



Healthwatch County Durham
Annual Report 2013/14



© Healthwatch England 2014

The text of this document (this excludes, where present, the Royal Arms and all departmental and agency logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context.

The material must be acknowledged as Healthwatch County Durham copyright and the document title specified. Where third party material has been identified, permission from the respective copyright holder must be sought.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at enquiries@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

You can download this publication from www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

Contents

- 4 County Durham: the challenges
- 5 Message from the Board of governors
- 6 About us
 - 6 Background to Healthwatch
 - 7 Corporate status
 - 7 The Board of governors
 - 8 The staff team
 - 8 Friends, Facilitators and Partners
- 9 Engagement activity
- 10 Signposting and information
- 11 Listening and gathering views
- 12 Success stories
 - 12 Dementia Project
 - 13 Jupiter House Medical Practice
 - 13 GP Telephone numbers
 - 13 Promoting 'flu jabs
- 14 Moving forwards
- 15 Finances



Since 2001 the population of County Durham has grown by 4 per cent. Changing demographics are likely to affect the scale of needs for certain health and social care services.

Life expectancy

In County Durham, males from the most affluent areas will live 8.2 years longer than those from the most deprived areas. Females in the most affluent areas will live 6.7 years longer than those in the most deprived areas.



Infant population



The number of children aged 0-4 has increased from 26,263 to 28,600 between 2001 and 2011, and there are an additional 2,300 pre-school children.

An increasingly elderly population

The proportion of County Durham's population aged 85+ is predicted to increase, doubling from 2.0% of the population to 3.9%



11,000 22,000

All figures on this page are taken from the County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2013.





One year after its establishment, the governors of Healthwatch County Durham have been looking back at the past year and planning for the years ahead.

As with any new organisation, there has been a period of 'settling in and settling down'. There have been tough moments, hard decisions to make and times when we wondered whether progress would ever be made; but also occasions when our staff and volunteers have received grateful thanks from healthcare patients, social care users and carers who have either been given exactly the information they need to make an informed choice about their health or social care, or who have simply appreciated having their voice heard.

A key priority during the year was to prepare the way for delivering a first class service for the population of County Durham. Although it took time to get it right, we believe that we now have the necessary policies and procedures in place, both to operate effectively as a responsible, credible and respected organisation (the inwards focus) and to be an effective consumer champion for health and social care consumers (the outward focus).

We were fortunate to inherit some staff from the County Durham LINK (Local Involvement Network, in some ways the predecessor equivalent to local Healthwatch) and they have been joined by skilled and enthusiastic new members to form an energetic and talented core team.

Our engagement work has quickly become bedded in; regular 'drop-in' sessions for information and signposting are held throughout the county and we are always exploring new ways to reach every corner of our very diverse population and to seek out the views of those people and groups whose voice is seldom heard.

Our stakeholder relationships are developing steadily and we will continue to make sure the consumer voice is represented in discussions and decisions at the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board, on the Adult Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with all service providers and within the two Clinical Commissioning Groups in the county. Wherever possible we work with other local Healthwatch to achieve synergy,

We look forward to reporting in a year's time on significant further progress.

A key priority during the year was to prepare the way for delivering a first class service for the population of County Durham



Healthwatch County Durham is the independent, statutory champion for consumers of health and social care services in County Durham.

We're part of a Healthwatch network

Healthwatch England is the national consumer champion in health and social care. It has significant statutory powers to ensure the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and social care services.

We have strong statutory powers

The Health and Social Care Act formalises the relationship between Healthwatch England, the Secretary of State, NHS England, Care Quality Commission, Monitor and English local authorities.

We have a unique power to advise this wide range of organisations. Our ultimate recourse is the Secretary of State. We have the power not only to report on the key issues that affect people who use services, but to expect that those in control respond to us. They don't have to agree, but they have to publicly tell us what they are going to do to respond to our advice.

Healthwatch County Durham is a member of the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board.

Healthwatch County Durham has the power to make 'Enter and View' visits to observe at first hand the provision of health and social care services - either in response to concerns, or to highlight good practice. We can report our findings publicly and escalate issues to Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission and the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Committee.

We make a difference

Healthwatch County Durham is making a difference to our community.

We do this by:

- having real influence with people who provide local services
- by helping people find the right services and give them the best possible care.



Corporate Status

Since its establishment in April 2013, Healthwatch County Durham has operated under a contract between Durham County Council ('the commissioners') and Carers Federation.

From the date of establishment, the intention has been that Healthwatch County Durham will, in due course, become an independent social enterprise. The word 'flotation' is used to describe the point in time when the Carers Federation contract is ended and Durham County Council directly commission Healthwatch County Durham.

The corporate constitution, governance and financial arrangements of the successor body are all still to be determined, although it is envisaged that Healthwatch County Durham is likely to be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The aim is for Healthwatch County Durham to achieve independence by the end of March 2015 at the latest. Working towards the 'flotation' will be a key priority for 2014/15.

Until Healthwatch County Durham becomes independent, Carers Federation is the employer of all Healthwatch County Durham staff, and holds the lease on the office premises used by Healthwatch County Durham. Carers Federation is accountable to Durham County Council for the service delivery of Healthwatch County Durham.

The Board

The Board of Governors of Healthwatch County Durham is responsible for planning the strategic direction of the service, for oversight of the operational business plan and for monitoring and reporting on progress.

The Board of Governors is responsible for preparing for the 'flotation' to an independent social enterprise and it will be supported in this by Carers Federation.

Board members (called governors)

The following founding governors were all first appointed between April and August 2013:

John Bedlington (Chair) (resigned April 2014)

Jan Burden

Betty Carr

Adrian Currie (resigned April 2014)

Ian Doyle (resigned April 2014)

Michael Flood (resigned December 2013)

Brewis Henderson (resigned April 2014)

Judith Mashiter

Jean Ramsay (resigned April 2014)

Lynn Smith (resigned March 2014)

Paul Taylor

Jim Welch

The Staff Team

Healthwatch County Durham is an organisation whose main assets are its people.

The Staff Team are the employees who put into action the strategic plan set by the Board of governors.

During 2013/14 our staff team comprised:

Joanne Scott - Development Officer

Julia Catherall - Community Participation and Engagement Worker

Kirsty Littlejohn - Administrator

Noel McMenemy - Signposting and Information Officer (p/t)

Carole Little - Community Participation and Engagement Worker (p/t)

Sue Ewington - Signposting and Information Officer (left March 2014)

Danielle Martin - Community Participation and Engagement Worker (left August 2013)



Left to right: Kirsty Littlejohn, Joanne Scott, Noel McMenemy, Carole Little and Julia Catherall.

With the help of...

We are a membership organisation and are extremely grateful for the time and skills which our volunteers contribute. During 2013/14 we decided to have three categories of Healthwatch County Durham membership:

Friends

Friends of Healthwatch County Durham sign up to receive regular updates about the work we're doing, news of forthcoming events and E-bulletins.

Facilitators

Healthwatch County Durham Facilitators are volunteers who are interested in becoming actively involved in our work. People with time to commit might participate in surveys, help at events, assist with administration, data analysis or other things.

Partners

Organisations who wish to be 'group members' of Healthwatch County Durham are called Partners. We find that there are many mutual benefits in being closely associated with other County Durham or national organisations such as those representing particular consumer or demographic groups.

At the end of 2013/14 we had

417 Friends,
49 Facilitators
324 Partners and
12 fully trained
Enter & View Authorised
Representatives



Throughout 2013/14 our staff, governors and volunteers have been actively building connections with others in the health and wellbeing sector in County Durham.

To be an effective consumer champion, Healthwatch must develop effective ways of listening to the local population's views and experiences of health and social care services.

Of equal importance, however, are the relationships we have with service providers and those who commission individuals and organisations to provide services for the local population. Only by having positive, trustworthy and constructive relationships are we able to maximise our influence in helping to achieve the very best health and social care for people in our community.

Engagement with service providers

- Derwentside Health Network
- East Durham Health Network
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys Mental Health Foundation Trust
- Dental Local Professional Network
- Pharmacy call to Action NHW England
- Learning Disability Provider Forum
- University Hospital of North Durham Patient Experience Team

Even in its first year of existence, Healthwatch County Durham has been engaging with a wide cross-section of the county's diverse and widespread population.

Engagement with commissioners and regulators

- Care Quality Commission
- Healthwatch England
- County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy Task Group
- North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group Engagement Steering Group
- North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group
- Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group
- Durham County Council

Engagement with stakeholders and partners

The full list is too long to include, here, but includes, for example:

- Alzheimer's Society
- Age UK
- dementia support groups
- stroke clubs
- social housing providers
- Durham County Carers Support
- frail and elderly engagement events
- cancer support groups
- business clubs
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender 50+ group
- schools
- young carer organisations
- travelling community.



The range of health and social care services and providers confuses many people, but we can help with navigation to the right service, in the place, at the right time for them.

Healthwatch County Durham wants to ensure that all sections of the local population in County Durham have access to good quality, impartial advice and advocacy relating to health and social care services available to them.

We provide information and support access to information for service users and their carers.

Monthly drop-in sessions

Our main information and signposting activity throughout 2013/14 has been through regular 'drop-in' points. After trialling various locations, we found the following to be effective in terms of coverage of the county, accessibility for all potential service users and popular with increasing numbers of the community: **Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Durham City, Peterlee.**

In addition to these regular sessions, our team are exploring holding sessions at hospitals and in other community locations such as supermarkets.

When a member of the public wishes to raise a formal complaint about a service, we always signpost them to Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) and offer to support them through the process.

Between November and March we made 32 referrals to ICA.

A lady called the Healthwatch office wanting information about dementia organisations in County Durham.

We signposted the caller direct to the Alzheimer's Society at Bullion Lane in Chester-le-Street.

A lady called us, wanting to be referred for urgent dental care. She was querying the referral system, as she was unclear of the process.

We listened to the details of the lady's experience and then offered to research the process for her. We called her back to let her know what her next steps might be (she had to make an appointment with her GP to get referred). During the course of our conversations, we also found out that she was entitled to free prescriptions and dental treatment.

The caller was very happy with the outcome from our signposting information service.

Between November 2013 and March 2014 we engaged with **1416 people** at various events and with a further **275 people** at our regular drop-in sessions.

“ We’re all ears. Only by listening to both positive and negative feedback can we formulate recommendations to those who plan, commission, deliver and regulate services.

To be an effective consumer champion, Healthwatch must develop effective ways of listening to the local population’s views and experiences of health and social care services.



We prompt for views and start conversations via social media. During 2013/14 we sent 583 tweets and posted 160 Facebook status updates. We have 725 followers on Twitter and 351 Likes on Facebook.



Between November 2013 and March 2014 we received, on average, 22 calls per month on our Freephone service

Sample of issues raised

- GP appointments systems
- GP charges (for administration requests)
- car parking at hospitals
- telephone number (0844) used to make GP appointments
- hygiene of toys in GP surgery waiting room
- overcrowding in waiting area at hospital eye clinic

Dementia Project

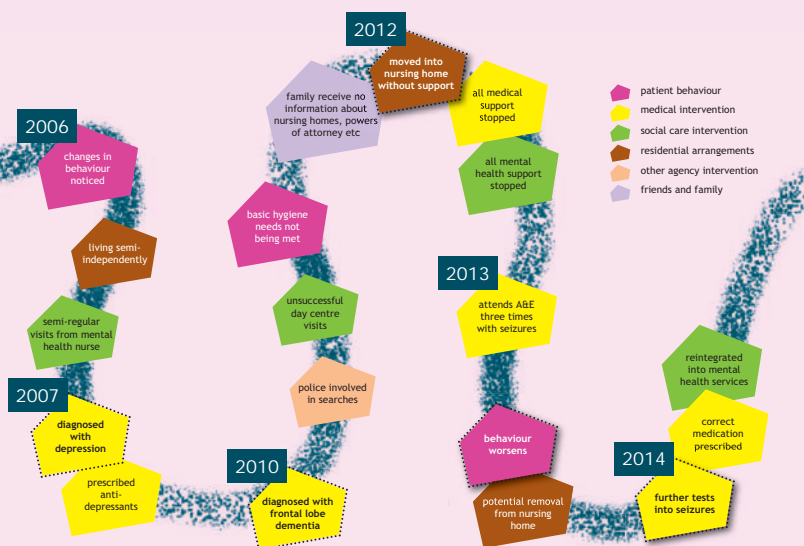
In January 2014 Healthwatch County Durham and Healthwatch Darlington were asked by their respective Clinical Commissioning Groups to collaborate on a patient journey consultation. The consultation, using case studies, was carried out directly with dementia patients, their families and carers across the two Healthwatch areas.

The main purpose of the study was to collect the views, opinions and experiences of dementia patients, their families and carers in order to influence the County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy 2014-2017. The commissioner of the project was also interested to learn of any gaps which were identified in current provision.

Staff found the topic of dementia to be very emotional; listening to some of the experiences of dementia patients was quite harrowing.

The case studies highlighted the trials and tribulations some carers face on a daily basis. Some aspects of services were excellent, but several areas for improvement were identified. The biggest unmet need was for information about who to contact for help and advice, particularly if the patient or carer suddenly finds themselves unable to cope. The report suggested that these are the things that could make the difference between someone having 'a tough time' and needing a hospital admission.

'Timelines' were used to illustrate the fluctuations in care needs of dementia patients



Key recommendations:

Enhanced signposting and information • Personlisation of dementia services • Dementia awareness raising • Increased range of support • Joined-up service delivery

Jupiter House Medical Practice

Following notification of the changes to the service at Jupiter House GP Surgery in Peterlee, Healthwatch County Durham made contact with the Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG to highlight issues with the proposed communication with patients. We suggested improvements to the letters advising patients about the changes, making them more consumer-friendly. We also requested that the Healthwatch County Durham freephone number was included in the letter, inviting patients to contact us direct with any queries or concerns. The NHS team responsible for the communications was impressed by the speed of the Healthwatch response and was grateful for our input to the process.

GP Telephone Numbers

Following comments collected from the public, a suggestion was made in September 2013 that Healthwatch County Durham should investigate whether any of the GP surgeries within County Durham were using 'premium rate' telephone numbers as the only, or main advertised, means of patients contacting them. Out of 69 GP practices, 12 surgeries were found to be using 0844 numbers, and from listening to how this was impacting negatively on local people, Healthwatch decided to investigate and a full report was submitted to both CCGs. As a direct response, all 12 GP surgeries committed to reverting back to using a local, geographic, number. We were pleased to have helped making contact with their GP more accessible for patients.

Promoting 'flu jabs

Through our public engagement activity we learned that there were mis-communications surrounding eligibility for 'flu jabs. This resulted in many carers being unsure about their entitlement to vaccination. Healthwatch raised the issue with the two CCGs and the service providers and then publicised and promoted the fact that all carers are entitled to receive 'flu vaccination.



We're changing gear for 2014/15. It will be a key year as we become an independent social enterprise and as we become increasingly effective as a consumer champion.

There will be three strands to our work:



We'll listen

We will listen to patients of health services and users of social care services to find out what they think of the services they receive.

We're planning a wide-ranging programme of engagement activities to ensure that we reach all corners of the county and all sectors of the local population. We will put great effort into reaching those people who are usually least heard, rather than only listening to those who shout the loudest.



We'll advise

We will advise people how to get the best health and social care for themselves and their family.

We'll provide help and information about all aspects of health and social care provision in the county. We will offer to signpost people to what's available, help them make the best choice and offer help and support if they experience any problems.



We'll speak up

On consumers' behalf we will speak with those who provide health and social care services. Wherever possible we'll try to work in partnership with providers to influence service provision at the design stage, or to make improvements to what is provided; as a last resort we will invoke the statutory legal powers we have. Service providers have a legal duty to listen to Healthwatch and take heed of the evidence we collect.



Healthwatch County Durham is commissioned by Durham County Council. In 2013/14 it cost 43p per head of the county's population to fund our statutory activities.

In safe hands

Whilst Healthwatch County Durham is being operated under contract to Carers Federation, the majority of expenditure is handled through its central finance department, with oversight by the local Board of governors.

By the nature of the organisation's objectives and its work as champion for health and social care consumers, a high proportion of the annual costs relate to staff costs and the facilities associated with operating the staff team.

The current Board of governors is working towards being an independent social enterprise (see page 7); when this point is reached, the financial management for all aspects of operating Healthwatch County Durham will pass to the Board of governors.

As commissioners of Healthwatch County Durham, Durham County Council maintain a close relationship with those who deliver the service, and hold them to account for the expenditure of public money.

	2013/14				2014/15
Income					
	Core grant	Other income			
Core contract	£209,195				
Dementia project		£2,938			
Efficiency savings		£4,047			
Total income			£216,180		
Expenditure					
Management and staff salaries			£124,938		
Training and other expenses - staff, board and volunteers			£13,403		
Operational costs - ICT, telephony, printing, stationery, accommodation, insurance etc			£29,744		
Marketing and publicity			£4,815		
Activities - signposting and information, engagement, meetings			£2,523		
Total expenditure				£175,423	
Carried forward to 2014/15					£40,757



Healthwatch County Durham

The Work Place, Heighington Lane
Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe
County Durham DL5 6AH

Tel 01325 375 960

enquiries@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk
www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk