

What is Healthwatch?

August 2024

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Introduction

During follow-up work on our recent stakeholder perceptions survey, it was suggested that this simple, clear explanation of the Healthwatch role could be of use to partners and stakeholders.

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the experiences and needs of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

Healthwatch exists in two forms, on a national and local level, working together towards the same goal of enabling people to have a voice about their health and social care systems.

- The national organisation is known as Healthwatch England.
- Local Healthwatch organisations are in every area of the country, represented here in our county by Healthwatch Rutland.

Healthwatch England

Healthwatch England is a committee of the independent health and care regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Healthwatch England has three main statutory functions¹:

- Support, guide and provide advice to Local Healthwatch organisations.
- To escalate concerns about health and social care services raised by local Healthwatch to the CQC.
- To provide advice to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, NHS England and local authorities, especially where the quality of services is an issue.

Local Healthwatch

There are 152 local Healthwatch organisations across England, one for each upper tier local authority area. All are funded by and accountable to their Local Authority but work independently of them. The main statutory functions of local Healthwatch include:

¹ <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/our-history-and-functions#:~:text=Healthwatch%20England,advice%20to%20local%20Healthwatch%20organisations.>

- √ Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
- √ Gather local people's views and experiences of their health and care services and share them, together with recommendations for change, to commissioners and providers of care.
- √ Advise people about their options for accessing local health and care services.
- √ Pass on people's views and experiences about their care to Healthwatch England and, where there are areas of concern, to the CQC.

Local Healthwatch in Rutland

Healthwatch Rutland is one of England's smallest local Healthwatch with 2 part-time members of staff (a manager and an engagement officer) and a group of hard working, enthusiastic volunteers. Our volunteer Advisory Board meets 4 times a year and provides strategic direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities; thus ensuring that decisions about our work reflect the concerns and interests of our community.

Our contract is currently held by Connected Together, Community Interest Company (CT CIC). CT CIC is the legal entity responsible for contract compliance, legal oversight and financial management of Healthwatch Rutland. CT CIC provides back-office support and delegates operational decision-making to the Healthwatch Rutland Manager and the Advisory Board.

What we do

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using health and care services. We listen to the public's opinions and experiences by:

- 📞 Telephone, email and website.
- 📞 Attending local groups and events.
- 📞 Taking 'pop up' stands to libraries, supermarkets and community venues.
- 📞 Undertaking research projects determined by local need and feedback.
- 📞 Our Enter and View programme.²

² This involves exercising our statutory right to enter places of NHS or social care to view the premises and talk to the public about their experiences of care and to staff members about their roles within the organisation

We take additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds, including those who are often not heard by health and care decision-makers.

We ensure that local commissioners and providers in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Integrated Care System hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us. We do this through our involvement in the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board and the LLR Integrated Care Board and their associated boards and operational sub-groups.

The feedback and insight we obtain from the public is also shared with Healthwatch England, the CQC and commissioners and providers of care.

We operate in an independent and transparent way, ensuring that all available platforms are used to keep the Rutland public up-to-date with our work and impact, by:

- √ Holding Advisory Board meetings in public.
- √ Monthly newsletters.
- √ Articles on our website and through social media.
- √ Written reports, available in hardcopy, online and in accessible formats.
- √ Attending meetings of local organisations.
- √ Holding an Annual Meeting to present our Annual Report and engage with the public on local health and care topics.

What does Healthwatch Rutland *not* do?

We do not:

- X Get involved in national or local party politics.
- X Provide an advocacy service.
- X Reveal the identities of the people who give us feedback or contribute to research unless we have received consent to do so.

Want to know more?

Email tracey.allanjones@healthwatchrutland.co.uk (or turn over for other ways to contact us).



healthwatch Rutland

Healthwatch Rutland
The King Centre
Main Road, Barleythorpe,
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 7WD

www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk

t: 01572 720381

✉ tracey.allanjones@healthwatchrutland.co.uk

✕ @HWRutland

📘 [Facebook.com/Healthwatchrutland/](https://www.facebook.com/Healthwatchrutland/)