



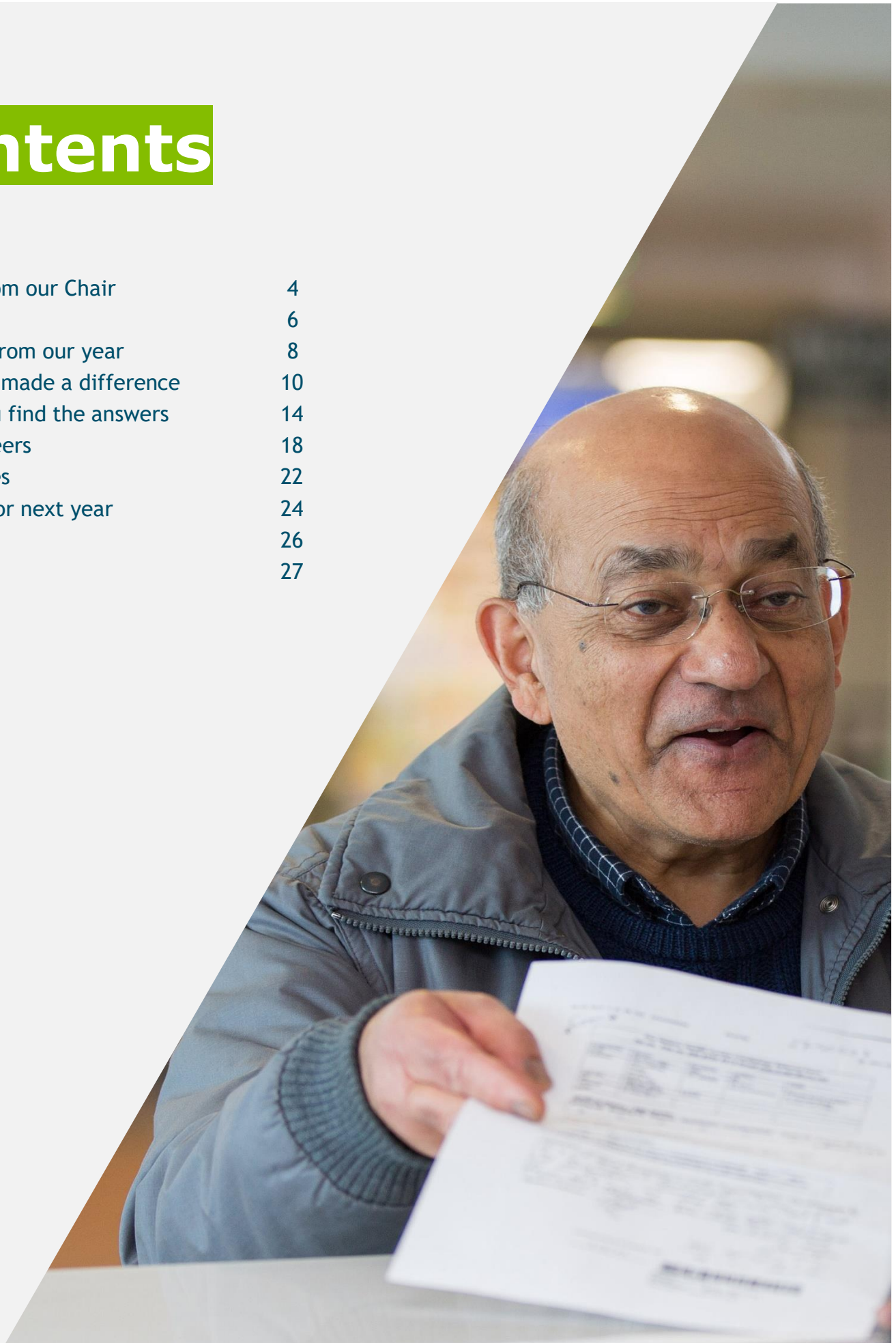
Healthwatch St Helens

Annual Report 2018-19



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Message from our Chair

I'm very pleased to be able to present the Healthwatch St Helens Annual Report for 2018-2019 and talk about what's gone on over the past year to benefit people in St Helens.

I'm particularly proud to tell you about the following:

- ❑ Our collaboration with St Helens Cares, our integrated health and social care system.
- ❑ Our successful listening events around end of life care, mental health and making good choices when choosing which service to use.
- ❑ How closely we work with the Local Authority to make sure that social care is meeting people's needs.

Our strong relationship with the Local Authority and St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group has secured our position as a critical friend and we've been heavily involved with the ongoing development of our integrated health and social care system. Our involvement with St Helens Cares has made sure that local people's voices have been heard, in the redesign of services and our relationship with the Quality Monitoring Team makes sure that care for people who live in residential and nursing homes is of a high standard.

The listening events we held this year reflected what's important to local people. The excellent feedback received around the end of life event told us that local providers learned a lot about what they need to do to support people in their final days. The "Making the Right Choices for your Healthcare Needs" event was a positive step

towards helping local people to use services in a way that gets them the right treatment faster. With mental health being an issue in St Helens, our event helped our local Scrutiny Committee understand what people want and need from service but sometimes don't get.

Feedback from our local Hospital Trust tells us that the patient experience reports we provide are invaluable in telling them how to improve the patient experience.



'The efforts of our staff team and volunteers means we are a respected partner in St Helens'

Halton and St Helens Voluntary and Community Action is a key partner and their services and support are very important to us. From spot-purchasing IT support to the knowledge and expertise that we often utilize, having VCA as our parent company means that we can operate to the high standard that we do.

I want to mention the dedicated team of volunteers and offer my thanks for their commitment to the work we do. From our Enter & View team to our Forum members, they give up so much of their time to try to improve

services for the people of St Helens.

None of the things I've talked about would happen if it wasn't for the tremendous Support Team, who work so hard. They're the people who keep the day-to-day work going and provide the intuitive and informative support to our volunteers.

I look forward to continuing the work we do and seeing more positive change for the people of St Helens.

Tom Hughes
Healthwatch St Helens Chair

Changes you want to see

Last year we heard from 384 people who told us about their experience of a number of different areas of health and social care. Here are some examples of the changes that you want to see.



- Better communicate between medical professionals when managing your treatment and care.



- Being kept informed about why medication is sometimes changed to a different brand.



- Feeling listened to about my health concerns



- Less waiting times for mental health services

About us

Healthwatch is here to 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 St Helens, 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 are 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



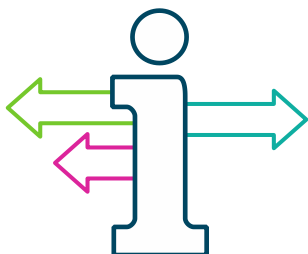
Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2018-19. Our resources:



384 people shared their health and social care story with us, 61% more than last year.



We have 26 volunteers helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 300+ hours.



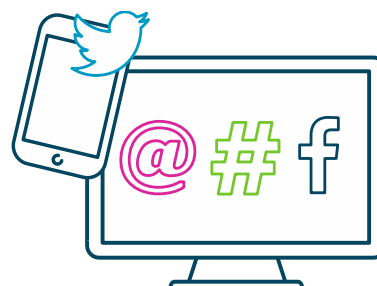
Over 8,000 people accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support, 25% more than last year



We visited 12 services and 30 community events to understand people's experiences of care. From these visits, we made 23 recommendations for improvement.



15 improvements we suggested were adopted by services to make health and care better in our community.



198% more people engaged with us through our website and social media.



How we've made

a difference

Changes made to your community

Find out how sharing your views with your local Healthwatch has led to positive changes to health and social care services in St Helens. We show that when people speak up about what's important, and services listen, care is improved for all.

Take a look at some examples of how Healthwatch St Helens has made a difference in your community.

Helping a local GP practice to understand what it needs to change to meet patient needs around medication

One of our Healthwatch members contacted us to share her concerns around some issues with her mum's medication and ordering repeat prescriptions.

Mum's prescription was ordered online, but a technical error meant that the request was cancelled rather than sent to the pharmacy to be processed. When staff were notified and tried to order the medication again, the same thing happened. This meant that a vulnerable, elderly lady was without blood pressure medication for 4 days.

When we heard about this lady's situation, we contacted the practice who did everything they could to identify what had gone wrong. The practice recognized that staff could be doing more to address technical errors in future. The following changes were made:

- The timescales for issuing prescriptions have been revisited
- Staff will intervene if there are technical issues and issue prescriptions manually.

Now the system for ordering repeat prescriptions at this practice is greatly improved. With staff more aware of what they need to do, patients won't have to wait for their medication.

Our Volunteers help our local Hospital Trust make sure they are accessible to all.



Making it easier for people with additional needs to get the support and treatment they need

Thanks to one young lady with autism asking for our support, a local Hospital Trust has introduced systems to support other patients with autism to have a better experience when accessing treatment.

This young lady and her mother highlighted shortfalls with how the Hospital Trust communicated with people who have additional needs and identified how they could be improved.

Through resolution meetings with key staff members at the Healthcare Trust including

the Operations Manager and the Matron for Quality, it was acknowledged that communication in the Trust had been a sticking point at times and the following changes happened:

- An alert system was added to the Trust's patient database for patients that have additional needs
- Extra training for staff to help them work more effectively with patients on the autistic spectrum

What began as a possible complaint resulted in the Trust learning valuable lessons and a better service for patients now and in the future.

"This is the most help that we have ever had. Thank you so much for your support"

Telling us your story can help make services better for you and others in the future





Supporting local people to find the right services to meet their needs

More people in St Helens now know what services are available to them when they need treatment or advice

Following on from last year's work around supporting local people to find the right services, we held the "Making the Right Choices for your Healthcare Needs" event.

Over 100 people came along, and saw presentations about A&E, GP services, North West Ambulance Service, St Helens Walk-in Centre and pharmacy services. We collected patient stories to help commissioners and providers understand why people have used certain services in the past.

We sponsored a Saint Helens Rugby League player for the 2018/19 season, to help raise our

profile. He made a personal appearance, to help us demonstrate the importance of services like A&E being available when people really need them and how accessing a different service could mean people get treated faster.

From feedback received on the day and since the event, we believe that people who attended now have greater awareness of where they can get the most efficient and appropriate treatment. Evaluation activities at the beginning and end of the day, indicate that people feel more confident to make better choices in the future.

We'll continue to get the message out there to help local people get the best treatment to meet their needs.

"I want to help my sponsor to get the message out about the work they do and encourage people to share their experiences of using services in St Helens"
(Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook, St Helens RFC)



Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services understand what works, what doesn't, and what would make services better in the future.

Website: www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk
Telephone: 0300 111 0007
E-mail: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

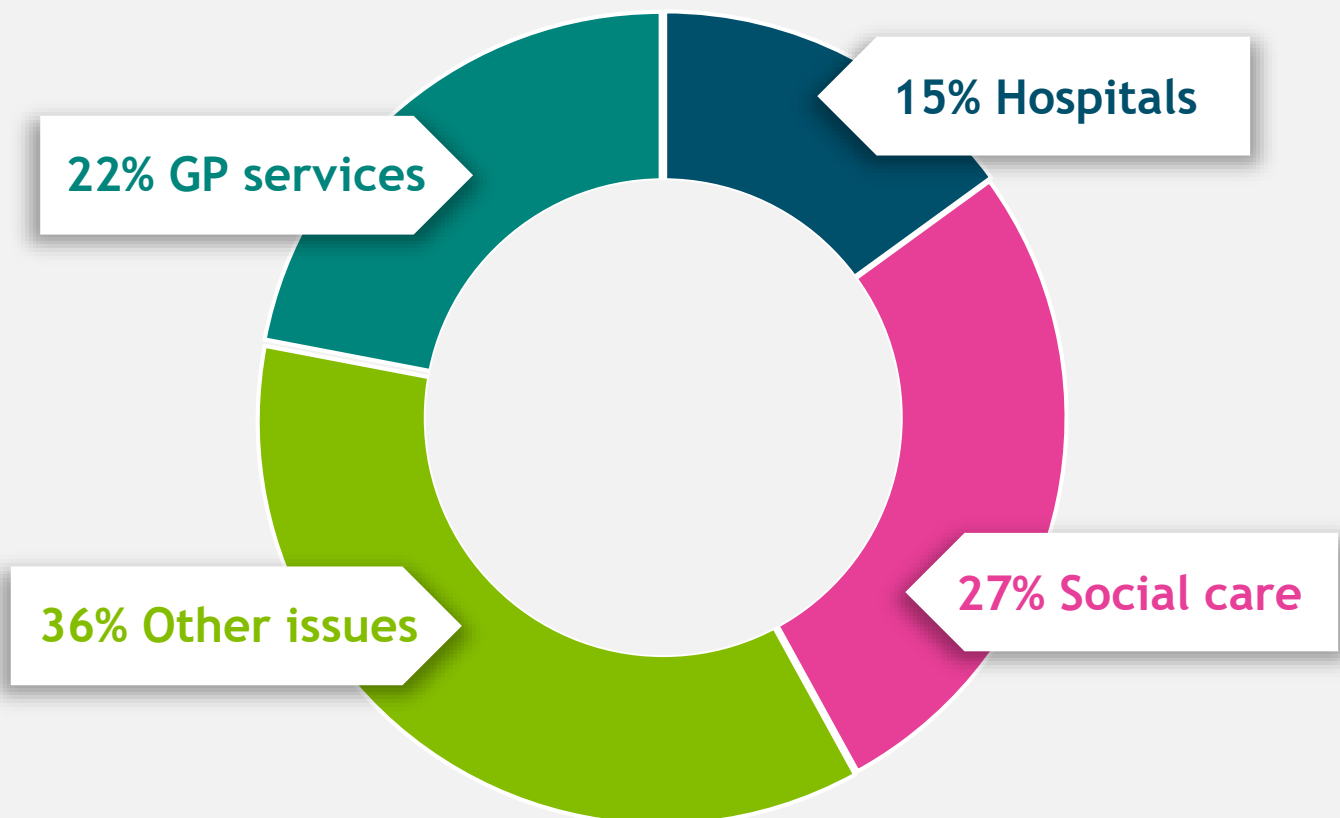


Helping you find
the answers

What services do people want to know about?

People don't always know how to get the information they need to make decisions about their own health and care. Healthwatch plays an important role in providing advice and pointing people in the right direction for the support they need.

Here are the most common things that people ask us:



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. Last year we helped 185 people access the advice and information they need.

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

- The 'Your Healthcare Needs' section of our website.
- Our 'Talk to us' form on the website
- At community events
- Following our promotion of helpful services across our social media channels
- Over the phone or by making an appointment to see us at our office.



Patricia's story:

My husband was becoming less able to get around the house and I was worried I would have to give up work to become his full-time carer. Healthwatch St Helens helped us to get a social care assessment, then lots of adaptations were made to the house and now my husband has a lot of his independence back.

"I wouldn't have known where to start without you".

Your Healthcare Needs

Many people are often unsure as to where they should go for support or treatment. We added a section on our website that contains lots of useful information.

We asked our partners across the borough for up to date versions of their leaflets with information about various conditions and also where to go to get the right treatment or advice.





Working together with St Helens CCG and Local Authority to develop 'St Helens Cares'

Making sure local people are involved in the transformation of services across the borough

Healthwatch St Helens has been heavily involved with bringing the community voice to the redesign and development of services in the Integrated health and social care system, St Helens Cares.

We used the stories and experiences that people in our communities have shared with us to highlight where services need to be improved, communication channels made better and the patient journey made more streamline. This has included our feedback on the introduction of a Shared Care Record and 'Contact Cares' - a system where one

telephone number puts people in touch with a range of local organisations.

By asking for the redesign of therapy services to include engagement with the people who have used them, a survey was designed by our Clinical Commissioning Group that gave 170 local people the opportunity to give their views about how services could be improved.

Thanks to our involvement with the development of St Helens Cares, lessons have been learned about how things could be done better and what local people believe their services should look like in the future.

*Working with Healthwatch St Helens has proved extremely valuable in better understanding patients' experiences of our services.
(Director of Corporate Governance, St Helens CCG)*



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 is here for you.

Website: www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 0007

E-mail: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk



Our volunteers



How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch St Helens we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of our 26 volunteers that support us to help make services better for their communities.

What our volunteers do:

- Raise awareness of the work we do in the community
- Visit services to make sure they meet local people's needs
- Encourage friends, family and neighbours to share their stories with us and take part in our activities.



Supporting members of the public to give us their story

Volunteers helped to raise awareness of the importance of choosing the right location for a new cancer hub.

Thanks to the feedback from a group of volunteers, plans to build a new cancer hub in our area will take into consideration how easily the site can be reached by people who have to use public transport.

Recognizing that not everyone has access to a car, our volunteers felt it was important to make sure that the new cancer hub is built at the most appropriate site to meet all local needs, including people who have to make their own way there by bus.

Our volunteers carried out a transport review to the four proposed sites for the new hub, to see how accessible they were by public transport. This involved them making the journeys, starting at our local bus station, imagining they had appointments for 9.30am and 3.30pm.

Feedback about how straightforward the journeys were, how long they took and how much they cost will go towards influencing where the site will be placed, after further consultation later this year.

'It's so important to make sure that the new cancer hub is accessible to all.'

Meet our volunteers

We caught up with a couple of our fantastic volunteers to show you how their work truly makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.



Ann, 76

I got involved with Healthwatch St Helens when I moved back to the area, after being involved with a similar organisation in Ireland, as I still wanted to be involved in improving healthcare services.

Since getting involved I feel that what I am doing is very worthwhile and makes a difference to the community.

Brenda, 82

As a member of the older generation I feel that we need information about services and how we can access them.

At Healthwatch St Helens we have the mechanism to find out what people think of these services, whether they're good or bad and recommend how they can be made better.



Volunteer with us

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

Website: www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Telephone: 03300 111 0007

E-mail: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

‘The views that you share with Healthwatch help us to make a difference across the borough’

Healthwatch St Helens Volunteer





Our finances

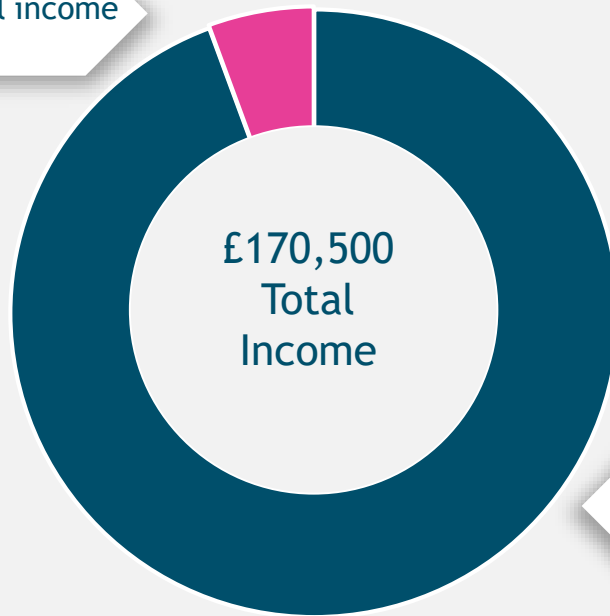


How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we spent £169,935.

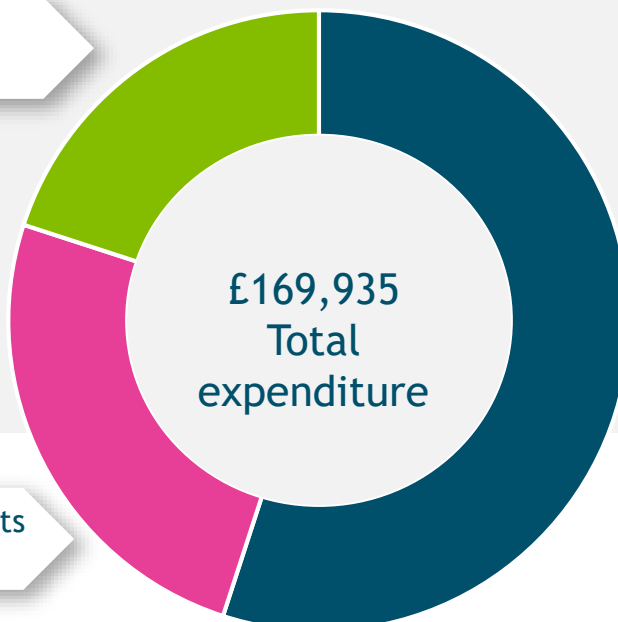
We also received £2,500 of additional income from NHS England.

£2,500 additional income



£168,000 funding received from local authority

£21,540 - Our operational costs



£97,571 - How much we pay our staff

£50,824 - How much it costs to run our Healthwatch



**Our plans for
next year**

Message from our Manager

I am happy to be able to bring this Annual Report to a close by looking at some of the important work we did this year and what we plan to do in the future.

Looking back

Our 'Making The Right Choices for Your Healthcare Needs' event was a massive success. We're confident from what feedback told us that people learned a lot and will make better choices in future.

We'll be carrying on with work around the theme of making the right choices, with the focus this time on some of the main health challenges for people in St Helens.

Looking ahead

We want to look at why diabetes is so common in St Helens and what people with diabetes are experiencing when they access treatment. We'll incorporate this into work around blood pressure and cholesterol, which are all causing concerns about the health of local people.

Barriers and opportunities

We know that encouraging people to be more aware of their own health and wellbeing is a challenge but we'll keep working to get the message across. We'll be taking advantage of the excellent relationships with partners across the borough, to collaborate on important pieces of work, for the benefit of the people of St Helens.

Thank you

I couldn't close without thanking all the people who make our work possible, especially my fantastic team who work so hard, in some cases, behind the scenes, to make such a

success of the work we do that helps makes a difference to local people's lives.

Thanks must go to our Chair, who is tireless in his efforts to support positive change in local services, to our volunteers who give us so much of their time to work with us and to Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook for his support.

I can't leave out our parent company, Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action. We really couldn't operate to the standard that we do without their continuing help and support.



'So proud of all we've done this year and excited for what next year holds.'

Jayne Parkinson-Loftus
Healthwatch St Helens Manager

Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers
- The voluntary organizations that have contributed to our work
- Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action
- St Helens Clinical commissioning Group
- Public Health St Helens
- St Helens Cares

“It is important for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to work closely with Healthwatch St Helens to tackle health challenges for our residents and influence local and national policies. I believe we do this well and will continue to do so.”

(Joanne Heron, Scrutiny Manager, St Helens Council)



Contact us

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Phone number: 0300 111 0007

Email: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

tw: @HWStHelens

fb: facebook.com/Healthwatchsthelens

Address and contact details of the organisation holding the local Healthwatch contract as of 31/03/2019.

- Halton & St Helens Voluntary & Community Action
- St Marie's, Lugsdale Road, Widnes, WA8 6DB
- 01928 592405
- info@haltonsthelensvca.org.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.

Registered Charity No. 1106001 and a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 2539153



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