

The value of listening

Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham

Annual Report 2023–2024



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"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our CEO and Committee Co-Chair

"Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham have continued year on year to have an impact across the whole community. This year, working with our partners in health and social care, Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham launched 21 separate reports of which the cost-of-living report highlighted how health has been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. This year we gathered patient experience feedback from 5396 reviews whilst visiting health and social care facilities. The service was supported by 28 valued volunteers who contributed an amazing equivalent of 327 days to Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham staff and volunteers, who have continued to work with dedication to ensure a responsive and vital service continues to support the local community."



Tim Spilsbury (Chief Executive Officer, Your Voice in Health and Social Care - contract holder for Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham)



"As a fairly new member of the local advisory committee for Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham, I have been impressed with how much this very small but dynamic, dedicated, diverse, and hard-working team, and its group of volunteers has achieved. During these ongoing economically challenging times they have worked closely with partners in the council, NHS bodies, community organisation, and community representatives focusing on engaging with service users and local people to find out about their experience of services, and how services can be improved to better meet their needs. Highlights include Healthwatch conducting research into:

- The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on people's ability to access even basic NHS services such as dental health services and prescriptions
- The experience of users of mental health inpatient services.
- Vaccine hesitancy

Going forward, issues of insecurity and continuity are perhaps the major concerns for Healthwatch as a result of the funding system cuts at a local and national level. Hopefully, we can continue serving the people of Hammersmith & Fulham for the next few years and beyond."

Anthony Allert (Co-Chair, Local Advisory Committee)



About us

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



Our Staff



Carleen
Duffy
Area
Manager



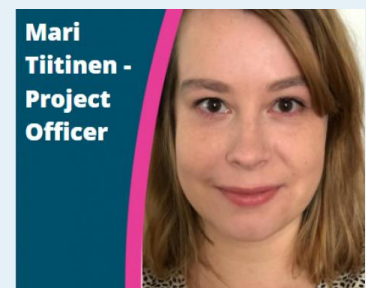
Chloe
Howcroft
Engagement
and Project
officer



Yee
Phyoo
Patient
Experience
Officer



Ruchi
Wadhwa
Project &
Engagement
Officer



Mari
Tiitinen -
Project
Officer

Year in review

Reaching out:

5396 people

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

462 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as the cost-of-living crisis, mental health and advocacy services.



Making a difference to care:

We produced

21 reports

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

Our most popular report was

Cost-of-living and health report

which highlighted **how health has been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.**



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

28

outstanding volunteers who gave up **327 days** to make care better for our community.

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

£110,000

which is **10% less** than the previous year.






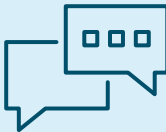


We currently employ

5 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We investigated the experiences and satisfaction of residents using the PATCHS online consultation system and made recommendations for more patient education, which we helped facilitate at PPGs and the borough Patient Reference Group</p>	 <p>We provided clear information about the changes to the advocacy service in the borough and continued to provide advice on how to make complaints about health services to the residents who contacted us.</p>
Summer	 <p>We began circulating Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust's list of local dental practices currently accepting NHS patients to help alleviate barriers to accessing dental care.</p>	 <p>We conducted our Enter and View Programme to investigate the impact of the Pharmacy First campaign on community pharmacies, the insights of which helped inform our information and signposting programme helping residents know when to visit a pharmacy first.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We heard from 238 people on their experiences of how the cost-of-living crisis was impacting their access to health and care services and health and wellbeing. We also suggested other information and support that could be included in the Council's Cost-of-Living Crisis help booklet.</p>	 <p>We carried out our mental health inpatient engagement project for the second year, engaging with inpatients from Lakeside and Hammersmith & Fulham Mental Health Units. We made 92 recommendations throughout the project</p>
Winter	 <p>We conducted our research project on the experiences of using local maternity services among seldom heard minority ethnic women. We heard from 32 women and made tailored recommendations for CLCH midwives and health visitors.</p>	 <p>We used our research project on vaccine hesitancy to understand the attitudes of residents toward vaccination, and the barriers influencing uptake, addressing gender-based misconceptions with the HPV vaccine.</p>

Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Addressing a critical service gap

Our outreach efforts have addressed a critical service gap by offering vital information and signposting services to individuals.

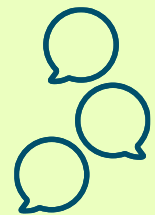
Through our engagement work, we regularly come into contact with residents who may be entitled to specific benefits or healthcare services but are sometimes unaware of their eligibility or lack knowledge regarding where to seek assistance for their concerns. Our proactive approach, providing valuable information and advice, continues to reach new audiences.



Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

Our quarterly Patient Experience Report shared with the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital resulted in an invitation to conduct Enter & View visits to collect patient feedback around appointment management and waiting times. Through Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham, patients at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital will be given a chance to share their experience and feedback regarding using the hospital outpatient services.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

We collaborated with the Patient Experience Facilitator from the Inner North-West Division CLCH to exchange best practices and explore ways to work together effectively on enhancing patient experience. Subsequently, we actively participated in various in-person and online meetings, to collect insights into practices around patient experience. When implemented, this resulted in an increase in the uptake of West London Trust Friends and Family Feedback and resulted in a response rate slightly above the national average.



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Your Voice Heard at a Wider Level section at the end of this report.



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 Hammersmith and Fulham a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture and feed this back to services to help them improve.

Patient Experience Programme

At Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham, we run a comprehensive Patient Experience Programme as part of our duty to gather and represent the views of patients and service users in the borough.

They tell us what is working well and what could be improved, allowing us to share local issues with decision makers who have the power to make changes.

