

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch East Sussex
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from our chair

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be a major influence upon our patterns of work throughout 2021/22, but we have continued to adapt and hence reached out to more people in our county.

Our Annual Report clearly shows how we have listened to our local communities and acted upon the intelligence gathered to bring about changes and improvements, by working with other organisations who I believe recognise that Healthwatch is here to help not hinder.

Our Young Healthwatch commitment is worthy of special mention and has allowed us to reach out to children and young people whose voices were previously less heard.

It is pleasing to report that our contract has been renewed so thank you East Sussex County Council. Contract renewals take up huge amounts of time so again a big thank you to our staff, all of whom were involved in our successful bid.

And the final thank you must go to our volunteers.....young and old.....without whom we would not have achieved the success that we have.



Keith Stevens
Chair of East Sussex Community Voice delivering Healthwatch



“The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities.”

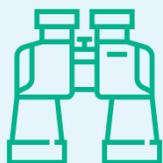
Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch East Sussex is your local health and social care champion. From Camber to Peacehaven, the English Channel to the High Weald and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other 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

- 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, the Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



2,422 people

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

719 people directly and 30,639 virtually

came to us for clear advice and information about health and care services this year.

Making a difference to care



We published

7 reports in East Sussex and 6 as Healthwatch in Sussex

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. In these, we made **96** recommendations.

Our most popular report was

'Returning To Kendal Court'

which highlighted the experiences of people living in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have **37** outstanding Adult and Young Healthwatch volunteers.

They gave up **392** days of their time to make care better for our community.

We're funded by East Sussex County Council. In 2021-22 we received:

£376,000

which is the same as in the the previous year.

During 2021-22 we employed

11 staff

which is two more than the previous year. Five of these were full-time.

Feedback from our partners

East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group

"It has been a pleasure to continue to work with Healthwatch East Sussex in 2021-22 to ensure that people and patients are at the heart of our work in the NHS in East Sussex, and that insight from our communities has helped to shape and develop this work.

In particular, their work as part of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has made a significant difference to the way we have rolled out the programme to our local communities, drawing together insight on challenges and barriers, constructively challenging delivery plans to ensure they meet the needs of our population, and helping to ensure there is clear and accessible information for residents about the programme and how they can receive their vaccination.

Further to this, the formation of Young Healthwatch has been a brilliant initiative to hear feedback from young people. Their views and insight has been so valuable in our approach to the programme for young people, their families and carers.

We look forward to continuing to work with Healthwatch East Sussex over the years ahead."

Jessica Britton, Executive Managing Director, East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group

East Sussex County Council

"Over the past year Healthwatch East Sussex has continued to play a vital role in the health and social care system, championing the views and rights of people at key strategic fora, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safeguarding Adults Board.

Their focused activity in areas such as care home webinars, which I know have been highly valued by families and friends of residents, has made a positive difference as we emerge from the pandemic and their report, following engagement with out of area residents placed in temporary accommodation, has helped inform agencies thinking on subsequent developments and service improvement."

Mark Stainton, Director of Adult Social Care and Health, East Sussex County Council

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

"ESHT [East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust] found the insights from Healthwatch helpful to focus their efforts on improving the discharge process across the Trust.

Alongside the recommended actions suggested by Healthwatch we also identified some of our own from the report provided. The report was shared widely with our multidisciplinary group and the discharge check in service - both groups aim to improve the discharge process for patients, their families and services going on to support the patients after discharge.

In line with Healthwatch recommendations all information provided to patients at the point of discharge was reviewed and considered for updating, this is an ongoing piece of work as our process continues to evolve."

Hazel Tonge, Deputy Director or Nursing, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



Our volunteers staffed the Sussex COVID-19 vaccination advice line supporting people to obtain robust information and enable their decision-making.



Our insight to a Sussex-wide 'System Pressures' initiative helped NHS commissioners and providers understand and respond to the patient journey and experience.

Summer



The East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board used the findings from our engagement with residents of Emergency and Temporary Accommodation to inform its work, generating widespread local and national coverage of the issues.



Our 'One year on' engagement with relatives, families and carers of care home residents helped reflect on the impact of the pandemic. Findings identified progress and next steps for care homes, Adult Social Care and public health in supporting residents and loved ones.

Autumn



Our Young Healthwatch engaged young people to explore their perceptions around COVID-19 vaccinations, with insight used to inform local delivery.



Findings from a Mystery Shopping exercise of the Child Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) website by Young Healthwatch volunteers helped improve understanding on how to maximise its accessibility.

Winter



Our Mystery Shopping findings helped NHS commissioners and local practices better understand and take steps to improve GP practice websites and out-of-hours messages across the county.



We shared our extensive insight on the barriers to accessing NHS Dentistry in East Sussex with local decision-makers, MPs and Healthwatch England to help them understand the nature and scale of the impact on people.

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 feedback to services to help them improve



Improving GP websites and phone messaging

We have used patient feedback and our own independent review of GP websites and phone messaging to help NHS commissioners and GP practices understand people's experiences, concerns and push for improvements.

Accessible information is crucial in supporting patients to make effective decisions on how and when to access GP and other services in the minimum number of steps (especially out-of-hours), and how to self-care appropriately.

Our staff and volunteer team assessed all GP websites and phone messages in East Sussex for quality, clarity, ease of navigation and presentation of information. We identified positives and areas for improvement in ten report recommendations.



59.6% of the websites

we reviewed did not have text-to-speech or other accessibility features

The feedback that the public shared with us combined with our findings identified improvements on a number of issues that we raised on behalf of the public, including:

- Websites must be accessible to be effective and should all have text-to-speech or other accessibility features as well as information on translation services.
- Appointment options and triage mechanisms should be clearly explained to patients to help them pick the option which fits their needs and preferences.
- Content on GP websites must be easy to find and navigate. Posting information which is hard to find is of limited value. All websites should have search functions.
- GP websites should be compatible or user-friendly when accessed from tablets and mobile phones, rather than just from computers.
- Out-of-hours messages need to provide effective information and signposting to help people understand which services to use and when.

What difference did this make?

Sussex NHS Commissioners have committed resources from the Winter Access Fund to assist GPs in renewing and upgrading their websites, and are supporting practices with upgrades to telephony systems.



“We would like to thank Healthwatch East Sussex for this valuable report, which highlights the positive work that GP practices are doing in terms of their websites and their phone systems, and also clear areas for further improvement.”

Sussex NHS Commissioners



Supporting improved access to dentistry

Thanks to people sharing their experiences of dentistry services in East Sussex, we have supported Healthwatch England in calling for improvements in NHS dentistry provision, whilst assisting local people to access dental services.

Good oral health is incredibly important. The ability to eat and drink and live without dental pain or discomfort is crucial for people's health and day-to-day wellbeing. Preventative care and guidance on dental hygiene also play a key role in early diagnosis of oral diseases and support the maintenance of healthy teeth and gums.

Dentistry was one of the two most common themes we received feedback on during 2021-22. We heard that people were struggling to find dentists in East Sussex accepting new NHS patients, experiencing delays for NHS appointments (including emergencies), often confused by charges and frustrated at reduced access to check-ups and hygienists.

Our Mystery Shopping exercise found that only 1-in-10 dentists in East Sussex were accepting new NHS patients in late 2021.

We have shared our feedback and key concerns with the Local Dental Committee, NHS Commissioners, local MPs and the public. We have also highlighted these issues to Healthwatch England and supported their national campaign for urgent improvements in NHS dentistry provision.

Locally we collaborated with Healthwatch across Sussex to co-develop 'Dentistry - A guide to your rights and accessing the treatment you need' to directly support Sussex residents understanding of:

- Differences between NHS and private dental care
- NHS dental charges and exemptions
- Emergency Dental Services and out-of-hours support
- How to raise concerns and complain



"We won't build back a fairer service until access to NHS dentistry is equal and inclusive for everyone."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England.



What difference did this make?

Due to the call for change, in January 2022 the Government announced £50 million of funding to support additional NHS dentistry capacity, with £7 million in the South East of England.

As the commissioning of NHS dentistry will be controlled by Integrated Care Systems (ICS) from July 2022 onwards, Healthwatch are committed to working with the Sussex ICS to understand and respond to dentistry issues in East Sussex.

Maintaining connectivity with care home residents

This year we followed up on our commitment from 2020-21 to keep the conversation going on the crucial linkages between care home residents and their relatives, friends and family carers as the pandemic continued.

We hosted seven webinars last year which identified the negative physical and mental effects on care home residents brought about by a lack of visiting rights due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the parallel impacts on family, friends and carers.

'One year on' we hosted two further webinars to hear relatives' and providers' perspectives on the impact of continued care home visiting restrictions due to the pandemic, explore 'essential caregiver' status as a means of enabling access and hear how care homes were affected.



"As a health and social care professional I joined these webinars initially with the expectation I would just be giving information and answering questions. In fact, I found the webinars deeply moving and humbling as each time a carer retold their experiences good and bad about being the carer of a relative in residential/nursing care during the pandemic. The information I heard informed the content of the East Sussex Care Homes Plan."



Isobel Warren, East Sussex Care Homes Place Based lead, East Sussex County Council/CCG

Relatives and family carers valued these opportunities to share their experiences and have ongoing dialogue with health and care professionals. We heard:

- 'What good looked like' from a family carer as an essential care giver.
- How 'shared care' approaches facilitated good quality relationships between care employees and unpaid carers.
- How visiting restrictions have challenged both communication and the provision of practical care.

What difference did this make?

In delivering these webinars, Healthwatch:

- Amplified the voices of family carers and relatives desperately wanting to stay connected with friends and family in residential settings when they felt no one was listening.
- Enabled family, friends and carers to establish and develop more collaborative relationships with health and care partners, breaking down barriers and perceptions of 'us and them'.
- Provided a safe platform to hear the emotional impact families were experiencing, and explore support and solutions.

Making Emergency and Temporary Accommodation safer

We engaged with residents in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation to better understand their health and wellbeing needs, and shared our findings and recommendations for positive changes with statutory partners.

Emergency and Temporary Accommodation (ETA) is provided by local authorities for those who may be: legally homeless, have suitable immigration status and/or a priority need making them vulnerable or at more risk of harm. Placements for ETA can be in other local authority areas if none are available locally.

Being housed in another local authority area may disrupt access to jobs and employment, family and wider social support networks, and caring responsibilities. These factors can affect people's health and wellbeing, as can the level of support provided or available, including access to health, care and community services.

In response to concerns for their welfare, we engaged with residents of Kendal Court in Newhaven about their experiences of being placed in out-of-area ETA by Brighton & Hove City Council. This followed a previous review in 2018. We identified people with unmet multiple and complex disadvantages (including mental health), challenges for residents in obtaining appropriate support and a lack of guidance for new arrivals.

Our independent findings were shared with the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, Brighton & Hove City Council and local stakeholders. We recommended that people with multiple and complex needs should not be placed at Kendal Court, support for residents should be pro-active and consistently provided, and residents' experiences should be independently monitored moving forwards.



"Most of the time I'm frustrated and having nightmares. I'm scared for my wellbeing. I don't get any support or help from anyone."



Kendal Court Resident

What difference did this make?

After the review, Brighton & Hove City Council reduced the number of out-of-area placements into ETA in East Sussex. New placements to Kendal Court were paused and the City Council also identified their intention to invest in more welfare provision to support people in ETA when services are put out to tender in 2022/23.

These changes will hopefully enhance the experiences of residents from Brighton & Hove placed out-of-area into East Sussex, particularly at Kendal Court.

Healthwatch East Sussex is planning further exploration of the experiences of residents in emergency and temporary accommodation in East Sussex during 2022/23.

Launching Young Healthwatch in East Sussex

Building on the learning from prior work with children and young people, we launched Young Healthwatch East Sussex in 2021.

Through the recruitment of a diverse group of young volunteers and youth participation staff, Young Healthwatch East Sussex has been launched as a youth-led space for young volunteers to shape community engagement and communications activities. We gather young people's views and experiences of health and care in our county and share these to influence service delivery.



13 young volunteers

were supported to take part in a range of initiatives, including mystery shopping, site visits and surveys.

Young Healthwatch took part in the following activities this year:

Training and Development

Young volunteers received training in Understanding the Integrated Care System, Visiting the Care Environment, Safeguarding and Facilitating Youth Engagement.

Youth Voice in Psychiatry Consultation

Young People took part in the Opinion Research Services (ORS) consultation commissioned by Sussex Health and Care Partnership in Summer 2022. Young Healthwatch participated by sharing their views and concerns on the relocation of adult psychiatry services from Eastbourne District General Hospital to a new location.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Young Healthwatch led a study into young people's experiences and perspectives on the COVID-19 Vaccination programme in East Sussex (see next page).

Foundations for our Future

Young Healthwatch East Sussex led the Healthwatch in Sussex 'Sector Connector' event session for East Sussex, discussing recommendations for improvements to the way that we deliver and manage young people's mental health services.

Planning for the next year

Young Healthwatch volunteers took part in a variety of internal workshops which have helped them to develop an engaging and exciting workplan for the year ahead.

What difference did this make?

Young people have a sustainable voice within our organisation and within the local health and care system.



"I felt so supported throughout (Young Healthwatch) and it has definitely helped me with my confidence, as well as feeling like I am having a positive impact on something really important."

Young Healthwatch volunteer (17)



Young Healthwatch East Sussex: COVID-19 vaccinations for young people

Young Healthwatch kickstarted their ambitious workplan to investigate young people's health and care with a study into COVID-19 vaccinations for young patients in our county.

