

On equal terms Then and now

Healthwatch Ealing Annual Report 2020-21

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Message from YVHSC CEO, Tim Spilsbury



I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the fifth annual report for Healthwatch Ealing under Your Voice in Health and Social Care to reflect on what has been a hugely successful and ultimately challenging year. A year that has seen Health and Social Care services respond magnificently to extreme circumstances with the onset of COVID-19 and voluntary sector services work together to achieve the best possible outcome to support local efforts.

During this time, Healthwatch Ealing have continued their statutory responsibility to obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services, make those views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services, provide reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved and promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.

Healthwatch Ealing received 4630 patient experiences from which services across the borough were commended for their overall quality of treatment and care, staff professionalism, attitude and professional advice.

This year, working with our partners in health and social care, Healthwatch Ealing launched a survey to find out how the people of Ealing were coping during the COVID-19 pandemic. The response to this survey was extremely positive with over 460 Ealing residents telling us about their experiences during the pandemic. People demonstrated adaptability as a community and identified access to non-COVID related care, COVID-19 safety guidelines and their mental health as areas of concern for the local community.

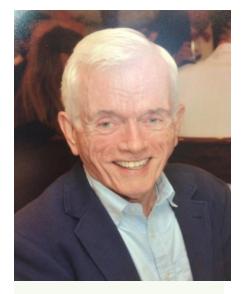
Despite the circumstances Healthwatch Ealing produced 14 reports on health and social care and made 78 recommendations. In addition to the COVID-19 impact study the service obtained the views of those of our community who are housebound and reviewed integrated service provision.

Volunteers contributed 950 hours of their time to support the service and as a result of this involvement and the staff team we have been able to provide advice and information to over a 1000 people.

As we look forward to recovery and the opportunity to meet and greet friends and family I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Healthwatch Ealing staff and volunteers, who have continued to work with dedication to ensure a responsive and vital service continues to support the local community.

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Message from our Chair



This financial year has been unlike any other. It began in April 2020 just as the seriousness of the Covid-19 pandemic was becoming apparent. It was to present the health and social care system with its greatest challenge. It also presented Healthwatch Ealing with an unprecedented challenge.

We were faced with continuing our work while changing our methods. We have been able to do so thanks to the flexibility of our staff, volunteers and the committee all of whom worked in new and imaginative ways to fulfil our aims and objectives.

Although we had to suspend our face to face activities, we were able to adapt our processes to continue producing our Patient Experience Reports which measure the satisfaction levels of local health and social care services. As always, we brought our findings to the attention of commissioners and providers with the aim of ensuring any shortcomings were dealt with and that the residents of Ealing receive the highest possible quality of service.

We do appear to be in a much better place as the new financial year begins, but the pandemic has not gone away. With health and social care constantly at the top of the news agenda, we will continue to monitor our essential services with a focus on the short and long term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to adapt for as long as necessary and we will continue to reflect the opinions of the people of Ealing to ensure our health and social care services are held to account where necessary and praised when deserved. We will continue to work with commissioners and providers, we will continue to consult with the people of Ealing, we will continue to represent the people of Ealing.



We are driven by the people of Ealing. Ealing residents deserve the very highest standards in health and social care and Healthwatch Ealing will continue to work tirelessly towards this end.

John

Peter Cleary
Healthwatch Ealing
Chair

Our Committee



Peter Cleary, Chair

Peter volunteered with Healthwatch Ealing and its predecessor since 2008 and was appointed Chair in January 2018. He supported Healthwatch Ealing as Chair until March 2021, when he retired from the Committee. We are hugely grateful for the work that Peter led on during his time with Healthwatch Ealing.



Satpal Chana

Satpal has long been involved in Healthwatch and is a former Vice Chair (2015-2018) and current Trustee for AGEUK Ealing, since 2013. She has worked for the NHS as a qualified health professional and a senior manager, both in the UK and abroad.



Alan Cook

Alan has been involved in Healthwatch Ealing and its predecessor for a number of years. He is a trained Enter & View Authorised Representative and has represented Healthwatch at a number of Council and NHS forums. Now retired, Alan worked in the NHS for 30 years.



Christina Tom-Johnson

Christina has been a committee member for Healthwatch Ealing since 2018. She brings a wealth of healthcare and community knowledge after spending 50 years working in the NHS before running the Welshore Community Group in Ealing since 2010, providing activities, befriending and support for isolated people.



Anita Tharpe

Anita is new to the Healthwatch Ealing committee, She is currently employed with the NHS Commission Support Unit as a Senior Project Manager and has over 10 years experience in the Healthcare sector. Amongst other roles, Anita is a Co-opted School Governor with a Special Needs School in Ealing.



John McNeill

John sadly passed away in September 2020. John was invovled in Healthwatch Ealing's work since 2014 and passionately fought for improvements in patient access in the borough. John was held in the highest regard by his colleagues and will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Ealing. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares can experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



"Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives."

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

4,630 people

this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

1,016 people

this year.

Responding to the pandemic



We directly engaged with and supported

1,143 people

during the COVID-19 pandemic this year and approximately **460 people** viewed our COVID-19 Information and Support webpage.

Making a difference to care



14 reports

were published by Healthwatch Ealing this year, outlining the improvements that people would like to see being made to the borough's health and social care services. In total, we made **78 recommendations** for improvement.

48 engagement events

were attended last year, most of which were virtual. We also continued to grow our Twitter following and increase the number of subscribers to our online newsletter.

Health and care that works for you



41 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work. In total, our volunteers, interns and work placement students contributed **950 hours** to Healthwatch Ealing, the equivalent to **119 working days**.

We employ 4 staff

The equivalent to 3 full time employees

We received

£140,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21.



Patient Experience: Then and now



A Digital Approach to Patient Experience

Being able to identify and represent people's feedback is imperative to the development of Health and Social Care in Ealing. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Ealing, we were able to successfully shift our Patient Experience Programme from face to face community outreach to a comprehensive digital model.

Prior to the pandemic, our Patient Experience Programme was carried out through daily visits to health and social care services, collecting feedback from over 400 people per month about their experiences of local services. At the start of the pandemic, we had to quickly adapt our service delivery model to one of direct telephone calls to Ealing residents and gathering online reviews.

However, it was not only the way in which we delivered this programme that we had to adapt. Our Patient Experience team also took on additional responsibilities, providing information & signposting to people in need; conducting follow up case work to ensure that people's requests for access to services and even basic provisions such as food from delivery services or foodbanks and medication from their pharmacy were being met; and regularly acting as a befriending service for people who were feeling socially isolated.

Our Patient Experience team welcomed these added responsibilities, going above and beyond to support our communities while embracing the new ways in which we heard from our residents.



A Digital Approach to Patient Experience

In addition to gathering feedback via direct telephone contact, our Patient Experience team orchestrated a number of innovative ways of hearing from patients and service users during the last year:

- Promoting our Patient Experience survey at our own public webinars and holding 'virtual stalls' at other community organisations digital events.
- Working with the local voluntary sector organisations, including foodbanks and older adult support groups, to distribute physical copies of our survey to those who did not have access to digital platforms.
- Improving our digital and social media presence to promote our survey via online channels
- Obtaining feedback from individuals who participated in our other research projects, including our COVID-19 Impact research.
- Collecting online feedback via our Patient Experience webpage form and from other sources of online reviews.



"In November, I spoke to an 85 year old woman who was living alone. It became clear from her feedback that whilst she was managing her physical conditions well, she had not spoken to anyone in a very long time. After speaking with her for some time, she told me that she really appreciated the company and someone to chat to." - Stuart, Patient Experience Officer, Healthwatch Ealing



Then and Now: Access to GP Services

Going back to January 2019, Healthwatch Ealing has been closely tracking how people are managing to access GP services. Before the pandemic, issues relating to GP service access began to appear more regularly in patient feedback with negative reviews increasing from 18% to 37% by March 2020. Patients were finding it increasingly difficult to book GP appointments, often confounded by lengthy waiting times once they did attend.

It was interesting to see that, during the pandemic, the 'digital first' approach to appointment booking alleviated these access issues to some extent and many individuals found online appointments and telephone consultations suitable in meeting their needs. However, others still found it difficult to book appointments and felt that a GP appointment system that utilised both virtual and face-to-face appointments would deliver the best level of care.

We have consistently presented these findings to Ealing and NW London Health Partners, and will continue to monitor GP access feedback and work with our partners as practices move out of lockdown. As we adapt and adjust to the changes that we have seen in patient needs over this period we must ensure that a suitable pathway of care is available to every Ealing resident.



To find out more > > >



Access to Ealing Hospital: Then and now



Thanks to people sharing their experiences of Ealing Hospital we have been able to help the London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) adapt to changes in need over the years to ensure that patients have access to clear information about, and a simple pathway to, accessing their treatment and care.

