

'You Said, We Did' – June 2024

We regularly review the experiences you told us through public events, surveys, [Feedback Centre](#) and [Information & Signposting](#) enquiries.

These help us understand where things are working well and where they need to change. We hear positive stories about how services have supported and assisted you, as well as mixed experiences, and where things need to be better.

Healthwatch uses your feedback with health and care decision-makers to seek a positive difference, and this document sets out the changes you have helped us to deliver during June 2024.

You Said

We heard from an individual with a foot ulcer, who had been advised by their GP that they needed to see a podiatrist. The patient was not made aware of how to access the podiatry service.

We heard from an individual whose daughter's NHS dentist had refused to provide a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter for appointments, leaving her unable to access dental care.

We heard from a health professional on behalf of a client, They had been deregistered from their GP practice as they live out-of-area. They were concerned they couldn't access a GP, especially as they needed to.

We heard from someone with limited mobility who is unsteady on their feet. They don't need to use a wheelchair all the time but would like to have access to one for occasional use.

We Did

We researched available NHS treatment options and services and due to the individual not having access to a computer we completed an online self-referral with them to the [ESHT Podiatry Service](#)

We shared information on the [Accessibility Information Standard](#), which places a responsibility on health and care providers to ensure any communication support needs due to disability, impairment or sensory loss are met.

We provided details of the [NHS Find a GP website](#) and the closest GP accepting new patients to the individual's current address. We clarified that a GP surgery can treat an individual as a temporary patient if they have an appropriate need, even if they are not yet registered with the practice.

We informed them about the [East Sussex Wheelchair Service](#) which offers free assessments and the provision of wheelchairs for appropriate patients, as well as the [British Red Cross](#) wheelchair rental service, which provides wheelchairs for short term use.

Our Contributions and interventions

We visited Foodbanks in Newhaven and Lewes to provide information and listen to visitors' experiences of health and care. We heard how a lack of finance is a real barrier to accessing healthcare by hindering people's ability to travel to appointments, pay for medicines or other healthcare costs, and limiting reliable access to a phone or internet services. We are sharing our insight with the East Sussex Financial Inclusion Steering Group to raise decision-makers awareness.

We attended the Eastbourne Cultural Involvement Group, hosted by Diversity Resource International (DRI). We heard concerns from attendees about accessing some health services and challenges in accessing interpreters. We explained how to access interpretation services when accessing NHS healthcare, including the eligibility criteria, and the different avenues for accessing urgent medical care.

We met with NHS staff delivering the Sussex Dental Helpline so Healthwatch could understand what support the helpline offers callers, and how our Information and Signposting service could get enquirers to the right place as quickly as possible. We shared insight on dentistry, including ongoing challenges in finding dentists accepting NHS patients in East Sussex and the costs of private dental services.

We shared insight and experiences from East Sussex residents who've told us about the challenges they face in travelling to health and care services with County Council staff developing the new Local Transport Plan. We raised the importance of considering travel to and from health services when commissioning transport services and routes. We highlighted challenges around travel costs, lack of understanding around travel support schemes, limited coverage and connectivity in some areas, and barriers accessing non-digital transport timetables.

"Thank you for not only finding a service for me, but for making the referral – all in one call. I'm most grateful for your help.."

Share your experiences with us

Used a health or care service recently? If so, please tell us about your experience by leaving a review on our dedicated [Feedback Centre](#).

Support and assistance

If you need support in accessing health and care services, please contact our Information & Signposting service via:

enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk or 0333 101 4007

Contact Us

To find out more about Healthwatch East Sussex, please go to: www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk or contact us via:

Email – enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Phone – 0333 101 4007

Twitter – @HealthwatchES

Reports and publications

All our reports are published on our website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/>