



# On equal terms

**Then and now**

Healthwatch Sutton Annual Report 2020-21

# Contents

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Highlights from our year	6
Care homes: Then and now	7
Children's mental health: Then and now	9
Making a difference together	11
Responding to COVID-19	15
Our volunteers	18
Our finances	19
Next steps & thank you	21

# Message from our Chair

**When I wrote my message for our last Annual Report, we were 3 months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Who would have thought that the essence of my message would be all too familiar a year on?**

It's been a strange and sad year in so many ways, and my thoughts are with all of you who have suffered during this time. However, at last, there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel and I do believe that next year's message will be of the 'business as usual' variety.

You will read in this report that our activities have been many and varied this year. Maybe not quite 'as normal', but carried out with the zeal and commitment of a dedicated staff team, a vibrant Board and a grand bunch of volunteers!

We have also demonstrated once again, that we are decidedly community minded in Sutton. This is evidenced by the fact that so many people have volunteered, in so many ways, to help others.

I offer and leave you with the following quote. I wish I could claim credit for it, but that goes to Lady Stella Reading, Founder of Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) in 1938:



**Too many people think of volunteers as a means to an end, as cheap labour. True voluntary service is nothing of the kind. It is, in fact, the gift of a thoughtful person – their skill, their energy, their time.**

**Lady Stella Reading, Founder, WVS**



David Williams

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Williams'.

Healthwatch Sutton Chair

# About us

## Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Sutton. 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 their 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**

# Who we are

## Our staff team

### **Pete Flavell**

Chief Executive Officer

### **Gemma Thatcher**

Communications, Engagement and Projects Officer

### **Andrew McDonald**

*(from March 2021)*

Health Engagement and Projects Officer

### **Lorraine Davis**

Team Administrator

### **Pam Howe**

*(to November 2020)*

Patient Engagement Officer

### **Simon Foxcroft**

*(to July 2020)*

Team Administrator

## Our board members

### **David Williams**

Chairperson

### **Barbara McIntosh**

Vice Chairperson

### **Adrian Attard**

Treasurer

### **Adrian Bonner**

### **David Elliman**

### **Shri Mehrotra**

### **Noor Sumun**

### **Launa Watson**

### **Janet Wingrove**

### **Derek Yeo**

*(to December 2020)*

# 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

**2,042 people**

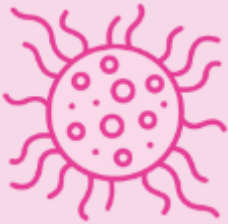
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

**1,940 people**

this year.

## Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

**1,554**

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**7 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, we made 4 recommendations for improvement.

**50% of recommendations**

we made last year have been acted upon, at the point where we reviewed progress.

## Health and care that works for you



**22 volunteers**

helped us to carry out our work.

**We employ 4 staff**

50% of whom are full time equivalent.

We received

**£109,960 in funding**

from our local authority in 2020-21.



# Care Homes: Then and Now



## Then: Enter & View visits

**In October 2019, we carried out a pilot visit to Crossways Nursing Care Home.**

We tested out a new system that helped us collect the views and experiences of staff, residents and their family and friends. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and got to see the care home in action!

Following our visit, we produced a [report for Crossways Care Home](#) that looked at 9 quality indicators and gave a red, amber or green rating for each.

Following the success of the pilot and publication of the report, we started to organise visits to a further 10 care homes across the Borough. By March 2020, we had held meetings with 6 care home managers to set-up our visits.

However, as the COVID-19 virus spread, it became increasingly apparent that care home residents were amongst the most vulnerable residents in Sutton and were most prone to the most severe effects of the virus. In light of this, we cancelled our plans to visit care homes.



## Now: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 in care homes

**We all saw in the media that concerted efforts were being made by local and national Government and the NHS to protect care home residents.**

Throughout the pandemic, we were in discussions with Care Home Commissioners at Sutton Council to understand the difficult situation that care homes were in. They told us that they would benefit from a project that captured the views and experiences of staff, residents and their family and friends during COVID-19. We offered to help collect this information independently and remotely with the view of publishing a report outlining the key issues that arose during the pandemic, so that learning could be made with recommendations.

We launched this new project in February 2021 by sending out packs to all care homes in our area. The packs included paper copies of surveys, posters for staff areas, residents areas and areas frequented by visitors. All the surveys could also be completed online by scanning a code on the poster. Survey collection has continued into May and a report will be published in the summer.

We are hoping to return to physical visits to care homes with our band of volunteers once we feel it is safe to do so and the care homes have had a break!



**The care home commissioning team welcomes Healthwatch Sutton's care home project, as it allows for an independent voice to comment on the excellent work undertaken by Sutton care homes. We will use the outcome of the project to inform the development of our quality assurance processes and to champion the vital role carried out to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community.**

**Stephen Hardisty, Commissioning Manager, Sutton Council**







# Children's Mental Health: Then and Now



## Understanding the mental health needs of primary school children pre COVID-19

**Before the pandemic, we asked nearly 1000 primary school pupils (aged 9-11) about their mental wellbeing, and we feel that it is important that their voices are heard.**

Our [report](#) found:

- Most pupils told us that friends made them happy, and they worried most about school and homework;
- 96% of pupils had access to an internet-enabled device and a majority had some form of supervision when online;
- 78% of pupils had at least one social media account.

We understand that COVID-19 has immensely affected primary school education. In light of this, it is likely that the mental health of pupils will have been impacted. Our report has established a baseline, and provides us with an opportunity to carry out a pre and post COVID-19 comparison on the state of mental health in primary school pupils in Sutton. As such, our recommendation is:

**To investigate the potential to repeat this survey, possibly with additional questions that reflects the pandemic's impact, in order to publish a comparative report of pupil's mental health prior to and following the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## Shaping GP services in Sutton

### GP practices are now working together in 4 Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in the London Borough of Sutton.

PCNs were formally established in July 2019 and are groups of GP practices who are working together to provide a wider variety of services at a broader range of times. PCNs cover local populations of between 30,000 and 50,000 people.



**I would like easier access to a range of health care professionals that are not easy to access currently due to heavy demand, especially physiotherapy services.**

**Local patient**

It is intended that PCNs deliver the following for patients:

- Better, more personalised health and care services, delivered more conveniently in settings closer to home;
- Support for individuals with more complex conditions that is better co-ordinated across different health and care services;
- Stronger support for patients to play a much greater role in making safe and informed decisions about their own health and care, taking full advantage of all local resources.



**Often people have 'multiple' illnesses and would prefer to see people within the same environment – not go from one practice for COPD, one for mental health etc.**

**Local patient**

We wanted to find out what you thought about these changes to GP services. [Here is what you told us:](#)


- 52% would be willing to use an app to answer questions before contacting a GP;
- Over half of respondents would not be willing to take part in a group appointment with people with a similar condition;
- ¾ of respondents would accept a referral to a link worker. A link worker could support you to access a service or activity provided by a group or charity (e.g. social activity, housing or debt advice);
- Self-management and exercise (group and individual) were the most commonly selected for advice and support.

We are currently in the process of developing recommendations and actions in partnership with key stakeholders, including PCNs (via their Clinical Directors and support staff), Primary Care Commissioners, Sutton GP Services (GP Federation), Patient Participation Groups and the PRG.



### Share your views with us

NHS and social care staff are doing everything they can to keep us well during these challenging times, but there might be things that can be improved. Your feedback can help services spot issues that are affecting care for you and your loved ones. Contact us today to share your experience.

 020 8641 9540

 [info@healthwatchesutton.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchesutton.org.uk)



# Making a difference together

## Our commissioned work

**Through our commissioned work, we are able to ensure the views of local people are heard and influence decision-making when improving services and patient experiences.**

We support Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) at local GP surgeries, as well as the Patient Reference Group (PRG) to communicate with local commissioners. This work is funded by NHS Sutton.

Additionally, we provide independent feedback and reporting systems for local health and social care services. This year, we have supported Sutton Health and Care @ Home and the Palliative Care Co-ordination Hub.

## Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

PPG activities were inevitably put on hold in the early part of the year. In August, it was possible to meet virtually with the Chairs and patient leads of PPGs. We explored different ways of working going forward, including the possibility of offering virtual meetings to engage with a larger, more diverse group of the patient population. We also discussed how PPGs can support their respective practices, working more collaboratively across Primary Care Networks, new clinical roles in GP practices and ideas for future patient engagement and surveys.

## Patient Reference Group (PRG)

PRG meetings were also temporarily put on hold during the early part of the year. However, in July, we were able to hold our first virtual meeting. Attendance at this and further virtual meetings has been good and the majority of patient representatives have been able to navigate the technology and take part. To facilitate this, we ran a number of 'Zoom masterclasses', sharing our own steep learning curve on holding effective Zoom meetings!

The group was provided with information on the COVID-19 response and recovery by Sutton Health and Care and an overview of their *Changes and Priorities since March 2020*. They were also provided with an overview of the Primary Care response to the pandemic.

Meetings continue to be held virtually. The group are playing an important role in disseminating information and providing feedback on current issues, including Test and Trace, COVID-19 messages and the importance of the flu vaccination programme. This is alongside work on social prescribing in GP practices and the development of Primary Care Networks.

### Providing a patient perspective



Epsom and St Helier Hospital asked us for help in capturing patient feedback on the impact and perception of a different way of working, with the introduction of Physician Associates in the triage areas of their Emergency Departments (ED).

PRG and Healthwatch Sutton volunteers reviewed the Hospital's draft information leaflet and questionnaire, intended for patients who have been through the ED. The volunteers reviewed the materials based on design, language and ease of use and understanding.

We collated the volunteers' feedback and passed it to the study lead at the Hospital. The study lead said:



**Thank you for your support and efficiency in resourcing the volunteers and co-ordinating the feedback. The responses are very useful and I am grateful for the volunteers' time and input.**

**Study lead at Epsom and St Helier Hospital**

## Remote consultations & digital prescriptions

**The COVID-19 pandemic forced the majority of GP consultations to take place remotely and an increase in electronic prescriptions.**

In June 2020, we asked our patient group members and volunteers to tell us about their experiences of these services to find out how they were working. We received 25 responses. These responses included feedback on positive and negative experiences, observations and suggestions on ways their experience could have been improved.

We were able to provide initial feedback at the PRG meeting in July before the full report was published. Insight from this timely survey and the [Changing your GP service](#) survey helped to inform those responsible for planning and providing Sutton GP services to help target their own work going forward.



**I feel that if I cannot see a doctor face to face, I may just as well Google my concerns for advice.**

**Local patient**

### Remote consultations

The majority of patients commented that their remote consultations were well managed and saved time. Generally, people said that it was easier to get an appointment, GPs called on time and that they would be happy to use the service again.

In terms of negative feedback, some felt a 10 minute appointment was not sufficient and a telephone consultation limited patients' ability to communicate their concerns. As a result, they would have preferred a video consultation.

Technological problems, such as poor connection, were also noted.

### Digital prescriptions

Overall, people were positive about digital prescriptions. Patients said that the process was simple, easy and straightforward. They also said it was a more efficient use of their time and the GP's, and felt the service was particularly helpful for carers.



**My surgery wrote to me with regard to my particular health needs at this difficult time. I found it very moving that they should be caring for me so thoughtfully.**

**Local patient**



### Sutton Health and Care @ Home

The @Home service is designed to minimise the number of older people attending A&E and if they do need to be admitted, the service supports them to return home as soon as possible. We have supported the service for the last 2 years by providing an ongoing feedback and reporting system. People who have used the service complete a survey and we then analyse the data and provide a quarterly report. To date, we have produced 5 reports that the service has used to monitor quality and share with their commissioners. The service was put under extreme pressure by the pandemic. As a result, they stopped collecting user feedback (including their own Friends and Family Test) to focus entirely on delivering their service. Our reporting also stopped. However, the service has confirmed that they will restart collection in the coming months.

### Sutton Palliative Care Co-ordination (PCC) Hub

The PCC Hub provides support to patients and their families and carers to live well, during the last stages of life. We have been a key part of the Board for this service which was launched during the peak of the pandemic in April 2020. As one of the organisations involved in the planning for this service, we felt that it could benefit from an independently delivered user evaluation reporting system. We worked with the service to design 3 surveys to collect the views of service users, their relatives and people who have been bereaved. We trained up our volunteers to call these groups of people and carry out the survey over the phone. We have now started producing reports that are used by staff, managers and other stakeholders to understand how well the service is working and make changes or improvements if needed.





## 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 is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.**

The Healthwatch Sutton Information and Advice service is based at *Citizens Advice Sutton* and operates as part of the Advice Link Partnership Sutton (ALPS). This service is open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. You can get in touch with them by phone, online or in person for information and signposting relevant to health and social care issues.

### **This year we helped 1,940 people by:**

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out
- Supporting the community volunteer response
- Helping people to access the services they need

## Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



30% on community care



18% on GP services



10% on health services for children



6% on dentistry

## What you said about the service:



"Having someone guide us through this emotional time has been a godsend."

"I didn't realise support services were available."



"Having a listening ear has been really helpful."



### 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.suttonalps.org.uk](http://www.suttonalps.org.uk)

0208 254 2616



## Your experience of COVID-19

Throughout the pandemic, we have continually sought to understand local residents' experiences of COVID-19 and new services, such as Test and Trace and the vaccine rollout programme.

### Your COVID-19 stories



We all have a COVID-19 story and our report tells the stories of local residents as the pandemic unfolded in the London Borough of Sutton.

Before the first lockdown, we created a short survey to understand the impact the pandemic was having on local people, their families and friends.

[Our report](#) helped us to understand the issues that Sutton residents were facing between March – June 2020. We shared our findings at a variety of different meetings including the Sutton System Leaders Group that was set-up in response to the pandemic and has met weekly ever since.

### Your thoughts on NHS Test and Trace



We captured the thoughts, views and experiences of local residents to find out how the NHS Test and Trace system is working in Sutton.

We received a variety of anecdotal feedback that people were concerned about the effectiveness of the system, especially toward the end of 2020. As a result, we put together a short survey to find out the views concerning the system. In total, 113 people completed our survey.

We found:

- 90% knew *definitely* or *to some extent* how to organise a test.
- Nearly 80% stated that they were not confident that the NHS Test and Trace system will effectively reduce the transmission of COVID-19.
- 58% confirmed they had downloaded the NHS COVID-19 app.

We acknowledge that it is hard for local organisations to influence a national initiative. However, the publication of our report happened to coincide with a meeting held by Healthwatch England and Public Health England. As a result, our findings were shared directly with the national leads of the Test and Trace programme. We also shared [our report](#) with the NHS and Local Authority.

### Keep Sutton Safe: COVID-19 vaccine survey



As the vaccine roll-out gained momentum, it became apparent that it was important that as many people as possible chose to take the vaccine. There was some intelligence gathered nationally that indicated that some people were hesitant about having the jab. We wanted to understand what Sutton residents thought about the vaccine.

We worked in partnership with Sutton Council and NHS Sutton to develop a survey, using Keep London Safe's template. The survey aimed to find out if people would be happy to receive the vaccine and identify reasons why people may be more hesitant. It ran from February to April 2021 and the results will be published in the coming months.



## Our volunteers

**At Healthwatch Sutton, we are supported by 22 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like to make to services.**

What a weird year it has been for our volunteers! Ordinarily we would be carrying out visits to care homes or St Helier Hospital, stuffing envelopes for mail-outs or carrying out research in the office. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made it very difficult to carry out this type of work.

We have held 2 virtual Volunteers Forums to catch-up with our volunteers, and keep them updated with all the happenings at Healthwatch Sutton. As things start to return to normal, we hope that opportunities for our volunteers to get involved in our work will improve.

We must not forget our Directors are also volunteers. Our Board meetings have continued as usual, albeit virtually. We have also continued to invite members of the public to attend as observers.



## Our finances

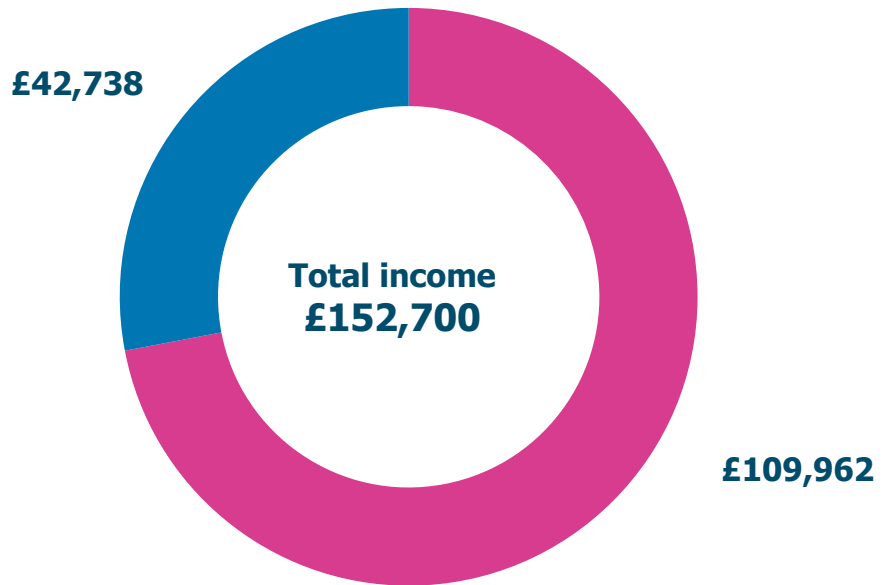
**Healthwatch Sutton is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. We comply with both Company Accounting and Charity Commission SORP requirements.**

# Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. We also receive additional income from NHS Sutton and a variety of NHS organisations.

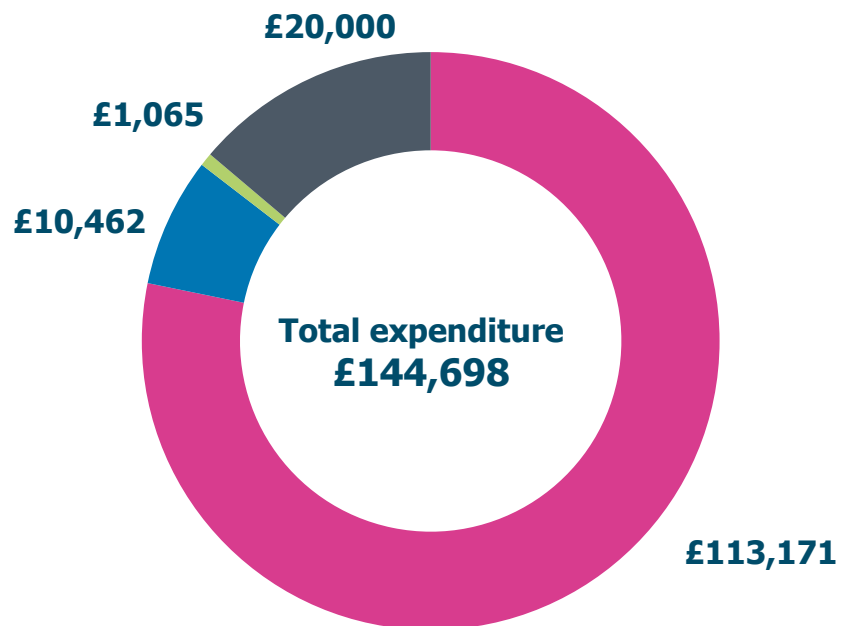
## Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding



## Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration
- Grants to organisations



The figures listed above are subject to audit. Once completed the figures will be updated.

# Next steps & thank you

## Top three priorities for 2021-22

1. Care homes
2. Mental wellbeing of primary school children
3. Building for our future (Epsom and St Helier Hospitals NHS Trust)

## Next steps

Our main priority is to restart the 2 projects that were stopped during COVID-19. We would like to resume our Enter & View visits to care homes and continue our work looking into the mental wellbeing of primary school children in the Borough.

We also have a few ideas that might lead on to new projects. We have been looking into finding out the views of local people who have used the triage system provided by Sutton Uplift, as it provides the starting point for access to mental health support in Sutton. We are also interested in seeing if we can help provide some local people's insight that could help develop the proposal for the mental health service transformation that is being carried out across South West London, with Sutton being a leader in developing the model.

Plans are also progressing for the new hospital development in the south of the Borough. We are keen that people's views are included in decisions about the build to make sure the facility is accessible and fit for purpose.

Through our work for NHS Sutton, we are supporting projects being carried out by the 4 new Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in the Borough. They are looking to identify a specific health need in their area and put in place a plan to try and support people in their area to improve their health and wellbeing. For example, in Carshalton, data shows that the prevalence of diabetes is high and management of the condition is poorer than in other areas.



**"Thank you to everyone who shared their views and experiences with us over the last year. Our work would not be possible without you. Please continue to share your stories with us – you are helping to make a real difference to local health and social care services."**

**Pete Flavell, Healthwatch Sutton CEO**

# Thank you

## **Thank you to everyone who is helping us to put people at the heart of health and social care, including:**

- Members of the public who shared their views and experiences with us.
- All of our amazing staff, directors and volunteers, including: Aboo Koheeeallee, Adrian Attard, Adrian Bonner, Barbara McIntosh, Chelliah Lohendran, Clare Nunns, Daphne Norman, David Elliman, David Williams, Derek Yeo, Isabelle Harding, Janet Wingrove, Launa Watson, Neena Mehrotra, Rosemary Bloxham, Sally Sauvageot, Shri Mehrotra, Stephanie Phillips, Noor Sumun, Shiraz Sethna, Sheila Gooljar and Susan Hind.
- PPG, PRG patient representatives and GP practice staff.
- All the organisations and groups who have contributed to our work, including: NHS Sutton, South West London CCG, London Borough of Sutton, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, South West London and St George's Mental Health Foundation Trust, Community Action Sutton, Citizens Advice Sutton, Sutton Carers Centre, Age UK Sutton, Sutton Mental Health Foundation, Sutton Primary Schools (staff and pupils), Sutton Care Homes (staff, residents and their families), other South West London Healthwatch organisations (and beyond!), Sutton Palliative Care Coordination Hub and Sutton Health & Care.



# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Sutton, Granfers Community Centre, 73-79 Oakhill Road, Sutton, SM1 3AA

Healthwatch Sutton Information & Advice, Citizens Advice Sutton, 68 Parkgate Road, Wallington, SM6 0AH

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

Charity number: 1151601      Company number: 08171224

## The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch board consists of 9 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. Through 2020/21 the board met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as the authorisation of projects, representation at meetings and the change in strategic direction as a result of the pandemic.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. The priority for local people concerning their health has been centred entirely around the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, since March 2020 we have carried out a series of projects looking at different aspects of the pandemic that have been of concern to people in the Borough. These include: the general impact on life at the beginning of the pandemic, Test and Trace and people's experiences in care homes.

## 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 email, provided a webform on our website, 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, capturing the views of care home residents, and children (aged 9-11) whose views are often under-represented.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be available on our website by 30 June 2020, and we will also share it with Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS England, NHS Sutton and the London Borough of Sutton.

### 2020-21 priorities

Project/activity area	Action taken
COVID-19 experience report	Presentations given to Sutton System Leaders group and other decision-making Committees to influence their planned activity.
Mental wellbeing of children aged 9-11	Report published was based on pre-lockdown experience. It has been proposed to repeat the same survey in the Autumn so we can see the impact on the children before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
Test and Trace – views and experiences report	Shared widely with all relevant local organisations and also taken by Healthwatch England to Public Health England meeting where the results were used to influence the programme.

### Responses to recommendations and requests

All providers have responded to requests for information and recommendations.

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 the Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

### Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Sutton is represented on the Sutton Health and Wellbeing Board by Barbara McIntosh, our Vice Chair. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by ensuring that local people's views are included by attending the agenda-setting meetings with the Board chair and leads. She has also made the Board leads aware of our work and checked that decisions made at the Board have considered the views of local people.





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