In 2019, our Patient Experience programme identified that **one in four people** found it difficult to access services at Ealing Hospital. In particular, some individuals mentioned that they struggled to book their hospital appointment due to a lack of availability and finding it difficult to get through to somebody on the phone. During this time, patients of Ealing Hospital were concerned with the length of time that they had to wait before being seen for their appointment.

As a result of this feedback from the public we advised Ealing Hospital and the LNWH Trust to:

- a. Explore how the Hospital could improve its appointment booking process
- b. Explore how they could further improve information and transparency about potential waiting times once people were at the Hospital for their appointment.

This work was welcomed by the Trust and has contributed to their concerted efforts to improve these aspects of service access.



Now: Accessing Ealing Hospital during the pandemic

During the pandemic, we were able to successfully utilise our digital approach to gathering feedback from patients and, subsequently, follow up on our recommendations for Ealing Hospital. Our two-year meta analysis review of patient feedback on access to Ealing Hospital highlighted clear improvements in the ability for people to get through to somebody on the phone and book an appointment as well as successfully carrying out the appointment via a digital consultation route.

The use of technology for digital appointments and monitoring individuals' health helped people to arrange and access their appointment from the comfort of their own home which was a sudden and vital need as a result of the spread of COVID-19.



"A text arrived from the doctor at my appointment time. I clicked on it, was able to use the video app in seconds, and there was my doctor on my phone! He issued me a prescription which was sent electronically to the chemist for me to collect the same day." - Ealing Resident

Unfortunately, despite the move to digital appointments, prolonged waiting times remained a persistent issue for some people. The collection of these experiences were presented to the LNWH Trust and other Ealing health partners as an ongoing trend that must be addressed to be able to support Ealing Hospital with the pressures that they may face as we move out of Lockdown.



"Very nice and compassionate staff at Ealing Hospital. As I attended during the pandemic, everything felt safe and in control. Staff made sure the PPE equipment did not impede communication." - Ealing Resident

Overall, our meta-analysis showed that Ealing Hospital has been largely successful in their adapted approach to care, providing patients with easier and in a great deal of cases improved access to their services.

As a result of people sharing their experiences, we were able to share these success and learnings with Ealing Hospital, the LNWH Trust and other Ealing health partners to demonstrate the ways in which we can continue to improve Hospital access for local residents.



Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch.



Q 020 3886 0830



info@healthwatchealing.org.uk



Responding to COVID-19

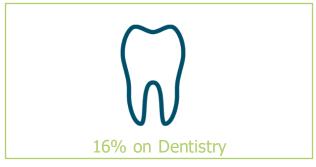
Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect has been shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible, during the pandemic.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date advice on the local and national COVID-19 guidance and response
- Signposting people to reliable information sources and community support
- Promoting the opening of vaccination centres in the borough of Ealing
- Being a part of the community volunteer response that supported the vaccination roll-out
- Helping people to access the health and social care services they need
- Providing recommendations to key health partners prompted by our COVID-19 Impact Survey which heard feedback from over 460 Ealing residents.
- Ran a series of virtual webinars and forums to provide people with a platform to voice concerns and have any queries answered by relevant Healthcare Professionals

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:









Information & Signposting



People told us about the difficulties they were facing in accessing clear and accurate information. Our role became focused on providing people with clear, consistent and concise advice and information. Our virtual public webinars and digital content provided information to over 1000 people and provided them with the opportunity to ask us questions about their care.

The key questions people were asking included:

- How can I find an NHS Dentist?
- Are the COVID-19 vaccinations safe?
- What do the latest government guidelines on COVID-19 safety mean for me?



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.



www.healthwatchealing.org.uk



020 3886 0830



Info@healthwatchealing.org.uk



Other areas of work

In addition to providing people with the information they need, Healthwatch Ealing conducts regular research into the operations of Health and Social Care services within the borough. This research provides us with the evidence we need to supply local partners with key recommendations and potential next steps to ensure services are deliverying treatment and care to the highest standard possible.

This year we published a total of 14 research papers including:

1. COVID-19 Impact Survey

From May to June, over 460 Ealing residents told us about their experiences with health and social care during the pandemic. People demonstrated adaptability as a community, however, many highlighted a lack of access to non-COVID related care, difficulty in keeping up to date with COVID-19 safety guidelines and a significant impact on their mental health as key areas for concern.

Healthwatch Ealing presented these findings to local health partners and as a result are now working collaboratively with the NWL CCG, Public Health, community organisations and residents to produce a solutions-based framework for alleviating health inequalities for communities that have been experiencing these disparities, long before the inception of the pandemic.

2. ESCAN Report

Healthwatch Ealing conducted a comprehensive report to evaluate the range of children's services that are provided at Carmelita House. We found that patients were very happy with the quality of treatment that their children received, with ample praise for the members of staff. We were also able to provide a series of recommendations to further improve services which were welcomed by the service provider, Ealing Community Partners. Plans are being finalised to revisit Carmelita House to follow-up on our recommendations in the summer of 2021.



4. Housebound Report

Phase one of our Housebound Report successfully captured the social care experiences and opinions of Ealing residents who cannot leave or need assistance leaving their home.

Phase two of this report will continue in the summer of 2021 in which we will be able to capture the impact that the pandemic has had on these individuals and provide care services with a set of recommendations for how they can address patient concerns.



3. Integration Index Project

During this year, we were also chosen to conduct a piece of research in partnership with Healthwatch England and the NHS exploring the development of the integrated healthcare system. Together with Healthwatch Hounslow, we conducted a series of interviews and discussion groups with women who had multiple long-term health conditions, to understand how health and social care can further integrate services to improve the quality of treatment that people receive. Healthwatch England will publish the collection of local Healthwatch reports in July, and we look forward to working with local health partners to act on our findings.





Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at:



www.healthwatchealing.org.uk



020 3886 0830



Info@healthwatchealing.org.uk



Enter & View visits

On behalf of The Care Quality Commissioning (CQC), Healthwatch Ealing carries out Enter & View visits to observe matters relating to health and social care services and provide recommendations on how they can improve.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, our Enter & View programme was put on hold to comply with the local council's and government guidelines. Nevertheless, in collaboration with Healthwatch Bromley, Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham and Healthwatch Waltham Forest, we were able to develop our Enter and View Virtual Visit Programme.

The services is now in a strong position to conduct either virtual or in-person Enter & View visits, accommodating any local or service specific circumstances which may result from the Covid-19 pandemic into the future.

In early 2021, we received promising feedback from the six providers of Bladder and Bowel and Diabetes Services who we visited in early 2020, prior to the pandemic. We therefore aim to follow up with these providers, and capture the changes and improvements made as a result of our recommendations.



Volunteers

We are proud to say that we continued to promote equality and diversity in our volunteer recruitment this year with a total of 41 volunteers helping us to find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

These volunteers came from a range of ethnic backgrounds, included individuals living with disabilities, informal carers and those who had been supported by the borough's mental health services. Our volunteers:

- · Helped people to have their say, carrying out Patient Experience surveys over the telephone and online.
- Utilised their proficiency in some of the borough's widely spoken languages including Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi to capture the experiences of those who are so often underserved.
- Provided up-to-date health and social care information on our website, e-newsletter and via our social media channels.
- Supported our research projects through distributing surveys, analysing data and writing up findings.
- Represented Healthwatch Ealing at online engagement events to introduce Ealing residents to our work.
- Took part in the local volunteering efforts to support the vaccination roll-out.
- Two Healthwatch Ealing volunteers used the skills that they developed with us to successfully obtain new jobs.







Young volunteers - Natalia

"Urban health and wellbeing was a unit I thoroughly enjoyed at University. Therefore, upon hearing about my local Healthwatch and what they do, I applied to be a volunteer. By collecting patients' experiences and analysing the results, it has enabled me to gain a greater understanding and insight into what values and indicators are best for a great health service. It has been a massively rewarding and interesting experience and I was able to use the skills I learnt during my time at Healthwatch to secure a new job!"

Board members - Satpal

"The Covid-19 pandemic has been an exceptionally difficult time for everyone, making normal ways of working impossible. In spite of this, Healthwatch Ealing continued to provide advice and information to residents of Ealing, finding new ways to engage with the public, gathering their views and experiences of health and social care services during the pandemic. The reports of these findings continued to be submitted and as the lockdown eases, staff and volunteers are keen to resume face to face meetings with the public."

Helping online - Raj

"Throughout the pandemic, volunteering with Healthwatch Ealing as a Patient Experience Volunteer has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me. I have been able to dedicate my time to listening to and supporting others which, in turn, has helped my own mental wellbeing. It has also provided me with the opportunity to be a part of a team and learning new skills that I will be able to use in any role or challenge that I take on in the future."



Volunteer with us

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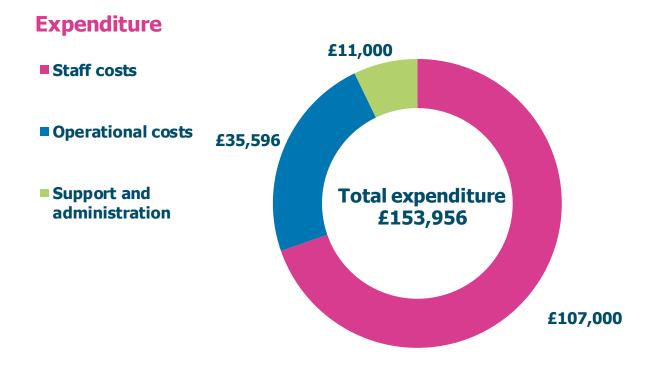
Info@healthwatchealing.org.uk

Finances

Healthwatch Ealing

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





Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Hearing from underserved BAME communities that have been significantly impacted by the pandemic to address health inequalities
- Visiting Mental Health hostels to understand service provision and management of risk
- Listening to individuals living with disabilities to explore how borough services can learn from residents experiences of the pandemic

Next steps

In line with guidelines and the recovery roadmap Healthwatch Ealing is taking a stepped approach to resuming face-to-face community engagement. This remains at the core of our plans moving forward to ensure that our priorities for 2021-22 are met. Additional plans include:

- Following up on the recommendations that we provided to services before and during the pandemic and supporting these service in their implementation.
- Using the learnings and findings from our COVID-19 Impact research as the foundation to create a co-produced framework for how we can address health inequalities in the borough.
- Further developing our own internal programmes through our newly established quality framework, thereby improving the influence and impact that we can have as an organisation working on behalf of residents.
- Working closely with GPs and our local Hospital to support access and strong patient communication.
- Working with our social care partners to review how the lives of people living with disabilities has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Working with local partners to pursue a strong footing for the voice and experience of Ealing residents within regional Clinical Commissioning arrangements.



"Tackling unfair health differences will need those in power to listen. To hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives, and then to act on what has been learned."

Chair of Healthwatch England, Sir Robert Francis QC



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Ealing, 45 St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London, W5 5RG

Company holding local Healthwatch Contract

Your Voice Health and Social Care, 45 St. Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RG

Healthwatch Ealing 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 committee consists of 6 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction on, and scrutiny of, our activities. Our committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as, working collaboratively with other, neighbouring Healthwatch to increase our ability to distribute vaccination information to underserved communities and use our COVID-19 Impact research to begin to explore how the community sector can begin to support individuals with their mental health and wellbeing.

We also ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. Our strong focus on improving service access is a direct result of the experiences we hear from people in our webinars and through our patient experience work and our research and recruitment priorities for 2021/22 are based on our research findings from this year that have uncovered gaps in local knowledge.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by text, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, sending out physical copies of our surveys and service reviews, presenting at a range of meetings and taking an active role in local task groups designed to set up a framework for change as we move out of the pandemic.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website here: www.healthwatchealing.org.uk

2020-21 priorities

This year saw challenges like no other experienced before. Our plans for the Healthwatch Ealing service had to adapt and change substantially. During a shifting and challenging context we worked to reach out to residents across the borough and work with key commissioning and provider partners to support local efforts to control the pandemic and support the residents of Ealing in greatest need. Whilst we were able to make great progress in our Patient Experience Programme, track and monitor GP and Hospital Access throughout the course of the pandemic, and carry out a large scale Covid-19 survey, other areas of our work, such as the Enter & View programme, went on standby. For the research that we did produce, we recognise that service providers were solely focused on adapting to new ways of working and ensuring that the immediate needs of their patients were met. We therefore hope to engage with these services providers in the coming year to understand the impact of our reports that were published during the pandemic and continue our work with local health partners to explore how our recommendations can provide further impact.

Responses to recommendations and requests

During this year we received welcome responses to our recommendations from Ealing Community Partners, relating to our research at Carmelita House and our review of the NHS Falls Programme. We look forward to working with the service provider in 2021/22 to conduct our follow-ups. For our other research pieces during this time, we recognise the challenges services faced during the course of the year and look forward to engaging further in 2021/22 to ensure the learning and patient experience captured within our work can elicit positive service changes.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Ealing is represented on the Ealing Health and Wellbeing Board by Matthew Van Mol-Jones, Healthwatch Ealing Operations Manager. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by presenting our work, contributing to discussions around changes and adaptations through patient voice representation, encouraging the collaboration of future work (particular with seldom heard groups) and further developed relationships with key partners to ensure that Healthwatch Ealing's position - and therefore the experiences of residents - remain a priority in the discussions and decision making processes.

healthwetch

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