

Here for you

Facing challenges together

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Annual Report 2020-21



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Message from our Chair

It would be an understatement to say that the Health and Care system faced unprecedented pressures in 2020/2021. This also brought with it extra challenges for our team who needed to adapt to new ways of working, and develop innovative ways of engaging with the public to ensure their voices were heard at a time where it was more important than ever.

Despite these challenges, I am proud to say that 2020/2021 was a year of success and achievement for our team.

The lack of opportunities for face to face engagement has been particularly challenging for a team who are so used to being out and about speaking to the public, however the use of virtual methods of engagement, such as our mental health group and the development of our virtual care home engagement pilot have ensured that we have maintained a high level of contact with members of the public at a time where it has been needed most.

Through the Telephone Buddy Support Network our dedicated volunteers have continued to support people affected by loneliness and isolation by offering a regular friendly chat. This service has also proved to be a great way to capture experiences of people using health and care services and another opportunity to offer advice on how to access services and support.



I am incredibly impressed with the energy and enthusiasm the team have shown during a very difficult year. They have gone to great lengths to ensure the right balance of ensuring that patient voice is an important part of decision making whilst at the same time offering support to a system under pressure.

I am pleased to say that due to recent new funding, this service looks set to continue and go from strength to strength in the coming year and I look forward to seeing how it continues to develop.

Ensuring the public were kept up to date with clear, accurate and trusted information has been a key priority for the team over the last year. Through new initiatives such as the daily good news report, the team were able to ensure that members of the public understood the ever changing guidance.

For people in our communities with a learning disability and/ or autism, navigating complex information and understanding how to stay safe was even harder. We recognised this and along with partners from across the Humber region, we developed a range of interactive and accessible resources to allow people with additional needs to understand how to take care of themselves and access support during the pandemic.

As services work hard to recover from the pandemic, we will continue to be here as the independent voice, ensuring that what matters most to you is heard by those with the power to make decisions.

Thankyou to all of the staff, volunteers, partners and members of the public who have contributed to our work over the past year. Despite the challenges ahead, I remain optimistic for a safe and successful 2021- 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol'.

Carol Lightburn
Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Chair



About us

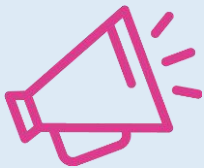
Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in North Lincolnshire. 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.



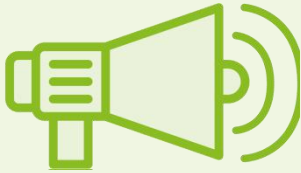
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the 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

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

Reaching out



We heard from

1,336 people

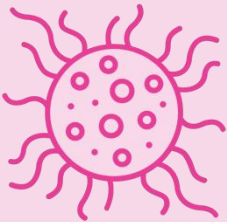
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

18,925 people

this year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

1426

people during this year through our information giving initiatives, vaccine survey and Telephone Buddy Support Network.

Making a difference to care



We published

22 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we made recommendations for improvement.

20% of recommendations

we made last year have been acted upon, at the point where we reviewed progress.

Health and care that works for you



78 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed 945 hours which is 126 working days (based on a 7.5 hour day).

We employ 4.3 staff

This is an increase of 1 part time staff member compared to last year.

£115,640 in funding

was received from our local authority which is the same as last year.



Then and now- Cervical Screening access



In late 2019 we were contacted by a local disability rights campaigner who raised an important issue on behalf of a number of women concerning barriers to accessing cervical screening. We received feedback that women who are disabled were struggling to access their cervical screening appointments due to a lack of hoists in GP surgeries to allow them to transfer independently on to the examination table.

In early 2020 we launched our access to cervical screening project and encouraged all women over the age of 25 to take part by sharing their experiences of cervical screening. We conducted a survey and several focus groups and interviews with women with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

In our investigation we found that there were various emotional and physical barriers to accessing cervical screening. We also found that those with physical and learning disabilities were less satisfied with the cervical screening process. During discussions within our focus groups and interview sessions, women reported being given less information or involvement in decision making around whether or not to be screened. We also discovered that for women who were physically disabled, there were no hoist facilities available in GP surgeries in the local area. This could be a disadvantage to some service users who wish to access screening or other procedures which require transfer to a treatment bed and are unable to do so independently. Other issues raised included a lack of accessible information for women with learning difficulties; issues around appointment times; and sensitivities around screening for women who have experienced sexual abuse.

We published our report in summer 2020 with 13 recommendations to GP practices, the CCG and the Local Authority, including;

- The installation of hoists in GP practices. Where this is not possible there should be at least 1 hoist available within each primary care network.
- Easy read information should be provided to patients with a learning disability to allow them to make an informed choice.
- GP practices should refer those profoundly affected by previous abuse or trauma to support services.

