

# news

Local news from your local Healthwatch

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Healthwatch Cambridgeshire is a champion for people using health and social care services and we will be working to ensure that people's voices are heard.

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## Young People's Network



NHS England's Maternity, Newborn, Children and Young People's Strategic Clinical Network is gathering the voices of young people across the East of England. At Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, we see this as a great opportunity to join forces and work to improve young people's health and wellbeing across the county.

Rita Nunes, our children and young people's ambassador, attended their first meeting in October. She got to meet some of the young people involved with the network, including Jemel Fox from Community Action Suffolk. There are also representatives from across the region, including Norfolk, Essex, Hertfordshire and Peterborough, who want to make sure children, young people and families get the best service possible.

The aim of the network is to deliver better health outcomes and experiences for children, young people and families. They want to be child and family focused, making children, young people and families feel comfortable in the service settings they currently use and inviting them to be active participants in the future design of services.

The network recently employed two young people to start in January 2014 who, besides being responsible for administrative support, are going to be responsible for developing and maintaining the network of young people who meet on a regular basis.

At Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, we are looking forward to working with the Strategic Clinical Network, sharing good practice and making sure children and young people not only have access to the best service but also have a say when it comes to their health and social care services.

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### Healthwatch Cambridgeshire

The Maple Centre, 6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon, PE29 7HN

Tel 01480 420628

enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk <http://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/>

## Can you help make a difference?



Do people in your community want to learn more about dementia? Would they like to become Dementia Friends?

Dementia Friends aim to make everyday life better for people with dementia by changing the way we think, talk and act.

A Dementia Friend is someone who has attended an information session and committed to an action that will make the lives of people living with dementia a little bit better. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend and every action counts - from helping someone find the right bus, to spreading the word about dementia in your local community.

At Healthwatch Cambridgeshire we have our own trained Dementia Friends Champion. Kate would welcome the opportunity to come and meet with local community groups to encourage more understanding about dementia.

If you would like a free, one hour Information Session for your community group, please contact **Kate** at [kate.hales@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:kate.hales@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk) or the main office at [enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk) or telephone **01480 420628**.

Let's talk about how you can help create a dementia friendly community.

## Volunteer for us!



Are you interested in volunteering for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire? We look forward to recruiting volunteers to help us with our work in the New Year.

We will be looking for volunteers to bring a variety of skills and a fresh perspective to projects that help us understand what it is like to use care services in Cambridgeshire. Your knowledge of your local community could help us build stronger links with the people who live, work or receive care services in Cambridgeshire.

We want to make sure that volunteering is open and accessible to people across the county and that individuals have a good experience volunteering with us.

We are working hard to make sure we are ready to support volunteers in their roles. We have developed our volunteer involvement policy, volunteer handbook and training.



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If you are interested in volunteering with Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, get in touch with us on **01480 420628** or email us at [enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk). We will also post specific volunteer opportunities on our website.

## **Our new Information and Signposting Service launches soon**

We will be launching our new Information and Signposting service in February 2014, to help you find information about local health and social care services.

We are busy meeting people from a range of organisations across the county. We are getting to know the services available and the people providing them, so that we can help you find the best service to meet your needs.

We want your feedback on the services you receive, so that we can give people good, accurate information and point them to the right services. We are keeping track of concerns, to help us build up a picture of health and social care services across the county. Whilst we cannot investigate individual complaints ourselves, we can help you find advocacy and support if you want to file a formal complaint.

You will be able to contact us by phone, email or letter with your query, or by using a simple form on our website.

More information in our next Newsletter!

## **Call to action - shining a light on good care...**

We want to hear about your stories of good care from local health or social care providers. We can use these examples when we talk to local organisations, to help improve care services for everyone.

It is very easy to focus on where organisations go wrong in providing health & social care services, but showing where organisations are doing well can help improve care too.

Please contact us with your stories.

## **YOU SAID - WE DID**

The Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Team have been out and about, listening to what people have to say. Here are some of the issues you have told us about that we are working on:

### **Social Care Assessments**

Older people can wait a long time for social care assessments. We raised this as a concern with the County Council and will be looking closely for the improvements they have promised. We have also asked Healthwatch England to see if this is a national issue.



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### Use of plain English

Jargon and complicated writing often make public documents hard to read. We are reminding organisations to use plain English and giving feedback on written materials whenever we can. We have also shown how to rewrite documents to make them easier to understand.

### Complaints

Supporting the national Healthwatch work, we have put together a flow chart of how complaints in all parts in the health and social care system work. This is on our website and shows the various points of contact and who can help.

### Maternity services

We have found out that there are differences in how women engage with maternity services across the region. We are talking to providers and commissioners about this and will be writing a report which will make recommendations for improvement.

### GP Provision

Through monitoring social media, we've heard concerns about GP provision in areas with new housing developments. We have brought this to the attention of the NHS England Area Team and continue to monitor the situation.

Do you have something we should know about? Tell Us Your Story.

Ring on 01480 420628 or Email [enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk)

## Healthwatch England come to Cambridge

One of the great things about new local Healthwatch is that we are part of a big national network, all working towards the same end. Increasingly, we are working together, learning from, and sharing with other local Healthwatch and our national umbrella organisation, Healthwatch England. It was great to welcome Healthwatch England to Cambridge last week for their public committee meeting.

The committee were keen to hear from local Healthwatch, and held a morning session with representatives from Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Bedford Borough as well as Cambridgeshire. Ruth Rogers and Sandie Smith were there for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire. We gave the committee very full feedback on what it's been like so far, warts and all! The committee received the comments positively.

In the afternoon, the public meeting included a discussion on the next steps for their complaints work. This will include a public campaign and improvement projects. They are lobbying government hard to bring in a simplified single system for health and social care complaints.

You can find out more about Healthwatch England on their website:

<http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/>



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## Join our Consultation Network!

Do you want to be kept informed of consultations and local events where you can have your say? Join our consultation network.

You can sign up in a variety of ways:

- Fill out a form when you meet us at an event
- Phone us and we will take your details over the telephone
- Join using the online form on our website

If you do not have access to email or internet, you are still very welcome to join. Many surveys need to be completed online, but we will send you any relevant opportunities we can.

You can choose the subject areas you are interested in and can change these preferences at any time - just phone us or contact us using the form on our website.

Recent opportunities have ranged from a consultation regarding liver resection surgery, to membership on the NHS East of England Citizen's Senates, to a survey regarding your use of Accident and Emergency services. We have also publicised local events on:

- the Older People's Procurement
- the launch of the mental health phone app by the SUN Network
- the launch of Carers Trust Cambridgeshire

Go to our website to join our network: <http://www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/>



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