



Healthwatch St Helens

Annual Report 2015/16

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If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us via the details on page 25.

Message from our Chair



I am proud to introduce our 3rd annual report for Healthwatch St Helens, (2015-16).

After our 2014 borough-wide consultation, we focused on three key

areas that were important to the people of St Helens.

We created a Patient-friendly Practice award - designed by you, the patients - recognising those GP practices that go the extra mile for you. Once achieved GP Surgeries maintain their award for 2 years.

By monitoring progress on the local mental health strategy, we made sure concerns raised around children's mental health services were highlighted. Our staff and volunteers also helped the local Time to Talk campaign exceed its target of 20,000 minutes by talking to friends and family about how they were feeling. This helps reduce stigma around mental health and asking for help. This theme links with work planned in the future.

Good multi-agency involvement helped us develop the End of Life information booklet and this was launched in Dying Matters week. We hope that people will find it useful when planning their end of life care in a considered and sensitive way.

We remain committed to involving you in improving all levels of health and care services from 'cradle to grave'. I regularly attend the Health & Wellbeing Board to voice patients' views where tough decisions

are made about local health and social care delivery services. If you would like to know more, please get in touch.

We promote regularly engaging with patients and service users when redesigning services. This can help to bring new ideas, particularly in such times of stretched finances and cut-backs.

I must thank committee members and volunteers for their hard work and enthusiastic commitment to our diverse workload. Giving a massive 1,450 hours of their time this year, they engage without favour or conflict of interest, to protect the best interest of St Helens people. Many people don't use all the services that we scrutinise, but might need them in the future.

I appreciate people are busy and have lots of other things to think about, apart from what they or a family member might need in the future. However, we live in changing times, so it's good to gain an awareness of what is available so that when needed, you can find the right support. Working across many areas, Healthwatch saves the public purse many thousands of pounds a year and without the time & energy given, we would not have such an excellent reputation for reaching the wider community.

I urge you to keep feeding in your stories and ask for your continued support to enable the team to make our local health & care services the best they can be. It may be you or a family member who needs them one day.

Message from our Support Manager



Year 3 of Healthwatch has been another good year and we have seen some real results.

Highlights this year included:

- Turning the results of the Good Quality GP Services report into a tangible award that GP practices can work towards to show they go the extra mile for patients. So the Patient-friendly Practice award was born and we must thank patients/public, colleagues from the CCG and practice managers for all helping to design and pilot the award, which we look forward to awarding to practices.
- A public meeting was held to finalise all the hard work behind the scenes on an information booklet about local services to help people who have been or soon to be bereaved. The booklet was launched in Dying Matters week, and distributed around the borough. Initial feedback from nurses specialising in cardiac support services is that it has been very helpful and covers most of the things that people felt were missing when they went through the process of planning for and dealing with the death of a loved one.

Both these areas of work have been fully supported by local partners but also promoted on a national scale to other local Healthwatch as good practice.

In recognition of our role in scrutinising local services we have maintained a watchful eye over the progress of the mental health strategic framework for St Helens. Areas of improvement are beginning to show, and with patient and service user experiences being collated by us, and hard work from services, we have ensured that progress is on track, despite the shortage of funds in this area from national Government.

It is interesting to note that from the latest consultation on our priorities “people with mental health issues” is a clear priority for the public and members that responded.

We have been in all sorts of places this year where local people have been able to tell us about services and how they have had an influence on how services could improve; here’s just a few of them:

- Welcome to St Helens event
- Child Health Summit and Healthy Child services recommissioning
- Carmel College health awareness day
- Suicide prevention and awareness training sessions.

As this will be my last year as manager of the support team, I must make special mention to the staff, committee members and ‘Friends Of Healthwatch’ who all show a passion and enthusiasm for the task and who have made my job so enjoyable and rewarding. I know the organisation will continue to provide a strong voice for the people of St Helens.

The year at a glance

This year we've reached 15,408 people on social media and through our website



Our volunteers help us with everything from Enter and View to surveying views of local people



This year we've spent 132 hours on Good Quality GP Services - one of our top priorities in 2015/16



We've visited 11 local services including care homes and GP surgeries



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from Mental Health to End of Life



We've received 55 detailed Case Studies from people accessing health and social care services



Who we are

What is Healthwatch St Helens?

Healthwatch is the local, independent consumer champion for health and social care in St Helens. We give all members of the community a powerful voice - making sure their views and experiences are heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social care services.

We have been set up by the Government to independently ensure the public have a say on the health and social care services they use, such as:

- GPs and practices
- Dentists
- Mental health services
- Hospitals
- Social care
- Community health services e.g. district nurses, podiatry, etc.
- Carers services
- Children and young people services
- Residential care homes

A local Healthwatch has been set up in every area of England.

Our purpose is to give the people of St Helens a stronger voice to help to change and challenge how health and social care services are provided locally. We support and enable all members of the public to influence local services by sharing their experiences - good or bad - with us. We don't provide clinical or medical advice, but we do our best to signpost you to

where you can go next or what your options are.

We work closely with the Care Quality Commission and we are backed up by a national body, Healthwatch England.

Our vision

To give St Helens people a stronger voice, to help challenge and change how health and social care services are delivered locally.

Our priorities

Patient-friendly Practice Award

Our priorities consultation told us that a good quality GP service was the top priority for people in St Helens.

Healthwatch St Helens set up the 'Good Quality GP Services' task group in 2015 and developed a questionnaire to help us find out what a 'good quality GP service' actually means to local people.

In total there were 672 responses from online forms and paper questionnaires.

The next stage of our work was the creation of The Patient-friendly Practice award. Designed by local people, with support from St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group and local Practice Managers, this award is a way to reward

local practices for what they are doing to improve the patient experience.

End of Life Care Booklet

Local people told us that they didn't see the point of planning for end of life until someone close to them died and then they understood its importance, especially when that person died at home. They believe that they could have coped much better if they had had more information.

Healthwatch St Helens took the lead in developing the 'End of Life Care' booklet with support from Greenacres Woodland Burials and many other local partners.

The booklet contains clear and easy to follow information such as what to do

Our Healthwatch Team (from left to right): Jayne Parkinson; Claire Jones; Emma Rodriguez Dos Santos; Debbie East; Janet Roberts.

when someone dies at home, a list of useful contacts and what to expect after a loved one passes away.

A coffee morning gave us feedback from the public on what they wanted from the booklet and anything else that needed to be included.

Although some of the information such as legal issues applies to the country as a whole, the rest of the booklet is aimed at services local to St Helens.

The booklet is entitled 'Plan, Prepare and End of Life Care' and is available on our website and in public places, such as libraries and GP surgeries.



Listening to people who use health and care services



Gathering experiences and understanding people's needs

- Our 'Welcome to St Helens' event brought people from different cultures together to find out what support is available to them and tell us about the issues they face.

"It's so important to recognise that St Helens is a town that's becoming increasingly diverse."

St Helens resident

- We continue to connect with young people through our contacts in local schools and colleges and a group of college students gave valuable feedback around the development of information leaflets about smoking and drug use.
- Regular contact with the local YMCA and Addaction gives homeless people and those affected by drug and alcohol addiction the opportunity to share their views and experiences.

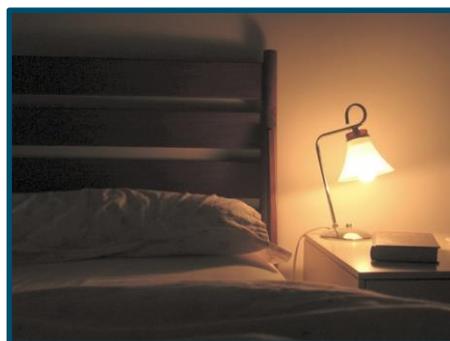
What we've learnt from visiting services

Partnership Working

Healthwatch St Helens joined up with 4 other local Healthwatch to measure how consistent the service is that the 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust delivers.

- Some small inconsistencies were found across the boroughs but overall, staff are providing good quality care for their patients.

- Recommendations were made to commissioners to help the trust to deliver a more uniform service across all of their inpatient sites.



