

Paper 3 : Report from Healthwatch Rutland Manager

I am pleased to submit this report to the Board of Healthwatch Rutland (HWR), outlining activity since my last report in March 2026.

Governance

Janet Underwood, our long-standing Chair of the HWR Advisory Board, stepped down from the role in June to spend more time with her family and pursue her other interests.

Janet's commitment to improving access to care for people in Rutland, together with her strong advocacy for rural communities, has been instrumental in:

- Strengthening our role as an independent champion for Rutland residents in health and social care
- Engaging on key issues such as access to urgent care services and NHS dentistry
- Building valuable partnerships and influence across the local health and care system
- Ensuring that the views and experiences of Rutland people shape healthcare decision-making at every level

We extend our sincere thanks to Janet for her dedication and contribution and we wish her every happiness in what comes next. We are delighted that she will continue to support our work as a volunteer.

Interim governance arrangements are in place with Alan Walters as Vice Chair and further updates will be shared as we progress.

Outreach and engagement activity

On 26 March we had a table for the half day Barrowden Wellbeing Day and took the opportunity to engage on the Women's Health survey and piloted the Pharmacy First survey.

In April, HWR again joined the Rutland Dementia Participation Group 'on the road' this time at Greetham Community Centre. The aim of the session is two-fold:

1. To understand more about how people are experiencing current dementia support in Rutland and to provide input to future neighbourhood support planning.
2. By taking the meetups out to the villages, to give local families living with dementia the opportunity to drop in for advice, signposting, peer support - or just a chat over a cup of tea.

The Dementia Fair held at Oakham Castle on 23 May as part of Dementia Action Week was a huge success. With healthcare and support stands, craft stalls, the dementia choir, Dementia Friends sessions for children (plus lovely weather), the event drew more than 600 visitors. It enabled us to engage on the Pharmacy First survey, signpost people investigating dementia support and raise awareness of our advice and guidance service.

Coming up in June we have stands at the Tesco Community Awareness event in Oakham and at the Know More Live Well morning at Greetham.

Women's Health survey

The LLR Every Woman's Health Matters survey closed in March and our Rutland engagement feedback was submitted to the report writer at Healthwatch Leicester/Leicestershire (HWLL) in April. The final report is due to be published in August and findings presented to the Women's Health Partnership in September 2026.

Pharmacy First in Rutland: project to gain insights into public awareness and patient experience

Pharmacy First is an NHS service that allows pharmacists to supply prescription medicines for seven specific conditions without needing a GP appointment. It aims to make getting treatment for minor illnesses quicker and easier. Our current project seeks to understand how aware people are of the service and what they think of it.

The survey is now live and will run until mid-July. We have already seen a strong response, both online and through the in-person outreach described above. A meeting has taken place with the Primary Care Network to understand the primary care context and their views on the Pharmacy First service, which we hope will lead to further discussions with individual practices to explore their perspectives in more depth.

Rutland's Community Defibrillators: project to explore provision, accessibility and operational status

The project team met in June to plan the scope of the project and the draft project plan is currently being reviewed with a view to sign off at the end of the month.

The project will focus on:

- Assessing accessibility of defibrillators by investigating visibility, signage and availability of devices.
- Reviewing the condition and maintenance of devices to determine reliability.

- Identifying gaps in siting and upkeep across different communities in the county.

Outputs from the project will include a report of findings and the creation of materials to increase public awareness of the importance and use of defibrillators.

Same-day access to healthcare in Rutland

The new Minor Illness and Injury service began operation on April 1st at Rutland Memorial Hospital every day from 1pm to 9pm and provides:

- Booked appointments for minor illnesses, following contact with a GP practice or NHS 111
- Walk-in access for minor injuries
- Extended X-ray availability on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (11am–7pm) from 13th April 2026

HWR will continue to promote the service and ensure people know how to access it.

NHS Trust Quality Accounts

Healthwatch has a statutory role in the annual NHS Trust Quality Account process. Each Trust is required to share its draft Quality Account with the local Healthwatch for comment, and Healthwatch's statement must be included in full in the final published document. Our role is to provide an independent, patient-centred view of whether the Account reflects local experiences and priorities, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. This helps ensure that the voices of patients, carers and communities voices are reflected in the Trust's quality priorities.

Our submissions in May and June this year include a joint response with Healthwatch West Northamptonshire to the EMAS Quality Account and HWR responses to LPT and NWAFT Accounts (see papers 5, 6 and 7 of the agenda pack).

Dismantling of Healthwatch

The NHS Modernisation Bill was introduced to Parliament on 14 May following the King's Speech and received its second reading on June 1st. The Bill proposes that the functions of local Healthwatch will be absorbed into Integrated Care Boards and local authorities. During the debate, whilst the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, James Murray, defended the plans to move Healthwatch functions into other bodies, 23 MPs raised concerns, many paying tribute to the work of their local Healthwatch.

The Public Bill Committee is inviting written evidence from anyone with relevant expertise, experience or a special interest in the Bill and local Healthwatch have sent in a collective submission to the committee.

The publication of the Bill has not clarified an alternative future model for how independence, transparency or external scrutiny will be preserved when the collection of patient and service user feedback and experience becomes the remit of ICBs and local authorities.

To focus attention on this issue, HWR and HWLL are together working on a paper for the Joint LLR Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will may also be submitted to the Bill committee as evidence.

Meetings

The following is a record of the partner meetings attended during the period since the last report:

Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board	11/3/26 24/3/26 6/5/26	JU
Rutland Neighbourhood Strategy Commissioning Group (was IDG)	Monthly	TA-J
Rutland Mental Health Neighbourhood group	Monthly	TA-J
Rutland CYP Partnership	5/5/26	TA-J
Rutland Staying Healthy Partnership	24/3/26	TA-J
Rutland Dementia Delivery Plan	2/6/26	TA-J
Rutland Health Inequalities & Inclusion workshop	7/5/26 4/6/26	TA-J
RCC commissioners	9/3/26 4/6/26	TA-J
Rutland Health PCN	3/6/26 11/6/26	TA-J
LNR Joint ICB Commissioning Strategy meeting	5/5/26	JU
LNR Joint System Quality Group	19/3/26	TA-J
LLR Mental Health Collaborative	23/3/26	TA-J
LLR Transferring Care Safely	Monthly	JU
LLR Pre Hospital Model of Care Steering Group	19/3/26	TA-J
LLR Primary Care Transformation Board	21/5/26	TA-J
LLR System Engagement	13/5/26	TA-J
LLR CYP Partnership	13/5/26	TA-J
LPT/HW quarterly	13/4/26	JU

LPT Peoples Council	10/3/26	TA-J
HWR/HWLL catch-up	Monthly	JU, TA-J
HW LNR Cluster meeting	Monthly	JU, TA-J
LNR HW / ICB CEO	Every 6 weeks	JU
Local HW Response group	Monthly	TA-J
DHSC/Local Healthwatch meeting	10/6/26	TA-J
Kings Fund LHW report briefing	17/3/26	JU, TA-J
HWE Chairs meeting	14/5/26	JU

Acronyms:

ASC	Adult Social Care
CAR	Citizens Advice Rutland
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CYP (P)	Children and Young People (Partnership)
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DHU	Derbyshire Healthcare
ED	Emergency Department
EDI	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion
EMAS	East Midlands Ambulance Service
E&V	Enter and View
HOSC	Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
HWB	Health and Wellbeing Board
HWE	Healthwatch England
HWLL	Healthwatch Leicester & Leicestershire
HWP	Health and Wellbeing Partnership
HWS	Health and Wellbeing Strategy
ICB	Integrated Care Board
ICS	Integrated Care System
IDG	Integrated Delivery Group

IMP	Information M anagement system of P atient experiences – HWR feedback collection system
LDN	Local Dental Network
LHW	Local Healthwatch
LPT	Leicestershire Partnership Trust
LLR	Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
LNR	Leicester, Northamptonshire and Rutland cluster
LRI	Leicester Royal Infirmary
NEPTS	Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services – currently EMED Patient Care
NHSE	National Health Service England
NWAFT	North West Anglia Foundation Trust
OMP	Oakham Medical Practice
PCH	Peterborough City Hospital
PCN	Primary Care Network
PMS	Primary Medical Services
PPG	Patient Participation Group
RCC	Rutland County Council
RISE	Rutland Integrated Social Empowerment team
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
UEC	Urgent and Emergency Care
UHL	University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
VAR	Voluntary Action Rutland
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise