



## Alcohol Services Report September 2017



## Introduction

### Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees

Local Healthwatches have been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion with the aim to:

- Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services to better meet their needs.
- Support people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees works with local people (adults, children and young people), patients, service-users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services. This doesn't just mean improving services today but influencing and shaping services to meet the needs of the local communities tomorrow.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is commissioned by the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. To ensure independence Healthwatch is steered by an independent Board of volunteers and is accountable to the public. Healthwatch are the only non-statutory body whose sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak-out on their behalf.

Healthwatch has:

- The statutory right to be listened to; Providers and Commissioners must respond to Healthwatch within 20 days of submission of requests for information or reports.
- The statutory power to Enter & View publicly funded health and social care services (exclusions apply).
- A statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### Rationale and purpose of the report:

Healthwatch works closely with both the voluntary and public sectors to assist in the delivery of its statutory activities and priorities. These close relationships ensure that the public voice is heard during the service planning processes making sure local services better meet the needs of the people using them. One of the statutory bodies Healthwatch work closely with is Public Health Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (Public Health). Public Health are the lead body for developing and publishing our local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA summarises the efforts of many people through a range of different mechanisms to identify, define, and address the wider health and well-being needs of the people of Stockton-on-Tees. The work, done in partnership, is guided by plans, strategies, and policies that have been developed after needs assessment, data analysis and research, and through consultation with professionals and residents across the area. The purpose

of the JSNA is to bring together in one place the information that this rich resource provides, backed up by a technical compilation of statistics, data, and analysis. This enables the widest spectrum of partners to have the intelligence they need to ensure commissioning strategies work together for better provision of services for those areas of greatest need. For more information on JSNA, please follow this link <http://www.teesjsna.org.uk/stockton/>

**Aim:**

To investigate public awareness and experiences of local alcohol services, alcohol-related services (such as advice/counselling), alcohol-related hospital admissions and A&E attendances.

**Objectives:**

- To research and gain an understanding of the views of a cross section of Stockton-on-Tees residents regarding local alcohol services and the equivalent service provision.
- To work collaboratively with the JSNA, to capture intelligence to support and ensure commissioning strategies are cohesive. This will enable better provision of services, for those in areas of greatest need.

**Methodology:**

Healthwatch staff designed a questionnaire to gather the awareness, views and opinions of members of the public, carers and service-users of alcohol services. The questionnaires were circulated via email, social media, face-to-face at the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees annual event and to local service-user groups. In addition to the questionnaire, Healthwatch had also received intelligence about alcohol-related service provision within Stockton via its Information and Signposting Service and during general public engagement. It should be noted that the views contained in this report are representative of the individuals surveyed, and not necessarily those of service providers.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees analysed the data gathered from members, the general public, carers and service-users, who gave feedback on local alcohol-related services. Those who completed the survey also provided their opinions of alcohol-related hospital admissions, and the perceived reasoning for this.

Following analysis of the data gathered, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees has provided recommendations to Public Health, to enable the JSNA to improve alcohol service provision.

**Results:**

Over 100 surveys (Appendix 1) were distributed and 75 were returned. Of the 75, 74 were completed either fully or partially. 28.38% returning the survey were male and 71.62% were female. You will note that data does not always reflect the 75 surveys received, as some people skipped questions and some gave multiple answers. We have captured all data provided.

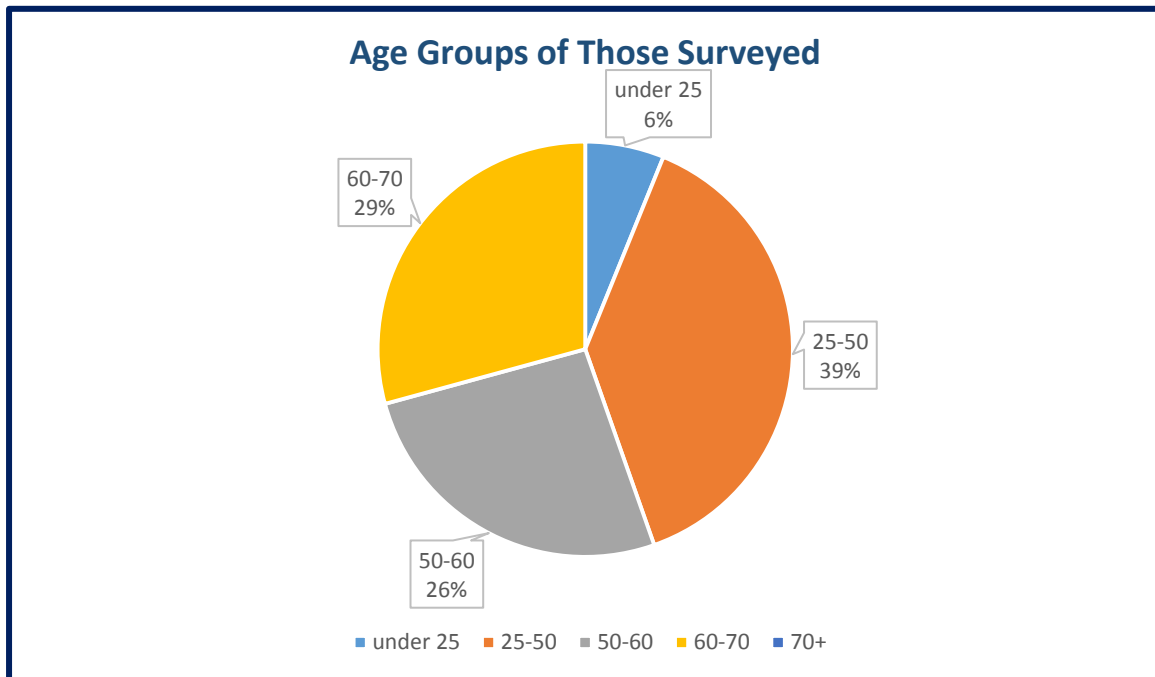


Figure 1: The age range of those who responded to the survey

Just over half of the people who responded stated that should they need advice and/or support regarding alcohol misuse services, they would know what services were available.

Those who knew where to go for advice and/or support said that they found out about the service via the following:

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees	4
Lifeline	2
Online	5
CGL	3
Work in the sector	6
Service users	2
Family member of service user	2
School	1
GP	3
Other	4
Total	32

For those who did not know what services were available for advice or support around information on alcohol misuse services, stated that first they would try to find out more via:

GP	16
Online	12
Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees	3
Stockton directory (SWAN)	2
Alcoholics Anonymous	1
Other/not applicable	2
Total	36*

\*NB: Some provided more than 1 answer

When asked, “Where would you go if you needed advice or information about alcohol misuse? (For yourself or another)” 56 replies were received:

Online	15
GP	22
NHS	1
Lifeline	6
Don't know	1
CGL	5
Local authority	4
Stockton Information Directory	3
Healthwatch	2
Other	3
Total	62*

\*NB: Some provided more than answer

Replies below to the question, “Where would you go if you needed alcohol-related support?”

Alcoholics Anonymous	3
CGL	3
Voluntary sector	5
GP	19
NHS helpline	2
Online	3
Lifeline	6
Friends	2
SWAN	1
Healthwatch	2
Not applicable	4
Total	50*

\*NB: Some provided more than 1 answer

Of the 20 people who had accessed alcohol services, 65% stated that the service **did not** meet their needs. When asked how services could be improved to better meet their needs, the following suggestions were given:

Text in pink are actual quotes from service-users.

“Remove stigma and advertise available services on pub toilet doors.”

“I believe a separate unit to deal with all alcohol related issues should be provided to take the pressure off an already over stretched NHS.”

“A complete overhaul in services is needed. Management don’t care and this is reflected in the ground level staff.”

“A wider range of services for recovering alcoholics not just delivered by one provider. More support from GP’s as many seem to have very little knowledge of alcoholism and how to support a patient.”

“More links with mental health services.”

“A paramedic/police outdoor unit in traditional high streets or busy events to avoid unnecessary calls to ambulance services at the expense of really urgent cases.”

“More signposting.”

“More awareness of services available.”

“A drunk tank. Any drunk put in say Corporation hall, and watched till they sober up. This can be run by volunteers with minimal medical intervention.”

“Keep those affected separate so they can be given support needed-frequently thrown out next morning.”

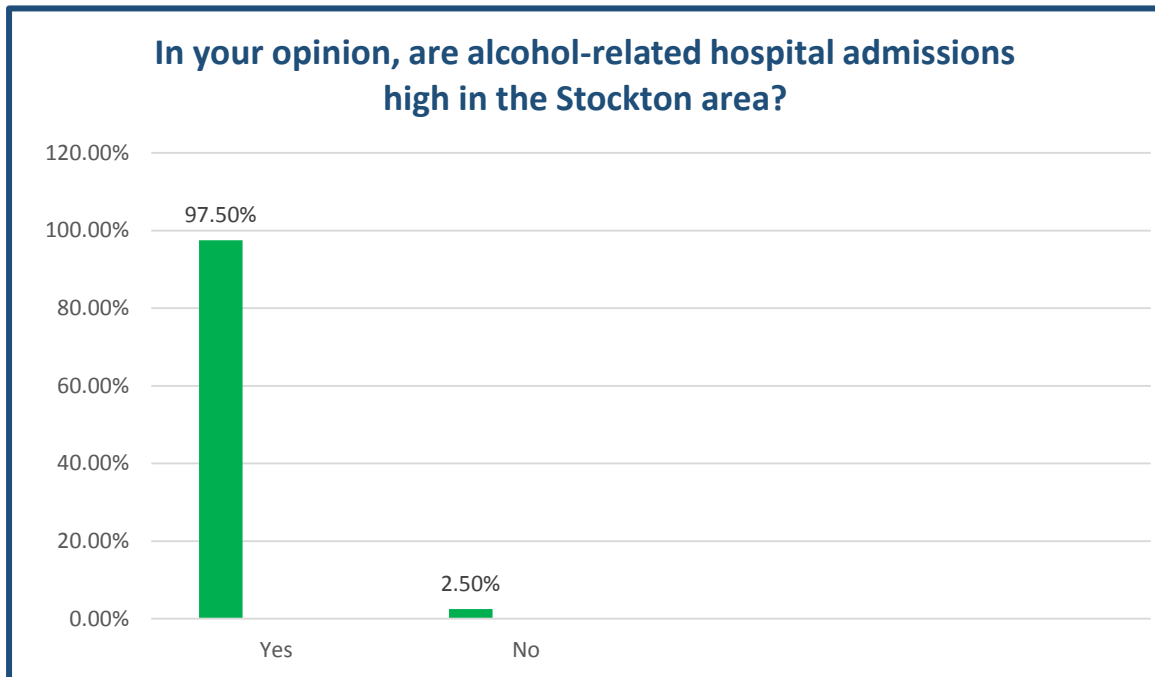


Figure 2: The opinion about whether alcohol-related admissions are high in the Stockton area.

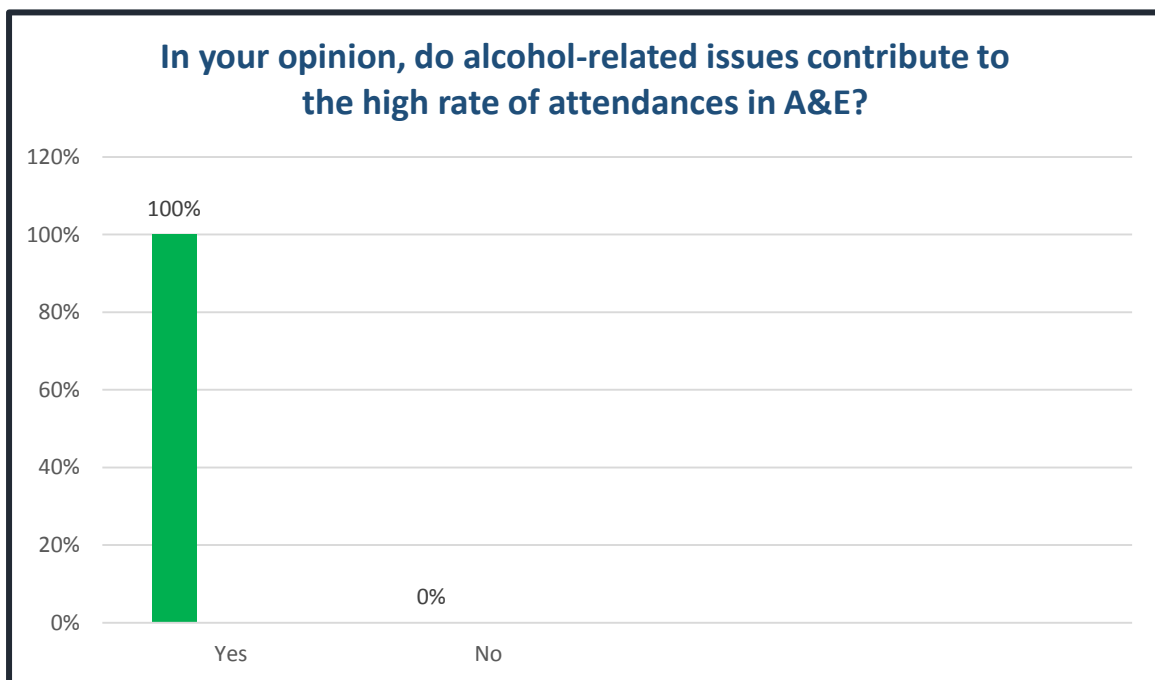


Figure 3: The opinion on whether alcohol-related issues contribute to the high rate of attendances in A&E

For those who thought that A&E attendances were high due to alcohol reasons, the following were given as possible reasons:

- Fights
- Those who excessively drink tend to have poor health
- Falls and trips
- Self-harm
- Mental health issues
- Poor availability of alternative services to help address issues before they escalate.
- Blackouts
- Liver failure

Other feedback received, included:

“The funding is the issue; the info is there but there needs to be more help with accessing these services. The things which affect people’s ability to get help are financially based. Benefits in particular are difficult and stressful to claim and all a lifeline can do is pass you to another service; there’s no cohesion and people who are ill and struggling aren’t able to deal with being passed about. We don’t keep appointments and we don’t have the money to get us to and from these appointments when we are able to keep them.”

“I have been in A&E a number of times and I have seen for myself that there are a lot of alcoholics at any time of the day.”

“You can access information via the council website - support for people with alcohol/drug problems page.”

### Conclusion

Over two thirds of those who responded were female. Only 5 completed surveys were received directly via Change Grow Live (CGL) clients. CGL is funded by Stockton Borough Council to provide alcohol support services for the residents of the Borough alongside many other services they provide. The remaining 70 responses came from either Healthwatch members or general members of the public reached via our social media campaign.

Almost half of those responding, stated that they would not know what services were available to them, should they need advice or support around alcohol issues. Of those who did respond, no particular information source was obvious.

Should they wish to find out more about what advice and/or support was available, 44% of respondents said that they would start to look for information via their GP and 33% would look online.

When asked if they actually needed advice or information regarding alcohol misuse either for themselves or someone else, where they would access this, 56 responses were received. 35% of those responding said they would go to their GP, 24% would



look on line, and almost 10% said Lifeline. It should be noted that on 1 June 2017, CGL commenced the operation of many of the services provided by Lifeline. Lifeline has not been in operation since June 2017. Therefore, the service 10% would turn to, no longer exists. If they actually needed support rather than information most people who responded stated that they would go to their GP. However, 12% stated that they would go to Lifeline.

65% of the 20 people who had accessed alcohol services, stated that the service did not meet their needs. More promotion of services available, separate units to treat alcoholics, mobile street/community treatment vehicles and better links with mental health services, were all highlighted as possible ways of improving services.

### **Recommendations:**

It is clear that some of the people who completed the survey believe that Lifeline still exists. Whilst Healthwatch is sure the change of provider was widely circulated, perhaps a new promotional campaign of all available services could be written into the JSNA.

As over 71% of those who completed the survey were women, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees recommends that Public Health target the views of more males. These findings may be very different from the intelligence gathered by Healthwatch.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees also recommend that the views of those under 25 years old could be sought due to low number of responses from this age group.

Due to the lack of responses received by CGL, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would recommend that Public Health work closely with the people using these services to ascertain how they found the help and information they needed, and to see if the service meets their needs.

### **Acknowledgments:**

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would like to thank the team at Change, Grow, Live (CGL) for their support in the gathering of evidence for this report. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would also like to thank the service users and Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees members who gave their time to provide information about their views and experiences of alcohol services in the locality.

**HEALTHWATCH STOCKTON-ON-TEES ALCOHOL SERVICES SURVEY**

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees are currently looking into patient's views and experiences of alcohol services across the Stockton area. If you are a service user, relative or carer of someone who has accessed alcohol services, then we would like to hear from you! Your views and experiences will be used to help shape future services, to make sure they better meet the needs of those who rely on them. Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey, which may influence future service provision to better meet the needs of the service-users.

<b>Please tick relevant box</b>		<b>Male</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Female</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Prefer not to say</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Age Category (Please circle)</b>	Under 25	25-50yrs	50-60yrs	60-70yrs
<b>1</b>	<b>Should you need advice and/or support regarding alcohol misuse services would you know what services were available?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>If Yes, how did you find out about this? If no where would you start to look?</b>			
<b>2</b>	<b>Where would you go if you needed advice or information about alcohol misuse? (for yourself or another)</b>			
<b>3</b>	<b>Where would you go if you needed alcohol-related support?</b>			



4	<p>If you or someone you know have accessed alcohol support services, did these services meet your/their needs? Please give further information</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p>
5	<p>In your opinion, are alcohol-related hospital admissions high in Stockton? Why do you think this?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p>
6	<p>In your opinion, do alcohol-related issues contribute to the high rate of attendances in A&amp;E?</p> <p>If Yes, what do you think the main reason for these admissions are?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p>
7	<p>If you are accessing/have accessed, how could they be improved to better meet your needs?</p>	

