

Performance Report

October – November – December 2024

Activities during reporting period October – December '24

RESEARCH

- The joint Healthwatch in Greater Manchester **Pathways to CAMHS** report has been released and we have set to work sharing the report as widely as possible and presenting this report at events. This includes presenting the report at the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester Conference and to Youth Focus's Bee Heard group. We have heard from many members of the public that the findings of the report resonate with their experiences. We also received responses to the report from local NHS Trusts; these have been published online, alongside the report.
- Data gathering and analysis is now complete for the **Accessible Information Standard** project conducted by our summer intern. A draft report has been written and we hope to release the final report in January.
- We successfully relaunched the **Sexual Health** Healthwatch 100 survey and shared this widely in partnership with Trafford Council's Public Health Team. A report is currently being prepared which we hope to release by the end of January.
- Preparations have been continuing through our partnership with Trafford Health and Social Care on the **Discharge to Assess** project. We hope to begin our data gathering stage of this project in the coming months. This will include surveys and interviews with both patients and professionals.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Our current overarching focus is on reviewing and updating the **organisational handbook**, including flagging policies and procedures for review.
- We supported the release of the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester **CAMHS** report by producing a communications plan, social media images, press release, and website information, to be used and shared by the network. We also fielded feedback and enquiries from professionals.
- We have been assisting with our intern's project on **Accessible Information Standards**, and produced a standalone document outlining our observations at Trafford General.
- We presented our public engagement research for the **Trafford Locality Plan Refresh** at Trafford Participation Group and answered questions from group members. This work, undertaken at the request of Trafford Council has been included within the draft Locality

Plan Refresh and it is expected to be signed off by Trafford Locality Board in January 2025.

- A new **information pack** for prospective board members was created and shared, giving a brief overview of ourselves and our recent work in advance of application.

VOLUNTEERING

- Our volunteers contributed **45 hours** of time between October and December.
- Volunteers attended workshops, open days, a conference, and our end of year get-together.

ENGAGEMENT

- As part of our HW100: Sexual Health project, we held a **drop-in session** at UA92 Student Wellbeing Fair to promote our Sexual Health Survey in October. BHA for Equality honoured our invitation to help support the session by distributing sexual health information resources, condoms, and lubricants.
- We attended the **Trafford Deaf Partnership** meeting in November where an update about our projects was shared. An opportunity for members of the group to take part in Manchester NHS Foundation Trust's PLACE Assessment (as volunteer assessors) was mentioned at the meeting.
- We had a stall at the **Carers Rights Day** in Stretford in November. Over 50 people were engaged at our stall with some people signposted to support services.
- We had a stall at a drop-in at Limelight Wellbeing Hub in November, which was part of several health testing and advice drop-in sessions during **Greater Manchester HIV Testing Week**. We promoted our HW100 Sexual Health Survey and signposted people to support services.
- We presented the report on Pathways to CAMHS at the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester **Listen for Change Conference** in November. This conference was attended by our staff, volunteers, Local Authority representatives and NHS ICB leaders.
- We had stall at the Delamere Medical Practice **Open Day** for professionals and patients in November. It was a well-attended event that gave us an opportunity to make ourselves known to the patients of the practice and to give out information.
- We spoke to South Asian women at the **Cervical Cancer Awareness Event** organized by Answer Cancer UK at Limelight Wellbeing Hub in December. People present at the event were given information about what we do, our current projects and how to get in touch with us.

From the Trafford community

One of our statutory duties is to signpost people to services.

- There appeared to be some barriers to care for patients with allergies needing COVID boosters. An individual needing to source alternative COVID vaccines for at-risk family members with allergies struggled to get care due to a lack of available information, and neither their GP nor several local charities were able to signpost them. Following the guidance published by the NHS online, we contacted the Greater Manchester vaccination hub and were initially told that several Trafford GPs and community pharmacies were offering Pfizer as standard. However, when the individual tried to contact the locations in advance, they were told that there was no stock or no available appointments. Eventually they were able to access the much-needed jabs, but the incident highlighted the importance of accurate and up-to-date information on available vaccines as well as ensuring that patients can find that information when needed.
- We continue to hear from people looking for advocacy, most often for help giving feedback.
- We heard mixed feedback regarding GP services handling mental health issues, with two residents describing feeling dismissed, although one stated that the surgery did well when they returned for the same concern a second time.
- Residents offered positive feedback about local GPs and pharmacies, noting the ease with which they accessed vaccinations, the availability of face-to-face appointments, and 'amazing' staff.
- We received several comments about urgent care from Trafford hospitals, including positive feedback: staff across the sites were praised for being 'excellent', 'professional', and 'friendly'. However, one resident was frustrated at being redirected to A&E due to lack of available staff.

Strategic updates

We continue to represent Healthwatch in Greater Manchester (HWinGM) at the ICB System and Quality Group. At its November meeting, the main item related to winter pressures.

We linked into Healthwatch England's one day London conference in November. The afternoon session was devoted to ADHD which, of course, was timely from Trafford's point of view as we had launched the Care Pathway to CAMHS research project which we had undertaken on behalf of HWinGM as a commissioned piece of work. This was followed by the HWinGM conference at Friends Meeting House where the day comprised two main issues – children's mental health and cancer. This well attended conference allowed us to showcase our Trafford report which has been well received by providers who have committed to working with HWinGM to take forward our recommendations. The GMHW central team is now following this up. We were fortunate enough to listen to two people's lived experience. One lady had adopted two autistic children, and her recital of her journey served very well to illustrate the problems we discovered. A gentleman who was in the palliative stage of his cancer journey recounted his experiences.

Mark Fisher (Chief Executive, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care) and Warren Heppollette (Chief Officer for Strategy & Innovation, NHS Greater Manchester) gave keynote speeches talking about the need to listen to what service users are telling them. From a HWinGM perspective it was difficult to see how the ICB had acted upon some of the messages we have been sending through countless reports over the years.

One of the issues of concern in relation to our children's mental health project is how these recommendations are going to be pursued both at a Trafford level and at a GMICB level. To date, we have had no feedback from Trafford although we have had a written response from the ICB.

We will ask the Health and Wellbeing Board to discuss the report but our recommendations impact on a variety of commissioner and provider groups in our locality. It is difficult to see how the responsibility to take this research seriously is going to be addressed as there are recommendations which affect all partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors. We had similar issues last year with our report on Young People's Digital Mental Health Report which is the first step on the care pathway to CAMHS.

As you know, we are a small team and the Care Pathway to CAMHS research took 6 months to develop as it involved 10 localities in GM comprising surveys, focus groups and documenting people's lived experience. This was interspersed by our work with public health in relation to vaping where we analysed 6000 responses from children and young people as well as continuing to progress our annual workplan for the Council.

The emotional toll on staff working with service users cannot be underestimated. We know that across Greater Manchester, staff working on our CAMHS care pathway have been deeply affected by some of the stories they have heard, even to the extent of having to withdraw from this research.

We reported earlier this year that we had again been successful in recruiting a Manchester University student to undertake an 8-week study. This year the topic selected was Accessible Information Standards. Whilst on the face of it this may seem like a 'dry' subject, it nevertheless is of significant importance as communication is constantly raised by the public as a barrier to accessing the care they need. The intern's report provided a mixed picture. Amongst providers visited, pharmacies, hospitals, GPs and Dentists were all familiar with AIS, although there was a consistent lack of written information available which clearly impacts a significant number of vulnerable people who have no access to the internet. Conversely, 79% of patients reported never being denied information. Large print is the most commonly used method and braille the least. Our survey reported that 27% of people said that additional support was sometimes or always available.

Early in 2024, we worked with public health to survey young people regarding sexual health. We had a poor response, so we decided to re-launch the survey asking young people how they access sexual health information. Initial results point to family planning clinics, but work is underway to analyse the HW100 responses which numbered around 100! A report will be published in January 2025.

We are working with the Trafford Collective in relation to their multiple disadvantage project and we have signed our grant agreement which commits us to doing our part of this work over the next year.

We are in the process of finalising our grant agreement with the Council. As in previous years, we will look to boost our income by taking on commissioned work. We will be working with partners over the first 3 months of 2025 to agree our programme of work for 2025/26.

We have continued to provide representation at Trafford groups. A lot of effort has gone into developing the sustainability and locality plans involving all partners. One suspects that these will require ongoing amendment as and when the government's long-term plan is produced in the spring. At Healthwatch we are awaiting the second iteration of the Penny Dash report which will likely herald changes for national Healthwatch. As reported previously, Healthwatch England is recommending that it becomes the commissioner of local Healthwatch. How that is to be achieved is not yet known or over what time period.

In the meantime, we go into 2025 with optimism! Happy New Year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heather', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath it.

Heather

