



Guided by you

Annual Report 2019-2020

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Welcome to our annual report. Due to the ongoing crisis with COVID-19 this report is slightly shorter than usual, but gives you an insight into the great things that have been happening at Healthwatch County Durham over the last 12 months. During the current pandemic Healthwatch is still working hard to make sure your voice is heard and that we keep you informed about health and social care in the County.

Thank you

Message from our chair



'I am grateful to all of you and the service providers who have allowed us to speak to patients and carers, or allowed us to speak up on your behalf'

This past year has seen County Durham become a much more focused deliverer of integrated health and social care, and our partner organisations continue to work toward improving the outcomes for all patients, carers and service users. Not without challenge given the scale of the integration agenda. Healthwatch County Durham through its dedicated staff, its team of volunteers and independent Board continue to work tirelessly to ensure that your voice is heard.

Developing relationships is a key element of the work we do, whether that is in research, signposting or Enter and View, we must remain mindful of our independent status. I am grateful to all of you and the service providers who have contacted us and allowed us to speak to patients and carers, or allowed us to speak up on your behalf, and who have responded positively to us as a consequence of our work.

I acknowledge that we all live in changing and challenging times, and I know that Healthwatch County Durham will continue to strive in the best interests of you all over the coming year. I want to thank all of our excellent volunteers and dedicated staff for their hard work, professionalism and enthusiasm and without who we couldn't function. A special thanks to the Board for their ongoing support, expertise and professional approach.

Chris Cunnington Shore

Healthwatch County Durham Chair

About us

Here to make care better

The network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan shows the power of the Healthwatch network in giving people that find it hardest to be heard a chance to speak up.

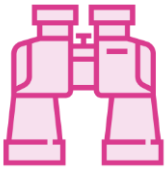
The #WhatWouldYouDo campaign saw national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented locally. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review – sparking a national review of patient transport from NHS England.

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local Healthwatch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

 *I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level.'*



Sir Robert Francis, Healthwatch England Chair



Our vision is simple

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.



Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to 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 solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations



Get involved with Healthwatch County Durham

Help us to make decisions and to make a difference!

- **Join our mailing list:** Join over 1,100 people in County Durham who find out what we are doing and tell us what they think. Subscribe here: <http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk/e-bulletin>
- **Contact us if you are interested in volunteering:**
 - Freephone contact number: 0800 3047039
 - Email us: healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net
- **To find out more take a look at our website:** <http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk/content/contact>

Health and care that works for you

21 volunteers

During the last 12 months volunteers have given 1696 hours of their time, average in 32.6 hours every week!

We employed the equivalent of

5 full time staff

Made up of 7 staff members

We received

£197,500 in funding

from our local authority in 2019-20



Providing support



233 people

accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support,

74 people

People were signposted to other health and social care organisations

Reaching out



1,139 people

56 engaged with us through our website and social media, 1083 people engaged with us at community events.

Making a difference to care



We published

19 reports

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care, and from this, we made 75 recommendations for improvement.

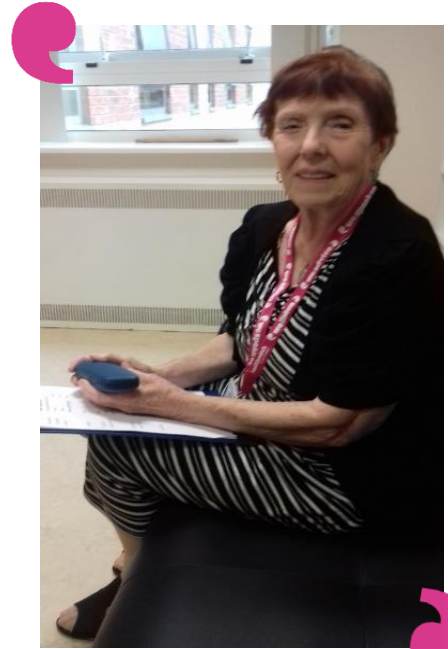
Our Volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers, here's some of the things they have been up to:

Learning from volunteers

Our volunteers have been involved in a vast amount of engagement work throughout 2019-2020 including:

- The Care Navigation survey
- NHS Long Term Plan Focus Group
- Support for website updates to Care Homes
- Representation at Durham Community Action
- Representation at Pioneering Care Partnership
- Volunteers celebration
- Healthwatch County Durham Annual Event
- Distribution of our leaflets/ information
- Flu Survey engagement
- Patient Alliance Group
- Place Assessment work
- Representation at Joining the Dots initiative (DCC/Macmillan)
- University Hospital North Durham 'smoke free' engagement
- The refurbishment of the chemotherapy unit at University Hospital North Durham



Jean Snow, one of our amazing engagement volunteers, who worked tirelessly with us up until she sadly passed away, in 2019

Healthwatch Training for our Volunteers

We have provided training for our volunteers in the County to enable them to carry out their volunteer engagement. Volunteers have been trained in First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, Dementia awareness, Effective Communication and Enter and View. Training has enabled our volunteers to forge relationships and establish local community connections. The volunteers meet as a group every 6 months and have regular weekly contact with the volunteer supporter. Healthwatch County Durham and Healthwatch Sunderland were selected to receive funding from HW England to run regional Enter and View training- this has been temporarily delayed due to Covid-19.

Healthwatch County Durham Board

Healthwatch County Durham's Board attend numerous events and meetings including:

- Health and Well Being Board
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Safeguarding Adults Board
- Mental Health Strategic Partnership Board

The Board meets regularly and the board welcome members of the public to attend. The Board reviews all of the thematic priorities at the end of each year and uses what the people of County Durham tell them, to drive continuous improvement in the health and social care services. They combine consultation, signposting enquiries and engagement work with assessment of national issues to make sure views and priorities are always balanced.



Enter and View

We are fortunate to have 9 fully trained authorised representatives, 6 of which have been active during the year. They have been involved in seven Enter and View visits in Care Homes and GP surgeries.

Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.

Having safe, high-quality health and social care services is important to all of us. To check the quality of our local services we have been:

- **Looking** at how local health and care services are doing against national targets and standards
- **Carrying out** Enter and View visits in Care Homes and GP surgeries, using our findings to improve patient **experiences**.
- **Attending** and providing information to the Council's committees, which look at health and social care services
- **Working** in partnership with CCG's, NHS and the Council to help improve services and highlight what is important to patients, carers and families.
- **Telling** the Care Quality Commission (CQC) about your experiences of services so they can consider this before their inspections

Did You Know?

People who have used our signposting service said:

It's good to know that you can get things done for me. I've been trying and getting nowhere. A phone call from you and everything is sorted. I can't thank you enough.

Thank you for your help I really appreciate it as you are the first person who has actually tried. That means a lot. 😊

Views about Enter & View and volunteering:

HWCD Enter and View - "So important that users are given the chance at a ground level to express what is important to them with regard to health services"

Volunteer - "I really am feeling valued, welcome and part of the professional team (considering I am a volunteer). That takes some doing!!!"



Sharing views and experiences at a local care home



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at Healthwatch County Durham.

Telephone: 0800 3047039

Email: healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net

Website: <http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk>

Our reports and recommendations in 2019/2020

We have used the information people have told us to decide which areas of health and care to find out more about. Some of the reports we have produced are:

- Vascular services
- Flu vaccination
- Smoke-free hospital sites
- Young people and pharmacy services
- Plans for Ward 6 at Bishop Auckland Hospital
- Supported living schemes for adults

We have shared your views on local and national issues. Our reports have been sent to the organisations who runs services; the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) , Durham County Council and NHS England.

The people who lead these have told us what they will do in response to the recommendations we have made. We will follow this up to make sure it happens.

We also send our reports to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), who inspect health and care services and Healthwatch England to help build a picture of services at a national level.

All our reports can be found on our website

<http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk>



How we find out about what's important to you:

- We attended 112 engagements events throughout the year
- 2663 people provided us with feedback about health and social care
- 3994 people signed up to receive our e-bulletin this year

Our Key Reports



One of our Vascular events

Flu Vaccination

Healthwatch worked with Durham County Council's Public Health team to find out what discouraged vulnerable people from having seasonal flu jabs and what might encourage an increased uptake. 300 surveys were completed and our findings were shared in a report which will be used to help inform the local flu campaigns in 2020. Read the full report [here](#)

Vascular Services

When vascular services were being reconfigured in the region, NHS England called on Healthwatch to help them undertake a series of listening and informing events across County Durham, as well as undertaking a survey of former patients. The information gathered at the events and from the survey was presented in a report giving details of what was important for patients, families and carers in delivering services. Read the full report [here](#)

Young People and Pharmacies

Healthwatch received information from 439 young people in the County. Using an online survey and going into schools and colleges to talk directly to young people about their experience of using pharmacy services. We came up with a number of recommendations for the Local Pharmaceutical Committee to help them increase the number of young people using a pharmacy for health advice and services. Read full report [here](#)

Smokefree Hospitals

When the local hospital trust went Smoke-free they turned to Healthwatch to gather the views of patients, staff and visitors. We worked with Healthwatch Darlington and we captured the views of 218 people. In our report we made a number of recommendations based on our findings. We hope to be able to re-visit this work next year to see how things are going. Read the report [here](#)

Supported Living

When Durham County Council outsourced their supported living schemes for vulnerable adults they asked Healthwatch to gather some independent data from the service users about how the experience had been for them. Healthwatch had conversations with 33 services users, who were really happy to be able to share their experiences. In the report Healthwatch made a number of recommendations to the council. Read the report [here](#)

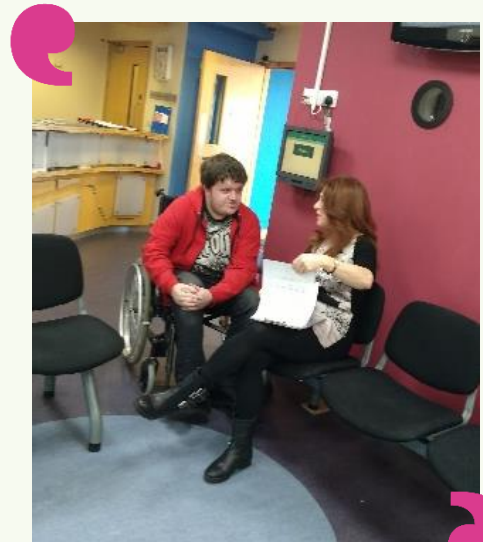
Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.

Take a look at how your views have helped make a difference to the care and support people receive in County Durham.

Improving experiences visiting your GP surgery

Throughout the year we carried out Enter and View visits to 4 GP surgeries and thanks to people speaking up here are examples of some changes that have been made:

- Improved parking for disabled patients
- More nurse practitioners recruited
- Changes to the layout of reception areas



A patient sharing views and experiences at a GP surgery

'Your visit has certainly helped us focus our minds, not only on what we are doing well, but also on areas where we know we need to improve in addition it has also highlighted further areas where we need to develop and improve our service to patients'

Responding to patient concerns

Over 20 people contacted us about their concerns that a step-down ward at a local hospital was going to close. Healthwatch felt there was an opportunity for more robust patient consultation about the proposals and as a result it was agreed we would work with the Trust to conduct engagement with patients to find out what was important to them about the care they received and the support available to help them get well. We had 180 questionnaires completed and spoke to 18 patients. The final report was presented to the hospital trust in July with our recommendations.

The great news is ultimately the Trust decided to retain the step-down ward at the hospital, showing the benefits of working together with our health partners in the county



Bishop Auckland Hospital

Finances

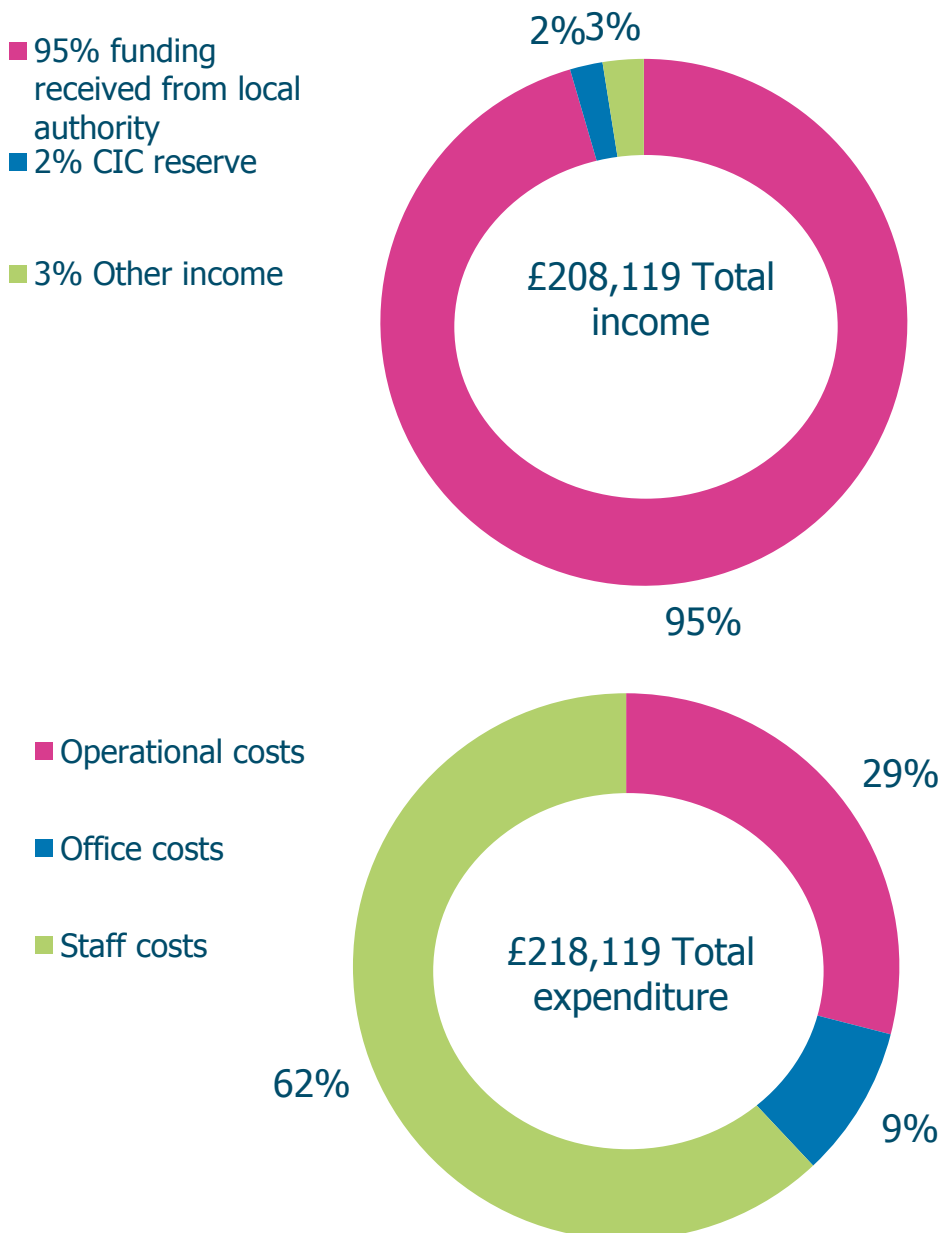
We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012).

In 2019/20 Durham County Council paid us £197,500 under contract to deliver local Healthwatch services, we also received £10,619 from other sources. The main areas of expenditure have been:

Staff costs: £128,389

Office costs: £19,146

Operational costs: £60,584



Thank you

Thank you to everyone who is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work.



Our volunteers training and sharing views

Contact us

By Phone:

0191 378 1037 (office landline)
0191 378 7695 (volunteer support)
0800 304 7039 (Freephone signposting)
07756 654218 (text)

By Post:

Healthwatch County Durham
Whitfield House, St Johns Road
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
Durham
DH7 8XL

By E-mail:

healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net

Online:

Website: www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

Facebook: Healthwatch County Durham

Twitter: @HWCCountyDurham

Instagram: @healthwatchcodurham



Healthwatch County Durham Board Meeting

The organisation holding the local Healthwatch contract is the Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP), Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF

Tel: 01325 321234

Email: enquiries@pcp.uk.net

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you need this in an alternative format please contact us.

Note: Registered Charity No: 1067888

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Healthwatch County Durham
Whitfield House, St Johns Road
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
Durham
DH7 8XL

www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

t: 08000 304 7039

e: healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net

 @HWCountyDurham

 Healthwatch County Durham
