

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham Newsletter, August 2021 (Text Only Version)

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New Story: Annual Report 2020-21

After what has been an extremely challenging year for everyone, we are pleased to publish our Annual Report for 2020-21 to share our achievements for the year.

As part of our patient experience programme to obtain views of the local health and social care services, we heard from over 4,000 local people.

Because of the Covid-19 restrictions in place, our staff and volunteers continued the programme throughout the pandemic by contacting patients through direct telephone engagement and finding out their views on how the local services were managing the unusual circumstances.

From these conversations we were able to produce reports and recommendations which were shared with the commissioners and service providers.

During each lockdown, our team kept in touch and supported the most vulnerable people who lacked basic needs such as food and medication by liaising with local community organisations to deliver these services to them. In our report, we have included some of the stories shared by our team.

We also continued our information and signposting services through regular online sessions and over the telephone to enable residents to stay up-to-date on the local health and social care services. In total, we provided information and advice to 350 local residents! Read more in the full report. [👉 More](#). Story End.

New Story: Our Report on Vaccine Attitudes & Experiences

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham has recently published a report on Covid-19 vaccine attitudes and experiences.

In partnership with our neighbouring Healthwatch organisations in Ealing and Hounslow, we engaged with local residents and health and social care staff during December 2020 - March 2021 through a series of webinars and telephone interviews.

At our first webinar in December 2020, just over half of people (58%) said they would receive the vaccine, however over the course of the new year (January - March 2021) this number noticeably increased.

When looking at vaccine concerns, we found that widespread news coverage of adverse reactions (such as blood clotting) has influenced some people. The lack of longer term testing and research, including for people with long term conditions and allergies was also commented on.

Some people would prefer to know how others may react before taking the vaccine themselves.

It was felt that more information is needed, and those responsible for the vaccine programme need to engage with, and listen to local people, to better understand any anxieties or issues.

The full report is available now. [👉 More](#). Story End.

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New Story: Aged 18 or Over? Get Your Covid-19 Vaccine!

In Hammersmith & Fulham, the council are continuing to organise vaccination pop-up clinics and a bus for which you do not need to book an appointment for, just walk-in. No need to be registered with a GP, but you do need to have 8 weeks between your first and second dose.

The large vaccination centre in Hammersmith & Fulham is now also accepting walk-ins, open from 8am to 6pm every day except Tuesdays. You will need to bring proof of age, your name and address and your NHS number if you have it.

More information on where to get your vaccination can be found on the Healthwatch H&F Covid-19 webpage, which is updated regularly. [➡ More](#). Story End.

New Story: Some 12-17s to be Offered the Pfizer Vaccine

The government has announced plans to vaccinate certain groups of children and young people aged 12-17 following the advice given by The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The JCVI recommendation comes after it reviewed the limited available evidence on the vaccination of children and young people under the age of 18 and concluded that the minimal health benefits do not outweigh the potential risks.

Find out more in the full article. [➡ More](#). Story End.

New Story: Introducing the NHS Covid-19 Pass

You can now get proof of your Covid-19 vaccination details using the NHS Covid Pass service.

If you're aged 16 or over, you can get an NHS Covid Pass depending on your vaccination status or Covid-19 test results.

If you have full access to the NHS App, and are registered at a GP surgery in England, you can view and share your Covid Pass for event trials and when traveling abroad.

Some countries may also ask for a negative Covid-19 test result. Always check the entry requirements for the country you're visiting before you book your travel. There is step by step travel advice on GOV.UK.

If you do not have full access to the NHS App, you can still get your pass for event trials in England.

To get your pass, log in to the NHS App and tap the homepage link. Find out more online. [➡ More](#). Story End.

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New Story: Face Masks Retained in Healthcare Settings

England's Chief Nurse has reminded the public that everyone accessing or visiting healthcare settings must continue to wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules.

While many of the Covid-19 restrictions have ended, Public Health England's infection prevention control guidelines and hospital visiting guidance remain in place for all staff and visitors.

That means NHS visitor guidance will stay in place across all health services including hospitals, GP practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure patients and staff are protected.

Staff, patients and visitors will also be expected to continue to follow social distancing rules when visiting any care setting as well as using face coverings, masks and other personal protection equipment.

Chief Nursing Officer for England, Ruth May said:

"It is important for the public to continue to play their part when visiting NHS and care settings to help protect our staff and patients, particularly those who may be more vulnerable to infections.

It is vital we do all we can to reduce the risk of infection for those working in our services and those who need our care." [👉 More](#). Story End.

