



The value of listening

Healthwatch Manchester
Annual Report 2023-2024

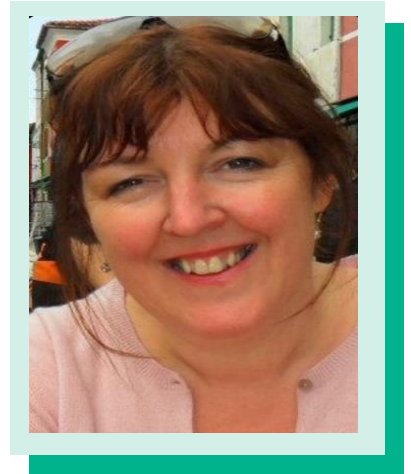
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Message from our Chair

My first year as Chair for Healthwatch Manchester has been one of learning, both personally and professionally. Getting to know the resolute and committed team and our Board, and witnessing their passion and commitment to support the health and social care of the people and communities of Manchester.

This year has seen the new Integrated Care Service, alongside the associated boards and strategy groups, become more established. Our Manchester Healthwatch continues to maintain its role as an essential and integrated part of the Manchester Health and Social Care landscape.



Our values, as independent, non-political, and impartial critical friends, support us to actively engage, listen, and collaborate with local people to improve our health and social care services.

It has been my pleasure to meet and get to know key stakeholders within our commissioning body and across the health and social care landscape alongside representing Healthwatch Manchester, and our citizen voices, within the Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board.

Each year our Healthwatch Board meets to set in place a challenging programme of work, focusing on access, particularly around health inequalities. Our recently published Impact Report for 2023–2024 summarizes many of our projects from the last year, including our work around wheelchair access and Jain-friendly food in Manchester’s Hospitals.

We have also seen the launch of our second forum, Manchester Women Together. Our reports, and access to our forums, can be found within our website and social media posts.

As our [Impact Report](#) shows, our team supports hundreds of people each year, providing feedback to them on how we have taken their views forward, and helped to shape local services.

I want to thank Neil Walbran our CEO, and the team at our Castlefield offices, including Tom, Dan and Ada who work tirelessly to ensure the voices of the citizens of Manchester are engaged with, listened to, and actively heard.

Finally, to our Board, which continues to grow, with Emerge 3RS joining us this year, as we continue to ensure we use our statutory position to support change and improvement for local people.

Amanda Smith
Chair of Healthwatch Manchester

Message from our Chief Officer

It's strange to look back on our eleventh year and think about how the landscape has changed so much.

Since I set up Healthwatch Manchester in 2013, pretty much every leader across Manchester's health and social care organisations has changed and the system in which we operate is markedly different from back then.

And we've had some changes for the worse.



The year before we started, all three of the NHS trusts which serve the people of Manchester gained bad press coverage from the center in the space of six months. Since then, our mental health trust has undergone an intensive review creating an inevitable reduction in its offer to the users of its services.

Our work in the coming year will have a major focus on mental health services and I'm looking forward to creating a positive impact and improvement where we can. The same goes for social care with a renewed focus on families living in poverty; we will be reaching out to them to find out the best ways of helping them into services. What's apparent is that the need for us is set to increase, even within the cautious optimism around political change creating redress through increased public spending.

We've had some great wins in the past year which are all laid out in our Impact Report but in brief they've included work with our main hospital trust, mental health trust, primary care in the round and, of course, social care. Our second forum – Manchester Women Together – was set up using grant funding and goes from strength to strength.

Once again, I have to congratulate our small team for their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work to enable us to serve you the citizens of Manchester to the best of our ability with our finite resources.

Neil Walbran

Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Manchester

About us

Healthwatch Manchester is your local health and social care champion.

We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

Our sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

We champion what matters to you and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.

Our vision

To enable real and long-term improvements to the health and social care of the people and communities of Manchester.



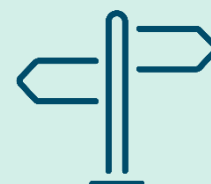
Our mission

Healthwatch Manchester is an independent not-for-profit organisation driven by National government policy, mandated by legislation and its local membership and supported by the Local Authority. Through engaging and informing the people and communities of Manchester as their consumer champion and influencing the design and commissioning of services, Healthwatch Manchester seeks to improve their access to and experience of health and social care.



Our values are:

- Be independent, non-political and impartial in our activities.
- Be non-judgmental, open and transparent, and seek the trust of local people.
- Actively engage with seldom heard communities.
- Value the people and communities of Manchester and their contributions.
- Act as a critical friend and always challenge constructively.
- Reflective of a strong evidence-base.
- Realistic and influential.
- Innovative and adaptable.
- We are a local listening service.
- We provide information and signposting.
- We work with local people to improve health and social care services.



Year in review

Reaching out:

234 people

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



55 people

came to us for clear advice and information about GP practices with questions around accessing appointments and using their websites

Making a difference to care:

We published:

13 reports about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services.

This does not include the **81** individual review reports for each GP in the city.

Our most popular report was

Better Practice

which highlighted the struggles people face when accessing GP Websites.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have **3**

outstanding volunteers who gave over **80 hours** of their time to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.
In 2023 - 24 we received

£147,000


We currently employ

4 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Engaging with Manchester Foundation Trust and Jain Samaj to help facilitate the implementation of Jain friendly food options in Manchester Hospitals</p>	 <p>We reviewed 81 individual GP Practice Websites from practices across the city and combined them into an overall report about ready access to information</p>
Summer	 <p>We designed and created an online Women's Health Forum for women in the city known as Manchester Women Together</p>	 <p>Reviewing wheelchair access in Wythenshawe Hospital and combining it with reviews of the other two major hospitals in Manchester.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We talked with Manchester's student population to discuss their knowledge and experience of Mental Health Support Services</p>	 <p>We conducted multiple focus groups and telephone interviews with minority groups to review different National Health Campaigns</p>
Winter	 <p>Visiting the A&E waiting area at Manchester Royal Infirmary to talk with patients about their experience using the service.</p>	 <p>We designed and produced an information leaflet regarding advocacy and accessing the IMCA & IMHA services whilst in hospital</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Greater Manchester influence decisions made about services at Greater Manchester Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester to achieve:



Gathered opinions from across our local communities and used our knowledge to contribute towards the development of the Greater Manchester Dementia United Quality Standards, the Greater Manchester ICS People and Communities Engagement Strategy and the Shanley Report.

Undertook a Greater Manchester Children and Young Peoples (CYP) Mental Health Project, with a focus on pathways to mental health support. This project gathered peoples lived experiences of existing service provision across Greater Manchester. Recommendations and findings will be fed back to GM and local commissioners and providers to help shape future service delivery.



The appointment of 3 key roles to the Healthwatch in Greater Manchester partnership. These include an Independent Chair of the Network, Chief Coordinating Officer and Administration and Data Officer. These roles will drive forward the leadership, coordination and delivery of the All Age Strategy 2022-2025 alongside partnership working across the Greater Manchester Healthwatch Network.

Worked in collaboration with Greater Manchester Patient Services to co-produce ongoing reports throughout the year which identify challenges and share the lived experiences of the people of Greater Manchester. We have and will continue to ensure their voices are heard throughout the Greater Manchester ICS through their Quality and Performance Committee.





Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

'Bridging the Gap'. Student Access to Mental Health Support Services

In Autumn of 2023, HWM started work on one of our priority areas of work, **student access to mental health support services (MHSS)**.

Initially, HWM started a similar project to this in 2020 however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the work stalled and was never completed. The continuation of this work had been **pre-approved by the board in 2022**.

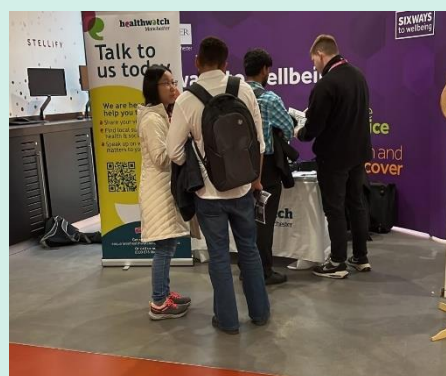
Originally starting in 2020, HWM staff had gathered data from students in Manchester about their understanding of MHSS by conducting surveys which were done in a similar fashion to that of this report.

To reach as many students as possible, HWM conducted **three engagement sessions with students** in central Manchester between November 2023 and February 2024.

We decided upon two venues to conduct our interviews. Initially we **held a stall on the University of Manchester Campus** at University Place – a bustling lecture theatre building. We then held a **further engagement session at Manchester Central Library** on an appointment only basis as a means of engaging with students who were apprehensive speaking about this sensitive subject in a public space.

We found that most **students were aware of the MHSS made available** to them as a student by their university. However, they were **not aware they could use services outside of their provision**.

Moreover, many students revealed that despite the availability of MHSS, **they did not know how to access them or where they were situated in the city**.



Tom and Ada on the University of Manchester campus

We therefore recommended the following changes:

- Universities and colleges in Manchester should in future **promote MHSS services to students via social media as well as through other channels.**
- Universities and colleges in Manchester should **include information regarding how to access MHSS including location and time of operation.**



[Read our full report here](#)

Patiently Waiting. HWM surveys at the Accident and Emergency Department in MRI

Since the COVID pandemic there has been an **increase in A&E attendance**, which could be due to referral of patients from other parts of the health and care system. We were contacted by The University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) regarding this matter and asked to investigate and publish our findings.

A proposal requesting this research from MFT and was submitted to the HWM trustee board in September 2023 for approval. On approval a number of planning meetings were held with key representatives from HWM and MFT to explore the options for gathering information about A&E experience from patients.



The waiting room at A&E in Manchester Royal Infirmary

A survey questionnaire was developed for **face-to-face interviews with patients**.

HWM visited the A&E department on three occasions between 13th and 23rd November 2023. We were given a three-hour time slot on each of these visits which were 13:00-16:00, 08:00-12:00 and 17:00-20:00.

Overall, we conducted **107 surveys**

Our key findings were as follows:

- The **lack of communication between GPs/NHS 111 and the A&E service** about referrals and English language only appointment forms (Q7) was brought up on numerous occasions
- **43% of respondents were in the 18-29 age demographic** which is almost double the Office for National Statistics value for this age range in Manchester.
- M14 was the most recorded postcode which is distinct compared to other Manchester postcodes for its diverse ethnic population.

We therefore recommended the following:

- Communication, both inter-service (between GPs, the 111 service and A&E) and for patients for whom English is a second language requires review to examine efficiency gains and improve patient experience.
- A more detailed look into the reasons why **certain groups of people are overrepresented in the A&E waiting rooms** is required



[Read our full report here](#)

Better Practice? GP practice website reviews

As the independent health and social care champion for Manchester citizens, HWM regularly undertakes reviews of health and social care services in both Manchester and Greater Manchester.

Since 2021, HWM have received the most complaints about the difficulty people have in making a GP appointment, with heavy emphasis on the GP practice websites and their poor levels of accessibility.

In 2021 we reviewed all GP practice websites across the city and produced a bespoke report containing our findings.

Then in February 2023, HWM attended the MCC Health Scrutiny Committee meeting. At the request of the Chair, **HWM were tasked with completing a second review, comparing each individual GP practice website in Manchester from 2021 and 2023.** The organisation began planning this work to commence in April 2023 as part of its annual action plan 2023/24.

HWM staff and volunteers reviewed a total of 81 GP practice websites and were able to compare 73 to the list of practices we originally reviewed in 2021. We decided to use the same scoring criteria as was used in 2021 to make both reports comparable.

We found that the key areas regarding accessibility i.e. making an appointment and navigating around the system showed a decrease in scoring.

Moreover, **Statutory / Contractual compliance remain low and compliance with the NHS Accessible Information Standard remains low overall.**



HWM recommended that GP practices must invest time and resources in improving their websites in the following areas:

- Access to information for infection control, health and wellbeing and other language availability
- Ease of navigation around the system including making and cancelling appointments
- Compliance with the NHS Accessible Information Standard

[Read our full report here](#)

[Read each individual practice report here](#)

Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Extra Care Service Review

In June 2023, the HWM team spent two weeks visiting several Extra Care service venues across the city of Manchester to talk with the residents about their living conditions and experiences.

Most respondents told us that the Extra Care service they received was of good quality and that their health and wellbeing would have deteriorated had they been residing in full time care.

Once this work had concluded, The Manchester Older People's Housing Alliance informed us that they would be using our report to lobby Manchester City Council for more Extra Care services locations to be created across the city.

[Read the full report here](#)

Wheelchair access at Manchester hospitals

Between December 2022 – December 2023 the HWM team conducted Enter and View visits to each of Manchester's three major hospitals to assess wheelchair access, provision and the ease of movement when using a wheelchair within the hospital. We found that although mobility and access using a wheelchair was good, locating a wheelchair was in fact difficult for a person with no physical or sensory disabilities.

Since we published this combined report, the Trust have taken on board the findings and recommendations. They put measures in place to improve wheelchair access and information in each of the three hospital sites and continue to monitor this provision in each of the three hospital sites

[Read the full report here](#)

AIS compliance in Manchester Pharmacies

Currently at HWM we are working to spread awareness of the Accessible Information Standard among health and care providers across the city. This Standard explains how people who have a disability must be able to access information in a format they can use and understand, and they should also expect communication support from health and care services.

We have been visiting these pharmacies on a postcode basis, producing a report for each postcode. Since this project started, we have visited and reported each pharmacy across nine separate Manchester postcodes areas. Over the last year specifically we have visited 23 pharmacies across four postcodes to conduct these reviews.

[Read our AIS reports here](#)

There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard, and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Collaboration with the Jain community in Manchester to help get Jain friendly food options introduced in Manchester Hospitals
- Working with the Deaf community in Manchester when producing walk through direction videos in Manchester Hospitals
- Listening to the experiences of learning-disabled people when receiving their annual health checks

Working with the Jain community

We have had a longstanding working relationship with the Jain community through one of our trustees, Dr Mina Desai who alerted us to the absence of Jain friendly food provision in Manchester Hospitals.

This was of particular concern as it raised patient safety concerns where medication may be ineffective in the absence of nutrition.



We thus consulted with Mina at Jain Samaj and Nick Bailey, Director of Corporate Workforce at MFT, to discuss this potential change.

After a prolonged period of consultation this issue was addressed, and work began on implanting Jain friendly dietary options on menus in Manchester hospitals. In mid 2023 we were informed by Dr Mina Desai that Jain patients in Manchester had started to have appropriate menu choices available during their hospital stay.

investigating the experiences of learning-disabled people when in receipt of an Annual Health Check

We have spent time over the last year working with learning disabled (LD) people to better understand their needs as a community. In doing so, a review of Annual Health Checks using qualitative analysis was included in our annual work plan for 2023/24.

In June 2023 we held two focus groups with members of the Manchester People First group to gather information on their experiences receiving annual health checks. We found that not only were these health checks of poor quality, but they were not done in a timely manner, nor were they explained to the LD people receiving them.

We recommended that healthcare professionals conducting Annual Health Checks should consider the capacity of their patients and explain, as they conduct these checks, what procedures will happen. Moreover, the quality of these checks needs to improve at the earliest opportunity and the improvements required should be made through reading and adopting the views and experiences in our report.

After our report had been produced, we met with PCN leads and care professionals. We were informed that they would be using our report to inform their PCN Learning Disabled Care Coordinator model for Learning Disabled Patient Care.



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Manchester are here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

Our Information and Signposting work at Healthwatch Manchester

Earlier this year, Healthwatch Manchester met a lady who had recently moved to Manchester with her husband and two children. She wanted to know more about how to access health services in the city but didn't know where to start.

We gladly showed her how to find a GP in her postcode by using the NSH Website. We also took her contact details down to add her to our mailing list for our monthly bulletin which routinely contains up to date and relevant information about healthcare services in Manchester.

The resident also took one of our crisis cards which contain information about local walk-in centres and mental health support services in Manchester, and a stress ball.. We are always happy to be of service to all residents of Manchester when they need us!

Daniel – Information and Engagement Officer at Healthwatch Manchester

Manchester is an incredibly multicultural place with roughly 200 different languages spoken across the city. Therefore, it is natural to assume the HWM team have had a hand in supporting people with language barriers access health and social care services.

At an International Women's Day event in Manchester, we met a citizen who informed us of the lack of support for Cantonese-speaking people at her GP surgery, especially now that all Chinese speaking members of staff at the practice had left.

Fortunately, I am fluent in Cantonese and was able to hear this resident's concerns. From here, I could inform and signpost this lady to an appropriate Cantonese interpreter. We also referred her to other support networks such as the Wai Yin Society who help the Chinese community deal with difficulties like these every day.

Ada – Information and Engagement Officer at Healthwatch Manchester

Our Information and Signposting Statistics at Healthwatch Manchester

Contact Topic	Number of contacts
GP	55
Dentist	53
Hospital	45
Mental Health	10
Other	71
Total	234

A breakdown of our Information and Signposting enquiries since April 2023



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Assisted with our desk-based research projects
- Helped improve the quality of our reporting through proofreading to bridge the knowledge gap
- Carried out Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve

The work of our Citizens Reading Panel volunteers



As a member of the HWM Citizen Readers Panel, I review the various reports before publication. HWM want their reports to be easily read and understood by everyone, not just by the service providers, and that's where I can help. As I read through a document, I ask myself "Does the report make sense to me as a member of the public?". Then I offer comments and feedback about how the material was presented. I might ask for clarification if I found a section confusing or suggest that a diagram would illustrate a finding better than lots of words. My aim is to make sure that anyone will remember the report's key points, understand HWM's recommendations and appreciate how the work is contributing to health and social care improvements.

*Janet –
Healthwatch Manchester Volunteer*



At Healthwatch Manchester I volunteer as part of the Citizens Reading Panel. Here I help with the production of the reports by reviewing the findings that Healthwatch gather. By correcting grammatical errors and ensuring the accessibility of each document, I help strengthen each case that Healthwatch Manchester makes to improve the health and social care services across the city. From Public Health campaign reviews to Enter and View reports, I assess the readability needed for the variety of audiences such as Manchester City Council, Primary Care Network Leads and the public. I also look at how accessible the graphs and data are in these reports and make suggestions when necessary to improve their clarity, leading to an easier to read document. I love being part of the process that leads to people's concerns being addressed and the improvement of local services.

*Isabelle –
Healthwatch Manchester Volunteer*

Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.



www.healthwatchmanchester.co.uk



0300 078 0669



info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk



Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work, we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£147,000	Expenditure on pay	£103,406
Additional income	£8,199	Non-pay expenditure	£37,734
		Office and management fees	£15,962
Total income	£156,199	Total expenditure	£157,062

Additional funding

Additional income is broken down by:

- £3,000 received from NHC Primary Care from our local Integrated Care Board(ICB) for work on a project
 - £1,345 for representation from our local ICB.
-

Next steps

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 2024-25 Workplan is as follows:

- Access to care pathways
- New ways to access Primary Care
- A mystery shopper review of the Enhanced Access Service
- A review of defibrillator locations across the city
- Launch of our Men's and Women's Health Forums
- Investigate the Neurodiversity Care Pathway
- Aids and Adaptations 6 months on
- Children & Families Forum setup
- Hospital Passports
- Enter and View Programme
- Accessible Information Standard Pharmacy Reviews



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Manchester, First Floor, Railway Cottage, 33 Collier Street, Manchester, M3 4NA.

Healthwatch Manchester uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of **seven** members who work on a voluntary basis 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 2023/24, the Board met **five** times and made decisions on matters such as **budget setting and approval of our Annual Work Plan for 2023/24**.

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 2023/24, we have been available by phone and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending 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, our social media channels and our monthly bulletin. We will also produce hard copies where necessary.

Responses to recommendations

Four providers did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so 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 that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to **the Health Scrutiny Committee at Manchester City Council** who have both heard and requested our work in the past.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in the **Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership**. For example, we provide regular activity and impact reports through the **Healthwatch in Greater Manchester Network**. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Manchester is represented on the **Health and Wellbeing Board** by our Chair Amanda Smith. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending each meeting and speaking up on behalf of Manchester citizens. Healthwatch Manchester is not represented in any Integrated Care Partnerships or Integrated Care Boards.

Enter and view

This year, we made **5** Enter and View visits. We made **18** recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.


Location	Reason for visit	Outcome
Carlton Road	At the request of commissioning	A report was produced with recommendations – the service followed up on these and patient safety improved.
Fairleigh House	At the request of commissioning	A report was produced with recommendations – the service followed up on these and patient safety improved.
Averill House	At the request of commissioning	A report was produced with recommendations – the service followed up on these and patient safety improved.
North Manchester General Hospital	At the request of commissioning	A report was produced with recommendations – the service followed up on these and patient safety improved.
Wythenshawe Hospital	At the request of commissioning	A report was produced with recommendations – the service followed up on these and patient safety improved.

2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
GP Website Reviews	The vast majority of the practices found the individual assessment review reports we sent to them highly useful in successfully completing the NHSE website audit.
Extra Care Service Review	The Manchester Older People’s Housing Alliance informed us that they would be using our report to lobby Manchester City Council for more Extra Care services locations to be created across the city.
Student Access to Mental Health Review	Increased awareness of the student voice to Mental Health Service Providers in the city of Manchester.
Compliance reviews of the Accessible Information Standard(AIS) among Manchester pharmacies	Increased awareness of the AIS and the means to achieve compliance through reviewing 23 pharmacies across the year.
Patient interaction in the A&E waiting area at MRI Hospital	After publishing our findings, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board have adopted the 18–29 age range as a priority area of focus in their urgent care strategy.

Healthwatch Manchester
First Floor, Railway Cottage
33a Collier Street
Manchester
M3 4NA

 www.healthwatchmanchester.co.uk

 0300 078 0669

 info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk

 Healthwatch Manchester

 @HealthWatchMcr

 @healthwatchmcr

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