

Together

healthwatch
Barnet

**we're making health
and social care better**

Annual Report 2022–23



Contents

- Message from our Chair
- About us
- Highlights from our year
- Listening to your experiences
- Hypertension Outreach
- Advice and information
- Volunteering
- Finances and future priorities
- Statutory statements



“

"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

Healthwatch Barnet has focused on insight as we transitioned from post COVID to almost back to normal.

- Our Men's Health Report was our key research project, it is the start of our work in considering men's mental health as a matter of urgency and one that needs a local strategy.
- Our Hypertension Outreach work has demonstrated how Healthwatch collaboration for system wide policy can and should work.
- We have been able to restart our Enter and View activities and have, for the first time, included supported living accommodation.
- We brought the experiences of long COVID sufferers to primary care, and they listened.
- We were instrumental in high quality Advanced Care Planning information made available across primary care, not least GPs.



Jennifer Pearl
Healthwatch Barnet Chair



This year has all been about change and learning. We have created a new team structure with its emphasis on volunteering at the heart of all we do. I look forward to seeing the fruit of this in 2023-24



About us

Healthwatch Barnet is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.

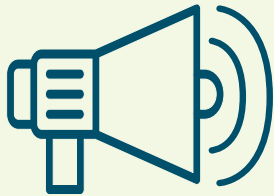


Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Year in review

Reaching out



900 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

12,100 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost of living crisis.

Making a difference to care

We published

4 reports

Our most significant report was

Men's Health

Where we were able to take a deep dive about men's perspectives on physical and mental health



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

20 Volunteers

outstanding individuals who gave up their time to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£128,755.53









which is **5% more** than the previous year.

We currently employ

2 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>Our work on Advanced Care Planning came to fruition and we developed resources across primary care</p>	 <p>Our work on Long COVID case studies were widely distributed and a great example of Local HW collaboration</p>
Summer	 <p>We were able to re-start our Enter & View Programme and refreshed our approach to include Supported Living accommodation</p>	 <p>Our Hypertension project in collaboration with our Local HW partners for the North East London ICB system was devised and planned</p>
Autumn	 <p>We completed our work on a cancer pathway tool for the NCL CCG with UCL that has now been launched</p>	 <p>We conducted qualitative research for our men's health research through community groups</p>
Winter	 <p>We ran a borough wide survey of men as the second phase of our research on mental health and published our report .</p>	 <p>We carried out our first Supported Living Enter and Views and have reworked and rethought our approach on these types of premises where our powers are more limited</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Vaccine confidence

Our research exploring vaccine confidence with people from different backgrounds provided vital lessons for public health campaigns.

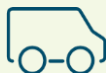


NHS admin

We highlighted the negative impact poor NHS admin can have and recommended five principles for services to improve people's experiences.

Patient transport

NHS England announced improvements to non-emergency patient transport services thanks to public feedback.



Waiting list support

After we and other organisations called for an urgent response to hospital waiting lists, and better interim communication and support, the NHS set out a recovery plan to address the backlog.

NHS dentistry

We continued to voice public concerns that improvements to NHS dentistry are too slow, leaving thousands of people in pain.





Listening to your Experiences


Three significant pieces of research and engagement have been carried out over the year. Our work on Advanced Care Planning, Long COVID and Men's Health has enabled us to bring the experiences of residents to policy makers and practitioners

Advanced Care Planning

A group of GPs working with the Barnet Primary Care Training Hub, which oversees the education and development of the primary and community workforce, approached us to work together to explore ways to improve advance care planning. We interviewed a broad mix of people to explore their views and experiences.


As a result of our work, local GPs are now equipped with knowledge and insight into the most common barriers that prevent people planning ahead and taking advantage of the benefits of having advance care planning conversations.

A leaflet has been produced based on the feedback provided that will further support GPs to start the conversation.



“We unanimously agreed that this report, highlighting the narrative, opinions and experiences of individuals in Barnet in their own words, was extremely powerful. It has been invaluable for GPs and the Training Hub to learn more about the challenges experienced by people locally.”

The Barnet Primary Care Training Hub




“We are grateful for the amazing work carried out by the Healthwatch Barnet team on the project.”

Dr Elizabeth Goodwin


What difference will this make?

Advance care planning offers people the opportunity to plan their future care and support while they have the capacity to do so. These conversations with healthcare professionals can be held at any age. Unfortunately, often these conversations are not had because it is a sensitive matter and the term can attract negative connotations. Our work with Doctors and in producing a clear guide will make this conversation easier and make the transition into greater care smoother and safer.



“It would also be helpful if the GP could print out a very simple leaflet on ACP and say this is what it’s all about, take it home and read it and discuss it with your family and then you can say to the patient ‘phone to make an appointment’ which puts it in the patient’s ballpark.”

Interviewee



Living with Long COVID Report

Long COVID is an evolving condition that can greatly impact the health and quality of life of an individual. Initially in the pandemic, there was a focus on acute COVID19 and less attention on Long COVID. Thanks to local people sharing their experiences of Long COVID, we helped NHS leaders to improve the support available


Through interviews, focus groups, events and a survey we engaged with over 300 people to produce our report.

What we learnt

1. 55% of people said it took 4 months or more to receive a diagnosis
2. 73% said they had to conduct research on their own.
3. Long COVID impacted on all areas of an individual's life
4. And GP's lacked knowledge of the condition.


What difference will this make?

As a result of our work, local NHS leaders have produced a comprehensive action plan to work through each of our recommendations. Our findings have enabled local NHS leaders to have a thorough understanding of the challenges and barriers people with Long COVID face and they are now taking steps to improve local services.



“Hearing feedback from our communities and their personal stories is vitally important to help us reflect on the care we offer. This report and its recommendations will help us to better understand what our residents need from us, and how we can improve access to services and experience of care.”

“We are committed to working in partnership with Healthwatch and other health and care organisations across NCL to implement the recommendations in this report.”



Dr Katie Coleman, Clinical Lead for Primary Care Network Development, NCL CCG
Sarah Mansuralli, Executive Director of Strategic Commissioning, NCL CCG

Men's Health – Calling for a Strategy

There have been growing calls for a men's health strategy, given the poor health outcomes for men in comparison to women across a range of health conditions and their low take up of primary care access.

We wanted to focus on men's physical and mental health perspectives and experiences. We spoke to 50 men as part of the qualitative phase with the help of a range of community organisations.

We then surveyed 250 men using an online survey that we were able to ensure was as representative as possible. Our report is now finalised and to be published in 2023/2024.

A key finding that will feed into our work for 2023/2024 was the need for more services and support for men's mental health.

We found that there was a worrying minority of men for whom mental health is preventing them from looking after themselves adequately.

What difference will this make?

We will be using this report and findings and our 2023/2024 work plan will include assessment and insight with regard to current mental health services available in Barnet.

Key Findings

1. Men will say they can look after themselves, but confidence diminishes with lower income and mental distress
2. Exercise and diet are the dominant strategies for maintaining health, both physically and mentally. As men get older, they are more engaged and perhaps have more time to attend to their physical and mental well-being.
3. There is however little evidence that men engage in therapy and counselling, even those claiming mental health issues
4. Pharmacists are as, if not more than, trusted as GPs as providers of health information.
5. Most men will state they are able to access services for their mental and physical health. But those with mental health issues are disproportionately less likely to feel like this.
6. There is clearly a disconnect between those identifying as having mental health issues (perhaps not an easy thing to admit) and the services available to/ used by them.
7. Worryingly, a significant proportion of men (particularly older men) were dissatisfied with their last encounter with the health service.



Hypertension Outreach

This year has seen the development and execution of our Hypertension Project. Blood Pressure is one of the NCL ICB's Core20Plus themes.

We have reached a number of our most deprived communities to build awareness of the dangers of hypertension through:

- Local Food banks
- Community Centres
- Eastern European advocacy and support organisations
- Local Health Champions

Our Community Connectors

This outreach work was an example of a collaboration with our Healthwatch Neighbours responding to a North Central London wide health promotion initiatives.

With some modest funding that is continuing into 2023/2024 we hired Community Connectors to provide advice, blood pressure checks.

We engaged over 200 residents about their blood pressure.



I love my role as a Community Connector. It's been really fulfilling to know that in some small way I have made a positive impact in peoples' lives.

Chloe, Community Connector

Working with our Healthwatch Neighbours

This work cemented our collaborative work with our Healthwatch neighbours who together cover the North Central London ICB.

Our focus is to share approaches, align information collection and crucially to ensure Local Healthwatch have a presence and a channel to the whole system.

Health improvement strategies at a system wide level need local execution and joined up thinking. This on-going outreach work is an example of this happening.



We have had the opportunity to collaborate with our Healthwatch colleagues over the past few years, on a number of projects, this has given us a better understanding of the work we all do and built a closer working relationship across the NCL



Advice and information

Healthwatch Barnet have signposted more than 300 people on to other organisations.

Complaining about GPs are a significant portion of our enquiries in 2022/2023.

We dealt with a range of enquiries regarding GP access, Dental service availability, complaints about hospital treatment and often people who have simply no where else to turn and need a sympathetic ear.

More than ever the support available is constricting and enquiries are far more challenging.



Volunteering

2022/2023 has seen a refocus on our volunteering workforce. Our seasoned Enter and View volunteers have after COVID restrictions been able to conduct a series of Enter and Views in Care Home and Supporting Living contexts.

Making volunteering count

- COVID had a real impact on volunteering across the board
- We have a core of volunteers who have been with Healthwatch Barnet when it was first set up
- We have remodelled our team roles to focus on creating a larger and more diverse volunteer workforce for our research and engagement work
- Our Volunteer co-ordinator will be in position in 2023/24

Jennifer Pearl

"Volunteers play a key role in any Healthwatch, and we are so grateful for their insights. From Enter and Views to contributing to committees, they offer a unique breadth of views and experience, and I would like to personally thank them all for their work."



What our volunteers say:

Helena

"Having worked in the care sector for a long time I feel volunteering with Healthwatch is a good use of my knowledge and skills. As an Enter and View volunteer I like the opportunity to visit care homes to highlight good practice as well as to identify where improvements are needed within a short time frame if necessary."

Alan


"Volunteering gives me the opportunity to make a difference, however small."



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 www.healthwatchbarnet.co.uk

 **020 3475 1308**

 Info@healthwatchbarnet.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£128,755.53	Staff costs	£104,827.83
Winter Wellness	£15,000	Project costs	£11,815.20
Community Connectors	£11,250	Overhead	£24,714.79
		Held for future use	£13,647.71
Total income	£155,005.53	Total expenditure	£155,005.53

Next steps

The last year has been focused on research and insight to inform and improve local services.

Now that we are able to, our Enter & View programme will be built back up. Our Volunteer Co-ordinator will also try and ensure that we get to pre COVID volunteering levels and make volunteering count for all involved.

We want to build on our NCL wider Healthwatch Collaboration and look forward to engaging in health promotion activities such as our Hypertension Project.

We want to make sure that NHS pressures are not left unheard and that our focus on GP access and helping people with signposting and information will continue.

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. NHS and LA Mental health service examination
2. Early Years health provider evaluation – Health Visitor services
3. Work with our Healthwatch Colleagues in North Central London to identify resource and joined up local execution on system wide Core20Plus priorities



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Barnet, Independent Living Centre, c/o
Barnet and Southgate College 7, Bristol Avenue,
Colindale, London NW9 4BR

Healthwatch Barnet uses the Healthwatch Trademark
when undertaking our statutory
activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of volunteers who provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met one time and made decisions on matters such as focusing on men's health and approving our hypertension work.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and distribute it to our partner organisations via our mailing lists.

Responses to recommendations

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area for example we have recently provided a report on Men's Health to joint commissioners at the Local Authority and this will inform our work on mental health services in the borough in collaboration with the commissioners.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in North Central London ICB. For example, we have contributed our insights on health behaviors within our borough to inform Core20Plus ICS priorities.

Enter and view

This year, we made 3 Enter and View visits.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Leecroft House	E&V	
Whetstone House	E&V	
Ivy House	E&V	

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Barnet is represented on the Barnet Health and Wellbeing Board by Banos Alexandrou. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by presenting our 2022/23 activities and strategic priorities for 2023/2024.

2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/ activity	Changes made to services
Men's Health	Informing 2023/2024 mental health service evaluations
Hypertension Project	Engaged 200 individuals from deprived communities with information on hypertension
Long Covid Report	NHS Service Providers understand better peoples experiences
Advanced Care Planning	Leaflet designed with Barnet Primary Care Training team for all professionals to use and provide to patients
North Central London Cancer Pathway Tool	Worked with UCL partners to design paper and on-line pathway tool



healthwatch Barnet

Independent Living Centre, c/o Barnet & Southgate
College, 7 Bristol Avenue, London
NW9 4BR

www.healthwatchbarnet.co.uk

t: 020 3475 1308

e: info@healthwatchbarnet.co.uk

 @HWBarnet

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchBarnet](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchBarnet)

 [healthwatchbarnet](https://www.instagram.com/healthwatchbarnet)