2023/24 summary of patient experience data collection



4805 reviews from 186 visits

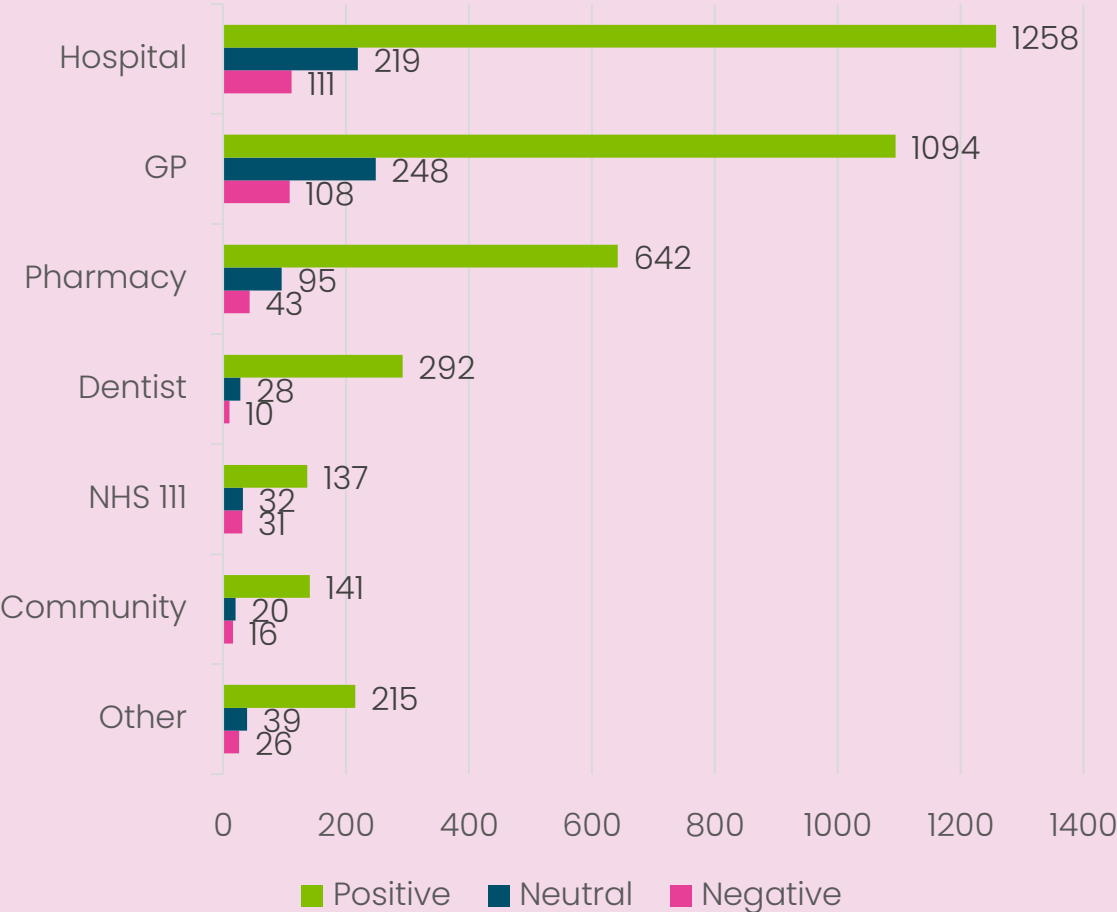
From patients sharing their experiences of health and social care services with us through the patient experience programme, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.



Presented at Board meetings

At Borough Executive meetings, Health & Wellbeing Board Meetings and other local and North West London meetings to inform and advise decision makers on patient experience.

An overview of our findings from the year



Patient Experience Programme

Step forward for better: Recommendations and Implementations

Based on the patient reviews, we have produced the following recommendations in the year 2023/24:

Remote Appointment Training for Patients

Recommendation :	Enhance patient education on remote appointments using means such as videos and in-person training
Rationale :	Many, especially the elderly and non-English speakers, struggle with online services.
Implementation :	Increase training programs, inspired by successful models like Canberra Old Oak's.
Body of responsibility :	PCNS and GP services

Patient Information on GP Access and Available Services

Recommendation :	Promote GP access information and available services through posters, leaflets, banners, and Patient Participation Groups (PPG)
Rationale :	Many patients have unrealistic expectations and are unaware of appropriate service options, such as seeing pharmacists for minor ailments or self-referring to MSK services
Implementation :	Increase patient education initiatives, like The Bush Doctors' banner in the waiting room explaining how to book appointments and available services
Body of responsibility :	PCNS and GP services

Customer Service Training for GP Receptionists

Recommendation :	Customer Service training for GP receptionists with help of VCSEs
Rationale :	Patients often feel receptionists are unfriendly or insensitive, likely due to a lack of proper training
Implementation :	No action of implementation observed
Body of responsibility :	PCNS and GP services

Patient Experience Programme

Step forward for better: Recommendations and Implementations

Morale Boost for GP Staff

Recommendation :	Install a recognition wall displaying positive patient comments.
Rationale :	Highlighting positive feedback boosts staff morale and shows what actions are appreciated by patients.
Implementation :	No action of implementation observed
Body of responsibility :	PCNS and GP services

Communication Regarding Appointments

Recommendation :	Ensure appointment letters clearly indicate the time, date, and any changes communicated clearly and well in advance
Rationale :	Clear communication reduces missed appointments
Implementation :	No action of implementation observed in Hammersmith & Fulham, though Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust plans to align signage language with appointment letters.
Body of responsibility :	NHS Trusts

Communication Regarding Test Results

Recommendation :	Implement a real-time tracking system for patient test results
Rationale :	This will alleviate anxiety and give patients a greater sense of autonomy over their healthcare journey
Implementation :	No action of implementation observed
Body of responsibility :	NHS Trusts

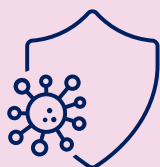
Patient Experience Programme

Together, We Can: Impact on Our Stakeholders



Optimising the use of online GP consultations

From the data collected from the Patient Experience report, we wrote a PATCHS report at the end of 2022-23 financial year. This report highlighted the need for better online GP consultation systems. Throughout 2023-24, significant efforts were made to increase the patient experience, especially at Canberra Old Oak Surgery, where GP staff trained patients extensively on these systems.



Enhancing Vaccine Education at Park Medical Centre

When Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham collaborated with Healthwatch Ealing as part of the Northwest London-wide vaccine survey, the Patient Experience Team engaged with the patients across the borough to gain patient responses. We have also further collaborated with two medical students from Imperial College to shape a patient education poster about vaccinations in Park Medical Centre.



Enter & View on Patient Access of an NHS Trust

During 2023-24, patient access issues were identified at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital. This observation led Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham to collaborate with Healthwatch Kensington & Chelsea and Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to carry out an Enter & View analysis to explore improvement opportunities.



Data Sharing Agreement

In the first two quarters of 2023-24, we collaborated with three GP services and CLCH NHS Trust in Hammersmith & Fulham Borough to produce one-page mini-reports summarising patient experiences for each service. Due to resource constraints, these reports were discontinued from quarter 3 onwards. We are now working on establishing data sharing agreements with these GP services to share patient experience data, providing valuable 'patient voice' insights for continuous improvement.

Ensuring the cost-of-living crisis is not a barrier to health

Last year, we conducted a deep-dive research and engagement project to collect feedback from residents on how their health has been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

Our survey was co-produced with key stakeholders, including the LBHF Council, NHS North West London, VCSE groups, and residents. Our findings revealed that many people in H&F are experiencing financial barriers to receiving the healthcare and treatment they need due to the rising cost of living.

1 in 2

people had not been able to – or anticipate not being able to – go to a health service in the last 12 months or next six months



What did you tell us about the cost-of-living crisis and your health?

- Nearly 1 in 3 respondents said they had not been able to access dental care in the last 12 months due to the cost of checkups and treatment
- Nearly 1 in 2 respondents said their mental health had declined in the last 12 months.
- Around 1 in 5 people (20%) didn't ask for or receive support during the cost of living because they do not know what is available.

Our findings also evidence that the cost-of-living crisis is further exacerbating health inequalities among certain groups, with ethnic minority groups, women, those with long-term health conditions, on means-tested benefits, those that identify as being in a more financially uncomfortable situation and living in areas of higher deprivation – the north and centre of the borough – being more disproportionately affected in most areas of our survey.

What difference did this make?

- Several of our recommendations call for more targeted information and signposting towards financial, mental health and other forms of support – particularly towards the groups whose health has been more adversely affected by the rising cost of living
- Our intervention in the development of LBHF's revised 'Help with Cost-of-Living Crisis' guide booklet, namely the inclusion of mental health assistance and help with health costs information, and other recommendations to the LBHF Cost of Living Crisis tea, including suitable venues to distribute the COL guide booklets, will ensure that more people – particularly the most affected demographic groups – get the information and support they need during the rising cost of living.
- Along with system partners, including LBHF, NHS NWL and VCSE organisations, we continue to signpost residents to relevant services for help during the cost-of-living crisis, including mental health support, such as being able to self-refer to H&F Talking Therapies, to ensure that local people get the help they need, when they need it.

Maternity Experience of Women from Ethnic Minority Communities

Last year, we engaged with young mothers to explore the maternity care experiences of women from minority ethnic group.

To gather insights, we conducted face-to-face interviews with 32 women, with the assistance of children's centres and local charities. These conversations aimed to capture the personal experiences of these women throughout their pregnancy and childbirth journeys.

Women from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly those from black or Asian communities, had more unsatisfactory experiences during labour and after childbirth



Around 30% of the respondents felt that support offered post-birth was insufficient to meet their needs. When asked, these women expressed a need for more focus on support offered by staff in terms of information, face-to-face appointments, training, and culturally appropriate care.

What did you tell us about your maternity journey?

Your recommendations for improving maternity care for women from ethnic minority groups focus on improving support and communication throughout the pregnancy journey. This includes training staff in active listening and empathy, providing clear information on care deviations, and offering increased post-natal support. Establishing safe havens for discussing concerns with mental health professionals, providing specialised childcare services or ensuring equitable treatment regardless of child presence, and offering financial support are also recommended. Ensuring a consistent team supports mothers, tailoring support on a case-by-case basis, and training staff to avoid stereotypical assumptions based on ethnicity, religion, or culture are essential for creating a more inclusive and supportive maternity care environment.

What difference did this make?

- We are feeding back our findings to groups like Imperial Maternity Voices and using our experience to inform community projects like 'co-producing respectful maternity care with black and black identifying women and their families'. Through this work we are continuing to ensure that the voices of seldom heard women are involved in decision making and these communities are working more closely with stakeholders.
- The Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust have responded to each of our recommendations with various initiatives and training programmes they have put in place to improve maternity care and support for women from ethnic minority groups including active listening, communication and Information provision,, pregnancy havens, establishing support systems, continuity of care, specialised staff straining, addressing staff shortages and avoiding stereotypical assumptions. By implementing these recommendations, NHS Trusts in Hammersmith and Fulham can ensure more equitable and supportive care for all women.



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 voices are heard, and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Addressing vaccine hesitancy amongst parents from ethnic minority communities
- Attending Health Inequalities community listening events to hear about the experiences of ethnic minority communities within the health and care system.
- Engaging with people living with disabilities and older people
- Engaging with residents from more deprived parts of the borough about how rising costs were impacting on their access to health and care services, including homeless people, refugees and asylum seekers.

Building Trust among Black residents

We are on the Steering Group of the Building Trust project, a collaborative initiative between the Local Authority, NHS and VCSE groups, to tackle structural racism and health inequalities among black residents within the local health and care system.

We took part in comprehensive training including active listening, emotional resilience and trauma, and attended several health inequalities community listening events to inform ourselves on the lived experiences of black residents regarding their use of health and social care services.

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy

In partnership with Healthwatch Ealing, we conducted a research project on vaccine hesitancy to understand the attitudes of residents of young people and adults towards vaccination, and the barriers influencing uptake. Many individuals expressed a greater willingness to get vaccinated if more information and transparency was available. This served as the basis for collaborative work with Canberra Old Oak GP Surgery to arrange a community MMR Vaccine information session.

As a result of our efforts, we have helped to address some of the barriers that can prevent people from getting their children vaccinated

- A survey conducted with participants of our MMR Vaccine information session indicated that they felt more informed about vaccines after our session, with many expressing their intention to vaccinate their children or feeling more inclined to do so.
- Furthermore, our staff and volunteers successfully persuaded one parent and their child to schedule an appointment with the nurse for further information about vaccines.



Due to the success of this pilot community outreach event, we intend to organise more events like this in 2024-25 with other community groups to continue to increase access to information and trust in immunisation.

Amplifying the voices of unpaid carers

Throughout the year, we have made it our mission to ensure that unpaid carers get their stories and experiences heard.

We liaised with the Carers' Network H&F throughout the year to attend their monthly coffee mornings as an opportunity to engage with them on various projects, including our Cost of Living and Health project, to ensure that their voices are heard.

Through our previous engagement work with this group, we were able to represent their views and needs at a Wellbeing and Recovery College Steering Group meeting, where we suggested they offer a more comprehensive level of support and respite for unpaid carers living in H&F, which has now been included in the College's prospectus.

Hearing from people living with disabilities

We have also made greater efforts to ensure that local people living with disabilities get their voices heard, too.

We liaised with Action on Disability to speak to service users about the work that Healthwatch do and collect their experiences of accessing health and social care services. We are looking to build on this working relationship to ensure that more local people living with disabilities get their experiences heard.



Hearing from more deprived parts of the borough

As part of our Cost of Living and Health research, we particularly wanted to hear from residents living in more deprived parts of the borough, including the north and centre of the borough, to find out how rising costs were impacting on their ability to access health and social care services and their overall health and wellbeing.

We linked up with Citizens Advice H&F, the H&F Food Bank and other VCSE groups to attend their drop-in sessions and speak to local people who have been experiencing more hardship during the rising cost of living.

Experiences of mental health inpatients

In 2022/23, our mental health inpatient project, commissioned by West London NHS Trust, resulted in engaging with people seeking treatment in Lakeside and Hammersmith and Fulham Mental Health Units. We carried out this project for the second year in a row and engaged with 321 inpatients and made 92 recommendations.

Mental health inpatients are still a seldom-heard group, which is why it was important to continue to engage with them to find out their experiences of using the local acute mental health services and find out what areas need improvement.

Our involvement in the West London NHS Trust Inpatient Engagement project has enabled us to connect patients with community support groups such as Citizens Advice and drug and alcohol support services like Turning Point. Furthermore, we have implemented improvements in collaboration with support groups for residents. The success of this project has led to the request for an additional year of the project. Together with the Trust we aim to further develop our collaboration with the community support groups and organisations.

Our achievements include:



Improvements to Service:

Efforts have been made to improve access to sanitary products in the two inpatient mental health hospital units, improve patient engagement in activities, improve access to multi-faith spaces, and involve patients in food and dietary preferences, including upgrading to online food ordering systems to allow patients greater autonomy and convenience in selecting their meals. We will continue gathering feedback and introducing improvements over the upcoming year.



Improved Patient Experience:

The recommendations implemented in the inpatient mental health hospital units are expected to positively impact patient experience and satisfaction. We anticipate an improvement in the overall wellbeing and comfort of patients receiving care in these units.

Follow-up and Monitoring



We will closely monitor the implementation of these changes and gather feedback from patients to assess their effectiveness. This ongoing evaluation will enable us to make any necessary adjustments and ensure that the improvements have a meaningful and lasting impact on the quality of mental health services provided in the community.



