



**Together
we're making health
and social care better**

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Rotherham

Contents

Message from our Chair	3
Statement from our host organisation	4
About us	5
Highlights from our year	6
Listening to your experiences	14
Advice and information	16
Volunteers	18
Finances and future priorities	20
Statutory statements	21



"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

Welcome to the Healthwatch Rotherham Annual Report. My first introduction as Chair of Healthwatch Rotherham coincides with our tenth year of operating as Healthwatch

Our Annual Report sets out the work we have undertaken this year to help make a difference both to the way in which our local health services are provided and delivered, and to our patients and residents as we help them access and understand those services. Patient feedback can have a real influence on service provision and quality.

We have made good progress on our priorities for the year. We have focussed heavily on ensuring we hear from those in harder to reach communities and seldom heard groups, and we have conducted more outreach programmes in different areas of Rotherham.

Our focus on using feedback to drive change and improvement in services has seen us gathering feedback through multiple different methods such as: publishing “spotlight shares” and providing that feedback to the relevant health service to help improve the patient experience.

This year we have reached more people than ever by increasing our in-person engagement and outreach attendance. Through our projects this year we have shed a light on some of the main challenges patients are finding in accessing services

I am particularly pleased that this year we have started to implement our programme of “Enter and View” inspections, which I expect will be a further way to enable change and improvement in those services.

I hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report and can recognise the contribution we make to local health services.



I am proud of the work our staff and volunteers have achieved this year and look forward to continuing to ensure we make a real difference to the services our residents access and receive”



John Barber
Healthwatch Rotherham
Chair

Statement from our host organisation:

Healthwatch Rotherham has made some excellent progress over this past year in widening their reach to the Rotherham community. There have been some fantastic and well attended engagement activities as well as insightful reports on what the community are saying about Health and Social Care services.

Despite seeing some challenges with key members of staff leaving for progression in their careers and volunteers having competing commitments, the service has continued to operate successfully. The service now is fully staffed with a new Healthwatch Service Manager, Information and Campaigns Officer and Community Engagement Officer.

A focus this year will be on building the services Advisory Boards' skills and resources. Healthwatch have successfully appointed new board members, taking the head count up to 4, with one being the chair. The skills this has brought to the service will enhance the work Healthwatch Rotherham produces.

As we move into the new year, I am looking forward to seeing the service thrive, with the ultimate goal of providing a valuable service to the Rotherham community that has an impact on the health and social care services local people can access.



Jamie Ashton
Project and Services Director
Citizens Advice Rotherham

About us

Healthwatch Rotherham is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



Our values are:

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

Year in review

Reaching out



1499 people

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

391 people

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

Making a difference to care

We published

5 reports

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

Our most popular report was

“How Rotherham Residents Access Health and Social Care Information”

which highlighted the struggles people face on accessing information post-Covid



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

4

outstanding volunteers who gave up 46 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£108,910

which is 21% more than the previous year.

We currently employ

3 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We ran successful online 'Let's Talk' events which topics included cancer, an 'age friendly' Rotherham and carers. This allowed people to become more informed on these topics and highlighted local services</p>	 <p>We ran a report that looked into how Rotherham residents access GP services, listened to their feedback and experiences and fed this back to services to make improvements</p>
Summer	 <p>We highlighted issues people with Long Covid faced, including diagnosis, accessing services and educating employers. We ensured Long Covid became more recognised in the community.</p>	 <p>We highlighted issues with accessing defibrillators in Rotherham Town Centre, ensuring the owners of the defibrillators made regular checks and maintenance to allow 24/7 accessibility</p>
Autumn	 <p>We launched our bi-weekly 'Spotlight Shares', which highlighted feedback we had collected from outreaches and events, both good and bad, about local services. We then gave this feedback to services</p>	 <p>We created and published our first Healthwatch Rotherham animation, kindly donated to us. The animation allows people to learn more about us and what we do in an interactive and accessible way.</p>
Winter	 <p>We conducted our first Enter and View inspections in local care homes. We spoke to residents, staff, family and friends to listen to their experiences, and provide recommendations to the care home for improvements</p>	 <p>We published a report that highlighted the barriers residents with English as an additional language face when trying to access GP services. We made some recommendations for an increase in translator availability to the ICB</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Accessible Information:

Healthwatch uncovered that only a third of NHS Trusts fully comply with their duty to help patients with sensory impairments and learning disabilities, which has helped lead to a national review of the Accessible Information Standard.

