



On equal terms

Healthwatch Rotherham Annual Report 2020-21

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Message from our Chair

My name is Nicola Dyke and I am chair of the Healthwatch Rotherham Steering Group. I am pleased to share with you the success of Healthwatch Rotherham.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Healthwatch Rotherham has moved to a virtual service accessible via telephone, email and video links. The monthly sessions have been conducted via Zoom and monthly newsletters have been sent out as a way of keeping in touch with the community.

The disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on people from a BAME background has brought to the front the years of inequality and discrimination, something I feel strongly about and something I know my colleagues at Healthwatch Rotherham want to positively address. Because of previous work with asylum seekers and refugees Healthwatch Rotherham were successful in securing a grant enabling them to work with refugees and asylum seekers and have held myth busting sessions regarding the Covid-19 vaccinations which has been a great success.

Healthwatch Rotherham have successfully worked with the Deaf community to improve communications at the hospital. There were challenges with staff wearing face coverings as hard of hearing people were unable to lip-read so communication was hindered.

Rotherham Healthwatch has seen many successes and the "Discharge from Hospital" report was probably the biggest one. This was a powerful local study which gained national media attention. The outcome of the study was that the hospital took on board the Healthwatch recommendations and now have quarterly meetings to discuss and problems or trends that are arising.

The hard work of Healthwatch Rotherham in supporting the local community is robust and professional and it is greatly appreciated. Our patients from Rotherham deserve our very best efforts when it comes to advocacy or securing the right care and treatment. Hearing the plans of Healthwatch in supporting this is brilliant and empowering.



We are indebted to so many people that have gone the extra mile during the pandemic, but as we look back over what has been an incredible year, I would like to say Healthwatch Rotherham, thank you. You have been brilliant.

N. Dyke

Nicola Dyke
Chair
Healthwatch Rotherham Steering Group

Message from Healthwatch Rotherham Service Manager Lesley Cooper

In April 2020 the Healthwatch Rotherham contract moved over to Citizens Advice Rotherham and District and I was appointed Service Manager, it has certainly been an interesting year, with many twists and turns but I am proud of the work we have achieved during this year and would like to thank the Healthwatch Team - Sonia, Emma and Hamna for all their hard work.

I must admit I was apprehensive about the new contract and wondered how we would fit in with the existing Citizens Advice service and remain independent but I feel we have the right formula being led by our Steering Group but also having the added benefits of support from Citizens Advice with technical/IT support, HR Services and Management. We have also seen an increase in referrals between teams As we have become more aware of each others services.



Message from Projects and Services Manager at Citizens Advice Rotherham and District Jamie Bland

The Local Authority commissioned Citizens Advice Rotherham and District (CARD) to deliver Healthwatch Rotherham – the independent consumer champion for health and social care.

I am incredibly proud to work in partnership with Healthwatch Rotherham. The Healthwatch Rotherham team continue to be champions for people who use health and social care services, being present at key meetings such as The Health and Wellbeing Board, Patient Experience Group (TRFT), Adult Safeguarding Board and Health Select Committee, the team are constantly problem solving and sustaining good relationships with health and social care key workers.

Whilst working with Healthwatch Rotherham we have seen huge benefits between both our services including partnership activities between our teams. Healthwatch Rotherham have complimented many of our projects and Citizens Advice, with the end goal of ensuring the public are being heard and supported in whatever way they need. It has also been rewarding to see how we at Citizens Advice have been able to support Healthwatch Rotherham' campaigning and events by circulating information to our wider teams and partners.



About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Rotherham. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares their experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use residents views to shape the health and care support they need today and in the future.



"Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

1073 people

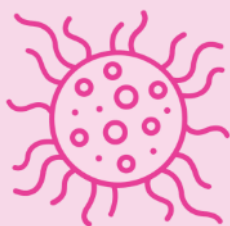
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

203 people

this year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

Over 2.000

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

Making a difference to care



We published

5 reports

Including Discharge from Hospital, Opinions on the Covid-19 vaccine and Loneliness and Obesity

Health and care that works for you



7 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed 165 hours/22 days.

We employ 3 staff

2 full-time staff and one part time member of staff (3 days a week)

We received

£90,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21.



Theme one: Covid-19 Vaccine



Covid-19 myth-busting sessions:

Through previous work with Refugee Council on their Health Access for Refugees Programme (HARP) and British Red Cross, we became conscious of a hesitancy towards the vaccine in this community. Healthwatch Rotherham decided to work with these organisations again to put together online myth-busting sessions on the Covid-19 vaccine for asylum seekers and refugees. This group of residents are often under-represented and hard to reach.

The sessions were run in seven different languages and discussed the Covid-19 vaccines in depth, allowing participants to ask any questions or express any fears they had to Doctors who also attended. This was all translated by volunteer translators. The sessions had a total attendance of 60 people.

