



# Together

**we're making health  
and care better**

**Annual Report 2022–23**

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**"In the last ten years, the health and care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and care leaders use your feedback to make care better."**

**Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director**

# Message from our Chair

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2023 Annual Report for Healthwatch Middlesbrough. As Chair it is always a pleasure to reflect on what we have achieved in the past year and the impact Healthwatch continues to make on the communities we serve.

I am particularly proud of our success in listening to the voices of communities that too often experience barriers to engagement. We achieve this in many ways. For example, our Community Champions, an initiative started during lockdown, have worked with a team of translators to ensure that Healthwatch information is available to speakers of more than 40 languages, recognising the direct

impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis for the health and wellbeing of our communities and their ability to access services, our Champions have worked across South Tees, listening, and responding to the different challenges faced by those living in urban and rural communities.

Listening to communities is vital if we are to play our part in delivering the Healthwatch England vision of a world where we can get the health and care we need. How we communicate what we hear to decision makers is key. Healthwatch Middlesbrough achieves this by working in partnership with our local stakeholders in innovative ways. For example, South Tees Foundation Trust asked us to help involve users in the production of their Patient Involvement Strategy. We used our relationships with communities to deliver a series of workshops that allowed people to talk about how they might most effectively be involved in shaping the services provided by South Tees. This approach ensures that the Patient Involvement Strategy reflects the voices of local people, and, most importantly, their needs and those of their families and friends.

What follows provides a rich insight into the work of Healthwatch Middlesbrough and how it continues to make a real difference to the lives of communities. Good health and care are vital for the wellbeing of all of us, and I am proud of the role that Healthwatch Middlesbrough continues to play in ensuring that we all have a chance to shape the services we use every day.



**Paul Crawshaw, Chair  
Healthwatch Middlesbrough**

**“Now in its tenth year, Healthwatch continues to deliver for the communities of Middlesbrough, providing real opportunities for involvement and participation and ultimately shaping better health and care services for everyone”.**



# About us

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## Healthwatch Middlesbrough is your local health and care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



### Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



### Our values are:

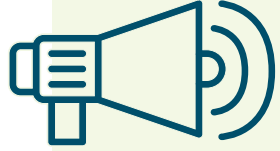
- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Year in review

## Reaching out across South Tees

**4,704 people**

shared their experiences of health and care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.



**198 people**

came to us for clear information and signposting about topics such as GP access, dentistry and mental health.

**1,242,171 people**

were informed about the role of Healthwatch via meetings, events, radio, publicity, leaflets, social media and bulletins.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**3 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and care services.

Our most popular report was

**Middlesbrough Specialist Drug & Alcohol Services Review**

which involved consulting with local people to inform future commissioning of this service..



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**51**

outstanding volunteers and Champions who gave up **255 hours** to make care better for our community across South Tees.

We're funded by Middlesbrough local authority. In 2022-23 we received

**£92,500**




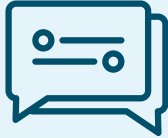




which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

**2 x Full Time Equivalent staff**

who help us carry out our work in Middlesbrough.

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We supported the #YourCareYourWay campaign which called for improved accountability and implementation of the Accessible Information Standards.</p>	 <p>We reviewed the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment strategy and identified a gaps in feedback from those with lived experience of barriers to healthcare.</p>
Summer	 <p>Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments and Accessible Information Standards will now be included in the IPSOS NHS toolkit for Communication Leads following our input into the consultation process.</p>	 <p>A Youthwatch Tees Valley group is in its initial stages of development delivered by Youth Focus North East to ensure young people's voice influences local health and care services</p>
Autumn	 <p>We supported the ICB with their engagement for a new model of Integrated Urgent Care and gave feedback for the development of the ICP Priorities Survey.</p>	 <p>We urged the Government to act after reporting as a network, a 452% increase in people struggling to see an NHS dentist.</p>
Winter	 <p>Delivering joint Making Every Contact Count sessions with Creative Minds, increasing the number and diversity of Middlesbrough Health Champions, targeting health inequalities.</p>	 <p>The impact of the cost-of-living crisis in different South Tees communities was highlighted through a Community Champion Vlog with, who supports rural communities.</p>



# 10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and care. Here are a few of our highlights:

## How have we made care better, together?

### Community Mental Health Transformation

Through our engagement with local communities, we provided a solid foundation and clear direction in the creation of a new vision for mental health services.



### South Tees Neurodevelopment Pathway:

Our consultation influenced the commission of new support services for both children and their families.



### Experiences of living with dementia

Influenced the development of a dementia friendly community, increased awareness and improved information and signposting for those living with dementia and their carers.



### Dentistry myth buster:

Helping to improve patient, public and local politicians understanding around the most common myths and misunderstandings relating to NHS dentistry.



### Community Champions Network:

Developed in lockdown to enable us to continue to gather experiences of seldom heard communities. The network has continued to grow and is a vital link in improving health and care across South Tees.



## Healthwatch Hero



### **Dean Johansen-Berg, Community Development & Engagement Officer, Community Ventures**

Dean is a real 'Healthwatch Hero', as well as being a Community Champion where he regularly shares valuable community intelligence, he also recently shared his own family's experience of dementia care at James Cook University Hospital. This has led Healthwatch to raise awareness of Forget Me Not cards to both staff and families within the Trust to improve the quality of care of those living with dementia.

Dean also regularly opens his door to Healthwatch giving us access to the local community and supports Healthwatch campaigns and events.



*'Thanks for this, I really appreciate it and will continue to support Healthwatch for as long as you need me' - Dean Johansen-Berg*





# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

# Co-production – Patient Involvement Strategy

**South Tees NHS Foundation Trust requested our support with the coproduction of their Patient Involvement Strategy.** In partnership, we delivered three workshops to 35 local people, patients and communities to identify their involvement in the service they receive from the Trust. A strategy tree was developed to use as a tool to remove jargon and ensure free flowing conversations.

The strategy tree grew during each workshop and feedback suggested that this was a simple and easy pictorial approach which participants could follow, contribute to and thoroughly enjoyed.

The areas we covered were; Where you receive care; How you receive care; Experience of your care; How others receive care and the methods used.

The strategy has now been signed off by the Trust and the 'Tree' will be used in all communications for both staff and patients around the hospitals.

Areas highlighted by attendees as the framework for the strategy were:

1. Culture
2. Skills
3. Structure
4. Impact & Evaluation
5. Practice



## What difference will this make?

The strategy reflects local people's needs and diversity which will have to be embedded by the organisation, it's staff and the way services are delivered. This will require a culture change for everyone to take responsibility for this approach relevant to their role. Patients and visitors will also become aware of what to expect and hold those accountable, therefore improving experiences.

## Next Steps

Awareness of the strategy will be supported by the workshop attendees, and they will inform the content of leaflets for patients and staff of the strategy and involved in the promotion of these throughout the Trust.

There is also a planned follow up workshop to share the impact of this new approach has had on patients and their families.

We still start to see the full impact this strategy has had over the next 12 months and will report 2024-2025.



*"I have really enjoyed today.... The sessions are invaluable, anything that can help patient experience has got to be good for the NHS and South Tees itself."*

**Terry Bytheway, patient, workshop attendee**

# Informing future commissioning of health services

**With the support of local partners, we engaged directly with 98 people who received drug and alcohol services in Middlesbrough.**

Most lived in rented or supported living and a third told us where they lived made it more likely to use drugs and/or alcohol.

People identified a range of life challenges they were struggling with which impacted on their recovery journey; yet 40% said they were not aware of who was co-ordinating their care which prevented them reaching out when they needed help.

Over half of all respondents felt services could work better together.

## Summary of Findings

As a result of our findings, we recommended:

- A single point of contact will provide individuals with the best chance of staying focussed and ensure coordinated care and support is available when it is needed.
- Robust connections and pathways are made between organisations offering a range of support services, providing timely and effective signposting in respect of other life challenges that impact on recovery.
- Improved pathways and support into dual diagnosis with clear information on criteria thresholds and how these services can be accessed.
- A 24-hour helpline or outreach support to connect people into the relevant service for support whether under the influence or not.

## What difference will this make?

Future prescribing model. In brief:

- Enhanced co-ordination of service offer.
- Grant spending focussed on those in treatment with issues around safe and secure accommodation.
- Effective measures so all service users view the substance misuse provision as a single system that works together to meet individual needs.
- Two other delivery sites already in place to localise service delivery.
- Plans to build a multi-agency offer in delivery locations to better support service user needs.
- Grant funded activity has been repurposed to increase capacity to offer home visits for ease of access.
- Considerations around enhancing recovery culture within the whole system, and how the single data system is used to improve continuity of care.



*"...it was a pleasure to host and meet your staff at Foundations last week. They really are a credit to Healthwatch, seeming to gain our patients' trust and confidence quickly."*

Service Provider Manager



# STAR Awards 2023 – celebrating good practice



**In April we held our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual STAR Awards Ceremony, after a successful nomination process where we received 50 outstanding nominations – our highest number to date!**

Our six award categories gave the opportunity for us to receive a diverse range of nominations from across the health and care sector which highlighted excellent quality of care, many innovative ways of working, gaps in support identified and filled, as well as some fantastic examples of collaborative approaches.

Our awards were presented by key leaders from health and care to an audience of nearly 200 attendees.



It was a fantastic morning of celebration of the work people do, and showcased how well-respected our local Healthwatch is among partners, stakeholders and commissioners.

*The STAR Awards will continue to be part of our annual workplan contributing to:*

- *Sharing good practice*
- *Raising awareness of Healthwatch*
- *Strengthening our relationship with stakeholders and partners*
- *Increasing our Community Champions network*
- *Promoting our volunteer opportunities*



Scan this code to see all the nominations from the 2023 STAR Awards



- ❖ A very overwhelming inspiring experience, Extremely well run event, thank you
- ❖ It was a great morning, inspiring to see all the good work people do for our community
- ❖ Good to see some very deserving services getting the recognition they need for getting us through some challenging times



# Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

## Non-complex Adult Hearing Services Review

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.



We supported the ICB review of non-complex, age-related adult hearing services across Tees Valley by promoting opportunities for patients to give their thoughts on these services and provide feedback for consideration for the future model of this service.

The findings from survey participants and Healthwatch led focus groups across South Tees were used to inform changes required to the service specification for this contract in the following areas: Improved access to the service, promotion of home visit appointments, adherence to accessible information standards and appropriate aftercare provision.

## Prospect Surgery- Middlesbrough

**More people contacted us with concerns about GP's than any other health or care service!**



When Prospect Surgery told us they'd moved from 'inadequate' to 'good' in a matter of months, we wanted everyone to hear how they had achieved this. Raising awareness of what they did to improve helped us develop trusted relationships with them and other GP's, as well as provide opportunities for sharing and learning.

**Jayne Henderson, Practice Manager said:**

*"We worked extremely hard and are proud of our achievements. We are not stopping here though... We are ambitious about continued improvement. We contacted Healthwatch because we believe by working in collaboration with our patients and partners, we can provide an even better service."*

## Waiting Well Initiative

**Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.**

We were asked by our local NHS to hold focus groups to inform the ICB 'Waiting Well' Initiative. We held two focus groups attended by over 20 members of the public to ask their opinions and suggestions to consider in order to influence future developments of this offer.





# Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Extending the diversity of our community champions to include seldom heard groups such as male survivors of domestic violence.
- Through our Community Champion, we have shared important messages on health and care, to a network of translators speaking over 40 different languages.
- Listening to rural communities about the impact of the Cost-Of-Living crisis on their health and wellbeing.

## Menopause – Working across Communities

At the request of our community partners, we attended venues where a large percentage of the population experience health inequalities and engaged with women from different ethnic backgrounds, providing information about Healthwatch and the menopause. This has informed an event that we will hold on World Menopause Day across South Tees with professionals and the public to share good practice and raise awareness of this issue.



Shazia, Manager of Nur Fitness says she was really pleased with the delivery of the menopause awareness session given by us. "It was a very informative, informal chat and information was given to the ladies to share too. They were also sensitive to our ladies' cultural needs which helped break down barriers".

Rama, Creative Minds said "The discussion gave us the opportunity to have a better understanding of menopause and we were also able to discuss and ask questions which many of us won't normally do outside the group. We appreciated you coming and delivering the session. "



## Improving Support for Carers

Our active membership of the South Tees Carers Forum enabled us to represent a strong voice for carers, influencing our own direction and that of the wider partnership. Working closely with the partnerships newly commissioned role of Primary Care Link Worker helped kick start the 'Carer Friendly Practice Offer', with our introduction to GP's. The offer inspired local GP commitment to carers and included adopting NHS Quality Markers, recruitment of carer ambassadors and a GP Carers Registration Form.

