

# ENGAGEMENT REPORT



***JAN-JUNE 2021***

## Introduction

[Healthwatch Ealing](#) is the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public. We play a role at both local and national level to make sure that experiences of health and social care are considered by the service providers. Healthwatch Ealing gathers insights from local people about their experiences with local NHS services including - but not limited to - hospitals, GPs, dentists, and social care providers. This gives us a chance to find out what is working well and what needs to be improved. We relay this information to the appropriate services, Trusts and the CCG and offer our support in making these improvements.

This Engagement Report covers both Quarter 4 of the 2020/21 financial year and Quarter 1 of the 2021/22 financial year - January - June 2021. Healthwatch Ealing, much like other organisations that work with the public in a face-to-face capacity, have had to learn and adapt our scope and methods of engagement because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our face-to-face work has been limited due restrictive measures and adherence to government guidelines. As such, we have been using much of this time to reassess and develop new methods of delivery and engagement with the public. It should be noted that due to the nature of this engagement work, most people tend to express concerns more than they mention examples of good practice. Therefore, for a balanced view of patient views, this report should be read alongside [Healthwatch Ealing's Patient Experience reports and our Attitudes Toward and Experiences of the COVID-19 Vaccination Report](#). This engagement report details online events/meetings we have attended, issues raised at these meetings, our successes, challenges and lastly our upcoming projects. With restrictions slowly being lifted, our aim is to resume face-to-face engagement work to interact with as many patients and service users as we possibly can.

## Engagement Activities Overview:

Event run by	Type of Engagement event	Number of attendees	Details of Event	Our Work/ Contribution
Acton Town COVID Task Group	Task Group		01/21 - 10/03/21	Attendance at meetings to contribute to patient feedback and in turn the latest comms through our channels
MINT	Discussion forum	10+	Date: 20/01/21	Discussions included general services updates and how we could gain further input from members of the public and the relevant Healthwatch services
Working with Young People	1-2-1 meeting	2	Date: 03/02/21	Exploring the ways in which Healthwatch could support young people in its volunteer work
Public Meeting on COVID-19 Testing in Hanwell and West Ealing	Public Information Update	20+	Date: 03/02/21	Information regarding the latest information on the South African COVID variant, testing information and safety guidelines

Healthwatch Tri-borough Webinar: Mental Health for Adults	Healthwatch Public Webinar	30+	Date: 12/02/21	Presentations from IAPT, Visiting Angels (Dementia Service), Interact Stroke on introductions, service update and access changes during the pandemic. In addition, COVID-19 vaccination attitudes and experiences were discussed with polling undertaken as well.
West London Mental Health Forum	Discussion Forum	10+	Dates: 16/02/21 - 16/03/21 - 20/04/21	Regular meetings providing updates to community mental health services in the borough
Boots Pharmacy COVID Vaccination Site Meeting	Task and finish group	5	Date: 17/02/21	A meeting with the CCG and local Pharmacies due to launch temporary COVID-19 vaccination sites for geographical advantage with Healthwatch playing a promotional role
BME Inequalities Research Project	Project Exploration	2	Date: 18/02/21	Discussion with Maddy Gupta Wright to understand how Healthwatch BAME Communities engagement work can help support the wider Public Health agenda of reducing inequalities
Improving Vaccine Equity - IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST	Discussion Forum	20+	Dates: 23/02/21 - 09/03/21 - 16/03/21 - 30/03/21 - 20/04/21	A ten-part series exploring how we as a NW London region can approach Vaccine Equity differently, thereby reducing variation in the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine. Topics included the use of qualitative stories to inform how we identify barriers and co-produce solutions, and how we translate conversations into action through a theory of change.
Healthwatch in London Network Meeting	Discussion Forum	10+	Date: 24/02/21 - 20/04/21	Sharing best practices and providing + gathering updates from all local HW to inform work going forward
Ealing Together and VCS	Discussion Forum	10+	Date: 03/03/21	A regular forum that covers the latest activities and changes to services within the voluntary sector and identifying ways of working together

Age UK X HW Ealing meeting	1-2-1 Meeting	2	Date: 03/03/21	Meeting with CEO Reginald Parkinson to explore how Age UK could support Healthwatch Ealing's Integration Index Project
London School of Economics X HW Ealing meeting	1-2-1 Meeting	2	Date: 03/03/21	Discussion with PhD student who had recently produced a piece of work exploring the anthropology behind health inequalities to understand how this can inform Healthwatch projects
Ealing Carers X HW Ealing meeting	1-2-1 Meeting	5	Date: 08/03/21	Meeting with Tu Vida manager and some carers to introduce them to Healthwatch, outline how we can help support their care and the care of those that they care for and explore any future areas of engagement and research
AT Medics/ Operose Health GP services contracts	Discussion Forum	10+	Date: 09/03/21	Explored the implications of the closure of these health services with key health partners and ensured that service users would be guaranteed access to GP care during this process.
Healthwatch Tri-borough Webinar: COVID-19, One Year On	Healthwatch Public Webinar	30+	Date: 24/03/21	<p>4<sup>th</sup> and final webinar included public discussion to outline perceptions and experiences of the vaccine as well as exploring the trajectory of the last year, how services have changed and will balance between new methods of care and more traditional methods. Presentations from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Julia Renton - Clinical Director of Community &amp; Recovery Mental</li> </ul> <p>Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jo Manley - Deputy Director for Local Services</li> <li>- Talac Mahmud - GP (Firstcare Practice)</li> <li>- Gurcharan Salotera (GP)</li> </ul>

Dentistry in London meeting with NHSE and Dental Federation	Information Update	30+	Date: 22/04/21	Update from the Dental federation on how the plan to combat the mounting pressures to see NHS patients
Healthwatch and YP Meeting	Introductory Meeting	3	Date: 17/05/21	Exploratory meeting to introduce Young Person to Healthwatch and see if they were interested in applying for a position on the committee
Chelsea and Westminster Maternity Voices Partnership Quarterly Meeting	Discussion Forum	20+	Date: 20/05/21	Received an update from partners on recent feedback from services users and findings from a piece of work which focused on Ethnicity and Maternity at Chelsea and Westminster
Connect Against Covid Help Everyone (CACHE) Network Meeting	Discussion Forum	10+	Date: 28/05/21	<p>Focused on Vaccine Equity including a presentation on surge testing and the addition of pop-up vaccination clinics and a presentation from a community organisation on how to cope with COVID when living with a disability.</p> <p><b>‘CACHE Network: BAME COVID response’.</b></p> <p>Understanding mental health and wellbeing in BAME communities and current projects running to help community groups.</p>
Induction Meeting with ECP Paediatric Clinical Leads	Introductory Group Meeting	6	Date: 07/06/21	Opportunity to speak with newly appointed clinical leads at the ECP to understand their vision and voice any concerns or hopes for the future. Backed up by ESCAN findings and opened the opportunity for future research for CYP with additional needs.

Ealing and Hounslow CVS (EHCVS)	Online Networking event/meeting		Date: 11/06/21	<p>Healthwatch Ealing informed the attendees about our work and how we support residents</p> <p>Actively listening to projects organisations are working on to help support BAME communities.</p>
ESCAN Recommendations Follow-up Meeting	Report follow-up	2	Date: 15/06/21	<p>Shabnam Sharma of ECP/Carmelita House provided a comprehensive update on how the ESCAN services at this site have implemented Healthwatch Recommendations from our ESCAN report. This will be added as an update to the initial report presented to stakeholders at the relevant borough meetings.</p>
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust	Online Patient Panel		Date: 24/06/21	<p><b>‘What Matters to You?’</b></p> <p>Opening a discussion with patients to understand some of the challenges they have faced with health and social care services.</p> <p>Introducing Healthwatch Ealing, informed the attendees about what we do.</p> <p>Actively listening to the voices of patients and carers to understand the current challenges the pandemic has presented them with.</p>
Ealing Community Network (ECN)			Date: 30/06/21	<p><b>‘Why your Voice Matters?’</b></p> <p>(Stakeholder engagement)</p> <p>Actively listening to the work of ECN and learning about their three main priorities: Community wealth building, digital inclusion, and Inequality.</p>

## Discussion Points from Engagement events/meetings

Key health partners and borough stakeholders were brought together during this time via different forms of e-meetings including Task Groups, such as the Acton Town COVID-19 Task Group; Discussion Forums, such as the Improving Vaccine Equity Forum; and Webinars for the distribution of information to the public such as the Healthwatch Tri-borough Webinars. Discussions at the meetings listed in the table above, unsurprisingly focused on the development, successes and challenges faced regarding the COVID-19 Vaccination rollout.

