



**Healthwatch  
Sunderland**

Annual Report 2018-19



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# Message from our Chair

This has been another busy year for Healthwatch Sunderland, staff and volunteers and both have risen to the challenge of dealing with numerous and complicated issues with enthusiasm and good humour.

There are many changes to health and social care services being proposed and consultation has taken place on the Path to Excellence proposals which we have been fully engaged in to ensure the voice of patients and public have been heard.

More work has been done around the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) consultation around Urgent Care Services in the city and a full submission was made by Healthwatch Sunderland detailing the issues of concern.

We also produced a report on the provision of equipment in the community that helps people live independent lives and our recommendations are being acted upon.

Path to Excellence Phase 2 and work around Integrated Care Systems across the North East and North Cumbria continues.

We have also undertaken a substantial amount of work around what it is like to live in Care Homes in the city, which has been welcomed by the public and service providers alike. Our Star Awards are also incredibly popular and very much appreciated by recipients.

Throughout the year we have also worked with the GP Alliance, Sunderland Adult Safeguarding Board and the North East Ambulance Service.

A very busy year indeed and next year is going to be just as busy and we need to hear your views on health and social care services in the city to enable us to be effective in our work.

I have decided to stand down as Chair of Healthwatch Sunderland at the end of March 2019 and I want to thank the Board, Staff and all our Volunteers for all their work throughout the year and wish them well for the future. I am sure the new Chair, John Dean will represent the views of patients and public with enthusiasm and vigour and I wish him well in his endeavours.

Alan Patchett



# About us

## Healthwatch is here to make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

*As Chair of Healthwatch England, it's my role to make sure your Healthwatch gets effective support and that national decisions are informed by what people are saying all over England.*

*If you were one of the 400,000 people who shared their experiences with us last year, I want to say a personal thank you. Without your views, Healthwatch wouldn't be able to make a difference to health and social care services, both in your area and at a national level. One example of this is how we shared 85,000 views with the NHS, to highlight what matters most, and help shape its plans for the next decade.*

*If you're part of an organisation that's worked with, supported or responded to, thank you too. You've helped to make an even bigger difference.*

*None of this could have been possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, who work in the community every day to understand what is working and what could be better when it comes to people's health and care.*

*If you've shared your views with us then please keep doing what you're doing. If you haven't, then this is your chance to step forward and help us make care better for your community. We all have a stake in our NHS and social care services: we can all really make a difference in this way.*



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Francis'.

Sir Robert Francis QC  
Healthwatch England Chair

## Our vision is simple

Health and social care that works for you. People want health and social care support that works - helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



## Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



## Our approach

People's views come first - especially those that find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



## People are at the heart of everything we do

We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

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

Our main job is to raise people's concerns with health and social care decision-makers so that they can improve support in Sunderland. The evidence we gather also helps us recommend how policy and practice can change for the better.

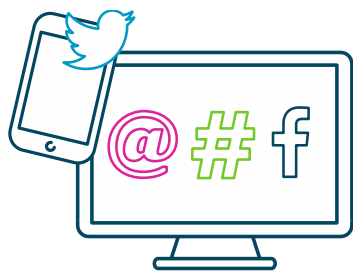




**Highlights from**

**our year**

## Here's how we have engaged with the residents of Sunderland in numbers:



We have **1415** followers on Twitter and **233** friends on Facebook. Join us and keep up to date with how we can help you.



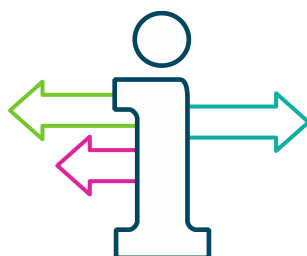
We have gathered over **1700** pieces of feedback on peoples experiences of using local health and social care services.



We visited over **100** services and over **200** community activities and events to understand your experiences of care.



Have a look at our website and sign up to our newsletter - we had over **23,000** visitors to our website this year!



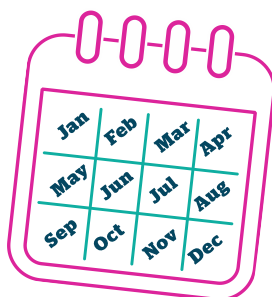
Over **500** people accessed our Information & Signposting Service - can we help you with your health and social care questions?



