

A close-up portrait of a middle-aged Black man with a balding head, smiling slightly. He is wearing a white collared shirt under a bright blue jacket with yellow-green accents. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a hospital or community center, with a sign featuring the number "4" visible on the left.

Shaping

our future

Our strategy for 2018 - 2023

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Introduction

Healthwatch England was launched in 2012. Since then, in partnership with local Healthwatch, we have worked to understand what people want from health and social care and to make sure that these views are heard by those who run services.

We are now developing our strategy for 2018 - 2023.

Between June and September 2017, we asked the public, professionals and local Healthwatch a number of questions to help shape our future focus.

We invited people to share their views on what the primary job of Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch should be over the next five to ten years. We asked what the world would look like for people who use health and social care services if we were successful.

We also asked people to share their thoughts on the biggest challenges we face, the opportunities we can take advantage of and how the Healthwatch network could work differently to have an even greater impact.

We invited people to share their views on the issues we should focus on to help make health and social care services work better for people.

This consultation document sets out what people told us, as well as our proposals for our future direction, which have been shaped by the feedback we received.

Thank you to everyone who shared their views so far. We would like to invite you to take part in the next phase of our strategy consultation. We will use what you tell us to help develop a final strategy, which we will publish in 2018.

Our journey

2012

Our role

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set an ambition to put people at the centre of health and social care. The legislation created a Healthwatch in every local authority area across England, as well as Healthwatch England, the national body.

2013

Our role is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use services and to ensure these views are heard by those who make decisions about health and social care at a national level. We also support local Healthwatch to do this locally.

Our first strategy

Our first strategy focussed on:

- Addressing current concerns with health and social care services.
- Making sure that future services are built to meet people's needs and are shaped by the people who will use them.
- Developing the potential of the Healthwatch network.
- Ensuring we are an effective and efficient organisation.

2017

Progress check

The views people have shared with local Healthwatch tell us what matters most to them when it comes to health and social care.

We have used this understanding to call for changes. We have used our statutory position to help make sure that the public's views are understood by health and social care services.

With the help of 4,700 volunteers, the Healthwatch network in 2016/17:

- Helped 176,000 people find information about health care and services.
- Supported 341,000 people to share their views of health and care.
- Produced 1,745 local reports and 11 national reports about people's experiences of care.

Together with local Healthwatch we have made an impact on a range of issues by making sure the public's voice is heard by those who plan and run health and social care services.

Looking ahead

Public involvement is key to overcoming challenges

A growing number of people need help with long-term health conditions, while lifestyle factors, such as a poor diet, are also adding to the amount of individuals needing support from services.

At a time of unprecedented pressure, it has never been more important for services to find out what people need from them and use this information to provide better, more targeted care.

The public recognise the challenges that services face. They want to help by taking more control of their own health and care and becoming an equal partner in decisions that affect them.

This is why our future aims will focus on:

- Empowering more people to their say
- Providing a high quality Healthwatch service
- Making sure people's views help improve health and social care

People's views have helped us create future areas of focus. The following sections set out more information about our future strategy - ambitions, challenges and opportunities, as well as the aims on which we want to hear your views.

Although the final strategy will be about Healthwatch England, it will set out aims that we will encourage local Healthwatch to adopt too.



Our ambition

Health and social care that works for you

‘What do you expect when it comes to managing your health and care?’

This is the question we asked the public when we launched. What people told us is captured in eight principles that have formed the starting point for all our work and helped inform our initial vision.



I want...

- **A healthy environment**
- **To be involved**
- **Information and education**
- **Essential services**
- **Access**
- **A safe, dignified and quality service**
- **Choice**
- **To be listened to**

What you said

Over the summer we asked people to describe what the world would look like for people who use health and social care services in five to ten years if we are successful. What you told us reflected what people said when we were established.

Key themes

People described a future where:

- They are in control of their own health, care and wellbeing.
- They can get the information they need to look after themselves.
- They can access efficient, high quality care when they need it, on an equal basis with others.
- Services work with individuals to achieve the best outcomes for them.
- Communities help set health and social care priorities and services are accountable to them.

What this means for our work

What people expect when it comes to managing their health and care hasn't changed. However, we need a better way of expressing the ambition people want us to achieve.

This is why, when we publish our final strategy, it will include an updated vision setting out what we're here to do. To help us get there we will work with people to make sure we get the articulation of our vision right.



Our role

The legislation establishing Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch sets out our statutory remit. Within this remit, we asked people what they thought the primary job of Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch should be over the next five to ten years.

What people said

Key themes

People thought our main job included:

- Empowering people to have a greater say in their own care and in the delivery of services.
- Making sure the voice of people is used to help shape health and care policy and practice.
- Encouraging services to be more inclusive and people focussed.
- Supporting communities to hold services to account.

People said they thought it was important that Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch acted in an independent way.

People also felt that we should support local Healthwatch, provide leadership and help them with issues, such as communication and quality.

What this means for our work

What people told us has been used to help shape our future priorities. It has also made us review the way we describe our purpose. When we publish our final strategy, it will include an updated statement setting out our purpose and the role we will play in delivering our vision.



A changing world

The traditional approach to meeting people’s health and social care needs is changing. Our society faces big challenges when it comes to making sure people have the support they need.

There are also significant opportunities for services to better meet people’s expectations and for individuals to take greater control of their health, care and wellbeing.

What you said

We asked for people’s views on the biggest challenges we face, as well as the opportunities we could take advantage of to make the greatest impact.



- Using technology to help more people share their views
- Partnerships with charities, universities and think tanks
- Maximising the use of our evidence and statutory powers
- Influencing health and social care reforms
- Growing public awareness of health and care challenges
- Public appetite to be more involved with decisions

- Rising demand for care linked to lifestyle and other factors
- Capacity of services that face staffing and funding pressures
- Public awareness of how to have more control of health
- Professional attitudes to involvement and inconsistent practice
- Variation in access to care and support
- Impact on health caused by wider social factors, like housing



What this means for our work

It is clear from views people have shared that our future strategy will need to take into account big challenges. For example, are enough people aware of how they can take control of their health and care? How can we ensure the needs of every section of the community are understood? And, is there a strong culture in the NHS of listening to people’s views? People’s feedback also highlights some clear opportunities we can maximise.

Our future aims

We asked people where we should focus our efforts to have the biggest impact.

What you said

Key themes

The ideas people shared largely focussed on the following areas:

- Working to improve existing care, particularly the access people have to support, and the avoidable differences in people's experience of health and social care across the population.
- Mental health and care for older people were also common issues where people wanted to see improvements.
- Making it easier for more people to have an equal say in decisions that affect them by tackling barriers, such as public awareness and professional attitudes.
- Ensuring that communities are involved in shaping future health and social care services.
- Supporting a stronger, more consistent Healthwatch network - from the service the public receives, to the way the network works together to achieve change.
- Maintaining the independence of the network and working in partnership with others to improve health and social care services.

Five ways we can deliver our aims

Healthwatch staff, volunteers, stakeholders and the public have already come up with ideas that could help us deliver our aims:

- 1. Work in partnership more often** with charities, think tanks, universities and others to do targeted research and make findings available to the public, professionals and policymakers.
- 2. Harness the power of technology** to enable more people to share ideas, experiences and views with health and social care professionals.
- 3. Promote new engagement approaches** encouraging services to adopt new ways of mobilising their community to solve problems.
- 4. Make the most of our volunteers' talent** by supporting more of them to champion and represent the views of their community when services want to make changes.
- 5. Demonstrate the value of speaking up** by supporting the Healthwatch network and services to measure the impact people's views have on improving care.

What this means for our work

People's feedback has helped inform the development of three aims for our future. We would like to hear your views on these aims:

1.

Empowering you and your community to have your say

Our aim

We want to make sure people can access the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.

Changes you might expect to see

- More people will know their rights when it comes to accessing support. They will understand the quality of care they should receive, the drugs and treatments available, the involvement they should have in their care, and their right to complain if things go wrong
- More people will share their views with services and Healthwatch to help improve health and social care
- Services will work in partnership with people and every section of the community to determine the right support for them

Questions we would like your help with:

1. If we achieved our aim, what positive changes would you expect to see?
2. Which activities do you think we need to focus on to achieve our aim?



Have your say

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2.

Providing a high quality Healthwatch service for you

Our aim

We want to support a consistently high quality Healthwatch service for people who want to share their views or find information about health and social care. We also want to help local Healthwatch to champion people's views effectively and make sure that local health and social care services truly reflect people's needs.

Changes you might expect to see

- More people will understand how their local Healthwatch can help them
- People who use Healthwatch will receive a consistently high quality experience
- More people will share their ideas, views and experiences with their Healthwatch
- A greater number of health and social care services will use our evidence to make positive changes
- Local communities will understand how their views have made an impact on local services

Questions we would like your help with:

1. If we achieved our aim, what positive changes would you expect to see?
2. Which activities do you think we need to focus on to achieve our aim?



Have your say

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3.

Making sure your views help improve health and social care

Our aim

We want people's views to drive health and social care - ensuring you get access, on an equal basis with others, to support that works for you, as well as helping to shape future services for your community.

Changes you might expect to see

- People are able to easily access evidence about people's views of health and care
- Those who make decisions about health and social care routinely use people's feedback to identify problems, improve the quality of support and shape future services
- There is a stronger understanding amongst professionals about what matters to people
- Every section of the community plays a greater role in setting health and care priorities
- People report that they can access the support they need on an equal basis with others

Questions we would like your help with:

1. If we achieved our aim, what positive changes would you expect to see?
2. Which activities do you think we need to focus on to achieve our aim?



Have your say

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Have your say

To find out more about our consultation and to have your say please visit www.healthwatch.co.uk/yoursay

You can also send a written response to:

Your say
Healthwatch England
National Customer Service Centre
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA



About this consultation

This consultation will run until 3 January 2018.

We plan to publish our final strategy by the end of March 2018.

Information provided in response to this consultation may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

healthwatch

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