



Annual report 2019-20

Guided by you

**healthwatch**  
Birmingham

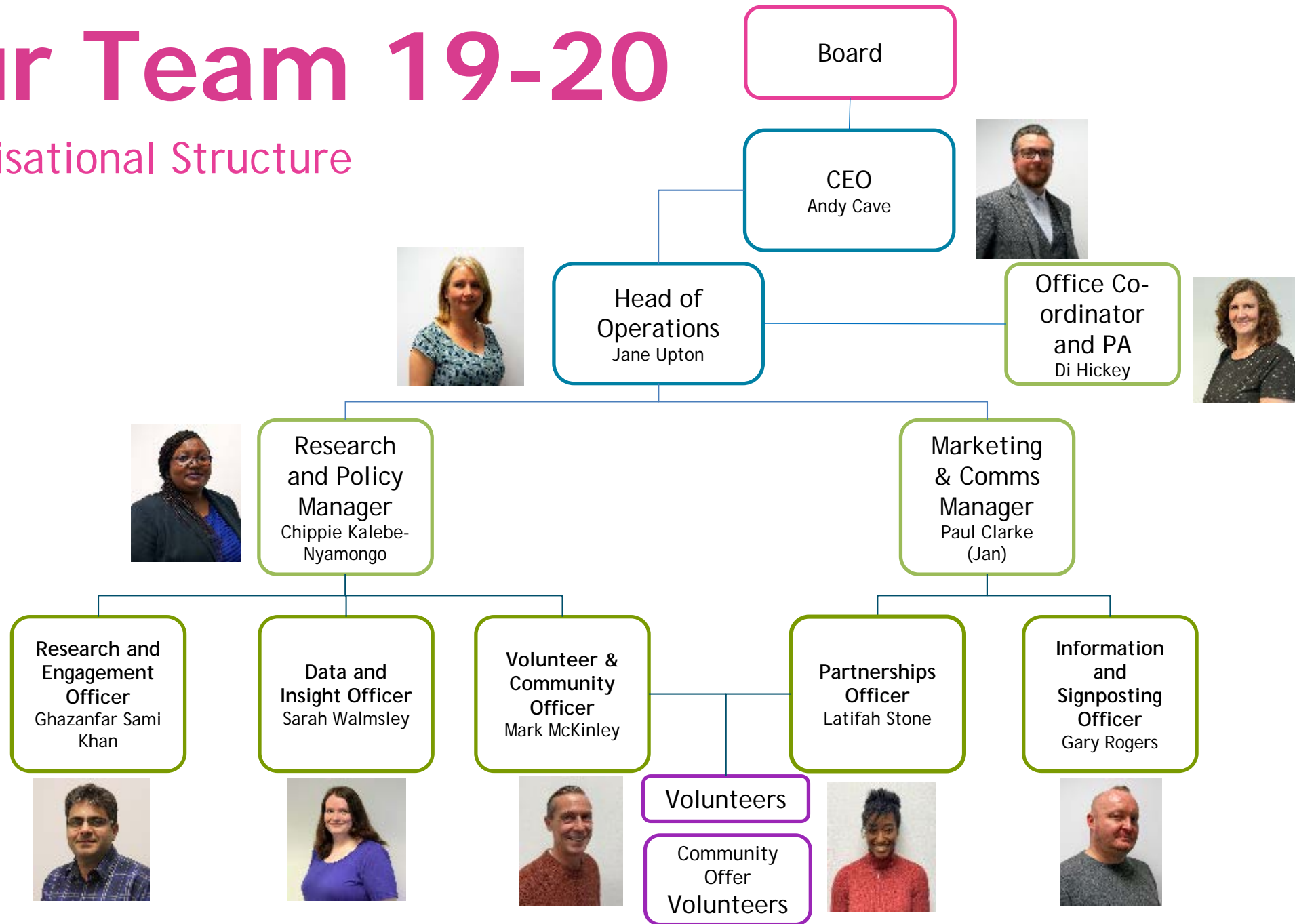
# Key moments of 2019-2020

- Overall we performed well in 2019-20 in comparison to previous years with continuous to growth across all areas.
- Between April 19 – July 2020 we had a contract extension as a result of an extended tender process.
- We won the contract which started in August 2019 at a contract value of £407,207



# Our Team 19-20

## Organisational Structure





# Highlights from our year

## Health and care that works for you



### **15 volunteers**

helped to carry out our work. In total, they attended 65 events, meetings or training sessions and gave 162 hours to help improve health and social care services.

### **10 staff**

9.17 of whom are full time equivalent.

## Providing support



### **1,884 people**

shared their health and social care story with us, 30% more than last year.

### **474 people**

accessed Healthwatch Birmingham advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support, 25% more than last year.

## Making a difference to care



We published

### **3 investigation reports**

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care.

## Reaching out



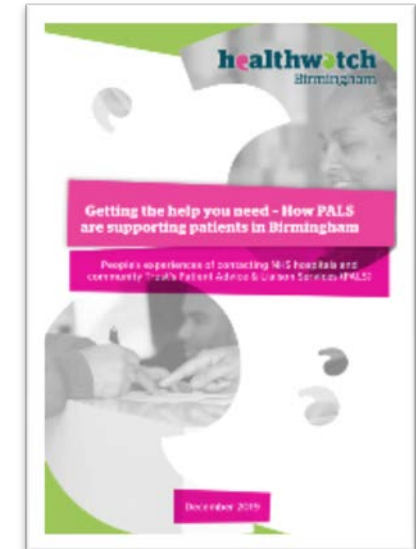
### **60,836 visits**

to our website, 5,986 people engaged with us through social media, and 2,502 people engaged with us at community events.

# How we've made a difference

## Improving support for hospital patients who have problems with care

- Service users will benefit from improvements to NHS trusts' Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS), following our report into their experiences. Examples of recommendations include:
  - every enquirer to Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust PALS receiving a named contact,
  - more feedback from PALS users at Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust being used to continuously improve the service.
  - Lead PALS officers are sharing best practice across NHS Trusts to tackle inconsistency.
- We worked with seven NHS trusts across Birmingham and 19 community organisations and registered charities.
- 87 people told us about their experience of PALS. Their experiences were inconsistent between NHS trusts. When PALS worked well people's needs were met, they felt understood and that their voices were heard. However, when PALS did not work well people felt powerless, afraid their treatment had been compromised by contacting PALS, and believed PALS was not acting in patients' best interests.
- This will help to ensure a more standardised service between NHS trusts. The full report, ['Getting the help you need – How PALS are supporting patients in Birmingham'](#), can be found on our website.



# How we've made a difference

## Assessing the impact of changes to primary care services on vulnerable people

- We responded to 14 consultations, reviews or listening exercises. One example is a response to a primary care consultation by NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This highlighted the importance of the CCG fully assessing the impact of service changes on vulnerable people.
- The CCG consulted patients of Five Ways Health Centre after the Care Quality Commission (CQC) placed the centre into 'special measures'. The health centre was in an area ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in the country.
- The area includes people on low incomes, the elderly, people living in poverty, and those with caring responsibilities; 59% of the practice population are from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups.
- Healthwatch Birmingham recommended the CCG assess the impact of such proposed service changes on vulnerable patients. As a result, the CCG committed to implement impact assessments for future consultations and engagement for primary care services. These will help ensure that the needs of vulnerable patients are more fully understood, and negative effects of service change minimised, in the future design and delivery of primary care services in West Birmingham.





# How we've made a difference

## Hospital Waiting rooms improved for patients with sensory disabilities

Our report [“What is it like being in a hospital waiting room?”](#) examined the experiences of people in waiting rooms in eight NHS hospitals. We heard the views of patients and conducted focus groups to hear from people with sensory impairments.

Our [follow-up impact report](#) shows that our recommendations led to many improvements for patients and carers.

