



# Eastbourne Listening Tour 2022

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**healthwatch**  
in Sussex

# Introduction

## Our rationale for our 2022 Listening Tour

Healthwatch gather people's views of health and social care services in East Sussex and make sure they are heard by the people in charge.

Each year we focus on one area of East Sussex to engage with local people and understand their communities in more detail. For 2022 our Listening Tour wanted to hear from residents in **Eastbourne**, from the **15<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> October**.

We used a wide variety of engagement activities and events to ask people about their experiences of health and care, including surveys and online engagement, discussion groups, pop up stands in various locations and specially organised events.

We will use the feedback received throughout the tour to make recommendations to support positive changes to local health and care services.


### Our aims were to:

- Raise the profile of Healthwatch amongst the public (especially diverse communities), community groups and service providers.
- Use the feedback gained to understand local issues and seek positive developments in health and care services.
- Gain a wide range of feedback from all parts of society to relay to the local health and care system and Healthwatch England.
- Make sure that we listen to as diverse a cross-section of society as we can and that everyone's voices are heard.
- Maximise the opportunities that people in Eastbourne have to be heard so that they feel listened to.



# What we heard – Our key findings

## Health and Care Services

- We heard about people's appreciation for the NHS, especially being free at the point of access, the range of services offered and the ability to move between them. People also told us positive examples of how the NHS had helped them with support, advice, treatment and procedures, with a good quality of care and desired outcomes. Services which received positive comment included Covid Vaccination, Pharmacies and GP Practices.
  - Feedback highlighted people's appreciation for the expertise, professionalism and compassion of staff in the NHS and wider health and care services.
  - Of the comments received on people's experiences of health services over the last 12 months: **37.1%** expressed a negative sentiment, **32.9%** highlighted a mixed sentiment and **25.7%** a positive sentiment.
  - We asked people (**390**) about their levels of confidence in accessing health and care services when they need them. Of those responding, we heard that: **41.6%** were *Very/Quite Confident*, **32.3%** were *Unsure* and **16.7%** were *Not Confident at all*. We received *No response* from **9.5%** people.
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# What we heard – Our key findings

## Health and Care Services

- The most common frustrations with the NHS were waiting times and delays, causing negative impacts on people's physical and mental wellbeing.
- The most desired improvements were GPs, Dentists, NHS 111, mental health support and A&E departments, reduced waiting times, CAMHS, improved facilities, and a greater focus on improved wellbeing education and self-help. Other improvements related to communication (including between services) and improved quality of care and treatment.
- We asked people *'If you could change one thing to improve your health and wellbeing, what would it be?'*. In order of frequency of response, they told us:

More physical activity/exercise; Improvements in support services; Change diet or food habits; Lose weight; Maintain interaction with friends/family.






# What we heard – Our key findings

## Access to Services

- People told us about the challenges they often experienced when accessing health and care services. This included a lack of suitable adaptations to buildings, especially for those with disabilities or impairments. For example, wheelchair access, suitable lighting, braille signs etc.
- Some issues were identified in the feedback from specific user groups (e.g. homeless, migrant communities etc.) about the barriers they face, including language and translation services, often due to a lack of awareness about their rights and the duties and responsibilities to respond to them.
- A lack of awareness and understanding from health and care providers is felt by people from protected characteristic groups \*, such as assumptions made about someone's sexuality, information being communicated in an inaccessible format or financial limitations not being taken into account.


\*age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation





# What we heard – Our key findings

## Care services

- We heard that the five most identified care services needing improvements were: Home care, Support to live independently, Dementia services, Community-based Services (charities, support services for certain groups such as homeless, refugees and asylum seekers) and Residential Care/Nursing Home.
  - We heard there is a lack of consistent public understanding about the provision of care services, and the responsibilities of different organisations to deliver them. The greatest proportion of people told us the NHS would be their first port-of-call for advice about care, rather than the local authority. People also thought they would pay if they or a loved one went into a care home, with very few being aware of support from ESCC.
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# What we heard – Our key findings

## Cost of living crisis

- We heard about changes to people's behaviour since the **cost-of-living crisis** began in 2022. Changes identified by our 390 survey respondents included:
  - » 51.3% telling us that they had become **more anxious about the future**.
  - » 34.4% had **good quality sleep less often**.
  - » 25.4% **ordered fast food** or takeaways on a **less** regular basis.
  - » 24.1% had **socialised** with friends and family **less regularly**.
  - » 21.0% **felt lonely**, in part due to changes in other behaviours.
  - » 19.2% engaged in **physical activity less often**.
  - » 13.6% **consumed alcohol less** regularly.
- Community services are highly valued by their users and play an important role in supporting members of the public, each providing various benefits such as food, warmth, socialising, financial advice, immigration advice and more.



# What we did

## Our methodology

### **We meet people where they are.**

Throughout the Listening Tour both a long and short survey were made available to residents which asked about their experiences of health and care services. These were available to complete at the various locations at our pop ups.

A postal drop of surveys in multiple wards of Eastbourne took place to reach out to as many residents as possible. The long survey could also be completed online.

Focus groups were organized to speak with members from local voluntary sector organisations in order to gather some in depth-feedback from under-represented groups.

We also held our own events to gather feedback such as a launch event, an art and wellbeing session and a live Q&A event to give residents the opportunity to ask questions directly to decision makers.

**489 responses** were received by the 13<sup>th</sup> November deadline.

The findings from the Listening Tour are outlined in this report along with recommendations to make positive changes to Eastbourne's health and care services.



# Context

## Where we went

### Healthwatch Events:

- Community Observation Walks
- The Listening Tour kicked off with our launch event.
- Art and wellbeing session in Gather.
- The Big Health and Care Question Time.

### Pop ups:

- Supermarkets- Morrisons, ASDA
- Langney Shopping Centre
- Gather (in The Beacon Shopping Centre)
- Eastbourne and Hampden Park Libraries
- Eastbourne District General Hospital
- Victoria Medical Centre and Digital First
- Pub quiz at The Crown and Anchor
- Age Concern
- The Job Centre

### One to one conversations:

- Homeless outreach (Jevington Gardens Temporary Accommodation), Warming Up the Homeless, Kingdom Way Trust, Salvation Army)
- Food Bank
- Bourne This Way (LGBTQ+ parent support group)
- Sanctuary Café (Refugees and asylum seekers)
- Salvation Army Older People's Lunch
- East Sussex Hearing

### Focus Groups:

- Eastbourne Blind Society
- Accessibility Discussion Group (at Defiant Sports)

### Commuter postcard drop at Eastbourne station.



# Our Engagement Reports

# Our Engagement Activity

To provide more in-depth findings on each of our engagement activities we have produced separate reports for each of them. The links to each of these reports can be found below, however if required, please request details for hardcopies.

## Observation Walks Report

Healthwatch East Sussex organised two Observation Walks around areas of social deprivation in Eastbourne with partners from the borough council, local Organisations, The NHS and Adult Social Care. These were to understand how aspects of the environment in these areas have an impact on residents' health.



# Our Engagement Activity

## Homeless Truths Report

Our volunteers and staff engaged with residents at Jevington Gardens Emergency and Temporary Accommodation to understand their needs, experiences of accessing health and care services and other support, as well as how their health and wellbeing may be affected by living at such sites.

*"I'm glad to have a place, but some things are difficult"*

*"I'm very worried about the little one and we need a new place [to live] to help with health, but no one seems to be listening"*

## Homelessness Report

We engaged with service users at Warming up the Homeless, Kingdom Way Trust and Salvation Army to gain feedback from residents of Temporary and Emergency Accommodation and rough sleepers about their experiences of health and care.

*"GP said they are going to help with mental health. They haven't organized appointment yet."*



# Our Engagement Activity

## Long and Short Survey Reports

Throughout the Listening Tour we ran a long and short survey to gain feedback from residents in Eastbourne about their local health and care services. The long survey provided us with more in-depth feedback from those who were happy to use a bit more time to complete it such as at our Launch Event, as well as being posted around various areas of Eastbourne to residents' homes. The short survey was used more at pop ups for quick engagement.

*"Pharmacy first port of call in most instances - excellent service. GP welcoming, genuinely cares."*



# Our Engagement Activity

## Commuter Survey Report

Early in the morning on two days of the Listening Tour we handed out commuter survey postcards at Eastbourne Train Station for residents to complete on their train journey to work.

*“Can't get NHS dentist appointment - hasn't had dentist in 6 years. Moved here from Brighton, no-one in Eastbourne is taking patients.”*

## Protected Characteristic Groups Report

Healthwatch East Sussex worked with various local organisations to hear from residents of protected characteristic groups. We wanted to give everyone a voice in the Listening Tour, so these were opportunities for members of the community to be heard who may not usually be heard.

*“Too many doctors see you and don't understand any of your existing issues, you waste so much time constantly explaining. They need to coordinate.”*



# Our Engagement Activity

## Food Bank Report

Eastbourne Food Bank welcomed us at two of their food banks (in the town centre and in Langney) to talk with residents who use this service about their health and care experiences, and how the Cost-of-Living Crisis is having an impact.

*“They're [Food Bank] helpful and they listen and they try their best to help.”*

## The Big Health and Care Question Time Report

Towards the end of our Listening Tour, Healthwatch East Sussex ran a live Question and Answer event for residents to ask their questions directly to six panelists (local decision makers in health and care).

*“It was really good to have the opportunity to hear from our local NHS and social care leaders”*

# Our Engagement Activity

## End of Life Care Survey Report

The engagement team at St Wilfrid's Hospice joined Healthwatch East Sussex at the Launch event and various other engagement activities during the Listening Tour. They produced their own survey on residents' experiences of end-of-life care.



