

# Understanding good care

Healthwatch Waltham Forest  
Annual Report 2023–2024



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**"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."**

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



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# Message from our Chief Executive

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## Introduction

We began the year out in the community asking people what they thought good care looked like to them. Many of the people we talked to may not normally have their voice heard particularly, Pakistani and Muslim women, people attending food banks and men. They took part in workshops, feedback walls and questionnaires, providing us with incredible insight.

We continued to bring people's feedback on services into our community insights system from a wide range of public, statutory and voluntary sector sources. Our unique coding system then allows us to identify where in the care journey there might be problems and who those problems might be impacting the most.

The outcome of all this work is the understanding that local people believe good care should be: accessible, competent, person centered and trustworthy. We are calling this the Good Care Framework and have started applying it to all aspects of our work. [What Good Care Looks Like to People in Waltham Forest](#)

We know that GP access continues to be the most important issue for local people. As well as our regular GP community insights reports we started to produce and present reports at a Primary Care Network level [You can read the reports here](#). They allow the Waltham Forest Primary Care Transformation group to understand where things are improving and help understand why and to measure whether changes are having an impact over time.

Our increased understanding of why the Pakistani, Black African and Caribbean communities may be hesitant to receive vaccines was quickly picked up and used by the Waltham Forest group with oversight of the vaccine programme, as well as London wide groups, to inform communication and covid vaccine delivery.

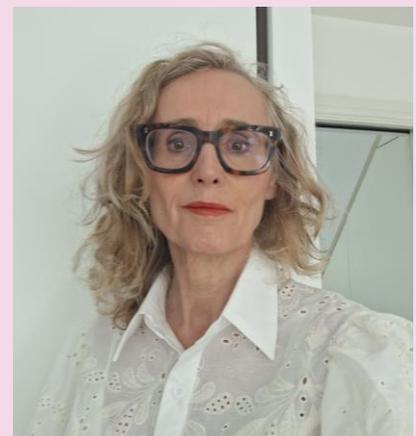
We have a well-respected voice on the Waltham Forest Health and Care Partnership Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board due to our clear evidence-based input that allows us to voice the views of different communities and groups. We produce regular reports for the Waltham Forest Quality and Performance Group and sit on the Health Scrutiny and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees.



**“Developing the good care framework to measure what local people think good services look like has been a game changer for us. We are incredibly excited to see it being used across Waltham Forest health and care programmes.**

**We continue to build a body of community insights on health and care services to ensure no service is developed, designed or delivered without taking into account local peoples views .”**

Dianne Barham, Chief Executive Healthwatch Waltham Forest



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# About us

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## Healthwatch Waltham Forest 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 care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



# Year in review

## Reaching out:

**5,062 people**

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, allowing us to identify 20,399 issues helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.



**192 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

**51 reports**

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

Our most popular report was

**Good Care Conversation**

which highlighted what local people think good care looks like to them.



## Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

**7**

outstanding volunteers who gave up 64 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2023 - 24 we received

**£111,690**

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

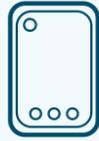
**6 staff**

who help us carry out our work.



# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



GP phone system improvements were introduced following our report on GP access.



A home care patient leaflet and further investigations into the timeliness of visits was undertaken following our community insights reporting.

Summer



Care Home staff, healthcare professionals, residents and family members improved the way they work together following our Care Home review.



Whipps Cross Hospital discharge processes were informed by the findings our Enter and View Visit to Elizabeth Ward.

Autumn



Our 'Big Conversation' set out what good care means to local people. Health and care providers began using it to help design, commission and deliver services.



Our insights on vaccine literacy informed targeted communication campaigns to the Pakistani community.

Winter



Our support and evaluation of a GP led community clinic identified a demand for this type of provision. Learning is informing more integrated community-based provision including prevention programmes.



Promoting wellbeing programmes in Waltham Forest adopted the Good Care principles of good care – accessible, competent, patient centred and trustworthy developed by Healthwatch.

