

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 Hive Stadium

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... plus more!

➔ How Has Health & Social Care Changed for You?

Healthwatch Harrow hosted a forum at the Harrow Baptist Church on 29th November, attended by 75 people. The forum provided a space for residents to share changes they have experienced.

The event was opened by Healthwatch Chair, Ash Verma. The guest speakers and panellists were Lisa Henschen (Managing Director of Harrow Based Partnership), Shaun Riley (Assistant Director of Health and Wellbeing, Harrow Council) and Carrie Whelan and Gbemisola Akinterinwa (Team Managers at Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust). The programme included group discussions, presentations and a question and answer session.



29th November, Harrow Baptist Church

At the event, we heard that access to all services is still difficult (GPs mentioned in particular). Digital access is not the only way to access services, other options must be made available. GPs in particular are contracted to enable you to access them via phone, face to face, correspondence or online. If this is not happening, please let Healthwatch Harrow know and we can share this information with the people who commission the services. Lisa said she wanted to hear from you.

We also heard there is not enough engagement with people who use services when they are being changed or closed down. Joint talking is key to better engagement. In the case of the closure of The Bridge, users of that service shared that no other services have been offered to them to replace the role that the Bridge provided.

“The automatic callback is a good idea!”

Join us today and have your say!

Other key themes - there is the need for a more personalised approach with community mental health teams, social care and health professionals. Residents are still having to share their stories with each new person they come into contact with.

Adults with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) are being informed that if they can get on the waiting list for an assessment - they have a '3 year wait'.



Access difficulties are widely reported

Access to mental health services triggered a lot of feedback. Attendees felt they are not getting the full service required; it is not clear what is available and who to contact (need to have a named worker); psychiatry access is especially difficult and annual reviews are not happening. It is also unclear who is coordinating the integration with social care.

Currently various specialists can be accessed at a GP surgery, and this must be communicated to patients as they may be booked in with a specialist rather than their regular doctor. Lisa confirmed that there is a move to integrate services so that patients are not having to repeat their stories but how we share this with patients' needs better communication.

Shaun reported that 'Conversation Cafes' provide a place where people can talk to someone face to face about issues they are facing and get signposted to an appropriate provider.

Carrie and Gbemi confirmed a new referral system is in place (for mental health) to speed up the process of ensuring that people were seen within the target of 28 days although they aim for 14 days.

A full event report will be produced in January.

If any of these points raised affect you, please do contact us to share your story. Only by sharing stories and having evidence can the commissioner take some action to change the situation.

➔ Cost of Living 'Shouldn't Be a Barrier to Care'

Healthwatch England writes "As the cost of living crisis challenges our basic human needs, rising costs mean many of us are having to adapt our spending to keep on top of expenses.

You might be having to make tough decisions, cutting back on what you're spending on food, heating and your health to pay your bills.

The cost of living crisis shouldn't be a barrier to care. Prioritise your health. If you have a chronic condition, a new illness causing concern or feel ill, seek the appropriate professional healthcare support. Many pharmacists can support you with everyday health concerns, meaning you may not need to visit your GP. You should only go to a hospital in an emergency.



Keep your medical appointments, if booked

Take your medication. Many of us take medication to stay healthy and manage existing health conditions. With the recent increase in prescription charges, rationing medicines to save money may seem like a good idea, but it can lead to health complications in the long run. You might be eligible for support with your prescription with a Prescription Prepayment Certificate. Prescriptions are free for those over 60.

Keep your appointments. Please attend any pre-arranged or regular appointments with your GP, dentist, optician or hospital. If you're worried about the increase in transport fares, check out what support is available when travelling to your GP, hospital or other NHS services." [➔ More](#)

“Care workers are good at keeping in touch.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ When to Use NHS 111 and How it Can Help

Healthwatch England writes "The NHS wants to make it easier and safer for patients to get the right treatment when they need it, without waiting a long time to be seen in A&E.



Phone, or use the online portal

If you have an urgent but not life-threatening health problem, you can now contact NHS 111 to find out if you need to go to A&E. Call 111 or use the online portal (111.nhs.uk).

They can book an appointment at your local A&E or emergency department (the time given will be a rough guide for when you will get seen). It allows the NHS to better manage patient flow and overcrowding at A&E, with the aim for people to get seen sooner.

Your NHS 111 advisor or clinician could also make you a direct appointment with a GP, Pharmacist or Urgent Treatment Centre. They can also give you the advice you need without using another service.

“ I had both jabs at the same time! ”

Join us today and have your say!

If you need an urgent face-to-face assessment or treatment, they can arrange this immediately. No one who turns up in A&E should be turned away or asked to call NHS 111". [➔ More](#)

What to do in an emergency?

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, you should call 999 or go straight to your nearest emergency department.

➔ New Adult Autism Diagnostic Service

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes "From 13th November, a new Adult Autism Diagnostic Service will be available in Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon.

The service will offer quality and comprehensive autism diagnostic services for adults aged 18 years and over, who are registered with a GP, in these boroughs.



A new 'comprehensive service' for adults

It will also provide pre and post-diagnostic support; advice and signposting for individuals and their carers and families; and consultations and support for other teams working with autistic people.

The service has been designed to reduce waiting times and the backlog of people waiting for assessments. It can also help raise awareness around autism and increase the confidence with which services meet the needs of autistic people.

As the service ramps up over the coming year, people will see a much more 'defined and clear' process for autism diagnosis. We will work with third sector partners to create an offer that promotes 'waiting well', supporting people with services beyond CNWL in local communities.

A Peer Support Worker and social prescribing will be embedded into the service as a key part of its development."

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

“Excellent hygiene at the hospital.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ New Befriending Service for Carers

Harrow Carers, the charity for unpaid young and adult carers, is launching a new befriending service to meet the needs of clients, many of whom look after frail, ill, disabled or vulnerable family members or friends.

Befrienders or volunteers will be recruited and trained to ring or visit carers, who may be responsible for the long-term care of a partner or relative. For many carers, this may be the only connection to the outside world, a rare glimpse into something they once enjoyed, a moment to focus on themselves.

They can choose, for example, to play a game, do a puzzle, anything that will help mental wellbeing. This befriending service will be offered to them for ten weeks, after which they will be signposted to other support services in Harrow.



Reconnecting carers with their community

It is hoped that this befriending service will cater to the needs of the older carers, many of whom look after friends or family members with dementia.

Five million people provide unpaid care in England and Wales. Over a quarter of carers (29%) report feelings of loneliness often or always. Befriending services can alleviate such feelings and help carers regain confidence, that they may have lost over a long period of losing touch with others.

'We would like to particularly focus on the carers, who often get overlooked. Apart from the regular company, we will provide them with a link to the local community and other services and ensure they are better informed of their rights,' said Karen Gilchrist, Adult Services Manager at Harrow Carers.

To find out more, get in touch:

☎ 07719 068413

✉ Kalpana.mehta@harrowcarers.org

➔ The 'Hub of Hope' App for Mental Health

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes "As we approach the festive season, please remember that the Hub of Hope, the UK's fastest growing and most comprehensive mental health support database, is free to use at any point.

The Hub of Hope is the UK's leading mental health support database, bringing together local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support services for the first time. The database was developed by national charity and partner of CNWL, Chasing the Stigma, to signpost people towards vital mental health support in their local area.



Improving mental health and wellbeing

The resource can be accessed online or downloaded for FREE from Apple App or Google Play Store. So far 13,000 (and growing!) mental health services have registered themselves onto the database and over 650,000 people have used the Hub of Hope.

“ I'd like to visit mum more often. ”

Join us today and have your say!

To use the app, simply enter your postcode and select what kind of support you require from a series of options. The app will then generate a list of suitable services closest to you.

Some of the most frequently searched terms include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, advice and support, women's support, bereavement and loneliness." [➔ More](#)

➔ Phone Lines - Moving Over to 'Digital Voice'

BT's digital home phone switch over is called Digital Voice. The current landline telephone network is being switched off by 31st December 2025.

