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Tell us
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healthwatch
Liverpool

Annual Report 2019-20

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Message from our chair



Lynn Collins,
Healthwatch Liverpool Chair

It is with much pleasure that I add a few words of introduction to this report summarising the highlights of a very busy and engaging year for Healthwatch Liverpool.

While the way in which we deliver our support and services will be different, they will be even more important to our residents and community organisations going forward

Whilst COVID-19 will determine the nature of our work going forward, it feels like a very different world we reflect on in this year's report. A time of face to face engagement, large and well attended events, and our collegiate team working in our busy and crowded offices. It is a true testament to the hard work and adaptability of our staff team that we have been able to instantly and with agility adapt to the COVID-19 world of home working and remote contacts. As always I would like to record my thanks to all of the Healthwatch Liverpool staff and volunteers for once again ensuring we deliver our services and support with professionalism.

During the previous year we stepped up our public engagement with the successful launch of our membership scheme in November. I was delighted to be part of the day and particularly enjoyed the hard hitting and thought provoking theatre piece which took us through the experience of a family navigating the health and social care system.

This year also saw the launch of our Community Engagement Board, a really valuable way to connect with our health and care support organisations. We've moved these meetings from 'in the room' to Zoom and they have proved an essential part of our engagement work whilst in 'lockdown'.

We do however end our year with one element of certainty. Securing a three year contract gives us the opportunity to consolidate our work going forward, and to give security to the team to allow some more medium to long term planning. While the way in which we deliver our support and services will be different, they will be even more important to our residents and community organisations going forward as we all try and navigate health and care services of the future.

Lynn Collins
Healthwatch Liverpool Chair

Our priorities

Last year we engaged with 6885 people, who told us their stories, and the improvements they wanted to see health and social care services make in 2019-20, which informed our priorities for the year

Here are the priorities for our work in 2019 - 2020, and what we did:



Issues with the current assessment of need and provision of SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) services.

We talked to young people affected by this and their families to make sure that their experiences inform change. [See page 11 for details.](#)



The major health challenges experienced by homeless people.

We set out to understand the barriers to accessing health & social care services experienced by Liverpool's homeless community. [See page 12 to read more.](#)



Helping address Liverpool's high levels of mental and physical ill health.

We've been working with Citizens Advice Liverpool's Ways to Wellbeing Service and other social prescribers to provide easier access to social contact, community activities and ways to keep well. Our Wellbeing Liverpool site is ready to go live once lockdown is lifted and community activities can resume. [Go to page 27 for the full story.](#)



Home care - a largely invisible but vital service.

During this year we worked to develop a project to gather in depth experiences of people who use home care services and we were ready to start in depth interviews in people's homes in March. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that we were not able to carry out this work. It remains our intention to do so, and we are looking at ways we can carry out this work without putting participants at risk.

About us

Here to make care better

There is a local Healthwatch in every area in England. Here in Liverpool, we work closely with other local Healthwatch, especially our neighbours in Merseyside and Cheshire to give local people's experience a regional voice. We also work together with Healthwatch England to strengthen the network and its impact. This year we were early adopters of Healthwatch England's Quality Framework, helping to inform its roll out across the network.

Below Healthwatch England's Chair Sir Robert Francis talks about the national impact of the Healthwatch network:

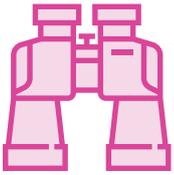
The network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan shows the power of the Healthwatch network in giving people that find it hardest to be heard a chance to speak up. The #WhatWouldYouDo campaign saw national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented locally. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review - sparking a national review of patient transport from NHS England.

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local Healthwatch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

 I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level.



Sir Robert Francis, Healthwatch England Chair



Our vision

We want a health and social care system that works for everyone.



Our values

- We are a community-led organisation which takes a bottom-up approach to our work;
- We empower local people to have their voices heard on issues relating to health and social care;
- We value equality, diversity and inclusion and work to make sure that all communities in Liverpool are represented in our work;
- We work with everyone in an empathetic, confidential and nonjudgemental way;
- Our work is evidence-based and collaborative. We work closely with other organisations which share our values;
- We are independent and not afraid to challenge decisions when they are not in the interests of local people;
- We are transparent and open in everything we do and we are accountable to the community.



Our mission

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



Our approach

We gather feedback about health and care services from a range of sources and use this feedback to set our priorities for future work including:

- Research projects
- Community visits and events
- Targetted Listening Events
- Surveys
- Enter and View Visits



Our impact

We want to make the biggest possible impact for people in Liverpool:

- Informing service development
- Sharing best practice
- Identifying gaps in service provision
- Improving service quality
- Making sure patients are aware of their rights
- Holding decision makers accountable to the public



Find out more about us and the work that we do

Website: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

Twitter: @HW_Liverpool

Facebook: @HWLiverpool

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.



Health and care that works for you



12 volunteers

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 659 hours of their time.

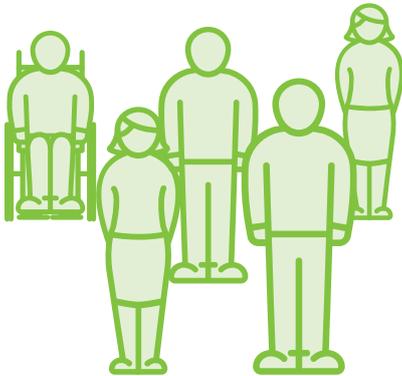
22 staff (16.6 full time equivalent) employed

We received

£549,356 in funding

from our local authority in 2019-20, the same as in the previous year.

Supporting people



6885 people

engaged with us across our information service, events, project work, surveys and visits to services including:

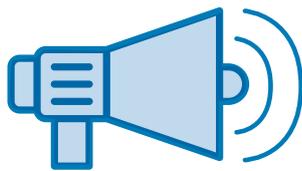
2114 people

accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support.

251 people

accessed our independent complaints advocacy service

Reaching out



15,529 people

engaged with us through our website. We reached 459,297 people through posts on our Healthwatch Liverpool and Live Well directory social media platforms.

587 people

engaged with us at the 20 additional public events we attended this year

243 visits

to local community groups as part of our Wellbeing Liverpool project

Making a difference to care



We published

10 reports

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care.

How we've made a difference



Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.

This year, through our engagement projects; including surveys, events, focus groups and interviews; as well as directly from people contacting our information and signposting service; we heard the experiences, needs, stories and feedback of 6885 people.

Take a look at how your views helped to make a difference to the care and support people received in 2019 - 2020.

Improving advice and support during palliative care and bereavement

We were contacted by a family seeking to share their experience and feedback on the lack of information given, and their experience of a lack of partnership working between health and social care services, during the time of their grandparents' deaths.

The family's aim was to share their experience, to ensure that appropriate advice and onward referral pathways were enacted and made explicit to families accessing palliative care/bereavement support services, with particular attention paid to the needs of vulnerable adults living alone following the death of their spouse.

With the family's consent, we took this forward, and discussed this feedback with the hospital trust involved in the provision of care for the family. The experience was shared with the Patient Experience Team who were invited to respond to the family's experience and the views.

Following a comprehensive review incorporating the family's feedback, the hospital trust has made changes to the provision of information contained within their Bereavement Booklet; reviewed and made changes to the information provided



Following a comprehensive review incorporating the family's feedback, the hospital trust has made changes to the provision of information contained within their Bereavement Booklet

to their hospital staff, and, changes were made to their public website pages relating to support for relatives; with attention given to cases where a patient's next of kin or close family member has care needs.

As a direct outcome of the family sharing their experience with us, we were able to take forward these concerns and after discussing these with the hospital trust, action was taken to ensure bereaved partners, especially those who are elderly, frail or living alone, as well as their wider families, are meaningfully asked the right questions about their care and support needs, and are also provided with the right information to help them to access the help they require.

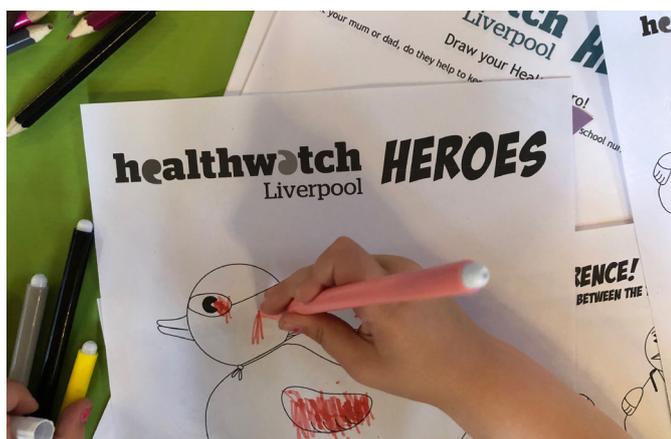
Improving SEND Provision in the City

This year, we ran a consultation project to look at people's experiences of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision within the city. This covered children and young people aged 0-25, with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Through this project, we engaged with 208 people about their views and experiences. As part of this project, we also attended SEND Partnership Board meetings and training sessions.

Through this project, we conducted surveys, 1-2-1 interviews and focus groups, and received input from 75 parents and carers, 72 children and young people, and 61 SEND practitioners.

In addition to our own engagement work, we commissioned a group of Young Advisors, from the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), to conduct peer-led consultation, via 6 focus groups with young people. Young Advisors are trained and qualified young people, aged 15-24, who work to engage their peers to promote youth voices in the city, on issues that matter to young people, and share these youth voices with decision makers to better inform service plans and delivery.

Staff and volunteers produced a report with consultation findings, and recommendations for improvement of SEND service provision in Liverpool.



Colouring in at the Liverpool Local Offer SEND event in June 2019



Our recommendations included:

- increasing the representation of children, young people, parents and carers at all stages of the commissioning cycle
- increased inclusion and representation for BAME children, young people, parents and carers, including additional language support where English is not peoples' first language
- an additional focus on mental health support for all family members; improved alignment of neurodevelopmental and CAMHS support
- further work on developing 'whole life' pathways.

The report and it's recommendations were welcomed by Liverpool's SEND Partnership Board, who confirmed that the report's findings and 17 recommendations will help to inform the city's SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), SEND Co-Production Charter and the SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy.

The report will be amended to reflect potential changes to public sector duties and service provision under the Coronavirus Act, and we will continue to work closely with the SEND Partnership Board and Liverpool Parents and Carers (LivPaC) to ensure that the views and experiences of children and young people with SEND, and their families and carers, continue to inform policy and practice.

Hearing Their Stories: Homelessness in Liverpool

This year, we began our engagement project about Homelessness. Although the number of experiences we regularly receive about homelessness, are not high, having visited services for homeless people in the past, we were aware that homeless people often experience more health inequalities than the general population, and that social care agencies are not always ready to provide services to people who are homeless and may have particularly complex needs. With Liverpool City Council's current homeless strategy due to end in 2020, we felt this was a topic of importance that required a targeted approach to engage with, and hear the experiences of people who are homeless.

We brought together providers of health and housing services as well as voluntary sector organisations working with homeless people to find out what they thought about services

We visited hostels and activity providers to get feedback from people using those services, as well as from frontline staff. We spoke to 24 organisations and 117 people, the majority of which, were service users.

As a result of hearing the experiences of the people who chose to share their stories with us, we also decided to provide a further platform for these stories. We made a short film, interviewing someone who had been homeless themselves and who now works in homeless services. In December 2019, we held an event at The Brink - A

“If I was in charge, I'd just want everyone to feel safe and welcome and for people to give us a chance regardless of our background as some places look down on us and treat us differently”
- Service User



In November 2018, research carried out by Shelter estimated that there were 320,000 people homeless in Britain.

dry bar and restaurant in Liverpool which works with local people in recovery, to conclude the research stage of our project on homelessness in Liverpool. We invited professionals, commissioners, and people with lived experience of homelessness to an event where we talked about the themes that had come out of the research so far, and invited people to feedback about whether they felt this was accurate, or if there was something we'd missed. The event also featured free food, and a performance by The Choir With No Name.

The feedback we received during this engagement, was mostly about housing and accommodation, support, information, health and social care, and from the findings of this research and consultation project, we were able to identify key themes for improvement, as well as what is currently being done successfully; and make recommendations, including involving homeless people in the planning and design of future strategic decisions, and involvement of people with lived experience, in the training of staff.

We look forward to sharing further recommendations, findings and the experiences shared with us, as we enter the next stage of our project, which is to publish and share our project report. We would like to use this opportunity, to thank everybody who shared their views and stories with us. We look forward to the outcomes of this work making a positive impact to services and people, in the city.

Working with our Local Authority

As well as our own projects and priorities, which are defined by and decided upon by the needs we identify in the community through people's feedback; we also work with Liverpool City Council to design and facilitate engagement work on needs identified by the local authority.

“Healthwatch Liverpool’s role as a trusted independent party has enabled honest engagement with the public. This is of great value to the system and in turn the general public, with improved services seen as an outcome . It is extremely appreciated that you are willing and able to target some engagement at areas we as a system feel there are potential improvements to be made. You undertake a difficult role and deliver effectively, being a key part of the system respectfully challenging it. It can be easy to criticise but particularly appreciated are your endeavours to assist with solutions” -
Gemma Black - Commissioning and Contracts Manager, Liverpool City Council

In 2019 - 2020, this included consultation around Bereavement Services, and Mental Health Day Opportunities. Our findings from these were shared with Liverpool City Council, to support future learning and improvement, and inform future decision making.

Mental Health Day Opportunities

We were approached by Liverpool City Council to engage with users of Mental Health Day Opportunities services. These services were commissioned ten years ago, and funding renewed on an annual basis, however, this would be moving to a commissioned basis, and the council were therefore; keen to hear from people who use the existing services to gain feedback to inform what services should look like in the future.

We used a survey with options for paper, online, on the phone and in person completion to support everyone to share their views; while allowing people to complete the surveys in their own time.

It also meant we could reach those who might be reluctant or unable to attend consultation meetings which were being arranged by the Council.

We received 137 responses to this survey, with key findings including:

- Most people felt that the services have enabled them to improve or maintain their mental health.
- People found value in having a safe and non-judgemental space and being given the opportunity to get out of the house to come to the services
- People want to see the services extended to include a greater range of activities, longer opening hours and increased funding .

“What I like best about the service is the fact that I can come into the centre along with other like-minded service users who are also suffering from various mental health problems and don’t judge one another.” Survey respondent



Share your views with us

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 Liverpool is here for you.

Website: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk **Telephone:** 0300 77 77 007

Email: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk



Bereavement Services

We were approached by Liverpool City Council, to gather insights around the experiences of carers accessing Bereavement Support Services. We ran a focus group, to hear the wishes and experiences of people using bereavement services in Liverpool. We spoke to partners such as the Carers Centres, Link Workers, Bereavement service staff and GP's, to find out what works well, and identify learning points for improving the service offer in future.

Our findings included the need for easy access to reliable information and advice

from services, as well as the impact on isolation issues.

For carers who were already feeling isolated due to the level of their caring role, re-engaging with life after bereavement felt particularly challenging and people told us that information, support and community connections were much needed and valued. The findings from these discussions were shared with the council to inform future learning. With more people experiencing bereavement in isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, we are keen that any information and support which might help people in such difficult times, is easily available.

“After learning about the impact of bereavement as a risk factor for loneliness, it led to a feeling that we could probably do more to support those who have experienced a bereavement. Needing to start with understanding people's experiences, where we might be getting it right and where we could improve was vital to challenge our many assumptions.

Healthwatch Liverpool have been able to undertake this with extreme sensitivity and despite pressures responding to covid-19, were able to prioritise completion of this activity given it's sad but increasing relevance. Additionally, Healthwatch Liverpool have researched the current service offer and have gone on to contribute to the implementation, supporting system change with General Practice and through Link Worker Community of Practice. This all assists to determine any remaining gaps in meeting needs.”

Jane Weller - Commissioning and Contract Manager, Liverpool City Council

Long

Term

Plan

#WhatWouldYouDo

Highlights



217 people shared their views with us via the 'What Would You Do?' survey



We ran a focus group to specifically hear the views of older people in the city



We ran a targeted focus group with people who have long term conditions

NHS Long Term Plan

Following a commitment from the Government to increase investment in the NHS, the NHS published the 'Long Term Plan' in January 2019, setting out its key ambitions over the next 10 years. Healthwatch launched a countrywide campaign to give people a say in how the plan should be implemented in their communities.

Here's a summary of our work and what we found.

Alongside a 'What Would You Do?' survey, we also ran targeted focus groups, to hear the voices of older people, and people who have long term health conditions. We held a focus group at the Sunflowers Centre, which supports people living with cancer in the city.

We also held another focus group at 'Wheel Meet Again', a community group for older

people in Liverpool. Through these focus groups, we were able to have more in depth and open consultation, and the discussions with service users were rich and powerful.

We worked with local Healthwatch in Cheshire and Merseyside, to ask people #WhatWouldYouDo to improve the NHS locally



Participants at a 'What Would You Do?' focus group, discussing their views and experiences

Some of the top issues that people told us they wanted services to focus on are:

- Timely appointments and treatment
- Health professionals who listen to patients and have the time to do so.
- Treatment decisions being a joint decision between the person and the relevant health and care professional
- Being able to talk to their doctor or other health professional wherever they are
- Having absolute confidence that their personal data is managed well and kept secure
- More links within the community to help reduce social isolation
- Better access to support and treatment for people with mental health or long term issues
- Being able to stay in their own home for as long as possible
- For their family to be well supported at the end of life

What we plan to do

In Liverpool, health and social care services have been working together on a One Liverpool plan which aims to implement the NHS Plan recommendations while tackling the deep health inequalities between Liverpool and other parts of the country and within the city.

The plan is ambitious. Covid-19, which has had a huge impact on Liverpool, is going to make it difficult to fully implement this plan. Non-Covid related healthcare had to be significantly reduced during lockdown and at the peak of the pandemic. It is going to take a great deal of time for services to get back up to speed and to be in a position to deliver the improvements that local people have told us they want to see and that the One Liverpool plan aims to achieve.

We will continue to work closely with services as they plan and prepare to recover from the impact of Covid-19 while ensuring that the needs of local people are acknowledged and addressed.



Participants at a 'What Would You Do?' focus group at Wheel Meet Again in South Liverpool

Helping you find the answers



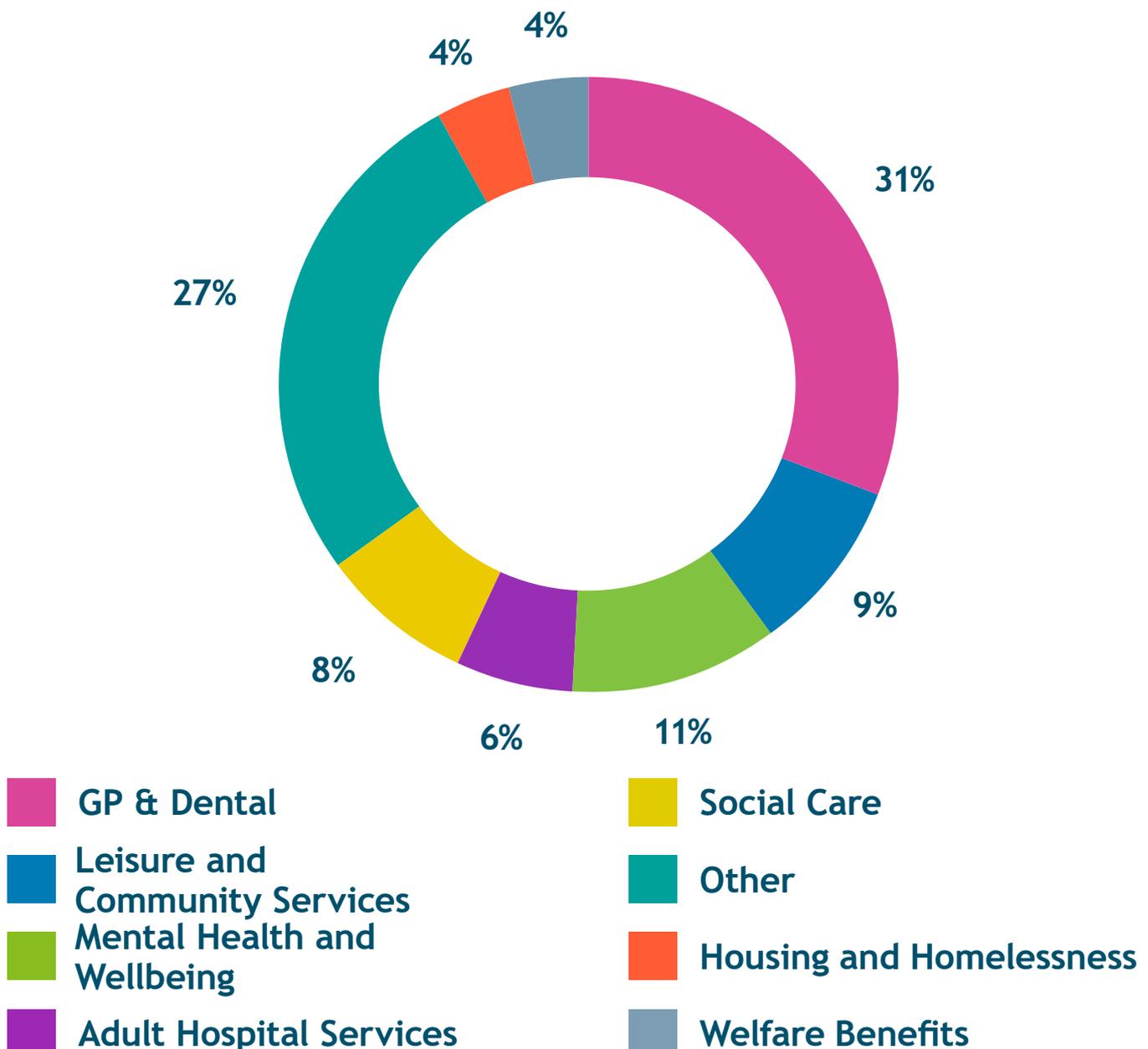
North End Sketch Club - an example of an activity aiming to improve people's wellbeing through creativity

Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch Liverpool 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 we helped 3629 people get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people's queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community and student events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.
- Maintaining the Live Well Directory to ensure people can access up to date and relevant information
- 4421 signposts to community organisations, helplines, charities and health and care services

Here are some of the areas that people asked about.





The Live Well Directory

We helped 3629 people this year through our information and signposting service. However, we wouldn't be able to do this without having access to information about the vast range of health, care and wellbeing services available in Liverpool. We want this information to be available to everyone which is why a really important part of our work is keeping the Live Well Directory up to date.

We think it's vital that there's a trusted source of information for anyone who needs it - whether you're looking for help

for yourself, for a friend or family member or if you're a professional looking for options for someone you're supporting.

That's where the Live Well Directory comes in!

We maintain the Liverpool service information on this online directory all year round - over 1650 services - making it the trusted place to find out what options are out there for you.

This year the site had over 283,000 hits on the directory with people viewing more than 710,000 pages.

Every search result page on the site has a prominent message encouraging people to contact us if they can't find what they're looking for so the site acts as another route into our enquiry service.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, services needed to change the way they delivered their services and activities, to keep people safe. We knew how important it was that there was a way for organisations and the public to stay informed. We added pages to Live Well with information we gathered, on what was still available, under the themes of:

- food and practical support
- mental health and emotional wellbeing
- online activities and telephone befriending

This meant that people could easily access this information from the home page. We also added a new category of Coronavirus support to the site's search options.



We'll keep working hard to make sure that the information on the directory is up to date and that Live Well is the best place to start if you're looking for services to help improve your health and wellbeing in Liverpool.

“The Live Well directory continues to be an essential resource for frontline staff within LCC. During the Covid-19 pandemic, more than ever Live Well proves to be a comprehensive resource. It is a substantial achievement to have been able to continue to ensure it's relevance and provide a one stop at a time of extreme pressure and change in the delivery of services in the community. Whist I may not say thank you enough, please do not be in doubt about the value given to this.” -

Gemma Black - Commissioning and Contracts Manager, Liverpool City Council

We are proud to offer a person centred Information and Signposting Service, to help people navigate the maze of health and social care services in Liverpool.

Our Information and Signposting service helps people to find the answers, and provides information about services and organisations that can meet the needs of our enquirers. However; sometimes, answers for these needs, can't be found.

Through our work, we can identify gaps in service provision within Liverpool, and share these with decision makers, to inform,

discuss and provide insight into the services and support people in Liverpool are seeking.

Last year we had many conversations with the public, where we were able to identify unmet need, and share gaps in service provision.

This year key themes of these gaps included:

- Advocacy services offering general advocacy
- Home maintenance services that are free/ low cost
- Domestic abuse services for male domestic abuse survivors
- Dental services that can be provided in homes, care homes and for inpatients.

Here's a glimpse of the impact that our Information and Signposting service has had on the people who contact us

 Thank you for your reply, I must be honest and say I was not expecting such a comprehensive response! Seriously, thank you. We are feeling a little bereft at the moment but your response helped mitigate that - Enquirer, looking for mental health support

 I can't say enough how grateful I am for this information. It's given me hope and a starting point that there maybe help! I will contact all these people and when I've moved it's reassuring to know there are emergency schemes. I will also contact Healthwatch in my area and see what they say. Again thank you so much. Its given me hope! - Client moving to Liverpool, looking for health and social care information

 This is absolutely amazing, thank you so much. This [client] has been really struggling because they can't operate their electric cooker because of their vision and has been lonely and depressed - I've had a manic afternoon on the wards and just couldn't find the time to do this research myself. This will make a huge difference, I am really grateful and I'm sure [client] will be too - Dietician Royal Liverpool University Hospital.



Finding the Answers for Families Affected by Direct Payments

Direct Payments are a way people can arrange their social care services themselves, giving them more choice and control. The number of people receiving Direct Payments in Liverpool is low and the process can feel off-putting.

Our Information and Signposting service received a call from an enquirer who was managing Direct Payments for a family member. Their current home care provider had increased their charges above the council approved hourly rate which would have left the family member with an additional charge that they could not afford.

The Local Authority's guide to direct payment, available online, stated that the local authority were able to provide a list of agencies charging the council approved hourly rate for home care services. The enquirer contacted the local authority, but was advised that this wasn't the case

- and such recommendations could not be made. The enquirer sought the support of Healthwatch Liverpool, to address the issue of this contradictory information. After raising this issue with the Direct Payment Team, the inaccurate information was withdrawn reducing confusion for other families in future.

In discussion with the enquirer, pressures around carer support were also identified. We were able to provide accurate signposting to The Carers Centre, with a full description of the service and support that could be engaged with. We also provided information about a national helpline able to offer further advice and guidance about care at home - Independent Age.

We are working with the council and care providers to include information on which care services will accept direct payment and their charges on the Live Well Directory. This will ensure easier access to information in future, hopefully making it easier for more people to use Direct Payments to fund their much needed care.

 "Thank you for your help (and your sympathy!)" - Enquirer,



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch Liverpool is here for you.

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Email: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

Providing advice and Information through the NHS Complaints Process

Our Information and signposting service provides initial advice and support to people navigating the NHS Complaints Process. This year we provided this initial NHS Complaints advice and support, to 185 people.

We were contacted by the family of a patient who had died while an inpatient at a large hospital trust in Liverpool. The family had made repeated efforts to engage informally with and to seek the support of the hospital trust, aiming to ensure that, as far as possible, their own experience of care and support wouldn't be repeated i.e. learning from mistakes.

We provided a copy of our Self Help Information Pack and worked with this family, on wording of a letter from the family to the hospital trust's Complaints Team.

The family declined a referral to our Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service, which provides more direct advocacy support, as the family felt very strongly that they were able, with a bit of a guiding hand and listening ear, to act independently. Throughout the three months

of contact the family had with Healthwatch Liverpool, we supported them to identify roles and responsibilities within their family network, prior to meetings with hospital staff; to identify the key questions they would present to the trust; and to manage their expectations of this process. We also provided the opportunity to reflect throughout the process on their thoughts and feelings.

This process resulted in a suitable outcome: the family were offered an apology by the hospital trust, provided reassurances by the trust, and confirmation that further investigation of some issues would be completed.

Furthermore, with the family's consent, the transcript of a Local Resolution Meeting between the family and the trust, will now be used by the trust, for training purposes, with the hope of fulfilling the family's aim and wish, for the trust to learn from mistakes made.

Through this process, we also identified the need for further support, and offered signposting support, with information about bereavement support services locally.



This year we have provided 185 people with information and advice on NHS Complaints procedures and provided our 'Self Help Information Pack' to 104 people, giving local people the knowledge and empowerment to navigate the

complaints procedures themselves. Our 'Self Help Information Pack' (SHIP) explains the NHS complaints procedure at the different stages, and contains useful letter templates and information on various other agencies to help local people navigate the process. The pack is also available to download and print directly from our website, including in large print. *This year our online 'SHIP' was downloaded more than 200 times, a 78% increase from last year!*

This year we provided direct Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy to 58 people.



Service Learning and Improvement through Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy

We provided advocacy support to a client wishing to complain about NHS 111 and their

experience with an NHS 111 Clinical Advisor. The investigation found that the safeguarding referral made by the Clinical Advisor (CA) was not appropriate and the actions taken by this person should not have happened. The review of this incident has highlighted how misunderstandings and incorrect assumptions can lead to a series of events which are wholly avoidable and an apology was offered.

The CA then also completed a reflective statement after re-listening to the calls and had an in-depth meeting with their clinical manager. They have also acknowledged that they should have handled the call more sensitively. This case has also been used as a learning tool to enhance the quality of future calls and the CA will also complete refresher training in Level 3 Safeguarding.



Best Foot Forward - Improved communication for Orthotics client

Our Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy service, provided direct support to a client who has cerebral palsy and requires orthotic footwear. The client wished to make a complaint about significant struggles with getting their footwear from the Orthotics Clinic at Broadgreen Hospital, over the last 10 months. The client had contacted PALS but had received no response. Another challenge

faced here, was that this occurred quite close to the beginning of the Covid-19 lockdown period, so it remained uncertain as to when this issue could be resolved; specifically, whether the footwear could be collected once the issue was resolved, and whether there would be further delay to the footwear being made.

Following support from our Advocacy service, the outcome of the complaint found that there had been a miscommunication by the hospital, and the footwear was actually ready for collection. In response to the client's complaint made with advocacy support, the trust increased and improved communication, including the hospital organising delivery of the footwear to the client's home, while ensuring the client was still able to socially isolate. The trust also communicated that, as is the Trust's Policy on Orthotic Footwear, a second pair of boots were now also being made for the client.

I am contacting you to thank you for helping me after I had received no response to a complaint I had sent to [a hospital trust].

I had been waiting about 6 weeks for a response to my email complaint sent to the Patient Experience Team. I contacted Healthwatch Liverpool for advice, and spoke to [a Healthwatch Liverpool Independent NHS Complaints Advocate] who contacted the Trust's Patient Experience Team, and I received a call from them the same day. I have since had further advice from Healthwatch Liverpool, about how to follow up on my complaint, ensure I get a written response from them.

I would like to thank Liverpool Healthwatch, for the swift action taken to escalate my complaint, and for the empathetic and understanding manner with which my concern was dealt. I imagine if you hadn't got involved, I would still be waiting for a response, which, given the nature of my complaint, would have compounded my feelings of being unheard and ignored.

Healthwatch is a very valuable service, and is an effective voice for people who receive health services, who are often vulnerable and lack confidence to speak out themselves when things go wrong.

Feedback from an Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy client. (Shared with consent.)



Working with Students in Liverpool

This year we attended student ‘Welcome’ events and ‘Freshers’ events, at Liverpool’s four universities. We provided information to 1515 new students, on topics ranging from meningitis to mental wellbeing, and from NHS health charges, to how to register with a GP/ dentist. We also attended a ‘Refreshers’ event later in the year, speaking to 55 students about these key health messages.

Liverpool’s student population has been growing every year. The latest published data (2018-19) shows 60,065 students undertaking higher education at Liverpool universities and colleges.

We chair and co-ordinate the multidisciplinary Liverpool Student Health and Wellbeing Group, which meets quarterly to bring together stakeholders with involvement in student health and wellbeing. Attendance of the group includes colleagues from local HE and FE Institutions, many health and wellbeing organisations, student unions, commissioners, decision makers and public health.

We all now live in uncertain times. The numbers of future students and how they will be taught, live and socialise is all very unclear. 2020’s freshers experience will not be the same as in previous years. We are working with partners on the best way to guide new and returning students on accessing health services without the usual packed ‘freshers’ events.

We spoke to 1515 students



We gave information about Mental Health Support Services to 533 students



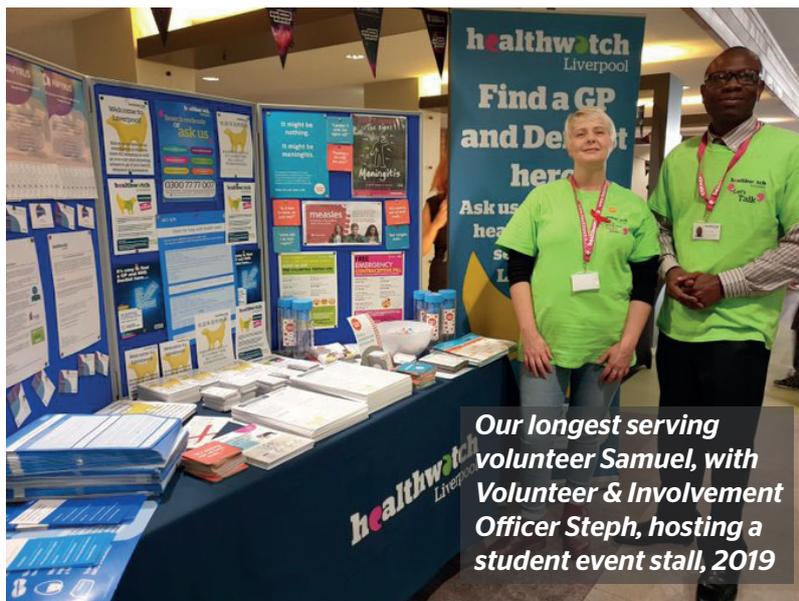
We spoke to 589 students about vaccinations including Meningitis ACWY & MMR



We gave 1069 students info about their nearest GP and dentist and how to register



This year, we had our messages translated to Chinese and shared these with 92 students



We spoke to students about how to get help with health costs and gave HC1 forms to 253 students



We signposted 1069 students to their nearest sexual health service



We spoke to 104 international students and gave info about charges and how the NHS works



We signposted 1069 students to other NHS services such as local Walk In Centres

Wellbeing in Liverpool

Last year, we partnered with Citizens Advice Liverpool and the Women's Organisation to deliver an exciting new social prescribing project - Ways to Wellbeing, funded by the Department of Health.

This year was the first full year of the project, which saw our Wellbeing Liverpool Officer getting out and about across the city to find out more about lots of different community activities, with the intelligence gathered, informing and supporting effective social prescribing and general wellbeing amongst the wider community.

In 2019 - 2020, our Wellbeing Liverpool Officer, made 243 visits to local community groups and organisations, to find out more about their work and how local people can get involved, to benefit their wellbeing.

Many visits were made to marginalised groups including:

- Adults with learning disabilities
- Adults with physical disabilities
- BAME dementia friendly groups
- Social and Creative groups for homeless people/rough sleepers
- LGBT social and creative groups
- Women with mental health issues
- Adults in recovery from addiction
- Men's mental health social groups

The Wellbeing Liverpool Officer has forged strong connections with groups across Liverpool and has been able to use these connections to establish more collaborative working in the community, including groups working together on joint funding bids (e.g. Homecooked CIC and Ellergreen Womens Group); advising on community venues (e.g. The Florrie), finding and connecting groups with tutors (e.g. 'Roxy Yoga' who now provide a weekly yoga session specifically for people who are working with a Link Worker); and providing connections for equipment for groups in need (e.g. funding for Boccia kids).



Sing along following a Red Neighbours Walking Football session

Our social media channels are updated regularly to inform people about wellbeing opportunities available in Liverpool and reduce anxiety about attending by sharing photographs and videos of venues and group leaders/tutors. The Instagram account was started last summer and now has over 1000 followers.

To support our mission of helping local people to feel less isolated, more active, creative, engaged and socially connected; this year during Christmas festivities, we built on our local knowledge of activities to improve social connectivity and wellbeing at Christmas. We produced a Christmas Day Activities Bulletin, with events and activities for people who may otherwise be alone or vulnerable. Our bulletin included Christmas lunches within the community, and various activities during Christmas 2019, to ensure anybody in need, would have the information available to them, to choose to spend Christmas with others. This bulletin was kept up to date with new information, and shared widely on social media, on the Live Well directory and with partners and community groups across Liverpool, to reach as many people as possible.

