

**Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees**  
**Annual Report 2014/15**





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## Note from the Chair - Tony Beckwith

It's a great pleasure to introduce the second Annual Report for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees. It gives us the opportunity to tell everyone the successes of the year 2014/15 and outline the activities of Healthwatch, its volunteers and its staff. We are the voice of the people of Stockton-on-Tees, especially those who receive health or social care and we take advantage of every chance we get to feed the views of the public to those who provide or commission these services. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees.

During the year we have contributed to several investigations either in our own right or to support the Council's Scrutiny Committees; we have been able to offer the views of the public and generate change in the way services are provided. We are now established and fully recognised as contributors on a number of committees and working groups such as the Health and Wellbeing Board. We have started a programme of "Enter and View" visits to services across both health and social care. The outcome of such visits will directly influence the way these services are provided by picking out deficiencies and suggesting change as well as influence the commissioning of services in the future.

If you have any comments on this report or the work that we do please contact me on: [anthonybeckwith@hotmail.com](mailto:anthonybeckwith@hotmail.com).

## Note from Healthwatch Manager - Natasha Judge

This year has seen significant growth in relationships with the public, partners, stakeholders and other community organisations, strengthening the voice of local people. We have shared this intelligence to influence the planning of statutory NHS and social care services ensuring information gathered is used to improve services.

By actively seeking the views of people who are not often heard, we have enabled individuals to have a stronger voice providing assurance that their views and opinions are valued. As the manager of Healthwatch Stockton, I am very proud of the excellent work that Healthwatch volunteers, staff and the Board have carried out in the second year, and look forward to building on that work in the future. Whilst we have achieved much this year, our vision for the future is to build upon our successes and continue to make positive change for the residents of Stockton-on-Tees.

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# About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is a patient and service user voice organisation. We listen to people's experiences and views of local health and social care services. We use this information to influence how services are planned and delivered in the future to make sure they meet the needs of those people using them.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is an independent organisation steered by a Board of volunteers. Healthwatch is commissioned by the Local Authority and accountable to the public.

## Our vision

Our vision for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is to be a strong, independent, trusted and effective voice and champion for local people.

We strive to work effectively with the local Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health Stockton-on-Tees and local health and social care providers ensuring the needs and preferences of service users are at the heart of the deliverance of health and social care services.

## The Healthwatch remit

- Involving and engaging the local community in the scrutiny of, and influencing the commissioning of, local services.
- Conducting in-depth investigations into identified areas of concern.
- Identify gaps in services and areas in need of improvements.
- Producing reports and making recommendations for local health and social care services. We have the statutory right to request a response from organisations which receive these reports.
- Act on concerns of the public and use our statutory right to enter and view local services.
- We have a statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board enabling us to deliver intelligence gathered from the community to inform decision makers.
- Empower and support members of the community to access local services through our information and signposting service.
- We are responsible for reporting concerns to Healthwatch England that may need greater investigation by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure service users are receiving the best quality of care.



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# Engaging with people who use health and social care services

## Understanding people's experiences

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees listens to the views of local people who use health and social care services. We use a variety of tools to engage with the public including public events, visiting community groups and social media. We deliberately make a point of listening to vulnerable people and communities who do not usually have their voices heard. We use the information we gather as the basis for our work programme then carry out deeper engagement as part of our investigations.

Working in partnership with the Local Eye Health Network, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees gathered public intelligence to feed into a Local Eye Health Needs Assessment. This is an example of how we have specifically aimed to engage with seldom heard groups and vulnerable people. For example, we:

- Listened to service users with long term eye conditions at Teesside Society for the Blind;
- Held a focus group with people in the deaf community;
- Held a focus group with men from the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community;
- Held a drop in session with smokers;
- Held a drop in session with people with dementia and their carers;
- Held a focus group with people with learning disabilities.

The information gathered and collated was fed into the Local Eye Health Network and it was used to form the Patient and Public Engagement section of the overall Eye Health Needs Assessment.

Recommendations were made for commissioners and providers in a number of areas, some of which were directly linked to the information people told us:

- Large print, easy read letters and leaflets should be made available to people with learning disabilities by optometry practices;
- Increase Eye Clinic Liaison Officer Provision;
- Interpreter provision for NHS sight tests for members of the BME, deaf and deafened communities to be clarified and communicated to key communities;
- Include optometrists in brief intervention training for smoking cessation;
- Optometrists to undertake dementia awareness training.

'Deaf people don't often have their views listened to, so it's great to be asked by Healthwatch about our experiences of other services, such as how we find accessing support around eye health assessments.'



## What is Enter & View?

We gather the views and experiences of people in a number of different ways, and this can include conducting an Enter and View visit.

Enter and View is seeing and hearing for ourselves how services are being run and allows Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees to collect the views of service users at the point of service delivery.

- We listen to staff, service users and visitors or observe service delivery.
- Enter and View visits are conducted by authorised Healthwatch Representatives who are trained volunteers.
- Visits can either be announced or unannounced.
- Visits have a clear purpose, to ensure effective evidence gathering and reporting.



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**“Enter & View is a really useful tool as it allows us to see how services are delivered from the point of view of people using those services. Our observations can make a real difference to improve services”**

**Beryl Magson, E&V Volunteer**

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## Enter & View in practice...

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees received intelligence from the public suggesting that activities were not being delivered consistently at Roseville Care Centre in Ingleby Barwick.

The Enter & View team planned a visit to the care home in order to observe how activities are delivered. The Care Centre welcomed and supported our visit.

We spoke to a range of residents and staff in the Care Centre, highlighted good practice and identified possible areas for improvements.

Roseville Care Centre responded in writing confirming they would be respond with the following actions:

- Staff have been issued with training booklets relating to delivering activities;
- There are now two Activity Co-ordinators in post;
- Resident Assessments will be completed prior to admission and the Activity Co-ordinators will discuss individual preferences with clients.



# Providing Information & Signposting for people who use health and social care services

## Helping people get what they need from local health and social care services

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees has a statutory duty to provide people with information to enable them to make informed choices on accessing health and social care services.

With such a vast and complicated health and social care system, it's not always clear where you should go to report an urgent issue, to make a complaint, or for further information. Residents of Stockton-on-Tees can contact the Information and Signposting service via telephone, text, email and its website ([www.healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk)).

During the year we have supported many people to access the information and help they need. Here are examples of the queries we have received.

### GP Registrations

- People told us they were having difficulty registering with GP practices in Stockton.
- We highlighted this with NHS England who is investigating the issue.
- We wrote to local practices and reminded them about the criteria for closing their patient lists.
- This has been highlighted in the Stockton Review of Access to GP and Urgent Care Action Plan.



## Signposting and helping people make choices

We have also signposted people to many local services including:

- NHS England;
- PALS;
- Stamp Revisited;
- Independent Complaints Advocacy;
- Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Sanctuary Supported Living;
- Welfare Rights;
- Regional Refugee Forum;
- Pharmaceutical Ombudsman;
- Age UK;
- Alliance Psychological Services;
- Starfish;
- Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind.

It's really useful to record the details of Information and Signposting calls, it enables us to assess where there might be problems or gaps in services and undertake further work where relevant.



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# Influencing decision makers with evidence from local people

## Producing reports and recommendations to effect change

We listen to the views and experiences of people who use health and social care services. We then use this information to influence how services are designed and delivered in the future. We influence in a number of different ways which include:

- Using our seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- Writing reports which influence service reviews;
- Using our relationships with providers to suggest service improvements;
- Enabling service users to be involved in decision making.

## Relationships at North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust

We value the relationships we have developed with our stakeholders and are a credible voice which can reflect service provision in a constructive fashion.

Following positive local feedback, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees suggested that the Trust consider implementing a Complaints Review Panel, in order that the public can be involved in reviewing how complaints are dealt with.

North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust listened to our comments and have developed a successful Complaints Review Panel on which Healthwatch has a seat.

## Stockton Borough Council Review of Homecare Services

During the winter of 2014, Stockton Borough Council conducted a review of Homecare services. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees delivered a parallel engagement exercise eliciting the views of service users in order to feed this information into the review.

We listened to 28 service users and made recommendations based on their comments. These included:

- Ensure that service users and their carers are appropriately represented in future engagement activity;
- Take on board additional findings where service users made comments about difficulty in communicating with the provider administration office;
- Encourage providers to engage with young carers more effectively as part of future provision.

Our subsequent report was highlighted and noted in the Stockton Borough Council Review.

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**“It’s nice to be listened to and asked your opinion. I like that Healthwatch is independent and keeps my comments anonymous”**

Service User, Homecare.

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## Putting local people at the heart of improving services

### Spring Forward Event - a huge success!

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees takes a co-productive approach to decision making. Our public event was therefore a great opportunity for us to invite a range of Healthwatch members as well as the general public to come together to outline the key priorities Healthwatch should address in the coming year.

People discussed at length health and social care issues important to them and then voted to determine which ones Healthwatch should incorporate into its work programme.



## Linking in with local strategic activity

The positive relationships we have developed with local stakeholders are vital. They ensure that we can emphasise the importance of public and patient involvement in strategic development throughout Stockton-on-Tees.

Stockton-on-Tees was recently successful in becoming a Demonstration Model for the delivery of Integrated Personal Commissioning.

The key Healthwatch role is in ensuring service users are involved at all stages of development:

- Championing Co-production;
- Steering Group Membership;
- Community Assets Sub Group;
- Care Planning Work Stream.

In addition to this, we are also working closely with the development of the Better Care Fund in Stockton-on-Tees, with a particular emphasis on public engagement.

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**“It was refreshing to see so many young people at the Spring Forward event. They gave different and enthusiastic opinions.”**

Spring Forward attendee

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# Impact Story

## Case Study

### *Our Work with the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Community*

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Local groups of people from the asylum seeker and refugee community have been feeding views and experiences to Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees.

Supported by the Regional Refugee Forum, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees listened to members of the Health Focus Group about issues that people faced when accessing services.



People told us about their experiences as well as highlighting the issues they have around accessing some services. This information has been fed into current work activity about Sexual Health Services as well as giving direction for further issues for Healthwatch to investigate.

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee community in Stockton-on-Tees has grown over recent years. The community is increasingly diverse with a variety of cultures, languages and experiences as well as a range of health requirements. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees therefore decided this was a key group to engage with. We listened to members of the Regional Refugee Forum as well as members of Raising Awareness in Darlington and Tees Valley.





# Our plans for 2015/16

## Opportunities & challenges for the future

The year ahead sees significant opportunity for Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees to further strengthen our commitment to local people.

Our work programme will centre on the issues which matter most to the local community.

We will be responsive, by changing our work programme priorities throughout the year, where necessary, to ensure we are acting in the interests of our local community.

We have a confirmed programme of work activity which will be delivered throughout the year and have also planned our approach to engaging with seldom heard groups to identify potential issues for deeper investigation.

Current Work Programme	Future Engagement Programme
<b>Sexual Health Services:</b> Recommendations for Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service are in draft at the time of publication.	<b>Mental Health service users:</b> Plans in place to develop a focus group of service users and their carers. This will include a range of Mental Health Services.
<b>Discharge from North Tees Hospital transport arrangements:</b> Working in partnership with NTHFT and NEAS to listen to patients and make recommendations for service improvements.	<b>People with learning disabilities:</b> Healthwatch will use outreach sessions to listen to groups of people and their carers in different situations.
<b>Discharge from North Tees Hospital: Care package arrangements:</b> Monitoring the implementation of local strategies such as Better Care Fund to identify where our investigation can compliment service improvement.	<b>Young People:</b> Developing a young person's engagement strategy designed in conjunction with young people.
<b>Breastfeeding peer support:</b> Continue to feed into Breastfeeding Service Review Steering Group.	<b>People living with dementia and their carers:</b> Utilise the Dementia Hub to listen to people's views and experiences.



# Our governance and decision-making

## Our Board

Our Board is made up of hardworking, dedicated volunteers. The role of the Board is to provide strategic oversight and governance to Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and ensure it delivers its strategic objectives.



Specifically, its role is to:

- Agree priorities and sign off the work programme based on feedback from our network;
- Receive reports and recommendations from Task and Finish groups;
- Oversee all Enter & View activities in line with the work programme, receive reports and to escalate concerns where necessary to Healthwatch England;
- Oversee the proportionate and judicious exercise of other statutory duties and powers held by Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees;

## Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Board:

- Tony Beckwith (Chair);
- Carole Harrison;
- Jonathan Erskine;
- Paul Noddings;
- Tracey Hamilton;
- Oz Sadiq.

## Healthwatch said goodbye to:

- Ingrid Brough-Williams;
- Abdul Khan;
- Linda Oliver;
- James Hadman.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the time and support they gave to the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Board.



# Financial information

INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities		129,554
Additional income		
<b>Total income</b>		<b>129,554</b>

EXPENDITURE		
Office costs		4,360
Staffing costs		89,175
Direct delivery costs		33,853
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>127,388</b>
Balance brought forward		2,166



# Contact us

## Get in touch

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Website URL: [www.healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk)

*If you would like to read our reports in full please contact Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees or visit our website.*

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2015 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our Local Authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

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