



**Annual Report 2024–2025**

# **Unlocking the power of people-driven care**

**Healthwatch Stockport**

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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

## Continuing to champion the voice of Stockport residents.

Over the past year, Healthwatch Stockport has continued to champion the voices of local people, working hard to ensure that health and care services reflect what matters most to our communities. From hospital discharge to mental health and hearing services, we've listened, analysed, and acted on people's experiences to support and drive meaningful change.

Thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and board members, we've supported nearly 1000 people, produced 12 reports, and engaged directly with those often underrepresented. Whether through Enter and View visits or community events, we've reached deeper into our borough to make sure no voice goes unheard.

We've worked collaboratively with NHS GM and fellow Healthwatch across Greater Manchester to make sure Stockport's voice is heard at the Integrated Care System level—ensuring local feedback influences regional decisions. Our volunteers have given over 435 hours of their time this year. Their passion and commitment have been vital in helping us connect, challenge, and improve services across Stockport. To all our volunteers, staff, partners, and board members—thank you for everything you do.

Together, we're creating care that informs, involves, and works better for everyone.



"I'm incredibly proud of how we've listened, collaborated and created real change. Every voice matters—and together, we're making sure Stockport's health and care services are shaped by the people who use them."

**Sue Carroll, Healthwatch Stockport Chair**

## About us

# Healthwatch Stockport is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you 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 use people's experiences to help make health and care better.



### We have updated our values:

**Equity:** Embracing inclusivity and compassion, establishing profound connections with the communities we serve, and empowering them.

**Collaboration:** Nurturing both internal and external relationships, fostering transparent communication, and partnering to amplify our impact.

**Independence:** Championing the public's agenda, serving as purposeful and critical allies to decision-makers.

**Impact:** Pursuing ambitious endeavours to effect meaningful change for individuals and communities while remaining accountable and holding others accountable.

**Truth:** Operating with unyielding integrity and honesty, fearlessly advocating truth to those in power.

## Inform. Involve. Influence

# Our year in review

We've supported more than 980 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 5 FTE staff and, our work is supported by 38 volunteers.

## Reaching out:



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

We've taken over **700** calls with **108** people asking us directly for clear advice and information on topics such as GP services and accessing treatment and care.

## Championing your voice:



We collaborated and created over **12** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like discharge from hospital, finding your way around hospital sites, hearing services, and children's mental health.

Our most popular report was '**Home after Hospital**' highlighting the challenges people face when being transferred home from a stay in hospital.

## Statutory funding:



We're funded by **Stockport Council**. In 2024/25 we received **£171,600**, which is **4%** more than last year.

We currently employ 5 Full Time Equivalent staff who help us carry out our work.



# A year of making a difference

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

## Spring

The Enter and View Team carried out a **hospital walk-about** to look at how accessible signage is for people who may need extra support to find their way around. The report is being used to make hospital estate improvements.



The completion of the **Hospital to Home Research Report** highlighted issues such as lack of clear communications and last-minute changes and delays. An action plan has now been implemented with our recommendations.



## Summer

We used one of our quarterly network events to host a '**Making it Real**' Conference. We showcased the progress being made to involve people with lived experience in Stockport's health and social care partnerships.



Families in Stockport shared their heart felt stories with us to produce a **Children's Mental Health Report** in collaboration with our Healthwatch colleagues in Greater Manchester. We met with key leaders to discuss the findings.



## Autumn

We produced our annual '**What to Know this Winter**' booklet. This delivers key messages to people who don't access online content about winter health, where to find accessible services and how to look after yourself and others during winter.



We secured funding for a new **Living Well Engagement** Officer to ensure the voice of people using mental health services is embedded in the new design of mental health services in Stockport.



## Winter

Enter and view visits were completed to three **NHS Adult Hearing Service** providers to talk to patients about their experiences of using the services. Most patients were really pleased with the services.



Our staff and volunteers ran a **Library Tour** of Stockport libraries. We spread the word about our information and advice service to people we wouldn't normally engage with. We made new community connections.



# Working together for change

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

This year, we've worked with 9 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 that lived experience in Stockport is heard and influences decisions across the ICS.

## Voices from our communities:



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 VCFSE sector and communities. We presented our work across the network, highlighted the importance of Healthwatch work and explored new ways of working, including stronger patient representation and co-production at ICS level.

# 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 Stockport this year:

## Out and about in the community



### **Developing a Community Voice Partnership.**

In partnership with NHS GM, we're working with local people and organisations with lived experience of health and care to ensure their voices shape decisions. Together, we're making sure the integrated care system reflects what matters most to our communities. Every quarter, the locality board hears directly from residents across the borough, helping to influence how health and care services are designed and delivered.

## Listening to the voice of local people



### **Listening to local voices helps improve care for everyone.**

Stockport residents told us about their experiences with the continence service, highlighting areas for improvement. Despite financial and staffing challenges, we worked closely with them to identify practical solutions. As a result, a new leaflet is being developed to support patients whilst they wait for their appointment. It will provide advice, reassurance and set clear expectations for patients during their care journey.

## Improving care over time



### **Change takes time. We work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.**

By engaging people and carers who use mental health services—both in the community and in hospital—we've partnered with our local mental health carers group, primary care and local GPs to co-design an Equality Toolkit. This resource will help receptionists and support staff better understand and meet the needs of people with severe mental illness.



# 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 and listened to their experiences of all aspects of health and social care.

People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback to service commissioners and providers and help them improve the services they provide to our residents.



# Listening to your experiences

## Hospital to Home: improving quality and support

### Understanding of the experiences of individuals being discharged from hospital who require social care and support services once home.

We carried out our 'Hospital to Home' research project, between April and June 2024. We wanted our findings to improve the quality, support, and overall experience of local people being transferred home from hospital.

### What did we do?

We carried out a range of engagement activities to find out what people's experiences of waiting to go home from hospital was like; including surveys and Enter & View visits to the transfer lounge. We also hosted afternoon teas in the community for people who had been discharged from hospital in the last 6 months needing a social care or other support package.

### Key things we heard:



- **Poor communication:** Insufficient involvement in discharge preparations and a lack of clear communication regarding discharge plans.
- **Discharge Process Delays:** Delays and last-minute changes to discharge timing and inconsistent coordination of transportation added to patient confusion.
- **Varied Care Plan Quality:** Quality of discharge assessments and care plans varied significantly, leaving some patients uncertain about their next steps once they were back home.

### What difference did this make?

An action plan has been developed by Stepping Hill Hospital and Healthwatch Stockport based on our recommendations. The system wide Safe and Timely Discharge Group is responsible for its implementation.

Up to now several changes have been implemented from the plan including a dementia resource box being available on the unit, the unit staff have attended training for sensory loss, spare batteries for hearing aids are now available on the unit, the TV content is being reviewed for suitable content, and the discharge summary sheet for patients has been reviewed amongst several other recommendations having been implemented from the report.

# Listening to your experiences

## NHS adult hearing services two years on

**Reviewing Adult Hearing Services two years on from the NHS service being contracted to independent providers.**

After receiving feedback that highlighted inconsistencies in the new service, now offered by several independent providers, we wanted to understand how people viewed this service.

### What did we do?

We conducted a survey using questions developed with our members, these also provided the basis of a series of Enter & View visits to providers. We gathered information from both patients and staff on their experience of using and working in the service.

### Key things we heard:



- **Good Service:** All patients who responded rated the service either good or excellent.
- **Patient Choice:** Less than half patients were given a choice of provider at the time of referral, whether this was by a GP or other provider.
- **Mixed Communication:** Messaging between the GP, the patient and the service is sometimes inconsistent. There was mixed messaging around earwax removal provisions on the NHS for example.

### What difference did this make?

Our work showed that, overall, patients receive a good service from adult hearing providers. However, people with additional support needs may face difficulties accessing services, and feedback on getting to appointments is mixed.

This work is ongoing, with our recommendations due for follow-up in 2025–26. That said, the research has already raised awareness of Healthwatch within these services. Encouragingly, providers showed a genuine openness to feedback and a commitment to improving care based on people's experiences.



# Hearing from all communities

**We're here for all residents of Stockport. 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:**

- Supporting the recruitment of Lived Experience Co-chairs to health and care partnerships.
- Employed a mental health engagement officer to ensure the voices of people who use services help design them.
- Through our Community Voice Partnership, we have made sure that the voices from our local community have been heard by local NHS leaders and Integrated Care Systems.



# Hearing from all communities

## Living Well in Stockport: Helping to make changes for people with Serious Mental Illness

**We collected the experiences of people living with Serious Mental Illness to support the successful implementation of the Living Well Model across Greater Manchester; designed to bring primary, secondary, and voluntary services together to support adults with a serious mental illness (SMI).**

From lived experience feedback gained, we identified themes such as social isolation and community engagement, gaps in support and care from professionals and the importance of VCFSE Services which offer ongoing support.

### What difference did this make?

One of the ways we are tackling the gaps in support from professionals, particularly with GP Practices is to develop a Primary Care Toolkit. The toolkit offers guidance around reasonable adjustments that can be made to ensure people with SMI are able to access their GP and other primary care services, inline with their care needs.

## Empowering local people to be leaders

**Working with the 'Making It Real' partnership, we co-hosted a conference which gave people in our local community who use health and social care, a chance to give feedback and share ideas.**

During the conference we heard from various key speakers including the Co-chairs (with Lived Experience) of the various health and care partnerships from the One Stockport Health and Care system, representatives from Adult Social Care, Healthwatch England and of course Healthwatch Stockport!

### What difference did this make?

The event provided an opportunity for attendees to share their opinions on key areas about adult social care such as the importance of transparent language, listening without judgment, consistent practices, and clear explanations for decisions.

Due to this event, Adult Social Care are committed to developing an action plan to implement these principles, which will be overseen by the Making It Real Board.



# Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year over 700 people have reached out to us for information, advice, support or help finding services.

**This year, we've helped people by:**

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services





## Feeling ignored: left to face deteriorating mobility

**Ms F contacted us with ongoing foot problems, struggling to get a diagnosis despite referrals. She felt like she wasn't being listened to and was reluctant to contact her GP again.**

Ms F contacted us with ongoing foot problems, struggling to get a diagnosis despite referrals. She felt like she had been left and forgotten about and was reluctant and nervous to contact her GP again. Eight months after a specialist had referred her back to podiatry as urgent, Ms F still had no appointment, and her mobility was rapidly deteriorating.

Healthwatch Stockport advised her that she was able to get the referral expedited, explaining a clinician needed to do this. Empowered, Mrs B secured a face-to-face GP appointment and finally felt heard. The GP gave a diagnosis of Morton's neuroma and also scheduled a podiatry appointment.

Ms F was relieved and grateful, explaining our advice gave her the confidence to approach her GP again.



"The Dr was "marvelous" she had a face-to-face appointment. The doctor looked at her feet and diagnosed her with Morton's Neuroma which is what has caused all the problems for her – she was very emotional as it has been ongoing for 2 years."

(Ms F's Daughter in Law)

## Supporting people to navigate the health and care system:

**Mrs C contacted us, distressed and feeling unsupported by her GP regarding persistent pain and a delayed hip operation.**

She needed to lose weight for the surgery and had been referred to a weight management programme but she hadn't heard anything and was struggling to chase it up, which was impacting her mental health.

Healthwatch Stockport offered to investigate waiting times with the weight management team, ABL. We learned there were two tiers to the scheme, and she was under the More Life team. We provided her with a direct contact for support.



Via a telephone follow-up, Mrs C said she had spoken to the More Life team and was awaiting forms to complete. She was incredibly grateful for our support, stating she wouldn't have made any progress without Healthwatch Stockport's help.

# Showcasing volunteer impact

**Our fantastic volunteers have given over 435 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.**

## **This year, our volunteers:**

- Represented Healthwatch Stockport at over 80 different boards, panels and groups.
- Collected hundreds of experiences to support our work at our outreach network and engagement events.
- Carried out 9 enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Reviewed and fed back on 10 internal and external Health and Social care literature and documents



# Showcasing volunteer impact

## At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

"Healthwatch has given me the opportunity to continue to use my knowledge and skills."

Rosemary has a background in community health services, in addition to caring for her mother long distance and her son who has hearing loss and mobility issues.

"I wanted to be part of an organisation which gives everyone a voice in shaping and accessing local health and social care services. I really enjoyed the Enter and View visits to Stepping Hill last year, I'm so proud to be the volunteer Enter and View Lead."

**Rosemary**



Mike is a valued member of our Advisory group, reading panel and is also attends meetings on behalf of Healthwatch Stockport.

"After years of navigating social care for family, I wanted to be able to support others with everything I have learnt. Healthwatch Stockport's lets me do just that."

**Mike**



### Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



[www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk)



0161 974 0753



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

# Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Stockport 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	£171,600	Staffing Costs	£154,044
Additional income	£7,557	Operational Costs	£53,568
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£179,157</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£207,612</b>

The overspend for 2024-25 was a deliberate decision taken by the board to use some of our reserves to employ an additional member of staff to support volunteer involvement and support communications. Additionally, we are still waiting for funding from NHS GM for the Living Well contract.

## Additional income:

### Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch in Greater Manchester also received funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level. Of that money Stockport received:

- £885 for work on the Pathways to CAMHS Project
- £2,000 for the Greater Manchester Network collaborative activities

# 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 Health and Care System to help develop a 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. Continue our work around making it easier for local people to access mental health services
2. Promote our Information and Advice service and re-run our Library tour but in partnership with our health and care colleagues
3. Finish our primary care access for people with additional needs work programme.



# Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Stockport, 48 Middle Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3DL**

**Healthwatch Stockport 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 5 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

We have an Advisory Group that ensures the decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as finance, policy and staffing. The Advisory Group met 9 times.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We renew, refine and identify new strategic priorities and project areas during our annual planning where we invite people and communities to contribute to our work programme at events, on social media, through surveys and feedback.

## 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 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

We did not have any providers who did not eventually respond to requests for information or recommendations. 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.

In our local authority area, we take information, insight and experience reports to the Health & Wellbeing Board, the One Stockport Health and Care Locality Board, statutory partner's patient experience meetings and the Quality Improvement Collaborative. We also take our reports to heads of service and local health and social care partnerships where appropriate.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Stockport is represented on the Stockport Health and Wellbeing Board by Sue Carroll, Healthwatch Stockport Chair.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending all the relevant meetings and sub-meetings, sharing our reports and contributing to discussions, providing challenge and positive feedback where appropriate.

Healthwatch Stockport is represented on the One Stockport Health and Care Locality Board and the Integrated Care Partnership by Maria Kildunne, Healthwatch Stockport Chief Executive.

# Statutory statements

## Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What we did as a result
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust	To understand the transfer experience of patients from hospital to home and care received once home if it was needed.	Developed and shared a report with several recommendations. An action plan has been coproduced and is being implemented. Several improvement to the Transfer Unit have been implemented to improve patient experience. (see page 10)
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust	To check the accessibility and signage of the estate from the perspective of people with additional support needs.	The findings were analysed, and a wayfinding report was produced with several recommendations. The findings are now being used by the hospital estates team to help update and improve signage and accessibility of the hospital estates.
Specsavers Beacon Clinic Scriven's Hearing Centre	To understand the experience of people accessing adult hearing services.	Several visits were made to private providers delivering adult hearing services on behalf of the NHS. Our patient satisfaction report has been drafted and any recommendations made will be followed up during summer 2025.

# Appendix

## Glossary

Term	Meaning
NHS	National Health Service
NHS GM	National Health Service Greater Manchester
ICS	Integrated Care System
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
VCFSE	Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise
GP	General Practitioner
SMI	Serious Mental Illness
Dr	Doctor
ABL	A Better Life Health Ltd

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