

Activity Report Q2

1st July – 30th September 2025

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Project Work & Reports

Life & Health in Herefordshire; Gypsy Roma Traveller Communities

This work represents a year of meaningful and sustained engagement with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities across Herefordshire. It was undertaken with the aim of listening, learning, and understanding the complex web of social, cultural and structural factors that continue to shape health outcomes for these communities. From the outset, the project sought not only to gather evidence, but to build relationships founded on trust, respect and collaboration. Through open conversations, community visits and shared activities, it created space for GRT voices to be heard and for their experiences to guide the direction of the work.

The findings reflect both the resilience of GRT families and the persistent challenges they face. Insecure housing, discrimination, and the ongoing difficulty of accessing preventive healthcare remain key concerns. Many community members continue to experience exclusion from mainstream services, often as a result of misunderstanding or a lack of culturally sensitive approaches.

The project's use of a community connector model proved particularly valuable in overcoming these barriers. By embedding trusted individuals within communities, it became possible to foster genuine engagement, enable two-way communication, and co-produce practical, community-led solutions that respond directly to local needs.

Beyond documenting challenges, the report highlights examples of positive change emerging from this approach. Improved attendance at health appointments, stronger relationships with local services, and greater confidence among community members to seek support all demonstrate the potential of partnership-based work. These achievements underline the importance of sustained investment in approaches that place community trust and empowerment at their core.

"They help us when we need it, but they also get us — they don't tell us how to live our lives. It makes things easier and feels respectful." Quote from a young family at Tinkers Corner – Bosbury.

Above all, this project has shown that when communities are respected as equal partners, it becomes possible to build solutions that are not only effective but sustainable, helping to ensure that GRT families in Herefordshire can experience the same health and wellbeing opportunities as everyone else.

What We Heard: Understanding the Barriers to Better Health

Environmental and Housing Conditions

Many families live in areas with poor environmental standards and inadequate housing, which contributes to stress, anxiety, and respiratory illness.

Discrimination and Stigma

Persistent stigma and exclusion continue to undermine trust in health services and discourage people from seeking care.

Socioeconomic Exclusion

Poverty, unemployment, and insecure housing are strongly linked to poorer physical and mental health outcomes.

Access to Services

Barriers such as digital exclusion, limited information, and wrongful registration refusals at GP surgeries restrict access to care.

Cultural Factors

For some, health is considered a private or “unclean” topic. Past negative experiences and cultural taboos can deter people from using services.

Lack of Trust and Communication

A lack of culturally sensitive communication and historical discrimination contribute to mistrust and delayed care-seeking.

Invisibility in Data

GRT communities are often under-represented in data, meaning their needs remain unseen and unmet in mainstream services.

Click [Here](#) to view Full Report

Community Health Champions



In September we published our Community Health Champions Report, this was off the back of the initial pilot we delivered across Herefordshire with the support of the NHS Research Engagement Network. The pilot was funded through Research Engagement Network via NHSE that ran until April 2025.

This report captures how local volunteers, roadshow events, and community partnerships came together to promote the prevention and early diagnosis of cancer and cardiovascular disease. The report provides insights into the development of our volunteer model, the development of training using a nationally recognised framework, the impact of community engagement and lessons learned to strengthen future health initiatives.

This work has also incorporated spreading the awareness of what health & care research is and the importance of getting involved across a range of communities.



Click [Here](#) to read our full report.



Spotlight On...

Patient Participation Group Networking Event

September saw our second Patient Participation Group (PPG) of GP practices networking event held at The Kindle Centre, Hereford.

On the day we saw 11 attendees from PPGs across Herefordshire, some were PPG chairs and other were general members.

This event brings together PPG members from across Herefordshire in a space we hold for them to enable ideas & experience sharing, thoughts on best practice for improving patient engagement and create a forum for open collaboration between PPGs.



Following our first event in July we asked the forum what they wanted to see at the next meeting, and they asked for information around NHS 10 year plan and ICB structures. This was the first part of the event followed by a session looking at What Makes a Perfect PPG & how can we work with surgeries in most effective ways.

The PPGs on the day came up with some great starting points to build on what they want their PPGs to be...here are some of the great examples;



Following our first event in July we asked the forum what they wanted to achieve through future networking events, they asked for more information around NHS England and Integrated Care Board structures. This formed the first part of the event followed by a session looking at What Makes a Perfect PPG presented by a PPG member from Hereford Medical Group, followed by a workshop to explore how PPGs can work with surgeries in the most effective ways.

Making an overall positive difference for both patients & the surgery

Proactive & Useful

Valued by patient community

Effectively working as a team

Representative & Interactive

Being highly valued by our practice

Now we have started to build what they want their PPGs to be and the values they want to bring – we now plan to work on these in the future sessions, bringing in practice managers and other community connections that can help the PPGs build something to work on together that is beneficial for their surgeries.

What we have learnt about the Needs & Challenges faced by PPGs in Herefordshire:

- Lack of clarity about their role
- Limited engagement from patients in some PPGs
- Poor communications from some GP Practices in proactively involving their PPG
- Lack of training and support (around NHS & GP service structures, how to engage underrepresented patients and how to run an effective PPG)
- Support needed to build PPG capacity and representation.





Spotlight on... New Projects!

Severe Mental Illness (SMI) & Health Inequalities

During the summer Toni from the Healthwatch Team launched our new project exploring people's experiences of physical health inequalities amongst those living with a severe mental illness.

This project investigates health inequalities affecting people in Herefordshire living with severe mental health conditions, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, eating disorders, and severe depression. It examines the social, economic, and systemic factors contributing to poorer physical health outcomes, reduced access to services, and lower life expectancy within this group. By identifying key barriers across healthcare and wider social systems, the project aims to generate evidence to support policy and service improvements that advance equitable, integrated, and person-centred care for those most at risk.

The project is working collaboratively with The NHS Health & Care Trust locally and will continue into the next quarter.



healthwatch
Herefordshire

Does your mental health impact on your physical health needs & access to support?

We're exploring the health challenges faced by people living with serious mental health conditions, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, eating disorders, and severe depression.

Can you help?

We aim to find out:

- what barriers or issues you face when accessing services?
- What changes would you like to see?
- How could services be more inclusive of your needs?

Contact to Sam or Toni

info@healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk
Call: 01432 277044

   or pop us a message @HWHerefordshire



Empowering Neurodivergent Voices in Public Spaces & Transport

In August Healthwatch Team Member Kim launched our project to understand how accessible community spaces and transport are for those living with neurodiversity in Herefordshire.



Key Objectives of the project:

- Understand how neurodiversity impacts people's comfort and ability to access public spaces and transport.
- Co-develop and pilot a practical audit tool with neurodivergent individuals to assess sensory and accessibility factors.
- Use this tool to gather data on positive and negative experiences in public environments.
- Promote environments where neurodiverse people feel welcome, safe, and included.
- Share findings with local authorities, service providers, and the public to drive improvements.

Over the next few months Kim is co-ordinating focus groups across the county that are led by those living with neurodiversity's so we can start to understand what's important to them and how together we can develop an assessment tool for sensory and accessibility factors in these environments and support these groups of people to undertake audits.

Understanding patient access to Urgent Care in the emergency Department

In Quarter 2 we have been working with Wye Valley trust to design and plan a patient and carer engagement project which will be undertaken in the Emergency Department from October to December.

The aim of the project is:

- To understand the public's behaviours around urgent care.
- To investigate how people from different socio-economic groups, geographical areas or different demographics are behaving in urgent care.
- To engage with the public to see what their experience and opinions are of urgent care.
- To understand if other providers are directing the public to the correct avenue for urgent care.
- To understand what is needed to encourage the public to use the right outlet for their needs.

Cancer Prevention

In August we started a programme of work aligned to the national screening programmes to improve uptake of bowel, breast and colorectal cancer, for earlier diagnosis.

The Community Health Champion training and support programme has been adapted to focus on a 1-year programme to recruit train and support volunteer members of the public to become Cancer Champions active in their own communities.

Throughout the year there will be an ongoing programme of training and support to embed this approach in Herefordshire.

In Quarter 2 we have developed the resources and recruited an initial wave of cancer champions which were trained in October. [Cancer Champions Toolkit](#)

Below are other related programmes of work in Herefordshire for cancer prevention which will be implemented for the coming 9 months

- Core 20 Connector for gypsy Roma Traveller and agricultural communities to target cancer prevention
- Work with Afghan and South Asian Women to develop appropriate resources to target the reduction of cervical cancer and increase screening uptake.

Mental Health

We are currently in the planning phase for two mental health projects

THRIVE is a University of Worcester five-year mental health research programme which will start in January, We will be chairing the patient and public involvement and coproduction group that supports the programme.

Research Engagement network project is entering a new phase of the national NHS project where we will work with people with mental ill health across the county to involve them in health and care research initiatives locally. This work will start in Q3 for 9 months.

Engagement & Events

Quarter 2 of 2025 has been a busy quarter for engagement, aside from outings with the Chatty Van we have engaged through a wide variety of channels and also worked with other local providers to maximise contact with communities. Here are some examples out and about engagement.

- Homeless & Rough Sleeper Engagement – Lee's Place
- Wye Float
- Local supermarket pop-ups
- Longtown Community Show
- Kington Agricultural Show
- Chatty Pop Up – Halo Leominster
- Herefordshire Council Staff Networking & Wellness Event

243 people
engaged with
across all
Chatty Events



Wye Float



Longtown Show



Kington Show



Halo Leominster

Lee's Pace Opening

In September we opened our first community hub at 6 St Peter's Square, Hereford, which we have leased for 5 years.

We are opening the new venue for Lee's Place volunteer run hot food & support hub for the homeless seven evenings a week 6pm-8pm on 4th October.

We have exciting plans to develop the range of services we offer at the premises over the coming months. Offering community champion training events, focus groups and Healthwatch information & advice.



Influencing Strategy & Planning in Health & Care

Healthwatch plays a partnership role in a varied range of boards, working groups and forums in Herefordshire and across our wider integrated care system footprint (Herefordshire and Worcestershire), where we:

- Hold commissioners and providers of health & care services to account.
- Advocate for the involvement and co-production of service design and delivery with communities.
- Feed in the views that we have heard directly from residents or from other voluntary and community sector organisations.

The following are some of the strategic work undertaken this quarter:

- Herefordshire Health Inequalities cross sector Group chaired by Healthwatch Herefordshire
- Herefordshire Homelessness Forum chaired by Healthwatch Herefordshire.
- Neighbourhood health model development
- Adult social care prevention strategy development
- Complex Lives strategy development
- Review of Better Mental health priorities for the health & wellbeing board
- ICS academy VCSE Faculty chaired by Healthwatch Herefordshire

Forums Healthwatch Attend

Regional Forums:

- Healthwatch England forums; Engagement, communications, volunteering, Equality Diversity & Inclusion Network
- Healthwatch West Midlands Network

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Integrated Care System Forums:

- Mental Health Joint Committee
- ICS Partnership Assembly
- Children's Programme board
- Health inequalities prevention and Personalisation collaborative
- Quality, resources, and delivery committee
- Dementia Programme board
- Strategic Commissioning Committee
- Embedding the VCSE in the ICS
- Carers Partnership
- VCSE Faculty
- ICS Academy Steering Group
- Work well strategy group

Herefordshire Forums:

- Health & Wellbeing Board
- One Herefordshire Partnership
- Herefordshire Engagement Network
- Children's and Adults Scrutiny Committees
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Autism Partnership Board
- Adult Mental health partnership
- Children and young people emotional health & wellbeing partnership
- Dementia Partnership
- Children & Young People's Partnership
- Transformation Tuesday
- Adult Safeguarding Board
- Wye Valley Patient Experience Group
- Herefordshire Together Collaborative
- Youth engagement forum
- Oral health improvement board
- BRAVE strategic group.
- Homelessness Forum
- Herefordshire Health Inequality board.
- Community Action Network meetings
- JSNA steering group

Information, Advice & Feedback

Q2 (2025) Enquiry Insights



Total Enquiries 44



43 WEBSITE



2 PHONE CALLS



**36 Women
4 Men
4 Unknown**

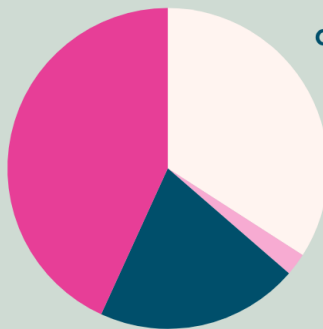


**0-12 (0)
16-24 (1)
25-49 (11)
50-64 (15)
65-79 (13)
80+ (3)**



**20 White British/White Other
1 Asian
21 Prefer not to say/Unknown**

**Concerns
43.2%**



**Complaints
34.1%**

**Compliments
20.5%**

Top Complaint Themes

1. Access to services/wait times
2. Booking Appointments
3. Communication from services

Top Service Themes

1. GP Services
2. Hospital/ED
3. Wait times

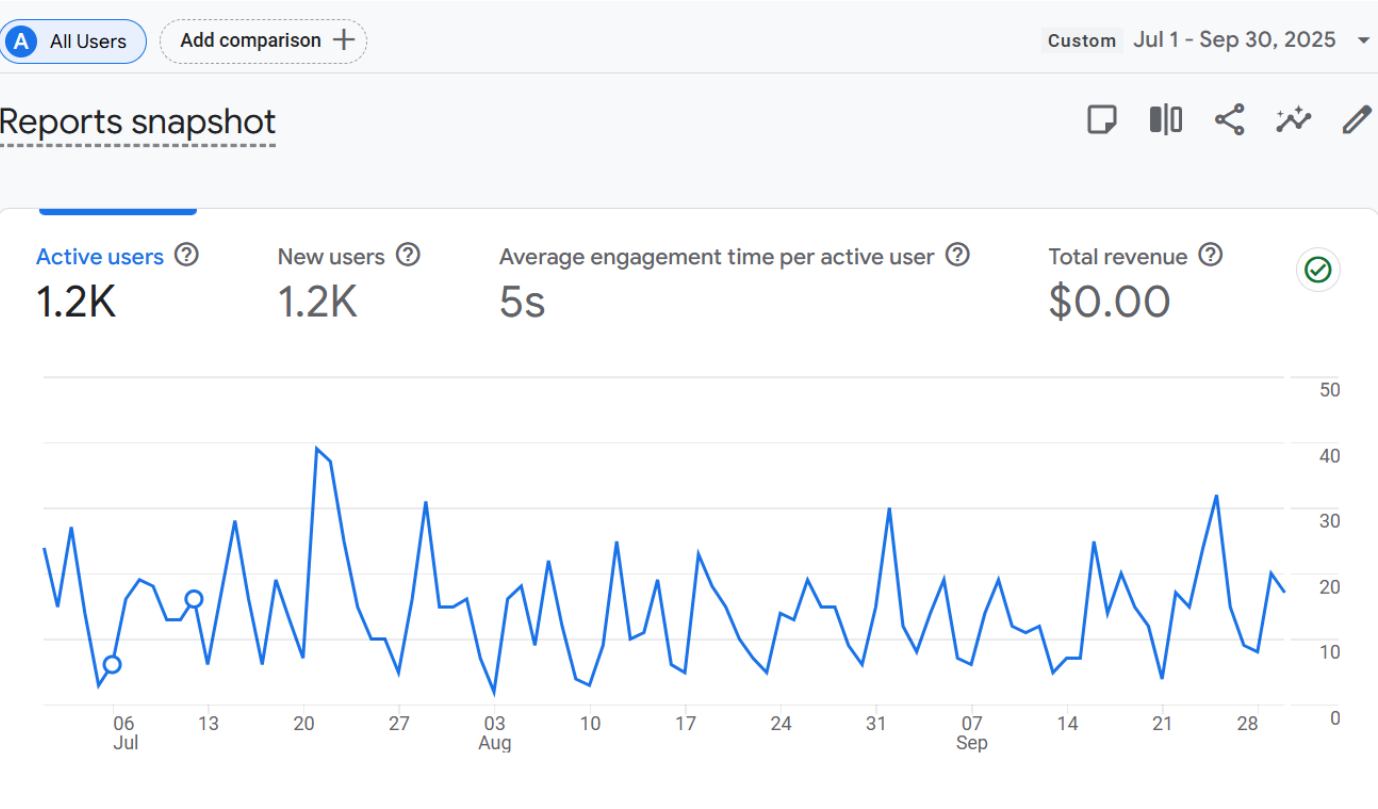
Top Compliment Themes

1. Access to services
2. Being treated with kindness, dignity & respect
3. Quality of treatment



Analytics

Appendix A – Q2 web performance Healthwatch Herefordshire.



Q2 Social media performance Healthwatch Herefordshire

Values	
Sum of FB Views	54325
Sum of FB Content Interactions	411
Sum of FB Link Clicks	48
Sum of FB Visits	1100
Sum of FB Follows	31
Sum of Instagram Views	5288
Sum of Instagram Reach	2335
Sum of Instagram Content Interactions	77
Sum of Instagram Profile Visits	37
Sum of Instagram Follows	16
FB Followers	2100
FB Following	532
FB Likes	
Instagram Followers	1159
Instagram Following	1061

Lee's place Q2 figures

Values	
Sum of FB Views	73529
Sum of FB Content Interactions	845
Sum of FB Link Clicks	282
Sum of FB Visits	4555
Sum of FB Follows	63
FB Followers	728
FB Following	
FB Likes	577
Instagram Followers	5
Instagram Following	0

Contract metrics

Contract Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Evidence
Volumes and nature of enquiries and signposting activity	P13
Customer Satisfaction	<i>"Can I pass on my thanks to Samantha Jenkins who came out to us, the PPG, at Kington Medical Practice. Her enthusiasm and knowledge was wonderful." – Suzanne Kington PPG</i> <i>"They help us when we need it, but they also get us – they don't tell us how to live our lives. It makes things easier and feels respectful. " – Quote from a young family at Tinkers Corner – Bosbury</i>
Numbers and characteristics of customers assisted through Healthwatch Herefordshire (Gender / Age / Geographic location / Disabilities / Ethnicity Customers from traditionally difficult to reach groups)	P13
Accessibility and engagement	Engagement & reports section p3-8, Strategies and influencing work Page 10-11
Numbers of reports and recommendations produced and the outcomes of these,	Engagement reports section p3-9 To be developed, an action tracker for recommendations

Social Value

Social Value Indicator	Evidence
Deliver 300 unpaid work experience and /or volunteering weeks for young people aged 14 – 24, including individuals from underrepresented groups.	X9 Community Health Champion Volunteers trained (3 hour sessions for each person trained)
Offer a number of curriculum and career support activities with schools.	In Q1 when worked with NMITE, Royal National Collage for the Blind, Hereford & Ludlow Colleges. Hereford Hoople Jobs Fair. St. Thomas School Hereford.
Work with the voluntary community and social enterprise and charity sector (VCSE) to deliver 1000 hours of community activities that support localised needs.	Work through Lee's place and the volunteers there (see Lee's place report) Daily sharing of social media posts that support local VCSEs in their events/awareness campaigns & inclusion of VCSE info in eBulletins.
Reducing carbon use by 2030 – contributing towards making sustainability, resilience, and carbon minimisation central to all our actions.	Home working, recycled paper, local suppliers, digital tools. Car sharing for project working and meetings.

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