



Together
we're making health
and social care better
Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Cornwall

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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

Over the course of the past year, I have been inspired by our dedicated staff and volunteer team, heartened by the significant projects they have undertaken and proud of the many recommendations for health and social care improvements these have brought forward.

It is our job to seek out, listen to and amplify the stories people in Cornwall have about their experiences of using health and social care services and how those learnings can be translated into better, more efficient, people-centred services.



Anna Pascoe
Healthwatch Cornwall Chair

We are here to learn from and develop what people tell us – identifying and appreciating good practice and understanding where services could benefit from user-led further improvement.

Sometimes these stories can be difficult to hear – for our staff and providers. We respect their roles and above all respect that hard-to-hear stories must be even harder for those experiencing them.

We are deeply committed to our role as an independent, trusted voice publishing valued research and project work and holding effective conversations with providers across the Integrated Care System.

2023 marks ten years of Healthwatch Cornwall serving the people of Cornwall.

If you told us a story, it mattered. If you worked or volunteered with us, you helped shape change. If you provide services, we know you listened and cared.

Valuing these relationships and turning listening into action continue to guide our work. That is the bedrock on which our next five-year plan is being built.



“We have now been on the waiting list for a new NHS dentist for two and a half years. Whenever I call round the dentists, they have space for me as a private patient but not NHS. There is no way I can afford private treatment as I am an unpaid carer living solely on benefits. I wish I could see a dentist. I worry about the effect of my gum disease on my heart and general health.”

About us

Healthwatch Cornwall is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

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



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.

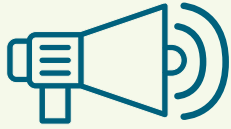


Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector.

Year in review

Reaching out



970 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services, including 281 who took part in our mental health and suicide prevention research and 184 who helped us compile our dementia report.

357 people

Contacted us via phone, email and website for advice and information.

Making a difference to care

We published

3 reports

- Cornish Communities in Mind – Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Research (November 2022)
- 15 Steps for Maternity (January 2023)
- Hear Our Voice – improving dementia and memory loss services and support (March 2023)



Health and care that works for you

We're lucky to have

23

outstanding volunteers.



We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£300,000

core funding and

£64,000

for facilitating the Partnership Boards which is the same as the previous year. We also receive funding to host two maternity services.

We currently employ

16 staff (11 FTE)

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring



By listening to 160 unpaid carers, we helped secure extra funding for dementia services.



Responding to parental concerns, we signposted local services for children with autism at the Royal Cornwall Show.

Summer



Talking to 280 people from different communities led to new mental health and suicide prevention services.



Feedback about dental access difficulties led to an extra 1000 emergency NHS appointments.

Autumn



Our Kernow Maternity Voices Partnership helped local services rank as some of the best in the country.



We talked to 551 students about the 111 service – a third of them weren't aware of it before.

Winter



We supported 'Team GP' by raising awareness of the range of services available in GP surgeries.



We alerted health and social care providers to poor end of life care during winter pressures.

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better together?

End of Life care

Local staff received training around delivering and talking about End of Life care and support, and our #littlelifeconversations campaign led to more people being encouraged to discuss their End of Life plans with their families.



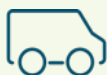
35,000 local people

have spoken to us about their health and social care experiences.



Care at Home

Assisted Cornwall Council to review the framework for direct payments and established regular dialogue with providers to address their concerns. Cornwall Council also allocated an additional £4.5m to meet the costs of increasing the rate paid to providers.



Mental Health

Our 2019 conference 'Together in Mind' was used to launch the MH Strategy and ongoing work looking into what mental health support looks like in the county and has led to the provision of much more targeted support resources for different groups.



Access to dentistry

Working in partnership with other local networks, our ongoing pressure on the system to solve the dentistry crisis has led to an increase in the number of emergency appointments available, and Healthwatch England used our local feedback to campaign nationally.





Healthwatch Hero



Listening to the people of Cornwall

The Healthwatch team has worked hard over the last year getting out and about in the community to gather feedback from as many people as possible. None more so than our Healthwatch Hero Sarah who is committed to giving everyone in Cornwall a voice about health and social care and making them aware of the support services available.

Sarah travels widely across the county forging strong relationships with relevant organisations and attending events ranging from gender identify family days to college fresher weeks. She has met with people at job centres, warm/community hubs and community support groups as well as going dockside to see our wonderful local fishermen and families.

If you see Sarah, stop for a chat.

Suicide prevention report will lead to service improvements

We were jointly commissioned by Public Health Cornwall (PH) – part of Cornwall Council – and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board (CISICB) to produce '*Cornish Communities in Mind*' – our mental health and suicide prevention report.

The one-year research involved more than 280 people from diverse communities and groups – including veterans, those with Long Covid, key and essential workers and older people. We captured the experiences of service users and their families, health care professionals, people bereaved by suicide and people in voluntary sector organisations providing mental health support.

Most groups told us there is a need to treat the cause rather than the symptom. This was particularly prevalent among veterans, those harmed by gambling, those with a mental health diagnosis and those at risk of self-harm and suicide. People told us they would like support to work through past experiences and treat unresolved trauma. People also told us they find it difficult to explain their medical history repeatedly to different professionals, especially if this involves reliving something that's happened.



“Engagement work carried out by Healthwatch Cornwall and others plays a crucial role because the more we break down barriers and empower people to speak openly and honestly about their feelings, the better for everyone.”

Paula Chappell, Public Health Practitioner and Suicide Prevention Lead for Public Health Cornwall

What difference will it make?

The findings were used to develop the People In Mind service which is a collaboration of local voluntary and community organisations led by Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum. This is the new £5m service launched in April 2023 to ensure people struggling with their mental health in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly get the support they need before reaching crisis point – thereby preventing suicide. People can access help for a range of mental health issues, from finance and debt advice to self-harm and loneliness interventions, via the new People in Mind service.



“Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. If my childhood trauma had been addressed, I don't think that I would have had my breakdown and lost everything.”

Improving dementia and memory loss services and support

Working together with Cornwall Memory Cafe Network and Dr Allison Hibbert, Chair of Cornwall Dementia Partnership, we heard from over 160 carers of people living with dementia or memory loss. Our 'Hear Our Voice' report includes 40 recommendations for developing a clear pathway of dementia services and support that is accessible and local.

Carers described services and support as patchy or inconsistent. Many struggled to access regular reviews, respite and support leaving them feeling lonely and isolated. Information, advice, assessments and financial support were not always volunteered proactively, routinely, or when needed most.

Our recommendations cover:

- Respite
- Diagnosis
- Regular review
- Education of healthcare care staff and wider professions
- Carer identification
- Support groups and dementia friendly activities
- Carers assessments, benefits and financial support
- Information and advice
- Personalised care and support and care for younger people living with early onset dementia

What difference will this make?

The Integrated Care System (ICS) Dementia Programme Board will address all the recommendations during 2023/24 as part of the dementia improvement programme. This should bring an increase in dementia-specific support roles – such as primary care dementia practitioners, additional voluntary and community sector services and increased opportunities for respite care. In addition, there will be education for GPs and other health and care staff to improve diagnosis rates and identify and support carers.



"I feel there should be more regular contact with someone about the patient and the carer. It is not just the patient suffering this terrible illness but the carers who need more assistance to get better breaks and respite. I have been unable to obtain either."

Feedback from a carer.

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.

Providing a helpful signposting service

Often people just don't know where to turn for help.



Help is often out there, but it is not always easy to find. When people contact Healthwatch Cornwall they are rightly concerned about their own or their loved one's situation. Sometimes a listening ear is all they need but often we are able to help by signposting either to national or county-wide services, or to more local services near where they live. Sometimes it's just a matter of putting them in touch with the right team at Adult Social Care to get an assessment, not just for loved ones but for those who care for them too. Many people don't think of themselves as carers, but they are all entitled to help if they act as an unpaid carer in any capacity.

Getting services to involve the public

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



Healthwatch Cornwall has been pleased to be asked to help develop the local Integrated Care Strategy, and to inform the Integrated Care Board's engagement programme to ensure they are listening to - and acting upon - user experience. We are looking forward to seeing these develop and remain committed to asking for evidence of where people's experiences have improved services, or where people have been involved in the design of a new service.

Improving care over time

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



Over the years, Healthwatch Cornwall has heard from lots of local people who cannot access an NHS dentist - something that is common across the whole local Healthwatch network in England. Healthwatch England are using your feedback to demand that dental reform is given a national priority. Only by changing the way services are commissioned can we create a system where everyone has equal access to affordable dental care. We will continue to raise this.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area.

We consider it important to reach out to the communities that are heard from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and that services meet their needs.

This year they have included:

- Rice & Peas – an organisation that incorporates diversity and inclusion.
- Blue Light Day – an annual event that breaks down barriers between adults with a learning disability.
- Chronic Sisters – women’s long term health condition group.
- Warm hubs – Cuppa Companions – community-based groups that offer a warm safe space for anyone to come along.

