

Experience Matters

Annual Report 2020-21



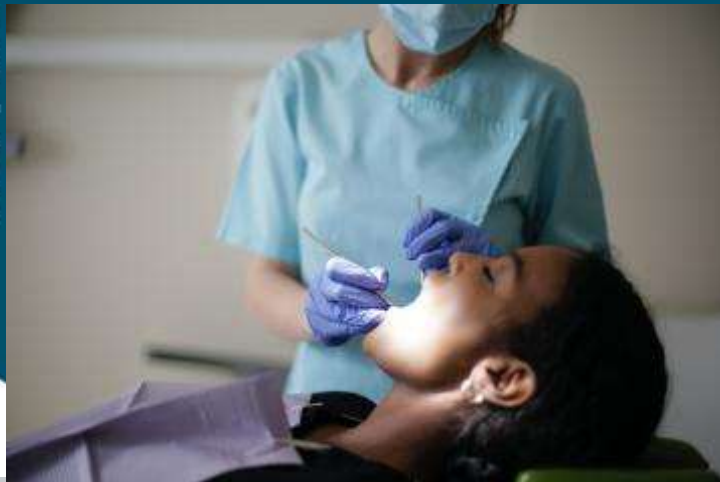
healthwatch
Richmond upon
Thames
 LONDON BOROUGH OF
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

South West London
Clinical Commissioning Group

Covid-19 Vaccinations in Richmond What you need to know

When: 02.02.2021 from 15:30-16:30

Thank you for registering for our free live event to hear from Richmond's leads on coronavirus vaccinations



Spring 2021

Your Guide to Richmond's NHS, Care & Support Healthwatch

The NHS, social care and local charities have continued to provide a huge range of help during the pandemic.

We've produced this guide to help you find the information you need when you need it.


Whilst most services are still running through the pandemic the way that they run has, and will continue to adapt. If you can't find what



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Chair's Foreword


 This year has been like no other most of us have experienced and we have all had to make many adjustments to the way we go about our everyday lives. None more so than our staff and loyal group of volunteers who put the aims and objectives of Healthwatch into action in Richmond upon Thames.

I want to start by thanking them for their unwavering support and hard work to make sure we deliver an excellent service to you.

The contents of this report demonstrate just how things have changed in how we go about our work and what is important to our local population in such challenging times. Whilst we have not been able to get out and about as we normally do, we have still managed to interact with hundreds of people, thanks to technology, and to have many fruitful conversations by telephone and e-mail with more people than ever. Not surprisingly, issues to do with Covid-19 have dominated the agenda but some unpredicted impacts of the pandemic have raised other issues for us as for the rest of the country - access to NHS dental care being one on which Healthwatch Richmond has taken a national lead.

Whilst all this is going on there are changes to the way the NHS is organized, with the development of Integrated Care Systems for health and social care in England and a more collaborative approach to their business. The Integrated Care System in which we are situated - South West London - is still taking shape and we want to be an active partner in that system so we can effectively represent the views and needs of Richmond about NHS and Social Care services.

We are far from out of the pandemic woods yet and we want to ensure we are able to adapt our work programme to meet any future unpredicted turns so have chosen to have a flexible agenda for 2021-22. More about this in later sections of this report. I hope the following sections provide you with some helpful information about our work and encourage even more of you to get involved with us to help shape the future of local services.



Julie Risley
Chair Operational Committee
Healthwatch Richmond

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in the London Borough of Richmond. 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



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, provide us with information about their experiences and shape the services that support them.

Providing a high quality service

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

Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want to make sure more providers of services 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, Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

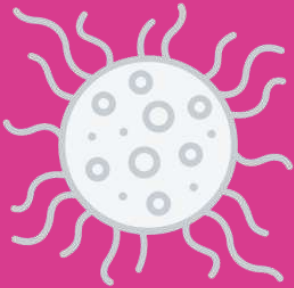
Find out about our work in 2020-21



Youth Out Loud!

#CookingChallenge

Responding to the pandemic



225 DBS checks processed for volunteers working with local charities to support our community

9,000 additional shopping trips or other support were made by these volunteers to vulnerable local people

We set up a **Community Hub phone line** providing a direct line for vulnerable people to community support

Helping people to get information

100,000+ people engaged with communications (15 x last year)

78,000 people used our website

87,000 Guides to NHS, Care & Support delivered to homes across Richmond

864 people got answers to their questions:

414 via our signposting service, up 29% from last year

75 people were helped to access dental care

450 people got answers to their questions about vaccinations through our events



Improving care

2,438 people engaged with us through our projects and outreach

6 reports published raising issues with providers and commissioners with impacts including:

Urgent Dental Care Hubs set up in response to us and our network raising concern about national crisis in dentistry

Improved access to medication deliveries for vulnerable people across Richmond and beyond as a result of our work to influence a national pharmacy chain

Maternity care significantly improved as a result of a comprehensive review we undertook.



How we've made a difference



Listening to our community

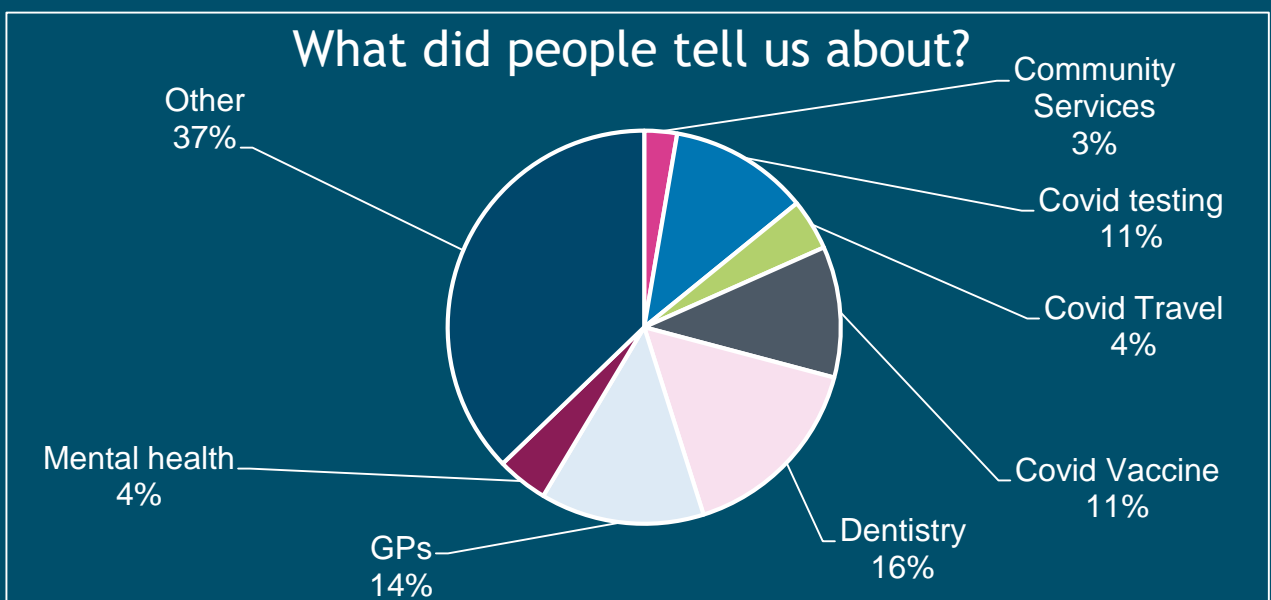
Social distancing disrupted the community groups and activities that we would usually use to reach people face to face. Despite this we've managed to collect 2,438 experiences through a combination of online and postal surveys, video calls, phone calls and events - **18% more than last year.**

- 1,302 people engaged through our projects
- 636 people engaged through 26 remote community outreach sessions
- 500+ people engaged through 4 community events

My husband is elderly and vulnerable. We have heard nothing about the Covid vaccination. It seems Vineyard surgery has opted out and told us that we will hear from NHS. They said it would be this week 28 December. We are in the dark at a very scary time

What did people tell us about?

The patient experiences that we collected through our community engagement work related to Coronavirus and the pandemic in general, but also dentistry, carers, mental health and the local community.



Some hospital services have been stopped and I'm really struggling. The other problem is there is a huge waiting list before an assessment. Once you have an assessment there is another waiting list before the service is given. Thank you for a helpful session.

Communications

Sharing information was more important during 2020-21 than it had been at any point since we formed in 2013 and we rose to this challenge by expanding communications which were seen **450,000** times, helping people to take **66,400** actions to access the information, services and support that they need and ensure people know about us and our work.

Website

Over **78,000** people visited our website during the year, more than any other Healthwatch, to access information including:

- **27,433** people found information about travelling during coronavirus
- **18,185** people found information about vaccinations
- **1,944** found information about caring
- **18,679** people found information about Covid tests
- **17,369** found information about restrictions or changes
- **1,637** found information about dentistry

Impact: **48,675** people also took actions via our website including:

- 20,874** checked regulations covering travelling during the pandemic
- 14,525** booked a Covid test or found more information about testing
- 5,653** booked a vaccination found more information about vaccines
- 907** got help to find a dentist or information about dentistry

Print

To support people who need to communicate offline, we printed and distributed **87,000** Guides to NHS, Care & Support to homes across Richmond (see Page 19).

E-Bulletins

We sent **118** bulletins providing information about NHS and social care changes as well as key public services messages across the year. These were read **62,979** times leading to people taking **5,743** actions to access support, find more information or get involved.

Social media

Our social media reached **226,539** people and **12,074** people engaged with information about the pandemic, vaccines, opportunities to share their experience or to volunteer



YOL!

Youth Out Loud! (YOL!), are a group of young people aged 13-17 from Richmond and Kingston who are helping to improve NHS care and the wellbeing of young people. YOL! is supported through a partnership between Healthwatch Richmond and Healthwatch Kingston.

Our work with YOL! focused on giving teenagers appropriate information on local and national services, raising awareness of young people's experiences and growing the number of young volunteers.

Activities included:

- 175+ hours contributed by 11 dedicated YOL! members
- 6 new members recruited to YOL!
- 2 YOLTalks! Podcasts produced by young people (a third is in production on mental health). These were distributed through social media and by 65 young person's organisations and schools and covered:
 - food, eating and body perceptions during lockdown
 - experiences of being LGBTQ+

Understanding young people's experiences and sharing our success at Healthwatch Week

We worked with YOL! to collect over 1,700 experiences of health, care and wellbeing during lockdown from 346 young people.

Our resulting report, *Young People's Wellbeing During the Covid-19 Crisis*, gives local service providers key learnings around mental health, physical exercise and health and the availability of online support and information that will help them better to meet the needs of young people in Richmond and Kingston.

We shared our experience, success and achievements from supporting YOL! during the pandemic by presenting to 42 Healthwatch organisations at the national Healthwatch Week conference.

YOL!

Enhancing digital communications

The shift to remote work and life created a need for YOL! to boost engagement online. After revamping their website, YOL! has enhanced its presence on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

We have worked with young people and local organisations to promote wellbeing, events and local services or campaigns including a Cooking Challenge, Sexual Health Week and Mental Health Awareness week. YOL! posted every day during the height of the pandemic. As a result 5 times more people visited our website (yolweb.info) this year than last year.



Volunteering at YOL! has been an amazing experience so far and I've loved all 3 years of it. It's been really interesting learning about how the local health services work and it's also been great to know that I'm helping other young people in the area.

Highlights so far include being part of videos about us and self harm and the 15 steps challenges, where we got to visit some of the services ourselves and give feedback on them.

- A YOL! Volunteer

Experiences of the pandemic

Through online and postal surveys, we collected **376 peoples' experiences of care and wellbeing during the first 6 months of the coronavirus pandemic** and published two reports to ensure decision makers had up to date information to inform their plans:

- Health, Care & Wellbeing Experiences During Lockdown - June 2020
- Health, Care & Wellbeing Experiences in Richmond During Coronavirus - August 2020

From August 2020, our regular outreach, signposting and project work provided us with significant insight into people's experiences. We heard from almost **2,500 people** about a range of NHS, social care and community support. This enabled us to take a number of quite specific actions to improve care as well as providing us with rich intelligence to influence and inform key decision makers about the community's priorities.

Thank you for the amazing work that you and your team have done and continue to do. I would like to applaud your response to the COVID-19 and your ongoing work. May I also take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the Richmond Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

- Public Health Richmond



This is great work. Thank you. Really comprehensive. Knowing the public's attitude is crucial as services are being "re-opened" because there's no point setting things up in a way that people won't feel confident to use. Your work is very valuable in our understanding of patient and public needs.

- Clinical Commissioning Group

Experiences of the pandemic

What happened as a result

Ensuring people felt safe enough to attend appointments:

People who were at higher risk from the virus told us that they were worried about their safety when traveling to or attending appointments. Understanding the control measures in place made them more confident about attending appointments.



...visiting the surgery when frightened, I was impressed with the efficiency/kindness of nurse and doctor in full PPE.

It gave me such confidence



— A member of the public talking about a GP experience

We shared this feedback with the NHS who launched a communications campaign explaining how people will be kept safe from the virus.

Helping to improve access to medicines:

Large numbers of people were being referred to charities to collect their prescriptions rather than being able to access deliveries directly, leading to distress and delay. We raised this with the national pharmacy chain concerned. **They changed their policies so that patients who needed them could get prescriptions delivered.**

Messaging around testing:

Many people contacted us because they had been unable to access testing. Others contacted us about “fit to fly” certificates. We fed this into decision makers and influencers. Munira Wilson MP asked questions in Parliament and Healthwatch England raised the issue nationally.

The messaging on the booking number and website was adapted to clarify that NHS testing does not provide “fit to fly” certification.

Dentistry

At the start of lockdown dentistry closed. Shortly after we heard concerns from people who couldn't access care. We were able to signpost people to dentists providing self-care advice and prescriptions for pain relief and antibiotics over the phone but for the first time since Healthwatch was established, we couldn't help to access care.

Influencing national services

We flagged problems with dental care provision to Healthwatch England and to our MPs. Sir Robert Francis, Chair of Healthwatch England, Munira Wilson MP and Sarah Olney MP and asked them to raise our concerns with Parliament.

As a result of their and similar campaigning, urgent dental care hubs were set up nationally.

Urgent Dental Care worked well as an interim measure and eventually dentists were able to reopen from June 2020. We were able to help lots of callers to access support as a result.

Helping people to find care

From September 2020 however, it was clear that there were significant challenges with capacity in primary care dentistry.

We began to regularly call all of the dentists in Richmond to ensure that we could help people to find a dentist.

This enabled us to help 75 people to access dental care who could not have done so without our help.



Dentistry

Identifying the crisis in dental care

Dissatisfied with the challenges that patients faced, we undertook a review of 300 people's experiences and published a detailed report which identified that:

- half of the survey respondents were unable to access dental care unless they could pay,
- a third were unable to access even urgent dental care unless they can pay,
- there was a growing backlog suggesting that access may deteriorate further.

We published a report on dentistry and asked NHS England to take steps to improve access to dental care. Based on this report, our MPs asked questions in Parliament about how dentistry would recover.

Our work was instrumental in Healthwatch England producing a critical review of the position on dentistry.

Addressing the crisis in dentistry

Despite our action and that of Healthwatch England, the wider Healthwatch Network and our MPs, we are not aware of any action being planned that would address the crisis in dentistry. We will continue to campaign for change using all means available to us.



I called you last week to find how to get a dentist. It worked really well for me. I got an appointment with a local dentist and was able to solve my dental issues very quickly.

Thanks to you I am not in pain anymore.



- Feedback from a person using our signposting line

Maternity

Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust were planning to review how the changes to the services during the pandemic had impacted patient experience. As maternity was a priority for us prior to the pandemic, we offered our support with this and worked with them to produce a detailed survey, collect feedback and analyse the responses.

We collected detailed responses from 462 people with recent experience of maternity services at West Middlesex University Hospital and Chelsea & Westminster Hospital through an extensive online survey running between 24th June and 29th July 2020.

Findings

Much of the feedback that was received was strongly worded praise for staff and a testament to the excellent care that many received. In many cases, patients recognised staff who had gone the extra mile to support and care for them. We heard about some excellent innovation in communication and opportunities to do things differently. The pandemic also created significant challenges that highlighted the value of involving partners and the opportunities and challenges created by virtual appointments. We also identified significant concerns relating to the staff in postnatal care, particularly at night time, who did not always treat women with kindness and compassion.



We want to thank Healthwatch Richmond for their support and energy in producing this report. We welcome the findings to help us drive improvements in relation to: visitor restriction policies, experiences of postnatal care particularly on the ward, virtual appointments and communication.

- West Middlesex Hospital

Outcomes

The trust was very receptive to our findings including those that were more challenging and required action. We participated in a workshop with staff from both hospitals to explore the concerns arising from this report and what could be done to address them.

Whilst we're positive that this work will have been positive and impactful, the pressures of the increased levels of Covid in early 2021 led to a pause in our contact with maternity services and we anticipate an update on the actions and changes that resulted from this work shortly after the publication of this report.

Helping you find the answers

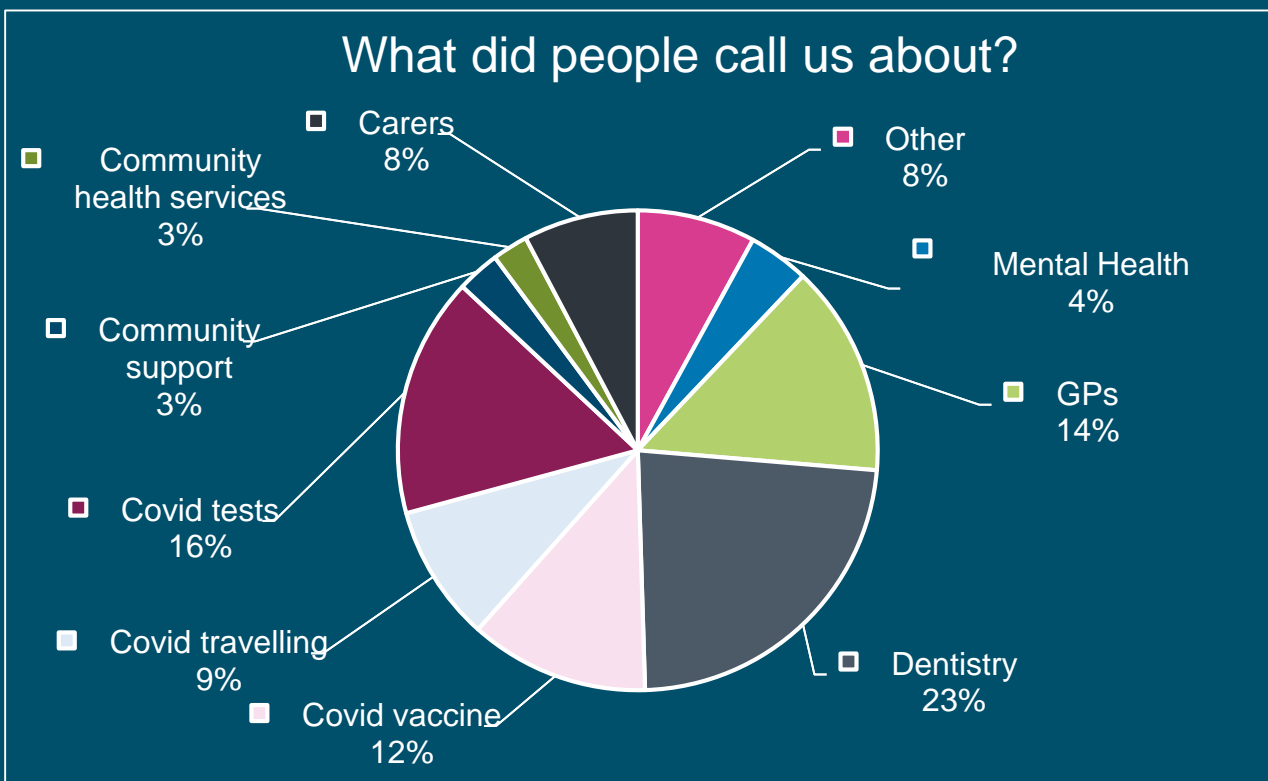


Helping you find answers to your questions

A key part of our work is helping people to find answers to their questions about NHS services, social care or community support.

We help people to find answers to their questions through our outreach, events and engagement work, our communications and through people contacting us by email and phone. In 2020/21:

- 414 people got support by phone or email (+29% above last year)
- 450 people’s questions were answered through our vaccination events
- 78,000 people found information through our website (15 times last year)
- 87,000 guides to NHS Care & Support were distributed.



Thank you so much for your help. I'm going to get through today. I may find myself in A&E over the weekend. But just having you pick the phone up and being there has been a life-saving service.

- Person seeking support to avoid a mental health crisis

Helping you find answers to your questions

Your Guide to Richmond's NHS, Care and Support Services

Our work during the pandemic highlighted the importance of printed material for those who are digitally excluded. We produced a short directory in April 2020 and April 2021 and distributed 87,000 copies to homes across the borough to help people find the right care, information and support when they need it.

I just wanted to comment on how helpful the NHS and care guide is which just came through the door. It is incredibly reassuring to know there is such a breadth of support and care - and it's so clearly put together in the guide.

- Feedback from a member of the community

As well as being a document that people find immediately useful, we know that people keep hold of these documents for some time, making use of them and contacting us when they need more help.



Help and Complaints

PALS - Patient Advice & Liaison

Every NHS provider will have a PALS department which can:

- Provide guidance on what you should expect from your care
- Help resolve questions or concerns you may have around treatment, including information on complaints
- Provide contact details for support groups outside the NHS

Local PALS

- Hounslow R. Trust 0800 95
- West Middlesex wmpals@chel
- Kingston Hosp shift.pals@nh
- South West Lo 020 3513 615

You can find the relevant PALS service using www.nhs.uk or by calling your GP surgery or local hospital.

NHS Complaints Advocacy

If you wish to make a complaint about your NHS care and need independent help, Cambridge House can provide advocacy to help you form your complaint and guide you through the different stages.

As well as NHS Complaints Advocacy, Cambridge House is the first point of contact for all advocacy in Richmond.

Healthwatch Richmond

We can help you find up to date information about how services are working as they adapt to changes resulting from Covid-19. We're also working to improve the things that matter to you. Call us with your questions or to share your experiences with us in confidence:

- Call: 0208 099 5335
- Email: info@healthwatchrichmond.co.uk
- Visit: www.healthwatchrichmond.co.uk



The impact of helping you find answers to your questions

The impact of our signposting work is best told through the stories of the people that we help and their feedback to us about the help that we gave them:

In the past fortnight I have spoken to 111, 119, GP, Nurse at Vaccination Centre, Richmond Council, West Mid and the Community Hub. Everyone was very sympathetic but they couldn't help.

You provided a clear understanding of our situation and how to proceed. When that didn't work you connected all of these unfathomable dots on our behalf and this morning I had a call & text confirming an appointment for a vaccination. Thanks again for everything, we appreciate it enormously.

- The parent of a 16-18 year old with a serious medical condition who was eligible for, but could not access a vaccine

Thank you so very much for your very valuable time yesterday which was really extra helpful and kind. Based on the information you provided I am able to fly home to be with my children. It is so appreciated to deal with helpful people in such extraordinary times.

- A person was able to return home to their family after we helped them to find the legally permitted reasons for traveling

Thank you for following it up and for your help. I think your involvement has moved things along apace. Mum had her jab this morning and I got a call from the Practice manager confirming that her records have been updated to show she is Housebound.

- The carer of a vulnerable housebound person who was eligible for, but could not access a vaccine



**Talk
to us...**

Responding to Covid



Responding to Covid

DBS checks

To support our voluntary sector organisations to help as many people as possible we did 225 DBS checks for them free of charge.

Our work saved **Neighborhood Care Groups 39 days of staff time** they spent supporting members of the community and led to at least **450 of the most vulnerable members of our community receiving support** on average each week who might not otherwise have done so.

Healthwatch's assistance in processing the DBS checks for volunteers has been invaluable over the past year as we have needed to bring on new volunteers to meet increased requests for help. Processing DBS checks is time consuming and something our one part-time member of staff would have struggled to do whilst working from home. By taking this out of our hands it has enabled us to concentrate on responding to requests for help during this incredibly busy time

- Feedback from a local charity

This support was particularly important as many of those who had volunteered for these organisations before the pandemic were unable to continue as they became shielders and themselves had support needs.

With Richmond Healthwatch's help, we speedily filled the gap left by our older volunteers who, in February 2020, represented $\frac{2}{3}$ of our volunteers. We've had a 20% increase in client numbers but thanks to your help we've been able to continue to support all our clients.

- Testimony from a local charity

Whilst we're proud to have played an essential role, we are also incredibly grateful to the charities and volunteers who delivered such vital support during the pandemic. We are also very grateful to Richmond Council, Richmond Parish Lands Charity and Richmond Council for Voluntary Service for funding to help us cover the costs of this work.

It was fantastic! incredibly smooth process.

- Feedback from a volunteer using the service

Responding to Covid

Vaccination information events

To answer people's questions about Covid vaccination we ran several online events. They were well received with almost 500 people taking part or contacting us as a result of our work.

In total we answered **450 separate questions on vaccination** through our events (356) and wider signposting work (64) work and another **18,185 people found vaccination information on our website**.



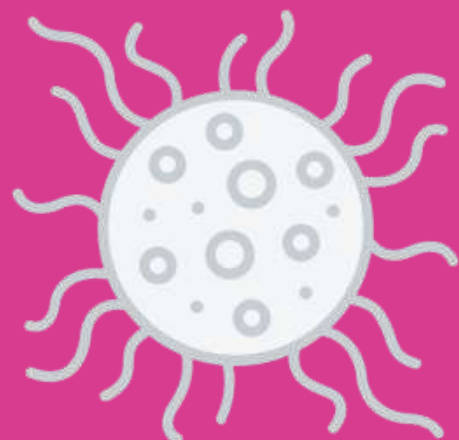
*Many thanks for your detailed & informative reply to my enquiry.
The more I hear & read the more re-assured I am*



- Feedback from a person asking a question after an event

Community Hub

We helped to set up the phone line that linked vulnerable people from the community with voluntary sector support for things like shopping, collecting medications.



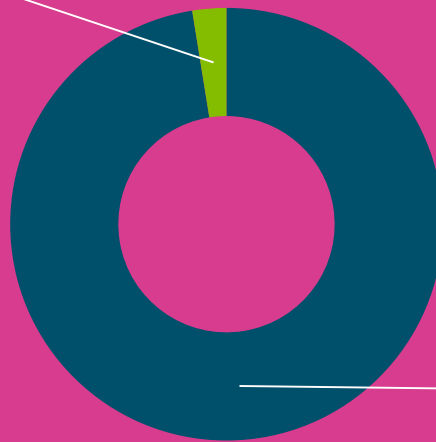
Our finances



Finances

Income

Additional Income,
£3,800



Healthwatch Funding
from Local Authority,
£146,000

Total Income: £149,800

Expenditure

Operational,
£40,600



Support &
Administration,
£600

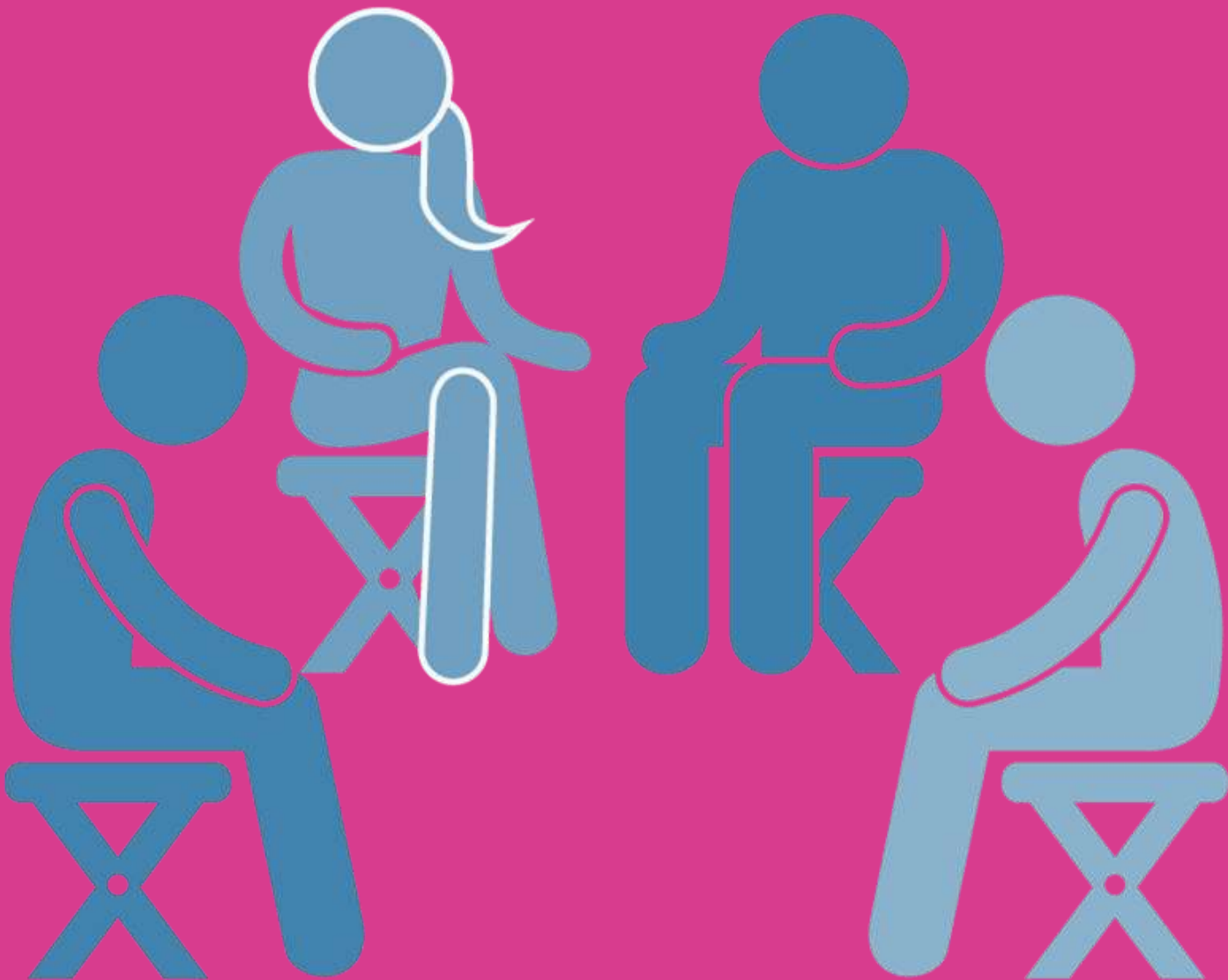
Staff, £108,600

Total Expenditure: £149,800

This financial statement provides figures accurate to the nearest £100. Essential operational costs include office and premises costs, meeting costs, travel, print, operational costs of undertaking projects, marketing and the insurance and financial support required to run the Healthwatch contract. Support and administration costs relate to the services and activities necessary to ensure that Healthwatch Richmond is run safely, legally, and effectively, and include audit and governance costs.

Our plans for 2021-22

A message from our Chief Officer



Our plans for next year:

A message from our Chief Officer

A year of change

The past year saw huge changes for everyone and we were no exception. The shift from face to face to remote working was a rapid and revolutionary change for us all.

We were in the fortunate position of having plans and systems that allowed us to make the transition effectively. Changing our ways of working and responding to completely new and rapidly changing priorities was more of a challenge, and one that suited flexibility and innovation over planning.

I am immensely proud of the efforts of the team - staff, volunteers and Trustees - and of what we have achieved.

As 2020/21 ends, we're looking forward to returning to a planned approach as set out below to the return of face to face working. Whilst we'll be cautious and safe in this, we look forward to re-establishing our relationships and indeed to seeing our key stakeholders, our volunteers and our wider community.

Looking ahead

We'll need to retain the skills we developed over the past year, relearn old ones and define new relationships with our volunteers, key stakeholders and find ways to reach community groups that we were unable to engage remotely. I am particularly looking forward to seeing our Trustees and volunteers again.

We'll also see Clinical Commissioning Groups, the NHS leaders (which merged across South West London in 2020), hand the baton on to Integrated Care Systems (ICS). The ICS will bring social care and NHS providers and commissioners together in Richmond and across South West London in a move from commissioning to collaboration. These bodies and our relationships with them will need attention as they develop.

Plans for 2021/22

Our initial priorities are:

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Adult Mental Health
- Vaccinations
- Long Covid service
- Accessing primary care

As there are significant changes in the way that decisions are made through the setup of the Integrated Care System and our Borough's Place Leadership group, we expect that we will need to develop our plans and adopt a flexible approach over the year.

Mike Derry
Chief Officer
Healthwatch Richmond

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Youth Out Loud!
Twitter @Youth_OutLoud
Instagram @youth_outloud



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