



Annual Report

Our work in 2018-19



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Message from our Chair

I am very pleased to introduce our 2018-19 Annual Report.

This year we have been in touch with more residents than ever. Over 1400 people have taken part in our events and workshops, or given us their views on local health and care services.

In particular residents have talked to us about podiatry, physiotherapy and other services delivered in the community by Whittington Health, one of our big local hospitals. They've given their views on seeing a GP at the Angel walk-in centre, and on how these same day GP services might be re-organised. They've talked to us about activities on offer in the care homes where they live, and they've shared their worries and hopes about the re-organisation of mental health services during a year when a lot of change has been discussed.

We have provided information on accessing GP appointments, not just during the day but in the evenings and at the weekend as well. We've shown residents how to access GP services on-line, and how to access interpreting services when using health care. Our approach to information provision has become more dynamic, going out into the community to actively promote navigation services and resources that allow our residents to take better charge of their own health. This is what many of our partners in the community have told us is needed, and we plan to build on this activity in the year to come.

Our volunteers have been instrumental in helping us carry out all this work. In addition, our specially trained 'Enter and view' representatives carried out a series of visits to Moorfields Eye Hospital and the Whittington, speaking to almost 170 outpatients about their experience of finding their way around the hospitals, and of waiting to be called for their appointments.

We have continued to extend our volunteering programme with local university London Metropolitan, and Queen Mary University, as well as working with students at City and Islington College.

In June 2018 we were awarded Investing in Volunteers status with our volunteers reporting that they 'feel valued' and that they 'are making a difference'.

We couldn't achieve what we do without their valuable insight, expertise and commitment. Thank you to all of them.



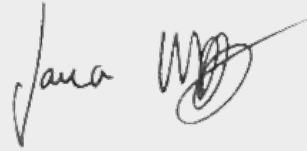
'This year we have been in touch with more residents than ever.'

We are really proud to say that because of our work:

- + From April 2019 Autism Health Checks for adults have been introduced
- + Autism awareness training is being provided for GP practice staff and 'environment checks' of GP practices are being carried out by parents of children with autism.
- + From April 2019, patients waiting for an ADHD assessment can now access peer support whilst waiting for their assessment. This will help them to self care whilst waiting. The waiting list is also being worked on.

- + Provision of Sign Language interpreting services has increased. This will help deaf residents to access same-day GP services.
- + Local residents report increased confidence and well-being after participating in our health-based digital workshops.

We hope you'll enjoy reading the report. If it inspires you to get involved, our contact details are on the back page.



Jana Witt
Healthwatch Islington Chair

Changes you want to see

Last year we heard from over 1400 people who told us about their experience of a number of different areas of health and social care. Here are some examples of the changes that you want to see.



- + Improve the appointment booking process for podiatry services and reduce the waiting time



- + Home care services need to be easier to contact, and more responsive



- + Make it easier for people to get an urgent or same day appointment at their own GP surgery



- + Make it easier for people to access resources that help them take charge of their own health

About us

Healthwatch is here to make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

We are here to help make care better for people.

Our vision is simple

Improved health and social care outcomes for local residents.

In other words, health and care that works for you - helping you to stay well, get the best out of services, and manage any conditions you face.



Our mission

- + To collect knowledge that reflects the diversity of needs and experiences within the borough, and to encourage people to feedback their honest views on services.
- + To use the evidence we gather to influence service delivery, provision and commissioning for the benefit of local people to improve their experience.
- + To reach out to and empower our local community to be informed about and involved in local services, and to exercise choice in taking up services.
- + To support the independent assessment and audit of local services.



Our approach

People's views come first - especially those that find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



People at the heart of everything we do

We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- + Visiting services to see how they work
- + Running surveys and focus groups
- + Going out in the community and working with other organisations

Our main job is to raise people's concerns with health and care decision-makers so that they can improve support across the borough. The evidence we gather also helps us recommend how policy and practice can change for the better.

Leaders of local community organisations work with us to promote digital inclusion





Highlights from our year



Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2018-19.



1400 people shared their health and social care story with us, 40% more than last year.



We have 31 volunteers who made a massive contribution to our work over the year.



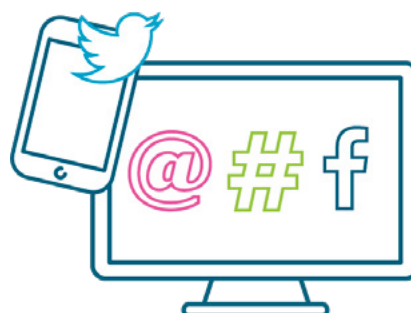
324 people accessed Healthwatch advice and information at community events, or contacted us by phone or email with questions about local support.



We visited 53 services and 25 community events to understand people's experience of care.



Our reports have explored issues ranging from maternity services for refugee women, to meaningful activities in care homes.



197 residents participated in our digital inclusion workshops.



**How we've made
a difference**

How we are having an impact in the community

When people share their views with Healthwatch it leads to positive changes to health and social care services. When people speak up about what's important, and services listen, care is improved for all.

Take a look at some examples of the ways we are making a difference in Islington.

SPEAKING UP: How we helped make GP surgeries more autism friendly

Many people told us that more could be done to make health and care services accessible to people with autism.

We decided to investigate further, by doing some mystery shopping. Our volunteers phoned GP surgeries posing as a parent looking for a practice which could accommodate the needs of an autistic child. They asked a series of questions to find out what support was available.

We were able to speak to 33 of the 35 practices in the borough. Not many had staff with any specialist knowledge or training around autism, and some staff suggested sending autistic patients to a better equipped practice.

We also found that although most practices were happy to give patients with autism longer appointments, there was a lack of quiet spaces for patients with autism to wait.

We shared our findings with the commissioning manager for special educational needs. Our report increased her team's understanding of some of the difficulties that families with an autistic child can face accessing GP services. We made some recommendations for making these services more accessible.

As a result of our work:

- + A service commissioned locally to provide annual health checks for autistic patients now also includes provision for training for GP practice staff.
- + 'Environment checks' of GP surgeries have also been introduced. These will be carried out by parents of children with autism and other special educational needs.

Emma Whitby, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Islington was delighted that we were able to help make a difference.

"It's a fantastic outcome. Some GP surgeries in the borough are already very good at supporting autistic patients, but there is still a need for staff training. We recommended that local residents with experience of autism were involved, so it's great to learn that parents will be visiting individual practices to give feedback on what works well and what could be improved in terms of the physical environment."

IT'S EASY: What you told us you value about same day GP services

The Angel Medical Centre provides GP services that can be accessed without an appointment.

There are plans to change this service, because currently the walk in centre is unable to access your patient records, or refer you on to other services. This means that if your condition is felt to be serious, you have to go from the walk in centre to Accident and Emergency and wait to be seen all over again. Also, if you live in the north of the borough, you're less likely to use the walk in centre because it's too far away.

We made 8 visits to the centre between August and December 2018, speaking to 145 patients using the walk in service.

Feedback was very positive. People praised its speed and quality, and some expressed a preference for the walk in model as a means of

accessing services in general. Many reported difficulties getting an appointment at their own GP.

"I couldn't get an appointment at my GP. I needed to be seen as soon as possible for an infected tattoo. It's easy and quick and it's excellent that the pharmacy is in the same building."

However, Deaf service users told us that the walk in service wasn't accessible to them because BSL (British Sign Language) interpreting wasn't available at such short notice.

We shared this feedback with commissioners and recommended that even if the service does change, the strengths of the current model are not lost, even as its weaknesses are addressed.

+ A final decision is yet to be taken on the future of same day GP services but, as a result of our work, additional BSL interpreting services have already been commissioned.

Healthwatch Islington gathering views at the walk in centre in Angel





We went into care homes to speak to residents about the activities they were offered

SOCIAL CARE: How we helped local care home residents to have their say

We gather views about services from the members of our community that may find it hardest to be heard. Our volunteers visited six care homes to see if residents were happy with the activities on offer in the home. We spoke to 37 residents during our visits. Many had dementia or other conditions, meaning it was hard for them to participate fully. In some cases we spoke to a relative, friend or staff member along with the resident to gain a better picture.

One issue mentioned by several care home managers was the increasing frailty and increasing level of need of residents. Many are limited to their beds and/or a chair and this puts a

strain on staff time as group activities become less feasible.

- + We found it encouraging that all the homes we visited seemed to recognise the importance of providing residents with meaningful activities.
- + Despite the challenges, we found many examples of good practice. We have shared these in a report about our visits.

“I like reading - I use the library on the second floor. I used to sing but my voice has gone now. Crosswords, newspapers, art appreciation, I can do most of those here when I feel well enough. I’m getting used to it. Rooms are not very soundproof so there’s a problem with noise. When music activities happen I’d like them to close the door. It’s nice to be private as well as join in.”



Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services hear what works, what doesn't, and what you want from care in the future.

w: healthwatchislington.co.uk

t: 020 7832 5814

e: info@healthwatchislington.co.uk

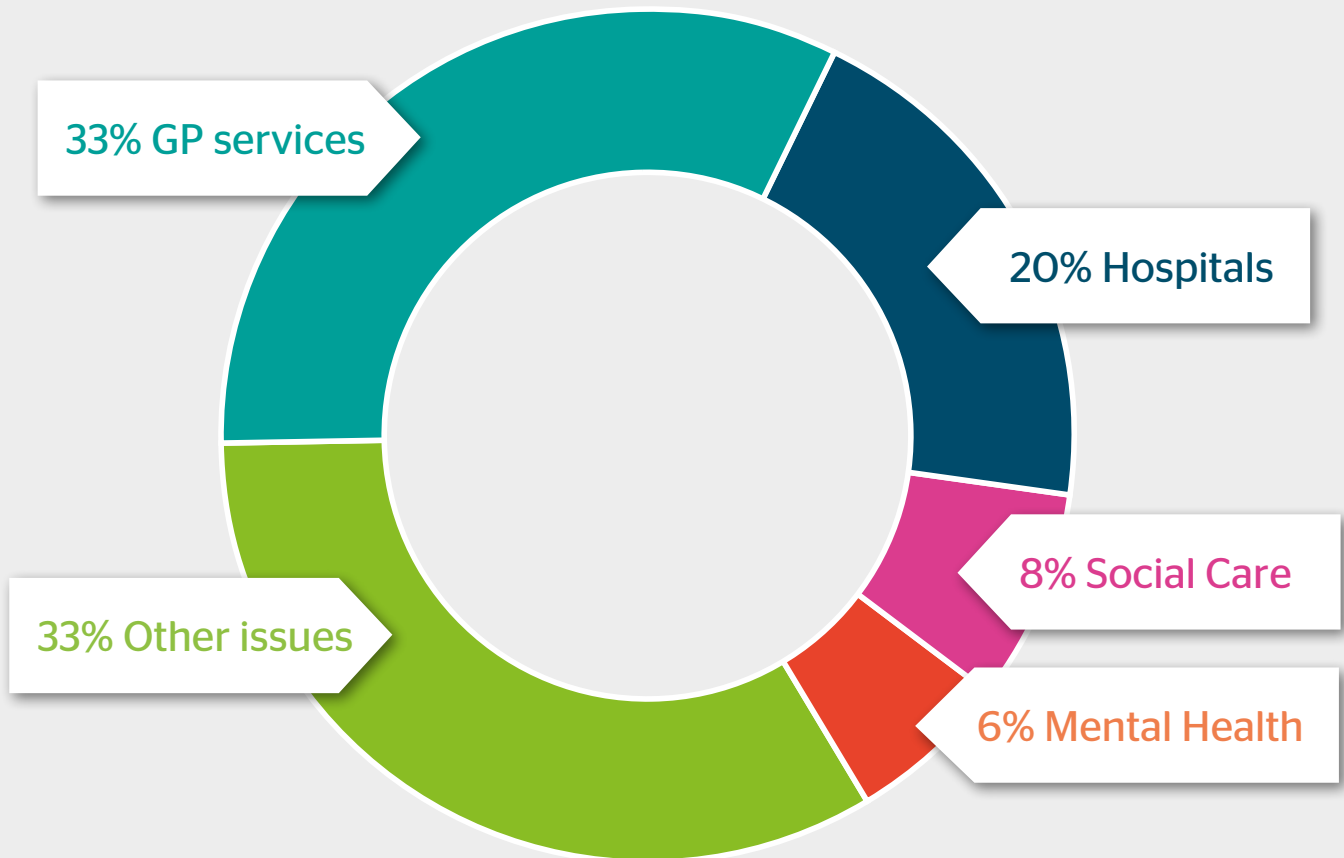


**Helping you find
the answers**

What services do people want to know about?

People don't always know how to get the information they need to make decisions about their own health and care. Healthwatch Islington plays an important role in providing advice and pointing people in the right direction for the support they need.

