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# Annual Report 2019-20

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# Message from our outgoing Chair

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Joanna Saunders  
Chair of Healthwatch  
Rotherham  
2017 – March 2020

This is my last report as Chair, and I have mixed feelings following the significant changes which have affected the organisation over the past year. On the positive side, it's been a great experience to work with the fantastic staff team, volunteers and voluntary Board members since June 2017 to provide a service for the people of Rotherham.

With the backdrop of a recommissioning of both the Healthwatch service and the NHS Advocacy function separately, Healthwatch Rotherham continued to deliver its highly valued and responsive service to people seeking support for their use of health and social care services in Rotherham. You can read about some of their experiences and hear how our staff team supported them throughout the report.

In preparation for the recommissioning exercise, the Board and staff team spent some dedicated, facilitated time reviewing our role and progress and considering how we wanted to work in the future. As the Healthwatch service transferred to Citizens Advice Rotherham and District, we were proud to end the year with a clear sight of what we did well and where our services could be improved. A number of themes have been consistent in our work for a number of years, including mental health and wellbeing, services for children and young people with mental health and learning difficulties and primary care access issues. We are particularly proud of MATT, our work with men experiencing mental health issues. Men are a "hard to reach" group for almost all health and wellbeing services and as you read Martin's story here in the report you will see how important a listening ear, social interaction and shared experience can be. MATT are now constituted in their own right and are keeping in touch with each other even during the challenges of Covid-19.

On behalf of the Board members, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff team and volunteers for all their hard work over the past year. We said goodbye to Anne Lemm at the end of February – she was one of the original members of Healthwatch Rotherham and was much appreciated by her many clients over the years for her kind and supportive approach. All the staff regularly received very positive feedback from clients and it was always a real pleasure to read messages from them as their problems and concerns were addressed and resolved. Steve and Mike transferred to the new advocacy service provider, and Lesley transferred to the new Healthwatch provider. We wish them all well for the future – there will certainly continue to be demand for their support!

Finally, I'd like to thank Tony Clabby, our retiring CEO, for keeping the wheels on the bus over the past year, he has worked with compassion and humour and will be missed by colleagues in the health and social care sector across Rotherham. Our Board members have been immensely supportive over many years and I'd like to thank them all for their contributions at meetings and events throughout the time I've been involved.

Regardless of the changes in the organisation of Healthwatch Rotherham, the experience of the public and service users will be just the same and we wish the new host organisation our good wishes for the future.



Joanna Saunders  
Healthwatch Rotherham Chair (2017 – March 2020)

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Tony Clabby  
Chief Executive Officer  
Healthwatch Rotherham  
January 2015 – March  
2020



*Myself, our staff team and the board of trustees have been very privileged to have delivered what has been recognised as an excellent and award winning Healthwatch service to the residents of Rotherham over the last seven years*

# Our priorities 2019/20

Residents told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20. These were our six priorities for the year based on what you told us.



The NHS Long Term Plan.



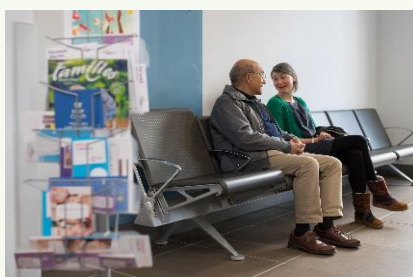
Rotherham Primary Care Networks



Children & Young People.



Mental Health.



Adult Social Care Services



Partnerships

Rotherham CCG values regular feedback from Rotherham Healthwatch, the information is always noted and triangulated alongside other sources of information, and used to inform our decision making. Key reports and stories are often highlighted to Governing Body through the monthly engagement reports, demonstrating the importance that we place on this material. We also appreciate the challenge that Rotherham Healthwatch provides in helping us to look robustly at the services that we commission, and how well they are working for patients, giving an independent perspective that is vital.

