

## **Healthwatch Response to the London Ambulance Service Customer Satisfaction Survey September 2014**

Healthwatch Wandsworth supported the London Ambulance Service to conduct a customer satisfaction survey during the month of September 2014. We ensured that 45 surveys were completed.

The London Ambulance Service stated that they wished to ensure that hard to reach groups such as those with mental ill health and dementia were included in the survey.

Healthwatch consulted with groups of older people and with service user groups of people with long term mental health conditions, as well as younger people not necessarily with mental health conditions. Typically, some of these groups of people do not use computers, so we did this through face to face contacts. We gave support to fill in the survey for those who needed it due to literacy, sight or mobility problems. We also consulted with wardens and officers of sheltered housing schemes for older people, who have significant experience in using the London Ambulance Service.

Overall, we noted responses to be positive and complimentary. The majority of people that we invited to take part in the survey declined as they said that they had never called for an ambulance. It is thought that people with severe and enduring mental health needs declined to take part because in the event of a crisis they would most likely seek medical attention by other means, such as being supported by care staff, or being escorted by the police. We also noted that people were not comfortable with divulging the reason for calling an ambulance – particularly if it was related to their mental health. Much local experience of the LAS is not of being taken to A&E but of other interventions by paramedics. Themes of experiencing excellent care from the staff of the London Ambulance Service as well as long waiting times and recognition of an oversubscribed service were apparent.

It was also noted that people who took part were interested to know what happens next, what is done with the information and what it achieved. Some mechanism for informing those who took part where to find the results and outcomes would have been beneficial.

Healthwatch would be very interested in seeing the results of the entire survey, and the action plan that arises from reviewing the information.

**Healthwatch Wandsworth 24.9.14**