

Annual Report

2020-21

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Annual Report 2020-21



Contents

About us	3
Message from our Chair	4
Highlights from our year	5
Responding to COVID-19	6
Non-Covid Activities	18
Stakeholder Feedback	24
Volunteers	26
Volunteer Chair & Directors	30
Staff Team	32
Finances	33
Statement from Chief Officer	34
Thank you	35
Next steps	36
Reports Published 2021	37
Statutory Statements	38

Glossary

+	A&E	Accident & Emergency Department
+	BHCC	Brighton & Hove County Council
+	BSUH	Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
+	CCG	Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group
+	CQC	Care Quality Commission
+	JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
+	PALS	Patient Advice & Liaison Service
+	PLACE	Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment
+	SHCP	Sussex Health and Care Partnership
+	IDT	Integrated Delivery Team
+	USH	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Brighton and Hove. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares can experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



"We would like to thank Healthwatch once again for their work on the experiences of end of life patients and their loved ones, and for their support of our efforts to provide the best possible care for them."

Anne Middleton

Associate Director for Quality, BSUH
September 2020

Message from our Chair

A year dominated by COVID-19

2020-21 has been dominated by COVID-19, and national restrictions stopped us from talking to people in person. But within weeks of lockdown, we resumed our activities remotely, talking to hundreds of people on the phone and through online surveys, finding out what patients and the public were experiencing.

We have taken on new challenges such as webinars on cancer, care homes and end of life. Our regular Healthwatch bulletins - widely credited - kept everyone up to date with easy-to-understand information and news. Young Healthwatch produced videos and apps for children and young people who have greatly struggled during the pandemic. Our representative work has reflected patient and public concerns on dentistry committees, and the future of mental health services.



"It is a tribute to our staff and volunteers that despite the pandemic we have reached out to, and supported, more people than ever before."

The crisis initiated cross-communal working in the city, ensuring that the most vulnerable were protected. Our work fed directly into the plans of health and social care services who themselves were having to change rapidly.



Fran McCabe
Independent Chair
Healthwatch
Brighton and Hove

We have worked more closely and collaboratively this year:

- With local Healthwatch teams, reporting key findings from the impact of the crisis and vaccine roll out.
- With our local NHS Trust to quickly set up a Healthwatch Hospital Discharge Wellbeing project, supporting patients and directing them to community support and services. Our volunteers played a crucial role helping it to achieve national recognition.
- With our CCG to set up the Sussex Vaccine Helpline answering hundreds of people's questions. Our volunteers helped free up valuable NHS staff time allowing them to focus on other important matters.

None of this could be done without our amazing and very experienced volunteers and I am extremely proud of them. They are the backbone to our organisation and our staff have brilliantly supported them. The Board has also stepped in too and taken on extra work.

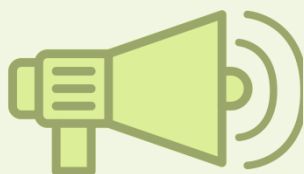
I would like to welcome two new Board members Alistair Hignell and Dr Khalid Ali who joined us this year and thank everyone else for the support of Healthwatch during this most difficult year.

Fran McCabe

Highlights from our year

Find out about how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

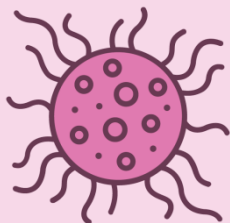
7,224 people

this year - online or via telephone - about their experiences of health and social care, and of the people we engaged with

33% had disabilities, 12% were LGBTQ+

and **13% were from ethnic minority groups.**

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported over **2,000 people** during the year, including

330 inquiries to our information line mainly about COVID-19 and accessing dental services.

Making a difference to care



32 reports

reviewed 72 different services, about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

From this, we made **187 recommendations, 48% of which led to service improvements** - and other recommendations are in progress.

Health and care that works for you



84 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work, contributing **8,127** hours.

Attended **612 decision-making meetings** and **56 Board Meetings**

We employ 6 staff

3 full time and 3 part-time.

£178,600 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21, the same as the previous year.



Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we have helped thousands of people by:

- Asking them about their experiences of accessing services throughout the coronavirus pandemic and sharing the findings with Commissioners. We captured hundreds of young people's views.
- Responding to concerns about a lack of information about cancer services and care homes during COVID-19 lockdown by delivering a series of webinars attended by local experts who answered their questions.
- Providing up-to-date advice on access to NHS dental services during COVID-19, and escalating people's concerns to NHS England and local city leaders.
- Providing bulletins on COVID-19 and vaccinations keeping people updated and aware of changes. Our volunteers answered hundreds of questions working on the Council's Vaccine Help and Advice line.
- Setting up and running a Hospital Discharge Wellbeing Service to check on the wellbeing of patients and raising discharge issues directly with our local Trust, and signposting people to support services.

COVID-19 Bulletins

When the coronavirus hit, we were one of the first community organisations to publish consolidated information and we quickly established ourselves as the 'go-to' organisation for accurate and up-to-date advice.

We attracted praise from Councillors and local MPs, the public, press, and senior city-leaders for the quality and breadth of our updates.



32 health, social care and COVID-19 bulletins with updates, advice, and signposting.

Over the past year we issued 77 updates. We also kept people up to date with the vaccine roll out, ensuring people were up to speed with the latest developments.

We used our bulletins to promote important messaging such as the NHS 'Open for Business' campaign to encourage people to come forward and seek medical help if they needed it.



31 additional ad hoc updates on services and support.



14 vaccine bulletins detailing the latest developments.

Key Points

- Senior city- leaders described our updates as "the go to place for information".
- Councillors shared them with their constituents.
- Local media and local care agencies shared them with their networks.
- In July, we were the first local organisation to analyse data and publish a report describing the impacts of COVID-19 on our city. Read our report "The impact of COVID-19 on Brighton and Hove: a statistical evaluation".

Information shared with the public

We produced a series of separate COVID guides for patients on topics such as:

1. How to access your GP or dentist.
2. How to obtain prescriptions.
3. Support for your physical and mental health.
4. A comprehensive guide to local health and social care services.
5. Regular updates on the COVID vaccine roll-out.

Click on the link below to view the report.



"Just to say THANKYOU for you regular and helpful bulletins. A good deal of work must go into them. Much appreciated."

Public Feedback

"I found your newsletter of immense benefit. I often refer to the information in your newsletter when working with family/friend carers. Once again, thanks for the amazing work you are doing."

Official, BHCC

"On behalf of the CCG I would like to extend my thanks to Healthwatch for the COVID-19 bulletins. I personally found the patient stories very inspiring."

Senior Manager
Brighton and Hove CCG



[Read the Impact Report](#)

Care Home Residents & their Carers

During the COVID-19 pandemic there have been considerable challenges across the 800 Sussex care homes, including how to keep families in touch with their relatives.

Families and friends of loved ones in care homes told us that:

- Access to residents varied by care home: some families were allowed to see their loved ones in the garden but others were denied access altogether;
- That this separation had negative impacts on the wellbeing of carers and residents;
- Communication from care homes varied: some kept regularly in touch with relatives whilst other carers heard nothing; and
- Guidance from government and the CCG lacked clarity and was sometimes not forthcoming.

One relative was interviewed on BBC Radio Sussex, and shared her moving account of being separated from her mother for 17 weeks. Her distress at being prevented from providing care and support to her mother was an experience that could be felt by many of us.



"Relatives have an important role in monitoring the care given to, the safeguarding of, and advocating for, the residents."

Webinars & Forums

As a result of the concerns we had heard, we held a series of events between July 2020 and March 2021 on behalf of informal carers (families and friends) of care home residents to provide a space for them to ask questions and gain answers from health and social care representatives. These events ensured that the voice of informal carers and care home residents were heard, and they raised important issues about care home service improvement which influenced decisions made by system leaders.

