



Together

we're making health
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Dudley

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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 Chair

The previous 12 months have certainly been a rollercoaster for Healthwatch Dudley.

The first half of the year was unclear, with Dudley CVS submitting a new tender application to provide Healthwatch Dudley services for the next five to seven years. The application gave Dudley CVS and Healthwatch Dudley the ideal opportunity to review the service, the staffing structures and budgets to ensure a fit for purpose organisation to move forward.

By Christmas 2022 we had been notified that it was a successful bid, then the hard work began, and we restructured the way we work to best serve the community.

Throughout this time, Healthwatch Dudley continued to successfully deliver projects and maintain contact with our statutory partners and many members of our local communities.

I pay tribute to the staff and volunteer team for ensuring all the work continued during this time of change. Unfortunately, we said goodbye to some longstanding staff and we thank them and wish them well.



Sally Huband,
Healthwatch Dudley Chair



“Change is never easy, but we now have a new way of working, some new staff with new skills to support our existing team and a very positive approach to the future.”

Message from our Chief Officer

Now more than ever, it is essential that we reach out to those whose voices are seldom heard, as we play our part in helping to reduce health inequalities.

We are pleased to announce that the Healthwatch Dudley contract has been successfully renewed for at least the next five years. As a result, we have conducted a service restructure to allow us to continue to serve the public and fulfil our statutory functions effectively.

Throughout the coming year, we look forward to increasing the profile of Healthwatch Dudley. We will focus on outcomes and the impact made as a result of working alongside organisations who provide health and care services in the Dudley borough.

I would like to thank colleagues across health and social care for their ongoing commitment to involving local people in the development and delivery of services. I would also like to acknowledge and thank our staff, past and present, our volunteers and steering group members for their unwavering dedication and commitment to our work.



**Jason Griffiths,
Healthwatch Dudley Chief Officer**



“As the cost-of-living crisis continues and households face increasing challenges, it is essential that we are here to listen to our communities and share their compelling stories of health and care experiences with the people who have the power to make change.”

About us

Healthwatch Dudley is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS 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.

The new team and our direction



Jason Griffiths | Chief Officer

Jason is responsible for maintaining and developing a cohesive and effective organisation. This includes operations and business planning, as well as ensuring that Healthwatch Dudley follows the Healthwatch England principles and objectives to improve health and social care services in the Dudley borough.

Deb Attwood and Linzi Pearson | Listening and Signposting Officers

Deb and Linzi listen to people to find out their views on health and social care services. They receive feedback by phone, email and webform. Stories are also captured by engaging with local groups and communities. Deb and Linzi signpost individuals to help them navigate health and social care services in Dudley borough. The feedback they receive is passed on to the organisations who provide the service and the team work together to bring about improvements.



Carly Houghton | Volunteer Co-Ordinator / Outcomes & Impact Officer

Carly manages all elements of volunteering within Healthwatch Dudley. She supports volunteers to ensure they serve the community to the best of their ability. As the Outcomes and Impact Officer she analyses the data we collect and demonstrates the impact we have on local health and social care services.



Katie Chiverton | Digital Engagement and Communications Lead

Katie shares our work with the local community online through social media campaigns and our website. She uses these platforms to encourage people to share their experiences. From the data we collect, Katie helps write and distribute reports to share our findings and achievements.



Our new team will work together to:

- Maximise our influence on health and social care
- Improve how we collect and manage data
- Enhance how we tell stories
- Support staff working in the system to be able to make changes
- Increase our presence in health and social care settings and listen to people's experiences of services
- Develop more creative volunteer roles to support the team
- Improve how we hold systems and services to account

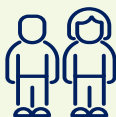
10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch Dudley as we have been serving the public for 10 years. It is particularly special as our host organisation, Dudley CVS, was successful in securing a contract to deliver Healthwatch Dudley for another five years.

Here we look back at some of the key moments over the past decade.

How have we made care better, together?

Dudley Deaf Focus Group



Set up in 2015, Healthwatch Dudley holds regular meetings which are attended by profoundly deaf people who use British Sign Language. Over the years we have made meaningful changes in accessibility to healthcare in Dudley by listening to feedback and working together.

Carers support and ambles



We run ambles with family carers in local parks, led by the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust Carer Co-ordinator and Crossroads Carers. This helps carers' health and well-being.

We listen and signpost to support services as we walk.

NHS dentistry



We continued to voice public concerns that improvements to accessing NHS dentistry services are too slow, leaving thousands of people in dental pain.



Patient Experience Group

We are active on the Patient Experience Group with Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust and share our feedback at regular meetings. We also capture experiences by visiting the wards and departments at Russells Hall Hospital alongside the Patient Experience Team with information trolley visits.



