

Annual report 2019-20

Guided by you

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Message from our chairman

"Healthwatch would be nothing without it`s volunteers. We couldn`t carry out the much-needed work without them, thank you."



Hello everyone,

It`s hard to believe another year has gone by since I last wrote about Healthwatch Hartlepool.

To be honest it`s been an incredibly challenging but successful year that at times has been tinged with some disappointment and sadness.

One of our key successes has been around our sustainability. Through partnership working, across the region, we have brought additional funds into Healthwatch Hartlepool, but this collaborative work adds a new dimension to our work. One of these major pieces of work was around the published NHS Long term plan and we received the most responses to surveys we have ever received, which demonstrates its significant importance to the residents of Hartlepool.

We also worked on the reconfiguration of the sub region`s Clinical Commissioning Groups, held workshops around wellbeing and worked incredibly hard on developing a new sensory strategy for Hartlepool. Once again thanks to Christopher, our Chief Executive, for seizing these opportunities to expand the work & role of Healthwatch Hartlepool and to all the team for their organisational skills.

I can report we are very healthy financially speaking. We can make economies of scale by judicious buying and prudent money management. Long may it continue.

I must thank all the Board members who give their time unstintingly and are always there to help when needed. One of our Board members, Margaret is also Chairman of the Volunteer Steering Group carries out a dual role and, of course, has double responsibilities and work.

My sincere thanks go to the management team whose roles get wider every year and will need to adapt accordingly in the challenging times that lie ahead for most charitable organisations.

Sadly, I must also report that Healthwatch Hartlepool was devastated to lose our highly respected Board member Ruby Marshall MBE. Our Board, staff and volunteers are deeply saddened at the tragic loss of Ruby to COVID19. Ruby was our inspiration and a highly respected member across the whole of Hartlepool and region.

I cannot speak highly enough just what a remarkable and dedicated woman Ruby was. She made a huge difference both during her career, in Social Care, and in retirement to the most vulnerable families in our community. For us she was our constant in all that we do. Her work with Healthwatch Hartlepool, Hartlepool Carers, the Council and Hartlepool & District Hospice helped shape the health and social care system in our town, providing a lasting legacy for everyone. For us Ruby was not just a member of our Board. The directors, staff and volunteers have lost a dear friend who was loved and admired by everyone.

Finally, I must recognise that the coming months will need a huge amount of work to reshape our work programme to meet our statutory requirements in the new world we face post pandemic. I am confident we have the strength of will, the skills and competencies we need across our Board, staff & volunteers to continue our successful path in influencing Health & Social Care in Hartlepool. I look forward to seeing you all at our Annual General Meeting later in the year.

Jane Tilly - Healthwatch Hartlepool Chairman

Our priorities

Last year we engaged with over 1400 people about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20. These were our six priorities for the year based on what you told us.



The NHS 10 Year Plan



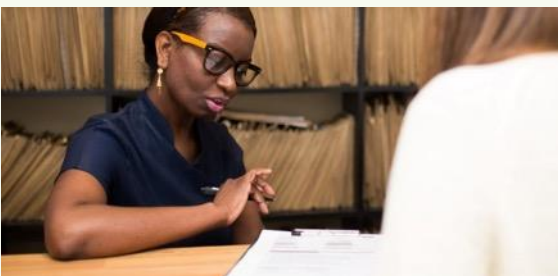
Mental Health



Loneliness & Isolation



Sensory Loss



Nursing & Residential Care



Audiology

About us

Here to make care better

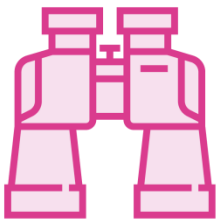
The network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan shows the power of the Healthwatch network in giving people that find it hardest to be heard a chance to speak up. The #WhatWouldYouDo campaign saw national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented locally. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review – sparking a national review of patient transport from NHS England.

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local Healthwatch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level.

Sir Robert Francis, Healthwatch England Chair





Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you.
People want health and social care support that works – helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



Our approach

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.
We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations



Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Facebook: @HealthwatchHartlepool

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.



Health and care that works for you



30+ volunteers

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up over 500 days for our work.

We employed

4 staff

none of whom are full time, which is exactly the same as last year.

We received

£116,150 in funding

from Hartlepool Council in 2019-20, exactly the same as the previous year.

Providing support



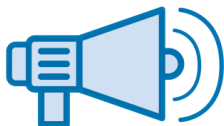
1455 people

shared their health and social care story with us, 25% more than last year.

12 people

accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support, no more than last year.

Reaching out



58% people

engaged with us through our website, 1975 people engaged with us through social media, and 1455 people engaged with us at community events.

Making a difference to care



We published

8 reports

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care, and from this, we made 23 recommendations for improvement.

How we've made a difference



Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.

Take a look at how your views have helped make a difference to the care and support people receive in 2020.

Developing a Sensory Impairment Joint Plan for Hartlepool

It is without doubt that Sensory Impairment in all its forms has a significant impact on individual health and wellbeing especially for older people.

The Office for National Statistics estimates that in Hartlepool there are –

17,472 people with vision loss
16,500 Deaf and deafened people
520 Dual sensory impaired people.

Sensory impairment or being Deaf has a significant impact on various aspects of daily life including mobility, access to information and communication. There is also an increased risk of social isolation and poorer physical and mental wellbeing.

Healthwatch Hartlepool and the Hartlepool Deaf Centre consulted with local Deaf people and the subsequent report highlighted various areas in which the experiences of Deaf people attempting to access health care and other local services was poor and consequently a pressing need for services to improve accessibility and overall patient/service user experience for Deaf people was identified.



Our findings were presented at the Hartlepool Health and Wellbeing Board and all recommendations were endorsed. Our findings strongly influenced Hartlepool Borough Council to commission the development of a town wide Sensory Loss Plan and a working group was set up to drive the initiative forward. The group was made up of the partner organisations which included –

- Healthwatch Hartlepool
- Hartlepool Vision Support
- Hartlepool Deaf Centre
- Hartlepool Carers
- Hi-Vis UK
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

The Group was coordinated and Chaired by Hi -Vis UK, a locally based national charity, and Healthwatch Hartlepool played a key part in shaping the direction and activity of the group.

This included contributing to the analysis and assessment of findings, engaging with and involving local commissioners and getting the conversation going locally regarding sensory loss and mental health.

