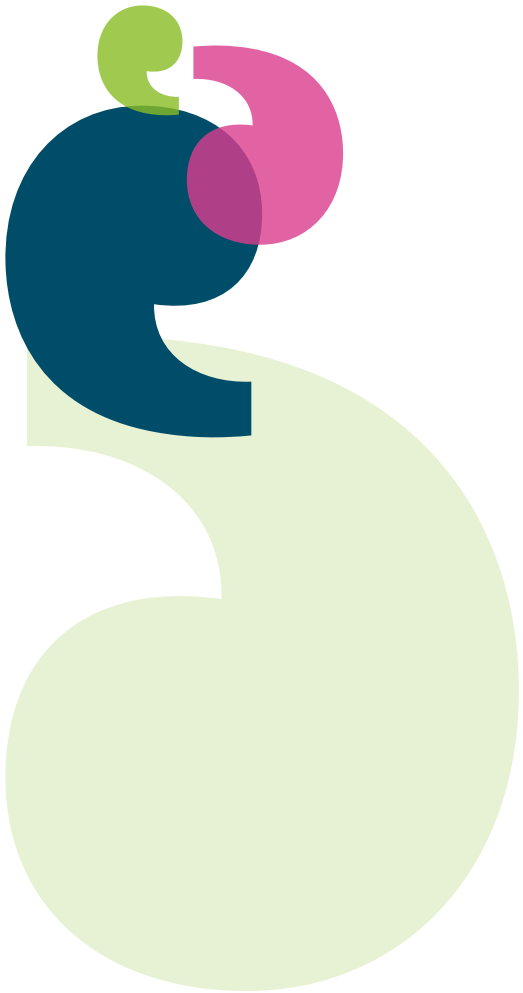


**Annual
report**

2014/15

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Note from the operational lead

Healthwatch South Tyneside's second year has seen us further embed our key role ensuring the patient voice is heard by those making important decisions on health and social care provision in the borough.

We have been at the centre of the major changes to South Tyneside's health and social care system being implemented as part of a national government programme.

Operational boards, steering groups and patient forums are attended regularly to hear what 'you' - the people who use these services - think about it all. Participation in these discussions is key to ensuring that not only are people aware of the changes, but that they have a real opportunity to shape health and social care for the generations that will come after us.

Healthwatch South Tyneside will continue to play an active role in the development of future services.

This year the relocation of the Jarrow Walk-In Centre and changes to the patient transport booking system have been difficult subjects for residents to consider. We have worked tirelessly to ensure that the views of patients were taken into account.

Patients highlighted that they were encountering problems accessing their GP practices in a timely fashion. Healthwatch South Tyneside, along with our partner Vision Sense, carried out some thought provoking research on behalf of South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group into both GP and pharmacy services.

The results were surprising but were conclusive, finding that our GP practices and pharmacies are offering a good service.

Next year we intend to take forward our new vision strategy which will see Healthwatch out in the community using digital technology to gather information as it happens in a fast and efficient manner. We will be more accessible to the general public and will be out there asking you for your views and experiences.

On behalf of the South Tyneside Healthwatch team I would like to thank South Tyneside Council, South Tyneside CCG, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, Healthnet and the many voluntary and community groups who have helped us to build a strong and versatile Healthwatch service.

Joanne Luther

Project Manager - Healthwatch South Tyneside

Healthwatch South Tyneside board meetings are held in public at Jarrow Community Centre. Agendas and reports can be viewed on our website at healthwatchsouthtyneside.co.uk or for more information and enquiries email info@healthwatchsouthtyneside.co.uk

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About Healthwatch

Healthwatch South Tyneside is one of 148 local Healthwatch across England. Healthwatch is the consumer champion for health and social care and aims to ensure that the voices of users of health and social care reach the ears of decision makers.

Our vision and mission

We are passionate about ensuring that we are successful in representing the feelings of our citizens in the way that decisions affecting them are made.

Residents of South Tyneside will be able to have their views of health and social care services heard by those who design, commission, deliver and monitor services locally and nationally, and have direct access to person centred information and advice to help navigate their way through the health and social care landscape.

Achieving this vision will mean that:

- People shape health and social care delivery.
- People influence the services they receive personally.
- People hold services to account.