Community information

Healthwatch Dudley built relationships with the Asian community to help break down communication barriers when accessing healthcare. We signposted to relevant services and informed community members of their rights.



Your Care, Your Way

The Accessible Information Standard gives people the legal right to get health and social care information they can understand. Healthwatch England is monitoring compliance with this standard and encouraging services to become more accessible.



We want to hear your experiences

To make meaningful improvements, it is vital for services to hear your views. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Get in contact with our team with your experiences, good or bad.

Call us: 03000 111 001

Email us: hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk

Write to us: 7 Albion Street, Brierley Hill, DY5 3EE

 @HWDudley

 [Facebook.com/hwdudley](https://www.facebook.com/hwdudley)

 @healthwatchdudley

Listening to migrant communities



In 2021, Dudley CVS was awarded targeted prevention funding from the Black Country & West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver a 12-month pilot to expand social prescribing support for migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum. As part of this programme, Healthwatch Dudley was commissioned to listen to migrant communities to better understand some of the health and care barriers they face.

We were invited to the Welcome Group Halesowen, a charity that hosts weekly sessions for refugees and people who are seeking asylum.

During regular visits, the Healthwatch Dudley team provided signposting to people who were struggling to get the support or information they needed about health and care services.

We worked with Dudley Integrated Health & Care NHS Trust and Solutions4Health to deliver blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes checks during one session.

We connected with over 200 people who told us about their experiences of accessing housing and being homeless, healthcare barriers, struggles with communication and future hopes for their children.

“I come to meet friends and I know I can always get help and information when I need it. There is always a warm welcome here.

Abeke, former asylum seeker

Black Country Star Network

Working with autistic and learning-disabled people to remove barriers to health services.

In early 2022 our journey began with Dudley Voices for Choice and local people to share project ideas. We listened to experiences of autistic and learning-disabled people to find out what works and what challenges they face with health services.

We learned how some people feel more comfortable talking about their health when taking part in other activities. We then worked with local organisations to facilitate five listening workshops with 20 people where other activities were already happening.

From these conversations we jointly developed tips for healthcare professionals when providing a health check for an autistic or leaning-disabled person.



Healthwatch Dudley staff and volunteers joined Healthwatch Sandwell, to receive autism and learning disability awareness training from our project partners Autism West Midlands and Dudley Voices for Choice. The project was commissioned by Dudley Voices for Choice and funded through the Dudley Learning Disability and Autism Board.

Recommendations for a health check:

- ✓ Be prompt and not make patients wait too long for appointments
- ✓ Introduce themselves
- ✓ Ask the patient how they're feeling
- ✓ Have an informal chat to make the patient feel more at ease
- ✓ Talk through what is going to happen and explain why it is important
- ✓ Talk to the patient not their carer
- ✓ Answer any questions in clear language
- ✓ Ask for consent before any and each process
- ✓ If giving an injection, use distraction techniques or provide a sensory object

“I’m 48 now and going to my doctors still makes me feel nervous, I always feel better when people explain what is going to happen.” **Listening workshop attendee**

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. Here are some examples of our recent work.

Relocation of High Oak Surgery

Services need to be accessible for everyone, including those with limited mobility or no access to digital services.

Healthwatch Dudley was commissioned by Dudley Integrated Health & Care NHS Trust (DIHC) to collect the views of residents after High Oak Surgery was relocated from Pensnett to Brierley Hill Health & Social Care Centre.

The majority of residents we heard from voiced concern about access to the new site and expressed a preference for the practice to be returned to the Pensnett site, with an investment in improving the facilities there. Expensive and difficult travel and inability to access digital services were common themes from residents.

DIHC considered the feedback from the community and have decided to return GP appointments to the Pensnett site as soon as possible, with some services still being offered at Brierley Hill Health & Social Care Centre.

Longer term, DIHC is exploring options, such as integrating primary care with the local pharmacy. This will be a process that we will continue to monitor.

The decision about the longer-term future of the surgery will be the subject of an application to the Black Country Integrated Care Board Primary Care Sub-Committee.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We set up the Dudley Deaf Focus Group in 2015 and have been working together with partners to improve services for Deaf people over the years.



Since 2015, Healthwatch Dudley has been working with the Deaf community to improve access to services. We meet regularly with group members and from discussions we helped develop an "I am Deaf card" to highlight communication needs. Our collaboration led to the introduction of vibrating pagers at Russells Hall Hospital, so that the Deaf person knows when it is their turn to be seen.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from diverse communities within the Dudley borough. It is important we reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voices are heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Engaging with the elderly Asian community to help them access care and improve their wellbeing with community groups.
- Engaging with homeless and vulnerably housed people to signpost to services.

We have taken community feedback to the boards and places where decisions are made.

Saltbrook Place

Healthwatch Dudley teamed up with a local provider of supported accommodation for homeless and vulnerably housed people in 2022. The team worked with Midland Heart Housing Association to establish a monthly breakfast club at Saltbrook Place in Lye.

During regular drop-in sessions over tea and toast, we have been signposting residents to services, hearing about barriers to health and social care and gaining a better understanding of what it feels like to be homeless in the Dudley borough.



“Coming to this group has helped me to get to know people and to feel more positive. I hope that our ideas can make a difference.” **Saltbrook Place resident**



Wellington Road Group

We worked with elderly communities who could not speak English to form social groups. We helped them obtain funding to help people to socialise, take part in different activities and keep safe and healthy.

People told us they wanted to become more active and be able to look after their own health. We involved Active Black Country who arranged exercise sessions and got a tutor to provide IT classes.

We held an information event with 15 stallholders to provide information and health checks. Both attendees and stallholders learned from this event.

We believe that by building relationships and signposting to services, the elderly people living in Dudley borough who don't speak English will be more able to take control of their health and care.

“I don't understand English. I have a heart condition. The doctor can speak Punjabi, but the receptionist only speaks English. So, it is hard to explain to them why I need to see the doctor.” **Information event attendee**





Information and signposting

If you don't know where to turn or who to speak to about a health or care issue, Healthwatch Dudley is here for you.

We can listen and provide information to help you understand your options so that you can get the support you need. Or you may want to pass on some great feedback about a health or care service you have received.

So, whether it's about finding an NHS dentist, how to make a compliment or complaint, or information on how to find a good care home for a loved one - you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date trusted information
- Helping people find the services they need
- Sharing your experiences with people that have the power to make changes to health and care services

Helping people receive the care they deserve

Healthwatch Dudley was contacted by a lady who told us her bottom set of teeth had gone missing whilst she was an in-patient at hospital. Despite several enquiries, the dentures had not been located so she obtained a quote from her dentist for a new bottom set. However, 'Norma' told us that she did not think it was right that she should be out of pocket and wanted to know why she had to pay so much. 'Norma' told us "I'm so embarrassed about my teeth, I can't leave the house. I'm so depressed about this"

We provided 'Norma' with information about NHS dental charges, how to make a complaint to the hospital and how to request compensation for the loss of her dentures.

As a result of the information we provided, 'Norma' received an apology, followed by reimbursement of the cost of new dentures.

“I can't believe I took on the NHS at my age and I would never have had the confidence to do it without your help. I get my new teeth fitted on Wednesday. I'm sure I will come out smiling and couldn't have done it without your support.”

'Norma' 75, Dudley resident

Sharing advice and information

We were approached by a local church with a request to share information about what we do. The church wanted to arrange a coffee morning to share useful information with the community.

We provided information about local groups and services in Dudley borough, as well as how to provide feedback about health and care services.

We suggested they hold seasonal coffee mornings with a particular theme and offered to help with any contacts they may be seeking in the future.

A few months later, they asked if we knew of anyone who could do a talk about bereavement. We signposted to Dudley Council's Carers Hub pre & bereavement support group and a bereavement group at Chawn Hill Church, Pedmore. We also reminded them about the information available via Dudley Community Information Directory (www.dudleyci.co.uk).





Volunteering

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

This year our volunteers:

- Participated in focus groups
- Took part in a community panel to recruit the Dudley Integrated Health & Care NHS Trust Deputy Chief Officer
- Supported Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) at Russells Hall Hospital
- Told friends and family about Healthwatch Dudley and passed on feedback of health and care experiences

"I enjoyed every minute; I feel like I'm worth something." **Healthwatch Dudley volunteer**



"Feeling of satisfaction, you can't buy anywhere!" **Healthwatch Dudley volunteer**

How our volunteers have contributed

Refugee support

Our volunteers supported us at one of our summer community celebration events which enabled 19 refugee families to get together and build their support networks, as well as giving us a real insight into what it feels like to be a migrant living in Dudley borough.



Autism awareness training

Before the Black Country Star Network activity began, our volunteers were able to take part in Autism and learning disability awareness training. This training prepared staff and volunteers participating in the project to better understand the challenges faced by autistic and learning-disabled people when using GP services.

Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE)

Several of our volunteers received training which enabled them to participate in monthly PLACE-lite assessments during the year. This culminated in two full days of the National PLACE annual assessment at Russells Hall Hospital. Volunteers joined hospital staff and governors in assessing hospital wards, outpatient departments and hospital grounds, providing feedback from a community perspective.



Do you feel inspired?

