

Engagement Report – December 2025

Purpose

This report provides an update on Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough engagement activities, including the health and care forums for the period 1 Jan 2025 to 30 Nov 2025.

Action required by the Board

The Board is asked to:

- Note the report

Author

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17 December 2025

Key items

1. Our programme of face-to-face engagement allows us to hear from people we might be less likely to hear from by other means including those who are digitally excluded including, homeless, BAME, refugees and asylum seekers. At events attended during this period, our engagement team and volunteers have gathered 1,358 (*previous year 1,896*) feedback stories which have been logged by our Information and Signposting team and shared with local health and care providers using our IMP reporting system. I believe this is lower this year as we have had various surveys which have taken priority.
2. Our Health and Care Forums continue to be well attended with an increased presence from local Patient Participation Representatives and regular provider updates including Integrated Neighbourhood updates and representation from National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Other researchers have approached us to share their studies.

Overview of Engagement activity

3. During the twelve-month period since our last report, our engagement team have attended a total of 195 (*previous year 205*) events, speaking to 5,520 (*previous year 4,377*) people. These activities enabled us to hear feedback from 1,358 (*previous year 1,896*)
4. Some highlights of our engagement activity during this time are given below.
 - Hospitals across the county
 - GP surgeries across the county
 - Job centres
 - Men's wellbeing events and groups
 - Women's wellbeing events and groups
 - Carers events
 - Sensory Impairment groups
 - Disability groups such as dementia, stroke, amputees
 - Mental Health events and Good Mood Cafes
 - Golden Age events
 - Armed Forces days

Engaging with young people

5. Following on from last year's report we have continued to hear from increased numbers of young people, creating relationships with schools and colleges and other youth organisations. Attending Freshers Fairs, Pride events, ARU presentations, Preparing for Adulthood SEND event, Pinpoint Conference and Student Voice Celebration Day.
6. Over this period our engagement team have built on their existing contacts and created links to communities we have not previously engaged with. We have also built strong links with groups working with local migrant populations. We intend to develop these relationships over coming months, being able to demonstrate that we are capturing an increased number of experiences from people from different ethnic backgrounds such as:
 - Chinese New Year
 - Gypsy Roma Traveller drop-ins in Cambridge
 - Cambridge Central Mosque
 - Winter Comfort Homeless Drop-in
 - Asylum Seekers Hotels in Peterborough
7. Our visits to refugee hotels and events have highlighted the need for more information to be produced when refugees arrive in the country to support them to access and navigate our health services and how our systems work, including sexual health/consent, domestic violence and substance

misuse services. We are part of a multi-agency group (Migref in Peterborough) who are working on this project.

- We have increased our presence in GP surgeries this year across the county.
- We have engaged with more men this year.
- We have increased our presence at Community Hubs and minority groups in Cambridgeshire, including Royston and East Cambs.
- We attend all hospitals across the county regularly.
- We have attended lots of different disability awareness events.

Health and care forums

8. Since the beginning of this year, we have initiated a new system to how the forums are now run. All Chairs are now external. The forums now run quarterly for 2.5 hours, allowing for extra networking time at the end. Sue Allan the Co-ordinator meets with the CEO, Chairs and Comms Manager before and after each forum to plan the comms, speakers, concerns raised, promotion and current health issues arising. This is working very well, and all Chairs have embraced this new way of working.
9. Our four Health and Care Forums continue to be well attended by members of the public and representatives from local health and care services. Local large healthcare trusts attend to give service updates, as well as other local health and care providers including local voluntary and community sector organisations, to answer queries and respond to feedback. We also receive regular updates about local Integrated Neighbourhoods work from local teams. Trusts who attend or give regular updates are as follows:
 - Cambridge University Hospitals Trust (CUH)
 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT)
 - Queen Elizabeth Hospital
 - North West Anglia Foundation Trust
10. During this period, we have seen an increased attendance at our Health and Care Forums by local Patient Participation Group (PPG) representatives. On average we observe 12-14 reps attending each quarter. We believe this is due to us regularly updating our PPG contacts and holding North and South PPG seminars. We have created a dedicated slot at all meetings to hear their feedback and are able to escalate any issues they raise via our escalation process. This is a key aspect of our meetings we are keen to continue to develop over coming months.

11. The Health and Care Forums use an action log to ensure we record issues raised and requests from the forums, providing feedback as appropriate to future meetings.

Examples of matters we have followed up during this period include:

12. Fenland – Lack of secondary health services for those who live in Wisbech. Funding being given to Ely for Community Diagnostic Centres. Lack of hospital and community transport to get to other hospitals in Cambridge and Kings Lynn.
13. Peterborough – Who monitors care providers in the home? What's happening with dentists? Social care Services, medication shortages.
14. Cambridge – Digital front door and accessibility issues Podiatry referrals, stroke rehabilitation protocols.
15. Huntingdon – New GP triage systems. Digital exclusion, medication shortages.
16. Topics discussed/updates provided at the health and care forum meetings during this period include:
 - HUC 111
 - HW 5 year strategy workshop (Jess attending each forum)
 - Dementia Research Project
 - Medication shortages and Pharmacy closures – ICB Pharmacy Team
 - REN Project (NIHR) National Institute for Health & Care Research
 - NWAFT hospital updates and overview of services
 - CPFT Adult Physical Health services
 - CPFT Butterfly Volunteer project (End of life)
 - PCC Targeted Prevention Programme for adults
 - CUH updates- Cambridge Children's Hosp/Cambridge Cancer Research Hosp/Acute Care Strategy
 - Headway – Brain Injury Support
 - Cambridge Online

Integrated Neighbourhoods

17. Healthwatch staff aim to attend 12 Integrated Neighbourhood meetings in the North Place and 3 in South Place. Most of them take place every 3 months. Sue collates the information and produces a quarterly report for the team. Sue also attends the North Integrated Neighbourhood Development meetings.

18. At the beginning of the year the Independent Volunteers who were currently doing this under the previously funded role continued, but unfortunately, they lacked consistency and reliability.

Enter and View visits

19. Our Enter and View visits are conducted to provide an independent assessment of their services, complementing the CQC's positive inspection results. The objective is to evaluate the services from the perspective of patients and visitors.
20. This year we have visited Arthur Rank Hospice (Peterborough), Alan Hudson Centre (Wisbech), Ely Community Diagnostic Centre, Wisbech Diagnostic Centre.
21. Authorised Representative volunteers have received updated training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively and members of the staff team have also completed training to provide us with required capacity to carry out visits and support volunteers.

Spotlight on Youthwatch

22. We were very pleased to recruit our Youth Officer Molly Hopgood in April 2025, working 8 hours a week, mainly evenings and weekends. It has enabled us to give our full attention to this important part of our work, supported by Sue Allan. Molly has quarterly meetings with other Healthwatch's in the East of England to share good practice.
23. We now have 30 Youth volunteers with an average of 10 attending each meeting. Most are from the Peterborough area. 43% are from ethnic backgrounds and 13% have a disability. Due to our relationship with Anglia Ruskin University, we seen an increase in recruitment to our volunteering offers.
24. As from September this year we have been able to remunerate our youth volunteers who attend our online meetings and who get involved with extra responsibilities and activities.
25. Our focus this year has been to co-produce a research project with our young volunteers to highlight the barriers autistic young people face when accessing primary care services.

How have we done this?

26. Over a period of months, we have invited those young people with lived experience into our online meetings. We have also heard from parents of those with lived experience.

27. Molly and Sue have been proactive in meeting with all leaders of SEND services and have visited numerous ASD groups across the county.
28. We have invited The Experts on Myself (TEOM) and the Speak out Council (Voiceability) to train our young volunteers about neurodiversity.

Activities completed this year:

29. We would like to thank the UCP media students for producing an animated rap video for us to support our Vaping project report.
- Planning a new Neurodiversity Project
 - Training on neurodiversity and autism from guest speakers
 - Input from the group to support the ICB 10-year strategy
 - Training on neurodiversity from TEOM (The experts on myself)
 - Training from a young man and his parent from a lived experience perspective.
 - Johnny Hebron attended a county council event to showcase the vaping report.
 - Invited a speaker from Healthy You, C. Card service to hear feedback from our group on ways of distributing and advertising the C.Card scheme to a wider audience.
 - Sarah Stone from Plain Sailing delivered motivational training to the group. This was very inspirational.
 - We heard from TEOM, young people with lived experience of autism and their feedback on primary care services.
 - Visiting groups to hear more experiences from autistic young people as part of our research.
 - Planning and filming our first podcast in November.
 - Attended an ASD group in St Neots and Circles in Peterborough
 - A young person from the Speak Out Council delivered a session about Masking
 - Cambridge Community Services presented on their young people's portal and the group fed back ways to improve it.
 - Met with other professionals in the field of neurodiversity who are supporting our project
 - Our Vaping report has been used to support the Sheffield Hallam University research for the Cambridge County Council Insight report. Some of our findings have been shared within this report to represent a local view along with the Health-Related Behavioural survey for Cambridgeshire.

Highlights

30. Scripting, filming and editing our first Youthwatch podcast focusing on Youthwatch – What it does, previous reports, how to join. We hope to record more in the new year.
31. Being able to visit Autism services and listen to those with lived experience. We have now completed the research part of the project and will be writing our recommendation in January. The final part of the project will be to invite GP's, Practice Managers, Specialist Nurses to meet those young people and listen to their needs. The impact from this will be that a small number of surgeries will be an exemplar for these recommendations and lead the way for other practices.
32. Being able to support other research projects, influence change with local council strategies and improve ways other young people's services are delivered.

Future plans

33. We will continue to develop our engagement activity in line with our organisational objectives, seeking to hear from people in all districts of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough equally, continuing to seek new connections and engage with our diverse communities. In January we will be focusing on receiving more social care feedback by facilitating some large events in Peterborough City centre in partnership with PCC.
34. We will continue to develop our health and care forums, encouraging an increase attendance by representatives of local Patient Participation Groups and ensuring attendees are able to receive regular updates from representatives of local health and care services and Integrated Neighbourhood teams.