Let's Talk Sessions

In 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic began and the country went into lockdown, we created online Zoom events on various topics to stay connected with our community. In the past 3 years, we have had guest speakers from a range of services and covered a host of topics including cancer, suicide, dementia, COPD and loneliness.

NHS Dentistry:

We continued to voice public concerns that residents are struggling to register with an NHS dentist. We worked with other local Healthwatch to voice our residents concerns, have held a public 'Let's Talk' event on dentistry, allowing the public to voice their concerns with a local dentist and written a report with recommendations to dental services.

Covid-19 Vaccine Myth-Busting sessions:



We delivered sessions in several language such as Spanish, Arabic and Farsi to 60 attendees on the Covid-19 vaccine. Attendees had the opportunity to ask our guest GP any questions on the vaccine and voice any fears they may have. The sessions resulted in an almost 100% positive uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine from attendees

Enter and View:

In 2023, we began Enter and View inspections in local care homes. We have spoken to residents, staff, family and friends and made recommendations and improvements to improve the resident's experience





Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Shelley is a Healthwatch Hero for highlighting an issue one of her clients was facing when trying to access GP services.

Shelley's client had been a patient at their registered GP practice for most of their life. The client has autism, and when coupled with the isolation from the Covid-19 lockdowns, it meant the client's ability to interact in public places was severely restricted.

The client urgently needed a medication review but the GP surgery was not providing a home visit to the client, despite the client being unable to use the telephone or attend the surgery in person. We felt this was unacceptable and recommended a conversation with the Practice Manager to provide reasonable adjustments for the patient.

Following our advice, the GP surgery agreed to complete a home visit, and the client has now been able to access GP services going forward.

Without Shelley sharing her client's experiences with us, we would never have known about this issue.



Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have increased our face to face engagement, attended more outreaches and spoke to more members of the public than ever.. This allows us to understand the full picture, and provides us with information to feed back to services to improve.

Improving Maternity Services in Rotherham

In early 2023, we were tasked by our local Health Select Commission (HSC) to find out about Rotherham residents experiences with Rotherham Maternity Services, with any recommendations and improvements helping to shape their future work plan.

We focused on mothers who had given birth in the past 6 months in Rotherham, and used a combination of in-person and online engagement to collect responses. We created a digital survey and this was sent to a number of services in Rotherham and circulated with their service users. .

The results of the survey showed that all respondents had a positive experience of using Rotherham Maternity Services.

All respondents felt supported by their midwife/healthcare professional in the first few weeks after giving birth.

Overall, this was a positive report; however, there were some negative comments regarding a lack of antenatal classes, lack of mental health support during pregnancy and appointments for various issues being spread out in both distance and time, making them inconvenient.

Key Recommendations:

- Offer antenatal classes for parents who want this additional support
- More mental health support and information offered during pregnancy by services
- Appointments grouped together to avoid patients having to travel to different parts of Rotherham so much both pre and post-birth



What difference will this make?

The survey's results have shown Rotherham Maternity services the importance of listening to the public and hearing about their feedback and experiences. The survey showed that women wanted more interactive, in-person antenatal classes during their pregnancies. The midwifery department has taken note of the remarks and indicated interest in working with Healthwatch Rotherham to conduct patient experience surveys in their department.

“Thank you to Healthwatch for conducting this survey, it is really helpful. It helps us improve and provides really good information and feedback. I know it is small number, but we really feel value these findings. I look forward to working with you to help to improve these services.”

