

# The value of listening

Healthwatch Middlesbrough  
**Annual Report 2023–2024**



**healthwatch**  
Middlesbrough

# Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Year in review	5
How we've made a different this year	6
Your voice heard at a wider level	7
Listening to your experiences	8-12
Hearing from all communities	13-16
Advice and information	17-18
Volunteering	19-21
Finance and future priorities	22-23
Statutory statements	24-26



**"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."**

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



---

# Message from our Chair

---

What a busy year it has been for Healthwatch Middlesbrough. We have packed a lot into the last 12 months and as the newly appointed Chair I am pleased to be able to look back and reflect on some of our many successes and, what the forthcoming year will bring.

Our work is heavily influenced by listening to local communities through our information and signposting service and local engagement activity. For example, when we became aware that more people were contacting us about menopause, we delivered a menopause event attended by over 200 delegates all sharing their experiences and, listening to leading experts in this field to help improve services and outcomes for women's health.

Working in partnership is an important factor in our work and in August 2023 we produced our GP Resource in collaboration with a range of professionals in response to the most common questions we heard from local people. This resource enabled us to raise awareness of the changes in GP Practice teams and how to make the most of the range of options available to them, which has had a positive impact on everyone we have engaged with.

Our work this year has influenced where we will focus our attentions going forward in our priorities, which will include continuing our efforts on women's health and building on the work with GP surgeries to promote our resources and gather patient experiences

In addition to this, we also include community mental health services, care homes and seeking out more opportunities to engage with local community groups and service users, always focussing on those with health inequalities, to help improve local health and care services across Middlesbrough.

This document provides more detail of our work this year and how we will continue to focus our efforts on making a difference to the lives of local people and communities.



*"We all know that access to good health and care services are key to people's general wellbeing. Healthwatch Middlesbrough / Redcar and Cleveland continues to play an important role in ensuring that the voices of local people are heard and used to help shape the health and care services that we all regularly use and rely on."*

**Lesley Spaven, Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency**



# About us

## Healthwatch Middlesbrough is your local health and social 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 social 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:

**1,367 people**

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



**297 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

**1,347,559 people**

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

## Making a difference to care across South Tees:

We published

**7 reports**

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

We produced **2 resources** to increase awareness of access to GPs and Community Pharmacies.

We held **15 focus groups** enabling local people to influence services and commissioning to meet their needs.



Our most popular report was **Women's Health** which highlighted the struggles people face accessing menopause support.

## Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

**16 volunteers & 35 Community Champions**

Our outstanding volunteers who gave up 444 hours to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.

In 2023 - 24 we received

**£92,500**

Which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ









**2.95 staff** (full time equivalent FTE)

who help us carry out our work.





# How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Deep Dive podcast; connecting with local communities and listening to patient voices; the importance of real community engagement.</p>	 <p>We arranged for test results to be posted directly to a patient who was no longer registered with a GP.</p>
Summer	 <p>We delivered awareness raising sessions to Employment Advisors who now help us extend our reach to the vulnerable people they support.</p>	 <p>We informed the development &amp; content of the South Tees Dementia Passport and the team completed Dementia Friends training with our Champions &amp; volunteers.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Linked People First Advocacy with our Community Champions to raise awareness of this offer to those having the biggest health inequalities to support.</p>	 <p>Shared various awareness campaigns including 'share for better care' and collaborated with Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board to promote Adults Safeguarding Week.</p>
Winter	 <p>During the transferring of the Substance Misuse service provider, we highlighted problems people faced accessing the service. These were quickly resolved by us linking patient experiences with the new service deliverer.</p>	 <p>More carers receive improved GP services because we continually share the Carers Registration Form, throughout the year.</p>

# Your voice heard at a wider level

**We collaborated with other Healthwatch teams to ensure the experiences of people in Middlesbrough influence decisions made about services at North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) level.**

This year we've worked with Healthwatch's across the Tees Valley to achieve:

## Improved Planning Processes for families who care for an adult with learning disabilities:



The Tees Valley Healthwatch Network provided insight to the NENC ICB, to give them a greater understanding of the needs of people with a learning disability, aged 40+, so they can improve the planning process when families can no longer support their family member to stay at home. We asked carers and those they care for what is important to them, and what support they need to live a happy and healthy life.

## Improved access to dentistry services by carrying out 3 standalone activities:

- Sought people's feedback about their experience after accessing treatment funded through the ICB's additional investment for additional sessions at some dental practices to improve access. Unfortunately, this wasn't taken up across South Tees.
- Contacted all dental practices in the region to understand what people were being told when trying to access NHS treatments through a 'mystery shopper' exercise.
- Survey of the general population across the North East and North Cumbria to gather their experiences of dentistry in 2023.



## An understanding of health-literacy related barriers to research

We held a focus group locally to discuss if participants had previously been involved in research, what their preferred channels for accessing healthcare information were, and identify barriers to future research opportunities.



- Participants' responses varied, with some showing keen interest in future research engagement and others highlighting barriers like limited awareness or understanding.
- Preferred methods for disseminating future research opportunities were both email and face-to-face interactions.

## Improved outcomes for children and young people with earlier mental health support.

Children and young people (11-25 years old), parent/carers, and other key stakeholders, were invited to be involved in developing children and young people's mental health services. NE&NC ICB asked us to support this piece of research that was being undertaken by an independent organisation, by sharing a survey and encouraging completion. Please [click here](#) to see the final report.





# 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.



# Improving support for menopause and women's health

Throughout 2023–2024 we had increasing feedback and queries regarding menopause, particularly where people could get information and the help they needed. We also noticed a disparity in their experiences of people going to the GP for support.

We felt that this was an important issue for many people across South Tees and made it one of our work priorities for 2023–2024. Our work included:

- Producing a menopause information leaflet that was widely promoted and is accessible via our new [Women's Health](#) page on our website.
- Holding awareness sessions with ethnic community groups.
- Delivering a menopause event and produced films of the key speakers and the information they shared.
- Distributed a survey on behalf of the ICB for feedback from women to improve access to women's health services, health information, experiences of health services and the quality of care and health outcomes.
- Produced a [Women's Health Report](#).
- Connected with the ICB Menopause Lead to ensure this work informs wider developments.



## What difference did this make?

### Our menopause event, Bloods, Sweats and Tears raised awareness of:

- How to get support from a GP.
- Alternatives to HRT.
- The importance of lifestyle and nutrition in managing symptoms.
- Communities who find it difficult to identify menopausal symptoms due to other health conditions or disabilities.
- The range of services and support available locally.
- Informed our ongoing priorities.

As a result of our Women's Health engagement and report, we have agreed with our Board that this area of work will be one of our 2024–2025 priority areas.

We are building on the feedback received and working with the NENC ICB, to highlight and support increasing awareness and knowledge of menopause within GP Practices.



***"Brilliant event, well organised and managed. Great range of speakers, covering complimentary subjects and all very well received by attendees. Fantastic work everyone you should be very rightly proud of the event, but more importantly the impact this will have for women to be better able to manage menopause symptoms."***

Event attendee

# "I need to see a doctor" – Top tips for accessing your GP - Practice & evaluation

In collaboration with a range of professionals, our GP resource – **"I need to see a doctor"** was produced, in response to the most common questions and issues raised by local people about accessing their GP Practice.

This resource explains how practices have changed and how to make the most of the services available. Improvements include more specialist roles that work alongside a GP, and extended hours to meet increasing demand. We also included information:

- For carers and people with autism and learning disabilities.
- About Accessible Information Standards (your health or care provider must find out what your communication needs are and meet them) and reasonable adjustments (things that need to be in place for an individual to have equal access to healthcare).

A limited number of copies were printed due to cost implications and a poster was produced with a QR code for online access.

## What difference did this make?

- We received many positive comments and requests to use the resource from health care professionals and other local Healthwatch organisations. A resource template has subsequently been shared and used regionally and nationally.
- The poster with a QR code is being displayed in local GP surgeries.
- We talked with local people to get their views about the resource and reported them in our **GP Resource Evaluation**.
- Tees Valley Youthwatch were also asked to evaluate the GP Resource and produced Tees Valley Youthwatch Consultation with Young People report. You can read more about this on page 14.

**100%**

of those we engaged with found out something new from each section of the GP Resource



## Next Steps

Going forward, we have prioritised ongoing work in this area over the next year by supporting and promoting good practice in local GP Practices and developing positive outcomes from patient involvement and patient participation groups.



***"This looks really good- Thanks for all your work pulling this together".***

Emma Joyeux, Commissioning Lead – Primary Care, NENC ICB

***"Massive thanks for sharing this – We will be distributing widely as it is a fantastic resource. Well done to all of your team for the work on this project, and many thanks again for the opportunity to be involved".***

Dr Rachel McMahon, GP Locum,– Interim CEO and Company Secretary, Cleveland LMC

# STAR Awards 2024 – celebrating good practice

The Healthwatch South Tees Award of Recognition celebrates those who make a difference in the health and care sector to the people they support by going that extra mile. Local community voice is key to the work of Healthwatch and improving health and care services. The STAR Awards offers the opportunity to share good practice from health and care services across South Tees.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual annual STAR Awards ceremony recognised the fantastic work being carried out by our local health and care services. We received a record number of nominations this year, 72 in total, 55 of which were eligible for the 2nd stage and considered by our judging panel in the following categories:

- Care and Compassion
- Excelling in Support to Others
- Making a Difference – Volunteer Award
- Valued Service
- Leading the Way for Change
- Community Innovator



## What difference did this make?

The day was all about demonstrating how local services are responding to the needs of those they support. This has not only improved experiences for local people but also increased the quality of services they receive.

It was great to see so many innovative ways of working, gaps in support identified and filled, as well as some fantastic examples of collaborative approaches. This highlights that in many cases, providers have acknowledged that it's beneficial to utilise, through collaboration, a range of strengths, skills and knowledge from different deliverers, in order to provide a more holistic approach to improve outcomes for our local population.



69

*"A brilliant event to bring together services that would never know each other existed! A fantastic morale boosting event".*

*"It was a pleasure to be nominated and attend this event. To be honest I had never heard of Healthwatch previous to this. It was humbling to be amongst incredible people who are doing incredible things. It has already got me thinking about initiatives I could share and I have made some useful contacts".*

Event attendee

# Three ways we have made a difference in the community

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

## Raising Awareness of the South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (STHNHSFT) Patient Involvement Strategy

Following on from our work last year in co-producing the Patient Involvement Strategy, our next step was to develop ways to promote and raise awareness of the Strategy to patients and staff.

We delivered a workshop where attendees informed the content of leaflets that have been produced and distributed across the Trust sites, continuing our co-production approach. There is also a planned follow up workshop to share the impact this new approach has had on patients and their families. We will start to see the full impact this strategy has had over the next 12 months and will report in 2024-2025.



## Bridging the gap in menopause care for ethnic minority women

Many ethnic minority women find it difficult to raise this subject with their GP and at home and are less likely to seek support or help.

In collaboration with NUR Fitness, a local organisation dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of ethnic minority women, we delivered sessions to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of menopause and perimenopause. The sessions were interactive and gave the women knowledge to recognise these symptoms as well as advice of where they can get help and how to discuss this with other members of their family.



## Reaching Vulnerable People Through Other Organisations – A Collaborative Approach

We understand that to effectively communicate with local people we need to develop strong partnerships with organisations who support them.

One way has been through a series of workshops with The Department for Work and Pensions, informing work coaches about Healthwatch.

A key focus was supporting people who have disabilities and mental health issues; groups who often face significant health inequalities. By providing coaches with understanding and resources we were able to improve the support network for these vulnerable people.

*“Those in attendance literally ‘ran’ with cards for all the desks, to support people to use Healthwatch”.*

DWP Work Coach



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.





# 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:**

- Recruiting two additional team members responsible for delivering community roadshow activities.
- Producing information in BSL and different languages.
- Interviews on the local radio station for ethnic communities.
- Recruiting Community Champions who support a diverse range of communities.

# Youthwatch

Youth Focus North East supported us to develop a Tees Valley wide Youthwatch Advisory Board as a 12-month pilot programme. This was to be made up of 16–25 year olds who would consult with other young people about a specific health or social care theme they highlighted and feed this back into their local Healthwatch. The first area they wanted to focus on was mental health.

They created a tik tok video expressing their experience of mental health which was shared at the Healthwatch 10-year celebration event. Also, the Young Person's Deputy Mayor of Middlesbrough's [video](#) of her lived experience of health care services was presented to the attendees.

## 80 young people were consulted about their experiences of mental health across South Tees.



Their feedback was shared with local service providers and commissioners to inform their delivery and future commissioning.

## A new approach was needed

As a result of needing to recruit a new youth worker to continue this work and as some of the young people had moved on, it was proving difficult to identify new members and a different approach was agreed:

- Age range was lowered from 16 – 25 to 13 – 25 years old
- Short mini workshops were delivered that were specific task focused.

The groups provided feedback for a Tees Valley wide sexual health service review and 'youth proofed' our recently published GP Resource – 'I Need to See a Doctor'.

## Themes identified

### Sexual Health

- Speak to us like an adult.
- Show us how to use contraception properly.
- Tell us about all our options not just the options in that one service..

### GP Resource

- Include a glossary to let us know all the different words that doctors and nurses use.
- What am I allowed to speak to my Doctor about without my parents being present or what age can you see a doctor alone.
- Include 'short snappy' signs of illnesses, what to look out for and when to see a Doctor

Again, all of these responses were shared with service deliverers and commissioners and will also be considered by us when producing public resource information in the future.

The insight reports produced as a result of this work can be found here:

[Youthwatch – Insight into Sexual Health Report](#)

[I Need to See a Doctor – Tees Valley Youth Consultation Report](#)



# Putting sensory loss at the heart of engagement

We have been delighted to support the newly developed sensory drop-in initiative in Middlesbrough launched by Adult Social Care and Public Health. This approach is to support resilience and health equity for local sensory loss communities. By providing inclusive services such as BSL communication and tailored activities, this initiative aims to address health inequalities and promote well-being.

Through a variety of activities, we have increased awareness of what we do, delivered menopause awareness sessions and listened to their health and care needs and experiences. All of this feedback has enabled us to provide more enriched community intelligence with relevant stakeholders to inform improvements to ensure effective support is given for continued independent living.

In addition to this we have held an inclusive engagement session at the Middlesbrough Deaf Centre in partnership with People First to raise awareness of local support services. A BSL interpreter facilitated discussions to ensure inclusivity, allowing attendees to share experiences and concerns of health and care services.

## As a result of this engagement session we were able to:

- Provide a platform for individuals to share experiences in a supportive environment.
- Encourage community participation by promoting inclusivity.
- Empower individuals through meaningful conversations.



# Getting on the road!

We welcomed two new Engagement & Events Officers to the team this year to increase awareness of what we do with South Tees communities and encourage additional feedback of health and care services to inform our work. This has been approached through 'roadshow' type activities with one of these roles specifically focussing on local ethnic minority communities. A report detailing all of our activities can be viewed [here](#).

**We have engaged with over 3,259 people through our roadshow activities**



## What difference has it made

- Information and signposting enquires have increased by **55%**
- Volunteering opportunities have increased by **112.5%** due to offering our volunteers and Champions more opportunities to be involved.
- Increased links and connections with new and existing stakeholders as a result of this approach.



## Next Steps

In 2024, the team plans to continue roadshow type activities to raise awareness of HWST and build on relationships with communities who have barriers to engagement across Middlesbrough.



# Recognised for supporting equality and diversity

## Healthwatch South Tees were nominated and shortlisted for the Public Sector Award, as part of the Tees Valley BME Achievement Awards 2023.

We were shortlisted for our dedication to enhancing public health and wellbeing. Specifically, by supporting equality, diversity and inclusion through community events such as presenting at the Diverse Communities Forum and our Community Champions Programme. They highlighted our collaboration with community organisations and faith groups to amplify diverse messages about our work within these communities.

### Healthwatch Middlesbrough will continue reaching out to diverse communities in 2024-25 by:

- Hosting a Multicultural Event to understand health and social care barriers and encourage sharing of experiences.
- Engage with churches, temples and other religious venues.
- Develop an ethnic community information and signposting role.



## Gynaecological Steering Group

### Teaming up with agencies to improve cervical screening access for trauma survivors.

As a result of receiving community intelligence from one of our Champions, we became aware that female trauma survivors weren't having a positive experience during their cervical screening due to certain steps in the procedure and language used.

To explore this issue further we played a vital role in bringing together agencies and facilitated the creation of a steering group. The members of the group include the local sexual violence support service, Arch Teesside, Public Health South Tees, a specialist GP, Equality and Diversity expert and Cancer organisations to improve cervical screen accessibility for this community.

The group seeks to address barriers to support and educate professionals to ensure there is a trauma-informed service which keeps the patient at the forefront, whilst also aiming to increase the uptake of screening.

We receive regular updates and remain involved in the project as and when needed to follow its progress and raise awareness of any changes made. Already the project has got people talking and professionals recognising there is a gap.



***"I don't know who else, other than Healthwatch, could have pulled together people from all these agencies to work together on this project."***

Sexual Violence Counsellor





## Advice and information

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 information and signposting to help you understand your options and get the help you need. 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 we've helped people by:**

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Providing relevant signposting information enabling people to make informed decisions
- Referring people to local advocacy services when relevant

# Community Pharmacy Resource

**It is essential that people have clear, accurate information about services available in their area to enable them to make informed choices.**

Community pharmacies are well used and trusted by their local communities. They provide a range of healthcare services including helping people to get the most benefit from their medicines and to lead healthier lives.

Following on from the success of 'I need a doctor' we created an additional resource to inform members of the public on how to best utilise their community pharmacy, coinciding with the launch of the Pharmacy First Scheme.



Working in collaboration with Community Pharmacy Tees Valley and with feedback we received from the public, we included [information on your community pharmacy](#) that advised on different job roles and services. It explains why a pharmacy may sometimes be closed, a graphic that shows the prescription journey as well as lots of useful QR codes to links on how to get a prepayment prescription and how to check if you are exempt. The document has helped members of the public think about using their community pharmacy before going to a GP Practice or A&E.

## Addressing inequalities in access, experience and outcomes

**For those who experience health inequalities having an awareness of the support that is available can greatly improve access to healthcare.**

As part of our work with the South Tees Fairer Access group we are addressing inequalities in access, experience and outcomes for patients.

Through our membership of this group, we highlighted the stigma perceived by patients in requesting refunded travel costs and highlighted the guilt inducing nature of communications around unattended appointments (DNAs). For example, posters on boards saying how DNAs adversely impact the care of others).

As a result, the current process for reimbursement of travel costs was identified as a priority for action..

### What difference has this made

- A new poster was developed to be displayed within Trust reception areas – raising awareness of the travel reimbursement scheme for patients
- A link to the travel reimbursement scheme is now on the hospital website.
- Information of the travel reimbursement scheme to be provided by GPs on referral.







# Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers and Community Champions 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:**

- Supported us to engage with those people with sensory loss, to promote Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Used innovative methods, like art to support their communities in sharing their views and experiences
- Reviewed the accessibility of GP Practice websites across the area for those with differing needs



**"I love volunteering for Healthwatch Middlesbrough, they are like family. I also enjoy art and people tell me I am good at talking to people!"**

**I have been to the hospital and other places in our area and supported people to draw while listening to them talk about their experiences; there is a lot that art can do to break down barriers and improve mental health and people can use their new skills at home as a bonus too!"**



**Anthony –  
Healthwatch  
Middlesbrough**



**"I chose to become a Healthwatch Middlesbrough volunteer to make sure that all members of my community have a voice in health and social care.**

**I enjoy listening to people and supporting them to have their voices heard. As a mum, I have been able to do a lot of my volunteering from home; reviewing health and social care information to ensure information for my local community is accessible, understandable, and correct."**




**Becky –  
Healthwatch  
Middlesbrough**

## **Do you feel inspired?**



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

-  [www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk/](http://www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk/)
-  **0800 118 1691**
-  **vicky.jackson@pcp.uk.net**



# GP Website audit

**Our volunteers and a local college group completed an evaluation of all 38 GP Practice websites across South Tees. In collaboration with NHS Digital, the aim of this audit was to ensure inclusivity, so the information given, and resources offered through these digital platforms was accessible and met the needs of all of our local diverse communities.**

By involving our volunteers, we provided feedback from a wide range of health inequality groups such as those with a visual impairment, the neurodivergent, and people with learning disabilities, individually and as a group.

The outcome of this review will help these Practices to improve the accessibility of information about their services and improve experiences for all their patients.



## Key Findings:

- Most of the GP Practice websites had telephone contact available in various places on the website.
- Over **65%** of the websites did not have email information available which made it difficult to request repeat prescriptions, fit notes, etc.
- Whilst over **70%** of GP Practice websites have information on how to register at the Practice, only **40%** had this information on their homepages
- Over **15%** did not having information available about how to temporarily register.
- Over **75%** of GP Practice websites have information about how to make an appointment on their homepage. However, for those caring for others, this was less easy to find, with almost **20%** of websites not having this information available.
- A total of **19%** of the Practice websites did not have information on how to make a comment, complaint, or compliment.
- There are very few GP Practice websites which provide information on advocacy services or Healthwatch.
- Whilst information was available in different languages on **76%** of the website homepages, there was a general lack of accessible information for BSL, Easy Read and Interpreters.

## Next Steps

- All of the conclusions and recommendations within our engagement report has been shared with NHS Digital who will use these to inform further developments.
- Our volunteers are contacting GP Practices to obtain email addresses for those who do not provide this on their website.
- We will be contacting all GP Practices to provide them with Healthwatch and Advocacy services information that they can display on their websites, in their preferred format.



**You can read the full report [here](#).**



# 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	£85,743
Additional income	£18,575	Non-pay expenditure	£5,570
		Office and management fees	£26,726
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£111,075</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£118,039</b>

(N.B. Deficit was funded by carry forward from previous years surplus)

## ICS funding

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

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Growing Older – Planning Ahead engagement & reporting	£15,000
Dentistry engagement	£650
Health Literacy engagement	£800
Waiting Well engagement	£250
ICS local support and promotion of campaigns and engagement opportunities for a 12-month period	£1,875

## 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 priorities for the next year are:

- Care Homes** – Increase awareness of our functions through roadshow activities in a sample of care homes across South Tees and gather feedback from residents, their families & staff to highlight areas for improvements.
- Women's Health** – Raise awareness of menopause learning tools and resources, including areas for improvement with GP Practices and relevant key stakeholders.
- GP Practices** – Carry out engagement roadshows with patients & staff within GP Practices.
- Mental Health** – Gather intelligence and feedback based on experiences from people who access support from these services to inform improvements to service delivery and future commissioning.





## 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.

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



---

# The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of six members who work on a voluntary basis 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 2023/24, the Board met five times and made decisions on matters such as refreshing our Board governance, scoring our STAR Award nominations and our 2024-2025 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 2023/24, we have been available by phone, text, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as delivering community roadshows and attending community group meetings 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.

## 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 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 insights and experiences that have been 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 Lisa Bosomworth, Project Lead.

Healthwatch Middlesbrough is represented on the Integrated Care Partnerships in the South ICP area of NENC ICS by Rebecca Morgan, Project Development Manager, Pioneering Care Partnership 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 Lisa Bosomworth.

## 2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
<b>Board Governance</b> – Review governance and establish tighter mechanisms for decision making, involvement and support in our workplan areas.	Governance is updated and agreed and is providing more robust decision-making processes which has already improved as a result of this review.
<b>PPG development</b> – Support and inform the development of good practice for the Joint Patient Participation Group (JPPG) members and their GP Practice. This piece of work will improve communication to ensure that relevant rich intelligence is shared with HWST which will provide additional reporting evidence to the ICB at all levels.	Support given has improved information sharing between each GP Practice PPG rep and this JPPG. This has increased good practice & the relevant intelligence shared with HWM which in turn is included in ICB reporting. We have also identified & developed a direct route for participation directly into the relevant PCN increasing patient voice in decision making.
<b>GP Website Development</b> – GP website audit. This will help identify whether they are ‘fit for purpose’, accessible and informative for their patients. This will be supported by a group of volunteers from a range of communities	Our volunteers from a variety of diverse backgrounds and health inequality communities completed the website audit with all GP Practices in Middlesbrough. Their findings were shared with NHS Digital and changes have been made as a result of this.
<b>Learning Disabilities (Growing Older – Planning Ahead)</b> –In partnership with other HW across Tees Valley to deliver a large piece of consultation on behalf of North East Commissioning Support (NECS). This will identify the care needs of older adults with a learning disability and their carers. External funding provided June – October 2023.	The South Tees & Tees Valley reports are now completed, published and shared with our ICB which will inform future planning of care for these communities. Our local report has also informed a variety of areas within adult social care developments and delivery.
<b>Menopause Event</b> – Hosted an event to raise awareness and share vital information re: perimenopause & menopause during Menopause Awareness Week in October 2023. Key specialist professionals were invited to share relevant information with other professionals and members of the public, facilitate table discussions, have marketplace stalls for information followed by a live Q&A session.	This event was extremely well attended. The whole event, including key speakers were filmed and these are published on our website and utilised to promote this issue further. Our key findings from the event and previous engagement are informing the direction of the ICB’s work and will support our awareness raising of issues within GP Practices during 2024-2025.
<b>GP Resource – I Need to See a Doctor</b> – Resource produced highlighting the changes and current offer from GP Practices to inform members of the public based on regular I&S enquiries.	A template of this resource has been produced with funding from the NENC HW Network. This resource is now used by national HW’s and the London wide LMC as content for their promotional videos used in GP Practice waiting rooms.

# healthwatch

## Middlesbrough

Healthwatch Middlesbrough  
The Live Well Centre  
Dundas Arcade  
Middlesbrough  
TS1 1HR

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

☎ 0800 118 1691

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

f [facebook.com/HWMiddlesbrough/](https://facebook.com/HWMiddlesbrough/)

✂ @HwMiddlesbrough

📷 [healthwatchmiddlesbrough](https://healthwatchmiddlesbrough)

in [healthwatch middlesbrough](https://healthwatchmiddlesbrough)