



**healthwatch**  
Northumberland

Annual Report 2017/18



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# Message from our Chair

## Healthwatch Northumberland Chair, David Thompson, reflects on the year.

It has been a fascinating year since I became involved with Healthwatch Northumberland. The staff team have spent a great deal of time working with and learning from the wider community and are therefore able to represent the views of patients, carers and families with considerable effectiveness.

Similarly, board members reflect the thoughts of the people of Northumberland in a most positive way. Their worthwhile advice and support is much appreciated, not least the efforts made by recently retired Madeleine Elliott and Colin Watson. Particular mention must be made, however, for Vice Chair Carole Pitkeathley's dedicated service and huge contribution to the progress made by the Healthwatch Northumberland over the past two years.

One of the most important vehicles for communication is this Annual Report which incorporates detail of the wide ranging work undertaken during 2017/2018. Much has been achieved by colleagues within Healthwatch Northumberland whilst I have spent quite some time trying to unravel and comment upon the implications of Sustainability and Transformation Plans. Such plans have much to commend them in terms of promoting greater partnership within health and social care but developments are slow and not well publicised. In this context, there is scope for Healthwatch Northumberland to work even more closely with other organisations in the north east to monitor progress in such strategically important matters.



So there is much to do as we move forward. Our priorities for this coming year will include access to existing services especially appointments with GPs, mental health issues for young people, and dementia services. These were the issues prioritised by people who responded to our annual survey.

It is therefore re-assuring that Northumberland County Council has decided, after a thorough tendering exercise, to renew the contract for undertaking the role of Healthwatch Northumberland for another three years with Adapt (NE). We shall continue to be the 'ear and voice' of local people and continue to be the independent champion for users of health and social care. That is our committed intention and we shall strive to justify the faith which has been shown in us.

# Message from the Chair of Adapt (NE)

## Message from Pat Maginn, Chair of our umbrella organisation, Adapt (NE)

I would like to start my reflections on this year at the end, and say how pleased Adapt (NE) is to have won the contract to deliver Healthwatch Northumberland for another three years. Healthwatch Northumberland is a very important part of the portfolio of projects which deliver Adapt's vision of a more inclusive society for the people of Northumberland.

What is described here are only the highlights of what the staff team has been doing over the past year. However all of it, from every market day event to every phone call, is based on a commitment to be available and accessible to communities across the county, and the record response to the annual survey this year proves that this is happening.

Every market day event to every phone call, is based on a commitment to be available and accessible to communities across the county and the record response to the annual survey proves that this is happening.



The survey has given David Thompson and the Healthwatch Northumberland Board a wealth of information about the views and experiences of people in Northumberland as they are supported by our health and social care services. The Adapt (NE) Board is confident the Healthwatch Northumberland Board has the right strategy and plans and above all healthy, robust relationships with commissioners and providers in place to continue to be an effective independent champion.

I would like to end by thanking Kirsten Francis who through all her time at Northumberland County Council was a source of reliable, wise and valued counsel to both Adapt (NE) and Healthwatch Northumberland.

# Highlights from our year



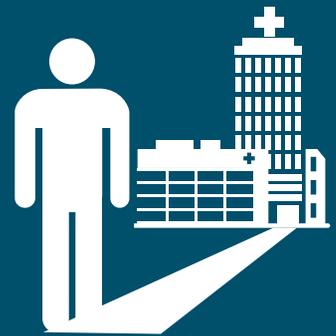
This year we had a reach of 120,000 on social media



Our annual survey was completed by almost 600 people



We have had over 900 responses to surveys about local services



We have visited 40 GP surgeries in the county



We've given your views at 45 meetings with the people who buy and provide health and social care services

We have answered over 500 questions



# Who we are



You need services that work for you, your friends and family. That is why we want you to share your experiences of using health and care with us - both good and bad. We use your voice to encourage those who run services to act on what matters to you.

As well as championing your views locally, we also share your views with Healthwatch England who make sure that the government put people at the heart of care nationally.

## Health and social 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.

We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

## Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.

People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

Healthwatch Northumberland is based in Hexham and the team travels throughout the county to meet with and listen to the people of Northumberland.

# Meet the team



**Derry Nugent**  
Project Coordinator



**Claire Jackson**  
Communication and  
Marketing Officer



**Tania Porteous**  
Engagement Officer



**Lesley Tweddell**  
Engagement Officer



**Anne Armstrong**  
Engagement Officer



**Jean Pearson**  
Administration Assistant

# Your views on health and care

## Listening to local people's views

### Overnight Closures of Urgent Care Centres

In September 2016 the hours at the Urgent Care Centres at Hexham and Wansbeck General Hospitals were reduced by closing from midnight to 8.00am.

In the summer of 2017 Healthwatch Northumberland was asked by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to engage with the public about their views on the temporary night time closures and what was generally understood about urgent care centres and where to access treatment.

We conducted a survey and held a focus group to hear what people felt about this change. The results showed that people in the county were concerned, especially those in rural areas. 24% of people felt that access to services for rural communities and those living longer distances from Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH) at Cramlington would be the most affected by overnight closures. For many, transport was an issue, particularly if they do not drive, do not have access to a car or have caring responsibilities. The impact was summed up by one respondent:

“For people who live in rural areas, removal of these overnight services will lead to people being unable to access the right service and either going untreated or calling an ambulance.”

While another said:

“I am a parent and carer. I would not be able to travel one hour each way to NSECH while leaving other children (with disabilities), at home.”

The feedback also revealed that people felt there was not enough information available to the general public with regards to which services to use for what illness or injury, and where people in need should go. A respondent commented:

“If there was generally clearer understanding as to which service should be used and for what, then resources would be used in a better way.”

Our recommendations to the trust were to undertake further public engagement about these issues. We were pleased to report in September 2017 that the urgent care centres at Wansbeck and Hexham General Hospitals would re-open overnight from 30 October.

“We work closely with our health partners, in particular Healthwatch Northumberland, who not only inform our quality priorities in delivering high quality, safe and caring health and care services, but also act as a 'critical friend' when we are developing communication and engagement plans to inform the public about a new, or a change in a service. Their communication and engagement channels are crucial in spreading our key messages and more importantly they help us to collect the views of our local communities”

**Claire Riley, Executive Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs,**  
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

## Annual General Meeting

We were delighted to welcome over 70 guests to our annual general meeting in Stannington Village Hall in October.

The meeting saw partners and local organisations come together with supporters and other members of the public to review the year of work from Healthwatch Northumberland, plus an outline of the strategic priorities until 2020.

Guest speaker was Graham Tebbutt, Head of Strategy and Transformation at North East Ambulance Service who explained the new ambulance response standards, with colleague Barry Dews, Head of Patient Transport. A marketplace of stands from local support and community organisations offering advice and information was a popular addition at the event, with Age UK Northumberland, Northumberland Cancer Support Group, Northumberland County Blind Association, Northumberland CVA, Carers Northumberland, Northumberland Independent Advocacy Service, Patient Advice and Liaison Service and Ageing Well Allies in attendance.

Importantly, the event also presented an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues of general concern to North East Ambulance Service and Healthwatch Northumberland staff and board members.

Graham Tebbutt of North East Ambulance Service said: “The change in ambulance response standards is the biggest in a generation and it’s important that patients and the public are aware of what this means for them. The opportunity to speak at the Healthwatch Northumberland annual general meeting was a fantastic chance to highlight what is happening before the changes take effect. I hope our presentation helped people to better understand the new national response standards. This meeting certainly gave people the chance to ask questions and the number of questions asked was indicative of the importance and interest that people have in the new ambulance response standards.”

The meeting was filmed by Hexham TV and can be viewed on its Facebook page.

## Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services

Young people’s ability to access mental health services and support was established as a key priority for Healthwatch Northumberland in the 2017/18 operational plan. This was based upon feedback obtained through the annual survey and from engagement activity with young people.

Our initial focus was to research how the system for accessing help and support currently operates. We found the first point of access for young people who do not have a specific psychological condition is often through their contact with universal services such as schools and primary care centres. We discovered that although a clear pathway exists when a psychological need has been identified, the system for accessing information, services and support at this earlier universal or preventative level seems much less clear.

As a consequence this has been our focus. We have researched and reviewed GP practice websites and found their content varies considerably across the county. We also facilitated a workshop with young people where we asked who they would go to for help if they were experiencing anxiety, depression, thoughts of self-harm, stress, low mood or anger. As part of this, the young people were asked what websites they might use in these circumstances and which words they would search for to access help.

Based on the findings of this small sample we hope to engage with a greater number of young people and delve deeper into their views on mental health support services before presenting our findings and recommendations.

“Healthwatch Northumberland has been an active participant in the Empowering People and Communities stakeholder group which is going to be responsible for developing and delivering that part of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Their input has been really valuable in providing a different patient perspective and the individuals who have attended have always had a wider skill set which we have been able to draw on.”

**Liz Morgan, Director of Public Health**

## Riversdale Surgery, Wylam

- + In June 2017 the Riversdale Surgery asked patients for their views on a proposal to close the site in Wylam and transfer all services to the surgery three miles away in Prudhoe. The surgery estimated that around half of registered patients - 1500 people, would in future have to travel to the new site to access services.
- + The feedback the surgery received highlighted concerns about getting to the new location by public transport. Although the distance is relatively short, the sites are on opposite sides of a river and there is only one direct bus service.
- + In October 2017 the self-organised Wylam Surgeries Users Group contacted us asking for more information about the decision making process and how patients' views could be fed into that process. We asked NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group to explain how the proposal would be considered and we also met with a representative of the Riversdale Surgery to understand the reasons behind the proposal.
- + We held two public drop in events in Wylam and delivered a survey to households in the affected areas; this was also available online. We spoke to 62 people and 167 questionnaires were returned. 81% of respondents are currently registered with the practice and 93% of respondents said they were unhappy about the proposal.
- + The overwhelming concern expressed was how patients would maintain access to the services offered by the Riversdale Surgery. The services were valued and sympathy was expressed for the position of the current GP partners, but respondents, especially the 66% of respondents aged over 65 who, while they are driving at the moment are very aware they may stop driving in the next 5-10 years, expressed grave concerns about their ability to get to Prudhoe.

Healthwatch Northumberland acknowledges that any proposals to change a valued health service will be met with resistance and questions as to the need for change. The feedback we have gathered from patients and others associated with the Riversdale Surgery, shows there is an understanding and some sympathy with the situation the surgery is in, but they are concerns about:

- Scale of disruption - under the proposal up to half the current Riversdale Surgery patient population will have to travel to the Prudhoe site with, for many, the current 'walk to the surgery' replaced by a three hour plus round trip.
- Communication - people would like more information about the proposed changes and to know their concerns have been heard and addressed in developing the outcome. Specifically the physical accessibility due to travel logistics and location (Riversdale patients) and the demand on other limited services (Riversdale and patients registered with other practices).
- Continuity of service - how it will be transferred and what changes or accommodations will be made to ensure it continues to meet peoples' needs.

Healthwatch Northumberland made recommendations to the Riversdale Surgery to address these concerns and anticipates a response by September 2018.

“Healthwatch Northumberland’s input as one of our key ‘critical friends’ has been very welcome throughout 2017/18. Using their canvassed public opinion to best effect they have provided useful, timely and appropriate challenge to CCG proposals and undertaken information gathering exercises that have greatly assisted the CCG’s decision making process. At the same time as welcoming constructive challenge the CCG has also enjoyed the close relationship that exists between both organisations and looks forward to furthering this in the future”.

**Stephen Young, Strategic Head of Corporate Affairs,  
NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group**

## Making sure services work for you

Until 2017 Northumberland County Council monitored older persons care homes in the county, against standards for resident choice, control and involvement, care, competency, safety and quality of service. These standards had been agreed with the providers and aimed to highlight good performance areas across all homes and also areas where standards were not being met and there was room for improvement.

Healthwatch Northumberland had helped to recruit Independent Observers whose role primarily and most importantly was to talk to the residents. In 2017 our Chair David Thompson, Vice Chair Carole Pitkeathley and board member Margaret Young took part in the scheme.

Reflecting on this David says:

“After attending an in depth training/briefing session provided by the council, I visited a care home in the county and was made most welcome. Sensible guidelines were agreed about where I could go - and not go - and this enabled me to speak openly to a significant number of staff and patients. I duly enquired about the main areas of interest, as requested by the council: environmental factors, staff and quality of care, individual care, food and nutrition, plus any other comments or observations.

Based on such findings, I then completed the visit handbook which allowed me to give formal feedback to both the council and the care home itself. This report was a positive one although I did pass comment on the few and relatively minor areas where I considered improvements could be made.

My comments reflected not only the high level of care and wellbeing which I believed was being provided for the residents, but also a rationale for further improvements to be made by the staff. It certainly gave me a first-hand experience of life and work inside a care home which in turn helped me to fulfil my responsibilities within Healthwatch Northumberland”.

As Northumberland County Council is no longer using the Independent Observer process the Healthwatch Northumberland Board has resolved to broaden the use of its Enter & View powers.

Local Healthwatch have powers of entry and providers of services have a duty to allow entry under the Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007 (amended under Health and Social Care Act 2012) and the NHS Act 2006, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Service Act 2007.

Healthwatch Northumberland will collect the views of patients and members of the public at the point of service delivery, report positive and negative findings with associated recommendations to service providers, Care Quality Commission, the Local Authority, NHS commissioners and Healthwatch England. The focus will be on activities, not whole organisations and on observation and gathering information.

Building on our own feedback and jointly with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust we will be undertaking an Enter & View project in autumn 2018 at the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital.



# Helping you find the answers



## How we have helped the community get the information they need

### Cold Caps

- + We were contacted by someone who reported that cold cap treatment hadn't been available for them during cancer treatment at Hexham General Hospital. A cold cap is a special cap filled with cold gel that can reduce hair loss caused by chemotherapy. It works by reducing the amount of chemotherapy drugs reaching the hair follicles.
- + We contacted some local groups for more information and were invited to attend a coffee morning held by the Northumberland Cancer Support Group. The people we spoke to told us that a cold cap is available at Hexham Hospital. Some were offered the cold cap treatment but declined because of potential drawbacks and limited success rates; others told us that because of the type of cancer and its severity, they had not been eligible for this type of treatment.
- + A volunteer with Macmillan Cancer Support agreed to ask some questions when she was next at the hospital. She reported back to us saying: "Hexham Hospital oncology day unit has two cold caps. These are offered to patients and are readily available as appointments can be made to accommodate everyone, but the consultant may be of the opinion that the patient could be at risk of metastasis (the development of secondary malignant growths to the brain) if taking a certain drug during treatment."
- + Further research concluded that it is the decision of the individual cancer specialist whether or not the cold cap is suitable for a patient. Cold cap treatment is not available for use during radiotherapy. It can be used with chemotherapy but if the treatment is very strong or if the patient has very long periods of chemotherapy treatment, the cold cap will not be suitable. In short, the severity of the cancer and the strength of the treatment will determine whether the cold cap is recommended.
- + Our findings were reported back to the individual who raised the query, who concluded that our findings had made things much clearer and that a discussion with the consultant was the next step.

### How to find information

We provide an information and signposting service to help people find health, social care and support services local to them. Our website has a comprehensive 'find services' page, with information about, and links to, local health and community services and organisations. Please get in touch if you need help finding the right service for you.

 "I have been aware of Healthwatch Northumberland for quite some time and, when I have needed to contact them, they have always been helpful. Currently Healthwatch Northumberland is pursuing a suggestion I made regarding standardising information about cardiomyopathy/ICD patients across the UK on a smart card. At present the information is kept in various forms, e.g. on an A4 sheet of paper. I am very grateful for their involvement and, hopefully, together, we will get a positive response."

**Jean W, Northumberland resident**



# Making a difference together

## How your experiences are helping to influence change

### Dental Services in Rothbury and Hadston

Part of the Healthwatch role is to ensure that patient and service user views get taken into account when services are being planned as well as when they are delivered. When the Coquetdale Dental Practice closed in October 2017 it was vital that local people had the opportunity to influence what came next.

The Coquetdale Dental Practice was unusual as it provided dental services to approximately 1700 patients in two different local communities - Rothbury and Hadston. The closure meant that people from both areas would be left without a local service and would have to travel to alternative practices in Morpeth or Alnwick.

Healthwatch Northumberland worked with the practice and NHS England Cumbria and the North East to promote this fact and to give people information about other practices. Very soon people were telling us that it was difficult to get NHS treatment or that practices were full.

At the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, local councillors said they had received similar feedback and also about the difficulty and cost of travel, especially for families.

NHS England Cumbria and the North East was asked to undertake some public engagement to get a clear understanding of local needs prior to commissioning a replacement service. Healthwatch Northumberland worked with NHS England to extend the engagement's reach by holding local drop in events in Hadston and Rothbury.

Through the drop-in events, an online and postal survey, NHS England Cumbria and the North East received 783 individual responses and is now considering the different options to provide dental services in the area. Joint working with Healthwatch Northumberland has ensured patient feedback will help to shape the further development of a viable and sustainable service model for dental services in Rothbury and Hadston.

As a service provider, additional feedback from a third party is always important and Healthwatch Northumberland provides that as required.

The team provided an excellent, responsive service for patients when engaging with them about the annual survey.

**Paul Atkinson, Practice Manager,  
Netherfield House Surgery**

## Response to Quality Reports

One of the formal duties of Healthwatch is to comment on the Quality Account Reports from organisations providing NHS services. A Quality Account is a report about the quality of services by an NHS healthcare provider and looks at patient safety, the effectiveness of treatments that patients receive and patient feedback.

Healthwatch Northumberland gave comments on the Quality Accounts of the NHS Trusts serving the county's population: Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, North East Ambulance Service, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust and Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust..

In each case we highlighted where the trust was doing well and where we thought there were areas for improvement. For example for the Northumberland Tyne & Wear Trust, who provide mental health services, we noted the ongoing issues in relation to waiting times for services. Of particular concern are the waits experienced for the Children's and Young People's services and the worsening position of people in Northumberland waiting at least 18 weeks for other services.

Our full responses can be found on the relevant trust's website or by asking them for a copy of the 2017 Quality Report.

## Working with our community and other organisations

### Great North Care Record

We hosted two consultation events in November on behalf of Connected Health Cities (CHC). The purpose of these sessions was to create opportunities for a small pilot group of residents from Northumberland to hear about the Great North Care Record (GNCR) project and to share their views and suggestions with the project team. The GNCR team wanted to understand the circumstances in which people across Cumbria and the North East would be prepared to share their health data.

The GNCR is a project whereby GP practices, hospitals, universities, community and mental health trusts have teamed up to develop the way patient information is shared to improve health outcomes for patients.

Historically, different NHS organisations have developed a range of individual systems to store patient records. This means important information held in one part of the health care system might not be readily available to other health care professionals.

A total of 35 residents were present at the sessions held in Berwick and Ashington and individuals who were unable to attend in person submitted questions and comments. Similar workshops were hosted by other local Healthwatch across the region. From across the area the main themes to emerge were that you:

- Want a say in how your data is used, by whom and for what purposes.
- Recognise the benefits of sharing data for improving health and social care
- Would like to have access to information held about you, to see what is in the record and to add additional information that might help your care.
- Expect to be informed about how your data may be used and to be able to access further information on data sharing as and when required. You want governance of data sharing to be managed by both experts and citizens.
- Expect communication and decision making about data sharing to be accessible to all regardless of an individual's class, literacy, disability, ethnicity, mental health status.
- Expect institutions handling your data to act in a trustworthy manner.
- Expect your privacy to be maintained, except where you have specifically agreed to share personal information.
- Expect an even higher level of care for data sharing about potentially stigmatising issues like mental health, reproductive health and sexuality.
- Want to know that your data is secure and that your preferences are upheld.

You can read the full report at: [greatnorthcarerecord.org.uk](http://greatnorthcarerecord.org.uk).

it starts with  
**YOU**



**“Healthwatch Northumberland has worked very positively with the Cumbria and the North East Quality Surveillance Group. As a respected partner, they professionally represent the patient voice and perspective to a significantly important agenda. Their input is both welcomed and influential.”**

**Bev Reilly, Co-Chair, Cumbria and the North East Quality Surveillance Group.**

### **#ItStartsWithYou**

By sharing your ideas and experiences of health and social care services with us, you have helped commissioners and providers hear what works, what doesn't, and how care could be better in the future.

### **Patient Transport Services**

Last year we reported on the problems which people were experiencing with the Patient Transport Service run by North East Ambulance Service but which we hoped would be addressed by the introduction of new eligibility criteria.

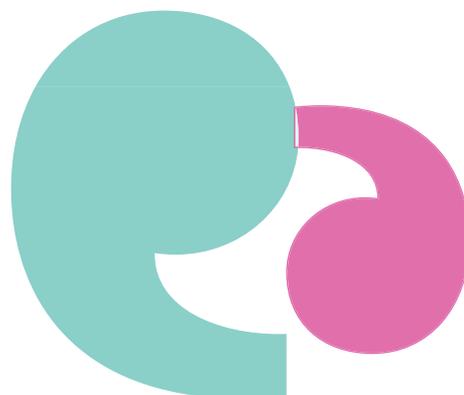
We are pleased to report that the new system was rolled out in Northumberland earlier than in other areas including the automatic eligibility for people living 30 or more miles from the site of their treatment. This is good news as we had continued to receive feedback about this from people, particularly those in the north of the county.

This was an excellent example of how continued engagement and feedback coupled with working together with commissioners, providers and the Patient Advice and Liaison Service can really make a difference.

### **Personal Health Budgets**

People who require health and social care services may have the option of self-directed support. Self directed support aims to put the person in charge of their own support through the use of a personal budget. Hundreds of people in Northumberland use personal budgets for health and social care to arrange their support.

Healthwatch Northumberland is working with Northumberland County Council and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to survey people who use these services. We want to find out how personal budgets are working for the people of Northumberland and what could be done to improve services further. Please get in touch if you would like to share your experiences with us.



# Our plans for next year



## What next?

Early in 2018 we conducted our latest annual survey to hear the people of Northumberland's views and experiences of health and social care.

A record 579 people from a wide range of backgrounds gave us a wealth of information about how health and social care services feel from the users perspective – the highest ever number of responses and a massive 63% increase on 2017.

The stand out thing that we were told is that 88% of people rated their experiences of health and social care services in Northumberland over the last 12 months as 'satisfactory' or better, with 65% rating them as 'good' or 'excellent'. This is a slight decrease from 67% last year. The majority of respondents found using services 'easy'.

Services with which people expressed highest satisfaction were community based services such as pharmacies, dentists, opticians and practice nurses.

GP services received many favourable comments but lost confidence from some respondents when it came to booking appointments. The telephone appointment system brought about problems such as not being able to take a call back at work, and waiting all day and then still needing an appointment. A significant issue was for those who are hard of hearing and those with mental health conditions who felt that they could not easily articulate the reason for their call over the phone. Others found the Doctor First system and online booking a positive experience.

In 2018/19 we will focus on the appointment issue to understand why there is such a range of experiences and how good practice could be shared.

Throughout the survey comments around mental health services focused on the lack of provision, particularly in the north of the county. We are already doing some work around mental health services and young people and will look to incorporate feedback from this survey in this work. Respondents to our annual survey were asked to rank a list of priorities for us in 2018/19. The main areas identified and what we will do are as follows.

### Mental Health:

- + Continuation of work to identify support for children and young people.
- + Ensuring Healthwatch Northumberland works with mental health networks and support groups to provide a clear way to gather experiences and provide feedback.
- + Involvement in PLACE (patient-led assessment of the care environment) with Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust.

### GPs and appointments:

Concerns and difficulties with securing GP appointments was a major element in survey responses and we will feed this back to primary care commissioners. Healthwatch Northumberland will undertake work to understand the problems more fully. We will also build on the visits carried out in winter 2018 and give regular feedback to GPs plus we will have constructive discussions with NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England.

### Dementia

Respondents did not specify which aspects of dementia services they wished us to look at. However, from recent work we have identified the role and support of carers as an area on which to focus. We are therefore investigating a link to the national John's Campaign which seeks to support carers to stay with their relative/loved one in a hospital setting. There is the opportunity to work with Healthwatch North Tyneside on this issue across shared services.

### Seldom Heard Groups

In addition to our focus on seldom heard groups within our annual plan, we will be looking to strengthen our work with the following groups:

- + Prisoners and families.
- + People who are deaf and who use British Sign Language.

## Our top priorities for the next year

### 1. Mental Health

### 2. GPs and appointments

### 3. Dementia

### 4. Seldom Heard Groups

# Our finances





Healthwatch Northumberland is a project commissioned by Northumberland County Council and delivered by Adapt (NE).

Income	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	199,000.00
Additional income	22,152.18
<b>Total income</b>	<b>221,152.18</b>
Expenditure	£
Operational costs	54,740.55
Staffing costs	110,586.83
Office costs	30,485.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>195,812.38</b>
Balance brought forward	25,339.90

# Our people

## Decision making

### Board Governance

As part of its governance framework, Healthwatch Northumberland must carry out an annual Board Effectiveness Review. This review is to help the board better understand how it operates, where its strengths and weaknesses are and what improvements are required. The review is not an examination of the board's effectiveness in terms of the delivery of the Healthwatch function; it is a process of self-reflection designed solely to help the board perform better as a unit.

Board members were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 24 statements which they were asked to rate as high, medium or low in terms of their own view of effectiveness. 82% of the statements were rated as high or medium reflecting that, for the most part,

board members believe board effectiveness is satisfactory (with the potential for some improvement) or good which is a very positive result for a relatively new board.

All board members had individual review meetings to discuss their experience, including induction on to the board and to identify any areas they wanted to develop as part of their role.

The board also negotiated and agreed an Information Sharing Protocol with key stakeholder partners and developed a Strategic Risk Register.

The board recognised the need to strengthen its knowledge in two key areas - mental health and working with young people, and used its powers to co-opt two members with relevant experience. Healthwatch Northumberland will seek new members through an open recruitment process in autumn 2018.





**The views and stories  
you share with us are  
helping to make care  
better for our local  
community**

**Derry Nugent**  
Project Coordinator, Healthwatch Northumberland

## Contact us

### Get in touch:

Address: Adapt (NE), Burn Lane, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3HN

Phone number: 03332 408468

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Facebook: [healthwatchnorthumberland](https://www.facebook.com/healthwatchnorthumberland)

Twitter: [@HWNland](https://twitter.com/HWNland)

**Address of Contractor:** Adapt (NE), Burn Lane, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3HN

Our annual report will be publicly available on our website by 30 June 2018 and in hard copy on request. We will also be sharing it with Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our local authority. 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 require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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