Reaching out to the Deaf community

Healthwatch Cornwall attended a monthly social lunch event at Cornwall Deaf Centre to gather views and opinions around how hearing loss affected mental health and what support was needed.

There was an overwhelming sense of mistrust of society, loneliness, isolation and feeling misunderstood within this community. The Deaf Centre and Hearing Loss Cornwall are crucial to their wellbeing and are heavily relied upon for help and support from all over Cornwall.

“The Deaf Centre is my main support. I come to the lunch here once a month and other activities such as bingo. I have low self-esteem and am too afraid to ask for more help. This impacted my mental health. Jackie who runs the Deaf Centre is phenomenal. We need more Jackies.”

Combating gambling harm

A focus group organised with gambling support staff gave an insight into people who experience gambling harm. The detail was delivered with great passion – highlighting the scale of the issue and the need for help, support and education within this community:

- Gambling harm for young people is on the increase.
- Gambling can cause or escalate domestic violence.
- There is a real lack of gambling support in Cornwall.
- GPs/Social Prescribers need more educational resource for signposting people who have experienced gambling harm to support services.
- People don't realise there's a problem until it's too late and they are in real financial trouble.

“Gambling is the carbon monoxide of addictions – you can't see, smell, or taste it, but it's there.”

“I felt like I had no control over my life. My parents separated when I was 17 and I had to grow up quickly. Gambling gave me a sense of control back.”



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Cornwall is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we will listen to you, hear your story and offer signposting and support to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's understanding the NHS dentistry system, how and to whom to make a complaint or making sure carers know how to access support – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust.
- Signposting people so they can access the services they need.
- Supporting carers as well as those they care for.
- Ensuring people understand the emergency and special dentistry services that are available.

Joining people up

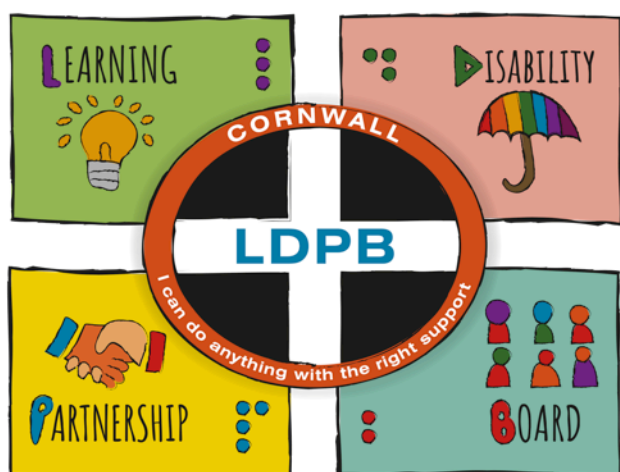
Healthwatch Cornwall facilitates four Partnership Boards: Carers, Learning Disability, Autism and Older Persons. Meetings are not only responsive to current issues but also an essential part of the production of local strategies and commissioning plans, followed by input into the design of services and scrutiny of their implementation.

The boards meet quarterly and bring health and social care professionals together with the people that matter most – users of health and care services, unpaid carers and people with lived experience.

Representatives from Cornwall Council, NHS Kernow, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and voluntary sector staff with direct experience relevant to each Board are also members.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB) is currently heavily involved in a review of adult social care services. Other examples of focused areas of work across the boards include post-diagnostic autism support, access to appropriate mental health services, developing accessible communications across health, social care and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), employability, independent living, carers passports and the wider NHS England (NHSE) Commitment to Carers programme.

The new role of Community Promoter was introduced in 2022 – board members with lived experience that join the team at meetings and events. Their expertise and enthusiasm has proved to be invaluable in reaching out to otherwise hidden carers and service users.



Kernow Maternity Voices Project (KMVP)

Our team of staff and volunteers are working in our local communities every week of the year in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly with links established with the Health Visiting Baby Weigh-in Clinics, Community Stay and Play Groups and other Voluntary sector targeted community groups.

KMVP also reached up to 12,000 services users via social media, aligned their Have your Say forms with those in use by Healthwatch Cornwall and contributed to events like the Royal Cornwall Show.

Isles of Scilly

In February 2023 we were able to take a rather special trip to experience life on the islands. We joined the community midwives and visited the islands for three days. Islanders took the opportunity to share their experiences of care with us, all of which has enabled us to capture some unique challenges for those living on the islands.

Celebration of great work

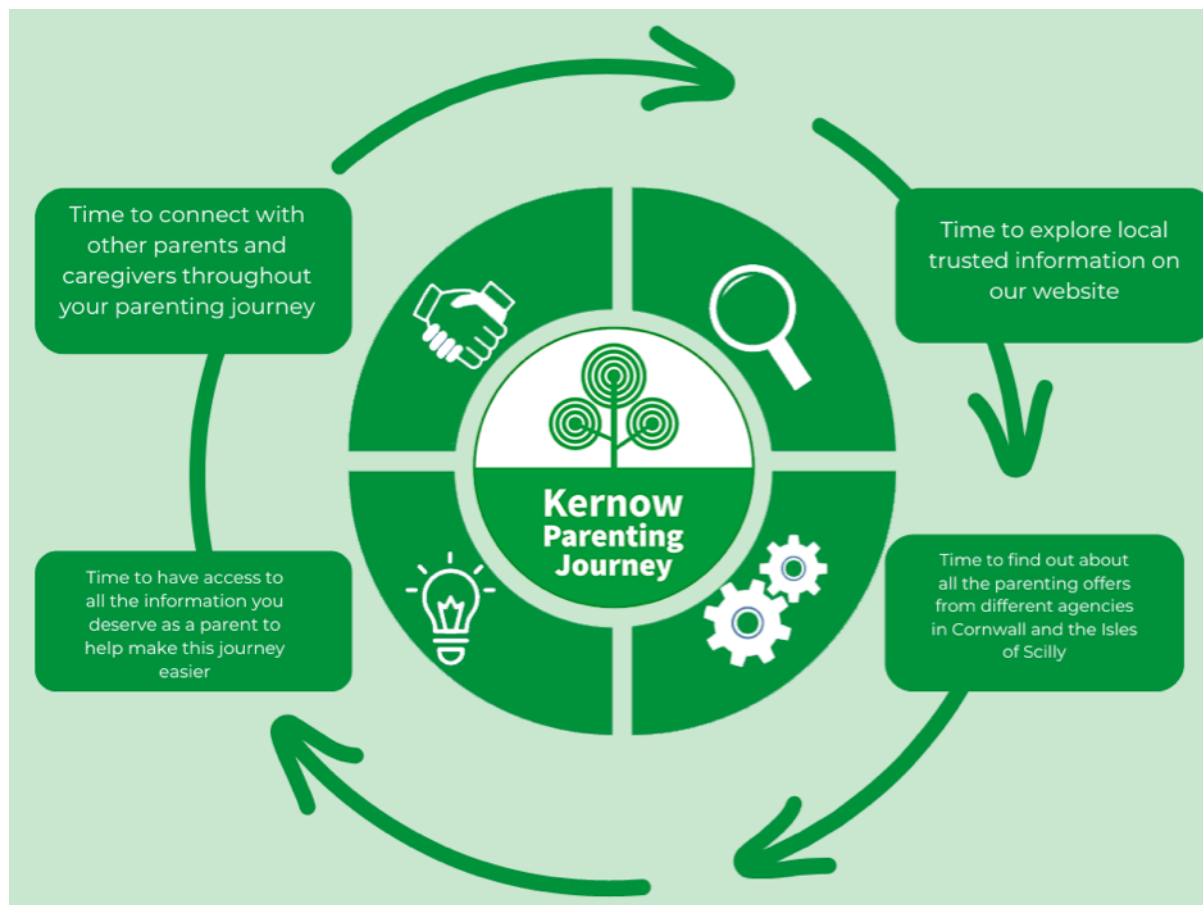
KMVP delivered 15 certificates to nominated superstars ranging from maternity support workers, community midwives, delivery suite midwives and managers. This piece of work aligned with the International Day of the Midwife and was the result of some social media campaigns run.

As well as identifying areas for improvement across the system, we love to celebrate what works so brilliantly well.



Keeping parents in the know

Originally commissioned by Healthwatch Cornwall as a research and engagement project, Kernow Parenting Journey has developed into a multi-platform, multi-agency programme that helps keep parents informed from pregnancy until their child is two. Tools include a website, podcasts, instructional videos, a pregnancy café and baby care, birth planning and post-natal sessions.



"Very informal and friendly atmosphere with expert knowledge."

Attendee, Dec 2022



"I need to socialise with other parents so desperately."

Social media, February 2023



"I wish this was around in 2020 when I was pregnant with my first baby and felt so isolated due to Covid."

February 2023

Quarterly newsletters about the project's progress are available - email enquiries@healthwatchcornwall.co.uk to be added to the mailing list.



