



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly

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"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chair

Once again, I present our annual report informing our community of the work undertaken in listening to people's positive and negative experiences of health and care.

The sharing of our biennial survey report with service providers instigated development and change within services. We hope that x-ray access will be increased with modern technology and be accessible daily, instead of the current one day per week.

The building of the new hospital and care home will no doubt, add to the services that will be available. We look forward to the services working together towards an integrated approach and to provide more accessible services.

Staff and directors have attended strategic planning forums and maintained relationships with both local and Cornwall based providers, to ensure what is being planned in service provision meets the needs of local people. Patient transport remains an important issue and we continue to chair quarterly meetings of the services providers who are involved in medical travel and transport, sharing issues raised and solving them together.

I would like to thank the volunteer Board for all of their support and our 2 part time staff, for their commitment to improving health and care services to islanders.



"Whilst we share many of the issues of health and social care in mainland communities and provision, we always promote the fact that many issues can be the same but different, due to our remoteness to the mainland."

Paul Charnock, Chair, Healthwatch Isles of Scilly



About us

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

Our local communities across the five islands can all access the health and care services that they need.



Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences influence health and care provision.



Our values are:

Listening to people's stories and to make sure that their views are heard.

Including: We listen to the views of people from all areas of the community.

Analysing: We look closely at people's experiences to learn how to improve care.

Impact: We use the information provided to drive change and improve services.

Collaboration: We work closely with local and national health, social care and voluntary services.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 120 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 2 part time staff and our work is supported by 6 volunteer members of the board.

Reaching out:



59 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

228 people came to us either online, over the phone or via email, for clear advice and information on topics such as medical travel and lifeline support.

27 signposting and information posts on Facebook had a total of 14,113 views.

Championing your voice:



Our 2025 health and care survey results produced 15 individual reports with recommendations and shared with service providers. We published 1 overall report that included the responses from the 15 services. The report focused on people's experiences of health and care over a 2-year period and included: health centre, social prescribing, mental health, optician, pharmacy, dental practice, community hospital, mainland hospitals, children's services, adult social services, care home, patient transport, Age Uk local transport and the health visitor.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by the Council of the Isles of Scilly. In 2024/25 we received **£50,602**, which is **3.5% more** than last year.

A year of making a difference

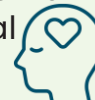
Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care on the Isles of Scilly. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Our biennial health and care research highlighted 2 key areas: mental health and drugs and alcohol, that need improvement and will be priority areas for 2025-2026.



The Community mental health day made us realise that the information that is provided to the community about mental health support is not shared enough. We are sharing mental health information on social media and newsletters.



Summer

The community said that they would like to be dropped off at the hospital by the airport minibus. We shared this with the operator and they said that if you ask the driver they can do this, saving money, time and anxiety.



We raised concerns about the current optician service and lack of availability. We met with the commissioners and the service has been expanded, meaning more people are being seen on island instead of travelling to the mainland.



Autumn

The unreliable weekly x-ray service has caused some people to experience longer term issues with broken bones. The CFT listened to feedback and we hope to have a portable x-ray machine available 24 hours a day.



People told us that the travel company had not released enough flights and there was concern about being able to book a medical flight. We spoke to the operations department and they put out more flights that day.



Winter

We continued to support the café for people experiencing cancer, and for them to be involved in identifying what would make a difference to them. The café has now expanded and a range of support is now on offer.



People were asking us the same questions about health and care, so we produced a set of 'top tips' that we have shared with the community giving them the answers to their everyday questions.



Working together for change

We collaborate with other service providers to make sure that the experiences of local people influence decisions that are made about services at the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Integrated Care System (ICS) level. This year, we've worked with the ICS to achieve the following:

A collaborative approach to wellbeing:



We organised a winter wellbeing event with the ICS based on four key themes: Get Checked, Move More, Eat Well, Try New Things and Be Kind. We had representation from maternity, health, social care, Active Scilly, WI and a healthy eating representative. Adults and children had the opportunity to be creative, played games and learnt how to access the NHS App and complete the 10 year plan survey using technology.

The big conversation:



We collaborated with the NHS to design a survey to find out how health services best meet the needs of children and young people. The survey had a particular focus on children with additional needs. The NHS are now focusing on the results of the survey and we look forward to hearing what developments/changes there will be in supporting children from the islands.

