

# What Would You Do?

Local people's ideas and experiences to help improve NHS services

Summary of report published 25 July 2019

We asked people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 'what would you do to improve your local NHS?' as part of a project to help them plan for the future.

The NHS Long Term Plan, published earlier this year, set out priorities for health care in England over the next 10 years and how £20bn of extra funding will be spent.

To get this investment right in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, services need to understand what matters most to local people.

## What local people told us

People want faster, easier access to GP services and clear information to help them manage their health.

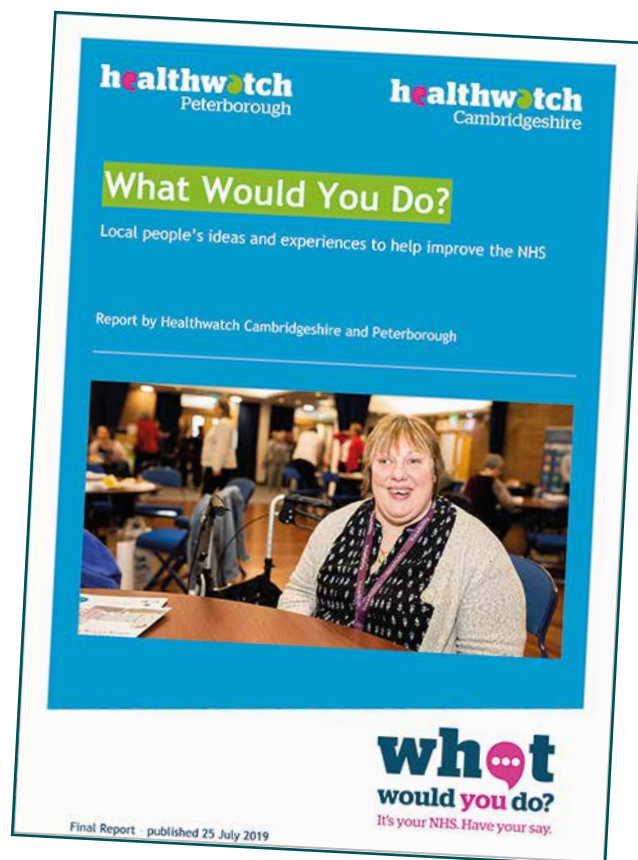
They want health and care that is more joined up, especially for people with one or more long-term health conditions.

They are interested in self-help and want more support to find information, and the right services to manage their health.

Travel and transport difficulties continue to be barriers to effective health care for people in the more rural areas of the county. People want care closer to home.

**healthwatch**  
Cambridgeshire

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We found a clear digital divide. Although many saw the opportunities of embracing technology, such as online appointments, others felt they'd be excluded by this.

## How many people spoke up?

More than 800 people from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough shared their views with us on how extra funding could be used locally.

Three in every five people we spoke to live with a long-term health condition or a disability.

**whot**  
would you do?  
It's your NHS. Have your say.



## What we did

We took two separate surveys out to 50 different community events across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to find out what local people think.

**Survey one:** What would you do to give people more control over their care?

**Survey two:** What would you do to give people better support? This survey was for people with long-term health conditions.

We also ran a series of focus groups, including conversations with disabled people and LGBTQ+ people.

### Improving local services

This work will help Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) develop its response to the Long Term Plan.

The STP is a partnership between the organisations who plan, pay for and provide health and care in our area.

They must use the extra money to:

- Make it easier for people to access support closer to home and via technology.
- Help people stay well.
- Provide better support for people with cancer, mental health conditions, heart and lung diseases, and other long-term conditions.
- Provide better support for people as they get older and experience conditions such as dementia.

It will also be used to develop the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-24.



‘People know that local health and care services are facing big pressures with shortages of staff and money.

They want to help and were willing and interested to share their experiences to help shape future services.

Whether about staying healthy or living with long-term conditions, people’s ideas and preferences reveal some important principles about how they would like to see health and care services develop in the future.’

**Sandie Smith, Chief Executive,  
Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and  
Peterborough**





## What people told us

### Choosing the support you need

These are the top three things that people said were important to them when getting support:

- Choosing the right treatment is a joint decision between me and the health or care professional.
- Communications are timely.
- I have time to consider my options and make choices that are right for me.

They said communication needs to be clear and jargon free. This was particularly important for people with long-term health conditions.

“Please be honest about what the options are and do not use clinical expressions when talking to a patient, encourage the patient to ask questions if they do not understand.”

People told us repeatedly of the value they placed on easy and timely access to appropriate health professionals.



### Travel and transport

Although many are happy to travel up to an hour or even two for appointments, this was more difficult for people with long-term conditions and those who rely on public transport.

“(I’d like to see) More support locally for treatment of my ME. I have to go all the way to Addenbrooke’s for good support from their pain clinic. This exhausted me and the drive, which at times takes two hours, brings on my pains.”

### Keeping independent and healthy in older age

People want ‘seamless’ health and social care services. They need appropriate and timely housing adaptations and a wider, more varied range of housing options to help keep people independent.

People told us how important getting out in their local community is to their health. Just a little access can make a big difference.

People also told us that it was important to support carers in their caring roles

“More carers available to visit people in the home. I know many elderly people with no family who desperately need help but are too proud to ask. We need to support those people. More funding and more staff!”



### What people with mental health problems or dementia told us

People with mental health problems or dementia valued a supportive GP, easier access to the primary care team and being listened to.

Two in every three people told us that the support they got when first diagnosed did not meet their needs.

People raised concerns about lack of choice, long waits and appointments that are too short or infrequent.

### What autistic people and people with a learning disability told us

Autistic people told us of problems getting a diagnosis, treatment and ongoing support. They said the lack of proper support affects their ability to lead full and productive lives. It also affects their ability to use other health services, particularly mental health.

“No support has been available since my autism diagnosis three and a half years ago.”

Autistic people and people with a learning disability want more help to live a healthy life. People looking after them need to talk to them not their carers. Information needs to explain things better using words and pictures.

### What people living with cancer told us

Most people felt the support they got at diagnosis had met their needs. We heard about good local services, although some people were not aware of the support available.

A local breast cancer support group said they would like to have access to a wellbeing centre.

### What we heard from people with heart and lung conditions

People with heart disease told us they valued the shared experience of others in support groups.

They also said that timely and understandable information helped them manage their condition.

“None of this (early support) was available. Patients with complex conditions need time spent with them so they understand the illness and how it will affect their lives.”

### Didn't get a chance to take the survey?

It's not too late to have your say! Help make your local NHS better for everyone in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by sharing your views with our Healthwatch.

Call: 0330 355 1285      Text: 0752 0635 176

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

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