healthwatch
Cheshire West

Annual Report 2019-20

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Front Cover Photo: Healthwatch Cheshire West at Chester Pride, 29th June 2019

Message from the Chair of Healthwatch England

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 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.

Sir Robert Francis, Healthwatch England Chair

Message from our Chair

I am delighted to present to you our Annual Report for 2019/20; a year which has been incredibly busy and diverse for the staff and volunteer team of Healthwatch Cheshire West responding to emerging health and care policies; the themes coming through from the public; and latterly our response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As your independent consumer champion, the Healthwatch Cheshire West staff and volunteer team constantly seek to hear from people about what works well for local health and care services and exactly where any concerns about services and support lie.

Throughout this year we have gathered and shared the experiences of 1,345 people of the health and care services and support they and their families receive. We have been able to act on this information to ensure that it is used to help shape the planning, commissioning, quality, and delivery of future services and support.

Working closely with the public and our Local Authority and NHS partners, this year we completed engagement activity on the NHS Long Term Plan, asking the people of Cheshire West and Chester their thoughts on the Plan and what matters most to them about health and care services. The findings were published in a report and were shared with key health and care partners and with the public via our website, to ensure they helped inform local plans that include Integrated Care Partnerships; and Care Communities.

The period of uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic means that our partnerships will be more important than ever. I would like to thank our staff and volunteer team, and everyone that has shared their views and experiences with us this year. Thanks also to service providers, and local authority and NHS commissioners, for working with us and listening to the views and experiences of the people of Cheshire West and Chester.

Lynne Turnbull
Healthwatch Cheshire CIC Chair

Healthwatch continue to ask the right questions of its strategic partners and encourage us all to put the residents of Cheshire at the heart of what we do. Cheshire CCG and its 4 predecessor organisations has worked closely with, and learnt from, Healthwatch during 2019/20. We have an excellent partnership which is down to Healthwatch staff and volunteers, and the values the organisation cherish. I look forward to continuing to work with the team in the coming months and years."

Clare Watson, Accountable Officer
NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Message from our CEO

I would like to take the opportunity to say a big thank you to all of our staff and volunteers helping to make positive changes for people's health and care services in Cheshire West.

As a Healthwatch we pride ourselves on our ability to remain independent, agile and responsive, demonstrated through the impact of our work. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many new and additional challenges, along with deep concerns amongst the public. We have worked hard with local health and care partners to keep the people of Cheshire West up to date with the latest information and developments.

During this year, the team have been closely following the development of Care Communities in Cheshire West, working to bring services closer to people's homes. We are very keen to ensure that what matter most to the public about health and care

services in their communities is fed into planning at a local level.

People's views and experiences remain hugely important and we recognise that new ways of engaging with the public will be required to make this effective. As the new year begins, we have created a survey asking people about their health and wellbeing during this period. Findings from the survey will assist in planning of health and care services, and will inform our Healthwatch priorities for the coming year.

Louise Barry
CEO – Healthwatch Cheshire CIC

It is more important than ever that our residents have an active consumer champion in supporting their use of health and social care services. We value the constructive and independent challenge from Healthwatch which has been so effective in helping us in our aim to get our services in the right place, delivered in the right way and at the right time.

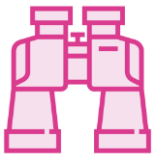
In 2019/20 for example, Healthwatch have been prominent in gathering the views and experiences of our population that has been so instrumental in establishing our local Integrated Care Partnership and in developing the first Cheshire West Place Plan. The Council's new Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also benefited from the advice of Healthwatch as it shapes its new role.

Healthwatch has been a dedicated member of our Health and Wellbeing Board during the year in both the Board's formal and informal settings. We look forward to continuing our strong working relationship with Healthwatch in our common goal of identifying and tacking health inequalities in our Borough."

Delyth Curtis, Deputy Chief Executive People; and
Ian Ashworth, Director of Public Health - Cheshire West and Chester Council

healthwatch Cheshire West

healthwatch Cheshire East



Our vision at Healthwatch Cheshire is simple

To be an independent voice for the people of Cheshire, helping to shape and improve local health and care services.

Our principles

Healthwatch Cheshire:

- independently collects the voice of the people of Cheshire about their health and care experiences
- challenges providers and commissioners to influence key decision making in health and care
- sets the standard for excellent public engagement, enabling diverse and seldom heard voices from across Cheshire to be heard
- ensures that all people have good quality, up to date information and advice
- uses its networks and public engagement to gather meaningful and robust local evidence and intelligence, working in partnership across all sectors of health and care
- provides a range of ways to gather the experience of people of Cheshire
- provides an NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) supporting people to raise their concerns and complaints.

Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk
Twitter: @HealthwatchCW
Facebook: @HealthwatchCW

Our 2019-20 priorities

In 2018-19, 941 people told us about the improvements they would like to see health and care services make in 2019-20. These were our priorities for 2019-20 based on what you told us, and how we acted on them.

You told us you wanted it to be easier to see a doctor or nurse quickly.

- We have provided information from the comments we receive from people to the GP Practices, Hospital and Community Trusts, the Primary Care Committee, and NHS Cheshire CCGs.
- We conducted A&E Watch, with a focus on waiting times for people to see health professionals.

You told us you wanted clearer guidance on the support options available for people with Dementia, and shorter delays in assessments for Autism and ADHD.

- During engagement on the NHS Long Term Plan, we held specific focus groups relating to Autism with members of Cheshire Autism Practical Support (ChAPS), feeding back these in depth discussions to the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership.
- Healthwatch Cheshire West are members of the Cheshire West Dementia Steering Group, which enables us to feed back opinions to those who can make change.

You told us you wanted shorter waits for hospital treatment after GP referrals and fewer cancelled hospital appointments.

- We regularly attend local steering groups in Cheshire West, where a key priority is to create joined-up care between services such as GP Practices and Hospitals.
- We have shared comments that we receive with the NHS Cheshire CCGs, and Hospital and Community Trusts, so that they can work together to improve people's experiences.
- Healthwatch regularly participate in Patient Experience Groups in Cheshire West.

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

49 volunteers

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up **862 hours**.

We employed

7 staff

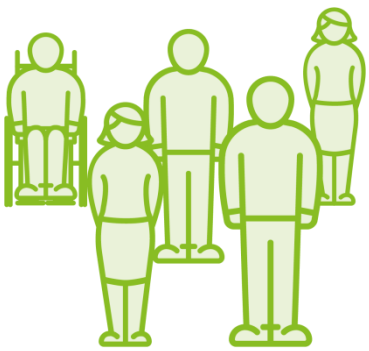
who work a variety of full-time and part-time hours.

We received

£166,490 in funding

from our Local Authority in 2019-20, no change from the previous year.

Providing support



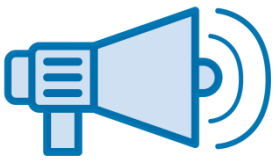
1,345 comments

about health and care were received from people in Cheshire West, **43% more than last year.**

112 people

contacted our Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service for support through the NHS complaints process, **62% more than last year.**

Reaching out



2,227 people

engaged with us at community events, there were **7,515 visits** to our website, and **2,162 people follow us** across Facebook and Twitter.

Making a difference to care

47 reports

were published about the improvements people would like to see with their health and care. These included Project reports and Enter and View reports. **From this, 69% of the services we visited made changes as a result of our recommendations.**

How we've made a difference

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

Take a look at some of the ways your views have helped make a difference to the care and support people receive in Cheshire West and Chester.

Improving people's experiences of emergency care through A&E Watch

On 13th January 2020 Healthwatch Cheshire West and Healthwatch Cheshire East conducted A&E Watch at the three A&E Departments of the Countess of Chester Hospital, Leighton Hospital and Macclesfield Hospital. A&E Watch is designed to give a snapshot view of the experiences of people attending A&E and their reasons for choosing A&E.

In total we received 170 responses to our A&E Watch survey across the three hospitals. We also conducted an Enter & View visit at each department which you can view on our website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view

At both hospitals, the Healthwatch team observed a busy but calm and professional feel to the environment. At the **Countess of Chester Hospital**, building work was taking place to improve the A&E department, which meant that at some points waiting areas were cramped but there was a calm atmosphere with no sense of disorganisation. However, people told us that they did not feel they were being kept informed about waiting times and reasons for delays.

As **Leighton Hospital** is based in Mid Cheshire, it draws patients from both Cheshire West and Cheshire East due to its Mid Cheshire location. Leighton's A&E department has benefitted from the renovation work that has taken place over the past year, including better signage about the streaming process in the waiting areas, and the new extended Clinical Decisions Unit. However, we did observe people waiting on trolleys in the corridor before going into Majors, and their relative, friend or carer stood next to them with no seating in the corridor.

What People Told Us

The main findings of the report across the three hospitals were:

- A slight majority of the people we spoke to had tried to visit another service before attending A&E, at 57% of people overall.
- Of the people who tried to go elsewhere before A&E, 61% reported trying going to their GP first.
- The ambulance service satisfaction rating indicates that across all three A&E departments, 84% found this service to be excellent (rated 5 out of 5).
- On the day we visited, across the three hospitals 73% of people we spoke to rated their experience of A&E as being at least 4 out of 5.

This A&E Watch report is presented to each of the Hospital Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups to feed into their planning and delivery. It is also published on our website at: **www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports**

Healthwatch Cheshire West staff and volunteers during A&E Watch at the Countess of Chester Hospital, 13th January 2020

A&E Watch: Spotlight on Leighton Hospital's streaming process

Leighton Hospital draws patients from both Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East. In February 2019, they had recently commenced their 90-day workstream on improving the streaming process for patients attending A&E, looking at how patients are assessed, where they are sent, and deciding by whom they will be treated. Healthwatch Cheshire West and Healthwatch Cheshire East were asked by Mid-Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to revisit Leighton Hospital on 7th October 2019 in order to assess the success of the new streaming system following its implementation. We were also able to compare these findings later in our January 2020 survey.

At the October 2019 visit

At our October visit, the waiting area had been renovated with the addition of a streaming desk. On this occasion new signage including direction from the streaming desk toward reception and two television screens displaying waiting times for separate departments, had also been added.

- People we spoke to were fairly evenly split on whether they felt they were being kept informed of timings or delays.
- 51% indicated that they did not know why they had been waiting the time they had.
- On the day we visited, 90% of the people we spoke to rated their experience of A&E as being at least 3 out of 5. 22% rated their experience as excellent (5 out of 5).

At the January 2020 visit

- At Leighton Hospital 71% felt well informed about waiting times. This is up from 49% in the October 2019 survey. People mentioned that they were being kept informed in a number of ways at Leighton – either via the TV screens, or by the triage nurse or other members of staff.
- 97% of the people we spoke to rated the experience of A&E as being at least 3 out of 5. 57% rated their experience as 5 out of 5, up from 22% in October.

John, Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteer at Leighton Hospital during A&E Watch, 7th October 2019

"As a system we are working hard to ensure appropriate signposting for our patients, to the service that best fits their need. The review highlighted there is more work to do on this agenda." - **Chris Oliver - Chief Operating Officer, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

You can read the October 2019 Leighton Hospital A&E Watch Report, and the January 2020 A&E Watch Report covering the three A&E Departments of Cheshire by visiting our website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

Improving services in Cheshire West & Chester through Enter & View

Volunteers and staff from Healthwatch Cheshire West regularly visit Care Homes, GP Practices, Hospitals, and other specialist services to conduct Enter & View visits. An Enter & View visit provides a snapshot in time of the services being provided and allows us to see, hear and feel what it is like within that particular setting for the people who use services, as well as their families and staff.

Healthwatch Cheshire West then publish these reports, which also contain recommendations for the service provider about how we think services could be improved. Providers regularly feed back on these recommendations and our visit, which show us the impact our Enter & View activity can make and the change it can affect.

These reports are sent to the Care Quality Commission, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Cheshire West and Chester Council and used at various meetings where our findings can be discussed and used to influence change.

Between April 2019 and the end of March 2020, Healthwatch Cheshire West published 42 Enter & View reports of services across the whole of Cheshire West, available to view on our website at www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/enter-and-view.

These include reports of:

- 35 Care Homes
- 6 GP Practices
- 1 Hospital setting

Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteers from University of Chester complete their Enter & View Training, 27th November 2019

Services acting upon our Enter & View recommendations

Healthwatch Cheshire West received feedback on Enter & View reports from 29 of the providers.

The recommendations offered in these reports led to improvements to areas such as care home activities, interior décor, improvements to meals, more information provision for people in waiting areas.

Improvements based on our recommendations were carried out in:

- 14 Care Homes
- 1 GP Practice
- 1 Hospital setting

Feedback from providers on our Enter & View reports includes:

Nice people, explained what was happening. Respected resident privacy and that the staff were busy. Thank you what a lovely report and I will take the recommendation on board."
Manager, Overdene House Care Home, Winsford

"There were some useful recommendations that we can look at implementing to improve communication and the service received by patients. It was a valuable exercise."
Practice Manager, Hope Farm Medical Centre

"The report gives a good overview of our home and highlights the positive aspects we are achieving here at Orchard Manor. Healthwatch is a great resource for the public to read and the visits are conducted in a friendly and professional way."
Manager, Orchard Manor Care Home, Chester

Keeping Cheshire updated with the information they need about Coronavirus (Covid-19)

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic escalated during March 2020, with lockdown measures, social distancing, and changes to services introduced. Healthwatch Cheshire West created a dedicated section on our website to provide all of the local and national information about Coronavirus, in one place, as a reliable source.

www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/coronavirus

As a part of ensuring consistent communications covering Cheshire, we are in partnership with the communications teams at each Hospital and Community Trust, the Cheshire CCGs, and Local Authorities who provide us with the latest updates from their organisations. The CCGs produce a weekly stakeholder bulletin on behalf of the partners, using the content from our website as a central point to populate the bulletin. Our website is therefore seen as a place where all partners can feed in information they wish to share.

Our online Coronavirus pages contain:

- The latest advice from NHS England and Public Health England direct from their websites.
- Information about Coronavirus in accessible formats – Easy Read format, links to BSL information at Sign Health, and the ability to download information in different languages.
- Updates from all of our local Trusts, Cheshire CCGs, and Cheshire West and Chester Council. These pages provide information on service changes, visiting restrictions, support helplines and more. All information is taken direct from the Trusts to ensure consistency of message.
- Useful links and advice – links to blogs and advice from trusted sources about Coronavirus, for example from the World Health Organisation, Information Commissioner's Office, and Public Health England.
- Information on how to volunteer to help or access support.

Assisting with the local response to Coronavirus (Covid-19)

As well as our work keeping the people of Cheshire informed with local and national updates, we have also started to gain feedback from people about their experiences of the Coronavirus pandemic. This includes accessing health and care, and asking about their mental health and wellbeing through our Coronavirus survey. Gathering views and information from the public will continue to form a large focus of our work in the coming months. Our findings will be regularly fed into the Local Authority, local NHS, and community sector to aid the response to Coronavirus and provide intelligence as services continue to adapt and develop.

Healthwatch Cheshire West are supporting the local community by being a part of the NHS, Local Authority, Community and Voluntary Response Cells, feeding back intelligence regularly in online meetings. Members of staff have been responding to telephone and online queries from members of the public requiring information or support around the Coronavirus response. We have offered some of our staff time for shopping and prescription collections for the most vulnerable in Cheshire. We look forward to continuing to offer this support across Cheshire in any capacity we can.

Alison, Healthwatch Cheshire West Community Engagement and Project Officer, 16th March 2020

Share your views with us

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

Website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 323 0006

Email: info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk

"Healthwatch Cheshire West have worked as a key member of our system communications approach to COVID-19. As an organisation they have supported both health and care to signpost our local people and communities to key up to date and reliable information as well as cascading the key messages essential to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the population of Cheshire. They have also continued to engage with local people throughout this period and have provided the CCG and the wider Cheshire health and care system with feedback that has been essential to supporting both the commissioning and provision of services."

Katy Brownbill, Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement - NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Healthwatch Cheshire West branded van, Healthwatch Across Cheshire

This year has seen us work closer than ever with partners in the health and care system in order to independently feed back people's views and experiences to affect change.

Cheshire West and Chester Place Plan – Cheshire West and Chester Council, the local NHS, and Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership consulted upon their Place Plan in summer 2019. Healthwatch Cheshire West helped to promote the survey, and held a focus group with our volunteers to offer feedback on the Plan, which was submitted to Health and Local Authority partners.

Care Communities – A priority of health and care partners in Cheshire is to bring care closer to home for local people in the form of Care Communities, integrating health and care. Healthwatch Cheshire West decided to seek the views of people in the nine Cheshire West and Chester Care Communities and their residents in a campaign called Healthwatch Across Cheshire. A large exhibition van with seating and display screens was hired and Healthwatch Cheshire West logos were professionally added to it to undertake a programme of engagement events across the area. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus outbreak meant that the programme had to be postponed. However, the contacts which were built up through this exercise will enable us to reschedule these events at a later date and support our Engagement Team in the future.

A Healthwatch Engagement Team member is linked to each of the Care Communities in Cheshire West and Chester. This gives Healthwatch the ability to focus on local developments within health and care and feed back the views of local residents.

Live Well Cheshire West – Cheshire West and Chester Council launched a new version of their Live Well Cheshire West website at the end of 2019, which provides members of the public with information on groups and services in their area in one place. Healthwatch Cheshire West conducted a review of the new website, and provided the Council with feedback on its usability from the perspective of the public.

"The site will only get better with feedback provided like this, so thank you very much. We will work through the points and make improvements based on the feedback." – **Gemma Baxter, Live Well Coordinator**

'Lets' Talk About Sex!' - Sharing our knowledge at Healthwatch Annual Conference

One of our Community Engagement and Project Officers, Jem Davies, talks about presenting our work on people's experiences of Sexual Health services from 2018 at the Annual Healthwatch Conference in Birmingham in October 2019.

My colleague Katie Tierney and I were given the opportunity to present our Sexual Health Project at the annual Healthwatch Conference in Birmingham. I was extremely proud to highlight our work to our national colleagues. This involved us explaining the project from beginning to end, detailing the various methods of engagement and research we used and how we overcame any challenges. The session was particularly focused on how to hold conversations with people on difficult issues that people may be hesitant to talk about openly.

I was able to explain that not only had the public valued our work but that also the providers of the Sexual Health services across Cheshire had provided detailed feedback on how the recommendations that we made had influenced the design and delivery of current and future services.

A short time later a colleague from another Healthwatch contacted me directly for some guidance on how they could do a similar project and specifically stated that they had been inspired to cover this subject following on from our presentation. I am very proud that our work is valued across the whole of the Healthwatch network."

Jem Davies and Katie Tierney at Healthwatch Annual Conference, Birmingham 2nd October 2019

View our project reports

You can view our 2018 Sexual Health report discussed above, along with all of our other project reports, by visiting our website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

Supporting people in Cheshire West through the NHS complaints process

Healthwatch Cheshire provides an NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS). ICAS helps people to use the NHS complaints process to make their voice heard.

ICAS offers telephone, online, and face-to-face support to help the people of Cheshire to progress complaints in relation to any NHS service provision provided at hospitals, GP Practices, dentists, pharmacies, opticians, and nursing homes.

Of the 112 people who contacted ICAS for support during the year, 50 were provided with information by ICAS to progress their complaint, 28 were signposted by ICAS to other organisations, whilst 26 required further support from our ICAS Advocate to help them through the complaints process.

62% more people contacted ICAS for support in 2019-20 than in the previous year.

23% more people required support from our ICAS Advocate this year compared to 2018-19.

Case Study: Supporting a complaint to a GP Practice

A resident was supported by ICAS with a complaint they had with their GP Practice. They have anxiety and depression and were struggling to obtain support during a Mental Health crisis. With the support of ICAS, they were able to write a letter of complaint.

A resolution meeting with the lead GP and the Practice Manager was offered and the individual was helped by the ICAS Advocate to prepare for the meeting. The Advocate also attended the meeting, which allowed the person to discuss their views and clarify the issues with an immediate response.

The end result was that a clear plan was agreed on how any future crisis would be handled and that all staff would be made aware of this plan to prevent any future problems.

Case Study: Helping to find a resolution in the Mental Health referral process

A resident contacted ICAS because they were struggling to resolve issues about the processing of a referral from his GP to access Mental Health services. They had previously tried to raise their concerns but were not satisfied with the response.

Our ICAS Advocate assisted the individual with drafting a letter of complaint. This resulted in the appointment of an Investigation Manager by Mental Health services who met with the person and the Advocate to discuss the issues with their referral.

Through this initial support from the Advocate the individual was able to continue to advocate for them self and eventually received a satisfactory response and resolution to their complaint.

> *I would like to thank you for your outstanding support when I was so desperately low and at breaking point trying to deal with my complaint on my own before I contacted you, the rest as they say, is history."*

Contact us for advice and support

If you would like independent support with the NHS complaints process, get in touch.

Website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/help-making-a-complaint

Telephone: 0300 323 0006

Email: info@icascheshire.org.uk

Long Term Plan

#WhatWouldYouDo

Highlights

More than 250 people shared their views on the Long Term Plan with Healthwatch Cheshire West.

We held 2 specific focus groups with students and people with Autism reaching different communities across Cheshire West and Chester.

Healthwatch Cheshire coordinated the 9 local Healthwatch across Cheshire and Merseyside, with over 2,800 people sharing their views across the region.

NHS Long Term Plan

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

Healthwatch Cheshire coordinated the work of the nine local Healthwatch across Cheshire and Merseyside, with a final report produced for each local Healthwatch, Cheshire as a whole, and the Cheshire and Merseyside region. Across Cheshire and Merseyside, 2,807 people shared their views, including 320 attendees across 21 specific focus group events.

In Cheshire West and Chester, we received 253 survey responses from circulating the survey online and at engagement events across Cheshire. As you told us that you wanted us to focus on Mental Health and Autism support, we conducted two specific focus groups with students from University of Chester, and with parents and carers of children with Autism at Cheshire Autism Practical Support (ChAPS), attended by 20 people in total.

Healthwatch Cheshire West focus group at ChAPS, Ellesmere Port, 2nd May 2019

The Chair of Healthwatch England and the committee acknowledged the great piece of collaborative work produced by Healthwatch Cheshire and Merseyside in such a short space of time." –
Healthwatch England Board Minutes, May 2020

NHS Long Term Plan - What did we find?

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

What do people want?

We asked people #WhatWouldYouDo to improve the NHS locally. The top issues that people told us are:

- People want access to the help and treatment they need when they want it.
- People want health and care professionals that listen to them when they speak about their concerns.
- A focus on prevention, joined-up care, and the environment, in order to help live a healthy life.
- Easier access to GPs.
- A focus on effective and timely communication.

What are we doing about it?

The findings of the report were shared with the former two NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups serving Cheshire West, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure the findings inform locally developing Five Year Plans; Integrated Care Partnerships; and Care Communities. The findings helped us to identify priority areas and themes for future engagement, research and Enter and View activity.

Above: Healthwatch Cheshire West focus group at University of Chester, 2nd May 2019

Below: Engaging with the public at Ellesmere Port Market

what would you do?

It's your NHS. Have your say.

View the Healthwatch Cheshire West NHS Long Term Plan Public Views Report

You can view the specific Cheshire West and Chester, or regional Cheshire and Merseyside report by visiting our website:
www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/healthwatch-cheshire-west-nhs-long-term-plan-public-views-report

How will our work influence the development of the NHS Long Term Plan?

Cheshire & Merseyside Health & Care Partnership

Below is a contribution from the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership about how the findings are influencing their next steps in progressing the Long Term Plan:

The work to produce this report done by our local Healthwatch is the biggest of its kind ever undertaken in Cheshire and Merseyside, with nearly 3000 people providing their feedback. We are immensely grateful for the time and effort that has gone into this report by all concerned. We would like to thank Healthwatch Cheshire for their work in coordinating the research and for compiling the report, and we would also like to thank all of the Healthwatch that conducted the research and engagement activity in each area.

What shines through is the passion that our local Healthwatch representatives, and those who participated in the workshops and survey, have for health and care in general and the NHS in particular. To be able to tap into this, and the ideas that people are brimming with, and the understandable concerns they still have, gives us an invaluable, comprehensive insight into how, together, we can continue to improve health and care in Cheshire and Merseyside over the next five years and beyond.

The wealth of information contained in the report will enrich the development of the system-wide strategy. The report, and the work that lies behind it, is an integral piece of our plan for public engagement around our five-year strategy. The strategy will be an aggregation of our nine Place plans, and it is essential that those plans meet the needs and requirements of their local communities. That is why Healthwatch work in each Place has been so important because it gives each Place a proper sense of what the priorities of local people are. I'm delighted that many of our Places are already incorporating their tailored reports into their thinking of their own plans."

Neil Skitt - Head of Communications, Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership

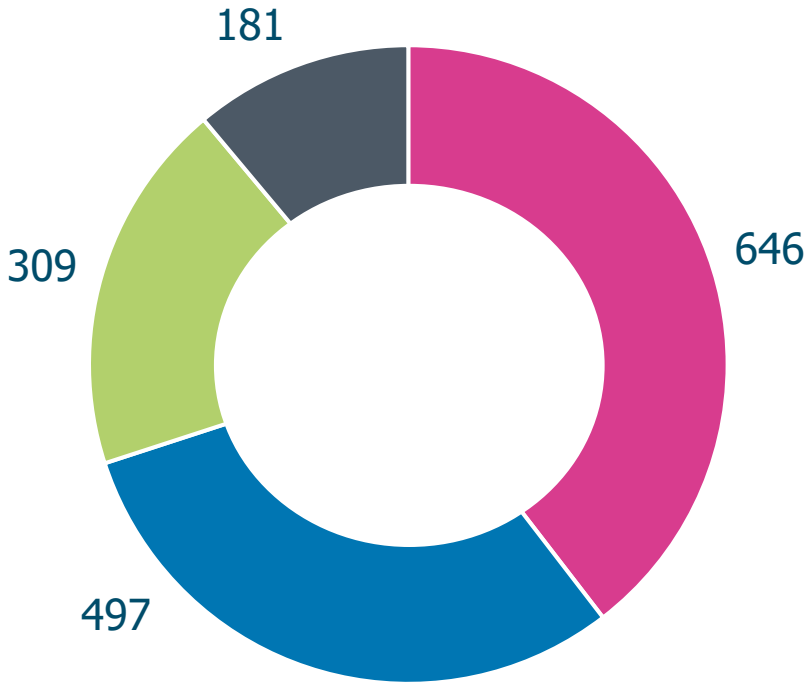
Listening to people's experiences

Healthwatch Cheshire West use a variety of methods to obtain the views and experiences of the diverse communities of Cheshire West and Chester. This includes in person, by telephone, via email, by Freepost comment cards, via our website and Feedback Centre or via Facebook and Twitter.

Healthwatch Cheshire West report on the feedback received in various ways:

- All Hospitals, GP Practices, and the Local Authority are sent the comments we have received from people relating to their service on a quarterly basis.
- We attend the Cheshire West and Chester Health and Wellbeing Board, and the NHS West Cheshire and Vale Royal CCGs Quality and Performance Committees.
- Quarterly reports are submitted to the above committees, as well as to Cheshire West and Chester Council commissioners, outlining what people have told us about their health and care.

This year we received 1,345 comments from people about health and care services. Here are the top four themes that people talked about by number of comments:



Throughout the year Healthwatch Cheshire West attended 214 engagement events including 66 visits to libraries and 20 to GP Practices to hear about people's views and experiences

We attend events and participate in meetings of over 30 wide ranging and diverse groups in Cheshire West and Chester, including groups for elderly people, carers, and mental health issues, such as:

- Age UK's 'Men in Sheds'
- Opal Rural carers group
- Alzheimer's Carers' group
- Active Cheshire Mental Health Network
- Dementia Steering Group
- Mid Cheshire Mind
- Action on Cancer
- Cheshire and Warrington Carers Group
- Parent Carer Forum
- Carers Trust
- Making Space
- Mid Cheshire Maternity Voices
- Fibromyalgia Support Group
- Motherwell
- Mankind Winsford.

Healthwatch Cheshire West engage and network with a diverse range of organisations, groups and forums, attending meetings. These include:

- Falls Prevention
- Wellbeing Network Meetings
- North West Ambulance Service
- University of Chester
- Winsford Workzone
- Healthy Winsford
- Matthew Henry Church Group, Blacon.

Healthwatch Cheshire West at Chester Pride, 22nd September 2019

In focus: Chester Pride

We again attended Chester Pride, allowing us to obtain the views, concerns and compliments of over 70 people from the LGBTQ+ community. Ahead of the virtual 2020 version of Pride, we are analysing the trends from comments from last year, which include:

- the need for consistent and easy ways to find relevant information within GP Practices and their websites to support the LGBTQ+ community.
- the need to improve existing knowledge across the Clinical Commissioning Group of supporting the LGBT+ community around their specific health needs to increase confidence of people using services.

Case study: Making a difference to the care of dementia patients

In May we were contacted by a woman concerned about the care her father was receiving at a care home. He had dementia and had suffered several unwitnessed falls, despite the use of a chair with pressure monitors. Following these falls he had twice been sent to A&E without any carer and once there had been left on a trolley in a corridor where he became very disconcerted and confused. On one occasion he managed to entangle his legs in the side rails when attempting to get off the trolley on his own. On another, he became so agitated he began scratching himself, causing bleeding.

The daughter queried protocols around numbers of staff required to look after dementia patients; should a 90-year-old man with dementia be left alone in a strange environment? We advised her that there are no set protocols, but that each home has a dependency tool with which they will assess a resident's care requirements. The care home, like many others, did not have the staff available to send someone to accompany her father to hospital. His details were passed on to the Local Authority to enable a full assessment of his situation to be carried out.

With the daughter's permission, this case was then raised and discussed at the next A&E Delivery Board meeting with Senior staff of the local Health Trusts, Local Authority, Commissioners, and North West Ambulance staff. Each member resolved to examine and identify how their service could improve the patient's journey.

The results of this inquiry were far-reaching and Healthwatch were able to feedback to the daughter that the following recommendations had been made at the A&E Delivery Board:

- That staffing levels being suitable to allow accompanied conveyance is evaluated and considered for future commissioning of services;
- The Clinical Commissioning Group to link in with the care home in question to look at options to accompany patients, especially those on the dementia unit if they require hospital assessment;
- To look at staffing levels being suitable to allow accompanied conveyance;
- The case example be shared at the ICP Long Term Care Programme Board to inform the work on enhanced nursing home support;
- Ongoing work with NWAS regarding conveyances and seeking support from GP Out of Hours if required;
- Healthwatch have been asked to do a follow up audit into A&E in due course.

Support for carers

At a carers event we spent time talking to a family about their experiences of getting help for their disabled daughter. They were relieved to receive information about social events and activities they could go to locally and commented that Healthwatch is a great organisation listening to people and their views. The family felt supported and reassured that they are not alone and that their comments about the challenges they have faced, and some of the more positive experiences they have had, will be heard.

Signposting and advice

A woman was unsure how to get help after her Agoraphobia had prevented her from going to see her GP for 18 months. She explained that she was having difficulty with benefits which she relied upon due to health conditions. Healthwatch explained that GPs can offer telephone appointments and home visits, or appointments with community/district nurses can sometimes be arranged if appropriate. We also referred the woman to Citizens Advice Bureau close to her home in Chester to arrange support with her benefits. The woman was relieved to hear that the community services existed and that there were more tailored options for her care.

Team around the Family

Our Community Engagement and Project Officers spoke with a woman who was concerned for her daughter who had started self-harming. She stated that her injuries did not warrant an A&E visit but she was struggling to get a GP appointment to help her daughter. She mentioned that the school had suggested a TAF (Team around the Family) but she was reluctant. We spoke at length with her about the purpose and the value of a TAF, signposted her to both CAMHS and the Live Well Cheshire West website. She stated she felt much more informed and was going to speak again with the school regarding a TAF.

Top: Cheshire Independent Living Awareness Day, 23rd August 2019

Middle: Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteers at Eid, Ellesmere Port, 1st September 2019

Bottom: Winsford Library, 18th November 2019

Contact us to get the information you need

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

Website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 323 0006

Email: info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk

Volunteers

Welcome to the Countess of C
Share your views on Health & Social Care
Tell us about your experiences to help shape and improve local Health and Social Care services
0300 323 0006
info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk
www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk
healthwatch
Cheshire West
www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk
Mobile phones
0800 169 0 169

Healthwatch Cheshire West are supported by 49 volunteers who seek to find out what people think about services within their communities and how they would like to see them improve. This year our volunteers:

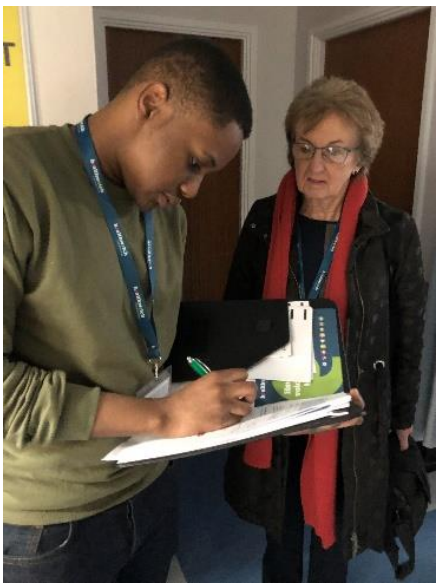
- Listened to people's experiences to help establish our priorities by engaging with the local community, with health and care services, and attending workshops on subjects such as the NHS Long Term Plan, Report Writing, and Cheshire West and Chester Place Plan.
- Carried out 31 of our 42 Enter and View visits to GP Practices, Hospitals, and Care Homes to find out what it is like from the patient or resident's perspective and writing subsequent reports.
- Assisted our day-to-day running in a number of ways such as in administration, and taking part in the recruitment of new Community Engagement and Project Officers.

Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteers help to improve health and care in Cheshire West and Chester

Our volunteers are crucial to the work we do, helping us to access and collate the experiences and opinions of many more people across Cheshire.

Some of the highlights from our volunteers' year include:

- **NHS Long Term Plan** – Healthwatch Cheshire led the coordination of the nine local Healthwatch across Cheshire and Merseyside in gaining the public's views on the NHS Long Term Plan in summer 2019. This required volunteers to take part in workshops and engagement events, helping to obtain over 250 responses from people in Cheshire West and Chester. The finished report was valued by the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership as feeding in to the development of the next stage of the Plan. To view the full report, visit www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/healthwatch-cheshire-west-nhs-long-term-plan-public-views-report



Healthwatch Cheshire West volunteers at the Countess of Chester Hospital during A&E Watch, 13th January 2020

- **A&E Watch** – In January 2020, 16 volunteers took part in visits to the three A&E departments in Cheshire, enabling us to engage with over 170 people during the course of one day, from 9.30am to 9pm. People's experiences of A&E were then formulated into a report which was shared with the Hospital Trusts and published on our website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

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 with Healthwatch Cheshire West.

Website: www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering

Telephone: 0300 323 0006

Email: info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk

NHS Cheshire CCG Associate Director of Communications and Corporate Development, Jonathan Taylor, addressing Healthwatch Cheshire West staff and volunteers at the Team Event, 9th March 2020

- **Cheshire West and Chester Place Plan** – Cheshire West and Chester Council, the local NHS, and Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership consulted upon their Place Plan in summer 2019. Volunteers assisted Healthwatch Cheshire West in promoting the survey. They also provided feedback on the Plan themselves in a focus group held at the Healthwatch Cheshire office which was submitted to Health and Local Authority partners.

- **Mental Health Training** – Healthwatch Cheshire has a constant programme of training and support to offer our volunteers. This year, one of the most successful sessions was on Mental Health Awareness as a precursor to becoming a Mental Health First Aider. Over 20 volunteers took part in a full day of training provided by an outside organisation. This session increased understanding of Mental Health issues, equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to engage with people more effectively.

- **M.U.S.T (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool) Care Pathway Training** - This training identifies adults, who are malnourished, at risk of malnutrition, or obese. It provides guidelines that can be used to develop a care plan for use in hospitals, community and other care settings. This training enables volunteers and staff to observe the nutritional value of care home meals during Enter and View visits.

- **Healthwatch Cheshire Team Event** – In March, we organised a whole team event of over 40 staff and volunteers. A training session was conducted on how to hold effective conversations to gain feedback from people that can be used by health and care services to review their delivery. The volunteers also received an update from NHS Cheshire CCG Associate Director of Communications and Corporate Development on the merger of the four Cheshire CCGs who viewed updating our staff and volunteers as vital in communicating the merger to the public.

- **Volunteer Satisfaction Survey** – In March we opened our survey asking volunteers about their experience with Healthwatch Cheshire West, what they enjoy and what they feel could be improved. The results of this will be analysed and fed back in June, with the acknowledgment that future ways of working may be impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear from them what they get up to.

Graeme

"Volunteering for Healthwatch was suggested by a friend when discussing retirement over two years ago. The care world was new to me and I've learned so much from the patients, carers, and the Healthwatch Cheshire volunteers and staff. The work is varied, interesting and allows me to maintain some of the skills I used at work."

Kabale

"There are no set hours a week or per month to volunteer, and for me that was very appealing with a busy home life and family. I choose when I volunteer to fit around my life. There are many opportunities to attend a variety of training from Nutrition to Mental Health. The engagements provide a great opportunity to improve communication, listening and presentation skills. The Volunteer Coordinator is friendly, enthusiastic and always willing to help the volunteers achieve their aims."

Ezgi

"It is great that I am able to volunteer when I am able, the Volunteer Coordinator is aware of my university demands and assists in trying to provide opportunities for me outside of that. I am an overseas student, so working with Healthwatch Cheshire has increased my knowledge of the area and the people. It has introduced me to many things in the area of health and care, I have learnt about hospitals, care homes, GP Practices. I have been involved in recruitment drives working at University events which has increased my circle of friends. I have been involved in projects that have seen a public report produced having impact on local services and I have been involved as a team member attending regular training events which is very important to me. I have carried out Enter and View visits which requires working as a team going into health and care environments looking at what it is like to use the service from a patient or resident perspective. I get to talk to staff and the patients or residents then produce a report which goes to Local Authorities, and local NHS. Healthwatch Cheshire has made a real positive impact on me because I am able to make changes to help people."

Bev and Amy completing their Enter and View training

Bev and Amy

"When we began to volunteer for Healthwatch we were originally volunteering at the Winsford Work Zone. It was here that we first met Jackie, a Community Engagement and Project Officer from Healthwatch Cheshire. When we were asked if we would like to volunteer, we jumped at the chance as it sounded so interesting. We began by carrying out engagement sessions within the community. Amy and I have always liked engaging with people and began to really enjoy talking to people again. We now do an engagement stand in Winsford on a regular basis once a month.

We collect views all over Cheshire and if we cannot get transport the Healthwatch team or Volunteer Coordinator will assist to ensure we can be involved, which is good as we can do more with Healthwatch.

We have done courses and training that help us in working with Healthwatch. We have conducted Enter and View visits, this allows us to enter care homes and hospitals as well as GP Practices to assess their services, and write reports and make recommendations on things that need improving. It was through Healthwatch Cheshire that we have become involved with Pride and we have attended a number of these events across Cheshire. It is very colourful and great fun. We found A&E Watch really enjoyable; staff and volunteers really help each other out at these sorts of events. We have carried out a refresher course on safeguarding as we had previously received training. This was very rewarding and interesting.

We have completed Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) training, which was provided by the training teams at individual hospitals in our area. This enabled us to enter wards in hospitals and assess what could be improved. The Volunteer Coordinator is always in touch to see how we are and to offer training courses, such as safeguarding and blood pressure readings. The latest training Amy and I took part in was around Mental Health. This was a day course and was eye-opening to me and really increased my understanding. There is so much more we can learn and look forward to our next steps at Healthwatch.

The staff at Healthwatch are lovely, friendly and welcoming people who are always willing to help you in any way they can. If you are looking for an enjoyable place to volunteer, I would definitely recommend Healthwatch. No two days are the same and you are always meeting new people."

Casey

"Why do I do it? I have been asked this question so many times around why I volunteer with Healthwatch Cheshire. The truth is I took part in a college workshop looking at the NHS Long Term Plan hosted by some of the Healthwatch Cheshire team. Their energy and their way of being involved in the community really impressed me and I wanted to know more about what I could do if I volunteered for them. As a college student I needed to gain more experience in health and care and I felt that volunteering for Healthwatch Cheshire could give me the most experience in the sector.

I contacted the Volunteer Coordinator David; he came to the college and explained thoroughly what I could do and be involved in. A couple of weeks later I took part in the Enter and View training as this intrigued me, I had my DBS done and received the training and support that helped so much. I then went on two shadow visits with experienced representatives and really got to see what to do and how to fill in reports. I really enjoyed looking into the standards of care, being able to meet and speak with the ward managers/care home managers and the staff, family and residents. Listening to them and their stories was amazing, listening to their views, especially on their concerns or compliments on the service being provided and then making sure that the management were aware of these. I also produced reports that were documented on the visits I had undertaken and then they would be sent to the providers and commissioners.

Casey (centre, third from left) at Chester Pride, 22nd September 2019

I have taken every opportunity to gain more experience whilst being a volunteer with Healthwatch Cheshire, including working in the main office gaining administration skills, safeguarding training, mental health training and I have also just completed an e-learning module on suicide awareness. All of this is something that I would never have got to experience without the support from Healthwatch Cheshire. The team are very supportive and helpful and I cannot give them enough thanks for everything they have helped me to accomplish. I could mention so much more like around the community engagement, experiencing my first Pride event, PLACE and being part of a team.

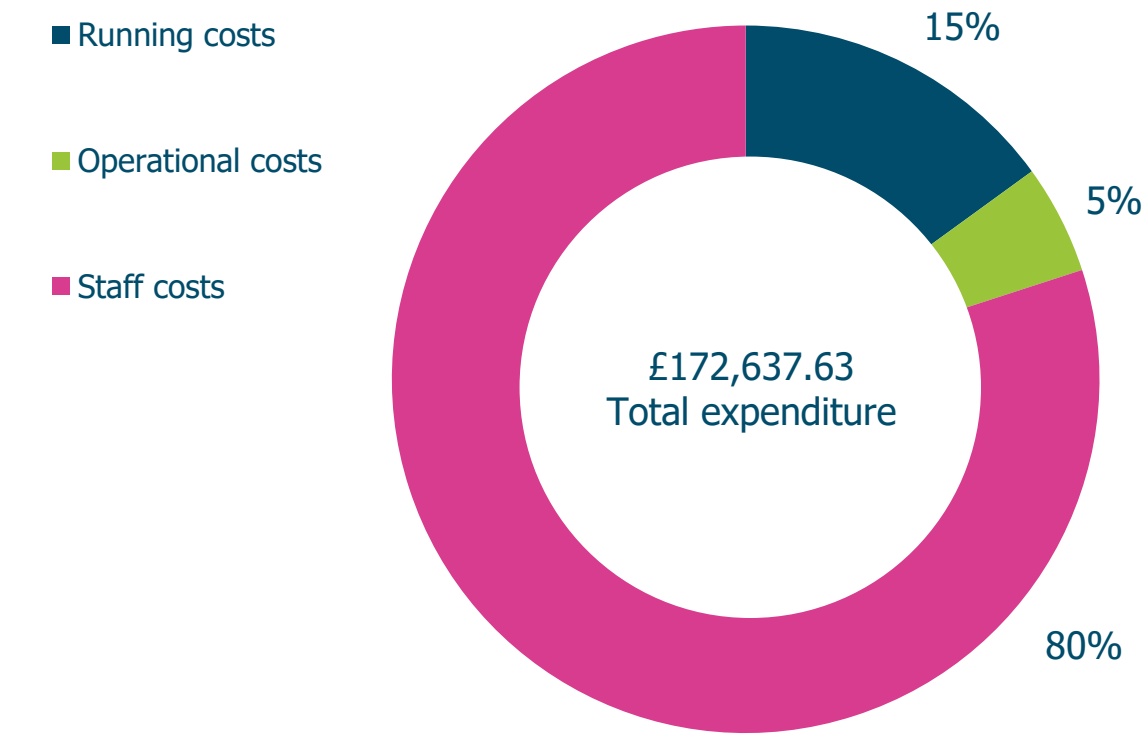
I love volunteering but most of all being able to help communities and strive for the best that services can be."

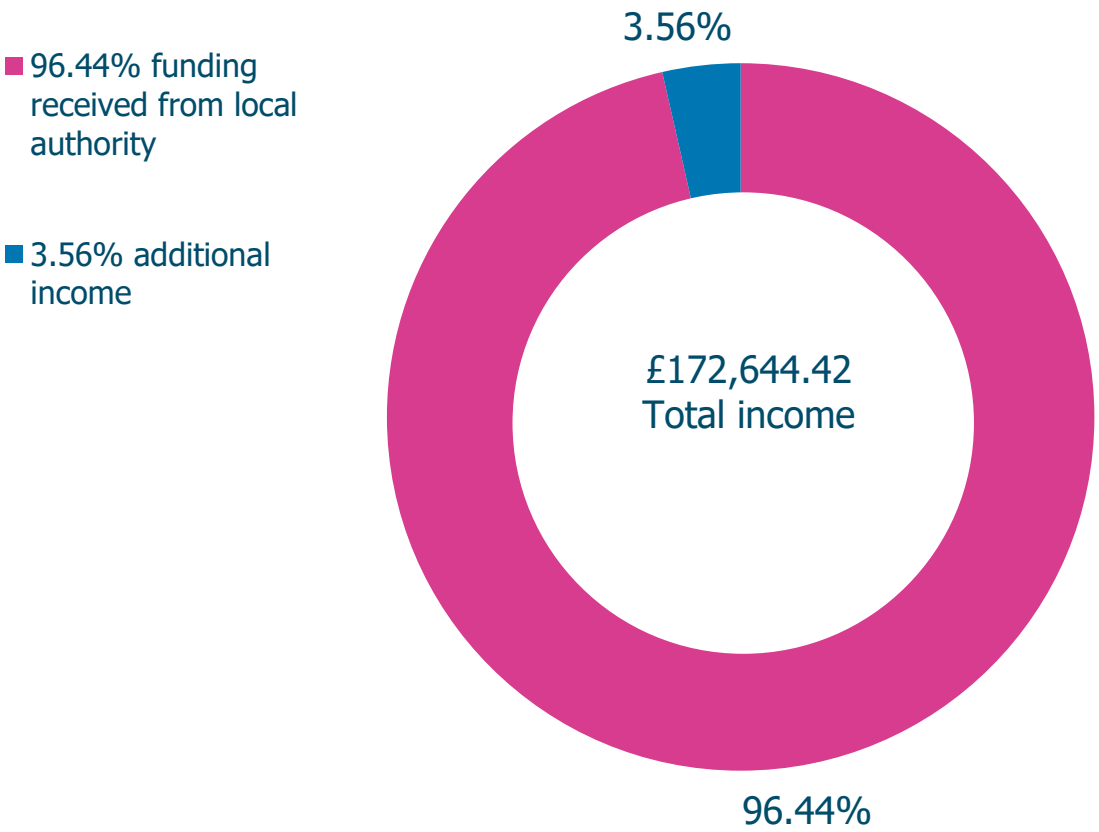
You can watch Casey talk about why she loves volunteering for Healthwatch Cheshire West, along with some of our other volunteers, on our website:

www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/meet-our-volunteers

Finances

We are funded by our Local Authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £172,637.63.





Looking ahead

Healthwatch Cheshire West is undertaking an independent survey to ask people about their health and wellbeing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. What people tell us about their views and experiences will inform our work during 2020-21.

We will continue to work in partnership at a strategic and local level to help inform the development of health and care services. A keen focus will be given to the work of the developing Care Communities, ensuring the voice of local residents is at the heart of decision making.

We will be developing new ways of engaging with the public, and our staff and volunteer team look forward to working closely with health and care partners to share best approaches.

Take the Healthwatch Cheshire West Coronavirus survey at

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/M3JZFGX

Thank you

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

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- Groups and organisations in whose events we have participated.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work.
- Local NHS and Local Authority partners.

Healthwatch Cheshire West Macmillan Coffee Morning, 27th September 2019

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