

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Sheffield
Annual Report 2021-22



Contents

Message from our chair	3
About us	4
Our year in review	5
Listening to your experiences	7
Advice and information	13
Volunteers	16
Statutory statements	18

Message from our chair

Bringing life experience to decision makers and systems in health and social care is at the heart of Healthwatch Sheffield's aims. Big systems love data – numbers, statistics, facts – and it really is important to know who gets what service and where. But, data only tells part of the story and experience tells the rest... and in fresh ways. This report demonstrates how we've brought the experience of people in Sheffield into the story this year so that services for everybody can improve.

I want to draw out three examples.

- **#SpeakUp** – our microgrants help smaller voluntary organisations tell their story such as the experience of African Caribbean community members accessing homecare; or what services are like for adults with learning disabilities;
- **"What have we been hearing?" reports** – our monthly insight reports analyse the concerns of the public which Healthwatch receives, and act as an early alert to providers of services about possible system problems;
- Our **Focussed work** with parents of children with special educational needs and with Sheffield Council about new plans for Adult Social Care help to examine specific situations.

Accessible information is critical to everyone so Healthwatch has increased its capacity to respond to a threefold increase in public enquires and is also producing resources for different needs such as a Vlog for British Sign Language users.

This year the new South Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) for decision making is being set up which means that we've been emphasising again the importance of listening widely, communicating well and that people being involved decision making is a vital part of effective services. We will continue to play our role in South Yorkshire on behalf of the people of Sheffield.

I want to thank the Healthwatch staff led by the Chief Officer, Lucy Davies, for their hard work in hard times, my colleagues on the Advisory Group for wisdom and good ideas, Voluntary Action Sheffield for hosting Healthwatch so supportively and to all our partners in the voluntary sector, in the NHS and the City Council.



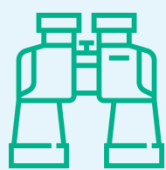
J.A. Robinson

Judy Robinson
Healthwatch Sheffield Chair

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Sheffield is your local health and social care champion. From Stocksbridge to Mosborough and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other 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 a healthy life .



Our goals

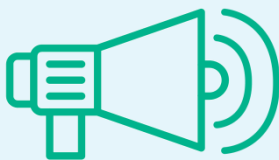
- Find out what matters to local people; influence and improve health & care services
- Involve those who often aren't heard
- Help make Sheffield a healthy city to live in



Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out **2547 people**



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

5776 people

Accessed advice and information which we have shared through social media, our website, paper resources, by email, and on the phone.

Making a difference to care



We published:

14 focussed reports

- 12 #SpeakUp reports in partnership with voluntary sector organisations
- 1 report on families' experiences of accessing support for Recessive Genetic Conditions
- 1 briefing on dentistry

11 'What have we been hearing?' reports

These are our regular insight reports giving a snapshot of what we are hearing from the public – we share these with services each month so that they can know about what is working, and what is not working for people.

Health and care that works for you











We're lucky to have **33** outstanding volunteers, who gave up **440 hours** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received **£209,952** which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ **7 staff** who help us carry out this work.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are highlights from our work in April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring	 <p>We shared our report on accessing support for recessive genetic conditions, so that people's experiences could help improve services.</p>	 <p>We signed community partnership agreements with 7 voluntary sector organisations, pledging to connect with and support each other's work. This helps us to hear the views and experiences of more people in Sheffield.</p>
Summer	 <p>We ran an event for parents of children with Special Educational needs and disabilities. Families could get information about different services and talk to us about their experiences of accessing support.</p>	 <p>We talked to adults with learning disabilities living in residential care. This was part of a report for the Care Quality Commission, to help them think about different ways to hear people's views on improving care.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We ran a focus group so that commissioners could directly hear people's views on what should be included in a new contract for intermediate care beds in Sheffield.</p>	 <p>We linked with Maternity Voices Partnership and Sheffield Maternity Co-operative to highlight experiences of accessing care before, during and after birth. We shared this with the CQC and local services to help highlight areas for improvement.</p>
Winter	 <p>We went out and about to talk to people about proposals to build new health centres. We gave people information about the proposals, and got their views to share with the people making decisions.</p>	 <p>Our new Information and Advice worker joined the team. This role was created to help us provide a better range of information in different ways. Information helps improve access to care and reduce inequalities.</p>

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 back to services to help them improve.



Autism diagnosis and support for children

Thanks to parents and carers sharing their experience of accessing diagnosis and support for autistic children, we have been able to inform work to design better services for children with neurodevelopmental needs.

