



# Together

we're making health  
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

**healthwatch**  
Ealing

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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**

# Message from Tim Spilsbury

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I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the seventh annual report for Healthwatch Ealing under Your Voice in Health and Social Care (YVHSC) and to reflect on what has been a successful year.



**Tim Spilsbury**  
YVHSC CEO

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 9 separate reports of which the Minster Care Home Report focused on raising care home standards in the borough. Our Mental Health Care Homes study specifically looked at mental health among staff and residents. 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 4557 reviews whilst visiting 178 health and social care facilities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Healthwatch Ealing staff, volunteers and committee members, who have continued to work with dedication to ensure a responsive and vital service continues to support the local community.

# About us

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## Healthwatch Ealing 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.



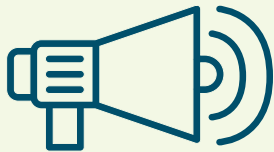
### Our values are:

- **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 health and care providers, local Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Year in review

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## Reaching out



**6,148 people**

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

**339 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

**9 reports**

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

Our most popular report was

**Minster Care Home Report**

which contributed to raising standards in the borough



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**41**

outstanding volunteers who gave up **87 days** to make care better for our community.

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

**£120,000**

We currently employ

**3 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



From staffing our support line to collecting patient feedback our volunteers have been integral to understanding the patient journey.



As part of Ride to Work Day we teamed up with local bike shops to offer amazing discounts on equipment and gear.

Summer



With online appointments becoming the norm, our top tips helped professionals and patients get the most out of digital appointments.



To promote the Core20plus5 campaign we provided free blood pressure checks - and if people guessed their numbers they got free ice cream!

Autumn



To raise awareness around safe and effective vaccine use we travelled around the borough in dinosaur costumes handing out information.



We urged the Government to act after reporting a 452% increase in people struggling to see an NHS dentist.

Winter



When people struggled to see their GP face-to-face we asked the NHS to confirm this right for all patients, resulting in updated guidance to practices.



For Aids Awareness Day and to promote positive sexual health we passed out free Healthwatch condoms all across Ealing.



# 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.

# Patient Experience Programme

At Healthwatch Ealing we operate a comprehensive Patient Experience data collection programme as part of our duty around gathering and representing the views of patients and service users in the borough.

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

## 2022/23 Summary of Patient Experience Data Collection



### 4,557 Reviews from 178 visits

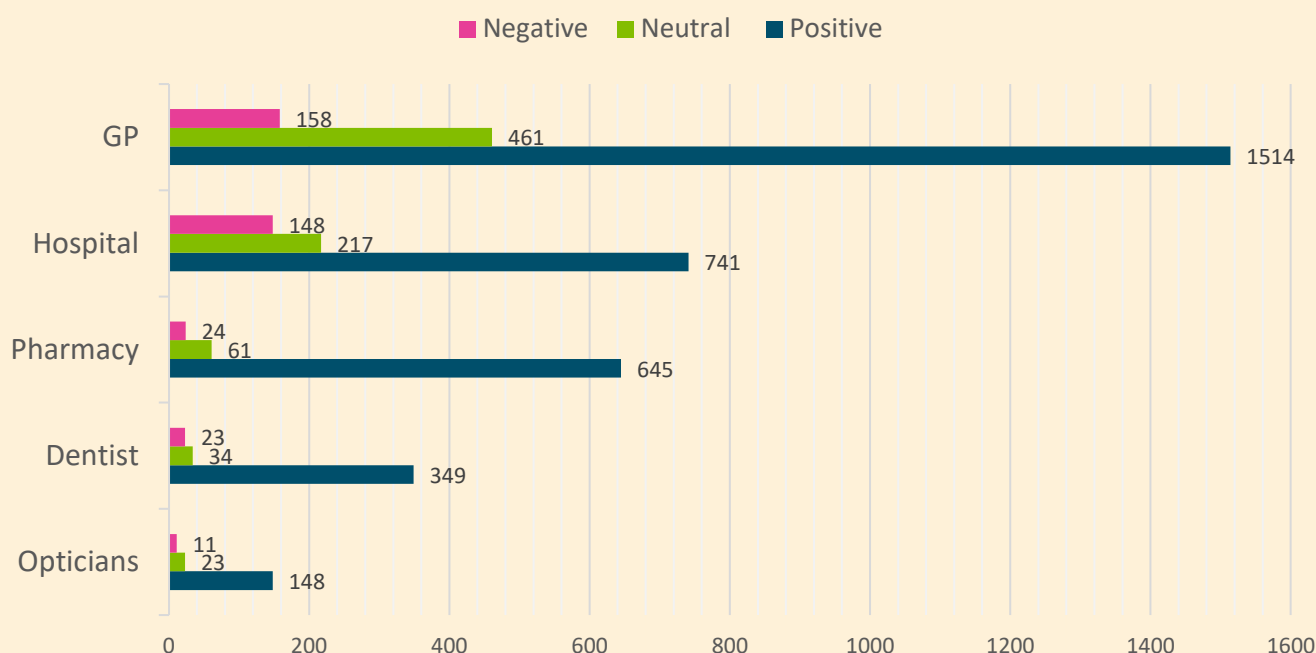
From patients sharing their experiences of health and social care services with us through the patient experience programme, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.



### Presented at Board Meetings

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

## An overview of our findings from the year





# 3 ways we have developed our patient experience programme

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Every quarter we produce a patient experience report, which details the experiences of over 1000 patients.

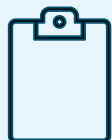
## Launching a new website



It's important for local people to be able to share their experience of services back to Healthwatch and access clear and up to date information and signposting about health and care services.

Healthwatch Ealing 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!

## Refreshing our patient feedback from



Our Patient Experience Programme gathers 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.

This year 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 Patient Survey and ensured our data can link easily to Healthwatch England's national database, enabling the voice of people from Ealing to have a stronger profile nationally.

## New 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 making it more accessible and easier to use. What was once a 50+ page document with 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 at the many meetings they attend!



# Hearing from all communities

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

A patient's journey is more than just a story to share. It can provide important insight in how best to support and help others.

# Mental Health Care Homes study

In September 2022, Healthwatch Ealing launched a new project looking at mental health among staff and residents in care homes.

By talking directly to stakeholders Healthwatch hoped to gain an understanding of the dynamics at play in the care home environment.

Our intention was to understand the pressures of care home living and working, identify best practices and to enlist the aid of our partners to improve conditions for all involved.



**Mental Health and Wellbeing in Care Homes**

The full report can be found on our [website](#).

## Top Findings and Recommendations

**Mental Health Services for Residents:** Residents overall expressed positive feelings about their mental health, however a significant number reported feeling depressed. They wanted more 1:1 time to feel connected with staff.

**Recommendation:** More engagement time with residents in relation to care and more social contact time built into staff's roles.

**Mental Health Services for Staff:** The majority of staff reported that their mental health was good when we visited. However, they felt that there was a lack of supervision and support from higher up at times. This caused uncertainty and unease for them.

**Recommendation:** Regular mental health check-ins and regularly scheduled supervision, where this is not already in place.

**Staff Wage Concerns:** Staff have expressed dissatisfaction with their work-to-pay ratio. They feel that their pay is too low for the amount of work that they do. This has caused a lot of undue stress for them, especially during the cost-of-living crisis.

**Recommendation:** Policy on wage increases and career progression should be made clear to all staff. Implementation of bonuses related to performance and recruitment would help with morale.

## Why this matters

The covid-19 pandemic was an extraordinarily hard time for care homes, many of them being hardest hit during the beginning of the outbreak and during the lockdowns. Having a picture of how mental health is doing now that the pandemic is under control is important.

# GP Access for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups

In 2022 Healthwatch Ealing launched a new project looking to better understand the Primary Care experience of the minority communities in Ealing.

By talking directly to patients who typically experience a range of health inequalities, Healthwatch hoped to gain an understanding of the issues they experience and the factors such as language and culture that may play a role in the access, treatment and care they receive.

Our goal was to give those who often go unheard a voice, and to disseminate the findings amongst the community.



The full report can be found on our website.

## Top Findings and Notes

**Ease of Getting an appointment:** Just under half of those surveyed (**49%**) expressed that they were easily able to secure an appointment. Whereas a sizeable minority (**28%**) reported extreme difficulty getting an appointment scheduled. When asked what they would improve about their GP (**52%**) reported access as their primary concern.

**Note: This is an issue we see expressed across the general populous, regardless of ethnicity.**

**The Language Barrier:** A majority of respondents (**58%**) feel that a lack of English language skills is a hinderance for the healthcare of those from a BAME background. Access to interpreters is a variable that is not constant for them.

**Note: I can't speak English very well, but they always provide me with interpreters.”**  
– A quote from a respondent.

**BAME not the same :** We found that each demographic we talked to expressed a different issue as their primary concern. Pakistani people expressed the least satisfaction with their care , Bangladeshi people are most likely to identify the language barrier as an issue, and Black expressed a strong dislike for the term BAME.

**Note: While we use a unifying term to describe minorities, we need to keep in mind that issues are diverse.**

## Why this matters

Ealing is a large and diverse borough. Recognizing that there are inequalities to receiving healthcare and then addressing them is a must. Knowing how residents feel about their GPs, and what they think can be improved about their service, is a very important first step to improving and implementing best practice.

# 3 ways we have made a difference for the community

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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 services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Ealing is a large borough with a diverse population. It can be easy for experiences to get lost in the conversation. Healthwatch has sought to ensure that all voices are heard. Whether it be religious, cultural, or even dietary [needs], we have brought an urgency to personalised care.

## Getting services to involve the public



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

During Covid the Hope & Horizon mental health wards were closed. When lockdown concluded, the decision was whether to make this closure permanent or not. Healthwatch was given the responsibility to gather opinions across minority communities to feed into this decision making. We spoke with almost 300 local people on the issue feeding in their voices to a contentious subject matter.

## Improving care over time



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

Covid has necessitated that patients interact with care providers in new ways. However, as we return to "normal" people are looking for a choice. Whether it is online, in person, or over the phone, Healthwatch has endeavoured to make patient choice fundamental to their care needs.

## Hearing from Carers and planning for the future

During 2022 Healthwatch Ealing worked closely with Ealing Council on a Carers project, talking with carers about future plans for their loved ones should there be an emergency situation, which resulted in not being able to care for their relative any longer.

- We spoke in detail with over **75 carers**, seeking feedback on a potential new emergency planning process.
- Feedback received from carers was shared with local partners and our learning has fed into London and nationwide plans, being presented at the **National Commitment to Carers Conference** in December 2022 by our Local Authority colleagues.
- Emergency Card scheme registrations have **increased in Ealing** as a result of the work, ensuring more carers have firm plans in place for their loved ones if any future event should arise.



## Patient Experience Targeting

During our patient experience reports, we noticed that the demographics of the patients we were talking to, did not match up with those of Ealing as a whole.

- In order to correct this, we identified areas where there is high diversity and underrepresentation in reporting. In particular medical facilities within Ealing's predominately South East Asian population.
- Since implementing this strategy, we were able to properly reflect the voice of Ealing in our patient experience reports..



"I feel like sometimes the GP does not listen to me. I am happy you reached out to me today to talk about my concerns"

**Local resident from Southall**



# 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 8 Enter and View visits. We made a number of recommendations as a result of this activity.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Reason for visit</b>	<b>What you did as a result</b>
Ealing Acute Care Unit (UB1 3HW)	To gain a better understanding of how this unit works with the Urgent Treatment Team.	We helped to identify improvements for patients in the waiting area.
Urgent Treatment Centre (UB1 3HW)	This centre is the first point of contact for many Ealing residents and its performance is of the upmost importance.	We facilitated improved integration with local services.
Sycamore Lodge Care Home (W3 8PH)	To support a local service provider in raising healthcare standards.	Assisted in developing a framework to implement needed changes.
Chestnut Lodge Care Home (W5 1SL)	To assist the local council in care home quality.	Identified actionable improvements.
Elm Lodge Care Home (UB6 9UG)	Support preparation for a future CQC visit.	Collected and promoted patient feedback.
Martin House Care Home (UB2 4RP)	Identify benchmarks for effective care.	Helped facilitate the sharing of good practice.
Whitefriars Nursing & Residential Home (UB1 3HU)	To better understand care services in Southall.	Highlighted diverse needs in care.
The Grange Care Centre (UB1 2QW)	To support the largest care home in Ealing.	Recognised and promoted effective examples of utilising a patient centered approach.



# Improving care homes across Ealing

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Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to undertake 'Enter & View' (E&V) visits. Over the last eight months we have visited two health services and carried out six visits to nursing and care home facilities.

Our Care Homes visits were part of a programme of work developed in close partnership with the Local Authority to promote best practice and highlight areas within the sector that can be improved. We accomplished this through a series of visits that incorporated talking to both those who receive and deliver care.

## What we have done

- We have strived to give voice to a vulnerable community.
- We have placed patient dignity and autonomy at the heart of our advocacy.
- We have facilitated positive conversations around patient centred care.
- We have worked with service managers to promote best practice.
- We have published multiple reports that layout clear pathways to improve care home services.

## More to come

- We will be visiting a further 8 care homes over the next twelve months.
- We will develop strategies to help improve struggling services.
- We will work with residents' families to make sure care homes reflect their residents.
- We will work with the local council, CQC and service providers to raise standards across the borough.
- We will continue to be an inclusive and representative voice in the community.



"The staff know my routine. They come to me when I need them to. Everything falls in line – they know when to support me. Since the new management has come in, there is more of a structure here. If I have an issue, it is resolved."



# 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 up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

## Pilot project – supporting signposting to local community groups and activities

We continue to look for ways to diversify and expand our contact with residents. In order to facilitate this, we started a pilot programme, where alongside patient experience surveys, we would inform patients about relevant local health, care and support services that would be of interest to them.

We started the pilot focusing on 3 pieces of information:

- Enteral feeding,
- The charity Reengage [and its programmes]
- Strength and conditioning classes for those who may be at risk of falls and frailty.

We have seen early success from these efforts, delivering information to 64 individuals across 10 GP practices, with services reported an increase on contacts and new referrals as a result.



“I never knew about Reengage until a Healthwatch representative got me in touch with them. It has been a great help.”

**New resident**

## Common information and signposting enquiries

### Making a complaint or escalating a complaint.



There are variations in routes to making a complaint between GPs, hospitals and social care services. We endeavour to keep our website updated with the best procedure for making a complaint and signposting residents to the relevant support and advocacy groups.



### Unable to access an NHS Dentist

An increasing complaint is residents who are unable to access an NHS dentist. We support residents with lists of dentists in their areas and beyond.



### Enquiries around Social Care & Mental Health

We have been supporting more and more residents and service providers with information on social care services and mental health services.

## Help accessing mental health services

As the cost-of-living crisis continues to unfold, many find themselves stressed. Over the course of the year, more and more people have reached out to us asking for help to access mental health services.

When trying to manage a mental health crisis it is important that you get the support you need as quickly as possible. Healthwatch Ealing advice and information has meant people who need urgent support know their options and have clear information.



"I'm really struggling, can you help find me any sort of therapy session."

**Geof, Ealing resident**



"You are the first people to actually listen to me. Thank you."

**Seema, Ealing resident**

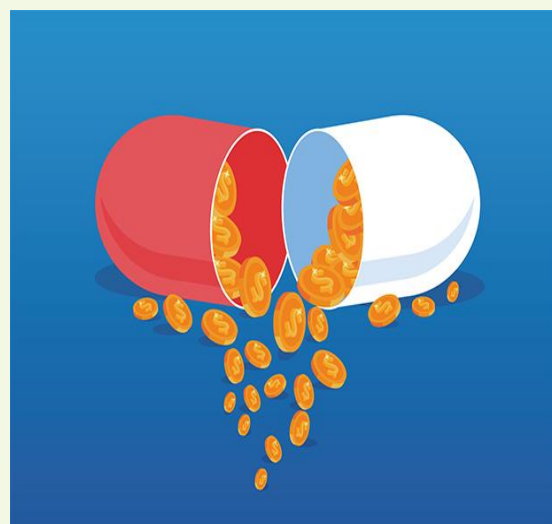
Healthwatch Ealing strives to match residents with the appropriate services needed based on the issues presented. We are available on the phone, via email and out in the community and helped over 222 people this year

## Helping residents in poverty cope with rising prescription costs

**Many of those who reach out to us require help navigating issues surrounding their medication. Whether it is cost, access or refills, our goal is to provide clear information and impactful support.**

A new resident who recently moved to the UK, reached out to us regarding prescription costs. They were on multiple medications, and while they were employed full time, the cost was really taking its toll. We were able to help navigate them through the NHS's prepayment programme and save them quite a bit of money.

Another resident, who recently turned 60, needed help accessing free prescriptions. We were able to successfully guide them through the process.



# Health promotion and engagement activities

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## Core20Plus5

This is a national NHS England approach to inform action that reduces healthcare inequalities. The “Core20” refers to the most deprived percentage of the national population. The “5” refers to particular clinical areas to focus; one of those is hypertension. We provided people with free blood pressure checks, talking to them about the different numbers and what they mean. In between improving understanding around blood pressure, we gave away free ice cream to those who guessed their numbers right. It was informative and a whole lot of fun!



## Vaccines Awareness



It is incredibly important that accurate and reliable information gets to local people. Raising awareness and understanding is an essential part of health conscious communities. We thought that dinosaur costumes would capture people’s attention; and it worked! We talked to over 500 individuals and handed out nearly 300 flyers on vaccines.

## World AIDS Day

Talks around sexual health can be awkward and difficult. In order to break through the stigma, we distributed approximately 400 condoms to Ealing residents. In return we received positive engagement and interesting conversations.





# 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 communities to promote their 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 services to help them improve
- Reviewed GP and dentist websites to review accessibility
- Collected the most up-to-date information on changes to services, such as whether NHS dental appointments were available at a practice

## Abbey

"I am going to start training to become a nurse next year. I thought volunteering some time at Healthwatch would be a good opportunity to engage with patients and hear their concerns. It was really interesting listening to their stories and the obstacles that they've had to overcome to get the care they deserve."



## Thomas

"I really enjoyed my time at Healthwatch. I got to assist in research, helps others share their experiences and raise awareness around important public health issues. It's been rewarding, and I am proud of the fact that I got to take part."



## Leah

"I needed to pick a place for work experience and I'm glad I picked Healthwatch. They have helped boost my confidence and improve my communication skills. I have really enjoyed working alongside the team and interacting with members of the public. And because of that I have a better idea of the type of charity work I want to do in the future."



### Do you feel inspired?

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

 [www.healthwatchhealing.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.healthwatchhealing.org.uk/volunteer)

 **02038860830**

 [info@healthwatchhealing.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchhealing.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.

## Our income and expenditure (unaudited)

Income		Expenditure	
Funding from Local Authority	£120,000	Expenditure on pay	£86,000
Additional income	£5,000	Non-pay expenditure	£20,000
		Office and management fee	£19,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£125,000</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£125,000</b>

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£5,000 funding** received from London Ambulance Service for work on a project

## Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

## Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Help to identify and tackle health inequalities.
2. Improve care home standards across the borough.
3. Raise awareness of and improve access to informative sexual health support .





# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Ealing and the contract holding organisation (YVHSC) are located 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

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

Our Healthwatch 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.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We engage regularly with communities across Ealing to identify issues that matter most.

## 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, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and provide it directly to various stakeholders, colleagues and Third sector organisations.

## Responses to recommendations

All providers responded to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

## 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.

In our local authority area for example we take information to The Health and Well Being Board and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in North West London Integrated Care System. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

# healthwatch

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