

A photograph of a middle-aged Black man wearing a dark blue flat cap, glasses, a dark blue blazer, and a grey sweater. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is an outdoor setting with a brick building and a blurred vehicle.

Health and care  
that works for you

Our strategy explained

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## **Our strategy 2018-2023**

This strategy sets out our ambitions and the difference we want to make by 2023 in partnership with local Healthwatch.

### **Our vision**

Health and care that works for you.

### **Our purpose**

To find out what matters to you and help make sure your views shape the support you need.

### **Our approach**

People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

### **Our starting point**

People want health and social care support that works for them - helping them stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.

### **The wider context**

Our society faces big challenges. A growing number of people need help with long-term health conditions, while illnesses associated with unequal life chances and lifestyle are adding to pressures on services.

People know that to get the support they need, the traditional approach to providing health and care must change. People want to help by taking control of their own health and care. They understand that information and technology can potentially help. However, to better meet their expectations services need to treat them as equal partners, find out what people need and use this information to provide targeted support.

## Our aims

### *1. Support you to have your say*

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

Goals by 2023: Over one million people share their views or seek information from us each year.

Challenges: Not enough people get the opportunity to have their say.

### Tactics:

- Identify who is not being heard
- Provide the information people need to act
- Use partnerships to reach more people

## *2. Provide a high quality service to you*

We want everyone who shares experiences or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.

Goals by 2023: We can tell you the difference your views have made.

Challenges: Lack of consistency and resources across the Healthwatch network.

Tactics:

- Establish common quality standards
- Focus on effectiveness
- Invest more in staff and volunteer skills

## *3. Ensure your views help improve health and care*

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.

Goals by 2023: Twice as many recommendations we make are implemented by services.

Challenges: Attitudes of some professionals towards involving people in their care.

Tactics:

- Produce strong evidence, which those who make decisions about health and care support can use
- Demonstrate how people's voices make a difference

## *What we will do*

- **Insight:** Research to better understand our communities, target engagement and track changing behaviour over time.
- **Brand:** Ensure our communications work in harmony to raise awareness, build trust and increase engagement.
- **Partnership:** Work strategically with community and professional groups to hear and share what people want from care.
- **Digital:** Invest in a unified system to gather, understand and share people's views of care.
- **Impact:** Establish common ways to measure the effect of our work, continuously improve quality and encourage innovation.
- **People and money:** Invest in attracting, training and retaining volunteers and staff. Share common services across Healthwatch to increase effectiveness.

## *An introduction*

### **The journey so far**

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set a powerful ambition to put people at the centre of health and care. To make this happen, the reforms created a local Healthwatch in every area of England, as well as Healthwatch England as the national body.

Our goal has always been to understand the needs, ideas and experiences of every section of the community and ensure they are heard by the people making national decisions about health and social care. We also support local Healthwatch to do this across the country.

Thanks to the thousands of people who have shared their views, and the readiness of services to listen, we've been able to make an impact on a range of issues over the past five years. We've come a long way since we were established. Our network is driven by volunteers and staff who speak to people every day to find out what matters most, and work with partners to help make change happen.

### **Looking ahead**

In a rapidly changing world we need to go further. More people continue to need help with long-term health conditions, while illnesses associated with unequal life chances and lifestyle are adding to the number of individuals who need support from services.

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

The public recognise the challenges that services face. They want to help by taking control of their own health

and care and becoming equal partners in decisions that affect them.

## **Making a bigger difference**

We believe greater public involvement in health and social care is critical to overcoming the challenges our society faces. This is why in 2017 we asked the public, our staff and volunteers to help shape our future strategy.

We invited people to share their views about our role and what the world of health and social care would look like if we were successful. We also asked people to tell us 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 heard about the main issues people thought we should focus on to help make health and social care services work better for them.

Our strategy draws on the ideas and views that people shared with us and explains what we want to achieve over the next five years.

## **Our vision**

Health and care that works for you People want health and social care support that works - helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



This means a future where:

- You are in control of your own health, care and wellbeing
- You can get the information you need to look after yourself
- You can access efficient, high-quality care when you need it, on an equal basis with others
- Services work with you to achieve the outcomes that matter most to you and your family
- Communities help set health and social care priorities and services are accountable to them

## **Our purpose**

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.

To achieve the future that people want, we believe our role should:

- Assist you to have a greater say in your own care and the services that support you
- Help to make sure that your views are used to shape health and care policy and practice
- Encourage services to be more inclusive and focus on your needs Support your community to hold services to account; and
- Provide leadership to local Healthwatch and support them to be as effective as possible.

## Our approach

People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

To enable this to happen, it's important that everyone understands the approach we will take to our work and what they can expect from us.

- People's views are at the heart of everything we do
- We work creatively to ensure people from every community have their say about health and care
- We speak clearly so that people can understand and act on our evidence
- We achieve positive change by working in partnership with others; and
- We are independent and are prepared to challenge services.

## 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 own health, care and wellbeing.

We want to take advantage of the opportunities available to not only make the greatest impact, but also to overcome these challenges.

### *Opportunities*

- Use technology to help more people share their views
- Partner with organisations led by people who use services, charities, universities and others to increase impact
- Maximise the use of our evidence and statutory powers
- Use people's views to shape future health and social care support
- Improve public awareness of health and care challenges
- Encourage the public to get involved with decision-making

### *Challenges*

- Rising demand for care linked to unequal life chances and lifestyles
- Services face staffing and funding pressures
- People don't always know how to take control of their health and care
- Professional attitudes to involvement and inconsistent practice

- Variation in access to care and support
- Impact on health, caused by wider social factors, like housing

## Our future focus

Over the next five years, we want to make the biggest difference by:

1. Supporting you to have your say
2. Providing a high quality service
3. Ensuring your views help improve health and care

### 1. Supporting you to have your say

**Our aim:** To help more people access the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.

**Where we are now:** Last year, around 176,000 people contacted Healthwatch for information and advice about health and care services and 341,000 individuals shared their ideas and experiences with us.

**Our goal:** We want to double the number of people we support over the next five years. By 2023, we want to help over a million people share their views or find the information they need to get the right support each year.

*The main challenge we face:* Not everyone knows how to have their say or has the opportunity to do so. Not everyone can access the information they need to make decisions about their health and care or help shape the services that support them.

*Tactics to help achieve our goal:*

- Identify who in the diverse communities we serve does not know how to have their say and finds it hardest to be heard
- Provide the information people need to act
- Work in partnership, nationally and locally, to reach more people and target those whose views are not understood by services.

*Signs of success:*

**2018**

- We understand and can track public awareness, attitudes, and experience of being involved in care
- We have identified the information people want to know to take control of their health and care
- We have increased public awareness and understanding of Healthwatch

**2021**

- We provide common ways for people to get or find the information they need to have their say
- We run campaigns across England to target those who find it hardest to be heard

- We work with a range of organisations to empower more sections of the community to have their say

## **2023**

- More people know their rights, and can access the information they need to make the decisions about care and the services that support them
- More people are confident about how to be an equal partner in their care

## **2. Provide a high quality service to you**

***Our aim:*** To help ensure that everyone who shares an experience or seeks advice from us receives a high quality service and understands the difference their views have made.

***Where we are now:*** We currently do not have a common way of measuring the quality of service across Healthwatch or the impact of our work. We also do not consistently tell people about the changes that have been made to services as a result of their views.

***Our goal:*** To ensure our staff and volunteers have the skills and tools they need to provide a high quality service. By 2023, we want to be able to tell anyone who shares their views with us how this has made a difference.

***The main challenge we face:*** The funding local Healthwatch receives from local authorities to carry out its work can vary from area to area. We do not

have a collective way of ensuring that the service we provide to people is always consistent and quality based.

*Tactics to help achieve our goal:*

- Establish a common way to measure the impact of our work and the quality of our service
- Focus on securing the resources we need and the ways in which we can boost our effectiveness
- Invest more in developing the skills and knowledge of our staff and volunteers

*Signs of success:*

**2018**

- Our staff and volunteers understand our vision, purpose and approach and their role in delivering our strategy
- We update the support and training we provide to our staff and volunteers
- Our commitment to equality, diversity and human rights is embedded in our day-to-day work with communities, colleagues and partners
- We have a common way of measuring the impact and quality of our service

## 2021

- Our staff and volunteers say Healthwatch is a good place to work and that we help them build the skills they need
- The majority of people who use our service report a good quality experience
- We make the most of our volunteers' talent by supporting more of them to champion and represent the views of their community

## 2023

- Our people reflect the diverse communities in which we work
- We can demonstrate the added value our work has on society
- The number of people reporting a good quality service from Healthwatch has increased

### 3. Ensuring your views help improve health and care

**Our aim:** To ensure your views are used by professionals to shape the health and care support that works for you, today and in the future.

**Where we are now:** Last year, Healthwatch published 1,745 reports about people's experiences to show professionals what is working and what could be better when it comes to the support they provide. We estimate that around four in ten of the recommendations we make are currently adopted by services.



***Our goal:*** To transform the way health and social care professionals and policy makers use our evidence over the next five years. By 2023, we want twice as many of the recommendations we make to be implemented.

***The main challenge we face:*** Not all health and social care professionals see the value of using people's views to improve support. The evidence we and others hold is not always easy to access.

***Tactics to help achieve our goal:***

- Focus on producing strong evidence, which those who make decisions about health and care support can easily access and act on
- Demonstrate how using people's views can improve the effectiveness of health and care support

***Signs of success:***

**2018**

- We understand and can track professional awareness, attitudes and experience of involving people in care
- Services understand the economic and quality benefits of involving people
- A network of health and social care professionals and policy makers to promote and champion the value of public involvement exists

## **2021**

- More professionals understand our role and report a positive change in attitude towards involving people in care
- Evidence about people's views of health and care can be easily accessed and reflects the diverse communities we serve
- We have helped services and policy makers understand and adopt better ways of mobilising their communities to solve problems

## **2023**

- The NHS and social care services use people's experiences of care to measure their performance
- The involvement of people in shaping care is a core subject in the education of health and social care professionals
- Every section of the community plays a greater role in setting health and care priorities

## Steps to achieving our aims

To deliver our strategy, we will produce a yearly plan setting out our priorities and telling you how well we are doing.

Over the next five years, there are six key areas that we will focus on to achieve our aims:

1. **Insight:** Undertake research so that we better understand the needs of our communities. We will use this evidence to improve the way we target our work and track changing behaviour over time.
2. **Brand:** Put in place a strategy to ensure that what we say and how we communicate is consistent across the Healthwatch network. We will work together to raise awareness, build trust and increase engagement with Healthwatch.
3. **Digital:** Make the most of technology to enable more people to share their ideas, experiences and views with health and social care professionals.
4. **Partnerships:** Work strategically with community and professional groups, think tanks, universities and others to target our engagement and make our findings widely available to help inform decisions about health and care.
5. **Impact:** Establish common ways to measure the effect of our work, so that we can demonstrate the

value of speaking up and continue to improve the quality of our service.

6. People and money: Invest in attracting, training and retaining the best volunteers and staff. Identify duplication of work and invest in shared services and consistent approaches to increase effectiveness.

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