



On equal terms

Then and now

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Message from our Chair

Lynn Hill, Healthwatch Hillingdon Chair, introduces our report with her reflections on the year, and the challenges we have faced in health and social care.

As I reflect on a truly remarkable year, one thing is clear. We have all been impacted massively by the pandemic Covid-19 and my heart goes out to everyone who has suffered, or lost a loved one from this awful virus. I can honestly say it has been like no other year ever. We started and ended the year in lockdown and most of our face to face activities were suspended.

“COVID-19 has challenged the whole healthcare community - it has dominated our attentions - but I am immensely proud of the outstanding contributions of so many groups within the Borough of Hillingdon, and our significant and ongoing role and in particular, the Healthwatch Hillingdon team.”

We have continued to operate successfully using Zoom and Microsoft Teams and we have remained flexible and agile with our scheduled meetings. Our team has shown resilience and versatility and have worked seamlessly from home. We have continued to be strong advocates for patients, providing a conduit for patient and carer concerns and signposting to services which have adapted rapidly to meet the changing needs of us all. We continue to meet quarterly as a board and our staff have a daily check in call to discuss any issues which have arisen.

Daniel West, Managing Director, and I still participate in daily calls with Hillingdon Health Care Partners (HHCP) and we were instrumental in setting up The Loved Ones Project in conjunction with The Hillingdon Hospital to ensure that carers, patients and families stayed connected when hospitalisation was necessary. Many services were reconfigured to reduce face to face contact where possible, and bureaucratic barriers to change were overcome. We now see the NHS wanting to maintain some of the new ways of working as we move slowly forwards into the recovery phase.

When the vaccination programme was announced by the Hillingdon Confederation, I volunteered immediately to become a Vaccinator and have been a regular at both the Youth Centre in Ruislip and more lately at the Winston Churchill Theatre. I remain an active Governor of Hillingdon Hospital and attend the monthly Finance & Performance meeting as a Governor Observer and am a Governor Representative on the Trust Redevelopment Board. We have made significant progress towards our new build this year and we are very excited about the future plans.

We continue to be funded and very well supported by Hillingdon Council and I remain a voting member of the Health and Wellbeing Board. And whilst change is never easy, especially during a global pandemic, we are in the midst of moving from the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) model to the newly formed Integrated Care System, created to remove traditional divisions between hospitals, general practice, local authority and social care. We will be working with all partners over the next year to provide a vehicle for achieving greater integration of services, improving population health, reducing inequalities and supporting the recovery of the NHS.



I look forward to the challenges of the next twelve months and I remain proud and privileged to be part of the Healthwatch Hillingdon team.

Lynn Hill
Healthwatch Hillingdon Chair

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Hillingdon. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares their experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



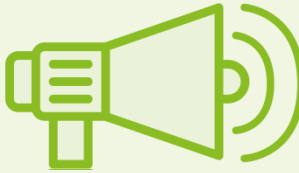
“Healthwatch Hillingdon has done great work this year during the pandemic, assisting our residents with advice and guidance in a very difficult time. We have been able to make the voice of the patient heard by our local NHS providers, and supply much needed feedback to help shape and deliver services. COVID-19 has underlined the importance of equitable access to health and social care, and Healthwatch Hillingdon is dedicated to ensuring this.”

Daniel West, Healthwatch Hillingdon Managing Director

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out



We heard from

157 people

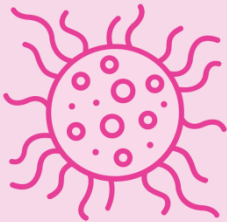
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

821 people

this year, 4% more than last year.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

over 20,000 people

online, over the phone, and in person during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

Making a difference to care



We published

4 reports

about our work, and the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. From this, **we made 22**

recommendations for improvement.

Health and care that works for you



10 adult and 16 young volunteers

helped us to carry out our work.

In total, they contributed **2237 hours**.

We employ 6 staff

with 2 full time, and 4 part-time, continuing from last year.

We received

£158,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21, the same as the previous year.

Digital Highlights

Find out about our social media and online presence.

Facebook



We had **658 page likes** at the end of the year, a **23%** increase on the previous year.

We had a total reach of **164,941**, and post engagements of **10,759** this year, up 78% and 90% respectively from last year.

Instagram



We ended the year with **890 followers** which is **303 more** (+50%) than last year.

Our website and project engagement



This year, our website saw **21,114 users** access our advice, guidance, news, report and blog articles throughout the year, a **287%** increase on the previous year!

