

Contract Monitoring Projects & Activity Qtr 2 (July – September 2025)

1. Projects & Activities Overview

Research & Engagement

See embedded document below:



Research%20and%20Engagement%20Prog

Key outcome of the research project on Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Leveraging the statutory powers afforded to Healthwatch, we wrote to Adult Care Services and Public Health responsible persons (Executive Directors) and their Exec Members, to ask for a formal response to findings from our work. This resulted in firm commitments to change for this underserved community.

Communications

- Media enquiries:
 - Heart Radio re adults with autism
 - BBC 3 Counties and Greatest Hits Radio re Refugees and Asylum Seekers Report
- Comms and social media launched findings from:
 - Refugees and Asylum Seekers Report
 - Armed Forces Report
- Preparing for launch of new projects: community pharmacy, children and young people
- Communications and engagement for our Annual Report
- Annual General Meeting and team and board Q&As relating to Healthwatch announcement
- Partnering with Public Health about publicising Co-Occurring Mental Health and Substance Use Report
- Supporting local charities, Healthwatch England initiatives, local councils and NHS/social care organisations via social media
- Ongoing monitoring of media & social media and our website usage, leveraging key 'event/issue' days to raise our profile and supporting partners in their campaigns by amplifying via our channels – including the work of Healthwatch England.
- Improving signposting resources for the public by expanding the information and resources on our website

Website Articles:

- [Our independent role has a big impact on local health and care – Annual Report 2024/25](#)
- [Response to Government announcement about Healthwatch](#)
- [‘Lost in the System’ – health and care barriers for refugees and asylum seekers in Hertfordshire](#)
- [Hertfordshire’s Armed Forces community wants help to navigate the NHS](#)

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Other

Volunteering: Three new Trustees were successfully elected to the Board at our Annual General Meeting in July.

2. Holding commissioners and providers to account and partnership working

This section explains our role in championing our communities at a strategic level. Listing the decision makers in health and social care that we have engaged with over the past three months and the key themes covered in those conversations.

Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System (ICS)

Activity has included:

- Six-weekly meetings with the Nursing and Quality Team across the Integrated Care System to raise issues from signposting and research. These meetings have proved an excellent way for us to raise concerns and the ICS have been very responsive in taking action to address these. Examples have included access to cancer screening for the housebound, as well as concerns relating to particular practices where a pattern had emerged through hearing from multiple members of the public (e.g. withdrawal of access to HRT, access to GP services).
- Meeting with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB, about the work in progress to transition from current to future arrangements, and the upcoming legislative changes for Healthwatch – as well as the insights arising from our signposting and research.
- Meeting with ICB Deputy Director of Transformation Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB
- Regular attendance at the System Transformation and Quality Improvement Committee:
 - Children and Young People were a theme throughout the September meeting, and that it was a struggle to provide services to meet need. Hearing the voice of the child was essential and the Chair said they will be very interested to see our report on the experiences of children, young people and families using health and social care services when complete to help inform their work.
- Representation at the ICS/ICBs:
 - Communications Group
 - Patient Participation Group (PPG) Development Group
 - Participation Community of Practice
 - Integrated Care Partnership Board (now stood down)
 - Primary Care Transformation Committee
 - Health Inequalities Strategic Board
 - Patient Engagement Forum (PEF)
 - Research Strategy Group

Hertfordshire and West Essex System Quality Group (SQG)

Regular attendance at meetings of the group. Every other month the SQG meeting has deep dives or spotlight reports and when our work on refugees and asylum seekers (Lost in the

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System) was published and referenced in our update to SGQ, the Chair was keen that it was showcased at the October SQG spotlight meeting to ensure that the learning is taken forward.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Quality Improvement Group

(re care homes, Supported Living and Support at home services including permanent, enablement, and short break services).

Regular attendance at meetings of the group; this quarter the topics covered included a presentation from our Senior Research Manager on the Refugee & Asylum Seekers Project Report, as well as discussion of rough sleepers, the Board's Annual Report, and updates on current Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

South and West Herts Health and Care Partnership (SWHCP)

A trustee of Healthwatch Hertfordshire is a regular attendee at this board, and our CEO is the co-Chair of the coproduction committee. This ensures we are close to the activities, priorities and community engagement of communities covered by this region, and have worked closely with them on community engagement, improving coproduction and raising awareness of services, whilst improving patient feedback. We have also participated in their national competitive bid for neighbourhood delivery innovation, which they were successful in securing amongst high calibre national submissions.

East and North Herts Health and Care Partnership (ENHCP)

Our CEO is a regular attendee at this board, and is also the Chair of the Community Assembly, a public and patient engagement space for the partnership. This ensures we are close to the activities, priorities and community engagement of communities covered by this region, and have worked closely with them on community engagement, improving coproduction and raising awareness of services, whilst improving patient feedback.

Over the past quarter, we have also supported the partnership in their work of articulating their coproduction aspirations and enabling this through governance arrangements (participating in three partnership workshops), as ENHT prepares to take on the host role for the partnership. We have also participated in their national competitive bid for neighbourhood delivery innovation, for which they were commended.

Mental Health, Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Health and Care Partnership (MHLDN HCP)

Our CEO is a regular attendee at this board, ensuring we are close to the activities, priorities and community engagement of communities covered by this region, and have worked closely with them on community engagement, improving coproduction and raising awareness of services, whilst improving patient feedback.

Over the past quarter, we have supported the partnership in their work to raise profile of budgetary constraints and improvements to local communities struggling with mental health,

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learning disabilities and neurodiversity – informing their work and momentum with the All Age Autism Strategy and Mental Health and Cooccurring Needs prioritisation.

Public Consultation by the Department of Health & Social Care on Dental Contract Reform

We completed the consultation on behalf of Healthwatch Hertfordshire. The consultation is an important development to better enable dental practices to provide high quality, evidence-based care to patients.

Quality Monitoring

East of England Strategic Review of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

We support the NHS England East of England Specialised Commissioning Team and NHS London and their review of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre (run by East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust at the Hillingdon Trust in north Middlesex). The aim is to organise services in ways that provide the best modern care for patients. A public consultation is anticipated, which we are happy to support once live to ensure the breadth of our communities have the opportunity to participate.

We regularly attend the Strategic Review of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Programme Board meetings /progress updates, including the current challenges around funding and how this affects the consultation process.

Quality Accounts

A Quality Account report must be published by 30 June each year by all NHS healthcare providers, outlining its performance on the quality of services and

We responded to a number of quality accounts in quarter 1, and collated all our responses into one document for the Board this quarter (see below). We will be exploring the collaboration opportunities identified and monitoring progress at our regular Trust meetings.



HwH-29 Quality
Accounts Review Boar

Holding to Account Meetings

We hold internal bi-monthly 'holding to account' reviews of the latest concerns and information (local, regional and national) and feedback from signposting and research and engagement. This allows us to connect all the insights and information across providers, services, and public feedback. Key themes and actions from the August meeting centred around:

- GP Practice Follow-up on signposting feedback and CQC inspection ratings
- Cancer screenings for those that are housebound
- Frailty/Older People: difficulty speaking with GPs – meaning an appointment has become harder for some with 'total triage' and many feel digitally excluded. Lack of contact (in person and online) means not finding out about services that may support them

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- Implementation of the new Accessible Information Standard
- Vaccine hesitancy

Meetings with Service Providers

These meetings offer an opportunity to raise issues from our research and signposting and the NHS and Herts County Council have been very receptive to feedback as to how their services need to be improved. These meetings also covered: finance, system pressures, patient and community involvement, and our research programme and its findings.

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (WHTH)

- Meeting with the Chair and CEO of WHTH, discussing the recently announced changes to legislation that may result in increased responsibility for patient voice at the trust, as a leader in the South and West Healthcare Partnership.
- We also introduced our Vice Chair, who has since regularly attended the Public Trust Board's meeting, and fed insights into our work and understanding of the Trust's work and priorities, and provides a link to Healthwatch insights and knowledge to the Trust's non execs.
- We met with their Chief Nursing Officer, sharing insights from our signposting and feedback service; this time, this included a concern raised regarding routine medication being altered for inpatients, and the potential of a medicine cabinet being left unattended. We also explored the work the Trust is undertaking in improving the leadership's understanding of the work of nursing staff.

East & North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust (ENHT)

- Meeting with the Chair and CEO of ENHT, discussing the recently announced changes to legislation that may result in increased responsibility for patient voice at the trust, as a leader in the East and North Healthcare Partnership. We discussed the impact of the 10 year plan on the work of the trust and how the foundation status is being considered.
- We were invited and the CEO and Chair presented to the Trust Board in public, talking about the work of Healthwatch over the past year and sharing the highlights of the learnings from our work – resulting in a number of follow up conversations about the ENHT's governance, communications and internal staff support.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

Regular attendance at the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust Patient Experience Group.

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)

Meeting with the Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer, to discuss key developments affecting the delivery of community services, including waiting times, staffing gaps, out of area beds and discharge process. We discussed the developments arising from the NHS 10year plan, the news about budget availability, and their recent work on care

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coordination, and working with community teams. We shared the insights arising from our work, in particular Refugees and Asylum Seekers and Autistic Adults.

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH)

Meeting with Divisional Director of Nursing and Therapies to discuss the impact of the NHS 10 Year Plan on the work of CLCH, and the continued local partnership they're undertaking, and how best to leverage the wealth of insights arising from Healthwatch's work

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (HCT)

- Meeting with Chief Executive of HCT, discussing their role in the East and North Healthcare Partnership and arrangements going forward, including their role in delivering local services. We discussed the virtual hospital occupancy, exploring their plans for increase in supply to meet with demand given such positive outcomes. We also explored the Children and Young people neurodiversity pathway to ensure the waiting list numbers continue to be in focus.
- Meeting with the Chief Nursing Officer, discussing the trust's work on children and young people, and the upcoming public health nursing contract, as well as the recent investment into special care dental services and additional pathways for anxious children aged 6 and under.

Circle Healthcare – Musculoskeletal Services in South and West Herts

Our Quality Manager met with the GP Engagement and Community Integration Lead and discussed waiting times, digital consultations, and future AI projects that may impact on patients.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

- Our CEO presented to the Districts and Boroughs Community Wellbeing Partnership, sharing our work focus and approach and inviting them to engage their communities on their feedback, and invite them to submit their concerns and questions via our signposting.
- Meetings with the Executive Director and Executive Members (newly elected Cllrs) for Adult Care Services and Public Health.
- We are also regular attendees at:
 - The Strategic Adult Social Care Coproduction Board
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 - Health Scrutiny Committee

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Health and Wellbeing Board

- Our Chair regularly attends the Health and Wellbeing Board, and at their last meeting they added our work on with the Integrated Care Partnership, a survey of 1,700+ people in Hertfordshire and how they felt about their local health, wellbeing and care. The survey

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identified that a number of groups have a much more negative experience, and the Health and Wellbeing Board leadership committed to taking forward the insights and recommendations we proposed for expanding the knowledge base and involving communities in the shaping of future support.

- Our CEO is a member and attends the Health and Wellbeing Community of Practice, that has recently been started.

National & Regional Meetings, including Healthwatch England

We continued our regular attendance at:

- Healthwatch England Social Care Network
- NHS England AI Ambassador Network
- East of England's Chief Executive Network
- Healthwatch England Chair and Chief Executive's briefings
- Local Healthwatch working groups

Local Councils & Voluntary and Community Sector Partners, meetings with:

- University of Hertfordshire's Director of the Centre for Research in Public Health and Community Care (CRIPACC)
- University of Hertfordshire's Programme Director for the Integrated Care System's Partnership Programme
- Research and Engagement Network Development (REND) programme
- NHS East of England Commissioning lead
- Head of East of England Clinical Senate
- Chief Executive of Age UK
- Steering group meetings of the Voluntary Community Social Enterprise and Faith Alliance (VCSFE) where our Chief Executive is a member of the steering group
- Chief Executive Officer at Community Action Dacorum
- Chief Executive at North Herts and Stevenage CVS

3. Budgets & Finance (Budget sheets; reasons for any significant under or overspend, as well as highlight any findings/issues which may impact on this contract)



Management
Accounts Qtr 2 - Heal