We engaged with young people through face-to-face activity at vaccination centres and a pan-Sussex vaccination survey, co-produced by Young Healthwatch. These gathered insight into young people's experiences of vaccinations, including the booking process, attendance at the appointment and the impact of the COVID pandemic on their mental health, physical health, education and social interactions.



30 recommendations

were made to a variety of stakeholders in East Sussex, backed by local young people and young volunteers.

Using the findings from engagement activities, Young Healthwatch made the following recommendations for developing and enhancing the COVID-19 vaccination programme in East Sussex, which have been shared with those responsible for delivering vaccinations locally:

1. **Vaccinators should be conscious of how to support anxious and needle-phobic young patients** and do their best to support young people's wellness during the appointment.
2. **Youth workers and teachers should empower young people** with knowledge of how to book an appointment and how to find safe and accurate information about vaccinations.
3. **Vaccination services should be co-designed with young people** to create a safe and supportive environment for young people.
4. **Communications and engagement professionals should use social media and factual evidence** to encourage young people to get vaccinated.
5. **The Integrated Care System should be aware that young people are concerned about the impact and side effects** of COVID vaccinations so that they can act appropriately to mitigate this, raise awareness & deploy additional resources to manage this worry.
6. **Young Healthwatch East Sussex will continue to monitor the situation** and champion young people's voices in relation to COVID-19 vaccinations.

What difference did this make?

Local health and care services and wider stakeholders are aware of ways to improve information and the delivery of vaccination services for young people.



"I wanted to join Young Healthwatch as a vaccine volunteer to develop my confidence and skills."
Young Healthwatch volunteer (16)



Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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



Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for the NHS and social care services to step back and see the bigger picture, through hearing personal experiences, and the impact on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

This year saw the conclusion of our series of open access 'Staying Connected' webinars bringing together the relatives and loved ones of those in care homes to share their experiences with care home staff, public health teams, carers' representatives and health and care commissioners. These events provided a safe space and unique space for all parties to share their first-hand experiences.



Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

The creation of the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) will bring new opportunities for how services understand, work with and deliver to people and communities. Healthwatch East Sussex has and is working to ensure that public involvement is a 'golden thread' in its decision-making, services and monitoring, and that the place-based needs of East Sussex residents are understood and met.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

Throughout 2020-21 we regularly contributed to a task-and-finish group supporting a GP practice following a merger. We highlighted priority themes raised in feedback from service users, made recommendations on communicating with patients, and helped track change over time. The practice has made demonstrable progress. We have called for the Clinical Commissioning Group to pro-actively share the learning and support any practices considering a merger in order to minimise the impacts for patients.

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch East Sussex 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, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Pro-actively providing up to date information on local health and care services
- Linking people to accessible and reliable information they could trust
- Sharing information on the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to find and access the services they need



Signposting people for help and support

We supported an enquirer requesting assistance in helping a relative to obtain a COVID Pass [proof of vaccination] to travel to their home country.

To achieve this, our Information and Signposting team signposted them to the Sussex NHS Commissioners' GP allocations team who were able to identify a surgery accepting registrations, and they were successfully able to register, activate the pass and travel.



As a follow-up, we highlighted the lack of clear information on the need to be registered with a GP to obtain a COVID pass to Sussex NHS Commissioners and requested updates to local communications and the Sussex Health and Care Partnership website.

What to expect when accessing health and care services

Our Information and Signposting team were contacted by a patient distressed, in pain and unable to access help.

Repeated attempts to make appointments with their GP by phone had been unsuccessful due to long periods on hold and being cut off. A pre-recorded message acknowledged that a telephone problem was being worked on. Unfortunately, the patient ended up calling an ambulance to obtain treatment.



When seeking to make a complaint, the complaints process details were not available on the GP's website, so the patient had to phone the practice, but could not get through.

Healthwatch East Sussex liaised with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the GP Practice Manager who issued an apology to the patient and offered direct contact to resolve their issues. The practice has also amended its website to include details of the complaints process.

"Thank you so much... within 24 hours of highlighting the problem, it's been resolved for me, after months of getting nowhere, or fobbed off to someone else."

Feedback from Information & Signposting service user

Volunteers

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

For example, this year our volunteers:

- Volunteered at COVID-19 vaccination sites, staffed the Sussex vaccination enquiry line and gathered grassroots intelligence on vaccinations via our Zoom 'drop-in' sessions.
- Contributed to and promoted our publications and events with local people.
- Undertook 'Mystery Shopping' of GP websites, NHS dental appointment availability and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) website, reviewing their accuracy, usefulness and accessibility.
- Undertook research and gathered evidence on COVID-19 cases and Long Covid.
- Contributed to local NHS steering groups on Cardiology and Ophthalmology service transformation.





Linda

"I have volunteered with Healthwatch for seven years and undertaken several tasks including PLACE and Enter & View visits. Since COVID struck, I have been part of a Dental review, Hospital Discharge Project and since February 2021 have answered calls from the public to the Sussex COVID Vaccination Enquiry Line, helping them understand the process.

It is rewarding knowing that these projects make a difference."

Beth

"I am new to Healthwatch but over the last eight years I have worked with many patients' groups in the High Weald area. When we are dealing with major issues such as the Covid pandemic and the shortages of NHS staff, it is so important not to forget how the NHS is seen by patients, often at their most vulnerable.

There is a lot to learn but staff and other volunteers are very helpful."



Gabby

"I have found volunteering for Healthwatch brilliant and have been able to work from home giving me the flexibility to do my hours around my studying.

It has enabled me to gain experience in digital design and running social media campaigns, really useful skills to add to my CV when I apply for a job."



Do you feel inspired?

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



www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk



0333 101 4007



Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.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.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£376,000	Staff costs	£324,464
Additional funding (including Independent Health Complaints Advocacy - IHCAS)	£272,678	Operational costs	£107,091
Total income	£648,678	Commissioned Services (including Independent Health Complaints Advocacy - IHCAS)	£219,392
		Total expenditure	£650,947

Our priorities for 2022-23

Our priorities for health and care at the start of 2022/23 remain the same as last year but will be updated between April and September 2022. Our priorities are:

1. **Acute care** – hospital discharge provision and restoration of planned care
2. **Primary Care** – including dentistry, GP/PCN development and Pharmacy provision
3. **Adult Social Care** – including care homes
4. **Prevention and Social Determinants of Health** – including housing and environmental factors
5. **Children and Young People** – including mental health and wellbeing

Next steps

2022-23 will see a range of influences impact on health, care and wellbeing. These include ongoing uncertainty and impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the transition to a new Sussex-wide Integrated Care System (ICS), pressures on funding and rises in the cost of living.

Our goal is to collaborate with partners to reduce any inequalities in health and care by making sure the public's voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers the public face, regardless of whether that is because of your location, income or race.

To achieve this we are introducing some new initiatives, including revisions to the way we identify and take forward our priority themes, the formation of an equalities and inclusion group and a small grants scheme. At the same time we are also re-introducing our face-to-face engagement activity, including undertaking our first 'Listening Tour' for three years, in Eastbourne during October 2022.

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch East Sussex is delivered by East Sussex Community Voice CIC, The Barbican Suite, Greencoat House, 32 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3UT.

Healthwatch East Sussex 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 Board currently consists of five members who provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. We are seeking to expand our Board in 2022-23. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the Board met eight times and made decisions on matters such as:

- Setting our work plan priorities and monitoring our delivery
- Committing additional resources to support the expansion of staff capacity
- Supporting the establishment of Young Healthwatch in East Sussex

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. The enquiries and feedback we receive through our Information & Advice Service, Feedback Centre and surveys mean that that we are reliably informed of what issues matter the most to our public. We also draw on grassroots intelligence and feedback from our volunteers.

We also seek involvement through our multi-agency Advisory Group, collaboration with many voluntary sector partners and our involvement in a diverse range of partnerships and boards, including the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided an online feedback centre for health/care services, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media and local radio.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. For example, this year we engaged with people living in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation (ETA), sharing the findings with local stakeholders.

We have also committed to establish an organisational Equalities and Inclusion Advisory Group in 2022-23 to support us in diversifying our work programme.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website, promote widely with our partners and our mailing list, and share it with East Sussex County Council as our commissioner, the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch England as our national body. Hard copies are available on request.

Responses to recommendations and requests

All the providers we contacted have responded to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to the Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations were undertaken.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch East Sussex is represented on the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board by the Healthwatch East Sussex Executive Director.

During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by calling for the public and patients to be at the heart of the key health and social care issues that have come before the Board:

- Presenting Healthwatch's report and drawing attention to the health and wellbeing needs of residents of Emergency Temporary Accommodation in Newhaven.
- Highlighting our work on gathering and sharing COVID-19 vaccination intelligence, as highlighted in the Director of Public Health's Annual Report.
- Contributing to programme planning and discussions related to the East Sussex Integrated Health and Care Plan.

healthwatch

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