

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: At Headstone Manor and Museum

In this Issue!

Healthwatch Harrow Update!	2
Learning Disability and Autism Forum What Does the Integrated Care System Do?	3
Getting 'Heart to Heart' Advice Cancer: Women 'Not Acting' on 'Red Line' Symptoms	4
We Need to Improve Access to Primary Care	5
Healthwatch England on Barriers to Pharmacy Access	6
Fast-Track Pharmacy for Maternity Mums Orthopaedic Surgical Centre Opens	7

... plus more!

➔ Your Hospital, Your Health - 4th September

Join us on 4th September 2024, 1.30pm - 4.00pm at Harrow Baptist Church (College Road, HA1 1BA) for our latest forum. This time, the event is about hospitals and as usual there will be an opportunity to share your views, and to speak with professionals. Register online or contact the office. [➔ More](#)

➔ Citizen's Forum - Learning About Cancer

Recently, we had the opportunity to attend the Citizen's Forum for Harrow residents where we learned about screening for bowel and breast cancer. It was an in-person event held at St Peter's Church in West Harrow organised by the Engagement and Equalities team of NHS Northwest London.



It's important to get screened for cancer

It was interesting to learn that by the end of the year the aim is to invite all people over 50 to be tested every two years for bowel cancer. In addition within Harrow 70% of people diagnosed with bowel cancer did not get their screening done.

With regards to breast cancer, women between 50 and 70 are invited for screening every 3 years and appointment times have been extended to include evenings and weekends.

There are family history clinics, also run for younger women. Harrow has an uptake of 60% of screenings. Later this year in addition to Kenton and Edgware, it is planned that there will be screening at Northwick Park Hospital.

“Waiting months to see a dentist.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Your Experience of Local GP Services

In the last 12 months, we have examined the stories of 1,341 patients, from surgeries across Harrow.

When comparing this year with last, we find that general satisfaction has improved noticeably by 9%. The vast majority of people continue to receive good quality, compassionate treatment and nursing care, with most feeling supported and involved.



We hear that telephone access can be difficult

On service access, feedback is more mixed. We have noticed that more patients are using online systems and the majority of feedback (64%) is positive, with accounts of effective booking given.

A patient says 'I was worried about my daughter so contacted the surgery. Not only did they respond to my online request within an hour, I had a face-to-face appointment soon after and the GP prescribed some medicine. The service was there when we needed it and everyone has been fantastic!'

That said, those preferring telephone booking have not noticed any improvement over the year - with complaints rising marginally by 1%. In our recent GP Access Report, we found that just 58% of respondents were usually able to make telephone contact within 10 minutes.

We heard from a patient, who says 'It took several attempts to get through and when I did, I waited for 45 minutes - only to be cut off! Very frustrating as I can only book by phone.'

Your Experience of Telephone Access?

Tell us about your experiences of contacting your GP practice by phone. All views are important.

We particularly would like to hear from patients who, for whatever reason, rely on phone contact.

➔ Learning Disability and Autism Forum

During Learning Disability Week (17th - 23rd June) Community Connex organised a forum on 18th June to help inform carers and clients about healthy eating.



18th June, a live cookery demonstration

Around 75 people attended, and learned about which foods are healthy, food labelling, and got ideas to support healthy eating habits. The event even included a cookery demonstration from Community Kitchen.

Healthwatch Harrow supported the event as eating healthily leads to a healthier lifestyle which means that we will have fewer people attending our hospitals and visiting GPs with health issues.

“A lack of information in the clinic letter.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Get Help, to Make an NHS Complaint

Advocacy 1st writes "If you are unhappy with the service you have received from the NHS, an advocate can help you to make a complaint.

Our advocates are independent from the NHS and provide a free, confidential service to help you with the complaints process. Our advocates will listen to you, help you to understand the complaints process, explore the options available to you, support you with the complaints letter and support you at any meetings about your complaint". To find out more:

☎ 0203 948 0597

✉ advocacy@communityconnex.co.uk

➔ What Does the Integrated Care System Do?

The Integrated Care System (ICS) brings together all organisations in the planning and delivery of health and care services, including local authorities (boroughs/councils), NHS Trusts (acute hospitals, mental health providers, community care providers), GP practices (increasingly working together as primary care networks or PCNs), the voluntary sector and universities within our eight regional boroughs.



Services work best, when in partnership

The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) brings together the eight local authorities and leaders from the NHS.

There is a 'high level' strategy to:

- Improve outcomes in population health and tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access.
- Enhance productivity and value for money.
- Support social and economic development.

Members of the ICP are voting members of the NHS Integrated Care Board plus one member from each local authority.

Dr Penny Dash and Cllr Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Westminster Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Adults and Public Health, are joint chairs.

Dr Dash says 'I am confident communities will see our efforts make meaningful differences in the way that health and care is delivered in your area.' Find out more in the full article. [➔ More](#)

“My pharmacist had the answers!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Getting 'Heart to Heart' Advice

MyHealth London has launched a campaign to help people with or at risk of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) live their lives to the full. CVD is a general term for conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels like heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure.



Register your account and get advice!

Anyone over 18 who has been diagnosed with CVD or has a risk factor of hypertension or atrial fibrillation can sign up for a MyHealth London account. You will be able to access various programmes and learning as well as view your personalised health dashboard where you can check your blood pressure and other heart-related biometrics, cholesterol tests and results and appointments. Account holders can also sign up for various email campaigns. ➔ [More](#)

“Home adaptations have really helped.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Parent & Carer Workshops for ADHD and Autism

The Centre for ADHD & Autism Support writes "We're thrilled to announce that we are currently hosting workshops tailored for parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people. These sessions are designed to provide valuable insights, support and resources.

Each workshop features exciting speakers who bring expertise and firsthand experience to the table, ensuring enriching and informative discussions. To stay updated and be the first to know about upcoming workshops, visit the website." ➔ [More](#)

➔ Cancer: Women 'Not Acting' on Symptoms

Charity Eve Appeal writes "Abnormal bleeding is a very literal 'red-flag' for three out of the five gynae cancers - womb, cervical and vaginal. Yet our Get Lippy survey (YouGov, April 2024) found that although abnormal bleeding might be easy to spot, too few women would act on their symptoms and get bleeding checked.

Less than half of the women we surveyed would get bleeding after the menopause or between their periods immediately checked by a doctor (44%). Only one third of women also would go to the doctor if they experienced pain during sex (35%) and under half (47%) would call their doctor if they bled during or after sex - often one of the first tell-tale signs of cervical and vaginal cancer.



Encouraging women to 'act fast'

Between them, womb, cervical and vaginal cancer affect around 13,150 women and people with gynae organs each year in the UK, and like with most cancers, detecting them early can make all the difference in giving women the best possible chance of successful treatment.

Abnormal bleeding is often the first symptom to arise with these cancers, and getting it checked out can help you either get your mind put at rest and your symptoms eased, or if you do have a cancer, get started on the treatment pathway as soon as possible.

It really is important to act fast once you have spotted red!" ➔ [More](#)

“I can't go shopping without support.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ We Need to Improve Access to Primary Care

The local NHS writes “NHS North West London is working with primary care networks and GPs to develop proposals to improve access in their area. Over the next few months, all of our primary care networks will be expected to work with their patients, residents, communities and stakeholders to consider how well access is working and develop proposals to improve it.

Access to general practice is the issue most raised with NHS North West London by local residents - and the ICB (Integrated Care Board) has published two key reports setting out the concerns patients are raising and the good practice data which underpins its approach to improving access.



Some patients have avoided making appointments

Over the last 18 months, NHS North West London’s outreach engagement team has spoken with 20-60 community groups a month across our eight boroughs, asking what matters to them.

“Staff need awareness of different cultures.”

Join us today and have your say!

We have also held online conversations with our 3,800-strong Citizens’ Panel and via the Next Door platform, where our posts are opened by up to 20,000 local people.

Feedback from residents is published in our insight reports. A report summarising the feedback specific to access to primary care has now been published. The most consistent point raised is that it is difficult to get a GP appointment and people feel they are waiting too long.

We also know from the national GP Patient Survey (GPPS) results that satisfaction with access to primary care has declined over the last year - for example:

49.8% said they found it easy to get through to someone on the phone at their GP practice (52.7% in 2022, down from 67.6% in 2021). This result is at its lowest for the eleven-year period we can measure (80.8% in 2012).



Access is the ‘most raised’ issue by residents

Over half (54.4%) reported a good experience of making an appointment, down from 56.2% in 2022 and now at the lowest level for six years (68.6% in 2018).

Most patients (86.2%) needed an appointment in the last 12 months. Of those, 27.9% said that they avoided making an appointment because it was too difficult, up from 26.5% in 2022 and compared with 11.1% in 2021.” ➔ [More](#)

➔ Health Visiting & School Nursing Survey

Harrow Council's Public Health Team is reviewing the Harrow 0-19 health visiting and school nursing service offer and would like to hear about your experience of the service.

