



Healthwatch West Sussex Annual Report

2020-21

On Equal Terms
- Then and Now



Sally Dartnell - Chief Officer



“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



“Previous technology and community partnership investment made it possible for us to swiftly adapt to remote working with other community and voluntary organisations so we understood peoples’ health and wellbeing needs in real time. ...

... We will continue with challenging but supportive conversations to make sure the changes are right to meet needs”

Steve Cooper, Chair of Healthwatch West Sussex



Here to make health and care better

The independent champion for people who use health and social care services. To understand what matters to local people, help make sure views are heard and shared with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shaping the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their insight made.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health and social care

We want more services to use your experiences and views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



Highlights from the year

Reaching out



We heard from

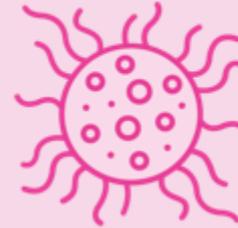
17,379 people

about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

3,000+ people

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

2,700+ people

during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ensuring Health and Social care that works for you



90 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed over 2,400 hours. With many more people offering input and support.

9 staff

equivalent to 6 full time people with the team working voluntarily over and above their hours during the year because of the public demand.

£315,889 in funding

Received from our local authority in 2020-21

£114,275 in-kind value

From the work of our volunteers and independent board. As a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, all of the income from our social enterprise work is also reinvested in projects for West Sussex.

Making a difference to care



We published

130 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we escalated 62 concerns (some small and other effecting many) and made over 30 recommendations for improvement.

85% of recommendations

we made last year have been acted upon, at the point where we reviewed progress.



Theme one: Dentistry



Then: access to NHS dental services

“Thanks to people across West Sussex sharing their experiences of dentistry we were able to help commissioners adapt to sudden changes in need and ensure patients had access to simple, clear information about their treatment.”



Now: ongoing dentistry issues

West Sussex insight contributed to the national picture for NHS England.

Locally we focussed on trusted information via websites working with the Local Dental Committee early in the pandemic to get a [checklist out to help local practices](#). This has been shared across the region to support other areas.



‘Thank you for the advice, it’s helped me to find the strength to continue to seek treatment and find a dentist (after 15 calls) that is willing to send an application for treatment, which is likely to be in August.’

West Sussex Resident (June 2020)



Theme two: Mental Health



Then: Review of Mental Health Beds

we raised concern over a consultation that offered only one option as a solution and sought to create a more robust and meaningful engagement ...
... to make sure people had the chance to express their views more fully, we took part in the public events and were part of the group that reviewed the findings



Now: Revised plans

The Trust's revised business case (presented to HASC earlier in 2021) demonstrated how peoples' concerns had been heard and contributed to the subsequent proposal for change.

...Effective engagement and consultation is key to getting services right for people and for building trust and confidence



Understanding what patients have said as to why shared space works is important on a number of levels.'

Katrina, Locality Manager for Healthwatch West Sussex



Responding to COVID-19

This year we supported over 750,000 times by:

- Providing up to date, local advice
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting confidence in the vaccine programme roll-out
- Providing a safe space for people to talk though the impact of paused cancer and planned services and separations from loved ones in care homes
- Helping people access the health and social care services they need.

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



22% - COVID-19 vaccines



20% - GP-led services



15% - Dental care



14% - Hospital care

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy

Complaints handling has changed with investigations and follow-up actions often having to be suspended as staff were redeployed. In the early stages of lockdown 1, our team proactively reviewed our service information and aligned to the new NHS England complaints framework.

The trend of increased case complexity continues. We are also seeing increasing demand. If this trend continues at the current referral rate we will exceed our resources.

We will monitor with commissioners to make sure people are not denied support. Hearing and addressing complaints also results in valuable learning for the health and social care systems.

- 1** Added to our self-help [information](#) to reflect changes to local resolution meetings which have moved to being held virtually.
- 2** Both complexity and number of cases has intensified. Cases often involve multiple agencies, safeguarding or serious incidents.
- 3** Valuable Lessons: For example, our support meant a resident's mental health care complaint resulted in six recommendations to improve services.

In August, we published [An Annual Reflection for the Service for 2019-2020](#) with Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service case studies and learning.



Working with Healthwatch England for national integrated innovation

It is essential to determine how well specific people's health and social care needs are met. Healthwatch West Sussex are privileged to be **one of five local Healthwatch nationally** funded to develop a national **Integration Index** toolkit for this.

We used set health and care experience profiles to look at the needs of:

- Children and young people with mental health support needs who are becoming adults
- Black men with a number of health needs including a recent experience of cancer.

We were able to reflect on national and local expectations, research, guidance and good practice, before approaching people to explore with them their own experiences against this context.

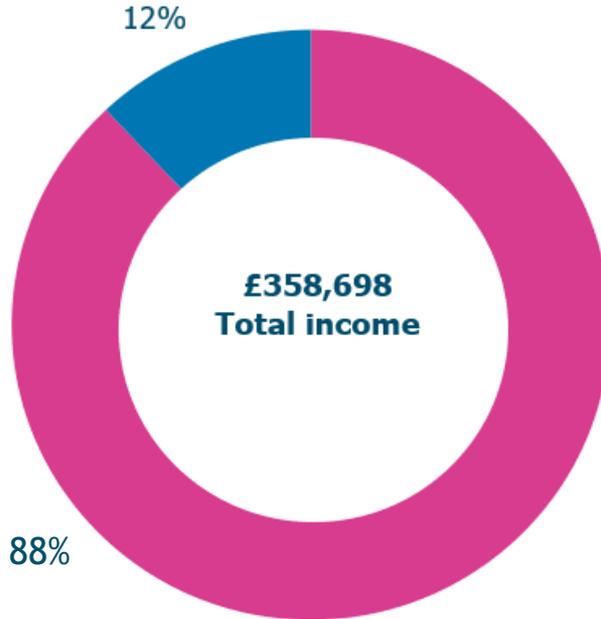


Finances

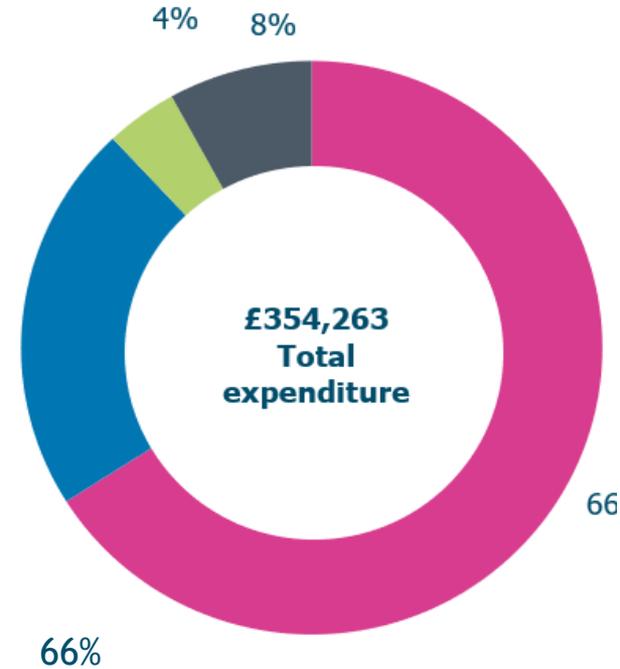
Expenditure

Income

- 88% funding received from local authority
- 12% social enterprise income



- Delivering Core Healthwatch
- IHCAS provision
- C.I.C investment projects in West Sussex communities
- C.I.C. costs



- One of the lowest funded Healthwatch in the country per head of population
- Innovative in seeking additional funding and reinvesting Social Enterprise income
- We seek to support everyone but demand exceeds our resources and this means raising concerns now.
- **£1 of Local Authority funding : £1.48 Healthwatch West Sussex C.I.C. spending, investment and volunteering**

Future priorities



Tackling unfair health differences will need those in power to listen. To hear the experiences of those facing inequality and really understand the steps that could improve people's lives, and then to act on what has been learned.

Martin Phillips, Independent Non-Executive Director for Healthwatch West Sussex

How to get in touch and be involved

Please contact us at helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk
or call

0300 012 0122

For more information about our work and how this makes a difference visit our website or follow us on social media

www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk



@Healthwatchwestsussex



@Healthwatchws