“The collaboration, expertise and support of Healthwatch Hartlepool has been a critical factor in achieving this progress in such vital work in Hartlepool. They will be key in the next phase” Bernard Quinn – Director Hi – Vis UK and Coordinator of the Local Sensory Impairment Joint Plan Group.

Healthwatch Hartlepool and other Local Sensory Impairment Group Partners have listened to the lived experiences of Hartlepool residents who said that having a sensory impairment or being Deaf in Hartlepool means –

- You face challenges that affect your mobility, access to information and experience of communication with health services and other organisations.
- There is little awareness of sensory impairment or of being a Deaf person amongst service providers.
- Information is often not made accessible e.g. small text, no audio, no sign language.
- Poor evening bus provision and limited accessible taxi services limits what you can do, so you do less.
- People don't know how to communicate with you, it's frustrating and worse.
- You find yourself isolated and it can affect your mental and physical wellbeing.

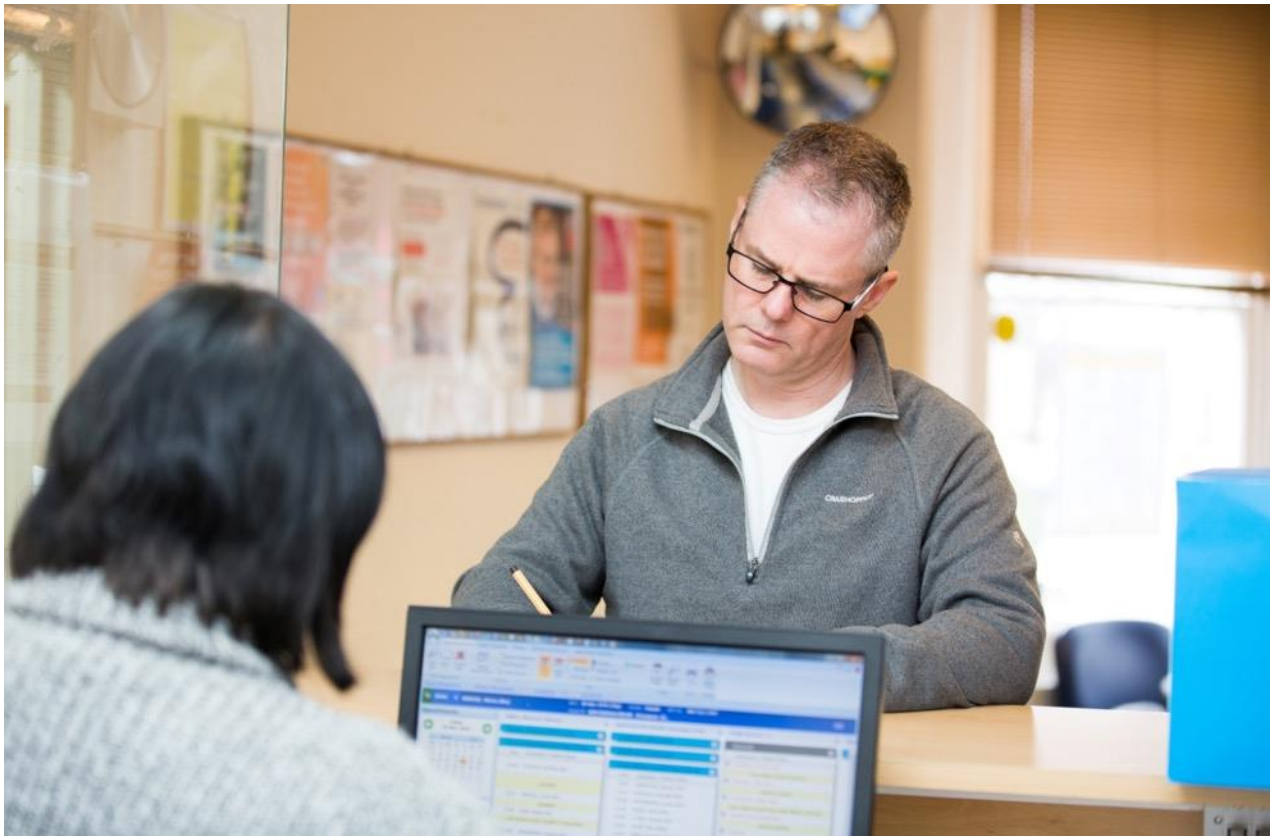
Consequently, key partners, including health providers and Hartlepool Borough Council have recognised the need to do much more to make Hartlepool a sensory and Deaf friendly town and as part of the strategy commitments will –

- Work with local sensory support organisations to maintain and co – develop the plan going forward.
- Work to develop the sensory skills and knowledge of health and care service workers.
- Increase the number of people identified and supported with sensory impairment.
- Raise town wide Sensory Awareness and Deaf Awareness.
- Improve access to learning, leisure and fitness facilities and opportunities.
- Improve access to information and hiring of interpreters in health and care services.

“The extent of the work undertaken by the Sensory Loss Strategy Group over the last year would not have been possible without the support of Healthwatch Hartlepool and we will continue to work with them and our local sensory support organisations to monitor and co-develop our plans going forward.”

Neil Harrison – Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services – Hartlepool Borough Council

Healthwatch Hartlepool is proud to have played a leading role in the development of the town-wide Sensory Impairment Joint Plan and in identifying key areas of improvement, which will make health and care services more accessible to Hartlepool residents who live with sensory loss.



Hartlepool Mental Health Forum

Healthwatch plays an active role in the Forum, with our Mental Health representative, Zoe Sherry, being the current chairman.

The terms of reference state that the purpose of the Forum is to provide a forum for people who use / have an interest in, mental health services and people who deliver services to meet and promote partnership work across the Borough of Hartlepool. The aim is to promote collaborative working across statutory, private and third sector organisations in partnership with people who use services, their carers and families.

At the present time the forum meets on a quarterly basis. Each meeting is used to update information, legislation and local activities, each attendee having time to speak about their own services and present activities.

This is a good forum to gain and exchange knowledge and information. The number of attendees varies between 15 and 30 people

Though the forum promotes and communicates information around mental health issues it also holds an annual event. 10th October 2019 saw our fourth "Strictly Mental Health" event once again held on World Mental Health Day.

Our annual event is used to promote good mental health and is a welcoming atmosphere for all people. We host a variety of activities and entertainment and refreshments as well as a range of stalls promoting services and offering advice and support.

This year's event was very well attended and supported by local companies, agencies and local people including Healthwatch volunteers. This enabled the event to be free to all and attracted over 250 participants.

Work has already begun on preparing for the 2020 event which will be reported as plans progress. Several of last year's stall holders have already requested a place next year.

Overall the Mental Health Forum is well supported by Hartlepool Healthwatch and Hartlepool Borough Council and we shall adapt to the foreseeable difficulties post Covid19. Throughout 2019 the Forum met regularly with guest speakers on relevant topics. The Forum also acts in a consultative role for the Teesside Crisis Concordat as well as Hartlepool Borough Council.

 *"The Forum ensures that the people of Hartlepool are widely represented and keeps people informed and aware of changes both to legislation and services delivered locally.*

**- Zoe Sherry Mental Health lead
Healthwatch Hartlepool**

"Healthwatch Hartlepool continues to make a valuable contribution to the work of Adult & Community Based Services through a range of mechanisms including the Mental Health Forum and the Tees Safeguarding Adults Board; helping to bring a different perspective to the work of statutory agencies.

Over the past year, consultation has been undertaken in partnership between the Council and Healthwatch Hartlepool to understand the priorities and aspirations of young people as they move into adulthood, with a particular focus on health and social care.

Healthwatch Hartlepool also supported a piece of work with the Council and Inclusion North to review and relaunch the Learning Disability Partnership Board, identifying key themes to be explored and supporting meaningful engagement with adults with learning disabilities.

Work to review hospital discharge arrangements has continued over the past year, and two workshops have been held looking at pathways for people returning home following a hospital stay and access to rehabilitation or 24 hour care settings."

**- Jill Harrison
Director Of Adults and Community
Based Services**

"Healthwatch has continued its commitment to the Hartlepool Health and Wellbeing Board during 2019/20, further strengthening the excellent working relationships it has created with all those involved. The organisation has demonstrated its great commitment and passion for the improvement of health and social care services throughout Hartlepool, with its continuing investigation of issues of local concern.

Healthwatch members have attended all meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board and contributed to the wide and varied agenda items that have been discussed involving work across all life stages. Their valuable contribution to the discussion has brought the experience of those who use primary, community and acute services health and care services to enrich the work of the local partnership.

The Health and Wellbeing Board would like to pay particular tribute to the commitment and contribution of Ruby Marshall, a Healthwatch representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board who sadly died earlier this year. Ruby was an excellent ambassador for Healthwatch and gave willingly of her time and expertise to improve the quality of local public services.

The Health and Wellbeing Board thanks Healthwatch for its input and support over the last 12 months and looks forward to working together to help the people of Hartlepool in the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and beyond."

**- Craig Blundred
Deputy Director Of Public Health**



Proposals for new clinical commissioning groups for Tees Valley and Durham CCG's

In 2018, NHS England and NHS Improvement told CCG's that they would be reducing their administration costs by 20% by 31 March 2020. In turn, they asked all CCGs to reduce their own running costs by 20% in the same timescale.

Whilst the reduction does not apply to the health services that they commission (and therefore will not affect frontline patient services), it does apply to CCG staffing arrangements.

CCGs aimed to take a more streamlined approach to commissioning and simplify their governance arrangements. The new organisations are intended to be more efficient, saving money from management to direct towards patient care and able to support their health and care partners in improving local people's health and the services they use, and implementing the NHS Long Term Plan.

It was imperative that they keep their current local arrangements for engaging with people and health professionals in

the places where they live and work and look for opportunities to improve that engagement, so that they stay in touch with, and take account of, local needs. If supported by CCG Governing Bodies and by NHS England, the new CCGs would be created on 1 April 2020, following the dissolution of the existing ones.

The County Durham and Tees Valley CCGs approached Healthwatch Hartlepool to help gather the views of local people during July 2019. These views were considered and presented to the five CCG Governing Bodies to help them decide on a proposal to create new CCGs.

Between them, the CCGs plan, buy and monitor (commission) local health services for a population of over 1.2 million people. CCGs work to improve population health, by tackling health inequalities, to improve life expectancy and the quality of life and to ensure local people can get the services they need when they are unwell.

They are membership organisations, with local family doctors (GP practices) as their members.

Responsible for commissioning most hospital and healthcare services in the local area, CCGs are regulated by NHS England and are accountable to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The types of services commissioned by CCGs include:

- planned hospital care
- rehabilitative care
- urgent and emergency care (including out-of-hours and NHS 111)
- most community health services
- mental health services
- learning disability and/or autism services

The CCGs provided information and questions including a slide set for Healthwatch Hartlepool to use to engage with the public. The questions included:

1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?
2. What benefits could you see from CCGs merging?
3. What concerns do you have about a CCG merging?
4. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us, or any questions which have not been answered?

The questions were uploaded to SurveyMonkey to ensure everyone could access the survey online as well as upload hard copy questionnaires from each area.

Through our outreach activity and events, we helped communities to receive and understand information about the proposals and to gather people's views. Healthwatch Darlington collated the engagement information from all 6 local Healthwatch organisations and the online survey to produce the final report presented to the CCGs.

Healthwatch Hartlepool proactively championed ethical behaviour and reflected and applied their organisational values in all activity they undertook, in addition to meeting their legal and regulatory requirements.

We used our local knowledge to focus on particular groups to ensure they included ages, gender and other variables that could have affected the engagement methods.

Healthwatch Hartlepool gathered feedback across the borough during our everyday patient & public engagement activities due to the tight timescales. These included social media as well as outreach activities including community events, groups and meetings.

We had 61 respondents across our CCG area out of a total of 305 across all 5 previous CCGs. When asked about the benefits respondents could see from CCGs merging there were varying responses.

"Cost saving" was deemed the most important with a particular emphasis on the "cost efficiency" benefit as well as "economies of scale", "less duplication of bureaucratic departments" and "less chance of communication hiccups". A common theme of opinion was regarding the "increased commissioning power" and a "more streamlined management arrangement". Responses also recognised that this approach could provide the opportunity to "service provision across a patch that is coterminous to the hospitals that patients can access in this area".

Some people were not so sure and questioned whether there will be a fairer pricing structure in future as they currently believe that CCGs in different areas pay different amounts for the same service. Others expressed concern about "job losses" and "having to travel for vital services" e.g. A & E services. One individual voiced their unease regarding redundancies: "How many will be made redundant and brought back again?" Whilst 8% of responses felt there will be no benefit whatsoever and the "local focus will be lost" in another "cost cutting exercise".

When asked about the concerns residents have about the CCGs merger the main themes across the Tees Valley and Durham CCG areas are as follows in order of importance and were completed by all 305 respondents:

1. Loss of local connections and needs 37%
2. The organisation will be too big 12%
3. Making people unemployed will lead to loss of expertise 10.5%
4. Loss of budget for local needs 7%
5. No concerns 7%
6. Worse services/reduction in frontline services 5%
7. Less staff/less effective 4%
8. Would all areas have equal status in decision making? 4%
9. Having to travel further/rural issue concerns 4%
10. Lack of local accountability 3%
11. Reduced patient participation/no voice 2%
12. In house fighting – who will they report to? 1%
13. Is it cost cutting for privatisation? 1%
14. More difficult to influence 1%
15. Public accountability at zero 0.5%
16. Re-inventing the wheel 0.5%
17. Health and Social Care should be joined up 0.5%

Some specific comments were made within our own CCG area:

 *"Would some smaller areas i.e. Hartlepool and Darlington, get overlooked in planning. How will Hartlepool be appropriately represented as a town in its own right?"*

"Becoming too strategic, focusing too much on beyond the area than within it. Need to ensure that existing local patches are not lost if there is a merger of existing CCGs."

Each household should know, without asking, that it has parity of access and parity of quality in the health services it requests.

Governance at a micro level could be either over done or under done and it is important to do neither - perhaps by ensuring each and every resident in the area has improved access to the powers that be in terms of meaningful feedback and engagement - NOT tokenistic friends and family forms.

Individual Practice Managers feeling a loss of control and overreacting to try and gain that back. At the best of times, these folks are individuals to be reckoned with: very few of them understand the impact and consequences of their actions and rules and when made aware of them very few listen and learn"

As agreed, the views were considered when presented to the Governing Bodies to help them decide on the proposal to create the new CCGs that came into force 1st April 2020.

Healthwatch Hartlepool are already reviewing the impact of the research findings by keeping positive and collaborative working relationships with our CCG.

Our Chief Executive & Chair of our Volunteer steering Group has requested to keep our current locality meetings in Hartlepool and requested ongoing dialogue with our newly appointed lay member for Patient & Public Involvement.

We expect communications to be released on a regular basis from the CCGs in order for it to be fed back to the relevant parties involved including participants and the general public.

The new CCGs have now been fully implemented and our area's accountable officer has said:

"Working together as two closely linked CCGs will help us to make the best use of our resources, leading to improvements in health and healthcare services."

"We are working together to efficiently commission high quality services which are equally available to all residents across County Durham and Tees Valley."

"Over the last few months, we have been seeking views from patients, staff and partners on these plans. Our close relationship with Healthwatch, local authorities and our patient groups has helped to ensure the voice of local people is heard."

The benefits of working across a larger population base with a shared management resource are already being realised and will continue to grow under the new arrangements.

This includes:

- Improvements to the quality of health and care services provided for local people
- Simplified decision-making process working to one agenda with shared meetings
- Cost savings and efficiencies
- Further opportunities for partnership approaches, aligning health and wellbeing priorities which support the needs of local people.

- Consistent approach to working with Primary Care Networks to deliver greater local clinical leadership and improved health
- Improving the quality and safety of our services by reducing variation and standardising pathways

The new CCGs will retain a focus on localities and their specific needs. This will be driven by the Governing Bodies, which will continue to have representation from the current localities, including GP practices, lay membership for public and patient involvement, local clinical leaders and senior managers.



Share your views with us

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.

Website: www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Telephone: 01429 288146

Email: yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Long Term Plan

[#WhatWouldYouDo](#)

Highlights



More than 40,000 people shared their views nationally with Healthwatch.



Our network held over 500 focus groups reaching different communities across England.



Healthwatch attended almost 1,000 community events.

NHS Long Term Plan

Following a commitment from the Government to increase investment in the NHS, the NHS published the 'Long Term Plan' in January 2019, setting out its' key ambitions over the next 10 years. Healthwatch launched a countrywide campaign to give people a say in how the plan should be implemented in their communities. Here's a summary of our own work in Hartlepool and what we found. Working with Healthwatch Darlington we asked people #WhatWouldYouDo to improve the NHS locally. The top issues that people told us they wanted services to focus on is:

- Lack of access and appointments for GP's
- Choosing the right treatment is a joint decision between the patient and the relevant health and care professional
- Travel and transport issues are a barrier to accessing care
- Life Expectancy and Mortality Rates

Healthwatch Hartlepool has ensured that all our key stakeholders including system leaders, received our findings via our website and meetings. We will also ensure that any future significant public-facing communications, not just our final report, are shared with the Integrated Care System and Integrated Care Partnerships.

This will give them a chance to factor it into their own communications and engagement activity as this is an important part of maintaining an open and positive relationship.

The comments and views that have been shared with us will, joined with other information we have received, help to inform the selection of our own research priorities ensuring that we are focussing on the things that matter to patients, service users, relatives and carers and the public across Hartlepool. Healthwatch Hartlepool will consider the findings when developing this year's revised work programme.

Healthwatch Hartlepool will work collaboratively with the CCG, Hospital Trusts, Health Scrutiny and the Health & Wellbeing Board to ensure that these findings influence the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan in our area.

We will be ensuring that any information fed directly to Healthwatch England from NHS England is also monitored so that we know what is happening at a national level as well as at a local and regional level. We expect communications to be released on a regular basis from NHS England in order for it to be fed back to the relevant parties involved, including participants and the general public.

Our full report can be viewed on our website www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk or by contacting our office where you can be provided with a copy.



"I would like to see a GP (preferably of my choice) when I need to – right now that's nigh on impossible for me! Can't even book appointment weeks in advance and 'on the day' they're taken!" – Hartlepool resident

"I would say the older you get the more you need to feel that care is readily available, a lot of older people feel they are lost in the system. I understand there is limited funds throughout the NHS and I feel strongly that with the pension age rising the charities are having to shoulder the burden of age care"
– Hartlepool resident

Helping you find the answers



Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.

This year we helped over 1000 people get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people's queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.

Here are some of the areas that people asked about:

Where can I access help in relation to my Mental Health?

What help is available for people with hearing loss?

What can be done to tackle loneliness & isolation across the town?

Why is it still difficult to access GP appointments in Hartlepool?



Living With & Beyond Cancer

Last year we reported that we were involved in a piece of work around the emotive subject of cancer care. Healthwatch Hartlepool entered into a partnership with Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees who had secured funding from the Northern Cancer Alliance to link up clinical teams with the Voluntary & Community Sector to improve the quality of life for those 'Living With & Beyond Cancer' across the Tees Valley.

Our aim was to ensure patients receive constant support and advice for any concerns they might have relating to finance or welfare, mental health, physical wellbeing, housing, loneliness and practical issues.

5 events were held across the Tees Valley area including Hartlepool. 57% of all attendees rated the events excellent and the remainder rated the events as good. Over 85% of the attendees felt 'more confident' about accessing relevant services.

"So useful to people concerned who don't know who to turn to"

Just over 50% of attendees said they were planning a life-style change following the events and 86% of attendees left feeling more confident in managing their own health & wellbeing.

All events attracted a multitude of partner agencies with trade stands and almost 60% of attendees said they plan to directly contact an organisation present following the events. 86% also said what they had learned will be useful to them going forward.

We felt the events were incredibly worthwhile and it is pleasing to report that 100% of attendees said that they will share what they had learned with family & friends.



Audiology Awareness

Healthwatch Hartlepool continues to work collaboratively with North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. This, together with our continued partnership with Hartlepool Deaf Centre and Hartlepool Carers allowed us to host an incredibly successful event with the hospital's audiology team. Residents of Hartlepool were given the opportunity to find out first-hand about types of hearing loss, hearing tests and hearing aids.

Attendees from the event praised highly the two knowledgeable speakers Conor Boland, Senior Audiologist and Sue Kitching, Audiology Team Lead. Only through our excellent partnership with the Hospital Trust were we able to secure our speakers and we have now developed a new partnership to hold further events promoting awareness of nutrition and dietetics as well as two separate events focusing on women's and men's health.

Feedback from the event was some of the very best we have ever received.

"Lovely event. Speakers were very clear and knowledgeable."

"Brilliant event, great guest speakers, very informative."

"This was a very enjoyable meeting, as well as being very informative, it was quite enlightening too, as I am a hearing aid wearer."



Mental Health Support

No matter how much patient & public engagement we undertake people continue to phone us and ask for information about mental health services they could go to for support. We wanted to make it easier for people to find the information they need. We created a specific advice leaflet for Healthwatch Hartlepool covering all support available across Hartlepool. We also utilise the leaflet to promote the fact we are here to listen and welcome new members. We promote the fact that getting together, talking and listening is such a good way to meet new people and make a difference. Our Mental Health lead member and Development Officer Stephen Thomas attended a National Conference in London by NHS England and our literature was praised as an example of good practice.



Working with the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICA)

20% of all complaints ICA deal with come from Hartlepool through our collaboration and drop-in service. Last year we were approached by a mother who had taken her child to a GP with severe stomach pains. After the child was examined, he was told to go home with some medication. The following day the child was taken to urgent care and immediately admitted to hospital. The child, it turned out, had an abscess on the stomach lining that had burst and subsequently caused the appendix to burst. The mother was extremely unhappy with the misdiagnosis and we referred her to ICA to make the formal complaint.



North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy has a very valuable partnership with Healthwatch Hartlepool. The working relationship includes regular outreach appointments and joint working to support Hartlepool residents who may wish to raise concerns around their NHS treatment and care. We are pleased to congratulate Healthwatch Hartlepool on another productive year and look forward to continuing to support the Team going forward"

Philip Kerr – Contracts Manager Independent Complaints Advocacy North East

Quality Account of North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust

Every year Healthwatch Hartlepool is invited to comment on the Trust's Quality Account. This year we wanted to influence the draft quality account before publication and ask that our thoughts be articulated in the priorities.

We commented on patient safety and patient experience. We asked for a greater focus around safeguarding, in particular those relating to deprivation of liberty.

For patient experience we raised our concerns around transport and accessibility focusing on a request for the Trust to adhere to the requirements of the Equality act 2010.

Other considerations related to better communication and the provision of information leaflets in alternate, accessible formats in a timely manner. It was confirmed that our comments and suggestions were warmly received and included.



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or 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.

Website: www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Telephone: 01429 288146

Email: yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Volunteers



At Healthwatch Hartlepool we are supported by over 20 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what people would like to improve, to services in their communities.

This year our volunteers:

- Raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community and with health and care services.
- Visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support.
- Helped support our day-to-day running.
- Listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.

Volunteers improve Health & Social Care services for residents.

Thanks to the hard work of a group of volunteers, instrumental changes have been made to nursing & residential care and the patient experience in hospitals.

Our volunteers conducted 9 visits to premises across Hartlepool and wards. 8 of the 9 were published within our reporting year and are available on our website. In total we made 23 recommendations for improvement. We spoke to both patients and staff to identify examples of good practice and better understand how dignity is being respected. We also do this by observing the nature and delivery of services. It is important that we capture the experience of patients and relatives and document any ideas they have for change.

We visited, Wynyard Woods Care Home, De Bruce Court Care Home, Seymour House Mental Health Nursing Home, Clifton House Residential Care Home, Brierton Lodge Care Home, Warrior Park Care Home, the Emergency Assessment unit of the University Hospital of North Tees and wards 29 & 36 of the same hospital.

Our volunteers wrote reports following each visit letting those in charge know what needed to improve and raising concerns about such things as:

- Picture menus to be made available for residents living with dementia and crockery relative to dementia needs is used
- Hand sanitation stations to be replenished immediately when empty
- Residents should have an appointed activities coordinator to keep their minds and body both active and busy
- Consider laundry assistants to allow carers more time to spend with residents
- Care & Nursing homes to alert Healthwatch Hartlepool when problems occur in the safe discharge of residents from hospital
- Wheelchair accessible toileting and showering facilities to be introduced at Ward 29
- Hospital cabinets to be always lockable to protect patients' possessions
- Improved signage in hospitals and better means of communication particularly around ward transfers



We also commented when we observed good practice and praised relevant staff and service providers. In response to our concerns the hospital trust and local providers of social care agreed to implement the above recommendations as part of their improvement plans.

With our volunteers' help, we are diligently keeping an eye on what people think of health & social care services accessed by Hartlepool residents. We have been instrumental in working with those in charge to make sure people's views inform changes.

The 'Together' Project – Tackling loneliness and isolation has been a concern of Healthwatch Hartlepool for a considerable length of time. Led by our Older Person's lead member Carol Sherwood we wanted to reach out to residents across the town who may of:

- Just moved to Hartlepool
- Have children that have flown the nest
- Recently retired
- Taken maternity leave or career break
- Simply felt alone or isolated

We were aware that it is not just the elderly that can feel alone and isolated. We launched the project initially by inviting residents to an 'afternoon tea' in the community and promoted, informally the wide range of activities that are available across Hartlepool.

We sourced all the materials through closer working with the Hartlepool Community Hubs. We then promoted the official launch of the new creative hub in Hartlepool 'The BIS' that offers workshops, classes, coffee mornings and so much more.

Finally, we promoted a drop-in event at Hartlepool's Central Community Hub and offered free transport to attendees.

Unfortunately, we were slightly disappointed with the number of respondents but in our reporting back to the Council and CCG we were reassured that any interaction was a positive one for the individuals concerned.

For this reason, we have now partnered with the Community Hubs in Hartlepool and over the next year will be scheduling a series of events that we can jointly promote and hopefully reach even more residents who feel isolated.



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at Healthwatch Hartlepool.

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Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear what they get up to.

Zoe Sherry – Mental Health lead member

I have been a volunteer at Hartlepool Healthwatch for approximately 10 years. At the present time I am the Mental Health lead member, and this has allowed me to be a member of the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Trust 'Fundamental Standards, Patient & Carer Reference Group.

Our role as a reference group has been to support the Trust's Quality and Assurance Committee in ensuring services are safe, providing high quality care and continuously improving. I also act as a conduit to feedback from service users and carers groups. The role also included carrying out visits to Trust locations to speak to patients and any relatives about their experience of the care and treatment they receive and identify any breaches of the Fundamental Standards.

Within Healthwatch Hartlepool I enjoy 'enter & view' visits, working on projects, and the opportunity to interact and support many people. It is a worthwhile use of my time and I enjoy using my skills and being trained in new ones including relevant legislation and being informed about the local community and available public services. It is rewarding to be part of a team and help to inform and support people with concerns or issues that are related to all aspects of health and social care.

Margaret Wrenn – Chair Volunteer Steering Group

I have spent all my working life in one or other of the branches of nursing, so when I retired I felt that I would be able to use the expertise I had gained, and that is why I volunteer for Healthwatch Hartlepool. Our work proceeded as normal throughout the year, and we continued with our visits to Nursing & Care Homes and our Hospital Trust.

Hospital discharge was very much to the fore this year, and there were still problems with patients being discharged early in the morning, late in the evening or overnight. We are assured that this is being dealt with, but we are still monitoring the situation, and still need the public to keep us informed if it continues to happen.



Our attendance at our Locality CCG meetings continued also, with us asking pertinent questions that had been brought to us by the public, about various problems they were encountering with their own GP practices, particularly around getting an appointment. This is not only a local problem but is being flagged up around the Country and the GP practices in the Town are doing their best to find a way around the ongoing problem!

Another problem brought to our attention, was regarding the availability of the ear-syringing service. This service was patchy to say the least, and the Audiology department staff were having great difficulty in carrying out audiology tests on those patients with ear-wax or were unable to carry out the test at all. After raising this with the CCG the outcome of this problem was that more practice nurses are now accessing up-to-date training to enable them to carry out the service at most of the practices in the Town.

The members of the deaf community were also having their own problems, with the difficulty in obtaining British Sign Language (BSL) translators to help them when accessing appointments at GP surgeries and Hospital departments. As this is their "First language" it was imperative that they were able to access the service as and when necessary. To this end, a collaborative approach was taken in raising awareness of the problem by the Deaf Community and Healthwatch Hartlepool. The resulting report was produced and presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Later in the year, information was given to Healthwatch regarding the treatment of a 96 year old gentleman who was admitted to ward 29 at North Tees Hospital from his Care Home, suffering from Pneumonia. His relatives kept a diary of his stay on the ward, and unfortunately it threw up several safeguarding issues. His hygiene needs were not being dealt with satisfactorily. Getting information about him was extremely difficult. He was left in tears with pain, and the relatives had to intervene to get anyone to help him. He was left with a badly swollen arm where the IV infusion had been left unchecked so that it had gone into the tissues causing pain and swelling, again there was difficulty in getting anyone to accept that this had happened and to treat him.

It appeared that the staff were leaving him shouting out in pain again, and when the other patients were approached and asked how they were coping with the constant noise, they blithely informed the relatives that it was okay because he was 'sedated at night-time'. When they were eventually informed that he was on end-of-life care, the relatives requested that he be transferred back to his Care Home. Eventually he was returned to the Care Home where relatives discovered that he had numerous bed-sores resulting from his stay on the ward.

Unfortunately, he died two days later. Naturally the family were distraught at the state he was in and eventually raised a complaint against the ward, which resulted in a meeting with relevant personnel within the hospital, including the Ward Matron, and the Assistant Co-ordinator for patient safety, and an investigation into the gentleman's treatment whilst on the ward. Sadly, this demonstrated to us in Healthwatch Hartlepool that there are flaws in the Care Act whereby safeguarding reporting ceases upon the death of a patient.

Apart from the above, it has become apparent, especially with problems around the Coronavirus crisis, that Healthwatch Hartlepool will have to change going forward. We will have to consider a different way of delivering the service in future, and this will include more collaborative work.

A huge thank you of course to our staff members who have dealt with the problems with which they have been faced, with good grace, hard work and a sense of humour.

Our volunteers are very much our cornerstone to success. We are truly committed to develop and invest in our volunteers for both their and our benefit. Below is our schedule of training we have provided to some of our volunteers over the last year.

02.04.19	Loneliness Across the Life course Seminar – HAST/ CVS Event Billingham	2 members attended
14.04.19	Living Well with Dementia Seminar NESCA Middlesbrough	4 members attended
10.05.19	Accessibility Training - AccessAble HBC	4 member attended
17.05.19	Dying Matters conference – NT&HNHS Trust	4 members attended
20.05.19	Carers Mental Health – TEWV – held at Middlesbrough	2 members attended
18.06.19	Right Care Right Place conference - TEWV Middlesbrough	2 members attended
03.07.19	Teepa Snow Seminar – Dementia Newcastle	3 members attended
14.8.19	Health /wellbeing workshop Agree Top 5 Priorities	4 members attended
27.09.19	Urgent Care Conference – TEWV	2 members attended
08.10.19	Personal Budgets Awareness Training NESCA	3 members attended
10.10.19	World Mental Health Day Event – HBH	20 members attended
29.10.19	Safeguarding Training Refresher enter & View	13 members attended
06.11.19	Health/wellbeing workshop part 2	4 members attended
19.11.19	NESCHA Integrated Care Systems	13 members attended



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**‘The views and stories
you share with us are
helping to make care
better for our local
community’**

Tony Leighton
Patient and Public Engagement Officer

Finances

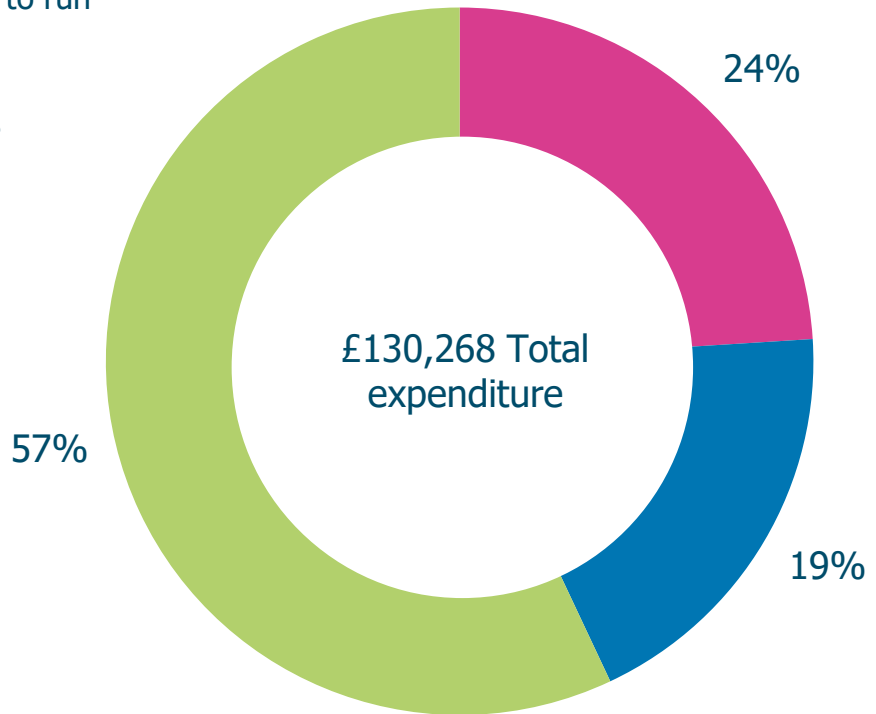


Income	£
Carried forward from 16/17	17,256
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	116,150
Income from Consultations and fund raising	17,000
Interest from Bank	73
Total income	150,479
Expenditure	
Operational costs	16,933
Staffing costs	103,298
Office costs	10,037
Total expenditure	130,268
Balance brought forward	20,211

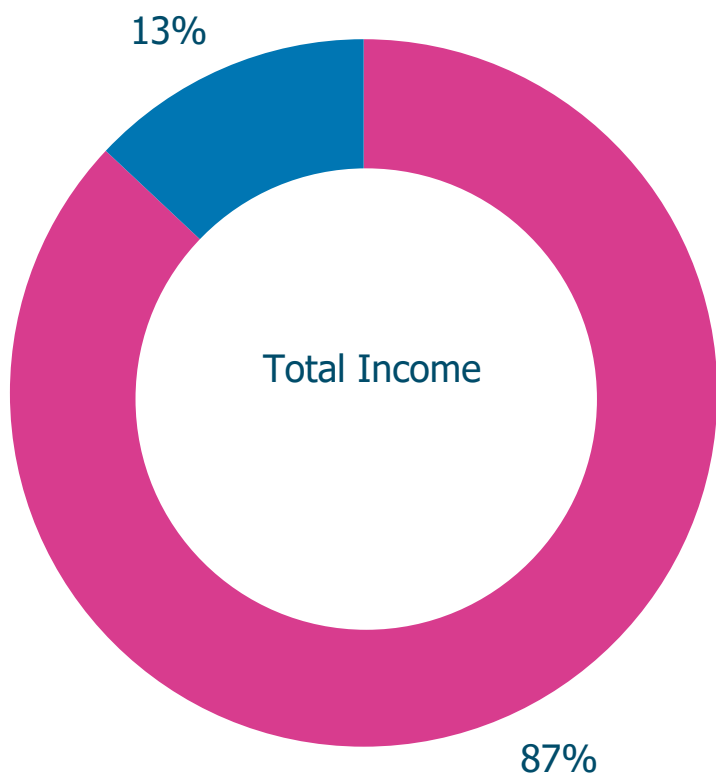
The 2019/20 final balance includes Healthwatch liabilities in respect of notional redundancy costs.

We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £130,268

- How much it costs to run our Healthwatch
- Management costs
- Staff costs



- Funding received from local authority
- Additional income



Our plans for next year



What next?

Our future work programme must now be set and reshaped based on the world we now face in the wake of the Covid19 Pandemic. Ahead is a huge challenge to set out the activities, priorities and outcomes expected from Healthwatch Hartlepool in 2020 but we must seize the opportunity to deliver our statutory functions robustly but in a different way.

One of our significant challenges is the retention of knowledge within Healthwatch Hartlepool as we move from face to face interaction to a more digital based approach. Initially we will need to refresh our Governance Framework, risk assess meetings of associated task & finish groups, public meetings, engagement and reporting mechanisms but we are determined to build on progress made during 2019/2020.

We must also continue our work regionally and nationally with NHS England, Healthwatch England and our Clinical Commissioning Group if we are to truly influence service delivery. Some examples of future work already agreed are:

Acute Care

We need to monitor the discharge of patients both to their homes or residential care. When able to do so, we shall consult with patients accessing services at the two hospital sites of the North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. From this we shall develop a new 'Enter & View' Programme.

As part of our commitment following the publication of the Trust's Quality Account, we shall monitor mortality rates, patient experience & patient care. Our specific focus needs to be on safeguarding, accessibility and communication. We shall also consult to see if there has been any improvement into access of transport in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Mental Health

We shall continue to drive the work of the Hartlepool Mental Health Forum in closely monitoring the work & continued outcomes of the Crisis Care Concordat to ensure patient care and experience is maintained and improved.

We shall monitor Safeguarding, Crisis and Community based services to ensure patient care and experience is being maintained or improved. We shall also monitor the adherence of the Trust against the fundamental standards. We will collaborate once again with Hartlepool Borough Council in supporting the Mental Health forum for World Mental Health Day.

Primary Health

Again review the implementation of our key recommendations to GP's regarding our previously published 'Voice for You' report in respect of Health Checks for the cohort of population with a Learning Disability. Undertake a discrete piece of work 'Emergency' Dentistry. We shall also visit the Urgent Care facility now operating from Hartlepool Hospital.

Social Care

Look at the experiences of residents in Care/Nursing homes across Hartlepool in line with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards and Hartlepool Borough Council's standards framework. Undertake a range of new Enter & View visits in line with the opening of any new care homes within the Borough of Hartlepool providing nursing care as well as monitor the implementation of previous recommendations to Care Homes.

Life-Long Conditions

Organise and host digital or open seminars focusing on member led lifelong condition priorities. These will include but not be limited to Women's Health, Men's Health, Nutrition & Dietetics.

Primary Health

Again review the implementation of our key recommendations to GP's regarding our previously published 'Voice for You' report in respect of Health Checks for the cohort of population with a Learning Disability. Undertake a discrete piece of work 'Emergency' Dentistry. We shall also visit the Urgent Care facility now operating from Hartlepool Hospital.

Patient and Public Engagement

Reshape how we consult and still deliver a comprehensive schedule of activity, which will focus on engaging with the seldom heard and hard to reach groups. This is imperative if we are to make a success from our collaboration with the town's community hubs in tackling loneliness and isolation.

We must undertake some further demographic profiling to examine who we have engaged with in person or via our website. We shall review our leaflets and associated response to recruitment of volunteers. We shall continue to offer a service where we collate patient stories, which articulate patient experience as evidence for future work plans.

Message from Our Chief Executive

This is my fourth report for Healthwatch Hartlepool as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Looking back

I am delighted that we have worked collaboratively across the region to ensure residents have had their opportunity to have their say on the NHS 10 Year Plan. I am so proud of our work around developing a new sensory strategy for Hartlepool and championing the emotive subject of Mental Health whilst promoting the substantial care support that is available to live well.

The year was both challenging and ambitious. Due to budget constraints we entered into paid partnership agreements to consult on the reconfiguration of the CCG's and held 3 workshops to consult on wellbeing. This work was both rewarding and informative whilst assisting Healthwatch Hartlepool meet our financial pressures.

Looking ahead

My main priority is to develop a new work programme and operational model that meets our statutory requirements but addresses the weaknesses exposed in patient engagement post Covid19.

Our future priorities must always include ensuring Mental Health receives the same priority as physical health, promote key services for those residents living with life-long conditions and work with Hartlepool's Health & Wellbeing Board in delivering their new priorities.

We shall achieve this through a town-wide survey, a range of much smaller events, greater use of digital platforms and collaborating with all our key partners.



Sadly, due to the tragic loss of our Director Ruby Marshall MBE we shall be seeking a new director. Ruby was our rock and our steer. She lit the room with her infectious sense of humour, glamour and passion. She will be a very hard act to follow but for me she is irreplaceable.

Barriers and Opportunities

It is ever more difficult to deliver our statutory duties with a reduced budget and increased operational costs. We now have the added burden of reshaping our accepted model of patient & public engagement to a more digital, on-line version.

The additional income sourced from working with our strategic partners shall enable us to continue to deliver our service effectively.

Thank You

I feel, thanks to the staff, Directors and volunteers we have been incredibly successful this year in delivering our key priorities because of their rich mix of talent, expertise and contribution.

'Healthwatch Hartlepool is an efficient organisation. We work with stake holders to co-ordinate and link our community engagement activities where appropriate to help avoid duplication of effort, time and resources.'

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Akers-Belcher'. The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

Christopher Akers-Belcher
Healthwatch Chief Executive

Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care in Hartlepool, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us
- All our amazing staff and dedicated volunteers
- The many voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work
- The Mental Health Forum
- The ORCEL Centre
- Hartlepool Carers
- Wharton Annexe
- Hartlepool Deaf Centre, Hartlepool Vision Support and Hi Vis Uk
- Hartlepool 50+ Forum
- Healthwatch Darlington
- Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees
- TONIC Consultants Ltd (TONIC)
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Hartlepool's Audit & Governance Committee
- Hartlepool's Health & Wellbeing Board
- The Independent Complaints Advocacy service (ICA) North East
- North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust
- NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group
- Hartlepool & Stockton Health (HASH)

"On behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee, I would once again like to thank Hartlepool Healthwatch for its commitment to the work of the Committee. Healthwatch continues to be an essential source of local views, comments and concerns, for the Committee in fulfilling its statutory responsibility to scrutinise service provision and challenge proposals for variations to services accessed by residents of Hartlepool.

Healthwatch continues to share information on a regular basis and has helped shape the Committees annual work programme.

In addition to this, Healthwatch representatives have actively participated in the Committees work and its views and opinions continued to be of significant value to the Committee. We look forward to working together over the coming year."

***Councillor Gerard Hall
Chair of the Audit And Governance***

Contact us

Address of local Healthwatch and contact details of any relevant Healthwatch subcontractors as of 31/03/2020.

Contact number: 01429 288 146

Email address: yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Social media: [facebook.com/HealthwatchHartlepool](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchHartlepool)

Website: www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Address and contact details of the organisation holding the local Healthwatch contract as of 31/03/2020.

Contact number: : 01429 288 146

Email address: yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

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 need this in an alternative format please contact us.

Charity Number: 1165402

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