

# Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Liverpool  
Annual Report 2021–22



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# Message from our Chair

**Once again we start our annual report by acknowledging the exceptional nature of the year that has passed. We began the year in the thick of the vaccine rollout and we recognise the huge contribution of our National Health Service and its staff in delivering this at speed and scale. But behind that success, the emerging crisis of waiting lists and waiting times alongside challenges in social care has meant that for Healthwatch Liverpool this has been another very busy year supporting our communities and speaking on their behalf.**

We see the impact of the last two years on different services in different ways – and through our focused research and engagement projects have been able to shine a spotlight on just some of this in more detail.

The long-term impact of the pandemic on health and social care in Liverpool is now well and truly in focus, and we know that it has both magnified health inequalities and narrowed access to services. That environment sets us our challenge for the year to come.

Our staff team of course have always risen to challenges – embracing new technologies and new ways of working to ensure our services remain fully accessible, and as soon as it was safe to do so we began returning to face-to-face work at engagement and listening events.

Alongside this, our day-to-day work providing information and advice, and supporting people in Liverpool with our complaints advocacy services have continued.

Faith in our ability to deliver quality services has also brought new work over the last year including our Accessible Information Standards project work with Healthwatch England.

Our Community Engagement Board has continued to meet throughout the year and we are indebted to them for keeping us up-to-date with issues and providing feedback on our plans and priorities.



With every year that passes, our vision and our mission which you will find over the page, becomes more important and relevant as we support our communities and speak on their behalf.

Please do read on and find out more about the work we do.

Lynn Collins  
**Healthwatch Liverpool Chair**



**“The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities.”**

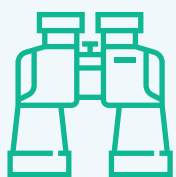
**Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England**



# About us

## Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Liverpool is your local health and social care champion. From Fazakerley to Speke and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



### Our vision

We want a health and social care system that works for everyone



### Our mission

#### To the Community

- To provide all communities with accurate, up-to-date information about local health and social care services, and activities to improve their wellbeing, through our information service and the Live Well directory;
- To provide guidance and support to people making a complaint through our NHS Complaints Advocacy service;
- To help make people aware of their rights when using health and social care services;
- The opportunity for all communities to give honest feedback about local services, whether good or bad, to help shape change and improve standards;
- Empowering people to be involved in improving local health and care services

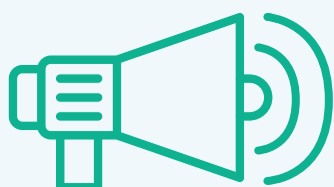
#### To providers and commissioners

- To provide honest feedback from people who have experiences of health and social care services to help identify what is working well and what needs to be improved;
- To help identify best practice as well as gaps in service provision based on feedback;
- To help ensure local people are properly consulted in relation to all aspects of commissioning, particularly less heard from groups and those who face health inequalities;

# Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

## Reaching out



**756 people**

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care. We also had hundreds of face-to-face conversations as we restarted in-person engagement events part way through the year.

People engaged with our information, advice and signposting **228,108 times** this year including through our enquiries service, events and information directory.

## Making a difference to care



We published **6 reports**

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

Our most popular report was our

**Accessible Information Standard Project 2021 – Local Report**

which looks at the experiences of people from minority ethnic communities who live in Liverpool and find it challenging to communicate with the NHS because they don't speak English well or at all.

## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have **10** outstanding volunteers, who gave up **187 days** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority, including funding for NHS Complaints Advocacy. In 2021–22 we received:

**£553,825**

which is **equal to** the previous year.

We also employ

**20 staff (16.9 FTE)**

across our Healthwatch functions and NHS Complaints Advocacy service who help us carry out this work (down from 21 staff (18.3 FTE) in 2020–21).

## How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are some of the key projects and activities we carried out from April 2021 to March 2022.

### Spring

We facilitated a care home Covid impact focus group and fed back on a previous focus group on this subject.

We launched an engagement project to gather the views of people aged 16–25, about covid vaccination.

Our information service provided local people with clarity on Covid Vaccines, including how to access vaccines and vaccine records.



