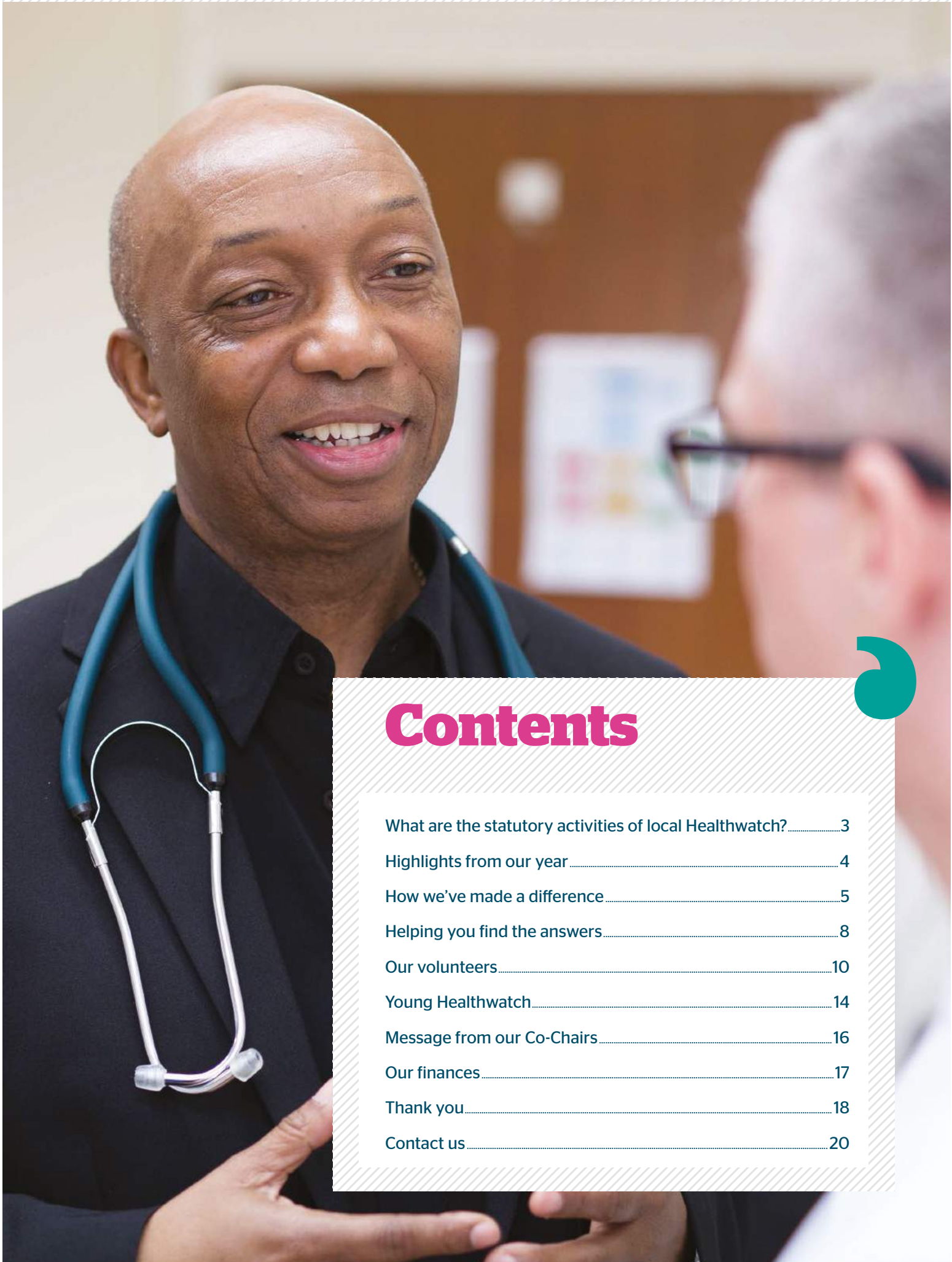


healthwatch

South Tyneside

Annual Report 2018/19





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The statutory activities of local Healthwatch

Healthwatch South Tyneside is one of 148 local Healthwatch organisations across England launched in April 2013 to give users of health and social care services a powerful voice.

As set out in the Health and Social Care Act of 2012, Healthwatch South Tyneside has the following statutory activities:

- + Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- + Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
- + Obtaining the views of local people regarding their need for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known.
- + Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
- + Providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services.
- + Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England.
- + Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about particular issues.
- + Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

An independent community interest company, it is your dedicated consumer champion, working with users of local NHS and social care services to hear about your experiences, identify any issues or problems and help generate improvements.

Healthwatch South Tyneside has the power to enter and view services, can influence how services are set up and commissioned by having a seat on the local health and wellbeing board, and provide information, advice and support about local services.

It also produces reports which influence the way services are designed and delivered and can pass information and recommendations to Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.

Highlights from our year



This year there have been 20,807 views of our Facebook posts...



More than 275 young people took part in our mental health survey...



