

Waiting Well Programme Consultation

March 2023

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What is 'Waiting Well'?

'Waiting Well' is a regionwide programme that aims to support patients who are waiting for planned care such as knee and hip replacements.

Evidence shows that taking simple steps before surgery or treatment to improve fitness, diet and mental health plays a crucial role in helping patients to recover more quickly and reduces the chance of being re-admitted to hospital. By empowering them to manage elements of their own health and be in as good shape as they can for their treatment means that there is much less chance of their planned care being cancelled.

The programme will focus on approximately 70,000 people who are classed as 'Priority 4' patients, many of whom have been waiting for their treatment for a considerable amount of time. With that in mind, the Waiting Well programme considers mental health and wellbeing elements of their preparation and subsequent recovery just as important as any physical elements, particularly when you take into consideration that around 21,000 people in that cohort are in the most deprived communities in the country.

Across the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) area, much work is already underway to support 'Waiting Well' patients. Patients are contacted via letter and offered support and signposting to a number of useful services or resources.

The patient letter will be followed up with a phone call from a member of their local support team to talk to the patient about their general health and wellbeing.

Currently, the bulk of the patient facing administration is being carried out by hospital trusts but in the New Year a central hub will be established to streamline communication in conjunction with the Trusts and other partners across the ICB footprint.

Consultation

To explore public perception about the programme, the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) undertook a piece of engagement with support from local Healthwatch across the area and also voluntary sector organisations.

The NENC ICB provided a toolkit which included a discussion guide and a recording template to ensure consistency in feedback from focus groups across the region.

Focus Groups

We held two separate focus groups, one in Middlesbrough and one in Redcar and Cleveland.

With the support of our community partners, we identified two venues where a large percentage of the population experience health inequalities.

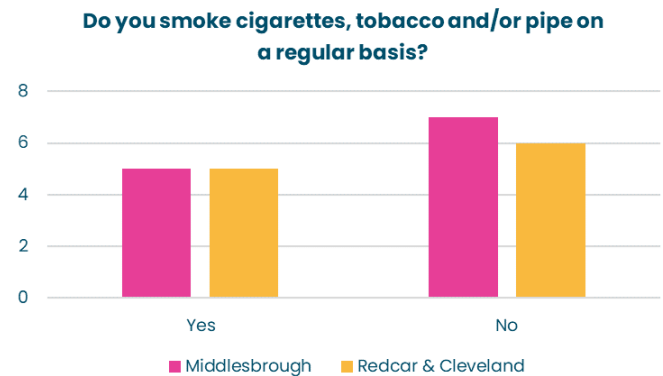
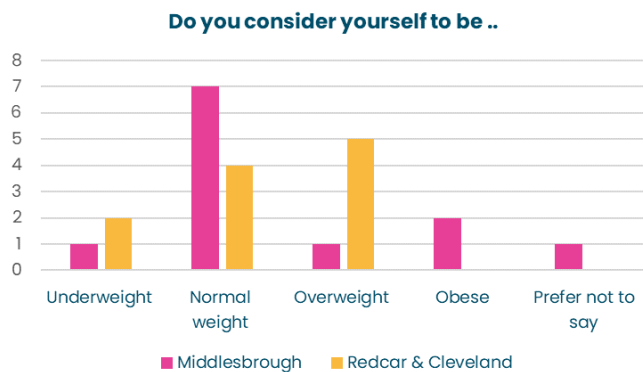
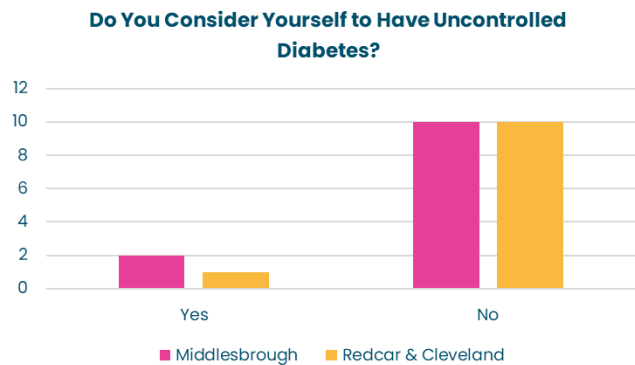
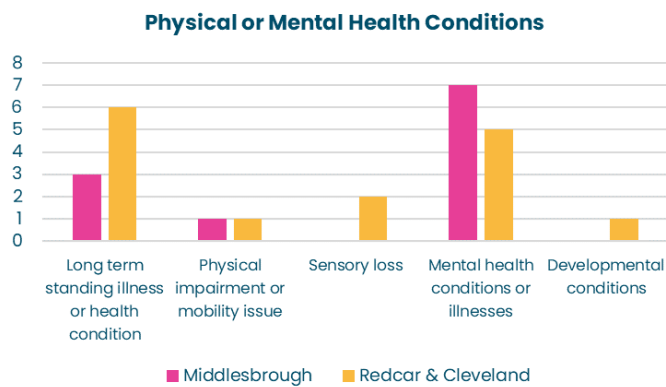
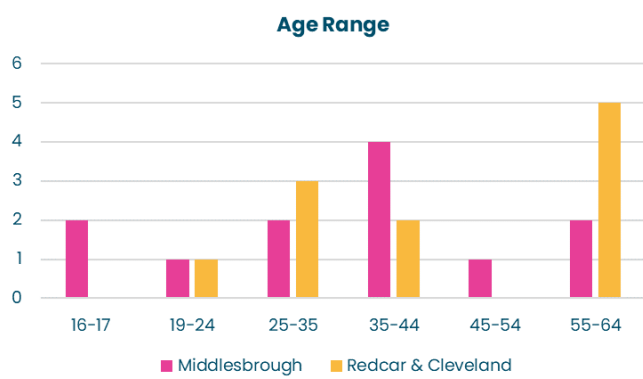
Middlesbrough

The Middlesbrough Focus Group was held at Community Ventures which is an organisation that supports local people in the Thortree area. We had 12 participants which included volunteers, staff, and local residents.

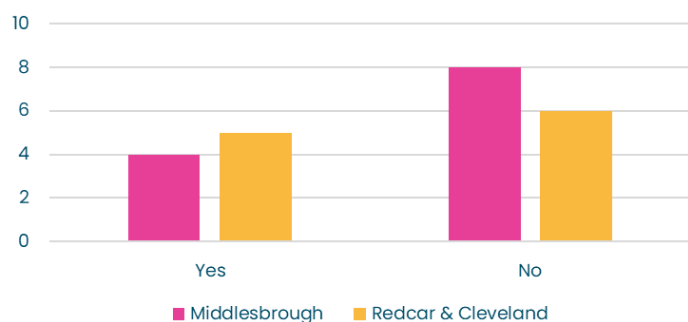
Redcar and Cleveland

The Redcar and Cleveland Focus Group was held at Grangetown Generations, which is a voluntary organisation which provides support for all ages in the community. The 11 participants were volunteers who live in the local area.

Participant Information



Have you been prescribed opiates / pain relief from your doctor in the last 12 months?



Are you an unpaid carer?



Discussion and Feedback

1. What are your thoughts about the Waiting Well programme?

Middlesbrough

- It sounds interesting. You always feel like you are at the back of the waiting list, so it would be good to be able to ask questions and get reassurance.
- It sounds like a good idea. Once you are on a waiting list you are just left. You don't get any information. Older people especially don't know where to ring for an update. So, you put your life on hold while you are waiting. This can impact your mental health as well as your physical health.
- Covid pushed things back and you don't even know if you are still on a waiting list for things.

Redcar and Cleveland

- Good idea for people who need it, especially if waiting a while.
- What happens if they don't get the information?
- Some people have a diagnosis and don't do anything about it.
- How do people access this programme?
- Will they have to wait longer on the programme if not fit enough?
- Some people aren't physically well enough to do exercise.
- What if underlining conditions? Have diabetes. Operation booked in, took time off work and on the day, diabetes levels not right for operation so had to cancel. This has an impact on life or time off work, kids to look after.

2. How would you feel if you were identified as someone who could take part in the Waiting Well programme?

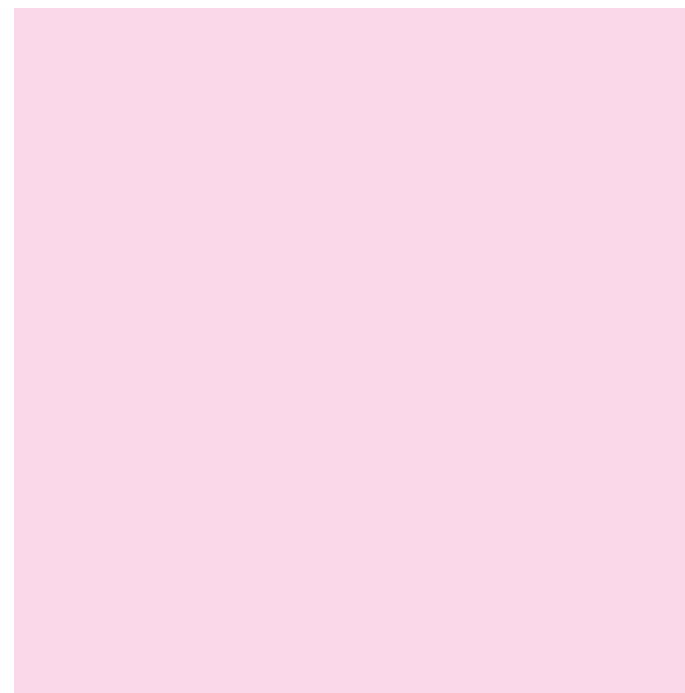
Middlesbrough

- Depends on what was being offered. It must be relevant to me. It would be good for the person who rang you to have an idea of when your operation might take place, even if that meant saying it won't be before a certain date. So that you can get on with your life as best as you can. I think having information on exercise pre and post operation might be good though.
- It depends on your motivation, where you live, the time of year, your age, the weather for example.
- It would be important to me that the right type of language was used when someone contacted me. I wouldn't want to be told to stop smoking for example, especially if I was older and had smoked for lots of years. It would be better to have more gentle guidance.
- I wouldn't answer the phone if I didn't recognise the number, if it was a number out of the area or no number showing. Maybe the letter needs to say what number would be contacting you.
- The letters need to have a font size of at least 14, there should be translation offered.
- I would want to know what would happen to me if I didn't accept the advice offered. Would this mean I would go to the back of the list?
- I would be open to do what they tell me, for example if they told me to stop drinking.

Redcar and Cleveland

- It depends on the support, if someone is overweight it isn't good enough to be told to lose weight.
- Healthy food sometimes costs more than unhealthy food.
- What will the barriers be if need to make changes? Not financially capable, not physically able to do exercise?
- What actual support is available?
- It needs to be the right type of support individual to each person.
- Person centred approach.
- Do not want to be told to just lose weight or to stop smoking.
- A healthy lifestyle costs more money.

- I would probably do it for a bit and then stop after a few weeks. So having a group or person to check-in with me might be helpful and make it become part of my life for the longer term.
- I would want to be able to bring someone along with me to an exercise session, either a friend or family member, because I wouldn't go into a room of new people on my own. The letter would need to be clear that I didn't have to go alone. I would also want to know that there was somewhere for them to sit whilst I was doing an exercise class.



3. What do you think the benefits of the Waiting Well programme will be?

Middlesbrough

- Free exercise – classes can be expensive.
- Could be a chance to do some socialising as well, which would be good for mental health.
- Having more information on likely timeframes for the operation and recovery times might also help support my mental health.
- Having someone I know, and trust come to the classes with me.

Redcar and Cleveland

- It's hard to say as depends on what operation they will be having.
- Will the support be appropriate for the individual?
- Will there be the same level of support offered post operation?
- If offered support for example explaining the traffic light system on food packaging and that just because one item is red it doesn't mean you can't have it.
- Ensure the support given is achievable for that person.
- Think of external factors e.g. are they mentally well enough or if they suffer from high blood pressure brought on by stress how can this be alleviated before the operation to stop it from being cancelled.

4. What do you think the challenges of the Waiting Well programme will be?

Middlesbrough

- Getting people to answer the phone to you – if they don't know who is calling.
- There needs to be a trusted relationship with someone before you will join in or take on board advice.
- If I had to go somewhere on my own, where I didn't know anybody, I wouldn't go.
- The discussion needs to be conversational when asking questions about general health, there needs to be an element of fun and enjoyment to get the conversation to be open and flowing, adopt a gentle touch, rather than direct questions.
- The person who rings you needs to have a least some basic knowledge of the average waiting time to support mental health and information on the types of exercise that you would be doing and would work best for you.
- There needs to be some longer term support to maintain the changes.

Redcar and Cleveland

- Consider long term/ short term/ cost/ the individual person and methods of communication.
- How will it be communicated to different demographics.
- If they don't want to take part of the programme how will that impact on the time waiting for the operation?
- People may see it as a burden or that someone is interfering in their life.
- Some may be worried about losing their independence.
- Need to provide different approaches to different demographics.
- E.g. an older person who has lived his life the same way may not take kindly to someone telling him he needs to change. They may be worried about carers taking over their lives.

5. Putting yourself in the shoes of someone who can receive support from the Waiting Well programme, what type of support would you want to help change your health behaviours both before your surgery and in the long-term?

Middlesbrough

- Opportunity to take a friend or family member along.
- Be local and within easy reach of transport links.
- It would need to be free.
- They would need to support you now and in the long term.
- Make it fun, for example seated Zumba classes, popular fun music, mixed groups with a social element, possibility of refreshments.
- In community venues which people are used to using and are confident and comfortable with.

Redcar and Cleveland

- Help with kids e.g. if child is autistic and parent needs to go in hospital, they will need a lot of support.
- Financial.
- After care.
- Think about what support the person has around them.
- How do they get identified into the programme? Is it age related? Are there only certain operations that it applies to?
- If a young person needs a knee replacement, would they be able to get on the programme?
- Will they get the operation quicker if they do the programme, what happens if they fail?
- How long is this programme on for?
- How is priority decided?

6. Do you have any other questions, comments or suggestions about the Waiting Well programme that you would like North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board to consider?

Middlesbrough

In an ideal world having someone to complete some basic health checks at the events such as blood pressure checks might be a good opportunity to pick up early signs of other complications which could not only impact on their operation, but on their overall health.

Redcar and Cleveland

- Would depend on what operations are under the scheme.
- Help to make process less stressful.
- Will the person accept the information given and can they understand it.
- Need to rely on patients being truthful, how much they smoke or drink for example.
- The programme needs to fit the person, not the person to fit the programme.

Update / Implementation

All of these responses were shared with the ICB, along with responses from focus groups carried out across the region.

These will be taken into consideration and will inform any changes required in the development and delivery of this programme.

We have also shared this data with local organisations responsible for the delivery of this programme across South Tees for them to consider within their support. They would like to continue patient involvement to explore things like leaflets, poster etc.

healthwatch

Middlesbrough

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Working for you,

across South Tees

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