



Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Haringey
Annual Report 2021/2022

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Public Voice through the Haringey Healthwatch team carried out Haringey Council's statutory Healthwatch functions in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and any subsequent relevant legislation.

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Public Voice is a Community Interest Company (CIC) number: 9019501.
Registered office: Tottenham Town Hall, Town Hall Approach Road, N15 4RX.

Contents

Message from our Chair	02
About us	04
Our year in review	05
Listening to your experiences	08
Advice and information	18
Volunteers	22
Finances and future priorities	25
Statutory statements	26
Contact us	Back cover

Message from our Chair



How would the exhausted NHS and social care services emerge from the coronavirus pandemic? Would there ever be a resumption of services as usual? Or had things changed forever as a result?

This was the year in which we all held our breath and crossed our fingers. How long would it be before we could shed those masks, meet our friends, and emerge from behind our computer screens?

For us at Healthwatch, we were obliged to channel the huge anxieties of patients and the public about access to services.

How would the exhausted NHS and social care services emerge from the coronavirus pandemic? Would there ever be a resumption of services as usual? Or had things changed forever as a result?

In response, in Haringey we listened hard to patient voices on the one hand, and on the other relayed their expectations and disappointments to service providers and decision makers with a greater intensity and regularity than ever before.

It became clear during the year that, in so many ways, 'business as usual' would not resume, but that patterns of service delivery in health and care would be different in future – and that an important part of our job was to help shape that change on behalf of you, the citizen.

For this reason, as you will read in this report, we stepped up our work to amplify the voices of patients in GP practices, by further developing Patient Participation Groups, as well as feeding back our surveys of practice websites, digital access and telephone accessibility. There have been real improvements as a result, though of course issues remain.

We also canvassed patients' opinions as the NHS proposed new premises in the area, for improved GP surgeries, and also for a new Community Diagnostics Centre in Wood Green – and those plans will be revised because of our work.

Further work on Long COVID, on mental health services, and on the often ignored health needs of minority ethnic women is set to also lay the foundations for the re-shaping of health and care services which are to come. Some changes take time.

With still further change pending next year, with the move to integrating health and social care, we argued hard this year too, to ensure a place for patients 'at the table' in any revised arrangements.

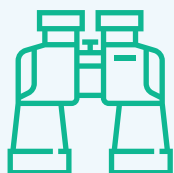
As last year, our Board, our staff, and more importantly, our amazing volunteers, had to be ingenious and agile to work around the constraints imposed by COVID-19. I thank them all for the commitment they have shown.

Sharon Grant OBE
Independent Chair, Healthwatch Haringey

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Haringey is your local health and social care champion. From Tottenham to Wood Green to Highgate and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other 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.



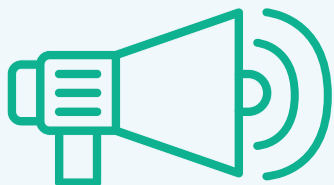
Our values

- **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 year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



652 people

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

172 people

came to us for clear advice and information.

Making a difference to care



We published

7 reports

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

Our most popular report was our

Haringey GP Stocktake

highlighting the struggles people have contacting their GP practice by phone, getting a GP appointment, and finding the information they are looking for on their GP practice website.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

45

outstanding volunteers, who gave up their time to help improve health and care services for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received

£152,000

Which is the same as the previous year.

We also currently employ

6 staff

two full time and four part time, who help us carry out this work.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



We highlighted how local people with no access to the internet were being 'locked out' of GP services. Digital exclusion particularly affected those who were vulnerable, had language barriers, and were from disadvantaged backgrounds.



We held a Haringey Patient Participation Group Conference to explore how patient voice could best be heard in the new emerging Integrated Care System. Patients also highlighted the improvements they wanted to see in GP services.

Summer



Our Experts by Experience Board of mental health service users were actively involved in North Central London (NCL) Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's) Mental Health Services Review. They ensured service user voices were heard at every stage of the Review.



We engaged with people over 50 to capture their COVID-19 vaccine experiences and test their attitudes towards a booster. This valuable feedback informed planning for the Autumn vaccine rollout.

Autumn

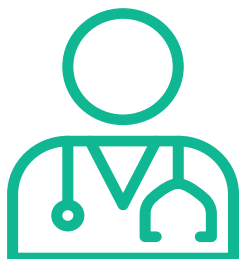


We engaged with young people on mental health, and found that many were really struggling with the impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns on their mental health and wellbeing.



We captured the experiences and frustrations of people living with Long COVID in our local area. We want to improve the local support and services available to help them recover.

Winter



We carried out a stocktake of all 40 GP practices in Haringey. Our work will ensure it is easier to get through to your GP on the phone, and practice websites are more accessible with comprehensive information.



We spoke to ethnic minority women (Turkish, Kurdish, Iranian) to capture their feedback on GP services and mental health services. We want to ensure these services are accessible and inclusive to local people from all ethnic backgrounds.



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 back to services to help them improve.

Making GP services more accessible

Thanks to people sharing their experiences of calling their GP practice and making an appointment, we decided to review GP practice phone systems, appointments and websites across Haringey. North Central London (NCL) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), GPs and Practice Managers are using our findings and recommendations to make improvements which will make GP services more accessible to everyone.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we were receiving a very high volume of phone calls and emails from local people unable to get through to their GP practice on the phone, make an appointment, or see their doctor in-person. People were frustrated, and not being able to access medical help when needed was causing them a lot of stress, anxiety and worry.

To explore the issue, we completed a stocktake of all 40 Haringey GP practices between November 2021 and January 2022. We assessed phone systems and appointments through a mystery shopping exercise, and reviewed practice websites.

We found:

- Answering the phone – The median time to get through to a receptionist was three minutes but there were practices where we waited much longer (over 20 minutes).
- Queuing systems – Most practices had introduced a queuing system for phone calls, but 10 out of 40 practices had not.
- Recorded messages – There was variation in the length of recorded messages, and some used complex words and technical language.
- Appointment systems – 16 out of 40 practices only offered same-day appointments, asking patients to call in at 8am.
- Websites – There was variation in the quality of practice websites and how user-friendly they were. Some websites did not carry key access information, e.g. interpreting and BSL services, wheelchair and disabled access.

We recommended:

- Answering the phone – Practices with long phone waiting times to review their systems and ways of working to bring these down.
- Queuing systems – Practices without a queuing system to consider introducing one so patients knew where they were in the queue.
- Recorded messages – Practices to ensure recorded messages were short, use a human voice, and are plain English, making them easier to understand.
- Appointment systems – Practices to avoid same-day only appointment systems (asking patients to call in at 8am every day).
- Websites – Practice websites should be user-friendly, plain English, have a search function, include a translate function, carry full out-of-hours information, and provide comprehensive access information.

We presented our findings and recommendations to NCL CCG, GPs, Practice managers and patients, and our work has been very well received.

What difference did this make?

NCL CCG found our work really helpful in highlighting key challenges for patients and seeing where improvements needed to be made.

- We shared our full dataset with the Haringey Primary Care team at NCL CCG so, when they met with individual practices, they could see how a practice was performing and raise any specific concerns.
- We sent Practice Managers their individual practice data so they could see how their practice compared with others, and act to improve areas where they were performing poorly.
- NCL CCG made money available to enable more GP practices to move onto cloud-based phone systems, with built-in queueing systems, which will help bring down waiting times for answering the phone.
- NCL CCG made money available to improve GP practice websites. A company has been commissioned to improve functionality across all practice websites and ensure key access information is always included.

The money being invested by NCL CCG is resulting in a better service for patients. We plan to repeat our GP stocktake in 2022/23 so we can check things are continuing to improve.



The Healthwatch Haringey GP mystery shopping report was a very important piece of work. It gave practices, the CCG and stakeholders an external view on accessing primary care in a uniquely challenging period.

Several practices have acted on the findings and the website recommendations led to action across North Central London. Thank you Healthwatch Haringey.

Owen Sloman,
Assistant Director of Primary Care,
North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group.



