

Public Report
Health Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Health Select Commission – 23 July 2026

Report Title

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Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Health Select Commission (HSC) wishes to offer a co-optee seat to the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to ensure that women's health issues are represented consistently within the Council's scrutiny process and to strengthen the voice of women in local health decision-making.

During its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Commission examined evidence of significant health inequalities affecting women, including declining healthy life expectancy, long waiting times for routine services, variations in referral quality and concerns that women are not always listened to within the health system. Members considered the Network's role in bringing together partners from health, social care, community and voluntary sectors to improve outcomes and provide valuable patient and practitioner insight.

The Commission recognises that the Network would provide ongoing expertise, lived experience and challenge, helping scrutiny members monitor progress on women's health priorities and future service developments, and as a co-optee, would benefit from a formal mechanism for continued engagement and oversight.

Recommendations

That the Health Select Commission:

1. Seeks approval from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to appoint a non-voting Co-optee from the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to the Commission's membership.
2. Seeks approval from OSMB that the RWHN non-voting co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission, shall remain in place until such time as it is deemed no longer necessary or appropriate by the Commission.

List of Appendices Included

None.

Background Papers

[18 June 2026 Health Select Commission Meeting Minutes](#) (Minute 6)

[Council's Constitution, Appendix 9 - Responsibility for Functions](#)

[The Local Authority \(Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny\) Regulations 2013](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) was established in August 2025 by a group of women committed to tackling the health inequalities experienced by women across Rotherham. The voluntary network brings together partners from the Council, primary and secondary healthcare services, and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 1.2 Its primary aim is to ensure that women's health remains a visible local priority, addressing inequalities in health outcomes for Rotherham women whilst simultaneously seeking to improve co-ordination between services, gather and analyse health intelligence and lived experience, raise awareness of women's health issues, support service improvement, influence local decision-making and strengthen research and engagement opportunities.
- 1.3 The work of the RWHN is largely synonymous with the Health Select Commission's terms of reference and reflects at least two of the themes of the Council Plan; 'Residents Live Well' and 'One Council That Listens And Learns'. To date, members of the RWHN have actively presented on the topic of women's health at the Health Select Commission's public meetings and contributed to the Access to Contraception and Menopause Reviews completed by the Commission.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the following detail in relation to the appointment of non-voting co-optees at Appendix 9, Responsibility for Functions:

'The [Scrutiny] Commissions shall comprise:

- 18 Members of the Council (quorum – 6)
- any non-voting co-optees appointed from time to time by each select commission;'

- 2.2 It also details within the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that it is responsible for Co-optee appointments by virtue of the following:

'20. To appoint non-voting co-optees to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and/or Select Commissions or Task and Finish Groups.'

- 2.3 In relation to the appointment of non-voting Co-optees, the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 does not specifically refer to Local Authority arrangements regarding the appointment of Co-optees, but does state:

'Co-option

31.(1) A county council may arrange for one or more of the members of an overview and scrutiny committee of the council of a district comprised in the area of that county council to be appointed as—

- (a) a member of an overview and scrutiny committee of the county council or another local authority, for the purposes of relevant functions exercisable by the committee in relation to the county council; or
- (b) a member of an overview and scrutiny committee of the county council, for the purposes of relevant functions exercisable by the committee in relation to another local authority.

(2) A county council making arrangements for an appointment under paragraph (1)(a) or (b) may specify that the appointment is—

- (a) for the life of the overview and scrutiny committee; or
- (b) until such time as it decides to terminate the appointment; or
- (c) for the review or scrutiny of a particular matter.'

- 2.4 As such, should members support the appointment of a representative of the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN), to the Health Select Commission, this would subsequently be taken to the next OSMB meeting for approval, before the appointment could be confirmed.
- 2.5 The intention is that, if supported, the recommendation to OSMB would be to appoint an RWHN representative as a Co-optee in line with (b) above, until such time as the Health Select Commission decides to terminate the appointment as described in recommendation 2 of this report.
- 2.6 The expectation would not be for the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to attend all Health Select Commission meetings, but would afford them the opportunity to attend all meetings where an item relevant to the women's health agenda and the aims and objectives of the RWHN was due to be considered.
- 2.7 Non-voting co-optee status would offer the RWHN the ability to ask questions of presenters and to offer views and comments on proposals put before the commission.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The possibility of issuing invitations to HSC Meetings on a case by case basis was considered, however, it was felt that such an approach would place an additional administrative burden on the Commission to identify relevant topics and make direct contact with the RWHN every time a relevant topic featured on a published HSC agenda. Given the voluntary role of the RWHN members, and as agendas are only published one week ahead of the proposed meeting date, it was felt that this may create difficulties in clearing diaries at short notice to secure attendance and participation. Likewise, it was felt that such an approach would risk the RWHN becoming disengaged with scrutiny activity, and would therefore undermine the intended mutual benefit of it's continued involvement in health scrutiny.

3.2 Whilst other organisations such as Healthwatch Rotherham, the South Yorkshire ICB and The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust routinely attend HSC meetings by virtue of either being commissioned by the Council to provide borough-wide health related services for Rotherham residents, or as a commissioner of services for Rotherham residents under the wider NHS infrastructure, the same cannot be said for the RWHN, so it would not be appropriate to conduct a transparent, formal professional working relationship under those same arrangements.

3.3 Resultantly, the only viable option which would:

- a) be compliant with the Council's Constitution,
- b) reflect the spirit of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, and
- c) facilitate truly flexible and unbureaucratic access and mutually beneficial participation in scrutiny activity

was the proposed option of offering a non-voting co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission to the Rotherham Women's Health Network.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The possibility of proposing that the RWHN be offered a Co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission was outlined as part of the recommendations agreed during its 18 June 2026 meeting. The Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health, Councillor Baker-Rogers was in attendance at that meeting, along with the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health. No concerns have been raised in relation to the Health Select Commission's recommendation, which was unanimously agreed by those present.

4.2 Likewise, the Health Select Commission's intention to formally propose the appointment of the RWHN as a non-voting co-optee was outlined to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) during the HSC update to OSMB which formed part of the agenda at its 1 July 2026 meeting. Similarly, no concerns in relation to the proposal have been raised following that meeting.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 It was agreed that this formal report detailing the rationale for the proposal would be prepared and put before the Health Select Commission's 23 July 2026 meeting for formal approval.

5.2 Assuming that the Health Select Commission approve the recommendations detailed within this report, they will subsequently be formally taken to the 8 September 2026 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to approve the appointment in line with the recommendations outlined in this report.

- 5.3 The appointment of the RWHN as a non-voting co-optee would take immediate effect upon receiving OSMB's approval.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 No financial or procurement implications arise directly from this report or its recommendations.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications directly arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for children and young people directly arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Furthering equalities and human rights are scrutiny objectives; therefore, Members considered equalities in the development of scrutiny work programmes, lines of inquiry and in their derivation of recommendations designed to improve the delivery of council services for residents.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no climate or emissions implications directly associated with this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are implications for partners directly associated with this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There are risks directly associated with this report and recommendations. The risks associated with the options considered and rejected have been described within the relevant section.

Accountable Officer

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Kerry Grinsill-Clinton, Governance Advisor

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Name	Date
The Executive Director with responsibility for this report	Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement	14/07/26
Head of Democratic Services (if appropriate)	Emma Hill	09/07/26

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