Please complete the survey if you work directly with the service, or you have feedback from parents or carers who use the service (this survey is not for young people as personal data is collected). ➔ [More](#)

“The midwife was right there for us.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Barriers to Pharmacy Access

Healthwatch England writes “Our latest report explores the current state of pharmacy services and offers actions for healthcare leaders and the wider sector. The report dives into people’s experiences of and attitudes towards pharmacy services at the outset of Pharmacy First.



Community pharmacies are widely used

It outlines opportunities for community pharmacies and the challenges the sector is facing as the role of pharmacists continues to expand. It also presents a comprehensive list of recommendations for the government, NHS England, Integrated Care Boards, the pharmacy sector, as well as local Healthwatch.

Drawing on the poll's results and the interviews, the report concludes that community pharmacies are very widely used, with 72% of people having used one in the past three months.

Online pharmacies are much less used, with 18% using one in the past three months. 54% of people who have used an online pharmacy at some point said they would be likely to do so again.

People value the accessibility of community pharmacies, both in terms of the ease of getting to one and the speed of being seen once there.

Pharmacy First faces some challenges. A small proportion of the population is less open to going to a pharmacy rather than a GP. This is due to their personal preference, while in some cases, due to a lack of awareness of the services pharmacies offer.

“They treat symptoms, not the root problem.”

Join us today and have your say!

More broadly, medicines shortages continue to affect patients. Almost one in four, 24%, have experienced shortages when trying to get medicine, and 42% have experienced problems getting medicine in general. This has led to patients having to play ‘pharmacy bingo’, going from one pharmacy to another to find the medication they need.

Closures are affecting patients’ access to pharmacy services. As well as pharmacies permanently closing, temporary closures are causing frustration. There is currently little transparency on temporary closures, nor information given to local residents when temporary closures occur.



Shortages ‘continue to affect patients’

Although 90% of prescriptions in England are dispensed free of charge, the cost-of-living crisis impacts pharmacy usage, with five per cent of people saying they have avoided taking up one or more NHS prescriptions because of the price.

“The phone is engaged constantly!”

Join us today and have your say!

The successful rollout of Pharmacy First will rely on addressing existing challenges facing pharmacy teams.

It will also be important that patients know about the scheme, can access their local pharmacy, and are confident in the support pharmacies offer.” ➔ [More](#)

Your Views on Community Pharmacies?

If you have any views or experiences of community pharmacies, good or bad, contact Healthwatch Harrow in confidence. All experiences matter!

➔ Fast-Track Pharmacy for Mums

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWT) writes “The pharmacy team at Northwick Park Hospital is helping mothers and their newborns get home quicker by setting up a ‘satellite’ pharmacy in the maternity unit.

The initiative has helped cut discharge times from half-a-day to half-an-hour helping reduce transfer time between the delivery suite to postnatal ward as well as freeing up bed space.

The hospital’s main pharmacy deals with around 70-80 discharge prescriptions a day relying on porters to deliver them to the ward. Staff found frustrated mums were often leaving without prescribed medications including antibiotics, painkillers and laxatives, as well as blood pressure medicines and blood clot prevention medication.



Pharmacy technicians will visit the wards

The satellite pharmacy allows all new patients to be seen by a pharmacy technician who checks their allergies, medication history and any prescription items that they have brought into hospital with them.

High-risk patients are highlighted to the pharmacist who then makes sure there are no prescribing errors or concerns about medicines interacting with each other.

The initiative has been a huge success with the midwives requesting the same level of service at the weekend.” [➔ More](#)

“Coping at home after a stroke is hard.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Orthopaedic Surgical Centre Opens

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWT) writes “A new surgical centre that will perform around 4,000 orthopaedic procedures a year has officially opened at Central Middlesex Hospital.

The £9.4m North West London Elective Orthopaedic Centre will help reduce a waiting list of more than 16,000 patients.



The centre will reduce waiting times

The centre was officially opened by former secondary school teacher David Wootton who was the first patient to be treated at the centre at the start of its phased opening in December 2023.

“Our social worker was very informative.”

Join us today and have your say!

The centre is one of the first developments of the North West London Acute Provider Collaborative, a partnership of the four acute NHS trusts in the sector - London North West University Healthcare, Imperial College Healthcare, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, and The Hillingdon Hospitals.

The centre brings together most ‘high volume, low complexity’ bone and joint procedures, such as knee and hip replacements, in North West London.

This approach has been shown to improve quality and efficiency, enabling better care for more patients and freeing-up capacity in other hospitals to focus on more complex procedures where patients need more specialist care.”

