



www.healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk | 01895 272997

# healthwatch

## Hillingdon

your  
**voice**  
counts

Providing you with information, advice and support about local services

5 years of improving health and social care in Hillingdon

Using your experience of the NHS and Social Care to improve services

Need advice on a service?

How do I get help for an elderly relative?

Just ask...

How can I find a new GP or dentist?

How do I raise a concern?



Come in and talk to us

We are:

- Independent
- Influential
- Informing

your voice counts



# Together

we're making health and social care better

Annual Report 2022-23

healthwatch Hillingdon

# Contents

---

Message from our Chair	3
About us	4
Highlights from our year	5
Listening to your experiences	9
Advice and information	15
Volunteers	17
Finances and future priorities	19
Statutory statements	20



“

**"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

---

At the end of last year, I expressed optimism that healthcare would return to a sense of normality as we finally came out of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. It's fair to say, we have continued to face many challenges, both as a team and as a sector but, in many ways we all face a far more positive position than we did twelve months ago. The impact of the pandemic has changed our lives and our NHS forever. Our staff and colleagues are continuing to respond to a multitude of complexities and deserve our utmost gratitude.



**Lynn Hill**  
**Healthwatch Hillingdon**  
**Chair**

Hillingdon services, like all others, now have record numbers of patients waiting for treatment. Medical, surgical, mental health and dental in particular continue to be problematical, and compounded by the recent pay disputes, resulting in many long waiting patients pushed even further back. We continue to work closely with partners and the public, and have helped many patients, families and carers navigate through the system wherever possible. Despite the challenges the pandemic and rising costs have brought, we continue to provide a full information and signposting service by telephone, via our website, and by appointment at our Uxbridge shop.

Healthwatch Hillingdon remains a very important voice for everyone in the borough. We are committed to improving both health and social care services for local people and being a strong and effective champion for all. Our ongoing alliance with Hillingdon Health and Care Partners (HHCP) and the Health and Wellbeing Board allows us to feed in local issues and improve standards of care. The Integrated Care System (ICS) was granted legal status as a statutory body in 2022 and serves to bring together NHS institutions, Local Authorities, and the Voluntary Sector with the ambition to provide the best healthcare for everyone. Whilst it's still early days, we will continue to play a key part, ensuring wherever possible, the patient focus is centre stage.

I remain an active governor at the Hillingdon Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, a member of the Trust Redevelopment Board & Remuneration Committee as well as being a Governor Observer on the Finance and Performance Committee. I saw the vaccination programme through until June 2022, when the Confederation handed the programme over to community pharmacies, and it was indeed a privilege to have been a part of it from the very start. I now support the local Trussell Trust food bank warehouse in Hillingdon every week to prepare food parcels and am witnessing first-hand the effects of food (and fuel) poverty on people's health.

Ghandi once said "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver." I end this year with immense thanks to the Healthwatch Hillingdon Team, and a renewed sense of pride and vigour for improving health and care outcomes for our Hillingdon community in the year ahead.

# About us

---

## Healthwatch Hillingdon 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 care we need.



### Our mission

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



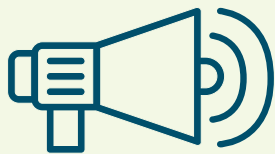
### Our values are:

- **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



**216 people**

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

**152 people**

came to us for advice and information about topics such as blood test appointments and the NHS Dental appointments.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**2 reports**

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

Our most popular report was about the

**London Ambulance Service Trust**

which highlighted the experience of patients to inform the Trust's strategy.



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**24**

outstanding volunteers who gave up over 220 days to make care better for our community.

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

**£158,000**

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

**5 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



We reviewed GP complaints information to understand the experience of those making complaints to Primary Care.



Our work with Hillingdon Health and Care Partners on Falls & Frailty informed the future approach to Population Health Management.

Summer



In partnership with the NWL ICB, we jointly lead the THRIVE network meetings to address children and young people's Mental Health delivery.



Young Healthwatch Hillingdon members took part in Hillingdon Hospital PLACE assessments.

Autumn



We helped plan Winter Wellness roadshows across the Primary Care Network areas, and attended to support residents with how to be safe over Winter.



Following a change in Phlebotomy pathways, we assisted patients in making blood test appointments.

Winter



We engaged with patients about their experiences of the London Ambulance Service, to help the Trust understand the needs of patients as part of their 5 year strategy.



Planned and delivered 4 community events to support residents in accessing community Pharmacy services and health checks.

# 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?

### COVID-19 Vaccine confidence

Our research exploring COVID-19 vaccine confidence with people from different backgrounds provided vital lessons for public health campaigns.



### Hospital Discharge

Our 'Safely Home to the Right Care' report on discharge saw the experiences of patients help shape discharge from Hillingdon and Mount Vernon Hospitals.



### Lower back pain services

We reported to commissioners the experiences of patients following the decommissioning of lower back pain services, highlighting and directly addressing the challenges they faced.



### NHS Long term plan

We engaged with residents about the NHS Long term plan, addressing their concerns and wishes for the future of NHS services, with a particular focus on mental health.



### Children & Young People

Our 'Listen to me!' and 'Seen and Heard' reports highlight the needs of children & young people in Hillingdon, helping guide commissioners and providers in the delivery of Mental Health support and services.



## Healthwatch Hero



### Celebrating a hero in our local community.

Turkey Mahmoud is a Healthwatch Hero for being instrumental in the work of Healthwatch Hillingdon, since it's inception in 2013.

Having held the roles of Trustee, Vice Chair and Interim Chief Executive Officer, Turkey has been heavily involved in the work of Healthwatch Hillingdon as both a volunteer and staff.

Turkey has been an invaluable member of the Healthwatch Hillingdon organisation, giving up his time as a volunteer to help ensure it's continued positive impact in health and social care, directly working and engaging with the public on vital projects, representing the voice of patients at strategic meetings, and championing their needs with commissioners and providers alike.

Thanks to Turkey's unwavering support through the years, Healthwatch Hillingdon will be able to continue supporting our residents and making sure they are at the heart of care.





# 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.

# London Ambulance Service NHS Trust Strategy

**In November 2022, Healthwatch Hillingdon began a programme of engagement to provide input to help shape the 2023–28 organisational strategy for the London Ambulance Service (LAS).**

A brief was provided by LAS, with five key questions the trust wanted to ask patients and the public, to better understand their experiences, and wishes for the future of the service.

In order to best gather this insight, we utilised existing feedback about the LAS to create a survey that would glean answers to these key points, which was then widely promoted through our online channels. Following this, we held a series of in-depth interviews with respondents who had expressed further interest in the project, to better understand the emerging themes. We also held a targeted focus group with our Young Healthwatch Hillingdon volunteers, to ensure the views of young people were also captured.

## What is LAS getting right?



- The overall response to the service was largely positive, with 81% of the 372 respondents who had used the service rating it as 'Good' or better.
- The majority of the positive responses praised LAS staff, with regards to their professionalism, and reassuring nature.
- 20% of comments referenced the LAS' fast response time.



Paramedics quickly assessed the situation and started treatment. At all times they were very professional, reassuring and kind. Like a big hug that can also save your life!"

**Mary, Hillingdon Resident**

## How can LAS improve emergency care?

- 28% of comments referred mainly to the resources available to the LAS, including the number of available ambulances and staff, quality of equipment, and specialist training.
- 21% mentioned poor response times with many noting that hospital handover was to blame.
- Other themes included inefficient call handling by 999/111, the negative impact of those misusing the service, and staff pay.



# London Ambulance Service NHS Trust Strategy

## How can LAS enhance urgent care?



Responses to these questions indicated a high level of knowledge of alternative services and patients' own ability to choose the right service. There were many responses that demonstrated a gap in patient knowledge and in services – with comments on the misuse of urgent care services, and a lack of GP appointments being a major factor.

## How should LAS work with other parts of the healthcare system to improve care?

- Integrated working was a key theme, with comments calling for better communication between services, both at the point of access, and as part of after care.
- Specific services such as primary care and mental health services were also identified as areas where stronger collaboration would benefit the system.
- Other themes included educating patients about other services and reducing unnecessary LAS callouts.



## How can LAS do more to contribute to life in London?



- Education, Employment and training – a clear desire for first aid training in communities was demonstrated.
- Greater investment in staff and facilities – relating to earlier points around resource levels, patients felt that this could again extend to voluntary and community-based opportunities.
- Further suggestions were made such as better management of systems and processes – including assets such as vehicles and buildings, and community engagement and communication about services.



Educate patients when to call for an ambulance! Most call thinking they will get seen quicker if taken to A&E. There are adverts regarding 111, people know about GPS's. Perhaps promote pharmacists a bit more and provide numbers for mental health services more.