Our first online forums were held in July 2020 and we also talked to other carers via email and written letters. Building on what we had heard, in November 2020 we ran a Sussex-wide webinar "Staying Connected during the Coronavirus Crisis: families and friends of Care Home Residents" which was attended by more than 90 people.

"Care Homes really matter, and families and friends of residents have a very important role to play in the shared care of residents."

Dame Philippa Russell

On how the 2021 webinars highlight the important relationship between the care home and the residents' families.

This webinar included discussions on:

- Adopting 'Key Worker' status for informal carers, with 85% agreeing this should happen in a live poll on the evening.
- The potential role of increased COVID-19 testing in helping relatives keep in touch with loved ones.
- The urgent need to clarify options for visiting over the Christmas period.



"Your webinar could be a wonderful catalyst for many discussions and some new thinking."

An important role in monitoring, safeguarding and advocating

A further series of Sussex-based webinars (funded by the Sussex Partnership NHS Trust) took place in early 2021 and covered the following themes: 'COVID-19 Vaccination roll-out in Care Homes'; 'The Impact on relatives and carers from long term separation and restricted visiting in care homes'; and 'What could and should the system be doing to support relatives and carers?'

Impact

- Increased our reach to informal carers and their loved ones in care homes, a protected characteristics group who are often neglected in the social care conversation.
- Amplified their voices, giving them a place to represent themselves to health and social care representatives, and raise key issues about service improvement.
- Influenced system leaders, ensuring that questions raised by carers have been answered by those representatives.
- Brought to the attention of the media and the general public, the issues related to carers and their loved ones, during the pandemic period.
- Encouraged better relations between carers and care home staff, promoting good communication and involvement of carers in decisions made around visiting and care of their loved ones during the pandemic.
- Resulted in a report that included recommendations that pushed for greater clarity on guidance for families around visiting arrangements; to encourage providers to adopt best practice examples of staying connected with families during the pandemic and to explore the suggestion that relatives be awarded key worker status to facilitate continued visiting of their loved ones in care homes.
["Staying Connected" Webinar Report December 2020](#)
- Produced an open message to MPs and Councillors, co-written by Healthwatch in Sussex:
[Amplifying the voices of relatives with loved ones in Care Homes across Sussex](#)



"It gave me a lot to think about and will help shape some of the support I give to the Care Homes going forward."

Dr Mathew Thomas
GP on the impact of the Staying Connected webinar on his work.

Read the reports: [Staying Connected](#) and [Amplifying Voices](#)

Hospital Discharge

When lockdown put many of our projects on hold, we worked with the local council and hospital trust to task our volunteers to help support the local COVID-19 response. In April 2020, we launched the Hospital Discharge Wellbeing Service (HOPS) and our volunteers started calling those recently discharged from hospital to check on their wellbeing.

Our volunteers call adults referred to HOPS that are on a BSUH Care Pathway which means that they either need no further assistance, or are in need of some assistance which can be provided at home, in their normal place of residence. We call all adults - not just those with COVID-19 related conditions.

Our role is a signposting and support service. Recently discharged adults are called by our volunteers who check on their health and wellbeing, and raise any hospital discharge issues directly with BSUH. They can also signpost people to community, voluntary and private sector services that they may benefit from.



"In the 22 years I have worked for the NHS, I haven't seen an equivalent service, with the same offer."

Marina Richardson, BSUH Discharge Hub Administrator

Key Figures

This year our volunteers contacted 1,731 people: 504 (28%) had some issue or concern related to their hospital discharge, and 139 were referred back to the BSUH Discharge Hub Team for further support.

407 (24%) people were referred on for some form of additional community support:

- BHCC Community Hub
- Possibility People - Link Back scheme for those 55+
- Aging Well service,
- Together Co (befriending)
- Carers Hub
- GP Surgery
- NHS/BHCC Community Assessment Scheme
- Mental Health Support services

291 people were identified as having mental health needs with 33 being referred on for urgent support.

People welcome the HOPS calls with 92% considering them to be 'helpful' (65% 'extremely' or 'very' and a further 27% 'somewhat').



20 volunteers contacted 1,731 people to check on their health and wellbeing.



92% of people our volunteers spoke to considered the calls to be 'helpful'



"My Mother passed away at the RSCH recently and I thought it best to let you know. I know that she spoke very highly of your team and the people that called her. I personally would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to all involved."

Son of a patient called by our Hospital Discharge team

A friendly phone call to check how you're doing

The service was recognised nationally through a webinar hosted by the Care and Health Improvement Programme at the Local Government Association and the British Red Cross (February 2021). Other Integrated Care Systems across the country are also intending to establish a similar service:

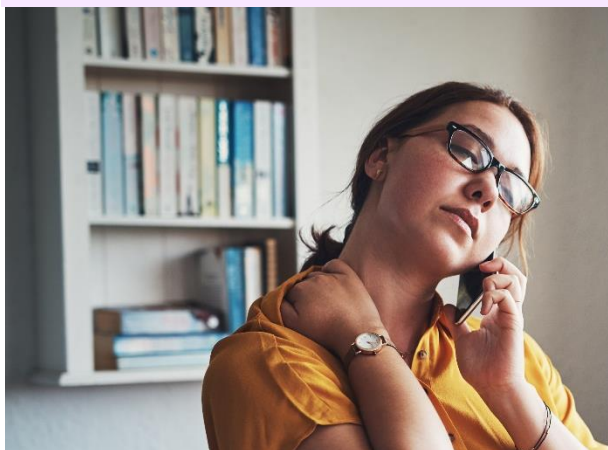


"A best practice example demonstrating how the voluntary care sector has been stepping up during the pandemic to relieve pressure across the health and care system and enabling people to recover safely in their homes after a hospital stay."

The service continues to help people who have been recently discharged from hospital. Given the high demand, we have implemented a new approach which involves texting some people recently discharged from hospital to ask if they would like a call from a Healthwatch volunteer.

Case Studies

- 'Sarah' left hospital unsure about her medication, the instructions for use, and whether she had been put on new pills. Our volunteer spoke to the hospital, re-confirmed the exact requirement and instructions for use and was able to talk this through with 'Sarah'.
- 'Mary' came out of hospital without the wheelchair they went in with (misaid on admission). They were now being asked to buy another wheelchair and they were distressed as this was a large expense and the chair had been lost through no fault of their own. Our volunteer was able to assist with the procurement of a new wheelchair without the requirement to pay again.
- 'Paul' left hospital without their partner being informed. They arrived home with medical patches to be applied to the body and an understanding of how they should be applied. However, when the partner read the instructions that came with the patches this suggested the information 'Paul' had been given in hospital was incorrect. Our volunteer was able to contact the person's local pharmacy and clarify instructions with their partner. By doing so, the anxiety felt by 'Paul' and his partner was ameliorated.



"There is real value in an independent person calling these people when they return home, to explore if the person needs any additional support. This service provides a safety net and ensures people don't slip through gaps in the system."

The Matron, IDT, BSUH

Next Steps

The project is jointly funded by BHCC and B&H CCG and given the success of this new service, it has received further funding from its initial 6 months through to March 31st 2022.


Read the report: [**Hospital Discharge Wellbeing Project \(Year to 2021\)**](#)

Accessing Health & Care Services

During the summer of 2020 it became clear that health and social care services were unlikely to resume to offer exclusively face-to-face appointments in the future. In response to this, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove led a pan-Sussex study into people's use and preferences towards accessing services. A total of 2,185 people responded and 104 of these were followed-up with a telephone call for further insight.

Issues Raised

- Overall, virtual appointments (phone, video or online) were well received by some people, groups and communities. For example, 71% were happy to have a GP appointment by phone, and an identical proportion were happy to get their prescriptions online.
- 37% of people chose not to make an appointment during the pandemic despite having a need to access health, social or emotional care, confirming the very substantial backlog of clinical and social care need that will need to be addressed post pandemic.
- People with disabilities and older people were generally the least happy to have virtual appointments.



