



Together
we're making health
and social care better
Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Southwark

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

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

We have a strong focus and vision to ensure the people of Southwark receive the care they need to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing. Advisory Board members and volunteers are enthusiastic, with a strong desire to come together to support the Healthwatch Southwark team to achieve their aim and priorities. Volunteers have kindly provided over 200 days of volunteering to help guide, shape and support Healthwatch Southwark. The efforts of the community and the Healthwatch Southwark team have not gone unnoticed. This is evident in our report which captured the experiences of the Latin American community in Southwark and highlights the challenges they have faced when accessing local health and social care services.

Over the past year, our team has engaged local organisations and people to deliver health events, have collated information pertaining to accessibility for people with learning disabilities, and have begun engagement work with people from Black African and Caribbean communities to identify health inequalities. The team have continued to work effectively with the local council and newly formed Integrated Care Services (ICS) for South-East London to share feedback provided and develop collaborative ways of working. Healthwatch Southwark has made great efforts to engage and support local people from all walks of life, access and share their experience. Our work does not stop when a project ends, our overarching goal is to ensure the local community's voice remains heard and seen by health and social care organisations and the local council. This goal can be seen in our recent impact review, this review explored how we work with the community, and it will help to strengthen this continued effort. It will also ensure Healthwatch Southwark remains purposeful in its daily activities.

I would like to thank all, past and present, who have contributed their time and effort to support Healthwatch Southwark to achieve milestones this year. Equally, I hope more people will come and join us to carry out our Enter and View visits Programme and to sit on our Advisory Board, as we continue in our efforts to champion the views of people who use local health and social care services.



Sheona St. Hilaire
Healthwatch Southwark
Chair

About us

Healthwatch Southwark 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 social care we need.



Our mission

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

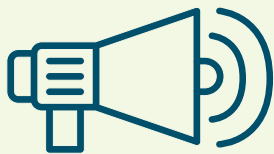


Our values are:

- **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



3000 people engaged

Via community events and community outreach (online and in person).

175 people

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

60 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as how to make complaints or access dental services.

Making a difference to care

We published

1 report

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

This report was titled

Health Access for Latin American Communities

which highlighted the challenges faced by the Latin American community in accessing health and social care services.



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

173

outstanding volunteers who gave up 206 days to make care better for our community.

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

£148,200

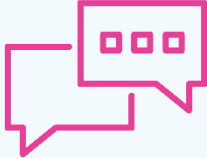

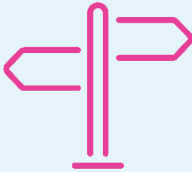





which is close to 6% more than the previous year.

We currently employ

4 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We restarted in person community engagement, setting up an outreach calendar to gather feedback and offer signposting support.</p>	 <p>We started an impact review of our organisation by taking part in Healthwatch England's Quality Framework review.</p>
Summer	 <p>We organised our first in person community health event since the start of the pandemic.</p>	 <p>As we transitioned out of the pandemic, we broadened our Community Health Ambassadors Network to cover topics such as mental health, vaccinations, cancer prevention, cost of living support and more.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We worked alongside local BAME organisations to organise a mental health event in celebration of World Mental Health Day.</p>	 <p>We held our first Annual General Meeting (AGM). This was a significant step to highlight that we had adopted strong governance structures.</p>
Winter	 <p>We started our project on Learning Disabilities and Autism, with the focus of undertaking background research and setting up a working group of stakeholders, users and carers to lead the project.</p>	 <p>We started engagement work for both of our Health Inequalities project. One of the project focused on health access for the Latin American communities and the other focused on mental health within the Black African/Caribbean communities.</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

GP Access

Our report highlighted the experiences of patients in accessing GP services in the post Covid-19 environment.



Mental Health

We gathered mental health service users experience of South London and Maudsley's NHS Trusts (SLaM) Adult Community mental health services to identify unmet needs. This project contributed to improvements in adult community mental services as part of SLaM's community transformation programme.



Vaccine Hesitancy

Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy was a key issue for BAME communities in Southwark. We undertook a project to review the reasons for this. This project contributed to the overall vaccine hesitancy strategy of our local providers.



Waiting for Hospital Treatment

Waiting for hospital treatment was a key feedback area for patients during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, we gathered in-depth experiences of how patients felt as result of the waiting times and how their experiences could be improved whilst waiting. The findings informed local NHS Trusts discussions in improving patient experiences.



Unpaid Carers

We reviewed the impact of caring on unpaid carers by speaking to 80 carers. This project had a significant impact when Southwark Council reviewed their carers strategy.





Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community

Through her role as a Community Health Ambassador, Patricia is supporting her community to improve their health by sharing resources, attending training courses, and giving feedback on issues facing her community. After the pandemic, Patricia realised her neighbours were socially isolated and needed access to health information. Patricia set up the Bolivian Latin Age Society (BLAS) to bring older Latin Americans together to participate in activities that improve their physical and mental health, such as yoga, mindfulness, and nutrition talks.

Patricia also played a key role in supporting our Health Inequalities Project (access issues for Latin American communities) by supporting our access to her community (Bolivian). For example, Patricia helped us to translate our survey from English to Spanish and undertook one-to-one interviews with the Latin American community to hear their health access experiences in their own community language.

Thanks to Patricia, the health and wellbeing experiences of Latin American communities are being amplified.



Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Health Inequalities: Latin American Health Access Project

Southwark has one of the largest populations of Latin Americans in the country, though it is often considered as an “invisible community”. Previous engagement has shown that levels of access to health services for Latin Americans in London remain low.

This project was designed to build relationships with Latin American communities in Southwark and to identify the challenges they face in accessing health and social care services. The findings of the project will enable us to raise access issues experienced by the Latin American community and provide recommendations to decision makers and service providers.

Our approach

- We connected with local Latin American organisations to inform our outreach and utilise their existing relationships to receive feedback.
- We established a collaborative steering group network with Latin American groups.
- We designed and translated a survey into Spanish to directly engage with residents.
- Community Health Ambassadors and community leaders carried out 1-2-1 interviews and focus groups with their networks to receive in-depth information.
- We collected 67 responses from diverse Latin American communities.

Findings

- 75.6% of people experienced challenges when accessing health and care services, particularly GPs and dentists.
- Language barriers are the main challenge to accessibility i.e., availability and quality of translators and translated materials. This contributes to a lack of awareness about available services.
- Many respondents felt discriminated against because they are Latin American, experiencing “rude” or “dismissive” behaviour from staff.
- Respondents identified that health services do not recognise diverse countries of origin within the Latin American community, negatively impacting the quality of care provided i.e., translators do not understand regional dialects and NHS providers do not gather relevant equalities monitoring data.
- There is widespread support that Latin American community groups in Southwark play an important part in facilitating access to health services for the diverse Latin communities.

Next steps

- A health event is being organised for the Latin American community in collaboration with the Latin American groups that supported the project. The event will be used to present report findings and recommendations, celebrate achievements and connect the community to relevant services and decision makers.
- The report will be presented to key decision makers and requests will be made to respond to recommendations.

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

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

Mental health services users experience of primary care,

It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.



The Councils Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee reviewed GP access at the behest of local residents. Healthwatch Southwark supported this review by facilitating mental health service users to speak about their primary care experiences at the Committee meeting. Sharing personal experiences was a powerful way for decision makers to hear the challenges mental health users experienced when accessing primary care and created a strong sense that improvements are necessary.

Creating awareness of local health services

Bringing residents and local services together



Healthwatch Southwark organised two in-person community health events in Peckham and Bermondsey, where local services shared how they can support residents. By doing this we spread awareness of health issues, such as mental health, blood pressure and ways residents can get involved with local decision making. Our health events created the space for residents, local health services, and NHS decision makers to come together and improve communication and understanding of health issues and experiences of engaging with services.

Improving care over time: GP Access

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.



In 2021-22 we completed our project on 'GP Access', since then we have been working closely with Southwark Primary Care Group to enact small changes to improve access. It was recognised that GPs are not effectively communicating with their patient population about the services they are offering. As a result, we have given GP providers the opportunity to present consultations at our events and also have plans to undertake a joint project to improve GP provider communications with their patient population.



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:

- Undertaking projects to gather experiences around mental health for the Black African/Caribbean communities and general health access issues for the Latin American communities.
- By working with a traveller support organisation (Southwark Travellers and Refugee Group) to support a successful grant application to improve health access for the traveller community in Southwark.
- By undertaking health events in the areas of Southwark where there are diverse communities that are experiencing health inequalities.
- By engaging young people to be more proactively involved with us.

Empowering young people to make a difference

We continued to develop our Young People's Health Panel and recruited five panel members who are passionate about amplifying young people's health and wellbeing challenges and getting involved in local decision making. We reached out to local stakeholders working with young people, such as youth centres, Councillors, and the patient engagement team at King's, to recruit panel members and to discuss future collaborations.

We met with panel members to explore what issues matter to them and decided to focus on mental health, ethnic minority representation in health care decision making and healthy relationships. Our next steps are to recruit more panel members, explore engagement methods with peers, and engage with stakeholders working in the three chosen topic areas.



Black African/Caribbean experiences of mental health

One of our key priorities has been to increase our engagement with seldom heard communities and tackle health inequalities. This year we proactively undertook an engagement project targeting the Black African/Caribbean communities in Southwark. The Black African/Caribbean communities make up 25% of Southwark's population.

Following from our discussions with community groups and individuals, we decided to prioritise mental health services, this included finding out why people from these communities are not actively accessing mental health services and to gather service user experiences. Our project is aligned with national and the local agendas as increasing minority community access to mental health services is a national and local priority ([The Patient and carers race equalities framework \(PCREF\)](#)), with South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) being chosen as a pilot site for PCREF.

In the last year, we have been busy engaging these communities to gather feedback and we hope this will have an influence in improving the experiences of African/Caribbean communities in accessing mental health services.





Advice and information

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

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust.
- Helping people to access the services they need i.e. referring people to 1-2-1 advocacy providers.
- Supporting people to register at GP practices and dentists.
- Listening to people's experiences of using primary and secondary care services.

Making complaints easier

Difficulty and confusion around making complaints were repeatedly voiced to us at our feedback and signposting clinics and online. We delivered a Complaints and Patient Advocacy Clinic to explain the complaints process and support services available in Southwark. Representatives from local NHS Trusts (King's, Guys and SLaM), the Council, advocacy groups, and patient and liaison services joined to share information, answer questions, and listen to feedback. Residents were able to ask questions and gave valuable feedback to services on their experiences of making complaints.

Healthwatch Southwark's advice and information has meant people who want to navigate the complaints process know their options and have clear information.



Thank you to all the presenters who shared information today. As an individual who has made complaints and followed the procedures, it is easy to get stuck and not know how to carry on. I was not aware of how much support services can give."

Finding mental wellbeing support

Southwark residents wanted to feel more connected to their community and needed support to improve their mental wellbeing as we came out of the pandemic. Following our Support in Southwark workshop with the Southwark Wellbeing Hub, residents continued to ask for advice and support regarding their mental health. At one of our signposting clinics, we met one resident who supports asylum seekers. They were looking for free wellbeing activities in the borough such as music classes, yoga, or mindfulness. We referred them to the Southwark Wellbeing Hub where residents can easily find the right support they need.

A Social Worker reached out to us on behalf of a young person experiencing anxiety and unable to attend school classes. The young person had an appointment with Southwark Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services team (CAMHS). In addition, the Social Worker wanted to see what local services were available specifically for young people. We recommended them to contact 'The Nest Southwark', a local mental health provider that supports young people between the ages of 13-25.



Thank you for listening to me today. It has been a very lonely time recently. I felt no one else listened and I have been feeling hopeless."



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:

- Raised awareness of Healthwatch Southwark and what we do by distributing posters, leaflets and banners at key settings in the community i.e. GPs, pharmacies and community centres.
- Supported with our health events and community engagement activities.
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views by undertaking 1-2-1 interviews and supporting people to complete surveys.
- Helped to undertake desk-based research for projects.
- Shared health information resources with their communities.

Saran – Community Health Ambassador

"Hoping to support myself and my local community's mental health, I joined the Community Health Ambassadors Network during the pandemic. Through training courses offered, I gained confidence in sharing information and resources to my local community and signposting residents to services at health events. The experience of bonding with my community oriented me towards my career goal: to empower the community through their authentic lived experience."



Elishia – Research Volunteer

"I got involved because I was eager to observe how health inequalities impacted communities. My role involves researching literature for projects, I also participate in community engagement activities. I believe that volunteering at Healthwatch has made me confident in wanting to pursue a career in health promotion. I have enjoyed working alongside my colleagues who have been supportive and provided me with opportunities to get involved."



Isata – Community Engagement volunteer

"I started volunteering in March 2022. Being a Healthcare Assistant, I was always passionate about caring and supporting vulnerable people. It has been amazing to be able to support Healthwatch by raising awareness, sharing and signposting health and wellbeing information at local pharmacies, GP Surgeries and community centres."



Do you feel inspired?

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



www.healthwatchsouthwark.org



020 3848 6546



info@healthwatchsouthwark.org

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 Local Authority	£148,200	Expenditure on pay	£146,718
Additional income	£70,681	Non-pay expenditure	£16,212
		Office and management fee	£46,671
Total income	£218,881	Total expenditure	£209,601

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£69,181 funding** received from Southwark Council for the Community Health Ambassadors Officers post.
- **£1500 funding** received from Partnership Southwark for support with in person community engagement events.

Next steps

- We are in the process of reviewing our strategy and expect to develop a 3 year plan by October 2023.
- We will agree where to undertake Enter and View visits and also work in collaboration with the South East London Healthwatch Network to facilitate joint visits to shared NHS Trust providers.
- We will continue with the projects we prioritised last year (Health Inequalities/ Learning Disability and Autism), these projects could not be completed due to staffing challenges.
- We will ensure we are active in organising community engagement activities, to gather sufficient numbers of community feedback.

Top Four priorities for 2023-24

1. Tackling health inequalities with the continuation of our health inequalities projects: 1. reviewing health access issues for the Latin American communities 2. reviewing mental health access for the Black African/ Caribbean communities.
2. Developing a 3-year strategy for Healthwatch Southwark.
3. Continuing our project on Learning Disability and Autism.
4. Starting our Enter and View visit programme.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Southwark (Hosted by Community Southwark: www.communitysouthwark.org), 11 Market Place , Bermondsey, London SE16 3UQ

Healthwatch Southwark 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

Healthwatch Southwark Advisory Board consists of 7 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Advisory Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Advisory Board met 4 times (plus additional working group meetings i.e. Quality Framework) and made decisions on matters such as creating new organisational policies (i.e. decision making policy) and creating an action plan from the Quality Framework review.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities and use various methods to do this. We undertake an annual 'priorities surveys' to gather feedback on areas that we should focus on, we facilitate community and stakeholder workshops to discuss and agree priorities. We gather feedback from the community by organising focussed engagement events, we use intelligence from community feedback and signposting information to identify key themes/areas that we should prioritise on.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, webform, as well as online and by in-person community engagement activities e.g. visiting community groups, having feedback and signposting stalls at libraries and NHS Trusts.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website, newsletter and circulate to all key stakeholders i.e., CQC, NHS England, NHS Trusts, Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Local Authority, Integrated Care System Providers, community organisations and local health and social care providers. We also plan to present this annual report to our Health & Wellbeing Board.

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

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

In our local authority area for example we take information to the Health and Wellbeing Board as well as the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

We take insight and experiences to decision makers at our local Integrated Care provider, Partnership Southwark Strategic Board. We share our data to the South East London Healthwatch Network, which is a collaboration of six South East London Healthwatch and they share our data to South East London Integrated Care System decision makers. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Enter and View

Due to capacity issues, we were not able to organise Enter and View visits this year. However, we organised a Enter and View training session with the intention of organising visits and had seven prospective Enter and View Representatives attend. Enter and View visits are valued by Healthwatch Southwark as a meaningful way to involve residents and improve services, therefore our Advisory Board has made Enter and View visits a priority area for 23–24.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Southwark is represented on the Southwark Health and Wellbeing Board by Sheona St Hilaire, Chair of Healthwatch Southwark Advisory Board. During 2022/23 our representative has carried out the role in the following ways:

1. Attending quarterly meetings (online and face to face) as a full voting Board member.
2. Raising local people's views/concerns on emerging issues in health and social care.
3. Presenting information on Healthwatch Southwark (our role and remit) and suggested to the Health and Wellbeing Board how we can actively support their work i.e. present data, share patient stories.

Healthwatch Southwark has a board position at the Southwark based Integrated Care Partnership provider, Partnership Southwark Strategic Board. Shamsur Choudhury, Healthwatch Southwark Manager currently represents Healthwatch Southwark at this important decision making forum. In the last year, this forum has mostly focused on developing its strategic objectives, building relationships with stakeholders and setting its key priorities for the next 5 years.

2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Impact
Increasing Healthwatch Southwark Community Presence: We produced new leaflets, posters and banners and have circulated these materials to key settings (i.e. GP's, Pharmacies).	This will increase our community presence and increase our feedback numbers.
Community Health Ambassadors We developed a programme for more engaged Ambassadors to carry out more targeted engagement to support Healthwatch Southwark and key stakeholders i.e. Council, ICS provider.	Organisations have received feedback on health and social care services and issues that residents are facing. Volunteer Ambassadors report feeling confident to engage with their communities.
Healthwatch England Quality Framework	An action plan was developed to improve organisational practice and develop new policies.



healthwatch

Southwark

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