These users had a total of **31,720 unique page views**, up **184%** from last year.

We hosted **5 surveys**, with 2 in partnership with the integrated care partnership, and 1 developed with the integrated care system



These surveys gained a total of **5,880 responses**, in which **1,087 Hillingdon residents** told us their views about COVID-19 vaccines, helping us influence the vaccine rollout and improve communications and engagement locally.



Then and now: Engaging with young people



Then: helping Hillingdon's young people

Since its inception, Young Healthwatch Hillingdon's (YHWH) aim has been to ensure the voices of young people in the borough are heard in Health and Social Care, and their needs are addressed. In previous years we have also engaged with and provided advice and guidance to young people on a range of topics, most notably mental health and sexual health.

In 2018, Partners for Health funded Healthwatch Hillingdon to deliver Peer to Peer Mental Health support programmes in several schools in the borough. The project ran until December 2019, and attained positive results, showing an increase in confidence in how to manage mental health, and where to seek support in both the students who attended the sessions, and the whole school population.

Following the success of the previous year, in the summer of 2019 Young Healthwatch Hillingdon delivered Healthfest2019 over two days, engaging with over 100 young people. Advice and guidance was offered by stall holders from KISS and BROOK (sexual health), NAZ (HIV awareness), Kooth (mental health), Jewels of Jael (art therapy), P3 Navigator, Hillingdon Youth Council, POhWER, Sorted (drug & alcohol awareness) and YHWH.

YHWH were also invited to conduct a review of sexual health services as a mystery shopper exercise to ensure the service met the needs of local young people. The subsequent report highlighted issues with confidentiality in physical settings, and ease of access and navigation with online platforms.



Now: The impact of engagement

Thanks to the fantastic work of Healthwatch Hillingdon and Young Healthwatch Hillingdon engaging with the young people of the borough, we have seen the positive impact of quality engagement.

Following the Mental Health Peer Support training programme's conclusion in December 2019, there were several unexpected positive outcomes extending into 2020:

- 3 schools continued the campaign after its completion, with participants at Harlington School being given funding by the Senior Leadership Team to facilitate additional assemblies, a mental health awareness video was produced at Oakwood School, and Healthwatch Hillingdon was asked for input to assist Uxbridge College with a mental health campaign in 2020.
- Healthwatch Hillingdon was approached directly to continue the peer support training at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy.
- Several safeguarding issues were addressed as a result which may not have come to light otherwise, as reported by teachers.

In the summer of 2020, due to social restrictions, Healthfest2020 was held virtually, with 10 sessions delivered on the topics of wellbeing, mental health, and employability, with 16 individuals participating. Whilst the attendance was lower than previous face to face events, the event gave Healthwatch Hillingdon much needed insight and feedback about running effective online engagement whilst working remotely.

“It was a good session on making young people aware that there is a service out there for them that they can connect with, I loved the relaxed demeanour of the presenter and having various options of communication was great.” Healthfest2020 attendee

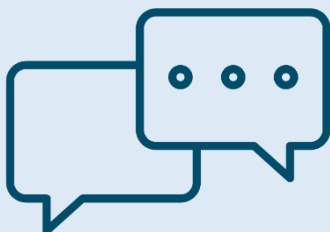
Lessons from previous engagement, and from Healthfest2020 has given us the opportunity to engage with young people in new ways.

In December 2020, Young Healthwatch Hillingdon published its first podcast, on the topic of Mental Health Mythbusting, with our young volunteers speaking to representatives from Hillingdon Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



Following on from the Young Healthwatch Hillingdon review of sexual health services, our young volunteers were invited back to assist in improving online services. Public Health Hillingdon also then asked Healthwatch Hillingdon to conduct another review of these services for adults.

Share your views with us



If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk/share-your-views

01895 272 997

office@healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk



Then and now: Making your voice heard



Then: NHS Long Term Plan

With growing pressure on the NHS – an ageing population, more people living with long term conditions, and lifestyle choices affecting people’s health – the NHS produced a ‘Long Term Plan’ in January 2019, setting out the things it wanted health services to improve for patients.

