



Annual Report 2024–2025

Putting residents at the heart of Health & Social care in Tameside

Healthwatch Tameside

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"Welcome to the Healthwatch Tameside Annual Report. This report highlights the significant impact of our efforts to amplify the voices of Tameside residents within the health and care system, ensuring that their experiences and needs, drive continuous improvement in service quality and accessibility."

Alex Leach, Healthwatch Tameside Manager

A message from our Chair

I'm proud to reflect on a year of impactful achievements, growth, and continued dedication to amplifying our community's voices

- This year marked a significant milestone as we secured a new six-year contract with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC), providing funding stability to continue driving meaningful change for residents. As part of broader service improvements, the NHS Complaints Advocacy function was thoroughly transferred to VoiceAbility in April 2024.
- Listening to residents remained a priority, with our Enter & View programme focused on residential care homes. We developed and implemented a structured operational plan, conducting two visits and producing reports with actionable recommendations, many of which have already been put into practice.
- We published four key reports on essential health and social care topics, with two more set to release in early 2025/26. These reports have enhanced patient insight within the local health and social care system.
- Additionally, we led a collaborative project with Healthwatch Greater Manchester and neighbouring teams, examining access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Nearly 1,200 people contributed, with strong input from Tameside residents.
- Our team has grown with new staff and board members, while we bid farewell to Tracey McErlain-Burns, who stepped down as Chair. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Tracey for her exceptional leadership, passion, and dedication.



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"In the year ahead, we will focus on listening to local voices, challenging inequalities, and ensuring Health and Social care services benefit everyone. We are committed to deepening community engagement and using evidence-based insights to drive improvements in Tameside's health services."

Glyn Goodchild, Healthwatch Tameside Chair

About us

Who are Healthwatch Tameside?

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services, in Tameside.

We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share people's views and experiences with those with the power to make change happen.

We also share them with Healthwatch England, the national body, to help improve the quality of services across the country. There is a Healthwatch in every area of England.

People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available in Tameside and beyond.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In Summary – Healthwatch Tameside is here to:



- help people find out about local health and social care services
- listen to what people think of services
- help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care
- encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care

We want to hear from you

If you would like to tell us about your experience of health and social care, we'd love to hear from you.



www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk



0161 667 2526



info@healthwatchtameside.co.uk

About us

Healthwatch Tameside is your local health and social care champion.

Healthwatch Tameside is your local health and social care champion.

If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services, we want to hear about your experiences.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and improve standards of care.



Our vision

We envision a community where every voice is heard and valued, ensuring access to high-quality, compassionate, and responsive health and care for people of Oldham and Tameside.



Our mission

We will champion the voices of local people in the health and care system, ensuring that their experiences and needs drive continuous improvement in service quality and accessibility.

We are dedicated to empowering people, fostering inclusivity, promoting transparency, and advocating for the highest standards of care for everyone in our community.



Our values are:

Believe it's possible: We believe in the power of people and communities to create positive change and promote social justice. We value vision and ideas.

Strengthen others: We work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We value collaboration and sharing skills.

Be true: We are honest and constructive. We use our unique connections and diverse voices to make meaningful changes.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 3,411 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 6 staff (FTE 3.07) and our work is supported by 7 volunteers.

Reaching out:



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

2,763 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **finding an NHS dentist** and **local community groups offering health & wellbeing sessions**.

Championing your voice:



We published **4** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like the **experiences of ethnic minorities** accessing health and social care services and how services can improve the experience for **care home residents**.

Our most popular report was the **Cost of Living** report, which highlighted how financial restraints are leading to reduced access to essential healthcare services including **dental care** and **prescriptions**.

Statutory funding:



We are delighted to have secured a new 6-year contract with **Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**.

A year of making a difference

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

Spring

We collaborated with **VoiceAbility** to successfully transfer NHS Complaints Advocacy in Tameside, resulting in seamless continuity for residents.

We created our **2024/25** workplan based on local experiences, focusing on GP access, cost-of-living impacts, and inequalities in health and social care.

Summer

With **Healthwatch in GM** and neighbouring Healthwatch teams, we led strategic community engagement to capture vital insights into people's experiences with CAMHS published in the '**Pathways to CAMHS**' report.

Our '**Cost of Living**' report was published, and key findings were shared across multiple Tameside system boards including the Tameside System Quality Group to influence local health and care priorities.

Autumn

We published our report on '**Ethnic Minority Healthcare Experiences**' amplifying unheard voices and influencing leaders at Adult Social Care and other key local strategic forums.

We led the engagement phase of our '**Pharmacy First**' report, gathering insight from **229** people across sessions in pharmacies, community groups, and health settings.

Winter

We conducted an **Enter & View** visit to a residential care home, gathering insights from residents, carers, family, and staff. Six recommendations were made to improve residents' experiences and environment.

We co-designed **Accessible Information Standards** resources with people with lived experience, ensuring seldom-heard groups are central to each of our project phases.

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 Tameside this year:

Every experience matters



Personal stories help services better understand challenges.

We shared 56 local experiences related to medication at **Tameside's Integrated Medication Optimisation Group (IMOG)**. Delays in medication readiness has been identified and highlighted to borough pharmacy leaders for action.

Getting services to involve the public



Including local voices, improves health care for all.

We ensured Tameside voices shaped the **South-East Manchester Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC)** in Denton. Tameside experiences helped develop diagnostic services like MRI, CT, and echocardiograms, improving access to quicker, more effective care. Claire Woodford, NHS CDC Project Manager for South-East Manchester adds "Public involvement in the CDC ensured accessibility and a patient-friendly environment."

Improving care over time



Change takes time. Health and Social Care, is for all.

Based on feedback gathered during our outreach activities, we have focused research on the implementation of the **Accessible Information Standard** within GP practices. To ensure our survey resources are inclusive and effective, we engaged with seldom-heard groups, including the Tameside Deaf Association and a local sight loss group, to help shape the survey. We aim to collect experiences in Quarter 1 of 2025/26. Findings will influence system leaders and health and social care providers across the borough.

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.

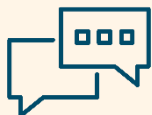
This year, we've worked with 9 Healthwatch teams across Greater Manchester to achieve the following:

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



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

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, the importance of Healthwatch work and explored new ways of working, including stronger patient representation and co-production at ICS level.

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

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 members of our community and their experiences of health and social care services.

People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback to health and social care leaders and decision makers to help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

Highlighting GP Access Challenges and Appointment Booking Issues

Last year, we gathered feedback from local residents regarding their experiences accessing GP services in Tameside.

At our outreach events including Tameside Hospital, our team frequently heard from community members about the significant challenges they faced in accessing GP appointments.

What did we do?

We launched a survey to understand challenges residents face in accessing GP appointments. Feedback from outreach events helped identify barriers to care, shaping our report with key findings and recommendations for improving GP services in Tameside.

Key things we heard:



55%

mentioned wanting easier and/or quicker access to GP appointments.

26%

of comments mentioned concerns around access to online services, with particular concern raised around digital exclusion

48%

of the people who gave their opinion about using phone services told us that they had a negative experience.

The work of this report highlights how difficulties in booking appointments, limited access to online tools, and lack of continuity in care can prevent residents from receiving timely and consistent healthcare.

What difference did this make?

The recommendations outlined in the report have been incorporated into the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership's (Tameside) Primary Care Improvement Work Programme, ensuring that patient concerns are addressed, and services are enhanced moving forward.

Listening to your experiences

The Broader Impact of Healthwatch Tameside

Our insight informed Tameside Council on key subjects including; action on poverty, healthcare inequality, and employment through community-led evidence and engagement

James Mallion, Director of Public Health at Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, highlights the role Healthwatch Tameside has played in providing system leaders with robust, community driven insight to inform strategic decision making throughout the year.



“The individual pieces of insight work produced by Healthwatch Tameside have been very useful to improve understanding among system-wide stakeholders and inform the implementation of specific pieces of work and service delivery within Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. Healthwatch Tameside leaders have successfully promoted these pieces of work across a range of partners to ensure the learning is noted by key organisations and to raise awareness of the findings and recommendations. This has included forums such as the Health & Wellbeing Board, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Steering Group, Strategic Partnership Committee, and Equalities groups within Tameside. Examples of specific impacts include the Cost of Living report, the conclusions from which were used to direct some of the work to tackle poverty in the local authority, including targeting of the Helping Hands campaign.

Also, the Inequalities in Healthcare Access report helped to inform public health resource invested in primary care, to tackle inequalities including some of the barriers highlighted in the report; and direct advice and feedback on core service delivery to GPs and Primary Care Networks.

Both reports also informed the targeting and delivery of subsequent new programmes including the WorkWell scheme which provides support for those who have recently fallen out of work due to a health issue – some of the groups who experienced challenges and barriers identified in the reports were targeted for this support. Another example of this is the current economic inactivity work which is also being targeted partly based on the findings around inequalities identified in these reports.”

James Mallion, Director of Public Health TMBC



Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Tameside. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Everyone should have the chance to share their story.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Championing the voices of Armed Forces Veterans
- Engaging ethnic minority communities to capture lived experience and drive strategic action on health inequalities across Tameside.
- Addressing deprivation through lived experience; we engaged residents in deprived areas, to shape more responsive service design.



Hearing from all communities

Improving understanding of Health and Social care within Ethnic Minority communities

We explored how seldom-heard community members experience essential services they rely on.

Commissioned and approved by the Tameside Inequalities Reference Group, we spent time with community members, to capture their experiences of accessing Health and Social care services in Tameside.

What difference did this make?

Our '**Ethnic Minority Healthcare Experiences**' report highlighted significant healthcare access challenges faced by ethnic minorities, including language barriers and cultural issues. It influenced the Tameside Inequalities Reference Group's recommendations to reduce healthcare inequalities, aiming to improve service delivery and ensure better, more inclusive healthcare for ethnic minority communities in Tameside.

Amplifying the voice of people living in deprivation

Exploring how people make choices about the health and social care opportunities they access.

We launched our '**Cost of Living**' report to understand how the rising cost of living impacts residents' physical and mental health, aiming to identify gaps in support and inform local health and care services

What difference did this make?

Findings indicated the cost-of-living crisis impacted the health and wellbeing of people negatively, including increased stress, poor diet, and delayed access to healthcare.

The report informed local health and care services, guiding resource allocation and support strategies. This piece of work was used by the local authority to direct some of the work to tackle poverty, including targeting of the Helping Hands campaign.

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 2,763 people have reached out to us for 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, in Tameside and beyond



Information and signposting

Empowering Families to Navigate Autism Support and Assessment Pathways

Healthwatch Tameside helped Nina* navigate services, explore choices, and confidently progress toward getting her daughter assessed.

Facing long delays and limited support, Nina* was unsure how to access an autism and ADHD assessment for her daughter.

We provided guidance on her Right to Choose and signposted her to GM Autism Consortium, GMICB, and private providers like ADHD 360. With this support, Nina* gained clarity, understood her options, and felt empowered to take the next steps.



“It’s been helpful to discuss the issue, and I feel that the conversation we’ve had has been like using a sound board.”

Support for Diabetes Management and Stroke Care Concerns.

Facing inadequate diabetes management, lack of stroke care advice, and dissatisfaction with her GP’s treatment, Inaya* sought advice on support.

Directed to us by Alzheimer’s Society, Inaya* sought help for her daughter’s stroke and diabetes concerns. After a GP visit, her daughter was prescribed metformin despite borderline diabetes. Inaya contacted us to establish additional avenues of support and information sources in Tameside.

As a result of connecting with the team, Inaya* was provided with resources from Diabetes UK, Stroke Association, and the Carers Centre. Guidance was given on filing a complaint and pursuing a social care assessment, while exploring GP practice changes.



“In just one phone call and a follow-up email, we swiftly connected Inaya* to vital local and national support, addressing a wide range of needs specific to her situation.”

*The names in these case studies have been altered to maintain anonymity

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 282 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs to improve in Tameside.

This year, our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Collected experiences and supported communities to share their views and experiences of health and social care providers.
- Carried out Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve



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.

"I've recently taken on the role of Deputy Chair, and I also get involved as an Enter & View rep and help with engagement. I love working with all sorts of people to make sure everyone's voice is heard.

I started volunteering because I wanted to give something back to my community. After over 20 years as a nurse, I saw just how vital good quality healthcare is for people in Tameside.

Listening is everything, creating a space where people feel comfortable sharing their stories really matters. And for me, it's all about doing that with empathy and without judgment."

Linda – Healthwatch Tameside Volunteer



"I value the diverse personalities and skills on the Healthwatch Tameside Board, each member brings something unique, with residents' voices always central to our work.

Volunteering here challenges me, helps me grow, and connects me with people from all backgrounds.

As both a Tameside resident and someone working in local services, I'm proud to use my experience to shape better care and contribute to making Tameside a healthier, more positive place to live for everyone."

Oliver – Healthwatch Tameside Volunteer



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 team, at Healthwatch Tameside.



www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk



0161 667 2526



info@healthwatchtameside.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Tameside Metropolitan Borough 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	(£151,985 less credit of £594 due to an overpayment at financial year end 23-24) £15,1391	Expenditure on pay	£100,845
Additional income	£3,050	Non-pay expenditure	£3,260
		Office and Management recovery	£30,000
Total income	£154,441	Total Expenditure	£134,105
		Surplus of £20,336 (Carried forward)	

It should be noted that salary expense this year was lower than budgeted owing to a later than expected gap in recruitment, but this will be offset next year and subsequent years of the contract.

Additional income is broken down into:

- £885 received from Healthwatch Trafford for work on the Pathways to CAMHS Project
- £165. received from Healthwatch England for attendee support at the Healthwatch National Conference
- £2,000 received from Healthwatch Bury for the Greater Manchester Network 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 Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Actively follow up on our 2024/2025 research and recommendations, showcasing the tangible impact of our work and driving significant improvements in health and social care services, for Tameside residents.
2. Consistently deliver real-time feedback to commissioners and providers, ensuring that the voices of Tameside residents are heard, and acted upon.
3. Champion the inclusion of seldom-heard groups, empowering them to share their experiences and ensure their needs are prioritised by health and social care providers.

You can read more about our future work in our **[Plan For the Year Ahead 2025/26](#)**

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Tameside, 131 Katherine Street, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 7AW
contract held by Action Together, 80 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DJ
Registered charity (No.1165512).

Healthwatch Tameside uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of **6** members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

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

Throughout 2024/25, the Board met **6** times and made decisions on matters such as **approval of the Enter & View policy** and **approval of the Healthwatch Tameside 25/26 work priorities**. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

During 2024/25, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and 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

We utilise insight gathered across the year, to shape our work priorities for the year ahead. Ensuring that the voices we hear, are at the heart of our work.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

All providers responded 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 the people who make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to Tameside GP Alliance, Tameside Primary Care Delivery and Improvement Group (PCDIG), Tameside Patient & Service User Experience Group (PSUEG), Tameside Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Sub Committee, IMOG, Tameside Provider Partnership (TMBC & NHS), Tameside ICS Public Engagement Partnership, Tameside System Quality Group, Tameside Adult Safeguarding Board, Primary Care Commissioning Committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in **Tameside Strategic Partnership Committee (Locality Board)**. For example, we presented our insights into the impact on the Cost-of-Living crisis in Tameside and shared intelligence on the experiences of those of ethnic minorities who use health care services.

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

Statutory statements

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Tameside is represented on the Tameside Health and Wellbeing Board by Anna Hynes, Tameside Director at Action Together.

During 2024/25, our representative has effectively carried out this role by:

Tameside Joint Health and Wellbeing Board

Tameside Director has attended all meetings and development sessions of the board and is leading the development of the Locality Live Well Accelerator program aligned to the Healthy Places subgroup. This programme is about developing community led, system enabled wellbeing in the locality.

Tameside Strategic Partnership Committee (Locality Board)

Tameside Director attended all meetings and development sessions, particular focus this year has been advocating for better commissioning decisions and practice regarding the VCFSE. An Acting Deputy for all age commissioning has now been appointed and is working with us to develop these approaches.

Healthwatch Tameside is represented on Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnerships by Heather Fairfield, Chair at Healthwatch Trafford and Tameside Strategic Partnership Committee by Anna Hynes, Tameside Director at Action Together.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Auden House Care Home, Audenshaw	To capture the experiences of care home residents	Developed and shared a report with 6 recommendations, the care provider followed up on these, and resident safety was improved. Report published here: <u>Auden House Care Home Report</u>
Daisy Nook Care Home, Ashton-Under-Lyne	To capture the experiences of care home residents	Developed and shared a report with 6 recommendations, including improvements to staff involvement at the care home and visibility of the complaints process. Report published here: <u>Daisy Nook House Care Home Report</u>

Appendix

Abbreviation list

ADHD	Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CDC	Community Diagnostic Centre
CT Scan	Computed Tomography Scan
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GM	Greater Manchester
GMICB	Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board
GP	General Practitioner
HW	Healthwatch
HWT	Healthwatch Tameside
ICS	Integrated Care Service
IMOG	Integrated Medication Optimisation Group
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NHS	National Health Service
TMBC	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
VCFSE	Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise

Healthwatch Tameside
131 Katherine Street,
Ashton-Under-Lyne,
United Kingdom
OL6 7AW



www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk



0161 667 2526



info@healthwatchtameside.co.uk



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