We published **37** reports - covering areas such as GP mergers, Care Home Life, and Community Equipment Services.



We have spoken to **131** residents, **127** of their relatives and friends and **228** staff members to find out what Sunderland's care homes are really like.



We have **22** volunteers (Volunteer Champions & Board members) helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave **674** hours.



We hold regular information stalls in our hospitals, health centres, GP practices and community venues across the city - come visit us, we'd love to see you!



**How we've made**

**a difference**



## Changes made to your community

Here's how sharing your views with us has led to positive changes to health and social care services in Sunderland. We show that when people speak up about what's important, and services listen, care is improved for all.

Here's some examples of how, with your help, we made a difference in Sunderland...

### GP mergers: Ensuring that patients remain at the heart of changes in Sunderland

Nationally and locally GP practices are having to make changes to the ways they provide better and more sustainable services for their patients. Locally we have seen this happening through mergers of some of our GP practices across the city to facilitate the delivery of sustainable, high quality and safe health care to patients.

To ensure that patients remain at the heart of these changes in Sunderland, we have played a pivotal role in ensuring their voices are heard and listened to during this process, as it can be very unsettling for some.

To help to achieve this, we worked in partnership with practice staff, their management teams, Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). We supported the patient

engagement work, which over the course of the year has affected approximately 20,000 patients within three GP practices. By attending consultations and carrying out specific engagement with practice patients we spoke to 599 patients across the three practices.

The engagement work saw our Engagement Team, volunteers and some practice Patient Participation Group members visiting the practices after 6 months (and in one case again at 12 months) post-merger, during surgery times to chat to patients and ask them: 'How do you think things are going since the merger?' Patients were more than willing to share their views and personal experiences of using the practices since the changes. The findings were then used by the practices involved to develop their future services, putting patients at the heart of what they do.

To see what they said visit our website: [www.healthwatchesunderland.com/healthwatch-sunderland-consultations-reports](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com/healthwatch-sunderland-consultations-reports)





## CARE HOME LIFE: What it's really like!

Thanks to residents, friends and relatives and staff from the care homes across Sunderland, local people now have the information they need when choosing a care home for themselves or a loved one.

As a result of our 'Care Home Life - What it's really like!' work, members of the general public now have access to our reports, which detail what life is like in the care homes of Sunderland. The reports are compiled after the Healthwatch Team carry out visits to each of Sunderland's 48 care homes. We gather feedback and listen to residents so that we can annually refresh and publish our findings.

Previous to our work local people would have had to visit each home they were interested in without any real information on what it is really like to live there. People have told us how this can be a very emotional and very stressful time and how the work of 'Care Home Life' has made a massive positive difference to them:

*"The Care Home Life reports really helped me and my sister when looking for a home for my mam."*

Local representatives of organisations supporting older people are now also acknowledging the value of our work and reaping the benefits. They have told us:

*"I used the Care Home Life reports during the course of my work, I find them really useful and easy to navigate with their 'trip advisor' style ratings. Thanks Healthwatch Sunderland!" (Sunderland Carers Centre).*

Care Home Managers have also told us that the work is having a positive effect on their home. One local Manager who received an 'Outstanding' CQC inspection told us the following about our work and support, when inviting us to their subsequent inspection result celebration event:

*"I personally believe that without your help and support we wouldn't have achieved the great success. Therefore I would greatly appreciate your attendance on this day if it is possible. Without your attendance I personally feel the celebration would not be complete."*



Other Managers have used feedback gained as a result of the work to implement positive changes in their care home for the benefit of their residents. The quote below exemplifies this:

*“Following this draft report I have appointed a Hydration Champion for the team. We as a Care Home will be taking part in National Nutrition and Hydration week 11<sup>th</sup> March until the 17<sup>th</sup> March. I will also be re-sending some paperwork to families where they can outline how, when and why they want to be contacted about their loved ones.”*

Following on from the success of this work our office has had many calls from other Healthwatch across the country, from County Durham in the North, as far down as Sutton in the South. Staff have sought advice, asking many questions on good practice and how they can replicate this work in their areas.

Finally, intelligence we have collected along the way has informed our other work. We are now working in partnership with Action on Hearing Loss, (the largest charity for people with hearing loss in the UK), researching the possibility of the development of a suitable training package for care home staff.

This was identified as a gap in current provision and it is hoped that the training will help staff who engage in such training will be better placed to support residents with hearing loss.

Whilst in the care homes of Sunderland we have met some amazing people; from residents, to their relatives and friends and fabulous staff. To recognise the achievements of the home Managers, their staff and the outstanding work they do, we have presented 5 care homes with a Healthwatch Sunderland Star Award.

To find out more visit our website:  
[www.healthwatchesunderland.com/care-home-life-what-its-really-like](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com/care-home-life-what-its-really-like)



## Nominate a star

If you would like to nominate a staff member, team or service for one of our star awards for the difference they have made to you or someone you know please get in touch.

- Email: [healthwatchesunderland@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchesunderland@pcp.uk.net)
- Tel: 0191 514 7145
- Web: [www.healthwatchesunderland.com](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com)



Phoenix Unit, Sunderland Royal Hospital

## Nominate a Star: The services that go the extra mile

As a Healthwatch we often hear about those services that shine or individuals who go the extra mile.

Celebrating these services or individuals is an essential and enjoyable part of our work and the 'Nominate a Star' scheme is our way of acknowledging all the good we hear about.

Over the past year we have presented the following organisations with a Star Award:

### GP Surgeries:

- Happy House Surgery
- Villette Surgery
- Dr Bhate and Partners

### Hospital Wards:

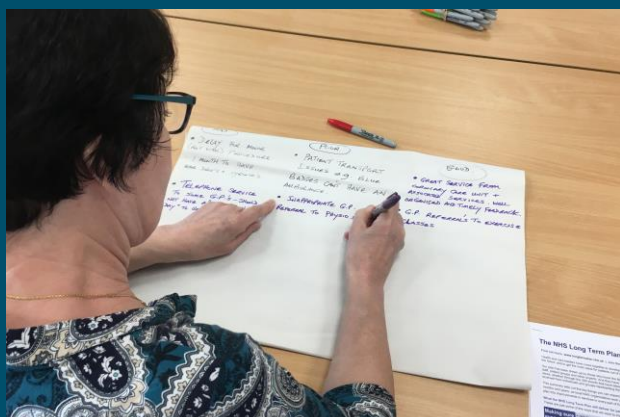
Phoenix Unit, Sunderland Royal Hospital

### Care Homes:

- Ryhope Manor
- Marigold
- Valley View & The Lodge
- Archers Park
- Elizabeth Fleming

*"All of the staff at the home and myself were overwhelmed to receive such a prestigious award. It is wonderful to know through the feedback received that we are getting the care we provide right and our residents and families are happy."* - Elizabeth Fleming  
Care Home

If you would like to nominate a staff member, team or service for one of our Star Awards for the difference they have made to you or someone you know, please get in touch.



## Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services hear what works, what doesn't, and what you want from care in the future.

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- Web: [www.healthwatchesunderland.com](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com)



**Helping you find**

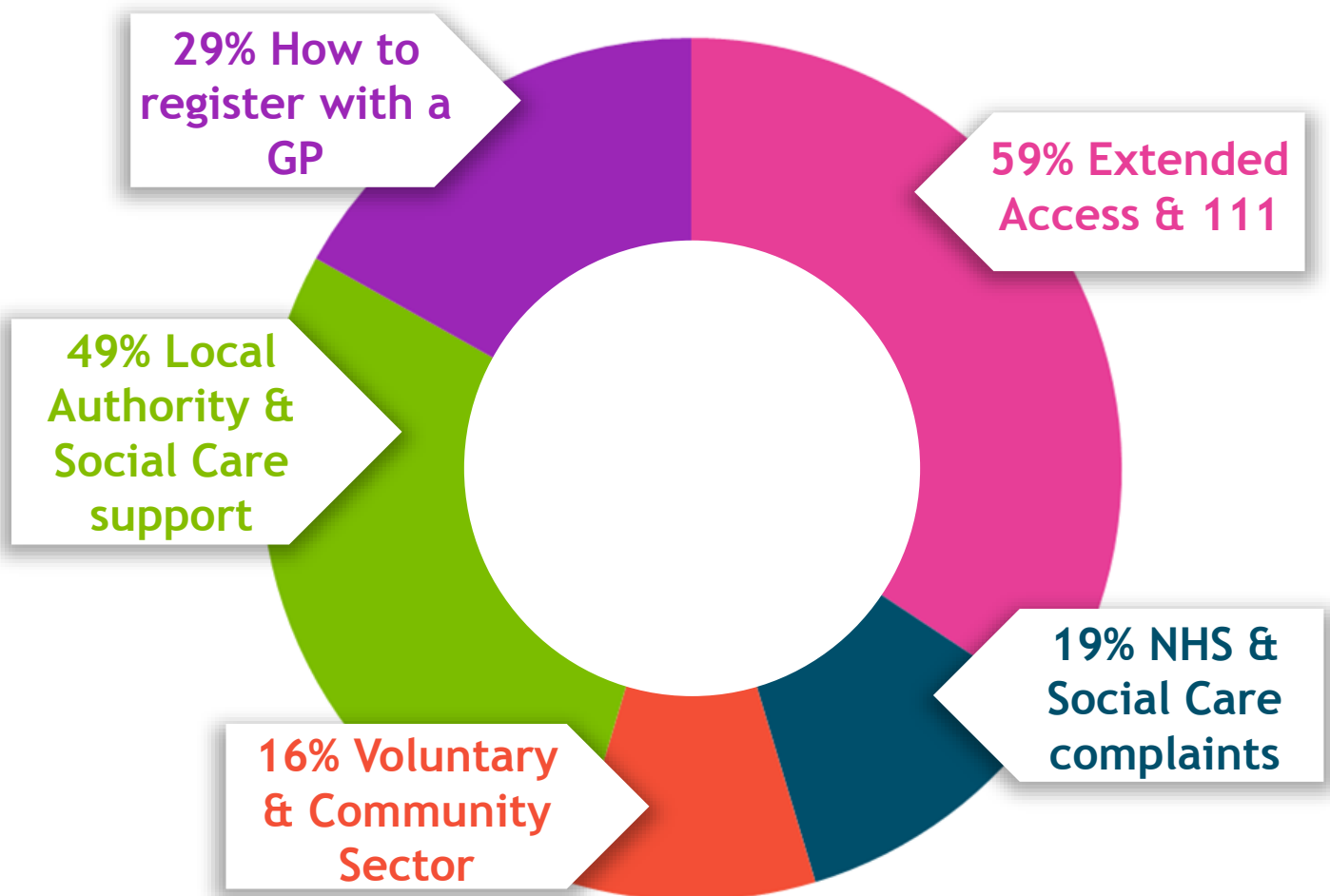
**the answers**

Your HEALTHY &  
SOCIAL CARE JOUR

## What services do people want to know about?

People don't always know how to get the information they need to make decisions about their own health and social care. Healthwatch plays an important role in providing information and pointing people in the right direction for the support they need.

Here are the most common things that people ask us:



Our Care Home Life reports support people to find the right care home.

Thanks to residents Rhoda and Jenny for sharing their views.

Visit our website to view our reports.

[www.healthwatchesunderland.com](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com)

## How we provide people with information and signposting support

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful.

There are a number of organisations that can provide help, but people don't know where to look. Last year we helped over 500 people access the advice and information they need.

If you have any questions or issues around health and social care you can contact us in number of ways including:

- + Our website, look for our Information & Signposting page
- + You can give us a call
- + Send us an email
- + Message us through Facebook or Twitter
- + Come visit us when we are out and about



### Rita's story:

"My prescriptions were costing a fortune as I was only getting a two week supply of medication each time. Healthwatch Sunderland informed me that I could ask my practice if I could have a prescription for a longer time period which would reduce this cost and the surgery agreed to this.

*So, thanks to Healthwatch Sunderland, I am over the moon I saved money on my prescriptions."*

### Veterans in Crisis:

We spoke with an army veteran who felt isolated, alone and in need of support. We informed him about Veterans in Crisis (VICS) and the support they offer to veterans in Sunderland. He did not feel well enough to attend a meeting or speak to them on his own, so he gave permission for us to contact VICS on his behalf. When we spoke to VICS they agreed to meet up with the gentleman and support him. With support the gentleman did engage with VICS and has been along to their meetings and made use of their foodbank.

Visit: [veteransincrisis.co.uk](http://veteransincrisis.co.uk)





## Signposting: Sunderland GP Extended Access Service

During engagement sessions across the city, the most common feedback we hear from the general public is related to issues around accessing GP appointments. To improve this situation, the Sunderland NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have introduced the Sunderland GP Extended Access Service, which offers out of hours GP appointments. We found that although this service has been up and running for some considerable time, many members of the public are still unaware of its existence.

It has become apparent that although patients' needs are fitting the criteria to access the service, some practice staff are not offering these appointments. We have highlighted this to the CCG and as a result of bringing this to their attention, they offered additional training sessions to the relevant staff and increased the amount of promotion for the service.

However, we haven't stopped there, on a mission to inform people of services they are entitled to, we now spread the word whilst on our travels around the city, explaining the service to people at various venues, during meetings, groups and in particular during surgery post-merger engagement sessions at newly formed practices.

People have shared how grateful they are for the information we have shared.

*"Thank you for this information. I can't understand why my practice didn't offer me this choice. I now know I can ask for this when I need it."*

Over a 6 month period we have distributed over 250 leaflets and are still continuing to do so as part of our Information & Signposting Service.

## Wheelchair Accessible Dentists

In December 2018, whilst at a local GP surgery we met a lady who explained she was finding it difficult to access her current dental practice, due to the fact she is a wheelchair user. A lot of our city's dental practices are located in old, and sometimes listed buildings and therefore can be difficult to update and make alterations to, so this can be a common problem.

To provide the lady with current information on the wheelchair accessible dentists across the city we carried out some research, and now we have an up to date list available on our website.

The lady who originally sparked this work was grateful for the information and said;



*"Thank you so much, you have made a real difference."*

This work then sparked further research and the production of a list of wheelchair accessible Opticians and Pharmacies and the production of a short video to promote this work which can be found on our website.





*Arthur is happy with his new wheelchair*

## Sunderland Community Equipment Services report

Initial conversations with some service users of Sunderland Care and Support, Community Equipment Services (SCES) highlighted some issues. This feedback was gathered over the first few months of 2017 and involved engagement work with the following organisations: Sunderland Carers Groups in Washington, Southwick and Pallion, Stroke Association groups, Alzheimer's Society groups, Kepier Medical Practice Patient Participation Group and South Hylton Medical Centre Patient Participation Group.

The feedback gathered prompted a larger piece of work, looking at SCES and accessing more focused feedback from their service users and equipment prescribers. To read the report and the response to the report from Sunderland Care and Support visit our website 'Report' page.

Following this work, whilst visiting one of the city's sheltered accommodations, we spoke to Arthur who was waiting a long time to get a new wheelchair. He had been visited by a SCES representative who had told him he required an electric wheelchair to replace his old one.

Whilst waiting for his new electric wheelchair, Arthur said he was left without any wheelchair at all and could not get out and about, even to the local shop and that he was in fact housebound!

He added that he was frustrated and unhappy at not being able to get out and about in his community, which was very important to him.

With his permission we contacted SCES on his behalf; they advised that the Rehabilitation Engineering and Aids for Living (RREMS) Service, which is based at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle, were dealing with his order for a new electric wheelchair.

After we contacted RREMS and explained Arthur's situation to them they made his order a priority. In the meantime SCES also mended the old wheelchair whilst he was waiting to enable him to get around. Result! To say he was pleased was an understatement!

We informed Arthur that should he need our support in the future, not to hesitate to get in touch, which he did a couple of months later. He needed support around benefits, so we contacted Age UK Sunderland Advocacy Service on his behalf, they duly made contact regarding his needs.

*"I am very grateful, I could not have got better support anywhere. I now get out to places like Barnes Park and South Shields then over to North Shields on the ferry."*

We as a team have learnt a lot from this piece of work, as well as strengthening our partnerships across the city, some of our partners have now built new relationships with SCES. After a representative visited local Stroke Association Groups and Sunderland Carers Centre Groups, he was asked to re-visit Sunderland Carers Centre Group in the Washington area. The group wish to keep the relationship ongoing and hope that he will visit again in Autumn 2019 to inform them of the organisation's new services.

*"The Washington Carers Group benefitted greatly from having SCES attend their monthly group, feeling that their issues relating to the service were listened to and acted upon in subsequent changes to service delivery."*

Helen McAdam, Sunderland Carers Centre



 **Our volunteers**

## How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch Sunderland we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of all of our amazing Volunteer Champions and Board members. They work with us to help make health and social care better. The team have provided 674 hours to support their local community.

### They help to:

- + Raise awareness of the work we do in the community
- + Visit services to make sure they're meeting people's needs
- + Collect people's views and experiences which we use in our reports
- + Ensure that patient and service user voices are heard at strategic meetings across the city

## Meet our volunteer Champions

We caught up with a few of our fantastic volunteers to show you how their work truly makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.

### June

June began her volunteering journey with us in February 2017, after hearing about the volunteer roles available whilst completing a course for people who are coping with brain injuries. June was enrolled on the course after having several mini strokes a few years earlier, which left her with cognitive problems and resulted in her being given early retirement from work on health grounds.

During her time volunteering with us and undeterred by her condition, June has grown in confidence over the past few years and has gone from strength to strength. Staff who have worked alongside her have witnessed the positive progression June has made and she has become a real asset to our Engagement Team and its work. When June was asked about her volunteering she said:

*“My volunteering with Healthwatch Sunderland has boosted my self-confidence as I learned how to approach and interact with people through information stands, care home visits and group work. I am confident to explain who we are and how we are trying to improve health and social care services throughout the city by asking for feedback on what works and what can be improved. Through the group work I have also found a way to turn negatives into*



*positives by explaining the personal problems I sometimes have with cognition, especially speech and comprehension, I find I can empathise more and they respond positively to this.*

*I find my volunteering has boosted my morale and self-worth in lots of ways I didn't expect and with the continuing support of Wendy, Anna, the staff and other volunteers I hope to continue improving into the future as my role develops.”*

## Our volunteers

### Nancy

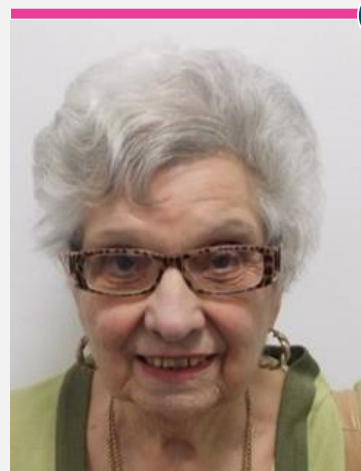
Nancy has volunteered with Healthwatch Sunderland since its launch in April 2013 and continues to be a much valued member of the team.

Nancy is enthusiastic and always up for a new challenge, whether this be a training course, hosting a Healthwatch Sunderland information stand, collecting resident's experiences in care homes or general engagement across the city, Nancy is there!

Nancy recently celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and told us why she still enjoys her volunteering:

*"I enjoy volunteering alongside the other Healthwatch Sunderland volunteers and staff*

*team and meeting new people on a one to one basis, which I find really rewarding. I'm a big believer 'if you don't use it, you'll lose it' and I have no intention of losing it!"*



### Lynda

Lynda originally got involved in volunteering just over a year ago, as she had lots of spare time to give and likes to keep herself busy. During this time Lynda has supported both staff and other volunteers with engagement stalls, care home visits and group talks. Staff have seen how far Lynda has grown in both her self-confidence and skills. Lynda said the following about her volunteering:

*"I was a little nervous at first but soon got into the swing of things and now really enjoy my volunteering. I love talking to other people, listening to their stories and I also feel very proud when I hear that the work I have contributed to, such as the Care Home Life*

*work, has made a real difference to local people. I would highly recommend volunteering to anyone."*



## Would you like to volunteer?

Do you have some spare time to give?  
Please contact our team on:

- Email: [healthwatchesunderland@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchesunderland@pcp.uk.net)
- Tel: 0191 514 7145
- Web: [www.healthwatchesunderland.com](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com)

“The views and stories you share with us are helping to make care better for our local community” Arlene, Healthwatch Volunteer



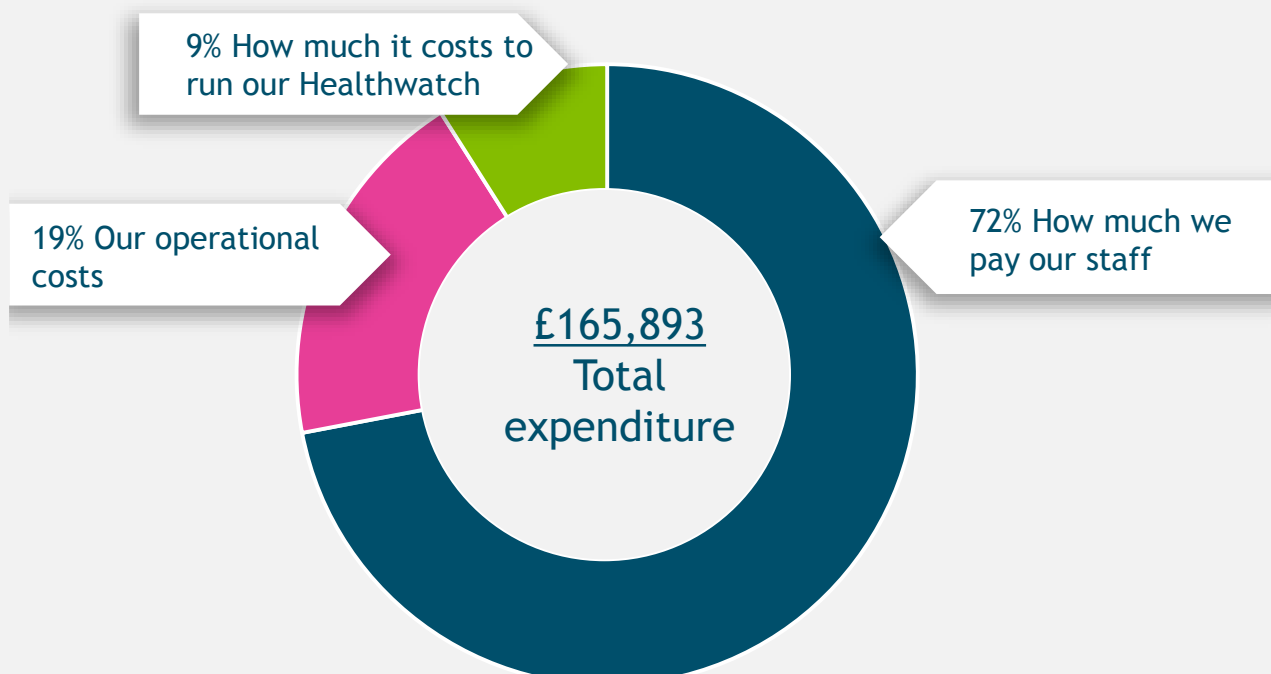
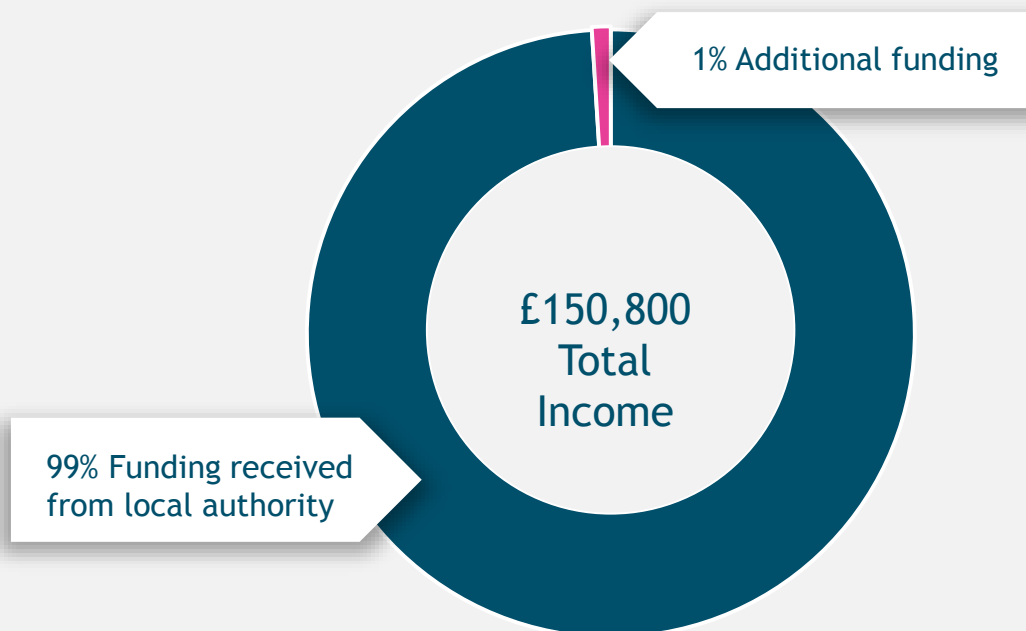


# Our finances

## How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we spent £165,893.

We also received £800 of additional income from the Adults Safeguarding Board and the NHS Urgent Care Programme.





**Our plans for**

**next year**





# Message from our new Chair

## Dr John Dean



After almost two years as Vice Chair, I look forward to continuing the excellent initiatives started in 2017 and 2018. Changes in health and social care continue at a pace. Starting with the merger of our two regional hospitals and recently the All Together Better Alliance that will have a significant impact on the integration of health and social care services in the community.

We will continue our involvement in the Path to Excellence process and will ensure that our regional Healthwatch partners whose communities are affected, are able to add their voice to the engagement process.

Our plan is to be involved in the All Together Better Alliance and to continue patient representation in the New Consultation Types programme being rolled out by Sunderland CCG along with our engagement in the new Telecare initiative using digital networks and devices to aid care in the home environment. As members of the Health and Wellbeing Board we will, additionally, participate in the alcohol and tobacco sub-groups of the Board.

Healthwatch Sunderland volunteers and staff will be involved in providing real time feedback from patients in the Sunderland Hospitals. This will help in improving hospital services.

As a result of the major changes being planned for health and social care services, the next year will be very challenging but will be helped by the contributions from our two new board members and the continued enthusiasm of our dedicated staff members and volunteers.

Finally I would like to thank Alan Patchett for his significant contribution.

# Message from Our

## Chief Executive

Firstly I would like to thank the people of Sunderland for working so closely with Healthwatch. To support over 500 people through the information and signposting service is phenomenal and the level of interaction and feedback Healthwatch Sunderland now receives is testament to the hard work and dedication of the staff and volunteer team, but also the willingness of local people to engage. Healthwatch's goal is to listen to local people's health and social care needs and influence service design and delivery; this is something that Sunderland does really well.

The sustained interest in the Healthwatch Sunderland's social media, website and events or activities is good to see and I look forward to this continuing into 2019-20.



*Carol Gaskarth*

**Carol Gaskarth**  
Chief Executive

# Thank you

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

- + Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- + All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- + The numerous voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work - so many of you have been generous with your time.
- + The care home staff that have welcomed us into their homes, and especially to the residents and their loved ones who have shared their experiences.
- + Our statutory partners in the local authority and CCG - thank you for listening.

*“Thank you for coming to speak to us today. We have found the information really useful.”*

*Group facilitator*

*Your Healthwatch Sunderland Team*

*“Thank you for being so kind and understanding. You listened to both me and my husband and recognised when he needed support. I really appreciate it and you have made a real difference.”*

*Member of the general public*

*“I love the Care Home Life work. You can see first hand who is doing well, which for a member of the public is fantastic! I love the fact that you have highlighted those homes who have good old fashioned values and care. The homes which have not done so well need to listen to what their residents and families have to say. What a brilliant piece of work!”*

*Tyne & Wear Care Alliance*



# Contact us

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- + @HWSunderland - Facebook & Twitter
- + [www.healthwatchesunderland.com](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com)



Photo by Steve Mayes

Healthwatch Sunderland is managed by:  
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Company Number 3491237

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- + Twitter: @PioneeringCare
- + [www.pcp.uk.net](http://www.pcp.uk.net)



Pioneering Care Partnership

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.

If you need this in an alternative format please contact us using the details above

# healthwatch Sunderland

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SR1 3QD

Website: [www.healthwatchesunderland.com](http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com)  
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