



On equal terms

Then and now

Healthwatch Cornwall Annual Report 2020-21

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Message from our Chair

Welcome to the Healthwatch Cornwall Annual Report

At this point in the year, having experienced so much tragedy and uncertainty as a nation and as a county, we are looking forward to a better future. However, we have witnessed and heard stories from people about the remarkable response and sacrifice the health and social care sector have made. We will continue to listen and learn.

Throughout the year Healthwatch Cornwall has had to adjust in so many ways. My thanks go particularly to the staff team who not only had to adapt to home working but had to develop entirely new ways of engaging and working with people. We became a significant part of Cornwall's response to the pandemic by representing the voice of people in a variety of strategic and planning processes. We have also participated in providing Healthwatch England with feedback from residents in a diverse range of areas from dentistry to patient discharge as well as the broader impact of covid – making sure that residents' voices are not just heard locally, but nationally too.

But business also went on as normal and we carried out some great work. A research report into emergency dental services was well received. The research and report we undertook for the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Adults Board into how people perceive the safeguarding adults system is about to be published too and there has already been a commitment to carrying out the recommended actions.

We also welcomed our new CEO Mario Dunn and said goodbye to our outgoing CEO, Amanda Stratford. Amanda has done a brilliant job of positioning Healthwatch Cornwall at the heart of the health and social care system in Cornwall and Mario in the short time he has been in post has taken that work forward with real energy and skill. Mario and the Board have developed and are now implementing our new 2 year business plan.

Jon McLeavy,
Healthwatch Cornwall Chair.

Last year I reflected on the need for a focus on learning from the pandemic and as we emerge from it, it again will be one of the priorities for the coming year.

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly. 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 an 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.

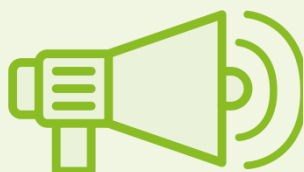


"Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives."

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

Highlights from our year

Contact with us



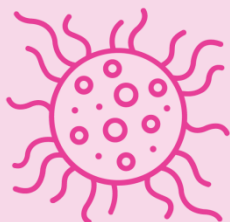
We heard from

2,736 people this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We received **238** 'have your says', **117** emails, **109** 'contact us' forms and **132** phone calls.

12,663 people visited our website to find information, an increase of 30% on the previous year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and listened to the voices of

2,110 people

in our coronavirus and mental health survey.

Making a difference to care



We published

6 reports giving recommendations on the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Health and care that works for you



15 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

We employ 17 staff

13 of whom are full time equivalent, which is an increase of 1 from the previous year.

We received

£437,548 in funding

from our local authority and other sources in 2020-21, 3% less than the previous year.

Top four areas that people have contacted us about



158 Dentistry enquiries



44 GP enquiries



20 mental health enquiries



19 Covid related enquiries

Covid survey



Early on in the pandemic, we heard from **1,731** people through a survey to find out how people were coping. We were told that people trusted local sources for information and found this helpful, but needed more information in some areas such as shielding. People also felt isolated and anxious, but **27%** of people from this survey reported positive impacts too. We were also told by **246** carers that they faced significant challenges with reduced support in this area.

- People needed more information on how to keep safe when shielding
- Isolation led to loneliness, loss of motivation and exacerbation of existing mental health conditions
- Day services and respite care closed, increasing the time carers spend in their caring role



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.healthwatchcornwall.co.uk



01872 273501



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How we listen to people in Cornwall

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 have your say form on our website, hosted digital engagement exercises such as Facebook Live panel discussions and conducted digital surveys. Our staff and volunteers have also attended virtual meetings of community groups 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 engaged with young people and the farming community in Cornwall.

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 www.healthwatchcornwall.co.uk where an easy read option is also available as well as printed copies on request.

2020-21 priorities – what we achieved	
Project / activity area	Progress in priority areas
Hospital discharge	11 recommendations made
Mental health	Supported implementation of a 24/7 emergency line
Dentistry	Participating in new reform steering group
End of life	Led the call for a bereavement website and support line to be set up
Seldom heard	Distributed GP access cards to homeless and other voluntary organisations
COVID survey	1,731 respondents resulting in full report, putting feedback at the centre of pandemic response

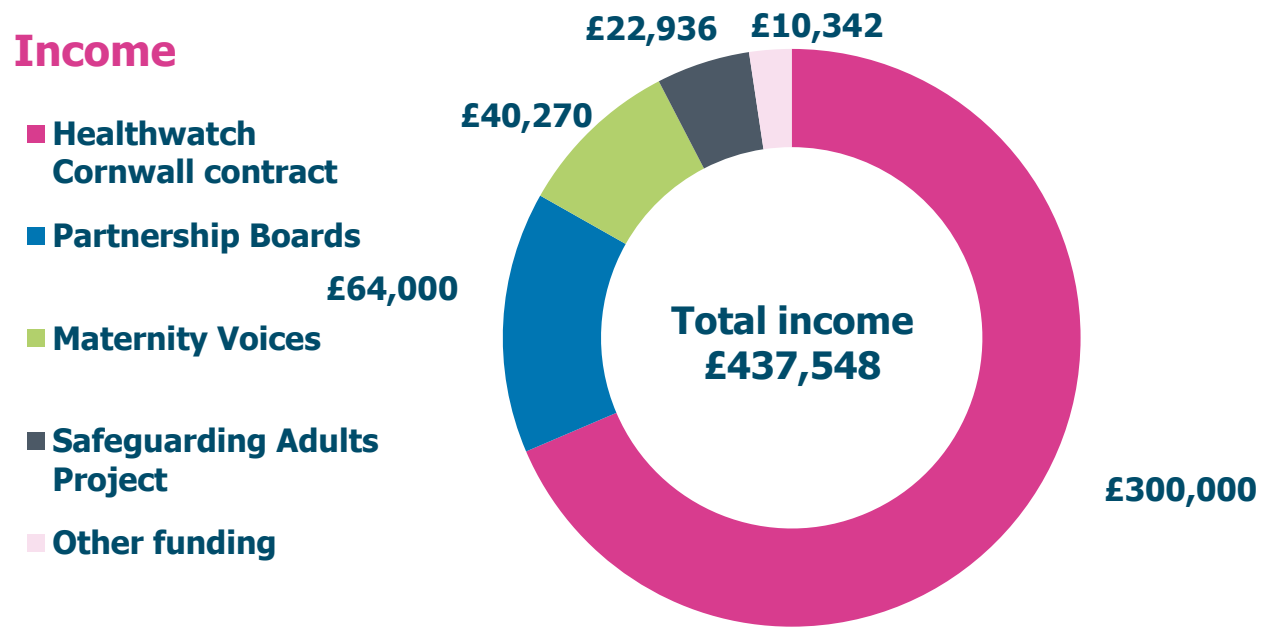
Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Cornwall is represented on the Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly Health and Wellbeing Board by senior management, with us having 2 seats on this Board. Our CEO and Engagement Manager are regular attendees and we have been particularly encouraged by the focus on health inequalities.

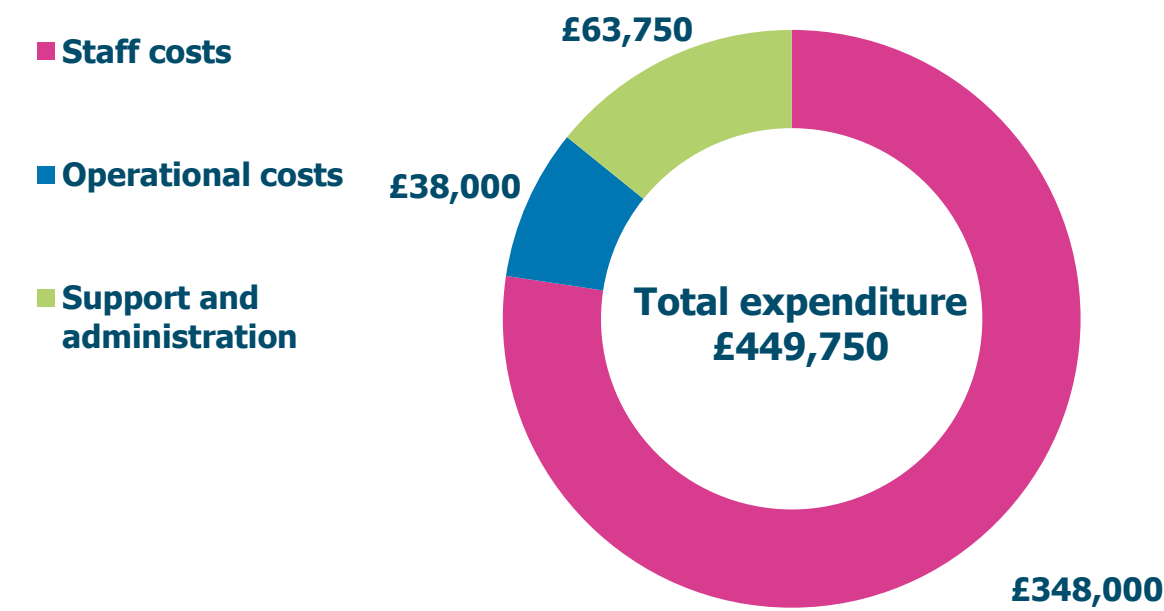
Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and other sources for some of our commissioned work

