

# healthwatch

Rochdale

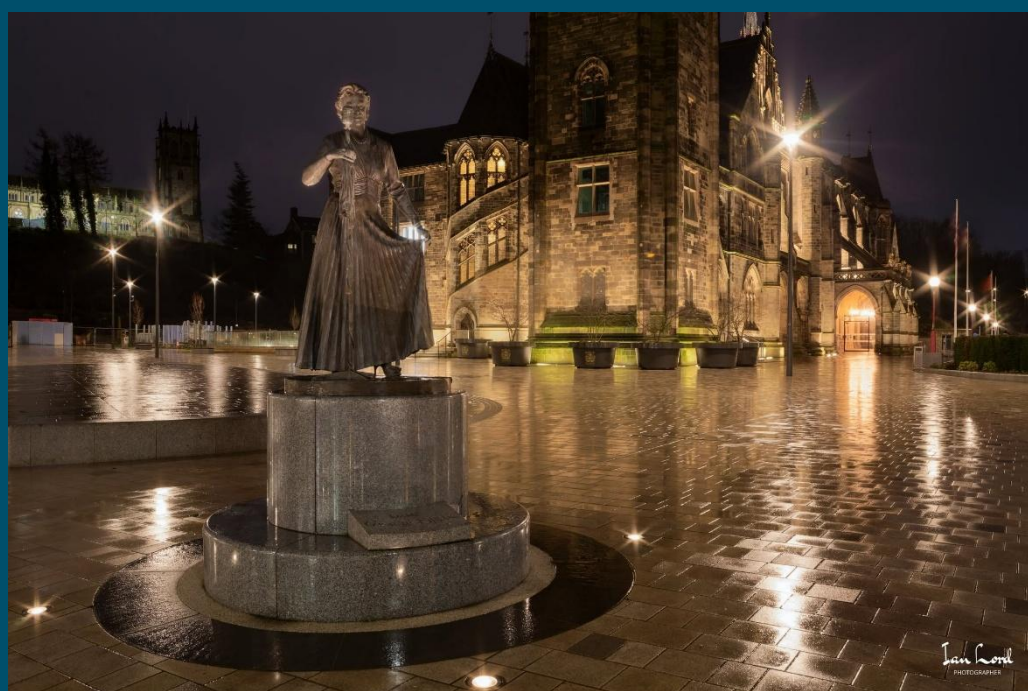
Annual Report 2025–2026

**A year of listening.**

**A legacy of change.**

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Our Gracie, Photo Credit: Ian Lord

# A message from our chair

**As we reflect on the achievements of 2025/26, I am immensely proud of the impact that Healthwatch Rochdale has continued to make on behalf of local residents.**

Throughout the year, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that the voices of people using health and social care services are heard, valued and acted upon by those responsible for planning and delivering care.

The feedback, experiences and concerns shared by Rochdale residents have directly informed our work programme and have enabled us to influence improvements across a range of local services.

Through our engagement activities, Enter and View visits, thematic surveys, focus groups and information and signposting service, we have continued to provide an independent and trusted voice for our communities. The evidence gathered through this work has not only highlighted areas requiring improvement but has also recognised examples of good practice that can be shared and replicated across the system.

As we move through what is expected to be the final year of Healthwatch nationally, I am particularly proud of the professionalism, resilience and dedication shown by our staff team. Despite ongoing uncertainty surrounding the future arrangements for public voice and engagement, the team has remained focused on delivering high-quality work and ensuring that the experiences of Rochdale residents continue to influence decision-making at every level



**Chair**  
Healthwatch Rochdale  
Margaret Parker



*“Our volunteers continue to be at the heart of everything we do. Their passion, commitment and generosity of time have enabled us to reach more communities, gather more experiences and undertake a wider range of activities than would otherwise be possible.”*

# A message from our chair, cont...

The staff's commitment to maintaining strong relationships with residents, providers, commissioners and partners has ensured that Healthwatch Rochdale remains a respected and influential organisation.

Our volunteers continue to be at the heart of everything we do. Their passion, commitment and generosity of time have enabled us to reach more communities, gather more experiences and undertake a wider range of activities than would otherwise be possible. Whether supporting engagement events, participating in Enter and View visits, representing Healthwatch at meetings or helping us connect with seldom-heard communities, their contribution has been invaluable. On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to every volunteer for the difference they make to the lives of local people and to the success of Healthwatch Rochdale.

This year has also seen significant developments across the Greater Manchester Healthwatch Network. As health and care systems continue to change and evolve, the role of Healthwatch within Greater Manchester it has become increasingly important to ensure that the voices of residents are represented within strategic decision-making structures. Therefore, a key part of Rochdale HW partnership work has been our collaboration with the Greater Manchester Network to support the collation, analysis and presenting intelligence from communities across all ten localities in order to provide a powerful collective voice for residents across the city region. Our team has consistently championed the importance of community insight and has helped ensure that local experiences are translated into meaningful intelligence that informs policy, service design and improvement initiatives across Greater Manchester.

As Chair, I would also like to thank my fellow Board Directors for their continued support, guidance and commitment throughout the year. Their strategic oversight and dedication have been instrumental in ensuring that the organisation remains focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for residents.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has engaged with us during the year. Every story shared, every survey completed and every conversation held has helped us build a clearer picture of people's experiences of health and social care services. Your voices remain the foundation of our work and the driving force behind the improvements we seek to achieve.

As we approach a significant period of change for Healthwatch nationally, we remain committed to ensuring that the legacy of Healthwatch Rochdale is one of strong community advocacy, meaningful influence and lasting impact. We will continue to champion the views of local people and work tirelessly to ensure that their experiences shape the future of health and social care services in Rochdale and beyond.

**Margaret Parker, Chair , Healthwatch Rochdale**

## About us

**Healthwatch Rochdale 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

Improved Health and Social Care experiences for everyone in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.



### Our mission

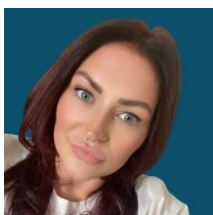
We are the independent voice of Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale residents. We listen, challenge, and shape local health and social care services.



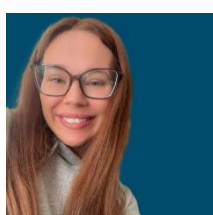
### Our values are:

- **CREDIBLE** We hold ourselves to the highest standards, we are open and honest in everything we do.
- **CO-OPERATIVE** We maintain a positive, forward-looking focus and work with others to get things done.
- **INCLUSIVE** We start with local people first; we work for everyone.
- **RESPONSIVE** We take what we know and translate it into actions.
- **ACCOUNTABLE** We take responsibility for our actions and stand by decisions.

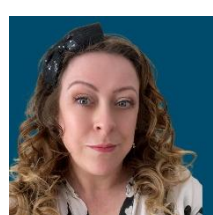
## Staff



Kate Jones  
CEO



Kirsty Mallinson  
Operations Lead



Naomi Burke  
Engagement &  
Volunteer Manager



Moira Auchterlonie  
Project Officer

# Our year in numbers

In 2025/2026 we supported more than **500** people to have their say and get information about their care. We employed **4** staff and, our work was supported by **12** volunteers.



## Reaching out:

### **453 people**

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

### **53 people**

-came to us specifically for information, advice and signposting about local health and social care services.

### **2230 people**

-were engaged with in 2025–2026 via meetings, events, stalls.

We additionally had **4287 website hits**.



## Championing your voice:

### **Making a difference to care:**

We published **14 reports** about the improvements people would like to see in areas like GP practices, Care Homes and CAMHS Services

Our most popular reports on our website was

**GP Enter and View Reports**: which highlighted recommendations to make improvements to the service working alongside the local Quality Team.



## Statutory funding:

We're funded by **Rochdale Borough Council**. In financial year 2025/26 we received **£150,000**.

# A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the Rochdale community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care locally.

Here are a few highlights.

## Spring

Our work with GP's Patient Participation Groups in the borough resulted in all patients having access to their general practice patient participation group.



We brought around change for d/Deaf residents of the borough when the Northern Care Alliance responded to our work confirming "My Communication Passports" will be imbedded into all care plans at the trust.



## Summer

In response to the rise in measles cases across England, we gathered feedback from, and worked with residents and professionals of the borough, resulting in the highest uptake of the vaccine.



Our insight on NHS digital services highlighted areas for NHS digital improvements.



## Autumn

We facilitated over 53 individuals to receive their Mini Lung Check from Rochdale North Primary Care as part of our Open Day Health Event.



We escalated concerns raised by residents about podiatry services across the borough.



## Winter

After reviewing the Primary Eye Care patient letter, we received confirmation during winter that it had been updated to reflect our recommendations.



We worked in partnership with the Carers Collaborative Network to gather further feedback and insight.



# Working together for change across Greater Manchester

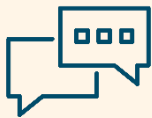
We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Greater Manchester are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services across Greater Manchester.

This year, we've worked with the other 9 Healthwatch's within Greater Manchester to achieve the following:



## A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

At the start of this collaboration, in 2022, we set out a 3 year All Age Strategy. Over the lifetime of the strategy, we have met and exceeded all objectives set and agreed. This achievement reflects not just activity, but meaningful progress in how public voice is understood, valued, and used across Greater Manchester. Importantly, this progress has been achieved while maintaining the independence of local Healthwatch and strengthening our collective voice at a Greater Manchester level.



## A big conversation:

We listened to thousands of people across Greater Manchester on a wide variety of topics across health and social care. These insights were shared at both local and ICS level to inform strategy, consultations and influence service design.

Our promise to champion the experiences of people and communities throughout Greater Manchester is as strong as ever.



## Building strong relationships to achieve more:

The All-Age Strategy has created a clear and practical legacy. We have established a credible, trusted and independent public voice model that complements local statutory delivery while enabling collective influence across the system.

The landscape around us may be changing, but we're still looking ahead and are committed to evolving, strengthening, and championing independent public voice across Greater Manchester.

