

# Three Years of Listening, Learning and Leading Change

**A reflection on growth, impact and transformation  
from Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees**

**January 2026**



# A Reflection on Growth, Impact and Transformation

Over the last three years, the health and care system has undergone one of its biggest shifts in over a decade, moving from Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). This change reshaped how decisions are made, how services are planned, and how public voice is gathered and understood.

For Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees, this change wasn't just structural, it marked a turning point.

It became a catalyst for growth, innovation and deeper connection with the people we serve.

It pushed us to rethink how we listen, how we engage, and how we influence.

And it strengthened our determination to ensure local voices remain central in a rapidly changing landscape.

## Three Years of Success, Confidence and Impact

During this period of transformation, we have:

### Listened to thousands of local people

Rising from 1,514 experiences (2022–23) to 2,919 (2024–25), clear evidence that more residents are turning to us, trusting us and seeing the value of their voice.



**92% increase on  
feedback over  
past three years**



## Driven Meaningful Change

Your stories have directly shaped improvements across:

- GP access
- NHS dentistry
- Pharmacy shortages & Pharmacy First
- Women's health
- ADHD and neurodiversity
- Migrant health
- Young people's mental health
- Drug and alcohol support
- Learning disability care planning
- Hospital group transformation
- ICS involvement, planning and strategy

## Established Innovative Ways of Reaching Communities

From Youthwatch and Word on the Street, to our Health & Care Ambassador Programme, coffee mornings, targeted engagement and high-impact events, we've brought services directly into communities, breaking down barriers and building trust.

## Strengthened our Foundations

We've expanded our board representation, boosted volunteer involvement, developed new champions and launched our Health and Care Ambassador Programme, giving us more reach, more insight and more independence.



Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Annual Event 2025



Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Health & Care Ambassadors Programme (HCAP) meeting



HCAP session at Purple Rose



Engagement team at HCAP session at Stockton Sixth Form



HCAP session at Purple Rose with Susan Mansaray, founder of Purple Rose and Stockton North MP, Chris McDonald

## Building the Healthwatch NENC Network

One of the most significant achievements of this period is the development of the Healthwatch North East & North Cumbria Network.

With change came opportunity and we stepped into it.

Together with 13 other local Healthwatch, we developed a coordinated, proactive and united way of working across the region. This has enabled us to:

- Gather intelligence collectively
- Escalate issues quickly and consistently
- Respond to system changes with confidence
- Influence decisions at every level of the ICS
- Provide insight that reflects all communities across the NENC footprint

This work has been recognised regionally and nationally as an example of strong, integrated public-voice leadership.

Stockton played a key role in shaping this, demonstrating professionalism, agility and commitment throughout a period of rapid system reform.



***“This work has been recognised regionally and nationally as an example of strong integrated public-voice leadership”***



Healthwatch North East & North Cumbria regional conference

# A Time to Move Forward with Confidence

During periods of transformation or uncertainty, the Board plays a stabilising role by:

- Strengthening transparency
- Safeguarding impartiality
- Maintaining ethical boundaries
- Ensuring decisions remain rooted in community need
- Eroviding calm, objective scrutiny

In a shifting landscape, this helps Healthwatch remain a reliable, steady, trusted voice that partners can depend on.



Healthwatch North East & North Cumbria regional conference



Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Executive Board

# Next Steps: Building on Our Momentum

As we move forward, our focus will be on deepening impact and strengthening community voice through:

- Health & Care Ambassador Programme (HCAP) – Continuing sessions to empower local champions and amplify lived experience.
- Palliative Care Strategy – Contributing to the 10-year plan to ensure compassionate, equitable end-of-life care.
- Primary Access Recovery – Working with partners to improve GP and primary care access for all residents.
- Enter & View Visits – Expanding our on-the-ground insight to monitor quality and share best practice.
- Inclusive Engagement – Reaching underserved and seldom-heard communities to ensure every voice counts in shaping health and care.

We look forward to sharing our findings with you and strengthening service user involvement to improve access and outcomes across the health and social care system.



University Hospitals Tees and Healthwatch Tees Valley Group Model listening event



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# A Heartfelt Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has worked with us and shared their experiences over the past three years – our partners, volunteers, colleagues, services and communities. Your voices continue to guide our work and inspire real improvements.

As we move into the next phase, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees remains here for you. We look forward to building on the relationships, trust and insight we've developed, and to continuing our shared mission: listening, learning and improving outcomes together.



Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees team



Healthwatch National Conference



Stockton Going For Gold event



Starfish Arts & Crafts group



**healthwatch**  
Stockton-on-Tees

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees  
6 – 8 Yarm Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 3NA



t: 0300 180 0660  
e: [info@healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk)

[healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk](http://healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk)