

Healthwatch Southend

Annual
Report

2014/2015





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Note from the Chair Janice Price



Healthwatch Southend is already building on the momentum of its activities and the progress made throughout 2014/2015 and does so with an ever increasing sense of urgency, purpose and focus. The last year has been an incredibly busy and rewarding one at Healthwatch Southend and we could not have achieved the outcomes we are now pleased to report without the contributions and dedication of our partners, volunteers, Advisory Board and staff team.

We also owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to the many residents of Southend who have registered their support, accessed our independent and confidential services and entrusted us with information regarding their health and social care service experiences. Public feedback and the sharing of lived experience about the services people access is the lifeblood of Healthwatch Southend's vision and is an integral constituent for wider public involvement in order to bring about progress, improvement and change where issues are identified. Equally it is important for positive experience to be shared too, enabling good practice and care to be promoted, celebrated and pursued.

During the last year Healthwatch Southend received 785 calls for information and advice about health and social care services in the borough with 77 of these having been referred to our formal complaints advocacy service. Recording the contact reason for each of these calls enabled us to identify several key areas of concern which resulted in two of our main public consultation events in 2014: Access to GPs (August 2014) and Community Dentistry (October 2014). These events were attended by healthcare and

statutory representatives, VCO's and members of the public and we extend our thanks to all attendees for their valuable contributions as well as to those attending other events we hosted throughout 2014.

In our Annual Report we will be highlighting our achievements and impact, however, with our statutory obligations at the forefront of our strategic and operational plans and as an organisation with a commitment to continual self-review, we are ever mindful of those areas of our work which need further attention and improvement. We have ambitious plans for year three of the Healthwatch journey and we will be sharing an overview of these with you later in the report.

2014/2015 has provided many opportunities and successes but there have been and no doubt will continue to be areas of substantial challenge. With ever increasing pressures on the health and social care budget, Healthwatch Southend believes that the involvement of local people in the design, commissioning, access and provision of services is essential and Healthwatch Southend looks forward to playing a major role in strengthening this approach in 2015/2016.



About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Southend is here to make health and social care better for local people and we believe that the best way to do this is by designing local services around their needs and experiences.

Everything we say and do is informed by our engagement with local people and our expertise derives from them sharing with us their lived experience of the services they access. As the only body looking solely at people's experience across all health and social care, we are uniquely placed as a network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

As a statutory watchdog our role is to ensure that local health and social care services, and the local decision makers, put the experiences of people at the heart of their care.

Our vision/mission

Our vision remains:

The citizens of Southend on Sea will be able to have their views on health and social care services heard by those who design, commission, deliver and monitor services locally and nationally, and will have direct access to person centred information and advice to help navigate their way through the health and social care landscape.

Our mission is:

To work collaboratively with everyone in Southend to improve the quality of local health and social care services.

A summary of our strategic objectives

- To provide an effective and efficient Healthwatch service
- To facilitate consumer engagement and involvement
- To effectively represent local people
- To effectively engage with regulators, commissioners and health care providers
- To provide a comprehensive advice, information and signposting service
- To provide an independent NHS complaints advocacy service
- To provide evidence based feedback

Our strategic priorities

Our priorities for 2014/2015:

- Outcomes and impact evidencing
- Enter and View
- Children and Young People
- BME Engagement
- Increasing public involvement

In order to realise our strategic priorities it was important for us to build the capacity of the Healthwatch Southend team for the specific tasks and objectives these priorities demanded. This was predominantly achieved by strengthening the Advisory Board, conducting a volunteer recruitment drive as well as increasing our communications and impact capability in terms of staffing and methodology.



From the outset, the Healthwatch Southend team ensured that data recording processes were in place in order to quickly identify issues, trends and gaps while aiming to improve outcomes monitoring.

Our engagement with residents who contacted us for advice, information and signposting enabled us to record a range of consented data for monitoring purposes which served to underpin our understanding of the key issues and concerns on which Southend residents needed either advice, action or a combination of both. We gathered a range of data which was extensive, and together with information received from 'Speakout' forms, completed online and at external events, several key issues were highlighted. Healthwatch Southend was able to be responsive to this body of evidence, the outcome of which provided priorities for our engagement focus.

The information gathered from multiple sources was compelling and identified significant areas of concern relating to health and social care services in the borough which led to the development of five key public engagement events developed and hosted by Healthwatch Southend:

- **GP Health Checks for people with learning disabilities (July 2014)**
- **Access to GPs (August 2014)**
- **Community Dental Service (October 2014)**
- **St Luke's Practice (October 2014)**
- **Homecare in Southend (November 2014)**

These events were supported by a diversity of stakeholder groups which were brought together to engage with, assess

and collaboratively navigate a way forward with the issues raised.

In being responsive to this real time information we recognise that we were unable to commit as much time as we had originally intended to our other set priorities.

BME engagement is an embedded strand of all the work we carry out and throughout the year we have identified and engaged with several BME groups and audiences in order to promote the services we offer and raise the profile of the work we do, emphasising that we do this on behalf of all residents in Southend.

65% of those accessing our Advice, Information and Signposting service provided their ethnic origin and of those 22% were recorded as BME service users. Southend is a borough of enormous diversity and we will continue to improve accessibility to our services and support for minority groups in 2015/2016.

As we reported, in 2013/2014 we did not become aware of any issues to justify the immediate use of our statutory 'Enter and View' power. However, in 2014/2015 as our monitoring processes gathered increasing evidence and with our advocacy and advice team also providing qualitative feedback on services, we were able to identify those service areas which potentially required observation to further understand the issues being raised. We report our progress on page 9.

In our planning for 2014/2015 we were eager to improve our reach to children and young people service user groups and their families and carers. We attended events which were specifically targeted for improved engagement with young people and we report on our progress and future plans later in this report.



Healthwatch Southend Team updates:

Team 2014/2015:

Manager - Jonathon Keay (until 25th March 2015)

Coordinator - Gill Dawson

Advocacy Workers (BATIAS partnership) - Jo Murphy and Scarlett Mearthy (until January 2015)

Advice and Information Worker (CAB partnership) - Michelle Goddard

Communications and Impact Worker - Mark Sadler (from 26th August 2014)

Team 2015/2016:

Manager - John Cooke (from 26th May 2015)

Interim Manager- Debbie Bent (from 5th March - May 22nd 2015)

Administrator/Coordinator - Joanne Quinn

Advocacy Workers (Batias Partnership) - Jo Murphy and Katherine Burrows

Advice and Information Worker (CAB partnership) - Louise Christie

Engagement Officer (Children and Young People) - Dan Turpin

Engagement Officer (General)

Communications and Impact Worker - Mark Sadler





Engaging with people who use health and social care services

Understanding people's experiences

Healthwatch Southend is dedicated to capturing, involving, evidencing and representing the voice and lived experience of all residents across the borough.

In the last year we have continued to build the number of groups, events and meetings we attend and have promoted our services across a broad stakeholder range including VCO's, health care providers, statutory organisations and disadvantaged groups. We maintain a database of this activity and consolidate our contact with these groups and individuals through repeat communications to build meaningful relationships with existing and new audiences.

Our supporter number continues to grow and we maintain and support these links via our E-bulletin and web communications. Our E-Bulletin is uploaded to our website, automatically emailed to registered supporters and posted to those who do not have access to a computer.

The monthly E-bulletin provides a comprehensive overview of activities Healthwatch Southend are engaged in and informative pieces around current and potential local and national health and social care issues. The E-bulletin, our website and our other social media platforms consistently and systematically invite our stakeholders to get involved

with our events and surveys as well as encouraging feedback about their experiences of any aspect of the health and social care services they access.

We also welcome opinion about the services we provide. We evaluate this information, learn and respond. Where necessary we make changes and improvements to our services and processes.

Healthwatch Southend has continued to develop its event programme around those issues and concerns that have been raised by the public via our services, engagement activities and completed 'Speakout' forms.

In 2014/2015 we have organised and coordinated five key events which have all been developed for the purpose of involving the general public, service users, carers, patients and families in the design and commissioning of local health and social care services. These events were well attended and brought these stakeholder groups together with service providers, healthcare professionals and commissioners for questions to be asked, views to be heard and a greater understanding of the challenges and potential outcomes for all concerned.

31% of people contacting us for advice and information were enquiring about access to GPs and Dental services



From our inception in April 2013 the single most significant area of concern being raised by local people through our engagement activity and services has been access to GPs.

Issues were being highlighted around finding a GP with whom to register, obtaining an appointment within a reasonable time as well as views around the quality of GP and practice services. Our Access to GPs Event in August 2014 was designed to help get peoples' views heard and openly discuss the issues with the professionals designing and commissioning the service.

