

  North West London Clinical Commissioning Group Brent	Brent Health and Wellbeing Board 16 March 2022
	Report from Healthwatch Brent
Progress update Healthwatch Brent 2021-22	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt:	Open
No. of Appendices:	2 Appendix 1 – Patient Experience report Appendix 2 – Identifying Young Carers in Substance Misuse Households – Review of Recommendations
Background Papers	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Jo Kay Healthwatch Brent Manager jo.kay@healthwatchbrent.co.uk Norbert Marjolin Community partnerships and voluntary sector Manager norbert.marjolin@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members of the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board (BHWB) with an update on progress in the development of the Healthwatch Brent work plan for 2021/22
- 1.2 The Healthwatch work plan aims to ensure that all residents in the borough, particularly the most vulnerable, are able to influence the commissioning and delivery of the health and social care service in Brent

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To recognise and note the progress in the development of the Healthwatch Service, and the development of the work plan 2021/22
- 2.2 To provide strategic input into the Healthwatch Service work plan priorities for 2022/23

3.0 Detail

Activity Outcomes July 2021 – Jan 2022

- 3.1 To date Healthwatch Brent have engaged, heard from and listened to Brent residents and patients. We continue to act on what people are telling us and have shared their views with those who have the power to make change happen. The service has also helped people find the information they need regarding services in their area and recorded this as 'advice and information'.
- 3.1.1 The Healthwatch Brent Service has built strong links, embedding user engagement within our work, and ensuring the patient voice is heard and shared with key stakeholders. During the first quarter of 2021/22, officers have mobilised the service in line with the plans set out in the commissioning process. Healthwatch Brent is fully staffed and the officers are all trained in procedures and policies.
- 3.1.2 During quarter two and three Healthwatch Brent have continued to work in different ways developing new and existing relationships with:
- Stakeholders
 - The voluntary and community sector
 - Statutory partners
 - Seldom heard groups
- 3.2 Healthwatch Brent are an active member of the Integrated Care Partnerships Executive Groups.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Executive Group.

We also attend the Access to Mental Health Services subgroup, accountable to the Integrated Care Partnership Mental Health and Wellbeing Executive Group. This is an opportunity for us work in partnership to raise patient voice and improve mental health services across the borough.

Health Inequalities and Vaccination Executive Group.

Healthwatch Brent are amplifying the voices of communities that go unheard and reduce the barriers they face by working in partnership, tackling unequal health outcomes and access to support. By working with the ICP this ensures they hear the experiences of those facing inequality, understand and act on the steps that could improve people's lives.

- 3.3 Healthwatch Brent has attended several events, including supporting partners across the system, such as, Brent Health Matters diabetes priority and the Brent Community Connect Roadshows.

Healthwatch Brent has been actively seeking the views of patients and service users in a variety of settings introducing them to the Healthwatch Brent Service, continued

to collect feedback via our Patient Voice Survey held successful drop-in sessions at various Brent libraries and community events bringing greater awareness to the community and an opportunity for Brent residents to have their voices listen to.

3.4 Governance

In quarters two and three Healthwatch has continued to work hard to ensure we are meeting the needs of Brent residents. We have faced several challenges especially with the changing landscape in health both nationally and locally. Healthwatch has set its priorities for 2021/22 considering the challenges patients are facing within the health care system.

Healthwatch Brent Advisory Group is meeting regularly to discuss the emerging priorities that have been identified from our engagement work.

We have a dynamic Advisory Group in place which is made up of members from:

- The public
- HWB volunteers
- Brent Multi Faith Forum
- The Voluntary and Community Sector representing young people, vulnerable adults with mental health and dementia and carers.

The breadth of involvement from the Advisory Group will enable us to help make key decisions about how to use our powers. The group will uphold our independence and support partnership working. The group will represent us in wider stakeholder engagement and decision-making structures.

Healthwatch Brent has launched the Brent Grassroots Community Voices, this is our formal network for connecting with grassroots organisations across the borough to hear their views and feedback on health and care services. The feedback collected will also help us set our key priorities.

3.5 Engagement

Healthwatch Brent representatives maintain an active presence at key working groups and committees to raise the profile of the Healthwatch Service, and engage with key stakeholders across the community and voluntary sectors. This engagement is proving successful with invitations to attend more seldom heard groups.

We are building connections with a number of community organisations that can help us reach seldom heard groups. This has included: work with Sufra to reach refugees and asylum seekers, conversations with English For Action Brent to reach settled migrants who do not speak English as a primary language, work with Sudbury Neighbourhood Centre for older adults, as well as a number of different groups serving Indian, South East Asian and Somali communities. We are also speaking with local youth organisations and sexual health charities to ensure that the voice of younger people is included in our work.

Alongside this work with community and voluntary organisations, we have been visiting local community centres and hotspots to reach people who may not be engaged with existing support programmes. We have also visited community based social sessions such as fitness groups for older people and wellbeing groups, allowing us to reach a broader range of Brent residents.

3.6 Key themes have been identified from listening to patients and speaking with the voluntary sector which has helped shape our key priorities for 2021/22 see Appendix 1 for Patient Experience report. Patients and Service Users reported some of the key themes highlighted:

- Lack of communication from their GP surgeries
- Inconsistencies with messages from GP staff
- Poor communications on the referral pathway between Primary Care and hospital departments, for instance patients having to chase a referral as they have not received any communications
- Community groups feeling left behind and not involved in key decision making of what the priorities of the borough should be, such as tackling Sickle Cell Disease.

Patients and the Community and Voluntary sector have informed us:

- It is extremely difficult to access primary care services such as GP practices and an NHS Dentist
- Patients experience negativity from practice staff when making an appointment
- Poor access to digital services for example patients not being able to book an appointment online
- Patients not being able to have a choice of which appointment type they would like to book
- New patients are not able to register with an NHS dental practice

3.7 Planned priorities 2021/22

Healthwatch Brent Advisory Group have agreed our highest priority 'Understanding the experience of arranging a GP appointment across Brent.' The aim for Healthwatch Brent is to improve residents' experience when engaging with GP Practices.

The project will take six months, allowing us to run a four-month borough wide survey to collect meaningful experiences and patient testimonials. Healthwatch Brent listened to and responded to what is important to Brent residents. By considering how the public respond to surveys so that the lines of enquiry echo concerns of the public and the language used in posing the survey questions is appropriate.

Healthwatch Brent are also working with System partners, Primary Care, and the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, to ensure patient voice is amplified and heard across all partner groups. We will collate the findings and work with the PCNs, Clinical Directors and Primary Care to ensure recommendations are actioned.

- 3.8 Healthwatch Brent continued to support the development of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, stages two and three, to ensure that the priorities contained in the strategy reflect the real needs of Brent communities. We ensured that the strategy plans added value to decision making and commissions integrated health services which meet the needs of the whole local community, in particular, the most vulnerable individuals and the groups with the worst health outcomes.
- 3.9 It has emerged from early-stage discussions with the independent Chair of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Board and the borough Head of Safeguarding there are certain community groups or ethnicities which appear to be under-represented in safeguarding concerns raised. Healthwatch Brent will establish what the blocks and barriers are and co-produce an action plan with all key stakeholders to address and remove the blocks and barriers and to help reduce health inequalities. This partnership-based project will establish whether the demographics of safeguarding concerns raised in the borough are generally in line with the demographics of the borough.
- 3.10 During the initial lockdown in 2020, NSPCC reported that long-term drug and alcohol use by parents is a growing worry for members of the public concerned children are being put at risk. The NSPCC reported on the number of people contacting them with concerns about drug and alcohol misuse among parents rose by 66%. The previous Healthwatch Brent Service undertook a project on 'Identifying Young Carers in Substance Misuse Households in Brent' in 2018. Due to the pandemic highlighting the serious concerns of the rise of substance misuse, Healthwatch Brent felt there was enough evidence to revisit the project to see if Public Health, Brent Carers and the Substance Misuse service provider have actioned the recommendations from the report in 2018. See Appendix 2 for full report details.

3.11 System partners

ICP and the ICS

The new Health and Social Care systems should embed and integrate patient voice, including patient and resident voice into all decision making.

Local Healthwatch Services have been working towards joined up health and care for some years. Healthwatch Brent will continue building on this work, to include, strengthening the joint work we have seen throughout the Coronavirus Pandemic, tackling health inequalities, and improving health outcomes. Prior to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Healthwatch Brent Service engaged across the partnership to understand the key health and wellbeing issues for Brent patients and communities. In the last six months the engagement work has reinforced we need to address several significant and well documented challenges, such as access to General Practice and Dentistry. These are not unique to Brent, although some problems are worse for us locally. To achieve our vision, we must be resolute in our ambition to collaborate to deliver improved health and wellbeing of 331,616 people (2019) of all ages living across our communities. Throughout the pandemic, a shared purpose has enabled us

all to fully appreciate each partner's contribution. It's vital to build on this whilst we consider our future ways of working as a system.

London Northwest Healthcare University Trust – Northwick Park Maternity Services

Alongside Healthwatch Ealing and Healthwatch Harrow, Healthwatch Brent is actively engaging with Northwick Park Hospital's maternity services. We met with several staff including the Director of Maternity Services and the Patient Experience Team, to discuss how we can ensure the patient voice is heard and rebuild trust amongst community groups. We also spoke about the importance of Northwick Park proactively going out into the community and speaking with mothers and expectant mothers to find out their views, especially those who are from seldom heard groups. This work will be used as a catalyst to improve patient engagement, and ensure the maternity services are listening to the patient in their improvement of services in line with the CQC inspection 2021.

3.12 Future priorities 2022/23

The NHS Long Term Plan makes a renewed commitment to improve and widen access to care for children and adults needing mental health support.

The Voluntary and Community Sector and local community groups across Brent have told us that they want to see improvements to mental health services. Collectively, these views cover every element of mental health support, from access to talking therapies to what it's like in a secure mental health inpatient unit. The feedback we received about mental health support continues to be mostly negative.

Even though there is a borough wide initiative to improve access to mental health services, Healthwatch Brent wants to ensure that children and young people and adults are receiving the care they need to stay physically and mentally well. We want to understand more about different people's experiences of mental health care at different stages in their lives. Through developing robust evidence base workplan to priorities three different areas in mental health for 2022/23 will allow us to understand Brent resident experiences of mental health services. Healthwatch Brent are proposing our priorities focus on

- what are children and young peoples concerns and experiences about mental health services
- a deep dive into three different community groups (Somali, South Asian and Eastern European) to gather feedback on peoples expeperiences of accessing mental health services and what are the barriers.
- inpatient experiences in mental health acute services in Brent from the beginning through to being discharged.

We want to inform mental health policy and practice to ensure the improvements support what people would like to see.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 No immediate financial implications

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 No immediate financial implications

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 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.

Report sign off:

Judith Davey
CEO, HealthWatch Brent