

Healthwatch Tameside

Annual Report 2023-2024



healthwatch
Tameside

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"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Chair

Healthwatch Tameside remains committed to listening to the local community and does so in a variety of ways, including face-to-face engagement events, telephone calls and surveys. All contacts with the Healthwatch Tameside team are recorded and the details of what you tell us are shared (anonymously) with the leaders of our health and social care services to inform their decision making.

Over the course of the past 12 months, Healthwatch Tameside has worked together with the wider Healthwatch in Greater Manchester network to bring the details of your positive comments and concerns together to analyse themes and trends. We have shared this information with the NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care System and told them that our community is unhappy with the changes to services for people with Autism and ADHD. We have also made local leaders aware of your concerns about access to GP appointments and your difficulties in accessing an NHS dentist. It is important that we also feedback on positive experience and whilst you have told us that you have concern about access to a GP, you have also very often praised the individual GPs and other primary care staff after your contacts with them.

This has been a difficult year for the Healthwatch Tameside team due to uncertainty around the service contract, which was only resolved at the end of March 2024. We are delighted to have been awarded a 6-year contract by the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, and with the support of the Advisory Board and Action Together we have promptly started to develop our plans for the next 3 years.

It has also been a very sad year following the illness of our Deputy Chair, Miss Jyoti Rao, and her passing in February 2024.

I would like to ask each person that reads this report to tell someone else about the work of Healthwatch. If you have completed one of our surveys or spoken to a member of our team, please tell others about us in your community.

Tracey McErlain-Burns

Chair, Healthwatch Tameside



About us

Healthwatch Tameside is your local health and social care champion.

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



Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



Year in review

Reaching out:

1,206 people

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

234 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.



Making a difference to care:

We published

3 reports

about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services.

This included our

Mental Health Survey Report

which followed up on our 2017 Mental Health Report by assessing the impact of new services.



Health and social care that works for you:

We were lucky to have

11

outstanding volunteers who gave up **90 hours** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.
In 2023 – 24 we received

£135,806

which is the same as the previous year.





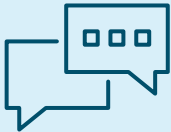



We currently employ

3.2 FTE

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We published our Health and Care experiences report with common themes highlighted around waiting times for appointments, communication and care provided.</p>	 <p>Following the completion of the Healthwatch England Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), we published our action plan.</p>
Summer	 <p>In partnership with Action Together, we launched our Cost of Living project in order to highlight how local people's changing financial situations are impacting the way they use health and care services.</p>	 <p>We strengthened our Advisory Board by successfully recruiting 2 additional board members.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We published our report on Mental Health services in Tameside, which gathered feedback from 198 people who have used local services. We made recommendations on areas related to access to care and communication.</p>	 <p>We approved our Enter and View policy and conducted training with our representatives.</p>
Winter	 <p>We launched our project to understand the experiences of residents accessing GP services in Tameside.</p>	 <p>We supported the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester Pathway to CAMHS project, gathering the experiences of parents and carers who have supported children and young people to access (or trying to access) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in the city region.</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Greater Manchester influence decisions made about services at Greater Manchester Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester to achieve:



Gathered opinions from across our local communities and used our knowledge to contribute towards the development of the Greater Manchester Dementia United Quality Standards, the Greater Manchester ICS People and Communities Engagement Strategy and the Shanley Report.

Undertook a Greater Manchester Children and Young Peoples (CYP) Mental Health Project, with a focus on on pathways to mental health support. This project gathered peoples lived experiences of existing service provision across Greater Manchester. Recommendations and findings will be fed back to GM and local commissioners and providers to help shape future service delivery.



The appointment of 3 key roles to the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester partnership. These include an Independent Chair of the Network, Chief Coordinating Officer and Administration and Data Officer. These roles will drive forward the leadership, coordination and delivery of the All Age Strategy 2022-2025 alongside partnership working across the Greater Manchester Healthwatch Network.

Worked in collaboration with Greater Manchester Patient Services to co-produce ongoing reports throughout the year which identify challenges and share the lived experiences of the people of Greater Manchester. We have and will continue to ensure their voices are heard throughout the Greater Manchester ICS through their Quality and Performance Committee.





Hearing from all communities

Once again, over the last 12 months we have worked hard to try to make sure we hear from individuals and communities in our local area. We feel that it is important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to give them the opportunity to give feedback and have their voices heard.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Having a stand at community events which include colleges, places of worship and libraries, We have been present at the annual Armed Forces Day, Tameside Men's Mental Health Conference, World Mental Health day and events at Tameside College to name a few.
- We have visited community groups to speak to service users and their carer's. Some of these groups include the BAME Memory Café, Service Users Group at Willow Wood Hospice, Places of Welcome, and Fit over Fifty.
- We have worked with partner organisations to provide talk, listen and share events with a range of groups and services. For example, we have held sessions with Tameside Carers Centre, My Recovery, Tameside Wellness Centre and a joint event held by Healthy Minds and Ashton Central Mosque.
- We continue to have a presence twice a month in the main entrance of Tameside General Hospital.
- We are aware of a number of residents who are unable to give feedback in any other way than speaking to us over the phone. We have a list of people fall into this category and give them a call each time we release a new survey. Residents can contact us to ask to be added to this list.



Advice and information

It can be confusing knowing where to turn when you need help with a health and social care service. Healthwatch Tameside provide free information and confidential support to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, getting advice on making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped over 230 people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis
- Being more accessible in the community, at libraries and public places
- Supporting people through the NHS complaints service

Dental practice closed mid-way through treatment

Many people contact us regularly for help to find an NHS dentist, including how to access emergency treatment.

Tony* contacted us as he was in the middle of treatment when he found out that his dental practice had closed permanently and there was no one answering the telephone. He had paid for the full treatment but was now left with a temporary filling and in pain. Not knowing who to contact, Tony contacted the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman who then signposted him to Healthwatch Tameside. He explained that his English was not very good and that he finds communicating challenging, and had to use online translation tools to speak to us.

With his consent, we passed on his information to the GM Integrated Care Board, to see if they could help with getting Tony an urgent dentist. The GM Integrated Care Board then contacted Tony and provided him with a new dental practice to continue his treatment.

*Name changed

“My English is not very good, thank you for explaining everything to me clearly. I feel a sense of relief to have your support” – Tony

Support at complainant’s Local Resolution Meetings

As a result of an inquest into Donna’s* mother’s death, there were some outstanding questions that the coroner advised to be asked under the NHS Complaints process.

Donna was signposted by the hospital to Healthwatch Tameside for support at a pending local resolution meeting. Local resolution meetings are offered as an opportunity for NHS organisations to answer questions or have further discussions face to face. They can be overwhelming, and it can be difficult to know where to start. We provided Donna with a short guide to local resolution meetings on our website and worked with her over the next few weeks to help her prepare questions and a ‘prompt sheet’.

We supported Donna at the local resolution meeting. After the meeting she felt that some of the issues had not been fully addressed – we went through these concerns and discussed possible next steps in line with the NHS complaints process. With the help of Healthwatch Tameside, a second response was sent to the hospital.

After a few weeks, Donna received a final response from the hospital, and she had mixed feelings about it. Donna decided not to continue to the next stage of the complaint’s process, but wanted to share her story with the CQC to raise awareness. We provided the CQC’s details to her and she knows we are here again if she needs us.

*Name changed

“Thank you for your support, we couldn’t have reached this point without your help” – Donna

NHS Complaints Advocacy

Making a complaint about NHS or social care services can be complex. Healthwatch Tameside empower and support people to make an NHS complaint by providing guidance throughout the process. Support is provided by telephone, online and face to face in relation to any NHS services.

This year in Healthwatch Tameside:

- Our complaints service received **93 new cases**, a **2% increase** from last year.
- We have helped people write complaint letters, supported them at local resolution meetings, helped people access medical records, and provided our Self Help Information Packs – empowering people to follow the complaints process themselves, but with clear guidance and expectations.

Feedback from complaints clients



"Thank you for the phone call and support last week. It was appreciated, especially given the level of frustration I am feeling about how my complaints are progressing."

"Thank you for being there today. It helped to not feel alone in that conversation. Hopefully, the services will commit to improving things for other people now. I don't think I'd have reached this point without Healthwatch getting involved."



"You kindly showed me compassion and understanding, and it was good to be able to speak with someone independent and without bias. I feel I can't trust anyone and it's comforting to know that Healthwatch are there."

"You have been such an amazing source of support for me, you gave me the push and confidence I needed every step of the way. If Healthwatch hadn't been there I don't know what I would have done and will be singing Healthwatch praises to everyone"





Volunteering

Our team of amazing volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to them we are able to reach more community members to gather more feedback. This contribution gives further opportunity for residents to contribute their experiences and help influence service provision in Tameside.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote Healthwatch Tameside services. They have been a presence in Tameside General Hospital, local Libraries, and at events.
- Collected experiences and supported residents to share their views, which they have fed back to the team.
- Shared information with communities about health and care and provided signposting information.
- Provided information to Healthwatch Tameside about local changes to services which impact the community.



'I was a nurse for over 20 years, and I wanted members of the public to have a real voice about their healthcare – which wasn't always optimal. We do this by undertaking surveys into health and social care and listening to real lived experiences. This is then fed back to government (national and local), hospital trusts and other service providers, and real change is made.

I enjoy talking with people at our outreach events, and I feel that I have got a lot out of this.

I have also had the privilege of working with members of the wider Healthwatch team, and this makes me feel that together we are making changes and making health and social services better for all of us.



Linda Kent
Volunteer

Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk

 0161 667 2526

 info@healthwatchtameside.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£135,806	Direct Delivery	£11,338
Additional income	£7,605	Management and Overhead	£30,000
		Salaries	£84,735
Total income	£143,411	Total expenditure	£126,073

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to all areas of our local community, especially people we don't often hear from, 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. Conducting research projects on areas that matter the most to Tameside residents
2. Launching our enter and view programme
3. Planning to reach areas of the community we don't currently hear from.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Tameside, 131 Katherine Street, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7AW. Healthwatch Tameside is a part of Action Together CIO (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 7 voting members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. These meetings are held in public which supports the transparency of our work. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 3 times and made decisions on matters such as agreeing policies and procedure on enter and view. The Board also held several formal briefing sessions in the latter half of the year whilst the contract review was being undertaken.

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 2023/24, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form via our website and 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 and a hard copy is available at our office.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers


We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment sub-group to share our community insight and to identify health and wellbeing groups in Tameside. Examples of our report can be found [here](#).

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the Tameside NHS Integrated Care System. For example, we share our intelligence with committees such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Tameside Strategic Board and the Tameside Quality Board. We work with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester to ensure insight and experience are captured across the city region. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch Tameside
131 Katherine Street
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OL6 7AW

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 0161 667 2526

 info@healthwatchtameside.co.uk

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