We welcomed speakers from NHS England (Essex Area Team), NHS Southend CCG and Patient Engagement and Involvement (NHS Southend CCG). A Healthwatch Southend Advisory Board Member also presented a "Review of GP Patient Practice Engagement in Southend" which was the result of research commissioned by Healthwatch Southend's Advisory Board earlier in 2014 and a full report of which can be accessed on our website.

"I have done listening exercises in A & E and was surprised at the amount of mums there in the morning with children with high temperatures and rashes. They went to A & E because they couldn't get a GP appointment until the afternoon or evening."

Attendee - Healthwatch Southend Access to GPs Event 26th August 2014

Question and answer sessions and table discussions involved members of the public, voluntary sector organisations, NHS and SBC staff, together with the

Healthwatch team, including our young volunteers.

"The afternoon was very informative, very interesting. Good to hear from the experts what services are in the community for older people to enable them to stay independently in their own homes and environment they know."

Southend Resident - Homecare Public Event November 2014

Our Home Care Public Event in November 2014 was organised in response to many concerns raised by the public at other events delivered by Healthwatch Southend and those we had attended throughout the year. Presentations were given by commissioners and home care providers who participated in an open debate with members of the public, VCOs, healthcare professionals and statutory representatives. A summary report has been written and Healthwatch Southend is now considering options to engage a broader section of Southend residents who access these services so that priority areas for improvement together with those areas that are working well can be identified.

19% of people contacting Healthwatch Southend for advice are 65 and over

47% of this group are 80 and over

Healthwatch Southend has consistently targeted groups that support older people throughout the borough to promote our services and ensure involvement of this user group. We have made good links with associated agencies and charities.



Engagement with local people to facilitate and promote their involvement in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of health and social care services is a statutory function of local Healthwatch.

While Healthwatch Southend can demonstrate considerable activity in these areas, we also recognise that we must do even more in terms of wider engagement and public involvement. Our 2015/2016 priorities will ensure that we will be able to report progress and achievements throughout the year.

Understanding the experiences of young people under 21

A priority for Healthwatch Southend in 2015/2016 is improved engagement with and the involvement of children and young people in the design and commissioning processes of the health and social care services they access in Southend.

While we have been building relationships with groups and charities that support young people under 21, we need to do more to ensure we are capturing their individual and collective voice about the services they, their parents and carers are using. From the 1st April 2015 our dedicated Engagement Officer (Children and Young People) will be making it their mission to talk to this user group about their views and experiences of health and social care services in Southend, running workshops in schools and youth groups as well as supporting a network of Healthwatch Southend Youth Ambassadors who will work with us on our 'Your Voice' campaigning.

We will be recording the views we gather and using our unique position and influence to get the voice of young people heard. We will be evidencing their opinion through relevant surveys and developing

specific events. Young people's representatives will have a timetabled platform at our Advisory Board and other strategic meetings to assure their involvement in decision making processes of the services they access.

The views of people volunteering or working in Southend but who may not live here

We recognise that non-residents work and volunteer across the borough and have experiences of health and social care services in Southend about which we need to hear. In a targeted approach we have actively promoted our services and activities to Southend's commuters but have not systematically gathered the views of this group. In 2015/2016, recording and evidencing the experiences of people who are not Southend residents will be rooted in our monitoring processes.

Involving disadvantaged and vulnerable people

Following Healthwatch Southend's Public Event which focused on the availability of local services for people with Autism and Asperger's, we have been following developments and have issued two subsequent reports. Initial discussions enabled service users to voice their concerns and needs directly to commissioners and subsequently the charity Supporting Asperger's Families in Southend (SAFE) was invited by Southend Borough Council (SBC) to have a representative on the Learning Disability Partnership Board as an interim measure.

Throughout 2014/2015 SBC has been developing its Autism Conditions Spectrum Strategy and on 9th December 2014 the first meeting took place of the Autism Partnership Board. This agenda and its impact will remain a priority focus for Healthwatch Southend in 2015/2016.



Involving disadvantaged and vulnerable people

In July 2014 Healthwatch Southend held an event to discuss issues relating to GP checks for people with learning disabilities. As well as welcoming speakers from local commissioning teams we were also grateful to Jenny Gilliat of SHIELDS - Supporting, Helping, Informing Everyone with Learning Disabilities in Southend - who gave her own perspective on the health check process. The event was well attended by service users from local organisations including SHIELDS and Project 49 (The Hub). The outcomes of this event and follow-up work can be found in the respective case study on page 17 of this report.

Through its information, signposting and advice work, Healthwatch Southend has become increasingly aware of the challenges the homeless community face when trying to access health and social care services. We regularly attend meetings of those organisations supporting homeless people in Southend with the aim of practically and legislatively supporting this vulnerable group as well as ensuring their views and experiences are captured.

Enter & View

Enter and view is one of a range of tools available to Healthwatch Southend to gather information needed about services and collect views of service users, their carers and relatives. Enter and view is not an inspection but instead an opportunity for lay people to engage with service users and their families, in order to gain a better view of how they feel about their services.

Visits aim to provide an informed view of the quality and scope of health and adult

social care services provided for Southend residents. Where Enter and View is determined as a course of appropriate action, recommendations for improvement will be backed by evidenced based reports.

In 2014/2015 Healthwatch Southend recruited 6 Enter and View volunteers who completed the requisite training programme. We are extremely grateful to these dedicated individuals who gave a considerable amount of time to become authorised Enter and View representatives.

During the course of 2014/2015 as our information gathering and evidencing increased, several key opportunities for our Enter and View team were identified. In March 2015 Healthwatch Southend undertook its first Enter and View visit and, at the time of writing, the draft report is currently with the respective provider for comment prior to circulation and publishing.

A dedicated Enter and View webpage is being created and will be available shortly. It will include details of the volunteer team and will contain links to any respective reports we produce and recommendations we propose as a result of the visits we make.

In 2015/2016 it will be a priority for our Engagement Officer to develop a programme of Enter and View visits which will be informed by the information we gather from our services and outreach work. There will be opportunities for more members of the public to become involved in the scrutiny of local services as we anticipate recruiting more volunteers for these specific roles. Healthwatch Southend looks forward to increasing public involvement in this area of its work and strategic aims.



Providing information and signposting for people who use health and social care services

Helping people get what they need from local health and social care services

At Healthwatch Southend our Advice, Information and Signposting service has continued to see an increase in the numbers of people requiring support to navigate the health and social care system in Southend. Our trained advisors (via our CAB Partnership) have supported 785 people in 2014/2015 to access the services they needed.

Our advice and advocacy team take a fully collaborative approach and are dedicated to ensuring that every client is provided with the information needed to meet their required individual outcomes.

“Michelle went above and beyond her job to find and give me information about how to pursue my treatment.”

Client Survey Response, December 2014

It can be difficult to know where to turn when you need help from health or social care services. Our Advice, Information and Signposting service will assist with queries about services and their availability, help individuals to navigate the health and social care system to help access the services needed as well as empowering

consumers with information on their rights and options.

Over the last year, the majority of enquiries at Healthwatch Southend have been from patients who are struggling to access a GP or dentist.

The following case provides an example of how we can help people to access services and take more control of their own health and social care.

We were contacted by a husband and wife who had received a letter from their GP practice, out of the blue, requesting they register with a new GP because they are living outside of the practice catchment area.

It appeared the couple's GP practice was struggling with the high number of patients on their register and therefore had started to contact some of their patients to ask they register elsewhere.

The husband and wife were concerned about changing to a new GP practice; they had been happy with their GP, it was not their choice to change, they did not know who else they could register with and they were concerned about whether a new GP would be willing to provide home visits for the husband who is house bound.

They were firstly advised that, unfortunately GP practices do have



the right to remove patients from their register if they do not live within the practice catchment area. This is known as a 'reasonable ground' to refuse or remove a patient.

To assist the couple, we checked the GP practice boundary maps for the Southend area and confirmed their choice of GP practices to register with. We also confirmed that when a request is made for a home visit, the new GP should assess the husband's medical condition to decide if a home visit is required in the same way the last GP did.

The couple have now contacted a new GP practice and are going through the registration process.

We often speak to clients who are not aware of their rights around the quality of and access to health and social care services. For the example given above, it is within the NHS Constitution that;

“You have the right to choose your GP practice, and to be accepted by that practice unless there are reasonable grounds to refuse, in which case you will be informed of those reasons.” (Page 63 of the handbook to The NHS Constitution for England 26 March 2013)

This year has seen government legislation changing rights and access to health and social care services with the introduction of the Care Act 2014, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Immigration Act 2014. It has been a challenge to keep up to date with all of these changes, but we have managed it, and our information and advice service continues to provide the advice people need for the problems they face.

100% of respondents to our Information and Advice Service survey 2014/2015 found our advice service either helpful or very helpful.

Key Outcomes for our Advice, Information and Signposting service

- 573 clients given the information/advice required at the first contact
- 136 clients linked in with a relevant voluntary/ third sector groups
- 125 clients assisted to register with a new GP practice
- 90 clients made aware of rights and options for making a health and/or social care complaint
- 81 clients assisted with a signposting request
- 80 clients assisted to register with a new dental practice
- 77 clients referred to a health complaint advocate
- 64 contacts made to us from health and care professionals asking for information on local services
- 42 clients made aware of health and/or social care services they previously did not know about



Influencing decision makers with evidence from local people

Producing reports and recommendations to effect change

Any reports we produce are circulated to our supporters, Healthwatch England, NHS England, CCG, The Health and Wellbeing Board and key stakeholders at SBC as well as being publicly available on the 'reports' page of our website. We request and welcome feedback on any aspect of the reporting content.

In 2014/2015 we have produced detailed reports following our public consultation events around GP health checks for people with learning disabilities and a follow-up report on the development of services for people with Autism and Asperger's. We also produced an in-depth report on the context, viability and future of St Lukes Health Centre following its respective consultation event in October 2014.

We believe that as a result of our consultation event on Autism and Asperger's services and our two subsequent reports there have been tangible developments which give testimony to Healthwatch Southend's efficacy to facilitate and collaboratively realise change and improvements. The outcomes and impact of our event and report on GP checks for people with learning disability can be found in our highlighted case study on page 17, while the full content of all our reports can be found on Healthwatch Southend's website.

Putting local people at the heart of improving services

The purpose of all the events we organised was to bring commissioners, healthcare providers and decision makers together with service users and members of the public. We are pleased to report that our events were enthusiastically attended by all these stakeholder groups. Patients, their families and the general public, Healthwatch Southend supporters and volunteers were able to voice their concerns to those making decisions about their services in an environment of listening, learning and collaboration. Their involvement and influence in the development and provision of services can be evidenced in our reports.

As previously noted a copy of all our reports is forwarded to Southend's Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) at which Healthwatch Southend's Manager has a seat.

Through our public engagement feedback, consultation events, requests and report recommendations we collect a body of evidence which we can take to the HWB with the aim of influencing the decision making process. Healthwatch Southend has recently contributed to the draft Service Specification for a Mental Health Needs Assessment for Adults which is an initiative of the HWB and the Joint Executive Group in 2015.



Working with others to improve local services

The success and outcomes of the events we have organised have only been realised as a result of the collaborative approach we have enjoyed with service providers and commissioners. We have been encouraged by their willingness to engage with Healthwatch Southend and the general public in a setting of transparency, understanding and empathy. This can be demonstrated in the reports we have produced and we believe that these relationships will only grow stronger and even more productive as 2015/2016 progresses.

We have experienced a good level of response to our requests for information from specific providers and commissioners and all of our Freedom of Information Requests have received prompt replies.



Access to GPs Event August 2014

Healthwatch Southend made 6 Freedom of Information Requests in 2014/2015

While we have not made any recommendations to the Care Quality Commission to undertake special reviews or investigations, we have provided them with copies of all our reports published in this period. When necessary, we escalate cases to Healthwatch England and an example of this in 2014/2015 related to Healthwatch Southend being made aware of patient concern regarding inadequate consultation and engagement regarding renal services commissioning. Healthwatch England has written to the Department of Health and NHS England regarding the extent of patient consultation and is conducting its own research to inform further discussions.

Our planned programme of evidence based Enter and View visits in 2015/2016 will provide greater public involvement in and scrutiny of local services. Copies of subsequent Enter and View reports will be forwarded to the CQC and Healthwatch England as they become available.



Impact Stories

Case Study One

A collaborative approach to improving the access and quality of Annual Health Checks for People with Learning Disabilities



Paula Pearl, Health Facilitation Nurse (SEPT) describes the annual health checks for people with learning disabilities at a Healthwatch Southend event (July 2014)

This case study demonstrates how Healthwatch Southend works to improve local healthcare services. It deals with how we identify a problem, how we gather public opinion and how we conduct follow-up work based on the evidence we record.

It also demonstrates how we communicate our findings to health and social care providers, commissioners and regulators, and how we monitor for signs of improvement.

Since 2008, anyone over the age of 14 who has been diagnosed with a learning disability has been entitled to a free annual health check from the NHS. In Southend these checks are carried out by GPs. They do not form part of the core GP contract but are instead classified as a Direct Enhanced Service, meaning that they can be taken on by practices as optional work in exchange for additional funding, which is paid upon the delivery of the health checks.

While the health checks were established to address concerns around the wellbeing of people with learning disabilities, there is evidence to suggest that, in the past, these check-ups have not always been delivered in a way that is effective and will lead to good outcomes for patients.

In early 2014, statistics published by NHS England revealed that only 27% of the people in Southend with a learning disability had received an annual health check between April 1st 2013 and March 31st 2014.



As a response to these figures, Healthwatch Southend organised a public event that focused on the health checks. Our aim was to openly discuss the topic, identify the issues and communicate these to the appropriate organisations. We also wanted to give Southend residents the opportunity to hear from the people who commission and provide the service, and to ask questions, make comments, or share their experiences and concerns.

Speakers at the event included a Health Facilitation Nurse from the South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT) and a representative from NHS England. A member of SHIELDS - a group of people with learning disabilities who offer advice and support on learning disability issues - gave a personal account of her experience of receiving a health check and described how, as a result, she felt more confident about visiting her doctor. Also in attendance were members of the public and other health and social care professionals.

During the discussion that followed the presentations it became apparent that there was very little information available relating to how the health checks were carried out in practice and whether they were performed to a high standard.

We heard accounts of significant variations in the amount of time being dedicated to each health check with reports ranging from anywhere between 5 and 45 minutes. We were told that some people were finding it increasingly hard to book appointments for the health check. Concerns were also raised about how people were invited to attend a health check appointment by their GPs and whether details were communicated in a form that would be accessible and understandable for patients with learning disabilities.

Following the event, Healthwatch Southend produced a short report which provided background on the health checks

and summarised our work on the issue to date. We sent copies of the report to the Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Southend Health and Wellbeing Board, Healthwatch England and NHS England, along with local councillors, local MPs and healthcare professionals.

We also made the report available on our website and promoted it in our monthly e-bulletin and through our various social media accounts. On the Healthwatch Southend website we created a page that included links to text versions of the presentations given at the Learning Disability Event, alongside other useful online resources, such as the Southend Hospital patient passport, and guidance produced by the General Medical Council for GPs who are treating patients who have learning disabilities.

Healthwatch Southend attended further public meetings addressing the health checks that had been organised by NHS England. These were designed to bring together service users, providers, commissioners, and designers, along with organisations like our own. We also participated in private discussions with representatives from NHS England, Public Health England and our colleagues at Healthwatch Essex, where we put forward ideas.

Although the low uptake of the learning disability health checks is clearly an important issue, Healthwatch Southend adopted the position that, while taking the necessary steps to drive up the number of people receiving the checks, we should not overlook issues around the quality of the service and how the information generated is shared between healthcare providers.

In an attempt to address what we felt were gaps in our knowledge about how the health checks are actually carried out, Healthwatch Southend wrote to every GP Practice in Southend with a list of questions. Among other things, we asked whether there is a template that GPs are required to work from when



carrying out the checks, whether any preventative screening is performed, and whether the health check can be carried out in the patient's home if they are unable to attend the surgery. We also asked GPs if they felt there were any ways in which the checks could be improved. The response to our survey was low; however those practices who did reply provided us with good information that was consistent with what we had read about the checks.

Healthwatch Southend also contacted SEPT and Southend Hospital, again with a list of questions about the health checks. These focused on how information from the checks is shared with community healthcare providers and also with those in outpatient or secondary care settings. We wanted to know whether this information was relevant and of a good standard. Both organisations provided us with detailed responses and offered opinions on how these elements of the health checks could be improved.

In the interests of driving forward improvements to the health checks, any intelligence that was gathered by Healthwatch Southend was shared with the other organisations we were in discussion with on this issue. This included NHS England.

At the time of writing the healthcare outlook for people with learning disabilities in Southend has notably improved. While this improvement is encouraging, the figure remains relatively low, but we are hopeful that momentum will continue to gather as a result of the massive collective effort being made to improve the service.

In a recent meeting, NHS England described to us in detail the hard work they have carried out across the board in improving the health checks. This includes making the service more accessible to learning disability patients and providing assistance and support to GPs.

The latest figures from NHS England show that, during the year 2014/15, 62% of people with a diagnosed learning disability in Southend received a health check - the highest uptake anywhere in Essex.

Another development has been the creation of a Learning Disability Self-Assessment Framework by the Southend Health and Wellbeing Board. This assesses the quality of the local services available for people with learning disabilities.

Healthwatch Southend will continue to monitor the effects of these changes by gathering the views of people with learning disabilities and their families during 2015/2016.





Case Study Two

Advocacy support leading to client empowerment and improved service provision



Health Complaints Advocacy Service at Healthwatch Southend

Our Advocacy Support Workers at Healthwatch Southend (partnership with BATIAS) are here to support the client with any aspect of the NHS complaint process that they require.

However, despite advocacy support being available, 25 patients who met with our advocates who explained the process and agreed advocacy support, decided not to proceed with the complaint. Some did not give reasons but others felt it would not make any difference; it would be too time consuming or that they felt too ill at this stage to start the complaint process off.

Two clients decided to proceed via clinical negligence route rather than the NHS complaints procedure as they felt that this enable them to achieve their desired outcome.

Eight clients escalated their health complaint to the Parliamentary and

Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) as they were not happy with the outcome from the first stage (local resolution).

The following case study demonstrates the outcomes and impact that can result from advocacy support for patients and providers.

Patient X contacted Healthwatch Southend to request advocacy support in relation to an ongoing issue with their GP surgery. Patient X had been asked on three separate occasions to meet with the GP to undertake a medication review and accessed our advocacy service to assist with obtaining answers to the following questions.

- Patient X wanted to ask why the review took place on three separate occasions and why was all their medication not reviewed at the same time?
- Patient X wanted to know what procedures were in place to notify patients that they would require a medication review as these delayed them obtaining their regular medication.
- Patient X wanted to highlight the problem they had in obtaining an appointment to meet with the GP to undertake these reviews and that if they could not obtain an appointment within the correct time period this could impact on them not being able to obtain their repeat prescription.



- Patient X also wanted to highlight that this issue had impacted on their mental health. It caused them great anxiety on each occasion that a medication request was made as they were concerned that certain medication was to discontinue?
- Patient X wanted to raise concerns about the attitude of the receptionist staff and how this again impacted on their mental health.

The advocate supported Patient X to write a letter of complaint to highlight their concerns to the practice manager. Following a response letter from the surgery, Patient X and the advocate requested a local resolution meeting with the practice manager to discuss the outstanding concerns.

Outcome from the local resolution meeting:

Patient X was advised that certain medication will continue to be reviewed but measures are now in place to ensure that when their next medication review is due, all relevant medication would be reviewed together

Patient X informed that medication reviews can either be done via telephone consultation or at a face to face appointment with GP

Patient X informed that plans are being made for all front line staff to undertake mental health awareness training

Patient X has agreed to take part in a session with front line staff to share their experiences.

After this meeting Patient X felt that this had given them the opportunity to discuss their concerns directly with the surgery.

Key Outcomes for our Complaints Advocacy Service

- 35 Active cases from 2013/14 period
- 97 Referrals for advocacy support
- 103 Cases closed
- 85 Self-help packs sent out
- 270 Advocacy page website views
- 42 Clients empowered



Our plans for 2015/16

Opportunities and challenges for the future

Healthwatch Southend remains dedicated to capturing, involving, evidencing and representing the voice and lived experience of residents across the borough. We have exciting plans to further improve our engagement techniques. We are strengthening our engagement team with a role dedicated to capturing the voice and experience of children and young people across Southend. The new Manager is also joined by another new Engagement Officer and together, with the support of the rest of the Healthwatch Team, they will be fully committed to a multi-stakeholder outcomes focused and consumer centred approach.

The refreshed team brings new expertise and engagement experience to Healthwatch Southend and our new Engagement Strategy is underway. We will continue to be responsive and develop engagement opportunities which extend and maximise our reach to all Southend communities.

We will also be strengthening the outcomes focus of our work which will further enable us to identify and improve our response to issues, trends and gaps in services. Our advocacy and advice services will see further developments with a strong programme of outreach activity to ensure that these services are well known to Southend residents and also that accessibility to vulnerable and hard to reach groups is maximised.

The new Engagement Strategy will include the development of a programme of Enter and View visits which will be informed by the evidence we gather and analyse from our public engagement activities, completed feedback forms and issues raised through our advocacy and advice services. We look forward to working with our trained Enter and View volunteers and will aim to build capacity of the volunteer team with new recruits to meet the demands of the planned programme.

Our priorities for the following year have been determined by identifying the needs and issues of our stakeholders through our services and wider engagement.

Healthwatch Southend Priorities 2015/2016

- **Engagement with Children and Young People**
- **Public Engagement & Involvement**
- **Enter and View**
- **Domiciliary Care**
- **Cancer Services**
- **Development of services for people with Autism/Asperger's**



Our plans for 2015/16

Opportunities and challenges for the future

We will continue the work we began in 2014 relating to two areas - Domiciliary Care and the Development of services for people with Autism/Asperger's with the aim of achieving notable outcomes for those service user groups.

Our Home Care event in November 2014 gave us an important foundation on which to build and we have no doubt that a collaborative approach with service users, the voluntary sector, providers and commissioners is the only way we can realise the potential improvements needed. The challenges around this issue are unavoidable but there is a need for continued and informed debate which is conducted with candour and compassion. There are no easy solutions and compromise will no doubt be at the heart of the outcome but solutions must be found and Healthwatch Southend aims to be a key driver of this agenda in 2015/2016.

Earlier in this report we have already noted our subsequent reporting and outcomes that have resulted from our Autism and Asperger's event in February 2014. We have published two related reports in March 2014 and a follow-up report in March 2015. This latter report can be located on our website and summarises the progress that has been made with the Autism Strategy in Southend over last year. In 2015/2016 Healthwatch Southend will continue to monitor progress and momentum as initiatives are implemented and services develop.

“Following the Healthwatch event last Tuesday, after years of campaigning for a voice in Southend Borough Council, SAFE has been invited to have a representative on the Learning Disability Board with a view to setting up an Autism Partnership Board.” 2014

Supporting Asperger Families in Essex (SAFE)

Local cancer services for the residents of Southend have become an area of healthcare which, through our public engagement activities, we are becoming increasingly aware of concerns and issues. These relate to various aspects of care and treatment and the Healthwatch Team will be working hard to gather public views and formulate evidence based data to inform discussions and debate with cancer care professionals. We will update and report on our progress throughout 2015/2016.

While these priorities provide us with focus and purpose, there will no doubt be other challenges requiring our attention. Therefore, Healthwatch Southend will remain responsive and inclusive welcoming involvement in any issues that arise in 2015/2016. We will continue to promote our services and representation to all stakeholders across the borough.



Our governance and decision-making

Our board

Janice Price (Chair)
Aline Clayson
Michelle Hill
Caroline Southgate
Chris Gasper
Alison Semmence
Liz Sharp (until 15th March)

Healthwatch Southend Advisory Board brings a broad background of experience and expertise which includes local government commissioning and an in-depth knowledge of the voluntary and healthcare sectors. As volunteers, they make an invaluable contribution to the direction and efficacy of our local Healthwatch.

The Advisory Board meets every 6 weeks to review activities in accordance with operational and strategic planning as well as ensuring that our statutory obligations are at the forefront of the work we undertake. The board also evaluates and offers advice regarding Healthwatch Southend's annual priorities. Members of the Healthwatch Southend team regularly attend board meetings to update and discuss key projects and concerns raised

by the public through our engagement activities. Additionally, an overview of the information reported at our monthly team meetings is presented by the manager to the board.

How we involve lay people and volunteers

Throughout 2014/2015 our board meetings have welcomed a diversity of stakeholder which has included lay people, healthcare professions and volunteers. All those attending our meetings and events are fully briefed on the aims, objectives and statutory obligations of Healthwatch Southend. We advise attendees that their voice and our capacity to capture it is a vital process in affecting change and improving the services they access.

All those volunteers recruited for specific roles at Healthwatch Southend undertake an induction programme which covers the aims, objectives, duties and the role of Healthwatch whilst also covering any respective policies. Training is offered as the role requires and specifies. We look forward to expanding our volunteering team across all our activities in 2015/2016 and we will be promoting opportunities via our website throughout the year.



Financial information 2014/2015

INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities		190,000
Additional income		
Total income		190,000

EXPENDITURE		
Office costs		19,158.47
Staffing costs		76,455.89
Direct delivery costs		77,772.55
Total expenditure		173,386.91
Balance brought forward		30,590.91



Contact us

Get in touch

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Email: info@healthwatchsouthend.co.uk

Website URL: www.healthwatchsouthend.co.uk

Healthwatch Southend is delivered in partnership with:

Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS)

Registered office:

SAVS Centre, 29-31 Alexandra Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 1BW

Registered charity number: 1063655

Company number: 03351855

Southend-on-Sea Citizens Advice Bureau

Registered office:

1 Church Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2AL

Registered charity number: 1090600

Company number: 4344100

BATIAS

Registered office:

The Beehive Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, Essex RM17 6XP

Registered charity number: 1016226

Company number: 2776330

We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2015 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS England (national and local team), NHS Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Southend People Scrutiny Committee and Southend Borough 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 require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.