

# healthwatch

## Stockton-on-Tees



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Healthwatch local  
Annual Report 2013/14



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**Tony Beckwith, Chair of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees**

Welcome to the first Annual Report of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees. We are the new consumer champion for health and social care in the borough and our aim is to put the voice of those who live and work in Stockton-on-Tees at the heart of health and social care services.

Next year I envisage that we will make full use of both statutory powers as well as powers of persuasion to fulfil this part of our role.

2013-14 has been a busy and demanding first year for us all but I am proud of our achievements and the solid foundation we have built for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees. I firmly believe we will serve the Borough well in the years ahead. I'd like to thank the staff of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees, Pioneering Care Partnership and my fellow Executive Board members for their time, energy and commitment. Most of all I'd like to thank the individuals, groups and organisations that have helped us make such a good start. You are the real 'Healthwatch.'

The people we've talked to during 2013-14 are aware of the pressures local services are under but they also tell us that the health and social care system is still not as good at listening as it could be and that the lessons of recent major crises in care provision still need to be embedded. As far back as 2009, Dr David Colin Thomé in his review of lessons learnt for the Healthcare Commission about Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust said:

PCTs (now CCGs) should be held to account for their responsibility for engaging patients and the public in design, delivery and quality assurance of health and care services, and for ensuring that the providers that they commission do likewise.

"Although commissioners and providers of health and social care services are getting better at listening to those who use services, there is still a long way to go before we can say that patients and the public are being involved at the design and commissioning stage."

This is why our role in holding those who commission services to account through the Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Scrutiny is so important. We must contribute objectively to early discussions about commissioning intentions and assessing progress on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

If you'd like to join in a conversation with me about Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees going forward please feel free to get in touch at [anthonybeckwith@hotmail.com](mailto:anthonybeckwith@hotmail.com)

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**General office enquiries**  
**01642 688312**

**Freephone 08081729559**  
for information and signposting to local health and social care services and support

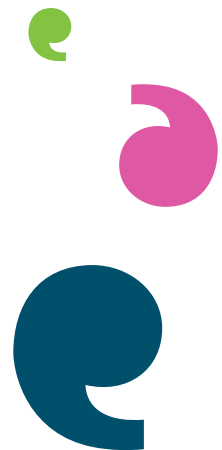


### Our vision

Our vision for Healthwatch in Stockton-on-Tees is to be a strong, independent, trusted and effective voice and a champion for local people, influencing health and social care delivery and supporting people to access health and social care services. Healthwatch will strive to ensure the best possible quality and choice in health, social care and wellbeing services for the benefit of all living and working in the city.

### Our objectives

Healthwatch in Stockton-on-Tees will:



1	Fulfil its statutory duties and functions, holding providers and commissioners of health and social care services to account where needed
2	Operate as a corporate body, embedded in local communities
3	Act as the local consumer champion, representing the collective voice of patients, service users, carers and the public, on statutory Health and Wellbeing Boards and robust challenge and scrutiny in the interests of its members and the citizens of the City of Stockton-on-Tees
4	Play an integral role in the preparation, reviewing and refreshing of the statutory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and joint health and wellbeing commissioning intentions and strategies on which local commissioning decisions will be based
5	Have real influence with commissioners, providers, regulators and Healthwatch England, using its knowledge of what matters to local people
6	Report concerns about the quality of local health and social care services to Healthwatch England which can then recommend that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) take action
7	Provide information to patients and public who need to find out about health and care services and promote informed choice in local health and social care services
8	Support individuals to find the right information and independent advocacy, where needed, if they need help to complain about NHS or social care services
9	Build on and utilise existing local engagement and signposting pathways and mechanisms rather than duplicating what is already in place

## The policy and legislative context for Healthwatch

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established Healthwatch as the new consumer champion for health and social care services for adults and children with the stated ambition ‘to achieve the best health and care services that are shaped by local needs and experiences’.

The Act aimed to strengthen the collective voice of patients, users of care services and the public through the establishment of a new structure known as Healthwatch. The Act established two Healthwatch new bodies:

**Healthwatch England** - a statutory committee of the Care Quality Commission

**Local Healthwatch** organisations to be commissioned by each Local Authority in England

Healthwatch replaced Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) but retained all of its statutory functions, with some additional ones.

