



The year ahead

Our plan for 2018 - 2019

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About us

We are the independent national champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services, and the government, put people at the heart of care.

We support local Healthwatch to find out what people want and to advocate for services that meet local communities' needs. Healthwatch around the country act as our eyes and ears on the ground, letting us know how people's care could be improved.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people. We have the power to make sure their voices are heard.



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.



More about our approach

- ▶ 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 prepared to challenge services.



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.



More about what people expect from health and care

- ▶ Being listened to
- ▶ A safe, dignified and quality service
- ▶ Access
- ▶ Being involved
- ▶ Essential services
- ▶ Information, advice and education
- ▶ Choice
- ▶ A healthy environment



Foreword



**Jane Mordue,
Chair of Healthwatch England**

This spring, the Healthwatch network celebrated five years of work - championing people's views of health and care. We also published a new strategy setting out the difference we want to make by 2023.

The run up to these events gave us the chance to reflect on our progress, our ambitions for the future and how Healthwatch England and 152 local Healthwatch can work together to make change happen.

Making the most of our role

Our society faces big challenges when it comes to making sure people get the health and care they need. As our strategy makes clear, we believe we have a role to play in helping to solve them.

With rising demand for care and services under pressure, the traditional approach to providing support needs to change. The public understand this, but services won't get these changes right unless they engage people in a debate and find out what really matters most to people.

This is where we help, supporting services to move beyond just seeking feedback, to a position where they truly put people's views at the heart of the decisions they make.

We've already demonstrated the difference we can achieve. From the changes people want to see at their GP practice, to discussions over long-term health and social care strategy.

Over the next five years we will continue to be at the table, providing a safe space where difficult discussions can take place and ensuring people's views shape the support they need.

Big and small changes that matter

From a standing start in 2013, we have developed expertise helping people have their say, as well as a powerful evidence base, covering a spectrum of views that have been used to achieve positive change.

For example, the experiences that thousands of people shared with us, helped kick-start work across the NHS to improve how people in the most vulnerable circumstances are supported after leaving hospital. Moreover, countless residents of care homes, mental health wards and other services have had their lives improved because of recommendations made after visits by our staff and volunteers.

We have proof of concept but we now need to go further.

Steps towards our vision

People tell us that they want to be in control of their own health, care and wellbeing. They want to make more decisions and to shape the services that support them. While health and social care workers tell us that they value our evidence for its honesty and practicality, we know its use needs to be more widespread.

Our strategy makes clear we intend to do more, much more, to support people to have their say, ensure their views are heard and have an impact on health and care policy.

This business plan sets out our first stage on the journey towards achieving this.

Overcoming the challenges ahead

If we are to achieve our vision, we also need to work with councils to ensure that sufficient funding is in place for the vital work of local Healthwatch.

Local authorities have a legal duty to commission a Healthwatch service for their residents, but we have seen funding fall by over a third since 2013. Given the challenges local government faces, although this situation may not be a surprise, it does mean that some local Healthwatch are now pared to the bone; a situation which could jeopardise their ability to carry out their statutory role.

This is why over the next year we will work with Government, councils and local Healthwatch to seek a solution. With big changes to health and social care services taking place, the need for a strong local voice that makes sure communities have a say on the decisions that affect them has never been more important.

At Healthwatch England, we are passionate about making a difference. With our strategy and this plan in place, I firmly believe we will move a step closer to helping to achieve health and care that works for everyone.

Introduction



**By Imelda Redmond CBE,
National Director**

Our strategy sets out where we want to be by 2023 and how we intend to get there in partnership with local Healthwatch.

The difference we want to make

► Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to make decisions about their wellbeing, care and the services that support them.

► Providing a high quality service

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.

► Ensuring 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.

Preparing for the future

In the first year of our strategy, we will focus on making sure that we have the right systems and structures in place to deliver our ambitions for the next five years.

To make the changes we need to deliver our vision, we will work with local Healthwatch to improve:

- The way we raise awareness and reach those who are not being heard;
- How we gather people's views and the research we undertake;
- The partnerships we need to make and share what people want from care;
- The digital systems we need to gather, understand and communicate people's views;
- How we measure our impact and encourage quality; and
- How we use our limited resources well and build the skills of our people.

We know that having a strong local Healthwatch in every area is key. This is why throughout the year ahead we will focus on improving the support we offer, creating an environment where innovation is celebrated, learning is shared and by working together we achieve the greatest impact.

Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to make decisions about their wellbeing, care and the services that support them.

Our goal by 2023

Over a million people share their views or seek information from us each year.

Steps along the way

- Carry out research to understand and then track public awareness, attitudes and experience of being involved in health and social care.
- Identify the information people want to know to take control of their health and care. Work with partners and local Healthwatch to make it easier for people to access this information.
- Introduce an improved website that local Healthwatch use to make their information easier to find. Establish the future investment needed to make our websites better.
- Develop a common Healthwatch approach to providing information to people and signposting them to local services.
- Review the research that exists about how to involve people in health and social care and share what we can learn from this.
- Put a new communications strategy in place that includes who we can work with in the community to reach more people and help us improve the way we communicate.
- Look at how we can encourage more young people to volunteer with us and support them to take more control of their health and care.

Signs of success

- 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 taken steps to make this information more accessible.
- We have clear evidence about the best way to involve people in shaping services.
- We have run a national campaign to get people to share their ideas and experiences with us. Public awareness and understanding of Healthwatch has increased.

Providing 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.

Our goal by 2023

We can tell you the difference your views have made.

Steps along the way

- Support local Healthwatch staff and volunteers to understand our shared vision, purpose and strategy.
- Identify the common skills and knowledge Healthwatch staff, leaders and volunteers need. Update the training and support we provide to help Healthwatch staff learn and grow.
- Put in place a new agreement with local Healthwatch outlining how we collectively provide a consistent, high quality service to the public.
- Help local Healthwatch secure and make the most of the funding they need.
- Work with local councils and other partners to establish what a high quality Healthwatch service looks like and support them to improve the way these services are commissioned.
- Find the best way for Healthwatch staff and volunteers to work together.
- Establish better ways for Healthwatch staff and volunteers to share and access information and guidance online.

Signs of success

- Our staff and volunteers understand our vision, purpose and approach.
- We understand the skills our people need and have updated the support and training we provide to our staff and volunteers.
- We have a common way of demonstrating the quality of Healthwatch services.
- We have an agreement with every Healthwatch about how we should provide a consistent service to people.

Ensuring 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.

Our goal by 2023

Twice as many recommendations we make are implemented by services.

Steps along the way

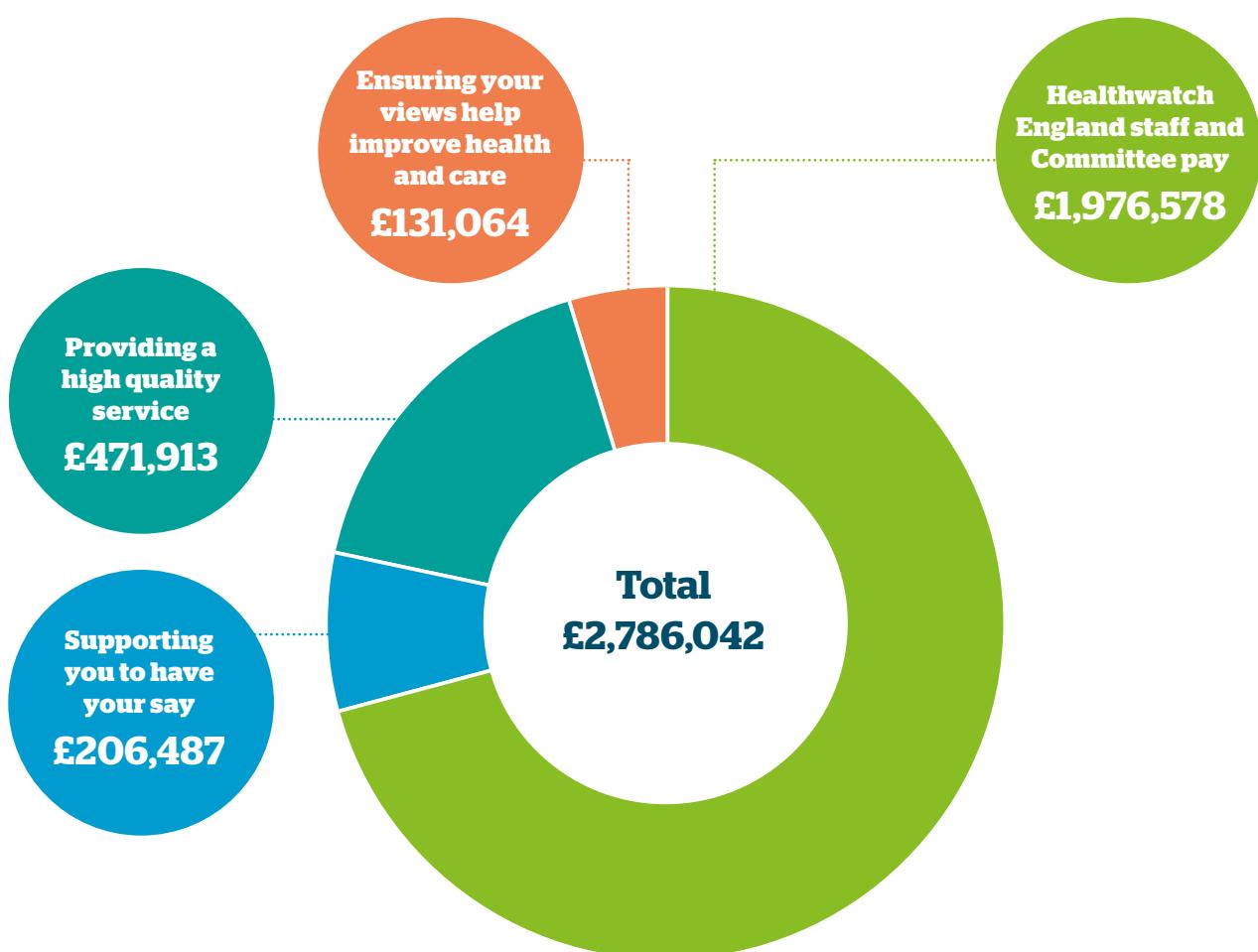
- Take stock of the reach of local Healthwatch and scale of the work we have done so far.
- Carry out research to understand and track professional awareness, attitudes and experience of involving people in health and social care.
- Identify and engage health and social care professionals with a strong interest in involving people in shaping health and care support.
- Establish the economic and quality benefits as a result of involving people in shaping the services that support them.
- Support the NHS to make better use of what people say about their care to understand how health and social care services are performing.
- Start a project with partners to help health and social care workers learn about the benefits of involving people in care as part of their professional training.
- Develop a plan of how we can help health and social care professionals access our evidence more easily and establish the investment in technology we will need to help make this happen.
- Put in place a common way for Healthwatch to measure how many of our recommendations are adopted by services and the impact this has.

Signs of success

- We understand and can track professional awareness, attitudes and experiences of involving people in care.
- We have established the reach and impact of the Healthwatch network.
- We have helped services understand the economic and quality benefits of involving people in care.
- We have established a network of health and care professionals and policy makers to promote and champion the value of public involvement.
- We have a common way of measuring the impact of our service.

Resources

This year we plan to spend the following amount to help deliver our business plan.



Our budget for the year 2018-19 has been reduced by 3.4% when compared to our budget in 2017-18.



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