

Your voice - improving health and social care



Annual Report 2018/19

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This annual report is available from 30 June 2019 on our website:

www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk

We are sharing it with Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS England, North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, North Tyneside Council Overview and Scrutiny Committees and North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board.

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.

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Message from our Chair

It is commonplace these days for the annual reports of charitable organisations to refer to the past year as one of considerable change. That is certainly true for Healthwatch North Tyneside. We end the year able to point to significant successes in influencing changes in key services. But a year ago such success was by no means guaranteed.

In March 2018 we successfully won the tender to continue to deliver the Healthwatch service in North Tyneside. But this came at a cost. Three members of staff, half the staff team, left the organisation and our budget was reduced by around 15%. Our then chair, Peter Kenrick, who had led Healthwatch since it was set up in 2013, also stood down. So it's fair to say that we started the year in a state of some disarray.

The first six months of the year were tied up with new members of staff starting and the new team coming together. It is testament to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of the new staff team, volunteers and trustees that I can say we have ended the year on a high. In particular I want to highlight the work of our volunteers who, throughout the year, have continued to give their time to go and talk to people in different settings. Without their contribution Healthwatch could not achieve what it does.

The strength of Healthwatch comes from listening closely to what people tell us about their experiences of health and care services in North Tyneside. This year we launched our first annual survey to gather views across the whole range of people's experiences. Over 500 people responded and we are using this to shape our priorities for the coming year.

Our recent work on the issues of mental health and urgent and emergency care demonstrate the value of listening carefully to what patients and the public say about the services they use. It also shows the importance of working constructively with people in the NHS and social care to improve services.

At a time when services are under considerable pressure, facing significant change and with evidence that public confidence in the NHS is declining; it is more important than ever that the voice of patients and the public is heard and acted upon. We will continue our work to make sure this happens.

Iain Kitt
Chair of Healthwatch North Tyneside



Our year in numbers

2513 people told us about their experiences of health and social care



1537 people talked to us at events across North Tyneside



We received **3357** pieces of feedback about local services



531 people completed our first annual survey



We signposted people to **49** organisations for advice and support



We helped distribute **4000** mental health support leaflets across North Tyneside



1 new service has been commissioned as a result of our work



Talking to us

Hearing people's lived experiences of the services they use is the bedrock of everything we do.

We talk to local people who use health and social care services so we can understand their experiences and what matters to them. We use this to help service providers and decision makers to improve local services.

During this year 2,513 people told us about their experiences of health and social care services by:

- ◆ Completing one of our surveys
- ◆ Talking to us at outreach and community events
- ◆ Talking to us whilst they were using services - for example in hospital waiting rooms
- ◆ Using our feedback centre - using online or freepost forms
- ◆ Calling our information line 0191 263 5321 or emailing us

People gave us 3,357 individual pieces of feedback about the different services they use, that is over 125% more than in 2017/18.

We are committed to hearing from people from across North Tyneside and from all sections of our community. We make a special effort to hear from groups that often don't have their voices heard.

We held 56 events at community venues and services across North Tyneside and engaged with 1,537 different people.

Over the coming year we will do more to hear from people who live in the North West of the borough, people receiving care at home and young people.



Our first annual survey

From September to December 2018 we asked for people's views through our first annual survey.

We had 531 responses telling us about all of the different services people used, what works well and what people thought could be done better. Our approach enabled us to hear from groups of people we don't usually manage to reach - particularly working age men.

The information we gathered has been fed back to service providers and commissioners. We also used this to help us to decide what areas we should focus our future research activities.

Helping you find the answers

We help people find the information and services they need. We talk to them about how to access services, their rights and eligibility criteria, how to give feedback and how to make a complaint or raise a concern.

This year we signposted 222 people to services from 49 organisations.

The most common issues people raised with us were:

- ◆ getting access to services, particularly support with adult social care
- ◆ resolving an issue about their healthcare
- ◆ making a complaint about their healthcare
- ◆ needing help or support

The organisations we most often signpost people to were:

- ◆ North Tyneside Council Adult Social Care Gateway Team and MyCare
- ◆ Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
- ◆ Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICA)
- ◆ North Tyneside Carers' Centre
- ◆ North Tyneside Citizens Advice

The number of people approaching us for information is lower than in previous years. This is partly due to a temporary reduction in our staff team's capacity from April to September 2018.

We are relaunching our information and signposting service in July 2019 with new publicity to promote our services across the borough.



Mental health support leaflet

Working with Launchpad North Tyneside and North Tyneside Community Health and Care Forum, we produced a list of support groups and services that people can refer themselves to for support with their mental health needs. We distributed 4,000 leaflets across the borough and have had some amazing feedback about how useful people have found them.

Other areas in the North East are now looking to replicate this approach.

In partnership with Launchpad North Tyneside we are fully revising and updating the content for this leaflet and we plan to distribute the updated version in July 2019.

One person told us:

“I found the leaflet very useful for myself. The layout is straightforward and easy to use”

An organisation using the leaflet said:

“I have already shared this with staff and have received excellent feedback. In my role I have found having a ready-made list of networks for me to engage with has definitely saved me a lot of time!”



You can download the latest version of the leaflet at:

www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/rights-and-resources/mentalhealthsupport

Key contacts

In March 2019 we launched our new information campaign about key places to get support or advice in North Tyneside. It is important for us to make it easier for our users to have access to the information they need.

We are giving out our ‘key contact’ fridge magnets and you will soon see our new Healthwatch information and contact card across the borough.

SIGN North Tyneside

Healthwatch is an active member of the SIGN network which brings together voluntary, community and public organisations to help people find the right organisation or service to meet their needs. The SIGN Directory is an important source of information for us and we encourage people to use this resource themselves.

www.sign-nt.co.uk

Your voice, making a difference

One of our key activities is conducting research into some of the issues or trends we hear about from local people. Each year we identify a small number of issues for a more detailed piece of research to better understand people's experiences, what's working well and what could be done differently to better support people.

We involve commissioners, service providers and service users in designing our research activities but our research is always independent. To be an influential voice for people in North Tyneside we believe our recommendations must be rooted in the evidence we gather and the good practice we see across the country.

During this year we focused our research activities on mental health, carers, GPs and primary care and changes to urgent and emergency care services locally.

Mental health crisis support

In November 2018 we published our [report into people's experiences of using services when experiencing a mental health crisis](#).

Why we did this

We focused our research on mental health crisis support because local people were telling us about their issues accessing crisis services. North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) also recognised there was an issue and had decided to review the crisis pathway. This offered an opportunity for us to work together and influence decisions.

Our aims were to identify common themes in experiences of services and to ensure that users' views were heard as part of the CCG's pathway review. We also wanted service users to be involved in designing future services.

Our approach

We adopted a co-production approach to ensure that service users' voices were central to the research and that the findings were relevant to providers and commissioners. The project was overseen by a steering group which included service users, carers, staff involved in delivering services and commissioners. The steering group helped shape the design of the research project, helped to collaboratively analyse the findings and recommended actions.

We ran three surveys, available online and offline, aimed at service users, carers and staff. We conducted five focus groups through a range of local mental health groups. In addition, with the support of the Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team and Psychiatric Liaison Team, our volunteers carried out phone interviews with a small number of people who were currently using these services to gather real-time experiences. We heard from 123 service users, 43 carers and 43 staff in total. We also looked at good practice in other localities.

Our research into crisis services ran alongside two other mental health focused activities - the KOSMOS project, which we funded to support service users and providers to come together to talk about key issues, and our leaflet about local mental health support services.

Our findings

Key themes were identified by the project steering group, these included:

- ◆ How people define mental health
- ◆ Accessing support
- ◆ Receiving support
- ◆ Leaving support
- ◆ Cross cutting factors

We suggested 15 actions for service providers and commissioners that would lead to improvements to users' experiences. The two key actions being to:

- ◆ develop a lower level crisis support service for people who feel they are experiencing a crisis but do not meet the threshold for the Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team
- ◆ develop a one stop shop and trusted assessment approach to ensure people receive the support they need quickly

What's happened since

This work has been very well received and we have had positive feedback about the co-production approach we took, the style of our recommendations and our commitment to mental health service users.

We presented our findings to North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board - who tasked North Tyneside's Mental Health Integration Boards to suggest an action plan and to review progress in November 2019. This action plan has been drafted and work is underway. North Tyneside Council's Adult Social Care Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee also considered our report and welcomed the findings and progress made.

