healthwatch Cheshire West

Speaking up for better care

Healthwatch Cheshire West Annual Report 2025/26

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A message from our CEO and Board

We are proud to present our Annual Report for 2025/2026 highlighting examples of how we continue to support and listen to a diverse range of people in our neighbourhoods to ensure your voices and experiences shape health and care services across Cheshire.

Over the past year we have supported more than 9,000 people across Cheshire to share their experiences or to access advice or information. Our work has addressed key issues such as GP access, emergency care, diagnostics, discharge, Care Homes, dentistry and pharmacy services—areas that deeply matter for our residents, and that are all under considerable pressure to deliver quality services.

This year is set against a backdrop of significant national change in Health services with the introduction of the Health Bill that includes proposals that risk the loss of an independent, trusted voice for patients and communities. As highlighted by senior leaders across Cheshire, the independence of Healthwatch is fundamental to ensuring people feel confident sharing their experiences and that those voices genuinely influence decision-making.

CEO Louise Barry and members of the board

*Our focus during this period remains clear: it is **business as usual for Healthwatch Cheshire**. We continue to listen, to advocate, and to ensure that the voices of local people—especially those who are seldom heard—are represented at every level of health and care delivery."*

We take this opportunity to thank our staff, volunteers and Board members for their dedication and commitment. Particular thanks go to Erica Morriss who stood down as a Board Member this year after 10 years of strong support for our team and commitment to our independent voice and values. We also extend our sincere thanks to the thousands of local people who have shared their experiences with us this year—your voices are at the heart of everything we do.

About us

Healthwatch **Cheshire West** is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our purpose

To be an independent voice with the people of Cheshire, helping to shape and improve local health and care services.

Our principles

- Work in partnership to act as a strong, local consumer voice, making a difference to health and care provision for the people of Cheshire
- Gather the views of the people of Cheshire
- Provide a platform from which diverse and seldom heard voices from across Cheshire can be heard
- Set the standard for excellent public engagement
- Ensure that all people have timely and good quality information and advice
- Establish and use networks and public engagement to gather meaningful and robust local insight and intelligence
- Provide constructive checks, balances and challenge to service planners and providers
- Provide Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) using feedback for insight and intelligence regarding patient choices and concerns.

Valued, trusted, independent

Our work is only possible because of the relationships we build — with the NHS, local councils, care providers and the communities they serve. Here is what some of those partners said about us this year.

Chief Executive, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Del Curtis

'I am delighted to support this Annual Report from Healthwatch Cheshire West, which reflects the voices, experiences and priorities of our residents. Healthwatch plays a vital role as an independent champion for the public and a trusted link between communities, the Council and NHS partners. Over the past year, their engagement with thousands of residents has provided valuable insight to help shape and improve local services. The report demonstrates Healthwatch's impact across key priorities, including GP access, emergency care, diagnostic appointments and work with seldom-heard communities. This supports our shared ambition to reduce inequalities and create a fairer, more inclusive system. We greatly value Healthwatch's partnership and the way their insight strengthens decision-making. I would like to thank the Healthwatch team, their volunteers and residents for their contributions, and I look forward to continuing our close collaboration in the year ahead.'

Director of Public Health, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Helen Bromley

"I am pleased to support this Annual Report from Healthwatch Cheshire West, which once again highlights the vital role the organisation plays in amplifying the voices of residents and shaping better health and care services. Over the past year, Healthwatch has demonstrated the real value of listening to people's lived experiences and turning those insights into meaningful change. The breadth of engagement—supporting over 5,000 residents to share their views or access information and advice—shows a strong commitment to ensuring that services reflect the needs of our communities.

Particularly impressive is the impact of their work on key system priorities. From influencing improvements in GP access and contributing to the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan, to driving measurable reductions in missed diagnostic appointments across the region, Healthwatch has shown how evidence-driven insight can lead directly to service improvements. I also want to recognise the organisation's dedication to equity and inclusion. Their efforts to reach seldom-heard groups—including rural communities, asylum seekers, carers, and LGBTQ+ residents—help ensure that the voices of those who are often excluded are heard and acted upon. As Director of Public Health, I greatly value the independent perspective that Healthwatch brings. Their insights not only help us understand what is working well, but also challenge us to do better—ensuring that the voices of residents remain central to decision-making."

Valued, trusted, independent

Our work is only possible because of the relationships we build — with the NHS, local councils, care providers and the communities they serve. Here is what some of those partners said about us this year.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to Healthwatch Cheshire's Annual Report and recognise the vital role Healthwatch plays in championing the voices of our communities. Over the last year Healthwatch has positively supported reviewing our Quality Account focussing on quality improvements in patient safety, clinical effectiveness and patient experience. Whilst we, like other providers, continue to experience challenges they have supported our approach to person-centred and evidence driven care.

Partnership working remains central to our approach at Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. We are committed to working collaboratively with Healthwatch alongside local authorities, NHS partners and community organisations to design services together and make them more accessible, responsive and joined-up for the people we serve. We are particularly proud of our collaborative partnership via the Health and Wellbeing Boards and most recently in producing our CWP VCFSE Partnership Framework – which sets out a shared approach for collaboration. As an anchor institution our commitment is to working in genuine partnership - bringing people together, sharing responsibility, and creating meaningful, lasting impact for the communities we serve.

We have received positive support from Healthwatch for the work CWP and Mersey Care are doing to strengthen our longstanding partnership. These aim to ensure that everyone in Cheshire and Merseyside can access the same high standard of mental health, learning disability and autism support. Recent joint work demonstrates what can be achieved when we act together – from improving support for new mothers and families, to strengthening urgent and emergency mental health provision, and aligning pathways for children and young people so they receive timely and consistent care."

Andy Styring on behalf of the Cheshire and Wirral Partnerships Board

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside have continued to progress the harmonisation and review of its clinical policies across the region. This work forms part of the wider programme to reduce variation in access to services and ensure that all policies are aligned with the latest clinical evidence, national guidance, and best practice.

Clear and accessible communication has remained a key focus to support engagement and understanding among patients and stakeholders. Healthwatch have continued to play an important role in supporting this work. They have reviewed policy summary documents to ensure they are clear, accessible, and easy for patients and the public to understand. Their involvement has helped strengthen the quality of the materials and supports our aim of making policy information more transparent and inclusive, enabling meaningful engagement across Cheshire and Merseyside.

Healthwatch representatives have attended meetings of the Clinical Effectiveness Group, where their input and advice have been valuable in shaping discussions and ensuring that the patient voice is reflected within various aspects of our work."

Olivia Billington – Digital Transformation and Clinical Improvement Manager

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your experiences and views, engaging with partners and working to improve care in **Cheshire West and Chester.** Here are a few highlights.

We shared views from 1,433 Cheshire West residents about GP access with leaders of health services, working with eight Healthwatch partners to push for change for residents across Cheshire and Merseyside.

We reported on patients' experiences of corridor care at Leighton and the Countess of Chester A&E departments during our Enter and View visits, using the co-produced Red Lines Toolkit.

We gave over 1,000 residents a voice on the NHS App, sharing their feedback directly with the national design team to improve access and reduce exclusion for those using alternative routes to care.

We embedded rural voices into Cheshire West and Chester's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026–31, ensuring concerns about primary care access, transport, and financial pressure were heard.

We made 12 Enter and View visits to care homes in Cheshire West and gathered feedback from over 100 residents and families. Our recommendations give providers clear, evidence-based guidance for improvement.

We spoke to over 60 people at Leighton and Aintree University Hospital about missed diagnostics appointments. Our findings contributed to an immediate reduction of 50 missed appointments per month across the region.

We've been listening to patients to understand what hospital discharge feels like for them, as part of a project with the Leighton hospital that will put patient experience at the heart of discharge planning.

We shone a light on NHS dentistry and Pharmacy — from a shortage of NHS dentists to barriers around Pharmacy First — and made the case for targeted local action to commissioners.

Our year in numbers

In 2025/2026 we supported more than **5000** people to have their say and get information about their care. We were supported by a small team of staff working across Cheshire West and Chester, and our work was supported by volunteers across a range of roles.

Reaching out:

4,031 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

969 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **GP access** and **access to NHS Dentistry**.

Championing your voice:

We published **19** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **GP access, corridor care, care home quality, dental services, pharmacy, and diagnostics,** which were shared with local decision makers..

Our most accessed report was **Diagnostics non attendees in Cheshire and Merseyside hospitals**, highlighting people's struggles in **accessing diagnostic appointments**.

Statutory funding:

We are funded by **Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority**. In 2025/26 we received £151, 127, which is the **same as** last year.

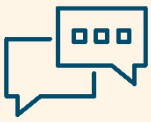
Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring local Healthwatch organisations to ensure people's experiences of health and care in **Cheshire West and Chester** are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services covering **Cheshire and Merseyside**.

This year we've continued to work with our Healthwatch colleagues across Cheshire and Merseyside, collaborating to widen our impact across the region.

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) is the third largest Integrated Care Board in England, serving 2.5 million residents. The nine C&M Healthwatch Organisations (HWO) collaborate to ensure local voices are heard. We have established agreements for better cooperation and hold weekly meetings to update each other and share information with the Integrated Care Board, Care Quality Commission, and partners.



A big conversation:

In 2024, NHS C&M Merseyside ICB developed an Urgent & Emergency Care Red Lines Toolkit to support patient experience in A&E Departments, with C&M Healthwatches co-producing the Care and Comfort section based on patient feedback. During 2025–26, we visited local acute hospitals to assess how they were meeting Red Line standards on comfort and care when ED overcrowding led to corridor care. The findings are helping to inform improvement work across trusts and the ICB, and Healthwatch has contributed the patient perspective through membership of the ICB's Urgent and Emergency Care System Board.

We also asked local residents about their experiences of the NHS App. The findings showed that while many find the app useful, confidence drops sharply among older users — and that digital exclusion is about behaviour, not just access. Healthwatch also provided a list of recommendations for the national NHS App design team, local stakeholders and service providers.

Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring local Healthwatch organisations to ensure people's experiences of health and care in **Cheshire West and Chester** are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services covering **Cheshire and Merseyside**.

Building strong relationships to achieve more:

In 2025, the nine organisations formally established the Cheshire and Merseyside Healthwatch Collaborative, strengthening our collective voice at regional level. The C&M Healthwatch network contributed to work on GP access, women's services, dentistry, the NHS App, ADHD assessment waiting lists and the *Red Lines Toolkit* for A&E corridor care — producing reports and recommendations on behalf of residents across the region. We continue to attend the ICB Board and its sub-groups, holding seats at 'Place' level and sharing attendances at C&M ICB meetings.

Executive Clinical Director, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

Fiona Lemmens

"The work of the 9 Healthwatch organisations across C&M has been instrumental in helping us ensure that patient experience is understood and acted upon across our commissioned services. I have found the work done on Emergency department waits and corridor care particularly insightful. This is a priority area for the ICB to improve for our population, and the Healthwatch work has strengthened the ICB's UEC improvement plan.

The contribution that Healthwatch colleagues make to our committee and board meetings is invaluable in bringing the voice of the public and patients into the room and undoubtedly improves the decision-making processes in the ICB."

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time. Here are some examples of our work in **Cheshire West and Chester** this year:

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues people face.

Our A&E Watch visits at the Countess of Chester and Leighton Hospitals, gave patients the opportunity to share their experiences of corridor care. We used the Care and Comfort section of the Red Lines Toolkit which sets minimum standards for patients covering safety, dignity, nutrition, communication and rest. This year's revisit found improvements from last year, where recommendations had been acted upon to improve patient care.

Getting services to involve the public

By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.

When Cheshire West and Chester Council developed its new Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2026-31), we made sure rural voices were part of the conversation. We attended engagement sessions in Tarporley and Winsford, reaching farming and rural communities whose concerns about NHS access, transport and financial pressures might otherwise go unheard. Their feedback helped shape the consultation ahead of the strategy's launch in 2026.

Improving care over time

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

In November 2024, Leighton Hospital launched a live A&E waiting times webpage which was in direct response to recommendations from our Enter and View work. By November 2025, it had been viewed more than 100,000 times. On the press release issued by Mid Cheshire Foundation Trust, Healthwatch Cheshire noted that 'access to clear, real-time information is vital for helping people make informed decisions about their care.'

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to voices from across our community. Our independence from the NHS, council and service providers means people can speak openly—often sharing what they wouldn't say elsewhere. This independence strengthens the evidence, gives a clearer picture of care, and makes meaningful change more achievable. People's experiences show what's working and what isn't, so we can hold services to account and support improvement.

To share your experiences, visit: Feedback Centre — Healthwatch Cheshire West at www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk.

You can reach out via other routes too:
www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/contact/

Improving patient access to diagnostic services

Our research drove a measurable change. Missed appointments (known as 'DNAs' - Did Not Attend) fell by approximately 50 per month across the region — bringing capacity back to a system under real pressure.

What did we do

We visited both hospitals to speak to patients waiting for and just completing diagnostic procedures. We called patients who had not attended their appointments. We also worked with the Cheshire and Merseyside Endoscopy Network to understand the journey of a patient, from referral to booking and delivery of appointment.

Key things we heard:

30% — **experienced delays at the referral stage, often without clear communication**

+ — **professionalism and kindness of staff, and the smooth experience once patients arrived**

– — **anxiety and fear, communication gaps, transport difficulties, and not wanting to "bother" anyone by cancelling or asking questions**

What difference did this make?

We turned listening into action. Our findings helped the network understand why appointments were missed, identifying both system issues and personal barriers because of our research. Following our work, reported DNAs across the region fell by **approximately 50 per month** — reducing pressure on services. We shared recommendations with the Cheshire and Merseyside Endoscopy Network and both Trusts on anxiety support, clearer communication, and improved cancellation processes.

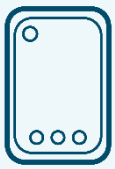
"The Diagnostics Non-Attendees report is a truly impressive piece of work, and reflects a thorough, thoughtful analysis. It is seldom that we get to speak to patients who don't attend for their appointments and so obtaining their feedback on how we can do better is gold dust. We simply would not have been able to do this without your support and ability to connect with patients."

- ***Tracey Cole-Wetherill, Diagnostics Programme Director, C&M Endoscopy Network***
- ***Dr Ash Bassi, Cheshire & Merseyside Endoscopy Network, Clinical Lead***

Keeping GP access grounded in patient experience

We set out to understand what accessing a GP in Cheshire West and Chester really means in practice — and 1,433 residents told us. The picture was consistent: difficulty booking, long waits, and phone systems that shut people out. Nearly two thirds had a long-term health condition. The key message was the care itself is good. Getting to it is the problem.

Key things we heard:



68% **waited in a phone queue to reach their GP practice**

64% **of those who gave up said difficulty getting an appointment was the reason**

"Once I got to see the doctor everything was fine. It's just getting to that stage which is a problem. I don't like to be triaged by the reception — it can be an embarrassing conversation."

What difference did this make?

We took those 1,433 voices straight to the top. Our findings were shared with primary care commissioners and at the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB Board, and they are now informing the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan — with particular focus on the 8 am phone barrier, digital exclusion and the needs of carers and disabled patients.

"The nine local Healthwatch continue to be critical friends and champions of the patient voice for NHS Cheshire and Merseyside. They have delivered an important piece of work – gathering thousands of views from residents on how they access and experience GP services across our region. This survey offers an essential temperature check on how well recent investment and changes to primary care are landing with the public. The findings provide us with rich insight into what's working and where further improvements are needed to ensure timely, fair, and effective access to GP services. As always, we are grateful to the Healthwatch network for their support, constructive challenge, and for ensuring we stay grounded in real patient experiences as we plan for the future."

—Clare Watson, Assistant Chief Executive, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of **Cheshire West and Chester.** 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 story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities including:

- Attending CHAWREC — Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race & Equality Centre, to reach people with no access to NHS dental care or a registered GP
- Going to Move On support session for asylum seekers and refugees at Tomorrow's Women in Chester
- Attending Café 71, Unpaid Carers groups, and groups for people with learning disabilities across Ellesmere Port and Chester

Reaching asylum seekers at Chester's Race Equality Centre

We removed barriers so people could access the care they needed.

When Healthwatch visited the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC), we met people with no access to NHS dental care — all were in pain. We provided information on dentalchoices.org and the dental emergency helpline, offering immediate, practical help to those who didn't know these services existed. We also signposted a man with blood clots to St Werburgh's Medical Practice for the homeless, connecting him to care he urgently needed.

What difference did this make?

People who use CHAWREC often fall through the gaps of the health system. By going to them, we gave trusted information in a safe space — helping people access services they were entitled to but didn't know how to reach. Dental pain that might have gone untreated was addressed. A man with a serious health need was connected to the right GP. These are small actions with real consequences for some of the most vulnerable people in Cheshire West.

Amplifying LGBTQ+ voices on health and care

We reached people who sometimes fall through the gaps of the NHS.

Our presence at Pride events gave members of the LGBTQ+ community an opportunity to share their experiences and suggestions for change. Three themes were consistent: a sexual health information gap for lesbian women, unconscious bias in GP records, and fears about hospital treatment for same-sex couples.

What difference did this make?

A Trans support worker committed to referring clients to Healthwatch, because our independence creates a space where people speak honestly. These experiences have been shared with health services and decision-makers who shape local health and care provision, ensuring all members of community have a voice at the top table.

Information and signposting

When you're struggling to find an NHS dentist, looking for help about how to make a complaint, or need advice about a good care home for a loved one – we're your first port of call.

This year 969 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services. These conversations also help us to understand where, and how, your care can be made better.

Healthwatch hear a wide range of issues across all ages, relating to health, social care and prevention. People find navigating services difficult and we are often the people who help them get the support they need, when they need it.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services

When a letter caused confusion, a call to us brought clarity

Anne* received a letter from Leighton Hospital's Endocrinology team saying her long-term medication would stop. She didn't know what to do.

Anne had been taking the medication for years. The letter was unexpected and offered no next steps. She wasn't sure whether to contact her GP, the hospital or a specialist. We listened, explained what the letter meant and what her options were, and sent her clear, practical information about who to contact next. We helped her feel confident enough to take the next step.

Thank you for being so kind. I do not know where I would be without Healthwatch."

Worries were lifted after a call to Healthwatch

A woman called Healthwatch Cheshire, very concerned about her 96 year old father in law who she was unable to visit. He was living alone and was seriously ill.

Healthwatch were able to put her in contact with Adult Social Care, who helped her get the support her father in law needed. She said,

Many thanks for getting back to me so quickly – you're brilliant!"

When one family needed answers, we helped find them

Sarah*, a parent, reached out to us, struggling to navigate her son's ADHD and autism pathway — in school, at home, and everywhere in between.

We listened. We signposted the family to the CWAC Parent Carer Forum, guided them on how to approach the school, and walked them through the EHCP application process step by step. Their son now has a formal autism diagnosis, the right support at school, and an EHCP application in progress — real outcomes for a family that had been struggling to find answers.

Thank you for listening and for helping."

*Names changed for anonymity

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given **250 hours** to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Carried out Enter and View visits to care homes and A&E Watch corridor care visits across Cheshire West and Chester
- Attended community engagement events, helping residents share their experiences and raising awareness of Healthwatch
- Reviewed health and care documentation, proofread reports, completed DBS and safeguarding training, and supported the dementia steering group and Citizens Focus Panel surveys

At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

Romina

"Thank you for inviting me to volunteer at the Storyhouse. I had an amazing time. [Staff] were amazing.

I would love to be more involved and active with Healthwatch in the future—the experience I had was genuinely amazing.

I am very grateful and thankful."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working and learning alongside the Healthwatch team. The work on the ground is crucial and fascinating.

Healthwatch listens with empathy, bringing experiences to life. Members of the public are genuinely more willing to express their opinions with their local representatives or volunteers..

Healthwatch Cheshire is relentlessly getting services to involve the public. Every member of the public is entitled to be heard and Healthwatch Cheshire is giving them the opportunity."

Corinne

Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.

healthwatchcwac.org.uk

0300 323 0006

info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk

NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)

ICAS offers telephone, online, and face-to-face support to help the people of Cheshire to progress complaints in relation to any NHS services provided at hospitals, GP Practices, dentists, pharmacies, opticians and nursing homes.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Giving in-depth practical support to help them access the NHS Complaints Procedure.
- Providing information to help them find out what stage their complaint is at within the process.
- Signposting to other organisations that can help.

Part of our Independent NHS Complaint Advocate's role is to support clients at resolution meetings, which aim to analyse where things went wrong and to change processes to ensure that these mistakes do not happen again. Our Advocate fed back about a particular hospital resolution meeting she attended with a client.

Jim came to us after reading a hospital leaflet about the support we provide to help people have a voice. He has respiratory problems, which affect both his mental health and his physical movement. After COVID, he was moved between wards during a long hospital stay and said that some staff treated him without respect, dignity, or empathy. A resolution meeting was arranged, attended by the consultant, lead nurse, and the nurses named by Jim. During the meeting, they discussed the impact this experience had on his mental health and his faith in medical care. Further training for those staff members is being considered, and an apology was made. The client now has an admission slip for hospital visits that explains his trauma and sets out his needs clearly for staff, so there is a clear pathway for how he wishes to be treated.*

Looking for support with a complaint?

If you need help through the complaints process, or would like to explore your options, you can find out more about ICAS on our website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk

Names anonymised

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from **Cheshire West and Chester** under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£151,127	Expenditure on pay	£150,479
Additional income	£0	Non-pay expenditure	£19,556
		Office and management fee	£9,328
Total income	**£151,127**	**Total Expenditure**	**£179,363**

Acting Chief Executive Healthwatch England
Chris McCann

"The NHS plays a vital role in our lives, and we know it faces real challenges. Listening to people's thoughts about their care is one of the best ways to improve services. Every comment, concern, and compliment helps health and care professionals see what works and what needs to change, so care can be safer and better for everyone.

"We want to say a heartfelt thanks to all the local people who have taken the time to share their experiences, and to the health and social care professionals who have listened and acted on that feedback. Your commitment has helped make a real difference for our community."

Finance and future priorities

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, 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 three priorities for the next year are:

1. Hospital discharge — We will build on our published findings, through the next phases of our 'Discharge from Hospital' project to improve how Cheshire residents are supported to leave hospital and return home safely.

2. Developing our Enter and View Programme across Care Homes, Hospitals and other health care settings.

3. Focussing on the new Neighbourhood delivery model, ensuring local people help inform decision making and planning.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Cheshire, Sension House, Denton Drive, Northwich, CW9 7LU.

Healthwatch Cheshire West 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 **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 diverse local community.

Throughout 2025/26, the Board met **four** times and made decisions on matters such as **governance and maintaining the independence of Healthwatch Cheshire West.** 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 into their experience of using services.

During 2025/26, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended 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 share it on our social media channels.**

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had **zero** providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were 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 shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Cheshire East Health Care Partnership, Joint Strategic Needs Analysis Working Groups, Patient Experience Groups, Care Home Oversight Group, Joint Intelligence Group and all seven Cheshire West Community Partnerships.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in **Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System.** The nine Cheshire & Merseyside Healthwatch Organisations are represented on the Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Primary Care Commissioning Committee, the Quality and Performance Committee, the Transformation Committee, the Women's Services Committee, subcommittees, Task and Finish groups and the Health Care Partnership to ensure public voice is represented and heard.

Individually, we are each active partners of ICB groups at our own 'Place' level (Cheshire West in our case).

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch **Cheshire West** is represented on the **Cheshire West** Health and Wellbeing Board and Joint Intelligence Board by the Healthwatch Cheshire Chief Executive, **Louise Barry.**

During 2025/26, our representative has effectively carried out this role by **using the insight and intelligence gathered by Healthwatch staff and volunteers, and submitted by the public, to help shape and inform discussions and decisions. Of particular interest this year have been reports on our A&E Watch, GP Survey, and care home Enter and View visits.**

Healthwatch **Cheshire West** is represented on **Cheshire and Merseyside** Integrated Care Partnerships by **Healthwatch Cheshire CEO** and on Integrated Care Boards by **Cheshire and Merseyside Healthwatch CEO representatives.**

Statutory statements

Enter and View

This year, we've enhanced our Enter and View Programme, incorporating the views and experiences of the people accessing the services we visit. As well as giving a broader perspective, it has enabled us to give more specific recommendations in our reports to help improve the services they offer.

This year, we conducted **14** Enter and View visits across Cheshire West and Chester. We made 12 Enter and View visits to care homes, gathering the views and experiences of 128 residents and their friends and family. These included Barony Lodge, Loxley Hall, Sable Cottage, Sandiway Lodge, Iddenshall Hall, HeatherCliffe, Wealstones, Crabwall Hall, Chapel House, Oaklands, Stone House, and Hartford Hey.

Our local hospitals remain a focus for us, with **two** Enter and View visits made to Countess of Chester and Leighton Hospital and its Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) unit. Our subsequent reports and recommendations were welcomed and have been a catalyst for future changes and improvements.

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