### Quarter 4, January - March 2021

During Q4 (2020/21), meetings focused on increasing the level of access residents had to the COVID-19 vaccination and improving the distribution of information about the vaccination. This included the set up and launch of new vaccination sites, exploring the ways in which we, as a network of health partners and service users, could address any concerns that were making individuals hesitant to take the vaccine, and understanding the more practical issues that members of the public were facing when trying to organise their vaccine. These practical issues included a lack of public transport links to vaccination centres and the concerns that became so prominent in the public regarding the safety of each vaccine (Astra Zeneca and Pfizer).

In addition to the vaccination rollout, Healthwatch had discussions with several community organisations and other stakeholders to understand how we could continue to work together to establish new ways in which we could hear from and support residents. This included meetings with Age UK, Tu Vida Ealing Carers Group and an Anthropology PhD Student at the London School of Economics, who was part of a team conducting research in Ealing as part of a national initiative designed to map out the contributory factors of health inequality. Healthwatch Ealing also had productive meetings with Public Health, Ealing CCG, the Dental Federation and the Local Healthwatch Network that supported our team in keeping up to date with the latest changes and adaptations to health and social care services that we then passed on to Ealing residents through our communication channels.

The main engagement work that Healthwatch Ealing conducted during this time was the continuation of our Tri-borough Webinar series. The third and fourth webinars of the series took place during this Q4, with healthcare professionals providing information about how residents can access Mental Health services during this time as well as how primary and secondary care services have changed during the first year of the pandemic. The focus on mental health services for our third webinar was a result of:

- Our research on the impact of COVID-19 on residents back in June 2020
- Hearing about residents' concerns around their mental and social wellbeing through our Patient Experience programme
- Speaking with professionals and community organisations at the West London Mental Health Forum Meetings, the MINT project meeting and the Ealing Together Meetings.

These Tri-borough Healthwatch Webinars also provided members of the public with the opportunity to voice their concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine and ask questions to our expert guest speakers who could provide insights that they may not necessarily receive from their sources of information. From these webinars, we were able to produce a piece of work that looks at the evolution of public opinion on the COVID-19 vaccination across a 4-month period.

## Quarter 1, April - June 2021

During Q1 (2021/22), Healthwatch Ealing continued to engage with community organisations. At the EHCVS networking event we provided residents with information about the work we do as an organisation and how this work feeds into the changes and developments of Health and Social Care services in the borough. We also began conversations with several different community organisations, facilitated by the Ealing Community Network forum, as to how our projects tie in with work being conducted by other organisations regarding, BAME inequalities, digital exclusion and community 'Wealth Building'. We learnt that several community organisations offer a range of activities including, arts and craft, greenspace and exercise. Counselling sessions are also available in a variety of languages such as Somali, Urdu, Kiswahili, Amharic, Arabic, and Punjabi. These activities allow BME community members to interact with others and receive the support they need to help them in their day to day lives.

In addition to our engagement work with community organisations during this quarter, Healthwatch Ealing has also continued to build on its relationships with statutory organisations. For instance, we were part of a meeting between London Healthwatch organisations and the Dental Federation in which the federation explained how it intended to deal with the ongoing pressures on their practices and what this means for residents' treatment and care. We also had several meetings with Ealing Community Partners to follow-up on our ESCAN report recommendations from last year and to explore how we can effectively support the new Paediatric Clinical Leads at Carmelita House. We participated in several forums and meetings - such as, the CACHE forum and the Imperial Trust Vaccine Equity meetings - which explored how we could collaboratively improve vaccine equity.

Healthwatch Representatives also attended meetings in a participatory role to ensure that as an organisation, we remained in tune to the changes and developments within Ealing Health and Social Care. We attended the quarterly update meeting with the Maternity Voices Partnership and the 'What Matters to You?' event, hosted by the London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust. These forums were an opportunity to gather insight about how service users feel about the services that they are using at this time and provided us with the opportunity to feed in our own intelligence into the conversations to support any service developments.

At the online patient panel event, hosted by London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, there was discussion on a range of challenges faced by patients and carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this event was to open a discussion with patients to learn about how they would like to receive care for themselves and their loved ones. Our Engagement Officer noted that many patients felt that there is a lack of communication from health and social care services, particularly GP surgeries. For example, one patient mentioned that they are not notified about when their next appointment is scheduled for. This often means patients must follow up with their GP and it can be difficult to get through to them. As part of our patient experience work, we have identified similar themes and recurring issues, for example, issues with booking appointments and waiting times which has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Lastly, during this quarter we had a productive meeting with Ealing's Integrated Youth Service to explore how we could improve our engagement work with children and young people (CYP) and drive younger Healthwatch volunteer recruitment to ensure that we are hearing their concerns and increasing the level of awareness about Healthwatch within the younger demographic. We will continue to build these relationships as we move toward more face-to-face engagement and explore the areas in which our engagement work would be most beneficial to CYP.



## Successes:

### Information & Signposting

Throughout this period, we have been able to directly support residents through our direct Information & Signposting Programme. We have been able to successfully provide direct support to 80 residents during this time with issues around their care and how to access services during this time, what individuals can do about their dental care, where to find information on the most recent COVID-19 safety guidelines and any queries and concerns regarding the COVID-19 vaccinations. Our Information & Signposting work has been particularly successful during this time as we have been able to form strong relationships and direct links with key stakeholders including the Primary Care team at the CCG, the Ealing Vaccination Programme team, the London North West Hospital Trust Patient Experience Team and advocacy and support community organisations.

Stand out case studies include supporting a bedbound resident to obtain a date for an operation that they had been waiting over 2 years for; supporting an individual get the urgent dental care that they needed; and supporting a mother to book the appropriate vaccine for her disabled son who had been missed off the vulnerable list and had been shielding for several months as a result.

### Key Relationships

During Q1 and Q4 Healthwatch Ealing continued to build and establish relationships with the VCS and statutory stakeholders.

- Continued to build relationships with VCS organisations, including the Maternity Voices Partnership organisations, Ealing Carers Group, Age UK, the CACHE Network and Ealing Community Network. These relationships further strengthen our engagement work within the community and channels of communication remain open with all community organisations in the borough as we continue to identify areas in which we can reciprocally support each other's work. For example, once face-to-face engagement is permitted, we will reintroduce beneficiaries of the Ealing Carers group to our services and commence with the Ealing Community Network to distribute our research project surveys to residents.
- Engaged with Health and Social Care services to begin to explore the safest ways in which we can start to carry out face-to-face engagement in service settings. This includes GP surgeries, Ealing Hospital and Mental Health Hostels.
- Successfully engaged with stakeholders regarding several Healthwatch-led projects including the second phase of our Housebound Research; Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on residents living with disabilities; Future discussion groups with BAME beneficiaries of community services; and the move back to our preferred, in-person models for our Patient Experience and Enter & View Programmes.
- Formed a strong relationship with Ealing Community Partners and the Children's services located at Carmelita House. Introductions were made with the team's new clinicians and further work to build on our recent ESCAN report was discussed.
- Continue to be involved in discussions around how the voice of local people will be represented at regional meetings under the new single CCG framework
- Engaged extensively with community groups, statutory bodies and service users at several Patient Participation Groups to understand how we should orchestrate our research regarding the impact of COVID-19 on residents living with disabilities and their family carers, and how this research fits in with the wider borough inequalities agenda. This work is being supported by both Ealing Council and Public Health with the aim of using these findings to improve services for these individuals and highlight any areas of future engagement work.

- Engaged with Healthwatch England and several local Healthwatch organisations as we work on improving our services through the recently established Quality Framework. This is an ongoing piece of work that will continue to evolve with local insight from neighbouring Healthwatch Boroughs and indeed national insight from Healthwatch England supporting us in the improvement of our service delivery.

## **Recruitment**

Healthwatch Ealing have worked closely with the YVHSC Volunteer Hub during this time to further develop the recruitment for our Engagement arm of the organisation. In addition to our full-time Engagement Officer starting during this period, Healthwatch Ealing also recruited two engagement volunteers - one providing support on our digital output and another lending their experiences to our research-related engagement work.

We also receive voluntary support from university student interns. These interns can provide support for each branch of the Healthwatch service, with our intern during the Q1 2021/22 period focusing on the growth of our digital engagement and distribution of Vaccination-specific information to residents through our online channels.

## **Tri-borough Webinars**

Our Tri-borough webinar series in collaboration with Healthwatch H&F and Healthwatch Hounslow continued during Q1 with expert speakers presenting on and discussing how their services have changed during a year of operating during the pandemic. This also provided residents with the opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding the services, COVID-19, or the vaccination rollout. The webinars were particularly successful as they were an innovative way to bring local organisations, clinicians and patients together to be able to directly address residents' questions and concerns, a scenario which has been hard to organise during this period. These webinars also provided the opportunity to hear residents' suggestions for how vaccine uptake could be increased. Examples of where this was effective in supporting the rollout programme was through residents sharing the successes of a mobile vaccination bus in Hounslow that the other two boroughs could adopt as well as highlighting the lack of transport links for older individuals in certain areas of Ealing, an issue that could be addressed through setting up temporary vaccination hubs closer to these areas.

In addition to the successful delivery of this engagement method, the outcome of these webinars was equally successful. In collaboration with the other Healthwatch organisations, Healthwatch Ealing produced a report outlining the public's attitudes toward, and experiences of, the COVID-19 vaccine. This report charted the evolution of people's opinions of the vaccination and documented the experiences of individuals who received the vaccine - a method of endorsement within itself. The analysis of the conversations that took place at Healthwatch webinars were supplemented by telephone interviews with residents in Ealing.

The findings showed that in December 2020, 42% of individuals were hesitant or against taking the vaccine. Several reasons were cited, including concerns over the speed at which the vaccine had been produced, the media's portrayal of adverse reactions and the unrepresentative nature of the sample populations for the trial phase of the vaccine production. By March, an overwhelming percentage of the attendees at our webinar, and of the individuals who were interviewed during this month, indicated that they would have the vaccine or had already had the vaccine. Although limitations of this report were identified, the findings are testament to the unwavering efforts of local health partners and community organisations in orchestrating the vaccination rollout. The findings from the report form an evidence-based foundation for how partners and organisations can continue to improve on this work.

The feedback from Ealing health partners on this report has been very positive, and we look forward to presenting this report at other borough meetings in Q2.

## COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Support

Healthwatch Ealing have consistently supported the vaccination rollout during this time, largely through the distribution of information. For example, throughout Q1 and Q4 we have ensured that our digital channels are up to date with the latest national and local COVID-19 safety guidelines, including information from local and regional stakeholder meetings that are available to the public.

More specifically, we have distributed the latest Vaccination Programme information to the public. This includes promoting the launch of two temporary vaccination sites at Ealing Pharmacies at our Tri-borough webinars (Meeting with CCG and these Pharmacies on 17/02/21) and using our digital channels to encourage the latest eligible age band to book their vaccination.

In addition to the distribution of information during this time, Healthwatch Ealing have also made significant contributions to discussions between local community organisations and statutory health partners regarding the growth and development of COVID-19 related engagement. For instance, we used ground level data acquired through our COVID-19 impact report, Tri-borough Webinar series, Patient Experience reports and direct Information & Signposting work to inform the COVID-19 Acton Task Force and the Imperial Trust's Vaccine Equity Webinar Series of what patients have been concerned about and how we can alleviate prominent issues through practical changes. This includes using social media more effectively to engage with younger populations regarding vaccine uptake, supporting older residents with community organised transportation to their vaccine appointments, distributing information regarding new vaccination hubs via community organisations and the utility of paper leaflets to encourage digitally excluded residents to book their vaccination.

## Digital Growth

At Healthwatch Ealing, we have worked on improving our digital presence to help patients and service users keep updated with our work and news in health and social care. Below is an overview of our digital improvements thus far.

Platform	Action	Outcomes
Healthwatch Ealing Website	<p>From Early June, we posted news items at least 2 times a week to keep service users updated about local and national news/campaigns and events.</p> <p>Posts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 'Beyond the Data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups' (10/06/21)</li><li>- Men's Health Week 2021 (15/06/21)</li><li>- Three one-day pop-up vaccination events (16/06/21)</li><li>- British Lung Foundation: Love your Lungs week (24/06/21)</li><li>- NHS COVID Pass (25/06/21)</li><li>- Get your vaccine at various locations this week (28/03/21)</li></ul>	We have directed service users to our website when providing our information and signposting service.

Instagram	<p>Healthwatch Ealing set up an Instagram page on 18/06/21 to engage, update and reach more people as well as keep updated with the work of other organisations.</p> <p>Posts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our aim and how we can help.</li> <li>- COVID-19 Vaccination updates and where to receive vaccines.</li> <li>- Helping to raise awareness on Love your lungs week.</li> <li>- Posted highlights from our annual report 2020/21</li> </ul>	To date we have gained 28 followers.
Twitter	<p>From Early June, we have increased activity on Twitter in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have posted more than 2 tweets per week.</li> <li>- We have interacted with other twitter users and organisation through liking and retweeting important updates.</li> <li>- We have informed followers about covid-vaccine updates and where to receive vaccines.</li> <li>- Posted highlights from our annual report 2020/21</li> </ul>	Twitter users/organisations have liked our posts and have retweeted.
Facebook	<p>We had encountered a problem with our Facebook page which meant we could not post regularly. However, our page is now back and running and our aim is to post regular content to keep service users updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To date we have updated followers about pop-up vaccination events</li> <li>- Helped raise awareness on Love your lungs week.</li> <li>- Posted highlights from our annual report 2020/21.</li> </ul>	We have gained 25 followers increasing the total to 65.

## Challenges

Healthwatch Ealing has been working remotely but will soon resume face-to-face public engagement in line with government guidelines. We are still experiencing challenges with outreach and engagement work as it has been difficult to reach members of the public who are digitally excluded. Meetings organised by Healthwatch Ealing during this time focused on overcoming challenges that we faced in conducting our research and day to day engagement work. Through establishing and building relationships with voluntary and statutory organisations in order to utilise our network we were able to successfully address these outreach issues as best as we could during this time.

However, challenges remained when promoting our online webinars, as there were limitations on those we could reach and those who were digitally excluded for one reason or another who we could not.

## **Key Challenges for Residents**

### **Vaccine Equity**

Throughout both quarters, 'Vaccine Equity' remained a prominent issue. Many of the discussion forums, focus groups and meetings focused on how we could collaboratively make relevant information regarding the vaccine's production and the vaccination rollout itself more accessible to all communities within the borough, regardless of access to digital technology. Healthwatch Ealing were able to support to these discussions and contribute to action plans using our intelligence acquired through the various streams of our work, outlined in the 'Successes' section above.

### **Mental Health**

Another challenging area for residents during this time was how to access mental health support services. We helped several residents directly through our Information & Signposting work during these two quarters to access mental health support services as well as using the intelligence gathered in our COVID-19 Impact report as evidence for how such services should target specific communities in the borough that have higher indices of deprivation and BAME communities (Including Eastern European communities)

### **Dentistry**

Residents continue to struggle to access their Dentist during this time. Inability to register or book routine appointments, rising costs of NHS covered procedures and difficulties in finding a Dentist in the borough to perform an emergency procedure were all issues that were voiced by residents during Q4 2020/21 and Q1 2021/22.

### **Communication**

The main theme identified at the online patient panel event, hosted by London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust was that patients feel that there is an issue with communication and a lack of clear information in areas such as appointments and being discharged. Many organisations briefly spoke about receiving numerous calls from carers about their concerns of receiving the vaccine.

Issues identified during our webinars corroborated with issues that were highlighted in other meetings as well. This included hesitancy around the vaccination due to specific misinformation, difficulties in accessing primary care services during this time, fears of non-COVID related health concerns going untreated and confusion around COVID-19 safety guidelines issues by the government.

### **Appointments and Referrals**

Patients at the LNWH Trust online panel felt there was a lack of communication about when they would receive their next appointment. They felt that there should be a better system in place so that they are notified and prepared for their next appointment.

It was also noted that patients feel that GP's fail to ask essential questions such as asking them about what help they or their family need.

One of the patients mentioned that it was clear from her mother's medical records that she needed be referred to specialist care. She mentioned however, that referrals can take a prolonged amount of time and found it to be an additional gap put in place for no clear reason.

## Discharge

There was also conversation during this time around patients being discharged without an effective treatment plan in place to identify what the patient requires before going back home. There seems to be a lack of communication and general information available from services for patients as they are often left confused about what to do when they have been discharged.

## Information, signposting and use of simple language

Patients feel that there is a lack of information available at GP surgeries about what services are available to support themselves and their families. An issue was also identified with the terminology used for services. Patients would prefer if simple language were used so that it is clearer to understand what services do.

Throughout this period, we have continued to come up with innovative ways in which we could engage with Ealing residents and healthcare professionals. Our public webinars, our 1-2-1 meetings with community and statutory organisations and our regular attendance at borough wide online forums have ensure that we have:

- Kept up to date with the latest guidelines and information
- Heard residents' main queries and concerns
- Engaged with residents through surveys and research, direct contact, online channel growth
- Distributed of physical copies of our surveys
- Continued to recruit new volunteers and upskill our current volunteers, whilst further improving our volunteer branch through collaboration with our Volunteer Hub
- Successfully recruited a new member to our committee
- Spoken with and learnt from other community organisations as to how we can effectively find the balance between online and face-to-face methods of engagement as we move out of Lockdown.

## Upcoming project and next steps

### BAME Engagement Research Project:

Public Health England published a report titled '[Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups](#)'. Considering this report and the findings of our own local COVID-19 impact assessment, Healthwatch Ealing is taking the best course of action and will conduct a joint research project with Healthwatch Hounslow to further understand BME health inequalities in these boroughs.

Digital exclusion, social isolation and a lack of information have been highlighted as issues that are perpetuating disparities in health and social care among BME communities. Our aim is to identify potential ways of alleviating these issues through acting as a facilitator and actively listening to the views and challenges faced by community groups.

The strengths of the Healthwatch Ealing and Hounslow team and dedicated volunteers working on this project, is that we can communicate in different languages spoken by BME community groups. This will allow us to build a rapport with diverse groups and gain a better understanding of the inequalities experienced in health and social care.

Having spoken to BAME-led organisations in Ealing, many have shown interest in this project, and we are hoping to contact additional organisations in the upcoming weeks to reach as many BME community groups as we can. We feel we can produce useful recommendations and hopefully, tangible impacts for the community.

### **Cancer Screening Awareness Campaign:**

Healthwatch Ealing will explore the ways in which we can support the NWL CCG with one of their areas of priority - the 'Cancer Won't Wait' Screening Awareness Campaign. This will most likely take the form of an online forum with clinicians, community sector leads and service users providing the public with the necessary information for Bladder, Bowel and Cervical Cancer screening. The content of the Q&A discussion forum will then be shared with the wider audience either through clips of the webinar or through the production of a FAQ-style document.

### **Maternity Services:**

Healthwatch would also like to work with the Maternity Voices Partnership and the London North West NHS Hospital Trust to capture the opinions and experiences of Ealing residents who have used the available maternity services (Northwick Park Hospital Maternity Services and Services in the community setting in Ealing) and understand the ways in which residents feel these services can be improved.

### **Hospital wards/ discharge:**

A further avenue for engagement would be to visit Ealing Hospital Discharge hubs, as well as Inpatient and Outpatient departments to gain a more in-depth perspective on how these services are operating with the continued restrictions in place.

### **CYP (ESCAN):**

We hope to build on our recent ESCAN report and engage with more Children and Young people as we move out of the COVID-19 Lockdown. We will seek to work with CYP Mental Health Support services in the borough to ensure that they are accessible to young people and speak directly to younger residents to identify what needs to be further developed in this area of wellbeing and support.

### **Social Care Delivery Research:**

Alongside this engagement project, we have two pieces of research that will focus on Social Care delivery during the pandemic. One of these projects will explore the care that those living with disabilities (and their family carers) have received during this time and the other project will focus on Housebound individuals (people unable to leave their home due to a physical or mental disability) have been supported by social care services.

We will utilise our close relationship with Ealing Council as well as our wide network within the voluntary sector to promote each of these research projects and gather feedback from service users. With this information we will be able to provide actionable recommendations that we will follow up on to ensure the development of relevant services.