



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Middlesbrough

Contents

Messages from our Chair's	3-4
About us	5
Our year in numbers	6-7
A year of making a difference	8
Working together for change	9-12
Making a difference in the community	13
Listening to your experiences	14-16
Hearing from all communities	17-19
Information and signposting	20-22
Showcasing volunteer impact	23-24
Finance and future priorities	25-26
Statutory statements	27-28



69

"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chief Executive

PCP is proud to host and lead Healthwatch Middlesbrough and our team has worked tirelessly to seek and listen to views, review provision and learn about local people's aspirations for health and care service in the future.

Working with people, communities and stakeholders is crucial to the success of Healthwatch. The information and intelligence gathered locally leads to impactful reports with clear recommendations, and these are proactively used to shape commissioning based on real experience.

Our Annual Report provides some of the years highlights, but it is only a snapshot of the incredible achievements. Our team of paid staff and volunteers are fundamental the success of Healthwatch. I extend my thanks them for their work, reaching into and across communities, for the way in which they engage with partners and for taking positive and solutions-focused approaches to system change.

Thank you also to the Healthwatch Board, who are also volunteers, giving their time to guide and support Healthwatch, ensuring good governance whilst overseeing the statutory responsibilities.

My final thank you is to the people of Middlesbrough without your views, thoughts and opinions Healthwatch would not be able to influence and improve services, you are helping to make improvements for years ahead, for which we are very grateful.



"Our brilliant team of dedicated staff and volunteers continue to successfully influence the health and care system whilst also providing practical support to local people. I am incredibly proud of the work they do and their approach to interactive engagement events has been outstanding."

Carol Gaskarth, Chief Executive, PCP

A message from our Chair

Looking ahead, our priorities will include delivering four Health & Wellbeing Events across the year, creating spaces for people to connect, share, and access support. We'll be focusing on two key areas: hospital discharge and community mental health, listening to lived experiences and working with partners to drive improvement. We'll also be engaging with care homes to better understand the needs of residents, families and staff ensuring their voices influence the future of care.

Additionally, our focus will shift towards smaller, impactful projects that reflect the priorities of people using health and social care services. We aim to build stronger relationships across South Tees, spotlight organisations adopting this approach, and share examples of good practice. A key priority will be promoting collaborative ways of working, with a particular emphasis on co-production.

My vision is to strengthen our connections with local communities, amplify unheard voices, and ensure the insights we gather lead to meaningful, lasting improvements across services. I'm also committed to offering my support, helping to guide and champion the important work of Healthwatch as we move forward



“I'm honoured to have recently taken on the role of Chair, following my time as a board member. It's a privilege to lead such a passionate and committed team, united by a shared goal of making health and social care work better for everyone.”

Carole Marshall, Chair

About us

Healthwatch Middlesbrough is your local health and social care champion.

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



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

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



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 2,214 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 2.05 full time equivalent (FTE) staff and, our work is supported by 14 volunteers and 32 Community Champions.

Reaching out:



1,780 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

434 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **women's health** and **changing GP Practice**.

Championing your voice:



We published **4** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **women's health** and **hospital services**.

Our most popular report was our **Multicultural Event Report**, highlighting people's barriers in **accessing health and care services**.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by **Middlesbrough Council**. In 2024/25 we received **£92,500**, which is the same as last year.

Our digital reach

This year we have successfully increased our reach on all social media platforms and transitioned to a new email platform to expand our audience.

Reaching out through our website:



Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 we recorded **19,029** page views with **15,194** active users. Our most visited pages were the **Homepage**, **News & Reports**, **STAR Awards 2024** and **What we do**.

Social media:

Facebook

Views: 64,997 – times our posts were seen.

Page/ Profile visits: – 3,187 times people clicked to our page.

Reach: 60,198 – unique people who saw our posts.



Instagram

Views: 1,555* – times posts and stories were viewed (*Q1 analytics not available)

Reach: 1,951 – unique people who saw our content

Our social media continues to play a vital role in promoting public health. We regularly share **essential healthcare information**, including **national and local campaigns** and **awareness events**. These posts are designed to empower our audience with the knowledge they need to make **more informed decisions about their health and wellbeing**.

E-bulletin:



During this reporting period, we distributed a total of **12 e-bulletins**. These bulletins served as a key communication tool, sharing updates on **local events**, highlighting **relevant national news**, and providing insights into the **ongoing work and achievements of our team**.

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Middlesbrough. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Hosted our 5th Annual STAR Awards celebration, honoring outstanding practices, responsive services, and innovative approaches in meeting the needs of people supported across South Tees.



Supporting the South Tees Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Steering Group by contributing to the development of effective consultation questions.



Summer

We played a key role in developing the Carers Charter at University Hospital Tees, ensuring a commitment to providing exceptional care for those supported by carers.



Delivering accessible information on menopause and perimenopause for individuals with sensory loss, with the help of interpreters.



Autumn

Developed a dementia passport through a collaboration with support organisations. Provides personalised, holistic care records for people living with dementia across health care services.



Facilitating South Tees Hospital Trust's Patient Engagement Portal activities to effectively gather and incorporate patient feedback.



Winter

HWST staff and volunteers raised awareness in local communities about using the NHS app. This helped people manage appointments, prescriptions, and test results, saving time.



HWST staff are now equipped to perform healthy heart checks. At our health and wellbeing event, we conducted over 30 BP readings, provided referrals, and offered advice. We will continue to offer this valuable service.



Working together for change

Introduction to the work between the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Healthwatch

Throughout 2024 -2025 The Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Healthwatch have worked together to build robust relationships to improve health and wellbeing for everyone in our communities. This partnership aims to:

- **Enhance Health Services:** By working together, the ICB can better understand and address the health needs of our communities.
- **Promote Wellbeing:** The collaboration focuses on creating opportunities that support improved wellbeing, including mental health, physical health, and social care.
- **Reduce Health Inequalities:** The partnership aims to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, has access to quality health services.
- **Engage the Community:** Healthwatch ensures feedback gathered from the public is escalated appropriately to help the ICB make informed decisions about health and care services.
- **Innovate and Improve:** Together, support the development of new and better ways to deliver health care, making it more efficient and effective.

This partnership is a significant step towards healthier, fairer, and more inclusive communities.



Working together for change

Our goal is to make sure people's experiences with health and care services are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level and help influence decisions made about health and care services.

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



Building a Strong Healthwatch Network

We formed a network of 14 local Healthwatch groups to improve health and care services both regionally and nationally.

Funding from our Integrated Care Board helped us build strong, meaningful relationships within this network, consistently adding value to the design of health and care services.

We have representatives from our network on local and regional strategic boards. These boards have robust reporting structures that support coordinated and effective engagement with our communities.

Our collaborative approach is recognised nationally as best practice.



**Claire Riley, Chief
Corporate
Services Officer,
NENC ICB**

Working together for change

Access to dental care



Listening to People's Dental Care Challenges

Over 3,800 people shared their views with us.

We engaged with people across the region to understand the difficulties they face in accessing dental services. We used various methods, including surveys, mystery shopping, general conversations, and one-on-one interviews at Darlington Urgent Dental Access Centre (UDAC).

The ICB has provided the following response

Improving access to dentistry will not be a quick fix but we are working on it, our key focus areas are;

- Stabilising services – additional investment including incentivised access, additional dental out of hours treatment capacity and dental clinical assessment workforce/triage capacity.
- Funding available to deliver a new model of dental care via Urgent Dental Access Centres and provide additional general dental access.
- Working with 'at risk' practices to identify and address financial issues of delivering NHS dental care.
- Working with local dental networks and NHS England North East Workforce Training and Education Directorate to improve recruitment, retention, training and education across the region.
- Developing an oral health strategy to improve oral health and reduce the pressure on dentistry.

We are continuing to work closely with the ICB as new ways of working are developed.



Working together for change

North East Ambulance Service clinical strategy engagement:



Gathering Feedback to Improve NEAS Services

Over 1,700 people shared their valuable feedback. 12 Healthwatch groups in the North East, along with Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE), engaged with the public and patients as part of the NEAS clinical strategy review. This work will be ongoing throughout 2025-2026.

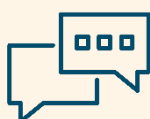
Key Strengths:

Compassionate and professional staff	Community involvement
Patient Transport Services	Effective emergency care

Areas for Improvement:

Response times	Mental health support
Communication transparency	Resource and staffing limitation
Coordination with other services	

The big conversation: Women's Health



Listening to Women's Health Needs

We spoke to nearly 4,500 people and held six focus groups with women who face extra health challenges. We wanted to understand what matters most to them and their priorities.

What We Learned:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Healthy ageing and long-term conditions (like bone, joint, and muscle health)
- Menopause, perimenopause, and hormone replacement therapy
- Screening services (like cervical, breast and bowel cancer screenings)
- Menstrual and gynecological health

Impact:

We're now working with our partners to create a "Woman's Promise." This will help women, health professionals, and others understand and support women's health needs and rights.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



We shared feedback from visually impaired individuals, highlighting accessibility challenges within the Ophthalmology department. Patients with visual impairments struggled to read the screens announcing appointment names, creating barriers to a smooth experience. Through our involvement in the **Patient Experience Steering Group**, we learned that patient feedback had prompted a positive change—**audio announcements have now been added to the screens**, ensuring that all patients, regardless of visual ability, can hear their appointment details.

Getting services to involve the public



Cambridge Medical Practice – Enhancing Patient Engagement

Following predominantly negative feedback during one of our GP roadshows, the Practice Manager eagerly collaborated with us to improve patient communication. At a subsequent event attended by 35 patients, we successfully increased awareness about additional roles and the appointment system and recruited members for the Patient Participation Group (PPG).

Improving care over time



Supporting Survivors Through Cervical Screening

Healthwatch Middlesbrough gathered insights from survivors of sexual violence on the challenges they face with cervical screening. Many struggle with distressing experiences linked to past trauma, leading to lower attendance rates.

To address this, we brought together key partners—including Public Health, the Integrated Care Board, and a GP from the IRIS Programme to co-produce a solution with survivors. The result is a discreet support card, enabling individuals to communicate their needs during appointments. Available in physical, digital, and printable formats, it ensures accessibility for all.

Launching during Cervical Screening Awareness Week (17–23 June), the card supports the wider “Screening Well” campaign, aiming to improve screening experiences for everyone.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

Advancing support for women's health

This year, we remained committed to championing women's health, with a particular focus on menopause.

Recognising the disparities in GP support across South Tees, we sought to gather further insights by launching a comprehensive survey to understand individuals' experiences in accessing care through their GP practice. The response was significant, with 169 individuals sharing their perspectives.

Key things we heard:



60%

Did not receive sufficient information to make informed decisions about managing their symptoms or starting HRT.

52%

Did not have the opportunity to discuss long term benefits or have their questions answered.

What did we do?

In addition to sharing our findings with the ICB to support their work, we took proactive steps to address the identified gaps. This included organising an online 'Train the Trainer' workshop, bringing together key stakeholders to improve awareness and access to menopause learning tools and resources.

What difference did this make?

The workshop brought together over 90 healthcare professionals and community support providers, empowering them with the knowledge and resources to better assist women through this crucial phase of life.



"This workshop was incredibly valuable. The presentation contains a wealth of great information, and I'd love to share it more widely to support staff at TEWV NHS Trust."

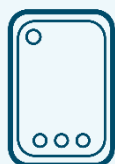
Listening to your experiences

Working together to improve your local hospitals

North Tees & Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals are now teaming up under a new partnership called a 'Group Model.' This means they're working more closely together to improve healthcare services for everyone across Tees Valley, North Yorkshire and County Durham. This Group Model will be known as 'University Hospitals Tees'.

To help make sure these improvements reflect what local people really need, Healthwatch Middlesbrough joined with other local Healthwatch to listen to patients, carers, and the wider community. The feedback gathered will help the hospitals understand what's going well and what could be better.

What people said:



- **Quality of Care:** Generally positive but **long waits** and **poor communication** were common frustrations.
- **Hospital Facilities:** Many felt the **buildings were outdated**, with **uncomfortable waiting areas** and **cleanliness concerns**.
- **Access to Services:** Barriers included **long waits, parking issues**, and **limited public transport**. Digital tools were helpful for some but **not inclusive for all**.
- **Hospitals Working Together:** People want **shorter waits, better communication**, and **easier access**, especially for those in **rural areas**.

Top 5 Recommendations

1. **Consistent, high-quality care** across all hospitals.
2. **Modernise hospital environments** for better comfort and cleanliness.
3. **Reduce waiting times**, especially in emergency and surgical services.
4. **Improve rural access** with better transport and more local services.
5. **Enhance communication** so patients feel informed and involved.

"Thank you again to you and your colleagues for the time spent on pulling this work together. It has already played an integral role in the work of the clinical boards and wider. The recommendations are being actively discussed and considered as part of our design work."

Maxine Crutwell, Programme Manager for Group Development



Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Middlesbrough. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Engaging with patients via GP Roadshows, identifying hidden unpaid carers.
- Holding a Health and Wellbeing event in an area with significant health inequalities.
- Sharing our Multicultural Event report highlighting barriers and solutions to accessing health and care services with local NHS leaders and Integrated Care Systems.



Hearing from all communities

Ethnic minority communities – understanding barriers and solutions in accessing health and care

Our insights don't fully capture the diversity of our local population, particularly ethnic minority voices. Engagement revealed a reluctance to give feedback, prompting the need for a more inclusive approach. In response, we hosted a **Multicultural Event**, bringing together over **80 attendees**, from across South Tees, to identify barriers and explore solutions for improving access to health and care services.

People highlighted several key barriers to accessing health and care services: **language difficulties**, worsened by inadequate translation services and complex medical terminology; **financial challenges**, including phone, internet, and travel costs, which particularly affect those on pay-as-you-go mobile plans; **limited awareness** of available services and poor signposting within communities; **digital exclusion**, where a lack of digital skills restricts access to platforms like eConsult and the NHS App; **long waiting times** for certain services; and **experiences of discrimination**, with some patients encountering condescending or dismissive treatment from staff.



What difference did this make?

Our report, featuring key recommendations, was shared with **health and social care commissioners and providers**, ensuring that vital insights inform decision-making and drive meaningful improvements in service accessibility.

Additionally, the event and feedback have sparked a vital initiative to **strengthen community support and signposting**. In partnership with Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (**MVDA**), we brought organisations together to explore **collaborative approaches**, sharing insights on how champion and ambassador roles can be leveraged to **better serve diverse communities**. This dialogue is driving meaningful action, creating **partnerships that enhance accessibility, guidance, and support** for those who need it most.

Hearing from all communities

Empowering unpaid carers through GP engagement

In 2024/25, a key priority was visiting GP Practices across South Tees to listen to patient experiences and improve access to vital health resources.

Through our **GP Roadshow**, we visited **24 GP Practices** and spoke to more than **800 patients**, sharing information on GP and Community Pharmacy services, strengthening relationships with practices, and raising awareness of Healthwatch Middlesbrough amongst both patients and staff.

Our roadshow activities provided a vital opportunity to engage with a diverse range of patients, opening conversations that led to meaningful change.

Among those we spoke to, **124 individuals** had not identified themselves as unpaid carers—meaning they were unaware of the support available to them.

Through these discussions, we helped them recognise their caring roles and encouraged them to register as carers with their GP Practice, ensuring their surgery acknowledges their responsibilities. This simple step creates a gateway to essential services, enabling carers to access the support they need for their own health and wellbeing.

What difference did this make?

This initiative not only supported individual carers but also strengthened awareness across GP Practices. By facilitating better recognition of unpaid carers, we helped improve access to essential services and encouraged practices to proactively engage with patients in caring roles.



"The GP Roadshows have been invaluable for supporting our collective efforts to raise awareness of unpaid care across South Tees and directing carers to much needed support. Holding a space within primary care has proven vital in identifying hidden carers and encouraging them to inform their surgery of their caring responsibilities, opening the door to support and services in relation to their own health and wellbeing. I was able to join the team at two GP Practices providing a fantastic opportunity to connect carers to We Care You Care resources."

Kelly Hodgson, We Care You Care, Project Lead

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 91 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



Information and signposting

Empowering communities: Providing information to support informed health choices

To support local communities, we have launched a new initiative aimed at providing residents with essential information about services that can enhance their health and wellbeing.

Our first health and wellbeing event at Thorntree Hub welcomed over 100 residents, providing them with direct access to expert guidance and practical support. These community-based events not only empower individuals to make informed health choices but also give us invaluable insight into the challenges they face in navigating health and social care services.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage with a broad range of services addressing key health concerns, from mental health and physical activity to smoking cessation, diabetes care, and domestic abuse support. Experts from healthcare organisations, voluntary sector groups, and emergency services were on hand to provide tailored advice and connect people to the resources they need.



What difference did this make?

By bringing these services into the heart of the community, we are breaking down barriers and ensuring that everyone—regardless of their circumstances—has the knowledge and support necessary to improve their wellbeing.



“Brilliant interaction – service users seemed to find it helpful and interesting and hopefully learnt something too.”

NHS Dental

Facilitating patient feedback

A patient expressed worries regarding their long-term blood pressure medication, noting that one GP appeared hesitant to prescribe it despite their stability on the treatment.

Additionally, there were concerns about BP results not being properly reviewed. The patient was advised to speak with the Practice Manager to address their concerns.

Upon checking the practice websites (Martonside and Endeavor), it was noted that the feedback form link had been temporarily removed, and policies were missing. Both practices were contacted via email, and the response confirmed that website updates had been made but the feedback form and policy had not been reinstated.

Resolution: Following the request for reinstatement, the feedback forms are now active on both GP websites, allowing patients to share concerns and experiences.

Ensuring access to vital medication

A person living with Type 1 Diabetes faced significant challenges in accessing their prescribed insulin after moving to a new GP practice.

Due to a backlog in registrations, they had been waiting two months for their records to be processed. Although they had secured emergency medication through 111, they were left with only two days' supply and urgently needed support to ensure continuity of care.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, we advised them to speak directly with the Practice Manager to clarify their prescription status. As there was no clear online guidance on duty of care in this scenario, we escalated the matter by reaching out to the ICB for clarification.

Following this advice, the person visited their new GP practice and successfully confirmed which provider was responsible for their ongoing prescription. As a result, the practice swiftly added them to the system, granting them access to online services and enabling them to request their medication without further delays.

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers and Community Champions have given 536 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Carried out a mystery shopping exercise.
- Attended community champion and volunteer events.
- Supported us in our engagement and attended events.
- Our Board supported us with our reports and priority planning for 2025/2026.



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

This year, Community Champion Steven and Healthwatch Middlesbrough continued its transformative podcast, tackling health and social care challenges faced by those with the greatest barriers to access. Featuring voices from community champions and volunteers, the podcast has explored advocacy, growing older, sexual violence support, and personal journeys, like living with prostate cancer to inspire conversations.

Steven shared that the podcast has offered invaluable insights into local issues, enriching his research role at University Hospital Tees and driving future learning.



Healthwatch's volunteers make a real impact by attending engagement stalls, ensuring people's voices are heard. Their dedication helps gather vital feedback, leading to improvements in local services. Regular check-ins keep them informed and supported, allowing us to celebrate achievements and tackle challenges together. Through their efforts, we advocate for better care, influence policy changes, and empower individuals. Every conversation they have strengthens our mission, creating a system that truly listens.



Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk



0800 118 1691



healthwatchsouthtees@pcp.uk.net

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Middlesbrough Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£92,500	Expenditure on pay	£91,991
Additional income	£9,762	Non-pay expenditure	£4,599
		Office and management fee	£29,529
Total income	£102,262	Total Expenditure	£126,119

Additional income is broken down into:

- £5,000 received from NEAS for engagement project.
- £262 received from Healthwatch England for Conference attendance.
- £250 received from Healthy Hearts funding.

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across **North East and North Cumbria** also receive funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
ICS funding	£3,500
Women's health funding	£350
NHS 10 Year Plan engagement	£400

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

- 1. Care home engagement** – Engagement activities to be carried out with 12 care homes across South Tees to raise awareness of HWST and to identify the different ways the residential homes make their home a good place to live a happy life and identify challenges they may experience in doing this.
- 2. Hospital Discharge** – Hospital discharge is one of the quality priorities for South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for 2025 / 2026. We will be carrying out a collaborative piece of work to inform improvements in discharge processes. Our focus will be on patients discharged to care homes and those with a domiciliary care package.
- 3. Mental Health Resource** – Will be doing a collaborative piece of work with partners to produce a resource to enable local people to understand the mental health landscape and how they can access support.

As we look ahead to our priorities for 2025/2026, we've intentionally built in capacity to respond to emerging needs. By avoiding back-to-back project scheduling, we're creating space for thoughtful planning, timely execution, and the flexibility to support our local communities and respond to what matters most to them as it arises.

Statutory statements

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

Healthwatch Middlesbrough uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of nine members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as scoring our STAR Award nominations and our 2025–2026 priority areas.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

During 2024/25, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended 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, share on socials, include in our ebulletin and distribute to key stakeholders and community members.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had zero providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were 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 insights and experiences shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the South Tees Health & Wellbeing Executive, The South Tees Live Well Board, South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Place committee. 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, Care Quality Commission, Cleveland Local Medical Committee, Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust and relevant themed steering groups across South Tees.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care System (ICS). For example, we provide quarterly reports for the NENC ICB which is also considered at the Patient Voice committee, then after analysis and triangulation go to Quality & Safety Committee. The Quality & Safety committee then make recommendations direct to the ICB. Any reports re Primary Care also go to the Primary Care Strategy & Delivery committee.

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 Health and Wellbeing Board by Linda Sergeant, Project Lead.

Healthwatch Middlesbrough is represented on the Integrated Care Partnerships in the South ICP area of NENC ICS by Natasha Douglas and Christopher Akers-Belcher, Healthwatch Regional ICB Coordinator.

The Regional ICP is attended by Christopher Akers-Belcher and the ICB Place Committee is attended by Linda Sergeant.

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