

Statement from Steve Inett  
CEO of Healthwatch

We have recruited, inducted and trained over 60 volunteers and two additional staff.

We have gathered feedback from over 2000 members of the public and spoken with many more to raise awareness of Healthwatch.

We receive around 150 contacts per month from the public and visit a different district each month to speak to people in libraries, Gateways, at community groups and in care settings. We have also held 6 quarterly public meetings across the county.

Our newsletter is seen by 783 residents each month. We have 887 Twitter followers and 106 Facebook likes. These numbers are increasing every month.

We have recently appeared on Meridian News twice and often guest on BBC Radio Kent as well as local radio stations such as Sittingbourne FM. We frequently appear in local press.

We produced project reports on:

- Mental health inpatients
- Mental health carers
- Eastern European patients in East Kent
- Children & adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Complaints in health and social care

Our project reports can be found here: <http://healthwatchkent.co.uk/projects>

We also undertook Enter and View visits to:

- 3 acute inpatient mental health wards
- 5 older person's care homes
- 5 learning disability services
- 3 A&E departments and 1 minor injuries unit
- 3 Outpatient departments

In addition to this a review of discharge arrangements in an acute hospital was completed. We held events across the county to speak to the public about a variety of topics. We also built links with the voluntary sector, Patient Participation Groups and GP practices. We have a formal link with 65 community organisations and are currently increasing that number.

We have developed ways of working which empower our volunteers to represent Healthwatch at strategic meetings and forums across the county.

We are committed to ensuring Healthwatch Kent is a partnership of volunteers and paid staff working in an open, transparent way, agreeing how we work and the issues we work on.

We have built our relationships with organisations and stakeholders via regular liaison and through our work at Kent's eight Health and Wellbeing Boards.

We have brought about improvements in services such as mental health and carers services, and have improved community engagement by hospitals.

We are seen as an objective, credible partner; this allows us to challenge poor quality services and acknowledge good practice. We are now being proactively approached by organisations to help them ensure the public are involved in service redesign. We are in an ideal position to continue to build on our strengths and bring about further improvements in health and social care services.