

On equal terms

Then and now

Healthwatch Hartlepool Annual Report 2020-21



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Message from our Chairman



Hello everyone,

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

To be honest it has been an extremely challenging year for us all, but I firmly believe we have successfully delivered our statutory duties by learning to adapt our work when faced with the Covid19 pandemic.

On a positive note, we have continued to engage with residents and our volunteer steering group digitally. Learning throughout the year has confirmed our belief that isolation needs to be highlighted as a priority as is engaging with those who are digitally excluded. We even managed to fit in a regional consultation to gauge public opinion regarding NHS Clinical research.

We were still able to celebrate 'World Mental Health' day by collaborating with a host of partners through a very successful drop-in event and this enabled us to engage with residents we previously may not have reached. This work was complemented by a refresh of our dedicated 'Mental Health' leaflet in partnership with service providers across the town.

The Volunteer Steering Group remained active utilising weekly on-line meetings to carry out prodigious amounts of work and increase their own learning by welcoming guest speakers across the spectrum of Health & Social Care. I can absolutely confirm that apart from living within a pandemic, our work continues exactly as before.

I can report we are very healthy financially speaking. We are able to 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. A special thank you to our newest recruit to the Board Carol Sherwood who is carrying out the dual role of also being a member of the Volunteer Steering Group and, of course, has double responsibilities and work.

My sincere thanks go to our Chief Executive Christopher and staff team whose roles have had to adapt to a very new way of working but they have certainly risen to the challenge.

Healthwatch Hartlepool would be nothing without our volunteers. We couldn't carry out the much-needed work without them, thank you. Their task over the next year will be to monitor our very different work programme.

I am hoping it will be onwards and upwards in the next year and look forward to seeing you all at our next AGM.

Jane Tilly - Chairman

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Hartlepool. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares their experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



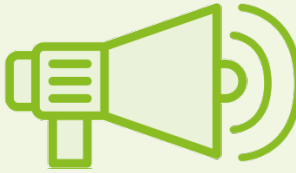
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

226 people

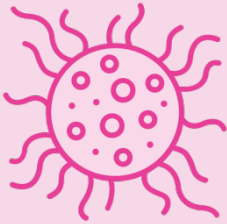
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

721 people

this year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

6530

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

Making a difference to care



We published

5 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we made **8 recommendations** for improvement.

Health and care that works for you



Over 30 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work. **In total, they contributed over 1500 hours.**

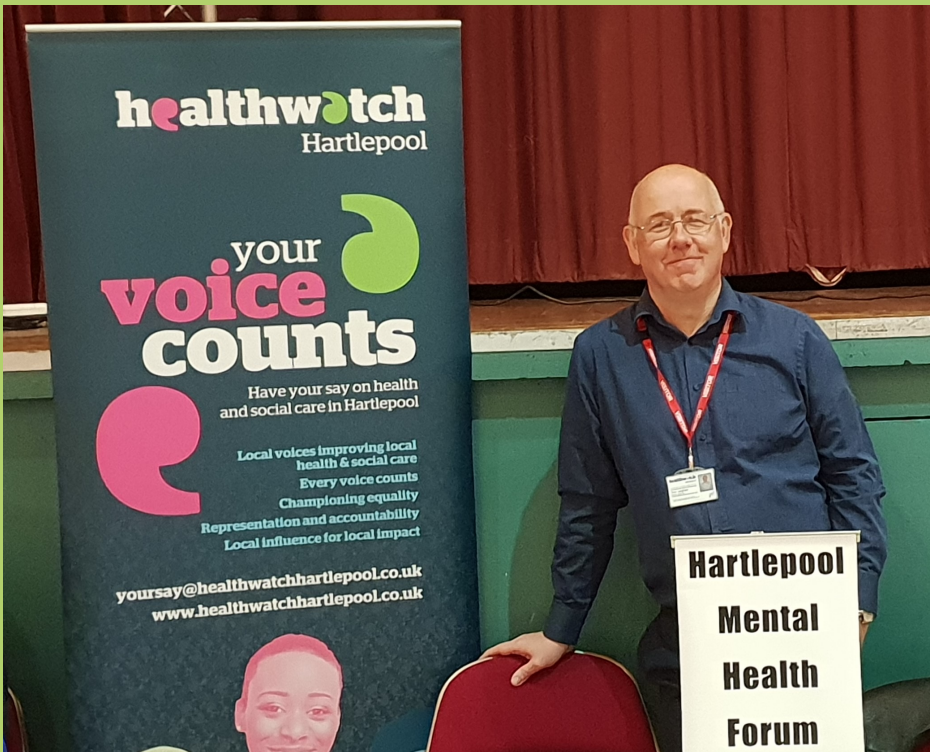
We employ 4 staff

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

We received

£116,500 in funding

from Hartlepool Borough Council, which is exactly the same as the previous two years.



Mental Health: Then and now



Then: Mental Health & the Mental Health Forum

Healthwatch Hartlepool has always played an active role in the arena of Mental Health, with our Mental Health lead volunteer, Zoe Sherry, being the Chairman of Hartlepool's Mental Health Forum. We also have a dedicated Mental Health support leaflet articulating all support organisations available to those in need.

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.

The forum met on a quarterly basis. Each meeting was used to update information, legislation and local activities, each attendee having time to speak about their own services and present activities. This has always been a good forum to gain and exchange knowledge and information. The number of attendees varied 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 the fourth "Strictly Mental Health" event once again held on World Mental Health Day. Our annual event was always used to promote good mental health and provide a welcoming atmosphere for all people. We hosted a variety of activities, entertainment and refreshments as well as a range of stalls promoting services and offering advice and support. The 2019 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.



Now: Ongoing Mental Health Support & the Mental Health Forum

The Mental Health Forum continued to be well supported by Hartlepool Healthwatch and Hartlepool Borough Council. We had to adapt to the challenges and difficulties presented through the Covid19 pandemic.

The following narrative, provided by our Mental Health lead, Zoe Sherry, explains how our work has continued to champion the patient voice in respect of Mental Health support whilst continuing to act in a consultative role for the Teesside Crisis Concordat as well as Hartlepool Borough Council.



“The last year has been a very difficult year in that our usual ways of communication and information have been disrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic. We have had to refine and change to meet the challenge. The changes that have been forced upon us have surprisingly been very positive. We have been able to have closer collaboration with other organisations some of which were new to us. The Mental Health Forum, which Healthwatch Hartlepool at present holds the Chair, has changed and grown with many new members. It is the public forum for many and is very useful to update information about changes within the mental health arena. Members act as a catalyst to other organisations not normally within easy reach.

Sadly, we were unable to hold our usual annual World Mental Health Day event last year. Despite this setback we were determined to continue with meaningful communication, so we had to be innovative. We secured a unit in our local shopping centre and utilised the shop window with a display of information from many mental health support organisations & networks. This we plan to expand upon this year. In addition, Hartlepool Healthwatch and The Mental Health Forum collaborated and produced customised shopping bags. Healthwatch revised their Mental Health Leaflet and many organisations contributed such as Hartlepool MIND, The Bridge, Hartlepool Carers, The Local Authority plus many more. We distributed these through many local organisations and local Pharmacies. The Pharmacies contacted people who we would probably not have had any contact with before. The use of greater communication formats has given access to a wider audience with information about what is available and how to access services and other information.

Healthwatch became very aware of the impact of Covid 19 on all age groups and how the pandemic highlighted the degree of isolation in the communities across the town.

Consequently, Healthwatch Hartlepool is to include this in their proposed work programme for 2021/22 to ensure that future needs are considered.

So overall the world has changed but we hope that we changed with it. We have proved our resilience and that our plans are flexible. Keep watching and listening and we hope to see you again soon.”

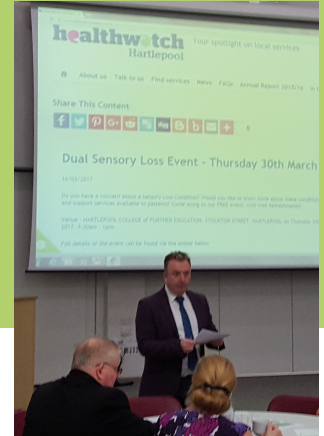
Zoe Sherry – Mental Health lead

Throughout the year Healthwatch Hartlepool has listened to the outcomes of the Mental Health Forum and monitored their work. This led to a review of our Equality & Diversity Policy. This review highlighted the need to collate much more robust data and our recommendation to monitor this data, as we embedded in our surveys regarding work programme & Covid19 impact, has been welcomed by Hartlepool Borough Council for their future work in respect of community led support.

Loneliness and Isolation : Then and now



Then: Loneliness and Isolation



Tackling loneliness and isolation has been a priority of Healthwatch Hartlepool since we were first established. Given our concerns we launched the 'Together' Project in 2019. Led by our Older Person's lead member Carol Sherwood we wanted to reach out to residents across the town who may have:

- 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 was 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 partnered with the Community Hubs in Hartlepool and over following year we intended to schedule a series of events that we could jointly promote and hopefully reach even more residents who feel isolated.



Now: Loneliness and Isolation

2020 brought under the spotlight the huge problem of loneliness and isolation that both Healthwatch Hartlepool and the Local Authority had highlighted as a concern for several years. The following testimonial from Hartlepool Borough Council articulates how our plans had to grow and adapt to meet the increased challenges we faced.



"Following the first lockdown Healthwatch representatives participated in a panel of voluntary and community sector representatives who came together to support the work of Hartlepool Support Hub, with particular emphasis on providing a community led support approach drawing on existing local assets.

The panel is made up of trusted partners and meets weekly to discuss how organisations can work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for people without duplicating efforts or simply signposting or referring people on. The representation from Healthwatch has provided facilitation and an independent overview, and has also acted as a voice to remind partners of the importance of ensuring that the mental health and wellbeing of the individuals being discussed remains at the forefront of this work."

Leigh Keeble, Head of Community Hubs & Wellbeing

The Hartlepool support hub was set up to provide person centred support to those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, self-isolating or critically vulnerable to ensure they have access to food and medication, reduce isolation, promote connectivity (socially and digitally) and provide access to other opportunities that make a difference to keep people well throughout COVID and beyond.

The Local Authority complemented this work with the recruitment of Community Street Ambassadors - To be the 'eyes and ears' of the Council and work with the community to prevent breaches of legislation, actively promote key messages and guidance (hands, face, space) provide confidence and reassurance specifically to vulnerable groups, support the communication of key information (testing, isolation, vaccines) to residents who do not access traditional methods and refer/escalate issues and challenges to public protection, enforcement and the police as relevant.

Healthwatch Hartlepool subsequently joined the initiative of 'Community Covid Champions' too. Our own Chief Executive duly completed the training and we disseminated all the latest bulletins, guidance and advice throughout our network across Hartlepool.

- Community COVID Champions are local residents, employees and students who are empowered to support communities, colleagues, friends and family to stay up to date with the latest advice about Covid-19.
- The Local Authority will train and support champions to make sense of the latest advice and information about Covid-19 to be shared and promoted, to help ensure we all stay safe and alert to the risks of the virus.
- Champions receive regular updates on Covid-19 by a variety of communication methods including zoom conferences, social media, instant messaging systems and web-based platforms.
- Champions will enable the Local Authority to get to some of the hardest to reach communities and share very specific messages responding to local insight.

More recently Healthwatch Hartlepool has agreed a data sharing arrangement with the Local Authority so we may continue our work with all those people identified as 'shielding' under the pandemic. This will give a greater reach to our function in respect of advice & guidance but also address our commitment within our revised Equality & Diversity policy agreed by our Board of Directors.



"Prior to the pandemic I was heavily involved in a project to identify people trying to cope with loneliness and isolation before Covid 19 invaded our lives and the subsequent lockdowns. I am extremely aware, through the regular updates supplied by Healthwatch Hartlepool, throughout this period, on the progress of this virus and its effect on the community. There has been devastation to lives and the effect of the sudden bereavements it has caused, has vastly increased our workload for future months. I hope I can help other members to work on this more and try to help identify people in our communities with these problems to seek advice and help to direct them to professionals in the NHS and care in the community to sign post them to the support they need.

I have also been involved in distributing and collecting information to monitor people who have used all areas of the NHS during the lockdown rules. This has allowed residents to express their experiences of obtaining appointments and the services supplied. This highlighted lots of positives and some negatives. The results of which, will help us to identify any improvements which can be made when things are back to our new normal. I am sure when our Enter and View work resumes, we will be extremely busy once again."

Carol Sherwood – Director & Older Persons lead member

Healthwatch Hartlepool has also continued with their collaboration with HiVis UK regarding online/digital communication/consultation with people who may have a sensory loss. The final draft of our guide was produced just before the November lockdown so we were unable to get it into a final polished format which could be shared with other Healthwatch organisations and placed on our website until after year end. Once published we will have a Checklist for Healthwatch Hartlepool regarding online/digital consultation with people who may have a sensory loss.

The guide will be extremely useful where consultation involves someone with a sensory loss or impairment because there are important considerations to bear in mind for safe and effective communication. The key to a productive conversation is preparation and planning ahead e.g. to enable sourcing a communication support professional if required. We will always check that the communication is working before we begin the formal interview and during the interview process/conversation.

The guide is in three parts: a 10-point checklist covering all sensory loss; advice specific to each of the four groups of sensory loss; further information. You will use part one together with the page from part two that matches the service user's type of sensory loss / impairment.

Each group requires a different range and combination of considerations, approaches and resources and a particular type of Communication Support Professional (CSP).

Groups covered by the guide are:

- British Sign Language (BSL) user (Deaf)
- Deafened/hard of hearing (deaf)
- Visually Impaired (ranging from people with low vision to severe sight impairment)
- Dual sensory impairment (DSI)

CSP's relating to Deaf, Deaf and Deafblind groups include:

- BSL – English interpreter*
- Lipspeaker
- Speech to Text Reporter
- Deafblind Manual Interpreter
- Notetaker

*When hiring a BSL interpreter it is important that there is a good match between the BSL service user and the interpreter in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. If the Deaf service user's second language is not English, seek further advice for that language (see last page).

Using someone other than a qualified and registered BSL interpreter for formal consultation interviews is to be avoided. While qualified interpreters are bound by a code of ethics including impartiality and confidentiality, friends and relatives are not.

Responding to COVID-19



Healthwatch Hartlepool plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped over **6000** people by:

- **Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally.**
- **Supporting the Health & Wellbeing Board's Covid Outbreak committee.**
- **Linking people to reliable up-to-date information.**
- **Supporting the Covid Champions initiative**
- **Helping people to access the service they need**



"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.

2020/21 has been a very challenging time for all areas of service provision and Healthwatch has continued to be an essential source of local views, comments and concerns for the Audit and Governance Committee during very uncertain times.

Healthwatch representatives have adapted to the virtual format of meetings during this period and have been fully involved in the Committee's activities in not only scrutinising ongoing provision across a breadth of health services areas, as detailed below, but also organisational change within the NHS and the impact of Covid-19 on services and communities across the town:

- Quality Accounts across provider Trusts;
- Orthodontic/Dentistry Provision;
- Progress updates in relation to the provision of Assisted Reproduction Services and the Midwife Led Birthing Unit in Hartlepool;
- Covid-19 response and recovery planning; and
- Integrated Care Strategy (ICS) / Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) organisation change.
- Complaints (via the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service);

As we move into the new municipal, the knowledge and experience of Healthwatch members will be essential in supporting the activities of the Audit and Governance Committee in effectively scrutinising the challenges facing health service provision in the ongoing and eventual post Covid-19 environment."

**COUNCILLOR GERARD HALL
CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE (2020/21)**

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



62% on GP services



11% on Dentistry



19% on Hospital Care



8% on Pharmacies

Case Study



Early in the pandemic during the month of March 2020 we had a surge in people accessing our website (95 visitors) and our Facebook page (220 viewers). We quickly realised we needed to move to a new way of working because we needed to ensure residents had clear and accurate information.

Our role became much more focused on providing people with clear, consistent and concise advice and information via social media and our network of contacts.

What we didn't want to do was lose the key people who have actively engaged with Healthwatch Hartlepool since our inception. Our volunteers have always played an important role in the work of Healthwatch Hartlepool. At the start of the first lockdown we decided to look at different ways of working and keeping in touch with our volunteers and so in April 2020 we introduced virtual weekly coffee mornings which enabled us to:

- Engage regularly with our volunteers and hear their stories.
- Update and inform volunteers on developments around Covid and other health and social issues.
- Enable volunteers to access social and emotional support from one another at an incredibly difficult and distressing time.

Our Virtual Coffee Mornings opened with a guest speaker update which covered developments and activities in key local services and speakers included:

- Mark Johns (North East Ambulance Service)
- Gill Alexander (Former Chief Executive Officer, Hartlepool Borough Council)
- Christine Fewster (Chief Executive Officer, Hartlepool Carers)
- Dr Nick Timlin (Practicing Hartlepool GP and Tees Valley CCG)
- Craig Blundred (Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council)



Contact us to get the information you need

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.



www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk



01429 288146



yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk




Volunteers

At **Healthwatch Hartlepool** we are supported by over **30** active volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys including our regional survey in respect of NHS Clinical Research.
- Attended a Covid safe, socially distanced meeting to prepare the information packs for World Mental Health Day
- Provided up to date news that could be disseminated across our network of contacts e.g. News from the Patients Association.
- Carried out reviews of our policies in respect of Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding.
- Provided meaningful patient stories to be included in our regular updates for our Lay Member for Patient and Public Involvement who presents them at the Governing Body of the Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group.


"Just wanted to say a huge thank you again for the information you provide for the TVCCG Lay Member PPI report. I'm in the meeting now and the Chief Officer and a number of Exec Directors have said how useful your 'word on the street' and patient stories are. They said not only do they use the information in national and regional meetings, but they use within the CCG to improve communications to patients as well as using the info as a reality check for commissioned services. Sometimes they think they have got it right, but patient and carer lived experience may tell a different story. Very much appreciated by all."

Michelle Thompson BEM (she/her)

Lay Member for Patient and Public Involvement



Life-long Conditions lead volunteer - Evelyn

“I have always been a huge supporter of Healthwatch Hartlepool. During lockdown I wanted to remain involved so was determined to keep in touch. I spoke with the office regularly as I see part of my volunteer role as gathering people’s experiences of NHS and social care services.

On one occasion I shared my own experience of the marvellous service provided at the Town Hall Vaccination Centre. The NHS staff and Council staff were wonderful and they should be commended.”



Board member - Margaret

“I am one of several Board members and volunteers who have been kept updated with zoom meetings, phone calls and emails with any available information relevant to Healthwatch Hartlepool and the ongoing pandemic. The weekly zoom meetings, chaired and arranged by our Development Officer Stephen were attended by a number of guest speakers from various specialisms.

These zoom meetings have been extremely helpful in keeping us up-to-date with events as the pandemic unfolded, but also to keep us in contact with our colleagues, and staff members, which in turn helped to keep us occupied, lessening the risk of mental health problems arising, especially among those members who live alone, may have felt isolated or may have been shielding during the long months of lockdown.”



Helping with surveys - Carol

“In previous years I have helped Healthwatch Hartlepool as part of the Volunteer Steering Group. This last year I also became a board member and have really enjoyed learning more about my new role. During this difficult last year, I was determined to help collect people’s views on local services for our surveys and work programme, which I did by speaking with many friends and family. I had excellent results and I ensured all information was returned to the staff in the office.”



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**.



www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

01429 288146

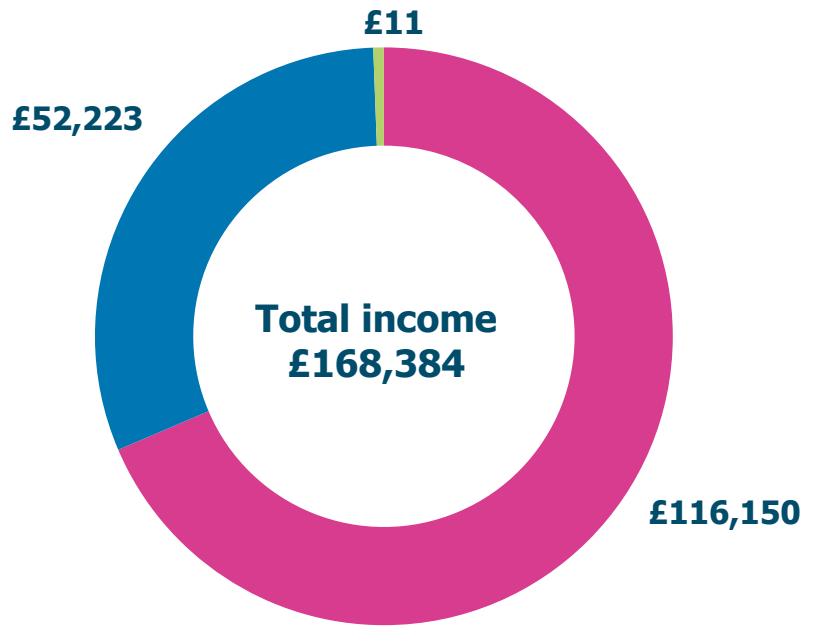
yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

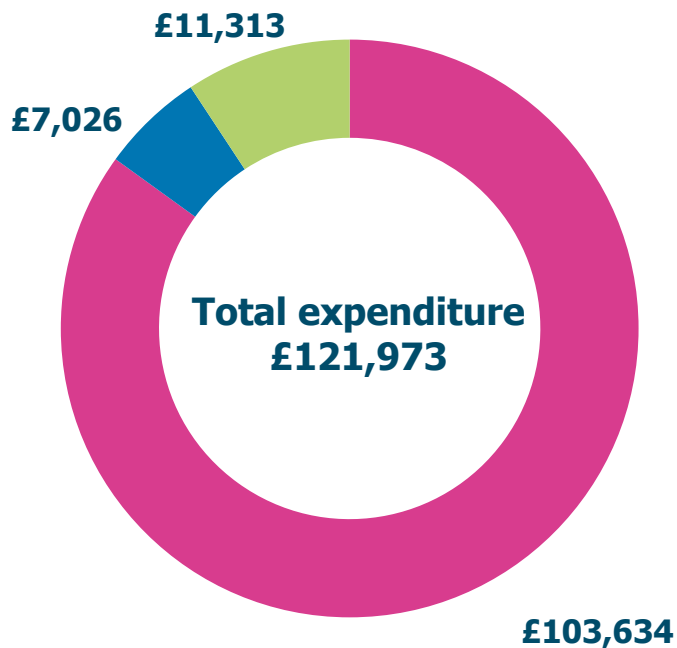
Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding
- Interest from Bank



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Office costs



The 2020/21 final balance includes Healthwatch liabilities in respect of notional redundancy costs. The balance does not include a grant payable in respect of regional consultation for NHS Clinical Research.

Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Examine the quality and timeliness of Midwifery led service provision at the University Hospital of Hartlepool. Focus on pre-natal and post-natal care with a meaningful consultation of expectant mothers, their families and other key stakeholders. Look at interventions and associated impact of maternal wellbeing checks undertaken in the community and in hospital setting.
- Continue to work with the Hartlepool Mental Health Forum in closely monitoring the impact of the ongoing reconfiguration of Tees, Esk & Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Mental Health Trust. Examine service areas such as crisis and community-based services to ensure patient care and experience is maintained and improved.
- Examine GP access post Covid-19. Examine patient experience of accessing appointments, repeat prescription requests and access to regular treatment/medication. Monitor re-introduction of face-to-face appointments and patient pathways for deaf, blind, dual sensory loss, refugees, asylum seekers and those with a Learning Disability (annual health checks).

Next steps

- Publish our new work programme for 21/22 – July 2021 including presentation at the Council's Audit & Governance committee to avoid duplication with statutory Health Scrutiny.
- Follow up on our previous years' reports and recommendations in respect of Hospital Discharge, LD Health Screening and the Integrated Urgent Care Service at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.
- Embed our revised policy in respect of Equality and Diversity / seldom heard communities in our monitoring & collaborative work regarding community led support.



“Tackling unfair health differences will need those in power to listen. To hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives, and then to act on what has been learned.”

**Christopher Akers-Belcher
Chief Executive – Healthwatch Hartlepool**

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

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)

Statutory statements



About us

Healthwatch Hartlepool, The ORCEL Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool, TS25 3LB

Charity Number: 1165402

Healthwatch Hartlepool uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you need any of our publications in an alternative format please contact us.

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Website: www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch board consists of 5 Directors who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met 5 times and made decisions on matters such as approving their statutory submission to the Charities Commission and approve the working arrangements under the Covid19 pandemic.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. During the last year we have promoted national & regional consultations and reported our involvement to Healthwatch England. We have utilised this intelligence and our own town-wide survey to help shape our future work programme. Our lead member for Mental Health is Chairman of Hartlepool's Mental Health Forum and we also utilise our patient & public involvement officer to facilitate contact with the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICA).

"North East NHS ICA value the relationship with Healthwatch Hartlepool. During the last 12 months the challenge of Covid 19 has meant new ways of engaging and this has been through the virtual platform. The support from Healthwatch Hartlepool team has ensured we have been able to sustain our advocacy work in Hartlepool and are looking forward to more partnership work in the future"

Philip Kerr
ICA Contracts Manager

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, promoted our website, provided a comments facility on our social media, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through both postal bulletins & Facebook.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, engaging with Hartlepool Carers and the Mental Health Forum.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk and circulate to all our key partners.

2020-21 priorities

Project / activity area	Changes made to services
University Hospital of North Tees Emergency Assessment Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New road map type display, which will inform patients of their proposed patient journey • Move of initial assessment area • Review of literature for accident prevention, safeguarding, smoking and other areas of health promotion
University Hospital of North Tees Ward 29	Appointment of Qualified SRN & Nursing Assistant Review of wheelchair accessible toileting & showering facilities
Tackling Loneliness and Isolation	Forged a greater working together protocol with Hartlepool Borough Council around Community Led Support & greater data sharing
Closer working with Tees Valley CCG	Introduced a Patient & Public Involvement communication template to inform TV CCG Governing Body of 'word on street' e.g. diabetes, paediatrics
Follow-up on collaborative work with Audit & Governance re a Midwifery Maternity Unit at the University Hospital of Hartlepool	Re-introduction of birthing suite and home births in Hartlepool plus associated revised Midwifery pathway

Responses to recommendations and requests

This last year we had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers albeit we published two of our reports that were ratified after March 2020. Consequently, we followed up on the recommendations & other actions resulting from this area of activity from the previous year. This remains a priority for Healthwatch Hartlepool and we are currently exploring virtual visits in-line with the national guidance.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations. We have ensured we have maintained a monthly dialogue with Healthwatch England to help shape the future of an integrated Health & Social care system.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Hartlepool is represented on the Hartlepool Health and Wellbeing Board by Margaret Wrenn & supported by our staff. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out their role.

"There have been significant challenges during 2020/21 in the provision of primary, community and acute services and health and care services that continue to not only effectively meet the needs of Hartlepool's residents but also respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout this year, Healthwatch has continued to be an active member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring that the experience of those who access services are used to enrich the work of the local partnership.

Over and above its activities in previous years, Healthwatch participation, as part of the Covid-19 response and recovery, has also been welcomed via its:

- Involvement as a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board's Outbreak Control Engagement Working Group; and*
- Acceptance of a Health and Wellbeing Board referral to explore the long-term mental health implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for individuals and communities. The piece of work to be undertaken through the Mental Health Forum.*

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 2021/22 and beyond."

CRAIG BLUNDRED

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