



Speaking up for better care

Healthwatch Trafford annual report 2025/26

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Chris McCann
**Acting Chief Executive
Healthwatch England**

“

The NHS plays a vital role in our lives, and we know it faces real challenges. Listening to people’s thoughts about their care is one of the best ways to improve services. Every comment, concern, and compliment helps health and care professionals see what works and what needs to change, so care can be safer and better for everyone.

“We want to say a heartfelt thanks to all the local people who have taken the time to share their experiences, and to the health and social care professionals who have listened and acted on that feedback. Your commitment has helped make a real difference for our community.”

A message from our chair

This year has been one of change both within Healthwatch Trafford itself, and within NHS and social care arising from government reforms. This has meant that we have had to be flexible in terms of the work we do and how we go about it.

We are extremely lucky in that we have an excellent relationship with our locality board who value our work and input. We have also been described by our health scrutiny committee as their 'eyes and ears'. Joint working with Public Health has been exemplary with much of our work related to the NHS 'left shift' preventative priorities.

We have been very vocal in calling for more district nurses and palliative care and we are pleased to say that our representations, along with others, has resulted in the equivalent of an additional 10 district nurses and expanding palliative care to cover 7 days a week.

We have been undertaking surveys and focus groups with two of our neighbourhoods. This work simply serves to illustrate the diversity of our populations, local priorities and the need to listen and learn from our residents. Linked to this has been our research on Live Well. We have also worked with our VCFSE partners in relation to Changing Futures – a programme which links our most vulnerable people with services through providing support and allowing them space and time to do this.

Access to GPs is a long running complaint. We believe that the establishment of Patient Participation Groups allows a more accurate interpretation of patients' views. We have had excellent feedback from patients which, so far, points to high levels of satisfaction in terms of accessibility and quality of service.

We believe that going forward there is a need to preserve the independence of Public and Patient feedback in order to improve services and to give a voice to those who might not otherwise be heard.

“We have a challenging but exciting programme of work going forward and look forward to working with our partners to make Trafford one of the best places to live in the North West!”



Chair, Heather Fairfield

About us

Healthwatch Trafford is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that health and social care leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

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



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

Our year in numbers

In 2025/2026 we supported people to have their say and get information about their care. We employed 4 staff and, our work was supported by 25 volunteers.



Reaching out:

2916 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

17,038 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as hospital care, maternity and infant feeding provision, and waiting times.



Championing your voice:

We published **15** surveys and **4** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like parental mental health and patient participation groups, and conducted **1** Enter & View visit.



Statutory funding:

We're funded by Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council. In 2025/26 we received **135,600**, which is the same as last year.

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Trafford. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

Our Pathways to CAMHS report featured in action plans across Greater Manchester, and our recommendations were considered by NHS GM when reviewing changes to ADHD and autism assessment pathways.

Our 'Evaluation of Feel Good Partington & Healthier, Happier Me' report found improved tailored outcomes.



Summer

Our work on the GP Choice project contributed to Healthwatch England's report on the 'Choice Gap' and the recommendations made.



Evaluation of the Changing Futures Project enabled us to analyse and highlight the key challenges and successes of the project. This formed part of the evidence used to secure additional funding beyond the pilot phase.

Autumn

We presented the findings of our listening event with Deaf residents to the Fairer Trafford Partnership. This facilitated key staff from MFT looking at how to develop training with partner agencies and incorporate it into AIS training.

Our Patient Participation Group report was presented at the Locality Board and Trafford Participation Group, fed into Trafford's Participation Strategy, and influenced our re-design of the Enter & View programme



Winter

Delamere Medical Centre implemented recommendations from our E&V visit, including launching their PPG.



The Trafford Locality Plan 25/28 was formally supported at the Trafford Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2026. This included and was influenced by our work on the needs and experiences of seldom heard residents.

Working together for change

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

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



A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:

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



A big conversation:

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

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



Building strong relationships to achieve more:

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

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

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time. Here are some examples of our work in Trafford this year:



Giving practices a better view

Our Enter & View at Delamere Medical Practice helped highlight what patients really need.