# Your voice heard at a wider level

## We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Waltham Forest influence decisions made about services at North East London Integrated Care System (NEL ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch across North East London to achieve:



**The Big Conversation**– the eight Healthwatch worked for the ICS to ask over a thousand residents what good care looked like to them. They told us it should be accessible, competent, person-centred, and trustworthy. The ICB have agreed these principles as a success measure for all partners moving forward and we will use our Community Insights System to monitor progress. This will strengthen the ICBs focus on making a difference to what local people feel is most important. [What does good care look like to local people?](#)

**Care Homes** – in 2022 each Healthwatch visited **care homes** in their borough to talk to staff and residents about how GPs and other care staff could support residents. This year, using our insights, simple information was produced for Homes on how doctors, nurses, carers and volunteers could work with them to look after residents. Better joined up care means that residents are less likely to deteriorate, can remain comfortable in familiar surroundings and are less likely to be admitted to hospital. [Care Homes Direct Enhanced Service](#)



We helped the NEL ICB **Research Engagement Network** to improve participation in research by engaging over 300 people from diverse communities at events and over 400 through a survey. We identified community priorities for research and used the Big Conversation principles to lay out how research could be accessible, competent, patient centred and trustworthy. We want to get the message out that if you want medical products and services to meet the health needs of your community you need to be involved in the research that develops them. [Research Engagement Network Report](#)

Our 2023 report on inequality in maternity services has helped improve services including:

- The introduction of a new app providing instant translation in different languages, British Sign Language and subtitles, Easy Read for those with learning disabilities, and a 'read aloud' function for those with visual impairment or literacy issues.
- e-learning Trauma-informed care courses for Midwifery Unit staff
- A planned Maternal Health Inequalities day with a focus on service user voice driving change
- Work towards a central helpline in each Maternity Unit
- Commitment to translate patient information leaflets for emergency Maternity.



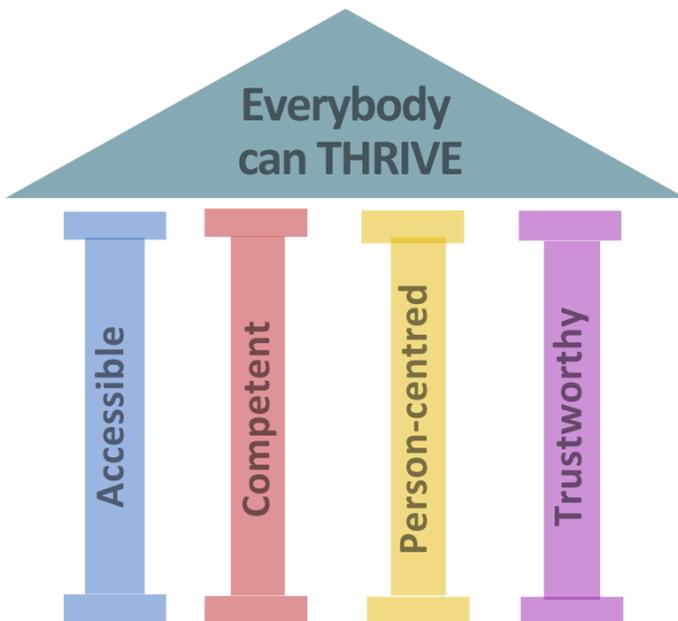


# Understanding good care

**We set out to understand what local people felt was important for their health and wellbeing. What we discovered was a set of principles that all health and care services could measure themselves against.**

# What does good care look like to local people?

We went out into the community to ask local people what good health and care means to them. We took what they told us and identified themes; these themes eventually developed into four pillars of good care. Wider issues also impact good care at a society level, 'the wider determinants', or what helps people thrive e.g. housing, employment, environment, education and safety etc.



We set out what good does and doesn't look like under each pillar and how these might be applied to mental health, long-term conditions, babies, children and young people and work force development in health and care. [Good Care Report](#)

The pillars impact each other. If access to services is difficult people's trust in the service can be gradually eroded. On the other hand, improving peoples access through understanding their personal access preferences can build trust.