"With less stress getting to the appointment, I had time to get the questions ready and felt much more prepared with what I wanted to get out of the appointment."

Woman (aged 40s)

"I was given a time-slot from 8 to 1, so I didn't know exactly when the doctor would call which made planning anything difficult and caused a fear of missing the call."

Woman (aged 50s)

"A better service than face-to-face appointments...same day appointment, received medication needed, no stress of leaving the house or of finding parking spot."

Woman (aged 30s)

Actions & Next Steps

As a result of the project, we produced a 'What it means for commissioners' document. This provides recommendations to offering a hybrid solution of face-to-face and remote appointments, and offers solutions to increase the uptake of digital solutions by reducing the proportion of people who are digitally excluded. We also produced a '**Digital Exclusion in Brighton and Hove: Briefing Report**', which is a foundation towards planned future work.

Read the report: [Digital Exclusion in B&H: Briefing Report](#)

Cancer Services

Together with Healthwatch East Sussex and Healthwatch West Sussex, under the name of "Healthwatch in Sussex", we responded to patient concerns and feedback about the lack of information about cancer services during the COVID-19 lockdown.

A webinar was coordinated between the three local Healthwatch and Sussex Health and Care Partnership in June 2020 attracting participants from the general public, cancer patients, family and friends of cancer patients and health and social care professionals.

Three cancer specialists from general practice and oncology presented information and responded to questions during the event as well as those unable to attend on the day.



"This was the first time I had attended a webinar and I was really pleased at how included I felt in the session. I am disabled and shielded and being able to take part easily was a bonus."

Webinar Attendee

Issues Raised

- Cancer screenings are currently limited.
- Tests such as endoscopies and colonoscopies are available, but with delays.
- Although GP access is mainly via remote consultations, patients with concerns should not delay making an appointment.
- Patients have not been lost in the system, but there are delays to treatment due to COVID-19.
- Patient fears around hospital visits are recognised but patients should keep appointments.
- Cancer specialists encourage the change towards self-help where possible and to avoid unnecessary appointments.
- Communication around cancer shielding was initially confusing but has now been lifted slightly and most appointments are online and by telephone.
- Risk of catching COVID-19 among cancer patients is not as likely as first predicted.
- New lockdown methods such as telephone and video consultations are here to stay.
- Support services are still available such as Macmillan.

Actions & Next Steps

A recording of the webinar was made available [on our website](#). This was accompanied by two outputs:

- the write-up of the event which included a full transcription, key issues and detailed all the questions raised by participants alongside responses from the speakers;
- information and signposting to organisations providing further advice and support to cancer patients.

Following the webinar, patient engagement has continued by keeping patients updated about services and support organisations through our regular and [special edition bulletins](#).

Healthwatch has represented patient views through meetings such as the Surrey and Sussex Cancer Alliance Board (SSCA) and the Patient and Public Engagement (PPE) Committee.

[Watch the webinar](#) or [Read the bulletins](#)

Dentistry Services

Concerns about accessing NHS dentists and treatment was the second biggest reason why people contacted us in 2020/21. We carried out two separate dentistry-related pieces of work to learn more about the impacts that COVID-19 had caused.

Our first involved a survey exploring people's experiences during the first national lockdown. Our second piece of work was a review of the information being provided to people, via dental practice websites and out of hours (OOH) phone messages.



"Accessing NHS dentistry is by far the hardest thing I have experienced during the pandemic." **Survey Respondent**



60% of people reported difficulties finding an NHS dental service.



Practice information was often unclear and lacking in detail.

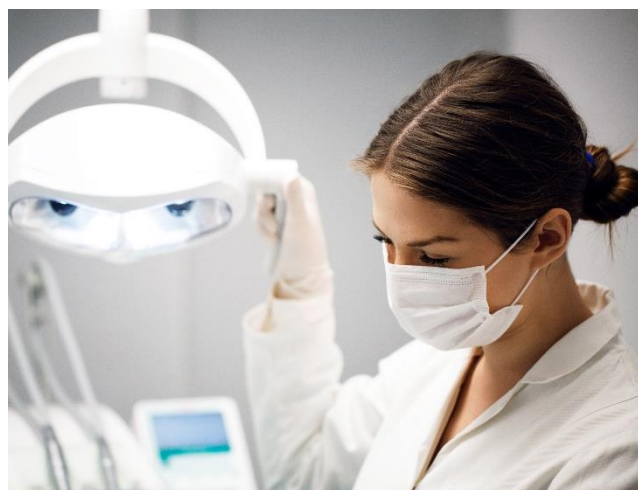
Key Findings

- 54 people contacted our helpline between January-March 2021 (compared to a total of 38 in the whole of 2020).
- A quarter of patients surveyed never heard back from the dental service after they had called them.
- Nealy half of patients surveyed could not find information about how COVID-19 had affected services.
- The availability of information offered by dental practices was poor: 14 had no information on urgent appointments or where patients should go in an emergency.
- 21 practices did not provide any advice on COVID-19 infection control procedures for patients visiting the practice.

Actions

We shared patient concerns with NHS Sussex Commissioners who helped us get answers and action from NHS England who commission dental services. We are an active member of the South East Local Dental Committee, and through our dedicated volunteer, we are able to put your questions directly to local dentists and NHS England.

We continue to engage with NHS England, and to inform patients about dentistry services during the pandemic, through our regular bulletins and special edition bulletins widely distributed via our mailing list and available on our website.



Patient feedback enabled us to contribute to the announcement by Healthwatch England of a national dental crisis in February 2021. Consolidated findings from our survey and the review were provided to the city Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, asking for pressure to be exerted on NHS Commissioners to improve access to dental services and clarify important issues for the public, which they agreed to do. We also asked local MPs to table questions to the Secretary of State for Health and other government ministers and Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion tabled a question to the Secretary of State for Health on Dental Services, having received a briefing from Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.

Read the Report: [Dentistry: the impact of COVID](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine - Experiences & Views

We ran a patient survey between February 16th until March 31st, the purpose of which was to explore people's experiences and views towards the vaccine for COVID-19. A total of 1,587 People responded.



76% White-British had the vaccine compared to 66% of all other ethnic groups.



20% of those yet to have the vaccine were unlikely to have the vaccine or had been offered and refused it.

Key findings

- 93% of those who had received at least one dose found the information about where and when to receive the vaccination as 'excellent', as did 85% of those reflecting on how to confirm attendance.
- Only 39% of people had received information on the time, date and location of when they would receive the second vaccination.
- For those not wanting to take up the vaccine, the main reasons given were a combination of safety concerns, possible side-effects, the strength of the evidence, and maintaining the right to choose whether to receive it.
- People from ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities were less likely to take up the offer of a vaccine compared to people who identified as White-British and people without disabilities.

"I've heard only amazing things about the vaccine rollout in Brighton, it sounds as if everyone is happy to have it and it's a happy atmosphere - it's a privilege and the speed of the appointments is fantastic. I feel privileged to have had the vaccine - thank you!"

Survey Respondent

Actions & Next Steps

We shared our findings with NHS commissioners, the City Leadership COVID Briefing, the Communications and Engagement Advisory Group for COVID-19 Immunisation Programme, and the Brighton & Hove Communications and Involvement Network meeting. We combined data from Brighton and Hove with East and West Sussex, totalling **5,900** responses. We are also following-up some people who expressed an interest to hear more about their experiences and views.

Read the report:

[People's experiences and views about Covid-19 vaccinations in B&H](#)

Young Healthwatch

Young Healthwatch is delivered by **YMCA Right Here**, to talk to young people about their experiences with health and wellbeing.

They find out what young people think these services are doing well, and also what needs improving. They host surveys, focus groups and listening labs, and produce youth-friendly reports.



