

healthwatch County Durham



Annual Report 2016/2017

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Message from our Chair

I am very fortunate as the Chair of Healthwatch County Durham in having fantastic support of Healthwatch staff, Board members and great volunteers. Throughout this annual report you will see the great work which has been carried out by the members of the team.



I have always been supportive of our National Health Service and I am keen to promote the expectations of the public when it comes to management of their health care.

I have found that expectations include:

- provision of essential services
- open access
- a safe, dignified quality service
- provision of health education and information
- freedom of choice
- always to be listened to
- to be involved
- to live in a healthy environment

We will promote these principles and 'best practice' to our local health and social care services. Please be assured that we will act as a 'critical friend' on your behalf. We will ensure the voice of service users is always heard, and we will influence wherever possible.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us, we are here to help.

Brian Jackson

Message from our Programme Manager



The Pioneering Care Partnership were successful in procuring Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) in August 2016. I joined the team two months later as their Programme Manager at a time when the team had gone through a TUPE transfer and were settled into their new offices in Meadowfield. The team had successfully set up all processes and had communicated our new contact details to all partner organisations and had advertised our move wherever possible to the people of County Durham.

One of my first priorities with HWCD was to add to the number of Board members in place and I am pleased to be able to report our success with this, by the end of November 2016 we had eight very proactive and supportive members led by Brian Jackson as Chair giving us a full complement of staff, Board members and a good number of volunteers who were already giving us their full support.

The staff have continually followed a workplan which was agreed by the Board in November and has been added to upon receipt of requests coming from the team, as a result of our research, the Board and other partner organisations.

I have been very lucky to inherit a fantastic team who are all specialists in their roles. You can read more about them and the work they have done in this report. They have been out and about in County Durham listening to patients, service users, family members, carers and members of the public and have used what they were told to make recommendations to the people who have the power to make services better.

2016/17 has been a year of two very different halves, the first being a little unsettling with the transfer and set up of new teams, the second proving to be very positive in that our teams have gelled very well identifying strong committed staff, pro-active and supportive Board members and a team of very willing volunteers. We have achieved a lot and are looking forward to doing further great things next year, always retaining our independence and putting the service user at the heart of what we do.

Marianne Patterson



Meet the team

Office Manager

Gail Anderson

Supporting the Board, doing her utmost to keep the paperwork light and trying her best to get us into a paperless world!



Engagement & Signposting Lead

Denise Alexander

Loving working with communities and supporting people of all ages and abilities



Volunteer Support Officer

Claire Cowell

Enjoying supporting our volunteers with their wide range of skills and always in awe of their desire to help

Engagement & Signposting Lead

Julia Catherall

Enjoys being out and about engaging with groups and organisations capturing your comments



Media & Communications Apprentice

Ethan Burnett

Enthusiastic about keeping us up to date in the social media and marketing world and ensuring we reach far and wide in County Durham

Research & Intelligence

Denise Rudkin

Our 'super sleuth' who enjoys digging deep to get the information and data we need



Engagement & Signposting Lead

Emily Hunter

Returning from maternity leave in June and looking forward to getting back into the world of work



Message from our Partners



2016-17 has been an exciting year of change for Healthwatch County Durham

A new partnership comprising the Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP), Durham Community Action (DCA) and Citizens Advice County Durham (CACD) became responsible for Healthwatch County Durham from 1st July 2016. The staff and volunteer team transferred, moved to a central office location and a new representative Board was recruited, creating a dynamic and diverse team, charged with seeking, listening and representing the views of local people and shaping health and social care services as a result.

The team, under the guidance of Brian Jackson as Chair, have admirably risen to the challenge of change. They have set clear priorities based on feedback, research and intelligence, increased engagement and signposting and they work effectively as credible and equal partners with statutory agencies. Not bad going in only eight months!

Healthwatch County Durham still has a long journey ahead. Reaching out to help people to understand their purpose, value and aims will be key to success; no mean feat given the size and scale of County Durham, in relation to both population and geography. Healthwatch will be challenged to scrutinise more services, increase membership and volunteer opportunities and improve general awareness. To truly represent the opinions of local people we must engage widely.

Healthwatch has a duty to shine a spotlight on health and social care services and be the voice and champion of local people. We will continue to rely on our knowledgeable and dedicated Board, staff and volunteer teams and partners to drive this forward. 2017-18 will be another busy year!