Mission statement: "To work collaboratively with everyone in South Tyneside to improve the quality of local health and social care services."

As consumer champion for health and social care, we achieve this by:

- Listening hard to people, especially the most vulnerable, to understand their experiences and what matters most to them.

- Influencing those who have the power to change services so that they better meet people's needs now and into the future.
- Empowering and informing people to get the most from their health and social care services and encouraging other organisations to do the same.
- Working with key strategic stakeholders within health and social care to champion service improvement and to empower local people.

Our strategic priorities

The statutory role and functions of Healthwatch are laid down in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 but local areas have discretion about how their local Healthwatch delivers its services.

Our Strategic Plan 2015-18 has set out seven key outcomes:

- Be a continuously improving and independent not for profit local organisation.
- Support the integration of health and social care services.
- Identify, examine, and report on key areas of local health concern.
- Respond positively to unexpected public concerns, and work with partners to report findings as required.
- Establish regular and high quality communications.
- Encourage close working between private and public services.
- Ensure that the public and communities are effectively included in the way services are shaped.

Each of these outcomes has a series of actions setting out how they will be achieved and reported.

Providing information and signposting for people who use health and social care services

Helping people get what they need from local health and social care services

We have provided information and signposting advice on a wide range of issues during the year, from the lack of disabled spaces in supermarket car parks to a patient alleging poor medical advice led to a burst bowel.

Enquiries signposted to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service included:

- Relative of patient whose bowel cancer wound was still open two years post-op.
- Relative/carer unhappy with arrangements for disposal of used syringes.
- Relative/carer wanting to complain about an ambulance failing to arrive.

Enquiries signposted to the Independent Complaints Advocacy included:

- Patient wanting to complain about donated organ spoilt in transplantation process.
- Caller who swallowed a dentistry palette and was discharged from hospital and told the object would come out naturally, but instead suffered a burst bowel after the palette penetrated the intestine.

Enquiries signposted to NHS England included:

- A carer unhappy with a GP's response to their relative's suicidal ideation.
- A couple seeking IVF funding unhappy with lack of support from their GP.

Other general advice included a patient wanting reimbursement for dental treatment while receiving State benefits, who was referred to Hebburn Neighbourhood Advice Centre and Welfare Rights, and a patient wanting to find out where they could have a shingles vaccination who was signposted to local BUPA hospitals and given an indicative cost.

A relative seeking advice on dementia was given contact details for the Alzheimer's Society, while a member of the public wanting to challenge the number of disabled bays at a supermarket was provided information on the legal quota from the local authority's highways department and signposted to Disabled Motoring UK.

As well as offering advice and providing contact details for other health and social care organisations, we have also directly intervened on behalf of patients.

Examples include a diabetic whose collection service for used needles was stopped. HWST contacted the caller's GP, who agreed to dispose of needles until a new collection system was agreed.



Engaging with people who use health and social care services

Understanding people's experiences

We have undertaken a variety of approaches to engage with users of health and social care services to understand their needs and experiences. They include carrying out surveys, meeting patients in health centres, holding round table discussions, Enter & View training visits to care homes, and attending community events.

'Take two minutes to talk to us'

HWST volunteers and staff spent a week at South Tyneside District Hospital asking the public about their experiences attending the Outpatients and A&E departments in advance of a CQC inspection of the Trust.

The 'take 2 minutes to talk to us' survey was designed to provide added value to the inspection, with information collated and data analysed in a report which was supplied to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Quality Surveillance Group and CQC.

Patients were happy to take part, openly voicing their views on services delivered at the hospital. We completed 316 surveys, with 239 from the Outpatients department and 77 from A&E. Our report was shared with the Trust and CQC.

Patients give verdict on GP surgeries

Between December 2014 and January 2015 we carried out a study of access to healthcare services at all 28 doctors' practices in the borough.

The survey was commissioned by South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) following complaints about lengthy waits for appointments, and was available online as well as in GP surgeries.

Pharmacists call for improved support

Pharmacists called for improved support from South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group in a survey carried out by HWST.

We carried out interviews at 28 pharmacies in January 2015, asking a range of questions about the services they offer, the challenges they face and the improvements they feel are needed.

Patient transport service

After receiving complaints from users of the patient transport service in South Tyneside, we arranged two events where patients could meet a senior NHS manager to discuss their concerns about changes.

A new over-the-phone eligibility assessment for patients looking to book an ambulance to take them to a medical appointment had been introduced in October 2014, in line with Department of Health national policy.

The purpose of the assessment is to make sure that the people who require ambulance services are prioritised and that the NHS is making the best use of the funding it has available.

But regular service users claimed they were given no warning about the changes and

were having to go through an eligibility assessment each time they make a booking.

After raising their concerns, a senior commissioning manager attended two events on behalf of NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group to hold round table discussions with service users.

The manager was able to explain the reasons behind the new procedure, while users were able to make suggestions on how the new booking service could be improved, including how the eligibility questions are framed and simplifying the process for regular users.

Enter & View

HWST has developed an Enter & View Framework supported by relevant policies and procedures and we have nine fully trained and DBS cleared authorised representatives to undertake visits.

The Enter & View representatives are: Dr Shobha Srivastava (board member), Dr Christopher Hargreaves (board member), Jeff Usher, Christine Lee, Arthur McKean, Margaret Turnbull, June Bains, Margaret Stewart and Yusef Abdullah.

Three initial Enter & View training visits were arranged for November 2014 where the HWST representatives shadowed local authority inspectors at Ashlea Mews, Garden Hill and Cheviot Court care homes.

They rehearsed the protocol for setting up an Enter & View visit, any specific areas of observation required and collation of the evidence to produce the report following the visit.

The outcome was positive from both the volunteers involved and the service provider, with no areas of concern to relay to either the commissioner or CQC from any of the visits.

Influencing decision makers with evidence from local people

Producing reports and recommendations to effect change

We have produced a number of reports during the year with recommendations for improvements to health and social care provision, some of which have already been implemented.

New respite care beds funded after Healthwatch report

After the issue of lack of respite care provision was raised at a dementia café we attended, HWST commissioned a report to assess the extent of the problem.

There are officially 16,700 carers in the borough, but it is believed the number of unofficial carers could be double or even triple this amount. In a survey of more than 500 carers last year by South Tyneside Council, 41% reported working over 100 hours a week in the carer role.

South Tyneside also has one of the highest rates of transfers into full time residential care in the country, with the primary reason in up to 89% of cases being carer burnout.

A telephone survey of all 29 care homes in the borough found only seven could offer respite care beds bookable more than a week in advance, and even these beds could not be guaranteed as they could be called on for last minute admissions. This meant carers were unable to book a holiday or even, in some cases, to have a planned hospital operation.

Outcomes

We took the findings to South Tyneside's Health and Wellbeing Board and the Local Quality Surveillance Group, and the Council commissioned six new respite beds.

St Thomas Complex in South Shields, The White House Nursing Home in Jarrow and Willowdene Nursing Home in Hebburn now each have two beds available for pre-bookable respite care.

Carers wishing to book the new service, launched in November 2014, need to first be assessed by care managers and those found to be eligible will be issued with a letter to be presented to the care home as proof they qualify. Bookings will be on a first come first served basis.

"We are pleased to be able to secure these respite beds which will provide much needed support to the many carers in the borough. The role of Healthwatch was invaluable in providing the intelligence to enable this provision to be developed and we look forward to continuing our excellent working relationship with them in the future."

Councillor Mary Butler,
Lead Member for Adult Social
Care and Support Services

Case Study: Charlie Cragg



Charlie Cragg is the sole carer for his wife Joan, 83, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease five years ago and also suffers from arthritis, diabetes and angina. The couple, of Fraser Close, South Shields, have been married for 61 years.

Charlie booked a coach trip to Scotland to give himself a few days' break but three days before he was due to leave, the care home Joan had been booked into rang to say the bed had been taken.

Charlie had vetted several homes and this was the one he wanted Joan to stay at. Fortunately another he was happy with was found with the help of the Carers' Association and he was able to go away. But having to rush around last minute looking for respite care was very stressful for the father-of-two.

Charlie said: "It's very difficult knowing what it is like being a carer until you actually have to do it. Housework, cleaning, cooking, shopping, banking – even getting sleep at night. I tell people my life is like a rollercoaster – you are up and down.

"With respite care you can go away and forget about the ironing, washing, cooking for a few days and absorb the atmosphere, go down to the lounge and have a pint and meet new people, enjoy adult conversation. When you are away the stress levels lift.

"If you can book up in advance now and they can guarantee that place is there, that's fantastic. I will be able to ring up three care homes instead of 20 and ask if there is a place available next week or the week after. I just hope six beds will be enough – the rush to get them could be like Black Friday!"

"Healthwatch South Tyneside has successfully built on their great start in year one and is now delivering some excellent work which is adding real value to scrutinising the services commissioned for the people of the borough. The surveys on GP access and community pharmacies made a significant difference to our knowledge of the public's view of these vital services."

David Hambleton,
Chief Officer, South Tyneside CCG

Verdict given on GP surgeries by 725 patients

Between December 2014 and January 2015 we carried out a study of access to healthcare services at all 28 doctors' practices in the borough.

The survey was commissioned by South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) following complaints about lengthy waits for appointments, and was available online as well as in GP surgeries.

It asked GP practice users a series of questions including quality of communication, appointment availability, referrals for urgent care, out-of-hours services, and involvement in decisions about healthcare.

There was an excellent response, with 725 patients taking part. The survey found above

average satisfaction with GP surgeries overall, compared with NHS England statistics, as well as with how GPs involve patients in decisions about their care, telephone contact and opening hours.

However, patients were less likely to be seen on time for their appointment or be confident managing their self care, and less likely to have confidence in out-of-hours clinicians. They were also significantly less likely to use online booking systems for appointments or to recommend their practice to friends and family.

The CCG is considering the detailed findings before announcing its official response.

Pharmacists call for improved support from commissioners

Pharmacists called for improved support from South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group in a survey carried out by Healthwatch South Tyneside.

We carried out interviews at 28 pharmacies in January 2015, asking a range of questions about the services they offer, the challenges they face and the improvements they feel are needed.

The research found challenges faced include insufficient staff resources, stock availability for important drugs, and language barriers with some customers.

The top three priorities pharmacists identified to improve the services they offer were a shared patient care record, awareness of the potential of community pharmacists

and better engagement of community pharmacists by the CCG.

Pharmacists interviewed felt additional promotion of the services they offered would benefit patients who currently wait for a GP appointment when they could receive instant service at their local pharmacy.

A key example of this is repeat dispensing, where patients can obtain regular prescribed medicines direct from their pharmacy without the need to see their GP, a service which has a low take-up across the borough.

Our report, available on the HWST website, is now being considered by the CCG, which commissioned the research to explore best practice, benchmarks, challenges and gaps in pharmacy services.

Parking Eye at South Tyneside District Hospital

Problems experienced by patients and visitors with a new car parking regime introduced at South Tyneside District Hospital in January 2014 were raised at a number of community forums.

They included South Tyneside Regional Equality Forum, the Independent Disability Equality Access Forum and the Dementia Café, with the main issues relating to lack of parking spaces, problems using the new Parking Eye machines and lack of information displayed within the hospital.

Car parking was also highlighted by a number of respondents to the 'take 2 minutes to talk to us' survey, with some patients whose appointments had overrun receiving parking fines.

Outcomes

The HWST Chair raised the negative feedback at the Local Quality Surveillance Group and as a result changes brought in have included a new process for staff alerting car park attendants about appointment overruns to prevent fines being issued, with details printed on appointment letters.

The issue of car parking provision has also been raised at South Tyneside Council's People Select Committee in relation to the new urgent care hub to be placed on the hospital site.

Putting local people at the heart of improving services

We have recruited an enthusiastic team of volunteers with a broad range of expertise to help us carry out our statutory duties.

They come from a variety of backgrounds and include a care worker, two retired nurses, a retired midwife, a business owner and an Arab and Muslim development officer.

All volunteers have completed their training and DBS checks, and have each delivered an Enter and View visit. Some have also attended community events to help raise awareness of Healthwatch South Tyneside.

HWST, represented by Chair Paul Cuskin, has had an influential role on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

This has led to the commissioning of important work including the research into access to GP practices and pharmacies, linked to the high profile decision to relocate Jarrow Walk-In Centre.



Volunteers Arthur McKean and Margaret Turnbull, Authorised Enter and View Representatives for Healthwatch South Tyneside.

Changing Spaces

Ten community venues with changing facilities suitable for people with complex needs have been identified and signposted following a joint project involving HWST and charity Your Voice Counts.

The Changing Spaces initiative was sparked by an issue raised at a YVC forum meeting about the lack of information around facilities for people with learning and physical disabilities who may require more than a disabled access toilet, enabling them to shower and change with dignity. Carers wanted to know where suitable changing facilities were located.

South Tyneside Learning Disabilities Partnership Board commissioned involvement group Equal People to:

- Identify the location of changing facilities currently available.
- Visit them and check that they were fit for purpose.
- Design a logo that could be used as a door plate to promote them.
- Design a leaflet and poster to raise awareness of changing facilities.
- Recommend this information is added to South Tyneside Council's website.
- Find out what training staff are offered in relation to Changing Spaces and offer learning disabilities awareness training.



Outcomes

Working closely with HWST, Equal People identified ten Changing Spaces in South Tyneside: Perth Green Base; Father James Walsh Centre; Jarrow Community Centre; Hebburn Swimming Pool; Haven Point; Horsley Hill Community Facility; Simonside Youth Centre; Monkton Stadium; Blissability; Cleadon Park NHS Building.

All ten were deemed fit for purpose, and Changing Spaces door plates were installed. Leaflets and posters were produced, the council website updated and carers and voluntary groups informed to raise awareness of the facilities.

Working with others to improve local services

HWST has not needed to escalate any complaints to HWE or the CQC during the year. However, we did hold a patient survey in advance of the CQC inspection of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust in May 2015, with our report shared with the Trust and CQC.

Take two minutes to talk to us

HWST volunteers and staff spent a week at South Tyneside District Hospital asking the public about their experiences attending the Outpatients and A&E departments in advance of the CQC inspection.

The 'take 2 minutes to talk to us' survey was designed to provide added value to the inspection, with information collated and data analysed in a report which was supplied to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Quality Surveillance Group and CQC.

Patients were happy to take part, openly voicing their views on services delivered at the hospital. We completed 316 surveys, with 239 from the Outpatients department and 77 from A&E.

The four main themes which emerged were: quality of service; staff; car parking; and waiting times.

Comments on quality of service and staff were very positive, with responses including 'very professional', 'caring', 'first class', 'helpful' and 'very impressed'. Negative comments were made about the lack of car parking and charging, including 'it's a nightmare', and feedback on waiting times was mixed.

Key partners

We will seek to develop our priorities in consultation with our key partners and working networks:

Strategic

South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group
South Tyneside Carers Strategy Group
South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board
South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
North East Ambulance Service Meeting
Regional Quality Surveillance Group
Integration Project Steering Group

Partnership Meetings / Forums

Pioneer Care Meeting
South Tyneside Community Dementia Forum
South Tyneside Regional Equality Forum
Healthnet
CCG Local Engagement Board
North East Ambulance Healthwatch Forum
Happiness and Wellbeing Forum
South Tyneside Patient Reference Group
Regional Healthwatch Meeting
South Tyneside Volunteer Summit
Local Quality Surveillance Group

"There have been some successful interventions from the Healthwatch team over the past year; two predominant issues being obtaining planned respite care for people with dementia and the GP practice survey. We have continued to work in partnership at a strategic level; proof that together we really can achieve more."

Margaret Adams
HEALTHNET CHAIR

Our plans for 2015/16

Opportunities and challenges for the future

Key priorities identified in our Strategic Plan 2015-18 include:

- Further develop our commissioner and provider relationships.
- Set up a framework for reviewing and evaluating our business model by instituting a Stakeholder User Forum that will meet quarterly.
- Develop a Quality Assurance Framework.
- Develop a supplier and contracting procurement model.
- Raise public awareness of our new digital approach.
- Develop a Communication Strategy.
- Develop a Volunteering Strategy to recruit and retain our volunteers.
- Develop a Priority Strategy to address methods to respond to issues from the public.
- Grow volunteer database.

Our governance and decision-making

Our board

Our board members have a diversity of skills, perspectives and experiences and their role is to direct and control the work of the organisation. A terms of reference document sets out the governance structures and principles.

