

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 7)
- (3) [COVID news](#) (page 13)

(1) YOUR HEALTHWATCH

A) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove six-month Performance Report – October 2022

Our six-month performance report demonstrates what we have achieved between April 1st 2022 and September 30th 2022.



Headlines:

- Performed our first Enter and View visit since the pandemic to the Royal Sussex County Hospital. [Read our report.](#)
- Received 138 information line enquiries with the main area being making a complaint about any health or social care service or treatment, followed by enquiries about accessing dentists including NHS treatment availability. Read our [latest report](#) covering the period July to September.
- 9 [reports published](#) with 29 recommendations.
- 26 newsletters produced.
- 63 Board meetings attended.
- 480 decision-making meetings attended (excluding Board).
- Healthwatch Brighton and Hove led the organisation of a '[Healthwatch, NHS and local people in collaboration: Southeast Regional Conference](#)' on 28th June 2022, alongside other locals Healthwatch partners in East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Medway. 65 people attended.
- 9,600 website page views.

So much of this work was supported by our wonderful team of volunteers – thank you! To download the full six-monthly report [click here](#)

B) How Healthwatch will help the NHS this winter – and praise for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove

Community organisations rallied to help the NHS during the pandemic. With services facing another challenging winter, Louise Ansari, national director of Healthwatch England, explains how Healthwatch are planning to lend a hand again.



Louise gave an interview to 'HSJ' magazine. In that interview, she described the pressures facing the NHS across the whole system, including managing the backlog that resulted from the pandemic. She also spoke about the cost of living crisis and how that might significantly worsen access to and outcomes in health and social care, and exacerbate existing health inequalities.

Louise described the role of over 150 local Healthwatch and how we are in a strong position to help services address these challenges. Healthwatch will prioritise monitoring winter plan activity that is being developed and feeding back people's experiences to ensure it is delivering what people need. We will also provide advice to help people use the right service and get support whether it be a pharmacy, GP or other primary care services, and feed back on whether people are receiving communications in the right way to help them do this.

Crucially, Louise highlighted the need to ensure there is a balanced view of care. At a time of high staff burnout and poor morale in the NHS and social care workforce, it will be more important than ever to give a balanced view of people's experiences, including positive and negative feedback. Healthwatch will also work with the voluntary sector to find new ways to help people to stay well this winter.

Louise also described how Healthwatch can support safer hospital discharge pathways, and referenced the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove volunteer-led wellbeing check-in service for people discharged from the hospital. It was great to have our highly commended project recognised for its contribution by Louise – a genuine acknowledgement of the time and effort put in by both staff, volunteers and the hospital.

C) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove's new data privacy statement

We will always make sure that your personal data is protected and treated securely. Any information that you give will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information we collect

We collect personal data from people when they share with us their experiences of the health and social care services they access, or when they ask for information or advice. We also collect information about our own staff and people applying to work for us.

Security

We are strongly committed to data security and we take reasonable and appropriate steps to protect your personal data from unauthorised access, loss, misuse, alteration or corruption. We have put in place physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information you provide to us. Only authorised individuals will have access to your personal data.

Why we collect data

We are a local Healthwatch, a statutory organisation and one of our main statutory functions is to obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services, and make these views known to the public, those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services, and Healthwatch England. We sometimes work with other organisations, such as the local council or other third sector organisations (e.g. charities), to learn the views of specific groups of health and social care users.

How we share information with other organisations

We only share personal data with other organisations where it is lawful to do so, and in accordance with our Information Governance Policy. Information is shared to fulfil our remit which is to pass on your experiences of care to help improve them on your behalf and people like you. We will only disclose your personal data where we have your consent to do so, or where there is another very good reason to make the disclosure – for example, we may disclose information to the local authority where we think it is necessary to do so in order to protect a vulnerable person from abuse or harm. Any such disclosure will be made in accordance with the requirements of the current data protection legislation.

To read more [click here](#)

D) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Chairman's interview on Talk TV and radio

Geoffrey Bowden, Chair of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, was invited by Talk TV to discuss rumours circulating that the government is contemplating introducing parking charges for all patients and staff using NHS carparks in England.

This followed a 2019 manifesto pledge by the Conservatives to abolish charges for those in greatest need, including the disabled, frequent outpatient attenders, parents of sick children staying overnight and staff working night shifts.

Geoffrey described the impacts this would have both for staff and for families, friends and carers of patients. He stressed how the change could exacerbate health inequalities and affect those who are already struggling with the current cost of living more. We will update you should we learn more on this story.

E) A new Healthwatch survey



We want to hear from you about your experience of accessing GP appointments

Healthwatch is running a new survey and wants to hear about your views of GP services in Sussex. Please take this 5 minute survey, run by Healthwatch in Sussex. It asks your views about getting support from your GP, including what you think about remote (non face-to-face) appointments.

Some questions will ask you to think about the time since the Covid pandemic (from March 2020).

We ran a similar survey in 2020 and want to see if people's views have changed.

There is also an opportunity to enter a prize draw to win one of three £25 High-Street vouchers and volunteer for a follow-up phone call to discuss your views further.

[Click here to take our short survey](#)

If you have any questions about the survey please contact info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk.

All findings are treated in the strictest confidence. For details of our privacy policy (who are collecting the data) please [click here](#).
Thank you for taking part!

Who are Healthwatch in Sussex?

Healthwatch in Sussex (consisting of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, Healthwatch East Sussex and Healthwatch West Sussex) helps to improve health and social care services across the area by listening to people, and using this to influence people who fund services.

F) Getting social care right starts with good information and service – advice from Healthwatch England

Would you know where to turn for social care support? New polling finds over 40% of people don't. This confusion can result in people not getting the care they need. Read Healthwatch England's latest findings.



Adult social care services help people with the practical support they might need to live independently. Many people benefit from social care support in different ways, including older people, those living with a physical or learning disability, and those who need short-term help after a stay in hospital.

In England, local authorities are responsible for providing their communities with information and advice about local social care services. They also organise and support care for those unable to fund it themselves, and can organise care services for self-funding individuals who may require assistance to do so.

This care can change people's lives. But Healthwatch England's latest findings show that people don't always know where to turn for help. And when they do access services, they're not always fully supported.

Read the full article [here](#)

G) What are people's experiences of urgent and emergency care?



Healthwatch England's latest findings reveal what people have been telling them about their experience of urgent and emergency care services.

The pressure on urgent and emergency care services has been a big story recently, with significant press coverage of ambulance delays and long waits in accident and emergency departments (A&E). Locally, the A&E department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital underwent an unannounced inspection by the Care Quality Commission due to concerns raised about safety. After the visit, the department was downgraded from 'good' to 'requires improvement' – read more about this by clicking [here](#).

To understand how the pressures have affected patients, Healthwatch England looked back at the experiences of urgent and emergency care services people shared with them between December 2020 and August 2022.

More than 3,000 people gave them feedback, and the number of cases shared grew over time. Nearly half (49%) of this organic feedback was negative.

The key themes identified from our polling included:

- People feel confident that they will receive high-quality care from urgent and emergency services, but believe they will have to wait a long time to receive it.
- People's confidence in services changed throughout the pandemic.
- Those who were admitted to hospital following a visit to A&E were more likely to say their confidence in the service had increased.
- Older people have lower level of confidence in urgent and emergency services.

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

Carry on reading for health and social care updates!

(2) HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

A) A new website launched for maternity and neonatal

Sussex Local Maternity and Neonatal System have launched a brand new website. It's a one-stop-shop with everything you need to know before, during and after your pregnancy.

They have been bringing together all the people involved in providing and organising maternity and neonatal care in Sussex. Such as midwives, obstetricians, health visitors, service users, neonatal staff, managers, commissioners, public health, educators, perinatal mental health providers and GPs.



You can find lots of information about planning for pregnancy, labour and birth, emergency contacts and more.

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will shortly be running a project to explore maternity and related mental health issues. Look out for more on this in the coming months.

To access the website, please [click here](https://sussexlmns.org)

B) Adult Inpatient Survey 2021



CQC has published the findings of the Adult inpatient survey 2021. This is based on responses from 62,235 patients who were in hospital at some point during November 2021. The statistical release gives a good summary of the findings.

The results show some change in people's experience of inpatient care compared with the previous survey in 2020, and for the most part is a decline in

opinions. Areas with the largest increase in negative results are those relating to patients' fundamental needs, such as getting enough help to wash or keep clean and to eat meals, as well as being able to get help from staff when needed.

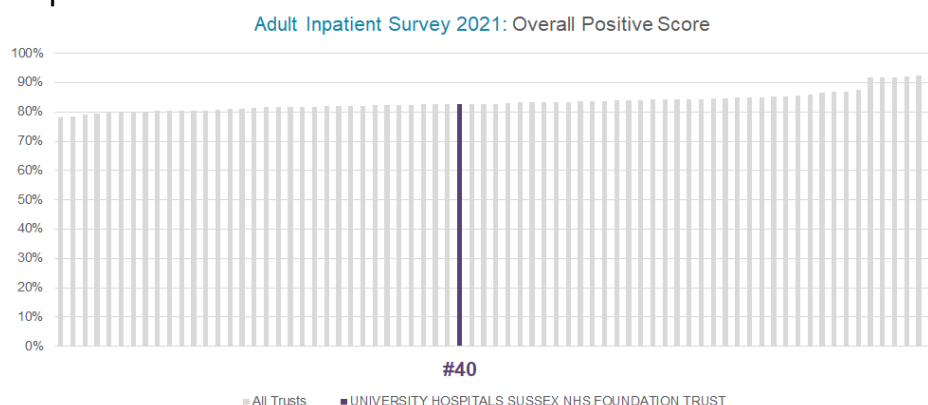
For questions relating to interactions with doctors and nurses, such as being included in conversations, receiving clear answers to questions, confidence and trust, most respondents reported a positive experience, but there has been an increase in those reporting negative experiences.

