

Championing what matters to you

**Healthwatch North Tyneside
Annual Report 2021–22**



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Healthwatch North Tyneside uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our activities as covered by the licence agreement.

Message from our chair

The past year has been challenging as we have emerged from Covid restrictions. Life has begun to feel more normal and as a result Healthwatch North Tyneside has been able to restart our face-to-face activities in communities – almost as usual.

Listening to people's views is core to our work, and we continue to look at new ways of reaching people, from working with partners to reach as many people as possible in our community, to continuing our successful online communications. In the last year we have heard from 2,441 residents, and we reached more people with online surveys than ever before. I'm also proud of our work to improve access to information about local health and care services.

During the year we have seen residents' raised expectations of local health and care services as restrictions eased, pre-pandemic issues re-emerging, and services being under tremendous pressure.

In addition, we face changes to our local NHS governance structure with the introduction of the Integrated Care System (ICS). We are working closely with other local Healthwatch to prepare for these changes and to ensure that local voices continue to be heard.

We recognise that we are lucky to have some of the best quality health and care services in England. However, there are still areas that need to be improved and that is what we will continue to strive for.

We couldn't do it without our strong relationships with partners, particularly VODA, North Tyneside Carers' Centre and Phoenix Detached Youth Project, and I give thanks to the providers and commissioners, particularly North Tyneside Council, North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, TyneHeath, and NHS Trusts who we will continue to work with through the transition to ICS.

Whilst working collaboratively, we remain strongly independent and unbiased.



Our success as an organisation is thanks to our fantastic team of staff, volunteers and trustees, who I am privileged to work with and grateful for their commitment.

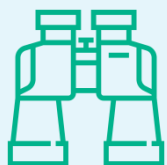
Julia Charlton
Healthwatch North Tyneside Chair

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch North Tyneside is your local health and social care champion. We make sure health and social care leaders and other 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.

We help to shape and improve local health and social care services. We want to show how people's experiences can transform services for the better; and to demonstrate how good engagement can provide solutions to challenges facing the NHS and care services in the years ahead.



Our vision

People's experiences, views and needs are sought, valued, and acted upon as part of the planning and delivery of health and care support in North Tyneside.



Our mission

To champion the experiences, views, values and needs of local people to positively affect the health and social care services in North Tyneside.



Who we are

Healthwatch North Tyneside is a small independent charity. We are locally based, and our trustees, staff and volunteers are from the area.

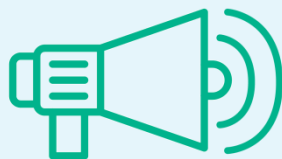
Our work is funded by a service delivery contract with North Tyneside Council or through grants or contracts with commissioners, providers or grant funders.

We are part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch, who operate in every local authority area in England. This network was established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, with the aim of putting patients and the public first.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



2,441 people

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

95,000 households

were provided with information about local health and care services through our leaflets and publications, including Living Well North Tyneside booklets and mental health support leaflets.

Making a difference to care



Some of the impacts we have had this year:

- A local Covid-19 helpline was set up based on our recommendations.
- Local dentists have updated information about their services.
- We helped negotiate free car parking for people using the breast screening service.
- User Voice has been meaningfully embedded in new NHS structures, the development of community mental health services and service development.

Health and care that works for you



- **4.5 FTE** including our Business Administration Apprentice.
- **1,906 hours** of volunteering thanks to our amazing team of engagement, research and administration volunteers, and trustees.
- **£141,263** of core contract funding to deliver the Healthwatch service in North Tyneside.

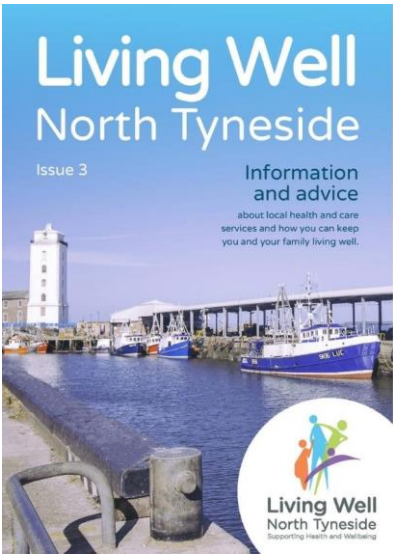
Information and support

Over the last year we have helped over 300 people to get the information or support they have needed. Here are some of the ways we have supported individuals across North Tyneside.



Improving access to information

Providing health and care information is part of our remit and has become increasingly important. We use feedback to identify gaps in information and work with commissioners and service providers to fill those gaps with accessible and useful information.



Living Well North Tyneside booklet

We have led on the production of this since its inception and worked with partners to produce two new editions in the past 12 months. 55,000 copies were distributed through vaccine centres from April 2021, and 98,000 copies of the third edition were distributed to homes and through community settings in March 2022.

We’ve had positive feedback about the booklet from residents who find it a useful format to receive information, and from service providers who have noted people referring to it when using their service.

Living Well North Tyneside website

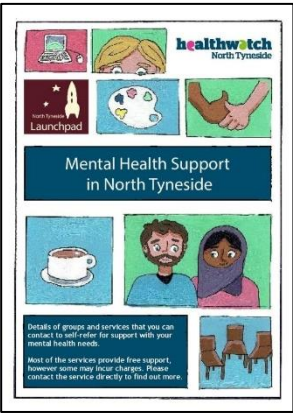
The Living Well North Tyneside website was launched in September 2021, an online hub of health care and community information in North Tyneside, for residents and professionals. As a key member of the Living Well North Tyneside Partnership, we have supported the development of the website and continue to promote it and provide useful content.

How to change a Covid vaccine appointment

There was a lack of information available on how to change or cancel appointments. We produced online and printed information with clear instructions. 3,000 were distributed to walk-in vaccine clinics and our website received over 280,000 page views.

Information about issues and services

During the year we have worked with partners to produce a range of information leaflets and resources on issues that matter to people. We also updated our popular mental health leaflet with support services available in North Tyneside.



How we have helped individuals

Vaccine support

A resident from Seaton Burn contacted us because their vaccine record had not been updated three months after they had had their jab at a pop-up clinic. Their GP and NHS 119 were unable to help them.

We contacted the service provider, who resolved the issue within 24 hours. We'd received similar calls, as had other health and community organisations, and so used this evidence to support the case for the local Covid Vaccine Helpline that was introduced in October 2021.

Finding a dentist

A resident from Wallsend was struggling to find a new NHS dentist close to home, having been removed from her dentist's patient list, so she called us for advice. From our dental research we were aware of a dentist taking on new NHS patients located a short distance from her home. We put her in touch and provided her with information on the registration process. She was able to register with the new dentist and thanked us for our support.

GP information

A patient of a Forest Hall GP practice contacted us to tell us they could not find the opening hours on the practice website. We contacted the practice on their behalf and asked for the opening hours to be added and for them to be easy for patients to find. In response to our request, the practice has added the opening hours to their homepage.

Making a complaint

We helped the host of a Ukrainian refugee to make a complaint to a Whitley Bay GP practice about their refusal to register the refugee.

We talked to the practice manager on their behalf and flagged this issue with North Tyneside CCG to make sure information about registering refugees was communicated to all GP practices.

Booking an appointment

A member of the public from Howdon contacted us because they were struggling to book a retinal screening appointment. We contacted the service on their behalf. The service arranged a call back and sent an appointment letter with information about the screening programme.

Improving health and care services

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 feedback to services to help them improve.



Dental services

As the lockdowns eased, we heard from increasing numbers of residents about difficulties in getting urgent and routine dental treatment.

In response, we worked with other local Healthwatch in the North East to gather people’s views and experiences of dental services. 235 people in North Tyneside participated. We also spoke to most of the dentistry practices in the borough. Based on this information, we prepared a region wide report, and a short report in March 2022, focusing on what people in North Tyneside said.

We also worked with Healthwatch England to highlight this nationwide issue.



“The insight from Healthwatch North Tyneside and wider network, was shared with the Chief Dental Officer and used as the basis of our reports about the problems people faced with the accessibility and affordability of NHS dentistry. Our research was mentioned in a Westminster Hall debate.

Healthwatch England



What difference has this made

We have shared the report findings with key decision makers. The introduction of the Integrated Care System means that responsibility for commissioning dentistry services will change, and we expect this to be more locally focused and accountable. We have agreed to discuss our findings with the new system leaders when established.

Several practices have now updated the information about the availability of their services on the NHS website.

We worked with other local Healthwatch to run a myth busting campaign about dentistry services. This has helped inform residents about how services are working.



“The North East Healthwatch ‘myth busting’ leaflet has been extremely useful in helping to improve patient, public and local politicians understanding around the most common myths and misunderstandings relating to NHS dentistry. It is clear and easy to read and as such we have used it to supplement responses we have made as an organisation to enquiries we have received.”

NHS England, Local Dental Commissioning Team



Menopause support

Acting on feedback from residents, we decided to gather information from people about their experiences of getting support for the menopause.

What we did?

We launched a brief survey in March 2021 and heard from 65 women. They told us about:

- A lack of trusted information.
- A need for GP training.
- A lack of peer support groups.
- The need for better understanding in the workplace.

We shared this report with local health and care leaders.

What difference has this made

We launched a new information resource about the menopause on the [Living Well North Tyneside website](#) and are working with partners to improve this.

Development sessions for GPs have been held and our GP Primary Care Networks are looking at how to improve health services for women over the coming months.

There has been significant national coverage of menopause issues in the media, which has helped maintain a focus on this issue.



"Menopause can be a very difficult time for many women. GPs are trained to support their patients with the physical and mental health aspects of the menopause and would encourage women to come forward for support.

"This report is most welcome and is being shared with local health professionals to give further understanding into the experiences women face. We will also be ensuring access to vital menopause support information is improved in North Tyneside."

Dr Alexandra Kent, Medical Director at North Tyneside CCG



Pharmacy and medications

Whilst most people tell us they are very pleased with pharmacy services in North Tyneside, we did hear a lot about pharmacy services during the pandemic.

In addition, we were asked by North Tyneside's Health and Wellbeing Board to gather people's views to contribute to the review of the statutory Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).

What we did?

We gathered feedback from service users throughout the year and ran a survey to gather evidence to inform the development of the PNA.



What difference has this made

We have published a report of our PNA findings, which has been used to develop the new Needs Assessment that will be published in October 2022. We have shared our wider findings about pharmacy services with key decision makers, including:

healthw@rch
North Tyndale

Prescription Deliveries in North Tyndale

A guide to pharmacies and their delivery options

Did you know that you can get your prescriptions delivered? During the coronavirus pandemic, people told us how helpful it would be to have clear information about how you can get a prescription delivered. The Well in North Tyndale does not fund pharmacies that provide delivery services to some extent. This guide details the services that local pharmacies provide, making it easier to find one closer to you or your prescriber from a local pharmacy. In addition to these services, there are several online pharmacies that will deliver your medication through the web.

We produced this guide because people told us it would be helpful. As well as an overview of prescription delivery services, we also want to answer some Frequently asked Questions that provide more information – see [here](#) – or ring 01302 831641.

Please tell us about your experiences of getting prescriptions, and your other health care experiences here: www.healthwatchnorthtyndale.co.uk/surveyway

We use this information to help improve services for local people - your feedback matters.

Key lists of pharmacies

- Prescription delivery available
- Delivery service provided by telephone
- Delivery service provided by van
- Currently no delivery service

Name and contact details	Delivery	Cost	How to arrange	Details
Backwash Backwash Newline Pharmacy 01302 138 182 Unit 2 Old Grove Building Church Road, Backwash, M27 6LE		Free	Contact the pharmacy or register on their Facebook page	Different prescriptions and repeat prescriptions for each area. Contact pharmacy for more information.
Battle Hill Lloyds Pharmacy Battle Hill 01302 333 160 Battell Hill Medical Centre Bentley Close, Millfield, NE27 6JH		Gill pay per month or 4 months	Contact the branch by phone or in person	Different prescriptions for repeat prescriptions for areas covered.

V1 produced December 2020. All information is this date correct at the time of publishing. Please contact pharmacy directly for most up to date advice.

- Local people's keenness for free delivery services from community pharmacies.
- Opportunities to improve people's understandings of the wide range of services pharmacies provide.
- Improving services for people who have multiple prescriptions.

We also updated our leaflet about prescription delivery services in the borough.

The introduction of the Integrated Care System means that responsibility for commissioning pharmacy services will change, and we have agreed to discuss our findings with the new system leaders when established.

Covid-19 Vaccination Programme

Covid has had a dramatic impact on people's lives since March 2020 and we have played an important role in North Tyneside's response to the pandemic.

What we did

We have continued to support the roll-out of the Covid vaccine programme by working with North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), North Tyneside Council, VODA and Tynehealth GP Federation to:

- Arrange pop-up clinics
- Provide information about the local vaccine programme
- Respond to queries
- Work with voluntary sector partners.



We gathered feedback from residents about their attitudes and experiences of the Covid vaccine programme as it rolled out, and as the booster programme was delivered.

What difference has this made

We received feedback about it being difficult to get answers to more complex questions about the vaccine programme from GPs or the national NHS 119 service. In response, we worked with the CCG and TyneHealth to develop a locally run vaccine helpline. The helpline was then commissioned by the CCG and operated during the autumn and spring booster vaccine roll-outs.

We shared feedback about individual services throughout the year, which enabled signage to be improved and access issues to be addressed, as well as other small but important improvements to the ways services were delivered.

We worked with partners to ensure there was clear information about the vaccine programme available through the Council and TyneHealth websites and continue to create and distribute information to residents.

Accessing GP Services

Access to primary care and GP services has been the most raised issue with Healthwatch North Tyneside since 2015. The Covid-19 pandemic led to significant shifts in the way GP practices operated, particularly the shift towards greater use of virtual appointments, and created greater pressures and demand for services during a period of high Covid cases and staff shortages due to isolation.

What we did

We heard from 1,224 people about their views and experiences, between March and July 2021, using an online survey, paper surveys and interviews at local vaccine centres, and a small number of focus groups with hard-to-reach people in the community.

Alongside this work, North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) asked us to develop and deliver a survey to hear the views and experiences of people who had used the Livi online GP service.



What difference has this made

We shared the detailed findings of this research with key decision makers, commissioners and providers, and identified some short and long-term actions and issues to consider.

Some practices used our short-term recommendations to review how their service operated during the lockdown, including opening their front door and changing messages on phone systems.

One of the main issues people told us about was a lack of understanding in how GP services were being delivered. We worked with North Tyneside's GP Federation TyneHealth and the CCG to create a resource to help people understand why GP practices were working differently due to the pandemic. This was communicated through practice phone messages, on practice websites, and in the Living Well North Tyneside booklet.

Our longer-term recommendations are currently under consideration by the CCG and Primary Care Networks.

Carers

Carers play a vital role in our community and have a unique perspective on health and care services. We are a key member of North Tyneside’s Carers’ Partnership Board and work closely with North Tyneside Carers’ Centre, and others to ensure Carers’ voices are heard.

What we did?

We worked with North Tyneside Carers’ Centre and other partners to gather Adult Carers’ experiences during the Covid pandemic (summer 2021).

258 carers told us about their experiences. We presented the findings to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Future Care Board, Mental Health Boards and at other strategic meetings.



What difference has this made

North Tyneside’s Carers’ Partnership Board has developed an action plan based on the issues raised by carers, including:

- Health and Care providers to plan for any possible future lockdowns, to better support carers based on what carers told us worked well and what was needed.
- The way Carers’ Assessments are delivered has been reviewed and new systems are being introduced.
- Access to respite care is being reviewed.
- Additional funding has been secured to support carers with managing difficult behaviour.
- Working with the Carers’ Centre to gather Young Carers’ experiences from the last two years (launched in March 2022).

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of Healthwatch North Tyneside. Thanks to their efforts, we're able to identify health and social care issues as they arise and understand what is working and what needs improving within the NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out interviews and surveys over the telephone and online.
- Helped with analysing data and writing reports.
- Attended different community events, venues and groups to raise awareness of Healthwatch, provide health and care information and gather service feedback.





Austin

"I've been a volunteer for some time and supported Healthwatch by inputting paper surveys, attending volunteer meetings, and sharing surveys. Volunteering for Healthwatch has given me the experience and confidence I needed to get my new job."



Colin

"I volunteer because I am interested to hear about people's experiences of health and care services and to help feed back these views to those responsible for providing these services. I know how important it is for me to record the feedback I receive and report back to the Healthwatch team. I like being part of the team and knowing that we have a positive impact."



Lesley

"I enjoy volunteering with Healthwatch and joining the other volunteers at community events and centres to talk to people about their experiences of health and care services. It's good to know that the feedback I gather is used to help improve local services."



Do you feel inspired?

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

 www.hwnt.co.uk
 **0191 263 5321**
 info@hwnt.co.uk

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 to fund the core Healthwatch service in North Tyneside.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£141,263	Staffing costs	£112,382
Other income	£2,562	Operational costs	£38,880
		Governance costs	£1,521
Total income	£143,825	Total expenditure	£146,783

Other funded activities

In addition to the above funding, we have been successful in securing additional funds to support specific research or engagement activities or information campaigns during this period.

Before we agree to take on additional funded activity, we test that the activity fits with our values and ethos and doesn't compromise our independence.

- Community Mental Health Transformation, North Tyneside CCG – ongoing for two years
- Livi /GP access user experience , North Tyneside CCG – completed in 2022
- Adult Social Care User Experience , North Tyneside Council – ongoing
- Covid-19 Vaccine engagement and inequalities, North Tyneside Council Public Health Team and VODA – ongoing
- North East & North Cumbria Healthwatch Network Development Funding, ICS – ongoing
- Equally Well Health Inequalities Strategy Engagement, North Tyneside Council – ongoing
- Living Well North Tyneside booklets – contributions from various public and voluntary sector partners towards the costs of production and delivery.

Priorities for the year ahead

We decide our priorities using the evidence we have gathered throughout the year, the responses to our annual survey, and from talking to stakeholders and service providers. This information helps us to identify the key themes and issues to focus on.

Key themes for 2022-23

Improve access to information – continue to work with partners and Living Well North Tyneside.

Health inequalities and access to services

- Women's health
- Audiology services
- Long-term conditions and outpatient support
- Transport
- Digital inclusion
- Carers

Integrated and coordinated care

- Hospital to home – experiences of hospital care, discharge and social care
- Getting care when you need it – particularly NHS 111 and GP extended access services

Service user voice in systems change – working with the emerging ICS structures. Also championing co-production in service development.

The way we work

Our Healthwatch board 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. During this reporting year our trustees were: Julia Charlton, Chair; Bea Groves McDaniel, Vice-Chair; Jackie Doughty, Treasurer (from Sept 21); Judy Scott; Beth Allan (until Jan 22); Natalie Underwood (until Sept 21); Paula McCormack (from Oct 21); Theresa Culpin; Jo Brown (from Dec 21); Carol Nevison (from Mar 22).

Health and Wellbeing Board and decision making

Healthwatch North Tyneside is represented on the North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board by Julia Charlton, Chair of Healthwatch North Tyneside and Paul Jones, Director of Healthwatch North Tyneside. We play an active role in the Health and Wellbeing Board and the strategic groups that deliver the operational work on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board including Future Care Board, Living Well Locally Board, Carers Partnership Board, and Aging Well Board.



Registered Charity Number 1160753

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