"We are a group of YMCA Right Here volunteers who are passionate about mental health and wellbeing and want to make a difference in the life of young people in our community."



71 responses exploring the views of young people from BAME backgrounds around sexual health services



146 responses on accessing health and care services during the Coronavirus pandemic

Young Healthwatch Volunteers

This year YMCA Right Here were involved in a number of projects with Young Healthwatch.

- **Last summer**, they were involved in creating a survey consultation for young people living in the Sussex area around their experiences of online health and social care services. They were involved in creating survey questions and making sure they were accessible to young people. They also looked at the data collected, coming up with themes and youth recommendations to make online services more accessible to young people.
- **Last autumn**, they were involved in creating lots of media content, including videos, social media posts as well as stories around COVID-19. These included youth-friendly information about mask wearing and mask types, hand washing, the effect of COVID-19 on the environment, the COVID vaccine, a YouTube series on COVID myth busting, Sex and Relationships at the time of COVID and much more. All the content they created is available on the Brighton and Hove Healthwatch website as well as both Right Here and Healthwatch Instagram pages. They had a lot of engagement on Instagram and their followers said they found the information very useful.
- **Last winter**, they were involved in another digital research consultation exploring the barriers faced by young people when accessing/trying to access mental health online appointments, including phone and video call appointments. They participated in a focus group sharing views and barriers experienced, and came up with solutions to break these barriers and make the whole online experience more pleasant for young people. After the consultation, they worked closely with Right Here engagement coordinators to create a digital guide to help young people get ready for online mental health appointments; including tips and strategies to use weeks, days, and minutes before an appointment. They came up with the content, the lay out and style and are excited for the guide to be published and shared with lots of services and youth groups.

Next Steps

Young Healthwatch will assist and monitor the implementation of "[Foundations for our Future](#)", which is how the Sussex ICS and NHS plan to improve emotional health and wellbeing services for young people.

Watch a video about [Young Healthwatch](#)

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



5% on GP services



28% on Dentistry



38% on COVID-19



37% on Vaccines

Please note: % are greater than 100% as people asked us questions about more than one issue

Case Study: COVID Vaccine



From December 2020, we received over 120 queries from people about the COVID-19 vaccine. We responded to individual concerns working directly with our CCG to obtain advice which we shared. In response, we also created a dedicated webpage which we regularly updated so that people had clear, consistent and concise advice and information.

Our information was widely shared by others. We were able to support carers, visitors, or vulnerable people to get their vaccinations, and offered reassurance that people would be contacted, about vaccine safety and scams. We worked with a local TV station to have people's questions answered by experts.



"I wanted to say thank you for giving me such useful advice and going into such detail. I will certainly take on board everything you said and will act on it."



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.



www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk



01273 234 040



office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk



Non-COVID Activities

While supporting people through the coronavirus pandemic we have continued to provide general advice and gather their views on health and care services. We have shared people's experiences and feedback with NHS Commissioners, NHS England, city health leaders, and the Healthwatch network.

This year we have helped hundreds of people by:

- Asking them about their experiences of using the **non-emergency Patient Transport Service in Sussex**. Their feedback and ideas for improvement have been used by NHS Commissioners to redesign the service specification for the contract, which is due to be retendered this year. We have also fed patient's experiences back to the current service provider who we are now working closely with.
- Recording the experiences of people receiving **end of life care**, and escalating findings to our local NHS Trust. We found that end of life care was not always a dignified and well-arranged experience. Our recommendations have been accepted in full by the NHS with a pledge to improve the care pathway and correct the elements of personal insensitivity and absence of coordinated planning that we found.

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services

In autumn 2020, the CCGs asked Healthwatch in Sussex to collate patient feedback on the local non-emergency patient transport service (PTS), which is operated by South Central Ambulance Service.

This was our fourth review of the service which transports eligible patients to their hospital appointments and home again.

130 patients from across 30 different hospitals, provided their experiences over the last 12 months, but also their ideas for how the PTS could be improved. These ideas are being used by the CCG to develop the new contract specification.

The PTS contract was due to be renewed in 2022, but COVID has delayed this until 2023.



78.5% are 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service.



86% would recommend family and friends to apply for it.



84% were satisfied with the service during the first lockdown.

Key points

- We made 14 recommendations and produced four separate reports.

Other key findings:

- Satisfaction levels and recommendation ratings varied across Sussex, with Brighton & Hove residents being least satisfied.
- 59% had experienced delays, changes, or problems with their transport or journeys.
- 68% of all passengers reported experiencing delays in being picked up from hospital.

You want an improved service to:

- Always notify you of any changes or delays to your journeys (95%)
- Create a dedicated service for renal patients (83%)
- Send a text or call you when your vehicle is 30 minutes away (79%)
- Provide an online account facility to manage your bookings (63%)
- Deliver a mobile phone app so you can track your vehicle (61.5%)



The Sussex CCGs have had a close working relationship with Sussex Healthwatch for a number of years, and we value the engagement expertise they bring. This report and earlier reports is very much welcomed. It has already been used to inform the development of the new specification that will be used to secure the future service. **Statement from NHS Commissioners**

Actions & Next Steps

Patient's ideas for improving the service were shared with potential bidders for the new contract at a marketing event last year, and the CCGs have already used our findings to amend their draft service specification: they are clear that patient communications need to improve. They have also strengthened some draft service targets which relate to timeliness.

Going forward, we will issue a joint briefing on the future of PTS with NHS Commissioners to city-leaders and decision-makers (once COVID allows). Healthwatch will also review the revised draft service specification ensuring that patients' voices are reflected. We will also help to review bids. We are now working with SCAS to develop patient forums so that users of PTS can provide their feedback, and we will also help to develop answers to frequently asked questions about the service.

Read the report: [Healthwatch in Sussex PTS Report](#)

End of Life Care

Healthwatch talked to **15** patients at the Royal Sussex County Hospital who were sadly at the end of their lives. At such a difficult time, we greatly appreciated talking to them and their families. The lessons they identified for reforming and improving the service are already having an impact.

We spoke to people about their discharge from hospital and though it was a small sample of patients, many issues emerged. We were disappointed that end of life care was not a dignified and well-arranged experience for many and the sensitivity of individual care planning that we would expect was not always provided.

Our Council produces Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which present information on the health and wellbeing of people in Brighton and Hove and provides evidence across four stages: 'starting well', 'living well', 'ageing well' and 'dying well'. Our investigation provided further evidence on 'dying well'.



"End of Life should be a dignified process, not an event."

"Patients need to be touched and spoken to at the end of their life – this is often the last thing they will remember."

Participant Feedback

Our report was published in September 2020, gaining support for the findings from the Clinical Commissioning Group and resulting in a major update at the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust on their end of life care work. We also issued a press release.

The end of life report was supplemented by a 'One Year On' report in March 2021, illustrating some of our long-term impacts.

Some formal processes have also taken place to embed the report's findings into strategy and policy, providing confidence that quality end of life care and dying well remain high on statutory agencies agendas:

Case Study

At 10 am K arrived home to an empty home, except for the cat. "They just dumped me at home, all food had 'gone off' in the fridge".

K rang carers who arrived at 1.45pm. A food parcel arrived later in the day but until then K had no food. "I was exhausted, just struggling to keep alive".

K required a small care package to be reinstated and medications from the GP. The surgery never made contact. K was admitted to a hospice a short time later and sadly passed away.

Webinar

As a result of this report and encouraged by relatives of end of life patients who wanted to continue the conversation, Healthwatch led on an end of life webinar during Dying Well week.

Members of the public, patients and family and friends of patients and health and social care professionals attended. Breakout rooms gave the opportunity for participants to share their stories and to tell us about the most important things to them when planning their end of life:

Patients want to govern their own end of life journey;

- Patients want the right to choose;
- Patients want to be treated as individual people and with dignity and compassion;
- Patients want good quality of care.

