

Annual report **2019-20**

# Guided by you

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“ This year has been a great year for Healthwatch Cumbria (HWC). We have successfully worked collaboratively throughout Cumbria bringing together communities and services through engagement and coproduction. The team has established strong networks and relationships within communities and online, allowing us to engage with an ever increasing number of people to gather their views.

We have seen another year of rapid change in our local Health and Care Services. Providers across the North East and Lancashire are now responsible for the delivery of some of our key services in Cumbria. This includes services related to mental health and learning difficulties. During this time we have established new relationships with new providers and engaged with the community throughout these changes.

Engagement is the core of what we do. Through the creation of the Carlisle and Eden Community Forum, built on the success of the West Cumbria Forum, we have brought together community representatives and key staff from across the health and care system to encourage collaborative working. This year, we have also concentrated our work by district to reflect the unique challenges and views from our large and diverse county.

We have also had the privilege of a visit from Imelda Redmond CBE, Healthwatch England National Director. Imelda hosted a presentation for our team underlining the importance of our role as a local Healthwatch within a national perspective and focus. Imelda also joined our team in our mobile engagement vehicle, the 'Chatty Van'. Visiting West Cumbria, Imelda met first hand members of our communities and heard their views.

I would like to thank our volunteers, who are an integral part of what we do. They have been dedicated and supported our work throughout the year. Along with our staff, together we have engaged with people across Cumbria. We have ensured their views are heard and shared through our relationships with, and reports to, service providers.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the team for their hard work and commitment to empowering the voices of the people of Cumbria. Through varied and innovative engagement with our 'Chatty Van' and digitally we have listened to more people, gathered more stories and provided key stakeholders with more real tangible information about the experiences of the people of Cumbria.

# Year of rapid change

**Helen Horne, Chair of Healthwatch Cumbria**



# Our vision

## **Our vision is simple**

Health and care services that work for you.

We all want health and social care support that works. We want services that help us to stay well and we want to get the best out of services to manage any conditions we face.

## **Our purpose**

To find out what matters to the people of Cumbria and to help make sure their views shape the support they need.

## **Our approach**

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.

We champion what matters to you by listening to your experiences, and we work with others to find solutions. We are proud to be independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

## **How we find out what matters to you**

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

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





**David Blacklock**  
Chief Executive



**Sue Stevenson**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Oliver Pearson**  
Senior Engagement Officer



**John Redgate**  
Engagement Officer



**Rebecca Knagg**  
Engagement Officer



**Debbie Banks**  
Research & Data Officer

Our team is made up of hardworking individuals who are proud to ensure that the people of Cumbria are given the opportunity to be heard and to share their experiences.



**Elaine Ralph**  
Information and  
Administration Officer



**Adam Hughes**  
Communications and  
Marketing Manager

# Meet the team

# Review of top 5 priorities from 18-19

# 1

## **To increase the number of active volunteers:**

During the year we recruited a further 5 volunteers providing a very welcome increase in our capacity for public engagement. We held a very successful 'Volunteer Day' for our volunteers just prior to Christmas and in addition to providing some training we unveiled our activity plan for 2020 which will be considerably enhanced through their involvement.

# 2

## **To use the Healthwatch Cumbria online Feedback Centre to increase people's influence in health and care services and to identify emerging issues for more in depth study.**

Our Feedback Centre has gathered a growing number and range of views and experiences from across Cumbria. After analysing the data from the responses we have identified a series of core recurring themes; topics that have been cited in a number of reviews. Based on a close study of these responses we have determined three prime areas of for further research and engagement for the coming year:

- Difficulties getting appointments.
- Issues surrounding a lack of support for mental health problems
- Barriers to accessing services

The effectiveness of the Feedback Centre has been greatly enhanced by the prompt replies from our provider organisations. We've heard how completing the feedback loop in this way can help people feel listened to and can often minimise the need for more formal complaints to be made. We would like to thank our colleagues in the health and care system for being an integral part of this work.

### **3 To use the Coproduction Toolkit to grow coproduction approaches across Cumbria facilitating more people to have a say.**

We know that services are better when the voice of the customer, the community and staff help shape the delivery of health and care. By working together, we have promoted a coproduction approach through the use of a coproduction toolkit - which is available online. The toolkit was developed by HWC, North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group and the Cumbria Learning and Improvement Collaborative.

The toolkit has been used multiple times this year within our work as well as being actively promoted to other organisations. A standout example is the toolkit's use in our Everyone Has a Voice project which applied coproduction methods to develop and deliver a plan involving local people, their families and carers in service development. The project asked 'what does a good life look like for people with learning difficulties in Cumbria?'

Coproduction, and the Toolkit, was made accessible by working with People First and partners to develop inclusive knowledge and understanding of the concept. We have also worked closely with organisations throughout our county to encourage and support the use of the toolkit to involve more people in the strategic decisions that affect delivery and worked collaboratively on a Coproduction Strategy which was endorsed by the North Cumbria Systems Leadership Board.

### **4 To reach new groups of harder to reach people, understanding how to overcome barriers to access.**

We have used a number of approaches to make progress on this priority by:

- Increasing our capacity to produce easy read material. This was so successful that we were also commissioned to produce easy read versions of strategy and consultation documents for other organisations
- Continuing our work with the Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership Board following on from our Everyone Has A Voice project. We will develop and produce the Board Action Plan to deliver our project recommendations
- Establishing a number of 'virtual' groups, enabling people to participate using mobile phones and computers
- Continuing to use the partnership approach to obtain customer consent for the sharing of contact details for specific pieces of work
- Increasing our physical presence in the community and attendance at meetings of self-help groups.