### Summer

We attended student welcome and fresher events across Liverpool's 4 universities, helping local students to access health and wellbeing services in the city.

We went on a Summer tour of family events held in parks around Liverpool speaking to children, young people and their families about the health and care issues that matter most to them.

We heard from local people with health-based mask exemptions, about barriers accessing health care; and we supported these individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities when accessing healthcare.



### Autumn

On World Mental Health day we held a Mental Health Marketplace event in Liverpool ONE, where we heard from local people about their experiences and signposted to local services.

We held our first in-person listening event, since the pandemic began, at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and spoke to 75 people about their experiences.

We heard about barriers to pharmacy services for people who require interpreters, and raised this, resulting in clarity and interpreter booking instructions being provided to Liverpool pharmacies.



### Winter

We completed our project looking at how accessible the information about health care and treatment is for people whose main spoken language is not English.

We provided information and signposting to 915 people during Winter, including on topics of social care, housing and homelessness. GPs; and vaccinations.

We supported the Be Prostate Cancer Aware Health Talk Event aimed at black men, their families and friends; and provided information and advice; as well as hearing the experiences of local people.



# Listening to your experiences

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



## Improving Accessible Information Standards in local NHS services

Thanks to people sharing their experience of difficulties accessing healthcare due to a language barrier, we were able to influence service improvements both locally and nationally.

Working with Healthwatch England along with other local Healthwatch we carried out a number of focus groups and interviews to gather evidence about people's experiences of accessing healthcare with a language barrier.



**We interviewed 22 members of the public and 5 members of NHS staff between October and November 2021**

Our evidence, along with evidence gathered as part of the national project, found that **people who experience language barriers struggle at all points of their healthcare journey.**

People we spoke to told us that when not provided with support, appointments had to be cancelled or rescheduled. Some patients had to rely on their own limited English, use other means to communicate such as hand gestures, or record consultations discussing their medical issues either via a device or on paper to be later translated by somebody else. Staff also told us about constraints around supporting patients with a language barrier.

Patients and staff suggested various changes that could be made to improve support such as automatic alert systems to flag people's language needs, easier access to translated resources, and flexible support based on individual needs.

Following this engagement, we set out several recommendations:

- Clearer guidance throughout the healthcare system making sure there is consistency when offering patients language support including the option to record and enact personal preferences for support where possible.
- NHS staff should be routinely trained to be aware of cultural sensitivities and the importance of addressing language support needs in healthcare consultations.
- More options for general healthcare advice and information to be translated into community languages in primary and secondary care settings.

### What difference will this make

Our recommendations will see the needs of local people with a language barrier, heard by services; to bridge the gap in communicating experiences to find improvement. This will lead to improved accessibility to services, which meet people's needs.

There was a change to the local NHS interpretation service during our research which may address some of the barriers we identified. We are planning to revisit this subject to see what has changed, and what further work needs to be done.

**You can read our report on our website: <https://healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/ais-local-report>**

**"Healthwatch England was pleased to give Healthwatch Liverpool a platform to go and speak to people from different backgrounds and to help raise awareness of Healthwatch Liverpool in those communities. The insight gathered – both from individuals and health and care professionals – was invaluable in shaping our findings and recommendations on the subject of accessible information."**

**Olly Grice, Collaboration and Regional Manager, Healthwatch England**

## Hearing Young People's Voices On Covid Vaccinations

With the eligibility for the Covid-19 vaccine set to be opened up to younger people in Summer 2021, we wanted to know what questions and concerns were prevalent among young people aged 16–25 in Liverpool so that we could share their views and assist with the vaccine rollout locally.

We were interested in whether young people would take up the vaccine when offered within their respective age group and why they did or didn't want to take up the vaccine. We also sought to understand what sort of information sources or people were influencing their decisions, whether any practical/perceived obstacles would influence their decisions and whether someone's background/life circumstance might influence their decision to take up the vaccine and why.

