



Healthwatch Hackney **Draft Strategy**

2022-2025

Each priority will have a timeline for completion

Our Strategy 2022–2025 is intended to transform health and social care in Hackney, by focussing on equality, access, safety, quality and effectiveness of those services. We will actively campaign for the delivery of our strategic goals and seek to influence local providers and commissioners, with the active support of local residents to implement our goals.

The Healthwatch Board will continuously monitor the delivery of our Strategy, within the agreed timeframes and establish a risk register to assess progress, mitigation and resolution of any impediments to HWH achieving its objectives.

Our Board members will provide leadership on those strategic goals that will benefit from their expertise.

We aim to secure adequate funding to achieve our 2022-25 strategic goals from the LBH, our statutory funder and from the CCG which funds many of our leading-edge activities. We will ensure that our financial governance is secure through specialised roles on our Board and external audit. We will seek additional sources of funding when required to achieve our strategic objectives and goals.

1. Healthwatch - The Public's Independent Champion for Health and Social Care

Healthwatch Hackney is the independent champion for people who use local health and social care services. Our job is to make sure that those who run our local health and care services listen to, understand and act on what really matters to local people. We listen both to the positive things people say about local services and the areas they believe need improvement. We focus on ensuring that people's concerns about services are heard and acted on. We work relentlessly to get services right for local people now and into the future.

2. We Have Statutory Duties - So do those we monitor

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to be the champion for people using health and social care services, and is

funded by the DHSC through our commissioners, the London Borough of Hackney. Healthwatch Hackney was established in 2013.

Our statutory responsibilities place a duty on us to:

- Provide information and signposting about health and social care services
- Monitor concerns, complaints and serious incidents
- Enable people to feedback experiences of health & social care services
- Collate information and compile reports about people's experiences and views about local services
- Listen to people from all communities in Hackney about their experiences of health and care services
- Work closely with community organisations, e.g. PPGs and the voluntary sector to improve services
- Help to involve people in decisions about their care and how it is delivered
- Provide information enabling local people to make choices about health and care services
- Work in partnership and co-production to transform and improve services
- Ensure required improvements are made when identified by local people
- Demonstrate the improvements we have made happen in local services
- Listen to and involve those who are least likely to be heard.

When we hear that services are not meeting people's needs, especially for vulnerable groups, we will speak out and act to bring about change.

We will encourage all service providers to listen to and learn from patient and public feedback, especially complaints, so they can improve services as required and needed by service users.

We are committed to working with all local health and social care service providers and commissioners to help design new models of care through the Co-Production model.

We aim to empower local people, by increasing local knowledge, involvement and understanding of the role and impact that Healthwatch has and will continue to have on local services.

3. Our Ambition is to Achieve:

- More effective gathering and using of information about the experiences of people using health and care services and working with partner organisations to transform services.
- Involving greater number of volunteers in gathering information from local people and local providers and commissioners.
- Involvement in the redesign and improvement of primary care services, e.g.

GPs, dental and pharmacy services, in collaboration with Primary Care Networks, local Neighbourhoods, CCG, NHS Confederation and the bodies representing GPs (LMC), dentists (LDC) and pharmacists (LPC).

- More effective influence on local mental health services, to improve their safety, quality and access through collaboration with ELFT, the CCG, CQC and local organisations representing people with mental health problems
- Creating a more secure and sustainable Healthwatch in Hackney by building income sources adequate to enable Healthwatch to have a major impact on the quality of local services.
- Greater opportunities for young people to influence Healthwatch Hackney and be heard on issues that matter to them.
- An accessible office where residents can have straight-forward and direct contact with our staff team, volunteers and Board Members.

4. Consultation on Strategy – 2022-2025

- During the period up to our AGM in September 2022 we will consult on the draft strategy and engage with local residents, community and voluntary sector organisations, our staff team, volunteers and local partners and stakeholders.
- We will present our final 2022-2025 Strategy to our AGM in September 2022.

PRIORITY THREE: INFLUENCING IMPROVEMENTS TO PRIMARY CARE SERVICES

Why is this important?

GPs, dentists, pharmacists provide essential front-line services for the population of Hackney and are the first point of contact for most people in the health care system.

Our feedback shows that this is a key point of pressure in the care system, and many people have difficulties getting appointments and receiving face to face consultations. There are also concerns about the triaging of patients by reception staff who are not clinically trained, and concerns that this process sometimes takes place in open reception areas, which are not confidential spaces. Pharmacists are expected to consult in private rooms, but some GP practices triage patients in open reception rooms. Patients have also expressed concerns about being referred to local pharmacists when they seek an appointment with GPs.

Hackney has lost three GP practices in recent years and is now losing a fourth (Southgate/Whiston Road) leading to the transfer of 6000 patients. We

need to take action to secure high quality, stable, accessible GP services for the future. 12 practices in Hackney are considered to be vulnerable over the next 5 years and some may be at risk of closure. Three of these practices are at high risk of closure. We believe that Healthwatch needs to develop better links with PPGs, especially where practices are at risk of closure in the short to medium term, so that the PPGs can better challenge weaknesses in primary care practices that put them at risk of closure. The system within the NHS to prevent practice closures does not appear to have enough power to prevent these closures and to enable succession planning, e.g. to bring in new partners to practices. There is a need for enhanced planning and support for GPs and PPGs to develop a collaborative approach towards preventing the closure of GP surgeries.

Detailed research has been carried out by HWH into compliance of GP practices with their statutory duties regarding registration. We have also closely examined the quality of GPs websites and collected information from them about the following issues:

- Patient registration process
- Access to interpreting services
- Extended consultations/ double appointments.
- Digital access to services:
 - booking an appointment
 - online consultations
 - ordering repeat prescriptions
- Complaint's policy, procedure and access to the Hackney Complaints Charter
- Option for general feedback
- Access to Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)
- Access to the GP practice Duty Doctor

Many people complain about problems of access to NHS dentists and feel pressure to go private. Many dental practices do not have websites and do not provide effective sources of information about their services or dental hygiene. There are also frequent reports of dentists not carrying out their contractual duty to remove plaque and expect patient to pay £50/70 for a dental hygienist instead. HWH has carried out a detailed study of dentists in Hackney which found problems of access to NHS dentistry to be particularly severe, whereas private dentistry was often more easily available. We made the following recommendation in our 2022 report on dentistry:

- The NHS Commissioner should ensure parity of esteem between NHS and private dental care and treatment, so that patients are never able to access dental care and treatment more quickly by paying for private treatment from a practice that is contracted to provide NHS care and treatment.
- NHS Commissioning of Dentistry should be transferred from NHS England

- to local CCGs/ICSs.
- All dentists providing NHS care in Hackney should have a website with detailed information about the services provided, preventative dental care and a copy of Healthwatch Hackney's Complaints Charter.
- NHS Commissioners should require all NHS dental practices to have maximum waits for appointments for routine, urgent and emergency care for all patients that seek care and treatment from them.

How will we do it?

HWH aims to develop greater involvement in the redesign of primary care services - GPs, dental and pharmacy services, We will develop collaborative work with Primary Care Networks, GP Confederation and local Neighbourhoods (e.g. through our Neighbourhoods Community Development Manager), the CCG and the bodies representing GPs (LMC), dentists (LDC) and pharmacists (LPC). We have already run successful public meetings on dental and GP services through our Information Exchange Programme.

We will use our seat on the Primary Care Commissioning Advisory Group (PCCAG), which has a major role in primary care development, and is run by the NEL CCG, to enhance our influence in the development, monitoring and succession planning of GPs. This work will be tied to the roll out of Enter and View visits to vulnerable GP practices to get patients' views on what developments are needed in each practice. We will also attempt to stop further closures of GP practices and the consequent dispersal of thousands of patients.

We have produced Complaints Charters for pharmacists, GPs and dentists. We will roll out the distribution of these Charters to Dentists and encourage them to ensure that copies are available in waiting rooms and on their website. We will encourage dentists to develop websites aimed at promoting dental hygiene and encourage the NEL CCG to commission dentistry for NEL instead of being commissioned by NHS England.

We will monitor local pharmacies through our Enter and View volunteers, who will examine the quality of pharmacy facilities, intended to enable pharmacist to carry out diagnosis and treatment for minor ailments.

What we expect to achieve

- An end to non-clinical triaging of patients by general practice through our work with the LMC and PCNs. Triaging should always be carried out in a confidential environment.
- Action to stop the closure of GP practices through our work with the PCCAG

PCNs and PPGs.

- Continuing production of detailed reports on primary care, e.g. in relation to registration for homeless people, migrants, access to services and advice through primary care websites.
- Local commissioning of dental care by CCGs instead of through NHSE
- Ending of enhanced access to private dentistry over NHS dentistry within the same dental practice
- Ensuring each dentist in Hackney has a website with information about access to their services, complaints and dental hygiene
- Reintroduction of Enter and View into primary care so that the issues above can be closely monitored
- Wide distribution of Hackney Complaints Charter through websites and notice board of every GP, dentist and pharmacist in Hackney