

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: Harrow in Winter

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... plus more!

➔ Healthwatch Harrow Update

Healthwatch Manager, Yaa Asamany writes “As usual the team have been busy listening to your stories and sharing insights so you can influence Health and Social Care services in Harrow.

Healthwatch Harrow attended and presented during Carers Rights Day at Harrow Carers on 21st November 2024. The theme was recognising your rights. About 60 people attended.



Annual assessments are important

The day also involved presentations from Advocacy 1st, Citizen’s Advice, Green Doctors and the NHS.

We were surprised to learn that out of every 50 carers only 1 had had an annual carer’s assessment. We encourage carers to notify Harrow Carers to get support in arranging this. Carers can also get information from Harrow Council. ➔ [More](#)

With Christmas around the corner and the cold weather we hope that everyone can get together with friends and family.

Looking ahead to 2025, Healthwatch Harrow hopes to have a forum in March potentially themed around maternity. Our next newsletter will have more information so watch this space.

Wishing You a Happy New Year!

I would like to thank all staff, volunteers and stakeholders who support the work that we do. Wishing all our partners and residents of Harrow a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.”

“ I am in control of my diabetes. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Social Isolation & Loneliness Survey

During the pandemic, many people experienced for the first time, what other people had been experiencing all the time. For some people, there was no difference, because they already felt isolated and lonely.

Social isolation is a measure of the number of contacts people have.

Loneliness relates to the quality of those relationships. People may become lonely after the loss of a spouse or a loved one.

Other common triggers include retiring from work, children leaving home, having reduced mobility, or no longer being able to participate in enjoyable activities for some reason.



Exploring social isolation and loneliness

People may happily choose to have only a few contacts, but they may not choose to be lonely.

“ I need to be involved in decisions about me. ”

Join us today and have your say!

The purpose of this survey is to establish the reasons and frequency of Social Isolation for the local population and to attempt to address the issues once highlighted.

We would ask you to give specific details of any groups, clubs and activities you attend, so that, as a result of the survey, we can compile a comprehensive list of activities available locally.

The survey closes on 19th January 2025. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Keeping Well Over the Colder Months

Harrow Council writes “Winter is a time when, because of the colder air outside, we tend to spend more time inside, enabling viruses to circulate and make us ill. However, with the right self-care and vaccines, we can give ourselves the best chance to stay well over the festive season and beyond.

Simple steps such as eating healthy food and taking regular exercise can boost our physical health. Keeping our home warm is also important - you can find help with energy bills on the London Borough of Harrow website. ➔ [More](#)

Equally, there are simple measures we can take that can help our mental health. We can spend time with family and friends, get involved with our community, and come along to a Conversation Café. ➔ [More](#)



You could get help with energy bills

Why not take a walk in some of Harrow’s green spaces, there are walks for all levels of ability all across the borough. ➔ [More](#)

Community Hubs are Open! All across the borough, community hubs provide shelter from the weather. They also become places of friendship, support and encouragement. They provide a warm welcome, where it is needed most. ➔ [More](#)

It’s important to have your vaccines. Adults can now book a free NHS flu or Covid vaccine if they are aged 65 and over, a resident in an older adult care home or have certain underlying health conditions. Find out more on the official website.* ➔ [More](#)

“ My GP could offer more support on referrals. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Think ‘Pharmacy First’

Pharmacists can offer advice on a range of illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, ear infections and aches and pains.

They can also give advice about medicines. This includes how to use your medicine, worries about side effects or any other questions you have.



Your local pharmacist is here to help

If they cannot help you themselves, they can refer you to a GP or other health professional.

Pharmacists can suggest treatments that do not need a prescription for a range of conditions.

Most pharmacies can also offer prescription medicine for some conditions, without you needing to see a GP or make an appointment. This is called Pharmacy First.

“ The care assistants get to know you. ”

Join us today and have your say!

If your medicine is out of date or unwanted, do not put it in the bin or flush it down the toilet.

