

Healthwatch brand messaging

July 2021

Introduction

The following document is a printable version of our one-page brand messaging guidance.

Our brand is more than a logo. The way we speak and write shows people what we stand for and why the Healthwatch service is relevant to them. To strengthen our brand, we commissioned a brand agency to review and create clear guidance. Over 100 staff and volunteers helped shape our new brand messaging, and the public and stakeholders also tested it.

What are our core beliefs?

Belief one

We believe that health and social care providers can best improve services by listening to people's experiences.

Belief two

We believe that everyone in society needs to be included in the conversation. Especially those whose voices aren't being listened to.

Belief three

We believe that comparing lots of different experiences helps us to identify patterns and learn what is and isn't working.

Belief four

We believe that feedback has to lead to change. Listening for listening's sake is not enough.

Belief five

We believe that we must always remain independent and impartial while working with partners to get things done.

What are our values?

Listening

We recognise the value of listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.

Including

We value inclusivity. Listening to the first-hand experiences of diverse groups improves care for everyone.

Analysing

We value the insight that's gained from analysing many different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.

Acting

We act on feedback and drive change. Listening has to positively affect outcomes and influence important decisions about people's care.

Partnering

We value strong partnerships with care providers and Government - serving as the public's independent advocate.

Strapline

“Your health and social care champion”

Who are we?

Short proposition

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

Long proposition

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services, we want to hear about your experiences. We have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and improve standards of care. We also help people to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice. Last year, we helped nearly a million people like you to have your say and get the support you need.

What's our brand personality?

The Healthwatch model is incredibly simple: We give people the opportunity to share their experiences of using health and social care services in England, and make sure that this valuable feedback reaches the powers that be and leads to positive change. We also help people to get the information and advice they need.

Exactly how we do that - and the complexity involved in running our organisation - is irrelevant to members of the public and doesn't need to factor in our communications. Internally, we're rightfully proud that we're running a 'high quality service', but to the outside world, that should be a given.

We need to keep things simple and employ a 'back to basics' approach. That means using fewer words, simplifying our messages and making a direct appeal to patients and service users. We personalise our comms by always talking to the reader, so one of our old statements like, 'We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services' becomes

'Your health and social care champion'. It uses half the words and suddenly you're talking to me.

We've been using the word 'champion' for a long time, because that's exactly what we are. But the problem is, we haven't sounded like a champion. And that needs to change.

Champions are strong, they're brave and they're effective. And these are our brand attributes. Strong because people (especially those who are vulnerable or marginalised) need an advocate. Brave because working within the system to hold decision makers to account is never easy. And effective because it's vital that people get the information and advice they need to make informed decisions and that their valuable feedback is taken on board - there's nothing to be gained from listening if nothing ever changes.

And that's why it's so important that the Healthwatch brand is synonymous with impact. Yes, we're rightly proud of how many people we reach each year, but moving forwards we need to be altogether more focused on what happens next. Whether that's changing a local GP surgery, or wholesale systems change at a national level, we are the people that inform and drive positive change.

Remember, cynicism and apathy are our enemy. So be exact and be concrete. Tell me that there are over 150 local Healthwatch, or that you helped to support nearly a million people last year. And, in time, try to find out how many beds have been added to wards, how much waiting times have been reduced, how systems and processes have changed as a direct result of patient and service user feedback. Or how your advice helped someone get the support they desperately needed. This data won't be easy to find but find it we must - so that we can demonstrate action. It's fine to caveat our data or frame the context of our claims. What matters is that people understand we're obsessed by impact. And to ensure everyone understands that they can trust us to get the job done, and that we do have the sway to drive change.

Healthwatch is a people's brand. When writing, always try to write as you'd speak. Be conversational, keep it light and don't try to be formal. We're not writing to a policymaker; we're dealing with everyday people.

Consider our tone of voice and brand personality: We're evidence-based, trustworthy, on your side, supportive and insightful. And we're also: caring, expert, curious, fair, personable and courageous. That's a long list and clearly every paragraph doesn't need to capture all of these attributes. But ask yourself from time to time how long it's been since you've been 'insightful' for example and decide if you need to write an article or social media post.

Or whether the information and advice you've provided is trustworthy, supportive and personable? And are you championing the cause of local people?

Our brand has always been good at the detail and capturing the head, but we need to do a lot more to uncover the emotional drivers behind what we do and tell stories that capture the heart.

While we're determined to increase awareness and reach when it comes to the Healthwatch brand, in our messaging it's sometimes right for our own voice to take a back seat and to allow the voice of service users and decision makers to shout louder. Think of us as the Question Time presenter. We have to hold the stage, broker the peace and facilitate an engaging and lively conversation - but the public aren't interested in us, they simply want to air their concerns and have a right of reply.

A good example of this is our campaign messaging. Instead of telling people how great we are, we instead adopt the public's voice and use the kind of phrases we hear all the time. Like: 'What's the point? Nothing ever changes' and 'I wish I could say thank you'. Beneath each of these eye-catching and provocative statements we can then expand on why it's so important

that people share their feedback or seek information and advice. Ultimately, we're looking for people to think, 'that's exactly how I feel'.

Finally, in the spirit of simplification and expediency, it's best not to get too obsessed by explaining the Healthwatch network. People don't need to know about our hub and spoke model, or that Healthwatch England supports their local Healthwatch. All they need to know is that Healthwatch exists to support them and that they can find us in every community.

So Healthwatch continues its mission to help people to get advice, share their experiences, and drive further improvements in care. We go forward a little nimbler, a little more accessible, and with an unwavering focus on getting (and communicating) results. But overall, we'll continue to get the job done. Because we know that the work we're doing is improving people's lives.

So as and when people need advice, or they're ready to tell us their story, whether good or bad, happy or sad - we'll always be here to listen and to drive positive change.

What's our campaign messaging?

The following messages address some of the public's key concerns and why and how Healthwatch can help:

What's the point? Nothing ever changes

After a negative experience, it's easy to think like that. But if nobody hears about what you've been through - nothing can change.

They saved my life. I wish I could say thank you

You can. Your local Healthwatch doesn't just want to hear about negative experiences. It's also really important to see what great practice looks like.

I feel lost. I don't know where to turn

Speak to your local Healthwatch. They'll be able to offer information and advice to help you get the support you need.

The staff are amazing. But they're not getting the support they need

Feedback doesn't have to be black or white. There can be many things about the service you received that you really valued while still being room for improvement.

Worst experience of my life!

Then please tell us about it, so that we can get you the help you need and make sure that decision makers learn how to improve.

You can't imagine what we've been through

Then tell us. And let us tell them. Your local Healthwatch is ready to listen to your experiences and be your champion for positive change.

I just hope this never happens to anyone else

Hopefully it doesn't have to. But only if you speak up, share your experiences and let us make decision makers aware of what needs to change.

I don't understand a word of it. It might as well be in gibberish!

There's a lot of jargon in the world of health and social care. We provide support and information to help you understand your options and get the help you need.

It's alright... I've googled it

Doctor Google has a lot to answer for. Healthwatch can help you to find reliable and trustworthy information that you can trust. We can signpost you to relevant services and help you to get the support you need.

Local Healthwatch audiences

We've outlined four key audiences that you may come across in your work. The tables below highlight information about key drivers, calls to action to use for each group, and the messages that will make them care.

1. The public

What's in it for me?
To be heard / for you to listen to people like me
To access help and support
To say thank you
To vent my frustration / anger / disappointment
To stop anyone else having to suffer
To overcome culture barriers
To know negative comments won't affect my care
For you to understand the complexities of my situation (e.g. housing, mental health)
To be signposted in the right direction and to end confusion and uncertainty
What do you want me to do?
1. Share stories and experiences with us (by online survey, telephone or email)
2. Access information, support and guidance (via the website or telephone)
3. Recommend us to friends and family or even get involved and volunteer at your local Healthwatch
What kind of messages will make me care?
We want to hear from YOU
Your voice will make a difference
Your experiences can help to improve care
It's quick and easy to share your experiences
Here's what we've already achieved... (stories, stats, case studies)

We can offer a lot of support and can signpost you to relevant information

If someone you know needs help, tell them about us

Our local Healthwatch know your communities and local needs

2. Health and social care professionals

What's in it for me?

To make a real difference to people's lives

To get to people we can't reach and hear from a wider selection of the public

To access information that can improve treatment, save money or make life easier

To use your insights to quickly find solutions to our challenges

To feel good about positive change

What do you want me to do?

1. Open doors for us - direct people to us and to our support and information
2. Before changing anything, come and talk to us
3. Work with us to tackle the issues raised and tell us how things changed as a result

What kind of messages will make me care?

We need your help

Our network can enable you to hear the voice of the public - to involve and consult with them

We can save you time / money by conducting research and testing on your behalf

We can help you gain the trust of your communities / reach your communities

We can get people in a room that you might not be able to

We can inform change, but only you can make it happen

We can help you to continuously improve

4. Local Stakeholders

What's in it for me?

To know what local people want and need - so we can plan accordingly

To help me spend well, prevent waste and gauge my performance relative to others

To access decision making structures and a network with a large reach

Evidence (for local Government to know about issues they need to worry about before it hits the press - and vice versa for the press).

What do you want me to do?

1. Partner with us, listen to us and consider our advice - we can achieve more together

2. Bring us in early, before key decisions have been made (for local Government etc.)

3. Invest in us / support us financially - our work delivers value (and costs money)

What kind of messages will make me care?

We've got a reach into your local community as well as every area across England

We can quickly help you to understand the key issues you need to be thinking about

We're all working toward the same goal - improving health and social care for everyone

Support us - our work doesn't come for free (for Local Gov)

Commission us (Local Authorities and charity partners)

Be open about your operational challenges

We value your expertise - we rely on you to fill the gaps in our knowledge

4. Partners and national stakeholders

What's in it for me?

To work with an organisation that's capable of understanding (and amplifying) issues that are important to our audiences

A strong ally

An independent partner with no axe to grind

A willing partner with insight into local needs

Evidence (for Government to know about issues they need to worry about BEFORE it hits the press - and vice versa for the press)

Information and insight - to help me spend well, prevent waste and stop me making mistakes

What do you want me to do?

1. Partner with us and take on board our feedback - we can achieve more together
2. Bring us in early, before key decisions have been made (for Government etc.)
3. Help us to encourage more people to come forward and share their experiences

What kind of messages will make me care?

We've got connections in every community

We can quickly help you to understand the key issues you need to be thinking about

We're all working toward the same goal: improving health and social care for everyone

For press:

- We can give you access to stories / stats about people's real experiences of health and social care
- We can give you a more nuanced sense of the reality people are experiencing - not just the voices of outrage
- We can be a one stop source of expertise and can speak on behalf of partners / charities etc.