Our mental health work has had a real impact. Anya Paradis, Director of Contracting and Commissioning at North Tyneside CCG said:

"HWNT and the CCG successfully collaborated on a review of pathways for people experiencing a mental health crisis. Healthwatch was able to provide invaluable patient and carer and mental health provider staff input into the pathways work. Based on the insight and feedback received through the Healthwatch research, the CCG commissioned a new service for people who are experiencing a mental health crisis. This service is called Together in a Crisis, provided by Mental Health Concern, and began accepting referrals in February 2019."



Thanks to Eva Kean, North Tyneside Art Studio, for the cover photo of our [mental health crisis summary](#).

Eva's artwork was chosen following a call for entries from people with lived experience of mental health issues.

KOSMOS

Bringing mental health service users and decision makers together to talk to each other and understand each others experiences was at the heart of this project.

We funded Launchpad North Tyneside and local artist, Helen Smith, to work creatively with service users and commissioners to investigate key issues that service users had identified through the original KOSMOS work. The two issues chosen to focus on were GPs and support whilst waiting for support to start.



One participant with service user experience said “What I got from it most is that I have been treated as an equal and my thoughts and opinions have been valued”.

A summary of this project will be available in summer, for more information please go to: www.launchpadnt.wordpress.com/kosmos

GPs and primary care

GPs are usually the first point of contact for people to access health services and access to GP appointments is the most common issue raised with us.

We know that GP practices use different approaches to managing and releasing appointments. We want to hear what this means for patients. Our GP survey, launched in February 2019, asks about their experiences, good and bad, when accessing primary care services.

Our volunteers will be visiting GP practices across North Tyneside to talk to people in waiting rooms and hear from the staff.

We want to build up a picture of what works well and what could be improved. We will use this to share with GPs and practice managers to help them improve their services.

healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/your-issues/primary-care

Carers

It is estimated that 22,000 people in North Tyneside are carers. Carers play a vital role in supporting people with health and social care needs, but all too often their own needs as an individual are overlooked.

We have worked closely with North Tyneside Carers' Centre to promote the needs of carers in the health and social care system. Since publishing our short report into the experience of carers in August 2018 we have been active members of North Tyneside's Carers' Partnership Board.

healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/your-issues/carers

Urgent care provision in North Tyneside changed significantly during 2018/19 with the opening of the new Urgent Treatment Centre at North Tyneside General Hospital and the closure of Battle Hill Walk-in Service. The new model delivering urgent and emergency care is being seen as an example for other areas to follow.

One of our priorities for 2018/19 was to understand how the new services were working for North Tyneside residents.

We worked closely with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to gather people's experiences and to understand why people are using the different services. The trust is using this information to help plan their resources, particularly over busy periods including winter.

Urgent Treatment Centre at North Tyneside General Hospital

We talked to 226 people in the waiting area of the Urgent Treatment Centre over a week in February 2019 and we will be sharing our findings and recommendations shortly.

Emergency Department at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH)

Working with our colleagues at Healthwatch Northumberland, we heard from 309 people over 14, three-hour sessions, in the waiting area of the Emergency Department and the Paediatric Emergency Department.

People told us why they were attending the Emergency Department or Urgent Treatment Centre, what other services they had accessed and what they thought could make their experiences of getting the care they need better.

We shared our findings and recommendations with Northumbria NHS, North East Ambulance Service and the Clinical Commissioning Groups for North Tyneside and Northumberland. Our recommendations focused on the following and partners are now considering an action plan:

- ◆ System-wide opportunities to better support people to get the care they need
- ◆ Access to NSECH, particularly public transport
- ◆ Changes to the waiting room environment to improve user experience and accessibility



Your voice, influencing decisions

We use the information and feedback people give us to inform and influence the decisions made by service providers and commissioners. Our role is to be a critical friend for health and social care services. We work with other organisations, both statutory and voluntary, representing the views of local people on health and social care.

We regularly meet with NHS and social care leaders to report on trends in feedback and raise the issues people tell us about. We hear their priorities and planned changes and ensure local people are informed and involved in decision making about services.