New Story: Getting Tested for Covid-19

To help stop the spread and keep your community safe, you can now get a free Covid-19 test by going to the walk-in test site in Hammersmith & Fulham, at 145 King Street, W6 9JT.

Opening times are 9am to 5pm on weekdays and 9.30am to 5.30pm at weekends.

You are welcome to have regular tests at this site, as long as your tests are 3-5 days apart, but please note that this site only offers the rapid lateral flow tests which are for people with no symptoms.

Residents can also pick up rapid lateral flow tests from the four main libraries including Shepherd's Bush library, Askew Road library, Fulham library and Hammersmith library, or one of 38 pharmacies in the borough. To find the nearest pharmacy to you, visit the NHS website. [👉 More](#)

If you are experiencing any of the three Covid-19 symptoms - a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, please self-isolate and book an appointment at a walk-in or drive-through test site that offers a PCR test, or order a PCR home test kit.

If you are unsure how or where to get tested, you can contact the H&F Council's CAN helpline by calling 0800 145 6095. Information is also available on the Healthwatch website. [👉 More](#). Story End.

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New Story: More Appointments to be Offered Face-to-Face

NHS England has issued new guidance to GP practices across the country on facilitating more face-to-face appointments for patients.

At the start of the pandemic, GPs had to change the way they delivered care, moving more to online and telephone appointments to help manage infection risks whilst still caring for millions of people.

Whilst the changes worked for many, the reduction of in-person consultations has left others struggling to access the care they need.

The move also looks to retain some of the advantages of remote care as the sector looks to find the 'right balance' for the future. [👉 More](#). Story End.

New Story: Introducing H&F, Ealing and Hounslow Mind

Mind are a local and national Mental Health and Wellbeing charity.

They aim to make sure that everyone suffering with a mental health problem gets the help they need to recover.

They listen, support recovery, fight stigma and work with partners to take action. They provide services for adults, children and young people, signposting for everyone and training and guidance for employers. [👉 More](#). Story End.

New Story: Healthy Start - Free Vitamins & Food Vouchers

Do you have children aged under four, or are you pregnant? If so, you could be entitled to vouchers to spend on healthy food and free vitamins, and the value of the vouchers has gone up. From 1st April the value of the vouchers increased from £3.10 to £4.25 per week.

Healthy Start includes free vitamins and food vouchers. These support eligible pregnant women and young families to eat well and get the vitamins they need for healthy development, helping you give your family the very best start in life.

Women who are at least ten weeks pregnant and families with children under four years old qualify for Healthy Start if the family is receiving universal credit or pension credit, and the family's total earned income is £408 or less each month.

You also qualify if you are under 18 years old and pregnant, even if you don't get any of these benefits. Check eligibility on the website. [👉 More](#)

Why are vitamin supplements important? Good nutrition in pregnancy and early childhood leads to better health but it's difficult to get all the nutrients and vitamins you need, even if you eat a healthy balanced diet.

Health experts recommend Healthy Start vitamins to make sure that you and your children get the important vitamins you need. Story End.

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New Story: #CancerWontWait Campaign

The NHS in North West London writes “We have launched a new campaign across North West London called ‘Cancer won’t wait’.

Since the start of the pandemic the number of people taking up screening appointments and attending their referral appointments has markedly dropped.

We are asking people to come forward for screening when invited and to speak to their GP if they notice any unusual changes in their body without delay.

Coronavirus has of course been a huge health concern for everyone this past year, and we have noticed that people are less likely to present to their GP with health concerns. When it comes to cancer, it is important that people come to us early, so every effort is made to help them as quickly as possible.

GPs are very busy but we are not too busy for our patients. If you have noticed something about your body that’s not normal for you, or are worried about any symptoms, please speak to your GP. Please also take up that screening.

Whether you or a loved one has a routine appointment, or a potential cancer symptom, our message is clear - you are not a burden, we are here to safely care for you so please don’t delay, come forward as you usually would. Cancer won’t wait and we can see you safely.

NHS staff have pulled out all the stops to keep cancer services going throughout the pandemic.

With thanks to staff at West Middlesex Hospital who have supported the campaign, featuring on posters, videos and social media.” ➡ [More](#). Story End.

New Story: Introducing Age UK H&F

Age UK are an independent local charity supporting older people across the borough with a wide range of practical services that promote wellbeing and independence.

Their aim is to help make later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

Their Activity Centre has recently re-opened and is once again welcoming older friends back for classes and social activities. Special measures are in place to keep people safe.

Other local services include Shopping, Information and Advice, Befriending, Footcare and Treatments, Digital Skills, Practical Help, Gardening, Activities and much more. There are also opportunities to get involved. Find out more on the website. ➡ [More](#). Story End.

