

# Your Voice



Spring / Summer 2022

## Care home life during Covid

**Our new 'Life in a care home' report shares the experiences of more than forty local people living in local care homes during the pandemic.**

Most people told us they were happy with care, visiting and Covid safety. With many families and friends praising the care residents received.

"The care in this care home has brought me to tears. The staff treat mum like one of their family. Always kept me informed of everything that's going on."

But some shared tough stories about being separated and isolated from loved ones due to strict visiting rules. We also heard some concerns about end of life care.

"My mother now has trouble remembering who I am as she has had no face to face contact with me since December 2020."

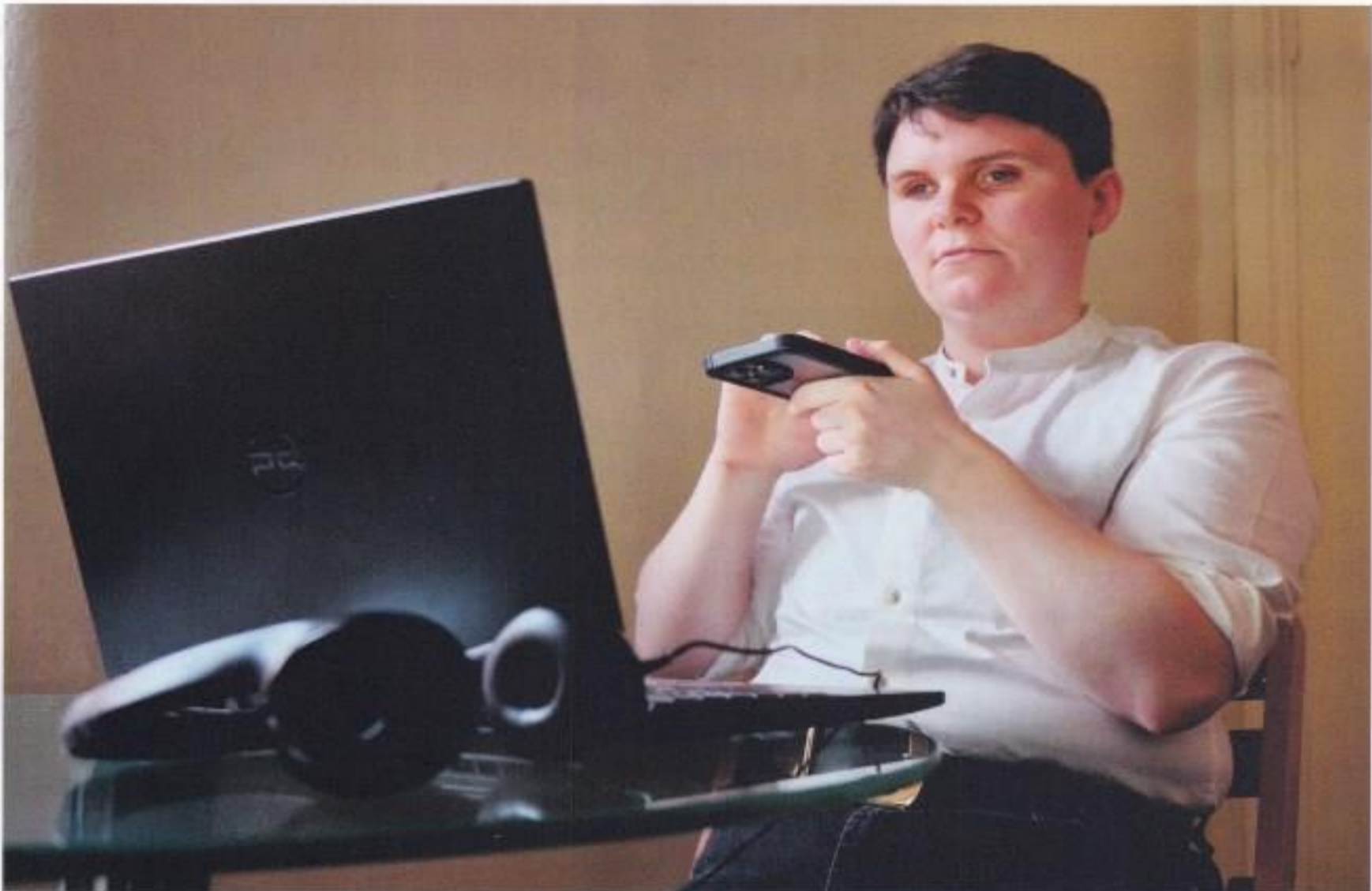
Now we've asked local councils and the local NHS to offer care homes more awareness and training to support residents' mental health and respect their end of life wishes.

You can read the report on our website or contact us and we can send you a copy.



## Your Care, Your Way

**Clear, understandable information is important to help you make the right health and care decisions. Join our campaign and have your say on what needs to change.**



**Student Connor Scott-Gardner using his mobile and PC to communicate.**

Medical and healthcare information can be complex. But, if you're disabled or have a sensory loss, you have a legal right to health and social care information in a way you understand, and communications support if you need it

Even though the Accessible Information Standard has been a legal requirement since 2016, many NHS and care organisations are not supporting equal access to care for deaf and blind patients.

That's why we're supporting the 'Your Care, Your Way' campaign to ensure services are taking their duty seriously to provide information in a way that people understand

## What you should expect

- ⇒ If you have a disability, hearing or vision loss or an impairment – or care for someone that does – you have a legal right to accessible information.
- ⇒ So letters and information can be sent in formats like Easy Read or Braille if that's best for you.
- ⇒ You can ask for information by email or text if you want your phone or computer to read them to you.
- ⇒ Services should offer you extra help at appointments if you have communications needs. If you're D/deaf, for example, you should be able to use a sign language interpreter.

Student Connor Scott-Gardner, who is blind and requires healthcare information in an electronic format as well as in Braille, said:

"Trying to get information about my own healthcare, in a format I can understand, has often been difficult. I can't read letters that come through the post, or prescription medications.

All I'm asking for is consistency, training on accessible information for staff – a few minor changes would make the world of difference to people like myself."

## Share your experience

Take a few minutes to tell us:

- ⇒ **Online survey:** <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/YourCareYourWay/>
- ⇒ **British Sign Language survey:** <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/your-care-your-way-survey-bsl>
- ⇒ **Call 0330 355 1285** or text 0752 0635 176 to talk to our team or ask for a paper copy.

We can send you a paper survey with a Freepost envelope or one in Easy Read if that's better for you.



## Help improve care

### New members are wanted on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Partnership Boards.

If you use adult social care, or care for someone who does, your knowledge and experience could really help others.

You'll be an Independent Member on one of the five local Partnership Boards: Carers', Learning Disability – including autism services, Older People's, Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment.

They work with the local councils, NHS and voluntary organisations to improve health and care services for family carers, people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities and older people.

Meetings are held every two or three months. And we will support you to share your views and those of others who use services to help influence care.

You'll get training and support, including help with communications if you need it, such as a BSL interpreter or information in Easy Read. We also pay out of pocket expenses.



Parent carer Kate Gravett joined the Partnership Boards because she wants to make things easier for families to get help for themselves and the people they care for.

*"You have the right to be heard as a carer. You are advocating for someone who can't do that for themselves. They have rights but you, as a carer, have your own – and you need to look after yourself too."*

### Find out more and apply

You can find out more about this and other volunteering opportunities here on our websites:



[www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/volunteer](http://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/volunteer)

[www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk/volunteer](http://www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk/volunteer)

Or call **0330 355 1285** or text 0752 0635 176 to talk to our team or ask for a paper copy. We can arrange communication help if you need it.

## More local, joined up care is on the way

**Lots of people in our area have to travel to get care and treatment and it can be difficult if you live in rural areas.**

But care closer to home is being planned.

In July, the different organisations that help you with your health and care are coming together.

So local councils, NHS hospitals, community health services, family doctors, 111, ambulance and voluntary organisations will join up.

They are going to work together to plan, pay for and deliver care in communities across our area.

And their new partnership is called Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (ICS).

The plan is to make care more equal for everyone and more joined-up - which is important if you have complex health issues or one or more long-term conditions.

Our Healthwatch will be involved and make sure your views about services are heard and that you are involved in decisions.



## Share your views

**At Healthwatch, our job is to listen to what local people say about health and care services. So what kinds of things do you tell us about?**

Over the last few months, the most-shared experiences have included care from your GP surgery, difficulties finding an NHS dentist and waits for hospital appointments.



You've told us about lots of other services too, from A & E visits and care homes to baby clinics and end of life care.

Some feedback has been good but you've also highlighted what needs to work better.

One of the common problems you report is around accessing your GP – including getting through on the phone and making appointments.

*"My regular appointments for my long-term condition have been transferred into phone appointments which I am not happy with."*

But other people have got in touch to praise their GP practice.

*"The staff are always very helpful. Quick to respond and I always get an appointment."*

**Waiting for care, had a hospital visit or used a health and care service? Then we want to hear from you.**

Anything you tell us is confidential and is anonymised before we pass it back to local health and care teams. See the "contact us" box on the back page to find out how to get in touch.

### How your feedback helps

Your experiences can make a big difference to the care others' receive.

For example, thanks to your feedback, our local NHS better understands the extra support some people need to get their Covid-19 vaccinations.

You told us about the help and adjustments wanted by people with learning disabilities. And you shared experiences of vaccination delays for people who don't leave their homes.

Had a great experience or want to say thank you? We want to hear that too and can pass it back to the person or team involved.



## Health and care near you

### How are health and care services running in your community?

Share your experiences and ask questions at your local Health and Care Forum.

These public meetings run across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough every two months. And bring together people using services with the people providing them – like hospital trusts, care teams and the ambulance service.

We talk about different topics and want to hear your views about how things are working.

From May, the forums are a mix of face to face sessions and online meetings. But please check nearer the date in case plans change due to Covid-19. Check our websites for full details or call or text us if you're not online.

### Join us at your next local Health and Care Forum:

- ⇒ Cambridge & South Cambs: 1 June (face to face)
- ⇒ Fenland & East Cambs: 9 June (face to face)
- ⇒ Huntingdonshire: 3 May (face to face) and 5 July (online)
- ⇒ Peterborough: 26 May (face to face) and 28 July (online)



[www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/events](http://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/events)

[www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk/events](http://www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk/events)

## Listening to everyone

**Listening to everyone in our communities – especially people who don't always get heard – is really important.**

So we work with community groups and local councils and cultural organisations to help homeless people, traveller communities, migrant workers and refugees and asylum seekers to know their rights and get help with health and care.

In Peterborough, for example, our Engagement Officer Rebwar works closely with PARCA which supports asylum seekers, refugees and local residents from diverse ethnic communities across the city.

We're also in contact with asylum seekers and migrant project schemes in districts including Fenland and Huntingdonshire.

Recently we've worked with organisations supporting Ukrainian people who are arriving in our area after escaping the current conflict.

We've recommended that welcome packs are given out so that refugees know their rights, including:


- ⇒ How to register with a GP
- ⇒ And that local healthcare services are free


## Contact us

Whether you'd like to share your feedback about health and care services, find out about volunteering with us or you're looking for local support – get in touch. We're here to help.

 **Call** 0330 355 1285 or **Text** 0752 0635 176

 **Email** [enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.co.uk)

 **Websites:** [www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk)

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



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Registered Community Interest Company No: 08516179  
Registered address: 6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon, PE29 7HN