



healthwatch

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social care cham*



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your voice
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**Working with y
to improve servi**

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Community Events in Barnet Libraries Report

February 2022

During October and November, Healthwatch Barnet visited five of Barnet's public libraries in a series of community events to engage with local people about their experiences, promote awareness of Healthwatch Barnet and gather people's thoughts on health and social care services in the borough.

We engaged with 120 people and distributed information, contact details and promotional material. The summary of that data can be found below.

Many thanks to Caroline Walker and the staff at Barnet Libraries for all their help. Many thanks to our Healthwatch Barnet Volunteers, Alaa, Danny and Janice, for assisting and collecting people's experiences.



Quantitative Data

How satisfied are you with the health services you have used in the last year?

78% were satisfied or very satisfied.

Have the health services you have used in the last year changed?

52% felt that health services have stayed the same over the last 12 months.

20% felt that it had got worse.

Which areas of health do you think we should prioritise?

People highlighted GP services as an area to prioritise, which has been a recurring theme throughout the last year.

How satisfied are you with the social services you have used in the last year?

23% were satisfied or very satisfied. However, 70% of those who completed our forms felt they were unqualified to comment as they didn't use social services often.

Which areas of social services do you think we should prioritise?

69% of people felt that learning disability services, daycare services and care homes should be prioritised.

Qualitative Data

Positive Experiences

Lane End Surgery is very good.

Received the vaccine at Cullimore Chemist. Very impressed with the service.

I have had both vaccines and the booster – impressed with the service, and it was recorded on my surgery's website.

Had both vaccines and booster jab. Very happy.

I'm very happy with the paediatric care I've received.

I have waited four months for allergy tests at the Royal Free, but when I did get seen, the treatment was good.

East Barnet Health Centre is very good.

The gynaecology department at Barnet Hospital is good.



Areas of Improvement

Primary Care – GP services

A visitor expressed concern about GPs and awareness of their rising caseloads.

I have a young baby and got an infection from breastfeeding. I made an e-consult appointment but they called early and I missed it. I called back but was number 37 in the queue. Eventually, I went to my parents' home in Shropshire and got an appointment immediately.

If I can see my dentist face to face, why can't I see my GP? Local pharmacies are very good, but sometimes you need the reassurance you only get from your GP.

I'm not happy with access to my GP, there are such long waits for appointments.

I need to have my thyroid condition monitored but when I tried to make an appointment, I couldn't do it online. I phoned and was 8th in the queue. When I got through, I was told I had to book for a blood test too and that also had to be online, which I found very difficult. I had to ask a friend to make the appointment for me. I also wanted to ask for a prescription for painkillers, which could have been dealt with at the same appointment.

I would prefer to see the same GP every time.

I'm finding accessing my GP very difficult, and can't get through to make an appointment.

I wanted to book my booster but was asked to go to Borehamwood for it, which is a two hour round trip. I got a message to call my GP but was told they are not doing it. In the end, I was able to book direct, but I got the information on how to do it through friends. I don't think I'll be the only one frustrated about this.

It frustrates me that when I book to see the GP I have to fill in the e-consult form every time.

It's really difficult to get an appointment with my GP.

Very frustrated with the appointment system at Cornwall House Surgery. You can only book up until noon, but all the available appointments have gone by 10.00 am. I can't call before then due to work. I spent 40 minutes on hold, then tried to use the e-consult form, which referred me to the 111 service. I work as a translator for those using GPs across England but I feel the situation in Barnet is worse than elsewhere.

Booked a time to speak to the GP. Was supposed to call at 4.30 pm but called at 3.00 pm when the caller was on the underground. Frustrating.

My child was ill and it was impossible to see the GP. After calling 111, we ended up in A&E but had a really long wait.

You can't get a face-to-face appointment with my GP.

Primary Care – Pharmacies

My elderly mother is really struggling with her GP. She requested a repeat prescription but when she got to the chemist, it wasn't there.

[person was not aware of medication home delivery services offered by pharmacies at the time of this conversation].

I've had delays in getting prescriptions for my epi-pen. Waiting for new allergy testing, but have been for a long time.

I have type 1 diabetes and am experiencing problems getting my regular prescriptions. When I need them and go to collect them, they haven't been sent through to the pharmacy and I have to go back 2 or 3 times.

COVID Vaccination & Testing

A visitor had to travel abroad and did a lateral flow test, as per the rules. However, he did not get the result back. The visitor was not impressed with the service.

I had to go abroad and needed to book a vaccine test: 'If you can't do digital, you can drop dead!' They charged £80 for a vaccine test. I'd like clearer information on the website – an easy read version, and less ambiguity, e.g. I didn't understand what was meant by 'arrival'.



Primary Care – Dental Services

A visitor has two young children but can't get an NHS dentist for them.

A visitor has been trying to book an appointment to see an NHS dentist. States there is a really long wait, then it was cancelled, but he can't find another NHS dentist.

Mental Health Services

There's a major issue around mental health self-referrals. Please could you raise it with the Primary Care Liaison Team. It's impossible to self-refer for treatment until you are in crisis.

My GP referred me for counselling. I have had three bereavements recently and I am experiencing anxiety. When I tried to make the appointment with MIND, I was told it wasn't serious enough.

The visitor's 15-year-old daughter has been referred to CAMHS but is very frustrated and worried because of the long wait for an appointment. In the meantime, her daughter is getting worse and had a panic attack at school.



Secondary Care

An elderly mother (90s) of a visitor had an appointment at Chase Farm Hospital, but transport there is very difficult. Felt that there is a lack of empathy – was told to ‘just go online’.

Concerned about the backlog caused by people delaying treatment during COVID.

I have had an eye appointment at the Whittington cancelled twice. I know they’re really busy but I felt like a number. The NHS didn’t use to be like this.

There’s a problem with appointments at Chase Farm Hospital. People were called in wrongly for appointments and, apart from the inconvenience, there were too many people in the waiting room for it to be COVID safe. A nurse told me this is a regular occurrence.

A nurse called left a message asking him for a blood test. I did not know why and then I got a text message following up the original call. I rang the hospital consultant who knew nothing about it, and I have not been able to find out more. I appreciate people are overworked but I found this all muddling and worrying.

Very long wait for hospital appointments especial Ear, Nose and Throat.

I’m waiting for a hernia operation at the Royal Free but it’s been postponed.

Young brother hurt his back playing football and they went to A&E at Barnet General Hospital, who referred them to a chiropractor. But the chiropractor wasn’t seeing under 18s.

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