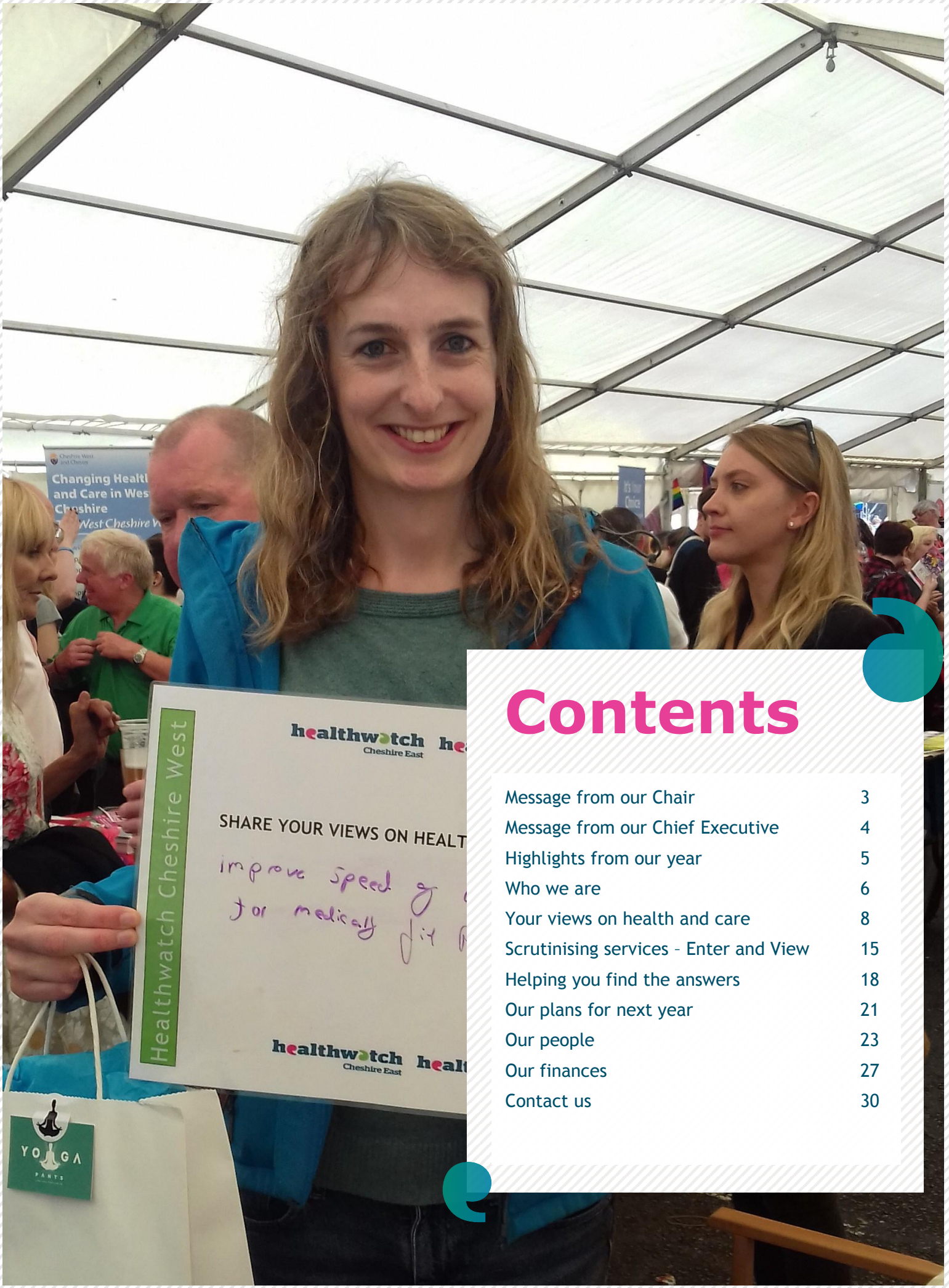
healthwatch Cheshire West

Healthwatch Cheshire West

Annual Report 2017/18



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Message from our Chair – Lynne Turnbull

I am delighted to present our Annual Report for 2017/18; a year which saw many challenges to both national and local health and care services.

In April 2017, Healthwatch Cheshire CIC commenced delivery of the new joint contract, delivering two local Healthwatch organisations - Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West. This covers the statutory functions of Healthwatch and an Independent Complaints Advocacy service, across two Local Authorities and four Clinical Commissioning Groups.

In order to maximise representation of the diverse people of Cheshire at a governance level, Healthwatch Cheshire recruited new Board members during the year, consisting of a mixture of 15 organisation representatives and individuals from across Cheshire.

As your independent consumer champion, Healthwatch Cheshire West has had an extremely busy year, constantly seeking to understand what works well for you and exactly where your concerns about local Health and Care services lie.

During the year we reviewed our Enter and View process and delivered a significant programme of activity. Enter and View sees trained volunteers visit hospital wards, day care centres and care homes to observe the nature and quality of treatment and care. This continues to strengthen our understanding of how well these services are serving the people of Cheshire West and Chester.

Strategically, we have been involved in discussions regarding the Health and Care partnerships and we have been able to use our seats at the local authority's Health and Wellbeing Board to reinforce the importance of effective engagement moving forward.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the Chief Executive Officer for her continued strong leadership of the organisation; my fellow board members, staff, volunteers and members of the public, as without your continued dedication and motivation, Healthwatch Cheshire West would not be able to be the local independent voice for people of Cheshire West and Chester, shaping and improving health and care services.

Finally, I encourage you to continue to share your views and experiences with us, so we can continue to work towards a vision of Health and Care services that meet the diverse needs of people across Cheshire West and Chester.

Message from our Chief Executive – Louise Barry

2017-2018 has been an exciting and very busy year for Healthwatch Cheshire West.

At the start of the year we were jointly commissioned by Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Local Authorities to deliver both Healthwatch Cheshire West and Healthwatch Cheshire East, and to deliver the Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) across Cheshire.

Our small staff team has altered to meet the new and varying demands of our delivery and we have welcomed new staff members to work across Cheshire, including on our delivery of ICAS. Our volunteer team are core to effective Healthwatch delivery and to our reach in to a range of communities, groups and activities, and during the year we have built on the strengths of our existing volunteer team and expanded to bring in new skills and perspectives.

During the year we have recruited new members to our Board of Directors, expanding in both numbers and expertise. Our Board is made up of people from local organisations representing: the wider voluntary sector; children and young people; older people; disabled people; and people from minority ethnic communities. In addition, we have members of the public with a range of skills.

Together, staff and volunteers undertake a wide range of engagement activities, sign-posting, partnership working, and Enter and View visits, some of which are highlighted in this report. All of the feedback and information people tell us is recorded anonymously and fed back to the key health and care providers and commissioners of services in Cheshire West and Chester. It is also fed in through our engagement on strategic health and care boards to ensure that the voice and experience of people accessing services is central.

> I would like to thank the staff and volunteer team for their continued enthusiasm and expertise in delivering Healthwatch Cheshire West, and I look forward to the new opportunities and challenges that next year will bring.

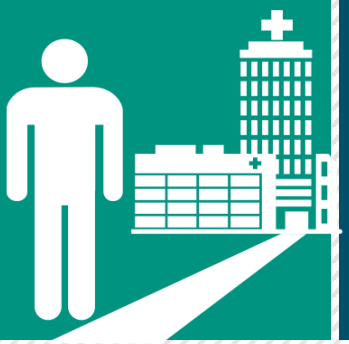
Highlights from our year

1,702

This year we have had 1,702 visits to our website

We won the **Student's Choice Award** at the University of Chester's Volunteer Celebration

We've visited **165** local services and Health and Wellbeing events



Our **47** volunteers help us with everything from engagement to Enter and View

Our reports have tackled issues ranging from **Pharmacies** to **GP Extended Hours**

We've spoken to **214** people across Cheshire hospitals at our two **A&E Watch** events

We've received **700** comments from people on their Health and Social Care services

Who we are

Healthwatch Cheshire West are the local independent consumer champions for Health and Social Care services in Cheshire West and Chester.

You may have seen one of our team or volunteers out and about around Cheshire gaining people's views and experiences of the Health and Social Care services they receive, in order to help inform the priorities and quality of services commissioned by the NHS and local authorities.

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

As well as championing your views locally, we also share your views with Healthwatch England who make sure that the government put people at the heart of care nationally.

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.

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 ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

This year has seen us undertake a newly commissioned joint contract to deliver Healthwatch services for both Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East local authority areas. This has provided challenges but also fantastic opportunities with many health services delivered cross-boundary.

Meet the team

Louise Barry
Chief Executive

Rachel Cornes
Service Lead

Emma McKenzie
Administration and Finance Manager

George Gibson
Communications and Research Officer

Annette Shepherd
Independent Complaints Advocate

David Crosthwaite
Volunteer Co-Ordinator

Jem Davies
Community Engagement & Project Officer

Jackie Lewis
Community Engagement & Project Officer

Neil Garbett
Community Engagement & Project Officer

Ros Haynes
Community Engagement & Project Officer

Making a difference - your views on health and care

Healthwatch Cheshire West's Macmillan Coffee Morning, 29th September 2017

Listening to people's views

Engaging directly with a wide range of people in community settings is where Healthwatch Cheshire West staff and volunteers are able to gain the richness of people's views and stories. It is by having these face to face conversations with people that we can best understand issues that are effecting people regarding health and care, and how we can support them by signposting them to services, organisations, or groups that can help.

A variety of easily accessible contact methods are in place to allow individuals and communities to engage and feedback effectively with Healthwatch Cheshire West: in person, via the telephone, by email, by Freepost comment cards, via Healthwatch Cheshire West's website or via Facebook and Twitter.

You may have seen our team out and about at venues such as libraries, Children's Centres, Extra Care developments, supermarkets and hospitals setting up a stand and chatting to people about their experiences.