Volunteering

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

This year our volunteers have:

Promoted Healthwatch Cornwall and Kernow Maternity Voices and collected feedback at:

- Health centres and GP practices
- Community events ranging from Pride to large agricultural shows
- Fresher fairs
- Health fairs
- Wellness and warmth hubs
- Support groups ranging from breast feeding support to memory cafes
- Local libraries and community spaces
- Local supermarkets

Supported projects such as:

- Kernow Maternity Voices 15 steps event
- Telephone interviews for Ageing Well
- Telephone interviews for the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention project
- Supported with social media updates and website review

Kathy & Liz

Kathy and Liz have been supporting Healthwatch Cornwall for many years, their expertise and passion to help patients and carers have a voice is second to none. They run regular drop-ins at their local library, which is a community hub for different age groups. They also volunteer to support other engagement activities at hospitals and medical centres, as well as supporting a range of community groups and events.



Steve

Steve is a committed volunteer, taking the promotion of the Partnership Board in his stride. Steve has attended the largest event in our yearly calendar, Royal Cornwall Show, Blue Light Day and other big community events like the Cornwall Winter Fair. Steve chats to members of the public about the role of the boards and hands out valuable signposting information and leaflets.



Karen

Karen's skill for social media is superb, seeking out information and creating content to keep the ever-growing number of followers engaged and up to date with maternity services here in Cornwall. Giving her time as a volunteer enables the project to effectively promote, develop and maintain our online presence to reach out to diverse audiences, including women and birthing people, their partners and professionals.



Do you feel inspired?

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

 healthwatchcornwall.co.uk/volunteer-us
 01872 273501

Finance and future priorities

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

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Core contract	£300,000	Expenditure on pay	£373,221
Project income	£64,896	Operational expenditure	£98,934
Partnership Boards	£64,000	Office running costs	£39,107
Maternity Voices	£74,500		
Kernow Parenting Journey	£30,000		
Total income	£533,396	Total expenditure	£511,262

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless of where you live, your income or race.

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Increase our focus on understanding and amplifying the views of those who are not heard by health and care services, especially people experiencing health inequalities, and children and young people.
2. Work with the Integrated Care System to better understand the challenges faced by people struggling to access primary care services, such as GP services and dentists.
3. Monitor the implementation of recommendations that we have made within various research topics, including support for carers of people living with dementia or memory loss.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Cornwall, 6 Walsingham Place, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2RP

Healthwatch Cornwall 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 6 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. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as improving our governance and scrutiny, and making our policies more meaningful and measurable. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, webform on our website and social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and circulate through our communication network.

Responses to recommendations

We did not make any requests for information to providers. Recommendations within our reports have been acted upon by commissioners and providers, which we continue to monitor. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example, we take information to patient experience and quality groups at Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, as well as the Health & Wellbeing Board at Cornwall Council.

Our Business Plan, Annual Report and research reports are shared with decision makers to inform commissioning priorities. We present our work to the Cornwall Council Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee to inform and shape a work programme based on the service user and carer voice. Relevant research and reports are presented to the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), its Programme Boards and forums. Data and insight are also shared with the Citizen Engagement Committee (part of the ICP) and with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Enter and view

This year we did not make any Enter and View visits.

Healthwatch representatives

Jody Wilson, Senior Manager, Strategy & Engagement represents Healthwatch Cornwall on the Health & Wellbeing Board. This is a forum in which key leaders of the local health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Cornwall. Jody has contributed to relevant agenda items to ensure that the public voice is represented. We have also presented and led a discussion on the importance of co-production at an informal session of the Board.

Our CEO and in their absence the Senior Manager represents Healthwatch Cornwall on the NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Partnership and the NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board. The Partnership is made up of representatives from Cornwall Council, the NHS, Healthwatch Cornwall and the voluntary/community and care sectors.

Anna Pascoe, our Chair, represents Healthwatch Cornwall on the Cornwall Council Health & Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Board. This Board participates in the policy development and performance management of the Council and reviews and challenges the Cabinet and wider council.

Priorities from 2021/22 – how did we do?

- We listened to people's experiences at events, meetings and weekly public sessions, sometimes in collaboration with partners.
- We ensured recommendations were implemented in key work areas.
- We kept in contact with key stakeholders in our identified priority areas of mental health, caring, dementia and end of life.
- We collaborated and worked constructively with the new Integrated Care System – building good working relationships with all its members.



"It is thanks to Healthwatch Cornwall and the Memory Cafe Network that we have been able to gather this vital feedback that is already shaping the way we want to deliver services in the future.

Your feedback is an important call to action for our commissioners and service providers who are committed to making sure that people living with dementia can feel safe and supported across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly."

Dr Allison Hibbert, Clinical Advisor and Lead for Dementia, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care System and Chair of Cornwall Dementia Partnership.



healthwatch
Cornwall

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