



# Your voice counts

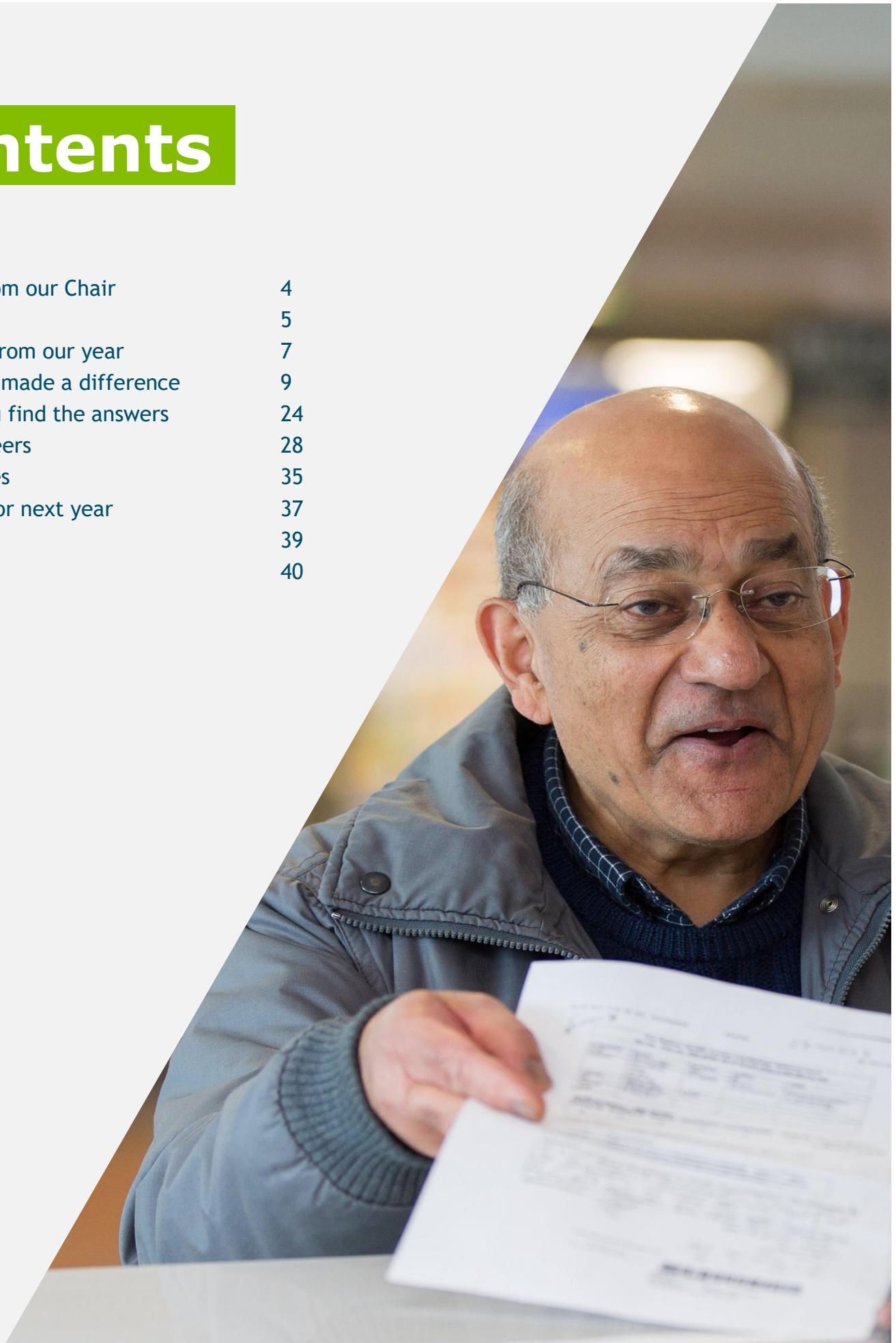
Healthwatch Darlington  
Annual Report 2018-19





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# Message from our Chair

Welcome to our Annual Report on the fifth anniversary of Healthwatch Darlington.

The comprehensive report which follows has been produced by our CEO, Michelle Thompson BEM on our behalf. I wish to record immediately the gratitude of the Board for the dedication of the whole team, which Michelle leads, for the way in which they have served the citizens of Darlington.

We continue to have to face a tight financial environment and we have statutory duties to perform in relation to health and social care - collecting information from users, signposting people to sources of help and support and influencing those able to make decisions in the NHS and the local authority. Increasingly we are working with our neighbouring Healthwatch across the North East as more and more decisions are taken by CCGs and Foundation Trusts working together in the NHS.

We have a small team of part-time staff on the payroll who have achieved so much this year and this would not have been possible without our considerable number of Health Connectors who volunteer their time with us in various ways - on outreach going to meet people in their communities, representing Healthwatch Darlington on various external bodies and also helping with research projects back in the office.

But, we need your help as members of the public. If you have an issue (or a compliment) with any health or care service, please tell us. We can only respond to your concerns if we

know about them.

We are very careful with the information you provide for us and we respect your confidentiality - but if we don't know, we can't help.

The report below contains details of the many areas of influence in which we operate. This may give you information which will encourage you to email, 'phone or write to us - the means don't matter, your concerns and compliments do. Healthwatch Darlington is here for you, so please do join us in getting the best possible health and social care for you and the people for whom you care.



Robert Upshall  
Healthwatch Darlington Chair

*'email, 'phone or write to us - the means don't matter, your concerns and compliments do'*

# About us

## Healthwatch is here to make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

*As Chair of Healthwatch England, it's my role to make sure your Healthwatch gets effective support and that national decisions are informed by what people are saying all over England.*

*If you were one of the 400,000 people who shared their experiences with us last year, I want to say a personal thank you. Without your views, Healthwatch wouldn't be able to make a difference to health and social care services, both in your area and at a national level. One example of this is how we shared 85,000 views with the NHS, to highlight what matters most, and help shape its plans for the next decade.*

*If you're part of an organisation that's worked with, supported or responded to Healthwatch Darlington, thank you too. You've helped to make an even bigger difference.*

*None of this could have been possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, who work in the community every day to understand what is working and what could be better when it comes to people's health and care.*

*If you've shared your views with us then please keep doing what you're doing. If you haven't, then this is your chance to step forward and help us make care better for your community. We all have a stake in our NHS and social care services: we can all really make a difference in this way.*



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which reads "Sir Robert Francis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Sir Robert Francis QC**  
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 that 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.



## People are at the heart of everything we do

We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. 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

Our main job is to raise people's concerns with health and care decision-makers so that they can improve support across the country. The evidence we gather also helps us recommend how policy and practice can change for the better.







# Highlights from

# our year

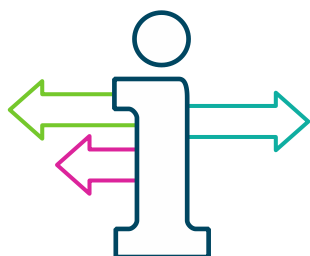
## Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2018-19. Our resources:



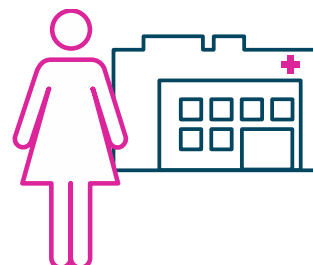
880 people shared their health and social care story with us via our surveys and outreach activity.



We have 23 volunteers helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 1602 hours.



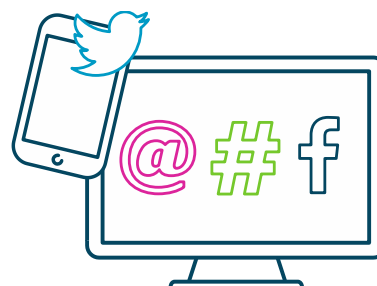
279 people accessed Healthwatch signposting and information online or contacted us with questions about local support.



We visited 42 services and 7 community events to understand people's experiences of care.



We recommended 35 improvements were adopted by services to make health and care better in our community.



288,971 people engaged with us through our website and social media.





**How we've made**

**a difference**

## Changes made to your community

Find out how sharing your views with your local Healthwatch has led to positive changes to health and social care services in Darlington. We show that when people speak up about what's important, and services listen, care is improved for all.

### Tackling barriers to accessing mental health services for people with an addiction

An area identified in our 2018/19 "What's Important to You?" survey was mental health services, and in particular the voices of service users in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. As a result we set up two focus groups to listen and to speak to local service users from the Recovery and Wellbeing service which sits under a regional charity called NECA.

8 clients attended the first focus group and a further 9 attended the second. 4 clients agreed to share their real-life patient experiences as case studies.

The qualitative and quantitative data provided by local service users helped shape our recommendations alongside the consideration of local, regional and national policy framework.

Healthwatch Darlington identified a number of concerns about local NHS services being delivered by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust including Improving Access to Psychological Therapies, West Park Hospital and Darlington Mental Health Crisis Team.



Service users were regularly experiencing early discharge from services due to life factors out of their control due to leading what's deemed as an erratic lifestyle.

These factors can have an impact on how patients engage with services. Service users felt these factors were not considered and some service users were unable to receive the treatment they needed due to the complexities of their needs which were not being addressed.

We frequently found throughout our work that service users seemed to have negative experiences when dealing with the Mental Health Crisis team. In particular it was felt that the crisis team didn't always answer the phone and if they did they were not much help.

Service users regularly mentioned the frustrations at the lack of information and communication they received from local mental health services and were often unsure how to navigate the health care system. Many did not know they had a care plan or in fact should have had one. They regularly expressed the feeling that they were not listened to and decisions were often made without their input.

Concerns were also highlighted about staff attitudes within local NHS services. Service users felt they were treated differently because of their addiction.

*Sarah now feels she doesn't know what she is doing with no job and no support from her care coordinator*

Chris is desperate to get the help he needs so he can recover and one day return to employment. Chris finds it embarrassing living like this and has got to a point where he has no hope.



Healthwatch Darlington met with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust to discuss our findings and recommendations and as a result we were told the Trust had made changes to the crisis team telephone line which no longer goes to West Park's Hospital switch board but now has its own stand-alone telephone line. The new telephone line is in implementation stage, so staff capacity is currently being monitored and tested in order to ensure calls are being answered more quickly.

The Trust also told us that the Care and Management of Dual-Diagnosis' policy has now been updated and additional protocols for dual-diagnosis patients/service users are in place. These are to ensure that discharge is handled carefully with the view to move patients on with a 'Keeping Well Plan.'

When Healthwatch Darlington asked about service user's care plans, we were told development work to improve the process of completing care plans is happening this year.

The Trust gave Healthwatch Darlington further reassurance that service users will be listened to if they have concerns about staff attitudes or discriminatory behaviour.



Healthwatch Darlington will be working with the Trust, NECA and service users to design an information pack/leaflet which will provide service users with the information they need to use mental health services, including information about raising concerns and making a complain.

The Trust have recognised that further development work is needed when it comes to information and signposting. Healthwatch Darlington have informed the Trust about the Living Well Darlington directory website and reminded the Trust of Healthwatch Darlington's statutory signposting duties.

Healthwatch Darlington asked the Trust about staff training and service user's involvement.

We were told that they have voluntary peer mentor roles which are open to service users to apply for, these roles provide patients and service users with a peer mentor. The Trust have also told us that the Dual Diagnosis Network is open to service user representatives. Healthwatch Darlington are pleased to hear that service users do have opportunities to be heard. We look forward to hearing about future service developments for dual-diagnosis patients living in Darlington.

Full report here: [Substance Misuse Report 2018](#)

*Daniel is desperate to get the support he needs from mental health services.*



## Children and Young People Mental Health Services

The Borough of Darlington has a resident population of around 106,000 people. Children and young people under the age of 20 years make up 23.5% of population of Darlington (approximately 25,000). Approximately 1,445 of the population of children and young people in Darlington have a mental disorder.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/five-year-forward-view/next-steps-on-the-nhs-five-year-forward-view/mental-health/>

We conducted two children and young people's surveys across the summer months in 2018. One survey was for young people and one survey was for parents and carers.

This survey was sent out online via our social media platforms, website and our weekly e-bulletin. We also visited a number of venues

and community groups engaging with young people, parents and carers face to face, giving them an opportunity to take part in the survey. We received 172 responses which was fantastic.

*"I want to know where I can get more support for my child whilst waiting for CAMH's"*

Throughout our research and engagement, the services regularly highlighted were Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) known locally as Talking Changes, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Crisis Team and Child, Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS).

*"CAMH's have considered all of the findings within this report and are seeking to improve the overall service user and parent carer feedback"*

*Our volunteer Health Connectors gathering views!*



## Children & Young People

### Findings

- 131 Children and Young People completed our survey
- 57% were not happy with the support provided during the wait for mental health services.
- 33% were not happy with the information provided during the wait.
- 85 (65%) young people used 1 or more form of technology to support their own mental health and a particular increase in apps and newer social media platforms have been noticed.
- 40 people mentioned newer apps and platforms they use. Examples of this were Discord and Snapchat.

### Suggestions for improvement

- Support during the waiting period for mental health services were more support and communication from services.
- More awareness raising in schools and earlier intervention
- Improved waiting times
- More staff and counsellors needed in and out of schools
- More education needed in schools.
- More information about services and mental health needed in schools and the community.
- More services needed within the community
- Peer support and support groups

**Table 1: Healthwatch Darlington survey responses - children and young people**

## Parent/Carers

### Findings

- 45 parent/carers took part in our survey.
- 70% were not happy with the amount of support available during the waiting period for mental health services.
- 43% were not happy with the information provided during the waiting period.
- Only 2.27% thought there was enough support in schools
- 66% said they were offered no support during the waiting period.
- Parents and carers mostly mention using Facebook or Mindfulness Apps as a suggestion for helping mental health. A few parents didn't agree with using technology and thought it was best to see a clinician face to face.

### Suggestions for improvement

- More communication and more information about services and other services need to be made available during the waiting period for mental health services. Several parents mention the need to have more support with 'how they can help their child during the wait'.
- More staff and improved waiting times
- Staff training across all organisations, schools, settings that come into contact with children with mental health needs.
- Reducing stigma and raising awareness within schools and the wider community.
- More information about support and services available needed within services and in the community.
- More/New services within the community.

**Table 2: Healthwatch Darlington survey responses - parent/carers**

### Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group:

*“We have included your key findings in the Local Transformation Plan refresh (as you are aware) and we feel that the refresh and associated planned actions cover all of the key areas - schools, training, communication etc.*

*To ensure we link all of this work together, we would like to invite Healthwatch to be part of the Local Transformation Plan core group.”*

### Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust:

*“CAMHS are currently working with Healthwatch to establish a participation group.*

*We would anticipate that the report, findings and progress on actions will be reviewed by this group.”*

- Healthwatch Darlington now attend the Local Transformation Plan meetings to ensure that children & young people and their families views are listened to.
- Healthwatch Darlington are supporting CAMHS to establish a young people’s participation group within Darlington.
- CAMHS said they will continue to work with CCG and LA to develop bids to progress the Mental Health Support Teams.
- CAMHS said they will continue to engage in national & local strategies, working with partners and commissioners to strengthen the anti-stigma offer across the borough. This work will also be included in the development of the mental health support teams in school.
- CAMHS said they will continue working with Durham & Darlington carers to develop a leaflet that contains information around other services available.
- CAMHS said they will continue with plans to further develop their website which will include details about Apps in leaflets and on the website.
- CAMHS said they will hold a Quality Improvement event in 2019 to standardise therapeutic group offer - will include parent/carer involvement.

Full report here: [CYP MH Report](#)

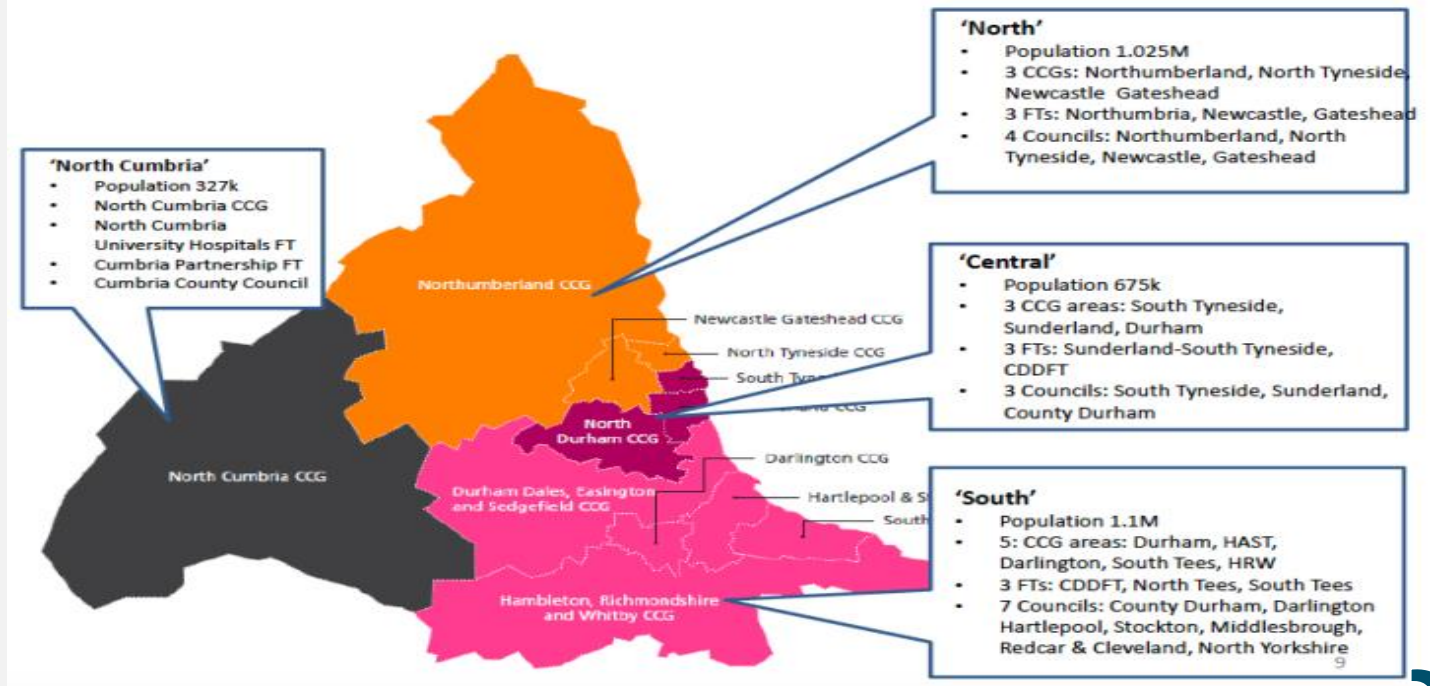
Following on from our report Healthwatch Darlington will be monitoring CAMHS to ensure the above actions and feedback are implemented.

Healthwatch Darlington are keen to see improvements and will be working hard to ensure the collective voice of children, young people and their families living in Darlington are being listened to and understood by our local commissioners and providers.





## Four Integrated Care Partnerships



## Healthwatch collaboration across the North East

NHS England and NHS Improvement funded the Healthwatch network to carry out engagement with communities across the country to establish how the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) should be implemented locally.

Local Healthwatch worked together to find out what local people think. What people told us will be shared with the NHS and will be used to help develop the plan for our area.

The coordinating Healthwatch for the North East is Healthwatch Darlington (HWD) and they agreed engagement priorities with the Head of

Communications and Engagement for our North East Integrated Care System (ICS) regarding the NHS Long Term Plan.

The area consists of four Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP) - North Cumbria, North, Central and South.

For the purpose of this large scale engagement, North Cumbria ICP joined their Cumbria colleagues and the North, Central and South ICP's were split into two areas:

- Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham
- County Durham, Darlington, Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby



## Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services hear what works, what doesn't, and what you want from care in the future.

w: [www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)

t: 01325 380145

e: [info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)

Healthwatch Darlington liaised and co-ordinated the engagement activities with Healthwatch colleagues and the ICS Head of Communications and Engagement in the relevant North and South ICP areas and produced two reports bringing together all the evidence and insight in the North and in the South gathered by each of the 13 individual Healthwatch who were all contractually obliged to carry out this engagement work.

## Objectives

The ICS priorities across the North East include:

- Prevention - early detection and effective management of the biggest causes of premature death: cancer, cardiovascular (heart) and respiratory (lung) disease.
- Better lung health, with an ambition to achieve a smoke free generation
- More effective management of frailty to ensure no one is admitted to hospital that could have been cared for more effectively in their own home with the right personalised care, and doing more to tackle social isolation with our ICS partners.
- Improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of infants, children and young people.
- Ensuring the best possible maternal health and early years outcomes.
- Improving outcomes for people who experience periods of poor mental health and specifically those with severe and enduring mental illness.
- Supporting and enabling everyone to have a good death and to be able to die in the place of their choice.

Discussions with individual Healthwatch colleagues revealed the following popular

themes that they knew from their experience of listening to people locally, were likely to be important:

- Mental Health including dementia, young people and SEND
- Long Term Health Conditions
- Palliative Care
- Cancer Services
- GP services including primary care networks, self-care, community and technologies

After discussions with the ICS Head of Communications and Engagement it was agreed that all Healthwatch themes would be helpful across the region to help inform ICS priority areas.

Each Healthwatch gathered survey responses and held focus groups during March and April 2019 and the North and South reports compiled by Healthwatch Darlington will be published in June 2019.

We will be reviewing the impact of the research findings by keeping positive and collaborative working relationships with the ICS and ICP's and ensuring that any information fed directly to Healthwatch England from NHS England is also monitored so that we know what is happening at a national level as well as at a local and regional level.



## Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services hear what works, what doesn't, and what you want from care in the future.

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## Black, Minority, and Ethnic Communities (BME) GP Registration & Accessibility



This project focused on how accessible GPs are to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in Darlington and patients with sight and/or hearing impairment.

