



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Telford and
Wrekin

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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

2024 to 2025 has been another busy year for us at Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin with so many areas within the local health and care system struggling with the increase in demand for services.

We planned our year out having listened to what people said was worrying them about local services. The CQC then published its report about the local hospital trusts highlighting concerns we had been hearing about A&E Services.

This was swiftly followed by the Channel 4 Dispatches programme A&E: NHS in Crisis bringing unwanted national coverage and potentially undermining our public's confidence in our services.

I was particularly proud of the way we devised and launched a survey to collect the voices from residents ahead of the scheduled airing of the programme. Our team sought to promote the need to hear people's views and truths rather than sensationalise the already negative scene and confidence in our NHS.

Over the last 12 months, we have produced two insightful reports into Pharmacies, including one which involved working with other local Healthwatch across the region.

We continue to reach out to new communities and are now exploring working with large businesses to hear from people working in their large facilities that we might not normally hear from.

All in all, a successful year. Despite our small service size, I think we do rather well.



“Another busy year which we have responded very well to, in collecting peoples experiences of services and taking those views to people and forums where we can use them to seek improvements to the services that matter to people.”

Sherrel Fikeis – Chair of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin

About us

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin 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.



Our vision

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



Our mission

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



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 376 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 3 staff and, our work is supported by 10 volunteers.

Reaching out:



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

89 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as how to access primary care and how to access social care. People also sought advice about the complaints process for primary care and acute hospital care plus finding NHS Dentists.

Championing your voice:



We published 4 reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like pharmacy, access to GP services and standards within the local urgent and emergency care departments.

Our most popular report was Access to GP Services, highlighting people's struggles in accessing primary care services.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by Telford and Wrekin Council. In 2024/25 we received £100,000, which is the same as 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 Telford and Wrekin. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Two Enter and View visits were completed at the Princess Royal Hospital, which identified areas of good practice and areas for improvement.



We launched our "Citizens Involvement Charter" to improve accessibility, diversity and inclusion when gathering patient feedback.



Summer

We teamed up with Telford College and Juniper training to offer work experience placements to local students.

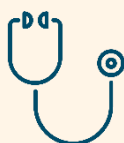


In response to the Channel 4 'Dispatches' programme on A&E, we launched our patient experiences survey.



Autumn

We concluded our "GP access" project, hearing the experiences of over 9200 local people around access to GP services.



Our insight on local pharmacies, gathered through 28 volunteer led pharmacy visits, highlighted the increasing pressures being faced by pharmacists.



Winter

Working with the Council's Public Health team, we started our smoking cessation project to understand what stop smoking support people want.



We held listening events at dementia café's, community centers and veteran's groups to hear the voices of patients, carers and staff.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Telford & Wrekin are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services at Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System.

This year, we've worked with the network of six other Healthwatch, which like ours are hosted by Engaging Communities Solutions (ECS) CIC, to achieve the following:

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin worked with our host organisation Engaging Communities Solutions CIC to undertake a project across the seven local Healthwatch it delivers to explore public knowledge and experience of the Pharmacy First service that was introduced in January 2024.

757 people took part in the survey, and it was found that 39% of those people had no knowledge of Pharmacy First at all.

There were a total of 141 surveys completed by people from Telford and Wrekin.

48% of people said that they had not heard of Pharmacy First at all whilst 31% said that they had heard of it and knew a lot about it. 11% knew a little about it and 10% said that although they had heard of it, they did not know much about it.

We've used the results to inform the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment that will be refreshed in the summer of 2025.

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



In May, we launched our Citizen's Involvement Charter to reinforce our connections within the community and to better recognize the impacts they have on our work through more difficult-to-track ways such as promoting our survey's. We look forward to continuing to collaborate to make care better.

We've also summarized 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 Telford and Wrekin this year:

Co-production with Young People and Barnardo's



Enabling young people to identify challenges and co-design solutions for services to address the challenges.

Barnardo's wished to provide services for young people in Telford and Wrekin. We held a series of focus groups for young people to identify the challenges they faced and to co-design a service to address these challenges. Two needs were identified, for one they co-designed a service where under 16's could engage in activities as well as a place that offered quiet space and times.

Getting services to meet young people's needs



By involving local young people in looking at services they needed, we were able to engage providers in meeting those needs.

Working with a local college and training provider we were able to hear that young people, aged 16-21, did not feel they had a space within Telford and Wrekin where they could discuss health issues. We have raised this with Youth Services and continue to use the Young Peoples voice to seek provision for their needs.

Investing time in young people to gain experience



Nurturing and mentoring takes time. Regularly attending sessions with young people builds trust.

We successfully created an ongoing partnership with the college and training providers in turn offering their students and trainees opportunities to access work placements alongside our staff. They supported us with our pharmacy project undertaking research, designing surveys and shadowing Authorised Representatives, resulting in the production of a report into the pharmacy awareness and application of Pharmacy First.

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 all areas of our community.

People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

Responding to local concern about the A&E services

Last year, we were quick to respond to the Channel 4 Dispatches programme called A&E: NHS in Crisis which aired on the 24th June at 9pm.

This was on the back of a Care Quality Commission (CQC) report published on 15 May highlighting concerns regarding Accident and Emergency (A&E) services in Telford and Shrewsbury hospitals.

What did we do?

We launched a survey to better understand what people's actual experiences were of A&E services at the hospitals. The survey was live before the documentary aired. The following day we were on local radio encouraging people to share their experiences but refused to be sensationalist about the issue instead encouraging people's voices to be the truth.

Key things we heard:



68%

of users reported their experience of care while in the A&E Department as poor or very poor.

61%

waited 4 or more hours to be seen, with 12% 6-8 hours and 29% over 8 hours.

71%

reported the wait to see a Doctor for the first time as poor or very poor.

Putting all the responses into three categories of positive, mixed and negative as we did for the overall rating of experience of care, we again saw two thirds of people sharing what are negative descriptions of care and treatment. This confirms peoples consistent accounts of their overall experiences.

What difference did this make?

Peoples' experiences echoed what the CQC raised concerns about and was documented in the Channel 4 expose, giving clear triangulation for the improvement works and enabling a second stage survey to see if the work does in fact deliver better outcomes for people.

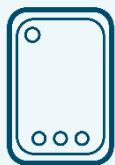
Listening to your experiences

Learning about Pharmacists experiences of Pharmacy First and other initiatives

Pharmacists are having greater pressures put on them by schemes like Pharmacy First.

We visited 28 of the 31 Pharmacies within the local area. Whilst the Pharmacists welcomed the Pharmacy First scheme there were concerns echoed by most regarding the training they had been given in the run up to the launch of the new scheme.

Key things we heard:



90%

of Pharmacists we engaged with had concerns around Pharmacy First.

95%

of people using the Pharmacies rated the overall service as excellent or good due to being friendly, efficient and patient centred.



"Training was poor, they have tried to do too many medical conditions in a short space of time and the GP receptionists do not refer accurately."

The pharmacists were mainly concerned that they had not been given enough time to undertake ear examinations, which was leading to lack of confidence. One Pharmacist explained they had paid to go on a prescribing course.

What difference did this make?

Our report from the Pharmacists perspective shows they have had a varied experience relating to Pharmacy First and there is a certain lack of confidence in the way the scheme is run. They feel under mounting pressure from the increasing expectations and some challenges are not welcome. The results have been shared the ICB locally to inform the support given to Pharmacists considering the rising promotion of using alternative services.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Telford and Wrekin. 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:

- Attending sessions with Yellow Ribbon, a community chaplaincy charity.
- Supporting our local Veterans by joint working with our local MP.
- Using the networks of our Independent Strategic Advisory Board members to access seldom heard communities like through the Gurdwara, the Sikh place of worship.



Hearing from all communities

Gaining a better understanding of the health needs of released inmates

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin collaborated with Yellow Ribbon to better understand the challenges people face in accessing healthcare.

Yellow Ribbon is a community chaplaincy charity that provides vital support to men on release from prison. We spoke directly with some of the men supported by Yellow Ribbon about their experiences in registering with GP practices and obtaining necessary medications upon release

What difference did this make?

We shared this feedback with the relevant GP practices to encourage improved access and support. To assist further, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin donated tablet devices to Yellow Ribbon. These enable the men to access the internet, making it easier to contact GP surgeries, connect with their families, and access vital online services.

Supporting people with Tinnitus

A Board member of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin trained as a lip reader and set up a Tinnitus support group called DeafnAble.

DeafnAble runs both online and face-to-face “Coping with Hearing Loss” lipreading courses throughout the year. These sessions have been described by participants as extremely beneficial and life-changing.

What difference did this make?

As a Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin Independent Strategic Advisory Board member, this advocate provides expert insight into the daily challenges faced by the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Their contributions are consistently welcomed and reflect the meaningful difference that informed, lived experience can bring to local health and wellbeing initiatives as well as supporting people with hearing loss, including their families and partners.

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 89 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



Improving medication provision for dementia

People using the Memory Clinic were struggling to get their GPs to provide adjustments to medication following clinic appointments.

People told us when their medication was changed after attending the Memory Clinic, they couldn't get their GPs to provide the new prescriptions as they had not been informed of changes by the service provider Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT).

We highlighted the issues to MPFT who then put in place new processes to improve communication between clinics and GPs particularly for medication changes. Since then, we have had no further negative feedback.



“Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin updated the patients involved who expressed their gratitude for our prompt action in resolving the issue.”

Improving support for dementia

There was nowhere locally for people and their families living with dementia to meet and seek peer support and advice.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin worked with the Rotary club and with the Alzheimer's society in setting up a dementia café after helping find the ideal location based on where we knew people were not covered by a service like this.

We also shared feedback and concerns we had received from carers that they needed somewhere they could go to talk with and meet other carers.

The café is now up and running and providing a vital drop in resource.



“It's provided us with the opportunity to meet and be with people who understand the issues we face.”

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 160 hours over this year 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:

- Carried out Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve.
- Joined us on outreach and engagement sessions, helping us to collect patients feedback and promote the work of Healthwatch.
- One of our volunteers, supported by a work experience student, has led on the pharmacy project and produced a report.



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.

"Being a Public Health graduate, volunteering with Healthwatch Telford has helped me apply my knowledge and skills in a real-world setting where I am gaining valuable experience in healthcare advocacy, community engagement, and service improvement. I have developed skills in communication, empathy, and problem-solving, which are essential for effective public health practice."

I'm proud to be part of an organization that prioritizes patient-centered care and community empowerment as this experience not only enhances my professional development but also deepens my understanding of the complexities of healthcare systems.



Promise

I have been volunteering with Healthwatch for a number of years now. I joined initially because I am convinced that we all need a good and efficient health system and this is a way of helping to bring that about. Last year I was able to head up some research into the progress and development of our Pharmacy services here in Telford and Wrekin. Having worked in that industry as a dispenser, I can appreciate the challenges that they face and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Visiting care homes of various kinds has given me new insights into those essential services and made me more determined to make things better! I would encourage anyone who has a heart for people and time to offer to come and join us in this valuable task.



Denise

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.



www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk



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Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Telford & Wrekin 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	£100,000	Expenditure on pay	£72,304
Additional income	£28,846	Non-pay expenditure	£19,790
		Office and management fee	£18,557
Total income	£128,846	Total Expenditure	£110,650

Additional income is broken down into:

- £1,666.67 received from Healthwatch England for work on a GP Choice project
- £1,800 received from Telford and Wrekin Council for a blood pressure project
- £179.20 received from Healthwatch England Bursary for the National Conference
- £200 received from Healthwatch England for Enter and View Resources
- £25,000 received from Telford and Wrekin Council for smoking cessation support

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.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Discharges – continue looking at unsafe discharges from hospital.
2. Veterans' Health – work with Shaun Davis MP to look at gaps in health and care.
3. A&E Stage 2 – looking at people's experiences since improvements were made.

Statutory statements

Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (ECS), Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford TF3 4HS, hold the Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin contract.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the Healthwatch England license agreement.

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Independent Strategic Advisory Board consists of 6 members who work voluntarily 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.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as which projects to adopt for the annual work programme and approving reports plus the recommendations contained within them as well as an escalation to Healthwatch England regarding the local hospital trust. 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 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 and across all social media pages.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had 0 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. We escalated a concern to Healthwatch England regarding the local hospital trust, though there were 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 shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the Health Scrutiny Committee and the Telford and Wrekin Health and Wellbeing Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System. For example, we attend the STW ICB System Quality Group, STW ICB Quality and Performance Committee, and STW ICB Telford and Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is represented on the Telford and Wrekin Health and Wellbeing Board by Simon Fogell, Chief Executive.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by regular attendance and contributing to the agenda items with people's voices.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is represented on the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Partnerships and the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Boards (STW ICB) by Simon Fogell, Chief Executive and Jan Suckling, Lead Engagement Officer.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Woodcote Hall Residential Care Home	Part of the Healthwatch T&W Workplan	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, installing nurse call cords in lounge, setting up hydration stations and having badges for temporary staff as a few examples.
St George's Nursing home	Follow up visit	Checked if the recommendations had been implemented – all 13 had been acted upon.
Woodcote Hall Residential Care Home	Follow up visit	Checked if the recommendations had been implemented – all 10 had been acted upon.
The Maples Care Home	Unannounced visit based on public feedback	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on one of these re dementia friendly toilet seats.
Sambrook Residential Care Home	Semi-announced visit – Part of the Healthwatch T&W Workplan	Wrote a report with one recommendation following the positive visit which the provider had in place.

Statutory statements

2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
GP Access Report	Highlighted the issues people were having accessing appointments to see a primary care health care professional. Not a new issue but gave clarity on the impacts this has for people based on 9,200 people's experiences. It provides clear issues that the local system needs to address to end the lower satisfaction in Telford and Wrekin compared to people in Shropshire when looking at the published ICS and PCN level data.
A&E Report	A survey was launched to coincide with the airing of the Channel 4 Dispatches programme: A&E in Crisis. Over 250 people provided similar experiences to those shown in the documentary and those picked up on by the CQC in its report in the local hospital trust providing clear triangulation for the improvement works.
Pharmacy Report	A series of Enter and View visits to all pharmacies within Telford and Wrekin. It showed people were mainly happy with their local pharmacy. Pharmacists though, have had a varied experience relating to Pharmacy First and there is a certain lack of confidence in the way the scheme is run. Pharmacists feel under mounting pressure from the increasing expectations. The results have informed the PNA survey due to be undertaken Summer 2025.



ECS

Engaging Communities Solutions CSR highlights

Engaging Communities Solutions CIC are the providers of seven local Healthwatch and an Advocacy provider. We are committed to developing our corporate social responsibility and this is a round up of our highlights for the year 2024/25

Our employees



Across our organisation we have **21** full time employees. As we have a commitment to flexible working to support our employees with their lives outside of work we also have **10** employees who work less than the standard number of hours per week.

50% of our senior management are female and **78%** of our middle managers are female.

All our staff have access to an **employee assistance** scheme that provides mental wellbeing support.

We are a **real living wage** employer.

Our community



Our employees were supported to give **27.5 hours** of volunteering time to their communities this year with paid time off to volunteer.

We provided the equivalent of **24 weeks** of meaningful work placements for school, college and university students.

Our staff raised **£304.50** for charities last year.

We supported **89** volunteers last year who gave **1163** hours of their time to our work.

Our supply chain



During the last 12 months we have spent **£25,853** with other VCSE organisations.

The environment



We have saved **4,914** car miles by using public transport this year.



Committed to quality

We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in depth audit so that we can be certain of this.

healthwatch
Telford and Wrekin

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