

# Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Enfield  
Annual Report 2021–22



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# Message from our Chair

I am pleased to share with you the 2021/22 annual report for Healthwatch Enfield.

In our first year of delivering the Healthwatch Enfield contract I'm really proud of the way the Enfield team have overcome the challenges of a transition phase during a pandemic. I would like to thank all the staff and the dedicated volunteers who have persevered and helped to ensure your voices were heard.

It was clear that access to Primary Care had worsened during the pandemic, so we worked alongside local NHS service managers to improve access to face-to-face appointments and the GP reception experience, and to identify the barriers to digital communication.

The pandemic also highlighted the existing deep inequalities in the delivery of health and care services and the need to build trust and stronger relationships with local groups. In response, we collaborated with the Edmonton Community Partnership to improve our understanding of the health care needs of the Bulgarian community and fed back to commissioners that the provision of interpreters is a key concern.

We are pleased to be able to restart our programme of 'Enter & View' visits to care homes and plan to expand this programme to assess more local care homes in the coming year. Volunteers who visited homes provided helpful feedback to managers who have gone on to improve the experience for residents, carers and relatives.

A key objective for next year is to build on this work by expanding our volunteer groups and by forming a passionate and grassroots-led Local Committee. We will continue to focus on health inequalities, with an emphasis on access to Primary Care, NHS dental care, and Health and social care provision in the borough.

I would also like to thank the Council, NHS colleagues, and other key stakeholders for the welcome they have given us and their support in our first year of the contract and we look forward to working with you in the future.



Christine Vigars  
**Healthwatch Enfield Chair**

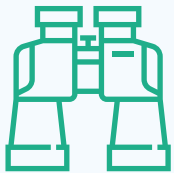
“The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities.”

**Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England**

# About us

## Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Enfield is your local health and social care champion. From Lower Edmonton to Chase and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other 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.



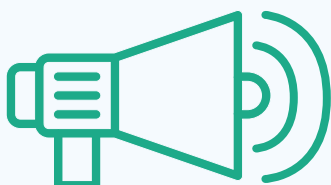
### Our values

- **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 care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

## Reaching out



**843 people**

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

**270 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19.

## Making a difference to care



We published

**3 reports**

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

Our most popular report was

**Improving access to GP services through engagement**

which highlighted the struggles people have with access.

## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**14**

outstanding volunteers, who gave up 60 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received

**£120,111**

We also employ

**3 staff**

who help us carry out this work. Two are full-time and one part-time.

## How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.

### COVID Support



Teaming up with four local Healthwatch across North Central London, we gathered insights about people living with Long COVID. We shared the findings with local press and statutory healthcare services.



From running an advice line to distributing flyers in GP surgeries, our volunteers helped to raise awareness of local support, services, and vaccine centres to help combat COVID-19.

### Access



We urged GP Practices to make their services easier to access after surveying 360 people about their experiences and shared our report with decision-makers.



Teaming up with the Edmonton Community Partnership we carried out engagement work to improve our understanding of the local Bulgarian community and to help them sign up to their local GP.

### Insights



We re-launched our programme of Care Home Enter & View visits to talk to residents, families, and staff to learn about their experiences of local care homes.



With temporary visitor restrictions in place in hospitals across England, we asked people about their experiences of visiting and contacting loved ones in hospital and how easy it was to connect with hospital staff.

# 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 feedback to services to help them improve.



## Making Access to GP Services Easier

Thanks to people sharing their experience of accessing Primary Care through surveys, our signposting service, and engagement work, we have helped the Local Government and North Central London Integrated Care Provider (ICP) to understand how services are being provided 'post' pandemic as the challenges in healthcare delivery continue.

Access to GP services and Primary Care worsened during the pandemic, largely due to staff pressures, increased demand, and the majority of services migrating online due to the fast-tracked 'Digital First', where access was mobilised online.

Following engagement work with people from the Bulgarian community we identified that people were having trouble accessing health and care services as a result of language barriers and social isolation.

Working with the Edmonton Community Partnership we wanted to explore some of the barriers in more detail to understand why they and other local residents weren't able to access the support they needed.



**56% of 109 people**

who contacted us wanted to make a complaint about primary care.

In addition to our engagement work in the Bulgarian community we received a high number of calls from people having difficulty accessing and registering with their GP surgery. We wanted to identify the key themes using your shared experiences. With the support of our volunteers, we heard from 360 people during our research and signposting service and used this feedback to advise the Local Government, and the North Central London Integrated Care Provider (ICP) that change was needed to make services GP and primary care services more accessible.

