

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Annual Work Plan

April 2024 – March 2025



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Date	Actions	Notes
15/02/2024	HWNW Planning Group workshop to review vision, values and strategic priorities. Review of work 23/24. Discuss priorities for 24/25.	GVB updated draft workplan and strategic priorities as per the meeting.
21/03/2024	HWNW Planning Group reviewed changes suggested and priorities that were decided at 15/02/2024 meeting.	GVB finalised drafted workplan.
08/04/2024	HWNW Advisory Board reviewed and ratified the Annual Work Plan on 08/04/2024.	GVB reviewed the work plan with HWNW Advisory Board, approved by members for publication

Summary

The Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire (HWNW) annual work plan helps provide commissioners and key stakeholders with an overview of planned activity for the next 12 months. It is also a useful tool for review and evaluation.

Each year in February, Healthwatch staff and volunteers review the previous year's work and set the next year's work based on information and intelligence gathered throughout the year along with other partner and stakeholder key priorities.

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire's strategic priorities are also revisited and reviewed at the same time to ensure they are aligned with our Vision and Values¹.

All our work is delivered within a very tight budget, which currently stands at £195,000 per annum to cover staff, volunteer expenses and operational costs, such as office premises, insurance, IT support, payroll, Investing in Volunteers accreditation, etc. To enable us to continue to provide a quality service with an experienced staff team we also offer bespoke commissioned work to key stakeholders and partners to bring in additional income throughout the year to support the Healthwatch work.

Background

About Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire is the local independent consumer champion for all publicly funded health and social care. We are part of a national network of local Healthwatch organisations. Our central role is to be a voice for local people to influence better health and wellbeing and improve the quality of services to meet people's needs. This involves us visiting local services and talking to people about their views and experiences. We share our reports with the NHS and social care, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (the inspector and regulator for health and social care), with recommendations for improvement, where required.

Our rights and responsibilities include:

- We have the power to monitor (known as "Enter and View") health and social care services (with one or two exceptions). Our primary purpose is to find out what patients, service users, carers and the wider public think of the health and social care provided.
- We report our findings of local views and experiences to health and social care decision-makers and make the case for improved services where we find there is a need for improvement.

- We strive to be a strong and powerful voice for local people, to influence how services are planned, organised and delivered.
- We aim to be an effective voice rooted in the community. To be that voice, we find out what local people think about health and social care. We research patient, user and carer opinions using lots of different ways of finding out views and experiences. We do this to give local people a voice. We provide information and advice about health and social care services.

¹ www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/what-we-do

Where we feel that the views and voices of Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire and the people who we strive to speak on behalf of are not being heard, we have the option to escalate our concerns and report our evidence to national organisations including Healthwatch England, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.

Read more about the work we carried out in 2023/2024 in our most recent annual report: (to be published June 2024)

See Appendix 1 for details of what the legislation says Healthwatch must do.

See Appendix 2 for our Strategy, Vision and Values.

Key Performance Indicators

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire's performance is monitored by the commissioners of the service on a quarterly basis against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Local Healthwatch statutory duties must also be considered, such as membership of the Health and Wellbeing Boards for North and West Northamptonshire.

The Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire contract is monitored against six high-level outcome measures. These are:

1. Local Healthwatch is positioned as a trusted and recognisable brand within Northamptonshire: a visible, influential, independent body that champions quality and provides consumers with a strong voice.
2. People in Northamptonshire have ready access to the information/support they need when making health and social care choices, assisted through local Healthwatch systems that signpost to existing sources of support/datasets. Healthwatch will clearly position itself to add value to already existing sources of information and advice, not replicate them.

3. Health and social care services, both local and national, are demonstrably influenced by the delivery of the consumer voice, including the experiences and views of children and young people and those of minority and traditionally marginalised communities, co-ordinated through local Healthwatch, leading to service improvement actions that build on the patient and service user experience.
4. Local Healthwatch provides a credible and influential presence at agreed key local authority and health commissioning and governance fora – most notably as a member of the Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board: ensuring that consumers have the opportunity to influence and co-design policy and commissioning decisions.
5. Healthwatch will make the views and experiences of local people known to Healthwatch England and make recommendations to Healthwatch England (and the Care Quality Commission), helping to carry out the role of national champion.
6. Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire demonstrates robust and transparent governance arrangements, strong performance management capabilities and processes. Able to demonstrate its clear accountability to those it is charged with supporting.

Under the high-level outcomes are a set of performance indicators and measures to demonstrate the impact and achievements of Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire.

Responding to changes in Northamptonshire

Unitary councils

The eight borough and district councils in Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire County Council were replaced with two unitary councils on 1 April 2021, North Northamptonshire, and West Northamptonshire.

West Northamptonshire unitary council serves the areas of Daventry, Northampton and South Northants, and a North Northamptonshire unitary authority serves Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby and East Northants.

Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Advisory Board update

In response to the change of council structure, we refreshed Board membership and recruited new Advisory Board members in 2022 who represent West and North Northamptonshire, depending on their residency. They particularly help champion the voices of:

- Carers
- Mental health service users
- Services for children, young people and families
- Acute services
- Learning disabilities and special educational needs
- Physical disabilities and impairments
- GP services
- Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- Ambulance services, transport, and accessibility

The purpose of the Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Advisory Board is to provide guidance and oversee the operation and delivery of our work programmes. The Advisory Board is informed by public feedback, the Planning Group, health and care system partners and Healthwatch England.

The Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Advisory Board and Planning Group also use the Decision-Making policy to help prioritise work and develop future work plans, as well as approving any other proposed projects throughout the year.

Development of this annual plan was led by our volunteers at meetings in February and March 2024, where they also reviewed and updated our Vision, Values and Strategic priorities.

Planning Group and Working Groups

The Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire (HWNW) Advisory Board is supported by a Planning Group that receives health and social care information from across the county and updates on all HWNW projects. They are supported by time-limited “task and finish groups” for specific work and projects. Volunteers and other members of the public may attend any working group they are interested in or have expertise in.

Annual Workplan 2024 – 2025

The rationale for including topics in our work plan includes:

- Subjects where Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire has received a significant amount of feedback from service users which suggests there is a gap in or inequality of service provision.

- Health and social care priorities that have been identified in commissioning intentions from Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN), local authorities and others.
- Priority areas that align with the work streams of the ICN, local hospital trusts, the Health and Wellbeing Boards, Public Health Northamptonshire and others.
- Areas of concern raised by Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or NHS England.

The Planning Group has identified several potential areas for ongoing and future work.

2024/25 HWNW Priorities

After the priority-setting workshops with Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Planning Group volunteers and Board Members, clear priority themes and work areas for 2024/25 emerged.

These are the things we MUST do:

1. Produce a 23/24 annual report by 30th June and continue to demonstrate impact
2. Hold an annual meeting open to the public
3. Contract re-tender and feedback/learning to Commissioners – current contract ends 31st of March 2025
4. Recruit and induct new staff to maintain capacity
5. Recruit and induct new volunteers to maintain capacity
6. Continue to review policies and update the volunteer handbook
7. Provide a signposting and feedback service to the public
8. Hold 4 meetings in public per year – HWNW Advisory Board
9. Attend 12 Outreach events as part of our Make Your Voice Count Campaign
10. To continue to promote HWNW and recruit volunteers
11. Support Young Healthwatch and engagement with children and young people
12. Continue to attend provider and commissioner meetings across the 2 unitary authority areas e.g. Health and Wellbeing Boards, to ensure the public and public views are represented at all levels
13. Respond to Providers Quality Accounts
14. Respond to health and social care consultations

The additional priority areas that HWNW discussed at their 2 workshops were:

- Integrated Care Northamptonshire/ Integrated Care Board – with a focus on social prescribing
- Make Your Voice Count- raising awareness of Healthwatch locally & connecting with minority communities & being present to gather feedback (& rural communities)
- GP services – focusing on communication pathways with patients and accessibility
- Kettering General Hospital – restarting Enter and Views
- Northampton General Hospital- focusing on the lack of specialist care for sickle cell patients
- Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust – community nurses
- Dentistry- access to children’s dental services and increasing communication with dentistry representatives at the ICB
- Mental Health and Wellbeing- focusing on children’s and adult mental health, including awareness, symptoms and supports
- Black women and maternal care- reducing inequalities and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing
- Older people’s services/ dementia/ frailty- increased education & exploring the support individuals are receiving at home for both patients and carers
- Young Healthwatch- working more closely with schools
- Prisons and Men’s Mental Health- rehab services, homelessness, physical and mental health supports
- Pharmacies- updates on services
- Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs)- overseeing their progress and changes as they build new centres
- Physical Health & Nutrition of Individuals – campaigning for healthy choices & exercise
- Children, Young People and Families
- Health Inequality, Acuity and Parity – race health inequalities

