



# Together

we're making health  
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

**healthwatch**  
Hammersmith  
and Fulham

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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director



# Statement from Your Voice in Health and Social Care

“ I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the third annual report for Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham under Your Voice in Health and Social Care to reflect on what has been a successful year. During this time, Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham have continued their statutory responsibility to obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services, make those views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services, provide reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved and promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.



**Tim Spilsbury**  
YVHSC  
Chief Executive Officer

This year, working with our partners in health and social care, Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham launched 23 separate reports. Of which the Carers Report focused on unpaid carers and found that carers assessments should be more individualised and tailored to specific needs, and the support offer should be more varied and include emotional and mental health support. In evaluating the new online booking system PATCHS to improve access to GP services we identified good progress and some improvements required for those with limited IT skills. The opinions of those we talked to shed light on the difficulties and disparities faced within the community. By engaging with their stories, we provide ourselves with a constructive base from which to improve their quality of care. This year we gathered patient experience feedback from 4835 reviews whilst visiting health and social care facilities.

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.



# 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, local Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Carleen  
Duffy  
Operations  
Manager



Patricia  
Kouadio -  
Patient  
Experience  
Manager



Chloe  
Howcroft  
Engagement  
and Project  
officer



Mari  
Tiitinen -  
Project  
Officer

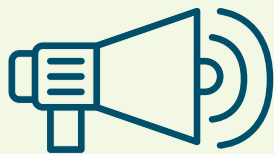


Your voice!  
Your health!  
Your care!

# Year in review

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## Reaching out



**5483 people**

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

**515 people**

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

## Making a difference to care

We published

**23 reports**

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

Our most popular report was

**Carers Report**

which highlighted the struggles people face **as a carer for a loved one.**



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**31**

outstanding volunteers who gave up **67 days** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

**£120,000**

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

**4 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



141 people came to us for information about extended/evening weekend GP opening hours and how to find an NHS dental practice.



We were able to provide information and signpost 74 residents who had not previously identified as a Carer or had a Carers assessment

Summer

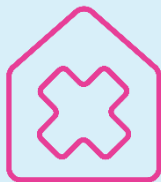


We used conversations with inpatients in Mental Health ward visits to co-produce monthly improvement measures at Lakeside and Charing Cross Mental Health Units.



To support the Polio and Covid-19 vaccination programme we talked to parents and shared information to understand their hesitancy towards the vaccines.

Autumn



We used Enter & View visits to care homes to improve accessible information standards and ensure care homes are Dementia friendly.



With online appointments becoming the norm, we looked into how digital appointments are being received and advised Practice managers on how these could be improved.

Winter



We shared the experiences of Hammersmith and Fulham residents using the London Ambulance Service to LAS leads and made recommendations on waiting times and communication between health and social care partners.



We spoke to 154 patients and residents about their experiences, awareness of social prescribing, and made recommendations on the need to improve patient/public education about the service, and to improve communication between patients and GP practice staff.



# Key projects

Reflecting on our work from the past year, we have highlighted some of our key achievements of engagement and co-production. Everything we do is guided by what local people tell us about their experiences of health and social care. The success of resident engagement is down to the commitment and determined efforts of our health and social care partners and providers to listen to these voices and use them to improve the patient experience.

# Helping to improve support for unpaid carers



It is well known that those who look after a loved one, such as a partner or a parent, can often struggle to maintain a healthy and fulfilling life. Many are not aware of what help and support is available to them, and those who do not identify as a carer are not always aware of the fact that they could be entitled to support.

We spoke to **150 carers** and found that more should be done to raise awareness of registering as a carer and accessing carers assessment. We also found that the carers assessment should be more individualised and tailored to specific needs, and the support offer should be more varied and include emotional and mental health support. Based on the feedback from the carers we spoke with, more should be done to better support carers who are not entitled to free prescriptions and travel to access and pay for these services.

“I would like therapy that would enable me to talk about things that affect me daily & would like a group that can allow younger carers an outlet to socialise.” – Female, 25-45, Asian/Asian British



# Helping to improve support for unpaid carers

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## Our recommendations:

1. An annual carers registration awareness campaign.
2. A review of the carers assessment form in respect of individualisation/personalisation.
3. A clear mental and emotional wellbeing support offer for carers.
4. A clear, vocal support offer for carers in accessing benefits and gaining employment.
5. A clear and accessible offer is communicated around statutory rights/eligibility for support and respite, and a local offer that goes above and beyond the minimum.
6. Clear tangible measures are outlined for how carers aged 25–49 can be better supported in general, and specifically in accessing and paying for dental care, eye care, prescriptions and travel to health appointments.

## What difference will this make?

We were able to provide information to and signpost **74 H&F residents** to the Carers Network and the Local Authority who had not previously identified as a Carer or had a Carers assessment.

We were able to provide information to and signpost **81 carers** to additional services and support groups within the mental health and VCSE services including support with suicide prevention, Foodcycle groups, Carers Council and digital skills.

All carers from the Healthwatch H&F Carers study were contacted and asked if they were happy for their contact details to be shared with the Local Authority. These contact details have been shared with the LBHF Council, which will make future contact with carers easier.

The findings from our report will help to inform the future Hammersmith & Fulham Carers Strategy that outlines how support services can better meet the needs of local carers.

# Social Prescribing in H&F: Understanding outcomes & impact

The Social Prescribing service is still relatively new in Hammersmith and Fulham. We engaged with 74 current and former social prescribing patients, 10 social prescribing link workers (SPLWs) and 80 residents, to find out what is working well within the service so far, and what could be better.

Our data demonstrated the potential for social prescribing to reduce pressure and resources on NHS services, including better supporting primary care more specifically. Nearly half of all patients told us that they are now reducing how often they use NHS services. This can be achieved by encouraging patients/the public to address the wider determinants impacting their health and wellbeing. Patients also recorded various improvements to their overall health and wellbeing, including improved self-esteem, confidence and combatting loneliness.

Our report also emphasised that there is still low awareness of the service, that communication and meeting format methods/preferences with link workers were not always met, and that social prescribing might be more impactful for patients with practical than medical issues like long-term health conditions or needs.



“The link worker has done my family a hell of a lot of good. It opened my life – to different people to contact to see what else there is. She's [the link worker] not just sitting there – she gets involved. I proudly feel that the service is absolutely brilliant. I hope it will stay... not just for my benefit, but for others.”

- **Female, 75–84, Any other White background**

# Social Prescribing in H&F: Understanding outcomes & impact

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## Our recommendations:

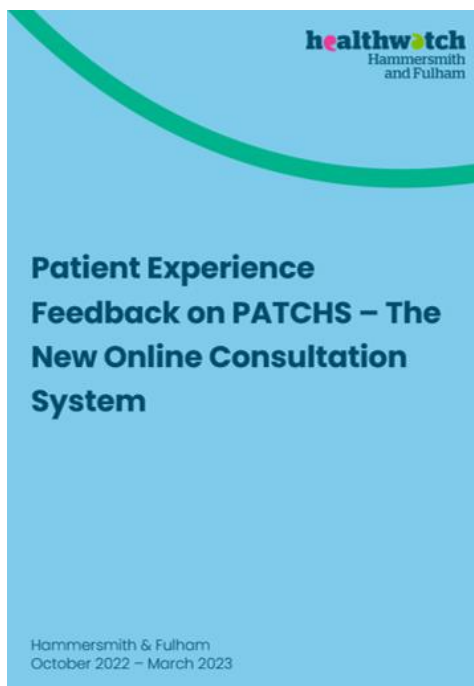
1. For GP practice staff to increase awareness and promote the benefits of the social prescribing service through promotional materials (e.g. display posters in all GP practices across Hammersmith and Fulham and celebrate the annual Social Prescribing Day).
2. For GP practice staff to clearly discuss what the social prescribing service is and the referral process to patients before their first consultation with a social prescribing link worker.
3. For social prescribing link workers to provide additional support with co-producing personal plans with patients with long-term health conditions.
4. For PCN leads to review their social prescribing referral criteria to specify which types of cases are appropriate to refer to a social prescribing link worker.
5. For social prescribing link workers to continue to regularly network within the local community and each other to maintain and keep their directory/database of contacts and information up to date.
6. Put the 'social' back into social prescribing: For the NHS Estates team to provide more physical space for social prescribing link workers in GP practices where possible, to conduct face to face appointments for patients that prefer them, and for SPLWs to feel more like a present part of their GP practice team.
7. For social prescribing link workers to provide patients with regular updates on any progress with social prescription referrals and clearly communicate upcoming appointments.
8. To encourage a more joined up, multistakeholder approach to health between NHS primary care colleagues, Local Authority and the Voluntary/Community Sector (VCS) to help patients/the public get the help they need in a more streamlined, holistic and preventative way. This includes utilising existing multistakeholder partnerships, including the North West London Integrated Care System, Hammersmith and Fulham Health and Care Partnership (HFHCP) and others.

## What difference will this make?

Improved patient education and clearer communication between patients and GP staff will help to reduce any confusion or uncertainty patients may have about their social prescribing referral, what the role of the link worker is, and the remit of the service.

A more joined up approach among primary care, Local Authority and the VCSE sector will help to better address and tackle the multiple complex issues that residents are facing, by helping them get to the help they need in a more streamlined and preventative way, while relieving pressure on primary care staff and resources.

# Evaluating the new online booking system PATCHS to improve access to GP services



In 2022, the North West London (NWL) Integrated Care System (ICS) commissioned a new online consultation service, PATCHS, to be used by GP practices in NWL including in Hammersmith & Fulham as the new, improved contact method for patients to get in touch with their GP practice.

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham conducted an analysis of feedback collected as part of our Patient Experience Programme to find out how people feel about using PATCHS as the new online method to contact their GP practice.

Analysis of the feedback told us that PATCHS can be an easy and quick method to book an appointment with a GP or to order a repeat prescription, especially for younger, working-aged people. However, it was clear that some people – older people and people from ethnic minority communities – still struggle to use the online system to contact their GP practice. The reasons related to lack of IT skills, the form being too long and complicated to fill in and finding it difficult to describe symptoms in writing.



“It’s a bit complicated for me, everything is done using the online system. Its not easy for me.” – **Male patient, 55-64, Black/Black British: Caribbean**

# Evaluating the new online booking system PATCHS to improve access to GP services

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## Our recommendations

1. Patient education – Online skills – teaching people the technical skills required to use PATCHS taking into consideration the specific needs of different groups, i.e. lessons are provided in different community languages.
2. Patient education – Process – informing people why the form asks so many questions about symptoms, health conditions, and medical history and how to describe symptoms using the form.
3. Promotion of PATCHS to working people – GP practices should ensure that it is promoted to these patients as an easy and efficient solution to appointment booking, general health advice, and ordering repeat prescriptions.

## What difference will this make?

Our report will feed into the discussion at the borough-wide Patient Reference Group in June. This will help facilitate discussions on PATCHS between residents and Voluntary, community and social enterprises workers with the Primary care and Borough leads

We will work with local voluntary groups and primary care patient groups to help encourage and organise PATCHS training. This will help offer equality of opportunity for those who are less able to use PATCHS such as those for whom English is not a first language or older people with multiple complex needs.

Providing procedural patient education will help residents to understand the lengthiness of the form and how to describe their symptoms. This will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the booking process and improve patient trust in online booking systems.

PATCHS seems to work particularly well for people who work, and therefore promoting this service to these patients should help to free up phone lines for those who are not able to use the online system.

# London Ambulance Service Strategy - user feedback

The London Ambulance Service commissioned Healthwatch organisations across London to undertake engagement activities to collect feedback that will contribute to the development of their new 2023-2028 organisational strategy.

The survey we developed covered three main elements: 999, 111 and working with partners, with questions very closely aligning to the issues outlined by LAS in the project brief provided to Healthwatch.

## Key findings



- Experience of 999 and LAS emergency care is positive.
- Patients expressed frustration with slow response time and supported improving the waiting times for the emergency service.
- Experience of 111 service and urgent care is mixed.
- In terms of 111 service, patients reported long wait times for call backs and frustration with the long triage process.
- Patients need communications and joined up working between health and care partners to work better.



# London Ambulance Service Strategy - user feedback

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## What difference will this make?

90% of patients requiring urgent clinical assessment will receive a call back with 1 hour, a target that the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust has committed to in the first year (2023-4) of its new strategy.

Efforts towards tackling discrimination and promoting inclusivity, especially when dealing with patients who are elderly or living with dementia, autism, learning disabilities, deafness, sight loss and other disabilities or long-term health needs, will also be improved as the Trust has launched mandatory discrimination and inclusivity training workshops that circa 50% of staff must undertake by March 2024.

“At LAS, we are committed to listening to patients and the public as a fundamental part of our mission to improve standards of care for everyone. London has a hugely diverse population with a wide variety of needs and Healthwatch is uniquely embedded within London communities, so we have been delighted to work with them on this by commissioning engagement reports. The rich insights from their reports will inform the development of our five-year strategy and help us to put the people we serve at the heart of all we do.”

**Roger Davidson, Director of Strategy and Transformation, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust**

# Local Healthwatch work across Northwest London



With the introduction of the Integrated Care System (ICS), Healthwatches in North West London (NWL) are committed to developing a model of practical cooperation to develop public engagement in health and social care across the NWL ICS. Over the past year our eight Healthwatch have developed a memorandum of understanding detailing how we work together to add value to our work locally and get the voice of the public to the system where we could not individually. Each month we meet with our 7 other Healthwatch at the NWL level to discuss local issues, current projects and insights with the NWL ICS engagement team and feed our reports into the NWL insight reports. Some key themes and trends have developed in the work of local Healthwatch in NWL. We would like to highlight some of the work happening across different boroughs and how this will impact on a local level.

## GP Access

Patient Experience feedback collected by local Healthwatch across all 8 boroughs in NWL has continued to highlight the problems people are facing when trying to access GP services. Across all boroughs, people are experiencing difficulties with:

- **getting through on the phone**
- **long wait times**
- **push for digital access**

Work is now being carried out in each of the boroughs to improve digital platforms and GP access, and raise awareness of other health services such as community pharmacists to ease the pressure on primary care. In Hammersmith & Fulham, the NWL Integrated Care Board (ICB) have created the H&F Patient Reference Group, which residents and Healthwatch attend to raise concerns and ask questions about local health services. In addition, Healthwatch H&F continue to share recommendations on these key issues through our Patient Experience report with Practice managers and borough and primary care leads.

## Mental Health Services

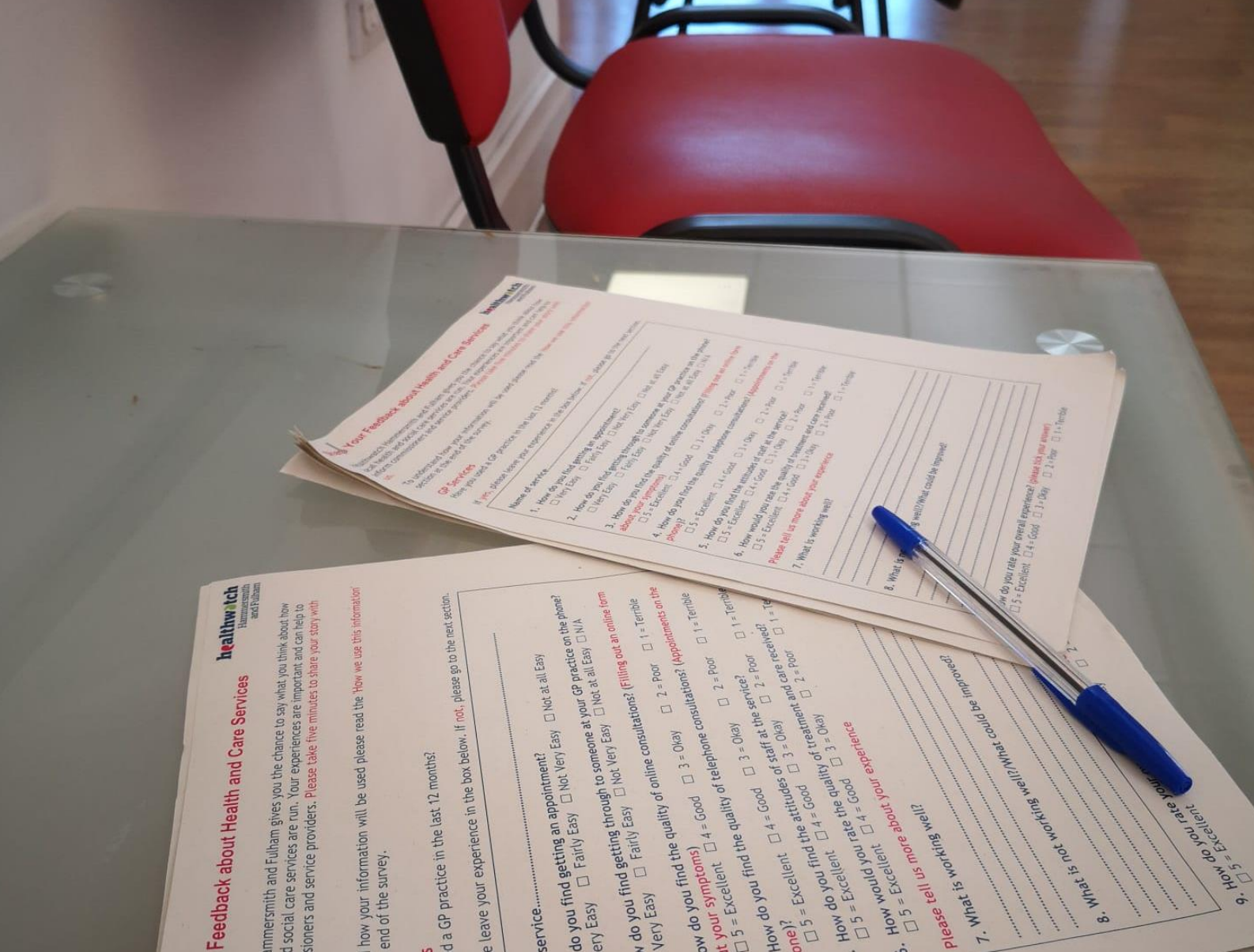
Working to improve inpatient mental health services has been one of the common themes of local Healthwatch work in NWL. This has been conducted through patient feedback surveys as well as Enter & View visits to inpatient mental health units.

