

Pass it on...

Please forward this ebulletin to your friends, family and colleagues.

Healthwatch Harrow is the health and social care champion for local residents.

Join now and get involved!



Picture: Pinner Memorial Park in Spring

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... plus more!

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➔ Our New Report on GP Access in Harrow

During February - April 2026, 91 local people completed our survey on access to GP services.

What did we find out? Firstly, booking appointments is a challenge - while around half of respondents (46%) find it 'easy' to book, a significantly larger 54% do not.

Telephone access remains an issue. A quarter of respondents (26%) can usually make contact within one minute. A third (32%) usually wait five minutes and a sizeable 42% wait for 'at least' ten minutes, when phoning. Comments reflect congested lines, long queues, and faults (being disconnected).



We heard from 91 local people

Compared with last year, satisfaction with online booking has dropped. Respondents feel that online forms are more difficult to find (a 9% decrease in satisfaction) and use (22%).

When booking, two thirds of respondents (69%) have been offered a choice of consultation method (in-person, telephone, video) while a sizeable number (31%) have not. Just 31% are able to see their preferred GP or nurse.

A broad majority of respondents (84%) have experienced a remote appointment. Half (51%) feel that remote consultations have fully met their needs, while almost equally, 49% feel they have not.

Read more in the full report, which covers many more areas of access. [➔ More](#)

“The welfare of carers is very important!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Meet Our New Chair!

Healthwatch Harrow Chair, Rebecca Amin writes “I am Rebecca, I am a single mum to three daughters and I am also a carer to my brother who has a learning disability. I work in the healthcare sector for a Consultant Psychiatrist.



New Chair, Rebecca Amin

I have been a Trustee for Community Connex for the last 4 years and I recently became Chair of the Board of Trustees for Community Connex and also Chair for Healthwatch Harrow.

I am looking forward to building on Healthwatch Harrow's work in engaging with Harrow's diverse community and to ensure the needs of the residents of Harrow are met.”

➔ Many Thanks, to Ash Verma!

Rebecca was appointed, following the recent retirement of Ash Verma, who after a very long service - stepped down in March.

Healthwatch Harrow Manager, Yaa Asamany writes “We are appreciative of the time and effort Ash Verma put in to support Healthwatch Harrow.

Directly by attending and chairing our public forums each year and indirectly ensuring that we championed the voices of Harrow residents and stayed an independent partner making a difference in the local health and social care arena.

As he always said, Healthwatch Harrow, in spite of stretched resources and rising costs had an impact which was showcased each year in our annual reports. The team will continue the work and momentum which he initiated years ago.

We wish him all the best during his retirement.”

➔ Expansion of Local Child Health Hubs

The local NHS writes “Children and families across North West London will benefit from an expansion of Child Health Hubs, supporting earlier access to care, reducing avoidable hospital visits and helping more children receive the care they need close to home.

The number of regional Child Health Hubs will grow from 24 to 45, providing a hub in every local GP network (Primary Care Network) by 2027 ensuring equitable coverage across our eight boroughs.

Working with GP practices and hospital partners, the hubs create multidisciplinary teams for children to provide timely access to specialist advice and coordinated support in community settings.



Access to ‘regular clinics and sessions’

They bring together GPs, paediatricians, & specialist teams through regular clinics and sessions, ensuring children receive the right care at the right time and reducing the need for outpatient appointments, A&E visits, and hospital admissions.

Building on the success of the existing Child Health Hubs, the expansion will create a more consistent and equitable model of care across North West London. Each local area will have its own hub, helping ensure all children and families can access high-quality community-based services. The model will continue to adapt to local needs, with additional support available in areas with larger populations or higher demand.”

Read more now in the full article. [➔ More](#)

“Fast service today at radiography!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Why the HPV Vaccination Matters

Harrow Council writes “Staying healthy and keeping our families healthy is important to all of us, and there are many everyday steps we take to look after ourselves and our loved ones. Alongside eating well and physical activity, vaccinations play a vital role in keeping us healthy and our community safe.



The HPV vaccine gives strong protection

Vaccines are a simple and effective way of teaching the body how to recognise and fight infections before they have a chance to cause harm. Over many decades, they have helped reduce or eliminate diseases that once made many people very unwell.

One important infection we can prevent is Human Papillomavirus (HPV). It is very common, and most people will come into contact with it at some point in their lives.

In many cases, it causes no symptoms and clears on its own. However, some types of HPV can lead to health problems later in life, including cancers, such as head and neck and cervical.

The HPV vaccine provides strong protection against the types of HPV most likely to cause cancer. It is offered to both boys and girls from Year 8 and above, when it is most effective. You can receive your vaccine up to the age of 25.

