

What you told us

Lambeth residents' experiences of health and care services

January to March 2026

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 January to March 2026. 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 so much for your help, it's much appreciated!"

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Photo of CEO Folake Segun on the Health and Wellbeing Bus, March 2026.

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 January to March, we spoke to 273 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 Latin American communities, people that need support with their mental health, and people with disabilities and 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 pharmacy, mental health care, adult social care, and NHS 111.

The most common feedback concerned:



Being listened to by GPs and NHS 111



Treatment and choice in mental health care



Booking GP appointments, online or by telephone



Deregistration and finding a new GP



Compliments

"I have been registered for many years. My GP, other practitioners, and reception staff at the surgery are responsive, curious when needed, kind, and helpful."

GP services

"A&E was very good – in and out in two hours."

Hospital services – A&E

"I was referred to A&E on a Friday at around 18:30. Triage and registration staff were most helpful, reassuring and welcoming. Phlebotomist and echocardiogram staff were extremely friendly and helpful. The A&E doctor who I saw at around 22:00 was very informative and informal. Please give him a Very Big Thanks from me! In all, I was in attendance for four hours, which I expected for a Friday evening."

Hospital services – A&E

Provider response:

"Thank you very much for passing this on. I will share this compliment with the team in A&E. It's such a busy unit so it will mean a lot for them to receive this."

"My experience at the labour ward was good and I felt well looked after. However, the postnatal ward was busy and seemed understaffed."

Hospital services – Obstetrics

"I received cancer treatment and the staff were all really happy."

Hospital services – Oncology

"Excellent in all ways. I had a year of physiotherapy after breaking my shoulder. The first assessment appointment was immediately after I'd seen the orthopaedic consultant, there and then. No wait at all. After the bone healed, I started six weeks of hydrotherapy, six weeks of group therapy, several individual physiotherapy sessions, and eight weeks of physiotherapy-led sessions in the community. The whole experience was outstanding, involved, and thorough."

Hospital services – Physiotherapy

Feedback



Being listened to

We heard from people who felt their symptoms were dismissed by their GPs and NHS 111. Many told us they had to have multiple appointments or consult other specialist teams before being diagnosed or referred for follow-up.

“The GP trivialised my mental health condition and delayed referrals until it was diagnosed by a psychiatrist after persistently chasing them for a referral.”

GP services – mental health

“I want to complain about GPs that are not willing to listen to symptoms. I had to ask my physiotherapy team to contact the GP and tell them I need further reviews from rheumatology. That was the only way they referred me after I asked them to do so numerous times. Nurses at the GP even suspected I had the condition I've been diagnosed with but still didn't refer me to rheumatology.”

GP services – rheumatology

“The GP did not listen to my symptoms; he said my problems were because I am old and female. In my experience they treat men and women very differently and are prone to ignore and belittle the views of older women.

For one condition, the GPs referred me to A&E on four separate occasions. A&E carried out tests, confirmed abnormal heart patterns, and sent me back to the GP.

For another, the GP said I needed a hip replacement following an x-ray. They refused to send me for an MRI. I went private. The specialist listened carefully to my medical history and opinions and referred me for another X-ray and MRI. He confirmed my tendonitis and I self-referred to physiotherapy. I now have no problems with my hip.

The health events above required several GP consultations, and their actions provided no help to me at all.”

GP services

Provider response:

“Thank you for sharing patient feedback. I will discuss it in our team meeting.”

"I attended my GP with severe pain in my stomach and shoulder blade. Despite the seriousness of my symptoms, the doctor simply gave me a prescription for lactic acid and did not arrange any further tests or investigations. I have since had to undergo surgery to have my gallbladder removed. Had I not taken the initiative to look into my symptoms myself, the outcome could have been far more serious. I am shocked and disappointed by the lack of care I received. I felt that the GP was more interested in getting me out of the room quickly than taking my concerns seriously."

GP services

"The call handler asked me if I could stand unaided about 10 times. I told her I collapse to my knees when I stand, which means I can't stand unaided. I was in severe pain with a severe headache, but she kept saying the same question. Even when my wife took over the call and told her I was collapsing to my knees, she still asked the same question. The call ended without any further assessment."

NHS 111

Some expressed difficulties communicating with their GPs about their health needs.

"I am not at all articulate in expressing my health issues, though I do feel that I am fortunate to be mobile and free of any serious health issues. I feel that I need to meet one-on-one with my GP but am not encouraged or do not know how to achieve this. Because there is no urgency for now, time slips by without resolution."

GP services

"I don't have a regular GP anymore. I'm always seen by someone I'm not familiar with and I have to explain my problems again and again. The doctors don't seem to have knowledge about my conditions and don't explain things clearly to me."

GP services

Provider response:

"In terms of continuity, we encourage patients to see the same GP for ongoing problems wherever possible. However, we do have to balance this with availability. We are currently considering ways to improve follow-up arrangements, including GPs booking patients directly for continuity, so this is helpful feedback. Thank you for sharing this with us."

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](#)

Treatment and choice

Several people told us they felt their wishes had not been listened to regarding treatment decisions, especially for mental health services.

"My wishes were not listened to regarding what support would be best for me. I don't feel like multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings are making decisions that are in the best interest of the patient. I feel that there is discrimination against service users who have dual diagnosis (substance use and a mental disorder) – these patients are refused for secondary therapy although currently stable. Refused appointment to see the psychiatrist as it is not "necessary".

Mental health services

"Lambeth Secondary Care Psychological Services rejected a referral for Mentalization Based Therapy (MBT) from one of their psychologists because I had intensive MBT in 9 years ago. My GP can only refer me to short-term Community Mental Health Team (CMHT), which is useless. I am desperate, struggling but nowhere to turn for help despite trying to reach out. I'm also 62 and feel that ageism and lack of funding played a part in their decision. Why should having MBT almost a decade ago influence their decision, as it was so long ago? It's unfair and unjust."

Mental health services

"Nothing went well. Everything could have gone better. A wait of approximately 2 years for second line support, only to be offered joint group zoom calls for complex trauma."

Mental health services



Booking GP appointments

Some people struggled to book GP appointments online and by telephone.

“There are no appointments, ever. Receptionists don’t reply to my messages in the app or by email. I can’t even call them anymore to change an appointment. I also had a doctor put down the phone on me during a consult. It made me cry!”

GP services

“I want to book an appointment for my mother at the GP. Despite repeated attempts to book, we are only ever offered telephone appointments. This is not suitable. My mother is unable to answer phone calls, and when the surgery attempts to call me instead, I am at work and unable to answer. As a result, the appointment is effectively cancelled before it even happens. We require a face-to-face appointment so that she can be properly assessed and taken seriously.”

GP services

“On at least 2 occasions, the doctor has asked me to make appointments which the administration team have refused to do. This treatment is stressing me out.”

GP services

Update:

“I am pleased to report that I spoke with the Reception Supervisor who has dealt with the issue for me.”

“I now have to be computer literate to ask for an appointment online. Triage will look at it and make decisions on whether I should be seen by a doctor or not. I always write full descriptions of my problem and, if lucky, get sent a link to find an appointment date and time. Then, on the phone or if I see a doctor, I’m asked “What’s the problem?” However, the experience of care is usually good.”

GP services

Provider response:

“Thanks for sharing – we will take this onboard.”

“I have to wait two weeks to make a GP appointment. It's really worrying when you don't know what's wrong with you and you have to wait without any guidance. You used to be able to go to the GP and make an appointment on the day, but now you have to call. It feels like everything is online and disconnected. I also don't feel comfortable talking during online or phone appointments, especially in a busy home. You also can't see what the doctors are doing or how they know what's wrong with you during a virtual appointment.”

GP services

Provider response:

“Thank you for sharing this feedback with us, we do appreciate you taking the time to pass it on. At our practice, we have not moved to a total triage model. We offer a telephone advice line each morning from 8am to 10am, where patients can speak directly with a GP. If the GP feels a face-to-face consultation is needed, an appointment is arranged, often on the same day, subject to availability. We also have a duty doctor available each day for urgent issues.

We continue to offer predominantly face-to-face appointments, with telephone or virtual consultations available based on preference. We understand that remote consultations do not suit everyone, and we try to remain flexible in care.

While it is always disappointing to hear when a patient has had a negative experience, we recognise that we may not always meet every expectation. We do encourage patients to contact us directly where possible, as we are often able to resolve concerns or offer alternatives. I will ensure this feedback is shared with the wider team for reflection and learning.”



GP registration

Several people asked for guidance on GP registration, including how to find a new GP after being deregistered due to a breakdown in relationship.

“I have been registered with [X GP] for a few years, but because of their poor behaviour I left and tried to register with an old surgery. The old surgery said I cannot register with them so I re-registered with [X GP] again and they accepted me straight away. Now they are saying I am not registered with them, even though I was sent a text confirming my registration.”

GP services

"I was unregistered from my GP with little warning and no other care in place. I feel that I was unregistered because I tried to make a complaint about their treatment decisions."

GP services

Provider response:

"Thank you for your email sharing the feedback from one of previous patients. We are aware of the complaint and are dealing directly with the patient through written communication as she has requested."

"My mother is having a lot of problems with local GPs. Her prescription was stopped by her GP without explanation, so we decided to change surgery. She tried to re-register with an old practice, but they told her they would not accept her as a patient. She currently does not have a GP."

GP services

Provider response:

"Any information regarding the patient's medication has been explained to the patient and her carers and is recorded in her medical records by us and previous practices. Please contact her current practice for this information."

What can I do if I am in this situation?

If your GP chooses to remove you from their list, they should tell you in writing and with notice. Although GPs cannot deregister you because you made a complaint, the basis of the complaint may mean that your relationship with them has broken down.

If you are deregistered, you can find a new GP. New GPs will consider your application and will only reject you if they have reasonable grounds, e.g. if they are not accepting new patients or you live outside of their catchment area. Being deregistered in the past should not affect a GP's decision to accept you.

[Find out more about what to do if you are deregistered](#)

Grace and Andrew's story: "I could help him, if I could get to the facts."

Bringing a companion to a GP appointment

What you said:

Grace, a local volunteer, asked us for help raising a concern on behalf of one of her community members, Andrew.

"We are supporting someone who is in a high state of anxiety about his very complicated health condition, stemming from prostate cancer treatment, now with metastasis in further areas."

Andrew had frequent GP appointments for his conditions. However, he felt that the GP had started to refuse him appointments. He was also worried that his health records were not accurate.

"He tells me that his GP sometimes does not have relevant paperwork from the hospital treating him. He would like someone to sit down with him and his GP and go through his condition to get an overview.

He is on a lot of medication which I think blurs his ability to take things in without anxiety, and I could help him if I could get to the facts."

Grace wanted to know if she could join Andrew at a meeting with his GP to help him understand the situation better.

What we did:

We suggested that he raise his concerns informally with the Practice Manager. If an appointment is arranged to discuss his condition, she should be able to support him and take notes, with his written consent. We also explained how to escalate his concerns through the complaints process, if necessary. She replied:

"Thank you very much for your response. I will act on it and hopefully we will get some help."

You can [find out more about bringing a companion to an appointment and other choices at the GP](#) on our website.

Delia's story: "It feels like my life is in their hands."

Reporting prescription errors at a local pharmacy

What you said:

Delia, who has severe vision loss, noticed some errors with her Dosette box prepared by a local pharmacy. She saw that some days did not have any pills dispensed, while others had incorrect medication.

She used to be a pharmacy assistant and nurse and was really concerned about other people.

"I know what I should be taking, but I'm worried about others that may not be as alert. It feels like my life is in their hands."

What we did:

We shared Delia's feedback with a Pharmacy lead in our local Integrated Care Board, who advised the following:

"I am sorry a service user has experienced this situation. In the first instance they should report and discuss this with the Pharmacy. By reporting the incident, the Pharmacy head office team will have a record of the incident. They will be able to investigate why the incident occurred and identify if there have been any other reports or trends of errors within the same Pharmacy.

The service user should also discuss the incident with a healthcare professional at their general practice so they can assess if there have been any untoward effects from the errors and if any changes to their treatment are required.

The Healthcare professional can also report the incident using the NHS South East London ICB Quality Alerts reporting form. This will support the ICB Quality team in identifying any trends in alerts/errors. If they do notice anything, they will share the information with the NHS England – Pharmacy team (London) who have responsibility for managing the Community Pharmacy contracts on behalf of the London ICBs."

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 January, February, and March, you asked us:

	How do I find a new GP?	The NHS website Find a GP service lets you search for local GPs currently taking new patients.
	How do I register with a GP without a fixed address?	You can still register using a temporary address or the address of your surgery.
	Where can I leave my pet while I'm in hospital?	Cinnamon Trust can help you find fostering for your pet during a hospital stay.
	Where can I find a Breast Cancer peer support group?	You can use the Cancer Care Map to find local and national cancer support services. You can also get guidance from Breast Cancer Now and Macmillan .
	Where can I get support as a carer?	Carers' Hub offers practical and emotional support to all Lambeth carers.

Edna's story: "I've really tried every way to get help"

Connecting Edna to Kidney Care support

What you said:

Edna had been conducting her own dialysis at home for 12 years. As she has gotten older, she now struggles to safely conduct her own dialysis, especially the preparation (carrying heavy water bags and hooking them up).

"Physically dialysing has affected me in terms of my mobility and my strength, and I am also quite a small person. I'm having a real struggle with the pain levels in my body. I am looking for someone to come and help me."

Edna wanted someone to come in and help her with the dialysis preparation. She tried to get support from Adult Social Care several times, but as she is otherwise able to care for herself, they told her she was not eligible. Private options would not be sustainable for her, as she needs support so frequently. She also tried AgeUK, but they told her they could not support with that.

"I don't have any relatives or anyone around to help me. I've really tried every way to get help."

What we did:

As Edna lived in Westminster, we connected her with Healthwatch Westminster for support. We also reached out to the National Kidney Foundation and Kidney Care UK for further guidance. Kidney Care UK then connected her to their Patient Support and Advocacy Service to discuss what support may be available.

Anita thanked us for our proactive help:

"Thank you so much for looking for help and getting back to me."

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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