

Then and now

Healthwatch Wandsworth Annual Report 2020-21



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Message from our Chair

'Our prime focus in 2020/21 was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on patients, families and communities.'

We responded to the crisis by increasing our communications, by running listening exercises, (including 2 wide-ranging surveys into the impact of COVID-19 and a major consultation on the switch to digital in the NHS), and by more targeted work on issues such as perinatal mental health and the needs of carers.



Thanks to organisations working along with us we've been able to reach many people in the community in different ways. For example, sending out our newsletter with parcels from Wandsworth Food Partnership and Age UK Wandsworth and speaking to a wide range of community groups to make sure we heard from a diverse range of people in our community.

Like others, we had to rely almost entirely on digital methods. But through our ('virtual') assemblies and engagement activities we were able to highlight key challenges, including the needs of disadvantaged groups and the issues raised by the vaccination programme. And by sending representatives to engage with the organisations which commission and run services, we sought to ensure that, even at a time of crisis, the voice of the patient and the community continued to be heard.



"The pandemic is not yet over, and services will continue to change in response. Plans are also afoot for further organisational change in the NHS. Looking forward, Healthwatch Wandsworth - working with partners - will continue to place the patient voice at the heart of decision making."

Stephen Hickey, Chair of Healthwatch Wandsworth

In this report you can read more about how people's views have contributed to increasing information about what it is like to use health and care services in Wandsworth and how this has influenced changes to services. This includes support for carers, hospital discharges and the response to COVID-19 pandemic.

"Continued collaboration and partnership has been an extremely valuable way of ensuring we have the maximum reach and impact with our work to amplify the patient voice in local healthcare. The Healthwatch Assembly on public involvement and learning during Covid-19 pandemic provided space to share our work with community, supported us to raise awareness of public involvement opportunities and deliver on our duty to involve and address inequalities"

South West London / Wandsworth NHS

"Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Wandsworth. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been important during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

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.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks information from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.

Working in partnership – thank you Wandsworth



Photo: Share Community helped us speak to students remotely.

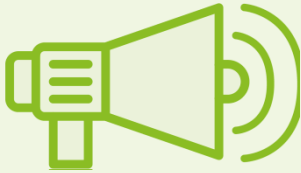
We could not have continued our work or have heard from so many people about their health and care experiences during the pandemic without collaboration with NHS and council staff and people working in voluntary sector organisations and those volunteering in the community. The same people who worked tirelessly with people in the community to support them through the pandemic.

We had to change the ways we engaged with people in the community. We'd like to thank everyone who supported us to ensure that people had their voices heard during the pandemic. We haven't space to list all 42 community sessions, but groups we worked with included Wandsworth Youth Council, Free2B, Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network, Share Community, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Katherine Lowe Settlement, Somali Love to Learn, Wandsworth Asian Carers, Wandsworth Carers Centre, BASE youth club, Battersea Zoomers, SEN Talk and Caius House.

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out

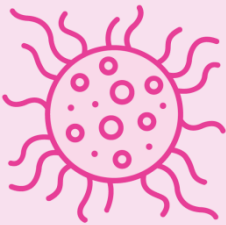


1063 people were involved in sharing their feedback on health and social care.

We provided information to **111 individuals** by email, phone and at events or using the local 'Refernet' system.

1122 visits to our website gave access to our online advice and information.

Responding to the pandemic



22 newsletters provided information about services and guidance related to the pandemic and more.

Over 760 people shared their experiences of the pandemic in our surveys about Managing Health and Care During the Pandemic, Experiences of the Pandemic for Staff in Care Homes and Experiences of Digital and Telephone Appointments.

289 people discussed their experiences with us at workshops with community groups for people with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, autism, carers, young people, faith groups and people from ethnic minorities.

Making a difference to care



We published **16 reports** capturing what is important to people about health and social care services and how things could be improved. Read on to find out more about what happened after our reports.

We regularly attended **41 boards, committees and groups** to make sure the views of local people were considered in decisions about health and care services.

Health and care that works for you



29 volunteers helped us to carry out our work.

We employ **4 staff** as 3.3 full time equivalent.

We received **£185,810** in funding via our local authority in 2020-21.



Carers: Then and now



Then: support for carers in Wandsworth

Thanks to people sharing their experiences with us carers in Wandsworth should now receive a more stable support service with better information and support.

In 2019 carers told us that they wanted early access to mental health support, information on support they are entitled to, more information about the health condition of the cared for and improvements to carers' assessments.

Adult Social Care re-contracted the carers support services, taking onboard what carers had told us and made the following changes:

- A simplified online carer's assessment (A third of carers were receiving an assessment by the end of 2020, compared to 17% at the end of 2019). Assessment is an important step to make sure carers get the support they need.
- Information booklets have been updated so carers now have more information about support offered to them, such as assessments, mental health support and emergency cards.
- There is now a 'Carer Champion' in all social care teams to ensure the teams support carers. A training module is available for all frontline workers to recognise unpaid carers and whether they need support.
- The redesigned carers support service must work with carers to explore what short breaks and respite meets their needs.



Now: Ongoing issues for carers

Thanks to carers sharing their experience of managing during the pandemic, we have been able to feedback to Wandsworth Adult Social Care about support services so that things can continue to improve.

In March 2021, we co-hosted a coffee morning with Wandsworth Carers Centre for an informal discussion about how the pandemic has affected their lives and the lives of people they care for.

What was working well for most:

- the different services providing health and social care services have worked and communicated adequately
- they have received enough information and support from healthcare services
- carers have found credible up-to-date information about COVID-19 and non COVID-19 services from Government website, local government websites and other sources.

The main issues included:

- Difficulties accessing mental health services
- Difficulties accessing other services, including respite, during the pandemic and lockdown
- Complexity of services. Carers wanted a centralised system, a single point of access to services as there is no one stop to get an answer.

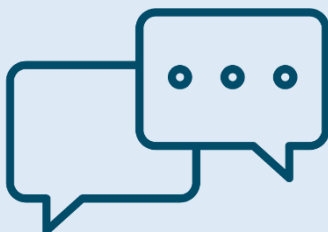
We then spoke to Adult Social Care to tell them about the feedback from carers and expect to hear about further improvements over the next year.



“It has been hard to get access to mental health services for my son and I have had to pay for private care.” Anonymous


Read more about what we did [here](#).

Share your views with us



If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

 www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk

 **020 8516 7767 (10am – 4pm, Monday to Friday)**

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Care after discharge from hospital: Then and now



Then: Discharges from St George's Hospital

Thanks to people who spoke to us at the 'Departure Lounge' at St George's Hospital, improvements to discharges from hospital are being put in place to better meet patient needs including reducing waiting times for medication and hospital transport.

Overall people felt adequately prepared for discharge and their family and carers had been sufficiently involved in planning. To further improve their experiences we recommended improvements to: information given at discharge including communication about the discharge summary; communications with hospital transport and with relatives; parking for picking people up and a review of waiting times and waits for medication.

The hospital has already implemented some changes and plans to do more, despite the impact of the pandemic on time and resources. They have:

- Created dedicated drop off zones for relatives and friends to pick people up more easily
- Improved how they work to reduce waiting times for medication so that people can go home quicker
- Changed how they work to identify overall waiting times for discharge, delivery of medication, transport arrangements and patient experience
- Taken steps to ensure patients are given more information about their discharge arrangements, including ensuring someone has gone through their discharge summary with them.

Read more about what we did [here](#).



Now: changes to the hospital discharge

With your insight we worked with Healthwatch England to contribute to a national understanding of new arrangements for hospital discharge. NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care are using the insights to refresh guidance. The evidence was also used by Healthwatch England and other organisations to secure an extension of the COVID-19 discharge fund with an additional £594 million from the Treasury to support discharges for the first six months of 2021/22.

During the pandemic it was important that services used new ways to get people home as soon as possible after a hospital stay. Innovations included a Discharge Hub, bringing staff together from a number of services to co-ordinate care, including St George's Hospital, community health services, social care and the voluntary sector. People had their assessment for ongoing care needs at home rather than before they left hospital. It was major change and it was important to understand how it was working.

We spoke to a number of staff involved in the new procedures, drew on a range of feedback from patients during and prior to the pandemic and fed this in to the national review by Healthwatch England.

Feedback from local people suggested a need for:

- continued improvements in communication and collaboration between teams
- communicating information to patients, families and carers and their involvement in ongoing care
- continued improvements in co-ordination with care homes
- collaboration between services to collect feedback from patients and ensure their involvement in how discharge arrangements evolve to implement good practice or address issues in an integrated way.

The main issues highlighted nationally were a need for:

- post-discharge check-ins and assessments, especially to ensure there were no unmet care needs
- discharge checklists to ensure people are prepared with the support needed to return home
- improved communication and information for patients, including a single point of contact
- improvements to help with reducing delays in medication
- more community care and voluntary sector care.

We discussed the discharge system at our event in March. People said that in future the system should address practical needs, should allow time for carers and other support to be in place before someone returns home, that an assessment of need should be as current as possible (pre-admission and on discharge) and views of patients about the service should be sought.

We will continue to ensure the views of patients are considered as the new discharge system develops.



“From feedback from Healthwatch during the pandemic about the new discharge processes, we know that a more detailed understanding of the patient experience is required to further embed the new ways of working.” Sandy Keen, Assistant Head of Transformation – Integrated care, Wandsworth

Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch.



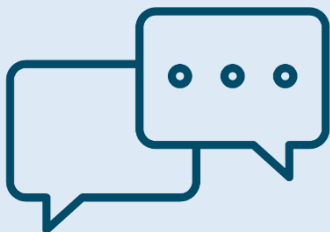
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Responding to COVID-19

Together we've made sure that the people who run health and care services know about difficulties people have faced in managing their health and care.

Local people told us about their experiences of accessing health and social care and managing during the first phase of the pandemic in an online survey. They told us the importance of reliable and trustworthy information, some had found it difficult to access services or had avoided services either because they thought they were busy or they were worried about COVID-19 infection. Carers reported a significant impact on their lives.

This provided insight to leaders of health and social care services in Wandsworth and NHS South West London CCG.

"To inform our recovery work we [mapped] patient and public insight ... around the impact of Covid and people's experiences of health and care services. The data was drawn from extensive sources including: Healthwatch surveys The feedback was synthesised and themed per recovery work stream. The insight was presented to the recovery board and informed what additional work is needed." SWL Governing Body Papers.

In March 2021 we launched a second survey to find out how people had been managing more recently and will report on this to inform further developments in health and social care.

Digital and telephone appointments

Working with the CCG in Wandsworth we found out about people's experiences of trying to access health and care when appointments were online or by telephone. This is informing how many services look at using these kind of appointments. We interviewed a number of people identified as elderly, with learning disabilities, with autism and people who needed mental health support to make sure their views were included in our findings.

Many people liked online or telephone appointments for simple discussions, but many felt more complex or sensitive conversations, first time appointments and some conversations about mental health should be face-to-face. Others were worried that if they did not have a telephone, access to the internet, or access to a private space, there could be barriers to accessing care. **Read more [here](#).**

"The telephone and video appointments report and recommendations will be relevant to many workstreams, ongoing and new. For example, addressing access barriers and digital exclusion within virtual healthcare models such as the clinical assessment service (including the Gastro/Digestive Hub), the Neurology Voices strategy, Community Diagnostics and Primary Care recovery as we move to usual business. Some of this work will have a wider impact for South West London communities." South West London / Wandsworth NHS

Experiences of the pandemic in Care Homes

Working with the CCG in Wandsworth, insight we gathered from care home staff helped the NHS and Wandsworth Council implement new ways to support care homes in the crisis, including support with digital technology and communications and supporting the mental health of staff and residents. We worked together to develop and send a survey to care home staff, which led a task and finish group to implement recommendations and an [action plan](#). **Read more [here](#).**

"We are taking forward support in care homes on the back of the Healthwatch survey and with a particular focus on mental health and Learning Disability care homes." Sandy Keen, Assistant Head of Transformation – integrated care, Wandsworth NHS CCG

Other Healthwatch and NHS organisations in South West London said they found our work useful and have built on this work later in the pandemic.

Mental health wellbeing workshops:

Working with Voicing Views and Talk Wandsworth we piloted virtual wellbeing workshops. We co-designed the programme to address topical mental health concerns relating to the pandemic.

"Working with Healthwatch Wandsworth and Voicing Views, refining and re-thinking what we do, has really helped us." Noel Brown, Talk Wandsworth Wellbeing Team

Contributing to vaccination programmes

We've contributed to the design and planning of flu and COVID-19 vaccination roll out and participated in a number of engagement events with the NHS CCG discussing the COVID-19 vaccine with minority and disadvantaged groups.

"Vaccinations are so important this year and we really appreciate your efforts to help us get the message out to our communities." Charlotte Gawne, Director of Communications and Engagement, SWL NHS CCG.

Your voice continues to inform change

A few highlights about how your insight has led to change over time.

Mental Health

Community mental health teams have improved support for people with serious mental illness in the community thanks to people who talked to us about their experiences.

Managers of the team have worked to improve: patient involvement in choices about their care and crisis plans, information about the service, changes in staff supporting patients and processes for discharge from the service. They have also worked to improve how support is resourced to provide better support to patients. Read more [here](#).

The views people shared with us about the crisis café contributed to new cafés in other areas, clarification of their preventative role and extended opening times during the festive season. Read more about it on our website soon.

Mental health wellbeing services in Wandsworth reach a range of communities and in ways that work best for them thanks to people who contributed to discussions at Healthwatch Wandsworth events.

“Feedback provided us with ideas for tailoring and creating workshops and marketing so they are more relevant to our target audiences and improved our impact. Working alongside Healthwatch has introduced us to organisations with which we were able to co-produce wellbeing interventions.” Noel Brown, Talk Wandsworth Wellbeing Team

“Healthwatch’s continued prioritisation of mental health issues in Wandsworth is really welcomed. Collaboration and work across a variety of areas from the crisis café, the Black & Minority Ethnic Mental Health Forum and project, to community teams and perinatal provides a positive, but objective and practical viewpoint, which always supports transformation across the system.” Mark Robertson Lead Transformation Manager – Mental Health (Wandsworth)

Health Inequalities

Awareness of health inequalities and interventions to support our community has increased, thanks to our annual Assembly events about health inequalities.

Each year we ask Public Health and NHS staff to tell us how they have worked to improve health inequalities. Our events host conversations in the community about these important issues and ensure progress is made. Find out more [here](#).

“The annual Healthwatch assembly on addressing inequalities provided a platform to reflect with communities on our ongoing approaches to this, sharing good practice (you said we did), exploring priority areas for development and increased focus.” NHS South West London /Wandsworth



Helping you find the answers

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

Early in the pandemic, we heard from many people about the lack of clear information and often inaccurate information.

We focused on clear, consistent and concise advice and information articles on our website to help address people's concerns. We provided up-to-date advice on COVID-19 including information about health and care services available, where to get support during lockdown, social distancing and other government guidance, vaccines and more (including in different languages and Easy Read where available). There were 1122 visits to our website, giving access to our online advice and information

This year we helped 127 people with information and signposting by:

- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Helping people to access the services they need
- Helping people understand what to do if they were unhappy with their care.

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



14% on Hospital care



13% on Social Services



12% on GP services



10% on Dentistry

Case Study: Resident unable to register with a GP during COVID-19



A Wandsworth resident had not visited a GP practice in over 10 years and desperately wanted to register with a GP so she could be vaccinated. She had been trying to do this for several months, without success and had become very frustrated. She contacted us via our Information & Signposting service as she had not had any help elsewhere. We managed to provide her with the information she needed and she managed to register with a GP successfully.



"I can't tell you how grateful I am that you're looking into this. I have finally managed to get an NHS number, it came through today." Anonymous



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.



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Volunteers

This year we were supported by 29 volunteers, who helped us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

The ways that volunteers could be involved this year changed and were sometimes constrained by the pandemic, for example, our face-to-face work and Enter and View visits were suspended.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Created digital content for our websites and social media.
- Carried out website reviews for local services on the information they provide.
- Helped make sure people in charge of services listened to what people were saying was important for their health and care by:
 - Helping more people to share their views in our surveys by using their community contacts
 - Contributing to our reports
 - Attending meetings with decision makers to tell them what people have said to us.



Volunteer Case Study

Research & Policy volunteer – Jummy, 27

Jummy joined Healthwatch Wandsworth as a Research and Policy volunteer in September 2019, where she has assisted with report writing and conducted desk-based research.

We asked Jummy “What have you gained from volunteering?”

“From volunteering, I’ve learnt a lot about the diversity of the Wandsworth population, the wide range of community support services available to residents and have developed a better understanding of service user needs and the existing barriers to accessing publicly funded health and social care services.

Volunteering at Healthwatch Wandsworth has also showed me the importance of having an independent outlet in which service users can feel comfortable to share their experiences, and how Healthwatch Wandsworth helps bridge the gap between service providers and service users – which has been all the more valuable throughout the pandemic.

Whilst volunteering, I have enjoyed being able to put a spotlight on what works well and gathering the views of a wide range of service users, as well as working alongside a kind, dedicated and compassionate team. Volunteering at Healthwatch Wandsworth has provided me with the opportunity to further develop my research and analytical skills, and I would not have got the job opportunities I have, if it were not for this opportunity, and for that I am forever grateful”



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at [Healthwatch Wandsworth](#).



www.healthwatch.org/Wandsworth



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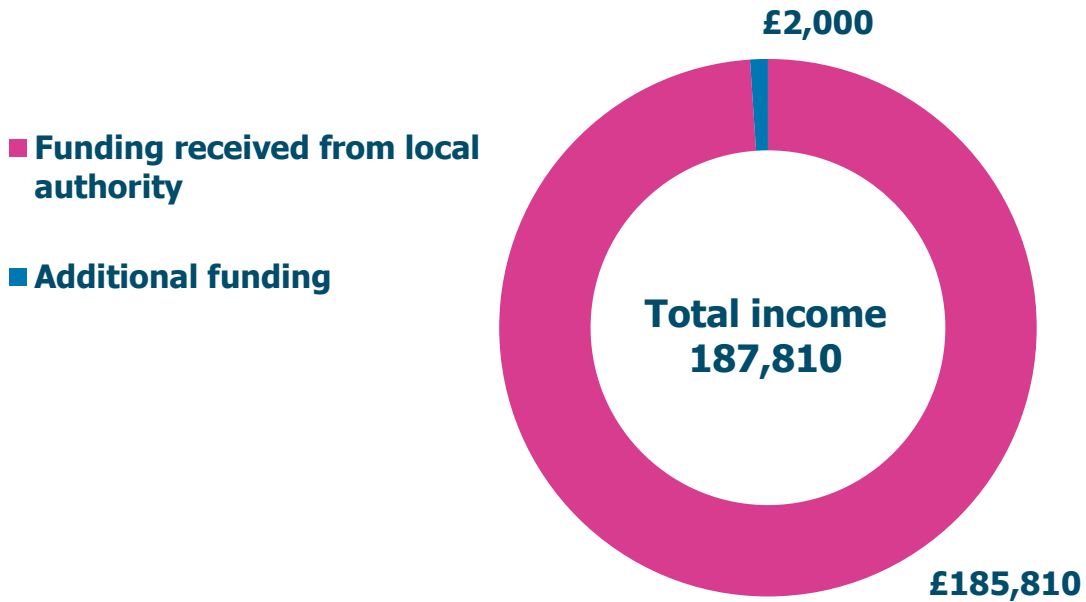


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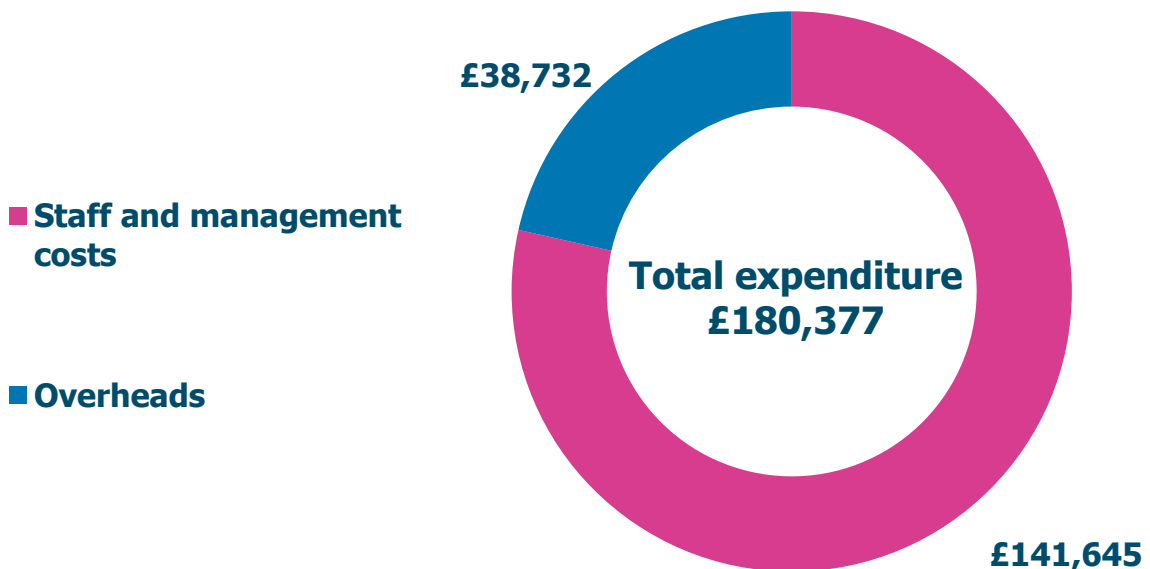
Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income



Expenditure



Healthwatch Wandsworth is operated and managed as an integrated part of Wandsworth Care Alliance and as such benefits from the synergies, economies of scale and the additional skills, knowledge and other resources across the wider organisation.

Next steps & thank you

Top priorities for 2021-22

1. Championing the voice of patients as services respond to the pandemic, building on what people told us last year and ensuring they continue to be involved in shaping services.
2. Listening to carers, people with Learning Disabilities and dementia about their needs and experiences, and the impact of the pandemic for them.
3. Working with minority and disadvantaged communities to identify if there are any issues they face in accessing services and new initiatives to address them.
4. Promoting communications between services and central access points to services.

Find out more about what we are going to do and how in our [business plan](#) for the year.

Next steps

Our work this year, like last, will be heavily influenced by the pandemic and the major challenges it has raised and we will be flexible to respond to the situation as it evolves. Including responding to the continuing threat of COVID-19 and evolving measures to keep people safe, recovery and evolution of services and the challenge of a backlog of work, requiring new ways to meet the challenge and a need to ensure no one is left behind because of unequal access to services.

We will continue to work from home but will gradually explore how to employ the benefits of working with people online, whilst trying to find safe opportunities to work face-to-face with our community when it is possible.

One of our priorities as listed above is to ensure that the health and care system continues to learn from the past year and what people have been telling us. We are also prioritising work with minority and disadvantaged communities to ensure they are heard and that services work for them.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their experiences with us this year and to the providers and commissioners who have listened and acted on what we have shared with them. We couldn't achieve what we do without working with you all.



“Our staff and volunteer team look forward to working with you and our community to hear the experiences of people who may face difficulties in getting support they need from services. We want to make sure decision makers act on this.”

Sarah Cook, Healthwatch Wandsworth Manager.



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Wandsworth is delivered by Wandsworth Care Alliance, 3rd Floor Tooting Works, 89 Bickersteth Road, London, SW17 9SH. Healthwatch Wandsworth 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 Committee](#) has 8 members who provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities on a voluntary basis. Our Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 they met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as how our work would address the pandemic and how we might work differently, including launching a COVID-19 survey. We also made a decision to pilot a different approach to our style of regular events holding fewer formal meetings and trialing a less formal 'coffee morning' in partnership with our community. They also met to perform a self-assessment using the Healthwatch England Quality Framework.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities, because they are informed by our work with volunteers and engagement work with the local community. Throughout our work we collect feedback and experiences of people in Wandsworth about health and social care issues that will affect them and use this information to set our priorities and shape our work. Opportunities for local people to inform our work and share their experiences of health and social care include: becoming a Healthwatch Wandsworth member (of which there are over 800 people) to keep up-to-date with and contribute to our work; attending our Healthwatch Wandsworth Assembly and other events; speaking to our staff and volunteers at community events and at services we visit and contacting our Information and Signposting service.

Methods and systems used this year to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to tell us their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone and email, provided a form on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups, interviewed people by telephone and provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media. We posted information to our members who prefer post and sent a newsletter to 200 residents via parcels from Wandsworth Food partnership and Age UK Wandsworth. However, it has been more difficult to reach some sections of the community.

We take steps to ensure we hear views of people from diverse backgrounds who may not be heard by health and care decision makers. For example, this year we have collaborated with the CCG on vaccination workshops and telephone interviews to reach elderly residents, people with Learning Disabilities, Autism and people with mental health needs. Community meetings we joined included people identifying with LGBTQ+, mental health conditions, young people, Learning Disabilities, Autism, Somali, faith groups, elders, Asian carers, carers and new mothers. People can tell us about themselves in our equalities monitoring forms and in demographic questions in our surveys. Of those who told us their ethnicity, 43% of people identified with ethnicities that were not White British.

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 www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk.

2020-21 priorities

Priority area	Changes made to services
Changes to how health and social care is delivered and how people access it, particularly the use of technology.	See page 11.
Discharge and follow-up support.	See page 8.
Immunisation, including MMR and vaccines	In response to the pandemic we focused our work on contributing to the planning and roll out of the flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine programmes.
Children and young people's mental health.	Based on what young people told us, we have raised awareness with commissioners about what matters to young people about a community-based place for mental health support (away from school and outside of school hours).
Perinatal mental health	We launched a survey and reported experiences of new parents in managing mental health. The survey closed in March. Changes made will be reported in 2021-2.

Responses to recommendations and requests

In general we have maintained contact, received responses and acknowledgements of our report recommendations from most providers and commissioners as well as can be expected in the circumstances. Communications have in some cases been more difficult because everyone has been focused on COVID-19. A lot of routine issues had to be put to one side to cope with the crisis.

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

We have contributed to discussions with Healthwatch England on areas of concern such as dentistry and public involvement in new Integrated Care System and maintained contact with our local CQC inspection team. We did not escalate specific issues or recommendations to the Healthwatch England Committee or the CQC directly in instances where there might be cause for steps to be taken.

Our volunteers and staff regularly attend meetings with the South West London Clinical Commissioning Group, Wandsworth Council and a range of local NHS organisations to ensure the needs of patients and service users are at the forefront of decision-making. Our Chair represents us at the Wandsworth Health and Wellbeing Board where key local strategies are agreed, including the Wandsworth Health and Care Plan and other initiatives promoting closer collaboration between the NHS and social care.

Many of our reports feature in the new Wandsworth Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which informs local health and care plans.



Healthwatch Wandsworth
3rd Floor Tooting Works,
89 Bickersteth Road,
Tooting, SW17 9SH.

www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk

t: 020 8516 7767

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