Carol Gaskarth
PCP Chief Executive
On behalf of the Partners



Meet our Board

Zena Jones

I am a passionate advocate of people with hidden disabilities and mental health issues. I am keen that they can have a voice through Healthwatch County Durham and have that voice heard through Healthwatch involvement with key partnerships in County Durham. Read some examples of our partnership working on pages 10 & 11

Lakuur Murthy

With many years involvement in the NHS I want to give citizens of County Durham the chance to have their voice heard on any changes to services that might affect them. I believe that Healthwatch County Durham is well placed to do this. Read more about the work we are involved in on page 8

Jim Welch

As a blind, disabled wheelchair user since 1990, I have a strong interest in health services in County Durham. I am the lead Board member for marketing and event planning as I am passionate about everyone having the opportunity to contribute and take part through whatever means is best for them. To see our results for social media and marketing look on page 23

Burnard Hume

I am new to volunteering and thoroughly enjoying my involvement with Healthwatch County Durham. I am the lead Board member for the learning disability work which has been very rewarding as I believe everyone should have a voice. Read more about this on pages 14, 15, 16 & 17.



Chris Shore

During my time in the health service I saw some significant developments to enhance patient care. Where poor care may exist I am committed to trying to improve services through my involvement with Healthwatch. I have many years experience within the health service and have seen both great services and those which were not so good. I feel that Healthwatch County Durham not only has a role in challenging poor practice but also sharing and promoting good practice. Read more about this on pages 20 & 21

Mary Mitchell

I have been involved in health related volunteering for many years and I believe Healthwatch County Durham is a very important link between the public and health organisations. I want to give users of health and social care services a voice about their care so was very pleased to sponsor our work around this. Read more on page 9

Judi Evans

During my career I have developed a strong focus on meaningful service user engagement. As the lead Board member for signposting I am keen to promote our professional service so that the people of County Durham know that Healthwatch County Durham is here to help. Read more about people we have supported on pages 12 & 13

Our Workplan

Healthwatch County Durham delivers a workplan that is based on what people tell us are their health and social care concerns and what research and commissioners tell us are priorities for the county. Our independent Board is made up of local people who decide what Healthwatch should look at each year. People send workplan requests to the Board and each one is discussed. They make their decisions based on where they think Healthwatch can have the biggest impact, where there is greatest need and the capacity of the staff and volunteers.

Each piece of work takes three to four months and involves face to face engagement as well as surveys to find out what people think. Healthwatch produces and publishes a report for each one with recommendations and shares them with people who have the power to make services better.

Urgent Care Consultation

On behalf of Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group we were asked to support the public consultation programme by attending urgent care centres asking existing service users for their views on the proposed changes. Some of the issues raised included:

- *GP same day appointments difficult to get*
- *111 service not very good and referring to people to A&E, which is causing problems*

As a result of the consultation, the option preferred by the public has now been implemented with all households in the Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield districts having received a booklet explaining what to do if you are unwell.

'Despite my gut reaction that this was a PR exercise, this was a genuine attempt to find out what the public thought of the proposed changes' attendee



Our Priorities

Next year our Board have agreed we will look at:

- Barriers to health screening programmes including bowel, breast and cervical cancer tests
- Oral health of children and young people
- Understanding of Safeguarding Adults priorities by vulnerable groups
- The development of our professional signposting service and analysis of trends
- Positive Enter & View visits to identify and share good practice

60 questionnaires completed

5 public events

4 centre visits

48 hours of staff time



Sustainability and Transformation Plans

15 events
45 hours of staff
and volunteer
time

The NHS in every area of England has been tasked with setting out how it plans to achieve wide-scale changes that make the most of the funding available and improves care for patients. These are called Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs).

At Healthwatch County Durham we are working to ensure that the general public has the opportunity to get involved and have their say on service changes that will affect them.

Common themes and concerns that are emerging include:

- *Not enough people have engaged with the programme*
- *Numbers attending the events have been low*
- *There is a lack of clarity on how the public's views will shape the STP*
- *Concern that the voluntary sector is not sufficiently resourced to play an important role in the delivery of more care closer to home*
- *Insufficient detail is available regarding proposed changes to services*
- *The distances people will have to travel to access services is a real worry for large numbers of residents living in rural areas of the County*

Going forwards Healthwatch County Durham would like to see:

- *The public put at the heart of the STP by engaging with a broader range, and greater numbers, of people enabling them to better understand the rationale for change. Timing and settings for events needs to be reconsidered to achieve this*
- *Engagement needs to be meaningful, ensuring that people's views are recognised and have a positive part to play in shaping services. A summary document showing how public opinion has influenced the final shape of the proposed service changes would support this*
- *People are passionate about their local services and time should be built into engagement events that enables people to share these concerns, showing that they are being listened to*

We will continue to collate feedback, analyse trends, and report key issues as appropriate.

Care Package Comment Cards

We are running a six month pilot where adults receiving a care package arranged by Durham County Council will get a feedback card with their care information. We hope this will help us to reach more people and give them the opportunity to contact us by freepost, freephone, textphone or e-mail. This should reach up to 300 people per month.

Moving forward, we will evaluate the pilot and consider how we might continue to reach vulnerable people in the county.

healthwatch
County Durham

Your independent health and social care

consumer champion

Together we can make a difference

Healthwatch County Durham is here to listen to your views on health and social care. We use your views and experiences to influence services being delivered in the County.

We can also provide help and information about all aspects of health and social care being provided, including signposting you to the right help and support if you have a problem.

If there is something you would like to tell us, or you would like our assistance with, then please use the form or contact details overleaf.



Make your voice heard

I have found our social worker to be very patient and understanding of my aunt's illness. She always explains everything to her and doesn't discuss things without including her. My aunt refers to her as 'the girl with the lovely smile'

Events attended

Better Health Programme

Healthwatch County Durham staff have been attending Better Health Programme events across the county in order to gather feedback on the themes and issues that are important to the general public. We have produced an independent observations report that shares our findings from all 15 events we attended, including those focusing on the draft Sustainability & Transformation Plans.

Big Tent event

We were delighted to attend County Durham Health & Wellbeing Board's fifth annual 'Big Tent' event in October. The event was very well attended by approximately 200 people, including service users, patients, carers, representatives from the voluntary and community sector and other NHS and local authority partners. The aim of the 'Big Tent' event is to gather views from stakeholders on a range of subjects including child poverty, oral health, reducing obesity and mental health services across the county. Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England gave the key note speech, which showed the North East in a very positive light in a number of areas:

- cardio vascular health has improved more than in any other region
- teenage conception rates have fallen by half
- hospital acquired infections rates have reduced
- smoking cessation rates in the North East are the fastest improving across the country

Drop-in activities

The team has been out and about across the county organising drop-ins with some of our key partners; Durham Community Action, Citizens Advice County Durham and ICA, the Independent Complaints Advocacy team. The aim is to raise the profile of our work with the general public, listen to their experiences of health and social care and intervene on their behalf when appropriate.



10

Young person's 'Future' event

We were pleased to attend the first young person's 'Future' event held at New College Durham in February. The information day, organised in partnership by SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability, Information, Advice & Support Service), Investing in Children, Making Changes Together and Durham County Council, was aimed at young people aged 13 - 25yrs with a special educational need or disability living in the county. The event provided us with an opportunity to talk to young people about their experiences of oral health. It is best practice for children and adults of any age with an impairment or disability to have a comprehensive oral health care plan embedded within their overall health plan. We are currently working to find out if this happens in practice.



Making Changes Event

We were happy to attend the 17th Making Changes Together event in Durham. The event is for parents and carers of children with additional and complex needs across the county and is organised by parents themselves. The aim of the day is to help inform and support parents with the latest changes in education and health and social care. It also provided a great opportunity to share the work of Healthwatch County Durham with over 100 people.



11

Over 100 Advice Providers working together

Healthwatch County Durham is one of over 100 organisations that have signed up to be part of a local partnership, Advice in County Durham, which is funded and hosted by Durham County Council and Citizens Advice County Durham. The partnership, which started out with just six members in 2013, brings together advice and support providers from across the county to share information and experience. Through increased joint working the partnership aims to improve quality of, and access to, advice in the county, providing a 'no wrong door' for the public. In order to achieve such goals in a sector facing increasing pressure, Advice in County Durham raises awareness of services available in the county and supports members by providing access to regular training and networking events.

Signposting and Information

Our Signposting & Information service gives you the information you need so that you can access the services you are entitled to. We can help you find the health or social care service that is right for you. We are here to listen to your comments on the services you receive and are happy to support you with any queries. Here are just a few examples of our service. To contact us ring or email us on:

0800 3047039 healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net



Julia Catherall

You helped when I had nowhere to turn

Always polite and helpful

A very well run organisation. Dealt with my complaint very well



Denise Alexander

An elderly lady who was suffering from a serious lung condition moved to a new house in the county. Visits from the respiratory nurse stopped, which was concerning her a great deal. As a result of Healthwatch calling her new GP practice, she was immediately referred to the respiratory nursing team and a visit arranged.

A lady contacted us to say she had recently had treatment at her dentist which required further treatment only 3 months later which incurred an additional cost. We contacted her dentist on her behalf and were told that the lady should have received a dental plan at the time of her first visit which would have prevented a second charge. They sincerely apologised as this was an oversight on their part and refunded the second charge.

We Speak Up

We Advise

We Listen

We Influence

A lady rang regarding her daughter, who has complex needs. Her orthopaedic consultant recommended that her daughter's wheelchair was checked for her posture, otherwise her back could get worse and she would need surgery. Mum visited the wheelchair service where she was told that her daughter would benefit from a moulded chair but that a spending freeze meant she couldn't have one. We highlighted the young woman's situation with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the NHS Trust, expressing our concern that if a suitable chair was not provided it may lead to surgery. In order to avoid the risk of surgical intervention all partners agreed that the spending freeze would be lifted, not just for this young woman but for all service users.

Pull me out, I am also a handy wall-poster!



170

People have used our Signposting and Information service this year

Review of Care Home Provision for Learning Disabled Service

Healthwatch County Durham helped Durham County Council in the review of care home provision for service users with a learning disability by carrying out some service user consultation.

The HWCD team agreed to carry out consultation in care homes in the county, using a questionnaire jointly agreed between adult social care commissioners and HWCD. 34 people were interviewed, which was a 26% sample. Healthwatch met with care home managers, who were enthusiastic about giving their service users the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Throughout January and February 2017 individual interviews were undertaken with service users in the eight identified care homes. Their views were recorded and formed the evidential basis for a report. Overall HWCD identified the following points:

- Service users were pleased to have the opportunity to give their views
- Service users appeared to be happy with where they lived and the support they received
- Some service users told us they had not had a choice about where they lived, however everyone appeared to be happy in their current home.
- Service users are happy with most of the activities they undertake and told us they are happy with the support they are given to stay healthy

8 visits

34 conversations

26% of residents took part

14

Some things that people told us:

'I like where I live, it's a friendly place'

'Everything is all right'

'It's lovely being here, I like it'



A report was written and shared with Durham County Council which included recommendations, some of which are:

- Service users really valued the opportunity to be able to contribute and talk about the support they receive and we recommend that Durham County Council embed service user engagement to their review processes
- Support providers should be encouraged by commissioners to share best practice in relation to service users accessing interesting and varied leisure and recreational activities which meet their needs, interests and aspirations
- Support providers should be encouraged to use mainstream facilities and investigate whether there are befriending opportunities in their locality

15

Learning Disability Annual Health Check Engagement

As part of the 2016/17 work plan, we chose to look at the uptake of health checks by people with learning disabilities. Improving the health of people with learning disabilities is a priority area for both North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield Clinical Commissioning Groups. Increasing the uptake of annual health checks was one of the measures identified to help achieve this. We were keen to understand if there were any barriers stopping people accessing health checks or if there was any good practice we could identify and share, which would increase the numbers of eligible people accessing annual checks.



I didn't know about them

22 year old female, living independently



I felt too anxious

18 year old female, living with parents

100
people took
part

16

We carried out a number of different activities, including:

- attending some existing events and groups to gather the views of people with learning disabilities first hand
- sending out an online survey to a wide range of organisations who support people with learning disabilities asking for service users to tell us their experiences
- speaking to eight providers of care homes for people with learning disabilities about their perspective of how the service works
- contacting GP surgeries to ask about their experience of providing annual health checks

In total we received 100 completed surveys from face to face and online engagement.

The information we gathered identified that:

- 54% of the people with a learning disability who completed a survey had received their annual health check, which compares to 52% in the NHS England 2013/14 survey
- all of the care home providers confirmed their service users had received their annual health check
- various ways were used to contact patients by GP surgeries to offer a health check and we found some examples of good practice which help to encourage uptake

In conclusion, we have made some recommendations for the CCGs to consider:

- all eligible patients should be contacted to offer a health check in an appropriate and user friendly manner. Any letters sent should be in an easy read format
- GP surgeries should be encouraged to share best practice to maximise the uptake of health checks
- the use of peer groups to promote health check uptake should be encouraged
- where necessary GP surgeries should consider using alternative venues to offer health checks which may be less intimidating for people with learning disabilities who are reluctant to go to surgeries
- HWCD should monitor the data produced by NHS England to identify whether the uptake in County Durham is improving.

17

Marketing and promoting Healthwatch Marketing Healthwatch County Durham

9 volunteers & Board members carried out 85 PR visits to meet the staff and provide updated HWCD information leaflets. They visited:

41 GP surgeries:

20 in Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield and 21 in North Durham

44 pharmacies:

24 in Durham Dales and 20 in North Durham



Linking up with CQC

We have quarterly meetings with CQC which help us to plan our volunteer work. In one meeting we agreed a piece of work looking at care home websites. Read more on page 23

Training that has been delivered

- Refresher Enter and View
- Learning Disability Awareness
- Safeguarding



Read more on our Enter & View visit on pages 20 & 21

Although Pam Coombs is an Authorised Enter and View Representative, she also enjoys gathering views and promoting the service of Healthwatch County Durham as an engagement volunteer

Our Volunteer Work

Our Volunteers have been busy throughout 2016/17 working hard on multiple projects, ranging from research projects, to Enter & View visits and drop-ins



Our Volunteers have contributed:

620 hours since October 2016

We have:

8 Board members

3 Research Volunteers

7 Enter and View Authorised Representatives

6 Engagement Volunteers

13 Healthwatchers

Paul Stokes

Healthwatch County Durham Volunteer

I volunteer for Healthwatch County Durham because I've had a long and varied experience with both the NHS and Social Care system-some good and some bad. I am observant, a good listener and like to help other people. It seems that people trust me and tell me things that they feel they can't tell others. I've mainly worked with young adults. I firmly believe we should all give something back to the community where we live, or to an organisation we have an interest in.



County Durham Volunteering Kite Mark

We are working towards the County Durham Kite Mark in Volunteering through Durham Community Action, who coordinate the scheme.

Enter & View

We carried out an Enter and View visit at Silverdale Family Practice in South Hetton.

This involved three Authorised Representative Volunteers and a member of HWCD staff. They spent the morning talking to users and staff and observing the surgery in operation. Silverdale Family Practice is a surgery who has scored highly, both in their recent CQC inspection and Patient Satisfaction survey. We were interested in understanding what they are doing well in order to share their good practice with other service providers. We were very well received and got a really good feel on the day for how and why the service is valued by its clients. Our report is available to view on our website.

Being treated as an individual and access to seeing a woman doctor when I want, is important to me



What people told us

Appointment availability

"You can always get an appointment"

Professionalism of staff

"I feel listened to and issues are addressed at first contact"

"Open door policy of manager"

Quality of the environment

"The interactive monitor as you come in is important (the up to date information it holds, i.e. number of people before you, time if running late)"

"Surgery is very clean, tidy, light, airy and comfortably set out"

Communication

"My father is unwell at the moment and I live a long way away, staff make sure he attends appointments and that he has his medication sent to the pharmacy on time. They update me (with his permission) on any significant events"

Professionalism and empathy of doctors

"You're not made to feel like you're bothering them"

"Doctors make you feel like they have time for you (even if running late)"

"I am diabetic, I feel well looked after"

- 1** Volunteer Support Officer
- 3** Authorised Representatives
- 25** conversations with patients

20

What we saw

One patient had trouble reading the digital screen which displayed people's appointments. After informing the reception staff the doctor came to collect the him and updated his records so members of staff would be aware in the future. He struggled to see red text against black, and before this was addressed he had to rely on sitting next to someone and asking them to inform him when he has been called.

21

Care home website research work

Following a meeting with the Care Quality Commission volunteers came up with the idea of carrying out research into how helpful websites are when looking for a care home provider. They wanted to do this because in their opinion:

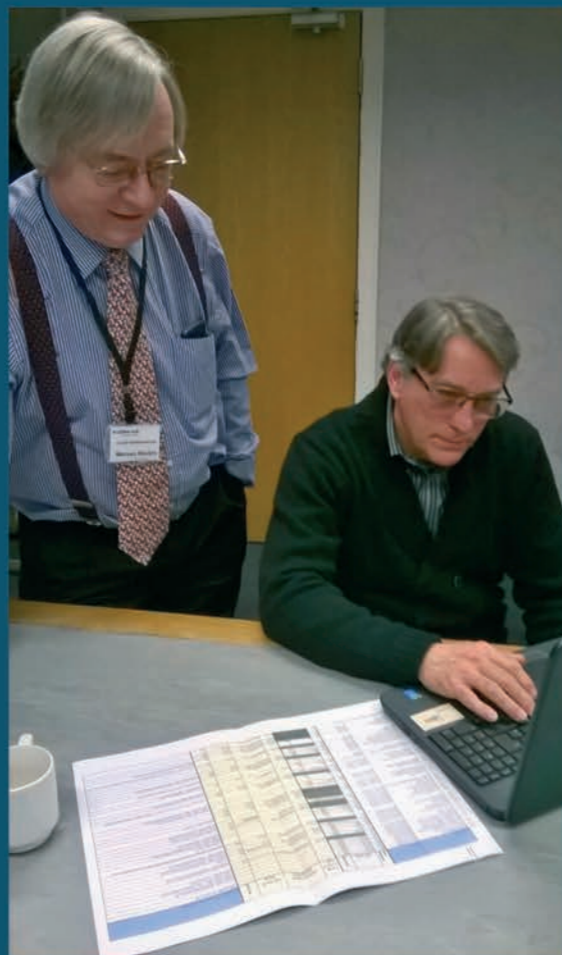
- Looking for a care home can often be during a time of difficult circumstances
- There can be differences of opinion in families about the options available
- Often the need for information and access to services is in an emergency
- Families may have financial constraints and will be concerned about how they will manage
- Where some of the family are not living in the locality of the person who needs support, they may not know the local area or have local knowledge
- People have different levels of IT skills

The findings showed that the sites are not always user friendly and can leave the user more confused and unclear around what was available.

HWCD has produced a report and made recommendations which we will share with care home providers to give them the opportunity to review their websites in light of the findings of the volunteers. The report is available on our website.

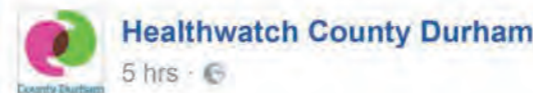
HWCD will approach Durham County Council to consider reviewing the current information held on their LOCATE website with a view to standardising the information available for individual care homes. This could then be a more consistent resource as a first point of contact

HWCD will have further discussions with CQC about the value of easily accessible, informative care home websites



The research was carried out by two volunteers Tony Bentley and Mervyn Hockin

Social Media Engagement



Healthwatch County Durham believe that a strong social media and marketing presence is a key part to reaching members of our community. The entire team works to publicise events that are being attended, and we work with local organisations in partnership to share information throughout the county. We have recently re-designed our monthly e-bulletin, and have seen an increase in engagement as a result. Our social media statistics are:

- 9035** visits to our website,
- 1200** newsletter recipients
- Facebook-** 178 posts, 542 likes
- Twitter-** 234 tweets, 262 retweets, 1842 followers, 257 liked tweets

Like Comment Share



Ethan Burnett Media and Communications Apprentice at Healthwatch County Durham

I joined Healthwatch County Durham in December of 2016 as the Media and Communications Apprentice. The HWCD team have seen a large increase in our social media statistics and engagement. One way we have achieved this is by working with partners across County Durham to promote and publicise our work. We have also re-designed our e-bulletin, aiming for a more colourful, vibrant look, with a focus on visual appeal, simple content and eye-catching layout. The future plans for HWCD in relation to Social Media and Communications is that of growth, to continue working within County Durham to reach an ever expanding part of our community, in particular young people.

Like Comment Share

“I just wanted to say how impressed I was with your newsletter. It's really well laid out, easy to read and very informative”



www.facebook.com/healthwatch-countydurham/?ref=br_rs



www.twitter.com/hwcountydurham

Finances

Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities-

£147,675

Operational costs-

£46,697

Staffing costs-

£88,781

Office costs-

£5,093

Total expenditure:-

£140,517



Contact us

Get in touch

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healthwatch

County Durham



the
consumer
champion
for
health and
social care

We Listen

We listen to patients of health services and users of social care services, along with their family members or carers, to find out what they think of the service they receive

We Advise

We advise people how to get the best health and social care for themselves and their family. We provide information about health and social care provided in County Durham

We Speak Up

We make sure that consumer views are heard by those who provide health and social care. Wherever possible we try and work in partnership with providers to influence how they make improvement

We Influence

We influence those who have the power to change services so they better meet people's needs, now and in the future



We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2017 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and our local authority.

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

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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