Healthwatch is unique in being the only non-statutory body with statutory powers and duties:

- The power to enter and view premises where health or social care services are provided (this power does not extend to premises that provide social care to children but Healthwatch is expected to gather views & experiences from children and young people in collaboration with local partners)
- Service providers and commissioners have a duty to respond to Local Healthwatch reports and recommendations within 20 working days -this also applies to providers of children’s social care services
- Local Healthwatch has a **statutory entitlement to a seat on the local Health and Wellbeing Board**
- Local Healthwatch has a **duty to provide information about health and social care services**
- Local Healthwatch can **escalate issues direct** to Healthwatch England (HWE) and through them, the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Local Healthwatch can also refer issues of concern direct to the Health Scrutiny Committee

“Commissioners and providers will have regard to the reports and recommendations and will have to be able to justify their decision if they do not intend to follow through on them.”

Healthwatch regulations

## The four domains of local Healthwatch activity

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 spells out the key activities each local Healthwatch is expected to undertake:

- Promoting and supporting, the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services
- Enabling people to monitor and review care services
- Obtaining the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local care services
- Making these views known through reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services



### The four domains of local Healthwatch activity

The Health and Social Care Act is very clear that an effective local Healthwatch will result in **‘the best health and care services that are shaped by local needs and experiences’**. This outcome-based approach means that to be truly effective, local Healthwatch will need to operate effectively across four key ‘domains’ of activity (below)

#### ‘Voice’

Ensuring people’s voices are heard and influence the design, commissioning and delivery of health and social care services

#### Scrutiny and Accountability

Holding commissioners and providers of local health and social care services to account through representation on key strategic partnerships including Health and Wellbeing Board; power to Enter and View services; 20 day duty to respond to local Healthwatch reports and recommendations; power to escalate matters of concern to Healthwatch England, the CQC and Health Scrutiny Committee

#### Information and Signposting

Providing information/ signposting about local health and social care services to enable people to make informed choices about services and support

#### Complaints

Providing information/signposting to those wishing to complain about services including signposting to the NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Service





## The model for local Healthwatch in Stockton-on-Tees



Following a competitive tendering process, Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) was awarded the contract for Stockton-on-Tees Healthwatch. PCP is a leading third sector health improvement organisation whose mission is to improve **Health, Wellbeing and Learning for all.**

PCP was Host organisation for County Durham LINK and also secured Healthwatch contracts in Sunderland, Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough.

### Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees - 'a network of networks'

The PCP model for delivery of Healthwatch in Stockton-on-Tees is based on the notion that it can only truly be effective in reaching as many citizens as possible if it works with and through established networks. This means that Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees:

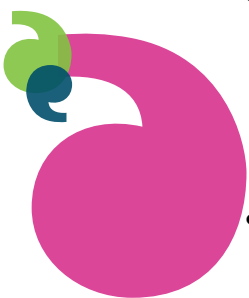
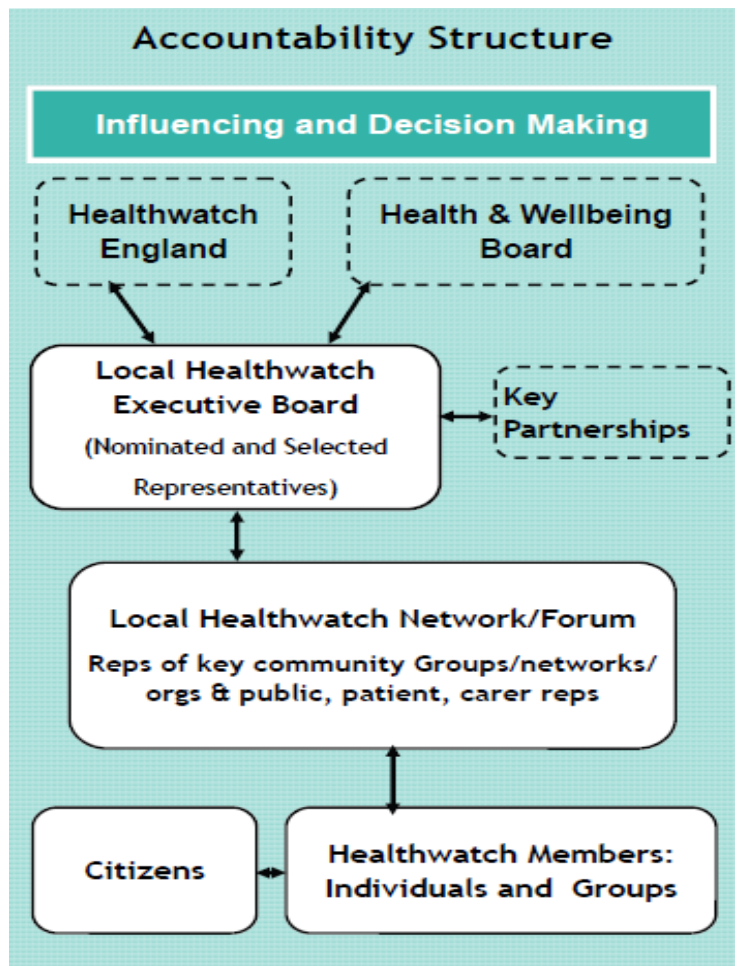
- Builds strong links with local voluntary and community groups
- Uses established community networks to share information, and to find out what matters to people
- Sub-contracts specific projects to local partners with the right skills and local knowledge
- Builds a bank of trained Healthwatch Information Volunteers who can be the eyes and ears of Healthwatch at grass-roots level
- Champions the voices of those who are seldom-heard

### Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees - an inclusive organisation open to:

- individuals who live and/or work in Stockton-on-Tees
- local organisations and groups representing a diverse range of communities in the Borough and supported by
  - paid staff and volunteers with specific roles and responsibilities
  - a volunteer Executive Board providing expert leadership, strategic direction and feedback to the wider membership

### Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees - an independent organisation

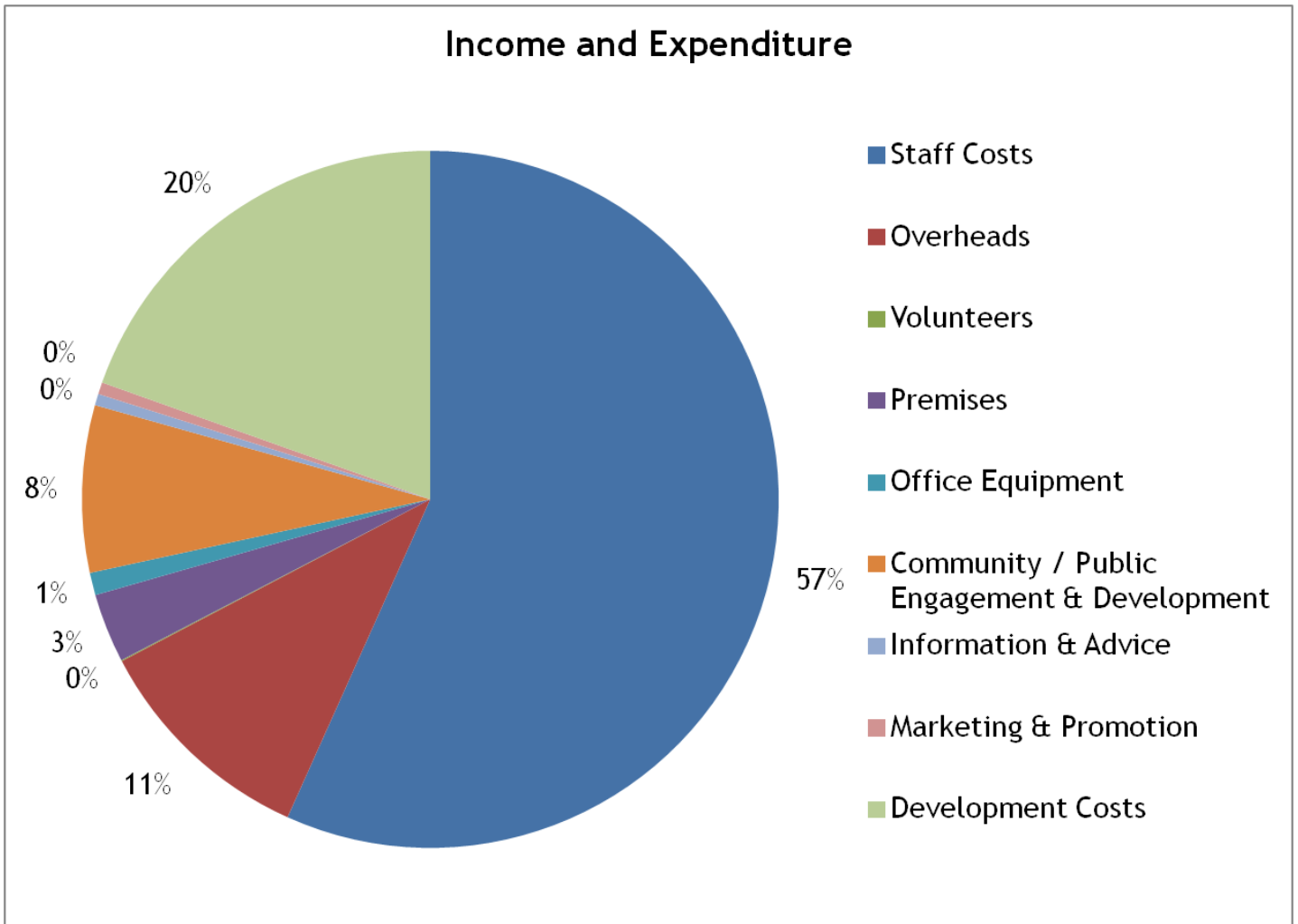
Local Healthwatch is independent of central and local government with its own legal powers and sets its own work programme to reflect the concerns of the local community.







The available funding for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees delivery in year one was £129,554



On 1 April 2013, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees entered into a licensing agreement with Healthwatch England to use its trademark and branding toolkit on all Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees materials, including those related to its statutory duties, activities and powers.



### Key achievements for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees in year one include:

- Efficient LINKs legacy handover and transfer of staff.
- Full audit of LINK legacy issues as part of managing the transition from LINK to Healthwatch.
- Effective mobilisation phase meaning that on 1st April 2013 Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees was open for business.
- National branding guidelines for Healthwatch licensed from Healthwatch England.
- Stockton-on-Tees Healthwatch-specific promotional materials designed, printed and distributed.
- 'Back office' set up to maximise efficient support to operation of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees.
- An ambitious Project Delivery Plan year one with key tasks, targets and milestones agreed, signed off by PCP and Local Authority commissioners and delivered on time and on target.
- A brand-new Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Information and Signposting service operational from 1 April 2013 offering a Freephone number to anyone who needs information about local health and care services.
- Development of a comprehensive pathway for signposting people who wish to complain about their services- nothing similar existed locally previously. This has been welcomed by many commissioners and providers of services.
- Major programme of awareness raising activities targeted at potential Network membership and stakeholders with more than 34 events and activities undertaken across the Borough.
- Targeted recruitment drive to build the Healthwatch network of both organisational and individual members with year one targets exceeded by at least 50%.
- Interim arrangements to fill places on key strategic partnerships including Health and Wellbeing Board in place from 1 April 2013 with smooth transition once Board members in place.
- Successful launch of the Healthwatch Network including online and offline events and opportunity to influence our year one Work Programme.
- Early piece of work responding to the Council's review of Adult Mental Health services.
- Successful campaign to recruit, fill and train for key volunteer roles on the Executive Board and Information Volunteers.
- A skilled and effective Executive Board in place, recruited through a robust, open and transparent process which included a role descriptor and core competences followed by comprehensive Board induction, skills audit and development opportunities.
- Executive Board meeting regularly and Board members hold places on key strategic partnerships including Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Programme of meetings for Chair of Healthwatch as part of induction and seat on Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees has a distinctive website and social media presence including a dedicated Facebook page and a Twitter feed with 350 followers.



- Detailed and comprehensive Work Plan signed off by the Executive Board based on robust analysis of feedback from the membership and the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees and a process for prioritising of issues by the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Board which takes account of priorities identified in the local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group commissioning plans and other key strategic documents which impact on the health and Wellbeing of the people of Stockton-on-Tees.
- More than 130 partners, stakeholders and member organisations are actively promoting Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees through their networks-extending our reach significantly. This includes organisations and groups working with older people and those whose voices are seldom heard.
- Robust governance arrangements, including comprehensive policies and procedures, in place which ensure accountability to both the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees membership and the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees.
- A comprehensive public awareness campaign to let the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees know about our Information and Signposting service which included a major media campaign, press releases, leaflets, posters, promotional items, handy reference cards and information kits. Coverage included local and regional print and digital media. To date over 2000 leaflets have been distributed.
- Development of strong relationships with commissioning colleagues on the Health and Wellbeing Board based on mutual respect and genuine commitment to partnership working.





Volunteers are central to the work of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees. During 2013-14 they have been actively involved in two key roles as:

### Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Executive Board members

### Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Information Champions

Volunteers fulfilling these roles are active members of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and must live and/or work in the city. As members, they play an important role in:

- Telling Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and other stakeholders about their own experience of services
- Collecting and sharing feedback about services from their own communities and networks with Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and other stakeholders
- Setting the work programme and priorities for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees
- Representing Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees in a range of settings where care services are being discussed
- Ensuring the good governance of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees

Volunteers are involved in the work of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees through:

Membership of the Executive Board and representing Healthwatch on key Strategic partnerships & boards.

The Healthwatch Network - which debates and identifies issues for Healthwatch Annual Work Plan and nominates Executive Board members

Task and Finish Groups - carrying specific project work linked to the Annual Work Plan and the local Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Individual volunteer roles as:

- Information Champion
- Enter & View Representatives

We also recruit volunteers with to help from time to time on specialist tasks, for example, a volunteer with specialist skills helped devise a questionnaire on hospital discharge.

There are clear descriptors for each volunteer role with Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees who undertook a pro-active campaign to recruit a broad-based group of volunteers to join its Executive Board and act as Information Champions during 2013-14.

We also began recruiting Enter and View Representatives towards the end of March 2014 for training in May 2014.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees has a volunteer Executive Board of seven members and a trained cohort of 15 Information Volunteers are supported by a dedicated Community Development Assistant who offers support and supervision on a fortnightly basis.





Volunteers also meet quarterly discuss their work and they raise Healthwatch’s profile by wearing Healthwatch branded t-shirts and carrying Healthwatch bags.

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds including those whose voices are seldom heard.

All Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees volunteers are provided with training, supervision, support and out of pocket expenses and Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees recognises volunteer contributions formally through certification and an awards ceremony. Additionally, Information Volunteers gain skills, confidence, knowledge which will increase their potential employability. Towards the end of 2013, the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Executive Board undertook a tailor-made Skills Audit to assess their additional training or development needs.



## Partners

In line with our ‘network of networks’ model, we have commissioned some local partners to undertake specific activity on our behalf aligned to our work programme. During 2013-4 these partners were:

### Know How North East

Supporting our work in involving children and young people in the work of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees  
 Newtown Community Resource Centre  
 123 Durham Rd, Stockton-on-Tees  
 TS19 0DE  
 01642 614126

### Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind

Supporting our work in involving people with mental health problems in the work of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees  
 The Mind Centre  
 90-92 Lothian Road  
 Middlesbrough TS4 2QX  
 01642 257020  
[info@middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk](mailto:info@middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk)

### Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association

Supporting our work in involving grass-roots communities and those whose voices are seldom heard in the work of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees  
 Marlborough House  
 Suite 4, 1st Floor  
 30-32 Yarm Road  
 Stockton on Tees TS18 3NG  
 01642 733 912  
[info@srcga.co.uk](mailto:info@srcga.co.uk)

## Governance

One of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees's first priorities was to recruit lay people and volunteers to its Executive Board. The role of the Board is to provide strategic oversight and good governance to Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and ensure it delivers its strategic objectives. Specifically its role is to:

- To agree priorities and sign off the annual work programme based on feedback from Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees members
- Receive reports and recommendations from Task and Finish Groups
- Oversee Enter and View activity in line with the work programme, receive reports and recommendations and escalate where necessary to Healthwatch England
- Oversee the proportionate and judicious exercise of other statutory duties and powers held by Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees
- Ensure that the annual work programme takes account of Health and Wellbeing Board, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Clinical commissioning Group priorities and is used to inform the annual commissioning intentions of these partners
- Authorise requests for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees representation on other strategic boards relevant Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees business
- Ensure that the voices of young people are valued and listened to within Healthwatch in a meaningful way
- Ensure the views of the wider Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees membership are fully considered by the Board and that feedback is regularly provided to the Healthwatch network about how the Board makes decisions and sets priorities

## Activities

Statutory activities as defined by s221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007	What we've done so far...
<p>Promoting, and supporting, the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services</p> <p>Enabling people to monitor and review care services</p>	<p>Open Network Forum meetings held in July 2013, offering members an opportunity to share experience and influence Healthwatch work programme priorities. To date, 150 individuals or organisations have contributed specific feedback on issues of concern.</p> <p>Detailed analysis and feedback report summarising feedback from Network Forum events disseminated and on website and used to inform board decisions about Work Programme priorities.</p> <p>An update on emerging themes is planned for a future Health and Wellbeing Board meeting.</p>





<p>Obtaining the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local care services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People under 21 or over 65</li><li>• People who work or volunteer in the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees area</li><li>• People from diverse backgrounds and sectors of society</li><li>• People from groups whose voices are seldom heard by those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services</li></ul> <p>Making these views known through reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services</p>	<p>Open/ongoing opportunities for members and the public to provide feedback through website, feedback forms and via Freephone number to Information and Signposting Service.</p> <p>27 activities specifically targeted at those voices which are seldom heard and highlighting inequalities in health and/or care for seldom heard groups.</p> <p>Consultation, engagement and report with 72 children and young people about school nursing services.</p> <p>Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees represented on the following Boards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and Wellbeing Board</li><li>• Stockton Locality CCG</li><li>• Quality Standards Steering Group North Tees</li><li>• Health and Social Care Partnership</li><li>• Health Scrutiny</li><li>• North East Ambulance Service</li><li>• Teesside Safeguarding Board</li></ul> <p>Participation in sub regional Healthwatch activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Chairs Meetings</li><li>• Healthwatch staff attendance at Regional Healthwatch Leads meetings</li><li>• Jointly convened with other Tees and Sunderland Healthwatches a regional round table meeting with Healthwatch England</li></ul> <p>35 relationship meetings with statutory/other stakeholders to raise awareness and understanding of Healthwatch.</p> <p>3 events for front line workers to raise awareness of Healthwatch.</p> <p>15 local Information Volunteers trained to extend reach into local communities and get feedback about issues of concern.</p> <p>Comprehensive communications strategy and materials for wide dissemination to the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees about the Information and Signposting service.</p> <p>Intelligence and data collection from all contacts with Information and Signposting service to identify trends and patterns in local service provision.</p>
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## Reports and recommendations

It is too early to assess the degree of impact Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees has had any impact on the commissioning, provision and management of the health and care services including improvements to those services. This will be a priority going forward into 2014-15.

Early in the year, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees took up an invitation to participate in a consultation about proposed changes to how the Council's adult mental health services are provided in the Borough. This formed part of an EIT (Efficiency Improvement and Transformation) Review of Adult Mental Health Services conducted by the Health Select Committee and was our very first piece of work.

Healthwatch's contribution was acknowledged and fed into the Review, however a formal response to our report and recommendations was not received within 20 days and it took some time to secure an appropriate response as there was a lack of clarity about appropriate protocols for managing responses. This experience served as a useful learning exercise for both the Council and Healthwatch and resulted in the development and agreement of a joint Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and Stockton Borough Council Reporting Protocol for managing future submissions and requests.

We also gained an opportunity to share and better appreciate each party's understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities relating to Healthwatch.

During 2013-14, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees did not make any recommendations to the CQC or the Healthwatch England committee of the Care Quality Commission about reviews or investigations which required attention. While the first Work Programme for Stockton-on-Tees Healthwatch was being agreed, no Enter and View visits by Authorised Representatives were planned and no requests from third parties such as the Care Quality Commission, the Health and Wellbeing Board or Health Scrutiny were made to us. We anticipate there will be visits during 2014-15 aligned to the Annual Work Programme and Enter and View representatives are currently being trained to carry out these visits.

In addition to the EIT Review, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees provided evidence to the Adult Services and Health Select Committee Review of Access to GP, Urgent, and Emergency Care and a local review of school nursing services in the context of healthy child in Stockton-on-Tees.

### Stockton-on-Tees Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees has been welcomed as an active and equal partner in the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Recruitment to the role of Healthwatch Chair involved a detailed role description and core competences that ensure the Chair understands their duties and responsibilities and can exercise these effectively and appropriately on behalf of members and the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees. A comprehensive induction programme for the Chair was arranged which included meetings with key partners on the Board.

## Challenges

There have been some challenges during our first year of operation including:

Healthwatch start-up coincided with major changes particularly in the configuration of health service commissioning, particularly the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups and Public Health moving into local authorities. The role of NHS England in commissioning primary care services proved to be a particularly complex and challenging issue for many.

Many commissioners and providers of health care services were unclear about the role of Healthwatch, particularly in relation to complaints and disseminated incorrect information suggesting that Healthwatch would investigate or handle individual complaints about services.

Healthwatch England were slower than anticipated in developing their 'offer' to local Healthwatch which meant that each local organisation had to invest scarce time and resources in developing local tools, processes and protocols including those for performance management, board recruitment and volunteer training. Development of a new Information and Signposting service was particularly

challenging as it was dependent on the accuracy of third party data and there was no clear pathway for co-ordinating information relating to complaints in the new environment. This had to be developed by our Information and Signposting Officer before we could confidently direct people contacting us for information.

A key challenge was communicating the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees 'network of networks' model to members and stakeholders as it was significantly different to that of the Local Involvement Network (LINK). Governance arrangements were also different to those of the LINK and new and different relationships had to be built with statutory partners who had been accustomed to direct involvement in LINK governance.

Understanding of the scope and statutory basis of local Healthwatch's scrutiny and accountability function has proved in some cases to be quite limited and it has been important to show how we can complement, rather than duplicate, other scrutiny and challenge activity undertaken by stakeholders.



Hospital Discharge
Direct Payments-Mental Health Services
Breastfeeding
<b>We also need to:</b> Review our current work plan to monitor progress and impact and take account of new trends and issues raised
Undertake a gap analysis of our current membership and run a targeted recruitment campaign to address these gaps
Continue our work to involve children and young people in the work of Healthwatch
Recruit and train further cohorts of Information Volunteers
Recruit and train Enter and View representatives for visits aligned to our work programme
Provide feedback to the Health and Wellbeing Board on current trends and issues and raise our profile with the Board in terms of our scrutiny and accountability function
Continue to develop our positive and complementary working relationship with Health Scrutiny
Continue our targeted programme to raise awareness of information and Signposting service in Sunderland
Build upon our relationship with Care Quality Commission Inspectors and managers and improve our capacity for supporting them in their role

## Dissemination

This Annual Report will be signed off by the Executive Board and shared with the membership at an open meeting before being sent to Healthwatch England as laid out in Healthwatch regulations by end June 2014.

The Annual Report will be widely disseminated via our website, e-bulletins, our membership and key stakeholders and will be available in special formats on request. Copies will be made available specifically to:

- Healthwatch England
- The Care Quality Commission
- NHS England
- All Clinical Commissioning Groups which fall within our local authority area
- The Overview and Scrutiny committee of the Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council



### Volunteer involvement in current Work Programme

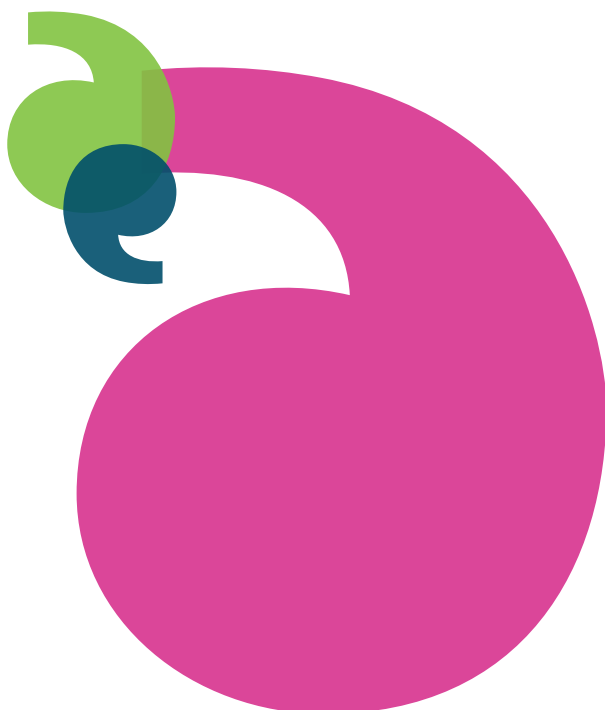
Healthwatch Stockton is carrying out a piece of work about hospital discharge from the University Hospital of North Tees. One volunteers with experience in designing questionnaires and data collection tools has supported this process by helping design a questionnaire for use by staff in the hospital. Another is undertaking follow up calls to discharged patients to gather information on their experience after leaving hospital.

This opportunity has offered Healthwatch volunteers a exciting opportunity to contribute to our work in a meaningful way which will really support the community in which they live.



### Grass roots engagement shapes current Work Programme

During our early engagement work, an Information Volunteer gathered some intelligence from her local network on the subject of breast feeding. We followed this up by chatting to some new mothers at a Babies and Bumps group about their experiences of using maternity services both pre-natal and anti-natal and found there was frustration around the support provided after delivery at North Tees Hospital. Because of this feedback, Healthwatch has now incorporated breastfeeding support into its current Work Programme.





**Nature of enquiry**

Caller rang as not very happy with treatment from out of hours service and wanted to know what her options would be. Caller had emergency appointment at out of hours as her prescription she had run out of. Had been prescribed beta blockers for ongoing tinnitus. Previously had 2 x 20 mg twice a day. Doctor said this was too low and prescribed 2 x 80 mg. Caller also asked if she was ok to take Sudafed with this and GP said yes. Later found out this not to be the case. After taking tablets caller suffered extreme hallucinations. Called back to the out of hours team in early hours and doctor only said that it would wear off by lunch time. Visited own GP following day who told her to throw away the prescription. No action offered to caller about how GP giving wrong prescription would be addressed

**Action taken**

Gave caller options on how to progress an NHS complaint such as contacting surgery or NHS England. Also gave details of Advocacy support services. Caller enquired if she would be entitled to compensation but explained we can't offer information about this. Explained that Citizen's Advice would be able to do this however, and could also support her with the complaint. Caller happy to contact CAB and also gave permission for us to call back to follow up on progress and outcome.

**Nature of enquiry**

Caller wanted to make complaint about X Dental Practice. Had crown fitted and pays for treatment which was Band 3. Pain after procedure but Dentist said she needed root canal (in same tooth). Caller queried why this wasn't done when crown fitted and Dentist said that's how they do it. Suffered further pain and infection in same tooth. On subsequent visits was charged £18.00 check up fee and told she cannot get a repeat prescription for antibiotics unless she pays a further £18.00. Caller refused as she thought that as it related to the initial treatment there should be no charge.

**Action taken**

Signposted to NHS England commissioner of dental services for clarification on charging.





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# healthwatch

## Stockton-on-Tees

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General office enquiries  
01642 688312

Freephone 08081729559 for information  
and signposting to local health and social  
care services and support

This information can be made available in large  
print, Braille, audio and other languages