We are always looking for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/volunteer/

 **03000 111 001**

 **hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk**

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	£206,000	Expenditure on pay	£214,712
Targeted Prevention Fund	£5,000	Overheads including accommodation costs and professional fees	£21,197
High Oak Consultation	£880	Running costs	£10,127
		Events, workshops and engagement	£5,269
Total income	£211,880	Total expenditure	£251,305

Due to staffing restructure, we overspent by paying redundancies which was covered by our reserves. Our remaining reserves on 31st March 2023 total £53,717 and will be carried forward into 2023/24.

Our income and expenditure is reported fully in the audited accounts of Dudley CVS for the year ending 31st March 2023.

Next steps

As our new team take their next steps, we look forward to the many conversations we will have with the public, to understand what is most important to them during a time that will be challenging for many. We will use this information to help hold health and social care systems to account and bring about improvements.

We will be more visible in the community and encourage more people to share their experiences of Health and Social Care across Dudley.

We will recruit more volunteers, who will play a vital role in supporting the effort.

Top three priorities for 2023–24

1. We want to know people's experiences of accessing their GP. We will use this information to bring about improvements based on feedback from local people.
2. We want to hear from unpaid carers, people in care homes and their families. We will share the stories and experiences with those who have the power to make decisions and changes.
3. We will work with colleagues in the NHS and Social Care to ensure the patient and service user voice is heard.

In memory of Dr Rob Dalziel



Healthwatch Dudley is sad to announce the death of our dear friend and colleague, Dr Rob Dalziel.

Rob joined the Healthwatch Dudley family in 2013, at the very beginning of our journey, as a Participatory Research Officer. Rob had a passion for equality, social justice and a firm belief that people's stories can powerfully influence how services are delivered.

Rob's vast ethnographic experience has helped to shine a light on a wide range of issues, including eye health and special care dentistry, improving self-care pathways and inequality of GP surgery access. Rob was a true champion of ensuring people had fair and genuine involvement in decisions made about their health and care, which is evident in all the thoughtful research he leaves behind.

A caring husband to Dilek, a loving father to two young daughters Maisie and Flora, a brother, son and a trusted friend to many, Rob's knowledge, passion, good humour and kindness will be sorely missed by everyone who knew and loved him, including his colleagues and health system partners in Dudley borough and beyond.

Rob died peacefully on 10th March 2023 following his cancer diagnosis late last year.

Dr Rob Dalziel
1 December 1962 – 10 March 2023.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch England, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, E20 1JQ

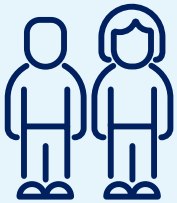
Healthwatch Dudley, Dudley CVS, 7 Albion Street, DY5 3EE

Healthwatch Dudley uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involving volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Dudley Steering Group works on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Steering Group ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local communities.



Throughout 2022/23 the Steering Group met every three months and made recommendations on matters including the redesign of Healthwatch Dudley and provided guidance to the new Chief Officer.

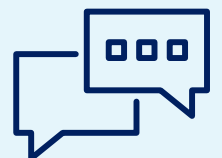
We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

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 can provide us with insight about their experience of using services.

During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, the form on our website and social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums that represent different people in our community.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to members of the public and partner organisations. We will publish it on our website, social media and distribute physical copies throughout the community.



Responses to recommendations

We are grateful for how receptive staff across health and social care have been to our 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.

In our local authority area for example we have a seat on the Dudley Health & Wellbeing Board and the Dudley Health & Care Partnership Board.

We take insight and experiences to decision makers in the Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Black Country Integrated Care Board and the Dudley Integrated Health & Care NHS Trust.

We share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch Dudley representatives

Healthwatch Dudley is represented on the Dudley Health & Wellbeing Board by Jason Griffiths, Chief Officer. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by playing an important part in shaping the Board's potential moving forward.

Healthwatch Dudley have also been actively supporting the development of the new Integrated Care Partnership.

2022–2023 additional involvement

Project/activity	Outcomes
Dudley Dementia Action Alliance (DDAA)	We helped ensure local people can more easily participate in the DDAA, by providing Zoom support and helping get people connected.
Community Information event to connect local people with health and care services	Introduction of IT classes, community-based health checks and a 'Looking After Me programme' that will be delivered by Hindi and Punjabi speakers.
Collaborating with VoiceAbility	We have regular meetings with the new Dudley borough NHS complaints advocacy provider to ensure that our services remain aligned.



Healthwatch Dudley

7 Albion Street, Brierley Hill, DY5 3EE

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 @HWDudley

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 @healthwatchdudley

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Any enquiries regarding this publication can be sent to us at
hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk