Research and Engagement Activity (Quarter 3: October - December)

Background

The Research and Engagement Programme aligns with the strategic direction of the organisation and has been approved by the Board. The Programme has the following aims:

- To gather public views, particularly ensuring that we are hearing from underserved groups
- To understand and address health inequalities
- To ensure our research and engagement activity has influence, impact and positive outcomes
- To support with the financial sustainability of the organisation
- To build and sustain our reputation for high quality applied research

This paper provides an overview of the Research and Engagement activity undertaken, projects that are currently underway, and upcoming projects.

Projects completed in the last 6 months			
Project name	**Aims and objectives**	**Target population**	**Activity and progress**
Drugs and alcohol workstream	Supporting Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council to implement improvements in drug and alcohol services by undertaking a series of projects to engage with affected communities. **Children and young people:** Engaging with children and young people about their experiences of using drug and alcohol services.	Children and young people aged 14-25	Children and young people report is available on our website.

	Prison leavers: Engaging with prison leavers about their experiences of receiving support from drug and alcohol services. **Co-occurring mental health and substance use:** Engaging with people with lived experience of co-occurring mental health and substance use, as well as carers.	People with lived experience, carers and local residents. Prison leavers accessing drug and alcohol services. Carers and people with a lived experience of co-occurring mental health and substance use.	Prison leavers report is available on our website. Co-occurring needs report available on our website.
Primary care workstream (2024 – 2025)	Supporting Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) to engage with Hertfordshire residents about key issues within primary care. **NHS orthodontic care:** Engaging with parents, children and young people about their experiences of using NHS orthodontic care.	Parents, carers and children and young people aged under 18. All Hertfordshire residents.	NHS orthodontic care report is available on our website. Online GP services report is available on our website. A summary of our findings were also shared on Heart Radio.

	Online GP services: Engaging with residents about their experiences of using online GP services and how they could be improved. **Armed forces community**: Engaging with the armed forces community about their experiences of accessing NHS services. **Children and young people's oral health:** Engaging with parents and carers about their experiences of accessing NHS dentistry and what information and support may help them.	Armed forces community. Parents and carers with children under the age of 18.	Armed forces community report is available on our website. Children and young people's oral health report will be published in March 2026.
Blood pressure checks in dental practices and opticians	Engaging residents about their views of measuring blood pressure within dental practices and opticians, to support the ICB with their pilot.	Hertfordshire residents without a diagnosis of cardiovascular disease.	A news article about our involvement and the impact this work has had has been published on our website.
Engagement with adults with learning disabilities about the use of their health data	Supporting Health Innovation East with the introduction of the Secure Data Environment (SDE) by engaging with adults with learning disabilities to capture their views on the use of their health data.	Adults with learning disabilities.	A news article about our involvement and the impact this work has had has been published on our website.
Refugees and asylum seekers	Engaging with refugees and asylum seekers about their experiences of accessing healthcare and how this could be improved.	Refugees and asylum seekers.	The final report is now available on our website. Key findings were shared at the Hertfordshire County Council Refugees and Asylum Seeker conference.

Primary care workstream (2025-2026)	Undertaking two in-depth projects exploring key issues within primary care. Our first topic will be explored **frailty** and ageing well.	Hertfordshire residents aged 65+	The report has been completed and is awaiting sign-off. The report will be published in early 2026.
Support for autistic adults	Engaging with autistic adults about their experiences of post-diagnostic support and the care they would like to receive.	Carers and adults who received an autism diagnosis in adulthood	The report will be published in early 2026.
Live projects			
Research & engagement network programme	Supporting the ICB to ensure research participation is more accessible, diverse and inclusive. This will includes a dedicated project working with the ICB and Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service (HHAS) to engage with the d/Deaf community about their experiences of accessing primary care.	Underserved communities in Hertfordshire	Our Research Officer is continuing to support with the project management of this programme. Engagement takes place from The report will be published in May
Primary care workstream (2025-2026)	Undertaking two in-depth projects exploring key issues within primary care. Our second topic explores **community pharmacy**, the engagement of which is underway.	Hertfordshire residents.	The engagement is underway and the report is due to be published in 2026.
South and West Hertfordshire	Supporting with the management, chairing and delivery of the Coproduction Board, the role of which is to advise the leadership in the	Residents in South and West Hertfordshire	Coproduction Board meets on a bi-monthly basis, reporting into the South and West Hertfordshire Health and Care Partnership Board.

Health and Care Partnership Coproduction Board	partnership on how best to embed quality coproduction and engagement with their local communities		We are looking to expand our membership. If you live in South and West Hertfordshire and are interested in finding out more, please contact: research@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
East and North Hertfordshire Health and Care Partnership Community Assembly	Supporting with the management, chairing and delivery of the Community Assembly, the role of which is to support the exchange of views, ideas and enable coproduction across local residents and those leading change and transformation programs	Residents in East and North Hertfordshire.	Community Assembly meets on a quarterly basis. If you are interested in attending the Community Assembly, please contact: research@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
Drug and alcohol coproduction	Advising leads in Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council to create a model of coproduction to help ensure professionals, service users, communities, carers and voluntary organisations are involved in the improvements to services.	Hertfordshire residents.	Our first Voice Huddle was held in September. The second meeting took place in November. If you're interested in attending or finding out more, please contact: research@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
Experiences of children, young people and families	Creating case studies through engagement with children, young people and families, exploring a range of key health and social care issues.	Children, young people and families	We are collecting case studies.
Planning for the future	Working with partners across the system to engage with residents about their awareness and experiences of completing advanced care planning, and how they can be better	People aged 65+	Mapping of local support and resources is currently underway. If you are interested in finding out more or getting involved, please

	supported to think about and plan for their older years.		contact: research@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
Exploring Connected Lives	Engaging with relatives, residents and staff within three residential care homes rated as required improvement. Engagement will focused on the Connected Lives principles, with questions centre on independence, feeling safe, respected and valued.	Staff, relatives and care home residents	The engagement of this project is currently underway. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact: research@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
Upcoming projects			
Drug and alcohol coproduction- Children and young people	Advising leads in Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council to create a model of coproduction to help children and young people, and those who care for them are involved in the improvements to services.	Children and young people	The scoping of this project is currently underway. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact: research@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk