



# Together

we're making health  
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

**healthwatch**  
Lewisham

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**"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."**

**Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director**

# Message from our Chair



**Our annual report draws on the feedback we have received. Much of it is positive. But many people continue to have significant concerns, especially about difficulties in contacting and accessing primary care.**

Increasingly, especially with limited financial resources, we need to work with other organisations to fulfil our statutory roles effectively. For example, we and other local Healthwatch groups working with Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust reported on the Trust's outpatient services. We are actively involved in the newly formed Lewisham Local Care Partnership (LCP) of statutory and voluntary sector organisations, which coordinates the commissioning of most local services; we will play our part to ensure the needs and views of local people are fully recognised.

Our last annual report explained how the Covid-19 pandemic had affected our work. I am pleased that we can return to face-to-face engagement with people and to visit local services to observe and report on the care provided. The pandemic has encouraged the NHS and social care to make greater use of phone and digital/internet-based contact. Our research has shown that whilst many people find digital contact convenient – at least for some aspects of care – a large percentage of people find it unsatisfactory or worse. And our research last year showed that a significant number of people cannot use digital, for a variety of reasons – no equipment, poverty, lack of confidence, language skills, etc. We have encouraged the LCP to address these issues, to avoid creating new forms of inequality for many service users.

We are grateful for the commitment of our small staff team and our volunteers in continuing to support Healthwatch. We hope that this report will encourage more local people to get involved.



**“I would like to be able to have face-to-face [appointment]. I can use Google translate on my phone to speak in person, I can't use this when I am on a phone.”**

**Lewisham resident**

# About us

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## Healthwatch Lewisham is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers 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

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.

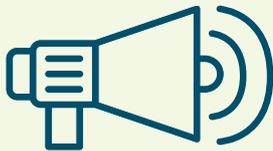


### Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with health and care providers, local Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Year in review

## Reaching out



**3593 people**

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

**159 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost of living crisis.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**6 reports**

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

Our most popular report was

**LGT Outpatients report**

which highlighted issues around admin and communication.



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have on average **17** outstanding volunteers and interns each quarter who gave up **1869 hours** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

**£140,000**

We currently employ

**6 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



We ensured residents' feedback on digital exclusion was considered by the decision makers including being discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board.



We engaged with hundreds of people who shared their experience on health and social care services.

Summer



We provided signposting helping 41 residents navigate the local health and social care system.



Our intern and volunteers contributed 810 hours to help champion the voice of residents.

Autumn



We conducted our Enter and View visits to 5 different organisations to help improve services based on the feedback of residents.



We led on a joint project gathering feedback from 946 patients using outpatient services across Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust.

Winter



We worked collaboratively with the London Borough of Lewisham to support the development of Maximising Wellbeing at Home, championing the role of people with lived experience.



We championed patients' voice at over 30 decision making meetings including Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board, Local Care Partnership Strategic Board and the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust Patient Experience Committee.



# 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 to help them improve.

# Feedback of outpatients at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

**This engagement was delivered jointly with Healthwatch Bexley and Greenwich and led by Healthwatch Lewisham.**

The study was commissioned by the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust (LGT) with the aim of securing feedback from outpatients around communication. To ensure we collected relevant feedback we conducted face-to-face engagement throughout October and November 2022 with people attending clinics. We also offered an online survey and focus groups with carers and Age UK. As part of this work, we collected feedback from a total of 998 patients.



## Top Findings and Recommendations

**The report identified several areas for improvement including:**

Follow-on contact for results and treatment, clear information pre-appointment, making contact with relevant departments, varied issues flagged for groups that might experience health inequalities including people with sensory disabilities.

The full report can be found on our [website](#)

## What difference will this make?

LGT developed an action plan based on our report recommendations. The action plan has been coproduced with leads of outpatient departments and is being implemented to improve the experience for patients. This includes changes to appointment letters, improving signage, and commissioning a new service supporting disabled people and those who need help with translation.

The exercise was of great benefit to the Trust, as the feedback clearly identified areas that the Trust needed to improve, and the recommendations made by Healthwatch based on the feedback are central to shaping our improvement plans and work for '23/'24.

...Communication with the Trust, coordination and the accommodative partnership approach was excellent, while at the same time the Healthwatch partners maintained that independent perspective, so essential when representing patients.  
Thank you for your great work.

**Nora Gill, Outpatients Transformation Programme Manager,  
Lewisham Greenwich NHS Trust**

# Patient Experience Programme

At Healthwatch Lewisham we operate a comprehensive Patient Experience data collection programme as part of our duty around gathering and representing the views of patients and service users in the borough.

They tell us what is working well and what could improve allowing us to share local issues with decision makers who have the power to make changes.

## 2022/23 Summary of Patient Experience data collection



### 3,309 reviews

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



### 63% positive

Reviews by patients were overall positive.



### Presented at board meetings

At Healthier Communities Select Committee meeting, Health & Wellbeing Board Meetings and other local and South East London meetings to inform and advise decision makers on patient experience.

## GPs: Top most positive & negative themes identified by patients in Q3

### Top 5 positive issues

Treatment and Care – Quality of Experience

Staff attitudes

Appointment availability

Staff attitudes – health professionals

Communication with patients

### Top 5 negative issues

Getting through on the telephone

Appointment availability

Booking appointments

Staff attitudes – administrative staff

Waiting Times (punctuality and queueing on arrival)

# 3 ways we have developed our Patient Experience Programme

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Every quarter we produce a Patient Experience report, which details the experiences of hundreds of patients.

## Launching a new website

It's important for local people to be able to share their experience of services with Healthwatch and access clear and up-to-date information and signposting about health and care services.



Healthwatch Lewisham updated its website in 2022/23, reviewing and refreshing content and benefitting from the most up-to-date knowledge on design and accessibility. Our new website contains health advice and guidance on changes across the system, as well as practical information like how to register with a GP when you have no fixed address. You can find all our news and reports on the website, feed back your experience of care, and more!

## Refreshing our patient feedback form

Our Patient Experience Programme aims to gather 1200 experiences of health and care services each quarter. It is a cornerstone of our work enabling us to understand the real time challenges local people experience when accessing health and care services.



During 2022/23 we revamped our feedback form, updating it with questions that really matter to patients and service users. We aligned some questions with the national GP Survey so in future we will be able to do direct comparisons of results. We have also ensured our data can link easily to Healthwatch England's national database, enabling the voice of people from Lewisham to have a stronger profile in their national work.

## New Patient Experience report

Our quarterly Patient Experience report provides a vital overview of the themes and trends in access and care experienced at GP surgeries, our local Hospital and other health and care services.



Our report has been redesigned this year, making it more accessible and easier to use. What was once a 50+ page document with charts and detailed narrative has now been broken down into snapshot data and key overview information. Trends from quarter to quarter are clearly highlighted and service specific recommendations will help our staff and committee members champion the changes needed across the system, in the many meetings they attend.



# Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voices are heard and that services meet their needs.

**This year we have reached different communities by:**

- Including unpaid carers views in each area of our work.
- Carried out targeted engagement with unpaid carers as part of our Outpatient projects.
- Advocated on behalf of people at risk of digital exclusion.
- Carried out routine engagement at various health and community places across Lewisham to reach a broad range of people from different communities.

## Focus on unpaid carers

This year we ensured that unpaid carers feedback was woven into our routine and focused engagement work. Here are a few examples of how we amplified voices of unpaid carers:

- We carried out a listening event with unpaid carers as part of our Outpatient project. Our questionnaires and analysis were designed to identify health inequalities experienced by unpaid carers.
- As part of our engagement work supporting the development of London Ambulance Service strategy, we engaged with carers to ensure their voices were part of the picture.
- We fed into the development of the unpaid carers service specification in Lewisham.
- We participated in the Carer Partnership Board meeting to advocate for people with lived experience.
- We participated in various meetings and engagement events to support the development of the Maximising Wellbeing at Home service. We fed back comments on the service specification and questionnaires aimed at local carers. We encouraged people's participation by promoting the survey aimed at local carers via our comms channels and also distributed the survey face-to-face collecting approximately 30 responses.



## Tackling health inequalities – focus on people at risk of digital exclusion

Following our earlier report highlighting the needs of people at risk of digital exclusion, we continued holding health and social care services and commissioners to account to ensure parity of access for those who may not use digital platforms to access or contact services.

The full report can be found on [our website](#).

The feedback suggests that ongoing reliance on digital without effective alternatives would increase inequalities in access to care for many vulnerable people. The issue goes beyond access to technology – many people are unable to use digital for many reasons, including poverty, language skills or lack of confidence. And increasingly, use of digital messaging is requiring providers to reconsider the language and forms of communication they use. Healthwatch is pleased that the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Lewisham Local Care Partnership Board, and individual partners, have taken on board our research findings and are working to identify suitable ways to improve access and ensure equality for all patients. We shall keep the spotlight on this issue.



# Championing people with lived experience

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we champion people with lived experience. This has been a key focus in 2022 – 2023.

## Some of our activities included:

- Supporting commissioning and service delivery by participating in committees, strategic, and decision-making boards. We use this opportunity to share people's feedback, hold services to account and ensure people are involved in service design.
- Championing voice of people at-risk of health inequalities and digital exclusion.
- Contributing to the development of local strategies and encouraging services to involve residents in decision making.
- Maintaining relationships with our local partners (both providers and commissioners).
- Presenting our reports and championing key findings to influence and impact on behalf of patients and service users.

# Feeding into Commissioning

## Maximising Wellbeing and Proud to Care

This year, one of our priorities was to champion the role of people with lived experience. We did this by supporting the development and commissioning of Maximising Wellbeing initiatives and the Proud to care recruitment process. Our activities included:

We helped to gather feedback and responses to a survey to support the development of service specifications.



We worked closely with the Proud to Care team and the Council's lead commissioner, to champion the role of people with lived experience throughout service design and to help build strong relationships across partners.



We supported procurement of services by evaluating bids for four service areas including bids for domiciliary care agencies.



We participated in planning meetings and chairing for Race Equality Week aimed at Wellbeing workers.



We helped to identify and induct people with lived experience who will form an interview panel for Wellbeing workers, alongside paid and unpaid carers.



Drawing on our intelligence from people with lived experience and from local residents more generally, we helped to shape service specifications for future commissioning of services for older adults.

“It was really helpful to have a professional external to the Council as part of the tender evaluation for Maximizing Wellbeing at Home. Having Marzena from Healthwatch as part of the evaluating panel made the process much more robust. Marzena had a really good understanding of the Maximizing Wellbeing at Home model, and consequently provided really useful and detailed feedback and challenge to other panel members on the tender submissions..”

**Ashaki Bailey – Procurement and Contracts Manager**



# Enter and Views

**Enter and View is a statutory power of a local Healthwatch, mandated by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation.**

During these visits we observe service delivery and talk with service users, their families and carers. We also engage with management and staff. The aim is to get an impartial view of how the service is operated and being experienced. Following the visits, our official 'Enter and View Report' is shared with the service provider, local commissioners and regulators and outlines what has worked well and gives recommendations on what could have worked better.

# In the spotlight: Enter and View Report, Leah Lodge Care Home

## Enter and View Report

Leah Lodge Care Home, November 2022



A report by Healthwatch Lewisham



**As part of our statutory duties, we carried out an 'Enter and View' to Leah Lodge Care Home in Blackheath.**

Operated by Cinnamon Care, the home specialises in residential care for older people with dementia. It also provides specialist care for mental health conditions, and physical and sensory disabilities, or impairments. The home may accommodate up to 48 residents and 38 were in residence at the time of the visit.

We visited the home in November 2022 and spoke to residents, family and staff. From our visit, we made 9 recommendations, the top ones are listed below.

## Our recommendations:

1. We suggest wider use of the garden, increasing music activities and increasing activities targeted towards male residents.
2. We suggest giving residents and families opportunities to suggest activities to meet their needs. Ideally, this needs to be evidenced – either in meeting minutes or personal records.
3. Where possible, we suggest offering a varied time for the family meetings, including evenings, to make them more inclusive for those with daytime commitments.
4. We suggest introduction of a structured forum for staff to voice their concerns – and in a way that is supportive, non-judgemental and transparent.

## What difference will this make?

The home manager engaged with us in a positive way taking many recommendations on board. The home is already planning to broaden the activities for residents and has committed to looking “at what sports our gentleman like and review the club to fit this”.



“If we weren't there I think other family members would support mum. It's everyone's home.”

**Resident's relative**

# Enter and View – other services visited in 2022 – 2023

As part of our statutory duties, we carried out an 'Enter and View' to four other services including:

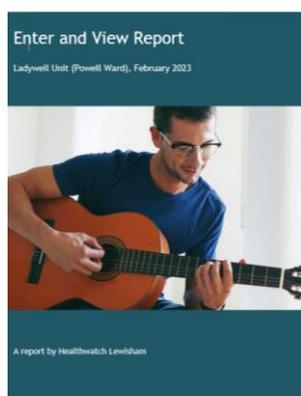


**Manley Court Care Home**



**M Power Learning Disability Home**

**Powell Ward, Ladywell Unit, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust**



**Wharton Ward, Ladywell Unit, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust**



[Report publication pending]

[Report publication pending]

## Our approach

Our visits are announced and conducted by authorised representatives, often volunteers who are trained and DBS checked. During the visit we have an introductory tour, during which we carry out our observations, and the opportunity to engage with staff, residents and family members on the day.

Our reports provide an independent snapshot of the feedback and experience of the service, based on our visit.

## Recommendations and next steps

Each of the above reports consists of minimum of five recommendations that are based on the feedback we receive.

We share our reports and recommendations with the service manager and request a formal response, to demonstrate commitment to service improvement.

We share the report and recommendations with a wide range of local stakeholders and decision makers who also have opportunities to feed in findings to assurance and improvement processes.



# Representation

We attended 90 key strategic and operational meetings where we represented the voices of Lewisham residents, encouraged public involvement and shared our intelligence.

The following pages contain just some examples of our representation, locally and regionally, ensuring health and care decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.



## Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health & Wellbeing Board leads action at Borough level to improve people's lives and to promote greater integration and partnership between the NHS, public health and local government. It is chaired by the Mayor and its remit extends beyond health and care services.

It is formally a committee of the local authority. We have used our seat on the Board to raise awareness about our reports and our regular intelligence gathering, especially around digital exclusion, which is an issue for all partners. Through our participation we promote the involvement of patients and service users in the development and co-production of services.

## Healthier Communities Select Committee

The Healthier Communities Select Committee is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and making recommendations about a wide range of local health matters.

It gives local councillors the opportunity to question and influence the work of health bodies in Lewisham, including hospitals, GPs and the council.

We provide regular representation at this meeting. Some of our contributions include:

- Championing people's voice for scrutiny of Lewisham Mental Health Estates, Adult Mental Health Care Model Review, Lewisham Health Care and Wellbeing Charter, Proud to Care' initiative, 'Warm Welcomes' initiative, and stressed that to be inclusive it would need careful thought to ensure diverse needs could be met.
- Fed back that HWL had responded to the consultation on Food Justice expressing our concern that the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on population health and wellbeing would fall on those with least resilience.



“The role of Healthwatch as the champion of patients, service users and carers is very important in the Healthier Communities Select Committee at Lewisham Council. Healthwatch Lewisham provides the patient voice at Committee meetings which enables the service providers and commissioners in attendance to be informed of public opinion. The local intelligence offered by Healthwatch is of vital importance.”

**Nidhi Patil, Scrutiny Manager, Overview and Scrutiny Chief Executive's Directorate, Lewisham Council**

## Primary Care Commissioning

The majority of the feedback we routinely gather relates to GP services. To ensure the feedback is shared with key decision makers, we regularly meet with Associate Director of Primary Care (local Primary Care commissioning lead) to liaise on key issues, sharing feedback from local residents, and encouraging engagement of local residents in decision making for primary care services.



“The NHS South East London ICB borough primary care team in Lewisham continue to value the open, two way dialogue we have with Lewisham Healthwatch. The direct patient feedback Healthwatch Lewisham are able to provide really helps us to better understand the challenges and opportunities in primary care and so informs our local work programme.”

**Ashley O’Shaughnessy**

**Associate Director of Primary Care (Lewisham), NHS South East London, South East London Integrated Care System**

## Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board

Much of the feedback we capture relates to people at-risk of health inequalities and therefore it’s vital for us to share this intelligence with the safeguarding team. We also regularly attend the Board meetings to champion people with lived experience. For example we contributed to the Board’s discussions on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Safeguarding, the update on Statutory Advocacy provision in the Borough and progress addressing Digital Exclusion.