- City Hospital has introduced patient held call systems allowing people to leave waiting areas without the anxiety of missing their appointment.
- Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre staff now guide visually impaired patients to their appointments.
- Birmingham Dental Hospital now makes announcements in clinics to ensure patients with hearing impairments or sight loss know when it is their turn.
- At the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital details of clinics that regularly over-run are shared with operational managers to identify causes and increase efficiency.
- At University Hospitals Birmingham a patient, who is an architect by profession with expertise in signage, is assisting work to help patients find the correct waiting room.
- Birmingham Children's Hospital and Birmingham Women's Hospital reception staff now have bold, visible sensory awareness badges stating 'I am here to help with sensory awareness'.



# Long Term Plan

## Giving people a say in the NHS Long Term Plan

Following a commitment from the Government to increase investment, the NHS published the 'Long Term Plan' in January 2019, setting out its key ambitions over the next 10 years. Local Healthwatch across the country were asked to find out what people want from health and support services for the next decade. Working with Healthwatch Solihull, more than 690 people shared their views with us.

The public's priorities included:

- access to the help and treatment I need when I want it (44%)
- jointly choosing the right treatment with the relevant health and care professional (38%)
- being able to stay in my own home for as long as it is safe to do so (48%)

Our recommendations to the NHS:

- clearly lay out how the health and social care system will improve communication pathways with patients.
- address individual and community skill gaps for self-care.
- eliminate local gaps in meeting the Accessible Information Standard.
- reflect on the availability of services to support individuals, with improvements made to referral pathways, waiting lists/times and the distribution of services.
- implement actions, where waiting times are unavoidable, to support individuals to self-care.
- detail how assets within communities will be supported and developed, identifying and addressing any gaps across Birmingham and Solihull.
- address how local NHS services will work across all partners to reduce the stigma of mental health, disability and other conditions, support individuals and build self-efficacy for self-care.

By addressing these in the development of the plan, the NHS will better enable local communities to look after their own health.



690 people shared their views with us



Healthwatch Birmingham was 'Highly Commended' at the national Healthwatch conference for our NHS Long Term Plan report.

This gave recognition to our impact in ensuring people's views were heard and considered by the NHS. The report can be found on our website.

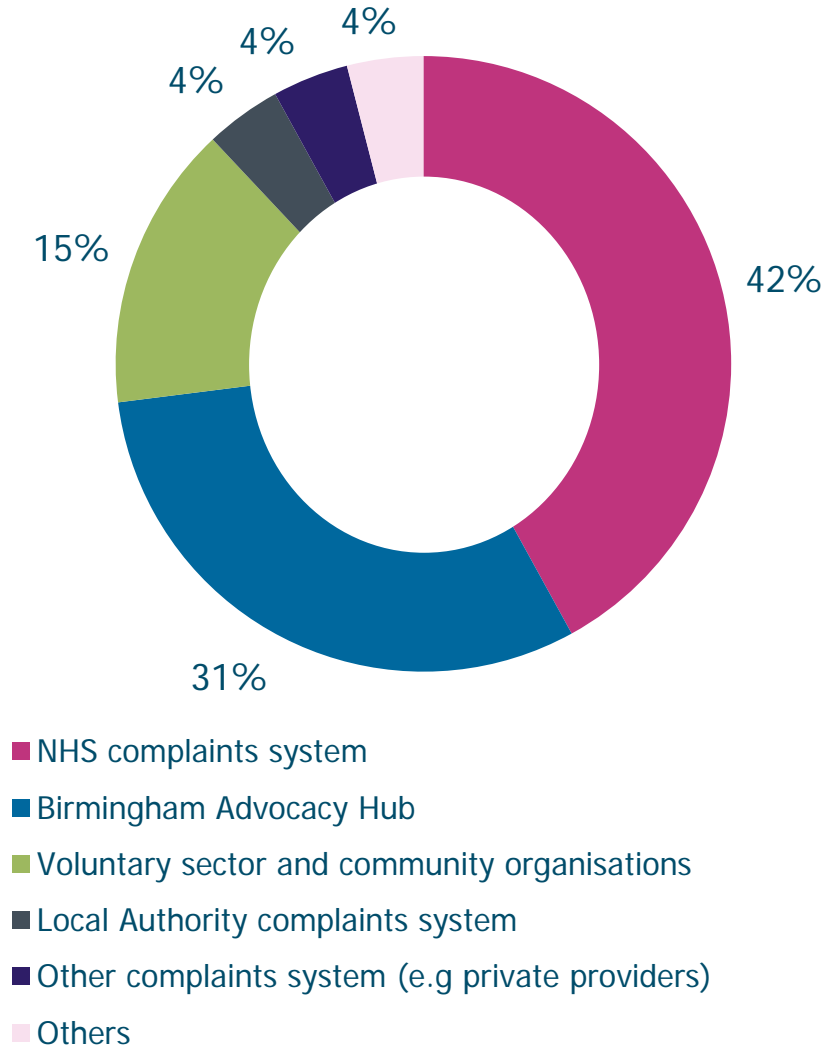


# Helping you find the answers

## Our information and signposting service

This year we helped 474 people get the advice and information they need by:

- providing advice and information articles on our website.
- answering people's queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- talking to people at community events.
- promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.



# Helping you find the answers

## Case Study: Support with a complaint about a GP and complex personal issues

Mrs C contacted us about her father. We listened to her and signposted her to organisations that could support Mrs C and her father at a difficult time in their lives.

Mrs C's father needed home visits from a GP. Over Christmas, her father required an ambulance visit, which the GP refused to attend. Mrs C complained to the surgery and received an apology. However, she was then contacted by the Practice Manager who removed Mrs C and her father from their list of patients. Mrs C did not want to move GPs and wished to make a complaint.

We signposted her to the regulator responsible for the GP surgery and referred her to an advocate to help her navigate the NHS complaints system.

During the call Mrs C shared with us that she is a full time carer and suffers PTSD following a serious sexual assault. We therefore also gave her details for The Rape and Sexual Violence Project which deals in counselling survivors of sexual abuse.

Mrs C told us that Healthwatch Birmingham was the first service to listen to her and make her feel that she wasn't in the wrong.



# Our Volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers.



## Christine Spooner

I really enjoyed working on the PALS project and being part of something that has made a difference to services in Birmingham. I also helped with the Long Term Plan, introducing Healthwatch staff to another organisation I volunteer for, CASBA, that provides advocacy support for vulnerable people. It was a privilege to help people with learning disabilities have their say to improve services.



## Mustak Mirza

It was great being involved with the PALS project, I felt valued and part of something that made a real difference. I also helped Healthwatch Birmingham staff at an engagement event at Birmingham Central Mosque, I helped break down language barriers enabling us to get more feedback to improve services and raise awareness of Healthwatch.



## Tim Phillips

I helped with the design of the PALS project. I also helped Healthwatch Birmingham staff to build links with the Disability Resource Centre, who I'm a trustee with. This enabled Healthwatch Birmingham to reach some of the service users that use the DRC, and get more feedback for the survey.

I am also the Volunteer representative on the Healthwatch Birmingham Board making sure the voice of volunteers is heard at governance level.





# What next?

## Our focus and work for 2020-2021

In the next year Healthwatch Birmingham will:

1. Highlight inequality and drive improvement by engaging more and more with communities that were disproportionately impacted by Covid-19.
2. Grow our partnerships with organisations in the VCSE sector that supported vulnerable populations during the Covid-19 outbreak.
3. Support health and social care in the restoration and recovery of services, while holding providers and commissioners to account for implementing positive changes for the public who we proudly serve.

- Provided information and signposting support during lockdown
- Covid-19 report – Experiences of citizens during lockdown
- Investigation – What challenges do people with sight loss experience accessing vision rehabilitation services?
- Inequalities investigation
- African-Caribbean Workshop with SWBCCG
- Development of virtual and innovative engagement activity
- Increased links with Voluntary and community sector
- Increased engagement through our Community Partnership
- Digital Access – National Research
- Responding to local and national consultations
- Supporting and challenging the levels of involvement as part of restoration and recovery



# Thank you for listening Any Questions?

Our full Annual Report 2019 – 2020 can be found at  
<https://healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Healthwatch-Birmingham-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf>