New Story: NHS to Collect Patient Data and Records

From 1st September 2021, NHS Digital will begin collecting patient data and medical records from GP Practices in England.

The NHS cites many benefits, including improved research and diagnosis, however many people, including some GPs express concerns about a lack of consultation on the plans. ➡ [More](#). Story End.

New Story: VacciNation: Exploring Vaccine Confidence

Healthwatch England writes “Since January 2021, over 15,000 people have shared their views and experiences of the Covid-19 vaccine with Healthwatch.

We’ve been able to use this information to quickly raise concerns with the Government, NHS England and other stakeholders throughout the vaccine roll-out programme.

Although overall feedback has been positive, we found that a minority of people from specific communities remain uncertain whether taking the vaccine is right for them. To understand why, what was lacking from the current roll-out strategy and help address concerns, we commissioned Traverse to look at groups with lower vaccine take-up.

This research included in-depth conversations and online exercises with 95 participants from African, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, and Pakistani ethnicity over five weeks during March and April 2021.

Key findings...

Attitudes to the Covid-19 vaccine are incredibly personal, so we cannot make broad conclusions about the views of whole communities. However, understanding the reasons behind mistrust and low confidence in our healthcare system is a step towards addressing health inequalities moving forward.

Our research uncovered five ways to increase public confidence:

Individual agency: Give people the ability to decide about the vaccine by providing them with all the information.

Independence: People are more likely to trust organisations and people, like doctors, scientists and the NHS, when they act independently from the Government.

Transparency: Transparency and trust go hand in hand. It’s essential to make all information about the vaccine public and accessible.

Experience: The public trust and rely more on the experiences of frontline healthcare workers, local doctors and everyday people.

Targeted messaging can miss the mark: Black and Asian people felt singled out and forced into a decision through targeted campaigns.

Reaching out to these communities and engaging locally and directly was more effective.” Find out more in the full article. [➡ More](#). Story End.

New Story: Early Intervention (Psychosis) Service Expanded

Early Intervention for Psychosis (EIP) teams are multidisciplinary community mental health services. Their support typically continues for three years committed to enabling recovery, with the provision of individually tailored, evidence-based services.

There is an EIP team in Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham and Hounslow and they are now accepting referrals for 14 to 65 year olds (previously this was 14 to 45 year olds). [➡ More](#). Story End.

Lyric Fest

Come and celebrate the return of the much loved Lyric Fest on 20th and 21st August. Presented in partnership with Hammersmith BID, join in for a free fun-packed summer festival in Lyric Square, featuring live music, theatre, dance, family activities and more. The programme of activities will include music, drinks and a BBQ on the Friday evening and a day of family events on the Saturday. Full schedule to be announced. [↘ More](#)

Dance in the Park 2021

Take part in free dance, and health and wellbeing sessions in West London Parks this summer. Try over 100 different classes from Bollywood, Salsa, Hip-Hop, Jazz, Zumba, Yoga, dance cardio and much more! Led by the team from the charity DanceWest, there are classes for families, children and adults. Find out more on the website. [↘ More](#)

Play Street

Want to get to hang out with your neighbours without leaving your road? If so, you can book a Play Street to temporarily stop traffic on your road and turn it into a playground for you and your children. You can have a birthday party, bring out food and drinks, play games or just let the kids ride their bikes and scooters without worrying about cars. Organising the day is easy. Find out how on the website. [↘ More](#)

Summer in the City

Hammersmith & Fulham Council is working with local youth activity provider LMP Action and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme to offer a summer of food and fun activities and events for children and young people. There are more than 25 different providers and they've got something for everyone! Sport, music, arts and crafts, drama, dance and family fun for four to 18-year-olds - or up to 25 for those with additional needs. The most important thing, this summer, is that every event is free! This year, they are ensuring that families can have access to a regular source of free nutritious meals over the summer holidays, whether at a local club or event and /or join an array of community activities. It's also about enrichment, learning and wellbeing. Think of it as a 'big learning tent' and wherever you go will be warm, welcoming and offer a range of unique and exciting opportunities for children and young people. [↘ More](#)

Hammersmith BID Summer Festival

Hammersmith BID is delighted to announce the return of their award-winning Summer Festival, which is celebrating its 15th year. This summer - they're getting back together to celebrate the safe re-opening of the town centre with free, family-friendly activities across Hammersmith. [↘ More](#). Story End.

This is the end of the newsletter. Thankyou for listening!

For more information about this newsletter contact the office:

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