

Speaking up for better care

Healthwatch Warrington annual report
2025/26



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Lydia Hughes

**CEO, Healthwatch
Warrington and Chair
Healthwatch Halton**

“

I am incredibly proud of the impact our team has delivered over the past year. By listening to residents' voices and working closely with our partners, we have helped drive meaningful improvements across health and social care in Warrington. From influencing changes in home care and access to GP and dental services, to shining a light on mental health challenges and supporting the development of new services, our work continues to make a real difference to people's lives.”

A message from our chair

I am proud to present our annual report, which reflects the dedication, resilience and achievements of our team, volunteers and Board over the past year.

Working closely with strategic partners, including the Local Authority, NHS Trusts, Primary Care and the ICB, we have continued to ensure the independent voice of our community is heard. Despite ongoing uncertainty surrounding the future of Healthwatch, we have adapted and continued to deliver meaningful impact.

During the year, we completed several reports, engaged with more than 8,000 residents and benefited from over 300 hours of volunteer support. Together with our advocacy service, these efforts have helped improve health and social care experiences across Warrington.

While challenges tested our resilience, they also highlighted the strength, commitment and adaptability of our team. I would like to thank our staff, partners, volunteers and stakeholders for their invaluable contribution and support.

As we reflect on the past year, we also look ahead. Healthwatch Warrington remains committed to empowering residents, amplifying independent voices and working collaboratively to improve health and social care for everyone in Warrington.



**Chair- Healthwatch
Warrington**
Norman Holding

“

It is both an honour and a privilege to serve as Chair of this organisation. Let us embrace the future with optimism, determination and an unwavering belief in our potential to make a difference.”

About us

Healthwatch Warrington 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

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences help make health and care better.



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

Our year in numbers

In 2025/2026 we supported more than **550** people to have their say and get information about their care. We employed **4** staff and, our work was supported by **23** volunteers.



Reaching out:

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

2,756 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **understanding GP roles** and **Useful information for Men**.



Championing your voice:

We published **12** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **GP Access, Men's mental health** and **Enter & Views**.

Our most popular report was **Men's Health Experiences in Warrington** highlighting people's struggles in **Men's Health and accessing mental health support**.



Statutory funding:

We're funded by **Warrington Borough Council** In 2025/26 we received £182,355, which is 1.87% 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 in Warrington. Here are a few highlights.

Enter & View

We published **8** Enter & View reports this year, examining Warrington A&E and local care homes in the area, making **44** recommendations for improvements.



Supporting

We collaborated with Warrington & Halton Hospital's Patient Experience department and Warrington Job Centre to provide patients with an About Me Card, aiming to reduce missed appointments and enhance patient confidence in receiving reasonable adjustments. Helping over **100** patients.



Advice

In our efforts to promote Men's Health, we developed resources and information focused on men's mental health in Warrington. This includes support and guidance on recognising signs of a crisis, which has garnered over **982** views on these pages.



Feedback

We have received significant feedback through our portal and outreach efforts. This feedback has allowed us to implement changes either within the hospital, at the PESIC, or by referring to management for further action. We have taken into account the experiences shared regarding hospital admissions and dressing clinics in Warrington to name a few.

Working together for change

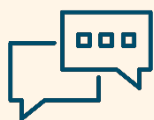
We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Warrington are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services in Cheshire and Merseyside

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across **Cheshire** and **Merseyside** to achieve the following:



A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

Working alongside the eight other Healthwatch organisations across Cheshire and Merseyside, we helped gather the views of **6,944** residents about access to GP services. Together, we provided a powerful evidence base for the Integrated Care Board, highlighting barriers such as appointment booking, digital exclusion and waiting times. This collaborative project ensured local experiences from Warrington contributed to regional decision-making and future improvements in primary care services.



A big conversation:

Healthwatch organisations across Cheshire and Merseyside to gather and share people's experiences of health and social care. This ensured that the views of Warrington residents were represented at Integrated Care System (ICS) level, helping decision-makers understand local priorities and shape services based on what people said mattered most to them. Through this collaboration, community feedback directly informed discussions about improving and planning services across the region.



Building strong relationships to achieve more:

Healthwatch Warrington and Healthwatch Halton created the Patient and Public Reference Group (PPRG) to support the Better Care Together programme, bringing together Bridgewater Community Healthcare and Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals. The group ensures patients and the public help shape the design and delivery of the new integrated services.