The Healthwatch network was funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement to carry out engagement with communities across the country to establish how the Long Term Plan (LTP) should be implemented locally. HwH conducted two surveys and three focus groups – people were asked to share their ideas on what they would change about the way the NHS in Hillingdon supports people with both physical and mental health, what this support should look like, and what needs to change regarding current provision. HwH engaged directly with nearly 300 people across the Borough with the following recommendations:

- Participants were very clear that “resources should be used to focus on prevention and early diagnosis in order to reduce pressures on the NHS”.
- Users of the service are asking for more opportunities to be informed and be able to influence services particularly events and focus groups. Co-production of plans with patients is a must.
- Information and advice for patients needs to be more readily available and in plain English. Whilst the move towards the use of digital communication is understandable the traditional face-to-face meetings and written hard copies should not yet be stopped.
- The move towards more holistic and integrated health and care services is welcomed and should continue.
- Develop further health care professionals’ customer care skills.



Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we saw over **20,000** users access our website, with articles and engagement activities:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response nationally, and locally
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out, and ensuring patient views were heard
- Providing information about available services to support our residents
- Including content tailored to young people
- Working with partners to gain feedback from patients and workforce

Our year helping you get the information you need:

Our Website

37,939 Page views, with:

12,187 on our COVID-19 Vaccine Survey

5,894 on COVID-19 Advice, Guidance and Blogs



Early in the pandemic, we heard from **50** people about how COVID-19 was affecting them – this was shared with our local NHS commissioners and providers, and helped us better inform residents about relevant issues. Our role became much more focused on providing people with clear, consistent and concise advice and information articles on our website to help address people's concerns.

Our COVID-19 Hub was created as a single place to find this information, and was accessed over **800** times by residents, alongside a range of content:

- Advice and information articles were accessed **1,224** times, with **158** about access to dentistry.
- COVID-19 related news items accessed **918** times.
- Our volunteer blogs chronicling their experiences in lockdown were accessed **1,348** times, and included entries from out Young Healthwatch Hillingdon volunteers.

Our year making your voice heard about vaccines:

With the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in November 2020, Healthwatch Hillingdon began working in partnership with Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to gauge public confidence in potential COVID-19 vaccines. The project was then supported by North West London (NWL) CCG to be expanded, covering the 8 boroughs of the NWL CCG (Hillingdon, Harrow, Brent, Hounslow, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, and Westminster).

The survey gained over 5,600 responses across North West London, with more than 1,000 from Hillingdon residents. This vital feedback was shared with health and care partners throughout NWL, highlighting concerns patients had about the vaccine and the different views of the community by age, ethnicity, and geography. Our recommendations for the vaccine rollout were:

- Communications and engagement to be tailored to the specific demographics expressing concerns, with focus on age groups, ethnicities, and geographical areas of lower vaccine confidence.
- Ensure the key information requested by patients be provided in an inclusive manner, including information on side effects, availability and eligibility and efficacy of the vaccine.
- Social media content to be curated and moderated to ensure correct information is propagated, and damaging/incorrect responses are not.

COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence

5,622 Responses across **8** North West London boroughs

1,087 from Hillingdon residents

1 focus group with **7** members of REAP.



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

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Volunteers

At Healthwatch Hillingdon, we are supported by 10 adult volunteers and 16 Young Healthwatch volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements they would like to make to services.

This year our volunteers:

- Helped design and deliver engagement on emerging themes, and assisted engaging with residents.
- Finalised our report after their work on a mystery shopping review of adult sexual and reproductive health services.
- Produced 4 newsletters with quarterly updates from HwH, and advice and guidance from external sources.
- Participated in virtual 'Coffee Afternoons' with the volunteers of partner 3rd sector organisations.
- Carried out a mystery shopping exercise to ascertain whether GP's in Hillingdon were offering face to face appointments.
- Our Young Healthwatch Hillingdon volunteers participated in consultations sessions with Hillingdon Hospital about its redevelopment.
- Wrote 7 blogs about their life since the pandemic, including living alone and experiencing isolation, and coping with the closure of schools.

Young volunteers – Ellie, 17

"I have been volunteering for Young Healthwatch Hillingdon for three years now and it has been a truly unique and incredible experience. As part of my role, I have had the opportunity to work alongside the NHS and mental health charities in order to research and promote adolescent health and wellbeing.

During the pandemic, we have had to adapt our engagement and therefore began producing podcasts as a way to communicate and advise other young people. Creating a podcast has been an insightful experience and is something that will benefit me for the rest of my life in regards to my communication skills. It has been very rewarding to help health services gather information from adolescents and give back to my community."

Digital Communications - Halimah

"Growing up, volunteering has always been second nature to me, whether it was helping with gardening at school, or the local charity shop. But my decision to join Healthwatch Hillingdon nearly two years ago was not an entirely selfless act. I needed experience and volunteering as a Newsletter editor was the perfect opportunity.

Since then, I have been able to broaden my skill set; writing and editing articles, designing layouts & conducting interviews. But most importantly, have had the chance to interact with my community in a way I never thought I would - through our health care services. Although indirectly, I am now aware of the many similar experiences so many people have encountered, both good and bad, and the power we have in making their voices heard.

With university ending, creating the newsletter has become a source of comfort, allowing me to indulge myself with the words that once consumed my everyday life.

While my journey at Healthwatch began as something that I could stamp on my CV, now it is a way for me connect with those around me, to appreciate the Health care services that are available to us, and to voice the concerns of others so that they are heard."

Young volunteers – Isra, 17

Being a member of YHwH has exposed me to so many invaluable opportunities, like working with the CCG in Hillingdon on the Transition project to help other young people transition comfortably from paediatrics into adult services, and the Hospital Redevelopment Project which has given me the opportunity to help shape the new hospital in Hillingdon.

With COVID-19, you'd expect engagement with young people to decline, but I think we've managed to adapt to really well to the current situation - for example, we've started producing podcasts! Whilst YHwH aims to advocate for young people in Hillingdon on the health services they use, I believe that becoming a member of the YHwH family benefits us as volunteers in more ways than you can imagine. Learning about the importance of self-care and looking after your own mental and physical health is especially important now more than ever.

Throughout the pandemic, YHwH has consistently provided a safe space for us as volunteers to voice any concerns, and get any help that we need. I'm so thankful for everything that YHwH has done for me."



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch with us:

 healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk/volunteer-enquiry-form

 **01895 272 997**

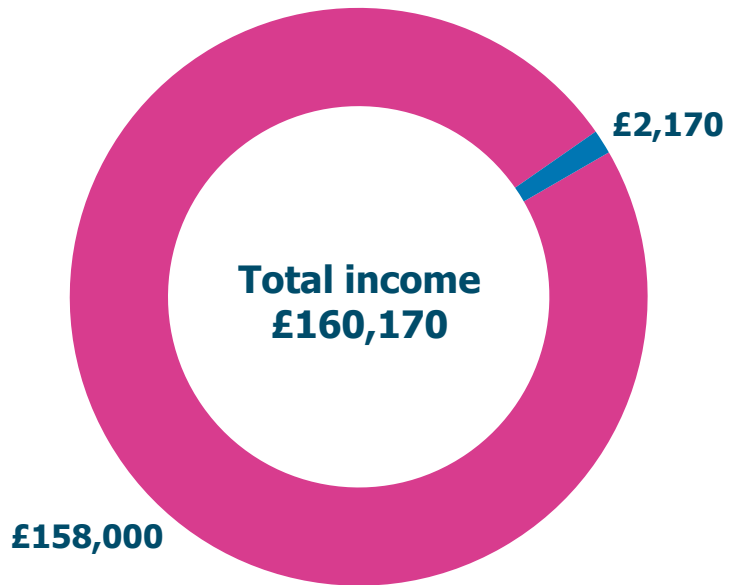
 **office@healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk**

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

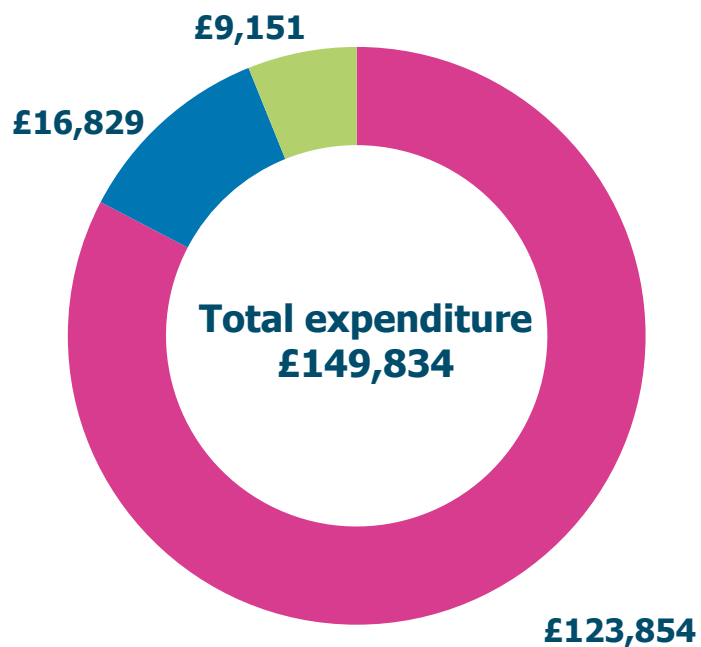
Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration



Next steps & thank you

Top three priorities for 2021-22

1. Understanding patients' access to GP services, and how this affects hospital and emergency services.
2. Assessing the local impact of COVID-19 on hospital services, with a focus on outpatient appointments, and discharge process.
3. Working with NHS partners to ensure the voice of the patient is heard in the new North West London CCG and Integrated Care System.

Next steps

- Healthwatch Hillingdon will continue to assess its effectiveness and opportunities while working arrangements are driven by the status of COVID-19 in the area – reviewing and adapting to ensure its statutory requirements are discharged.
- Continue to assist and guide commissioners and providers in addressing health inequalities in protected characteristics, and the progress towards a consistent and accurate representation of the community in our work. Vaccine hesitancy will be a key component to demonstrating this.
- Develop effective reporting of intelligence gained through direct feedback to Healthwatch Hillingdon, and from external sources, to give a clear picture of patients needs to health and care partners.



“Health inequalities have been more apparent than ever with the advent of COVID-19. To ensure the needs of our community are met, meaningful and effective engagement must be at the core when designing and delivering services to our population.”

Thank you

Healthwatch Hillingdon would like to thank the NHS in Hillingdon for all their hard work in an extremely difficult year, and including us in the scrutiny and design of services. Healthwatch Hillingdon hopes to continue to develop our relationships to ensure the voice of the patient is heard, and services designed with them at the centre. We would like to thank:

- Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group
- North West London Integrated Care System
- The Hillingdon Hospital Trust
- Central and North West London Trust
- Hillingdon Health and Care Partners
- The London Borough of Hillingdon
- H4all; Mind Hillingdon, Age UK Hillingdon, Carers Trusts Hillingdon, Harlington Hospice, and, DASH
- POhWER Hillingdon

We would also like to extend our thanks to our young and adult volunteers, and our Board of Trustees for all the time and hard work they have given us this year – without them, we would not have been able to achieve all we have to help the residents of Hillingdon.



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Hillingdon, 20 Chequers Square, The Pavilions Shopping Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1LN

Healthwatch Hillingdon 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 board consists of 8 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the board met 6 times and made decisions on matters such as the working arrangements for Healthwatch Hillingdon during social restrictions, which was continually reviewed throughout the year, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and priorities for residents, and the response to and ongoing monitoring of the Clinical Commissioning Group merger across North West London.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities. Our work is guided by feedback and intelligence from three distinct sources:

- Patient-led – emerging themes from direct engagement, either through our Insight and Signposting function or outreach.
- Partner-led – issues raised to us by commissioners and providers of health and social care services through the committees and boards we are members of.
- Healthwatch-led – priorities also are decided from the combined intelligence of our board, volunteers, staff, and support given by Healthwatch England.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

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 health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, holding a focus group with the organisation REAP (Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership) to understand concerns about VOCID-19 vaccines.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website, share it with health and social care partners, and provide paper copies to the public upon request.

2020-21 priorities

Project / activity area	Changes made to services
How has Coronavirus affected you? Survey	Raised issues to the local ICP to ensure community services were promoted effectively.
Raised issues to the ICP regarding loved ones of hospital inpatients not getting updates.	Assisted in the creation of the Loved Ones Project, helping families of patients in hospital have regular contact with one another, and receive updates on their status.
Reviewed mental health support for young people.	Recommendations were shared with the organisations reviewed, and were used to assist in the design of new services.
Vaccine confidence survey	Issues raised regarding hesitancy in specific demographics relating to age, ethnicity and geography in North West London informed engagement, and Healthwatch has been involved in co-producing vaccine communications.
GP appointments Mystery Shopping exercise	Issues raised and addressed regarding 2 practices not offering face to face appointments.
Integrated adult sexual & reproductive health services review	Our second review following Young Healthwatch Hillingdon's review in 2019, a feedback event was held with Public Health Hillingdon to discuss the recommendations.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We received responses to all requests for information or recommendations from providers and commissioners.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Hillingdon is represented on the Hillingdon Health and Wellbeing Board by Lynn Hill, Healthwatch Hillingdon Chair. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by updating the board on our COVID-19 response, raising emerging themes and issues from the patient population, and sharing the results and insight of our engagement work.



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