



Loud and Clear: Making your voice heard

What Healthwatch England did in 2013 – 2014



Easy Read version of Healthwatch England
Annual Report 2013-2014

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Who we are

Healthwatch England is the independent organisation that helps people speak up about health and social care.



We speak up for adults and children.

We make sure the government, NHS, health and social care services listen to the people who use them.



We tell them when things need to change to make sure people get good care.



We also support local Healthwatch in 152 council areas in England.



What we want to see happen

We want people to have good health and social care services that listen to them and understand what they need.



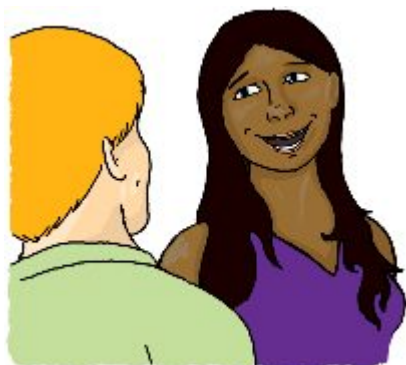
This means people will be involved in planning services.



They will have a say on what services should look like and the care they receive.

How we will make this happen

We will:



- listen to people and find out what health and social care services are like for them



- say how services need to change to give people the care they need



- help people get the best care

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- work with local Healthwatch to make services better for people in their area.

How we are run

We are run by a group of people called a **committee**.



They check we are working properly and also talk to people and find out what they think.



They try to listen to people who are often left out.



They use what people say to help them plan our work.

About this report



This is our second report to tell Parliament what we did in the past year.

Last year we said some people are just pleased to get a service. People say things are ok when they really need to change.



We said the main things we would work on in 2013 – 2014 would be:

- help health and social care services to hear what people think and need
- make sure services take people's complaints seriously.



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We also said we would help set up local Healthwatch groups.



We are still quite new but this report shows we are already changing things by:

- getting complaints taken seriously



- making people's voices heard across England



- making people's voices heard in their local areas



- listening to what people say they want from health and social care services.

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The main things we did last year

1. Made it easier to complain

Listening to patients can help services give better care and save lives. But many people do not know how to complain or are not listened to.



Health and social care services are changing things because we:



- told them making complaints is too complicated



- worked with government organisations to make it easier to complain



- showed it is hard to get support to speak up from an advocacy service



- told the government what it is like for people who want to complain.



Some stories about how things are changing:

Healthwatch Rotherham helped 3 people complain about care in a hospital stroke unit. The NHS trust agreed to make sure they always have enough staff on duty.



In Camden ‘secret shoppers’ found out not many GPs had clear information about how to complain.



Their report showed what changes they need to make, and GPs have started giving people better information.

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2. Made people’s voices heard across England



Local Healthwatch groups tell us what people in their area think about health and social care services.



We also look at national information and try to listen to people who often get left out.



Some stories about how we acted on what people told us:

We made sure the **media** (TV, radio and newspapers) said what patients thought about health issues in news stories.



For example, people having to wait too long to see a GP.



We collected information about how difficult it is for many people to see an NHS dentist to show the government.



40 local Healthwatch groups told us people were worried about **care.data**, a new way to share patient information.

Now this will not happen until the NHS answers their questions and gives people better information.



We started the inquiry into when people leave hospital because local Healthwatch said this was a real problem.



The inquiry helped people tell their stories.



We found many people are at risk because they do not get the right care when they leave hospital.



They often have to go back into hospital again quickly.



3. Made people's voices heard in their local areas

We helped local Healthwatch to get started in local areas.



We shared our ideas and training so they know how to help local people speak up.

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It was a big job to set up local Healthwatch in 152 areas. They listen to what local people think about health and social care and tell services what needs to change.



The stories on the next pages show how they listened and acted when people told them about poor services.



A mother said her daughter waited 3 months to find out if she had autism.

Healthwatch Cornwall talked to other families and told the council and NHS they needed better services.



There is now a special team to make sure children get the right support.



Lots of families told Healthwatch Reading they were worried about the care people get in their homes.



They collected stories about poor care and showed them to the council.



The council agreed they would only buy care services that paid staff well and gave them training and time to do the job well.



Families in Wakefield were worried about their older relatives in Queen Elizabeth House.



They contacted local Healthwatch who were shocked by what they saw there. They reported the service for giving poor, unsafe care.



A new manager started the next day and things got better very quickly.



Families said it was good to know that someone listened and acted when they were worried.

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The law says local Healthwatch can go into services and ask what people think about their care.



This is called **‘Enter and View’**. It means they can listen to people who often get left out.

We will make sure local Healthwatch know how to do this properly.

These stories show how **‘Enter and View’** can make services better:



Healthwatch Luton asked patients how GPs could make their services better. Volunteers visited every GP surgery and also spoke to 1,000 patients.



They sent a copy of their report to every GP.



Most patients thought it should be easier to get into buildings, have information in a language you understand and book to see a GP.



Some changes have already happened and Healthwatch Luton are working with GPs to make other things better.



Healthwatch Bradford heard the Accident and Emergency service had sent people home with serious things wrong with them.

They spent an evening in the hospital to find out what was happening.



They found people were not given privacy or respect and there were not enough staff.



When The Care Quality Commission checked the hospital, they listened to what patients said and looked at Accident and Emergency.



The care was so poor that the hospital got a warning and had to get more staff and treat patients better.



Healthwatch Bradford will go back this year and check things are better for patients.



4. Listening to what people say about health and social care

Everything we do is based on what people who use services and carers tell us is important to them.

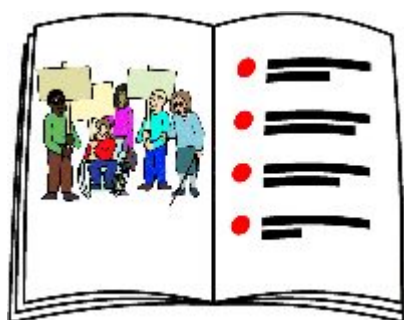


We listened to what people told us about health and social care services and used it to change our plans.

You can see how we did this in the last part of this report.



People said our work on patients' rights helps them understand what they should get from services.



The next pages explain these rights. We call them **consumer principles**.

Consumer principles



If you bought something in a shop and it did not work, you would probably take it back.



But people often just put up with poor health or social care services.

We asked 500 people about their rights as customers of health and social care services.



Our **consumer principles** say what people expect from services.



Some of these are also legal rights.

1. You should get the important services you need



People said they want good treatment and care that stops things going wrong and makes you healthier.



2. You should be able to use services

People want to have the same right to use the same care services when they need them, in a way that works for you and your family.



3. You should get respect and a good safe service

People want to get good safe services that help you feel better and good about yourself.



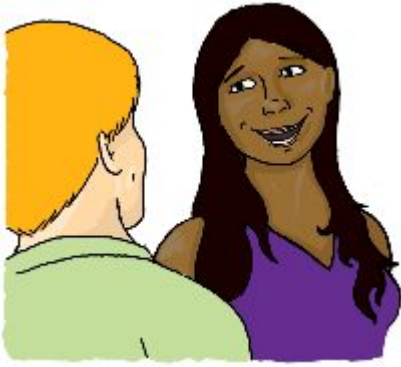
4. You should have information and learn

Everyone should know about their rights and what you should get from health and social care services.



5. You should be able to choose

People want the right to a choice of good equipment and services for health and social care.



6. You should be listened to

People want the right to be listened to if they are worried and support to complain. Services should do something about it.



7. You should be involved

People want to be involved in decisions about their own care and about health and social care services in their area.



8. You should be able to live somewhere safe and healthy

Lots of different things can make you ill or keep you healthy.



People want the right to live somewhere that helps you stay healthy and safe.

The most important things for us to work on next year

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Healthwatch England

In 2014 – 2015 Healthwatch England will:

Keep making it easier for people to complain



- Write a report for the government about how to make complaints and advocacy better.
- Work with Citizen's Advice to put clear information about how to complain on local Healthwatch websites. We will also help local Healthwatch support people who want to complain.



Make sure people at risk get the right support when they leave hospital



- Involve patients who were not safe when they left hospital in planning how to make things better.



- Use our legal powers to say what needs to change.



Involve people in shaping services they need

- Support local people to get involved, especially people who often get left out.

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- Support local Healthwatch to get involved with other groups that make decisions about health and social care services.



- Support local Healthwatch to make sure councils and the NHS use their shared money to make services work for local people.





Make sure health and care services listen to people's worries

- Train and support local Healthwatch to speak up for people who use services.



- Look at problems that affect people all over England.

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Make the Healthwatch network stronger



- Give each local Healthwatch group the support they need.



- Help them support local people to get involved with the new way the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** checks services.

Local Healthwatch

In 2014 – 2015, local Healthwatch will look at:



- Mental health services.



- GP services.



- Health services in the community.



- People leaving hospital.



- Residential care.

They will also look at other things that are problems in their area.

Thank you



We would like to thank all the people and organisations that are helping us make sure people get the health and social care services they need.

How to contact us



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