St Wilfrid's Hospice



# Our Conclusions and Recommendations



# 6 Conclusions

- We heard about positive health and care outcomes being experienced by Eastbourne residents and providers working hard to deliver them. The public appreciate this, especially during periods of great pressure, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and winter pressures, with particular praise highlighted for delivery of the COVID vaccination programme.
- Of concern is the impact that delays and waiting times for services have on people's confidence in getting support when they need it, especially urgent or emergency treatment, but increasingly also routine activity. This may lead to poorer health outcomes and disproportionately affect those already affected by health inequalities, especially in light of the cost of living crisis. These issues can also result in a negative reflection on services as shown by a majority of people feeling health and care services had got worse in the last 12 months.
- Our engagement indicated that some groups and communities feel that their needs could be better met and their 'voice' was often not heard. We heard that homeless people and migrants often feel this way, together with other groups with protected characteristics. Services do not adapt to meet their needs, despite repeatedly engaging them to determine what these are. This may make them less inclined to participate in discussions moving forwards.


# 6 Conclusions

- People told us of the importance of voluntary sector and community support for wellbeing. Local groups deliver flexible but targeted help and support, and serve as a link with statutory services. Opportunities to maximise their benefit could be improved and extended. Positive learning around the effectiveness of outreach, provision of adapted information and the need for non-digital communication channels could be shared.
- We received limited feedback on social care services, and this will be a focus for future Healthwatch activity. A local focus on improving awareness may be beneficial in directing people to the right information in the fewest steps, as well as providing them with the right support to be able to live independently at home for as long as possible.
- The cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on local people and we heard how they are changing their behaviours in response. Of concern is the increased anxiety about the future, isolation that may come from reduced socialisation and reductions in levels of physical activity, all of which may be generating additional pressures for individuals and increasing their need for support from services in the future.
- Finally, we would like to thank the public, patients, staff and partners who contributed to the planning and delivery of our Listening Tour.



# Recommendations

## Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS)


1. The ICS should evaluate (potentially independently) public understanding of social care provision, eligibility and pathways, and take appropriate steps to raise and sustain awareness.
  2. ICS commissioners and service providers should regularly and pro-actively capture and share 'positive' feedback from patients and users to illustrate positive outcomes and support staff and public confidence. To support this, feedback mechanisms should be promoted and accessible.
  3. The ICS should evaluate the system-wide contribution made by voluntary organisations and community groups in increasing prevention, improving wellbeing and reducing demand on reactive health and care services in the population. They should also take steps to strengthen collaboration with voluntary organisations and community groups to sustain local-level information sharing, advice and interventions.
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# Recommendations

## Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS)

4. To create inclusivity within services, Sussex Health and Care should adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and NHS [Accessible Information Standard](#) to:
    - (in discussion with local partners and local populations) regularly review, develop and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 as part of their Public Sector Equality Duty.
    - focus on providing clear, consistent and accessible information to patients and the public, with services required to demonstrate adherence on a regular basis. Lay evaluations should also be embedded.
    - increase Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) learning for all staff to support inclusive and unbiased treatment of patients and the public. Feedback on services should be used to monitor performance.
    - minimise and mitigate limitations for residents in accessing services by: ensuring access to interpreting and translation services, maximising suitably adapted physical access to sites and providing appropriate low/no cost travel support or suitable virtual alternatives to minimise financial exclusion.
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# Recommendations

5. Local authorities should work with local stakeholders to reinforce and improve the information made available to those with protected characteristics about their rights in relation to housing and other services that fall within their duties.

## Healthwatch East Sussex

6. Healthwatch will share the findings and recommendations from our 2022 Listening Tour with local and national partners and stakeholders to increase awareness of the health, care and wellbeing themes that were raised.
  7. Healthwatch will continue to raise awareness of its role amongst residents, across East Sussex. This will be supported by attending community events and meetings, digital promotion and community engagement activities.
  8. Healthwatch will act on its findings from the Eastbourne Listening Tour and explore the development of collaborative initiatives and projects that create local benefit.
  9. Healthwatch will monitor progress against its recommendations in this report and deliver a 'One Year On' event to provide an update on whether anything has changed and what has been implemented.
  10. Healthwatch should hold further Information and Signposting drop-ins at various Eastbourne sites so that all residents, especially those from seldom heard groups have an opportunity to receive advice and guidance.
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# Acknowledgements

**Our Listening Tour resulted in a large amount of feedback from a diverse cross section of the community which was thanks to the support of:**

- Healthwatch Volunteers
- Michele Findlay (art instructor)
- South Downs Residential
- Warming up the Homeless
- Kingdom Way Trust
- The Salvation Army
- Eastbourne Food Bank
- Eastbourne Blind Society
- Age Concern
- St Wilfrid's Hospice
- Sanctuary Café
- Defiant Sports
- Eastbourne Job Centre
- East Sussex Hearing
- Bourne This Way
- The Advocacy People
- Q&A Panelists
- NHS Sussex Public Involvement Team
- NHS 111
- Adult Social Care
- Primary Care Team
- Public Health
- One You East Sussex
- Care for the Carers
- Eastbourne District General Hospital
- Victoria Medical Centre
- Digital First- The Beacon Practice
- Gather
- FOUNDRY
- Morrisons
- ASDA
- Langney Shopping Centre
- Eastbourne Train Station
- Eastbourne Town Hall
- Eastbourne Library
- Hampden Park Library
- The Crown and Anchor Pub
- Job Centre
- Councillor Candy Vaughan
- Snap Fitness
- Pom and de Hommes
- Froggle Parties

# For more information

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