Enter and View

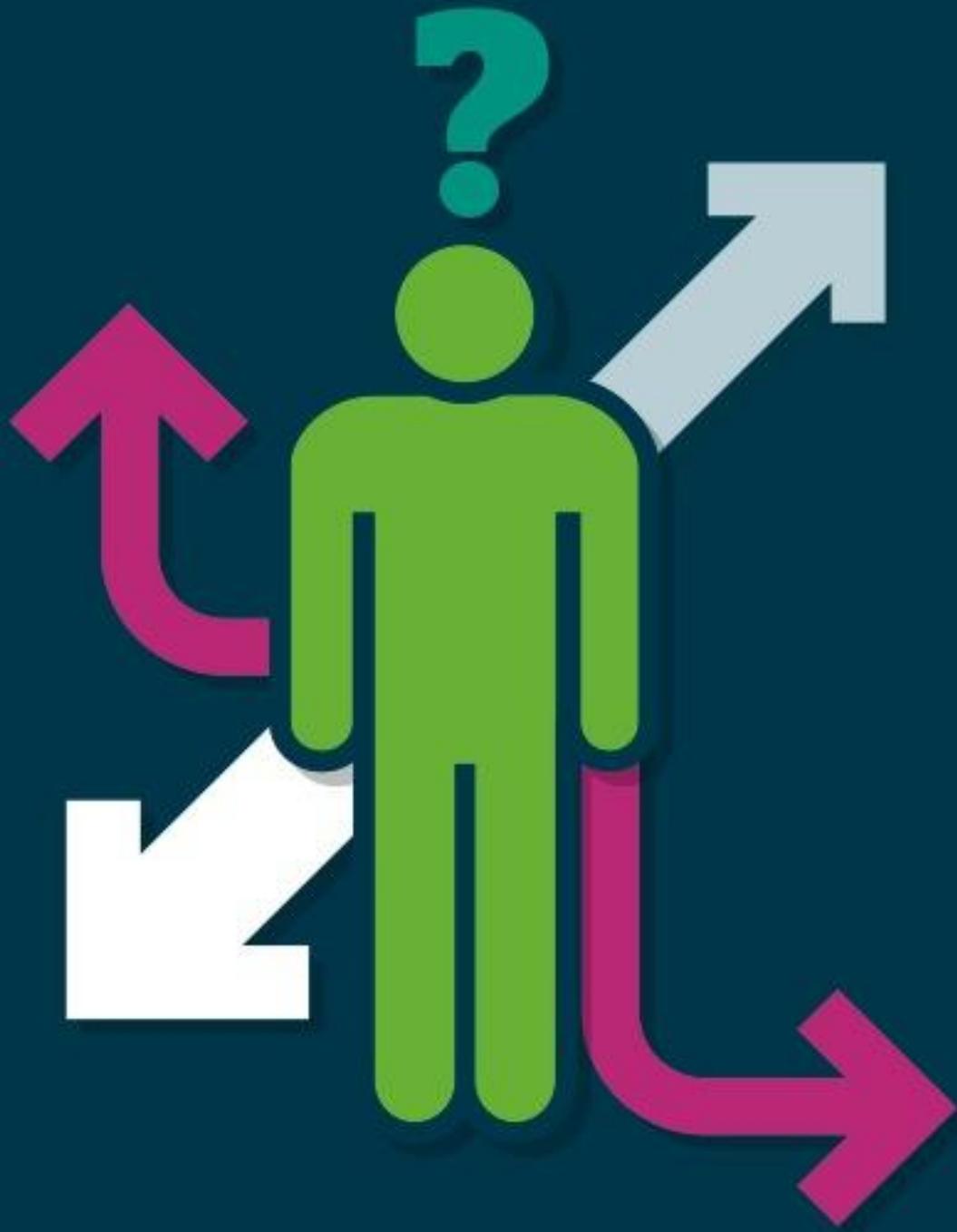
With a bigger team of volunteers this year we've taken part in Enter & View visits to 5 care homes, with a mixture of observations, but we're happy to report that no major cause for concern was identified.

- 2015 saw our first Enter & View of a GP practice, requested by the practice manager who saw the value we bring through our observation and recommendations.
- An Enter & View component was added to the assessment for the Patient-friendly Practice Award, to allow us to get a first-hand feel of local GP practices.

Authorised representatives who Enter & View on our behalf are:

- Carol Arnold
- Pam Davies
- Bernice Golding
- Joanne Heron
- Kath Inkpen
- Jimmy Jackson
- Jane Lowton
- Judi Lunt
- Brenda Smith
- Joan Young

Giving people advice and information



Helping people get what they need from local health and care services

Our monthly mailing gave information that helped a young woman get the support she needed.

- One of our members was able to pass on information that helped her granddaughter, who had recently started self-harming. She passed on the details of a local support group and with their encouragement she has since started getting support from other agencies as well.
- We were contacted by a gentleman who was feeling very negative about his situation. With multiple health issues, mental health and mobility difficulties, he had little quality of life and didn't see any future ahead.

For months and what seems like a lifetime of struggling with life's ups and downs, I approached U for help and hopefully now I am back on track - I know it's going to be hard but U've made it easier with the support you have given. Thank U."

A referral to the Assessment Team at our local Mental Health Trust and supporting him to attend the appointment meant that he could access the treatment he needed. Likewise, a referral to Adult Social Care meant adaptations to his property that will make everyday life much easier.

- T was confused about ordering prescriptions for the equipment he needed to self-manage a long term health condition. He had lost faith in his GP practice as they could not issue prescriptions for the quantity of equipment he believed he needed.



We supported him to work with staff from the practice and medicines management, to mutually agree on how much equipment he needed to order. His faith in the practice was restored, his relationship with staff improved and he can now manage his condition safely and properly.

We passed on information about a weekly parking pass at a local hospital, and helped a man save £200 on parking costs while his wife was being looked after in Intensive Care.

How we have made a difference



Our reports and recommendations

- Some of our recommendations in the Good Quality GP Services Task Group Report went on to help shape the criteria for the Patient-friendly Practice Award.
- Recommendations made at an Enter & View influenced one local Trust to make changes to the appearance of their wards.

Working with other organisations

- 2015/2016 saw some concerns raised with us around domiciliary care. Through our positive relationships with the Adult Social Care team at St Helens Council we were able to support local people to discuss their concerns, clear up confusion and create better lines of communication between providers and users.
- To plan and deliver our ‘Welcome to St Helens’ event, we worked closely with the Terence Higgins Trust, St Helens Accommodation Project (SHAP) and the local authority, to ensure that we reached the appropriate people. As a result of being at the event, one lady has brought us a detailed story about her son, who has difficulties with his mental health.
- We worked alongside 6 GP practices and 1 dental practice to support negotiations with patients so that their concerns didn’t need to escalate to a formal complaint.
- A concern was raised with us around a care home where

residents didn’t appear to have enough support to move around safely in the evenings. This prompted an investigation by the local authority Social Care team who discovered that there could have been some staffing issues due to sickness and holidays at certain times. Recommendations were made around ensuring that adequate staff were on hand to support residents at all times of the day.

Involving local people in our work

- Children and Young People’s services valued our contribution to the Provider Panel for the Healthy Child recommissioning tender.
- We brief representatives prior to meetings such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and the local Hospital Trust’s Patient Experience Council, and support them to produce feedback reports.
- Our Enter & View representatives are trained, DBS check and offered other relevant training.
- Volunteers have played a big part in helping to review our Enter & View Policy and Procedures, drawing on their experience of what makes an effective visit.
- The consultation event to start the process of deciding the criteria for the Patient-friendly Practice award brought more than 60 local people together.
- Public involvement at the coffee morning to evaluate and develop the End of Life Booklet when it was in draft form was invaluable.

Our work in focus



Our work in focus: Getting closure



Healthwatch supports people to get answers

J told us about her daughter, G, who was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia at 13 months old. She underwent a bone marrow transplant and experienced various complications including temporary sight loss.

Drugs used to treat G had affected her heart and she suffered heart failure at the age of 8. She had a transplant at the age of 21 and a pacemaker fitted at 26. Along with breathing difficulties, kidney problems and an enlarged liver, G's life had always been a succession of health concerns and medical treatment.

Sadly, G died at the age of 27 after being taken into Whiston A&E experiencing tiredness, breathlessness and swelling. Problems with her pacemaker followed and she passed away two days later. The cause of death was recorded as congestive heart failure.

J can't praise the medical staff highly enough, especially the teams from Alder Hey who treated G during her childhood.

However, she had some questions and concerns about G's last days and what really happened the day she passed away.

When J first contacted us she was still very distressed by the loss of her daughter and not ready to pursue her quest for closure. It was some 6 months before she felt ready and that was when we put her in touch with the Patient Experience Manager at our local Hospital Trust.

“This is the most challenging case you have given us yet and has left me feeling I have really been able to help somebody - with help from our doctors who have been amazing.”

Clare Aspinall, Patient Experience Manager, St Helens & Knowsley Hospital Trust

After a lot of time went into researching what happened and putting J in touch with the medical staff who could answer her questions and give her the explanations she needed, she was able to move on and start to grieve for her daughter.

J has been referred for specialist bereavement counselling at the Trust and lessons have been learned about making sure that patients' families understand what's happening more clearly.

Our work in focus: Getting the message across



Joint working with the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

We received a referral from St Helens Advice and Information Resource (SHAIR) regarding the case of a man in his mid-thirties who had various issues concerning his health, including seizures. The extent of his medical problems meant that he was restricted to living with his parents and was generally confined to his bed.

This gentleman, D, had regular appointments with a consultant at the Walton Neurological Centre with relation to the seizures he experienced.

D was a large gentleman, both in height and stature. When arranging for his transport to the Walton Centre, D's

mother repeatedly requested male ambulance officers to assist D to get downstairs.

On three separate occasions it was two female ambulance officers who arrived and on all three occasions the appointment had to be abandoned as they were not able to safely assist D downstairs.

D's mother requested support from Healthwatch to get her message across to NWAS and prevent any more appointments being wasted in the future.

After we contacted NWAS, they arranged for a further assessment to establish D's needs. The result of this was that only male ambulance officers will attend to safely move D downstairs to attend future appointments.

“On three separate occasions, appointments had to be abandoned.”



Our plans for next year



Future priorities

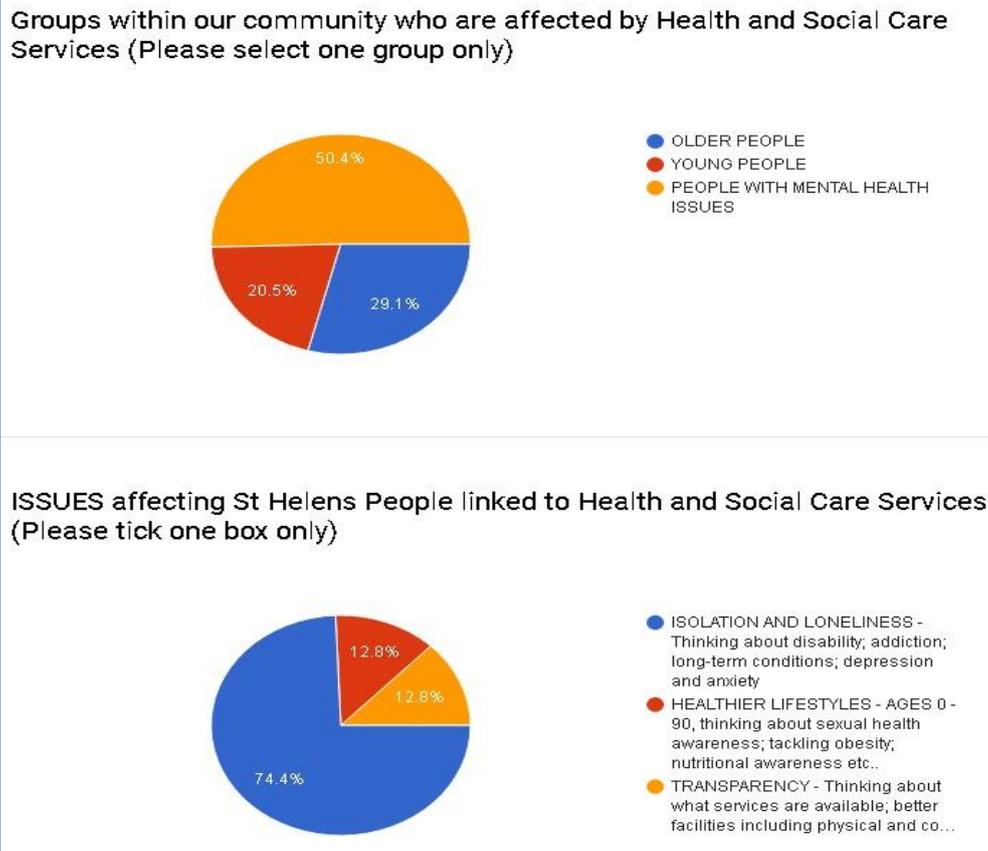
With the priorities from 2014's consultation being addressed, our committee decided it was time to look at some new areas... but what to choose from the vast number of challenges in the world of health & social care services?

A survey was launched and early indications showed that people with mental health issues was the top priority area as a community of interest (second and third priorities were 'older people' and 'children and young people').

People felt we should concentrate on the issues of isolation and loneliness as a priority area.

Other areas suggested were transparency and healthier lifestyles.

Workstreams for these areas will be established this year to examine and unpick what these issues really mean and everyone who wants to get involved can have their say there... We know already this is an area that our local Overview & Scrutiny partners have begun to look at and so we know there will be some local data and recommendations that we can build on to get some good outcomes in this area.



Our people



Decision making

Healthwatch St Helens is run by a group of volunteers who form our Management Committee and are responsible to the Chair and Board of Directors. They play a key role in setting the strategic plan and direction of Healthwatch St Helens.

Part of their role is to review and make recommendations around policies and procedures which achieve Healthwatch St Helens' objectives and ensure that we review our performance across all areas on a regular basis, reporting to relevant bodies.

The committee help review the direction and objectives of Healthwatch St Helens on a regular basis and fulfil Healthwatch St Helens' duty to residents, patients, service-users and other stakeholders and ensure that they encourage participation and consultation.

Committee members must attend at least 7 out of 10 meetings per year and additional training or team development days. They feed back on activities where they have represented Healthwatch views and provide written reports after they have attended meetings. These reports help with proving that input and recommendations have been made.

Any requests from our partners that require Healthwatch input or actions, are agreed at Committee meetings or via the Chair.

Our Management Committee:

- Wendy Burton
- Chris Coffey
- Elaine Cotterill
- Jane Dearden
- Jonathan Griffith
- Alan Griffiths
- Tom Hughes (Chair)
- Sam Omar
- Brenda Smith
- Joyce Storton
- Francis Williams
- Joan Young

How we involve the public and volunteers

Healthwatch St Helens has 4 tiers of membership:

- Informed members
- Involved members
- Active members
- Management committee members

People can choose the most appropriate level for them and get involved in things they want to do.

Friends of Healthwatch St Helens

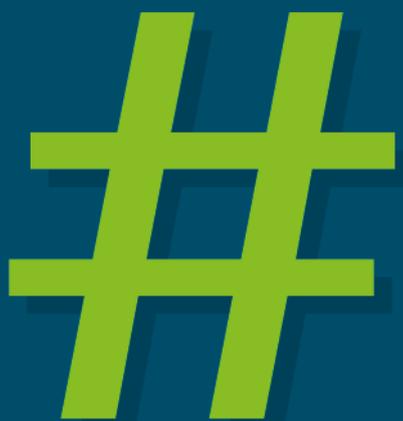
These are volunteers who want to spread the word and raise the profile of Healthwatch St Helens but are not able to be as frequently involved as the Management Committee. These dedicated volunteers play an important role in the work Healthwatch does regardless of how much or how little time they can spare, helping with leafleting, surveying and PLACE visits.

Our finances



INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities		149,615
Additional income		187
Total income		149,802
EXPENDITURE		
Operational costs		8,589
Staffing costs		102,051
Office costs		37,476
Total expenditure		148,116
Balance brought forward		1,686

Contact us



Get in touch

Address: Healthwatch St Helens, Tontine House, 24 Church Street, St Helens, WA10 1BD

Phone number: 0300 111 0007

Email: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Staff:

Emma Rodriguez Dos Santos - Support Manager

Jayne Parkinson - Engagement Officer

Janet Roberts - Outreach Officer

Claire Jones - Communications Officer

Debbie East - Administration and Volunteers Support Officer

Address of contractors:

Policy Unit, St Helens Council, Town Hall, Victoria Square, St Helens, WA10 1HP

Tel: 01744 676789

Address of Partners:

- St Helens District Citizens Advice Bureau, Millennium Centre, Corporation Street, St Helens, WA10 1HJ - Tel: 01744 732270
- St Helens Independent Living Services, Shopmobility St Helens, King Street, Chalon Way Multi Storey, Chalon Way West, St Helens, WA10 1DF - Tel: 01744 613388
- Healthwatch Independent Complaints Advocacy, The Gateway Conference Centre, 71 London Road, Liverpool, L3 8HY - Tel: 0151 298 3267
- St Helens Advice & Information Resource (S.H.A.I.R.), 24-28 Claughton Street, St Helens, WA10 1RZ - Tel: 01744 454530
- St Helens Carers Centre, 31-35 Baldwin Street, St Helens, WA10 2RS. Tel: 01744 675615

Healthwatch St Helens Limited

Company No. 8567187

Healthwatch St Helens is a Company Limited by Guarantee and part of the Healthwatch network (and part of Healthwatch England).

We will be making this annual report publicly available by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, 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.

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