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Our vision, mission and values



Our vision

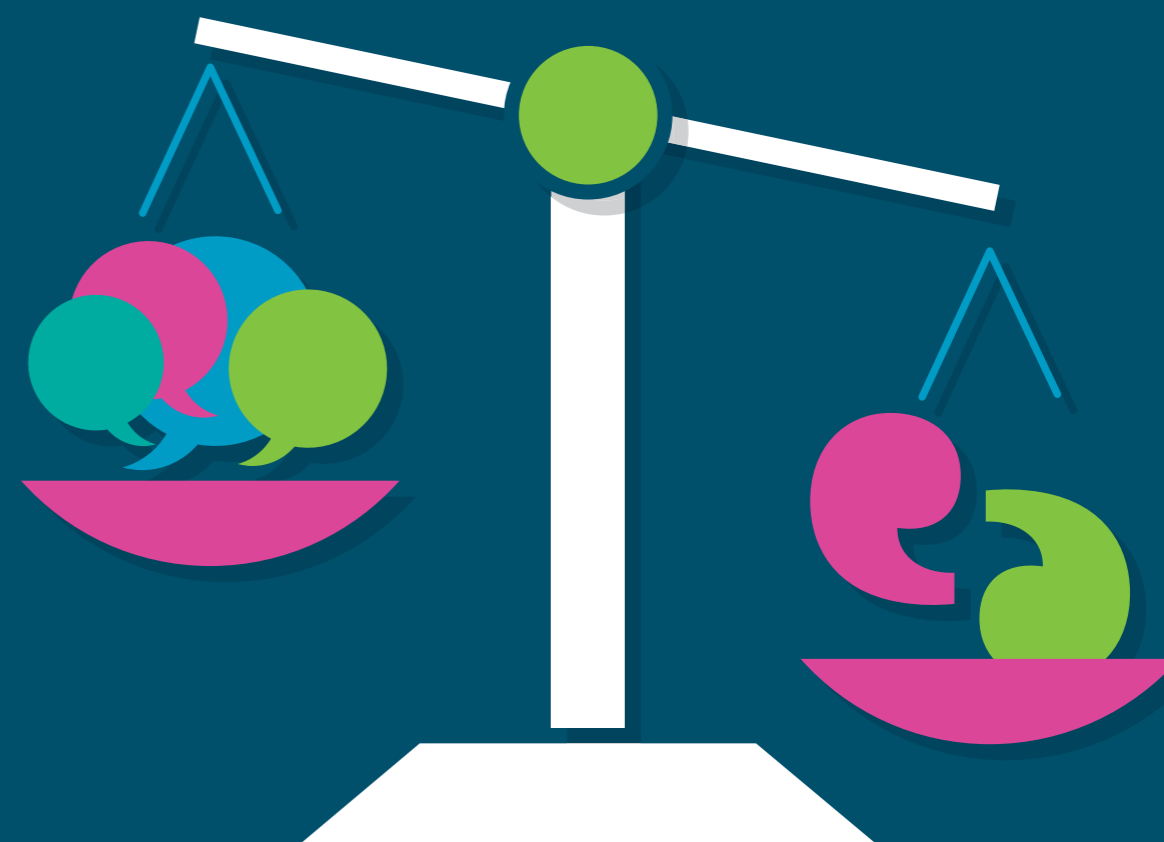
You, the public, are listened to, and involved in, improving our health and social care services in Kent.

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



Foreward from our Chief Executive

This year we heard the fantastic news that our contract has been extended until April 2018.

Although this bought with it significant budget cuts it is testament to the hard work, dedication and commitment of our staff and volunteer force. Together they have developed an organisation that effectively and conscientiously listens to the public and acts upon their feedback. Thanks to our excellent relationships with the organisations that both commission and provide health and social care services we are then able to affect the change that is needed to benefit those people.

This year we have focused our efforts on listening more to people from all walks of life. Given the size of Kent, we focus on one District a month. Within each District we know and understand the communities that live there and proactively seek them out and visit them to hear about their experiences of local services. We've been welcomed into many different communities this year including travellers sites, homeless groups, a Chinese lunch club and a mosque. We've also worked with other organisations who are already working with groups that are often harder to reach such as the Roma community or people who suffer from domestic violence. We are committed to continuing this work in the year ahead and will continue to feedback everything we hear from the public about ANY health or social care service back to the organisations responsible to help them continue to improve services for the people of Kent.

At the time of writing, we are about to embark on our second Healthwatch Big Bus Tour. Last June we visited every District in Kent stopping our double decker vintage bus in busy public places. We spoke to hundreds of people over seven days about their experiences of services and we will be doing the same again this June. Come on board and see us!

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 us on info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

Steve Inett
Chief Executive, Healthwatch Kent

The year at a glance

This year we've reached 1,434 people on social media



We've spent hundreds of hours on hospital discharge - one of our top priorities this year



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



We've visited 20 of our local services



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from children's mental health, dentists to physical disabilities



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





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 and signpost you to the correct service, either statutory or in the community.
- Inform you about your rights as a patient/service user, but also your responsibilities to manage your own health and support services to enable them to be effective
- Listen to your experiences and signpost you to where to make a complaint and what support is available with complaining
- Record your experiences and look at trends and themes across the county, using those trends as a basis for what we investigate further
- Escalate serious concerns to the appropriate authority and monitor the outcome
- Respond to enquiries on our Freephone line within one working day
- Endeavour to 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
- Publish the following on our website:
 - Our Strategic Priorities and Annual report
 - Our Project and Enter & View Reports
 - A monthly update of our work
 - Our workplan for the year
 - Records of our regular meetings that set our priorities

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 other stakeholders we will:

Voluntary Sector

- Offer the opportunity for someone in your organisation or group to become a Community champion where you will receive a monthly update on our work and have a mechanism to tell us the experiences of the people you work with.
- 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.
- Work with CQC, Monitor and TDA 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.
- 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, gateways and hospital foyers
- By using our statutory powers to Enter & View any 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

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:

- Chinese Lunch club
- Several Travellers sites
- Deaf groups
- Young Mums groups
- Mind, mental health support groups
- Roma community
- The Wrinkly roadshow for older people
- Diabetic Association
- Black African Community Church
- Events with the Roma community
- Disability Groups
- Rural libraries

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 particularly in relation to hospital discharge
 - It's extremely confusing for people about how to complain about services
 - The misconception about lack of NHS dentists often means people don't seek an NHS dentist and therefore don't have any treatment
 - End of Life Care is not always what the patient or family wants it to be
 - People with physical disabilities want a platform in Kent to raise their voice and be heard
 - People want to be involved in decisions about changes to services (big and small) but they are so often not given the opportunity
 - Young people want to be respected by services

What difference have we made?

In our hospitals: Our trained volunteers have visited hospitals across Kent talking to patients about their experiences of Outpatients, Accident & Emergency and Discharge. Through that work we have improved communications for patients in the waiting rooms, ensured clearer signage to help patients and families find their way better as well as improving dignity for patients at Darent Valley and Tunbridge Wells Hospitals.

In our Care Homes: we have escalated four cases of concern for patient safety to the Care Quality Commission and Kent County Council this year. All of these involved residents of care homes in Kent. 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 drive through some of the changes we have recommended. Together with patients and carers, we have finally secured the launch of a single phone number of patients and carers to use when they need to access mental health services. That work has also seen the creation of a Carers Charter which sets out the rights and responsibilities of carers. In addition we have conducted revisits Enter & View visits to three mental health wards in Kent and will continue to work with the Trust on our recommendations following these visits.

Changes to our services: we monitor and were relevant scrutinise consultations that involve changes to our social care or health services in Kent. Through our scrutiny work we have ensure the voice of patients was clearly heard during the process of change to our stroke services and to hospital services in East Kent. We have escalated our questions around some particular social care consultations and we continue to work with the County Council to improve the way they involve the public in their decision making.

GP services: We've seen many GP practices close in Kent over the past year. This is an issue shared across the South East. Working together with our local Healthwatches we have escalated our concerns to both Healthwatch England and NHS England who commission GP services. We are working with NHS England to improve the communication and support given to patients when their local GP practice closes.

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.

Physical Disabilities: in Kent there are many networks for older people, people with mental health or learning disabilities. There is not currently a platform for people with physical disabilities to make their voice heard and collectively discuss issues that matter to them. We are currently establishing a Kent wide network.

All of our reports and recommendations can be found on our website. We work with the relevant provider and commissioner to influence the recommendations that we have made. To date, no provider or commissioner has declined to work with us. All our intelligence and reports are also shared with Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.



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 **Intelligence Gathering Group** is made up of volunteers

They review the intelligence we receive from the public, meetings and reports

They identify themes and trends for our future work

Our **Deliberation & Directions Group** is made up of volunteers

Together they agree our priorities and projects

They define and shape our project work and allocate resources



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 as described in the same section.

Carers

Equipment such as crutches, wheelchairs, hoists etc. This service has changed in 2015 and we plan to talk to people about their experience of the new service and work with the new provider to ensure patients views are used to improve the service.

Patient Transport

We plan to review the new non emergency patient transport service once it has changed to a new provider.

Health & Social Care Complaints

We will follow up our evaluation of complaints processes in health and social care with an evaluation of the improvements that have been made from complaints, and how those improvements are maintained.

Hospital Discharge

Continuing the work that we have already done this year in North Kent, we will turn our focus to improving the experience of people being discharged from hospital in both East & West Kent.

Children & Young Peoples Services

We will work closely with existing networks that gather feedback from young people and families. We will work closely with Children's Health & Wellbeing Boards to ensure that the voice of children, young people and their families are heard in setting strategic priorities and developing new services.

We will gather feedback on the challenges faced by children and their families in accessing health and social care services, in particular the experiences of schools referring children into services.

Integration of health & Social Care services

Healthwatch Kent has already been heavily involved in the plans for integrating services. We will monitor the impact of these plans and will gather the experiences of people, in particular older people, who are moving between services e.g.

1. From hospital to a care home
2. From hospital to the community
3. From the community to hospital

We will undertake this work where short term improvements in services can be made, without needing to wait for integrated services to become effective. We will employ our statutory power to enter & view services to speak to service users, carers, family and staff about their experiences and feed this back to the organisations involved. These reports will have recommendations which the organisations are required to respond to.



Finances

Table heading showing statement of activities for the year ending 31 March 2016

Income	
KCC Contract	£448,793
KCC Business case projects	£166,220
Total income	£615,013

Expenditure	
Engaging Kent	£28,115
Staff employment costs	£225,793
Staff recruitment / training	£2,530
Staff and volunteer expenses	£17,217
Volunteer costs, expenses & training	£16,591
Grants	£98,505
Advertising and promotion	£13,679
Projects and research	£149,571
Professional fees	£8,308
Office related costs inc Insurance	£30,241
Total expenditure	£590,550



Balance sheet as at 31st March 2016

Fixed assets	
Tangible assets	£2,050
Current assets	
Debtors	£203,367
Cash at bank	£241,298
Total current assets	£444,665
Creditors	(£396,545)
(amounts falling due within one year)	
Net current assets / (liabilities)	£48,120
Total assets less current liabilities	£50,170
Provisions for liabilities Deferred tax	(£410)
Net assets	£49,760
Capital and reserves	£49,760

Notes
 Tangible assets, based on ICT equipment purchases minus a depreciation charge.
 Cash at Bank - funds allocated to current activities
 Creditors - trade creditors, taxation and social security, deferred income and accruals

Your voice 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



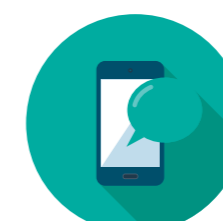
Online:
www.healthwatchkent.co.uk



By Post: Write to us or fill in and send a Speak out 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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