



Annual Report 2025–2026

**Together We Made a
Difference: The Final
Healthwatch Stockport Report**

Healthwatch Stockport

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"Building people's confidence in health and care services is essential, so providers shouldn't shy away from people's feedback. Instead, they should see it as an opportunity to improve patients' health and care experience and to identify the causes of health inequalities many communities face"

**Chris McCann, Deputy Chief Executive,
Healthwatch England**

A message from our Chair

As we present our final Annual Report, we reflect with immense pride on what Healthwatch Stockport has achieved alongside our communities over the past year—and over the last 13 years.

Throughout 2025–26, we have continued to champion the voices of local people, ensuring that their experiences shape the health and care services they rely on.

From hospital discharge and mental health to hearing services and primary care access, we have listened carefully, brought people together, and used those insights to influence meaningful change. This year alone, we have supported nearly 1,000 people, produced 12 reports, and reached deeper into our communities—particularly those whose voices are too often unheard.

Our volunteers have generously and consistently given their time, not only this year but throughout all the years playing a vital role in helping us connect with residents and hold services to account.

We are incredibly grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners and Board members, whose passion and commitment have made this work possible.

As we close this chapter, we do so in the knowledge that the legacy of Healthwatch Stockport—listening, influencing, and improving care—will continue to make a difference for years to come.



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"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.



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 1000 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 5 FTE staff and our work is supported by 40 volunteers.

Reaching out:



1002 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 **1470** calls with **457** 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 on and created around **10** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas such as, hearing services, continence, primary care access, ADHD and mental health. Updates on our reports and how these will be monitored going forward can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Our most popular report was '**Living Well in Stockport**' highlighting the challenges people face when living with a SMI in Stockport and what they would like to in regard to support and helping to stay well and recovered.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by **Stockport Council**. In 2025/26 we received **£181,896**, which is 6% 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 **Living Well model** for supporting individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) was developed through our mental health engagement, with 10 local organisations, highlighting key themes.



Our **Putting the Spring in Stockport** event brought together organisations from across our area who promote health and wellbeing. The event was attended by 200 local individuals and organisations.



Summer

Our **Adult Hearing Services** report set key actions focused on improving communication, ensuring parity across the service, and improving how commissioners collect and use patient feedback.



Our **Screening fact sheets** have been viewed hundreds of times, and helped raise awareness of the importance of screening across Stockport, and support better-informed health decisions in the community.



Autumn

Our annual **'What to Know this Winter'** booklet shared key messages to people who can't access online Winter health content, where to find accessible services and how to look after yourself and others during Winter.



We've been working with the Community Voice Partnership and Primary Care to co-ordinate the common themes around **improved access to primary care for those with additional support needs**.



Winter

We presented the **Making Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit** - developed as the result of the Living Well engagement work completed earlier in the year at the GP Masterclass, where it was well received.



Our final **Celebration Event** looked back at the work and impact of Healthwatch Stockport over the years, taking the opportunity to thank our volunteers, colleagues and partners for their help and support.



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 third 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 IVF, ADHD, and Prostate Cancer. 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.



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 patient information resource.

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 by the service to support patients whilst they wait for their appointment. It will provide advice, reassurance and set clear expectations for patients during their care journey.

Listening to the voice of local people



Listening to local voices helps reduce postcode-based health inequality.

Healthwatch Stockport collected feedback from our members in response to the GM Integrated Care Partnership's IVF consultation. They supported the Greater Manchester-wide move to standardise IVF provision and strongly endorses the option that provides 3 NHS funded IVF Cycles, in line with NICE guidelines. They believed this would promote fairness and consistency across the boroughs.

Improving care over time



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

Over the years we have engaged local people and carers who use mental health services—both in the community and in hospital—we partnered with our local mental health carers group, primary care and local GPs to co-design an Equality Toolkit. This resource has now been completed and will help receptionists and support staff to better understand and meet the needs of people with severe mental illness. It can also be developed over time to improve access for anyone with additional needs.

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

Living Well in Stockport

To understand the experiences of living with a serious mental illness in Stockport, and the challenges that come with this.

Between October 2024 and September 2025, Healthwatch Stockport's Mental Health Engagement Officer engaged with individuals living with serious mental illness (SMI). The aim was to understand their experiences and see how these can inform the development of the Living Well model in Stockport. The Living Well model is part of the Greater Manchester Community Mental Health Transformation, that aims to address health inequalities for people with an SMI, and provide more person-centered, joined-up care.

What did we do?

Healthwatch Stockport engaged with 55 people who had lived experience of SMI, as well as carers, loved ones, and organisations that support them. Feedback was gathered through attending various support groups in Stockport, conversations, focus groups, and an online survey..

Key things we heard:



- **Social Isolation and Stigma:** Difficulties reconnecting with the community and fears of discrimination following discharge from services.
- **Gaps in Support and Care:** Limited access to primary care, inconsistent communication, and missed physical health checks.
- **Importance of VCFSE Services:** Local groups and peer support networks help people to build confidence, connect socially, and manage their wellbeing.
- **What We Need to Live Well:** More community-based support, improved awareness training for professionals, and greater public understanding of SMI to reduce stigma.

What difference did this make?

The findings and recommendations of this report will be used to inform the ongoing development of the Living Well model in Stockport, to ensure it is shaped by lived experience and designed to support people with SMI to stay well and connected with their community..

Healthwatch Stockport has produced a Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit that can be used in Primary Care to help staff to understand and make reasonable adjustments for people with a SMI. This is being rolled out across GP surgeries in Stockport.

Listening to your experiences

Screening: myth busting

Produced fact sheets on screening programmes to inform people as to what screening is available and why they should access screening.

After receiving feedback that there were mixed messages about some screening and whether it was available to all we wanted to understand what these messages were and why there was variance

What did we do?

We looked at national guidance on various screening programmes and produced a series of fact sheets on screening and how to access it, that were easy to understand and took away the mixed messaging.

These were reviewed by local Public Health colleagues, to ensure they were giving correct messaging.

Key things we heard:



- **Inequality of access:** Access to prostate cancer screening varied depending on your GP and/or where you live, and people were not aware of some screening that can be requested after normal screening stops.
- **Good service:** When people did access the screening services, they were very pleased with them.
- **Mixed Communication:** Messaging from the GP or other health professional varied on some screening.

What difference did this make?

When the fact sheets were published on our website they were viewed many times. The most viewed sheet was on Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening, one of the more recent screening programmes to be introduced.

By producing and promoting these resources, we've helped raise awareness of this important screening across Stockport, supporting better-informed health decisions in the community.

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:

- Worked with Signpost for Carers Stockport to hear the challenges carers have in relation to continence issues and how these are addressed.
- Heard from Walthew House about the experiences of those who had hearing issues and used the NHS Adult Hearing Service.
- Visited men's support groups to hear about their experiences of receiving treatment for prostate cancer and feeding these into the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester research programme.



Hearing from all communities

Continence Service: Helping to make changes for people using the service

We collected the experiences of people trying to access the continence service in Stockport and how it impacted on their lives and their carers.

From the lived experience feedback gained, we continued to work with the continence service over time to improve the barriers people found in accessing the service, within the constraints the service had due to staffing levels and funding. These included improving communications and engagement.

What difference did this make?

We helped the service develop a booklet that could be sent out to patients which included information about referral criteria, as this not always explained by the referrer, and how to manage symptoms until they had their appointment.

We also supported a piece of engagement around a new product, which helped with the smooth introduction of the product.

Prostate Cancer: Raising awareness and improving services

Working with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester we sought the lived experience of those who had been treated for prostate cancer in order to raise awareness and help shape services.

Using face to face opportunities with men's support groups, social media and through our website we gathered the insights of those who had been diagnosed with prostate cancer through their responses to the survey.

What difference did this make?

The collection of data is still ongoing and being collated. However, the information will be used to raise awareness of prostate cancer and improve services to make the experience of being treated better.

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 almost 500 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



Safeguarding: unsuitable housing

A vulnerable young male adult living with a progressive, long-term health condition, and is currently in unsuitable housing contacted us for help.

We initially provided him with the number for the self-referral team at Adult safeguarding, but after listening to his situation, it became clear that he might benefit from having a social worker involved. He was initially reluctant due to previous negative experiences. We took the time to explain the benefits, and were able to help him understand that this would likely lead to better support.

During a follow-up, the gentleman confirmed that the referral had been made and he was in the process of getting a social worker for himself. He thanked us for our support and stated he felt truly listened to.



"I really appreciate you following up on my safeguarding dilemma. I've never had anyone from previous Stockport care-related enquiries make any concerned follow-ups."

Making an impact: Finding a Dentist

DWP contacted us about finding a dentist for someone they were supporting.

We received a call from one of the agents at the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as they were supporting a gentleman who was struggling with dental issues but didn't have a dentist. We rang 20 dentists in the Stockport Area and were able to find one dentist that was accepting NHS patients.

We passed this information directly on to the gentleman. On following up with him he had contacted the dentist and had an appointment booked for two week's time.



"Thank you for your help to find a dentist, I wouldn't have this appointment without your help"

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given many 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 10 enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Reviewed and fed back on 6 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 Stockport has provided a service for residents for 13 years. During that time, Maria and the team have steadfastly worked for the good of the people and always been valued in the borough. They've linked with Stockport Council, Stepping Hill and other organisations a direct the community to assistance and challenge organisations where needed and sought resolutions.

I became part of Healthwatch when I was chair of the Stockport Carers Forum I've been involved on the Lived Experience Panel, Enter and View team, Frailty Board (Frailty Transformation Team at Stepping Hill), and Palliative and End of Life Care Group meetings. I've enjoyed being part of Healthwatch with the friendly staff.

I'll be sad to see it close, entirely due to the Government's 10-year NHS plan. Having worked in the NHS for over 30 years, I don't agree with the plan as it will leave a great gap in public services."

Ruth



Our amazing volunteers

It has been a privilege to work with so many wonderful volunteers who give valuable time to support the work of Healthwatch Stockport. Without them we would not have been able to achieve all we have achieved, and we are humbled by their commitment and passion.

Finance

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	
Annual grant from Government	£181,896
Living Well Project	£30,000
Community Support	£8,404.04
Total income	£220,296.04

Statutory statements

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

Healthwatch Stockport used the Healthwatch Trademark when we undertook 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 consisted of 4 members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

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

Throughout 2025/26, the Board met formally 6 times and made decisions on matters such as finance, policy and staffing and took the decision to close Healthwatch Stockport in its current form. The Advisory Group met 7 times.

We ensured 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 used 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 2025/26, 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.

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 2025/26, 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
Brinnington Health Centre High Lane Medical Centre Marple Cottage Surgery Marple Medical Practice Cheadle Medical Practice Bramhall Health Centre Stockport Medical Group Heaton Moor Medical Group Alvanley Family Practice Heaton Norris Health Centre	To understand access to Primary Care GP Practices for people with additional needs.	Developed and shared a report which identified what is working well in practices and areas for improvement, which we would expect practices to take on board. The report also informed the HWS Primary Care Access Report.

Appendix 1: Healthwatch Stockport Reports – Status update January 2026

Report Name and Date	Themes	Status	Suggested oversight and monitoring	SRO and Named Contact
Continence Report July 2024 Updated Jan 2025	- Waiting Times - Response on the phone line and thereafter to voice messages - Staff levels and capacity	- Report Complete - Response from ICB and partners. - Action Plan in place – good progress being made - Presented to Carers Partnership 21/01/26 - Shared with Age Friendly Partnership 15/12/25	Carers Partnership /Age Friendly Partnership	- Sarah Dillion - Bethan Kelly
Home After Hospital Report July 2024	- Discharge planning - Experience of Discharge Lounge - Quality of discharge assessments - Information, communication and advice about discharge - Experience of support on returning home	- Report complete. - Action plan in place - No recent update provided	Safe & Timely Discharge	- Philippa Johnson - Cathy Lloyd
SHH Signage Report June 2024	- Signage and navigation - Guidance and assistance - Comfort and support - Safety and security - Communication aids - Areas covered: - Main reception and general corridors - Pathology entrance and associated corridors - Women's unit and maternity areas - Outpatients' areas (OPA,B and cardiology)	- Report Complete - Sent to Estates Awaiting feedback - Followed up with Angela Dawber and re-presented to the FT Estates (Dan Reason) March 2025 as they said they had not received it.	SNHSFT Estates / CVP	Karen James

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Report Name and Date	Themes	Status	Suggested oversight and monitoring	SRO and Named Contact
Primary Care Access for people with additional needs 2025–present	- Access to appointments - Understanding of additional needs by staff - Suitability of premises for mental and physical needs - Communication between staff and families/carers	- Feedback gathered - Analysis of data that already exists - Report in draft –Viaduct Care engaged and actioning the SMI Toolkit, with a view to introducing an accreditation scheme and expanding to include all people with additional support needs. - Have approached Kiera’s Kingdome/Disability Stockport to see if they will take ownership going forwards	Community Voice Partnership and Primary Care Board	- Dr. Viren Mehta - CVP
Adult NHS Hearing Report August 2025	- Generally positive feedback - Quality of service and aftercare - Patient choice - Waiting times variation - Referral inconsistencies - Communication inconsistencies and mixed messaging. - Commissioning process	- Report completed - Needs Action plan for recommendations - Shared with Age Friendly Partnership 15/12/25 - Agreed at Locality Board in January to be managed by the Age Friendly Partnership and is on the agenda for the next meeting on 31/03/2026	Age Friendly Partnership	- Sarah Dillion
CAMHS Report Greater Manchester September 2024	- Understanding the pathways - Communication - Managing childcare - Involvement in decision making - Provision of information - Finance and family stability - Referrals and wait times	- Report completed - Met with Key leaders before publication by Greater Manchester and PACT - Presented at Stockport MH and WB Partnership 29/01/25 - Response from GM ICB June 2025 - Being considered alongside new framework and planning, and a Stockport specific Equality Impact Assessment.	CYP Neurodevelopment pathway implementation group	- Ben Aspinall - Heidi Shaw

Appendix 1: Healthwatch Stockport Reports – Status update January 2026

Report Name and Date	Themes	Status	Suggested oversight and monitoring	SRO and Named Contact
Neighbourhood MH Experience Report Oct 2024–Nov 2025	• Social isolation and stigma • Gaps in support and care • Importance of VCFSE Services • What we need to 'Live Well' and primary care access • Support for carers	• Report completed • Presented at MHWB Partnership • Presented to MH Transformation Delivery Board • Needs action plan for recommendations • However, Viaduct Care engaged and actioning the SMI Toolkit, with a view to introducing an accreditation scheme.	• Mental Health & Wellbeing Partnership	• Sarah Dillion • Biju Anthony
SMI Mental Health in Primary Care Report June 2024	• Care coordination and communication • GDPR Challenges and Information Sharing • Access issues • Physical health needs • Digital challenges • Dental treatment challenges for individuals with SMI	• Report completed • Presented at Primary Care Board • Presented at Locality Board • Action plan in place – working group in place	• MH & Wellbeing Partnership and Primary Care Board	• Viren Mehta /Sarah Dillion
Annual Report 2024–25	• General overview of Activity, Work Programmes and Impact from Healthwatch Stockport over 12 months	• Report completed • Circulated to Healthwatch England, Department of Health, Locality Board. • Presented to Scrutiny (Dec 25) • Presented to Health and Wellbeing Board (Jan 26)	• Archive after presentation to HWB	• Sarah Dillion
Annual Report 2025–26	• FINAL Report	• First draft complete, with Advisory Group for review	• Circulate for info	• Sarah Dillion

Appendix 2

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

Inform. Involve. Influence

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