By choosing to be vaccinated, you are giving your child an extra layer of protection that will benefit them long into their adult life.

The vaccine does not contain the live virus; instead, it trains the immune system to respond quickly and safely.

The HPV vaccine will be offered in your secondary school from April 2026 to Year 8 students and above. To find out more, or to book a parent/carer webinar, please visit the website.” [➔ More](#)

➔ The 'State of Health & Social Care' in 2026

Healthwatch England writes "What does care truly feel like for those receiving it? We aim to answer in our new report. The NHS is saturated with statistics that aim to tell government, managers & clinicians how services are performing. Yet these only tell part of the story.



Overall, experiences have 'improved slightly'

Our new report aims to show what care feels like for the people using it, and make recommendations to fix what isn't working. With Healthwatch due to close, it's essential that those who take over our work continue to value the public's voice and act on the issues they raise.

“Been waiting months for talking therapy.”

Join us today and have your say!

The report draws on the 390,000 experiences we heard between October 2023 and September 2025. We combine these with external data to explore ten areas of care that people talk to us about the most.

And while each one faces individual issues, key themes emerge over and over.

Since our last report, there are signs that people's care experiences have improved slightly. But 29% of people are still not confident they can access timely care from most key services we asked about, such as A&E, GPs, dentists and hospitals.

The five cross-cutting themes we have found in the experiences people share reflect this finding, and its impact.

Access issues remain widespread. Across GPs, dentistry, mental health, elective care, and social care, people face persistent difficulties getting timely appointments, referrals, treatment, and support. These delays often worsen health outcomes and increase reliance on emergency services.

Inequalities in care persist. People and communities already facing inequalities (such as those on low incomes, ethnic minorities, disabled people, and those with communication needs) experience disproportionate barriers to care, leading to poorer health outcomes and higher levels of unmet need.



Access issues 'remain widespread'

Waiting for care takes a toll on wellbeing. Long waits for elective care, mental health support, and social care can seriously affect physical health, mental wellbeing, and financial stability. Many people report worsening conditions and a decline in quality of life while they wait.

Digital transformation brings both opportunities and risks. While digital healthcare innovations (such as the NHS App) improve convenience for some, digital exclusion and poor system integration risk creating a two-tier system and unequal access to care.

Administrative and communication failures undermine care quality. Poor administration, inaccessible information, and ineffective complaint handling erode trust and the patient experience. Problems like missing records, lack of updates, and failure to meet accessibility standards persist."

Read more in the full article. ➔ [More](#)

“The Practice nurse put me at ease!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Charity Helps Hospital Patients Get Home

"We're often the first service through the door when a patient goes home," says Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent's Pam Smith.

The charity works in partnership with Harrow Carers and local hospitals ensuring older people get home safely from Brent and Harrow.

The nine-strong team identify over 60s who meet criteria including being able to get home with the assistance of one person who can also provide basic shopping and domestic support so the patient is settled.



Assistance when leaving hospital

The service also includes three post-discharge calls to check how they are coping and, if any further help is required, a home visit can be arranged to discuss any further assistance.

The team, which cover Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent, are part of the hospitals' discharge service which frees up much needed bed space by getting patients home as soon as is safely possible.

Pam said "One of the team accompany patients' home in a taxi or via Hospital Transport and settle them in ensuring they have some food in the fridge.

If we feel they need additional support, we can refer or signpost them onto other relevant services, such as internal Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent, Harrow Carers services or services in the wider community." [➔ More](#)

"The care assistants get to know you."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Call for New Intensive Care Unit

Gareth Thomas MP has championed Northwick Park Hospital's call for a larger intensive care unit to be built, raising the question with Prime Minister Sir Kier Starmer in the House of Commons.

Mr Thomas highlighted the 'brave and extraordinary staff who looked after my constituents during the pandemic.'



Local capacity needs to be increased

The Prime Minister paid tribute to the wider NHS in the wake of the Covid Inquiry and said that he would arrange a meeting between Mr Thomas and the Health Secretary to discuss the matter.

The hospital wants to create a new purpose-built 36 bed unit with the potential of an additional 24 critical care beds. This would include a dedicated CT scanner. Stay tuned, for more on this story.

"I rely on translation, it needs to be there."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Autism Acceptance & Awareness Month

April marks Autism Acceptance & Awareness Month, a month dedicated to raising awareness, fostering understanding, and celebrating the unique perspectives of individuals on the autism spectrum.

