

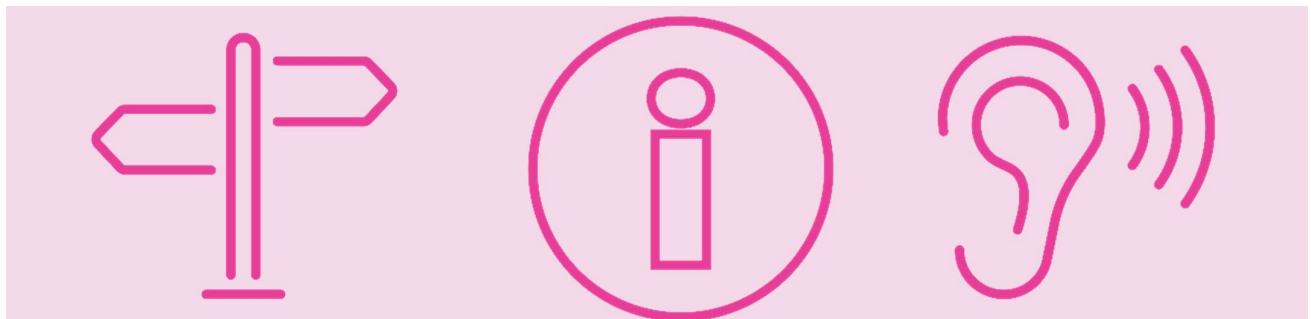
GP Roadshow Summary

March 2025



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About Healthwatch South Tees

Healthwatch South Tees (HWST), the operating name for Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland and Healthwatch Middlesbrough, is the independent champion for local people who use health and care services.

Healthwatch was established as a statutory service in every Local Authority area in England, by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Local Healthwatch work to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services, and to represent their voices to decision-makers so that services are better able to meet the needs of their local communities.

Background

General Practitioner (GP) practices provide a wide range of health services and are the first point of contact for most people seeking healthcare.

GP Practice services have changed to meet increasing demand and respond to local health care needs. They have done this by expanding the workforce, to include more specialist roles that work alongside GPs in general practice and improve the offer for patients.

In 2023 Healthwatch South Tees produced a resource, '[I need to see a doctor](#)', to help patients understand these changes and respond to the most commonly raised queries we received from the public. This resource was shared widely, however, we wanted to raise greater awareness of this with patients, especially those who are not digitally connected.

One of our priorities for 2024/25 was to carry out visits to GP Practices across South Tees with the aim of:

- Sharing our GP & Community Pharmacy Resources and other information that can support patients to get the best out of health and care services.
- Developing relationships with GP Practices.
- Raising awareness of HWST to patients and staff.

GP Roadshows

We visited 24 GP Practices across South Tees from August 2024 to January 2025, speaking to nearly **800** patients. We tailored each roadshow to meet the needs of the individual Practice and their patients by creating interactive displays and communications for each of the Practices.

Participating Practices included:

South Grange Medical Practice	Normanby Medical Practice	Manor House Surgery
Eston Surgery	Cambridge Medical Group	Garth Surgery
Brotton Surgery	Hillside Practice	Bentley Medical Practice
Ravenscar Surgery	Huntcliff Surgery	The Greenhouse Surgery
The Endeavor Practice	Discovery Practice	The Erimus Practice
Thorntree Surgery	Park Surgery	Prospect Surgery
Borough Road Surgery	Linthorpe Surgery	Nunthorpe Surgery
Acklam Medical Centre	Newlands Medical Centre	Coulby Medical Practice



Outcomes

Raising awareness of HWST

Of the 800 people we spoke to **738** were unaware of Healthwatch. We were able to inform them of our free [Information and Signposting service](#), which provides people with trusted information so they can make informed choices when accessing health and social care services.

Improving access to services

During our engagement, we made **367** people aware of the additional roles available within GP Practices by sharing our 'I need to see a doctor' resource.

GP Practices and patients also found our [Community Pharmacy resource](#) useful, especially the detail around the prescription journey.

"Thank you so much for this. It shows that approximately half of the patients are unaware of the additional roles in the GP practice.

I am sure all patients were grateful for the information, and I am pleased you managed to help those who are caring for someone"

Kendra Green, Eston PCN Manager, Normanby Medical Centre

Identifying unpaid carers

Through our conversations with patients we spoke to **124** people who didn't recognise themselves as unpaid carers so had no expectations that they could get help for themselves. We were able to inform them that they could register as a carer with their GP Practice, encouraging them to inform their surgery of their caring responsibilities, opening the door to support and services in relation to their own health and wellbeing.

"The GP Roadshows have been invaluable for supporting our collective efforts to raise awareness of unpaid care across the South Tees and directing carers to much needed support. Holding a space within primary care has proven vital in identifying hidden carers and encouraging them to inform their surgery of their caring responsibilities opening the door to support and services in relation to their own health and wellbeing. I was able to join the team at two GP Practices providing a fantastic opportunity to connect carers to We Care You Care resources.

Kelly Hodgson, We Care You Care Project Lead

Developing our relationships with GP Practices

Prior to our roadshow visits many GP Practices were unclear about the role of Healthwatch, and some were hesitant to engage with us. However, our willingness to engage with patients and share our resources to inform patients of the changes within General Practice, and other information to help them navigate the health and care landscape was warmly welcomed.

Many expressed that the perception they had of Healthwatch had greatly changed and we look forward to building on the excellent relationships we have made during this engagement.

Patient Feedback

Although gathering patient feedback was not an aim of the roadshow activities, patients used this as an opportunity to share their experiences with us. All patient feedback was shared directly with Practice Managers after the roadshow to enable them to share good practice and to improve patient care within their own practice.

Increased patient participation through Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

Prior to each roadshow we had discussions with each Practice to find out if there was anything they would like us to focus on. Bentley Medical Practice, Hillside Practice, Park Surgery, Thorntree Surgery, Discovery Practice, Cambridge Medical Group and Coulby Medical Practice all told us they would like help in recruiting patients to their Patient Participation Group.

During our discussions with patients, we highlighted this role and how it can support the GP Practice.

We successfully recruited new PPG members at the following Practices.

- Bentley Medical Practice
- Cambridge Medical Group

Impact

Cambridge Medical Group – responding to patient feedback

As part of our GP Roadshow activities, Cambridge Medical Group welcomed us to their Practice on 12 September 2024. The event attracted over 100 patients, however, the feedback we received was predominantly negative.

At the roadshow patients told us:

- “I can never see a doctor”.
- “Additional roles are not well advertised”.
- “The appointment system is frustrating”.
- “The building is starting to look worn down”.

After discussing this feedback with the Practice Manager, we suggested holding another event to inform patients how they can access the additional services within the Practice and to give patients an opportunity to express their concerns directly with staff. The event held on 30 January 2025 was attended by 35 patients. Patients left the event with more knowledge about the additional roles, the appointment system, and we successfully recruited members for their Patient Participation Group (PPG).

Feedback from attendees included:

- It’s refreshing to see Cambridge collaborating with other organisations to raise awareness of this.
- It’s wonderful to see this practice making changes; my son was born here, so I wouldn’t go anywhere else.
- The doctors here are exceptional.
- I don’t feel like just a patient here; I feel like family.

We would like to congratulate Cambridge Medical Group for responding so positively to patient feedback to improve access and patient experience.

“Following a roadshow visit from Healthwatch and the receipt of mostly negative feedback I requested further collaboration from Healthwatch to run our own patient event to address the concerns that were raised originally to show we were listening as a practice. I also wanted to update our patients on the ARRS roles and how they can access the additional services from their practice. This time the feedback was extremely positive, supportive and we were also able to launch a patient participation group to continue to shape the way forward for the practice.”

Lindsay Sanderson, Practice Manager, Cambridge Medical Group

Suggestions for improvement

- Our engagement highlighted that many patients were unaware of the additional roles within GP Practices and suggest GP Practices should increase promotion of these services to patients, using a variety of methods to share information.
- We found that engagement within primary care settings is beneficial in identifying unpaid carers. We suggest that GP Practices raise awareness to all staff in identifying an unpaid carer and that other agencies with a focus on this work engage in these settings.
- Our discussions revealed patient understanding of the prescription journey had some unrealistic ideas about when their medication would be ready. We would suggest that GP Practices share our stand alone 'prescription journey' social media post and printed poster to communicate and set clearer expectations.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch South Tees would like to thank the following for their support with our GP Roadshows:

- All participating GP Practices and patients who took the time to talk to us.
- All Primary Care Networks
- We Care You Care
- Teesside Mind

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