

The value of listening

Healthwatch Lambeth
Annual Report 2023–2024



healthwatch
Lambeth

Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Year in review	5
How we've made a difference this year	6
Your voice heard at a wider level	7
Listening to your experiences	8
Hearing from all communities	13
Advice and information	16
Volunteering	18
Finance and future priorities	20
Statutory statements	22



“Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities.”

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Chair



It's my pleasure to introduce the Healthwatch Lambeth Annual Report for 2023-2024. At Healthwatch Lambeth, we make sure decision-makers and NHS and social care leaders hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

The year has been very active, for instance the team has completed hard-hitting reports on important areas of concern such as maternity services and hospital discharge arrangements. We have engaged with people from different communities including Latin Americans, individuals living with mental health illnesses, and LGBTQI+ people, on various health and care services and topics. We've also worked differently with primary care colleagues and patients to help general practices improve the way they engage with local people.

We strongly believe that it benefits services and people themselves when services are transparent and positively encourage people to be involved in their own health and wellbeing and in how services are provided. Staff don't always find this easy, but Healthwatch Lambeth aims to help build confidence and capability.

We are incredibly grateful that people are willing to share their experiences of health and social care. Healthwatch Lambeth is committed to making sure what people say to us is used to improve services, especially for communities who are less heard. This means we continue to work with services and commissioners on recommendations we make and will come back to people using and, or in need of services to check that progress has been made.

I thank all the trustees for their wise contributions to the direction and governance of Healthwatch Lambeth, and, on behalf of the Board, I thank the team and all the volunteers for their hard work, expertise, and commitment to the people of Lambeth.

Dr. Sarah Corlett,
Chair of Healthwatch Lambeth



About us

Healthwatch Lambeth is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure decision-makers and NHS and social care leaders hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our vision

For the people of Lambeth to have their health and wellbeing needs heard, understood and met.



Our values

The core values of Healthwatch Lambeth are accountability, inclusivity, respect, collaboration, credibility, transparency, equality, and excellence.

We strive to act according to these values in everything that we do.



Our mission

- To make people's voices count in decisions about health and social care in Lambeth.
- To ensure less-heard voices influence decisions about health and care services.
- To hold to the highest possible standards of practice in community participation and encourage others to do the same.
- To make sure people have the information they need to look after their own and others' wellbeing and get the right services at the right time.



Year in review

Reaching out:

1750 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

148 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as primary care access, mental health, and delays in hospital appointments.



Making a difference to care:

We published

3 reports

about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

17 outstanding volunteers and **6** board members who gave up

77 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.
In 2023 - 24 we received

£295,822.82

We currently employ

7 staff

who help us carry out our work.



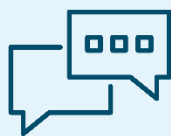
How we've made a difference this year



We uplifted voices from seldom-heard groups and helped shape NHS service provider plans to make maternity services more person-centred and equitable.



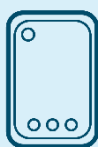
We highlighted the challenges that many vulnerable people face when navigating the hospital discharge process, resulting in local provider plans to co-design accessible information with patients.



Our community engagement training workshops inspired local primary care networks (PCNs) to better engage and involve their patients in shaping services.



We notified South East London ICS of the difficulties accessing ADHD medication from local pharmacies and shared up-to-date information with the public.



We collaborated with a local PCN to provide digital skills training, reducing digital exclusion and increasing patients' confidence to access online health services.



We addressed the concerns of residents from the Latin American and LGBTQI+ communities by raising awareness on how to access primary/social care support.



We helped widen the participation of people with poor mental health in shaping plans to improve mental health service delivery.



We helped patients access care, including supporting an individual with mobility issues to get a referral to adult social services, raising a concern with a service provider, and signposting to diabetes support.

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch in South East London to ensure the experiences of people in the area influence decisions made about services at South East London Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with the other five Healthwatch across South East London to:



Feed in people's experiences to identify, shape, and develop the six South East London Integrated Care System priorities, the principles that underpin them and the ICS Integrated Care Strategy. We also provided support for this programme's community engagement.

Provide representation on 16 ICS and ICB Boards, Committees, and Groups. Through this participation, we ensured an independent voice for the public, and highlighted the insight and intelligence gathered by South East London Healthwatch to decision-makers and health providers.



Develop South East London Healthwatch webpages, bringing together key Healthwatch reports in one place to facilitate health commissioners' access to people's views, experiences, stories, and recommended solutions.

Champion digital inclusion, which refers to a person's ability to use and access communications technology, across South East London programmes and services so that digital exclusion is mitigated as technology use becomes more widespread.





Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Creating a more person-centred equitable maternity service

We thank the women who shared their stories of using maternity care services in South East London. Since sharing your stories, NHS service providers are producing an equality and equity action plan, incorporating our key recommendations to make maternity services more person-centred, accessible, inclusive, and high quality.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic women, women living in deprived areas and women with learning disabilities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes when accessing maternity care services. Partnering with local voluntary and community organisations, we heard maternity care stories from 55 pregnant and newly birthed women from these groups.

What did women tell us about their maternity care?

Women spoke highly of health professionals who showed sensitivity, listened to them and were responsive to individual needs and circumstances.

- However, a lack of continuity and person-centred care and a focus on structural aspects of care left many women feeling anxious, alone and processed through the system.
- Poor communication meant that some women felt “funnelled” and/or excluded from decisions about their care.
- Many women – particularly those whose first language was not English – faced challenges in obtaining accessible information about maternity care hospital processes, pregnancy, birth and postnatal care.

What difference did this make?

Colleagues at South East London Local Maternity and Neonatal Services (SELLMNS) are using women’s stories and our recommendations to feed into their equality and equity plan. The new plan includes:

- Introducing pocket guides (aide memoirs) and online events to improve staff skills to deliver personalised care conversations so that women feel listened to and involved in their care.
- The provision of accessible parent education sessions addressing the information needs of women in six different languages, reflecting the diversity of the population across South East London, including Spanish, Portuguese, Somali, Arabic, Romanian, and French.
- Improving continuity of care for groups of women known to have poorer outcomes, including women from the groups we spoke to.



“This is part of a significant piece of work involving voluntary sector organisations and will provide a bank of feedback specific to SEL and will support our work to increase equity moving forward. The results of this work will feed into the LMNS equality and equity action plan.”

Jacqui Kempen, Head of Maternity Services for South East London

Reducing digital exclusion

After listening to patients' feedback about the challenges of using online services, we worked closely with Fiveways Primary Care Network (PCN) and Clear Community Web to provide Digital Skills workshops. As a result, older patients have improved their digital skills and are now more confident and better able to use the NHS app to access services.

As more and more services are going online, it is important to understand how this impacts patients and their experience of receiving care. We worked with Fiveways PCN to ensure patients are brought along on that journey and don't feel that digital services are being imposed on them as something they must adapt to without any support. Working closely with PCN staff members, we sought to understand how patients feel about online services by surveying over 60 patients in GP waiting rooms.

Our findings

We found that confidence was the greatest barrier for patients when it came to using digital or online options. Many patients did have phones and access to the internet and were comfortable using online services. However, many reported that they hadn't been confident to take the next step and manage their healthcare online.

What difference did this make?

After sharing this feedback, the PCN were keen to support their patients to improve their digital literacy. As a result we partnered with Clear Community Web to deliver digital skills workshops for patients from their PCN with a focus on introducing patients to the NHS app.

Over 40 patients attended, many of whom had not tried to download or use the NHS App before. The workshops increased awareness and understanding of the NHS App, and how patients can use it to have greater autonomy over their own health care by accessing their health records, booking appointments and arranging repeat prescriptions

The workshops also provided a great opportunity for practice staff to hear in more depth about the challenges people faced and talk with them about how they might overcome them. Based on the feedback received in the workshops, some of the practices within the PCN have now implemented drop-in sessions to help patients set up their NHS account which enables them to access the NHS App or to troubleshoot any problems they are having with online services.

As a result, people are better able and more confident to access services online.



"The session was really useful...being able to check my records, book appointment and anything that help me get to see a doctor sooner."

Reshaping the Hospital Discharge process

After we shared people's experiences of the hospital discharge process, NHS providers are developing accessible resources to help people better understand what to expect and to navigate the discharge process more easily.

Since the publication of our joint project on hospital discharge with Healthwatch Southwark in 2018, the **'Going Home' report**, both Guy's and St Thomas Trust (GSTT) and Kings College Hospitals (KCH) made several changes to the way hospital discharge is planned. To understand the impact of these changes on patient experiences, we spoke to 18 people who had recently left hospital.

What did people tell us?

Patients had mixed experiences regarding the co-ordination and communication they received before, during and after their discharge.

- The discharge process worked best for people who were familiar with hospital processes, able to communicate their needs, and/or had an unpaid carer to support them and communicate with staff on their behalf.
- Satisfaction with the discharge process was lower for people with social or communication needs, language barriers, and/or additional complex vulnerabilities like disabilities and chronic illnesses making it harder for them to navigate the process and/or access support.
- Blockages such as lack of coordination between teams, delays in prescribing medication and arranging patient transport also led to more negative experiences.
- Few people recalled being provided with written information about discharge, but those that did found it helpful.

What difference did this make?

Since sharing our follow-up patient feedback, GSTT and KCH are now:

- Co-designing with patients a new video and an Easy Read written resource (digital and in-paper) to explain the discharge process and outline the support services available during and post-discharge.
- Providing written resources in different languages representing the diversity of the South East London population.
- Implementing a discharge checklist with care home residents to ensure their transition to the care home is smoother and includes medications.

Ways we have made a difference in the community

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of problems and encourages them to take action.

Answering your questions about medications shortages

We have been hearing about significant problems across Lambeth from parents trying to access ADHD medication from pharmacies. Many parents are having to spend several days each month ringing all local pharmacies searching for medication in stock because of serious shortages.

After sharing this feedback with South East London ICS, they provided us with up-to-date information about the shortages which we shared with the public through our communication channels, raising awareness about the reasons for shortages and ways to get support.



Improving community engagement within primary care services

As part of our programme of work to support services to better engage with their patients and involve them in shaping services, we ran community engagement workshops with different local primary care networks (PCNs). During the workshops, each PCN developed plans for a future piece of community engagement around a key topic, from managing chronic pain and diabetes to improving cancer screening rates.

Some PCNs have already taken action on these plans including running an event with a focus on raising cancer screening awareness, whilst others have expressed interest in obtaining funding for a role that would incorporate patient engagement work.

We are waiting for information on potential funding but will use some of the ideas from the workshop if/when that transpires, and we have an identified lead for the work.





Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to gather feedback from less heard communities and ensure services are more accessible and meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Speaking to and supporting people from the Latin American community who experience challenges accessing primary care services
- Bringing together people experiencing poor mental health to help shape the design and delivery of mental health services
- Through our outreach programme, attending events targeting different groups of individuals including older people, those with poor mental health, carers, and Traveller communities.
- Hearing from and supporting people from the LGBTQI+ community to understand and navigate the adult social care system.

Supporting access to primary care for Latin American refugees and migrants

There is a well-established Latin American community in Lambeth, many of whom are refugees and migrants. We heard that many found it difficult to or were unsure about how to register with GP services. Language barriers were also a major obstacle.

In response to this feedback, we helped Spanish speakers overcome barriers to accessing GP and pharmacy services. Working closely with the Indo-American Refugee and Migrant Organisation, we held information sessions on how to access primary care services and introduced patients to 'Safe Surgeries' – practices in the borough who are committed to tackling the access barriers faced by many migrants by adopting inclusive registration policies.

Latin American refugees and migrants are now better informed about how to register with a GP, feel more confident to do so and are aware of their rights to NHS care.

Widening participation of people with poor mental health

We worked with external partners and the Lambeth Living Well Collaborative to bring together people with experience of mental illness including those from seldom-asked communities, their carers, and community organisations. We heard their views on accessing mental health services and the support needed to stay well and live full lives.

Feedback from people attending was shared with the Lambeth Living Well Network Alliance, a group of service users and carers and commissioners and voluntary and statutory providers of mental health and social care services. The information is contributing to their plans to refresh their purpose, improve their influence and widen participation of people in improving mental health and services in the borough.

Empowering the LGBTQI+ community to access adult social care

Talking to Lambeth residents, we found widespread confusion about what adult social care is, who provides services, their rights and who they should turn to for help. After we published some information and guidance on social care, we were invited by a local charity working with older people who identify as LGBTQI+ to provide information about accessing these services to their members.

We facilitated a workshop which gave information about the Adult Social Care system and allowed time for questions from the group. Many of the participants were navigating the Social Care system for the first time and the workshop allowed the opportunity for conversations in a familiar and safe environment. Older people identifying as LGBTQI+ are now better informed about social care and feel more confident to navigate the system.



"It seems many of my peers are in the same position and have only learned how the system works when in need of help, so I think it was a really good workshop. It's not just about empowering people—it's also about changing the care system."



Advice and information

For residents feeling lost and unsure of where to turn, Healthwatch Lambeth is there to help. In times of worry or stress, we provide confidential support and free information to help residents understand their options and get the help they need.

This year we have:

- Helped people get the health and social care they need.
- Helped people navigate the NHS complaints service.
- Linked people with local advocacy and mental health support.
- Directed people to local health and wellbeing services and community initiatives.

All names in the following case studies have been changed to protect anonymity.

Going the extra mile by helping people access social services

With our support, Glina was able to get a referral to social services for her mobility issues.

Glina needed adaptations to her bathroom, as she could not use the bath due to mobility issues. When she asked her GP to refer her to social services, she was told they could not do this.

With Glina's consent, we first contacted adult social services who said that the GP was best placed to make a referral. We then contacted Glina's GP practice who admitted that they had made an error. They booked a telephone consultation with Glina to discuss her needs and made the referral.

Raising people's concerns with the right people

We helped Winnie raise her concerns and get a response from service providers.

Winnie was extremely concerned about unsanitary conditions in a local mental health unit where her family member was an inpatient. She had contacted the hospital about her concerns but had little response.

We shared Winnie's concern with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, who spoke with the ward manager. As a result, her family member was moved to a B&B with clean facilities where they could continue psychological treatment. We also supported Winnie in raising an official complaint with the hospital, who are subsequently carrying out an investigation into the matter.



"Your call has triggered action. My family member is being moved to a B&B and they will be treated from there. Thank you!"

Signposting to diabetes support in Lambeth

We connected Kishore with the services he needed to improve his health and wellbeing.

Kishore contacted us looking for information about diabetes programmes tailored to the South Asian community. He wanted to know why a specific national diabetes programme was not available in Lambeth, and how he could access it.

We signposted Kishore to several programmes that provide diabetes support. We also contacted the national diabetes programme Kishore was interested in and identified how he could access it.



"Thank you, you are the first person who's listened and taken this seriously. It's infuriating when your back's up against a wall and you don't know what your options are to make healthy choices."



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say at community events in the community.
- Promoted Healthwatch services at large public events.
- Created content for our website, social media, volunteer newsletter, and flyers.
- Helped with data entry and administrative organisation.
- Mailed out paper copies of our newsletter to increase accessibility.



I started volunteering at Healthwatch as a way to use my time to do something practical to support the lovely people of Lambeth. Since joining, I have met some really lovely people and been involved in lots of different projects.

These have included reviewing and editing a report on patient discharge, attending stakeholder groups on safeguarding, researching and mapping local community groups for Black and South Asian residents and completing enter and view training so I can support site visits. I work in NHS policy, so I really value the opportunity to connect with local people about their experiences of using healthcare services; being able to see the difference my time makes is so rewarding.

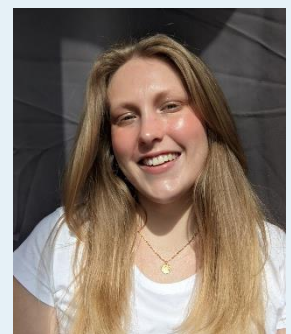


Ella, Research & Enter and View Volunteer



I joined Healthwatch Lambeth as a volunteer in January 2023 to fulfil my placement for my employability module during my Health and Social Care course. I got to partake in their pop-up events in Kings Hospital and at Lambeth County Show, asking residents and patients about their experiences with Lambeth's health and social care services. I also helped with spreadsheet data entries about charitable organisations in the area to simplify future connections.

Throughout the year and half, I was also trained for Enter & View and I projected this knowledge when completing my undergraduate dissertation. I further got an idea of how charities work and I can hopefully apply this knowledge and experience into my future career in the sector. Many thanks for including me and for providing me with great opportunities so far during my volunteering journey.




Denisa, Outreach & Enter and View Volunteer

Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 healthwatchlambeth.org.uk/volunteer

 020 7274 8522

 info@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk



Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£295,822.82	Expenditure on pay	£283,950.11
Lambeth Learning Disability Assembly	£33,600.18	Operational costs	£51,623.63
Additional income	£17,884.10	Support administration	£29,680.80
Total income	£347,307.10	Total expenditure	£365,254.54

Additional income is broken down by:

- £489.60 received from Healthwatch England for Healthwatch Lambeth website migration to Drupal 9.
- £2,400.00 received from Healthwatch England for work on a cervical screening project.
- £3,043.40 received in interest.

ICS funding

Healthwatch across South East London also receives funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Healthwatch Lambeth contribution to the Review of the Living Well Collaborative Aug–Nov 2023.	£8,951.00
Cost of HWL participation in and support for Lambeth DataNet	£3,000.00

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Engaging in research to understand health inequalities relating to specific communities in Lambeth including in relation to experiences of digital exclusion, mental health services experienced by Black men, screening services, and safeguarding.
2. Conducting Enter and View visits in a range of services across Health and Social care services including in GP surgeries, Extra care and care homes, and mental health services.
3. Conducting patient engagement with groups we have not previously extensively engaged with including homeless communities, refugee communities and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to understand their experiences of accessing health services.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Lambeth, Tripod, LB of Lambeth, PO Box 80771, London, SW2 9QQ.

Healthwatch Lambeth uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 6 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as refreshing our organisational strategy and developing our annual programme priorities.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and our social media channels.

Responses to recommendations

We had one provider who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to our local health and social care partnership board (Lambeth Together) where we have a place on the Executive Board and also in subcommittees including the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Performance Board, and local hospital patient engagement committees.

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in South East London Integrated Care System. For example, we participate in monthly meetings with the Director of Engagement for the ICS where we raise areas of concern or quality issues in collaboration with other Healthwatch in South East London ICS. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.


Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Lambeth is represented on the Lambeth Health and Wellbeing Board by Mairead Healy, Chief Executive. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings and contributing with patient perspectives on different areas of health and social care delivery.

Healthwatch Lambeth is represented on South East London Integrated Care Partnerships by Mairead Healy, Chief Executive and South East London Integrated Care Boards by Folake Segun, Director of South East London Healthwatch.

Healthwatch Lambeth
Tripod, LB of Lambeth, PO Box 80771
London, SW2 9QQ

 healthwatchlambeth.org.uk

 020 7274 8522

 info@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk

 facebook.com/HWLambeth

 x.com/HWLambeth

 instagram.com/HWLambeth

 linkedin.com/company/healthwatch-lambeth