



**Making
your
voice
count
2018**



**Award
winning
stories**



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We are Healthwatch

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people, and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved, and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to make sure that those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

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

healthwatch

**Making
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How we're making care better



Imelda Redmond
National Director

Last year, 341,000 people chose to share their experiences with us. These views not only paint a clear picture of what health and social care looks like across England, but also show when support is working, and when it is not.

Our job is to make sure people's views are used to shape the support that they need. We've seen first-hand the improvements in care that can happen when people take the time to speak up and services take the time to listen.

I'm delighted to share with you some of the stories from this year's Healthwatch Network Awards, which showcase some great examples of this in action.

With the NHS turning 70 this year, we have two special awards. Firstly, the #ItStartsWithYou award, which celebrates individuals who help inspire change by speaking up. Thanks to Tony, Errol, and others who were nominated, we can see the powerful impact that just one voice can have.

Our second award recognises health and social care professionals and organisations that go the extra mile to listen to people and put their needs at the heart of care.

The stories from all seven award categories highlight the important role we play, bringing communities and services together. We help make a difference to thousands of people, from improving mental health support for young people in Wiltshire, to encouraging parents to have their say on maternity plans in Northamptonshire.

Thank you to all our staff and volunteers, as well as communities and services that play their part to make care better every day. Our goal for the next five years is to hear from a million people. We want you to be one of them.



Our work in numbers

Last year:

We served
152 areas
across
England



341,000 people
spoke to us about
their experience of
using health and
social care services



4,700 amazing
volunteers gave up their
time to help **176,000**
people find the right
advice and information
they needed



Together, we
published **1,745**
reports about the
improvements
people would like to
see with their health
and social care



Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

Giving people the advice and information they need

How do I find a care home? How do I move GPs? Can I choose the treatment I get? Last year, 176,000 people contacted our network with questions like this about health and social care services. Find out how local Healthwatch are helping people with the advice and information they need.



Winner

healthwatch
Wirral

Making sure people get the right answers about their wellbeing

Over 12,000 people have been supported with their health and care issues thanks to the Infobank, a service set up together by Healthwatch Wirral and Arrowe Park Hospital. From help quitting smoking to advice on finding a care home, the drop-in service is there for people, families and staff, to help with a range of issues.

Many people can experience long waits between hospital appointments. The Infobank has been connecting people who need extra support during this time with organisations that can provide immediate support. This means people not only have better care in place when waiting for a follow-up appointment, but there is also less pressure on hospitals.

A key role of the Infobank is to also be there for patients when they don't know who to ask for help, or where to turn to. When Sam was admitted to hospital in an emergency, she was worried about her pet who was home alone. Both Sam and her nurse approached the Infobank for help, and they were able to arrange for the pet to be placed into foster care. This meant Sam was less anxious and stressed, and could focus on her own wellbeing during a critical time.

Healthwatch Wirral has also used the Infobank to find out what people think about the services they use, and have used this feedback to help make improvements such as interpretation and translation support for patients in need. The Infobank has helped to identify gaps in the patient's journey and work is now underway to produce simpler pathways for both the public and professionals to use.

It is great to be able to reach out and help patients that might otherwise have been left to struggle alone. 9 Karen, Healthwatch Wirral



Emergency readmissions are estimated to cost the country over £13bn every year¹

Runner up

healthwatch
Surrey

Getting people home safely from hospital

When people are discharged from hospital, it's important they have the right support in place to recover. But this doesn't always happen. Our research shows more than 1 in 5 people return to hospital within just 48 hours.²

Healthwatch Surrey heard from patients, families and carers about how stressful and confusing leaving hospital can be. They felt they weren't given clear information from the hospital, with some aspects of discharge not discussed or planned, including further transport arrangements, where to go for support, and how to take their medication.

To help improve communication when people are discharged, Healthwatch Surrey worked together with patients, staff and other organisations to develop a checklist of care needs.

The checklist provides patients and their families and carers with the information they need to ensure a safe and effective discharge, and Healthwatch Surrey continues to improve it based on their feedback. Other hospitals have also listened to people's feedback and are looking at how they can use this method to make leaving hospital a better experience for all.

Highly commended

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire

Healthwatch Shropshire

Healthwatch Torbay

Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

Volunteering

These stories highlight the fantastic work volunteers do to make care better for their communities, as well as recognising how Healthwatch support and include volunteers.



Winner

healthwatch
Wiltshire

Young volunteers help hundreds of students have their say

More young people are seeking support for their mental health, but many can wait months before treatment starts.

The government has committed to spend £1.4 billion in children and young people's mental health services over the next five years, but does the NHS really know what young people want?

Healthwatch Wiltshire has been recognised for its project which has given hundreds of students a chance to speak up about their mental health, as well as any other concerns they face when using health services.

In partnership with Youth Action Wiltshire and local schools, Healthwatch mentored a group of students, supporting them to learn new skills and build confidence. Some of the students were given further training to become 'Young Listeners', visiting schools and speaking to other students to understand their views on mental health.

Many students said they found it easier to speak to the Young Listeners as they were more approachable than adults. Based on these conversations, young people said they wanted:

- More opportunities to discuss their mental health and wellbeing
- Easily accessible and better health and wellbeing support within schools
- To be able to talk about their issues without judgement and be respected by staff and professionals
- Shorter waiting times for support

● Treat me like a person, not a child. Work with me to find a solution, don't talk at me from over a desk like an interrogation. Emma, student

To help influence change and show how things could work differently, the Young Listeners presented their findings to the Health and Wellbeing board and local schools.

Thanks to the Young Listeners, NHS staff and providers now have a greater understanding of the issues faced by young people, and how services can change to better meet their needs.

Runner up

healthwatch
South Gloucestershire

Volunteers improve accessibility for people with learning disabilities

Thanks to the feedback from a group of volunteers, a Minor Injuries Unit, GP surgery and a day centre have made changes to their services so people with learning disabilities have a better experience.

Healthwatch South Gloucestershire wanted to give health and social care staff a unique perspective of what using services could be like for someone with a learning disability.

Working in partnership with a local charity, The Hive (Avon), they recruited and trained five volunteers with learning disabilities to visit health and social care services to see how accessible they were, and make recommendations for improvements.

Because of the valuable insight of these volunteers, the services visited have made changes to their signage and lighting, and introduced easier to read documents to make it a more accessible environment for people with learning disabilities.

Highly Commended

Healthwatch Birmingham

Healthwatch Derbyshire

Healthwatch Northamptonshire



Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

Helping people have their say

Find out how Healthwatch have made a difference by reaching out to more people, to understand their experiences of using health and social care services.





New parents help set the future direction of support

When the local Clinical Commissioning Group wanted to improve maternity services through a new plan, Healthwatch Northamptonshire helped over 500 parents share their views and experiences.

To hear what people had to say, Healthwatch held a range of community events, social media engagement and online surveys. From young parents and mothers with mental health conditions, to individuals with disabilities, people from all walks of life were able to get involved.

Most parents were happy with the care they received and were able to give birth where they chose to. However, others raised concerns about their experience during labour, where they were left alone or in pain.

Using the feedback collected, a number of recommendations were made to help inform future plans for local maternity services, including:

- Being able to see the same midwife or team of health professionals
- Allowing teams to share information so that parents don't have to repeat their story
- Clearer advice for parents to help them make informed decisions
- Better choices about where to see a midwife
- Stopping unannounced visits from health visitors after birth

Thanks to parents and families speaking up, maternal care in Northamptonshire will be more tailored to what people need in the future.

Runner up

healthwatch
Camden

Using personal stories to monitor the impact of changes to mental health services

When the local NHS Trust and council proposed cuts to a mental health centre in Camden, those who used the service were concerned. Although people expressed their dissatisfaction through a consultation, they felt they were not being listened to by those in charge.

To help people have their say, Healthwatch Camden tried something new. For six months, they collected weekly audio-diaries kept by people who used the service. The personal stories showed strong evidence that the changes to the service were having an overwhelmingly negative impact on people.

Thanks to Healthwatch Camden's work, the council and NHS Trust made a formal apology to the people involved. The project has also made a difference to how the public are included in future changes to other mental health services.

🗣️ **It's the best bit of work I've seen, not only in Camden but anywhere when it comes to challenging damaging cuts. Absolutely brilliant!** 🗣️ Local resident

Highly commended

Healthwatch County Durham

Healthwatch Herefordshire

Healthwatch Staffordshire

Since January
2016, over
34,000
people have
shared their
views and
experiences of
using mental
health services
with us³

Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

Improving health and social care

This award recognises how Healthwatch have used the views of the public to make health and social care services better. Take a look at how working together with professionals has improved the quality of services.



Winner

healthwatch
Hillingdon

Improving people's experiences of hospital

Thanks to over 170 people who shared their feedback, changes have been made to improve people's experiences of leaving hospital in Hillingdon.

Patients from across 17 different wards told Healthwatch Hillingdon about the poor communication and lack of information, as well as long waits to be discharged from hospital, often without access to food or water.

80% of older people said they were well cared for in hospital; however, the satisfaction rate dropped considerably during the discharge process. Some patients said they felt under pressure to leave hospital because their bed was needed and others stayed extra days while a care home was found for them.

Healthwatch also spoke to staff who expressed a real frustration about the challenges they encountered when discharging patients.

Healthwatch Hillingdon raised nine recommendations with commissioners and providers to make leaving hospital easier for people. As a result, a number of improvements have been made for those waiting to be discharged:

- Water and food is available
- Waiting times for medication and patient transport have been reduced
- Processes are now in place to identify carers and support them when entering and leaving hospital
- Patients have more information about their stay in hospital, the discharge process and their onward care
- A standardised discharge process was introduced across all wards to reduce unnecessary delays, reducing the time people spend in hospital and the number of patients being re-admitted

Runner up



Making sure GPs provide information in a way that people can understand

Local residents in Camden told Healthwatch that GP services were not properly supporting those with communication needs.

Healthwatch Camden decided to take action. As a result, a number of changes have been made to improve people's experiences of visiting the doctor. For example, at all GP practices in Camden:

- Patients can now register using large print or easy read forms
- GPs ask new patients to tell them about any communication support needs they may have
- Staff are given deaf awareness training to improve how they communicate with patients

Thanks to everyone who spoke to Healthwatch Camden about the problems they faced, practice care has now been changed for all.

Highly commended

Healthwatch Enfield

Healthwatch Manchester

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets



Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

Championing diversity and inclusion

Find out how Healthwatch have made a difference to the experience of diverse communities using health and social care services.



Winner

healthwatch
Staffordshire

Helping prisoners get health support they need

More prisoners can access community dentists in Staffordshire thanks to Healthwatch Staffordshire's work understanding the experiences of people in prison.

The 85,000 people living in prisons in England and Wales are entitled to the same level and quality of services as other NHS patients and are more likely than the general population to experience mental and physical health problems.

Healthwatch Staffordshire, in partnership with NHS England, decided to find out if prisoners were getting the healthcare they needed.

Working with other organisations, they reached out to people living in six local prisons. Speaking to men, women, young offenders and older prisoners, they uncovered a range of issues which services have taken steps to address.

For example, female prisoners told them they could not get the special license they needed to leave prison to register with a dentist.

♀ We aren't allowed a Special Purpose Licence (SPL) to go to the dentist to register as a new patient. We can only have an SPL to attend an appointment but can't get an appointment unless we register in the first place ♀ Female prisoner

The prison service has reviewed the issue and is now granting licenses. Healthwatch Staffordshire also found that new prisoners thought the health information provided to them could be better. As a result, the induction for new prisoners has been changed to make people more aware of how healthcare in prisons works and how to access support.

Healthwatch Staffordshire created another lasting impact by training 'health champions'. As well as helping fellow prisoners to navigate the healthcare system, the network of over 20 champions also collect people's experiences of care and represent others in discussions with services.

Runner up

healthwatch
Lancashire

Findings used to design new learning disabilities service

People with a learning disability tend to have poorer health and often die younger than those who do not. Healthwatch Lancashire's work to find out if health services are working for those who consider themselves to have a learning disability or autism has made a real impact.

Using a range of approaches to make sure those with limited or non-verbal communication could have their say, they engaged over 330 people. After issues were raised about the communication by services and the awareness of staff, a number of steps have been taken by the local NHS.

As well as better staff training, services are also making sure more information for patients is made available in an easy read format. The findings from the project are now also being used by the local hospital to design a new learning disabilities service.

Highly commended

Healthwatch East Sussex
Healthwatch Hampshire
Healthwatch Oxfordshire

20%

**of written
complaints to
NHS hospitals
are about poor
communications⁴**



Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

#ItStartsWithYou

Our campaign #ItStartsWithYou encourages more people to tell us what they think about the services they use, so that together we can make care better.

Thanks to individuals speaking up, services across England have already made positive changes that benefit people, their loved ones and communities. This award showcases some of the fantastic work that is taking place to make a difference.

Find out more about our campaign and share your story:

www.healthwatch.co.uk/itstartswithyou



Winner

Tony Bentley, nominated by Healthwatch County Durham

It's easier to choose a care home thanks to Tony

When a loved one's needs can't be met at home any longer, making the decision to move them into care can be stressful.

When Tony needed to find a reliable care home in Durham for his mum, he didn't realise how complicated and time-consuming it would be. Searching online he noticed many of the care homes lacked basic information, which meant he couldn't make an informed decision, especially as his mum lived in a different area.

Tony, who is also a volunteer, raised his concerns with Healthwatch County Durham. They worked together to review every local care home website to identify the barriers to finding a good care home quickly, as well as how things could be easier for the public.

Healthwatch County Durham shared the recommendations with the council and care homes in the area. Using these ideas, the council has now changed its criteria so that all care homes will have to provide up-to-date information on durhamlocate.org.uk, which is a public database of local services. This means it's more straightforward for people to find details on the cost of care, what activities are provided, as well as when families can visit.

Tony and the other volunteers have continued to review the database to make sure it's easy to use. They were also invited to help a local care home provider set up a new website based on his ideas. In the future, they hope other care homes in the area will update their websites so that people can find clear information online.

Thanks to Tony it will now be much easier to find the right care home in Durham.

Runner up

Errol Campbell, nominated by Healthwatch Bristol

Speaking up saves lives

1 in 8 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. It's especially common amongst Black and Asian men.

When a close friend died from prostate cancer, Errol made a promise to raise awareness in the Afro-Caribbean community. From churches, prisons, barber shops and even football stadiums, Errol and his organisation, Friends of Caswell Thompson, have been speaking to men regarding the issue. Errol wanted to break down the stigma of cancer and inspire men who didn't like visiting the GP to get screened early.

Working together with Healthwatch Bristol, Errol organised a number of events to provide information about the risks of prostate cancer and support for families affected. He shared his own story of being diagnosed, encouraging men in Bristol to take action.

As a result, many men came forward to be screened, and over six were diagnosed with prostate cancer. Thanks to Errol, they were diagnosed early.

Errol and his organisation continue to speak up and bring light to the issue.

Highly commended

Becky Lawley, nominated by Healthwatch Dudley

Families of Nascot Lawn, nominated by Healthwatch Hertfordshire

Sandra Bell, nominated by Healthwatch Northamptonshire



Healthwatch Network Awards 2018

Celebrating 70 years of the NHS

Across England, doctors, nurses and other professionals regularly go the extra mile to ensure the public are looked after. This year, as the NHS turns 70, we want to celebrate the health and social care staff who continuously work towards improving patient care.

Nominated by local Healthwatch, take a look at the individuals and organisations that have been recognised for their efforts putting people first.



Supporting
NHS70

Winner

Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership, nominated by Healthwatch Surrey

Putting people at the heart of care

The NHS in Surrey, in partnership with the local council, developed a plan that would improve the health and wellbeing of local people and the support delivered by services. From the beginning, they decided that they wanted an approach that was driven by the needs and wants of the community.

To ensure that this happened, Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership carried out in-depth research with the community to explore their priorities. They also set up an online panel they could use to regularly ask residents new questions about the plan developed.

As well as engaging thousands of local people, the Partnership worked closely with Healthwatch Surrey to recruit seven 'Citizen Ambassadors' to sit on the boards that would oversee the new programmes of work.

Our remit is to engage more local people, including diverse groups, and those who traditionally don't have a say, to discover what their experiences are, and to influence improvements and change. 9 Citizen Ambassador

Covering areas like emergency care and cardiovascular care, the Ambassadors are supported by their local Healthwatch to maintain their independence and maximise relationships with the local community. The partnership also made a public commitment to be open, honest and timely in their communications.

The approach taken in Surrey has not only won a national award, it is now being advocated by NHS England as a best practice for ongoing work across the NHS.

Runner up

Peartree Medical Centre, nominated by Healthwatch Derby

Helping to protect vulnerable patients

A GP surgery which serves one of the most deprived parts of Derby has been commended for going above and beyond to keep people safe.

During the winter, the surgery rang and spoke to all vulnerable patients ensuring they were safe and well. They have also worked with the local hospital to provide better tailored support to diabetic patients, for example giving talks during Ramadan to keep diabetic patients informed and safe.

The surgery continuously finds ways to listen to communities, so that the care they provide meets the needs of individuals. Whether that is providing bilingual telephone systems or reducing the need for repeat appointments, there is a drive to make a difference.

Highly commended

Dr. Knut Schroeder, GP, nominated by Healthwatch Bristol

Ann O'Brien, Integrated Commissioning Manager for people with a learning disability, nominated by Healthwatch Isle of Wight

Avery Mews Care Home and the Co-operative Childcare Nursery in Dewsbury, nominated by Healthwatch Kirklees



1. National Audit Office, Reducing Emergency Admissions, 2018.
2. Healthwatch England, What do the numbers say about emergency readmissions to hospital?, 2017.
3. Healthwatch England, What People Have Told us About Mental Health, 2018.
4. NHS Digital, Data on Written Complaints in the NHS, 2016-17.



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