



Together

**we're making health
and social care better**

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Lancashire

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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Board



This year has been another year of dynamic engagement work for Healthwatch as we celebrated our 10th birthday.

We are proud to say that there has been an increase in collaborative working with partners, stakeholders and most importantly, the public. Celebrating the increase in valuable volunteers, our team has grown to include **42** new volunteers recruited across Lancashire as well as skilled staff we have welcomed into the team over the past 12 months.

We have continued to focus on public engagement, championing the views of local people and listening to their experiences of health and social care; building relationships and bringing communities together across the county. Empowering and enabling, creating the much-needed spaces and places for people to share their experiences of local services; it has been a privilege hearing from the most vulnerable members of society and being able to hear the stories of those who are seldom heard.

This was particularly evident in the Covid-19 vaccination report where we worked alongside the Healthwatch Together collaborative to complete a multi-faceted engagement campaign, speaking to over **1,200** people. As a result of gathering and analysing rich feedback from members of the public, particularly those who are seldom heard, we were able to formulate recommendations. Some of those included improving accessibility, increasing targeted communication and education to increase confidence within specific communities.

Another project that highlights the importance of co-production, was our work with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership. We were commissioned to engage with the public about their draft care strategy looking into **5** priorities. Feedback was received and concerns were highlighted to improve the delivery surrounding their strategy and communication. The success of this project was down to the effective communication and transparency between partners.

A core part of our work is our Enter and View Programme. We have carried out a total of **33** visits to five different service areas including GPs, care homes, mental health rehabilitation homes, day centres and hospices. These were impactful opportunities to engage with people accessing these services and the providers to have a direct impact on how services are delivered. These visits have helped us to make **104** recommendations to providers on ways that they can improve the experiences of people.

In a year that's been full of collaborative and impactful work, the dedication of our staff and volunteers has continued to inspire us as they work tirelessly to represent the views of local people. Looking ahead to the year to come, we are excited to see what the team can achieve as they continue to work side-by-side with the people of our area.

About us

Healthwatch Lancashire is your local health and social care champion.

From Ormskirk to Lancaster, and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS and social care leaders and 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.

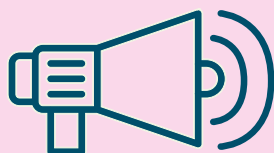


Our values are:

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

Year in review

Reaching out



14,338 people

Engaged with us online and in person, sharing their experiences and finding out more about Healthwatch and local services

41,421 visits

To our website to view our work, read our reports, find advice and guidance and to share views

We engaged with

77 seldom heard groups

from carers groups to refugee groups

Making a difference to care

We published

40 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

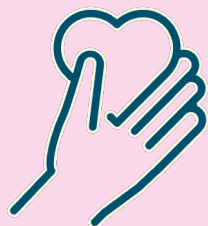
We carried out

33 Enter and View visits

across **5** service areas



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

42

outstanding volunteers who committed **690 hours** to make care better for our community.

We currently employ

12 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring



Dare to Care: We launched our innovative pilot scheme supporting people to pursue a career in local care homes.



Care Home Enter and View: We conducted **11** Enter and View visits, highlighting good practice and suggested areas of improvement.

Summer



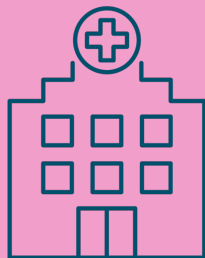
Vaccine Hesitancy: Our research involving **19** seldom heard groups, provided vital lessons for public health campaigns and future vaccination programmes.



Day service Enter and View: We conducted **11** Enter and View visits into day services for adults with learning disabilities.

How we've made a difference this year

Autumn



GP Enter and View: We conducted **6** GP Enter and View visits in response to an increased amount of feedback about the difficulties of making an appointment.



ICP roadshows: We involved the public in important healthcare planning from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership.

Winter



Cost of living: We investigated the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on physical and mental health which further supported recommendations made by Healthwatch England.



Community Champions: We were successful in recruiting **20** community champions to help us engage with seldom heard groups across Lancashire.

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

2016 – 2017

Mental health

We contributed to the redesigning of mental health services through co-production with young people. Young people reported that the Care Partnership addressed the 6 key 'things to fix'.



2020 – 2021

Keeping people connected

During the Covid-19 pandemic we helped people with learning disabilities and autistic people to keep connected and tackled isolation by keeping in contact on a weekly basis.



2022 – 2023

Shaping new hospital facilities

We gathered views about local hospital facilities, from the new location of hospital sites to the care you expect, which informed new plans with government investment.



2019 – 2020

As I See It

Through interviews with care home managers, we highlighted to key stakeholders the issues that the local social care economy was experiencing with a series of recommendations.



2021 – 2022

Tackling inequalities

Our conversations with the Windrush Health Group, a group of Black Caribbean men, informed Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust of key challenges and barriers for their community.





Healthwatch Hero

Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Denise, chair of the Lancashire Visual Impairment Forum, is a Healthwatch Hero. Every day, Denise champions the views of those visually impaired and blind on a range of topics from the inaccessibility of healthcare to transport.

Denise chairs the forum bi-monthly and arranges guest speakers and healthcare professionals to speak to forum members about their experiences. She connects service users and professionals to champion their views and amplify their voice to influence wider change.

Denise, and the forum, have provided our team with a range of stories and experiences to enrich our projects, including, shaping new hospital facilities, experiences of remote consultations, the cost-of-living crisis, mental health and the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Thank you, Denise, and the Visual Impairment Forum for speaking with us and helping us to make change. Your contributions are invaluable.



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 our priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services to help them improve.

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

Poor access to mental health support in Lancashire has been regularly brought to our attention. When we heard about Mark, a 38 year old who had recently been admitted to a secure mental health ward, along with stories from many others, we felt it was our duty to start a core piece of work investigating the accessibility of mental health support in Lancashire.

Impact: Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust are aware of Mark's story and will be provided with recommendations once our project is completed.



Getting services to involve the public

We have been visiting Patient Participation Groups across the county to learn how they are encouraging members of the public to be involved in their work, to give patients a voice and improve the links between the community and the service.

Impact: We have highlighted good practice and learned about how services are trying to improve communication with the community. We have been the critical friend and recommended that services need to take more action in engaging with the public to ensure they are receiving the care they deserve.



Improving care over time

Staff and volunteers have been involved in annual NHS PLACE assessment visits. We joined NHS staff and members of the public to visit local hospitals to observe the premises and test the food.

Impact: As a result, hospital estates departments across Lancashire were presented with a list of improvements to increase the comfort and confidence of patients and visitors.

These included replacing flooring with dementia-friendly materials, updates to cleaning schedules and instructions, repainting of damaged hallways and better signage to help the public navigate the hospital.

Learning from Covid-19 to improve the rollout of vaccination programmes

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on people, communities, and organisations. In response to the pandemic, vaccinations were developed at pace to help people defend themselves against the virus. However, there was statistical evidence to show that there was low vaccination uptake rates in specific communities.

Healthwatch Lancashire, in partnership with Healthwatch Together (a collaboration between Healthwatch organisations; Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire) were commissioned by the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board to engage with seldom-heard communities and individuals to gather their experiences and views of the Covid-19 vaccination programme. Factors which informed people's decisions, as well as barriers and experiences were investigated.

Healthwatch Together engaged with **1,216** members of the public, via **122** case studies, **46** focus groups and **596** online survey responses. The views from **19** seldom heard groups were also captured, to understand their views and experiences of the Covid-19 vaccination.



Improving the rollout of future vaccination programmes

Feedback informed **19** overarching recommendations, as well as more tailored recommendations for each community. Recommendations included:



- Improving access to interpretation services at vaccination sites and on the online booking system.
- Improve privacy within vaccination sites, to enable all individuals to feel comfortable in receiving the vaccination.
- Create 'community ambassadors' who are health professionals to connect with each community to address misinformation, overcome concerns and provide people with accurate information.



What difference will this make?

These recommendations were presented to the NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) and the Lancashire and South Cumbria Vaccination Oversight Board who established a working group to drive forward the recommendations. The learning from the project will be used by the ICS to inform future NHS business plans and will be adapted to provide further insight into future vaccination programmes (allowing delivery to be smoother and more effective).

“

I am not against immunisations as I know they have been tried and tested and the side-effects are well known. I feel that the Covid-19 vaccinations were not at that point yet.

”

Female participant, aged 48, self identified as a member of the Chinese community

Influencing change through Enter and View

One of Healthwatch's statutory powers is the right to carry out Enter and View visits. These visits enable us to speak with patients and those receiving care, their families and staff to find out their experiences and to recommend improvements.

