



**Annual Report 2024–2025**

**Unlocking the power of  
people-driven care**

Healthwatch Wandsworth

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“The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They’re changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people’s views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities.”

**Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England**

# A message from our Chair

## Welcome to Healthwatch Wandsworth's Annual Report for 2024/25.



Our role is to ensure that the voices of patients, residents and communities are always heard when decisions are made about our local health and social services. This has never been more important than today.

Read in this report about our contributions in many areas of concern to patients and families: including dentistry; autism; access to primary care; and challenges for local Asian communities relating to cervical cancer screening. Our work with patients and communities is now influencing how these services, and others, are being shaped for the future.

Our continued work in Wandsworth pushing for change is particularly important as health and care organisations re-structure and staff change.

Our final statutory statement section outlines how we continued to promote the issues people raised in previous years.

If you're passionate about continued improvements in health and wellbeing **join us** in promoting what local people have said.



**Stephen Hickey, Chair,  
Healthwatch Wandsworth**

## Thank you to our community



Our work rests on everyone playing a part to 'make a difference'.

Thanks to the commitment of our team of dedicated **volunteers**, and small **staff team** (including wider Wandsworth Care Alliance staff).

Thank you to the **voluntary sector organisations** and individuals whose enthusiasm for improving care for people in Wandsworth has given us a platform to speak to their communities.

We're also grateful to **staff working in services** for working with us to reach their service users and for their consideration and commitment to making changes where it is needed.

## About us

# Healthwatch Wandsworth is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



### Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



### Our mission

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



### Our values are:

**Equity:** We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

**Collaboration:** We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

**Impact:** We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

**Independence:** Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

**Truth:** We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

# Our year in numbers

## Reaching out:



**Over 1350** people were involved in sharing experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

**103** people contacted us for clear advice and information on topics such as how to access services they were struggling to access (particularly mental health) and about a complaint they wished to make about services. Another **855** have taken information from our website advice.

## Championing your voice:



We completed **6** reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like, **community mental health services**, **Thomas Young stroke ward** and **experiences of waiting for autism diagnosis for 0-8 year olds**.

## Statutory funding:



We're funded via Wandsworth Council. In 2024/25 we received **£172,835**, which is **3%** more than last year. Our funding allows us to employ **2.6 FTE staff** for Healthwatch Wandsworth. Our work was supported by **30** people volunteering their time.

## Making a difference:



We asked people this year if interacting with us made a difference and each time 70% and over said yes.\*

\*Taken from survey of our information and signposting enquiries and event participants.

# Working together for change

**We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Wandsworth are heard at the NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and that they influence decisions made about services at this level.**

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across South West London to achieve:

## Representation on ICS board and committees:



- sharing the public's concerns with key NHS decision-makers.
- improving ICS culture of keeping people at the heart of decision making e.g. staff from across the ICS have approached us to shape or improve their engagement plans, such as for the South West London Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and for the South West London earwax removal pilot.
- holding the ICS to account to engage people before any big changes are made to the services they use.

## Joint patient and public engagement:



We collaborated with South West London Healthwatch colleagues on a project about the Accessible Information Standard (see page 11).

We are promoting best practices in making communications accessible across the South West London NHS organisations, which is key to supporting access to the right care and meeting the needs of patients.

We have also provided insight and analysis on acute care services.

## Advocacy for improved dental commissioning:



In October, we presented at South West London Dentistry Day, contributing insights from national data and local patient views about the impact of costly dental experiences and low availability of NHS dentists. This presentation helped bring focussed insights about the needs and experiences of local people to decision-makers. We will be participating in further discussions about increasing equitable geographic distribution of NHS dentistry services.

# Listening to your experiences

**Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.**

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.

This section includes some of the highlights and we've summarised some of our other outcomes achieved in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report. It can take time to see services make changes, so we've been following what has been happening since our work in previous years.



# Listening to your experiences

## Championing community concerns about access to primary healthcare

Last year we spotlighted the changing way people can access general health care (primary care). This year experiences of local people showed that complicated systems and variation in how to access care affect whether people get what they need.

### What did we do?

We spoke to people in the community to understand the impact that changes in GP practices were having on their access to care. We also spoke to GP practice staff about how changes in national guidance and the GP contract have affected their work. We combined findings from our own outreach with other data sources to build a picture of the situation in Wandsworth for both patients and staff.

### Key things we heard:

**58%**

of people find contacting their GP Practice via the website easy (GP Patient Survey 2024). 61% said they were satisfied with the online form (Online form survey 2024).



Many people told us there were difficulties created by the inconsistencies between the different ways you can communicate or have an appointment.

**57%**

use phoning up as the main method to contact their GP Practice. (GP Patient Survey 2024).

The ways patients communicate with GP practices have been changing rapidly, with new telephone and on-line services, including apps.

Our work showed that this works well for many residents but can create uncertainty and confusion for others. A complicated process and poor communication about services can leave some people not knowing how to easily access basic healthcare.

### What difference did this make?

We've started speaking to GP practices and the people in charge of the NHS in Wandsworth about what people said. We will report on our website soon about any actions to improve clarity and consistency of access.

# Listening to your experiences

## Moves to improve the autism diagnosis support for 0–8 year olds

**Better outcomes for autistic people depend on timely support and diagnosis. Nationally and locally waiting times for diagnosis have been long.**

We spoke to parents and carers of children waiting to receive an autism diagnosis and people involved in planning and delivering support. Their stories highlighted a need to improve communications and support available.

### Key things we heard:

**70%**

**of parents and carers had been waiting for their child to receive a diagnosis for 1 year or more.**

**63%**

**of parents and carers felt lonely often or always and 61% said they are almost always or always anxious.**



**Parents and carers felt they needed better communication and updates to help them manage and that better signposting to support would help.**

### What difference did this make?

Our findings have already contributed to discussions about re-designing the 'Emerging Needs Pathway' relating to support for 0–8's with autism and the diagnosis process. We have collected actions and responses from multiple organisations. Actions include plans to better communicate with parents, provide signposting to services whilst people are waiting for a diagnosis and cross-team working. Read more [here](#).

We published a page of resources and organisations that families can access for support and so far 549 people have had this information.



“[Healthwatch Wandsworth’s] detailed review of views and experiences of parents/carers is helping to guide the steps we are taking, particularly efforts to improve communication with families.”

**Letter sent to organisations regarding the Autistic Spectrum Diagnostic pathway by the ICB, signed by Mark Creelman, Place Executive.**

## Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Wandsworth and work hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

### Improving cervical cancer screening coverage in Wandsworth's Asian communities

**We collaborated with local health and care leaders to understand barriers to attending cervical screening and what can help overcome them.**

**Key things we heard:** People told us about the need for culturally appropriate communications that also address language barriers, the need for more community outreach, to break taboos and more cultural sensitivity training for staff.

### What difference did this make?

A steering group will work with the community to codesign the next steps and address what people have told us. It is likely pilot projects will be developed in two areas of Wandsworth.



“We will be building on what we heard at this session and guided by advice from Asian communities in these areas. Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers and screening can save lives.”

**Mark Creelman, NHS South West London Place Executive**



Women's Health Conference at the Wandsworth Town Hall, hosted by the Mayor of Wandsworth, Councillor Sana Jafri, in collaboration with Women of Wandsworth.

### Improving accessibility of information to support communication

**We collaborated with Healthwatch across South West London to understand how well our GP services are meeting the communication needs of local people.**

An Accessible Information Standard (AIS) exists to ensure that people who have certain communication needs can access health and care and can work with staff to make sure their needs are met. This includes individuals with sensory loss, neurological conditions, neurodiversity, and learning disabilities. The AIS requires service providers to identify, record, flag, share, and meet patients' communication needs to ensure fair healthcare access.



