



**Talk
to us**

Telephone
03000 68 3000

Twitter
@HealthwatchE
#thinkrights

© Healthwatch England 2013

The text of this document (this excludes, where present, the Royal Arms and all departmental and agency logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context.

The material must be acknowledged as Healthwatch England copyright and the document title specified. Where third party material has been identified, permission from the respective copyright holder must be sought.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at rights@healthwatch.co.uk

You can download this publication from www.healthwatch.co.uk



Email
rights@healthwatch.co.uk

Web
www.healthwatch.co.uk

Contents

1. Our vision, mission and strategic priorities	02
2. Our strategic priorities	04
3. Our values	06
4. About Healthwatch England	08
5. Consumer rights in health and care	10
6. What next? Our strategy and engagement process	16



Our vision, mission and strategic priorities

Our vision

A world in which consumer rights and responsibilities in health and care are understood and delivered.

Our mission

We are the national consumer champion in health and care.



We achieve this by:

Understanding what matters most to consumers, especially those least included, by always starting with their needs and rights.

Influencing those who have the power to change design and delivery of services so they better meet the needs and rights of users.

Leading 152 local Healthwatch to ensure their local insight has national impact and our national insight has local impact.

Our strategic priorities

We will be particularly focused on:

Identifying concerns and risks and challenging others to take action.

Advancing consumer rights and responsibilities.

Promoting the design and delivery of services around the needs of a person.

Developing the potential of the Healthwatch network.

Our strategic priorities

Identifying concerns and risks and challenging others to take action

When a risk is identified we will take this directly to those who have the power to do something about it. We will identify national trends in consumer concerns and complaints and support local Healthwatch to engage their community. We will promote improved handling of concerns and complaints and support the network to engage with, and shape, the new inspection regimes.

Advancing consumer rights and responsibilities

We will advance consumer rights and identify the experiences and priorities of marginalised or excluded people and communities, and deliver on a post-Francis programme on complaints..



Promoting the design and delivery of services around the needs of a person

We will work with those who deliver services to ensure they engage with all individuals and communities, especially those with complex needs. We will support local Healthwatch to engage in conversations about service design, to ensure the best result for local people.

Developing the potential of the Healthwatch network

Our network is our strength. We will work to support the impact it can have by building capability, promoting best practice, providing additional support where appropriate and strengthening our internal systems to collate and analyse data. Data from our network gives us insight; this insight turns into impact when used at a national level.

Our values



Inclusive

We start with people first.
We work for children,
young people and adults.
We work across
health and care.
We work for everyone,
not just those who shout
the loudest.

Influential

We set the agenda and
make change happen.
We are responsive. We take
what we learn and translate
it into action.
We are innovative and
creative. We know that we
can't fix things by sticking
to the status quo.
We work with our network
of local Healthwatch to
make an impact both
locally and nationally.

Independent

We are independent
and act on behalf of
all consumers.
We listen to consumers
and speak loudly on
their behalf.
We challenge those in
power to design and
deliver better health
and care services.
We are not afraid to point
out when things have
gone wrong.



Credible

We value knowledge.

We seek out data and intelligence to challenge assumptions with facts.

We celebrate and share good practice in health and care.

We hold ourselves to the highest standards.



Collaborative

We keep the debate positive and we get things done.

We work in partnership with the public, health and care sector, voluntary and community sector.

We learn from specialists and experts, building on what is already known, not going over old ground.

About Healthwatch England

We are the national consumer champion in health and care. We have been given significant statutory powers to ensure the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and care services.

Health and care are critical lifelines to many millions of people every year. It can be a bewildering environment and often we use services when we are vulnerable or fearful. It can be difficult to speak up and, when we do, we are not always heard. A strong consumer champion can help to make sure every voice, especially the voice of those who are vulnerable and speak more quietly, is heard.

There are a number of unique aspects to our role.

We have been established as a consumer champion

This means we always start with people. We understand what people need and lobby for change on behalf of consumers. We are

ambitious – our role is to say where change is most needed. But we are realistic and provide solutions that improve services for consumers. This important role was highlighted by the Francis Inquiry and the Government has signalled a role for the Healthwatch network in improving the complaints system.

Our remit covers children, young people and adults

We have a responsibility to champion the needs of children, young people and adults. We work in an inclusive way knowing that if we can make it better for the most vulnerable, we will all benefit.

Our remit covers health and care

Before they are in contact with health and care services, many people assume all of their needs will be met by a joined up service. This expectation is simply not met, people are passed from pillar to post. It is often those with multiple needs which cross health and care providers who are most vulnerable and least likely to be heard.

Covering both health and care allows Healthwatch England to see how providers interact with each other and where their system fails to join up elements of an individual's care.