Patients' & Family's experiences

Impact

1. September 2020: the Clinical Commissioning Group formally responded to our report accepting that all of our recommendations were appropriate and reasonable.
2. October 2020: We presented our report to the Patient Experience Panel and the Quality Assurance Board, BSUH NHS Trust. They agreed to improve the care pathway and ensure personal sensitivity, in line with the feedback we gathered from patients and families.
3. October 2020: our city's Health and Wellbeing Board Committee (HWB) received the report and proposed that it form part of their 'Dying Well' programme. They requested that the report was brought back to the Committee for monitoring in March 2021.
4. Healthwatch was invited to be a member of the End of Life Steering Group that monitors quality and performance. The Steering Group prepared a detailed action plan for the HWB March 2021 meeting. Healthwatch was involved in formulating the Trust's response.
5. Healthwatch presented our findings to the Gold Group of End of Life General Practitioners and to the research team at The Shore-C cancer research centre at Sussex University.
6. The report helped to inform 'Dying Well week' in May 2021.



"We are committed to providing the very best possible end of life care for our patients and to supporting their families and carers through their bereavement.

This report highlights the challenges we face in doing so and particularly the need for communities and health partners to work together to ensure that every person's wishes are respected and acted upon as they approach the end of their life.

We have reviewed the report and delivered an action plan based upon its conclusions and recommendations."

Anne Middleton

Associate Director for Quality, BSUH, September 2020

Actions & Next Steps

Building on our findings, we are now working with our local Trust and their LGBTQ network with a focus on specific end of life considerations for LGBTQ+ people. We hope to publish outcomes later this year.

Read the reports on Patients' and Family's Experiences of End of Life Care:
["A Good Send-Off" \(2020\)](#) and ["A Good Send-Off?" - One year on \(2021\)](#)

Healthwatch in Sussex

Healthwatch in Sussex is the collective name for the collaborative projects undertaken by the three local Healthwatch in Sussex: Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex.



In this last difficult year we have come together regularly, with the excellent leadership of elected representatives and the NHS, to forge a Sussex-wide response to the COVID challenge. This vital work will continue over the coming year.

Healthwatch in Sussex has escalated public and patient concerns around access to GP's and dentists, care homes and carers, hospital discharge, travellers and van dwellers, digital disadvantage, access to mental health and wellbeing services.

Healthwatch in Sussex Projects

- [Conversations about End of Life: What's important to you? \(Webinar\)](#)
- [Amplifying the voices of relatives with loved ones in Care Homes across Sussex](#)
- [‘Tell Us – Ask Us’ campaign to encourage and support members of the public to Tell us about their experience of accessing health and care services during the pandemic](#)
- [Healthwatch in Sussex reports on Patient Transport Services \(2020\)](#)
- [Accessing health and care services – findings during the Coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [Sussex cancer patients have their questions answered](#)



"We would like to thank Healthwatch in Sussex for this insight. The last year has been an unprecedented time for the NHS and it has been challenging in terms of the delivery of health and care services. It is encouraging to hear what has worked well but equally important to hear where we can do more to improve the patient experience."

Response from Sussex NHS Commissioners'
on Tell Us – Ask Us

Next Steps – the Integrated Care System

Next year Healthwatch in Sussex are focussing on the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS), a partnership of all health and social care in Sussex. This includes:

- Hospitals
- GP surgeries
- Community Health – anyone visiting you at home to help with health and support
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Adult and Child protection for vulnerable people and families
- Volunteers and community organisations [VCS]
- Healthwatch – the voice for patients and the public

Our aim is to support the ICS to put the patient and public voice at the centre of all they do: service quality, staff, money and resources = "No decision about us, without us"

Read more about the [Sussex Integrated Care System](#)

Sector Connector

The Sector Connector is a way for non-NHS organisations (the Sector) to engage and influence the Sussex Health and Care Partnership Mental Health Programme. The Sector Connector project has been developed over the last year by voluntary and community sector organisations across Sussex. Healthwatch in Sussex have agreed to coordinate, convene, and enable the project.

The Sector Connector recognises that mental health and wellbeing are the responsibility of the whole health and care system. A podcast explains the [benefits of integrated mental health care across Sussex](#).



"A quick email to thank you for bringing us together via the Sector Connector meeting this month and facilitating the meeting. Myself and the team are very pleased to be involved and are keen to contribute."

Local Charity

Sector Connector Meetings

- Our first meeting in July 2020 provided an introduction to the Mental Health Sector Connector in Sussex.
- Our second meeting in September 2020 outlined the 'Restoration and Recovery' of services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included updates from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, psychological support to health and social care staff, and follow-up for post COVID patients. Read the [Agenda & Minutes](#),
- Our third meeting in December 2020 focused on 'Digital and Remote Work in Mental Health' including presentations from Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and Thinking Well:
[Lester's Presentation: Accessing Health & Social Care Services](#)
[Beth's Presentation: The SPFT Experience Implementing Digital Solutions](#)
[Nathan's Presentation on Thinking Well – Adapting a Voluntary Sector MH Service](#)
- Our fourth meeting in June 2021 was a webinar to explore Mental Health Money in Sussex. This event explored Mental Health Money plans and how the voluntary and community sector and local people can be more involved in decision making. Watch the [Sector Connector Meeting](#)



"Thank you so much for sending this through and hosting the forum."

Community Engagement Officer for SCOPE

Next Steps

We are planning future Sector Connector forums on:

- Foundations for our Future - young people's emotional health and wellbeing
- Healthy eating - Eating disorders
- Community Mental Health Services - plans for the future
- Co-production and co-design - making it real
- Post COVID Mental Health Demand - the way ahead

Listen to the podcast:

[The Benefits of Integrated Mental Health Care across Sussex](#)

Stakeholder Feedback

"I have worked closely with the Healthwatch team and their volunteers who have been flexible in response to the needs of the new Hospital Discharge well-being service. The volunteers really care about the people they are supporting and always want to go the extra mile to ensure their needs are met.

This service has made a marked difference to people's experiences after leaving hospital, providing a safety net and a friendly voice at the end of the phone in what has been a particularly challenging year"

Jess Harper

Commissioning & Performance Manager
Health & Adult Social Care. BHCC

"Sussex Commissioners would like to thank Healthwatch Brighton and Hove for their continued work and commitment to champion the voice of patients, carers and the public over the last year.

We have worked closely with Healthwatch through our COVID-19 response, winter demand, and in particular the Sussex COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. They have specifically supported the effort to inform the public effectively as the vaccination programme has been rolled out and also provided valuable insight that has shaped our ongoing approach; Healthwatch volunteers have also supported our Vaccine Enquiries Team in responding to a large volume of phone and email queries.

We look forward to working alongside them as we continue to restore health and care services for people in Brighton and Hove."

Jane Lodge

Healthwatch NHS Relationship Manager
Sussex NHS Commissioners

"Healthwatch has been very busy over the past months - some excellent emails received with advice for patients and residents."

Clinical Lead
B&H CCG

"I've been wanting to say for a while, that I found your newsletter of immense benefit. I often refer to the information in your newsletter when working with family/friend carers. Once again, thanks for the amazing work you are doing."

BHCC Official

"Thank-you for all the support you have given to our patients who have been discharged from the Acute Trust. You have ensured they are kept safe at home, preventing readmission and sign posting to services for some of our vulnerable patients. The link that you provide between the acute and the patients; answering any concerns the patient may have, has been comforting and supportive. Thank-you for all the work you do, for the patients and the Hospital. "

Pamela Heafield

Transformational Discharge Lead
Nurse, BSUH/USH

"Thank you very much for organising and hosting the meeting yesterday. I found it really helpful, it has been a very long, lonely, painful time and it was really nice to have a chance to talk about it

Public Feedback

"Thank you to Healthwatch for the work you continue to do on behalf of the patients, carers, families and local communities we serve. Your scrutiny and support of our services, and the work we do together in partnership, is invaluable"

Senior Executive, SPFT



Volunteers

At Healthwatch Brighton and Hove we are supported by 84 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Have supported hundreds of patients recently discharged from hospital, checking on their wellbeing and signposting them to essential local support services.
- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out interviews over the telephone on remote health consultations.
- Have attended virtual meetings on behalf of Healthwatch ensuring that we were represented, and patient's voices were heard.
- Provided advice, information, and support to hundreds of patients who contacted our information line or who called the Council's vaccine helpline.
- Carried out website reviews for local dental services on the information they provide.
- Reviewed patient literature produced by our local NHS Trust.

Fran O'Neill - Support Volunteer

I started volunteering with Healthwatch in November 2020. In the process of retiring from the NHS on ill health grounds, and still employed and being paid by them. It did not feel right in the middle of a pandemic with very little going on generally. Healthwatch offered me the opportunity to use some of my skills doing wellbeing calls for people recently discharged from hospital; like a safety net to ensure that support and services are in place when they went home. It is genuinely very rewarding work and I enjoy it immensely.

I have also had the opportunity to work on the Sussex COVID Vaccination helpline and now pick up the answer phone messages that Healthwatch receives. Interesting and challenging in equal measures - in a good way! What is really good about the organisation is how well supported you are.

There are regular team meetings, catch-ups where people from various organisations in the community join us to share knowledge about what they do, regular communication from the project leaders with updates on what is going on in the community and someone is always at the end of an email or phone if you need help or advice. And most importantly, they are a really nice bunch.



Conor Sheehan - Hospital Discharge Volunteer



Since retiring from full-time work as a university academic, it has been really important to continue feeling involved with people on a community level. As a Healthwatch volunteer on the hospital discharge project this year has allowed me to do just that. Patients are sometimes just glad of the chance for a quick reassuring chat, and they often tell me that it means a lot to know that somebody is thinking about them and their recovery.

In certain instances, people can be struggling with anxiety or other mental health issues which have been exacerbated by COVID-19 concerns. It is important that I am able to refer them to appropriate agencies and support groups that can help. Knowing that you may have helped to make someone's life a little easier or better, even in a very small way, is a great feeling.

It is great to be able to give back a little to those who need a bit of help and it is certainly true that doing so has real rewards.

Hadi Kebbeh - Student placement volunteer

As final year student, a placement at Healthwatch Brighton provided me with a better understanding of health promotion and advocacy within the community. I had special interest in mental health and wellbeing and the organisation was so supportive in finding me suitable roles that were engaging within this field. Not only that, but I was able to venture into other areas as well.

I took part in the recruitment of participants from Black and Minority Ethnic for a COVID-19 vaccine hesitation research. The experience helped develop skills that can be used to confidently deliver a culturally inclusive community practice. Understanding and championing the needs of the population is key to Public Health and with the experience gained from Healthwatch, not only was I able to link that to theory within the classroom but I believe it will be beneficial within my future career.

My placement at Healthwatch provided a positive learning experience which was motivational and supported my academic development. But most of all, the openness with which I was accepted into the role has boosted my confidence.



Dr Khalid Ali - Volunteer Board Member



Joining the board of directors at Brighton and Hove Healthwatch team since November 2020 has been a rewarding experience. Addressing the health and social care challenges of Brighton and Hove citizens in consultation with an experienced team of volunteers was an eye opener. Priority issues such as COVID vaccination, quality of care in hospitals and care homes, virtual consultations and online booking challenges in primary care were few of the problems that were discussed in a transparent environment in our meetings.

The genuine passion and desire to influence a positive change that drives the group members is reflected in the quality of reports and recommendations made by the team. It is a great honour to be part of this dedicated and dynamic group.

Leah Ashley - Hospital Discharge Volunteer

I became involved with the Healthwatch Hospital Discharge Wellbeing Scheme during the lockdown last summer. I have been volunteering at BSUH for a number of years and saw this Healthwatch volunteer opportunity to phone patients to check on their wellbeing following discharge from our hospitals. My first thought was this is a great extension of care within our healthcare system. It didn't take long for me to feel natural about making these calls and I started to enjoy the process.

It is particularly rewarding when you feel you have been able to hear the patients' experience, recommendations and even complaints. I have learned a lot during the past year with Healthwatch. There are no doubts about some challenging situations but the whole team at Healthwatch is very supportive and I never once felt left alone to deal with a difficult situation.



It certainly feels like a big family working together to achieve the same goals, and it is very gratifying to know that our work has been helpful and useful to the community, as well as being recognised as a benchmark of the best practices within our social care system.

Alastair Hignell - Volunteer Board member



My grandmother was one of the first doctors ever employed by the NHS. My father and brother were also GPs. At least a dozen friends and family work in medicine. You could say the NHS is in my DNA, especially as I have two chronic conditions and a wheelchair and spent the best part of a week in Intensive Care in 2020.

I have personal experience of what the critics would call the "learned helplessness of the NHS" and I have personal experience of the heroic and selfless qualities highlighted in the COVID-19 pandemic.

I know which I prefer, and I want to do my bit to ensure that an organization that is still the envy of the world should be recognised for the right reasons. Change is all around. Change is inevitable and change can be painful.

I believe that bodies like Healthwatch can mitigate the pain, convince the die-hards and smooth the transition from learned helplessness to informed care.

Volunteers & Authorised Representatives

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove was supported by has **84** volunteers during this year.

As **Authorised Representatives**, they are able to review services, attend decision-making forums and speak up for patients and care service users.

They include Healthwatch board members, staff and volunteers.

Alan Boyd	Emily Page	Mazzie Sharp
Alastair Hignell	Fran O'Neill	Mena Limwatana
Alison Willmore	Francis McCabe	Michelle Kay
Amy Knowles	Geoffrey Bowden	Mike Holdgate
Amy Oliver	Hadijatou Kebbeh	Miriam Foord
Angelika Wydra	Hilary Martin	Naomi Schubert
Anya Waigh	Holly Earthey	Neil McIntosh
Barbara Harris	Howard Lewis	Neil Vinter
Barbara Myers	Ines Garcia	Nicholas Gorvett
Bob Deschene	Ismail Uddin-Callegari	Nick Goslett
Brigid Day	Jacqueline Goodchild	Olivia Mansell
Brydi Edwards	James Davies	Patricia Comley
Cecily Bryant	Jayne Cockburn	Paul Koczerzat
Chloe Mackney	John Mackeith	Peter Burton
Chris Jennings	Judith Batchelor	Peter Fuller
Christine Clark	Karen Barford	Rebecca West
Christine D'Cruz	Kat Pearce	Robin Guilleret
Cindy Willey	Laura Lavers	Roger Squier
Conor Sheehan	Leah Ashley	Ryan Prichard
Daisy Burden	Lester Coleman	Siobhan McHenry
David Liley	Lynne Shields	Sophie Reilly
Deborah Rogerson	Mae Cole-Whitlock	Sue Langer
Denise Millar	Maisie Richardson-Wilson	Sue Seymour
Dr Khalid Ali	Margaret Nealer	Sylvia New
Elaine Foster Page	Marianne Stone	Vanessa Greenaway
Elaine Crush	Martyn Yeats	Will Anjos
Elisabeth Miskarik	Matthew Bickerstaff	Zoe Morrice
Elizabeth Kemp	Maureen Smalldridge	



Feeling inspired? Get in touch on 01273 234 040 or

healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/volunteer

office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Volunteer Chair & Directors



Frances McCabe
Independent Chair

Chair since 2013 and former Chair of Age UK B&H, working for over 40 years in health and social care.



Geoffrey Bowden
Volunteer Director

Started a successful healthcare firm and is a former Councillor with significant experience of health & social care scrutiny.



Bob Deschene
Volunteer Director

15 years of experience in senior NHS Management in a variety of roles across East & West Sussex.



Neil McIntosh
Volunteer Director

Joined in 2014 after a 30-year public sector career at a senior level in the Ministry of Justice, Dept of Health and NHS.



Catherine Swann
Volunteer Director

Over 20 years' experience in national NHS and academia, a senior public health civil servant and chartered psychologist.



Sophie Reilly

Volunteer Director

Since 2013, working locally and nationally, in the voluntary and statutory sectors to improve health and social care services.



Christine D'Cruz

Volunteer Director

An international corporate background focused on service delivery with over 20 years volunteering in arts and hospices.



Karen Barford

Volunteer Director

Former Chair of the City's Health and Wellbeing Board. Operational and leadership roles in adult social care.



Howard Lewis

Volunteer Director

Over 20 years' experience of information provision, advocacy, patient engagement, and recently in medical regulation.



Alastair Hignell

Volunteer Director

An international corporate background focused on service delivery with over 20 years volunteering in arts and hospices.



Dr Khalid Ali

Volunteer Director

Senior lecturer in Geriatrics and Stroke Medicine in Brighton and Sussex Medical School. Published researcher.

Staff Team



David Liley

Chief Executive Officer

Over 40 years working in Health and Social Care. In 1980's set up NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline.



Dr Lester Coleman

Evidence & Insight Manager

Over 20 years' research experience, an academic social scientist, now working in charity project evaluation.



Michelle Kay

Project Coordinator

A project manager in academia and international development. Managed £130m government grant.



Alan Boyd

Project Coordinator

A background in mental & public health with 16-years' civil-service experience designing policy & running projects.



Will Anjos

Project Coordinator

An experienced business project manager, and trustee of local community engagement charity, Brighton Soup.



Rebecca West

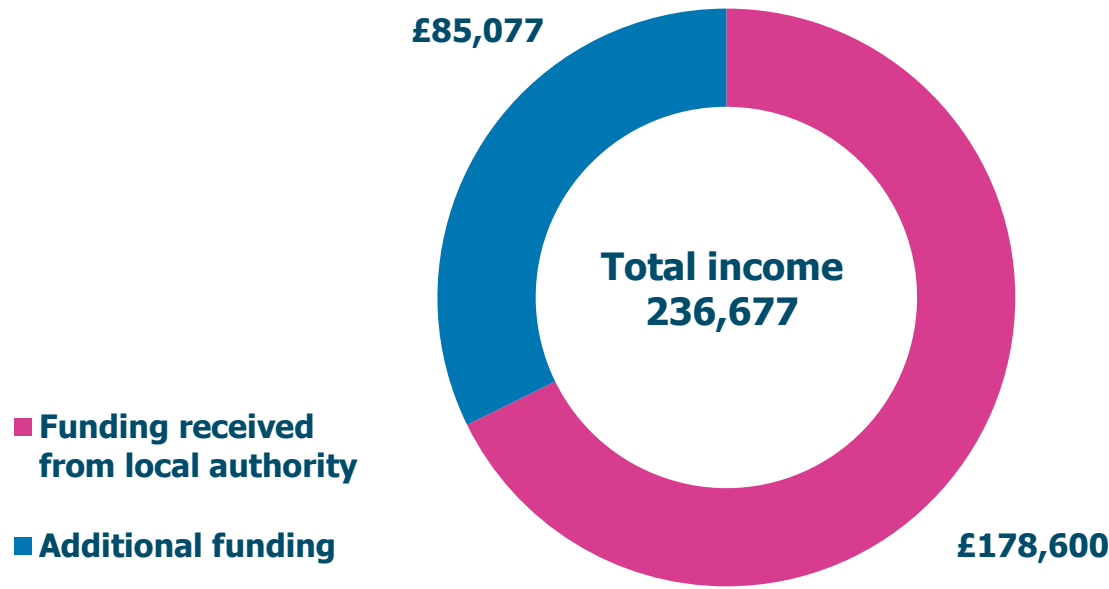
Project Officer

Started as a student volunteer in 2019. Now works across the team helping to support various projects

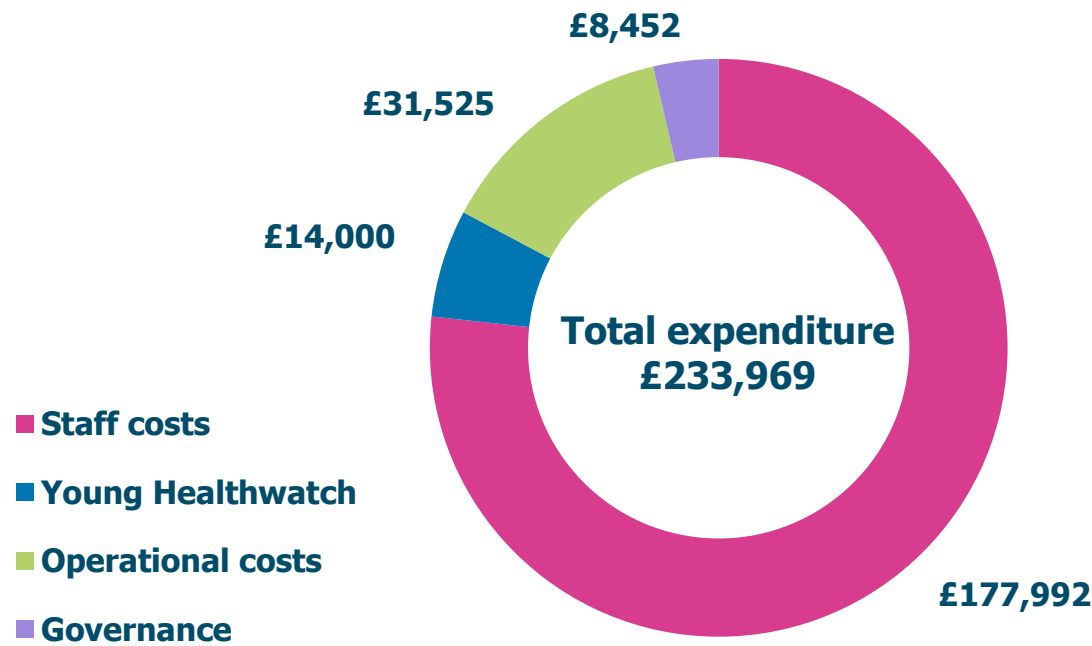
Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income



Expenditure



Message from Chief Executive

Healthwatch in Brighton is emerging from COVID-19 challenge as a strong, viable and sustainable voluntary organisation. Our volunteer group has grown substantially over the last year with 40-50 active volunteers. Our staff team remains stable and we have strengthened our links with the Universities, and Medical and Nursing Schools.

Our partnerships with other organisations and neighbouring local Healthwatch in East and West Sussex have also strengthened and whilst our reports and recommendations have been focused on the City of Brighton and Hove, many have had implications Sussex wide.

In response to COVID-19 Healthwatch has decided to allow staff to work from home and provided the resources required for this. We remain available to anyone who needs and reaches out to us.

This year we also put in place an independent support system to provide advice, guidance and counselling for all volunteers, Board members and staff. We made this move to help all our trusted people with the impact of COVID and the recovery process.

We lost not one day of activity over this whole year, our volunteers and staff have given the very best of public service. I cannot thank them enough. Alongside the NHS, social care, and public health, Healthwatch continue to help Brighton and Hove be a safe and healthy place to live and thrive.



"We lost not one day of activity over this whole year, our volunteers and staff have given the very best of public service. I cannot thank them enough. "

As a Community Interest Company (CIC) we make no personal profit and all income we generate is used to benefit local people. In the last year we have secured a further 3-year contract to provide a local Healthwatch service to people in Brighton and Hove, from 2022 to 2025. We are extremely honoured to continue to deliver vital work for the city and on behalf of all its residents.