We heard from 195 young adults ages 16–25 through online surveys and visits throughout June to September. We found that many young adults who participated were very positive about the COVID-19 vaccine. There were some concerns about getting the vaccine including: side-effects and long-term effects, specifically on fertility and speed of development, and access to safe transport to vaccination centres.

The young adults who would take up the vaccine, mainly wanted to so that they could return to normal life and be able to meet family and friends whilst keeping them protected. The majority said that their views of the vaccine were influenced by their families, with health and social care staff being the second most popular influence.

From this project we made a number of recommendations which we shared with various stakeholders and organisations involved in the vaccine roll out:

- Myth busting information should be developed to directly address issues surrounding future fertility.
- Vaccine promotional materials should include elements of 'getting back to a normal life' as part of their key messages.
- Information should be targeted at both young adults and their parents/carers.
- Designated, coproduced literature, marketing materials and social stories for young people with learning disabilities should be cascaded to all Primary Care Networks and education settings.
- Vaccination teams need to support children and young people with additional needs and their families to feel reassured and able to make an informed decision about the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Finally, we recommended that vaccine promotional materials and centres should advertise and ensure that young adults should feel safe at vaccination centres.



## Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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



### Language Equality in Liverpool Pharmacies

We received an enquiry and service feedback, about it being difficult for people who don't speak English to communicate with pharmacy staff about medications because of interpreter services not being used. Our enquirer asked what provision is in place for interpreter services in pharmacies, to tackle this inequality. Following discussion with Liverpool CCG and Community Pharmacy Liverpool (a network of local pharmacy providers), we learned that NHS England fund telephone interpreter provision to allow pharmacy staff to communicate with people about medication issues. The network committed to sharing a reminder with all Liverpool pharmacies, of this important arrangement. Pharmacies now have clarity on this issue, which can create positive change for people who do not have English as a first language; helping people understand and check their medication, resolving issues more promptly and improving access, equality and safety.

### Covid Continues To Impact Liverpool Care Homes

In 2020–21 we consulted with Liverpool care homes about the impact of Covid-19. This year we decided to run a follow-up survey for friends and relatives, to give them a chance to share their experience with an independent service; and to allow us to see if things with care homes had changed much, especially around visiting and communication. These were key concerns families had shared with us previously.



We ran our online survey from July to September on our website, and promoted it through social media and our newsletter. We heard a range of experiences from people who had mixed opinions about visiting and communication. People also told us they felt the pandemic had a negative impact on their loved ones' physical and mental health, as well as concerns about the quality of care their loved one received during the pandemic.

We sent our report to Liverpool City Council as we continue to champion putting local people at the heart of social care planning, and ensured they were aware of continuing issues. In addition, this work will impact and inform our 2022–23 Enter & Views visits. We will specifically be asking care homes, residents and family members about visiting arrangements, communication, and how they've ensured residents can access activities to keep up their mental health and wellbeing. We look forward to recommencing Enter and View visits in 2022 and making recommendations for positive changes in Liverpool care homes.

## Mental Health Conversations

### Mental Health and the Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has had many impacts on all of us. Mental health was amongst the biggest issues that people raised with us over the previous year, so in 2021 we undertook to further explore the experiences of local people. We launched our 'Mental Health and the impact of Covid-19' survey in 2021. So far, many people have reported a negative impact on their mental health, although there were some who said their mental health had improved during the pandemic. The feedback we received showed that certain groups had been particularly impacted, especially people who said they had a disability. While this work is still in progress, its findings will inform mental health service providers, commissioners and decision-makers of the experiences and needs of people living in Liverpool, leading to further informed decision making that puts local people at the heart of health and social care.



### Our Mental Health Marketplace Event

On Monday 11th October 2021, we hosted a Mental Health Marketplace event in the Liverpool One shopping complex to coincide with World Mental Health Day.

The event provided an opportunity to bring organisations together in one place, to network, to promote their support services to the public and to talk to people about how the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on their mental health and wellbeing. We also used the event as a means of promoting our mental health project and the services that we provide.

16 organisations attended the event from a wide range of local mental health & wellbeing services as well as services who provide specialist support such as benefits advice. We also had a few wellbeing activities running throughout the day, including yoga, dance and singing which members of the public could participate in.

Stall holders spoke to more than 500 people about mental health and wellbeing services, improving awareness of local services, further opening the mental health conversation; and empowering local people to know where to turn when they need mental health and wellbeing support, leading to improved wellbeing outcomes.

**"It allowed us as an organisation to get back out into the community and discuss what services we have to offer. I think it also helped raise awareness of what services are available across the city for people to access to get help if they feel they need it. It was also really lovely to do some networking with other organisations and get new/updated contacts for services that we were either not aware of, and those that have expanded."**

**Young Persons Advisory Service (YPAS)**



# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding a new GP, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Identifying gaps in health and social care provision



## Boosted Outcomes For Covid Booster

Our information and advice service was contacted by an enquirer, looking for advice about booster vaccination for their loved one, who was 99 years old and housebound. They explained that their relative was still waiting for their Covid booster, despite the booster programme already moving onto its next stage of age group rollout, and this being shared widely in the media. They were now growing increasingly distressed that they had been overlooked. Our enquirer explained that while the GP practice had been helpful in trying to get the loved one on the home visit booster list, they still had no resolution. The loved one had even asked that it be pointed out that they were a veteran, in the hopes they would be shown some priority, and our enquirer explained how heart breaking it was that their loved one felt like they didn't matter.



We liaised with the GP practice and Liverpool CCG to highlight this issue and the need for resolution. This resulted in confirmation that their home vaccination would be treated as urgent; and the practice contacted the enquirer themselves, to give reassurance. Our enquirer kindly updated us that their loved one then promptly received their vaccine. Not only did this mean the client was able to access vaccination, impacting Covid risk reduction and equal access to healthcare; but this also benefitted the loved one's mental wellbeing at a very stressful time. They have since celebrated their centenary.



"Hurrah! [Family member] had their vaccination today. Thank you so much. They had become so acutely anxious. They sounded so relieved and happy."

**Healthwatch Liverpool Enquirer**



## Dental Access Crisis

Access to NHS dentistry in Liverpool, and beyond, has seen a crisis this year, further highlighting health inequalities in the city. This year, 1,921 people contacted us about accessing dentistry, a 354% increase compared to the year before. In the majority of cases, we were unable to identify an NHS dentist for these enquirers, despite us continuously researching and reviewing local dental practices' new patient acceptance. For most of this year, there have been no NHS dentists taking on new patients in Liverpool. We're not the only area facing this issue. Between October 2021 and March 2022, the Healthwatch network heard from thousands of people about their experiences of dental care, many of whom were struggling to access timely care. Many people in dental need, have had to repeatedly access the emergency dental service, due to severity. We've heard from many people, that they have had to consider private care. This further extends health inequalities, and with the cost of living crisis taking effect, many people just cannot afford private dental care.



"I have tried many practices who have said that I may be treated if I pay privately, but I cannot afford this as I am on Universal Credit."

**Healthwatch Liverpool Dental Enquirer**



As a further result of us hearing about and raising the difficulties in accessing NHS dentistry, specifically relating to cases of vulnerable women with complex needs having no dental access and the implications of this, a scoping exercise being started by NHS England into the needs of homeless people within dentistry, was extended to also consider the needs of other vulnerable groups.

## GPs that meet people's needs

### GP Liaison To Suit The Needs of Non-English Speaker

An enquirer who does not speak English told us about a telephone appointment with a GP in which the enquirer was trying to use a translator, but the GP hung up while the enquirer was still talking, leaving them feeling disrespected and very upset. They did not want to make a complaint but had made the decision to move GP practice. They had been recommended a GP in another area, which has a GP who speaks their own language; and where they felt they would have their needs met and be treated fairly. However, they live outside the GP practice's catchment area. In this case we were able to liaise with the new GP practice and explain the circumstances and language needs of our enquirer to get a positive outcome for our enquirer enabling them to register.

The enquirer was very pleased with the outcome and the positive impact that it would have on their health and wellbeing and reducing their inequality of access to GP services.

