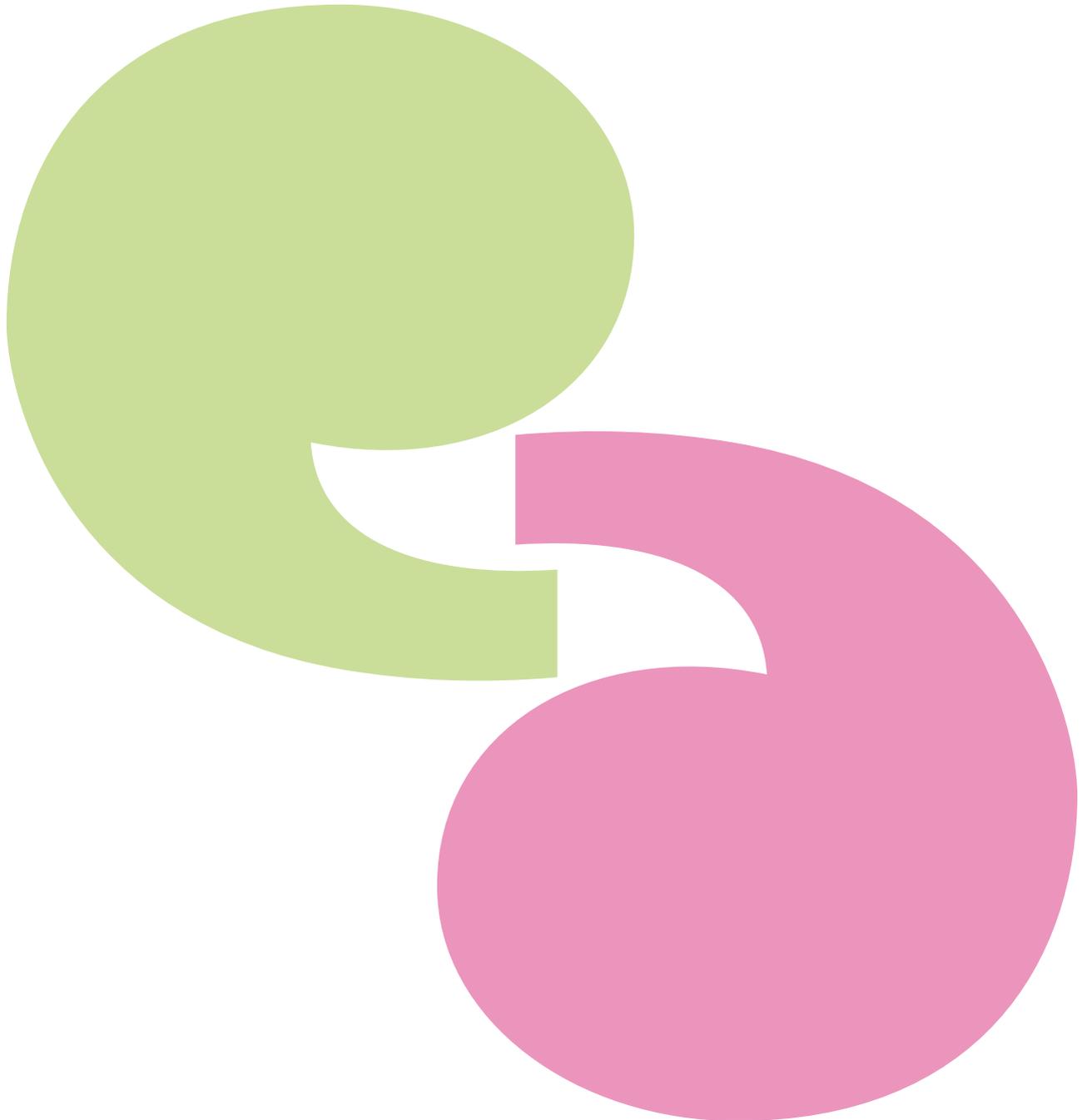


On equal terms

Annual Report 2020 to 2021





Cover picture - Elliot from South Cambridgeshire after his first Covid-19 vaccination.

