Timeline

What we know so far

healthwatch Derbyshire

June 2025

The government announced that it planned to close Healthwatch. They said our work would be taken over by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the NHS.

July 2025

We joined 130 other local Healthwatch to sign an open letter to the Secretary of State, Wes Streeting. The letter asked the government to rethink the proposals and set out our concerns.

August 2025

Local Healthwatch launched a public petition asking the government to review the decision to close independent Healthwatch, and to protect the public's independent voice in health and social care.

October 2025

Local Healthwatch had an update meeting. We were told to expect a draft bill to go to Parliament between January and March 2026. This bill is expected to:

- Officially close Healthwatch
- Close NHS England
- Change how Integrated Care Boards work
- Make changes to health and social care laws.

November 2025

The government confirmed that NHS restructures and redundancies will go ahead. This was announced in Wes Streeting's NHS Providers Conference speech.

November 2025

The public petition passed 10,000 signatures. As this reached over 10,000 signatures, the government provided a response.

December 2025

Louise Ansari, the CEO of Healthwatch England, stepped down on 16 December 2025. Chris McCann will lead Healthwatch England until the organisation closes.

Early 2026

Healthwatch Chairs and Chief Officers will have an update meeting early 2026. We expect to learn a lot more at this meeting.

Spring 2026

We expect more information about Healthwatch's future in the King's Speech. We do not yet know the date of this but we expect this to be in Spring 2026.

Ongoing in 2026

The King's Fund is working in partnership with Healthwatch England to explore what can be learned from the Healthwatch model. This includes what has worked well, what the challenges have been and what, if anything, could be done differently in the future.

Early 2027

Once a new Bill is introduced, it is expected to take about a year to pass through parliament and become law. This means the new law and system could come into place in early 2027.