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 have reached different communities within Rochdale by:

- Attending and contributing to a broad range of local events and engagement activities, including Army of Kindness Soup Kitchen, Carers Rights Day, Creative wellbeing groups and health and wellbeing events
- Facilitating feedback events in local community venues with interpreters
- Hosting regular drop-in sessions within Rochdale Borough libraries and Number One Riverside, Rochdale
- Engaging directly with community groups and seldom heard populations
- Delivering targeted engagement through focus groups, one-to-one interviews, and surveys



# Supporting Patient Participation Groups Across Rochdale

**Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) are a legal requirement for every GP practice in England. When they work well, they improve access to services, build trust with communities, and make sure the patient voice shapes how care is delivered.**

In 2025 Healthwatch Rochdale published their updated findings on Patient Participation Groups (PPG) in Heywood, Middleton, Rochdale and the Pennines.

The first deep dive into PPG's was completed in September 2022 when work was carried out after Healthwatch Rochdale received feedback from Rochdale borough residents that their GP practices did not have an active PPG.

## Why This Work Matters

Recent research published in the British Journal of General Practice (2025) found that one in eight GP practices had no PPG at all, despite the legal requirement, and that practices in the most deprived areas were the least likely to have one. This is the gap our work is designed to help address.

PPGs that are active, evidence-led, and working to be representative of their communities can make a real difference. They help practices identify problems early, build trust, and reach people who would not otherwise have a voice in how their healthcare is delivered.

## Achievements

Healthwatch Rochdale (HWR) has consistently worked with General Practices across the Rochdale Borough to establish effective PPGs. Through dedicated support and guidance, we have achieved remarkable progress:

- 2022: Only 22% of GP practices had active PPGs
- 2024: This figure increased to 43% of practices
- 2025: 100% compliance across the Rochdale Borough

## Impact

Through continuous support, direction, and dedication, Healthwatch Rochdale has successfully facilitated 100% PPG compliance across the Rochdale Borough. This achievement represents a significant step forward in ensuring patient voices are heard in primary care delivery and demonstrates the effectiveness of our collaborative approach to community health engagement. This work further demonstrates how sustained partnership working can strengthen patient involvement and ensure every GP practice benefits from an active patient voice.



*“PPGs give patients the opportunity to meet with staff to discuss practice issues and use patient experience to improve service.*

*With the changes that are currently taking place within Primary Care we recognise that PPGs are one of the best ways to get people involved and have a say when decisions are being made that affect their healthcare. We look forward to progressing this work further next financial year”.*

Kate Jones, CEO, Healthwatch Rochdale

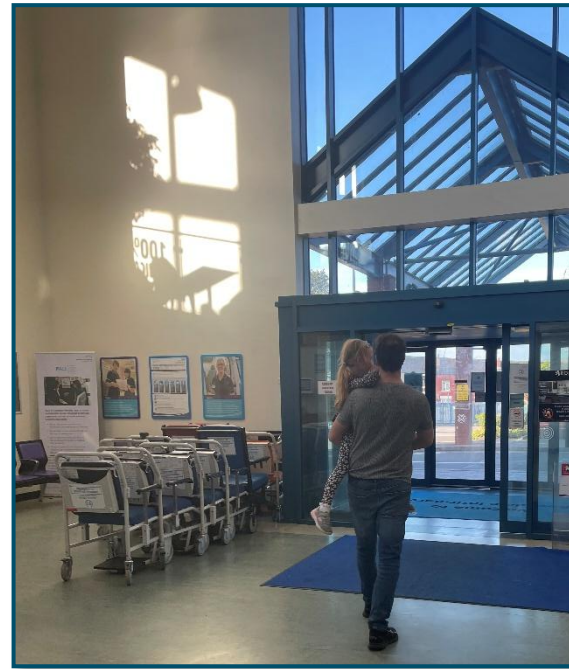
**You can read the full reports and further information on PPGs on our website <https://healthwatchrochdale.org.uk>**

# Barriers to Care: Hospital Letters

**We asked Rochdale residents how well hospital appointment letters worked for them following a number of queries around this topic.**

These letters are often the main way patients find out about their appointments, so it is important they are clear and contain the right information.

We held focus groups, ran a survey (75 responses) and spoke to residents direct.



We found some of the greatest barriers were communication failures, missing information from letters, language and cultural needs not addressed, cancellation and rebooking not addressed and admin errors.

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*"The current system assumes we are all digitally literate English speakers with reliable transport but that's not who we are."*

Voice of a Rochdale Resident

The findings highlighted that many hospital appointment letters are creating barriers to care. They do not give patients the information they need. Missing travel information, parking and appointment details, along with communication and accessibility barriers, are causing confusion, missed appointments and unequal access to healthcare for Rochdale residents.

Better communication and more accessible information would help people attend appointments and reduce inequalities.

**On our website you can find a wide range of our reports alongside health and social care advice, information and signposting**  
<https://healthwatchrochdale.org.uk>

# Barriers to Care: The Digital Divide

Following on from our Report and research around Barrier to care and hospital communications, we wanted to understand the barriers Rochdale residents face when accessing NHS services using smartphones, tablets and computers, as more healthcare services continue to move online.

This work supports one of the three key shifts in the NHS Ten-Year Plan (July 2025): moving from analogue services, such as phone calls and letters, to digital access.

We carried out a survey (**100 responses**), held **four** focus groups and spoke directly with Rochdale residents to gather both quantitative data and lived experiences.

We found some of the greatest barriers were technical problems with the NHS App, difficulties booking appointments online, problems accessing medical records and prescriptions, login and password issues, confusing NHS websites, and digital exclusion caused by poor internet access or a lack of suitable devices.

The findings highlight where digital healthcare is not meeting residents' needs and provide evidence to work with NHS partners to make digital services more accessible, inclusive and easier for everyone to use.

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*"I care for my mum with dementia. If she has an appointment (and there are many) the text goes to her phone, she just deletes it. I have asked numerous times for my number to be main one. They always say they cannot do this due to data protection. Makes no sense as it is costing the NHS in wasted appointment as she deletes them and wasting our time always chasing things."*

Voice of a unpaid carer, Rochdale



# Hearing from all communities

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

- Holding Focus Groups in partnership with voluntary, charity and community groups.
- Working with members of Rochdale d/Deaf community with BSL interpreters.
- Taking part in "Talk English" Event at Rochdale Town Hall for Rochdale residents with English as an additional language
- Raising awareness of the importance of Breast Feeding across the Rochdale Borough as part of National Breast-Feeding Day



# Hearing from all communities

Throughout our work, we gather critical information about health inequalities and the barriers or changes that people face, by speaking to those whose experiences and voices aren't often heard within the Rochdale Borough.

## Talk English Event, Rochdale Town Hall

This event brought together more than 50 organisations from across the health, social care, voluntary and community sectors providing residents with a welcoming opportunity to access information, advice and support in one place. The event was specifically designed to help people know how to improve their health and wellbeing while ensuring information was accessible to those who may face language barriers or are unfamiliar with local services.



## Raising Awareness of Local Services

Working alongside organisations across the borough helps Healthwatch Rochdale raise awareness of local services while ensuring residents know where to access support. Through community events and joint information stalls, we have listened to people's experiences, provided independent information and signposting, and gathered valuable feedback directly from the community.

The insight collected helps us identify common themes, celebrate good practice, and highlight areas where improvements are needed, ensuring residents' voices continue to influence positive change across Rochdale.



## Barriers To Care

Over the past year, Healthwatch Rochdale has worked with voluntary and community groups to understand barriers to health and social care locally.

Through community events, focus groups and one-to-one conversations, we have gathered residents' experiences while providing information, advice and signposting. Promoting healthy lifestyles and early intervention has helped residents access the right support while the feedback has been shared to stakeholders -ensuring their voices contribute to improving local services.



Special thanks to Caring and Sharing, HMR Circle and Rochdale Carers Hub for facilitating focus groups for us.

# Collaboration – Making a difference in our communities.

Through strong partnerships we have gathered Rochdale residents' voices about barriers to care and health inequalities.

## Rochdale Carers Hub

During Carers Week 2025, Healthwatch Rochdale worked with Rochdale Carers Hub to listen to the experiences of unpaid carers visiting Rochdale Infirmary whilst also offering information, advice and guidance.

We have also attended their Coproduction meetings and male carers breakfast sessions.

The feedback gathered has helped influence improvements to local health and care services, while ensuring carers feel heard, valued and better supported.



## Breastfeeding in Public Day 2025

Healthwatch Rochdale attended the World Breastfeeding in Public Day at Rochdale Town Hall organised in partnership with Rochdale Public Health team and local health and community organisations.

The event provided an opportunity to promote local support services for new parents, listen to families' experiences, share information about the Rochdale Breastfeeding Friendly scheme and gather feedback to help improve maternity and early years services across the borough.



## Rochdale Borough Libraries

By working in partnership with Rochdale Borough Libraries, Healthwatch Rochdale has reached more residents in trusted community spaces, providing information, advice and signposting while gathering valuable feedback on local health and care services. This partnership has ensured that the voices of people from across the borough are heard and used to help shape future improvements.

The libraries are a hub of community activity, and we would like to thank the Rochdale Libraries teams for their continued support and warm welcome throughout the year.



# Barriers to care – Listening to d/Deaf Rochdale residents voices.

## Phase 1 Report

**During 2025, Healthwatch Rochdale heard repeatedly from d/Deaf residents who described significant barriers when accessing local healthcare. As similar experiences continued to be shared through our feedback channels, we launched a dedicated project to better understand the issues and identify opportunities for improvement.**

Common themes and trends emerged from the feedback, with a key overarching issue being significant barriers to accessing healthcare—primarily due to the lack of availability of deaf interpreters for GP appointments, NHS dental services, and Urgent Care.

Under the Equality Act 2010, people who are d/Deaf or have hearing loss have the right to equal access to services.

### What did we find

**The Phase 1 report identified the significant barriers d/Deaf residents in Rochdale face when trying to access healthcare.**

- Lack of BSL interpreters across GP practices, hospitals and urgent care
- Cancelled or delayed appointments
- Communication relying on telephone calls and letters
- Poor awareness of SignLive
- Reception staff needing additional deaf awareness training
- Problems booking interpreters

**These issues make it even harder for d/Deaf patients to access the care they need.**

Our work showed how a complicated bureaucratic process and poor communication across services can leave communities without access to basic healthcare.

### What difference did this make?

Our findings were shared with NHS partners across Rochdale and Greater Manchester, helping to raise awareness of the barriers faced by d/Deaf residents and informing recommendations to improve accessibility, staff training and communication systems.

# Barriers to care – Listening to d/Deaf Rochdale residents voices

## d/Deaf Report – Phase 2

**Following publication of our Phase 1 report, we returned to the d/Deaf community to understand whether services had improved and whether previous recommendations had been implemented. Focus groups were held, we were joined by two qualified British Sign Language interpreters, d/Deaf residents, carers, friends and family members from across the Rochdale borough.**

Participants expressed frustration that little progress had been made since the last meetings– which shaped our Phase 1 report.

The biggest concern raised was the continued difficulty in accessing dental care—particularly the unwillingness of some local dental practices to book qualified BSL interpreters, despite repeated requests.

The group stressed that meaningful change is needed and called for greater accountability from decision-makers.

### Key priorities identified:

- Reliable access to qualified BSL interpreters
- Consistent use of reasonable adjustments
- Better staff understanding of deaf awareness
- Improved communication methods beyond telephone calls
- Equal access to NHS dental services

Although further work is still needed, these reports have created a lasting evidence base that continues to influence how healthcare providers improve accessibility for d/Deaf people across Rochdale and Greater Manchester.

The findings of both reports provide evidence to influence service improvements, strengthen accountability and promote better communication and accessibility across health and care services in Rochdale and Greater Manchester.

### What difference did this make?

We gave d/Deaf residents a platform to share their lived experiences, ensuring their voices were heard by health and care providers and decision-makers via the recommendations made within the reports.

Changes were implemented locally around the use of language line, booking of dental appointments, toolkits, system change and training within secondary care settings and finally the launch of the Northern Care Alliance Deaf Service User Improvement Strategy.

# Information and signposting

When you're struggling to find an NHS dentist, looking for help about how to make a complaint, or need advice about a good care home for a loved one – we're your first port of call.

This year **506** people have reached out to us directly for advice, support or help finding services. These conversations also help us to understand where, and how, your care can be made better.

## 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



# Finding the right support when it matters most

Helping families find the right care after hospital discharge

**Following her mother's discharge from hospital, a worried daughter contacted Healthwatch Rochdale because she was anxious about what support would be available to her Mother for the future.**

The person was supporting her mother at her Rochdale home but was due to return to her own home and work both of which were outside the borough. She was extremely worried about her mum's care whilst she was away. She was looking for possible support from Rochdale Adult Social Care and their contact details.

Although she had already spoken with Adult Social Care, Healthwatch Rochdale identified additional local services that could provide ongoing support, advice and practical help for both her and her mother. We followed up with a personalised email containing all the relevant contacts and information, ensuring the enquirer had everything needed to access ongoing support once she returned home.

**This case highlights how Healthwatch Rochdale's independent information and signposting service can improve access and provide reassurance during difficult times and help residents connect with the right support quickly and make informed decisions about care.**



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***“Thank you so much for the advice given. I can go back home feeling much more supported and reassured!”***

Rochdale Resident



# Successful Open Day

Healthwatch Rochdale Open Day and Health Information Event.

**Healthwatch Rochdale hosted an Open Day health information event along with 20 stallholders from local health and social care organisations at Number One Riverside, Rochdale Town centre.**

In September 2025, Healthwatch Rochdale welcomed residents, community organisations, health and social care professionals, and local partners to our Open Day at Number One Riverside. The event provided an opportunity to showcase the work of Healthwatch Rochdale, strengthen local partnerships, and encourage more people to become involved in shaping local health and social care services.

Throughout the day, visitors met with a wide range of organisations offering information, advice, and support on health, wellbeing, and community services. The event created a welcoming environment where residents could learn about local services, ask questions, discover volunteering opportunities, and share their experiences of using health and social care. By bringing organisations together under one roof, attendees were able to access a variety of support and make new connections within their community.

The Open Day also reinforced the importance of partnership working across Rochdale. Working alongside Rochdale Health Alliance who were offering flu vaccinations on the day and our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) partners demonstrated how collaboration can improve awareness of available services and make it easier for residents to access the help they need.

The event helped strengthen relationships between organisations while highlighting the shared commitment to improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities across the borough.



# Vital Volunteers

Our fantastic volunteers have given **over 500 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:**

- Visited communities to promote Healthwatch Rochdale and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve
- Shared our Social Media posts
- Accompanied us to events and helped manage stalls
- Took part in local meetings as ambassadors for Healthwatch



# Volunteers: 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.

## Valuing Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. Their passion, dedication and commitment enable Healthwatch Rochdale to reach more people, gather vital feedback, and ensure local voices are heard to help improve health and social care services across the borough.

Throughout the year, we recognise and celebrate the invaluable contribution our volunteers make by organising social events, coffee catch-ups and appreciation meals through local social value partnerships with venues such as The Baum and The Royal Toby.

These opportunities allow us to thank our volunteers, strengthen relationships, support their wellbeing, and celebrate the difference they make within our communities.

We are incredibly grateful for the time, skills and enthusiasm our volunteers give so generously. Their ongoing support is fundamental to the success of Healthwatch Rochdale, and the positive impact they have on both our organisation and the people we serve cannot be overstated.



***"Volunteering is about so much more than giving your time – it's about giving people a voice. I am continually inspired by the passion, kindness and commitment our volunteers bring to Healthwatch Rochdale.***

***Their willingness to listen, support others and champion positive change has a lasting impact on both our organisation and the communities we serve."***

**Naomi Burke,  
Engagement and Volunteer Manager**

# Enter and View

During 2024-2025 Healthwatch Rochdale carried out **3** Care Home Enter and View visits, **1** PLACE visit in partnership with Northern Care Alliance and additionally **8** GP Practice Enter and Views in partnership with the HMR Quality Team.

**The Healthwatch network was established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, with the right to 'Enter and View' places that deliver health and care. The right to 'Enter and View' is a statutory power for Healthwatch.**

The objective of an 'Enter and View' visit is to understand the experiences of Rochdale residents, collect their views and make observations of the site, then following this up with a report and recommendations.

## Our verified Enter and View Reps are:

- Rosemary Nunwick
- Karen Kelland
- Anne Taylor
- Terry Rich
- Moira Auchterlonie
- Melanie Tunney
- Margaret Parker
- Elizabeth Williamson
- Naomi Burke
- Kate Jones



# Visiting GP Practices Across Rochdale: Our Enter and View Programme

Healthwatch Rochdale has the legal power to visit health and social care services to see how they are working for patients. This is called an Enter and View visit. During 2025/26, we worked alongside the NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale (HMR) Quality Team to carry out eight joint visits to GP practices across the borough.

## What we did

Our visits focused on patient experience on the day. We spent time in the waiting rooms observing how patients and reception staff interacted, whether self-check-in systems were working, and whether the environment allowed for private conversations. We also spoke with practice managers and staff to understand both the pressures they face and the operational challenges of running a busy GP practice. Along with our observations on the day, we included feedback from Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections, website reviews, and information shared directly with Healthwatch Rochdale.

## What we found

- **Getting an appointment was a common concern.** Many practices did not offer a call-back option on their phone systems, and online booking through the NHS App was either unavailable or not promoted. Video consultations were rarely publicised and repeat prescription processes were often unclear.
- **Confidentiality in waiting areas and reception spaces raised issues at several practices.** Patients could often be overheard at the reception desk, with little or no signage to let them know a private space was available. Noticeboards were frequently out of date and waiting room TV screens were often switched off.
- **Information and signage were inconsistent.** Practice names and contact details did not always match in practice and online. Car park information was inadequate at several sites.
- **Patient involvement was underdeveloped in a few practices.** Some had no active Patient Participation Group (PPG). "You Said, We Did" boards were either absent, out of date, or not prominently displayed.
- **On the positive side,** all practices had clean, tidy waiting rooms with accessible facilities and good transport links. Phones were answered promptly, usually within 30 seconds, some with helpful automated messages. Interpretation services were available on request, and at least one practice had gone further in identifying and supporting patients with hearing needs. Most practices responded constructively to our recommendations, with several making changes quickly

## What happened next

Where concerns were identified, we formally requested a response from practices under our statutory powers. There was a six-month follow-up process, which has already shown evidence of positive change. Working alongside the HMR Quality Team means findings are reviewed regularly, intelligence is shared between organisations, and any concerns about a GP practice that need escalating are dealt with promptly.



# Visiting GP Practices Across Rochdale: Our Enter and View Programme

## Why this matters

Our Enter and View reports are published on the Healthwatch Rochdale website so that patients and the public can see what we found. The programme gives patients an independent voice in conversations about how their local services are run, and it supports practices to improve. Through this work we have also helped to raise awareness amongst practices of Healthwatch Rochdale's role in gathering and representing patient feedback, which has contributed to more open and productive relationships across the borough.

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*“GP Enter and Views put Healthwatch in the room, as the eyes and ears of patients. When practices respond quickly to our recommendations, it shows the importance of the impact of this work; making a significant difference to patient care.”*

Moira Auchterlonie,  
Healthwatch Lead on Quality Visits



**Please share your feedback with us about your experiences at your GP Practice.**

🌐 [www.healthwatchrochdale.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchrochdale.org.uk)

☎ 01706 249 575

✉ [info@healthwatchrochdale.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchrochdale.org.uk)

# Statutory statement

Healthwatch Rochdale's GP Enter and View visits and statutory recommendations helped identify improvements based on patient feedback, supporting positive changes at the practices. By listening to patient voice and acting on our recommendations, the practices have improved access, communication, and the overall quality of care for patients.

## Enter and View: GP Quality Visits

Healthwatch Rochdale would like to thank the HMR Quality Team for allowing us to accompany them during their Quality Visits as part of our Enter and View program of work.

| Location                              | Reason for visit                          | What you did as a result: Report with recommendations, Impact made   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Dr Bhima, Rochdale                    | Partnership working with HMR Quality Team | <p><b>We asked the practice to add a call-back option.</b> They now offer a call-back service during busy times.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to introduce online booking.</b> Patients can now book appointments using the NHS App.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve the waiting room noticeboards.</b> They have been updated, with a new monthly information board.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve privacy at reception.</b> Patients can now speak to staff in confidence using a private room when needed.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to offer more choice of male and female doctors.</b> Patients now have good access to both male and female clinicians.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve access to appointments.</b> Patients can now access more evening and out-of-hours appointments.</p> |
| The Ghafoor Family Practice, Rochdale |   | <p><b>We asked the practice to add a call-back option.</b> They now offer a call-back service during busy times.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to introduce online booking.</b> Patients can now book appointments using the NHS App.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to tell patients they can ask for a private room.</b> Posters have been added to let patients know.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve the Patient Participation Group (PPG) noticeboard.</b> The noticeboard has been updated with clear information and dates.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to update its name on signs and online.</b> The website has now been updated with the new practice name.</p>  |
| Woodside Medical Centre, Middleton    |   | <p><b>We asked the practice to help patients use online services.</b> They held two training sessions and will do more.</p> <p><b>We asked for the practice sign to be updated.</b> The sign now shows the correct clinical team.</p> <p><b>We asked for clear and consistent information about test results.</b> The practice updated all the information.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve the phone booking system.</b> They updated the phone message and continue to promote online services.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to involve the Patient Participation Group (PPG) in community events.</b> The PPG took part in a Military Veteran event.</p>  |
| Mark Street Surgery, Rochdale         |   | <p><b>We asked the practice to make phone and website information about test results the same.</b> They updated both so the information is now consistent.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to use the waiting room TV to share information.</b> They now use it regularly to keep patients informed.</p> <p><b>We asked for signs in different languages.</b> The practice updated the toilet signs, door signs and prescription box with a range of languages.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to involve more people in the Patient Participation Group (PPG).</b> They continue to recruit new members from different communities.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to share our report with the PPG.</b> They shared the report and discussed the findings with the group.</p>  |
|                                       |   |  |

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|---|---|--|
| Hopwood Medical Centre, Heywood           | Partnership working with HMR Quality Team | <p><b>We asked the practice to update the practice name signs.</b> A new sign is planned to be installed outside the practice.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to use the waiting room TV to share information.</b> Although the TV is no longer in use, patients can access information through free Wi-Fi, social media and other information displays.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to make sure the telephone call-back option was working.</b> The practice confirmed that patients can request a call-back and this service is being used.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to update the Contact Us page on the website.</b> The website has been updated with useful information and accessible links.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve privacy at reception.</b> Patients can ask to speak in private using a blue card, and confidential spaces are available.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to update the Patient Participation Group (PPG) information online.</b> The website has been updated with the latest PPG information.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to share our report with the PPG.</b> The report was shared with the group.</p>   |
| The Village Medical Centre, Littleborough |   | <p><b>We asked the practice to improve the telephone system.</b> Patients can now request a call-back and hear their place in the queue.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to update the practice name on the digital screens.</b> The practice confirmed they do not use smart screens and the name of the practice has not changed.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to add more self-service phone options.</b> The practice is working with its phone provider to improve the system.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to move the Patient Participation Group (PPG) banner to the waiting room.</b> The banner is now back in the reception area.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to add a "Join Us" link to the PPG webpage.</b> This has now been added.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to provide newsletters in the waiting room.</b> Quarterly newsletters are now available for patients.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to involve more people in the PPG.</b> The practice continues to recruit new members from the local community.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to create a You Said, We Did noticeboard.</b> The practice plans to add a new noticeboard in reception.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to share our report with the PPG.</b> The report will be discussed at the next PPG meeting.</p> |
| The Dawes Family Practice, Rochdale       |   | <p><b>We asked the practice to improve privacy at reception.</b> The practice is planning a new self-check-in system to create more space and improve privacy.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to restart the Patient Participation Group (PPG).</b> The practice plans to restart the PPG once enough people have joined.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to use the waiting room TV to share information.</b> The practice is looking at new check-in screens that will also help provide patient information.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve the noticeboards.</b> The noticeboards are regularly updated, and themed displays are being planned.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to add a telephone call-back option.</b> The practice has asked its phone provider to introduce this feature.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to update the PPG page on the website.</b> The practice has requested the digital team to make changes to include plans for restarting the PPG.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to replace the waiting room clocks.</b> New clocks with numbers will be installed.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to share our report with the PPG.</b> The report will be discussed once the PPG has been reestablished.</p>  |

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|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Durnford Medical Practice, Middleton | Partnership working with HMR Quality Team | <p><b>We asked the practice to make repeat prescription information clearer.</b> The prescription box inside reception will be reopened.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to use the waiting room TV to share information.</b> The practice confirmed they do not have a TV in the waiting area.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to add a telephone call-back option.</b> The practice confirmed this service is now available.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to improve the noticeboards.</b> The practice agreed to reorganise and theme them.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to let patients know they can ask for a private space.</b> A poster added at reception.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to reduce the number of notices on the reception glass.</b> The practice decided to keep them in place as they believe they are easy for patients to see.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to make information about test results consistent.</b> Information tells patients to call after 3pm.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to start a Patient Participation Group (PPG).</b> The practice is working towards setting one up.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to update the practice plaque.</b> A new plaque has been agreed.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to add car park information to the website.</b> The practice will update the website.</p> <p><b>We asked the practice to share our report with the PPG.</b> The practice agreed to discuss it at a future meeting.</p> |

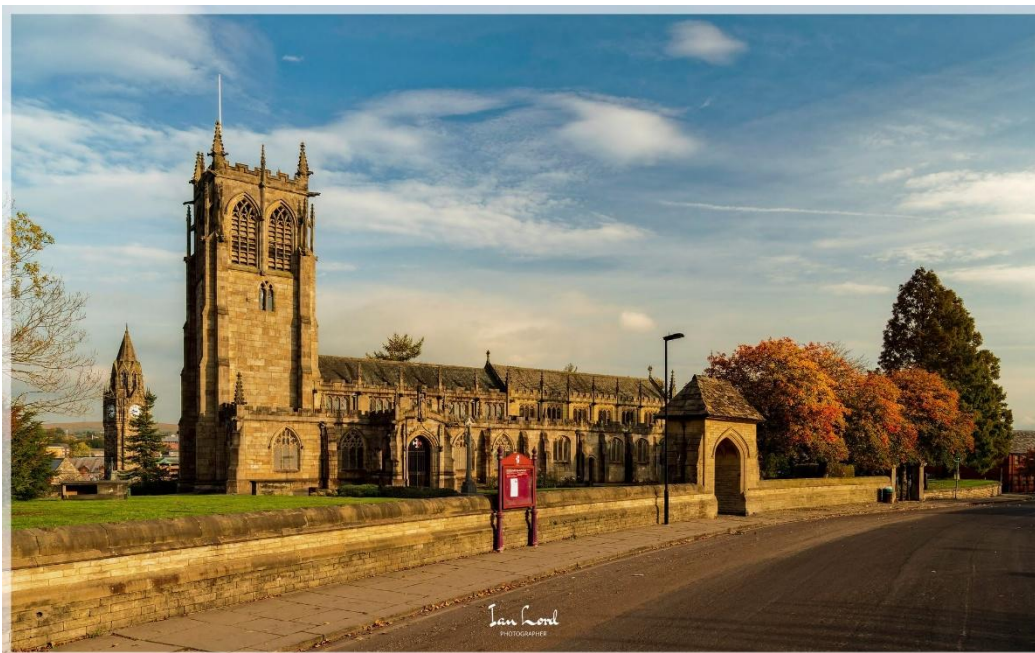


# Finance

We receive funding from Rochdale 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 | £150,000        | Expenditure on pay       | £132,750        |
|                              |                 | Non-pay expenditure      | £17,268         |
|                              |                 |                          |                 |
| <b>Total income</b>          | <b>£150,000</b> | <b>Total Expenditure</b> | <b>£150,000</b> |



St Chad's Church, Rochdale  
Photo credit Ian Lord

# Healthwatch Rochdale

## Future priorities

**Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas of Rochdale, 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. Strengthen Engagement with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) Across Rochdale**

Over the next year, we will work to engage with all Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) across the borough, building strong relationships and creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration. We will support PPGs to share experiences, identify common challenges, and highlight examples of good practice. Through regular communication and engagement, we aim to ensure that patient voices are heard and that PPGs are recognised as valuable partners in shaping and improving local health services. This work will help strengthen community influence and encourage more effective patient involvement in decision-making processes.

#### **2. Develop and Publish an Updated PPG Guide for Professionals**

We will produce a comprehensive and up-to-date guide for healthcare professionals on establishing, managing, and developing successful Patient Participation Groups. The guide will provide practical advice, tools, and examples of effective engagement approaches that encourage active patient involvement. It will include case studies and examples of how PPGs can evolve from consultation groups into meaningful engagement mechanisms that influence service design, delivery, and improvement. By providing clear guidance and support, we aim to help practices maximise the value and impact of their PPGs.

#### **3. Continue Delivering Our Core Statutory Functions During the Final Year of Service Delivery**

As we enter the final year of our current service contract, we will remain committed to delivering all of our statutory functions to a high standard. This includes gathering and representing the views of local people, providing information and signposting, undertaking Enter and View visits where appropriate, and ensuring that community experiences influence improvements in health and social care services. We will continue to produce evidence-based reports, engage with underrepresented communities, and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders. Throughout the year, we will focus on leaving a positive legacy by ensuring that the voices of Rochdale residents continue to be heard and acted upon, while demonstrating the value and impact of our work across the borough.

# Statutory Statements

## Healthwatch Rochdale

**Healthwatch Rochdale 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 **5** 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 2025/26, the Board met **16** times and made decisions on matters such as Business planning and workplan approval. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities by holding open public board meetings where questions can be asked by the public.

## **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 2025/26, we have been available by phone, email, text messaging service, provided a web form on our website and through social media, alongside attending 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 paper copies will be available throughout the Rochdale Borough or upon request.

[www.healthwatchrochdale.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchrochdale.org.uk)

# Statutory Statements

## Responses to recommendations

We had 0 providers who did not 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.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to the Primary Care Commissioning Committee, Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

We additionally take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Rochdale. We share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level as well as having data sharing agreements with the local health and social care system to share our local intelligence and feedback.

## Healthwatch representatives


Healthwatch Rochdale is represented on the **Rochdale Health and Wellbeing Board** by Margaret Parker, Chair.

Healthwatch Rochdale is represented on **Rochdale Integrated Care Partnerships** by Kate Jones, CEO and Margaret Parker, Chair.



Healthwatch England  
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