

healthwatch

Our yearly report

2023 to 2024



**Easy
Read**

Easy Read



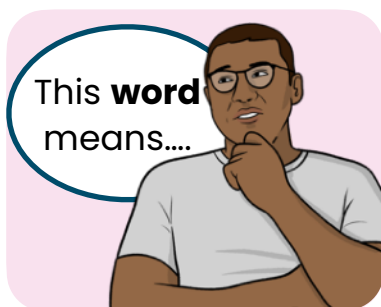
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information, but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** – this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Pink and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

What is in this booklet

About this report	4
Primary Care Recovery Plan	6
Dental Care Recovery Plan	9
Cancer care	10
Mental health checks for new parents.....	12
Fairer health and social care.....	13
The problems with delayed care	16
Leaving hospital safely	19
Changes to social care.....	21
The NHS in the future	23
Healthwatch in the future	25
Find out more	28

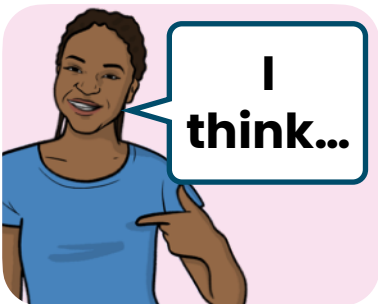
About this report



Every year, Healthwatch England writes a report about what we have done and what we plan to do next.



This is our report for 2023 to 2024.



This year, we have supported more than 1.5 million people to:

- Speak up about health and care services.



- Get information about their care.

Healthwatch England



We want everyone to be able to get the care they need.

We work to improve health and care services for everyone by:



- Listening to people who use health and care services.



- Telling managers of health and care services what people think so they can improve.

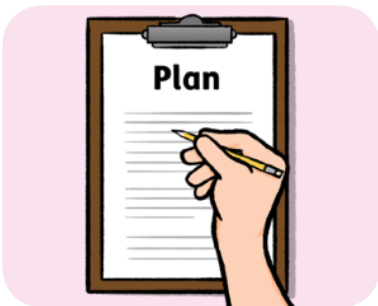


- Looking into problems with health and care services and saying what should happen.

Primary Care Recovery Plan



Primary care means local health and care services, like doctors (GPs) and pharmacies.

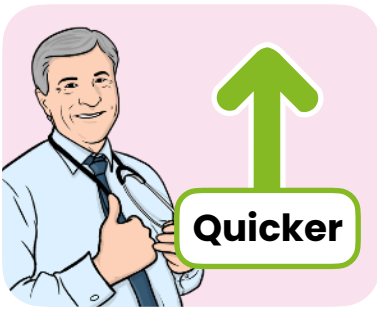


The **Primary Care Recovery Plan** says what the NHS will do to make primary care better.

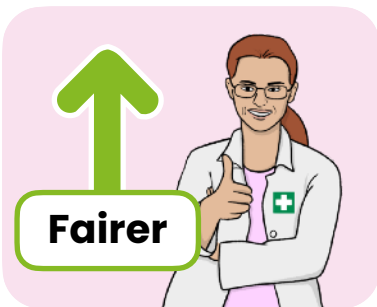


The plan deals with some of the problems we shared with the NHS after we listened to people who use primary care services.

The plan includes what the NHS will do to:



- Make it quicker and easier for people to get help from their local doctor (GP).



- Make primary care services fairer so everyone can get the care they need.



- Provide more care through pharmacies.



- Let more people know about what care is available from pharmacies.



We will help the NHS to make sure the plan works well.



We will keep listening to people who use primary care services and share any problems with the NHS.

Dental Care Recovery Plan



The **Dental Care Recovery Plan** is the government's plan to improve dental care services.



The plan was written after we told the government how difficult it is for people to see a dentist.



The plan says what will be done to make more NHS dentists available.

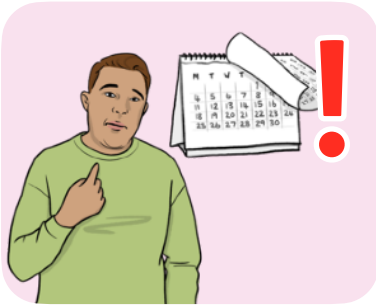


People are still telling us about the problems they have with getting dental care.



We are working with the government to make a new **Dentistry Rescue Plan** – this will set out bigger changes to improve dental care for everyone.

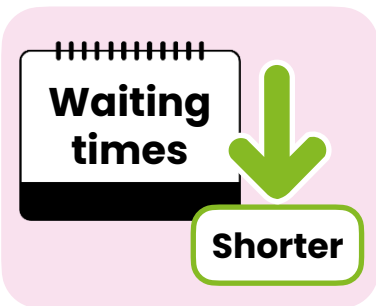
Cancer care



People with cancer have told us about having to wait a long time to get care.



We want everyone to get high-quality care as soon as they need it.



After we spoke up to the NHS, they made changes to make waiting times shorter.



The NHS has promised to create more medical training places so they can provide more cancer care in the future.



The NHS also plans to make sure every person with cancer has their own specialist or support worker to help them through their care.

We have told the NHS to:



- Do more to get people started on treatment as soon as they are found to have cancer.



- Provide better support for people after their cancer care.



- Make information about cancer care and treatments available to everyone in a way they can understand.

Mental health checks for new parents



All new parents should get a mental health check-up 6 weeks after having a baby.

It is called the **6-week postnatal check**.



Over 2,500 people took part in our survey about the check-ups.



The survey found that the mental health check-ups were not working well.



The NHS has made changes to improve the check-ups and make sure new parents get better care.

Fairer health and social care



Health care is help to treat problems with your body or mind. For example, going to the doctor or getting medicine.



Social care is help when you need extra support in your day-to-day life. For example, help with washing yourself or paying bills.



Everyone should be able to get the care they need, when they need it.



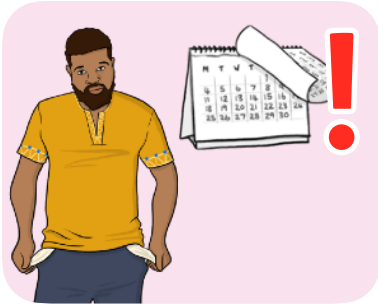
But lots of people have told us this does not always happen.



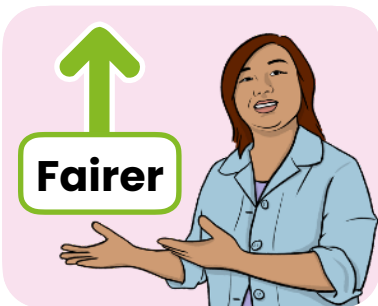
We wrote a report about people's experiences with health and social care.



We found that not everyone gets the same fair chance to get the care they need.



For example, we found that people in poorer areas can wait longer to get care.



Our report made suggestions about how to make health and social care fairer for everyone.

We suggested things like:



- Making more help available to people earlier, from places like support groups and schools.



- Getting the NHS to pay for people's travel to get care outside their local area.

We also suggested:



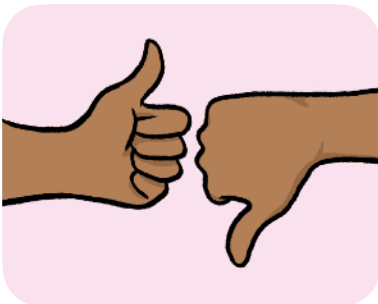
- People should be told about other places they can get help, like charities and support services.



- People should be told clearly about how long they will have to wait for care.



- People waiting for care should have someone they can speak to for support while they wait.



Our report tells managers of health and care services what is working well and what needs to change.



We will keep checking whether they make any changes based on our suggestions.

The problems with delayed care



People are now waiting longer than ever to get the care they need.



Many people have had their care cancelled or delayed.



We did some **research** that showed the problems this causes, like people's health getting worse.



Research means finding out more about something to help us understand it.

We have suggested that the NHS should do things like:



- Collect information about why care is cancelled or delayed so they can better understand what to do about it.



- Give better support to people who have to wait for care, especially people with mental health problems.



We are working to make sure people's letters about health appointments and treatments do not get lost in the post.

We will support the government with their 10-year plan to improve the NHS, which includes:



- Shorter waiting times for care.



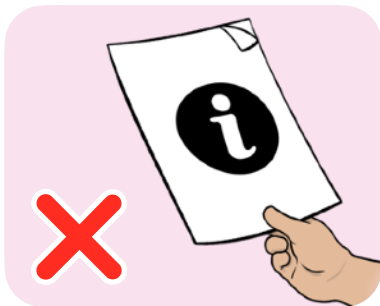
- Better support for people who are waiting for care.

Leaving hospital safely

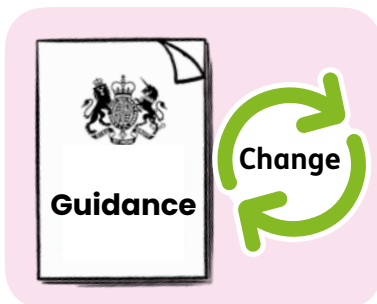


It is important to move people out of hospital when they are ready, to make space for other people who are waiting.

But people should be moved out of hospital safely.



We found that some people are leaving hospital without the right support or information.



The government has now changed their guidance for staff, patients and carers about leaving hospital.



It is important that everyone follows the guidance, or people may have to go back into hospital or need more support from other services.

We have also suggested things like:

- Setting standards in hospitals for:



- Waiting times for transport taking people home from hospital.



- How long people wait to be contacted by the hospital after they leave.



- Collecting better information about people leaving hospital to understand when things go wrong.

Changes to social care



We have done a lot of work to improve social care.



We made a difference to the government's 10-year plan for social care, which included an extra £5 million for local councils.



We have asked local councils to provide better support and information to people in their areas.



We supported a change for people in care homes to have the right to support workers and visitors, like family and friends.



We started a **campaign** asking the government to make changes to improve the whole social care system.



A **campaign** is a plan of things to do over time, to try and change something.



Through the campaign, we want to make social care better for disabled adults.



Many disabled adults are not getting the right care.



The government has agreed this is a problem and has promised to make changes.

The NHS in the future



We wrote a report saying what people want the NHS to be like in 2030.

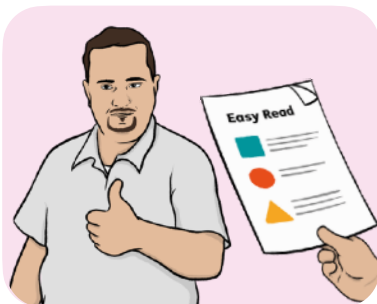
The report includes some of these suggestions:



- Everyone should be able to contact the NHS service they want, quickly and easily.



- Everyone should have the option to contact the NHS online, face-to-face, or by phone.



- Everyone should be able to get information from the NHS in a way they can understand.



- Everyone should have a fair chance to get care from the NHS when they need it.



- Everyone should be given care in a way that is right for them.

Healthwatch in the future



Our work is very important in making sure health and care services understand the needs of the people who use them.



But we are getting less money, and it is getting harder for us to do our work.



So we must make changes too.

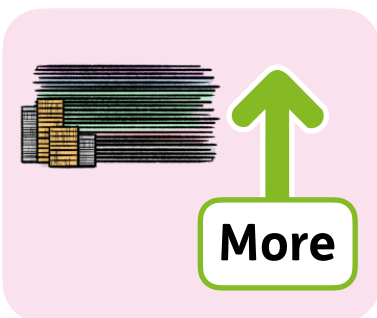
What is happening now



At the moment, local councils pay for local Healthwatch groups in their area.

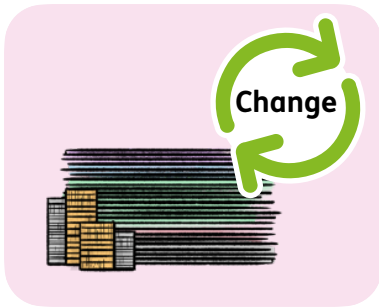


Some local Healthwatch groups also get extra money from their local NHS.



That means that some local Healthwatch groups are getting more money than others, so they can do more work and make bigger changes.

What should change



We need to change the way local Healthwatch groups get their money.



We think it would be better if local councils and NHS organisations pay Healthwatch England, and we pay the local Healthwatch groups.



That would help us to use the money carefully and pay local Healthwatch groups fairly around the country.

Find out more

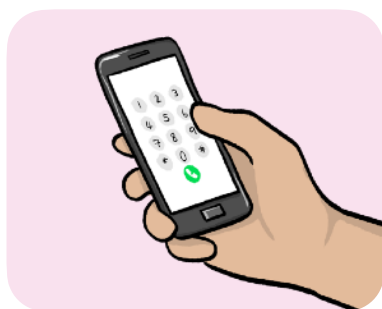


You can look at our website here:
www.healthwatch.co.uk

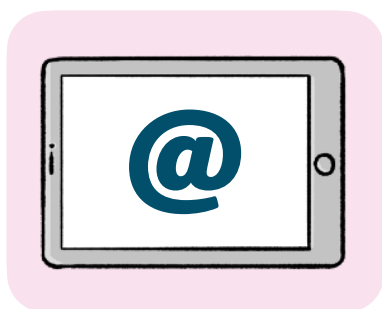
You can contact us by:



- Post:
Healthwatch England National
Customer Service Centre
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA



- Phone: 03000 683 000



- Email:
enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk