

Healthwatch fact sheet

What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services, we want to hear about your experiences. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and improve standards of care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice. Last year, we helped nearly a million people like you to have your say and get the support you need.

It's really important that you share your experiences – whether good or bad, happy or sad. If you've had a negative experience, it's easy to think there's no point in complaining, and that 'nothing ever changes.' Or, if you've had a great experience, that you 'wish you could say thank you'. Remember, your feedback is helping to improve people's lives. So, if you need advice, or you're ready to tell your story – we're here to listen.

Find out more about the work of Healthwatch here: www.healthwatch.co.uk

Your local Healthwatch

Wherever you live in England, you'll have a local Healthwatch nearby (there are over 150 across the country). We're here to listen to the issues that really matter to local communities and to hear about your experiences of using health and social care services. We're entirely independent and impartial, and any information you share with us is confidential.

You can find your local Healthwatch here:

www.healthwatch.co.uk/your-local-healthwatch/list

Have your say

Everyone has the right to expect quality health and social care services. It's important to make sure your views are heard so that those services can listen and improve.

One way to have your say is to take part in our surveys. Healthwatch run regular surveys throughout the year on a variety of different topics to explore your experiences in more detail. These can be found via your local Healthwatch website and social media.

You can also share your stories with us via email and website feedback. We want to hear about all kinds of experiences, positive and negative, and we understand that it's not always black and white. Great service but not enough support for staff? Lots of confusing jargon? Tell us about that, too!

How to make a complaint

Publicly funded:

- If you're unhappy with the care from your GP, Hospital or other publicly-funded health or care service, use the comprehensive guide produce by Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/nhs-and-social-care-complaints/
- If you'd like support in making a complaint, your local Healthwatch can help you find a local advocacy agency who can act on your behalf.

Private providers:

- Private health providers do not fall within Healthwatch's remit.
- Before using a service, check the provider is registered with the Care Quality Commission (www.cqc.org.uk/).
- To complain, firstly ask for their company complaints procedure and follow that, knowing that you can report them to the CQC ([\(\)](#)), and/or the General Medical Council (www.gmc-uk.org/concerns) depending on the issue.
- If the provider is registered with the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service, you could contact them at iscas.cedr.com/patients/what-we-can-do/
- Another possible avenue is to contact your local Trading Standards office – find your nearest here: www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers/support-advice