

# Healthwatch Thurrock

Annual Report 2015/16





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# Message from our parent company: Thurrock CVS



As a project of Thurrock CVS, we are delighted with the success that Healthwatch Thurrock has achieved over the past 18 months it's gone from strength to strength. With a new staff team in place at the beginning of this financial year, Healthwatch Thurrock has been able to return to producing the volume and quality of work it had previously, before a period of independence in 2013-14. We are pleased that Healthwatch Thurrock has returned as project of Thurrock CVS as the synergy between our objectives align; providing quality information and advice, reaching out to communities and representing the views of our customers.

Healthwatch Thurrock's engagement work with both the Social Care consultation and Health and Wellbeing Strategy refresh, were both highly commended and gave the team the opportunity to work with groups and organisations that Thurrock CVS support.

We would also like to thank the advisory group for their input in shaping Healthwatch Thurrock's operational plan, during this period. This has enabled Healthwatch Thurrock to continue to focus on their priorities for 2014-15.

As we enter the year 2016-17 we will see further challenges for citizens of Thurrock, especially in the Health and Social Care agendas and it's important that Healthwatch Thurrock continue to listen and channel those voices, in an important time of change.

**Kristina Jackson**

**Chief Executive Officer - Thurrock CVS**

# Message from our Chief Operating Officer



2015-16 has been a very successful year for Healthwatch Thurrock. As a project under Thurrock CVS we have had the opportunity to grow and complete some good pieces of work which you can read about in this report.

We have increased our staff team to 6; we have carried out some good outreach work and engaged with many residents, patients, service users and carers to gather their views on the Health and Social Care services across Thurrock.

This year has thrown up some challenges, for example there was a GP crisis in Tilbury. Healthwatch Thurrock was involved in the work being undertaken by NHS England and Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group to review this. This situation will be ongoing for some time, but it is one which has highlighted the issues raised by our residents concerned with the quality and accessibility of some of our GPs. This work has proven that by using

their voices and telling us their concerns, real changes can be made by the residents of Thurrock.

The Healthwatch Thurrock Team and I are looking forward to the challenges of the next year, the priorities as set by our members, residents, service users and patients around various issues on Health and Social Care Services.

We will also be undertaking two relevant ongoing pieces of work around the Thurrock Health and Well-Being Strategy and the Essex Success Regime where we will be out in your communities gathering your views and listening to your stories of using services.

Please take the time to read our report, please come and speak to us when you see us out in your communities and above all else, please remember your voices count.

**Kim James**

**Chief Operating Officer**

# The year at a glance

This year we've reached 1,331 people on social media



Our volunteers help us with everything from enter & view to the smooth running of our events



We hold on average 15 Healthwatch information sessions a month across the borough.



We've visited numerous local services in Thurrock from Pharmacies to Basildon Hospital and Childrens Centres to Residential Care Homes.



We gave advice, information and signposted over 750 people.



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from changes to fees for adult social care and awareness of Thurrock Health Hubs



# Who we are

Healthwatch Thurrock is an independent champion for Health & Social Care services for the people of Thurrock. We gather and represent views from our local community on the services in Thurrock in order to build up a picture of where services are doing well and where they can be improved.

Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people. Our sole focus is on understanding the needs, experiences and concerns of people of all ages who use services and to speak out on their behalf.

We are uniquely placed as a national network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

Our role is to ensure that local decision makers and health and care services put the experiences of people at the heart of their work.

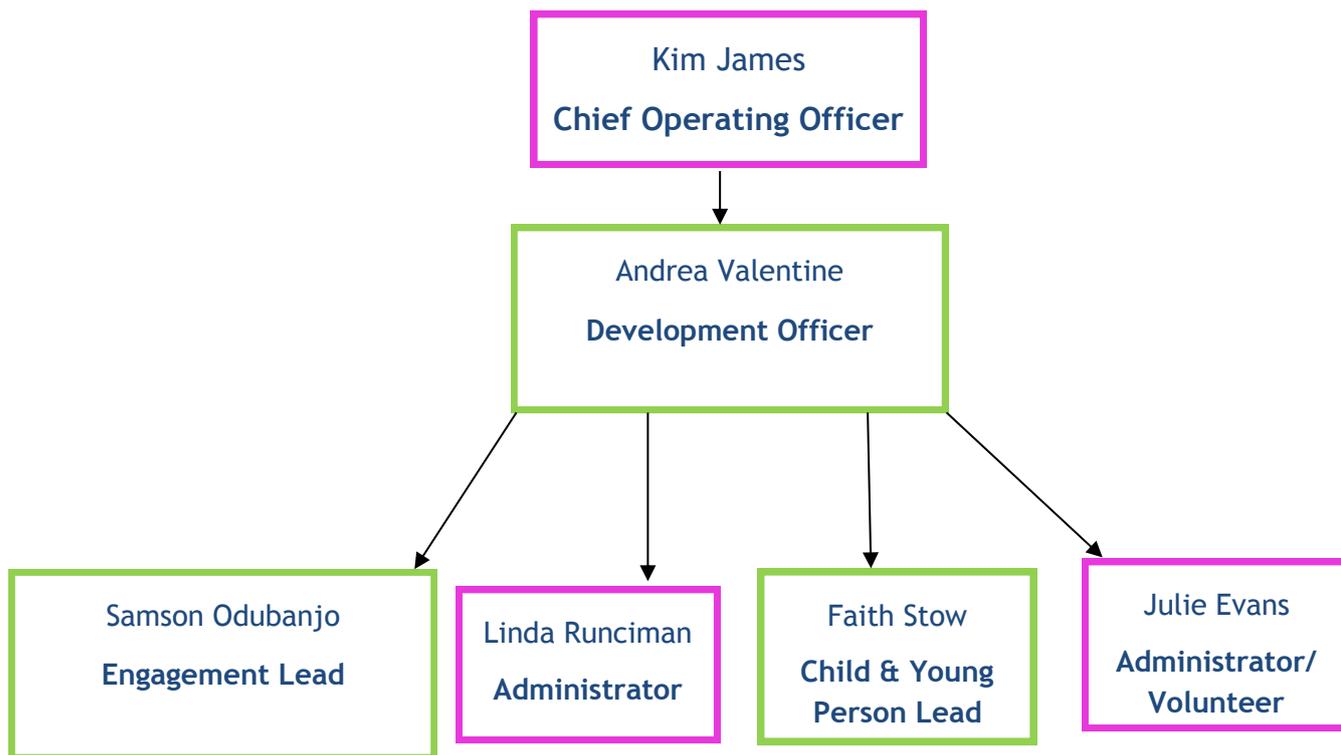
We believe that asking people more about their experiences can identify issues that, if addressed, will make services better.

Healthwatch Thurrock are a project under Thurrock Council for Voluntary Sector (TCVS), we are overseen by their CEO Kristina Jackson and by their Board of Trustees. The Healthwatch Thurrock Team are proud of the work we do in supporting the community to have a voice and enabling some small and some significant changes to planning, commissioning and delivery of health and social care services in Thurrock. We never underestimate the voice of the people.

## Our vision

Healthwatch Thurrock aims to enable people, communities and organisations in Thurrock to have a say and influence the planning, commissioning and delivery of Health and Social Care services to improve the health and wellbeing of patients, the public and service users.

## The Healthwatch Thurrock Team



Our Healthwatch Team (from left to right): Faith; Andrea; Samson; Kim James; Linda; Julie



# Listening to people who use health and social care services



## The Borough of Thurrock

Thurrock is a unitary borough within the County of Essex and lies by the River Thames to the east of London. Like many parts of England, Thurrock has health inequalities. These are differences in the health and wellbeing of different communities. For example, a boy born in Tilbury is predicted to live for ten years less than a boy born in Orsett<sup>1</sup>. The borough has a population of 160,000 people of which 19% are from a black or minority ethnicity (BME) community<sup>1</sup>. Thurrock also has a relatively young population compared to England, but as people live longer, the proportion of our population aged over 65 is predicted to grow faster than the general population<sup>1</sup>.

The community in Thurrock is diverse and multi-cultural, including many of which are classed as 'hard to reach'. We believe an integral part of our work is to ensure that we reach as many individuals of these groups as possible within our community.



Figure 1: Map of Thurrock<sup>1</sup>

## Gathering Experiences and Understanding People's Needs



Figure 2: Information Session at East Tilbury Library

As a team, we work hard to ensure we are out in the community, our outreach work has shown us that working with people face to face works far better than a less direct approach. Although, we also keep up to date with our other connections such as on-line and by phone.

Anyone is welcome to pop into our offices directly; or give us a telephone call to have a chat with a team member; they can also share their view on our website in a confidential space. We prefer not to rely on these approaches, so we take an active role getting to the people of our community. This provides an opportunity for people to share their experiences of health & social care services in Thurrock who otherwise may not have spoken to us if we hadn't have gone to them.

We aim to reach as wider population as we possibly can. During 2015/2016 we

collected people's views in various ways such as:

- Holding information sessions and drop ins at: Libraries; Community Hubs; Children's Centres
- Holding events and attending other organisations events
- Stands in various locations such as: local schools; local events; local colleges; local markets for example Grays Market
- Being active on social media: Facebook; Twitter; Healthwatch Thurrock Website
- Close relationships with community members eg. Local Area Coordinators (LACs)
- Attending community and professional forums
- Telephone calls; emails; direct drop ins
- Attending Faith and Church Groups
- Attending Stroke Groups, Mental Health Forums, Autism Action and many more groups and forums

**We visit all 9 Children's Centres in Thurrock once a month and on average have 15 information sessions across Thurrock a month.**



Figure 3: Kim James, Healthwatch Chief Operating Officer, speaking at the Fobbing Ladies Club on how Healthwatch empowers members of our community

### What we've learnt from visiting services

From visiting various Health and Social Care Services, Community Groups and other organisations in Thurrock, over the last year, we have learnt a lot. Each area in Thurrock has different demographics, trends and concerns. This in turn requires alternate approaches, methods and resolutions.

In April 2015, we reviewed some aspects of GP services in Thurrock. We looked specifically at the new contractual requirements of online access and Patient Participation Groups (PPG) at all GP practices. We also looked at the number of Thurrock GP Practices with a website and of those who do - how many provide an online booking service and information about PPGs. The results showed that there were some discrepancies.

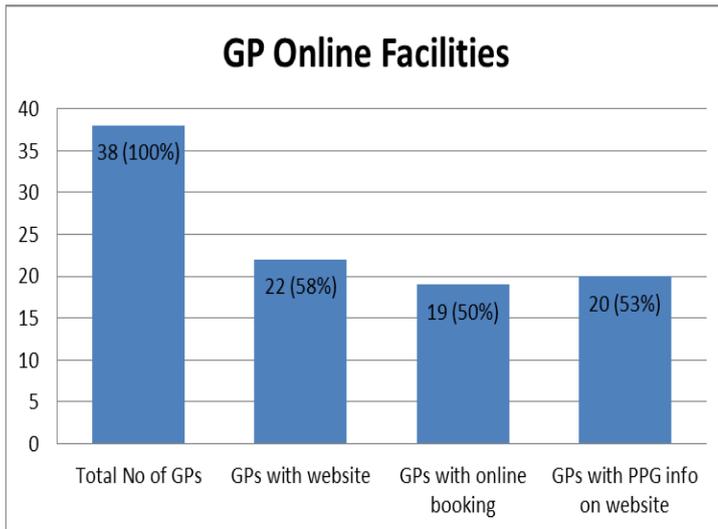


Figure 4: Bar chart GP Online Facilities in April 2015

We looked into the GP practices *telephone services* and also the *Out-of-Hours Provisions* across Thurrock.

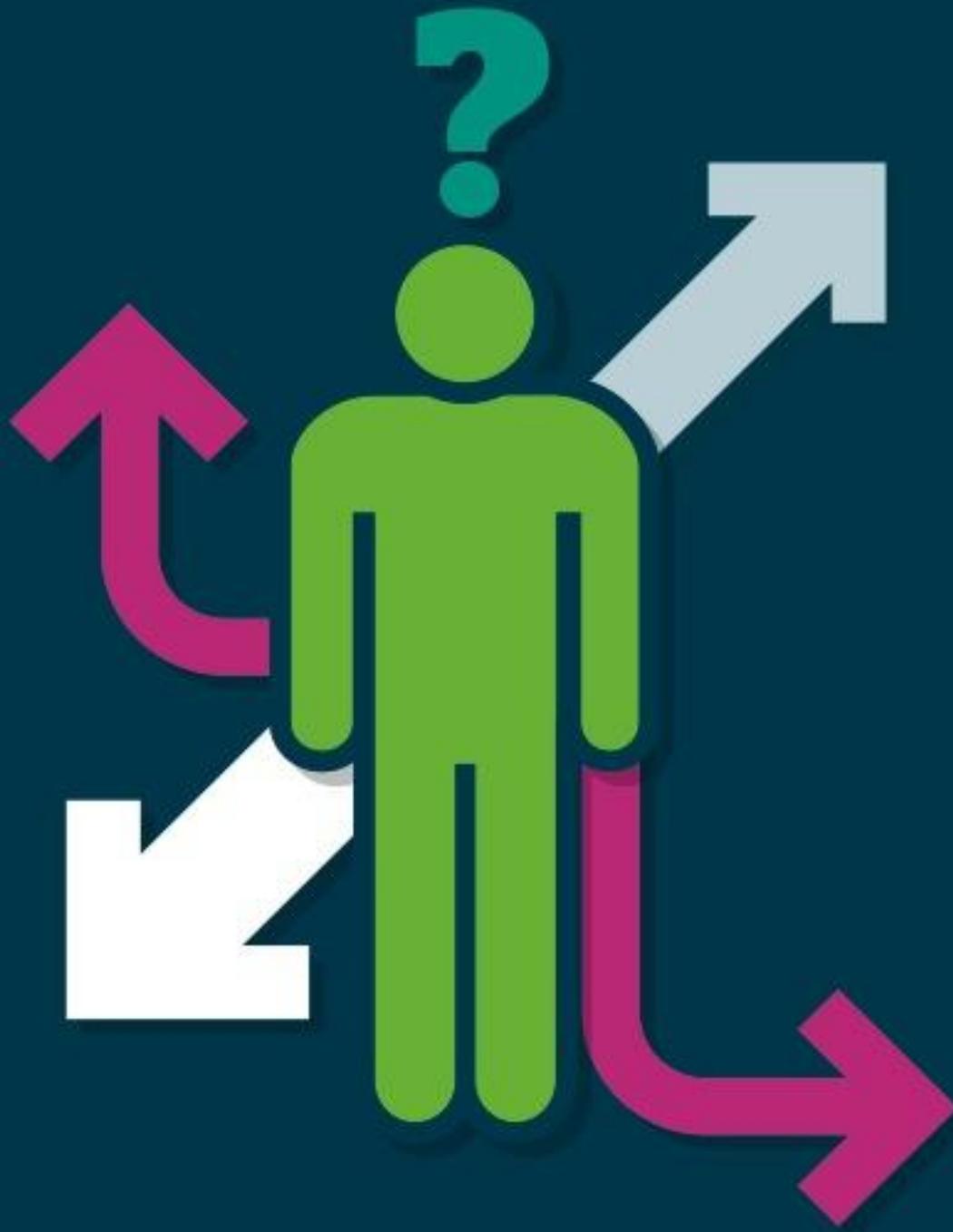
We found there to be variations between GP practices and a clear problem across the borough with regards to access to GP services online and a lack of continuity for patients in different surgeries with regards to Out-of-Hours Services. Healthwatch Thurrock also noted that none of the GP practices mentioned the Walk-in-Service provided by Thurrock Health Centre (available until 31st March 2016) on their out of hours telephone messages, which was a local resource open from 8am to 8pm 365 days a year.

Further on in the year in June 2015, Healthwatch Thurrock visited 11 GP practices to look at:

- Physical access i.e a ramp, a hearing loop etc.
- General information displayed in the waiting room and how up to date it was
- General condition of the waiting room and the layout
- Whether there was clear signage to explain how to make a complaint
- Signage of the availability to speak to a receptionist in a private area
- Suitable and appropriate parking
- The non-emergency appointment waiting times
- Process for an emergency same day appointment
- Availability of over the phone consultations
- Process for a repeat prescription

We found variations in all aspects, most noticeably in the process for booking appointments of both non-emergency and emergency GP appointments. Our findings were fed back to the GP practices that took part, NHS England and Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group.

# Giving people advice and information



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

At Healthwatch Thurrock our role is dynamic in information sharing of health & social care services, this could be raising awareness of a newly available service or continued promotion of local services for local people.

During 2015/2016 we gave advice, information and sign posted over 750 people (not including event and outreach work). We were able to reach 1,335 people on social media. Contacts such as: complaints, compliments and queries are recorded using the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System which was put into place in February 2016.

Following an individual(s) contacting us, it is followed up by sending out a letter, or an email, to summarise the individuals contact with the organisation, including any relevant material on relevant services or advice they may need.

In 2016, we designed a new leaflet to provide information about the new Thurrock Health Hub Service. It included information on when to use NHS services. The four new Thurrock Health Hubs provide a GP and Nurse Service at Weekends and Wednesday evening. We wanted to make sure people were aware of this service and more importantly how to access it. The new leaflets and Health Hub posters are taken out to all of our engagement activities in order to raise awareness of the new service. We also promote the service via social media and our quarterly newsletter.

We had found that over a third of people we spoke to were not aware of the Thurrock Health Hubs Service.

(See page 18 for the Thurrock Health Hubs Report)

### Healthwatch Thurrock Events

We held various events during the last year 2015/2016; with the broad aim to provide people with information, advice and to gather views and experiences from those that attend the events.

Events we held in 2015/2016:

- Acquired Brain Injury Event 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015
- Dignity Action Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016
- Stroke Awareness Event on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016
- Easter Event Fun Day on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

### Acquired Brain Injury Event

In May 2015, we ran an event around acquired brain injury; we invited users of services, stroke survivors, carers and providers, there was a good turnout of approximately 40 people.

Our local stroke support group presented some of the work they do locally, including the activities they provide and exercise classes people can join.

The event was supported by the local organisation Headway Essex that supports people following an acquired brain injury either by birth, accident or illness, and they brought information and gave a presentation on their work.

The event was well received the providers and commissioners took time to speak to and listen to those using the services and were able to look at some of the commissioned services and unmet needs within that service.

### Dignity Action Day

Healthwatch Thurrock held an event for Dignity Action Day in February. We facilitated open discussion about dignity in care and what this means to each of us. We gathered people's views on our digni-tree and covered various topics using videos to promote the discussion and raise awareness of dignity.

**“Dignity means choice empowerment protection. Not to rescue someone but to give tools to save themselves.”**  
*Event attendee*



Figure 5: Digni-tree for peoples comments on dignity in care

### The Stroke Awareness Event

On 23rd February, we held an event, in partnership with the Stroke Association to promote stroke awareness and provide support for those who have been affected by stroke. The event was an absolute success with over 50 people attending the day. We facilitated interesting discussions provided by Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group/ Essex Fire Safety Team/ and Councillor Barbara Rice (Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board 2015-2016). Feedback was great and people enjoyed a healthy lunch and party music.



Figure 6: Headway Essex Stand at the Stroke Awareness Event 2016



Figure 7: Set up for the Stroke Awareness Event 2016

## Easter Event Fun Day

A Healthwatch Thurrock Easter Event was held on 31st March 2016. A total of 55 children attended the event over 2 sessions. There were also two members of staff from Thurrock Children's Centres who attended the event and promoted the Children Centre Services. We as Healthwatch promoted our services and raised awareness about local health & social care services for children.

**Being healthy means eating healthy food, keeping safe and surviving from bad things.**

*Jessica aged 6*

We asked them what being healthy meant and got some great responses. We received some lovely feedback from event attendees and were able to gather views from parents and carers we otherwise would not have engaged with.

**Being healthy means not eating too much chocolate.**

*Oscar aged 5*

**Being able to survive and looking after other people.**

*Jensine aged 8*

We spoke to the families/carers and got their views of the local services in Thurrock including: Health Services, Social Care Services and Children's Services, such as healthy eating classes and the Children Centre Sessions and Groups. Our Easter Event allowed us to engage with a younger audience.



Figure 8: Some of the Easter Egg hunters



Figure 9: Easter Event in March 2016

# How we have made a difference



## Our reports and recommendations

Healthwatch Thurrock carried out various engagement activities work to find out about unmet needs, where services might be inadequate and what improvements people felt were needed. Here are the reports we worked on and published in 2015/2016:

### 1. Health Hubs Report March 2016

We undertook this report after finding that many people we spoke to during our engagement activities were unaware of the Health Hubs and what they provide. The Health Hubs provide a GP and Nurse Service at Weekends and on a Wednesday evening. It is important that people know about this service and how to access it. Whilst undertaking this report we gave out over 2,000 leaflets with information about the Thurrock Health Hubs and delivered posters advertising the new service to pharmacies, GP Practices, Health Centres, Surgeries, Libraries and Children Centres.

**36% of the people we spoke to were not aware of the Health Hubs in Thurrock.**

Because of our findings we continuously work with Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (TCCG) to promote the Health Hub service using our social media, information sessions and other general public engagement.

### 2. For Thurrock in Thurrock Report March 2016



Figure 10: Public Meeting held at Tilbury

TCCG are developing an improved model of health care delivery for Thurrock. This change to the health and care system in Thurrock sees a more holistic model of (locality) neighbourhood based care, closer to home for the local population. Healthwatch Thurrock worked in partnership with TCCG to raise public awareness of the new vision and to get the public view on such changes.

Over a six week period (from February 25th till March 31st 2016) we undertook a borough wide engagement plan. We held one public meeting and had themed information sessions; we had two Healthwatch Thurrock stands, the first at Grays Market and the second at South Essex College. We also visited Community Forums, Community Hubs, Education Centres, Children Centres, the Local Libraries and Sheltered Housing complexes to mention a few.

Surveys were conducted as well as group votes to ask what the opinions of people were on the piece of work. The survey was also available online and shared using our social media and the TCCG

social media. Overall public opinion was in support of the vision with few negative comments made. This report showed that there is a palpable anticipation of how health & social care services in Thurrock will improve to meet the current challenges faced in the overall health & social care service provision in the borough.

### 3. Adult Social Care Consultation Report November 2015

In 2015, Thurrock Council held a Consultation which proposed changes to Adult Social Care. We wanted to find out how this might impact those in the community that use adult social care services. We gathered independent views around the proposed changes in adult social care. These changes included:-

A) Charges for some adult social care services

B) Equipment and adaptations costing less than £50

C) The provision of Extra Care Housing

A total of 25 of the 45 Sheltered Housing Complexes in Thurrock were visited over a period of 12 weeks. We also attended relevant Coffee Mornings, Afternoon Tea events and engaged with some groups including the Over 60's Group at the Thurrock Rugby Club, Thurrock Over 50s Forum and TOP Club. We had user friendly easy read forms and collected verbal and written responses.

### 60% of respondents were 'very sad' with the proposed changes to Adult Social Care in Thurrock.

The responses show that people who will be affected by such changes are concerned. Although we at Healthwatch Thurrock recognise that savings have to be made we felt that these proposals could have a significant effect on some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. The respondent concerns seemed to theme around:

- Efficiency: daycare services need to be delivered differently. Enabling best use of the communal lounges within the sheltered accommodation to cut down transport service costs and enable people to remain in their own complexes.
- Concerns: around the implementation of charges for equipment under £50, the assessment of what equipment is needed, where equipment can be purchased and how (if a person has mobility issues and no access to a computer) and also the fitting of equipment.
- Fees: charging for Careline would impact on people with financial hardship; many indicated that they would return them rather than pay. A concern is that people who have an assessed need would return the item leaving them vulnerable.
- Contracts: Those in private flats felt they'd paid for the accommodation prior to a £40 weekly charge, which was not mentioned previously in their contracts.

## Our Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that any Council Tenant needing extra care has the complete/clear understanding of fees and charges.
2. Private Tenants (homeowners) incur the charge only when they use the service, but should be given a choice.
3. All new Council Tenants have the charge clearly stated in their contracts before they choose to move in/buy property. It is unfair to be charged retrospectively.

*All of our published reports can be found online at -*

*[www.healthwatchthurrock.org](http://www.healthwatchthurrock.org) by clicking on the tab “Reports”.*

## Working with other organisations

Healthwatch Thurrock has built good working relationships with our partners, below is some of the work we have completed and some comments from representatives of the organisations:

### Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (TCCG)

Healthwatch Thurrock has a good working relationship with TCCG with a seat on their Board and encouraged to speak on behalf of the residents of Thurrock regarding commissioning decisions affecting them. We have taken groups of service users and patients along when an agenda item has contained something which could affect them directly and with Chair’s consent they have been able to put their own case across and be listened to, with some good outcomes.

Following the GP Crisis in Tilbury (a town in Thurrock) we played an important role, we were able to work with TCCG and NHS England East to hold public meetings in Tilbury to keep patients updated on the situation and to listen to their concerns. We were part of the panel and encouraged patients to tell their stories. There were two of these public meetings and a patient panel has now been set up to ensure patients voices are heard within the future plans for primary care in the Town.

TCCG have a patient/public group the Commissioning Reference Group, made up of PPG members, individuals, community and voluntary sector group/organisation members and carers which Healthwatch Thurrock co-chair with the Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Lay Member. All commissioning decisions are taken to this group to discuss what it is and how it will affect the patients and residents of Thurrock. All comments are included in the Board Papers so the Board is fully aware of people’s comments and concerns when making decisions.

Healthwatch Thurrock always ensure that Thurrock residents can engage in active and meaningful conversations on the health and care issues that really matter to them. They reach out, and get out; right into the community, building existing relationships whilst creating new ones. Because of this, our future health and care vision proposals For Thurrock in Thurrock

are being warmly supported. It is only by actively engaging with our partners, like Healthwatch Thurrock and working together towards common goals that we will be able to bring about a real transformation of health and care services across Thurrock, over the coming years.

*Jeanette Hucey, Director of Transformation, NHS Thurrock CCG*

### Local Authority (Thurrock Borough Council TBC)

Healthwatch Thurrock have worked well with our Local Authority and although we are commissioned and monitored by them it has not affected our ability to carry out some in depth work into services commissioned by them and feedback any concerns.

Healthwatch Thurrock carried out visits to residential homes across the borough to feed into our ongoing Dignity in Care work, and fed back any concerns to the Managers of the homes and to the Contract and Monitoring Team at TBC.

We completed a large piece of work around the consultation on changes to charges for services and equipment and into changes to day-care service provision (report can be found on page 19) and fed back our findings at the Health and Wellbeing Board and our Health Overview Scrutiny Committee at TBC.

Healthwatch Thurrock have a seat on both Thurrock's Health and Well-Being Board (HWBB) and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) on both

agendas we have a standing item where we are able to raise any current concerns/trends that could impact the services received by the residents of Thurrock.

We also have seats on the Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards, Children's Partnership Board, Older Peoples Parliament, Disability Partnership Board and we attend the provider meetings. This gives us the opportunity to listen to concerns and challenge as necessary the actions to be taken, and for us to gather views then feedback any concerns raised to us by the residents, service users and carers in Thurrock.

### Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Healthwatch Thurrock has worked well with the CQC Inspectors locally. We were involved in the sharing of information and feedback from the residents of Tilbury both before and after the inspections of GP Surgeries in Tilbury which resulted in the Town having limited access to a GP following CQC Inspections and actions.

Until recently we met Monthly with our Primary Care Lead to share information, and hope to continue to work closely with her replacement.

We have attended CQC Inspections across the borough both within health and social care to feedback both positive and negative feedback we've received by services users and their families and carers ect.

Healthwatch Thurrock played a pivotal role in developing our new Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-

2021 by designing and leading a large scale community consultation that shaped the five goals and 20 objectives that make up the new strategy.

Department of Health and Local Government Association best practice guidance on the development of Health and Wellbeing Strategies clearly emphasises the importance of co-production of new strategies with the community and states that they should be presented “in a clear and accessible way”.

As the Director of Public Health for Thurrock, I firmly believe that it is only possible to affect change in health and wellbeing on a population level, if we work closely in partnership with our local residents. For too long, statutory services have “done to” not “done with” communities, and I am determined that moving forward we adopt the latter and not the former. Our community is our greatest asset in improving health and wellbeing, and it was vital that they were, and continue to be, engaged in the development and delivery of our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Healthwatch Thurrock successfully managed to engage directly with around 600 different Thurrock residents through a wide variety of forums in order to ensure that our Health and Wellbeing Strategy reflected their needs, views and priorities. As your application rightly points out, the

results of this engagement had a major impact on shaping the priorities and objectives contained within the strategy, and in ensuring that the final product was presented in a clear, accessible and understandable way for our community.

I was particularly impressed with the role that Healthwatch Thurrock played in delivering such an extensive and wide ranging consultation given the very tight time scale of a few months that we had to develop the strategy.

Thurrock Healthwatch, in my opinion has the strongest links with the community they serve that I have ever witnessed in my 20 year career in Public Health. You do a superb job in ensuring that their views are reflected within all of the key strategic partnerships that shape Thurrock Council’s, NHS Thurrock CCG’s and NHS England (East)’s commissioning and delivery of health and social care services.

*Ian Wake*  
*Director of Public Health*

Thurrock Safeguarding Adult Board has a long standing and beneficial relationship with Healthwatch in Thurrock. Healthwatch is a member of our Safeguarding Board and has a statutory consultative function within the Care Act 2014. Healthwatch is the eyes and ears of patients and users of services in Thurrock

and has a key role in bringing adult safeguarding concerns to the safeguarding adults board. I welcome their challenges as much as I am grateful for the support. I am particularly pleased that Healthwatch have agreed to undertake a number of audits of the work of the safeguarding board and I look forward to receiving its recommendations on how adult safeguarding in Thurrock might be improved.

*Graham Carey*  
*Independent Chair of Thurrock Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board*

### NHS England East (NHSEE)

Healthwatch Thurrock's relationship with NHSEE is a good one. This year we've been involved in the crisis meetings held regarding Tilbury's GP crisis. We had a role in sharing information with patients affected by the issues in Tilbury, we also held public meetings alongside NHSEE and attended the affected GP practices to speak with patients.

We have a good working relationship with the patient experience leads and with the team that deal with complaints; we are able to ring them and discuss issues and gain some clarity for callers to our Information, Advice and Signposting Service. We have also been able to work together to find good outcomes for some callers which has averted official complaints being received by NHSEE.

As part of NHS England's role to work collaboratively with a variety

of organisations across health and social care NHS England East has built up a working relationship with Healthwatch Thurrock to promote good outcomes for patients and the patient experience agenda. Both organisations work collaboratively to resolve individual patient concerns. A good line of communication between NHS England East and Healthwatch Thurrock has been established and has proven to provide an excellent method of producing good outcomes for patients where required by both organisations.

*Lynn Morgan*  
*Complaints Manager, NHS England, East Region, Nursing Directorate*

### Other Stakeholders

Healthwatch Thurrock has a good working relationship with other statutory providers like North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) who provide community services in Thurrock. We have regular meetings to discuss any issues or concerns and keep in regular contact to ensure we are aware of any changes to services which could affect service users.

Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (BTUH) is our main provider of acute care and it falls within the boundaries of Healthwatch Essex, we work together to ensure there is a working relationship with both Healthwatches. We carry out regular visits to the hospital to speak

## Involving local people in our work

with patients, two members of our advisory group are involved with the PLACE visits and we are involved in the community work being carried out to look at services being brought closer to home.

Following a large increase in people attending A&E and putting a lot of pressure on the service we produced a flyer around the need to attend A&E and the other options available to residents during evenings and weekends, we distributed over 2,500 leaflets and always discuss this during any visits to groups, organisations and community forums. There has been a marked increase in the use of weekend health hubs in the borough of which many residents were unaware.

BTUH values the excellent work that Healthwatch Thurrock undertake for the people of Thurrock and the support it offers the Trust. As an organisation we are committed to supporting Healthwatch Thurrock and working on collaborative projects to enhance the care we deliver to patients. Going forward we want to build on our well established relationships and identify opportunities to work more closely.

*Tom Abell  
Deputy Chief Executive at BTUH*

Healthwatch Thurrock work closely with Thurrock's Voluntary and Community Groups and have representatives from some on our Advisory Group. Since becoming a project of Thurrock CVS the relationship has become stronger, with us being able to contact groups via CVS, to attend meetings and jointly run events.

We worked hard throughout the year with organisations that represent and support our Learning Disabled (LD) residents to continue our ongoing work around the annual LD Health Checks, the numbers being delivered by our local GPs has been very low, with worrying outcomes. We took their concerns to TCCG, to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB), to our Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and to NHS England East (NHSEE). The outcome of this is that TCCG are going to be the commissioners for year 2016/17, they will ask GPs not to sign up to the Directly Enhanced Service (DES) unless they are confident they can deliver the service. If not, TCCG will commission a provider to deliver the LD Health Checks to those GPs that opt out. We are confident that next years delivered LD Health Checks will be an improvement on the 2015/16 figure of 11%.

We strive to involve local people in the planning and commissioning of health and social care services in Thurrock. As mentioned prior, we have a seat on our HWBB and when the refreshed Health & Wellbeing Strategy was put forward we encouraged co-creation with local

people. We carried out engagement with the local population to ensure that the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy reflected the views of the community. The HWBB informed us that through this engagement activity, a number of key themes emerged that have shaped the final strategy. Engagement also led to the strategy wording being presented in a more clear and accessible way than previous versions.

### Our Initial Recommendations to the Board

Healthwatch Thurrock made recommendations to the Board from the evidence gathered:

1. A more accessible and simplified version of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy be made available
2. Future surveys be kept short, sharp and simple as suggested by the feedback respondents

The refreshed Health & Wellbeing Strategy has been updated, the previous five 'Priorities' have since been changed to five 'Goals' as below:

### Refreshed Goals

- A. Opportunity for All
- B. Healthier Environments
- C. Better Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- D. Quality Care Centered on the Person
- E. Healthier for Longer

These goals are easier to understand, sharper and apply to the broad and diverse community in Thurrock. The

HWBB listened and took into consideration the responses made in the main survey and also considered the extra work we did which highlighted the importance of having jargon free text that is relevant and accessible. We provided this information over a series of meetings with Thurrock Council and also at the HWBB in March 2016.

“This has been a valuable engagement process as the views of the residents have been listened to and changes were made to the document, in relation to wording and priorities set.”

*Kim James, Chief Operating officer at Healthwatch Thurrock<sup>2</sup>*

# Our work in focus



# Our work in focus: Mental Health

Below is Jane's story, in her own words, of her experience of the Mental Health Service her family relative received.

 In 2015 I came to see you (at Healthwatch Thurrock) on the recommendation of my local Councillor who arranged a meeting between us. When I arrived at your office I was broken, a victim of a dysfunctional system. When I left I felt human again and I had hope. You did not promise me anything other than you would try to have my voice heard, and you did just that.

It has been a long hard slog to get SEPT (South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust) to give me answers. But there were individuals who helped in giving me a platform to be heard. Paul my son is doing incredibly well. He is recovering, something I feared I would never see.

Healthwatch Thurrock gave me the support I needed to move forward. I am a strong person, however many are not and simply get washed away by the tide of bureaucracy and policy, which does not fit all shoe sizes. I needed to give my story, Paul's story more importantly, and Healthwatch guided me to do just that.

Healthwatch Thurrock supported me, and provided me with advice. I am now mentoring a young man with mental health issues. So there is a positive from a negative, my experiences have given me the tools to help others.

Paul my son now has a home of his own, and is living independently. He is receiving psychotherapy, has a Care Coordinator and is taking regular medication. He is ALIVE, he smiles, HE IS SAFE! That is all I ever wanted, that is all I ever asked for from the system.

In the words of the late Sally Brampton: Killing oneself is, anyway a misnomer. We don't kill ourselves. We are simply defeated by the long struggle to stay ALIVE.

I live with this fear for Paul every day, however everyday has hope, every day has a new understanding, and every day is a new day. I can write this because I have hope, because I was believed. Thank you Healthwatch for listening to me and helping me.

*Jane*

*A Silent Witness to the Mental Health System*



We would like to thank Jane for sharing her emotional story with us and for both her and Paul for allowing us to use their story in our Annual Report. As Jane has stated she came to us in 2015 very distressed and with a difficult case concerning mental health services, her words speak for themselves. We were instrumental in gaining her an Advocate to work with her and her son, to raise her story and experience with the Mental Health Commissioner, and providers of her services. Her complaints were heard,

her story was listened to and although some elements are still ongoing you can see that things have improved immensely. We were glad to be part of the journey and the help we gained for Jane led towards the end of that very difficult time.

*Please note the names have been changed for confidentiality.*

## Our work in focus: Tilbury Primary Care Services

During the spring of 2015 following CQC inspections of local GPs we had a situation whereby Tilbury (a town in Thurrock) was left with extremely poor and reduced GP services and access.

NHS England East (NHSEE) called a Multi-Disciplinary Crisis Meeting of which Healthwatch Thurrock attended. We worked hard as an independent voice to ensure the situation was dealt with as quickly as possible. All letters sent by NHSEE to the patients affected had our contact details on and we took many calls from concerned residents. We were able to explain the situation, listen to and log their concerns which we were then able to feed back at the crisis meetings, we were also able to help people with the process of registering with a new GP

where necessary. We also spent some time visiting GP reception areas of those affected practices to speak face to face with patients and to offer support to those practices' PPG groups.

We now sit on TCCG's Primary Care Group alongside NHSEE looking at GP issues in Thurrock, raising concerns and feeding patients and residents voices into the solutions.

We encouraged TCCG to hold joint public meetings in Tilbury to listen to the concerns of residents and to involve them in the future and vision for Tilbury. There is now also a Patients Panel which helps shape the future of Primary Care provision in Tilbury.

# Our plans for next year



## Future priorities

Recent engagement, carried out for the Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB) - Goals 2016-2021, lead to a new piece of work, which is currently underway. Over the next ten months we will focus on each of these five Goals for Thurrock. Taking each Goal out to the community, we will be able to find out how the people of Thurrock see themselves reaching each Goal and what support may be needed to help them achieve this. A summary report for each will be presented to the HWBB over this period. This will allow local views and experiences to feed into the continuous improvement of health and social care services in Thurrock.

This work also links in with the Essex Success Regime; this is the future planning of health services in Essex to achieve a balanced and sustainable budget. If change is not achieved in Mid and South Essex the NHS deficit could rise over £216 million by 2018/2019 and would not be able to meet year on year growing demands. Healthwatch Thurrock will be involved in the consultation and engagement of service users in Thurrock to enable influence over the decisions being made in order to reflect the needs of Thurrock residents. We are proud to say that we are playing a part in the success of Thurrock Health and Social Care Services.

Over the next year, we will continue to have close links with NHSEE, TCCG and the Thurrock Council Public Health Team. With various events already lined up for

the coming year where we will showcase our current projects.

We are also planning to review:

- Domiciliary Care in Thurrock
- Local Diabetic/Blood Pressure Services and promote the new pre-diabetes prevention programme
- Finding out what the community want to be provided in the new Integrated Health and Wellness Centres
- Working more effectively with Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

In June 2016 we will be hosting a Youth Club Week. We aim to visit youth clubs and youth forums to engage with younger people around the services they use and whether they are happy with provision of such services. These visits will be kept light and fun with a higher or lower game that raises awareness of the costs of NHS services. It is essential that we work hard to engage the population as equally as possible to be truly representative of Thurrock's population when we deliver the people's views and experiences to our partners.

# Our people



## Decision making

Healthwatch Thurrock is a project of Thurrock CVS. We work independently of Thurrock CVS but are not an independent company. Our decision making is discussed with the Thurrock CVS Board Trustees.

Healthwatch Thurrock report monthly to the Thurrock CVS Board on:

-  Budget
-  Contractual Compliance
-  Activity

The Thurrock CVS mission is to strengthen the sector with support, co-ordination and representation through:

1. Developing and promoting voluntary sector led solutions, influencing policy decisions, to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of the residents of Thurrock.
2. Providing a range of accessible, high-quality services around information, support, training and advice to community groups and organisations in Thurrock.
3. Bringing voluntary and community organisations together to share knowledge, promote best practice and co-ordinate activity and opinion

This allows Healthwatch Thurrock to effectively disseminate our news, publications and information to Voluntary Sector Organisations and their members, Community Groups and Thurrock CVS Members.

Every year there is an Annual General Meeting (AGM) whereby members of the public are given the opportunity to help influence and set priorities which we then take to our Advisory Group to discuss.

Chief Operating Officer Kim James is line managed by the Chief Executive Officer Kristina Jackson of Thurrock CVS whereby decisions, trends and work plans are discussed.

## How we involve the public and volunteers

We have our own Advisory Group which our Chief Operating Officer, Kim James, reports to on our operating business; the group also monitors our contractual obligations and ensures we are working within our budget. The Healthwatch Thurrock Advisory Group is made up of 14 members from Community Groups; the Health and Social Care Sector; Patient Participation Group (PPG) members, individuals and Voluntary Sector representatives. The Advisory Group gives us direction around priorities and activities.

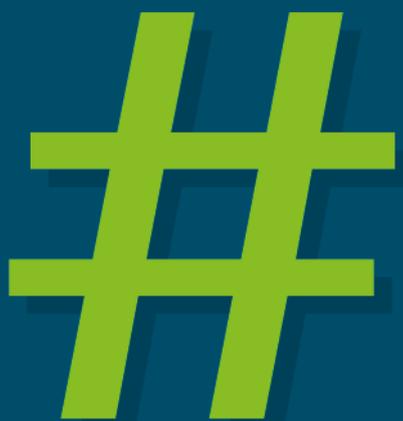
We have four volunteers who support us in the office but who also are able to come to events, community groups and meetings with us. They are also able to carry out Enter and View evaluations when needed. One of our volunteers has taken a role of Volunteer Co-ordinating one afternoon a week. In this role she is recruiting and growing our new volunteers who will be starting with us in June 2016.

# Our finances



INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities		124,357
Additional income		15,286
Total income		139,643
EXPENDITURE		
Staffing costs and other related costs		140,463
Overheads		19,598
Legal & Insurance		5,895
Advertising		2518.4
Engagement		8122.7
Governance		6,779
Total expenditure		183,377
Balance brought forward		- 43,735

# Contact us



## Address

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We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2016 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and our Local Authority.

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.

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# References

1. Thurrock Council (2015) Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Demographics and Population Change: <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/healthy-living/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>
2. Health & Wellbeing Board (2016) Public Minutes of the meeting Health & Wellbeing Board held 10th March 2016:  
<http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s7999/HWBB%20Notes%20100316.pdf>