Take it to your pharmacy to be disposed of safely.

Some pharmacies may offer the contraceptive pill for free without a prescription. If you are aged 18 years or older, you can also buy the progesterone-only pill from most pharmacies.

Ask a local pharmacist to find out what services they offer. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Help us Shape Your Local Pharmacy Services

Harrow Council writes "Healthy Dialogues is writing a pharmaceutical needs assessment (PNA) which looks at health needs of the people who live in your area.

As part of this we invite you to share your views around how you use your local pharmacy.



How do you use your local pharmacy?

Please take a moment to complete this brief survey, which takes no longer than ten minutes. ➔ [More](#)

Your input is invaluable in helping to shape the future of your local pharmacy services.

The survey is open until the 20th December 2024."

If you have any questions, please get in touch with Healthy Dialogues:

☎ 07825 571498

✉ PNA@healthydialogues.co.uk

“ I like to be recognised on arrival. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Learning Disability & Autism Forum

An upcoming event, hosted by Community Connex. The theme this time, is disability hate crime and scams - empowering you to take action.

When? Thursday 9th January, 9.30am to 2.30pm.
Where? Harrow Baptist Church, College Road, HA1 1BA. Book your place now. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Compassionate Care for All - Consultation

NHS North West London is proposing changes to improve adult community specialist palliative care services for people with serious or life-limiting illnesses.

They want to hear your views on these proposed improvements, which focus on compassionate, accessible care for local residents.

What is community specialist palliative care? Palliative care is the treatment and support provided to people who are terminally ill. It focuses on improving quality of life by managing symptoms, relieving pain and addressing any side-effects of a patient's condition. It also provides emotional and practical support for patients, families and carers.



Accessible, compassionate care for all

Specialist care refers to the fact that the care is provided by palliative care specialists.

Community specialist palliative care includes services for people outside of hospitals, such as in their homes, care homes, or hospices.

The aim of the consultation is to ensure that services meet people's needs & wishes, are fair and accessible to everyone across North West London, and deliver better care and improve outcomes for patients and their families.

The consultation closes on 24th February 2025. Find out more on the website. ➔ [More](#)

“ I want a named social worker. ”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Introducing the SPECTROM Project

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes "SPECTROM stands for Short-term Psycho-Education for Carers to help Reduce the Over Medication of people with intellectual disabilities. It is a training programme led by Imperial College London, UK and sponsored by CNWL.

Although many support (care) staff currently receive some training on supporting distressed behaviours in adults with learning (intellectual) disabilities, it varies in quality.

The SPECTROM training has been coproduced in the UK primarily for support staff but could be equally useful for other caregivers, such as family members and other professionals.



Helping to reduce over-medication

SPECTROM empowers staff by giving them detailed knowledge of psychotropic medication so they can challenge inappropriate prescribing.

This may involve not prescribing psychotropics for 'behaviours that challenge' in the first place and/or initiating a dose reduction and medication withdrawal if appropriate. Staff are taught instead how to address 'behaviours that challenge' without using medication.

This training is also designed to empower people with learning disabilities and their families by involving them in shared decision-making for care planning, including prescribing." ➔ [More](#)

“Staff need awareness of different cultures.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Learning Disabilities - The 'Four Challenges'

Healthwatch England writes "In the UK, approximately 1.5 million people have a learning disability. Many people with learning disabilities find it difficult to learn, develop new skills, understand information and interact with other people. Therefore, accessing the support they need to live as independently as possible is crucial.

We've investigated the care stories people have shared with us to identify the four common challenges they face accessing support.



Issues include a lack of options and information

Moving between services: Every year, thousands of children transition from children to adult learning disability services. The transition is challenging for young people and their families or carers as they often struggle to access support when they turn 18.

Services closing: Factors, such as pressures on local authority budgets, has led to the number of people benefiting from respite care falling from 57,000 in 2015/16 to 36,000 in 2022/23. Finding respite care, including carer's breaks, is a struggle, with professionals highlighting the shortage of services and how much it affected the lives of the parents and carers they work with.

Social life: Severe mental health conditions are 8.4 times more common in patients with a learning disability. That's why it's essential for people with learning disabilities to have a form of social interaction and feel connected to their community.

Accessible communication and inclusive healthcare: Our previous work showed that 28% of people with hearing, sight or learning disabilities said they had been refused help when requesting accessible information from the NHS."

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

➔ Supporting Your Mental Health this Winter

Support is available from your local NHS mental health services.

NHS Talking Therapies: Get support with your emotional wellbeing (anxiety and depression) with talking therapies.



Support is available - get in touch

The Cove: Get help in a mental health crisis by visiting your local Cove - community support for individuals (16+) experiencing a crisis or in mental distress.

“My pharmacist had the answers.”

Join us today and have your say!

Hub of Hope: Visit the Hub of Hope to find services from healthcare providers and local charities and groups.

Kooth: Access support from a professional, speak to others about your wellbeing on a safe forum with Kooth. For ages 11-25.

Single Point of Access (SPA): If you need help immediately contact the Single Point of Access Line 24/7 on 0800 0234 650.

Mental Health Crisis Assessment Service (MHCAS): The Mental Health Crisis Assessment Service offers a calm and therapeutic alternative to attending an emergency department. Contact your mental health team or the SPA first before attending.

To find out more, visit the website. ➔ [More](#)

➔ CNWL Joins the London Care Record

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes “CNWL have started sharing information in the London Care Record, which is a single and secure view of a person’s health and care information.

This is helping to make sure that health and care staff who are treating the person in other settings have the information they need at the point of care to inform their clinical decision making. It also means that patients do not need to repeat their care history to the staff treating them.



Giving staff the ‘information they need’

The London Care Record includes details about any conditions which a person has, their test results, medicines, allergies, plans for their care and other useful information such as hospital discharge summaries.

It is currently used over two million times a month by over 100,000 health and care staff across London and some neighbouring areas.

Only staff involved in a person’s care are allowed to access the information.

Securely sharing patient information is important because both CLCH (Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust) and CNWL provide community health services to large parts of London and neighbouring areas including Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes. ➔ [More](#)

“The midwife stayed right with us!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ The Expert Patient Programme

Harrow Council writes “Living with a long-term health condition can be tough. Caring for someone with a health condition can sometimes mean you forget to care for yourself.

Public Health Harrow wants to support our residents who are facing these challenges.

We run free, simple workshops where you will learn how to do the things that you want to do, build your confidence and motivation, better manage your health condition and have a healthier, better quality of life.



Supporting people to be ‘expert patients’

Who can attend? Anyone who lives in Harrow or works for Harrow Council, aged 18 and over who is living with a long-term health condition. The programme is also available to carers of people with long-term conditions.

Do you need to have a specific health condition? No. The course is suitable for any long-term physical health condition or mild to moderate mental health condition.

How long is the course, and where will it be? You will attend a small group workshop once a week for six weeks. Each workshop is 2.5 hours long which includes 20 minutes of break-time. Courses are either in-person at a community venue or virtual via a small group video call.”

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

“A lack of support after discharge.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ London HIV Prevention Programme - Survey

PHAST, on behalf of Do it London, is conducting a survey to better understand the HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) prevention needs, knowledge, and attitudes of Black Londoners. If you identify as Black African, Black Caribbean, or Black British, are over 16, and live, work, or study in London, we want to hear from you!



Your views could make a difference

Prevention services are vital for all communities. As we continue to tackle the challenges around HIV prevention, it's essential that services are tailored to the unique needs of different groups.

“The welfare of carers is very important!”

Join us today and have your say!

Black communities are disproportionately affected by HIV, and it's crucial that our services reflect the diversity of experiences, attitudes, and cultural contexts within the Black community.

By taking part, you are helping to ensure that HIV prevention services across London are effective and meet the needs of the Black community. We value the perspectives of Black Londoners from all backgrounds—different faiths, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and cultures.

Your views will help us create services that are inclusive and reflective of the variety of lived experiences within the Black community.

The survey closes on 9th February 2025. [➔ More](#)

➤ Introducing Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels UK writes "We are a research team based at the University of Bristol.

We aim to raise awareness of Meals on Wheels and provide support to those wishing to access services.



Delicious meals, and much more!

Meals on Wheels is about much more than a meal. Safety and wellbeing, reduced isolation and independence are just some of the many benefits on offer.

The national website has a wealth of information and resources relating to Meals on Wheels, which we invite you to explore free of charge. It features a new UK-wide map." [➤ More](#)

“Tried the NHS App and it did the trick!”

Join us today and have your say!

➤ Pharmacies - Festive Opening Times

The local NHS writes "Bank Holidays can affect the opening hours of local pharmacies.

We have produced a document, detailing the opening hours for pharmacies in North West London, as well as other London boroughs, which have been asked to open over the Christmas and New Year Bank Holiday days.

There may be additional pharmacies opening which are not listed. If the pharmacy you would like to visit is not listed, then you can check their opening hours by searching at www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy or by calling NHS 111." [➤ More](#)

➤ Introducing Carer Champions

Harrow Council writes "One in seven people combine work with caring for a loved one. Many of them don't know where to turn to for help.

As a Carer Champion, you are a link between London Borough of Harrow Council, charities, voluntary organisations, emergency services, unpaid carers, health representatives and others.

You will raise awareness of unpaid carers across the Harrow community. You will help unpaid carers who are looking for support to find the services and support available across Harrow.



Scan the QR code, to find out more

What's involved? You may be invited to attend carer update meetings. You could be part of conversations to further enhance the services and support available for unpaid carers.

You may be able to share carer related information on your web pages, social media or by email, and help to publicise high profile national awareness campaigns such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.

You may come up with ideas for events and activities across the community where unpaid carers will be recognised and celebrated in all they do.

It's a great opportunity to meet new colleagues, develop your organisational skills, get creative and make a real difference to unpaid carers' lives."

To find out more, scan the QR code or get in touch:

[✉ carer.champions@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:carer.champions@harrow.gov.uk)

“Fast service today at radiography!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ What is Pension Credit?

Pension Credit is a means-tested benefit for people over State Pension age who have a low income. It comes in 2 parts - Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit. It's separate from your State Pension.

Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income to a guaranteed minimum level. Savings Credit is extra money if you've got some savings or if your income is higher than the basic State Pension.

By claiming Pension Credit, you might become eligible for other benefits too, such as help with health and housing costs



Are you eligible for Pension Credit?

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

Latest Newsletters

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

News Summary

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- ➔ The latest news from Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ The latest from NHS North West London ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS patient describes new eye cancer treatment as "best early Christmas present" ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Thousands of cancers caught early through NHS lung checks ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Less than three weeks left to book NHS COVID-19 and flu vaccinations online ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Councils to receive delayed £22.6m in adult social care innovation funding ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS makes fresh uptake appeal as five million women not up to date with cervical screening ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Assisted dying: social work role proposed to safeguard those going through process ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ Providers to cut care and jobs on back of Budget, finds survey ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ Bill to overhaul 'outdated' Mental Health Act introduced ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Millions of patients benefitting from improved care as new NHS IT software rolled out ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ £600m boost for social care next year announced in Budget ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS launches search for 150,000 volunteers to help transform cancer treatment ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Almost one in ten children obese in first year of school ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS rolls out 'stop-smoking' pill to help tens of thousands quit ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ New iPhone device to help rule out throat cancer ➔ [More](#)

WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL PHARMACIES.

Answer this quick survey to let us know about how you use your local pharmacy and help shape future improvements to pharmacy services in your area.

To access the survey type this link into your internet browser:
<https://forms.office.com/e/T3CLNc3tEu>



Or scan this QR code to access the survey