We have a national perspective fed by local insight

From the local insight we gain from the network, we develop an informed view of the issues and trends affecting people. We have a critical role supporting local Healthwatch to build this picture. We can draw together people's experiences of health and care, expertise from the voluntary sector and evidence from local Healthwatch to establish a national picture of what works and what doesn't regardless of location, who pays the bill or what part of the health and care system is involved.

We have strong statutory powers

The Health and Social Care Act formalises the relationship between Healthwatch England, the Secretary of State, NHS England, Care Quality Commission (CQC), Monitor and English local authorities.

We have a unique power to advise this wide range of organisations. Our ultimate recourse is to the Secretary of State. We have the power not only to report on the key issues that affect people who use services, but to expect that those in control respond to us. They don't need to agree, but they have to publicly tell us what they are going to do to respond to our advice.

Our role is to say where change is most needed.

Sometimes we give advice formally, using our powers to raise issues of concern or where we feel we, or any local Healthwatch, are not getting an adequate response. Often, we work together with partners to influence their thinking at an early stage and to help them get the design of services right from the start.

Healthwatch England and its network have a role in improving quality and services and we have also been given a new role in this on complaints.



Consumer rights in health and care



Rights

Healthwatch England wants to put the voice of the public at the heart of health and care. In our Annual Report, published in October 2013, we proposed a new approach built around eight consumer rights.

The NHS constitution is set out in the law and describes the legal rights that patients are entitled to. In our research, we asked people to draw on their own experience and help us to describe the rights they expected to have in health and care.

At the beginning, the people we spoke to, didn't frame their discussion in terms of rights. They didn't want to demand too much from the health and care services, which they thought were already stretched.

Despite not talking about rights spontaneously, when we talked further and introduced the NHS Constitution and other existing frameworks such as the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection, people quickly became excited.

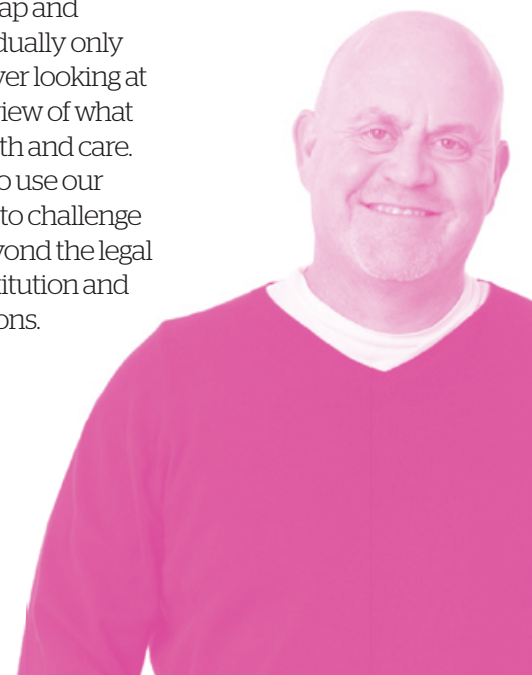
The public found the rights we shared with them a useful starting point, but wanted to improve and develop them and make them easier to understand and use.

By the end of our conversations, the people we spoke to saw real value in adopting a rights based framework, suggesting that it could help them to get what they need and help to ensure that health and care systems are more focused on the people they are serving.

We brought all this work together into our new rights framework that sets out the public's expectations of health and care services. The rights in the framework overlap and interlink. Taking each right individually only gives us part of the picture, however looking at the entire set of rights gives a full view of what consumers should expect in health and care. In relation to the NHS, we intend to use our new consumer rights framework to challenge health and care services to go beyond the legal rights enshrined in the NHS constitution and so meet people's wider expectations.

Talk to us:

Tel: 03000 68 3000
rights@healthwatch.co.uk
Twitter @HealthwatchE
#thinkrights





Consumer rights in health and care (continued)

These rights form the backbone of our vision, mission and strategic priorities, and it is on these, alongside our strategy, that we will be consulting on going forward.

1. The right to essential services



I have the right to a set of basic and essential treatment and care services at a defined standard.

2. The right to access



I have the right to access services on an equal basis with others, when I need them and in a way that works for me and my family.

3. The right to a safe, dignified and quality service



I have the right to high quality, safe services that treat me with dignity, compassion and respect.

4. The right to information and education



I have the right to information and education about how to take care of myself and what I am entitled to within the health and care system.

To find out more about these rights, including practical examples of how they might work, please visit our website at www.healthwatch.co.uk/rights



5. The right to choose



I have the right to choose from a range of high quality services, products and providers within health and care services.



6. The right to be listened to



I have the right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I have the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received.



7. The right to be involved



I am an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I have the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting my local community.



8. The right to live in a healthy environment



I have the right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.