### **5 To work with Healthwatch Together to explore support/access challenges for adults in crisis**

Healthwatch Together is now formally 'branded' as a partnership of four Healthwatch organisations operating collaboratively across Lancashire and South Cumbria. As an outward facing service, we provide a single point of contact to system leaders, engaging strategically to raise our profile and work together locally to give people the opportunity to engage with us in their own communities. This joint work enhances our ability to influence at the highest level and increases our capacity and skills across our vast and diverse geography.

We have used a number of methods to access the hardest to reach members of the community this year, with a focus to support those in crisis. This has included:

- hosting 'pop ups' - staffed information points designed to capture public feedback in a range of venues
- promoting awareness and prevention - on topics such as health conditions
- establishing forums - enabling people to express their concerns and anxieties

Healthwatch Together has produced impactful work this year, including our awareness campaign to increase the take-up of breast screening and cervical screening among women with a learning difficulty.

# Feedback Centre



We launched a new independent patient/customer Feedback Centre on our brand new website in April 2019.

“ The Feedback Centre is an online platform where the public can share their reviews and experiences of local health and social care services. All the feedback received is made available to inform the public and as an additional source of intelligence for providers and regulators. A two way exchange, The Feedback Centre encourages service providers to respond to reviews, acknowledging and engaging with their customers.

Responses gathered by the Feedback Centre over the last year have been mainly positive (nearly 70%) and cover 185 different services in the county. Services include acute hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacists, opticians and social care. Only 15 percent of service reviews are negative reviews (16 percent neutral).

As a local Healthwatch, we gather a wealth of information from our extensive engagement activities. The intelligence we hear is shared directly with Healthwatch England and in turn with the Care Quality Commission to inform planning and to provide vital intelligence. The Feedback Centre is the latest tool in our engagement offer; it is gathering powerful information whilst providing impactful advantages to us, the public and service providers.

As an engagement tool, the Feedback Centre helps us to reach more people across a wider geographic range. Live and available whenever needed: the platform demonstrates our willingness to adapt to an increasingly digital world..

In addition to providing a means of transparent communication for service providers, the Feedback Centre also has the capability to produce and send bespoke reports. Informative and clear, these reports collate the feedback and themes for a particular service to provide a detailed summary of public experience.

One of the core features of the Feedback Centre is its ability to connect the public with services in an online conversation. Service providers are encouraged to review submissions and to publish a response, which will be displayed on the website. Nearly a third of public reviews this year have been responded to, opening a line of clear and transparent communication that may not have previously existed. This has enhanced our relationship with those providing the responses and helped to build up confidence that people are being listened to.

Looking ahead, we will continue to encourage the public to use the Feedback Centre to voice their experiences of local services and help to ensure that service providers are listening to what the public have to say.



# Feedback Centre Stats

→  
**735**

reviews received

## Top 3 themes of feedback:

### 1. Treatment & care (all services)

**92%**

mainly for quality

Positive

### 2. Staff

**76%**

**23%**

around attitudes and general care

Positive

Negative

### 3. Access to services

**43%**

**53%**

around convenience and distance to travel and lack of access to services

Positive

Negative

←  
**267**

provider responses

## Top 3 reviewed services:

1. Hospitals
2. GPs
3. Pharmacies

# Engagement Stats

## Total engagement figures

**8280**

## Total signposting for year

**100**

## Two main themes for signposting requests:

**NHS Complaints information**

**Help finding a dentist**

# Highlights of 2019-20

## Appleby Healthy Town Project 2020

**Appleby has experienced several flood incidents in recent years. Recognising the inspirational resilience of the town and its residents, we undertook focused engagement work to consider how this resilience could extend to the town's health and social care.**

Following this engagement we produced and published a report. Since then the town council has nominated Councillor Dr Gareth Hayes, clinical researcher at Newcastle University, to work with Healthwatch Cumbria to build on the great work already undertaken by healthcare providers.

Since the initial report in 2019 the town has welcomed ongoing improvements with the NHS dentist reopening to new patients and with plans to reopen a care home closed by flooding in 2015. Good practice including the operation of local GP clinics and prescribed exercise, along with community services, have all been recommended by our report to help with health resilience.

Plans are advanced on health promotion working with the local pharmacy on stroke prevention in May and later to reach out to



primary and secondary school pupils to help nurture and support the mental health of the whole family.

As Dr Hayes' described in an interview published in a local newspaper, 'Appleby does look after itself but we have to measure it and not let it slip.' It is hoped that our engagement work and the recommendation made by our report will support the town to maintain its resilience in relation to health and social care.

## Imelda Redmond visits Cumbria



**We had great pleasure hosting Healthwatch England National Director Imelda Redmond CBE on a two day visit to the county during September.**

From a chance remark during a conversation at the Healthwatch England Conference in 2018 we set out to enable Imelda to drive our Healthwatch Chatty Van in the Lake District, one of her favourite locations.

During the visit Imelda met the Healthwatch Team and drove the Chatty Van through the scenic Whinlatter Pass across the County to the hospital in Whitehaven and was able to join our experienced and enthusiastic team at work and see first hand the challenges and opportunities for health and social care in the county.

The following day we visited the historic town of Penrith where Imelda met local residents and heard their experiences of health and social care services. This included Linda Woods and her mother Jean Atkinson, from Catterlen, who related their positive experiences of using the Cumberland Infirmary and local social care services. Imelda also heard some less positive stories when, for example, communication between hospitals, GPs and patients have sometimes not worked well.



**Top:** Imelda with Healthwatch Cumbria and Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers.  
**Above right:** Imelda at Whinlatter Pass.  
**Right:** Imelda driving the Chatty Van.

“

Healthwatch Cumbria does a vital job independently listening to people in their local areas about their health and care experiences. Their strong relationships with the people who make decisions about these services helps to ensure that people's experiences in places like Penrith and across the country can inform service delivery and improvement locally and also nationally through Healthwatch England.”

**Imelda Redmond**

# Highlights of 2019-20

## Barrow BeWellFest

**Like many town centres, Barrow is usually quiet on Sundays but on the 6th October it became the centre of activity.**

Over 1,000 people attended three simultaneous events; BeWellFest, Barrow Running Festival and Silver Sunday. Among the attendees was the Healthwatch Cumbria Team together with the Chatty Van.

Building on the great work by the local running clubs, schools and organisations, the aim of the day was to inspire and encourage everyone to lead a healthy lifestyle. This included showcasing the range of physical activities available to people locally, regardless of their background, ability or age; from sports and social clubs to organised walks and weekly events.

The overall aim of the day was to promote good mental health with an emphasis on prevention. Local partners delivered a series of displays and activities to raise awareness and to increase and promote positive messages around mental health issues, health conditions and healthier living.

Within the Health and Wellbeing Marketplace, there were free Health MOT tests, including blood pressure checks and BMI Measurements. Health Professionals were also available for a chat and to advise and signpost enquiries. Silver Sunday enabled many elderly people, often living alone to meet others and visit the marketplace.

The Healthwatch Cumbria team spoke with many people about their experiences of local health and care services, gathered valuable comments for the Feedback Centre and were able not only to signpost people but to introduce them personally to services present that could help them immediately.



**Top:** Senior Engagement Officer, Oliver Pearson with Barrow Mayor, Kevin Hamilton.

**Right:** The Chatty Van outside Barrow Town Hall.



# Highlights of 2019-20

## Carlisle and Eden Community Forum

### HWC established the Carlisle and Eden Community Forum (CECF) in 2019 with its inaugural meeting held in September.

HWC wants to ensure that the passion and voice of local people is heard loudly in all the right places as decisions affecting their health and care are made and also that people are properly informed. This means working closely together with local communities, community representatives, community groups and interested parties and ensuring that key decision makers are involved, listening and responding.

The Forum has been modelled on the highly successful West Cumbria Community Forum (WCCF) which was set up in Autumn 2014 and is still running at the request of its participants. The CECF Forum was set up as a similar vehicle to enable "conversations about a healthier future" and to involve people in informing and shaping the future provision and delivery of health and care services in Carlisle and Eden.

The CECF Forum meets every two months, is facilitated by HWC and expertly chaired by the Archdeacon of Westcumberland, Richard Pratt. Some topics included in recent agendas include the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Warm Homes Eden, Living with Parkinson's, the new Cancer Centre and Hyper Acute Stroke Unit provision in Carlisle.



## Hospice at home

### Hospice at Home West Cumbria (HHWC) commissioned HWC to coproduce a Customer Charter and a bespoke customer experience survey.

The aim of our work with HHWC was to support an increase in customer involvement and to improve the quality of the feedback they receive about their services. Working together, the creation of a shared Customer Charter, whilst being a positive reflection of the organisation's values and a solid foundation for a new questionnaire, was an opportunity to promote the positive impact of coproduction.

In order to put HHWC at the heart of the community, the group recognised that they need to:

- Increase the number of people who know about the service
- Inform people about the 'self-referral' service
- Consider establishing 'Hospice Champions' who would work to get the message out
- Think more cohesively around performance management and service improvement.

The group created a list of value words in order to establish a sense of direction for the organisation.

Through coproduction, HWC and HHWC created the new, empowering Customer Charter which incorporated the organisation's values and a well-researched draft survey using an online survey tool.

The objectives for the project focused on:

1. Increasing customer involvement and engagement through the coproduction of a Customer Charter.
2. Enabling the steering group to create and deliver survey materials to develop a bespoke survey to test experience against the new Customer Charter.



**Hospice at Home West Cumbria**

*"Gives you a choice of supportive help through your journey with care and compassion"*

Eric, Patient, October 2019

We will provide a range of high quality care, support and information for patients, their loved ones and those bereaved.

We will help you live your best life by supporting you with your emotional, physical, spiritual, social and cultural needs and wishes.

We will listen carefully to your wishes and needs throughout your journey and always keeping you and those important to you at the centre of all we do.

We will work closely together and alongside other professionals to ensure we provide you with the support you need to live your life how you choose.

We will deliver care and support where and when you need it.

We will ensure we keep your information confidential and private.

**Our Promise**

We will develop trusting relationships with you and those important to you, enabling you to share your thoughts and feelings in a safe, non-judgemental place.

We will provide support and care from compassionate, kind and skilled professionals and volunteers.

We will welcome everyone regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation and treating each person with dignity and respect.

To find out more about our work, please get in touch:  
[www.hospiceathomewestcumbria.org.uk](http://www.hospiceathomewestcumbria.org.uk) | Tel: 01900 873173 or email: [info@hhwc.org.uk](mailto:info@hhwc.org.uk)  
 Registered Charity No. 1086837

[@hospice.cumbria](https://www.facebook.com/hospice.cumbria)
[@HospiceatHomeWC](https://twitter.com/HospiceatHomeWC)
[@Hospice\\_at\\_home\\_wc](https://www.instagram.com/hospice_at_home_wc)

## Ongoing work



### Stroke awareness in Copeland:

A collaborative piece of work with NHS, Local Authority and Third Sector partners continuing to raise awareness of the risks of stroke and ways to lessen the risk. People in local communities are tested for recognised risk symptoms, such as high blood pressure and identified for referral for support.

### Everyone Has a Voice

Following our very successful Symposium and acceptance of all the recommendations of the report Healthwatch Cumbria continued to work with the Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership Board to develop an Implementation Plan

### West Cumbria Community Forum

Our flagship Forum in West Cumbria continues to be a success, bringing together representatives of the community with the most senior representatives of our health and care system for constructive and transparent debate and information sharing.

### Hospitals

We have continued our regular presence at the Cumberland Infirmary, West Cumberland Hospital, Westmorland general Hospital and Furness General Hospital collecting patient experiences and talking to patients, visitors and staff to gather their views on accessing health and social care services.



### Presentations and Engagement

We have maintained our presence in the community, delivering presentations and engagement at a number of Third Sector organisations, reaching a wide range of communities of interest and place, including: Age UK, Parkinson's Group and the Dementia Alliance. Engagement locations have included libraries, market places, shopping centres, and public events, often with the Chatty Van including the PRIDE Festival at Carlisle Castle, Ormsgill Fest and Barrow BeWell Fest.

### Signposting

HWC continues to provide a signposting service through our telephone helpline, through our website and increasingly during conversations with members of the public. We provide information about health and social care services to support choices and decision making for the people of Cumbria.

### Volunteers

We have continued to seek volunteers and this year have recruited a further 5 to join our HWC Team. Our volunteers do amazing work. They raise awareness of the work we do in the community, visit services, collect people's views and experiences and support our projects and commissioned work

### Healthier Towns Group

We continue to support Ulverston's bid to become a Healthy Town. We engaged with the local community and produced a report for Ulverston Town Council which has provided useful information for the group, identifying what is working well and what could be improved. Our report identified that waiting times for mental health provision was a concern for the town's residents and suggested a follow up survey tailored to Ulverston's young people.

# Our year in

## New projects and activities



### The Carlisle and Eden Community Forum

This has been modelled on the highly successful West Cumbria Community Forum (WCCF) and has been set up as a vehicle to enable “conversations about a healthier future” and to involve people in informing and shaping the future provision and delivery of health and care services in Carlisle and Eden.



### Safeguarding

Following discussions with the Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB) local surveys have been amended to include questions aimed at raising awareness of safeguarding, asking what people know about it and what action they would take if they had concerns. CSAB is interested to use this intelligence to inform its awareness raising activity.

### Bay Health and Care Partners Public Assembly

Hosted by HWC the Assemblies took place in Barrow-in-Furness, Kendal and Lancaster and provided an opportunity for people to learn more about health and care issues and contribute their views about how challenges could be met and the shaping of future service provision.

### Website and Feedback Centre

Our new and improved website launched this year. This includes the new Feedback Centre, formally launched in September 2019, for patients and public to give their views about individual providers of health and social care services. [www.healthwatchcumbria.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcumbria.co.uk)



### Easy Read and Easier Read

HWC has developed our capability to produce accessible documentation for internal purposes and providing critique and support to others. This has so far included an easy read version of the Learning Disabilities and Autism Partnership Board Action Plan to address the recommendations of the HWC Everyone has a Voice report and an Easy Read version of the North Cumbria Health and Care Strategy document.t.

### Chatty Van

The van has been very visible in several towns, festivals, and events. It has also been the subject of a presentation at recent NHS Engagement Practitioner's events in Manchester and London. Most notably, it was driven by Healthwatch England's National Director Imelda Redmond during a two day visit to Cumbria.

# Cumbria

## New projects and activities



### Young People and Healthwatch

Throughout this year we have greatly increased the involvement of young Cumbrians in our work. With greater engagement through social media and the recruitment of young volunteers we are hearing from more young people than ever before.

To share this work, in September, Becky Knagg (Engagement Officer) and Jade Ainsworth (young volunteer) presented at this year's Healthwatch England event titled 'Healthwatch: Involving young people in our work.'

During the presentation Becky discussed the role of young people at HWC. Jade gave a very personal account of how she became involved with Healthwatch Cumbria and how she was embracing and enjoying volunteering.

Healthwatch England were very grateful to Jade and Becky for their presentation and we have since been contacted by Healthwatch Wolverhampton to present at their forthcoming young people's event.

### NHS 10 Year Plan

As Cumbria is divided between 2 ICS areas we conducted engagement and held focus groups to inform both the reports in respect of Healthy Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS and North Cumbria ICS.

### Area based focus

To ensure that HWC has an equal presence in all parts of the County our planned engagement for the year is divided between the 6 Districts enabling an in-depth 2 month long focus in each, visiting local organisations, localised surveys on issues important to the particular communities and connecting with local Councillors.

### Place based focus

We have trialled a 'hyper-local' approach which has been very well received where we focus on a particular town. In the case of Appleby we worked with the local town council to produce a study on the health and care experiences of the population and subsequent report. The close working has led to us now working with one of the town councillors to develop and action plan with a view to working with some of the town's wide range of community groups.



# Our year in



## Commissions



### Why do people attend A&E

Healthwatch Cumbria was commissioned by the North Cumbria CCG, on behalf of the A&E Board, to design a survey to be delivered to people accessing the A&E Departments at the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven and the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle. The CCG wanted more information about people's understanding of alternative services (such as GP practices and NHS111.)

### ICS Prevention Project

Commissioned by NECS on behalf of the Integrated Care System for North East, this was 'A Conversation about Wellbeing' through research conducted with focus groups. We worked with TONIC, a research organisation that was asked by the Integrated Care System to talk with people across the North East and North Cumbria about health and wellbeing to inform the shape of services in the future.

### Learning Disability Screening Toolkit

A Healthwatch Together commissioned project to develop Toolkits to increase the uptake of Breast Screening and Cervical Screening among women with a learning disability. The toolkit was completed and well received by the Commissioners, subsequently published and distributed together with a pocket-size 'concertina' version.

### Hospice at Home

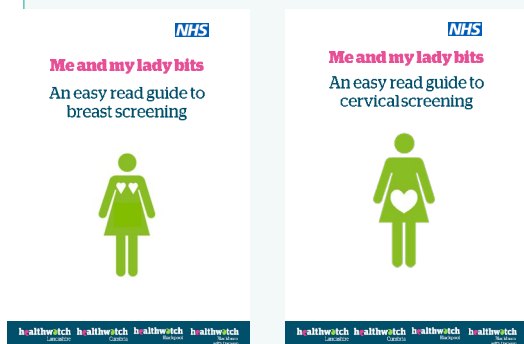
Hospice at Home West Cumbria (HHWC) commissioned HWC to co-produce a Customer Charter and a bespoke customer experience survey. The aim was to increase customer involvement and to improve the quality of the feedback HHWC receive about their services. HWC also made recommendations for further action that HHWC could take, in order to enhance and monitor their customers' experience.

### THRIVE Phase 2

Healthwatch Together was commissioned by NHS Funded providers of Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services to coproduce, with children, young people and their families, a design for future services for children and adolescents.

Last year, over the summer of 2018, young people were asked what a great service would look like. Based on this information we submitted an outline service model for evaluation by an independent panel of stakeholders, which was approved to move forward into a detailed design for future services.

This year, we have entered the second phase of this project. We have engaged in a four-month phase of coproduction with young people with lived experience of emotional health and wellbeing needs, and their families and carers. The aim has been to design a detailed THRIVE-based model of care that builds on the Outline model approved last year and that further meets young people's needs and addresses the key things they identified as needing improvement.



# Cumbria

# Project spotlight

## 1.

### A&E December 2019

**We were commissioned by the North Cumbria CCG, on behalf of the A&E Board, to design a survey to be delivered to people accessing A&E Departments in Cumbria.**

The CCG wanted more information about people's understanding of alternative services (such as GP practices and NHS111) as well as answers to the questions:

- 1. Why do people 'self-present' at A&E, particularly between 4pm-8pm?**
- 2. Is A&E the most appropriate service for them to access?**
- 3. Are people aware of alternatives to A&E?**
- 4. If they are aware of alternatives, why do they choose not to use them?**

The research took place from 2-15th September 2019, covering the hours 9am-9pm across seven days.



## recommendations

“

### Further to the research project, we suggested the following:

1. Ensure the public are aware of GP appointment availability and opening hours.
2. Provide information on the availability and opening hours of alternative urgent treatment and open access centres.
3. Communicate what services are available, where they are and how they can be accessed – particularly in tourist areas.
4. Communicate the service that NHS111 and CHOC provide.
5. Target information campaigns at specific groups, who access A&E for different reasons.
6. Provide up to date, timely and relevant information on hospital notice boards.
7. Update waiting times regularly.
8. Look into reasons why patients are returning to the hospital, via A&E, after being discharged.

There were 243 respondents in total, with a fairly even split between females and males. Almost everyone present in the A&E waiting rooms was interviewed, with exceptions for ambulance arrivals and those who were visibly distressed or vomiting (these numbered less than 15).

Results from the research showed that the most represented age group presenting at A&E was 21-29 years, followed by 60-69. During the evening peak (4-8pm), this was identified as young males and older females.

The vast majority of people at A&E attended as a result of either an accident or illness, or had previously been to the hospital and were

returning for further help or treatment. 60% of them had not attempted to see their GP first as they felt A&E was the most appropriate service for them, at that time (although comments were made to the effect that they would have gone to their GP if it was more convenient to get an appointment.)

67% of people were advised to attend A&E. Half of this group were advised to attend by medical professionals, a quarter were advised by friends, family or work colleagues. 75% of people did not seek help anywhere else (excluding their GP).

**Results from the research showed that the most represented age group presenting at A&E was 21-29 years**

# 2.

## Thrive

**This year we have been happy to continue our involvement in Thrive, which has supported the re-design of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in the south of Cumbria.**

**In September Jade Ainsworth (Young Volunteer) and Becky Knagg (Engagement Officer) travelled to Birmingham to an event hosted by Healthwatch England titled 'Healthwatch: Involving young people in our work'.**



We recruited a group of young people to meet weekly to discuss different given topics, which included 'how to get help' and 'mental health drop-ins'. The information discussed in the group was fed back to teams of other young people in Blackburn, Preston and Blackpool and their Healthwatch facilitators. The information from all areas was shared with CAMHS practitioners from Lancashire and South Cumbria.

The group of young people were fantastic at sharing their views and ideas and were very honest about their past experiences with their mental health.

The purpose of the event was to showcase successful examples of how young people had worked closely with Healthwatch to achieve real outcomes. Becky began our presentation by explaining some examples of where we had recently worked with young people. This included the Ormsgill fun day and Thrive. Becky discussed some of the barriers that had to be worked on and the benefits of the involvement of young people.

A member of the group was asked to represent the young people and present our findings at a meeting in Preston. The young person had gathered further responses to the questions raised by CAMHS by creating an Instagram Poll that reached over 600 young people. With support from Healthwatch Cumbria, she was able to analyse and present her findings back to CAMHS. Since completing the project, the young people involved have been glad to see the impact they have had on the services.

Healthwatch Cumbria has now been approached by CAMHS, to coproduce a drop-in out of hours service in Walney, Barrow and Kendal which is a service that the young people said was lacking in the area.

Jade then moved on to give a very personal account of her own story, including what it meant for her to be making a positive difference to services that she found challenging. She discussed how being involved in the Thrive project inspired to do her own research via Instagram polls.

Healthwatch England were very grateful to Jade and Becky for their presentation and they have since been contacted by Healthwatch Wolverhampton to present at an upcoming young people's event.

## 3.

## Anne and Jack: Using Experience to Affect Change



**Anne Aspinall contacted Healthwatch Cumbria in April 2019. Visiting our Barrow-in-Furness office, Anne was concerned about her husband Jack who was due to start renal dialysis treatment.**

Anne Aspinall contacted Healthwatch Cumbria in April 2019. Anne was concerned about her husband Jack who was due to start renal dialysis treatment.

To receive dialysis, Jack would need to travel to Kendal, a round trip from his home that covers 70 miles, three times a week. Anne was worried about taking the lengthy journey, not just because of the distance but also because of the route; the trip requires the use of a busy road which has seen over 250 road collisions in the last year.

Healthwatch Cumbria supported Anne by inviting her to attend the Animation Café, a local health engagement group that would give her opportunities to speak to local GPs, hospital trusts and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Through meetings of the Animation Café, Anne found out that the service providing Jack's treatment was provided by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust (LTHFT). Anne was advised that an influential person to speak to was Dr Mark Brady, Clinical Director of Renal Medicine for LTHFT.

In the time that followed, Anne and Jack worked hard to spread the word about their concerns. Though the Trust provided transport for Jack, the time it took to get to treatment, receive treatment and return home could take a whole day: leaving home early in the morning and getting back late in the evening.

Anne and Jack's hard work, supported by Healthwatch Cumbria, culminated in a significant milestone on the 25th October. Facilitated by our Engagement Officer, Becky, Anne and Jack shared an extremely positive phone call with Dr Brady. Dr Brady confirmed that a consultation process had taken place concerning patients who travel from Furness to Kendal for regular renal dialysis; Dr Brady confirmed that there is scope to commission a service in Furness or Ulverston and that this process could conclude within the next 18 months.

“

**To receive dialysis, Jack would need to travel to Kendal, a round trip from his home that covers 70 miles, three times a week.**

This news was a significant relief to Anne and Jack who have been waiting to see the impact of their campaign for a number of months. Through hard work and fortitude, the couple have channelled their concerns into a step towards positive change.

# Healthwatch Together

## Context

With the introduction of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships and now Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) it was clear to those of us working in the four Healthwatch in Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire and south Cumbria that we needed to collaborate and work together.

We agreed to maintain the integrity of our contractual relationships with our own local authority but collaborate to strengthen our collective influence on the full range of partners across Lancashire and South Cumbria health and care system, whose delivery boundaries criss-cross those of each Local Authority.

## Action

The result was Healthwatch Together, an effective hybrid combining the strengths of all four Healthwatch but also creating a single entity for two way communication with the leaders in the health and care system. It simplified the relationship for them and also demonstrated unity amongst the four Healthwatch.

We started by successfully submitting joint bids and co-delivered projects; one exploring the role of digital solutions for health and care and a second focused on co-producing easy read booklets to enhance the uptake of breast and cervical cancer screening for women with learning difficulties.

This experience led to the development of the Healthwatch Together Offer which has now been submitted to system leaders.

You can access the offer [here](#).

## Results

We know we are in a strong position to be recognised as the ICS's Engagement Partner' and see ourselves as the independent arm of the health and social care system in Lancashire and South Cumbria. We are well known, trusted, and we deliver on our promises and offer great value for money.

This strong and effective collaboration has been welcomed, and our expertise has been sought to support focus groups and case studies in 2019 following the NHS Long term Plan Engagement. We have also led ICS engagement shaping sessions with lay members of our CCGs and a wide range of third sector partners. Our independence and recognised experience puts us in a unique position to offer challenge and support to shape effective solutions



Healthwatch  
**Together**

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria  
and Lancashire working in partnership

Since January 2017  
**Healthwatch Together**  
has delivered

**£120k**

worth of engagement  
work on behalf of the ICS

## Objectives

- To work together to engage and empower our communities to drive forward meaningful change in health and social care provision.
- To be recognised as a statutory, professional partnership working effectively with our statutory partners to facilitate change, to speak with one voice and to provide real solutions to the challenges we face together.
- To be renowned for excellence and have an unrivalled reputation for delivering high quality pieces of work across Lancashire and South Cumbria
- Enabling health and social care professionals to come together with local people to have facilitated conversations to bring about co-produced solutions



**We have elevated our reputation as the 'The Engagement Solution Specialists' for the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS**

## Impact

Our ability to build strong interhealthwatch relationships has had multiple benefits. We have:

- **Experience:** together we can offer a very experienced joint team of 24 paid staff and 37 volunteers who have a proven ability in community engagement activities and working successfully with our health and social care partners.
- **Skills:** we are learning together and sharing skills through joint training and development.
- **Resources:** Together we have increased resources and infrastructure to respond quickly to new demands for work and ensure quality provision.
- **Local Knowledge:** Together we have increased and excellent knowledge and understanding of our local communities.
- **Partnerships:** Together we bring an even wider range of partnerships with public, private and third sector. Our ability to mobilise their support and participation with our work is an undoubted asset.
- **Coproduction:** As a collaborative, we have driven forward both the principle and the practice of coproduction.
- **Value Driven:** Our partnership is based on a sound ethical approach. In delivering our work we will not compromise on our deeply held values.
- **Value for Money:** All of our work is costed on the basis of a full recovery approach. We strive to be cost effective and efficient in all that we do, but quality work requires appropriate resources and we will price our work fairly and competitively.

- **Volunteers:** We boast a significant number of brilliant volunteers, experts by experience of their local communities and the health and social care sector. Our volunteers are trained and developed to a high level.
- **Online Presence:** We have invested in developing our online capability and have in place website and social media platforms with consistently high levels of engagement.
- **Membership/Contact Database:** Together we have amassed a huge database of members/contacts.
- **Report Writing/Data Analysis:** We have excellent report writing skills which is combined with data analysis so as to make sense of our findings for a wider audience.

In practice we have:

- Agreed project leadership supporting joint operational project meetings.
- Healthwatch Together strategic meetings when we consider what has worked well and less well and used this to plan our future approach.
- Agreed that the Chief Operating Officer for HW Cumbria and HW Lancashire acts as our single point of contact between us and the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS with a Service Level Agreement in place which sets out what this involves.

# Volunteers

We are indebted to our team of volunteers who each extend their impressive skills and time to enhance our work and reach.

## Our volunteers:

- + Raise awareness of the work we do in the community
- + Visit services to make sure they're meeting people's needs
- + Support our day to day running
- + Collect people's views and experiences which we use in our reports

**We are grateful to our outstanding volunteers. In a large rural county such as ours having a knowledgeable and dedicated team that can either work alongside staff members or independently is a great and powerful asset.**

Valuable professional backgrounds from health or social care. Personal experience of receiving services either for themselves or others. Considerable knowledge of specific health conditions. Our team of volunteers feature exceptional qualities that help us achieve our aims. We have added another 5 volunteers to our HWC Team this year providing a welcome increase to our geographic cover and our capacity for engagement and involvement.



**Rebecca Mullins**

My volunteering role with Healthwatch Cumbria is very important to me. I have really enjoyed engaging with the public at the hospital and running a health hub for the local Macular Society. I am a carer so have been able to listen to and signpost other carers in need. Healthwatch Cumbria has helped upskill me and make me more confident.



**Edward Bebbington**

I have lived in Cockermouth for the last 30 years with my wife, Jane. I became visually impaired due to macular degeneration in my fifties and I started to volunteer for sight loss charities. After a few years I was pleased to volunteer for Healthwatch Cumbria as people with sight loss are often socially excluded. Healthwatch Cumbria has provided me with an opportunity to represent their views, while sharing health sector plans with the local visually impaired community.



## Volunteer case study: Jade Ainsworth

**Having experienced faults within the mental health system, working alongside Healthwatch has fuelled my passion and determination for change.**

Healthwatch gave me the chance to be involved in a project known as Thrive, working with young people to re-design the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). In the Thrive project, myself and others shared our views and experiences, and I was soon provided with the opportunity to present on behalf of other young people.

I have amassed a large number of followers on my Instagram account which is focused on mental health recovery. My account has become the perfect platform to gain a greater understanding of young people's experiences and allowed me to pose a range of questions through polls to which I unexpectedly gained over 800 responses. I analysed this data and produced a presentation to show the results. I then delivered this to an audience of CAMHS mental health professionals. The presentation was greatly received and I have been contacted since by CAMHS practitioners for more information and the chance to present further.

My passion didn't end there; I became a Healthwatch Volunteer. Last summer I was asked to take part in a funding bid for a project which would place mental health support workers in schools in Barrow and Morecambe. I was asked to share my opinion and ideas. I produced a video about my own experiences and how vital mental health support in schools could be, and how essential early intervention is. The funding bid was successful and staff are currently being trained for this role.



I am currently involved in coproduction events, involving families and professionals in the shaping of Mental Health Support Teams. In September last year, I also presented at an event organised by Healthwatch England regarding getting young people involved in the work Healthwatch does.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to become involved in planning and leading on a project working with CAMHS and local youth support groups to look at the provision of drop in mental health support for young people. This project was instrumental to the groups receiving funding to continue after the pilot scheme and provide ongoing drop-in support funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

I understand the profound effect services can have on an individual when the individual isn't heard. From my experience of working alongside these services I know that this is not their intention, their sole purpose is to help every patient in the best way possible whilst aiding their recovery. What needs to be remembered is that there is a distinct difference between being listened to, and being heard. People start to heal the moment they are heard. This is why organisations such as Healthwatch Cumbria are vital in allowing voices to be loud and clear.

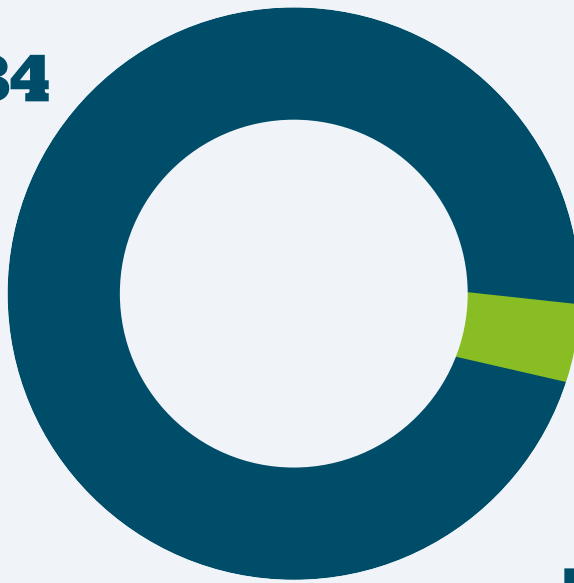
“

**I produced a video about my own experiences and how vital mental health support in schools could be, and how essential early intervention is.**

# Finances

## Income

Income A  
**£253,484**



Income B  
**£27,086**

**Total £280,560**

## Expenditure

Staff costs  
**£154,816**



Operational costs  
**£98,430**

**Total £253,245**

# Top 5 plans for 2020-21

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# 1

**We will continue to expand our digital engagement techniques and develop more virtual groups and networks.**

This will potentially increase our engagement capacity and support us to access more hard to reach groups. We will use digital technology where possible to target engagement to specific demographics and encourage greater involvement with the general public.

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# 2

**We will question, is 'Good' enough?**

We will seek out and highlight examples of excellence, increasing awareness of our Feedback Centre and encouraging services to access, digest and respond to the responses received about their service.

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# 3

**We will explore the challenges and support available for people in Cumbria who are living with Dementia, co-producing a strategy to develop the services that support them.**

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# 4

**We will explore how some groups of people were worse affected than others by the pandemic as suggested in the HWT Covid survey feedback.**

We will examine how the health or social care services were able to assist or meet their needs and highlight where useful adaptations to services or gaps occurred. The outcome would be to support or recommend changes in identified areas such as mental health and social care provision in Cumbria.

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# 5

**We will investigate the impact of Covid-19 on those with new, or existing health conditions.**

We will study the results of the HWT Covid survey as a starting point for this work, looking at how the pandemic has affected the public's use of health and social care. Following this, we will identify themes and further areas of enquiry.

# Listen and empower

## Message from David Blacklock, CEO of Healthwatch Cumbria

“ Healthwatch Cumbria has had a busy and impactful year full of dynamic and engaging activities. Listening and reaching out into communities, we have empowered people to have their say and to have their experiences heard. I would like to thank everyone who has shared with us their views. We have championed what matters most to the very people that health and social care services are designed to support.

This year we have successfully created the Carlisle and Eden Community Forum, based on the West Cumbria Community Forum model. Bringing together local people, community groups and key professionals from across the NHS, we have facilitated high level, transparent conversations to drive improvements.

I am lucky to work with an amazing team of dedicated staff and volunteers who work hard to engage with our community. They are dedicated to empowering and amplifying the voice of Cumbrians. They have reached out to the county's many towns and more remote regions, often using our 'Chatty Van', to connect us with as many people as possible.

A particular highlight is the increased amount of work we've undertaken involving younger Cumbrians, engaging through social media, and other means, on topics such as mental health services and other aspects of Health and Social Care that are important to them.

We know that the year ahead will bring challenges to both our health and social care services and to our communities. The spread of Covid-19 will require adjustments. Our role will be ever more important. We will need to adapt our ways of working - to be receptive and to be creative. With this challenge comes the opportunity to try new ways of working, to reflect the needs of our communities.

In 2020/21 we will rise to the challenge; we will step up alongside the people of Cumbria who have already demonstrated such a strong community spirit and response. We will continue to listen and empower the people of our county to have their voices heard.



# Thank you

**We are proud of the role that we play in our county. Listening, sharing and amplifying: we are here to work with the public, to put experience at the heart of health and social care. We are grateful to the individuals, groups and organisations that help us achieve this aim, this includes:**

- Thousands of members of the public who share with us their views, experiences and ideas
- Our team of hardworking and highly skilled staff and volunteers
- Many voluntary organisations and community groups
- Collaborative colleagues from across the health and social care system

Thank you to those above, and so many others, whose energy and efforts help us to be a visible and vocal part of our county and communities.



# Contact us

## **Healthwatch Cumbria**

People First Conference Centre  
Milbourne Street  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA2 5XB

**0300 303 8567**

[info@healthwatchcumbria.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcumbria.co.uk)

**[healthwatchcumbria.co.uk](http://healthwatchcumbria.co.uk)**



**healthwatch**  
Cumbria