



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Gateshead

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"The feedback local Healthwatch hear in their communities and share with us at Healthwatch England is invaluable, building a picture of what it's like to use health and care services nationwide. Local people's experiences help us understand where we – and decision makers – must focus, and highlight issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. We can then make recommendations that will change care for the better, both locally and across the nation."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chair

This year gave us the opportunity to build on the foundations created by our engagement team by growing our reach, acting on public feedback and helping people through signposting and information.

In our latest Annual Survey, we heard concerns that reflected national issues relating to GP access, dental services and community pharmacies. The people of Gateshead also told us about their mixed experiences of dementia care, physiotherapy, mental health services, residential care homes and autism or ADHD.

We have continued to increase our engagement and research activities, with key areas of activity including Enter and View training, menopause and hospital discharge. We have partnered with care providers, commissioners, voluntary sector partners and other local Healthwatch to inform decisions across the region. In addition, we have connected with other local Healthwatch on topics of regional concern, while supporting the national agenda under Healthwatch England.

We will continue our hard work translating the feedback and experiences that are shared with us into tangible impacts, helping to improve our care systems for everyone.

Michael Brown, Chair



“Whenever I look back on our work, I am proud of the contributions of our volunteers, staff members, strategic partners and every member of the public who has shared their story with us.

We wouldn’t be where we are today without you.”

Michael Brown, Chair, Healthwatch Gateshead

About us

Healthwatch Gateshead is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure that leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

We believe that users' views can improve health and social care services.



Our mission

To demonstrate how user views can improve services in health and social care, and provide practical services, support and advice.



Our values are:

Equity: Embracing inclusivity and compassion, establishing profound connections with the communities we serve, and empowering them.

Collaboration: Nurturing both internal and external relationships, fostering transparent communication, and partnering to amplify our impact.

Independence: Championing the public's agenda, serving as purposeful and critical allies to decision-makers.

Truth: Operating with unyielding integrity and honesty, fearlessly advocating truth to those in power.

Impact: Pursuing ambitious endeavours to effect meaningful change for individuals and communities while remaining accountable and holding others accountable.

Our year in numbers

Overview:



We've supported **8,421 people** to have their say and get information about their care.

Our work is supported by **15 volunteers** and we employ **6 staff**.

We're funded by **Gateshead Council**. In 2024/25 we received **£140,250**, which is the same as last year. **The Integrated Care Board** also provided **£9,500** for project work and core funds.

Reaching out:



850 people shared their experiences with us through research.

This allowed us to produce reports, raise awareness of issues and improve services.

7,189 people engaged with us at **247 outreach sessions and events**; this is 6 times the number of people we engaged with last year.

382 people came directly to us for information and signposting, which is 3 times the number of people from the year before.

Championing your voice:



We published 2 reports:

- *Exploring the experiences of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)* - December 2024
- *Covid 19 and Flu Vaccination Take Up by the Public* - March 2025

With a further 2 reports prepared for publishing:

- *Women's Health Report: Menopause and HRT* - May 2025
- *Patient experiences of hospital discharge pathway 0 at the Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust* - June 2025

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your views, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Gateshead. Here are a few highlights:

Spring

We visited young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in their homes, having tailored discussions about their transition from child to adult services.



We partnered with Connected Voice and the Jewish Community Council of Gateshead for cultural awareness training, learning the best ways to listen and engage.



Summer

We established monthly drop-in sessions at the Queen Elizabeth hospital, providing visitors with signposting information and the chance to share their views.



We attended Gateshead's first Pride Family Picnic in Saltwell Park, speaking to the local LGBTQIA+ about health and social care, as well as their specific feedback and concerns.



Autumn

We spoke to women across Gateshead about Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), as well as gathering responses as part of the Big Conversation about women's health.



We worked with Age UK Gateshead to find out their users' experiences of the North East Ambulance Service in order to deliver feedback.



Winter

Our newly trained Enter and View team conducted their first visit, speaking to the facility's residents, their family members and facility staff to understand their experiences.



We hosted public workshops online and across Gateshead to inform people about the new NHS 10-year plan, giving them a chance to give feedback and express concerns.



Making a difference in the community

We take people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers. In this way your feedback can shape services and improve care over time.

Here are some examples of our work in Gateshead this year:

Identifying next steps in overwhelming situations



Our consistent presence in the community gives us the time and the opportunity to help people break down complex situations.

Sharon* approached us asking for advice; her three children were facing different challenges, and she felt she had hit a 'dead end' in accessing educational, social and mental health support.

After we listened and identified actionable next steps for each individual issue, Sharon left feeling relieved and supported.

Facilitating discussions for World Mental Health Day



We organised a mental health discussion group with partner Your Voice Counts, speaking to adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) about their experiences.

Topics included daily health, diagnosis and dealing with stress.

The event was well-received, and we were also able to support Your Voice Counts by connecting them with a community contact who could support them with Wellness Recovery Actions Plans (WRAP).

Sharing a community perspective with Occupational Health students



We were invited to present (both online and in person) to a group of Northumbria University students studying occupational health.

This information session armed these future practitioners with a practical knowledge of local health and social care services, including our signposting system. They were glad to receive a community-oriented perspective and we were invited to return.

*This name has been changed.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

Exploring the experiences of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We spoke to young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities, asking them about their experiences transitioning from children's social care to adult social care.

Our questions focused on services provided, opportunities available and the involvement of parents, carers and families in the transition process.

What did we do?

Gateshead Council's Transitions Team, part of the Integrated Adult and Social Care Services, worked with Healthwatch Gateshead to survey the young people in their service. 16 young people wished to be involved, and so our engagement team worked with them and their parents/carers to tailor the survey to their individual communication needs.

Key things we heard:



40%

reported a positive experience transition from child to adult services, while 20% reported a neutral experience and the rest reported 'not sure'.

90%

reported a positive relationship with their Transitions Team worker.

25%

reported facing challenges and issues with the services received from adult social care.

Overall, our findings highlighted that the needs of young people with SEND are unique and individual, requiring care providers to pay attention to their specific requirements. Not all participants were aware of the support that was available to them.

What difference did this make?

Gateshead Council received this report, and plan to incorporate our recommendations into their SEND strategy during their next review. Healthwatch Gateshead will review progress against the report's recommendations in 2026.

Listening to your experiences

Overcoming communication barriers to health

While attending a drop-in session at a Gateshead community hub, we were able to help a professional whose clients were facing issues accessing care.

Several local residents shared with us that they needed interpretation services to help them communicate with health professionals. They were not receiving this support, resulting in them losing GP, dentistry and opticians' appointments which they required.

We contacted the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and a Migration Support Officer working for Gateshead Council. By doing so, we identified interpreting services available to anyone accessing local ICB services, passing this information on to our original contact and to Gateshead Council.

What difference did this make?

A few months later, Healthwatch Gateshead received feedback from the Migration Support Officer involved, thanking us for supporting them to make the right connections.

As a result, this issue was presented at the next Gateshead Migration & Refugee Multi-Agency Meeting, and brought to the attention of Gateshead Public Health partners. This highlighted to a wider range of partners the ongoing communication barriers preventing access to care.

We also attend regular events for refugees and asylum seekers, providing information and signposting support.

After showing attendees at a local event how to use the auto-translate function on our website to access our information in their first language, we received feedback that our support and willingness to adapt to meet the needs of the community was "invaluable".



"Healthwatch are now the first people I think of when our users have a need for some new information."

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Gateshead. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their experiences and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Attending regular women's health events and women's groups.
- Speaking to refugees and asylum seekers at regular drop-ins and events.
- Reached out to young people through Youthwatch Gateshead.



Hearing from all communities

Creating opportunities for young people to speak up

We recently launched a new Youthwatch Gateshead programme, partnering with Gateshead College to host a pilot workshop on hospital experience.

Our local young people told us that they have had positive experiences with hospital care, healthcare staff and emergency services, but have concerns about long waiting times.

What difference did this make?

Young people often feel disengaged and disempowered when it comes to their health and social care. Through our Youthwatch Gateshead programme, we aim to ensure their views are reflected in our ongoing work, while also providing a list of helpful services and organisations at the end of each session.

Speaking to local women about the menopause and Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Our engagement team spoke to 163 women across Gateshead, gathering responses to help us understand their experiences of Hormone Replacement Therapy for menopause symptoms.

Through this study we evaluated the level of awareness among women about the menopause, its symptoms and available treatments, while also assessing how barriers to accessing HRT affect the health outcomes and quality of life of menopausal women in Gateshead.

70% reported that their day-to-day quality of life was affected by the menopause.



“One doctor said that as a woman menopause was to be expected so ‘get on with it’. Another said at age 60 I was ‘old and past it’ and that HRT is not a ‘magic wand’ and I need to accept the symptoms.”

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on our support.

This year 382 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust.
- Helping people access the services they need.
- Supporting people to look after their health.
- Signposting people to additional support services.



Helping local caregivers access crucial support

We were approached by Melanie* at Leam Lane Library. Melanie's mother was living with a dementia diagnosis but had no support.

After listening to Melanie, we explained the role of the local crisis team. We then assisted her in calling Adult Social Care and helped her explain the issue to the call handler. As a result, an urgent social care assessment was scheduled.

After the call, we helped her write down her own list of next steps, including contact information, support groups and signposting for financial support.

"I felt that I was on my knees and overwhelmed. I'm so pleased I saw on social media that Healthwatch would be at Leam Lane, their help has been a big relief."

Connecting older people to local services

Gloria* spoke to one of our engagement officers at Gateshead Central Library, sharing her concerns that she was struggling to discuss all the factors affecting her health condition during her clinical appointments.

She felt there was never enough time in each appointment, and worried that age-related issues affecting her health would be dismissed as 'irrelevant'.

We were able to signpost Gloria to a number of services; Your Voice Counts advocacy service to help gain direct help with her health concerns, alongside Age UK Gateshead and Gateshead Older People's Assembly to address social isolation and a general lack of support. She was also encouraged to discuss adjustments with her GP if she still felt unable to share her concerns.

"Healthwatch gave me a chance to discuss some issues which I'd never talked about face-to-face. The drop-in event was very convenient for me."

***These names have been changed.**

Showcasing volunteer impact

We're supported by our amazing volunteers, and thanks to their efforts in the community and on our committee, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving when it comes to health and social care in Gateshead.



"As a volunteer member of Healthwatch Gateshead Committee, I contribute my lived experience as an autistic person, campaigner, and advocate to help ensure local health and care services are inclusive, accessible, and responsive.

In the past year I have been involved in the roll-out and promotion of the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism, as well as helping to raise awareness of its value across local health and social care providers. I also provide insight through consultations and project groups, and work to amplify the voices of neurodivergent and disabled residents."

Alan Guest, Committee Member



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

By improving our volunteer offer, we successfully increased our committee from 5 members to 9, bringing new expertise and diverse perspectives to our work.

The Healthwatch Gateshead Committee is made up of volunteer members, each representing their own community of geography, interest, demographic or practice, and each with their own personal/professional interest in health and social care services.

This year they have helped us to:

- Set the research priorities for the coming year.
- Define our research projects.
- Identify engagement activities and locations, defining how we listen to the public and their experiences.
- Identify underrepresented communities in Gateshead, and support us in reaching out to them to hear their views.
- Provide direction and support for the annual work programme.
- Fulfil our statutory duties e.g. responding to Quality Accounts.

“As a Healthwatch committee member, I’ve seen how powerful it is when everyone feels heard, especially those who are often overlooked. Inclusion starts with listening, and lasting change follows when we act on what we hear.”

Privilege Garaba, Committee Member

Our Engagement Volunteers are individuals who support the work programme of Healthwatch Gateshead and have helped us this year to:

- Visit communities to promote Healthwatch Gateshead, raising awareness of our research projects and what we have to offer.
- Support at events such as Gateshead Carers Gala, Mela in Newcastle and Gateshead Pride, sharing information about health and social care.
- Collect experiences and support their local communities to share their views, helping people respond to our surveys and submit feedback.

In the coming year we plan to further develop our volunteer offer, diversifying our range of volunteering roles, enriching the volunteer experience and maximising their impact within Healthwatch Gateshead.

Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us and be part of the change:



08000 385 116



info@healthwatchgateshead.co.uk

Our Impact

Improving the ambulance experience for wheelchair users in the North East

Healthwatch Gateshead listens to local people and understands that it's not always easy for them to tell services directly what needs to change.

After receiving anonymous feedback from the public, Healthwatch Gateshead raised concerns with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) about the accessibility of ambulances for people with a wheelchair.

NEAS responded positively and began consulting with:

- The network of 14 regional Healthwatch groups
- Sunderland Disability Group
- Disability North
- Newcastle RREMS (Regional Rehabilitation Engineering Mobility Service)

This collaboration led to the introduction of new NEAS service guidance.

What changed?

- **Treatment in Wheelchairs:** Where possible, NEAS will treat people while they remain in their wheelchairs if it's safe and gives the best outcome.
- **Staying at Home:** If appropriate, NEAS will treat people at home and refer them to other services instead of taking them to hospital.
- **Transporting Wheelchairs:** If someone is in a community setting and needs to go to hospital, NEAS will use Patient Transport Services or an ambulance to convey them. If the wheelchair can't go with them, it will be transported separately. All local hospitals have agreed to this new approach.



Our Impact

NEAS are still making improvements, and their next steps are:

- Develop an internal training video to raise awareness of the challenges some wheelchair users can face.
- Staff training on how to safely disengage wheelchair motors.
- NEAS is working with Newcastle Wheelchair Services and has draft training materials ready. Training will begin once these are finalised.

This work shows how Healthwatch Gateshead helped ensure that the voices of service users were heard—and led to real, positive changes in how services are delivered.



"Working with Healthwatch Gateshead and other voluntary sector partners has helped us better understand the needs of wheelchair users and improve the way we provide services.

This has allowed us to ensure people are treated with dignity, we are able to meet their specific needs and protect people's wheelchairs from being left in community settings."

Mark Johns,
Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion Manager



Improving GP Services in Gateshead Healthcare

In 2023, Healthwatch Gateshead gathered feedback from patients of Gateshead Healthcare, including Crawcrook, Rowlands Gill, Grange Road, and Blaydon GP practices.

This feedback, along with insights from the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board, revealed that many patients were unhappy with the services they received at these practices.

As a result, Healthwatch Gateshead launched a focused investigation into three key issues:

- Booking Appointments – How easy it is for patients to make appointments.
- Waiting Times – How long patients wait to be seen.
- Public Perception – How patients feel about the overall quality of care.

To better understand these concerns, Healthwatch Gateshead carried out an engagement process to hear directly from patients using these GP services.

Many of the problems identified – such as difficulty getting appointments, lack of follow-up care, and trouble reaching the practice by phone – are common across the country. However, Healthwatch Gateshead believed that local improvements can still be made by reviewing and adjusting systems at each practice.



Our Impact

Key recommendations from the report were to:

- Review and improve the appointment booking system.
- Ensure better follow-up care after tests and procedures.
- Upgrade the telephone system to make booking easier.

What difference did this make?

These findings were shared with both the medical group running the GP practices and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), which oversees them. As a result, changes have already been made to improve services.



"North East and North Cumbria ICB is committed to supporting and strengthening general practice at a time of significant system reform.

Our ambition is to work in partnership with primary care to ensure services are equipped to meet rising demands, reduce health inequalities, and improve population health.

We are actively investing in general practice through resilience funding, digital transformation, and support for under-served communities.

A key priority is supporting general practice to deliver on the Government's three 'left shifts', moving from treatment to prevention, analogue to digital and moving care from hospitals to the community.

We recently held a series of general practice listening events, attended by our Chief Executive, Sam Allen and our chief medical officer, Dr Neil O'Brien.

The events were an important engagement opportunity for practice staff in the Gateshead area to talk about the challenges they face in delivering services to their practice population. We are committed to ensuring that the feedback from the events and wider engagement is embedded into our planning to deliver sustainable, high-quality care across our region."

Lynn Wilson,
ICB Delivery Director Newcastle & Gateshead

Working together for change

Healthwatch Gateshead is proud to part of the Healthwatch North East and North Cumbria (NENC) regional network.

The goal for Healthwatch NENC is to make sure people's experiences with health and care services are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level and help influence decisions made about health and care services.

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



Building a Strong Healthwatch Network

We formed a network of 14 local Healthwatch groups to improve health and care services both regionally and nationally.

Funding from our Integrated Care Board helped us build strong, meaningful relationships within this network, consistently adding value to the design of health and care services.

We have representatives from our network on local and regional strategic boards. These boards have robust reporting structures that support coordinated and effective engagement with our communities.

Our collaborative approach is recognised nationally as best practice.



Working together for change

Work carried out during 2024 – 2025:



Integrated Care Strategy

As a network, we received over 400 responses during our engagement period.

A review of the feedback showed that children and young people were under-represented.

Impact:

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) added a fourth goal: **"Giving children and young people the best start in life."** This goal increases the focus on people of all ages throughout the strategy.

Refreshing the ICB Involvement Strategy



Healthwatch spoke with over 100 people to help update the ICB Involvement Strategy.

Impact:

Based on their feedback, the ICB has updated its principles to include:

- Meaningful involvement
- Removing barriers
- Listening to feedback

We also helped create a shorter, easier-to-read document and a workplan based on these new principles, including ways to measure success.



Working together for change

Access to dental care



Listening to People's Dental Care Challenges

Over 3,800 people shared their views with us.

As a network, we engaged with people across the region to understand the difficulties they face in accessing dental services. We used various methods, including surveys, mystery shopping, general conversations, and one-on-one interviews at Darlington Urgent Dental Access Centre (UDAC).

The ICB has provided the following response

Improving access to dentistry will not be a quick fix but we are working on it, our key focus areas are;

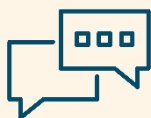
- Stabilising services – additional investment including incentivised access, additional dental out of hours treatment capacity and dental clinical assessment workforce/triage capacity.
- Funding available to deliver a new model of dental care via Urgent Dental Access Centres and provide additional general dental access.
- Working with 'at risk' practices to identify and address financial issues of delivering NHS dental care.
- Working with local dental networks and NHS England North East Workforce Training and Education Directorate to improve recruitment, retention, training and education across the region.
- Developing an oral health strategy to improve oral health and reduce the pressure on dentistry.

We are continuing to work closely with the ICB as new ways of working are developed.



Working together for change

The big conversation: Women's Health



Listening to Women's Health Needs

As a network, we spoke to nearly 4,500 people and held six focus groups with women who face extra health challenges. We wanted to understand what matters most to them and their priorities.

What We Learned:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Healthy ageing and long-term conditions (like bone, joint, and muscle health)
- Menopause, perimenopause, and hormone replacement therapy
- Screening services (like cervical, breast, bowel, and cancer screenings)
- Menstrual and gynaecological health

Impact:

We're now working with our partners to create a "Woman's Promise." This will help women, health professionals, and others understand and support women's health needs and rights.

Change NHS:



As a network, we supported engagement for the NHS 10 Year Strategy, delivering over 17 workshops throughout North East & North Cumbria including people from ethnically marginalised communities, autistic people, people with learning disabilities and young people.



Our commitment to working in partnership with Healthwatch and being open and transparent in our interactions will continue. We value greatly the contribution of the partnership across the region. We should all be rightly proud of what we have achieved to date, and I look forward to seeing this work progress as we enter the next phase of the ICB.



Sam Allen, Chief Executive at North East and North Cumbria ICB

Working together for change

North East Ambulance Service clinical strategy:



Gathering Feedback to Improve NEAS Services

Over 1,700 people shared their valuable feedback. 12 Healthwatch groups in the North East, along with VONNE, engaged with the public and patients as part of the NEAS clinical strategy review. This work will be ongoing throughout 2025–2026.

Key Strengths:

Compassionate and professional staff	Community involvement
Patient Transport Services	Effective emergency care

Areas for Improvement:

Response times	Mental health support
Communication transparency	Resource and staffing limitation
Coordination with other services	

Raising Voices Together:

To showcase the work carried out by the NENC Healthwatch network, all 14 local Healthwatch came together. We shared experiences and learning, highlighting how local engagement has made an impact both regionally and nationally. This gathering helped strengthen relationships, with a commitment to continue collaborative efforts.

Claire Riley, Chief Corporate Services Officer, emphasized that our efforts have ensured that citizen voices are embedded within the ICB at every level of decision-making. She stressed the importance of involving and engaging with communities in any changes and developments. Claire also highlighted the need for consistent, long-term funding to build on our success and ensure people's voices are heard and acted upon.

Chris McCann, Deputy CEO of Healthwatch England, supported Claire's views on the power of the network. He expressed the ambition for Healthwatch nationally to develop strong systems of work, using NENC Healthwatch as a model for best practice.

Finance and future priorities

Healthwatch Gateshead receive funding Gateshead Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Gateshead Council	£140,250	Expenditure on pay	£151,885
Integrated Care Board	£9,500	Non-pay expenditure	£1,618
		Office and management fee	£34,319
Total income	£149,750	Total Expenditure	£187,822

Tell Us North CIC (host organisation for Healthwatch Gateshead) have agreed to spend reserve monies to increase the capacity of the Healthwatch Gateshead staff team. This is in the form of additional roles, Research and Data Officer and Enter and View Officer to support the development of the Healthwatch Gateshead Services. This money from Tell Us North CIC covers the difference between income and expenditure on the table above.

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop a culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Healthwatch Gateshead have now trained authorised representatives dedicated to Enter and View, so we will be carrying out Enter and View visits in 2025-26.

Our emerging priorities for the next year are:

- Hospitals
- Mental Health
- NHS 111 service
- Social Care

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Gateshead is administered by Tell Us North CIC.

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Email: info@tellusnorth.org.uk

Healthwatch Gateshead 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.

The Tell Us North board consists of 5 Directors who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities across all our contracts including Healthwatch Gateshead. Healthwatch Gateshead also has its own volunteer committee, also consisting of 9 members. This committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Tell Us North CIC Board met 4 times as the legal entity. The Healthwatch Gateshead Committee met 6 times, making decisions on matters such as making responses on the local Quality Accounts, defining research projects and identifying underrepresented communities who we could target to hear more from them about their experiences of health and social care service.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. Our committee bi-monthly meetings and the Annual Joint Meeting between Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle (held in September) are open to the public, and the minutes for each meeting are made available on our website.

Statutory statements

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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

During 2024/25, we have been accessible to the public in a number of ways, including phone, email, via web form on our website, social media and in-person at regular community groups and forum meetings.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will provide copies to partner organisations, make print copies available and publish it on our website: www.healthwatchgateshead.co.uk

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

This year there were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations. We undertook one Enter and View Visit, with the report prepared for publishing in 2025–26.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

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

We have taken insights and experiences to decision-makers in North East and North Cumbria including the Care Quality Commission, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, Gateshead Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Gateshead is represented by Yvonne Probert, CEO of Tell Us North CIC, or Michael Brown, Chair of the Healthwatch Gateshead Committee on:

- Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board
- Gateshead Adults Safeguarding Board
- Gateshead Council Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Integrated Care Board (ICB) Gateshead Place Sub-Committee

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