**Peter, Hillingdon Resident**

# London Ambulance Service NHS Trust Strategy

## Young Healthwatch Hillingdon

To ensure a diverse range of Hillingdon voices were able to participate in the survey about the London Ambulance service, we invited young people to a focus group to tell us about their own experiences of using the service.

- They did not feel confident in what would prompt a 999 or 111, with inconsistent messaging confusing the matter.
- With some positive experience of good communication, such as through texting, it was felt that more developed usage of technology would help.
- Engagement with young people in first aid, and the services available to them, would help build confidence in when to access those services..



## Our recommendations:

Healthwatch Hillingdon made 7 recommendations to the LAS – More detail can be found in the full report, at the Healthwatch Hillingdon website.

### Communication

- Public education – appropriate use of services, and what is available.
- With patients – ensuring patients feel listened to, and at the heart of care.
- With professionals – to ensure better handover of patients between services.
- Wait times – although most patients are aware of the pressures the service is under, better communication regarding response times is needed.

### Service Integration

- Providers – a proactive and holistic approach is needed among providers.
- Community services – better utilisation of voluntary services.

### Ongoing patient & public engagement

- Consistent engagement frequency & methodology – to continue building on the work carried out as part of this project.
- Review of 111/999 services – to address the issues raised by patients.
- Targeted engagement – this is needed to get a clearer understanding of under-represented communities in London.

This report, along with reports from 26 other local Healthwatch, was well received by the LAS. The Trust made note of the high levels of engagement in the Hillingdon project, and along with Healthwatch Havering, Camden, Croydon, cited our report as an example of best practise.



# 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:

- Engaging with specific patient cohorts on issues that affect them, such as falls and frailty.
- Tracked and highlighted the differences between communities, and their respective experiences of London Ambulance Services.
- Using our platforms in strategic meetings with commissioners and relationships with providers, we are able to ensure this feedback is heard.





# 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 access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

## Help to find dental care in Hillingdon

Healthwatch Hillingdon had 39 people contact us for advice and information on dental services. The public reported that most practices were not taking on new patients, and that some had extremely long waiting times for appointments.

The impact of delayed treatment has resulted in people living with considerable pain, developing medical resistance and dental conditions worsening.

“A resident contacted his dentist to make a routine appointment. He was told that because he had not been seen since 2019, he would need to re-register but only as a private patient. The resident has been a patient at the practice for over 10 years and cannot afford private treatment..”

Healthwatch Hillingdon's advice and information has meant people who need urgent treatment know their options and have clear information.

We have also been able to provide details of some dental surgeries with NHS capacity, resulting in several residents successfully making appointments and getting the treatment they need.

## Booking blood tests at Hillingdon Hospital

**During the year, we were contacted by 126 residents regarding blood test referrals for appointments at one of the two Hillingdon Hospital sites.**

Following changes to Phlebotomy in Hillingdon in early 2021, the move to community Phlebotomy services meant that the pathways for blood tests had changed. Implemented at a critical time to further restrict COVID-19 exposure for patients, the work to move to a community Phlebotomy service had already begun with the then North West London Clinical Commissioning Group (now NWL ICB). It was identified that most walk-in attendees at Hillingdon Hospital had been referred by their GP, so measures were put in place to divert these patients to the community hubs.

However, for blood tests ordered by the hospital itself an appointment must be made by the patient themselves. As a result of our previous support of The Hillingdon Hospitals Trust in ensuring clear messaging to patients about the changes in the service, the Healthwatch Hillingdon phone number was included in patient leaflets.

As a result of this, we have been able to assist residents who are unable to use the online booking system in securing their blood test appointments and understand how the changes to the service is affecting patients.





# 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:

- Attended community events to support residents in accessing services, and providing advice and guidance where needed.
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Reviewed GP websites to assess complaints processes.
- Assisted in the creation of periodical newsletters, and social media content.

# 10 years of volunteering at Healthwatch Hillingdon

## Isra

"Deciding to volunteer for Young Healthwatch Hillingdon (YHwH) in 2017 was one of the best decisions I could've made. I've learnt so much, made so many new friends and got involved in things I never would've been able to get involved in without YHwH. In some ways, looking back, it even influenced my decision to study medicine. Starting the course made me realise how useful being a volunteer at YHwH is and how grateful I am for all the support I'm receiving. Thank you!"

## Simone

"I heard about Healthwatch Hillingdon at a Jobs Fair at Hillingdon Adult Learning. There I saw the opportunity to engage with the community and learn more about this new country that I decided to live in. As a volunteer, I help them with social media, creating graphics to share on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Also, I work as an Ambassador visiting hospitals and taking part in community events. I share my experience on social media to spread awareness about health and social care. In a short period of time, I have learnt how the NHS works and how to help people with their complaints. I have heard a lot of compliments about health services. By volunteering for Healthwatch Hillingdon we can learn more about our community and grow as human beings.

## Bernie

"I decided to volunteer as a mystery shopper with Healthwatch Hillingdon, as I feel passionately about the healthcare services provided for the local people of Hillingdon. I have personally received excellent care, and would like everyone to receive the same excellent standard that was afforded to me.

Volunteering gives a sense of pride and satisfaction knowing that you are helping others."



### Do you feel inspired?

Would you like to make a difference in health and social care? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, whether for engagement events, projects, or as board members to help guide our organisation.



[healthwatchhillington.org.uk/](https://healthwatchhillington.org.uk/)



01895 272 997



[office@healthwatchhillington.org.uk](mailto:office@healthwatchhillington.org.uk)

# 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 Government	£158,000	Expenditure on pay	£166,917
Additional income	£5,588	Non-pay expenditure	£17,372
		Office and management fee	£9,833
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£163,588</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£194,121</b>

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£5,000 funding** received from the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust for our 2023–28 strategy project.
- **£588 funding** received from refunds and previous project work.

## Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackle inequalities and reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless of whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

## Top three priorities for 2023–24

1. Driving transformation through further research to understand children and young people's experiences of accessing and using mental health and emotional support services. These could include tackling health inequalities further
2. Continued engagement with residents to understand the barriers to access, and experiences of using primary care services.
3. Further tackling health inequalities in our communities through targeted outreach activities with underrepresented groups.



# Statutory statements

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 7 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. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 3 times and made decisions on matters such as strategic priorities, operations and recruitment, and allocation of budgets.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

## 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, through social media, and provided a webform on our website, and we regularly attend meetings of community groups and forums.

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 and provide hard copies to those who may not be able to access it online.

## Responses to recommendations

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

## 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 Hillingdon Health and Wellbeing Board, Hillingdon Primary Care executive Board, Hillingdon Health Protection Board, and the Hillingdon Health and Social Care Select Committee.

We present insight and experiences to decision makers in the North West London Integrated Care Board and Hillingdon Health and Care Partners. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Hillingdon is represented on the Hillingdon Health and Wellbeing Board by Lynn Hill, Chair of Healthwatch Hillingdon Board of Trustees. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by providing updates on Healthwatch Hillingdon activities, reporting the recurring and emerging themes raised by our residents, and providing scrutiny on providers and commissioners updates.

Healthwatch Hillingdon is represented on the following strategic, commissioning and provider boards:

- Primary Care Executive Group – Lisa Taylor, Managing Director
- Hillingdon Health & Care Partners Delivery Board – Lisa Taylor, Managing Director
- Health Protection Board – Lisa Taylor, Managing Director
- Health and Social Care Select Committee – Lisa Taylor, Managing Director
- Patient Experience Review Group & Patient Experience Forum – Lisa Taylor, Managing Director
- Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Programme Board – Daniel West

## 2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Changes made to services
Children and Young People (CYP) service transformation (THRIVE)	Working with NWL Integrated Care System, Healthwatch Hillingdon planned and lead the implementation of THRIVE, bringing together providers, commissioners and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations to drive transformation in CYP mental health support and services.
Hillingdon Health and Care Partners Engagement & Involvement Group	Helped restart and subsequently Chair the group going forward, to develop engagement and resident involvement across the borough, collaborative work amongst health & care partners, and ensuring seldom heard communities are engaged with.
Phlebotomy – Acute and community services.	Worked with the Trust and Primary care to develop patient communications, and directly assisted patients in accessing services.



**healthwatch**  
Hillingdon

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

[healthwatchhillington.org.uk](http://healthwatchhillington.org.uk)

t: 01895 272 997

e: [office@healthwatchhillington.org.uk](mailto:office@healthwatchhillington.org.uk)

 [@hw\\_hillingdon](https://twitter.com/hw_hillingdon)

 [Facebook.com/hillingdon.healthwatch](https://www.facebook.com/hillingdon.healthwatch)

 [@healthwatch\\_hillingdon](https://www.instagram.com/healthwatch_hillingdon)

 [healthwatch-hillingdon](https://www.linkedin.com/company/healthwatch-hillingdon)