

What matters most Annual Report 2017-18



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About us



Healthwatch is here to make care better.

We speak up for people who use health and **social care** services.



Social care is where you are supported to live independently at home or in a care home.



There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England.

We listen to the views of local people.

We share these views with professionals to improve services.



We encourage services to involve people in deciding how they should improve.



Our vision

Our vision is what we want for the future.



We want health and social care services that help people to:

- Stay well



- Get the most out of services



- Look after their own health



Our purpose

Our purpose is what Healthwatch should do.

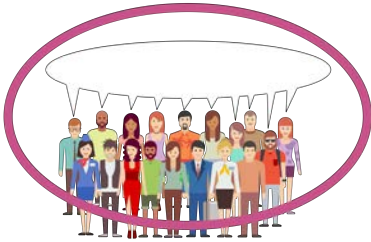


We want to find out what matters to you. So that your views help to improve the service you get.



Our approach

Our approach means how we do our work.



The views of people who use services are the most important thing for us.

Especially the views of people who find it hardest to be heard.

Our aims

Our aims are the things that we want to do over the next 5 years.



- We want more people to get information about how to have their say



By 2023 we want over 1 million people to share their views, or get information from us each year



- We want to provide a high quality service ourselves



- We want more services to listen to the views of people

How we work

Local Healthwatch staff and volunteers find out what local people think by:



- Surveys



- Meeting people



- Working with other organisations



We try to get more information about problems and think about ways to make it better.



We write reports about issues.



We tell the government and health and care managers how they should do things better.

You spoke. We did something



Last year:

- Over 400,000 people told us what they thought
- We wrote over 2,000 reports about ways we want health and care services to improve



People wanted:

- Better information to make the right choices



- Easier access to support



- Doctors to explain things better



- Services that work well together



Seeing your local doctor

People said they want it to be easier to see their local doctor.



We are helping local GPs understand how they could do this better.



Healthy teeth in care homes

People in care homes told us they did not get help to keep their teeth healthy.



We spoke to the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Now the CQC checks on the health of people's teeth when they inspect care homes.



Government's plans for social care

The government is getting ready to write its plans for social care.

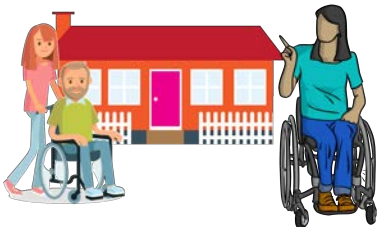


We have told the government that their plans need to:

- Be easy to understand



- Give people enough information to plan their own care



- Give people a choice of different types of social care



- Make it easy to understand how much social care costs



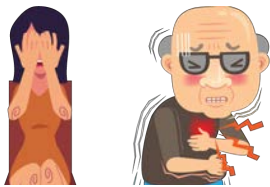
- Show how carers and families are supported



Mental health

People told us that they want:

- Clear information about the help they can have
- Mental health to be as important as physical health
- Good quality care
- To be able to see a specialist easily
- To be involved in decisions



The CQC now says that local health services should involve Healthwatch when they plan changes to their services.



We have a new project to look at the mental health of women around the time that they give birth.



Medications

The NHS wants to stop letting people have certain medicines on prescription from their pharmacy.



They want people to pay for these medicines themselves.



Many people said that they could not afford to pay.



We told the NHS and they have decided that certain people should still be able to get these medicines for free from their pharmacy.



New technology

Technology is new gadgets and ways of doing things with phones, computers and televisions.



People want the NHS to use the best new technology in the future.



But people want a chance to say what new technology is working well and what is not.



Getting treatment in Hospital

Lots of people told us that they often had to go back into hospital soon after leaving it.



Many people went back into hospital just 2 days after leaving it.



We spoke to the NHS.

They are now:

- Looking into this problem, to try and find better ways of working
- Going to keep a check on how many people go back into every hospital



Helping you find answers



People ask Healthwatch for help in getting information about their health and care.



Last year we helped over 700,000 people get information.

People are asking us for information about:

Social Care

- Care homes
- Care at home
- Support for carers





Local doctors (GPs)

- What services they can get locally
- How to change doctors



Hospitals

- What support you can get when you leave hospital



- Information from hospital services



- If you can have a choice about which hospital you go to and the treatment you get

Supporting you to speak up



We help people to speak up about what they think about health and social care services.



Over 400,000 told us about things that have happened to them.



Every year we have a ‘Speak up’ campaign. Last year many more people took part and told us what they thought about services.

Helping people to speak up

Often the people who get the worst health and care services are the people who find it harder to speak up.



We have been working to help people who find it the hardest to speak up to give their views.



These include people who are:

- Disabled



- Older



- Pregnant



- Homeless



- Facing drug or alcohol problems



- From a black or minority ethnic background

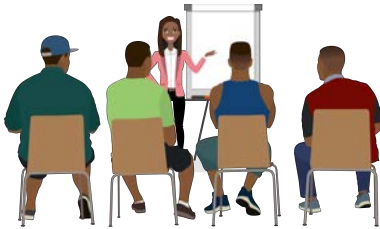


- Transgender



Providing a high quality service

We want to make sure that our staff and volunteers have the skills and support they need to do a great job.



We have been:

- Providing training for staff and volunteers



- Running a national conference for staff and volunteers



- Improving our computer systems so people can work better



- Holding regional meetings so that our staff and volunteers can work together better

The year ahead



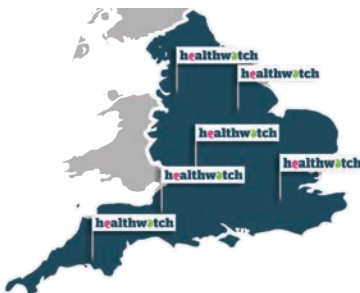
This year we will:

- Welcome our new chair: Sir Robert Francis
- Launch our strategy, which explains more about what we want to do over the next few years
- Carry on sharing the views of many thousands of people with the government when they are making their plans for social care



We plan to:

- Support more people to have their say
- Improve the quality of work of Healthwatch staff around the country
- Make people's voices count



For more information

If you want more information please contact us by:



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