Income



Expenditure





Then and now Mental health



Then: mental health conference

In June 2019 our annual conference 'Together in Mind' was dedicated solely to mental health. The five-year Mental Health Strategy for the county was launched here, providing a forum for discussion and consultation that we were able to directly influence.

Since then and in response to the pandemic, a number of partnership meetings have been established to focus on the mental health and wellbeing of our population, ensuring that people had access to support and trying to predict what extra support may be needed. Healthwatch Cornwall attends the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Cell and the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Operational Group, feeding in real time feedback received through our communication channels - close contact and regular communication with these various Cells has delivered real impact and results.

During the pandemic, there was a common misconception from the public that services were closed. We encouraged the system leads to focus on communicating the fact that services were still open and how people could access them, as well as the need to provide more communication about helpful resources. In a survey we conducted in July, 1,078 respondents told us about the impact of the pandemic on their mental health.



Now: improved mental health communication and digital outreach

Following our continued engagement with the system on these issues we have been pleased to see a 24/7 mental health line created to improve emergency access to those needing mental health services.

Since the launch of this, Healthwatch Cornwall played an active role in promoting and signposting these resources. We have also been pleased to see the rapid development and creation of a comprehensive series of wellbeing guides produced by Cornwall Council, with a noticeable improvement in promotion and communication of these – which we have also played a role in sharing across our channels.

- **A 24/7 permanent mental health emergency phone line has been created**
- **A series of mental wellbeing guides have been created by Cornwall Council**
- **A Cognitive Behaviour Therapy mental health app SilverCloud has been introduced**

An 'Accessing Mental Health Services in Cornwall' research project was also conducted in February 2021 as a follow up to the mental health key findings from the Cornwall coronavirus survey, mentioned later in this report. This included a Facebook Live panel discussion with local organisations Outlook Southwest and Sea Sanctuary. The findings are being presented to key stakeholders and the report will be published soon.



"The Facebook Live mental health panel discussion with Healthwatch Cornwall was a really inventive way to engage with the public when in-person engagement just wasn't possible. It allowed us to connect with service users on a really important topic, enabling them to tell us directly what they thought about accessing mental health services."

Adam McPherson, Communications Officer, Outlook South West.



The survey helped us listen to residents, generating significant feedback on this topic.

- **1,500 Facebook Live discussion views, with 185 comments**
- **400 survey completions about people's experiences of accessing mental health services**
- **28 video calls gathering people's feedback about mental health services**

We are also part of the working group with Duchy College and Farming Health Hub, promoting the 2 minute Farmer Project, Farm fit mental health and wellbeing support and 'Help at hand' app. This will link into face-to-face engagement with the farming community when restrictions allow.



"We would like to thank Healthwatch Cornwall for their ongoing support in championing mental health and wellbeing across our communities, and for their strength of partnership working alongside us all to ensure that we deliver the very best outcomes and experiences for those who need care and support."

Tim Francis, Director of Strategic Commissioning for Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism.





Then and now Dentistry



Then: dentistry crisis in Cornwall

In October 2020, Cornish residents contributed significant amounts of feedback towards the South West Oral Health Needs Assessment Survey conducted by NHS Improvement South West.

Healthwatch Cornwall supported the promotion of this survey through social media, website and email newsletters and were pleased to have more than 500 residents sharing their feedback directly, with Cornwall contributing the greatest proportion of feedback in the entire South West region.

Dentistry was the most widely reported issue and Healthwatch Cornwall have been listening to residents tell us about their experiences. We have received 158 pieces of direct feedback relating to dentistry in the last year. Healthwatch Cornwall were very vocal in ensuring that these issues are being heard and we are actively involved in working groups and surveys to listen to residents, report feedback and work towards solutions to resolve this crisis in the county.



"I can't find a dentist anywhere in Cornwall that is accepting NHS patients. My family has been on the waiting list for over two years (myself, my husband, and my 4-year-old daughter who has never been to the dentist as we can't get into one)"





Now: a path to improvement and reform

The NHS England and NHS Improvement Summary of Oral Health Needs Assessment was published in January 2021 taking our feedback on board, an excellent example of engaging with residents locally to support reform via NHS Improvement.

We shared the extensive feedback from residents on dentistry issues which has also contributed towards the Healthwatch England report, 'Dentistry and the impact of COVID-19.'

Following these two reports and with the issue achieving national coverage, we took the opportunity to localise the message further. The highly successful PR piece using resident feedback highlighted the issue – with "NHS and emergency dental services approaching crisis point in Cornwall with resident told to buy crown tooth replacement kit from Amazon" gaining excellent coverage. This helped raise further awareness locally and encouraged more feedback to keep this issue firmly at the top of the local agenda.

We secured the following coverage locally to raise awareness of the issue and our work in this area:

- **BBC South West TV news, CEO interview headline news**
- **BBC Radio Cornwall, CEO voice morning and daytime news rotation**
- **Cornwall Live, online article and social media support**
- **Falmouth Packet, online article and social media support**

Healthwatch Cornwall also sits on the South West Local Dental Network and through our active engagement with this Local Dentistry Network, we have been invited to participate in a series of Sprint workshops to help input and shape the improvement of dentistry services going forward.



"The feedback from people who have needed dental services that Healthwatch Cornwall provided has given us deep insights into the challenges faced by residents trying to access dental care in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly. Actually taking the time to present these insights from Cornwall to the South West Dental Network in person was extremely well received by dental commissioners. We look forward to working with the team at Healthwatch Cornwall and other Healthwatch bodies at our new sprint workshops so that the improvements to services in the future take into account the needs of the people we serve."

Mr Ian Biggs NHSEI's Regional Director of Primary Care and SRO for dental transformation



Share your feedback with us

Healthwatch Cornwall is here to listen to your feedback of the health and social care system in Cornwall. Please call us free or go online to share your experience so we can help to improve service.



0800 038 1281



www.healthwatchcornwall.co.uk/share-your-views



Then and now Hospital discharge



Then: communication and experiences of discharge should improve

In 2019 we carried out a focused hospital discharge report on behalf of the Transformation Board - Delayed Transfers of Care: What it's like for Patients and Families.

Onwards from this in 2020, we also informed Healthwatch England's research into people's experiences of discharge during the first wave of the pandemic and promoted the survey for this research, contributing to the report '590 people's stories of leaving hospital during COVID-19'. Healthwatch Cornwall highlighted concerns raised in the 2020 report with a number of key stakeholders within the system and most recently by presentation at the Patient Experience Group at Royal Cornwall Hospital. Themes and recommendations identified within the 2019 DTOC report were reflected in the 2020 review, which found that:

- **61% did not receive information about the new discharge process during their hospital stay**
- **82% did not receive a follow up visit or assessment**
- **64% of people discharged at night were not asked if they needed transport support**

Better communication with patients and families remained a theme, which included the lack of provision of follow-up contact details post discharge and meant people didn't know who to call if concerned.



Now: actions to improve hospital discharge in place going forward

In response to the Healthwatch England report, patient experience teams at Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust and Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust undertook a thematic review of complaints about patient discharge. It concluded that better communication in almost all cases would have improved the experience.

We were provided with assurances about the impact of this work, along with actions the Trusts are keen to monitor in their work to improve patient experience when being discharged from the acute, community and mental health hospitals. These improvements will better ensure:

- **Carers and families will be even more involved in discharge arrangements**
- **Patients, families and carers will be given follow-up contact**
- **Greater communication with patients and those close to them**
- **Improved monitoring of discharge processes and practice**
- **Patients and their families are more involved in transport arrangements earlier on in patient's stay**
- **Discharges at night will be avoided but if necessary, transport confirmed and checked with carers and family**
- **The acute, community and mental health hospitals will develop a standard discharge protocol across the system**

We continue to work closely with patient experience teams across the acute, community and mental health hospitals that provide care to residents of Cornwall. As a critical friend, we meet regularly with RCHT, CPFT and University Plymouth Hospitals Trust to share your views here and through more formal patient experience committees. These teams remain focused on improving people's experiences of being discharged from hospital and we share a clear commitment to monitor these improvements through our collaborative working.



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Responding to COVID Cornwall Coronavirus Survey

The 'Cornwall Coronavirus Survey' launched in June last year to understand how the events of the first lockdown and COVID-19 had affected health and social care services.

- 1,731 residents responded to the survey
- This resulted in a 63 page raw data report and a 24 page highlights report
- 1,617 residents gave us feedback relating to information and advice
- 1,498 respondents told us about healthcare issues
- 1,401 respondents gave us feedback about mental health and wellbeing

The findings were grouped in three key areas of mental health, communications and carers. The report was presented to the System and a number of recommendations were adopted, notably there was an improvement in mental health resources and communication output from organisations such as Public Health.



"It is vitally important we understand people's views and experiences throughout Covid-19. It is through learning from people in reports like this one that we can ensure our information and support meets people's needs. We were really pleased to work with Healthwatch Cornwall particularly on learning more about the effects the pandemic and lockdown have had on people's mental health."

Rachel Wigglesworth, Director of Public Health CIOs.





Responding to COVID

Kernow Maternity Voices Partnership

Expectant mothers, their partners and families were confused about rules and restrictions around visiting and attendance at antenatal appointments during lockdown restrictions.

Facebook Live became the most accessible way to understand how people felt and what information was needed. A Friday night session was set up for an hour each week allowing us to engage with people directly online. When lockdown began, policies on using social media to communicate with the public were relaxed at RCHT and midwives established a second series of live Q&A sessions during which medical questions could be answered – Maternity Natters was born.

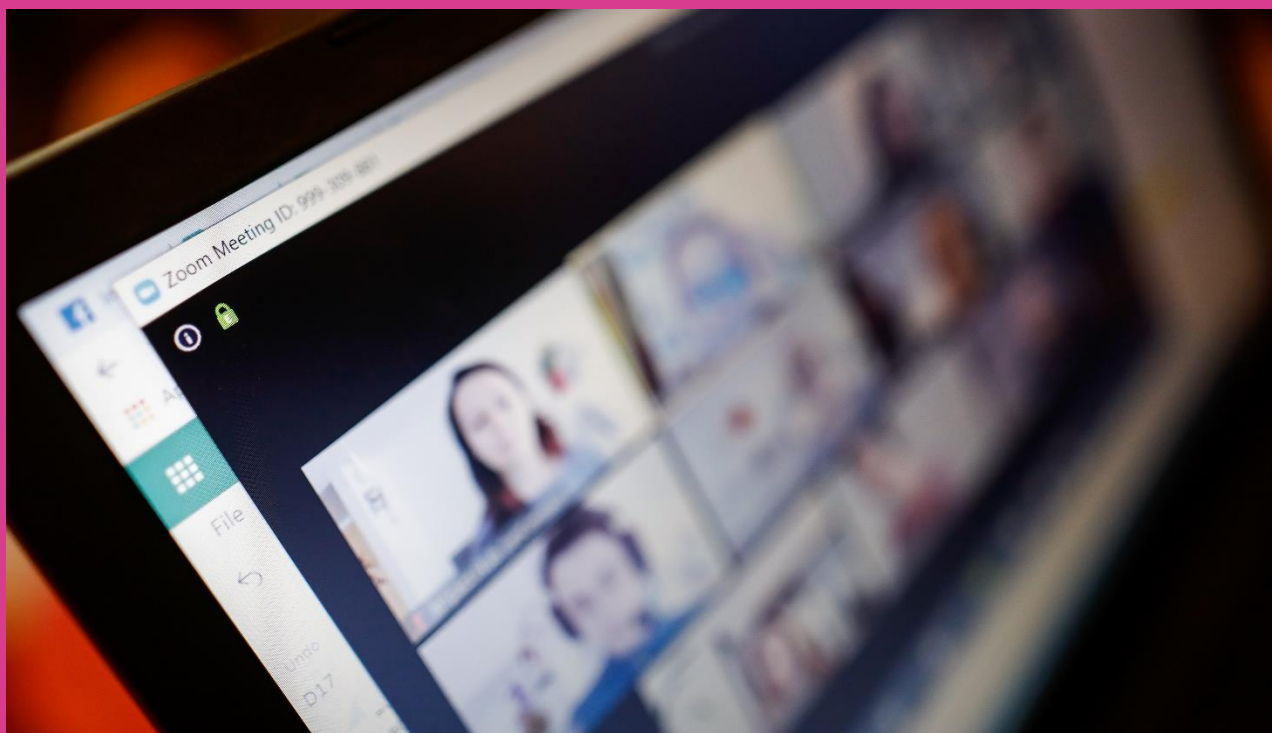
- Staff were able to offer more support when restrictions made this challenging
- Anxieties were reduced as women and their partners were able to gain up to date information
- People with learning disabilities found the information easier to process
- The live sessions brought a sense of community and connections were established



"These sessions have been amazing, it's great to be able to listen to all the advice and information and have the opportunity to ask questions. Even though this is my second pregnancy it's been really reassuring and interesting. I think they're incredibly valuable and should be considered in the future regardless of a second lockdown."

Maternity Natters participant.





Responding to COVID

Local critical response meetings

The health and social care system had a significant role to play in the identification and management of Covid 19 outbreaks, and how services needed to operate very differently.

We played a vital role in ensuring public feedback we received was fed into the appropriate channels and we continued to encourage those who plan and run services to consider how they respond to public opinion.

A number of new meetings were created and we took an active role within many, including:

- **Cornwall Covid 19 Local Engagement Board**
- **End of Life Cell**
- **Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Cell**
- **Community and Wellbeing Cell**
- **VCSE Emergency Response Alliance (VERA)**
- **Vaccines Inequality Steering Group**

These brought together a wide range of voluntary sector representatives to discuss their solutions and challenges in supporting people within our communities. The voluntary sector were a crucial element of the pandemic response and Healthwatch Cornwall supported these initiatives, regularly feeding in the views from people who had got in touch with us.



Responding to COVID

Co-production and public engagement

Healthwatch Cornwall worked with Co-Create to explore the positive effects and challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a view to making sustainable changes.

This research set out to independently review any changes to local working practices in Cornwall's Health and Social Care system during the initial Covid-19 period with specific regard to public engagement and co-production - and to make recommendations for how positive aspects of this can be sustained locally in the longer term and elsewhere.

The report made the following findings:

- **6 positive changes were reported**
- **5 negative changes were reported**
- **15 principles for sustained change were made**
- **7 recommendations in total were made**

The use of technology to support and enhance services and public engagement was a notable positive, as well as a rapid pace of change allowing the speedy implementation of long-discussed ideas. There was also a notable increase in the speed of funding availability and ensuing access to it. Among the five negative impacts were communication difficulties for marginalised groups, digital exclusion and a lack of public engagement with funding initiatives.



In focus

Partnership Boards

A Learning Disability, Autism and Carers Service Users Group was created to ensure that their voices continue to be heard throughout the pandemic. It has been enthusiastically adopted, especially by participants with sensory issues, who see it as a comfortable and safe space to communicate.

This relaxed and informal online forum feeds directly into the Partnership Boards, allowing service users to share their feedback, thoughts and experiences, as well as contributing to local strategy development, without the pressures of joining formal meetings. In turn, local decision makers benefit from hearing unfiltered views on the big issues being faced by groups that could otherwise be hard to reach as a result of the lockdown.

The Boards have also engaged closely with Cornwall Council in the revision of the Adult Social Care Charging Policy and the Carers Policy and the start of the development of a Working Age Adults Programme, which will see the implementation of LD and Autism Strategies by 2022.



"I like it because it's an open communication space. It's Autism and LD led and allows the views of carers and service users to be heard as one."

"Keeping the meetings on Zoom takes away the difficulty of transport for people."

LD, Autism and Carers Service Users Group feedback.





In focus Adult Safeguarding

Healthwatch Cornwall were commissioned to conduct a review of adult safeguarding services in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly and are currently in the final stages of this year long project.

Healthwatch Cornwall interviewed 28 service users to understand the safeguarding process from the perspective of those with lived experience, as a result of this we have been able to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the process from people with direct lived experience.

16 recommendations have been made, founded on evidence-based decision making. The report has been presented to the Safeguarding Adults Board who have accepted the recommendations.



"Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Adults Board were delighted to work with Healthwatch Cornwall to find out about local people's experiences of adult safeguarding. It was imperative for us to be able to build a comprehensive understanding of the process from the perspective of people going through the process, and Healthwatch Cornwall have excelled in providing us with these valuable insights to help us make improvements in the future."

Fiona Field, Independent Chair of Safeguarding Adults Board for Cornwall and The Isles of Scilly.