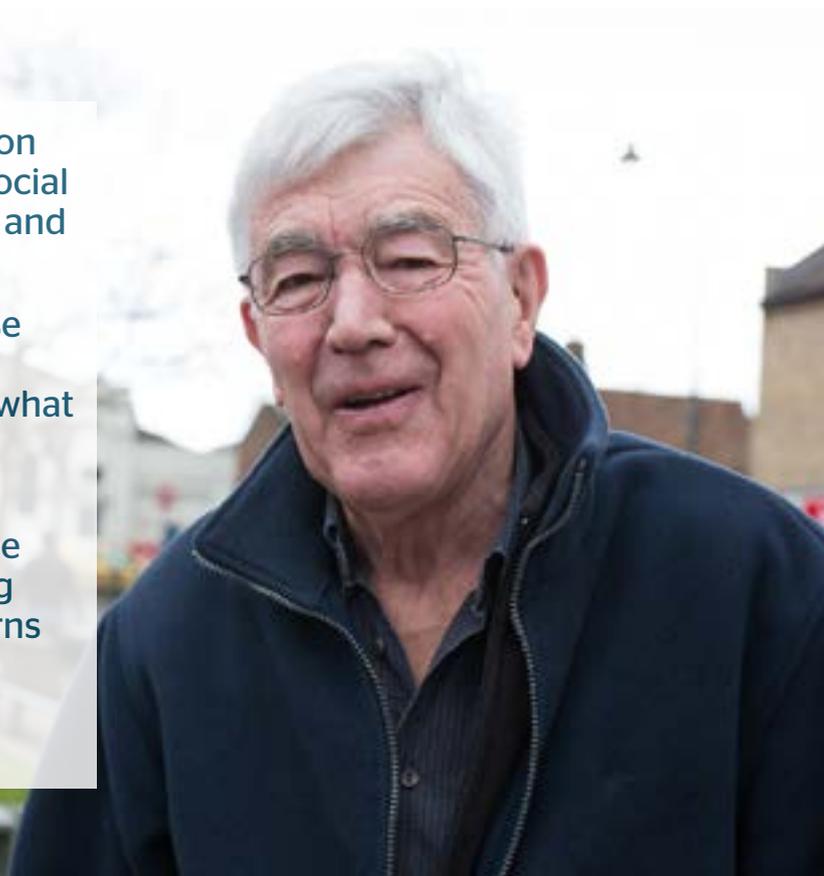
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We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Our job is to make sure that those who run local health and care services understand and act on what really matters to people.

We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. And focus on ensuring that people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed.



Here to make care better

Welcome to our annual report for 2020 to 2021 – the most extraordinary of years for all of us, where we've had to adapt and learn new ways of living our lives.

We've seen huge and rapid changes in how health and care services are provided as well as what the 'rules' are for keeping safe.

Initially, many services were suspended while the health and care system responded to the pandemic.

Our team has found new ways to listen to and support our communities to get the health and care they need. From practical volunteering in the community, to engaging online and over the phone – rather than face to face – providing advice, information and support.

We've responded to a record-breaking number of enquiries from local people and our new websites have seen a threefold increase in activity. More than 40,000 people have read our advice articles alone – these give information on issues such as dental access, Covid-19 restrictions, support and vaccinations.

We have found opportunities to work more closely with our local NHS and care teams than ever before. Sharing your feedback with them to help them protect people, such as through our 'Your care during Covid' briefings and report.

Many of your experiences have made difficult reading, but we have learned so much by listening and learning from people's experiences of the pandemic.



Covid-19 has been a tumultuous experience for everyone, but it is clear that those communities who were already experiencing disadvantage have been the most affected. Whether this is as a result of not having access to technology or being at higher risk of Covid-19; the role that inequalities plays is immense.

In the coming year, we will be redoubling our efforts to listen to those people who are at most disadvantage, and working with our local services to make improvements.

Lastly, and most importantly, a huge thank you to everyone who has supported our work over the last year and helped us make a difference. Our voices are stronger when we work together.

Sandie Smith, Chief Executive

Our priorities

2020-21 has been the first year of our five-year strategy which sets out our ambitions and the difference we want to make by 2025, working together with local people and organisations.

As we signed off our strategy in early 2020, we did not anticipate the huge changes the Covid pandemic would bring to all our lives. Our priorities have remained the same but our work within each priority area has been shaped by what people have told us and what is happening locally and nationally.



Promotion of independence and self-care

– so that people can have more information and support to get the services they need and remain independent for as long as possible.



Easier access to GP, dentist, pharmacy and other primary care services

– so that people make the best possible use of services that work well for them.



More joined up social care and integrated support services

– so that people find it easier to move from one part of the system, such as hospital, to another, such as care at home.



Better mental health services for everyone

– so that people get the support they need.



People are involved in designing the services they use

– so that health and care services meet the needs of the local community, particularly those who are most likely to be excluded.

Our year in focus

We play an important role in bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us.

Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to our communities by listening to people's experiences. We also talk to local health and care organisations to find out what they are hearing and experiencing.

Our team has been creative in seeking new ways to engage with people as we've been unable to work face to face in the community.

This year, we have



Heard from more than 2,700 people about their experiences of health and care

- ⇒ Of these, 1,357 were from Cambridgeshire, 687 from Peterborough, and 96 were from out of county. (Not everyone shares this information).
- ⇒ We provided advice and signposting to 712 people.



Published four reports and three briefings about the improvements people would like to see.



Held 40 public meetings online

- ⇒ Including 24 Health and Care Forums, six Healthwatch Board meetings, four Wheelchair Forums and six workshops.
- ⇒ We have also supported 24 Adult Social Care Partnership Board meetings.



38 volunteers have helped us with our work

- ⇒ They've given more than 314* hours of their time to help investigate the issues that matter most to people in our community.

Supporting our community during Covid-19



Our role and reputation as a trusted source of information has never been more important than over the last year.

And listening to our local communities and hearing their experiences and struggles over the very difficult last 12 months has given us – and the people planning and providing services – insight, understanding and learning.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, our Healthwatch closed down regular face to face activities to concentrate on reassuring our communities and supporting local NHS and care organisations to manage the crisis in our area.

Our focus was on:

- ⇒ Sharing public health messages, so people know what they need to do to keep themselves and others safe.
- ⇒ Helping people navigate changing services.
- ⇒ And sharing tips and encouragement on looking after their mental health and wellbeing.

Your care during Covid

In May 2020, we launched a three-month Covid-19 survey to capture people's experiences during this unique time.

We wanted to find out how changes to health and care services were affecting local people, particularly those most likely to be affected by the virus and service changes.



Over 500 responses came in within the first few weeks and in all, 1,131 people shared their stories with us.

We produced three briefings – in July, August and September – to feed back the survey findings to senior health and local authority care teams to help them to continue to deliver good quality care across our area.

The information was also shared with Healthwatch England to help inform the national response to the pandemic.

Our final report, Your Care During Covid, flagged up our concerns about increasing health inequalities.

It revealed:

- ⇒ **Older people, those with disabilities or long-term health conditions, carers and those not online were hit hardest by the pandemic and subsequent service changes.**
- ⇒ **Three in ten people avoided getting help for a health problem.**
- ⇒ **Out of those that did get help, three out of four rated it highly.**
- ⇒ **One in three people told us that the pandemic had a high or significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing.**

It was humbling to hear how people had fared and how deeply some had been affected by the crisis. Some of the experiences were tough reads – shining a light on loneliness, anxiety, bereavement, lack of support, pauses in treatment and delayed operations.

And there were lessons for all those planning and delivering services – including the need to:

- ⇒ Tackle health inequalities – building on the use of technology but ensuring there are alternatives for those without internet access and for those whom remote consultations are hard to access.
- ⇒ Provide clear and timely communications for those waiting for treatments.
- ⇒ Understand the impact of isolation and service disruption on new families and those with additional needs.

Leaving hospital during the pandemic

In March 2020, a new national approach to discharging patients was set up in the wake of coronavirus – aiming to free up hospital beds. It saw people leave hospital faster by having their ongoing care needs assessed at home.

Our volunteers helped us follow up on the experiences of 35 patients leaving local hospitals between June and August. And we published our findings in December in our Leaving Hospital during Covid-19 report.

The report showed that the new discharge system worked well for some local patients.

 ‘It was great that they waited to discharge her ... [until] everything was put into place to make her safe at home particularly given the situation with Covid.’

- Carer feedback

But for others it has been a poor experience - leaving patients lacking information, support and equipment.

 “No care package in place for two/three days after I left hospital. No support at home for this period. I just had to manage. Have carers three times a day now.”

- Patient experience

Our report and recommendations on how the complicated discharge process could work better for everyone were shared with local hospitals, community services, local authorities and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group which plans and buys health care services for our area.

Improving end-of-life care

We learned that some people's decisions about their care and treatment at the end of life were not being respected during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

 “The only time the GP has got in touch with my friend is to make her sign a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate).”
- Patient experience

And one NHS consultant told us that:

 “We carry out reviews of people that have died in the Trust. It is sad to see completed ReSPECT forms that clearly state not for readmission to hospital and would prefer to die in own home... we have got to be better than this, working together to bring people's expectations to the fore in times of emergency.”

We wrote to local health leaders to raise our concerns and as a result, a new NHS task group has been set up to tackle some of the issues raised.

We are part of the group and will be feeding back your experiences into improving care for people near the end of life – and will report back over the next year.

Tackling the challenges together

Covid-19 has been a huge challenge for our local health and care system. And our whole team has played a part in helping healthcare system partners to deliver key information over the last year.

From shielding advice and testing information, to self-isolation guidance and encouraging vaccine take-up, our Healthwatch has helped to develop as well as share messaging across our diverse neighbourhoods and minority communities.

On a personal level, many at our Healthwatch got involved in mutual aid schemes and became volunteers in their local communities.

Others sewed masks and hospital scrubs; ran neighbourhood aid schemes; collected shopping and prescriptions; packed and gave out food parcels; delivered hospital boxes; one team member even created a series of vlogs to provide information for people with learning disabilities and their carers through the first lockdown and beyond.

What matters to you



We use what you tell us to help influence improvements in health and care services.

Local health and care services have been under huge pressures because of the Covid-19 pandemic. And we know that this has made it harder for some people to get the care they need or has even put people off getting help.

The six top topics people have contacted us about have been:

- 1) Ongoing issues finding an NHS dentist.
- 2) GP services – including feedback on the move to remote appointments, long waits to be ‘seen’ and the quality of care.
- 3) Hospital care – including inpatient care, in-person and remote outpatient appointments.
- 4) Community services – such as Covid-19 support and vaccination, and changes in appointments for services like physiotherapy.
- 5) Diagnostic services – such as questions about Covid-19 testing.
- 6) Urgent and emergency care services – including A&E, NHS 111, out of hours’ GP care and Minor Injuries.



Finding an NHS dentist

Getting NHS dental care in our area has continued to be an issue for local people this year. And it has now become an increasing and extensive problem.

The Covid-19 shutdown of dental services aggravated existing problems around access to high street NHS dentist services.

 'I have rung every dentist in Cambridge, and all are only taking private patients or a 6-9 month waiting list.'
– Patient experience

New risk assessment and infection control regulations mean not all dental surgeries have reopened. Those that have can see fewer patients each day. So, NHS practices, which have high numbers of people wanting to be seen, have been hardest hit, and priority has gone to people needing urgent care.

The local special care dentist service – for people with learning or physical disabilities or dental anxiety – had a four-figure backlog after the first lockdown. Lack of dentistry for children also became an emerging problem during the year.

Easier access to primary care services, like dentists, is one of our priorities.

 'I'm really struggling to find a dentist that accepts NHS, I'm currently pregnant and my teeth are crumbling away.'
– Patient experience

Our Healthwatch has been sharing people's concerns and frustrations at regular, sometimes weekly, sessions with NHS England and NHS Improvement which plans and pays for dental services in our area.

We are hopeful that a new dental strategy being developed for the East of England, with more flexible NHS contracts, will address some of the issues. However, there is no quick or short-term fix.

Getting help from GPs

GP services have been a big focus for local people, ranking second in the list of topics people contacted us about this year. We've heard concerns about long-waiting lists, problems adjusting to remote appointments as well as praise for the support people have received from their local practice.

“My daughter had an eye infection. Extremely impressed with GP. She had a telephone appointment. We were sent a link to upload photos. GP phoned back with a diagnosis and sent prescription electronically to our chemist. Anxious about visiting surgery so this alleviated this.”

– Patient feedback

The way we use GP services fundamentally shifted because of Covid-19. With a reduction of face-to-face appointments, most GPs moved to 'remote' sessions and consultations via telephone, video, and email.

What people said

Some people told us they liked online and telephone appointments saying they were quicker and easier. But certain groups struggled with the switch, including older people, disabled people and those not online.

And results from our three-month Covid-19 survey showed that three in 10 people put off getting help for minor health problems and potentially serious conditions.

Making the most of online and telephone appointments

Last summer, we supported a national study into people's experiences of online and telephone consultations.

'The Doctor Will Zoom You Now' report – published by National Voices, Traverse and Healthwatch England - shared top tips for patients and health and care professionals on how to get the most out of these appointments.



Giving GP websites a check-up

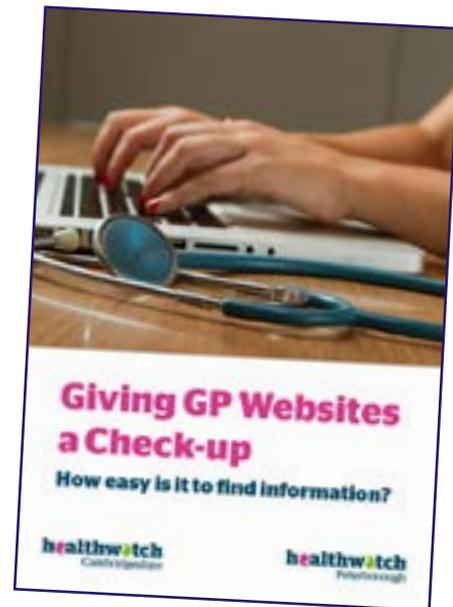
With many people going online to get information, in June and July our volunteers helped us audit 98 GP websites in our area.

We wanted to see how easy it was for people to find information that was up to date, clear and easy to understand.

Our subsequent report, Giving GP Websites a Check-up, revealed half did not have the latest Covid-19 guidance and two out of three did not have good examples of accessible information for patients with sensory loss or learning disabilities.

And it urged GPs to make it clear and easy for patients to make appointments and complaints.

We raised the issue of website quality with regional and national Healthwatch and shared our report with the Local Medical Committee, which represents GPs and practices, and with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.



As part of the project, we offered practices the opportunity to get individual feedback about their websites. And this has led to improvements on the accessibility of some sites, including clearer, easier to read pages and up to date Covid and vaccine information.

We will be re-checking GP websites later in 2021 to see what changes have been made and make any additional recommendations for improvement.

Improving GP services

During the year we also fed local people's GP experiences into Healthwatch England's GP Access during Covid-19 report, published in March 2021. Feedback included how service changes were communicated; problems booking appointments; and access to regular treatment and medication.

The report called on NHS England to formally review GP services to make sure they work for everyone. It also recommended that patients are offered a choice of appointment type and are given support and reasonable adjustments so that communication and information is accessible.

Involving people in change

We support people to speak directly to those who make decisions about local health and care services. Their ideas and experiences help commissioners and providers improve future services.

Our forums bring people together

Our regular Health and Care forums – covering Fenland, Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and Greater Cambridge – moved online at the start of the pandemic.

These popular public meetings bring local people together with health and care decision makers to ask questions and share experiences and ideas. In the last year we welcomed more than 350 people to 24 meetings - 232 people in Cambridgeshire and 145 in Peterborough.

 “Lovely atmosphere and useful information. I get something important out of every meeting.”

– Regular Health and Care Forum participant

The meetings are an opportunity to find out about what is happening with the services you and your family may use, including planned changes. In the last year, we have fed back on things like the relocation of Peterborough Urgent Treatment Centre, found out how emergency and urgent care services are working during the pandemic as well as hearing an increased amount of feedback around services for children.

In addition, our quarterly Wheelchair Users’ Forum has continued to meet online, feeding back people’s views on wheelchair services.



Two participants at a pre-Covid Health and Care Forum

Partnership Boards



Our Healthwatch supports people who use adult social care to get involved in Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council’s five Adult Social Care Partnership Boards.

Each Partnership Board’s role is to support and improve care for people who use health and adult social care services. And give people with experience of using adult social care services a say on current and future care. This includes older people, carers, physically disabled people, learning disabled people and those with sensory impairments.

There are currently 58 volunteers – called Independent Members – who take part in regular meetings with health and care staff. Due to Covid-19, these have been online since after the first lockdown.

“It’s ... been really rewarding to use my caring experience to make change happen and improve services for others across our area.”
– Sue Honour - Chair of the Carers’ Partnership Board

To start with, many members, especially on the Learning Disability Partnership Board, struggled to take part because they did not have internet access or needed support to use the technology.

In Peterborough, local charity Enabling Independence was able to invite some members to its office when regulations allowed, and they were supported to join in the meetings.

“I like being part of the Learning Disability Partnership Board. We get good support, and we can see what we do has an impact.”
– Enzo Petruziello, Independent Member of the Learning Disability Partnership Board (pictured above).

We also supported Fenland carer Stuart – a long-time Independent Member of the Carers’ Partnership Board – who is not online, to keep giving his views. As well as sending papers by post and getting his thoughts by phone, we arranged a socially distanced trial session on Zoom at our Huntingdon HQ so that he could contribute and see other Board regulars online.

“I tried joining the previous meeting remotely - by telephone, using the land line and hands-free option. But that didn’t work very well because the quality of the sound was really poor which was difficult especially on a meeting lasting a couple of hours.

“So, Debbie suggested I try using Zoom on a laptop and I decided to give it a shot.”

– Stuart, Independent Member of the Carers’ Partnership Board

Feeding back on services

Not surprisingly, Covid-19 was the biggest issue discussed by the Partnership Boards. And members shared experiences and ideas on many topics - continuing to have an important say in how local services were delivered and changes to support were made for people including those who were shielding.

Blind and visually impaired people, in particular, were affected by the pandemic and the lockdowns, with some not leaving home for many months.

- ⇒ The Sensory Impairment Board put together a report about their experiences and this went to local authorities, district councils and the community and voluntary sector so that support could be reviewed.
- ⇒ Meanwhile, the Carers’ Partnership Board looked at support for family carers during the pandemic and the Carer Support Service that is delivered by Caring Together, Centre 33 and Making Space.
- ⇒ And members of the Learning Disability Partnership Board were able to share their Covid-19 vaccination experiences – and highlight the support and adjustments they needed – with NHS staff at a Clinical Commissioning Group seminar.

Other topics discussed by the Partnership Boards this year have ranged from e-scooter trials and domiciliary care to provision of day opportunities and assessments for people leaving hospital.

Mental health care

Easier access to mental health services is one of our key priorities and we have worked closely with local mental health groups The Sun Network and Rethink Carer Support to share people's feedback and ideas for services with local mental health commissioners.

Over the past year, problems in accessing community mental health services have got worse due to the increased levels of mental ill-health caused by the pandemic. These pressures have been at their greatest in children and young people's mental health services – and, above all, for people with eating disorders.

Autistic voices and young people's mental health transitions

We've supported the development of a new all-age autism strategy by running workshops and having one to one or supported conversations with 14 autistic people. The report from this project – Autistic Voices – wasn't published during this financial year, but a pre-view copy was well received by commissioners who told us.



“Thank you for the information you have gathered ... it is a really good comprehensive piece of work and provides a range of information of what people with autism's lived experiences of health and care is locally.

“The areas that have been highlighted and the recommendations will be incorporated into the county wide All-age Autism Strategy.”

– Janet Dullaghan, County Lead for Autism Strategy

We've also undertaken some qualitative research into the mental health care experiences of eight young people and their families transitioning from children to adult's mental health services. The report from this is not due to be published until later in 2021, but it is part of a wider project to help the NHS in England develop a framework to understand how well services in their area are meeting people's needs.

Digital access for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

Through a National Lottery community funded project, we also supported 20 families and individuals from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to access online health information and appointments.

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers make up the largest ethnic minority groups in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, yet they are more likely to experience significantly poorer health than the general population. And many have struggled to access health and care services as a result of Covid-19 restrictions and a lack of internet access.

People were nominated for support by the Traveller Health Team working across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Compas, a charity who work with the Roma community in Peterborough.

And then by partnering with local charity Cambridge Online, we provided them with a tablet, technical support and six months connectivity with mobile data.

Initial feedback has been really positive. As well as helping people connect to healthcare, people have been able to use the tablets for home schooling, adult learning and more.

Over the next three years, we will be developing our support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities through a lottery funded project to help improve the health and care experiences and outcomes of people in these communities.



Involving people in research

We've supported local people to get involved in health and care research, particularly those from communities who can find it more challenging to access services.

This includes:

- ⇒ Helping to recruit five people from the local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, as well as people from deprived communities, to get involved in an NHS research project on health inequalities run by market research company Ipsos MORI.
- ⇒ Supporting two online workshops – one for Cambridgeshire and one for Peterborough – as part of a regional project to understand people's views on sharing personal data to improve health outcomes. This was a Cambridge University research project, funded by UK Research and Innovation. It will help researchers understand the issues that concern patients around data sharing, and the safeguards needed. And increase public understanding of the benefits of health and care data sharing for public health research.

We also helped to bring a public and patient view to a successful local health partners' bid for funds from the Health Foundation. Volunteers from our Healthwatch joined a citizens' involvement group, led by our Chair. This group will develop to ensure the public and patient perspective is central in the support to bring healthcare innovations more quickly to the benefit of people across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire over the next three years.



Helping you find the answers



Picture shows woman with a support dog at a pre-Covid-19 event.

Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful.

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.

This year, our Information Service helped 712 people with questions about health and care

⇒ This includes 336 from Cambridgeshire, 272 from Peterborough and 35 from out of county.

This is nearly three times more than we helped in the previous year. And we are finding that a much higher percentage of people sharing their experiences with us are now also asking for advice.

Information we helped people with

We helped people with lots of questions, from information about Coronavirus safety measures to Covid-19 testing and vaccinations, and from finding an NHS dentist to raising a concern about poor care.

As part of this, we've developed a series of advice articles on our websites, many of them answering our most common questions, such as finding an NHS dentist or information about coronavirus.

These are hugely popular, and more than 40,000 people read our information and advice articles in the last year— our top three articles have been:

- ⇒ Testing for coronavirus
- ⇒ Finding an NHS dentist
- ⇒ Information on coronavirus

Giving people the information they need

We aim to give people the information they need to make their own choices or raise their own concerns about their health and care.

This can be anything from sending a link to an advice article or contact details for an organisation that could help them, to more complex queries from people who need more support.

An initial call and chat with our Information Service about a problem can often bring other issues to light. And whilst we can't wave a magic wand, sometimes just knowing the right people to contact can help to progress things.



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health and social 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.

Call: 0330 355 1285 or text 0752 0635 176

Email: enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.co.uk

Or visit one of our websites and click on 'Advice and information'.

Case studies

Here are the stories of two of the people our Information team have helped.

Isolated and needing support

An isolated patient, struggling with continence issues and the wrong products, got in touch as they thought they were waiting to be seen by a specialist service. We also discovered their car was off the road, so they couldn't get to the shops and had to rely on food parcels. And that they were struggling to pay their fuel bills.

What we did

We contacted the relevant Patient Advice and Liaison Service and also put them in touch with the social prescribing service at their GP practice to find links to services and organisations which might offer support.

What happened

A specialist continence service appointment was arranged, and a thorough assessment and review followed.

Six support sessions were offered by their local social prescriber and a referral to a home energy service resulted in a grant to help with their winter heating costs.

Repeat medication difficulties

A number of patients got in touch to tell us about difficulties in getting their repeat prescriptions.

Some were struggling because their GP surgeries had switched to an online system for requests, and they did not use a computer or have email.

Others were concerned about being offered generic medicines rather than specific manufacturer brands.

What we did

We put them in contact with the Medicines Optimisation Team at our local Clinical Commissioning Group, which helps health professionals and patients make the right treatment choices.

What happened

The CCG team got in touch with patients and their GPs to iron out the difficulties and make sure patients could request and receive their medicines as needed.

Our volunteers



Our volunteers play a vital role in helping people have their say on health and social care.

And volunteering with us helps you develop skills, gain experience and make a difference to your community.

We've been supported by 38 Community Listener volunteers, 13 from Peterborough and 25 who live in Cambridgeshire, who have given 314 +hours of their time in the last year.

We also have a Board of 11 volunteer Directors – including new Associate Director Chelsia Lake who's supporting our work on listening to young people and in improving mental health services.

And throughout the year, we've also supported 58 volunteers to get involved as Independent Members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adult Social Care Partnership Boards.

How volunteering has changed

Changing the way we organise our volunteering has been a challenge. Normally, our team would be out and about at community and health events across our area, listening to people and gathering their experiences of health and care services.

But with all face-to-face work paused because of Covid-19, some of our volunteers have taken a break –understandably – and others have supported us on project work almost entirely online.

Others have opted to get involved in our online engagement work and this has required a lot of research into how and when community groups are meeting and mapping these groups across our area.

Projects our volunteers have worked on include:

- ⇒ An audit of GP websites as part of our Giving GP Websites a Check-up report.
- ⇒ A survey of peoples' experiences of leaving hospital during the pandemic as part of the Leaving Hospital During Covid-19 project.
- ⇒ Our three-month Covid-19 survey into people's health and care experiences.
- ⇒ Getting involved in focus groups for projects undertaken by other organisations such as the University of Cambridge and Public Health England.

In these difficult times, it's been more important than ever that we make sure our volunteers are properly supported – they are an integral part of Team Healthwatch. And as part of this, we organise monthly online volunteer meetings, as well as having regular telephone catch ups.

Meet Molly Hopgood



Background: University student studying BSc Psychology

Role: Community Listener

From: South Cambridgeshire

“I’m looking to a career in healthcare and going to be doing a placement year at a hospital working with rehabilitation teams in a brain injury ward.

“Volunteering with Healthwatch gives me an opportunity to improve my interpersonal and listening skills.”

Investing in our volunteers

In a difficult year, it was a huge boost to hear in August that we had been awarded the Investing in Volunteers quality mark.

This is a nationally recognised award from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. And shows we are a great place to volunteer – and how much our volunteers mean to us.

Work on the award began in September 2019 but the assessment, which involved interviews with 19 volunteers and staff, took place during lockdown.

“The award is a real boost for our whole team. We are so proud of what our volunteers do and all that they help us achieve.”

– Healthwatch Volunteer Manager Heather Lord

Meet Paul McCloskey



Background: Retired

Role: Community Listener and Independent Member on the Sensory Impairment and Older People's Partnership Boards

From: Huntingdonshire

“I like the work with Healthwatch - connecting to other local communities, talking to people and teasing out what's working well or not. It's meaningful.

“Passing on people's feedback gives local services and agencies a wakeup call from time to time.

“I have hearing loss myself and the impact can be incredibly undermining. So, my other volunteering work ties in well, especially with the Sensory Impairment Board, to improve care services and speak up for people with sight and hearing loss.”

Meet Eunice Alhassan



Background: Lawyer

Role: Community Listener

From: Peterborough

“I relocated to the UK from Nigeria to be with my husband who works for the NHS in Peterborough.

“At home, healthcare is difficult to come by and people die because they don’t have access to it. So, it’s something we really value.

“Serving – and helping others – is also really important to me

“I’m enjoying the work but since I joined, everything has been online. So, I’m really looking forward to face-to-face meetings starting and being able to meet everyone in person and talk to people about their experiences.”

“The beauty of volunteering is that you can just do the things you enjoy. Over the last year, I’ve sat on an interview panel, talked to people about their experiences for the leaving hospital report and helped make a video about online meetings.”

– Lorraine Lofting, Community Listener volunteer

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 Heather Lord, our Volunteer Manager.

Call: 0330 355 1285 or text 0752 0635 176

Email: enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.co.uk

Or visit one of our websites and click on ‘Get involved’.



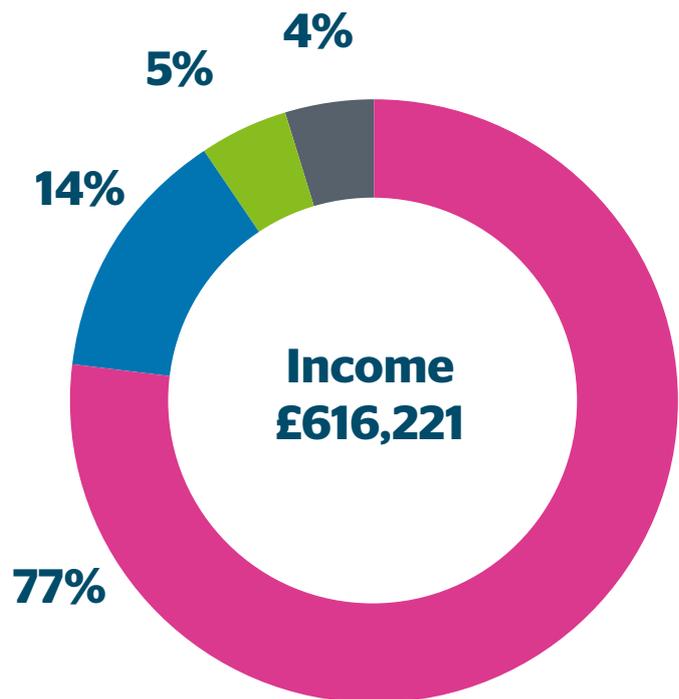
Finances

To help us carry out our work, we receive funding from Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

These figures are from our draft audited accounts for 2020 - 2021.

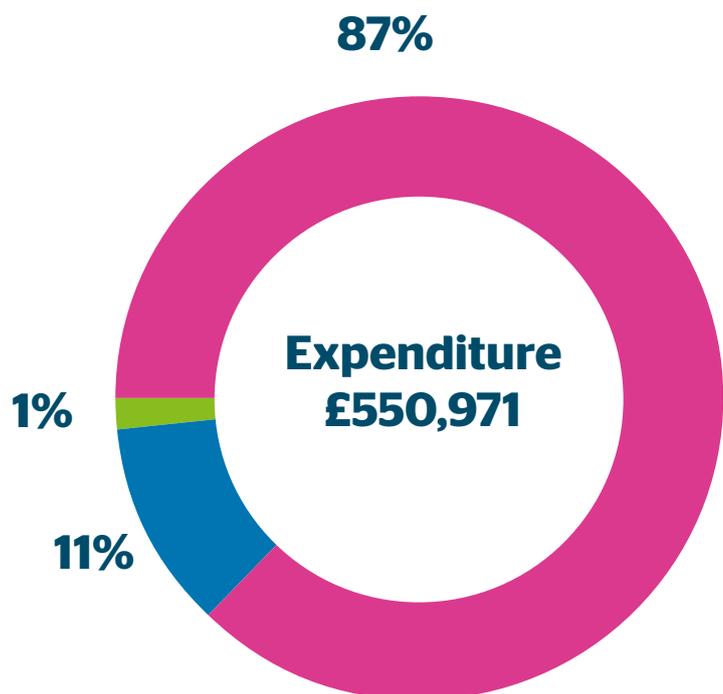
Income

- £475,102 funding received from our local authorities
- £84,504 funding for the Partnership Boards
- £29,139 National Lottery
- £27,325 funding for other projects



Expenditure

- £465,066 for staff costs
- £60,129 for operational costs
- £7,460 for support and administration



What next



It seems incredible that the next 12 months might be as significant as the ones we've just lived through.

The year ahead signals big changes. As health and care services continue to deal with Covid and rebuild services, they will also be evolving into an Integrated Care System (ICS). This change to how health and care services are planned, paid for and delivered is all about joining up services for people in local areas.

And for us, it's a big opportunity to put people's voices at the heart of the new system. We will be supporting them to keep listening to and involving local people as the ICS develops.

The changes ahead, and the ongoing delays in waiting for some treatments will be hard for some of the people in our community. But the groundswell of support for professionals providing care during Covid was inspiring – and we will do all we can to nurture a positive respect for health and care staff during the difficult work to be done.

Our commitment to help tackle inequalities will be stronger than ever – we will make sure that the theme of 'On equal terms' directs our work.

A message from our Chair

Val Moore is Chair of our Healthwatch and will be stepping down in September, after a full six years in post. This is what she says about “one of the best roles I’ve ever had!”

Healthwatch has a statutory role and a might beyond its small size – yet has managed to do so many important things during my time working with the team and the Board of Directors. And it will be a very sad time to leave.

Combining our two local Healthwatch services in 2017 allowed us to work together better for people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. And this has improved year on year – especially in our most challenging year to date.

I’m incredibly proud of the Healthwatch team’s response to Covid - both in themselves – working from home and in designing new ways to carry on engaging with people online and from a distance.

The messages we’ve had to speak about on behalf of patients have been difficult - very hard. But they have been well received by the health and social care community locally and we think we have been able to make a difference and use the experiences of service users to influence change.

Our excellent team will continue to apply modern and effective ways to gather insights on the issues that matter most to you. Issues such as avoiding exclusion in the digital age, getting access to services and support in waiting ‘well’, and thinking about how care can work best for local people. All on equal terms.



Picture shows Val Moore, Chair

Statutory statements



The 2012 Health and Social Care Act says that we must include the following statements in our Annual Report each year.

How we are managed

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough are jointly managed by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Community Interest Company (CIC).

The CIC has a Board of 10 Directors and one Associate Director – they decide what is most important for us to do and make sure our organisation is properly run.

This year, they have continued to meet every two months in public, but the meetings have been online. The papers are published on our websites one week in advance. Members of the public are able to ask questions at these meetings.

Our team of 16 staff, a mix of full-time and part-time, provide our Healthwatch services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

How we obtain people's views and experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email and through our websites. We've also attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to doing more to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. For example, we have:

- ⇒ Undertaken targeted workshops to listen to young people (up to 25 years) about their experiences of mental health services.
- ⇒ Supported a small group of people with learning disabilities at a workshop with local health commissioners to feedback about their experiences of going for their first Covid-19 vaccinations. Some of them had found this difficult and the insights they gave helped the NHS do more to meet the needs of learning-disabled people.
- ⇒ Engaged with people from minority communities by working with Fenland District Council, Peterborough City Council's community champions group and parent carer charity Family Voice's seldom heard community forum. Our Engagement Officer Rebwar has also made videos for our local authorities in his native Kurdish language.
- ⇒ Listened to older people by attending online support and friendship groups for people with long-term conditions such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Diabetes and Dementia. We've also reached out to older people through community newsletters and the local media.

How we make this report available

We ensure that this Annual Report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. Our Annual Report will be publicly available on our websites and from our office by 30 June 2021. And it will be presented at our Annual General Meeting online on 21 July 2021.

We will send a copy to Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission, NHS England, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire County Council, including their Adults and Health Committee and Peterborough City Council, including Peterborough Health Scrutiny Committee.

We will also develop an Easy Read copy and make the report available in other formats such as large print if people need us to.



Responses to recommendations and requests

We have to report on providers or commissioners who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. We do not have anything to report here.

This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

However, we send all our reports and anonymised patient feedback to Healthwatch England for them to include in their national work. And details about any patient issues that we think may be part of a national problem, such as problems with NHS dental access, or poor communications around a nationally led piece of work such as the Covid vaccination programme.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Our Chair, Val Moore, is a member of both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Boards, as well as their joint core group who work together across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

These Boards are places where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our local populations. And we support Val in this important work by letting her know what you've told us.

Our Chair is also a member of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. It was set up to help the local health and care system to respond to the pandemic with its own plan and tailored communications.

We have supported their work by sharing people's feedback on the impact of Covid-19 and how its restrictions have affected different groups in our community. And by sharing public health messages and signposting to services as the pandemic progressed.



Picture shows Sylvia from a pre-Covid-19 event. Sylvia has a learning disability and shared her experience of trying to get information in Easy Read.



You can read and share this report free of charge.

If you need this report in a different format, please get in touch with us.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

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**Registered Community Interest Company No: 08516179
Registered address: 6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon, PE29 7HN**

Contact us

The Maple Centre
6 Oak Drive
Huntingdon
PE29 7HN

 0330 355 1285 or text 0752 0635 176

 enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.co.uk

 www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk

 www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk

