

Activity Report Q3

1st October – 31st December 2025

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Project Work & Reports

NeuroAccess Herefordshire: Empowering Neurodivergent Voices in Public Spaces and Transport

This project began at the end of September 2025 and is still in its engagement phase. The project aims to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of public spaces and transport in Herefordshire for neurodivergent people, including those with autism. By working directly with individuals, schools, institutions, and support services, we will cocreate a sensory-friendly audit tool with Neurodivergent people, support them to undertake audits of community places and transport, to help identify strengths and barriers in local environments.

The key objectives of this piece of work can be summarised as the following.



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.

Since the engagement started in September several focus groups and 1 to 1 conversations have been held across Herefordshire to start to gain an understanding of what we may need to consider but also to co-create the assessment tools with neurodivergent communities.

From the focus groups we have some early themes that have emerged that tell us more about the barriers and experiences that those living with a neurodiversity in Herefordshire are facing – below is a summary so far.

- Fear of being misinterpreted by staff or the public
- Risk of confrontation or exclusion
- Inconsistent understanding of neurodivergence
- The effort required to “mask” in public
- Neurodivergent people do not want to be singled out or separated

Our conversations have also demonstrated the importance of trust and accountability in the wider system who have consulted those living with neurodiversity before and nothing has ever changed as a result. Throughout this piece of work, we continually work in a transparent way. Ensuring people know what will happen with their input and how the groups we work with will be involved beyond consultation – all of this will be vital to the sustainability of the outcomes and recommendations that are made at the end of the project time.

Healthwatch team member Mary will continue with this project working on the assessments and audits with a variety of groups and individuals. Full report and toolkits produced will be available from late April 2026.



Help Shape More Inclusive Spaces

Join one of our Neuro Access Focus Groups

If you have Autism, ADHD or Sensory processing differences we would like your perspective on making spaces more inclusive to your needs.

What's the focus group about?
We're exploring how accessible community spaces are – including shops, cafés, health settings, leisure centres, and public transport.

Our Upcoming Focus Groups are

Online 07/10/25 18:00PM-19:30

Hereford, Lee's Place- 14/10/25 10:00-11:30

Ledbury, Methodist Church 16/10/25 10:00-11:30

Let us know if you would like to come along:
Call: 01432 277044
kim@healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk
amy@healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk
www.healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk

Led by lived experience
Flexible and informal
Real local impact



Emergency Department – Understanding patient's behaviours accessing urgent care

During 2025, through our work with the Herefordshire Inequalities group, we committed to undertake work in the Emergency Department at Hereford Hospital to understand drivers of public behaviours leading to accessing the Emergency Department for urgent care.

Healthwatch Engagement team have started a project with staff and volunteers to gather qualitative insight and lived-experience evidence to complement the quantitative data presented that the NHS already hold.

The project aims to achieve the following by its completion in April 2026;

- To understand the public's behaviours accessing ED based urgent care.
- To explore any patterns in people from different socio-economic groups or demographics in urgent care.
- To ask the public what their experience and opinions of urgent care are.
- To how the public may be directed to urgent care.
- To understand what the public need to help them find the right option of care for their needs.

So far since November we have engaged with 248 individuals within the ED department. We have two volunteers working us on this engagement between hours of 7am and 11pm at different days of the week and weekends.

Early emerging themes that we are hearing are;



Difficulty getting GP appointments (especially same day appointments)



Advice given by 111 to attend Emergency Department



Low trust or confidence in Hl, due to call wait times, repetition in questions and few outcomes other than recommending Emergency Department.



Attendance due to chronic or ongoing conditions, pain management and minor injuries – Some patients recognise that ED may not be the 'right place' but they 'had no other option'.



Long wait times in ED seen as preferable To the uncertainty of whether they would even be seen elsewhere



Health literacy gaps – lower understanding of other pathways amongst some groups



Language barriers, digital exclusion and accessibility issues influencing choices.

In addition to the gathering of people's experience in the Emergency Department, we are calling patients that have consented, after their treatment to find out what their whole experience of any ongoing care beyond the waiting room.

We plan to continue the engagement until end February 2026 to engaging to engage with a minimum of 500 patients. The full report & findings will be available in April 2026.

Severe Mental Illness (SMI)

Inequalities Project

During the last quarter, Toni continued engagement activity for the SMI project, initially working with organisations that support people with SMI and then engaging directly with individuals with lived experience. Engagement has proved challenging, particularly due to some organisations' reluctance to facilitate access to service users and the inherent difficulties of engaging individuals whose conditions can make participation inconsistent. In many cases, conversations were shaped by more immediate concerns such as addiction, housing, or benefits, which limited opportunities to focus specifically on physical health experiences.

Toni has successfully engaged with around 15 various Herefordshire organisations that support those with SMI these are the themes:

- They see that preventative care isn't always prioritised
- Service users often carry responsibility for their own care needs and with an SMI this can be very difficult – they say it can be exhausting and discourage them from seeking further help
- VCSE organisations are often not taken seriously or considered in the same light for their expertise by professionals when reporting issues to medical/social professionals for or with service users meaning that often physical health needs then get missed.
- They also see practical challenges such as booking appointments, attending alone or managing long wait times for appointments, as a barrier to manage their physical health, feeling that there are no or limited options for advocacy. This leads to missed appointments and discharge from lists or services.

Toni interviewed 7 individuals living with SMI, early themes are;

- Characteristics of SMI itself make it hard to identify physical health conditions in the first place
- Access issues also a problem – appointment times or locations can prohibit some getting there – also the overwhelm of using digital platforms for getting a GP cause access issues.

- No follow up appointment or checks made so no continuity in following up with the physical health condition.
- Telephone appointments often hard to sufficiently demonstrate physical health complaints especially when related to pain management – as often this is quickly put down to their mental health condition.
- Link up and sharing of information and treatments between mental health professionals and GPs isn't always consistent. Seeing locum GPs often means having to re-tell their background of mental health and this can be frustrating when wanting to talk about physical health concerns, continuity of care makes a big difference.



healthwatch
Herefordshire

Let's help remove inequalities together

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 are looking for local organisations, charities, support groups/services who can help us with our project-

we aim to identify what needs to change and how we can make services more inclusive and person-centred.

Contact us

The poster features two illustrations: a person sitting inside a brain outline and a person with glasses looking distressed.



Spotlight On...

Hear our Voices Event – October 2025

October saw the 3rd Hear our Voices event we have co-produced with Mencap in Herefordshire.

Amy supported the creation of the event with Herefordshire Mencap and they had a packed agenda for the day, hearing from NHS Talking Therapies and the Learning Disability Team about the support available for mental health and wellbeing. Great discussions were had about friendships and relationships, exploring how people can find friends, build connections, and support each other.

After a lunch break, Electoral Services shared how they're working to make voting more accessible for everyone, followed by an important update from the Council on how feedback from the last Hear Our Voices event is helping shape their Learning Disability Strategy.

This event saw over 50 individuals from the learning disability community come together to have their voices and experiences heard and continues to provide a platform for sharing between this community and services in Herefordshire.



Engagement & Events

Quarter 3 of 2025 has been a busy quarter for engagement, aside from Chatty Caravan outings we have engaged through a wide variety of channels and working with other local providers to maximise contacts with communities.

Here are some examples of the places we have been:

- Homeless & Rough Sleeper Engagement – Lee's Place
- Beacon College – Health Pop Up Day
- Local supermarket pop-ups
- Talk Community Network Meetings
- Ledbury Food Bank – Drop Ins
- Baton of Hope Event
- Ukrainian Support Groups
- Hear our Voices

265 people
engaged
through
events in Q3



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:

- University of Worcester Thrive mental health and rural inequalities supporting lived experience
- Complex Lives strategy development
- Neighbourhood health development workshops
- Herefordshire Community Anchors

Launch of the Herefordshire Homeless Charter

On World Homeless Day, we facilitated more than 30 organisations from across Herefordshire came together at Community Power's new hub in St Peter's Square.

A welcoming place where the very successful homelessness project Lee's Place operates from to launch the Herefordshire Homeless Charter.



The Charter sets out a shared vision for a Herefordshire where everyone has access to a safe home, a supportive community, and the opportunity to thrive. Signatories – spanning public services, charities, health and faith groups – pledge to collaborate so that people are not only housed, but heard, respected, and empowered.

Why the Charter Matters

According to Shelter, more than 309,000 people in England are currently homeless, including over 130,000 children. In the West Midlands alone, 1 in every 200 people are without a safe home. Locally, Herefordshire Council has supported hundreds of residents in recent years through emergency accommodation and prevention schemes – yet the rising cost of living and shortage of affordable housing continue to put pressure on individuals and families.

Signatories to the Charter pledge to work collaboratively to help end homelessness in Herefordshire. This means that people:

- Have a safe, secure home
- Have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, to homelessness generally, and in wider society

- Can tell their own story, be listened to, feel that their experience is valued and not be stigmatised through being homeless
- Have equality of access to information and services
- Are able to make safe choices about their own lives, which are respected
- Have the appropriate level of support, where needed, to create a good quality of life and wellbeing
- Have equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities
- Are safe from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and benefit from the full protection of the law

Forums Healthwatch Attend

Regional Forums:

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

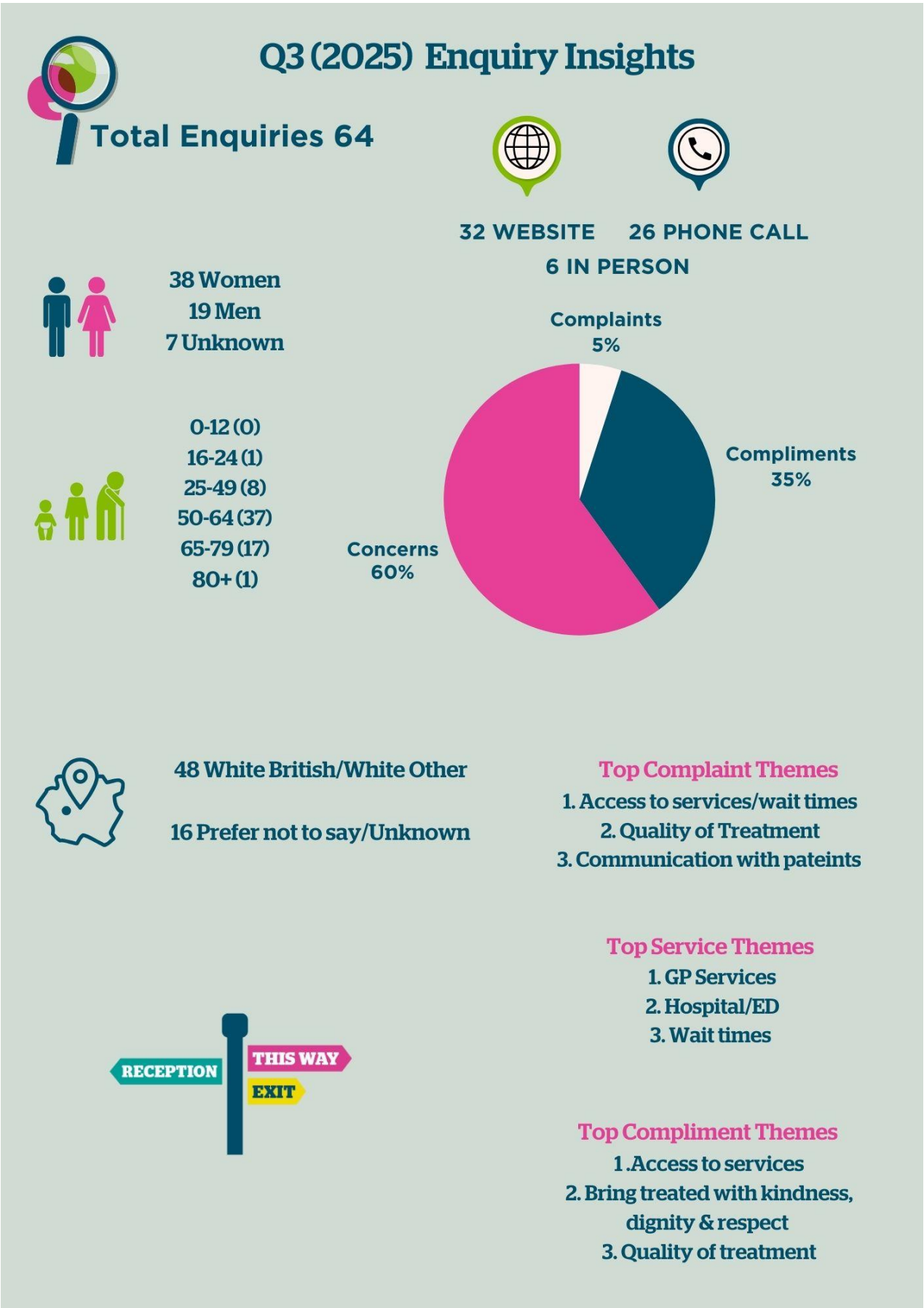
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Integrated Care System Forums:

- 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

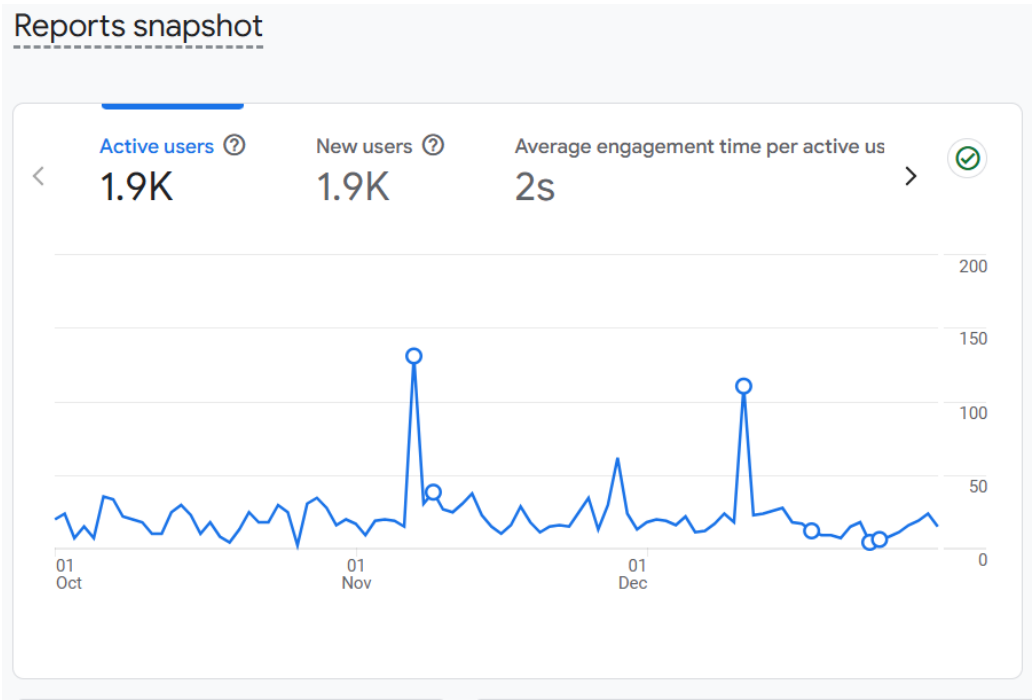
Information, Advice & Feedback



Analytics

Appendix A – Q3 Web Performance Healthwatch Herefordshire

1st October 2025 – 31st December 2025



Q3 Social Media Performance Healthwatch Herefordshire

Values	
Sum of FB Views	29913
Sum of FB Content Interactions	239
Sum of FB Link Clicks	51
Sum of FB Visits	748
Sum of FB Follows	28
Sum of Instagram Views	2809
Sum of Instagram Reach	802
Sum of Instagram Content Interactions	20
Sum of Instagram Profile Visits	29
Sum of Instagram Follows	25
FB Followers	2219
FB Following	531
FB Likes	
Instagram Followers	1170
Instagram Following	1066

Q3 Social Media Performance Lee's Place

Values	
Sum of FB Views	537328
Sum of FB Content Interactions	7207
Sum of FB Link Clicks	1663
Sum of FB Visits	17553
Sum of FB Follows	471
Sum of Instagram Views	1309
Sum of Instagram Reach	574
Sum of Instagram Content Interactions	46
Sum of Instagram Clicks	0
Sum of Instagram Profile Visits	76
Sum of Instagram Follows	26

FB Followers	1114
FB Following	
FB Likes	875
Instagram Followers	107
Instagram Following	156

Q3 Social Media Performance Community Power

Values	
Sum of FB Views	3310
Sum of FB Content Interactions	66
Sum of FB Link Clicks	6
Sum of FB Visits	23
Sum of FB Follows	23
Sum of Instagram Views	1257
Sum of Instagram Reach	67
Sum of Instagram Content Interactions	2
Sum of Instagram Clicks	0
Sum of Instagram Profile Visits	130
Sum of Instagram Follows	0
FB Followers	74
FB Following	179
FB Likes	0
Instagram Followers	14
Instagram Following	1

Contract metrics

Contract Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Evidence
Volumes and nature of enquiries and signposting activity	P13
Customer Satisfaction	<p><i>"I appreciated how approachable and supportive Toni was throughout our conversation." – SMI participant</i></p> <p><i>"You showed genuine compassion at a time when we really needed it. We are very grateful." – Member of the public who called into a Healthwatch drop in in November</i></p>
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,	<p>Engagement reports section p3-9</p> <p>To be developed, an action tracker for recommendations</p>

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.	
Offer a number of curriculum and career support activities with schools.	In Q3 when worked with Beacon College, Hereford & Ludlow Colleges, Art College and NMITE

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 from previous reports in 2025) 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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