



Your Voice

Annual Report 2018-19



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Message from our Chair

Our annual report looks back at what Healthwatch Hertfordshire has achieved over the past year. 2018 was the 70th Anniversary of the NHS - an event marked by celebratory events, inspiring speeches and perhaps most importantly of all, a £20 billion funding boost.

The NHS has transformed lives. In 1948, life expectancy was 71 years for women and 66 years for men. Now it's 81.5 and 77.2 years respectively. This change - just think about it we now on average live 10 years longer than 70 years ago - is not just because of the NHS, but it has certainly made a significant difference.

Someone once described the difference in healthcare now and in the early days of the NHS (they were talking specifically about cancer treatment but it has wider relevance) "In the 1950's & 60's treatment was cheap, safe but not very effective, now it's expensive, dangerous but usually works."

There is much to celebrate; in May figures were produced that showed that the number of people dying as a result of strokes has reduced by 55% over the past 10 years. In the UK, HIV/AIDS has become chronic, but largely controllable rather than a death sentence it was 25 years ago. The

number of people smoking, has dramatically reduced - In 1948 65% of men and 41% of women smoked, now the numbers are 25% & 21%.

But it's not all good news. More people now die as a result of dementia than of heart attacks. At last year's Healthwatch AGM our key note speaker was my predecessor, Michael Downing who reminded us about the importance of care services: a government green paper has been delayed yet again and the problems highlighted in the Panorama series yet to be addressed.



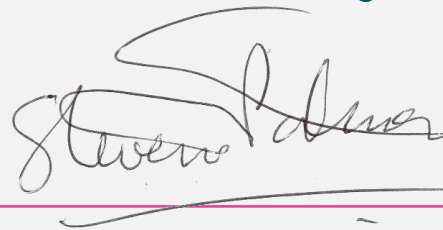
'From social prescribing to co-production the way the health service works will change and continue to change.'

Healthwatch operates on a number of levels. Through our signposting service, we help individuals navigate through an increasingly complex health and care system. We carried out a number of innovative projects such as our work on enablement services and our Enter & View visits to dental practices. We are putting greater emphasis on our research and reinforcing our relationships with commissioners, providers and local authorities is becoming an increasingly important part of our work.

The staff, Board and other volunteers are a credit to Healthwatch, working with commitment, knowledge and effectiveness to enable these things to happen, and make sure we make a difference. Patient and public involvement must be a core part of the implementation of the 10 year NHS Long Term. Health is changing - no longer can

patients simply be passive recipients of care handed down by professionals. From social prescribing to co-production the way the health service works will change and continue to change.

In this report we highlight our activities and achievements in the year, but we've aimed to make this report shorter than in previous years, with our website and published reports detailing our projects and recommendations. The report also takes the opportunity to reiterate our values and showcases the role of our volunteers in helping us to hear the voices of the public. Finally I'd like to give a plug for the 2020 Hertfordshire Year of Culture. Well-being is a vital component of delivering good health and culture in all its facets is an essential contributor to well-being.



Steve Palmer
Healthwatch Hertfordshire Chair

Steve and Paul Burstow, Chair of the Hertfordshire and West Essex STP



'We really value our relationship with Healthwatch Hertfordshire. The organisation acts as a trusted partner and critical friend, helping to protect and advance the health and wellbeing interests of Hertfordshire residents.'

'Whether it's through taking part in Governing Body meetings, promoting patient involvement at public events, lending their expertise and insight through quality assurance visits or bringing concerns to our attention on behalf of individuals, the contribution that Hertfordshire Healthwatch makes is really invaluable.'

Beverley Flowers - Chief Executive, NHS East and North Hertfordshire CCG

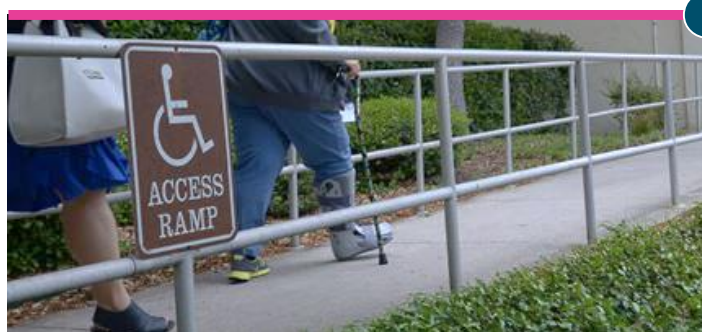


Changes you want to see

Last year we heard from 584 people who told us about their experience of a number of different areas of health and social care. Here are some examples of the changes that you want to see.



- + Dental treatment and charges being fully explained



- + New service locations should prioritise accessibility



- + There needs to be even better communication between health and social care services in the county

March 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Mum's Birthday	7	8	9
10	11 Colin's sports day!	12	13	14	15	16
17 Mum arriving to help	18	19 Surgery	20	21	22	23 lunch with the girls
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- + A reduction in the late cancellation of appointments, especially surgical ones

The National Picture

There are nearly 150 local Healthwatch across the country. Locally we chair the Regional Network meeting of Healthwatch on a quarterly basis, and we form part of the national network headed by Healthwatch England.

On 19 September 2018, it was announced that Sir Robert Francis QC would be the new Chair of Healthwatch England. A specialist in medical law, including medical and mental health treatment and capacity issues, clinical negligence and professional discipline he has chaired various independent inquiries, most notably the full pivotal public Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust inquiry.

Sir Robert's appointment shows the importance the government places on Healthwatch and our role as the voice of the 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 Hertfordshire, 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 dark ink, which appears to read 'Robert Francis'.

Sir Robert Francis QC
Healthwatch England Chair

About us

Healthwatch Hertfordshire is here to make care better



Our role is to represent the health and social care views of the people of Hertfordshire to those able to make a difference, and to hold providers and commissioners to account when they fail to act if services do not reflect the needs of patients.

To enable all of this, we have significant statutory powers to ensure the voice of the consumer is strengthened, and heard, by those who commission, deliver, and regulate health and care services.

