

Services

Feedback Report:

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

October to December 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 October to December 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 for your email and information, I greatly appreciate it.”

Table of contents

About us	2
How we use your feedback	2
Table of contents	3
Who we heard from	4
What Lambeth people are saying	4
Top issues	4
Compliments	5
Feedback	6
Booking GP appointments	6
Being listened to	8
Communication with services	9
Waiting for care	10
Martha and Fatima's story: "Once you get a hold of them, they're good."	11
Helping Alec raise his concerns	12
Just Ask Us	14
Helping Peter find a GP	14
Contact us	16



Photo taken at the INSPIRE Black Communities Health and Wellbeing event, October 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 October to December, we spoke to 332 people about their experiences of health and care services in Lambeth. We spoke to people from diverse groups, including people of Black Caribbean and Black African heritage, people from the LGBTQ+ community, young people (under 25), older residents (over 65), carers, and people experiencing frailty or long-term conditions.

What Lambeth people are saying

Top issues

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

The most common feedback concerned:



Booking GP appointments by telephone or online



Communicating with and being listened to by GPs and hospital consultants



Waiting for treatment in hospital



Compliments

People shared positive experiences of high-quality care at the GP surgery and in the hospital.

"My GP surgery is excellent. They always provide the care I need."

GP surgery

"I had a hand operation. It went great; the specialist really took care of everything."

Hospital

"I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis – staff were very caring."

Hospital

Many praised services for providing clear treatment explanations and advice.

"The face-to-face consultation was good as they listened well and actively about my situation and summarised their intended actions clearly and well. It's good to have good, caring doctors in this surgery. Thank you for your service."

GP surgery

"I have a regular asthma review at my GP. I was given a preventor/controller inhaler. The people in my surgery are very kind and good at explaining the condition to me. I was referred to a vascular clinic for thrombosis."

GP surgery

"Fantastic drop in and appointment support from the breastfeeding team in Lambeth and the postnatal and neonatal ward in hospital. Supportive, kind and great advice. The postnatal breastfeeding support and the breastfeeding workshop were particularly good."

Hospital – breastfeeding and postnatal support

"I stayed 5 days in hospital post C-section and attended two breastfeeding workshops. Super helpful, got me off to a great start. Midwives provided helpful ad-hoc support. I subsequently went to a breastfeeding group that was also fantastic."

Hospital – breastfeeding and postnatal support

Feedback



Booking GP appointments

Many people told us about booking GP appointments. While some praised their GPs for being easy to access, others struggled to reach them online and by telephone.

"It is very easy to book appointments with my GP, with short wait times."

GP surgery

"It's really difficult to get a GP appointment. I've just moved to the UK from Ireland and it's not like that back home. If I don't call at 7am, all the appointments are booked up, or I have to go online and fill out a form to then see if I will be given an appointment or not."

GP surgery

"At my surgery, it is impossible to make an appointment on a day that works for the patient. Requests for appointment have to be made through an app that is tedious and does not let you select times you are able to attend an appointment. The practice then sends you a text message giving you one available time for an appointment and no way of letting them know if you are unable to make it except through requesting another appointment at unspecified times through their app."

GP surgery

"I haven't seen my own doctor for two years. It's so difficult to get an appointment. Once I was due for an online appointment that did not happen. I waited and waited but did not hear anything. It was really stressful.

It's sad, by the time I get to the doctor, I forget what I had in the first place. I hope that things get better – it's been like this since the pandemic. I want things to go back to normal, but maybe there is no normal anymore."

GP surgery

Provider response:

"Thank you for sharing this feedback with us. We are genuinely sorry to hear how stressful the patient found their experience, particularly difficulty accessing appointments and the missed online consultation."

Continuity of care matters, and we try to accommodate requests to see a usual GP through face-to-face or pre-bookable appointments. When a patient's GP isn't available, they can be seen promptly by other GPs or clinical staff to avoid delays.

All online and eConsult requests are triaged and responded to the same day in line with the current NHS guidance. Without patient details, we cannot review this specific case, but if these are shared, we will investigate fully and take steps to prevent it happening again.

We take every comment seriously and reflect on it alongside the many improvements we are implementing to keep our services safe, timely, and in line with NHS requirements."

Some described challenges making appointments but praised the quality of care once they were seen.

"I can go to two different GPs depending on need. One of them is harder to get to for me, but it's good to have options. My daughter often has to phone for half an hour at 8am to get me an appointment. Even if she calls straightway, she'll get told she's 24th in line. I know the GPs are not at fault – it's just how systems work.

Once the doctor sees you, they provide good care and always follow-up very well."

GP surgery

"My GP isn't open 7 days a week – I wish they opened on weekends. Other than that, they are great. The doctors always listen and they follow-up on my concerns. I wouldn't fault them at all – they're trying their best."

GP surgery

Provider response:

"Thank you very much for sharing this positive feedback with us! We greatly appreciate hearing about our patients' experiences, and we are always striving to provide the best care possible. It's wonderful to know that our efforts are recognized and valued. While we understand the desire for weekend availability, we are pleased to hear that our doctors' attentiveness and follow-up are appreciated."



Being listened to

Some people told us they did not feel like their clinicians took their concerns seriously.

"I have something on my right hip that I would like someone to look at. I need a specialist; the pain is very strong and prevents me from walking. Both my GP and the hospital only recommend ibuprofen, and I don't see them looking into the reasons for this and possible solutions."

GP surgery and hospital

"I struggle communicating with professionals because of my hearing issues. I am trying to get a loop system from GSTT, but this has been difficult. They keep sending me to Specsavers audiology, but they have not been able to help me. I feel that they lack expertise in hearing technology."

Hospital services and audiology

"I don't think my GPs listen to me when I try to explain my symptoms. They don't take me seriously, even though I know what's going on inside myself and they don't.

I have been diagnosed with issues in the past, but my GP keeps sending me back to testing. When I bring up my medical history, they tell me, "That was a long time ago, we need to look at what's happening now." But my past issues are still affecting me; it feels like going back to square one when they ignore my previous diagnoses.

I also think they focus on how to manage my issues, rather than investigating the causes. For example, I have bowel issues. They told me I should just avoid certain foods, instead of referring to find out what the issues are and what's causing them."

GP surgery

What can I do if I am in this situation?

If you feel that your symptoms have not been taken seriously by your GP, Jess's rule may help you.

Jess's Rule is a primary care initiative that encourages GP teams to **reflect, review and rethink** if a patient presents three times with the same symptoms or escalating symptoms. ([NHS England](#))

[Find out more about Jess's rule and how it may apply to you](#)



Communication with services

People told us about poor communication from services when trying to raise concerns.

"I had four appointments for dermatology patch testing. They were very good and thorough. However, they didn't explain how I should remove the strip. I tried every possible means of communication – they didn't answer any phone calls or emails. I finally reached someone and stressed that they put me in contact with the dermatology team WITHOUT putting me on hold. I still couldn't speak to my consultant, but I got answers from the locum doctor.

They need to explain things more clearly and be easier to reach."

Hospital services – dermatology

"[After a loss], I have been trying to get answers from my consultant since April. I raised this with PALS but heard no updates despite chasing. I just want my questions to be answered to be able to move forward."

Hospital services – obstetrics and gynaecology

Provider response:

"I spoke with our PALS Lead about this. She responded to the original enquiry to the PALS Team but she felt the patient's issues were best dealt with as a formal complaint and so she would pass her enquiry on to the Complaints Team. We have shared her most recent email with them and they will be in touch to update her on progress. I am so sorry for the delay and the distress that this is causing her."

Some people felt that their wishes had not been respected by administrative staff.

"I asked to see female only staff. They tried to force me otherwise and mocked me when I stood up for myself. It was as if they could not hear me."

Hospital services

"I had put in a request to my GP about a member of staff not having access to my records. However, I can see that she had accessed my medical records. I am furious about this."

GP surgery



Waiting for care

We heard of long waits for hospital care across several departments.

"My friend was diagnosed with severe mini strokes in January 2025, but their follow up appointment wasn't scheduled till November 2025. They were not given advice on lifestyle changes or how to handle their condition in the interim.

Another friend was diagnosed with moderate to severe leaky heart valve, and their appointment was postponed until 2026.

I was diagnosed with a possible prolapsed womb in June 2025, and I'm still waiting for a scan date. I have been following the physio exercises."

Hospital services – cardiology and gynaecology

"I have a gastrointestinal issue which causes me daily pain. I was referred to the gastroenterology department in 2024, and as of October 2025, I have not been seen. It's not fair that I haven't been seen by a specialist in 20 months. I paid into the system, but I have no rights. I can't take the pain, and I'm so scared about the bleeding, but I don't have enough money to pay for private treatment."

Hospital services – gastroenterology

"I had to wait a long time for an appointment at the Headache Clinic. When I was finally seen, the clinician told me an occipital nerve block procedure would be arranged. I received an appointment confirmation for a routine follow up on 6 April 2027, which is 17 months away. I have received no appointment for the nerve block.

...I remain unable to work and am struggling to manage symptoms in the meantime. My mental health symptoms will continue without support, as they are linked to ongoing uncertainty and my untreated condition."

Hospital services – neurology

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.](#)

Martha and Fatima's story: "Once you get a hold of them, they're good."

Getting home adaptations from Adult Social Care

What you said:

Two older women, Martha and Fatima, told us about the adaptations to their homes they received from Adult Social Care. Both had faced long waits to get the adaptations they needed, and once the changes had been implemented, both women ended up needing further repairs.

Fatima told us:

"I have several health needs and live alone, so I tried to get adaptations. It took four years, but my bathroom finally got converted into a wet room. However, there were a few issues with how the works were done and I found it difficult to get the necessary repairs done."

Martha told us a similar account.

"I have access needs and have gotten adaptations from Adult Social Care. There have been some issues. For example, they turned the bathroom into a wet room, but as it was on top of the kitchen, this led to a leak and the ceiling caved in. They also installed a step on the entrance, but the wood has rotted, making it more unsafe for me than it was before."

Despite these issues, both women were happy with the service they had received from Adult Social Care. Fatima told us:

"Although I have had trouble getting in touch with them through the years, I am relatively happy with my care from Adult Social Care."

Martha felt similarly positive, particularly about the support she had received to meet her changing needs.

"My needs have evolved through the years, and I've needed new adaptations. They installed guard rails in my home, but now I am waiting for them to install a stair lift. Everything takes a long time, but once you get a hold of them, they're good."

Helping Alec raise his concerns

Triage at the GP Surgery

What you said:

Alec shared feedback about his GP surgery as he felt that their triage system was inadequate and made it difficult for his family to access care.

"My family and I have been with this GP surgery for over 7 years. They use a triage system to decide who the patient should see. The majority of times they triage to a pharmacist, physician associate (PA) or a nurse."

On one occasion, his wife was suffering from a respiratory tract illness for two weeks. After calling the GP, she was triaged to a high street pharmacist, who sent her back to the GP. She waited for two hours on the phone, only to be triaged to an urgent care centre, where she had to "wait to be seen for several hours with their 2-year-old daughter".

Alec also shared his own experience getting care for severe eczema.

"I suffer from eczema which for a long time has been managed by tertiary dermatology services. Recently I have had flare-ups of this condition, which in the past have been difficult to manage. Despite this I have twice been triaged to a PA who was very nice, but clearly out of her depth to manage my condition."

Alec expressed feelings of frustration, as he felt that his family "had not been seen within a reasonable timeframe by appropriately trained medical staff."

He also told us that he had reached out to the practice manager with his concerns but had not heard back.

What we did:

We shared Alec's feedback with his surgery, who immediately acknowledged his concerns and asked for his details so they could respond to him directly.

Provider response:

"We take all patient feedback seriously, particularly where concerns are raised about access, triage and clinical safety. We are sorry to hear about his and his family's experiences, which clearly caused frustration and inconvenience, and we appreciate you bringing these matters to our attention.

Our triage model is designed to ensure patients are directed to the most appropriate clinician in a timely way, in line with NHS guidance and local commissioning arrangements. Administrative staff do not make clinical decisions; they follow agreed protocols to support access and escalation to clinical teams. However, we recognise that individual experiences can fall short of expectations, and we are keen to review the specific concerns raised.

We continually review our workforce mix, triage pathways and escalation processes to ensure patient safety and appropriate clinical input, particularly for patients with complex or long-term conditions. Feedback such as this is helpful in informing that ongoing work.

I understand that he did contact the practice previously, and we apologise if he feels a response was delayed. We would welcome the opportunity to speak with him directly to better understand the circumstances and review whether our processes worked as intended in his case."

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 October, November and December, you asked us:

	I would like support raising my concerns with an NHS service.	NHS Complaints advocates can support you at all stages of the complaints process. In Lambeth, this is provided by VoiceAbility .
	I would like advice on a housing issue.	Citizens Advice offer self-help guides on many housing issues. You can also call their advice line at 0800 254 0298.

Helping Peter find a GP

Supporting a patient after being deregistered

What you said:

Elsa, an advocate, reached out on behalf of Peter, a man who had been deregistered from his GP due to a breakdown in communication.

"He has not been violent, but he does not trust the doctors and has been argumentative. He has a brain injury, and his behaviour is likely related to this."

As Peter had been removed from several other surgeries in Lambeth, Elsa was concerned that they would not be able to find a new GP for him.

"Many of the GP surgeries in Lambeth seem to be connected, so they may not accept him."

Peter also requires home visits, making it difficult for him to register out of borough.

What we did:

We reassured them that other surgeries would still be able to accept Peter, as practices must have reasonable grounds for rejecting a registration and these issues must be given in writing.

We also reached out to a Primary Care lead in the Integrated Care Board to ask about the support available to help Peter find a GP. They provided the following information, which we shared with Elsa and Peter.

Provider response:

"GP practices are able to remove a patient from their list where there has been an irretrievable breakdown in the doctor patient relationship. A sustained lack of trust or persistent argumentative behaviour could meet this threshold. Where a patient has a brain injury or other vulnerability, practices are expected to act proportionately and make reasonable adjustments, but this does not prevent removal where the relationship has broken down, and the correct notice process has been followed.

Importantly, removal from one or more practices does not prevent a patient from registering elsewhere. Practices must not refuse registration simply because a patient has been removed previously or is considered challenging. Each practice is an independent contractor and there is no shared system or mechanism that would allow practices to collectively block registration. Any refusal must be for valid reasons, such as boundary or capacity, and should be recorded.

The need for home visits does not in itself prevent registration, but it does mean the patient will need to register with a practice whose boundary covers their home address."

Our contacts in Primary Care also agreed to identify the most appropriate pathway to support Peter to register with a GP.

"If the patient is unable to register with a local practice despite support, the ICB does have the ability to formally allocate the patient to a GP practice to ensure they can access ongoing primary care."

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.

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Lambeth

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

healthwatchlambeth.org.uk
tel.: 020 7274 8522

instagram.com/HWLambeth
x.com/HWLambeth
facebook.com/HWLambeth