



Healthwatch Manchester

Annual Report 2024–2025

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"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our Chair

My second year as Chair of Healthwatch Manchester sees us enter our twelfth year as a statutory organisation, providing an independent voice for the people of Manchester who use our health and social care services.

We continue to see transformation within the health and care landscape with the abolition of NHS England, as the government changes how our NHS is run. Additionally, we will see restructure within the Integrated Care Boards, as the Secretary of State describes this reform as being “the biggest decentralisation of power in the history of the NHS”.

What remains consistent is the work undertaken by Healthwatch Manchester as we continue to work to our six statutory functions, representing the voice of our citizens. Working both independently and collaboratively with our Healthwatch network across Greater Manchester, we continue to use our dedicated locality knowledge. This ensures that our yearly work plan, and areas of focus, represent what Manchester citizens and our board, feel are the key areas of concern. We engage, investigate, evaluate and feedback through our reports and engagement, with commissioners, providers, organisations and key stakeholders across Manchester.

Highlights for me this year included the successful launch event of our Men’s and Women’s Health and Care Forums at Manchester Art Gallery, and then publicising this further with a stand manned by the Healthwatch Manchester team on a busy Saturday at Piccadilly Gardens.

It was a pleasure to welcome Sally Dervan, Chief Executive Officer of Age UK Manchester, onto the Healthwatch Manchester Board. Our board continues to grow, ensuring that we too are representative of our communities, enabling us to reach out and listen to your experiences of service access, to see what works well and what can be improved.

Our staff team, volunteers and our board are proud of what we achieve on your behalf. Our digital and social engagement continues to increase, but the outreach work we undertake is vital, to enable a visible and tangible presence for engagement.



Finally, on behalf of myself and the Healthwatch Manchester Board, a thank you to Neil, our CEO, Tom, Dan and Ada, our core staff team. Our team and our volunteers bring passion and drive to the work that we undertake, alongside a determination to improve health and social care for the people of Manchester.

Amanda Smith, Chair of Healthwatch Manchester

A message from our Chief Executive Officer

Our twelfth year and looking back, it's quite strange to think of what was in that Health & Social Care Act which gave rise to Healthwatch and what's left now. Aside from Public Health England there's just us. We've seen the end of the CCGs and their patient group, and now we stand in the gloaming of NHS England.

We've also seen the birth of our Local Care Organisation, three hospital trusts merge into one giant, and various iterations at a Greater Manchester level, the latest being the Integrated Care System. Here's to a future which holds greater stability after the oncoming NHS structural reforms have settled in.

In this year we completed a comprehensive programme of work examining and reviewing a wide range of services across the spectrum of health and social care making a demonstrable impact on improving services and holding the system to account. This has as usual been set against a backdrop of our core functions where we've helped hundreds of people into services and with their complaints and queries.

Of particular note was the launch in August of our two health and care forums: Manchester Men Speak Up! and Manchester Women Together! These two forums provide a space for men and women to share and support each other around health and care issues across our social divides.

We've also seen our Greater Manchester Network grow in strength supported by a funded partnership between NHS Greater Manchester and the ten Healthwatch across our City Region. This was celebrated at our conference in November which enabled the showcasing of just some of the amazing work we all do.

As usual I must thank our Board and Chair for their direction and informed input to the governance of Healthwatch Manchester, to our team of volunteers for their vital contribution and of course also give thanks to our fantastic staff team who work so hard to bring our annual plan to fruition.

Neil Walbran, Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Manchester



About us

Healthwatch **Manchester** is your local health and social care champion.

We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care. Our 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.



Our vision

To enable real and long-term improvements to the health and social care of the people and communities of Manchester.



Our mission

Healthwatch Manchester is an independent not-for-profit organisation driven by national government policy, mandated by legislation and its local membership and supported by the Local Authority. Through engaging and informing the people and communities of Manchester as their consumer champion and influencing the design and commissioning of services, Healthwatch Manchester seeks to improve access to and experience of health and social care.



Our values are:

- Be independent, non-political and impartial in our activities
- Be non-judgmental, open and transparent, and seek the trust of local people
- Actively engage with seldom heard communities
- Value the people and communities of Manchester and their contributions
- Act as a critical friend and always challenge constructively
- Reflective of a strong evidence-base
- Realistic and influential
- Innovative and adaptable
- We are a local listening service
- We provide information and signposting
- We work with local people to improve health and social care services

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than **260** people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ **5** staff and our work is supported by **4** volunteers.

Reaching out:



260 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

130 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **finding an NHS dentist** and **making complaints about their treatment in care**.

Championing your voice:



We published **8** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like **mental health hospitals**, **General Practice** and **defibrillator provision**.

Our most popular report was '**Where is it**' highlighting people's struggles when trying to **access defibrillators in Manchester City Centre**.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by **Manchester City Council**. In 2024/25 we received **£147,000**.

A year of making a difference

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

Spring

We continued with our Accessible Information Standard compliance project across 10 pharmacies in the Didsbury and Withington areas.



We conducted a telephone mystery shopper exercise to determine whether the offer of the Enhanced Access Service is being provided by GP Practices in Manchester.



Summer

We conducted a review of each GP Practice website across Manchester to check they included the offer of the Enhanced Access Service.



We hosted the formal launch of both our Men's and Women's Health and Care Forums at an event in Manchester Art Gallery.



Autumn

We performed an Enter and View visit to the Park House mental health inpatient wards based at North Manchester General Hospital before patients moved to a new site.



We performed an Enter and View visit to the North View mental health inpatient wards based at North Manchester General Hospital after patients had recently moved in.



Winter

We hosted multiple focus groups with the autistic community to discuss the benefits of neurodiverse peer support at health and care services.



We interviewed a number of people to discuss the impact of having an adaptation installed in the home has had on their independence.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Manchester are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services across Greater Manchester.

This year, we've worked with 10 Healthwatch across Greater Manchester to achieve the following:

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



We have progressed into the second year of our partnership agreement with the ICS, as part of a network of 10 local Healthwatch to amplify the voices of people across the region. We've contributed to regional strategies, produced GM-wide reporting, and launched shared platforms to strengthen our insight. Our representative ensures lived experience is heard and influences decisions across the ICS.

The big conversation:



We listened to thousands of people across Greater Manchester on topics like ADHD, Menopause, Pharmacy, Urgent Care and CAMHS. These insights were shared with the ICS and used to inform strategy, consultations, and influence service design. By working together across the region, we've made sure the experiences of individuals and communities are central to how health and care services are planned and delivered.

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



In November, Healthwatch in Greater Manchester hosted a conference, bringing together ICS leaders, Healthwatch staff, the VCSE sector and communities. We presented our work across the network, the importance of Healthwatch work and explored new ways of working, including stronger patient representation and co-production at ICS level.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.

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

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



In 23/24 Healthwatch Manchester successfully lobbied for Jain food to be included on our hospital Trusts' menus. In this last year, we had a report that one of our hospitals was not providing Jain food. After escalation through the inequalities route this was quickly sorted out and the patient in question was able to eat in the hospital.

Getting services to involve the public



Through our placement at the strategic advisory body: Involvement Assurance Group for Greater Manchester, a large-scale change to the South Manchester Walk-in Centre was identified. Following a meeting with the lead NHS Officer Healthwatch Manchester was satisfied regarding the inclusion of citizen and other stakeholder input regarding this initiative.

Improving care over time



After completing our lengthy review of defibrillator locations in Manchester City, we were informed that a large high street supermarket had taken our advice onboard and purchased a defibrillator. This is now located in their store and is available for anyone who needs it in the local area. Information about the location of this defibrillator was also made available online.

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.

We host regular outreach across the city at leisure centres and voluntary actor organisations like Manchester People First and The Bread-and-Butter Thing.



Listening to your experiences

Adaptations in the home, 6 months later

In 2024, Healthwatch Manchester were commissioned by Manchester City Council to gather the opinions of and feedback from Manchester citizens regarding their experience living with adaptations in their home.

Working with Manchester City Council (MCC), a survey of 'before and after' adaptations was created and deployed by HWM to citizens in receipt of these adaptations through MCC.

What did we do?

We produced a 30-question survey to be completed via telephone interviews with Manchester citizens. This survey contained questions about the person's wellbeing, confidence, mobility, and independence. Overall, we spoke with 17 people who had all received an adaptation at least 6 months prior.

Key things we heard:



76%

of respondents reported improvements in their wellbeing thanks to their adaptation.

71%

of respondents reported improvements in their confidence thanks to their adaptation.

59%

of respondents reported improvements in their mobility thanks to their adaptation.

53%

of respondents reported improvements in their independence thanks to their adaptation.

What difference did this make?

Our report revealed the positive impact these adaptations had on the recipients whilst also revealing the low level of tech enabled care received by the same group of people.

Listening to your experiences

Improving services for mental health inpatients

In 2022, it was announced that the Park House mental health inpatient hospital was to be knocked down and replaced by a £105 million state-of-the-art hospital. HWM conducted an Enter and View visit to both sites before and after the transfer of patients from Park House to North View.

We visited Park House in October 2024 to speak with patients about their awareness of the upcoming move. We visited North View in January 2025 to speak with patients about how the move from Park House went.

Key things we heard:



60%

Of patients preferred the environment at North View more than Park House.



'The building is very nice and brand new. It's well built; they've done a good job of the building. I felt on edge in hospital but better here, dead nice people here feel free to go about' – **North View Inpatient**

Conclusions:

Patients felt as though the move from Park House to North View was conducted well by GMMH as highlighted by the numerous responses noting how the staff were very supportive in helping the patients move from one site to another.

Despite most patients believing there was a high level of care at North View, a concerning number of patients felt as though the staff were more attentive and caring during the daytime compared to night-time.

What difference did this make?

The data we collected was used by senior ward managers to improve their understanding of patient issues and we will be revisiting this work to evaluate improvement in patient experience as a result.



'It is useful to have feedback that can be used critically to provide patient centered care that can have a more direct influence on the patients. It allows the senior management team to make improvements to the ward overall they may not have known before Healthwatch's visit' – **PALS Officer Jayren Marsden**

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of **Manchester**. 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 story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Gathering the views of families living in poverty through regular outreach sessions at events held by The Bread-and-Butter Thing
- Engaging with inpatients at numerous mental health wards about their experience living there and their future moves to other locations.
- Hosting workshops about the importance of peer support with members of the autistic / neurodiverse community and the University of Manchester



Volunteering at Healthwatch Manchester

At Healthwatch Manchester we have a fantastic team of volunteers who make up our Citizens Reading Panel. This panel help in the analysis of our data and production of reports.

Janet is a member of our Citizens Reading Panel and has been for several years. On her experience, Janet had the following to say:

I've been surprised once again by the variety and depth of HWM's work. I've become accustomed to the Enter and View reports which follow a standard methodology and format. The findings and recommendations vary each time and are brought to life by photographs and quotations from service users. Here, my role tends to be that of an editor: clarifying the odd sentence, suggesting a small change to help understanding.

I'm also asked to comment on ad-hoc reports on topics such as the outcomes of a health campaign or feedback about home adaptations. After completing the fieldwork, collecting lots of data and reaching a conclusion, it can be hard for a writer to find a balance between what is too much or too little information for the report's recipients. That is when I can act as an objective member of the public, checking if the report presents the findings and recommendations in a clear way. I might offer a new way of presenting complex data or raise a question about a particular paragraph that I can't understand. The body of data can be so powerful when seeking to deliver improvements. These different elements of my role were all important when I first volunteered and they continue to make it enjoyable and, I think, useful.

If you are interested joining the Healthwatch Manchester Citizens Reading Panel, please get in touch by emailing us at info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk



Launching our Men's and Women's Health Forums

In August 2024, Healthwatch Manchester formally launched both our Men's and Women's Health and Care Forums. [Manchester Men Speak Up](#) and [Manchester Women Together](#) represent separate spaces for men and women to talk openly about their health & care experiences.

Although Manchester Men Speak Up has existed for several years already, we were never able to host a formal launch due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Thus, creation of Manchester Women Together provided the opportunity to launch one forum and 're-launch' another.

Therefore, we formally launched [Manchester Men Speak Up](#) and [Manchester Women Together](#) at the Manchester Art Gallery on Saturday 10th August.

This fantastic event gathered many of the city's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and Statutory sector organisations together to hear from citizens with lived experience who shared their stories and inspired others to do the same.

This event was opened by the Chair of Amanda Smith, before speeches from Neil Walbran and men's forum lead Daniel Roberts about [Manchester Men Speak Up](#) were followed by a presentation by CEO of Talk about It Mate Mike Richard.



Local poet Dominic Berry helped animate the crowd through his fantastic poetry session before Amanda Smith and women's forum lead Ada Mok presented the [Manchester Women Together](#) forum to the audience. Cancer Patient Advocate Kathy Morse gave a powerful account of her experience fighting cancer ahead of a fantastic performance by the Manchester SHE Choir rounded off a tremendous event.

Following this, the Healthwatch Manchester team headed over to Piccadilly Gardens and set up our outreach stall to help promote the forum and encourage citizens to get involved. Thank you to all who took part and all who popped over for a chat. Let's get the people of Manchester talking!

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Manchester City Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£147,000	Expenditure on pay	£103,406
Additional income	£2,000	Non-pay expenditure	£37,734
		Office and management fee	£15,962
Total income	£149,000	Total Expenditure	£157,062

Additional income is broken down into:

- £2,000 to support representation and engagement with the Greater Manchester ICB

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

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Improve GP compliance with the Accessible Information Standard.
2. Improving the integration between health and care on hospital discharge.
3. Improving access to online support for prostate cancer patients.



Statutory statements

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 license agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch Board consists of seven members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met five times and made decisions on matters such as our annual work plan and the approval our Data Protection Policy around AI. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

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 available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and our two Men's and Women's Health and Care Online Forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

Healthwatch Manchester sent two Freedom of Information requests and received responses from both. One provider did not respond when asked to provide a response to a report involving their service.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

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. For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the Manchester Quality and Clinical Effectiveness Group.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board (ICB). For example, we present collective intelligence from across the region to strategic forums such as the Quality and Performance Committee, the System Quality Group, the Integrated Care Partnership Board and the Children and Young Persons Board, and thematic system groups.

This is often done collaboratively through the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester Network, bringing together local insight from all ten boroughs. By working together in this way, we can highlight both common themes and local variation, ensuring that the voices of Manchester influence decisions at every level of the ICS. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Manchester is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board by our chair Amanda Smith.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending each meeting and speaking up on behalf of Manchester citizens.

Unlike the other Healthwatch in Greater Manchester, Healthwatch Manchester is not represented on its Integrated Care Partnerships or Integrated Care Board.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Mental Health inpatient hospital – Park House	To speak with patients regarding their knowledge and understanding of their future relocation to North View.	Wrote a report detailing the findings and compared them to the new site.
Mental health inpatient hospital – North View	To speak with patients regarding their experience when relocating to North View from Park House.	Wrote a report detailing the findings and compared them to the old site.

2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Projects / reports	Outcomes achieved
Report on defibrillator access in Manchester City Centre.	Incorrect information was removed from the North West Ambulance Service website regarding defibrillator locations and their working condition.
Review of GP Practice offer of evening and weekend appointments to patients.	A higher number of GP Practice are offering the Enhanced Access Service to patients.
The public launch at a city centre venue of our two forums: Manchester Men Speak Up and Manchester Women Together	The forums now provided a direct link for people in Manchester to access support services and information relevant to them.
Improving services for Mental Health Inpatients.	This report reinforced the use of best practice in patient engagement implemented by GMMH.

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