



Speaking up for better care

Healthwatch Rotherham annual report
2025/26

Contents

A message from our Service Manager	2
About us	3
Our year in numbers	4
A year of making a difference	5
Working together for change	6
Making a difference in the community	7
Listening to your experiences	8
Hearing from all communities	11
Information and signposting	13
Showcasing volunteer impact	15
Finance and future priorities	17
Statutory statements	19



**Healthwatch
Rotherham Service
Manager**
Kym Gleeson

“

'This year, Rotherham became a pilot area for delivering health care closer to home. Healthwatch Rotherham made sure we had a seat at key decision-making boards, including the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Rotherham Place Board. Meaning the voices we gather are not only heard but acted upon by service leaders.

We listened to people from all parts of our community, especially those who are often unheard. Through visits, conversations, and surveys, we gathered experiences, common themes, and shared clear feedback and recommendations with health services. By working with local services, we have improved care to Rotherham people..

A message from our CEO

What have we achieved in Rotherham over the last working year?

Here's what you could include:

- We have worked closely with a range of local services and community organisations, including The Rainbow Project, Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA), Rotherham Sight & Sound, Rotherham Parent Carers Forum, Social Supermarket, and Military Community Veterans Centre (MCVC).
- We have acted on feedback to drive change and improve services for people in Rotherham, influencing improvements across Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, and Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust.
- Healthwatch Rotherham has been working collaboratively with other Healthwatch services and has attended ICB Executive Board meetings on behalf of all Healthwatch organisations across South Yorkshire. This has enabled the organisation to advocate for the views and experiences of people across the wider region, not just within Rotherham, ensuring that public voice and lived experience are embedded in decision-making at the highest level.



CEO
Duncan Gall



As the host organisation, I am immensely proud of Healthwatch's impact. By providing a robust, independent platform for public feedback, they have driven critical service improvements, championed health equity, and ensured that the community's voice remains at the absolute heart of local NHS and care decisions.

About us

Healthwatch Rotherham is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS 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 more than 11500 people to have their say and get information about their care. We employed 4 staff and, our work was supported by 7 volunteers.



Reaching out:

1910 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

133 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as **Access to a GP** and **finding an NHS dentist**.



Championing your voice:

We published 78 reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like Mental Health, Veterans Passport, and access to Adult Social Care.

Our most popular report was **Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT): Waiting Well Report**, highlighting people's struggles in **accessing care whilst awaiting a hospital referral or procedure**



Statutory funding:

We're funded by Rotherham Metropolitan Council. In 2025/26 we received £161,260 which is £2 less than last year.

A year of making a difference

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

Spring

We have been working throughout the year with the Oral Health Team part of the RMBC Public health team. This has allowed us to refer our most vulnerable and underrepresented clients to register with an NHS Dentist.

We worked with Headway Rotherham on a report about what it is like living with an Acute Brain Injury. As people often face gaps in understanding, diagnosis, communication, and long-term support.

Summer

We launch the Veterans Health Passport, a small, portable document designed to help former Armed Forces personnel communicate their medical history, service-related conditions, triggers, and care needs to NHS staff more easily.



We responded to feedback on the operational changes to the Acute Medical Unit at Rotherham Hospital and the positive impact those changes have made to Rotherham Residents. .



Autumn

We collaborated with Sight and Sound Rotherham to design communication cards for People who are Hearing and/or Visually impaired. These minor changes amplify patient centered care and make healthcare more accessible.

'Let's Talk' event was held at Rotherham College for breast cancer awareness. Sessions delivered by professionals from TRFT helped students gain knowledge and confidence in understanding their breast health.

Winter

The NHS approved a plan to improve the Waiting Well service to Rotherham people awaiting a procedure or Hospital referral off the back of Healthwatch Rotherham's report on the service.



Healthwatch Rotherham has supported improvements within RMBC Adult Social Care services, contributing to the development of an action plan focused on improving responsiveness, face-to-face support, and the accessibility of the service .

Working together for change

We've worked with neighboring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Rotherham are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services at South Yorkshire Integrated Care System

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch's and other organisations across South Yorkshire to achieve the following:



A collaborative network of local

Healthwatch: Healthwatch Rotherham has been working collaboratively with other Healthwatch services and has attended ICB Executive Board meetings on behalf of all Healthwatch organisations across South Yorkshire. This has enabled the organisation to advocate for the views and experiences of people across the wider region, not just within Rotherham.



A big conversation:

As part of the ongoing commitment to improving care, the Department of Health and Social Care worked with Healthwatch England to bring together local Healthwatch organisations from across the UK through an online event. The session enabled meaningful discussions around the remit, challenges, and resources of the new NHS Trust currently being developed, in line with statutory requirements set out in law.



Building strong relationships to achieve

more: We have attended Enter and Views visits at GP practices, TRFT, pharmacies, and care homes. These visits were carried out in response to feedback and concerns raised by members of the public. Following each visit, we published reports outlining our findings and made recommendations to the services on areas for improvement. Working in partnership with the public, partners and stakeholders to help ensure the best possible care is provided.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

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 Rotherham this year:



Making life more accessible

We attended Sight and Sound Rotherham, to listen to residents who had experienced an acute brain injury.

After speaking with the group, a key issue identified was that individuals often have to repeatedly explain their communication needs to different healthcare professionals, highlighting a gap in the Accessible Information Standard. To address this, we proposed a communication card that can be used during appointments. The card would outline key details such as the person's condition, communication preferences, and support needs. This acts as a reasonable adjustment, helping professionals understand and respond appropriately. Overall, this approach promotes more accessible, person-centred care by reducing repetition, improving communication, and supporting appropriate adjustments.



Getting services to involve the public

By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.

We carried out a focus report exploring menopause, its impact on women in the workplace, and experiences of accessing support and healthcare services. The findings led to the creation of a system-wide working group led by Health Select Committee, with the aim of making Rotherham a menopause-friendly borough. As a result, a dedicated action plan has been developed to drive improvements, raise awareness, and promote better support for women across local services and workplaces.



Improving care over time

Our contraception insights highlighted disparities in access to services across the system, particularly around long waiting times for contraceptive implants. The findings identified a shortage of appropriately trained staff within primary care, which meant some individuals were unable to access the contraception method that worked best for them and were instead required to seek alternative options. As a result of this work, Healthwatch Select Committee established a working group to address these issues and explore improvements to contraception access across the borough.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. Through this, a range of concerns has been raised, including access to translators, difficulties accessing dental services, and hospital referral waiting times.

People's experiences of health and social care help us understand what is working well and what isn't, enabling us to provide feedback to services and support improvements.



Standing Up for Better Support During Hospital Waiting Times

Last year, we championed the voices of our community to help us gather feedback about Rotherham Hospitals Waiting Well service.

A “waiting well” at Rotherham Hospital is a program/service designed to support patients who are on a waiting list for planned surgery or treatment. It provides information and resources to help patients stay healthy while they wait, which can help manage symptoms, prepare for procedures, and improve recovery time.

What did we do

We launched a survey to better understand if residents were aware of the service, and areas of improvement. We then published a report with the feedback we collected. We then used that feedback to improve the service, by sharing it with NHS leaders, councils, and decision-makers.

Key things we heard:



89%

Or 232,180 people, were actively waiting to receive treatment at Rotherham Hospital

96%

Of respondents were not aware of the Waiting Well Service

85%

Of people had not received any information on how to look after themselves while waiting for treatment.

Our findings highlighted a lack of clear communication and expectation-setting between medical professionals and patients. Many respondents reported not being given a referral timeframe, while others had been waiting anywhere from 16 weeks to over two years for medical procedures.

What difference did this make?

Following the publication of our report, TRFT approved a plan to improve the Waiting Well service. Led by the Head of Patient Experience, a multidisciplinary team of department heads and representatives from Healthwatch Rotherham has been assembled to develop and implement an action plan to improve the service, with changes scheduled to be delivered over the next 12 months.

Health on Hand: The Passport Every Veteran Should Carry

Last year, Healthwatch Rotherham and the Armed Forces Welfare Officer at Rotherham Hospital (TRFT) have visited the veterans at MCVV Rotherham and discussed the benefits of having a health passport. Their ideas and input has been invaluable.

What did we do

The Veterans Health Passport is a small document that was designed to help military veterans communicate their health history, service-related conditions, and specific needs to healthcare providers. The idea behind it, is that it supports continuity of care, especially when transitioning between military and civilian health service.

Our role, was to gather insight and data base on lived experiences to help influence the structure of the passport

Purpose of the passport:

- Improves communication with healthcare providers
- Creates personalized, holistic care
- Provides continuity of care
- Provides empowerment and advocacy
- Provides faster access to support services if proper and links with time in service
- Reduces misunderstandings or stigma
- Proves useful in emergencies

This information should be treated as confidential. Wherever possible, to be completed by the veterans or the people who know them best.

Full name:

What I like to be called (if different):

Service number:

My communication needs:

People I am happy for you to discuss my care with (family member, carer, other support):

What I would like you to know about my service history:

Any dates that might make me worried or anxious, including things I might not want to discuss:

What I would like you to know about my medical history and medication:

What I would like you to know about my background

What is the Veteran's Passport?

For any armed forces veteran, healthcare settings can be unsettling. Although it's completely normal to experience anxiety after traumatic events, this can be tough to deal with.

This Veteran's Health Passport is designed to help our veterans navigate through these visits as smoothly as possible by letting you know relevant background information and how to support them.

Please read this information before your appointment with our veteran. It provides important information which will help with assessments and saves our veteran from repeating potentially difficult information.

Information for veterans

This passport is yours to keep and use as you wish for any appointments you have.

You can choose whether you want to share this information with the healthcare professional that you are seeing.

Please only complete the questions that are important to you, using as much or as little detail as you would like. Please hand over your passport when you arrive and encourage staff involved in your care to read it, this will give them a brief overview of your information.

If you consent to provide information about yourself and preferences, these will be securely recorded and shared with other NHS and service providers when required. This is for the purpose of helping our organisation to better meet your needs by being able to ensure you receive the relevant support.

More information on using the NHS for our military veterans:

nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/military-healthcare/veterans-health-faq

Useful Contacts

Defence Medical Welfare Service
Armed Forces Support
dmws.org.uk

Veterans' Gateway
Advice & support for veterans & ex-forces
veteransgateway.org.uk

Op RESTORE
The Veterans Physical Health & Wellbeing Service (DMWS)
dmws.org.uk/op-restore-the-veterans-physical-health-and-wellbeing-service

Mental health support for veterans, service leavers & reservists
www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community-mental-health/veterans-reservists/

Op Courage
veteranaware.nhs.uk/
op-courage

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact your medical team.

Document produced by TRFT in conjunction with Rotherham Healthwatch and MCVV. Originally developed by Stockport NHS Foundation Trust / Monksdale Bay NHS Foundation Trust

LS 120224 (new and revised)
Sustainable Forestry / Low chlorine

Combat Stress
Mental health services for veterans
combatstress.org.uk

Op Nova
www.forcesemployment.org.uk/programmes/op-nova/

Veterans Covenant
Healthcare Alliance
veteranaware.nhs.uk

UK armed forces charities
Royal British Legion
www.britishlegion.org.uk

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
www.rafbf.org

SSAFA
www.ssaifa.org.uk

Help For Heroes
www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Walking with the Wounded
www.walkingwiththe-wounded.org.uk

Military Community Veteran Council (MCVC)
mcvc.org.uk/contact-us

Veteran Health Passport

A veteran is anyone who has served for at least 1 day in the armed forces, whether regular or reserve.

All veterans are entitled to priority NHS treatment for any condition related to their service (subject to clinical need)

This includes veterans who don't receive a war pension.

This includes assessment, treatment, aids and appliances for conditions accepted as being due to their service.

NHS
The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

NHS
The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust
Rotherham Hospital
Millers Road
Rotherham
S60 2SD
Telephone 01909 820000
www.therotherham.nhs.uk

Healthwatch Rotherham

MCVC
Military Community Veteran Council
Supporting the Forces

DMWS

The Publics Perspective: Accessing Adult Social Care at Riverside House

During October, Healthwatch Rotherham assessed adult social at Riverside House through a Secret Shopper exercise.

The mystery shopping exercise, which included nine different scenarios, resulted in an **average service rating of 2.7 out of 5**. These consisted in Face to face, Website and digital access, Telephone enquiries, and Out of Hours.

Key things we heard:



50%

of respondents told us they felt like their needs were not met, when accessing the service.

“It used to be awful but in recent years it has improved since we gained a named social worker who stays with us through life's difficulties. It has been refreshing to be able to have a positive experience to share about the Rotherham Adult Social Work Team.”

We fed back to Rotherham Metropolitan Council:

- **Improve communication and follow-up:** Including responding to voicemail messages and ensuring promised call-backs happen.
- **Provide confirmation when referrals are received:** So, people know their request has been actioned and is being followed up.
- **Ensure there is better cover when a social worker is on leave:** So, people can still speak to someone who can help.
- **Improve access to information for non-digital people:** Including clearer phone contact options.

What difference did this make?

Our report contributed to RMBC has agreed to make the following changes:

‘We are now developing an action plan to ensure we can give feedback to staff on what is working well and areas we will focus on to ensure our customer contacts are fully responsive to a range of needs and contacts. Our primary focus will be on our face-to-face reception provision, as well as the accessibility and ease of use of our website.’

These will support residents, to have a better experience when asking for help and improve the accessibility and ease of use of the council website.

Opening up access: Healthwatch Rotherham designs a range of Communication cards

Imagine stepping into your GP surgery, clinic or hospital and instantly letting staff know exactly how you communicate—no awkward explanations needed. That's the reality we've created with our new communication cards, designed to give deaf and hard of hearing patients confidence and clarity at every healthcare visit.

We teamed up with Rotherham Sight and Sound and Rotherham Deaf Futures to co-design a simple tick-box card. Whether you need lip-reading support, a British Sign Language interpreter or information in writing, these cards make your needs visible from the moment you walk through the door.

We have a range of cards available:

- I have a learning disability
- I am sight impaired
- I am deaf, hearing impaired or use BSL
- I have had a stroke or brain injury



My Communication Card

My communication needs are..

What best describes me..

- ☐ I am deaf
- ☐ I use a hearing aid
- ☐ I use British Sign Language (BSL)

- ☐ I need a BSL interpreter at every appointment
- ☐ I need to lip read
- ☐ Face me and speak clearly
- ☐ I may need extra time
- ☐ I need things written down

Information for health and social care providers

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) aims to ensure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss:

- can access and understand information about NHS and adult social care services
- receive the communication support they need to use those services

Under the AIS, all NHS and adult social care providers should:

- **Ask:** If someone has communication needs related to a disability or sensory loss and find out how to meet those needs
- **Record:** the needs of the individual
- **Alert:** flag or highlight the needs
- **Share:** the needs with the relevant people with patient consent
- **Act:** take action to meet the needs
- **Review:** If someone's needs or situation changes, information must be updated



To find out more, please scan the QR code

healthwatch
Rotherham

This card belongs to:

What difference did this make?

Our communication cards have been distributed across the voluntary sector in Rotherham, including at events such as the Rotherham College Wellbeing Event, TRFT, and RMBC, with over 1,000 cards handed out to date.

We have also developed a downloadable PDF version, which has been shared across South Yorkshire's Integrated care board (ICB) and Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber (RDaSH). In addition, Healthwatch Sheffield, Doncaster, and Barnsley actively use and distribute our communication cards within their respective sectors.

The distribution of our communication cards has had a positive impact on members of the public by helping to improve accessibility, confidence, and understanding when accessing services. The cards provide individuals with a simple and effective way to communicate their needs, particularly in situations where they may feel anxious, overwhelmed, or unable to express themselves verbally.

Hearing from all communities

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

This year, we have reached different communities:

- We have reached out this year with Apna Haq, a charity that works with Black and ethnic minority women facing issues like Domestic violence, Honour based violence, forced marriage, sexual abuse, and exploitation.
- At Healthwatch Rotherham, we stand for the voice of the public by attending RDaSH Governor meetings and contributing to key strategic forums, including the ICB Executive Board, Primary Care Delivery Group, and Patient Experience Committee. We also take part in the national pilot team led by NHS England for neighborhood working, alongside Prevention, Health and Equality meetings hosted by Public Health. Through these partnerships, we advocate for the people of Rotherham, raise public concerns, and escalate issues to help improve local health and care services.



Improving Understanding of the Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Communities in Accessing Healthcare

We investigated access to Healthcare for the LGBTQ+ community.

Attendees identified recurring barriers such as long waiting times for gender clinics, refusal of transgender referrals, and difficulties accessing mental health support. 61% of people told us that they felt that their sexuality or gender identity has had a negative impact on their mental health.

What difference did this make?

The report on The Rainbow Project Rotherham made a significant difference by highlighting the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Rotherham and ensuring their voices were heard within health and social care services. The project found both the positive impact of inclusive community support and the barriers many individuals still face when accessing healthcare, including discrimination, misgendering, and a lack of understanding around LGBTQ+ needs.

Helping asylum seekers and refugees understand and access NHS care

As part of our regular engagement's Healthwatch Rotherham attend Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA)

Part of our role at Healthwatch Rotherham is to advocate for and educate the public about the health and social care support available to them, helping people understand what services they can access within Rotherham and how to navigate them effectively.

What difference did this make?

Our support has included assisting residents with a range of issues, including 14 oral health referrals, 2 more dental-related enquiries, 6 mental health support enquiries, and 3 GP contact interventions. We have also supported residents through 3 diabetes-related information and advice calls, sent 3 concerns and feedback emails to the TRFT Patient Experience Team (PET), and provided stop smoking signposting through Healthwave.

By listening to local people and connecting them with right services, we help ensure community voices are heard, concerns are escalated where needed, and local health and care services continue to improve in response to public need.

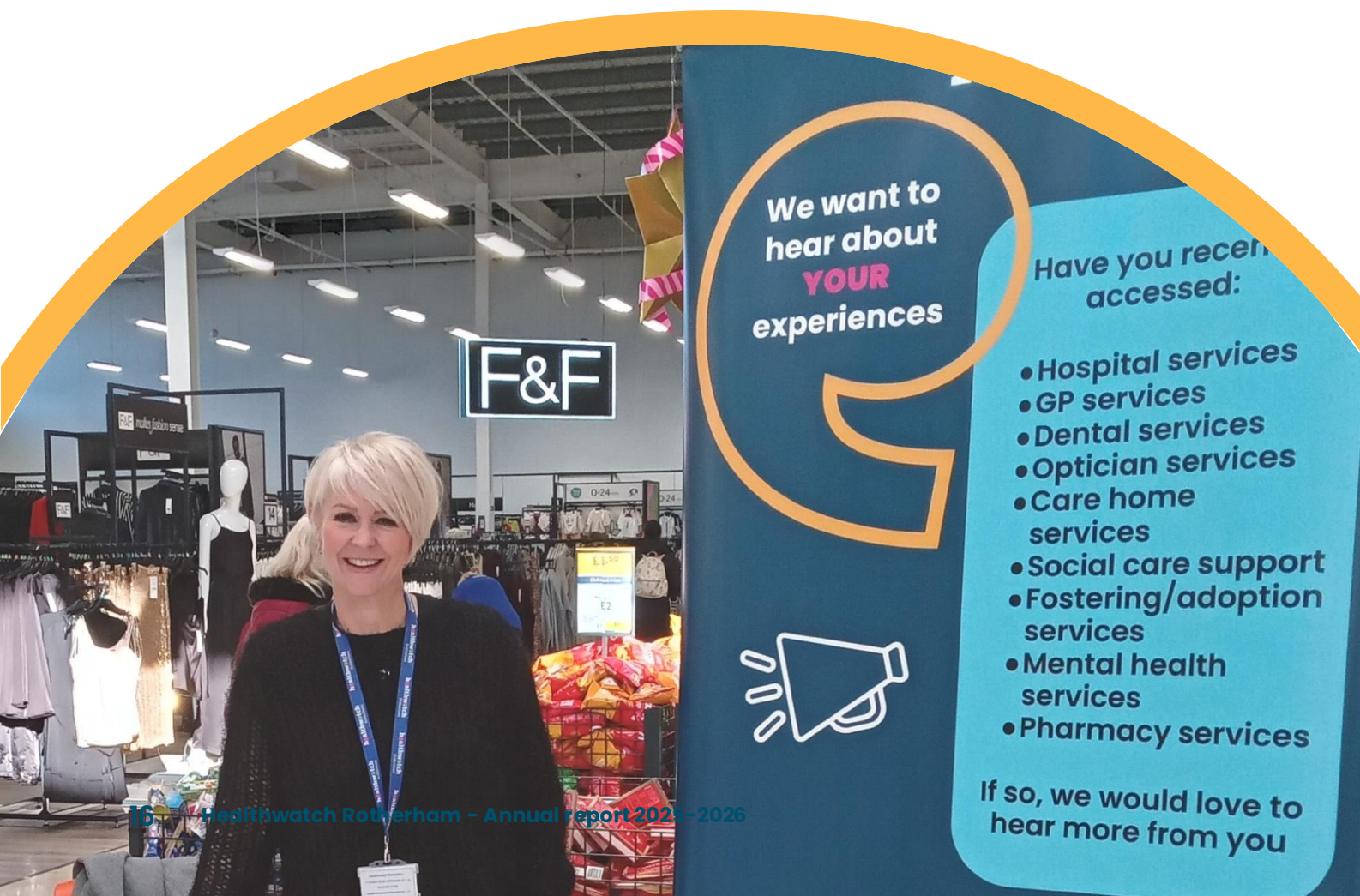
Information and signposting

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 1910 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 could be made better.

This year, we've helped people by:

- We have signposted people to 1126 services around Rotherham.
- We have attended over 80 outreaches throughout the year and spoke to over 1,533 people.
- Alongside the outreach engagements, we also attended 23 other events around the borough including Rotherham Show, Carers day and held our own event 'Health in our community'



Lengthy wait times surrounding Autism Diagnosis

We helped challenge barriers within Rotherham's autism referral pathway, contributing to changes aimed at improving access for local families seeking assessments.

Following contact from a Rotherham parent seeking an autism assessment for their daughter ahead of her GCSE exams, we found significant barriers in the local "Right to Choose" referral pathway. By escalating concerns with CAMHS, providers and the ICB, we highlighted inconsistencies preventing families from accessing timely assessments. The issue was recognised and action taken to resolve the pathway, helping improve access for Rotherham families seeking NHS neurodevelopmental assessments.

Waiting Without Reassurance: Sarah's Journey to Clarity

Sarah felt abandoned after a "mystery" abdominal mass was found during a routine appointment and she was given a 53-week wait; accessing a medical professional felt like a barrier in itself.

Healthwatch Rotherham first met Sarah in May 2025 after she was informed by the gynecology team that she required surgery to remove an abdominal mass. The news left her overwhelmed and tearful during the consultation. When she became distressed, she felt her fears particularly around the possibility of cancer; were not met with sufficient empathy or reassurance.

Following the appointment, Sarah left feeling extremely anxious about her health and worried about how her family would cope if her condition were serious. Healthwatch Rotherham supported her by linking her with mental health services to help manage her anxiety while she waited for treatment and encouraged her to raise concerns with the hospital's Patient Experience Team.

With Sarah's consent, a referral was made. She was told a clinician would contact her but also informed her surgery could be delayed for up to 53 weeks. However, she was not provided with additional support during this waiting period.

After 21 weeks without an update, Sarah returned to Healthwatch Rotherham feeling increasingly distressed and exhausted. Despite further contact with the Patient Experience Team, delays continued. Eventually, a clinician confirmed her test results made cancer highly unlikely and that it was safe for her to wait for surgery.



"I cannot thank you enough, someone has just called me from the hospital, and it is not cancerous. That is all I wanted to hear, I can finally stop worrying"

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given over 110 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- We have an Information and Signposting Volunteer who supports clients over the phone and via email, providing guidance and directing them to relevant health and social care services.
- We have had a number of Enter and View visits throughout the year, our Volunteers helped conduct these visits, document feedback and concerns raised by both patients and staff, while also supporting the distribution of surveys to gather wider community insight.



At the heart of what we do

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



Alison

I have been volunteering for HW for coming up to 5 years and I really enjoy it. Volunteering gives me the opportunity to talk to people who live in Rotherham about their experience of using health and social care services.

Listening to their views, ensuring that their voice is heard and signposting to organisations that can offer support makes me feel like I have something positive to offer. I meet lots of interesting people and organisations and learn about what is good about Rotherham.

I enjoy working as an Information and Signposting Officer at Healthwatch Rotherham because I support local people who experience difficulties with health and social care services. I find it rewarding to listen to their concerns and guide them to the right information, so they feel more informed and confident in making decisions. I also value being part of a supportive team focused on improving services through community feedback. The role gives me a strong sense of purpose, knowing even small conversations can make a real difference.



Nic

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.



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



[01709 717130](tel:01709717130)



Info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk

Finance and future priorities

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

Our income and expenditure:

All figures are draft and subject to audit and final adjustments as the finances won't be confirmed officially until November.

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£161,260	Staff Salaries	£103,555
Additional income	£2,548	Operational Cost	£23,919
		Overhead Salaries	£30,668
Total income	£163,808	Total Expenditure	£158,141

Additional income is broken down into:

- £2,548 received from University of Sheffield for Student placement.
*additional funding for student placements yet to be confirmed.
- £1,300 received from the local ICS for joint work on a project
- £308 funding received from Cambridge University for joint work on a project

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across South Yorkshire 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
Engagement work at TRFT	£1300.00
	£0.00
	£0.00

Finance and future priorities

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. To continue to support and engage with under-represented groups and escalating concerns to the highest level.
2. Review earlier recommendations made to services in our focus reports and enter and view visits. So, we can follow up to assess what improvements have been implemented as a result and impact this has had on Rotherham residents.
3. We will prioritise reducing health inequalities by improving access to assessments, strengthening communication between services and patients, and ensuring people feel heard, informed, and supported while waiting for care.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Rotherham, 2 Upper Millgate – Contract held with Citizen Advice 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 5 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 9 times and made decisions on matters such as the approval of the yearly workplan. 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 web form 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, social media and distributed within the ICS.

Statutory statements

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 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 take information to director of public health, RMBC Service director of strategic commissioning in adult care, housing and public health and deputy director of Adult social care.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in South Yorkshire ICB. For example, Healthwatch Doncaster share insights, with us that we communicate to RDash governors as Healthwatch Rotherham has a seat to represent both Healthwatch services on the board . We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and social care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Rotherham is represented on the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board by Kym Gleeson, Healthwatch Rotherham Service Manager.

During 2025/26, our representative has effectively carried out this role by being in attendance and scrutinising presentations by public health, plus other stakeholders and partners.

Healthwatch Rotherham is represented on South Yorkshire ICP Integrated Care Partnerships by Healthwatch Doncaster. Kym also attends the Mental Health, Learning Disability, Dementia and autism delivery group held at SYICB.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
GP Practice – Swallownest Court	Public Insights	Made recommendations of improvement and fed back to the service. Fed by patient voice and staff observations
Hospital – Acute Medical Unit (AMU) Rotherham Foundation Trust	Positive operational changes, to onboarding patients and care provided within AMU	Gathered insight from staff and patients. Face to face, and via written and online surveys.
GP Practice – Market View Surgery	Public insights	Made recommendations of improvement and fed back to the service. Fed by patient voice and staff observations.
Pharmacy – Archways Pharmacy	The public raise concerns	Made recommendations of improvement and fed back to the service. Fed by patient voice and staff observations

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Waiting Well TRFT	The trust has set up a multidisciplinary board and have developed a 12-month improvement plan for the Waiting Well service.
Communication Cards: Healthwatch Rotherham have worked alongside, Sight and Sound Rotherham to produce a set off communication cards, catering for people who are Vision or Hearing impaired, suffered with a stroke or brain injury; or have learning disabilities.	The cards have been distributed around Rotherham's services. Including the TRFT

Statutory statements

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Let's talk events' – Healthwatch Rotherham held a range of Let's talk events throughout the year. Some of these included Menopause, and Breast cancer awareness, personal hygiene, and CPR.	The purpose of these events are to discuss and educate targeted groups relating to common issues that they may be experiencing.
Healthwatch Rotherham – 'Health in our community' Event	We reached approximately 80 Rotherham residents; providing information on health, wellbeing and signposted to many different services. We also launched our co-produced communication cards for the Visually Impaired group at Sight and Sound Rotherham.
Healthwatch Rotherham has been working in partnership with the Public Health Oral Health team to support more vulnerable groups in Rotherham in accessing and registering with a dentist.	- More vulnerable residents (such as low-income families, older adults, and people with disabilities) are now registered with a dentist, meaning they can receive routine check-ups instead of only seeking emergency care. - With better access, issues like tooth decay, gum disease, and oral infections are identified earlier. This reduces the need for more complex and costly treatments later. - Targeting vulnerable groups helps close the gap between those who can easily access dental care and those who cannot—one of the key goals of public health work in areas like Rotherham. - When people are registered with a dentist, they are less likely to attend A&E or GP services for dental pain.

Statutory statements

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Increased Newsletter Membership	Danielle our research and campaigns officer and our Engagement Officer, Holly, have worked in collaboration and have increased our newsletter membership by 68%. Our newsletter contains vital information regarding changes to health and social care services, what's happening locally in Rotherham, and resources to improve your physical and mental health.
Social Media Reels	We are committed to expanding our social media reach by adapting how we deliver information, with a stronger focus on engaging, accessible content such as short-form reels. By working collaboratively with key partners across the system—including primary care public health teams, SYICB, the Health and Wellbeing Board Chair, and the Health Select Board Chair—we aim to create informative and engaging content that helps educate residents of Rotherham about their health. This coordinated, system-wide approach allows us to share consistent, trusted messages in a format that is easy to understand and widely accessible, ultimately empowering local communities to make more informed decisions about their wellbeing.

Statutory statements

2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Increased and expanded out Social media reach.	One of our key priorities across Q3 and Q4 was to expand our social media reach. To support this, we strengthened our presence by launching and actively engaging on two additional platforms: Instagram and LinkedIn. As a result, our total reach has increased by 119% since the start of the year. This growth has significantly enhanced our brand visibility, broadened our audience, and created more opportunities for engagements across Rotherham.



Healthwatch Rotherham
2 Upper Millgate,
Rotherham,
South Yorkshire,
S60 1PF



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



01709 717130



Info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk



/hwrotherham



@HWRotherham



@healthwatchrotherham_



@healthwatchrotherham

