

Citizens' Assembly

Presented by:
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Community Waits issues raised by CA members

Community Leg Clubs

Limited availability and long waits

Chiropody

Restricted access for non-urgent cases

Wound Care

Difficult to get (GPs not providing wound care, reliance on community nurses)

Transport

Barriers to accessing community services

Occupational Therapy

Delays impacting independence at home

Mental Health

Long waits for community-based support

Physiotherapy

Significant waiting times for rehab services

Transport

Barriers to accessing community services

Speech and Language Therapy

Long waits for communication support

Equipment Provision

Wheelchairs, profiling beds etc. often delayed or unavailable

Nail cutting Services

Lack of access for vulnerable patients

Key Healthwatch Findings / Reports:

The Public's Perspective (Healthwatch England):

- ▶ In their “Public's perspective” report, they found many people face **long delays getting mental health support** in community settings. [Healthwatch](#)
- ▶ In that report, people also said that when they were on waiting lists for planned medical procedures, they often **didn't get enough support** while waiting — not just medically, but more holistic support (social, financial, mental). nds.healthwatch.co.uk
- ▶ They highlight that **inequalities** matter: some groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, lower income, disabled people) are more likely to experience worse waiting times. [Healthwatch+1](#)

Hidden Waiting Lists: GP Referrals:

- ▶ Healthwatch published a briefing on **hidden waiting lists**, particularly around GP referrals. Many patients wait for their referral to be processed, but don't always get good communication, or support, or even clarity on timescales. nds.healthwatch.co.uk
- ▶ They recommend better referral-process transparency, giving patients referral letters, estimated waiting times, and more choice in appointment settings.

Health Disparities Report / Inequality:

- ▶ Healthwatch has consistently called for **action on inequalities** in waiting times. E.g., in 2022 they said that waiting list burdens disproportionately affect women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, and those on low incomes. [Healthwatch](#)

Challenges



Normalisation of Long Waits: There's a concern (from NHS Providers) that very long waits (52+ weeks) are becoming "normal" in community services, especially for children. [nhsproviders.org](https://www.nhsproviders.org)

Strain on the System: As demand increases (rising referrals), community services are under more pressure. [nhsproviders.org](https://www.nhsproviders.org)

Health Inequalities: Healthwatch argues that simply having a long waiting list isn't enough — we need to understand **who** is waiting the longest, and ensure resources are focused where they are needed most. [Healthwatch](https://www.healthwatch.org.uk)

Support During Wait: Many patients don't feel supported while they wait: they ask for better communication, more holistic care (social, mental), and more useful info / signposting. [nds.healthwatch.co.uk+1](https://www.nds.healthwatch.co.uk+1)

Referral Processing: Hidden waiting times at the referral stage contribute significantly to delays — not just the "official" wait from being on a waiting list. [nds.healthwatch.co.uk](https://www.nds.healthwatch.co.uk)

Key Themes

Inequality is a big issue

Communication gaps matter

Support while waiting “waiting well”

Ownership patient control

Monitoring and transparency

Health impacts of waits