



Help The  
NHS Get Fit for  
the Future –  
pages 5 & 6

Inform

Newsletter

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**Inform.  
Involve.  
Influence.  
Independent.**

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0161 974 0753

078710 89100 (text service only)

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# Happy Christmas From Our Chief Exec

**Welcome to the Winter edition of Healthwatch Stockport's INFORM!**

As we look forward to the festive season, the team (Board Members and Staff) at Healthwatch Stockport sends heartfelt wishes for a joyful and peaceful time to you!

This issue is packed with updates, highlighting the important work we've been doing, including: our work on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), our focus on eye care, our expanding team and more.

Before you dive in, I'll reflect on some key highlights of 2024 that have shaped our work and amplified the voices of Stockport residents:

**Early 2024:** We completed our joint review of day care services and started our 'Hospital to Home' research. We engaged with you at our Healthwatch Network event, identifying priorities for our 2024/2025 work programme.

**Spring:** We collaborated with all ten Greater Manchester Healthwatch to explore experiences of CAMHS (see page 6). We supported the Stockport Learning Disability Conference, strengthening our commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

**Summer:** We co-hosted the successful Making it Real conference with Stockport Council, promoting community empowerment and introduced the Co-chairs of the Stockport Partnerships, all with Lived Experience (see page 10). We've published our Home after Hospital Report and supported many community events engaging directly with residents at the Family Hub days; listening to their views whilst sharing how we can help. We also presented our second Mental Health report, ensuring your voices shape decision-making.

**Autumn:** We expanded our team, welcoming new members; Suzi and Maya (see page 4). We proudly supported NHS Greater Manchester to plan and deliver their Fit for the Future event, to hear your views about the future of the NHS. There's still chance to have your say (see page 5).

**Winter:** We held a Christmas get together on 11 December where we enjoyed a brew, mince pies and more! (See page 14). We also launched our 'What to Know this Winter' booklet to help you stay well, have you got your copy? (See Page 15).

As 2024 draws to a close, I'm proud of the work we've achieved together. From the positive feedback to the strengthened relationships with our community and voluntary sector partners, it has been a rewarding year.

Heartfelt thanks to our fantastic members, supporters, board, advisory group, and our Healthwatch Stockport team! Here's to an even more impactful 2025! Wishing you a festive season filled with love, peace, and good health.



*Maria Kildunne*

# Good To Meet You Stockport!

In October, we were thrilled to welcome not one, but two new colleagues to the Healthwatch Stockport team; Maya (our Mental Health Engagement Officer) and Suzi (our Volunteer and Communications Coordinator)!

They're already proving a fantastic asset to our team. We're really looking forward to sharing what they've been involved in, in the near future.



## #TeamHealthwatch

Over the last few months, we've been out and about across Stockport – connecting with people who work and live in the borough, and listening to your feedback and experiences of local health and social care. We've supported open days, pop-ups, community forums, events and more. Here's just a sample:



We're massively proud to have been to the **Mental Health Collaborative**, the **Stockport volunteer Fair**, **Stockport Family Hubs events**, we joined the **Stockport Car scheme's AGM** and **Stockport County Community Trust Health and Wellbeing strategy** event, we supported **Stockport's Dementia strategy** and public engagement around the **NHS Greater Manchester Fit for the Future**. We've also been training ourselves up on the **Oliver McGowan Learning Disability and Autism**, **Data Protection**, **First Aid** and **Volunteer reach** training.



**GET IN TOUCH**

We'll continue our efforts to connect with our community in every corner of Stockport. So why not get in touch (contact details on back page) to invite us to your meeting or event?

# Stockport Gets Fit For The Future!

In November, we supported Stockport colleagues in NHS Greater Manchester (GM) to host a public listening event at the Guildhall. As part of a wider GM-wide consultation, we wanted to hear from you about transforming an NHS, Fit for the Future.

The event led by NHS GM, welcomed presentations from Michael Cullen (CEO of Stockport Council), Amanda Rafferty and Philippa Johnson (NHS GM), supported by Maria Kildunne (Healthwatch Stockport). Together they outlined plans for Stockport and GM and didn't shy away from the financial challenges the health and care system are currently facing.

We facilitated 'round table' discussions that enabled people to share what they thought of the plans that were presented, what they thought the system could do differently and how people wanted to be involved and engaged going forward. We finished the afternoon with a Q&A Session so people could ask their burning questions.

## Join the Conversation

By understanding people's views and experiences, NHS GM can plan and deliver health and care services that meet the needs of people and communities in Stockport. The event is part of ongoing work to involve the community in improving health and care for all. Sign up to the Fit for the Future panel for opportunities at [NHS GM website](#).

'NHS Change' is the new government campaign to develop a new National 10 year NHS Health Plan (Find out more on page 6 or call Healthwatch Stockport for details).



**SAVE THE DATE**

## Next Healthwatch Network Event 2025!

Planning for our next Network Forum in March is already underway! Look out for the date popping up in our communications in the New Year, follow us on Instagram, X (Twitter), Facebook. and Linked In.

# Change NHS: A National View

## Help Build A Health Service Fit For The Future

Our NHS has been there for us for over 76 years. But to make sure the NHS is here for the next 76 years, doing all it can to support the health of everyone, they need your help.

Alongside the Greater Manchester Fit for the Future campaign and our recent event in Stockport, everyone in England is also invited to share their views on how NHS services can be made better – so, Stockport, keep having your say!

This feedback campaign has been described as the “biggest ever conversation about the future of the NHS.” It doesn’t matter whether you have a lot or a little to say. Your views, experiences and ideas will shape a new 10 Year Health Plan for England.

Department of Health & Social Care

NHS

HELP BUILD  
**a health service  
fit for the future**

CHANGE

Get involved now  
[change.nhs.uk](https://change.nhs.uk)

### Have Your Voice Heard!

To get involved in the conversation, visit [change.nhs.uk](https://change.nhs.uk). The website will be live until early next year, and via the NHS App.

What’s more, register your email address, to hear more as the 10 Year Health Plan develops. Alternatively, if you’d like to feed your views into Healthwatch Stockport as part of our collective response, please do get in touch (contact details on back page).



Scan the QR  
code to have  
your say

# Tackling Children's Mental Health

Healthwatch in Greater Manchester (GM) released a new report that focuses on the experiences of people accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

This research gathered feedback from all ten GM boroughs from young people, parents, carers, health and education professionals. Almost 1200 stories have contributed to the report, enabling us to better understand and recommend how services can be improved.



## Key Findings



**Main barriers:** wait times, who to contact, appointment availability, communication between staff.



**Difficulties finding out how to get support** including the options.



**Parental role is pivotal** in child's access to care and ensuring progress along the pathway.



**Accessing CAMHS can have an overwhelming impact on health and wellbeing** including negative impact on work and finances.



**Services were disjointed:** missing/incorrect information, parents having to repeat story).



**95% of parents/carers not kept up to date with referral progress.**



Almost 80% of **parent/carers accessed/considered private care.**



**Many waited over 1 year between assessment and intervention:** lack of support had significant impacts, e.g. deteriorating health.



**Professionals call for improvements:** eg. wait times, referral process and more.



**Over 2/3 of professionals said their overall experience was poor.**

## Healthwatch GM Recommendations



Improve awareness of services and how to access support (who they're for).



Provide clear information on what the CAMHS Pathway is and what can be expected.



Action needed to ensure equal access to care pathway (i.e. flexibility of environment and times).



Improve communication and support during waiting period (reduce likelihood of feeling overwhelmed).



Treat parent/carers as equal partners in their child's access to Pathway.



Create Single Point of Entry for Greater Manchester (Reduce frustrations).

## Tackling Children's Mental Health Continued...

NHS GM system leaders are already considering the report data and recommendations to apply this to local mental health strategies. In fact, Stockport Integrated Care System, said.

We're passionate about transforming our offer for children and young people and their families and we know that we've rising demand for our services, and challenges that this brings...

### They're taking extra steps to address the recommendations:

- Working with families and services to ensure the right care.
- Discussing the report at existing governance processes including Stockport SEND Board and Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership, where system partners, parent/carer representatives and Healthwatch attend.
- Reviewing Single Point of Access/Early Help Pathway for CAMHS.
- Ensuring services and offers of support, and how to access them, are widely publicised.

Scan the QR code (digital only) to read the CAMHS report from Healthwatch GM



## Faster Diagnoses, Quicker Treatment

Officially opened on 2 October 2024, in collaboration with InHealth, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust and Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust have launched the new South Manchester Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC).

Patients are now being referred to the facility which aims to enhance access to essential diagnostic tests, facilitating quicker diagnoses and faster treatment.

CDCs are part of the government's initiative to enhance healthcare services. They offer a wide range of elective procedures away from major hospital locations including X-rays, CT scans, MRIs, ultrasound scans and blood tests.

- Swift access to tests leads to quicker diagnoses.
- Shorter waiting times for appointments and test results.
- Improved patient experience - more convenient, comfortable environment for tests.

The centre supports residents in Stockport, Tameside, Glossop and the High Peak. The South Manchester CDC is at Crown Point North, Denton.



**GET IN TOUCH**

Have You Been to the Facility? At Healthwatch Stockport, we've been receiving feedback from patients who've used the centre. We'd love more! What do you think about the service? (Contact details on back page).



# Setting Our Sights On Improving Local Eye Care

As one of our work programmes for 2024/2025 and following community feedback spanning 12 months, we've been focusing our attentions to the 'variation in eye services and its impact on wellbeing, health and lifestyle'.

Eye services emerged as a key theme in response to involving the public in our top priorities at our Network event, via social media and by continually listening to what matters most to Stockport.

We had started work on a comprehensive research programme that aimed to better understand people's experiences and help us to make recommendations for improvements to commissioners and eye care providers/services.



## What we had found out



Concerns about varied access routes to receiving eyecare (NHS via GP or optician).



Access for marginalised communities, housebound and those on lower incomes.



Longer waiting times for referral for services such as diabetic retinopathy and the impact.



Manchester eye hospital waiting area, difficult for those with neurodiversity/Learning disabilities.



Private optical services can use this as an opportunity for audiology upselling.



There is a need to raise awareness of signs and symptoms (of eye conditions) more effectively.



Waiting times for new vision services is 12 months and no established pathways.

However, we've recently learnt that Greater Manchester Integrated Care are reviewing their Ophthalmology Strategy. The draft would appear to address many of the issues raised by Stockport residents. This is fantastic to see! As a result, we've decided to pause our work programme until the strategy is published, when we'll review it to see if this responds fully to the feedback we've received.

**You can still share your feedback with our team. Contact details are on the back page. Your feedback matters!**

# Making It Real Conference

In July, Stockport Council's Adult Social Care team and Healthwatch Stockport hosted the first Making It Real (MIR) Conference at Stockport's Masonic Guildhall.

The purpose of the event, attended by over 100 people, was to demonstrate Stockport's commitment to integrating lived experiences into health and social care, ensuring people are at the heart of all we do. The conference introduced the MIR Board, a group combining individuals with lived experience and practitioners to influence positive changes in social care delivery.



Co-chairs – **Hannah, James, Nina, Michelle, Lydia, Nick and Steve**, all with lived experience from other partnerships (learning disability, mental health, community voice, preparing for adulthood, autism and carers), shared their personal experiences of why they got involved with the One Stockport Health and Care system. Attendees learned about Stockport's working in partnership journey, and plans to put local people at the heart of helping to shape future services.

## Community Priorities and Action Plans

Healthwatch Stockport presented its work plan, which based on our extensive public feedback. Key themes include 3 main areas:

- **Improved Communication:** Addressing issues like inconsistent service updates and lack of accessible information.
- **Better Access:** Tackling barriers in services like ADHD diagnosis, eye care, and neurodiverse patient support.
- **Information Provision:** Exploring physical spaces for reliable social care resources.

Smaller projects will focus on hospital signage, GP practice environments, and reducing service disparities.

## National Impact of Healthwatch:

Will Pett, Head of Policy from Healthwatch England, highlighted the vital role of Healthwatch in driving national reforms, including the Dental Recovery Plan and Accessible Information Standard updates. He emphasised that the power of patient stories and experience is central to addressing NHS inequalities and ensuring that healthcare systems rebuild trust.





# Making It Real Continued....

## Engagement and Feedback:

Interactive workshops facilitated by Sarah Newsam further explored what it means to work in partnership, emphasising the need for transparent language, personalised communication, and streamlined processes. Attendees praised the event’s organisation and the opportunity to network with peers.



## Celebrating Dedication

The conference honoured Mike Lappin, Healthwatch Stockport’s longest-serving member, for decades of advocacy in improving health and social care. More about Mike on page 13.

**One Stockport Health and Care Partnerships**  
In our next issue, look out for more details about how local people are helping to develop and drive plans for better health and care in Stockport.

# Our Lived Experience Network Is Growing!

Last time, we shared information about our Lived Experience Network, which is our 'go-to' network of groups with lived experience for seeking views from those who can actively help us improve health and care services.

Does your group support individuals with conditions like diabetes, dementia, sight or hearing loss, M.E., mental illness, autism, or other long-term conditions? If so, we’d love for you to join our Lived Experience Network! Your group’s insights and ideas can help improve services for everyone.

**How It Works:** Joining is easy and requires no regular commitment. We’ll contact you when we have a relevant project and may ask:

- For your views and experiences about specific health or care services.
- If someone from your group can join a short-term working group.
- If your members can participate in a survey or focus group.

**Why Join?** By joining, you’ll have a direct line to share your group’s concerns, challenges, and successes with those who develop and run health and care services in Stockport. Your input will help shape better services for everyone in the community.

If you’re interested, please call or email us. Not ready to join? That’s fine too—look out for further opportunities in our future publications. Let’s work together to make health and care services better for all.



# Introducing Our New Directors

## Get To Know Us!



**"Being fairly new to Healthwatch Stockport I was really keen to get stuck in and be involved"**

As a Carer and someone with lived experience, **Steve** brings great insight and a wealth of business experience. He was appointed as a Director in March 2024. We appreciate Steve for his common-sense approach. He's always willing to be hands on by offering to review work on our projects or helping us set up at events. Steve has been instrumental in our work around mental health, carers and social care.



**"As a founding member of the Lived Experience Panel and later joining the Advisory Group, I was proud to contribute. When the opportunity to become a Director arose, I was eager to apply."**

With a career in business administration and experience of the health and care system, accompanying her husband to medical appointments across Greater Manchester, **Jan** is passionate about patient access and healthcare navigation. She's always seeking to ask the questions any patient might have along their healthcare journey, ensuring everyone can access and understand the health and care system safely and effectively.

## Meet our Health Advisory Group

Our Healthwatch Advisory Group are your health and social care champions. They're responsible for advising on and guiding Healthwatch Stockport's activity. They're at the heart of all that we do and primarily make up the Influencing part of Healthwatch Stockport.



Mike Lappin  
(Chair)



Sue Carroll



Simon Innes-  
Chadwick



Jan Kitching



Steve Gear



Neisha Fielding



Ruth Turner



David Kirk



Anand Dutta



Mary Edwards



Mike Bailey



Mary Foden



Rosemary  
Wheeler



June Westley

# Mike Lappin: Our Longest Serving Member

Earlier this year we proudly presented a Long Service award to our longest serving member, Mike Lappin. Mike has been a stalwart champion for patient and public involvement since the 1970s, beginning with the Community Health Council, the Patient Forum, through to now, with Healthwatch Stockport since it started in 2012.

In his various roles, **Mike has worked tirelessly, challenging health and social care partners to strive for improvement** and is a public representative in primary health care on many health and care boards. Currently, Mike volunteers as the Chair of the Healthwatch Stockport Advisory Group, where he provides invaluable direction to our work. He's also a member of our Enter and View Team. He has been pivotal in numerous project teams over the years. **Congratulations and thank you** Mike, for everything you continue to do!



## Get Involved With Us

If you're keen to try something new and make a difference, there are ways that you can get involved with us and the variety of work we do.



### Become a Healthwatch Stockport Member

Once you become a member you'll receive our weekly Round-up, our newsletter and invitations to our events. There are opportunities to get even more involved, from sharing your feedback on all aspects of health and social care and aiding our work programmes.

Scan or click the QR code or visit our website to get involved. You can also call or email us (details on back page)



### Share Your Experiences With Us

Our free Information and Advice Service helps you to find out more about Stockport health and care services. We also gather feedback on those local services, so if you've been to see your GP, dentist, hospital or receive social care support, for example, we want to hear your views and experiences. If we spot a common theme, we'll be able to act and create a piece of work to help improve that service. Don't forget to share the positives too, so we can highlight the good practice.

Visit our 'Feedback Centre' on our website, email or call us (contact details on back page). Phone lines to our Information and Advice service are open 10am - 2pm Monday to Friday. Scan the QR code for the 'Feedback Centre'.



# Feeling the Festive Spirit

## Be On Elfwatch For A Chance To Win!

Forget your regular Elf on the Shelf, we're running our own Elfwatch competition this December and one lucky winner from Stockport will receive a £25 gift card!

All you have to do is tell us which Stockport location our cheeky 'Hatter' the Elf is visiting

Why not enjoy your-elf and get fully involved in the competition on Instagram or Facebook?!

All correct guesses will go into a draw to win. We'll announce our winner in January. Good luck everyone and have fun!



## A Sprinkle Of Seasonal Cheer

Together with our neighbours at Stockport Advocacy, we sprinkled some extra festive cheer over a hot cuppa or two and delicious mince pies.

Residents, members and local health and care professionals joined us at the Land O' Cakes. Together, we kickstarted our countdown to Christmas in great spirits with fantastic company, festive music, tasty treats, wearing our Christmas jumpers, and winning raffle prizes!

## Our Opening Hours Over the Holidays

The Healthwatch Stockport office will be closed to the public from on Friday 20 December until Monday 6 January 2025.

We will continue to monitor our inbox and voicemail intermittently during this time in case urgent support is required.



# Winter Health Guidance



## Don't Leave Your Health On The Shelf!

As Winter sets in, your wellbeing needs to take extra priority. From getting your vaccines and medication in good time, to looking after your mental health, we're providing information to help you stay well. See our 'quick' advice sections and visit our socials and website for updates for further wellbeing guidance.

### Vaccinations

If you're eligible, this year there is the option of booking a combined appointment to have the Flu and the Covid vaccines at the same time.

Go to [www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/find-a-pharmacy-that-offers-free-flu-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/find-a-pharmacy-that-offers-free-flu-vaccination)

### Repeat Prescriptions

There are three ways to order a repeat prescription from your GP:

- using your NHS account
- using online services or apps
- contacting your GP surgery

Visit: [www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions/how-to-order-a-repeat-prescription](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions/how-to-order-a-repeat-prescription)

### Warm & Well

'Warm and Well' aims to help residents navigate the cost of living challenges while providing tips for wellbeing over the colder months.

Visit: [www.onestockport.co.uk/warm-and-well-this-winter](http://www.onestockport.co.uk/warm-and-well-this-winter)

There are also schemes to help you with the cost of heating. Find support for this by visiting [www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/cost-of-living-support](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/cost-of-living-support)

### Food Support

If you need an emergency food parcel, there are food banks across Stockport. To access a food bank, you require a voucher. Visit [www.stockport.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/foodbank-vouchers](http://www.stockport.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/foodbank-vouchers)

### Useful Contacts

**NHS 111** - Phone/online for urgent medical help (not emergency), option 2 for mental health crisis.

**Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Helpline** - 0333 332 3800

### Healthwatch 'What To Know This Winter'

Contact us for a copy of our 'Winter Booklet' which offers more advice and guidance to help you and your loved ones!

You can also download a digital copy at: [www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk)



# healthwatch

## Stockport

We are your local health and social care champion.  
If you use GPs, hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services, we want to hear your feedback and experiences, so we can enable you to get the best health and social care and create better services for all.

To us, you come first – especially if you find it hard to be heard elsewhere. How can we be there for you?

### We inform

We provide information and signposting about local health and social care services so you can get the best support.

### We involve

There are many ways you can get involved and share your feedback. Your views help us to better understand what's going well, what isn't and hear what's most important to you.

### We influence

Your feedback helps us to shape services across Stockport for the better. We've already published many reports (see our website) which have positively influenced key decisions and improved services in Stockport.

## Contact us

[info@healthwatchstockport.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchstockport.co.uk)

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