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

➔ Employment Support from West London Works

The Shaw Trust writes "Is a physical or mental health condition making employment difficult?"

West London Works is a free service designed to help you find meaningful employment or to stay in your current role.



Overcome barriers to meaningful employment

The free service is available to anyone over 18 who is living, or registered with a GP, in Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, or Harrow, and is motivated to find or keep meaningful employment. Take advantage of the opportunity & sign up today!"

Speak to a GP, or get in touch:

☎ 0800 987 4088 or ✉ info@westlondonworks.co.uk

“I can have tea in my room when I like.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ The 'Love Your Liver' Campaign

9 in 10 cases of liver disease could be prevented. Love Your Liver is a national awareness campaign, by the British Liver Trust devoted to liver health.

Around 1 in 10 people receiving a free liver scan on our Love Your Liver roadshow have signs of possible liver damage. And 1 in 40 could already have advanced levels of liver scarring.

As part of the Love Your Liver campaign, they offer help and information for looking after your liver. The national roadshow and free online screener let you check on your liver health. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Young Men in Harrow 'Find their Rhythm'

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes "Recently, friends, family and staff gathered to celebrate the launch of 'Every Effort Counts' a new album written and recorded by young black men at Northwick Park Hospital.

The group, who have faced barriers to accessing mental health support services, were assisted by charity Finding Rhythm.

With support from a team led by Dr Shona Herron, CNWL Senior Clinical Psychologist, they also worked with music practitioners, record producers and jazz musicians.



Grabbing the mic, for mental health

Dr Shona Herron said "Finding Rhythms is a music-based project underpinned by Narrative Therapy that has been supporting young black men who have faced severe mental health difficulties in Harrow with huge successes.

Feedback has been excellent, with the men reporting feeling safe and understood in the group, as well as increasing in confidence and overall wellbeing.

An enormous thanks to everyone who has contributed to this project and made it possible. These men have thrived within this project!

The project has received funding to continue running until September for a third cohort, giving another 10 young men the opportunity to come together to share stories, and collaborate on an album." ➔ [More](#)

“Parking at the hospital is difficult.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Help with the Cost of Living

If you don't have enough money to live on, you might be able to get help to afford essentials like bills and food.

This includes the Household Support Fund and cost of living payments.

You should check if you can claim benefits - you might be able to do this even if you work, have savings or own a home.

Check the Citizen's Advice Bureau website, to see what help you could get.



What support could you get?

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

Latest Newsletters

- ➔ Harrow Council - Harrow People Newsletters ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Harrow Carers - Newsletter, Spring 2024 ➔ [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 continues to face record demand for services, new data shows ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Taskforce chairs announced ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS identifies over half a million more people at risk of type 2 diabetes in a Year ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ How parents with learning disabilities lack support before, during and after care proceedings ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Thousands of NHS patients to access trials of personalised cancer 'vaccines' ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Working with Gypsy and Traveller communities: tips for positive practice ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS England appoints first medical director for mental health and neurodiversity ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS patients to access world-leading laser beam surgery to prevent epileptic seizures ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Millions more GP appointments in April than before pandemic ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ First ever life-saving treatment for rare heart condition available on the NHS ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS announces 143 hospitals to roll out 'Martha's Rule' in next step in major initiative ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ How prioritisation tool can help councils tackle their DoLS backlogs ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS and NICE plan to adopt innovative tech quicker ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ DHSC to publish every council's waiting times for adult social care assessments and services ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Publication of the infected blood inquiry final report ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Government proposes disability benefits overhaul in face of 'spiralling' caseload and costs ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS plan to cut avoidable admissions to further boost efforts to reduce waiting times ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Over half of England's care home residents get NHS spring covid jab in four weeks ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS expands 'soup and shake' diets to thousands more patients with type 2 diabetes ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ App messaging saved NHS more than £1 million in last year ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS launches Dentist Recruitment Scheme ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ How effective are case reviews in improving safeguarding practice? ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS launches tool to improve bowel cancer screening for people with sight loss ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Assistive technology and dementia: practice tips ➔ [More](#)



Healthwatch Harrow Forum

Your hospital Your health



Wednesday 4 September 2024
1.30pm – 4pm



Harrow Baptist Church
College Rd, Harrow HA1 1BA

If you have any questions, please
email us:

info@healthwatchharrow.co.uk

or call us on 0203 432 2889



Scan me to register

Click here to book your place
at the forum.



www.healthwatchharrow.co.uk