This year we conducted **33** Enter and View visits in a range of services to champion the patient voice and contribute to influencing change.

Information we receive from engagement, phone calls, emails and our online feedback centre inform our recommendations. When planning a visit, we also look at local intelligence, including CQC reports and attending stakeholder meetings with the local authority and NHS.

Service areas visited:

1. Care homes
2. Hospices
3. Day centres for adults with learning disabilities and dementia
4. Mental health rehabilitation
5. GP practices



Our Enter and View visits are grounded in partnership working and sharing good practice. As a result, two service providers have become Community Champions which allows us to share information with each other going forward.





What difference will this make?

Following Enter and View visits, **25** of our team's recommendations have been actioned by service providers to improve care. These include:

- Implementation of an ideas sharing session which is led by the occupational therapy team, to shape and develop an occupational therapy programme within a mental health rehabilitation centre.
- 'Communication hub', with two laptops have been set up in a care home, meaning that relatives can call their loved ones.
- Implementation of an electronic recording system for staff to reduce paperwork, meaning staff have increased time to focus on care.

“

Thank you for your visit. We are happy to receive such a positive report. I have taken your recommendations on board and began to implement your suggestions within the care home. Going forward, we will continue to ensure that we continue to offer the best support possible to our residents, families and staff.

Care Home Manager in Lancashire

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A further summary of the impact of our Enter and View visits is shown on the next page.

Enter and view

This year, we carried out **33** Enter and View visits. We made **104** recommendations or actions as a result of this activity. The table below shows a snapshot of some of the actions that have been taken by providers.

A summary of impact

Location	Recommendation	Action from provider
Acorn Heights Care Home: Burnley	Advertise activity timetable more widely	Activity co-ordinators completing 1-1 sessions with residents about activities
The Knowle Care Home: Preston	Implement staff name badges for the benefit of residents	Name badges introduced
Ashmeade Residential Home: Burnley	Consider ways to make residents aware of their choices about their morning routine	Staff briefed on making residents aware of choices
EnableU, Day Centre: Colne	Improve the back garden and outdoor environment	Garden tidied and sourcing a picnic bench
Adams Ark: Blackburn	Improve communications methods for relatives	Newsletter sent out asking relatives about their preferred communication methods
Age UK Day Club: Ormskirk	Consult with members, relatives, and staff around food preferences	Sourcing a new catering supplier and involving members in new food menu
4Ever-Unique (Unique Kidz & Co.): Morecambe	Offer members opportunities and activities within the community	Additional staff member recruited to assist with activities out in the community
Highfield Scheme: Great Harwood	Improve communication methods for relatives	Implementation of a report sheet for relatives
	Include service users more in the planning of activities	Discussions with service users about current activities and what they would like going forward. There is now a plan in place to implement some of these
Lancaster Medical Practice: University Health Centre	Ensure communication about appointment-making procedure is clear through reception teams and social media	Social media campaign and review of information on website and in waiting rooms
Issa Medical Centre: Preston	Promote Patient Participation group	Open day held to advertise the Patient Participation group which Healthwatch Lancashire attended



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from all communities within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Visiting events at community-based charities, family groups and faith organisations.
- Recruiting Community Champions who have strong links with seldom heard communities.
- Presenting video case studies to the local Integrated Care Board and NHS Trust Patient Experience Groups.
- Increasing our presence through pop-up events and working from local community hubs.

Better support for parents of children with disabilities

Feedback gathered from focus groups identified a lack of support and miscommunication within SEND services.

As a result, Healthwatch Lancashire contacted the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) team and arranged for them to meet with the group.

Impact: Healthwatch revisited the group along with SENDIASS and members had the opportunity to ask questions and raise their concerns. The meeting ended positively with SENDIASS addressing concerns and providing the group with requested information.



“There’s a lot of things wrong with the service, there is a lack of care for the children and parents. Staff don’t have time to properly talk to you and the appointments always feel rushed. I was given the wrong information and the wrong medication for my child which I think is awful.”

Mother of child with a disability



Co-production to ensure information is accessible

Healthwatch Lancashire regularly work with a learning disability self-advocacy group in Lancashire to produce easy read surveys and materials.

Our easy read surveys include pictures and use language and font size which is easier to read.

Impact: This ensures that members of the public who are neurodivergent or visually impaired can complete our surveys as independently as possible and have their voices heard.



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch 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 you are looking for a GP, or need advice about how to make a complaint – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Involving people in shaping the local NHS five year strategy
- Signposting people to advocacy and third-sector support services
- Supporting and signposting people during the cost-of-living crisis
- Signposting people when wanting to make a complaint

Help to find dental care

161 people contacted us last year looking for advice and information on dental services.

Most feedback was regarding the lack of dentists taking on NHS patients and not being able to afford private treatment.

“I have contacted my local MP, but she can't offer any solution either. We are desperate now, unable to afford a private dentist, what am I to do?”

The delay or absence of dental treatment has resulted in some people experiencing considerable pain.

“I am in need of urgent dental care. There are no NHS dentists, leaving me in extreme pain.”

Impact: As well as signposting, we have presented feedback to the Lancashire Health Scrutiny Steering Group and informed local MP's. Commissioning dental services is now the responsibility of Lancashire's Integrated Care Board. We have accepted an invitation to join a 'commissioning group' to influence improvements.

Helping to improve GP access

Healthwatch Lancashire received an influx of feedback about the difficulty of making a GP appointment.

“I have to wait over 30 minutes to get through on the phone to make an appointment. Then I am unable to make a face-to-face appointment. I have just been referred straight to the hospital without being seen by my GP.”

In response, we set up a GP Enter and View programme to investigate issues that patients were experiencing and to learn what steps were being taken. We carried out 6 visits to speak with staff and patients about their experiences. Our recommendations promoted alternative methods of appointment-making to try and simplify the appointment-making process for patients.

Impact: As a result, surgeries reviewed:

- Their appointment-making process
- Staffing for care navigation during busy periods
- How they inform patients about their options

We also heard from **1392** people with concerns about the procurement of services for a specific GP practice. We informed the ICB of these concerns which resulted in them carrying out targeted engagement with patients, extending the procurement by 18 months and arranging a new process to involve patient engagement.



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. In just one year, we have gone from 2 volunteers to 42. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to better understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Committed **690 hours** to make care better for Lancashire residents.
- Visited communities to hear their stories and signpost to support services.
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve.
- Took part in Hospital PLACE assessments and contributed to recommendations based on feedback.
- Connected us with their community to help capture and champion seldom heard voices.

Inna

"I was born in Ukraine and worked for 32 years as a doctor. When the war started and my city was occupied by Russian troops, I decided to change my life. I came to the UK, and I now volunteer with Healthwatch. I have been able to delve deeper into the cultural roots of society. With Healthwatch, I can make my contribution to the improvement of the lives of others."



John

"As a volunteer if the role wasn't varied and fun I wouldn't be motivated to continue. It has been both of these in spades. How else would I have got to spend a Sunday in a vast Accrington mosque, where I walked through an inflatable bowel (true!) and met the Mayor of Hyndburn. All this has been underpinned throughout by the positive and welcoming attitude of the Healthwatch team."



Rachael

"I started volunteering with Healthwatch Lancashire to get experience alongside studying a diploma in Health and Social Care. Volunteering with Healthwatch has given me a different perspective entirely. It can be quite challenging as you hear a lot of negative stories, but I'm so glad I stepped out of my comfort zone as it has given me so much confidence. I even enjoyed the days standing outside in the rain!"



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.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£322,446	Expenditure on pay	£323,833
Additional income	£201,053	Non-pay expenditure	£139,224
Total income	£523,499	Total expenditure	£463,058

Additional income:

This year we received two grants from the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board. These were for Healthwatch Together projects and included the Covid Vaccination Hesitancy project and Healthwatch Together co-ordination and ICB engagement.



Looking ahead

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackle inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

A portrait of Lindsay Graham, a woman with long blonde hair and bangs, smiling. She is wearing an orange ribbed sweater. The background is a warm, out-of-focus interior with wooden walls and hanging lights.

