



Our First Year

A new Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham

Annual Report 2020-2021

Contents

Statement from YVHSC	3
Message from our Committee	4
About us	6
Highlights from our year	7
Patient Experience during COVID-19	8
Access to services during COVID-19	10
Responding to COVID-19	12
COVID-19 Vaccines – attitudes and experiences	14
Volunteers	16
Finances	18
Next steps & thank you	19
Statutory Statements	20

Statement from YVHSC CEO, Tim Spilsbury



I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the inaugural annual report for Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham 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.

Healthwatch H&F 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 H&F received 4011 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 Healthwatch H&F pioneered our approach to engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic which became standard practice across all of our Healthwatch service provision. Staff and volunteers continued to directly contact residents of H&F to understand the community's response to each lockdown. Through this process we were able to identify not just people's experiences of a lockdown, but also additional needs that required signposting and coordination. Staff and volunteers were able to liaise with local community organisations to support individual needs, especially around basic needs such as food and medication delivery and were able to set up referral pathways to ensure the community received support from local community resources.

Throughout the year Healthwatch H&F co-produced webinars that were hosted by experts in health and social care and provided information and advice that was easily accessible on a series of key topics, such as mental health, isolation and accessing services.

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 Hammersmith & Fulham staff and volunteers, who have continued to work with dedication to ensure a responsive and vital service continues to support the local community.



Message from our Committee

At the start of last financial year, in April 2020, we were all coming to grips with the Covid-19 pandemic. This presented all sorts of challenges and significant changes for commissioners and providers of health and social care for Hammersmith and Fulham residents. It was the job of Healthwatch to find out how these changes affected Hammersmith and Fulham residents during the pandemic and to share these findings with local commissioners and providers.

We had to make a rapid transition from relying on face to face interviews in different locations to virtual or telephone interviews for our Patient Experience Reports. Our staff and volunteers also shared important Covid-19 related information to residents through signposting, regular newsletters and webinars.

At the same time we were concerned that the 'digital first' approach to healthcare did not support residents unable to access or use digital technology or to share their experiences of health and social care with Healthwatch. We used different ways of reaching out to these residents.

We were able to do this thanks to the flexibility of our staff, volunteers and committee members, all of whom worked in new and imaginative ways of supporting residents and sharing their experiences of healthcare during the pandemic.

The top areas of concern raised by Hammersmith and Fulham residents were access to GP services, dentistry, hospital care and information about the vaccine programme.

Next year we are determined to meet all the challenges that will undoubtedly arise. We will continue to monitor local health and social care services with a focus on health inequality, reaching out to more residents and a stepped return to in-person interviews and meetings in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Our Committee

The Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham Committee is made up of local residents who support and guide the service on a voluntary basis.

When we started the service in April 2020 we welcomed a number of people to join a 'Shadow Committee', many of whom who had been involved with the previous provider of the service. During the course of 2020-21 the Shadow Committee transformed into our fully functioning committee, and welcomed some new members.

Bethany Carty

Maria Connolly

Elaine Dunbar

Peter Hamm (res. Nov 2020)

John Marshall

Paul Schrijnen (res. Aug 2020)

Nadia Taylor

Jane Wilmot



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in joining the committee, please get in touch at Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham.



www.healthwatchhf.co.uk



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About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Hammersmith & Fulham. 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.



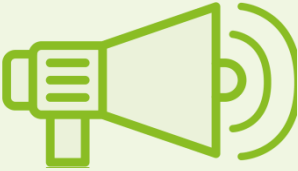
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the 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

4066 people

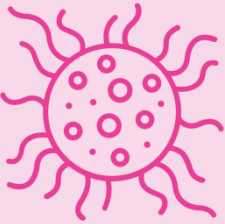
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to over

350 people

this year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

1,053 people

during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

Making a difference to care



We published and presented on

7 reports

to borough health partners and communities about the improvements people would like to see being made to health and social care services.

Health and care that works for you



32 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

We employ 4 staff

The equivalent of just over 3 full time staff

We received

£122,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21.



Patient Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Being able to identify and represent people's feedback is imperative to the development of Health and Social Care. The tremendous efforts of staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham enabled us to successfully shift our Patient Experience Programme from our standard in-person community outreach to a comprehensive virtual and phone-based model during 2020.

In addition to our focus on obtaining 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 local Community and 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 including our 'Share your experiences' webpage
- Working with the GP Federation and borough GP surgeries to promote our survey by sending a survey link for patient distribution to each surgery and uploading our online survey form to all GP surgery websites.



Case Studies: Patient Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the start of the first Lockdown, it became clear that our Patient Experience programme was going to need to operate outside of our usual remit in order to support the residents of Hammersmith & Fulham.

Our Patient Experience staff and volunteers didn't just gather patients' experiences, but also acted as a befriending service and supported people through the provision of information, signposting and in some cases, going the extra mile to ensure individuals were able to access the treatment and care that they needed. These case studies capture how our adapted programme helped.

At the beginning of the first lockdown, during our direct telephone engagement, our Patient Experience Manager, Patricia called a woman who was unable to access her GP.



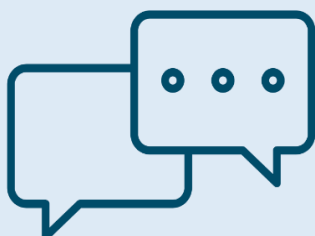
"The woman was 90 years old and of Caribbean ethnicity. When I spoke to her, she told me she was not well, that her stomach hurt and that she had not eaten in days due to the pain. She required support from her GP but she did not know the name or contact number for her surgery to organise an appointment." *Patricia, Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham Patient Experience Manager*

Patricia began to contact GP surgeries that were closest to the woman's home. Patricia was able to identify the right surgery and asked the receptionist to call the woman and help her to book an appointment. Patricia followed up this work, receiving confirmation from the GP surgery the next day that they had organised an appointment for the woman and, subsequently, called the woman a few days after, who had successfully received a prescription for her pain.

In another instance, one of Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham's volunteers was able to support a young lady who had just been discharged from Hospital who was struggling with her mental wellbeing. She informed our volunteer that she did not have anything to eat, had not received her prescribed medication and did not want to leave her house due to fear of COVID-19.

Our volunteer was able to liaise with a local community organisation that has supported residents throughout the lockdowns providing residents with basic provisions, such as food and medication. Our volunteer worked with this organisation to set up a food delivery from the local foodbank to this woman and ensure that her medication was scheduled to be delivered to her home by her pharmacist.

We are exceptionally proud of our staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to support those in need during this time of crisis.



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.



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Access to services during the COVID-19 Pandemic



GP Access During the Pandemic - Community Engagement Report

Thanks to local people sharing their experiences of GP access during the COVID-19 pandemic we were able to inform commissioners of how the move to digital and remote GP services has affected residents in Hammersmith & Fulham.

Our report found that **6 in 10 people** used a telephone to contact their GP during the pandemic while a third used digital methods such as e-consult, email, and GP apps.

Whilst most people were relatively confident in using technology to access GP services, their comfort level for receiving healthcare via this method was lower. The main concerns raised were the lack of physical examination and the difficulty of accurately describing symptoms and conditions.

Many people we heard from would be happy to continue with the use of digital services when accessing their GP in the future, however, many noted that this route of access needs further improvement in order to be efficient.

We were able to present these findings as a set of recommendations to Hammersmith & Fulham Clinical Commissioning Group, the Council and other borough health partners and encouraged a collaborative approach moving forward to ensure that our residents have equal access to primary care services.



Non-digital Access to services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

While conducting this work alongside our Patient Experience programme, we recognised that the 'digital first' approach to health and social care did not support many residents who were unable to access or use digital technology. This also meant that we may not hear from these people.

To make sure that we were gathering the thoughts and experiences of people who struggled with or were not able to access services digitally we:

- We worked with local Foodbanks to distribute **over 500 paper copies** of our Patient Experience Form, including a freepost envelope for residents to review any health and social care services and send it back to us, free of charge.
- Worked with **8 GP surgeries** throughout the pandemic to distribute paper copies to patients who were not able to complete our survey online.
- Partnered with **20 Pharmacies** in the borough to ensure that residents could pick up and post paper copies of our Patient Experience survey back to us.
- Sent **over 100 paper copies** of our Patient Experience survey to local community organisations who agreed to support our programme.
- Created an online shortened version of our Patient Experience survey that we also sent to community organisations as paper copies who agreed to help members of their community to complete it.



"The women I spoke to needed a lot of support. She felt like her GP was not helping her and the Hospital kept cancelling or postponing her appointments. When I spoke to her, I was able to help her to contact PALS and receive a foodbank delivery. The day she received the food, she called and thank me. She was so thankful for what I had done for her."

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham Volunteer



To find out more > > >

<https://healthwatchhf.co.uk/what-we-do/our-reports/>



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 collected was shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services were operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped over 5000 people by:

- Adapting our own ways of working to ensure that we continued to represent the people's voice and notify health and social care partners about the issues that people were facing
- Using our digital channels to provide up to date information on local and national guidelines and the response to COVID-19. Information was further channelled through daily phone calls to many residents.
- Directly providing people with the information that they needed to access services during this time
- Supporting community and voluntary sector organisations to increase their reach by sharing information about how they adapted their services to continue to serve their communities
- Supporting the local vaccination roll-out by regularly promoting new vaccination site information
- Co-hosting a series of webinars that kept residents informed of changes to services, vaccination information and provide reliable information to reduce vaccine hesitancy.

Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



40% on GP services



10% on Dentistry



30% on Hospital care



20% on Vaccines

Information & Signposting



Early in the pandemic, we saw an increase in the number of people who were unable to access primary care services such as Dentists and GPs, often being provided with inaccurate access information. Our role became much more focused on providing people with clear, consistent and concise advice and information articles on our website and at our webinars to help address people's concerns. The key questions people were asking included:

- How can I book an emergency appointment with a Dentist?
- I can't contact my GP online or over the phone, what shall I do?
- I need a face to face GP appointment. How can I book this with my GP surgery?



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.



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COVID-19 Vaccine, Attitudes and Experiences Report



Attitudes Toward and Experiences of the COVID-19 Vaccination

Over the course of four months, Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham - in partnership with Healthwatch Ealing and Hounslow - engaged with local residents and health and social care professionals through a series of webinars and telephone interviews to find out about attitudes toward, and experiences of, the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out.

Our webinars provided **over 120 people** with up to date safety advice and changes as well as information from health care professionals on how to access health and care during this time. We provided:

- Information about the vaccination rollout that addressed the public's queries and concerns
- Information about how to access a range of community support services including befriending, digital literacy support and mental health support services
- A platform for Public Health and NHS professionals to update the public on the most recent news of the vaccination roll-out
- All the information that was presented and the recorded webinars to the wider population – sending them out via our mailing list and making them available to residents on our website

Attitudes and Experiences – Our Findings

From the discussions we were able to have with residents at our webinars, we produced a report that outlined how people's attitudes toward the vaccination evolved during the first stages of the vaccination rollout.

Our report highlighted that **6 in 10 people** who attended our webinar in December 2020 said they **would take the COVID vaccine** when offered. As the vaccination program progressed, the findings from our webinar at the end of March 2021, found that this number had risen to **9 in 10**.



In February and March 2021, our volunteers conducted telephone interviews with people who had received their COVID vaccine. **9 in 10 reported that they had a positive experience** of receiving the vaccine, with many saying the vaccination was well organised and conducted by friendly staff and volunteers.

Next Steps

Throughout this time we used our findings to regularly inform local health partners as to how they could continue to develop their community outreach around the vaccination, reduce vaccine hesitancy and find new ways of engaging with those that their traditional forms of outreach were not reaching.

We look forward to continuing this work with the public and professionals in Hammersmith & Fulham to provide clear and practical solutions to people's health and social care issues. Our work will all be published on our website here: www.healthwatchhf.co.uk



Volunteers

At Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham we are supported by 35 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Came from a variety of backgrounds including a diverse range of ethnicities, young people looking to improve their skills, full and part-time workers giving back to the community in their free time, and those who had been supported by local community organisations and wanted to provide others with the opportunities that they had.
- Helped people to have their say, carrying out Patient Experience surveys over the telephone and online.
- Utilised their proficiency in the borough's widely spoken languages 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 Hammersmith & Fulham at online engagement events to introduce residents of the borough to our work.
- Helped with the local volunteering efforts that supported the vaccination roll-out.



Patient Experience Volunteer

"There are so many things that I enjoy about my role as a volunteer with Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham. Seeing the outcome of my work with people, being recognised by the wider Healthwatch team for my contributions, knowing the work I do is benefitting the community. It makes me feel good knowing that my work has made a difference during the pandemic."



Committee Member

"I have been on the Healthwatch Committee for three years now. Previously it involved attending meetings and community events to gather people's views, however, this has all changed in the last year. Instead of going to events to talk to gather people's views I've been able to put my not so digital-mind to use by assessing how easy it is to find information from the GP websites – helping to improve the service for those with less digital skills."



Research Volunteer

"I enjoy all the tasks at Healthwatch and I really enjoy contributing to research that is used by the general public and in the public health sector. I have represented Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham in a variety of meetings and have had the opportunity to work alongside various organisations. This has not only enriched the research projects but has also helped me to gain extensive experience and knowledge which will be useful for me in the future."



Volunteer with us

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Finances

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

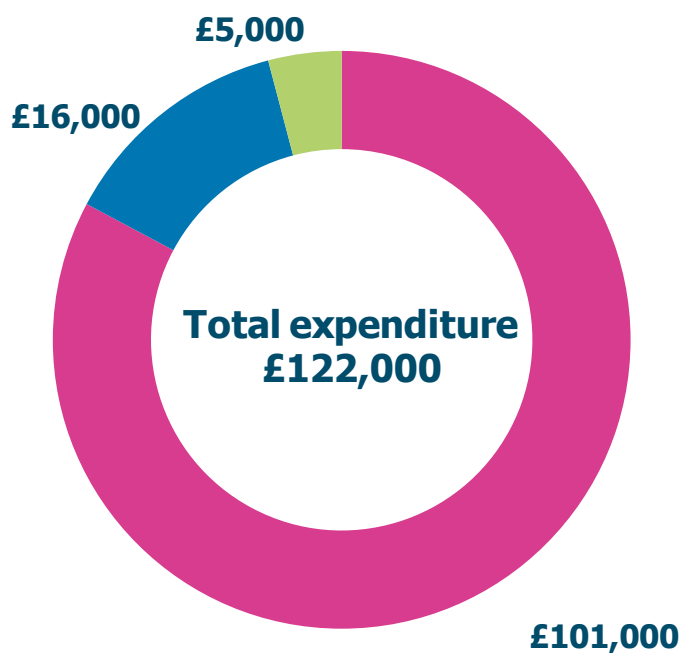
Income

- Funding received from local authority



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration



Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22

- 1. Working with partners to ensure that the positive developments in digital access to health and care are maintained, where helpful, alongside ensuring options and access for all remains the overriding priority.**
- 2. Reviewing Hospital Discharge Hub arrangements and supporting patients safely back to their homes/care setting**
- 3. Improving access to suicide and bereavement information, guidance and support for residents and their families**

Next steps

In line with guidelines and the recovery roadmap Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham 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 work plans include:

- Following up on the recommendations that we provided to services before and during the pandemic and supporting these services in their implementation.
- Implementing phase two of our GP Access report, working with our health partners to co-produce a charter of access standards that must be upheld to deliver the best possible access for residents.
- Hearing from children and young people to understand how their mental health has been affected by the pandemic and produce a set of recommendations for health and social care services and community sector organisations to implement, collaboratively.
- Understanding how carers have been impacted by COVID-19 and how support should be shaped.



“Thank you to all our staff, committee members and volunteers for stepping up during the pandemic to help us establish the new Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham service.

Tim Spilsbury, CEO of YVHSC, the provider of Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham, 141-143 Kings Street, London, W6 9JG

The contract holder for Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham is **Your Voice In Health and Social Care** 45 St Mary's Rd, London W5 5RG.

Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham 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 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide guidance, oversight and scrutiny to 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 committee met a total of 6 times.

We also ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities and the information we gain from our residents helps to shape our research projects and direct Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham priorities.

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 and distribution of paper copies and freepost envelopes.

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, hosting online patient experience zoom sessions; creating accounts on varying platforms such as Nextdoor, this proved useful in allowing us to collate a wider range of reviews of services from residents; engaging with residents via direct telephone engagement. The advantage of this was that we were able to reach those digitally disadvantaged and/or housebound alongside older demographics, with many of those we spoke to aged 80+.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to all. We publish it at www.healthwatchhf.co.uk

2020-21 priorities

This year saw challenges like no other experienced before. Our plans to implement a new Healthwatch service for Hammersmith & Fulham had to change before they had even begun. During a shifting and challenging context we worked to establish ourselves, 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 those residents of Hammersmith & Fulham in greatest need. Whilst we were able to make great headway in our Patient Experience Programme and our GP Access study, 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

All providers responded to our requests for information or recommendations during this year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

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 Hammersmith & Fulham is represented on the borough's Health and Wellbeing Board by Maisie McKenzie, Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham Operations Manager. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by presenting, contributing to discussion around changes through patient voice representation, encouraging the collaboration of future work plans (particularly with seldom heard groups) and further developed relationships with key partners to ensure that Healthwatch Hammersmith & Fulham's position - and therefore the experiences of residents - remains central in the discussions and decision-making processes.



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