

# Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Annual Report 2023–2024



# Message from Young Healthwatch Manager



It is such a pleasure to be working with Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire again. The skill, dedication and hard work that our young volunteers put into Young Healthwatch is fantastic. We would not be able to achieve anything without them. They volunteer for us during an already difficult period of their lives and are often dealing with their own stress and strains that come with being a young person.

This year we have recruited new volunteers and welcomed back some of our existing volunteers. They have all worked well together and when representing Young Healthwatch in public have behaved amazingly.

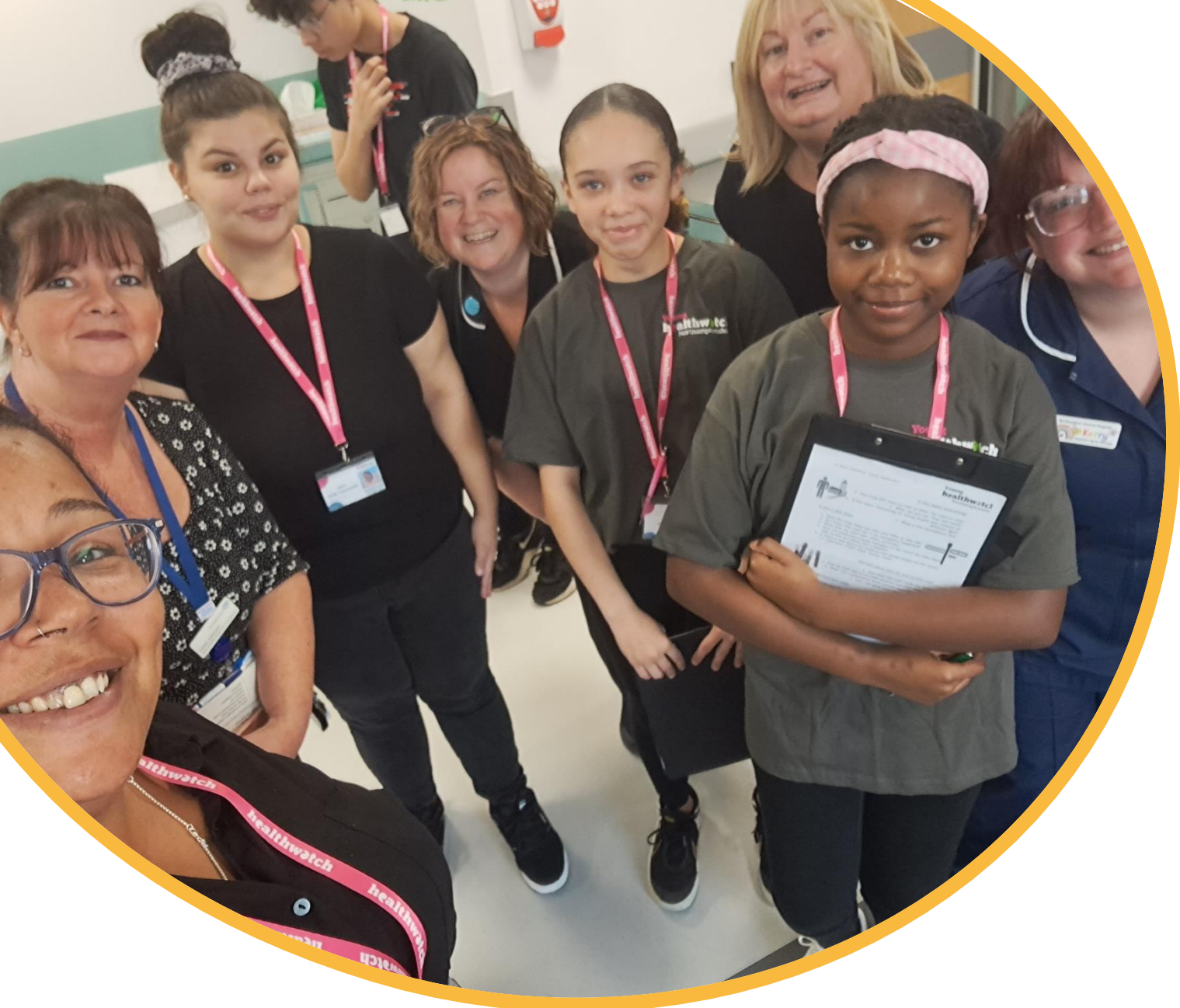
We have worked on some fantastic projects this year and have really made sure that young people are heard in health and social care locally. Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire know that they are not the voice of all young people locally, but they are working hard to make sure that young people locally do have a voice. They are making sure that young voices are heard. Everything that we do is decided by the volunteers that make us who we are and to reflect this we are currently in the process of reapplying for our Investing in Children accreditation.



Esther Stimpson  
Young Healthwatch  
Manager







# 15 Steps at Northampton General Hospital

In November 2023, Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire were invited to Northampton General Hospital to assess and provide feedback on the wards visited. They did this by using the 15 steps method and were able to provide a young person's perspective when giving feedback on areas for improvement.

The report was written by Young Healthwatch volunteers in their own words, allowing the young volunteers to express their opinions and then finalised by the Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire staff. The report is based on what they observed and the people they spoke to.

# 15 Steps at Northampton General Hospital

The report was well received by Northampton General Hospital and Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire found that the areas that we visited at Northampton General Hospital were very welcoming and appear clean and well managed. They are calm and the staff that we saw were confident. The patients and their parents that we spoke to were happy with their experiences. There are many well thought out areas of Northampton General Hospital for children however there appears to be a lack of thought for teenagers, although in some areas this has been acknowledged and staff are looking to change this.



**The visit was a great opportunity for us to gain an insight into what was important to the younger generation when visiting our hospital.**

**Christine Johnson    Head of Patient Experience & Engagement**







# Young people and their families' experiences of Autism and ADHD diagnosis in Northamptonshire

In the Autumn of 2023 Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire was commissioned by Northamptonshire's Integrated Care Board (ICB) to carry out research exploring the experiences of young people and their parents and carers who were waiting for an assessment of Autism and ADHD or those that had been recently diagnosed.

Between January and February 2024, a total of 322 people responded to the survey. 115 young people between the ages of 11 and 18 and 209 parents and carers of 11 to 18 year olds. This is thought to be around 5% of those on a waiting list in Northamptonshire.

The report is due to be published in 2024.



# Young people's experiences of vaping in West Northamptonshire

In the Autumn of 2023 Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire was commissioned by Public Health West Northamptonshire to gather the views of young people in West Northamptonshire who use vapes or similar nicotine products.

To complete this work focus group questions were devised by the Public Health team for us to ask to young people in a focus group or one to one setting. In May and June 2024, 11 young people took part in this work. Eight in a focus group setting and 3 in one-to-one interviews.

# Young people's experiences of vaping in West Northamptonshire



Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire also responded to a national consultation on vaping: Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views. They presented the knowledge they had on youth vaping at the Youth Vaping Summit held by West Northamptonshire Public Health at Moulton Community Centre.

The full report on young people's experiences of vaping is due out in the summer of 2024.

**"I would like to take this opportunity to thank your four young people for attending the summit this morning and for giving us an insight into their thoughts which I found interesting. I thought they came across very well and didn't seem nervous to speak in front of the crowd."**

**Trading Standards Officer**



# Celebrating our volunteers

Our Young Healthwatch volunteers are the only reason we can do the work that we do. They continue to ensure that young people are heard in health and social care locally. As an organisation we are led by them. We are currently in the process of reapplying for the Investing in Children Accreditation to reflect this.

## With them, For them, Because of them





## What our volunteers say



When I first started Young Healthwatch at the age of 14, I had no idea how many exciting and unique opportunities I'd have presented to me to help me get to where I am now, 7 years later. I'd always had an interest in a career in healthcare and here I am, 21 years old working as a newly qualified physiotherapist. The projects I have completed with YHW have definitely helped me along the way!

YHW has helped me with my confidence in public speaking by presenting our projects in front of many important adults who valued youth's input on healthcare services, resulting in pediatric services being altered because of our recommendations. I used to get nervous thinking about speaking in front of a group of people, but working with YHW I gained many tips and strategies to help calm the nerves and ended up confidentially appeared on BBC Breakfast... twice!

I have made some lovely friendships when attending YHW meetings, friends of different ages to myself. Hearing different people's experiences of healthcare services really helps to make our projects as diverse and inclusive as possible, a very rewarding feeling being able to provide broad feedback to children's services. Discussing our ideas over pizza nights at our meetings is also another perk. I always look forward to meeting everyone when a meeting was scheduled, we also all joined Teams calls during the COVID pandemic which made things feel a lot less lonely.

At YHW I feel like I am adding great value to pediatric healthcare services, making the volunteering feel extremely rewarding. We also distribute surveys on various topics, for example eating disorders, to gather opinions of children around us to make sure all voices are heard and conveyed to relevant services. Overall, I love volunteering at Young Healthwatch and can't wait to see what else we do!

### Do you feel inspired?



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



[www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk)



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