

# Services

# Feedback Report:

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

**July to September 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 the feedback we heard from July to September. 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 very much for your kind attention and for showing interest in my case. I truly appreciate your support, which makes me feel less alone in this situation."

"Thank you so much for your support with my query and supplying me with the information I needed."

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Photo taken at the Launch of the Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham Sexual Health Alliance, September 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 July to September, we spoke to 241 people about their experiences of health and care services in Lambeth. We spoke to people from diverse groups, including carers, parents of young children, people with long-term conditions (e.g. chronic pain), people over 70, and people from Lambeth's Black Caribbean, Black African, and South Asian communities.

## What Lambeth people are saying

### Top issues

We heard the most about GP services during these months. We also heard about hospital services, pharmacy, urgent care, adult social care, and mental health services for children and adults.

The most common feedback concerned:



**Choice and being listened to** in GPs' diagnoses and treatment decisions



**Communication** about appointments, triage, and referrals



**Digital services**, including booking appointments online



## Compliments

People told us positive experiences of good quality treatment and follow-on care in hospital and at their GP surgery.

"I went to St Thomas' Hospital yesterday for a scan. It was very efficient; I was in and out. Wonderful service!"

Hospital

"My surgery is brilliant. They always get back to me when I have a concern about my baby."

GP surgery

"Everything usually goes well. I'm restricted to bed full time at home and have had very few problems. When I have hospital appointments, I have no difficulty getting the transport I need. My GP always does home visits for me, and I very rarely have difficulty getting an appointment."

GP surgery

Provider response:

"Thank you so much for forwarding the wonderful feedback we received from the patient. It is heartwarming to hear such positive comments about the care we provide. It is a pity that we cannot extend our gratitude to the patient directly due to the feedback being anonymous. Nevertheless, knowing that our efforts are appreciated is truly encouraging for our team."

# Feedback



## Choice and being listened to

Several people felt like medical professionals had not taken their wishes into account with regards to diagnosis and treatment.

"It feels like GPs don't listen to you or take your wishes into account, which doesn't fill me with confidence. When I found out I had fibroids, I wanted them removed but the doctor didn't want to do that. They told me they would shrink as I got older, so there was no need. They also said if they removed them, there was a risk that Black woman my age "may not wake up from surgery", which I found really upsetting."

GP surgery

"I've got a pillar cyst on my head, and my GP has told me they won't remove it. Someone I know has had a similar cyst removed and I'm confused as to why he's been referred and I haven't – it's not consistent. I have asked my GP four or five times over the years, and they have always said no."

GP surgery

"When my HRT stopped working, my GP jumped to prescribe antidepressants rather than increase my dose. I had to go private and fund my HRT because the NHS is so rigid about their guidelines, [even though] 20% of women on HRT are poor absorbers and need higher than licensed doses to feel the benefits."

GP surgery

"My niece has debilitating periods, likely due to endometriosis. However, from what she told us, the doctor only focused on prescribing her the pill or the coil, without looking into the cause of the pain."

GP surgery

"I'm 93 years old. I've been waiting for years to have a spinal issue investigated by my GP. I feel like they're not taking me seriously and it's probably to do with age. I've had many telephone conversations, but they come to nothing. Every time I have an appointment, they tell me, "We're not looking at your back today, we're just looking at your eyes." It's getting to the point where I don't want to see the doctor at all. I just want someone to look at my spine and tell me what the problem is."

GP surgery

Provider response:

"Thank you for your email yesterday regarding one of our registered patients and the concerns relayed to your team. We will contact the patient to discuss their ongoing care and options."

### **What can I do if I am in this situation?**

Your diagnosis and treatment are clinical decisions made by healthcare professionals based on their knowledge, experience and expertise. If you are unhappy with their decision, it is worth meeting with your healthcare professional to discuss your condition, the impact it is having on your daily life, and the process behind their decision.

You also have the right to ask for a second opinion, for example asking to see a different GP at your practice or to be re-referred to a different hospital specialist.

[Find out more about getting a second opinion on our website.](#)



## Communication and administration

Many told us about communication issues regarding upcoming appointments, triage, and referrals, which caused them to feel confused and frustrated.

"After I injured my wrist, my GP sent me to A&E. A&E told me they couldn't treat me, as there was a five hour wait and it wasn't an emergency. They told me I should go to a special unit in a different hospital. I took the day off and went the next morning. The doctor confirmed I had a fracture, but she told me they couldn't treat me there and I had to go back to my GP!

I don't understand why A&E couldn't see me, then this unit confirmed I had a fracture, but then turned me away even though I am in a lot of pain and had to take time out of work! My GP even told me that I shouldn't have been turned away."

### Hospital

"After reporting a concerning mole to my GP, my GP accidentally made two referrals, leading me to have duplicate appointments in different hospitals. An administrator at the second hospital realized the error; she explained that the GP was at fault and made an appointment for me to get the mole removed.

Unfortunately, the appointment fell during the doctors' strike but as I had had no letter to cancel, I assumed it was going ahead. After forty-five minutes of waiting and asking reception for help, an administrator called and told me I would not be seen. I did wonder how long they would have left me waiting if I had not said anything. This all came across as very poorly managed."

### Hospital

"I needed an emergency prescription. I contacted NHS 111 online and received a text referral confirming I could collect it from a local pharmacy. I called prior to my visit, and a staff member told me there was no stock and advised me to "ring around and ask various pharmacies." When I explained the referral and that they should be obtaining my medication, he dismissed it and told me that "111 was totally incorrect."

I was forced to re-enter the NHS 111 system and eventually obtained my medication elsewhere."

### Pharmacy



"I had a cervical screening booked at my GP surgery. Two weeks before, I was told there may be an issue and was advised to write to the surgery to ask if I should still attend. Despite emailing well in advance, I received no response. As I had already taken the day off work, I decided to attend anyway.

During the appointment, I expressed to the nurse that both my time and the clinic's time had been wasted by the lack of communication and organisation. However, the nurse reassured me that we could proceed with the swab and samples anyway. I was later notified that both samples were rejected by the hospital, as "no sample was received", which I found alarming.

I reached out to the Practice Manager for clarification numerous times by phone, email, and in-person, but did not receive a response. It felt as though the practice was avoiding communication altogether."

#### GP surgery

#### Provider response:

"Thank you for your email. I'm sorry to hear she has felt frustrated by the lack of communication. I've copied in the onsite managers so they can look into this and respond directly to the patient."



We also heard from people that had not had any updates on their referrals.

"I have been suffering with sinus issues and face pain for many years. I finally saw the face pain clinic in 2024 and was referred to another hospital, but I have had no contact from them since April. I asked PALS and was told it was being followed up, but nobody has gotten back to me. While the time frame might not seem long, I have been suffering from these debilitating symptoms since 2022."

#### Hospital

"I have been waiting for a long time for a referral to trauma therapy for my PTSD, fears, anxiety, and depression."

#### GP surgery

#### Provider response:

"Thank you for your email. We have contacted him and he has received an update."

"I have been on a waiting list for a scan of my little toe for a long time, but I don't know how that's progressing. I wish I knew more about when I'll be seen."

Hospital

Provider response:

"Thank you for contacting the Patient Advice and Liaison Service. The patient can raise any concerns with the specialist nurses directly at this email address or by calling this helpline."

### **What can I do if I am in this situation?**

If you would like an update on a GP referral or appointment, ask your GP or the surgery's Practice Manager. For hospital appointments, you can reach out to their Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

[Find out more about raising a concern with health services](#)



## Digital services

Some people, especially adults over 70, expressed concern over GP services moving online.

“Care at my surgery is good, but I'm worried about them moving to online services. My surgery doesn't do it yet – you can still call at 8am for a telephone or in-person appointment. I'm lucky in that regard.”

### GP surgery

“I am a disabled pensioner with virtually no computer skills. I have to use a computer to make an appointment on a system that does not work. Once a receptionist took my phone and booked me an appointment, but even they struggle. My wife and I feel excluded from our GP and find accessing care nearly impossible.”

### GP surgery

#### **What can I do if I am in this situation?**

Your GP should offer ways to book an appointment beyond using the online system. However, there is support available for you to improve your digital skills.

Some GPs and charities like ClearCommunityWeb offer free digital skills drop-ins across Lambeth. They can help you with things like booking an appointment using the NHS app.

To find out more, you can ask your GP if they offer any support or reach out to us and we can signpost you to sessions in your local area.

# Patty's story: "They were extremely diligent in promoting help."

## Follow-on care after discharge from hospital

### What you said:

Patty, a woman in her 70s, recently had a knee operation at St Thomas Hospital. While in hospital, the experience was excellent; in her own words, "the service was great, and everyone was extremely helpful."

Patty was particularly impressed by the follow-on care provided after discharge. First, she was offered practical support with daily tasks. Although she did not need it, she felt reassured to know that help was available if she required it.

"On discharge, I was offered at-home support, including help with cooking, cleaning, etc. My son lives nearby so I declined, but I really appreciated the offer.

The hospital also followed up with two visits to check in and make sure Patty was supported.

"Once I was home, the hospital made sure I had enough help – they visited my home twice to check in on me.

They were extremely diligent in promoting help!"

# May's story: "I now rely on my own research for my family's care."

Being listened to by health professionals during and after pregnancy

## What you said:

May, a recent mum, told us about her experiences of not feeling listened to by her GP during and after her pregnancy.

May experienced postpartum depression for nearly a year. When she asked her GP for help, she felt dismissed, as they told her she just "needed to get used to being a new mum" without offering much support.

She felt similarly dismissed when she told her doctor she'd had abdominal pain since giving birth.

"I told my GP about the pain, and they said it was normal, as my body was just adjusting. I later mentioned it to another health professional in hospital – they were really concerned and told me I should flag it with my GP!"

She told us she "fully lost trust" in her GP following an incident when her concerns over her baby daughter's health were ignored, only to be confirmed later by another health professional.

"A few weeks after she was born, my daughter looked jaundiced, so I booked an emergency appointment, which was very easy to do. However, during the appointment, the GP told me I was just being paranoid and that she was okay.

A few hours later, I had a breastfeeding check and when the nurses saw her, they told me I had to take her to A&E immediately.

I was really disturbed by this and ever since, I take her straight to A&E if there's anything wrong with her."

May also described relying more on online information on her and her family's health, due to her lack of trust in her GP.

"Whenever I feel unwell, I just research for myself now as I don't feel confident in my GP."

Another issue raised by May and another recent mum concerned their midwife visits, which took place in the hospital rather than at home. Both experienced difficulties travelling to their appointments while recovering from childbirth.

“The midwife visit after birth was not a home visit, I had to go to the hospital. I had just had a C-section and couldn’t really walk, and we didn’t have a car, so it was really difficult to go.”

“We had to go into the hospital for our midwife visit as they were short staffed, which was hard to do straight after giving birth.”

May’s experiences of feeling dismissed echo some of our findings from [our 2024 report “Trust Mother’s Words.”](#)

# 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 the organisations in the community offering the support you need.

In July, August, and September, you asked us:

	<b>Can I register with a GP outside of my catchment area?</b>	Some surgeries accept patients outside of their catchment area. Use the <a href="#">Find a GP service</a> and look for practices that show the box: "Accepts out of area registrations."
	<b>Where can I access grief counselling?</b>	Organisations like <a href="#">Cruse</a> and <a href="#">South East London Mind</a> can signpost you to local grief support. Cruse also offers bereavement support through their helpline at 080 8808 1677.
	<b>My mother has Alzheimer's. Where can we go for support?</b>	<a href="#">AgeUK Lambeth</a> offer practical and wellbeing support to older residents and their families. <a href="#">Alzheimer's Society</a> can also inform you on support available.
	<b>I am a carer. What help is available for me?</b>	The Lambeth <a href="#">CarersHub</a> offers practical and emotional support for young and adult carers.

# Helping Anna understand how home delivery of medication works in Lambeth

## Understanding free delivery of medication In Lambeth

### What you said:

Anna has severe rheumatoid arthritis, causing her to rely on a walking stick and at times use a wheelchair. Due to her reduced mobility, she wanted her pharmacy to deliver medication directly to her home.

However, Anna's pharmacy told her that they were only able to provide free home delivery to those registered as housebound, due to funding constraints.

"We truly appreciate the challenges you face and understand why this service would make such a difference for you. Unfortunately, we have had to limit our free delivery service to patients who are formally registered as housebound. This has been a very difficult decision, but it allows us to keep the service sustainable and available to the most vulnerable patients."

Following this decision, Anna chose to switch pharmacies. She was able to find one that was further away but offered her free home delivery. However, she felt that she had been treated unfairly and did not understand why different pharmacies had different eligibility criteria.

"I felt discriminated against, and I believe that people with reduced mobility, such as myself, should not be treated in this way."

### What we did:

To provide more context on how pharmacies in Lambeth provide home delivery, we reached out to a local Pharmacy lead for more information. They told us that Community Pharmacies are not formally funded to provide home delivery services. When they do provide this, it is usually as a private service, and they may set their own eligibility criteria and/or costs.



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“A community pharmacy may consider the following factors when providing a delivery service: the pharmacy business model/ finances, staffing levels, the number of patients requiring home delivery, availability of a staff member who can drive, DBS checks for the driver/delivery person, location of patient, etc. Other community pharmacies may provide a delivery service with broader access. I would suggest phoning [local] pharmacies to check if they would support home deliveries.”

We shared the information with Anna, who replied:

“Thank you so much for your interest, time, and support with this situation. I’ll keep the information about the pharmacies in mind.”

# Contact us

You can tell us your experience or feedback by:

- **Online form:** [www.healthwatchlambeth.org.uk/share-your-views](http://www.healthwatchlambeth.org.uk/share-your-views)
- **Email:** [info@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:eulalia.gonzalez@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk).



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