



Business Plan 2022 – 2023

Healthwatch Wandsworth

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Summary of our plans for 2022/2023

The bigger picture

The Covid19 pandemic has dominated the health and care agenda, including the work of Healthwatch, for the last 2 years. Even as the effects of the pandemic continue to be felt, we are witnessing new developments that will require us to adapt. This includes a restructuring of the health and care system into an Integrated Care System (ICS), changes to practice in many areas from Mental Health to Social Care reforms and the potential impact of the 'cost of living' crisis on health and social care.

While acknowledging the need to remain flexible and respond to the situation as it evolves, we can at this stage describe in general terms our intended activities in the coming 12 months. Our staff and volunteer representatives at meetings and those speaking to the community will undertake various activities to advance equity in health and social care, including:

- working with new staff and new roles in the NHS, the local council and organisations that provide health and care services as the ICS system evolves to promote more joined-up services;
- playing an active role to influence ICS transition and development, in Wandsworth and at South West London level and continuing to embed and formalise patient and public involvement in the new system. NHS decision makers want to understand what communities are saying, want advice on engagement and want us to challenge them when decisions are being made. To help make this happen they are providing funding that will enable Healthwatches across South West London to collaborate in championing the views of local people.
- building on work and intelligence gathered over the past year as new ways of working emerge. Although Covid remains a significant concern, we should see a shift from coping with Covid to re-building services, including catch up with back logs, addressing the underlying challenges that the pandemic highlighted such as health inequalities and a need for integration across services.
- re-starting 'Enter and View' visits for a close-up view of specific services from the perspective of patients and service users.

The way we work will continue to evolve to meet the circumstances and to provide opportunities to involve people in our work. We will likely see more hybrid working this year, still working largely from home and running some meetings and events online, but re-introducing more face-to-face interactions.

The pandemic has brought many issues and challenges into sharper focus and we will continue to prioritise **digital support, health inequalities, mental health and support to carers** as we move forward.

In 2021 we completed a self-assessment of how we work using the Quality Framework designed by Healthwatch England and used this to improve how we work. We've completed the action plan, but some of the quality areas will be incorporated into our objectives because they are things that can always be improved upon further.

Our main objectives for the year:

Each year we set priority themes to guide our work and help keep us focused on what matters to local people.

We've reviewed all the experiences people shared with us between April 2021 and March 2022 and have also looked at what will be happening in health and social care this year to see if there are opportunities for people to have a say in what happens.

This year we aim to focus on the following health and care topics:

1. Hospital discharges
2. Perinatal mental health
3. Dementia service provision and support for carers
4. Strengthening links with communities and groups who experience health inequalities
5. Reviewing Wandsworth Council's Social Care Front Door approach to holistically help people to remain independent
6. Local information and co-design during the implementation of social care reforms

Most of these topics relate to work we have already started and wish to progress further.

Within the objectives above we will place particular emphasis **on digital support, health inequalities, mental health and support to carers** as cross cutting themes.

Since we are a small team with finite resources, we have a [decision-making framework](#) to ensure that we concentrate our efforts to get the best outcomes with what we have available. We will also consider options to take on additional paid work under this same criteria.

Please read the *Our plans for the year* section for more detail about what we intend to do and how we will do it.

What is Healthwatch Wandsworth?

Healthwatch Wandsworth (HWW) is your health and social care champion. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

We are the independent champion for people using health and social care services in Wandsworth. Health and social care services have a legal duty to respond to our recommendations and requests for information.¹ HWW can enter a service to speak to patients using its 'Enter and View' powers; we also listen to people using surveys, online, in person, by email or by phone. In this way we aim to make sure decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

HWW is contracted by Wandsworth Council through Wandsworth Care Alliance (WCA), a registered charity, making WCA the accountable corporate body for Healthwatch Wandsworth. This arrangement strengthens HWW through the sharing of skills and resources with WCA and the synergies between Healthwatch and WCA's other projects on mental health and support for the voluntary sector across the borough. More information about our governance, decision-making and our board is on the [HWW website](#).

The role of HWW is to:

- promote and support involvement of the public in health and social care
- gather views about what local people think, what matters to them and to make sure that their views shape health and care services in Wandsworth

¹ Health and Social Care Act in 2012

- monitor and drive up the quality of local services based on the input of local people about their experiences and needs
- provide information about local services and service changes and promote access to services.

HWW has a unique position in the health and social care landscape as an independent organisation, listening to what people have to say, with an understanding of how health and social care works in theory and practice. Its role is to ensure that local people in Wandsworth have the information they need, the opportunity to input their experience and views, and that their voice is heard by those responsible for health and care services.

Conversations between HWW and community members are confidential and, as a non-political organisation, HWW does not use information for political purposes. We champion the perspective of local people without judgment or bias, and we work with health and social care systems and their leaders to make sure they respond to and act upon what people are saying.

You can read about our past work and achievements in our [Annual Reports](#).

Our plans for the year

Topic 1: Hospital discharges

Background:

The new Discharge to Assess arrangements² that were brought in during the height of the pandemic will develop as we emerge from the emergency Covid situation and as such there is a need to include the voice of service users who may be affected by changes. Discharge from hospital is a multidisciplinary and cross organisation initiative

² <https://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/keogh-review/documents/quick-guides/quick-guide-discharge-to-access.pdf>

that we can research to provide insight to as collaborative initiatives like this develop within the new Integrated Care System. Our focus on hospital discharge will also include care provided outside of the hospital to reduce admissions to hospital, such as the 'hospital at home' and 'virtual ward' initiatives.

How we'll do this:

- We will use what local carers have told us about hospital discharge to local decision makers to help develop support for people when they leave hospital.
- We will provide insight and consider further research projects on 'hospital at home' and 'virtual wards'.

Topic 2: Perinatal Mental Health

Background:

Managing emotional and mental health wellbeing in pregnancy, childbirth or the first year after giving birth and becoming a parent (called the perinatal period) represents a challenge for many. In a recent report we identified a need for greater collaboration and communications between the organisations dealing with perinatal maternal health to raise awareness of perinatal mental health and support available. In 2022 we aim to speak to the relevant services about our recommendations and promote opportunities for services to collaborate and communicate with each other.

How we'll do this:

- During Maternal Mental Health week in May we will collaborate with local service providers to develop a list of support services available. We'll work with them to raise awareness of perinatal mental health and promote the support available via social media, our newsletters, website and circulating information to our networks.
- We will help inform support by working with the commissioners of the Health Visiting service and drawing their attention to local people's experiences and concerns as captured in our surveys.

Topic 3: Dementia service provision and support for carers

Background:

The national Dementia Strategy is due to be updated. Wandsworth does not have a cross-organisation dementia strategy (although several other strategies include related strategic aims). During the pandemic people have told us that there has been a significant impact on people with dementia and their carers because some services have not been available as usual.

How we'll do this:

- People told us that they want more information about available support and we hope to explore further how this can be done. For Dementia Action week in May we will raise awareness by collating and sharing information about support currently available.
- We will explore opportunities to promote collaboration across services that support people affected by dementia.
- We will hold workshops with people with memory loss or dementia to understand how digital technology could help them.

Topic 4: Strengthening links with communities and groups who experience health inequalities

Background:

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the profound issues of unequal access to services. Healthwatch can contribute by working with partners to analyse and highlight the issues and by using our unique access to decision-makers to ensure they are addressed.

How we'll do this:

We will reach out to community groups to raise awareness of our work, build new relationships and collaborate with them to strengthen their voice from within the health and care system. Our staff and volunteers will continue to encourage decision makers to seek views from local communities and enable community representatives

to co-design services that affect them, for example in the work of the Ethnicity and Mental Health Improvement Project which will begin this year.

We will specifically focus on:

- Continuing to support the Ethnicity and Mental Health Improvement Programme - one of the most innovative projects in Wandsworth tackling a key area of inequality. Involved as we are in working groups implementing the projects, we are provisionally considering an Enter and View survey of people who use the service.
- Building on our research of the needs of blind and partially sighted people.
- Restructuring our surveys and revising our approach to collecting feedback more generally to better understand the needs and issues important to people.
- Monitoring and gathering evidence about whether and how the 'cost of living crisis' has an impact on health and health inequalities. Our staff and volunteers will find out what people are saying about the impact and will raise awareness of available support.
- Monitoring information and support provided for 'displaced people' who move to Wandsworth.

Topic 5: Reviewing Wandsworth Council's Social Care Front Door approach to holistically help people to remain independent

Background:

People often tell us that they want more joined up support from services and it is obvious from our Information and Signposting work that many people trying to access health and social care require a holistic view of their needs to improve their situation. The Council's Front Door project proposes a holistic approach to supporting people to remain independent, via a single point of access that provides some co-ordination of support. The project is looking at how it might continue and move to a face-to-face model.

How we'll do this:

- We want to use our 'Enter and View' powers to speak to people who have used the service to hear if it meets their needs. Due to Covid restrictions and the timing of the Front Door developments, we had not been able to do this before now, but we have already started to make plans.

Topic 6: Local information and co-design during the implementation of social care reforms

Background:

There are many reforms planned for the coming year, these changes are likely to affect a lot of people in the borough and have a particular impact on people who may face barriers to access. We will focus on the Social Care reforms as a priority.

We want to make sure people know and understand what is available to them to ensure better access to support. But, we want to go further and get people involved in shaping how policies and changes are put in to practice.

How we will do this:

- Our staff and volunteer representatives and our research volunteers will gather information about what is happening and identify areas where we can support organisations to involve people in changes and to communicate clearly.
- We will continue to update the information on our website and communicate via our newsletter to make sure people know what support is available and how to access it.
- We will offer advice and support to the council around their communications and engagement with the community to help them understand the impact of the changes on people and how to support them.

Other key operational challenges and objectives

- We will produce an annual report and responses to the Quality Accounts of our two large hospital Trusts.³

³ Find out more about Quality Accounts here: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/quality-accounts/about-quality-accounts/>

- Our existing contract (between WCA and Wandsworth Council) is due to end in 2023, and we will prepare for any retendering exercise the Council may propose.
- We will also seek opportunities to adhere more closely to the Healthwatch England Quality Framework on the following areas:
 - Equality Diversity and Inclusion, focusing on our staff and volunteers; who we work with and who hear from in the community; as well as looking at how we undertake our work to ensure opportunities for participation.
 - Demonstrating our independence and impartiality, demonstrating our impact, and how we hold services to account as measured in the Quality Framework.
 - Improving volunteer support, including peer support and researching and understanding how we might recruit and support volunteers.
- We will explore how we can embed a 'Trauma Informed Approach' throughout our work, to ensure that we work with people in a way that involves them in important discussions but does not trigger previous traumatic experiences.
- We will adapt our communications to the new Healthwatch England Brand.
- We will collaborate with other SWL Healthwatch to establish a new way to champion the views of people in South West London so we can make sure that the South West London Integrated Care System (ICS) understands what communities are saying and so that we can give the ICS advice on engagement and challenge them when decisions are being made.
- Changes to the health and care services can take time and we rely on health and social care services to make the changes. We will continue to track the influence of our previous work and remind the people in charge of services of what patients and service users have shared about their experiences of health and social care.

Promotion and Communications Plan

Background

Digital communications will continue to be an important way of reaching people to ask them about their experiences and to let them know they can contact us if they need help finding health and care services.

In line with public health guidance, we will increasingly return to face-to-face engagement and outreach, while retaining some of the advantages associated with remote working and online communication.

Our plan for communications

Our website, electronic newsletter and circulating our surveys electronically will be important. Our plan to do more of this includes:

- Sustaining at least 2 newsletters per quarter (one longer one and a shorter bulletin) to provide up-to-date information on services, with two printed versions per year.
- Utilising press releases, where possible, to reach a wider audience with information about our events and our priorities.
- Connecting with organisations on social media to increase our reach.
- Encouraging organisations to share our articles in their own publications and to raise awareness of our priorities.
- Reconnecting with staff in communications and engagement roles through the Communications and Engagement group.

- Using opportunities for communication and collaboration across WCA projects to support each other.
- During Maternal Mental Health week in May we will list local services to raise awareness of perinatal mental health and promote the support available.
- For Dementia Action week in May we will collate and promote information about support available locally.
- Our staff and volunteer representatives and our research volunteers will gather information about Social Care changes and will support organisations to involve people in changes and to communicate clearly.
- We will promote information about Social Care changes on our website and ask our members to spread the word.

Resources

To deliver our programme we rely on 3 main resources:

- Financial - in 2022-23 we expect our contract income to remain the same as 2021-22. Additional project funding may be obtained where it fits our aims and objectives or goes beyond our planned work.
- Staff team – 3.3, full time equivalent, dedicated staff resource plus senior management and back-office support as well as input from the wider WCA team, where possible and appropriate.
- Volunteers – We currently have 27 volunteers. A vital augmentation to the staff team for achieving current and planned levels of activity, including but not limited to: undertaking a wide range of roles ranging from speaking to patients during Enter and View visits to helping write our reports.

How our work will make a difference

We will continue to use the insight we gather from the public to make the case for improvement. However, demonstrating impact is a challenge and not always straightforward because our achievements depend on how far our evidence or recommendations are acted on by others. Sometimes this can be immediate, sometimes it can take time to see change. As a small organisation, working with a range of major public services, we rely ultimately on our ability to influence and inform, based in turn on our understanding of the views of patients and service users. We must balance our independence and role in holding the system to account with acting as a critical friend and working constructively with health and care decision-makers.

We therefore aim to build constructive working relationships with local health and care leaders, to ensure we keep up-to-date with what is happening in health and social care and so that we can continue to raise and champion the views of local people.

Our impact will be felt in the following ways:

- We ensure that service commissioners and providers are constantly reminded of the importance of engaging with patients and service users in all their activities. By our presence at key decision-making fora, including the Wandsworth Health and Wellbeing Board, the Wandsworth Oversight and Scrutiny Committee, and key committees of the local Clinical Commissioning Group and major service providers, we ensure that the patient and service user perspective is not overlooked and that opportunities for public engagement and co-production are highlighted.
- Through our own regular communications and consultation exercises, and our input to the consultation and engagement exercises of others, we ensure that the public has access to important information and can raise issues and concerns.
- By investigating particular services or issues in depth – e.g. through our Enter and View programmes, or other targeted exercises – we throw a light on specific issues or areas of concern and make recommendations which we then follow up with the relevant commissioners and providers. Our intention is that, where recommended,

service commissioners and providers will make changes to their practice including staff training and guidance and changes to how a service works.

- Service commissioners and providers make changes to their practice in the short term, and/or longer-term changes, such as staff training/guidance, changes to procedures or that services start to work with other organisations.
- Our work and the input of local people in our work has highlighted areas for improvement, challenged assumptions or provided reassurance. In some instances, the work will prompt further investigation and monitoring.

These impacts are not easy to measure - and specific service changes on the ground are almost always the result of the work of many people, including but not exclusively Healthwatch. Nevertheless, they are vitally important. Updates about the impact of our work will be available on our website, via our newsletter and our annual report.

Our Key Performance Indicators:

In addition to our broad statutory responsibilities and obligations, under our contract with the London Borough of Wandsworth we have each year a number of particular Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against which our performance can be assessed. Our KPIs for 2020-21 (which pre-date the COVID-19 crisis) are:

800 People involved in feedback through engagement in consultations, survey's, outreach and enter and view

**72 Patient and public engagement events
outreach/meetings/training/development/briefings**

40 Attendees at our quarterly events

8 Enter and View visits

2500 Unique visits to our website

4124 Total visitors to our website

600 Social media engagements

8 Newsletters published

- 12 Articles published in a local newsletter/on a website**
- 450 Individual members**
- 160 Organisation members**
- 12 Reports, and feedback and recommendations sent to commissioners and providers**
- 8 Meetings with the other regional/national Healthwatches**
- 22 Active and trained Enter and View and Healthwatch Representative volunteers**
- 10 Other active volunteers**
- 2000 Volunteer hours contributed**
- 26 Committees, boards, groups attended regularly**
- 50,000 Funds from alternative funding sources**

We also provide a report on the demographics of our volunteers and people who have been involved in our work where information is disclosed.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working with more local people and organisations in the coming year. If you would like to share your stories and experiences with us or you would like to collaborate with us, we would be very glad to hear from you.

Contact us

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