

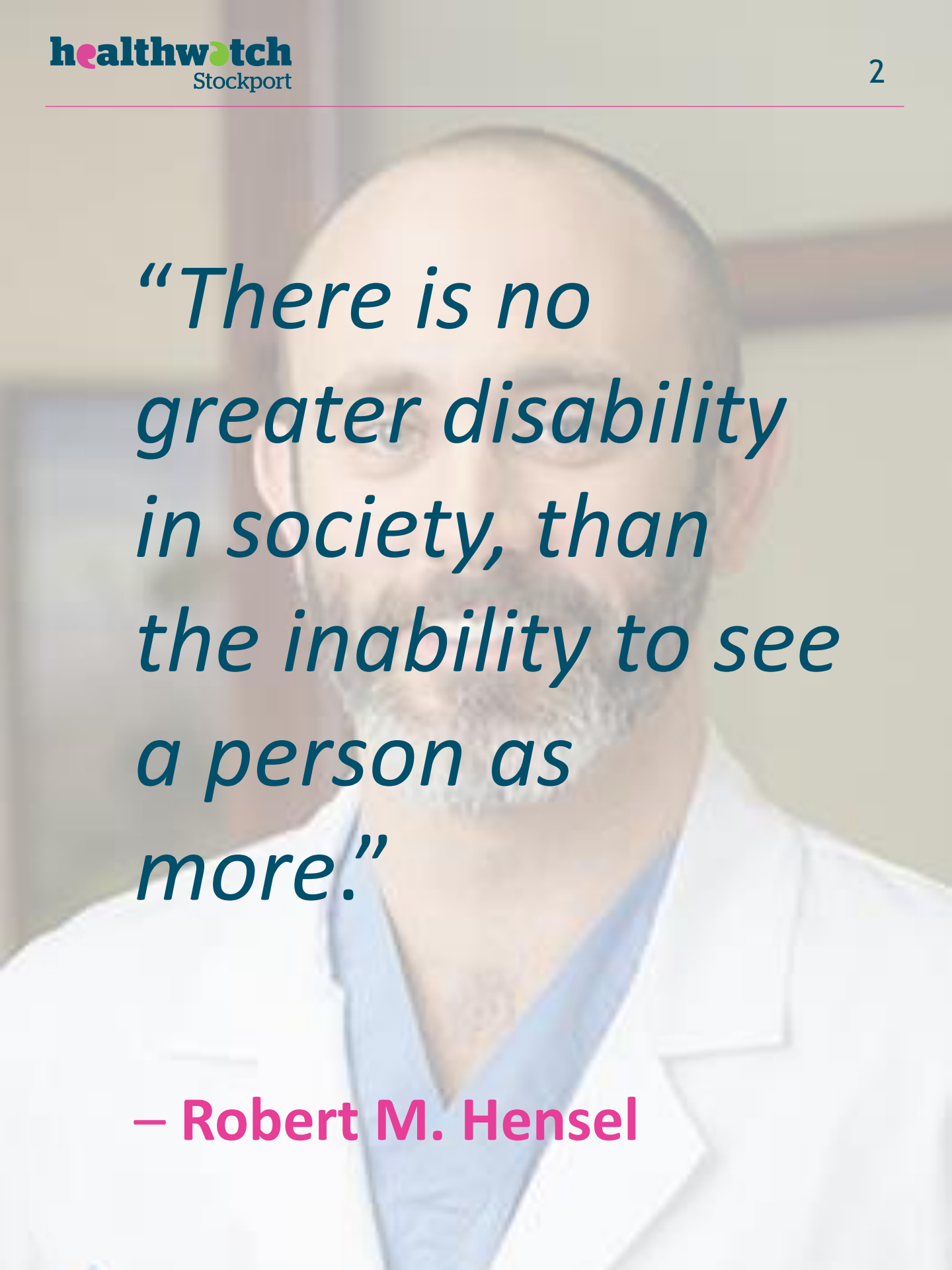


**Annual Report**  
**April 2020 - March 2021**

**On Equal Terms**  
**Then and now**

**Inform | Involve | Influence**

[www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk)



*“There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.”*

**– Robert M. Hensel**

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# Message from the Chair

Welcome, I am pleased to be able to present to you our 2020-2021 annual report. I am proud to continue as Healthwatch Stockport Chair, this now being my 6<sup>th</sup> year in this privileged position.

As we started our new working year in April 2020, none of us could know the massive impact that lay ahead of us. These changes continue to have a profound effect on our health and daily lives despite the best will to be as hopeful and optimistic as possible.

At Healthwatch Stockport we want you to receive the best experiences and outcomes when using health and care services in Stockport and beyond. To help us do that we always take your views into consideration and use your experiences to define our working priorities.

We have spoken to so many people who have battled through existing health conditions, exacerbated by covid-19, who have faced mental health challenges and declining mental health because of the impact of lockdown. Many of us have lost loved ones and have had to deal with bereavement in ways unimaginable prior to the outbreak.

The dramatic impact of covid-19 on health and social care services and the consequent restrictions on social contact have put an enormous strain on people and services. We are all aware that even in if we achieve a way of life without Covid-19, the ever-growing waiting lists for operations is a concern and the number of serious health conditions going undiagnosed will continue to rise.

Yet, the pandemic has yielded an exceptional response; services have adapted and provided great care in ways that would have seemed unthinkable before. What the pandemic has highlighted is that the skills and experience of the voluntary sector need to be harnessed and integrated into plans for the future with appropriate resource.

To that end, we wish to celebrate all our frontline care staff in the NHS, the voluntary sector and the wider care sector who have worked so tirelessly during this crisis. We applaud the wide range of staff working in the background; from those coordinating supplies of PPE, right through to our local gold commanders who have kept everything going throughout the pandemic.


I am particularly proud of the way our team at Healthwatch Stockport quickly reacted to the pandemic. Even before lockdown started, they had the foresight to intuitively see that extra support would be needed. With a strong skillset in public health and working in the voluntary sector they were able to adapt and use our connections to gather a small army of volunteers, concentrate on providing timely information to help local people and our voluntary sector colleagues get the help and support they needed in an ever-evolving situation.

In closing I'd like to thank all our staff, volunteers, members and fellow directors for keeping the momentum of our work going. Without them, this great work could not happen.


Sue Carroll, Chair

Healthwatch Stockport

## Message from our Commissioner



*The continued commitment of the members and staff of Healthwatch to improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Stockport is amazing. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have an impact on the communities of Stockport and the challenges to rebuild a stronger health and social care system has never been more relevant than now. Stockport Healthwatch will be key to this and will be bringing a wealth of expertise and knowledge of the lived experience of the people of Stockport to emerge from this pandemic stronger and more resilient.*



Vincent Fraga, Head of Commissioning & Infrastructure, Stockport Council

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# About Healthwatch Stockport



## Health and care that works for you

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Stockport.

We're here to find out what matters to you and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

## Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

*Our aim is to Support you and your family to get the best outcomes from health and care services in Stockport*

## Our Approach

- 1. Inform.** We provide **information** about health and social care support and services that **works for you**. Helping you **stay well**
- 2. Involve.** We gather **your views** and ensure **you are listened to** about what works well and what could be improved. We identify trends and themes, and we use it as evidence to support our influence.
- 3. Influence.** Working with those that run services to ensure improvements are made because of what you said.

We use feedback to work with commissioners to make services work for you

*“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives.”*

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



# Highlights from our year



Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21

## Reaching out

We heard from **500+** people this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to over **2400** enquiries.

We have had **21,402** tweet impressions

**59** new followers on twitter

**4042** followers across 3 platforms Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

## Responding to the pandemic

We engaged with and supported **475** people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

## Making a difference to care

We produced **5 reports** about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

## Health and care that works for you:

We have **87** ACTIVE volunteers

With over **500+** wider members and **2000** stakeholders we regularly communicate with.

We employ **6** [part time] staff [equating to 3.5 full time equivalent], which is an 40% increase from the previous year.

We received **£108,000** in funding from our local authority in 2020-21,

# Responding to the Pandemic - Covid-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people get the information they need, this was especially important through the pandemic.

This year we helped by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Supporting the community volunteer response
- Helping people to access the services they need



By Mid-February 2020, we were aware that the virus was going to take hold, so we spoke to our colleagues in the voluntary sector, particularly Age UK Stockport about plans to respond to the outbreak, as it was thought that the older population were most at risk.

At the start of lockdown - the UK were asked to stay at home, people aged over 70 and the most vulnerable were asked to shield themselves from leaving home. Most organisations were starting to set up systems for working from home and evaluating what the pandemic would mean for their organisation and services.

We initially made an offer from the Healthwatch team to our local community and voluntary organisations to help and support in terms of:

- Helping smaller orgs/groups putting together officer procedures for staff, home working etc.
- Set up **Coronawatch** - Disseminating stakeholder briefings, communicating information to and on behalf of the voluntary and community sector about how their organisations were responding to the pandemic.
- Disseminated useful information and resources from the government and public health websites
- Practical support in staying connected with vulnerable people who may be self-isolating
- Practical support in distributing essential items out to vulnerable people in the Community

As we didn't have a volunteer hub in Stockport, we offered to develop a volunteer database. Soon local organisations were referring people who wanted to volunteer to us. The council were involved in the discussions, and we had support from our commissioners and our health and adult care portfolio holder.

Whilst the council were getting their back offices sorted, setting up remote working as well as putting in place dedicated coronavirus helplines, which was no mean feat, our tel. number was published on the council website as an interim helpline to call for assistance. Our calls increased significantly from people requiring practical assistance and information to help them make sense of what was going on.



# Responding to the Pandemic - Covid-19

## Over the following weeks and months our covid-19 response continued:

- Mutual aid groups were forming, offering to help neighbours with shopping, picking up essential items and generally checking in on them. These were great initiatives but when we spoke to some of them, they were cautious about potential scams and putting both vulnerable people and volunteers at risk. We produced some practical guidance in the form of **Top Tips for Volunteers** and **Top Tips for people accepting help**. These were adopted by the council and used on their community response to covid-19 webpages.
- We distributed **voluntary sector leaflets** to Facebook group leaders and mutual aid groups
- We set up a **database of community offers** [space, essential food and toiletries parcels supplies, food supplies, financial support]
- Became another outlet for provision of **food vouchers**
- We had regular check-ins with the **Chief Executive of Stockport Council** who provided **assurance** that everything was being done to ensure people most vulnerable were being contacted and looked after.
- We were taking up to **50 calls per day**. With only two members of staff.
- We took part in **daily virtual meetings** between the council and other voluntary and community sector organisation representatives to help coordinate efforts
- Set up a regular **volunteer newsletter** - keeping our 'corona' volunteers informed of opportunities to get involved.
- As well as general information about the virus, guidelines and clarification, requests for **medication pickups, food deliveries and financial help** were the most frequent enquiries coming into our information line.
- We spent a lot of time informing local organisations about our Healthwatch Information & Signposting service which was to **provide health and social care information and signposting**, and our volunteer offer to pick up and deliver prescriptions, pick up and deliver food parcels and make welfare calls.
- We worked closely with the CCG to look at how our volunteers could help deliver prescriptions in a coordinated way and did so in **partnership with the Stockport Car Scheme**.
- We also **deployed volunteers to help the food bank deliver** parcels to people who couldn't get to the foodbanks themselves due to isolating or who were being shielded.

## Responding to the Pandemic - Covid-19

- During April we had **350 volunteers** come forward to offer their service, by July this had risen to almost **500** and continues to grow
- We established a **Pen pal service** following an initiative to put cards, pictures, and messages of well wishes in food parcels
- Council offered to provide staff support to help us with **volunteer placement** with local organisations
- Throughout the Summer and into Autumn and the subsequent lockdowns, Healthwatch Stockport continued to **help with shopping and medication pick ups**
- We launched and ran a **'Your Story during Lockdown' Survey** looking at people's experiences during the outbreak.
- We launched and ran a **community heroes project** celebrating the work of people who went above and beyond in Stockport

The council received the list of the most vulnerable people who had been written to by the government who were in the extremely vulnerable group. They were making proactive calls to them using the operators who were running the council helpline. In

Stockport there were about 4,500 people who fell into this group and many thousands more who were still vulnerable and required help that did not. The council and the NHS working together with the help of the voluntary and community sector did their best to identify those.



# Your story during lock-down

Just after lockdown in the spring, we launched and ran a survey which asked people about their experience during lockdown:

- 320 people responded, 18% of respondent stated they were carers
- We received responses from all postcode areas in Stockport and across all age ranges
- Almost half of respondents had to isolate during the first lockdown. Those that needed support during the pandemic, accessed it from a wide variety of sources such as community and voluntary groups.
- When applicable age, disability and caring responsibility had the most effect on how challenging covid was for people.
- 79% were happy with local covid related information they had seen. Those that weren't said the information was unclear, not accessible to them, not seen often enough, not local, or was out of date. We did receive comments about the lack of a BSL interpreter on the news and during press conferences.
- Most people could use technology to help them during this time, but a small group could not - about 11% [which correlates with national figures of about 13% not able to use digital technology]. Of this group half found that inability a problem for them.
- Community members, local voluntary organisations and GPs were the ones people most trusted when they needed practical support.
- Pharmacists, GPs, and Outpatients departments were the most visited healthcare sites and were mainly positive experiences for people
- About 50% - had not needed to access healthcare services, but of those that did it was mainly by telephone consultation.
- Colleagues from Forward and Nexus were running a similar survey aimed at people from minority and diverse ethnic backgrounds and we agreed that we would share responses. They received 155 responses
- As expected covid-19 and the related pandemic measures had significant impacts for people's mental and physical health. We collected many comments and examples to illustrate this. The significant impact on health and care workers was well documented in this survey and provided very useful information.
- We will be producing a book about people's stories along with the stories of our community heroes.

Our report has now been made part of a Healthwatch in Greater Manchester wide report that has been sent to the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership with recommendations for consideration. These will be reported on in the 2021-22 Annual Report.

# Community Heroes Project

After setting up the volunteer database, we quickly started to receive positive comments about the volunteers we were placing. We decided to set up a **Nominate a Hero** project, where we invited people to nominate a hero, this could be about a neighbour, volunteer, organisation, or care staff who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic and tell us a little bit about why they felt they were their hero.

We had **137** nominations from across Stockport.

Each month we highlight different heroes and share the great work, generosity, and kindness of people in Stockport.

We hope to host a celebration event when guidance permits.



## Role on the covid-19 management board

Healthwatch Stockport is a full member of the Stockport Covid-19 Outbreak Management and Engagement Board. It meets fortnightly to consider the impact of outbreaks to the population, communities, and businesses. It focuses on communication and engagement with the public and develops local support to implementing the steps necessary to reduce the risk of spread of covid-19 in Stockport.

Healthwatch is there to support communication mechanisms, raise any issues about the communication and engagement through feedback received from the public. We have also been working closely with the voluntary sector around communication throughout the pandemic.

# Volunteer HUB Development

During Covid-19 and in the absence of a dedicated volunteering brokerage service for Stockport, Healthwatch Stockport created a model that as of March 2021 has supported and mobilised over 350 of the 500 volunteers we recruited to support our local communities.

We have been working with several partners; Sector3 and Stockport Council as well as other organisations such as Stockport Car Scheme, Stockport Advocacy and Age UK Stockport to ensure we are coming up with an approach to volunteering that mobilises volunteers across the borough to support our communities during this unprecedented demand due to Covid-19.

The hub will build on this model, harness the supply and demand for volunteers that have occurred as result of the Covid-19 crisis and make it a valuable resource for Stockport.

Since December 2020, we have been speaking to voluntary and community groups [through the forums, a survey and a range of 1-1s] about the potential for a hub in Stockport what they would expect from a volunteer hub, how they think it should develop, where it should be placed and their thoughts on strategy development. Here is a summary of what people told us:

## Potential

- There is a lot of support for the hub, it's a great way to network, a separate volunteer forum/network would be useful, feels it could be lost in the bigger forum.
- Support for a drop in when things get back to 'normal'
- Larger organisations could help support smaller organisations and harness this as it can't all be the responsibility of the hub - knowing who can be approached for help is essential
- When the partnership model was mentioned most people were in favour, but they want to make sure it's not bureaucratic/stuffy

## Engagement

- Meaningful engagement with voluntary and community organisations is key, as one size doesn't fit all. Think about volunteer support from diverse backgrounds
- Any developments and planning should be done in collaboration from voluntary and community groups and a steering group set up with them leading
- The hub needs to be placed in the community and led by the sector with organisations that work in the heart of communities, shared across the sector
- Do what you're doing - its working!
- Working with and supporting volunteers is important - it also raises the profile of our organisations
- Partnership to be set up early and have discussions early on not have a strategy for strategy sake - less important than hub development
- A guide to the hub would be useful

# Volunteer HUB Development

## Expectations

- Support with volunteering policies and where to get started was a common ask
- We need to embed the diversity of volunteers and ensure opportunities are communicated and promoted to all sectors of the community - not just say we will, we need to demonstrate the hub as inclusive and address any challenges and barriers early on
- Don't forget about smaller grass roots organisations who might need volunteers more and require support
- Needs to be allowed to grow and not seen as a project - embed in the community
- Training for volunteers is key and access to that is vital and could be delivered cross Sector

## Challenges

- Some groups reticent of taking on volunteers and how to handle difficult situations, felt they were not well equipped
- Seems a lot for one volunteer coordinator - could become a bigger task - don't set it up to fail
- Identities and uniqueness not lost - recognise organisations that are and have been doing volunteering successfully

## Funding

- Funding is important and if committed should be long term, should NOT be a project - needs to be a staple of voluntary sector life
- There needs to be a commitment to funding post 12 months
- Don't start too big
- Be aware of constraints for funding - short term funding can be detrimental
- There was support for delivery by Healthwatch and Sector 3 - keeps it independent

## Strategy

- Look at models where it has worked elsewhere
- Not onerous for the partnership or those delivering it
- Must be agile and light
- Short and owned by the sector

## Outcomes we want to achieve in partnership for the Hub:

- Increased Community connectedness
- Increased social capital
- Future proofing against another crisis
- Building organisational/community capacity and resilience in local communities and within the VCFSE sector
- Development of a supported volunteer match scheme
- Provision of a present, coordinated, and structured approach to volunteering in Stockport
- Build and increase capacity, confidence, and experience to maintain volunteering support in Stockport beyond 12 months



# Volunteer HUB Development

## Current position [March 2021]:

- Following from the engagement that took place a modelling workshop took place to explore stakeholders experience, suggestions, and ideas further to shape what an initial model for the hub will look like
- Regular volunteer hub development meetings are taking place
- We have a temporary part time volunteer coordinator in place on secondment from the council who is working primarily on coordinating and supporting the volunteers on the Stockport vaccine roll out
- We are developing a hub platform in form of a website to enable organisations to promote volunteering opportunities, and for volunteers to register with the hub and access those opportunities. This will be launched during volunteer's week June 2021.



# Volunteer Stories from the HUB

## Carrie and Ian Bradshaw's Story

'Carrie & I have really enjoyed volunteering at the Vaccination Centres, the shifts we have done have made us feel part of something very special. When we both started volunteering, we were amazed at the amount of respect we were getting from the public as they arrived for their first vaccinations. We were constantly being praised for volunteering and giving up our time to help others. Everyone is so grateful to get their vaccinations, some in tears with joy and some saying it was better than winning the lottery, some shifts have been overwhelming with gratitude. We plan to keep up volunteering at the Vaccination Centres until there is no one left to vaccinate. So if you are reading this and have some free time sign up and volunteer and help put our country back on its feet.'

<https://stockportvolunteerhub.org.uk/carrie-and-ian-bradshaws-story/>

"..Since Covid-19, and I was furloughed, I offered my time to volunteer in my community, I have since found - this is me - this is what I want to do, I won't be returning to work as I know it, I want to work in a sector that helps people in need, I know now this is what I want to do"

- Jane, who joined the community volunteer hub in April 2020

## Volunteering at a Vaccination Centre

"During the pandemic I have found myself with plenty of spare time, but not a lot of options on how to fill it. So, I was keen to get involved with volunteering to put this time to good use, but also to break up the days! I was quickly matched up to help at the local Covid-19 vaccination centre.

After a quick briefing I was given a high-vis jacket and set to work in the car park; helping people find available spaces, directing them to the entrance for the centre and generally trying to keep the traffic moving safely around the area, as well as providing a bit of entertainment with my dancing to keep warm - which one lady likened to a bad rendition of Riverdance!

Despite the cold, the time passes quickly, with our site vaccinating over 2300 people a day. Being involved with the vaccination programme is an absolute pleasure. People often stop post-vaccination to thank us and comment on how well organised the operation is. The surgery staff have also been very welcoming and make me feel part of their team very much. It feels great to be a small part of it!"

Donna Littlewood, Vaccination Site Volunteer Steward

[www.stockportvolunteerhub.org.uk/volunteering-at-a-vaccination-centre](http://www.stockportvolunteerhub.org.uk/volunteering-at-a-vaccination-centre)



# Information and Signposting

Early in the pandemic, and in just three months nationally Healthwatch Advice had been accessed by **over 70,000 people**. In Stockport over the course for the last 12 months we heard from over **2,400** people calling into our service looking for clear and up to date information. Our role became much more focused on providing people with clear, consistent, and concise advice and information articles on our website to help address people's concerns.

## Some key questions people were asking included:

- How can I find an NHS dentist?
- Where can I access financial help?
- Where can I get practical help whilst I'm shielding?
- Where can I get help because I am struggling with my mental health?



## Top four areas that people have contacted us about:

This year the top four areas that people have contacted us about are:

1. Dentist
2. Medication collection/support with shopping
3. Mental health
4. GP Care

## Reading Group

Healthwatch Stockport has a reading group which was set up to review health and social care related literature produced by any health and care services including the voluntary sector and us. We have **27 members** on this group.

We received four requests for the Reading Group last year, three from Stockport Council and one from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.

The requests from the council were for leaflets relating to Covid-19 guidance, we had a fantastic response to the leaflets and the feedback was used to improve the leaflets, such as advising to use Face Masks, advice to handwash and not just sanitise, as well as using a sterner feel to the leaflet with a weblink to provide more information.

The request from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust was an opioid information leaflet for patients that they wanted feedback on how it read to non-healthcare professionals. We had a great response to this and the Foundation Trust implemented the majority of the suggestions from group members which included making it shorter, more concise, and repeated information removed. The visual impact was improved by adding colour to the headings.

Both organisations found the feedback useful and would both contact us again for any future feedback.

## Healthwatch Pen Pal Scheme

During the pandemic, whilst volunteering and speaking to callers, it became evident there were many people in the borough who were older, lonely, isolated or without any nearby family. To help combat the loneliness we decided to set up a pen pal scheme whereby people in the community could volunteer to write to a 'pen pal' in the community. It was easy to sign up via the Healthwatch Stockport website and once they had done this the volunteer details would be logged onto our database.

The scheme quickly gathered momentum with around fifty volunteers coming forward. There is certainly no shortage of goodwill in the community and with the relaxing of restrictions we are looking forward to continuing the pen pal scheme with high hopes that our pen pals will go on to form lifelong friendships.

The pen pal scheme is still welcoming local residents to become pen pals, so if this is something you are interested in, please call **Shirley Hamlett** on **0161 974 0753** to find out more.



## Feedback CASE STUDY

Here we follow the experience of a Healthwatch Stockport member, who made an enquiry with us over 3 years ago.

### THEN - Background to an initial enquiry & Healthwatch Stockport response.

In 2018 Lisa had contacted Healthwatch Stockport due to a traumatic experience accessing End of Life care for her mum and support for herself as a carer. At the time, **Lisa did not feel she was in a place to go forward with an NHS complaint although she wanted lessons to be learnt from her experience.**

We invited Lisa to come in to meet with us and over time we worked with Lisa to put together an Impact Case Study. We circulated it to local commissioners and providers with a view to organising a multi-disciplinary learning workshop and use Lisa's experience as a case study. Unfortunately, there was little take up on this request. In addition, we provided support and signposting to Lisa through regular contact and suggested Lisa also contact her GP to discuss her feelings following her traumatic experience, as well as information on other organisations that could also provide support and guidance including Stockport Advocacy and Beacon Counselling.

Lisa began attending Healthwatch Stockport events and activities including a specific series of afternoon tea conversations on End of Life Care which Healthwatch Stockport ran in conjunction with Stockport CCG and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.

Sadly, Lisa lost her partner not long after losing her mum.

Lisa remained in contact with Healthwatch Stockport and wanted to get involved with volunteering - particularly volunteering where she could 'make a difference'.

During 2019 we asked Lisa if she would be interested in training to become a Lived Experience Panel volunteer, supported by Healthwatch Stockport, and working alongside other Lived Experience Panel volunteers and representatives from AQuA [Advancing Quality Alliance], Stockport CCG and Stockport Foundation Trust. Lisa was keen find out more and decided to take up the opportunity.

# Feedback CASE STUDY

## LISA NOW: Positive outcomes

Currently Lisa is still an active Lived Experience Panel Member:

Lisa is our lead Lived Experience Panel representative on a national research study - PALLUP Study - which is overseen by the University Surrey funded by Health Education England and the National Institute for Health Research. The PALLUP Study - Equipping community services to meet the palliative care needs of older people with frailty approaching the end of life.

In March 2021 Lisa was selected, following her engagement in the first stage of the PALLUP Study, to take part in a 'consensus meeting' which established consensus on the core palliative care needs of older people with severe frailty.

Following this meeting, Lisa was invited to become a member of the PALLUP Study's Reference Group by Dr Richard Green and Professor Caroline Nicholson and continues to be a full member of this group.

In March 2021 Lisa made a follow up enquiry to the Healthwatch Stockport team regarding the offer of a meeting with NHS Complaints Advocacy to find out more information about making an NHS complaint after a significant amount of time has passed since the incidents. We supported Lisa with NHS Complaints Advocacy Stockport and a meeting was arranged.

This meeting took place and after considering making a formal complaint, Lisa decided to discuss the issue further with us and find more out about the End of Life Care model in Stockport and other people's experience of this pathway. NHS Complaints Advocacy let Lisa know she can always contact them at any time in the future if she decides she would like to make a formal complaint.

Healthwatch Stockport contacted Lisa with updates on their forthcoming work on End of Life and have invited Lisa to join the Healthwatch Stockport End of Life Care Reference Group which will meet twice a year and part of this work, with Lisa's consent, will involve looking at her impact case study. Lisa is happy to join this reference group and along with her role as a Lived Experience Panel member help influence and inform service delivery and support people in need of palliative care and their carers.

Lisa continues to be a valued Lived Experience Panel member on our Frailty Pathway work at Healthwatch.

# Improving Services for people at the end of life

## THEN - 2018

Thanks to people speaking up, there are now plans in place to improve end of life care for people in Stockport which includes the needs of carers.

Healthwatch Stockport working with Stockport CCG and Stepping Hill Hospital conducted an End of Life Conversation with 25 people with experience of caring for a relative or a close friend during end of life.

People told us that they felt there was an uncoordinated approach to end of life care by health and social care professionals. Carers sometimes felt they were ignored and although information and support services were available, they were not known about early enough or at all.

Carers felt everyone should be having more conversations about end of life care and the needs of people with disabilities; particularly sensory impairments and learning disabilities should not be forgotten about.

### **Our 11 recommendations were themed into the following areas:**

- Improved **coordination, communication, and Information**
- The needs of **protected groups** to be taken into consideration when developing improvement plans for end of life care
- Improved training for health and social care **professionals** and people in an informal caring role
- Review care planning processes
- Identify Healthwatch Stockport champions to continue working with commissioners and providers

Nine months later, the carers were invited to attend another conversation event with Stockport CCG and Stepping Hill Hospital and we were pleased to report progress had been made against each recommendation.

## NOW - 2021

A progress report has been produced against the recommendation made in the first report. A reference group is being set up to monitor the final steps that need to be made to complete the recommendations and they will meet twice a year to monitor the service.

We will be exploring the option to develop End of Life Care Champions next year.

# Don't Forget about me

## Then: August 2020

For several years Healthwatch Stockport has continued to receive feedback from people with learning disabilities and/or sensory loss with regard their experiences of care. We held a focus group inviting people with learning disabilities and sensory loss, stakeholders from local provider services, carers, and health and social care professionals to provide direct accounts and experiences they have had about visiting their GP and hospital.

Although we heard some examples of good practice within primary care it was isolated to a few specific practices. It was disappointing to hear accounts of poor practice as we want to be able to stand up and make sure our local health and social care system provides the best of care for our communities. We made a commitment to the participants that we would collate their feedback, help them find out more information and present their concerns to the local Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a remit to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population, our report asked the board to assure themselves and us that Stockport is improving the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities, sensory loss, and other disabilities/limiting conditions. The full report can be found on our website.

### **We asked the Health and Wellbeing Board if they were assured that:**

1. Statutory requirements around meeting communications needs of people with learning disabilities, sensory loss, dementia, and other disabilities/limiting conditions are being met within health and social care such as when a person presents at ED or admitted to a hospital ward?
2. Staff in health and social care know their organisational policies well enough to put in place the appropriate means to support patient appointments such as British Sign Language Interpreters, implementing blue butterfly etc?
3. Staff in health and social care are appropriately trained and have the sufficient awareness to care for people with learning disabilities, sensory loss, dementia, and other disabilities [such as using hoists, storing equipment]?
4. Annual Health Checks are carried out equitably to all people with learning disabilities, no matter which GP they are registered with?
5. Health Actions Plans are being used to provide a more person-centred approach?
6. The VCSE sector has sufficient knowledge from services about initiatives such as Blue Butterfly, Forget me not, This is Me, hospital passports etc. to be able to raise awareness and stimulate public awareness and conversations about learning disabilities, sensory loss, dementia, and other disabilities/limiting conditions?
7. GP practices/hospital sites are as accessible as possible for people with learning disabilities, sensory loss, dementia, and other disabilities/limiting conditions?

# Don't Forget about me

## NOW - 2021:

The task and finish group has met several times and we have met with the CCG in January to start work on a plan of action to tackle the recommendations in the Don't Forget About Me Report.

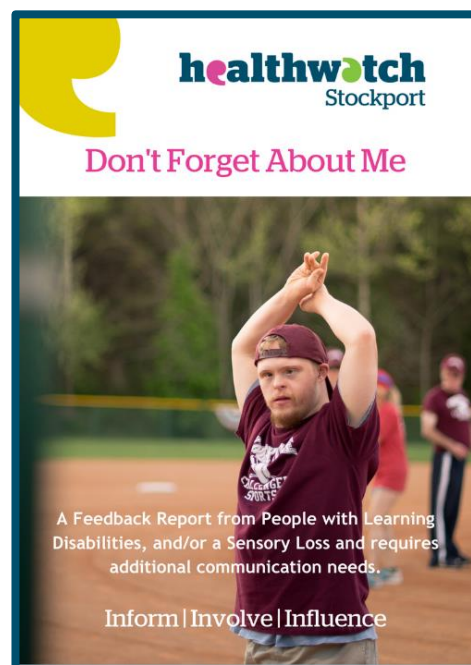
We have a reference group in place to oversee this which is made of organisations who represent people with LD and Sensory loss.

This was an interim report to the Health and Wellbeing Board from the Healthwatch Stockport Learning Disability and Sensory Loss Task & Finish Group about recurring issues being faced by Stockport residents and groups, who they feel they have not been addressed elsewhere.

*"Susan [from a provider organisation] recalled incidents when two of their residents were in hospital and required moving and handling. Susan's colleagues had to show hospital staff how to use the mobile hoist. They had no idea if the hoist had been serviced. The wheelchair of one of the residents couldn't be found following their transfer to another ward. The home manager on asking about the chair was advised to return to the previous ward where it must have been left, to find it. Having spent time looking for the chair on the previous ward, it was then found in the storeroom of the new ward. No member of staff was aware of this and yet this was a vital piece of equipment in terms of the individual's postural management and support during eating and drinking."*

Since Covid-19 James who had no verbal communication and profound learning disability went into hospital, and no one could go in with him. The Carer was then contacted by staff asking,

*"is he always this confused?"*





# Dementia

## THEN:

During Healthwatch Stockport's public priority setting engagement in 2018, dementia was identified as a priority by Healthwatch members, we therefore went on to select dementia as a condition to look at in more depth. Local people were engaged and asked what they would do if they could influence the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). Two focus groups were held with people who had dementia and their carers, to find out about what they would improve in service provision. This work fed into a larger piece of work done with Healthwatch in Greater Manchester colleagues and a [Healthwatch in Greater Manchester Report](#) was published in October 2019 and this fed into the national work undertaken by Healthwatch around the country around consultation on the NHS Long Term Plan.

## NOW:

To complete our work around dementia, we had planned to undertake a series of Enter and View visits to local care homes and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust to view the care being provided for people with dementia. However due to the Coronavirus pandemic these visits could not take place. We therefore improvised and ran two online feedback sessions aimed at allowing people with dementia and their carers to tell us about their experience of using services during the pandemic.

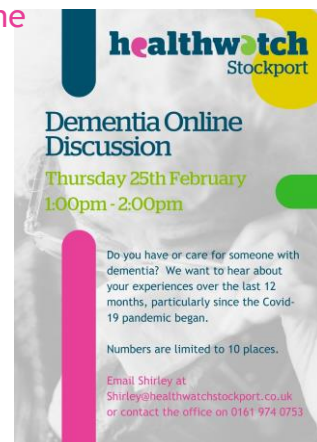
A task group was set up to oversee this piece of work which included people with lived experience, and we sought the views of people and their carers to provide an overview of services at a point in time. This research will add knowledge and help understand what the picture is like in Stockport and how things have changed for people with dementia over the last 12 months. We will share our data with colleagues in Public Health who provide JSNA data.

Two, one-hour long focus groups were held in an informal and friendly environment to provide a safe place for people to talk freely. For anyone who did not feel comfortable we offered a 1-1 telephone conversation or zoom chat.

**Participants spoke about the following areas that affected them:**

- Care homes - moving to one when you have dementia and the care within them
- Care plans - both in care homes and when receiving care at home
- Hospital care
- Dementia training
- What works well
- Gaps in service

*Participants provided case studies. Detailed key findings will be presented in a full report and circulated later in 2021.*





# Improving our Information

**Our Website: Providing you with reliable, up to date and useful information**

Last year we reported that we had developed a new website, the next phase of developing the Healthwatch website was to ensure our **directory of health and social care services** was as up to date as possible so it can be used as an additional resources for visitors to our website.

**Over the last year on our website there have been:**

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>10,132</b> | Sessions        |
| <b>7,515</b>  | New users       |
| <b>2,617</b>  | Returning users |
| <b>27,152</b> | Page views      |
| <b>16,758</b> | New page views  |

**The most visited pages were:**

- What we do
- Meet the team
- Pen pal scheme
- Your story during coronavirus
- Become a community volunteer/join the Stockport volunteer hub
- Stakeholder updates

# Engagement

When the pandemic began, we started to collate updates from local organisations and upload them to our website as an information repository. We circulated regular stakeholder updates and this led to a regular information round-up being circulated. In June we sent out our first Information Roundup, a collection of news items, events, and new stories from all our partners.

This first update went out to **94** stakeholders and members. Ever since then it has grown, with more organisations taking an interest in sending us information to circulate on their behalf.

It has been growing ever since with more features being added such as voluntary and paid opportunities, surveys, e-Bulletins and newsletters from other organisations. This has become a valued resource for Stockport, and the go to place for information about health and social care in Stockport. We often receive feedback and praise for its content and regularity, now being weekly.

We now send the Information Roundup to over **300** people each week, with new people subscribing each week.

## LGBT+ History Month Stockport February 2021

During LGBT+ History Month we supported a collaboration with Forward LGBT+, Samaritans Stockport, Stockport Pride, OUTing, the Past Festival, Nexus, The Proud Trust, Stockport Council, LGBT+ PLUS, NHS Stockport Foundation Trust, and Nationwide Building Society to bring over 30 events and activities based around the theme of Body, Mind, Spirit to people in Stockport.

What has been the toughest year in living memory for most of us, it was vital that we could come together to "claim our past, celebrate our present, create our future" (LGBT+ History Month's motto)

With a mix of fun, serious, and educational activities we brought you a beautifully diverse community and showcased local talents.

**Sending rainbows to you all.** 

[Watch the Stockport LGBT+ History Month Montage here](#)

[You can find all the events that took place here](#)

# Our Volunteer Members

At Healthwatch Stockport we are supported by **87** active volunteers, **500+** members and a reach of over **2000** stakeholders to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

We have **560** volunteers on our Community Volunteer Hub database.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone, by post and online.
- Delivered paper surveys in their streets, delivered goody bags and leaflets
- Helped add additional services to our health and social care directory of services
- Help with the vaccine roll out
- Helped with the local volunteering efforts of shopping and collecting prescriptions for those self-isolating or shielding.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, our usual work including carrying out all face-to-face work in the community, dramatically reduced and most staff and volunteers have become home based. However, this hasn't held our volunteers back. They volunteer team remain as dedicated and enthusiastic as ever, supporting our activities and keeping up to date with all things health and social care related. They have dedicated their time over the past year with the following activities:

**Our Board** - Virtual meetings are now the norm, with our Executive Board members meeting monthly to oversee the smooth running of the organisation.

**Strategic Monitoring Group** - Virtual meetings are held monthly, and members attend strategic meetings and events across the health and social care sector to ensure the voice of Stockport people continues to be heard.

**Training** - We have carried out two Healthwatch Stockport Information Sessions for new members and stakeholders

**Reading Group** - Have reviewed 4 pieces of health and social care literature

**Social activities** - Importantly our volunteers have been there for each other during this difficult year by staying connected with each other, attending regular virtual coffee mornings and get togethers such as our Macmillan coffee morning Quiz and our Christmas Quiz raising **over £120**.

# Our Volunteer Members

## Case study Liz, Sam and Jill.

Two volunteers who initially contacted us separately for information and advice turned out to be a couple of our volunteer heroes - Sam and Liz. We put them both in touch with Jill, who we felt would benefit from a couple of calls from some friendly volunteers. They have since been having three-way telephone conversations.

*"When we first started coordinating volunteers, we were overwhelmed with calls for support. I did stop to wonder what exactly we had taken on, but stories like this make it worthwhile."*

## Case study from Maria

Meet **Maria**, one of our latest Healthwatch Stockport members and listen to her story during lock-down - proving that it has not all been bad.

We first met Maria when she wanted help with her medication pick up, as she was shielding. After supporting Maria a couple of times, we started to realise what a character she was - you could describe her as bubbly, funny, and such a scream, among a lot of other things!

When another member of the public rang in about their parent, Jean, being isolated and was feeling lonely, we immediately thought of Maria. After we contacted Maria, seeing if she was happy to call Jean, she was more than happy to help.

Fast forward to now, Maria is great friends with Jean and have since found out they have other friends in common! Maria has been able to reconnect with Jean with old friends and are all back in contact!

[Find Marias story online here.](#)



SCAN ME

# Finances

This year we received **£108,000** of funding to run Healthwatch Stockport.

The money was allocated as follows:

Running Costs **15%**

Activity Costs **7%**

Staff Costs **78%**

These figures are subject to change following final completion of year end accounts undertaken by ***Powell and Powell Accountants***.

# Next Steps and Thank you

## Top three priorities for 2021-22

1. Supporting the development of an **integrated care system** in Stockport ensuring there is patient and public voice at all levels of the system.
2. Monitor **system recovery**, ensuring patients who need care receive it in a timely way and they are equipped with the information and support they need whilst they are waiting for their care.
3. Create a new and invigorated **member engagement** plan that will involve current and new members into our work projects and activities.

## Next steps

We will complete our work around service improvements for people with learning disabilities, dementia, allergies, dental access and continue to develop the work we have started with the Lived experience panel around frailty.

We have set up our planning and reporting systems to ensure we embed ways to reach out to communities from all the equality groups, as well as homeless people and carers.

*“Tackling unfair health differences will need those in power to listen. To hear experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives, and then to act on what has been learned.”*

We wish to thank all our members who have stuck with us through the pandemic and taken on extra responsibilities to help those that needed help. To all our voluntary sector, social care and NHS colleagues thank you for your tireless commitment to ensuring we support the most vulnerable in our communities.

**We dedicate our special thanks to  
Captain Tom  
‘Tomorrow will be a good day’**



# Statutory Requirements

## About us

Healthwatch Stockport, 48 Middle Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3DL has full responsibility for the Healthwatch contract in Stockport.

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

## 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 to our activities. Our board and strategic monitoring group ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the boards met 9 times and made decisions on matters such as how to support the covid-19 response in our community.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We use insight from our information and signposting enquiries, and we usually host an annual priority setting event to ask people what matters to them. We also use social media and feedback from a range of sources [such as CQC reports, Care Opinion, Statutory complaints reports etc.] to help shape priorities.

## Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities, and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example listening to people from the LGBT+ community during LGBT+ history month, listened to and acted upon people with learning disabilities and people with sensory loss.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website and social media channels, we create a press release for local media, we have a substantial mailing list where it also promoted, and we make hard copies available on request.

# Statutory Requirements

## Responses to recommendations and requests

We did not have any providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

## Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Stockport is represented on the Stockport Health and Wellbeing Board by Sue Carroll, Chair, Healthwatch Stockport. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by championing the experience of patients and the public.

# Inform | Involve | Influence

