

Annual Report

Amplifying the voices of
communities across Lancashire.

2024 – 2025



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Message from our CEO

Healthwatch Lancashire has had another impactful year, driven by our ambition to reach even more people and connect with the diverse communities across Lancashire.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has shared their views and experiences with us.

The people of Lancashire are our eyes and ears; your stories shape our priorities and help us focus on what really matters. We've worked hard to champion the voices of those who use health and social care services making sure their needs are heard, understood and acted upon.



Looking ahead, we remain wholeheartedly committed to being the voice of Lancashire residents on all matters related to health and care. We will continue to put people's views at the heart of the services we all rely on, especially at the moments when they matter most.

David Blacklock – CEO People First

Message from our Chair – Mark Panone

As the People First Chair, I'm pleased to introduce this year's Healthwatch Lancashire's Annual Report and to share some reflections on what has been an important and inspiring second year since inception.

Over the year, we've heard from many people across Lancashire who have shared their personal experiences of drawing on health and social care services. Whether those experiences were positive or highlighted areas for improvement, every story has helped us build a clearer picture of what's working and where change is needed.

This year, we've heard from many people across our community about what's working well and what still needs to change in health and social care services. Common themes have included barriers faced by BSL users when accessing services, challenges in women's health – particularly around gynaecological health, menopause, and mental health – and ongoing issues with transportation and accessibility to healthcare services for disabled people.

We've worked hard to ensure these and other concerns are shared with decision-makers and service providers in a constructive way to improve services for all.

I'm especially proud of the way our team, staff and volunteers alike, have deepened their engagement across the area.

Through community outreach, events, and online channels, we've made it easier for people to share their views and feel part of shaping the future of health and care in Lancashire.

I'd like to thank our many partners across the NHS, Lancashire County Council, and the voluntary sector.

Your openness and willingness to listen make our work possible, and together, we can continue to champion better care for all.

Looking ahead, our focus remains the same: to be a strong, independent voice for local people—and to make sure that listening leads to action.

Thank you for your support and for being part of this journey.





About Us

Healthwatch Lancashire is the public voice for health and social care in Lancashire and exists to make services work for the people who use them.

We believe that the best way to do this is by providing the people of Lancashire with opportunities to share their views and experiences.

Our team



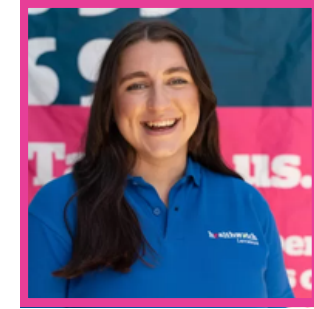
David Blacklock,
CEO of People First



Lindsay Graham
Director of Lancashire
and South Cumbria



Kerry Prescott
Head of
Healthwatch



Jodie Carney
Manager



Steve Walmsley
Engagement
Team Leader



Lewis Darwen
Data and Research
Team Lead



Cora Dixon
Communications and
Administrative
Coordinator



Caroline Fancott-
Beynon
MVNP Project Team
Leader



Dawn Iverson
Volunteer Coordinator



Sue Edwards
Senior Engagement Officer



Emmy Walmsley
Senior Engagement Officer



Louise Dewhurst
Engagement Officer

Message from our manager, Jodie Carney

This year has been a fantastic year for our team as we continue to push for positive change in our health and social care system by amplifying people's voices in Lancashire.

A highlight this year has been listening to women about their experiences of health services and ensuring that this is recognised to inform the programme of women's health hubs in Lancashire. Another highlight is presenting the findings of our project exploring the experiences of people who are Deaf and use British Sign Language, this report will in no doubt have an impact in forming change to improve access to health appointments for people across Lancashire.

With the ever-changing health and social care system, our role as Healthwatch is more important than ever. We continue to push boundaries and further embed ourselves in our local communities.

I hope that as you read through this report, you can see that the voices of people is at the heart of everything that we do.



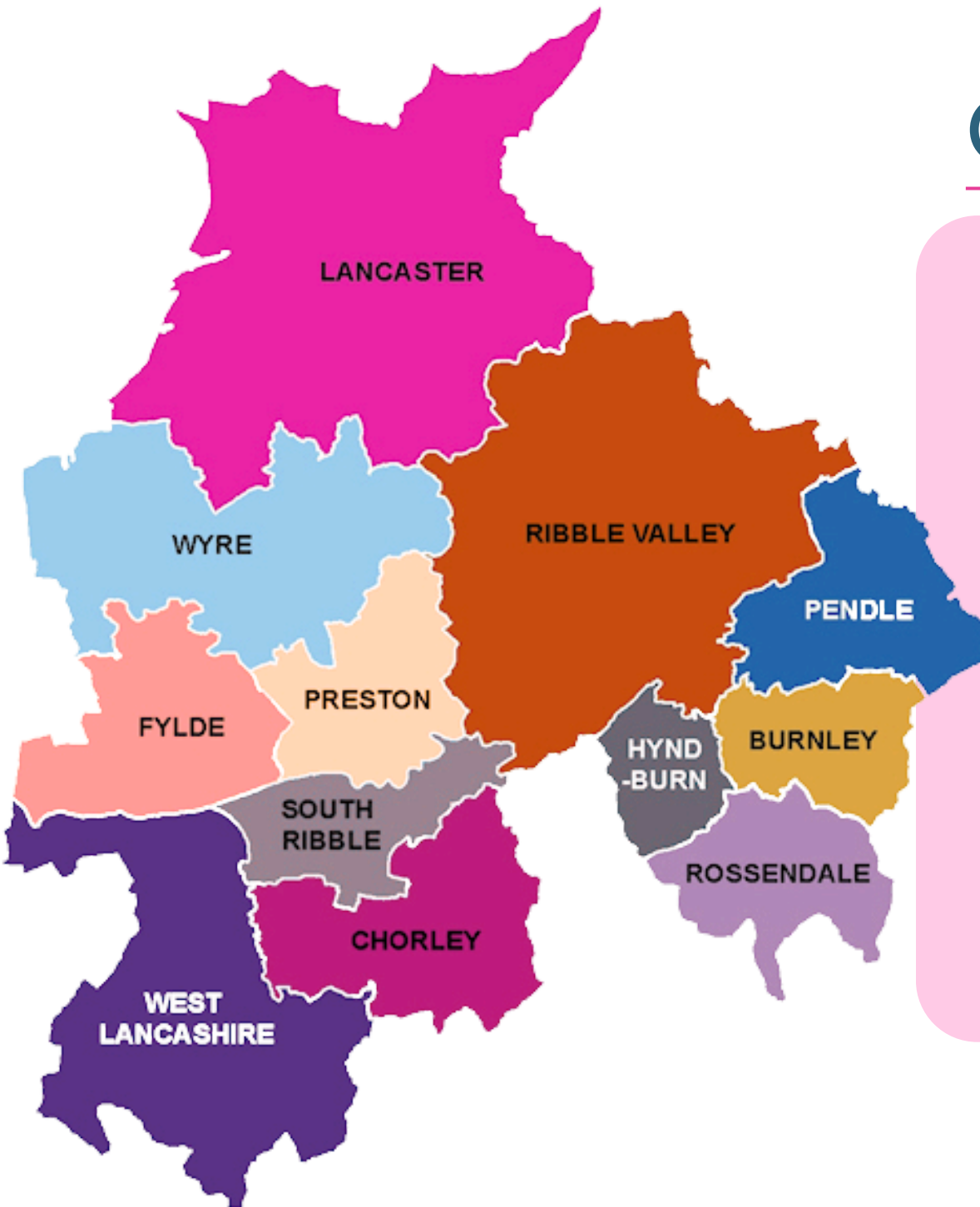
Our Patch

At Healthwatch Lancashire, our role is to amplify the voices of our communities across Lancashire.

We cover

- Central Lancs (Preston, South Ribble and Chorley)
- West Lancs (West Lancashire)
- East Lancs (Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rosendale)
- North and Coastal (Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre)

Across these areas, we've built strong local connections, regularly joining community groups to listen to people's views and offer helpful information, signposting and support where needed.



Our volunteers

This year our fantastic volunteers have given 947 hours, equivalent to 126 working days, to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what works and what needs improvement.

This year, our volunteers:

- Completed 81 hours of training
- Spent over 150 hours supporting local hospitals and mental health facilities to assess their patient experience and the care environment
- Spent over 690 hours directly engaging with our community to gather views and improve care





Debra

"Volunteering helps me to keep in touch with my "clinical" roots, whilst choosing what activities I volunteer for and I choose the amount of time I can commit to.

I particularly enjoy the PLACE assessments and the Enter and Views – I suppose this is because of my background. I really feel that we are making a difference whilst improving the environments for patients, service users and their families."



Denise

"The team at Healthwatch Lancs are so helpful making sure we as volunteers are well supported.

I know the difference your volunteers make in the community so I wanted to get involved. It has also been very rewarding knowing conversations today will go on to make a difference in the future."



Angela

"I volunteer with Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP) because, in my work, I've heard so many stories from parents who feel let down by poor communication and experiences during their maternity journey.

Being part of MNVP allows me to help turn those stories into meaningful change. I love being able to run and attend free meetings, listen to families, and help ensure their voices are heard—so we can improve services together."

Our values



Equity – We listen with compassion, value every voice, and include those often left out.



Empowerment – We create a safe, inclusive space where people feel respected, supported and confident to speak up and shape meaningful change.



Collaboration – We work openly with others to share learning, build trust and make a greater impact together.



Independence – We stand up for what matters to the public. We work alongside decision-makers but stay true to our role as an independent, trusted voice.



Truth – We're honest and speak up when change is needed—making sure those in power hear it, even when it's hard.



Impact – We're here to make a real difference. We're ambitious, accountable, and driven to help others create change.

Our year in numbers

From veterans to British Sign Language groups, ensuring every voice is heard.

106
seldom heard groups

Helping us drive change and listen to our community.

11
Staff members

Highlighting the improvements people want to see in care.

42
reports published

30
Enter & View visits

Across 5 service areas, observing and influencing care quality.

51,060
website visits

People accessed our reports, advice, and shared their views.

40
incredible volunteers

Providing 947 hours to make care better for everyone.

9760
people engaged

Online and in person, sharing experiences and learning about local services.

Workplan 2024-25

Project Reports

Who can help me:

Exploring the experiences of carers of people with a neurological condition.

Our Voice in health and social care:

Exploring the experiences of BSL users when accessing health and social care.

Disability Voices

Disability Voices:

Exploring the experiences of people with a disability in Lancashire.

This will provide an overview of support available for people with a disability and highlight any barriers to accessing services.

Women's Health

Women's Health:

We will be facilitating engagement roadshows across Lancashire exploring 'what matters to me' for women and their health. This will inform a 'deep dive' phase 2.

Virtual Wards

Virtual Wards:

Exploring people's understanding of virtual wards and recent experiences.

30 Enter and Views

GP Practices



Care Homes



Blood Clinics



Rehab facilities



Pharmacies



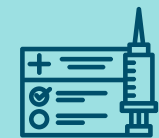
Campaigns



Sexual health



Rights within healthcare



Hospital passports

A year of making a difference

Spring

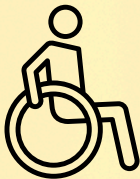


We worked alongside our Healthwatch Together colleagues to deliver roadshows and enter and views around maternity and neonatal services.

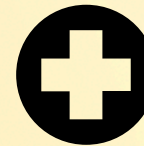


We held conversations with members of the public registered with a rural PCN about their health and wellbeing.

Summer



Our 'Disability Voices' project was launched. Investigating what life is like for a disabled person living in Lancashire.



We introduced Pharmacies and Blood Clinics into our Enter and View Programme, resulting in five service areas visited across the year.

Autumn



We started our 'Talk to Us' Women's Health Project. This explored what matters to women around their health and wellbeing.



We continued our Enter and View programme in GP practices, Care Homes and Rehabilitations.

Winter



A research period began, looking into Virtual Wards and how the local Trusts provide this service.



We launched a joint campaign with the NSPCC to provide information to young people around mental health.

Working together for change

Healthwatch Lancashire is part of Healthwatch Together, a collaboration of five local Healthwatch organisations that ensure community voices shape healthcare decisions across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

We represent the voice of residents at strategic meetings including the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and their Quality Committee, ensuring local experiences influence service improvements and developments.



**Healthwatch
Together**

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool,
Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmorland
and Furness working in partnership

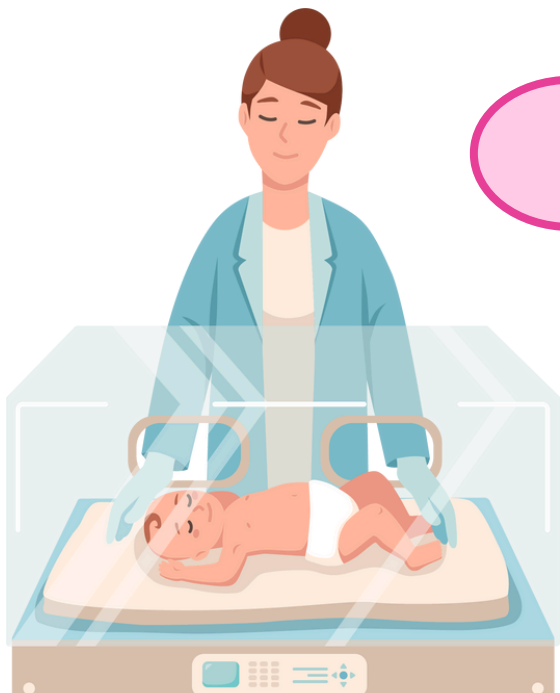


Project Spotlight

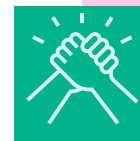
Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership, Supporting Maternity and Neonatal Care by listening to families.

Through our Healthwatch Together partnership we have worked closely with our Local Maternity and Neonatal System. In September 2024, we published our report Maternity and Neonatal Matters.

The report highlights the experiences of people accessing maternity and neonatal services across four hospital Trusts.



[Read the full report here.](#)



Partnered with Local Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnerships (MNVPs) to improve services.



Worked with the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) to standardise feedback collection.



Attended the LMNS Insight, Co-production, and Engagement (ICE) group to ensure patient voices drive improvements.

Across the four hospital Trusts, we identified a lack of promotion of the 6-8 post-natal check. In May 2025 we will run a campaign highlighting the importance of these checks and how people can book appointments.

Making a difference in the community



Every year, our work is guided by what people tell us matters most.

Whether it's access to virtual wards, support for unpaid carers or experiences of accessing women's health services, we turn community voices into action.

Our Voice- BSL



Championing the experiences of the Deaf community

Last year we championed the voices of the Deaf community by engaging with British Sign Language (BSL) users to highlight experiences of accessing health and social care services. Throughout this project we heard from over 120 people.

Feedback revealed that...

There are gaps in understanding how to provide interpreting services across service providers, and gaps in services providing Deaf awareness to staff.

People shared experiences of not understanding medical information and treatment due to a lack of appropriate BSL interpreters.

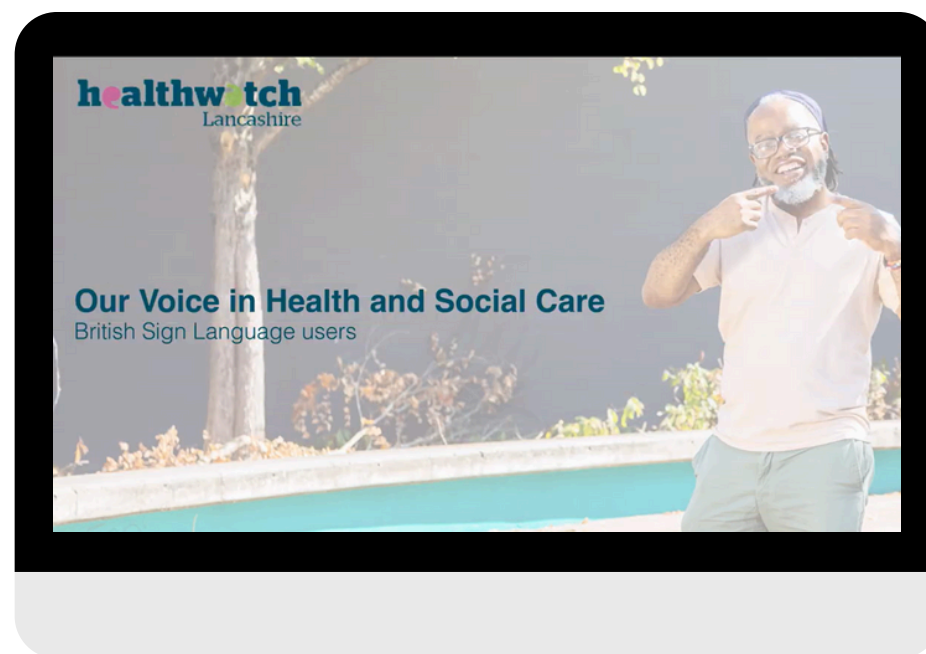
41%

of respondents reported poor experiences with primary and secondary care services.

23%

of services we contacted through mystery shopping, stated they knew how to book a BSL interpreter.

Click to view our BSL video below.



I recently got blue lighted to A&E with a heart problem. The whole way there was silent, as no one knew any sign language. I can lip read but the paramedic wouldn't take his mask off so I couldn't lip read what he was saying. It was a scary time for me, and I did not feel I was being supported. I arrived at A&E and was told that there was no interpreter on shift, but there should be one later.

I face-timed my husband, as I was scared as no one would communicate with me. The doctor shouted down the phone at my husband "can you tell your wife something for me." This was highly inappropriate. My husband should not be translating for me when he was just as scared. He was stressed already with having the kids at home and me in hospital, but he was then translating for me.

There should have been 24/7 VRS [Video Relay Service] available to me but there wasn't. I feel this could have been avoided. Staff were walking around with iPads and phones so why can't there be an app on there to help translate for patients.

Lancashire resident – A&E experience
'Our Voice in Health and Social Care' project.

Personal Experience

Our Voice- BSL



Championing the experiences of the Deaf community

"My daughter's mental health has been impacted as we have had to use her as an interpreter. It has damaged her wellbeing."

"A hearing person can ring at 8am and get an appointment that day. How do Deaf people do that? We don't have that option...by the time we have emailed there are no appointments available"

"I asked for an interpreter three times and there was no interpreter provided. I don't go to the GP now".

What difference did this make?

We presented our work to the Lancashire BSL Forum where we presented the report with interpreters and a BSL video.

We heard commitments from the Local authority to improve provision and take on a dedicated Deaf Social Worker to support the community.

We are also setting up a task and finish group with local providers to work in partnership to see our recommendations through.





Hearing our Communities

We're here for all residents of Lancashire. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their experiences and play a part in shaping service to meet their needs.



Waiting for wellness



Exploring young people's experiences of accessing mental health services.

Between October– December 2023, we spoke to 110 young people and 31 parent/carers about experience of accessing mental health support services for young people.

72%

of respondents received mental health support in 3 months or less.

35%

of parent/carers mentioned a lack of support for those who are neurodivergent.



Feedback revealed....

Their experiences highlighted multiple barriers in accessing support for those who are neurodivergent, particularly those with autism and/or ADHD, as well as young people reporting a gap between the transition into adults' mental health services.

Waiting for wellness



Exploring young people's experiences of accessing mental health services.

We've worked with Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust to explore some of the recommendations made in this report. Along with other positive changes, the trust has introduced six-weekly check-ins to ensure timely support with a check-in template pending approval, and triage and assessment tools are now used consistently across the service.



"When I was being transferred from CAMHS to adult services, I had no support for 9 weeks because people weren't communicating."

What difference did this make?

We also partnered up with NSPCC to launch a Campaign in October 2024, focused on supporting young people and their mental health. This also included 'lunch and learn' sessions for parents and professionals with resources for young people. This was celebrated in a recent event hosted by Healthwatch Lancashire where 160 young people and parents came to get information about mental health services and support available.

My problems go back 55 years. I am currently having CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy]; it is helping and it was only a short time I had to wait.

I was told by the person who did the initial assessment of me on the phone that I could benefit from a therapy that involved eye movement, as I am sure my problems are related to my childhood. But this has still not been offered to me.

It is annoying to be told by the team that it will be helpful, but then to find out it is not available in my area. I am receiving CBT, but it is only scratching the surface. I am still left with my problems with no way to treat them and get sorted out once and for all. My CBT therapist is already discussing the end of my sessions, and I am worried about what is going to happen when my sessions end. I have an eating disorder, I am an alcoholic, and I have had mental health problems for around 55 years. Why can't I access the treatment that might help. I am still left with feelings of suicide and low self-worth with seemingly no end to them.

Lancashire resident – 'Waiting for Wellness' project.

Personal Experience

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 feed this back to services and help them improve.



Linda's Experience

Thanks to Linda's feedback we were able to help her gain access to dental services.

We provided assistance to her to contact local services through the Lancashire Dental Helpline and NHS Dental Choices website to find her an appropriate service.

We raised it with our local Integrated care board who took the story under advisement and gave us some advice on how to support people with learning difficulties to get access to treatment.

Linda is a resident of Burnley in Lancashire.

"I was at a specialist dentist in Burnley for many years and they told me they were no longer able to treat me and had taken me off their list and told me to find another dentist. I was very happy with this dentist and struggled to find another NHS dentist near where I lived.

There were a lot of people being taken off their lists for many reasons which isn't fair.

Healthwatch were able to give me advice and support to help me keep registered with them and I am back now getting treatment like checkups and other work they need to do."



Hearing the voices of veterans in prison

Veterans often have unique and complex health issues due to their military backgrounds. We regularly attend a veterans breakfast club in HMP Kirkham to hear the voices of people who have served in the armed forces around the quality of their healthcare.

What difference did this make?

Veterans feel heard and able to raise concerns; and feedback is provided to the prison healthcare provider enabling them to better meet the needs of veterans. Individual cases have been referred to ABL Health who oversee prison healthcare across the northwest, which allows for them to advocate and support where necessary.



Improving information carers receive about support

We spoke with **124** unpaid carers supporting someone with a neurological condition. We attended 25 community groups and conducted 27 case studies. 80% of carers in our study were registered as a carer with their GP but only 39% had received a carer's assessment. 345 of carers said that they weren't offered any support at all.

What difference did this make?

We partnered up with Lancashire Carers, the MS society, Alzheimer's UK and AgeUK to create a list of support and information for people caring for someone with a neurological condition.

This was produced into an information list people can stick on their fridge. This is to help increase awareness of what support is available.

This information will also be shared as part of the Lancashire and South Cumbria's Integrated Care Partnership's Carers Charter.



Information and signposting

From finding an NHS dentist to making complaints and providing feedback, we are here for you. 581 people reached out to us across the year for advice, guidance and support, finding services that can help them.

This year, we helped by:

- Signposting people to the correct support services
- Helping individuals access contact details for the services they need.
- Encouraging individuals to share their personal experiences.
- Providing up-to-date information that people can trust.



Workplan 2025–26

Disability Voices Phase 2

Phase 2 will investigate transport accessibility for disabled people living in Lancashire attending medical appointments and health services. We will explore wheelchair repairs, hospital and community transport, and structural accessibility barriers.

Men’s Health

This study will begin with a broad survey to understand men’s health concerns and priorities. Based on the findings, we will then conduct a more in-depth investigation into the key issues identified in the first phase.

Ageing Well Without Children and Family

This project aims to identify key concerns and challenges associated with ageing without children and explore strategies to mitigate the impact on future services. It will begin with broad research before focusing on critical themes in health and social care.

The Impact of Social Media on Young Children

This project will explore the impact of social media on young people’s mental health, their online behaviour, their safety on social platforms, and how social media influences their self-perception.

30 Enter and Views

GP Practices



Care Homes



Day Centres



Urgent Walk-in



Pharmacies



Campaigns



Continuing Healthcare



Accessible Information Standards



Cancer Awareness

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	£322,521	Expenditure on pay	£228,639
Additional Income	£26,000	Non-pay expenditure	£104,328
Total Income	£348,521	Total expenditure	£332,967

Additional income can be broken down into:

- £25,000 Personalised care and support planning (PCSP) survey
- £1,000 Focus group for Genomic Medicine Service Alliance (GMSA) North West

The Formal Bits

Healthwatch Lancashire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

Healthwatch Lancashire is part of the People First Independent Advocacy family, Registered Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee (Registered Charity No. 1184112 Company No. 5438407)

- Healthwatch Lancashire, Leyland House, Lancashire Business Park, Leyland, PR26 6TY.
- Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ.
- People First Independent Advocacy, People First Conference Centre, Milbourne Street, Carlisle CA2 5XB.

The way we work

Volunteers and lay people are involved in our governance and decision-making. Our Board consists of six members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met twice. To ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

We are commissioned by



Contact Us



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