In focus

Maternity Voices Partnership

Kernow Maternity Voices Partnership (KMVP) published a report on maternity services at Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust, using the NHS England 15 steps framework quality improvement toolkit.

KMVP conducted the research by speaking to women and birthing people, spending around 20 minutes in different areas at the hospital. 17 recommendations were made to make improvements to the facilities for service users. The report has been shared with the system and local maternity services.

Healthwatch Cornwall are pleased to have been able to support the KMVP initiative and look forward to the recommendations being implemented by the maternity services at RCHT.



"It has been great to work so closely with the KMVP team on this report using the 15 steps framework and we welcome the findings. User feedback is so important in allowing us to understand lived experience, the work of KMVP and the 15 steps toolkit allows us to hear the service users voice first-hand and we look forward to working with the MVP team to integrate the findings and recommendations going forward."

Jessica Slater, Programme manager, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly local maternity and neonatal system.





In focus

Volunteers

At Healthwatch Cornwall, we are supported by 15 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 helped us with:

- **Signposting**

As part of our accessing mental health services campaign, our volunteers helped us with broadening our signposting information. Our volunteers researched what support and advice was available, helping us to provide this information to people in Cornwall needing help and support.

- **Research analysis**

Our volunteers also helped us to analyse results from our research campaigns which has been an invaluable source of support. They have assisted our engagement team in areas such as transcribing, taking telephone feedback and dealing with occasionally difficult subject matters.



Volunteer with us

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch with Rhiannon

✉ Rhiannon.pring@healthwatchcornwall.co.uk

☎ **01872 273501**

Message from our CEO



Looking forward – we have a detailed Business Plan of activity for the year. Again our absolute focus is on achieving improvements in the NHS and social care services for the people of Cornwall.



It hardly needs saying but it has been a difficult year for everyone.

The pandemic and lockdown have significantly hampered our ability to reach out to members of the public so they can share their experiences of the NHS and social care services with us. Our volunteers, who perform an important element of that outreach, have also seen their activities restricted. However, as I write this we are emerging from lockdown; we will be back stronger and more innovative in the way we manage our external engagement.

Despite these challenges, Healthwatch Cornwall can point to a year of achievement. We developed new ways to listen to the people of Cornwall and understand their concerns, frustrations and good news about health and social care services and we continued to take that evidence to those that commission and provide services in order to seek improvements.

We continued our focus on end of life care and mental health and wellbeing. A dedicated phoneline and website for the Cornwall Bereavement Network was a key achievement as was introduction of a 24/7 mental health support line. The series of mental wellbeing guides created by the local Public Health team were a great source of information. Our follow up campaign in 2021 'Accessing Mental Health Services in Cornwall' has provided the system with further insight into how the people in Cornwall are dealing with the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

Access to NHS dentistry was another area of focus for us, the impact of the pandemic really highlighted the limited availability of NHS dental services. We had a huge increase in numbers of people contacting us for advice and information about how to access both emergency and routine dental care and we are working closely with NHS England and local providers to improve our situation in Cornwall.

Mario Dunn,
CEO Healthwatch Cornwall.

Next steps & thank you

Top priorities for 2021-22

- End of Life, Dentistry and Mental Health are three focus areas of work that will be prioritised
- Preparing for Pregnancy & Parenthood, Ageing Well, Partnership Boards & KMVP are also key focus areas
- Lay representation as part of the new Integrated Care System in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

Next steps

- Continue to listen to residents and act as a critical friend to the health and social care system
- Follow up on recommendations made around hospital discharge, dentistry and covid-19 research
- Develop the volunteer programme and expand our engagement with seldom heard groups

Thank you

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Our volunteers | • Cornwall Foundation Trust |
| • Cornwall Council | • Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust |
| • Healthwatch England | • NHS Kernow |
| • Outlook South West | • NHS improvement South West |
| • Public Health | • Sea Sanctuary |
| • Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum | • All the members of our community who shared feedback |



About us

About us

Healthwatch Cornwall CIC, 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. Through 2020/21 the board met quarterly and made decisions on matters such as the appointment of our new CEO and the creation of a new charity, Trestadow, which will enable us to explore new areas of work in the coming years.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

- 44% of our total feedback received was in relation to dentistry and so this is now a key focus area in our business plan.
- Responses received in our digital public engagement session on mental health confirmed the need for more trauma based services which is already part of the local mental health strategy.

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