Our main functions are to:

- + Represent the views of patients and service users
- + Run a signposting service
- + Hold services to account

We are a small team with a large remit. There are less than ten of us covering all health and social care service within the county, and so we concentrate on focused, targeted work. As a team we are currently shifting our focus more towards more research driven pieces of work. This research expertise has been recognised by Healthwatch England. With them and other local Healthwatch we are currently working on creating research and engagement protocols to be adopted nationally, across the Healthwatch network.



'I knew you could do it, I had a good feeling about you. Thank you so much, you're a gem and a godsend. Tell your boss you've made a real difference. I will pray for you and your family tonight.'

*- Healthwatch Hertfordshire
Signposting Client*

Who we work with



We work with partners and stakeholder organisations across Hertfordshire, as well as health and social care commissioners and providers. This includes the County Council and all three of the clinical commissioning groups serving the county; Herts Valleys CCG, East and North Hertfordshire CCG, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG.

However, our work doesn't stop at the county boundary: after all, the people who live here don't. We can - and do - work with any and all services used by residents of Hertfordshire. This also extends to our work with the Sustainability Transformation Partnership, a health and social care initiative spanning all of Hertfordshire and West Essex. Finally, we contribute to national organisations, such as the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England. This helps us to have an impact which extends across the country.

Governance



Healthwatch Hertfordshire is a charity and limited company, commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council, though we are a completely independent body.

We are governed by a board of trustees; volunteers selected for having a mixture of skills, lived experiences, and knowledge of health and social care. This board sets our strategic direction - currently under review - and ensures resources are used wisely. The board also ensures we keep to our charitable purpose.

Find out more

Further details on our governance and charitable purpose can be found in our Report of the Trustees, which is provided to Companies House and the Charities Commission. You can [download the report here](#), or call the office and ask for a copy on 01707 275 978.



'We really value our colleagues at Healthwatch. They provide a great sounding board for us and they help out on specific projects such as how we communicate our new community-based pathways. We have a good relationship with Healthwatch and really appreciate working with them to strengthen the patient voice in this patch.'

Kathryn Magson - Chief Executive, NHS Herts Valleys CCG

Our Values

Healthwatch Hertfordshire is proud to be a values driven organisation. Our values run through everything we undertake.



Supportive

- + We always work with positive intent
- + We promote and practice the idea of 'critical partnership' with local bodies
- + We will challenge each other in a supportive and constructive way
- + We share our learning and learn from others
- + We take collective responsibility as a 'Healthwatch Team' and help each other to be successful

Influential

- + We gather, and search for, data and intelligence to influence, and challenge, decision makers
- + We offer practical and feasible ideas for change in our findings, and related recommendations
- + We work towards positive working relationships with those empowered to lead locally on health and social care provision

Independent

- + We listen to people and speak on their behalf without judging
- + We are politically, and organisationally, impartial, challenging those in power locally to design and deliver health and social care services from that position
- + We are pleased to highlight what works well, and confident in reporting identified problems
- + We use our independence to enable creative approaches to our work

Credible

- + We set a work programme that is consistent with strategy, realistic, makes a difference on the ground, with specified outcomes
- + We have good and transparent governance
- + We want to be here for local people in the long term
- + We do not promise what we cannot deliver, or promise for others
- + We strive to ensure that the views expressed by our representatives are those of Healthwatch Hertfordshire, and not an individual opinion

Compassion and Equality

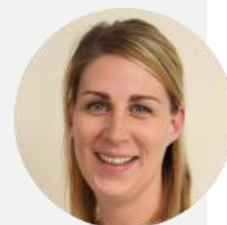
- + We are empathetic to the experience and voice of individuals
- + We work in an inclusive way, showing respect for all
- + We are part of the community and are committed to the wellbeing of all people in it
- + We are approachable, and trusted
- + We promote equality & diversity

Meet the Team

Why do you like working for Healthwatch Hertfordshire?

"We give the public the opportunity to talk to us, to be listened to, and we do the best possible job for them. Even if we can't help, at least we're listening. And we always try. We'll always go that extra mile for them. Giving that back to someone is nice."

- Natalie Stone, Finance & Resource Manager



The Current Healthwatch Hertfordshire Board of Trustees



Steven Palmer
Chair



Eve Atkins



Alan Bellinger
Treasurer



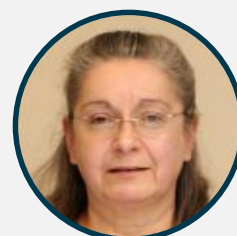
Maryrose Brennan



Meg Carter



Brian Gunson



Virginia
Kirri-Songhurst



Sundera Kumara -
Moorthy (Kumar)
Vice Chair



Carol O'Brien



Andrew Stenson



Jayne Taylor



Michael Taylor

The Current Healthwatch Hertfordshire Team

Research & Engagement



Geoff Brown
Chief Executive



Priya Vaithilingam
Head of Research & Engagement



Jane Brown
Quality Manager



Annabel Chapman
Research Officer



Paul Regan
Communication & Engagement Officer



Chloe Carson
Research Officer



Natalie Stone
Finance & Resources Manager



Alice Lovell
Team Support Officer & Volunteer Co-Ordinator



Nuray Ercan
Head of Governance & Operations



Jo Wilkinson
Project Coordinator



Susan Lee
Administrator



Highlights from our year



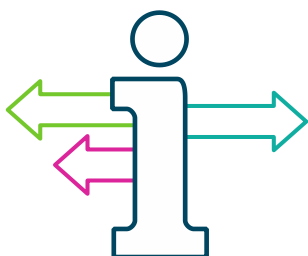
We release our engagement figures every quarter, and in a few months will be publishing a full report on last year. But here are the headlines:



584 people shared their health and social care story with us through focus groups, our signposting service, online, surveys, and at events across the county.



We have 47 active volunteers helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up over 1,100 hours.



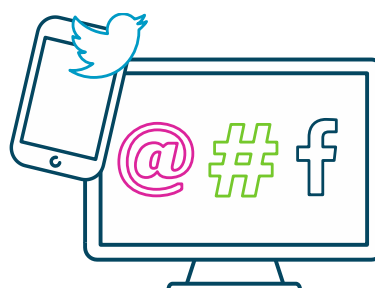
We spent almost 240 hours talking to people who had accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support.



We attended 21 chair and chief executive meetings with providers and commissioners, and over 50 different boards and committees on a regular basis.



75 improvements we suggested were adopted by services to make health and care better in our community.



3,713 members received our free newsletter, either digitally or through the post, whichever was best for them.



How we've made a difference: Holding to Account





Holding to Account

As part of our commissioned role, we hold the system to account from the service user perspective.

Service providers must provide us with certain information and also pay regard to our concerns, reports and recommendations; responding to us explaining what action they will take, or why they are not taking action. Though we do have statutory powers at our disposal, we rarely need to demand responses or action with service providers keen to improve.

Our approaches to holding to account include regular meetings with Commissioners and Providers at a Board level where key initiatives and changes are covered, with us highlighting the key priorities outlined by the patients and public.

We also attend over 50 Boards and committees across the county with a role to ensure the patient/service user perspective is considered.

Across the county involvement is often at a strategic level - for example a new contract is transferring the provider of Adult Community Health Services in the west of the County. Here our role is to ensure disruption to service provision for patients is minimised, that patients are fully informed of changes and that opportunities for patient engagement are maximised.

More generally we talk to commissioners and providers about possible impacts on patients of other issues and how plans are being made to address risks.

This year this has included winter planning where an STP wide approach meant less problems. Similarly we explored the impact of a possible 'no deal' Brexit on patient services.

Our work with commissioners and providers also looks at issues where service disruption or change may impact on patients. For example, we were fully briefed on issues relating to the Lorenzo system problems at East and North Herts Hospital Trust, and the Trust was keen for Healthwatch to make patients aware of the potential impact on getting appointments.

We're also very involved with social care, for example after the collapse of Allied Healthcare we discussed with Herts County Council Adult Care Services to ensure that mitigation was in place; so a transfer to a new provider would not impact on residents. The Council also said they'd like us to find out about residents and families views on how things have been to help inform processes in future. We are currently working with Hertfordshire County Council about the details of this piece of work, but we look forward to announcing it at our 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Finally, Healthwatch Hertfordshire works closely with Hertfordshire County Council's scrutiny committee. The committee reviews decisions about council services such as social care and also are responsible for scrutinising health services for Hertfordshire residents. Our focus on patients and performance issues helps us inform the committees on areas to help inform their work programme.

Meet the Team

Why do you like working at Healthwatch Hertfordshire?

"It's interesting. It's nice to be able to help people, both with the signposting, and knowing that what we do can make things better in the future in some ways."

- Susan Lee, Administrator



'The Chairman and officers of Herts Health Scrutiny are always appreciative of the insight that Healthwatch brings to the Committee's consideration of health issues. The Chairman has complete confidence that the views expressed are based on evidence from users and carers. The attendance of the HWH Chair at Committee provides an opportunity to hear the voice of users. It ensures that the Committee is able to assure itself that its decisions are being made in the best interests of Hertfordshire residents. The HSC Chairman particularly values the commitment of HWH to the annual Quality scrutiny.'

Seamus Quilty - Chairman, Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee

Ensuring Quality Services

Healthwatch Hertfordshire attend meetings which are called 'Quality Meetings', which take place with various service providers in Hertfordshire, at different levels within the organisation, as well as operating strategically within Hertfordshire and out of county.

These are an opportunity to ensure that the patient voice is central to quality improvement. We can draw attention to the themes and issues that we identify through our engagement and signposting activities at these meetings, which adds to the understanding of what needs to be improved or can highlight any risks that may impact across the system. Some of the meetings we attend include:

- + Herts and South Midlands Quality Surveillance Group
- + Strategic Quality Improvement Group (care

homes and home care)

- + Hertfordshire Community Trust Patient Safety and Experience Group

This work, which happens throughout the year, focuses on recommends and commitments made in a yearly report produced by each NHS Trust and hospice called a Quality Account. These reports focus on how they are pursuing better quality care.

This outlines how the Trust is pursuing better quality care through a number of priorities that form the focus of the Trust's yearlong efforts to make improvements. The quality of the services is measured by looking at patient safety, the effectiveness of treatments that patients receive, and patient feedback about the care provided.

Meet the Team

Why does Holding to Account matter?

"It's important because the patient should be a key voice to be heard in terms of how services are delivered and planned. There can be a risk that clinicians develop pathways without always thinking about the impact on people using the services. That's why we're here. It's an opportunity to have an impact on health and care services. It's fundamental to people having a good quality of life."

- Geoff Brown, Chief Executive Officer



We have the statutory power to comment on an individual Trust's report, which is an important way for us to hold Trusts to account.

Some of the comments we made this year:

- + We received comments about West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust's quality priorities, particularly around discharge. A number of initiatives have been put in place, which have helped A&E at Watford in particular to keep pace with increased demand. But there is recognition that there is still more to do and we hope to see patient satisfaction with the discharge process improve over the next year.

- + Complaints handling at East and North Hertfordshire Hospital Trust is an important area for quality improvement, a fact recognised by the Trust. They have wanted input from Healthwatch Hertfordshire, and we look forward to seeing how they use these comments when they publish their revised policy.

"With their links across health, social care and the voluntary sector and the insight that brings, Healthwatch Hertfordshire provide invaluable advice and challenge to all agencies to improve the care of people who need it."

Ian MacBeath - Director of Adult Care Services, Hertfordshire County Council



Keith, one of our volunteers, talking to a member of the public at the Lister Hospital

'Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust appreciates the support and engagement from Healthwatch Hertfordshire in bringing forward the patient voice into our services, supporting us to continually improve the patient experience.

Attendance at our Public Board Meeting and relevant subcommittees allows feedback, challenge and partnership working to consider any issues and themes coming through from contacts they have received; ensuring prompt action is taken to resolve any concerns as well as supporting the development of new services.'

Clare Hawkins - Chief Executive Officer, Hertfordshire Community Trust



How we've made a difference: Research & Engagement



Meet the Team

Why should providers listen to services users, and why through us?

"They pay for it. They own it. They use it. It's important to know what they think about it; good and bad. We're uniquely placed to be a 'go between' with our powers but no agenda other than supporting the facilitation process."

