

	<b>Brent Health and Wellbeing Board</b> 2nd April 2025
	<b>Report from Healthwatch</b>
<b>Healthwatch Brent 2025-2026 draft workplan</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Patricia Zebiri Healthwatch Manager (Brent) <a href="mailto:Patricia.zebiri@healthwatchbrent.co.uk">Patricia.zebiri@healthwatchbrent.co.uk</a>  Gina Aston Healthwatch Service Manager <a href="mailto:gina.aston@advocacyproject.org.uk">gina.aston@advocacyproject.org.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. As we look ahead to 2025/26, Healthwatch Brent has developed a draft plan of priorities and is seeking feedback and strategic input to ensure alignment with Health and Care priorities.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Board is asked to note Healthwatch Brent's draft priorities for the 2025/26 financial year.
- 2.2 The Board is also asked to provide strategic input into Healthwatch Brent's priorities for the 2025 / 26 financial year.

## 3.0 Detail

### Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1 Healthwatch Brent's work supports the strategic priorities of 'Thriving Communities' and 'A Healthier Brent'. It also supports key priorities from the 2022–2027 Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy, including:

- Healthy Lives
- Staying Healthy
- Understanding, Listening, and Improving

## **Background**

3.2 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which was amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, outlines the main legal requirements of Healthwatch. It includes the following statutory duties:

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services
- Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved
- Obtaining the views of local people regarding their need for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England
- Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England
- Providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services
- Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England
- Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about issues
- Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively

## **4.0 About Healthwatch Brent**

4.1 Healthwatch Brent is staffed by 2.2 whole time equivalent (WTE) staff as follows: -

- Healthwatch Manager 0.8 WTE
- Communications and Engagement Lead 0.6 WTE
- Volunteer and Projects Officer 0.8 WTE
- In addition, we have support as needed from the service manager (Gina Aston) who oversees three NWL Healthwatch teams.
- Our Advisory Board have responsibility for setting Healthwatch Brent's priorities and ensuring that our work focuses on issues that will have the highest impact for local communities

- We have a well-trained and active group of volunteers who support our activities. Our volunteers are ethnically diverse and are representatives of the great diversity found across the borough of Brent - this gives the advantage of having a deep reach into various communities.

4.2 Given our limited resources it is essential that we have a clear annual focus that ensures our residents have a voice in key decisions that impact them, positive impact that reduces health inequalities, improves health and care for residents and is measurable. In addition, we aim to be agile and flexible in managing our priorities so we can support / address any newly emerging issues / feedback we have from residents.

## 5.0 **Draft work programme for 2025-2026**

5.1 Our annual workplan is approved by the Healthwatch Brent Advisory Board, which holds responsibility for setting Healthwatch Brent's priorities. The focus is on issues that will have the greatest impact on local communities. As we develop our priorities for 2025/26, we are keen to gather stakeholder feedback and input before final sign-off by the Advisory Board.

5.2 Key focus areas for 2025/26:

- Community engagement
- Adult Social Care
- Community Pharmacies and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)
- GP access (including same-day access) and complaints processes

5.3 This is in addition to:

1. Ongoing information and signposting activity, and general engagement with key community groups and wards.
2. Monitoring key themes in resident/patient feedback.
3. Participating in key Health and Care meetings to support alignment and share information and knowledge.
4. Supporting Healthwatch England's national projects, ensuring Brent's perspectives are represented.
5. Maintaining flexibility to address additional priority areas if required.

## 5.4 **Overview of 2025 – 26 planned activities (timescales can be found in Appendix 1)**

<b>Priority</b>		<b>Summary overview</b>
1.	Community engagement	<p>Regular engagement programme, visiting a variety of community spaces across Brent to speak to residents about their experiences with health and social care.</p> <p>The key themes and issues uncovered during these visits are shared directly with relevant services and commissioners and used to identify future priorities for the Healthwatch team.</p> <p>Continue to support and signpost residents and community groups who contact us directly. Ensuring that we continue to</p>

		<p>horizon scan and remain aware of services in Brent and across London that our residents can tap into.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME:</b> - To inform HW of the lived experience / issues that residents experience and ensure a bottom-up approach to our work.</p>
2	Adult Social Care: engagement	<p>In partnership with Brent's Adult Social Care team, we will continue building on previous projects that focus on service improvement through resident feedback.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME:</b> - To give residents a platform to share their lived experiences and support / shape service improvement.</p>
3	Pharmacy first / Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)	<p>This work commenced in 2024-2025 and involves a review of patient sentiment towards pharmacy services across the borough, including the Pharmacy First scheme. The project aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate whether patients feel that the Pharmacy First scheme is effective, and whether they are happy with the overall standard of care provided by their local pharmacy</li> <li>• Evaluate whether patients have been able to access medications in a timely manner</li> <li>• Evaluate whether patients have enough information about Pharmacy First and understand what is available to them.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, this project aims to ensure that the service being provided by local pharmacies meets the standards that residents are being promised, and that people have enough information to make use of the services.</p> <p>In addition, we will be supporting the Public Health Team with the 2025 Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). Particularly around engagement and ensuring the voices of residents are heard and support decision making.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME:</b> - Make recommendations for how pharmacies can better meet the needs of Brent residents, and feed our findings to Healthwatch England as part of their wider review of primary care access</p> <p>Support the timely development of the PNA and align the two pieces of work as appropriate.</p>
4	GP access / complaints process	<p><b>GP access</b> continues to be a key concern for residents.</p> <p>Healthwatch has carried out significant work in this area and made several recommendations.</p> <p>It is recognised that changes are needed to improve appointment availability and booking accessibility. This</p>

		<p>includes improving access to same-day appointments as well as enabling advance bookings.</p> <p>However, all changes must be developed in <b>collaboration with residents and patients</b>, ensuring their views and needs are considered.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor this area closely, ensuring that engagement remains meaningful and is recognised as a vital part of service improvement.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME: -</b> To ensure that resident and patient engagement is central to any changes. This will help to anticipate and avoid unintended consequences from a top-down approach.</p> <p>Findings will be shared with key stakeholders and Healthwatch England as part of their wider review of primary care access.</p> <p><b>GP complaints procedures</b> Through community engagement and online feedback, we have identified a trend of residents struggling to raise issues / concerns with their GP surgeries.</p> <p>This appears to be due to several factors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of sufficient or clear information on how to raise a complaint</li> <li>○ Concerns about being treated differently as a result of raising a complaint</li> <li>○ Being seen / told they are disruptive</li> <li>○ Being struck off the GP list.</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTCOME: -</b> To establish a clear picture of the issues using data, review existing complaints procedures, and work with practices and the CQC to develop improvements that reflect residents' experiences and concerns.</p> <p>Make recommendations for how making complaints / raising issues / ideas for improvement might be captured and used for service improvement.</p> <p>Feed our findings to key stakeholders and Healthwatch England as part of their wider review of primary care access</p>
5	GP services - Enter and View (E&V)	<p>This will build on our previous work to assess improvements and to inform the work above on raising issues / complaints.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME: -</b> To inform and complement the work in point 4 above and build on previous work carried out by HW in 2023 - 2024</p>

6	Attend / participate in key Health and Care meetings	Key meetings including co-production / patient experience / disability / GP access.  <b>OUTCOME:</b> - Aim to align efforts, share information and support the best outcomes / impact for residents.
7	Health awareness / tackling inequalities	Support a variety of Health and Care services raise awareness in the community of their services where we have identified a need from the residents or health inequality. Starting with Safeguarding and Breast Screening.  <b>OUTCOME:</b> - Promote Health and Care services through our community links aim to raise awareness amongst seldom heard communities. Ensuring the best outcomes / impact for residents. Using data to assess impact.

## **6.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

6.1 Outlined in the main body of the report.

## **7.0 Financial Considerations**

7.1 There are no relevant financial implications. The priorities have been formed with current financial envelope in mind.

## **8.0 Legal Considerations**

8.1 There are no relevant legal considerations.

## **9.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

9.1 The Healthwatch Service has been assessed against the Equality and Diversity Policy so that it ensures we are fully committed to and undertaking action under the Equality Act 2010 and other forms of legislation that combat discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

## **10.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

10.1 No impact on environmental objectives.

## **11.0 Communications Considerations**

11.1 Outlined in the main body of the report.

### **Report sign off:**

**Patricia Zebiri**  
Healthwatch Service Manager