A copy of the report and responses to our recommendations is available on our website;

<https://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk/general-interest-reports>



Now: Lack of hoists in GP practices

Since publishing the report, North Lincolnshire CCG have committed to reinforcing to all Primary Care practices the requirement to make reasonable adjustments within the GP practice; this includes making the practices more accessible for wheelchair users. However, the issue of lack of hoists in GP surgeries is still ongoing.

Although this investigation focused on the issue of accessing cervical screening independently, it has wider implications for anyone trying to access any kind of intimate examination that cannot transfer independently on to an examination table.

Our report caught the interest of local MP Holly Mumby-Croft who has asked the Department for Health and Social Care;

‘What assessment has been made of the adequacy of the availability of hoists in (a) GP and

(b) Primary Care settings to ensure that patients with conditions that affect mobility are able to be examined?’

BBC Look North also became aware of the issue and interviewed the team at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire to understand how the report came about and who the issue affects.

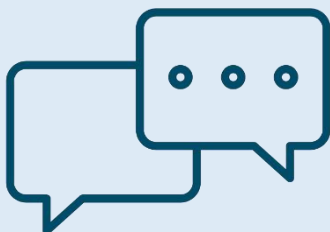


The survey undertaken by Healthwatch exceeded my expectations. Not only did they start a questionnaire, but they also made it available in an easy read format so that women with learning disabilities could have their say too. They ran focus groups with ladies with both physical and learning disabilities. This has provided a much-needed snapshot into the lived experiences of a group of women who are often overlooked.” Lorna Fillingham

What next?

This is an ongoing local and national issue and Healthwatch North Lincolnshire are committed to ensuring that addressing the lack of hoists in GP practices remains a high priority for the CCG and GP practices.

Share your views with us



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.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

 **01724 844986**

 enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk



"I have been trying to get some proper support for months but I am very unwell and no one seems to listen. I was referred to social services for an assessment but they wouldn't do one"
- Survey Respondent

Then and now - Mental Health



Thanks to people sharing their experiences of local mental health services during the pandemic we were able to develop a guide of services along with information about different mental health concerns to help make the mental health landscape easier to navigate.

People told us that they were unsure of how to access services and support, and those who had been able to access services told us they had experienced difficulties in getting the right support in the right way. We developed an easy to read guide of all local and national support services and information on self help which was particularly welcomed.

Additionally, as a result of increased feedback about access to services at the beginning of the pandemic we undertook a survey of local people to find out how the restrictions had affected mental health in North Lincolnshire.

Of those surveyed, 75% of those with previous mental health concerns and 40% of those with no previous mental health concerns experienced a decline in their mental health. When asked about support they had accessed, many were turning to family and friends and as little as 8% accessed formal mental health services.

From this work we realised that people were wanting to talk about and normalise mental health. People had been turning to friends and family but thought that services weren't listening to them, or were ineffectively listening. With support from our local Mind, we set out to change this in November 2020, with the creation and development of our Every Voice Matters group.

"A member of the public went to her GP about her mental health as she has been struggling to cope with supporting her family. She was referred to poesis and they told her she needed to 'look after herself first' and find 'me time'. She felt disregarded and didn't see the contact as helpful."





Now: Every Voice Matters

The Every Voice Matters group is an opportunity for people to share their experiences of mental health services in a safe and neutral space and now contributes to various work streams in the development and improvement of local mental health services.

The Every Voice Matters groups is an informal group held virtually on a monthly basis and attended by service users and members of the public, many of whom attend regularly each session. The sessions are hosted by Healthwatch North Lincolnshire which allows services users to know they are sharing their views with an independent organisation. Staff from Mind are on hand to offer mental health advice and support where needed.

Guest speakers are often invited to attend the group to talk about what services and support they offer to support mental health.

Conversations are focused around how service users are managing in the current climate and how they can be better supported. These discussions will be vital for creating suitable services in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and some services are already starting to take shape; such as the newly anticipated crisis house and Community Champions low level support and interest groups.

Sessions are also used to signpost individuals to relevant services which may be able to support. Recently one gentleman who attended reported feeling a little disconnected and a visiting professional suggested he explore the local 'Men in Sheds' group. Whilst the individual was unsure whether this would be useful to him, he had not heard of the service and was sent information via email to consider whether this may be of interest to him or not.

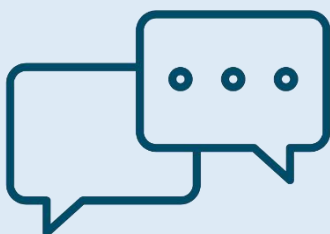


"I look forward to attending the group talks. It's like a little family of like minded people and a support network. Subjects are interesting and informative, and a pleasure to be a part of"
- Sharon

Crisis House

Local patient participation groups have been approached by the CCG to be involved in the mobilisation of a local crisis house. Patient views on the environment have been gathered highlighting the importance of individual rooms with en-suite facilities, to provide a safe and comfortable environment, alongside an open plan social area to aid with rebuilding social skills to aid recovery. These points were fed back to Mind and North Lincolnshire CCG who have adapted plans to incorporate these views. Further work is continuing with patient engagement on this project to understand what a good crisis house would look like to service users. This will ensure that the crisis house will be fit for purpose and give it the best chance of success by involving and empowering service users to be part of its development.

Every Voice Matters



**Have
your
say**

Second Thursday of each month

7pm-8pm

Via Zoom

**Talk
to us...**

(15 min drop-in available on Wednesday from 7pm to check connectivity)

To get the link to access this session and for email reminders contact:

lmajor@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk



Then and now – Working together

Then

Each Healthwatch is set up to serve the unique communities in which they represent. However, we recognised that we could have a greater impact for our residents if we could work together on issues that crossed boundaries and services. This meant that for certain issues and projects we would take a more collaborative approach on gathering views and opinions of services across a wider geographical footprint. This was trialled, and was successful in 2018 when Healthwatch across the Humber, Coast and Vale worked collectively on the NHS Long Term Plan. As part of this project we gathered feedback on services that residents in our areas travelled to. These included:

Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Now

All four Healthwatch across the Humber region have come together to form the Healthwatch Humber Network.

The Healthwatch Humber Network is a mini network of local Healthwatch teams made up of East Riding, Hull, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. These Healthwatch teams have the benefit of geographic proximity, as well as being hosted by the same organisation. This means that in some circumstances, the network will work together to develop projects on a collective basis where there is equal need and benefit to each local community.

Working together in this way means that a more extensive range of feedback can be gathered which is then collated in to a central system, and allows for themes and trends to be identified on a much larger footprint. It also ensures that no matter where a person accesses Healthwatch, they will get the same advice and opportunity to have their voice heard.



As part of this more collaborative approach a member of staff represents the whole network at regional meetings. This includes Humber, Coast and Vale ICS Partnership, Cancer Alliance Collaborative, Maternity Voices Partnership, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Trust, and Local Pharmaceutical Committees. This enables staff to share the workload and identify themes and trends in a more coordinated approach. This has benefited our populations as greater involvement has meant greater impact on local and regional issues.

Intelligence gathered by the Healthwatch Humber Network also gets fed directly into the Humber Acute Services Review that is currently taking place. All patients' views on specific areas are compiled as a whole with one Healthwatch being the Lead, and are fed into the system to inform changes made to local acute care services. This has included patients having their say on Emergency Care, with local A&E Departments now having renovations to improve access and services, as people wanted emergency care to be more easily accessible and closer to home.

By taking a collective approach to some elements of our work we are able to share resources, experiences and have a greater impact on the areas that we serve.

Next steps

As other services from across the region will be working more closely together, we will have more opportunities to share our understanding of what you want to see in the coming months.

Our next joint project will look at the impact of delayed access to care across the Humber region. To get involved contact us on 01724 844986.

Responding to COVID-19



Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic. The insights we collect are shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally.
- Supporting people to access COVID-19 support.
- Providing befriending support through the Telephone Buddy Support Network.
- Supporting people with a learning disability and / or autism to understand the COVID-19 guidance and how to stay safe.
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out.
- Gathering experiences of the covid-19 vaccine.



Keeping People Connected – COVID-19 Community Champions

From the beginning of the pandemic we became concerned that people with a learning disability or autism living in the community may struggle to understand the ever changing guidelines, and feel confused and isolated. In May 2020, we became aware of a project funded by the Transforming Care Partnership Board that was developed to reduce the number of people with LD / ASD being disproportionately affected by the pandemic and jumped at the opportunity to be involved.

Initially the 12 week project involved expanding our Telephone Buddy Support Network to provide support to people living in the community with a learning disability and / or autism to ensure these individuals were safe, understood the guidelines, and were able to access the right services. We created a wide range of easy read resources to promote the service, and encouraged referrals from a range of sources such as GP practices and support groups.

In August this project was extended for an additional 8 weeks. However this time a different approach was taken. For this extension we worked closely with Inclusion North, Cloverleaf Advocacy, Matthew's Hub, Choices and Rights and Autism Plus; together forming the Humber COVID-19 Information Champions Network.

As part of this network we produced 7 e-newsletters with a different weekly topic to provide accurate, up to date and accessible information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and related subjects for people with autism and/or learning disabilities. Topics included; identifying COVID-19 symptoms, employment, and mental health support. These topics were selected because we recognised their importance under the current circumstances, and because the existing information surrounding them was lacking in accessibility.

Working together – sharing accessible information

By collating the information into a weekly newsletter we were able to create a single source of accessible information that could be shared widely.

To ensure accessibility, we included a number of different interactive resources.

These included:

- Easy-read/low-literacy documents
- Videos in British Sign Language (BSL)
- Makaton videos
- Links to resources in alternative languages to English



In total, the newsletter was sent out to 630 recipients which included the Healthwatch North Lincolnshire e-mailing list, local councillors, local support groups, charities, and individuals working within the NHS and North Lincolnshire Council. The newsletter was also shared by the network in East Riding and Hull.

The engaging content of the newsletter was very popular and caught the attention of Scunthorpe MP Holly Mumby-Croft, who wrote to us twice stating that she found the information 'excellent' and useful and had shared it with her colleagues and on her website.

As a result of the project, staff have improved their knowledge surrounding alternative accessible resources, and have increased their collection of easy-read documents and provided a space for these publications to become a permanent feature on the Healthwatch North Lincolnshire website.

In addition, the project has paved the way for further collaborations with a number of local groups, including the performance group Starlight Arts, who have produced further Makaton information videos for us since the COVID-19 Champions project ended.

“It was great to pool our resources, experience and skill sets together to benefit autistic adults and those with a learning disability in our communities in North Lincolnshire. By working together we were able to reach more people which during the lockdowns was challenging as well as vital.”



-Peggy O'Neill Cox, Cloverleaf Advocacy

Telephone Buddy Support Network

In response to the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, we set up the Telephone Buddy Support Network (TBSN) at the end of March 2020 to support residents in North Lincolnshire who felt isolated and lonely, especially during the first lockdown.

The service was available to anyone, no matter what their age, who felt they needed support to feel less isolated or lonely.

Through our recruitment process we were really fortunate to have a large influx of volunteers come forward to support people from the comfort of their own sofas!

Training and recruitment had to be carried out virtually, which came with its own challenges but volunteers were soon up and running supporting people over the telephone. Volunteers and buddies were carefully matched, based on mutual interests and calls took place each week on an agreed day and time to provide social support, updates on COVID-19 government restrictions, information and signposting. We also referred into other services where needed, such as to North Lincolnshire Council's COVID-19 response team for support with food shopping and prescription collections.

The overall aim of the service is to promote conversations and help people feel connected with others to try and alleviate isolation and loneliness and improve people's mental health. Many local organisations refer into the service including North Lincolnshire Council's COVID-19 response team, social prescribing and other local voluntary and public sector organisations. People can also self-refer into the service to receive the calls.

"Issues of loneliness & social isolation have risen dramatically within the community over the COVID-19 pandemic and it is reassuring that our clients receive full support and company from a friendly voice at the end of the phone." – **Fiona, social prescribing link worker**



Case studies

What seems like a small act of kindness from a volunteer makes a world of difference to the people they support. Comments received include:

"I enjoy the calls, we get on like a house on fire!"

"The calls have been a saviour to be honest, especially during lockdown"

"I really enjoy my calls, we have the same sense of humour"

"Oh yes, I want them (the calls) to continue, you matched us well!"

"My buddy makes me laugh!"

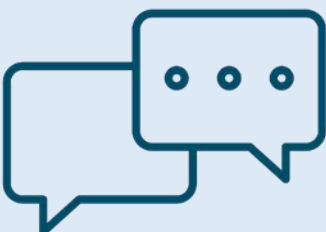
Dawn's story

"I started receiving calls from the Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Telephone Buddy Support Network in 2020. Because of a number of health conditions I have, I sometimes felt isolated and therefore wanted someone to talk to.

Initially I began having just friendly calls once a week, but over time as my volunteer got to know me better, I felt more comfortable with asking for additional help and support. In particular, they gave me advice on how to get the best out of the health services I use, including my local dentist and GP practice.

Although initially I wasn't sure what to expect from the service, I think that the regular calls have been very good at improving my confidence and empowering me to ask for support when I need it. In addition, the calls have helped to improve my general wellbeing over the difficult lockdown period.

Healthwatch have gone above and beyond and have been a great support over the last months, and I hope that more individuals with disabilities such as myself are able to access the Telephone Buddy Support Network in the future."



Fancy a chat?

If you or anyone you know is feeling isolated and would like a friendly regular call from one of our volunteers contact us on 01724 844986

Working together

Partnership working is a key part of the Telephone Buddy Support Network and North Lincolnshire Alliance Volunteer Hub have been a huge support in the recruitment and training of volunteers. Providing training opportunities to support volunteer development is a key part of the work we do with our volunteers.

"The Healthwatch telephone support volunteers have been able to access training arranged by the Alliance Volunteer Hub to support them in their role, including 'Understanding Grief and Loss' delivered by Lindsey Lodge Hospice and 'Mental Health Awareness' delivered by Scunthorpe & District Mind." **Jacky Birkett, Manager Alliance Volunteer Hub**

Another key partner in the referral and welfare process has been North Lincolnshire Council's Community Teams. In the event that a volunteer can't reach their buddy and does not have a next of kin, a Community Team Activator will carry out a welfare check to see that the person is okay.

"Working with Healthwatch means that we can help people at the earliest opportunity to reconnect with the world which helps them to stay in touch with others."

North Lincolnshire Council are really proud to work with Healthwatch on this initiative to continue to keep residents safe and connected with others." **Mags Smithson, Lead Officer for Community Participation and Wellbeing, North Lincolnshire Council**

Next steps

We are delighted to have been successfully awarded funding to continue to deliver the service over the next 12 months. This means we will be able to expand and develop the service to be able to support more people in North Lincolnshire.

This opportunity also means we will be able to listen to more people's experiences of health and care services within our communities.

As restrictions continue to be lifted and we begin to move towards more face to face interaction, we aim to support volunteers to meet their buddies for the first time and also support the clients to attend local groups and activities. Regular coffee mornings will also be hosted for volunteers and their clients.

Overall, despite the last 12 months being one of the toughest years for us all, the Telephone Buddy Support Network has really highlighted how the local community have pulled together to support each other when it is most needed.



Interested in volunteering?

If you would like to become a telephone buddy, or are interested in one of our other volunteer roles, we would love to hear from you!

Call us on 01724 844986 or email

volunteer@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

Virtual care home engagement pilot



The arrival of COVID-19 in March 2020 meant that strict national visiting restrictions were placed on care homes to prevent the spread of infection and ensure the health and safety of both care workers and their residents.

Around the same time Healthwatch England instructed all local Healthwatch to cease all Enter and View activity until further notice. This meant that we were no longer able to use our statutory powers of entry, to be able to visit care homes to understand the experiences of those living and working in residential care.

As a result of the reduced contact from outside visitors we realised that the voices of those who have been most affected by the changes in residential settings had been going largely unheard.

Working together

Healthwatch teams in North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire remained committed to ensuring the voices of residents were heard and considered in any learning from the pandemic. To do this, each Healthwatch needed to consider the safest and most effective way to engage with care home residents and staff, whilst at the same time minimising the disruption and burden placed on teams in the care home sector.

We identified that by working together across the Humber Network we would be able to share resources, skills and learning from the pilot which could be used for future engagement projects.

The pilot consisted of pre-engagement through social media, to raise awareness of the project and identify any care homes that would be suitable, and any relatives that would be happy to speak to us.

This was then followed by a week long engagement which consisted of a virtual meeting with a care home manager, followed by a virtual 'tour' of the building and telephone/zoom or Whatsapp interviews with relatives, residents and staff. Paper copies of the

questions were also made available to those who were unable to speak to us.

Each area across the Humber selected three homes to take part in the project and in total we heard the views of 11 registered Managers, 100 staff members, 62 relatives and 70 residents.

Overall residents felt well supported during the pandemic, but felt that staff had less time to interact with them which was leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. There was some frustration from relatives who wanted to visit their loved ones, but overall they understood the reasons for the restrictions, and thanked staff for keeping their relatives safe.

Managers and staff told us they had received excellent support from the local authority and CCG, but sometimes felt confused about government guidelines and how to apply them in the care home. This meant that there was an inconsistent approach to visiting and social distancing in the homes across the region.

The results of each of the visits have been shared with care home providers, the provider development team at North Lincolnshire Council, the CCG and the CQC.

Next steps

The pilot project was a good opportunity to test what works and what doesn't work quite as well under virtual conditions. Although it allowed us to engage with people in new ways, it was not a substitute for good quality enter and view visits. However the model does suit a range of purposes such as engaging with users of domiciliary care services, and will be used more widely in the coming months.

Want to find out more?

Visit our website

www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

Supporting the COVID-19 Vaccination rollout



Volunteer response

The welcome arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine in North Lincolnshire in December 2020 meant that GP practices needed to step up to deliver the largest vaccination program in history. Working with the Volunteer Alliance Hub, our staff team and some of our volunteers offered frontline support to the GP practices in the South Primary Care network (PCN) delivering the vaccine. This was a great opportunity to have some face to face interaction with members of the public for the first time in many months and gather valuable feedback about the rollout to share with PCN colleagues to support improvements.

Vaccine Feedback and attitudes

As the rollout expanded to reach more members of the public, the locations in which people were able to receive a vaccine increased, and at times this could be confusing for the public. We increased the reach of our vaccine survey to try to capture these experiences, as well as peoples attitudes to the vaccine locally. We used this information to produce messaging about the vaccine and shared on our social media and websites as well as our regular newsletter.

Information from the survey has also been shared with the Primary Care Networks, Volunteer Alliance Hub who were responsible for the volunteer response,

the CCG and Healthwatch England who have been keen to use these insights to understand vaccine attitudes nationally.

By understanding peoples experiences and thoughts and feelings about the vaccine, organisations are able to identify any groups that may be hesitant to take the vaccine and adapt services to meet the needs of those using them.

In total, 961 responses to the survey were received. Feedback included:

- Information provided before vaccination was inconsistent. We recommended that GP practices take a more consistent approach to providing information before vaccination so that everyone could make an informed choice.
- Concern over the length of time people were waiting between their first and second dose. We recommended that more information be provided to people upon receipt of their first vaccine.
- Overall respondents were satisfied with the location, car parking arrangements and the indoor signage. Almost all respondents were pleased with the help they received from the volunteers and many commented upon the friendliness and helpfulness of staff.

Our response to feedback

You said – we did

With all of our surveys, we offer the opportunity to members of the public to contact our team if more help or support is needed, or to sign up to our newsletter.

From the 961 responses to the vaccine survey, 114 people required further contact from our team.

The majority of these people required further reassurance about when and where they would be able to receive the vaccine, or wanted to find out when their second dose would be.

However in some cases we needed to support people further. Below are two examples of how we have helped members of the public.

You said

One patient explained that they were deaf and partially sighted. During their Covid-19 vaccination they told the nurse who proceeded to only speak to the patient's partner and not directly to the patient themselves. This left the patient feeling as though they were 'invisible'.

We did

We raised the matter with the GP practice who sent assurances around their compliance of the Accessible Information Standard, which included having a system in place for the booking and attendance of BSL interpreters. However, the practice also gave assurances that the issues raised by the individual would be mentioned at a clinical and admin team meeting to make sure staff understood their responsibilities. The practice would also look at providing Deaf Awareness training for all their staff and an assessment of the surgery would take place in order to make sure that the signage and information displayed was appropriate and accessible for everyone. On her visit for the second dose, the patient had a more positive experience of receiving the vaccine.

You said

One elderly patient told us that they had received their first dose of their vaccination in a care home before Christmas. However they were now back in their own home, and bedbound so unable to leave the house to attend the surgery for their second dose. The second dose was due, but the patient had still not heard how or when she would receive it.

We did

The patient was unable to resolve the issue herself, so with consent we contacted the GP practice to explain that this patient was now in her own home and required her second dose. The practice arranged a home visit and the patient has now received her 2nd dose of the vaccine.

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



33% on GP services



14% on Dentistry



24% on Hospital care



5% on Residential / Nursing Home

Accessing GP appointments

Many of the contacts made to Healthwatch North Lincolnshire concerned GP surgeries and how they had adapted during the pandemic. Comments included:

- Some patients being disappointed at receiving telephone / video consultations rather than face to face appointments.
- Experiencing delays in obtaining face to face appointments as initial telephone consultations were put place to first assess patient need.
- Confusion caused over miscommunication between practices and patients over COVID-19 vaccine eligibility.
- A sense of waiting longer for phones to be answered.



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.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk



01724 844986



enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk



Our Volunteers

At Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, during 2020/21 we have been very fortunate to have been supported by 78 volunteers across different roles including volunteer telephone support, virtual engagement, read and review and other projects.

This year our volunteers have:

- Supported over 123 people to feel less isolated and lonely during the pandemic through the Telephone Buddy Support Network.
- Attended training through the North Lincolnshire Alliance Volunteer Hub in understanding grief and loss and mental health awareness.
- Engaged with three care homes through virtual engagement, interviewing residents, relatives and staff, reporting good practice and making recommendations for improvements.
- Completed read and review projects for local health and care organisations, ensuring documentation is current, easy to understand and in a format that is user friendly.
- Supported the North Lincolnshire Volunteer Alliance Hub volunteering at vaccination centres across North Lincolnshire.

Despite the pandemic, 2020/21 has been a very successful year for volunteering with Healthwatch North Lincolnshire.

With the staff team working from home, it was a challenge at first to provide all recruitment and training online, but it also offered a new way of working that had not been explored previously. Staff could keep in touch with volunteers via regular zoom coffee mornings, email, and a volunteer WhatsApp group.

We have worked really hard to adapt our volunteer roles and offer new opportunities such as telephone support volunteer and virtual engagement volunteer. Both roles have been incredibly successful and allowed us to continue our work and support the most vulnerable members of our local community.

Award winning volunteer- Carol Anscombe

Healthwatch volunteer Carol Anscombe, won a regional award for 'Volunteering and Connecting Communities' through the Hey Smile Foundation volunteer awards in October 2020. Carol joined Healthwatch as a meet and greet volunteer in the Ironstone Centre and took on the additional role of telephone support buddy at the start of the pandemic, where she phoned three people a week. Carol also volunteers for Westcliff Community Works and the local hospital Chaplaincy service.



"We are so proud of Carol! She is a wonderful example of someone who generously gives back to her community and supports people quietly, without fuss and judgment. She is always thinking of others, is a great listener and supports people when they need it most."

Carol's story in her own words

"I started volunteering with Healthwatch in 2019 after the sad and sudden death of my husband John in January. I had spent a few months in a very dark place, not wanting to leave the house and not knowing how to go on with my life without my husband. My family encouraged me to start volunteering to give myself a purpose. Since starting in this role my confidence has grown and I have taken on additional volunteering with the telephone buddy service, and with other local organisations. I can't thank Healthwatch and Westcliff Community Works enough for their help and support during the most difficult period of my life."



Young volunteer - Kelsey

“Healthwatch has been an amazing opportunity for me to improve my social skills and confidence and has had a huge positive impact on my mental health. As a Health and Social Care student I have enjoyed learning about the people in our local area and helping and supporting them during the pandemic. It is so amazing to know how many lives we have maybe made that little bit better just by talking to people over the phone.”

Telephone support volunteer - Mark

“I have been volunteering with Healthwatch North Lincolnshire for around a year and I really enjoy it. I wanted to do something to give back during the pandemic as I recognised that for many it is a lonely, isolating time. I volunteer with Samaritans but I wanted to do something which would help people in a more personal way. I think the service given to vulnerable individuals by Healthwatch has been amazing and I look forward to continuing that work.”



Volunteer - Wendy

I have been volunteering for a year as a telephone buddy to support isolated people during the lockdowns. I contact two people weekly and thoroughly enjoy the conversations we have.

I have enjoyed my involvement in the care home projects too. Visits have been virtual during the pandemic but hopefully as lockdowns ease, the visits will be in person to give feedback and suggestions for improvement. I enjoy the varied work and gain a lot of satisfaction from a fairly small commitment in hours.”



Volunteer with us!

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at [Healthwatch North Lincolnshire](https://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk) .



www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

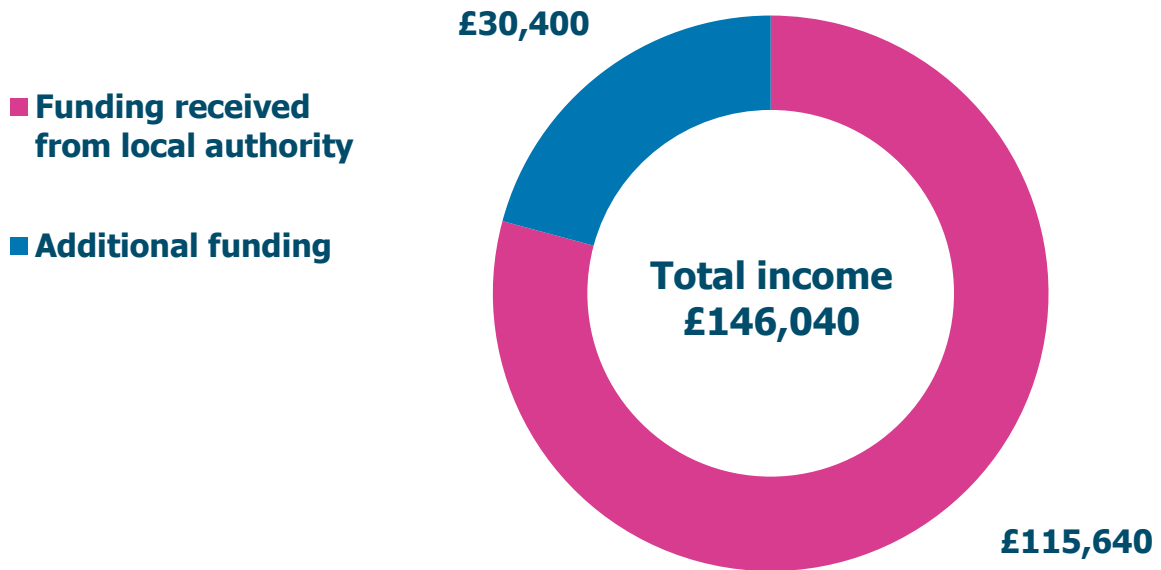
01724 844986

volunteer@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk

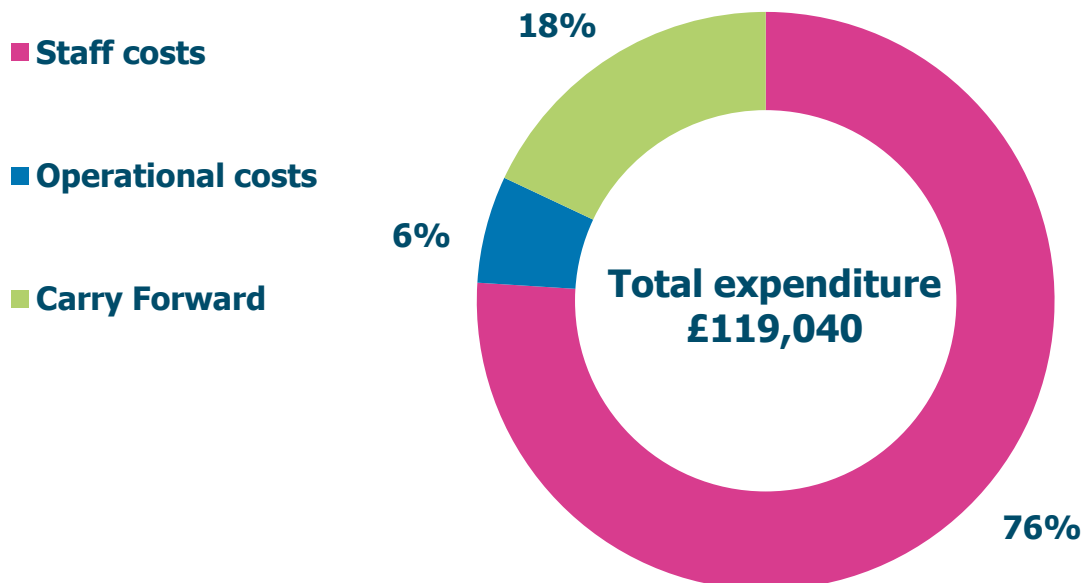
Finances

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

Income



Expenditure



Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22

1. Understanding the impact of delayed access to care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Supporting patient engagement in the Hospital Trust's review of its community services.
3. Support improvements in hospital discharge and provide evaluation of the discharge to assess/Welcome Home service.

Next steps

- Resume face to face engagement as soon as safe and possible to do so.
- Continue to listen to the views and experiences of those living in care homes.
- Continue to encourage GP practices to install hoists to allow access for disabled people.
- Further delivery of the mental health participation group to facilitate service user involvement in the development of the new crisis house service.
- Continue to support and hear the needs of our more vulnerable service users through continued delivery of our telephone befriending service.



"In the coming months, our team will continue to be on hand to support you to get the most out of health and social care services. Every comment and experience shared, whether good or bad helps us to understand how well the system is working for you. So please continue to share with us!"

Thankyou

Thankyou to everyone who has shared their views and experiences with us over the past 12 months. Thankyou to our wonderful volunteers who have selflessly given up their time to support vulnerable people. Thank you also to our partners who have contributed to our work:

- North Lincolnshire Healthy Lifestyle service
- Lindsey Lodge Hospice
- Macmillan cancer support
- Diabetes UK
- Natural Choice Group
- North Lincolnshire MVP
- Peggy's world
- Stroke Association
- Scunthorpe Central
- Citizens advice North Lincolnshire
- PiP (parents in partnership)



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, Suite 37, Normanby Gateway, Lysaghts Way, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, DN15 9YG.

The contract to provide Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is held by Meeting New Horizons CIC, a community interest company. Registered in England No 7605054, Registered Office The Strand, 75 Beverley Road, Hull HU3 1XL.

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire 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 Advisory Body consists of 3 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Advisory Body ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met 2 times.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. This includes gathering views and opinions and identifying areas of concern; gaining insights from information and signposting enquiries; collecting intelligence from partners and issue led Boards; and also in supporting the public in having a voice on service areas that are earmarked for change.

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

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

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. We achieve this through proactively and systematically working with groups and organisations representatives of these diverse communities.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible and we publish it on our website www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk.

2020-21 priorities

Project / activity area	Changes made to services
Telephone Buddy Service	Provided 945 hours of support to 123 isolated individuals and provided early identification of emerging issues.
Care Homes Sector Support	Ensured that residents continued to have a voice during Covid 19 restrictions, ensuring services continued to meet their needs and good practice could be shared more widely.
Cervical screening	Provided evidence of the challenges individuals who are unable to transfer independently when hoists are not available within primary care.

Responses to recommendations and requests

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

There were no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is represented on the North Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Carrie Butler, Healthwatch Delivery Manager.

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Contract holder

The contract to provide Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is held by:

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