

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: The White House (Regional Architecture)

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Available in additional formats

Contact Us

➡ Your Views on Pharmacies and Medication?

We have recently launched our survey on community pharmacies and medication.

A 'community pharmacy' is typically a service not in a clinical setting (GP or hospital) such as your local high street service.

We want to find out what people think of their community pharmacy generally, how easy it is to access, particularly in out-of-hours such as late evenings, whether people get clinical advice from their local pharmacist, and what other services they would like to see offered.

While the vast majority of local people receive an excellent prescribing service from their GP, we have heard in some cases that the move to 'online only' services has disadvantaged some patients.



We want your views on pharmacies and medication

We also hear that medication reviews have been delayed or have not happened - meaning some patients have been left without medication, or have received unexpected dosages or brands. What are your views on your local GP, when getting or renewing your medication?

Please complete our survey, which closes on 31st October. Paper copies on request. ➡ [More](#)

☎ 020 3432 2889

✉ info@healthwatchharrow.co.uk

“ I'd like a face-to-face appointment. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ GP Patient Experience - Key Trends

Each week we receive the feedback of around 35 local people, this amounts to around 400 comments every 3 months (or 'quarter').

Thanks to the work of our Patient Experience Panel which meets monthly to review feedback, and to our staff team, we are able to produce regular reports - on what works well, and what could be improved.



Many patients prefer to use the phone

We find that despite the increasing use of online booking systems, a large proportion of patients - from all sections of our community still prefer to use the phone to get in touch.

“ Our social worker goes the extra mile. ”

Join us today and have your say!

One local person says “The telephone is constantly engaged, I'm having to wait more than 40 minutes. I rang for an appointment for my elderly mother and was told that I have to do all appointments online”.

This experience is not uncommon, it is also reported that patients are often advised to call back 'the next day' and this adds to congestion on the lines.

Some practices have now installed a 'call back' system, giving callers the opportunity to hang-up and receive a call back later in the day.

What is your experience of contacting your practice by phone? Get in touch with us, in confidence.

Our latest GP analysis is available online. ➡ [More](#)

➔ #BecauseWeAllCare - GP Referrals Survey

Healthwatch England writes “Support our campaign to improve GP referrals to specialist care. One concern we’ve heard from the public is how hard it can be to get a GP practice referral to another NHS service. GPs are the first point of call for many health issues and the gateway to specialist support. But with many GP surgeries stretched thin and under pressure, it’s not surprising to hear people feel they’re stuck and unable to get the right support.



Referrals can be ‘difficult to get’

There’s little data about people’s experiences getting a referral from a GP. We want to change this. The system can only improve with a better understanding of people’s challenges, so please support the next phase of our campaign.

“Weekend opening helps as I work long hours.”

Join us today and have your say!

Behind every statistic is a real person, facing very real barriers. Barriers which can have a knock-on effect on day-to-day lives. That could be the older gentleman who struggles to walk to the park whilst waiting for a hip replacement. A young woman whose reoccurring symptoms like fatigue and hair loss make it unbearable to leave the house. Or a mum with a missed diagnosis for life-threatening illnesses, like cancer.

What can you do to support the campaign? We need people who have tried to get a GP referral in the last year to come forward and share their experiences. So, please pass this message on to friends, family and colleagues.” ➔ [More](#)

➔ Working for Carers

Harrow Carers writes “Do you provide care and support to a friend or family member? Do you want to move back into work, but don’t know where to start?

Or maybe you were caring for someone and are now looking to get back into work or training?

We can help! Working for Carers is a free London-wide project that helps carers over 25 move back into work.

This could include one-to-one advice and support; help to write your CV; access to education and training opportunities; confidence building and more!



Helping carers over 25 ‘move back into work’

To find out more and to sign up (for carers living in Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon or Hounslow) get in touch or visit the website. ➔ [More](#)

☎ 020 8868 5224

✉ workingforcarers@harrowcarers.org

➔ Introducing ‘GP Finder’

A new ‘GP Finder’ will be launched in September to improve people’s experience when registering with a GP practice. A new catchment area filter will help patients find GP practices which they are eligible to register with. Find out more online. ➔ [More](#)

“NHS 111 gave spot-on advice.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Community Diagnostic Centres

Community diagnostic centres are a national initiative to build diagnostic capacity for planned care, based in the community and entirely separated from urgent and emergency care. This 'one stop' approach for checks, scans and tests will be more convenient for patients and help to improve outcomes for patients with cancer and other serious conditions.

Plans are afoot to establish three new Community Diagnostic Centres in areas of north west London where there are significant clusters of deprivation. These centres will be on existing NHS sites. One will be a main 'hub' facility located at the Ealing Hospital site, but clearly separate from the main hospital. There will also be two 'spoke' facilities, one at The Wembley Centre for Health and Care and another at The Willesden Centre for Health and Care.



Increasing capacity 'where it is most needed'

Initial engagement and involvement activity was led by NHS London who organised experience-based co-design workshops in 2021 with a diverse range of stakeholders, including patients, staff and the public.

The outputs of this engagement exercise have informed the current approach and there are now plans to conduct more localised engagement and involvement activities across north west London. This will ensure the plans reflect and respond to the needs and views of all users, as well as helping build awareness of the new centres.

Stay tuned for further information.

“The phone is constantly engaged!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Protect Free Travel for Older Londoners

Since June 2020, older Londoners have not been able to use their Older Person's Freedom Pass or their 60+ Oyster card between 4.30am and 9.00am on weekday mornings. Since then, travel concessions have become increasingly 'under threat'.



Affordable transport 'is a lifeline, not a luxury'

Thousands of people have raised their voices to call for vital travel concessions to be protected. Thanks to them, remaining travel concessions have been saved, but the danger of future cuts has not gone away.

Age UK London are campaigning against the early weekday morning suspension of travel concessions because it penalises older Londoners with no choice about when and how they travel. Some of the poorest older Londoners are among those hardest hit and hundreds have talked about the 'devastating impact' it has had, so far.

“Communication on the ward should be clear.”

Join us today and have your say!

Affordable transport is a lifeline not a luxury and it can transform lives. Taking travel concessions away from older Londoners who live in the city with the worst pensioner poverty rate in the country and some of the highest living costs in the world will drive up poverty and exacerbate the capital's social isolation crisis.

The number of older Londoners relying on out of work support like Universal Credit has doubled in seven months and only one in three made redundant find a new job within three months. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Re-Engage: Tackling Loneliness Amongst the Old

Charity Re-Engage writes “Are you aged 75 or over and finding it difficult to get out and about?”

You’re not alone. There are thousands of people who wish they could get out and do more but are starting to find it hard. we are here to help



Helping older people to ‘get out and about’

Our Sunday afternoon tea parties are a chance for a change of scenery and regular afternoons of conversation and laughter with friends of all ages.

Re-Engage groups meet right across the UK every month and our local volunteers even provide transport to and from the tea party so that you have nothing to worry about and no costs to pay.”

To find out more about the programme, get in touch or visit the website. ➔ [More](#)

☎ 0800 716 543

✉ info@reengage.org.uk

➔ HeadsUp Conference, Thursday 17th November

Understand mental health care through the eyes of a young persons' panel and professional training from specialist mental health services.

Join the conference on Thursday 17th November at Victoria Hall, Harrow, HA1 2JE.

The conference will include guest speakers, the opportunity to hear from, and submit questions to, a diverse panel of young people with lived experience, food and refreshments, networking opportunities, and training workshops delivered by each of the specialist partners.

Find out more, or register now online. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Deaf or Hard of Hearing? Talk to the CQC!

Local people are being encouraged to share their thoughts on the standards of care they receive at GPs, dentists, hospitals and care homes, with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The CQC is particularly keen to hear from deaf and hard of hearing people about their experiences and has teamed up with Disability Rights UK to help make this easier.

It has recently launched SignLive on its website, where people can provide feedback in BSL. People can also get in touch using the RelayUK app, for those preferring to communicate by text.



The CQC regulates health and care services

It is essential for people to share their experiences of healthcare provision right across the region, to inform the CQC’s monitoring of local services and to ensure people are receiving safe and effective treatment.

The CQC’s chief inspector of Adult Social Care, Kate Terroni, said:

“We are committed to addressing health inequalities and reducing barriers to care.

The lived experience of people who are deaf and hard of hearing, and the wider community, is significant in understanding how care for them can be improved. We want to learn from their experience and drive these improvements and ensure people received good, safe care”. ➔ [More](#)

“I found the assessment too complicated.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Disabled People on 'Poor Communication'

Healthwatch England writes "Our new deep-dive analysis of people's experiences of healthcare communication is a stark reminder of why NHS England and the 42 new Integrated Care Systems need to ensure services abide by the Accessible Information Standard.

Recently, we've published new findings, which show services are failing in their legal duty to provide accessible information for people with physical and learning disabilities.



Barriers in receiving support are reported

As part of the Your Care, Your Way campaign, from March and May 2022, we carried out an online survey of 605 people affected by communications challenges. Whilst the survey participants were self-selected, their views are likely to reflect those of a significant group of people who need communications support.

We found that one in four respondents (28%) – including deaf, blind and with learning disabilities – said they had been refused help when requesting support to understand information about their healthcare. This included information being provided in formats such as Braille, British Sign Language and easy read.

Not being given information in the right format affected people's mental health and wellbeing (38%), meant they missed out on important information about their health (29%) or meant that they could not contact a service they needed (27%).

“The receptionist fitted me in the same day!”

Join us today and have your say!

Respondents also reported that the quality of communication from NHS and social care services had worsened over the last two years. Two-thirds (67%) felt that the way health and care services communicate with them had gotten worse or slightly worse over the course of the pandemic.

It is not just people with sensory impairments or learning disabilities who are affected by this issue.

A fifth (22%) of those who reached out to Healthwatch to share their experiences identified themselves as having a mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety.

Of these people, 35% reported they rarely or never get the support they need to understand healthcare information or communicate with staff. The majority of them (70%) also said that the lack of information in a format they could understand further impacted their mental health and wellbeing.



1 in 5 respondents has a mental health condition

Louise Ansari, national director at Healthwatch England said "Our findings are a stark reminder that some of the most vulnerable people in our society are still excluded from access to healthcare because they communicate in British Sign Language or they need information in visual formats.

And this is despite the fact that their rights to accessible information are protected in law.

People's right to accessible information should be based on their communication needs, not just on a diagnosed disability.

For instance, people who have a mental health condition or are waiting for a diagnosis should have a right to request communication support in the same way as people who have a sensory loss or a learning disability."

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

➔ New Breast Centre at Northwick Park

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWHT) writes "A new breast service covering North West London allows women to be tested and treated at one location and often during a single visit.

Northwick Park Hospital is hosting the new one stop centre providing a more convenient patient-friendly service that will help reduce waiting times.

At present, the service sees more than 7,000 patients a year and treats more than 400 women with breast cancer.

The changes have been driven by patient feedback and the importance of making cancer care as straightforward as possible for patients. The National Breast Screening Programme will also now be co-located with the treatment centre.



Making care 'straightforward for patients'

Our clinicians hope the co-located services encourages more women to get screened, while a resident GP will forge stronger links with community primary care.

The new centre allows us to deliver innovative breast health aimed at patients with concerns about symptoms that are unlikely to be related to cancer.

We also aim to be the first clinic in the region to offer the possibility of performing every type of biopsy at the patient's initial visit.

This will also allow for smoother cancer journeys for patients, including post operatively, and a better ability to address any concerns.

We are retaining the neighbouring breast service at Ealing Hospital which offers mammography and ultrasound". [➔ More](#)

➔ Help Shape Local Perinatal Services

Central and North West London NHS Trust (CNWL) writes "We are looking for parents, or their partners, who have used their local perinatal (during pregnancy and two years after) mental health services to join a friendly virtual forum on the first Wednesday of every month.

This forum was made for people to share feedback based on their own experiences, share ideas on what would improve CNWL's service, and support projects to widen the reach of the Trust's services.



Join the monthly Zoom meetings!

Join the monthly Zoom meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at 12pm. This is a safe space to meet and you will be reimbursed for your time.

If you live in Harrow, Brent, Kensington & Chelsea, Hillingdon or Westminster, and are interested in the forum, please contact Sakina Ballard, Perinatal Advanced Lived Experience Practitioner. More information is also available online. [➔ More](#)

[✉ sakina.ballard@nhs.ne](mailto:sakina.ballard@nhs.ne)

➔ Local Deaf Residents 'Call for Action'

Deaf people in Harrow have criticised some of the services offered to them by their council. At a recent Harrow Council cabinet meeting, three deaf residents said 'more should be done' to include deaf people when it comes to support packages. [➔ More](#)

"We need quicker waits for children."

Join us today and have your say!

➤ Polio Vaccine for Children Aged 1 to 9

A polio vaccine for children aged 1 to 9 has been announced. The risk is low, but it is very important to make sure your child is up-to-date with all their vaccinations, including polio.



Protecting younger children from Polio

Check your child's red book or contact your GP if you don't think your child has had them. Find out more about which vaccines are given to children on the NHS website. ➤ [More](#)

The booster dose will be given to children that are up-to-date with their routine vaccinations. If they are not, they will be offered the next poliovirus vaccine in their schedule.

The vaccine will be given through GPs and other local providers who will contact parents and carers when they are ready for them to come forward.

What are the symptoms of polio?

Most people with polio won't have any symptoms and will fight off the infection without even realising they were infected. A small number will experience a flu-like illness 3 to 21 days after they're infected.

Symptoms can include a high temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F) or above; a sore throat; a headache; abdominal (tummy) pain; aching muscles; feeling and being sick. These symptoms will usually pass within about a week without any medical intervention.

Find out more on the Council website. ➤ [More](#)

“They treat symptoms,
not the root problem.”

Join us today and have your say!

➤ Introducing Novus Homeshare

Novus Homeshare is a charity that matches people who want help or support around the house with people who need accommodation and are willing to help. The service helps people from all walks of life in need of an extra helping hand at home in London (and surrounding areas), for a reasonable fee.

Homeshare is a fantastic initiative and something which combats loneliness and bridges the intergenerational gap.

Essentially, homesharing enables two unrelated people to share their lives for their mutual benefit.



‘Bridging the intergenerational gap’

A homesharer provides support and companionship to a householder in exchange for free or low-cost accommodation. And not many people are aware of this service. Find out more online. ➤ [More](#)

“First impressions really
do matter!”

Join us today and have your say!

➤ SWiSH - Information and Advice Service

The SWiSH service is an information and advice service and open to anyone who lives or works in Harrow.

Call the SWiSH Team for support with accessing services in the community such as advocacy, housing, debt advice, legal advice, welfare and benefits, mental health and day services. Plus much more!

☎ 020 8423 7382 (option 1)

➔ Debt Advice from the CAB

Dealing with money issues can sometimes be off-putting.

But if you don't understand how things like credit or mortgages work, you could end up losing out financially or getting yourself deep in debt.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) has a dedicated webpage, with comprehensive information and guidance including on getting help with the cost of living, help with debt, using a food bank, budgeting and debt solutions.



Don't 'lose out financially' - get advice

The resource is available now. ➔ [More](#)

Latest Newsletters

- ➔ Harrow Carers - Newsletter, August/September 2022 ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ London North West Healthcare NHS Trust - Our Trust Newsletters ➔ [More](#)

Please send us a link to your latest newsletter!

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](#)
- ➔ The latest from the Recovery News Channel ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS to roll out life-changing glucose monitors to all Type 1 diabetes patients ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Better access to NHS dental services under new reforms ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS launches awareness campaign for England's most deadly cancer ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Medical support worker role helps hundreds of refugees to become NHS doctors ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Government seeks overseas care staff to fill mounting shortages ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS sets out long COVID action plan for thousands of people with persistent symptom ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Delay cap on care costs, council heads urge government ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS lands breakthrough in global battle against superbugs ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Army of volunteers join NHS trial to spot deadly cancers ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ High street pharmacies spot cancers in new NHS early diagnosis drive ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Breakthrough treatment to boost life chances for hundreds of people with respiratory cancer ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Social care waiting lists up 37% in 6 months, finds ADASS ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS saves £1.2 billion on medicines over three years ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Thousands of patients to benefit as NHS marks 100th fast-tracked cancer drug ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Adult care bereft of cash for current pressures and long-term reforms, warn MPs ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ Community learning disability and autism placements increasingly costlier than inpatient care ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ NHS checks and treatment on patients' doorsteps part of new changes to health and care ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Government boosts nursing home payments as vacancies continue to mount ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Ethnic minority care workers in more insecure work than white peers, finds watchdog ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS in final push to treat longest waiters ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS launches lifesaving sickle cell campaign ➔ [More](#)

HOW ARE YOU?

In our adult years, the lifestyle choices we make can dramatically increase our chances of becoming ill later in life.

Making small changes now can improve your health right away and double your chances of staying healthy as you get older. It's never too late to start.

Talk to your doctor or nurse about your health today.

BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY
ONE YOU