

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Oldham
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from our chair

We've been through another year where we all felt the continuing impact of COVID 19 on our daily lives and on our local health and social care. Healthwatch Oldham staff have had to adapt – continuing to provide the Healthwatch service by working from home and also by managing the move to our new base, at Medtia Place, on Union Street.

Despite these ongoing challenges, we have continued to listen to our local community to make sure their voices are heard and acted on. An example of this is our Greater Manchester Dental Report – a supplemental report we issued in August 2021. During the COVID pandemic, people across Greater Manchester told their local Healthwatch that they were experiencing difficulties accessing NHS dental services. Across Greater Manchester, local Healthwatch organisations experienced a six-fold increase in enquiries regarding NHS dentistry and nearly 98% of these enquiries raised issues of accessibility.

We continued to consult with the Oldham public, trying hard to reach out to communities we don't hear from as often as others. By conducting a bi-monthly survey called the Healthwatch Oldham 100, we continue to obtain views from local people on a range of subjects. The findings from these surveys can help us to identify trends within service delivery and provide information to guide us on areas to look into further.

We were also able to run our People's Choice Awards for the second year running, to celebrate the hard work that people throughout all health and social care services deliver to the people of Oldham.

We have published our report looking into people's experiences of accessing services whilst living with cancer during COVID-19 and acted on feedback, to drive change to make a difference to people's experiences.

Towards the end of 2021 we had the opportunity to work in partnership with the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Team to produce a Wheelchair Users – Understanding How Accessibility Works for You Report. This was a survey that was designed to be a starting point to highlight and understand peoples' experiences of accessibility when they have a physical disability.

All the reports mentioned above are available to view on our website.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our staff and volunteers and I want to thank them all. I would also like to thank our funders and partner organisations and our Board volunteers. We look forward to continuing to work with you over the next year. Please continue to let us have your views and to join us in events, either online or in person, as a participant or a volunteer.



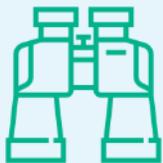
John Starkey
Healthwatch Oldham Chair

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Starkey".

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Oldham is your local health and social care champion. From Moorside to Failsworth and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other 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

- 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.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



500 people

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

1,290 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

Making a difference to care



We published

7 reports

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

Our most viewed report was

A review of people's experiences of health and care services whilst living with cancer during COVID-19

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

13 Volunteers

who gave up over 4 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received:

£135,000

Which is the same as the previous year for the main service.

We also currently employ

5 staff

who help us carry out this work and this is the same as the previous year.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



We published our New Years Blues infographic, highlighting mental health during the winter months.



We held focus groups on NHS Remote Appointments as part of our work with the Northern Care Alliance.

Summer



We published our report on people accessing services whilst living with cancer.



We were able to resume our outreach sessions in the community and attended various health walks throughout the borough to support residents and promote wellbeing.

Autumn



We promoted the COVID-19 vaccination rollout and highlighted the benefits of people accessing their booster jabs heading into winter.



We urged the Government to act after reporting a 452% increase in people struggling to see an NHS dentist.

Winter



We held our second annual People's Choice Awards and distributed the certificates and commendations to those nominated.



We ran our latest Healthwatch Oldham 100 survey which focussed on people who live with or support those who have dementia.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve



Remote Appointments within the NHS

During early 2011, we partnered with the Northern Care Alliance to look at remote appointments and how patients feel about using them.

Given the challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic since early 2020, the usage of remote appointments by health professionals have increased.

A remote appointment is a meeting between an individual (patient) and an NHS Health Professional using a telephone or a video call via an App (where you have not been able to visit a service for a meeting in person). These could be any appointments, including hospital appointments, GP appointments, and community service meetings.



211 Surveys completed

In addition to four focus groups being held remotely

The aim was to understand people's experiences of using remote appointments and to create an easy-to-read guide for people to follow if they didn't feel comfortable with the process.

After the surveys and feedback from the focus groups were analysed, a report was produced and shared with the Northern Care Alliance.

From this, the Northern Care Alliance have created a task and finish group to look at its recommendations and work to complete both a guide to support people with the use of a remote appointment and a best practice guide for staff to use as a resource.

The guide will be made available in 2022.

What difference did this make

The new guide being produced will help patients who feel uneasy with the use of remote appointments and provide them with valuable resources.



"The call came at the correct time and was not hurried in any way. The consultant spent the time asking the questions he would have asked face to face and gave me all the time I needed plus he went beyond what I expected regarding something I wanted to ask about. I was very happy. It was good not to have to worry about travel or parking."

A patient who completed the Remote Appointments Survey



Walking and Talking!

As we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to re-think how we can engage with our local residents. Taking part in local health walks has allowed us to engage with residents in a COVID-19 friendly manner as it's in an outdoor setting.

The format of the local health walks have allowed us to introduce who we are, what we do and take people's feedback on services they may have accessed or provide our information and signposting function.

We also provided walkers with a card which contains a little more detail and ways to connect with us at a later point if it's more suitable. These walks have provided us with the opportunity to engage with our community and make people aware of our current projects and how they can get involved.



"As we're walking, different people stop us and ask about the group. Having the confidence to go out on your own is something I don't have but as a group it gives you the motivation you need."

Walker on the Failsworth Health Walk.



People's Choice Award Winner

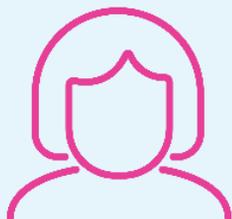
We created a small video of the Failsworth Health Walk and it also gave us the opportunity to provide the walk leader – Alan Keane with his People's Choice Award Certificate.

You can check out the video on our social media link below:

[Twitter.com/HWOldham](https://twitter.com/HWOldham)

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



Domestic Abuse Project

A project was undertaken with the Oldham Safeguarding Adults board to examine people's experiences of domestic abuse.

Funded by the Ministry of Justice this joint project brought together members of the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board, Healthwatch Oldham and Age UK Oldham to explore the experiences of older survivors of domestic abuse in Oldham.

The finding will be used by Oldham's Domestic Abuse Partnership to train and support professionals to improve the identification and support offered to older people to help them deal with abusive situations.



Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership

ROMVP is a forum for maternity service users, birthing partners, providers and commissioners of maternity services to come together to design services that meet the needs of local service users in the Rochdale and Oldham area.

It's a great way for Oldham residents to express their views on the maternity care received during pregnancy, throughout the birth and postnatal care. Service users' views and opinions are valuable and help to shape the future of local maternity services.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for changes.

We have known about problems with dental access for a long time. We have received feedback from residents for several years stating that they have been unable to register with practices as an NHS patient. Last year, it became apparent that this was a national issue and we called for reform of NHS dentistry, co-signing a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for NHS dentistry to be accessible and affordable for everyone.

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Oldham is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's help finding an NHS dentist or details on how to make a complaint – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need



Long COVID and access to Long COVID Centre

We were contacted by someone who has been living with what she felt were symptoms of COVID-19 which had surpassed the 12-week period. NHS class this state as Long COVID.

They spoke to their GP and were told that if she could find out where to refer to then they would refer her to the service. As a result of this, she contacted us for guidance. We looked into this and spoke to the Northern Care Alliance.



They confirmed that there was a referral process for this to attend a clinic in Oldham. They stated that the information for GPs to refer into the clinic has been sent out to them. However, not all GPs had received this. As a result of this, the Northern Care Alliance sent a reminder to all GPs with the appropriate information to ensure GPs were fully aware of this service.

The person who contacted us originally had now been successfully referred to the Long COVID Clinic.

Domestic abuse and counselling support for families who have experienced loss

We were contacted by The Oldham Adult Safeguarding Team regarding a family who wanted support post the death of their daughter which they felt was a result of Domestic Abuse.

This process took several weeks of individual enquiries and getting different services to work together to see what would be best as there was no specific support for the family available in the Oldham area.



There was support available in other areas, but it was not accessible for them as they did not meet the referral criteria. After several weeks, a Greater Manchester Police Victims Support Coordinator for Oldham made contact and arranged to support Adult Safeguarding around a solution to help the family.

In addition, from the information that we gathered and collated, a support sheet was created by Oldham Council Adult Safeguarding Team in partnership with Healthwatch Oldham for professionals and members of the public to use when looking for bereavement support.

You can access this below:

[OSAB-National-and-Local-Bereavement-Support.pdf](#)

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Oldham. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from community events which we have been able to start attending again within the area.
- Got involved in focus groups as part of our projects, specifically the Remote Appointments Project we ran with Northern Care Alliance.
- Supported to ensure our information on local services is current and up to date.
- Continued to be at the heart of Healthwatch Oldham by being part of the Healthwatch Oldham Governance Board.



Jacob

Jacob supported Healthwatch Oldham this year by attending three events on our information stalls providing up-to-date and current details of services delivered within the area. Jacob felt the experience empowered him, increased his confidence in approaching people, and highlighted to him that even if you don't have all the answers, people are happy for you to get back to them with information. He enjoyed being able to explain the Healthwatch services feeling proud to wear the Healthwatch Oldham T-shirt and badge.

Jacob also provided us with valuable insight and support whilst we are in the process of setting up our YouthWatch 100 Survey. He has helped design the logo and format the questions for our first survey, which is around Young People's Mental Health. He used his own experience using Mental Health services to support this process and moving forward we are looking into starting an Oldham Youth Healthwatch.



Jacqueline

Our recently appointed Vice-Chair Jacqueline has been very kind to offer her time to the staff team and the wider board. She has been able to use her HR and organisation development experience to facilitate a 'Vision and Value' Workshop. This was an enjoyable session that got us to think about who we are, and what we aim to achieve in the coming years as a team and organisation. The findings from the day have now been adopted as our Vision and Values.



Do you feel inspired?

There are plenty of ways to get involved with Healthwatch Oldham. Please check out our details below and get in touch:



www.healthwatcholdham.co.uk/have-your-say



0161 622 5700



info@healthwatcholdham.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.

Income		Outgoing	
Funding received from local authority	£135,000	Staff costs	£135,982
NHS Complaints	£28,000	Direct delivery	£6,391
Additional funding	£3,000	Management and overhead	£36,000
Total income	£166,000	Total expenditure	£178,373

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Working with the Health and Wellbeing Board and wider local system in tackling health inequalities via the action plan that has now been signed off by the H&WB.
2. Given forthcoming National Health Service changes expected in July 2022, one of the proposals is replacing CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) with a Greater Manchester ICS. A statutory Integrated Care System (ICS) in Greater Manchester will be a partnership that brings providers and commissioners of NHS Service across the 10 GM Localities together. Through this process of transition Healthwatch Oldham will ensure residents have a strong influence over the incoming ICS changes, and that patient voice and patient experience remain a key cornerstone of all the work that will take place under the GM ICS Umbrella.
3. Establish an Oldham Youth Healthwatch, with specific governance arrangements and identify key routes in the system to achieve outcomes.

Next steps

The global pandemic and several key findings since COVID-19 hit have shone a light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and social care services. This has highlighted the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard. Over the coming year, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure the patient voice is heard, and decision-makers reduce the barriers people may face, regardless of whether that's because of where someone lives or other issues such as income or race.

We will do this by working with the Health and Wellbeing Board on their draft inequalities plan. This work came about because Healthwatch Oldham through our representation on the board was able to pose challenges around the system not having tangible objectives around tackling health inequalities. This then formed the Health and Wellbeing Board development session, which then lead to the development of an inequalities plan.

We will also ask the local system to identify more detailed next steps around the DNAR (Do not attempt resuscitation) work which has been carried out by the end-of-life transformation following our report in 2020. In addition, we will be asking the new Oldham locality team, to follow through with our COVID-19 report of 2021, to ensure there is a much broader impact from our findings. Moreover, we will begin our work by engaging with patients around experiences of hospital discharge, working closely with the Northern Care Alliance and our local Royal Oldham Hospital.

Message from our Manager

I would like to begin by paying tribute and giving special thanks to our hardworking Healthwatch Oldham team who have adapted amazingly to our new hybrid working arrangements and kept the core business of Healthwatch Oldham continuing, through another significant period of change.

Moving forward Healthwatch Oldham will be focused on building on the successes of this year. We will continue to respond to the challenges that have been presented by COVID-19 over the last 2 years, this includes both its emergency and recovery. In the last year, we have worked incredibly hard with our local Health and Social Care System to prepare for the new ICS arrangements which are due to be implemented later this summer. We will work hard to ensure Healthwatch Oldham is a key strategic partner as Oldham begins to develop its role and position within the Greater Manchester ICS and amongst the national changes more broadly. Whilst doing so we will always ensure we are at the heart of championing patient voice, and patient experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked with us and helped us deliver on our work plan over the past year. Our amazing team works so hard to ensure Healthwatch Oldham is at the heart of change and influence but none of our work would be possible without colleagues in Action Together, our Healthwatch Oldham Board, the residents of Oldham who participate in our surveys or the many partners and stakeholders across Oldham who work with us to deliver on the needs for the good people of Oldham. This past year has seen everything slowly open up fully, following a few years of continuous lockdown and restrictions. This has allowed us to start attending external events.

Some of the highlights from this year include the Opening Doors Domestic Abuse Project. Funded by the Ministry of Justice this joint project brought together members of the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board, Healthwatch Oldham and Age UK Oldham to explore the experiences of older survivors of domestic abuse in Oldham. The finding will be used by Oldham's Domestic Abuse Partnership to train and support professionals to improve the identification and support offered to older people to help them deal with abusive situations. We have also progressed with our work around the Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) which we are delivering jointly with Healthwatch Rochdale, in the last year one of the highlights is appointing a Vice-Chair for the MVP who is a recent service user from Oldham, which is a brilliant complement to the work of the Chair of the MVP who is from Rochdale. We now feel we have very strong foundations, to take this important area of work from strength to strength. In terms of our work around Primary Care, we have continued to engage with the Primary Care Commissioning Committee, and for example, we are working closely with Royton and Crompton Family Practice to help them engage with their patients via a survey which we hope will be jointly co-produced by ourselves and the GP Practice.

Over the past year, we have contributed significantly to several key reports, which include the Greater Manchester Healthwatch Network Dentistry Report, which was submitted to the Department of Health. We also published our Wheelchair users report, which was done in partnership with the Oldham Safeguarding Board, and we are hoping to build on this work in the coming year. We also published a report on People's experience of living with Cancer during Covid-19, which was an emotive and hugely significant piece of work. In terms of Healthwatch 100's, I am pleased to report we carried out on the important issue of Dementia, and early in the coming year, we are publicising our next Healthwatch 100 which will be around Young People's Mental Health.

I am determined that we continue to make a difference in how health and social care is designed and delivered in Oldham and that patients, service users and their families are at the heart of this. Now more than ever we must rebuild and renew parts of our NHS systems and/or structure, as we move to usher in the new NHS system and changes, later in the summer.

We hope next year to report on the work of the proposed Patient Participation Group Oldham-wide audit, which hopes to work with the local Primary Care Team given some GP Practices haven't been able to reignite these important forums, for patient voice. If you would like to know more about what we do, or about our work that is planned for the year ahead, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the local Oldham community for continuing to work with us, and our partners and stakeholders for giving us the space and ability to play a key role in the local system. None of this would be possible without the support of our Board, and our host organisation Action Together, this important set-up for our Healthwatch enables us to try our best and helps us to take our work from strength to strength.



Tamoor Tariq
Healthwatch Oldham Manager

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Tariq".

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Oldham, Action Together CIO, Media Place, 80 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DJ.

Healthwatch Oldham 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 8 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as our Vision and Values, and Healthwatch Oldham's position and role in the system during the whole ICS transition, both locally in Oldham and sub-regionally in Greater Manchester.

We opened up our priority setting in a very clear and easy way and allowed the public to poll issues that were important to them. This meant we took up issues such as dementia, young people's mental health and the experience of cancer patients during COVID-19. In addition, our work around dental care was based on regular feedback coming into us, and we worked with other Healthwatch on a coordinated report and response.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight into their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision-makers. This year we have done this within our domestic abuse / vulnerable adults project, we had specific and separate focus groups for those from the BAME communities and a separate group for those with learning disabilities.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and share it with all our partners and stakeholders via email along with social media posts and inclusion in our e-bulletin.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We didn't have any providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Oldham is represented on the Oldham Health and Wellbeing Board by Tamoor Tariq – Healthwatch Oldham Manager. During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by engaging in a whole range of issues. Below is a brief overview of their activities.

2021-2022 Outcomes

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
<p>COVID-19: Your Health And Care Experiences Report</p>	<p>Senior Executives and leaders from the system were clear the report was powerful and therefore should be followed through. The report was then sent from the Health and Well Being Board to the Statutory Duties Committee.</p> <p>Oldham Care Organisation formally responded to the report and said, 'We recognise the importance that contact with loved ones has upon recovery from illness. Our clinical teams have developed and continue to improve processes to support communication with families, through regular telephone calls to update on patient progress and the use of Skype and Facetime so that relatives can see their loved ones.'</p> <p>Furthermore, in their formal response OCO, acknowledged the report's findings that attending appointments and treatments alone can be difficult, especially in the case of maternity service and receiving news on life-changing conditions. As a result, they committed to reviewing the national guidance and then pledged to reflect this within the local Hospitals' Visitor Policy. They also confirmed within weeks of our report, that midwife and scan appointments at the hospital can be attended by a loved one.</p>

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
<p>Developing A Health Inequalities Plan For Oldham</p>	<p>In September 2021 there was a discussion led by the Director of Public Health two reports which made a series of recommendations for reducing health inequalities across Greater Manchester. The first report was from the GM Independent Health Inequalities Commission, titled The Next Level: Good Lives for All in Greater Manchester. The second report was from Michael Marmot’s team at The Institute for Health Equity, titled Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives.</p> <p>The Healthwatch Oldham Manager contributed to the wider discussion on this, and it was agreed a detailed action plan was needed to help address the long-standing issues linked to Health Inequalities. Healthwatch Oldham discussed the challenge around Year 6 childhood obesity as an example, it was agreed a partnership between Children Services, Schools, and Primary Care was needed to help facilitate early intervention.</p>
<p>Child Death Overview Panel- Annual Report for Oldham, Rochdale and Bury (2020-2021) presented by Oldham Public Health.</p>	<p>Healthwatch Oldham welcomed this report and felt it would be beneficial to further investigate the issues from a solely Oldham population point of view. It was agreed several partners would come together to review this and present back their findings at a future Health and Well Being Board. the investigate at these issues in more depth from an Oldham point of view. The wider issues to be explored Include looking at issues around language barriers, housing and wider maternity services.</p>



healthwatch
Oldham

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