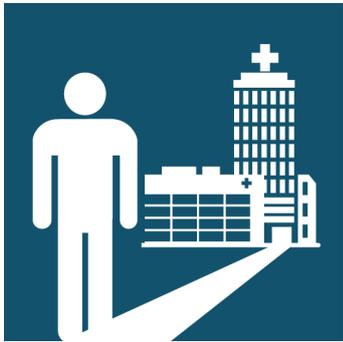




We listen to you, take action, and influence positive change for our health & social care services



Talk to us
it starts with **YOU**
healthwatch



Read more about what we have achieved and how we go about it inside our annual report



Healthwatch Kent

Annual Report 2017/18



The year at a glance

Through our Helpline we have empowered 5,140 people to make informed choices and get the right care that they need



Our 66 volunteers have donated 1,540 hours of their valuable time to help make a difference



We've spoken to 3,500 people in depth about specific issues



We've done 40 Enter & View visits including 25 to Care Homes



We've visited 72 community groups and spoken to around 1,440 people



Over 400,000 people have heard about Healthwatch and our work this year



What have we achieved?

Created a patient group to influence the STP and the future of our health & care services



We have shared 158 stories to inform Kent County Council's review of Carer services



Improved care for Parkinson's patients in West Kent



Improved information available to patients with learning difficulties in East Kent



We've shared 470 stories from people who have been discharged from hospital



Launched the Healthwatch Help Cards which have helped 7,685 people so far



How do we bring about change?

The answer is simple... By listening

We listen to people through a number of different ways:

- When people contact our Helpline directly.
- By proactively visiting communities and groups, especially those who are classed as seldom heard and may not share their feedback.
- Through our regular Information stands at public places including libraries and hospital foyers.
- By using our statutory powers to Enter & View any adult health or social care service and talk to patients and users about their experience.
- Talking to people in supermarkets and high streets about their experiences of services and their thoughts about how services could change.

Through this work we have been able to listen to people from all ages from young to old. We've also heard from people who would be classed as 'seldom heard or vulnerable plus people who may not live within Kent but who use Kent's services.

Here's just a few examples of where we have been this year:

- Mental Health support groups
- Gypsy & Travellers sites
- Older People's Groups
- Pensioners Information Fair
- Rural Libraries
- Kent Physical Disability Forum
- Macular Support Groups
- Dover Big Local Fete
- Canterbury Pride
- Carers Forums
- RBLI Information & Advice Days
- East Mencap Fun Day
- Age UK Hythe & Lyminge Festival
- Canterbury & District Early Years Project
- Maidstone Dementia Cafe
- Foodbanks
- Ashford Homelessness Forum

What we've learnt from visiting services:

We've learnt so much from talking to people but here are a few snapshots.

- Access to a British Sign Language Interpreter continues to be a problem.
- Many people continue to be stuck in hospital while they await a care package to enable them to go home.
- Psychological wellbeing was the biggest issue faced by the Carers we spoke to.
- Services do not always work as efficiently or as joined up as they could be.
- If people cannot get an appointment from their GP, they are twice as likely to go to A&E.
- People are confused and fearful of changes to services. They want to understand what services will look like in the future.
- People don't feel they are being engaged and involved in changes to services.
- There is currently a lack of provision for adults with autism.
- GPs and District Nurses do not always receive discharge information on their patients so they don't have the details they need to treat them.
- Test results are not always ready for peoples' appointments.
- People can experience lengthy delays for appointments.
- Information is not always available to people in the format that they need.

Strategic Priorities

This year we have tried to reduce the number of priorities to enable us to focus and commit the time needed to make a real difference to services. This list is not exhaustive and we will continue to respond to issues as the year goes on.

Adult Autism: Although we don't hear a huge amount about adult autism services, we have heard a number of concerns. Kent County Council and the NHS are going to be reviewing the services they provide to adults with autism in Kent this year, so this is a great opportunity to ensure that people can share their views and thoughts so that they can be considered while a new service is being developed.

Autism in Children: Two years ago, we published a report about mental health in children and young people. During that work we heard a number of issues about autism in children particularly around diagnosis and waiting time. We want to see if this situation has improved for young people and their families.

The Sustainability & Transformation Partnership (STP): We will continue to have an active role in the STP and the changing face of commissioning within Kent & Medway. Our role is to champion the involvement of patients and service users in these changes and to ensure all parts of our communities are involved. A key way that we do this is to support the STP Patient & Public Advisory Group which involves members of the public.

Discharge from hospital for homeless patients: We have done a lot of work around hospital discharge over the past two years but we have yet to address the issues faced by homeless people across Kent. We will be proactively seeking to understand their experience of being discharged from hospital and helping to improve their experience.

Mental health in the community: We often hear about issues with mental health services in the community both from providers and service users. We will be exploring these issues in greater detail and working with the relevant services to make improvements.

End of Life Care: We will be visiting some Kent hospices this year to talk to patients and their families about End of Life Care. We will also be working in partnership with the Kent Community Health Trust to gather feedback from Kent residents about current End of Life care services.

Accessible Information for All: Last year we worked in partnership with East Kent Mencap to visit hospitals in East Kent through the eyes of someone with learning difficulties. This year we will continue a series of visits to other

organisations to explore how they are supporting patients and service users who may be Blind, Deaf or have communication issues.

Listening to you: As always, we will continue with our programme of visiting communities particularly those who are often harder to reach. These visits will enable us to hear directly peoples' experiences of health and social care services. We have a regular presence in all Kent NHS Trusts talking to patients, but we also visit community and local groups as well as travelling around Kent on our Coffee Caravan. The Coffee Caravan, in partnership with Rural Kent, visits rural communities to reduce social isolation, provide information and support and enables us to hear directly from communities.

The patient and user voice: Working together with established user forums such as the Older Peoples' Forum, the Mental Health Action groups and service user forums and the Kent Physical Disability Forum, we will ensure that these existing forums are involved and listened to as part of the health and social care system.



What difference have we made?

What do we do with what we have heard?

We share EVERYTHING that we have heard. We share the loud voices and the not so loud voices. We share the positive stories and the not so good stories. Here are just a few places that we share the feedback you tell us:

- Directly with the Care Quality Commission especially if we have serious concerns about a service.
- We meet with Kent County Council every month and raise issues with a panel of KCC officers.
- At the Kent Health & Well Being Board and the seven local Health & Well Being Boards.
- If relevant at the Kent Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee which is made up of Kent County Council Elected Members.
- Directly with the relevant organisation and commissioner of the service.
- All our information is shared with our umbrella organisation, Healthwatch England.
- We are part of the Kent & Medway Sustainability & Transformation Partnership (STP). Any issues we hear that relate to the future of services we share here.
- We work with all of these organisations and more to ensure your voice is heard by the right people at the right time to influence and inform improvements and changes to services.

In our hospitals: Our trained volunteers have completed 13 Enter & View visits to talk to patients in hospital. We also regularly visit Kent hospitals to hear from patients about their experiences. Here are just a few of the things we have achieved;

- Better support for Parkinson's patients in West Kent.
- More disabled parking at Kent & Canterbury Hospital.
- Better information for patients waiting in Outpatients.
- Improved signage to help patients find their way in West & East Kent.
- Better appointment information for Royal Victoria Hospital patients.
- Improvements are being made in East Kent to ensure information is more readily available to patients in different formats should they need it.
- New policy at Darent Valley Hospital to stop dialysis patients missing meals.
- A new leaflet is being created for new and expectant Dads.



In our Care Homes: We have visited 25 Care Homes across Kent this year to talk to residents, families and staff. Our findings have only just been published so it is too early to say what difference it will have made but we are confident changes will be made as a result. We have also escalated 18 cases of concern for safety to the Care Quality Commission and Kent County Council this year. All of our escalations have been investigated.

Mental health patients and carers: We work closely with the Kent Mental Health Action Group (MHAG) as well as the local groups which are made up of patients and carers. On behalf of the Kent MHAG we asked questions about the readmission rate for mental health patients. Following on from the response, we facilitated a direct relationship between the MHAG and the Mental Health Trust to strengthen their relationship. We are now embarking on large piece of work in conjunction with our parent company, Engaging Kent, to strengthen the voice of mental health patients and ensure the mental health forums are heard and involved in the development of services.

Changes to our services:

Services are undergoing a huge amount of change across the country and we can't be involved in every development. We have however focused our efforts on the Kent & Medway Sustainability & Transformation Plan or STP. Our work in this area focuses on the following aspects;

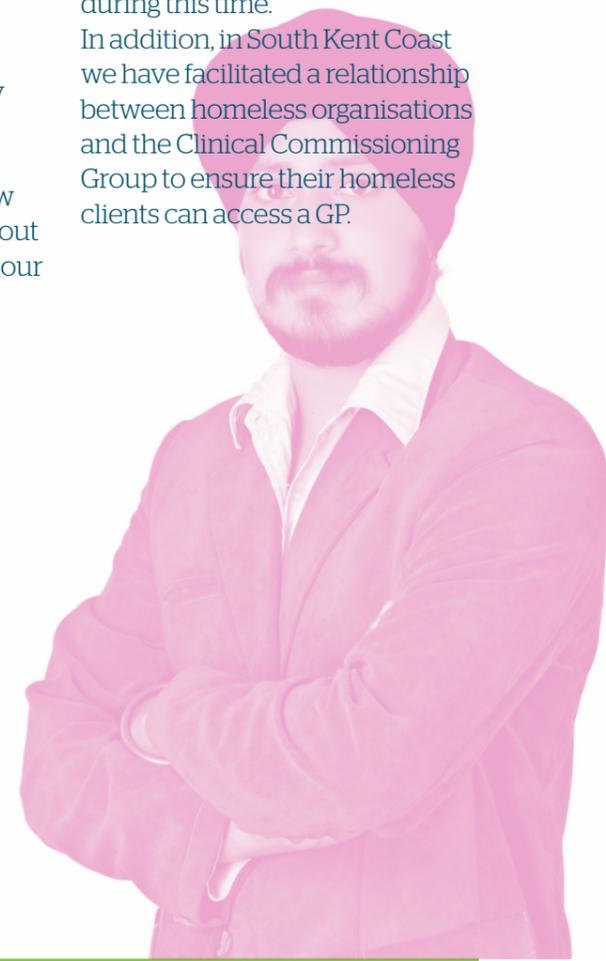
- We have been instrumental in setting up and developing the Patient & Public Advisory Group for the STP which is a group of patients and voluntary sector representatives that ensure the voice of patients is firmly centred within the STP. We have been asked to Chair that group. We have ensured members of the public are involved in every work stream of the programme, we have improved consultation documents and ensured engagement is carried out to a high level wherever possible. We have gained commitment from the programme to work in a 'co-production' model going forward and we are helping them draft their strategy and recruit their communications and engagement team.
- We also have a statutory responsibility to scrutinise changes to services to ensure people are involved and informed about any changes. Our volunteers who are not

actively involved in the STP undertake this scrutiny work and they are trained by the Consultation Institute. Most recently they have scrutinised the Kent & Medway Stroke review and felt it adequately involved people from across Kent.

- This year we established the Kent County Council Peoples' Panel which is a group of informed members of the public. They meet monthly to discuss and test ideas around service improvement and development.
- In addition we have actively promoted and encouraged hundreds of people to get involved in the stroke review and share their thoughts about the options for the future of our stroke services.

GP services: We have heard from people across Kent about the concern caused when their GP surgery is closing or merging with others. We have worked with Healthwatches across the South East to produce our Checklist for GP closures and mergers. This details how we would expect patients to be informed and involved in any potential changes. It also enables us to have a clear framework that we would expect Clinical Commissioning Groups to follow during this time.

In addition, in South Kent Coast we have facilitated a relationship between homeless organisations and the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure their homeless clients can access a GP.



What difference have we made?

Dentists: We have been raising the concerns of Care Home residents who either couldn't physically get to a dentist from the care home or who found it difficult to get someone to take them to a dentist. In these cases, many older people were going without seeing a dentist. From 2019, the Care Quality Commission will be including access to dental care in their inspections of care homes. This is great news and should help more older people across the UK to receive the dental care that they need.

Physical Disabilities: We have escalated concerns about wheelchair services across Kent. On behalf of the Kent Physical Disability Forum we have facilitated direct conversations between patients, commissioner and the organisation who provides that service. We have clearly stated the issues and the improvements that we expect to see.

In the community: We spoke to 158 Carers recently many of whom were not involved in traditional carers groups. All the feedback we heard has been used to directly inform a KCC's review of Carer services.

Following feedback from people especially the Gypsy & Traveller community we have developed the Healthwatch Help Cards. These are to enable people to discreetly ask for help should they need. Over 8,229 have been distributed across Kent to better support people.

Together with our parent company, Engaging Kent, we have worked with the Kent Coffee Caravan this year reaching 105 people from rural and potentially isolated communities.

All of our reports and recommendations can be found on our website. We work with the relevant provider and commissioner to influence the recommendations that we have made. To date, no provider or commissioner has declined to work with us, although some have taken some time to respond. All our intelligence and reports are also shared with Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.



Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are central to everything that we do. They are involved in every level from administration through to decision making.

Here's just a few examples of what our volunteers do for us:

- Hold regular sessions in Kent hospitals talking to patients about their experiences.
- Represent Healthwatch at key meetings including all seven local Health & Well Being Boards ensuring that patient voice remains on the agenda.
- Work with us to shape the work plan for the Kent Health & Well Being Board.
- Visiting services as part of our Enter & View remit to talk to patients about their experiences.
- Visiting community and seldom heard groups to understand their experiences of services.
- Read, distil and analyse reports and information.

Our Steering Group is made up of volunteers.

They identify themes and trends for our future work.

Together they agree our priorities and projects.

They define and shape our project work and allocate resources.

Our local Area Teams discuss and examine local issues.

They work with local organisations and commissioners.

They determine our local activity within each Clinical Commissioning Group area.

They are made up entirely of volunteers.





Finances

Table heading showing statement of activities for the year ending 31 March 2018

Income	
Funding received through local authority to deliver Healthwatch statutory activities	£511,000
Additional Income	£0
Total income	£511,000
Expenditure	
Operational costs	£106,598
Staffing costs	£330,043
Office costs	£17,278
Volunteer costs, expenses & training	£18,956
Total expenditure	£472,875
Balance brought forward	£38,125



Your comment counts We want to hear from you

Tell us your experiences of health & social care services in Kent



By Telephone:
Healthwatch Kent
Freephone 0808 801 01 02



By Email:
Info@healthwatchkent.co.uk



Online:
www.healthwatchkent.co.uk



By Post: Write to us or fill in and send a Your Comment Counts form. **Freepost RTLG-UBZB-JUZA** Healthwatch Kent, Seabrooke House, Church Rd, Ashford TN23 1RD



Face to Face:
Call 0808 801 01 02 to arrange a visit



By Text: Text us on **07525 861 639**. By texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's British Sign Language interpreter will make contact and arrange a time to meet face to face.

Engaging Kent CiC is the legal entity which holds the Healthwatch Kent Contract.
www.engagingkent.co.uk | Seabrooke House, Church Rd, Ashford, TN23 1RD

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