We also found the right contact within ICB and forged connections with the Carers Forum and Primary Care Link Worker, to update systems that capture carers data in primary care.

Now, significant progress has been made and a target has been set to have updated systems in use across 80% of local surgeries by March 2024. The impact of improved data will support a better understanding of carers journeys and shape future developments.



"Thank you for the initial introduction, it helped enormously to build trust quickly with the staff." Primary Care Link Worker (Carer Support)





# Information and Signposting

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

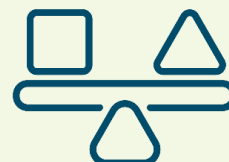
- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis
- Regularly sharing intelligence with local providers and *commissioners* to inform of local trends and issues.



## Making the complaints process accessible

Through our information and signposting service, we heard from a patient who was having difficulties sharing feedback with their GP surgery. The surgery had asked the patient to put this in writing as detailed in their 'Complaints Procedure'. This wasn't possible for the patient as they have limited use of their hands, have no family nearby and their paid for PA attends to their medical needs only.

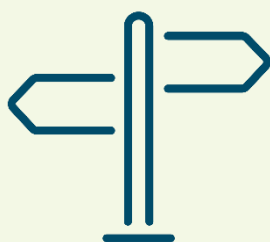
Despite telephoning to try to discuss with the Practice Manager the patient had no response and requested some support including accessibility for complaints.



We made a referral to the Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) Service to support the patient but also contacted the Integrated Care Board to raise awareness of this issue. The ICB had discussions with the Practice Manager resulting in additional education of frontline staff and the complaints procedure being amended to be more accessible for all.

## Kickstarting access to the diabetes prevention Programme.

**We received a query from a patient who was alarmed to discover he was at risk of becoming Type 2 Diabetic and had been signposted by his GP to the 'Healthier You' NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme**



Due to a recent change of provider locally, the details the patient had received were out of date and he was unable to find more recent information.

We contacted the new provider who shared with us information regarding the Prevention Programme and how to access it locally.

We passed on this information which put his mind at rest giving him access to a variety of options for healthy life choices.

We produced an article for our E bulletin and promoted the new service across our networks and socials during World Diabetes Prevention week, so that many more people could reduce their risk of Type 2 Diabetes.



# Volunteering

**We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers, which has continued to grow and are who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.**

## **This year our volunteers:**

- Raised awareness of local Healthwatch with their communities and our service offer.
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views through focus groups, events, and open discussion.
- Supported community engagement at local GP services to help them improve the patient experience.
- Reviewed our documentation for accuracy and accessibility.
- Collected the most up-to-date information on changes to services, such as the future of care, older adults hearing services and health inequalities.

## Jane

As a Social Prescriber it is imperative for me to be able to source the up to date, relevant information to not only deal with health issues, but also for patients to be able to access the relevant help and support they need. If I wasn't a Community Champion it would have been extremely difficult to source information, resulting in negative implications for those I support.



## Victoria

"I volunteer with my local Healthwatch because I believe in the power of advocacy and the importance of ensuring that every individual in our community has access to quality healthcare and support. Together, we can make a difference and create a healthier future for all. Volunteering is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the health and well-being of our community, giving a voice to those who need it most."



## Kerri

As a professional, it is great to have somewhere to go when you can see some things aren't working well and the impact it has on the people I work with. People who have experienced trauma and abuse don't fit in to the constraints and processes that sometimes services have and it's beneficial to be able to have a place where we can highlight this.



### Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

✉ [www.healthwatchrmiddlesbrough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchrmiddlesbrough.co.uk)

☎ 0800 118 1691

✉ [vicky.jackson@pcp.uk.net](mailto:vicky.jackson@pcp.uk.net)

# Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£92,500	Expenditure on pay	£61,588.50
Additional income	£8,116	Non-pay expenditure	£27,545.50
		Office and management fee	£6,981
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£100,616</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£96,115</b>

Additional income is broken down by:

£816 received from Healthwatch Norfolk for Website Migration Funding.

£2,500 received from NHS Tees Valley CCG for PCP Community Engagement Grant.

£300 funding received from IPSOS MORI for consultation work to research health inequalities.

£4,500 from ICB for ICS Funding.

## Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless of whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

## Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Continue to monitor the impact of the STHNHSFT Patient Involvement Strategy
2. Continue to tackle health inequalities further
3. Increase opportunities to receive feedback from young people through the development of Youthwatch.





# Statutory statements

The organisation holding the Healthwatch Middlesbrough contract is Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP).

PCP is a multi-award winning health and wellbeing charity operating across the North East. For further information please visit [www.pcp.uk.net](http://www.pcp.uk.net). Registered charity No. 1067888. Company registered in England No. 3491237. Registered address: Pioneering Care Centre, Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham. DL5 4SF. © Pioneering Care Centre.

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# The way we work

## Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of eight members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met three times and attended additional meetings to judge the STAR Awards nominations, attend events and made a variety of decisions electronically including our priorities for 2023–2024

## Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, text, Whatsapp, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, promote through a social media campaign, upload on our website,. It will also be shared with key strategic partnerships and Boards, stakeholders, Community Champions and volunteers.

## Responses to recommendations

All providers responded to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

## Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us. In our local authority area for example we take information to, South Tees H&WB Exec, Live Well Board, STHNHSFT Council of Governors, NENC and Place ICB committees, ICS. In addition to this, We also take insight and experiences to decision makers on a quarterly basis with local authority adult social, primary & secondary care, CQC, CLMC, TEWV and relevant themed steering groups across South Tees.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Middlesbrough is represented on the South Tees Live Well Board by Healthwatch Middlesbrough, Project Lead. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by raising awareness of our work, highlighting local health and care needs, influencing key strategies and workplan areas, and sharing relevant messages and engagement opportunities.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board (ICB). While we have worked together informally for many years, recent funding from the ICB has enabled the Network to formalise working arrangements through our Operational Protocol, so that it can systematically represent the views of service users, families and carers with partners across the Integrated Care System. Local intelligence is collated across each of the four sub-regional areas and shared at Area ICP meetings. At regional level, the Healthwatch Regional Coordinator represents service-user voice from across the region at the NENC Integrated Care Partnership Strategic meeting, Quality & Safety Committee, Primary Care Strategy & Delivery sub-committee, Healthy & Fairness Advisory Group, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion meetings and System Quality Group meetings. The network of local Healthwatch has also been commissioned to undertake additional research to ensure local opinions are represented in the ICB's work priorities, including focus groups for the Waiting Well, and consultation around the development of the ICB strategy.

Healthwatch Middlesbrough has been represented on the Integrated Care Partnerships in the South ICP area of NENC ICS by Toni McHale and Christopher Aker-Belcher. The Regional ICP is attended by Christopher Akers-Belcher, Healthwatch Regional ICB Coordinator. The Integrated Care Board Participant for the network is David Thompson, Chair of Healthwatch Northumberland.



[www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk)



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## 2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Changes made to services
IPSOS Health Inequalities Research. Identifying people from areas that experience health inequalities to participate.	The findings from this research will help NHSE identify what helps people access and use healthcare services and what could be done to improve this.
Raised awareness of the difficulties of those living with dementia and their carers face in claiming for council tax exemption.	The Local Authority made the form downloadable on their website, and the local dementia network produced literature and avenues for support for those experiencing difficulties.
Substance misuse service user consultation	Liaised with the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) to feedback within the network around the implications to the patient on calling out the term Blue Script. The outcome was an article in the LPC newsletter asking for consideration of the language used in community pharmacies across South Tees.
Community Champion – Community Intelligence	We followed up on an issue raised by a Community Champion regarding issues with the Tees Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) Client Pathway. A meeting was arranged with key TEWV stakeholders leading to an increased understanding amongst parties as well as actions for improving partnership working. Relevant parties are now being invited to client ‘Huddles’ to contribute to meaningful restorative pathways.





# healthwatch

Healthwatch Middlesbrough  
The Live Well Centre Dundas Shopping Centre  
Dundas Street Middlesbrough TS1 1HR

[www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk)

t: 0800 118 1691 text only: 07451 288 78

e: [healthwatchsouthtess@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchsouthtess@pcp.uk.net)

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