Here are the most common things that people contact us about:



Other issues people contact us about include housing, benefits & entitlements, and advocacy



How we provide people with advice and information

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful. Last year we helped 324 people access the advice and information they need.

+ When we carry out community research with our partners, information and advice is given to everybody who takes part. This is a great way to support residents that don't have English as a first language. 153 people were supported in this way last year.

- + You can come to us for advice and information in a number of ways including:
- + Over the phone. Call us on 020 7832 5828
- + By emailing info@healthwatchislington.co.uk
- + Visit the advice and information pages on our website
- + We also provide advice and information to everybody who takes part in our digital inclusion workshops. For example we support people to use their smartphones to register for online GP services.

LOGGING ON: "Digital is no longer a no go area"

The Log On project is a partnership between Healthwatch, the mobile phone network provider 3, and six local organisations representing communities in Islington where English isn't the main spoken language. The project was initially aimed at older residents with existing health conditions.

Most participants owned a smartphone, but did not know how to use it well.

The aim of the Log On project is to teach people:

- + how to get the best out of their smartphones,
- + to get online and discover a range of health and wellbeing resources
- + to learn how to use online GP services to book appointments and order repeat prescriptions.

One participant shares their impressions:

"My dad couldn't go out unassisted as often as before. His eye sight is affected so reading at certain levels and distances is a challenge. His memory has deteriorated and he misplaces many items, such as his freedom pass."



I attended the course with my mother and we learnt about the different ways in which technology can help. We learnt about social networking, such as WhatsApp, which has helped him to keep in touch with everyone, including his friends so that he does not feel isolated and alone. Using a mobile phone with a large font has also helped him to be able to read again clearly.

My mother and I were able to search for online services, for information about his condition and what to do to help him, as well as activities such as swimming. I take him every week so that he is able to stay active and have a healthy mind.

His mental health is much better and continuously improving and my mother and I are very glad that we attended the training."



Mary needs to be at hospital at 9am, as her medication is delivered intravenously for five hours.

Helping Mary access hospital transport again

Mary is in her eighties and relies on a mobility scooter to get around. She has a number of health conditions and travels to the Royal Free Hospital for specialist care once a month. She used to get hospital transport for this, but in May 2018 she was told she was no longer entitled to it.

She had to get two buses, meaning it was taking over an hour to get to the hospital. She was getting very tired, and as the year drew on and it got darker, she found it quite stressful to use public transport. She tripped over a couple of times whilst making the journey. Mary spoke to PALS to see if she could receive hospital transport again. She was told that there was nothing they could do, so Mary contacted Healthwatch to see if we could help.

- + We spoke to another member of staff at the hospital and got a fresh perspective on the problem. We advised Mary to contact the hospital transport service for a reassessment.
- + After the reassessment, Mary was asked to provide a report from her doctor to show that she was unable to use public transport.
- + Because her GP was taking a long time to send the report to the hospital, we contacted the practice to hurry the process up.
- + Once the report was received, Mary was given access to hospital transport again.

“You put me to the right person, I wouldn’t have been able to get this far without your support. I am very pleased.”



Are you looking for help?

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.

w: healthwatchislington.co.uk

t: 020 7832 5828

e: info@healthwatchislington.co.uk



Our volunteers

How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch Islington we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of our 31 volunteers that work with us to help make care better for their communities.

- + Raise awareness of the work we do in the community
- + Visit services to make sure they're meeting people's needs
- + Support our day to day running e.g. governance
- + Collect people's views and experiences which we use in our reports



Healthwatch volunteers at Moorfields Eye Hospital on City Road

VISITING SERVICES: our volunteers gather views at Moorfields Eye Hospital

Thanks to the feedback given to our volunteers, the hospital now has a better understanding of how patients view their services.

We spoke to 105 outpatients at Moorfields over the course of three visits made towards the end of 2018. The feedback we gathered was very positive. We shared what we learned in a report.

- + Lots of the patients told us that they felt Moorfields was a very friendly hospital.

- + They felt that staff made time for patients, and that even though the hospital does get very busy they never felt rushed.
- + They felt that appointment letters were clear, and that clinics in the hospital were well signposted.
- + Waits within the clinics can be very long. Although noticeboards are used, some patients and hospital staff felt that more could be done to let each patient know where they were in the queue.