We looked at the difficulties the BME community have in registering with a GP in Darlington, the support and standard of care they are given when using their GP surgery, and the provisions in place to address language barriers for BME patients.

We took the opportunity to explore this area after it was brought to our attention by Darlington Assistance for Refugees (DAR). They told us the story of an Arabic family of five children who tried to register at a GP surgery in Darlington. They were given a registration form in English to fill out and sent away. Despite speaking limited English, they were not given any translated documents or support in filling out the forms. This caused the family distress.

We were also aware of the problems BME groups have in accessing GP services in Darlington through conversations we have had during our previous BME projects.

We felt it was important to collect data from a range of sources. To do this we communicated with GP surgeries in Darlington, had in-depth conversations with local BME community members and representatives, and conducted our own research into GP services in Darlington.

The qualitative data provided by BME residents shaped our recommendations alongside the consideration of the policy framework which underpins this work.

The most important concern that emerged during our study is that GP practices in Darlington are not sufficiently recognising the struggles that BME residents may be facing when trying to register, accessing appointments and completing application forms/ documents when faced with speaking no or little English.

BME residents provided us with a clearer insight into what matters to them the most. We recognised that some practices in Darlington provide good provisions to meet the needs of all patients with positive feedback contributed in some cases.

A large proportion of qualitative data however highlighted a need to review the current translation service and initial support in place for patients.

We sent our recommendations to both commissioners and providers to help influence and improve the support that NHS England and GP practices in Darlington provide BME patients who speak no or little English.

As a result of our report we received positive feedback from local GP surgeries, Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England North.



## Outcome (BME) GP Registration & Accessibility

### What we did

We listened to your feedback and we made recommendations which were sent to providers and commissioners. We met with NHS England North to discuss the report and concerns with the current Interpreting and Translation service. We received responses from Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England North and five GP practices.

### Actions & Follow up

**Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group** will continue to support providers. They will continue to communicate to all GP practices the accessible information website for further information on how to make these improvements and discuss with practices as part of an annual visit process.

**NHS England North** will continue to work with Language Empire to make improvements. Language Empire will hold an open recruitment process for interpreters in the 'DL' postcode area and this is planned to continue until local interpreters are able to meet the needs of Darlington patients in all but a handful of cases. **NHS England North** plan to arrange training sessions for local GP practices in the near future. **Healthwatch Darlington** have offered to support with sharing information about the recruitment and offering suggestions for a venue for the training.

**St George Medical Practice** will be reviewing their accessible information policy and trying to implement changes.

**Neasham Road Surgery** will be reviewing current policies in place.

**Rockcliffe Court** are in the process of reviewing their own policies on interpreting and translation in line with Healthwatch Darlington's suggestions. Whilst doing this they are contacting their web designer to ask about using Google Translate.

**Orchard Court** have made a poster available with all the different languages for patients to point to which language they use.

**Whinfield Medical Practice** reception team leader is undertaking an inhouse project to review their process/ information and Healthwatch Darlington's recommendations.

Full report here: [GP BME Report 2018](#)

We would like to thank Darlington Assistance for Refugees (DAR) for sharing the views and experiences of refugees and BME residents living in Darlington. This has provided us with the understanding we needed to highlight problems which has helped underpin our recommendations. We would also like to thank volunteer Health Connectors; Jack Turner, Jamie Odgers, Gill Waite, Sajna Miah, Lorraine Dunn, Georgia Walker and Madi Scott for your assistance with research.

## What's it like to live in a Care Home?

We visited five care homes following the six that were completed last year. We asked residents family friends and staff what its like to live, visit and work in a care home. We received very positive response from all areas with residents happy about where they were living and with relatives saying that they feel their family members were well looked after.

### Observations:

We observed the interaction between residents and staff which was very kind and caring. Each of the homes were very welcoming, with the manager or senior member of staff greeting us and introducing us to the environment, staff, visitors and residents. The cleanliness of all the homes was very good although some décor was a bit dated. On entering we were pleased to see that all the homes were displaying our information of the visit and in the communal areas notice boards were up to date.

*“As a volunteer I visited three care homes and was pleased at the atmosphere in them. I was impressed with the standard of care that is given and has eased my mind should I, or a relative need to enter such a home”*

### Recommendations:

- More one to one interactions as this was one of the main things brought up by staff, relatives and residents.
- Promote ratio of staff to number of residents so that the staff delivering the service, the residents receiving the service, and relatives of residents visiting understand the requirements set out by the Home regarding the number of staff per number of the residents.
- For staff to spend more time with residents where possible, giving a better 1 to 1 service.
- For residents to be given the opportunity to get out doors in the fresh air more, either in the garden or by trips out.
- Being aware of small housekeeping and meal time issues as these can make a big difference to residents if rectified.

### Acknowledgements :

We would like to thank all residents, family, friends and staff for their time in completing the surveys and talking to us. All the homes were very welcoming, open and honest during our visit and is very much appreciated. Our report was positively received by the Care Homes involved as well as the Care Quality Commission, Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Team and the public.

## Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)

We spoke to 161 people about the Talking changes service and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.

The new model aims to meet the requirements of the Mental Health Five Year Forward View, offer an enhanced model including people with long-term conditions, a more equitable service across the collaborative and evidence based IAPT interventions that are NICE approved.

It will offer the quality of care recommended in the Five Year Forward View and deliver timely evidence based treatment via a Single Point of Access across the collaborative.

We forwarded our findings to the CCG and asked for regular updates regarding the ongoing consultation for this service including further engagement opportunities.



## Great North Care Record

We held 3 focus groups for people to share their views with the Connected Health Cities (CHC) project looking at the development of a new tool that will allow members of the public to indicate how their personal health information should - or should not - be used. The tool is likely to take the form of a smartphone app or online form. Patient's information would be used for the purposes of health service planning and health-related research.

## Stroke Services

We held a focus group offering service users and their families an opportunity to explore the current provisions in place for individuals using Stroke services living in Darlington.

Darlington CCG want to provide a service that delivers care closer to home where possible and more continuity of care.

The review looked at the current pathway which includes the specialist stroke rehabilitation provision at Bishop Auckland Hospital, as well as rehabilitation provision outside the hospital in the community



*“More and better communication, family involvement more and discussion around the table as to full care needs”* **Stroke patient**



## Vascular Services

Healthwatch Darlington and Healthwatch County Durham hosted a number of information and listening events about vascular services in County Durham. We were asked by NHS England to facilitate these events to capture the views of patients and the public about improving the experience of services. Attendees were able to hear from and share their views directly with NHS staff, including vascular consultants.

The events, while directly impacting patients who may need to access vascular services (for treatments, procedures and surgeries), were also available for any member of the public who wanted to attend. In Darlington the changes did not affect service users due to the current flow from Darlington but attendees found the events beneficial especially speaking to the vascular consultants.



## Care Quality Commission

CQC are the independent regulator of health and social care in England. They make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and they encourage care services to improve.

We have quarterly meetings with key CQC inspectors. This enables us to share information and intelligence about Darlington services and which services are due to be inspected.

## CDDFT & TEWV Quality Accounts

Quality Accounts are annual reports about the quality of services provided by an NHS healthcare service. They are published by each NHS healthcare provider, including the independent sector and are made available to the public.

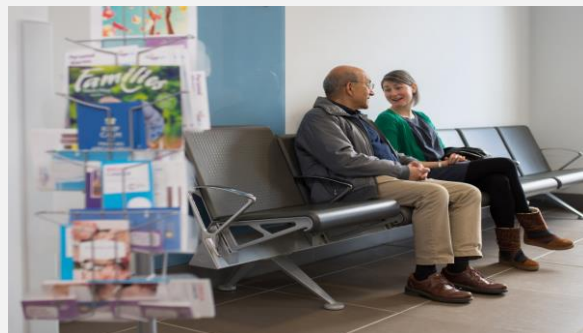
Each year we are asked to comment on the quality accounts from the County Durham And Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV).

The Quality Accounts process is an opportunity for us to provide an evidence-based challenge to providers based on our own engagement with people who use NHS healthcare services.

We are best placed to provide meaningful comment on draft Quality Accounts where engagement with the provider on Quality Accounts, including co-design of the provider's priorities for improvement, is a year round exercise.

Providers are often proactive in seeking views from Healthwatch Darlington on what quality priorities should be selected for a Quality Account several months before it is due to be published.

## Enter and View Programme for County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust



Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) was asked, as a stakeholder in the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) Quality Improvement Board (QIB) to suggest how they could support quality improvement within CDDFT, linked to the Measures of Success criteria, agreed by the QIB in October 2017.

The HWCD Board suggested, Patient Experience was the most appropriate area to support. They proposed Enter and View visits in wards or departments that had done very well or less well in their most recent Friends and Family Test (FFT), to learn from those that had done well and share that learning with other wards who wish to improve. HWCD Board also met with Healthwatch Darlington who agreed to take part in the work and to carry out visits in Darlington Memorial Hospital.

HWCD met with CDDFT Patient Experience team to plan the visits. They identified three wards at University Hospital of North Durham (UHND) and three at Darlington Memorial Hospital (DMH) with different FFT results. It was agreed that Healthwatch would not know which wards fell into each category and that the same 'appreciative questions' would be used to identify trends and areas of good practice, as well as areas for improvement.

Individual reports were written for each of the wards based on what we were told and

observed on our visit. In total there were 81 individual conversations with patients across the 6 wards. Visits on the wards took between 2 to 3 hours.

Overall the feedback we received from patients was very positive and there was praise for the staff who cared for them,

### Feedback from ward staff and actions already taken to address any of the issues raised:

The reports were shared with each ward and Healthwatch was delighted with the positive response to the observations and recommendations.

Staff showed enthusiasm and consideration for each other as well as the patients under their care.

On one ward at DMH they told us they are looking for ways to better support dementia patients and to inform other patients about dementia

Where there had been negative comments about the meals staff told us they would make sure this was shared with the catering team.

In relation to noise levels one ward told us they do take time to try to place patients with the same cognitive needs in one area, as much as possible, thus limiting the amount of disturbance of others.

## CDDFT Official Response

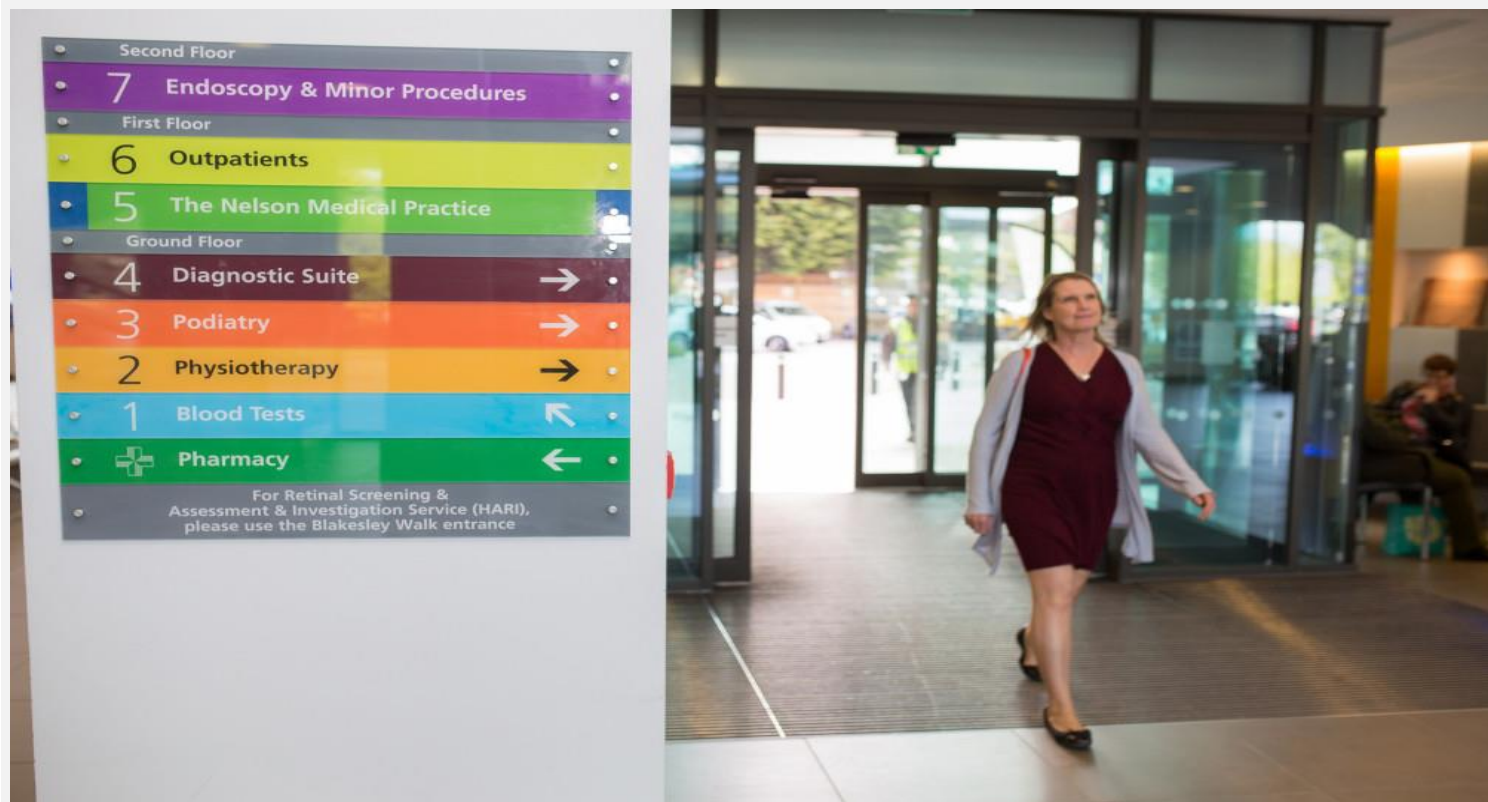
*“Hearing what our patients think about our services and the care we are providing is a really important part of our commitment to continually review and improve the overall experience we can offer and to ensure we are delivering on the Trust’s strategy, ‘Our Patients Matter’.*

*We recently invited Healthwatch County Durham and Healthwatch Darlington to come onto our two main sites and provide some independent support for gathering and understanding patients views and feedback.*

*We’re pleased to share with you that the Healthwatch reports highlighted lots for us to be proud of - the results show how impressed patients and their families are with our nurses and healthcare workers in particular. Kindness, keeping them informed, checking patients are feeling ok in themselves were all highlighted. Patients noted this thoughtful approach continued even at the busiest times.*

*As well as the positives, the feedback also provides another way in which we can identify areas for improvement. The visits highlighted patient feedback about noise at night on the wards which has led to the launch of our Invest in Rest Charter”*

For the full story including access to the full reports: [Hospital Enter and View](#)



We would like to thank:

- all the patients in wards at UHND and DMH who shared their experience with us
- the staff in the wards who helped us gather patient experiences
- the Healthwatch volunteers who helped us gather the experiences of patients on the ward







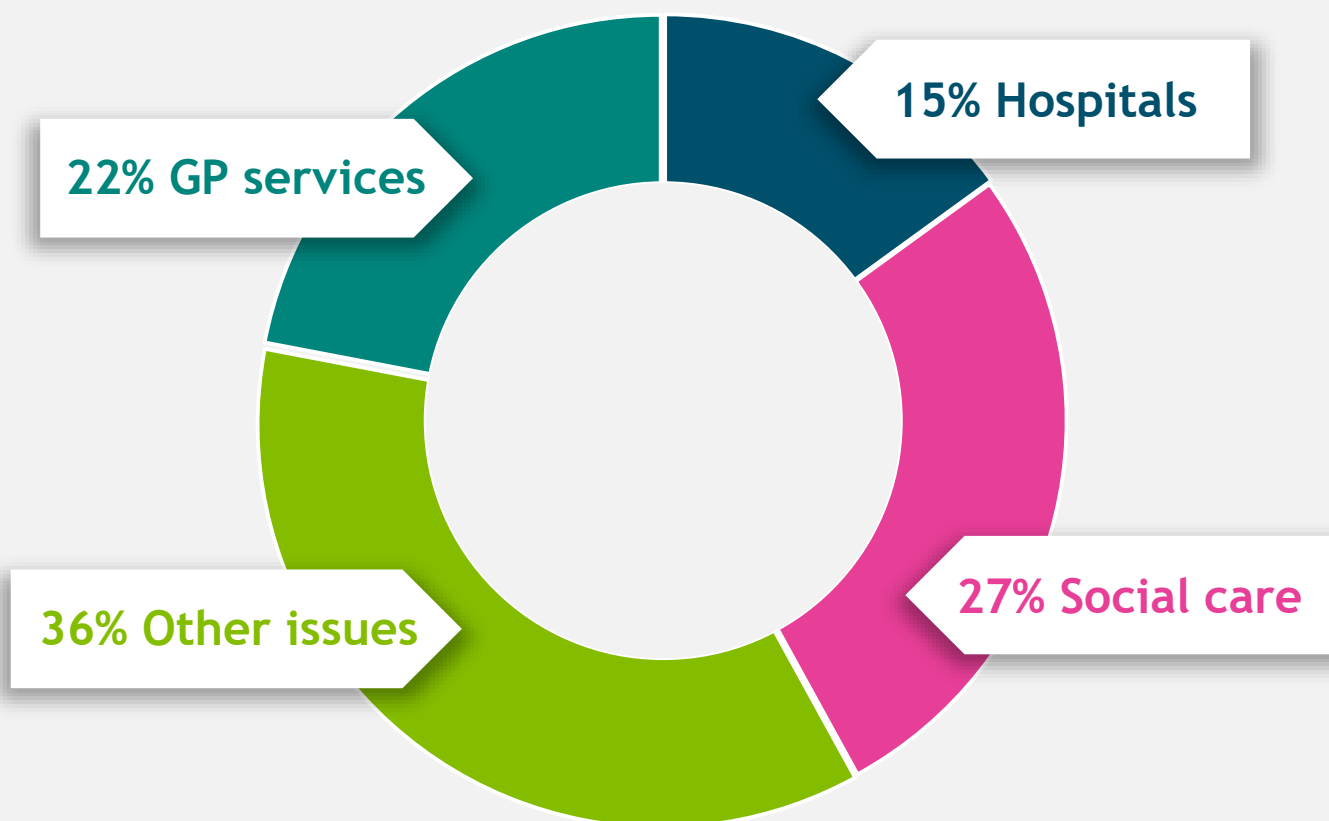
**Helping you find**

**the answers**

## What services do people want to know about?

People don't always know how to get the information they need to make decisions about their own health and care. Healthwatch plays an important role in providing advice and pointing people in the right direction for the support they need.

Here are the most common things that people ask us:



## How we provide people with advice and information

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful. There are many organisations that can provide help, but people don't know where to look. That's where we come in! Last year we helped 279 people access the advice and information they need.

You can come to us for advice and information in a number of ways including:

- + Specific advice and information online
- + Our contact us form
- + At community events
- + Promoting helpful services across our social media channels and weekly e-bulletin
- + Over the phone, email or post.



### Hospital Services

A person spoke to us about their father in hospital. They felt their father was being mistreated but eventually let it go when safeguarding got involved. They felt that nobody would listen to their concerns. They had no idea who Healthwatch was and wished they had of done before now, as a proper complaint might have been easier to explore. They were given an information leaflet and signposted to the Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) so they can explore the possibility of making a formal complaint.

### GP Services

A person called into our office for help. They couldn't find a GP to register with in the local area. They were removed from the list at one GP practice due to an incident which they feel was not that bad.

They were worried if they register with a new GP they will review their medication and this will be reduced. They heavily rely upon their medication and are unhappy with the decision to be removed from their old GP list and wanted to make a complaint.

We contacted NHS customer contact centre on their behalf as they had no phone credit to do so. The contact centre told us that it would be up to the GP to clarify if a medication review would take place upon registering.



They could not guarantee this won't happen as it's a clinical decision. The person decided to try a new GP surgery and we referred them to ICA as they require support to make a complaint.





## Mental Health Services

Mental Health services was the most common theme for patients and families to contact Healthwatch Darlington during 2018/19. Individuals will often be looking for additional support aside from the NHS due to long waiting times or feeling unsupported. Healthwatch Darlington directs these individuals to third sector organisations, peer support groups or to raise further concerns within local Trusts, Patient Experience Teams or the Independent Complaints Advocacy.

## Community Support

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations are the second most common reason for patients and their families to contact us.

They will often request telephone numbers for local services ranging from LGBT support to Alzheimer's support

## Musculoskeletal Services

Most individuals request telephone numbers for services. However, further information is often needed for individuals using Musculoskeletal services. Patient and families seem to be struggling with long waiting times once referred from their local GP or experience difficulties trying to obtain information about the location of the service and did not know where to go. We have signposted some of these individuals to the local Musculoskeletal service or Independent Complaints Advocacy to raise further concerns.



## Are you looking for help?

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

w: [www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)

t: 01325 380145

e: [info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)



# Our volunteers





## How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch Darlington we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of our 23 volunteers that work with us to help make care better for their communities.

- + Raise awareness of the work we do in the community
- + Visit services to make sure they're meeting people's needs
- + Support our day to day running e.g. governance
- + Collect people's views and experiences which we use in our reports



*Some of our fabulous Health Connectors and Youthwatch volunteers!*

## Volunteers improve accessibility for service users living with or recovering from an addiction who use mental health services

Our volunteers assisted with staff led focus groups and one to one patient interviews with local service users who live with or recovering from an addiction who use mental health services. Thanks to their support and the feedback gathered which highlighted service users struggles to use and navigate mental health services, a local Trust has agreed to introduce easy to read leaflets which are designed with the patients views at the 'heart' of the design. The new documents will improve patients experience when using mental health services.

## Volunteers improve the quality of an overnight hospital stay for local patients

Our volunteers from Healthwatch Darlington and our neighbouring Healthwatch County Durham conducted enter and view visits within local Hospitals to see how comfortable the wards were for patients during their stay. Improvements were highlighted, and recommendations were shared with the Trust. Thanks to their feedback which highlighted some patients find it difficult to sleep at night, this prompted the Trust to initiate their 'Invest in Rest Charter'. They have made practical steps such as dimming lights, turning down the volume of buzzers and phones and reminding staff to keep their voices low. Patients can also request ear plugs and eye masks.



## Meet our volunteers

We caught up with a couple of our fantastic volunteers to show you how their work truly makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.



### Jamie, 32

*“Having moved to Darlington from Northern Ireland in early 2017 I spoke to someone I know about volunteering opportunities and Healthwatch Darlington was mentioned.*

*This gave me the perfect opportunity to meet new people as well as further develop my skills in IT and social media in an office environment. It has been a privilege to also get involved in community outreach by visiting other organisations, public settings such as schools, colleges and community centers.*

*I’ve also been given the opportunity to take part in community events during various health awareness weeks, speaking to the public and finding out their views on health and social care services in Darlington. Capturing all of this information has helped Healthwatch Darlington greatly in creating reports and making recommendations to the health commissioners and providers of vital Health and Social care services.*

*Having struggled in recent years with mental health issues, being a volunteer with Healthwatch Darlington since November 2017 has given me a lot of confidence to be around others, speak openly to the general public and it’s allowed me to feel like I’m valued member of the community. I feel like I’m making a positive difference to the lives of people in Darlington. Being a part of Healthwatch Darlington has heavily influenced my desire to possibly pursue qualifications and a future career in Mental Health.”*



## Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering get in touch.

w: [www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)

t: 01325 380145

e: [info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)

## Meet our Volunteers



### Ross

*"I joined Healthwatch Darlington as a volunteer in May 2017 after I saw one of their roles on a website.*

*I hoped to gain some news skills within an office. Since then I have become newly qualified in administration and I hope to gain a role as an administrator in the near future. I've enjoyed taking part in community events and being given the opportunity to represent Healthwatch Darlington at the Hospital and the Living with and Beyond Cancer event."*

### Gill

*"I joined Healthwatch Darlington after I was inspired by talking to a member of the team at a volunteer fayre.*

*I have enjoyed meeting new people, the staff and volunteers are friendly, I have also enjoyed Enter & View visits to care homes and getting the chance to talk to people."*



### Lorraine

*"I was researching how to raise concerns about an NHS service when I came across Healthwatch Darlington.*

*When I learnt about Healthwatch I realised it was something I might be able to contribute to. I like to give service and I thought it was something I could do given I have Dementia. My highlight so far has been the chance to meet people when assisting at community outreach."*





## Youthwatch Darlington volunteers

- Improve information and signposting available for young patients in the local area
- Listen to young patients views and experiences
- Gather views and experiences
- Support and represent young people's voice for health and social care in Darlington
- Raise awareness online via our social media platforms increasing our reach

## Volunteers raise awareness and improve the information available for young people online

Youthwatch decided to design their own posters and social media posts to raise awareness during Stress Awareness Week and to address young people experiencing loneliness. Following on from feedback gathered which is now included in our Children and Young People's Mental Health report it was highlighted that young people sometimes don't know where to go for help and support.

Thanks to our young volunteers creativity, posters have now been displayed within colleges, GP surgeries and local pharmacies which include advice telephone numbers and online support for mental health. Furthermore, the social media reach for their online posts have been fantastic.

The latest post reached over 7000 people.

**Loneliness in Young People**

Just like many of the elderly, a lot of young people experience loneliness throughout the year. In fact, it is a lot more common than you would think!

**Talk to us...**

**Causes**

- Living alone
- Homelessness
- Stressful events
- Low self esteem
- Having a disability
- Bullying and intimidation
- Friends moving away
- Friends or family problems
- Leaving school, college or work
- Domestic violence/abuse
- Stay at home parent

**Impacts**

- Eating issues
- Substance misuse
- Sleep disturbance
- Cognitive deterioration
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Paranoia

**Solutions**

- Tell family/friends how you feel
- Join a community social group
- Join a club or hobby group
- Join a volunteering group
- Talk to someone, anyone
- Develop new routines
- Go for a walk outside
- Practice yoga

**Social Media and Your Wellbeing**

Social media can be a great tool for reducing loneliness for young people. However, it is important to remember, for people who are experiencing low mood and isolation, this can have the opposite effect, as we can be led to think that other people's lifestyles are much better than ours. This is often incorrect but it can leave us feeling inadequate.

**Further help**

- [bbc.com/ownit](http://bbc.com/ownit) (Online wellbeing)
- [Humankindcharity.org.uk](http://Humankindcharity.org.uk) (Darlington young carers)
- Youngminds crisis text line: 85258
- Do-it.org (Volunteering opportunities)
- Samaritians: 116 123

**Youthwatch DARLINGTON**

Contact us: 01325 380145  
j.austin@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk

Created by Youthwatch Darlington, a volunteering group, for 14 - 25 year olds.

**healthwatch Darlington**



## Volunteers improve the information available for young patients in local GP surgeries

Our young volunteers were asked by a local GP practice manager to visit their surgery. The surgery wanted their input and ideas to improve the information available for young patients within the waiting areas. Thanks to our young volunteers' feedback and ideas the surgery now have a brand-new display area for young patients which features information on mental health, carers, sexual health, local support groups and healthy living. Furthermore, the surgery now has recommendations on where to order leaflets and what to include on their website for young patients.



## Meet a few of our Youthwatch volunteers!

### Madi



I first found out about Healthwatch Darlington when I was 15 years old after my friend invited me to volunteer. After that, I decided to join the Youthwatch Darlington team because of the energetic atmosphere and the welcome environment that was present. My highlight so far has been watching Youthwatch Darlington grow and seeing what we have achieved so far.

### Alistair



Recently I finished my A levels and decided to volunteer to help develop my skills, whilst deciding on what the next step is.

I love everything to do with technology and the internet and wanted to bring in my knowledge to help Healthwatch, whilst helping the community to improve the lives for health users and young people.

### Liang

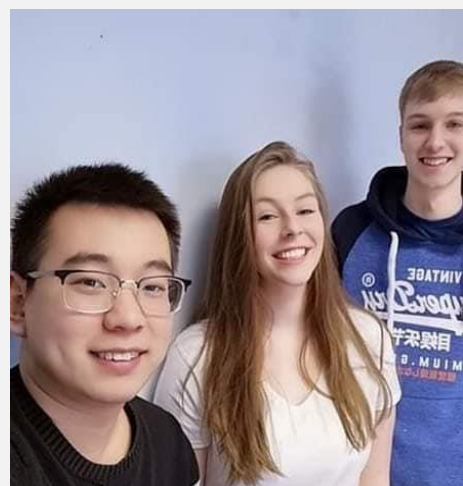


I come from China. I am an undergraduate and major in Food and Nutrition at Teesside University.

I like to help people, In the past I used to volunteer in an underground station in China. I'm very excited to now be a volunteer with Youthwatch Darlington. I am hoping to learn more new things! At the same time, I can use my knowledge about nutrition.



*Madi and Alistair out and about!*




*Liang, Madi and Alistair*



*Liang, Madi, Alistair & BBC Tees!*

*During the last year, our volunteers have also benefited from our own 4 module volunteer training as well as Dementia Friends, Cancer Awareness, Safeguarding training, Kings Fund - How does the NHS Work?, Diabetes training and Healthwatch England CRM training.*





**‘The views and stories  
you share with us are  
helping to make care  
better for our local  
community’**

**Mike Smith**  
Healthwatch Volunteer





# Our finances

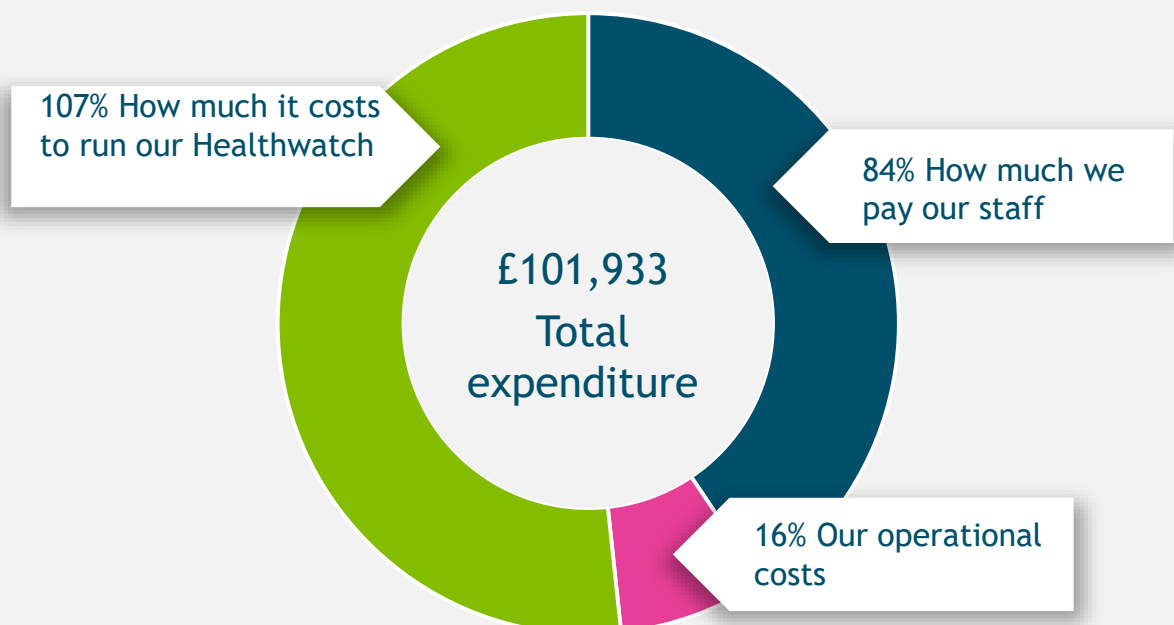
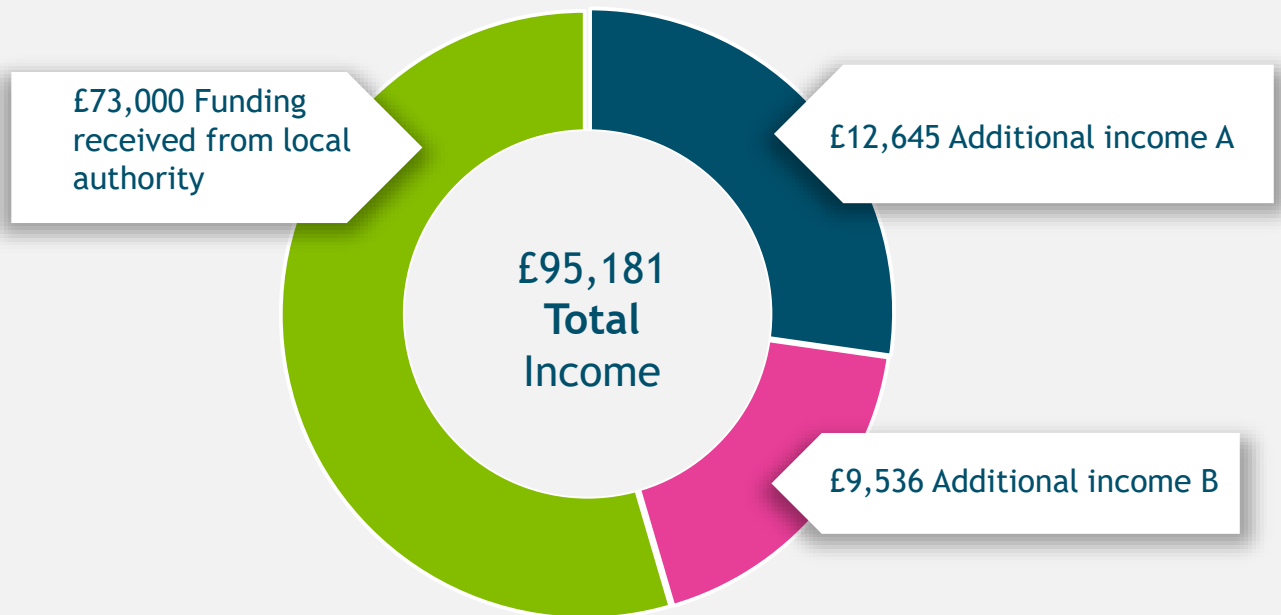




## How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority and we received £73,000. We also received £22,181 of additional income from

public and third sector organisations  
In 2018-19 we spent £101,933 which meant we spent some of our reserves.





**Our plans for**

**next year**

# Message from our CEO

We are a very small dedicated team, passionate about our vision and more importantly our residents. In 2018/19 we demonstrated how vital we are as one of Darlington's major stakeholders in the future of health and social care services.

We have a responsibility to ensure the voices of all Darlington communities are heard and considered, both children and adults and we cannot achieve this by working in isolation.

I am incredibly proud of our achievements in 2018/19 and this report reflects the dedication of our team and emphasises the need to work in partnership with others in order to gather relevant information and ensure high quality local care and health services.

Volunteers are a charity's most valued asset and our volunteers are exceptional! We could not have achieved so much if it were not for our dedicated team of Healthwatch Connectors and Youthwatch volunteers.

We have created a volunteer hub full of laughter, full of care and full of unwavering enthusiasm to reach out and support our community. We empower local people, we explore new opportunities and we create exciting engagement ideas that appeal to our diverse population.

Our "What's Important to You?" survey as well as information gathered at our community outreach has informed our work plan for 2019/20. This includes children and young people's mental health, learning disabilities, primary care access, hospital discharge services and seldom heard groups. We look forward to looking into these topics in more detail to ensure the planning and delivery of services meets your needs and those of your family and friends.

I would like to thank everyone who has completed our surveys and to the participants in all our focus groups and workshops. Your experience of local services, your comments and opinions and your patient journeys are so appreciated and will help us to influence at a strategic level.

Finally, on behalf of our team including Diane, Jemma and Rachel, I would like to thank our Board of Directors and all our volunteers.

Your willingness to support our team has helped to showcase our work as the independent champion for health and care services, not only to commissioners and providers of services but more importantly to patients, carers and the public.



*'We have created a volunteer hub full of laughter, full of care and full of unwavering enthusiasm to reach out and support our community.'*

**Michelle Thompson BEM**  
Healthwatch Darlington Chief Executive Officer



# Thank you

Thank you to everyone that 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
- + Commissioners and providers of local services
- + All 13 local Healthwatch in the North East who work with us regularly
- + Healthwatch England



# Contact us

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- + Twitter: @healthwatchDton
- + Facebook: @HealthwatchDarlington @youthwatchdarlo
- + Instagram: @healthwatchdarlington @youthwatchdarlington
- + Website: [www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)

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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.

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**healthwatch**

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Website: [www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk)