

healthwatch

On equal terms: Then and now

Healthwatch England
Annual Report 2019 to 2020



**easy
read**



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Introduction



Every year Healthwatch England writes a report to explain what we have done and what we plan to do next.



Healthwatch England is an independent organisation that:

- helps people who have a problem with their health or care services



- writes reports about some services



- helps health and care managers to know what people who use their services are thinking.

About us



We want health and social care services to be good for people who use them.



How we work

We do this by finding out what patients think and telling the people who are running health and social care services.

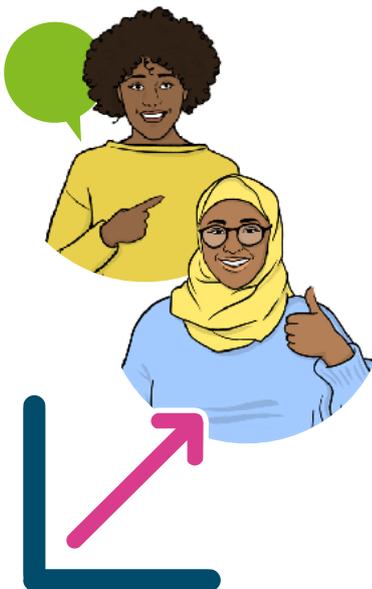


We particularly try to listen to people who find it hardest to speak up.

What we want

We want to:

- support people to say what they think about health and care services
- provide a very good service to local people
- make sure people's views help to improve health and care services.



What we did this year



This year we:

- supported 350,000 people to say what they thought about health and care services



- helped nearly 1 million people find advice and information about local health and care services



- suggested nearly 6,000 ways that health and care services could be improved.



Helping people speak up

Most people use our website to say what they think about health and care services.



Some people come and meet us face to face and some people contact us by telephone or email.



Giving advice

Most people wanted advice about:

- how to find a dentist



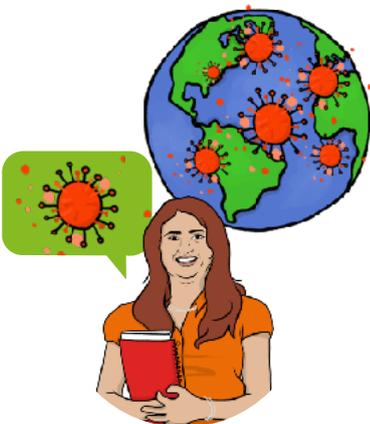
- how to make a complaint



- help travelling to NHS services



- registering with a doctor (GP)



- COVID-19 - this is a new illness that is spreading around the world. It can cause difficulties with breathing and your lungs.

We gave more than 300,000 people advice about COVID-19.

COVID-19



We wrote over 250 reports which explained what local people thought about the care they were getting during the COVID-19 outbreak.



Our 4,000 volunteers went out to help people who had to stay inside away from others during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Helping people get good quality care



Travelling to hospital

Travelling to hospital is a big issue for many people. Especially people who live in country areas.



We wrote a report called 'There and back' about the transport service for people who are not in an emergency.



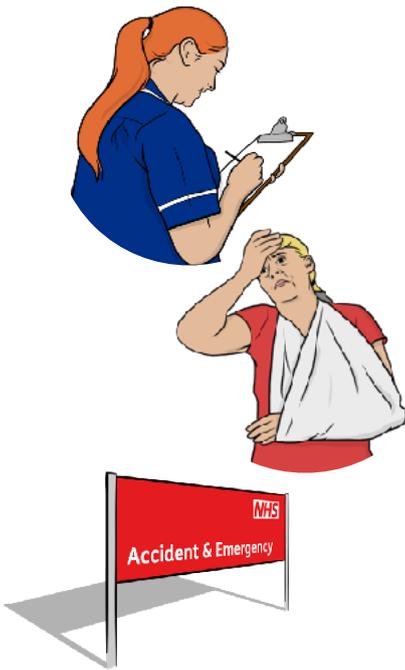
Because of our report NHS England is looking at the transport service and thinking of ways that it could be improved.

Accident and Emergency (A&E)

We talked to over 6000 people about what they thought about Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments at their local hospital.



We wrote a report that suggested changes.



NHS England has agreed with our report. They are now asking A&E departments to:

- see patients within 15 minutes of arriving
- dealing with urgent cases within an hour
- making sure no-one has to stay in A&E for longer than 12 hours.

Local doctors and dentists during the COVID-19 outbreak



Most people have had difficulty getting treatment for their teeth during the COVID-19 pandemic.



A lot of people were told they would have to pay a lot more to get treatment.



Thousands of people told us their stories and we have passed these on to a Government committee.



Many people said that local doctors weren't telling them what was happening with their treatment.



NHS England has now told all local doctors to make sure people are given information about what is happening to their treatment during the COVID-19 outbreak.



Talking to your doctor online

For a lot of people it is much easier to talk to their doctor online.

But for some people it is very difficult.



GP's surgeries need to make sure they can still see people who can't get online.

Meeting people's needs



Wellbeing checks for new mums

Many women have some difficulty with their mental health around the time that they have a new baby.



We talked to nearly 2,000 mums about what happened while they were giving birth.



Nearly half said that it was hard to get support for their mental health.

Over a third said that the support that they got for their mental health was poor.



NHS England has now told local health teams to give new mums a mental health check up 6 weeks after they had their new baby.



People with dementia

Dementia is an illness that affects your brain. You can become confused and forget things.



Dementia is likely to get worse. The care and support you need will change as time goes on.



The law says that people with dementia should have a regular review so they get the care they need.



But we found that only about half of people get a regular review.



Dealing with COVID-19

During the COVID-19 outbreak we have found that:

- many people who left hospital have had no support at home



- deaf people who read people's lips have not been able to communicate with their doctors wearing face masks



- people who need information in different languages have not been getting the help they needed



- many people have not been getting their regular support from local doctors.



The NHS 10 year plan

The NHS wrote a long term plan in 2019. We have been helping local people say what they think about this plan.



People say they want:

- it to be easier to get a service



- health services to use computers in a better way



- care to be right for each individual person



- services to work better together



- all services to have the same high standards - not just some of them



- help to lead a healthier life



- better mental health services



- more support for carers.

Help with online appointments



Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, local doctors have very quickly changed how they work.



Health professionals are now seeing people online.



We are looking at what people thought about these online appointments.

COVID-19



The COVID-19 outbreak has made a big difference to everyone's lives.



Healthwatch has carried on working through the outbreak.



Providing advice

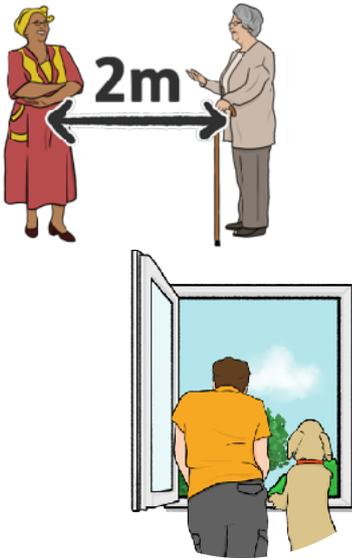
Thousands of people have been asking us for advice.

The main questions have been:

- What does **shielding** mean?



Shielding is when you have to stay strictly indoors away from other people to stay safe from COVID-19



- What is the difference between **social distancing** and **self-isolation**?

Social distancing is keeping at least 2 metres away from other people

Self isolation is staying indoors away from other people.



- How to find an NHS dentist?



- How to get help to travel to a hospital?



- Should you see a pharmacist rather than a doctor?



- What to do if COVID-19 is affecting your mental health?



- Where to get help if someone has died?



Speaking up for people

We have been telling health and care managers what local people have told us.



We have:

- helped the NHS to plan their volunteer scheme



- told the NHS that volunteers weren't getting enough face masks and other protection



- told the NHS that people need to get a dentist in an emergency



- helped the NHS to think about how to keep people's personal information private.



Supporting local work

Our local Healthwatch volunteers have been working hard during the COVID-19 outbreak.



Local groups have been:

- finding more people to be NHS volunteers



- supporting people who have just come out of hospital



- listening to people who have been lonely and alone

- telling health managers what is happening locally. Some of the issues were that:

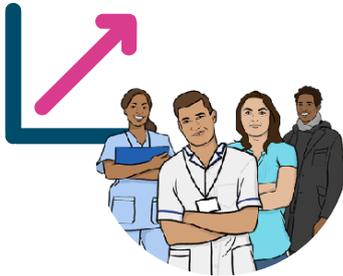


- care home workers were not able to get tested because they don't drive a car



- people in care homes were not able to see their local doctor (GP).

Looking to the future



The COVID-19 outbreak has shown us that we need to keep helping health and care services to improve.

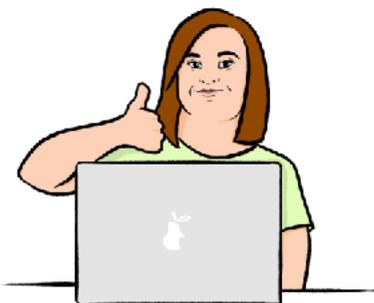


Over the next year we plan to:

- work harder on making sure that everyone gets the same fair access to health and care services



- improve the way we communicate with people who use health and care services



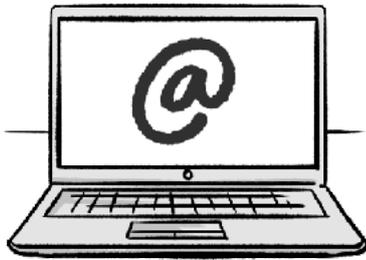
- use new computers and phones to spot where issues come up quickly.

For more information

If you want more information please contact us by:



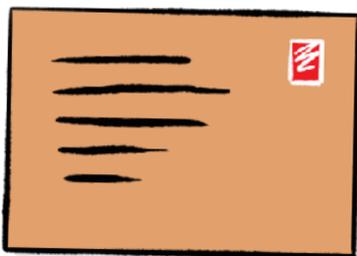
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