Hospital discharge remains a challenging part of people's experiences of care. Patients were not always involved in decisions about discharge and did not always know what would happen next with their care, with both having deteriorated compared with 2020.

Generally, responses are more negative than in the previous report – and the biggest increases in negative responses are mainly in relation to meeting fundamental needs (e.g. cleaning and feeding).

To read a ready made report for our local hospital trust [click here](#).

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove has already raised this survey with our local Trust, University Hospitals Sussex, who have agreed to discuss the findings in more detail at their next Patient Engagement and Experience Group which Healthwatch attends. The results for our Trust show it is in the middle of the pack for positivity scores. Interestingly, the scores where they were lowest are those that are already recognised, including help for patients with eating which was timely following our latest [Enter and View report](#) where we highlighted this as a concern, and there are plans already being taken forward to deliver improvements.



C) Reducing health inequalities: Preventative blood pressure checks throughout Sussex

Hundreds of people came forward to get their blood pressure checked after health and care partners across Sussex Health and Care got behind 'Know Your Numbers Week' in September.



Hypertension is the third biggest risk factor for premature death and disability after poor diet and smoking. It is a leading cause of heart attack and stroke and yet in Sussex only 64.6% of those who are estimated to have hypertension know that they have it and are actively being supported.

Numerous events took place last month and checks continue to be offered at GP practices, local pharmacies, community centres and other public venues, where you can drop in and chat with a healthcare professional.

You can find a map of which pharmacies are offering blood pressure checks, and a host of other useful information, by [clicking here](#)

D) Reducing the carbon footprint of the NHS in Sussex



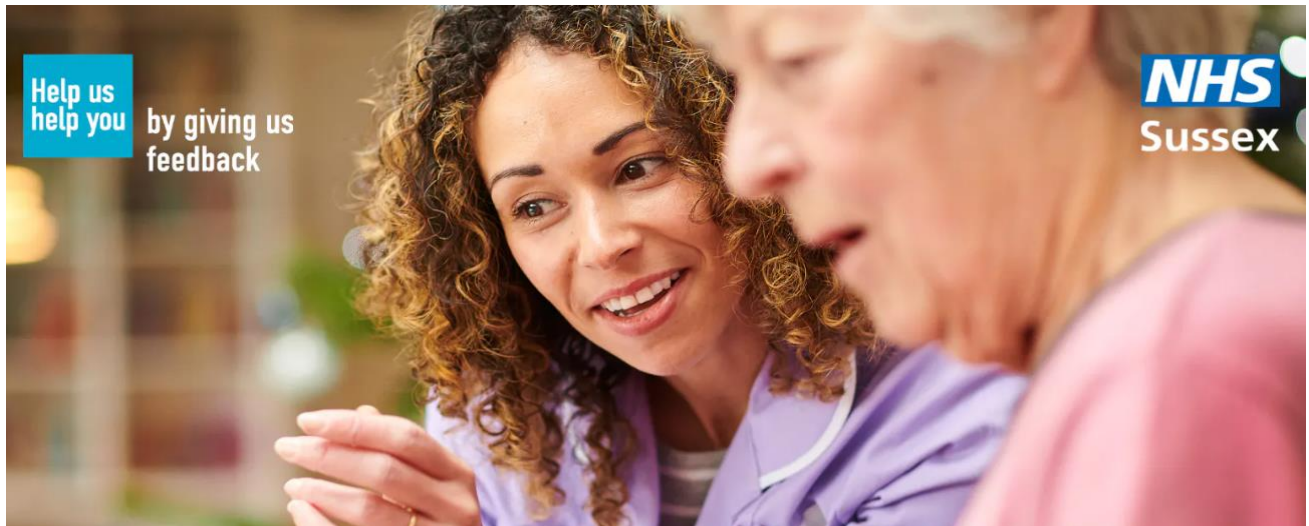
NHS organisations in Sussex have been working together to develop a plan that aims to reduce long-term climate change.

Within the public sector the NHS is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide, making up 4-5% of the UK's carbon footprint. In 2020, the NHS committed to reduce its carbon emissions and become Net Zero by 2040 for emissions within NHS control – and 2045 for indirect emissions.

NHS organisations in Sussex have been working towards these targets for some time and they are now pleased to announce the publication of part 1 of [Together to Zero: Our plan for a greener NHS in Sussex](#). This important document sets out their

vision and clear commitments to meet their Net Zero targets, while highlighting some of the great work that is already underway.