“Great to read and so glad to see so many positive points. As always though room for improvement which we will take on board. Thank you for your support and time.”

David Probert - Chief Executive at Moorfields, responding to our report

Meet our volunteers

We caught up with a couple of our fantastic volunteers to show you how their work truly makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.



Mark, local resident

One of the first times I volunteered with Healthwatch they provided some excellent training to prepare me for being a community representative. I was on a procurement panel helping to decide who should deliver advocacy services in the borough. Healthwatch projects are really worthwhile and they're great people to work with.

Jacqui, university student

I am studying Public Health. My course covered theory of research, but I knew practical experience would be vital. I was just starting the third year of my degree when I took part in a Healthwatch project looking at social isolation. The big thing we found was that people didn't want to relate to it, as they found it stigmatising. The project helped me to build confidence and to go out and interview members of the public.



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering get in touch.

w: healthwatchislington.co.uk

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‘The views and stories you share with us are helping to make care better for our local community’

Rose McDonald
Healthwatch Volunteer

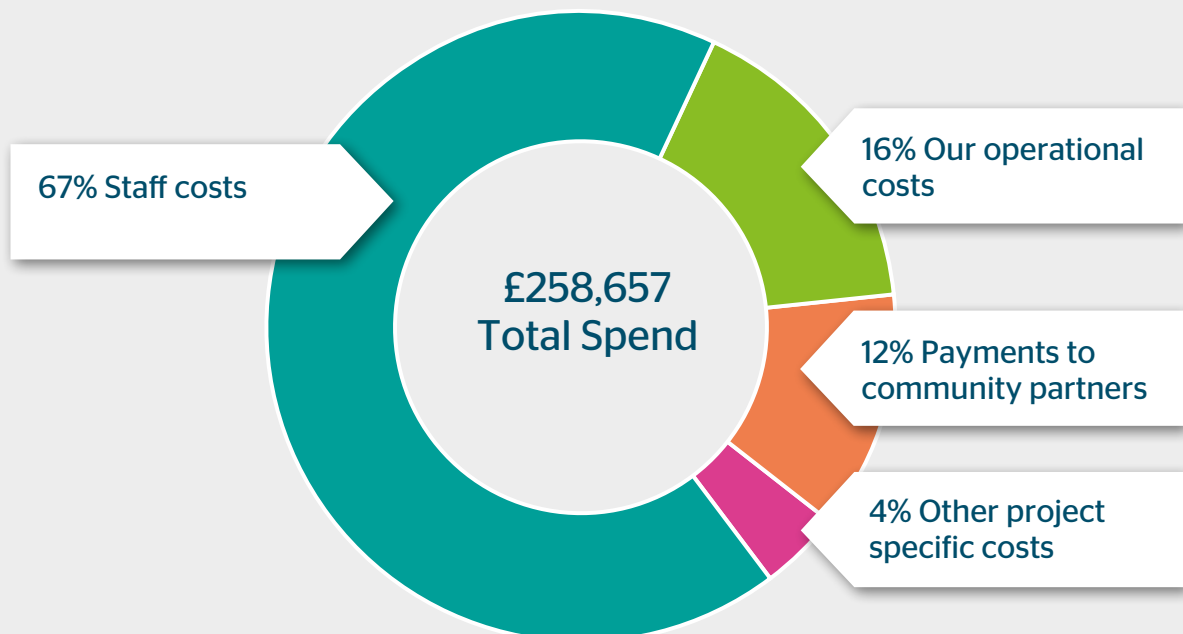
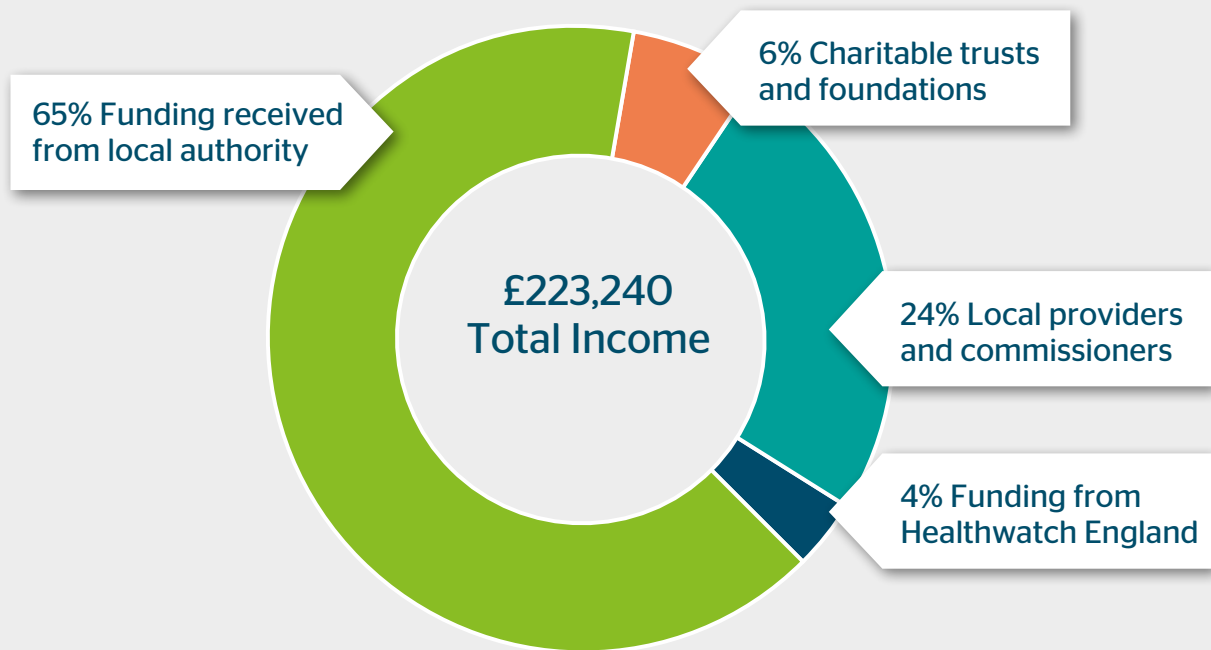


Our finances

How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we received £146,170.

We also received £77,070 of additional income, and used reserves of £35,417.





**Our plans for
next year**

Message from our Chief Executive

We are keen to ensure that the voices of the most marginalised are heard within the health and care system. In the current climate, inequality continues to increase, so this work remains a priority.

Other priorities for our year to come

- + We will continue to seek out funding for our digital inclusion work, helping residents to access information that has been moved on-line. This year we will be working with our community partners to engage families with school age children.
- + We will continue to push for timely, accessible communication with residents about health, care and prevention services.
- + We are looking at dementia services as part of our engagement work on the NHS Long Term Plan (which considers how the NHS needs to look in ten years time). We plan to do more work on the topic of dementia in the year to come.
- + We plan to investigate the accessibility and the transparency of information about dental charges.

Barriers and opportunities

- + Signposting residents to services is likely to become harder as workforce pressures increase and important decisions about the resourcing of social care remain hanging in the balance, the Social Care Green Paper being long overdue.
- + We will aim to influence local hospital and health-centre building projects so that they offer improved access for all.



'I would like to thank our local statutory partners for hearing our feedback and working to improve services during what we know are strained times for public services.'

Emma Whitby
HealthwatchIslington Chief Executive

Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care, including:

- + Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us
- + Our Diverse Communities Health Voice Partners: Arachne Greek Cypriot Women's Group, Community Language Support Services, Eritrean Community in the UK, Imece, Islington Bangladesh Association, Islington Somali Community, Jannaty, the Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation and the Latin American Women's Rights Service.
- + The Elfrida Society, Help On Your Doorstep, Islington Mind, Hillside Clubhouse, Islington Borough User Group,
- + The mobile phone network provider 3 for sharing internet skills with our residents, as well as funders Clarion, Awards for All, Cloudesley and Islington Council.

- + We continue to work closely with our neighbours in Barnet, Camden, Enfield and Haringey to champion residents' views within North London and have been working to make hospital admissions, and hospital discharge more patient-focussed.
- + Finally, we'd like to thank Shelagh Prosser and Rose McDonald who stood down from our Board of Trustees after serving two terms. Both had been with us from the start of Healthwatch and made a great contribution to our development as an organisation.

"Listening to the concerns of the affected is a crucial step to lasting social change. Fantastic initiative by Healthwatch Islington - we are glad to work with them on this important issue."

Islington Somali Community on their involvement in our dementia research

Jannaty Women's Group hosting one of our digital inclusion workshops.



Contact us

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We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you need this in an alternative format please contact us.

Healthwatch Islington is a charitable company.
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