



Healthwatch Darlington

Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee
20th October 2021

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Darlington. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



Supporting you to have your say



Providing a high quality service



Ensuring your views help improve health & care

Highlights from our year

<p>Reaching out</p> 	<p>We heard from 1,269 people this year about their experiences of health and social care. We provided advice and information to 32,874 people this year.</p>
<p>Responding to the pandemic</p> 	<p>We engaged with and supported 115 people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.</p>
<p>Making a difference to care</p> 	<p>We published 2 reports about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From these, we made 22 recommendations for improvements.</p> <p>50% of recommendations we made last year have been acted upon, at the point where we reviewed progress.</p>
<p>Health and care that works for you</p> 	<p>32 volunteers helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed 154 days! We employ 4 part-time staff which is the same as the previous year. We received £73,400 in funding from our local authority in 2020-21, 0.55% more than the previous year</p>

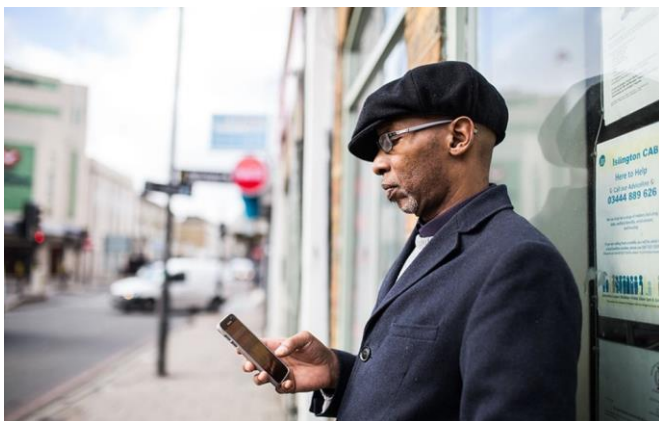
Then and Now



Children and Young Peoples Mental Health

Then: Access to information and support during the waiting period or in general

Now: Children & young peoples mental health issues



Accessible Primary Care Services

Then: Accessing your local GP

Now: Accessing your GP before and during the pandemic

All reports can be found at www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk

Responding to Covid-19

This year we helped and supported **32,874** people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Supporting the community volunteer response
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Holding weekly Live Facebook “Wellbeing Wednesday” sessions
- Providing a thrice weekly e-newsletter at the height of the pandemic

In addition we reached people with information **741,712** times via our social media posts



New way of working



Due to demand during the pandemic we increased our popular weekly e-newsletter to thrice weekly editions. Each issue contained the most up to date local, regional and national health, wellbeing and community news to ensure individuals and organisations were well supported

Thrice weekly Newsletter

We designed a new way to connect with our online community. "Wellbeing Wednesday" was launched including special 'one off' live sessions connecting patients, service users and their families with health professionals, clinicians and the voluntary and community sector in Darlington.



Wellbeing Wednesdays



Online engagement

Our new model during the pandemic was based on sharing information and encouraging individuals to share feedback connecting them with services.

Some of the top sessions included:

- Primary Care & Flu Vaccines
- NSPCC & Kooth
- CAMHS and Mind
- Women's refuges and domestic abuse
- Unemployment and mental wellbeing
- Access to services across the winter

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



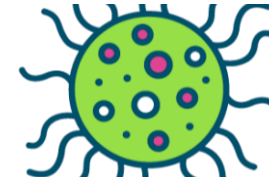
37% on Vaccines



23% on GP services



20% on Hospital Care



20% on Covid-19

Our Volunteers

- Helped people have their say from home, sharing and carrying out surveys either on the telephone or online.
- Created digital content such as advice and information on our website and social media helping us to reach individuals with important information during the pandemic.
- Carried out information and communication reviews for local services on the information they provide especially messages about the pandemic.
- Supported our projects and work by attending meetings, sharing ideas, creating plans and representing us within their communities.
- Shared information by word of mouth with people in Darlington helping to signpost people to the right support
- Shared awareness raising campaigns and assisted us in the launch of a new social media information session ensuring that we were able to engage with our community even further from home.



Volunteer Impact, Awards & Recognition



Volunteers helped their community during the pandemic by designing information campaigns which involved creating advice pages, posters, blogs, gathering the best information in relation to seldom heard and minority patients, loneliness/isolation, access to services during the winter, during and after lockdown advice, and mental health. Not only this but they shared generic health & care information all throughout the year.

Created 15 wellbeing campaigns and shared health information all year.

Volunteers listened to their community about children and young people's mental health, general covid-19 experiences and digital exclusion. Not to mention reporting back 'word on the street' news keeping us connected with Darlington during remote working.



Gathered 748 experiences and held 6 online focus groups.

This new normal can be worrying

Things have been quite uncertain this year...

What can help?

- Wear a face covering based on your likes, hobbies and style
- Focus on the things you like and enjoy, maybe even turn it into a hobby
- Exercise at home
- Limit social media if it's affecting you
- Rest if needed
- Going to your GP (This is okay to do, make sure to wear a face covering)

Useful links

- Mental health foundation www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- Beat www.beateatingdisorders.com
- Shout 24/7 Text: 85258
- Youngminds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
- NHS Live Well <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>
- The Listening Post ListeningPost@dacym.co.uk

Early in the pandemic our volunteers recognised the importance of sharing helpful information with the community. Not only this but they also recognised this needed to be inclusive by removing barriers for those who experience inequalities due to health conditions or demographics. Information has been shared online, in poster/leaflet format and in audio format.

Information campaigns

Volunteer Impact, Awards & Recognition

Community recognition



Volunteers were recognised locally and regionally. Youthwatch Darlington received a thank you letter from HM Lord Lieutenant, they showcased projects across the North East and volunteers were praised for their input during our popular Wellbeing Wednesday live sessions.

Volunteer recognition



During 2020/21 individual volunteers were recognised for their incredible support during the pandemic: Faith Miller, Sue Kirk, Amy Adams and Jessica Mather all received a volunteer of the month award. Faith was named a 'Healthwatch Hero' by Healthwatch England at the end of 2020.



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 at [Healthwatch Darlington](https://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk).



www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk



01325 380145



info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk

National Awards and Recognition!



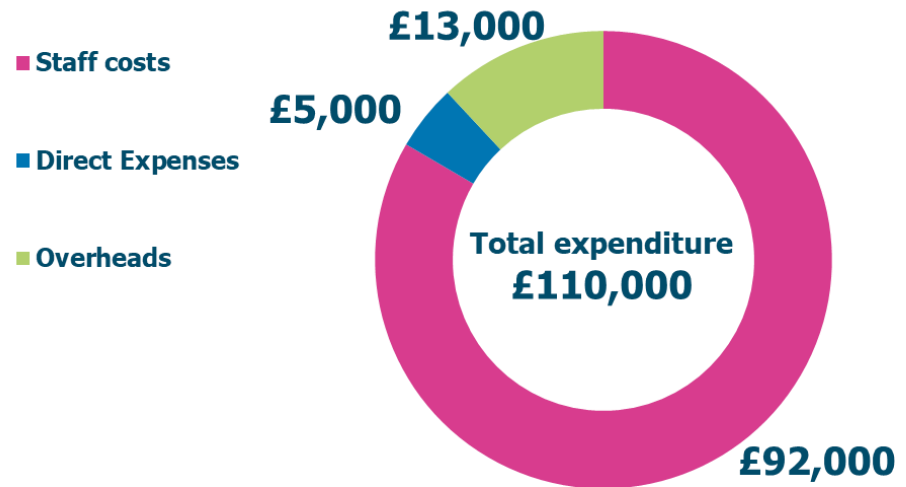
In November 2020 Healthwatch England awarded our volunteers from Youthwatch Darlington with the 'Highly Commended' award during the annual conference. The award celebrated our volunteers and we were one of only 12 Healthwatch to receive this award out of 152 across England.



In January 2021 we submitted the fantastic work that Youthwatch Darlington have carried out over the last year to feature in the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Annual Conference. A panel of parents, young people and health professionals selected Youthwatch Darlington to feature in the conference gallery showcasing their work to improve mental health information for young people. This has been seen by over 1400 delegates from across 37 countries.

Our Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.



Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Children and Young People's Mental Health – we will continue to influence local strategies by following up recommendations and evidencing impact.
- Understanding the experiences and impact of Covid pandemic and vaccinations and lessons learned
- Digitally Excluded and Seldom Heard Groups