- Nuray Ercan, Head of Governance and Operations



'Healthwatch are valuable partners to HPFT as both a critical friend and partner. Their approach is always to work with us to ensure we are continually improving and providing the best services to the population of Hertfordshire.'

Dr Jane Padmore -Executive Director of Quality and Safety (Chief Nurse)
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

'You've actually really listened. It's been a long time since I've felt like someone's really valued and considered what I've said. Thank you, you've been really patient, didn't rush me and was very patient.'

- Healthwatch Hertfordshire Signposting Client

Service User Feedback on Supported Living Services

In August 2018, we assisted Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) in setting up a new contractual framework for external Supported Living providers. We did this by designing and leading on how best to engage with current service users to understand what they want from Supported Living services and to help ensure their voices informed future commissioned services.

As part of this work we worked in partnership with Communication For All (an organisation that specialises with engaging with individuals with a learning disability) to run eight sessions with forty-three service users using a mix of qualitative data collection methods. These included 1:1 semi-structured interviews & focus groups.

What is supported living?

Supported Living is a flexible model of service delivery and can look very different for different people and has various service models: for one person it may be a few hours

support a week to live alone in a rented flat, for another it may be round the clock support to live in a home they own; and for others it may involve living in a shared house with shared support and individual support to meet individual needs. It includes the provision of physical, emotional, social care, and practical support to enable an individual to live well in their own home.

Who did we speak to?

The service users we spoke to as part of this engagement lived in a range of different housing types and included both people who had recently moved in and/or were looking to move on to a more independent setting. We spoke to people in Supported Living run by externally commissioned providers as well as people in HCC's own 'in-house' services. Individuals had varying needs and received a wide range of support - which all needed to be taken account of as part of this project.

What did people tell us?

- + That choice, opportunity and involvement for service users varies across service providers, and that it is difficult to know what to expect.
- + People didn't always feel their were being enabled to live independently. Sometimes this was because of lack of resources and capacity, and sometimes this was because of culture/attitude e.g. risk adverse staff culture
- + That the service user voice wasn't always being heard
- + That more easily accessible information needed to be available for service users and their loved ones to help inform them of their choices.

What did HCC say they will do in response?

To include in the tender documents, specifications and key performance indicators for providers:

- + Clear requirements in relation to engaging, involving and co-producing services with service users and their families.
- + A statement that HCC wants to commission a service that helps enable and empower people to live as independently as possible; is flexible to need; and ensures the best use of technology to improve people's life and independence.
- + That HCC is developing better information that can be shared with service users and families about accommodation options, provisions across the county, how to access and choose services, as well as expectations of support amongst other things.

Meet the Team

'Why is it so important to evidence people's lived experience?'

'Evidencing lived experience is about describing people's personal knowledge and direct experience of the world. In this case, their experiences of health and social care services. Experiences will inevitably be affected by people's personal circumstances, for example if they are a carer, or have a particular condition. Our role is to ensure systems and organisations hear these personal circumstances and use this insight to understand how services can and will impact on people generally and on an individual basis.'



- Priya Vaithilingam, Head of Research & Engagement

Here for all of the community



Read the Report

To read the responses to our recommendations, you can contact our office and ask on 01707 275 978. Alternatively, you can [download the full report online](#).



Working together to improve enablement services

Newton Europe - consultants who specialise in operational improvement - were encouraged to work with us by Adult Care Services to ensure service user experiences fed into their work on improving community and acute services. Our focus was on community services, and more particularly enablement services. As part of this we held a focus group which brought together people that identify either as an older person who require support to maintain their daily living, or a person with physical or mental disabilities who uses these services.

What people told us:

- + There was appreciation of how hard and dedicated staff/carers are
- + There are lots of hand offs between different professionals during the course of someone's care, with a lack of clarity over who is accountable for the individual. A particular group of organisations highlighted were district and borough councils, and their role in Direct Payment Grants or housing/adaptation grants
- + There isn't usually a single person who is responsible, accountable and can oversee the whole of the individual's care and support.
- + There was a feeling that people needed to push for updates, and that this was not a reasonable expectation (especially of vulnerable people). It was reflected that this sometimes occurred due to front line staff not having the authority to make certain decisions - triggering a long management chain or approval process.
- + An individual's plan for their care isn't always clear - when the next step is known (which it isn't always) then there is not always an expected date at which it will be complete.
- + Individuals felt that they aren't always given the option to genuinely input into their own plan and be listened to in order to make sure it works for them at the appropriate time, often being consulted too late when information had become out of date.
- + There were also concerns raised about how holistic assessments are, particularly taking the roles and needs of carers into account.

This information has been shared with Hertfordshire County Council and we are exploring the best way to continue for these voices to be heard.

Annual Health Checks for people with learning disabilities

People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people. Annual health checks are for people aged 14 or over with a learning disability to try to help reduce that risk by letting them talk about their health with their GP. The aim is to find any problems early and stop them developing by getting the patient the right care.

Healthwatch Hertfordshire is working with partners to try and understand why there is a low uptake of annual health checks within the

learning disability community, and what impact this might be having.

Within the last year, we have been working with Hertfordshire County Council, Thera Trust, Blueberry Hill Care, Herts People First, Watford Mencap, MacIntyre, Origin Housing, Watford Workshop, Carers in Herts, as well as service users themselves to design an easy read survey, supporting materials and engagement tools which will best reach those we need to hear from. After a brief pause and to coincide with the next round of annual health checks, the survey is being launched later in the year, with the results helping us to understand how GPs can improve people's experiences and hopefully increase uptake of this important service.

Drug & Alcohol Stakeholder Network

Healthwatch is the independent facilitator of the Hertfordshire Drug and Alcohol Stakeholder Network. This network brings together stakeholder organisations affected by Drug & Alcohol provision, providers of support services, as well as the commissioner of these services (Public Health). The aims of the group are to:

- + Share information, and good practice, on statutory and voluntary sector services

- + Enhance local networks, develop contacts, and encourage partnership working
- + Identify barriers, challenges, opportunities, and good practice within drug and alcohol pathways and suggest possible solutions
- + Influence the future commissioning of drug and alcohol services, through one unified voice

With this in mind, the focus over the year has been on evaluating the current Drug & Alcohol Strategy and delivery plan (2016-2019), and influencing the learning and outcomes identified for future plans.

Working with Healthwatch England to develop, support and promote Research Standards across the network

We, along with other selected local Healthwatch have been working with Healthwatch England to develop a training package that will improve consistency and

reduce variation across the network when undertaking research. This work intends to enhance the Healthwatch network's reputation, credibility and status nationally as an organisation that produces high quality research and engagement that can stand up to scrutiny, and we are very proud to have been part of this work from its infancy.

The roll out of the course and training to the network is planned for later this year, where there will be further continued opportunity for Healthwatch Hertfordshire to be involved.

Herts Help Mystery Shop

In spring 2018 we were asked by Age UK Hertfordshire to mystery shop the HertsHelp triaging service for Hertswise dementia support. The project was requested due to questions raised by the Hertswise stakeholder group around gaining assurance about the effectiveness and quality of HertsHelp call handlers triaging correctly into the Hertswise services. The project:

- + Evaluated the quality of call handler's responses to complex and simple test scenarios
- + Assessed if the call handler signposts into the correct Hertswise service/organisation
- + Identified good practice and potential areas of improvement for the service

A team of fully trained volunteers and staff from Healthwatch Hertfordshire called HertsHelp presenting a scenario where they were posing as someone caring for a loved one with dementia. They then presented the call handler with a scenario - ranging from the simple to the complex - which would require the handler to probe to find out more about the person to provide the support necessary.

Some of our findings were:

- + Volunteers felt that call handlers showed care, concern and empathy towards the caller
- + For complex scenarios signposting could be more tailored to the immediate needs of the caller
- + Responses to complex scenarios still

offered a number of solutions but did not always meet the identified outcomes. (Young onset dementia specifically highlighted)

Some of our recommendations were:

- + In an urgent/complex situation, to identify and focus on what the caller really needs rather than overwhelming them with lots of options
- + To consider asking the caller for their personal details at the end of the call rather than beginning, to avoid the perception of this being a barrier for those seeking help
- + More awareness raising and training for staff in identifying calls related to Young Onset Dementia

After receiving and reviewing our findings and recommendations, a possible review of the mystery shop exercise and future quality assurance planning for the Hertswise service by Age UK Hertfordshire and Healthwatch Hertfordshire was agreed.

"The majority of the HertsHelp team have completed a workshop in liaison with the Young Onset Dementia lead within the Hertswise service and have expressed a greater understanding of the support available."

"I am thrilled at the overall positive feedback received. The team... were delighted to hear such positive feedback."

Anne Garcia - HertsHelp Support Centre Manager

Read the Report

To read the responses to our recommendations, you can contact our office and ask on 01707 275 978. Alternatively, you can [download the full report online](#).

Dental Enter & View visits

Enter and View is one of the statutory powers that Healthwatch Hertfordshire have. It involves us sending trained staff and volunteers - called Authorised Representatives - to go to health and social care locations to monitor services and report on their findings.

The input of our volunteers is crucial. Not only do they give us enough resources to vary out Enter & View visits, but they bring the 'patient perspective' which is vital to putting the service user at the centre of our recommendations.

Over the past year we have been carrying out Enter & View visits across the county at NHS dental surgeries. Building on the findings from a joint project between HwH and Public Health England, the visits looked at access to dental services for marginalised and socially excluded groups. We wanted to evaluate how responses to our initial report had been implemented; finding out how practices make adjustments to accommodate the patient's physical and mental health needs, how practices explain NHS treatment costs, and the complaints process in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard.

There has been close partnership working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC),

Public Health England, NHS England and Hertfordshire Local Dental Committee (LDC), with the LDC suggesting that they would welcome a self-audit checklist based on the Enter and View visits so that all dental practices would benefit from the project. This is being developed as part of the summary report that will be covering the entire project (see Chief Executive Report).

We found that practices should:

- + Review their complaints policy to ensure it reflects the **Statement on Dental Complaints** produced by the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.
- + Ensure that the dental practice's entry on the NHS website is kept up to date and reflects the information on their own website.
- + Ensure staff are aware of how to book interpreters across all languages, including British Sign Language, and to book them when required.

"At our last Herts LDC one of our members reported positively on one of the enter and view visits in Watford. Another member wondered if it were possible to invite Healthwatch Hertfordshire to do a enter and view visit? This would enable practices to know their shortfalls."

Peter Tatton - Secretary Hertfordshire Local Dental Committee

Roger and Sweeney, two of our Enter and View Authorised Representatives



'The East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust is once again happy to confirm a valued ongoing relationship with Healthwatch Hertfordshire. We acknowledge the importance of 'enter and view' activity in holding us to account for patient experience. We also value hosting Healthwatch Hertfordshire officers and volunteers taking the time to engage directly with our patients across our hospital sites to capture the issues that are of concern. Having this independent process in place to capture patient feedback is a very positive practical addition to our own patient feedback methods and enables us to check we are aware of the big issues that patients want to talk about.'

Sarah Brierley - Director of Strategy, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

Making sure we hear YOUR stories

Healthwatch Hertfordshire is an organisation that, first and foremost, aims to represent the views of the people who live within the county. More than that, we see ourselves as part of the communities we represent. It's important for us to be able to find out - face to face - what the lived experience of service users is. That is why there's every chance you'll see us up and down Hertfordshire.

We attend events across the county, using local volunteers where possible. And this year we

began to trial our **Talk To Us** stalls. The idea is to have a regular presence at a set location. Not only does this give us the opportunity to increase public knowledge of our work and what we do, but also we're able to capture vital feedback from people who would never normally engage with us.

If you do see one of our stalls, whether it's at a festival or fete, a hospital or doctors surgery, or even within your local community, be it at a shopping centre, library, or food bank, come over and talk to us. Over **900** people did this year, and their feedback has helped bring about many of the changes we talk about throughout this report.

Ken and Paul, attending the Lister Hospital in Stevenage



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.healthwatch.co.uk

t: 03000 683 000

e: enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk

healthwatch
Hertfordshire

Health and
Social Care.

