



healthwatch Hackney

Annual
Report
2020-21

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Message from our Chair

The past year has been painful and disturbing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people have died, and many have suffered the pain of infection and loss. NHS and social care staff have worked tirelessly to provide care and treatment for patients in the community and hospital. Tragically some have also passed, and our hearts go out to their families.

Healthwatch Hackney has continued its work in a much-modified way, with our staff working from home and many of our usual activities put on hold. We had to stop holding meetings in public and developed online zoom meetings. This enabled us to develop an 'Information Exchange' where local residents can talk to and question services leaders, e.g. about dental services provision. We held high profile and dynamic Board meetings with Marie Gabriel, Chair of the new NE London Integrated Care System; Anne Canning, Hackney's Director for Children's services and Paul Calaminus, Chief Executive of the East London Foundation Trust.

We want to become a much more influential body in our relationship with local NHS and Council leaders. We want to see the voices of local people reflected in major decisions made by these bodies. It is not enough to be heard; we want to see far reaching changes to local services when Hackney residents find them wanting.

We are developing a new strategy, which we want to be created through coproduction and partnership with local people and local community organisations. Our priorities will focus on access, quality, safety and the effectiveness of local services. And of course, how we influence them.

We need to secure adequate longer-term funding from our statutory funder, Hackney Council, to ensure we can carry out our statutory roles effectively. We want to have visible premises in a central location fully accessible to local people.

Amongst our priorities will be a campaign with local residents to redevelop St Leonard's Hospital into a modern community hospital, to replace the very old and poorly maintained building we now have.



We want to have greater influence in the development and integration of Health and Social Care within the 8 Neighbourhoods in Hackney, and active involvement of local people in decisions about those services. We also want to make sure that no one in Hackney is denied healthcare due to problems with GP registration.

Our Enter and View programme will be re-activated, so we can systematically monitor local services and use the experience of people who use those services, to bring significant change where this is needed.

We will work more closely with mental health services by promoting the 'Wellbeing for All' agenda, to enhance access to mental health care and treatment in the context of the impact of COVID-19, with particular attention to the needs of BME and older people.

Central to our work is the need to ensure thorough coproduction with local providers of services, and the new North East London commissioning body, produces significant service improvements through the genuine involvement of people from all parts of our diverse Borough and people of all ages.

We will work closely with all of our partners in local services to promote the empowerment and health of local people and ensure the tragedy of COVID-19 does not inhibit the development of our essential work with local communities.

Thank you to our fantastic staff team, volunteers and Directors of Healthwatch Hackney.

Malcolm Alexander
Chair, Healthwatch Hackney

Message from our Executive Director



Looking ahead

This has been the year when the COVID-19 pandemic very unfortunately took its grip on our world. In Hackney we saw all communities, and particularly those from our ethnically diverse communities, badly hit by the pandemic. Existing inequalities that are in our society were brutally exposed and deepened.

I am very proud at the way our staff team responded to the pandemic, contacting our supporters hearing their concerns and making sure we could help them by telling them about the support available at this very difficult time.

This year the lockdown stopped us from being office based and we shifted to homeworking. This meant our primary way of understanding people's needs and concerns, by face-to-face work, stopped. We adapted and moved to online meetings developing our highly effective Information Exchanges Meetings. Our new chair, Malcolm Alexander, also reinvigorated our board meetings into public forums where residents can quiz local and regional health and care leaders on their work.

In the coming year our big-ticket item is our partnership with Healthwatch City of London to develop the People's Plan for the re-development of the St Leonard's Hospital. This is an important resource for our communities with well-appreciated services. It is vital it continues and builds on this role. We are hopeful as the pandemic eases we can return to face-to-face work in the borough.

We are eager to do this as we know many of those we want to hear from are on the wrong side of the digital divide. This further isolates them, they need to be at the centre of our concerns because of the challenges they face.

We will continue to see the re-shaping of health services, with the creation of a regional Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which will become an Integrated Care System across North East London. We have been assured we will see little change locally. We shall see; but it is important these changes are transparent and the accountability we saw in Hackney CCG continues into the new regional body. The pandemic has hit health and care services badly and waiting lists for other conditions increased. In this context, there must be no decline in the quality of services. We will monitor this carefully and speak loudly where we see service provision decline. To this end we plan to focus on making sure those who run services hear and act on the concerns and issues of Hackney residents.

This year we said farewell to staff members Chloe Macri, Jamal Wallace and Mark Drinkwater, and welcomed Sabrina Jantuah and Sally Beaven. Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to our Board, staff, volunteers and all the people of Hackney for their contributions to our work.

Jon Williams
Executive Director, Healthwatch Hackney

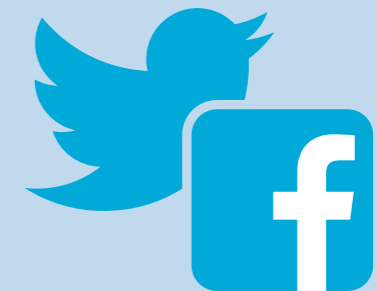
Highlights of the year

We identified **7,889** issues from **2,380** people and shared this feedback with local providers and commissioners



41 volunteers helped us to carry out our work by providing an estimated **2,192** hours of unpaid support

We produced special reports on residents' experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, GP reception services, caring for others, living in temporary accommodation, and dental services.



Our Tweets were seen **154,000** times on Twitter, an increase of **23%**. We have **1,754** followers on Twitter and **298** people follow us on Facebook.

“ Thank you, for another informative and useful Newsletter. Due to my full-time care duties, I access your Newsletter as and when I can. I am always grateful for the articles that are essential to me, every day.

COVID-19 response and impact

This has been a very tough year for Hackney and we are not through it yet. The longer term impact on Hackney residents is still unfolding. Our NHS Community Voice survey in the early part of the year told us how challenging people found the lockdown and their feelings of isolation. Most perturbing was the theme of distrust we found, not only of central government but also of our local authority. We know the Council put in huge extra effort to support the most vulnerable in our communities, in spite experiencing an awful cyberattack, which did not help its efforts to support people.

The distrust of institutions manifested itself in other ways too. In Hackney the structural racism many experience in health has been more clearly recognised with its impacts on increased mortality, higher levels of some long-term conditions like diabetes, higher instances of disability and mental health. Locally recognition is seen as clearly not enough, racism needs to be dealt with head on. We welcome the establishment of the City and Hackney Health Inequalities Group, led by Director of Public Health, Dr Sandra Husbands to coordinate local action on these issues. Our chair, Malcolm Alexander, attends this group, leading on resident involvement. He seeks to ensure residents are at the centre of the drive to push against inequality.

One of the issues we have heard from residents is about hesitancy towards COVID-19 vaccines. This itself is driven by distrust. So, we pushed with others, particularly Hackney Council for Voluntary Services and local community groups, to take this hesitancy seriously and with respect. People must be listened to and their concerns heard and addressed. We were very pleased how the Council worked closely with the community groups to develop local residents as Community Champions to build local confidence in the vaccine. There is still a way to go, and this is the right approach to build confidence; to listen to residents and address their issues.

Whilst it appears we are starting to get ahead of the COVID-19 virus we are not out of it yet. We are only starting to see the longer-term impacts, such as the diverse conditions that comes with long Covid. The pandemic impacted heavily on other health services and people were told not to put pressure on the NHS. But this has had the effect of increasing waiting lists, with many of those waiting suffering pain. We have also seen a massive increase in demand for mental health services, particularly for young people.

One of groups most impacted by COVID-19 were disabled people. The NE London Clinical Commissioning Group asked Healthwatches across this area to look into this, so the health and social care services could improve their response and support for disabled people. It was good hear that many disabled people felt well informed about wearing masks and social distancing, but changes in social care services could have been much better communicated. And there needs to be much better clearer information produced, including in easy-read. This is on-going work, with the aim to deliver an enduring link to disabled people and help to ensure a quicker response to their issues in future.



Dr Sandra Husbands
Director of Public Health, City and Hackney

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Who we are



How we make decisions How we ensure transparency

Healthwatch Hackney is a community interest company (CIC) governed by its Board of unpaid directors who live or work in the London Borough of Hackney.

The Board provides strategic direction to the organisation and ensures we meet our statutory and contractual obligations.

Decisions are made by our Board and its subcommittees, with some decisions delegated to the executive director.

To ensure decision-making is transparent, the Board:

- + Meets in public
- + Publishes board minutes, papers and agendas
- + Widely promotes board vacancies
- + Holds formal interviews for prospective Board members
- + Holds an annual general meeting in public

Our Board



Malcolm Alexander Chair

Lead for patient safety and St Leonards redevelopment

Malcolm is a former lecturer in patient and public involvement in health and social care and patient empowerment at Westminster University. He is an active health campaigner with a special interest in emergency services, complementary medicine, mental health, health care in detention centres for asylum seekers, ethnicity and access to health care and opposes NHS privatisation.



Lloyd French Lead for race equality and community empowerment

Lloyd has lived in Hackney for over 53 years, since arriving from the Caribbean as a child. He is a qualified

structural engineer who has worked in construction, property management and community development. He has particular interests in race equality and community empowerment. He brings to Healthwatch Hackney his local knowledge, project management and finance skills and desire to improve local health service and empower patients.



Yas'ina Christopher Vice-chair

Lead for sickle cell disorders

Yas'ina has had an extensive career as a nurse, including at Homerton Hospital, with a particular focus on

accident and emergency. She is an active member of the local sickle cell group, SOLACE and has been involved in various public health programmes including Alzheimer's, sickle cell disease, cancer, heart disease and arthritis. She has lived all her life in Hackney.



Philip Jones Lead for mental health and adult social care (Joined September 2020)

Philip has recently retired from a mental health social work and social work

management career. He has a comprehensive grasp of the issues of Integrated health and social care service delivery and the stigma and discrimination facing service users from ethnic minority communities. He has lived in Hackney for 23 years.

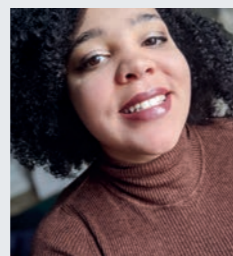


Anthonia Onigbode Treasurer

Lead for financial governance of Healthwatch

Anthonia is chief executive of Hackney Co-operative Developments, a local

social enterprise development organisation. She is a fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants and company secretary for a number of organisations, charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. Her passion is seeing businesses and individuals thrive.



Cassandra Lovelock Lead on promoting the needs of unpaid carers within healthcare

Cassandra is a current PhD student at the London School of Economics,

specialising in unpaid care and unmet needs for carers for those with mental illness and co-production with unpaid carers. She uses her experience as a young, black disabled woman and mental health carer to guide all her work. Cassandra is an ambulatory wheelchair user from a mixed background.



Sarah Oyebanjo Lead for acute arthritic care and Healthwatch quality standards

Sarah has a degree in biomedical science and masters in public health.

She has extensive experience of working with vulnerable and hard to reach groups. She volunteers with Keen London, a charity that provides one-to-one sports and fun for children with special needs. She is particularly keen to see Hackney's young people become involved in Healthwatch and have their voices heard.



Saleem Siddiqui Lead for promoting Healthwatch's influence in health and social care

Saleem was made a Freeman of the London Borough of Hackney in 2013

and served as Councillor from 1990, including as Mayor of Hackney. He is a member of the Homerton Hospital Council of Governors and is a member of the City and Hackney Older Peoples Reference Group. He has extensive links into Hackney communities.

Our staff



Jon Williams
Executive Director



Catherine Perez Phillips
Deputy Director



Lola Njoku
NHS Community Voice Manager



Liya Takie
Finance and Office Co-ordinator



Kanariya Yuseinova
Volunteer and Enter and View Co-ordinator



Sally Beaven
Engagement and Co-production Manager



Sabrina Jantuah
Neighbourhoods Community Development Manager



Healthwatch Hackney is the independent champion for people who use health and care services in the London Borough of Hackney. We make sure people's voices are heard and influence decision-makers to improve services.



Our vision

- + Health and social care services equal for all
- + Needs of all Hackney communities met
- + Residents at the heart of service design

Our mission

- + Improved health and care services
- + All people able to enjoy good health and wellbeing
- + Treatment and care provided with respect and dignity
- + Diversity valued
- + Participation and collaboration encouraged

Our priorities

- + Impact of changes and cuts to social care
 - + Early rapid access to high quality mental health services
 - + Shift of services out of hospital
 - + Access to quality information
- These key priorities guided and informed our work in 2020-21.

Our duties

- + **Promote** and support people's involvement in commissioning and scrutinising local health and care services
- + **Enable** people to monitor the quality of local health and care services and recommend improvements
- + **Obtain** people's views on using health and care services, advise on gaps and make people's views known
- + **Publish** reports and recommendations on how to improve services and direct these to health and care commissioners, providers, Healthwatch England and other scrutiny bodies
- + **Provide** advice and information on how to access local health and care services
- + **Formulate** views on the standard of provision and how it can be improved and share these with Healthwatch England
- + **Make** recommendations to Healthwatch England and advise the Care Quality Commission on special reviews or investigations
- + **Provide** Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to perform effectively

Your views on health care

What you told us in 2020-21

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that it was not possible to run our normal face to face outreach activities. Nevertheless, by using phone calls, surveys, online meetings, focus groups, social media and our online feedback centre we were able to capture your views.

Trends and insights

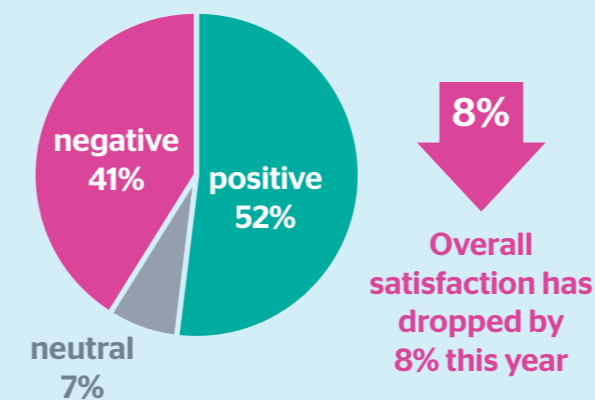
In 2020-21 we identified and analysed 7,889 issues about local health and care services, based on feedback from 2,380 people.

Local residents took part in regular feedback panels, reviewing, coding and analysing your feedback with a matrix used by other local Healthwatch.

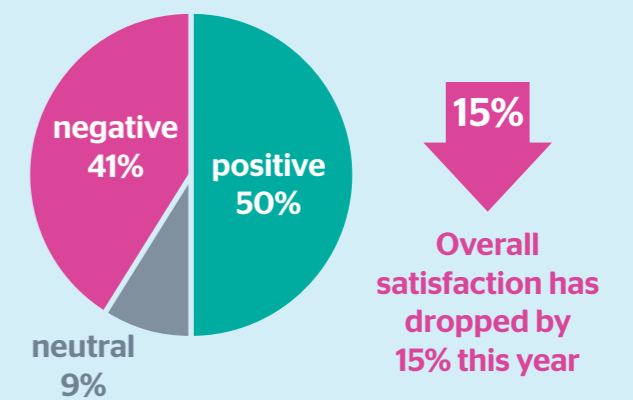
- 43% was collected from social media
- 16% was collected from our surveys
- 31% was collected from providers reports and websites

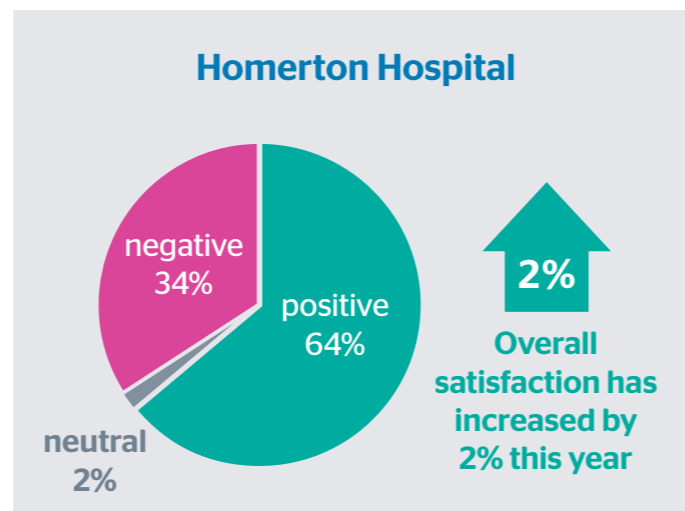
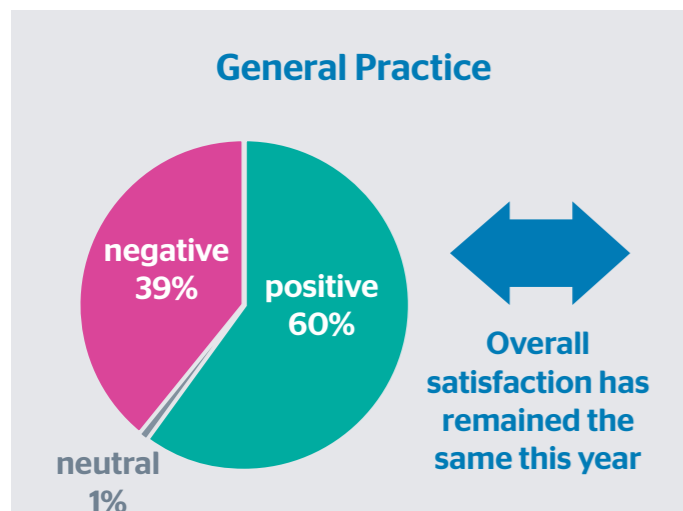
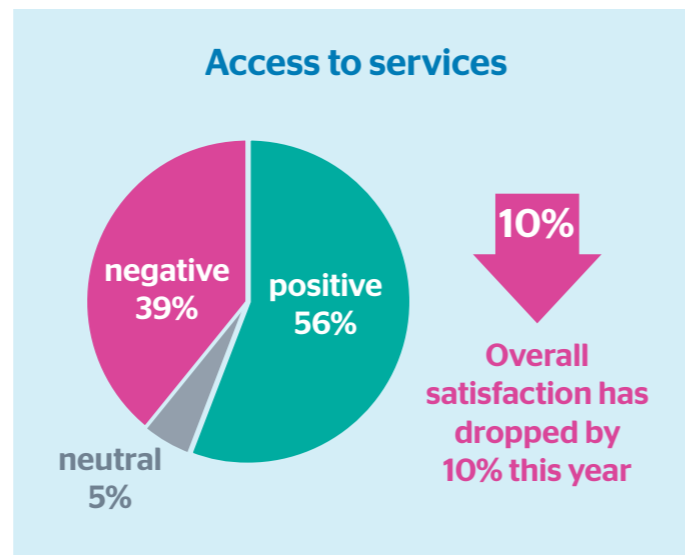
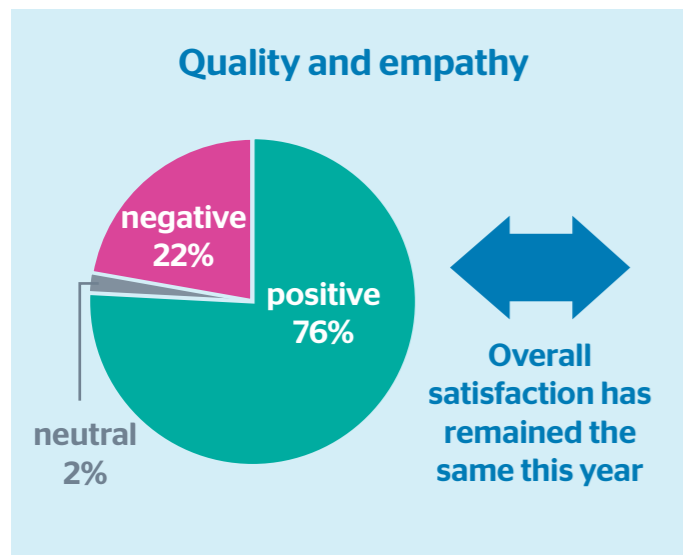


How do people feel about health and care services as a whole?



How well informed, supported and involved do people feel?





2490 issues from 473 people

1207 issues from 288 people

POSITIVES

- + Most people receive good quality care, compassionate treatment and nursing care, with good levels of support.

NEGATIVES

- The ability to book appointments is a problem for many, with issues of telephone access and waits of days (or more) to see a clinician.
- People would like greater levels of privacy in reception.

POSITIVES

- + Feedback about A&E suggests good quality, compassionate treatment and care, with marginal satisfaction on waiting times.