Sarah Petty – Head of Midwifery and Nursing, TRFT



Improving access to Defibrillators in Rotherham

In September 2022, we were alerted to an incident in Rotherham town centre where a resident was having a medical incident that required a defibrillator. The nearest defibrillator was behind a locked gate, despite it being advertised as available 24/7. We began to investigate the defibrillators in Rotherham town centre, where they were located and who was responsible for them. Upon looking, we were able to see a number of defibrillators registered in Rotherham Town Centre. Unfortunately, almost half of these were showing as 'not available now' despite being advertised as 24/7 accessibility. We decided to contact those listed as being responsible for them, which was mainly Rotherham Council.

What happened:

We were able to get in touch with a local councillor in Rotherham who has been successfully campaigning locally to get an additional 10 defibrillators in his local area. He has also pushed for any future large housing developments in Rotherham to incorporate a defibrillator into the development.

Through our contact at the council, we were able to pass on our findings regarding accessing defibrillators to Rotherham Council, and ensure that they implemented 'guardians' to check on the defibrillators weekly.

We also compiled a report which highlighted where all the defibrillators are in Rotherham Town Centre, including photos to help people easily locate them. The report also highlighted what a defibrillator is and what it is used for. In addition to this, we created some leaflets highlighting how local businesses could buy a defibrillator, the benefits of owning one and training available to increase confidence in using one.

What difference will this make?

As part of the improving lives commission, Rotherham Council reviewed how defibrillators were checked and a system was put in place to check defibrillators going forwards. There is ongoing work to identify more defibrillators which would come under the responsibility of RMBC.

Rotherham Council has organised with member services some defibrillator training for all councillors. This will give the councillors the opportunity to ask questions around defibrillators and purchase and fitting these in the community.

In November 2022, a motion was presented to the Council to look to create a By Law which would make it a specific offence in the Rotherham Borough to tamper, damage or remove a defibrillator. As of June 2023, this is something that is actively being pushed to the Overview and Management Scrutiny Board.



There has been a number of actions around lifesaving equipment since issues around defibrillators were raised by Healthwatch Rotherham

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.

Highlighting Long Covid issues



In the summer of 2022, we decided to look into Long Covid. At this stage, Long Covid was still a relatively new condition that people were living with, as a result of Covid-19. Due to this, it was less known by medical professionals and there were limited local services to help people with Long Covid. We spoke to a small group of Rotherham residents who highlighted issues around diagnosis, communication with services and issues with employment, relationships and social life. We listened to their experiences and provided some recommendations to services, particularly highlighting the need for more awareness on Long Covid for employers to ensure employees were being supported and not penalised.

Let's Talk events:



For the past three years we have run online 'Let's Talk' events, in a bid to stay connected to our community. As we emerge from the pandemic, we have begun holding in-person events in addition to our online events. The events are open to both the public and professionals, and guest speakers attend to discuss a specific topic, with attendees having the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Previous topics have included suicide, loneliness, cancer, diabetes, COPD and TB. The events also allow us to highlight the fantastic local services residents can access.

Improving care over time



Healthwatch Rotherham engages closely with local services to ensure Rotherham residents are receiving the best mental health support. We discovered that both adults and children were worried about the long waits to use mental health services in Rotherham. A digital service called 'Kooth' was commissioned by Rotherham Council off the back of our report, to provide increased mental health support for young people in Rotherham.

Additionally, in 2022, we conducted Let's Talk sessions and engagement sessions with people around Rotherham to encourage them to maintain good mental health. We also created a service booklet and online directory for residents to inform them of the various mental health services offered both locally and nationally.

This year, we aim to interact more with young people in Rotherham to determine what is working well with local mental health services, what could be improved, and what young people want to see from services going forward. We will do this through local outreaches and events, online engagement and building relationships with local services.



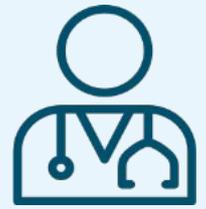
Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Attending outreach events in different areas of Rotherham, working with services such as REMA and Shiloh
- Creating and hosting information and signposting events at local libraries with community link workers in attendance, to speak with local residents
- Fed back to local services the feedback given to us by members of the public, through service meetings and our reports
- Created in-person and online Let's Talk events to give members of the public an opportunity to speak with services about important issues

Accessing Primary Care with English as an additional language



Through some of our outreaches in 2022 and 2023, we heard from services and service users that they were struggling to access GP services due to language barrier issues.

We created a survey, using mainly in-person engagement, to reach the audience we wanted. We visited a variety of local services and ensured there was a translator if needed to assist in completing the surveys.

We found that respondents struggled to book medical appointments due to language issues, as well as attend appointments. We found there was a lack of translators available to patients, particularly when trying to book appointments.

Patients wanted more translator availability, translated documents/leaflets and more understanding and patience from staff.

We passed these comments onto the ICB, who stated that following the recommendations, they will work with translation providers and general practices to make improvements to services.



Spotlight Shares on Rotherham Services:

In 2022, we decided to create bi-weekly 'Spotlight Shares' to publish on our website, in our monthly newsletter and on social media. These 'Spotlight Shares' allowed people from the outreaches and events we attend to share their feedback and experiences on services they have recently accessed.

Starting this project ensured we could speak to a number of people from different communities, including those from seldom heard backgrounds, as we attend a variety of different outreaches in a number of different areas of Rotherham.

The comments and feedback received were anonymous, and allowed people to be truly honest about their experiences. We encouraged people to share both positive and negative experiences. These short case studies were then published, and the feedback received was passed on to the relevant services to inform them and help them to improve the patient experience. Additionally, any themes or patterns we noticed from the feedback helped to shape our future projects, reports and work plan.



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch 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 finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Developing a Service Booklet to inform people of local services they can access
- Helping people access the services they need through information and signposting via telephone, email and outreaches
- Providing information on local events and news from other services
- Providing more face to face opportunities to speak with us

Helping residents provide feedback to services:

We run an information and signposting service to all clients. We can be accessed via social media, telephone, e-mail and our website. We also attend a number of different events including the Rotherham Show, and outreaches, to ensure that people can access us face to face to provide feedback on services.

The most common issues that we hear about are GP complaints, Rotherham Hospital A&E wait times, registering with a dentist, dental appointment wait times and adult social care complaints.

We signpost clients to various local and national services, with our most common signposting being to NHS England, the Patient Experience Team at Rotherham Hospital, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and the Absolute Advocacy Team.

We note down common themes from feedback and pass these onto services at our regular meetings to make them aware and give them opportunity to improve the patient experience.. These themes also help us shape future reports and projects.

Helping residents find the best health and social care service for their needs:

In 2022, we published a service booklet that highlighted local and national services available to people in a variety of areas. This included emergency care, urgent care, mental health services, adult social care services and children and young people's services amongst others.

We found that there was not a comprehensive local service booklet available to people in Rotherham, which was our main drive to create one. We wanted to include the main local services in South Yorkshire, and for the guide to be simple and easy to read. We also wanted to cater for those new to the country, who may not know how England's health and social care systems work, or who to contact in an emergency. For this reason, we made sure to include well-known numbers such as '999' and NHS '111'.

The guide was created in a PDF format, allowing it to be accessed digitally, as well as via physical copies. Having physical copies of the guide ensures those without internet can access the contents, as well as allowing us to adapt this into other formats such as Easy Read and translated into other languages when requested.

We have had some great feedback on the booklet from both residents and professionals, and hope to create more in-depth directories on specific topics in the future.



Volunteering

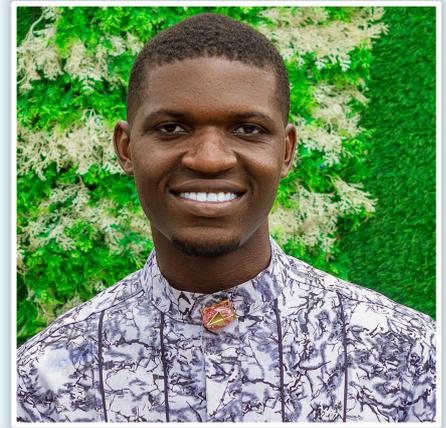
We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Attended events and outreaches such as the Rotherham Show to promote Healthwatch Rotherham and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and feedback from Rotherham Hospital, and supported local residents to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local care homes to help them improve
- Helped structure our work plan to ensure we are meeting our targets and providing the best service possible

Anointed

"I joined Healthwatch as a volunteer to give back to the community, by helping to promote health and social care services in Rotherham. I have gained valuable skills, knowledge and connections, whilst contributing to my future career in public health. Healthwatch Rotherham has given me the opportunity to carry out community engagement to improve services for local people



Anointed has recently been awarded the Chevening Gold Award at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for volunteering 100 hours with Healthwatch whilst studying at University in Sheffield. This is a fantastic achievement for Anointed and a reflection of his hard work with our service. Anointed volunteered with us weekly and helped answer enquiries from the public, as well as attending outreaches and events to promote Healthwatch and speak with local people and services.



Alison

"Since volunteering for Healthwatch Rotherham, I have assisted on managing stalls at local events, which has been great to have face to face contact with the public, talking about what Healthwatch does and signposting them to services. I have also undertaken two Enter and View inspections in local care homes, which gives a voice to residents regarding their experience and provides meaningful feedback".



Do you feel inspired?

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

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

 01709 717130

 info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk

Finance and future priorities

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

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£108,910	Expenditure on pay	£84,976
Additional income		Non-pay expenditure	£7,839
		Office and management fee	£29,551
Total income	£108,910	Total expenditure	£122,387

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Listen to individuals providing & receiving care to support reforms in services by working with partners in health and social care, including care homes.
2. Work with significant organisations and stakeholders to support and implement changes to health and care services.
3. To improve the access and delivery of health and care services, listen to and gather the viewpoints and experiences of people who can be hard to reach.



Statutory statements

Citizens Advice Rotherham and District are the host organisation for Healthwatch Rotherham.

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 Board consists of four 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. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 10 times and made decisions on matters such as signing the collaboration agreement between other Healthwatch organizations in the South Yorkshire to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area

- We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities:
- We analyse all of the comments that the public gives us directly or that we learn about when we undertake public engagement.
- We observe recurring trends in enquiries we receive and in our project work.
- We conducted surveys to figure out residents' preferences.

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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

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, conducting a research to understand barriers to accessing health and social care services and shared findings with the ICB for their action.

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 mailed to various health and social care organizations for wider reading and dissemination.

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 Healthwatch England Committee, so 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 insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example we take information to Health Select Commission meetings, patient experience forums and primary care delivery groups. The results of our study on defibrillators prompted a motion to be made to the Council to propose drafting a bylaw that would make tampering with, damaging, or removing a defibrillator in the Rotherham Borough a particular offence.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Enter and view

This year, we made 2 Enter and View visits. We made 8 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Athorpe Lodge Care Home	This facility offers step-down nursing beds from the hospital. As a result, the council has an interest to find out about the experiences of patients who have been discharged from the hospital and returned home following a period of rehabilitation or reablement.	Wrote a report with recommendations and sent this to the care home manager. The recommendations were minimal and the service will follow up on these
Ashton Court Care Home	The council was curious to learn about the thoughts and opinions of the residents and employees at this care home, which is rated "Requires Improvement" by the CQC.	Wrote a report with recommendations and sent to the care home manager. Care Home manager to follow up on these and improve the service for residents.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Rotherham is represented on the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board by the Healthwatch Rotherham Manager. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by providing the insight and evidence to highlight the issues that matter most to Rotherham residents. In addition we have contributed to discussions about the Health and Wellbeing strategy

Healthwatch Rotherham has contributed to develop ICB South Yorkshire strategy by voicing people's view through 'What Matters to You' campaign.

2022–2023 Outcomes

Project / activity	Changes made to services
How Rotherham residents access Health and Social Care Information	Multi-service digital inclusion review to develop a strategy to improve digital inclusion
Healthwatch Rotherham animation	More awareness of our service and how to access us
In-Person 'Let's Talk' events	More awareness of important topics such as dementia and cancer for Rotherham residents, as well as more awareness of local services for help and support. A chance to engage with more local communities, reach a wider audience and improve accessibility.



healthwatch Rotherham

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