Enter and Views

Enter and View is a statutory power of a local Healthwatch, mandated by the Health and Social Care Act 2013. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation.

During these visits we observe service delivery and talk with service users, their families and carers. We also engage with management and staff. The aim is to get an impartial view of how the service is operated and being experienced. Following the visits, our official 'Enter and View Report', shared with the service provider, local commissioners and regulators outlines what has worked well, and gives recommendations on what could have worked better.

Enter and View 2023/24

The focus for our 2023/2024 E&V was on the impact of the 'Pharmacy First' campaign.

Context: May 2023 Access to Primary care NHS delivery plan; Additional Services provided by Community Pharmacies:

Role of Community Pharmacies: Since April 2023, pharmacists can issue repeat prescriptions for oral contraception without GP involvement. Blood Pressure Checks and Smoking Cessation Services are now available through Pharmacy Technicians. Consultations for Minor Illnesses and Urgent Medicine Supplies can be referred to community pharmacies.

Purpose of Healthwatch visits: Observation of new service

Resident feedback: Focusing on perceptions of visiting a pharmacy instead of a GP. Accessibility of local pharmacies. Overall experience with pharmacy services.

Staff feedback: Sought to understand staff sentiments of providing additional services. Potential areas for improvement to better support staff with increased workload.

Theme	Barons Pharmacy	Kanari Pharmacy	Jays Pharmacy	North End Pharmacy	Implemented?
Accessibility	Install a ramp for better access.	Ensure staff know where the portable ramp is and consider a permanent ramp.	Good Standard	Lower the threshold at the entrance. Install an automatic door.	TBC – We are still awaiting responses and/or further details from pharmacies about if/when/how they intend to implement these
	Good Standard	Install an automatic door.	Good Standard	Good Standard	
General Environment	Good Standard	Provide more info about services through leaflets, posters, and videos.	Display service information on the shop front.	Replace carpet with vinyl or laminate flooring. Reconfigure space to reduce clutter.	
	Good Standard	Good Standard	Provide additional seating during busy times.	Consider moving to larger premises. Replace glass door in consultation room.	
Feedback and Complaints	Encourage customer feedback in multiple formats. Install an electronic device for feedback.	Encourage customer feedback through various formats.	Encourage customer feedback in various formats.	Proactively encourage feedback in multiple formats (verbally, online, on paper).	
	Good Standard	Good Standard	Make the complaints procedure more visible.	Good Standard	
New Pharmacy Services	Review and improve the use of the local Integrated Care System and Pharm Outcomes.	Ensure GPs use the online system for Minor Ailment Referrals.	Encourage feedback on new services.	Ensure GPs have access to information about medication stocks in local pharmacies.	
	Good Standard	Improve communication between GPs and pharmacies about stocked medications.	Good Standard	Good Standard	



Advice and information

The Healthwatch H&F Information and Signposting service is provided to local people who make direct contact with us either through phone, over email or during in-person engagement activities and community events. It is also provided indirectly through information available to the public on our website and various social media platforms to help them navigate the complex health and social care system. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and jargon-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 and advice people can trust on a range of topics, including how to make a complaint about a health service
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

Helping to improve access to local NHS dentistry

In the past year, we heard ongoing issues from local people, and through our cost of living and health research project, who were telling us they were unable to find dentists taking NHS registrations.

What did we do?

We opened channels of communication with The Central London Community Health (CLCH) Trust and developed the relationship through regional and local meetings and communication. As a result, we set up a mechanism for Healthwatch to receive a monthly update from CLCH on which General Dental Practices are currently accepting new NHS dentists. This information is made available to those who make contact with Healthwatch, and more widely to the public via posting on our social media channels, our website, in our newsletter and through face-to-face engagement.



“Thank you for helping me find a dentist.” – Local resident

Help with finding advocacy services and making complaints about a health service

As of July 2023, the way members of the public make a complaint about primary care services changed from contacting NHS England to NHS North West London. At a similar time, the advocacy services in H&F changed provider from The Advocacy Project to Libra Partnership.

What did we do?

We made efforts to ensure that residents received the new information on where to go to get help with making a complaint about a health service. We made this information widely available via our website, monthly newsletter and in-person engagement activities to ensure that people did not get lost in the system.

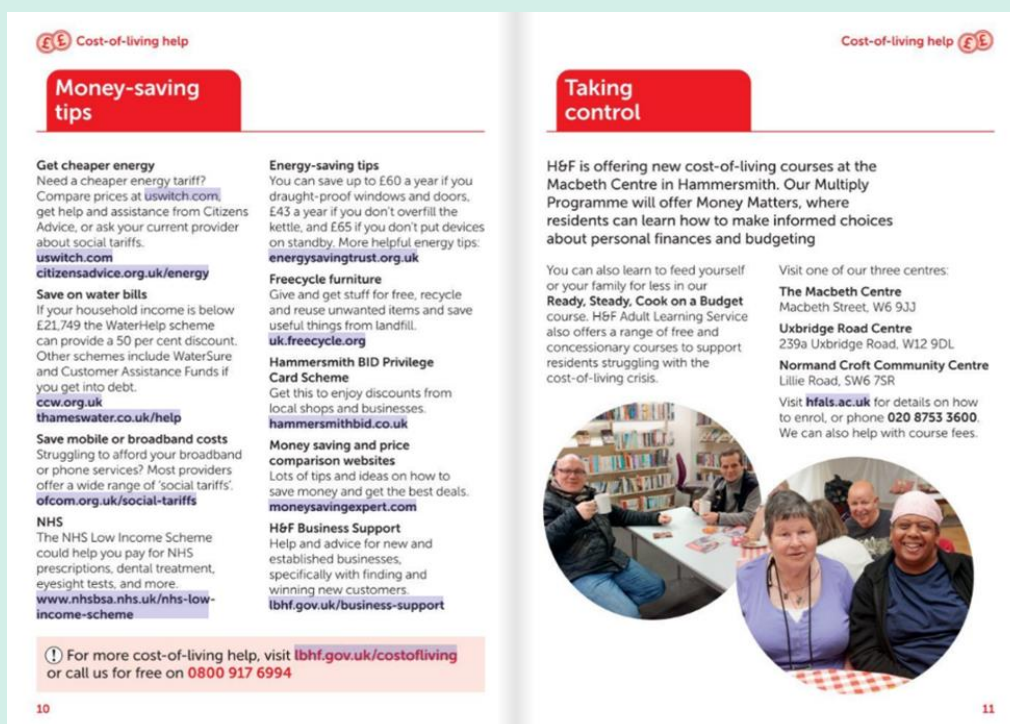


“Healthwatch made a valuable contribution in supporting me to achieve a beneficial outcome resulting in a take up with the Advocacy Services.” – Local resident

Inclusion of mental health support and help with health costs in the Local Authority’s Cost of Living support guide booklet

What did we do?

Since joining as a member of the Council’s Cost of Living Alliance Steering Group in July 2023, our interventions have resulted in the Council including information about mental health support and help with health costs in their Cost of Living support booklet, such as highlighting the NHS Low Income Scheme and HRT Pre-payment Prescription Scheme. We also advised the Group on which health services are best to distribute the booklet across the borough to ensure that residents most in need of this support have access to this vital support. We also kept the Group updated about our Cost of Living and Health research work, ensuring that the partners were aware of how the cost of living crisis was impacting local people’s health and what their respective organisations could do to alleviate the stresses, such as ensuring that people that might be eligible for caring allowances come forward to check their eligibility.





Volunteering

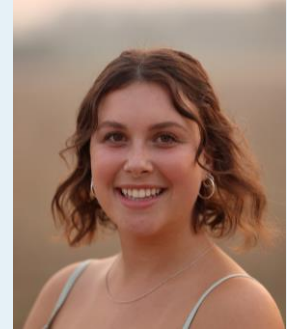
We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Represented us at community events and meetings across Hammersmith and Fulham to promote Healthwatch H&F and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve
- Conducted project research and publicised our work on social media



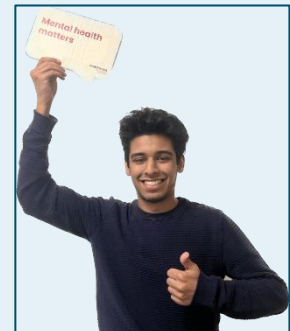
"I volunteered with Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham for six weeks in the summer of 2023. I wanted to volunteer with Healthwatch because I wanted to work with an NGO that engaged with the community in a meaningful way. I learned a lot from my time but one thing that stands out was learning how to interview people and collect data about their experiences within the healthcare system and then how to use Excel sheets to organize the data collected. My favourite part about interning with Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham was the people I worked with and the people in the community that I met. They truly made this a wonderful experience."



Eva –
Special Programmes
Intern



"My time at Healthwatch has been one of the most rewarding experiences. I've particularly enjoyed getting out my comfort zone and meeting people in various health authorities. Whether this was in pharmacies, mental health wards or care homes, it was interesting to understand and hear different experiences people had. It has also been highly beneficial to assist and get an insight into the process of turning peoples feedback into recommendations. It was amazing to work alongside the hardworking team at Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham, who were welcoming and a joy to work with."

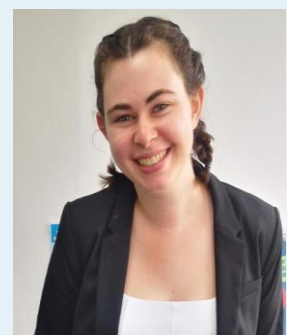


Dillon – Intern



"Interning at Healthwatch has been a great experience where I have learned about an entirely different healthcare system, engaged with residents to better understand their experiences, and met great people, all while improving my data analysis and interpersonal skills."

Read Melissa's full experience of her time with us in her [blog post](#) on our website!



Melissa, Intern



"Volunteering at Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham has been a profound opportunity for me to merge my passion for data analysis with improving public health services. Over the course of one year, I have worked on impactful projects such as social prescribing and addressing the cost-of-living crisis. This experience has been both professionally enriching and personally rewarding. It has allowed me to apply my technical expertise to real-world challenges, directly impacting the health and well-being of our community. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such meaningful work and look forward to continuing my journey and striving to make an even greater impact in the future."



Rati –
Data Analyst Intern



"This experience gave me an insight into the struggles of patients using NHS services. Visiting mental health wards as part of a funded project was an eye-opener and invoked empathy towards patients. Would greatly recommend volunteering."






Ardash - Intern

Do you feel inspired?



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

-  www.healthwatchhf.co.uk
-  **0203 886 0386**
-  info@healthwatchhf.co.uk



"I decided to volunteer with Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham to gain an insight into what working in a healthcare environment would be like. My favourite part of volunteering was the patients' stories that they shared; they gave me a new and unique perspective of the healthcare system. Volunteering in the in-patient experience project, I saw huge improvements in my communication and empathy, which will be useful later in my career and beyond."



Don – Mental Health Inpatient Volunteer



"The knowledge gained from my counselling psychology degree motivated me to support others. Consequently, I began volunteering as a 'Mental Health Inpatient Volunteer' for Healthwatch in 2023. In this role, I have learnt how to conduct inpatient surveys on NHS patients under section. I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing the team of volunteers treat the patients with kindness, respect, and giving them all a voice - which has historically been ignored from the mental health landscape."






Jessica – Mental Health Inpatient Volunteer

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"I really enjoyed my time when working with Healthwatch! The field of health care services and NGO work makes me understand the importance of conducting easy access to health care and the meaning of helping people in our great effort. All the colleagues here are nice and friendly, I am free to ask any questions and they are welcome to help. The "Enter and View" project I participated in was really interesting, which not only strengthens my working ability in doing observations and interviews but also gives me a chance to view and talk to the local elders in west London. Also, the other administrative tasks and posting on social media are all easy going, which is a good way of learning for me. The internship at Healthwatch is a wonderful experience and gives me a great help in my work experience and guides me into the field of healthcare with NGO."



Angel – Intern



"I have loved my time volunteering with Healthwatch to administer well-being surveys to patients at psychiatric facilities. With the incentive of giving back to the community and building on vital care skills, Healthwatch exceeded my expectations. Working in a hospital setting has been so rewarding! I have learnt how to be compassionate and patient in communicating with vulnerable populations, and I have gained valuable experience for my future career path in mental health. I am so grateful for this opportunity and will always look back at my experiences in this volunteer position."



Anita – Mental Health Inpatient Volunteer

Do you feel inspired?



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Feedback from residents and partners

While reflecting on our work and impact from the past year, we also invited residents and local partners to do the same by telling us what they think we've done well, and to provide us with suggestions as to what they would like to see more of from us.

This year, residents and partners told us:

- They value the work we do in providing residents and local service users with the opportunity to share their views independently – we act as a “temperature check” for services – to ensure that services continue to meet the needs of residents and local service users now and in the future
- Residents and local service users appreciate the guidance and information we share – whether it is help with making a complaint about a service or finding a local NHS dentist or GP
- More visibility is still needed to ensure that more people know what Healthwatch is and what we do

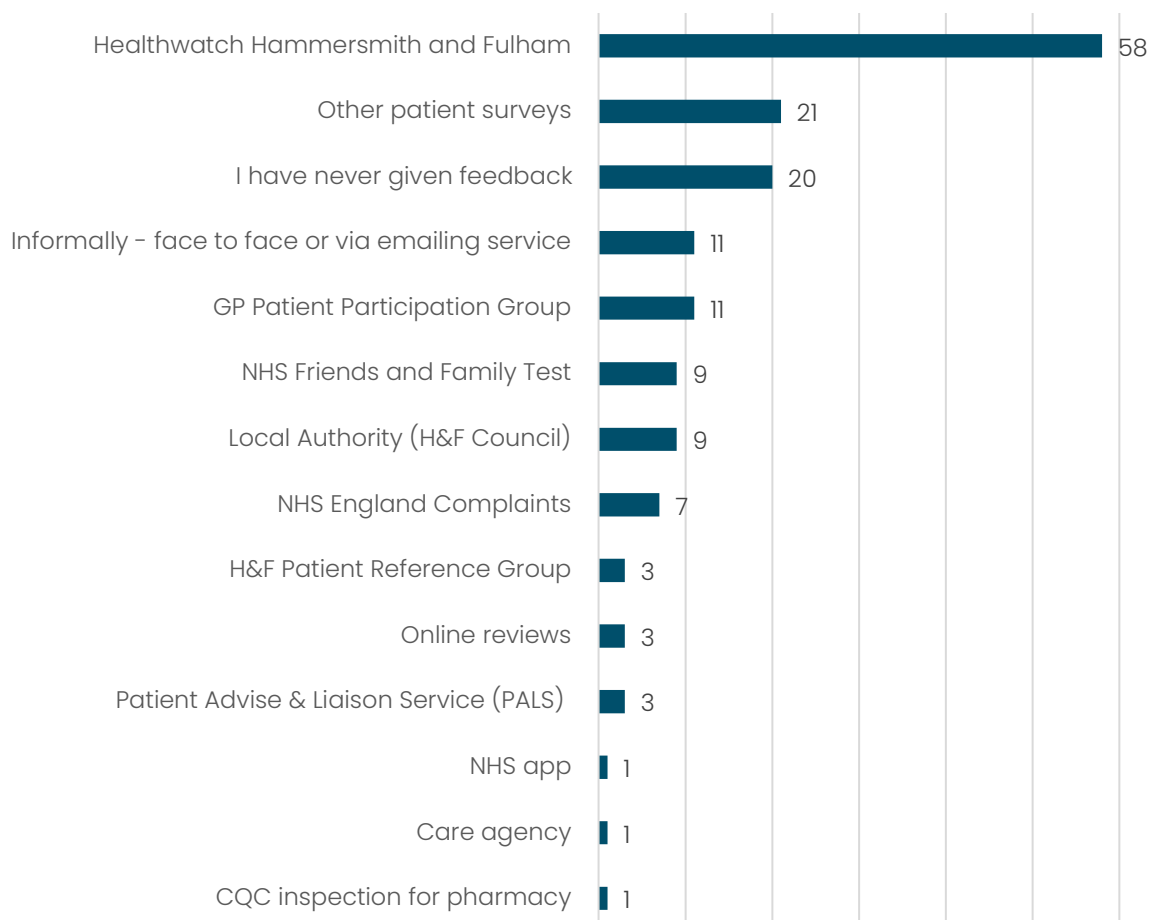
Feedback from residents

In the second year in a row, we conducted our 'Have your say on Healthwatch H&F' survey to gauge what residents and local service users think about our work, how we can improve and what the key health and social care issues are that matter most to them, so we can factor this all into our 2024-25 work plan. We received 103 responses. Here's what you said...

Healthwatch H&F continues to be a proactive engagement channel through which residents and local service users can share their views on services

- More than a half of respondents have previously shared feedback with Healthwatch H&F, followed by patient surveys and informally via face to face or over email.

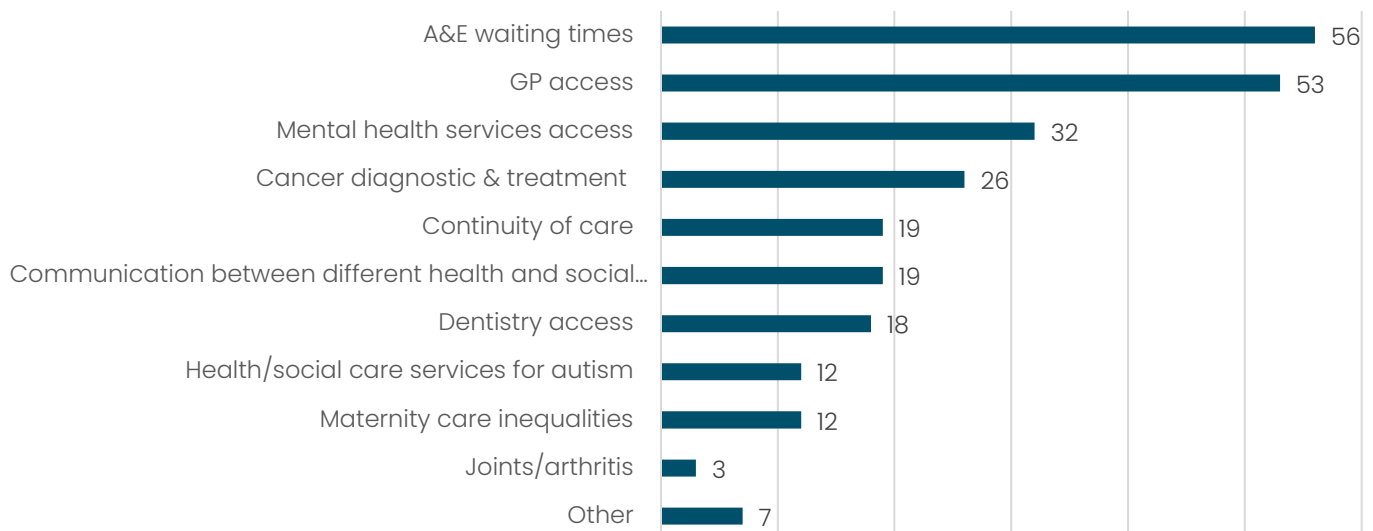
Which of the following have you ever shared health and social care feedback with? Tick as many that apply:



Improving access to health services continues to be the most important issue for H&F residents and local service users:

- More than half of respondents told us that A&E waiting times is the most important issue to address. This is followed by GP access, and access to mental health services. We will continue to address GP access and A&E waiting times in our patient experience programme, and intend on improving mental health access through our upcoming suicide prevention and mental health service project.
- In the free comments, several respondents also mentioned homelessness, support for people living with autism or Alzheimer's, as well as hospital waiting times as important issues to them.

Health and social care issues that matter most to H&F residents



There's still more work we need to do to increase our visibility so more residents and local service users know what Healthwatch is and what we do!

- *"I was vaguely aware of Healthwatch but you need to make it more visible about what you do"*
- *"Need to do more on being more accessible - especially for people not online or not technically aware. I wasn't sure about it before"*
- *"It's a shame that many residents don't know about Healthwatch HF. It doesn't help that your offices are not in a better location, I bet many people don't know where you are based."*



"Healthwatch chased up my issues contacting the Advocacy Service on my behalf via phone calls, followed up by emails, and kept me updated. They related well to me and was able to respond sensitively and supportively to my trauma and distress. Their sound interpersonal skills meant that they listened to me with the understanding of my complaint and providing me with positive and useful responses in relation to other organisations from that I could seek support. It is always refreshing when organisations maintain the highest possible level of service to the public they cater for. I warmly and positively commend them for their expert intervention."

Local resident



"Thanks for taking the time for meeting with me on Friday. It was much appreciated"

Local resident



"Healthwatch made me aware of the Prepayment Prescription Certificates that would help me with paying for multiple medications."

Local resident

Feedback from partners



“Healthwatch provides an invaluable service in collecting patient views and we share these with our patients – both the good and the bad. Their reports help us to shape our services to ensure we are doing our best to meet patient expectations. Healthwatch colleagues regularly come to the surgery to speak to our patients, who really seem to like having an opportunity to talk to them in an informal and safe environment. Sometimes patients might feel more relaxed about sharing their feelings with the Healthwatch team than with us. All in all, it’s a great way for the practice to get a temperature check on what patients are thinking – and a good opportunity for us to then adapt so that we keep on trying to improve.”

Magnus Nelson (Practice Manager, Ashville Surgery)



“The work of Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham is really helpful for us, as an NHS Trust, to understand the patient’s needs. Having those regular Patient Experience Reports gives us insight into the experiences of our patients and, using this information, along with other resources that we collect, we can make a meaningful impact to improve our services. Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham is a particularly receptive and proactive Healthwatch, giving an extra opinion based on patient voices.”

Matt Robinson (Head of Patient Experience, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Trust)



“Carers Network has welcomed Healthwatch H&F to a number of monthly carer coffee mornings at both the Irish Cultural Centre and Lyric Café in Hammersmith. Here, the Healthwatch team completed surveys, at their request, with local carers on how the cost-of-living crisis was affecting their wellbeing – helping our carers contribute to this important piece of work...”

Chloe Theobald (Operations Manager, Carers Network H&F)



“As Chair of the PPG at Canberra Old Oak surgery and Chair of the H & F Patient Reference Group (PRG) I believe it’s so important to work with Healthwatch HF. It’s an opportunity for Healthwatch HF to offer guidance and advice, especially bearing in mind the challenges facing the NHS nationally and of course, locally.

I’m always grateful that a member of Healthwatch HF attend the surgery PPG meetings to assure patients that their opinion, their views are so important to ensure that the surgery is meeting the demands of patients. Over the year patients who were unaware of an organisation called Healthwatch, now know that there is a body who will listen to their concerns. The relationship between the PPG Chair and Healthwatch is beneficial and there have been a couple of occasions when we have worked together, for instance at the W12 Together event in September and much recently on an immunisation initiative.

The Patient Reference Group, which meets every 2 months, is made up of residents and representatives from various organisations that work in the H & F Borough. Healthwatch HF are needed as the PRG look at issues such as the changes to H & F Health and Care Partnership Board, Same Day Access and recently the emotional issues around Autism.

I’m extremely proud of the working relationship that the surgery PPG and the H & F Patient Reference Group has with Healthwatch HF. The relationship is based on trust, on cooperation and a desire to work together for the benefit of every resident, young and old who live in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.”

Peter Hamm (Chair, Patient Reference Group, Chair Canberra Old Oak Surgery)



“Healthwatch have been fully committed and supportive in their work to highlight issues around health and care and ensure the patient voice is heard - regularly attending and promoting the H&F Patient Reference Group through their wonderful newsletter!”

Valdev Chaggar (Programme Support Manager, Health Inequalities and Comms & Engagement, Hammersmith & Fulham Health and Care Partnership)

Kevin Driscoll (Head of Vaccinations and Immunisations, NWL ICB)



"We have really appreciated seeing how engaged and active Healthwatch H&F has been in the past year, it's been really refreshing and we look forward to working more with them in the year ahead."

Shad Haibatan, Deputy CEO, Head of Engagement & Partnerships, SOBUS)



"The work of Healthwatch over the last year has helped our understanding of why people are not coming forward for vaccinations in North West London including producing an important piece of work that sets out what services must do to improve overall vaccination uptake. "

Kevin Driscoll (Head of Vaccinations and Immunisations, NWL ICB)



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	110,000	Expenditure on pay	92000
Additional income	560,00	Non-pay expenditure	8560
		Office and management fees	10000
Total income	£110,560	Total expenditure	110,560

Additional income is broken down by:

- £560 received from Healthwatch England for work on the Maternity in North West London project.

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of Hammersmith and Fulham, especially people in the most deprived areas, those most at risk of loss of life to suicide and those most seldom heard and engaged with .

We will work together with partners, our local Integrated Care System and the voluntary sector to help develop a health and social care culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top priorities for the next year are:

1. Exploring the key trends and themes around suicide in the borough, particularly within the most affected communities.
2. Investigating the experiences of residents using health and social care services to identify barriers to attending cancer screening.
3. Exploring opportunities to reduce barriers against patient access and to reduce the "Did not attend" (DNA) appointments at outpatient wards in local hospitals.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham, 141-143 King St, London, W6 9JG. The company holding the local Healthwatch contract is Your Voice Health and Social Care, 45 St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RG.

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement

The way we work

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

Our Local Advisory Committee consists of 5 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide local intelligence on the ground, as well as direction and scrutiny of our activities. Our Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2023/24, the Committee met 12 times and made decisions on matters such as which community to focus our maternity project on and planning community outreach events.

We also ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities through our patient experience feedback, engagement/community events, Patient Participation Groups and Patient Reference Group meetings we attend, voluntary sector networking meetings and our annual 'Have your Say on Healthwatch' survey.

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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using local health and social care services. During 2023/24 we have been available by phone, email, WhatsApp, face-to-face at local health and social care services, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings and events of community groups, drop-in sessions and forums. We ensure that this Annual Report will be made available to as many members of the community and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, take copies to engagement events, promote in a newsletter launch, present it at community and stakeholder meetings, social media, and share it via email with our past project participants and all local and NWL partners.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we take information to our Health and Wellbeing Board; Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee; ICB Operational Delivery Group; ICB Mental Health Operational Delivery Group; West London NHS Trust People and Communities Forum (formerly SUCE); Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust PPEG; Practice Manager Forum, North West London Engagement and Communications meetings; Patient Reference Group; Hammersmith and Fulham Primary Care Executive Group; West London Trust Carers Council and H&F Safeguarding Adults Board.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers at North West London (NWL) Integrated Care System. For example, we meet with our 7 other Healthwatch at the NWL level and discuss local issues, current projects and insights with the NWL ICS engagement team and feed our reports into the NWL insight reports. We attend the NWL Vaccination and Immunisation Board, and we attend the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy Forums. We also share our reports with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Your voice heard at a wider level

Healthwatch operate at a local level providing local feedback into the borough Partnership/Health & Wellbeing Board/Primary care executive group and Health and Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Through the borough-based governance structure, we ensure our intelligence is fed through to the North West London ICB. None of the 8 Healthwatch in North West London are funded to work collectively to provide one North West London Healthwatch voice. However, we do meet regularly to discuss our workplans, share insights and evidence from our various studies and collaborate on projects that are of interest in our boroughs as well as at a NWL level.

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Hammersmith and Fulham influence decisions made about services at North West London Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch across North West London to achieve:



Through work, Healthwatch Hillingdon, Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing and Hounslow completed individually we were able to inform the NWL mental health strategy. We represented local carers' needs to inform a more comprehensive offer of support for carers in the borough through the Mental Health Carers Council. At a wider level, the West London NHS Trust has since expanded their prospectus to include more mental health and wellbeing support sessions and courses for carers. We engaged with 321 inpatients in Lakeside and Charing Cross Mental Health Units to understand their experiences and satisfaction with the activities, facilities, support and discharge offered, and made 92 recommendations to improve the services that cover residents from Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith & Fulham.

We worked collaboratively with other Healthwatch across North West London to engage with women from seldom-heard groups to understand more about their experiences with maternity care services. Collectively we found that maternity services in North West London should prioritise listening to birthing parents, ensure consistent post-birth information sharing, and provide comprehensive staff training for atypical situations. Additionally, they should maintain high standards of translation services, have contingency plans for low staffing, and offer clear postnatal support information. This is consistent with our findings from our local work focusing on women from Black, Asian, and other ethnic minority seldom heard groups. These findings have been shared with the NHS Trusts that provide maternity services across the whole of North West London. The findings will be used to inform maternity strategies being created in the upcoming year.



Your voice heard at a wider level

This year we've worked with Healthwatch across North West London by:



Healthwatch Hounslow Chair, Peter Goulding, represents on the Policy Development Group. He regularly champions patient and carer involvement in policy development. Peter does not represent the voice of any specific boroughs in meetings but will endeavour to keep everyone updated on upcoming policies for discussion. This allows individual officers to attend alongside him when there is a policy or agenda item of particular interest. Peter will aim to promptly share meeting dates and papers with all Healthwatch leads as soon as he receives them. While the onus is on individual staff to attend relevant meetings, Healthwatch Hounslow email Peter and copy the group if we have a specific report to share. Peter contributes local borough intelligence and reports during discussions.

Healthwatch Ealing advisory committee member, Alan Cook, sits on the NHS111- urgent care board. Championing for equitable care for all residents in Northwest London and beyond. Alan does not represent any particular borough in meetings but rather ensures the patient voice, especially those in the boroughs of NWL are involved in decision-making and standard monitored KPIs. Our data from the Hounslow, Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham London ambulance survey has been shared with Alan and our recent patient experience data on NHS111 services has allowed Alan to successfully point out patient concerns backing this up with numbers. The completed patient survey designed by this group is now awaiting final approval and will be used across the whole of London.



Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham area manager Carleen Duffy sits on the NWL vaccination and immunisations board. Carleen does not represent a particular borough but has worked collaboratively with members of the board to improve data collection highlighting which communities in each borough are lagging, suggesting ways to ensure equitable access to vaccinations in seldom-heard communities, and promotion materials are created in easily understood language in multiple spoken languages. Healthwatch Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham spoke with over 400 people across North West London to better understand their attitudes towards vaccines, including their vaccine knowledge and reasons for vaccine hesitancy. The findings from this engagement work will contribute to future vaccine education efforts.

Healthwatch as a wider system partner

Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham is represented on the Hammersmith and Fulham Health and Wellbeing Board by Carleen Duffy Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham Area Manager and Nadia Taylor, Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham Advisory Committee Chair. During 2023/24 our representatives effectively carried out this role by raising insights and data evidence of access barriers to dentistry, mental health provision, suicide prevention, and autism and SEND pathways.

Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham is represented in the Hammersmith and Fulham Integrated Care Partnerships by Carleen Duffy Area Manager through the Primary Care Executive Group, Adult Safeguarding Board, Operational Delivery Group, patient representative groups at Imperial NHS Trust and Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust, and through engagement with the NWL Engagement teams at other borough and NWL based partnerships.

2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/Activity	Outcomes Achieved	Impact
Mental Health Inpatient Engagement	Engaged with 321 inpatients, made 92 recommendations on patient engagement, access to sanitary products, multi-faith spaces, dietary preferences, and online food ordering systems in mental health units. We also connected patients with community support groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved patient satisfaction and involvement in their own care. Reduced stress and discomfort associated with lack of access to sanitary products. Fostered a sense of inclusion and respect for cultural diversity. Increased patient autonomy and satisfaction by allowing them to choose their own meals. Widened patients' social support networks, which may support long-term recovery.
Pharmacy First Campaign	Our observation of pharmacies through our Enter and View programme and the Patient experience programme will enable us to make recommendations to the primary care team that include other front-door services than GPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By incorporating community pharmacies into the primary care team, the healthcare system can collaboratively address barriers to access leading to better patient care and outcomes.
Local Dental Practices	To address barriers to accessing NHS dental care, we circulated a list of NHS-accepting dental practices to local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced barriers to accessing NHS dental care for residents. Improved access to dental care contributes to better overall oral health within the community, preventing more serious health issues down the line.


Project/Activity	Outcomes Achieved	Impact
<p>Maternity Services Among seldom heard Minority Ethnic Women</p>	<p>Research was conducted to understand the maternity experiences of seldom heard minority ethnic women in North-West London (NWL). Several recommendations were made; one of them being to establish safe spaces for women to express their fears/feelings about pregnancy. We are involved on the advisory board of a larger scale research project by Imperial College to shape maternity experiences for black women in the borough.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated NHS Trusts in NWL to provide more equitable and supportive care for all women. Facilitated family hubs to set up peer-support groups to enhance emotional wellbeing for pregnant women The impact of these strategies will be measured and reviewed through patient participation and mother and baby groups to ensure continuous improvement and sustainable change.
<p>Vaccine Hesitancy Research</p>	<p>We conducted a comprehensive investigation into public attitudes towards vaccination, in both adults and children. This research helped us to understand the key barriers and support NHS and public health leads devise strategies to improve vaccine uptake.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the barriers to vaccination requires a multifaceted approach that includes education, accessibility, community engagement, risk communication, and trust-building. By implementing these strategies, we can improve vaccine uptake and protect public health.
<p>Patient Experience at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital</p>	<p>Through sharing quarterly reports and attending patient participation groups, we have formed a dialogue of patient feedback on key issues such as appointment management and waiting times at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital. In response, the Trust has requested Enter & View visits in outpatient areas to further understand and improve the patient experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing our quarterly Patient Experience Reports with NHS Patient Experience Teams offer them management insights and facilitates open dialogue between patients and hospital management, fostering collaboration in addressing issues effectively. Conducting Enter and View visits allows us to gather real-time feedback and pinpoint opportunities for improving the patient experience across different hospital areas

Project/Activity	Outcomes Achieved	Impact
<p>PATCHS Online Consultation System</p>	<p>Investigated resident experiences and satisfaction with digital GP systems and found some residents struggle to use the systems. Collaborated on education sessions at PPG and PRG meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved digital access to appointments and test results Improved sense of patient autonomy by encouraging the GP services to provide patient education on navigating PATCHS
<p>Cost-of-Living Impact on Health and Care Services</p>	<p>In light of rising inflation, we aimed to understand how the increasing cost of living is impacting residents' ability to maintain their health and well-being. We collected insights from 238 residents and used this information to address barriers to services by providing relevant information and signposting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents are more aware of the support services available to them and how to access these resources, including financial aid, healthy eating/food waste reduction schemes, and affordable healthcare options. This strengthens connections between residents and community support organisations Residents are able to better maintain their health and well-being despite economic challenges.
<p>West London Trust Friends and Family Feedback</p>	<p>Collaborated to increase uptake and make recommendations based on carers' feedback. We achieved response rates slightly above average and expanded the availability of courses for carers at the Wellbeing College.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved engagement and participation from residents in providing feedback. The Trust's commitment to listening and responding to resident feedback has strengthened support for carers and promoted a more inclusive and responsive healthcare environment across West London.

healthwatch

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