- + On general inpatients, outpatients and surgery, feedback is largely positive about most service aspects.

NEGATIVES

- Maternity services have recorded a 9% decline in satisfaction, with a lack of involvement and communication reported.
- Some people comment on being discharged when not feeling ready.

People's Feedback Panel (PFP)

An important part of Healthwatch's role is to scrutinise feedback, good and bad, on local health and social care services and identify issues.

Our People's Feedback Panel turns your raw experiences of health and care services into hard evidence which we then use to influence service commissioning and delivery. The People's Feedback Panel meets twice a month to look at patient feedback and decide what the issues are, coding them to enable us to identify trends. We also monitor risk to patients, equality and dignity. This makes the People's Feedback Panel a crucial part of the Healthwatch Hackney operation.

The panel is open to anyone and **no experience** in research or an understanding of the health and social care system **is needed**.

Contact us for information on how to get involved as a panel member.

Information Exchange

Our Information Exchange meetings were created as a response to our inability to meet local residents face to face, following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“ I asked a question about tinnitus. Thank you for putting my questions to the audiologist and for her advice. I will contact my GP.”

Our monthly virtual public meetings to discuss important health and care related topics started in July 2020. Each meeting features a key speaker. The meetings are a great opportunity to hear the latest updates on health and care services and get answers directly from service providers.

“ Thank you for sending me the recent Information Exchange Meeting recording with subtitles, it was helpful. I will pass it onto my deaf friend who was not at the meeting.”



The meetings take place using Zoom. We strive to make the meetings as accessible as possible for all Hackney residents by using closed captions and the ability to dial in using a land line. The meetings are also recorded and published on our YouTube channel.

Some of the most popular meetings we had last year were:

- Access to Dentistry during the pandemic
- Maternity Care in Hackney during the pandemic
- Mental health services in Hackney during the pandemic
- COVID-19 vaccination rollout in Hackney

“ I have just found your email in which you have been so kind to send me all the information I missed when you had the meeting on hearing loss. I cannot thank you enough and to tell you how you made my day. It is a gesture I will never forget.”

NHS Community Voice

NHS Community Voice is a patient led project, which brings together patients and residents from all GP practices in City and Hackney to discuss things that matter to them about health. NHS Community Voice was forced to change its engagement and communication methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, as social distancing measures were imposed and some people self-isolated or shielded. All face-to-face work stopped, and the protection of vulnerable residents from the virus became a priority.

Challenges included:

- Providing targeted outreach to ensure representation of specific participant groups.
- Collating people's demographics, evaluation and feedback is difficult with online events.
- Lack of access to the internet or IT skills has made it hard to reach some groups.
- Inability to meet our communities face to face to gather people's insights.

Activities

COVID-19 survey

We wanted to capture a snapshot of the experiences and wellbeing of the Hackney and City of London community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure we reached as many people as possible, including those without internet access, we had to be inventive and adapt our approach. Flyers were included in 1,800 food parcels that were distributed to residents by Hackney Council and 120 in the Kosher food parcels sent out to the Orthodox Jewish community, who were shielding or isolated.

84 people completed the survey. The report highlighted the significant effect the digital divide has on residents' ability to access adequate support and information. Many people also seemed to have lost trust in public information. It also demonstrated the impact of the mental health crisis resulting from the pandemic, that is affecting all areas of the community.

NHS CV and Hackney Mosaics

We worked in partnership with Hackney Mosaics to create a plaque which is on display at Lincroft Road.

The plaque, which features a poem by Hackney resident Lemn Sissay OBE, honours the contributions of NHS staff and frontline key workers. Lemn said "Thank you Hackney Mosaic Project. This is my first landmark poem in Hackney and I love it."

The creation of the plaque involved 20 individuals, many of who were self-isolating and digitally excluded. Taking part had a positive effect on their health and wellbeing, creating connections and lessening loneliness.



*Said the sun to the moon
Said the head to the heart
We have more in common
Than sets us apart*



Working in partnership with Shelter to survey and run focus groups with residents in temporary housing

In late 2020, 27 households took part in a series of telephone surveys and focus groups with Healthwatch Hackney's NHS Community Voice project and Shelter London, to better understand the issues they and others face in accessing basic facilities in their accommodation and housing services.

The report highlighted the negative impact of living in temporary accommodation, with 78% reporting that it had impacted on their mental health.

Hackney Council responded positively to the report, telling us that they are rolling out free Wi-Fi to all their hostels over the next year; installing laundry facilities where possible; working on improved crisis prevention; trialling the embedding of social workers in housing needs teams; and providing hostel residents with clear and accessible accommodation guides, which outline key contacts and highlight a range of services they can access.

Self-Care Winter Event 2020

127 people attended this online event which focused on promotion of well-being activities that are free and available to the community in Hackney.

COVID-19 Conversations were held for the **Black and South Asian Communities**. The events provided a platform for discussion and the answering of questions about the vaccine, helping to address issues preventing uptake. A total of **200+ people** attended both events.

Next steps

As the lockdown starts to ease, NHS Community Voice has a key role to play in the new North East London Clinical Commissioning Group's resident involvement to feed the voices of residents into the system through the new structure of the People and Place Group.