*Helen Wyatt, Patient and Public Engagement Manager, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group*



# About us

## Here to make care better

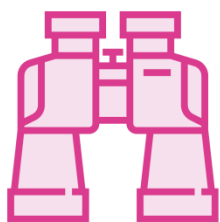
The network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan shows the power of the Healthwatch network in giving people that find it hardest to be heard a chance to speak up. The #WhatWouldYouDo campaign saw national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented locally. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review, sparking a national review of patient transport from NHS England.

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local Healthwatch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

 I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level.

Sir Robert Francis, Healthwatch England Chair





## Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you.

People want health and social care support that works – helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



## Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



## Our approach

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.

We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



## How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations



Find out more about us and the work we do

**Website:** [www.healthwatchrotherham.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchrotherham.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @HWRotherham

**Facebook:** @hwrrotherham

# Highlights from our year

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Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.





## Health and care that works for you



### **18 volunteers**

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 475 hours.

We employed

### **5 staff**

The same as the previous year.

We received

### **£136,735 in funding**

from our local authority in 2019-20.

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## Providing support



### **159 people**

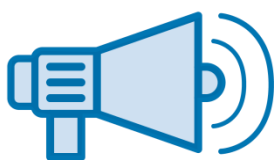
shared their health and social care story with us,

### **133 people**

accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support.

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## Reaching out



### **3,950 people**

engaged with us through our website, social media, and people engaged with us community events.

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## Making a difference to care



We published

### **13 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care, and from this, we made recommendations for improvement.

# How we have made a difference

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EMOTIONS HAVE NO GENDER  
DON'T LOCK YOURS IN THE DARK



@MattTalking



@MenActuallyTalking

Our new group aimed at getting men talking has been a real success

### It's good to talk, but sometimes our men folk are not very good at it!

Thanks to a small grant from Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group in June 2019 we held the first meeting of our new Men Actually Talking Together (MATT) project. We know there is a real need in Rotherham for support groups to help men with their mental health. We wanted to provide a safe, secure and confidential meeting space where there was no pressure to meet a certain criteria or tick specific boxes. We pulled together a team of volunteers who we knew would be chatty and would be able to make people feel at ease, one of these volunteers was Martin and here he tells us a bit about the project.

"Our first meeting was held in the summer and we did have a few guys turn

up, it was evident that it had been a big step for them just to walk through the door. I am a people person and I am not afraid to talk to strangers so in the early days we devised a system where we had a rugby ball and the person who currently held the ball was in the chair so to speak. There was no pressure for anyone to say anything if they didn't want to they could just pass the ball along and this worked really well. The group has come a long way in a few months, we have been out on trips to local projects including Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wentworth Woodhouse and a trip on a canal boat. It all helps to build confidence and the difference is clearly visible in the men that attended that first meeting."

Even though we officially meet once a week in person we have chat groups and support each other with telephone calls in-between meetings'



Martin, Volunteer M.A.T.T Project

I love talking to people and finding out about their experiences and if I am able to help them that's even better. I am proud of the M.A.T.T project and what we have achieved in a short time – I secretly think it is my baking that keeps them coming back!

We are currently not meeting face to face due to the Covid-19 restrictions but if anyone needs help they can contact us via our social media accounts in the first instance (details above)



Bespoke dental treatment is available via the NHS if there is a valid reason.

### Resident was told her replacement dentures would not be available on the NHS.

We were contacted by a resident who had worn partial dentures since she was 16 years old. Over recent years she had lost a couple of her own teeth and the palate was not longer sitting comfortably. She had been to see her dentist who had advised her that the chrome palate that she currently had was no longer supplied via the NHS and if she wanted a like for like replacement she would have to pay for private treatment.

The resident raised the issue with us as originally she was supplied with the chrome palate as the standard one caused

her problems with thrush and what is known in the industry as a “soggy palate” We contacted the dental commissioning team for NHS England Yorkshire and Humber and we were able to confirm to the client that although her dentist would need a strong clinical rationale to provide, a replacement chrome palate they felt that her history provided this. Guided by the clinical adviser we spoke to the resident about her options which included

- Asking her dentist to reconsider.
- Ask her dentist for a referral to a dental teaching hospital or restorative dentistry consultant.
- Ask the dentist to strip down the old components, make new impressions and fit these to the existing base.