Working together

We realised that as there were many Social Prescribing Link Workers working for different organisations, it would be beneficial for them to meet regularly to network and discuss best practice. Healthwatch Liverpool began hosting quarterly Link Worker meetings in Autumn 2019 and these have continued more regularly during the Covid-19 pandemic (via Zoom).

As social prescribing continues to grow, our information is now used at the heart of other social prescribing projects in Liverpool involving partners such as GP surgeries and local voluntary sector organisations.

We want people to have access to information which can give them the confidence to try something new and to improve their health and wellbeing in the process. We do this by, where possible, showing the 'human' side of community groups and activities, to put people at ease and feel less anxious about trying an activity or group for the first time. This is done through sharing photographs and videos on our social media, interviewing group leaders and beneficiaries for stories and case studies, and hiring a professional photographer to capture groups in action to be used on our website.

A new website, Wellbeing Liverpool, has

Lunchtime 'Walk for Health' in the rain



been in development in 2019-20. This will build on the service information on the Live Well directory to become an additional resource that members of the public can use to create action plans either by themselves or with a link worker, to help them to become less isolated, more active, creative, engaged and socially connected.

The Wellbeing Liverpool website was due to launch in April 2020 with three engaging and informative events to coincide with the website going live. This event planning aimed to deliver events showcasing activities from various community groups that people could try out as taster sessions and would also see Healthwatch staff and volunteers demonstrating how to use the new website.

Unfortunately, due to lockdown, these events had to be cancelled but we look forward to using the event plans developed in 2019-2020, to launch Wellbeing Liverpool in a safe way in the future, to help Liverpool people recover their wellbeing and social connections after the stresses and isolation of lockdown. In line with the website launch we plan on having marketing materials including pull up banners and videos on screens, in GP surgeries to advertise Social Prescribing and the Wellbeing Liverpool website.

We are very excited for this work to bear fruit in the coming months.

Involvement



Our Volunteers

At Healthwatch Liverpool we are supported by 12 volunteers who gave 659 hours of their time, to help us fulfil our purpose.

This year our volunteers:

- Engaged with patients and visitors at Listening events across Liverpool hospitals, to collect their views.
- Positively influenced the design of, and contributed to our engagement and research projects, including vital input into our project design and delivery plans, taking part in research interviews, administrative and data tasks.
- Facilitated group discussions at our events and shared their own experiences of health and social care services to promote open discussions
- Promoted local health information and advice at a range of public events that take place across the city, including many student welcome events during ‘Freshers’

Volunteers Lend a Listening Ear!

Thanks to the work of our volunteers, patients spoke up about their experiences of hospital care

“I have been involved in Listening events during my time at Healthwatch Liverpool. The second listening event I volunteered at, was at Aintree University Hospital. I really enjoyed being so hands on and showing my independence. The staff at Healthwatch really allowed us to be involved and volunteers had their own questionnaires to each fill out with patients. Approaching patients independently really improved my confidence. During my first Listening event I was anxious to approach the patients and families as it was something I had never done before. However, the Healthwatch staff were really supportive and allowed us to shadow them until we felt comfortable to do some questionnaires ourselves. This event allowed me to promote the amazing work that Healthwatch Liverpool does and it was nice to be involved in work outside of the office and be in the hospital environment.

I liked speaking with the different patients, it was nice to meet so many different people and I felt I could really be a listening ear for them.



Volunteer Danielle at our Healthwatch stall at a local volunteering event

It was also nice to see that patients felt comfortable speaking to us and they all seemed pleased to speak openly with me, as well as my fellow volunteers, and they shared their views and feelings with us about their care, whether positive or negative; knowing Healthwatch Liverpool would really listen, and share this with the hospital, to identify what is going well, and what the hospital could do to better patient experience.”

Danielle, Healthwatch Liverpool Volunteer

Thanks to the hard work and approachability of our volunteers, we were able to visit many wards and departments of the hospital, and heard the views of 89 patients and visitors!

We could not have heard and shared, so many vital patient experiences, and influenced positive change, without the work and dedication of our volunteers.

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear what they get up to.

Here's Healthwatch Volunteer Louise, sharing her highlights since joining the volunteer team. Louise has brought lots expertise to our research projects, amongst other projects. Louise has had a great impact on our work, and on the team.



Louise

I started volunteering with Healthwatch Liverpool, hoping to gain additional research experience and maybe refresh some other skills too. I wasn't disappointed. I was able to get stuck in quickly. Too quickly? I did wonder

as I found myself, flip chart pen in hand, taking notes whilst hastily introducing myself to Healthwatch Liverpool staff and volunteers at the Who Cares? We Do? Event at the Black-E theatre, within about a week of signing up!

But that day, as ever, the staff and volunteers were friendly and supportive and, after several discussion groups, a bowl of scouse, and a very informative play about social care, it turned out to be a great introduction and I was glad I'd agreed to participate. I've continued to value being able to get stuck in and shape the role to my own interests and abilities whilst also being able to access structured support and training. What I have found most satisfying is working in a team to produce a research report, so that insights from people's experiences of the SEND process, can help to bring about improvements in the future

At Healthwatch Liverpool, we want to ensure all volunteer participation is fulfilling, impactful, enjoyable and positive for everybody involved.

Our volunteers make a massive contribution to our work and efforts to find out what matters to health and social care users and the wider public, and to help make sure that these views shape Liverpool services. Volunteer involvement benefits our work massively, but it is also vital to us, that volunteering benefits our volunteers too!

By investing in our volunteers and providing them with bespoke training, ongoing support and one to one supervision, we not only provide a great volunteering experience, we also help people to grow in confidence, gain new skills and knowledge, improve their

general health and wellbeing and enhance their employability skills.

This year we have been proud to work with a number of asylum seekers, providing support and guidance through the DBS process, enabling these volunteers to fully participate in all of our activities. Through their participation and willingness to share their own experiences, we have learnt a great deal about some of the challenges faced by the asylum seeker & refugee community in accessing local health and social care services.

It's important that individuals and groups who are often excluded from conversations about local services play a central part in the work that we do and that we continue to learn from, and listen to, one another.



To show our volunteers just how much we appreciate them, the time they give to benefit the people of Liverpool and Liverpool's health and care services, and, the support and warmth they give to the wider team at Healthwatch Liverpool; it was a pleasure to come together with our staff and volunteer team, for our 2019 Christmas celebrations. We held an office party with food, games and quizzes. It was also great to have some of our volunteers come along to our big team Christmas meal. It can't be all work and no play!

We would like to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers! We simply couldn't do what we do without you!



Volunteers Samuel and David at the Healthwatch Liverpool team's Christmas meal



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 our Volunteering and Involvement Officer, Steph.

Website: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/volunteer

Telephone: 0300 77 77 007

Email: steph.gregory@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

Our Membership

This year, we've launched a new membership scheme and focused on developing a wider range of methods for engaging with the community, to ensure that local residents are able to get involved in all aspects of our work.

Our offer to members includes regular newsletters, with information so that our members can stay informed of the work we are doing, and are planning to do, including the findings of projects and reports, future public engagement plans, and training and volunteering opportunities. We want to ensure local people know about the different ways in which they can engage in our work. We have focused on ensuring our membership scheme is accessible to anybody wishing to engage; as well as ensuring we promote this opportunity, across the city, to harder to reach groups.

We currently have 105 members, with a mix of members of the public, and health and social care professionals.

In November 2019, we launched our membership, with a day-long event, titled 'Who Cares? We Do!' which brought together members of the public and health and social care professionals to talk about the issues affecting local people around health and social care, and provide an open space to share experiences and wishes for the future of health and social care in Liverpool. We identified key themes of attendee views, and then held 'World Café' style discussions, to further discuss and explore these topics.

In the afternoon, we also hosted a performance of the play 'Phyllis', by Women and Theatre; which looks at experiences of social care - a great discussion starter; with a Q&A session with the actors and audience. [Our report of the event was published on our website.](#)



Become a Healthwatch Liverpool Member!

We've made it even easier for you to share your expert knowledge as a patient, service user, carer or service provider and help shape local health and social care services.

Sign up now: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk/membership

In February 2020, we held our second membership event, during National Story Telling Week.

We invited local people we've engaged with through our work, and who have shared their experiences and views with us, to share their stories directly and authentically with others, through the platform of this public event, which also included their views on the importance and benefits of speaking up and sharing their voices.

The day concluded with a story telling workshop to help encourage attendees to think creatively about how they could share their health and social care stories with us, and with others, to influence positive change.

We also discussed our three ongoing projects - our work with kidney transplant

patients, which we look forward to publishing soon, our SEND, and Homelessness projects. We also encouraged further feedback from members of the public, and spoke about getting involved in our membership scheme.

Having a strong membership scheme, means we can work closely with the public, as well as professionals working in the health and social care sector, or with an interest in health and care related topics; and collectively, continue to make a positive impact to health and social care services, and the people of Liverpool.

We look forward to working further with our membership over the next year, and increasing engagement in our membership scheme; to ensure people of all walks of life, backgrounds, experiences and stories, have a strong and supportive platform to share their voices, and direct our work at Healthwatch Liverpool.

Community Engagement Board

This year, we launched our Community Engagement Board. The board is made up of individuals or representatives from organisations that have a key interest and expertise in people's experience of health and social care services in Liverpool.

The aim of the Community Engagement Board is to provide advice and guidance to Healthwatch Liverpool in relation to the health and social care needs of different communities in Liverpool.

The board advises the Healthwatch Liverpool management team on issues affecting local people and helps to set priorities for Healthwatch Liverpool's work. It does this by:

- Sharing community insights and concerns about health and care issues affecting local communities.
- Supporting the Healthwatch Liverpool team in identifying local issues, priorities and concerns.
- Representing the views of local people to improve and influence local services.
- Advising on Healthwatch Liverpool's priority areas of work.
- Reviewing work plans and their delivery.
- Receiving updates on our activities.
- Supporting the team in promoting Healthwatch Liverpool amongst their networks
- Sharing information and ideas from their networks that may be of useful to our work.
- Helping to identify opportunities for joint working amongst networks.

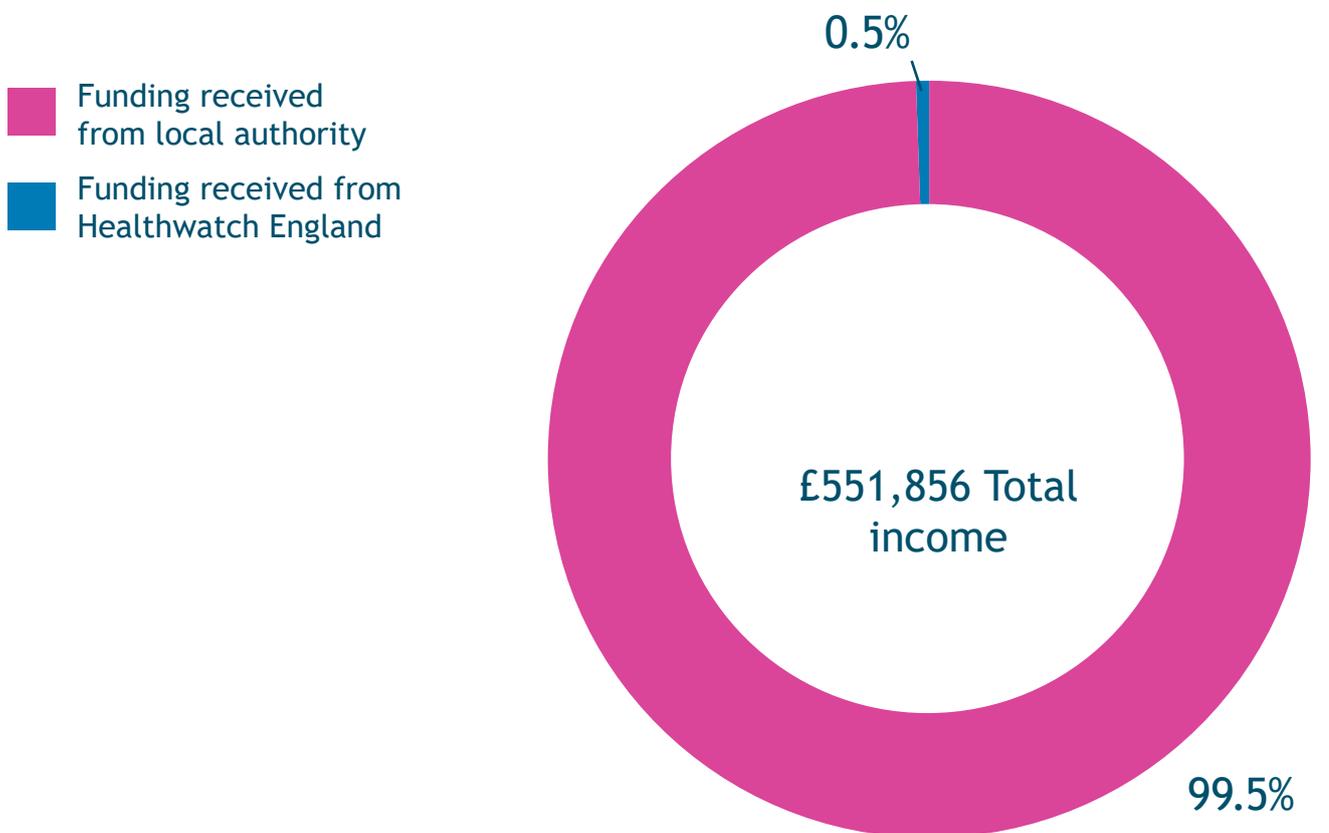
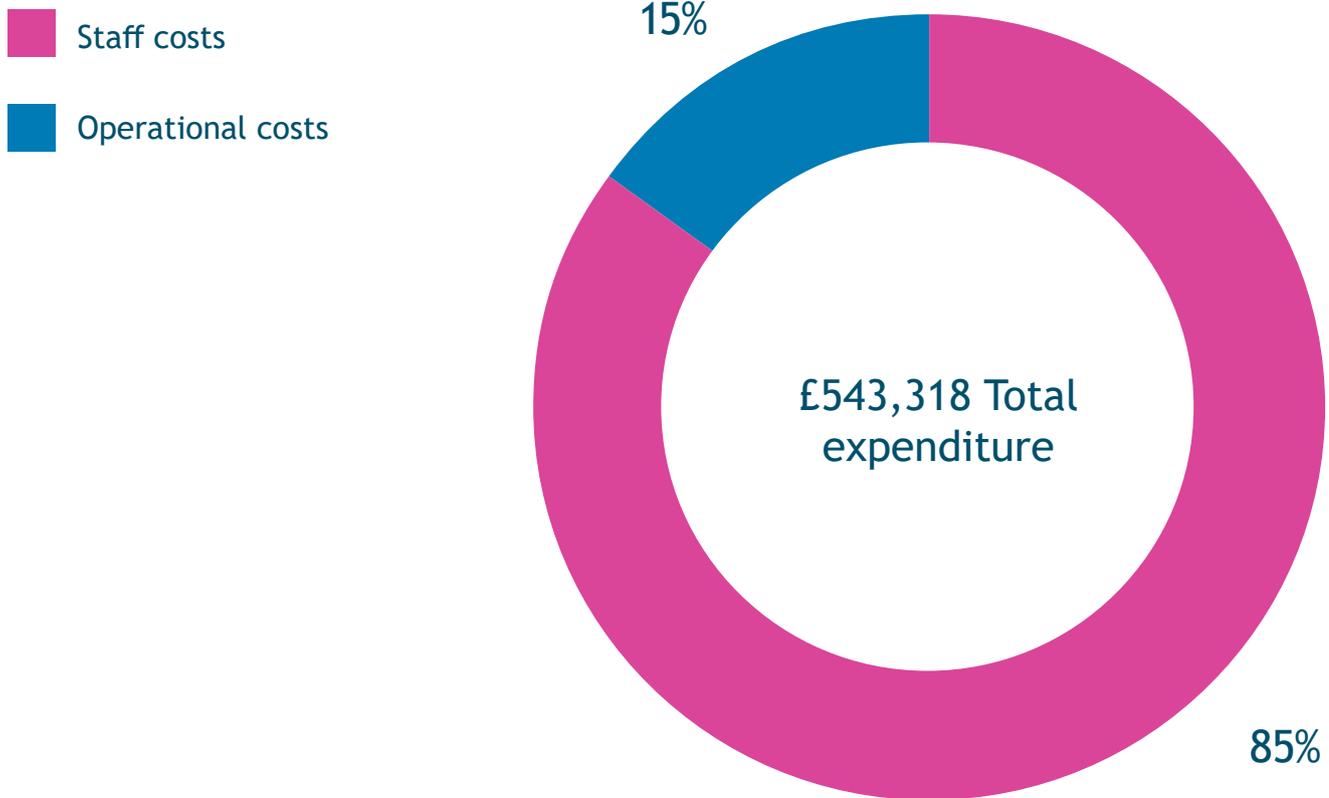
Our board is currently made up of ten representatives from local organisations.

Finances



Women & Theatre lead an audience discussion session at our Membership Launch event in November 2019

We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £543,318.



The above figures cover income and expenditure on our regular Healthwatch activities. Our work on Wellbeing Liverpool is separately funded by pilot funding from the Department of Health as part of Citizens Advice Liverpool's Ways to Wellbeing project

Our plans for next year



Looking back

We are proud of our work in 2019-20. Our project work focussed on issues we know are important to local people. We continued to help people navigate the maze of health and care services. We adapted towards the end of the year, at pace, to the new Covid-19 landscape and ensured that there was no gap in our service operation including taking public enquiries about health and social care, which was vital at such a challenging time for so many people. Our Live Well directory continued to provide people with information on suitable services and activities to support their wellbeing and was visited hundreds of thousands of times.

Looking ahead

To say that 2020-21 is going to be a challenging year feels like an understatement. The city has been hit particularly hard by Covid-19. It looks very much like health inequalities and deprivation affecting this city for so long are key factors in this - and also in which groups within the city have been hit hardest.

Healthwatch Liverpool's vision is "a health and social care system that works for everyone". In 2020 this has to include responding to the pandemic, learning from people's experiences of it and making sure that this is at the heart of the plans for how the city recovers from this.

Our revised priorities for 2020-21 are below:

Spring 2020

- maintain our services throughout lockdown, keeping the information, enquires and advocacy service running without disruption, and ensuring that the Live Well directory continued to be a reliable source of information.
- start to collect people's experiences of the pandemic with an online survey live from 1st April 2020, which has since been used by other local Healthwatch as a model.



Healthwatch Liverpool Chief Officer, Sarah Thwaites, at our Membership launch event in November 2019

- meet with link workers, student services and community organisations to hear the experiences of the people they are supporting
- help to ensure that local people's experiences are fed as quickly as possible into, firstly, crisis management, and later, decisions about recovery planning as well as planning in case there is a further wave of Covid-19.

Summer 2020 and beyond

Having taken time to review our planned work for the year, we are planning four new and additional priorities for our work in for Summer 2020. These are:

Health Inequalities

We will be focusing on gathering the experiences of those groups who faced additional challenges during Covid-19, including:

- people whose communication needs were not met (BSL speakers, people whose first language is not English)

- shielded groups and others who were most vulnerable, and ask; how was that experience? How supported did people feel?

We will explore whose health has been hit the most and share findings on how those needs should and must be included in recovery planning.

Mental health

Even before Covid-19, mental health was coming out as a top priority for us to focus on this year - feedback, enquiries and our members were all telling us how important this was to local people. Covid-19 has made this even more important with around 70% of our Coronavirus survey respondents to date telling us that the pandemic had impacted on their mental health. Few of us have been unaffected but some people such as carers, people who have been bereaved and front line workers have been particularly affected.

We know how important it is that the city plans to help address the increased stress, anxiety and depression that people have been experiencing, helping people find ways to deal with this and providing support where needed. We'll be working with local people to decide where to focus our attention based on where the voices we gather could be of most impact.



Social care settings

In a normal year, we would visit care homes and other settings to see the care delivered and gather people's experiences. Currently this isn't possible. Care settings are largely cut off from the wider world with families not able to visit. Many settings have faced a very hard time. We'll be gathering experiences from people about working in, living in or having a family member in a care setting during Covid-19.

What lessons are there for the future? What care do people want in future?

The city's recovery

As well as contributing to the city's recovery planning, once community activities can safely resume we'll be launching Wellbeing Liverpool to help people find and try new activities, ways to get active or to connect with others in their community. We hope this can play a part in helping us as individuals, communities and a city recover from Covid-19 and lead the lives we want.

S Thwaites

Sarah Thwaites
Healthwatch Liverpool Chief Officer



In October 2019, Sarah appeared on Nihal's BBC Radio 5 Live afternoon show to provide a live response to the health and care issues raised in the Queen's Speech to mark the opening of Parliament

Healthwatch Liverpool Chief Officer, Sarah Thwaites, with our 'Highly Commended' certificate at the 2019 Healthwatch Network Awards.

Thank you

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

- Members of the public who shared their views and experiences with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The community organisations that have contributed to our work.
- Our members
- Our Community Engagement Board
- Health and social care workers
- We would also like to take this opportunity, to thank all key workers, frontline staff and everybody who is helping to get Liverpool through the Covid-19 pandemic.



Contact Us

Healthwatch Liverpool
4th floor, LCVS, 151 Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2AH.

Phone: 0300 77 77 007
Text / WhatsApp: 07842552878

Email: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk
Twitter: @HW_Liverpool @LiveWellLpool
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HWLiverpool
Instagram: @LiveWellLpool
Website: www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

During the period covered by this annual report Healthwatch Liverpool was delivered in partnership by Liverpool Advocacy Rights Information Development and Equality (Laridae) CIC, and LCVS

Laridae CIC (company number 8254903)
Registered office: 4th Floor, 151 Dale Street, L2 2AH

Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services (Company No 181759, Registered Charity No 223485)
Registered office: 151 Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2AH

Our annual report will be publicly available on our website by 30 June 2019. We will also be sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and Liverpool City Council.

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.

Healthwatch Liverpool
151 Dale Street
Liverpool
L2 2AH

www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

t: 0300 77 77 007

e: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk

 [@HW_Liverpool](https://twitter.com/@HW_Liverpool)

 [Facebook.com/HWLiverpool](https://www.facebook.com/HWLiverpool)
