

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

Public Feedback

Healthwatch Bristol provide a voice for everyone who uses health and social care services and help to bring about change by involving local people in the improvement of NHS and social care.

Healthwatch have the power to visit local services to see how they operate, identify best practice, and look at any areas of care and treatment that need to be improved. Healthwatch collect public feedback, carry out research, and work with other organisations such as Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) to ensure patients receive the best possible care. Patient feedback is anonymised and shared with service providers and commissioners. This ensures people's experiences remain central to the planning, redesigning, and improvement of care.

Decisions around key project work are assisted by the Local Advisory Groups (LAGs). The LAGs are made up of representatives of the local population and volunteers. Members of the advisory group identify the key issues affecting the local population, including those identified by the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Social Care Strategy, Healthier Together programme, Bristol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Health and Wellbeing Alliance, and Healthwatch England.

This knowledge is used to create a workplan. To address their workplan goals, Healthwatch Bristol also utilise vital support from:

- Volunteers - who help support and identify local priorities.
- Joint working - working in partnership with communities to ensure Healthwatch can represent every area of Bristol
- Engagement - with community, professionals, families, carers, and patients
- Diversity and representation - ensuring those who are least heard can share their views and experiences
- Networking - striving to make key connections that reflect the diversity of the geographical area
- Social value - creating conditions and undertaking outreach that supports positive environmental outcomes and a safe, healthy city for all

Healthwatch Bristol Annual Report 2024/25

Each year, Healthwatch Bristol produces an [annual report](#) to provide an overview of their work and achievements over the previous financial year.

In 2024/2025 projects included:

- Healthwatch Bristol actively listened to d/Deaf and hard of hearing people who shared frustrations with inaccessible health services. They highlighted missing interpreters, unclear communication, and barriers to booking appointments. Patients often missed care due to these gaps. We urged providers to follow the Accessible Information Standard, improve staff training, and use visual aids. The findings push for urgent, inclusive changes that empower patients and improve healthcare equity. An [infographic](#) was developed to transform lived experiences into clear, actionable insights. By visually highlighting the barriers Deaf and hard of hearing people face, it has empowered health partners to recognise gaps, adapt services, and foster inclusive care. It's a practical tool

that drives awareness, sparks conversation, and supports meaningful change across health and social care settings.

- Listening to people on inpatient mental health wards. An enter and view of 6 inpatient mental health wards was carried out. Thirty-seven service users and fourteen staff were spoken with to understand what work well and where improvements are needed. The response to the visit was very positive, with changes made in several areas. These include collaborative care planning, addressing noise and safety concerns, and enhancing discharge planning. Activity programmes are being expanded, and staff interaction prioritised through daily support time. Overall, the response reflects a commitment to co-production, quality improvement, and patient-centred care.

Examples of how Healthwatch has made a difference:

Investigating local health inequalities using the Core20PLUS5 approach':

102 people in Knowle West, Hartcliffe and Weston-super-Mare spoke to us about their experiences of health and social care. They shared the barriers and failures that prevented them from accessing local services, and what improvements are needed. Access to appointments in GP practices is key:

- Many people give up trying to make an appointment as they say it is so difficult and too long a wait, reducing the opportunity for early diagnosis and timely intervention.
- People can feel judged or stigmatised during contact with their GP practice, e.g. when being triaged by a receptionist or care navigator.
- Communication challenges including not being listened to or being 'fobbed off'

There is evidence of people having a difficulty getting to places where health and care services are provided because there was no provision locally, because of public transport cutbacks, and discomfort at being in an unfamiliar setting.

We found evidence of a combination of systemic barriers and failure to adequately accommodate individual access requirements.

These mainly accounted for individuals' difficulties in accessing healthcare. People we spoke to needed:

- Choice of means of access – in person, online, telephone that allows more flexibility for patients to explain their concern in the way they can best manage.
- A timely response to all patient-initiated contact
- More flexible triage systems
- Flexibility of appointment times and length with a mix of book-ahead appointments and on-the-day or within two days appointments
- GP practices working with their Patient Participation Groups or local communities to co-produce an appointment system that works better for their patients and the practice.
- Improved listening skills and training for receptionists to counteract stigma and subconscious prejudice.

- Improved funding for GP practices working in areas of high need to increase provision of appointments.
- Continued funding for tailored provision to marginalised communities.
- More opportunities for patient-controlled access, such as drop-in, with opportunistic screening.

Changes at your GP surgery: monitoring how care improvements will benefit patients:

We react to what people tell us, and we noticed that people often told us they didn't understand if their GP surgery was changing for the better. We wanted people to know about NHS plans to 'tackle the 8am rush' and make it easier and quicker for people to get the help they need from their GP practice and surrounding healthcare community.

We [created a booklet](#) outlining what changes we felt you'd want to know about. We explain the National Delivery Plan for surgeries that recognise the need for better access to appointments and call backs. The booklet includes information about what the Plan means for patients, such as the roles of the various qualified health professionals who are being recruited in surgeries and wider communities surrounding them. We include information about Pharmacy First and your rights when it comes to digital registration for appointments. We also included case studies of good practice in the local area

GPs told us they found the information in the booklet very useful, especially the information about the different staff roles that are currently available or will be offered in the future at GP surgeries. GPs and other healthcare professionals agreed that more information is needed to help everyone understand the changes.

Healthwatch Bristol 'Local Voices' report:

Our quarterly Local Voices report is an anonymised compilation of the feedback that we receive from the public about their experiences of health and social care. We send these to over 300 provider leads and commissioners. This feedback uses a set of national themes and helps to build a picture of how services are working well across Bristol, and where improvements can be made. This is of particular importance to those in the community who have poor health outcomes and poor service experiences. Amplifying their voices by bringing data to meetings about strategy, service quality, improvement, patient experience, and to newly founded decision-making parts of the ICB, brings information that creates a patient-centred approach to all service change. We provide a 'live' version of Local Voices on the PowerBI app which is already linked to five insights & intelligence leads across Bristol City Council and more than 60 across BNSSG.

Further data / links / consultations:

- Healthwatch Bristol website <https://www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk/>
- Healthwatch Bristol <https://www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk/news-and-reports> for details of our latest reports and ongoing research

Date updated: September 2024

Next update due: September 2025

Contact details: contact@healthwatchbristol.co.uk