.....“She would have to pay privately as the NHS no longer supplies chrome dentures” .....is a definite untruth – Clinical Advisor, NHS England.





Lord Hardy Court, Rawmarsh, Rotherham

During the autumn of 2019 we conducted a short piece of work jointly commissioned by Rotherham Council and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group.

The work was based around the intermediate care and reablement project and involved Healthwatch attending two local care homes Lord Hardy Court and Davies Court to speak to residents who had been discharged from hospital but were not quite ready to go back home.

Over two sessions we managed to speak with 15 residents about their transfer of care from Rotherham Hospital to the care home, discovering what worked and what didn't work quite so well. We also asked where they would rather be and what support would they need in place to get them there.

The overwhelming feedback was the residents felt well looked after and safe and had nothing but praise for the staff.

*Healthwatch played an important role in providing objective and independent feedback from service users as part of our intermediate care and reablement project, one of the main priorities for the Rotherham Place Partnership, to integrate health and social care. The feedback helped us understand what our patients and their families value and what is important to them in shaping our future provision.*

**-Claire Smith**

**Head of Adult Commissioning (Joint Commissioning CCG/RMBC)**



**Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.**

**Take a look at how your views have helped make a difference to the care and support people receive in Rotherham.**

### **Vulnerable people and access to GP support in Rotherham**

During December we conducted a “mystery shopper” exercise to find out how people in Rotherham can register with a GP practice. The guidelines from NHS England state that “If a patient cannot produce any supportive documentation but states that they live within the practice boundary then practices should accept the registration.

In Rotherham we also have The Gate, a practice which caters for vulnerable patients including the homeless, asylum seekers and refugees and we wanted to make sure that other GP practices were aware of this.

We utilised two medical students who were on placement from Sheffield University. They researched each GP practice in Rotherham and looked at the practice website to see what the policy on registering a new patient was and then contacted each practice by telephone to make a general enquiry about registering as a new patient.

We collected responses from 26 GP practices over a 2 day period.



**50% of GP Practices said they needed photo ID and proof of address before registering.**

A report on the findings was published on our website and shared with Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group, with recommendations including:

- There were often inconsistencies with the details given by the receptionist on how to register and the policy on the website – this highlighted the need for training and/or for the website to be updated.
- Raising awareness of The Gate’s services as they are very experienced and better equipped for supporting vulnerable patients.
- To consider the use of “My Rights to Healthcare” cards in Rotherham for vulnerable people.



*As a result of our findings Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group asked all practices to review their procedures, to make sure they were giving the right information to patients*



Urgent and Emergency Care Centre, Rotherham Hospital

Another piece of work which was undertaken by the Medical Students whilst on placement was to conduct a survey to find out the reasons why residents were attending the Urgent and Emergency Care Centre.

The students spent two days in the Urgent and Emergency Care Centre and spoke to 100 residents during this period. Almost 42% of the residents attending had not spoken to a Health Care Professional before attending UECC but 83% believed they were in the right place.

The students also noted that the waiting area was not suitably set up for vulnerable patients and a suggestion was made to look at providing a quiet space for vulnerable residents.

From the survey the students put together a report and recommendations which were shared with The Rotherham Foundation Trust and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group. We also shared the report with the Health and Wellbeing Board and on our website.



*Healthwatch Rotherham would like to thank James Dudfield and Lucy Hunter from University of Sheffield Medical School for undertaking these two pieces of work on our behalf during their Community Placement.*

# Long Term Plan

**#WhatWouldYouDo**

## Highlights



Local Healthwatch in South Yorkshire & Bassetlaw received the Outstanding Achievement Award for our engagement and partnership work on the NHS Long Term Plan



More than 1,500 people shared their views with Healthwatch South Yorkshire & Bassetlaw.



Our network held 15 focus groups reaching different communities across South Yorkshire & Bassetlaw



Healthwatch Rotherham attended 15 community events.