Board members

Paul Cuskin (Chair)
Sue Taylor
Julie Boyack
Howard Becke
Dr Christopher Hargreaves
Dr Shobha Srivastava
Paul Freeman.

Key responsibilities

- To determine strategic direction and policies.
- To ensure the activities of Healthwatch South Tyneside reflect the diverse communities of South Tyneside, not just the views of majority groups or the most high profile issues.
- To establish and oversee control and risk management arrangements.
- To ensure that Healthwatch South Tyneside achieves its aims and objectives.
- To oversee 'operational management' and ensure the implementation of board policies.

How we involve lay people and volunteers

Our board members have been recruited from a wide variety of backgrounds, including the civil service, voluntary sector, financial services, the Armed Services and the NHS.

We have also assembled an enthusiastic team of volunteers with a broad range of expertise to help us carry out our statutory duties. They include a care worker, two retired nurses, a retired midwife, a business owner and an Arab and Muslim development officer.

Volunteer roles include undertaking Enter and View visits and attending community events to help raise awareness of Healthwatch South Tyneside.

Financial information

Staffing

Project Management Costs	£16,445
Salary Costs	£52,351
Healthwatch Chair	£2,500
Staffing Expenses	£1,143
Staff Recruitment	£45
Staff Training & Development	£119
	£72,603

Accommodation

Rent, Rates & Service Charges	£7,200
IT Costs	£2,866
Telephones	£1,258
Premises Overheads	£757
Office Furniture & Equipment	£899
	£12,980

Running Costs

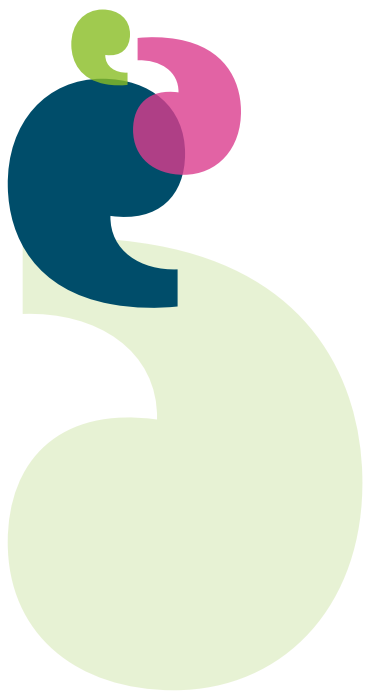
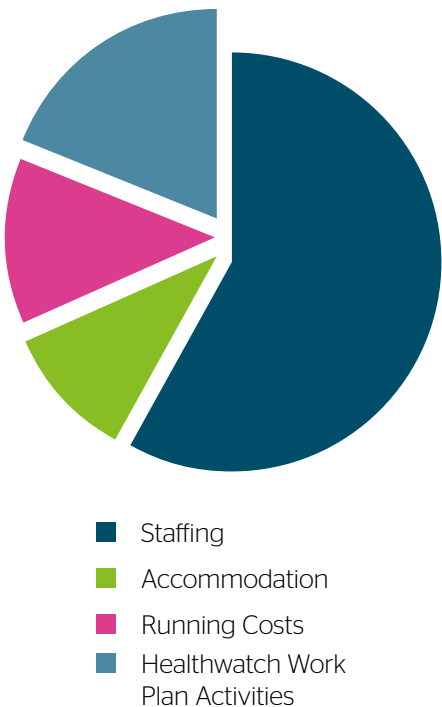
Postage, Printing & Stationery	£3,631
Publicity & Marketing	£1,030
Volunteer Expenses	£2,428
Venue Hire & Associated Costs	£828
Legal & Professional Costs	£365
Hub/Freephone	£2,200
Management Support	£5,500
	£15,982

Healthwatch Work Plan Activities **£23,467**

Total Expenditure £125,033

Total Budget £141,625

Balance carried forward £16,592





Healthwatch South Tyneside

Jarrow Community Centre, Cambrian Street,
Jarrow, NE32 3QN

Tel: (0191) 489 7952

Email: info@healthwatchsouthtyneside.co.uk

Web: www.healthwatchsouthtyneside.co.uk

Freephone: 0808 801 0381

Twitter @HWSouthTyneside