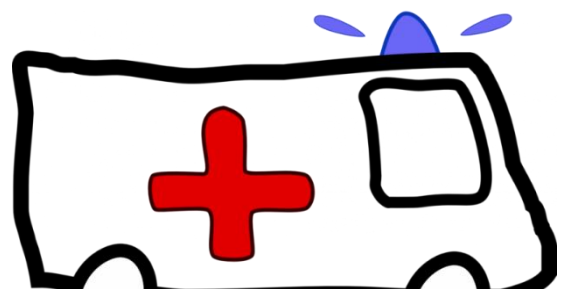
– David Liley, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, said:

”

You can read our full press release [here](#)

D) Your questions about non-emergency patient transport put to the provider

Healthwatch in Sussex is working with the provider of non-emergency transport services to host a series of patient forums so that your questions can be answered.



Healthwatch in Sussex has been working in collaboration with South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation (SCAS), the provider of non-emergency transport services (NEPTS) to support a series of patient forums.

These events have allowed users of the service and their families, as well as hospital staff, to ask questions.

Last October, an online event was held and attended by 13 patients and their families. Also in attendance were representatives from SCAS, and a representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group.

A number of questions were asked, which SCAS provided answers to, or promised to look into further. A further event was held in January, and another is planned.

You can read the full report [click here](#)

E) NHS dentistry - a Healthwatch bulletin

The number of queries we received from you about dentistry rose by an astonishing 271% between 2020 to 2021. In 2022 alone, we have already received the same number of queries as in the whole of 2020. Your biggest problem is finding a dental practice which is taking on new NHS patients.



In our latest bulletin, we provide information about:

- What is behind the current crisis?
- Your dental concerns
- What action Healthwatch is taking
- Our next steps

Our bulletin is available [here](#).



I am trying to find an NHS dentist in Brighton and I have called around 30 practices on the NHS dentist list, but none are taking on new patients >18 years. - Comment from a patient who contacted us for help



F) We need to focus on inequalities to address the NHS waiting lists

A Healthwatch England report has found that current hospital backlogs have had a huge impact on patients waiting for treatment. But women, those on a low income or from an ethnic minority background, are more likely to have a worse experience of waiting for care.



With NHS wait lists currently at over 6.3 million people, Healthwatch England wanted to understand the stories behind those waiting for care.

Last year, research by the King's Fund showed that the NHS backlog was disproportionately shouldered by people in poorer areas. Healthwatch England's research highlighted people were unhappy with the communications they received and the lack of support the NHS gave them to help with things like pain relief or accessing physiotherapy.

These concerns were not experienced equally by all, and findings were particularly stark among disabled people, those with long-term health conditions, and those on lower incomes.

Their new poll of 1,000 adults on NHS waiting lists shows that a poorer experience of waiting can be linked to factors such as wealth, disability, level of education, gender or ethnicity.

Healthwatch England will be looking forward to the opportunity to provide written and/or oral evidence to further support the work of the Inquiry and its secretariat as the process commences.

Read the full Healthwatch England report [click here](#)

G) Shining a light on the struggles surrounding social care



A report from Healthwatch England found that social care support changes people's lives but sadly, not everyone gets the support they need. Healthwatch England wants to understand what life is like when you can't get support or if the support you get just isn't enough.

Using stories people have shared with Healthwatch England from up and down the country, they have identified some key areas in which the social care system is failing people. Hear from Angela, Emily and Debbie, who have been brave enough to share their stories with Healthwatch England and identify the problems they face.

The need for better information and clearer advice: Angela's story

Working mum of two Angela was also an unpaid carer for both her parents. Her father needed constant care for his dementia and diabetes and her mother needed and continues to need support after suffering a stroke. This was an incredibly harrowing time, not made any easier by the fact that her parents live in different towns, so Angela had to

split her time between two separate homes. This, of course, had a huge impact on Angela's personal life. Her family's mental health and her own were hugely affected.



I might as well have been on a desert island in the middle of nowhere 'cause there was no one helping me. I didn't even have anybody to turn to like a social worker either.



Angela found there was a distinct lack of communication surrounding both her mother and father's care, and the professionals she met were unsympathetic to her needs.

To read the full report [click here](#)

Carry on reading for health and social care updates!

(2) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

A) Learn about Integrated Care Systems, which come into effect on 1st July

The way health and care works across Sussex is changing

On 1 July 2022 the way health and care is arranged in England changed. A Sussex Health and Care System is being developed to improve how it works for the population and their staff.

From 1 July, the 'Sussex Health and Care System' will work differently

The changes are designed to help:

- Support people to live for longer in good health.
- Make sure our disadvantaged communities get the care they need.
- Improve people's experience of using services.
- Better support health and care staff.
- Make better use of the resources available.

The new way of working will involve all health and care organisations coming together in Sussex as the Health and Care Assembly, the creation of a new NHS organisation called NHS Sussex to strengthened partnerships of health and care organisations working locally.

To begin with you will not notice many changes, and you can continue to access services in the same you do now. Over time, the specific health needs of our local population will be assessed to work out which health and social care services are most needed, so that to

these can be improved. This is about better delivering the services that local people need.

You can watch a short video to which explains the changes by clicking [here](#)

To read more about these important changes, please visit the [Healthwatch website](#) where we have written an article that gives more information. We will be sharing a further guide to what the changes mean soon - keep an eye out.

You can read some Frequently Asked Questions [here](#)

B) Avian flu in Brighton and Sussex

You may be aware that we have an outbreak of Avian flu in the city which is impacting on our gull population.

The risk of transmission to humans is low. Our local Council are following government advice and directions on how dead and sick birds are treated and disposed of.

The most important message is to advise people to stay away from and not touch dead or sick birds and contact the council to remove them in the case of the former and RSPCA in the case of sick birds.

Please visit the Council's web page for more information.

[Avian Influenza \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk)

C) Switchboard have recently launched a Domestic Abuse Service for LGBTQ+ people



Switchboard have recently launched their Domestic Abuse Service - you can find information about it [here!](#)

In addition to this, they have created a drop in space for LGBTQ+ survivors of Domestic abuse to have a coffee and a chat with them about the support they may need. They are currently running this on Tuesdays from 3-5pm at the Ledward Centre.

Anyone over the age of 16 is able to access this space, and if they require additional support (a friend or support worker) to come along, that is completely okay! If you could spread this far and wide to your networks, they would greatly appreciate this.

If you have any further questions or have thought of someone who might benefit from some support, send them an email! Domesticabuse@switchboard.org.uk

D) FREE women's recovery support group

Kennedy Street Recovery is a peer led charity that offers support, signposting and connection to those interested in recovery from addiction

. They currently run a number of outreach projects from various locations.

Every Tuesday the charity runs a FREE women's recovery support group, 1.30 at Africa House, (thank you St Peter's for the use of space) in the basement.

They offer an informal, friendly meeting where women can hear from other women in active recovery from addiction, how and where they found their recovery in the community and what they do to continue to stay mentally well in the community. This week they have the pleasure of hearing from Tina, a functioning recovering alcoholic, she's 1 year sober, she will be speaking about her lived experience, the freedom of recovery and which recovery pathway changed her life.

It is essential to book via the QR code due to limited space.

Recovery Connects Group

Tuesdays 13:30 - 15:00

Africa House
136-137 London Rd
Brighton, BN1 4JH

kennedy street →
addiction recovery



Scan QR or Sign up at:
[recovery-connects-
intro.eventbrite.co.uk](https://recovery-connects-intro.eventbrite.co.uk)

E) Survey for adults living with diabetes and those who care for them

Sussex Health and Care Partnership brings together hospital and community NHS trusts, general practices, social care, and others to plan and deliver health services that meet the needs of the people of Sussex, so that they can lead healthy and happy lives.



They are committed to the continuous improvement and evolution of diabetes services so that all their population can access high quality care no matter where they live. As a result, they are developing plans to review and improve services, building on what already works well and creating a more consistent and effective approach to diabetes care across the whole of Sussex.

They do not want to start to make any changes to services without involving you, their service users. They are keen to understand your experiences and gain your views on what a good service would look like for you.

If you have Type 1, Type 2, gestational or any other type of diabetes, or are a carer or family member of someone who does, please complete the following survey by 17th July 2022 and let us know your thoughts.

To complete the survey [click here](#)

F) Loneliness - how to get help and support



Loneliness is an issue that can affect us all, young or old, at any point in our lives. We might live in a busy city or a rural location, on our own or with others and still feel isolated.

You should not blame yourself for feeling like you are struggling, now or at any other time.

You can find advice on the following topics by clicking on the links

1. [Feeling lonely](#)
2. [Advice for loneliness](#)
3. [Support for loneliness](#)
4. [Find more support](#)

G) Cervical Screening Awareness Week 20-26 June 2022



Cervical screening is available from 25 years to 64 years in England and, currently, people aged 25 to 49 receive invitations every 3 years and those aged 50 to 64 receive invitations every 5 years.

Cervical screening is a free health test available on the NHS as part of the national cervical screening programme. It helps prevent cervical cancer by checking for a virus called high-risk HPV and cervical cell changes. It is not a test for cancer.

According to [Jo's Trust](#), the UK's leading cervical cancer charity, **one in three** women and people with a cervix don't attend cervical screening. They are working to change that statistic.

They want to raise awareness of the importance of cervical screening and are pleased to share some resources below.

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is when abnormal cells in the lining of the cervix grow in an uncontrolled way and eventually form a growth (tumour). If not caught early cancer cells gradually grow into the surrounding tissues and may spread to other areas of the body.

To read the full article [click here](#)

H) Deaf people can now use a video app to contact 999



Previously, deaf people could only make aural calls for the police and ambulance or fire brigade, but a new BSL-friendly new service is being launched.

You will be able to download and use an app to communicate to a BSL interpreter who will then relay the information to emergency services. Ofcom, the communications regulator, says that telephone and broadband companies are required to offer the free, 24/7 video call service for BSL users.

Until now, deaf people could only use a text messaging service to contact 999, but this only worked if you had registered in advance. So, anyone who needed access but hadn't registered had to find an alternative way to get help, which could be catastrophic in the case of an emergency. Additionally, the text service operates only in English, meaning non-speakers might also struggle to communicate their situation and needs.

It's been the result of a long campaign by deaf organisations and individuals, including the national hearing loss charity, RNID, and Sign Health, the deaf health charity.

What is 999 BSL?

999 BSL is a service that connects you to British Sign Language Interpreters remotely through an app or a web-based platform, who then will relay the conversation with the call handler and emergency authorities. This service has been set up so that no deaf person will be excluded when they need to make an emergency call, therefore saving lives.

How to make a 999 BSL call?

There are two ways to reach the emergency services through 999 BSL:

- iOS and Android App (on a smartphone or tablet)
- Web-based (www.999bsl.co.uk)

There are three very simple steps, you will need to:

1. Open the app (download beforehand) or webpage
2. Press the red button 'Call 999 BSL now'
3. Connect to an interpreter

When to use the 999 BSL service?

The 999 BSL service is for emergency situations only, for an example:

- if someone is seriously injured
- life is at risk
- being in danger or harm
- a serious offence is in progress or has just been committed.

For less urgent situations, please use Police 101 (wherever possible) or NHS111 through SignVideo - not 999 BSL, unless there is an emergency.

For more information about the 999 BSL service, a list of FAQs, how to download the app, please visit the website www.999bsl.co.uk

Any questions, please email info@999bsl.co.uk

Carry on reading for COVID updates!

3.COVID NEWS

A) COVID infections are once again rising

The BBC has reported that COVID infections in the UK are up by more than 40%, the latest weekly Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures suggest.

Around 1.4m people in the UK had coronavirus in the week ending 11 June, up from around 990,000 the week before.

