



**Annual Report 2024–2025**

# **Unlocking the power of people-driven care**

Healthwatch Lincolnshire

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"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

**Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England**

# A message from our Chair

## **Healthwatch Lincolnshire continues to be the voice of the communities we serve.**

This year we have continued to dedicate our efforts to hearing from the local community. Our four detailed and varied research projects highlight issues that affect thousands of people and the insights provided through this engagement have already had impact, with direct influence on health and care decisions and more projects and connections created as a result.

Our information signposting team, along with our data analysts, continue to spot trends and then proactively work to highlight the problem and support people to overcome them both individually and then in the wider context of system change.

By acting on feedback, our work makes a direct difference to people's lives.

Our holistic approach means that everyone from service users to decision makers is considered, allowing us to track impact and change as a result of our actions.

By working closely with the Integrated Care Board, councils and other key health and care stakeholders, we are able to make meaningful change.

In 2024/25, HWLinCs was selected to continue to deliver Healthwatch Lincolnshire, a decision the team is proud of and a responsibility we cherish.



"Healthwatch Lincolnshire is for the people of Lincolnshire. It is guided by the Healthwatch Steering Group, which meets to decide the direction and focus of our efforts. We have spaces available on this important board and welcome all enquiries for new membership."

**Liz Ball, Healthwatch Steering Group Chair**

## About us

# Healthwatch Lincolnshire is your local health and social care champion.

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



### Healthwatch's vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



### Healthwatch's mission

To make sure that 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** people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 3,300 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ nine staff and our work is supported by 36 volunteers.

## Reaching out:



**3,300** people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

**1,192** people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **wheelchair services in Lincolnshire** and **NHS dentist access**.

## Championing your voice:



We published **14** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas such as **mental health, respiratory health** and **neurology**.

Our most popular report was the **Lincolnshire Community Pharmacy Findings**, highlighting people's experiences with the pharmacy use in the county.

## Statutory funding:



We're funded by Lincolnshire County Council. In 2024/25 we received **£304,549**, which is **1.65% more** than last year.

# A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Lincolnshire. Here are a few highlights.

## Spring

We published our Menstrual and Menopausal Health Report, which continued to have impact throughout the year.



Our information and signposting team highlighted longstanding difficulties in accessing necessary care through the wheelchair service, detailing three local case studies.



## Summer

Our YourVoice@Healthwatch public event launched and shaped the Community and Primary Partnership, in association with Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board.



The Enter + View volunteers visited Woodview Care Home and created a report that highlighted the positives, as well as recommendations based on feedback from families and residents.



## Autumn

The Healthwatch Lincolnshire Pharmacy Survey report was published, ensuring residents' experiences shape the development and delivery of pharmaceutical services in the county.



Stakeholders and decision makers attended our webinar that launched the full Menstrual Health report.



## Winter

We published our Respiratory Health Report, which collected Lincolnshire residents' experience of asthma, COPD and more, looking at diagnosis, treatment, care and medication.



Our Enter + View team visited hospital emergency departments to gather patient and staff feedback, assess care quality, and highlight areas for improvement.





# Working together for change

**We've worked to bring together organisations to ensure people's experiences of care in Lincolnshire are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services.**

This year, we dedicated a YourVoice@Healthwatch public engagement event to the launch and development of a new vision of positive collaboration.

## A collaborative network:



In February 2023, the Farrar Report commissioned by the Integrated Care Board recommended Lincolnshire develop Community Primary Partnerships, to 'supercharge' arrangements for integrated care closer to home, so requires closer working and shared direction.

## YourVoice@Healthwatch:



The summer 2024 YourVoice@Healthwatch was a collaboration between Healthwatch Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire County Council Public Health and the Personalisation Team across the Integrated Care System (ICS). More than 60 people attended and attendees ranged from people working in the health and care system to independent businesses, parish councillors and local residents.

## A shared agreement:



Structured discussions on the day covered the values and potential of communities within Lincolnshire and the expectations of community and primary partnerships: how they should work and feel. These discussions led to the development of Our Shared Agreement, with five foundations that all attendees and organisations agreed.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

# Making a difference in the community

**We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.**

Here are some examples of our work in Lincolnshire this year:

## Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



**Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues people face.**

Our information and signposting team listen to a varied range of personal stories every day and treat each one with respect and importance. Through contacting practice managers, ICBs and more, they have made a positive change to lives in such diverse areas as TB testing, autism advocacy, ADHD diagnosis, dental care, hospital transfers and much more.

## Getting services to involve the public



**By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.**

We have run a number of events that directly brought together decision makers and the public, as well as playing a part in the HWLincs VOICE Conference. Here, pledges were created to reach communities and elevating public voice and lived experience in the strategic conversations to bring about change for the benefit of people and communities.

## Improving care over time



**A dedication to hearing all voices.**

Listening to people's experiences with health and social care services is central to our work. We engage with communities across Lincolnshire to identify what works well, what needs improvement, and how services can better meet people's needs. We are committed to all voices, especially those often unheard. We offer many ways for people to share their views in order to gather diverse perspectives and reach as many people as possible.



# Listening to your experiences

**Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.**

This year, we've listened to feedback from people across all areas of our community — from urban centres to rural villages, and from a wide range of backgrounds and lived experiences.

Whether shared through surveys, events, one-to-one conversations or online, each piece of feedback helps us understand what is working well, what needs to change and where services can do better.

We don't just collect feedback we act on it. Every month, we share your experiences directly with service providers, commissioners and system leaders, so they can hear first-hand what matters to the people using their services. This means your voice has a direct role in shaping improvements in health and care across Lincolnshire.



# Listening to your experiences

## Research project: menstrual health

**During 2024, we conducted a series of research projects which sought to involve more people in conversations about their health.**

This decision was part of our ongoing efforts to address health inequalities in Lincolnshire and ensure that everyone's needs are heard and considered.

### What did we do?

All four of the projects followed the same format: two initial surveys; one for service users to share their experiences of diagnosis, management and support, and another for health and care professionals supporting individuals with the conditions of interest.

### Key things we heard about menstrual health:



**70%**

**of women struggled to get medication that worked for them.**

**63%**

**of endometriosis sufferers were incorrectly diagnosed with other conditions.**

**15+**

**A diagnosis of endometriosis took up to 15 years for some respondents.**

This work led to improved collaboration with individuals and organisations, which supports our work in related areas and led to further projects.

### What difference did this make?

As a result of this project we were invited to join the Women's Health Steering Group. The report findings have informed the Women's Health Strategy for Lincolnshire and have been presented at health and care system meetings, discussed on local radio and at the ICB Women's Health Conference.

# Listening to your experiences

## Respiratory health research project

**The Healthwatch Respiratory Health Report 2024 highlighted the need for better coordination, a reduction in inequalities and more local support.**

We heard from 223 people who shared their experiences of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis and more. Seven healthcare professionals also contributed.

### What did we do?

We promoted the survey to get a clear picture of respiratory health in Lincolnshire. The survey was altered to support the Integrated Care Board's review of respiratory services and it gained essential quantitative data, as well as quotes that tell the human stories behind the numbers.

### Key things we heard:



**38%**

**needed urgent or emergency care for their respiratory condition in the past year.**

**41%**

**faced medication shortages or other difficulties obtaining specialist prescriptions.**



**"Staffing needs to improve. These patients become severely ill very quickly and there is a huge gap in care."**

A health and care professional

### What difference did this make?

The findings highlighted disparities in the quality and accessibility of care between different respiratory conditions and areas of the county. It also provided an important outlet for health and care professionals to share their insights and concerns. The report findings contributed to the respiratory services review.

# Listening to your experiences

## Neurological conditions research project

**We highlighted the need for clear information, joined-up care, local specialist centres and support groups for people with neurological conditions.**

During this project, 375 people shared their experiences. Many patients felt unheard and dismissed by healthcare providers. A lack of knowledge and empathy around certain conditions such as fibromyalgia and ME led to delayed diagnoses which impacted patients' lives, social lives and employment.

### Key things we heard:



**71%**

**had faced challenges getting medications that worked for them.**

**46%**

**of respondents were diagnosed after 18 months.**



"I felt like I was being fobbed off. I had to drop out of school due to not being able to climb the stairs to my classrooms. I was borderline suicidal."

This quote from a respondent highlights the emotional impact on mental health that delays in diagnoses can cause.

### What difference did this make?

The findings highlighted significant gaps in the understanding of and care for neurological conditions. It shone a light on an unheard voice and highlighted an unmet need. The work was recognised and praised by national charities. As a result of the work we were asked to present the findings to a national Functional Neurological Disorder action group and invited to join their working group to support improving care for these individuals.



# Listening to your experiences

## Pharmacy services survey

**What works well and what needs to be improved around pharmacy access.**

We were approached by our Health and Wellbeing board to gather experiences of using pharmacy services to support the Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). The system wanted to understand what is working well and what could be improved, as well as experiences of the Pharmacy First Scheme..

### Key things we heard:



**80%**

**rated the Pharmacy First scheme as good.**

**85%**

**reported no difficulty accessing their pharmacy.**



“They possibly saved my life via the free blood pressure monitoring. It was verbally offered and I took this on a whim and they sent me straight to A&E as it was so high. My blood pressure is now medicated and under control. I will be forever grateful.”

This quote shows the success of pharmacies offering a wider range of services beyond dispensing medication. However, stock availability, processing delays, disabled access, and better privacy were areas highlighted for improvement.

### What difference did this make?

“The report formed a body of evidence that we have been able to cite supporting the call for more funding for pharmacies, highlighting the issues with medicines supply. Funding for community pharmacy... remains £2bn short of the government’s own cost independently commissioned economic review for the sector here. The government has recognised that more must be done both in terms of medicine’s supply and funding and evidence supporting this is most welcome and useful, contributing to a positive impact on community pharmacies in the county which in turn benefits patients.”

**Tracey Latham-Green, Chief Officer, Community Pharmacy Lincolnshire.**

# Hearing from all communities

**We're here for all residents of Lincolnshire. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.**

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

**This year, we have reached different communities by:**

- Engaging with asylum seekers to understand their challenges around GP registration and access to medication and sharing this with NHS leaders to support inclusive primary care.
- Reaching people living in areas of socio-economic deprivation through targeted outreach in Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland to capture their experiences of accessing health and care services.
- Ensuring local voices shape decisions by feeding lived experience into health and social care system priorities, such as ageing well and service changes led by the Integrated Care System.





# Hearing from all communities

## GP registration and access to medication for asylum seekers

### Volunteers working with asylum seekers linked with a vital pilot.

A young person from Afghanistan arrived with a mental health crisis and no money for a prescription. The practice pharmacy and community pharmacist insisted they needed a health certificate before they could get the medication.

### What difference did this make?

Our information and signposting officers shared information about a pilot scheme that issued NHS numbers to people arriving in small boats, allowing the access to services and medication that they need. The information was shared to all GP practices and pharmacies in Lincolnshire.

## Helping Lincolnshire residents to age better and supporting changes to services

### Key stakeholders attended our YourVoice@Healthwatch public event to address Lincolnshire's aging population.

The Director of Public Health and the NHS Director of Nursing and Quality spoke at the event and presented *Ageing Better in Lincolnshire: Adding Life to Years*.

### What difference did this make?

Presenters gave a mixture of practical advice and information on health projections and what they mean for the people of Lincolnshire. All speakers took questions from the public, who took the chance to ask questions and ask the team for advice, as well as bring up the issues that matter most to them.

# Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 1,192 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

**This year, we've helped people by:**

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services
- Sending almost 500 individual reports to providers in Lincolnshire



## Supporting a stalled ADHD diagnosis

**A parent struggling to get an ADHD assessment for their 16-year-old child contacted Healthwatch Lincolnshire.**

The information and signposting team realised the parent was unaware of all available NHS-approved pathways and were facing delays while waiting for responses from their GP and ICB.

Healthwatch provided the parent with information about ADHD 360, an NHS-recognised provider in Lincolnshire. We also contacted the ICB and practice manager. As a result, they were assessed within eight weeks, diagnosed, and now receive the support they need.



“Without you we wouldn’t have got anywhere.”

## Wheelchair services improved by Healthwatch

**Delays and difficulty contacting new providers caused distress for many people in need of wheelchairs and support in Lincolnshire.**

Healthwatch spotted a trend in negative feedback and difficulties with wheelchair services. The information and signposting team followed a number of cases where significant harm and distress was caused and worked to improve their situation.

Healthwatch contacted the commissioner and provider and met to try and resolve these matters. A triage system and point of contact for clients were established and we have heard that waiting times for assessments and equipment have decreased.



“Just wanted to say how grateful I am. I had a phone call from a manager from Lincs wheelchair services this morning and seems things are now moving again thanks to you.”



# Showcasing volunteer impact

**Our fantastic volunteers have given 1,219 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.**

## **This year, our volunteers:**

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve



# Showcasing volunteer impact

## At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

Carol has volunteered with Healthwatch Lincolnshire for more than 10 years. She is a passionate public engager and is driven by the opportunity to continue and to share a common interest in public health and health promotion.

"I am always surprised at patients and family's willingness to share information about their experiences of services and care. For some it is the first time someone has listened, that they have been able to pay a compliment or they have been able to say something out loud."

**Carol**



The Healthwatch Lincolnshire readers panel help to ensure that everything we put out into the public is free from errors and can be understood clearly.

As well as helping Healthwatch Lincolnshire, volunteers find that it can also help themselves.

"I really enjoyed proofreading the reports, especially the last one on pelvic health. It was very well written. Just doing a little bit of volunteering like this really helps my mental health."

**A readers panel volunteer**



### Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



[healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk](https://healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk)



01205 820 892



[info@healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Lincolnshire County Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

## Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£304,549.18	Expenditure on pay	£256,062
		Non-pay expenditure	£10,646.52
		Office and management fee	£37,045
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£304,549.18</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£303,753.52</b>

## Next steps:

**Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.**

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

## Our top three priorities for the next year are:

### 1. Do more to tackle inequalities.

We will support more people who face the worst outcomes to speak up about their health and social care, and to access the information and signposting they need.

### 2. Influencing service providers, commissioners and decisions.

To work with key stakeholders and organisations to support and influence service improvements and their decision making for our health & care services.

### 3. Increasing our reach and impact.

To improve our awareness and reach across Lincolnshire to ensure people know of us, contact us for signposting and share their experiences with us.



# Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Lincolnshire is delivered by HWLincs, Rooms 33–35, The Len Medlock Centre, St George's Road, Boston, PE21 8YB.**

**Healthwatch 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 Steering Group consists of 12 people, including staff and members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Steering Group ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the group met four times and made decisions on matters such as the Healthwatch Lincolnshire Workplan 2025/26 and representational feedback strategies. 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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

During 2024/25, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and forums. We also regularly attend outreach clinics across the county for face-to-face signposting and feedback gathering.

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 [www.healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk)

# Statutory statements

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Lincolnshire is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Partnerships and the Integrated Care Board by Navaz Sutton, CEO of HWLinCs.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by ensuring that public voice and lived experience remain central to strategic discussions and decision making. We have contributed to shaping local health and care priorities, championed the inclusion of under-represented communities, and shared insight from Healthwatch engagement and reports to inform system-wide planning.

Through regular attendance and active participation, we have strengthened the visibility and influence of Healthwatch Lincolnshire within the wider integrated care system, helping ensure that local people's views are reflected at the highest levels.

## Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

Healthwatch Lincolnshire plays an active role in making sure that the experiences and views shared with us by the public reach the people who can make a difference. Each month, we share all patient experience data we receive with providers and commissioners, helping to inform service delivery, planning and improvement.

In addition to this, our team regularly represents the public voice at a wide range of system and provider-level meetings.

These include strategic groups such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as operational forums focused on patient experience, quality, primary care, digital inclusion and health inequalities. See some examples below:

- Health Scrutiny Committee
- System QPEC
- Primary Care Co-commissioning group PC3
- Health Protection Board
- Lincolnshire System Quality Group

# Statutory statements

## Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Woodview Care Home – Lincoln	Change of ownership	Wrote a report with recommendations – recruitment of an activities coordinator to enhance the wellbeing of residents actioned by care home.
Beckfield Care Home – Lincoln	Relative survey pilot	Report published October 2024. Residents, relative and staff reported positively.
Emergency Department – Lincoln County Hospital	Joint quality visit with Lincolnshire NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) and United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT), looking at corridor care as part of national campaign.	Observations and recommendations shared with stakeholders to support ongoing improvements in emergency care across Lincolnshire.

## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Mental health research project: veterans, new fathers, farmers	88 people shared their views and a report with recommendations is prepared for publication.
GP access snap survey	1,255 people contributed to this snap survey, which will inform a report to share with stakeholders.
Outreach and engagement events	We have been active across the county at dozens of events that give people the chance to get face-to-face information signposting.
Online interaction figures	215,182 total online impressions and interactions across the year.

**Healthwatch Lincolnshire**  
**Rooms 33-35**  
**The Len Medlock Centre**  
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