

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW ANALYSIS REVEALS SOCIAL MEDIA GAP BETWEEN NATIONAL AND LOCAL NHS AND LOCAL HEALTHWATCH

A striking gap between those following key official national and local NHS Twitter accounts and those of local Healthwatch organisations is revealed today in new analysis from J B McCrea Ltd.

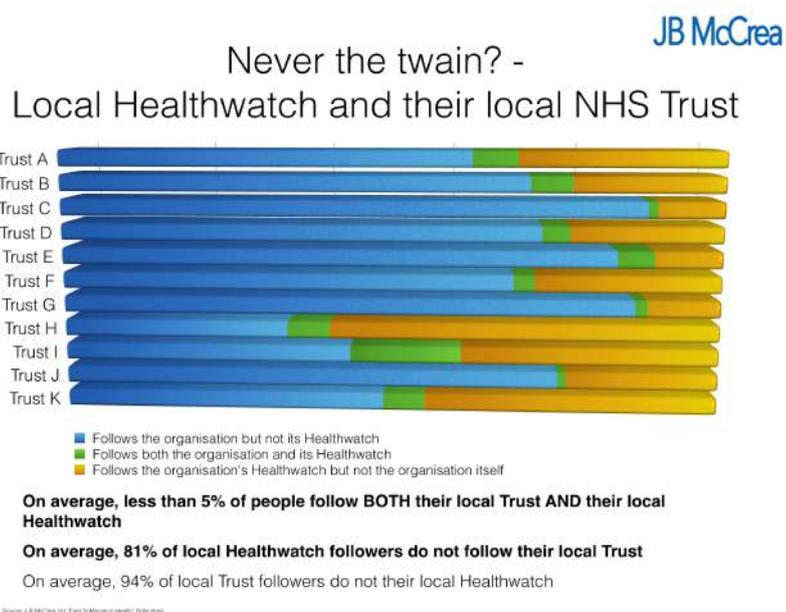
The analysis was presented at an event on March 19th for over 70 NHS Heads of Communication organised by the NHS Confederation.

The analysis was produced using a unique NHS social media data mining tool - "Find SoMeone in Health" - developed by J B McCrea Ltd and containing the details of over 500,000 Twitter accounts with the highest interest in the NHS and UK healthcare, including **every** Twitter follower of

- @nhsengland
- @dhgovuk
- @nhscitizen
- @CareQualityCommission
- @healthwatche (national Healthwatch)
- all local Healthwatch Twitter accounts
- sample of local NHS Trust main Twitter accounts

The analysis reveals

- 60,000 people follow at least one local Healthwatch Twitter account - of these, 40,000 (75%) DO NOT follow ANY of @NHS England, @dhgovuk, @CareQualityCommission, @HealthwatchE OR @NHSCitizen
- On average, less than 5% of people follow BOTH their local NHS Trust AND their local Healthwatch Twitter account
- On average, 81% of local Healthwatch Twitter followers do not follow their local Trust
- On average, 94% of local Trust Twitter followers do not their local Healthwatch

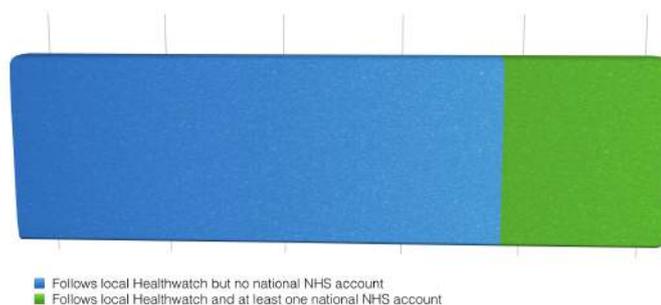


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Speaking at the event, Managing Director Joe McCrea said:

JB McCrea

Never the twain? - Local Healthwatch and national NHS accounts



60,000 people follow a local Healthwatch Twitter account

75% of people who follow a local Healthwatch Twitter account DO NOT follow ANY of:

@NHS England, @dhgovuk, @CareQualityCommission, @HealthwatchE OR @NHSCitizen

Source: JB McCrea Ltd 'The 500,000 in Health' Database

“Our research is based on social media data never before available to the NHS. It suggests that there is currently a clear disconnect between those choosing to follow their local Healthwatch on social media and those choosing to follow key national NHS Twitter accounts or their local NHS Trust.

“This does not have to be seen too negatively. It could be simply that local Healthwatch has been particularly good at attracting local people to follow them. Or it could be that local people value conversations about their local health services over and above national policy discussion and debate. Whatever the reason, it suggests that thousands of people get information and comment about the NHS direct from their local Healthwatch rather than through other NHS bodies, either nationally or direct from local Trusts.

“Closing this disconnect will be vital for the NHS in the coming period as it embarks on a massive programme of significant local health and care service changes and tries to change behaviour and attitudes in accessing and using local NHS and care services. There is also clearly a great opportunity for local NHS Trusts and their local Healthwatch to be working even more closely together to share messages, comments, insights and followers.”

Chief Executive of Healthwatch England, Katherine Rake, said:

“These findings highlight precisely why the Healthwatch network was set up, to reach out to new audiences and engage them in decision making about their local health and social care services.

“It’s really positive to see so many thousands of people following what their Healthwatch is up to and using social media to share their views and experiences of local hospitals and GPs. The key now is to ensure we join-up with local services on platforms like Twitter to ensure people’s online conversations can be used to influence real change.

“There is great opportunity for social media to make a positive difference to the way providers work with patients, all the system needs to do is listen.”

Chief Executive Officer of the NHS Confederation, Rob Webster, said:

“The conversations we have on social media are a significant part of modern life. Social media is a potentially powerful tool for engaging populations. This will be essential as we work to improve healthcare and transform services in the future. This analysis challenges us to make sure we use all the routes available to make sure we engage people who use our services and let them have a say in the future of care”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The data underpinning the analysis was produced using a unique NHS Social Media data tool developed by J B McCrea Ltd - Find SoMeone in Health. This was first used in December 2014 to produce the first ever comprehensive analysis of social media use in the NHS - contained in the groundbreaking report "On the Brink of SoMething Special"? A FREE copy of this full Report can be downloaded from: <http://jbmccrea.com/download-report/>

This contains full details of all social media accounts used by every NHS Trust and national organisation. This revealed:

- 4 out of 5 (79.6%) of NHS organisations now use at least one social media channel for corporate communication and engagement
- Almost 1 in 3 (27.9%) use only Twitter
- 1 in 5 (20.9%) use a combination of Twitter, Youtube and Facebook
- NHS corporate use is almost entirely dominated by Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn. Just under 7 per cent of NHS Organisations were found using Social Media channels outside this 'Big Four' - mainly Pinterest, Vimeo or Flickr
- Social Media Capability Analyses completed by over 400 individuals working at all levels over more than 30 NHS organisations, including national leadership organisations and agencies, Acute Trusts and Community Trusts shows that overall that NHS is at a state of Low Maturity in its use of Social Media.

The further work to add details of every Twitter follower of every local Healthwatch account was completed by J B McCrea Ltd during January to March 2015.

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