If you want to make a difference in health and social care, if social justice and combatting health and care inequalities is important to you. Come and join us you will find a warm welcome.



David Liley
Chief Executive
Healthwatch Brighton and Hove

Thank you

This year marks the 73rd birthday of the NHS. The last year has been the most challenging year in NHS history. Those challenges have affected the health, social and voluntary sectors, and would have been made all but impossible to surmount without the help and support of countless individuals and organisations in our city and across Sussex.

Thank you:

- To members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- To all of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- To the voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work.
- To all NHS staff working across our local trusts, and to all care staff and staff working in allied services.
- To all those working in emergency and support services.
- To all those working at our local city council and CCGs who have delivered vital services, and listened and responded to our feedback
- To all our local and national partners, providers and commissioners working across health and social care.

Your tireless dedication saved countless lives, and we know that the selfless efforts of our volunteers have contributed to this.

So thank you to all – in front and behind the scenes – who have kept us safe over the last year. We cannot express our gratitude enough.



Next Steps

Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Supporting the NHS and City Council with COVID recovery
- Speaking out for vulnerable people
- Making sure decision makers keep their promises

As COVID national restrictions are relaxed we will continue to help people by:

- Continuing our hospital discharge project = 4,000 people supported so far by our phone line service
- Supporting the COVID Enquiry Vaccine Helpline = 14 Healthwatch volunteers support the NHS
- Promoting the universal vaccine = no one is safe until we are all safe

Last year and next year

- We have published reports, have more work in hand, and continue to check promises are being kept. We will chase promises made about End-of-Life Care, people in Care Homes, Patient Transport, Children and Young People's mental health, Dentists and Dental Care, Access to GP Surgeries and Cancer Care.
- Healthwatch will continue to monitor how many of our recommendations are implemented by the NHS, CCGs and City Council, and seek reasons why these have not (or cannot) be implemented.
- Our joint work goes from strength to strength. We will continue to work in partnership with official regulation bodies, Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission, General Medical Council.

Equality and diversity

- **Supporting those who are digitally disadvantaged:** COVID-19 has highlighted existing health inequalities notably how the elderly, those in poverty or who first language is not English, have been unable to access remote and virtual appointments as easily. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to health and social care services will be a major focus for the next year.
- **Ensuring Young People's views are heard.** Children and young people will inherit the NHS and social care system that we change in response to COVID-19. Young Healthwatch have gathered essential information about young people's attitudes to the COVID vaccine and use of sexual health services, and we will continue to collate more.
- **We will continue to strive to make the Healthwatch team, Board and volunteer group diverse and reflective of our city.** We have recruited to our Board of Directors young people and people from BAME communities.



"Tackling unfair health differences will need those in power to listen. To hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives, and then to act on what has been learned."

Reports Published 2020-21

This year, we issued 32 reports which described your experiences of health and social care. We also published reports on COVID-19 and the impact this has had on our city. You can access all of our reports below, or on our website.

1. [COVID-19 Enquiry Line: 8th February to 19th March \(March 2021\)](#)
2. [The role and impact of Healthwatch B&H: Our 3rd activity report Jul 20 to Feb 21 \(March 2021\)](#)
3. ["A Good Send-off?" Patients' and Family's Experiences of End of life Care: One year on \(March 21\)](#)
4. [Accessing dental services under COVID-19: Reviewing dental practice websites and out of hours telephone messages \(Mar 2021\).](#)
5. ['Ask Us/Tell Us' - People's Feedback to Healthwatch \(February 2021\).](#)
6. [Dental Services during COVID-19 \(January 2021\).](#)
7. [Digital exclusion in Brighton and Hove - A Briefing Report \(January 2021\).](#)
8. [Patient Transport Services in Sussex: What patients and passengers told us \(Jan 2021\).](#)
9. [Hospital Discharge Wellbeing Project \(HOPs\) April - December \(Dec 2020\)](#)
10. [Staying Connected Care Home Webinar Report \(Dec 2020\).](#)
11. [Accessing health and care services - Interviews with 104 respondents \(Nov 2020\)](#)
12. [Young People's Preferences Towards the Future of Health and Social Care Services in Sussex - Findings during the Coronavirus Pandemic \(Nov 2020\).](#)
13. [Accessing health and care services during the Coronavirus pandemic \(Oct 2020\)](#)
14. [Hospital Discharge Wellbeing Report \(Oct 2020\)](#)
15. [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove - 6-monthly performance report \(Oct 2020\)](#)
16. ["A Good Send-off?" Patients' and Family's Experiences of End of life Care \(Sept 2020\).](#)
17. [Preferences towards the future of health and social care services in Sussex: findings during the Coronavirus pandemic - Interim report \(Aug 2020\).](#)
18. [Patient Led Audits of the Care Environment: Scores achieved by local Trusts in 2019 \(July 2020\)](#)
19. [Environmental Audits of the BSUH Trust: April 2019 to March 2020 \(July 2020\).](#)
20. [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove activity report covering May to June 2020 \(July 2020\).](#)
21. [Outpatients' booking systems: an interim Healthwatch report \(July 2020\).](#)
22. [The impact of COVID-19 on Brighton and Hove: a statistical evaluation \(July 2020\).](#)
23. [Mental Health Sector Connector Forum 8 \(July 2020\)](#)
24. [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove - Annual Report 2020 \(June 2020\).](#)
25. [Cancer Webinar: Key Themes & Q&A - 11th June 2020 \(June 2020\).](#)
26. [Patient feedback systems for health & social care services: a briefing paper \(June 2020\)](#)
27. [Healthwatch Brighton & Hove - Enter & View Policy \(May 2020\)](#)
28. [Healthwatch B&H during the coronavirus pandemic: activity report Jan to April 2020](#)
29. [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove - Stakeholder Report 2020 \(May 2020\)](#)
30. [Equality Impact Assessment 2020 \(May 2020\)](#)
31. [COVID-19: Positive comments and feedback received by Healthwatch \(April 2020\)](#)
32. [The experiences of young people from BAME backgrounds on sexual health services \(April 2020\)](#)



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove CIC.

YMCA DownsLink Group (Young Healthwatch Brighton and Hove)

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove 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 **11** members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met **8** times and made decisions on matters such as staff support and staff terms and conditions, priorities for our work plan and activities.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We have a regular bulletin that is circulated to over 1,400 people in the City of Brighton and Hove, Board meetings are held in public and we have regular public webinars to hear the views of local people, on a range of health and care issues.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example:

- Creating a Hospital Discharge friendly phone services that has received over 4,000 referrals from the local hospital. With 60% of people being actively helped. We provide regular quarterly reports to the NHS locally and City Council decision makers.
- Young Healthwatch gathered the views of young BAME people on access to COVID services, mental and emotional health support and sexual health services.
- Helping travellers and Van Dwellers access clear water and adequate sanitation during the most restricted times in COVID-19 lockdown.
- We have held webinars to support people with Cancer concerns, end of life care questions, and for Care Home residents and their families.
- We have raised concerns over access to dental care with NHS England, local decision makers and assisted our local MP's in raising the issue in Parliament and with Government Ministers.

We will ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it widely on the internet, our web site and distribute it through the local Community and Voluntary sector support network. Our annual report is also formally presented to the City Council at the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting.

Responses to recommendations and requests

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove along with the other Healthwatch in Sussex, escalated concerns about public access to dental health services to Healthwatch England, and we understand this has contributed to their national reports and actions to improve dental health care.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is represented on the Brighton and Hove Health and Wellbeing Board by David Liley, Chief Officer, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by:

- Presenting reports and raising issues on End of Life care, support to Care Home Residents and their families, access to GP and dental services.
- Being part of the COVID response in the city including sitting on the COVID-19 Engagement Board and regular City Leadership COVID-19 briefings.
- Assisting the Adult Safeguarding leadership team in the city.

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