



Healthwatch St Helens Annual Report 2016/17



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Message from our Chair

I am pleased to present our 4th Annual Report for Healthwatch St Helens (2016-2017).



Our focus this year was equality of access to services for people on the autistic spectrum and people with issues around their mental health. These two important areas of work will continue into the

coming year.

The Support Team continue to deliver the core functions of a local Healthwatch every day while supporting our Management Committee, who show the same dedication as ever to protecting the interests of people in this borough.

All services currently face serious financial pressure and we will continue our work with the People's Board, Council and CCG in the development of the local delivery

system that meets the health and social care needs of the people in this borough while tackling the challenge of cost and demand.

We will also be supporting the CCG to encourage local people to make the right choices around where they go to for treatment and advice for their healthcare needs, to assist with financial pressures by promoting the right treatment at the right place.

“The public face the challenge of thinking hard about where to go for medical support or even if the opinion of a medical professional is required.”

Our support team still need you to feed in your experiences of using health and social care services in St Helens. By hearing what you think of the services you and your family have used, both good and bad, services providers and commissioners can design services for the future that better meet the needs of local people.

*Tom Hughes - Chair
Healthwatch St Helens*



Message from the Chief Officer of Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action

Due to changes within the Healthwatch St Helens staff team structure, I have been asked to write the introduction to this year's Annual Report.

The support team, volunteers, management committee and Directors have once again provided their time and commitment to supporting the organisation's work and enabled local people to share their views and have a say on local health and social care services.

Our work locally, gathering hundreds of experiences and views of local services, which, through the work of the team and the Chair, were fed to the Commissioners and Providers to make improvements and recommendations to build on areas that are working well.

We had considerable organisational change within the year, with our manager emigrating to New Zealand. Following an interim arrangement we appointed Jayne Parkinson-Loftus to take up the role in the new financial year. There is still some work to do around processes for volunteer recruitment and this is well underway.

We are pleased with how the relationships with local providers and commissioners are developing. These relationships are maturing and considerable time is invested in them by the Chair and our new manager.

This has helped us move to a position of ensuring partners understand our "watchdog" role and our desire to work



closely with them to ensure local people and patients have access to high quality services.

We are particularly proud of our work with NHS St Helens CCG on the review of access and experiences in GP surgeries, resulting in the development of our "Patient-friendly Practice Award". Our colleagues in the CCG's patient experience team are enthusiastic about supporting this award and encouraging local practices to apply. We would also encourage local people to nominate their own practice if they feel they go the extra mile for their patients.

Sally Yeoman - CEO, Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action



Highlights from our year

This year we've reached more than 12,500 people on social media



Our volunteers help us with everything from Enter & View to designing surveys



We've visited 6 local services



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from misdiagnosis to accessing transgender services



We've spoken to more than 50 people on mental health and autism



We've met hundreds of local people at our community events





Who we are

At Healthwatch St Helens we know that you care about helping to improve the health and social care services that you and your family use. We ask you to share your experiences with us, good and bad, so that you can have a voice and the people who make decisions about these services know what is important to the people of St Helens.

With a Healthwatch in every borough, we are your independent local watchdog for health & social care services

Our vision

Our vision is to give the people of St Helens a stronger voice, to collectively help to challenge and influence how health and social care services are delivered locally.

By working closely with partners we can take a collaborative approach to identifying areas for improvement and make recommendations.

By encouraging local people to share their experiences with us, both good

and bad, we can offer the community perspective that complements the work our statutory sector partners are doing.

The services our members can have a say on include:

- GP services
- Hospitals
- Residential care and nursing homes
- Mental health services
- Community health services such as district nurses and health visitors

Our priorities

Our priorities consultation, together with an increase in the number of experiences we were receiving around autism led us to set up a task and finish group around access to services for people with autistic spectrum disorder.

Mental health and parity of esteem was another area that local people felt strongly about so we set up a second task and finish group to look at this issue.

Big changes this year

This year saw some changes in the support team staff, committee members and a move to new premises for Healthwatch St Helens.

In July last year our previous Support Team Manager emigrated to an exciting new life in New Zealand with an Interim Manager taking over the reins.

Some of our management committee chose to resign due to health issues in some cases and work or family commitments in others.

March saw the Healthwatch St Helens base moving to new, much nicer premises along with the team from Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action.

The Healthwatch St Helens Support Team - 2016-2017

Claire Jones -
Support Team Manager

Jayne Parkinson-Loftus -
Engagement & Development Lead

Debbie East -
Admin & Volunteer Support Officer

Janet Robert -
Outreach Officer

Our 2016-2017 Healthwatch Support Team (from left to right):

Claire Jones, Jayne Parkinson-Loftus, Debbie East, Janet Roberts



We can
help you...

*Your views
on
health and
care*



Listening to local people's views

- + Our work around access to services for people with autistic spectrum disorder led us to visit local support groups such as the Autism & Asperger's Society, to make sure people with ASD have a say.
- + We work with our local Carers Centre and specialist support groups to design questionnaires to make sure they are appropriate for their audience and will tell us what we need to know.
- + We attended a series of events and open days hosted by our local Senior Voice group, to make sure that older people's voices were heard.
- + Outreach to ADDaction gave people affected by drug and alcohol addiction the chance to share their views and experiences.
- + We shared positive experiences about the maternity unit with our local Hospital Trust, collected from people who live outside the borough but chose to have their babies here.

What we've learnt from visiting services

- + We visited a local care home that requested an Enter & View after a negative comment was made about them on the website of a neighbouring Healthwatch. The manager wanted an opportunity to demonstrate what the home was doing well and learn from any

recommendations the Enter & View team could make. The visit was extremely positive and the team were very impressed with the care they saw being delivered. The only recommendation we needed to make was in relation to improvements to lighting and signage in the car park.

- + Enter & Views to GP practices were related to the Patient-friendly Practice Award and showed practices that were committed to putting patients first and making them feel like people, not just names on a list.

This year we introduced a new system for setting our Enter & View schedule for 2017/18. Positive relationships with colleagues in the Local Authority led us to introduce a system where our community-focused visits will complement the more formal quality



monitoring inspections.

Members of the support groups we visited for people on the autism spectrum told us that it was nice to feel that someone was listening to them.



*Helping
you find
the
answers*

How we have helped the community access the care they need

- + We put a lady in touch with a local integrated advice team to enable her to get the support she needed to care for her disabled child.
- + A local family were able to access the right advice and support from our referral when they needed help with caring for an elderly relative.
- + Our local sexual health team referred a young transgender woman to us who was struggling to get the treatment she wanted and was accessing medication via the Internet. We put her in touch with the appropriate team at a local Trust, she is now receiving the correct treatment and is on the gender reassignment pathway.

Homeless man got the support he needed and somewhere to live

When a young homeless man came to see us he was talking about ending his own life. He didn't believe anyone could help him and he didn't see any point in trying to access support.

We were able to put this young man in contact with a nurse who is based at our local YMCA who supports people who are either homeless or are at risk of becoming so. She also ensures that people with mental health concerns get the support they need.

Part of the young man's difficulties was that he lacked confidence to access services that could support him and our mental health nurse offered him the help he needed.

He went on to access support to deal with his mental health issues and now has somewhere to live.



Young man now has a place to live and some hope for the future.

Having more choice around end-of-life care.

A lady with a long-term condition wanted to have control over how her future medical care is managed, particularly around end-of-life care.

When this lady went to her GP surgery to put a Do Not Attempt Resuscitation statement in place she was directed to the CAB who then directed her to us.

We gave her the information she needed as well as one of our end-of-life care booklets and the DNAR statement she wanted is now in place.

Through her experience we were able to identify that some locum GPs don't know what the process is around advanced care planning and our local CCG has taken this on board as an awareness-raising need.

*Making a
difference
together*

Have you
visited
Care Home
Rel
What was it like?

How your experiences are helping influence change

Regular reports to our Clinical Commissioning Group and local Hospital Trust have highlighted areas for improvement.

- Patient experiences around one of our Hospitals' ophthalmology clinic echoed what the Trust's Friends & Family tests were saying. As a result, the Trust has initiated a complete review of the department.

Close liaison between Healthwatch and the Council's Contracts and Quality Monitoring Team ensures a joined-up approach to the monitoring of local services and avoids duplication of resources.

Elaine Hardie,
People's Services, St Helens Council

Working with other organisations

Healthwatch St Helens is committed to working collaboratively with local partners to bring about the best services for local people.

- + Enter & View reports and feedback reports for practices who receive the Patient-friendly Practice Award are routinely sent to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- + Our strong, ongoing relationship with the Local Authority's Quality Monitoring Team ensures that we share information received about care homes and that our Enter & View programme complements the Quality Monitoring schedule.

- + We promote Public Health campaigns including one around flu vaccination, which saw an increase in uptake compared to other years.
- + Some of our Enter & View team acted as mystery shoppers for our Clinical Commissioning Group's complaints review.
- + Our joint Enter & Views with 4 other local Healthwatch led to service review by 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust and was highly commended by Healthwatch England.

How we've worked with our community

- + Our 'Friends of Healthwatch' help us to reach more people by talking to their friends and neighbours and bringing back views and experiences.
- + Attendance at events like 'Healthy in St Helens' help us to engage with people from all parts of the borough.
- + Our Healthwatch members form the assessment team for the 'Patient-friendly Practice Award', reviewing the paper-based submissions and visiting the practices.

"Healthwatch St Helens have been an active and valued partner with the Council and CCG in shaping public health action and campaigns in St Helens. With a wide network of members Healthwatch is key to enabling the Council to listen to people's views and to work in collaboration to shape plans to improve health."

.....
Dympna Edwards, Public Health St Helens

*It starts
with you*



Promoting Independence for a young girl with Autism

As part of our work around support for people on the autistic spectrum, we met Annie, a 12-year-old girl whose mother, Michaela was desperate for her to be able to increase in confidence and independence.

Annie had attended a local social group with other young people who have similar needs to hers. However, the volunteers who ran the group felt that Annie needed someone to attend the group with her, to help manage her stress and anxiety.

Michaela didn't know who she could ask to attend the group with Annie. She felt that having a family member there would stop her from mixing with other young people and the whole point of her attending the group was to increase her independence and develop her social interaction skills.

Michaela's experience of trying to access services were poor in the past and she didn't believe that anyone would help her. We raised it with the Local Authority how people with neurodevelopmental conditions and their parents and carers didn't believe there was any support available and gave local examples of where people were struggling to access support.

Annie has now had an assessment of her needs and is receiving the support that will enable her to attend the social group she enjoys.

“I can't thank you enough.”

Michaela, mother of Annie, a 12-year-old with autism.

Helping a local care home to improve how it operates

Pamela told us about her experience of a local care home where her father, who has dementia, was placed for a short time.

During his time there his family felt that communication between staff and residents' families needed some improvement.

We supported Pamela to explain her issues to key staff at the home and from the Local Authority. She helped the staff and managers at the home to better understand the need to make families feel fully involved and informed about their loved one's care.

Through our strong relationships with local social care teams, and being able to put Pamela in touch with the right people, we helped her to recognise that she had other options than making a formal complaint and instead she helped to identify some areas for improvement.

Unfortunately, during Pamela's father's stay, some of his belongings went missing which led to Pamela having to be reimbursed for various items of clothing that she had bought for him. This helped the staff at the home to recognise that they needed to do some work around how they look after residents' belongings, particularly around identifying residents' clothing.

The home has made a commitment to introducing a better system to make sure that residents' belongings do not go missing or get mixed up with items belonging to other residents.

(Names have been changed for data protection reasons)



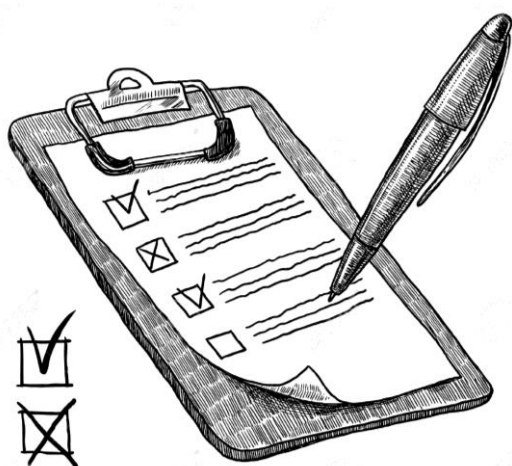
*Our plans
for next
year*

Healthwatch
Your
voice
counts

What next?

Our work around autism will continue into this coming year alongside the Local Authority's work in designing a new neurodevelopment pathway which aims to significantly reduce the time people wait for assessment and a possible diagnosis.

We can help the Local Authority to learn from what didn't work in the old autism pathway by sharing our case studies and questionnaires and support them in the development of a more effective neurodevelopment pathway.



Our work will progress into a second phase where we will be able to compare and contrast the experiences of young people on the new pathway with the experiences people have had in the past. This can help us to highlight what issues our Local Authority need to look out for, to ensure better experiences for local people in the future.

We will continue to identify the gap in services for people with mental health difficulties, with particular focus on what happens when people don't meet specific criteria for the services that are on offer.

We'll also be turning our attention to people who use wheelchairs, exploring what impact a recent change in commissioning will have.

We'll be supporting St Helens Independent Living Service (SILS) to promote a service they're designing that will encourage local people to donate old equipment such as wheelchairs and walking frames that will be refurbished and passed on to people who need them.

Supporting 'St Helens Cares'

Our local Accountable Care Management System, 'St Helens Cares' will have our support to engage with the public about the need for financial recovery and how changes in the way services are delivered can be a more efficient way of providing health and social care across the borough.

St Helens Cares aims for a governance approach:

- That enables collaboration & (distributed) leadership
- That involves the key partners that need to be involved
- That allows for challenge
- That adds value



Our people

Decision making

The final decision about the areas of work we focus on rest with our Management Committee, made up of volunteers from our local communities.

How we involve the public and volunteers

The stories that local people bring to us influence the issues we focus on at Healthwatch St Helens. When we identify common themes or concerns about a particular issue, we engage with our wider membership and the public to get their views about whether we should focus on these areas through:

- + Public consultation events
- + Our monthly newsletter

- + Targeted outreach to local groups with specific areas of interest.
- + Questionnaires across the borough at local events, libraries and other public places.

Sometimes our consultation events highlight a wide range of issues that are important to local people. When this happens we might hold further events to narrow down areas we can prioritise on and we might ask our members to rank the issues by how important they think they are. This helps us to make sure that what we focus on is truly representative of what matters to the people of St Helens.





Our finances

Income	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	149,614
Additional income	0
Total income	149,614
Expenditure	
Operational costs	16,858
Staffing costs	103,740
Office costs	29,016
Total expenditure	149,614
Balance brought forward	0



Contact us

Get in touch

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Support Team - (2016-2017)

Claire Jones - Support Team Manager

Jayne Parkinson-Loftus - Engagement & Development Lead

Janet Roberts - Outreach Officer

Debbie East - Administration and Volunteers Support Officer

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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 on 30 June 2017 by publishing it on our website and sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, 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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