

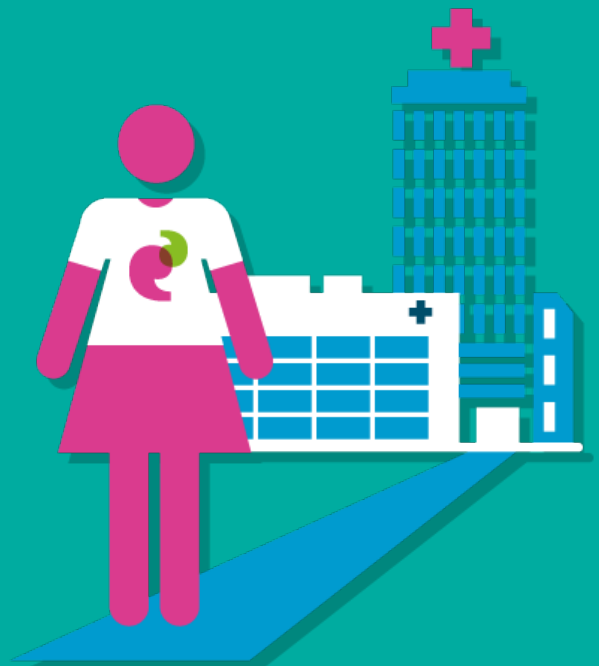




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Our vision, mission and values



Our vision

You, the public, are listened to, and involved in, improving our health and social care services in Kent.

Our mission

To raise the public's voice to improve the quality of local health and social care services in Kent.

Our values

- Open and transparent
- Volunteer led
- Objective and balanced



We achieve this by

Listening to you about your experiences of health and social care services and taking those experiences to the people who commission health and social care services in Kent.

- Working in partnership with organisations – no surprises
- Critical friend
- Balancing positive and negative, loud and quiet, many and few
- Truly represent residents of Kent



Forward from our Chief Executive

This year has been a time of great change.

Both the NHS and social care are under huge strain. Numbers of people needing services continue to increase every month; the money available for services continues to be reduced and we continue to face a critical lack of staff to meet the needs of patients and service users. All of these factors together mean that services must change and the health and social care system in Kent must work differently to ensure that this change can happen.

The role of Healthwatch Kent in this sea of change is to ensure patients and service users have a voice. You should not only be informed of potential changes but also be given the opportunity to get involved in constructive discussions about what those changes could or should look like.

Much of our year has been spent working to ensure you have a voice and a place to get involved with these changes. This journey will continue over the coming year and we would encourage you all to get involved if you can. This is the time to make your views heard.

In addition to this we have continued to focus on specific services and issues that we have heard about from the you including;

- We spoke to over 300 people about the Children & Adolescent Mental Health service. Our recommendations are part of the new service which will be rolled out in 2017
- We spoke to over 100 people about their experience of being discharged from hospital in North Kent. We have worked on a new patient leaflet explaining the discharge process which is currently being piloted with 20,000 patients
- Our report on changes to repeat prescriptions is being used to inform all 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups as they work to reduce the amount of money wasted on unwanted medicines
- Our findings about people's experience of autism services has been used as part of a national report highlighting the challenges that parents and young people with autism are facing

None of this would have been possible without the tireless enthusiasm and determination of our volunteers. We are very lucky to work with some incredible people who are involved in all aspects of our work from invaluable administrative support through to making decisions about our priorities.

This report gives you an insight into our work, but if you are interested in finding out more do please get in touch. We are always looking for people to get involved in any way they can so take a read and give us a call if you want more information.

You can reach us anytime on 0808 801 0102 or email info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

Steve Inett
Chief Executive, Healthwatch Kent



The year at a glance

This year we've spoken to 2,467 people through our Helpline



We've spent hundreds of hours visiting community groups and proactively working with groups which are traditionally harder to reach such as Gypsy & Travellers



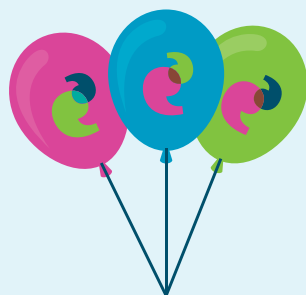
Our volunteers help us with everything from booking meetings to making decisions about our priorities and resources



We've visited 16 of our local services



We've met hundreds of local people through our work in communities



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from getting a GP appointment through to mental health patients being placed outside of Kent



What we do for you?

We exist to make health and care services work for the people who use them.

Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people. Our sole focus is on understanding the needs, experiences and concerns of people of all ages who use services and to speak out on their behalf.

Our role is to ensure that local decision makers and health and care services put the experiences of people at the heart of their work. We believe that asking people more about their experiences can identify issues that, if addressed, will make services better.





What do we do for you?

- Give you information about health and social care services.
- Signpost you to the correct place.
- Inform you about your rights as a patient and service user.
- Help you to understand how to make a complaint and what support is available.
- Record your experiences of services.
- Regularly analyse the themes and trends from what people have told us.
- Escalate serious concerns to the right people and follow up on the outcome.
- Respond to enquiries on our Freephone line within two working days.
- Meet as many people face to face as possible, in particular contacting groups who do not contact us by other means. To do this we will visit a different district council area each month and visits priority groups in that district.
- Be open and transparent in how we work.

What do we do for commissioners and providers?

- Work in a spirit of partnership, sharing information, informing you about work we are undertaking and supporting work that improves patient/service user experiences.

- Meet with you quarterly to discuss shared areas of concern and monitor an action plan made up of agreed issues, Healthwatch report recommendations and CQC findings.
- Act as a critical friend for consultations you undertake.

What do we offer our volunteers?

- Be clear about the requirements and expectations of you and be open with you if there are any concerns about how you carry out your role.
- Give you clear roles so you can understand your commitment and what you will achieve.
- Give you training and experience in working in health and social care at a strategic level.
- Reimburse your out of pocket expenses.
- Be appreciative of your time and efforts.

For the voluntary sector we offer:

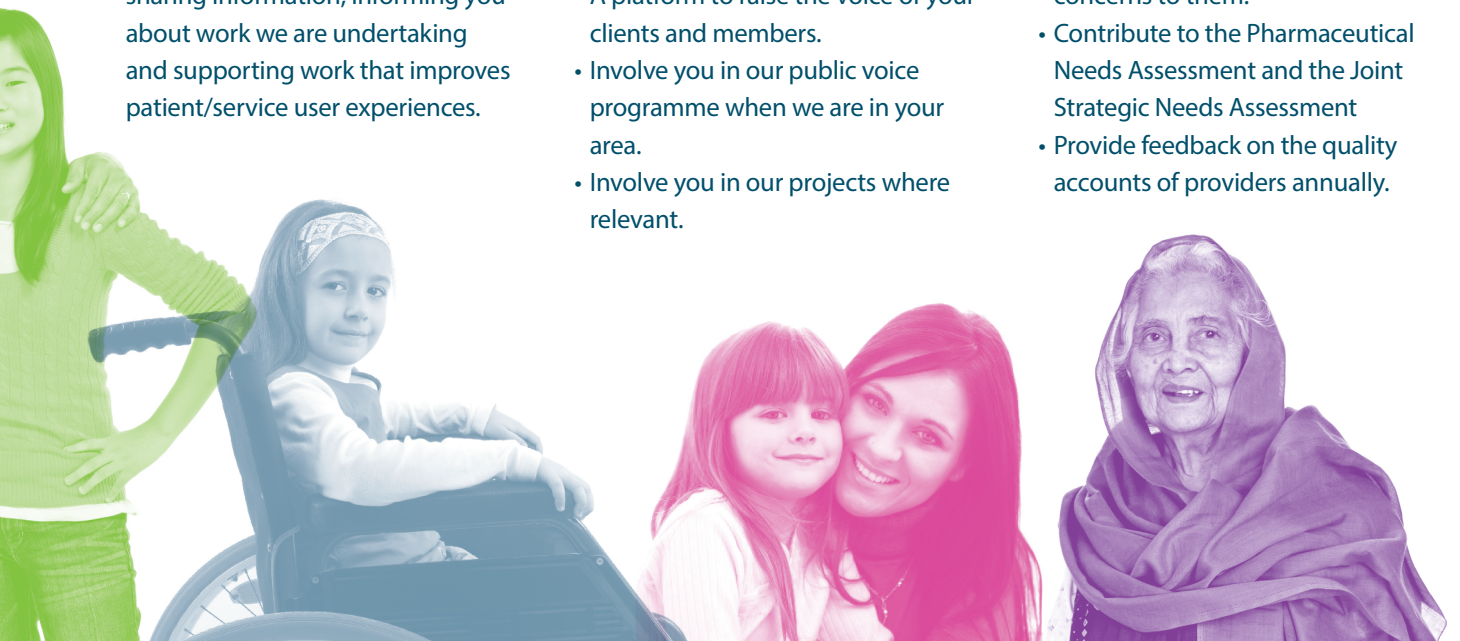
- Regular monthly information shared with your key contact person, known as a Community Champion.
- Regular encouragement to share the experiences of your clients or members with us.
- A platform to raise the voice of your clients and members.
- Involve you in our public voice programme when we are in your area.
- Involve you in our projects where relevant.

District Councils

- Inform you when we are working in your area.
- Support councillors to share experiences of local residents.
- Keep you updated of the outcomes of our work.

To fulfil our other statutory roles we will:

- Use the outcome of escalations, projects and Enter & View visits to make recommendations to Healthwatch England / Care Quality Commission to conduct special reviews or investigations.
- Use the database designed for the Local Healthwatch network to provide Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively at a national level.
- Work with CQC and NHS improvements where there are significant concerns about an organisation.
- Continue to be effective participants of the Kent and local Health & Wellbeing Boards.
- Continue to be effective participants of the Kent Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and escalate concerns to them.
- Contribute to the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Provide feedback on the quality accounts of providers annually.



How do we bring about change?

The answer is simple... By listening



We listen to people through a number of different ways:

- When people contact our Helpline directly
- By proactively visiting communities and groups especially those who are classed as seldom heard and may not share their feedback
- Through our regular Information stands at public places including libraries and hospital foyers
- By using our statutory powers to Enter & View any adult health or social care service and talk to patients and users about their experience
- On board our Healthwatch Big Bus which visited every Kent district in 2016

Through this work we have been able to listen to people from all ages from young to old. We've also heard from people who would be classed as 'seldom heard or vulnerable plus people who may not live within Kent but who use Kent's services.

Here's just a few examples of where we have been this year:

- Mental Health support groups
- Eastern European family liaison group
- Several Travellers sites
- Older People's Groups
- Pensioners Advice & Information Fair
- Rural Libraries
- Kent Physical Disability Forum
- Disability Groups
- BME Ladies' Coffee morning
- Young People's Transition Information Day
- Carers Forums
- Kent Mental Health Festival
- East Mencap Fun Day

What we've learnt from visiting services:

We've learnt so much from talking to people but here are a few snapshots

- Services do not currently work as efficiently or as joined up as they could be
- It's extremely confusing for people about how to complain about services
- If people cannot get an appointment from their GP, they are twice as likely to go to A&E
- Translation services within GP surgeries continues to be an issue
- People who require a complex level of care often stay in hospital much longer than they need to
- People are confused and fearful of changes to services. They want to understand what services will look like in the future
- People don't feel they are being engaged and involved in changes to services
- Autistic patients struggle to get the support they need
- The Children & Adolescent Mental health services continues to be an issue for patients and families



What difference have we made?

In our hospitals: Our trained volunteers have visited hospitals in North and West Kent talking to patients about being discharged. As a result, we have worked with Darent Valley Hospital to develop a new patient leaflet explaining the discharge process. This is currently being piloted with 20,000 patients. We have returned to visit Outpatient departments in East Kent and have seen improvements in waiting times and the way appointments are being handled. All our recommendations have been implemented. We've also visited Outpatients in West & North Kent and heard largely positive feedback. Improvements have been made to signage and the information included in appointment letters as a result of our visits.

In our Care Homes: We have escalated 11 cases of concern for patient safety to the Care Quality Commission and Kent County Council this year. All of our escalations have been investigated and in one instance the care home was prevented from accepting new residents until measures were put in place.

For mental health patients and carers: We've worked closely with our mental health trust to follow up on concerns we heard from patients being placed in beds outside of Kent. We're pleased to report that currently the numbers of patients has dropped significantly. There are currently 5 mental health patients in beds outside of Kent.

The recommendations from our report on the Children & Adolescent Mental Health service have all been included in the new specification for the contract. Our findings from Autistic patients was used as part of a national report by Healthwatch England.

Changes to our services: We monitor and where relevant scrutinise consultations that involve changes to our social care or health services in Kent. Through this work we have identified that organisations often don't engage with patients and service users enough prior to any public consultation. To address this we have created our Best Practice Guide to Pre-consultations to ensure all organisations are fully aware of their responsibilities. We are also setting up two new patient groups to support better engagement around the Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP) and for Kent County Council.

GP services: We visited 3 GP surgeries in South Kent Coast and highlighted that patients aren't aware of online booking or extended opening times. We have written to all South Kent Coast GP practices to ask them how they plan to promote these services to patients.

Dentists: Following our detailed report into NHS dental services we have made a number of recommendations. We will be working on these with NHS England and the Local Dental Practitioners Network to make the changes. We have also created two new leaflets for the public clarifying issues around dental charges and how to find an NHS dentist.



Information & signposting service

With all the changes to health and care services it's not always clear where you should go to report an urgent issue, to make a complaint, or for further information.

Healthwatch Kent can help you find the right services to suit your needs through our FREE Information & Signposting Service.

Although we can't give you advice or make specific recommendations, we can help you make an informed decision in finding the right health and social care service whether it is provided by the NHS, the Council, a voluntary or community organisation.

We know how complicated it can be to find your way around the health and social care system. Our team of trained staff can take the worry away and find the answers for you. Call us!



Call us for FREE on
0808 801 0102

Calls answered from
10am – 4pm every weekday

Messages welcome anytime and responded to
within two working days.

Email us at info@healthwatchkent.co.uk or text
07525 861 639. Text 'Need BSL' for our British
Sign Language Interpreter to contact you.



5%

Access to services

9%

Appointments / Referrals



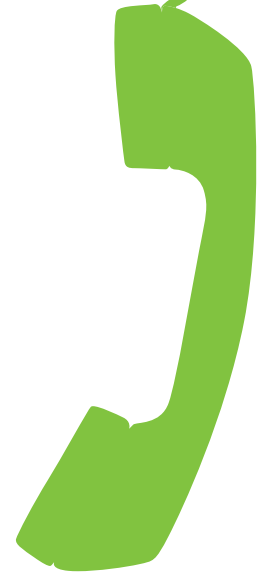
7%

Staff attitude



9%

Waiting times



1,225 people contacted our Information & Signposting service this year.

Of these contacts, here is a snapshot of what people wanted to talk to us about

43%

of people who got in touch with us did it through email

15%

Quality of treatment

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are central to everything that we do. They are involved in every level from administration through to decision making.

Here's just a few examples of what our volunteers do for us:

- Hold regular sessions in Kent hospitals talking to patients about their experiences
- Represent Healthwatch at key meetings including all seven local Health & Well Being Boards ensuring that patient voice remains on the agenda
- Work with us to shape the workplan for the Kent Health & Well Being Board
- Visiting services as part of our Enter & View remit to talk to patients about their experiences
- Visiting community and seldom heard groups to understand their experiences of services
- Read, distil and analyse reports and information

Our Steering Group is made up of volunteers

They identify themes and trends for our future work

Together they agree our priorities and projects

They define and shape our project work and allocate resources

Our local Area Teams discuss and examine local issues

They work with local organisations and commissioners

They determine our local activity within each Clinical Commissioning Group area

They are made up entirely of volunteers





The year ahead?

Together with our volunteers, we have identified the following priorities based on what we have heard from the public.



This list is not exhaustive and we will continue to respond to issues brought to our attention during the year.

The Sustainability & Transformation Plan

We will continue to be actively involved in this. We have created and will Chair the new Patient & Public Advisory Group to drive forward better engagement and involvement with the public. We will also exercise our statutory responsibility to act as a critical friend to this process.

Health & Social Care Complaints

This continues to be an issue for people who contact our Helpline. We have recently reviewed organisations' websites in relation to complaints and we are planning a focus group of patients who will work directly with organisations to help them improve their service.

Hospital Discharge

We will be publishing a further report on patients who have a delayed discharge in North Kent. Our report on Hospital Discharge in West Kent will also be published this year and we will embark on a new project to talk to patients in East Kent about their experiences.

Children & Young Peoples Services

We are a founding member of the new NHS Youth Forum. The forum will ensure that organisations effectively engage with young people but in a co-ordinated and integrated way.

Finances

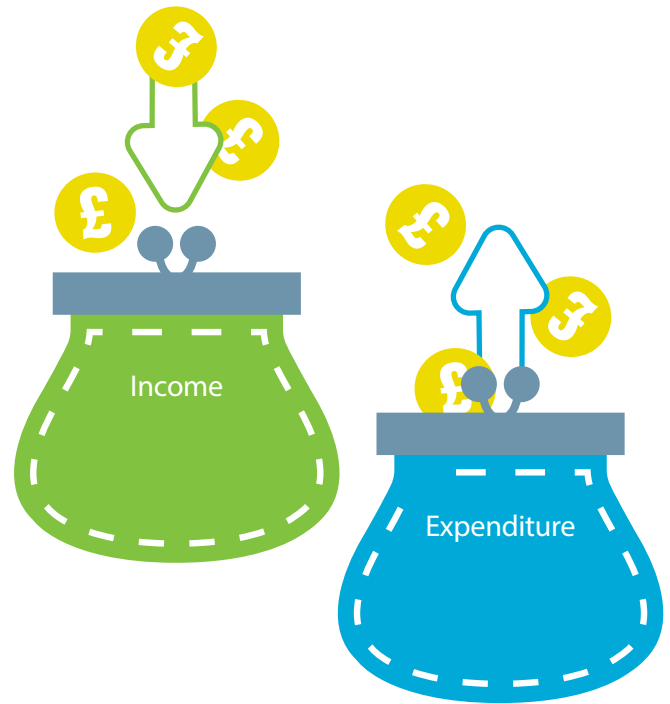
Table heading showing statement of activities for the year ending 31 March 2017

Income

Funding recieved through local authority to deliver Healthwatch statutory activities	£666,270
Additional Income	£0
Total income	£666,270

Expenditure

Operational costs	£240,789
Staffing costs	£327,760
Office costs	£23,805
Volunteer costs, expenses & training	£22,545
Total expenditure	£614,899
Balance brought forward	£51,371





Your comment counts

We want to hear from you

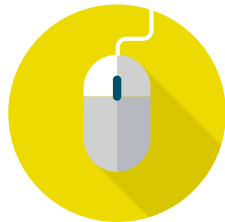
Tell us your experiences of health & social care services in Kent



By Telephone:
Healthwatch Kent
Freephone 0808 801 01 02



By Email:
Info@healthwatchkent.co.uk



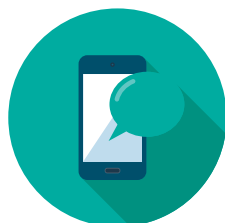
Online:
www.healthwatchkent.co.uk



By Post: Write to us or fill in and send a Your Comment Counts form. Freepost RTLG-UBZB-JUZA Healthwatch Kent, Seabrooke House, Church Rd, Ashford TN23 1RD



Face to Face:
Call 0808 801 01 02 to arrange a visit



By Text: Text us on 07525 861 639.
By texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's British Sign Language interpreter will make contact and arrange a time to meet face to face.

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