

Healthwatch County Durham Background Information

What services does local Healthwatch cover?

- All hospital based health services for adults and children
- All community based health services for adults and children including GPs, dentists, pharmacists, podiatrists, health visitors, district nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and community psychiatric services
- Residential and nursing home services for adults
- Social work and/or care services including home helps, home carers, support workers and social workers or care managers
- Services that combine health and social care including sexual health centres, wellbeing centres and day centres for older people
- Services and support for children and young people apart from those who are in receipt of social care support from the local Council.

What powers does local Healthwatch have?

Healthwatch is unique in having some legal (or statutory) powers and duties whilst retaining its independence of central and local government.

Local Healthwatch powers

- Can enter and view premises where health and/or social care services are provided (This power does not extend to premises that provide social care to children but Healthwatch is expected to gather the views and experiences from children and young people in collaboration with local partners).
- Can refer issues of concern direct to local Council Health Scrutiny Committee
- Is entitled to a seat on the local Health and Wellbeing Board
- Can escalate issues direct to Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Local Healthwatch also has a **duty to provide information about health and social care services and service providers**. Service providers and commissioners have a **duty to respond to local Healthwatch reports and recommendations within 20 working days**. This includes providers of children's social care services.

Healthwatch in County Durham

Healthwatch Durham was launched in 2013 and is open to anyone who lives and/or works in Durham and would like the opportunity to get involved so we can really understand the range of issues and concerns that people have about their health and social care services.

Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) holds the contract for Healthwatch Durham. PCP is a leading health improvement charity whose mission is **Health, Wellbeing and Learning for all**. **There are four key aspects to the work of Healthwatch:**

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| ‘Voice’ | Ensuring local people’s voices are heard and their experiences can influence the design, commissioning and delivery of local health and social care services |
| Scrutiny and Accountability | Holding those who plan and commission local services to account through our involvement in the Health and Wellbeing Board, our reports and recommendations, our power to enter and view services and our ability to refer issues of major concern direct to Healthwatch England or the local Health Scrutiny committee. |
| Information and Signposting | Providing an Information and Signposting service to provide information about local health and social care services to help people make informed choices about what’s best for them |
| Complaints | Providing information and signposting to people wishing to complain about health and care services |
| But... | Healthwatch does not investigate individual complaints or act on behalf of individuals with complaints services |

How we provide Healthwatch in Durham

We believe that Healthwatch can only be truly effective if we can reach as many citizens as possible. This will only happen if we work with and through established networks, groups and organisations in Durham. Our approach to an effective Healthwatch is underpinned by the following principles:

A 'network of networks' which

- builds strong links with local voluntary and community groups
- uses established community networks to share information, and to find out what matters to people
- works collaboratively with local partners who have strong local knowledge and connectivity with communities of interest and place and can support the work of Healthwatch in obtaining the views of these communities
- builds a bank of trained Healthwatch Volunteers who can be the eyes and ears of Healthwatch at grass-roots level
- Champions the voices of those who are seldom-heard.

An independent organisation

Local Healthwatch is **independent** of central and local government with its own legal powers and sets its own work programme to reflect the concerns of the local community.

| Your Healthwatch Durham Board Members | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Brian Jackson | (Chair) |
| Zena Jones | |
| Lakkur Murthy | |
| Judi Evans | |
| Burnard Hume | |
| Jim Welch | |
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