



Annual Report 2024–2025

**Unlocking the power of
people-driven care**

Healthwatch in Devon,
Plymouth & Torbay

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“The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They’re changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people’s views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities.”

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chair



Welcome to our 2024–25 Healthwatch Annual Report.

This report describes the wide range of engagement, representation, outcomes and impact undertaken by Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay over the past year. It recounts the hard work and commitment of Healthwatch volunteers and staff and highlights the importance of listening to patients' voices.

During 2024–25 Healthwatch maintained its vital role in gathering information and feedback on services to capture what is working well and what may need to be improved.

I'm really proud of the positive change we've contributed to this year using your feedback, including, among other things, co-designing a new hospital complaints process and developing better training & support for local Carers. As a Carer myself, I'm particularly proud of the latter, and the fact that our Carers Report was used in a Parliamentary House of Commons Inquiry into Adult Social Care Reform.

In furthering our objectives, we recognise the potential of true co-design and co-delivery of services alongside our diverse communities. We have worked closely with our local voluntary, community and statutory partners to ensure that residents' voices, including the most vulnerable and marginalised, are considered in provision by commissioners.

We have promoted engagement through community events, social and traditional media, responded to complaints and concerns, provided advice and information through our contact centre, and issued reports on a variety of topics.

This has been a challenging time for services confronted with issues including a waiting list backlog and funding constraints. We continue to play a vital role in gathering information and feedback on services as we support NHS Devon Integrated Care Board and are also involved in many strategic forums to implement positive change.

Our common objective is the wellbeing of our communities, relationships between local organisations are consequently robust, and we look forward to our partnerships continuing and strengthening.



"I would like to thank all those that have supported Healthwatch in our mission to monitor and improve health and social care, particularly the residents of Devon Plymouth and Torbay. Together we can all make a real difference."

Dr Kevin Dixon

Chair of Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay

About us

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay 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.

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. Healthwatch exist on a national and local level, working towards the same goal of enabling people to have a voice about their health and social care systems.



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences help make health and care better.



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

How it works locally

Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council jointly commission local Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

Although these three services are jointly commissioned, each local authority area retains the distinct identities of their own local Healthwatch.



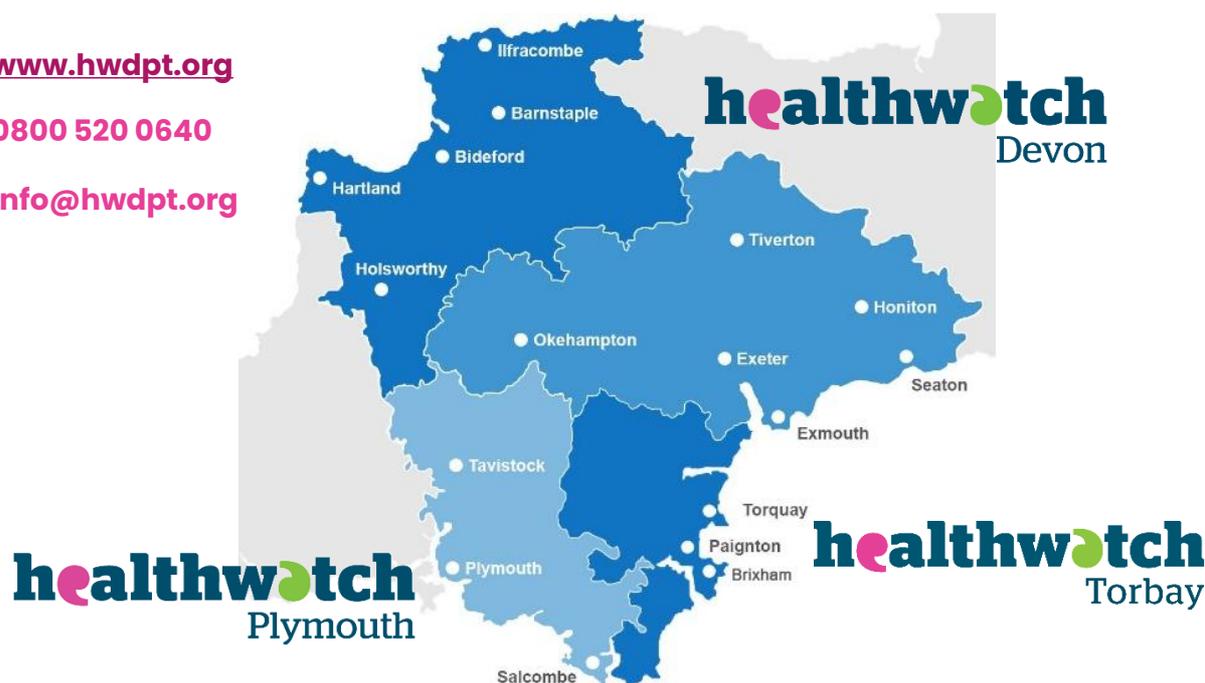
www.hwdpt.org



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Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay are delivered by a collaborative partnership of Colebrook (SW) Ltd, Engaging Communities South West and Citizens Advice Devon.

We offer a dedicated walk-in centre in Torbay, offices in Plymouth, and in wider Devon 'Healthwatch Champions' are located at Citizens Advice offices based throughout the county to carry out Healthwatch core functions. Healthwatch Champions have offices based in East Devon, North & West Devon, Exeter, South Hams, Torridge & Mid Devon and Teignbridge.

Who funds us?

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) fund the work of Healthwatch nationally. DHSC gives money to local councils so they can commission an effective independent local Healthwatch service. Although local Healthwatch are funded by and accountable to local authorities, they are completely independent.

Our year in numbers

In 2024–25 we supported 5,764 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 18 full or part time staff and our work is supported by 22 volunteers.

Reaching out:



1502 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

762 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as how to access social care and finding an NHS dentist.

3500 pieces of local feedback about the new 10 Year NHS Health Plan were collected by NHS Devon following our collaborative engagement work.

Championing your voice:



We published **11** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **pharmacy, complaints** and **eye care**.

Our most popular report was **on the impact of providing unpaid care at home in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay**, highlighting 240 carers' struggles and the effect that caring for a loved one has on their lives.

Statutory funding:



We're jointly funded by Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council.

In 2024/25 we received **£562,484**, which is the same as last year. This includes **£350,000** for Devon, **£116,484** for Plymouth and **£96,000** for Torbay.

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Healthwatch Torbay led on a collaborative Cardiovascular Disease prevention project with Public Health and Primary Care Leads offering free blood pressure and health checks in the community.



Healthwatch Devon worked with 120 library volunteers to ensure the people they support can still provide us with feedback, including those in rural areas or the housebound who receive home-delivered books.



Summer

Our report on the impact of providing unpaid care at home led to new dementia training to support carers and 240 carer views fed into both local Carer Support plans and a national Parliamentary Inquiry into social care.



We attended many community events and summer fayres in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to gather health & social care feedback.



Autumn

Healthwatch Plymouth produced a report summarising patient feedback and experiences of the new Royal Eye Infirmary (REI) building in Plymouth. This led to a brand new pedestrian crossing being introduced.



We shared Healthwatch England's 2023–24 annual report, which outlines how over 400,000 people shared their experiences with them nationally and locally to change care for the better.



Winter

Our collaborative engagement work with NHS Devon led to 3,500 individual pieces of local feedback about the new 10 Year NHS Health Plan. We independently chaired engagement days across Devon.



We hosted a special event in Paignton to help provide local people with energy advice and financial support during the Winter months. To view a short video of the event, please [click here](#).



Working together for change

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay work together to ensure people's experiences of care across the county are heard at Integrated Care System level, and that they influence decisions about local NHS services.



This year our collaborative engagement work with NHS Devon led to **3,500 individual pieces of local feedback** about the new 10 Year NHS Health Plan.

Working together to transform health and care :



In November 2024 the NHS in Devon launched local engagement around the 10 Year Health Plan, which ran in parallel with the national Change NHS campaign. All Devon residents were invited to share their experiences, views and ideas for improving the NHS. People were encouraged to fill out a local survey to ensure that local insights are used to improve local services. NHS Devon Integrated Care Board asked us for help gathering these views.

Making sure you are part of the big conversation:



In response, we independently chaired engagement days across Devon for local residents to speak with NHS Staff about the 10 Year Health Plan to get their voice heard as part of the development process. In addition to these five locality workshop events in Paignton, Exeter, Barnstaple, Ivybridge and Plymouth, we gathered feedback via branded postcards at 42 smaller drop in events, talks and meetings, helped people unable to submit their feedback online to do it free over the phone and also created promotional videos of the engagement (like the one on the right – [Click here](#) to view it online).



Building strong relationships to achieve more:



Your feedback from this engagement will directly inform the development of the Government's 10-Year Health Plan for England and the local plans for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. NHS Devon have agreed to share any outcomes or impact with us from this going forward. We look forward to continuing to collaborate to make care better for our local communities.

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 Devon, Plymouth and Torbay 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.

Service commissioners in Plymouth now have a better understanding of how women who are rebuilding their lives after substance misuse, homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system experience local health and social care. Our report highlighted how these women face additional barriers to accessing health and social care, including distrust in 'professionals' based on past experiences. [Click here](#) for more.

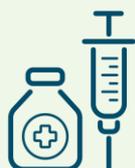
Getting services to involve the public



By involving local people and working with other local organisations, services can help improve care for everyone.

We worked with 120 library volunteers across Newton Abbot, Exeter and Barnstaple to ensure they raise awareness of our work to the people they support, including those who receive home-delivered books. They have been sharing our freepost feedback postcards so that those people in rural areas can still provide us with feedback, despite many being housebound.

Improving care over time



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

Healthwatch England's pharmacy closures [review](#) found that Devon had more hours of temporary pharmacy closures than the rest of the South West and we also heard concerns from people about pharmacy closures in rural communities. We shared this feedback with commissioners, who used it to develop a new community pharmacy strategic framework for the next five years. We continue to monitor how the local and national strategies will be implemented to ensure an effective community pharmacy provision for Devon, Plymouth & Torbay.

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 feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



"The feedback we hear in our local communities and share with Healthwatch England is invaluable, building a picture of what it's like to use health and care services across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. Local people's experiences help us understand where we – and decision makers – must focus and highlight issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. We can then make recommendations that will change care for the better, both locally and across the nation."

Pat Harris, Strategic Lead for Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay



Better training & support for local Carers

New dementia training to support Carers has been developed after our Carers report was fed into local Carer Support plans and a Parliamentary House of Commons Inquiry into Adult Social Care Reform.

240 Carers who live in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay shared their experiences with us to help us understand in more detail how a Carer's role was impacting on their everyday life and their emotional wellbeing.

Many Carers told us they are feeling overwhelmed by their caring role and that they do not prioritise their own health and wellbeing over the person they care for.

Key things we heard that would make a difference :

- 1 Improved access to training, information and advice. Particularly for those affected by conditions like Dementia.**
- 2 Carers need improved access to support for themselves.**
- 3 Carers need more support to enable them to prioritise their wellbeing.**
- 4 Having someone to talk to and / or access to online support groups would help Carers to feel less isolated.**
- 5 Carers who live with the person(s) they care for need more support and better access to respite care.**



"Thank you to Healthwatch for their work... it provides a clear picture of the issues for Carers across the whole of Devon... Some of these are issues for Carers' Services / Commissioners of Carers' Services, and each area will build the findings of this report into local Carer Support."

What difference did this make?

The Devon wide Carers Leads Development Group have built the report findings into local Carer Support (quoted above). Acting on the recommendations, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust have subsequently launched new Dementia awareness training for Carers to support them in their caring role. Healthwatch England included this report in their submission to the Parliamentary House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee Inquiry into Adult Social Care Reform – 'the cost of inaction'. Amongst other recommendations, the committee have since adopted the Healthwatch recommendation for a calculation of unmet need. We will continue to monitor local Carers' feedback and share any concerns with service leaders for them to act upon. [Click here](#) to download our Unpaid Carers Report.

Improving the safety of new hospital services

We reviewed the experiences of 40 patients of the new Royal Eye Infirmary in Plymouth and recommended a safety improvement which was listened to, acted upon, and upheld by decision-makers.

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust's (UHP) Royal Eye Infirmary (REI) service moved from its location at Derriford Hospital to a new purpose-built building in the International Business Park near to the Derriford Hospital Site. Earlier this year Healthwatch Plymouth conducted visits to the REI to engage with patients around their experiences of the new facility.

Key things we heard:



- 1** The majority of patient feedback gathered was positive, both about the service and the staff.
- 2** Main issues raised include parking and transport, interior and exterior signage, and waiting times for appointments and follow-up.
- 3** We recommended the issue of installing a safe pedestrian crossing outside the REI be prioritised with the Local Authority.



"Thank you to Healthwatch for conducting this engagement and providing valuable insights into the experiences of patients attending the Royal Eye Infirmary... we are encouraged by comments praising our staff's professionalism and quality improvement efforts. The areas highlighted for improvement, particularly those relating to parking, signage, and waiting times, are important to us, and we are committed to addressing them."

What difference did this make?

A new pedestrian crossing has now been implemented as part of the adjacent retail park development. The report has been shared with NHS Devon Integrated Care Board and University Hospitals Plymouth, who have committed to addressing the other issues raised in the report. (quoted above)



[Click here](#) to read the full REI report

Reducing barriers to accessing appointments

People in Torbay have improved access to low-level healthcare support after we led on a collaborative Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) prevention project offering free blood pressure and health checks in the local community.

We were approached by Primary Care and Public Health to ask if we could trial ‘Building Healthy Heart Communities’, as our offices are based in a community library in central Torbay. This followed research which stated that you’re six times more likely to die from heart disease in Torbay, with 1 in 6 of these from preventable CVD. Feedback from this suggested that barriers accessing GP Appointments to have blood pressure and health checks were contributing to the increase in CVD in our local area.

We therefore worked with key statutory and voluntary organisations to re-purpose a front-facing part of the Library to be a focal point for local communities to access low-level healthcare support. This included free blood pressure and health checks in partnership with a local GP Surgery.



Dr John McGuinness of Corner Place Surgery overseeing a blood pressure check.

Key outcomes from our collaborative project:



359

Blood Pressure readings have been administered, with 131 of these identified as raised or high.

2952

local residents have been supported with healthcare and wellbeing queries.

What difference did this make?

Early detection of high blood pressure and access to blood pressure monitors allows patients to feed data back to their GP without the need for an appointment, so they can identify and treat them for early CVD. Several patients identified with raised readings have since returned for follow-up monitoring after being prescribed anti-hypertensive medication. This has helped reduce barriers accessing GP Appointments and address the increase in CVD locally. We presented these findings directly to decision makers via our local Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board, who stated that our work evidences *“the impact of providing support in the community to enable this to be rolled out wider.”*

Hearing from our local communities

We're here for all residents in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. 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 by:

- Chairing focus groups with adults with autism and ADHD
- interviewing patients who had been through the complaints process
- Making sure that the voices from our local communities have been heard by local NHS leaders and Integrated Care Systems.



Hearing from our local communities

Improving access to GP Services for patients

Access to GP services is the most common issue we hear from people, and we wanted those in charge to understand what the main GP access issues were and the impact they have on patients and their families.

We produced a report of the patient experiences we have heard in relation to GP access in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and shared it with NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB). The report highlighted the need for easier and more timely access, improved patient communication, more accessible GP websites and consistent monitoring of patients with ongoing medical conditions.

What difference did this make?

Our report was used to inform the ICB's Primary Care Access Recovery Plan, which has directly led to improvements to local GP access that include:

- 48.4% of appointments occurring within 1 day (national target is 35%).
- 55% of patients found it "easy" to get through to someone on the phone (national average is 50%).
- 99.16% of practices now have online consultation and video consultation available, with over 93% enrolled with GP online registration services.
- Increased uptake of the NHS App, leading to a 70% increase in repeat prescriptions ordered and a higher number of self-referrals.
- The development of a new Community Pharmacy Strategy for Devon.
- Improvements being made to many GP websites following a full review.

Helping develop a better health needs assessment for adults with autism or ADHD

Through focus groups with adults with autism and ADHD, we heard that many felt health needs assessments were not making enough reasonable adjustments for them as part of the process.

We reported the group's detailed feedback to Devon Adult Social Care Performance and Assurance Board, making recommendations for change.

What difference did this make?

Public Health Devon used feedback from our report to develop a health needs assessment that looks at the social, emotional and mental wellbeing needs of adults with autism or ADHD. This led to a focus group being run so autistic people could contribute to the new health needs assessment.

Hearing from our local communities

Co-designing a new and better hospital complaints process using your feedback

Working with University Hospital Plymouth NHS Trust (UHP) we independently interviewed patients who had been through the complaints process to review their experiences.

People told us they felt the complaint's process was not timely, they didn't feel involved or fully informed, and many felt their complaint wasn't fully understood or if the Trust had learnt from their experience. [Click here](#) to read our report.

What difference did this make?

Based on the feedback and our recommendations, UHP co-designed a new improved complaints process with patient representatives and Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. The new process addressed each and all of our recommendations and will significantly improve patient's experiences of complaining, particularly responsiveness, timeliness and communication.

This has led to other Devon Health Trusts looking to redevelop their own complaint's processes to replicate this new co-designed model.

Royal Devon University NHS Foundation Trust are already redeveloping and enhancing their 'You said, we did' webpages, improving how patients see changes made as a result of their feedback or complaints.

Improving access to digital healthcare by getting more people using the NHS App

Accessing digital healthcare such as online GP Services is one of the key issues we hear from the people we support in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

The national average of NHS App patient download by population is 60% across England. In 2024 in Devon this was considerably lower at 50%.

To help, we worked with NHS Devon Integrated Care Board to promote a number of targeted NHS App initiatives to the people we support. We shared resources online via our website, social media, email newsletters and also face-to-face at public drop-in sessions and community events.

What difference did this make?

Devon is now equal to the Southwest average (58%) and on target to surpass the 60% national average within the coming months. This means more people in Devon – particularly those in rural areas or the elderly – are now able to access digital healthcare such as online GP Services via the NHS App.

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 762 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

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
- Launching a brand-new website full of information via www.hwdpt.org.



Improving patient access to medical records

David told us he has had lots of problems getting a copy of his medical record and discharge letters from his GP Surgery. He said he had been received no response after being removed from their practice patient list.

We contacted another GP Surgery in Devon who specifically treat patients on the 'Special Allocation Scheme' – which ensures that patients who have been removed from a practice patient list can continue to access healthcare services. We explained David's situation and they showed him how to request his medical records and discharge letters.

The GP Surgery posted out David's medical records and discharge letters, which they have on patient's electronic record. David was happy to have finally received these medical records.

Increasing patient access to equipment

Kevin lost his hearing aids but couldn't get through to someone over the phone. There was no voicemail option, and he had no other method of trying to contact audiology.

We confirmed that the listed number for audiology kept ringing with no answer and no voicemail option and called different numbers until a relevant member of staff answered.

We explained Kevin's issue and they were able to contact him directly to resolve it. They also agreed to investigate the listed phone number with no voicemail and act on it.

Supporting patients waiting for surgery

Sandra's physical and mental wellbeing was being negatively impacted due to waiting for hip surgery at hospital. She contacted the hospital to chase for a date for the hip operation but had no response even after her GP had written to the hospital to request a date for surgery.

We signposted Sandra to the Patient Advice & Liaison Service at the Hospital to help raise a complaint at her request. We also phoned the surgeon's secretary to request for information as to why she was yet to have an operation date and to request they get in touch with her to discuss.

Sandra was given a date for surgery; she told us she felt relieved about this and that it had positively impacted her mental wellbeing.

"Thank you so much for all you have done. I can't imagine how I would have coped for much longer without your help."



Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given hundred of 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:

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Found out more about what kids think about the future of the NHS, with the help of our volunteer Junior Healthwatch Reporters. [Click here](#) to see a video of what they said.



Showcasing volunteer impact

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.

"I moved back to Torbay when I retired and I was looking for something interesting to do. I certainly found it because I've been volunteering with Healthwatch Torbay for ten years now!

I really enjoy working with children and young people and some of the project work we've done and events that we've been to. But also, I like talking to people, listening to their feedback, understanding what they like and don't like about health issues across Torbay.

Being involved with the conversation is really important, so come along and you can do it too!"



Pat

"My name is Roger and I've been a Healthwatch volunteer for Plymouth for several years.

There's so many aspects to enjoy. I've visited care homes, hospitals, and I go to events and I talk to people. I find it great fun, because I can have a banter with them. But at the same time, deriving what problems they've got with the NHS.

We don't aim to cure, but we aim to help. If you want to help and volunteer too, come and visit our website."



Roger

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.



www.hwdpt.org/volunteer



0800 520 0640 (freephone)



info@hwdpt.org

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Local Authority Funding	£562,484	Expenditure on pay (staffing)	£455,530.95
(Devon)	(£350,000)	Non-pay expenditure (operational)	£60,108.91
(Plymouth)	(£116,484)		
(Torbay)	(£96,000)		
		Office and management fees (support)	£59,953.66
Additional income	£3,150.00		
Carry in from 2023/24	£18,490.36		
Total income	£584,124.36	Total Expenditure	£575,593.52

Additional income is broken down into:

- **£3,000** received from the local ICS for joint work on the NHS 10-Year Plan project
- **£150** received from Healthwatch England for work on an NHSE GP Forum project

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across Devon, Plymouth & Torbay also receive funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
NHS 10 Year Plan Engagement	£3000

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

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 priorities for the next year are:

1. Using technology to help people access services at home.
2. Helping people access social care services and care homes.
3. Improving and joining up services for children and young people.
4. Making sure all patients can access health services equally.
5. Helping people access mental health services for conditions like depression.
6. Helping people access GP, hospital and mental health services.
7. How cost of living affects people's health and wellbeing.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay are provided by Colebrook Southwest in partnership with Engaging Communities South West and Citizen's Advice Devon, William Sutton Memorial Hall, 6 Shelley Way, St Budeaux, Plymouth, PL5 1QF.

Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay use the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

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

As Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are independent services, driven by the voice of local people, an independent steering group has been set up in Plymouth – led by lay people. Our Healthwatch Assist Network of voluntary community groups allows us to build links with communities so we can gather information about the health and care services they use.

Enter and View visits are a way for our trained lay representatives to visit health and social care services to gather information and understand the experiences of service users, staff, and families. Due to our extensive workplan and engagement in 2024-25, there were **no** enter and view visits required to be delivered in Devon, Plymouth or Torbay.

Our Steering Group, Assist Network and Lay Representatives help us to produce evidence-based priorities and support the delivery of our workplan and statutory functions across all of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2024/25 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums, both face-to-face and virtually.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many key stakeholders, members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website – www.hwdpt.org.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations or RFIs

An RFI (request for information) is a formal process for gathering information from providers of a service such as health care trusts or commissioners. Based on patient feedback, we made **12** RFIs to stakeholders. There were no 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 no resulting reviews or investigations. In addition, we responded to all **8** requests from external stakeholders for further evidence from Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay about various health and social care related topics.

As part of the annual statutory Quality Account process for NHS Trusts and specific service providers, we provided responses to all of these reports.

Healthwatch Representation

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us. Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay are represented on numerous different relevant meetings locally, regionally and nationally.

This year we have taken information to each of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Health & Wellbeing Boards, Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Boards, Safeguarding Adults Partnerships and Local Care Partnerships. We are on the Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board and take insight and experiences to other decision makers in our region.

We share our data with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England (HWE) to help address health and care issues at a national level and are part of the regional South West Citizens' Assembly and HWE South West Network with our neighbouring local Healthwatch.

"An invaluable contribution is made by Healthwatch and the South West Citizens' Assembly to the work of the South West Clinical Senate.

The Senate's purpose is to collaborate with commissioners to establish the best possible setups for services, all in the pursuit of providing high-quality, long-lasting healthcare... The role of Healthwatch is to bring together representatives with lived experience in order to monitor and improve services across the South West, and to identify opportunities for change at the highest level... We appreciate the involvement of our Healthwatch colleagues in this mission."



Statutory statements

2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
10 Year NHS Health Plan Engagement	Feedback directly informed the development of the Government's 10-Year Health Plan for England and the local plans for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
'Gifted Women' Report	Commissioners have a better understanding of the health and care experiences of women with a history of substance misuse, homelessness or contact with the criminal justice system.
Pharmacy Closures Feedback	Commissioners used it to develop a new community pharmacy strategic framework for the next five years.
Library Volunteers Training	People who receive home-delivered books (e.g. the housebound) are now able to provide us with feedback.
Unpaid Carers Report	New dementia training to support carers and carer views fed into local Carer Support plans and a national Parliamentary ASC Inquiry which adopted some of the recommendations.
REI Engagement	Recommended safety improvement listened to, acted upon, and upheld by decision-makers. (New pedestrian crossing installed)
CVD Project	People have improved access to low-level healthcare support (e.g. blood pressure and health checks).
Access to GP Services Report	Improvements to local GP access including more online and video consultations, increased NHS App uptake, repeat prescriptions, self-referrals and websites accessibility.
Autism and ADHD Feedback	Public Health Devon developed a new health needs assessment that looks at the social, emotional and mental wellbeing needs of adults with autism or ADHD.
Complaint's Process Review	A new improved complaints process in Plymouth that other Devon Health Trusts are looking to replicate.
'Beat the Freeze' Event	People provided with energy advice and information on financial support during the Winter months.
Report into Urgent & Emergency Care	Our 2023 report was used to inform the new Torbay Hospital Emergency Department Improvement Project, which will increase space capacity by 50% and create mental health spaces.
HWE 'A pain to complain' report	Royal Devon University NHS Foundation Trust developed and enhanced their 'You said, we did' webpages, improving how patients see changes made as a result of their feedback.

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