This Good Care Framework now underpins everything we do and is used across the Waltham Forest Health Care Partnership as a measure of how well services and decisions about the environment in which people live meet their health and care needs.

## What difference did this make?

- The Good Care Framework is an accepted structure against which strategic plans are measured to understand if they are meeting what local people want from health and care. It has been integral in shaping the **Waltham Forest Health and Care Partnership** priorities for 24/25 .
- Any **commissioned services** now need to showcase how they will deliver services which deliver the pillars of Good Care, to ensure they respond to the needs of local people. The Good Care Framework is also being used to monitor commissioned services to measure the impact.
- **The Care Closer to Home and Centre of Excellence** programme has committed to embedding the principles of good care within its service transformation work, including the development of Locality Hubs.
- The **Primary Care Transformation** Group and the **Quality and Performance** Group have worked to align the coding themes of the Community Insights System to the four Good Care pillars to enable them to measure improvements in GP Practices and Primary Care Networks overtime.
- **Babies, Children and Young People** Strategy group and **Mental Health** Transformation group are aligning their programmes to the Good Care Framework

# What are people's views on vaccines?

**We asked local people from Pakistani, Black African and Caribbean communities whether they were planning to have the Covid vaccine and the reasons behind their decision.**

- Many people just seemed to have had enough of vaccines. Around 40% of respondents thought it was easy to get vaccines and that there weren't significant side effects, but still choose not to have one.
- Nearly half (47%) of the respondents believed that Covid was no longer a significant threat.
- Around 60% people were worried about adverse reactions.
- Many just felt that they hadn't had enough information from their GP.

[Attitudes towards vaccines report](#)

What does this mean for a vaccine uptake strategy?

## Accessible

Acknowledge and address obstacles in accessing vaccines and information about them, including those relating to disability, neurodivergence, poverty and time.

## Competent

Address local people's concerns, including those around side effects, in an evidence-based, easy to understand manner.

## Person-centred

Understand that different groups have different communication needs and engage using different channels; tailor your messaging accordingly. Make it easy to get vaccines on an appointment or walk-in basis in different community locations (GPs, pharmacies, community centres etc.).

## Trustworthy

Identify "trusted influencers" for different groups; listen to local people's concerns and engage with them in an honest and specific manner.

## What difference did it make?

- findings fed directly into the North East London and Londonwide vaccination communication influencing campaigns focusing on specific ethnic minority communities with tailored messaging targeting trusted information sources.
- presented to the London Pakistani and the Bangladeshi Vaccine Groups to influence local, regional and national NHS strategies.
- the Spring vaccine campaign in Waltham Forest, Newham and Tower Hamlets piloted our project findings, promoting clinics through GP practices and working alongside faith groups.
- we are now looking at Romanian residents' vaccine and immunisation literacy and their understanding of primary care.



**"In my GP surgery they never have time for me when I need them... but they do have time to send me reminders about vaccines that I don't want all the time!"**

Black African woman, Waltham Forest, decided against flu/vaccine booster

# Improving GP Access

Our community insights show that GP access is still the biggest issue for local people.



GP Feedback received by Healthwatch 2022-24, 4,475 comments, 14,391 issues.

## Local people have told us that access could be improved by:

- Flexible user-friendly booking systems
- Better telephone systems and responsiveness
- More online appointments
- More e-consult but with simpler online booking forms.
- More routine/ non same-day appointments
- Greater choice of how they are seen:
  - in person/ over the phone/ online
  - At their practice, at a Locality Hub or at an Urgent Treatment Centre.

[What does good GP care look like to local people?](#)



## What difference did it make?

Primary Care Networks have focused on improving access through:

- improving phone lines, websites, and appointment processes.
- increasing online consultations for those who could benefit.
- providing access 6.30pm and 8pm Mondays to Fridays and 9am and 5pm on Saturdays.
- a Same Day Access service, for patients who fit referral criteria, directed via 111 or the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) provided by Waltham Forest GP Federation.
- enabling pharmacies to complete episodes of care for 7 common conditions.



## Experience of access

The good news is that these changes seem to be showing a gradual but steady improvement in peoples experience of accessing services.

[Experience of GP services](#)



**It's a constant battle to get appointments, to ask for services, to be proactive in remembering the need for next steps in diagnosis and treatment.**

Black African British resident in Waltham Forest

# Are care providers working better together to support care home residents?

**We talked to residents, carers and staff at care homes about how well GPs and other care support providers work together to support less capable residents.**

People felt that there had been positive change and improved collaboration has resulted in a more holistic and personalised approach to care. Working with the integrated care team we suggested how those improvements could be expanded on:

- Offer ongoing training program to staff to enhance collaboration and understanding of the approach's benefits and implementation.
- Strengthen feedback mechanisms to involve residents and families in shaping the care model.
- Collaborate with residents, family members, and healthcare professionals to develop comprehensive, personalised care plans that address all aspects of well-being.
- Organise workshops to foster open discussions among healthcare professionals, enhancing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and understanding of different roles.
- Implement a robust documentation system to track progress, interventions, and outcomes promoting accountability and transparency.
- Engage with a larger and more diverse group of residents, family and carers to provide deeper insights into the approach.
- Develop tailored communication, including visual aids and simplified language, to facilitate meaningful interactions with less capable residents.

**97%**

**of care homes would feel comfortable contacting the GP outside of scheduled home rounds.**



## What difference did it make?

- a more holistic approach to care, emphasising residents' overall well-being.
- smoother transitions for residents returning from hospital due to enhanced communication.
- personalised care plans and tailored interventions.
- quicker referrals allowing for better resources for residents



**“Yes, obviously things have changed because you have the monthly meeting and everyone is involved. Before it was all the outside agents come and go with minimum communication..”**

Care Home Manager



# 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 voice is heard, and services meet their needs.**

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

- Running an event in partnership with Waltham Forest Islamic Association specifically to reach Pakistani women.
- Engaging with people attending a local foodbank
- Working in partnership with our health and care system partners to ask local people where they think it is most important to spend money to improve the health of local people.

# Three ways we have made a difference in the community

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

## Taking services out into the community

With the Walthamstow Central Primary Care Network, we delivered a community clinic for people with long term conditions who were disengaged from their GP. The clinic provided GP appointments, health and dental checks and vaccinations alongside housing, finance and digital access advice. We wanted to demonstrate that actively engaging people at the community could help build greater trust in, and interaction with, the health and care system.

Learning is being used to inform more integrated community-based provision including prevention programmes. The intention is to pilot other mechanisms to bring together primary care, local authority, and VCS services to tackle health inequalities and promote prevention programmes.



## Involving men

**Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.**

Looking at our community insights we realised that we hadn't heard from enough men. That makes it hard to understand if services are meeting their needs. We worked with our health and care partners to run an event outside Leyton Orient Football Club on a match day specifically to reach men. To be honest, it still wasn't that successful. It is hard to get men to talk about their health and the partnership is developing a longer-term programme to target men at the point where they are receiving services e.g. at the GP or hospital.



## Improving maternal health for Black, Asian and minority ethnic women

Over the past two years we have produced a series of reports on the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women and those living in the most deprived areas of maternal care. The aim is to improve equity and equality of women's experience of GPs, community midwives and hospital-based services. We continue to work with the local Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnerships and through the Community Insights System to measure whether care is accessible, competent, person centred and trustworthy. We have highlighted the impact that difficult GP access can have on outcomes and the importance of clear information when arriving at Whipps Cross Maternity unit.





# 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, making 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 access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

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# Improving communications for patients on Elizabeth Ward at Whipps Cross Hospital

It's essential that people have clear, accurate communication about their care.

**Having clear information about how the ward works and what to expect when you're discharged can make a big difference to patients' levels of anxiety and trust in their care and their recovery.**

Following our Enter and View visit to Elizabeth Ward in November 2022, one of our recommendations was for the service to create a patient information leaflet about the ward, including instructions on how to make a complaint. In response, the service developed an action plan to address these improvements.

They have now produced a comprehensive Welcome Information leaflet for patients, family members, and carers. Additionally, a new Complaints & Compliments leaflet has been created and will be distributed to patients during the welcome stage, along with other informational materials.



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## Improving womens health

**Women in Waltham Forest will receive improved access to women's health services and should feel that services are working better together to meet their needs.**



Over 200, largely Muslim and Pakistani, women attended our women's event in July. They told us they were waiting too long for gynaecology services, that services didn't work well together and that they would like to see more women focused GP services. Women from ethnic minority communities and those with disabilities felt most effected by access issues. We are working with Waltham Forest Women's Network and the ICB to design a Women's Health Hub that will better address these issues.

**We are working with Waltham Forest Women's Network and the Integrated Care Board to develop a Women's Health Hub in Waltham Forest.**

- We want to build a women's co-production group to lead this work. If you can share your experiences, share information about the project with other local women and come together to help co-design the service then please sign up here.



# 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:**

- Visited communities to promote their local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve



### Jennie – visiting health services

During the last year I was able to visit the heart ward at my local hospital as part of the Enter and View Team. We had the chance to talk to patients about all aspects of their care, the environment, staffing and their understanding of the complaints process and dementia care.

Their feedback highlighted good practice and identified some small areas that could be improved. I enjoy being part of the Healthwatch team ensuring that the care provided locally is the best it can be.”



### Maria – supporting our administration

“Being a volunteer in Healthwatch has provided me with many opportunities to develop new skills, such as managing stakeholders' queries, working with and supporting the rebranding of the organisation's governance policies and procedures and meeting the deadlines. The work with Healthwatch has open for me also career doors, giving me the opportunity to progress in my role in the NHS”



## Do you feel inspired?



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

- [www.healthwatchwalthamforest.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwalthamforest.co.uk)
- [08001455026](tel:08001455026)
- [info@healthwatchwalthamforest.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwalthamforest.org.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

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£111,699	Expenditure on pay	£91,236
Additional income	£24,158	Non-pay expenditure	£50,357
		Office and management fees	£6,647
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£135,848</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£148,239</b>

### Additional income is broken down by:

- £2,000 received from Healthwatch England for work on a project.
- £2,000 received from the local ICS for joint work on a project.
- £800 funding received from a local charity to support their project.

## ICS funding

Healthwatch across North East London also receives funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Representation on NEL ICS Strategic Meetings	£5,000
We also receive funding for the Community Insights Project to support delivery of the Community Insights System across the eight Healthwatch. This is not included in the Healthwatch Waltham Forest budget.	£70,000

## Next steps

**Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.**

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

### Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Making sure local people are at the heart of designing three new Integrated Care Locality Hubs and a Women's Health Hub in Waltham Forest.
2. Understanding the health needs and the experiences of the Romanian community.
3. Bringing together everyone's insights on how well services are working together for people with multiple long-term conditions and the frail to understand where the blockages might be and who we might not have heard from.



# Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Waltham Forest (delivered by Local Voice in the Community), 80 Redmans Road, London, E1 3AG**

**Healthwatch Waltham Forest uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.**

# The way we work

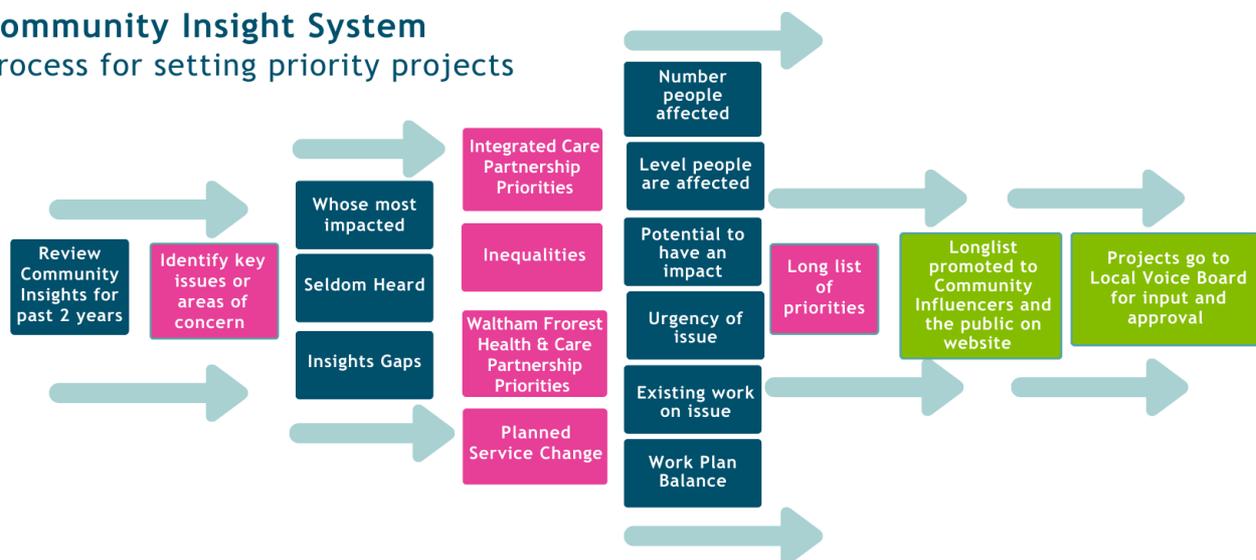
## Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Local Voice Board consists of five members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met five times and made decisions on matters such as reviewing the community insights gathered from local people and setting priorities and reviewing our monitoring reports and suggesting areas for improvement.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities through our community insights priority setting process.

### Community Insight System Process for setting priority projects



## Using everybody's insights

Our Community Insight System (CIS) is based on health and care partners, Healthwatch, Voluntary, Community partners and local people working together to gather and analyse local people's insights to identify needs, improve service design and quality and to tackle the root causes of health inequalities. The CIS brings together data from public, statutory and voluntary sources and codes it across the integrated care pathway, including the wider determinants of health. This allows us to:

- pinpoint where in a service issues occur and who is being impacted.
- analyse the experience of residents based on personal characteristics, life circumstances and equalities looking at the intersectionality of factors influencing people's health outcomes e.g. is class more important than ethnicity?
- focus limited engagement resources on understanding why issues are happening and how to tackle them.

## Enter and view

This year, we made one Enter and View visit to follow up on actions from our previous Enter and View at the Elizabeth Ward at Whipps Cross Hospital. We made eight recommendations or actions as a result of this activity and this was the impact.

Theme	Suggested Action	What happened as a result
Communication and interaction between patients and staff.	Improve communication with patients when involving them with decisions about their care and treatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During discussion with patient team to check out if patient understands and to ask patient to repeat back what has been discussed.</li> <li>• Summarise discussion and check if patient wants to add anything.</li> </ul>	. Communication with patients will be incorporated into the WXH Ward accreditation program. The Organizational and culture workshop held in July
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allow all Ward staff to access the Trusts Wellbeing service.</li> <li>• Put a TV in the quiet room so staff can relax on their break.</li> <li>• arrange away days or culture day to promote staff Wellbeing</li> </ul>	
Feedback and Complaints	Provide patient information about the service, including how to complain. :	A general ward leaflet was developed
Recovery and after care	Improve information on discharge processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the information available to patients on discharge to support them to understand who they can contact, when, why, how and what for.</li> <li>• Currently no System to fast track patient to GP. Only hospital follow up appointments are arranged within three months</li> </ul>	QI project and various T&F groups are in-place to support with discharge and discharge processes.  Healthwatch Waltham Forest to raise with GP providers and commissioners

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is represented on the Waltham Forest Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health and Care Partnership by Dianne Barham, Chief Executive. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by presenting insights gathered from local people, using community insights to inform papers presented and ensuring that the principles of the Good Framework are consistently adopted across the health and care system. Dianne leads the North East London Community Insights Steering Group and also sits on the North East London: Integrated Care Partnership, Integrated Care Board Steering Group; System Strategy Group and the Fuller Continuity of Care Working Group.



**healthwatch**  
Waltham Forest

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