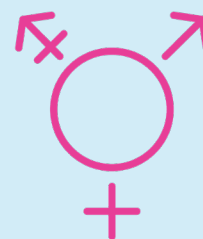


### Trans GP Support and Information

We were able to find a positive outcome for a trans enquirer who was very unhappy with the service provided to them, by their GP. They shared their experience of having to regularly chase up their medications, as well as overall service organisation issues, and most notably, a lack of sensitivity to, and knowledge of, the needs of trans people. They felt they now had no choice but to move to a GP practice that would be more understanding of their needs.

We provided information about the NHS complaints process and shared our Self Help Information Pack, to inform and empower them in making a complaint. Using the feedback we have received from other trans people in Liverpool we were able to identify a GP practice which receives positive feedback for their quality of care. We provided this information to the enquirer, and also signposted to online positive reviews from trans patients, about this GP.

Our knowledge of local services and the information we provided enabled our enquirer to make an informed decision about their GP healthcare which they felt would lead to improved health outcomes in the future.



### The Live Well Directory

A really important part of our work is keeping the Live Well Directory up-to-date as a trusted source of information for professionals and members of the public in Liverpool.

You can find information about more than 1500 services in Liverpool. In 2021-22 the site had more than **220,000 visitors** viewing more than **680,000 pages**.

 [www.thelivewelldirectory.com](https://www.thelivewelldirectory.com)



LIVE WELL

## Healthwatch Independent Complaints Advocacy

Complaints handling departments of local health services are still seeing delays in processing and investigating complaints, due to the impacts of Covid. Our Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service has continued to help local people find their way through the complaints process, when something has not gone right with their care.

This year our Independent Complaints Advocacy Service provided direct support in **61** cases. We have also supported **134** people with information on the complaints process, and provided our Self Help Information Pack to **111** people; empowering them to follow the complaints process themselves, but with clear guidance and expectations.



The continuing impact of complaint process delays has been felt within our advocacy service this year; however, we are proud of the outcomes we have been able to support our clients to achieve, including a long-standing client completing the complaints process, and being offered an apology, service improvement and financial compensation by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who make final decisions on complaints that have not been resolved by the NHS in England.

## Support accessing medical records

A family who wished to complain about their loved one's treatment was having difficulties accessing their medical records. While, due to the family member's deteriorating condition, formal action to progress their complaint is on hold, our advocacy service was able to support the family in accessing their loved one's medical records from the GP, which had proven challenging, and an unnecessary burden at a difficult time. Our liaison with the practice, resulted in this record access being successful, which has a positive impact on the family.



“Thank you so much. I am sure we would not have received these without your help”

**Healthwatch Liverpool Complaints Advocacy client**



## Helping raise concerns about communication with hospital PALS service

Another case supporting positive change, surrounds communication with a hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), and consideration for language barriers. This client sought our help after not being able to contact anyone in PALS, regarding a promised surgery appointment. The expected timescale had passed, and the client had not heard from them. This added to their existing feeling that, because of their language difficulties they weren't being treated with importance. Our advocate was able to work on resolving the issue with PALS, and after two months, we were able to provide the client with surgery details from the hospital. We were also able to communicate the client's difficulties with the Trust and they became more considerate regarding the language barriers. The client was also invited to give 1-2-1 feedback regarding their experience with language difficulties, as part of our Accessible Information project.



**To find out more about how we can help with a complaint about an NHS service visit**

➤ [www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/complaints](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/complaints)

# Volunteers

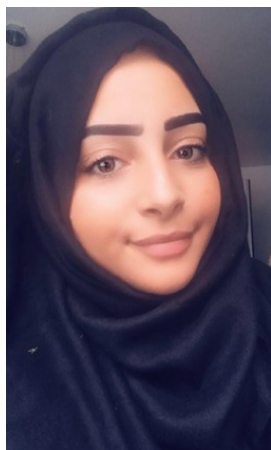
“Our volunteers provide us with a unique insight into the communities we serve, helping us to design, shape and deliver our projects, and supporting us to reach people from a range of diverse local communities. They have shown great resilience in adapting to a lot of change and I would like to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers for their commitment to Healthwatch Liverpool, particularly during what has been a very difficult period for many people.”

**Steph Gregory, Healthwatch Liverpool Volunteer and Involvement Officer**

## This year our volunteers:

- Supported the creation of our Mental Health survey, from questions to design
- Participated in and helped to facilitate online Focus Groups and webinars, from GP Access to Care Homes, and a Public Health Q&A to our Meet the Cancer Professionals event
- Attended online external focus groups and engagement activities
- Supported our report writing process
- Consulted with patients, carers and staff at our Alder Hey Children’s Hospital Listening event, to hear their views
- Engaged with children and families through craft activities at Holiday Action Food & Families events
- Supporting the facilitation of our World Mental Health Marketplace event
- Liaised with local dental surgeries to keep our dental services status information up to date
- Conducted online research to gather information about the accessibility of GP websites





## Mel

"My name's Mel and I've tried supporting Healthwatch Liverpool in any way I can in the past year. I have supported with the mental health survey, research and analysis. My key contribution has been keeping information about NHS dentists up to date. This involves calling every Dental practice and gathering information such as whether they are taking on new NHS patients, provide sedation, disability access or care home visit etc. Since the pandemic, there has been a clear problem regarding the lack of accessibility to dental services. There were no dental practices taking on any new patients on the NHS and it's important that this information stays recent so Healthwatch Liverpool's Information and Advice service can continue to deliver the appropriate information to local people.

I started volunteering just as the pandemic hit. Although we couldn't get together, the staff and the support and interaction from Steph and other volunteers made it feel as though we were all in the same room/office. This was because everyone is friendly and welcoming.

I like volunteering because no matter how little or much they are appreciative and grateful for all the input I give. I feel useful. What I get out of it is experience and the opportunity to work along side such lovely people."

## Joe

"I am a 2nd year Health and Social care student at Liverpool Hope University who started volunteering with Healthwatch Liverpool in January 2022. As part of my degree, I am required to do a placement and I wanted to gain experience working more towards the health side of the course rather than the social care. Healthwatch was the perfect match for me.

I have been involved in a hugely varied number of events with Healthwatch Liverpool, including a Prostate Cancer awareness event that focused on raising awareness within the Black community, which brought together black males and family members, with health professionals and people who have or have had prostate cancer to share their experience of managing their illness, identifying the signs and highlighting the importance of regular testing, there was also on the day testing for all males aged over 40 on offer. This was one of the initial post-covid face to face events that Healthwatch Liverpool was involved in, our duties where to assist with running of the event working alongside Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance and the staff at the Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre.



My experience of working with Healthwatch was so diverse and enjoyable that I decided to continue to volunteer on a long-term basis, as the experience I have gained seems invaluable for my future career and every member of the Healthwatch team has been so welcoming."



## Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 [www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/volunteer](http://www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/volunteer)

 **0300 77 77 007**

 **steph.gregory@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk**

# Finance and future priorities

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

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority authority *this includes funding for NHS complaints advocacy and social care engagement.	£553,825*	Staff costs	£511,101
Additional funding	£8,500	Operational costs	£74,283
		Support and administration	£16,963
Total income	£562,325	Total expenditure	£602,347

## Our top priorities for 2022–23

**Our main priority area for 2022–23 is equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened existing health inequalities. A lot of feedback we get from the public has been about this. We want to look at specific areas of these health inequalities to help address them including:**

1. Barriers to GP access
2. Reviewing local translation and interpretation services
3. Transgender people's experiences of healthcare
4. Resuming visits to social care services
5. Children and young people's rights in healthcare

## Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, how you identify, whether you are disabled, your age, income or race, or any other factor. Healthwatch Liverpool are committed to making a positive impact on equality within health and social care, and ensuring every voice has the opportunity to be heard.

# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Liverpool is delivered by Liverpool Advocacy Rights Information Development and Equality CIC a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee and registered in England & Wales (company no 8254903) at 151 Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2AH.

Healthwatch Liverpool 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.**

We have a Community Interest Company board with 5 directors who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. In 2020–21 they met 7 times and made decisions on matters such as our budget, policies and working from home arrangements.

They are assisted by a parallel Community Engagement Board with 11 members in this year representing local communities to ensure that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021–22 the Community Engagement Board met 10 times, influencing the direction of particular projects for the year and setting our priorities for 2022–23. Because of the Board's concern about the pressures facing the NHS and the impact on patient care the Chief Officer and a Clinical Lead for the Clinical Commissioning group attended one of these meetings to answer questions and hear community experiences.

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 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, text and WhatsApp, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual and in person meetings of community groups and forums and provided our own virtual activities such as focus groups. We were able to hold one in-person Listening Event at Alder Hey Hospital between waves of Covid when it was possible for us to visit wards and clinics in the hospital talking to patients and families. We hope to do more Listening Events in 2022–23 subject to any hospital visiting restrictions.

We learn a lot about the issues people are facing from engagement, from our information and signposting enquiries and from the NHS complaints we support patients with. This informs our priorities for future work. For example, we heard in detail how some groups have faced greater difficulties than others from the move to remote access and this has informed our focus for 2022–3 on equalities.

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, interviews and focus groups with people who do not speak English about their experiences of NHS services; targeted visits to young people's groups to hear their views on the Covid vaccine; attendance at the Kuumba Imani Millenium Centre to engage with black men on the topic of prostate cancer; and, we launched an accessible survey on the impact of Covid on mental health; with a BSL video, and which heard the views of many disabled people.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and link to it on social media and in our member newsletter.

## Responses to recommendations and requests

We had one provider who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

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.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

## Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Liverpool is represented on the Liverpool Health and Wellbeing Board by Sarah Thwaites, Chief Officer. During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings, sharing community insights on a wide range of health and care issues and participating in groups that report to the Health and Wellbeing Group such as the Health Protection Board.

### 2021–2022 Outcomes

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
Dental pressures – we gathered information on dental availability making sure that when there was any capacity in the system (e.g. the short-term extra provision in March) we helped patients to access this. We also liaised directly with NHSE on some extreme cases where dental pressures were having a major impact of the person's physical and mental health. These people were prioritised for dental care.	We shared what the public were telling us about the scale and impact of the dental crisis and how it is worsening inequalities. There is, as yet, no solution in sight but we will continue to champion this issue.
Language barriers – we collected people's experiences of how language barriers are making it very difficult for people who do not speak English to access good quality timely care, sometimes with dangerous consequences.	We shared these findings with decision makers and continue to use them to help shape priorities in the local health and care system. We will be revisiting this subject in 2022–3 to see if a new local NHS interpretation contract has helped address these issues.
Long covid – our Chief Officer experienced severe long covid in 2020–21. On her return she was asked to be in a public health awareness video and to liaise with a new long covid multidisciplinary team. This has led to ongoing conversations, widening out to neighbourhood Healthwatch.	We have been consulted over communications messages and equality planning and the new service has now engaged Healthwatch Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton and St Helens to gather feedback from their service users and people with long covid who haven't yet been referred to the service to learn how the service and referral pathways should be shaped.
"Meet The Cancer Professionals" and "Meet Public Health Liverpool" public online webinars, to connect and bridge the gap for the public and services. The public got to know about and ask questions about these local services.	Increased understanding and awareness of local cancer services and public health provision among members of the public.
Student 'Spiking' response – After student union members on our Student Wellbeing Group raised issues about spiking of students in nightclubs and how these were dealt with in A&E	We liaised with A&E doctors to understand their processes to respond to suspected spikings and facilitated a meeting to ensure that student unions, advisors, GP and A&E staff were all clear of the processes, reasons for it and be able to communicate to students. If the issue recurs in the next student year partners are more able to respond effectively.
Covid-19 Vaccination – As a member of the Health Protection Board which met very frequently during this year, we were part of discussion on vaccine roll out sharing community insights and concerns.	Liverpool's vaccine programme became increasingly responsive to community needs including pop-up community vaccination sites in areas where there were barriers to take-up. Lessons have been learned for the future in how to take preventative health to communities to improve access for all.



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