The Involvement Alliance

For the last two years the Involvement Alliance has worked hard to raise awareness of services, working in partnership with member community organisations. Activities included the development of joint opportunities to work together on involvement and engagement to activities with seldom heard communities, training for member organisations and the sharing of strategies to reach community members. The project ended in November 2020. Members of the Alliance were surveyed and reported very positively about their experience.

70% said “the project met their expectation”

85% said “it improved information sharing”

52% said “it created opportunities for partnership working”.

“Thank you for the work carried out and shared information and inviting me to the initiative and having met with the other organisations

Turkish Cypriot Association

Although the Involvement Alliance has formally ended, it leaves a strong legacy of collaboration. Established organisational relations will enable

continued exploration of joint activities to spread costs and achieve crossover between groups and service sectors, for example, bring together young people and older people for intergenerational projects.

“We have found this a valuable vehicle for building closer working relationships with related organisations, and one well worth the extra time expended. We will try to sustain them going forward

Older People's Reference Group

The Involvement Alliance Small Grants Scheme was created to support widening engagement and organisational developmental needs. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic it enabled organisations to better respond to the challenges of public engagement/involvement, when face to face work became impossible.

Three members of the Involvement Alliance were awarded a £1,400 grant. This included funding two postal newsletters to members of the Older People's Reference Group. The content included 'We Said - They Did' on behalf of City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group, as well as other useful bits of information such as tips on self-care, useful contacts and a 'Meet the Advisory group' section. Only 140 out of 460 their members have email addresses making providing information in a paper format incredibly important.

Healthwatch investigatory reports

How can I help you? What patients tell us about Hackney GP receptionists November 2020

Receptionists in GP practices are generally the first point of contact for people seeking medical help. Making sure the service is welcoming and friendly is vital in ensuring access to healthcare is easy and straight forward.

“I'd like to report a case of negligence from my GP practice, who have been very passive aggressively neglectful towards me, constantly forgetting to do tests, losing results, ignoring my health tickets, not replying to my call back requests, and now my physical health and illness is proceeding to get worse.

We looked at feedback from **80 people** collected between November 2019 and July 2020 and related to patients interaction with receptionists.

POSITIVES

+ Patients were generally happy with the care they receive at their GP practices.

NEGATIVES

- Problems with phone calls were one of the main issues highlighted by people trying to access GP services.
- Insensitivity and unprofessional behaviour from receptionists is experienced in multiple ways by patients across surgeries. In some cases the interaction is perceived as rude and confrontational, in others it forces patients to take drastic decisions such as changing surgeries or stopping treatment.

Complaints: Some patients felt that after they reported the behaviour of receptionists to their GP their complaint has not been fairly investigated in an open and transparent way.

Changes following our research

We signposted residents to the Hackney Health and Social Care Complaints charter and made them aware of how they can raise concerns and what they should expect from services.

“Thank you very much for all of the information.

“I've been redirected to you via the NHS and Citizen's Advice websites to make a complaint about a GP in Hackney. Might you be able to let me know how to go about it?

The experience of Hackney carers during COVID-19 pandemic March–October 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives of those providing unpaid care. The closure or remote provision of services meant that many carers who previously would have had a break, had to cope without a respite.

Between August and October 2020, we spoke to **38 unpaid carers** and heard of their experience during the pandemic.

POSITIVES

+ Several carers reported positive experiences - including of the increased use of remote communication (e.g. by calling, sending pictures and having virtual consultations).

NEGATIVES

- Carers have provided an increased amount of care, spent more time providing practical help and emotional support due to changes in their typical care arrangements and their restricted ability to access support services.
- They have also had extra expenses, including having to pay for extra personal care.
- The majority of respondents had not been contacted by health and social care services.
- Slow and confusing information provided.

Changes following our research

Unpaid carers were made aware of their rights to support by signposting them to City and Hackney Carers Centre and Carers First.



An investigation into dental services in Hackney during the COVID-19 pandemic September - October 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of both routine and urgent dental services. In March 2020 all non-urgent dental care, was stopped as part of strict measures to help stop the spread of coronavirus. Urgent care would be based on telephone advice and the prescription of analgesics and/or antibiotics.

We undertook research to assess how all NHS commissioned dental practices in Hackney were operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What we found:

POSITIVES

- ➕ Most dentists aimed to see urgent patients on the same day or within 48 hours.
- ➕ Most of the practices were referring patients to 111 if they could not see them.

NEGATIVES

- ➖ Fewer practices were able to accept new NHS patients.
- ➖ The time-consuming infection control

procedures and extra cleaning led to dentists being able to see fewer patients per day.

- ➖ Most of the practices were prioritising patients with the most urgent needs.

Changes following our report

We signposted several residents to dental surgeries in Hackney, which we identified during our research as having the capacity to accept new NHS patients.

“ **This is really helpful information. Thank you very much for this. I'll enquire with the dentists you've listed and see how it goes. Fortunately, I don't have any need for emergency treatment. Thanks again for your help.** ”

“ **I have successfully found a place at Woodberry Down Dental Practice! I have an appointment for 22/03/21. Thank you so much for your help! I was starting to lose hope.** ”

“ **Thanks so much for that information. Really very helpful! I'll try a couple of the surgeries you mentioned.** ”

Enter and View report, ride-out with ParaDoc - February 2021

ParaDoc provides an assessment and treatment service for acutely unwell patients in City and Hackney, who might otherwise be admitted to Accident and Emergency. The focus is on patients who are elderly and frail and those with complex needs.

