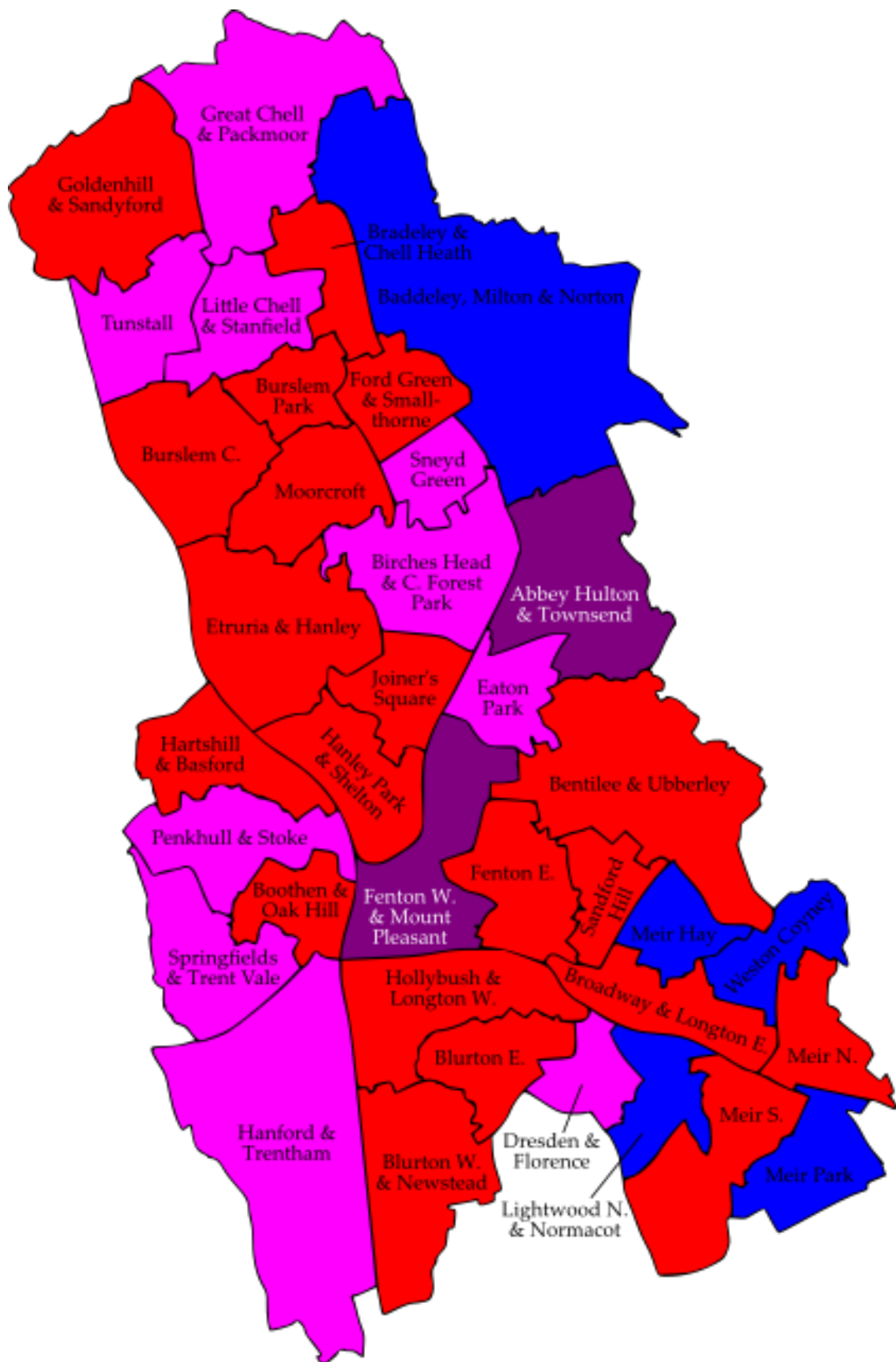




Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent

Annual Report 2018-19





Contents

Message from our Chair	1
About us	3
Highlights of the year	5
How we've made a difference	7
Helping you find the answers	11
Our volunteers	14
Our finances	18
Our plans for next year	20
Contact us	22



Message from our Chair

I am honoured to continue in my role of Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent Chair with this being my sixth year in this vital position. Our local Healthwatch is here to listen to your health and care stories and share these with the people who plan, buy and provide these services.

The most common themes we hear about are GP services, Mental Health Services, Social Care and Hospitals and to ensure that we address your concerns and compliments we share your stories with relevant people and incorporate your priorities into our work programme.

The move from hospital care to community care continues to be a high priority for the local health and care economy and we are constantly reminding commissioners and providers of the absolute need to ensure that patient safety and quality of care is not negatively affected during this process. Any new models of care must be discussed with the public, their views sought and incorporated into service change to ensure that the right care is provided in the right place with no gap in service provision. Furthermore, as detailed in the CQC Local System Review the skills and experience of the voluntary sector must be incorporated into future plans together with being appropriately funded.

On the subject of funding, most, if not all of you will be aware of the current financial climate and the effect of this on statutory services. As a statutory service we are not immune to cuts to our budget and therefore going forward part of our work programme will include income generation to allow us to maximise our reach and impact.

It is impossible to include all the detail of our work in this report and so only the highlights are included. If you wish to discuss any aspects of our work, then please do not hesitate to contact our staff team and if after having read about our role you would like to volunteer with us please contact us to register your interest.

Thank you to all who have supported and contributed to the work of Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent and I look forward to working with you in the future.



Lloyd Cooke

Chair, Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent



Changes you want to see

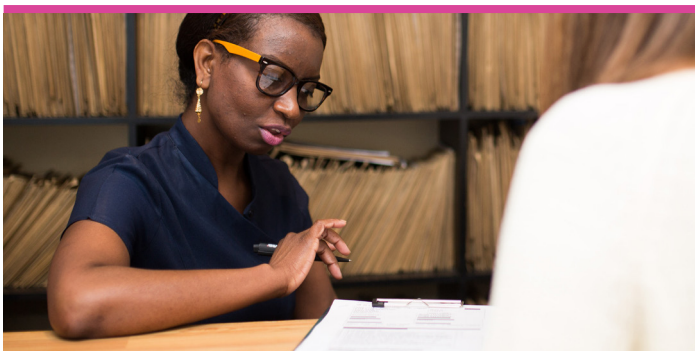
This year we completed a Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent 2019/20 Priorities Survey. You told us about your experience of a number of different health and social care services. Below are some examples of the feedback we received.



“Peer support and talking therapies in the community is a boon for the mental health community”



“Prescriptions are always wrong”



“I think that the carers are forgotten and the ongoing battles passed from pillar to post and back again. Just for a Flu injection even. No one takes responsibility for anything. The answer to everything seems to be “I’ll put it on screen for him/her to pick up” You don’t hear anything more unless you continually chase it and sometimes even then you don’t get any satisfaction. Doctors surgeries are the worst culprit.”



“Too eager to discharge - incorrect care put in place”



About us

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent and Healthwatch England is here to help make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

As Chair of Healthwatch England, it's my role to make sure your Healthwatch gets effective support and that national decisions are informed by what people are saying all over England.

If you were one of the 400,000 people who shared their experiences with us last year, I want to say a personal thank you. Without your views, Healthwatch wouldn't be able to make a difference to health and social care services, both in your area and at a national level. One example of this is how we shared 85,000 views with the NHS, to highlight what matters most, and help shape its plans for the next decade.

If you're part of an organisation that's worked with, supported or responded to Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent, thank you too. You've helped to make an even bigger difference.

None of this could have been possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, who work in the community every day to understand what is working and what could be better when it comes to people's health and care.

If you've shared your views with us then please keep doing what you're doing. If you haven't, then this is your chance to step forward and help us make care better for your community. We all have a stake in our NHS and social care services: we can all really make a difference in this way.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Robert Francis'.

Sir Robert Francis QC
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 that 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.



People at the heart of everything we do

We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. 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

Our main job is to raise people's concerns with health and care decision-makers so that they can improve support across the country. The evidence we gather also helps us recommend how policy and practice can change for the better.





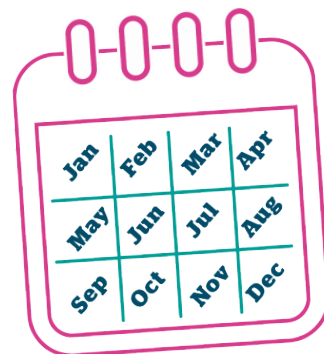
Highlights from

our year

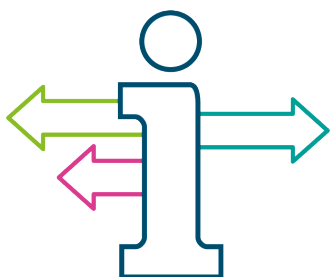
Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2018-19. **Our resources:**



We have received over 700 individual comments/feedback via our surveys, focus groups, Feedback Centre, telephone and email



At the end of March 2019, we had more than 20 active volunteers supporting us in our work. They spent, in total, more than 24 days over a wide range of activities.



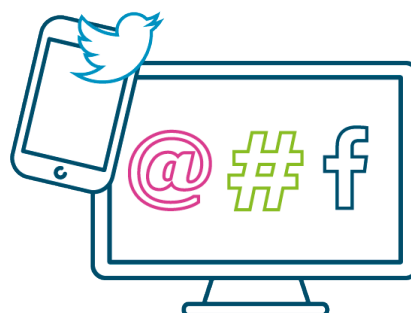
We worked with the Care Quality Commission to ensure your feedback was captured in their Local System review of health and social care <https://bit.ly/2WV0I3d>



We visited 15 services and 64 community events to understand people's experiences of care. From these visits, we made several recommendations for improvement.



Our volunteers have attended Future of local health services in Northern Staffordshire events and are a member of the Local Dental committee. They are passionate about championing the public voice.



We have over 2000 social media followers.



**How we've made
a difference**



Barriers to GP Access for the homeless

Many people told us that services do not truly understand the challenges for people who do not have a home. People found it difficult to access support because they lacked a permanent address, phone number or identification.

NHS guidelines say that GP services cannot refuse to register someone because they do not have proof of address. To raise awareness of this issue, we worked with VOICES of Stoke and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group.

Using these views, we:

- » Co-produced an information card which has been distributed to all GP Practices in the City and other organisations who work with homeless people
- » Co-produced a toolkit for other local Healthwatch to use which allows for a consistent approach to gathering national data and sharing findings and support positive change
- » Co-produced literature to be displayed in GP Practices back-offices to ensure that all staff are aware of the right to access a GP and the guidelines

As well as making a difference for people in the area, this work is being used by the NHS nationally to inform its health inequalities strategy.

NHS
North Staffordshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS
Stoke-on-Trent
Clinical Commissioning Group

How to register a patient experiencing homelessness at your practice



Do people experiencing homelessness have to provide identification?

NO. People experiencing homelessness will often be unable to produce documentation. If a patient cannot produce any supportive documentation but states that they reside within the practice boundary then practices should accept the registration.

Do people experiencing homelessness have to provide an address for correspondence?

NO. Where necessary, you may use the address of the practice to register people experiencing homelessness.

Do people experiencing homelessness need to register with a specialist practice?

NO. Practices should ensure that there is equitable access for all patients that wish to register with them. Patients have a right to change practices if they wish. If a patient is registered at another practice, this is not a reason to refuse registration.

Do practices have to tell anyone if they refuse a patient registration?

YES. If a practice refuses any patient registration then they must record the name, date and reason for the refusal and write to the patient explaining why they have been refused, within a period of 14 days of the refusal.

Is there any guidance available on patient registration?

YES. See the "Patient Registration Standard Operating Principles for Primary Medical Care (General Practice)" from NHS England.

Or, call your CCG primary care team on 01782 298002.

healthwatch
Stoke-on-Trent

EC
Expert Citizens

VOICES
Stoke-on-Trent
Voice of the Homeless

COMMUNITY FUND



Care Navigation - your access to a GP

Towards the end of 2018, we were asked by the CCG to produce a report consisting of patient views following the recent introduction of 'Care Navigation'. There has been a steady rise in patient complaints about GP Services as well as a fall in the numbers able to get an appointment. Attempts to address these issues, such as weekend opening, and consultations carried out using new technologies, have been much-publicised. In addition, the General Practice Five Year Forward View (2016) suggests significant funding is required to support administration and reception staff to take a more active role in their surgeries to lighten the load.

This has resulted in an initiative called Care Navigation whereby Primary Care administration and reception staff use active signposting to direct patients to other sources of help if they have a minor ailment. To do this, they have a list of conditions deemed suitable for signposting and a directory of services. When utilised elsewhere in the country, this has been seen to save a significant amount of GP time that can be used to improve access for more vulnerable patients.

Full report: <https://bit.ly/31QHlfm>

Key Findings

- » 77% of those spoken to in Care Navigation surgeries reported being asked questions about their illness when they booked their appointment.
- » 4.6% reported difficulty answering questions about their illness when asked by receptionist staff.
- » 11.7% of people felt uncomfortable answering questions asked by receptionists about their illness. 78.7% agreed that they were comfortable and the remaining 9.6% neutral about the issue.
- » 8.2% of respondents reported not feeling confident that what they explained to reception staff was understood. 81.9% said they were confident, with the rest neutral (10%).
- » 7% reported that they didn't feel they were supported to get the right help.
- » 12.6% reported that they were not satisfied with their experience of making an appointment,

"There receptionists are very good, don't encroach, don't pressure"

"wanted doctor but they said, have to see nurse, did not explain why.....just that can't see the doctor"

"They ask about your illness, but sometimes I don't know what it is, I just want to see someone"

"No problem, if they think I should go to the pharmacy, I'll go to the pharmacy"

"I wish I could see the same doctor as 9 out of 10 is different doctor"

"Try to phone at 8 to get a quick appointment but can't get through. 62 phone calls this morning (friend sitting alongside said the got through on the second attempt)"

"I start ringing at 7.55 and nearly always get through, people leave it too late to get an appointment, they get one eventually, but have to wait"

although comments suggest that this related to difficulties contacting the GP surgery rather than active signposting.

- » Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent encountered patients who reported having made as many as 80 repeated phone calls when attempting to get through to a receptionist. This may impact upon attitudes towards the service before interacting with Care Navigation.
- » A small number of respondents reported being refused GP appointments once they had explained their symptoms.

Our findings were shared with both Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group and Stoke-on-Trent City Council Adult and Neighborhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee and have helped to inform the development of Care Navigation and we contributed to their GP Provision in Stoke-on-Trent Task and finish Group.





Transgender - who cares?

In June 2018, we held an extremely successful event at Staffordshire University, with over 160 attendees who wished to gain awareness of many of the issues facing the Transgender community.

Speakers included representatives from the local Clinical Commissioning Groups, the University Hospitals of North Midlands, Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust and the audience also heard personal stories from members of the Transgender community and parents.

The audience included schools, GP surgeries, health professionals as well as many members of the public. Feedback was that the day had been very well received and many wanted the event to be repeated to ensure the issues were not forgotten. The main opinions which were fed back by attendees were:

- » More than 75% of attendees found the day to be useful or very useful and asked for the event to be re-run either annually, or possibly even more frequently;
- » 12% felt that the 'work' should be continued and that by introducing ongoing workshops, awareness could be further raised, and feedback gathered;

- » 7% of attendees felt that the development of an information website would be beneficial to many.
- » A further two main themes were identified - the production of badges and posters to promote awareness and to develop and widen the scope for other events.

Two major outcomes arose from this event and the surrounding work - one was that the CCG recognised that awareness training was necessary for all NHS employees who meet members of the public and the other was to bring about the launch of a North Staffordshire based branch of Mermaids, the national charity which supports younger people who are unsure of gender identity and their parents.

More recently, a further outcome is that Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent has been asked to partner with Keele University to run a similar national event, focusing on Trans issues. This second event will take place in June 2019 and will concentrate on education and related issues which concern Trans youth. Approximately 150 people are expected to attend, many of whom will come from the education sector.





Helping you find

the answers

How we provide people with advice and information

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful. There are a number of organisations that can provide help, but people don't know where to look.

You can come to us for advice and information in a number of ways including:

- » Specific advice and information by email
- » Our contact us form
- » At community events
- » Promoting helpful services across our social media channels
- » Over the phone



Health Centre/GP Complaints

A lady called us about a local health centre. She was at the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman stage of the complaints process and needed some help with filling out their forms and support with the process.

We signposted her to Asist Advocacy Services who are funded to provide this level of support.

Another lady called to ask how she can make a complaint about her GP. We advised her that she could contact the GP Practice Manager and see if her issue can be resolved and if not then to contact NHS England. If the issue was still not resolved, then she could contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

Welfare Benefits and GP Access

A lady called us and said that her friend who is homeless has attended the Job Centre and was told that unless he produces a sick note his benefits will be stopped. He has complex multiple needs.

They then attended a local GP Practice and was told that they need to complete a form and it is the Doctor's discretion as to whether a homeless person is seen or not.

The client was signposted to our information card and draft letter on our website which details NHS guidance about access to a GP regardless of lack address and identification. Contact details of Voices of Stoke were also shared, and information given about their Services Co-ordinator role.

<https://www.healthwatchstokeontrent.co.uk/our-work/gatekeepers/>





Patient Voices

Opinions of Sutherland Centre patients recorded on 14th September 2018

- "I don't want my appointments to be cancelled.. If they have to be, I'd appreciate if you explained why."
 - "I think communication is important, I'm happy to receive text messages from you to keep me informed."
 - "I appreciate it when you find the time to speak to me at reception."
 - "I would like it to be easy to be able to reach my care coordinator."
- RECEPTION**
- 
- "I want to have the Care Plan Approach explained to me."
 - "I like my care plan to be up to date."
 - "I would like my care plan to be completed in partnership with me."
- 
- "I would like to be able to see the same psychiatrist and not different locums."
 - "I don't want to have to tell my story over again to different professionals."
- 
- "In consultations, please look at me and have the time to listen."
 - "I would like you to check that I understand what you tell me and be sure that you understand me."
 - "I like that I am able to have families and carers attend appointments with me."
 - "I need to know that I am able to raise concerns if the next appointment date feels too far away"
- 

healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent
 About: The above is the results of a workshop held with patients of the Sutherland Centre. The patients were asked what was important about the way their treatment is delivered and what they would be on their 'wish list'. Do you have a comment to share? Contact us (details below).
 @HealthwatchSOT 01782 683080 info@healthwatchstoke.co.uk

Your experience of Community Mental Health Services

We have received feedback about concerns about community mental health services and our mental health group organised a focus group at a local mental health community centre. Attendees shared their experiences and we produced a Charter which has been shared with North Staffordshire Mental Health Care NHSTrust.

We will focus on this area further in 2019/20.



Come and Have Your Say

Do you use services at the Sutherland or Greenfields Centre?

Healthwatch wants to know how you want your services to be delivered. To find out, we are visiting the Art Group at:

The Sutherland Centre, 11am Friday 14th of September

Please come along.

You can contact the Healthwatch office for more information on 01782 683102 Or info@healthwatchstoke.co.uk



Are you looking for help?

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 Stoke-on-Trent is here for you.

w: www.healthwatchstoke.co.uk
 t: 01782 683 080
 e: info@healthwatchstoke.co.uk



Our volunteers



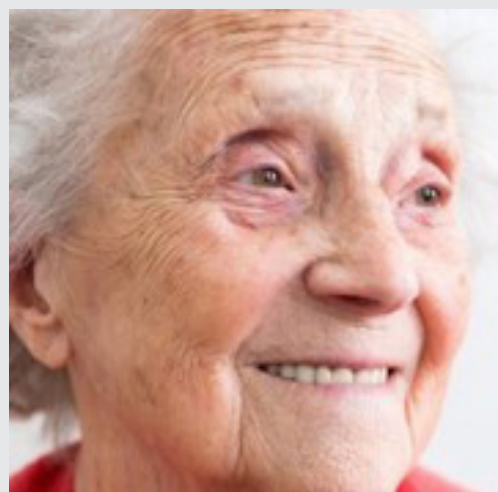
How do our volunteers help us?

Our volunteers maintain their keen interest in being involved in the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) and the Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent STP Volunteer Group was formed last year.

However, the work of the group has been frustrated by many 'pauses' in the development of the STP strategy and we understand serious engagement work will commence in 2019 - 2020. Our group of volunteers has been kept very active in other areas. The group has been

involved in various events to ensure they are able to participate, enabling patient voice to be represented and heard appropriately at every stage.

There are currently two groups who meet regularly, these being the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership volunteers' group and the long-standing Mental Health group. The Enter and View team meet as part of the STP group.



Enter and View

We have a team of 15 volunteers who have received Enter and View training and they represent a wide range of backgrounds. Some are ex Health and Care professionals; some are service users while others have a great passion to bring about improvements in health and care across the city.

To this end we have begun working closer with the City Council to understand what they are looking for when undertaking their visits (the Council is, of course, responsible for providing care in its' Homes).

We have developed a checklist to ensure that our visits cover all areas checked out by their teams. Several members of our team have undertaken Adult Safeguarding training to better equip them on future visits.

By doing this, we will continue to work completely independently, but with an aim of providing safer and improved care across the area.

Another first during this year has been a visit to a local GP Practice. Such visits will now become incorporated into our scheduled program.

During the year, the team undertook 6 Enter and View visits to facilities across the City as considerable time was taken up by undertaking other volunteer activities, but it is planned to dramatically increase the number of visits in the year 2019/20.

All Enter and View reports, once approved, are sent to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England, the City Council and are always published on our website: (<https://www.healthwatchstokeontrent.co.uk/enter-and-view-reports>).

How else have they been involved?

Events attended by the group, either alone or with support from Healthwatch staff included:

» Modern Slavery event in May 2018;

Sanity Fair in June;

Transgender - who cares event in June 2018 (see details of this event elsewhere in report);

Meir and Milton Youth Groups in July; and various community events including the Hartshill Community (HAHO) event in June, a full day community event with residents from Sneyd Green in September and the 'Hidden Voices' event arranged by North Staffs Combined Healthcare Trust, also in September. Each of these enabled us to gather feedback regarding important issues such as the future of local health services in Northern Staffordshire.

Our volunteers were heavily involved in a piece of work commissioned by the CCG to assess public sentiment regarding changes to the way in which appointments were made with GPs across the city. This 'Care navigation' project had a short timescale and involved patient engagement sessions at nine GP Practices across the city and the production of a report based on the findings. The work was carried out on time and 'to budget'.

Approaching the end of the year 2018 - 2019 saw our volunteers once more getting actively involved in ascertaining public opinion of the 'Long Term Plan' being developed by the NHS. The work began in March 2019 and the research element of the study was completed before the end of April 2019. Over 250 surveys had to be completed during this time period and, once more, the work of our volunteers enabled us to achieve this. During March 2019, five sessions were carried out with various groups across the city, including those suffering from Stroke, the BME community and the older people's LGBT group in the city.

Our Enter and View Authorised representatives, at the end of March 2019 are:

- » Hilda Johnson
- » George Wallace
- » Paul Harper
- » Ruby Greene
- » Maureen Myers
- » Phil Leese
- » Kev Lovatt
- » Carol Myatt
- » Jean Mayer
- » Barbara Mawby
- » David Sweetsur
- » Lynn Hopkins.



Meet our volunteers

Elsewhere, individual volunteers took up individual roles representing us at different meetings. These include:

- » One of our volunteers became the regional Healthwatch representative for the Local Dental Network, a quarterly meeting at which Healthwatch and therefore the public, can be kept aware of changes to dental services across the area;
- » Attendance by one of our volunteers at the bi-monthly meetings of Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (formerly Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Trust) User and Carer Forum;
- » Regular attendance at workshops run by NSCHT at the Sutherland Centre and the Greenfields with feedback comment cards being returned from these sessions, which we then pursue with the relevant organisation; and
- » Regular attendance at the Dementia Alliance group and running drop in sessions at Headway.

During this period, the number of active volunteers has continued to remain at a healthy level and at the end of March 2019 was just under 30. Fourteen of these have undertaken Enter and View training and take part in our schedule of visits.

The volunteers come from a broad range of backgrounds, representing a broad spectrum of age ranges, ethnicities and gender. They also come from a wide range of backgrounds - we have students from Keele and other Universities, as well as, for example, service users with long-term conditions.

What is without doubt is that we depend heavily on the ongoing commitment shown by our volunteers as without them we could only carry out a fraction of the work we do, and we sincerely thank them for their efforts.



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering get in touch.

w: www.healthwatchstoke.co.uk

t: 01782 683 080

e: info@healthwatchstoke.co.uk

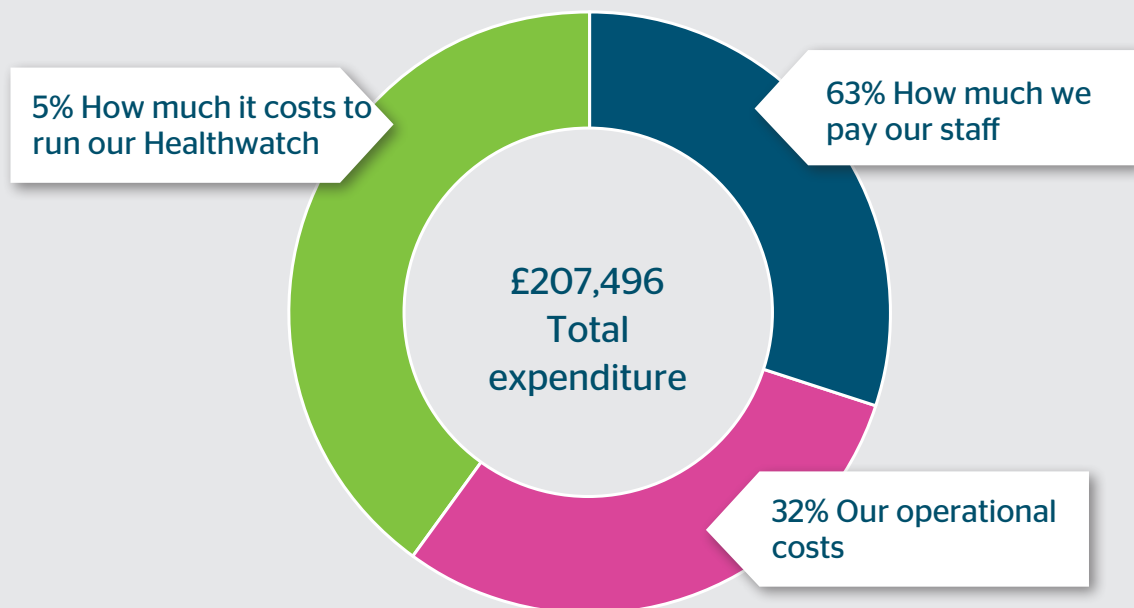
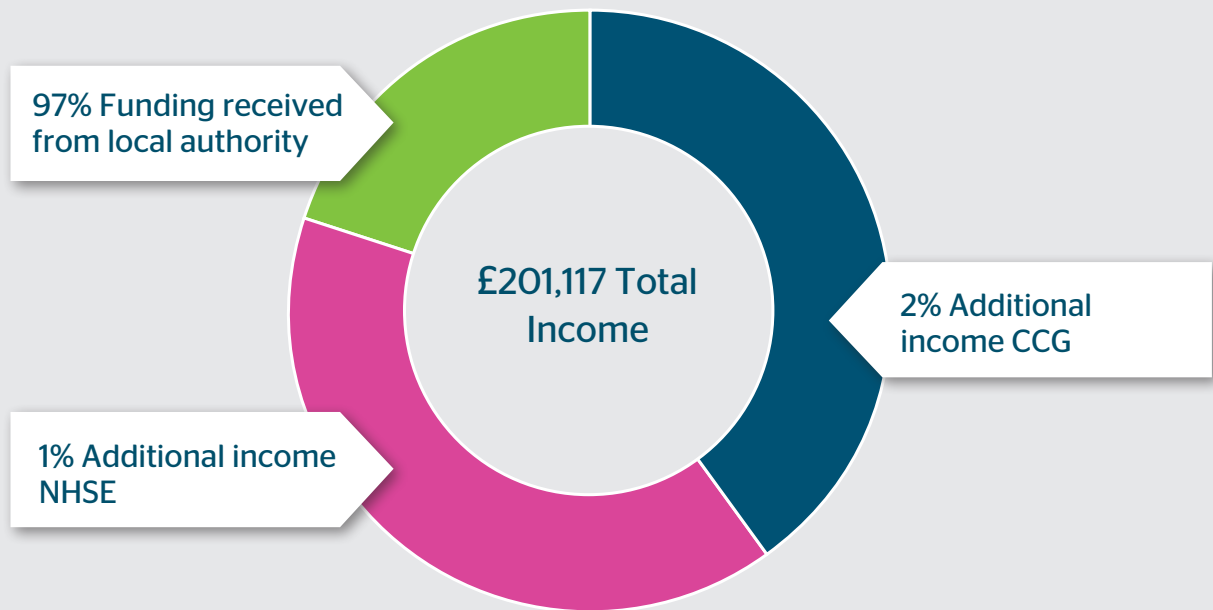


Our finances

How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we spent £207,496.

We also received £5,046 of additional income from CCG consultancy work and NHSE.





Our plans for

next year

Message from our Chief officer

During 2018/19 we have worked hard to ensure that the public voice is included in health and care service development. We have had many conversations with local health and care leaders to ensure that events and opportunities are available for you to have your say in the Local Health Care Services. Future of Community Hospitals Consultation and the upcoming Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Engagement events. We have also worked closely with the Health and Care Wellbeing Board to ensure that local discussions about changes to health and care services are discussed in this forum to encourage joint working to reduce duplication and negative impact on services.

Our community Mental Health Group has attended various mental health events and meetings and contributed to North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust Quality Accounts. Patient experience has been shared with providers to champion positive change. Our Dignity and Respect Charter is promoted on an ongoing basis.

This year we worked with and contributed to the Stoke-on-Trent City Councils Adult and Neighborhoods Overview and Scrutiny committee's GP Provision in Stoke-on-Trent Task and Finish Group. Their report was published in October 2018 and contains various recommendations including that the online and mobile application appointment booking services are reviewed to ensure that they are user-friendly and that their usage be encouraged by GP Receptionists and the public made be aware of their availability and how to use them.

This year we carried out a Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent 2019/20 Priorities Survey which gave you an opportunity to tell us what you think our priorities should be next year. Following evaluation of all responses our 2019/20 priority areas are:

- » Patient experience of prescriptions
- » Patient experience of NHS and social care in the home
- » Patient experience of community mental health services

Other themes that have been identified in our evaluation will form part of our engagement and outreach programme.

Our work programme will have an element of flexibility to allow us to be responsive to unexpected events in our health and care system and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.

I would like to thank all our staff, volunteers, Board members and the public for their vital contributions to support a health and care service that works for all members of our communities and I look forward to working with you in the coming year.



Simmy Akhtar

Chief officer, Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent

Contact us

Address and contact as of 31/03/2019.

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent, The Dudson Centre,
Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. ST1 5DD

- » Contact number: 01782 683080
- » Email address: Info@healthwatchstoke.co.uk
- » Twitter: [@HealthwatchSoT](https://twitter.com/HealthwatchSoT)
- » Facebook: facebook.com/Healthwatch-Stoke-on-Trent
- » Website: www.healthwatchstoke.co.uk

Contract holder's address and contact details as of
31/03/2019.

Engaging Communities Staffordshire CIC (ECS)
Unit 42, Staffordshire University Business Village
Dyson Way
Staffordshire
ST18 0TW

- » Contact number: 01785 887809
- » Email address: contactus@ecstaffs.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.





healthwatch
Stoke-on-Trent

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent
The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

www.healthwatchstokeontrent.co.uk
t: 01782 683080
e: info@healthwatchstoke.co.uk
tw: @healthwatchsot
fb: www.facebook.com/healthwatchstoke