



## Speak up

What Healthwatch England did in 2016-2017



EasyRead version of:  
**Speak up. Healthwatch  
Annual report 2016 – 2017**



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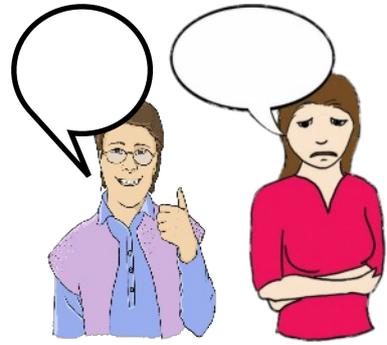
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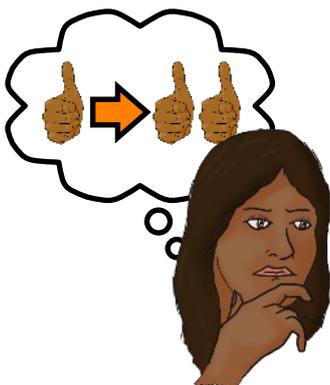
Healthwatch England is the organisation that helps people speak up about health and social care.



We are **independent**, this means we are not part of health or **social care** services.



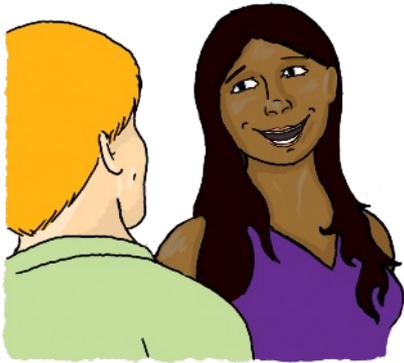
**Social care** is support to live at home and includes things like day centres and social workers.



We find out what people think about services and how to make them better.



There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. They find out what local people need and tell us.



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

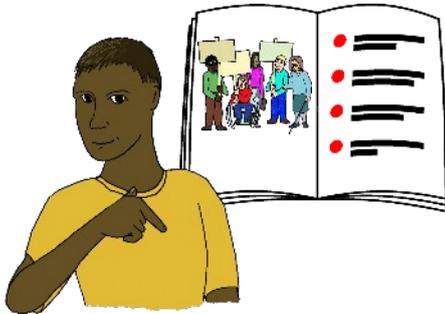


We also give local Healthwatch advice and training to do their jobs better.

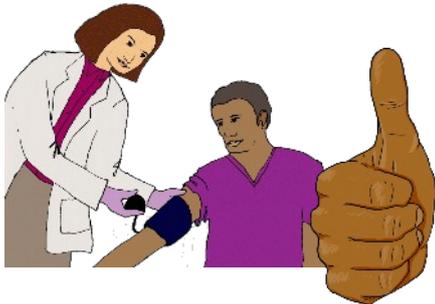


A committee or group manages Healthwatch. They check our plans and make sure we do our work well.

# Our Principles



When we started in 2012 we asked people what they expected from health and care services.



From what you told us we wrote our 8 Consumer Principles:

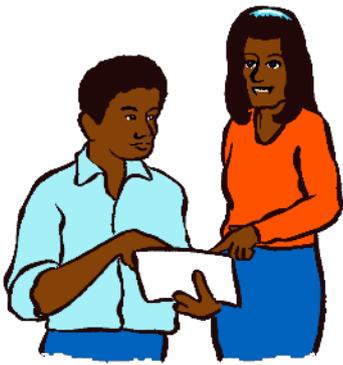
**1. You should get the important services you need**



**2. You should be able to use services**



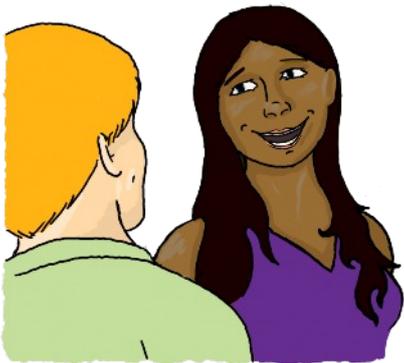
**3. You should get respect and a good safe service**



**4. You should have information and learn**



**5. You should be able to choose**



**6. You should be listened to**



**7. You should be involved**



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

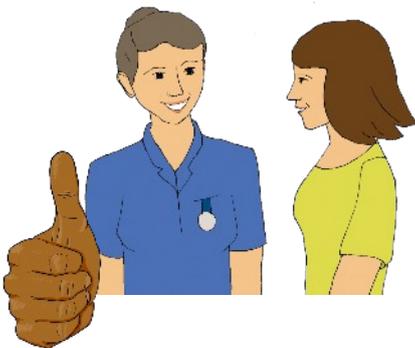
# What we do



We have helped people speak up to make health and social care services better since 2013.



We try to involve people who often get left out because we know listening makes services better.



We think that services have got better at listening to what people need and want but this needs to happen more.



In the last year 341,000 people told local Healthwatch what they think about services, they said:

- they want to see better mental health services



- they want to be able to get the help they need from health and social care services when they need it



- that services need to give the help that is right for each person.



Over the next year we will make sure people know how to speak up and tell services what they think.



# What people think about services



Health and social care services have to support more people. If they need to change things, they must think about what people need and want.



These are the things people told us about.

## Mental health services

1 in every 4 people in the UK needs support for their mental health. People want services that:

- understand mental health and give you support quickly before things get too bad

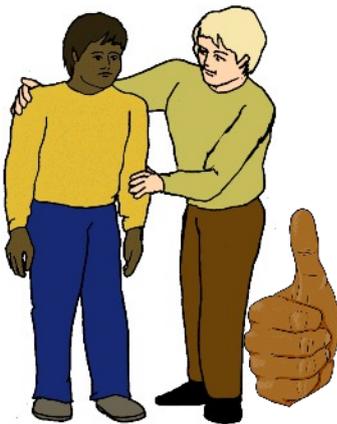




- involve you in decisions about your care



- make sure you see the same person each time



- give you good support if you need help urgently.



The government is giving mental health services more money. Services must make sure they use it to give people support when they need it.



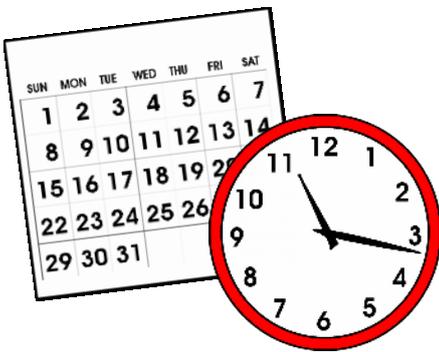
## Primary care

Primary care includes your GP and dentist. They are usually the first people you see if you have a problem with your health.



More people told us about primary care last year than any other services:

- some people wait too long to see a doctor or dentist



- people want to know about opening times, booking appointments or how to get on a GP list.



Only 2 in every 10 people we spoke to told their GP what they think of their service.



We will make sure people know how to say what they think.



## Hospital care

Lots of people visit or stay in hospital every year. We spoke to some of these people and they said that:



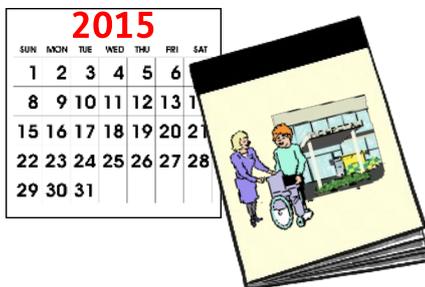
- it can be difficult to get to some hospitals or park there



- you can have to wait too long in Accident and Emergency



- you often do not get enough support when you go home from hospital.



In 2015 we wrote a report about better support when patients leave hospital.



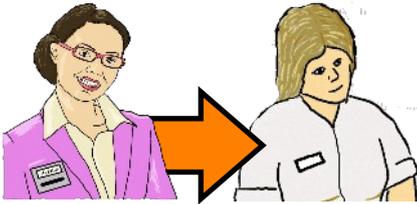
We will keep working to make sure hospital staff send patients home safely with the right information and support.

## Social care

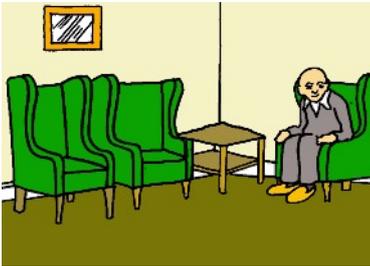


Many people in Britain live in care homes or have support to live at home. It is important for people to say what they think about these services.

People said:



- staff can keep changing or are not trained enough



- some care home do not feel like home. They should be safe, comfortable and part of the community



- if you live in a care home it can be difficult to get services like a GP or dentist.



It is important to get these things right and we will tell people how to speak up about these services.



## What different people think about care

People need different support to stay well and be as independent as possible. We asked people who often get left out if they have problems using services.



People over 65 said:



- hospital staff, patients and families should be better at talking to each other



- some staff are impatient with older people



- it is difficult to see their GP when they need to



- some get poor care at home or in care homes.



People under 25 said:



- it is difficult to see a GP or doctor



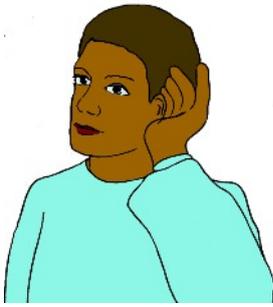
- health services do not take mental health problems seriously



- reception staff can be unhelpful



- young carers want more support.



# How we make sure services listen

## Making local services better



### Dementia

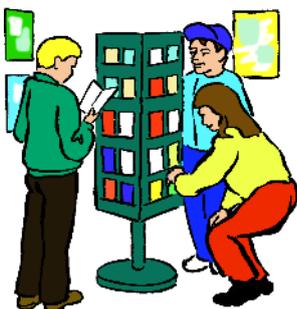
Dementia is an illness in the brain. It affects memory, the way you think and the way you act. Most people with dementia are over 65 but young people can get it too.



People with dementia and their families told local Healthwatch they want:

- better care and treatment as early as possible

### Information



- good information about services and support



- staff and services that understand the support they need.



We published a report so services could understand what they could do better.



## **Young autistic people**

There are about half a million autistic people in England.



33 local Healthwatch helped us write a report about children and young people with autism.



People and their families told us they need:

- GPs and schools that understand autism



- to find out more quickly if someone has autism and get the right support



- better support for families and carers



- health and care services that work well together.

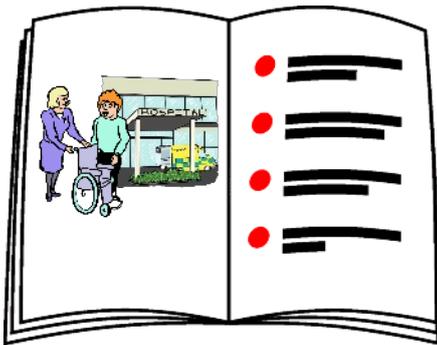


Some GPs are using these ideas to make it easier for people and their families to see a doctor.

# Planning for better health and care

## Leaving hospital

People need the right support to go home from hospital when they are ready. People have told us that there are things that are not good about leaving hospital. For example, leaving hospital taking too long or not getting the right support when you are home.



This year we worked on guides to help staff make sure patients go home safely. Local Healthwatch also checked how this is working in their area.

## Dentists

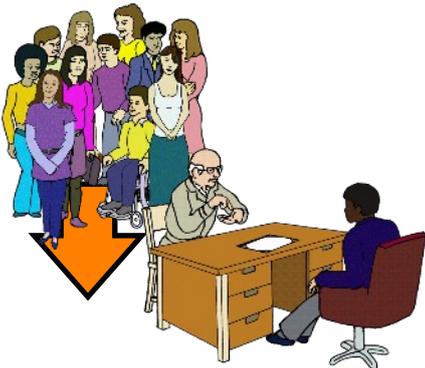
1 in 5 people cannot see an NHS dentist when they need to.



If people have good information and regular check ups it can keep their teeth healthy for longer.



We wrote a report to help dentists understand what could be better – especially for people who often miss out on dental care.



## Complaints

We have found out that only a few people complain about a poor service.



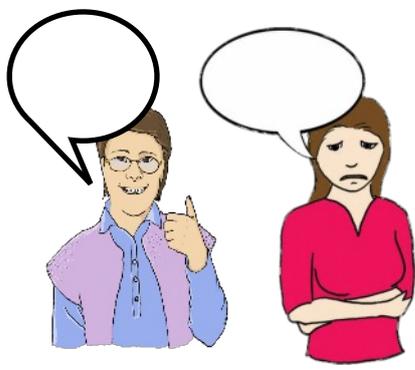
We think when complaints are dealt with well it helps a service get better.



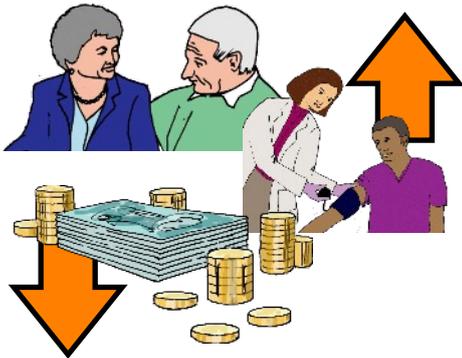
This year we have worked to help make it easier to complain.



Local Healthwatch have also worked to help the local NHS to better deal with complaints.



# Supporting people to speak up



## Changing services

People are living longer and need more health and social care. But services have less money and need to make big changes.



We told people about NHS plans for services to work together to save money and give good care.



We asked what people think about the plans so the NHS can use these ideas to decide what to do.



Our guide for NHS staff says there are 5 steps to involve people in these plans:

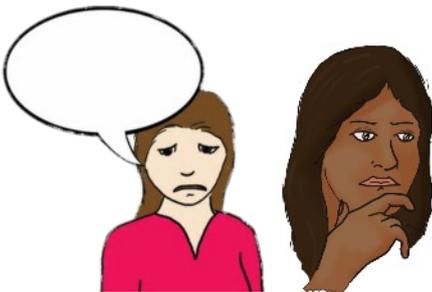
**1. Say why things need to change**



**2. Involve people from the start**



**3. Find out who will be affected and what they think**



**4. Give people time to think and speak up**



**5. Explain how they will use people's ideas and check how the changes affect them.**



We held workshops to talk about how to involve people in changes to health and social care.



We used our 'SpeakUp for Better Care' campaign to tell people how to get involved.



## Helping people find services



Last year local Healthwatch helped about 176 thousand people find the support they need.



Healthwatch Essex got an award for their information service.



More people use their website or phone to ask for help with things like GP services, care plans and community services than the year before.



This information also helps health and care services understand if people have problems using them.



# The most important things to do next



When people tell us what they think about services it helps make care better.

But people say there is still a lot of work to do.



We are planning what to do next and will involve the public, our staff and other people who work with us.



We need to ask more people but, so far, the most important things to work on are:

- Making sure people get the information they need to make good choices about their health and social care
- Make Healthwatch stronger so it can work with even more people



- Make sure people's ideas are used by services to make care better.



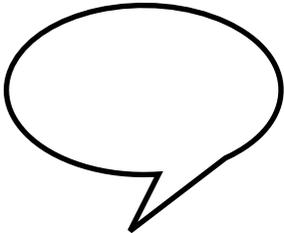
Next year we will tell everyone about our new plan to help even more people get involved and make care better.



Thank you to all the people and organisations that helped us make sure people get the health and social care services they need.



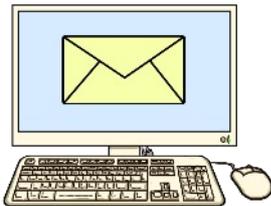
# More information



If you want to ask us anything about this report, please



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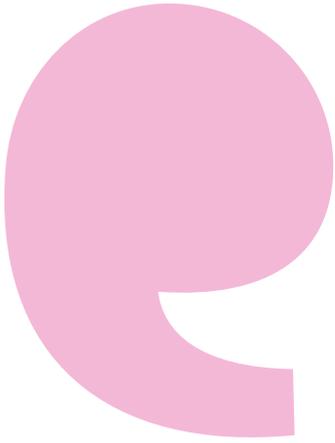
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