Amplifying patient voices through supporting and strengthening Patient Participation Groups

Thanks to more people getting involved in their Patient Participation Group, GP practices have continued to receive valuable feedback on their services at a time of considerable change. We have brought PPGs across Haringey together to share good practice and common challenges, and we have amplified patient voices, ensuring these voices are heard and acted on by senior staff in Haringey GP practices and at NCL CCG.

Every GP Practice is required to have a Patient Participation Group (PPG), where practice staff (including GPs) and patients meet, enabling patients to provide feedback and suggest improvements.

Over the past 18 months, we've carried out a lot of work with PPGs, aiming to capture and amplify patient voices, strengthen and diversify PPG membership, and ensure PPG feedback is used to improve GP services. This has been very important at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has meant huge changes in the way GP services are accessed and delivered.

There were many elements to our work:

- We produced leaflets and posters encouraging people to join their PPG and sent these out to all GP practices and pharmacies in Haringey.
- We created new PPG web pages on the Healthwatch Haringey website, containing tools and resources for PPGs, e.g. draft terms of reference and template service commitment documents.
- We ran training sessions for PPG Chairs and members on hosting and attending online meetings.
- We worked with 'pathfinder' practices, supporting them to promote, organise and run online meetings.
- We organised and ran an online Haringey PPG Conference in June 2021, with a keynote speaker and workshop sessions on themes PPG members had prioritised for discussion. 55 people attended representing 18 Haringey GP practices.

- We run quarterly Haringey PPG Network meetings, bringing together PPG Chairs and members from practices across Haringey. Each meeting attracts between 30 and 40 people. Topics discussed include access to GP services in a time of COVID-19 and lockdowns, digital exclusion, the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, and sharing good practice on running an effective PPG.

What difference did this make?

NCL CCG found our work really helpful in highlighting key challenges for patients and seeing where improvements needed to be made.

- Our PPG leaflets and posters helped raise awareness of PPGs, encouraging more people to get involved.
- Our PPG web pages, with tools and resources, made it much easier for practices and patients to set up and run an effective PPG.
- Our training on online meetings enabled PPGs to continue meeting throughout the pandemic – this was very important when GP services were undergoing considerable change.
- Our work supporting pathfinder practices with online meetings meant they attracted more people and from more diverse backgrounds.
- Our Haringey PPG Conference and our Haringey PPG Network meetings bring together PPG members from across Haringey to share good practice and discuss common challenges.
- There is a thriving network of local people, active in their PPG and interested in primary care, keen to provide feedback and improve services.

Overall our work has meant:

- More people, from more diverse backgrounds, are now involved in Haringey PPGs.
- PPGs continued to meet online during the pandemic and GP practices received valuable feedback from PPGs at a time of considerable change.
- Good practice and common challenges are identified and shared across Haringey practices.
- Patient voices have been amplified, heard and acted on by senior staff in Haringey GP practices and at North Central London CCG.



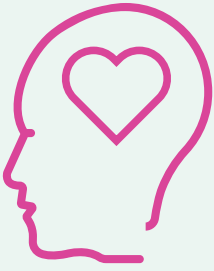
I have really enjoyed the time I have spent working with Healthwatch Haringey and the PPG steering group. I have always been an advocate of doing whatever we can to increase communication between patients and their practice. I think this helps contribute to better health care.

Dr Peter Christian,
The Muswell Hill Practice,
Board member for Haringey,
North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group.



Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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



Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It's important for the NHS and social care services to see the bigger picture, through hearing personal experiences, and the impact on people's lives. This provides a deeper understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

We partnered with two local community groups to capture ethnic minority women's experience of health and care services:

- **Roj Women's Association**, who support Turkish and Kurdish women.
- **Middle Eastern Women and Society organisation (MEWSO)**, who support Middle Eastern, North African and Asian women.

We ran eight focus groups, a mix of in-person and online, with interpreters, and discussed their experiences of GP services and mental health services.

On GP services, many women felt discriminated against and they did not feel listened to or heard. They particularly highlighted the challenges posed by language barriers, the lack of appropriate interpreters, and digital exclusion.

On mental health services, women wanted access to the full range of treatment options (including psychological therapies), not just anti-depressant medication. They highlighted the positive impact on mental health of community networks, community socialising, and group physical activities.



Our clients and the team at Roj Women agreed that the partnership was a fantastic opportunity which made our needs and voice heard. The participants felt valued and appreciated having the opportunity to express the challenges they were facing through and post the pandemic.

Fatos Usta,
Roj Women.



Getting services to involve the public

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

NCL CCG and Haringey Council are planning an Integrated Health and Wellbeing Hub in Wood Green.

The Hub will comprise:

- Community Diagnostics Centre (CDC), offering x-ray, ultrasound, ophthalmology services and blood tests, located in The Mall, Wood Green Shopping Centre.
- GP practice (possibly Hornsey Wood Green GP Practice).
- Whittington Health community health services.

We have been working with Whittington Health to engage local people on the Community Diagnostics Centre and the relocation of some of their community health services. We have also been engaging with patients at Hornsey Wood Green GP Practice to see how they feel about the plans to move their practice to Wood Green Shopping Centre.

It is important local people have their say so the new Integrated Health and Wellbeing Hub is shaped by the people it is designed to serve.



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 helping you get a GP appointment, finding an NHS dentist, providing information on COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, or helping you access advice and support for a long-term health condition – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19.
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust.
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme.
- Helping people to access the services they need.

Helping people register with a new GP practice

Sarah* called us as she was not happy with her current GP practice. She had tried to register at another practice nearby but was turned away and told they did not accept patients from other practices in the same area.

We contacted the Practice Manager to remind them of the reasons a GP practice could refuse to register a patient, e.g. they are not accepting new patients or the patient lives outside the practice boundary. None of this applied in Sarah's case.

The Practice Manager responded straight away, inviting Sarah to come in and register at the practice. The problem had arisen because the practice was revising its policies and not all staff were up to date.



Just to let you know, I have registered with the new surgery and I am very happy. They seem so much better in every way than my previous practice. Thank you for all your help.
Sarah*

Helping people access urgent dental care

Jaden* called us because he needed urgent dental care and he could not get through to his dentist. He was very distressed – his fillings had fallen out, his crown was broken, and he could not eat due to the pain.

Jaden had tried to call his dentist, but his phone got cut off when he called, and this had been happening for days.

We found the phone number for the lead dentist and called him to explain Jaden's situation. The dentist spoke to his receptionist and told her to make an urgent appointment for Jaden.

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Helping people access specialist care

Kwame* emailed us as he needed a copy of a referral letter from his GP practice which had been written by his GP a few weeks before. He wanted the referral letter so he could follow-up with the hospital and check he was on the list for an outpatient appointment with a vascular surgeon.

Kwame had tried to call his GP practice but had not been able to get through. He had called twice in the afternoon – the first time he was placed in a queue and was cut off after waiting 30 minutes, and the second time he tried the emergency option and was cut off again.

We contacted the Practice Manager and asked her to contact Kwame direct and arrange for him to get a copy of the referral letter. The Practice Manager responded the next day, providing Kwame with the referral letter immediately.

The problem had arisen because the practice was short-staffed, with a very high volume of calls, resulting in long waiting times and calls being cut off. The practice has now recruited four extra full-time receptionists so this should not happen again.

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

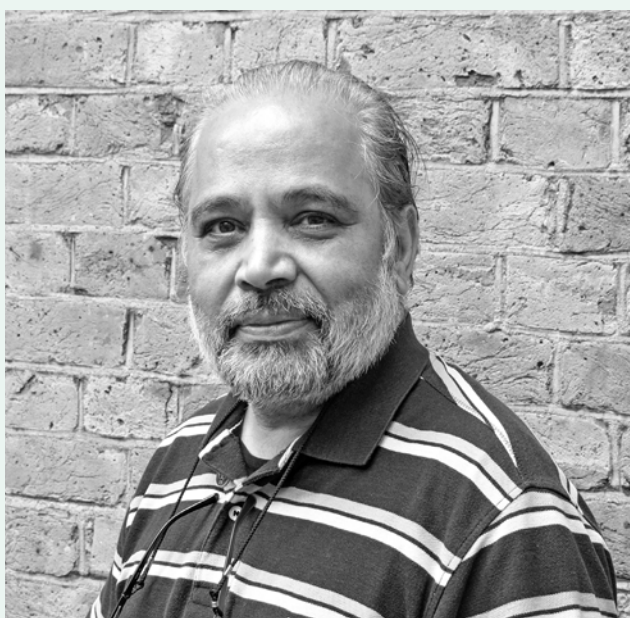
This year our volunteers:

- Joined their GP Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG), our Haringey PPG Steering Group, our PPG Network meetings, and PPG Conference, to share experiences and work together to help improve GP services in the local area.
- Continued to meet online through our Joint Partnership Board, Reference Groups and Experts by Experience Board, so adult social care service users, mental health service users, and carers, continued to have a voice. They worked with service providers to improve services and make them more accessible.
- Helped digitally excluded Haringey residents get online to access health and social care services, NHS appointments and consultations.
- Joined our parent company Public Voice's telephone friendship service, providing a friendly weekly phone call to Haringey residents feeling lonely, isolated and vulnerable.



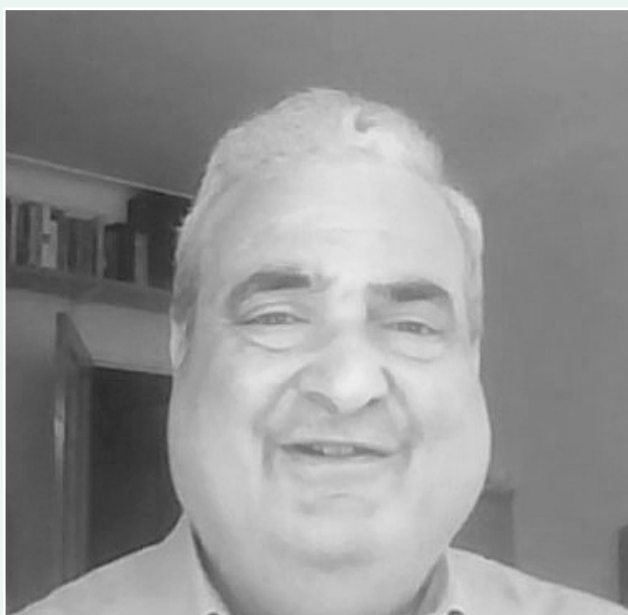
Kemi, Digital Support Volunteer

During the pandemic, I noticed how everything was moving online. I wondered how people who weren't used to the internet were coping, and volunteered to help support the drop-in sessions at Lordship Lane. I do things like show people how to download the NHS App, enabling them to get a COVID-19 pass to travel abroad, and order repeat prescriptions. I've enjoyed helping people as it's nice to empower someone. I had to stop working due to health issues and volunteering has helped me towards my goal of returning to paid work.



Satish, Digital Support Volunteer

I am retired and wanted to share my experience and knowledge of IT. I provide support at the Digital Support sessions at Chestnuts Community Centre in Tottenham. I help older people, showing them how to use their devices, mobile phones or laptops, to find information on health services. I benefit too – I feel my knowledge has been useful to someone and helped them access NHS services.



Paul, PPG Steering Group member and Haringey PPG Network member

As a member of the PPG Steering Group, I've helped shape the PPG project, e.g. the leaflets and posters encouraging people to join their Patient Participation Group (PPG). I have found the Haringey PPG Network meetings really helpful in finding out what's happening in other practices in Haringey. Its been useful to hear how other practices have approached problems and responded to issues, and to listen to their ideas on possible solutions to common challenges.

Isha, Carers Reference Group Chair and member of the Joint Partnership Board

Volunteering in these roles has given me the opportunity to use my lived experience, of being the main carer of my disabled husband, to help others in a similar situation. I am proud to be involved in implementing The Carers Strategy for Adults in Haringey, enabling hidden carers in the borough to be identified and supported. I volunteered because I wanted to find solutions to the many challenges facing carers in Haringey.

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.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£152,000	Staff costs	£125,000
Additional funding	£28,000	Operational costs	£10,000
		Support and administration	£45,000
Total income	£180,000	Total expenditure	£180,000

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Primary care, including GP services.
2. Mental health.
3. Reaching out to vulnerable, seldom heard and diverse individuals and communities.

Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of where you live in Haringey, your income, disability, gender or ethnicity.

Statutory statements

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of eight members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met six times and made decisions on matters such as improving digital inclusion through providing a digital support service for local residents, and working to improve adult social care services during the lockdowns when vulnerable people were most reliant on these services.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We listen to concerns and challenges raised directly with Healthwatch Haringey through local people contacting us by phone and email for help and support. The most common issue over the last year has been access to GP services, and we have carried out a number of projects with the aim of improving access to primary care. We also listen to the concerns and challenges raised by our service user groups – our Joint Partnership Board, our Reference Groups, our Experts by Experience Board, and our Haringey Patient Participation Group Network. For example all of these groups raised the issue of digital exclusion as the NHS increasingly moved its services online during the pandemic. In response, we have undertaken a number of projects looking at digital exclusion and people locked out of services, especially amongst those most vulnerable, alongside trying to promote and improve digital inclusion by supporting local people to get online.

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

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities, and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year this has included engaging with local people who are most vulnerable and digitally excluded; and engaging with Turkish, Kurdish and Iranian women to capture their experiences of GP services and mental health services.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website, we highlight it in our newsletter, and we send it out to stakeholders, partners and residents. We ensure there are a small number of physical hard copies available for those who do not have digital access.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

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

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

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Haringey is represented on the Haringey Health and Wellbeing Board by Sharon Grant OBE, Chair of Healthwatch Haringey. During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending all the Health and Wellbeing Board meetings which were quarterly, and by being actively engaged in discussions on the new and emerging Integrated Care System (ICS).

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
Accessing GP services: Evaluating phone, video and face-to-face appointments in Haringey	Promoting and increasing digital inclusion, enabling more people to get online and access NHS digital services. Improvements in GP phone systems so patients were able to reach their practice more quickly and easily. Reinstatement of face-to-face appointments as soon as it was safe to do so, for people who had communication difficulties, language barriers, mental health issues etc.
COVID-19 Vaccine Phase Two	Improved communications about the COVID-19 vaccine for young people and Eastern European communities, addressing their specific concerns, and opening up access to the vaccine for these groups through pop-up clinics, walk-in centres, and a mobile bus.

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
Haringey Patient Participation Group (PPG) Conference Report - 2021	Robust discussions on how to ensure patient engagement, voice and influence were built-in to the new Integrated Care System (ICS). Recognition of the importance of PPGs to GP practices, as PPGs provided vital feedback on patient experience at a time of great change within primary care.
Amplifying Patient Voices: Haringey Patient Participation Group (PPG) Development Project Report	Providing toolkits and resources to set-up, develop and strengthen PPGs in Haringey. Facilitating the Haringey PPG Network so PPGs from across Haringey can meet to discuss common issues and challenges, and share experiences and good practice.
Young people and Mental Health: The Impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns in Haringey 2020/2021	Schools realised the need to talk about mental health, support their pupils/ students around mental health, and the importance of extra-curricular activities and groups in promoting good mental health. Mental health services raising awareness of their services, and how to access them, in schools and colleges.
Haringey GP Stocktake	Sharing best practice on phone lines, queuing systems, recorded messages, appointment systems and websites. Money invested to improve phone systems, moving to cloud-based systems, and implementing queuing systems. Money invested to bring all practice websites up to a more consistent standard, with up-to-date information in plain English, easy to search for and find, and covering access issues.
Engaging with Turkish, Kurdish and Iranian women on GP services and mental health services	Improved access to, and experience of, GP services and mental health services for ethnic minority women in Haringey.

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