A message from the Chair

I am delighted to introduce the Healthwatch Northumberland Annual Report for 2014/15.

Partnership Working has been and still is our most effective way of improving and influencing health and social care services for the people of Northumberland. Like all partnerships, it can be rocky, however the commissioners and providers in Northumberland are all working to improve services for everyone in Northumberland. We truly share this commitment and vision and appreciate that we are often seen as equal partners.

We continue to work closely with commissioners and providers, both at strategic and operational level. It is vital that future discussions, when planning new ways of delivering health and social care, will also need to involve the Voluntary Community Sector. Healthwatch Northumberland has already built a strong foundation in that the VCS Assembly are represented on the Healthwatch Northumberland Board.

The Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board recognises that Healthwatch Northumberland is a key partner, and continues to take a system wide strategic role in delivering transformational change and improving the health and wellbeing of the local community. It is my privilege to represent Healthwatch Northumberland on the Health and Wellbeing board and I have been able to do this successfully due to the on-going support of the board and staff team at Healthwatch Northumberland and partners on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

This report demonstrates a successful year for Healthwatch Northumberland as it grows from strength to strength. You will see progress and achievements through increasing our supporters and involving volunteers task groups and engagement activities as highlighted in the report. In particular working with Care Homes and undertaking Hospital inspections in partnership with Commissioners and providers. All working towards improving better outcomes for recipients of Health and Social Care.

I would like to thank the Healthwatch Northumberland Board members for their support and valuable time they have all given. Without this we would not be in the strong position that we are in now.

Cynthia Atkin
Healthwatch Northumberland Chair
A message from the Strategic Lead

Another successful year for Healthwatch Northumberland which has seen us make real progress engaging with the public.

I would like to thank the public for their support at our many events this year and for sharing their experiences. This ensures that we know and understand their views and can represent these to commissioners and providers to influence change. We have built up our team of volunteers who are an asset to the organisation and their support and commitment is appreciated by everyone at Healthwatch Northumberland.

My thanks also go to the staff team who have all worked very hard to maximise our reach into communities across the county.

Our Board too have all become more involved, participating in task groups to look at issues raised by the public and working with supporters, commissioners and service providers to give the public a voice and see their views have an impact on services.

The coming year is an important one for health and social care in Northumberland and I expect will be a busy one for Healthwatch Northumberland, with the opening of the country’s first Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington in June 2015. Northumberland was recently awarded Vanguard status for Primary and Acute Care System (PACS) and Healthwatch Northumberland will be involved as this develops. We welcome the development of the Better Care Fund which will see more integration of health and social care in Northumberland.

Liz Prudhoe
Strategic Lead
Healthwatch Northumberland

Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent consumer champion for health and social care services and provides the statutory service for NHS complaints advocacy in the county. We aim to inform people about the health and social care services that are available to them and provide support if they need it to make a complaint about an NHS service they have used. We also ensure that the public’s views are integral to local commissioning processes and are raised at national level via Healthwatch England.

Our Chair, Cynthia Atkin, was invited to be Vice Chair of the Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board and Chairs the Communication and Engagement Sub Group of the Health and Wellbeing Board. She is supported to do this by colleagues on the Healthwatch Northumberland Board and the staff team; this is done through Healthwatch Board discussions around Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and information from the staff team relevant to agenda items for Health and Wellbeing Board meetings. This gives Healthwatch Northumberland the opportunity to talk about public experiences, concerns and priorities at strategic level in Northumberland.

Our vision and mission

We are the Northumberland consumer champion for health and social care. Our vision is for a Northumberland where health and social care services are all directly influenced by the diverse community they serve. We want people to receive the right care when they need it, and we want services to be accountable to the public who use them.

Our Values

All of our work is informed by the following values:

Inclusive

- We start with people first
- We work for children, young people and adults
- We cover all health and social care services
- We work for everyone
Influential
• We set the agenda and make change happen
• We are responsive
• We take what we learn and translate it into action
• We are innovative and creative
• We know that we cannot fix things by sticking to the status quo
• We work with other local Healthwatch and Healthwatch England to make an impact both locally and nationally
• We work with everyone, not just those who shout the loudest

Independent
• We are independent and act on behalf of all consumers
• We listen to consumers and speak loudly on their behalf
• We challenge those in power to design and deliver better health and social care services
• We like to highlight what works well but are not afraid to point out when things have gone wrong

Credible
• We value knowledge
• We seek out data and intelligence to challenge assumptions with facts
• We celebrate and share good practice in health and social care
• We hold ourselves to the highest standards

Collaborative
• We keep the debate positive and we get things done
• We work in partnership with the public, health and social care sectors, and the voluntary and community sector
• We learn from people’s experiences and from specialists and experts
• We build on what is already known and collaborate in developing and sharing new insights
Our Strategic Objectives

Below are our strategic objectives and the measures we take to achieve them.

1. To collect evidence from the public, patients and users of services, their carers and families to inform services.
   **Measures:** Evidence collected through development outreach work, web based activity and social media will be recorded and analysed quarterly.

2. To facilitate the involvement and engagement of the public, patients and users of services, their carers and families for the design of health and social care services.
   **Measures:** Involvement and engagement activities with communities and groups will be monitored quarterly to ensure activities are representative of all communities.

3. To deliver independent advocacy for people wishing to make a complaint regarding NHS services.
   **Measures:** Advocacy cases will be monitored quarterly to ensure that access to the service is representative of all communities.

4. To work effectively with Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) partners.
   **Measures:** Sharing information with VCS partners through board partners and Northumberland VCS Assembly.

5. To identify and prioritise key issues and establish work streams that contribute to the improvement of the quality of health and social care services.
   **Measures:** Work undertaken will be analysed annually identifying trends and recording outcomes which will be presented in the annual report.
6. To be an influential and critical friend to commissioners and providers of services and represent the views of Northumberland residents at the Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board.  
**Measures:** An independent social audit will be undertaken and follow up annual surveys will be completed with key stakeholders.

“We work closely with our health partners, in particular Healthwatch Northumberland, who not only inform our quality priorities in delivering the very best quality of care, but also act as a ‘critical friend’ when we are developing communication and engagement plans to inform the public about a new, or change in, service. Their communication channels are crucial in spreading our key messages and more importantly they help us to collect the views of our local communities.”

Claire Riley, Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust

7. To measure the impact of the work undertaken.  
**Measures:** Data gathered will be analysed annually to measure impact.

8. To establish robust governance and information systems.  
**Measures:** Strategic subgroups have been established from Healthwatch Northumberland Board members to develop future strategy and sustainability. Information systems are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

As Healthwatch Northumberland starts with people first, it is essential for all our work to be inclusive, accessible and meaningful to everyone. Our work covers the health and social care needs of children, young people and adults and we are committed to working for everyone. There can be differences in people’s experience of health and social care - people’s ability to access services might be affected by their ethnicity or gender. How well people are listened to might be affected by their disability or income. At the same time, access to health and social care affects people’s ability to work, care for others or play a part in their local communities. This is why diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We ensure our staff, Board and volunteers can do their work in an environment where they are valued, involved and supported and feel safe from discrimination.
The Healthwatch Northumberland Team

Liz Prudhoe
Strategic Lead

Tricia Ashford
Project Coordinator

Judith Arundel
Development Worker/Advocate
for Blyth Valley

Chris Barker
Development Worker/Advocate
for West Northumberland

Anna McClure
Development Worker/Advocate
for North/Central Northumberland

Emma Aljoe
Development Worker/Advocate
for North/Central Northumberland

Helen Elliot
Children and Young People’s Development Worker/Advocate
for Northumberland

Linda Pinkham
Advocacy Support

Harriet Critchley
Communications Worker

The current staff team From left to right: Tricia Ashford, Harriet Critchley, Judith Arundel, Anna McClure, Helen Elliot and Chris Barker
Key Priorities for 2014/2015

We reviewed our engagement and feedback throughout 2013/14 and identified our key priorities for 2014/2015. They were:

- Engagement and Communication with the Public
- Increased Involvement of Children and Young People
- Mental Health
- Hospital Discharge
- Social Care
- Access to Healthcare
- Complaints Service
- Influencing Planning and Commissioning
- Using information gathered to inform improvements in services
The year in numbers:

- Northumberland is a huge county covering an area of 2,000 miles squared—our staff travelled around 10,000 miles to reach out and engage with people across the county.
- We attended nearly 350 events and meetings to engage with the public and community organisations.
- We met with around 2,000 members of the public at events and meetings.
- We engaged with over 1,400 professionals and voluntary sector workers.
- We received around 2,000 comments from members of the public.

The majority of feedback we received this year was positive about local health and social services.
What we do...

Healthwatch Northumberland is committed to the ethos of our Parent Organisation, Adapt (North East), which is “to improve the quality of life of disabled people who have sensory, physical and learning disabilities, or mental health problems; also people who are disadvantaged in being able to access services because they live in a rural location.”

49.1% of the population in Northumberland live in a rural area. To ensure we are accessible to all of these people we work with the 279 community and voluntary sector organisations on our mailing list to distribute our information widely. Our Development Workers all have a designated area of Northumberland where they work out in the community, this enables us to maximise engagement and hear about the experiences of individuals and groups who can be hard to reach.

We established a Single Equality Forum for Northumberland and facilitated their participation in the setting of the equality objectives of Northumberland County Council. We have maintained links with members of the Forum, enabling us to stay in touch with hard to reach groups such as Berwick Migrant Group.

How we do this...

We deliver and design our engagement to be flexible to the circumstances of people living in Northumberland. This year we have significantly increased our level of direct engagement with the public, going out and about to leisure centres, libraries, hospitals, supermarkets and other community venues to widen our reach. Our Development Workers have visited GP practices, care homes, pharmacies, dentists, opticians and hospitals in Northumberland. By working in the community with health and social care services we are able to gather feedback from a wide variety of service users across the county.

In the coming year we are planning a roadshow to engage with people living in some of the smaller isolated rural communities that we have not already visited to engage with the public and ensure we hear the voices of people from all parts of the county. We will build on our work with partners in the voluntary sector to further increase our reach in the community.

“My experience of Healthwatch Northumberland is that they encourage organisations across the system to work together to share best practice methods of involvement.”

Sharon Spurling, CEO, Carers Northumberland
We have established Task Groups around some of our key priorities, each of these is led by a Board member and involves staff, supporters, service users and carers as well as other appropriate stakeholders.

**Mental Health**

Early in 2014 plans for major changes to the way mental health services are delivered in Northumberland were announced. We worked in partnership with Carers Northumberland to gather feedback from service users and carers about their experience of existing services, and to find out how they felt they could be improved. Our Mental Health Service User and Carer Feedback Report was published in July 2014.

We established a task group which involves supporters who have an interest in mental health issues and took the feedback we had gathered to design workshops held by Northumberland Tyne and Wear Trust.

The Mental Health Task Group is monitoring progress of the implementation of Community Transformation and working with commissioners and providers to ensure that the views of service users and carers are taken into account as services develop and as the new way of working is implemented. The Community Transformation programme for Northumberland is set to continue throughout this year and Healthwatch Northumberland will continue to have an active role in the process.

**Access to Health Services**

The Access to Health Services Group is following up on feedback from the public about patient transport and GP appointment times. Access for people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities has also been raised. The group have designed a project to look at this in more detail. We will be gathering feedback from these groups and providing a report about areas of concern and any good practice identified.

**Social Care**

Our Social Care Task Group brings together supporters with an interest in this topic with carers, local authority and Care Quality Commission (CQC) representatives. The group reviews CQC reports on local provision and is monitoring follow up actions. Members of the group will also be participating in local authority care home inspections as Independent Observers, with other Healthwatch Northumberland volunteers. Feedback from their visits will be shared with the group. In the coming year this group will also be looking at home care provision in the county in more detail.
What we do with issues raised...

We work collaboratively and constructively with commissioners and service providers. To do this effectively we have established our Health and Social Care Liaison Group. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum for mutual exchange of information. This allows for an ‘early warning’ about problems with health and social care provision, and to enable providers to give feedback on issues raised and other developments. We share outcomes from this group with the public in our ‘You said, We did’ sections in our regular updates and newsletters.

The following organisations are members of the group:

- Healthwatch Northumberland
- Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumberland County Council – Adult Services and Children’s Services
- NHS England

The work we have done to establish this group demonstrates that commissioners and providers are willing to work with us and respond to requests for information. This year all requests for information have been responded to.

Changes to the provision of Patient Transport Services were implemented in October 2014 in Northumberland. This resulted in concerns being raised by patients who were no longer eligible for patient transport and who were finding it difficult to get to appointments.

Northumberland is a vast, rural county with limited access to public transport in many areas. We are participating in a county-wide Transport Commission which is looking at patient transport alongside wider transport issues in Northumberland. Our Access to Health Services Task Group is monitoring progress on patient transport.

"Healthwatch is also engaged in many of our locality groups, representing the patient’s voice and ensuring that services are planned appropriately for our rural and urban communities. Their expertise in engaging with the public, patients, carers and service users is critical to the work that we do as a commissioning organisation and we look forward to this role developing even further, particularly as we begin to integrate services even more in the future."

Northumberland CCG
Healthwatch Northumberland is part of a regional group for local Healthwatch to meet regularly with the North East Ambulance Service, looking at their performance and picking up on local areas of concern relating to ambulance services. We will continue to work with the North East Ambulance Service to monitor services and take forward issues raised by the public.

Healthwatch Northumberland attends regional Healthwatch meetings to share information with local Healthwatch colleagues in the North East and with Healthwatch England. A number of members of our team, both staff and Board, use Yammer, a social media website for Healthwatch, regularly to keep in touch with Healthwatch colleagues nationally. We submitted our annual intelligence return as requested.

**Working with Children and Young People**

We have continued to develop engagement with children and young people and published our Children and Young People Focus Group Report in August 2014. Our Children and Young People’s Development Worker has been working with youth services and groups of young people across the county to establish a Young People’s Health Reference Group for Northumberland. This is progressing well and we aim to have a representative group established early in the coming year. The reference group will enable young people to identify their priorities for health and social care services which will be shared at strategic level in the county to influence decision makers. This includes the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children and the Northumberland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Strategy Group.

The reference group will also provide a link to our Board, where there is a place for a member of the reference group to attend and share children and young people’s views and issues with the Board to influence our strategic planning.

Activities that are planned with the group going forward include media projects based on issues identified by the children and young people we engaged with this year.

> “The Healthwatch Northumberland reference group has been a great way of expressing my opinions and concerns about health and social care services. It is a good way of meeting new people, the same age as you and those who have the same opinion and those who have different opinions, as it gives us more information about these services. This group also gives good opportunities to receive training, as I am now training to do care home inspections, which will give me more experience in the health and social care sector, which is where I want to be employed.”

Annabel Young
Member of The Reference Group
Working with people over 65
Northumberland has a higher than average percentage of over 65s in the population. We have targeted this group by engaging with Older People’s Forums, Dementia Forums and through working with partners such as Age UK Northumberland. We have also participated in Ageing Well Northumberland, a partnership approach to help increase health and wellbeing resilience for the future.

A few examples of specific groups we have worked with are:

- We have spoken to carers groups across the county about their experiences of health and social care services.

- “In It Together” is a group for parents and carers of children and young people with a wide range of disabilities and special needs. Parents from the forum told us about particular issues they face, which we shared with the commissioners and providers of services. We attend their county wide Parent and Carer Forum to share information gathered and keep them updated about Healthwatch Northumberland activity.

- We have worked with the Learning Disability Central User Forum to create an easy read guide for Independent Complaints Advocacy Northumberland (ICAN). This has also been useful in other settings such as care homes. We are continuing to work with this group to create more easy read information.

- A group of children and young people called Children’s Health Action Team (CHAT) worked with us on a project to create a radio advert about Healthwatch Northumberland.

Enter and View Activity

Much of the feedback we obtain is positive about services. Our Board reviewed “Enter and View” activity in June 2014 and agreed a policy that sets out clearly the circumstances in which Healthwatch Northumberland will carry out Enter and View, which was supported by our commissioner. We have participated in visits with Northumberland County Council (NCC), Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the NHS this year, in line with the policy. We have not undertaken any formal Enter and View as we have not identified a service that meets the criteria set out in our policy. However, through working with partners we have been involved with 23 visits to care homes, hospitals and other services.
Volunteering

We are very fortunate at Healthwatch Northumberland to have a team of dedicated volunteers. They are involved in a wide variety of activities including supporting us at events and representing Healthwatch Northumberland in meetings.

This year they have taken part in:

Care Home Inspections

Some of our volunteers undertook training with Northumberland County Council (NCC) to visit care homes as Independent Observers. During the visits they found that:

- The suitability of the care home varied depending whether it was purpose built or adapted from an older building
- There appeared to be good access to training particularly around dementia care
- Most homes had a programme of activities, but there appeared to be a feeling of isolation, particularly for residents who were confined to their rooms

This information has been included in a report, produced by our Development Workers, which is due to be published in May 2015.

NCC have arranged training dates for future care home visits. They have asked to use more Healthwatch Northumberland volunteers due to their successful participation in the visits last year.

Community Connections

We link to community groups with volunteers who are part of that group and keep us connected with feedback from their members about health and social care issues raised at their meetings. They keep their groups updated about our activities and what we have done with their feedback.

We currently have 34 volunteers
Mystery shopping

Our volunteers participated in a mystery shopping exercise of the Northumberland Single Point of Access—A one stop shop for information, advice and support for social care. This project was delivered in partnership with Northumbria NHS Healthcare Trust. Overall, mystery shoppers’ experience was very positive, describing staff as polite and friendly, however there were some suggestions for improvements mainly focused around the information provided, which we understand have since been addressed.

Some of our young volunteers also undertook training for a mystery shopping exercise, in partnership with the Trust, looking at sexual health services in the county.

“...The volunteers were professional in their approach to the mystery shopping exercise and keen to support the continuing quality of front of house customer care in health and social care services.”

Beverly Davison, Health Improvement Advanced Specialist
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust

vInspired

We have become an Awards Validator for “vInspired” meaning that our young volunteers now have the opportunity to log their volunteering hours online in order to work towards different awards. vInspired is a nationally recognised volunteering award scheme which allows young people aged 14 to 25 to get the recognition they deserve, as well as offering a chance to develop their CV.

We recruit volunteers from across the county and are working with people from a range of locations within Northumberland.

We have an excellent working relationship with other local Healthwatch in the North East and signpost any volunteers from outside Northumberland to their nearest local Healthwatch.
Challenges

One of the greatest challenges we face in engaging with the public in Northumberland is the size, geography and rurality of the county. Northumberland has the lowest population density of any local authority in the North East region, and has the seventh lowest population density of all local authorities in England. The county covers around 2,000 square miles. Our staff team have travelled around 10,000 miles to engage with the public to hear about their experiences.

Many local services in Northumberland are recognised by patients and regulators as being amongst the best in the country. The feedback we get supports this and generally the public are quite happy with the services they receive. Of all the comments we have received this year many more are positive about local services than negative and feedback across the board has not identified any major areas of concern with services.

What we have done very successfully, and will continue to do, is ensure that patients have a voice and that service providers and commissioners know, understand, listen and respond to the feedback we gather.
The Future for Healthwatch Northumberland

Using feedback from members of the public and our supporters our top priorities for 2015/2016 are:

- Mental Health
- Access to Health Services
- Social Care
- Patient Transport/Ambulance Services
- Giving Children and Young People a Voice

The new Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital is due to open in Northumberland in June 2015. We have worked with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to ensure that the public has information about the development of the hospital and will continue work with the Trust and the public up to the opening of the hospital and beyond to monitor access and service delivery.

In March 2014, NHS England announced that Northumberland had been chosen to take a national lead on transforming care for patients, with Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust being chosen to lead work with partners to deliver an integrated Primary and Acute Care System (PACS) for the county. Healthwatch Northumberland is one of the partners for the Vanguard Site and will be working with other partners in the coming year to ensure that patients are at the centre of this work.

“We work very closely with Healthwatch Northumberland in a number of different ways and we really value our positive working relationship that we have with them. When we set up the Integration Board Expert Testing Panel, Healthwatch Northumberland supported us by recruiting patients and carers for the panel. They have continued their support in this area of work and ensure that the panel acts as a critical friend for our commissioning plans and service developments specifically designed to improve NHS healthcare for the people of Northumberland. “

Northumberland CCG
Providing Information and Signposting for people who use health and social care

We offer a signposting service for people who:

- Are struggling to find an NHS or social care service in Northumberland
- Are looking to find out more information about a service or support they need
- Have a general enquiry regarding the NHS or social care service

We have an interactive website which contains a ‘Your Health’ page which we use to provide information about local services and to signpost people to relevant organisations and support. We also have a useful information page which includes recent reports from the CQC on GPs, care homes and home care providers in the county.

We keep our supporters up to date by producing an update every month and a newsletter every quarter. We ask our supporters how they would like to receive our information and provide it in their preferred format. This year we circulated 1251 newsletters and updates.

We dealt with 996 enquires this year—The chart below shows the type of enquiries we have received.
Case study:

Kay contacted Healthwatch Northumberland after being refused Patient Transport Services. She has used this service in the past to attend an appointment at the Ulcer Specialist Clinic, and has significant mobility problems which means she is unable to use public transport.

Kay has always had a positive experience of Patient Transport Services in the past as the drivers know who she is and how to work with her condition, however on this occasion when trying to book her transport Kay was asked a new series of questions. After answering them Kay was told she was no longer eligible and was advised to contact the British Red Cross about booking one of their volunteer drivers. This came as a shock as she had not been consulted about the new set of questions and felt unprepared.

It was at this point that Kay contacted Healthwatch Northumberland. We encouraged Kay to make the call to the British Red Cross and they told her it would cost 50p a mile, this meant the journey would cost her £25.10 as the clinic is 25.2 miles away from where she lives, Kay was also concerned the volunteer drivers may not be trained in dealing with her condition.

Kay then appealed the decision and it was decided that she was eligible for transport to her appointment by Patient Ambulance Service, she was pleased that the matter had been resolved, but she was stressed about the situation. She said “I was concerned that I might miss my appointment because I was unable to arrange transport.”

She is unsure if she will be asked the same set of questions next time she needs to arrange transport for an appointment and hopes it will not be as difficult in the future.

How has Healthwatch Northumberland helped?

We supported Kay by providing her with information on other transport services if she required them and explained the appeals process to her. She also felt supported and was pleased that we took a serious interest in her experience. Kay is now a member of our Access to Healthcare Task Group.

“I was concerned that I might miss my appointment because I was unable to arrange transport.”

Kay Pearson
Independent Complaints Advocacy Northumberland
(ICON)

Northumberland County Council has commissioned ICAN as part of the local Healthwatch contract since 2013.

The service offers advocacy support to individuals living in Northumberland who want to make a complaint relating to their NHS treatment. They are given as much or as little support as they need to guide them through the NHS complaints system. This could include helping them write a letter or attending local resolution meetings.

Our Development Workers all provide advocacy support to clients in their area who need it and have all achieved, or are working towards a professional advocacy qualification. This year we have supported 73 new clients making complaints about NHS services.

Below is some of the feedback we have received about the ICAN service:

“I would just like to say a very big thank you for all the help you gave me to put my point of view forward. You showed me concern and respect, thank you again, you are an asset to all like myself who need help.”

“The ICAN service was really good. I had a meeting with the Trust and am happy with the outcome. Thank you for your support.”

“Very supportive and understanding.”
Influencing Decision Makers with Evidence from Local People

The work that we have done to gather the experiences of people who have been affected by changes to patient transport services in Northumberland has enabled us to share information with the commissioner and provider of the service. This has influenced changes made to the questions patients are asked when they need to book transport. Patients are also asked for more detailed information about their circumstances which has resulted in improved access to patient transport for those who need it.

The work of our task groups has provided a platform for patient and service users’ experiences to influence the development of services. The main provider of mental health services in Northumberland, the commissioner for social care and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) participate in the groups, and join us around the table to look in depth at what users’ experience of services are and how they can be improved. We have also shared positive feedback and looked at how what works well within one area of service delivery can be replicated to improve others.

Development Workers targeted care homes around the county to raise awareness of Healthwatch Northumberland. They spoke to staff, residents and families and gathered a breadth of feedback about living in residential care in the county. We felt we could use this to put together a report of their observations to show a different perspective to that of an inspection. Our Development Workers have drafted a report which they have shared with the care homes they visited and we hope to publish the report soon and share it with commissioners and other stakeholders.

We have not made any recommendations to the CQC as the need to do so has not emerged from the feedback we have received from the public in Northumberland. However, we continue to work closely with the CQC, in line with Local Healthwatch and CQC relationship principles. We are included in high level information sharing meetings around social care where we are able to feed in information about local services so that any emerging issues are addressed at the earliest stage. The CQC contact us before every local inspection in the county and we receive feedback about any actions they are going to take once the inspection is complete.

NHS England contacted us about the closure of a dentist in the county. We worked with them to keep patients of the practice informed. We were later invited to send a representative to be involved in the evaluation of applications for a new practice to replace the one that closed, looking in particular at issues around access, patient engagement and information.

“Good feedback on our NHS contractors”.

Pauline Fletcher, Primary Care Commissioning Manager (Dental), NHS England, Cumbria and the North East
Our Governance and Decision Making

The Healthwatch Northumberland Board

The Board’s role is to provide strategic direction and overview to our work; they also have the responsibility for making strategic level decisions in all aspects of our work. Their roles include: receiving and responding to reports from relevant strategic bodies such as NHS England and Northumberland County Council and making submissions to these bodies. The Board keep under review our overall policy and direction and help us to develop Healthwatch Northumberland further.

Each Board Member represents an organisation, an area or a group of people. Some of our Board Members have joined us as nominated representatives of partner organisations; others are individuals who have been selected to represent an area of Northumberland or a specific group of people.

Nominated representatives from partner organisations:

- Sharon Spurling (Carers Northumberland)
- Catherine Lee (Patient Advice Liaison Service - PALS)
- Anne Lyall (Voluntary Sector)
- Danielle Hayes (Alzheimers Society)
- Deb McGarrity (Age UK Northumberland)
- Pat Maginn (Chair - Adapt North East)

Individual Board Members

- John McIndoe (Representing Central Northumberland)
- Nigel Porter (Representing West Northumberland)
- Fiona Wardlaw (Representing South East Northumberland)
- Pauline Wilson (Representing North Northumberland)
- Emma Brown (Representing Children and Young people)
Social Impact Audit

We want to determine the difference Healthwatch Northumberland has made in the county; to do this consultants Angier Griffin were appointed to carry out a social impact audit on our behalf.

What is a social impact audit?

Social impact can be defined as how an activity has an effect on the community and well-being of the individuals and families. The audit will show the difference Healthwatch Northumberland has made across the county.

How will it work?

Over an 18 month period from September 2014 to March 2016, four key elements will be delivered:

- September 2014 - An impact mapping workshop involving staff and board members
- December 2014 - 360° stakeholder review
- September 2014 to March 2016 - Develop knowledge, skills and capability within the staff team to deliver outcome and impact reports
- December 2015 - Service review

The results of the 360° stakeholder review were encouraging and highlighted what Healthwatch Northumberland should prioritise to make a difference across the county.

These priorities are:

- To build public awareness about Healthwatch Northumberland and become more widely recognised
- To improve internal and external communications so that (close) stakeholders are more aware about Healthwatch Northumberland’s priorities and how they can contribute and become more engaged
- Greater clarity about Healthwatch Northumberland’s strategic purpose - how its mission is designed to translate into actions and its chosen priorities
## Budget for 2014/2015

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Expenses</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
<td>4,980.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/Marketing/Publicity</td>
<td>13,000.00</td>
<td>12,231.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Support/rooms etc</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
<td>1,729.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Staff/Volunteers</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>6,545.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>24,000.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat/Light/Insurance</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone &amp; Computer &amp; IT</td>
<td>16,000.00</td>
<td>13,214.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web &amp; Data Collection</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>4,192.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCS Partner Involvement</td>
<td>24,000.00</td>
<td>16,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>7,997.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>352,977.00</td>
<td>320,229.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Funding 2014/2015

- **Funding 2014/2015**: 314,000.00
- **Carried forward**: 38,977.00
- **Totals**: 352,977.00
Our Annual Report is available electronically on our website and hard copies are available on request. We will also provide copies of the report in other formats on request. A summary of the report will be included in our next newsletter. Our commissioners and all of our partners will also receive copies, including Northumberland County Council, Healthwatch England, The Care Quality Commission, NHS England, Northumberland CCG, Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board and Communications Sub-group and Northumberland Overviews and Scrutiny Board and organisations who commission or deliver health and social care services in Northumberland.

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