Autism affects how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. It is not a one-size-fits-all experience. Read more about autism, and the focus of the awareness month, on the National Autistic Society website. [➔ More](#)

➔ Adult Out-of-Hours Mental Health Crisis Service

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes “We’ve started a new overnight Mental Health Crisis Response Team for adults in Kensington, Chelsea, Westminster, Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon.



Get emergency help, out of hours

The team operates every night from 8pm to 8.30am, offering community support to help individuals return home safely from emergency departments if they require ongoing mental health crisis care.

Referrals will be taken from our Single Point of Access (SPA) as well as local Home Treatment and Psychiatric Liaison teams.

For London boroughs, phone us on 0800 0234 650, or email cnw-tr.spa@nhs.net.

If you or the person you are calling about is already receiving care from one of our mental health teams (between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) we encourage you to call the team that looks after you”. Learn more about the service now on the official website. [➔ More](#)

➔ Emergency Dental Care Through NHS 111

It’s important to access emergency dental care when you need it.

NHS 111 can advise you where you can get seen and, in appropriate cases, organise an appointment, which might be at a different practice from your regular NHS dentist but usually nearby.

If you have a regular dentist, contact your practice.

If you don’t, or you need advice out of hours, 111.nhs.uk is here for you. [➔ More](#)

➔ The Robots are Coming...

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) writes “The trust is welcoming a new era of surgery with the arrival of cutting-edge robotic technology.

The trust has taken delivery of two state-of-the-art Intuitive Da Vinci surgical robots, which will be based at Ealing Hospital and Northwick Park Hospital, expanding access to advanced, minimally invasive surgery for thousands of patients.



Improving experiences and outcomes

A third robotic platform is already in use at Central Middlesex Hospital, supporting specialist colorectal procedures.

Surgeons and theatre teams are already training on the new technology with the first robotic procedures taking place later this month.

This marks a key milestone in transforming surgical care, improving patient outcomes, and positioning LNWH at the forefront of NHS innovation.

Oscar Smyth, Senior Transformation Lead, said ‘We are planning to convert more than 700 procedures per year to robotic-assisted surgery across both sites by the end of next year, supporting the NHS’s national ambition to significantly expand the use of robotic surgery as part of improving outcomes, productivity, and patient experience.’”

Read more in the full article. [➔ More](#)

“I want a genuine choice on referral.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ What Do Women Want from Health Services?

Healthwatch England writes “The Women’s Health Strategy for England sets out an ambition to ‘radically improve’ how the health and care system listens to women.

Strong communication and attentive listening are known to support greater patient satisfaction, better understanding of health conditions, and higher- quality care. To understand whether this ambition is being realised, we asked people about their recent experiences of care, focusing on whether they felt listened to and whether their concerns were taken seriously.



‘Strong communication’ is very important

Our findings show a clear gap between men’s and women’s experiences. Nearly three quarters of men (72%) report feeling listened to and taken seriously “always” or “most of the time.” For women, this falls to 63%, highlighting a persistent disparity in how patients experience communication and respect within healthcare settings.

The gap widens further when comparing different ethnic groups. More than six in ten, 64%, of white women who have had a medical appointment in the last two years said they felt listened to and taken seriously, compared to 52% of Asian women.

Younger women are also less likely to say they are always listened to. Among those aged 18 to 29, only 12% said they are always listened to and taken seriously. This rises to 30% among women aged 70 and over”. Read more in the full article. [➔ More](#)

“My pharmacist had the answers.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Age UK on ‘Corridor Care’

A ‘shocking’ new analysis by Age UK in 2024/25 shows there were more than 100,000 instances of over-65s waiting between one day (24hrs) & three days (72hrs) in A&E after a decision to admit them had been made

In more than half (54,000) of these cases these older people were aged 80 plus.



Allocating beds has been difficult

Data reveals “exponential increase” in the last 6 years - in 2018/19, people aged 65 plus experienced a wait of between one and three days in A&E only 1,346 times.

“I prefer to see my own GP.”

Join us today and have your say!

Pensioner David, who spent around 30 hours in A&E said “Every joint was aching. It was excruciating, and I could barely move. They told me there were no beds, no trolleys, nothing. I was left in the reception area all night with no treatment and no one checking on me. I ended up lying on the floor. Someone gave me a coat to put under my head. I’d been awake for three nights by then. It was horrendous.”

Sadly, Age UK has already established that if you are an older person who comes into A&E today, there is a considerable risk that you may face a wait of 12 hours or longer before a decision to admit you results in you actually moving to a hospital bed on a ward.

Age UK is ‘hugely concerned’ that in more than half of cases, the older people affected were aged 80 plus (53% or 53,870). [➔ More](#)

➤ Leisure in Harrow Gets £1.4m Investment

Harrow Council writes "Residents across Harrow are set to get a boost to their fitness activities and lifestyle with a £1.4m investment in local leisure centres after Everyone Active secured a new 10-year contract.

Everyone Active will continue to manage three key sites - Hatch End Swimming Pool, Harrow Leisure Centre and Bannister Outdoor Sports Centre.



Upgrades to studios, equipment and more!

The investment will include brand-new equipment, modern design upgrades to existing studios and improvements to the ladies-only gym. Plans also include the creation of a new, larger group exercise studio and an upgraded spin studio, increasing capacity for studio-based classes and group cycling sessions.

Work is expected to be completed by the summer, with improvements phased-in to minimise disruption for customers." [➤ More](#)

“ I want to be treated as a person, not an issue. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➤ What is the Conversation Café?

It is a weekly event for Harrow residents. It offers face-to-face support focused on Social Care, unpaid Carers and improving health and wellbeing.

Who Can Attend? Conversation Café is open to all Harrow residents.

Read all about it, online. [➤ More](#)

➤ Volunteer and Make a Difference!

Volunteer, Hira Bhanderi writes "Volunteering with Healthwatch Harrow has been one of the most rewarding things I've done in my spare time. I originally signed up because I wanted to give something back locally and play a small part in improving the services people rely on every day.

I've always believed that listening to people's real experiences is one of the most powerful ways to create change, and this was a practical way to do it.

One of my first memorable moments as a volunteer was simply speaking to residents at community events. I quickly realised how powerful it is to create space for people to share their stories. Some conversations were quick and light; others were deeply personal. But every interaction reminded me that being listened to matters.



Check our volunteering opportunities online

A second key moment was seeing how feedback gathered from those conversations feeds into wider discussions about improving services. It was incredibly motivating to know that the voices we heard didn't just disappear – they contributed to something bigger.

The third moment has been more personal - gaining confidence. Over time, I became more comfortable approaching people, asking questions & representing Healthwatch in the community. That growth has been one of the biggest benefits of volunteering."

Visit the website, for more on volunteering. [➤ More](#)

“ The food was fantastic and the ward clean. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Eight Tips for Healthy Eating - A Guide!

This online guide, from the NHS outlines eight practical tips which cover the basics of healthy eating, and can help you make healthier choices.

The key to a healthy diet is to eat the right amount of calories for how active you are, so that you balance the energy you consume with the energy you use.

If you eat or drink too much, you'll put on weight.

On the other hand, if you eat and drink too little, you'll lose weight.



Eat a 'wide range of food' for a balanced diet!

Eat a wide range of foods to ensure that you're getting a balanced diet and that your body is receiving all the nutrients it needs. ➔ [More](#)

Latest Newsletters

- ➔ Harrow Council - Harrow People Newsletters ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Harrow Carers - Newsletters and Bulletins ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital - Articulate Newsletters ➔ [More](#)

News Summary

- ➔ The latest news from London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ The latest news from Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Specialist palliative care in North West London - Update ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ March was busiest month ever for A&Es amid meningitis outbreak ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Lessons from CQC's assessments of local authority adult social care provision ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ People searching NHS advice on high blood pressure skyrocketed last year ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Why treating providers as equals is key to improving adult social care ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Women attending first NHS mammogram hits 10-year high as thousands more cancers found ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Adult safeguarding failures being repeated due to lack of national oversight, warns Casey ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS facing 'second surge' in vomiting virus as cases reach highest level this winter ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Thousands recruited for "new era" severe mental illness study ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Occupational Therapists report increasing demand and struggle to meet needs ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Hospitals still under pressure with another cold snap and norovirus rise ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Feature - The Mental Health Act 2025 summarised ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Social care practitioners to form part of neighbourhood health teams ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Hundreds of thousands of young children now to be protected against chickenpox ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Diabetes prevention scheme helps one million people ➔ [More](#)

HPV Vaccine

Free Online Webinar for Parents & Carers

The HPV vaccine is routinely offered to both boys and girls in Year 8 and helps protect against certain types of cancers caused by the HPV virus

We are offering a series of FREE parent information webinars led by doctors, providing an opportunity to learn more about the HPV vaccine.

These sessions will cover:

- The HPV virus and its link to cancer risk
- How the HPV vaccine works
- What your child can expect on the day of vaccination

Each webinar also includes an HPV Q&A session with GP Doctors.



Scan the QR code or [click here to join](#)

MEETINGID: 385 807 878822 82

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Join the link via Microsoft Teams on the day / time of the webinar you would like to attend