In addition, we influence decisions and represent local views by attending or being part of local decision making boards and committees. These include:

- ◆ North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board
- ◆ Integration boards including the Carers' Partnership Board and the Mental Health Integration Boards
- ◆ North Tyneside Council's Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ◆ North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group's Future Care Board
- ◆ VODA Chief Officers Groups

Changes within the NHS

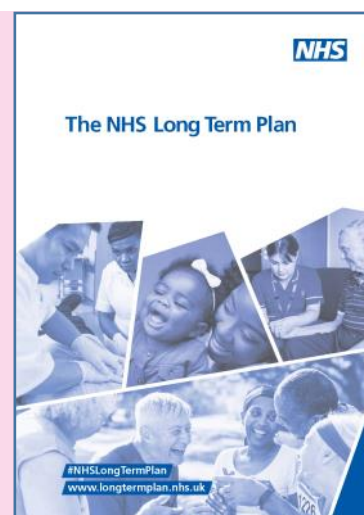
NHS leaders in the North East have been discussing how they can work best together for some years. The most recent phase began with the launch of Sustainability and Transformation Plans in 2016 and ideas have evolved since then. The launch of the NHS Long Term Plan in January 2019 gave further food for thought.

We have consistently challenged NHS leaders to involve service users in these discussions and make sure voices from local communities are heard. Although this has been frustrating, we have made some progress in recent months and we will continue to champion service user involvement in NHS planning for the future.

NHS Long Term Plan

We are working with other local Healthwatch organisations across England to engage people in the NHS Long Term Plan. This includes running focus groups on mental health and cancer services, and promoting opportunities to share views through surveys.

Our findings will be shared with the NHS locally and regionally and will be published in the summer. This work is grant funded by NHS England through the Healthwatch network.



Healthwatch Stars

Local people use our online feedback centre and printed feedback forms to tell us about their experience of a particular service. We collate this feedback and share it with services.

Some services receive a lot of positive feedback and we wanted to recognise these. At our Annual General Meeting in November 2018, we awarded Healthwatch stars to the services that had received the most positive feedback. These were:

- ◆ North Tyneside Carers' Centre
- ◆ Care Plus
- ◆ Anxious Minds

Spotlight on Care Plus

Care Plus is a service for the most frail people in our community. It puts the service user at the centre of their care. It brings together the main organisations involved in looking after people, coordinating and joining up support services so that the individual's needs are met and they feel supported.

One user told us “On seeing our doctor on Friday afternoon the following Monday received a telephone call. The next day two people came round, "wow". Next day household aids arrived. Family and friends were amazed at the scale and astonished at the way things were organised for other organisations to aid us, to contact us, which they did very quickly.”

Another person told us “Helped my mother-in-law improve her confidence after falls. Comprehensive assessment by the community matron (who was excellent). She brought in input from OTs and advised on home adaptations, brought new household aids. They also did a cognitive assessment which revealed cognitive problems which was very helpful to us to help us understand her difficulties and help with them”.

Pictured below is the Care Plus team with Paul Jones, Healthwatch Director



Message from our Director



Time flies when you are having fun! I joined Healthwatch North Tyneside in June 2018. My knowledge of health and care services came from being a carer for 29 years and as a service user. It's been eye opening to learn about the complexities of our health and care systems, but I have not lost sight that for people it's the quality of care that counts.

People tell us that they are generally pleased with the services they receive. Our annual survey data shows that 94% of local people rate the services they access as satisfactory or above.

At a cancer service focus group I was running recently, one man said **“We are really lucky to have the services we have, it's a great place to be ill - but there are always things that could be done better”**.

I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved, particularly:

- ◆ Our work on mental health which has led to improvements in people's experiences.
- ◆ Building on some great relationships with stakeholders and other organisations.
- ◆ The reach we have managed to achieve through our annual survey and engagement work which has meant we have heard from more people about a broader range of issues than in any previous year - not bad given the changes we have been through.

Our work plan and priorities for the coming year is clearly based on what people in North Tyneside have told us is important to them.

I am looking forward to increasing the opportunities for people to share their experiences across the borough. As part of this we recently funded four local organisations to work with young people to better understand their health and social care needs and experiences.

A major project for us this year will be pulling together the research that we have completed over two years into 'what people in North Tyneside do when they feel ill'. We want to understand what's working well and what could be improved across GP services, NHS 111 and local urgent and emergency care provision.

We have a great opportunity to continue to work with other organisations to improve services and better meet people's needs. I am really pleased that we have been commissioned to do specific pieces of work over the coming months - engagement on the NHS Long Term Plan, lay people's views of meaningful life in care homes and, again working with North Tyneside Council to research and better understand people's experiences of adult social care services.

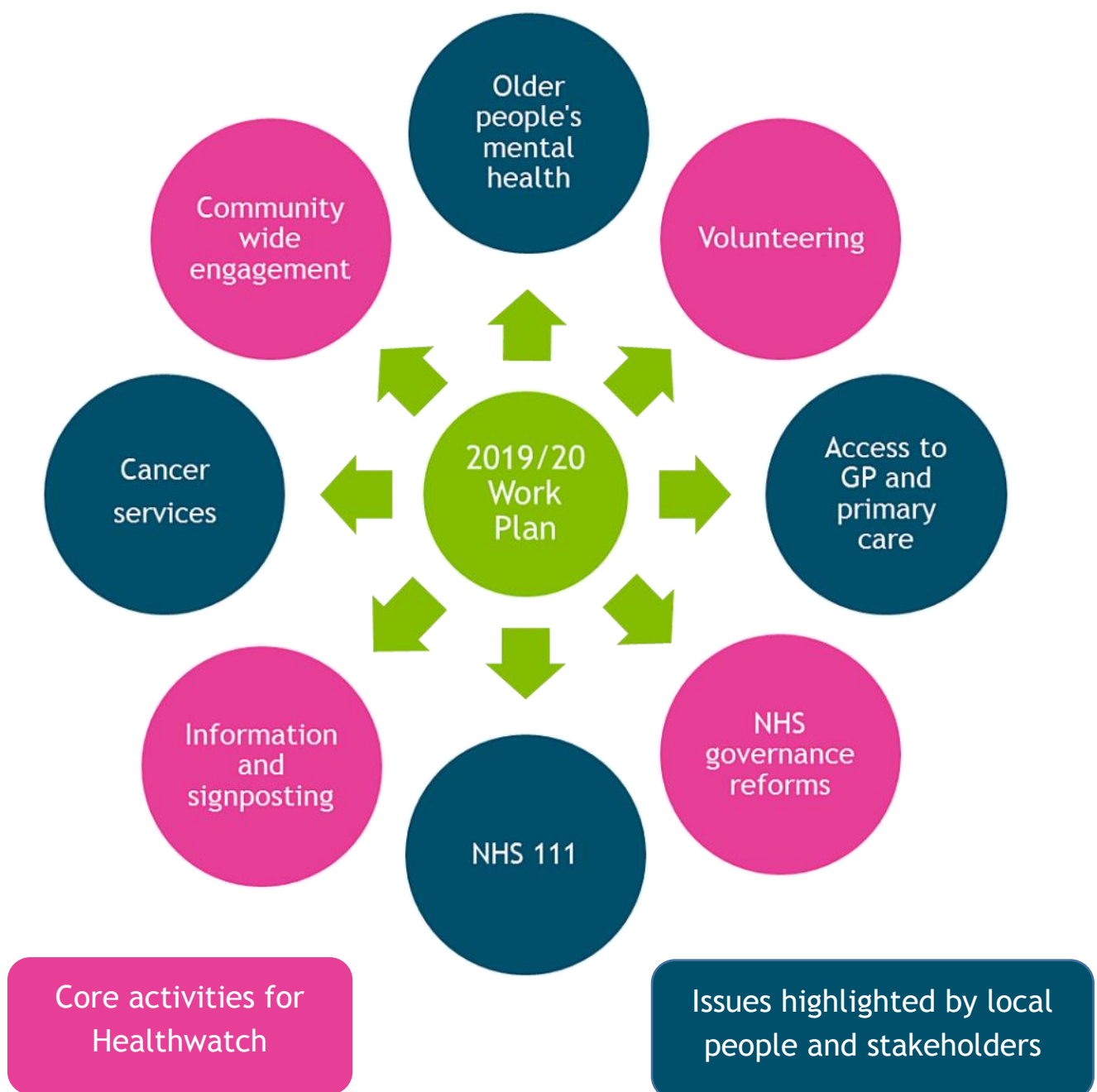
I'd like to thank our team of staff, volunteers and trustees for their dedication, resilience and making this fun. Also the stakeholders and commissioners and partner organisations who are keen to work together and are open to the challenge that a critical friend can offer. Finally to the people of North Tyneside who share their experiences with us and approach us for help when they most need it.

Our priorities for 2019/20

Our Healthwatch priorities for the coming year are based on what local people have told us matters most to them.

We have chosen to focus our research on older people's mental health, access to GPs and primary care, cancer services and NHS 111 because people told us these issues are important. We have discussed these priorities with our stakeholders.

Our research aims to identify what's working well and what could be done better and to look at practice in other parts of the country. Based on what we hear, we will make recommendations to service providers and commissioners. We are committed to co-production and will try to involve users and stakeholders throughout the research process.



Meet the Healthwatch team

We are a small local charity made up of our volunteers, trustees who are also volunteers, and a small staff team.

To make a real difference to health and care services we need to be a strong and well respected independent organisation. During this year we have recruited and trained new staff, volunteers and trustees. We launched our new strategic plan in November 2018 which you can read at www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/aboutus/policies



Our volunteers

Our volunteers are an integral part of our team. They help us to engage with local people at community events, gather feedback from service users, support us with administrative tasks and design and carry out our research projects. Without our volunteers we couldn't achieve what we do.



Richard, one of our volunteers, has been involved in talking to people about their experiences of urgent and emergency care services and says:

“I was mindful that for some people, they are at a very low moment because they are in hospital; meaning that empathy, emotional support and extra time may be needed with some chats.”

He added that “the people I spoke to were great, most had a fantastic sense of humour and were really happy to talk.”

We have focused on recruiting new volunteers and improving the support and development opportunities we offer to volunteers. We have recruited 14 new volunteers since October 2018.

A recent recruit said “I think the induction for new volunteers is excellent, it is non-threatening, informative and inclusive. I have also had lots of relevant training, for example, safeguarding, deaf awareness, equality and diversity - it has all been of a very high and professional quality. What I find particularly helpful about training events is that everyone is valued and there is much opportunity for new volunteers to work with and learn from more experienced volunteers.”

We are keen to recruit more volunteers to support us in improving local health and care services. If you would like to hear more about our opportunities please go to www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/get-involved/volunteer

Our board of trustees

Iain Kitt - Chair

Sokhjinder Morgan - Vice-chair (to January 2019)

Julia Charlton

Bea Groves-McDaniel

Judy Scott

Linda van Zwanenberg (to March 2019)

Trustees appointed in January 2019:

Steve Nicklin

Amanda Normand

Natalie Underwood

Beth Williams

We owe a big thankyou to our trustees who stood down in the past year:

Linda van Zwanenberg, trustee and volunteering lead from 2013 to 2019

Sokhjinder Morgan, Co-chair then Vice-chair from April 2018 to January 2019.

Our staff team

Paul Jones, Director

Jo Brown, Research and Engagement Officer

Amanda Graydon, Volunteer and Engagement Officer

Tracey Hindmarch, Finance and Administrative Officer

Meg Woollam, Communication and Engagement Officer

Pictured below are Meg, Paul, Jo, Tracey and Amanda



Working with others

Other Local Healthwatch

We work with other local Healthwatch to identify common issues and opportunities where we can work together whilst respecting local differences.

We worked with Healthwatch Northumberland to understand people's experiences of the Emergency Department at the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital. We are also working together to share experiences and support each other to make best use of our limited resources.

We also worked with Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead to deliver engagement events, particularly at regional events like Newcastle Pride and the Mela.

Healthwatch England

We continue to work with Healthwatch England by sharing reports and information. Our work around mental health was highlighted as good practice across the network and we are supporting other local Healthwatch to develop their own research projects.

North Tyneside provided the highest number of responses to Healthwatch England's maternity and mental health campaign.

We actively contribute to discussions across the Healthwatch network including Intelligence and Infographics, CRM Database, Communications Group, Lead Officers Forum and the Healthwatch Annual Conference.

Our Research and Engagement Officer is currently seconded to Healthwatch England for one day a week to provide research support across the network.

Local Voices

In early 2018, we made two small grants to local voluntary sector organisations to conduct research into people's experiences of health and social care. We funded Barnardo's The Base and North Tyneside Disability Forum. This was a new approach for us to take in gathering the views of particular communities and we learned a lot from the process.

Spotlight on Barnardo's The Base

Barnardo's received £1,000 to research how best to communicate health messages with young people and what issues were most important to them. The project was led by young people. They found that parents and carers and other trusted adults were the most important source of health and social care information and support. Social media also plays an increasing role. A key message from the young people is that they want to be involved in designing and developing services - they would be more likely to trust services and messages if they knew young people had been involved.

How we use our funds

2018/19 Income

During 2018/19 we had a total income of £138,227.

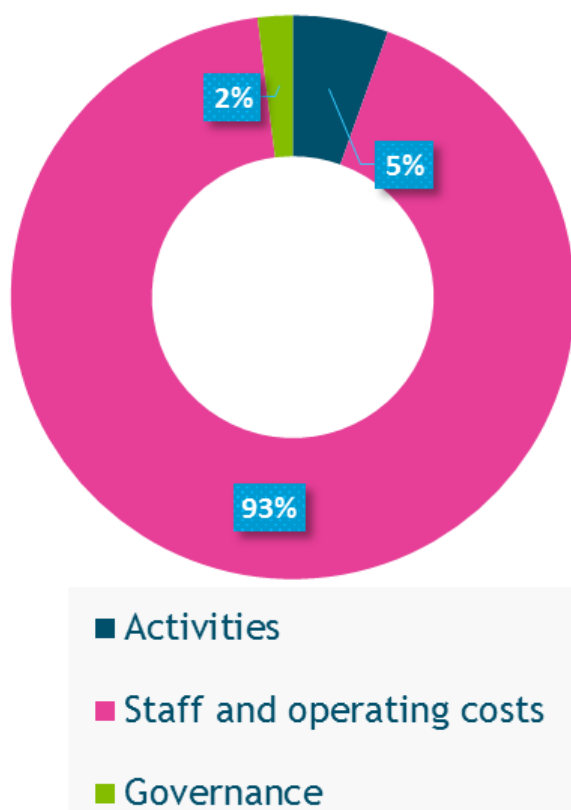
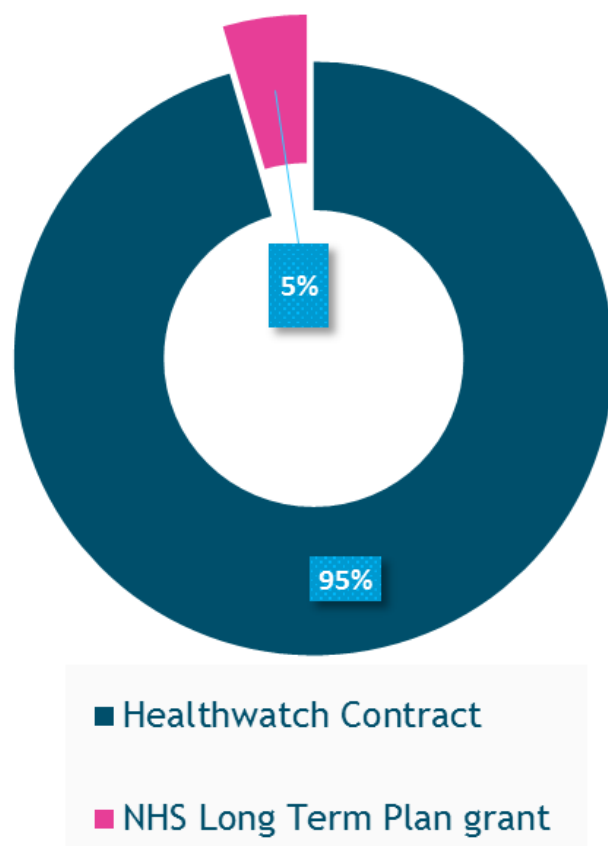
In the previous year we received £148,953.

This means we received 13% less this year than last, mainly due to the reduction in our core contract.

Our main source of funding is the core Healthwatch contract from North Tyneside Council.

We were also successful in securing a grant of £6,255 for engagement and research activities about the NHS Long Term Plan. This funding came from Healthwatch England as part of a package of activity across the country for use between February and July 2019.

In addition to our income, we hold a reserve of funds accumulated over our previous years of activity.



2018/19 Expenditure

During 2018/19 our total expenditure was £121,126.

In the previous year we spent £135,377.

The reduction in spending was a result of reduced activity following changes to our core contract.

Whilst we did not spend all of our income this year, we committed to a number of activities during the year that would not be paid until the next financial year. This includes our funding for local young people's organisations through our Young Voices Fund.

Our full accounts will be published after our Annual General Meeting and will provide the details of our financial activities as required by the Charity Commission.

Contact us



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www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk



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Healthwatch North Tyneside charity no: 1160753