

Monthly Feedback Report

March

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 care¹.



What did we hear in March?

We heard from 284 people² about their experience of health and care services in Greenwich.

“Gynaecology appointment, no complaints, only a five-minute waiting time.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“Very happy with the service. The GP listened to me and provided the referral I needed.

GP Practice

¹ Photo above taken from engagement with parents at Discovery Children's Centre in February 2025.

² 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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What Greenwich residents are saying...

Accessibility of Services

“ I have immunoglobulin therapy at Kings College Hospital every 3 weeks. Last time I had to wait for 3hrs before I could get into a treatment room. I’m being treated separately as I have rhinovirus. The nurses were very concerned for me. The room was blocked by a patient needing to be picked up by patient transport. As he had a respiratory virus, he couldn’t go to the discharge lounge. When they eventually came to collect him after two hours, the room then needed to be cleaned so I had to wait even longer for my treatment. The nurses were very frustrated about this. The unit manager helped as they too were appalled at my long wait. 3 weeks later, very different scenario. They called me and said I could go in earlier if I liked and the room was already ready. They are a great bunch in haematology.

King’s College Hospital

“ I had to come in for an urgent blood test but I was told to wait until 2 PM. Miscommunication in general–the patient is the last to know. Really bad waiting time, information should be given accordingly.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ Fab! I was seen and treated by the doctor in A&E and out in less than two hours!

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I have been recently to QE Hospital with my wife. She was admitted to the gynaecology department. The service is very good– she was seen to on time.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ A&E at QE- the care services are very good but waiting time is very very long. It would be better if they can attend to the patient quicker.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ Respiratory medicine department- they have a good service, a bit unhappy with the booking system. They cancelled three times and the waiting time was long.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I waited for 40 minutes but happy because booking was very fast.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Staff Communication and Support

“ The standard of doctors is very poor.

GP Practice

“ I am very happy with QE Hospital, honestly no suggestions.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I visited QE because of a pregnancy, very good staff.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am happy overall with the service I received at QE.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am very happy with QE Hospital, no suggestions for improvement. Very good service.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I had an X-ray at QE, the care service is very good, everyone is very nice.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Beth's story: "It felt like no one was willing to take action"

At 78, Beth has been living with cataracts that have significantly affected her independence and quality of life. Once simple activities—going for a walk, preparing meals, or reading her favourite newspaper—have become daily struggles. **"I'm scared of going out in case I trip. I have to walk with my head down, constantly focusing on the pavement. Going out at night is out of the question because I can't see anything. Even reading the newspaper has turned into a struggle; I now rely on a magnifying glass just to catch a glimpse of the text."** Beth's daughter, Margaret, has become her primary carer, taking on domestic responsibilities such as shopping and food preparation to help keep her mother safe. Without this support, Beth fears she would not be able to cope.

Late last year, Beth attended an appointment with an eye specialist at Queen Mary Hospital, where the urgency of her condition was made clear. The specialist explained that without immediate intervention, the scarring behind her eyes could worsen, putting her at risk of permanent sight loss—a risk compounded by her diabetes. However, despite this urgent need, Beth was left in limbo. No follow-up communication was received, and her daughter's repeated attempts to secure an appointment for the treatment they'd been told was imperative, were met with silence. **"My daughter called the hospital every week. She even reached out to King's College Hospital and PALS, but it felt like no one was willing to take action."**

After many weeks of persistent calls, Beth finally received an appointment, for more than two months after she had been informed that urgent treatment was required. While she was relieved to be seen, this situation left Beth feeling neglected and unsupported. **"From the moment I was told in December that I needed treatment, the lack of follow-up was disheartening. Yes, I was relieved to meet with the doctor, but once we left, I felt forgotten. I have spent countless days just waiting and worrying about what will happen to me"**

Beth's experience reflects challenges in health and care services, where delays in referrals, communication breakdowns, and service capacity issues can have profound consequences for patients. Recent NHS policy initiatives—including the Elective Recovery Plan and the NHS Long Term Plan—have prioritised reducing waiting times, enhancing patient pathways, and improving access to diagnostics and specialist care. Beth's case illustrates why such improvements are urgently needed. Despite being identified as an urgent case, Beth faced delay in accessing specialist care. Beth and her daughter were left without information on next steps, contributing to anxiety and uncertainty. As an older patient with long-term conditions (diabetes and limited sight), Beth represents a vulnerable group that faces a higher risk of poor outcomes as a result of delayed treatment. Her story is a reminder of the real-world impact of delays in care.

Healthwatch Greenwich | Manuel's story: "Some nights, I feel as though I'm suffocating"

Manuel's story: "Some nights, I feel as though I'm suffocating"

For the past two years, Manuel, a construction worker, has been struggling with persistent breathing difficulties, which have made sleeping at night a battle. **"Every night, I wake up gasping for air,"** he shared. **"My nose is completely blocked, forcing me to wake up multiple times just to catch my breath."** Doing a very physical job, the lack of sleep is making everyday life harder.

Determined to find a solution, Manuel was referred to an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. But the wait for an appointment was six months—six more months of interrupted sleep, exhaustion, and worry. **"I was counting down the days,"** he said. **"I thought, finally, I'll get some answers."**

But when the long-awaited appointment arrived, Manuel felt let down. **"The doctor told me surgery wasn't necessary and prescribed medication instead,"** he recalled. **"I was worried—I take other medications, and I needed to understand how this new prescription would interact with my existing treatment. But when I tried to ask, I wasn't given the chance."**

Manuel felt dismissed. **"The doctor didn't answer my questions. I left the appointment with more confusion than when I arrived. I felt completely abandoned."**

He was told that a prescription would be sent to his GP, so he waited, expecting to hear from his GP surgery. After two weeks of chasing, he finally learned that his prescription had been sent directly to a pharmacy instead—information no one had communicated to him. When he finally got the medication, it didn't bring immediate relief. Without a follow-up appointment or clear guidance on what to do if the medication wasn't effective, Manuel was left on his own to manage his symptoms. **"I've had to come up with my own ways to cope,"** he explained. **"But these are just temporary fixes. Some nights, I feel as though I'm suffocating."**

Provider Response

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

A Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust Spokesperson said: "It's rewarding to see some more positive feedback coming through for a wide range of our services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is a reflection of the efforts that we are making to improve our patient care and experience. We recognise how frustrating long waits are for our patients and we have made changes, such as extending our Same Day Emergency Care provision in order to see more patients more quickly, and we are starting to see the impact of the changes coming through".

"We will be looking into Manuel's story to understand how we can work better with our partners to ensure that patients get the support they need. We are very grateful for him sharing it with us and would encourage him to return to his GP for further treatment if his condition remains unresolved."

Rethinking Mental Health Support for Parents and Communities

In February, we spoke with Parent Power³, an organisation supporting parents. What emerged from these discussions was a reminder that, for many families, mental health support is not simply a matter of awareness or willingness to engage—it is shaped by a series of barriers, from inaccessible services to economic pressures and wide-ranging inequalities. While policymakers and service providers often focus on improving access to mental health services, those we spoke to at Parent Power made it clear that access is about far more than just availability; it is about trust, safety, and meaningful inclusion.

For many parents, the reluctance to seek mental health support is not about stigma in isolation but about how health and care systems have often not been able to engage with communities in ways that feel safe, relevant, and culturally competent. Bianca, a group leader with Parent Power, reflected on postnatal mental health and the limited space many women feel they have to speak openly.

"The women I work with don't just avoid these conversations because they 'don't want to talk about mental health.' It's because they worry about how they'll be treated if they do. Will they be dismissed? Will they be judged as unfit mothers? These are real concerns," she explained.

Daisy, a mother of two who emigrated from Hong Kong a few years ago, shared that many people in her community are still hesitant to engage with formal services—not because they don't care, but because they don't feel those services are built for them. **"Mental health is important, and I try to teach my boys that their feelings matter because in our community, they are taught to be strong, to believe that 'boys don't cry'. But even when I look for help, I am worried if [services] will listen and if they will understand these experiences"**.

Sunita, of South Asian heritage, shared Daisy's concerns, **"It's really difficult to talk about mental health. Many people are afraid that if they openly share their struggles with mental health issues, their children will be stigmatised,"** she articulated.

Language emerged as another barrier that limits engagement with mental health services. Parents expressed that the fear of being judged on their English proficiency discourages them from seeking help, even when they know support is available. **"It's not just about speaking English—it's about being understood,"** Daisy reflected. **"Many of us worry that if we don't say the 'right' thing in the 'right' way, we won't be taken seriously. That's what holds us back—not a lack of awareness, but a lack of confidence in how we will be treated."**

This challenge is not new. Research consistently shows that language barriers contribute to poorer health outcomes, and reduced trust in services. Yet, instead of addressing this gap through widespread use of interpreters and multilingual resources, too often, the burden is placed on individuals to overcome these barriers alone.

Perhaps the most urgent message from parents was that mental health cannot be separated from the broader realities of daily life—particularly financial insecurity, housing instability, and the rising cost of living. Halima, a mother struggling on a low income, put it bluntly: **"We talk about mental wellbeing, but we don't talk about survival. Everything is expensive. I'm out of work—how can I think about mental health when I'm worried about putting food on the table?"**

For many families, this is not about 'choosing' not to prioritise mental health—it is about navigating a system that does not account for the deep link between economic stability and emotional wellbeing. Mental health services are often structured around the assumption that individuals can engage meaningfully once they 'recognise' their mental health needs, but this overlooks the fact that poverty, insecurity, and stress are fundamental determinants of mental health itself. Bianca reinforced that these challenges are not isolated but part of a wider system that often does not account for the realities many families face. **"When families don't engage with mental health services, we have to ask: is it because they 'don't want help'—or because the system doesn't give them the help they actually need?"**

Despite these challenges, what stood out most from our conversation with Parent Power was the resilience, resourcefulness, and collective strength of parents who continue to advocate for themselves, their children, and their communities. Parents like Daisy are actively redefining mental health conversations within their communities and encouraging open dialogue with their children.

Groups like Parent Power create trusted spaces where parents can learn, support one another, and challenge the barriers they face together. Community-led initiatives like 'Be Well'⁴ are already bridging the gap, offering peer support and culturally relevant guidance that many parents feel they cannot find elsewhere.

³ [About Us](#)

⁴ [Be Well Champions – South London Listens](#)

Next Steps

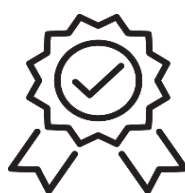
We follow up on all concerns or issues raised.

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

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