Alyssa Chase-Vilchez, Executive Officer and Iyinoluwa Oshinowo Research and Engagement Coordinator for Healthwatch in South West London led the project alongside a steering group of disability charities and people with lived experience. **144 patients and carers and 82 GP staff members shared their views about how well things were working.**

**Key things we heard:** People were unaware of how the AIS supports people, recording of communications needs was inconsistent and people had to repeat their needs, many people rely on family or charities, some GPs need support with training and resources and there were particular challenges for British Sign Language (BSL) users.

### What difference did this make?

A community of practice has been launched to bring together South West London GP practice and NHS staff, people with lived experience and disability charities to deliver [recommendations](#). Recommendations have been presented to GP practices and the SW London NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB). The ICB has sent us a letter pledging to work with Healthwatch to make progress towards recommendations.

Further work to seek the views from BSL users about a new interpretation service has already started across South West London Healthwatch.

# Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – we can help you find the right information. This year 103 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services. Another 855 people have accessed specific information from our website.

**This year, we've helped people by:**

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



## Complaints, feedback and communication

**Feedback from Wandsworth residents regarding Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at St George's Hospital have informed our decision to undertake research in 2025-6 to understand the challenges faced by the service.**

Several people contacted us for support after struggling to raise a concern, reporting they felt left 'in limbo'. Patient feedback and reports at the hospital have highlighted a need to look at this topic a bit further, particularly around building an understanding about the process for raising concerns and complaints and response times. We hope to provide useful insights to improve the situation for patients.



## Signposting people to mental health support

**Denise\* felt that she was not getting appropriate support after suffering a stroke and that this was affecting both her and her child's mental health.**

Denise raised concerns that after suffering a stroke last year she had not received appropriate support from her social worker and that this had caused trauma for her child.

We spoke with Denise and helped her submit referrals to two local charities *Family Action* and *Wandsworth Carers Centre*.

As a result, these two organisations have been able to offer mental health support for both Denise and her child as well as providing information for her child on how to deal with being a young carer.



\*Name changed

# Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given over 1,200 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

## This year, our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Represented us and our community at meetings to promote the involvement of local people and to hold services to account so that they respond to what people have said.



# Showcasing volunteer impact

## At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

"I joined Healthwatch Wandsworth as a Research Volunteer in May 2024, and I have felt welcomed from the start. My role has involved analysing both quantitative and qualitative patient survey data, anonymised NHS data and data from the Information & Signposting Service and Healthwatch Representatives' meetings.

It is rewarding knowing that my work contributes to improving the experiences of vulnerable patients in our community by ensuring that decision makers have evidence-based information to guide their actions."

**Shakeel**



"Volunteering with Healthwatch Wandsworth has developed the research skills that I gained during my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, refined my interpersonal skills and improved my ability to champion the key challenges the community believes should be prioritised by our health and social care sector.

I am pleased that my volunteer role has led to my current position on the staff team as a Community Research and Volunteer Project Officer, I am excited to continue to grow with Healthwatch Wandsworth."

**Rhiann**



### Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



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



07434633745



[information@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk](mailto:information@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

We receive funding via Wandsworth Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

## Our income and expenditure:

The following figures have not yet been formally examined or audited and therefore may be subject to future adjustment.

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£172,835	Expenditure on pay	£152,753
Additional income	£35,153	Non-pay expenditure	£37,264
		Office and management fee	£18,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£207,988</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£208,017</b>

## Additional income breakdown

- £24,500 from Wandsworth Council for Lived Experience and Co-production project.
- £10,653 was for other small projects including ICB funding for representation on ICB committees, ICB funding for community services project and RM Partners funding for representation on a strategic group.
- We are carrying forward £14,000 into the financial year 2025-6 for continuation of activities.

## Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

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

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
SWL ICB funding for two funded SWL positions (funds held and related expenditures paid for by Healthwatch Sutton)	£110,000
Community Service Project re-distributed amongst 6 Healthwatch	£22,000
Accessible Information Standard project (fund held and related expenditures paid for by Healthwatch Sutton)	£18,480

# Future priorities

## 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.

This will be in the context of many changes in services and cost pressures across all levels and organisations. We will have a reduction in our capacity to work across South West London. We hope to ensure that the new emerging systems like 'Integrated Neighbourhood Teams' will have strong involvement of local people and will be increasingly responsive to community needs.

## Our top priorities for the next year are:

1. Access to general care, including online tools, access for people who speak English as a second language.
2. Complaints, advocacy and communication, primarily in a hospital context.
3. Experiences of community mental health service changes
4. Enter and View visits to a care home and mental health ward.

Read more in our Business Plan [here](#).

# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Wandsworth is delivered by Wandsworth Care Alliance (WCA) and our office is at Tooting Works, 89 Bickersteth Road, Tooting, SW17 9SH. Healthwatch Wandsworth 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 Healthwatch Committee has six members who work voluntarily to provide direction, oversight, and scrutiny of our activities. This includes members of the WCA board of trustees. The trustees and WCA are ultimately responsible for the delivery of Healthwatch.

Our Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. This year the Committee met five times and made decisions on matters such as self assessing how we work using the Healthwatch England Quality Framework, revising our committee election process and reviewing how we set our priorities. We ensure the public are involved in deciding our priorities by reviewing feedback over the past year, holding conversations in the community and surveying the public and voluntary sector organisations about our priorities (see our [Decision Making Policy](#)).

## 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 can provide us with insight into their experience of using services.

During 2024/25, we have been available by phone and email, through our website and through social media, and attended meetings of community groups and forums. We take additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are not heard from at all stages of our work. For example, our priorities have focused on people with communication needs and autistic people. Where needed we have acquired funding where possible to make sure we can reach people. We are also increasingly using a trauma informed approach in our work which means that we increasingly consider how people's previous experiences might shape our interactions and how we can make adjustments to be more supportive in working with them.

We make this annual report available to members of the public and partner organisations. It is published on our website, in our newsletter and it is submitted to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board.

# Statutory statements

## Responses to recommendations

The majority of providers responded to formal requests for information or recommendations, although it can be challenging to get information about progress on actions over time due to pressures in health and social care, high turnover of staff and lack of continuity. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find time to meet with those we collaborate with, meetings are often cancelled or re-arranged over long periods. For example, South West London Healthwatch organisations submitted a joint request for dentistry commissioning data on 11 December 2023 to the North East London ICB. Despite multiple follow-up requests from ourselves and the South West London ICB, we still had not received an adequate response as of October 2024 when we independently identified another source for the data.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee or related reviews or investigations.

## Our Representatives, taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure through a range of means that senior decision makers in the local NHS and Council know the issues raised through our work with communities.

Some are formal: for example, our Chair, Stephen Hickey contributes to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the ICB Health and Care Partnership Board and ICB Health and Care Committee. At these meetings he encourages the inclusion of the views of local people and we present what local people have told us.

Other staff and volunteers contribute to meetings and boards including our nominated Governor at the St George's Hospital, at South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust board and other committees relating to a range of services including primary care, social care and more.

At the South West London level Alyssa Chase-Vilchez, Executive Officer, ensures Wandsworth residents are heard. This has included the Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Partnership Board as well as a large number of associated committees including the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and the People and Communities Engagement Assurance Group.

We also contribute at a national level through dialogue with Healthwatch England and mutual sharing of information, data and emerging issues.

# Statutory statements

## Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What we did as a result
St George's Hospital – Thomas Young Stroke Ward	Hospital services are key services for local people and we wanted to build upon the national Stroke Patient Reported Experience Measure Survey (PREMs) from 2022/23	We made seven recommendations about enhanced communication and information for patients during their time on the ward and further patient involvement and collection of feedback. This was based on conversations with nine patients on the ward as well as the family members of one of these patients.

## 2024 – 2025 further activities and outcomes

Changes to services can take a time and depends on capacities of staff outside of our organisation. We've attempted to follow how progress organisations are making in the issues we raised in previous years.

Outcomes/progress achieved	Challenges to progress
<p><b>Perinatal mental health (<a href="#">report</a>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Card Medic</a> has been introduced to increase availability of interpreting at St George's Hospital.</li> <li>- A recent CQC <a href="#">report</a> on St George's Hospital maternity services stated that 'several improvements have been made in routine antenatal care and mental health support.'</li> <li>- The Council's staff who work on breastfeeding now regularly meet the breastfeeding mental health nurse.</li> <li>- South London Perinatal Provider Collaborative are bringing together data and information to improve services. This includes looking at peer support and community engagement and access initiatives for underrepresented groups.</li> <li>- SWL ICB Digital Strategy includes Mental Health &amp; Maternity: Enhancing access and patient empowerment through digital tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very few staff involved in our original workshops are still in post</li> <li>- After a CQC inspection of hospital maternity services there has been limited time to hear updates on the themes raised in our work.</li> <li>- The ICB funding for maternity core connectors has ended. There is no-one therefore to recruit the maternity champions anticipated in our report.</li> <li>- National Maternity and Perinatal Audit (NMPA) reported that work is ongoing to establish an effective pathway for referring to secondary perinatal mental health services.</li> </ul>

# Statutory statements

## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Outcomes/progress achieved	Challenges to progress
<p><b>Mental health support for people who are homeless</b> (<a href="#">report</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local charity SPEAR has secured charitable funds for a <a href="#">new mental health support service</a> for people experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>- A new multi-service hub is set to open in a few months, we are speaking to the leadership team about involving the voices of people experiencing homelessness in the way it works.</li> <li>- We have made some progress connecting Council housing senior leaders and South West London Mental Health Trust to consider strategic approaches to mental health and prevention.</li> <li>- Wandsworth Council housing teams now have a vulnerability policy to guide approaches to people who are vulnerable (including those with mental health needs).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was a period of uncertainty over continuity of funding for the Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Programme (RAMHP) and the Homelessness inclusion unit at St Georges Hospital, which has had the potential to have interrupted continuation of care for service users and continuity of staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support for unpaid carers who take care of someone leaving hospital</b> (see <a href="#">report</a>).</p> <p>See our webpage <a href="#">here</a> about progress being made at St George’s Hospital.</p> <p>There is also a person employed in the discharge hub to connect people with voluntary sector support.</p>	
<p><b>HMP Wandsworth Health Care Services</b> (see <a href="#">report</a>).</p> <p>See our webpage <a href="#">here</a> about how health care is developing.</p>	<p>A pandemic and CQC and HM Prisons inspections have delayed our update. After contact with the CQC we have been able to gather information.</p>

# Statutory statements

## 2024 – 2025 Outcomes

Outcomes/progress achieved	Challenges to progress
<p><b>Adult Community Mental Health Services</b></p>	<p>We were commissioned to survey patients who used SWLSTG Mental Health Trust Community Mental Health three times at various stages of the service transformation programme. Due to delays in receiving patient data we were only able to progress the second survey in May 2025.</p>
<p><b>South West London Community Services project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have started a collaboration with other South West London Healthwatch to help inform future changes to community services.</li> <li>- Our focus is on proactive care services. In 2024-5 we prepared a survey to speak to patients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have begun this project in 2025-6 after delays in securing data protection agreements with the service provider.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Virtual wards (<a href="#">report</a>)</b></p>	<p>Health Innovation Network finalised their recommendations using our insight but do not have an update on implementation. Awaiting an update from the service provider.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p> <p><b>Trauma Informed Approach</b></p> <p>Our interest in the trauma informed approach and discussions with local providers, led us to promote the Healthwatch Essex <a href="#">Trauma Cards</a>. Staff at the Education and Development Department at St George’s University Hospitals have been using this and other input from us when developing a course about Domestic Violence Support.</p> <p><b>Strategic developments of the system</b></p> <p>We have continually input into the Health and Wellbeing Strategies and emerging developments of local Provider Collaboratives and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.</p>	

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