



Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Annual Report 2016/17



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Message from our Chair

In the four years since Healthwatch Northamptonshire started its journey, we have achieved a great deal, with staff and volunteers working tirelessly to ensure that the views and experiences of people of all ages living in the county, are heard by those commissioning and providing services in health and social care.

2016-17 has been no exception, despite the challenges of tightening resources, staff changes and an office move. It has been marked by Healthwatch Northamptonshire continuing to win a number of regional and national awards, particularly for our innovative and exemplary work engaging with and involving children and young people. The work around our Eating Disorders Survey, designed for young people by young people, which resulted in over 2,000 responses, has been particularly praised and acknowledged. We also reached many members of the public with our Make Your Voice Count 4 campaign and our partnership with our commissioners and providers of services has continued to grow and develop.

Our work could not have been achieved without the skills and commitment of our CEO Kate Holt; her hardworking and excellent staff team; the dedication of our Board members and volunteers who give unstintingly of their time and experience;

the Connected Together (CTCIC) Board, who so ably manage the Healthwatch contract; the encouragement and cooperation of our partners in health and social care, and not least, the valuable contributions of the people of this county.

Finally a very special thank you to Professor Will Pope, whose leadership, wisdom and expertise over these last four years has enabled us to achieve so much and we are fortunate that he continues as CTCIC Chair.

“Our work is more vital and as essential than ever before.”

This year, we face another significant budget cut, but we consider our work to be more vital and essential than ever before, especially given the increasing challenges faced by our NHS and social care commissioners and services. Of huge importance to our county is the continuing development of the STP (Sustainability and Transformation Plan) and we are very keen to ensure that as the detail of this plan unfolds, people are fully involved and have their voices heard and listened to.

We very much look forward to working with you all in this coming year.



Teresa Dobson



Message from our Chief Executive

2016/17 was another exceptionally challenging year for Healthwatch Northamptonshire. We started the new financial year in April 2016 with a further budget cut, an office move and a reduction in staffing levels.

We continued to make efficiencies and work smarter while producing some excellent work and making a real impact, which this annual report will highlight.

Notably, our work with children and young people (CYP) has won awards and we led a regional Masterclass about how to meaningfully engage with CYP. We also spoke to people across the county more than ever before thanks to Mark Symmonds and his 135 Pop Up Shops!

Going forward into 2017/18, our budget has been reduced again and we have had to make further redundancies. Our ability to remain active in the community and raise the views of people in Northamptonshire about health, social care and wellbeing services will be sorely tested. We will continue to rely heavily on the goodwill of staff and volunteers to deliver our work and fulfil the legal responsibilities and statutory duties required of us.

“We make your voice heard.”

Why we're needed

Healthwatch acts as a credible, resolute and independent consumer champion with an essential role to ensure an effective voice for local people, to hold decision makers to account and to influence the form and quality of local care ensuring everyone has access to the best health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Impact of Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Volunteers and staff sit on various Boards and meetings to represent you, for example on the Health and Wellbeing Board, the local hospital Boards and patient groups. They also get out and about around the county to hear views directly from you and by visiting care homes and GP surgeries etc. to feedback and make recommendations to decision makers.

All our reports where we have consulted and engaged with you to hear your voice can be found at:

www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/reports



Kate Holt



Highlights from our year

This year 1,839 people engaged with us on Facebook and 1,665 people like us on Twitter



Our volunteers help us with everything from Enter and View visits to choosing our priorities



We've visited local hospitals, care homes and day centres



Our reports have tackled issues like homelessness and maternity services



We've spoken to over 2,000 young people about eating disorders



We've met 1,200 local people at our community events and Pop Up Shops





Who we are

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

We are uniquely placed as a national network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

Our vision

Healthwatch Northamptonshire will be a strong, resolute and independent community champion. We will give local people a voice and work in partnership to influence the design and quality of health and social care provision so that all local people have an opportunity for an improved quality of life.

Our values

- + We will be accessible and visible
- + We will be independent and objective
- + We will be open, honest and transparent in all that we do
- + We will be inclusive and embrace diversity and equality, reflecting the diverse needs of local people
- + We will listen to and hear the views of local people

- + We will speak up for local people and enable people to speak for themselves
- + We will be fair and credible
- + We will seek out and use evidence, including from the public, to inform our work

We will continue to strive to make a positive difference and campaign for the best possible health and social care for local people.





Our priorities

To deliver our vision and realise our values, Healthwatch Northamptonshire works to:

- + Find out the views, needs and experience of local people through a wide range of methods to get the broadest view possible, representative of all our diverse communities
- + Make these views known to health and social care decision makers
- + Promote and support the involvement of local people in decision making about health and social care services
- + Enable local people to monitor the quality of provision of local care services
- + Report on the quality of local care services and make recommendations about how these services could and should be improved
- + Provide advice and information about local health and care services
- + Provide Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to form a national picture of the quality of care

When necessary, we escalate concerns using our rights to refer matters to the County Council's Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee locally and to Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission at national level.

Our Team (from left to right): Sonia, Natasha, Kate, Oyinda, Polly-Ann, Esther and Jo





Our team



Kate Holt

Chief Executive

Kate manages the Connected Together CIC and the Healthwatch Northamptonshire contract. She is responsible for the day to day operation and delivery.



Jo Spenceley

Senior Healthwatch Officer - Research, Reporting and Intelligence

Jo leads research into experiences and views of health and social care and ensures that this is reported and shared.



Esther Stimpson

Healthwatch Officer - Projects, Consultations and Engagement

Esther leads our project work, supports our planning group, and ensures all are able to take part in meaningful consultation across the county.



Sonia Bray

Senior Healthwatch Officer

Sonia coordinates our work on adult services and related projects.



Natasha Mansukhani

Research, Reporting and Intelligence Assistant

Natasha assists the team to research and report on people's views and experiences of health and social care.

Oyinda Famodoun

Comms Intern

Oyinda will be helping with our communications and marketing until the Autumn 2017.

Becky Calcraft

Healthwatch Assistant (starts July 2017)

Becky will be helping with our engagement, projects and volunteers.

Office Administrator/PA

To be recruited

We can
help you...

Are you struggling
with social care?

*Your views on
health and care*



Listening to local people's views

For Healthwatch Northamptonshire, 2016/17 was the year of the 'Pop Up Shop'! We focussed on getting out and about around the county to hear more from the people of Northamptonshire and to let them know about us.

With the help of our volunteers, we held 135 Pop Up Shops in 55 locations, including regular monthly visits and one off events and groups.

We spoke to around 1,200 people at these events and gathered 153 useful comment cards.

Many of our regular Pop Up Shops took place where health and care services are provided to make sure we heard the views of those using the services, including older



people. Locations included both general hospitals, Corby Urgent Care Centre and Specialist Care Centres.

In order to reach the more rural parts of the county we teamed up with the Rural Wellbeing Service (operated by Action with Communities in Rural England; ACRE) and joined them on their mobile Rural Information Centre. We were also able to meet a broad cross-section of the county through regular Pop Up Shops at locations such as leisure centres, day centres and Community Cafes.

We attended support groups and other specific service user groups and events for young and old, such as care homes, early

years centres, interfaith forums and colleges.

Through building links with Teamwork Trust Northamptonshire (who run programmes for adults with mental health needs, learning and physical disabilities), we were able to engage with people with learning difficulties and gather their feedback. We also attended a number of South Northamptonshire Homes events where we could talk to local residents about their experiences of using health and social care services in their area.

Finally, we joined up with other organisations at some of the larger public engagement events targeting the general public and specific groups, including the Diwali Festival of Light, Mental Health Awareness Day, Armed Forces Day and Learning Disability Partnerships Board's Moving On Up Conference.

In addition to what we heard at events and through specific, focussed surveys, we logged 224 pieces of feedback received by phone, email, comment card, etc. and received 169 responses to our annual Make Your Voice Count survey.



Mark at a Pop Up Shop at Spinneyfields Specialist Care Centre, Rushden



What we've learnt from visiting services

In addition, Healthwatch Northamptonshire carried out two Enter and View¹ visits in 2016/17.

All these reports and additional feedback have been shared with the commissioners and inspectors of health and care in the county - Care Quality Commission, Northamptonshire County Council and NHS Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The authorised representatives who carried out these visits were: Sandra Bell, Brian Burnett and John Rawlings.

Kingswood Care Homes, Raunds

In September 2016 we visited Kingswood Residential Care Home after a member of the public with a relative living at the home raised concerns about aspects of the care, staffing and management. The findings from the visit were positive - residents liked living in the home and were treated with dignity and respect, relatives knew staff well and who to contact for advice, and staff were happy. Overall, people felt things were improving under the new manager and we made recommendations concerning the communal area and garden.

Whilst conducting a tour of the home it was noted that a number of hardly used pieces of assistance equipment were left in an outside yard. When questioned about why they were there, we were told that the

¹ Enter and View is the power that Healthwatch has to go into health and care premises to hear and see how people experience the service and gather their feedback, www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/enter-and-view

holder of the county council's equipment contract would not pick them up and return them to their stores. We have shared our concerns with Northamptonshire County Council about the waste of council resources and cost if this was replicated across care/nursing homes in Northamptonshire.

CUBE Disability, Northampton

In March 2017 we visited the CUBE Disability day centre in Northampton. CUBE is a private company registered to provide non-regulated day provision for adults with learning disabilities. This means that they are not regulated by the Care Quality Commission. Along with Healthwatch England, we expressed concerns to the Department of Health about the lack of regulation of service such as these and supported living services in 2015². Having heard some concern from two carers of clients of CUBE Disability in Northampton, and because recipients of personal budgets (public money) use the service, we decided to visit to see for ourselves what the service provided and what clients and carers thought of it. The visit was again very positive - we spoke to five clients, who were very happy with the activities provided and their experience. We also received 13 surveys back from carers of clients and the feedback was 100 percent positive. The only recommendation we had was for some clearer entrance signage.

The owner of CUBE Disability agreed with our concerns about the lack of special regulations for this type of centre, and felt the introduction of regulations would help

² www.healthwatch.co.uk/resource/concerns-healthwatch-network-lack-quality-assurance-non-regulated-services

to raise general standards of service. We will resume these discussions with Healthwatch England.

“We found the experience of Healthwatch Northamptonshire at The Cube Disability to be an important tool for all parties concerned...

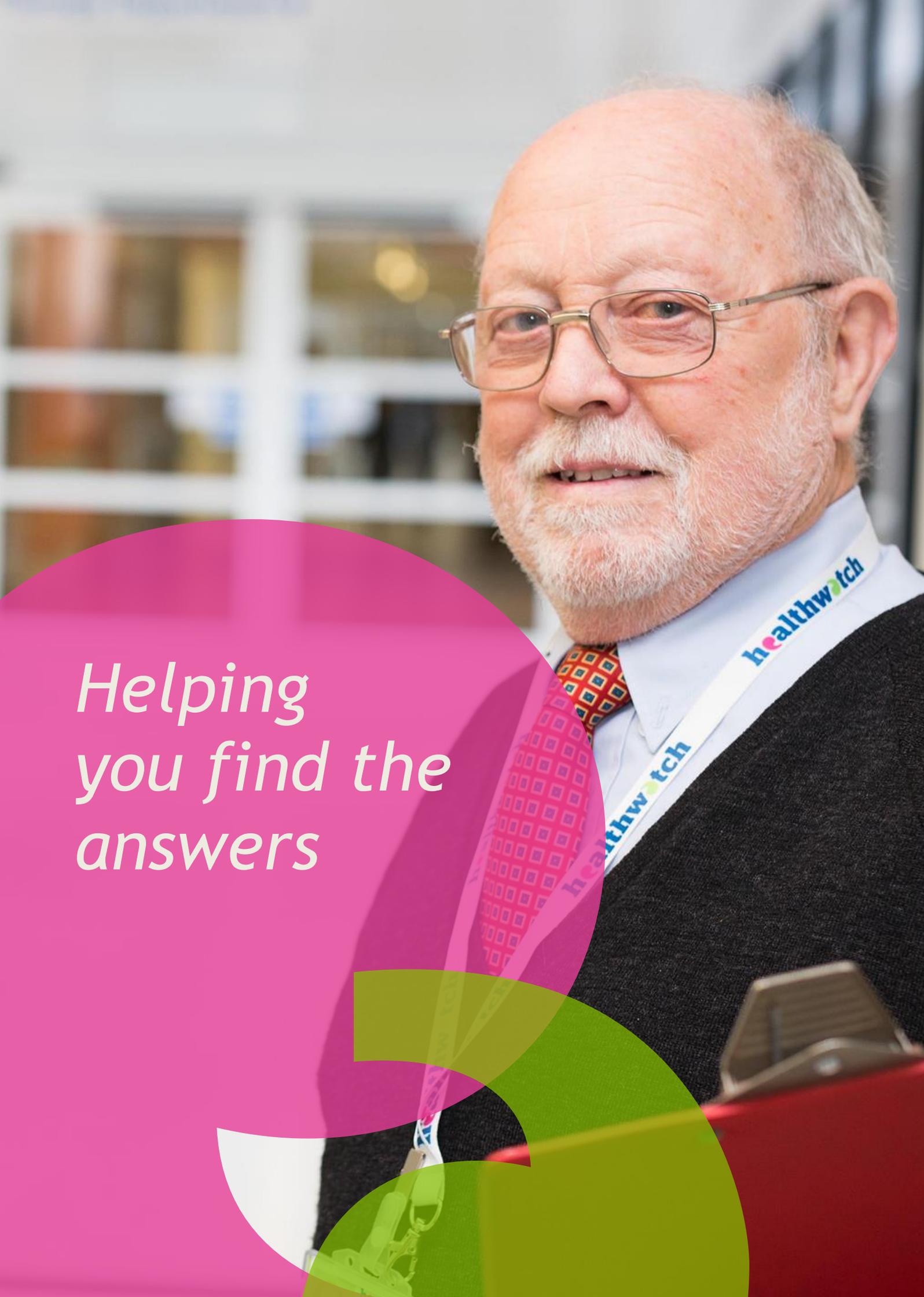
Our experience was that the whole process was independent and unbiased. The people who came did so with an open mind and all their questions were relevant. They did challenge us and this again is great as we can then step back ourselves and see what we do right (or wrong) on a daily basis.

We are so busy working, that this is a way of reflecting and striving to attain high standards and keeping them...

I would ask all providers to welcome a review of their service and then follow through any recommendations. The staff at Healthwatch Northamptonshire have a friendly approach and listen carefully. I felt I could trust them and confidentiality was upheld at all times too. Big thanks to the staff from Healthwatch who enabled the clients to have their say too.”

Owner, CUBE Disability





*Helping
you find the
answers*



How we have helped the community access the care they need

As well as gathering feedback from the people we spoke to at Pop Up Shops, we gave more detailed advice to those who needed it (28 people) and an additional 89 people were given advice by the office.

Many people ask for information about how to make a complaint about a health or care service or about how to find an NHS dentist or GP. Mr Brett asked for advice about both of these:

“I have recently had the need to complain about a dental practice, from whom I believed that I had very bad service and dentures that did not fit.

I contacted Healthwatch Northamptonshire and sent the letter of complaint that I sent to the Practice Manager, along with the reply from the Dentist, who in short asked me to register with another dental practice, as they repudiated my claim.

I was given considerable assistance from Jo, who gave me a website of local dentists. I have found one quickly. Jo also told me about the NHS Complaints Advocacy, to whom I complained officially.

I am now very close to obtaining a satisfactory conclusion to my complaint. Without the advice from Healthwatch I feel that this

situation would have been prolonged.

I wholeheartedly advise that anyone in a similar situation should ask their advice.”

Mr Brett, Wellingborough

Like Mr Brett (above), people also benefit from being able to discuss their issues or complaints with us to check they are talking to the right people or find out who else could help them. For example, not everyone is aware that they can usually talk directly to the matron of a hospital ward to resolve issues with care before progressing with an enquiry to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) or a complaint.

Others are helped by our online complaints guide³, which tells people how they can make a complaint, where they can get advocacy support, and about other organisations that could help them.



³

www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/complaints-guide

Many people come to us to find out where they can get the help they need. For example, one person told us about a relative in their 60s who kept falling and we were able to signpost them to the falls assessment service and to Northamptonshire Carers to get them a carers assessment and access to respite care.

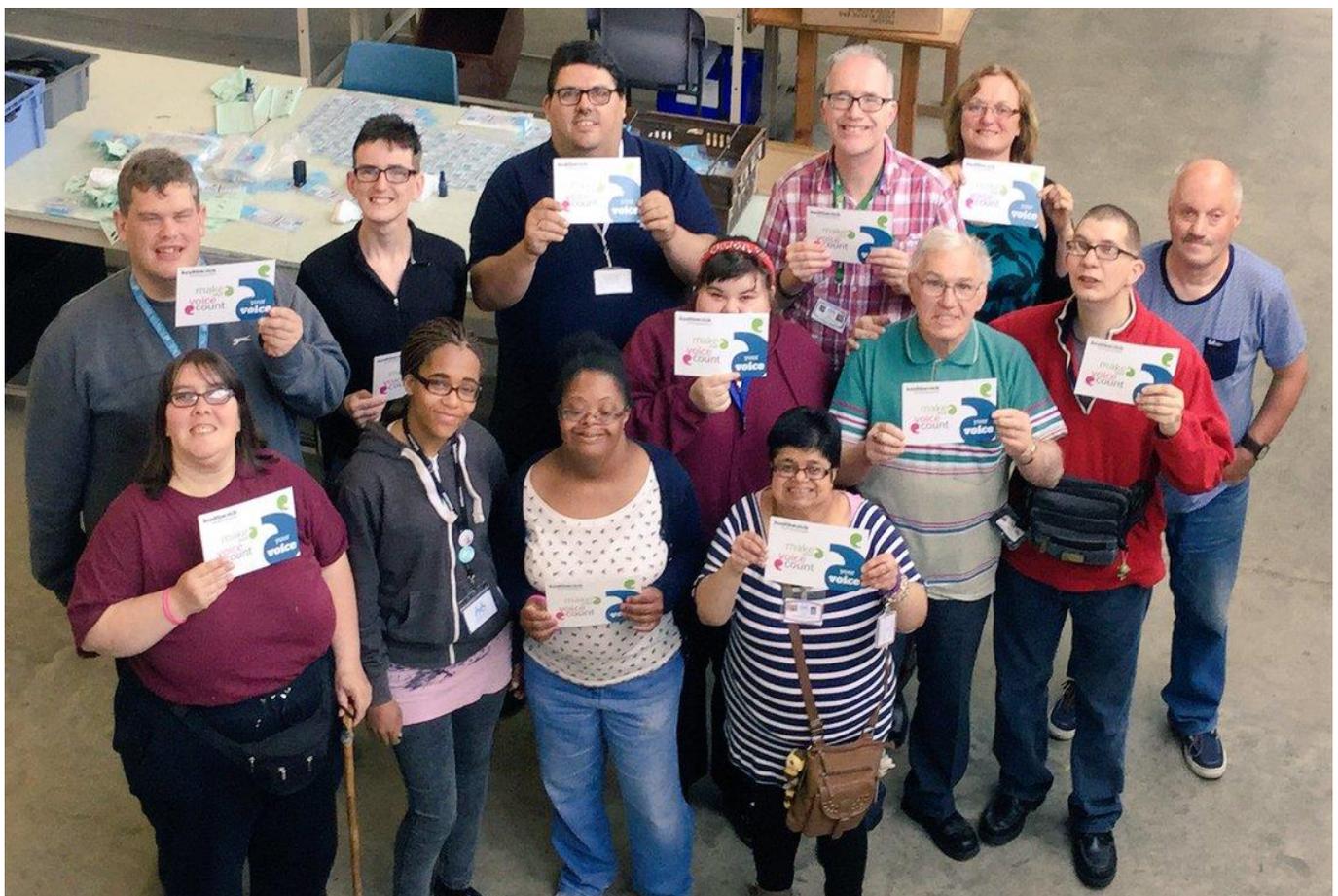
Occasionally people come to us when they have not been able to get help anywhere else. We are currently assisting a member of the public to get the orthotics service they need and through doing this we have alerted both the service provider and the commissioner to the issues and engaged in ongoing discussion to improve the customer experience.

During the past year most of our signposting has been to the Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) at the local NHS trusts, NHS

complaints advocacy (VoiceAbility), Northamptonshire Carers, NHS England Customer Centre, Adult Social Care, Citizen's Advice Bureau, and Community Law.

We have also been contacted by homeless people and people at risk of homelessness seeking help for mental health issues. We also frequently make enquiries with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Trusts and others to find out the answers to more unusual questions, e.g. how to access medical records and issues with accessing treatment.

Giving people information and hearing their concerns requires sensitivity and empathy. Two members of the team were trained in 'dealing with complaints with empathy' this year to strengthen our ability to give information and signpost effectively.



Mark at Teamwork Corby



*Making a
difference
together*

Have you
visited
Care Home
Rel
What was it like?



How your experiences are helping influence change

In addition to our Enter and View reports and regular feedback reporting, Healthwatch Northamptonshire published five project reports in 2016/17 to inform decision makers of the views of the people of Northamptonshire so that services can be improved (all of which can be found on our website⁴).

The views of children and young people with SEND in Northamptonshire

During late 2015/early 2016 we engaged with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at events and at schools (in lessons and assemblies). We spoke to 74 children and young people with SEND face to face and a further 156 completed a survey. Most of the young people we spoke to told us they'd had good experiences of healthcare but we did identify high rates of bullying among this group - 56% of the survey respondents said they had been bullied and 16% said they had bullied others.

This feedback was used by the Information Advice Support Service (IASS) for SEND in Northamptonshire and the Northamptonshire's Disabled Children and Young People's Delivery Group self-assessment.

"I have read the full report and thought it was really well produced. The items I will take from this for some follow up are around bullying and the information available to young

⁴ www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/reports

people and how it is presented. Given that a large proportion of children and young people would go to a parent if they had a worry I will look into putting on a workshop on bullying for parents [this took place in November]. We can also look at the workshops for young people at our next conference and see if we can include bullying into that too. I'm sure that other strategic groups will want to learn from this piece of work too."

Anne Wakeling, IASS Service Manager



Free ANTI-BULLYING workshop for parent carers of disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN)

When: Tuesday 22nd November 2016, 10am – 2pm

Where: The Bee Hive, Harborough Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 8LR



Topics covered on the day include:

- Recognising signs of bullying
- Tips for talking to your child about bullying and how to support them
- Working with school to address bullying



The views of children and young people in Northamptonshire about eating disorders, including the young LGBTQ⁵ community

At the beginning of 2016, Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire designed a survey to find out what children and young people knew about eating disorders and whether they had experienced eating disorders themselves.

Over 2,000 young people completed the survey. We found that a lot of young people knew about eating disorders, and over a third felt they either had one or knew someone with an eating disorder, but over half did not know where to go for help with an eating disorder, particularly boys.

We also held a focus group with the OUT THERE LGBTQ youth group at The Lowdown as we were keen to find out if there were any particular body image issues for this group of young people and what information about eating disorders and body image they thought should be available for the young LGBTQ community.

These findings help inform the Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Future in Mind Local Transformation Plan for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, which aims to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people across the county.

“Nene and Corby CCG recognise the issues raised by the eating disorders report and copies have been distributed to all the stakeholders including NHFT where they have been asked to use it to shape the new service. We will make use of the learning from the report in shaping our KPIs and quality monitoring the service.”

David Loyd-Hearn, Transformation Manager, NHS Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups



Young people designing the eating disorders survey

⁵ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning

Experiences of pregnancy, birth and onwards: The views of parents about services and support in Northamptonshire

In March 2016 we surveyed 77 parents with infants or young children about their views on the help and support they received during pregnancy, labour and the postnatal period. We did this to ensure the voices of parents are heard throughout the development and implementation of changes to services. Find out more about this work on page 24.

Access to health and social care services for Northamptonshire's homeless and vulnerably housed population - The views of homeless people and professionals

In late 2016 Healthwatch Northamptonshire undertook a piece of work to find out more about the views and experiences of Northamptonshire's homeless and vulnerably housed population, a seldom heard group. We were particularly interested in finding out about the barriers homeless people face when accessing and using local services. We spoke to five organisations working with homeless people across the county and 25 homeless people or people who had been recently made homeless in Northampton, Rushden and Wellingborough.

We heard about some good support for homeless people, particularly provided by homeless charities and oral health checks from the Community Dental Service, but the support available across the county appears to be variable. Access to GP practices was not a big problem although we learnt that homeless people often

distrust GPs and health professionals, feeling they do not understand their lives and the issues they face, or that they do not feel the need to register with these services if they are not ill or in pain. We also learnt about alcohol use and how this can be a barrier to people accessing mental health services and other support and that access to psychiatrists and community psychiatric nurses was difficult for some, particularly outside of Northampton.



As a result of this report, which also highlighted the concerns of Accommodation Concern in Kettering about the high incidence of toothache and rotten teeth amongst their homeless clients, the Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT) Deputy Medical Director and Specialist in Special Care Dentistry offered:

“...for [the Community Dental Service outreach service] to be extended using their junior dentists, supported by the wider team” and “contact Accommodation Concern to offer them dental support”

Deborah Manger, Deputy Medical Director, Specialist in special care dentistry, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

Hospital discharge and follow-up home based support

In October 2016 we carried out a survey of people being discharged from Kettering and Northampton General Hospitals, with the aim of finding out how well their discharge had been planned and whether appropriate support was put in place to help them manage. In Spring 2017 we followed up with some of the respondents to find out whether the planned post-discharge support worked out for them. Findings showed that 40% felt fully involved in their discharge planning and were generally satisfied with the process. The report is about to be published.

Working with other organisations

During 2016/17 we have worked with other organisation to engage with members of the public in system change, shared tips on engaging with children and young people, and helped both general hospitals gather patient feedback.

Revolutionising Engagement and Involvement Workshop

In May 2016 Healthwatch Northamptonshire and the Patient Congress jointly held a public engagement event focusing on ‘Revolutionising Engagement and Involvement’. The purpose of this was to enable members of the public, health and care providers and voluntary sector organisations to feed into the Northamptonshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)⁶.

⁶ The Northamptonshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) sets out how health and

Since this workshop Healthwatch Northamptonshire has pushed for more consultation with the public about the STP to ensure the voice of the public is sought and listened to and are pleased to see increased engagement with us.



Revolutionising Engagement Workshop

EMAHSN masterclass and 10 top tips

In October Healthwatch staff and Young Healthwatch volunteers held a ‘masterclass’ on Engaging with Children and Young People for the East Midlands Academic Health Sciences Network (EMAHSN). At the masterclass we shared our experience of running the youth wellbeing conference in 2015 and produced a ‘10 Top Tips when engaging with children and young people’ guide with EMAHSN.



social care in our county will change over the next five years.

Young Healthwatch members delivering the Masterclass

Gathering patient feedback at Northampton and Kettering General Hospitals

In addition to the Young Healthwatch visit to Kettering General Hospital (KGH) (see page 31) our volunteers carried out 14 visits to wards at KGH to talk to patients and observe the environment and care from the patient and carer perspective. This was fed back directly to the wards and Matron's Forum at KGH and resulted in action plans for each ward.

We also worked with Northampton General Hospital (NGH) to undertake a survey of patients using the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department over 24 hours (with special thanks to the volunteers who took the night shifts!). NGH had witnessed increased pressure on their A&E and asked for our help in talking to 'walk-in' patients over a 24 hours period in order to understand why more patients were attending A&E.

Reporting to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and others

During the year we sent the CQC feedback on all three NHS trusts in the county (NGH, KGH and NHFT) and St Andrew's Healthcare to inform their inspections of these services. The CQC let us know when they are visiting health and care services so we can give them feedback and we share what we have heard most weeks.

“Thanks, this is really helpful and I will certainly focus on the staffing

levels on the inspection. Thanks for passing on this information.”

CQC Inspector

We have also shared our regular reports of people's experiences with the county's health and care providers and commissioners and sit on the patient experience groups of the three NHS Trusts so they can address the issues we raise.

We share feedback and reports with Healthwatch England too, such as to help inform their review of the evidence on NHS dental services that had been shared with them by the local Healthwatch network.

How we've worked with our community

As can be seen from this report, we have spoken to a wide variety of groups and communities during the year, from the Bipolar Support Group, to new parents and the Inter Faith Forum. All the feedback gathered from these groups is fed back to the relevant services, such as the concerns of the Bipolar Support Group about NHFT mental health crisis care.

As well as helping a wide range of community representatives engage with commissioners and providers at the STP workshop, we have represented the public voice in response to a number of consultations during the year. We also have Healthwatch volunteers representing us at local Health and Wellbeing Forums and patient engagement groups across the county, as well as specialist groups of professionals, like the Mental Health Concordat, safeguarding boards and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Independent Community Equipment Services (ICES) Procurement Process

For some time our volunteers have been concerned about the Independent Community Equipment Service, and in particular, whether it represented ‘value for money’ to Northamptonshire County Council and local tax payers. We also called for more openness in the procurement process. Northamptonshire County Council responded by establishing a user/carer consultation group, in which Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers were involved. Our volunteers helped develop a user questionnaire to find out user and carers views of the service, feedback from which influenced the development of the service specification, and also helped evaluate the completed bids.

Closure of Drayton Day Centre and Stephen Court Day Centre (Northamptonshire County Council, NCC)

In October 2016 we were approached by a group of carers concerned about plans to close Drayton and Stephenson Court Day Centres in Northampton. Following a meeting with the group of carers affected by the proposals, we submitted a response to the consultation asking for assurances that NCC would listen to the views and concerns of carers about standards of care and whether there were sufficient suitably qualified staff in the new provision. They wanted to be reassured that vulnerable people did not have to endure travelling long distances to the new provision and called for advocacy support to be made available to users/carers in the transfer process.

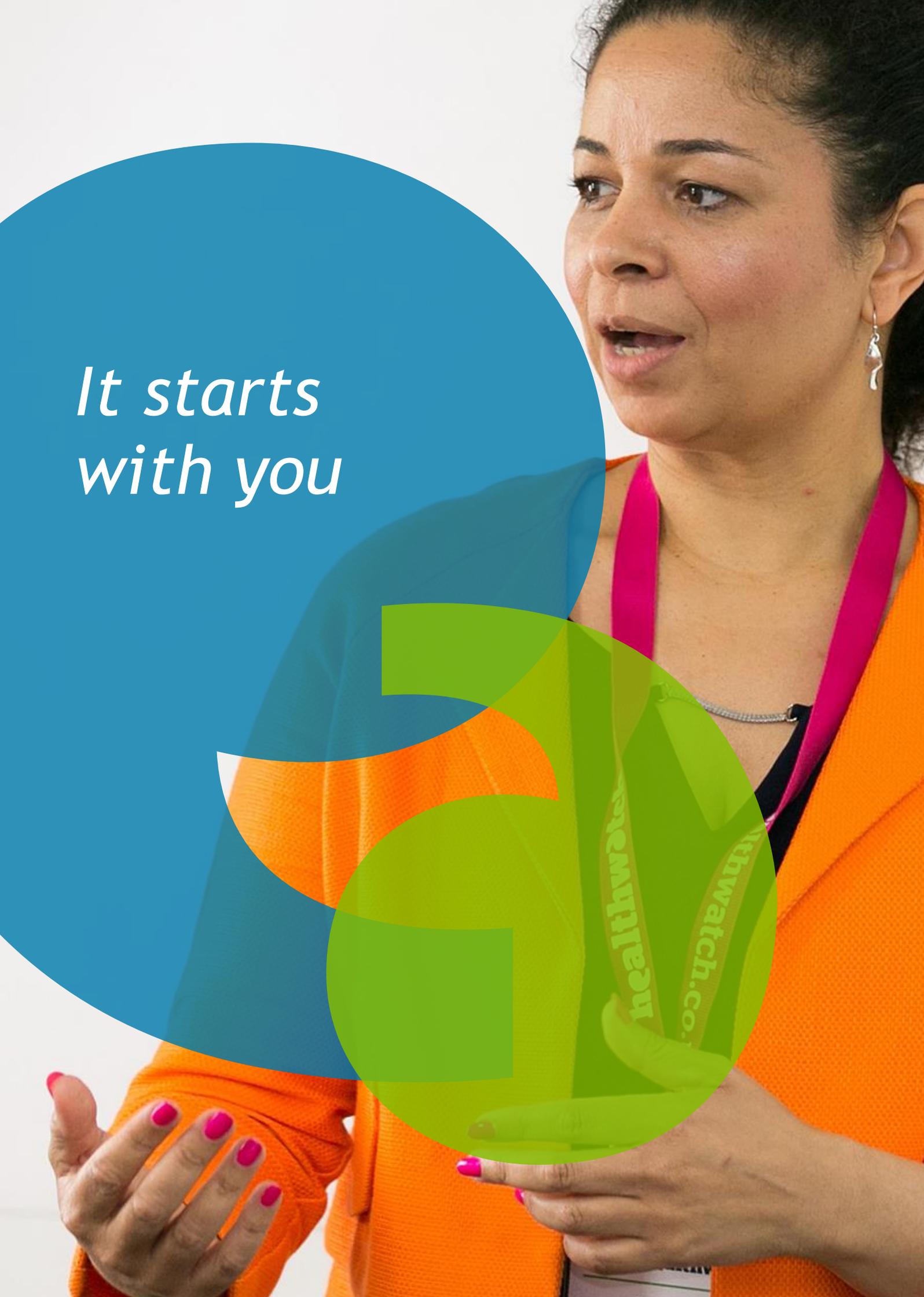
Other NCC consultations

We also responded to the NCC ‘Utilising block residential care contracts’ consultations about proposed changes to the provision of longer term support for older people and those with specialist needs, such as dementia, and respite care and short stays. Whilst we agreed with the importance of getting value for money we sought assurances that the reduced number of beds would not be at the expense of those needing short term or respite care placements, as this would have a detrimental effect on carers and risk caring relationships breaking down.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire also responded to the consultation on ‘Paying for care and support in your own home’ and expressed concern at the absence of any open consultation sessions open to both current users and carers, as well as the general public. Of particular concern was a proposal to introduce a charge for community care assessments for those people who were self-funders, as this was in breach of Section 8 - Care and Support, of the Care Act Statutory Guidance document. Subsequently, there was clarification this was a charge for arranging placements for those who were self-funders.



*It starts
with you*





#ItStartsWithYou

Experiences of pregnancy, birth and onwards: The views of parents about services and support in Northamptonshire

There are a lot of new parents in Northamptonshire - 9,054 babies were born in the county in 2015! Therefore, we were keen to find out more about the experiences of new parents so their voices are heard throughout the development and changes to services.

We asked new mums and partners about their experiences and the support they received during pregnancy, labour and the postnatal period (the first year with their baby).

To make sure we were asking the right questions we held two workshops with new parents from Northamptonshire Breastfeeding Alliance (NBA). This helped us to design a survey that would engage with mothers and partners and explore

their opinions. We held these at a 'Wacky Warehouse' so there was plenty to entertain younger participants!

The survey was designed to give a 'snapshot' of what parents thought of the available services, their overall experience during this period and their mental health and wellbeing.

We found that whilst the majority of parents felt they had received good care and support during pregnancy, labour and after birth, there was variability in their experiences, a number of perceived gaps in services and points where they would have liked more support. The quality of care and supportiveness of healthcare professionals, particularly midwives, had the biggest impact on the experience of pregnancy and labour. The quality of information and advice was also important, and there was a desire for more information and advice about breastfeeding and other support available to families after birth.



NBA parents at the workshop

This snapshot of the views and experiences of new parents in pregnancy, birth and the first year was very well received by local organisations and service providers and gave a real insight into what mothers and their partners experience and feel. The findings are also being discussed at Northampton General Hospital's Patient Experience Group.

Northamptonshire Breastfeeding Alliance said:

“We were very pleased to read in the Healthwatch report about all the positive feedback from new parents about the Baby Cafe/Breastfeeding Cafe.”

Briony Askew, NBA Co-Chair

Following on from this, Healthwatch Northamptonshire has been commissioned by NHS Nene Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to do further work on this, which will help to shape the Local Maternity System.

“This report is extremely informative and will be influential when we are looking at developing our Local Maternity System in line with the National Maternity transformation programme.”

Helen Adams - Commissioning Manager
- SEN and Disability and Maternity, NHS
Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning
Groups



*Our plans
for next
year*





What next?

Our main priority is to remain an advocate for voicing the views of the people living or using health, social care or wellbeing services in Northamptonshire.

Out and about

With the budget reduction Healthwatch Northamptonshire will need to prioritise what it does for 2017/18 even more rigorously. We will continue to get out and about around the county talking to people as much as possible getting their views on public services, although we won't be able to continue with the number of regular Pop Up Shops that we did in 2016/17.



Esther talking to a family at Northampton Caribbean Carnival

Statutory roles and functions

As set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 we will continue to fulfil our statutory duties of gathering local intelligence and disseminating it to key stakeholders and the public. Holding providers and commissioners to account for changes in service and responding to consultations.

Planning group

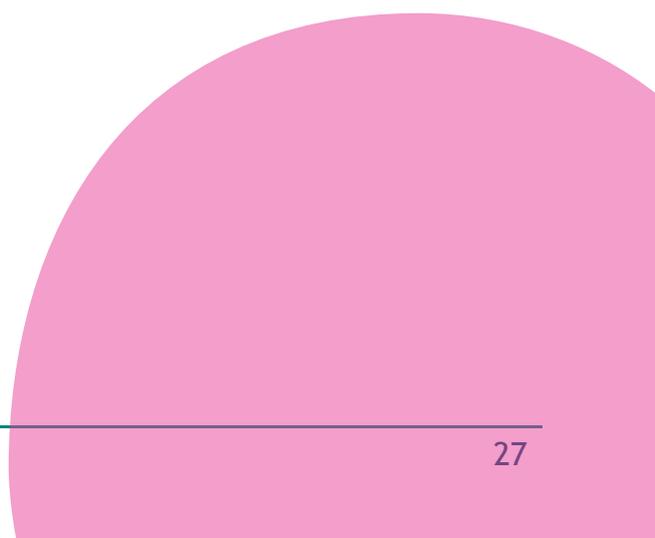
The volunteer-led Planning Group will continue prioritising the work plan of Healthwatch Northamptonshire and the projects that we undertake in response to local priorities and issues, e.g. the development of the Local Maternity System, engagement around the Northamptonshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) and national GP Forward View, monitoring developments of the delivery of social care in the county, and Enter and View visits in response to issues raised by the public.

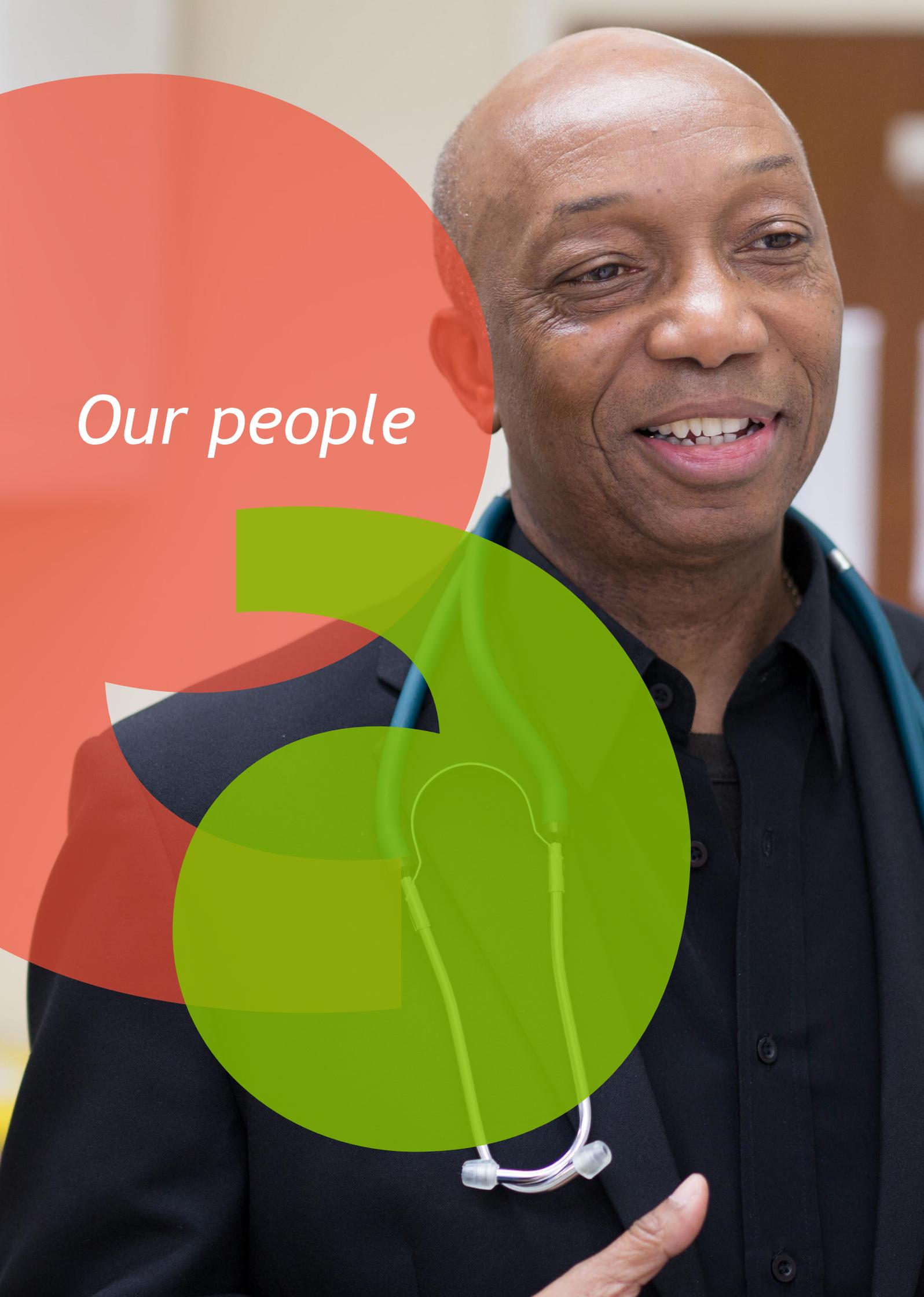
Investors in Volunteers

Our aim is to get Investors in Volunteers accreditation and recognition in 2017/18 for all the hard work and training that our volunteers complete publicly representing the people of Northamptonshire in health and social care at high profile meetings e.g. Health and Wellbeing Board, Northamptonshire Safeguarding Board, NCC Overview and Scrutiny, A&E Delivery Board, Patient Congress and many many others!

Young Healthwatch

As an award winning part of our work we will continue to develop this area to ensure that the voice of children and young people in Northamptonshire continues to be heard at all levels, in particular those children from seldom heard communities.





Our people



How we involve the public and volunteers in our governance and decision making

Healthwatch Northamptonshire Board

The Healthwatch Northamptonshire Board is made up of volunteers who ensure we are meaningfully engaging with local people, stakeholders and decision makers on health and social care issues. Our quarterly board meetings are held in public.

The Healthwatch Board:

- + Ensures effective delivery of the contract with Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)
- + Proactively gathers, listens and represents the views and experiences of local people
- + Empowers local people to influence the quality of health and social care
- + Directs the work and focus of Healthwatch Northamptonshire

The Healthwatch Northamptonshire Board has been strengthened this year with new members with a range of expertise.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire Planning Group and Volunteer Community

We could not carry out our work without the expertise, time and commitment of our volunteers. They are the eyes and ears of the organisation out in the community often representing Healthwatch Northamptonshire at meetings and events.

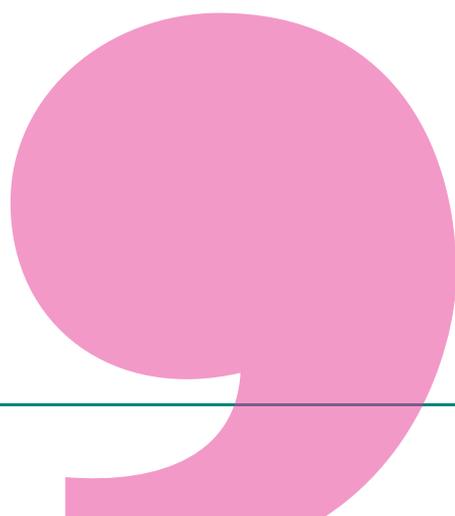
The Planning Group is made up of volunteers from diverse backgrounds who meet regularly to discuss and respond to current local issues in health and social care. This group was established in March 2017 with the merger of our Adult Service (which incorporated both health and social care) and Children, Young People and Families planning groups. This one Planning Group helps us to ensure our work considers all aspects of health and social care and makes recommendations to the Board as well as informing the Healthwatch Northamptonshire work plan.

Volunteers from the Planning Group and wider volunteer community form 'task and finish' groups to undertake projects based on the priorities they have chosen and make recommendations.

Thank you Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers, you have done a fantastic job during a very full year and we could not do what we do without you!



Rob enjoying volunteering at the Northampton Caribbean Carnival!





A volunteer's perspective

Having previously been involved with LINK Northamptonshire as a volunteer I was delighted to continue volunteering with Healthwatch Northamptonshire. My particular interest has always been around social care and disability having held the post of CEO of a countywide pan disability organisation before semi-retirement.

My expertise, I feel, has at all times been valued and appreciated, but the most positive part is being part of the Healthwatch team. By everyone working to the same aims, ideals and values we have opportunities to be involved in a variety of issues and concerns. For example we have recently been involved in seeking patient views from both acute hospitals, Northampton and Kettering, on their discharge processes, talking directly to the patients and the staff. The comments were then collated and a report will be produced. This will be then submitted to a wide audience within health and social care locally and copied onto our website and shared with Healthwatch England.

Many of our members sit on various committees involving both health and social care and of course various patient participation groups.

This involvement is vital to ensure the everyday 'voice of the people' is championed at every opportunity.

We have a Planning Group that currently meets bi-monthly where we can all have an input in voicing our concerns and deciding where we feel actions should perhaps be taken from writing a letter to requesting health or social care professionals attend

our meetings to answer our questions and concerns directly. One of our volunteers has also had direct involvement as a service user sitting on panels involved in the process of awarding of new contracts.

At long last we are now involved with, and (hopefully) thoroughly engaged around the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) going forward.

If you would like to be involved or know of someone that is enthused by STPs we would be delighted to hear from you.

The last 12 months have certainly been challenging and of course sometimes frustrating on occasion - we are human after all! But I like to think we don't give up and hopefully we all remain measured and professional in our approach.

I can't think of a better way of using my time as a volunteer and that Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers are recognised as 'added value' within the Health and Social Care System.



Sandra Bell
Vice Chair - Healthwatch Northamptonshire Board



Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire is a group especially for young people to be involved and have their say.

Young Healthwatch has been very busy this year and even made a video about Young Healthwatch! (Find the video on our Young Healthwatch webpage⁷)

“I have just had a look at this [video] and wanted to say how great it is! I was so impressed with Maddie, how she presented and promoted Young Healthwatch. I just wanted to say congratulations on a great piece of work.”

Sharon Robson - Head of Specialist Children's Services, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

+ The publication of our Eating Disorders report, about the findings from our survey of over 2,000 young people about their experiences and knowledge of eating disorders, was very well received. The report identified more work that could be done to help young people know where to go for advice and to better address some of the specific related issues with the LGBTQ community. Young Healthwatch designed this survey at a special workshop and as a result of their involvement we won a ‘Youth on Board Inspiring Project Award’ from the British Youth Council.

⁷ www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/young-healthwatch-1

“Our Youth on Board Awards celebrate organisations and projects that support youth participation in innovative and exciting ways, and mark the fantastic achievements that can happen because young people are supported to get involved. The awards are special because all of the selection and judging is done by young people, and we hope that flagging up these projects will encourage other organisations to follow in their example.”

British Youth Council



+ Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers carried out a visit to Kettering General Hospital Skylark ward in July. The young volunteers wrote their own report of what the ward was like from their perspective and made some suggestions for improvement, which were well received.

+ A Mental Health Guide was devised by Young Healthwatch and produced in an Easy Read format so it could be accessible to more young people. The guide helps young people in the county identify various mental health conditions and where to go for support.

The guide was accompanied by 'Matthew's Story', a look at one young person's journey through mental health issues.

- + In October Young Healthwatch volunteers themselves delivered a masterclass for professionals from across the East Midlands on how to engage with young people. It was great for Young Healthwatch to share their successes and both the young people involved and the professionals gained a lot of knowledge from it.
- + Towards the end of the year Young Healthwatch were at Northampton Central Library promoting Northamptonshire's Mental Health Awareness Day. They spoke to members of the public about mental health and 'stamping out' the stigma surrounding it. They made a great video from this day too!⁸



Young Healthwatch Stamp Out Stigma!

- + Young Healthwatch also worked with the East Midlands Ambulance Service and Northamptonshire Carers to take part in the Heartstart training. This gave Young Healthwatch members the opportunity to learn lifesaving skills and meet new friends. All the young people that attended the training rated it as excellent or good.



Young Healthwatch promoting Northamptonshire's Mental Health Awareness day

⁸ <https://youtu.be/roGBFA9QA1w>

“Heartstart has taught me some very valuable lessons that I can apply in my personal life. I can apply the skills I have learnt to anyone as they have taught me how to perform CPR on pregnant women, men, women and children. I have also learned how to aid someone when they are choking, which I think was the most valuable thing I learnt”

Young Healthwatch volunteer



Young Healthwatch Heartstart training



Heartstart training with Northamptonshire Young Carers Service

The successful year was topped off by being a finalist in the ‘Championing the Public’ category at the national Patient Experience Network Awards (PENNA) for ‘Engaging with Children and Young People to Champion their Voice’

“A very innovative approach of engaging with children and young people to ensure services are right for them. An impressive portfolio of projects has been produced through this initiative”

PENNA judge



What is it like to be part of Young Healthwatch

“I am very glad to have come across Young Healthwatch. It’s one of the friendliest organisations I have had the pleasure of working with and I hope I have more opportunities to do as much as I can to help them promote all the good causes, such as mental health awareness. I have met so many great people from different backgrounds and I really enjoy the group tasks we get to do where we get to make real connections with individuals.

Moriam,
Young Healthwatch





Connected Together: First for Community Engagement



During 2016/17 Healthwatch Northamptonshire Community Interest Company (CIC) became Connected Together Community Interest Company (CTCIC).

CTCIC is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch Northamptonshire. The remit of the CTCIC Board includes:

- + Contract compliance
- + Legal requirements
- + Financial and risk management
- + Sustainability and growth
- + Agreeing strategy and operations
- + Agreeing policies and procedures

CTCIC aims to be first for community engagement across the county of Northamptonshire and beyond.

CTCIC is a social enterprise and a partnership between the University of Northampton and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire will remain a key contract for CTCIC. The vision is that the CTCIC will gain additional contracts to run alongside this and we are actively working on this at present. CTCIC will operate as the organisational hub behind these projects enabling joint working and access to knowledge and resources where relevant and commercially viable. CTCIC brings a business focused approach enabling us to help other organisations work together for the benefit of the Northamptonshire community.

Our Vision:

To be a financially sustainable independent and professionally run organisation, that gains, and in turn manages and runs effective and sustainable community projects and initiatives.

Our Values:

- + Professional
- + Community focused
- + Sustainable

We welcome ideas and suggestions for projects that benefit Northamptonshire and its community engagement. You can contact our Business Development Manager Polly-Ann Howard at pollyhoward@connectedtogether.co.uk.



Polly-Ann Howard
Business Development Manager

Polly comes from a commercial organisation background and can support turning an idea into a plan, and then into a project. Connected Together can also offer general business support during projects as well as community engagement expertise.

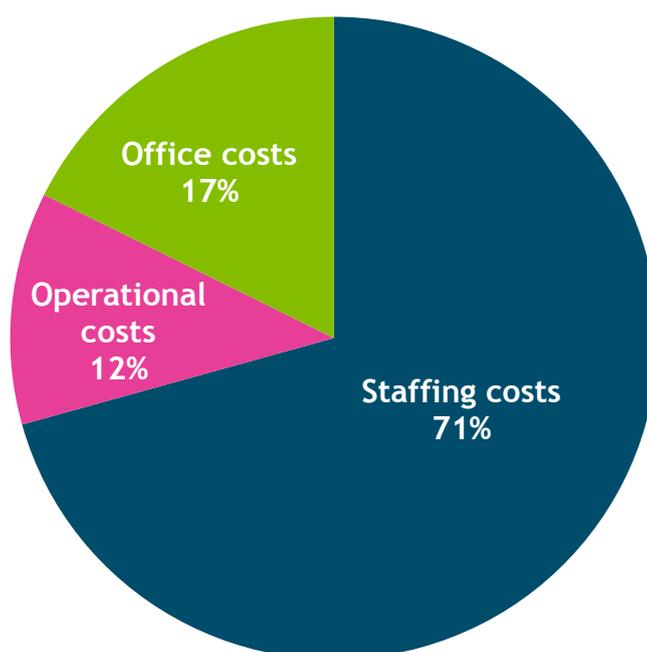
You can also find out more at: www.connectedtogether.co.uk



Our finances

Income	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	295,624
Additional income	30,050
Total income	325,674
Expenditure	
Operational costs	36,291
Staffing costs	219,241
Office costs	54,730
Total expenditure	310,262
Balance brought forward	15,412

2016/17 Expenditure





Contact us



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[@YHWNorth1](https://twitter.com/YHWNorth1)



We will be making this annual report publicly available by publishing it on our website and sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups, Northamptonshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and our local authority - Northamptonshire County Council.

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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