Your
voice

Helping you find
the answers

01978
info@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk

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Community Health

Putting our hospitals at the heart of local communities



GP, hospital, mental health services, pharmacy, local care

How we provide people with advice and information

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful. There a number of organisations that can provide help, but people don't know where to look. Last year we helped 114 people access the advice and information they need.

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

- + Over the phone
- + Our Contact Form or email
- + At community events
- + Social media
- + Promoting helpful services

Signposting

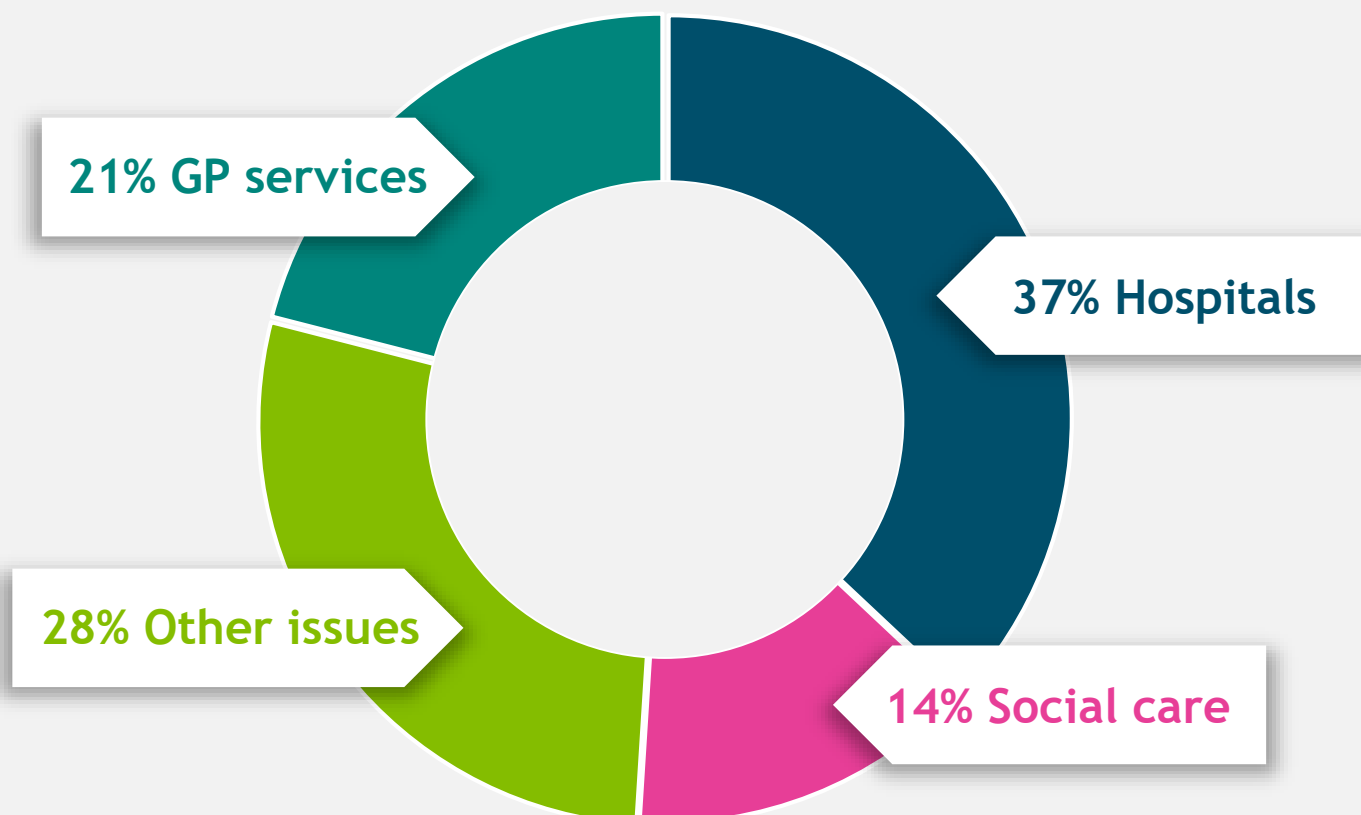
We provide a free, confidential signposting service that is independent of NHS and social care services. What that means is that, when asked, we are able to provide people with choices and information, and direct them to the most appropriate place or places. We also provide information on what to do if anything should go wrong.

But our work doesn't stop there. With the permission of our callers, we use their anonymised information to help improve NHS and Social Care services; sharing good practice,

identifying gaps in service or bad practice, and doing what we can to make sure it doesn't happen to the next person.

People often call us once every other avenue has been explored, which means that the cases we deal with are often complex, involving multiple agencies or unique situations. We pride ourselves on what one of our Trustees described as a 'Signposting Plus' service. We will do all that we can to ensure you have everything and anything you need - whether it be phone numbers, knowledge about you're rights, or talking you through a complaints process - to get the results you want.

What services do people want to know about?



Case Studies

Due to the complex nature of many of our signposting cases this work has enabled us to spot gaps in the system or help a client who

has already tried various routes to get the assistance they need. This section outlines just a few of the times we've been able to help the caller, and help change the system.

Carers rights: Ensuring transparency and fairness

We were approached by Carers in Herts to look into some feedback they had received from their members; carers had concerns about the way they were being assessed as 'escorts' - a trusted person accompanying a patient to a medical appointment - for non-emergency patient transport provided by the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST). We found out what the escort criteria for carers is - someone who is that patient's 'fulltime carer' - and shared it with Carers in Herts. We also noted that individuals can appeal the decision made by the patient transport assessor, but this was not displayed on the EEAST website.

We were able to meet with EEAST and the service's commissioner at Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group, to raise these issues. Following this conversation, EEAST committed to:

- + Collect more feedback from Carers in Herts members about problems with the service
- + Provide us with the appeals process and add it to their website for transparency and clarity
- + Ensure that the patients' needs for an escort are fully explored before ruling out a non-fulltime carer, and that patients with dementia always have an escort
- + Provide carers with a full explanation for why they cannot accompany someone, and inform them of the appeals process

End of life compassion

The family of someone who was on life support contacted us to ask how they could find out more about end of life care. They had been told by the consultant that they needed to consider switching the machine off, but the consultant refused to put the family in contact with the end of life team until they had made the decision to do so. The signposter taking the call saw that this vulnerable family shouldn't have to make a

tough decision without the support or knowledge they clearly needed to make an informed choice. This is wrong, and has been raised with the trust.

But, more importantly for that family, we were able to put them in contact with the End of Life Team at the hospital trust, so that they could have that difficult and emotive conversation with a clinician who would be able to fully support them.

Meet the Team

Is Healthwatch Hertfordshire independent?

"Absolutely! Because of our role and the way we work you won't find us holding a placard or on a march, but every time we go into a meeting we know I'm there to speak up for the people of Hertfordshire."

- Paul Regan, Communication & Engagement Officer



Meet the Team

What about people who don't often engage with feeding back to the system?

"There's a reason it's a seldom heard group. It does what it says on the tin. There are people who are disadvantaged by society and how it works. I think there is a wider thing of people feeling that no one listens to them and that anything they do or say is pointless, that nothing will change. We're trying to make sure that that isn't the case."

- Alice Lovell, Team Support Officer & Volunteer Co-Ordinator



Hold please?

A member of the public had called their local hospital only to find, after having spent a considerable amount of time on hold in a queue, the phone line went dead. When they called back straight away they were on hold again for so long that they decided to give up. This was, understandably, frustrating for the caller, but they told us that they also found it very upsetting.

This wasn't the first time we had heard about this issue, and as something that could effect a lot of people we went to the hospital trust to find out what was going on. They told us they were aware of some issues, and would be targeting their monitoring of phone systems accordingly. Since then new

phone software has been installed, which we understand has helped. We are continuing to receiving progress reports, which we're able to feed back to the public and also check against new information we receive.

I was annoyed about being given lots of different numbers by everyone making me call around. I'm really glad that you were able to just take care of my problem. Thank you SO much.

- Healthwatch Hertfordshire Signposting Client

Meet the Team

What's special about being part of Healthwatch Hertfordshire?

"We're kind of honoured to meet all the people around the county who take the time to share their experiences with us. And then you can meet all the staff, how hard people work and how they want to make the system better. Sometimes they don't know how but they want to."

- Jane Brown, Quality Manager



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.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk

t: 01707 275 978

e: info@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk



Volunteering with us

Over the next few pages, you'll find out about the work our volunteers do to support Healthwatch Hertfordshire. This includes:

- + The work of our Board who are responsible for governance and oversight
- + Attending 35 of the over 50 different Boards and Committees to represent the patient voice at a decision-making level
- + Supporting us through various projects in their Enter & View role, including visits to Dental Practices and the Hertswise Mystery Shopping Exercise
- + Raising our profile by helping to staff events stalls, holding talks with local community groups, and keeping up a regular presence at Lister Hospital. Through engagement events led by volunteers, we have been able to (Apr18-Mar19):
- + Recording 134 experiences from service users on comment cards

By doing all of the above, volunteers have helped to raise awareness of us in the public eye, and through that have enabled us to improve services in our holding to account role. Those comment cards mentioned also feedback into our website's Feedback Centre, which is used by the hospital trusts to get a sense of their patients' experiences.



How do we help our volunteers?

Healthwatch Hertfordshire revised and created a new volunteer induction process in 2017/18 to better support our volunteers in their respective roles. This has been used throughout 2018/19, with the addition of a new Volunteer Training Record to be introduced in the near future. Our induction process supports volunteers in the following ways:

- + Inviting interested volunteers to attend an Introduction Session
- + Holding one-on-one meetings
- + Providing a Volunteer Handbook, which is full of useful information for them in their role, whatever it may be
- + Providing a new Training Record bringing all of the roles' training requirements together in one document

In addition, we hold an annual event, celebrating our volunteers and thanking them for all that they do, because we know that we couldn't do everything we do without the support of our volunteers. This was held on the 6th June last year in conjunction with national Volunteers' Week, and was widely agreed to be a great success.

In the future we have plans for volunteer reviews and will be introducing Equality and Diversity training to be attended by all staff and volunteers equally, ensuring that anyone representing Healthwatch Hertfordshire in any capacity has the skills and knowledge to do so in keeping with the standards and behaviours embodied by the organisation.

How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch Hertfordshire we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of our 47 volunteers who work with us to help make care better for their communities.

'I thought you were understanding and kind. It's been a long time since anyone has treated me so nicely. You made me feel better. At the end of a call like this I usually feel worse. Your support and help was fantastic.'

- Healthwatch Hertfordshire Signposting Client



The Bishop's Stortford volunteer team

Volunteers: Not just helping us improve other people's services!

When we originally started working with a group of new volunteers in Bishop's Stortford with Learning Disabilities, we thought it would be to empower them; to ensure that their voice was being heard.

However, since then we've found that they are the ones who have empowered and enabled us. Because we were looking at the best ways of communicating and supporting one group of volunteers, we quickly realised that we should be adopting these practices wherever we could.

This is why we have started offering audio versions of our newsletter, as well as large print. We're continually trying to create things in easier to read formats. But the most important learning for us was moving away from having a separate group of volunteers living with learning disabilities who we treated in a different way, and instead having a single body, some of whom have **additional** needs, which may or may not be those with learning disabilities. This allows us to support every one of our valued volunteers in the way that best suits them.

'I have good skills, and good communication when standing in front of people to talk to them about how we can make services better' - Jo, Enter & View Volunteer

Meet our volunteers

We caught up with a couple of our fantastic volunteers to let you know - in their own words - how their work makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.



Kumar, Trustee

‘Volunteering is a necessary activity. The essential part of volunteering is you can do what you want to do in the way that’s most comfortable. Some volunteers like communicating with individuals. Some others prefer challenging the system or highlighting where it could be improved. As a colleague of mine very recently suggested, “every voice matters”.’

Kerose, Enter & View Representative

‘With our work more people can access services, more people can come and go. I like to know that I’m giving someone the voice they want. (People with Learning Disabilities) think they can’t get a voice. (Other people) think they’re stupid, but they’re clever in their own, different way. They just want to show them that they are, that they’re seen in a way a normal human being is.’



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.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
 t: 01707 275 978
 e: info@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk



Our finances

How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we spent £489,457. The below accounts show a 14 months period. This is due to our board making the decision to move our financial year end to March 31st to

align it with standard practice. For more detailed information on our finance please see our full annual accounts which you can [download here](#), or contact the office on **01707 275 978** and ask for a copy.

	Actual to 31 st March (14 months)
Summary	
Income	
HCC Funding period 1.2.18-31.3.18	62,766
HCC Funding period 1.4.18-31.3.19	376,593
Other Income	8,114
Total Income	447,473
Employment Costs	
Staff salaries	377,882
Staff insurance, travel etc	9,515
Total Staff Costs	387,397
Governance & Other non-staffing Costs	
Rent	23,903
Governance & Other Office Costs	36,996
Volunteer & Member Expenses	5,347
Legal & Professional	7,921
Engagement & Communication	28,007
	102,174
Total Costs	489,571
Net deficit for year	-42,099



**Our plans for
next year**

Message from our CEO

Looking back at the last year, I think we should be proud of all we have achieved in sometimes challenging circumstances: increased demand with no increase in capacity, staff turnover and vacancies, new contractual arrangements and restructuring our services, an increased focus on the need to get income from other sources.

Our achievements reflect the wide range of work we undertake: For example our signposting service, something of a misnomer, as in practice it is more about supporting people than just giving brief information. Often we are contacted when people have experienced something in health or care that needs improving and often they come to us as a last resort. Signposting cases are always important and sometimes distressing and I'd like to thank the team for all their compassion and professionalism in helping people.

The last year was the one that marked a shift in our focus towards research and engagement. Our projects working with Healthwatch England on Developing Research Standards across the Healthwatch national network reflects this approach. Work on supported living, and with Newton

Europe, covered in previous pages show the importance of our activities to evidence the need for improvement in services. This is also demonstrated by our enter and view Dental programme, so successful that the Local Dental Committee wanted a check list so those practices not involved didn't miss out.

The report also covers our holding to account role - in Hertfordshire we are very fortunate to work in an open and successful Health and Care environment and the positive comments from Hertfordshire's Commissioners and Providers show how through working together we can help the patient voice to be heard and improvements made.





I would also like to pay tribute to our Board and operational team who have enabled an effective, well run organisation with a clear focus on ensuring our strategy and resources are geared to the needs of our population. The restructure of our service into Operational and Research and Engagement Teams will further enable this to happen and to increase our capacity we have recruited two research officers.

Looking ahead

Our new focus has already meant a range of projects and activities are in train for 2019-20. This includes working with Healthwatch England on a large scale Public Engagement programme on the 10 Year plan. Amongst other highlights are: the Mental Health Discharge Project which is looking at the support for carers when

someone is discharged from a mental health ward; the survey work mentioned in the report about Annual Health checks for people with learning disabilities; support for hospital trusts to enhance the effectiveness of patient engagement and co-production work with patients on Personal Health Budgets and Integrated Personal Commissioning (with NHS England). Other partnership work - including a focus on patient leadership and training for effective social prescribing.

We are also looking to build our relationship with University of Hertfordshire and other research partners. Our Head of Research and Engagement Priya has been made a Visiting Research Fellow status at the University. Working closely with the University of Hertfordshire, we are a named collaborator within the CLAHRC applications - Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care East of England (CLAHRC EoE).

In terms of our 'holding to account' and representative work, we are likely to be further focusing on the reconfiguration of services including acute service provision. We will also be increasingly working with the STP to enhance public involvement in the partnership to ensure community and patient perspectives are heard.

Barriers and opportunities

Healthwatch Hertfordshire is a relatively small organisation and we have been credited with punching above our weight on a number of occasions. This is a recognition of our role.

Our size is also a challenge given the breadth of agenda we have to cover across the whole of health and social care and this means the priorities we set will not always please everyone. We also need to balance

our desire to increase our reach with a recognition that any ensuing increase in demand for our services is unlikely to be matched by an increase in resourcing to match this.

However, our projects above show that there are also many opportunities - having alternative sources of funding for projects, looking at partnerships with the Universities, our new structure can help focus attention where it's most needed. All in all it's likely to be an exciting time for Healthwatch Hertfordshire!

Thank you

Finally from me, some thank you messages: To our Board and team that help us be an organisation of which we can be proud. To our volunteers for their key roles and patient insight and for partners in the NHS and Social Care, the Voluntary Sector and across the Healthwatch network. Finally though, the thank you needs to go to the people of Hertfordshire who have given their views to help us try to improve health and care across the county and beyond.



'Healthwatch Hertfordshire is a relatively small organisation and we have been credited with punching above our weight on a number of occasions. This is a recognition of our role.'

Geoff Brown

Healthwatch Hertfordshire CEO

'Healthwatch Hertfordshire has supported us in the role of 'critical friend' during a very important year for West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust. We have found their advice invaluable as we have engaged our local communities in discussions about plans to redevelop our hospital estate. Our feedback shows that we have reached thousands of people. We will continue to seek advice on best practice from our colleagues at Healthwatch Hertfordshire to ensure that the views of our patients and their carers are used to make improvements to the care we provide. In an age of fast-paced change in how healthcare is delivered, it is more important than ever to assure people that, for example, moving care from hospital settings or providing consultations using digital technology is a positive step. In shaping these discussions, the experience of Healthwatch Hertfordshire will continue to be instrumental.'

Louise Halfpenny - Director of Communications, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care. We've mentioned a lot of people in this annual report but every partner we work with throughout the year and every member of the public who takes the time to talk to us helps us to make a difference.

Thank you!



Brilliant help. I didn't know who to call. I'd have been lost without you.

- Healthwatch Hertfordshire Signposting Client



Contact us

Address of local Healthwatch and contact details of any relevant Healthwatch subcontractors as of 31/03/2019.

- + 01707 275 978
 - + info@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
 - + @HwHertfordshire
 - + www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk
-

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

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