

Together

**we're making health
and social care better**

**Healthwatch Hartlepool
Annual Report 2022–23**



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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chairman

Hello everyone,

Here we are again, and another year passed since I last wrote about Healthwatch Hartlepool. It has been an extremely challenging year for us all. I firmly believe we have successfully delivered our statutory duties as we transitioned from working under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic to where we are now. We have seen ourselves facing more and more engagements and for this we are grateful.



On a positive note, we have continued to engage with residents and our volunteer steering group digitally. Learning throughout the year has confirmed our belief that communication is key and this was confirmed when we published our 'Discharge' report in respect of North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

We conducted much more work covering Enter & View activity across 5 residential care homes together with a visit to the Town's Urgent Care facility. We found the Urgent Care facility to be one that everyone involved should be proud of.

We even managed to fit in 3 town wide awareness raising events. These covered Community Mental Health Transformation, Nutrition & Dietetics and Men's Health. Our sincere thanks to North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Hartlepool Council's Public Health team for working collaboratively with us in informing residents what services are available across the town.

We again actively celebrated 'World Mental Health' day by collaborating with a host of partners through some very successful engagements. Summer also saw us launch our new Healthwatch Hartlepool website, which is now attracting many more visitors than previously. This is great source of information for sign posting residents to relevant services.

The Volunteer Steering Group remained active utilising monthly face to face meetings in addition to on-line meetings to carry out prodigious amounts of work and increase their own learning by welcoming guest speakers across the spectrum of Health & Social Care.

We found the last year challenging financially speaking. We have been able to weather this situation through judicious buying and prudent money management. We also relocated our premises to Greenbank in the centre of town and now enjoy being an even greater partner to the Voluntary & Community Sector. I must thank all the Board members who give their time unstintingly and are always there to help when needed.

Message from our Chairman

We have all had to welcome the new way of working under the Health & Care Act 2022. My sincere thanks also go to our Chief Executive Christopher and staff team whose roles have had to adapt to the new way of working in respect of the Integrated Care Board but they have certainly risen to the challenge.

Healthwatch Hartlepool would be nothing without our volunteers. We couldn't carry out the much-needed work without them, thank you. Their task over the next year will be to monitor our newly published work programme.

I am hoping it will be onwards and upwards in the next year and look forward to seeing you all at our next AGM.

Jane Tilly | Healthwatch Hartlepool Chairman



healthwatch

10
years

About us

Healthwatch **Hartlepool** 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 care we need.



Our mission

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



Our values are:

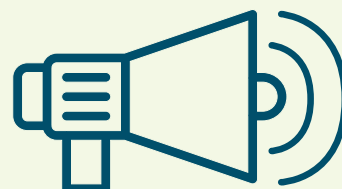
- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Year in review

Reaching out

1221 people

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



150 people

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

Making a difference to care

We published

7 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Hospital Discharge



Health and care that works for you

We're lucky to have

30 Volunteers

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£116,150






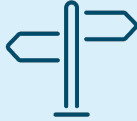


We currently employ

4 staff

None of whom are full-time, who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Collaborated with the Council's Audit & Governance committee to examine the accessibility of services.</p>	 <p>We hosted an information event covering the topic of Nutrition & Dietetics. This was in partnership with Public Health & North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.</p>
Summer	 <p>We launched our new website and now have an annual reach of over 5000.</p>	 <p>We visited both Stichell House and Warrior Park Residential Homes to examine the quality of care and dignity afforded to residents.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We launched our new project of Youthwatch across the Tees Valley with Youth Focus North East.</p>	 <p>We marked International Mens day by hosting a Mens Health Matters Event at Hartlepool College of Further Education. We focused on wellbeing and the need for screening. We also supported the Mental Health Forum in celebrating World Mental Health Day.</p>
Winter	 <p>We worked alongside the new Integrated Care Board to examine the 'Waiting Well' campaign and examined the North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust draft Quality Account.</p>	 <p>We arranged 6 focus groups to examine discharge from hospital as part of our research into patient experiences when leaving Hospital.</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Volunteers that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Vaccine confidence

As a key participant in the work of Covid Champions we shared the most up to date information with our volunteers and across our network helping to combat COVID-19 & promote vaccinations.



Dual Sensory Loss

Healthwatch Hartlepool and other Local Sensory Impairment Group Partners listened to the lived experiences of Hartlepool residents which led to a new Sensory Impairment Plan for Hartlepool.



NHS Dentistry

Healthwatch England confirmed there has been some progress in the reform of dental contracts and saw an additional £50 million made available to improve access to NHS dentistry. The insight from Healthwatch Hartlepool and the wider network has been a vital part of making that happen.



GP Access

Thanks to people sharing their experiences of accessing GP's, we have helped the Integrated Care Board (ICB) identify the problems patients constantly experience and pushed for improvements.



Community Mental Health

We collaborated with all Tees Valley Healthwatch organisations to work with Tees, Esk & Wear Valley Mental Health Trust that led to the reshaping of community based mental health services.



10 – Celebrating Success

On Wednesday 8th March 2023 fourteen local Healthwatch from across the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) came together to celebrate its 10th birthday. The fourteen Healthwatch work collectively across the NENC Integrated Care System (NENC ICS) region to add value and service user voice to the changing health and social care landscape.

Staff past and present, Board members, volunteers and partner organisations came together to share in the success that Healthwatch has achieved to date.

Since the commencement of Healthwatch there has been a strong commitment to ensure that the voice of service users and the public remains embedded in the decision-making process of health and care services, championing the views of those that access services to ensure service delivery and changes made promote the best wellbeing outcomes for individuals, carers and families.

With the introduction of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) it is recognised that only through partnership working, meaningful engagement and combined resources will we make a positive difference to the health, wellbeing, and care of the communities we represent.

The event provided an opportunity for reflection of the journey of Healthwatch so far. The trials and tribulations, the growth, the changes and more importantly the successes that demonstrated the passion that remains with us on our journey to change.



10 – Celebrating Success

The day was hosted by Christopher Akers-Belcher – Chief Executive of Healthwatch Hartlepool. Christopher is also the Regional Coordinator for the North East & North Cumbria Healthwatch Network. Throughout the day guest speakers spoke of their own experience and involvement with Healthwatch and shared their vision and hopes for the future.

Jennifer Clark and Delana Lawson from Healthwatch England presented detail of our vision, mission and values, providing reference to our changing world with its challenges and opportunities and building on our success with three key objectives.

1. To support more people who face the worst outcomes to speak-up about their care and access the advice they need.
2. To ensure care decision-makers act on public feedback and involve communities in decisions that affect them.
3. To be a more effective organisation and build a stronger Healthwatch movement.

10 – Celebrating Success

“What an incredible way to mark 10 years of Healthwatch in the region. It was a privilege to be invited to join in.

I am as ever blown away by the passion, dedication, and talent of Healthwatch volunteers, boards and staff members. People working within limited resources to create real changes in people’s lives. This Healthwatch region has moved deftly towards becoming a truly effective collaborative in a way other regions have struggled to do. It was clear to me how the Healthwatch is valued by the ICB, providers and partners. Personally, this is my home region, where I started my own Healthwatch journey, and I couldn’t be prouder of how far you have all come in the last decade. I look forward to seeing what the next decade brings.”

Jenny Clark

Deputy Head of Engagement and Sustainability, Healthwatch England

“Thank you so much North East. What a fabulous day, well done to you all. You have set the standard for celebrations and collaboration nationally. I heard some interesting conversations throughout the day and during the networking session and am looking forward to the implementation of ideas we should take forward as a region.”

Delana Lawson

**Quality Assurance & Regional Manager (North East, Yorkshire & Humberside)
Healthwatch England**

“I’d like to thank the various Healthwatch organisations across Tees Valley for inviting me to the 10th anniversary event. I’d particularly like to say thank you for the opportunity to talk about the collaborative work that we have undertaken to ensure the patient voice is at the heart of the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme that is now underway. I am looking forward to the continued input of Healthwatch as we progress with the agreed changes in our local communities, and I very much welcome their continued support to understand and address the key health inequalities that impact upon access, effectiveness, and experience of our mental health services.”

Dominic Gardner

**Care Group Director MHSOP / AMH, Durham Tees Valley Care Group
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS FT**

10 – Celebrating Success

We were delighted that Claire Riley from the NENC ICS was able to attend the event and share with us her ambition for the future of health and care services. With the ICS transformation underway Claire spoke of her desire to ensure insight and feedback from the public was used at both a national and local level. Claire welcomed the opportunity she has had to work alongside Healthwatch and is looking forward to continued collaboration that will support system wide planning and service delivery.

Claire acknowledged there will be challenges and ‘hard conversations’ along the way and that positive system change will only be achieved through meaningful partnership working. Claire welcomed the opportunity to answer questions raised and provided honest feedback on the challenges ahead, with a determination to ensure positive outcomes for health and care services.

“Thank you for inviting me to join the Healthwatch 10-year celebration. It is important to celebrate the great work of the Healthwatch teams and the impact this has had on patients, carers and the public. Now we have the opportunity to learn from this work and ensure the voices of our communities are at the heart of health and care services.”

Claire Riley
Executive Director of Corporate Governance, communications and involvement,
NENC ICS





Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Bernie Hays – Healthwatch Volunteer

Bernie is an exceptional individual who has become an integral part of the Healthwatch Hartlepool family. We always say Healthwatch exists for everyone and there is no fixed membership but rather people should become involved depending on our work programme and the topics that they feel most passionately about. Bernie has embraced our ethos and believes whole heartedly that by being involved we can together create change. We cannot thank him enough for the dedication he has shown to Healthwatch Hartlepool and his immense contribution within our Volunteer Steering Group.

Bernie's story:

"I first heard about Healthwatch when I registered as a carer for a family member and started to receive their monthly newsletter. At that time, I was working towards my retirement with the NHS. As a volunteer I have been able to help people have their say on health & social care. It has also enabled me to be part of a team, developing new skills and gaining experience from other health professionals and outside agencies.

With other members of the team, I have completed a number of 'Enter & View' visits to Care Home settings, listening to the views of people whom are in Residential Care and rehabilitation beds awaiting to return back home. It has also given me the opportunity to speak with family members and their carers. It has given me the opportunity to write reports on the outcome of the visit.

Most recently I have been part of the team looking at discharge planning from hospital. Meet and greet with hospital staff, patients and families, hoping to make hospital discharge safer and smoother from admission into hospital to discharge back into the community. Each month we have a Volunteer Steering Group and meet up to discuss any health and social care matter.

We also have an online monthly (coffee morning) and a guest speaker is invited. Discussing a number of topics: including, Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol, Safeguarding and any other Health and Social Care needs. So if you want to develop new skills and meet new people:

Become a volunteer and help your community improve health & social care.”



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Celebrating Heroes in our local community.

The Hartlepool Lived Experience Forum has championed the co-production & the active involvement of people with lived experience of mental illness (including carers/families) in the transformation of Community Based Mental Health services across Hartlepool and the wider Tees Valley. It is widely accepted that such involvement in the design of services has been shown to empower service users, increase the quality and efficiency of services and improve clinical outcomes.

Teesside Community Mental Health Transformation

Lived Experience Representatives – These include Tees, Esk & Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Trust Involvement members: Sophie, Sandra, Michael, Aaron TEWV staff and partners within the community who have been instrumental in the reshaping of Community Mental Health Services across Teesside, sharing their lived experience & insights because they wish to make a difference to others.

“We are now in year 3 of the Teesside Community Mental Health Transformation. We became involved in the project as it was a great opportunity to use our lived experiences to help influence positive change. As part of the project, we have been involved in the design of the new model for community mental health services and our input has helped shape the direction of travel. We work alongside the NHS, Statutory Services, Local Authority and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) as equal partners, working towards a shared vision/goal.”

“It has been really empowering being involved in this work, it has supported my own wellbeing, increased my confidence, gave me purpose and lots of great experience”.

The aim of the Tees Valley Community Mental Health Transformation:

- Working with partners and people with lived experience to improve care and support for people in the community.
- To deliver a new community based mental health offer that improves the lives of people with severe mental health problems.
- To work in close partnership with all stakeholders, including service users and carers to design and deliver personalised care.
- To meet the diverse needs of the local population – going beyond treating symptoms to improve wellbeing.
- To ensure people don't fall between the gaps in services and get timely access to the care they need.

“A critical part of this work is building trust, good relationships and feeling safe to challenge. We really value our relationships as lived experience representatives and we are peer support for each other. Maxine Crutwell, Community Transformation Programme Manager, recognised the importance of the lived experience voices from the start of the programme and ensures we are always involved as key partners and our voices/thoughts/opinions are heard and recognised, beyond any tokenism. Maxine has a true understanding of co-production/co-creation and is focused on a person-centred approach. It’s not always easy, change takes time, but we all support each other as one team.”

Healthwatch Hartlepool would also like to recognise the immense amount of work & leadership provided throughout the journey of Community Mental Health Transformation by Maxine Crutwell - Programme Manager (Community Transformation Tees Valley) Tees, Esk & Wear Valley Mental Health Trust.



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Peer Support

As part of the Community Mental Health Transformation, the NHS England Framework recognises the importance of lived experience and have allocated funding towards expanding the peer support workforce. Belinda Brooks, TEWV Peer Support Lead for the Teesside Community Mental Health Transformation has been pivotal in moving this forward, using her own lived experience and working collaboratively with lived experience representatives, TEWV staff and Local VCS organisations across the Tees Valley to understand how best to utilise this funding in co-producing the service specification for delivery of 121 place-based peer support across the Tees Valley. There is also work ongoing looking at creating a Peer Support Network.

The Hartlepool Lived Experience Forum

“The Forum was created to ensure that people with lived experience/carers/families are at the heart of all future mental health services and are able to support delivery in a peer role, having knowledge and experience that can help to make services the best they can be, which is key to drive the Community Mental Health Transformation.

Supporting people with lived experience to have a voice and say, in how services are delivered to them/for them will enable people to become an active participant in their recovery.”

Do you, or someone you care for, have lived experience of poor mental health? Use your knowledge and experience to help transform adult mental health services in Hartlepool? If you would like to come along to the next lived experience forum, you would be more than welcome.

The Hartlepool Lived Experience Forum is facilitated by Catherine Wakeling - Starfish Health & Wellbeing; Leigh Trimble - Red Balloons; Belinda Brooks - NHS; Sophie & Sam - Lived Experience Representatives all of whom have their own experience of living or supporting loved ones with poor mental health. The Forum is hosted by Trevor and Angela - LilyAnne's café and supported by Tony Leighton - Healthwatch Hartlepool.

We are really grateful that these organisations & individuals agreed to setup the lived experience forum in Hartlepool, they are really passionate about what they do and really want to embed lived experience voices at the heart of all service design. It is built on a strong foundation of team working, trust and relationships and is a great example of partnership working and co-production within the community and a new way of working, really focusing on the needs for the individuals and ensuring everyone's voices are heard.

The Lived Experience Forum is a really friendly, supportive and safe environment, where people with lived experience can speak openly and honestly without judgement, to use their experience/expertise/insights to help improve community mental health services going forward. Building a strong foundation of trust, confidence and mutual respect. The lived experience forum approach is very proactive, its focused on how we can make services better for people, understanding the barriers and looking at ways to overcome them and explore different ways of working.

The direction of this group will be led by the lived experiences voices. They have a really positive approach/energy which is reflected in the group, it is an amazing collaborative approach all working to the same goal. It is really important that we manage expectations, things won't change overnight, but our voices are so much more powerful together. The group also really valued coming together with peers who also have lived experience.



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Celebrating Heroes in our local community.

Feedback from people who have attended the lived experience meeting:

“It is amazing to come together, feeling that our experience is valuable and will make a difference to others.”

“At first I was not sure about it (The Forum) but I feel connected to others by our experience”

“It was difficult to speak at first, but now I have been to a couple of sessions, people help me to feel safe, to speak and talk about my experience.”

“Well Done, I think you steered us really thoughtfully and I was very moved by all of the stories and sharing”

“I found it really brave of them to speak, it made me feel I can speak too.”

“Being able to be part of the Hartlepool Lived experience Forum has encouraged me to speak and see I have knowledge that can help others. It has given me the courage to attend other community meetings and share my views.”

We would like to show our appreciation for everyone who have been involved in the lived experience forum to date, for giving their time voluntarily to make a difference for others, we look forward to working with you all going forward. Everyone involved is determined to ensure people with lived experience feel valued, respected and most importantly have a voice.

The Forum will learn and adapt as we go along. It will continue to grow; it will keep evolving and learning based on feedback from the group. This will ensure that lived experience voices are at the heart of all services.

It is so important that service users/carers have a voice. We always need to understand different perspectives and ensure that we are representative of our communities, if you require any further information or wish to become involved, please contact Tony Leighton at Healthwatch Hartlepool on telephone number 0800 254 5552 or Catherine Wakeling at Starfish 01642 672987. There is no pressure, you can come to the meeting and listen. If you prefer, representatives could give you a call, meet 121 or send you a copy of the questionnaire. We are completely flexible, you can get involved as much or as little you would like, there is no pressure. Any contribution is greatly appreciated. Your wellbeing is priority. We can meet anyone before the meeting and offer support during and after the meeting. We would welcome any new members with lived experience to the group.

“Everyone involved is working together as one system to meet the needs of the individual and transform services”



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.

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge

Healthwatch Hartlepool recognises that many people in Hartlepool are significantly affected by health inequalities and high levels of ill-health. The delivery of supportive and appropriate hospital discharge services are vital and play a major part in ensuring patients experience and subsequent recuperation are maximised.

In March 2023 Healthwatch Hartlepool published our comprehensive report in respect of Hospital Discharge following consultation across the town and at North Tees hospital. Patients, Families, Carers, Care Homes & Care providers were all given the opportunity to participate complemented by visits from Healthwatch Hartlepool to the Discharge Hub.

Our survey and consultations highlighted the following key areas:

Our findings demonstrate that significant strides have been made in many aspects of the discharge process since our previous investigation in 2014. Most noticeable of these is the progress that has been made in developing integrated working practices which have resulted in a much-improved collaboration between health and social care stakeholders in the discharge pathway.

The co-location of health and social care staff, the development of the Integrated Discharge Team and ISPA have all contributed to the development of closer working relationships and understanding of the various challenges and complexities different partners face in the delivery of an effective, patient centred discharge experience. Also, the development of services such as the Community Respiratory Service have ensured a seamless transition into post discharge patient support and ongoing condition based treatment.

Further to this, the continued use of SystemOne and the adoption of the OPTICA system, a secure Cloud application, which tracks all admitted patients and the tasks relating to their discharge in real-time through their hospital journey has greatly enhanced the potential to plan and co-ordinate patient discharge. It also enables up to date information to be shared and utilised by partners from all sides.

However, our research also shows that there are still challenges to overcome. Our investigation has shown that a significant number of patients do not feel involved in the planning of their discharge and in some cases, arrangements have not been fully discussed until they are about to leave hospital. Some patients have told us that they were given little information about their forthcoming discharge and subsequent care arrangements, whereas others have said that they and their families were fully involved in planning their discharges from the early stages of their admission.

As so often is the case, communication is the key to a successful discharge, ongoing patient recuperation and minimising the chance of re-admissions. Work has already started to identify improvements to patient communication through the North Tees & Hartlepool (NTH) and Emergency Care Improvement Support Team (ECIST) improvement project "The 4 Patient Questions" which is looking at ways of improving consistency of information given to patients during non-elective inpatient stays.

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge

Communication must be sensitive to the needs of the patient. If a patient is Deaf, interpreter support must be made available at all stages of the discharge planning process in order to ensure that the patient is involved in and aware of their discharge arrangements. Support must also be provided to patients with neurological conditions such as dementia to ensure they are aware of what is happening and helped at key times to avoid undue stress and anxiety. Family members and carers are key partners in such cases and should also be kept regularly informed and involved. Johns Campaign already provides the framework around which good practice can be developed.

Some patients have reported delays in changes to care packages being implemented post discharge and long waits for equipment and adaptations. A particular area of concern are the long waits which some reported for OT assessments, again leading to delays in the introduction of much needed adaptations and equipment.

Communication issues are also highlighted by care homes and domiciliary care providers. Information often reported to be limited around patient discharge processes and arrangements. In order for care homes to be ready and prepared to receive residents back to their home adequate notice is needed to ensure paperwork is completed and changes to medication and care packages are implemented immediately and safely.

The homes also expressed concerns that there had been occasions on which they were worried about the fitness of a resident to be discharged back to the home, again emphasising the need for good communication in the run up to discharge. Finally, some homes raised concerns about lack of clarity around medication changes in discharge letters and DNAR's not being returned with the resident, again highlighting the need for improved communication.

Visits to the Discharge Hub left us questioning the suitability of the current location. The staff and volunteers all provided excellent care and with the provision of snacks and drinks efforts have been made to make the patient stay as comfortable as possible. However, the design and co-location with cardiac patients is not appropriate and the long-term location of this service needs to be reconsidered. Patient dignity is paramount at all stages of their stay in hospital, and instances were observed during our visits in which the layout of the Hub limited the ability to deliver to the highest standard.

Many patients who attended the Discharge Hub, reported long waits for medication and transport. Timely availability of medication still appears to be a significant cause of extended stays in the Discharge Hub, and on one of our visits we observed the nurse on duty having to go to pharmacy to collect a patient's medicines. One would hope that the enhanced virtual planning tools which are now available and improved co-ordination could to some degree help ease these long-standing issues.

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge



Key findings from patient/family questionnaires

- A high number of patients reported that their discharge arrangements had not been discussed with them or family members until their actual day of discharge and patients reported that they had received no information about discharge procedures or what would happen on their return home during their stay in hospital.
- 25% of patients reported that they had waited over 2 hours in the Discharge Hub before being formally discharged and able to return home.
- The main reasons given for delays at the Discharge Hub were having to wait for medication, having to wait for transport or having to wait for both medication and transport issues to be resolved.
- Patients reported that they had found their stay in the Discharge Hub to be uncomfortable, and said that it lacked privacy as confidential discussions could be overheard.
- 35% of patients reported that they considered the supply of medication they had received when discharged to be insufficient and, in several cases, not immediately available.
- Several patients reported delays in post discharge OT visits and subsequent delays in receiving necessary equipment. This led to some patients reporting that they had to purchase equipment privately as they were unable to wait for the OT visit and assessment.
- Feedback on post discharge care and support arrangements were variable, and patients said that new care and support arrangements were not immediately actioned following their discharge home.
- It was reported that interpreters are not always present to assist Deaf patients to participate in their discharge planning arrangements and vital information, such as discharge letters are not provided in a format which is accessible to Deaf patients.
- Overall, patient rating of their discharge experience varied considerably, with 37.5% of patients rating the experience as excellent or good, and 37.5% of patients reporting their experience as being poor or very poor.
- A similar picture emerged regarding experience of post discharge health/social care with 25% of patients rating the experience as excellent or good and 25% of patients reporting their experience as being poor or very poor.

“People are given a discharge letter with a landline telephone number so they cannot make contact if they have any health problems following discharge. Hospitals are not routinely booking BSL Interpreters for discharge so the Deaf patient do not understand what information they must follow because this is only explained in English.”

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge

What difference will this make?

Following the publication of our report the Chairman of North Tees & Hartlepool Foundation Trust invited Healthwatch Hartlepool to a meeting at the Trust with himself and the Managing Director. Healthwatch Hartlepool welcomed their acceptance of the report and the creation of a working group to monitor the learning from our report and implementation of the key recommendations:

1. Communication and involvement of patients in planning their discharge and subsequent post discharge care arrangements happens consistently as per the requirements of the North Tees and Hartlepool Discharge Policy Framework and guidelines contained within the Hospital Discharge and Community Support Guidance (DHSC – March 2022).
2. Improved information outlining the discharge process and post discharge care and support is produced and made available to all patients entering North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals for non-elective procedures. We recommend that the Wirral NHS Leaflet – Your Discharge Explained as an example of good practice. A copy of the leaflet can be found at Appendix 1.
3. Ensure patients are informed of the availability of post discharge support services such as the Community Respiratory Service that is available specifically for those with breathing difficulties and COPD. This will help to reduce patient readmissions to hospital and facilitate effective recuperation.
4. Alternative/easy read formats should be produced of all discharge related materials and support such as interpreters booked to ensure Deaf patients and patients with other languages and support needs are not excluded.
5. Ensure that the principles of John's Campaign are consistently integrated into discharge arrangements in order to maximise support for patients who are living with dementia and similar conditions.
6. Wherever possible, patient transport and medication requirements should be finalised and in place in advance of the day the patient is due to be discharged.
7. Current operational practices relating to the Discharge Hub and Pharmacy should be reviewed, and the potential to use of Hospital Volunteers to collect medication maximised in order to reduce medication related discharge delays.
8. Unless there is a justifiable reason not to do so, patients discharge should be via the Discharge Hub or Transport Hub in line with national guidance.
9. Consideration should be given to the suitability of the current location of the Discharge Hub, and efforts made to find a more appropriate bespoke location which gives patients a more comfortable and dignified experience.

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge

What difference will this make?

10. Staffing levels should be reviewed together with the wider review of the Discharge Hub arrangements recommended above. Levels of occupational therapy and physiotherapy support should also be at a level which ensures equipment required by patients to assist their recuperation is in place and available when discharged home in order to minimise the possibility of re-admissions.
11. Consideration should be given to improving communication with care homes and care providers to ensure the best possible transfer of care arrangements are always in place. We suggest that a workshop should be considered, at a future Care Managers Forum which is facilitated by Hartlepool Borough Council, focusing on how future communication processes between the Trust and care sector can be developed and improved in relation to discharge and other shared arrangements. Healthwatch Hartlepool are willing to be involved in the design and facilitation of the event if required.
12. That Healthwatch Hartlepool and health and social care colleagues involved in the delivery of the patient discharge pathway meet in six months to review progress.

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Advocating for better Hospital Discharge



Firstly, on behalf of North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust I would like to thank Healthwatch Hartlepool, who have collaborated with both the Local Authority in Hartlepool and ourselves, to produce this report, which reviews the current discharge arrangements and processes for patients in Hartlepool.

The Trust welcomes and agrees with the findings including that significant strides have been made in many aspects of the discharge process for our patients since the previous investigation in 2014. Most noticeable of these is the progress that has been made in developing integrated working practices, which have resulted in a much-improved collaboration between health and social care stakeholders in the discharge pathway.

However, as an organisation we recognise that there remain challenges to overcome for patients, their families and carers at all stages of the discharge process. The valuable insights and recommendations alongside information collected during the research process, has already enabled the Trust to develop a comprehensive improvement and development plan, which includes:

- Communication and involvement of patients in planning their discharge and subsequent post discharge care arrangements;
- Improving information outlining the discharge process which will be available to all patients entering North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals for non-elective procedures;
- Ensuring patients are informed of the availability of post discharge support services
- Providing alternative/easy read formats of all discharge related materials and support such as interpreters booked to ensure deaf patients and patients with other languages and support needs are not excluded;
- Ensuring that the principles of John's Campaign are consistently integrated into discharge arrangements
- Wherever possible, patient transport and medication requirements being planned in advance of the day the patient is due to be discharged;
- Review of current operational practices relating to the Discharge Hub and Pharmacy, exploring the potential to use Hospital Volunteers to collect medication;
- Patient discharge via the Discharge Hub or Transport Hub in line with national guidance;
- Estates review to ensure suitability of the current location of the Discharge Hub;
- Workforce review in support of the Hub
- Review of communication with care homes and care providers to ensure the best possible transfer of care arrangements in collaboration with Healthwatch;

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge



The improvement plan has already been presented and ratified at the Trust Quality Council chaired by the Chief Nurse and Chief Medical Officer and will be presented to the Quality Committee in July 2023.

Finally, we would welcome Healthwatch Hartlepool, health, and social care colleagues involved in the delivery of the patient discharge pathway to meet again in six months to review progress.”

**Neil Atkinson – Managing Director
North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust**

A large decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping curved lines, one green and one pink, sweeping across the bottom half of the page.

healthwatch

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years

Advocating for better Hospital Discharge



In the last twelve months Healthwatch have supported the health and adult social care system by undertaking a comprehensive investigation into hospital discharge arrangements from North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals. Moreover, following a detailed analysis and discussion with representatives from the Council's Adult and Community Based Services Department and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Healthwatch have produced a report which includes a series of recommendations regarding changes and developments which are being considered in order to improve care provision and the person's and family carers experience.

Both the Council and the Foundation Trust found the constructive feedback to be extremely valuable in determining next steps and how the broader health and social care system needs to adapt to meet the challenges emerging following recovery from the Covid pandemic.

This is an excellent example of co-production and collaborative working that will deliver real improved outcomes for local people, and the contribution from Healthwatch was much appreciated."

**John Lovatt – Assistant Director (Adult Social Care)
Hartlepool Borough Council**



Positive changes for Deaf people & those living with sensory loss

Hartlepool Borough Council commissioned a strategic Joint Sensory Support Plan for local people who are Deaf, deaf, deafened, blind and partially sighted and those living with combined sight and hearing loss, and for all organisations working with and supporting them. The plan was adopted in 2022.

Healthwatch Hartlepool was a key supporter of the work from its inception. They worked closely alongside the coordinating organisation Hearing Impairment - Visual Impairment UK (Hi-Vis UK) and other partners to create this unique, comprehensive approach to local sensory loss support. Healthwatch Hartlepool also helped ensure local people's views and experiences were always at the heart of the plan.

Healthwatch Hartlepool's contribution included being part of a key sub group which devised and published a groundbreaking report and practice guidance: "Making Sensory Friendly Public Places".

" Healthwatch Hartlepool jointly designed and delivered a pilot training course with Hi-Vis UK for local authority staff in the Council's community facing hubs. This established a learning programme to support and guide staff to make change happen on the ground.

A key aspect of the plan was the establishment of a stakeholder partnership - a forum for the full spectrum of organisations of and for people who are Deaf, deaf, blind, partially sighted, and those living with combined sight and hearing loss.

The partnership includes: Hartlepool Borough Council, Hi-Vis UK, Healthwatch Hartlepool, Hartlepool Vision Support, Hartlepool Deaf Centre, North Regional Association for Sensory Support, Hartlepool Carers, Teesside Local Pharmacies Committee, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Incontrol-Able, Community Led Inclusion Project, 1 Heart -1 Mind - 1 Future.

The work is ongoing and Healthwatch Hartlepool continue to play a full and active part in this journey."

Bernard Quinn - Chair of JSSP Steering Group

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Positive changes for Deaf people & those living with sensory loss



Another challenging year for Hartlepool, including supporting phase 3 work on the local Mental Health plan. The basis of the work being formed as a result of the Healthwatch local consultation and engagement work. Progress has also been made in taking positive steps to implement the local Joint sensory support plan and local action plan. Healthwatch being key to ensure that the local voice is heard.

Special thanks once again to the staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Hartlepool for their continued support, professional challenge and curiosity.”

Neil Harrison – Head of Safeguarding & Specialist Services
Hartlepool Borough Council



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Joint Sensory Support Plan on a Page



LONG TERM CHANGE

Establish a **Sensory Support Coalition** of public, independent and VCSE organisations to **work together for long term change**.



IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

Work with local sensory support organisations to help us **improve accessibility**, co-monitor / co-develop our sensory / Deaf support plans.



RAISE AWARENESS AND SKILLS

Work to develop the sensory and Deaf **awareness, skills, and knowledge** of local health and care services workforce, the independent and VCSE sectors and in the wider community.



IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Work to improve access to information **and to communication support** in health and care services including compliance with the Accessible Information Standard 2016.



RAISE NUMBERS IDENTIFIED & SUPPORTED

Work to increase the number of **people identified and supported** with single and combined sensory loss including carers and parent-carers where sensory loss/Deaf is involved.



IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Work to improve accessibility of **learning, leisure and fitness** services and facilities, wherever these services are provided.



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Consult further to fill gaps in our understanding e.g. carers, **co-create a local sensory support delivery plan**. Continue conversations with stakeholder groups and across the wider community.

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Healthwatch Hartlepool shared with North Tees & Hartlepool Foundation Trust the experience of 'lung health' patients, attending appointments at hospital. The location of the department within the hospital meant such patients attending had a long walk to be seen. Healthwatch Hartlepool ask if the patient transport facility would allow them to be dropped off closer to their appointment location could be provided. We raised this via the Trust's Quality Account and they introduced a new drop off point and also new signage has been erected to point patients to the nearest entrance for Lung Health when travelling by car, to ensure little walking distance as possible.

Getting services to involve the public



Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

Healthwatch Hartlepool is represented on the Governing Body of North Tees & Hartlepool Foundation Trust. Through our work representing the views of the public the Trust approached Healthwatch Hartlepool to undertake further consultation in the community, particularly with the seldom heard. This will fulfil the Trust's strategic aim of 'Putting our population first' and their priority of delivering People-Centred-Care.

Our consultation proactively seeks feedback, involves people at every stage of care, and we will ensure services are accessible and inclusive for all (dementia, learning disability & autism and Mental Health)

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Over the years Healthwatch Hartlepool has been raising the issue of GP Access and highlighting the problems some residents experience. Healthwatch Hartlepool published a GP Access report in March 2022, outlining key headline areas for improvement which was shared and formally acknowledged by the ICB in June 2022.

Whilst many of the key themes were already identified by the ICB and nationally by NHS England, the ICB valued the report from Healthwatch and has used the recommendations to ensure a continued focus on the work to deliver improved access for our community.

healthwatch

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Three ways we have made a difference for the community

“It’s important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people’s lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems. The ICB is pleased to share that further progress has since been made on these key areas as follows:

- *Telephony access – investment has been made available locally and nationally to support practices move to cloud based technology, with added call back and call waiting functionality to improve the patient experience of making a phone call to their general practice. The data intelligence functionality of cloud-based telephony will also help practices to understand better the demand and to manage capacity accordingly*
- *Enhancing access – new arrangements have been in place since October 2022 offering patients additional appointments on an evening and weekend.*
- *Annual health checks – across Hartlepool, approximately 81% of learning disability health checks were completed, which was an improvement on the previous year. Progress and improvements continue to be pursued led by the Mental Health commissioning team and the clinical lead for LD.*
- *Digital communications – patients who are able to use digital technologies are encouraged to sign up via the NHS App or practice websites to use digital services such as online consultations, electronic repeat dispensing, booking and cancelling appointments and viewing their patient record which can help with test results to minimise telephone calls. All practices are equipped to also use SMS text messaging services and many use this to offer specific appointments to patients to book for things like flu clinics or long term condition reviews*
- *Timely appointments – most practices now offer access to a diverse staffing model of skilled and competent clinicians and allied health professionals, including advanced nurse practitioners, nurse prescribers, physiotherapists, social prescribing link workers, mental health workers and clinical pharmacists in addition to GPs. Appointments will be offered to patients to see the most suitable person for the clinical need which may not always be a GP, at a time clinically necessary for the need. Patients will be advised on first contact with the practice how their request will be managed.*

There is considerable work being undertaken currently as part of the national ‘Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care’ and the ICB will be pleased to share progress with Healthwatch later on in the year as these plans are developed and implemented.”

Emma Joyeux
Commissioning Lead – Primary Care
North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board



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:

- Engaging with residents in sheltered accommodation as part of our consultation on hospital discharge.
- Held a weekly drop-in Healthwatch surgery at the town's Central Hub to offer advice & information on all aspects of Health & Social Care.
- Embedded the voices of local people in the crafting of our work programme. Ensured the community have been heard by local NHS leaders and ICB through our Healthwatch Network.

Better care for All

Healthwatch Hartlepool is part of the Hartlepool Health & Wellbeing Alliance. The alliance has been operating over the last two years. Developed from partnerships made during the Covid Lockdowns it meets monthly (with additional sessions to deal with specific issues or challenges)

It is an independent, open and inclusive partnership focused on working collaboratively to improve the Health and Wellbeing of all those living and working in Hartlepool.

It welcomes all voices when making plans and turning them into action. Mental Health to Dentistry, Disability to Digital Support Services, looking at what's working and what's not as well as planning for the future.

There are over one hundred individuals and organisations involved including:

Hartlepool United Sports Foundation, Payout Hartlepool, Changing Futures North East, West View Advice & Resource Centre, PFC Trust, Let's Connect, Something Positive Solutions, Hospital of God/The Bridges, Hartlepool Sport, LilyAnnes, Incontrol-able, Hartlepool Carers, Hartlepool Hospice, Hartlepool Sensory Spot, Families First, Hartlepool Baby Bank, Hartlepool Action Lab as well as institutions such as the local authority, Tees Esk & Wear Valley Mental Health Trust, Social Prescribers, Healthwatch Hartlepool, Hartlepool College of Further Education and Teesside University plus anyone else sharing our values who would like to get involved.

Mental Health Support

Healthwatch Hartlepool is incredibly lucky to have Zoe Sherry as our Mental Health Lead. Zoe not only undertakes this role with passion but is also Chair of Hartlepool's Mental Health Forum and a Governor at Tees, Esk & Wear Valley Mental Health Trust. Zoe brings an unmeasurable amount of skill, expertise, intelligence and knowledge to her role and Healthwatch Hartlepool is most certainly the beneficiary.

"The last year has been different for us in Healthwatch Hartlepool as we pick up the pieces post Covid. Some things are reverting to as they were before the pandemic and at least some Mental Health Forum meetings are again face to face, which I find so much easier and pleasant.

Once again, we were delighted to be able to fully celebrate World Mental Health day in October. This time as there was no access to the Borough Hall we were pleased to have the use of Hartlepool's Town Hall Theatre. This being very central and accessible, proved popular and there was room for all our usual activities.

We were kindly donated refreshments, soup with a bun and unlimited teas and coffees. The tables with our green cloths and the green and purple UNISON balloons made the room welcoming and cheerful. There were many information stands provided by various organisations who have links to mental health and they were busy throughout day.

We had activities and entertainment. There were mindfulness sessions as well as singing and dancing. There was a Zumba class as well as social dancing on the stage, which was very popular. Two choirs, The Blue Rose choir and St Teresa's school choir performed and were well received.

At the end of the day the school choir crocodyled out of the hall with the balloons over their shoulders. A wonderful sight of our children actively involved in celebrating such an important day whilst raising awareness. St Teresa's school also kindly held an art competition this year, the subject this year was 'The Queen' We received a delightful set of art works, with the winner depicting the Queen in a purple outfit with a corgi.

A raffle was held of donated prizes which we hope to repeat this year too. But of course, we could not do this without the support of Healthwatch Hartlepool, Hartlepool Borough Council and our invaluable volunteers. Thank you.

The Mental Health Forum is also looking forward to widening its remit and being involved with the Council's Health Scrutiny function over the coming year. We have been able to book the Town Hall for 10 October 2023 so please support us in any way you can."



healthwatch

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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 support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make 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
- Helping people access NHS dentistry & GP Services
- Supporting people in finding information regarding vaccinations.



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Your Health. Your Voice.

Healthwatch Hartlepool works collaboratively with the North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy service. We signpost residents if they feel they have not had the service they expect from the NHS and want to complain. Over the last year the majority of referrals into this service came from Healthwatch Hartlepool. These NHS complaints cover care and treatment in respect of hospitals, GP's, dentists, pharmacies, opticians and NHS funded care homes.

"The North East NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) service enjoys a very proactive relationship with Healthwatch Hartlepool and works closely with the Team supporting any Hartlepool residents with their health complaints.

Working jointly has allowed us to ensure all referrals are dealt with quickly and we are able to share complaints information anonymously on a regular basis to underpin the patient information Healthwatch Hartlepool collect. We also value the opportunity to talk with Healthwatch volunteers to give them some insight into our work".

Sue Ewington – Advocate – North East NHS ICA

Helping residents with the best advice

Healthwatch Hartlepool partnered with Tees, Esk & Wear Valley Mental Health Trust, North Tees & Hartlepool Foundation Trust, and Hartlepool's Public Health team to showcase a number of topics identified within our work Programme.

The first event was a follow-on to our work to shape the future of Community Based Mental Health Services and this was led by Maxine Crutwell – Programme Manager for Community Transformation Tees Valley.

"Very informative, having not known anything about this project before. Really positive to hear about Community Mental Health nurses in GP surgeries and the introduction of hub-based services"

Our second event was led by Vanessa Osborne – Specialist Bariatric Dietician from the Hospital Trust and Craig Blundred – Director of Public Health. The theme was 'Healthy Hartlepool' and covered nutrition and dietetics.

Our final event of the year coincided with International Men's Day and focused on the range of services that is available across Hartlepool to support the life journey of men. The event was not just for men but for those who care for or look after a male in their life whilst raising awareness of the need for screening.



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers 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:

- Visited the North Tees Discharge Hub as part of their investigation into Hospital Discharge
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local Residential Care homes to help them improve
- Visited Hartlepool's Urgent Care facility to learn first-hand why it is commended locally and regionally
- Supported the staff in collecting the most up-to-date information on changes to services such as whether GP appointments were available at a practice
- Undertook training in disability awareness and dual sensory loss

Margaret Wrenn – Chair Volunteer Steering Group

"Healthwatch Hartlepool is 10 years old this year, and like many other volunteers, I feel we are doing very well. We have stepped up our 'Enter & View' visits, training, arranging/attending public meetings on various topics and listening to the concerns of the people of Hartlepool. When COVID-19 started I felt as though everything stopped, but luckily, we were able to have our meetings via zoom, and we kept up with our training by the same method.

Unfortunately, people could not see their GP's face-to-face, or a dentist or visit their loved ones in Care Homes or Hospitals. It was a very difficult time for everyone, especially those with relatives who were dying in hospitals and care homes and were unable to visit or see them at this awful time.

It has been a much better year for Healthwatch Hartlepool. We have continued with our zoom meetings, which is easier for attracting speakers as they don't have to leave their offices but have had face-to-face meetings for our Volunteer Steering Group and Board of Directors.

We have carried out a large piece of work on hospital discharge, which was very well received, once completed.

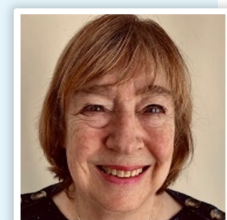
As usual, many thanks to our great team in our Healthwatch office, who have worked tirelessly over the last year, so that the volunteers could continue what we all regard as vital work within the Town."



Dr Lynne Humphries

I am a relative newcomer to the virtual coffee mornings and cannot always participate in them due to other commitments but always enjoy them. I have had my misgivings about the Zoom format as I would have liked to see people in person but I find it very interesting to have the presentations on my screen at home. The people presenting are always knowledgeable and the information provided about local health actions are excellent.

I particularly liked the Substance Misuse presentation as I know it is a big problem in Hartlepool as elsewhere and I find it useful to pass on information about services such as these to people I know. I am aware that people in this situation do know about the services but for whatever reason do not engage."



Do you feel inspired?

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

 www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk  07749688795

 0800 254 5552  yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Last year's guest speakers at the virtual coffee mornings included:

Alex Gray – Social Prescriber – Social Prescribing Team

Ben Smith – Locality Manager Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Trust
(2 updates, May and February)

Jeanette McGuire – Community Dementia Nurse, North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust

Christopher Akers-Belcher – Healthwatch Hartlepool CEO – ICS/ICB

Judith Chatfield – Cancer Community Development Worker – North East & North Cumbria
(NENC) ICB

Neil Harrison – Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services – Hartlepool Council

Fiona Adamson – CEO – Hartlepool & Stockton Health (HASH) GP Federation

Sue Ewington – Advocate – North East NHS ICA

A further coffee morning ran as a general Healthwatch Hartlepool work programme update meeting without a guest speaker.



Do you feel inspired?

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

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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 Council	£116,500	Expenditure on pay	£102,837
		Pension Cost	£9,373
Additional income	£4,747	Non-pay expenditure	£16,402
		Office	£8,730
Total income	£121,247	Total expenditure	£137,342

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£4,500 funding** received from the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) Healthwatch Network
- **£30 funding** received from a local voluntary group
- **£216 interest** received from deposit account

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Learning Disability & Autism Project – Growing Older, Planning Ahead
2. Dentistry
3. Work with North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust to reach areas of the community they currently do not hear from



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Hartlepool CIO
Greenbank, Waldon Street, Hartlepool TS24 7QS
Charity Number – 1165402

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

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 6 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as reviewing our Governance Framework and ratifying the submission of our Operational Questionnaire to Hartlepool Borough Council.

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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided access via our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Responses to recommendations

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England, so no resulting reviews or investigations were required.

healthwatch

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The way we work

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example we take information to Hartlepool's Health & Wellbeing Board and Audit & Governance committee that has responsibility for Health Scrutiny. We also share our work with the Council's Adult and Community Based Services committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). For example we hold a position at the Tees Valley Area Integrated Care Partnership and at Place we attend the NENC Integrated Care Board Hartlepool Place sub-committee.

While all Healthwatch across the region have worked together informally for many years, recent funding from the ICB has enabled this Network to formalise working arrangements through an Operational Protocol, so that it can systematically represent the views of service users, families and carers with partners across the Integrated Care System. Local intelligence is collated across each of the four sub-regional areas and shared at Area ICP meetings.

At regional level, the Healthwatch Regional Coordinator (Christopher Akers-Belcher) represents service-user voice from across the region at the NENC Integrated Care Partnership Strategic meeting, System Quality Group, Primary Care Strategy & Delivery sub-committee and the Healthy & Fairer Advisory Group. The network of local Healthwatch has also been commissioned to undertake additional research to ensure local opinions are represented in the ICB's work priorities, including focus groups for the Waiting Well, and consultation around the development of the ICB strategy.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

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Enter and view

This year, we made 6 Enter and View visits. We made 9 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Stichell House Residential Care Home	Post COVID-19 learning	Wrote a report with recommendations – the care home reinstated regular residents and relatives' meetings. They also developed a regular newsletter for family members.
Warrior Park Residential Care Home	Review progress since last visit	Wrote a report with recommendations that include: For there to be more activities on both floors and actively encourage use of outdoor space. Employ new coordinator and encourage staff to take-up training opportunities.
Urgent Care Centre Hartlepool	Identify examples of good working practice	Published our report to celebrate the work undertaken & encourage the trust to pass on the good practice whenever and wherever possible
Charlotte Grange Residential Care Home	To review progress and change since our last visit	Published our report and referred our findings to the Local Authority. Requested that the improvement of the general condition of the home be a priority to the new owners.
Elwick Grange Residential Care Home	Covid concerns and gain insight into the current quality of care	Published our findings and confirmed to the Local Authority we were impressed with the home.
West View Lodge Residential Care Home	To gather feedback from residents & rehabilitation patients together with family members	Published our report and strongly recommend that the home gets rid of the odour in the corridors of the Croft unit.



“From an Adult Social Care perspective, the work of Healthwatch Hartlepool over the last year is invaluable to Hartlepool Borough Council in a number of ways.

Having a different view is always important, but the key to this is getting the view from an impartial experienced organisation who understand the focus of what care providers are trying to deliver, but at the same time can provide a critical eye where needed.

Having this happen and then getting the feedback from these ‘enter and view’ visits to care homes is incredibly useful and I hope we continue to receive this intelligence so that we can continue to help shape and improve how we deliver services across Hartlepool.”

*Trevor Smith | Head of Strategic Commissioning (Adults)
Childrens & Joint Commissioning Services*

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Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Hartlepool is represented on the Hartlepool Health and Wellbeing Board by Christopher Akers-Belcher – Chief Executive and Margaret Wrenn – Chair Volunteer steering Group. During 2022/23 our representative have effectively carried out this role by presenting our reports & findings, participating in the review of the town's pharmaceutical needs assessment, assisting with the review of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, promoting the need for ambitious targets around the health checks and health plans required by residents living with autism or a Learning Disability.



On behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee, I would once again like to thank Hartlepool Healthwatch for its commitment to the work of the Committee. 2022/23 continued to be a very challenging time for all areas of service provision and Healthwatch has been an essential source of local views, comments and concerns for the Committee.

Healthwatch has this year contributed to the Committee's scrutiny of Quality Accounts across provider Trusts and complaints, via the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service. The area of most significant support this year has, however, been around the provision of evidence to support the Committee's in depth investigation of the accessibility of council services to people with disabilities and long term conditions. Healthwatch actively promoted resident and stakeholder surveys, welcomed the Committee to speak in person to its volunteers and as an extension to usual engagement processes was instrumental to the completion of a 'mystery shopper' exercise.

As we move into the new municipal year, the knowledge and experience of Healthwatch members will continue to be essential in supporting the activities of the Audit and Governance Committee in effectively scrutinising the challenges facing health service provision.

We look forward to working together over the coming year."

*Councillor Rob Cook
Chair Audit & Governance Committee (2022/23)*

Healthwatch Hartlepool is represented on the Tees Valley Area Integrated Care Partnership and the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) Hartlepool Integrated Care Board (ICB) Place sub-committee by Christopher Akers-Belcher -Chief Executive.

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Healthwatch Hartlepool,
'Greenbank',
Waldon Street,
Hartlepool,
TS24 7QS

 www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

 0800 254 5552  07749688795

 yoursay@healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

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