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



We invited Health Transportation Group UK (HTG-UK), who had been awarded the patient transport contract, to our quarterly medical, travel and transport meetings. This has meant that we have been able to share community feedback with them and together, with the rest of the group members, looked towards improvements to the service that is currently provided.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.

Here are some examples of our work on the Isles of Scilly this year:

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues people face.

Our biennial health and care survey was sent to most households across the five islands and received 264 responses from a population of 1739 residents who were 18+. The feedback from people's personal experiences formed 11 recommendations that were shared with service providers. To date, 5 recommendations have been actioned. One example is that people were not aware of the social prescriber's role. There are now posters, pop-up and information available about what a social prescriber does and how to access the service. (Source: ONS - 2021 Census (TS007B))

Getting services to involve the public



By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.

In 2024, the section on the optician service in our biennial health and care survey found out about people's experiences of using and accessing the service. Thanks to what people shared, we have been able to work with the health centre who commissioned a new service provider and more appointments are now available, reducing the need to travel for an optician appointment and the related costs.

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Feedback from the community about having to pay for a cancelled medical flight due to illness caused anxiety, stress and money issues to people when they are most vulnerable. This feedback was shared regularly with the transport provider, who has now changed their cancellation policy. This means that patients who are too ill to travel can cancel a flight, stopping a stressful situation.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community, including children and young people and the off-island communities. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.

We have continued to share people's experiences directly with service providers and within meetings. For example, our medical, travel and transport group meeting, where 33 stories were shared and 11 of these resolved or actioned before the meetings were held.



Listening to your experiences

Championing community concerns to provide a reliable x-ray service

Our biennial health and care survey championed the voices of our community to demonstrate the need for a more reliable x-ray service.

After sharing a report about the x-ray service with our local community hospital they have started to work on a new project aiming to bring portable x-ray imaging technology to the islands.

What did we do?

We found out about people's experiences of using the local x-ray service. The current service runs one day per week, operated by a radiographer who travels across from the mainland. We obtained the data identifying the number of days that the service did not operate due to weather stopping travel, or lack of radiographer.

Key things we heard:



47%

of x-ray clinics were cancelled in one year

11%

the x-ray service was unreliable

0%

reported concerns about the x-ray itself

The feedback showed what people thought about the reliability and accessibility of the service and the impact that not having a timely x-ray had on their health and recovery.

What difference did this make?

The data gained has enabled the hospital to work with a local university and a company that specialises in radiology and 3D imaging, to work closely with the local community and apply for a grant to be part of a trial, with the hope of the service becoming permanent in the near future.

Listening to your experiences

Improving the experience of patient transport

Our biennial health and care survey told us that local people find booking transport and travelling to hospital stressful.

150 local people rated their experiences of accessing and using patient transport in the past 2 years with 61 comments supporting these ratings. The experiences shared included: people identifying that they wanted to see improvements to the booking system, not being charged for flights when they had to cancel for medical reasons and if they had any special requirements, they could speak to the airline in the first instance.

Key things we heard:



44%

of respondents who commented about their rating identified issues with patient transport.

66%

of respondents identified ways patient transport could improve.



“Having to pay for changes to medical flights due to ill health is ridiculous!”

The stories highlighted the need for a medical transport system that works for islanders. We continue to work closely with the transport booking office and the provider of medical transport by meeting on a quarterly basis, to share community feedback and to continue to make improvements to the services provided.

What difference did this make?

Our report contributed to changes that have now been made to the patient transport system for islanders. Patients can speak to someone who will book their flight straight away and understands the issues that islanders can have. There is now no cost to the patient if they are ill and cannot travel, if they have evidence from a medical professional to prove this. If a patient needs a particular seat on a plane, then they can make this request directly to the airline.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of the Isles of Scilly. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Visiting all of the off-islands.
- Organising an event with the ICB with free transport, to enable people to reach out to a range of service providers for support.
- Giving most members of the community the opportunity to share their experiences of 15 different local services.



Improving accessibility of the local ambulance service

A community group shared concerns about phoning for an ambulance.

People told us that when they called 999 they had been informed there would be a significant wait for an ambulance, although the islands have a local service which was not experiencing the same delay issues as the mainland. We shared these concerns with the Patient Engagement Manager for South Western Ambulance Service.

What difference did this make?

South Western Ambulance Service rolled out new training packages for call handlers dealing with Isles of Scilly patients. They retrained current personnel and provided an Isles of Scilly section in their induction pack and within their training days. Although the impact will take time to see, we have already received less feedback about this issue.

Older people's difficulties in using technology

We found out that some older people were struggling to use the NHS app and log into remote consultations.

To help, we have supported people with a step-by-step process, provided written instructions and helped people with their remote consultations.

What difference did this make?

As our office is accessible to the community, people can drop-in and see us, so that we can give them hands on support if they need it. We can also arrange for someone to support them with their technology if they have a remote consultation. Feedback from the community has been very positive and people have returned to us for signposting and support.

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding out how to book patient transport, making a complaint, or accessing the optician service, you can count on us. This year 62 people have reached out to us for advice, support or for help finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



Improving the support with medical travel

Mary was stressed that she missed a transfer bus because she could not find the times they went.

Mary told us that she had been for a medical appointment and was booked on a transfer bus to the airport. She waited and it did not come. She was told she was there at the wrong time, but she could not use the technology to find the timetable.

We spoke to the operations department of the transport provider and they have now added the timetable to the booking confirmation. This will help Mary and other people who find accessing information using technology, difficult.



“It will stop me worrying that I miss the transfer bus.”

Support with hospital discharge transport

Patient's family were concerned about the process of arranging travel.

A patient's family member said that their parent was due to be discharged from a mainland community hospital and they were told that they would have to make their own arrangements for transport home. As they did not have any details of the discharge, they could not do this.

We advised them to call the hospital and explain to them that this is usually arranged by the hospital.

We received an email from patient's family member to say that the issue was resolved because of our advice.



“I was able to speak to someone who was more familiar with the needs of patients from the islands, and they agreed to arrange their parent's travel home.”

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from the Council of the Isles of Scilly under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government and Council of the Isles of Scilly	£50,602	Expenditure on pay	£36,227
		Non-pay expenditure	£8,734
		Office and management fee	£3,120
Total income	£50,602	Total Expenditure	£48, 081

Next steps:

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of our community, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top two priorities for the next year are:

- 1. Mental health services and support:** Our biennial survey highlighted that people were not aware of how to access mental health services and support. We will share signposting and information regularly through our channels and at events. We will include more detailed questions in our next survey to find out how the support has impacted local people. We will build on our partnerships with the services involved in supporting people with mental health issues.
- 2. Drugs and alcohol services and support:** Our biennial survey highlighted that people were not aware of the services that are available to support them, or where to find information about drugs and alcohol. We will share this information regularly through our channels and at events. We will include more detailed questions in our next survey to find out how the support has impacted local people.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly, Unit 1, Gleaner House, Buzza Street, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR210HW.

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch Board consists of **6** members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met **5** times and made decisions on matters such as finances and sharing insight gained from their specific roles on the board and from meetings attended. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

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 services.

During 2024/25, we have been available via drop-in to our office, phone, email, webform on our website, through social media and local events.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website, share it on social media and have hard copies available in different places across St Mary's and the off-islands.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

There were no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the council's scrutiny committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers. For example, we share information with members of our medical travel and transport group, where members come from our local ICS. We also share insight with all partner agencies.

We share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is represented on the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Health and Wellbeing Board by Paul Charnock, Chair of Board.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by highlighting the need to include the Isles of Scilly in reporting and decision making.

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is represented on our local Integrated Care Board by Healthwatch Cornwall.

Statutory statements


2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Top Tips	We created and shared 16 key tips to help support people with health and care. It is available on Facebook (6,137 views to date), on our website, newsletter, digital board and on our noticeboard.
Integrated model of care project	We have been part of an exciting new project to integrate health and social care, ensuring that the community is involved in decisions about the new hospital. We are currently working with the project board to involve the community in providing feedback through a survey.
Young ambassador	We are in the process of starting up a young ambassador program, to involve people aged 16+ in helping to improve health and care services for younger people.
Data sharing	We share the stories that we receive from the local community with Healthwatch England. This gives them a broader picture about what is happening across the country or more locally and they use this information to make recommendations for changes to health and care services.







“The feedback local Healthwatch hear in their communities and share with us at Healthwatch England is invaluable, building a picture of what it’s like to use health and care services nationwide. Local people’s experiences help us understand where we – and decision makers – must focus, and highlight issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. We can then make recommendations that will change care for the better, both locally and across the nation.”

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

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