The Chair of our Board, Malcolm Alexander, had a ride-out with the ParaDoc team for three hours (5pm-8pm), which included a visit to two patients.

POSITIVES

- ➕ They are a highly impressive team of a GP and paramedic, who demonstrated outstanding clinical/medical practice in their interaction with patients, their commitment to providing the very best urgent care and keeping patients away from the A&E department.

NEGATIVES

- ➖ Services are limited to only one car. ParaDoc service should be expanded to meet the needs of patients and limit the number of referrals to the Accident and Emergency department.

Changes following our report

ParaDoc expanded their capacity and developed a connection with both the local and pan London commissioning teams for emergency care (unplanned care).

Helping you find answers

Before the COVID-19 pandemic Healthwatch Hackney was frequently out and about in the community. Directing people towards different services was an important part of this work. It became clear during the first wave of the pandemic and the introduction of social distancing, that we would have to reshape this work.

We continued to respond to general emails and calls, but also proactively contacted all our supporters to check on their welfare and collect comments on their experiences of accessing healthcare. Calls provided a vital opportunity to signposting residents to support services.

POSITIVES

- ➕ Supporters appreciated check-in calls and saw them as 'sun in a stormy day'.
- ➕ Overall, supporters found the pandemic challenging but manageable

“ **Have been coping well during the lockdown. Zoom has made a real difference for me.** ”

“ **I lost my husband a few months ago and find it difficult to cope but have been trying to keep busy.** ”

- ➕ NHS staff were positively regarded.
- ➕ Supporters felt safe at medical centres and the local hospital but not in transit to them.
- ➕ Virtual appointments were well received.

NEGATIVES

- ➖ Individuals who were self-isolating and the elderly needed extra care during the pandemic. Unfortunately, a small number of supporters reported having nobody to rely on.
- ➖ Physical distancing over-burdened already stressed caregivers.
- ➖ Parents were not equipped for home schooling.
- ➖ As the pandemic continued, mental health became more concerning.

Changes following our calls

We referred a number of residents to Hackney Council's Coronavirus support, food support services, prescription delivery, befriending services and carers support.

Among the main signposting destinations were NHS Independent Health and Care Advocacy Services and Hackney Council services together with GP/hospital services.

“ **It was a 'breath of fresh air' speaking to you. Thank you for making time to listen to my concern regarding the poor care towards my parent at the Homerton Hospital.** ”

Integrated commissioning

Integrated Commissioning is about bringing together health and care services to deliver more effective care for residents. 2020 - 2021 saw many changes as the Integrated Commissioning Board prepared to become Integrated Care Partnership on 1 April 2021. Against the backdrop of a global pandemic, with remote working the norm, local councillors, health commissioners, health and care providers, voluntary and community sector and residents representing the public, prepared to come together create a truly integrated approach to governance for health and care services across Hackney and City. The integrated care partnership will allow decisions to be made by a triumvirate, made up of managers, clinicians/practitioners and the public.

Healthwatch Hackney has played a key role in the preparations of this change. We sought to ensure public representation is embedded in this new system. We facilitated communication, engagement and public representation across local health and care services. In this way we give life to the vision to the triumvirate and fully integrated care.

Care workstreams

Healthwatch Hackney has supported public representatives to sit on and contribute to each of the care workstream boards, which are planned care, unplanned care and children and young people's workstreams (the prevention workstream transformed into a COVID-19 focused group led by Public Health). This has allowed residents to bring the current patient perspective and the "common sense approach" to these decision-making boards, which are working in partnership commissioners and practitioners to generate plans for the integration of care.

Communications and Engagement group

This group is co-chaired by our executive director. The group brings together representatives from across the integrated care system, allowing London Borough of Hackney, City of London Corporation, Homerton hospital, the GP Confederation, the voluntary and community sector, East London

Foundation Trust, Healthwatch City of London, patient and public representatives and many more to work together to align and agree work around communication and engagement. The group acts as a touchpoint and successfully promotes collaborative working across the system. This year the group supported:

- Communication and public engagement for the vaccine rollout and ongoing vaccine delivery, with a focus on harder to reach communities.
- Winter planning and flu engagement.
- Access to GPs for all including undocumented migrants.
- Community Champions delivering up to date accurate information about Covid and vaccines directly into communities.
- Young system influencers - a project enabling young people between 16 and 24 to engage directly with the system to promote improvements.
- The creation of the public involvement strategy for City and Hackney for the coming 12 months.
- The creation of the communication and engagement strategy for the coming 12 months.

Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods are part of the move towards greater joint working between different health and care teams and the wider community. Eight local Neighbourhoods have been created across the City and Hackney. By organising services such as GP practices, social care teams and community mental health support into Neighbourhoods, the aim is that they will work more effectively together, providing better support for residents. In addition to this the services and support in each Neighbourhood should better reflect the needs and priorities of local people. Here are a few highlights.

Neighbourhood Resident Involvement Group (NRIG)

Healthwatch Hackney supports the Neighbourhood Resident Involvement Group (NRIG) which is made up of 12 volunteers from across the different Neighbourhoods in City and Hackney. NRIG has been representing residents within the Neighbourhoods programme for over 2 years.

NRIG's focus in 2020-21 has been to strengthen the understanding and use of co-production within the Neighbourhoods programme. Co-production means that professionals and residents work together to develop solutions to shared challenges. This may result in new services, training, policies or communications. NRIG started a series of workshops with a consultant in January. A joint workshop with employees from the Neighbourhoods Programme will take place in May 2021, resulting in a co-production handbook. This work will also be incorporated in the review of the Hackney Co-production Charter to strengthen co-production across the borough and beyond. We anticipate this will lead to opportunities for the co-production of Community Nephrology services (kidney diseases), and aspects of mental health services.

Community Influencers Pilot

To meet the need for more flexible and inclusive approaches to involving residents, we have been working in partnership with Volunteer Centre Hackney's Our Place Hoxton project. Ten residents volunteered to gather insights from their friends, neighbours and family members about their local community and the things impacting their health and wellbeing. Although it has been challenging carrying out engagement activities during the pandemic, there were some interesting findings from this work. For example, social isolation and concerns about the lack of physical activity were the top impacts of COVID-19 raised by people in Hoxton. Unsurprisingly there was a lot of interest in events that bring people together and exercise groups as we emerge from the pandemic.

"I've learned lots from other volunteers about how they relate to their community and the training opportunities of Community Organising. I learned a lot from being in a group with diverse people, learning from people's ideas and interpretations."

The issues raised from this work will contribute to the strategy for the local Neighbourhood Partnership Forum. The learnings from this pilot and work in the City of London later this year will be written up into a tool-kit which will be shared across the whole of the Neighbourhoods programme.



"It's a chance for people in the local community to feedback their thoughts and comments about what's been going on and what needs to change."

"I like the collaborative aspect of things, it's fluid and participant led which I've not experienced yet. We are doing something that all Hoxton participants can relate to and it is being driven by people in the area."

Neighbourhood Conversations and Partnership Forums

Neighbourhood meetings have been hosted by Hackney CVS to identify what the key issues are in each Neighbourhood and how different people and organisations can work together to address them. In Well Street Common Neighbourhood and Shoreditch Park and City they are developing a more formal "Partnership Forum" with their own steering groups and strategies. At both the conversations and forums there is a mixture of residents, primary care staff, voluntary and community organisations and Council staff. Resident engagement and participation within both the conversations and forums has been developing over the past year. Well Street Common was established first and has established a number of working groups to address mental health support, resident engagement, communications and inequality and inclusivity.

Our volunteers

Healthwatch Hackney cannot deliver its work without our fantastic volunteers. Many volunteers go on to paid work. Last year 43 volunteers provided 2,299 hours of unpaid support including:

- + Board membership
- + Public representatives on key health committee and groups
- + Calling our supporters
- + Collecting public feedback
- + Event organisation and administration



Debbie

After a career as an exhibition organiser, I wanted when I retired to put something back into the community where I have lived for over 30 years. I discovered Healthwatch Hackney at a Hackney Volunteer Day. Their commitment to giving local health providers grassroots feedback appealed to me and I thought I had the kind of skills and experience they might find useful.

I enjoy the outreach activities, talking to people to get their comments.

We are currently doing this on the phone due to the pandemic. We log the comments on to the Healthwatch Hackney database before they are assessed by a panel that includes some volunteers. We then create reports for our Clinical Commissioning Group to show how local services are doing against a range of criteria.

I've been volunteering for over two years now and have been trained in adult safeguarding, working with an 'enter and view' inspection team and have attended an active listening course. It is rewarding as I've had to develop new skills as well as using existing ones and the team at Healthwatch Hackney are always helpful, grateful, and supportive.



Ivana Kolar

I am a public health student and a Hackney resident for the past six years. I slowly fell in love with this vibrant borough, and it was important for me to try and give back to the community as much as I could.

Healthwatch Hackney was suggested to me through university as a great organisation to get involved with to gain insight into public health. It seemed like an amazing opportunity, but it has become so much more than I expected.

I have been volunteering since February 2021. The most joyful part of volunteering is being able to connect and work with people that share the same interests as me. People who want to improve lives of their community members and people that I am able to learn so much from. Volunteering has really opened my eyes. It showed me the extent of health issues in Hackney and the importance of listening and hearing what people have to say about access and delivery of health and care services.

Volunteering during a pandemic was definitely a different experience than I expected but Healthwatch Hackney, especially my manager Kanariya, have made it a new normal. I've met and worked with so many people already, so I can't wait to see what will happen next. I look forward to meeting new people and gaining further experience while supporting the communities in Hackney.

Our finances

INCOME	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Funding from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	150,000	150,000
City of London Corporation	-	8,677
NHS clinical commissioning group projects	209,244	224,136
Other income	2,250	7,065
Total Income	361,494	389,878
EXPENDITURE	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Operational costs (including project direct expenses)	83,443	73,281
Staff costs	251,714	282,669
Premises / office costs	15,819	17,367
Healthwatch City of London	-	11,660
Total expenditure	350,976	384,977
Balance brought forward	10,518	4,901

The London Borough of Hackney funding is provided through a central government Local Reform and Community Voices 2020/21 grant and was awarded £201,335 to support Healthwatch.



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