The findings led to practical changes such as improvements to communication with patients, better visibility of information in the practice, and updates to notice boards to ensure patients could access clearer and more relevant information about services and support available to them. As a result of the feedback gathered, there was renewed attention placed on launching and developing an active Patient Participation Group (PPG), helping create stronger opportunities for patients to contribute to discussions about how services are delivered and improved.



Working together in Trafford

Working with other experts in Trafford for better care.

Trafford Council asked us to deliver a project on people's wellbeing in Sale and Partington. We collaborated with Trafford Council's Public Health team and Age UK, and their feedback and expertise were used to refine and streamline the project and ensure the outcomes would be relevant to all involved, particularly Trafford Council in designing their Live Well offering.



Improving care over time

Our CAMHS report with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester continues to feed into meetings and service design.

We presented our report at the Children's Commissioning Board, Thrive in Trafford, and the All Age Mental Health Board. This has provided us with an opportunity to influence decisions in relation to our recommendations. The findings of the report were also considered as part of work on ADHD and Autism assessment pathways.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Trafford. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Working to make our engagement activities as accessible and inclusive as possible. This includes thinking about accessibility, communication preferences, and any support people may need to take part confidently and meaningfully.
- Seeking out opportunities to engage with younger people across Trafford, recognising the importance of understanding the experiences and priorities of future service users.
- Taking a targeted approach to volunteer recruitment to ensure that our volunteer network better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.



Working with the Deaf Community

During the year, we continued to strengthen our engagement with members of the Deaf community through our work with Trafford Deaf Partnership.

Through targeted engagement and discussions, Deaf community members shared valuable feedback about communication barriers, accessibility issues and the changes they would like to see across local services.

What difference did this make?

We ensured that the views and experiences shared through this work were captured and fed back to relevant organizations and decision-makers. We presented the findings of our listening event with Deaf residents to the Fairer Trafford Partnership. This facilitated key staff from MFT looking at how to develop training with partner agencies and incorporate it into AIS training.

Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into Enter and View

Over the past year, we have taken steps to strengthen the way equality, diversity and inclusion are considered within our Enter and View programme

We introduced specific questions and areas of enquiry designed to understand how services meet the needs of diverse communities and whether people can access services in a way that is appropriate for them. This includes considering the experiences of people with mobility needs, sensory impairments, hearing loss, visual impairments, learning disabilities, and more.

What difference did this make?

By embedding these considerations into our Enter and View methodology, we have been able to give practices more practical feedback to help them make tangible changes. In the case of Delamere Medical Practice, the practice acted on patient's specific needs to improve their experience, such as introducing both visual and verbal patient call-ins and displaying informational health content on a screen in the waiting room.

Information and signposting

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

This year 17,038 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services. These conversations also help us to understand where, and how, your care can be made better.

This year, we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



From the Trafford Community

The below narrative gives just a few examples of some of the issues, themes and trends that we have heard about from Trafford residents over the course of the year:

Dentistry: We continued to hear from people who were struggling with dental care, including over 50 who had been removed from the NHS list at a local practice without notice.

Maternity and infant feeding: We had mixed feedback around maternity care and infant feeding, with some people praising the ease with which they accessed services, including the clear signposting by hospital staff, and others reporting missed conditions, and a lack of care and consideration for pre-existing issues, eroding trust between patients and practitioners.

Hospitals: While we heard a great deal of positive feedback around hospital care, we also heard from people who were concerned about discharge with no care plan, parking issues, and a feeling that they were not listened to by staff across clinical and administrative departments.

Waiting times: Several people reported waiting for months for appointments or clinic letters, during which time their conditions did not improve or worsened. Waiting times also remain a concern for people trying to access CAMHS, and we heard from one parent whose own mental health had been affected while waiting for support.

Joined-up care: Many residents' experiences were affected by a need for better joined-up care, with lack of continuity or communication between services central to the issue.

Communication: A recurring issue across services seemed to be a difficulty getting in touch with providers via email or telephone, even to book appointments or gain access to support. When people were able to speak to services, they reported problems with staff behaviour and not being listened to, in one case leading to a hospitalisation.



“The staff are all great but you can't get to see them. ... It took 10 months from asking for a meds review to seeing a consultant. And it will be another 6-8 months before I can get the tests done to make the decision. In the mean time, I am ill every day.”

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given over 200 hours to support our work. Their involvement enabled us to increase our reach within communities and ensured that engagement activity remained community-led and informed by lived experience.

This year, our volunteers:

- Were a core part of our Enter & View work, contributing to planning and acting as Authorised Representatives on the day.
- Supported engagement at community events, promoted surveys, gathered feedback from residents
- Attended partnership meetings
- Contributed to quality assurance processes through the Reader's Panel



At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

Alison



"I've recently started volunteering with Healthwatch Trafford, and so far, have helped with an admin project, and taken part in an over 50's focus group. I look forward to more of the same, and really hope I can help to make a difference, especially with regards to older people's health and wellbeing"

Ange



"When I applied to volunteer for Healthwatch Trafford, I knew my skills were mainly desk-based. Recently, I was asked to do a task which required online research. I really enjoyed doing this task which suited me down to the ground and felt a sense of satisfaction on completion."

A word of thanks from our Chief Officer



"Our volunteers are incredibly valuable to our work. We are a small team with limited resource and the help of volunteers allows us to do far more work than we would otherwise. I am extremely thankful for the enthusiasm and desire to make a difference that our volunteers bring to our work; it's a reminder for all of us about why we do this and is inspirational."

Chief Officer, Andrew Latham

Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.healthwatchyourname.co.uk



0123 456 78



Email@email.com

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Trafford Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£135,600	Expenditure on pay	£115,096
Additional income	£0	Non-pay expenditure	£18,639
		Office and management fee	£4,915
Total income	£135,600	Total Expenditure	£138,650

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across Greater Manchester also receive funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
To enable and coordinate the 10 Healthwatch across Greater Manchester to work collaboratively as a critical friend to the ICS— coordinating public insight across localities, producing GM-wide intelligence reports and embedding the peoples voice of GM in system governance.	£99,000

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences. We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Reablement (as part of a wider project on Discharge to Assess)
2. Oral care in under-5s
3. Live Well - Researching access to activities to improve health and wellbeing

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Trafford, VCAT Shared Space Initiative, Arndale House, Suite C
4th Floor, Chester Road, Stretford, Manchester, England, M32 9BH

Healthwatch Trafford 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 voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities.

Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2025/26, the Board met 6 times. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2025/26, we have been available by phone and email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, submit it to Trafford Locality Board and submit it to the publicly available Healthwatch England Reports Library..

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had 1 provider who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we meet regularly with our ICB and Local Authority leads on health and social care and take information to Trafford Locality Board, Trafford Clinical Practitioner Senate, Trafford Provider Collaborative Board and Trafford Health and Well Being Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Trafford. For example, we attend Trafford Health Scrutiny Committee, Trafford Children's Commissioning Board and Trafford ICP Participation Group. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Trafford is represented on the Trafford Health and Wellbeing Board by our Chair of Directors, Heather Fairfield.

During 2025/26, our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings and ensuring the public voice is heard., including raising the issue of palliative care funding and the need for more investment.

Healthwatch Trafford is represented on Trafford Integrated Care Partnership and Trafford Integrated Care Board (Trafford Locality Board) by the Chair of Directors, Heather Fairfield.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
GP Practice – Delamere Medical Practice	Time elapsed since CQC rating, notable amount of patient feedback received.	Published a report with recommendations – the service followed up on These and made changes to improve the patient experience.

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Palliative Care Project and District Nurses	The findings from our palliative care project and our representations, along with others, has resulted in the equivalent of an additional 10 district nurses and expanding palliative care to cover 7 days a week.
Parental Mental Health Project	This project re-examined an issue which we had investigated in 2022. Our report found continuity rather than significant change. A majority of respondents reported experiencing mental health difficulties around the birth of their child, most commonly low mood and anxiety. We recommended continued monitoring, clear communication and recognition of the role of community and preventative support.

Healthwatch Trafford

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