Lindsay Graham

Healthwatch Lancashire
Director

Top three priorities for 2023–24

1. **Explore access and waiting times for people requesting mental health support in Lancashire** – We will run a project exploring people's experiences of accessing mental health support and use this to influence positive change in services provided by the NHS.
2. **Implement real co-production** – We will champion local voices in the planning of our work to ensure we are asking the right questions and capturing what matters the most to people. We will develop a steering group at every opportunity with our community champions to utilise their knowledge and expertise.
3. **Extend our reach with seldom heard communities** – We aim to increase our reach and make new connections with seldom heard groups including those in secure settings, travelling communities and the LGBTQIA+ community.

The way we work

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

Healthwatch belongs to local people – our statutory role is to act on their behalf to speak up for them, voice their views and ensure that commissioners understand people's experiences to aid sound decision making.

Our Board consists of nine trustees with a wide range of skills and experience. Trustees have experience of working at senior levels in the Police, Fire Service, NHS, local authorities, education and the corporate world.

The Board of Trustees meets every month and is kept informed by our CEO on the performance and delivery of our work programme. Twice a year, our board meets in public, giving members of the public an opportunity to attend and ask questions.



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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a contact form on our website and through social media, as well as attending 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, share with our local stakeholders and community champions, post it in our newsletter and promote it on our social media.



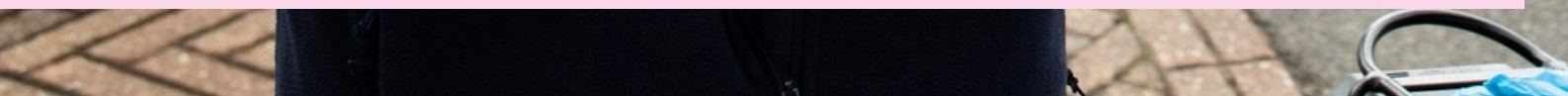
Responses to recommendations

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so 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 insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

We have taken insight and experiences to decision makers in Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System. Some examples include, the Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust Service User and Carer Council, Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust Patient Experience Group and East Lancashire Hospital Trust Patient Experience Group. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.



Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives sit on many of Lancashire's strategic boards, ensuring the voice and experiences of people are heard. These boards include:

- Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board
- Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Associated Communities
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership
- Lancashire Place Based Partnership

Thank you

We are proud of the work we have achieved and the role we play in listening and amplifying the public voice. Over the last ten years, Lancashire residents have told us the good and the bad when it comes to health and social care and helped us to raise awareness of big issues to influence change.

Thank you to:

- Thousands of Lancashire residents who shared their personal experiences and views of local health and social care services
- Stakeholders from across the health and social care system for allowing us to be the critical friend and working hard to make improvements
- Community groups and voluntary organisations for connecting us with the community to capture their experiences
- Our staff, volunteers and community champions for their passion and hard work



“

“Healthwatch have listened to me and really made me feel that they care and want to help and believe me they really have. It is good to know that I can turn to them and get the help I need when I need it.”

A resident living in Lancashire who engaged with the Healthwatch Team

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Message from our CEO

“

It is the people who experience services that are most well-placed to shape change.

Another year has passed and I'm happy to say it's been a year filled with the Healthwatch team representing our local communities.

Our team has been out and about listening to people's stories and experiences. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share their views, you really are our eyes and ears. In turn we have taken these views, presented reports and recommendations, and worked tirelessly to represent these at decision making boards, groups, and committees such as the Integrated Care Board, Quality Committee and Health Scrutiny Committee.

Whilst I am grateful for the strong relationships we have with health and care providers, commissioners and leaders, I remain concerned about the findings of our work this year, particularly the consistent lack of good involvements and engagement of people in the development and improvement of services.

We continue to witness decisions being made that will impact on local people without their meaningful involvement or consultation. We must do better at co-producing services with the very people that will access them. After all, in our view, it is the people who experience services that are most well-placed to shape change.

In the coming year, my team and I will push harder for more meaningful engagement from health and care

organisations. We will work together with system leaders to position our communities as the driving force that shapes services and we will champion those views to make that happen.

I'd like to thank my wonderful team for their outstanding efforts, and I'd like to thank our stakeholders and partners for the collaboration we have shared this year and the progress we have so far made. It is this progress that inspires me to continue to raise our ambition to ensure greater involvement of patient voice. Together we can achieve more.

Most importantly, thank you to you, the reader of this report, the individual who has shared your experience, views, and time; you are helping us drive change. Without you, we wouldn't be here.

I am looking forward to working together across our area in the year to come to achieve more than we have ever before.

David Blacklock, CEO.



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