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Annual report 2019-20

# Guided by you



# Contents

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Message from our chair	4
Our priorities	5
About us	6
Highlights from our year	8
How we've made a difference	10
Long Term Plan	18
Helping you find the answers	20
Our volunteers	25
Responding to Covid- 19	30
Our finances	33
Our plans for next year	35
Thank you	38
Contact us	39

# Message from our chair

Once again I am delighted to be providing the foreword for the latest edition of the annual report. Healthwatch as an organisation is now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year of operation and I am as proud as ever to be a part of it.

The team at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire have continued to work hard to champion the voice of the residents of North Lincolnshire, particularly to ensure the voices of the most vulnerable are heard the loudest.

Throughout the year we have continued to raise the profile of the service to encourage as many members of the public to get involved in our work as possible, and for them to understand their rights as users of health and social care services. The opening of our 'Hub' in the Ironstone centre has meant we are more visible than ever before, and has given the opportunity for our team to interact with more local people on a more regular basis.

Through our work with the older population and those with a learning disability living in a care home, we have been able to improve access to dentistry and ensure that oral health is considered a priority for these vulnerable adults.

I am particularly proud to see how the team have adapted to the challenges that the coronavirus outbreak have presented. The introduction of the telephone buddy service in March has helped to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable and isolated in North Lincolnshire. This would have been impossible without the passion and commitment of our team and our wonderful army of volunteers who have really stepped up to support the ongoing crisis. I look forward to seeing how this support continues

to develop in 2020/2021.

The role of Healthwatch has never been more important, or relevant. As services change and adapt to the new 'normal' we will continue to be here as the independent voice, ensuring that you are able to understand and adapt to these changes. When things don't go to plan, we will continue to be here to make sure that providers and commissioners understand the impact that this has on you and the wider population.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in our work in the past year and I hope that by working together we continue to have a happy, safe and successful 2020.

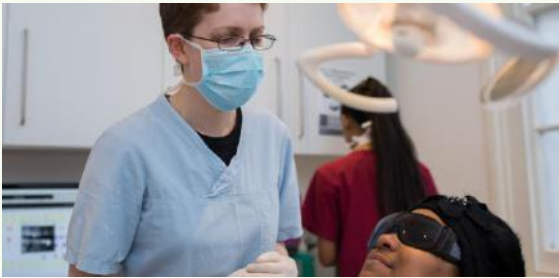


Carol Lightburn  
Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Chair



# Our priorities

Last year people told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20.



- In our priorities survey vulnerable people told us they would like better access to dental appointments.



- People told us that oral health in care homes needed to improve.



- You told us that people with a disability were not able to access cervical screening appointments due to lack of facilities in GP practices.



- We wanted to increase our engagement with people in our communities to make sure we listen to as many experiences as possible.
- We wanted to involve as many people with a learning disability in our work as possible to ensure their voice is well represented.

# About us

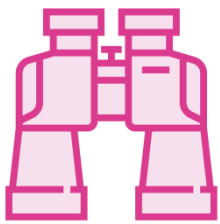
## Here to make care better

The network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan shows the power of the Healthwatch network in giving people that find it hardest to be heard a chance to speak up. The #WhatWouldYouDo campaign saw national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented locally. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review – sparking a national review of patient transport from NHS England.

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local Healthwatch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

 I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level.





## Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you.  
People want health and social care support that works – helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



## Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



## Our approach

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.  
We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



## How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations



Find out more about us and the work we do

**Website:** [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

**Twitter:** @HealthwatchNL

**Facebook:** @HealthwatchNorthLincolnshire

# Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.



## Health and care that works for you



### **20 volunteers**

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 487 hours.

We employed

### **3.5 staff**

2 of whom are full time, which is the same as the previous year.

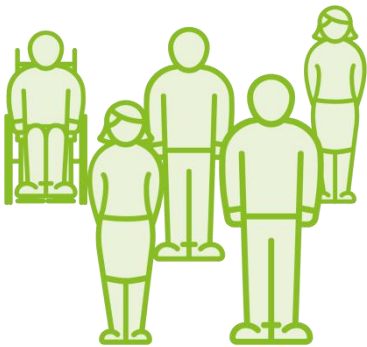
We received

### **£115,775 in funding**

from our local authority in 2019-20.

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## Providing support



### **1599 people**

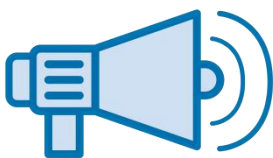
shared their health and social care story with us, 63% more than last year.

### **2302 people**

accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support, 53% more than last year.

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## Reaching out



### **8692 people**

engaged with us through our website, 16332 people engaged with us through social media, and 1853 people engaged with us at community events.

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## Making a difference to care



We published

### **11 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care, and from this, we made 36 recommendations for improvement.

# How we've made a difference

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## Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.

### Take a look at how your views can make a difference to the care and support you , and other s receive from your GP practice

#### I feel more confident to raise concerns with my GP practice thanks to Healthwatch - Dawns story

Some of the feedback received about local services in 2019 related to staff attitude, and our team have helped over 20 people to understand their right to be treated with respect and dignity. Here is Dawns story:

'I contacted Healthwatch in January this year as I was having some difficulties with my GP practice. I was feeling as though the staff were ridiculing me and not taking me seriously every time I visited my surgery.

I have learning difficulties, ADHD, dyspraxia, severe anxiety and depression which causes me to easily become very upset and emotional. Because of this I am not good at communicating with people. Whenever I had to speak to the surgery admin about anything I was filled with anxiety. This made me feel ashamed of my lack of ability to communicate which is very hurtful to me and adds to my difficulties and feelings of incompetence. I contacted Healthwatch as I couldn't cope with it any longer, and I did not want the same experience to happen to anyone else.

The team at Healthwatch were very helpful. They explained to me my rights as a patient and advised me to raise my issues with the practice manager. I was apprehensive about this at first but with Healthwatch support I

gained the confidence to do this. I was invited to a meeting with the Practice Manager who listened to my concerns and assured me she would be addressing the issues with the reception team by providing training to help them understand hidden disabilities. The Practice Manager was keen to ensure I felt comfortable coming into the surgery and offered me the use of a private waiting room and access to the practice learning disability nurse who would help me access my appointments.

I very much wanted to help other people with similar disabilities to myself to access NHS services so after speaking with a member of staff from Healthwatch I decided to try and become one of their volunteers. I felt due to my own experiences (some positive and some negative) I had a lot of experiences to share with others. Also, because I felt that this service is valuable to help the community, I started to try and provide feedback about my experiences dealing with both Scunthorpe and Grimsby hospital and my GP practice, and to signpost friends who I felt may benefit from the support of Healthwatch especially in these difficult times.



## Enter and view

Local Healthwatch have a legal power to visit health and social care services and see them in action. This power to Enter and View services allows us to identify what is working well with services and where they could be improved.

Visits can be announced or unannounced and can be based on a particular theme. Over the last two years we have conducted two themed pieces of work to look at falls in care homes and oral health in care homes. Our visits were positive and highlighted a lot of good practice and areas for improvement that care homes have been keen to take on board. As a 'critical friend' we are always keen to build positive relationships with providers so that they are receptive to our feedback and use it to improve services.



*The enter and view report is detailed and gives clear recommendations for us to work on.*

*Such visits to the site are very much welcome as they positively contribute to how we support and deliver a service for those at Applegate House. We are always eager to enhance our practice. Thank you for taking the time spent with us . Luke – Manager, Options Applegate House*

*The visit was positive and we endeavour to continue to improve the service we provide to our residents.*

*Found the visit to be beneficial in partnership working to ensure all is done to improve the service in house and in the wider community provided for our residents. Lynne- Manager, Ascot House*



## Improving access to dentistry and oral health in care homes

In our priorities survey at the beginning of 2019 people told us that they were struggling to get an NHS dentist. Many of the people who contacted us were vulnerable, and as a result of not having regular visits were turning to the emergency dental service when they were in pain.

The community dental service exists to provide specialist dental care for people with physical and learning disabilities and complex medical conditions, however we discovered that many local services such as GP practices and social care providers were unaware of how to refer. Many referrals came from general dental practices, but a patient needed to have a regular dentist in order to be referred. With many practices not taking on new patients, this was a barrier to access. We also received feedback that living in residential care could be a barrier to accessing dental treatment.

### What did we do ?

We rolled out a survey in 2019 to look at peoples experiences of accessing dental services which received over 300 responses.

We used this information to feed back into the Yorkshire and Humber dental commissioning executive group and into the parliamentary select committee on access to dental services nationally.



We also completed a series of 11 enter and view visits to look at the experiences of people living in care homes.

We spoke to 53 residents during the visits and discovered that almost half of those we spoke to did not have access to a regular dentist, and 16 people had experienced problems with their teeth such as having no denture to help them eat, and having loose and sore teeth.

From speaking to care staff it became evident that oral health training was lacking, however staff did see oral health as a priority, and supported residents with this. There was a lack of adequate assessment of oral health in care homes, and most of the settings did not have a mouth care policy.

We produced individual reports for each of the settings that we visited with a range of recommendations for improvement. As a result of the reports and recommendations, care homes are now taking steps to ensure:

- An oral health policy is in place which is read and understood by all staff.
- Staff undertake oral health training (a range of online and face to face packages are available).
- Oral health assessments are carried out on admission.
- Residents who have a regular dentist are enabled to continue visiting.
- Referrals are made to the community dental service where appropriate.
- Residents are assisted and advised to take care of their teeth and mouth where possible.

An overall report was also produced with recommendations for dental practices, the Community Dental Service, NHS England and the Provider Development Team at North Lincolnshire Council. As a result of these recommendations the following actions have been taken:

### Champions incentive framework

As a result of the visits and report, the Provider Development Team at North Lincolnshire Council are now supporting care homes to improve their oral health provision by including our recommendations within the champions incentive scheme. This includes care homes providing training in oral health, conducting oral health assessments, and having clear policies on oral health in care homes.

This means that care homes with 'dignity and respect' champions will receive an incentive for ensuring that our recommendations are followed.

### Flexible Commissioning

NHS England and Improvement are changing the way dental practices are commissioned in two phases known as 'flexible commissioning'. The first phase should improve general access to dental services and has started to be rolled out. The second phase aims to increase access for the most vulnerable, and NHSEI have committed to ensuring the needs of those in care homes are prioritised in this phase, by making it easier for dental practices to support these groups.

Healthwatch will continue to monitor access to dental services for people living in North Lincolnshire and ensure that those living in care homes are not disadvantaged as a result of their residential status.

We will continue our work on improving access to dentistry for the residents of North Lincolnshire and will evaluate access to services in the post Covid19 landscape.

## Reducing the risk of falling in care homes – update on our work

Last year we reported that we investigated the issue of falls in care homes. This issue was brought to our attention by partners across health and social care.

The review of 9 care homes that took place was welcomed by providers and commissioners and care homes committed to making improvements to help reduce the risk.

Since the report was produced, the Provider Development Team at the local authority committed to ensuring the recommendations within the report were also included in the champions incentive framework alongside the oral health recommendations.

This means that champions are also incentivised to improve safety within their care homes by following the recommendations of our report, which



included:

- Carrying out falls risk assessments.
- Helping residents to self manage falls risk.
- Undertaking specific falls prevention training.

Working closely with the local authority to ensure that care homes act on our recommendations is a positive step to improving the lives of the many vulnerable and frail people who reside in our care homes in North Lincolnshire.

***Over the past year, the Provider Development Team has worked in partnership with Healthwatch on a variety of projects, most notably for the development of the local quality incentive scheme within Care Homes, the Champion framework. The information provided from Healthwatch regarding oral Care and Falls from their previous enter and view visits and reports were invaluable in helping us to develop the criteria needed that ensured that the person was at the centre of our developments, and would make a valuable difference to the care they receive.***

***We hope to continue to work in close partnership to raise the quality of care locally.- Provider Development Team***





## Investigating barriers to accessing cervical screening for disabled women

We received feedback that women who are disabled were struggling to access their cervical screening appointments due to a lack of hoists in GP surgeries to allow them to transfer independently on to the examination table. We were also told that there were potentially more barriers to accessing these appointments for disabled women such as a perception that screening is not needed if a woman is not sexually active.

Nationally, the number of women accessing cervical screening appointments has seen a decline over the last few years, and North Lincolnshire was no exception. We wanted to know why this was, and what could be improved to encourage all women to attend this very important appointment.

We decided to investigate this further and in January 2020 we launched our Access to Cervical Screening project.

The launch of the project coincided with the Jo's Trust #smeafor smear campaign and cervical cancer awareness week and began with an event at the Ironstone centre in Scunthorpe. We used the event to promote the importance of attending cervical screening appointments alongside the North Lincolnshire Council Public Health team, and as a way to promote our survey which went live on the day.

Throughout the week we continued to promote the campaign at the following venues across North Lincolnshire:

- The Pods
- The Arc
- UCNL

Alongside our general survey, we circulated an easy read version for people with learning disabilities to ensure we represented a wide range of experiences and attitudes and beliefs around screening. In total we received 299 responses to the survey.

We also held focus groups at Lincolnshire House with disabled women and interviews with women with a learning disability at three supported living locations in North Lincolnshire. During these sessions a total of twelve women shared their experiences of cervical screening.

We realised it was also important to understand the challenges faced by health professionals when conducting screening appointments, so we produced a survey for GP practices to complete.

## What did women tell us?

From the investigation we have discovered a range of barriers to accessing cervical screening for all groups of women:

- No hoists available in GP surgeries
- Lack of information in accessible formats for women with a learning disability
- Lack of wheelchair friendly environments
- Lack of understanding of risk of contracting HPV
- Fear of pain
- Embarrassment
- Lack of convenient appointments

However, most people considered screening as important or very important.

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*"I have tried to book an appointment at GP and have been unable to get one out of work hours"*



*"I need an appointment when I am at my best as the physical activity of getting to the doctor's getting undressed is very exhausting for me"*

*"My own GP surgery doesn't have a height adjustable bed, and I use a wheelchair full time, my husband has to transfer me onto the examination bed"*



### Watch this space!

**We have been busy analysing all the information from the cervical screening investigation and have been producing a report with all the findings. However, due to the coronavirus outbreak, our resources became focussed on the local effort to support the community. This meant that publishing the report needed to be paused. The access to cervical screening investigation report with recommendations will be published soon - Keep an eye on our website and social media!**

# Long Term Plan

**#WhatWouldYouDo**

# Highlights



More than 40,000 people shared their views nationally with Healthwatch.



Over 800 people in North Lincolnshire had their say on how services should be developed. The highest number of survey responses in the country.



Healthwatch North Lincolnshire attended almost 50 community events.

## NHS Long Term Plan

Following a commitment from the Government to increase investment in the NHS, the NHS published the 'Long Term Plan' in January 2019, setting out its' key ambitions over the next 10 years. Healthwatch launched a countrywide campaign to give people a say in how the plan should be implemented in their communities.

Here's a summary of our work and what we found.

Working with Healthwatch Hull, East Riding, North Yorkshire, North East Lincolnshire and Vale of York we asked people #WhatWouldYouDo to improve the NHS locally.

People told us they wanted more support to help them stay healthy, and more control over their care.

We listened to peoples views on local hospital

services and people shared their ideas on how the NHS can support people affected by cancer.

We shared the combined report with the Humber Coast and Vale Partnership who are using the views to shape NHS services on a wider footprint.



# Helping you find the answers

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## The Healthwatch Hub – one stop shop for advice, information and signposting

As part of our NHS Long Term Plan engagement activity in March 2019, we spoke to patients within the Ironstone Centre in Scunthorpe. It was noticed that there was no longer a centralised point / reception desk for patients when they entered the building, resulting in people being unsure of where to go for appointments. We identified this as an opportunity to offer a service that would help enhance patient experience for visitors to the Ironstone Centre and raise awareness of Healthwatch. This led to the development of the Healthwatch Hub which opened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 in line with national volunteers week.

The Hub was created to be a completely volunteer led project which, for the first time allows our team to have a consistent and recognisable public facing base. The Hub allows members of the public to access information and signposting advice as well as an opportunity to provide feedback about local health and care services. Being so visible in such a well used and central location means that it is

a great place to involve members of the public in the work we are doing, and as such have used the base to promote the launch of our cervical screening project to encourage people to complete our survey. Since the launch of the project in June 2019 our lovely meet and greet volunteers have signposted over 1000 visitors to a range of services either within the Ironstone Centre or to other health and social care services. Although temporarily closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are planning to improve this further in 2020 and beyond by recruiting more volunteers and working more closely with voluntary sector organisations to extend the scope of advice that we offer.



*"The Healthwatch Team provide a valuable service within the Ironstone Centre. All of the staff have a very professional attitude and are willing and happy to help patients and visitors in any way they can. They provide support to the other tenants by way of signposting patients and deliveries to the correct area and providing information and advice as necessary. A very good service provided by a great team!"*



**Kirsty Dale – NHS property services**



## Annual Festival of wellbeing – bringing local people together with health and social care services

The Healthwatch Festival of wellbeing was held for the third time in July in the beautiful grounds of Normanby Hall Country Park.

Over 1000 visitors attended the event to find out more about local health and care services, and learn about living a healthier lifestyle. The event was designed to be fun and interactive and an ideal opportunity for local services to showcase the work that they do. Visitors were able to get involved in a range of activities, including Zumba, cheerleading and mindfulness.

Over 60 health and care organisations joined us for the day from across the public, private and voluntary sector and were on hand throughout the day to engage with members of the public to provide expert advice and support.

Having all of these services in one place allowed visitors instant access to services they may not have been aware of and gain an understanding of what is on offer locally.

The festival was also a great opportunity for stakeholders to learn more about each other’s services in order to mutually signpost individuals. This is particularly important as services evolve and change so frequently within health and social care.

We held a poster competition with children from local schools to show what good mental health looks like. The winners were announced at the festival and were used as part of the CAMHS young peoples’ transformation plan.

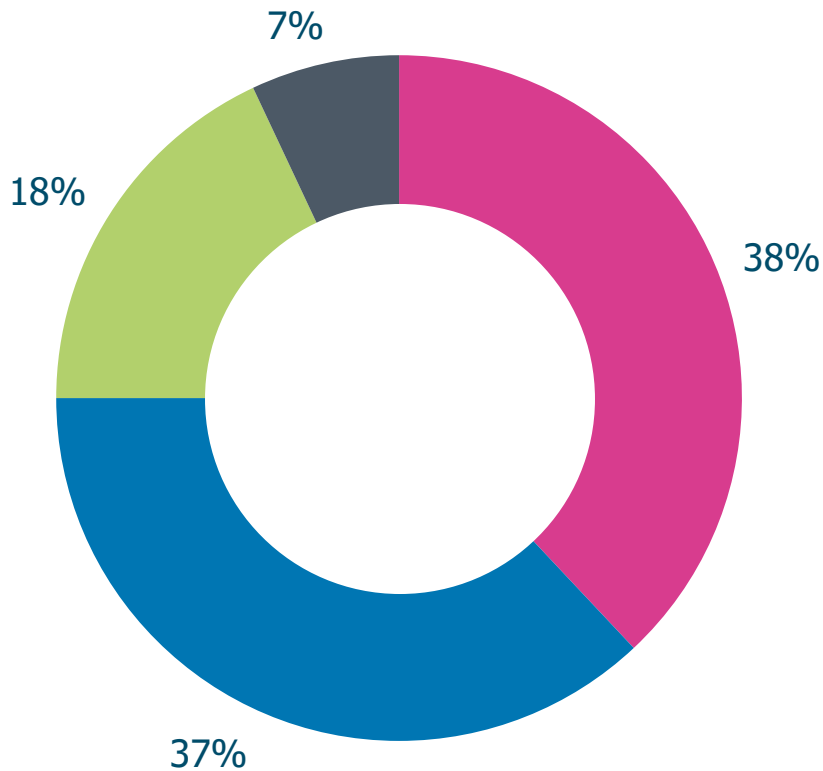
Unfortunately the festival will not be taking place in 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak. Keep an eye out on our website and social media for news of our 2021 festival which we hope will be even bigger and better!

**Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.**

This year we helped 2502 people get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people’s queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.

**Here are some of the areas that people asked about.**



- Secondary care
- Primary care
- Mental health
- Care homes /adult social care



We noticed that a lot of people were contacting our team to say they didn't know how to access the emergency dental service as the phone number had now changed. In response we created social media posts to ensure members of the public knew to contact NHS 111 if they had a dental emergency and did not have a regular dentist, and also shared this information with local health services.



You told us that hospital parking was an issue, as spaces were limited on site. We made people aware of the low cost and easy alternative which is the park and ride service, by promoting it across our channels and our newsletter to ensure that hospital parking was reserved for those who really need it.



You wanted clear and easy to understand information on how to access mental health services. We produced guides on what services are available and how you can access them.



### Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is here for you.

**Website:** [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01724 844986

**Email:** [enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

# Volunteers

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## At Healthwatch North Lincolnshire we utilise volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what people would like to improve to services in their communities.

### This year our volunteers:

- Raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community and with health and care services.
- Visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support.
- Helped support our day-to-day running.
- Listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.
- Ran the Healthwatch hub in the Ironstone centre.
- Supported vulnerable and isolated individuals during the coronavirus outbreak through the telephone buddy service.

### Volunteering helped me reconnect with the world again- Carols story

I started volunteering with Healthwatch in 2019 after the sad and sudden death of my beloved husband John in January.

I had spent a few months in a very dark place, not wanting to leave the house and not knowing how to go on with my life without my husband. My family encouraged me to start volunteering to give myself a purpose. John and I had always been very active in the community, as members of our GP practice PPG and the board of governors at the local hospital trust so I knew he would have wanted me to continue this. It was a chance encounter with a member of the Healthwatch team at a Long Term Plan event that gave me the courage to join the ranks. I have been volunteering on the Healthwatch Hub in the Ironstone Centre as a meet and greet volunteer since June 2019. My role is to help people access services within the building, to raise awareness of Healthwatch and allow people to share their stories with me. I love

this role as it has given me the opportunity to meet lots of new and interesting people. And lifelong friends.

Since starting in this role my confidence has grown and I have taken on additional volunteering with the telephone buddy service, and with other local organisations. I can't thank Healthwatch enough for their help and support during the most difficult period of my life.



### Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire

**Website:** [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01724 844986

**Email:** [enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

# Our volunteers

## Denise

I love volunteering for our local Healthwatch team; I feel very much that I belong to this organisation. Healthwatch values me as an individual and involves me in projects. I give as much/little as I feel I can give of my time and I never feel any pressure to commit. Some of the projects I have been involved in this past year are:

- Place audits
- Enter and view visits
- Volunteer forum
- Festival of wellbeing
- 15 step challenge
- Falls report
- NHS long term plan focus groups

I started volunteering with Healthwatch to improve my self confidence and they have certainly helped me with this. I would recommend anyone thinking about volunteering to take the first step and volunteer for Healthwatch. I look forward to welcoming you.



## Jackie



I became a volunteer at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire in Spring 2019. I have always worked in the public sector and have always had an interest in the development and improvement of health and social care services.

I have been involved in a number of different projects with Healthwatch North Lincolnshire. I took part in a number of enter and view visits

to care homes for older people and people with learning disabilities as part of the review of dental care. I also took part in the PLACE assessments at two local NHS Trusts where I was able to see a variety of areas of the hospital, and even enjoyed a hospital lunch. I also spent a few hours inputting individual survey results on to a database which might not sound exciting but it was very interesting cataloguing service user experiences.

I have enjoyed a number of training courses with Healthwatch and I am now a Cancer Champion. I am looking forward to dementia awareness and health champion training in the future.

I am excited about further developing my volunteer role, and working with the friendly and supportive Healthwatch North Lincolnshire team, when it is safe to do so.

**Our volunteers are at the heart of our everything we do. They generously dedicate their time and energy to helping people in their local communities.**

**We couldn't do our job without them!**



## From Volunteer to Communications and Engagement Officer – Hannah's' story



After leaving University in June 2019, I knew I wanted to begin my career in a sector where I was able to work closely with community groups to help make a difference, however I didn't know where to even begin looking. Getting a job locally was proving difficult, and I realised that I needed some more experience to get a role that I knew I would be truly happy in.

An advert for the Healthwatch Festival of Wellbeing at Normanby Park came up on my Facebook newsfeed. Reading about the event and finding out that it was hosting stalls from many different local organisations across the health and social care sector, I decided to attend, hoping that it would give me an idea about what I wanted to do, or perhaps even offer a volunteering opportunity.

Whilst there, I spoke to a range of stallholders, but the one which stood out the most was Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, who had organised the event. I was intrigued to find out that they were involved with all areas of the health and social care sector, and also offered a range of flexible volunteering roles.

A few weeks later I began as a 'Hub' volunteer at the Ironstone Centre, where I

helped to signpost people to services in the building, and raise awareness of Healthwatch.

The flexibility of this role fit in perfectly alongside my part-time work job, and was also a great opportunity for me to get to know the wonderful staff and other volunteers.

The role of Communication and Engagement Officer became available in December and I knew straight away that I wanted to apply. I liked the fact that the role seemed so varied and with plenty of opportunities to learn new skills - from producing promotional materials, to organising events, and discovering new ways to engage with community groups and individuals.

I have now been working at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire for 6 months. My experience so far has been amazing. The role has allowed me to put my own stamp on it and be self-directed within my work, yet there has always been plenty of support on hand when I have needed it. I have had the opportunity to complete a number of additional training days and receive qualifications in mental health first aid and work-place health. Amongst this, it has been a delight to work alongside wonderful colleagues who all strive towards the same goal.

To anybody who is looking for an opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, build their confidence, or support their local community - I wholeheartedly recommend volunteering for Healthwatch; you never know what doors will be opened up to you in the process.

# Responding to Covid-19

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## Coronavirus – Our response to the crisis in North Lincolnshire

As the Covid –19 pandemic started to take hold in the UK, the way we usually operate as a Healthwatch needed to change in order to adapt to the new 'normal'.

All of our face to face activity needed to be suspended and our attention needed to shift in order to support the local effort to combat the effects of the virus and the restrictions that were needed to bring it under control.

The Healthwatch team have adapted well to the new way of working and have used innovative methods to capture your experiences, keep you up to date with information and changes to local services and ensuring you are able to access all the services you need to keep you safe and well and connected.

### Reducing the impact of social Isolation

In mid March, more and more vulnerable people were being asked to isolate to protect themselves from the virus. We were involved in a local project with the Safeguarding Adults Board looking at the physical and mental health impact of social isolation. We soon realised that the restrictions imposed on many of the most vulnerable in the population meant that these issues would only worsen.

We decided to offer our support to help combat this by setting up a telephone buddy service. Initially this service was offered by our core team and volunteers, but as we started to work closely with the North Lincolnshire Council Shield team at the end of March, demand increased and we soon realised we needed to recruit more volunteers to keep up with this demand.

The service is going from strength to strength and our volunteers have dedicated themselves to improving the lives of local people by offering a regular friendly chat. The buddy service is also a great way of finding out peoples experiences of health and social care services during the pandemic, and is perfect opportunity to be able to signpost

people to the right services to make sure they can access all the support they need. We are committed to ensuring that we continue to help local people to feel connected and reduce the impact of social isolation, and will continue to offer this service for as long as there is demand.



### Next steps for the buddy service

- Continue to recruit and train new volunteers to support people in our local community.
- Extend offer to people with a learning disability and autism to support them to understand the guidelines and get the help they need.
- Extend offer to support people who are lonely and isolated in North Lincolnshire care homes.

## A trusted source of Information

As the virus started to take hold and it was becoming apparent that major changes to the way in which we usually live our lives, we started to receive calls for advice about Government guidelines. It soon became clear that some people were struggling to understand what they should and shouldn't do to stay safe. We responded to this by publishing a special edition newsletter in March full of trusted and up to date information about the virus.

We soon realised that the pace of change meant that this information was becoming outdated quickly. Therefore we decided to produce a daily 'good news report' which combines good news from across the world, nationally and locally with the latest updates and guidelines.

The way in which local services were operating also had to change as a result of the virus, and we were at the forefront of ensuring we communicated these changes to members of the public and other local services through our website and social media. For people who do not have access to the internet we ensured that we made all of our material available in printed form and shared this with our regular subscribers and local groups.

## Your experiences of local services during the pandemic

We are always here to listen to your feedback about health and social care services. When the pandemic hit and services started to change in response to this, we realised that gaps in services may begin to appear.

We developed a Covid-19 experience survey and began to share this across all of our channels on a daily basis. We fed this information back to providers as soon as we received. This rapid feedback has allowed services to respond quickly to the issues taking into account your views and experiences.

### Next steps

We will continue to produce relevant and up to date information in a range of accessible formats including easy read.

As face to face engagement is currently not possible we will continue to develop innovative ways of obtaining feedback. This will include-

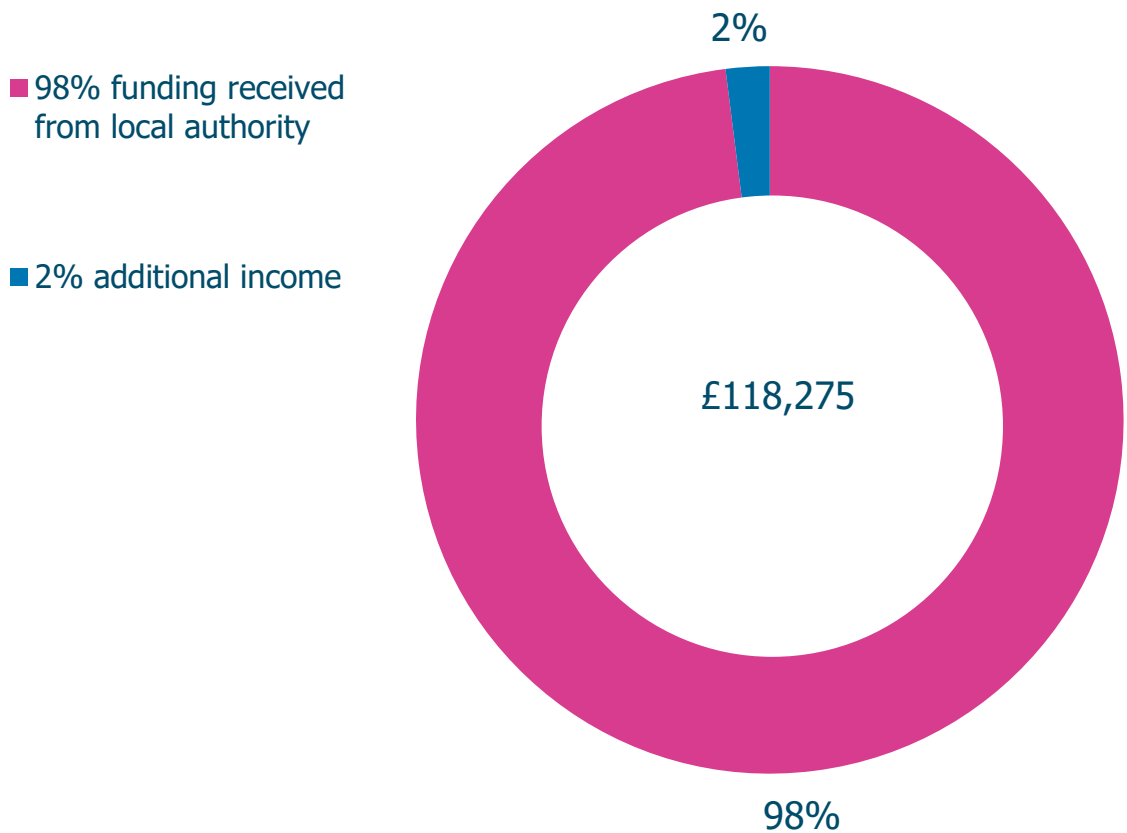
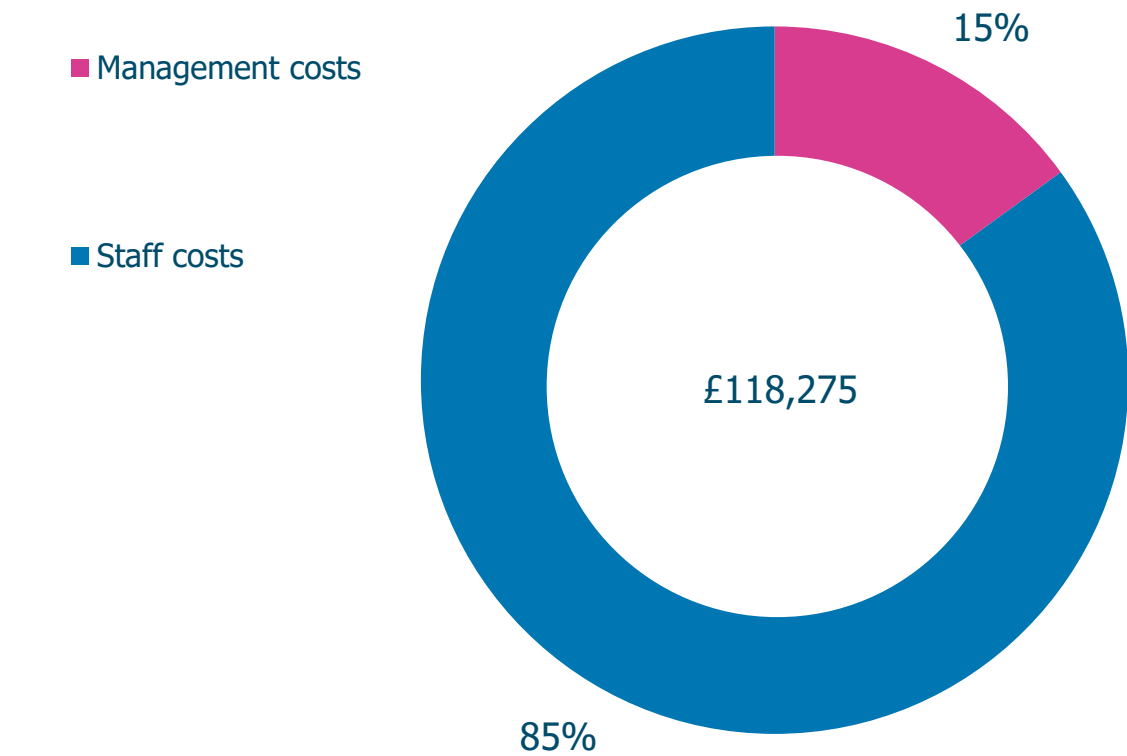
- Virtual focus groups
- Feedback through partners
- Virtual enter and view visits
- Virtual health events
- Attendance at virtual support groups

# Finances

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**We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £118,275**



# Our plans for next year

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## Supporting the Hospital Trust to improve its CQC rating

In February 2020 the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust's (NLaG) most recent CQC report was published.

Although there had been some improvements since the last inspection, particularly in Community Services and in the 'well led' domain, there had been areas across the Trust that had unfortunately deteriorated.

Services across the Trust such as diagnostics, emergency care and end of life care had been highlighted within the report as key areas of concern.

We have continued to gather feedback on the NLaG Hospital Trust throughout the year through regular visits to the outpatient department and other services across Scunthorpe Hospital, and shared this feedback with the patient experience team and during meetings with the Chief Executive of the Trust.

As the services start to resume their normal activity, and when it is safe to do so we will be making a more concerted effort to understand the experiences of patients in the A+E department and diagnostics by carrying out targeted engagement work and enter and view visits in these areas.

We will look at what matters most to people when it comes to planning for end of life and will be working with both patients and relatives to understand this very sensitive issue. We will use this information to support the Trust in their improvement journey by sharing information that allows them to make

improvements that you want to see.



**We want your feedback!**

If you would like to make a positive contribution to your community by sharing your experiences of hospital services please get in touch. Every comment, good or bad helps to shape services for everyone

## A message from our CEO

Looking back on the previous year fills me with an immense sense of pride. The team at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire may be small in number, but continue to prove their might when it comes to representing your voice.

The team have built upon the positive relationships established with partners across health and social care in the previous year and this has helped to ensure that organisations listen to your views and act upon them, which in turn improves services for everyone who uses them.

The Covid-19 crisis has been a huge challenge for health and social care systems both nationally and locally, and it has been amazing to see how Healthwatch North Lincolnshire have really stepped up to help the most vulnerable and isolated people in our community by offering a telephone buddy service.

Since lockdown began, we have recruited over 60 new volunteers and supported over 70 individuals with regular telephone contact. In total we have made over 580 calls. We will continue to offer this service over the next year, and plan to extend the service to people living in care homes.

Looking forward in 2020 we will be investigating how the coronavirus and lockdown have impacted your mental health, and whether mental health services have been there to support you when you needed them most.

We will be revisiting our planned work at the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospital Trust to ensure that the Trust understand and take into account your experiences as part of their improvement journey.

We will revisit our dental project to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on access to

dental services, particularly for the most vulnerable in our community. We will also be publishing our report on barriers to accessing cervical screening for vulnerable groups.

As the health and social care sector begins to emerge from the lockdown, we will be here to listen to your experiences of accessing services, and make sure your voice does not go unheard.

Every comment whether good or bad helps us to understand how well the system is working, so please keep sharing with us.



Stay safe!

Jenny Jenkinson  
Chief Officer, Meeting New Horizons

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenkinson'.

# Thank you

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

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff for all of your hard work and dedication to improving Health and care services.
- Our ever growing army of fabulous volunteers.
- All of the care home providers who supported our work.
- Our partners in the voluntary sector;



# Contact us

## Get in touch with us at:

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Website: [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

TWITTER: @HealthwatchNL

FACEBOOK : @HealthwatchNorthLincolnshire

## Contract holder

The contract to provide Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is held by:

Meeting New Horizons CIC  
The Strand  
75 Beverley Road  
Hull  
HU3 1XL

Telephone: 01482 324474

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Our annual report will be publicly available on our website by 30 June 2020. We will also be sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, North Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and our Local Authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.



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