## NHS Long Term Plan

Following a commitment from the Government to increase investment in the NHS, the NHS published the 'Long Term Plan' in January 2019, setting out its' key ambitions over the next 10 years. Healthwatch launched a countrywide campaign to give people a say in how the plan should be implemented in their communities.

Working with other Healthwatch colleagues in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw we asked people #WhatWouldYouDo to improve the NHS locally. The top issues that people told us they wanted services to focus on were:

- Easier access to GPs
- Not to be digitally excluded
- Quicker access to diagnosis and support

We presented our report to South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System and also to Clinical Commissioning Groups in our localities.



As a patient with myeloma (a blood cancer), I would like to be able to access my blood results online and not have to wait for clinic appointments. It can be an anxious wait at crucial times in my disease.

# Helping you find the answers

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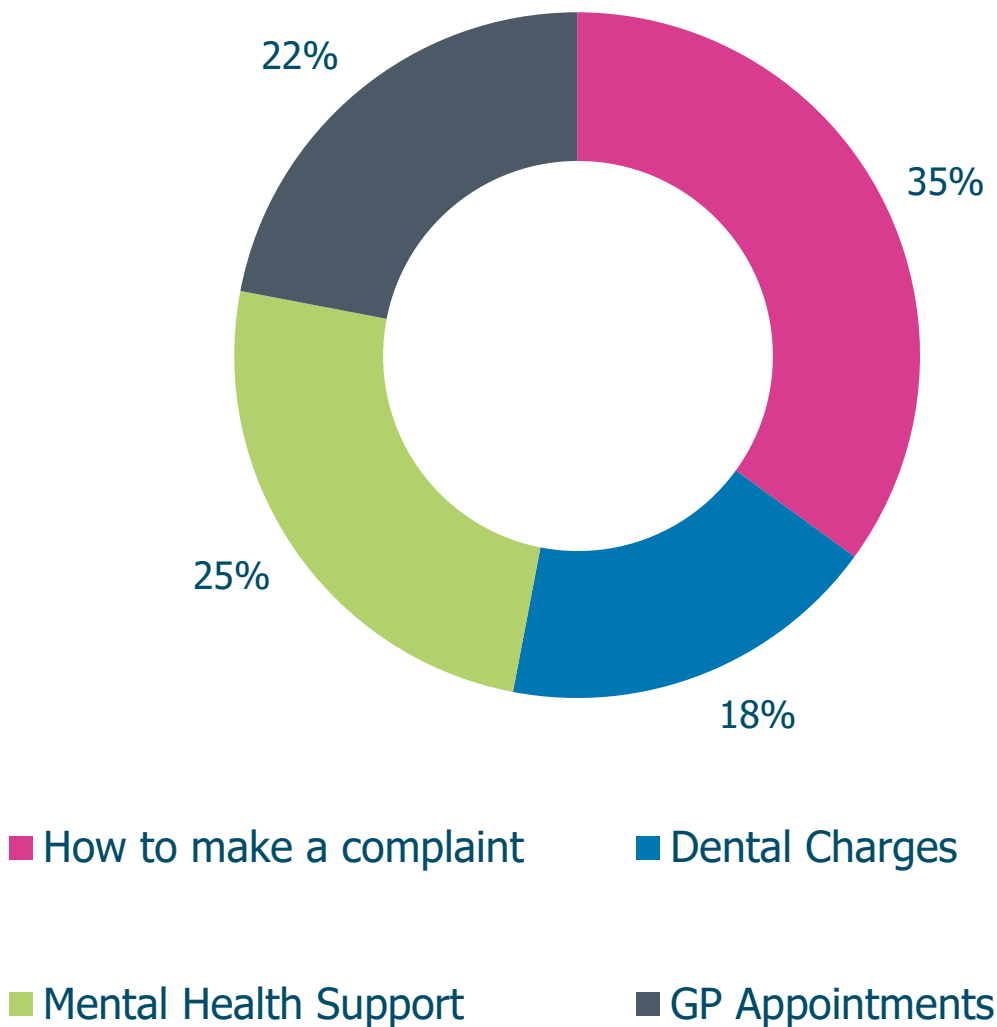


**Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.**

This year we helped over 200 people get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people’s queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.

**Here are some of the areas that people asked about.**



Improving communications and partnership working

We received a telephone call from a resident who was concern about her mum and care she was receiving. Everyone was being helpful and making mum comfortable but it was a reoccurring problem and no one seemed to want to get to the bottom of it.

Mum was 90 years old and had a catheter fitted which was constantly becoming blocked, this would lead to water retention which was very painful and uncomfortable for mum and would result in a call to 111 and

usually a trip to the Urgent and Emergency Care Centre for a new catheter to be fitted.

After three new catheters and her mum going through the upsetting and uncomfortable procedure, the daughter felt that services were not listening to her and came to Healthwatch for help.

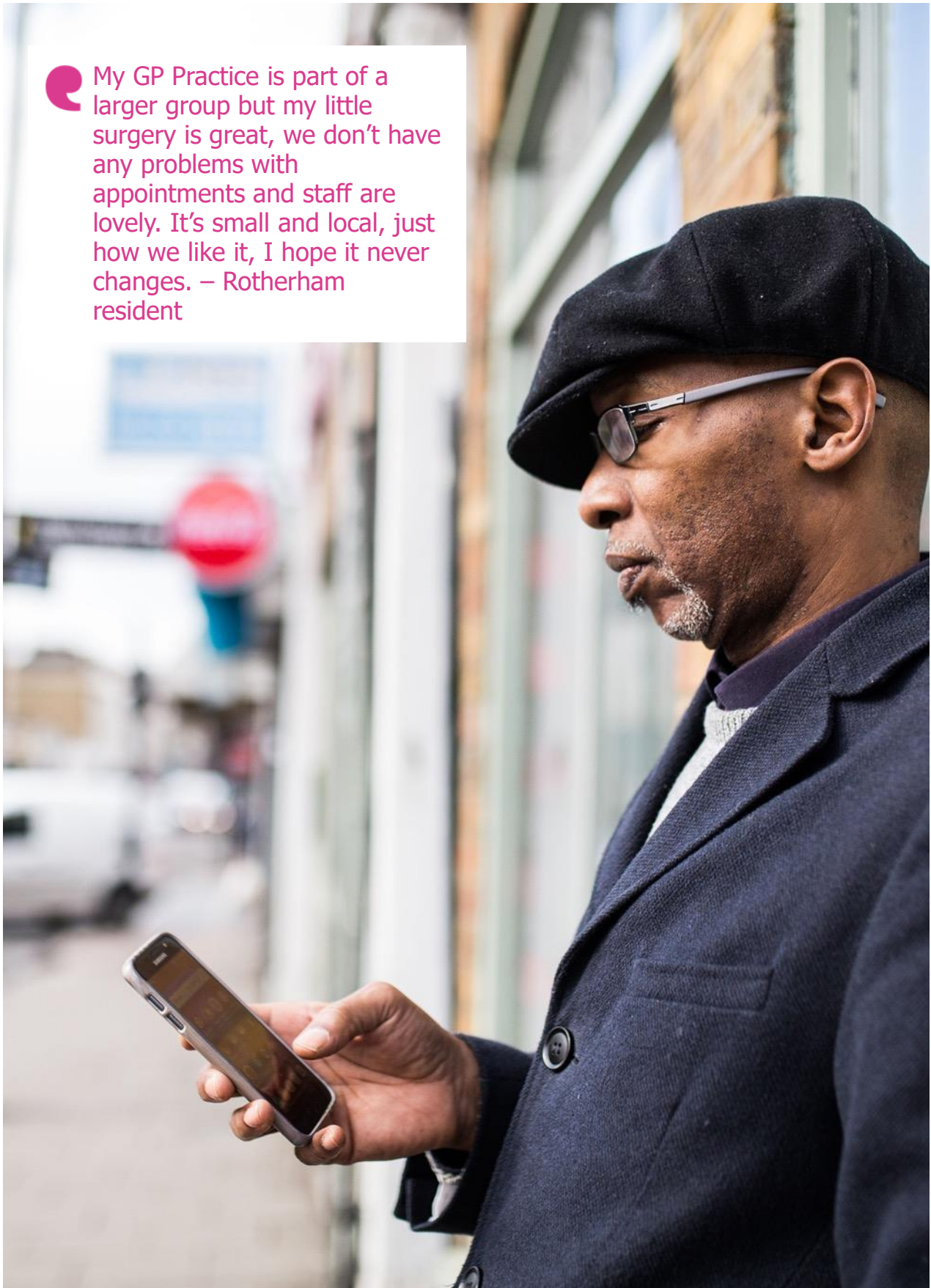
After speaking with the hospital and District Nurse a review of mums situation took place and a decision to use a larger catheter was taken. In the weeks following the change there have been no blockages or calls to NHS 111. This is making a big difference to mums wellbeing.

Thank you to Healthwatch for listening to us and for getting something done. Since the District Nurse has become involved and mums treatment reviewed she is much more comfortable and smiles a lot more'

Making sure you get the right care is our number one priority



My GP Practice is part of a larger group but my little surgery is great, we don't have any problems with appointments and staff are lovely. It's small and local, just how we like it, I hope it never changes. – Rotherham resident







### Finding support:

We met with Jill at a community event which we attended, Jill told us she was recovering from breast cancer and although her treatment had been second to none she had found it to be a very lonely journey. We found details of a group that held regular meetings in Tesco Community Room and passed on the details to Jill. We also referred Jill to the Macmillan Advocacy Service for support and friendship.



### Registering with a Dentist:

Stephanie emailed us concerned about not being able to get an appointment at her local dentist. After speaking to the local dentist, we found out that they were at capacity, but managed to find her another dentist nearby. Although this means Stephanie will have to travel a little further she is happy to be registered and able to receive treatment.



### Support for carers:

Michelle, a carer for her Dad, contacted us asking for help with where to go for support. We put her in touch with a local carers group so that she was able to share her experiences with people in a similar position. From this she also found out about a nearby respite service.



#### Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or 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.

**Website:** [www.healthwatchrotherham.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchrotherham.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01709 717130

**Email:** [info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk)

# Volunteers

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# Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear what they get up to.



## Kate

I really enjoyed my time volunteering at Healthwatch Rotherham. I started by helping out in the office answering calls & logging queries as I have administration experience. I spent a day at the Older People's Event making refreshments. Seeing the vast amounts of information and help for the elderly that these types of events can share is good to see within the community with Healthwatch being a big part of it. I also found the PLACE assessment at RGH really interesting as well I was happy to be a part of it and would definitely take part again. As for volunteering for Healthwatch I would do it again in a heartbeat under the guidance of Lesley as she was a huge help to me. Seeing the time and dedication from everyone in the Healthwatch office is so inspiring.

## Michaela

I have received support from Healthwatch Rotherham in the past, and I am a firm believer in paying back, so when I was asked if I would be interested in getting involved and helping out with the PLACE assessment at Rotherham Hospital I jumped at the chance. It also gave me a real insight into how all the different departments in the hospital connect – not something you see as a patient!



## Pauline

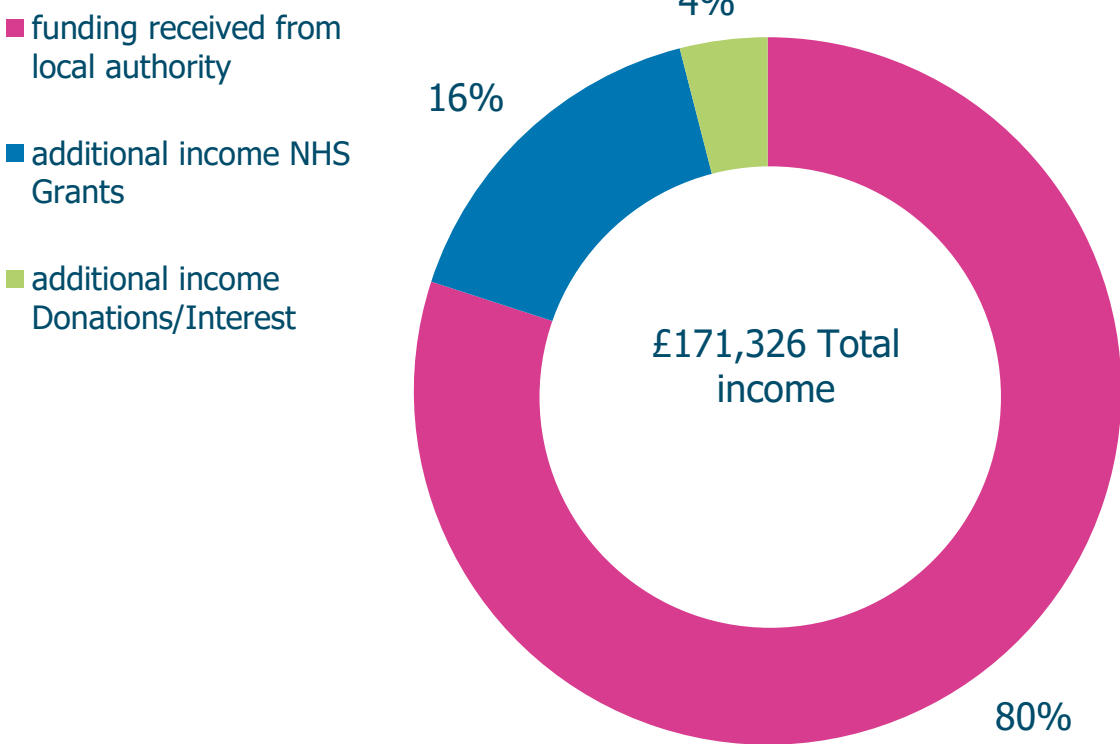
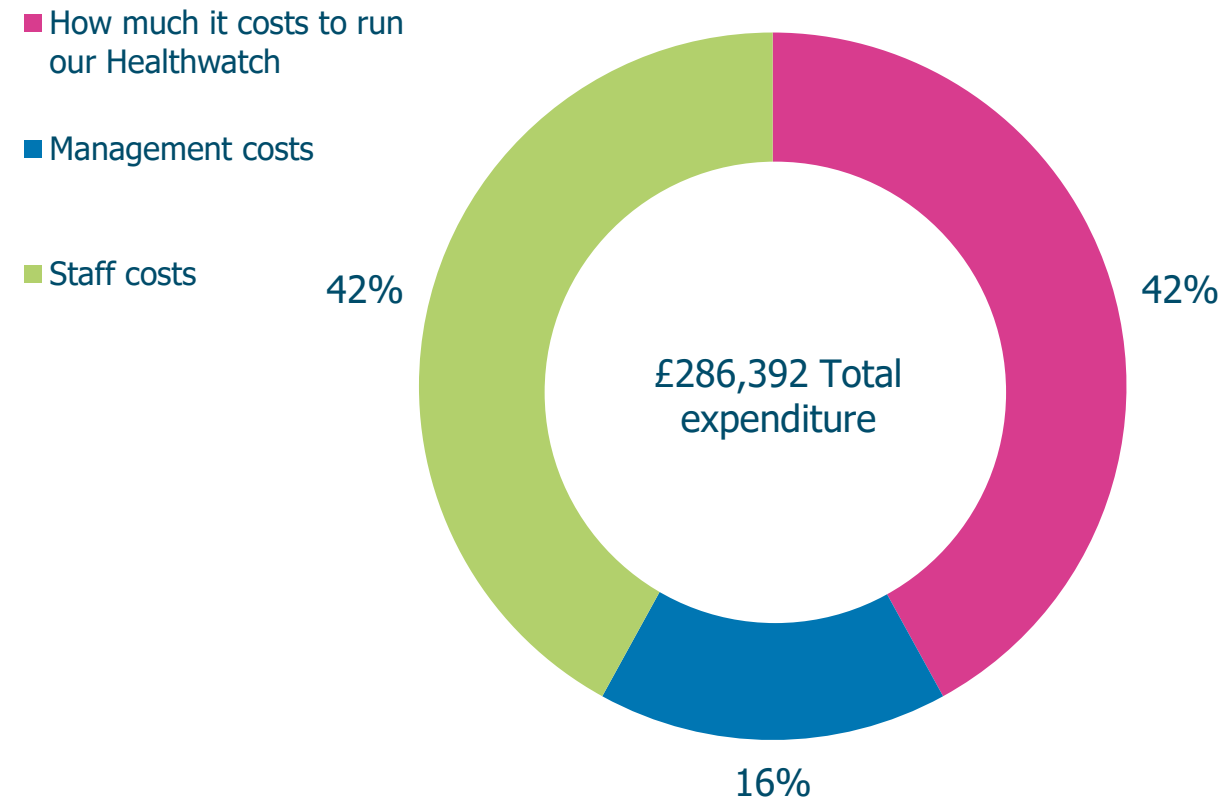
I have plenty of time on my hands now my children are grown up and I wanted to give something back to the community. I like being out and about and talking to lots of different people about their experiences so to volunteering with Healthwatch at community events is perfect for me!

# Finances

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We hold a contract from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012) in order to carry out our statutory functions, in addition to the Healthwatch contract we also provided the Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy during this period.





# Our plans for next year

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**It's all change at Healthwatch Rotherham for the coming year as the service is now being delivered by Citizens Advice Rotherham and District. And what an introduction we have had too with the arrival of Covid-19 and the country going into "lockdown" we certainly have a challenging time ahead.**

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic at the end of 2019/20 brought with it new challenges as we had to change the way we all work overnight. We were quickly able to switch to a more digital service and residents are still able to contact us by telephone and email and receive information and advice during these unprecedented times. Covid-19 has also delayed our plans a little with regards to setting up a new Steering Group to oversee the Healthwatch service and also recruiting staff, both of these are priorities for us over the coming weeks.

We were able to set up an online survey to find out how local people were effected by the pandemic and the results from this along with feedback gathered online and from our partners has been interesting and consistent. They show mental health and wellbeing alongside communications as being the key areas of concern for our residents. This information and feedback has enabled us to inform services, both at a local level and nationally, it will also help to shape the reset and recovery of our local communities as we come out of lockdown and into our new "normal"

Throughout the coming year we will continue to work with commissioners, service providers and residents to ensure that the peoples voice is at the heart of the decision making process.



Healthwatch Rotherham Service Manager  
Lesley Cooper

We are always on the look-out to build new partnerships as we have such a rich and diverse community in Rotherham, we want to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard.

The year ahead will most definitely be a challenging one, but I also hope a rewarding one as we see services and communities working together to make Rotherham a better place for all who live and work there  
#BecauseWeAllCare.

**I am looking forward to the year ahead, finding out what works best for Rotherham and planning how we can achieve it'**

Lesley Cooper  
Healthwatch Rotherham Service Manager



# Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of social care, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work.



# Contact us

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For the period covered in this Annual Report the Healthwatch Service was delivered by

Rotherham Healthwatch Limited  
Thornbank House  
38 Moorgate Road  
Rotherham  
S60 2AG

As from the **1<sup>st</sup> April 2020** the service will be delivered by **Citizens Advice Rotherham and District** and the contact details are as follows

Healthwatch Rotherham  
RAIN Building  
Eastwood Lane  
Rotherham  
S65 1EQ

Contact number 01709 717130  
Email address [info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk)  
Social media [facebook.com/hwrotherham/](https://facebook.com/hwrotherham/)  
[twitter.com/HWRotherham](https://twitter.com/HWRotherham)

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

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you need this in an alternative format please contact us.

Note: Please include your charity or company number here.  
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