Children in Sheffield wait a long time to access assessment and diagnosis for autism – while they are waiting, too often they don't get the support which they need. After diagnosis, we know that many families continue to feel unsupported by services.

This year we did three pieces of work which looked at this subject – #SpeakUp reports with Autism Hope, and Asperger's Children and Carers Together (ACCT), and an event at Verdon Street Community Centre to talk to families in the Burngreave area. People in this area of Sheffield had been under-represented in previous consultation work.

At this event we heard people's views on issues such as the location of services, how information should be provided, and unequal experiences of accessing support – language, attitudes of professionals, and financial circumstances that didn't allow people to access private services, were all identified as barriers to getting good care. In all three pieces of work, we heard from people who felt that their parenting was being judged – this experience made some people less willing to seek support.



73% of families

said their child did not have access to specialist support within mainstream schools

Autism Hope #SpeakUp Report

The recommendations from these different pieces of work were wide ranging but included:

- Support needs to be more pro-active – consider where services can reach out to parent-carers to offer support and/or signpost to support.
- Increased short break and respite options for parents need to be developed.
- There needs to be good signposting and referral routes to peer support, but also investment in organisations who can provide peer support, advice and information.
- Better systems for information sharing between teams should be developed.



“The best thing is being able to access feedback from parent support groups because they know how to navigate the system; they've been there.”

Parent at Verdon Street Event



Listening to people's experiences – Verdon Street, Burngreave



What difference did this make?

Both the #SpeakUp reports and feedback from the event were shared with the Task and Finish Group of the Neurodevelopment Transformation Programme; this group is undertaking a wide range of work, and wants to ensure that their aims, projects and plans are directly informed by parent voice. Recognising the importance of hearing from diverse groups, the Verdon Street event helped to capture issues and experiences relating specifically to deprivation and ethnicity.

There are a range of service developments taking place because of the work of the Neurodevelopment Transformation Programme, including:

- **Neurodiversity in schools** – a project in 10 mainstream schools to improve support for neurodiverse young people
- **Making assessments holistic** – in one locality area, panel meetings are bringing professionals together to consider a child's needs
- **A single point of access** has been developed as part of the assessment process, for people seeking support with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- **Improved information resources** are now available on the Children's Hospital website
- Development of a new **peer support service**



"Too long for waiting times to initial assessment and treatment – not acceptable, more needs to be spent to improve this service [psychology] and its accessibility."

Parent, Autism Hope #SpeakUp Report



Homecare and the African Caribbean Community

Thanks to people sharing their experiences of accessing homecare, we have been able to work with the council to include a greater focus on meeting the needs of diverse communities when services are commissioned.

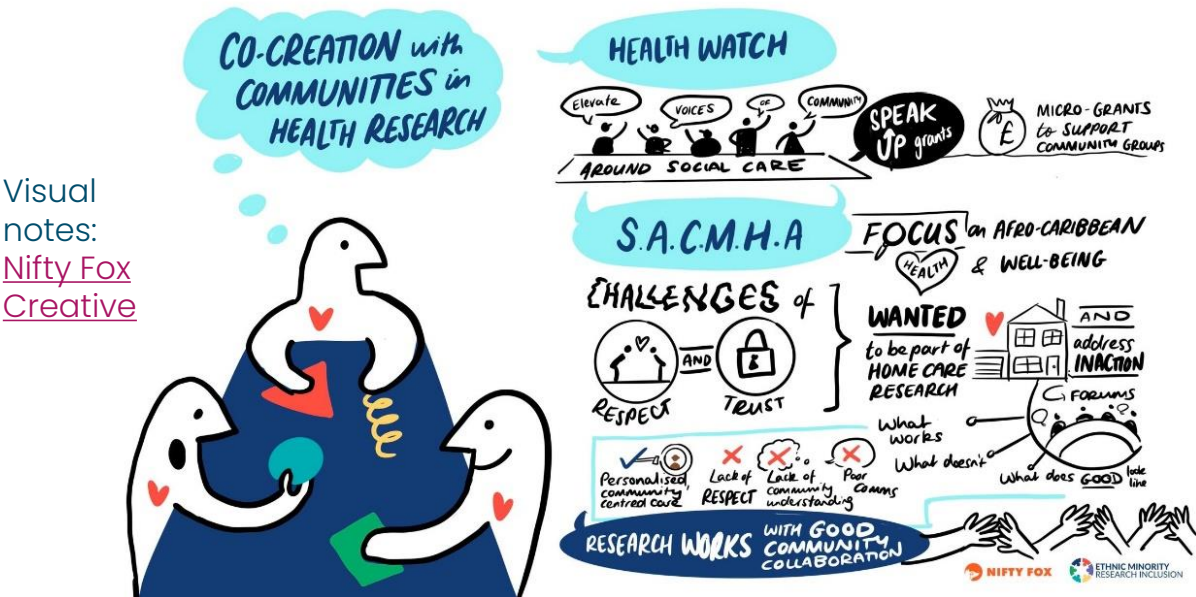
When you have people coming into your home to support you with personal care, it's vital that the care is provided in a way which works for you; for people from different ethnic communities, culturally appropriate support is central to this.

Through our #SpeakUp grants, SACMHA undertook a piece of work to help us hear from people in the African Caribbean community about their experience of Homecare. Through this work, we heard from people receiving care, family carers, and social care professionals of African Caribbean heritage.

One of the main issues we heard about was a lack of continuity of care, and lack of cultural understanding at all stages of the process – from the social work assessment, through to day-to-day care. Added to this, people were not likely to raise issues, or didn't know how to; as a result care packages were sometimes failing when people still needed support.

“This has been one of the most significant and potentially impactful pieces of work SACMHA has completed in the last few years. Our community are holding SACMHA to our commitment of ensuring that this did not become just another report, but that it leads to real and tangible change. We have engaged with key stakeholders since the publishing of our report, agreed and begun the implementation of an action plan and are in regular contact with the African Caribbean community of Sheffield to keep them abreast of plans made. This is far too important an issue for SACMHA to allow any loss of focus on improvements, which we recognise will be incremental, but nonetheless must happen.”

David Bussue, Service Director SACMHA Health and Social Care





What difference did this make?

Following our report Council officers from across Adult Social Care have developed a collaborative action plan, to be shared, reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

The plan contains practical actions linked to each of the report recommendations, with areas of focus including testing new approaches to commissioning and providing home care, developing social work practice and making changes to monitoring the performance of care providers. Taking steps to ensure that care delivery and interactions with Adult Social Care are culturally appropriate is a key theme through many of the steps outlined within the action plan.



“Learning needs to be embedded right across Adult Social Care and built into the Delivery Plan. This is a wider systemic issue, requiring overarching strategic focus”

Alexis Chappell, Director of Adult Social Care



Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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



Supporting empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for the NHS and social care services to step back and see the bigger picture, through hearing personal experiences, and the impact services have on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, and can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

After sharing our report on African Caribbean experiences of homecare, we invited commissioners and staff from adult social care to join an event run by SACMHA. This event brought together people using homecare, with people running services and allowed people to have direct conversations. It deepened understanding of the issues and brought the report to life.



Supporting services to involve the public

Services often understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care, but may need some support to think about the best way to do this.

We worked with the council to think about how to involve people in creating their new strategy for Adult Social Care. This work meant more people had the chance to give their views on how Adult Social Care should look in Sheffield.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

In 2019 we published our report 'Not Equal' looking at the experience of deaf people accessing health and social care services. We continue to hear about the barriers for deaf people, but also continue to push for change. This year we have:

- Raised issues on behalf of individuals
- Contributed to the development of a new tender specification for interpreting services
- Worked with the hospital on their updated action plan, which included developing resources and training for staff

Advice and information

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, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Making sure people understood their rights and their options



GP Access Cards

Throughout the year we acted as a hub to distribute NHS England and Improvement GP Access Cards – these cards help people who may need to overcome the barrier of being asked to provide proof of address, immigration status or photo ID when trying to register with a GP.

To support this campaign we:

- **Distributed around 1000 cards** to organisations that support people who may struggle to register with a GP – for example homeless people, and asylum seekers and refugees.
- Collaborated with [Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group \(CCG\)](#) to design and deliver **training for GP receptionists** about the GP Access Card Campaign and registering homeless people, and **presented at GP Practice Managers' locality meetings**, which allowed us to reach practices across all areas of the city.



Making information accessible to different people

One of our aims is to improve access to health and care services through providing information and advice. We know that getting the right information at the right time can make a big difference to people's experience of getting care and support, and good information can help reduce inequalities of care.

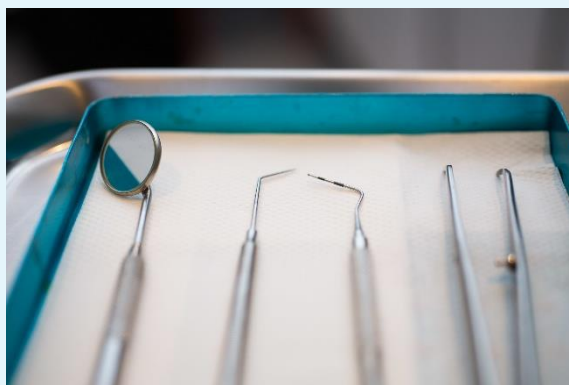
The pandemic increased demand for this part of our service – between December 2019 and March 2022, the number of people contacting us with enquiries tripled. This led us to recruit someone into a new dedicated role – we wanted not just to respond to enquiries as they came in, but be pro-active in developing the information that we offer and tailor it to the needs of different groups. Our new Information & Advice Officer has been able to talk with groups to identify what information would be helpful for them, and produce resources for different people including asylum seekers and refugees, and homeless people.

We have also worked with Citizens Advice Sheffield Deaf Advice Team to produce a regular Vlog in British Sign Language, giving deaf people in Sheffield information about a wide range of topics such as Covid, mental health and local and national issues.



#fixNHSdentistry

Throughout Covid-19, access to NHS dentistry has been a particular issue for many people. This year 1 in 4 calls and emails were from people who couldn't get dental care. Here are just some examples, typical of the stories we heard this year:



Kiera* called all the dentists in Sheffield who said they were accepting new NHS patients online, but she couldn't get an appointment – they could only offer to put her on a waiting list which would be two years long or more.

“I am willing to travel as far as needed as I am getting quite desperate at this point”

David* needs to see a dentist, but all the ones he calls say they can only offer him private treatment. He told us he is currently unemployed and doesn't have the money.

“£200+ I don't even have that in my bank account right now”

Pam* needs to have dentures fitted after having her remaining teeth removed. Dental practices won't even put her on a waiting list, and seem to have a blanket policy that dentures aren't an 'urgent' issue, despite its effect on Pam's life.

“I can't eat or talk properly... I can't afford to go private... It is affecting my mental health”

Although we are unable to help people get routine care quickly due to lack of availability in the city, we have been able to give people information and support to access urgent care.

Locally, we raised this issue through our monthly briefings, in meetings and committees across the city, and by communicating directly with Yorkshire & Humber commissioners. However, it became increasingly clear that national action is needed in order to help people access care. This issue isn't specific to Sheffield; the current provision of NHS dentistry is simply not working.

Healthwatch England picked up this issue, bringing together examples from across the Healthwatch network. This [report](#) includes examples from Sheffield, showing how even a small bit of feedback given to us can have influence at national level.

Healthwatch England is working with the British Dental Association and calling on NHS England and central government to make crucial changes to the way dentistry is provided; we are supporting them in this campaign. Local voices and stories like those above are central to this effort, providing evidence for much-needed change.

Volunteers

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

This year our volunteers helped us:

- Steer our work as part of our Strategic Advisory Group
- Review and comment on reports and policies from health & care organisations
- Speak to more people locally
- Attend boards and committees across the city



Asma, Strategic Advisory Group member

My name is Asma, doctor of medicine. I have been a member of the Strategic Advisory Group for around 2 years because I am passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of people all around Sheffield, and I liked the idea of giving Sheffield people the opportunity to speak up and tell their stories.

During the last two years I have attended meetings where we work as a team to feed back on various reports and review the impacts of Healthwatch Sheffield's work on health and social care. This year I was part of an amazing event for parents of children who have (or may have) special educational needs or disabilities. The event was very successful and all attendees got the benefit from it.



Heidi, work experience student

The Healthwatch team are incredibly friendly and create a great working environment (even when it's through a laptop on zoom!) They're approachable and were always ready to help when I needed it. Going to meetings with them and people from other organisations has given me a great insight into what working in this area is like. As well as insight, I've gained skills such as presenting, listening, resilience and ambition. Doing my own microproject this week has developed my time management, presenting and speaking skills, all while learning how Healthwatch gather input from the public and take it into account for their work.



Do you feel inspired?

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



www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk/volunteer



0114 253 6688



info@healthwatchsheffield.co.uk

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Sheffield, Voluntary Action Sheffield, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield, S1 4FW.

Healthwatch Sheffield 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 Sheffield Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) is a group of up to 9 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. SAG ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met 11 times and made decisions on matters such as our work with the Integrated Care Board, and our priorities in 2022/23.

We also ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. To help us choose these, we listen to what people have told us matters to them – this year we did this through a range of ways including:

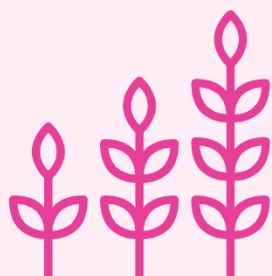
- Looking at what people have shared through our enquiries and information service
- Holding a public meeting
- Visiting community groups

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experiences of health and care services. In 2021/22 we have been available by phone, text, email, a webform on our website, linked with Care Opinion, attended meetings of community groups and forums, run virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, sharing our BSL Vlog, and working in partnership with community organisations through the use of our #SpeakUp micro-grants.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website.

Our Community Partners



Our community partnerships are a collaboration agreement between us and a voluntary or community sector organisation – an agreement to support each other's work and work together create more opportunities for people to be heard by local decision makers.

We currently have 12 communities partners, helping us to amplify the voices of even more people across Sheffield.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Sheffield is represented on the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board by Judy Robinson (our Chair). This statutory Council Board brings together decision makers and partners across the NHS, the City Council, the voluntary sector and independent players.

Healthwatch is involved in helping to set the Board’s agenda ensuring issues about service changes and user voices are discussed and alerting the Board to our intelligence from the ground about trends and about emerging issues – such as the growth in complaints about accessing dental care. We give an annual update about our work to the Board.

In addition, the Board is an opportunity for exchange of understanding , identifying common concerns and joint initiatives between Healthwatch and partners in other sectors and we make full use of these important relationships.

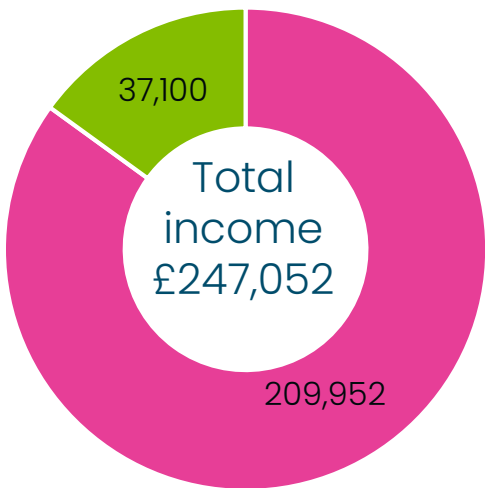
Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

There is a statutory relationship between Healthwatch and Health Scrutiny – Healthwatch may refer any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the Sheffield for review and scrutiny, and if they do the local authority must take account of any information provided by them.

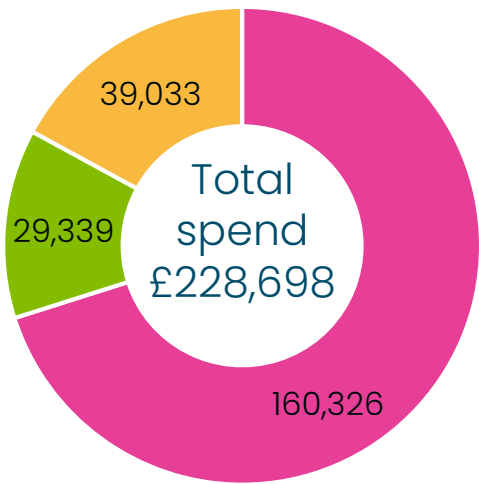
Our representatives at Scrutiny this year have been Lucy Davies (Chief Officer) and Patricia Edney (Strategic Advisory Group Member) who have attended Scrutiny Committee meetings to share insight, views and experiences of local people as part of discussions.

Finance

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



- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding



- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration

2021–2022 Activity

Additional work areas not explored in depth in this report

Project	Area of focus
Recessive Genetic Conditions Report	Experiences of parents and families in accessing support
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
Speak Up Reports (in addition to those already explored)	
Sheffield Voices	Experiences of Adults with Learning Disabilities during Covid
Burngreave Messenger	Health information delivered to 9000 households in Burngreave
JCI Sheffield	Young professionals and mental health
Luv2MeetU	Access to health services for Adults with learning disabilities
South East Sheffield Community Dementia Advice Service	Impact of Covid on people living with dementia
Saalik Youth Project	Young people exploring health and wellbeing issues in their community
Sheffield Maternity Co-operative	Experiences of pregnancy, birth, abortion and loss during the pandemic.
Burton Street Foundation	Experiences of Annual Health Checks and the use of Hospital Passports by adults with learning disabilities

Top three priorities for 2022–23



1. Hearing from older people in care homes
2. Maternity Services – including the experiences of parents and families in underserved communities
3. Long Covid – including reaching people with information, and hearing about their experiences of living with long covid



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