

The value of listening

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly
Annual Report 2023–2024



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"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Chair

Welcome to our Annual Report.

I am proud to present this report which highlights an overview of our work, supported by our volunteer directors and two part-time staff, on behalf of our community. I would like to offer our thanks to those in the community who have told us of their stories, including positive experiences and issues of using health and social care services and hopefully we have been able to provide guidance and support, as appropriate.

Throughout the year we have attended local authority meetings and relevant agencies activities in ensuring, where appropriate, the views of our community are heard. We have undertaken our biennial survey regarding access to, and use of, health and care services and we will shortly publish our report of the community's views and importantly the various and individual services responses to them.

Other activities include having worked with our adult care services/youth activities/visiting services, whilst also running a support service with several community volunteers. We have maintained our contact with Macmillan who visit the islands giving support to people experiencing cancer.

Last year I indicated that there are many changes taking place in health services and pressures on our own local care and support services. It's been a busy year with new partnerships formed, with more joined up working and we look forward to continuing working closely with the community and service providers.



“Changes continue to happen within health and social care and with island residents sharing their experiences we can ensure the best decisions are made for the future of our community.”

Paul Charnock Healthwatch Isles of Scilly



About us

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly 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

Our local communities across the five islands can all access the health and care services that they need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences influence health and care provision.



Our values are:

- **Listening** to people's stories and make sure that their views are heard.
- **Including:** We listen to the views of people from all areas of the community.
- **Analysing:** We look closely at people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Impact:** We use the information provided to drive change and improve services.
- **Collaboration:** We work closely with local and national health and social care and voluntary services.



Year in review

Reaching out:

50 people

came directly to us to share their experiences of health and social care services, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

56 people

came directly to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.



Making a difference to care:

We published

1 report

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

Adult Social Care

which highlighted the struggles people face as carers and people are not aware of what adult social care does.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're funded by our local authority.

In 2023 - 24 we received

£48,891

which is 7.5% more than the previous year.





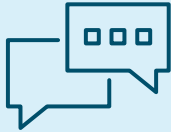



We currently employ

2 part time staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We gave people the opportunity to help shape the future of health and care by sharing their views with the chief executive officer for the ICB.</p>	 <p>We took steps to get more people to have remote consultations, therefore less travel to the mainland for patients.</p>
Summer	 <p>The cancer cafes gave us the opportunity to find out what would help support them in their cancer journey and we are using this information to provide resources for support.</p>	 <p>We have taken steps to begin joined up working with the SEND parent/carer forum, to get children's, parents and carers voices heard.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We drew attention to vulnerable people who would always need a medical escort and worked with Patient Transport and St Mary's health centre to make this happen.</p>	 <p>Patient Transport made changes to their telephone booking system after we shared feedback from the community.</p>
Winter	 <p>We worked with the ICB communications and engagement team, to provide health guidance postcards for the community.</p>	 <p>We created a health care guide for new and temporary staff and shared it with local businesses.</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other service providers to ensure the experiences of people on the Isles of Scilly influence decisions made about services at Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked closely with the NHS Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board to achieve:



Achievement one: We held an engagement event to support the ICB communications team to obtain a significant amount of feedback from residents focusing on their themes 'Start Well, Live Well and Age Well' – over 100 people were engaged with face to face and the opportunity to complete the online survey was shared both on our Healthwatch Facebook pager and the community page. We are involved in providing our knowledge of the local community and the views of the residents when it comes to decision making relating to health.

Achievement two: We hosted a community voices forum where the guest was the CEO of the ICB. It was part of a 'community conversation' to gather views from local people to help shape the way that health and care services are delivered in the years ahead. The outcome from this was that local people had their voices heard by the senior management of the Board and had reassurance that these views would be taken back to the Board for discussion.



Achievement three: We met with the patient engagement manager for South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust to share feedback about local people's difficulties with the 999-response service and being told there would be a lengthy wait for an ambulance. Due to the Isles of Scilly having its own ambulance service, this length of wait is not necessarily accurate. This feedback is in the process of being addressed by the service through call handler training.

Achievement four: We have shared concerns with the ICS about the issue that was raised about giving birth on St Mary's and the information that was being shared to those accessing maternity services. The service providers have joined together to make sure that the communication about the options of giving birth are communicated clearly and accurately to individuals.





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.

Improving the patient transport booking service

Last year, we published findings from our community health and care survey. Thanks to this insight, the Patient Transport service, Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust, has simplified their process to include a dedicated booking line for Isles of Scilly patients, so that their transport can be booked while they are on the phone.

You shared experiences with us that suggested the process in place for booking medical transport was not as simple as it could be and that this added stress to what was already an anxious situation for most people.

26%

of respondents said the booking process was time consuming and you need to wait for several days until your booking is confirmed.



What did you tell us about the patient transport booking service ?

- Waiting for flight confirmation means that you cannot book the rest of your travel, including off-island boating, accommodation and travel to the hospital from the airport or boat quay.
- If the booking is delayed, you may end up cancelling a medical appointment because there are no flights available.
- The delay in booking can also cause difficulties in booking someone to travel with you, who is not a funded medical escort.

What difference did this make?

- Patients feel that the person who they are making the booking with has a good understanding of living on the islands.
- Less medical appointments need to be changed because of lack of transport.
- Patients can book for someone else to travel with them and have more confidence that they can sort the whole medical travel journey in a straightforward way.

Adult Social Care– How can we improve?

In 2022, our biennial health and care survey research on adult social care contributed to their focus on carers.

22 people rated services and support for carers. 68% of these people said the services and support were poor or satisfactory.

Since sharing these ratings Adult Social Care has made carers a focus. They are:

- Developing a carers strategy, with input from carers, finding out what they want and need.
- Hosting carer support meetings: although these were previously held, they spoke to carers to find out when they wanted these held and have set up more suitable times.
- Reaching out to new carers.
- Actively trying to make the community aware of the support available through social media, council website, social media and word of mouth.
- Working closely with the social prescriber, who is also signposting people to the carer support group.

What difference did this make?

- The 2024 biennial survey results have identified a rise in satisfaction, with 67% of respondents saying carer support was good or excellent
- Clearer, more focussed communication
- Breaking down the barrier of loneliness as a carer
- Empowering carers
- Listening and making joint decisions with carers

- In 2021, 5.6% of Isles of Scilly residents (aged five years and over) reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week.
- This area had the country's joint highest proportion of people (aged five years and over) providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care (alongside [Gedling](#)). **How life has changed on Isles of Scilly: Census 2021 (ons.gov.uk)**



“Struggled as a carer, no support offered.”

Survey respondent

Three ways we have made a difference in 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 (Community Voices Forum)

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Patients on the islands that have long term issues that affect their ability to travel to a medical appointment alone are now identified by the GP surgery as someone who will always need a medical escort. This means that every time they travel to an appointment it will already be on the system and will save time in the booking process.



Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

We have worked with the patient engagement manager of South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust to speak to members of the community about their role and gain some feedback about the service and system provided on the islands. This feedback has been taken back as actions and we are awaiting a response.



Improving care over time (access to health care appointments)

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Having received feedback about having a medical appointment time that means you can travel there and back in one day; we have worked closely with the Transformation Team and the Patient Experience Team at the Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust, to manage these issues and we have received **50%** less negative feedback about appointment times.



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone 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:

- Speaking to a local community group about the role of Healthwatch , giving advice, information and support.
- Reaching out to every member of the community through our biennial health and care survey.
- Providing opportunities for the local community to speak face to face with NHS and ICS leaders through a community forum and a community day.

Clear communication for maternity services

After raising a concern with Cornwall & The Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board (ICB), they are addressing the concerns of those accessing maternity care services who had been told different stories about not being allowed to give birth on St Mary's.

The ICS is working closely with maternity services and Kernow Maternity Voices Partnership to make sure they communicate the correct information to those using maternity services.

As a result of what people shared, Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly ICS have committed to:

- Provide clear and accurate information to expectant mothers, explaining birthing options.
- Work closely with partner services to make sure that they share and receive up to date information.
- Offer face to face events where the community can share their feedback directly with the ICB.

Children & young people's voices count

Children and young people have their say about the health and care services that they use or would like access to.

The questions asked included:

Where or who do they go to for information on health and social care?

Where should this information be found?

What would you like more information about?

Do you think any of the services need improvement?

What services have worked well for you?

One of our priorities for 2023-4 was to engage with children and young people to find out their views on health and care. On the Isles of Scilly 17% of the population are under 18 (ons.gov.uk). They are the future of the islands, so it is important that their voices are heard. We attended a youth hub meeting with the SEND and inclusion manager (IOS Council) and the participation officer for safeguarding children (Cornwall Council) to gain some feedback. We found out that many of the young people were not aware of who the school nurse was, they had limited understanding of what health and social care meant and what services were available. They did, however, identify how they would like to find out this information: an app, through school and from posters. Next steps: to work with Cornwall VSF and continue to work closely with Isles of Scilly Children's Services.



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 it's finding out information about medical travel or accessing healthcare – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Giving options to take concerns further
- Providing information on care resources

Need a medical escort?

Understanding the process of arranging a medical escort.

Thanks to the doctors and receptionists at our local health centre, Patient Transport and the consultants at RCHT, people who will always need a medical escort to travel to the mainland will be identified as someone who needs this service and will not need evidence to prove this when making a patient transport booking.

We were made aware of issues that vulnerable patients experienced when of having to prove they needed a medical escort every time they had a hospital appointment on the mainland.

*Jim shared his story with us. It was causing him distress because he had several medical appointments and could not understand why he kept having to provide the same evidence that he needed help travelling. We raised concerns with all the service providers involved and now if a person will always need someone to travel with them, it is written on their notes with patient transport, who can go ahead with the booking, saving time and stress for the patient.

*Name changed

Important communication about accessing healthcare on the Isles of Scilly

It's essential that people have clear, accurate communication about healthcare services.

We have many temporary staff who come to the islands as seasonal workers and a regular turnover of employees who are unaware of what medical services are available to them and the contact details of these services.

We wanted to make sure everyone could access the right information

- We produced a 'useful health information for new and temporary staff' guide that has information on the health centre services, pharmacy services, booking Patient Transport to the mainland and a list of local health and care telephone numbers.
- We shared the booklets with as many hospitality and other local services across the five islands, both in hard copy and digitally.
- The feedback that has been received from employers has demonstrated the value of this information sharing.



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. Some of this funding is from the Department of Health and Social Care, who give the money to our local council so that they can commission an effective Healthwatch.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£48,891	Expenditure on pay	£33,150
		Non-pay expenditure	£10,983
Total income	£48,891	Total expenditure	£44,133

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of our community, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top four priorities for the next year are:

1. Medical travel: Breaking down the barriers. Working with the ICB to improve the system of booking patient transport and expand the options that are available.

2. Cancer Care: We will continue to work in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and The Cove, to develop services on the islands for those people who are experiencing or have experienced cancer, where people can get support, advice and guidance from professionals and share their stories. We will provide support for those people who need help with accessing remote consultations or seeking information online.

3. Adult health and social care provision: We will monitor the delivery and request information about future planning. We will have regular meetings with Adult Social Care to discuss any feedback or issues identified. We will build on partnership with Adult Social Care, making sure there is a strong public voice in the Adult Social Care decision making processes.

4. Children & young people: Ensuring inclusivity. We will continue to establish an effective liaison with the service providers and improve engagement with children and young people. We will host the SEND parent/carer forum and work in partnership to share their experiences to make sure that the voices of parents and carers are heard and make recommendations to improve the experiences of children and young people.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly, Unit 1, Gleaner House, Buzza Street, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR210HW.

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 5 members who work on a voluntary basis 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 diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 3 times and made decisions on matters such as our biennial survey and how to progress with issues that have not been resolved.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities through our biennial survey that is received by every household.

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 into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, e-mail, provided a webform 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 and have hard copies available in the local and off-island newsagents/shops.

Responses to recommendations

We did not have any providers who did not respond to requests for information or 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 insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the IOS Scrutiny committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly Integrated Care System. For example, we share information with the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Health and Wellbeing Board. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is represented on the Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly Health and Wellbeing Board by Paul Charnock, Chairman. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by raising issues and sharing concerns with the Board.

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is represented on Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board by Healthwatch Cornwall.

2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Community Health and Care Survey 2024: created and sent out 2 copies of the biennial survey to every household (930) across the five islands.	Received 264 (15%) completed surveys. Collated data and 13 individual reports written to service providers. Now awaiting responses to be put into a final report to the community.
Community Day	Feedback received from the community was mainly focussed on Patient Transport and the difficulty and complexity of making medical transport bookings. We shared this feedback with them and from this and other previous feedback the new telephone line was introduced.
Community Voices Forum	This was a joint forum event with adult social care. Attended by the CEO of the Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly integrated Care Board. It gave the opportunity for local people to share their thoughts, suggestions and have their say about health and care on Scilly. It was part of a 'community conversation' to gather views from local people to help shape the way that health and care services are delivered in the years ahead. The outcome from this was that local people had their voices heard by the senior management of the Board and had reassurance that these views would be taken back to the Board for discussion.
Farmer's Market	We joined the NHS communications team to be part of their community conversation 'What will make the Isles of Scilly a healthier place in the future'? This event enabled us to build on our relationship with the NHS and for members of the community to feel that their voice counts towards the future of health on the islands.
Talk to U3A group	We were invited by the group to talk about the role of Healthwatch. We provided some background information and talked about the impact of sharing health and care stories with us and how their views count. We provided booklets on patient transport bookings and useful contact details. From this event we identified that we would keep the group up to date with new information via the named contact.

Thank you

Over the past year we have had many positive comments about local health and care services.




We would like to thank everyone who is helping us to put people at the heart of care.





healthwatch

Isles of Scilly



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