

# Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Manchester  
Annual Report 2021-22



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# Message from our Chair

A year of recovery and review which has shown us some remarkable achievements as well as some inevitable setbacks in health and care for Manchester. Now in our tenth year of operation it's clear we are needed more than ever by the people of Manchester as their champion for health and social care. In the past year we have spoken up for communities for whom English is a second language who faced immense barriers around COVID safety information, for people who struggle to gain access to primary care through the new digital system and for people in desperate need of dental care.

Our integrated function in Manchester's health and social care landscape and its family of partners has been pivotal in effecting positive change as a result of this. It's been a continuing privilege to serve alongside the members of our Health & Wellbeing Board and its Executive and to bring these issues there as Chair of Healthwatch Manchester.

The new ICS and the structural reform it brings has brought about a repositioning of our Healthwatch in order to continue our role in amplifying the voice of citizens at a strategic level and the organisation is strongly placed in the Greater Manchester network going forwards.



Once again I would like to thank our Chief Officer, staff and volunteers for their excellent work in realising the objectives and outcomes for the organisation and a special thanks to my fellow board members who have guided us through this difficult time.

Vicky Szulist  
Healthwatch Manchester Chair

# Message from our Chief Officer

It seems a long time ago since we scrambled into lockdown and did our best to support people through the confusion and distress around health and care services. It feels like we've been round the block during this two-year slog. This last year has been one of recovery as we embrace the 'new normal' and it's been a returning joy to see our city come back to life and its old self again.

There are many lessons to be learned from the pandemic and the responsive nature of our Healthwatch service has helped bring about some highly useful changes and impact. Your calls and enquiries have resulted in embattled services such as GP practices and dentistry move front and centre in people's considerations.

New areas of work have included hospital discharge into care, social care assessments and supported accommodation and these are specialist areas we've investigated through working with our commissioners and colleagues at Manchester City Council. These have shone a light on the stand-up work our social care services have provided in the face of the pandemic and identified some areas where integration needs to happen around health such as mental health support.

Going forwards our board have identified the areas of focus for Healthwatch, some of which are listed below. As always I'd like to warmly thank our trustee board members, staff team and volunteers who make our work possible.

- Transition from the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) into the Adult Mental Health Service (AMHS)
- Access to sexual health services
- Hospital discharge into care
- Accessible Information Standard compliance
- Men's Health & Care Forum

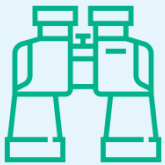


Neil Walbran  
Healthwatch Manchester  
Chief Officer

# About us

## Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Manchester is your local health and social care champion. From Crumpsall to Didsbury and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



### Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



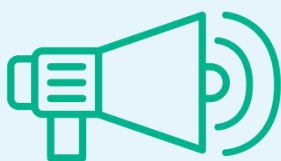
### Our values

- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- Including everyone in the conversation - especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- Analysing different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- Acting on feedback and driving change.
- Partnering with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector - serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

## Reaching out



**997 engagements**

With people who spoke to us about a health or care issue.

**440 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about primary care. This was the single biggest topic which people contacted us about.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**6 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

**‘Good Practice’**

which highlighted the accessibility struggles people have when using GP practice websites.

## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**20**

outstanding volunteers, who gave up **310 hours** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received:

**£140,000**

which is the same as the previous year.

We also currently employ

**5 staff**

who help us carry out this work.

## How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



From running advice lines to delivering safety information, our team helped combat COVID-19



Following a popular survey with three local communities, we raised concerns about the lack of accessible COVID-19 safety information with relevant partners.

Summer



With online appointments becoming the norm, we investigated the accessibility of GP practice websites and how they catered for all members of our community.



We are working with practices and website developers to ensure that their websites meet the required accessibility standards.

Autumn



We have regularly met with our partner in the Local Dental Committee to raise concerns which Manchester residents had shared with us about access to dental treatment.



We have kept Manchester residents informed about the availability of services locally and have signposted people to NHS 111 where appropriate.

Winter



When people struggled to see their GP face-to-face we asked the NHS to confirm this right for all patients, resulting in updated guidance to practices.



To support the COVID-19 vaccination programme we talked to different communities to understand their hesitancy towards the vaccine and published guidance to improve trust.

# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve





## Making hospital discharge safer

Thanks to people sharing their experience of hospital discharge with us over the last year, we've helped identify those areas requiring improvement which will ensure that hospital discharge is a safer process for everyone.

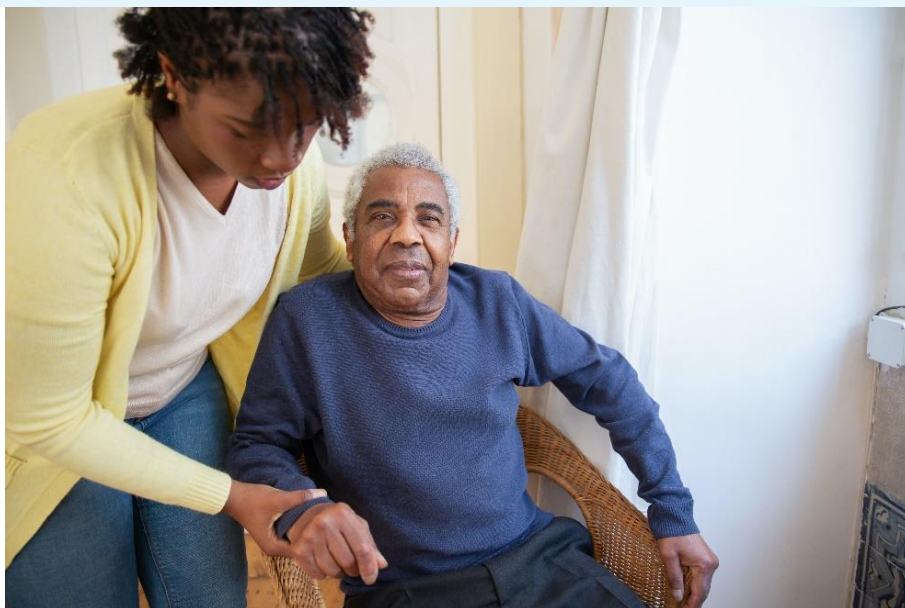
Rules around hospital discharge changed during the pandemic, to speed up the discharge process and free up beds.

Working with our partners at Manchester City Council we wanted to check that, despite the new rules, patients were still getting the support they needed. We interviewed patients who had been discharged from hospital since the beginning of COVID-19 to hear about their experiences, what worked well and what areas needed improvement.



## High praise for staff

we received a large number of comments from participants praising the work of the staff



### What difference did this make

Highlighting the areas which need improving will help to ensure that hospital discharge is safer for everyone and that people's care needs do not go unmet.



“This feedback is such a credit to our social workers and shows the depth of their dedication, skill and humanity at such a critical time for everyone in Manchester.”

Cllr Joanna Midgely, Deputy Leader with responsibility for Health & Care.



## Raising the voices of local communities

**Our most popular report this year was ‘Good Practice’, which highlighted the accessibility concerns around GP practice websites and what improvements could be made to ensure that they are easily accessible for everyone.**

A team of staff and volunteers reviewed every GP practice website in Manchester (over 80) and looked at a range of different criteria, from the ease of finding other language options to how you book an appointment. What we found was a severe lack of compliance with the NHS Accessible Information Standard (AIS).

As part of the criteria we also looked at information provided specifically for young carers, and again we found that very few websites had any information at all. We raised this as a concern with the GP practices and look forward to changes being made.

We also were able to interview members of Manchester People First, a local self-advocacy group for adults with a learning disability, about their experiences of using GP practice websites. We took their feedback and produced a video which highlighted their concerns and we have shared this with local decision-makers.



“We’re really pleased that our review has made it to the right people so this problem can be sorted as quickly as possible. It’s been a real struggle for people to get to grips with online appointments and so on through this whole pandemic.”



Neil Walbran, Healthwatch Manchester Chief Officer.

## What difference will this make

Due to our call for change, GPs across Manchester are reviewing the accessibility of their websites and we will be continuing to work with them to ensure that the necessary changes are made to make their websites accessible for everyone. Information for young carers will also be more readily available and easily accessible.



## Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



### Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for the NHS and social care services to step back and see the bigger picture, through hearing personal experiences, and the impact on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

We interviewed members of two local communities, black men with multiple health conditions and people from the South Asian community with diabetes, to find out their experiences of integrated care and to highlight areas that needed improvement.



### Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

We visited local pharmacies to see if they were accessible for all and made suggestions where improvements could be made to improve the experience for everyone.



### Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic we have had a significant amount of dental enquiries. We have been meeting regularly with the Manchester Local Dental Committee to pass on the concerns and stories which are raised with us and to make sure we have the most up-to-date information to pass on to the public.

# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Manchester is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one - you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need

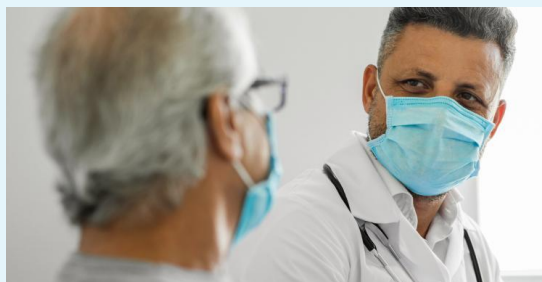


## ‘Manchester Men Speak Up’ - providing a voice for men’s health

Over the last year we have been reaching out to Manchester men and conducting a number of engagement events with them. What they told us was that they wanted a space to allow them to discuss their health and care concerns.

We decided to set up a men’s health and care forum which would provide men with this valuable space locally.

Initial discussions took place in the summer of 2021 and we are very excited to be able to launch the forum later this calendar year. Once the project is formally launched, Manchester men will have a space to go where they can raise any health and care concerns that they have and discuss their issues with other men who are going through similar experiences.



## Setting a Healthwatch first - producing a Healthwatch calendar!

As a local Healthwatch we are always looking for new ways to get our name out there and engage with our residents.

This year our team came up with a great idea and what turned out to be a Healthwatch first - a calendar! We listed as many important dates, birthdays and important events as we could and distributed to local partners and the public.

We received excellent feedback which we are looking forward to incorporating into the calendar for next year. This initiative has helped out to get our name out there even further into the many different communities across the city and allowed us to engage with people in a new and fun way.



# Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch.

Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Created digital content on our website and social media.
- Assisted as part of 'Reading Panels' - checking our publications to make them more people focussed and easier to read.
- Joined our staff team on visits to local voluntary organisations and took part in engagement activities.



## Volunteering with Healthwatch Manchester

Over the course of the last year we have had 25 active volunteers who have made significant contributions towards our research projects and reports.

Our community champions have been at the forefront of our outreach activities, allowing us to engage on a more frequent basis with Manchester residents at a variety of venues across the city. The aim of these visits is to gain a greater understanding of resident's health and social care needs, to discover areas in which we can encourage sustained improvements.

### What our volunteers do

You may have also seen the work of our volunteers on our Instagram @healthwatchmcr, where a range of content has been produced to keep Manchester residents engaged. The content has been designed in line with our brand new calendar and will continue to be produced in this manner, for the remainder of the year.

### Training opportunities


Across the course of the year a variety of training opportunities have been offered to our volunteers, on topics such as: assertiveness, communication and legal structures. We have utilised a variety of externally produced material, as well as internal knowledge for the delivery of this training, with volunteer feedback suggesting that this hybrid model has been successful. By offering this training we are able to ensure volunteers have the necessary skills to undertake their volunteering role with confidence.



### Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 [www.healthwatchmanchester.co.uk/volunteer](http://www.healthwatchmanchester.co.uk/volunteer)

 0161 228 1344

 [info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income		Income	
Funding received from local authority	£140,246	Staff costs	£110,436
Additional funding	£14,362	Operational costs	£26,286
		Support and administration	£21,622
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£154,608</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£158,344</b>

## Top three priorities for 2022-23

1. Tackling health inequalities
2. Reaching out to all of our communities
3. Amplify the voice of local people

## Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, income or race.



# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Manchester, First Floor, Railway Cottage, 33 Collier Street, Manchester, M3 4NA

Healthwatch Manchester 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.

Our Healthwatch board consists of 8 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met 6 times and made decisions on matters relating to the smooth running and priorities of the organisation.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We regularly run surveys open to all members of the public asking for their input to shape our work and the issues which we look into. Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers and we monitor all our responses to make sure that they are representative of the diverse communities in our city.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible.

### Responses to recommendations and requests

There have been a number of circumstances when providers did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.



# healthwatch

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