Healthwatch Lewisham are a trusted and important member of the Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board who can always be relied upon to contribute to the wide range of issues and projects the Board oversees and is involved in. In the last 12 months this has included leading on the debate regarding digital exclusion; providing evidence that is being collated on the impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on families in the borough; and helping to improve how we engage with adults and use their lived experience to shape the delivery of services locally.

**Local Martin Crow, Business Manager, Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB)**

## Helping shape local Integrated Care System (ICS) and Integrated Care Board (ICB)

South East London's Integrated Care System brings together all the organisations responsible for delivering health and care for our communities.

In July 2022 at Borough (Place) level, an Integrated Care Board (ICB) replaced the former Clinical Commissioning Group. We are formal members of the Lewisham Board, and use this position to champion the voice of patients, service user and carers and to support initiatives to ensure the ICS can meaningfully capture and listen to the feedback of local residents. We contributed to the development of the People's Partnership to support local Lewisham health and care Partners.

We hold regular meetings with the Lewisham ICB Place executive lead to ensure an exchange of key information, including on the problems being experienced by local people in accessing services. Initial meetings also focused on our work on digital exclusion, and responsibility for the follow-up to this report has now been placed with the Lewisham Quality and Assurance Group.

### Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust: Patient Experience Committee

We regularly capture feedback from local residents sharing experience of University Hospital Lewisham. We also use feedback shared from people at-risk of health inequalities through a variety of our reports and intelligence we gather. We ensure we share this feedback regularly with the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust (LGT) by participating in the Patient Experience Committee. For example, we used patient's feedback to inform LGT's Patient Engagement Strategy consultation.



Healthwatch is a key partner of the Trust championing the voice of the patient. They have been instrumental in providing links to seldom heard from groups and contributed to the development of the Patient Experience Strategy. Their engagement with patients, carers and staff, has generated valuable feedback which is aligned with the work being undertaken by the divisions through the Outpatient patient engagement group, ED improvement work and other patient experience improvement workstreams.

**Michelle Acquah, Patient Experience Manager, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust**

## Working at South East London (SEL) Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

Healthwatch Lewisham partnered with other local Healthwatch in the SEL area to establish a role of regional Director to ensure residents' voices are heard by the NHS South East London Integrated Care System (ICS). This is done through representation, advocacy, and challenge on the South East London Integrated Care Partnership and on the following key boards and committees in the ICS:

- Integrated Care Board (ICB) Planning and Finance Committee
- ICB Quality and Performance Committee
- Interim Digital Governance Group
- ICS System Quality Group
- ICB Engagement Assurance Committee
- ICS Population Health and Equity Partnership Advisory Group
- ICB Equalities Committee
- SEL Local Care Record Governance Board
- Data Usage Committee
- ICS Information Governance Group

The coordinated insight from SEL Healthwatch is used to inform strategies, decision making and add value to a wide range of South East London Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care System work programmes.

At system level Healthwatch Lewisham has:

- Influenced the approval and shape of data use case applications, requesting access to support diabetes care and to analyse long term conditions.
- Raised issues about the accessibility of language for communication about the London Care Record so that people and communities now have more accessible content and images on the digital assets produced.
- Shared insights across all priority areas in the development of the ICS Strategic Priorities so that people's views directly shaped the priorities.

The SEL Healthwatch partnership established a SEL Healthwatch Reference Group. The Group consists of people from each borough, who are affiliated to Healthwatch. SEL Healthwatch Reference Group members reflect a range of service user perspectives and experiences, and balance their individual perspectives with broader patient and public interest.

As NHS South East London ICS continues to develop, Healthwatch Lewisham will continue to work with the Director SEL Healthwatch to provide consistent and harmonised insight and intelligence to the ICS. Healthwatch in South East London will play our part to end health inequalities by amplifying the voices of communities that go unheard and work with the ICS to reduce the barriers to services that people and communities face.



# Independent Health Complaints Advocacy

Our service provides support for residents who would like to make a complaint about an NHS service or a provider.

The service is free, confidential and independent. Our advocates can help and support you to make your complaint. They do not give advice about what you should do but can provide options and guide you through the complaints process.

# Summary of our advocacy service



Our Advocates supported **146 people** in 2022 – 2023



We received **130** new cases this year



Our staff signposted **151** people on how to make complaints and access relevant health and social care services



**598** people accessed complaints information and template documents on our website



Our advocates delivered intensive, **face-to-face support** attending resolution meetings with providers and speaking to those clients who prefer to meet in person

## Breakdown of the new complaint cases

Service	Number of complaints
GP	66
Hospital	33
Mental Health Hospital (SLaM)	18
Dental	4
Other	9

# The role of the Advocate

Our Advocates support people in making complaints. Their day-to-day tasks however can vary and often, by listening to people and offering the initial support the complains are resolved without a formal complaint being made.



## A day in the life of our Advocates

Answering telephone queries about complaints and the process

Following up new clients with information and consent forms and logging them on the system

Relaying answers and our actions to clients

Supporting the less able e.g. visually impaired, mental health issues, to review letters so they be sent with minimum delay

Attending meetings with clients to ensure all points are covered and actions recorded

Discussing options with clients e.g. taking a case to the PHSO

Following up with PHSO case workers re status of client cases

Ensuring outcome letters received

Listening to clients' stories – we are often the first people that will actually listen to them

Reviewing ongoing cases to ensure actions have been followed up

Chasing NHS providers for overdue letters and responses

Writing letters on behalf of clients

Asking for client feedback to provider letters and formulating a next steps plan

Organising local resolution meetings on behalf of clients

Following up on actions from meetings

Supporting clients to complete PHSO paperwork and organising supporting evidence to go with submissions

# Making a difference

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## Case study

### The problem

The client attended their GP surgery with worrying symptoms that may have been cancer. Urgent blood tests and a scan were ordered at a local hospital. The client waited for their referral to one of the local hospitals however despite the 10-day protocol for cancer referrals they did not hear back. The delay was caused by an internal miscommunication at the GP surgery. During the wait time the symptoms were causing the client increasing distress and anxiety.

### Action

The Advocate supported the client with a complaint highlighting the dangerous delay in the urgent referral which was only made when the patient rang up to complain. Our Advocate highlighted that the client was looking for an explanation as to why the referral protocol was breached and also the dangers of results and referrals being missed in the practice.

The response was taken very seriously and there was a long and detailed investigation. However, the client felt it did not acknowledge the distress and anxiety the delay had led to as she thought she had a cancer. The Advocate suggested and arranged a Local Resolution Meeting.

### Outcome

The Local Resolution Meeting was extremely positive and helped to restore trust between the client and the practice. The Practice Manager outlined how protocols and systems had been updated and training for members of staff introduced to ensure that results and subsequent referrals would be actioned.



“Thank you so much for attending today. I seriously couldn't have done it all without you being there with your expert guidance! So much appreciated.”

**Lewisham resident**



# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust.
- Helping people access the services they need.
- Helping people how to address concerns and make complaints.
- Finding the right advocacy service for those who need additional support.

## Helping residents access services

With the growing number of residents in Lewisham, a diverse population, and the complexity of the health and social care system, some people face challenges in accessing services.

One of our roles is to provide reliable signposting for local residents to help find the right information. Many people come to us with unique queries and our experienced team work together to find the best signposting advice to help direct the person to the right service.



“We directly signposted **159** people, responding to their specific and unique query. We deliver this service via phone, email and face- to-face.

One of our roles is to encourage people to share their voice, to help shape health and social care. Many organisations offer opportunities for involvement, and we help encourage people to take part in this engagement by sharing the opportunities on our website and social media.



Over **10,500** people visited our website accessing information and signposting pages, news and reports.



Over **2260** Twitter followers had access to the information we shared and posted with over **7600** visits to our profile page.



The information shared on our Facebook page was accessed by over **400** followers.

## Example of information and engagement opportunities we promoted to local residents:

- University Hospital Lewisham Hospital Discharge Survey
- Lewisham Dental Service Patient Experience Survey
- Lewisham’s Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme Survey
- Maudsley NHS Aiming High; Changing Lives Strategy Event
- Bowel Cancer UK – Bowel Cancer Awareness Month Support Talks
- Lewisham and Greenwich Trust Adult Community Service Survey

## The most common service areas people enquire about are GPs, hospitals, advocacy, mental health and social care.



Some of the themes from our Information & Signposting work include:

### Hospitals

- Unhappiness with the quality of treatment.
- Lack of follow up and information regarding test results.
- Access to care and treatment.

### Advocacy

- Support needed with raising concerns and resolving issues with health and social care services.

### GPs

- General unhappiness with the quality of service and treatment.
- Deregistration from a GP surgery.

### Mental Health

- Access to community mental health team and communication barriers with the team.
- Challenging a diagnosis.
- Experiencing crisis due to multiple issues and difficulty accessing support.



“Thank You very much for your help with this I feel that I might be actually getting somewhere.”

**Lewisham resident**

## Case study

**Enquiry:** A vulnerable, housebound person raised a concern with us regarding a lack of Covid-19 booster jab. The person informed us of their multiple attempts to communicate with their GP practice to request this without any luck. This resulted in a long delay in getting the jab and caused distress and anxiety.

### Outcome:

We escalated this issue to our Primary Care commissioning colleagues who liaised with the GP surgery regarding the issue. Following this intervention, a home visit was arranged to deliver the booster.



# 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:

- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views.
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve.
- Reviewed GP and dentist websites to review accessibility.
- Championed the voice of people with lived experience at local committees and decision-making meetings.
- Helped to create a better, more accessible website.
- Provided information and signposting for people needing help in navigating health and social care system.
- Posted information on our website and social media to help inform residents about engagement opportunities and health and social care news.

## Caitlyn

"The team at Healthwatch Lewisham has been incredibly supportive of my involvement in as many different project areas as possible. They've enabled me to develop personally and professionally in a wide range of areas, which is invaluable as I begin my career. I've taken on projects that allowed me to learn new skills and develop existing ones, represented Healthwatch Lewisham both digitally and face-to-face, gotten to know an entirely new healthcare system and community..."



## Cynthia

"I provide Healthwatch Lewisham with help in keeping their website up-to-date and posting relevant information on the organisation's social media channels. My volunteering role gives me the opportunity to develop valuable, career enhancing digital and social media skills. Having lived in Lewisham for over a decade and as an ex-NHS employee I'm keen to support the important work that Healthwatch Lewisham does in my local community."

## Adrian

"I volunteer for Lewisham Healthwatch as their Digital Champion, and I am also an Advisory Committee Member. Recently I have volunteered to participate in Enter and View visit to a local care home. I really enjoy working with others as part of a team and it's really exciting to be able to learn new skills."



### Do you feel inspired?

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



[www.healthwatchlewisham.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchlewisham.co.uk)



020 3886 0196



[info@healthwatchlewisham.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchlewisham.co.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 (unaudited)

Income		Expenditure	
Funding from Local Authority	£140,000	Expenditure on pay	£126,000
Additional income	£16,000	Non-pay expenditure	£12,000
		Office and management fee	£17,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£156,000</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£155,000</b>

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£11,000 funding** received from Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
- **£5,000 funding** received from London Ambulance.

## Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues, and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

## Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. Tackle health inequalities.
2. Seek feedback from people that may be less often heard from and continue our focus on incorporating the carer voice as standard.
3. Further develop our Patient Experience programme and share our findings with key decision makers.



# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Lewisham, Waldram Place, Forest Hill  
London, SE23 2LB

Your Voice in Health & Social Care (YVHSC) are the contract holding organisation. Address: 45 St Mary's Road, London, W5 5RG

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

# The way we work

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## 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 to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as [Enter and View](#), [patient engagement](#), [representation and research projects](#).

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 have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups, and seeking feedback at a range of health and public places including libraries, community centres, GP Practices and local hospitals.

We make this annual report available as widely as possible by publishing it on our website and social media platforms, and distributing it to local partners.

## Responses to recommendations

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, and so there are no resulting reviews or investigations. We did however flag two issues to Healthwatch England, namely a short and limiting timeframe to escalate NHS complaints cases to the National Health Ombudsman and lack of clear process to adequately support rape victims at local A&E hospital.

## Taking people's experiences to decision makers

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

In our borough for example we take information to a broad range of governance meetings. Please see the representation section in this report for more information.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in the South East London Integrated Care Board. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.



**healthwatch**  
Lewisham

Waldram Place | Forest Hill | London | SE23 2LB

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