

# **Work Plan**

## **2025 – 2026**



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Dear Reader,

I am pleased to share with you the Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin workplan for 2025/2026 which shapes the direction of our work to provide the citizens of Telford and Wrekin an opportunity to have their voices heard about health and social care services.

The work programme has been compiled from information received by the public via a number of means and as an independent organisation this approach is important. The information in this workplan has been agreed by our Healthwatch Advisory Board which is in line with our governance process.

The workplan highlights the work that will be delivered as part of our core statutory duties but does not include any commissioned pieces of work which Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin may bid for during the forthcoming year to March 2026.

Your feedback on this workplan is welcomed. The impact of our work is crucial to inform change which we want to keep you involved with. This can be done by a number of ways particularly by attending our public Healthwatch Advisory Board Meetings or accessing our website and reading our reports. Further information for this can be found on our website

Yours sincerely

Jan Suckling

Chief Officer

## **The eight main statutory functions of a Local Healthwatch**

- 1.** Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- 2.** Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
- 3.** Obtaining the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known.
- 4.** Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved within an overall framework that recognises financial constraints. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
- 5.** Providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services.
- 6.** Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England.
- 7.** Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about particular issues.
- 8.** Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

# HEALTHWATCH TELFORD AND WREKIN WORKPLAN 2023/2024

## Introduction

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Telford and Wrekin. Our role is to ensure that the voices of local people are heard by those who commission, deliver, and regulate health and social care services. We listen to experiences—positive or negative—and use that feedback to help drive improvements across local services.

Local Healthwatch organisations were established in 2013 as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, replacing previous patient and public involvement structures. Since then, we have worked to strengthen the voice of the public in shaping care.

We also provide **signposting, information, and support** to help people make informed choices about their health and social care needs.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is delivered by **Engaging Communities Solutions CIC**, a not-for-profit community interest company dedicated to involving people in the design and delivery of public services. See here for further details: [www.weareecs.co.uk](http://www.weareecs.co.uk)

As part of the national Healthwatch network, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin also works closely with Healthwatch England to ensure that local views can inform national policy and change.

## Our responsibilities

All local Healthwatch are required to:

- Gather and represent the views and experiences of people who use health and social care services.
- Ensure the diverse communities they serve have a voice in how services are designed and delivered.
- Share people's experiences with those who have the power to make services better, including NHS bodies, local authorities, and service providers.
- Provide people with information about local health and social care services to help them make informed choices.
- Recommend improvements to services based on what people tell them.
- Report concerns about the quality of care to Healthwatch England or relevant regulatory bodies, such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC), where appropriate.

- Work collaboratively with other local organisations, including voluntary groups and patient representative bodies.

Local Healthwatch benefit from having Healthwatch England as their national body. It gives local Healthwatch a stronger voice by providing a route to escalate serious or ongoing concerns to national decision-makers, such as NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. This ensures that the views and experiences of local communities can help influence change at a national level.

Healthwatch England also offers essential support to local Healthwatch through training and practical resources etc. See here for details: [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

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The information in this document highlights the key workstreams Telford and Wrekin will undertake in 2025/2026.

This year we aim to have a consistent positive impact for the communities and the people we serve. We aim to strengthen partnerships with providers and commissioners of services, further increase our public engagement, and raise and escalate these issues to decision makers to affect change.

We will design our work to ensure impact for service users.

We will look for opportunities to raise the profile of work within Telford and Wrekin to enable us to further raise the profile of Healthwatch in our role as the independent champion for people using NHS health care services and children's and adult social care services.

We will do this through using digital and face to face methods.

We will use the feedback we receive to make recommendations for future improvements for the people of Telford and Wrekin.

The following key lines of enquiry were set in the early phase of delivering the Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin service in 2025:

- A&E Stage 2
- Veterans Health and Wellbeing
- Discharge
- GP Access

In light of the government announcement to abolish Healthwatch Services in all 152 locations and there being no timescales published as yet the key lines of inquiry were reviewed.

GP Access was planned to be a long term continual piece of work. It has been decided to cease this work. We did publish a very detailed report that clearly articulates the views and truths of the public experiences of accessing GP services. The system is aware and using the report. Therefore, our time will better spent on achievable and realistic short term projects.

The rationale for choosing these services as key lines of enquiry is:

## **A&E Stage 2**

This is a follow on to the first stage A&E survey that was undertaken in response to the Channel 4 Documentary. We continue to receive feedback about A&E services. It is hoped the second stage survey will show if the work undertaken to address CQC inspection and concerns raised by the documentary are achieving better outcomes for people.

## **Discharge**

HWT&W heard from different care homes of times when discharges to them from hospital have been unsafe in their opinions. This has led to a larger piece of work as the more we have looked at the wider the scope of the project has become. This will be separated into different chunks and reports issued for them.

## **Veterans Health and Wellbeing**

We often hear experiences from Veterans which indicate some Veterans can find it hard to access the services they need. Shaun Davies MP, Telford constituency, and his team also are also aware of challenges Veterans face in getting access to services at the right place, at the right time. Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin and Shaun Davies MP are working together to explore the issue and seek peoples experiences, their truths, of accessing NHS health services and social care services.

## **Enter and View Programme**

Our unique and added value is our independence and ability to speak to people using services or people living in residential or nursing care and their families, to give voice to any concerns they may have, as well as raising awareness of potential risks to residents. Also, to hear of good practice and where things should be celebrated.

We have a very good relationship with colleagues in Telford and Wrekin Council and the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Board as well as the regulators like the Care Quality Commission. We link in with them regularly to jointly share intelligence to help plan our visits.

## **Communication**

Effective communication and marketing are vital to delivering this workplan.

We will communicate the impact of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin work and activities to stakeholders and the public.

We will support citizens of Telford and Wrekin with health and care messages and information.

## **Volunteering**

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin has many varied roles that volunteers can support our work as the peoples champion acting independently to take the voice of people to those in positions of power. Volunteers recruited to support Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin work are recognised as a valued resource, key to our ability to deliver the annual workplan. Volunteer week takes place each year at the start of June and Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin will be actively supporting this campaign by daily social media postings, promoting how volunteers can help Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin and we will be holding recruitment events during the campaign.

All our volunteers are provided with a full induction and we work with them to understand how best their time and skills can be utilised. All this is supported with comprehensive training, regular surveys provide a check point to see where we can improve our overall support offer to volunteers.

## **Information and Signposting**

Offering information and advice is a statutory part of our work. We will:

- Provide an appropriate response to anyone who contacts us with a health or social care query. Contact can be made by telephone, post, social media or in person when we are at an engagement event.
- Provide individuals independent and impartial information and support about choices available to them.
- Promote the information and signposting service to make sure citizens know how we can help them.

## **Community Engagement**

To enable service users and the public to share their views and experiences of health and social care services, our Outreach colleague works closely with communities in the areas towns and villages plus at health and social care establishments.

We proactively engage with and respond to the different communities in Telford and Wrekin to understand and help meet their health and social care needs and we adopt the following principles of engagement:

- Work in collaboration with others – we will work with partners across all sectors to make the most of our capacity for engagement and involvement.
- Engage digitally – we will continue to develop our digital activity.
- Engage in person – we will continue to try and reach all local people of different ages and different demographics across all locations in the city.

- Plan engagement – to help us listen to what the people of Telford and Wrekin are telling us about what matters to them.
- Information and Signposting – to make the public aware of their rights and what health and care they should receive. Also to signpost them as appropriate.
- Involve Volunteers – to provide a variety of volunteer roles to add value to our engagement.

## **Strategic Influencing**

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin has built up a good working relationship with a number of strategic level organisations and committees. These include the Health and Wellbeing Board, Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership, STW Integrated Care Board (ICB)/Partnership (ICP) and many others.

Our remit is to work with these Boards, Committees, Partnerships to ensure the voice of the public and patients are heard, and to provide advice, guidance and assurance on how to achieve this. Regular meetings continue to be held between key strategic influencers and our Chief Executive/Chair with relationships continuing to be strengthened.

## **Promotion of Healthwatch – Social Media**

Our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts have grown considerably and help us expand our reach, network with other organisations and provide live updates on our engagement activities, local health news and national campaigns. Tying our social media activity in with trending topics helps us to get the message out to more people and ensures that what we are focused on remains relevant to members of the public. It also makes us more accessible, as people can message us at any time to seek advice or information, and we can quickly signpost them to other organisations.

We will be expanding our social media platforms to include LinkedIn, You Tube and exploring TikTok as additional ways to reach wider and different groups of people.

## **Healthwatch Collaboration**

We recognise that we will benefit people by working collaboratively and in partnership with others. We aim, to do this by:

- Having an active role in the West Midlands Healthwatch network, learning from and sharing good practice and impact with partners.
- Working with other local Healthwatch to manage our collective resources to engage effectively with wider partnerships.
- We may set joint priorities and work with other Healthwatch where this will produce better outcomes.
- Working and supporting Healthwatch England campaigns.