The top 3 issues raised on your behalf included:

- (1) Access to face-to-face appointments
- (2) Impolite reception staff
- (3) Digital exclusion for online appointments

### What difference did this make

We provided insights on your behalf about how primary care services are being provided 'post' pandemic and identified the key themes with top decision makers in health and care so that they can better understand what's working well and what could work better.



**"GP Access is vital; it is the first point of call for all access to health services for our residents."  
Michelle Malwah, Community Engagement Manager at Healthwatch Enfield.**





## Getting back into the community

It's more important than ever that we create a programme of work that champions the voices of those who all too often go unheard in Enfield. Currently, 16,000 people in Enfield haven't registered with a GP and the impact of existing inequalities due to income, ethnicity, disability, age, and environment are becoming more apparent.

Our Annual Report represents how we have supported you, the local residents and patients of Enfield. A significant part of our recent work has focused on strengthening our organisation so that we can make sure that your voice is heard, and decision-makers have the knowledge to reduce the barriers you face.

Due to taking on the delivery of the Enfield Contract in June 2021 in the midst of the COVID-19 lock-down, less outreach work was carried out by the team. As a result, we focused our efforts on signposting, a support line, surveys and designing a programme of work for the remainder of 2022.

This is why we have invested a significant amount of time in training and recruiting volunteers and building up a larger core team to facilitate the engagement and communications we have planned for 2022–23. This is so that we can increase our reach and make stronger grassroots connections to ensure that local services reflect the needs of people living with a range of health conditions and community groups.

### Building a diverse and passionate Local Committee

This Summer we will host our first Committee meeting following months of recruitment and advertising so that we can build a team of authentic, knowledgeable, and well-connected local Committee Volunteers who can champion your voice at regular intervals at our (bi-monthly) committee meetings. Our programme of work includes:

- GP Access
- Tackling local health inequalities
- Access to NHS Dental care



### The health risks we are tackling in Enfield

Through our research we have identified that the key health risks within Enfield include Hypertension, Obesity Stroke, and Chronic Heart Disease (CHD). In the North West and Sout East of the borough, there is a higher prevalence of CHD, stroke, and anti-fibrillation. Whereas in the the North East and South East there are higher levels of smoking, obesity, and diabetes.

We will be tackling some of these issues, starting with a hypertension project by running focus groups, raising awareness about the risk factors, and signposting where to get help and support.

## How we have made a difference for the community

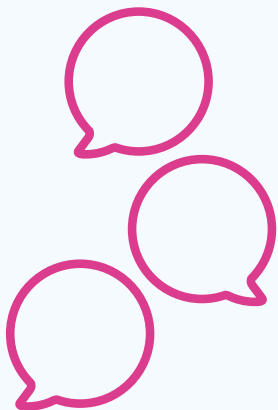
Through our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



### Improving the quality of life in care homes

**In order to reduce the risk of ill-health, it's essential that Care Home Managers have access to genuine insights by involving the people who receive and deliver care within care homes.**

Thanks to residents in care homes sharing their views and experiences, service managers were able to improve residents' comfort. This included changes to the garden area so residents can be more involved in helping in the garden and encouraging residents in the planning and implementation of the changes. We also recommended additional activities for residents with mobility issues and recommended more frequent resident meetings to provide a space for sharing concerns.



### Increasing awareness of GP access

**Helping local Bulgarians to discover and access the health and care they need by strengthening grassroots communication channels.**

Last year we teamed up with Edmonton Community Partnership and spoke directly with people from the Bulgarian Community at the Ark Community Food Bank, a local shopping centre and Edmonton Green to understand their barriers to accessing health and care services.

Working alongside Bulgarian support workers enabled us to build trust and raise awareness of local health services. Many people told us that they were wary of the system and weren't aware of service availability.

We learnt that some Eastern European communities can only speak their own language and don't read it, so printing leaflets isn't always the solution. With the help of the support workers and translators we were able to identify the right communication channels and locate where communities hang out online.

As a result, we provided information about local health and advice through a wider range of channels, including translation via local Turkish and Bulgarian radio, specific social media groups and direct phone calls. This helped to alleviate some of the fear and anxiety people were feeling about the system.

We also gave out fifty GP cards to explain that neither a proof of status or an ID is needed to register with a GP and families were guided to local walk-in sessions on the same day, with 18 people signing up to a GP on the spot by simply realising that they could.

# 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 helped people by:

- Helping them to find and access local health and care services
- Linking them to their local patient groups
- Providing feedback postcards with QR codes in GP clinics
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme



## Signposting support for people with Long COVID

Many people diagnosed with COVID-19 have experienced longer-term symptoms, affecting many aspects of their life. This is called Long Covid or Post-Covid Syndrome.

Between October and November 2021, we partnered with four other local Healthwatch and spoke to over 53 people who were experiencing Long COVID to gather their experiences across the treatment pathway.

By teaming up with other Healthwatch organisations, we were able to signpost people onto other support services such as their GP for specialist testing and support.

Given that Long COVID is relatively widespread, and there is now a body of learning and research, we hope that in future clinicians will be better placed to diagnose, and to refer to specialist testing and support with the recommendation from our recent report.



## Raising awareness of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

With 80% of GP surgeries in Enfield offering a Patient Participation Group, we wanted to ensure that people were aware of the benefits of the services, to de-mystify some of the terminology around patient participation groups and explore ways of making them more accessible to local residents.

We created a Patient Participation Group landing page on our website inviting people to join their local group and the benefits of joining.

We produced advice for the public, telling them what to expect from a Patient Group and how it can provide them with more power to get involved in decisions about the range, shape, and quality of services provided by GP practices.



**"The vast majority of GP practices in Enfield (80%) are confirmed to have a Patient Participation Group. While this is the case, we are unsure as to how active they may be (online content is often lacking, or outdated)."**

**GP Access Report 2021**



# Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Enfield. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Carried out a GP website audit
- Carried out an Enter & View visit at a local care home
- Represented Healthwatch Enfield at local meetings





### Jas

"I have volunteered with HW Enfield for 5 years and remain passionate about all aspects of health and social care - more so as so much is changing around us. I sincerely believe and live in hope that what the local diverse communities share with Healthwatch has an impact on how services are delivered at the local level and their voices are heard at the top level where policies are made. That is what keeps me engaged with Healthwatch. The roles are varied. I am also an authorised Enter & View assessor. The Team at Healthwatch Enfield have always been very professional, supportive and value all the volunteers."



### Janice

"I was pleased that we were able to get back out into the community and do an Enter and View visit to a local Care Home. Also, happy to promote Healthwatch as their representative on Enfield Dementia Action Alliance and a member of their steering group."

### Margaret

"I have found volunteering with Healthwatch to be interesting and rewarding and am very impressed with the passion and knowledge of other volunteers and staff."



### Do you feel inspired?

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

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

 020 8373 6283

 [admin@healthwatchenfield.co.uk](mailto:admin@healthwatchenfield.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.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£120,811	Staff costs	£70,555
Additional funding	£0	Operational costs	£13,816
Total income	£120,811	Total expenditure	£84,371

## Top four priorities for 2022–23

1. Establishing a grassroots-led Local Committee
2. Tackling local health inequalities
3. Access to NHS dental care
4. Improving GP Access and awareness of GP Patient Groups

## Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, income or race.

We will be working to understand what matters to the local communities, so that local public service providers can listen to ideas and co-design any changes to strengthen the local VSC infrastructure by addressing current gaps in representation.

Along with our Healthwatch colleagues we will be speaking to residents at risk of hypertension, highlighting the risk factors, actions they can take to minimise the risk, and advising on how and where to get their blood pressure checked.

We will also support the development of the 2022–23 Enfield Local Account programme, providing a detailed in depth look at the way Adult social care is provided in Enfield, and how well the borough is doing in meeting the needs of Enfield residents who require care and support. We will continue our scheduled programme of Enter and View visits over the year and outreach work in the community.

# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Enfield Community House, 311 Fore St, Edmonton, London, N9 0PZ. The contract is currently delivered by Healthwatch Central West London.

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





## The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch board consists of 8 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.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. We do this via information we receive from our signposting service and well as conducting surveys asking local residents what they think we should investigate that year. This ranges from GP access to mental health services.

### **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 2021–22 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 ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website, send it out to our network of service providers, local commissioners, councillors and to local residents and patients.

### **Responses to recommendations and requests**

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to make use of our Enter and View powers for most of the year until February 2022 with a programme of activity underway for the remainder of 2022.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

## **Health and Wellbeing Board**

Healthwatch Enfield was represented by Tania Kerno. During 2021-22 our representative effectively carried out this role by sharing the experiences of local people throughout the year.

# healthwatch

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