With a limited budget of £195k per annum it is not possible for HWNW to cover all areas of health and social care in Northamptonshire. Therefore, it was agreed that along with the MUST DO work, the following areas would be prioritised for additional work throughout the year (these are ordered by priority):

1. To prioritise the Make Your Voice Count Campaign- We will utilise this campaign to raise awareness of our HW locally and to support individuals within our community. The campaign will be run over the course of 6 months and will focus on: offering an overarching survey (which can include specific focuses based on the needs of our partners and topics of need), attending outreach events and organising events, and connecting with minority communities. Through the work we do we will be present in the

community and will gather feedback. This large-scale piece of work will allow us to support other areas of adult health and social care at our discretion.

2. To focus on the issues surrounding GP practices- We will follow up with the ICB regarding our previous report's suggestions to see if they were followed and we will enquire about what is currently being done to support communication and patient experience.
3. To restart our Enter and View visits to Kettering General Hospital (KGH), and to continue to plan visits both at KGH and at Northampton General Hospital (NGH). We will complete one Enter and View each quarter.
4. To prioritise dementia education, we will do this by training staff on dementia awareness and by running a learning session for our staff and volunteers.
5. To keep updated on the current state of dentistry in Northamptonshire, we will continue to keep a watching brief and continue attendance at the Northamptonshire Oral Health Alliance (NOAH) meetings and quarterly meetings with the CQC. If there is a possibility to engage with a piece of work through Healthwatch England, we will pursue the opportunity.
6. To focus on health inequalities, acuity and parity by addressing the cultural barriers surrounding access to care through a piece of work.
7. To focus on men's mental health through a piece of work, details yet to be finalised.
8. To focus on adult health and social care through an Enter and View to a local care service, details yet to be finalised.
9. To ensure that we focus on Black women, maternal care, and reducing inequalities through an event such as Black History Month.
10. Keep a watching brief on the development of the Community Diagnostic Centres and support public engagement.
11. To support the work we do with children and young people through the pursuit of an Investing in Children Accreditation.

Further operational project plans will be developed to deliver the work on these priorities throughout 2024/25.

This plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the HWNW Planning Group and Commissioners.

See Appendix 3 for a detailed list of all work and meetings.

Appendix 1: What does the legislation say about Healthwatch

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which was amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, outlines the main legal requirements of Healthwatch. This is underpinned by many other regulations which give more detail about how activities should be undertaken.

The law refers to the roles of:

- Local authorities – who are required to make provision for Healthwatch.
- Providers of Healthwatch services (referred to as Healthwatch).
- Healthwatch England – whose main role is to provide advice and support to every Healthwatch

Legislative frameworks are often complex. It is important to consider what legislation states about Healthwatch, local authorities and Healthwatch England. It says:

- What they must do (duties)
- What they may do (powers)
- What is prohibited

Local authorities must make provision for the following statutory activities:

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- 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.
- Obtaining the views of local people regarding their need for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly making these views known to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing, or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England.
- Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. 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.

- Providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services.
- 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.
- Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations directly to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about issues.
- Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

Appendix 2: Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire Strategy and Vision

Our vision

'Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire will be a strong, resolute, and independent community champion. We will give local people a voice and work in partnership to influence the design and quality of health and social care provision so that all local people have an opportunity for an improved quality of life.'

- Healthwatch Staff and Volunteers

Our values

- We will be accessible and visible
- We will be independent and objective
- We will be open, honest, and transparent in all that we do
- We will be inclusive and embrace diversity and equality, reflecting the diverse needs of local people
- We will listen to and understand the views and needs of local people

- We will speak up for local people and enable people to speak for themselves
- We will be fair and credible
- We will seek out and use evidence, including that from the public, to inform our work
- We will strive to make a positive difference and champion the best possible health and social care for local people

Our strategy

We have five strategic priorities:

1. To deliver our statutory functions.
2. To champion the views of all people who live in or use health, social care or wellbeing services in Northamptonshire and commit to prioritising issues relating to health inequalities.
3. To recruit and develop staff and volunteers in Northamptonshire to continue to build the capacity of Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire as an independent consumer advocate of health, social care and wellbeing.
4. Working alongside community partners for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for adults, including vulnerable adults and carers.
5. To work for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for children, young people and families.

Appendix 3: Workplan timescales and priorities

This table summarises all work plan activities, including routine and project work, and forecast timing for 2023/2024. It is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

In the event that new or unanticipated work arises during the year, which is determined to be a higher priority (following use of the decision-making policy) and/or the scope or time/resource requirement of any current project extends, Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire and Connected Together (the contract holder) reserve the right to revise the agreed 2023/24 work plan and deliverables as appropriate through discussion with the commissioner.

Routine activities

Work area/theme	Notes	Timescales	Who responsible	Update
Horizon scanning and mapping with Providers/Commissioners	Meetings with CEOs/Chairs/directors. Joint meetings with the CIC Board and Healthwatch.	Ongoing	Chair/ HWNW Manager	Ongoing. Meetings listed in CEO and Chair updates to the quarterly HWNW Board Advisory meetings
HWNW Advisory Board meetings	Strategic direction.	Ongoing	Chair	Quarterly Ongoing
HWNW Advisory Board development	Strategic direction: Board briefings held monthly with CEO.	Ongoing	Chair/ HWNW Manager	Ongoing
HWNW Annual meeting	Date to be agreed-July 8 th 2024	TBA	Chair/HWNW Manager	
Planning Group	Operational direction	Ongoing	HWNW Manager	Bi-monthly Ongoing

Task and Finish Groups	Ad hoc and project-based. See projects	Ad hoc	All	
Consultations	HWNW Advisory Board to determine and be responsive to changing demands.	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/All	Ongoing
Project 1	Make Your Voice Count Campaign	Ongoing (6 month time scale from April 2024)	Task and Finish Group/ HWNW Manager/	Planning Stages
Project 2	St. Andrews Inpatient Mental Health Service Review with IMPACT	Ongoing	HWNW Manager	Ongoing – due to close and have report produced 04/2024
Project 3	Enter and Views at NGH and KGH	Ongoing, occurring quarterly	Task and Finish Group/ HWNW Manager/HWNW staff	Ongoing
Dentistry	Monitor concerns raised by the public	Ongoing	HWNW Manager /HWNW Advisory Board	Ongoing
Community Diagnostic Centre	Watching brief. Public engagement.	Ongoing	HWNW Manager /HWNW Advisory Board	Ongoing
Marketing strategy/ PR/Comms	Work in conjunction with the Northamptonshire Integrated Care communications team to publicise key messages.	Ongoing	HWNW Manager /Communications apprentice	<i>Weekly social media posts. Monthly newsletters. Press releases as required. Friday update emails to all volunteers.</i>

Website/newsletter/ social media	Monthly newsletter, regular social media postings on Facebook and Twitter, HWNW website to be reviewed and updated	Ongoing	HWNW Manager /Communications Apprentice	<i>Ongoing</i>
Engagement events	HWNW Board to determine key high-profile events countywide and review priorities and resources available. Bookings of events are ongoing and subject to providers releasing dates of events. 12 Outreach events 24/25	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/ HWNW Officer/All	Ongoing
Signposting and outreach	Web and telephone service	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/ HWNW Signposting and volunteer Co-ordinator. Comms Apprentice.	Ongoing
Engagement with seldom heard groups	We work or have links with the following groups for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHFT Moving Ahead project/Community Engagement Project (BAME) • Autism East Midlands (CYP) & Young Carers (CYP) 	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/ HWNW Officer	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deafconnect (Hearing impaired CYP and adults) • Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) • Change Grow Live, Substance Misuse Service 			
Patient Engagement Groups/Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend essential NHFT/KGH/NGH/SAH meetings to enable information sharing about the patient/service user experience, prioritising those linked to main project work areas. • Information sharing meetings with CQC/NCC/CCGs re residential and domiciliary care providers. 	Ongoing Usually bi-monthly	Signposting and Volunteer Co-ordinator and all volunteers.	Ongoing
Intelligence reporting to HWE and CQC	As per the agreed research area and report production see Projects section below	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/ Research Assistant	Ongoing

Quality Account responses	NHFT/NGH/KGH/SAH/EMAS	Late April/May	HWNW Advisory Board and HWNW Manager	Annual
Volunteer strategy	Support the current cohort of volunteers and increase current level of capacity	Ongoing	Signposting and Volunteer Co-ordinator	Ongoing
Volunteer training	Maintain a regular programme of training to ensure the maintenance of capacity. Healthwatch England standards and updates regularly monitored for necessary training provision.	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/signposting and volunteer co-ordinator	Ongoing
Volunteer recruitment	Ensure targeted recruitment to sustain existing capacity and ensure the availability of the right mix of volunteers to support the agreed work programme (communicating with different groups).	Ongoing	HWNW Manager/Signposting and volunteer co-ordinator	Ongoing
Young Healthwatch (YHW)	Ensuring YHW has regular meetings and project work to focus on, which compliments our focus on CYP services		YHNW Lead/ Supported by CYP Officer	Ongoing

ICS/NHCP	Involvement in workstreams. Previously involved in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary, Community and Social Care Workstream • Collaborative Stakeholder Forum • CYP Workstream • Urgent Care • Digital Framework • Cancer • iCan 	As required	HWNW Manager/ HWO/Volunteers	Ongoing
Annual report		30 June 2024	HWNW Manager/ Chair/CEO/All staff	Annual

<p>Regular meetings attended by volunteers and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Board – North – Sheila White & Gabriella Van Beek • Health and Wellbeing Board – West – Gabriella Van Beek • NOHA – Chris Drage • ICS Strategy Board – Morcea Walker/Kate Holt • Community Diagnostic Centre Programme Board – Kate Holt • HWNW Advisory Board – all Board members • HWNW Monthly briefings – all Board members • Joint CTCIC/HWNW Board meetings – all Board members • iCan People Advisory Group – Sheila White • East Northants Urban LAP – Sheila White • East Northants Rural LAP – Sheila White • WNC Executive PLACE Delivery Board – Caroline Gooch • East Northants CWF – Sheila White • Corby CWF – Dora Shergold • Kettering CWF –(not filled) • Wellingborough CWF – (not filled) • East Northants Rural LAP – Oundle – Sheila White • Wellingborough Rural LAP – Susan Hills • Wellingborough Urban LAP – Ishver Patel • NHFT Patient Safety – (not filled) • NHFT/Leicester Terrace Pressure Tissue Damage – (not filled) • MHLDA Population Health and Prevention Pillar – Gabriella Van Beek • KGH PCEEG Group – Penelope Mc Dermott • NHFT PPEG Steering Group – Penelope Mc Dermott • NHS Northampton Integrated Care Board Information Sharing – Penelope Mc Dermott • NGH PCEE Group – Penelope Mc Dermott • Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board – Morcea Walker • NSAB Delivery Board – Morcea Walker, Gabriella Van Beek • NSAB Communications and Engagement sub-group – Morcea Walker
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<p>Regular meetings attended by volunteers and staff (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSAB Quarterly Performance sub-group – Morcea Walker• ICS Strategy Development Board – Morcea Walker/Gabriella Van Beek• HWE regional meetings – Kate Holt/ Gabriella Van Beek• HWNW Contract Monitoring – Morcea Walker/Kate Holt/ Gabriella Van Beek• ICS Primary Care Steering Group – Gabriella Van Beek• PAUSE – Chris Drage• NOHA – Chris Drage• NHS Complaints Review Committee – Dora Shergold• KGH PPEG – Wendy Patel• NGH Quarterly Dementia Steering Group – Ishver Patel• NHFT Joint Strategic Pressure Ulcer Steering Group –(not filled)• ICAN PAG – Sheila White• VSCE Steering Group – Dora Shergold• ICS North Northants Steering Group – Dora Shergold• MHLDA Executive Board- Gabriella Van Beek• Diverse Communities Forum- Marcella Daye
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About Connected Together

Connected Together Community Interest Company (CIC) is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire.

The remit of the Connected Together CIC includes:

- Contract compliance
- Legal requirements
- Financial and risk management
- Sustainability and growth
- Agreeing strategy and operations
- Agreeing policies and procedures

Connected Together CIC is a social enterprise and a partnership between the University of Northampton and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire. It aims to be first for community engagement across the county of Northamptonshire and beyond.

By using our expertise and experience, we can help you in delivering community engagement programmes including workshops, research, surveys, training and more. Contact us to find out how we can help your community.

We welcome ideas and suggestions for projects that benefit Northamptonshire and its community.

Find out more at www.connectedtogether.co.uk



Connected Together
First for Community Engagement