Through evaluation forms, it was discovered that before attending these sessions, only 30% of participants had a positive opinion of the Covid-19 vaccine. 40% of participants had neither a positive or negative view, and 30% of participants had a negative opinion of the Covid-19 vaccine. The purpose of these sessions was to ensure participants were well-informed on the vaccine, enabling them to make informed decisions. The evaluation forms enabled the impact of the sessions to be measured.



Covid-19 myth-busting sessions:

90% of participants found the sessions very helpful, with 0% finding them unhelpful. This was an excellent response and showed the impact of the session content and the input the Doctors had on attendees.

After the session, 91.7% of participants had a positive opinion of the Covid-19 vaccine. This percentage shows a huge shift in opinion when you compare the data from before and after the sessions. Positive opinions on the Covid-19 vaccine rose from 30% to 91.7%, a huge increase of 61.7%.

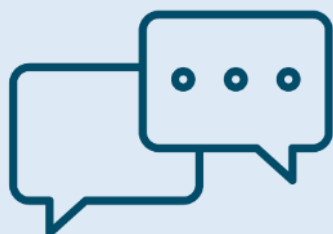
These statistics really illustrate the success and importance of running the myth-busting sessions. It allowed asylum seekers and refugees an opportunity to learn about the vaccine and dispel any myths they had learnt from other sources such as social media and rumours within their communities, an opportunity they may not have been offered before. In particular, having a translator who can translate all information from English to the participants chosen language was really important, ensuring the information being given was understood fully, allowing for maximum impact on the participant.

Having volunteers participate in the sessions who were already known to the group really helped and having someone there who had gone through the experience of booking a vaccine appointment and attending a vaccine hub was really invaluable and really brought the sessions to life.

Due to this project being undertaken recently, it is hard to know the long-term impacts of these sessions currently. When looking at the wider impact of these sessions, and taking into account the data from the evaluation forms, hosting these sessions has in no doubt resulted in a better uptake of the vaccine from asylum seekers and refugees.

We have answered a NICE call for evidence on vaccine hesitancy and attended a Doctors of the World workshop to talk about our sessions and the results from them. It is hoped there will be a reduction of health inequalities within these communities, and opportunities for more events like this to take place to ensure as many people as possible are being reached and informed.

Share your views with us



If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.



<https://healthwatchrotherham.org.uk/>



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Theme two: Let's Talk...Zoom sessions



Let's Talk sessions:

During January 2021 we set up our monthly online engagement sessions Let's Talk and to coincide with Cervical Cancer Prevention Week our first subject was cervical screening. We ran the session in partnership with the Be Cancer Safe team, and had ladies on-board who were able to tell us about their experiences. We were also joined by a nurse from the colposcopy team at Rotherham Hospital who was able to inform the group what to expect if some abnormal cells were detected. We talked about how it may be embarrassing but being uncomfortable for a few minutes really can help save your life.

February 2021 saw our Let's Talk event pick up on Mental Health, after short introductions and a video about "The black dog" we went on to talk about self-help and exchanged ideas on having a homemade rescue pack full of items to help us overcome a build-up of stress or anxiety. We discussed the different sources of help for people who are feeling mentally unwell this included friends and family. GP Services, Online therapy and how to self-refer into services.

March 2021 session was based on the Covid-19 vaccine, we were able to get representatives from Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and the Chief Pharmacist from Rotherham Hospital to come along to the session and dispel any myths that residents may have heard regarding the vaccine.



Let's Talk sessions:

From our Cervical Screening Awareness session we heard from some residents that they were being told that their GP Practice was not currently offering screening appointments due to the pandemic, we contacted Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group to see if there were any plans to restart the programme and if residents would be called back. From this we discovered that Cervical Screening is a national programme and had not been "stood down" due to the pandemic. The GP Practices who were not offering the screening were informed and now all GP Practices are offering the service.



"Be Cancer Safe partnered with Healthwatch on their popular 'Lets Talk' event for Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in January to share our expertise. This was a great opportunity to raise awareness to the public and to highlight the risks of cervical cancer and the preventative benefits of screening. We look forward to continuing our work with Healthwatch on further health topics".

Tracy Williams, 'Be Cancer Safe'.

Following on from our session on mental health and hearing of the different experiences we set up a short survey looking at people's opinions of mental health services in the borough both for children and adults. The report shows mixed messages in the service that residents have received with praise for some aspects but also serious concerns regarding waiting lists. There is some work that can be done to improve communications with patients. Following on from this report we are now holding regular meetings with Care Group Leads for both Adult and Children's mental health services to look at areas for improvement.



"Following attending Healthwatch Rotherham's 'Let's Talk' event on Covid19 Vaccine Myth-busting, I was able to write a report that was taken to the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group meeting. This prompted HR colleagues to use these themes identified within the event, to help encourage staff within the organisation who were hesitant, to have the vaccine, by directly addressing some of the myths that are circulating locally."

Hannah Hall – The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

Our Covid-19 vaccine session had a ripple effect with many of the attendees taking the information back into their workplace and cascading the information that they had learned. By giving people the true facts we have ensured that they are fully informed before they make their decision on whether to have the vaccine or not. The presentation and format of the session also helped us to facilitate some online myth busting sessions with refugees and asylum seekers which had some fantastic results.



To find out more:

<https://healthwatchrotherham.org.uk/>

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Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped hundreds of people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally on social media and in our newsletters
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information on Covid-19
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out and hosting events and myth-busting sessions on the Covid-19 vaccines to encourage uptake, particularly amongst asylum seekers and refugees.
- Hosting monthly sessions on Zoom, allowing people to stay connected
- Helping people to access the services they need and overcoming barriers

"The work that Healthwatch did on discharge processes during COVID-19 gave the Trust invaluable feedback. This has been built into our work to improve patient experience when being discharged from hospital. We have routine engagement meetings with Healthwatch and as a result are able to work collectively to continuously improve services".

Michael Wright, Deputy Chief Executive at The Rotherham Foundation Trust .

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



18% on GP services



14% on Dentistry



22% on Hospital care



15% on Mental Health services

Case study:



Earlier this year we looked at people's attitudes towards the Covid vaccine and we were contacted by a resident who wanted to have the vaccine but had been shielding since early March 2021. Kerry did not feel comfortable with the amount of people she would come into contact with at a vaccination hub "because we have not encountered any infection risk at all, we feel extremely reticent to come to a vaccination site"

We contacted Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and we were able to make arrangements for Kerry and her husband to be vaccinated in an outside area at Oak House.



Contact us to get the information you need

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Volunteers

At Healthwatch Rotherham we are supported by 6 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Formed a Steering Group and helped put together a three year work plan, deciding on priorities and supported the team to deliver these.
- Increased engagement in the community and amongst other services and organisations by representing Healthwatch Rotherham at local meetings.
- Looked at feedback left on social media regarding services (particularly secondary care) and reported back to Patient Experience Group at Rotherham Hospital
- Spoke with residents who have had a recent interaction with Healthwatch Rotherham to gather feedback to help us improve our service.
- Spoke to residents about concerns they have had with health care services and signposted to further support.

Young volunteers – Hamna Saeed:

I started volunteering with Healthwatch Rotherham at the beginning of this year and I have really enjoyed my time being part of the team. During my time volunteering I mainly focus on helping our Engagement Officer Sonia with promotion and engagement for our upcoming events and campaigns. This has allowed me several opportunities to network and create strong relationships with different services, service users, as well as the wider community in Rotherham. Furthermore, I have participated in the planning of our Let's Talk events and the promotion of our Mental Health surveys.

In addition to this, my role also consists of taking on some administrative roles such as collecting feedback from social media platforms regarding services in Rotherham, which will help services to improve and develop. Furthermore, I collect feedback from our own service users to understand how we as a service can improve and continue to help and give back to the Rotherham community. I have been provided with several opportunities to expand and develop my knowledge, skills and confidence.

Volunteering at Healthwatch has provided me with a wider exposure of understanding the health and social care sector within Rotherham; as well as allowing me to understand how different integrated systems within Rotherham all work together to provide the highest quality of services for Rotherham residents. Both the knowledge and experiences I have gained during my time have really benefited me in my future career path of working in Public Health. I plan to continue volunteering as I study for my Masters in Public Health, allowing me to develop and use my skills and knowledge.



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at

info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk



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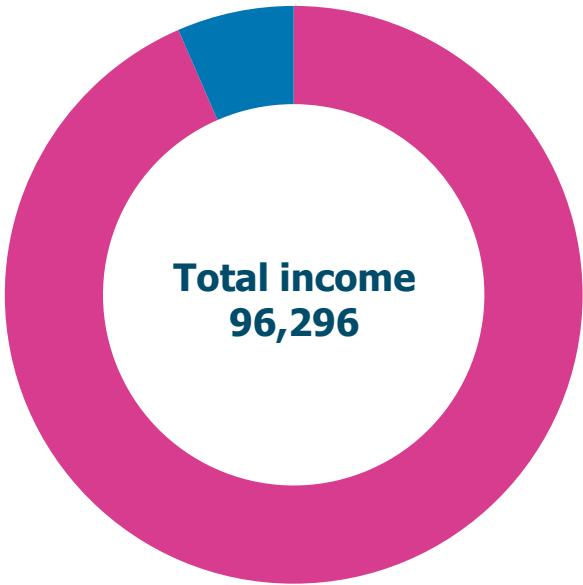
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Finances

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

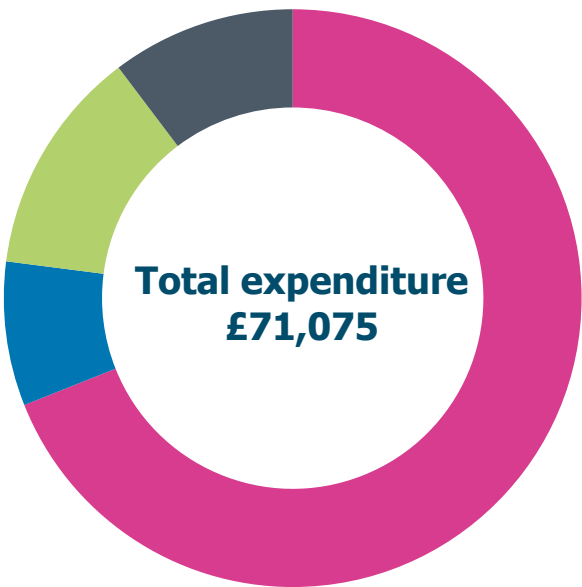
Income

- Funding received from local authority £90,000
- Additional funding £6,296



Expenditure*

- Staff costs £49,020
- Operational costs £5,733
- Support and administration £9,004
- Contribution to overheads, £7,318



* Expenditure is lower than budgeted due to delays in appointing new staff at the onset of the service

Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22


1. Mental Health (as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic)
2. Changes to services brought about by the pandemic
3. Adult Social Care

Next steps:

As we move through 2021/22 we will continue working with residents, service providers and commissioners to ensure that the patient voice is at the heart of any decisions regarding health and social care. We will build new partnerships whilst strengthening existing ones within the Rotherham community, particularly with seldom heard communities to ensure that everyone has a voice and an opportunity to be heard.

As restrictions are lifted and we return to our new normal we want to explore how residents are feeling and where we can best support them going forward. We want to make sure that we do not leave anyone behind and that there are alternatives to using technology for those who are digitally excluded. We want to keep a watchful eye on waiting lists for outpatient services and elective surgeries and also keep in touch with residents who have been trying to get access to NHS dental services.

We will continue to engage with the local community on digital and social platforms as well as face to face when restriction allow. We will keep people informed of our activities via our monthly newsletter and website.



*2020-21 has been a difficult year for all organisations, and the CCG has been pleased to maintain a good and positive working relationship with Rotherham Healthwatch despite the many challenges. We have valued the feedback and reports that Healthwatch have in spite of everything continued to produce and share; and been happy to support Healthwatch in signposting to current and verified information. We have continued to consider opportunities for engagement in a variety of health related issues, and anticipate the time we can take these forward. – **Helen Wyatt, Patient and Public Engagement Manager, Rotherham CCG***



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Rotherham is hosted by Citizens Advice Rotherham and District, RAIN Building, Eastwood Lane, Rotherham S65 1EQ

Healthwatch Rotherham 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 Steering Group consists of five members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our group ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the group met nine times and made decisions on matters such as setting the priorities and publishing reports .

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities by looking at the insight from our information and signposting enquiries, we attend regular meetings within the community and listen to the concerns raised which helps us to identify and emerging themes and trends. Our monthly "Lets Talk" sessions are well attended and based around subjects which are important in Rotherham and help us to shape future priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a web-form on our website, 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 by, for example, engaging with the deaf community, working with refugees and asylum seekers and improving our contacts with seldom heard diverse groups.

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.

2020-21 priorities

Project / activity area	Changes made to services
Covid-19 myth-busting sessions	Allowed services to network with each other via these events, ensuring that patients are able to get the best possible service through communication and partnerships. These events also allow members of the public an opportunity to talk with medical professionals and voice any concerns or worries they have.
Let's Talk...Cervical Screening	We heard from some residents that they were being told that their GP Practice was not currently offering screening appointments due to the pandemic. We contacted Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group to see if there were any plans to restart the programme and if residents would be called back. From this we discovered that Cervical Screening is a national programme and had not been "stood down" due to the pandemic. The GP Practices who were not offering the screening were informed and now all GP Practices are offering the service and no one has contacted us to say they have had problems booking appointments for one.
Enquiries: Supporting the Deaf Community	Updated their policies and refreshed training for all staff in A&E on how to book an interpreter. The service now uses a buzzer/vibration system so the deaf person knows when they are being called, and they are looking into/already have installed some Perspex screens and are looking into clear facemasks.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We had 0 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

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 Rotherham is represented on the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board by Lesley Cooper, Service Manager of Healthwatch Rotherham. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings and raising awareness of Healthwatch Rotherham in the local community.



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