

Stakeholder Perceptions Summary Report October 2025



Introduction

We asked stakeholders from the Local Authority, Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) and local charities and support organisations to share their experiences of working with us and provide insights into our impact.

This survey provided valuable insight into how we are perceived across the local health and care sector. The responses reflect a service that is trusted, respected and seen as an independent body but who also highlights areas where awareness could be stronger and where more people could feel included in our work.

"I have worked closely with Healthwatch Dudley since I started over a decade ago, and really appreciate the helpfulness, expertise and insightfulness that comes from being in the position of a 'critical friend'."

**Consultant in Public Health Medicine
- Dudley Council Health and Wellbeing Directorate**

Insights

The Stakeholder Perception survey was open for five weeks between August and September 2025. We shared the survey via conversations and email to 46 health and social care professionals and partners. We received responses from 17 stakeholders across Dudley borough.

- 94% of respondents agreed that we understand local issues and bases its work on residents' feedback.
- 94% of respondents think we communicate clearly in writing and in person.
- 94% agreed that we effectively collect insight from diverse or seldom heard communities and 88% agreed that communications are inclusive.
- 80% felt we influence decisions made and add valuable insight for decision-makers.
- 88% agree we are a trusted partner that they want to collaborate with.

Percentages reflect only those stakeholders who responded to each question; some respondents skipped certain questions.

Strengths

Stakeholders highlighted many positives about our role and approach. They described us as trusted, constructive and independent, with clear communication and a strong focus on involving local people.

- Seeking seldom heard voices to contribute to community services, proposals and decision making.

"I've been pleased to work with Healthwatch most recently on the pharmaceutical needs assessment; they went above and beyond to ensure good representation from underheard populations."

**Consultant in Public Health Medicine
– Dudley Council**

- Inclusivity was highlighted through our work with the Deaf and hard of hearing community, which led to changes in hospital communication and booking systems.

"Over the years Healthwatch Dudley has communicated clearly and regularly in writing, in person and in BSL, sharing valuable insights, broadening understanding, and successfully influencing decisions to improve health and social care services for the benefit of Deaf people."

Dudley Senior Social Worker

- Our clear communication in reports and in-person engagement are valued as being easy to follow with lived experiences being recognised as a priority.

"Clear, simple and readable communications that get straight to the point, combined with good local insight."

**Consultant in Public Health Medicine
– Dudley Council Health and Wellbeing Directorate**



Strengths

The impact on services is recognised in examples such as High Oak Surgery and GP access.

"The High Oak surgery situation. I think HWD have influenced all key stakeholders"

Head of Communications,
engagement and partnership
for Place
– NHS DGFT

- Stakeholders strongly recognise that Healthwatch Dudley bases its workplan on what we hear from local feedback, not tied to other agendas.

"Healthwatch Dudley work very hard to try to understand what issues people are having when accessing health and social care services"

**Digital Inequalities Lead
– Black Country ICB**

- Evidence of impact through community collaboration.

"Healthwatch Dudley met with service users quarterly to hear about issues that matter to the d/Deaf community. They would also inform the group of upcoming changes to services and the ways the d/Deaf community can have a say."

**Assistant Care Co-ordinator
– Deaf Support Dudley Council**

- Seen as a collaborative service we challenge barriers in a way that is fair and helpful.

"I think the team are genuinely well respected and are authentic and able to challenge in a constructive manner."

**Head of Communications, engagement and
partnership for Place
– NHS DGFT**

- Actively involving service providers and commissioners, giving space for people to have their voices heard.

"Healthwatch Dudley actively involves service providers and commissioners by inviting NHS and social care personnel to Deaf Focus Group meetings. This gives members the opportunity to share lived experiences, suggest improvements, and see positive changes being acted upon."

Dudley Senior Social Worker

Challenges

Alongside the positives, there were also challenges recognised. These mainly related to awareness, the difficulty of influencing system wide change and making sure we reach more communities who may not always be heard.

- Some stakeholders said they had little exposure to Healthwatch Dudley communications or had little awareness of us.

"I both work and live in Dudley. I have never been approached as a resident by Healthwatch and neither have any of my family to my knowledge."

- Feedback suggested we could show more awareness of the pressures and how local services operate
- Seldom-heard groups or those facing additional barriers may benefit from more engagement and support, including people with mental health needs, those facing language barriers, housing and drug and alcohol support users, and people with physical and sensory disabilities.

"We find engaging people who receive Mental Health support in the community in our co-production opportunities really challenging so getting support to ensure they are listened to and can influence change would be a benefit."

Interim Director

- Dudley Council Adult Social Care

- Continue to increase our profile among the general public and professionals so more people understand the role Healthwatch Dudley plays.

"I rarely see communications from Healthwatch Dudley."



Opportunities

Looking ahead, stakeholders suggested ways to build on our strengths. They encourage us to share more stories of impact, raise our profile with the public and continue working with partners to improve inclusivity and collaboration.

- Suggestions to showcase our impact such as stories and case studies that shine a light on our service.

“Integration agenda in moving care closer to home and influencing partners to share power and resources for the good of our local population and communities.”

- “It was noted that even with strong evidence, influencing system wide change can be really difficult

“I’ve put somewhat because I think it can be really difficult to influence everything and convince others to listen and take action or even open their ears and doors to Healthwatch Dudley.”

- Continuing to support community groups who value our involvement.

“We have had regular and invaluable support from Healthwatch Dudley over the years, evidenced in the improvement in NHS and Social Care access and services. It would be beneficial if Healthwatch could continue this collaboration with Deaf and hard of hearing people who are often overlooked in consultations and service planning. Reaching this community ensures their experiences shape services, improving inclusivity and reducing inequalities.”

Senior Social Worker

- Stakeholders offered support to contribute around carers, ‘talking inequalities’ and integration of services.



Moving forward

The survey shows that Healthwatch Dudley is trusted and valued, that our work is making a real difference especially for people and communities who are sometimes overlooked.

Stakeholders told us they would like to see us raise our profile more widely, reach more local residents and keep pushing for improvements in health and care.

We will use this feedback to build on what we do well, share more stories about the difference we make and continue to make sure local voices contribute to local change.

Focus for improvement:



Raise our profile.



**Collaborate with partners
to address local issues.**



**Maintain
independence.**

Thank you

We would like to thank all stakeholders who took the time to share their views and for collaborating with us over the years. Your honesty, insights and suggestions are vital in helping us understand how we are working effectively.

This feedback will help us build on existing strengths and ensure that we continue to put local voices as a priority.

It has helped give us clear direction going forward, confirmed the importance of independent scrutiny and will support the design of what is to come next.

Thank you and please continue to reach out to us.

healthwatch

Dudley



**Committed
to quality**

Healthwatch Dudley is committed to providing a quality service, from how we collect data, to the information we provide. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit, in conjunction with Healthwatch England, to ensure we meet this high standard.

**If you would like this report in another
language or format please contact us.**

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