



Healthwatch South Tees Communication Strategy 2018-2019

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INTRODUCTION

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved and share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also share them with Healthwatch England, the national body, to help improve the quality of services across the country. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In summary - local Healthwatch is here to:

- Help people find out about local health and social care services.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.

As of 1 April 2017 Healthwatch Middlesbrough and Healthwatch Redcar & Cleveland are working together to deliver Healthwatch activities across South Tees.

The Healthwatch South Tees Communication Strategy outlines how we will engage and communicate effectively with our stakeholders and communities. The strategy will ensure people understand what we do and the mechanisms we use to gather public views and opinions on health and social care services across South Tees.

We will use this Communication Strategy to ensure we understand the needs, concerns and experiences of the residents of South Tees, giving local people a trusted method to have their voices heard and helping to design and improve health and social care services for themselves and their families.

Aims and Objectives of Healthwatch South Tees

Our aim is to be a strong, independent, trusted and effective voice and champion for people across South Tees, influencing health and social care delivery and supporting people to access health and social care services.

Our main objectives are:

- To increase awareness of Healthwatch South Tees and our role in improving health and social care services.
- Develop continuous and meaningful engagement with the public, patients and carers to influence the delivery of health and social care services in South Tees.

- Develop key relationships with stakeholders and partners to ensure the public voice influences decisions made by health and social care commissioners.
- Ensure we gain evidence-based views that are representative of the community rather than personal or single-issue views of active members of the community.
- Champion the voices of seldom heard groups, including children, young people and those with protected characteristics.
- Represent the collective voice of patients, service users, carers and the public on statutory health and wellbeing boards.
- Escalate any concerns regarding health and social care services that are notified to us appropriately to Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- Provide information and signposting support to the public about health and social care services.

PRINCIPLES

We will follow the principles of good communication by;

- Ensuring that the information we provide is clear, in plain language and available in the most appropriate format.
- Being inclusive and accessible to all members of the community, considering diversity ensuring groups are not disadvantaged, including translated or alternative format information.
- Using effective methods to communicate that are consistently 'fit for purpose'.
- Being honest, open and impartial, ensuring that an outcome is never pre-determined.
- Planning communication in advance to enable full participation.
- Ensuring the information we provide is accurate and timely.
- We will always actively look to target the correct audience and review processes as required.
- Upholding and promoting the Nolan Principles of Public Life and ensure honesty and integrity in all our work.

COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

Effective communication is to ensure we are getting the right message to the right people through the most appropriate mechanism at the right time. By using the following mechanisms to engage with the public, carers, stakeholders and partners we will;

- Actively promote our work, provide information and gather feedback via the Healthwatch Middlesbrough and Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland **website**, ensuring coverage across both locality areas.

- Use social media such as **Twitter** and **Facebook** for information sharing, event promotion, and to engage with specific audiences as part of our work plan process and promote the work that we are doing.
- Provide regular **e-bulletins** and circulate throughout our networks. We will supply health and social care services with posters and leaflets that provide our contact details and that offer ways in which individuals can share their views and experiences.
- Work with **partner** agencies to ensure our messages are circulated through their **networks**, **newsletters** and via their **websites**.
- Work with stakeholders and partners to develop a **Healthwatch forum** that provides an effective, consistent mechanism to gather intelligence.
- Support the promotion of **campaigns** and **events** throughout our networks regarding health and social care topics.
- Attend **meetings** both statutory and non-statutory to raise awareness, gather information and ensure that service user voices are included in the decision-making process of health and social care services.
- Attend **community groups** to promote our work, gather intelligence and provide information.
- Provide a **drop-in** service at various venues throughout the South Tees locality.
- Provide an **Information and Signposting** service to support service users to access appropriate health and social care services.
- Work effectively with other local Healthwatch to ensure a joined-up approach to National initiatives and agendas.
- Provide regular information to Healthwatch England and partners about our work to support service improvement and raise awareness.
- All the information we gather will be made available via our websites and updates will be provided throughout our social media channels.

COMMUNICATION WORKPLAN 2018-2019

Workshops:

To support the development and delivery of our work plan priorities we will host various workshops whereby our stakeholders will be invited to share their current priorities, challenges and intelligence from service users and the public.

Information gathered will be used to support Healthwatch South Tees Partnership Board in determining our future workplan priorities, feed in to specific work plan items and shared as appropriate to help improve and shape the delivery of health and social care services.

The information provided will be used in addition to national and local policy to provide the basis of developing focused questionnaires, providing an opportunity to gather targeted intelligence.

Focused Questionnaires:

We will develop a series of questionnaires that will explore four categorical themes including older people, young people, those living with a diagnosed long-term health condition and challenges facing BAME groups. We will ensure that themes such as mental health, obesity and the wider determinants of health are featured throughout our work plan areas, to identify trends and look for innovative ways to improve service delivery and prevention.

We will gather both quantitative and qualitative service user data, such as waiting times, accessibility and service usage. Any intelligence that we receive will be shared appropriately to support the priorities of our partners and their identified workplans.

Respondents will be given the opportunity to give their own undirected opinions of health and social care services, highlighting key issues within specified demographics and detailing what is important to individuals about their health and wellbeing and care needs.

Healthwatch South Tees Young Peoples Shadow Board

We want to ensure that we capture the voice of young people throughout all our work plan priorities. To progress this area of work we will work with other local Healthwatch, professionals and stakeholders to research and identify best practice in establishing a young person's shadow board.

Research and insights gained will be used to establish the most effective method of developing this work plan priority, collaborating with local organisations throughout South Tees to build on existing work with young people, to avoid the duplication of existing workstreams and provide an opportunity to integrate people who would like to be involved.

We will integrate the Young Persons Shadow Board into the development of the overarching Healthwatch South Tees workplan, identifying outcomes that support young people to have their voices heard and improve the commissioning and delivery of local health and social care services.

Healthwatch South Tees Roadshow and Focus Groups

We want to ensure that we are visible throughout our communities, to accomplish this we will identify key locations throughout South Tees to hold information stalls, raise awareness of Healthwatch, provide Information and Signposting and gather service user feedback.

To support us in the gathering of targeted qualitative intelligence, we will use developed questionnaires that have been influenced by national and local policy and

feedback from our partners. We will conduct a series of focus groups throughout various demographic areas to ensure the voice of those underrepresented are heard. All of our findings will be made publicly available to inform future commissioning and the improvement of service provision.