

**make**  
your   
**voice**  
 **count**

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**A REPORT ON HEALTHWATCH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN DURING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2013**

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## Executive Summary

Healthwatch Northamptonshire is the new, independent consumer champion for people who need to use health and social care services. Established in April 2013, our aim is to gather the views and experience of patients, service users, carers and the public. We will report these views and experiences to health and social care decision makers to influence and improve the quality of care. Our vision is to make a positive difference to the quality of care and improve health and wellbeing in the County.

During September and October 2013, Healthwatch Northamptonshire ran a campaign called “Make Your Voice Count”. The aim of the campaign was to:

- Let local people know about Healthwatch Northamptonshire and what we do
- find out people’s views and experiences of health and social care and suggestions for improving the quality of care
- grow our Healthwatch Northamptonshire community of volunteers to build our numbers and ensure we better reflect the diversity of our local communities.

We delivered the campaign through a series of roadshows, a media campaign, attending community and patient events and meetings already planned and a survey asking people to rate their care. We talked to over 1,100 people; our website had over 1,000 visitors; 214 people completed a survey; over 100 people want to volunteer for us and our media reach in local newspapers provided 126,000 opportunities for local people to read about us.

The survey analysis indicates that the majority of services used were rated as good. The more in-depth conversations highlighted some specific concerns about health and social care. Waiting times to see family doctors (GPs) and difficulties and delays in accessing urgent and emergency care were the most common concerns.



## The Health of Northamptonshire 2013

- Deprivation is lower than the England average, however 23,000 children live in poverty<sup>i</sup>.
- Life expectancy for women is lower than the England average and is worse in the most deprived areas of Northamptonshire compared to the least deprived areas - 9.4 years lower for men and 5.8 years lower for women<sup>i</sup>.
- There is an even bigger gap in disability-free life expectancy of 15 years for men and 12 years for women between the richest and poorest areas<sup>ii</sup>.
- Over the last 10 years, mortality rates have fallen. Early death rates from cancer, heart disease and stroke have fallen. Lung cancer and heart disease are the biggest cause of death in the County<sup>i</sup>
- In Year 6, 17.6% of children are classified as obese. Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment and smoking in pregnancy are worse than the England average. Levels of alcohol-specific hospital stays amongst those under 18 and breast feeding are better than the England average<sup>i</sup>.
- An estimated 20.9% of adults smoke and 24.6% are obese. The rate of road injuries and deaths is worse than the England average. Rates of sexually transmitted infections and hospital stays for alcohol related harm are better than the England average<sup>i</sup>.
- Northamptonshire has a fast growing and aging population - one in five people will be 65 or over by 2019 - which will put additional pressure on health and social care services<sup>iii</sup>
- Over 14,000 people aged over 65 are predicted to be living with dementia by 2030, double the 2010 number<sup>iii</sup>.
- Health and social care priorities in Northamptonshire include reducing the number of adults smoking, reducing obesity within the family, improving educational attainment, reducing falls in older people and supporting vulnerable children and parents<sup>i</sup>.



## About Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Healthwatch is the new independent consumer champion for health and social care from April 2013. There are 152 local Healthwatch across the country and a national body called Healthwatch England. Healthwatch Northamptonshire covers the county of Northamptonshire. Our funding comes from Northamptonshire County Council and we have established ourselves as a Community Interest Company (form of social enterprise) to ensure that we operate as an independent organisation and secure a firm financial basis. The Community Interest Company is a partnership between the University of Northampton and Northampton Volunteering Centre.

Our rights and responsibilities include:

- We have the power to monitor (known as “enter and view”) health and social care services (with the exception of services for looked after children)
- We will be a strong and powerful voice for local people to influence how services are planned, organised and delivered.
- We will be an effective voice rooted in the community. To be that voice, we will find out what local people think about health and social care. We will research patient, user and carer opinion using lots of different ways to find out views and experiences so that the community is effectively represented
- We will report our findings of local views and experiences to local health and social care decision makers and make the case for improved services
- We will provide information and advice about health and social care services
- Where we don’t feel our voices are being heard, we will escalate our concerns and report our evidence to national organisations including Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (the independent regulator of health and social care).



## Make Your Voice Count

Make your Voice Count (MYVC) is an on-going Healthwatch Northamptonshire campaign launched in September 2013.

To achieve the campaign's objectives we organised a series of events, hosted by ourselves or in partnership with other community groups. We had stalls at libraries, hospitals and local community events. We spoke at community meetings as well as promotion through radio, newspaper and social media.

A common theme throughout all of these events was our survey, which required respondents to let us know what health and social care services they were using, how they rated them, whether they had good or bad experiences in the past and what they wanted Healthwatch Northamptonshire to focus on.

## Who heard about Healthwatch Northamptonshire?

Event	Total reach
Healthwatch Northamptonshire roadshows	49
Libraries	100
Richmond Village event	60
Learning Disability Partnership event - Northampton	60
Northampton General Hospital open day	80
Children and Young people's working group	20
Northampton Resident's Association	17
Blackthorn Children's Centre Area Leads meeting	10
Northampton Interfaith forum	20
Northampton Parents Participation Group	35
Zimwomen	3
Northampton Patients Experience Group	13
Northampton Neurological Forum	8
Carers Partnership	25



<b>Learning Disabilities Partnership relaunch – Daventry</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Oakley Vale Community Association</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Corby Steel Workers</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>East Northants Patient Engagement Group</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Corby Memory Café</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Health and Wellbeing Forum – Wellingborough</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Northampton Association for Youth Clubs</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Lesbian, Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender group – Northampton</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>International Coming Out Day - Northampton</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Corby Clinical Commissioning Group event</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Nene Clinical Commissioning Group event</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Northampton Sports Awards</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Network 50+</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Kingsheath over 50s group</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Nene Valley Fibromyalgia Group</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Kettering Stoke Group</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>University of Northampton Volunteers fair</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Daventry and district heart support group</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Online surveys</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,153</b>

<b>Media</b>	<b>Opportunities to see or hear</b>
<b>Through press releases/coverage</b>	<b>67,000</b>
<b>Through newspaper adverts</b>	<b>59,063</b>
<b>Visitors to our website</b>	<b>1,052</b>



## What people told us about how they rate their care:

### Primary care:

#### GPs (family doctors)

- 90% of respondents have used GP surgeries in the last 12 months
- 66% of these respondents found their GP services extremely good or good
- 25% rated their GP services satisfactory
- 8% rated their GP services as poor, 1% no response

Waiting times for appointments to see a GP was repeatedly referred to as the biggest problem. Poor communication and lack of follow up were also cited as problems.

“My GP is excellent- I have always received prompt and caring treatment.”

“My GP referred me to mental health services, went to appointment to find out I had been wrongly referred and was not told how to access the ‘wellbeing’ service, finding out by chance 3 weeks later.”

“Problems with availability of appointments with GP, especially during a bank holiday week.”

“Problem with GP ownership and care for customer, out of sight, out of mind - very poor relationship and follow up on referrals.”

“Long delay for GP appointments”...“Telephone number for GP too expensive, booking appointments difficult”...“Appointment with GP cancelled by surgery and not rebooked, despite having waited 4 weeks for appointment”

“Excellent service from GP, referred to Kettering General Hospital, received appointment swiftly.”



## Dentists

- 70% of respondents have used the dentist in the last 12 months
- 79% rated their dental services extremely good or good
- 12% rated their dental services satisfactory
- 8% rated their dental services as poor, 1% no response

“Access to appointments to the dentist are improving, they have answering machine that tells you what to do if dentist closed.”

“New dentist taken over at surgery in last two years, still NHS but new equipment and facilities, service a lot better.”

“Dentist at very helpful, gives excellent service and explains any work that needs to be carried out.”

“Dentist did my check-up in less than a minute, went to another dentist a couple of days later and needed work despite being told by first dentist teeth were fine.”

“Last three appointments had to be rearranged, 2 at the last minute.”

“Dental practice often cancels appointments, doesn't offer full range of services, refers patients to private dentists.”

“Dental surgery seems to employ NHS dentists who leave after 3 months, leaving no NHS dentist and no way of having work completed other than through private practice.”

## Pharmacists

- 81% of respondents have used a pharmacy in the last 12 months.
- 88% of rated pharmacy services extremely good or good, 9% rated the service satisfactory, 3% rated the service as poor.

“Positive experience of ordering prescription online, then picking up from pharmacy.”

“The pharmacy I use goes out of its way to help with anything.”



## Hospitals

- 52% of respondents have used hospitals in the last 12 months.
- 18% of these respondents found hospital services extremely good.
- 44% rated their hospital services good.
- 25% rated their hospital services satisfactory, 11% rated their hospital services as poor, 2% marked the not applicable box.

“Kettering General first class, excellent diagnosis of hidden condition and prompt follow up appointments”

“Staff at Northampton General always caring and compassionate, including the porters who chatted cheerfully to me as they took me to theatre.”

“Hospital waiting times in Northampton General are too much, no communication, especially in A&E.”

“Went to Kettering General Hospital to have impacted tooth removed, caught infections and ended up with sepsis and had to have two operations.”

“I was in hospital for 11 days, I was well looked after, but my results taken from tests in hospital were lost.”

“Hospitals do not treat the elderly with any respect.”

“Recent A&E admission at Kettering General Hospital was concentrated on trying to discharge patients at the end of four hours irrespective of health conditions.”

“Hospital operation was very well done, but rushed out in a hurry with no proper aftercare.”

“Had to go to hospital for minor op but as an emergency, that part was excellent, but moved three times in less than 24 hours, usual drugs were lost and went to discharge lounge for four hours because drugs were sent to ward.”



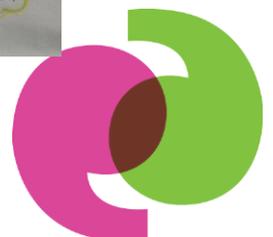
## Healthwatch Northamptonshire in the community



## Learning Disabilities Partnership Board ~ Joint event

One of the highlights of the campaign was a joint event with the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board to find out what people with Learning Disabilities thought of the services they were receiving in Northamptonshire.

Over 60 people attended the event, the majority being people with learning disabilities who use health and social care services. Also included in the day was a meeting between service users and the Director of Patient Experience, Neil Churchill, NHS England.



## Themes identified at the Learning Disability partnership event:

- **Communication:** Several people at the event talked about how some health professionals communicate with them and the need for improvement. Examples were given of health care professionals talking to the carer/support worker initially, rather than the person with learning disabilities and making assumption about their capacity to speak for themselves. One woman gave an example of waiting three hours for a GP appointment because the receptionist assumed the woman was waiting for her support worker, which was not the case.
- Patients felt that information was not sufficiently handed over when shifts changed and that care could be poor if individual needs weren't taken into account.
- We heard about a great example of good care at Kettering General Hospital who employs a young man with learning disabilities to work with patients with learning disabilities and staff to improve communication.
- The importance of advocacy services was emphasised by lots of people. There was considerable concern that the Families in Partnership advocacy organisation was closing down.

### Waiting times:

- Several people talked about having to wait a long time to be seen at A&E. One man told us that after he had been seen, he had been discharged in the early hours of the morning with no transport home.

### Community Services

- People do want to receive services in their own home. Some people said they were concerned about letting strangers into their homes and the need for all staff to show their identification, which should confirm that all checks had been done. Some people said this didn't always happen and it was a real concern.



## Services for people with learning disabilities - attendees at the event also completed the survey

- 8% of respondents have used services in the last 12 months.
- 12% of these respondents found services extremely good.
- 23% rated services good.
- 6% rated services as satisfactory.
- 18% rated services as poor
- 41% marked the n/a box

“Day Centres - Everything good, like cooking, movement and music, conservation, biking. Nice staff. Need to share information about what’s on and activities. Lack of access for people under private/independent providers to access activities run by other providers.”

“Occupational therapy and physiotherapy - long waits, refer to each other and wait long time.”

“Personal Health Budgets are not working.”

“Hospital staff do not know how to talk to people with learning disabilities.”



## Mental Health Services

- 13% of respondents have used mental health services in the last 12 months.
- 14% of these respondents found mental health services extremely good.
- 28% rated mental health services good.
- 11% rated mental health services satisfactory.
- 28% rated mental health services as poor
- 19% marked the n/a box

“Poor experience with previous GP and felt totally let down by health visitor with my son’s lack of sleep and behaviour issues. At the time, I was suffering mental ill health and had no response to my calls for six months. The issues weren't resolved, but still was not offered any support or advice.”

“As a foster carer - shocking social worker support - our looked after children are awaiting a replacement social worker for the second time in 12 months, had no social worker for 3 months. No support, managers/staff leaving etc. Not enough mental health/Child and Adolescent Mental Health support.”

“The mental health team have had their services cut dramatically and it is near impossible to access support. The waiting lists for psychotherapists are months to years long. This means that a lot of people are with no support or outlet, other than to be put on medication when they see their GP.”

“Mental health therapist did not know how to help.”

“Mental health services in Northampton are poor. My own experience is of a service which is massively oversubscribed and inadequate.”



## Children's Services

- 6% of respondents have use children's services
- 8% Classified them as extremely good
- 25% classified them as good
- 9% classified them as satisfactory
- 25% classified them as poor
- 33% answered not applicable

Long waiting times were again highlighted as a problem. One woman said she had waited in A&E at Northampton General for over 6 hours with her son who has autism, and felt unable to leave the waiting area to take her son outside or to the canteen in case they missed their slot. It was felt that in cases like these, prioritisation is needed.

“Social care transition from children's services to adult. New system of case managers impedes progress”

“Lack of support/co-ordination/understanding of how to support a parent of children with disabilities between education, health and social care.” This family had 3 children - one child with autism, another child has hypermobility and another child with chronic pain/disc degeneration.

“I am a single working parent - no support from health and social care.”

## Residential/Nursing Care

- 4% of respondents have used residential/nursing care services in the last 12 months.
- 10% of these respondents found residential/nursing care services extremely good.
- 14% rated residential/nursing care services good.
- 24% rated residential/nursing care services satisfactory.



- 14% rated residential/nursing care services as poor
- 38% marked the not applicable box

## Social Care Services

- 6% of respondents have used social care services in the last 12 months
- 19% of these respondents found social care services extremely good
- 14% rated social care services services good
- 10% rated social care services services satisfactory
- 19% rated social care services services as poor
- 38% marked the not applicable box

## Key Themes from our 8 roadshows

### Appointments

As with the survey, there were widespread concerns about accessing appointments in hospitals and primary care.

- Assumption that everyone has the internet and can therefore book appointments online
- Time taken to get through to reception on the phone can be far too long (30 minutes in some cases and then disconnects)
- The cost of calls to make an appointment is charged at premium rate in a lot of surgery's. Cost is stated at 3p per minute but is actually 5p per minute
- Often no same day appointments are available
- Receptionists can sometimes be a barrier to receiving required information



- People are going to A&E when they can't get an appointment within a reasonable timescale

### **Elderly care in hospital/discharge**

Care of the elderly in hospital and at home was frequently mentioned, particularly communication, the discharge process and aftercare. Many elderly people were concerned and fearful that if they complained while in hospital, it would make their care worse. It was also felt that if they didn't have someone to speak up for them, they would be overlooked.

- Lack of basic care in hospital. A gentleman of 90 had to attend hospital at mealtimes to feed his wife. Staff seem to overlook those in need of feeding assistance, especially a concern if the patient does not have a relative/friend to care for them.
- The discharge/aftercare process does not appear to be working efficiently. An 87 year old partially sighted lady was discharged from hospital after a knee operation with no assessment; she was left at home with no care for four days before anyone attended to her.
- Elderly people are also afraid to complain about community carers in case they have their care withdrawn. Particular examples of unsatisfactory care include being put to bed at 6pm, while still daylight or not being got up until 11am, after having been awake for hours.

### **Specialist Care**

Lack of awareness of particular conditions was mentioned across several roadshows, involving several different conditions. Specialist training for GPs and doctors was recommended. Conditions include;

- Fibromyalgia - GPs are not always aware of the condition and not sympathetic despite the possibility of it resulting in disability or chronic pain.



We asked people about the top issues Healthwatch Northamptonshire should take action on (the bigger the print, the more people said action should be taken).

A&E Appointments Better  
Trained Receptionists at KGH Care  
Communication Daventry Doctors Getting  
GPs Health Healthcare Hospital  
Level Local Mental Health NHS  
Services Support Surgeries Waiting  
Access Carers Checks Cleanliness  
Dementia Doctors EMAS Local NHS Older  
People Patients Services Smoking  
Social Support Waiting



## Involvement with Healthwatch Northamptonshire

- 57% of respondents said they would like to be involved with Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- 84% would like to receive newsletters and mailings
- 44% would like to participate in public consultations about health and social care
- 34% would like to participate in small group discussions about health and social care
- 21% would like to attend relevant meetings as representatives of Healthwatch Northamptonshire.
- 21% would like to carry out monitoring visits to services in Northamptonshire
- 15% would like to participate in our research

## Evaluation of Make Your Voice Count:

An internal evaluation was completed for the final report with some important learning. Key findings include:

- The best way of engaging local communities is to attend local events rather than expect people to come to our roadshows
- As our staff and volunteer capacity grows, we will be able to attend more events
- Lots of people were hearing about us for the first time
- More work needs to be done to enhance our engagement with important local populations including black and minority ethnic communities; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people; young people; traveller community; people who are homeless and rootless and young people



## Who completed the survey?

214 people responded to the survey either in person or online.

What part of Northamptonshire do you live in?

Northampton	34%
East Northants	7%
Wellingborough	8%
South Northants	6%
Daventry	8%
Corby	21%
Kettering	16%

What is your gender?

Male	37%
Female	63%

What age group do you fall into?

16-20	1.5%
21-30	5.9%
31-40	20.1%
41-50	9.8%
51-60	19.1%
60+	43.6%

What is your ethnicity?

English	85.4%
Welsh	0.5%
Scottish	5.5%
Irish	1.5%
Other white background	2.0%
White and Black African	0.5%
Indian	0.5%
African	2.0%
Caribbean	1.0%
Any other	0.5%
Black/African/Caribbean background	
Prefer not to say	0.5%

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes	27.8%
No	70.1%
Prefer not to say	3.1%



## What we will do with this report:

### We will:

- Send a copy to everyone who participated in our Make Your Voice Count Campaign; circulate it widely to local organisations and publish it on our website and Facebook page
- Produce an easy read version
- Share this report with local health and social care decision makers and talk to them about the improvements required in local services highlighted in this report
- Repeat the survey every year so we can see if care is improving
- Follow up the people who expressed an interest in volunteering for Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- Build our profile in the local community and take every opportunity to work with local people; voluntary and community organisations and patient, user and carer groups to find out what people think of health and social care services. In particular, we will do more work with

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<sup>i</sup> Northamptonshire Health Profile 2013, Public Health England, September 2013

<sup>ii</sup> Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011, Northamptonshire County Council, October 2011

<sup>iii</sup> Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2013, Northamptonshire County Council, December 2013

