

# Monthly Feedback Report

January

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## About us

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Royal Borough of Greenwich. We're here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care<sup>1</sup>.



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## What did we hear in January?

We heard from 164 people<sup>2</sup> about their experience of health and care services in Greenwich.

**“As an inpatient at Queen Elizabeth hospital the service was really good, but the waiting time can be quite bad.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“I waited a really long time to get an ENT appointment at Queen Elizabeth hospital.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

<sup>1</sup> Photo above taken from engagement at a dementia care event in November 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Feedback collected through our monthly health and social care satisfaction surveys, meetings with local groups or advocates, outreach and engagement events, and research reports.

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## Editor’s Note

At Healthwatch Greenwich, we champion the voices of residents and promote improvements in health and care. As part of this mission, we strive to celebrate good practice where we see it.

To do this, we’ve taken a slightly different approach to gathering feedback. Rather than asking residents to share their full experience – which can sometimes focus more on challenges or frustrations – we led with a simpler, more positive question: *What has been good about your experience?* Starting with this question, we see a shift in perspective, allowing us to spotlight moments of excellence, from the professionalism of staff to the accessibility of services and even those small, meaningful interactions that left a positive impression.

We hope that highlighting what’s working well alongside what requires improvement presents an opportunity for wider learning. By understanding what residents value most in their care, commissioners and providers can replicate and build on these positive aspects across the system.

## What Greenwich residents are saying...

### Accessibility of Services

**“ There is a very long waiting time for appointments at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the language that they use is hard to understand.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ The majority of staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital are nice and you do get appointments- there is not a long time to wait.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ At Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I was seen to very quickly and I received good treatment. Overall, very accessible.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ Once you see a doctor it is really good but the waiting times are very long.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ My GP is very difficult to reach for appointments. Even when you call, they mention that there is no appointments when you need them.**

GP Practice

**“ Once you see a doctor it is really good but the waiting times are very long.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ Very slow services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ I waited a week for an appointment. The care for kids is good but more staff is needed to support patients.**

GP Practice

**“ Impossible to get appointments. You have to be up before 8 AM. How am I supposed to make appointments when I have a small child and am up all night.**

GP Practice

**“ Happily surprised with the quick and efficient outpatient appointment.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ Very efficient. I really like the NHS app and I generally don't experience any issues with the surgery.**

GP Practice

## Facilities

**“ I like the snacks that they offer at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and they do call you for follow-up appointments. Overall, I have no complaints.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ The staff are very kind and respectful people and the facilities are clean.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

## Staff Communication and Support

**“ Queen Elizabeth Hospital has amazing staff, especially the midwives. I was treated with care and respect, and all my questions were answered.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ The staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital are very humble and offer great service.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ I have to compliment the nurses at Queen Elizabeth Hospital as they took time to listen to my concerns and understand my pain.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ Very happy with Queen Elizabeth Hospital, very good at hearing out your problems and are very good with giving advice and treatment.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ The person that attended to us was very patient and friendly. He explained things well to us.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ I really like Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they took good care of me.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ Queen Elizabeth Hospital is very efficient, welcoming and well-organised.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ GP is amazing and the staff are good. No problems with appointments.**

GP Practice

**“ All GP surgeries should have a paediatrician. GP's don't know much about babies. My baby had something but they didn't really know what it was.**

GP Practice

**“ I had a very bad experience at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There are long waiting times for an appointment and the staff are very unprofessional. I prefer to go to St. Thomas.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ I was very happy during my maternity. I had a consistent midwife who was very friendly and kind. I was getting the care I needed and the aftercare for me and my baby was great.**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**“ Really good GP. They gave me a prescription on time and this helped with my back pain.**

GP Practice

**“ I used the Time to Talk service. I had a trainee to support me but I wasn't happy. It was nice that I only had to wait for a month to be seen but I was not satisfied. She was nice but I could see she just tried to tick the boxes, only questionnaires- not proper conversation. She then gave me exercises but if you work full time and have a family, when do you have the time to do these? They act like one size fits all.**

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

Healthwatch Greenwich | Jenna's story: "It was truly refreshing to see the system functioning so efficiently."

## **Jenna's story: "It was truly refreshing to see the system functioning so efficiently."**

Jenna had long debated scheduling her ECG appointment, a vital step in her annual health check. Weeks before, her GP had sent her an invitation to book the appointment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but she kept putting it off.

"I thought to myself, this is going to be complicated, so I kept delaying it. I never picked up the phone," she explained.

Jenna had heard from others how difficult it was to secure a specialist appointment. The thought of navigating this same journey left her anxious. "I had never been to QE for an ECG before. I simply had no idea what to expect, and the stories I heard about the difficulties surrounding appointments put me off" she reflected.

However, when Jenna finally decided to make the call, her experience was far from what she had anticipated. "At a quarter to twelve, I dialled the number for QE, fully expecting to wait a while. But to my surprise, the phone was answered right away. The receptionist asked when I wanted to come in and simply said, 'See you at one o'clock.' I was genuinely taken aback. I hadn't even dressed for the day yet! I had to quickly jump in the shower and catch the bus. I arrived at the hospital within an hour. It was just amazing."

Once at the hospital, Jenna learned that the cardiac department had been a walk-in centre before the pandemic, and they were committed to maintaining that same swift service by giving same-day appointments.

"People now call on the day for appointments, and the department strives to accommodate their requests, which is exactly what they did for me," Jenna noted.

Her positive experience only continued into her appointment.

"The nurse who attended to me was exceptionally efficient and genuinely kind. She was also very knowledgeable which put me at ease right from the start," Jenna recounted.

Following the ECG scan, the nurse made sure that the doctor on call quickly reviewed the results, leaving Jenna feeling very reassured. “She went straight to the doctor on duty and came back with a note for me to take to my GP. She also shared the delightful news that the results were good and there was nothing for me to worry about,” Jenna said.

After her successful appointment, Jenna dropped off her results at her GP’s surgery on her way home. By the time she settled down with a cup of tea, it was just before 2 PM—an impressive two hours after she had initially called for an appointment.

A few days later, still feeling a bit curious, Jenna decided to reach out to her GP to double-check her results. Though she had accessed them online, she wanted to ensure she hadn’t missed any important details. “I waited a few days before calling the practice to schedule an appointment, but honestly, everything I needed to know had already been confirmed during my hospital visit and in the online results letter. This definitely made things easier,” she explained.

Jenna was left impressed by her overall experience, stating, “It was truly refreshing to see the system functioning so efficiently.”

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## Provider Response

### Response from Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

A Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust spokesperson said: “We are delighted to see some positive feedback coming through for our services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, particularly Jenna’s high praise for our Cardiology’s same day ECG appointments. We know that coming into hospital for tests and procedures can be daunting for patients so it is great to hear that not having to wait for an appointment, coupled with the efficiency and compassion show by colleagues delivering the service, helped to put Jenna at ease”.

“We are also proud to read so many supportive comments about our colleagues and the care that we are offering. We don’t always get it right but we are committed to striving to provide exceptional care for our patients. Achieving this will be partly down to listening to feedback – good and challenging – and learning from what our patients share with us, so we welcome all views. We do know that long waits are frustrating for patients and we continue to work hard to improve these with measures such as trialling new care models and relaunching our Same Day Emergency Centre late last year. This work is ongoing and we encourage all patients to come to us directly so that we can listen, learn, and improve. Greenwich patients can reach us on 020 8836 4592 or [pals.qeht@nhs.net](mailto:pals.qeht@nhs.net).”

## Improving Accessibility for Blind and Partially Sighted People in Greenwich

Members of Blind in Greenwich (BiG)—a peer support group for blind and partially sighted residents, shared difficulties with accessing essential health and care services and information.

### Accessibility

Residents discussed the poor accessibility of local health services, highlighting how a “one-size-fits-all” approach often fails to accommodate the range of needs of people living with vision loss. This not only made accessing services difficult but, in some cases, unsafe.

Billy, a BiG member, explained: “You don’t know what you need to do until you hit a wall. Not everyone with a visual impairment can read Braille. Some people lose their eyesight gradually and don’t read Braille. It’s difficult to use lifts in hospitals that only have Braille. There are also many safety hazards within the hospital for us - we can’t read the signs warning about slips and trips. Queen Elizabeth Hospital is especially challenging.”

For many, getting to health and care facilities is extremely difficult. Busy roads, poorly marked pedestrian crossings, and unfamiliar layouts leave people exhausted even before their appointments begin and reasonable adjustments are rarely offered. Edith shared her experience: “I had to fight to keep my appointments in the same clinic...my guide dog had difficulties adjusting to a new location.”

### Communication

Residents shared challenges in speaking with health and care staff, suggesting many organisations have poor awareness and understanding of vision loss. As a result, staff often spoke to family members in the room with them, rather than to them directly, leaving them feeling sidelined in their own care and afraid to speak up. Billy highlighted this issue, saying: “There is also an issue of dignity. I have difficulties with nonverbal and visual cues, and people often talk to my wife instead of me.” Despite knowing that reasonable adjustments are within his rights, Billy fears speaking up, worried that it might affect his treatment. “There’s a fear that if you speak up too much, you will be labelled as a problem patient,” he said.

### Digital Applications

While many blind and partially sighted people use digital technologies to facilitate their access to information and care—such as screen reading software that allows them to hear what is written—many NHS systems are incompatible with these tools. Joe noted: “The screen reading software does not work with the NHS App, and [for the software to read it out] we need to receive information in text-based formats rather than graphics-based materials.”

Adaptations to support visually impaired patients are inconsistent. For example, although some GP surgeries have audible screens to call patients for their appointments, these tools are not always used or programmed effectively. Joe shared his frustration: “My GP surgery stopped calling out patients' names due to concerns about mispronouncing them— so I don't know when it's my turn. My issue is that it's not that difficult to fix the software so that it can pronounce names correctly.”

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## Next Steps

We follow up on all concerns or issues raised.

We work with commissioners, providers, regulators, and service users to understand where services are working well and where there needs to be further development.

## Contact Us

For more information on our feedback report, or to request it in large print or easy read format, contact:

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