

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Ealing
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from our Chief Executive, Tim Spilsbury

I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the sixth annual report for Healthwatch Ealing under Your Voice in Health and Social Care to reflect on what has been a hugely successful and ultimately challenging year. A year that has seen Health and Social Care continue to respond magnificently to extreme circumstances with the continuing pandemic.

During this time, Healthwatch Ealing 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.

This year, working with our partners in health and social care, Healthwatch Ealing launched a study to understand the impact that the pandemic, and resulting lockdowns, had on Ealing residents who are unable to leave their homes or require assistance to do so. 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.

As we continue our pandemic recovery journey, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Healthwatch Ealing staff and volunteers, who have continued to work with dedication to ensure a responsive and vital service continues to support the local community. As evidenced with the news that YVHSC will continue to provide Healthwatch Ealing for another 5 years and continue to progress the excellent work that precedes us and lies ahead for this amazing service.



“The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities.”

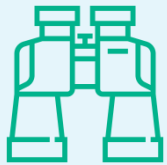
Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Ealing is your local health and social care champion. 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

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



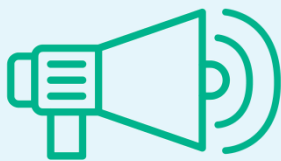
Our values

- 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



5,784 people

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

520 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

Making a difference to care



We published

12 reports

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

We presented

3 Enter & View Reports

which recommended improvements to care facilities and mental health hostels.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

35

outstanding volunteers, who gave up **129 days** to make care better for our community.

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

£140,000

Which is the same amount provided by the local authority the previous year.

We also currently employ

4 staff

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



Whether it was staffing advice lines, signposting information or gathering patient experience, our volunteers helped combat Covid-19.



To improve GP access across the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing and Hounslow, we engaged with over 15,000 patients.

Summer



Working with the NHS and local clinicians, we were instrumental in promoting the #CancerWon'tWait Campaign which advocated for early cancer screening.



We continue to emphasise early intervention support when confronting issues around depression and suicide

Autumn



We teamed up with adults living with disabilities and their carers to address inequalities and promote a patient centred approach within health and social care.



We support primary care facilities in order to facilitate high standards of care integration and mental health support.

Winter



In order to initiate change, we identified barriers to care for the underserved and seldom heard communities in Ealing.



To address the challenges faced by housebound residents, we compiled and championed first hand experience.

Listening to your experiences

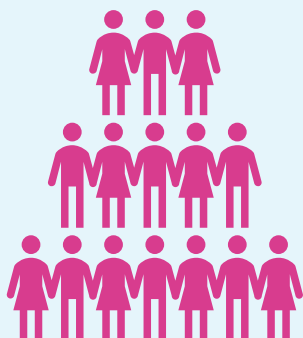
Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve



Patient Experience

Being able to identify and represent people’s feedback is essential to the improvement of Health and Social Care in Ealing. A special thanks to our staff and volunteers for being able to deliver under the pressure caused by the pandemic.

Bringing Experiences to Life



We talked to **4,876** people

Being Part of the Community



We conducted **162** GP visits

Sharing the Knowledge



We published **4** health experience reports

Housebound Study

We wanted to understand the impact that the pandemic, and resulting lockdowns, had on Ealing residents who are unable to leave their homes or require assistance to do so. 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.

72% of people

found the reliance on digital technology had affected their ability to access health & social care services



The partnership work between the Council and Healthwatch Ealing has been key in supporting social services provide the best possible services to the communities we serve. The completion of reports into the experiences of the pandemic on people with limited mobility have helped us to better understand and plan for improving how we can support the residents in Ealing."



Kerry Stevens Director of Adult Services, Ealing Council

What we are working towards...

Ensure that all Housebound individuals receive a comprehensive Social Care Assessment

Individuals should be provided with the equipment they need to increase independence

Combine training with supervision to address inconsistencies in quality and duration of care visits

Communication between care providers, carers, and service users is transparent, informative, and utilizes digital and non-digital channels

Clear instructions on how to access information and care, including a designated point of access

Conduct annual surveys of social care service user experiences

Covid-19 Impact Study

It was important that we collected accurate accounts of how Covid-19 and the resulting lockdown affected those with disabilities. The pandemic's impact was laid bare in our discussion forums. First-hand accounts detailed the struggles faced. By engaging with us, we were able to identify areas needing increased attention and develop effective tools that could reduce health inequalities.

We found that some experienced a reduction in care provision. That many experienced difficulties booking GP appointments and turned to A&E. And that poor communication was a major contributory factor to feelings of stress, anxiety and helplessness.



70% of people

stated that their mental health had been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

“Physically draining to do all the caring alone without seeing my own friends and getting a break from care.” Ealing Resident & Carer

We issued a series of recommendations:

- Communication: emphasis clear communication from social care providers
- Service Delivery: ensure that the standard of social care is high and consistently met
- Mental Health Support: identifying barriers to mental health support
- Family Carer Respite: providing carers with a break
- Digital Skills: access to digital devices and skills training
- Community Transport: making sure access to basic provisions is available



“Knowing that someone made the time to just pick up the phone was so appreciated and beneficial for my mental health, even if I didn't need anything in and the person calling wasn't offering anything specific.”

Ealing Resident



Engagement Study

Healthwatch Ealing engaged with residents from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups to understand their experiences of accessing health and social services during the pandemic. We set out to better understand health inequalities and the types of changes that need to be made to better support residents.

In collaboration with community organisations Acton Youth Association, Horn of Africa Disability and Elders Association (HADEA) and Welshore Community Hub we met with local community residents. There was a benefit in creating a place where people could share their experiences, as they were unaware that others were facing similar issues.

Key findings

Access to information

Various communities expressed a need for information on mental health, diabetes, high blood pressure and healthy living.

Digital Access to Services

Booking appointments during the pandemic was challenging. Many mentioned that a lack of digital skills affected their ability to access health and social care services.

General Access to Services

There was a preference among elderly residents to ask family members to translate on their behalf. No visitor policies at hospitals affected these individuals.

Mental Health and Well-being

Social isolation had an impact on residents' mental health. Many were unaware of the support options in the local community.

Recommendations

We recommend providing information in a variety of languages. To further alleviate health inequality in the borough we recommend increasing representation in health and social care, improving access to translators, offering educational training to improve employability prospects and addressing social isolation.

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout 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 step back and 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 make it our mission to talk to thousands of people every year. To hear their stories, to better understand their challenges. Our experience is, that this dialogue facilitates innovative healthcare solutions.



Getting services to involve the public

Since the start of the Pandemic, the number of people attending cancer screening and referral appointments has decreased.

We facilitated a Cancer Screening webinar to encourage residents to speak to their GP. Our virtual Q&A sessions provided residents an opportunity to get their questions answered by clinicians and help them make the best decisions for their health and wellbeing.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with health and care services to consistently raise issues and push for change.

The past 12 months will have a major influence over next year. In the coming months we will be working across the borough to raise awareness and improve access to support for those who are confined to their home or need support from a carer. Fostering clear and effective communication is the first step in improving patient-centred care and ensuring a holistic approach to health services.

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Ealing 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 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



Signposting Additional Support

While engaging with residents in Ealing, we spoke to a single mother in about her time spent accessing assistance from health and social care services. She expressed difficulties in gaining adequate support from her GP while her son was awaiting screening for ADHD. We made sure to listen and understand her concerns prior to signposting her to the appropriate support service. Taking those extra few minutes ensures that we provide people with appropriate and accessible guidance.



Advocacy

We spoke to a woman in West Ealing who had to routinely deal with multiple health concerns. She was recently in a car accident which left with her multiple injuries and additional trauma.

Unfortunately, she was not happy with the care received while in hospital. We made sure she had access to an advocate and assistance to pursue a complaint. We also followed up shortly after to ensure she had the necessary support in place.



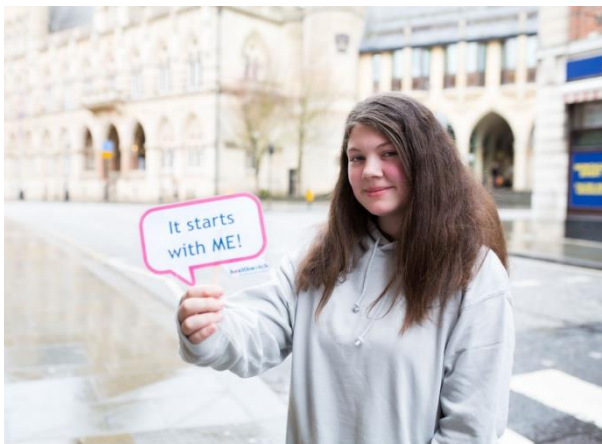
Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch. 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:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Visited Ealing Hospital and GP surgeries to collect first hand patient experience
- Created digital content on our website and social media.
- Carried out website and telephone reviews for local services on the information they provide and assessing their accessibility.
- Supported our research projects through distributing surveys, analysing data and writing up findings





Bedada

"I have enjoyed meeting a diverse group of people. Interacting with patients and their families has been insightful. My communication skills and ability to listen has improved a lot. Healthwatch staff are always kind and helpful. I have felt valued during my time here."



Rani

"I have gained experience and confidence while volunteering with Ealing Healthwatch. I found it interesting to discover patients' views and motivating to see how Healthwatch [Ealing] uses those opinions to improve patient care."



Laura

"I have had a great time volunteering with Healthwatch Ealing. I have learnt so much about health care services within the borough. I've gained confidence in approaching and building rapport with people. I hope to use these skills in the future. Ealing has been great in supporting my volunteering journey!"



Do you feel inspired?

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



www.healthwatchealing.org.uk



020 3886 0830



info@healthwatchealing.org.uk

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 | | Income | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Funding received from local authority | £140,000 | Staff costs | £102,000 |
| Additional funding | £0 | Operational costs | £28,000 |
| | | Support and administration | £10,000 |
| Total income | £140,000 | Total expenditure | £140,000 |

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Work closely with GPs and our local hospital to support patient access and communication
2. Identifying practical steps to reduce health inequalities.
3. Contribute to the improvement of mental health services across the borough.

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 whether that's because of where you live, income or race.

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Ealing and the contract holding organisation, Your Voice in Health and Social Care are based at 45 St. Mary's Road, London W5 5RG.

Healthwatch Ealing 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 5 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 7 times and made decisions on matters such as how best to prioritise our resources and direct our attention.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. Patient experience guides our research and our action. By identifying peoples' concerns we are able to identify the areas that would benefit the most from evidence-based recommendations and sustained support. 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, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, reaching out to more diverse areas across Ealing.

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 here: www.healthwatchealing.org.uk.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We conducted 3 Enter and Views activities during the 21-22 financial year. We focused our attention towards care homes and mental health hostels. Reports produced, identified areas of improvements and provided recommendations for how to achieve those goals.

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

healthwatch Ealing

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