

Services

Feedback Report:

What people are telling us about their experience
of health and care services

April to June 2025

About us

Healthwatch Lambeth is your local health and social care champion. If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services in your area, we want to hear about your experiences. As an independent body, we work with NHS leaders and other decision makers to listen to local feedback, improve standards of care, and reduce inequalities. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

This report brings together all the feedback we heard from April to June 2025. Feedback was shared with us over the phone, by email, through our website, and at in-person outreach events. All names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

The feedback received from patients and their carers is presented as shared, and some feedback may lack detailed information or context. Nonetheless, we highly value patients' and carers' time and effort in sharing their views and experiences with us.

How we use your feedback

We follow up on all concerns and issues raised.

We share all compliments, complaints and concerns with the relevant service providers and commissioners. We ask that service providers acknowledge the feedback and make note of any actions they can take to address it. Feedback is shared either anonymously or, with consent, with contact details, so that service providers can respond to service users' concerns directly.

We answer any queries by providing the requested information, or by signposting to any relevant organisations that may be able to help.

"Thank you again for contacting me about my complaint and offering support. It gives me confidence to know there is advice and guidance to help me if I need it."

"Thank you for your prompt reply and support. It's very helpful and I really appreciate your responsiveness, empathy, and assistance."

Table of contents

About us	2
How we use your feedback	2
Who we heard from	4
What Lambeth people are saying	4
Top issues.....	4
Compliments.....	5
Feedback	6
Booking GP appointments	6
Waiting for treatment.....	8
Medication, prescriptions and dispensing.....	9
Kadijah's story: "I've never felt judged."	10
Living with ADHD in Lambeth	11
Just Ask Us	14
Getting clarity on translation support	15
Contact us	17



Photos taken at the Lambeth Country Show, June 2025.

Who we heard from

We have gathered valuable insights from people across Lambeth regarding their experiences using health and care services. By actively listening to the voices of the community, we have gained a better understanding of their perspectives and challenges they encounter when accessing healthcare.

Listening to feedback from different segments of the community is a priority for Healthwatch Lambeth. This helps us see the complete picture and provide valuable feedback to service providers, enabling improvement.

From April to June, we spoke to 240 people about their experiences of health and care services in Lambeth. We spoke to people from diverse groups, including carers, people from Lambeth's Black Caribbean, Black African, and East Asian communities, people with English as a second language, and people with autism, ADHD, disabilities, and long-term conditions.

What Lambeth people are saying

Top issues

We heard the most about GP services during these months. We also heard about hospital services, dentistry, pharmacy, mental health care, adult social care, services for people with a learning disability, and services for people with drug and alcohol addictions.

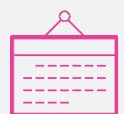
The most common feedback concerned:



Booking GP appointments, by telephone or online



Medication, including issues with both prescriptions and dispensing



Waiting for treatment, including for hospital care and dentistry



Compliments

"I have a great relationship with my GP and pharmacy. I'm restricted to bed full time, and my GP never moans about doing home visits. The longest I ever wait for an appointment is 24 hours. My pharmacy delivers medication without issue and will actually ring to remind me when they think I may need a repeat prescription."

GP surgery and pharmacy

"My visit to the pharmacy went like clockwork AND the chemist rang up a month later to see how I was doing."

Pharmacy

"Both doctors and reception staff at my GP are nice. There are about 15 doctors, compared to my previous GP which was not good and did not have enough doctors. My doctor is kind, patient, and books in follow-ups and prescriptions."

GP surgery

"My GP is very good and always helping."

GP surgery

"It's a good location and I like the lift that takes me to the first floor. The GP and nurse are good. The social prescriber was also good, listened well and signposted me to talking therapies."

GP surgery

"My GP gets five stars. They call me quickly and always give me a choice of who to speak to."

GP surgery

Provider response:

"Thank you for sharing! I've forwarded our patient's compliment and your email to the whole practice team. I'm sure it will make their day!!"

Feedback



Booking GP appointments

Several people told us they struggled to make appointments during the “8 am rush”. While they praised the quality of care, they found accessing appointments difficult.

“My GP is great – the only difficulty is making appointments. I call at 8 a.m. but they keep me on hold for over an hour. I don't understand the online booking system.”

GP surgery

“I can't access the GP as I'm told I must fill in their webforms at 8 a.m. and it's all closed within hours, so I don't bother for weeks on end. I've never seen a GP there. The experience of care is good, but the ease of access is very poor.”

GP surgery

“Waiting to book a GP appointment takes too long and it's difficult to do it over the phone. But when you go, they are very good.”

GP surgery

“Getting a GP appointment is so difficult. You have to ring again and again or try to book online using all the different apps. It puts you off going to the doctor. For kids it's a lot easier, but for adults they make you wait!”

GP surgery

“The practice never has any appointments. I tried to book four times over the past two weeks, but to no success. There's inconsistency among practice staff about when patients should call to make appointments. I have been told to phone at different times and days, but every time all appointments have gone.

I was also told that appointments are released on the NHS app from 7.30am – but the practice doesn't open until 8am for people to call. This is an unfair and unjust system. Are NHS app users getting priority over non-NHS App patients? Shouldn't both have equal access to appointments?”

GP surgery



Some people working full-time wanted more flexible appointments.

"I'm in full time employment, so I need flexible appointments. My GP would give me daytime appointments, and I could not take the time off all the time. But if I didn't attend, receptionists would say "Then you are not unwell!" I have complained and they seem to be more flexible now. They have to be with working people!"

GP surgery

"I work, so it is not easy to put time aside for phone calls. I was told I should expect a call from a GP between 15:00 and 18:00. I missed the call by five minutes at 17:55. I attempted to call back, but there was no answer on the line.

It was very frustrating to have an appointment call so late and for there to be no way to speak to anyone when I found the missed call. I think the standard of communication available to service users is very poor and not patient friendly."

GP surgery



Some people also faced issues booking appointments or registering online.

GP surgery

"I asked my GP for an appointment, and they told me it would be a telephone consultation. I waited in the entire day, but no call came. When I contacted them the next day, they told me no appointment had been made. This happened three times. I later found out that their system had booked them as in-person appointments, while the app told me they would be telephone calls. After the third instance, I got a message on my record telling me off for not attending an in-person appointment. However, I didn't attend because I was told it would be a call!"

GP surgery

"I tried to register with a GP five times. They wouldn't let me make an appointment or register without an app, even though I don't have a compatible mobile phone. They also said registration would take three days, but it only ended up taking a couple of hours. It was outrageous, the lack of care. It was all about the administration without anyone taking concern about me, the patient."

GP surgery

"I have been trying to use the Evergreen Life app to book GP appointments since November 2024, without success. In April 2025, I tried to book an appointment by telephone, and the receptionist told me I should use the app. When I explained the technical issues I was facing, they told me to come in for help. A member of staff helped me contact the IT provider, who linked my account to the surgery. However, I was still unable to use it to book appointments.

I am not going to attempt to make a new appointment at this point, either by telephone or the app. I do not want to go through a long phone queue only to be disbelieved about why I'm not using the app when I finally speak to a receptionist."

GP surgery



Waiting for treatment

People told us they faced long waits for care due to cancellation or issues with referrals.

"The NHS quoted waiting time for knee surgery at the hospital is 18 weeks. I have been waiting for 42 weeks since my GP referred me to the Orthopaedic department, and that is just to meet the surgeon; more time will be added prior to operation.

After 18 weeks the NHS is required to provide us with alternative providers if they are unable to fulfil their requirement. This has not happened. Although one replacement has been authorised, there is still no date for surgery to take place. Both my GP and hospital have failed to communicate and provide ongoing care, leaving me psychologically and practically in a worse state of health."

Hospital services – orthopaedics

"I was referred as part of my hypodontia treatment. Unfortunately, the referral was not actioned for several weeks, and only after multiple calls was I informed that the referral had been misplaced and delayed by over two months. This has caused significant distress, both emotionally and practically."

Hospital services – dentistry

"Waits for dentistry are too long. There should also be more ways of getting emergency dental treatment, besides the King's College Hospital service which often entails a long waiting list."

Dentistry



Medication, prescriptions and dispensing

We heard about issues and delays with prescriptions from GPs, pharmacies, and community health services.

"The NHS app is a good app, but it doesn't tell me when my next prescription is due. The Patient Access app does this and it's really helpful. I wish the NHS app could do this too!"

Dispensing – NHS app

"I have struggled to get care for my endometriosis. Now, the GP pharmacist who seems to know nothing about my situation is refusing my medication."

GP surgery

"I was recommended a medication by a hospital consultant. I received written confirmation from my GP stating my prescription had been approved and I would be notified when it was ready for collection. However, my prescription was then abruptly refused without clear explanation. This decision contradicted the written information and caused me considerable confusion, distress and mental strain."

GP surgery

"I experienced a critical issue related to the supply of my medication prescribed by [a community health service]. When I contacted the pharmacy to collect my prescription, I discovered that they had not received appropriate communication or instruction from the care team. I was left without access to essential medication, and no emergency provision or support plan had been arranged."

Services for people with drug and alcohol addictions

"I was prescribed a cream for nearly 30 years. I tried to get a retest prescription but was told it was no longer used. I asked for an alternative but wasn't offered anything. Surely, I should be given an alternative as my problem has not disappeared. I now appear to have no care plan or treatment for an ongoing issue."

GP surgery

Provider response:

"We will follow up with this patient about the feedback re: an alternative cream."

Kadijah's story: "I've never felt judged."

Getting high-quality, respectful sexual health care

What you said:

Kadijah, a woman under 25, has been on the self-administered contraceptive injection for 2 years. She initially got it prescribed through her GP and now collects it every three months from the pharmacy.

Her experience of sexual health care at the GP had always been high-quality, respectful and non-judgemental.

"I have a great GP surgery. Most clinicians and GPs I have met regarding sexual health have been astounding and very kind. I had a female doctor in my last appointment, so I felt extra comfortable.

Making the experience comfortable is very important. This was particularly crucial when I was younger and more nervous around the subject. I've never felt judged."

Kadijah's only concern was that her prescription was sometimes delayed, causing her to occasionally go past the recommended limit without a second dose.

"Sometimes it takes a while for my prescription to come in, as it isn't commonly prescribed. The one time I needed to use a different pharmacy, they gave me back my prescription and told me to try elsewhere.

Sometimes I go over the 13-week-mark without a second dose. I'm lucky to not get any side effects in that time, but others might not be so lucky and start experiencing unwanted symptoms. It would be nice to collect several doses at once so I could avoid this issue."

What we did:

We shared Kadijah's feedback with her surgery.

Provider response:

"It's lovely to hear the positive feedback. Thank you!

Regarding her prescription issues, hopefully the patient is aware they can choose for their prescriptions to go to any pharmacy of their choice."

Living with ADHD in Lambeth

Local feedback and Lambeth findings from Healthwatch England's survey on ADHD

Healthwatch England recently conducted a national survey of adults' experiences of living with ADHD and waiting for an assessment. You can read the full report on their website [here](#).

We would like to spotlight the experiences of Lambeth residents living with ADHD that participated in the research, incorporating feedback shared with us.

Survey responses from Lambeth residents

Living with ADHD

People felt that ADHD had a negative impact on their self-perception, their relationships and their work, including:

- Poor self-esteem, self-doubt, and guilt
- Issues with concentration, time management and memory
- Difficulties engaging with other people
- Impulsiveness and engaging in risky behaviour.

All respondents had been diagnosed with or suspected they had anxiety, and most had been diagnosed with depression. However, some felt that their anxiety and depression had diminished once they began managing their ADHD symptoms.

One person mentioned how knowing they may have ADHD helped them better understand their behaviour.

"A psychologist suggested that I have ADHD and to learn about the symptoms was a huge relief! So much of my interactions and reactions to life suddenly made sense. This happened in my late 40s - I really wish that I had this information sooner."

Adjustments at work

Most respondents had not asked for adjustments at work. One person said they had not asked for support because they did not want to *"seem like a burden"* and hid their suspected ADHD out of fear of prejudice.

One person tried to get adjustments at work but struggled because they did not have a diagnosis.

Waiting for an ADHD assessment

Some people had been referred for an ADHD assessment by their GP and had been on the waiting list for several years with few updates.

"I'm low and frustrated. I just want the assessment. I have waited nearly 3 years – it's not quick enough!"

"The NHS did not contact me at all after my referral. After 6 months, I reached out to find out about wait times and was told it was a 6 year wait, with an additional 2 for medication. That is too long!"

One person had to chase up their referral when it was sent to the wrong provider.

"It was very stressful; not only do I not have mental health support, but I also need to ensure that referrals are done correctly."

People described the uncertainty of waiting for a diagnosis, with little support and information on how to manage their symptoms.

"I can only presume that my symptoms are due to ADHD, but I will not know until I receive a formal diagnosis. I am in limbo, unable to receive medication."

One person wished for more support while waiting, such as therapy tools like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), support groups, or regular check-ups.

Had not asked for an ADHD assessment

Some respondents suspected they had ADHD but had not yet seen a GP to ask for a referral. Most felt they would be dismissed if they tried to get an assessment or were deterred by the long waiting list.

"I'm unsure how the GP will help. They may be dismissive."

"I am anxious about being dismissed"

"I don't want to be medicated and have learned to manage my condition. I understand that the waiting list for assessment is ridiculously long."

Anton's story: Waiting for ADHD medication

In addition to the survey responses, we also heard from Anton, a man struggling to get medication for his ADHD, despite having a diagnosis.

Anton was diagnosed by a private practice under the Right to Choose programme but was unable to complete the medication titration period. He was advised to ask for an ADHD referral with his local NHS practice to complete titration and receive his medication.

However, despite already having a recognised diagnosis, he has been waiting for over a year to be seen. He believes he has been placed in the same waiting list as those waiting for an assessment.

"I have an official diagnosis, but it looks like the NHS can only refer you to an ADHD practitioner without any category or classification. My doctors mentioned in my referral that I only need titration, and I ask about updates again and again, but it looks nothing can accelerate the process. I know that people who wait for an ADHD assessment can wait for years, and I am afraid that I am waiting for my titration in the general ADHD referral queue.

I don't have money for a private practice at the moment. I just need to pass my medication titration period and be prescribed with medication that I really need."

Just Ask Us

If you're looking for information about health and social care services in Lambeth, we're here to help. We can also signpost you to organisations in the community offering the support you need.

In April, May and June, you asked us:

	Can I switch dental providers mid-treatment?	Switching dentists is easy on the NHS. Talk to your dentist if you'd like to switch providers.
	I need housing advice on council housing and rent deposit schemes.	Shelter and Citizens Advice offer self-help guides on many housing issues, including rent deposit schemes and council housing .
	How can social prescribers help me?	Social prescribers can listen to your needs and connect you with community services that can help. Ask your GP for a referral.
	Can I ask for a re-referral if the wait for an appointment is too long?	If you have to wait over 18 weeks for a non-urgent, consultant-led appointment, you can usually ask your GP for a re-referral .

Getting clarity on translation support

Understanding translation service provision in primary care

What you said:

Residents told us about their struggles getting translation support at appointments at the GP, dentist and optometrist.

Ellen, a carer, told us that her request for a Pashto interpreter for her foster child had been ignored by her **GP surgery**.

"My foster child speaks English as a second language. I made a telephone appointment for them and requested a Pashto interpreter, but the doctor talked to them without one."

Later, another resident, Donna, reached out to enquire about translation services at the **dentist**.

"I am supporting a homeless patient to access dental care and, frustratingly, have come across a local dental practice that does not offer interpreters or a language line. After discussion with their service manager, they have advised that they are "not obligated to do so".

Donna also wanted to know about translation services at the **optometrist**, after struggling to get an interpreter during an appointment with Minor Eye Condition Services (MECS) for a different person.

"I've had another report of an opticians not offering interpreters for a Minor Eye Condition Services (MECS) appointment, resulting in a patient at another hostel being turned down."

What we did:

For Ellen's **GP** concern, we advised that she raise her issue with the practice manager.

For Donna's queries, we asked the Integrated Care Board about translation services available in Lambeth for **dentistry** and **optometry**.

For **dentistry**, we were told that while dentists are required to arrange translation services, there is no clear pathway to do so.

"It is a contractual responsibility to arrange for translation services. However, there is no clear pathway. There was a recent circular last month urging practices to arrange, pay for, and then claim the cost later. However, the practices will first have to identify the providers."

For **optometry**, we were told that while there is currently no funding for translation services for Minor Eye Condition Services (MECS) in Lambeth, it is something that is being raised and is being attempted to resolve.

"This is something we're trying to resolve. Whilst funding is available for the Sight Testing contract via NHS England, it isn't for Minor Eye Conditions Services and costs are generally prohibitive if the cost can't be reclaimed, as a MECS fee is only £50. It's something that we'd be really keen to sort out as it causes a lot of issues. In the meantime, we're working on providing a breakdown of which practices can communicate in different languages and make that information available."

Donna told us the patients had been able to find alternative solutions. However, she thanked us for our help finding out more about what's available and highlighting gaps in provision.

"We have found a way around [getting translation during MECS appointments]. One of the support workers will go with him and have language line on their phone.

Thank you for getting back to me and for your explanation."

Contact us

You can tell us your experience or feedback by:

- **Online form:** www.healthwatchlambeth.org.uk/share-your-views
- **Email:** info@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk
- **Telephone:** 020 7274 8522

For more information on this report, or to request it in large print, contact eulalia.gonzalez@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk.



Healthwatch Lambeth
Health Foundry, Canterbury House,
1 Royal Street, SE1 7LL

healthwatchlambeth.org.uk
tel.: 020 7274 8522

[instagram.com/HWLambeth](https://www.instagram.com/HWLambeth)
[x.com/HWLambeth](https://www.x.com/HWLambeth)
[facebook.com/HWLambeth](https://www.facebook.com/HWLambeth)