E) Better health and care for all across Sussex, today and in the future



The NHS want better health and care for all across Sussex, today and in the future. They want everyone to live longer, healthier, and fulfilling lives and have access to the best services and support when they need them. To do this they need both short- and long-term changes.

Right now, health and care services are under significant pressure, which they know will increase over the winter months, due to the impact of cold weather on people's health, as well as the impact that the cost of living crisis will have on some people's health and wellbeing.

Health and care organisations in Sussex have been working together to plan and prepare this winter, whilst also developing their 5 year plan to achieve better health and care for their people and communities.

The NHS can't focus on everything, so they need your help.

- 👍 How do you feel about the NHS?
- ❄️ What would help you and your loved ones stay well this winter?
- 👉 What should our ambitions and priorities be?
- 🏠 What's important to you where you live?

Let NHS Sussex know by completing their survey [here](#).

F) How your insight has led to changes across health and social care



Sussex Health and Care is the local system supporting you and the services you use across Sussex. It is made up of health and care organisations across Sussex. Their aim is to ensure better health and care for all now and in the future. Their ambition is for every person living in Sussex to have access to the best health and care from the moment they are born and throughout their lives.

The system wants to make sure that people know how their views, experiences and suggestions have helped make changes and shape local health and care services and a new committee – the Patient Experience Committee – receives and discusses reports on how the system has involved people and communities and the difference this has made.

Throughout summer 2022, a lot of work was carried out to reach and hear from people and communities. This feedback has helped to inform and shape work that is already taking place and future plans to improve health and care services.

You can read a summary of [what the system heard from the public and how they are responding](#).

A number of initiatives are being taken forward to address these issues which will happen over time, including:

1. You want it to be easier and quicker to get a GP appointment
2. You want it to be easier and quicker to access mental health and wellbeing services
3. You want better communications to support you when waiting for planned care
4. You want better support to help you use technology
5. You want better information to help you access and use the right services
6. You want it to be easier and quicker to get dental care

A number of initiatives are being taken forward to address these issues which will happen over time, including:

- **GPs:** more appointments will be offered between 8am to 8pm and at weekends; it will be possible for people with minor illnesses to be referred

for consultations on the same day at pharmacists; people will receive support to use digital technology.

- **Mental health:** more money will be invested; emotional services for children and young people will be expanded; work is taking place to reduce waiting times for neurodiversity assessments.
- **Waiting lists:** Community Diagnostic Centres have been set up so that people can have tests performed more locally; patients will receive better communications keeping them informed and offering advice. [My Planned Care](#) already provides information on waiting times and extra information.
- **Dental Care:** a temporary increase in appointments in dental practices that have capacity has been arranged, but the system is continuing to determine what more needs to be done.

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will work with the system to ensure that these developments include your voice and reflect your needs. We will also push for them to happen sooner rather than later. We have already been, or are currently actively, involved in gathering your experiences and sharing these on the development of [Community Diagnostic Centres](#); the need for [improved patient communications](#); the need for better dental provision and we are currently running a survey seeking your [views on accessing GP appointments](#).

To read more [click here](#)

G) Age UK launch two new services

Age UK has launched two fantastic new services, Let's Get Digital and Bereavement Navigator.



Let's Get Digital!

Age UK are supporting people aged 50+ in Brighton & Hove to get connected online via 1:1, in groups and they can even visit your home! They can provide people with a tablet with wifi free of charge to get people up and running!

Bereavement Navigator

Age UK have just launched their Bereavement Navigator Service looking to support people aged 50+ bereaved with practical tasks as well as emotionally. They can support with immediate practicalities such as registering the death or applying for funeral grants as well as linking people up long term with skills to

keep them independent as well as meeting people through peer support groups. They want to keep people independent and connected.

To read more, please [click here](#)

Carry on reading for COVID updates!

3.COVID NEWS

A) More than 100,000 people in Sussex protected thanks to autumn booster



More than 100,000 people have had their COVID-19 autumn booster within the weeks of the roll out going live, with others encouraged to come forward for their top-up as well as their flu jab.

In total, more than 4.2 million COVID-19 vaccines have been given in Sussex to protect local people.

Currently, those eligible for the [autumn booster vaccine](#) include care home residents; the severely immunosuppressed; people aged 50 and over; frontline health and care workers; pregnant women and carers.

As with previous COVID-19 vaccination programmes, those most at risk will be invited first to [book an appointment online](#) or by calling 119, as long as it has been three months since their last dose.

It is also not too late to get an earlier dose of the free COVID-19 vaccine if you need one. Everyone aged 5 and over can still get a 1st and 2nd dose of the vaccine.

For more information about getting your vaccine, please [click here](#).



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