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from the mental health concerns of young people to problems older residents were having with Accessible Information...



Our website has seen an 11 per cent year-on-year increase in traffic, from 5,575 to 6,174 users...

We have visited five care homes in South Tyneside to find out how residents are cared for, engaged and entertained...



We interviewed more than 100 people to find out about their experience as a South Tyneside District Hospital outpatient...



How we've made a difference



Volunteers Margaret Bower and Arthur McKean at Westoe Village Fair

Listening to people

From meeting the public at events, to conducting surveys, to commissioning reports, to engagement via our website and social media channels - Healthwatch has had a very busy year collecting the views and experiences and identifying the needs of health and social care service users in South Tyneside.

Community events our team of staff and volunteers have attended to meet the general public have included Westoe Village Fair, Laygate Festival, Cleadon Park School Fun Day, Jarrow Festival and the Hadrian School MELA.

We have held a monthly drop-in at Cleadon Park Primary Care Centre to gather views and experience of mental health services, and spent a morning each month from September to February at the outpatients' department at South Tyneside District Hospital, where we spoke to patients to about their appointments.

To ensure we reach all sections of the community we have attended refugee drop-ins at the Living Waters Church in Laygate, met members of the travelling community at West Boldon Pastures, attended the Al Azhar Mosque in South Shields, and met members of the Iranian community at Caffè Nero and the Bangladeshi community at Ocean Road CA.

Staff, supported by volunteers, also conducted 'Enter & View' visits to five care homes in the borough to assess the standard of care and range of meaningful activities being provided.

Our new Young Healthwatch team has been instrumental in helping us to engage hard to reach groups, including young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Their work has led to feedback from hundreds of young people via social media, face to face in meetings and at events to gauge their views on mental health services and their awareness of them. They have also met young people with special educational needs and disabilities at three special schools to establish their aspirations for adult life.

Young Healthwatch has engaged Depaul (homeless charity supporting young people), Apna Ghar, the Youth Justice Team, sexual health services and Youth Outreach staff as part of the #manage your mental health campaign.

YH is also attending curriculum group and training provider meetings to promote the service and build good networks with schools and colleges.

Improving services

We have published a number of reports during the year with recommendations for improvements to services, based on the feedback we have received from users and carers.

They include a report on Accessible Information, which followed a telephone call from Marian Stead, of Jarrow, concerned that she had to open and read letters for an elderly neighbour which contained personal medical information. When she rang his GP practice and asked for letters in large print, her request was initially refused.

In response Healthwatch conducted three months of research, including an online survey of patients, telephone survey of GP practices, group sessions with patients at The Deaf Club and Your Voice Counts, and an interview with the North East Ambulance Service.

We found evidence supporting her concerns that many patients were struggling, having not been offered information in suitable alternative formats, meaning they were relying on relatives and friends to help them.

A common theme from survey respondents was frustration because they were having to repeatedly request correspondence to be delivered in alternative formats and/or because their communication needs had not been recorded or shared with other healthcare professionals.

Healthwatch rang 27 GP practices in South Tyneside to establish if they were meeting the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) which was implemented by NHS England in 2016 and requires information to be available in alternative formats so people with a learning disability, sensory impairment or sensory loss can understand what is being said and to communicate their needs.

Whilst the majority of receptionists understood and felt they complied with the standard, around a third forwarded our call to the practice manager and some asked a colleague to support them with their answers. Not all reception staff knew what the AIS was and if there was signage within waiting areas to inform patients of their rights to receive information in different formats.

The report, which made a number of recommendations, was presented to South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board and shared

with commissioners and healthcare service providers.

Marian praised Healthwatch for its response to her request for help: "It has been fantastic, absolutely great. From trying to help one person, now everybody in the borough who needs medical information in alternative formats will get it. It's a great outcome."

Healthwatch conducted five Enter & View visits to care homes last May, completing a tour of all 26 homes in the borough. Each report outlines the findings of our Authorised Representatives and is shared with the home owner.

Over a six month period from September to February, volunteers interviewed patients at South Tyneside District Hospital's Outpatient's Department. More than 100 patients gave feedback on their experience of the service, which was shared with the Lead Nurse of Patient Experience.

We were glad to report the findings suggested high satisfaction with the quality of treatment provided - with all respondents stated they would recommend the department to family and friends, rating their experience as 5 Stars.

Waiting times were consistently praised, with many respondents saying their appointment times were punctual. Staff were also highly regarded, with respondents emphasising they were treated with dignity and respect, and that medical information was well explained in a friendly and approachable way.

Recommendations for improvements included pre-booking of wheelchairs so they can be made available by porters on arrival and the replacement of a dirty entrance carpet.

Urgent Care Hub review

We also returned to the Urgent Care Hub at South Tyneside District Hospital in January 2019 to review the service and see if recommendations we made last year for improvements had been implemented.

Our findings on the lack of GP cover at the hub had made front page news in the local Press in March 2018. After 15 Enter & View visits to the hub over a period of three weeks where we spoke to 41 patients and members of staff, Healthwatch had found it was without a GP more than a third of the time it was open during the visits.

“It’s a great outcome.”

Marian Stead

This meant patients had to be referred on to the A&E department, which the hub is designed to relieve pressure on by instead offering consultations with other clinicians such as nurses or GPs. Staff at the hub told Healthwatch they believed there were not enough staff to support the service.

The managing director of service provider Vocare responded immediately to our report and its various recommendations, pledging to meet with South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and NHS South Tyneside CCG to “discuss the report further and to ensure we work in partnership to deliver seamless and accessible services to patients”.

Returning to the hub, Healthwatch carried out three two-hour visits and found the recommendations put forward in our 2018 report had been addressed.

The Minor Injuries and GP area had been refurbished and was well presented, providing a welcoming experience for patients. The wellbeing of the patients coming through whom we observed was positive and the patient streaming enabled patients to be directed to the appropriate treatment.

The manager shared with us copies of the previous three months’ rota indicating when a GP was on duty. No gaps were evident as an Advanced Practitioner was on duty to cover all sessions in a GP’s absence.

We did feel, however, that access into the A&E department from the main reception proves difficult for individuals on crutches or in a wheelchair and have asked if this can be addressed.

Working in partnership with others

Healthwatch South Tyneside attends a number of committees, boards and groups to represent the views and concerns of health and social care service users.

They include:

- + Joint Primary Care Committee

- + Safeguarding Adults Board
- + Communications and Engagement Task and Finish Group
- + Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (South Tyneside and Sunderland)
- + Health and Wellbeing Board
- + HealthNet
- + Local Healthwatch Chairs.

We have regular meetings with the Director of Quality and Transformation and the Chief Operating Officer at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and the CEO of South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group.

Young Healthwatch is chairing a new group for parents and carers of children with SEND looking at transition and the gaps between children and adult services on behalf of charity Your Voice Counts.

Healthwatch has attended various meetings to share information and work in partnership, including South Tyneside Regional Equality Forum, Healthnet, Dementia Alliance and Women’s Health in South Tyneside (WHIST).

We continue to develop our priorities in consultation with our key partners and working networks:

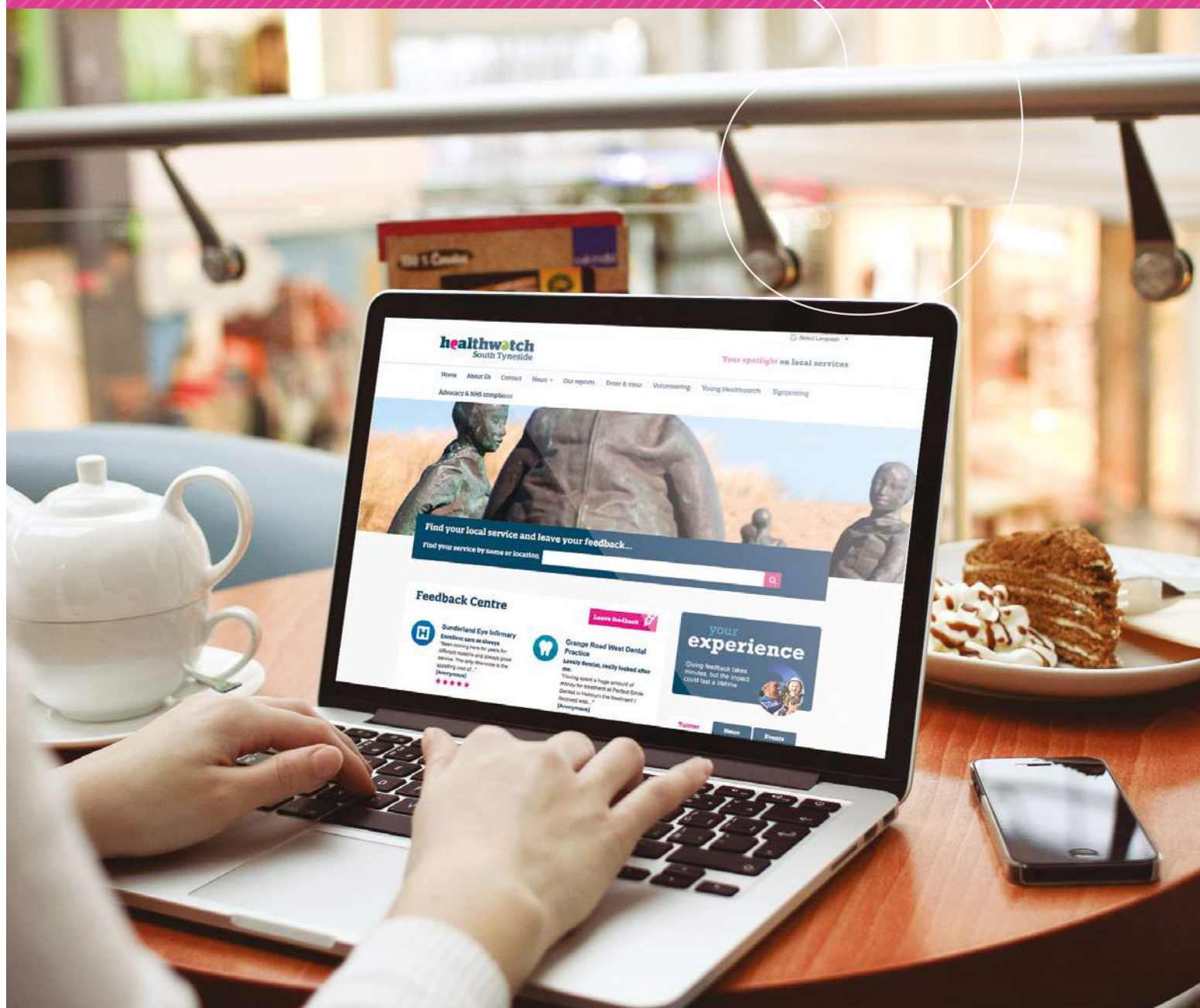
Strategic

South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group
 South Tyneside Integrated Board Group
 South Tyneside Carers Strategy Group
 South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board
 South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
 North East Ambulance Meeting

Partnership Meetings/Forums

Dementia Action Alliance Group
 Pioneer Care Meeting
 South Tyneside Community Dementia Forum
 South Tyneside Regional Equality Forum
 Healthnet
 CCG Local Engagement Board
 North East Ambulance Healthwatch Forum
 Happiness and Wellbeing Forum
 Regional Healthwatch Meeting.

Helping you find the answers



One of Healthwatch's key roles is to signpost local health and social care services, and to offer advice to service users and their families.

During the year we have been contacted by people in a range of ways - via our website, Facebook page, our online Feedback Centre, email, telephone and in person both at our offices and at other venues and events.

We also go out into the community to offer help. Examples include attending the South Tyneside Asylum and Refugee Church Help group to help members looking to sign up at local GP and dental surgeries.

Our team has also attended dozens of events and meetings across the borough during the year to meet patients and carers and engaged with well over 1,000 people.

We have restructured the Healthwatch website to make it easier to navigate and find information, and to leave feedback, with a new area dedicated to young people.

The comprehensive 'Find a service' facility has information and contact details for a wide range of health and social care services.

More than 200 services are listed, ranging from care homes to dentists, GP practices, hospices, hospitals and domiciliary care providers. Information includes telephone numbers, addresses and website details.

The Feedback Centre remains a popular platform for leaving comments on health and social care services which, like TripAdvisor, also enables people to review other people's experiences before choosing a provider such as a dentist, GP surgery or pharmacy.

We use social media to drive traffic to our website, publishing regular news items of interest about local and national health and social care issues on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

In 2018/19 our Facebook posts were seen by nearly 21,000 people, and website traffic increased by around 11 per cent to 6,175 unique users - an extra 600 people. On average, 350 people view each social media post we publish.

Social media is also an excellent barometer to measure the issues local people care about; both in terms of how many shares and likes they generate

as well as the comments people leave.

Last year the announcement of the closure of St Clare's Hospice saw the biggest response with 2,580 views followed by the appeal for Young Healthwatch volunteers and the launch of the young people's mental health survey.

The kinds of issues raised by service users who have contacted us this year by telephone, email, via our website and in person for advice and information include:

- + a bucket handle tear misdiagnosed as osteoarthritis by a hospital
- + waiting two to three weeks each time for a GP appointment
- + the "appalling" cost of parking at a hospital
- + waiting months to be given hearing aids
- + a GP who visited a patient's home without an appointment
- + waiting more than a year for a counselling appointment.

Some were signposted to the North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy, which deals with formal complaints about health and social care services.

But many people leaving comments on the Feedback Centre were taking the opportunity to praise the service they had received.

One wrote about South Tyneside District Hospital: "My 94-year-old dad had fallen and broken his hip. He was successfully operated on and we can't praise the staff enough. He is having the best care in all regards. From the doctors to auxiliary staff - all marvellous. The nurses are so lovely, every single one of them. We so appreciate what Ward 7 has done for our lovely dad. Thank you all so much!"

Another, writing about the breast screening unit at Sunderland Royal Hospital, said: "The clinic is modern and very private. I was seen at my appointment time. The staff were really friendly and put me at ease, introducing themselves by their first names. The radiographer was lovely and very gentle. The whole experience could not have been better. Well done to you all."

A key priority for 2019/20 is developing a new area of the website for Young Healthwatch with dedicated advice and information for young people on the issues they say matter most to them, including mental health, sexual health and primary care.

Our volunteers

How we involve the public and volunteers

In 2017 we employed two new members of staff to develop volunteer recruitment and over the past year their work has seen a significant boost to our volunteer ranks.

New recruits in 2018/19 include five new board members with backgrounds in nursing, primary care and the voluntary sector, and our Young Healthwatch team.

They join long serving volunteers including two board directors who have been with us since our launch in 2013 and who have extensive experience in the NHS and voluntary sector - Co-Chair Sue Taylor and board member Dr Shobha Srivastava.

The board has a diversity of skills, perspectives and experiences and its role is to direct and control the work of the organisation. A terms of reference document sets out the governance structures and principles.

Decisions about our work programme are made by the board but largely driven by external factors including changes to health and social care service delivery, consultation activity and the demands of service users and patient groups.

Last year the board produced a three year Operational and Work Plan which sets out our key priorities from 2018 to 2021. They include how we involve local people, improved ways of working, raising the profile and awareness of Healthwatch, and improving links with strategic partners.

Decision making

Monthly board meetings are held in public and minutes are published on our website. We also publicise our plans and decisions widely via the website, social media, e-newsletters and the local media.

Key board director responsibilities:

- + To determine strategic direction and policies.
- + To ensure the activities of Healthwatch South Tyneside reflect the diverse communities of South Tyneside, not just the views of majority groups or the most high profile issues.
- + To establish and oversee control and risk management arrangements.
- + To ensure that Healthwatch South Tyneside achieves its aims and objectives.
- + To oversee 'operational management' and ensure the implementation of board policies.



“It also feels good to help people; if people ask me for advice about health and social care I can say if I don’t know the answer I know someone who does.”

it starts with
YOU



Volunteer spotlight: Margaret Bower

Former nurse, carer and support worker Margaret Bower brings decades of experience as a health and social care professional to Healthwatch South Tyneside.

The 68-year-old grandmother-of-two spent 17 years working as a maternity and theatre nurse in hospitals in Northumberland, Teesside and Cambridgeshire before taking roles in a nursing home in Jarrow and as a live-in support worker in Newcastle.

Margaret’s varied career, which has also included spells training as a driving instructor and as a cleaning company boss, has fitted around her husband Peter’s senior management roles in the NHS and bringing up their two children. This has meant 17 house moves so far (one more pending).

Margaret, from Jarrow, also spent a number of years caring for her elderly mother. She retired aged 65, but remained determined to keep herself busy.

Peter, Co-Chair of Healthwatch South Tyneside, asked if she would be interested in bringing her experience in health and social care to HWST and in 2018 she joined as a volunteer.

Margaret said: “I like to help people and feel useful; I don’t want to sit in the house and I don’t want to feel that I have wasted all those years I put into the NHS.

“I’m quite an all-rounder, as I have worked as a theatre and maternity nurse, I’ve worked with the elderly, I’ve been a support worker, I have been a Patient and Public Involvement volunteer and I also volunteer for Your Voice Counts helping people with learning difficulties.

“It also feels good to help people; if people ask me for advice about health and social care I can say if I don’t know the answer I know someone who does.”

Board members



Sue Taylor Co-Chair

Sue retired as CEO of Gateshead and South Tyneside Sight Service in 2018 after more than 20 years with the charity. She has worked in the voluntary sector for 25 years, mainly for and with people with sight loss, and represents sight loss at a national and regional level. Sue represents the voluntary sector on the Local Eye Health Network for the North East, leads on the South of Tyne Eye Care Planning Group, and is part of a national Department for Health pilot looking at models of Commissioning for Effectiveness and Efficiency around eye care services.



Peter Bower Co-Chair

After a 30-year career in the NHS including several years as a CEO in primary care, Peter retrained as a secondary school maths teacher before retiring after a third career in the probation service. He has undertaken voluntary work with a social housing provider and also gained an Open University degree. The married father-of-two, from Jarrow, joined the Healthwatch board to help improve services across health and social care as the two work ever closer together.



Dr Shobha Srivastava MBE Board Member

A founding board member, Dr Srivastava MBE retired as a hospital consultant in 1998 and has used her knowledge and expertise since working with the Community Health Council, Public Involvement Forum, LINK and now Healthwatch. Dr Srivastava also sits on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Domestic Violence Forum, and is a North East Ambulance Foundation Trust governor. In June 2017 she was awarded the MBE for voluntary service work in the field of community cohesion.



Ged Dixon Board Member

Ged is a retired Human Resources professional who graduated from Northumbria University. Following a career in senior management positions in the utilities and retail sectors he established his own consultancy to advise and assist smaller businesses in all aspects of the employment relationship. During this time he supported a number of care home service providers and developed a strong desire to ensure that the best possible levels of care and services are provided to the most vulnerable people in our society.



Margaret Adams Board Member

Following a career in nursing and midwifery, working in Europe and the Middle East, Margaret qualified as a social worker specialising in mental health. She held managerial positions in London and Kent and joined South Tyneside Council in 1989 as a training officer and later being promoted to manager. Margaret was then seconded into the commissioning section of the Primary Care Trust, responsible for commissioning the specialist mental health carer services still in place today. She joined the voluntary sector with the Carers' Association, is a former Chair of BLISS=Ability, and is a founder member and long serving chairperson of Healthnet.



Steven Burton Board Member

Steven has lived and worked in South Tyneside all his life and is passionate about the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives here. He brings to Healthwatch over 25 years' experience of working with people from different backgrounds and with a varying degree of needs - from children with cerebral palsy to people with physical and mental health issues, people with a history of drug misuse, young people with a history of abuse and other vulnerable backgrounds.



Joy Curry Board Member

Joy is a retired Practice Nurse Manager who has worked in Secondary and Primary Care in South Tyneside for over 40 years and has first hand experience of delivering healthcare in a practice setting. Her main interest is in Primary Care. Joy joined Healthwatch to ensure that South Tyneside residents have the best care available in these difficult and challenging times due to financial restraints and workplace challenges. She also volunteers with South Tyneside League of Friends and is a member of The Nurses' League of South Tyneside.



Paula Lawson Board Member

Paula is Chair of Equal People Network through Your Voice Counts - the voice of the people with learning disabilities in South Tyneside. Your Voice Counts has a health focus group to share information with mainstream and specialist health provisions. At present Paula is working with the Health & Social Care Faculty at Sunderland University, interviewing and assessing student nurses, pharmacists and paramedics. She has represented people with learning disabilities in campaigns including Changing Places, Safer Places, and disability access on local transport.



Marilyn Stidolph Board Member

Marilyn retired from her role as a GP Practice Manager for more than 30 years in April 2018. She felt the role gave her the ability to form real relationships with patients and their families and Marilyn took pride in being able to make a difference. On retirement, she felt that she still had something to give and wanted to continue to be able to speak for the vulnerable, and this is what prompted Marilyn to join Healthwatch.



Alison Chalmers Board Member

Alison Chalmers, who served on the Healthwatch board in 2018-19 and has since resigned since moving away from the North East, was an Involvement Worker at Your Voice Counts in South Tyneside. She had worked in the voluntary sector or in education since graduating with a BA degree in Communication Studies in 1989. She was development officer for Healthwatch's precursor the Local Involvement Network in North Tyneside.

Young Healthwatch

Engagement Officer Tara Johnson with her trusted assistance dog Butler and members of the Young Healthwatch team



We launched Young Healthwatch in January 2019 and the team has had an immediate impact on our engagement with young people across the borough.

There are eight young volunteers aged between 16 and 26 who meet monthly, and in order to identify key priorities for their initial work programme we held drop-in sessions at South Tyneside College.

Over three months in early 2019 we spoke to 250 students about health issues affecting young people.

The three most commonly referred to were mental health, sexual health and drugs/alcohol.

Two-thirds told us their mental health and wellbeing was the most important issue to them, highlighting daily stress and anxiety and not knowing who to talk to or where to go for help - despite the launch of the 'ageless' Lifecycle mental health service in 2016.

The YH team, led by Engagement Officer Tara Johnson, decided it was therefore important to raise awareness of mental health services available to children and young people in South Tyneside, and also to review their experiences of any services they have used and suggest improvements to those services.

A questionnaire was developed with questions based on what the young people told us at the drop in sessions including who young people spoke to if they had a problem, their experiences of services, and what type of improvements would help young people better manage their own mental health.

More than 275 young people completed the **#manage your mental health** survey, which was shared online and in hard copy with a range of partners including: schools; South Tyneside College; Outreach Youth Teams; Depaul Homelessness Support Service; SEND/Learning Disabilities; Young Carers.

Group discussions were also held with Ocean Road Detached Youth Group, Apna Ghar and the Youth Parliament.

Key findings included demand for a monthly drop-in service in school, a one-to-one appointment system in school with a specialist, and group sessions on how to cope with different situations.

Other suggested improvements included more information about where help can be found, a dedicated website with information about services and coping tools for young people and a dedicated information care with contact details for services in the borough. The report with findings is being shared with local authority and healthcare partners.

The YH team also wanted young people to be able to ask questions of the decision makers responsible for mental health services, and a 'Question Time' style event was held at South Tyneside College.

It was attended by local and regional NHS leaders, college counsellors and the Deputy Leader of South Tyneside Council Tracey Dixon. There were 100 questions put forward by young people to select from, with topics including better ways to communicate services to young people, making new mental health services available in schools, and future plans.

Forty people attended, including young people, parents/carers and healthcare professionals, and the event was recorded with the film added to the Young Healthwatch area of our website.

SEND consultation activity

Other work by Young Healthwatch has included chairing an open meeting for parents and carers of young people with SEND and the manager of the transport team at South Tyneside Council.

This was followed by a workshop with parents to redesign the application form, which parents felt was too complicated and repetitive. The application process has also been brought forward three months, making it less stressful for parents/carers and easier for the local authority.

An information leaflet has also been produced that provides families with information about what to expect from the SEND transport service.

Young Healthwatch was asked to speak to young people with special educational needs and find what they wanted to do when they leave school, gaps in services and who helps them to achieve their goals.

The team devised one hour workshops "What about Bob?" which were delivered at three special educational schools - Bamburgh School in South Shields, Epinay School in Jarrow and Keelmans Way School in Hebburn.

The students were asked to invent a new classmate and think about how they feel when they leave school, the jobs they might like to do when they leave school and who will help them achieve this.

The workshops affirmed that young people with SEND are able to communicate their positive aspirations and want to feel included but that outside of their school environment they can feel isolated. Professionals can assume they want to go to residential settings in future but with the right support when making after school decisions with their social workers, they can voice other aspirations.

Recommendations include the provision of a dedicated transition worker, and the use of the "What about Bob?" questions in a social work assessment or with parents and carers to ensure young person's aspirations/goals are taken into account when making future decisions. The report will also be used to inform the transition process within children's social work teams.

In the first months of Young Healthwatch, excellent partnership relationships have been formed with South Tyneside Council, Your Voice Counts, South Tyneside Stronger Together parent and carer forum, South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, and the young people's mental health alliance.

Priorities for 2019/20 include developing the Young Healthwatch area of the website to include advice and information on mental health services, sexual health, primary care and emergency care, and ongoing engagement activity with young people across the borough.

Message from our Co-Chairs

Healthwatch South Tyneside's success in championing the views of local people relies upon building trust and respect with all individuals, groups and partners with whom we interact to collect and share information.

As we have extended our activities in the past year, we are particularly pleased with the progress made in our relationships with health and social care partners. Both the breadth and depth of our involvement has increased and this has led to more issues being raised and positively addressed.

More broadly across the system, joint decision making and working is driving integration of services and accelerating change. This needs to go hand in hand with greater local accountability, and progressively more and different engagement and involvement of local people. This is essential if services are to be fully fit for those who use them.

We have seen encouraging moves away from tokenistic, 'tick-box' engagement exercises, and Healthwatch South Tyneside has been active during the past year in highlighting both good and bad practices. This we will continue to do; challenging poor practice as a 'critical friend' and being an enabler and partner to help achieve better engagement wherever that is necessary.

'Hearing more and sharing more' is another key contribution that Healthwatch South Tyneside is making as part of the drive for improved health and wellbeing for the borough's people and communities. To pursue this, we are rolling out Healthwatch Ambassadors across our partner voluntary sector organisations as the next stage in our development.

In doing this we will achieve full coverage in South Tyneside and will deliver two main benefits; taking us deeper into local communities so we hear more, especially from the 'hard to reach, seldom asked' people, and reaching deeper into system decision making structures, enabling us to share more.

We will therefore provide more quality feedback, leading to greater influence in decision making by commissioners of health and social care services, with many positive changes being able to be implemented more quickly locally.

A big highlight this year was the launch of Young Healthwatch, which has achieved so much already.

The mental health survey and 'Question Time' event touches a major, and growing issue affecting our young people. Our Young Healthwatch team is helping us to reach young people and collect their views and experiences and produce information on our website in a layout which will appeal to this audience.

Another was our involvement in the co-designing process regarding palliative and end-of-life care, both as the borough's independent health champion and in collaboration with our partners following the sudden loss of the much loved St Clare's Hospice, together with the review of the Outpatients' Department at South Tyneside District Hospital.

We are also pleased to have met with managers in General Practice, which has created an opportunity to build our relationship in Primary Care - a central plank of the NHS Long Term Plan.

Internally, key successes have included our move from Jarrow to Hebburn with the increased availability to the public and higher profile, our Operational Plan which drives the work of our organisation, and our Fit for Purpose Business and Financial Review which hopefully puts us in a really good place for the future.

Our involvement in the Path to Excellence process is multi layered, and here we are working with our regional Healthwatch partners and NHS England to ensure that the needs and views of the people of South Tyneside are not forgotten.

Direct contributions have been made by Healthwatch and this has been received positively by the body responsible for the consultation process. The contributions have influenced the thinking of the decision makers to consider Path to Excellence more as a two way process, with the development of both district general hospitals being at the heart of the changes.

It has also been particularly rewarding to work with our colleagues at Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust on the development of their quality strategy for the forthcoming year.

A great deal has been achieved over the past year, as you will read in this annual report. These achievements, together with the learning gained as we have progressed, provide great foundations for our future development and contributions..

Co Chairs Sue Taylor and Peter Bower

Our finances

Income

Contract income 2017-18	£105,347
	£105,347

Expenditure

Staffing

Salary costs	£67,781
Directors' fees	£6,000
	£73,781

Depreciation and other amounts written off assets

Depreciation	£263
	£263

Running costs

Rent re licences and other	£7,144
Venue hire & associated costs	£333
Office equipment and repairs	£2,591
Computer running costs	£8,905
Leasing - other assets	£844
Travelling expenses	£1,326
Volunteer expenses	£138
Conference costs	£562
Subscriptions	£386
Legal and professional fees	£1,427
Consultancy	£7,308
Accountancy	£4,509
Charitable donations	£3,346
Bank charges	£147
Insurances (not premises)	£1,039
Printing and stationery	£1,781
Photocopier	£465
Publicity and marketing	£2,304
Annual reports	£1,363
Telecommunications	£2,613
Sundry expenses	£272
	£48,803

Totals

Income	£105,347
(Loss)/profit for the year	(£17,500)*

* After taking into account the brought forward balance from 2017/18 we continue to be in surplus and following our financial and business review in 2019 Healthwatch will have a recurrent balanced budget.





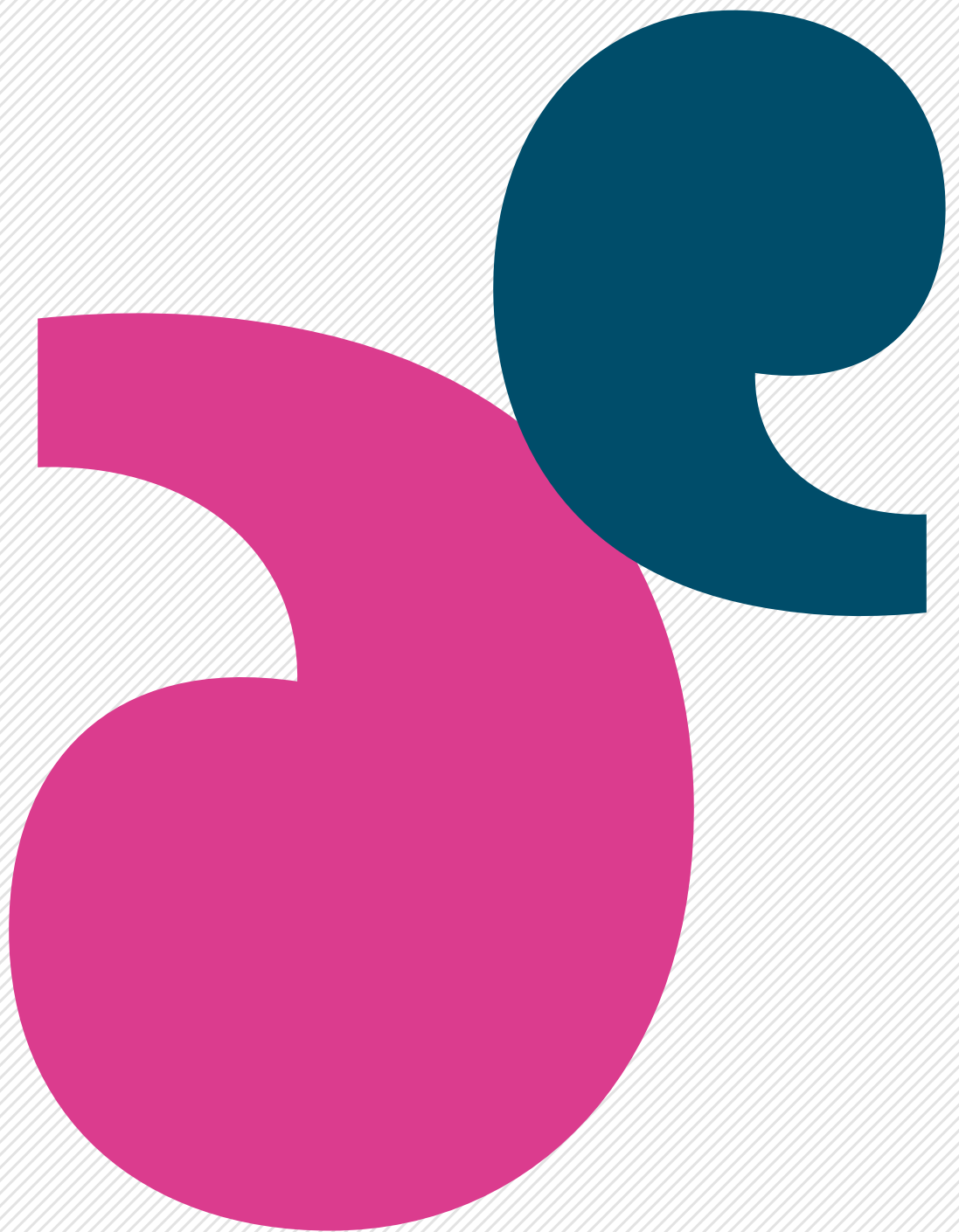
Thank you

A big thank you to everyone who has helped Healthwatch South Tyneside carry out our work over the past year.

From all our board members and staff to our growing band of dedicated volunteers, the Young Healthwatchers, and our intern Cal Freeman from Newcastle University who has produced an excellent volunteering film which can be viewed on our website.

Our gratitude also goes to the many partner organisations in health and social care and the voluntary sector we have worked with over the year, and whose support and co-operation has been invaluable.

Finally a message to the growing numbers of you in South Tyneside and beyond who have engaged with us via our website, social media, by phone, email, through surveys or in person at events - thank you for sharing your experiences with us.





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