The fast-spreading subvariants of Omicron - called BA.4 and BA.5 - are behind some of the new infections, according to the ONS.

In total more than 179,000 people have died in the UK within 28 days of a positive Covid test, but the number of people with Covid-19 on their death certificates is over 196,000. A Covid vaccination programme has so far reached nine in 10 people aged 12 and over with a first dose.

It is still possible to get your first, second, third, and booster vaccines to protect yourself and others. For details of where you can get your vaccine, please visit this [dedicated webpage](#).

B) New guidance on wearing masks in our hospitals



In recent weeks, the NHS have relaxed mask wearing in non-clinical areas. Now, following new national guidance, the Clinical Advisory Group (CAG) has agreed a number of changes that will be introduced on Monday 13 June.

What is changing:

- Masks are no longer required in non-clinical areas, even when moving around
- Masks are no longer required in “green” or non-Covid clinical areas, except
- Areas where they care for immunocompromised patients (Haematology/ oncology, renal dialysis, kidney disease, critical care)
- Areas where they care for patients who have not been triaged (Emergency Departments, Paediatric Emergency Departments, same day emergency care units, Urgent Treatment Centres)

What is staying the same:

- Masks will continue to be available in all areas for everyone who needs or wants them. They encourage people to continue to use masks if they would like to and for those who choose not to, to be respectful of that decision.
- They will continue to test patients with a PCR on admission and Lateral Flow on days three and five if they remain in hospital.
- They encourage patients and visitors to make sensible decisions and always wear a mask if they aren't sure.

What does this mean for inpatients?

Inpatients in most green areas do not need to wear a mask. In areas where they care for patients with Covid or immunosuppressed patients, masks are still required providing they don't interfere with treatment, e.g. oxygen masks. In areas where patients are un-triaged, patients will be required to wear a mask, including in the Emergency Departments, Urgent Treatment Centres and Same Day Emergency Care Units.

What does this mean for outpatients?

People coming in for outpatient appointments and the people accompanying them don't need to wear a mask. Outpatients who are acutely unwell or have any symptoms of Covid should not come to hospital.

What does this mean for visitors?

[Visitors](#) in most green areas do not need to wear a mask. In areas where they care for immunosuppressed patients, visitors will be asked to wear a mask. Visitors should not come to the hospital if they are unwell themselves, particularly if they have Covid or other respiratory virus symptoms.

On some occasions, colleagues may ask visitors to wear a mask due to local issues, including immunosuppressed patients, new Covid infections or particular vulnerabilities in the area.

For more information [click here](#)

C) COVID-19 inquiry

A formal inquiry has been given the go ahead to examine the preparedness and response of the UK to the COVID pandemic.

Watch this video from the Chair of the inquiry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtzcrmSlnLY&feature=youtu.be>

D) Is it COVID-19? Or just hay fever?

If you suffer from hay fever, this means your symptoms may flare up. But how can you tell if it is hay fever or COVID-19? Check out a handy symptom comparison on the next page.

Hay fever

- Runny or blocked nose
- Sneezing and coughing
- Sore eyes
- Itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears
- Itchy, red, watering eyes
- Reduced sense of smell
- Headache
- Earache
- Feeling a bit tired



If you have any of these symptoms, it is likely to be **seasonal hay fever**. Symptoms may fluctuate throughout the day and may be milder in wet weather.

COVID-19

- High temperature or shivering (chills)
- New, continuous cough
- Loss or change to sense of smell or taste
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or exhausted
- An aching body
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Blocked or runny nose
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhoea
- Feeling sick or being sick



If you have these symptoms, it is more likely to be **COVID-19**.



Join Healthwatch

You can sign up to receive regular bulletins and information from Healthwatch.

Please email office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Share your experiences of health and social care services with us:
[Have Your Say](#)

Email office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Call 01273 234040

Follow us!

Facebook @healthwatchbrightonandhove

Twitter @HealthwatchBH

Instagram healthwatchbh

Website: www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk