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The future of Healthwatch

The government have announced through the Daily Mail and BBC News that they want to scrap Healthwatch, which will include both Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch across the country, including Healthwatch York.

This is clearly very sad for our staff, volunteers, and everyone associated with Healthwatch York who have proudly supported local people to speak up about their experiences of health and social care.

What will replace us isn't clear. It has been suggested that local Healthwatch roles

can be absorbed into local authorities and Integrated Care Boards, and the role of Healthwatch England can become a senior manager role at the Department of Health and Social Care.

It has also been announced that people will be encouraged to share their feedback on hospital services via the NHS App.

For over 12 years, Healthwatch York has worked to bring more voices to decision making in the city. From demanding better support for people experiencing mental health crisis, to highlighting the challenges for Deaf people in accessing health and care support, they have advocated for people in York.

Our work on dentistry and access to autism and ADHD assessment pathways has been part of the national discussion about these services.

“For over 12 years, Healthwatch York has worked to bring more voices to decision making in the city.”

Continued on page 2 →

◀ **“We asked, You told us!”** The first issue of our regular magazine was published in autumn 2013.



Comment from Siân

“ WE RECEIVED THE NEWS THIS WEEK that Healthwatch will be abolished in the coming year. We are extremely disappointed to hear about this proposed change. We are concerned that it will mean an end to all independent health and social care lived experience influencing the quality and equality of care in England.

It is still early days and there is more we don't know than we do. It will take time for the government to pass the necessary legislation to make these changes. In the meantime, it is our intention to continue to work as hard as ever whilst we can to listen to and represent the people of York.

Originally, this magazine was intended to be a celebration of some of the work we have been dedicated to over the last year. In this edition we include reports and updates on the work that has already had an impact locally and will continue to do so.

We have had an amazing group of young volunteers working together to produce our **Core Connectors** report on the experiences of young people accessing health and care in York. There is an update from Grace, our T-Level student leading this work, on **page 3**.

We have re-established our care home visits this year, and hear from Louise, one of our volunteers who has been involved in the visits. We have also published our latest **Dementia Guide** – an invaluable resource for anyone experiencing memory loss and a dementia diagnosis.

We will aim to keep you informed as things develop and we hope that whatever comes next, the tremendous work of our

amazing volunteers will be recognised and supported to continue.



Siân Balsom
Healthwatch York
Manager

→ Continued from the front page

Siân Balsom, our Manager at Healthwatch York said:

“ Every day, on a shoestring budget, we've listened to people's stories; we've connected them to people and support that makes a difference to their lives; and we've raised the voices of those too often overlooked in our health and care system. We've constructively challenged partners as needed, with the power of real-life stories. The stories we share are rich in the sorts of details a service review simply can't provide. ”

Janet Wright, Chair of Healthwatch York added:

“ This is a really sad day for everyone involved with the Healthwatch network. Successive governments have said people should be at the heart of our system. But that can only really happen when that voice is independent. Self-regulation doesn't work. Independence is part of our DNA. The irony is that it has taken us a long time to establish ourselves as an equal partner in the health and care system. To lose what we've worked so hard to achieve, to lose the people who have made this the success it is, would take years to rebuild. ”

We want people in York to know that although this change has been announced, for the time being it is business as usual for the team. As we were established by legislation, new legislation is needed to abolish us. The earliest this can be introduced is the King's Speech. Although this hasn't been formally announced, this is likely to be scheduled for May 2026. The Bill will then need to pass through all the stages of the parliamentary process before it becomes law. In the meantime, we will be exploring all the options available to keep working hard for people in York.



Core Connectors update

We have been so lucky to have Jamie-Lee and Grace, our T Level students, leading the work on our Core Connectors project.

Sadly, we are saying goodbye to Jamie-Lee, who has finished her course. We have loved working with Jamie-Lee and wish her all the very best for the future!

Grace will continue to work with us over the summer, and here is her update:

“ WE HAVE COMPLETED the report based on the Young People’s Experiences of Health and Social Care survey. We presented our findings to the Health and Wellbeing Board at York Council, which was very intimidating and scary but made me feel proud that I did it. It also has helped greatly with my confidence and speaking up.

We’ve also spoken to healthcare organisations, voluntary sector groups, City of York Council, University of York and York College representatives. We had mostly positive feedback from our report and have been given advice to use with our future projects.

Our recommendations from our research are:

- Introduce cost of living support
- Reduce waiting times for mental health support
- Tackle GP and dental waiting times
- Create affordable social and community spaces
- Transition to adult services
- Improve public transport

You can read our report “Young People’s Experiences of Health and Social Care” on our website.

Based on our findings and the amount of feedback we received about mental health, we have decided to create a new survey focusing on young people’s experiences of mental health services in York.

We would love to hear from you if you are between the ages of 13 and 25, or know anyone who is, and are willing to share experiences with us, please get in touch! The link to the survey is on our website.

Engagement update from Ruth

We have run 86 stalls in the past year and three times as many people have shared their experiences of health and care with us. Thank you if you have spoken to us at a stall.

You can find us at our regular stalls:

- **Tang Hall Library:** first Monday of the month, 10am – 12pm
- **Marjorie Waite Court:** first Tuesday of the month, 1pm – 2pm
- **Haxby Library:** second Monday of the month, 10am – 12pm
- **York Explore:** second Tuesday of the month, 10.30am – 2pm
- **Spurriergate Centre:** second Wednesday of every other month including August

- **St Sampson’s:** second Wednesday of every other month including July
- **Acomb Library:** third Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12pm
- **Huntington Library:** third Thursday of the month, 2pm – 4pm
- **St Wulstan’s Church:** fourth Tuesday of the month, 12pm – 1.30pm (not August)
- **York Hospital foyer:** fourth Thursday of the month, 10.30am – 2.30pm
- **Foxwood Community Centre:** last Friday of the month, 12pm – 1.30pm
- **Clifton Library:** last Friday of the month, 2pm – 3.30pm

Come and share your experiences of local health and care services – or just say hello!

OT4me: Empowering children and families through specialist Occupational Therapy

OT4me Ltd believes every child deserves the opportunity to thrive. Their team of Specialist Occupational Therapists offer tailored assessment and intervention for children and young people across Yorkshire.

They support a wide range of needs – from sensory processing to emotional regulation and developmental trauma. They are experienced in advocating for those with neurodiversity including ADHD, autism and PDA profile.

OT4me works in close partnership with families, schools, local authorities, and health professionals, with the goal to break down barriers, build confidence, and help every child reach their potential.

A key part of their service is their specialist Attachment and Trauma Pathway. They support children who have experienced early trauma, attachment disruption, or who are adopted or in care.

They provide the following services:

- **Occupational Therapy assessment and treatment**
- **Sensory integration assessment and treatment**
- **Dyspraxia Diagnostic Service**
- **Trauma/Attachment support**
- **EHCP contribution**
- **Tribunal reports and attendance**
- **Sensory regulation sessions**
- **Room hire (SEN sensory gym)**
- **Adult autism diagnostic work**
- **Adult workplace support**
- **Bespoke training/workshops**
- **Professional supervisions and mentoring**
- **School support**

What one parent recently said:

“The communication from the enquiry stage through to the after assessment call was excellent. The report was thorough, evidencing what we needed with recommendations. There was no pressure, and the follow-up call allowed time to ask questions and clarify everything. The assessment cost is worth every penny. I would fully recommend OT4me.”

To find out more or book a free consultation:

 www.ot4me.co.uk
 **or call 01904 501601**
or 07850 535965

The OT4me logo, featuring the text 'OT4me' in a bold, sans-serif font. The '4' is stylized with a green leaf-like shape integrated into it.

Neurodiversity support for children, young people and their families in York

In January this year we published our report 'Listening to Neurodivergent Families'.

It is a collection of the experiences of families in York and provides recommendations to assist children, young people and their families in accessing assessments and support.

We wanted to share information about various organisations across York who offer neurodiversity support to children and young people. Below are some of them. For a full list including national support. See page 94 of the report on our website.

York Disability Rights Forum (YDRF)

YDRF is led by disabled people and works to promote equal access to human rights for all disabled people who live, work, or study in York. YDRF ND Parent Uprising is a project which recognises that parent of ND kids often feel isolated and alone in their experiences.

 hello@ydrf.org.uk
 <https://ydrf.org.uk>

York Inspirational Kids (YIKS)

YIKS is a group for young people and those who support them who have a learning or physical disability, autism or other neurodivergence. They offer a range of support for parents/carers and young people.

 www.yiks.co.uk

The Island

Local mentoring service for young people.

 www.theislandyork.org/how-to-support-neurodiverse-children

The Land

The Land supports families of children with high anxiety who find it difficult to leave home. They are currently creating a tranquil nature reserve offering small group sessions, parent carer meet ups, and workshops.

 info@theland.org.uk
 <https://theland.org.uk>

The Mind Garden

A support group for neurodivergent families. **The Mind Garden** offers support for children, young people and their families whether they have received a diagnosis, are on the waiting list or displaying signs of neurodivergence.

 hello@mindgardenyork.co.uk
 <https://mindgardenyork.co.uk/neurodivergent-families>

Parent Carer Forum York

An independent charity commissioned to represent the voice of parent carer lived experience in York. They represent parent carer views to Education, Health and Social Care to inform development of services for young people with additional needs aged 0-25.

 connect@pcforyork.co.uk
 www.parentcarerforumyork.org

The Place

The Place provides activities for children, young people and adults who live locally. The Place offers opportunities for all, through helping children to improve their wellbeing and mental health and grow their confidence and happiness. The Place also supports the community to access support, advice and services.

 <https://theplace.york.ac.uk/home>

Young people's services from York Mind

York Mind are now running an amazing number of services for young people. From drop-ins to podcasts, they offer a range of support in-person and online. Here is an outline of services available:

YorChoice drop in

No referral needed, just turn up!

YorChoice drop-ins take place every Monday and Thursday evening. **Each Thursday between 4 and 7 pm** they are at Highcliffe House, the home of York Mind, just off Clifton Green. On **Monday evenings** you will find them in different locations across the city, currently they are at **Clifton Explore, Rawcliffe Lane YO30 5SJ**.

If you are between 14 and 21 (25 with SEND) and are concerned about how you are feeling, or you simply want to access a safe space where you can speak to someone in confidence to ask for advice, or find out more about what support is on offer for young people in York, then come along for a chat.

No appointment is necessary, just turn up, have a cuppa and biscuit and see how they can help.

You can find out more about the drop-in and other young people's support services at:

 www.yormind.org.uk
 yorchoice@yorkmind.org.uk

Chat chit

Chat chit is a podcast discussing all things mental health. Now in its third series, all the episodes are available on the website.

Recent episodes include discussions about differing attitudes towards mental health, autism overstimulation and the power of sport in reducing stigma.

 www.yormind.org.uk/chat-chit-podcast

Yormind – www.yormind.org.uk

The **Yormind** website is an honest guide to where you can get information and support for your mental health in York.

This includes information about which services are open access or currently open to referrals, to make it as easy as possible for people to find the appropriate service for them.

Expressive Minds

Expressive Minds is a group supporting young people aged 11–18. It offers a 6-week early intervention project to support young people through a mix of art media ranging from sculpture and watercolours to collage and painting.

The group is designed to develop confidence, communication skills, self-esteem and self-expression, and to connect with others. Young people are actively supported to engage in conversations around mental health and helped to discover different positive coping strategies using a range of art media.

See the website for details, including the dates of the next course and how to refer:

 www.yormind.org.uk/mental-health-services/expressive-minds

Pride in Mind

The **Pride in Mind** group supports young people aged 12–18, who identify as LGBTQ+ and are experiencing mental health challenges.

It is a 6-week mental health support group for young people who identify

as LGBTQ+. The group is designed to offer mental health support to young people to develop confidence, share experiences, and provide support for managing the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community.

If you would like to refer you can fill out a referral form (on the website) and send it to:

✉ prideinmind@yorkmind.org.uk

You can refer yourself, or your parents, carers or other professionals can refer on your behalf.

If you have any questions about the group, please contact:

✉ sam.armstrong@yorkmind.org.uk

Young Person's Counselling

Available for young people aged 12-21. A professional can support the referral, but the young person must refer themselves.

To refer in, you can complete the referral form on the website here:

🖥 www.yorkmind.org.uk/how-we-help/refer

If you want to find out more, you can contact a member of the York Mind young people's counselling team:

☎ 01904 643364 – Option 1

✉ ypcounselling@yorkmind.org.uk



York Mind

📍 Highcliffe House, Highcliffe Court, York, YO30 6BP

☎ 01904 643364

✉ office@yorkmind.org.uk

York Mental Health Hubs

York is transforming its mental health services with the development of three new hubs.

The first hub is at **30 Clarence Street** and is now open. The second and third hubs are set to open later this year. The details are below.

→ **Hub 1: 30 Clarence Street.** Open for people to drop-in during the day only, **10am to 4pm, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.** No appointment needed.

It offers a safe and friendly space for people who need support with managing their mental health and wellbeing.

→ **Hub 2:** Based in **Acomb Garth**, this will be a brand new **24/7 hub** due to open this summer.

→ **Hub 3:** Will be based in **Burnholme/Tang Hall**, offering a daytime service. Development of this Hub has not yet started, but is expected to open later this year.

Raise York Family Hub Network

Raise York is a website full of information to support children, young people and families from pregnancy to adulthood.

The website contains an amazing range of information about activities and services available in the city for families.

Whether you are looking for holiday activities with food, advice about finance and housing or information about educational support, here is your place to start.

🖥 www.raiseyork.co.uk





Moving Minds dance project

Elaine Harvey, director of Moving Minds tells us about their dance project in York.

“ MY CAREER AS A DANCE-MAKER and facilitator spans three decades and a diverse range of settings and groups. In this time, I have witnessed the extent to which dance can transform and affirm the lives of individuals and communities. More recently I have focused on the impact of dance on the lives of people living with neurologically based conditions such as Parkinson's, MS and dementia, and this has become the focus of the Moving Minds project.

The work of Moving Minds has shown that, for people living with conditions such as dementia, participating in dance activities has several physiological and psychological benefits including stress reduction, encouraging social interaction, maximizing cognitive function and reinforcing a sense of identity.

Following a dementia related diagnosis there is often little access to holistic and

ongoing support. Moving Minds fills this gap in dementia care, helping to alleviate the physical, mental, emotional and social health challenges associated with dementia. Our classes aim to engender a creative community in which people living with dementia can continue to learn, grow and have access to high quality creative experiences.

Dancing is powerful in its ability to help people feel connected – research has shown that when people dance together with others their brains synchronize in a way that fosters a sense of connectedness, social bonding, and even elevated pain tolerance. This synchronicity, where brain waves align, can lead to feelings of closeness, trust, and belonging.

Dorothy has been attending classes in York for the past five years – she told us:

“ Moving Minds has created a positive and safe space; it is difficult to express how valuable this is for everyone. The project has created an environment in which the day-to-day struggles of dementia can be left at the door. ”

Dance is a holistic form of physical activity, and its expressive nature helps participants form close relationships and process thoughts and feelings often difficult to articulate. It removes the pressure of having to communicate and express ourselves verbally.

Sue, who has been attending the York based class for several years commented:

“ I think it’s the place where we’ve experienced more joy than any other group we’ve been to. We laugh, we feel better, we move, we sing – it’s just life transforming. ”

Ultimately, Moving Minds sessions give people the opportunity, whether they have a diagnosis or not, to experience joy, connection and friendship in an environment in which every person’s contribution is valued. **Come and give it a go! ”**

The group meets every Friday from 1.30pm–2.30pm at Clements Hall, Nunthorpe Road, York, YO23 1BW and costs £4 per session.

If you would like more information or to book a place:

07881 922343

hello@movingmindsdance.co.uk

www.movingmindsdance.co.uk



Get active at any age!

There are many ways to get active in York and there is support available to get started.

NHS Guidelines suggest that everyone should do some type of physical activity every day to improve overall health and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

For older adults, they suggest:

- be physically active every day, even if it’s just light activity
- do activities that improve strength, balance and flexibility on at least two days a week
- do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week
- reduce time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity.

If you haven’t exercised for while or if you have a medical condition or concerns, you are advised to talk to your GP first and make sure your activity and its intensity are appropriate for your fitness.

Help to get started

City of York Council (CYC) Health Trainers offer free and confidential support to help you feel happier and healthier. The support is designed around the goals that you wish to achieve. You can self-refer for support through the CYC website or contact:

01904 553377

healthtrainers@york.gov.uk

Live Well York website

A wealth of information about what is happening in York, including opportunities to exercise and socialise. There are numerous activities to help you get out and be active. If you fancy a swim, chair-based aerobics, dance, tennis, walking football or any number of other activities, you will find the details here!

www.livewellyork.co.uk

Age UK: Senior Club sessions

Age UK York has teamed up with leisure centres across York to offer active sports sessions for people over the age of 60.

→ York Leisure Centre Senior Club Session: Tuesdays 11am–1.30pm

York Leisure Centre: Weekly activity sessions specifically for older residents age 60+.

There are a range of activities including badminton, table tennis, pickleball, basic circuits and aqua sessions. You can choose what you would like to do and no experience is needed. You are very welcome to try something new!

Sessions: £5.50 per participant – discounts available with selected memberships.

→ Burnholme Sports Centre Senior Club Session: Wednesdays 10am–12pm

The **Senior Club** session offers Sports Hall activities including badminton, table tennis and pickleball for participants aged 60+.

Sessions: £6 per participant – discounts available with selected memberships.

→ Energise Leisure Centre Senior Club Session: Fridays 10.15–11.15am (subject to change in September)

Energise Leisure Centres offers sports hall activities including badminton, pickleball and exercise classes.

Sessions: £4.50 per participant – discounts available with selected memberships.

Pre-booking is required via the BETTER UK app (book Activity – Adult Group Sessions).

Attendance at the session entitles you to a free tea or coffee from the café/reception area – vouchers are provided to be used on the day received only.



Healthwatch York Dementia Guide 2025

The Healthwatch York Dementia Guide update is out and available now!

The guide contains information about what is out there for people with dementia and their carers in York.

In this edition, we have also included information about support in the community, being in hospital with dementia, and the support provided by North Yorkshire police for people at risk of going missing.

There is an online version available on our website or contact us for a printed copy.



Healthwatch York Care Home visits – insights from Louise, a care home assessor

In December last year Healthwatch York re-started its programme of visiting care homes and reporting back a 'snapshot' of life in that care or nursing home.

Since then, a team of volunteers has visited a different care home each month and produced a report based on their observations, conversations with residents and feedback from staff and residents' family and friends. The aim is to visit every care home in York.



Our volunteer care home assessor Louise agreed to give us some thoughts and insights about her visits to care homes in York.

“ IN THE PAST when I visited care homes to see relatives or friends, it often occurred to me that some residents led very isolated lives. They didn't leave the home and had few or no visitors. I wondered who would look after their interests, who would know or act if they were unhappy with their care.

For this reason, I was pleased to become a volunteer care home assessor with Healthwatch York. I have very much enjoyed chatting with older people who, reassuringly for the most part, have been very satisfied with the care they receive.

The announced visits by a small team of volunteers are not onerous. They usually begin with some information about the home from a manager followed by a tour of the facilities and then most of our time is spent seeking the views of residents and sometimes visitors (who, along with staff,

have other opportunities to contribute). The team on the day usually works in pairs.

Before leaving, we meet with the manager again to give verbal feedback, raise any concerns and clarify anything we are unsure about.

The collected data is compiled to produce a report, available on the Healthwatch York website and sent to appropriate organisations.

During the visits I have met a wide variety of people, and it has helped me realise that if I needed residential care, easy access to a garden and the kindness of staff would matter the most. I've also learned more about the staff who provide care. I never imagined that some would travel by bus from Hull for a 12-hour shift and then get a bus home.

If you enjoy a good chat, care about the provision in York and have a day a month to share, I'd encourage you to volunteer too.

If you are interested in becoming a care home assessor, please get in touch.



“ The visits ... helped me realise that if I needed residential care, easy access to a garden and the kindness of staff would matter the most. ”

Looking after your brain health – tips from **Dementia Forward**

Dementia Forward provides expert support, advice, and information to people experiencing memory problems, or living with a dementia diagnosis, and their carers, across York and North Yorkshire.

Here they offer some tips about looking after your brain health

Keep your heart healthy

What's good for the heart is good for the brain! A healthy heart improves blood flow to the brain, reducing the risk of stroke, cognitive impairment, and vascular dementia. So, make sure you keep to your regular blood pressure and cholesterol checks.

Eat a balanced diet

A nutritious diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can support brain function. Avoid excessive saturated fats and sugars, as they contribute to high cholesterol and obesity, which can negatively affect brain health.

Stay physically active

Exercise is one of the most effective ways to promote brain health. Physical activity improves circulation, reduces stress, and helps prevent conditions like Type 2 diabetes, which is a known risk factor for dementia. Even light activities make a difference, such as walking, gardening, or having a kitchen disco!

Drink responsibly

Limiting alcohol intake is crucial, as excessive drinking is linked to cognitive decline. Stick to government guidelines of no more than 14 units per week.

Eyesight and hearing

Make sure your eyesight is as good as can be by getting your eyes

checked and making sure you have the right prescription. The same with your hearing. Get your hearing checked and, if you have hearing aids, wear them! Being able to see and hear supports your social connection, which is important for brain health.

Keep your mind and social life active

Keeping your brain active through reading, puzzles, or learning a new skill is great for cognition. Social engagement reduces feelings of isolation and helps maintain emotional well-being, so engage in hobbies and socialise with friends – perhaps even do some volunteering! You can also go along to a Brain Health café. Contact Dementia Forward to find out more.



While there is no guaranteed way to prevent dementia, making small but meaningful changes to our daily routine can help significantly improve cognitive function and reduce our risk of developing dementia.

These changes can also help to support you to continue to live well if you are experiencing signs of dementia.

If you or a loved one are experiencing memory problems, confusion, or difficulties with daily tasks, it is important to seek medical advice.

Visiting a doctor for an assessment can help determine the next steps, and taking a trusted person along can be beneficial when it comes to explaining symptoms and observations.

Dementia Forward is your local dementia support charity, so please call the Helpline if you need any advice, support or information relating to dementia. The charity has a team of Dementia Support Advisors in York, who support people living with dementia or experiencing memory problems and who will help find the right services for you.

You do not need to have a diagnosis to access support from Dementia Forward.

Helpline: 03300 578592

www.dementiaforward.org.uk

**Dementia
Forward**

CYC Domestic abuse prevention initiatives

Shannon Cole, domestic abuse engagement officer within City of York Council's public health team, invites you to get involved in the current domestic abuse prevention initiatives:

Domestic abuse awareness sessions

Supporting those who help others (staff or volunteers in a professional or non-professional capacity) become increasingly aware of what domestic abuse is, how to spot the signs of abuse among the people they are supporting, how to appropriately respond to a disclosure of domestic abuse and what local support is available.

To book an awareness session for your organisation or as a group of helpers from different organisations or find out more about the sessions, please email:

 **publichealth@york.gov.uk**

Survivor voice survey

Hearing from domestic abuse survivors themselves in a new survivor voice survey. The survey is anonymous and asks questions about survivors' experiences of disclosing their abuse as well as their experience of specialist services within York. Results from the survey will be used to understand pinch points in referral pathways and gaps in service provision to inform future decision making.

You can take part in the survivor voice survey (or share it with anyone you think may be interested) by scanning the QR code below or picking up a paper copy with a pre-paid envelope from any Explore Library or Family Hub.



Making sure GP practices are accessible

Following our 2024 GP report, Exploring Access to GP Services in York, we explored some of the issues you raised a bit more.

You told us that sometimes GP practice websites are not accessible or it is not easy to find the information you need and that GP surgeries are not always physically accessible. So, between November 2024 and early February 2025, our team of wonderful volunteers audited all 11 GP practice websites and 33 GP surgeries in and around York.

For both audits the volunteers had a set of information to find, or questions to answer. The audits provided lots of good practice and some practical, often low cost, ideas for improvements that GP practices could make.

Recommendations for GP websites included:

- Improve colour contrast to ensure text is clear for all users.
- There should be multiple ways for contacting the practice so that people without IT access or those who can't use the phone can still easily get in touch.
- Remove visual clutter so it is easy for people to find information.
- Include guidance on how to use forms.
- Provide accessibility options on the website – to enlarge text, change colours, speak the text or translate information into different languages.

Recommendations for GP surgeries included:

- Make sure all signage is clear and easy to read for everyone including about how to get in if someone can't use the main entrance.
- Provide good colour contrast between walls, floor and seating to make it easier for blind and partially sighted people to identify the seating.

- Make sure waiting areas are quiet. Don't have the radio or music on as this can make waiting difficult for some people. Or have a quiet waiting area/ space and clear information about how someone can access it.
- Make sure that there is a clear, safe path for people to use to walk to the surgery entrance from both the pavement and car park.
- Make sure patient records are up to date with patients' reasonable adjustments, preferred format for printed information and any language needs.
- Let patients who need interpreters know how to be sure they have an interpreter booked for their appointment.
- Work with patients who are wheelchair and powerchair users to make sure that the surgery, waiting areas, lifts and consultation rooms are accessible for them.
- Always ask patients what works for them. Use the information you collect about people's reasonable adjustments to ask them if there is anything else that could help them comfortably and safely attend appointments.

The full reports are available on the Healthwatch York website. Copies have been shared with GP practices alongside reports for each individual practice.

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Dr Fiona Lloyd, GP Partner at Dalton Terrace GP Practice said:

“Thank you so much for all your tremendous work on seeking the views of our patients and other service users, both on the general quality of GP services, and more recently access and websites. The website is under review, and we will definitely have a closer look at our signage and door access. **”**

A big thank you to all the volunteers involved in the audits.

Endo Buddies: kindness, support and hope for those living with endometriosis



Endo Buddies is a registered charity that was set up in 2019 by their founder & Chief Kindness Officer, Katy, who spent 21 years fighting for an endometriosis diagnosis.

That long and painful journey inspired her to ensure no one else would have to feel as lost and alone as she once did.

Endometriosis affects 1 in 10 women and people assigned female at birth, yet diagnosis still takes an average of 8 years and 10 months. Many feel dismissed, unsupported, and left to cope alone – often in agonising pain. That’s where Endo Buddies steps in.

The charity’s flagship project is the **Surgery Care Package Project**, offering thoughtful, practical support to those undergoing endometriosis-related surgery. These “**hugs in a box**” include items like sleep masks, peppermint tea (for post-op gas pain), positive affirmations, fidget toys, and a

.....
“Many [living with endometriosis] feel dismissed, unsupported, and left to cope alone – often in agonising pain. That’s where Endo Buddies steps in.”
.....

helpful questions card to use with medical staff – because brain fog after anaesthetic is real. Over 1,200 care packages have been sent out to date, and the demand continues to grow.

Endo Buddies also provides vital mental health support, partnering with **Shout** to offer a **free 24/7 text service**. **Text: ENDO to 85258**. Their 2023 mental health survey revealed that 97.5% of respondents said endometriosis had negatively affected their mental health, and over 53% had experienced thoughts about ending their lives because of it. This underlines just how urgently better care and support are needed.

Registered as a charity in 2023, Endo Buddies is now working with hospitals across Yorkshire to ensure more patients feel seen, heard, and cared for.

To donate, request a care package, or find out how to partner with us, visit:

 **hello@endobuddies.com**
 **www.endobuddies.com**

Together, we can make sure no one faces endometriosis alone.



Feeling anxious or worried?

Text ENDO to 85258

for free, confidential support, 24/7



in partnership with

shout

Contact us

How to get in touch

Pop in and see us at:

Healthwatch York
15 Priory Street
YO1 6ET

📞 01904 621133

✉️ healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk

Send us a letter

Healthwatch York
FREEPOST RTEG-BLES-RRYJ
15 Priory Street
YO1 6ET

Go online

Visit our new more accessible website
which includes an E-reader and can
translate information into different
languages:

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