Similar key themes for improvement have emerged, including:

- **Improving communication between staff and patients, i.e. around care plans**
- **Improving activities for people living in mental health units**
- **Ensuring patients are treated with dignity and respect**

Based on the recommendations of local Healthwatch, improvement work is being carried out at inpatient mental health units in NWL. These reports are shared with the NWL engagement teams, included in the NWL insight reports and feed into the NWL Mental Health strategy.





# Listening to your experiences

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

# Our Patient Experience Programme

Through a mixed methods approach to patient engagement, we collected **4835** experiences from Hammersmith and Fulham residents throughout 2022/23.

Our Patient Experience programme gathers a minimum of 1200 experiences of health and care services each quarter. It is a cornerstone of our work enabling us to understand the real time challenges local people experience when accessing health and care services.

In their feedback, patients highlight areas of good practice and recommendations for further improvements to local services. From this, we produce quarterly reports outlining key themes and trends of areas of service delivery that are worth celebrating as well as those that can be further developed.

Our quarterly Patient Experience reports can be found on our website!



**"The staff attitude is good, quality of treatment and care received is good.."**  
GP Practice patient

**"They don't listen to their patients and will always give you wrong information!"**  
Dental patient

**"I'm terrified of needles but my dental surgeon is the best, he always makes sure I am comfortable all the time. He explains the treatment very well."**  
Dental patient

**"It's not easy to get an appointment, sometimes it's easy, and other times it's not, some of the receptionists are rude and some are nice. Doctors are very good and there is one lady doctor she is really good and nice."**  
GP Practice patient

**"Very kind and helpful people, always giving good recommendations and advise for my eyes and picking out glasses."**  
Optician patient

**"Overall a good service but they have long waits all the time I come here not once I have been seen on time."**  
Imperial College NHS Trust A&E department patient

**"We had to take our kids to the emergency because she has a high temperature. From the receptionist to the doctors, we were looked after. The nurses and doctors did a great job. I am so thankful that I have an NHS.."**  
Hospital patient

# Three ways we have developed our Patient Experience programme

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## Launched a new website



Healthwatch H&F updated its website in 2022/23, reviewing and refreshing content and benefitting from the most up to date knowledge on design and accessibility. Our new website contains health advice and guidance on changes across the system, as well as practical information like how to register with a GP when you have no fixed address. You can find all our news and reports on the [website](#), feedback your experience of care and more!

## Refreshed our patient feedback form



During 2022/23 we revamped our feedback form, updating it with questions that really matter to patients and service users. We aligned some questions with the national GP Survey so in future we will be able to do direct comparisons of results. We have also ensured our data can link easily to Healthwatch England's national database, enabling the voice of people from Hammersmith and Fulham to have a stronger profile in their national work.

## Redesigned the Patient Experience Report



**Our quarterly Patient Experience Report provides a vital overview of the themes and trends in access and care experienced at GP surgeries, our local Hospital and other health and care services.**

Our report has been redesigned this year, making it more accessible and easier to use. What was once a 50+ page document with charts and detailed narrative has now been broken down into snapshot data and key overview information. Trends from quarter to quarter are clearly highlighted and service specific recommendations will help our staff and committee members champion the changes needed across the system, in the many meetings they attend!



# Hearing from all communities

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

**This year we have reached different communities by:**

- Inviting local carers to share their experiences with us over a cup of coffee
- Visiting mental health units to speak to inpatients with severe mental health illness
- Sharing feedback from community mental health service users with the West London NHS Trust to help them improve their services
- Engaging with service users of Citizens Advice and other local VCS organisations to find out their health and care experiences
- Run engagement events in busy locations (Lyric Square, outside Hammersmith tube stations, GP waiting rooms, schools and West London College career fairs)

## Improving care for people with severe mental health illness

Healthwatch H&F was commissioned by the West London NHS Trust to carry out regular visits to the Lakeside Mental Health Unit in West Middlesex University Hospital and Hammersmith and Fulham Mental Health Unit in Charing Cross Hospital. As an independent, trusted party with whom service users felt comfortable sharing their experiences, we produced monthly and quarterly reports to the Trust of our key findings and recommendations to inform their improvement plans and service development. We held monthly steering groups with senior leadership teams from the West London NHS Trust to co-produce improvements to service using the patient feedback we collected from Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham residents.

- As a result of our findings, the West London NHS Trust are implementing 81 actions of improvement across both sites.



"I am treated with respect overall, but there is not always respect for privacy because of the door shutters on our bedrooms."

**Patient at H&F Mental Health Unit**



## Engaging with residents outside of health and social care

We attended support and advice services and other activities including the H&F Citizens Advice drop-in sessions. We have also been involved with the cost-of-living crisis support groups and foodbanks

In doing so, we engaged with a range of residents who often do not use GPs, hospitals or other health and social services for various reasons, mainly due to lack of trust or that they do not want to put extra burden on NHS services.



"If I don't have a need to use it [GPs] then I won't." – Local resident

Additionally engaging with residents outside of our usual health service and community visits also illuminated the need for some people in the local community to seek additional advice and support as many were unaware of any charities/support services in the borough or where they could receive further help and support. From this we were able to signpost residents to further mental health, carers, and cost-of-living support available in the borough.



"I need support – Single, no family here, on my own."  
**Local resident**

# Health Promotion and Engagement Activities

From an Eating Disorder information stall, to promoting safe sexual health, throughout the past year, we've been out and about across the local community raising awareness and sharing information and advice about various health issues.

## Free condoms and sexual health testing advice

Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham joined forces with neighbouring Healthwatch Ealing to greet residents with our free custom-made condoms for World Aids Day 2022 and PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) Awareness Week 2022.



## Hammersmith speaks up about mental health

As part of our ongoing mental health engagement work, we went out onto the streets of Hammersmith on Time to Talk Day 2023 to get people talking – and writing – about their mental health.

## Eating Disorder Awareness

Healthwatch H&F staff and volunteers spent a morning at Parkview Centre for Health & Wellbeing speaking about common signs and myths of eating disorders and signposting information and advice on where to go for local support as part of Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2023.





# 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

This year, we made 4 Enter and View visits. We made 35 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
St. Vincent's House Care Home	Hammersmith & Fulham Borough Priorities with a focus on patient involvement in care planning and accessible information standards.	Made a recommendation to improve information sharing on translation and interpretation services – St. Vincent's House now has a list of translators that will be shared with residents.
Farm Lane Care Home	As above.	Made a recommendation to review each residents cultural and religious preferences to ensure these are taken into consideration in their care – the care home told us that residents' cultural and religious backgrounds are discussed during admission, and they are supported with their specific needs.
Chiswick Nursing Centre	As above	Made a recommendation on ensuring that the care home's internal signage is dementia friendly – the care home told us that this will be implemented in the overall refurbishment plans.
Nazareth House Care Home	As above	Made a recommendation to improve information sharing on translation and interpretation services – the care home has now made this information available at the reception.





# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make 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 information on how to find the right mental health services to meet their needs
- Signposting carers to Carers Network and providing information about the Carers assessment process
- Explaining how to make a complaint about health and social care services
- Shared resources and information on the cost-of-living crisis.
- Connecting them to local charities they can trust

## Advice on how to make a complaint

61 people contacted us for advice on how to make a complaint about health and social care services.

The impact of the struggling services has seen a rise in the number of people wanting to make a complaint on services such as GPs, Dentists, Care Agencies, and Hospitals. Although complaints processes are normally displayed at the premises, with many people still accessing services remotely, they often do not engage with this information – perhaps it is not in their own language – and therefore do not know who to contact and where to get help with the complaints process.

 "I want to complain about my GP practice after a complaint I raised was not resolved."

**H&F resident**

Our advice and information has meant people who wish to make a complaint know who to contact and are aware of the free NHS complaints advocacy service provided to H&F residents by The Advocacy Project.

We have also recommended that health and social care services provide information about the complaints process via texts, emails or over the phone.

## Helping residents navigate health and care during NHS industrial action, vaccine campaigns and more

Through our growing email newsletter readership, we have continued to share trusted advice and information to ensure that H&F residents are always aware of how changes or events might affect them.

During various NHS strikes in 2022/23, Healthwatch H&F tried to ensure that residents were made aware of how local services may be affected.

We also shared updates from local NHS services and public health campaigns, like vaccine programmes such as polio vaccines for children and alerting residents when changes were made to the COVID-19 booster dose by 12 February 2023.

We also shared common queries we have received from residents and share synthesised information such as which GP practices offer extended evening/weekend opening hours or what help might be available for discounted dental treatment.

### More updates & events you need to know about

#### Nurses' strike action - Monday 6 February and Tuesday 7 February

Staff from Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and other services will be walking out on strike action across the next two days in a campaign for better pay and staff retention.

Official advice is to continue to attend your appointments as normal. If you need urgent medical help, use 111 online, and in life-threatening emergencies, please call 999.

[>> Find out more](#)

#### GET BOOSTED - Changes to the COVID-19 booster vaccine

After 12 February, COVID-19 booster doses will no longer be offered. Future booster vaccines may be offered to those at higher risk. If you're eligible and haven't come forward yet, you are encouraged to do so.

[>> Find out where you can get vaccinated](#)



National HIV Testing Awareness Week: 6 - 12 February 2023

## Sign up to our e-newsletter!

Receive news and updates on local health and care services, plus events and opportunities to get involved in!



# 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:

- Visited health and care services and events to promote the local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out Enter and View visits to local care homes to help them improve
- Provided information and advice on who to contact to make a complaint, how to find a local NHS dentist, and what cost-of-living support is available in the borough.

# Our Volunteer of the Year



## Simone, Special Projects, Patient Experience Volunteer in Records Intern

*"The opportunity to intern with Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham, was an experience that exceeded my expectations and profoundly solidified my professional interests in social care and health services.*

*I initially sought an internship role that would increase my competencies and comfortability within the mental health care field. It was crucial that I work for a company that was truly devoted to helping those with psychological disparities or whose quality of life was adversely affected due to personal circumstances.*

*At Healthwatch, I worked alongside project manager Ms. Carleen Duffy- whose leadership was steadfast and revered by all who have the chance to work with her. Together we addressed sectors of healthcare that are often overlooked or simply not always up to standard due to the high demands often placed within the healthcare field.*

*One of the most memorable duties as a Healthwatch intern, includes the routine visits to local nursing homes and mental health centers within the Hammersmith and Fulham borough. The primary purpose of these check-ins, were to illuminate ways in which patient support could be improved upon while also identifying areas that are well received and helpful. These conversations were often intense, yet so uniquely rewarding. I can still recall conversations with patients I had the pleasure of speaking with, who've made a huge impact on my life and perspective on individual needs and emotions.*

*It is rare to find a structured internship that grants the opportunity to engage directly with the patient population, while gathering insight on how to improve their quality of life and care. Besides these visits, I was also engaged in several projects focused on developing ways to increase the quality of social services, healthcare accessibility and community engagement. This work cultivated a true admiration for those who work tirelessly to provide updated information on how to access services that work to improve individuals' health and autonomy.*

*Overall, this experience is one that I will always hold a deep gratitude for, as it propelled me to widen my skill base in order to better help those in need and engendered an unwavering interest in the continuous effort to improve healthcare. Thank you to Ms. Duffy, and her co-associates who contributed in making this experience as remarkable as it was."*

## Phyo

"I became a volunteer after I finished my University first-year because I wanted to have an experience in the healthcare sector, working closely with patients and improving my social and data handling skills, which, indeed, were sharpened by my volunteering experience. During two years of volunteering, I have also vastly developed my in-depth knowledge on the structure of the healthcare system, its strengths, its weaknesses, and how it is improving. I very much enjoy working alongside a very supportive team, learning new skills, and different projects."



Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham would like to congratulate Phyo on his successful job application and welcome him to the team as our new Patient Experience Officer!

## Bhawna

"I decided to volunteer with Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham to better understand and advocate for the importance of mental health awareness. My favourite thing about volunteering has been meeting people and taking their views, as well as to take views/ideas from other volunteers."



## Freweini

"Volunteering at Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham has been a fantastic opportunity to support better health and wellbeing in the community, something I have always been interested in. I was exploring ways to contribute my time to help change people's lives. I have been volunteering for over six months. I'm learning a lot through volunteering with Healthwatch. Through my experience interviewing service users, my confidence, interpersonal, and interviewing skills have improved. I have also developed my database entry and analysis skills. My favourite thing about volunteering with Healthwatch H&F is engaging with service users and listening to their stories."



### Do you feel inspired?

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

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

 **0203 886 0386**

 [info@healthwatchhf.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchhf.co.uk)

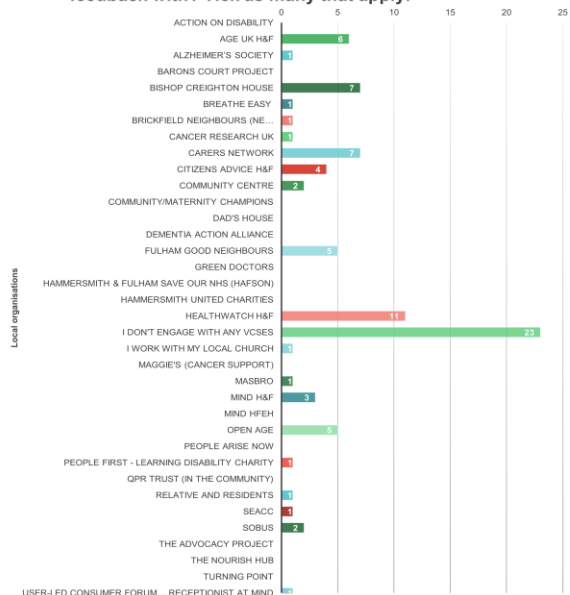


# Feedback on Healthwatch H&F

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.

# Feedback on Healthwatch H&F – from residents

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



## Continue to increase awareness and publicity of Healthwatch England and Healthwatch H&F

While many residents have heard of Healthwatch H&F, some provided suggestions as to how we can keep reaching and engaging with the local community to promote the vital work we do, including:

*"Get people more involved, advertised, easier ways to share feedback."*

*"Suggest you go out and about to meet residents, libraries, community centres, shopping mall"*

*"More people should know about Healthwatch"*

## Improving access to health and care services matters most to H&F residents



Around 1/3 of residents that shared with us the health and care issues that matter most to them stated access to health and care services.

Specifically, this relates to GP appointments, waiting times, face-to-face appointments and evening/weekend availability. Other key issues include mental health, disability and long-term health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma and dementia.

## Cross collaboration and signposting



Other residents suggested more cross-collaborative work and knowing more about health and wellbeing support offered in the borough.

*"Opportunities to collaborate, cross service to see what's going on"*

*"Leaflets available about the services mentioned above so people know what's happening in the community."*

# Feedback on Healthwatch H&F – from local partners



Here's what some of our local partners said about us:



Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham has been a valuable service to the NHS inner cluster engagement team for sharing insights from the local residents and echoing the residents voice, and generating awareness about what is actually really going on at the root of our communities. The granular data and insights which is provided to the NHS team has really been valuable and significant in reducing inequalities and making that change that the local community wants to see."

**Communications and Engagement Department,  
NWL ICS**



We have regular communications from Healthwatch – from reports with patient views on services in the borough, to notifications from Healthwatch colleagues to say they will be visiting the practice to observe on a specific day. It's always good to get patient feedback, and we feel that Healthwatch gives our patients an opportunity to provide unbiased and candid feedback, confidentially about our practice. It's easier for patients to give their feedback directly, and the Healthwatch observers are very skilled in encouraging patients to share their experiences with them."

**Magnus Nelson, Practice Manager, Ashville Surgery**



I have worked very closely with Healthwatch teams and they have been a very supportive network for the maternity champions project as there is an overlap in our priorities. We have found it very easy to collaborate on various events, what's going on particularly well is Healthwatch's attendance to our brunches and networking with our local residents to provide further information. It's been really great to share Healthwatch H&F's information with the maternity champions. Healthwatch has been a very visible presence on social media for which they have really interesting posts and tweets that I like to retweet to further spread awareness. I feel that we have a very positive collaborative relationship and I look forward to continuing whilst we are conducting our research project up until September 2023. I would like to thank the Team at Healthwatch H&F for their support with the Maternity Champions H&F project."

**Christina Ifil, Borough Manager,  
Maternity Champions H&F**



# 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	£120,000	Expenditure on pay	£99,000
Additional income	£6,000	Non-pay expenditure	£10,000
		Office and management fee	£17,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£126,000</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£126,000</b>

Additional income:

- **£6,000 funding** received from London Ambulance Service for work on an engagement project

We are also making a more conscious effort to reduce our paper usage to be as environmentally-friendly, cost-effective and time-efficient as possible. One prominent way we are doing this is using tablet devices more often for collecting public and patient feedback.

## Top three priorities for 2023-24

- The COVID19 pandemic and cost of living crisis has exacerbated the public need for mental health crisis support. Now more than ever health and social care services need to join resources to meet this growing demand and help ensure residents are aware of what support is available to them. Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham will continue to gather feedback and feed into the NWL and local Mental Health improvement strategies.
- Health and social care partners need to reflect on how residents access appointments and treatment while facing unprecedented financial challenges in a cost-of-living crisis. This is particularly pertinent with the ICS changes to delivery (increase in digital services, out of borough appointments in its every effort to tackle NHS backlogs, relocation of specialised services). We will look at how finances during the cost of living are impacting on health and care access, particularly digital access to help services gather resident voices on barriers to treatment and reduce missed appointments and ensure that finances are never a barrier to accessing health and care support. We will also continue to signpost residents to available support.
- We will also continue our vision to tackle existing health inequalities by working with our local public health team, VCS organisations and partners to address disorders that primarily affect residents from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. This will include conditions like Diabetes and Sickle Cell Disorder (SCD), mental health, and prostate cancer.



# 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 Healthwatch Advisory Committee consists of 3 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Advisory Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Advisory Committee met 13 times and made decisions on matters such as [more accessible language in our feedback surveys and how we engage with partners in projects](#).

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities and are lucky enough to have 2 committee members that sit on or chair other VCSE and NHS trust groups.

## 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 services. During 2022/23 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, social media posts, 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, WLNHST SUCE, Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust PPEEG, 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.



**healthwatch**  
Hammersmith  
and Fulham

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