

# The value of listening

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness

Annual Report 2023-2024



**healthwatch**  
Westmorland  
and Furness

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# Message from our CEO

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With our first year under our belt, I think we have made significant progress. Following the reorganisation of the local authority in Cumbria, Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness was created on 1st April 2023.

We became one of the newest additions to the national Healthwatch family and I would like to thank our team for their hard work and for ensuring we were set to go from day one.

Our official launch event was a huge success, with a packed room at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal. It demonstrated how connected we are to local people and organisations, and it was an emotional and powerful day which focused on the Disability Voices Project.

This project helped us and system leaders and providers hear from hundreds of disabled people. This really is what Healthwatch is all about: listening to people who don't often have a voice. I would like to thank all those involved.

Healthwatch have two very important elements to our work. The first is how we listen to and hear the voices of local people. I'm proud of how our team does this. We are connected, we listen in multiple ways and people trust us with their stories.

The second element of our work is how well we share these stories and experiences with commissioners and providers of services. I'm pleased to say we have majored on this with seats at the Integrated Care Boards (ICB) that run our local NHS, the Health and Wellbeing Board that provides local strategic oversight, the Health Scrutiny Committee and Place-based NHS boards to name but a few. We have the ability to influence at the highest levels and I hope this gives citizens reassurance.

Thank you to all those who have made Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness a huge success over the last 12 months.

**David Blacklock, Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness CEO**



**I'm proud of how our team does this. We are connected, we listen in multiple ways and people trust us with their stories.**

David Blacklock, Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness CEO



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# England's newest Healthwatch

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Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness (HWWaF) came into being in April 2023 following local government reform which saw Cumbria reorganised into two local unitary authorities, Westmorland and Furness, and Cumberland.

Our first year has been filled with learning and new experiences, including our official launch event, which brought many of our stakeholders together, from people with lived experience, to Healthwatch England, and NHS and local authority leaders and elected members. The whole team is proud of what we have achieved and the progress we have made.

This report looks back on our visible, public-facing work but it is behind the scenes that the biggest developments have taken place, not only initiating systems and processes to support effective working but forming a team and cementing relationships with a new local authority. Our small team has drive and ambition to work differently, to consider the 'so what?' and how we can make a positive impact with every event, visit, project, report.

With our unique geography across two integrated care boards (ICB), North East North Cumbria, and Lancashire South Cumbria, we have worked collaboratively with other local Healthwatch and volunteers to ensure a spread of activity across Barrow, Eden and South Lakes. We have employed a wide range of engagement methods, and we are most proud of the Enter and Views we have carried out. For us it feels deliberate and intentional, all the team can see direct impact, and it is a microcosm of what Healthwatch is meant to do: hold services to account on behalf of patients and influence positive changes. Small changes make a big difference. From three Enter and Views we have had 23 recommendations actioned by University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust (UHMBT).

Of course, after only one year there is still a lot of work to do but, with the renewal of the commission from Westmorland and Furness Council to People First until at least 2027, we are all excited to continue to grow into the best local Healthwatch we can be.

**Manager Kate Rees**

**Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities.**

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



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# About Us

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## Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness is your local health and social care champion.

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

### Our vision

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



### Our mission

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



### Our values are:

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



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# Year in Review

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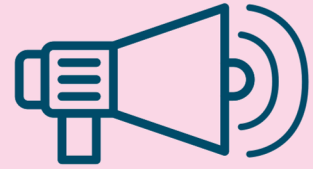
## Reaching out:

**4,845** people

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

**432** people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health, NHS Complaints Advocacy support and how to access dental services.



## Making a difference to care:

We published

**16** reports

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

Our most popular report was

**'I Care'**

which highlighted the experiences of what it is like to be an unpaid carer in South Cumbria.



## Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have **9** outstanding volunteers who gave up

**100** hours to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.

In 2023 -24 we received **£142,516**

(compared to £308,471 for Healthwatch Cumbria in 2022-2023.)

We currently employ **5** staff who help us carry out our work.



# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



The Lancashire and South Cumbria Care Partnership took responsibility to action 11 recommendations from our 'I Care' project to improve lives of unpaid carers.



Sixty-two people gave feedback on their experience of co-production with the health and social care system in North Cumbria. This feedback informed an event hosted by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

Summer



On the back of our Disability Voices project, a further research project was conducted resulting in 119 people sharing their feedback on how accessible the information and advice they receive from GPs, dentists and pharmacies is.



We attended a networking event put on by South Lakes and Grange Integrated Care Community (ICC), where we contributed to partnership working, refreshing the ICCs objectives and focus for the future using insights from public engagement.

Autumn



At our official launch event in October 66 people made a pledge on what they will do to improve lives for people living with a disability in Westmorland and Furness.



We supported patient-led assessments at hospitals in the Westmorland and Furness area, drawing attention to causes of concern such as a toilet marked as accessible in which a wheelchair was unable to turn around.

Winter



Following our Enter & View visit at Westmorland General Hospital's Outpatient Clinic the hospital quickly acted on our recommendation and reinstated their easy-read 'communication – pain and symptoms booklet'.



We co-produced our methodology and case study guidance questions for our Autism Pathways project with people with lived experience and system partners. This learning has been taken into schools by the system partners to better accommodate students when asking them questions.

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# Your voice heard at a wider level

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**We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Westmorland and Furness influence decisions made about services at Lancashire and South Cumbria (LSC), and North East North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care System (ICS) level. This year we have worked with 18 other local Healthwatch across both ICB.**



**A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:** All 14 Local NENC Healthwatch were involved in the formation of a network which enables us to work together, both on a regional and an area basis. Through funding from the Integrated Care Board we appointed co-ordinators to facilitate engagement projects and the gathering of region-wide public feedback. Our Board representative ensures that the public voice is heard at ICS level, influencing decision making across the whole of the North East and North Cumbria.

**Understanding the public view of dentistry services:** At the end of 2023-24, the NENC Healthwatch Network was commissioned to carry out public engagement about dentistry, to help inform the Integrated Care Board's decisions around improvements to services. Healthwatch carried out extensive public engagement across the region, including surveys and mystery shopper exercises – we gathered over 3500 responses to our general survey alone. Our list of recommendations will form part of our report to the ICB in early 2024-25.



**Involvement Strategy review:** The NENC Integrated Care Board wanted to review their 'Communities and People Involvement and Engagement Framework 2022-23' a year on from publication. The Healthwatch Network was commissioned to speak to seldom heard groups across the region to get their views on what an Involvement Strategy should include. We gathered valuable insight and made recommendations to the ICB about improvements to their strategy and public engagement processes.

**Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB:** Through Healthwatch Together, a collaborative of five local Healthwatch covering the Lancashire and South Cumbria footprint, we worked with local Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnerships and visited 26 family hubs to speak to new mums and families, and made 11 Enter and Views to maternity wards and birthing centres. We also undertook Enter and Views on behalf of Healthwatch England (HWE) at Community Diagnostic Centres to support HWE with a national piece of engagement.





# Listening to your experiences

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

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## Disability Voices

In October we published the Westmorland and Furness report on our Disability Voices project in Easy Read format.

Disability Voices captured the voices of 758 disabled people, their carers, and professionals working with disabled people across Cumbria in order to understand their experiences of everyday life, the barriers they encounter, their frustrations or worries, and what changes they feel are needed to improve their lives.



**41**

Recommendations made in our Disability Voices report.

### What difference did this make?

Through our engagement with people living with disabilities as part of the Disability Voices project, it was identified that further research was required to explore the issues regarding accessibility of communication from health services for those with a range of impairments.

This led to our 'Communication: I want it that way' project. We gathered stories from individuals, captured during pop-ups and pre-established community groups. 'Access' is such a broad topic so we focused on just one element of accessibility – patients' access to information and guidance.

'I want it that way' explored how accessible the information and advice provided by GPs, dentists and pharmacies is to those living with impairments – as well as asking carers, personal assistants and parents of those with lived experience how they have found communicating with GPs, dentists and pharmacies.

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## I Care

Last year we published our 'I Care' report, highlighting the health and wellbeing experiences of 76 unpaid carers living within South Cumbria.

Commissioned by Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB, we undertook a programme of engagement with unpaid carers in South Lakes and Barrow to understand their experience, the challenges they faced and what system partners could do to meet the needs of carers.

Our Senior Engagement Officer joined the partnership supporting greater information sharing, partnership working and wider dissemination of feedback to stakeholders and system partners including LSC and NENC ICBs.

### What difference did this make?

From this, 11 recommendations were made. These included:

- That an individual's medical record flag if they are an unpaid carer, so that health services are aware and are able to accommodate reasonable adjustments (such as times of appointments).
- Raise awareness of unpaid carers in organisations, especially in large employers and anchor institutions (such as the NHS and Local Authority Organisations), so that employers can accommodate reasonable adjustments.
- Free professional carer training to be offered to unpaid carers so that they can further develop their skills and get tips on handling different situations (such as dealing with difficult behaviours, conditions, etc.).
- Support unpaid carers and those they care for to create and develop an end of life plan.
- Help to facilitate conversations about advanced planning, and crisis contingency. Signpost and offer unpaid carers bereavement counselling when the person they care for passes away.

All 11 report recommendations made were taken up - in their entirety - by the Lancashire and South Cumbria Carers Partnership and embedded in their workplan. They have also been included in the workplan of the North West Clinical Directorate of NHS England.

The report was also presented and well received at:

- [South Cumbria Place Based partnership](#)
- [Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB](#) through the Patient Involvement Engagement Advisory Committee (PIEAC), who then commissioned further work to understand the experiences of minority ethnic communities.

## NENC ICB dentistry project

At the end of 2023-24, the Healthwatch Network was commissioned to carry out public engagement about dentistry, to help inform the Integrated Care Board's decisions around improvements to services. Healthwatch carried out extensive public engagement across the region, including surveys and mystery shopper exercises – we gathered more than 3,500 responses to our general survey alone, of which HWWaF and HWC contributed 473 (estimated 405 by HWWaF). Our list of recommendations will form part of our report to the ICB in early 2024-25.

In Westmorland and Furness our methodology was:

- Used the comms material provided at regular intervals on social media.
- Produced three articles for our website and e-newsletter.
- Single-issue call to action e-newsletter.
- Included call to action in local authority internal and external newsletters (reached 1,554 unique opens).
- Included in local third sector 'network of networks' county-wide e-newsletter.
- Sent HWWaF materials to Cumbria Association of Local Councils (parish councils)
- Our call to take part was picked up by hyper-local news websites, and the governors of a large secondary school.

We also received an extra 69 sign-ups to our newsletter.

### What difference did this make?

- People in South Lakes and Barrow (LSC ICB) asked us to carry out a dentistry survey in 2024 because they could not take part in this project. They emphasised the importance of the issue in those areas. We will carry this out in quarter four, following consultation with stakeholders on which issue within that broad subject to focus on.
- We raised awareness of Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness across our area through activities such as the call to action in local authority internal and external newsletters (1,554 unique opens).

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# Three ways we have made a difference in the community

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

## **Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness official launch**

In October we set a high bar for inclusive events in our area with our official launch event, along with the showcase of our Disability Voices recommendations. Thanks to ring-fenced funding from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority we were able to hold the event in a hotel in Kendal, in the centre of Westmorland and Furness. Not only was the venue fully accessible but, after listening to the needs of communities we work with, we provided British Sign Language interpreters, a sensory room and quiet space, as well as 'fidget toys' at every table. Most importantly, we had the voice of people with lived experience in the room, as well as esteemed system partners from the NHS, local authority and VCFSE sector. We received many compliments on the event, especially for the energy in the room and the shared passion to make a difference.

## **Learning Disability Listening Event**

In March 2024 Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness helped facilitate a Learning Disability Listening Event held by the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust (UHMBT). Thanks to patients and family members sharing their experiences of hospital in-patient and out-patient care and what improvements were needed, (UHMBT) has instigated an action plan to help drive forward these recommendations to improve patient experience for people with learning disabilities.

## **Easy Read material reducing barriers**

In January we carried out an Enter and View visit to the Outpatients Department at Westmorland General Hospital in Kendal to hear the view of patients, family members and staff of the community diagnostic testing being undertaken. Part of the visit included an accessibility audit, which highlighted the absence of Easy Read material available in the department. As a result of this visit University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust reinstated their Easy Read documentation for outpatients, reducing barriers to accessing health services.

There is a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



# Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard, and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Using co-production methods to hear experiences of autistic adults who have undergone an adult autism assessment to understand what support is available throughout this process and after diagnosis.
- Undertaking a programme of hospital Enter and Views, highlighting the experiences of maternity and neonatal care.
- Visited rural communities to find out how accessible services are for people with disabilities and long term conditions.
- Embedded mapping of engagement locations to ensure a proportional spread across Westmorland and Furness.
- Recruited Community Champion volunteers to be our 'eyes and ears'.

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## Adult Autism Pathways

Last year, because of directly engaging within the community, barriers to accessing adult autism services were highlighted to us. Following on from this, Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness undertook a deep dive into the experiences of autistic adults who had undergone the adult autism assessment process to understand what support was on offer during the assessment process and the pathways offered post diagnosis.

Working co-productively with Team Autism and The National Autistic Society (Furness Branch) a project group was formed to support the project by providing advice and guidance. With their support we:

- Produced autistic friendly promotional material
- Devised engagements questions that were accessible, and phrased in a direct and clear manner
- Sent out questions to participants prior to meeting and photos of room layouts and buildings (to help inform and reduce anxiety).

22 autistic adults spoke with us sharing their journey from referral to assessment and finally their diagnosis. This is currently in the report writing stages and will be shared with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and other system partners.

Using co-production to hear experiences of autistic adults trying to better understand the pathways and support available after diagnosis.



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## Communication – I want it that way

Following up from the experiences we heard from our flagship Disability Voices project we investigated further with our accessible communication project, 'I want it that way', which looked into the accessibility of health services, through the lens of those living with a disability. We heard from 118 people of which a large proportion of experiences were gathered from accessing geographically remote, rural areas.

Along with Disability Voices, we will revisit the findings of this project later this year to see what impact our recommendations have had.

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## Enter and View programme



This year, our newly formed Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness started their Enter and View programme undertaking three visits to specific units within hospitals within South Cumbria. As part of a commissioned project for Healthwatch England, we attended an Outpatients Department in a local general hospital to see how patients experienced their current community diagnostic testing services. Two further Enter and Views were undertaken as part of a collaboration with Healthwatch Together (HWT) commissioned by the Maternity Voices and Neonatal Partnership (MNVP) to hear experiences of mums, partners and family members of maternity and neonatal care within our area.

### What difference did this make?

- These visits gave local patients who experienced these services a voice which would be heard by managers of these services, leaders of the trust and the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care board.
- All reports were well received by the hospital trust.
- All eight of our recommendations made to the midwife led birthing unit will be actioned. Six have been actioned immediately and two are ongoing.
- All recommendations made to the consultant led birthing centre have been addressed and actions to improve patient experience are underway.
- The valuable maternity and neonatal feedback we heard from mums and family members helped inform the Bay Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership.
- The findings from the HWT reports were presented to the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) and HWT are liaising with the LMNS in their Involvement Co-production and Evolvment (ICE) group to carry forward the themes and recommendations and explore where they fit in with workplans.



## Advice and Information

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

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

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## Communications and social media

Having launched our website and Facebook, X (Twitter) and LinkedIn channels in April 2023 we have steadily grown the number of followers, visitors to our website, and engagement with content over the year.



**Facebook reach up 463%**



**256 e-newsletter subscribers**



**More than 5,000 visits to our website**

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## Community Forum

The first Healthwatch Community Forum met in 2014 in response to growing concern in West Cumbria regarding NHS Services. The forum has grown into an independent space where people's voices are heard, informative conversations take place, and accurate and timely information is shared.

Speakers have included: Public Health Managers from Westmorland & Furness Council on Eden's Dementia Friendly Community Partnership; Let's Talk Bereavement support service; Team Autism support group; Community Catalysts' (people-led social care and health); Cumbria Sexual Health; NENC ICB Primary Care Pharmacy; as well as representatives from hospital trusts and ICB responding to questions from public guests, and service updates.

Going forward we will work with Healthwatch Cumberland to continue to develop the forums, including arranging events and speakers by theme, such as women's health, mental health, access to services, and quality of care.



Our Community Forum creates direct two-way communication between patients and members of the public and services.



# Volunteering

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

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities Barrow, Eden and South Lakes to promote Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve
- We developed our Community Champion role. These valued volunteers are our 'eyes and ears' in communities – whether that is geographical, of identity or interest.



*"My name is Michael and I live in Grange-over-Sands. I am in my last year of sixth form at Ulverston Victoria, and plan to study medicine at university next year. I became involved with Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness last year after hearing about it online. Being a volunteer for Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness has given me the opportunity to attend our local NHS trust's annual members' meeting, which gave me valuable insights into how our NHS operates, and I appreciated being able to talk to the other local organisations and charities and hearing about their valuable work too. I hope to continue volunteering at Healthwatch and look forward to being involved with the varied and interesting projects they undertake!"*



Michael, volunteer



*My name is Rosemary and I live near Kendal which is where I came across the Healthwatch stand during a volunteer fair. I am learning a lot and try to feedback useful information to my local community organisations. Recently I undertook the 'Enter and View' training so that will be another way to get involved in due course.*

*I have found the organisation and its people friendly, personable and supportive, flexible and open. Healthwatch is an important body locally and nationally; health is a very important aspect of peoples' lives and I hope I can make a small contribution to making sure the healthcare people receive is the best possible.*




Rosemary, volunteer



### Do you feel inspired?

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

 <https://healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk>

 0300 373 2820

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



# Finance and future priorities

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

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£142,516	Expenditure on pay	£127,386
Additional Income	£21,782	Non-pay expenditure	£15,807
		Office and management fee	£10,608
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£164,298</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£153,801</b>

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## Additional income is broken down by:

- £8,495 from Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (for Disability Voices)
- £6,732 from North East North Cumbria ICB (North Cumbria Healthwatch representation)
- £1,875 from LSC ICS HW network contribution
- £260 from NENC ICB for dentistry project
- £4,420 Lancashire and South Cumbria MVNP commission



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## 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 focus on how we can improve the issues that concern local people the most, including GP access, waiting times, women's health, and social care. We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care Boards (ICB) 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.**

Collaborative engagement with seldom heard communities and groups to build trusted relationships, better understand their experiences and gather high quality information.

**2.**

Develop programme of Enter and Views, informed by people with lived experience and carers and service users.

**3.**

Innovative engagement - in new venues (such as large employers' canteens), Conversation/World Cafes, and interactive and creative recording of feedback.

# Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness 2024–2025 core project workplan

Autism Pathways

**Autism Pathways:** Listening to the experiences of adults diagnosed with autism and investigating local care pathways post-diagnosis.



Disability Voices / Accessibility follow-up

**Disability Voices / Accessibility follow-up:** Revisit the projects to deliver next steps and push for positive change based on recommendations. This involves going back to original participants and groups to identify priority recommendations and practical steps.



Women's Project

**Women's health:** Specific topic will be chosen by the public. We will undertake creative engagement to get involvement and obtain views in different formats.



Dentistry

**Dentistry:** In March 2024 we delivered a survey in Eden as part of the North East North Cumbria Healthwatch network. We will be building on that work across Westmorland and Furness and look to assess the impact of Patient Premium measures.



Enter and View Programme

Target = 4





# Statutory statements

Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ.

People First Independent Advocacy, People First Conference Centre, Milbourne Street, Carlisle CA2 5XB.

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness is commissioned by Westmorland and Furness Council.



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# The way we work

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## Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Board consists of seven members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

The Board of Trustees meets bi-monthly and is kept informed by our CEO on the performance and delivery of our work programme. Twice a year, our board meets in public, providing members of the public an opportunity to attend and ask questions.

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 2023/24, we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, share with our local stakeholders and community champions, post it in our newsletter and promote it on our social media.

## Responses to recommendations

We did not have any providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

## Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

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

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Health and Wellbeing Board of Westmorland and Furness Council; we have a seat on the Health Adults Overview and Scrutiny meeting; attend meetings of both Integrated Care Boards (ICBs); are part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment working group, which informs the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

We take insight and experiences to decision-makers at Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS, and North East North Cumbria ICS, where we work regularly with other local Healthwatch. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

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 at <https://healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk>

## Enter and view

With this year being our first as a newly formed local Healthwatch we were excited to start our Enter and View programme. In the last quarter of the year we made three Enter and View visits and produced 30 recommendations, a selection of which can be seen below along with the providers' actions.

As part of what we do, Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness has statutory powers to listen, act, challenge and provide feedback, improving local services and promoting excellence throughout the NHS and social care services. We exercise these through carrying out Enter and Views. These are visits to health and social care services such as hospital wards, GPs, pharmacies, care homes, day services, dentists, opticians, all carried out by our trained and authorised representatives (staff and volunteers).

Each Enter and View takes considerable planning on the part of the visiting team members, as well as an intensive team effort to produce a comprehensive report, with considered recommendations with which we can make an impact. For 2024-2025 we are developing our own strengthened processes, speaking to those with lived experience of using services about what we should look out for.

Our Senior Engagement Officer is a superb Enter and View trainer and her skills are called upon by other local Healthwatch.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Outpatients, Westmorland General Hospital, Kendal	Commission into Community Diagnostic (CDC) activity in Westmorland and Furness.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Reception areas have hearing loops installed, turned on and reception staff trained to use. <b>Provider's action:</b> New units purchased by patient experience team and installed in April.
Helme Chase maternity unit, Westmorland General Hospital, Kendal	Commission from Bay-Wide Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership	<b>Recommendation:</b> Staff names and roles are clearly on display on lanyards. <b>Provider's action:</b> Completed and information shared in May.
South Lakes Birth Centre, Furness General Hospital, Barrow-in-Furness	Commission from Bay-Wide Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership	<b>Recommendation:</b> Provide information on what services the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offers, and how to contact them. <b>Provider action:</b> PALS leaflets available on entry and exit of the ward. If a service user voices a concern, PALS information is also given individually

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## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness is represented on the Westmorland and Furness Health and Wellbeing Board by David Blacklock, CEO.

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness is represented on Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership, North East North Cumbria ICP, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) and North East North Cumbria ICB by Lindsay Graham, Director. Lindsay also sits on Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board, Cumbria Addictions Board, North Cumbria PLACE Based Partnership, and South Cumbria PLACE Based Partnership.

Manager Kate Rees has a place on the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy Steering Group, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment working group, as well as co-chairing the Community Health, Wellbeing and Equity Partnership for Eden.

## 2023 –2024 Outcomes

Activity	Outcome
Our Disability Voices launch set the benchmark for inclusive events held across the county, and our advice and input was sought by UHMBT NHS Trust for their own event.	People with a range of physical and learning needs can better take part in meetings and events which affect them.
Following our Enter and View visit to Westmorland General Hospital, Easy Read information being reinstated in the Outpatients department.	Those with learning disabilities and other communication needs have better access to information at Westmorland General Hospital.
We ensure we are as visible as possible and have recently introduced a 'Where we are this month' section to our website so the public knows where to find us.	We signposted 432 people to support, information and advice they needed.
People with lived experience from a range of communities, their carers and patients are directly involved in our governance.	We hear from communities of geography and identity across Westmorland and Furness to amplify their voices to shape future services.



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