



Quarterly Report

Year 7, Quarter 4
January - March 2020

Quarter 4 overview

Quarter 4 started very positively with the addition of a new Engagement Officer and temporary Patient Experience Officer (maternity cover) to the team.

The cervical screening project was launched and the team worked hard to champion the voice of those with physical and learning disabilities, by holding a series of focus groups throughout the County.

Towards the end of the quarter, the team were met with the additional challenge of the coronavirus outbreak which meant having to adapt to an unprecedented situation, and develop new ways of working in response to the crisis.

A telephone buddy service was set up in March to provide support to people facing isolation during the outbreak.

Outcome 1 - High public awareness of HWNL and the services it provides

Engagement and events

Engagement through a variety of channels is incredibly important in order to help raise awareness of Healthwatch North Lincolnshire and the work it does. Face-to-face engagement however, can be a particularly useful tool which can help to gather more thorough feedback through lengthier conversations with members of the public, and also ensure that Healthwatch remains a visible figure in the local health and social care sector.

By utilising face-to-face engagement frequently and effectively, the team are able to create opportunities for members of the public to share their health and social care experiences, find out more about local services and support that are available, and recognise Healthwatch North Lincolnshire as a trusted source of information.

During quarter 4 the team explained the role of Healthwatch to 60 new individuals and had direct interactions with a total of 325 people. The engagement and outreach sessions that were attended include;

• Ongo Communities Event
• Scunthorpe Hospital
• Healthwatch Hub - Regular Engagement
• The Arc Coffee Morning
• The Pods Leisure Centre
• Do Something Different Activity Session
• Re-wild 'The Gathering' Event

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University Campus North Lincolnshire (UCNL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sir John Mason House
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lincolnshire house Residential Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Mount Residential Care

Cervical Cancer Awareness Week

On the 20th January the team hosted an event at the Ironstone Centre which marked both the beginning of Cervical Cancer Prevention Week and the beginning of the new research project investigating cervical screening experiences in North Lincolnshire. The event was publicised beforehand on social media platforms and 22 surveys were completed during the event.

A staff member from the North Lincolnshire Council Public Health team supported the event by bringing along useful information and resources, and engaging with members of the public.

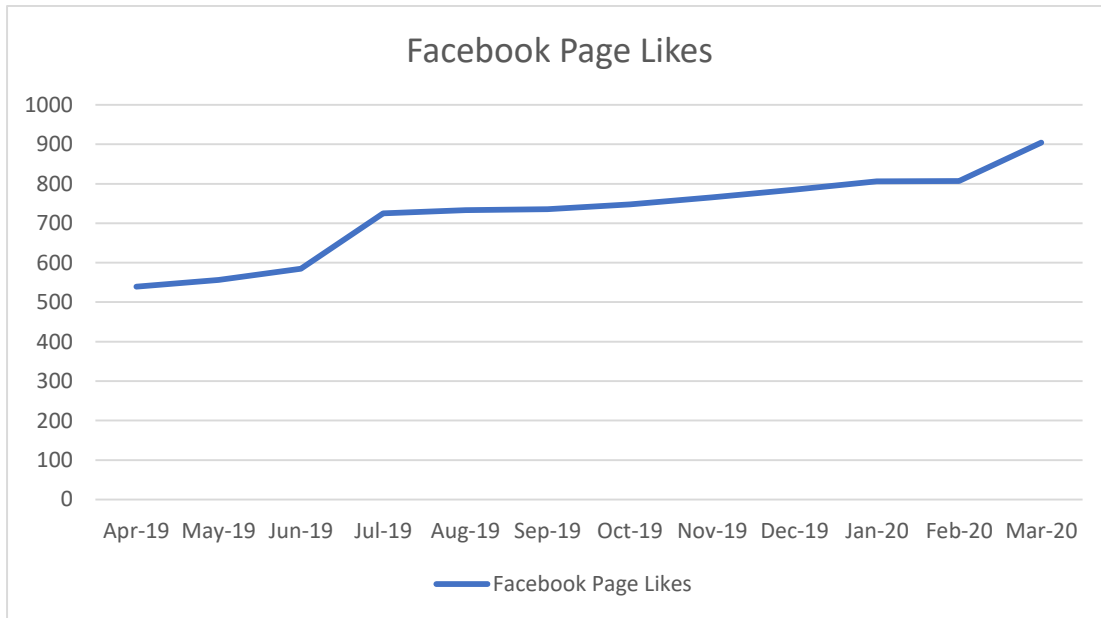
Members of the public also had fun participating in activities such as taking a ‘smeary selfie’ to support the popular campaign ‘smear for smear’ by Jo’s Cervical Trust which raises awareness of Cervical Cancer.



Social media engagement

By utilising social media more frequently this quarter, HWNL have been able to increase follower numbers across three primary channels; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Facebook had the greatest increase in likes, followers, and engagements (which includes commenting and reacting on posts, as well as sharing them), this can be attributed to the Engagement Officer posting more interactive content during the quarter. From the end of quarter 3 to the end of quarter 4, the number of likes on our Facebook page rose by 119, which equates to a 15% increase. This is the largest increase in page likes during this business year.



The most popular posts in this quarter were as follows:

Facebook

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire
19 March at 13:42 · 🌐

! 📞 Telephone Buddy Service 📞 !

Here at Healthwatch North Lincolnshire We've decided to create a 'telephone Buddy Service', where we will pair some of our lovely volunteers with more vulnerable members of the community who would like a short daily phone call and 'check-in'.

If you know of anybody who would benefit from this service, or if you know of any groups where this information could be shared to, please let us know! 😊

9,689 People reached 566 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

Twitter

Healthwatch N Lincs @HealthwatchNL · Feb 20

Did you know that a short walk has been proven to improve both your mental and physical health? 🚶‍♀️

Why not take a break from your desk and go for a walk this lunchtime with your colleagues?

Samaritans @samaritans · Feb 20

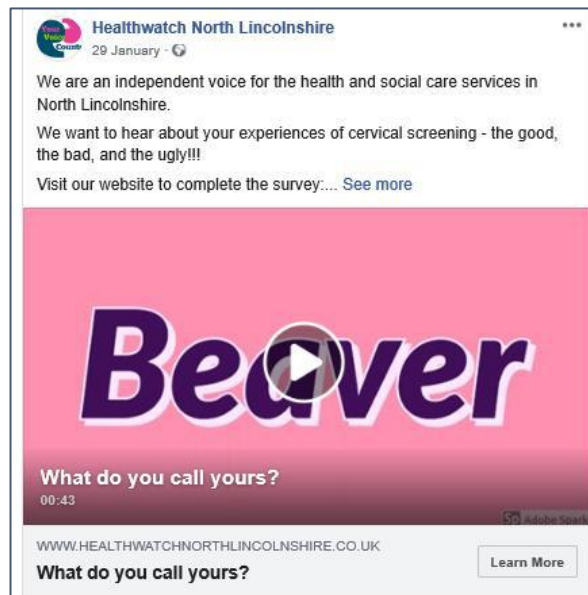
Go on, get yourself out for that walk at lunch today 🚶‍♀️ 🚶‍♂️
bit.ly/32bwkWn

🗨️ 5 ❤️ 2 📤 📊

Instagram



The Engagement Officer also made use of the Facebook paid advertisement feature this quarter in order to help promote a video she had made, encouraging women to participate in the Cervical Screening survey. Using this feature, a specific target group (women aged 20+ in the North Lincolnshire area) was selected to whom the video would appear. The video reached 3,104 women during the 30 days in which the post was live, and was watched a total of 815 times.



As outlined in the quarter 3 report, HWNL have successfully been able to increase the number of followers on the Instagram page by 12.8%. This will continue to increase further by engaging more actively on the platform and utilising features such as hashtags which can make both the page and its posts easier to find.

Response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Towards the end of quarter 4, the way in which Healthwatch North Lincolnshire operates was forced to drastically shift in response to the global outbreak of COVID-19.

With all face-to-face engagement suspended and all staff members working from home in accordance with government recommendations, the way in which they engaged with the public to keep them informed on the latest health and social care information had to change.

The team began to utilise social media platforms more regularly, to provide updates on the latest COVID-19 information via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the HWNL website. With many local organisations providing services online or over the telephone, the engagement officer has worked in collaboration with these groups, to promote their services and let the general public know where and they could still receive support.

It was noticed that the increased in social media usage contributed to an increase in posts being more consistently engaged with. Other health and social care organisations in particular were sharing the posts, meaning that the information will have been able to reach wider networks and individuals who perhaps aren't in direct contact with HWNL.

Whilst providing relevant, trusted and up to date COVID-19 information was incredibly important, the team recognised that for a number of people, the situation could be very stressful, and that an overload of potentially negative information or news could have an adverse impact on their mental wellbeing.

For this reason, it was decided to create a 'Good News Report'. This began at the end of quarter 4 and is now sent to all e-newsletter subscribers on a daily basis. The brief e-news contains positive quotes, a short general news summary, followed by a number of positive articles -both global and local. We also included a short daily activity such as a word search, riddles, or number puzzles to give the recipients something to do.

Overall, the daily report has been well-received and HWNL have received a lot of positive feedback on it.



Outcome 2 - peoples understanding of their rights of users of health and social care will be improved

Through the face to face engagement at the beginning of the quarter the team were able to signpost 173 individuals to different services across North Lincolnshire.

Most of the signposting that took place through face to face methods was to services within the Ironstone Centre at the Healthwatch Hub. The hub is staffed by Healthwatch volunteers and is a great opportunity to raise the profile of the service whilst ensuring that members of the public are aware of the services that are available to them.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak and the social distancing measures announced by the Prime Minister, the hub was closed during March.

Additionally, 169 people accessed the information and signposting page on the website from January 1st - March 31st.

Newsletters

During quarter 4 the Engagement Officer continued to utilise the bi-monthly newsletter to inform the public about the work of HWNL, provide them with information on HWNL partners, and other useful information on local services.

This format has remained particularly popular with those harder to reach groups who do not have access to the internet, such as the elderly as paper copies are sent out in addition to our e-news.

Two newsletters were published in quarter 4, in January and another in March. The average number of newsletters that were distributed for each of the issues (calculating the total of postal and e-newsletters) was 837.

Whilst both paper and e-news subscription numbers have increased, new subscriptions for the e-newsletter have been higher. During this quarter there have been 42 new sign-ups, which equates to an increase of 12% since the end of December.

With this continued increase in subscribers, the Engagement Officer decided to trial a new method of distribution for the next quarter. In some organisations such as GP practices which usually receive 20+ paper newsletters, the team will be sending 2-3 large-print laminated copies which are to remain at the premises. These will be available for people to read whilst waiting for an appointment/collecting their prescriptions. This will help to reduce printing costs and environmental impact, whilst ensuring that the newsletters are still available at all their usual locations, and without compromising the amount of content included in each issue. There will also be the opportunity for readers of the newsletter to send in a comment card using the freepost address to the team so they can begin to receive future editions.

As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, it was more important than ever for those subscribers that usually receive the newsletter through the postal system would still continue to receive this, as it is vital to ensure that those without access to the digital version of the newsletter continue to receive trusted and up to date information and advice. A 'special addition' newsletter is due to be published and distributed via post in quarter 4. The Engagement Officer is also looking at innovative ways in which more people from the hardest to reach groups can be reached during the coming weeks, to ensure they are also receiving accurate, trusted and up to date information.

Outcome 3- greater patient and public involvement in the work of Healthwatch

Investigating barriers to accessing cervical screening

In January, the cervical screening project was launched. The aim of the project was to investigate the barriers that women face when trying to accessing cervical screening. The project was developed in response to feedback from a local disabilities rights campaigner who, in quarter 3 informed Healthwatch that a number of women with physical disabilities were struggling to access their appointments due to a lack of hoists in GP practices.

A general survey for members of the public was developed which received 299 responses in total. Additionally the team held a focus group with women who live at Lincolnshire House, and two sessions of semi structured interviews with women who have learning disabilities and live in residential care and supported housing in North Lincolnshire.

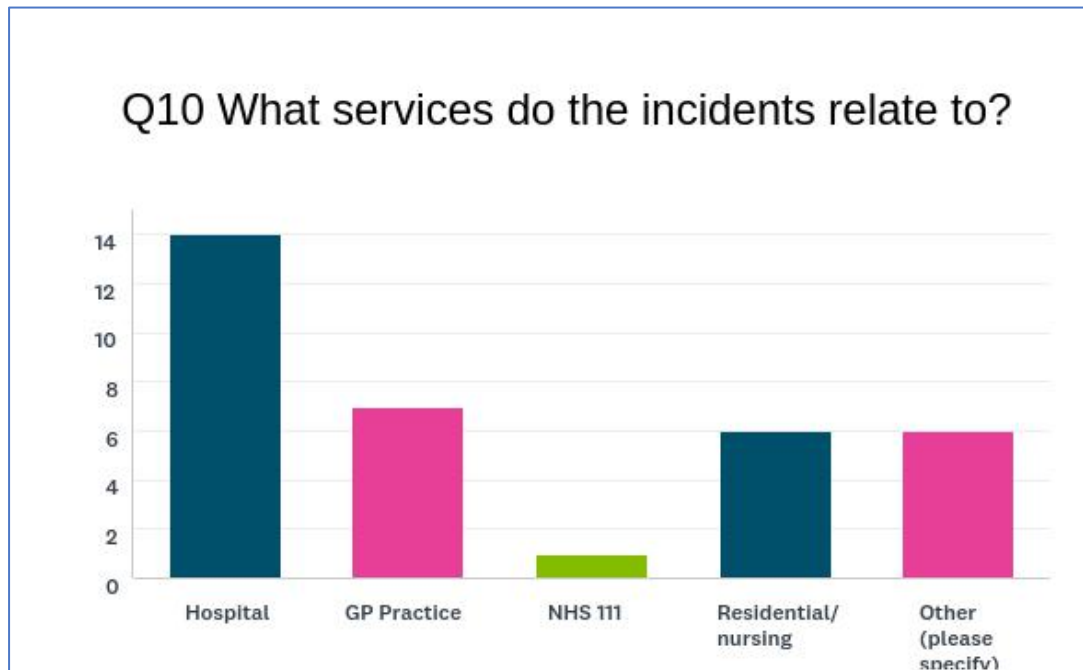
Cloverleaf advocacy supported HWNL to gather the experiences of the women with learning disabilities by helping to facilitate the sessions and developing an easy read version of the survey that was used during the interviews and was shared through the learning disability partnership.

The survey closed on the 1st of March and the Patient Experience Officer is currently analysing the information to produce a report with recommendations for quarter 1 2019.

Feedback survey

During quarter 4, 29 people completed online Patient Experience form to provide feedback about local services.

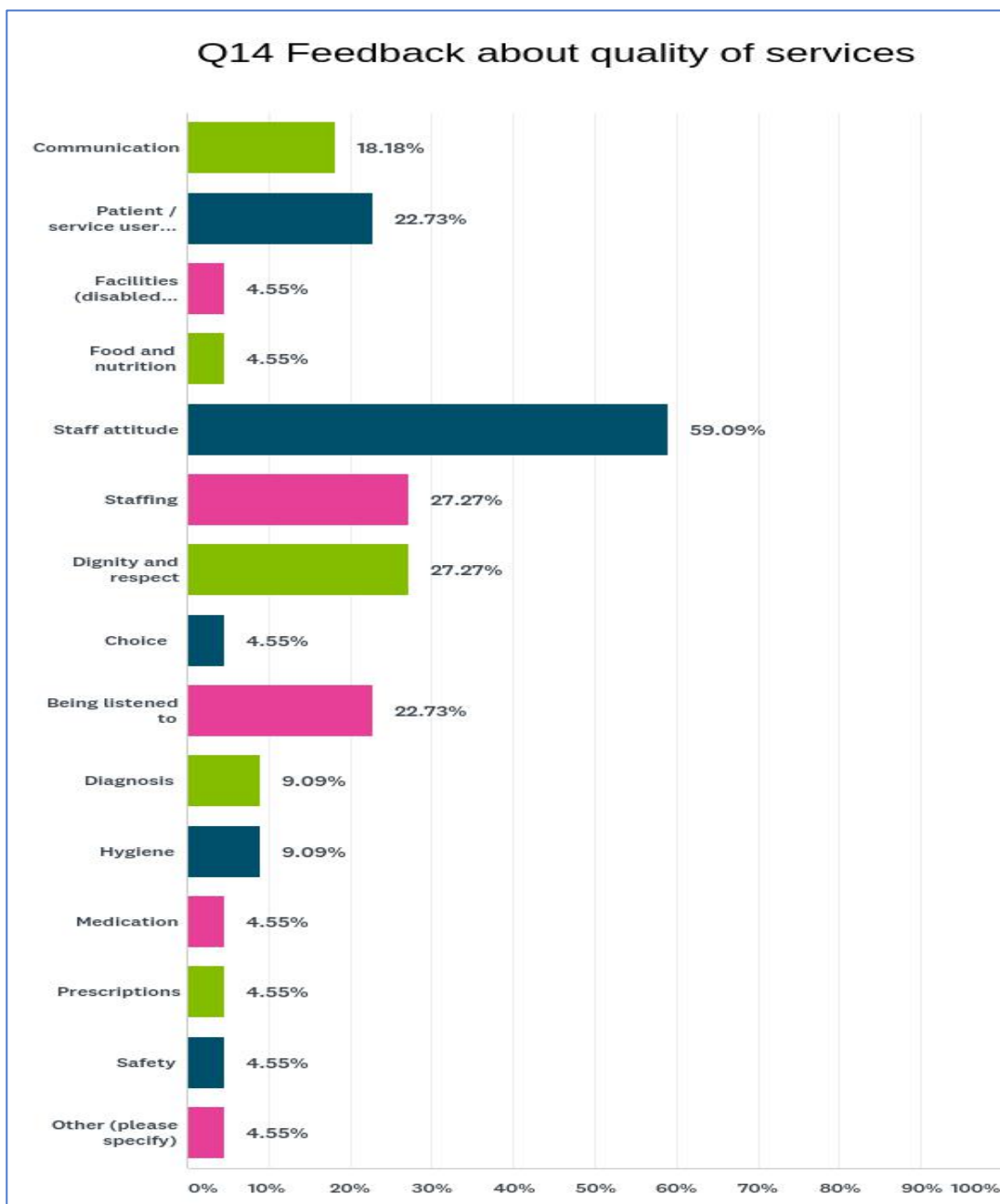
Most of the comments received were in relation to hospital services, followed by GP appointments.



The sentiment of comments were mostly negative, however two compliments were received this quarter, one for a GP Practice and one relating to a hospital ward.

Feedback received is categorised by theme- see chart below.

Staff attitude was unfortunately the common theme in quarter 4, and makes up more than 50% of the feedback that was received by HWNL through the patient experience form. The themes of staff shortages, dignity and respect and being listened to were also themes.



Experiences of services during the coronavirus outbreak

It was recognised that many of the services that members of the public were coming into contact with had changed considerably as a result of the pandemic, with the majority of appointments being cancelled or moved to virtual methods, and services such as pharmacies stretched to unprecedented levels. In response to this HWNL developed a new coronavirus feedback form to capture experiences during the outbreak. This information will be used to identify any issues or gaps in services that have developed and identifying if any support that might be needed for individuals.

Volunteer buddy service

One of the biggest developments during the quarter was the launch of the North Lincolnshire telephone buddy service.

As the number of virus cases across the UK started to increase, more and more vulnerable people were being asked to self-isolate for their own safety. It was recognised that this could have a massive detrimental impact on the mental health of these individuals. As a result of this, the team developed the Covid - 19 volunteer buddy service.

New volunteers are recruited to Healthwatch North Lincolnshire, and following a basic DBS check, and satisfactory references, offer regular, ongoing telephone befriending to vulnerable adults in the local area.

The volunteers provide a friendly ear and emotional and practical support to anyone who is feeling lonely and isolated during the pandemic. The volunteers are supported with signposting to a range of different services that the service user may need to access, and are trained to escalate any issues to the Healthwatch core team. The buddy calls are also a great opportunity to find out about any gaps in service provision as a result of the pandemic, and the volunteers record this in daily call log that is accessed by the core team and added to the intelligence database.

The service was launched on the 20th of March, and by the 31st of March, there were 6 volunteers making calls to 8 service users. Over 30 calls were made during the 11 day period.

A referral pathway was developed with the North Lincolnshire Council Covid-19 response team towards the end of March, which resulted in a large increase in volunteer and service user numbers. This meant that the capacity of the core team needed to increase to cope with the extra demand. As a result, a previous, experienced volunteer coordinator was re-hired on a temporary basis. A more up to date and detailed view of volunteer and service user numbers will be provided in quarter 1 2020.

The Healthwatch team will continue to provide this much needed service in the coming months, and as demand for the service increases will look at innovative ways of managing this.

Outcome 4 - Strong and effective relationships with commissioners and a credible voice on the Health and Wellbeing Board

Due to the social distancing measures enforced by the Prime Minister on the 23rd March, many meetings were automatically cancelled. This included the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting that was due to take place on 24th March and the safeguarding adults board meeting on the 27th March.

Prior to the lockdown, the Manager attended a meeting with Dr Peter Reading, Chief Executive at NLaG hospital Trust to share updates and gain a strategic oversight of plans to improve Trust services following the CQC report that was published in February. The meeting was useful, as the Chief Executive gave assurance on the next steps that were to be taken by the trust to improve, and detail of improvements that have already been made, such as a large reduction in waiting times for outpatient appointments, and improvements in diagnostic imaging services. The Chief Executive acknowledged that there were still issues in a few areas across the Trust including A+E, and end of life care. Healthwatch shared future plans to support this improvement in the coming months.

During the meeting, the Chief Executive gave assurance to Healthwatch that the Trust was well prepared for the potential increase in demand as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

During quarter 4 the team planned a piece of work to measure the impact of social isolation on members of the local population. The team worked with staff employed by the Arc to identify people who access their services due to isolation, and an event was planned for the end of March. The purpose of the event was to allow participants to share their experiences of being isolated but answering a short questionnaire and taking part in an art project. The piece of art was due to be displayed at the Safeguarding Adults Board conference in May.

Unfortunately due to the coronavirus, none of this was able to take place. However, as part of the telephone buddy service that was set up in response to the outbreak, the team are in a good position to measure the impact of social isolation in the coming months and develop a wealth of information and experiences to share with Commissioners.

Outcome 5 - Ability to show the impact of HWNL to challenge and speak on behalf of Health and Social care service users

During quarter 4, the team received feedback about the closure of a local respite facility for disabled children. Three parents came forward to Healthwatch to say that their disabled children were not receiving their usual respite sessions at the Cygnets as it had been closed. This was having a huge detrimental affect on the families involved who relied on short breaks from the respite service to help them get a much needed rest from the caring responsibilities of a profoundly disabled child. The parents were particularly frustrated at the situation, as they had not been given any clear explanation as to why the service was being withdrawn and did not know when it was likely to be resolved.

The issue was escalated to North Lincolnshire Council Childrens services, who were made aware of the impact that the closure of the service and the lack of communication had on families. Healthwatch were assured that the issue was now resolved and a meeting would be held to look at lessons learnt, and actions that would be taken to prevent this happening again.

All three families that contacted Healthwatch North Lincolnshire had their short breaks reinstated.

During quarter 4, a member of the public contacted Healthwatch to say that she felt that the staff who work in her GP practice do not treat her with the dignity and respect she deserves, and continuously make her feel uncomfortable and distressed when she attends a GP appointment. The member of the public has a range of issues including autism, ADHD and severe anxiety. She felt that the practice staff did not understand her needs and this was preventing her getting the treatment she needed from her GP. After contactning the team, she felt empowered to write to the Practice Manager explaining her concerns, and was invited in for a meeting to discuss in person. The meeting was very sucessful, as the GP surgery have made reasonable adjustments to meet her unique needs and have provided a learning disbaility nurse for her to share concerns with. The prcatice manager also suggested that she joins the GP practice PPG (patient participation group) as she was able to articulate the struggles of people with a learning disability well. The patient was very happy with the outcome and as a result feels more confident to challenge issues that face her and other people with a learning difficulty. She has now joined the ranks as a Healthwatch engagement volunteer.

Outcome 6 - Collective views experiences and needs of local people are made known to Healthwatch England, local overview and scrutiny committees and to local health and social care commissioners and providers.

During quarter 4 the staff team and board members attended a number of regular meetings with other professionals and stakeholders. However, some meetings were unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic.

These were a mix of public and voluntary sector organisations:

- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Learning Disability Partnership
- Learning Disability health and wellbeing subgroup
- Cross sector provider partnership
- Health and Social Care Standards Board
- Safeguarding adults board
- Patient and community assurance group (PCAG)
- Carers Advisory Partnership
- Crisis Care concordat
- Mental health collaborative
- Maternity voices partnership
- North Lincolnshire Patient Participation Group Forum
- North Lincolnshire Quality Surveillance Group

The team continue to feed important information to Healthwatch England on a regular basis to help enable a national oversight of issues.

Plans for quarter 1 2020-

The development of the coronavirus pandemic has meant that the way in which Healthwatch North Lincolnshire operates has had to change. The team will continue to adapt to the fast changing situation to ensure that the public voice is not lost in the emerging health and social care landscape. This will be achieved by;

- Continuing to proactively respond to service changes in North Lincolnshire and identifying gaps in services to bring this to the attention of decision makers.
- Supporting local services by providing feedback to help them improve.
- Continuing to keep the public up to date with trusted and reliable information regarding the developing crisis.
- Continuing to provide and expand the telephone buddy service to the most vulnerable to mitigate the impact of social isolation.