

Alkrington Hub

Consultation

What services do Rochdale borough residents want
in the Alkrington Hub.

Winter 2022–23

About us

Healthwatch Rochdale is the local independent health and social care champion for the Rochdale borough. We are here to listen to local people's experiences of using health and social care services and we use those experiences to help improve services locally and nationally.

Introduction

Following the closure of the 'Moving On Service' in Middleton, Healthwatch Rochdale were contacted by a number of service users who felt they had not been involved in the consultation process. Subsequently, Healthwatch Rochdale spoke with 42 service users about the effects of the closure and published a report which included ten recommendations to Rochdale Adult Care.

Since the closure of the 'Moving On Service', the centre has been redeveloped by Rochdale Borough Council and has reopened as 'The Alkrington Hub' with available spaces for groups to use.



Following recommendations made in the 'Moving On' report, Rochdale Borough Council

asked Healthwatch Rochdale to work in partnership to identify what services Rochdale residents wanted to receive from the Hub.



At present the Hub is not being utilised to its full potential and currently has Kickstart for Hope using the space for two days and Your Trust for two brief sessions, once on a Monday and once on a Friday. There is also a Rochdale Work and Skills Advisor in every Monday afternoon. (See

Appendix 1 for table of current use)

Methodology

Healthwatch Rochdale carried out a short survey which ran from November 2022 to January 2023 asking the question:

“What services would you like to see in The Alkrington Hub?”

The survey was available online and via paper format with a FREEPOST return address.

We spoke with 16 previous users of the 'Moving On Service' one to one over the telephone. In addition, ex-service users of the Moving On Service were invited to The Alkrington Hub to have open, face to face discussions around the Hub. We gathered insight from 18 participants.

We had 104 survey responses which have been collated to identify themes and trends. Quotes from the survey and highlights from people's stories are shared within this report.

The survey was shared via the following:

- **Healthwatch Rochdale Website**
- **Press Release:** Rochdale Online
- **Social Media:** Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn.
- **Face to Face in the community**
- **#TogetherRochdale ebulletin**
- **Local Networks including:** Women's Services Network, Communities and Faith Partnership Forum, Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership, Youthwatch Rochdale, Rochdale Grass Roots Gathering, BAME forum.
- **Healthwatch Rochdale Information, Advice and Signposting Surgeries:** The Strand, Nye Bevan House, The Lighthouse, Harehill House, Phoenix Centre and Rochdale Infirmary.



See Appendix 2 for a full list of where Healthwatch Rochdale engaged.

Stakeholder Online Meeting

Healthwatch Rochdale set up an online Zoom meeting on Thursday 26th January 2023 from 9:30am – 11am for stakeholders of the Rochdale Borough.

The meeting was to gauge interest from service provider about what could be offered at The Hub.

We only had one response to this offer.

Key Findings

From survey results the top three areas of service that people wanted to see within the Alkington Hub were:

- Health Services
- Leisure Services
- Social Care Services

Health 67.0% response

The largest response was for health services.

The top 3 health areas were:

- **Mental Health Support** including having local services such as Rochdale and District MIND available.
- **Weight Management** including exercise, diabetes and feeding advice for people with disabilities such as feeding tubes.
- **Rehabilitation** including services that support stroke, dementia, memory clinics and physio therapy.

There were also suggestions to put a community de-fibrillator in The Hub and offer First Aid classes to build on skills and raise awareness of basic first aid.

Some people also suggested services that could ease NHS pressures:

"I think anything that can take a pressure off our NHS is a bonus..."

"Make more use of Alkington Medical Centre to take the load of A & E and local doctor surgery appointments..."

"Support/Signposting for people with health issues struggling to be seen by a GP..."

"Ladies ONLY group, menopause, bladder, dietary, bodily changes and cancer support..."

Leisure 45.6% response

In the leisure category the top response was for social activities, followed by fitness, then 'befriending'. Some activities specified were:

- **Arts and Crafts**

- Dancing
- Quizzes
- Youth Involvement including youth clubs, youth activities, youth specific exercise
- Coffee and Chat – somewhere to socialise
- Parent/Carers including Peer Support, Dads Group
- SEN & D specific activities: Silent Disco, sensory sessions, sibling joint activities, Autism peer support

“Alkrington Hub needs to be a place for people to come as part of their community to meet others and also to share the skills they have.”

“Be good to just come to sit and chat with a brew and even an opportunity to offload on someone else...”

“Anything that can give us old and elderly people something to look forward to. Nothing too fancy, we have no energy!”

A small number of responses also mentioned the outside allotment area at The Hub, this area previously won “Middleton in Bloom” awards and certificates and is an area adapted to ensure accessibility for all.

“There could be a community project in the outdoor space...”

“My husband used to come to the allotment group at The Hub before Covid. It was for dementia, and he really enjoyed it and was an opportunity for respite for me...”

“Love the garden...It makes me happy...”



A few people queried if the Hub would be open to hosting evening and weekend events, especially social gatherings/quizzes and their thoughts were that it is something that people may use.

Social Care 39.8% response

The top three areas for social care were:

- Advocacy Services
- Rehabilitation
- Support for people with learning disabilities and autism

Residents felt that they needed support filling out forms, making complaints and completing applications. They also thought that somewhere that helped deal with issues via an advocacy worker would ease their anxiety around this and help tackle problems quicker.

There were a number of suggestions for local services who be able to provide support at The Hub.

- Carers Services – N-Compass, Home Instead, Rochdale Carers Hub
- The Alzheimer’s Society/Dementia Support
- The Stroke Association
- HMR Circle – Elderly support
- Safeguarding Team/Hub
- Adult Care

Additional comments were received around the need for services to utilise The Hub specifically around Special Needs, Disabilities, or Neurodiverse Needs for both adults, young people, children and/or carers. This is due to the accessibility of the building.

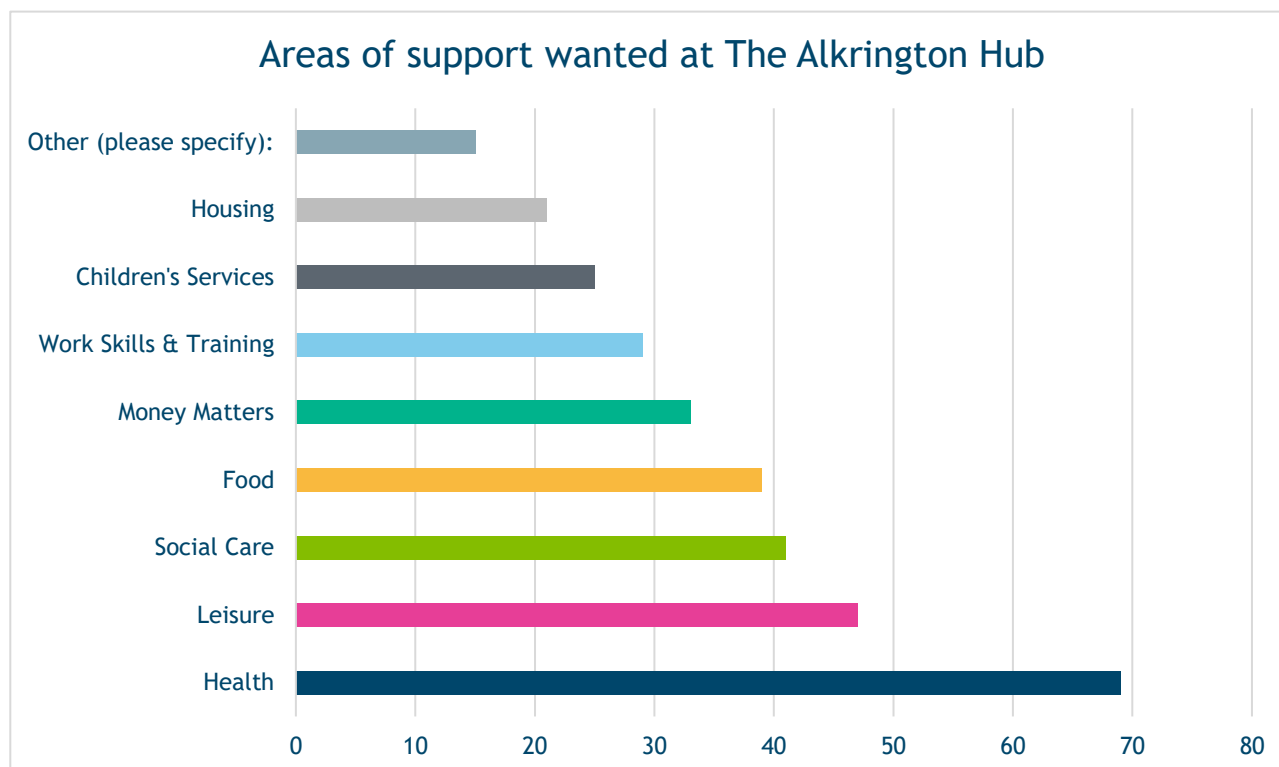
Suggestions include:

- Disability workshops
- Link Children’s services in the borough around SEND – as a Hub
- Sensory Impairment Support
- Light Therapy
- Specific Art for a generic need
- Post 16 and/or ost 18 support for young people with additional needs
- Gastro Feeding support and awareness
- Holistic Therapies/ Approaches
- Physio
- Housing adaptations – demos, info, advice
- Benefit Advice and Applications
- Blue Badge Information and Applications
- Specific Autism support



- Training: Makaton, First Aid, Speech & Language
- Acquired Disabilities
- Physical Impairments and Physical disabilities

Other ideas include inclusive keep fit, Interactive activities, woodworking, and watching films.



What is preventing people from using The Alkrington Hub?

Three main themes preventing people using The Hub were identified during the consultation:

Lack of Transport/Travel to The Hub

- Many felt that public transport links were not reliable. Some required adapted vehicles due to mobility needs and spoke of being unable to afford taxis due to being on benefits or struggling in the current cost of living crisis. Other residents, particularly from Heywood, said it is not somewhere they would think to travel to, to access a service, group or organisation.

"I would need to know the bus routes to travel here as I don't like going to new places that I am unsure of on the bus. If people offered things at the

Hub, it would be good for them to attach a bus timetable for Greater Manchester travel.”

- Previously, when the Moving On Service was in place some service users received partially funded travel and/or used the “Ring & Ride” service. Some service users also car shared when travelling to the Alkrington Hub but at present this offer is not available.
- Lack of accessible, reliable and affordable transport is a barrier to accessing services resulting in Rochdale residents not taking up services that they may need, it also means that some service users cannot get to groups that are already on in The Hub due to the short time frame that they are on for and the travel time involved. This was commented as a reason that was discouraging a carer from attending a group already in place.

“Support with transport is needed to get to and from the Hub- doorstep direct as I can not walk far due to my disabilities”.

- A suggestion whilst attending a focus group was that the Alkrington Hub could make use of minibuses from Redwood School in Rochdale. The school owns a number of minibuses that are used to transport their students to and from school, so therefore could potentially be available from 10am until 2pm for those who would need assisted transport to enable them to access services at The Hub.

“If the centre was frequently re-opened with transport provided, I would like to go to it. We have nothing else now like the Moving on Service was...I miss the social interaction of it and the friendship.”

Lack of awareness of The Hub

- Many people we spoke with did not know where The Hub was nor had seen or heard anything in recent publications or online about the building and it’s refurbishment.
- Previous service users from the Moving On Service had not received any communication directly from Rochdale Borough Council nor Rochdale Adult Social Care advertising new groups within the Hub or its reopening.



- Rochdale Residents were unaware of the current services running from The Hub.

"I would use The Hub, but...what is offered?"

- Rochdale Voluntary, Faith and Community Social Enterprises were also unaware of The Hub and the offer of a space to be utilised by groups such as themselves.
- A number of residents told us they don't use the internet or social media, so questioned where information is being shared currently and in the future.

"I would happily come to The Hub, but my question is what is actually offered and how am I going to know about it, I'm old; I don't have these fancy internet things and don't really get out much..."

Lack of trust

- There seems to be a barrier for people who previously used the Moving On service as well as Kick Start with Hope and Rochdale Borough Council.

"I felt let down, so I do not feel like I would go back into the building.!"

- Current service users shared concerns about items that had gone missing but whenever concerns are raised, they are given short responses with no context.
- Some were worried (especially Kick Start for Hope service users) that current sessions can be stopped without notice.

"It has lost it's appeal, it looks empty.....People don't know what to put in here as they fear if they have something good the Council will just come along and sweep it from under their feet like they have done previously"

- One Middleton resident stated The Hub has a terrible reputation and people seem to be constantly negative about it but they were hopeful that it could turn itself around like the community centre next door.
- Focus Group participants stated that although recommendations had been made and the Ombudsman had also had insight the Council still have not engaged in any way with Residents.

"Kickstart with Hope are trying their best for their members but have no support from the Council or any other groups and is proving a challenge. They are

being ignored by the council and the building in it's current state is not actually as accessible for disabled people."

Healthwatch Rochdale visited Kick Start For Hope, a charity based within the Alkington Hub every Tuesday. They offer arts and crafts, lunch, friendship and support for Rochdale residents with disabilities, acquired disabilities or additional needs. It is supported by a number of volunteers and unpaid carers.

The group felt that there were still a number of barriers in their way as service users with specific needs or disabilities including:

- Access to the toilets is difficult
- Hoist not working, numerous conversations with RBC and Adult Care
- Storage – not suitable
- Loss of equipment that belonged to group – *"New rules mean that it is not allowed"*
- Wall displays are not allowed – *"we want self-expression and pride in our work"*
- Computers- need to connect own devices
- Doors are not fire sealed
- No appropriate bins in the toilets (for incontinence pads etc)
- Less Space – bulky electrical chairs not suitable

Speaking with previous users of The Moving On Service

Telephone Conversations

Healthwatch Rochdale spoke with 16 ex-service users of The 'Moving On' Service over the telephone who told us they were still upset around the service closure, with many no longer accessing any services locally, nor wanted to go back to the Alkington Hub. Some of the reasons stated were:

- Lots of issues with the re-furb
- Not disabled friendly
- No working hoist
- No qualified staff to assist disabled members
- Lack of trust in Rochdale Borough Council



- Concerned around loss of previous items
- Money not well spent on refurbishment

“Pull it down, it is not fit for any purpose now! There is no one there to run it!”

“Only open now for a few hours, can’t get husband there and back as I work, and no transport provided.”

“A luncheon type club would be good in the canteen area- isn’t this supposed to be a warm space? Never even seen the blinds pulled up!”



Focus Group Tuesday 17th January 2023 at Alkington Hub with 18 participants who were previous service users of The Moving On Service.

What worked well previously (when It was Moving On Service)	
Fundraising	Got everyone involved and gave them a sense of achievement
Friendship Group	Met people with same problems or disabilities and was a place could feel “normal”
Form Filling in	Issues with fine motor skills Issues with memory Handwriting problematic - Staff helped fill in forms and explain them
Trips	Enjoyed and mentioned by many of the residents. - Llandudno - Oswaldtwistle Mills - Lunches out - Southport - Christmas Gatherings – food
Garden	Enjoyed the gardening Middleton in Bloom BBQs in Summer – all put money in a kitty
Support for Carers, Families and Friends	Every single person welcome

Transport	Transport was arranged, or car sharing made possible BUS- I would text when I got off so they could look out for me
Staffing/Volunteers	Dedicated Knew every single person – and their circumstances Knowledgeable Supportive
Digital Skills	Learnt Skills Helped me get a job Easy to understand – at our pace and small groups 1-2-1 support Found me the right equipment
Cookery	Did as a team and individual Helped gain confidence Gave me someone to eat a meal with

What, if anything, prevents you from using The Alkrington Hub	
Issues with re-furb	No Hoist No Staff to ensure safety Not disabled friendly Doesn't feel welcoming/clinical What has the money been spent on?!
Rochdale Borough Council	Lost all faith in them Don't care about the services they offer No Trust Doesn't want to access anywhere they are in charge of Refuse to answer our calls/emails – they don't want to know
Not fit for purpose	Too much money gone into it Who is going to use it now as the previous electric wheel chair users wouldn't be able to
What is being offered?	There is no intention to get a good service running again – I have anxiety at the thought of going back
No Transport	I struggle now on public transport

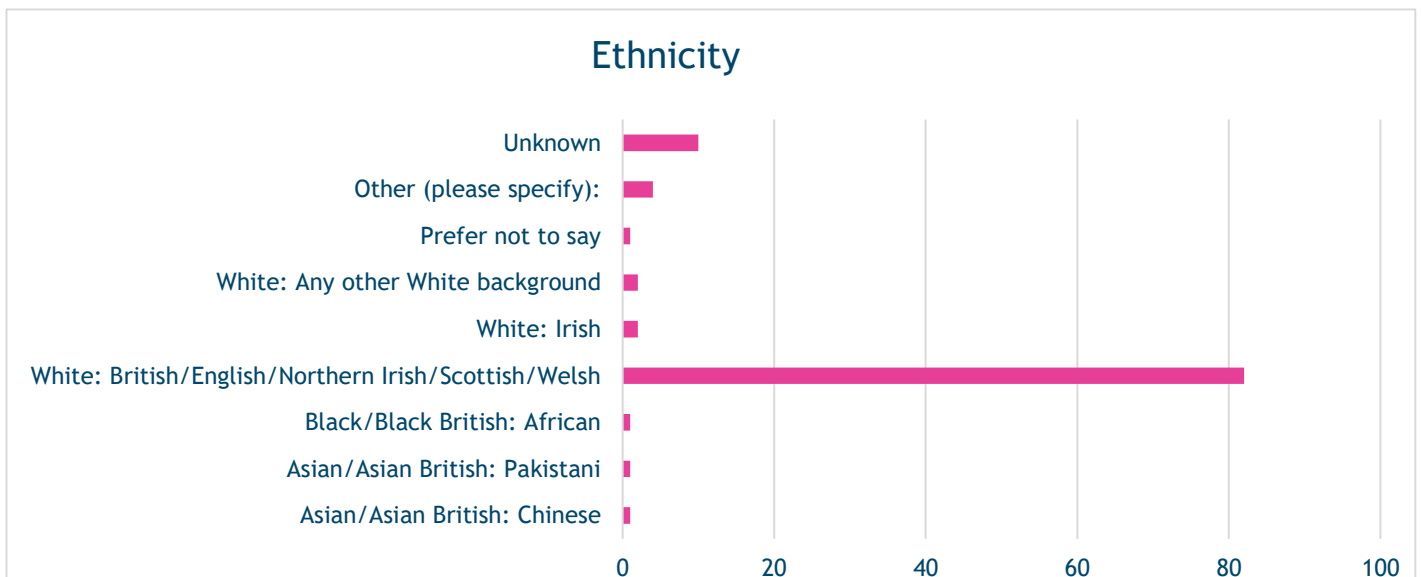
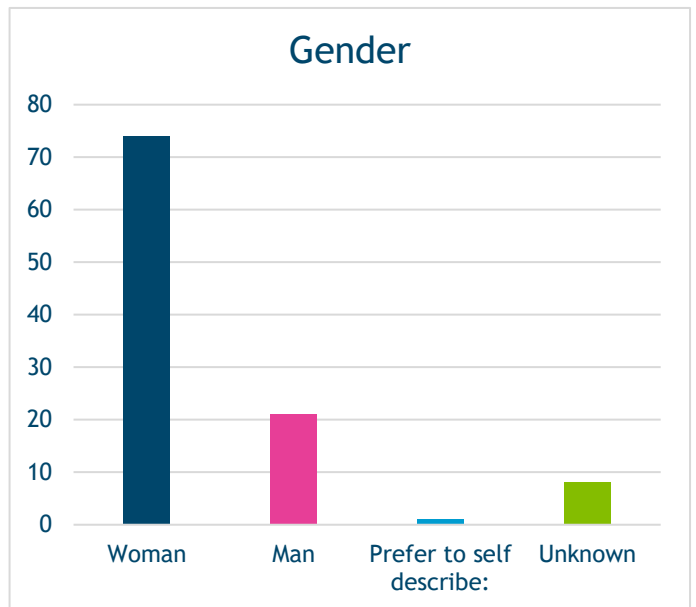
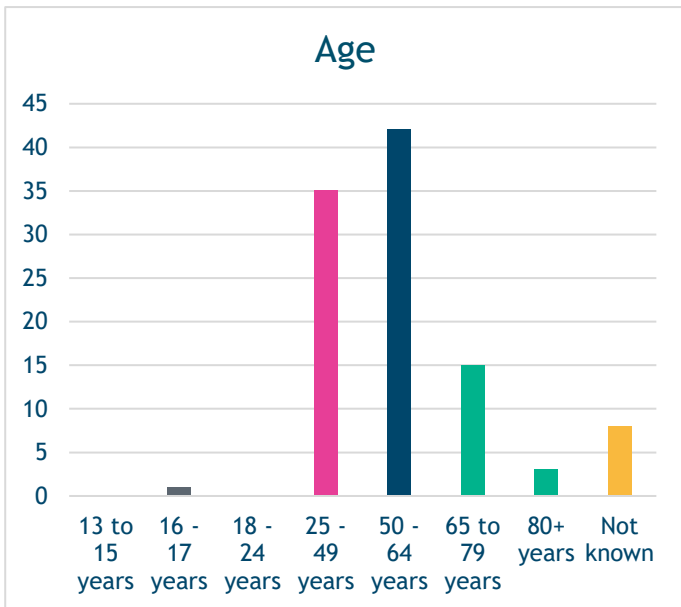
They don't have the transport service they used to use

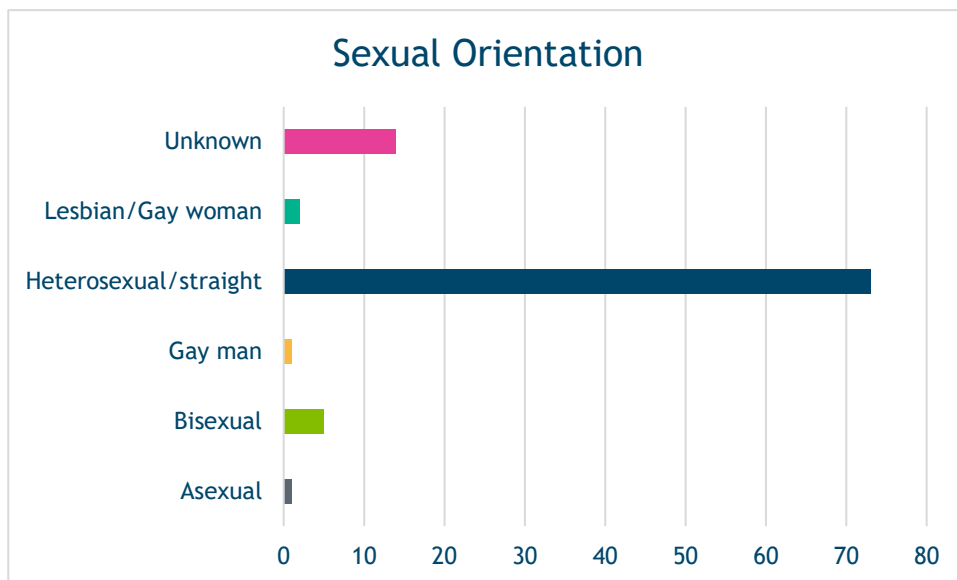
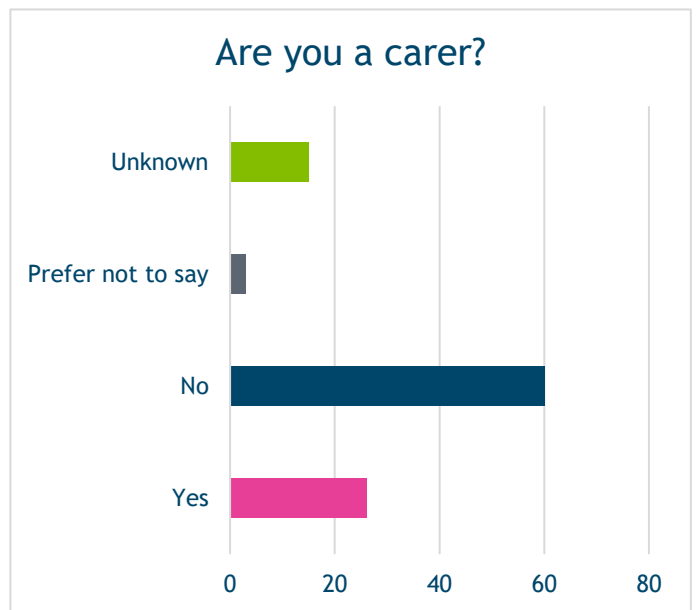
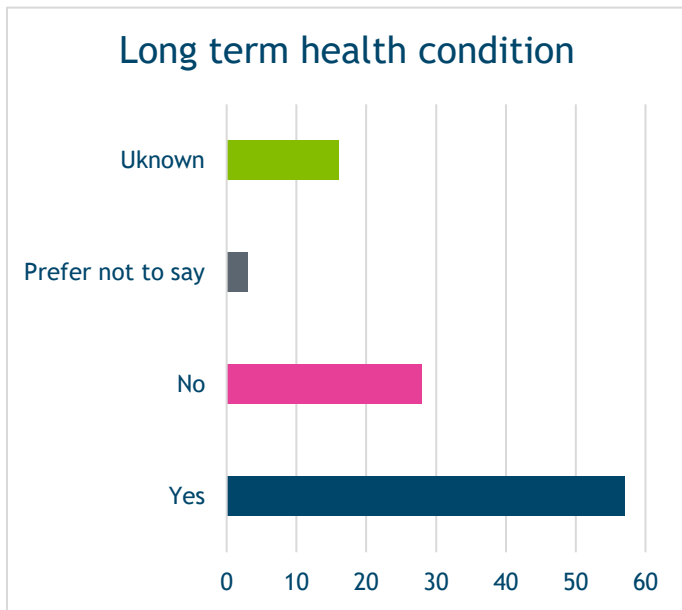
We held a conversation with a local organisation whom enquired about possibly using the Alkington Hub as a venue for whole team staff meetings, they were told all dates enquired about the space unavailable, yet no alternative dates offered. They suggested it would be a great space for “Hot Desking”.

It was noted during conversations with Rochdale Residents who were familiar with the area that the space and size of the Alkington Hub was a good size, it was clean and had an ample car park.

Who spoke to us

The below information was provided to us via survey responses.





Acknowledgements

With thanks to the following for allowing us to share our survey to their groups and networks or make use of their space:

- ❖ Action Together Networks
- ❖ Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership
- ❖ Kick Start with Hope
- ❖ Rochdale Adult Social Care
- ❖ The Lighthouse, Middleton
- ❖ Touchstones, Rochdale

Appendix 1

Timetable of current use at Alkington Hub			January 2023
Day	AM	PM	Additional
Monday	1 hour Exercise Class Your Trust	Rochdale Work and Skills Advisor	Warm Spaces Monday and Thursday 10am – 3pm Rochdale Borough Council SMART House assisted Living available to view each day via appointment Adult Social Care
Tuesday	Kick Start with Hope With staff -assistance care worker	Kick Start with Hope With staff- assistance care worker	
Wednesday	Kick Start with Hope Volunteer Led	Kick Start with Hope Volunteer Led	
Thursday			
Friday	1 hour Exercise Class Your Trust		
Saturday			
Sunday			

Appendix 2

Engagement Method/place	Date	Number engaged with
Survey Digital and Hard Copy	November 2022 to January 2023	Total Responses = 103
In person. Voluntary Partnership Meeting Syke Community Base	21.11.22	14 participants (Residents, VCSFE, Rochdale Borough Councillors) Hard copies left Shared to distribution list also
In person. Money Max Roadshow Heywood Civic Hall	23.11.22 10am - 2pm	Face to Face conversations 11 residents 3 male, 8 female 1 British/Pakistani
In person. Carers Rights Day Touchstones, Rochdale	25.11.22	Face to Face conversations 4 residents 2 male, 2 female 1 asian muslim
In person. 16 days of Activism SAFE Event Touchstones, Rochdale	25.11.22	Face to Face conversations 4 residents 4 female 1 Iranian

In person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall - open conversations Rochdale Infirmary	Monday 28 th November 10am - 12pm	4 residents 2male, 2 female 4 white British Ages: 69,32,19,23
Telephone - Ex Moving On service Users. Questions asked over phone	04.01.23, 05.01.23, 11.01.23	19 residents 7 male, 12 female 19 surveys
Postal - Hard copy surveys posted alongside Freepost envelope		28 posted 2 surveys received back via Freepost
Social Media Healthwatch Rochdale	December 22- January 23	Also shared to specific facebook groups and pages
Social Media Rochdale Borough Council	-	No posts on socials nor shared
#TogetherRochdale	December 2022	E-bulletin
In person and shared via distribution list. Better Health 4 Middleton monthly	December 2022 January 2023	Shared via distribution list Offer of hard copy
Action Together Grass Roots Gathering Zoom	December 2022 January 2023 10am - 12pm	6 attendees 8 attendees Shared via Distribution list
In Person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall Nye Bevan, Rochdale	06.12.22 10am - 12pm	4 surveys
In Person. Reaching Out, Homeless Event Rochdale	06.12.22 5pm - 8pm	No responses Commented wouldn't go, never heard of it, too far, no travel fare, don't know area
In Person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall The Strand, Kirkholt	08.12.22 10am - 12pm	3 surveys Posters
In Person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall The Phoenix Centre, Heywood	13.12.22 10am - 12pm	No responses 7 people spoken to but had no comments to make. Non had heard of Hub nor would use.
In Person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall The Lighthouse, Middleton	20.12.22 10am - 12pm	Left 15 hard copy surveys Posters 3 sent back
In Person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall Nye Bevan, Rochdale	03.01.23 10am - 12pm	2 surveys posters
In Person. Information, Advice & Signposting Stall The Phoenix Centre, Heywood	10.01.23 10am - 12pm	1 survey posters
Alkrington Hub Open Day	Friday 13 th January 2023 10:00am - 3:00pm	6 residents 1 carer 2 male, 4 female

Alkrington Hub Open Day	Monday 16 th January 2023 10:15am - 2:30pm	9 residents 2 local councillors 1 carer (female white British) 4 ex moving on service users (3 female, 1 male, white British) 1 male, English, 82, diabetes/mobility issues 1 female 10 surveys
In person. The Lighthouse Middleton Warm Space	Tuesday 17 th January 2023 9:45am - 11:45am	16 total group discussion 6 female 1 black/British, 4 White/British, 1 Asian/British face to face conversations 10 surveys
In Person Kick Start with Hope - service users with additional needs/disabilities/acquired disabilities	Tuesday 17 th January 2023 12:14pm - 1:50pm	21 participants Group discussion
In Person Ex-Service Users Moving On -hosted by Kick Start with Hope	Tuesday 17 th January 2023 12:05pm - 1:45pm	11 participants Group Discussion 5 male, 6 female, 2 dogs 2 unpaid carers 1 wheelchair user 1 partially sighted
Stakeholders Meeting Zoom	Thursday 26 th January 2023	1 response to attend Zoom Survey link was also sent to distribution list with invite
Network	Date	Add info
Rochdale Care Organisation	December 2022	Shared to Patient Care Experience team and ask to promote in setting or participate if Rochdale resident
Action Together, Women's Service Network	07.12.22	Distribution list Steering Group
Action Together LGBTQ Network	December 2022	Distribution List
Healthwatch Volunteers	December 2022	Survey link distributed via email
Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership	December 2022 January 2023	Distribution List ROMVP Volunteer Advocates Facebook post
Youthwatch 100 #YW100	December 2022 January 2023	38 young people shared with
Faith and Communities Network	December 2022	Distribution List

Refugee and asylum seekers network	December 2022	Distribution List
BAME Forum	January 2023	Distribution List
Rochdale Carers Hub Young Carers Hub	January 2023	Distribution List Facebook post
Home Instead	January 2023	Carers Staff Service users

Venue	Date of conversations	Themes
Money Max Roadshow, Heywood	24.11.22 <i>“Ideally, we should be encouraging things to help reduce social isolation and try to build on local peoples skills and enterprises. The cost of living is affecting so many small businesses – help them by hosting their stalls”</i>	<p>Dementia Support/ Alzheimers Society Singing/Choir/open mic</p> <p>Music Sessions especially weekends, Music Services too expensive, fixing shop</p> <p>Hot Desking (work purpose) home workers, cost of living, no office since covid</p> <p>ICT Help Desk for community help residents with digital skills inc forms</p> <p>Community Café Socialise, warm space</p> <p>Farmers Market</p> <p>Cook with your Kids Class</p> <p>Food/Diet/Nutrition inc cultural needs</p> <p>Weight Management inc Blood Pressure checks, lowering cholesterol</p> <p>Yoga/Pilates</p> <p>Arts/Crafts inc for people with additional needs/neurodiversity, forgotten skills eg wood carving, rugging, sewing – make do and mend</p> <p>Book Club Encourgaes literacy, debate and discussion. Borrow from local Library.</p>
Carers Rights Event, Rochdale	25.11.22 <i>“Alkrington higher crime rates, a police surgery could help locals with their worries around this, they can share</i>	<p>Debt/Money management</p> <p>Police Surgery residents groups, neighbourhood watch</p> <p>Dancing Bollywood, Bangra</p> <p>“Andys Mans Club” Mens Mental Health support</p>

	<i>fears and worries and get reassurance”</i>	
16 Days of Activism, Rochdale	25.11.22 <i>“It is very important to not only get the correct domestic abuse or violence support but imperative that women are given this in culturally respected and understood way, they need to know people understand”</i>	Womens Coffee Drop in Period Poverty – distribution, women only Sexual Health Advice, Condoms, Smear info, HIV awareness Breast Screening/Breast Cancer Advice/Breast Feeding Safe Space Domestic Violence/Abuse Translators
Rochdale Infirmary, Rochdale	28.11.22 <i>“I live on Spotland, but if I knew that there was going to be something on there that I am interested in I would travel especially around things that I currently can’t access such as hypnobirthing or antenatal classes or even a one stop place for everything maternity related as I get fed up of going all over for different appointments”</i>	Asthma/Respiratory Clinics correct use of inhalers, breathing probs from Covid, Inhaler recycling point Fix it Shop Encourage “Dads and Lads” at weekends (NB respondent was a single dad and also expressed hard to find things to do together), help with sustainability (reduce/reuse/recycle) Baby Clinic/Baby Classes Clinics, Birth planning, “How to...” Baby Group



Healthwatch Rochdale at the Carers Rights Event, Touchstones, Rochdale

<p>QUESTION: What support, services and organisations would you like to see at Alkington Hub? (These are services that you yourself would use and find beneficial)</p>	
<p>INFORMATION Tuesday 17th January 2023, 11:00am Feedback gathering, on the ground engagement. Alkington Hub Consultation at The Lighthouse, Middleton Group of 6 – awaiting Quiz 15 min conversation 4 Female White British, 1 female Black/British, 1 female Asian/British All ladies live in and around Middleton, non live in Alkington</p>	
<p>Services currently in Alkington Hub</p>	<p>All were unaware of the Hub and the things that they are offering. Said that out of the groups running currently- non of them would be interested in attending. Have never been or seen</p>

Childrens Services Comment that question should also say "and Young People"	Emotional Wellbeing: Small groups teenagers, Anxiety Mental Health: Professionals to meet with young people New Parents: Baby Blues LGBTQ: welcoming, link to Pride events Activities that both parents and children can engage in – weekends a good time
Food	Café area or warm space Food banks are very much needed – Middleton lots of deprivation and people struggling Social eating clubs
Health	Mental health is key Machines that measure biometrics One stop health hub Womens Health – Menopause, hormones, periods, contraception options Weight management
Housing	Lack of social housing Housing benefits Money saving tips - utilities
Leisure	Keep Fit Exercise for everyone – focus for elderly
Money Matters	Cost of living crisis Banking ATM Machine accessibility
Social Care	A space for meetings Drop in sessions for help and advice
Work Skills Training	Short Courses Adult Learning Upskill
Additional Comments: Reason Lighthouse works well is as its so warm and welcoming, they remember you and offer a listening ear Computers are always available along with help for them if struggling, everything is digital Quizzes are always fun, can also be used for charity or fundraisers	

Recommendations

The findings in this report are based on what local people have told us. Following our engagement work we recommend the following:

1. Improved transport links for local residents to access the Alkrington hub.
2. Improved communications to promote the services within the Alkrington Hub.
3. Rochdale Council to re-establish trust with local residents relating specifically to Adult care services.
4. Rochdale Council communication team to support future local engagement work which is being carried out in partnership across the health and social care sector.

Provider response

Since the initial survey for this report was completed in November 2022 Adult Care would like to take this opportunity to update residents on the current offer at the Alkrington Hub

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Drop In – all day	Kickstart with HOPE	Kickstart with HOPE	ESOL Classes a 2	50s / 60s Dance – exercise class
Fun Dance – exercise class	Community Champions (appointment only)			
Yoga Therapy				
SMART House – appointments (0300 303 886)	SMART House – appointments (0300 303 8886)	SMART House – appointments (0300 303 8886)	SMART House – appointments (0300 303 8886)	SMART House – appointments (0300 303 8886)

An Adult Care representative is present in the building every day and whilst we would encourage people to use the Drop In session on a Monday, we do support people attending the sessions on the other days if needed, either there and then or by making an appointment.

The building was a Warm Space during the winter and is in the process of signing up to be a Safe Place

There are a variety of other organisations who have used the space to support the community including the Carers Hub, the Food Solutions Foundation Group, Slimming World and Alkrington Community Centre

We have recently had interest from Rochdale Boroughwide Housing with a view to supporting people in food poverty, we have hosted visits from an organisation providing Reiki.

We welcomed the Chief Social Worker for England and have hosted staff training and listening events at the building.

We continue to encourage and promote other organisations and groups who could utilise the space and bring health and wellbeing opportunities to both the local area and to the borough.

The Smart House can support people to remain independent at home and continues to grow in regard to the equipment and technology demonstrated and the number of visitors. This facility is available for health and social care professionals, volunteers, carers and any resident to visit to look, try out and discuss equipment which can support independent living.

The building has aesthetically improved, decorated in neutral colours, calming pictures have been put up in the corridor with Cartwheel Arts working on commissioning a mural in the main room. Feedback from groups has been mixed as some would prefer vibrancy and others value the calmness of less stimulation which is seen as beneficial to some members of their groups.

The hoist is now working and has been serviced.

In response to recommendations:

1. Improved transport links for local residents to access the Alkrington Hub.

Adult Social Care are not able to provide direct transport to the venue however there are a number of transport options that the public can utilise to access the building and Adult Care are able to signpost and assist people to access if

needed we have included some details of the transport options available below:

GMPTe – the 415 bus stops at the bus stop just along from the car park entrance, this is an hourly service from Middleton Town Centre (ending in Oldham)

HMR Circle Volunteer driver scheme – a service for adults (aged 50+ / or vulnerable adults) who are unable, or find it difficult, to use public transport. Volunteer Drivers use their own vehicles to provide a door-to-door, flexible, transport service. The passenger is picked up from their home and taken to their destination. Return journeys are also available. If requested, and where possible, a driver can wait with the passenger until they are ready to return home. For each journey, a contribution is calculated at just 45p per mile – payable to the driver on the day, to reimburse the cost of petrol and to support the costs of insuring and maintaining their vehicles.

Ring and Ride – bookable low cost transport for disabled people and older people with walking difficulties. Short, local journeys to eligible residents of Greater Manchester. If you are a registered user you may travel to any location within 6 miles of your home address.

Taxi vouchers – some people are eligible for discounted taxi vouchers depending on their disability. Information can be found at <https://tfgm.com/public-transport/travel-vouchers>

2. Improved communications to promote the services within the Alkrington Hub.

The Alkrington Hub has been, and continues to be, promoted in a number of ways, including press releases, social media content, posters and flyers. In addition, the SMART House has been published through video content and the visit of the Chief Social Worker. In addition, the hub was promoted through the Warm Spaces scheme, which formed part of our Helping Hand cost of living campaign. We are always looking at new and different ways to promote our services, including The Hub Alkrington, through our ongoing communication work.

In addition, we would add that residents often don't know about something until they need it – then they seek the information. The more important thing is often whether the information is where it should be, is it up to date, can it be found easily, and is it easy to understand. We have, as previously suggested, ensured accessible posters and flyers promoting the service are in local community buildings. Also, the weekly drop in service has been promoted on our events' webpage. A lot has been done, there is always more that could be done,

ensuring the communications continue to be targeted to help maximise reach to the appropriate audience.

3. Rochdale Council to re-establish trust with local residents relating specifically to Adult care services.

It should be noted that this survey focused on The Hub Alkrington, not adult care services generally, and that the council performs above the national average for service users and carers finding it easy to find information.

Our residents in the borough and those who use services are recognised as being vital to the development of services and for their input whenever change is required. The council is working on developing and improving how co-production can work and Adult Care have recently appointed a Co-Production and Engagement Officer to support them to do this more effectively.

There are a number of forums Adult Care are involved in where engagement takes place some examples would be: Women's Supper Club, Elephants Trail Group, Food Solutions Network.

The Co-Production and Engagement Officer has setup a training program on best practice in Co-Production and change culture to support working with residents to ensure that voices are heard and that residents can influence change to services.

4. Rochdale Council communication team to support future local engagement work which is being carried out in partnership across the health and social care sector.

Our/The communication team regularly promotes work across the health and social care sector, in line with service priorities, and this will continue to be a priority of the communication work.

Recent communication activity includes:

Creation of a poster for our Drop-In service, displayed in local libraries, shops and community venues

Our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams are aware of the offer at The Hub and how to refer or signpost.

The Carers Hub have visited The Hub Alkrington a number of times with different carers they are supporting, this is helping to inform people of the offer

We have visited the Better Health For Middleton Meetings and explained the purpose of the building, what is on offer and how to get information to visit.

Action Together are fully aware of the building and its offer – they give information to local groups on what is available and to those looking for a venue in which to run sessions which support health and wellbeing.

We have plans to advertise the calendar of events on the council website including information and links to the organisations running activities. We are also developing our information on social media in regard to the drop in and to showcase the smart house. We would not be able to advertise the individual sessions on social media as they are run by individual organisations not RBC.

It should be noted that it is not always appropriate to include the Communications team in everything we do, and careful consideration is made before this takes place.

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