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 in Warrington this year:



Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand what matters to local people.

Through our Home Care project, residents and family carers shared powerful experiences of receiving support at home. Their feedback highlighted the importance of continuity of carers, effective communication, dignity and person-centred care. By capturing these stories and sharing them with providers and commissioners, we helped ensure that the experiences of people relying on home care are informing future improvements across Warrington.



Getting services to involve the public

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

Our Men's Mental Health project engaged with hundreds of men through community groups, events and outreach activities across Warrington. We worked with organisations including Andy's Man Club, More Than Men, Directions for Men and Mental Health Mates to hear directly from men about their experiences, barriers to seeking support and what services could do better. This feedback is helping shape future conversations and service development around men's mental health.



Improving care over time

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

This year we launched and promoted the About Me Card across Warrington. Through partnerships with Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals, the Living Well Hub and Warrington Jobcentre, we helped more people access a simple tool that enables them to explain their needs, communication preferences and reasonable adjustments. By encouraging wider adoption of the card, we are helping services become more person-centred, accessible and responsive to individual needs.

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.



Great report, some really helpful and interesting feedback around what could be improved and how systems can develop to help people much earlier and improve experiences / outcomes. It would be great to see more activity based programmes like Offload where men can build physical capability and develop strong peer support in a therapeutic environment. Our specialist services can then lean in and provide support to these offers through supervision and training to staff.

Steve Tatham, Ex NHS Commissioner and Independent Consultant, commenting on Men's Health Report



Championing men's mental health to improve access to support

Last year, we listened to men across Warrington to better understand their experiences of mental health support and identify improvements needed in local services.

Many men told us that although awareness of mental health is high, accessing support can still be difficult.

What did we do

We conducted a survey to explore men's experiences with mental health awareness, support services, and healthcare access in Warrington. This survey gathered quantitative and qualitative feedback to identify effective areas and those needing improvement. We also examined how mental health impacts access to services like GPs, dentists, pharmacies, and urgent care.

Key things we heard:



52%

Of respondents reported being very aware of mental health issues.

35%

rated access to GP and primary care services as poor or very poor, citing long waits and difficulties accessing appointments.

57 people

Those with diagnosed mental health conditions reported greater service awareness but lower satisfaction and more stigma and support barriers.

Community groups such as Directions for Men, Andy's Man Club and More Than Men received highly positive feedback and were valued for their supportive approach.

The findings showed that NHS mental health pathways can be difficult to navigate, while community services often fill important gaps in support.

What difference did this make?

The findings have been shared with local commissioners and providers to help improve services. Recommendations include strengthening community support, improving signposting, reducing barriers to access and creating better links between NHS and voluntary sector services.

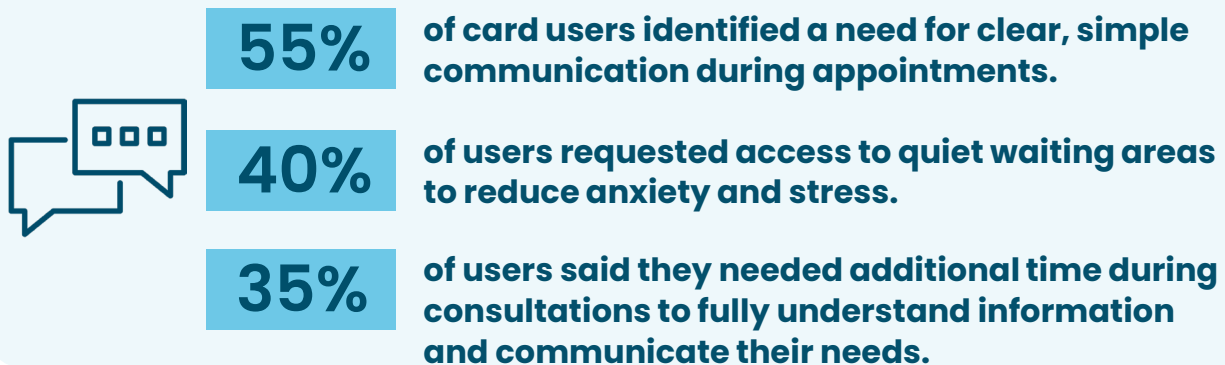


Improving patient experiences through the About Me Card

The About Me Card, adapted from the Healthwatch Essex Trauma Awareness Card, helps individuals communicate their needs and reduce anxiety for more person-centered care. This pilot program was launched in partnership with Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The card helps patients communicate their needs, triggers and reasonable adjustments, supporting more personalised and person-centred care.

Key things we heard:



“Staff understood me straight away without me having to repeat myself.”

The pilot also showed improvements in communication, reduced patient distress, fewer missed appointments and better relationships between patients and staff.

What difference did this make?

The About Me Card helped patients feel more confident accessing services and supported staff to understand individual needs before appointments. Hospital teams reported improved patient engagement and more efficient consultations when adjustments were known in advance.

Following the success of the pilot, the card has also been recognised by Warrington Jobcentre, extending the benefits beyond healthcare settings. Future plans include expanding the scheme, increasing staff awareness and promoting wider use across health and care services.



Improving Home Care Experiences Through Listening to Service Users

The Time, Trust & Care project was developed by Healthwatch Warrington in partnership with Warrington Borough Council's Adult Social Care Commissioning Team.

The project examined the experiences of individuals receiving home care in Warrington to identify successes and areas for improvement. Feedback was collected through surveys, conversations, and service data analysis, with 131 responses contributing to the findings.

Key things we heard:

Continuity of Care

Many people said frequent changes of carers increased anxiety and made it harder to build trust, particularly for people with dementia, those receiving intimate personal care, and people with complex needs.

Punctuality and visit length impact wellbeing

Some respondents reported carers arriving late, leaving early, or rushing visits, affecting medication, meals, personal care routines and independence.

Good communication improves experiences

Communication quality was one of the strongest predictors of satisfaction. Families valued being informed about delays and changes, while language barriers and poor communication caused frustration and concern.

The report also highlighted positive experiences, with many respondents describing carers as kind, caring, reliable and willing to go beyond routine tasks to support independence and wellbeing.



“Staff understood me straight away without me having to repeat myself.”

What difference did this make?

The findings were shared with Warrington Borough Council and local care providers, helping to shape recommendations focused on continuity of care, punctuality, communication, staff training, complaints handling, person-centred care, and greater choice and transparency. The project has ensured that service users' experiences are helping to drive improvements in home care services across Warrington.



Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Warrington 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:

- Consulting with the local Speak Up group on their views of living with additional needs, and how the About Me Card will support them.
- Talking to Men about their experiences of Mental Health and Primary Care.
- Experiences of those who receive home care services.

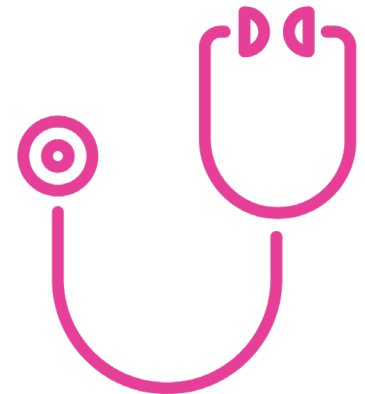


Hearing from all communities

Improving access through the About Me Card

While conducting outreach to register individuals for the About Me Card.

At the Living Well Hub, we supported an individual who struggled to complete forms and found appointments overwhelming. They told us they often left GP appointments without fully understanding the information given, leading to missed appointments and delays in accessing care.



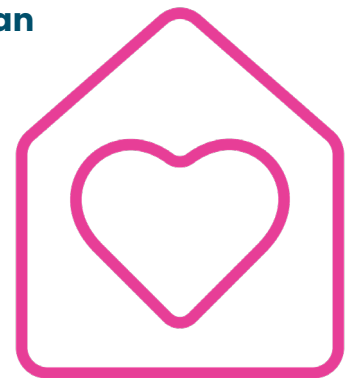
What difference did this make?

We helped the individual apply for an About Me Awareness Card and advocated with their GP practice to record their communication needs. Following discussions about the NHS Accessible Information Standard, the practice agreed to flag these needs on the patient record, helping ensure more accessible and personalised support in future. This case showed how early intervention and advocacy can reduce barriers and improve patient experience.

Helping a vulnerable resident stay safe

During outreach at the Living Well Hub, we met a gentleman living with dementia who was confused, unable to remember where he lived, and carrying a large amount of cash. He had no means of contacting family or support services and was unable to get home safely.

We worked with local partners to identify the individual, contact his support network and arrange for him to return home safely. We also created an About Me card containing key information to help him if a similar situation occurred again.



What difference did this make?

Concerned about the level of support available, we raised safeguarding concerns and contacted his social worker. As a result, discussions were planned around providing more structured care and additional support hours. This case highlighted how listening to community concerns can help protect vulnerable residents and drive improvements in care.

Information and signposting

When you're struggling to find an NHS dentist, looking for help about how to make a complaint, or need advice about a good care home for a loved one – we're your first port of call.

This year 2,756 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services. These conversations also help us to understand where, and how, your care can be made better.

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.



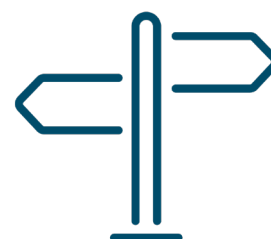
Information and signposting

Helping a resident understand changes to mental health support

A resident visited our outreach session after being told they were being discharged from a mental health support service. They left the appointment confused and worried about what would happen next.

We contacted the service on the person's behalf and explained that they needed clarification. The team quickly called the resident back, explained the decision and discussed future support options, helping them feel reassured and informed.

“ I spent the whole weekend worrying and not fully understanding. Thank you for helping me receive the clarification so quickly.



Finding the right home care provider

A family told us their mother's home care was poor, with concerns about reliability, timekeeping and standards of care. They felt the support provided was having a negative impact on her wellbeing.

After moving to a different provider, the family reported a significant improvement. Carers were described as professional, compassionate and attentive, helping the service user feel valued and respected. The family said the change had a positive impact on her quality of life and overall wellbeing.

Our home care project captured experiences like this to help identify what good care looks like and where improvements are needed across Warrington's home care services. The findings have been shared with Warrington Borough Council and providers to support service improvement and promote more person-centred care.



“ The carers were professional, compassionate and attentive, exactly what you would expect from a high-quality home care provider.”

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given **324 hours** to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve.



At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.



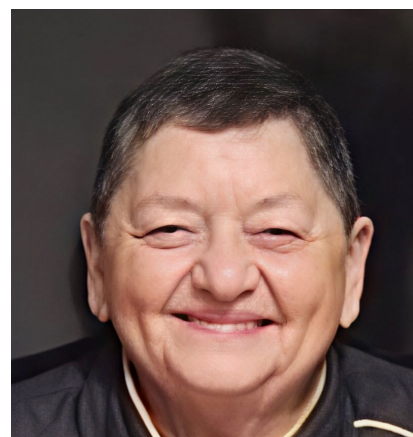
Kathy

“I have been a volunteer for Warrington Healthwatch for a few years now. It has been interesting taking part in training days and finding out about what they do. I have accompanied team members going out into the community, giving talks about the many ways that they can help people within health and social care settings.

The opportunities to volunteer for Healthwatch are very varied and flexible, you can choose which events you attend, and this fits around my family life easily. Everyone is very friendly, making volunteering and taking part in Healthwatch events really enjoyable.”

“Being a volunteer for Healthwatch allows me to give help, support, and guidance to my community.

Having lived and worked in Warrington for over 30 years I can give something back whilst connecting with others and helping to break down social barriers. I feel motivated by the positive outcomes, and it helps with my physical and mental wellbeing.”



Dot

Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.healthwatchwarrington.co.uk



01925 387 187



info@healthwatchwarrington.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from **Warrington Borough Council** under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from Local Authority	£182,355	Expenditure on pay	£149,542
Additional income	£12,548	Non-pay expenditure	£28,694
		Office and management fee	£24,096
Total income	£194,903	Total Expenditure	£202,332

Additional income is broken down into:

- £12,548 received from the Bridgewater Community Healthcare and Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals to support the Better Care Together programme in delivering the Patient and Public Reference Group (PPRG).



Finance and future priorities

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, 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 three priorities for the next year are:

1. Re-launch our Virtual Voices Panel across Warrington & Halton.
2. Work with the integration of Bridgewater Trust and WHH Trust, to facilitate on going changes that affect patients, and to continue to recruit panel members to feed in lived experience.
3. Social Care Homes for Enter and Views.

69 The work of the 9 Healthwatch organisations across C&M has been instrumental in helping us ensure that patient experience is understood and acted upon across our commissioned services.

I have found the work done on Emergency department waits and corridor care particularly insightful. This is a priority area for the ICB to improve for our population, and the Healthwatch work has strengthened the ICB's UEC improvement plan.

The contribution that Healthwatch colleagues make to our committee and board meetings is invaluable in bringing the voice of the public and patients into the room and undoubtedly improves the decision-making processes in the ICB.



Fiona Lemmens
Executive Clinical
Director Cheshire
and Merseyside
Integrated
Care Board

Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Warrington, The Gateway, Sankey Street, WA1 1SR
- is delivered by Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (ECS), Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford, TF3 4HS.**

Healthwatch Warrington 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 Independent Strategic Advisory Board consists of **8** 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 2025/26, the Board met **4** times and made decisions on matters such as Decisions on enter and view locations, recommendations, agreed on new priorities for the year ahead. 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 2025/26, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, print copies to distribute throughout the Warrington community, and in any format requested.

Responses to recommendations

We had no providers that 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 insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example, we take information to the Health Scrutiny Board where Healthwatch Warrington forms part of the agenda to escalate our intelligence reports.

We also take insight and experiences from decision-makers in the Warrington Together Board. For example, we share with Health and Wellbeing Board, Quality and Performance Board, Primary Care Place Board as well as the local trusts' Patient Engagement Committee and Bridgewater Trust and MerseyCare to share our intelligence. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Health Scrutiny Board where Healthwatch Warrington forms part of the agenda to escalate our intelligence reports..

During 2025/26, our representative has effectively carried out this role by Norman Holding, Chair ISAB Healthwatch Warrington, and Lydia Hughes, CEO, Healthwatch Warrington.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Meadowview Care Home	Ongoing Enter and View programme	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient experience improved.
Spire Hospital	Ongoing Enter and View programme	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient experience improved.
Callands Care Home	Ongoing Enter and View programme	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient experience improved.
Meadowview Care Home	Ongoing Enter and View programme	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient experience improved.
Spire Hospital	Ongoing Enter and View programme	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient experience improved.
Callands Care Home	Ongoing Enter and View programme	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient experience improved.

Statutory statements

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
System-wide service improvements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triggered a full review of domiciliary (home) care services by Warrington Borough Council. • Influenced improvements in training, punctuality, and continuity of care. • Informed NHS and ICB planning through GP access and experience reports.
Improvements to access to care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to emergency dental services. • Highlighted barriers to GP appointments and digital exclusion. • Escalated waiting time and access challenges across services.
Mental health impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published Men’s Mental Health report identifying barriers, stigma, and fragmented services. • Recommended improved access, early intervention, and stronger community provision.
Social care and care quality improvements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted Enter & View visits to care homes. • Identified issues in staff turnover, communication, and visit timing. • Shared feedback with quality monitoring teams.
New tools and innovation:	Launched the ‘About Me’ awareness card to support personalised and inclusive care.
Advocacy and support:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered NHS complaints advocacy services. • Introduced improved triage and support sessions.

Statutory statements

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Awareness and behaviour change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered campaigns on oral health, mental health, and service access. • Improved public awareness and informed decision-making.
Improvements to access to care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to emergency dental services. • Highlighted barriers to GP appointments and digital exclusion. • Escalated waiting time and access challenges across services.
Influencing policy and commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set priorities based on public feedback. • Informed commissioning and service redesign.

Clare Screeeton

Clare was truly a force of nature; her positivity, energy, and wicked sense of humour touched everyone who had the privilege of working with her.



Clare will want us all to remember her exactly as she was: upbeat, full of life, and always ready to make us smile. She brought joy and laughter into every room, and her spirit will continue to live on in the countless memories we share, both in and out of work.

Team Warrington loved Clare dearly, and while we feel her loss profoundly, we will honour her by carrying forward the warmth and optimism she embodied every day.

**Rest in peace, Clare.
You will never be forgotten.**

1977–2025



Healthwatch Warrington is a hosted Healthwatch and is delivered by

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