Tweet from Cheshire West and Chester Libraries regarding Healthwatch Cheshire West engagement activity, 31st January 2018

Working with communities and other organisations

Cheshire West and Chester has a wide and varied range of communities and our engagement activities and partnership working has enabled us to attend 91 themed events, in addition to our general engagement during the year, to raise awareness of Healthwatch and to ensure we are working in and with varied communities to gain a breadth of views. This activity helps us maintain and strengthen our partnership working with communities and individual organisations.

Our community focus next year will incorporate working on key areas that will be served by our emerging Care Communities across Cheshire, where services and support for care are better integrated in their local areas. Healthwatch will play a key role in ensuring people are kept abreast of these developments and can play an active part in what they might look like in their local areas.

We continue to maintain strong relationships with local Social Care, Public Health, NHS, and voluntary sector commissioners and providers, feeding in comments on service delivery from members of the public, and assisting in promoting campaigns and consultations, for example 'Self Care'; flu jabs; pharmacy services; dementia strategy; Adult and Older People's Mental Health proposals.

We have worked with NHS Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group (VRCCG) regarding the Red Bag Scheme, a system introduced to improve people's experience of transfer to and from hospital from Care Homes, by facilitating a specific volunteer representative to lead on the incorporation of questions around the Red Bags into our Enter and View visits.

Healthwatch Cheshire West has an effective working relationship with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), with whom we share our Enter and View reports and any comments we have had around particular services they may be visiting to assist with their monitoring and inspection activity.

Healthwatch Cheshire West at Mid-Cheshire Hospitals Trust Health and Wellbeing Fair AGM, 4th October 2017

Events we have attended over the year include:

Welcome Wednesday in Ellesmere Port – This is a weekly group offering a meal and a social group that anyone can attend from the long-term unemployed to the socially isolated.

Wellbeing Winsford – We attended the Wellbeing Winsford Week which allowed us to engage with various types of people from across the local community by virtue of the town centre location.

University of Chester – We have developed a strong relationship with the university this year, attending the Volunteer Fair in September. We have been able to engage with students and host student-specific information on our website.

Transition to Adulthood Event at Ellesmere Port – This event allowed us to find out about the difficulties in transitioning to adulthood in regard to service provision and support groups for young people with learning disabilities and carers.

Unity Centre, Chester – This year has seen us engage with asylum seekers in Chester, signposting them to health services and also to find out about any difficulties in access.

Rudheath and Witton Together Hub - we attended an Older People's Health and Wellbeing event in Northwich which allowed us to engage with local people over the age of 65.

Chester Pride – in August 2017 members of the Healthwatch Cheshire West team attended Chester's Pride festival, and even took part in the parade! This was an invaluable event that allowed us to engage with LGBT groups and something that we will look to attend next year as well.

Body Positive - Relationships have been established with Body Positive and we have jointly attended colleges to engage with younger people regarding sexual health.

Silver Rainbows - We attended an event in Chester to understand and highlight the issues facing the LGBT community as they get older and perhaps needing to live in care homes.

Projects

Alongside our general engagement activity, we embarked on a number of projects during the year which focus on particular issues that people of Cheshire West and Chester told us were important. Others were undertaken to help inform them of key messages from local commissioners.

GP Extended Hours and Out of Hours

We visited a number of GP Surgeries to gain an understanding of people's awareness and experience of the range of appointment times available with a GP through the Extended Hours and Out of Hours services. We found that many people in Cheshire West and Chester were not aware that these services were an option to them, but of those who were aware and had used the services experiences were broadly positive.

Awareness of Self Care

Promotion of self-care is seen as key in ensuring people stay well, and are able to prevent and manage minor ailments, particularly during the winter months.

During National Self Care Week from 13th – 19th November 2017 we supported the NHS Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group's (VRCCG) campaign, including staff members participating in a Wellie Walk, and promoting the benefits of the Self Care campaign alongside VRCCG staff at information stands as part of joint engagement activity.

Healthwatch Cheshire West staff taking part in a Wellie Walk as part of Self Care Week, 14th November 2017

Following the campaign, we undertook a project to establish people's views of self-care and found that broadly people in Cheshire are positive about the 'Self Care' message but had not necessarily heard of the campaign. Staff and volunteers from our engagement team found this follow up project was a useful additional signposting exercise to inform people of what 'Self Care' is, and to encourage them to practice it.

Katy Brownbill, Senior Communications Manager at NHS Vale Royal CCG, thought that Healthwatch's activity during Self Care Week was very beneficial to the awareness campaign:

> **We were particularly well supported by Healthwatch Cheshire West who not only had a physical presence at many of the events and 'pop up' stands to support the cascade of key messages they also ensured their external communications, digital and social media were clearly aligned to the self care messages we were sharing. Through this support we clearly increased our reach throughout our local population.**

Community Pharmacies

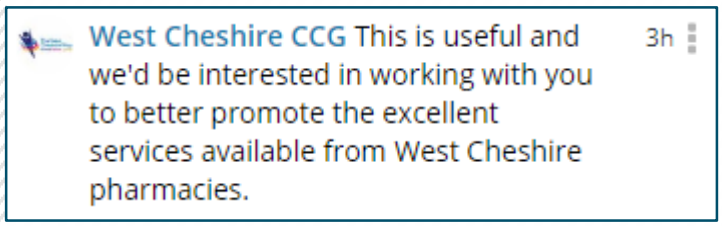
Pressure on GP Practices and the difficulty of accessing GP appointments means that the services of Community Pharmacies are increasingly important to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

In December 2017 we investigated and published our report which determined the current use, understanding and experiences of people in Cheshire of using these Community Pharmacies. Our findings contributed to the Cheshire West and Chester Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment consultation.

Our research found that people value pharmacies greatly and in many cases do see them as their first port of call before contacting a GP. Furthermore, knowledge of the Minor Ailments Scheme, which involves local pharmacies providing people with advice, treatment and prescriptions for certain minor conditions without having to book an appointment or visit a GP, was good with 74% of respondents being aware of the scheme.

Some concerns were noted regarding rural pharmacy weekend opening hours and the possibility of losing Community Pharmacies.

Tweet from West Cheshire CCG commending the Community Pharmacies report.



Access to Health and Care for the Boating Community

Following a meeting with the local Waterways Chaplain at an engagement event, we were made aware of possible difficulties experienced by the Boating Community in Cheshire in accessing Health and Care services. We subsequently undertook a project, with input from the Canal & River Trust, to determine the issues.

We devised a survey and held four public meetings at differing times of the day, close to waterways throughout Cheshire to engage with the local boating community regarding access to Health and Care services. We also climbed stiles and traversed muddy banks to reach canals and marinas in order to capture and share the views of boaters.

Despite concerns initially raised with us prior to our research, the majority of boating people who we spoke to living in marinas or on canals confirmed that they received good support from GPs and were able to register at practices without issue.

Concerns lay with the way in which repeat prescriptions are managed and accessing the services of an NHS dentist. It was felt that signage at key points along the canals providing details of local services available to the boating community would be of benefit to them.

All of our project reports are available to view on our website.

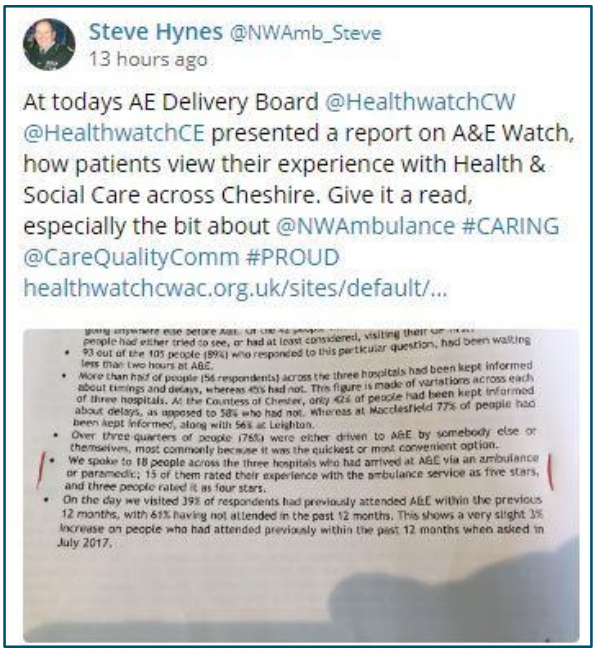
A&E Watch

This year saw Healthwatch Cheshire West begin a programme of regular A&E Watch activity. In order to explore themes emerging from the comments we received during the year from the public, and to test out media coverage that was focusing on pressures around delivery of NHS A&E, Healthwatch Cheshire West (along with Healthwatch Cheshire East) felt it would be useful to gain a snapshot view of the 3 A&E departments in Cheshire.

We were particularly interested in the route patients had taken to access A&E, and to assess how this compared to the perception that people were seemingly using A&E as their first port of call, with patients presenting at their local department with problems that are not necessarily appropriate for A&E and would be better served by non-urgent care or self-care.

This involved staff and volunteers going into the A&E departments of the Countess of Chester, Leighton and Macclesfield Hospitals at the same time on a particular day and asking patients to complete a survey detailing their experience of the departments that day. We conducted our first A&E Watch in July 2017 and completed our Winter follow-up in January 2018, speaking to 107 people on each occasion.

Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteers on A&E Watch, July 2018



Tweet from North West Ambulance Service staff member regarding the January 2018 A&E Watch Report, 25th April 2018

The main findings from our A&E Watch visits were:

- **A prevailing atmosphere of calmness, professionalism and control despite winter pressures.**
- **The perception of people going straight to A&E without considering other options seemed to be unfounded on the day.**
- **A&E departments in Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East at the times we visited were largely able to offer a quick, efficient and quality service to patients.**

Scrutinising services - Enter and View

Enter and View

What is Enter and View?

As the local consumer champion for health and social care, Healthwatch Cheshire West gathers comments from local people and looks at information about how well local services are performing. We then produce reports which we share with the people who have the power to make changes to services.

As part of our scrutiny function, we have the power to Enter and View services. This means that our Authorised Representatives have the right to enter certain types of health and social care premises to observe the nature and quality of services, and to comment on what is being done well and what could be done better.

These visits provide a snapshot in time of the services being provided and allow us to see, hear and feel what it is like within that particular setting for the people who use services, their families and staff. The reports from these visits are made available publicly.

Healthwatch Cheshire West undertook 34 visits over the last 12 months with the intention of monitoring standards and continuity. Reasons for visits are many and varied. The list below outlines reasons why a visit might be planned:

- As part of a work plan priority or work- stream project
- Intelligence received from a number of individuals or a partner organisation
- Issues arising from Quality and Risk groups or Patient Experience meetings as well as communication with CQC
- A facility has not been visited previously or not been visited for two years
- As part of a specific local study
- As part of a joint project e.g. working with improvement teams at our local hospital to monitor the Emergency Care experience, or Quality Assurance Teams with Local Authorities.

Over the period April 2017 to March 2018 Healthwatch Cheshire West conducted a total of 34 Enter and View visits covering a range of services, including:

18 visits to Residential Care establishments - including those providing Nursing Services.

6 visits to Acute trusts including ward visits, outpatients and Accident and Emergency departments

3 visits to centres providing support and day care for those individuals with a learning disability.

7 visits to GP Surgeries

Revising our Enter and View process

Over the last year the number of volunteers involved in Enter and View has increased, with individuals completing training that has included Adult Safeguarding and specific information on a number of conditions such as dementia and haemochromatosis. Training and overviews has also been given on initiatives such as the 'Red Bag' scheme and the 'Herbert Protocol.'

Our intention has been to widen the types of service visited by our Enter and View representatives in both urban and rural areas of the borough - with visits to GP Surgeries and learning disability establishments; not something that we have done previously.

This year has seen us revise and develop our Enter and View process which has been co-designed with our volunteers in workshop sessions, resulting in a new values-based approach to the Enter and Views, and a revision in how we present our reports.

Helping to influence change through Enter and View

Providers are invited to provide feedback on our visit and recommendations which can show us the impact our Enter and View activity can make and the change it can affect.

Feedback from providers has included:

"Overall the feedback was extremely pleasing. It was pleasing to see the comments surrounding staff and how the Care and support shown was genuine in nature. The feedback from visitors and residents is especially pleasing as this is coming directly from the people we provide service to. These comments are most welcoming and it's encouraging to see the service we provide is of such a high standard.

The Home Manager plans to hold a regular family meeting to gain feedback from the service provided and address any concerns highlighted. The new Manager at Lostock Lodge welcomes further visits and looks forward to working with Healthwatch." - Manager, Lostock Lodge Care Home – 12th September 2017

"I find it really useful as a manager of a service to receive reports and comments from independent organisations as they come into the service with fresh eyes, and often see things or pick up on things that on a day to day basis we could possibly overlook, and any feedback will always contribute to improving the service provided to residents." - **Manager, Rivacre Care Home, 9th May 2017**

"The visit went very well, with little interruption to the surgery's day to day running, well managed. I would like to thank Healthwatch for the report and findings." - **Manager, Weaver Vale Surgery, 7th February 2018**

Our Authorised Representatives are:

Christine Banfi, Joanna Brookes, Andrew Firman, Pamela Fox, Patricia Lott, Sue Masterman, Margaret McDermott, Alan Murphy, Rhiannon Wilson, Denise Pritchard, Jenny Young, Lynda Kenny, Elizabeth Bott, Deanna Mithen, Keith Millar, Geraldine Waite, Paul Checkley, Janet Lomas, Pamela Hunter, Chloe Randel, Georgina Hulme, Hilary Tidey, Susan Moore, Carol Kerr, Helen McGarvey, Jenny Morrell, Eileen Talbot, Barbara Kneebone, David Crosthwaite, Jackie Lewis, Jem Davies, Ros Haynes, Rachel Cornes, George Gibson, Georgina Wray, Joy Williams, Jackie Oliver, Pat Clare, Andrew Pleass, Liz Lawson, Ifeanya Nawagiochi, Jane Hines, Daniel Nate, Jane Dickinson, Helen Gould, Christine Nixon, Emese Javor, and Jackie Griffiths.

Helping you find the answers

How we have helped the community get the information they need

Signposting

A vital function of Healthwatch is to signpost people to services available to them. This can be via telephone enquiries, emails, website information, direct engagement etc. During our project activity we were able to use focussed conversations around, for example views of Self Care, and GP Extended Hours and Out of Hours, to provide people with more information about these initiatives who were not aware of them and the arrangements in place for their particular area.

This year we have had **1,702** visits to our **website**

Online and social media

As well as sharing people's views on the Health and Care they receive, we are also able to help provide people with the information they need concerning services and issues. With the appointment of a new Communications and Research Officer this year, we have been able to increase our presence online and on social media to inform the public about latest health and care news, updates, and new services or advice that has been published, which is an excellent method of complementing our face-to-face engagement. This year we had 1,702 visits to our website, and have 1,559 followers on Twitter and 116 likes on Facebook.

We carried out **34** **Enter and Views** in 2017/18

"Children's centres provided a good opportunity to understand the experience of young families. I have been able to assist in signposting to support groups, highlight consultations and raise issues identified to providers e.g. a need for post-natal support groups. Our visits have always been welcomed and staff have gone on to recommend us to other children's centres. At the end of most sessions I have been invited to come back or to other groups."

Jem Davies, Community Engagement and Project Officer

Consultations

Keeping abreast of local consultations impacting on the design and delivery of health and care services, and making the public aware of their opportunities to contribute, is a key role of Healthwatch. Examples of where we have helped to inform and encourage people to complete consultations when on engagement and through our website and social media this year include: the Adult and Older People's Mental Health consultation in the Vale Royal CCG area and Cheshire East; the Cheshire West and Chester Council Health Improvement Strategy consultation; the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment etc.

Enter and View Reports

Healthwatch produce a report following every Enter and View visit to services such as GP Practices, Hospitals, Care Homes and Learning Disability Centres. These reports detail our representatives' experiences of visiting the service at a particular snapshot in time, including the comments from people who use the services, their families and staff. These reports are published on our website for the public to read and to help inform the decision they make regarding services.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)

Healthwatch Cheshire CIC provides the Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service dealing with NHS complaints. ICAS advocacy works within the NHS complaints regulations and can help you to use the NHS complaints process to have your voice heard.

ICAS offers a service through online, telephone and, where appropriate, face to face support to people living in Cheshire who need assistance to progress complaints in relation to any NHS service provision provided at:

- Hospitals,
- GP surgeries,
- Dentists,
- Pharmacists,
- Opticians
- NHS funded care homes.

The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service is:

- Free
- Independent
- Confidential

ICAS has provided practical, individualised support to **35** people in Cheshire West and Chester during 2017/18

Support is tailored to the needs of the complainant; sometimes all that is needed is for a Self-Help Information Pack to be sent to the person concerned, other people may need more practical help perhaps in the form of helping to write a letter of complaint, preparing for a resolution meeting or speaking on their behalf to people within the NHS service.

ICAS serves both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, a population of over 700,000 people.

Since its inception in April 2017 a total of 65 cases have received practical support from the Healthwatch Cheshire NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service. This includes 35 cases from Cheshire West and Chester; 18 cases now closed and 17 cases currently active.

Feedback from ICAS clients:

"Thank you so much for helping me out. Your help is much appreciated."

"It was great just to have someone to listen."

"I couldn't have attended these meetings without you. Your support gave me the confidence to go forward with the process."

Our plans for next year

What next?

Healthwatch Cheshire West Priorities Survey

During April and May 2018, Healthwatch Cheshire West are conducting our annual Priorities Survey asking the people of Cheshire West and Chester what is important to them regarding their health and care. Along with strategic objectives and intelligence from other sources, this will help to inform our workplan for the next year and which areas and projects we will focus on.

Changes to local services

The Health and Care landscape in Cheshire West and Chester is changing, with plans for integration of Health and Care services to make care more efficient and to make sure people do not fall through any gaps in the system.

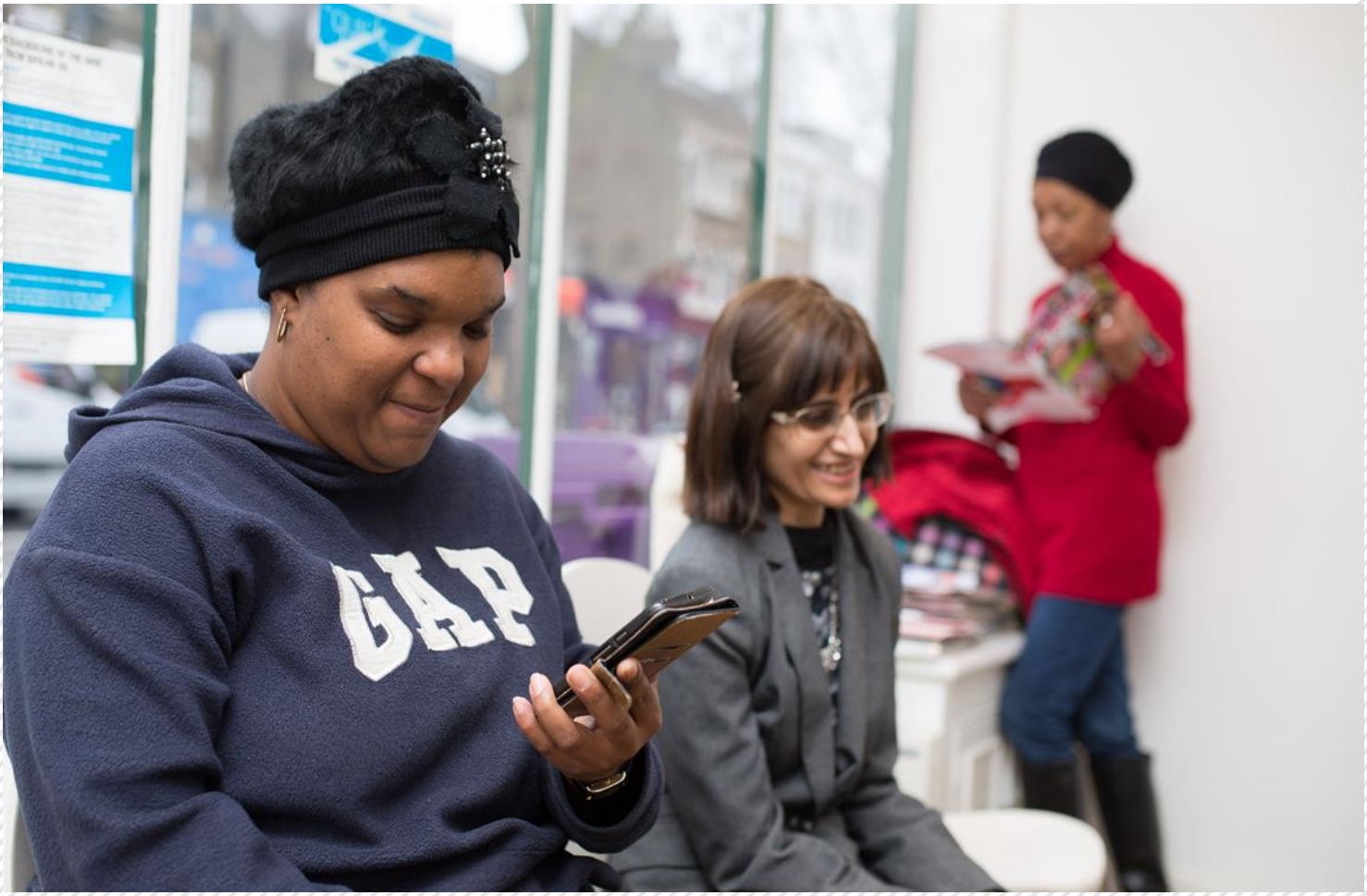
This will provide Healthwatch Cheshire West with the challenge of making sure that the public are well informed of any changes and impacts to their services and to ensure their views and comments are fed back to providers.

Volunteer Development

Our volunteers are at the core of all of our activity at Healthwatch. The coming year will see us strengthen their involvement and we will create lead roles on specific themed projects, and ask our volunteers to take a more active role in independently representing Healthwatch when out on engagement, or when meeting with health and care groups.

Citizens Panel

The coming year will see us further develop our Citizens Panel. This will enable us to effectively consult a diverse and representative panel of residents from Cheshire West and Chester about Health and Care issues affecting their local area. It will also give us a further opportunity to encourage people to respond to consultations, and to ask panel members if they would like more focussed topics tailored to their interests.



Our people

CHARITY'S CHOICE AWARD
FINALIST 2018
TANYA GRENADE
STUDENT'S CHOICE AWARD
FINALIST 2018
NATIONAL OSTEOPOROSIS SOCIETY (MANCHESTER CENTRAL SUPPORT GROUP)
STUDENT'S CHOICE AWARD
WINNER 2018
HEALTHWATCH CHESHIRE
STUDENT'S CHOICE AWARD
FINALIST 2018
TEARDROPS SUPPORTING THE HOMELESS

Decision making

Healthwatch Cheshire West, together with Healthwatch Cheshire East is run by a Community Interest Company, Healthwatch Cheshire CIC. The organisation's Board consists of 15 members; seven Corporate Directors and seven Board Members who, through their breadth of knowledge and expertise, help inform and direct our activities and delivery.

The Board meet on a quarterly basis, in public, to ensure that the legal duties of the organisation are met and to enable open and transparent decisions to be made on governance issues.

How we involve the public and volunteers

Each year Healthwatch Cheshire West conducts a Priorities survey to find out what matters to the people of Cheshire West in regards to their health and care. These results inform what people would like us to focus on during the year in terms of projects and targeted engagement. We review this together with intelligence received from a range of strategic and local forums and meetings to produce our priorities for the year.

The survey is designed by staff and volunteers and is circulated widely to enable people throughout the borough to have the opportunity to share their views with us. Responses to the survey ensure that we involve the public in informing decisions as to what we focus upon. We also use information gathered through our ongoing public engagement activities to inform us of additional trends and themes regarding health and care issues.

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do at Healthwatch Cheshire West. Our volunteers not only take part in the everyday activity of Healthwatch, but they also take a hands-on role in key developments. This year saw us undertake a thorough review of our Enter and View activity to adopt a more values-based approach to visits. Volunteers were at the core of this development from the beginning, through workshops and focus group sessions, all the way through to creating our new Enter and View toolkit and guide.

We also encourage our volunteers to take the lead on certain projects and issues. For example, one of our volunteers now leads on a project for Healthwatch in scrutinising the recently implemented Red Bag Scheme used by Care Homes to improve the experience of people when transferring to and from hospital. This in turn has led us to incorporating questions around the scheme into our Enter and View reports.

Healthwatch Cheshire West at Chester Pride, August 2017

Our community volunteers

This last year has seen the growth of volunteering at Healthwatch Cheshire West. New volunteers from various backgrounds and with differing life experiences have added to the skills and expertise of our existing team and reflect the range of local communities of Cheshire West and Chester.

> "Working with people from different backgrounds is like a breath of fresh air." - **Jenny Young, Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteer**

Volunteers are always keen to be involved in all aspects of Healthwatch delivery and take an active part in engagement, sign-posting, Enter and View and administration and we now have 47 active volunteers across the borough.

What have our volunteers been up to?

Our volunteers have carried out engagement across Cheshire West and Chester, including attending community groups, libraries, public health and care meetings, hospitals etc. In addition, they have attended varied community events such as:

+ Cheshire Independent Living Awareness Day (CILAD)
+ Disability Awareness Day
+ Chester PRIDE
+ Volunteers Celebration – Chester West and Chester Council

> "Volunteering is about giving your time but in return you gain so much - new friends, new knowledge and a feeling of self worth." - **Pat Clare, Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteer**

Their role during engagement activity is to enable as many people as possible share their views about health and care services with Healthwatch and to provide signposting for individuals who may need help and support.

Our volunteers have helped us to conduct research for specific projects such as A&E Watch; Access to Health and Care for the Boating Community; GP Extended Hours and Out of Hours; and Community Pharmacies.

Healthwatch Cheshire West's volunteers have accessed a range of training opportunities including sessions on Dementia; Diversity; Autism; Safeguarding and Enter and View to equip them with the knowledge and skills to carry out their activities. Throughout the last year they have taken part in Equality Assessments and PLACE visits organised by local NHS trusts. In addition, volunteers have also attended meetings on behalf of Healthwatch around topics such as Mental Health and the Red Bag Scheme, feeding information and findings from the meetings in to the wider Healthwatch team.

> "I enjoy these events, there is always something new to learn." - **Graeme Coyne, Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteer**

Many of our volunteers are Authorised Representatives able to carry out Enter and View visits. This year has seen us establish a new Enter and View process, which was co-designed at workshop style sessions with our volunteers.

Healthwatch volunteer helping out at CILAD

Recognition of our volunteers' work

Volunteers are crucial to the delivery of Healthwatch Cheshire West, and we are proud of the team we have working with us. We give continuous feedback to volunteers and keep them abreast of our activity and developments and, whilst we know how good our volunteers are, it is nonetheless pleasing when we receive external recognition of the hard work that is carried out. One such example of this was when Healthwatch England published an article detailing a 'week in the life' of one of our student volunteers from the University of Chester recognising and highlighting the work they undertook, and their enthusiasm for the role. You can read the full article on our website.

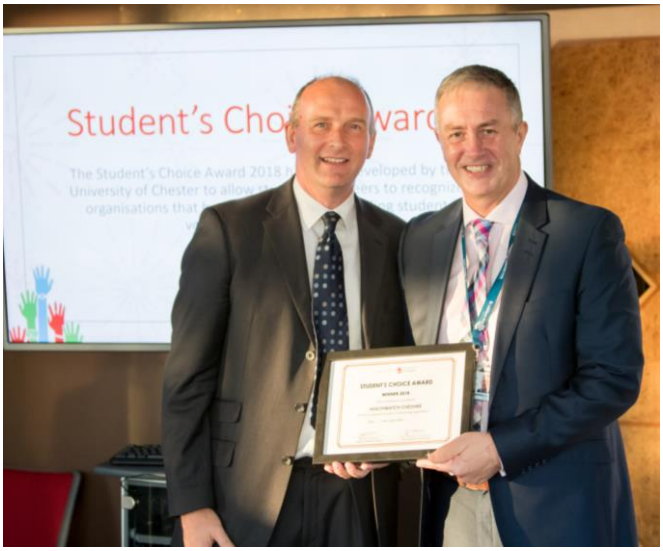
During the year we attended a Cheshire West and Chester Council Volunteer Celebration event at Chester Racecourse which allowed our volunteers and staff to meet with other volunteers and organisations and share experiences.

> "Volunteering for me is about being a member of a team, being responsible and being respected and valued. I feel this way, and in turn this makes me want to make a difference and be involved." - **Carolynne Braisdell, Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteer**

One of our volunteers, Jannat Ferdosh, put Healthwatch forward for the University of Chester's Student's Choice Award that is awarded to the organisation which offers 'an exceptional student volunteering experience'. Having been shortlisted alongside strong nominees, National Osteoporosis Society and Teardrops Supporting the Homeless, we were invited along to their Volunteer Celebration Evening and were delighted to win the award.

Winning this award was testament to our volunteers' continued success in making Healthwatch Cheshire West what it is, and we are thankful to have such a great team of volunteers.

Healthwatch Cheshire West at the Cheshire West and Chester Council Volunteer Celebration, 14th March 2018



Healthwatch Cheshire West receiving the Student's Choice Award at the University of Chester's Volunteer Celebration Evening

Our finances

Income	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities*	167,487
Additional income	1,944
Total income	169,481
Expenditure	**£**
Operational costs	26,045
Staffing costs	101,135
Office costs	11,717
Total expenditure	138,897
Balance brought forward	30,584

*N.B. This includes funding from our local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities and Independent Health Complaints Advocacy.

Listening to someone can make all the difference as it really does provide the community with the chance to make improvements for the better

Jannat Ferdosh

Healthwatch Cheshire West Volunteer

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Our annual report will be publicly available on our website by 30 June 2018. We will also be sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups, 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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