

The value of listening

Healthwatch Sheffield
Annual Report 2023–2024



Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Year in review	5
How we've made a difference this year	6
Your voice heard at a wider level	7
Listening to your experiences	8
Hearing from all communities	14
Information and advice	16
Volunteering	18
Statutory statements	20



"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Chair

27,000 conversations over 10 years – that's a lot of listening! It was an impressive fact from Healthwatch Sheffield's 10th birthday in 2023.

Listening with a purpose has been at the heart of Healthwatch and it still is – here's how.

Our Information and Advice service listens and supports people to navigate complicated health and social care systems. We analyse anonymously what we've heard so we can spot trends and emerging problems – these provide up-to-date feedback to service providers.

Two projects this year particularly show the importance of listening and its impact:

- We wanted to hear from people under represented in *Long Covid* services and we did 21 in-depth interviews to understand their experiences in detail. The project has created better information, in different languages, and made recommendations for Sheffield Teaching Hospitals to improve.
- Conversations with nearly 200 people about *palliative and end of life care* showed it can be hard to know what services are available and sometimes people's different cultural or religious needs are missed. NHS South Yorkshire will use these and other findings to shape their new strategy.

This year we also ran an art activity (you can see one of the pictures on the front cover) about *what matters to children*: family, pets, and sport are high on the list.

This work will help Healthwatch Sheffield to shape our own priority topic about children's access to health services.

So, Healthwatch listening and using what we hear is crucial; it helps services to better understand people's experiences, it gives seldom heard communities a voice, and it informs strategies and service delivery on a local and regional level.

Health and social care services often talk about "transformation": Healthwatch experience demonstrates that without listening, in all its forms, real change that benefits people and all communities will not happen.

I want to say thanks to all our community partners, to Voluntary Action Sheffield our accountable body, volunteers – including the Strategic Advisory Group – funders and our energetic and skilled staff.

Here's to another successful 10 years!



J. A. ROBINSON

Judy Robinson
Healthwatch Sheffield Chair

About us

Healthwatch Sheffield is your local health and social care champion.

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

Our vision

A city where people have an equal chance of healthy life.



Our goals

- Find out what matters to local people; influence and improve health & care services
- Involve those who often aren't heard
- Help make Sheffield a healthy city to live in



Year in review

Reaching out:

2,167 people

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

4,358 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.



Making a difference to care:

We published **2 focussed reports** about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services.

We also published :

6 SpeakUp reports in partnership with local voluntary and community sector organisations – as part of our SpeakUp grants programme

8 ‘what have we been hearing?’ briefings

to share people’s feedback about local services in a timely way



Health and social care that works for you:

We’re lucky to have **21 outstanding volunteers** who gave up 90 days to make care better for our community.

We’re funded by our local authority.
In 2023 – 24 we received

£209,952

which the same as the previous year.

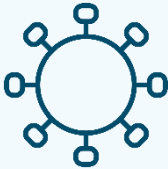







We currently employ

6 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Our Long Covid micro-grants helped us hear from 440 people about Long Covid – and identify what information is missing for Sheffield's communities</p>	 <p>Our feedback helped influence Sheffield Teaching Hospitals to focus on the Accessible Information Standard as one of their Quality Objectives for this year</p>
Summer	 <p>We hosted an event bringing professionals from across the city together with local Roma people, to focus on specific barriers they face to wellbeing</p>	 <p>Our 10 year anniversary event brought together local people, voluntary sector organisations, and NHS and social care decision-makers; promoting the different ways we can work together to help our city</p>
Autumn	 <p>The findings we shared about people's experiences of palliative and end of life care services influenced the new strategy for South Yorkshire</p>	 <p>We championed the patient perspective at an NHS South Yorkshire event on dentistry, ensuring decision-makers understand the impact of the NHS dental crisis on local people</p>
Winter	 <p>We interviewed pharmacy users and pharmacists in Sheffield about the current challenges they face, to feed into a national report about the state of pharmacy services</p>	 <p>Our SpeakUp project with SAVTE produced creative language-learning resources to help new arrivals to Sheffield access services and talk about their health</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in South Yorkshire influence decisions made about services at NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked as Healthwatch across Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield to achieve:



Making sure your voice was heard as part of the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy, "It Starts with People" and hosting Community Conversations where we asked the question "What matters to you about your health and Wellbeing?". Between us we heard from around 800 people whose views have helped influence the NHS South Yorkshire 5 year plan.

Better outcomes for our underserved communities in South Yorkshire. By working in partnership with our ICS, NHS England, and Healthwatch England, we are looking at inequalities within the deaf community and how we can make it easier for them to access health and social care. As part of this, we highlighted the lack of BSL (British Sign Language) interpreting in Opticians, and the NHS are now working with opticians to improve awareness of their duties to provide this.



Making sure that the public views and experiences of dentistry are heard by decision makers. We take our intelligence and feedback on local dentistry to our ICS and also to the South Yorkshire Local Dental Network. In November we presented what we've heard at an NHS South Yorkshire Dental event, highlighting the dire state of NHS dentistry and the real consequences for people across our area.

"Our Healthwatch partners in South Yorkshire work tirelessly to ensure the voice of people from Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield influences health and care services. They are particularly crucial to the system in their ability to ensure we hear from our most underserved communities. They effectively balance working with us as partners and holding us to account where necessary"

Katy Davison, Deputy Director of Involvement, NHS South Yorkshire ICB





Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Palliative and end of life care – influencing plans in South Yorkshire

Good palliative and end of life care is important for everyone; getting the right care and support at this difficult time is vital.

The Health and Care Act 2022 changed the way that health services are organised and planned in England – with this came a responsibility for the new Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to plan services for palliative and end of life care. We wanted to ensure that the views and experiences of people in Sheffield could help shape plans being made in South Yorkshire.

Through a survey that reached across South Yorkshire, we heard from 110 people who had used services in Sheffield. We spoke with an additional 62 people in the city through one-to-one interviews and group discussions. The people we heard from included carers and bereaved carers as well as people who were currently receiving palliative or end of life care. Through the survey we found that:

- People were generally not very happy with their experience of end of life or palliative care; on average they rated their overall satisfaction as 5.5 out of 10
- Only 37% of carers and bereaved carers said their friend/relative had an Advance Care Plan in place
- Just 42.7% of people felt that services worked well together during their friend or relative's care
- 56.4% of people felt they had been given the right information in a way that worked for them

“As a family we had never experienced end of life care, and didn’t know what to expect or what we could ask for, and essentially how to access the help when we needed it. We didn’t know who was supposed to be co-ordinating the care. Overall there was poor communication about end of life care with the family and other departments”

A survey respondent



Many people described that it was hard to know what health and social care services were available – and all too often, these services did not work in a joined up way. For people with English as a second language, and/or with particular religious or cultural needs, it was even harder to get the information and support that they needed. We heard how local community groups play an important role in providing support, and advocating for people using statutory health and care services.

What difference has this made?

- 1 NHS South Yorkshire (our ICB) committed to reflecting [our findings](#) and recommendations in the development of their strategy and local action plans. They will also use the report to help them understand what they should be measuring to check whether their plans have worked.
- 2 The ICB are actively looking for funding to support the development of local bereavement services – the proposed model is shaped by our finding that for many people, bereavement support works best when it is offered by community groups that they are already part of.

Improving support for people living with Long Covid

This year we have been working to involve people and communities in shaping and developing the support offer for people with Long Covid in Sheffield, particularly for those currently under-represented in Long Covid services.

This joint project with Voluntary Action Sheffield was funded by the Integrated Care Board and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, helping people's experiences have a direct impact on how those services run.

We did 21 in-depth **interviews** with people living with Long Covid and their carers, to help us understand their experiences. These interviews helped us bring people's stories to life for people planning and delivering Long Covid support services.

Our **community grants programme** worked with 15 community organisations and consulted with 440 people, from backgrounds who were under-represented in Long Covid services. These conversations highlighted what the gaps were in Long Covid information locally and nationally. Further rounds of funding helped the organisations to produce a total of 21 information resources about Long Covid in a variety of formats and languages, and deliver them to around 20,000 people living in Sheffield.

We are also producing a **report** of what people have told us, with local and national recommendations for better support for people with Long Covid.



Community groups presenting their findings



A Long Covid leaflet in Urdu produced by Roshni

What did people tell us?

- People with Long Covid want a person-centred approach to their care and for healthcare practitioners to have better awareness and understanding of the condition. They want to be listened to, believed and have their symptoms taken seriously – so they can get the best support available.
- There needs to be an increase in advocacy services and benefits advice for people for people with Long Covid who have difficulties expressing their needs or for whom English is not their first language.
- People spoke of the impact of Long Covid on their mental health and for the need for specific support that wasn't limited to a small number of sessions.

Involving people at every level:

- We delivered and supported **community information sessions** and events to develop people's understanding and challenge misinformation about the condition
- We supported community organisations to produce and deliver **culturally appropriate resources** about Long Covid
- We created a **Long Covid network** for people with lived experience of Long Covid and their carers to continue to be able to use their voice to effect changes to services and support
- We shared intelligence with **local decision-makers** and service providers to help them shape the Long Covid support offer

What difference has this made?

- 1 People with Long Covid and their carers now have access to more information, resources and networks to support them on their journey to get the help they need.
- 2 The experiences of people with Long Covid are now at the centre of influencing the future care and support offer.
- 3 Statutory and voluntary sector services in Sheffield are connected in a shared understanding of the needs and the barriers that people with Long Covid experience.



Filming for our Long Covid information video



Young people learning about the condition

"Thank you for doing this. There just doesn't seem to be any information about Long Covid or that Long Covid exists or that it's a thing that people should care about... So it's nice to be able to contribute something that is going somewhere towards fixing that"

A Long Covid project participant



Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Bringing experiences to life

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Each month we run a public and patient forum for the Sheffield Health and Care Partnership. Staff from health and care services come to the forum to talk about their work, and get the views of members on plans for service development and delivery. Members of the forum are people with lived experience of using health and care services, and have brought their perspectives on a wide range of topics through the year including pharmacy, hospital transport and hospital discharge.



Supporting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

Healthwatch staff supported workshops for GPs and practice managers, looking at how primary care services could involve patients in different ways. These sessions looked beyond the traditional approach of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) to consider different methods to get people involved. We have also developed a model for how we can work with practices and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to support this work on an ongoing basis.



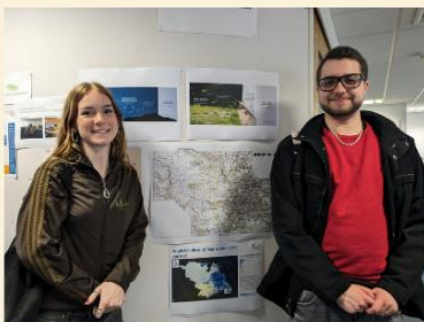
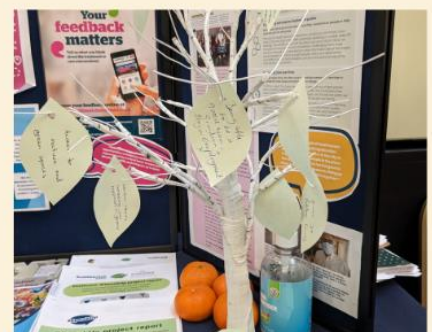
Improving care over time

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

In 2021 we worked with SACMHA to look at the experiences of African Caribbean people accessing homecare; this SpeakUp report prompted discussion about how to deliver inclusive and accessible social care services in the city. At the start of 2024, SACMHA were able to access funding for the post of an Engagement Manager for their Black Elders project, as part of a commitment from the local authority to improve the experiences of Black Elders needing care.



There's a summary of other achievements from this year on page 23 of this report.



A selection of activities from the year that helped us hear from people across Sheffield; visiting places and communities, running projects and activities, and hosting events



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard, and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Ensuring a particular focus on the experiences of people marginalised by race or ethnicity when working on topics like Long Covid, and palliative and end of life care
- Talking to people across the city, in places like food banks, social cafes, and women's refuges to get their views on care and support
- Connecting with community groups working across Sheffield to hear from the people they support, through our Speakup grants, community partners, and other partnership work

Helping communities to SpeakUp

A GP practice in the north of the city is trialling new ways to help people who need mental health support.

One of the ways we hear from different groups of people is through our SpeakUp grants. This funding and support enables smaller voluntary and community groups to carry out their own projects with the people they work with, and explore specific health and social care topics important to them.

One of [this year's SpeakUp grants](#) supported Space to Breathe and a Lived Experience team to consult with people in Sheffield about getting mental health support from their GP. They heard about the challenges getting an appointment, being believed and treated with respect, and the specific dynamics of seeking support while struggling with your mental health, which mean current systems don't always work well.

As a result of what people shared:

- 1 The project team worked with Chapelgreen Surgery to suggest new ways of working – trialling new appointment booking systems, creating other routes into care, and reviewing how crisis issues are dealt with. The GP surgery is committed to trialling new methods to better meet the needs of their patients who need support with their mental health.
- 2 A new group has been set up at the practice and meets regularly. The group is for peer support, but also has pathways to refer people for appointments to see the clinical team. It's hoped this will improve people's experience of support at the practice, and their access to appointments.

Working creatively with children and young people

An arts and crafts project helped children and young people share their views

Children and young people aged 18 and under drew, painted, and collaged the things that are important to them as part of our arts and crafts competition. There were online and postal entries, and we ran in-person craft sessions: a drop-in at Manor Library, and an event for refugee and asylum seeking families.

The events were great fun and we received 43 brilliant pictures. Many of the things children drew are things we know to be important for mental health more widely: access to nature and the outdoors, exercise and active hobbies, supportive relationships with family and friends, and safe places to live and learn.

[These findings](#) will help to shape our work on one of next year's priority topics – children's access to health services – and keep children's perspectives of health in the foreground.

We also used the findings to produce an information resource for families, bringing together free and low-cost local activities and support services that are important to them.





Information and advice

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

Help with health costs

With the cost of living continuing to rise, people need clear information about the support they are entitled to

Last year we consulted with local people to understand how the cost of living crisis was impacting on access to healthcare. We found people were struggling to afford things like medication, opticians, dental care, and travel costs. They were also cutting back on the things that helped them to stay well, like gym memberships and social activities.

We found that while there's lots of information available about how to get help with these costs, it could be difficult to find and understand, especially if you didn't know you might be eligible for help.

Now people in Sheffield can find out how to save money on health costs, and where to find further cost-of-living support

We worked with Citizens Advice Sheffield to produce a short booklet and webpage with lots of information and tips all in one place – from how to claim back your travel expenses for hospital appointments, to who might be eligible for free prescriptions and dentist appointments, and more. We update it regularly and make it available on our website and in various community settings across the city.

Bringing trustworthy information to more people

We bring information and advice to people across the city

We've been developing our information and advice offer to reach more people than ever this year. As well as developing our online information resources, we've been more present at community centres, coffee mornings, advice drop ins and other events across Sheffield. We provide a friendly welcome and helpful advice for people finding it hard to navigate the health and social care system.

We've supported people with a whole range of issues, including finding NHS dentists for themselves and their children, resolving conflicts with the staff at their GP practice, and ensuring people can order prescriptions in a way that works for them.

The number of information requests we help with has doubled in the last three years.

This year we provided one-to-one support to

over 600 people

to help find the answers to their questions.





Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote Healthwatch Sheffield and what we have to offer
- Helped us to collect and analyse people's feedback about services in Sheffield
- Provided public and patient perspectives on plans to improve local services
- Helped to shape our work and focus our priorities



Zeta – Research volunteer

"It's been an absolute privilege volunteering at Healthwatch Sheffield, especially working on the End of Life Care (EOLC) project. My passion for doing research as a psychology graduate and understanding people's experiences motivated me to volunteer.

My role primarily involved analysing survey responses to identify common comments on each specific EOLC service. This experience has given me first-hand insight into service users and their family's experience in EOLC.

Reading through the responses, I learned to empathise with individuals while remaining neutral. It was a rollercoaster of emotions – following their stories of their loss and feeling the weight. However, I ensured myself to remain neutral as I carried out the data analysis. It was also rewarding to see families expressing their appreciation for some EOLC services that Sheffield provides.

Spending the entire summer break at Healthwatch became the highlight of the year. I looked forward to each day in the office to carry on with the analysis.

I'm grateful that the data analysis skills were useful for the project. Knowing that the Integrated Care Board is considering our report for future strategies is incredibly rewarding."



See page 9 to read more about the project Zeta worked on.

Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.



www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk



0114 253 6688



info@healthwatchsheffield.co.uk



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Sheffield is hosted by Voluntary Action Sheffield.

Healthwatch Sheffield uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

Finance

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income		Our expenditure	
Annual grant from Local Authority	£209,952	Expenditure on pay	£219,632
Additional income	£48,900	Non-pay expenditure	£47,877
		Office and management fees	£42,681
Total income	£258,852	Total expenditure	£310,190

Additional income is broken down by:

- Sheffield Health and Care Partnership: £27,900
- Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group/South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board: £16,000
- Healthwatch England: £2,500
- Income from local charities for work done in partnership: £2,500

Our expenditure is higher than our income because we brought forward income for our Long Covid project that was received in the previous year but spent in 2023-24.

Our team

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of our team this year, either as a staff member or a volunteer.

Staff team

Mina Clarke	Project Support Assistant	Laura Cook	Policy & Evidence Co-Ordinator
Lucy Davies	Chief Officer	Sarah Fowler	Community Outreach Lead
Anna Harman	Information & Advice Officer	Natasha Munoz	Engagement Officer
Holly Robson	Operational Support Officer		

Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) staff

For extra capacity on particular projects, we link with VAS staff to support our work. VAS staff who have worked with us this year are:

Pam Daniels	End of life Care Project
Olga Gontsova	NHS South Yorkshire Forward Plan Engagement

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) volunteers

Judy Robinson (Chair)	Dr Patricia Edney	Lucy Fox	Tim Furness
Mark Gamsu	Janet Harris	Verni Tannam	

The way we work

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



Our Healthwatch Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) has up to 9 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. The Group ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2023–24, the Group met 8 times.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities; in January and February 2023 we consulted widely to decide what we should be focussing on for the next two years – we are now in the second year of those priority topics.

How we hear from people



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 2023–24, we have been available by phone, text and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums and having stalls in public places.

We partner with community organisations to help us hear from an even wider group of people across Sheffield, and we carry out different focussed pieces of work to hear about specific services, or the experiences of specific communities; you can read more about these elsewhere in this report.

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 and make printed copies available.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers



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

Locally: In our local authority area we take information to the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board, the Sheffield Health and Care Partnership, the Health Scrutiny sub-committee, and the Health and Care Partnership Board. These meetings bring together decision-makers and partners across the NHS, the City Council, the voluntary sector and others. We also regularly attend meetings and committees that focus on specific services, for example mental health services, dentistry, or children's health services, to share local people's insights on care.

Regionally: We take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the South Yorkshire Integrated Care System, for example the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership, where we share representation across the four Healthwatch in South Yorkshire.

Nationally: We share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level. They use national trends to push for improvements by NHS England and the government.

Healthwatch representatives



Healthwatch Sheffield is represented on the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board by Judy Robinson (our Chair). During 2023–24 Judy has effectively carried out this role by sharing key intelligence with the Board from our work with local people.

Healthwatch Sheffield is represented on South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board by Lucy Davies (our Chief Officer) and the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership by Fran Joel (Chief Officer at Healthwatch Doncaster).

Additional work areas from 2023–24

Project/activity
SpeakUp report – <u>Parson Cross Community Development Forum</u>: Speaking with older people living in the Parson Cross area of Sheffield, to understand what it's like accessing health and social care services in their neighbourhood
SpeakUp report – <u>Saalik Youth Project</u>: Working with young Pakistani Muslim people in and around the Burngreave area of Sheffield, to understand barriers to accessing support, and the role the internet plays in health and wellbeing
SpeakUp report – <u>SAVTE</u> (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English): Developing resources which will help people learning English to access health and social care services, and discuss their health concerns with professionals
Health and Care Public Forum (Sheffield): Involving patients and the public in the city's efforts to increase partnership working across health and social care services
Pharmacy interviews: Interviewing pharmacists and people who use pharmacies about their experiences locally, to feed into a national Healthwatch England report and shape recommendations for improvement
Supporting other Healthwatch: Our Community Outreach Lead has been facilitating the Healthwatch Experience Leads Network this year, supporting other Healthwatch across the country to develop the way they work with local people


Next steps

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 a culture within the NHS and Social Care 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. Children’s access to health services
2. A neighbourhood view of health and care – we have selected Tinsley as our first neighbourhood to focus on
3. Pulmonary Rehabilitation services



healthwatch

Sheffield

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**Committed
to quality**

Healthwatch Sheffield is committed to providing a quality service.

Every three years we perform an in-depth audit to ensure we meet this high standard.