Email us at rights@healthwatch.co.uk
or contact us via Twitter [@HealthwatchE](https://twitter.com/HealthwatchE) [#thinkrights](https://twitter.com/HealthwatchE)

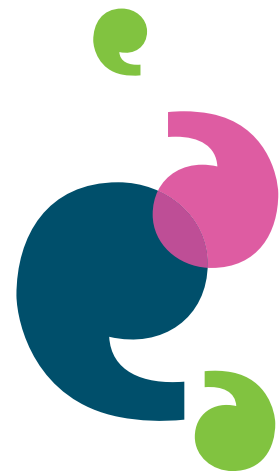


Responsibilities

We were struck by how quickly people moved from a conversation about rights into one about responsibilities. People were quick to point out that we all bear a responsibility for using services wisely.

We want to start a conversation with you about responsibilities and how you define them. We know that this is a big debate. We recognise that there are individuals who we cannot reasonably ask to take responsibility for their health and care or who need extra support to take full responsibility.

As with our work on rights, we are aware of existing work on responsibilities including those set out in the NHS Constitution, and the draft used by Consumers International.



These suggest a number of responsibilities that are a helpful starting point for this conversation. For example, they highlight the need to use services responsibly, recognising that health and care services are finite resources. This might include registering yourself and family with a GP and dentist, turning up to appointments and not using A&E for minor injuries. They also point to the need for us to be active participants in our care, by keeping informed about health matters and taking medication.

Respecting staff, services and other people is another strong theme. This could include, for example, being respectful of staff in pressured situations, not abusing or overusing services and being aware that those with greater need will be seen before you. But these thoughts are just a starting point for the conversation and we want to hear more from you about how we develop a set of responsibilities to complement our work on rights.

We will be talking to consumers, partners and stakeholders about responsibilities, as we did with rights, as part of this consultation.

However, it will be the research work we do with the public that will be the driving force for developing a draft set of responsibilities to mirror the rights.



What next? Our strategy and engagement process

When we launched our Annual Report in October 2013, we started a conversation with the public, our partners and stakeholders about the rights framework.

We know there are a number of frameworks already out there including the NHS Constitution, the Think Local Act Personal framework for care and the CQC's fundamental standards.

We will be working with stakeholders to bring these approaches together to establish a greater awareness of rights and would welcome your views about how we do this. In the next few months, we will also be testing out our approach with children and young people and those with mental health issues.

We have already had some fascinating discussions, online and in person, and want to widen this conversation. We are keen to hear from you.

- Write to us at Healthwatch England, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH
- Email us on: rights@healthwatch.co.uk
- Pick up the phone and talk to us on 03000 68 3000
- Follow us on Twitter @HealthwatchE and join the debate #thinkrights
- Or leave comments on www.healthwatch.co.uk

If you have already commented, then do be assured that your view will be taken into account when we publish our findings on rights and responsibilities next year, and when we finalise our strategy for 2014-16.

If you prefer to give us your written views, we are holding a formal consultation until 10 March 2014.

These are some questions you might want to consider, but do come back to us with any other thoughts.





What next? Our strategy and engagement process (continued)

Rights and responsibilities

- What do you think about our draft rights?
- What are your experiences of these rights, and/or those of your family, friends, or people you represent?
- Would these experiences have improved if you knew about these rights? If so, how?
- What does responsible and irresponsible use of health and care services look like?
- Do you have examples of when you or someone you know used health or care services responsibly and/or irresponsibly?
- How do you think we should work with the public and organisations to promote people's rights and the responsible use of health and care services?
- What else do you want to tell us about rights and responsibilities in a health and care context?

Vision, mission and strategic priorities

- What do you think of our vision, mission and strategic priorities?
- What stands out for you? Is anything missing?
- What else should Healthwatch England stand for?
- What does this vision, mission and strategic priorities mean to how we work with you?
- What else would you like to tell us about our vision, mission and strategic priorities?
- How can we continue to support the ongoing development of the local Healthwatch network?

We want this to be a conversation between Healthwatch England, the public, our partners and our stakeholders – so these questions are just the starting point of a discussion, and, we hope, the beginning of a working relationship.

We will be feeding back on our conversation on consumer rights and responsibilities on 15th March 2014 which is World Consumer Rights Day. The final framework and set of responsibilities will be launched in our 2014/15 annual report in October 2014.

What next?

We are developing a business plan which will detail the activities we will be undertaking in 2014/15 to make our priorities a reality. This will be published in early 2014.





Talk to us
We welcome
your views



Talk to us

**Talk
to us**

Telephone
03000 68 3000

Twitter
[@HealthwatchE](#)
[#thinkrights](#)



Email
rights@healthwatch.co.uk

Web
www.healthwatch.co.uk



Healthwatch England

Skipton House, 80 London Road
London SE1 6LH

Tel 03000 68 3000

Twitter @HealthwatchE #thinkrights

rights@healthwatch.co.uk

www.healthwatch.co.uk