The reason for the switch over is that the current cables are over 100 years old and they are hard to replace. The current system is very 'power hungry' and it is not just BT but a whole 'industry change' of system. The new system will offer better quality of calls and be more energy efficient.



99% of phones will work on the new system

With Digital Voice, your phone will plug into a black box called a router. You will be able to keep the same telephone number and you will pay the same price and have the same contract.

It has an enhanced scam protect feature, protecting people from scam calls and fraud. There is a 3-way calling option, connecting people with multiple family & friends, and the connection is 'very clear'.

If people have no mobile signal where they live, are vulnerable customers, lifeline users, are over 75 years, or only use a landline - their switch over to the new system is being delayed, in order to take more care and attention for these customers. However, eventually all phones will be migrated.

Our colleagues at Age UK have produced an online resource, explaining what is happening and how.

Please share widely. [➔ More](#)

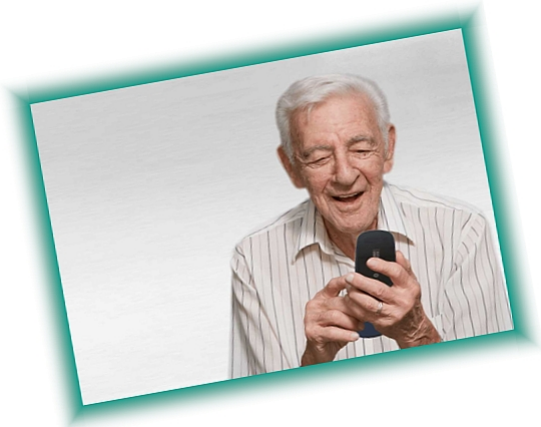
“ Staff need awareness of different cultures. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ New App-Based Dial-a-Ride Booking System

Transport for London writes “Dial-a-Ride is a vital free service that supports older and disabled Londoners, to get them to where they need to be.

The new app-based booking system offers members and caregivers access to an additional channel to the existing telephone booking system and allows members to book journeys and manage their bookings.



Helping to ‘meet your specific needs’

Members are now able to download and use the app to book journeys from 20th November onwards.

The new app will improve the accessibility and efficiency of the service with customers being able to book more quickly, track where their driver is, update any details related to their ride, and cancel a trip without having to call the contact centre.

Members will be able to customise their app with accessibility features to meet their specific needs, such as options to assist those with impaired vision with voice overs and adaptive font size. The new system will help us schedule trips more efficiently, benefitting both members and drivers through better planning of journeys.

We will be letting customers know about the new system using various communication channels including posters, leaflets and recorded messages on our phone lines when members call the contact centre.”

“I like to be recognised on arrival.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ New Urology Centre Opens at Northwick Park

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWT) writes “Diagnostics and treatment of a range of urological conditions will now be carried out in one unit at the hospital trust.

The North West London Urology Centre at Northwick Park Hospital will treat more than 1,500 patients a year for routine procedures, with onward referral of radical cancer patients to the hub at Imperial.

The service had previously been spread across three hospital sites and had to share areas with other clinical teams.



Improving treatment and diagnostics

The service will be expanded to provide more minor surgical procedures outside theatre to improve capacity as well as patient experience and outcome.

“The vaccination clinic was super efficient!”

Join us today and have your say!

The new lithotripter (for treating stones) has been installed in the unit and the bladder cancer diagnostic and treatment service as well as the prostate cancer diagnostic services are now all co-located in the same outpatient centre.

The service will still offer a weekly clinic at Ealing and Elective operating theatres at Central Middlesex Hospital but the bulk of the outpatient activities will take place at Northwick Park, enabling the team to work far more effectively and make further inroads into waiting lists.”

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

➔ Introducing the Conversation Café

The Conversation Café is a weekly drop-in, where residents with disabilities and their unpaid carers can receive face to face support. Meet with professionals from Adult Social Care, Voluntary Organisations and Charities.

Join us every Tuesday, 1.00pm - 3.00pm at St. Peter's Church, Colbeck Road, Harrow, HA1 4BX.

Mince Pie and Mingle!

The session on 19th December (same place and time) has a festive feel, with mince pies provided!



Support and advice for unpaid carers

To find out more, get in touch:

✉ conversation.cafe@harrow.gov.uk

“NHS 111 gave spot on advice!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Diabetes and the Menopause Event

Diabetes UK writes “Join the South East Coast and London team for an online event for people living with and affected by diabetes, plus healthcare professionals.

We will be joined by Community Diabetes Specialist Nurse Anne Eltringham Cox from West Kent Primary Care, who will be discussing the menopause - how it affects your experience of living with diabetes and what you can do about it. Book now!” ➔ [More](#)

➔ Harrow Warm Hubs

Harrow Council Writes “As the cold weather sets in and temperatures plummet, Harrow residents are guaranteed a safe, warm and inclusive welcome at Harrow’s Warm Hubs.

The Hubs, created by a number of community and faith organisations in the borough, provide a safe welcoming space for residents to meet and get involved in activities.



Helping residents to keep warm this winter

There are currently 29 warm hubs across the borough. Many of the hubs provide hot meals, exercise classes, health services and are a place to meet and make friends.

Staff are on hand to signpost people to advice and other support services.

Residents can find their nearest warm hub on the official website. ➔ [More](#)

With temperatures set to drop below freezing in the coming days, the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is likely to be activated so that no one is left on the streets.

If you witness or suspect that a rough sleeper is bedding down outside, please report it so we can help. ➔ [More](#)

Further information and advice on the cost of living, including support to keep warm, is available on the Harrow Cost of Living website.” ➔ [More](#)

“Appointment cancelled without notification.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body.

These nutrients are needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy.

It's important to take vitamin D as you may have been indoors more than usual this year.

You should take 10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D a day between October and early March to keep your bones and muscles healthy.



Vitamin D helps to keep you healthy

Find out more on the NHS website. ➔ [More](#)

Latest Newsletters

- ➔ Harrow Council - Harrow People Newsletters ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Harrow Carers - Newsletter, October/November 2023 ➔ [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](#)
- ➔ The latest from NHS North West London ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS urges people to get winter jabs with two weeks until online bookings close ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Hundreds of patients in hospital with norovirus ahead of winter ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Homelessness social work role valuable but rare, isolated and temporarily funded ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS cancer bus tours country as over two in five wouldn't visit GP about possible symptom ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ New autism support launched for families and carers across England ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ 10% pay rise for thousands of care workers as part of national living wage rise ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ First-ever therapy for rare genetic disease in babies to save lives on the NHS ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Social care staff carrying out tasks previously undertaken by NHS, without extra funding ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Hundreds of thousands of NHS patients to be offered the chance to travel for treatment ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Women urged to take up NHS cervical screening invitations ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Fast-track programme to train 320 more social workers in £19m contract extension ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ New NHS software to improve care for millions of patients ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS dementia diagnosis rates at three-year high ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Giant lung roadshow tours England as most people ignore early lung cancer symptoms ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ One in five children and young people had a probable mental disorder in 2023 ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Pharmacy reforms to bring new services to the high street ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Most councils rated good for adult social care in CQC pilot assessments ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ New NHS warning system to spot deterioration in children's health faster ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Artificial intelligence to help boost NHS winter response and prevent avoidable admissions ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ One-year waits reduce for patients as record demand for NHS emergency care continues ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS mobile testing scheme finds thousands of new cases of liver damage ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Women set to benefit from 'repurposed' NHS drug to prevent breast cancer ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS virtual wards to treat thousands of patients with heart failure at home ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS sets ambition to eliminate cervical cancer by 2040 ➔ [More](#)

DAMP AND MOULD

Advice for keeping
your home
damp-free

Dry clothes outside
when possible



Ventilate rooms for
15 minutes a day



Use the extractor
fan when bathing



Keep a window or
ventilator open



Cover pans and use
the extractor fan



Keep living areas
18°C to 21°C



Wipe moisture
from surfaces



Check your heating
system regularly



Keep a gap between
walls and furniture



Consider insulation
and thick carpet



If your issue has not gone away, speak to your landlord/housing provider.
If you do not have a response, report it to the Council. Visit

www.harrow.gov.uk/dampandmould



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW