

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: Looking onto Wembley

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... plus more!

➔ Our New Report on GP Access in Harrow

During March - May 2025, 59 local people completed our survey on GP access.

What did we find out? Firstly, booking appointments is a challenge. A marginal majority of respondents (54%) find it 'easy' to book, while a significant 46% do not.



We hear of congestion at 8am and 2pm

Telephone Booking: 42% of respondents book through the phone and when calling, just 60% are usually able to make contact within 10 minutes.

While some patients have benefitted from new callback systems, lines are typically congested at peak morning (8am) and afternoon (2pm) times.

Online Booking: Around half of respondents (49%) usually book their appointments online. As with phone systems, we hear that you need to log in at peak times, in order to successfully book.

One patient says "PATCHS works well when you can access it but there is only a very small window at 8am and 2pm."

Another says "PATCHS is open for such a short window. It can be frustrating when you have to wait for next day to book an appointment."

On functionality, three quarters of respondents (73%) are able to find the form easily, while a similar number (75%) find it easy to complete. Once submitted, response times are reportedly good.

This story continues on Page 5.

“Our social worker is very informative.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Introducing Sandy Bowman

Recently we appointed Sandy Bowman as Outreach Coordinator (a new role).

Sandy has many years of local experience, engaging with residents, families, carers and communities. She has joined us from Community Connex (formerly Harrow Mencap), a leading local charity.

Sandy says "I enjoy meeting people, listening to their stories and seeing how I can help them. I'm looking forward to this new challenge".



Sandy (right) with Allie Brice (Harrow Council)

You can contact Sandy, Tuesday to Thursday:

☎ 07341 424 704

✉ sandy.bowman@healthwatchharrow.co.uk

“Physiotherapy helps me stay independent.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Out and About in Harrow!

During Dementia Awareness Week (19th - 25th May) we attended the Harrow Citizen's Forum.

At the event (20th May) we looked at how we can better support residents affected by dementia, while also exploring broader issues impacting disabled residents, unpaid caregivers, pensioners and people living with long-term conditions.

There was a talk by Kerstin Williams, Dementia Advisor at Harrow Carers. Both caring and dementia will feature in our ongoing local work.

➡ Volunteers' Week 2025

Volunteers' Week, this year from Monday 2nd to Sunday 8th of June is a national initiative to celebrate and recognise the contributions of volunteers.

Healthwatch Harrow started Volunteers' Week with a successful day at Harrow Jobs and Volunteer Fair on Thursday 29th May.



Our volunteer Mary, at a Healthwatch stall

Our Outreach Coordinator, Sandy, was there alongside one of our volunteers, Mary. The event was held at Harrow College and was extremely well attended with around 50 stalls and over 600 people.

Sandy explains why we value volunteers at Healthwatch Harrow: "The positivity that volunteers bring to our organisation is priceless. We love seeing our volunteers learning new work skills and gaining confidence, and making friends while helping others. We came away from the event with quite a number of potential new volunteers which is really positive."

Find out more about volunteering, online. ➡ [More](#)

"I'd like to see my own GP."

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Carers Week 2025

This year the theme of Carers Week (9th - 15th June) was 'Caring about Equality'. The national awareness week championed unpaid carers. Volunteers Mary and Hira from Healthwatch Harrow attended an information event organised by Harrow Carers. The aim of the event on 13th June was to empower carers with knowledge, resources and community support.

➡ Harrow Weight Management Programme

Harrow Council writes "Being overweight or obese is a high-risk factor for developing serious health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

When BMI is over 25, the risk of these obesity-related illnesses increases significantly.

Maintaining a healthy weight can help prevent these conditions and support long-term wellbeing.

To help residents achieve a healthier weight, Harrow Council is working with Slimming World to offer a FREE 12-week Weight Management Course.



Supporting a healthier you!

This programme is open to adults aged 18 and over with a BMI over 27.5 who either live in Harrow or are registered with a Harrow GP.

Slimming World focuses on sustainable lifestyle changes through expert guidance on healthy eating, encouragement to move more, and weekly group support. It offers a practical, community-based solution to help individuals lose weight and build healthier habits."

To check if you're eligible and register for the programme, call 01773 546169 or visit the Harrow Weight Management Programme. ➡ [More](#)

You can calculate your BMI online (you should not use this tool to diagnose any symptoms). ➡ [More](#)

"The dentist explained all the costs."

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Local Support for Dementia

A diagnosis of dementia may create very mixed emotions. Accepting it and planning are key to living well with dementia, and getting help from health and social care workers can help.

Harrow Memory Services can provide information about your type of dementia and how it will affect you, and can highlight any tests, treatments, or therapies that might help.

The service also connects you with local professionals and support groups.

Any information should be explained to you and given to you in writing. You can ask for it to be provided in a format that you find easy to understand.



Connecting you with local support

Dementia hubs also offer support. They provide a local service where you can meet others with dementia. You can also meet with their carers. To enquire about booking a place, call 020 8736 6400.

If you are worried about your memory, make an appointment to see your GP. The earlier you get help, the sooner you can get advice and support.

Your GP will listen to your concerns. They may arrange for further tests. You may be referred to the Memory Assessment service.

The Harrow Council website has a comprehensive summary of support - including links to local and national advice and services. ➡ [More](#)

“I wish mum’s home was a little closer.”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Perinatal Mental Health Team

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes “The Brent and Harrow Perinatal Mental Health team supports women with their mental and emotional wellbeing during pregnancy and up to two years after having a baby.

This specialist care is available wherever suits you best, such as close to the maternity unit of your choice, your home or in Family Hubs.



The service gives you local options

You can access this service even if you choose to deliver your baby at a different hospital from Northwick Park, as long as you are a resident or you are registered with a GP in Brent or Harrow. If you aren’t based in these areas we also offer support across other London boroughs.

The team works in partnership with other local services”. Find out more online. ➡ [More](#)

“NHS 111 were fast and efficient.”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Mental Health Support Group for Carers

Harrow Carers writes “Do you care for a loved one with a mental health problem? Take a break from your caring responsibilities and join us for a warm welcome in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

Join us at Harrow Carers Centre (376 Pinner Road) every 2nd & 4th Friday of the month, 1.30pm to 3pm.”

☎ 020 8868 5224 or ✉ admin@harrowcarers.org

➔ Mind in Harrow - Stepping Stones Courses

Mind in Harrow writes "Our Stepping Stones classes have been running for 25 years. We have seen fantastic success in the duration of the project.

Learners have said that the classes have supported them with their mental wellbeing, helped them to become fitter, make friends and feel less isolated and helped them to build confidence.



Learners feel more confident, and connected

Our current classes are based on improved physical and mental wellbeing as well as building community connection. All of our classes are taught by expert tutors trained in mental health.

They have been tremendous in creating welcoming and supporting environments for all learners". To find out more:

☎ 07849 091 139

✉ steppingstones@mindinharrow.org.uk

➔ Survey on Mental Health Crisis Care Services

This survey is specifically intended for individuals who have accessed crisis care services through the NHS 111 'select mental health option' service.

Its purpose is to gather feedback on your experience and the support you have received.

The survey closes on 15th July 2025. ➔ [More](#)

"It's good talk about mental health."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ GP Access Report (Continued from Page 2)

In-Person Booking: A sizeable minority of patients (39%) are not able to book their appointment at the practice itself. At some practices, patients say "it is no longer part of the process."

Consultations: On booking, 42% of respondents have not been offered a choice of consultation method (in-person, telephone, video).

A clear majority of respondents (86%) have experienced a remote appointment. Two thirds (65%) feel that remote consultations have fully met their needs, while a significant minority (35%) feel they have not.

Just 36% of respondents are able to see a preferred GP or nurse. Concerns are expressed about continuity.



Having a named GP can 'make a difference'

We compared findings with a very similar survey, conducted the year before.

What has improved, since 2024? Responses suggest that compared with last year, patients find it marginally easier to book appointments, and feel better-respected by staff, when booking.

There is now greater choice of consultation method (remote or in-person) and remote consultations are considered marginally more effective - compared with last year.

What has deteriorated? Compared with last year, patients are less likely to be called at the expected time, or to see their preferred GP or Nurse.

What else has changed? We note that fewer patients are seen remotely, this might suggest that more in-person appointments have become available. Use of phones to book appointments has not declined - it has actually increased marginally (by 2%). ➔ [More](#)

➔ The Impact of Inaccurate NHS Patient Records

Healthwatch England writes "The NHS is investing resources and funding into making patient records paperless and improving patient information sharing between services.

However, coroners have repeatedly issued warnings about inadequate information sharing in the NHS, with some patients dying because clinicians could not access important details about their needs. But is the information in patient records correct in the first place?

Earlier this year, we reviewed our recent feedback on patient records and found people reporting alarming issues with medical records.



Errors in records are not uncommon

We found that nearly one in four (23%) adults have noticed inaccuracies or missing details in their medical records before.

It is unclear how many of these individuals have since been able to correct their records, though patient feedback indicates that correcting records can be a long and/or difficult process.

We asked the people affected what inaccuracies they had noticed. In most cases, people said they had noticed missing information, though some said their records contained incorrect information."

Read more in the full article, which contains advice and also service recommendations. ➔ [More](#)

"I can't go shopping without support."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ How Accessible is Your Healthcare?

Healthwatch England writes "People who have a sensory impairment or a learning disability continue to face difficulty communicating with services. Our recent analysis has found that:



In-person appointments 'can be crucial'

Face-to-face appointments are crucial for patients who have a hearing impairment. However, many people said this is a challenge. For instance, one person was told that they needed to undergo additional tests to "prove" they had hearing loss despite having a diagnosed hearing condition before being able to book a face-to-face appointment.

Some with a visual impairment reported that online systems were difficult to use or incompatible with communication software (such as screen readers).

"Parking at the hospital can be difficult."

Join us today and have your say!

People continue to receive information from health services in inaccessible or inappropriate formats. For instance, people with visual impairments told us of receiving hard copy letters instead of digital formats, and people with hearing impairments described receiving phone calls rather than emails or a relay service.

Some patients struggled to get to new facilities due to not receiving prior information about the need to navigate busy roads, poorly marked pedestrian crossings, and unfamiliar layouts. This resulted in people being late to appointments and putting them in potentially unsafe situations." ➔ [More](#)

➡ Introducing 'Project Search'

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) writes "MP Stephen Timms, Minister of State for the Department of Work and Pensions visited Northwick Park Hospital to see the innovative work of a project that helps train & employ young people.

Project Search helps students with learning disabilities and autism gain practical workplace experience with the NHS.



Getting 'practical workplace experience'

The initiative has a 70% success rate in finding graduates paid employment compared to the national average of 7%.

The graduates work in areas including outpatients, pharmacy, medical equipment library, multi professional clinical education, patient dining, portering, post room and domestic stores.

"I was involved in dad's care planning."

Join us today and have your say!

The hospital welcomed its first set of interns in 2017 and takes on up to 12 students every September for a period of nine months. Pippa Nightingale, CEO of LNWH Trust, said 'We know statistically that this group of people struggle to find employment and we hope our actions encourage more employers to follow suit and give these young people a chance.'

Project Search is supported by partners including Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge College, Medirest, Kaleidoscope, West London Alliance and Harrow Council". Read more in the full article. ➡ [More](#)

➡ Mental Health Support for Hospitals

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) writes "A dedicated mental health team is helping ease pressure on patients and staff at Ealing and Northwick Park hospitals.

The Enhanced Observations Team, which includes mental health nurses and healthcare assistants, responds to referrals made anywhere in the hospitals.

The team was established in 2023 in response to the growing number of patients presenting with mental as well physical conditions.

Deborah Okey, Senior Mental Health Nurse, said 'The majority of nurses are trained to look after a patient's physical, not mental, well-being.



Providing support - across the hospital

This can take up a lot of their time if an individual needs a lot of attention which is where we come in, assess the patient and make a recommendation and provide enhanced observation and support.

We train our healthcare assistants to manage the less complex cases while more complex cases are managed by experienced mental health nurses.'

Referrals can be made via email. There is a referral template which all the wards have access to.

The team is also available to staff if they feel they need support." ➡ [More](#)

"We need constant and reliable information."

Join us today and have your say!

➡ World Sickle Cell Day 2025

Thursday 19th June was World Sickle Cell Day, and this year's theme highlighted creativity & visibility, encouraging people to raise awareness through art, music, dance or storytelling.

What is Sickle Cell? It is a disorder of the haemoglobin in red blood cells. Haemoglobin is the substance that is responsible for the colour of the cell and for carrying oxygen around the body.

People with sickle cell disorder are born with the condition, it is not contagious. It can only be inherited from both parents each having passed on the gene for sickle cell.



'Telling it Loud' on 19th June

The main symptoms of sickle cell disorder are anaemia and episodes of severe pain. The pain occurs when the cells change shape after oxygen has been released. The red blood cells then stick together, causing blockages in the small blood vessels.

Even if you don't have sickle cell, you can help by giving blood. Many with the condition need regular transfusions, especially blood with the Ro subtype, which is more common in Black African or Caribbean communities and is in short supply.

The Sickle Cell Society and NHS Blood and Transplant urge more people, especially from these backgrounds, to donate. One donation can be life-saving. It's safe, quick and helps people live healthier lives. Visit sicklecellsociety.org/blooddonation or blood.co.uk to learn more and book an appointment. You can also find out more at the Sickle Cell Society. ➡ [More](#)

“Online prescriptions save time!”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Satellite Pharmacies 'Improve Discharge Times'

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) writes “Remote 'satellite' pharmacies are helping improve discharge times in local hospitals.



Getting prescriptions to patients 'faster'

The pharmacies, staffed by Medicines Management Pharmacy Technicians and assistants, dispense prescriptions on wards in as little as 25 minutes.

They replace the need for nurses or porters having to collect medicines from the main pharmacy which often meant longer delays for patients.

To date, four satellites are operational at Northwick Park, two in Ealing and one at Central Middlesex.

“Receptionists do a difficult job.”

Join us today and have your say!

Northwick Park has three satellite pharmacies covering the acute wards, medical wards (James and Jenner), maternity wards as well as a mobile trolley-based dispensing service covering the stroke ward.

Malcolm Smith, Principal Pharmacy Technician, said ‘The satellites help ease pressure on our busy main pharmacies as well as helping free up much needed bed space by getting discharge medications to patients faster.

It also means greater interaction between the pharmacy team and other clinical staff so they have a better understanding of what one another do.’” Find out more in the full article. ➡ [More](#)

➤ Help Shape the Future of Harrow's Parks

Harrow Council writes "Parks and green spaces are a vital part of life in Harrow – places where families spend time together, children play, and communities connect.



Our parks are a great local asset

We want to ensure everyone in Harrow can enjoy safe, clean, and welcoming green spaces close to home. And that's why as part of our ambition to restore pride in Harrow and ensure our borough is clean and safe, we're investing over £6 million in our parks over the next three years.

"The automated callback is really good!"

Join us today and have your say!

We are making our parks cleaner and more welcoming with the introduction of large litter bins in 12 parks, helping to reduce waste and create a better environment for all users.

In addition, we are working to boost the number of Green Flag-awarded parks in Harrow, with a flagship target of achieving nine Green Flag accreditations – the highest number in Harrow's history.

Residents are encouraged to read the draft strategy and complete a short survey via the Council's consultation platform, MyHarrow Talk.

All feedback will be reviewed by council officers and the strategy steering group to ensure the final version reflects the community's shared vision for Harrow's parks and open spaces."

The consultation closes on 14th July 2025. ➤ [More](#)

➤ About Fibromyalgia

Local resident and blogger Sonal Dave raises awareness about Fibromyalgia.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that causes widespread pain, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and often a mix of other symptoms like brain fog and mood disorders.

Sonal writes "When you live with Fibromyalgia, as I do, your body is already in a heightened state of sensitivity. Everything from physical touch to stress can feel more intense, challenging even the simplest daily activities.

So, when living with Fibromyalgia and having surgery becomes a necessary part of your medical journey, it can feel overwhelming. It took over my life the months before and after."



A range of support is available

Sonal highlights some useful information, guidance and support. Visit the official NHS website. ➤ [More](#)

Fibromyalgia Action UK, a leading national charity offers a helpline (0300 999 3333), information, support and advocacy. ➤ [More](#)

UK Fibromyalgia provides a range of resources, including a magazine, online forum, and Facebook group, to support people. ➤ [More](#)

Pain UK has an 'action initiative' providing medical information for professionals and offers support to patients and their families. ➤ [More](#)

"I wish the letter was more detailed."

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.

Most pharmacies can offer prescription medicine for some conditions, without you needing to see a GP, this is known as 'Pharmacy First'.



What can your pharmacist do for you?

Ask a pharmacist to find out what they can offer. You can also read more online. ➡ [More](#)

Latest Newsletters

- ➡ Harrow Council - Harrow People Newsletters ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Harrow Carers - Bi-Monthly Newsletters ➡ [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 waiting list hits two-year low as staff work to 'turn the tide' ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Millions to benefit from NHS robot drive ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ New ambulances and faster emergency care for patients next winter ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ NHS rolls out more personalised cervical screening for millions ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ £4bn a year more available for adult social care by 2028-29 in spending review ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ GP practices improve access by embracing technology and increasing appointments ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ What will ending overseas recruitment mean for adult social care? ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ NHS first in world to roll out new 'trojan horse' therapy for blood cancer patients ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Specialist NHS clinics and technology help thousands of obese children to lose weight ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Thousands affected by contaminated blood scandal to get bespoke NHS psychological care ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Practice tips on engaging with parents with learning disabilities ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Volunteers support the NHS for 6 million hours this year ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ NHS first in world to roll out 'revolutionary' blood test for cancer patients ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ GP practices embrace technology to improve patient access and provide choice ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Millions receive help from NHS high street pharmacies ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Care leavers supported into NHS careers ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ NHS initiative helps thousands more tackle their diabetes risk ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Millions more patients can register with a GP at 'touch of a button' ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ 'Amazon-style' prescription tracking goes live in NHS App for millions of patients ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Public twice as likely to check bank balance regularly than for signs of cancer ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ New GP drive to find undiagnosed infected blood patients ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Skin cancer patients given fast-tracked access to 'revolutionary' cancer vaccine trial on NHS ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ NHS rolls out 5-minute 'super-jab' for 15 cancers ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ Targeted breast cancer treatment approved for routine NHS use ➡ [More](#)



Sickle cell disorder (SCD) is the most common genetic blood condition in the UK, affecting approximately 17,500 people.

TAKE ACTION

- Give Blood
- Consider clinical trials
- Understand what Sickle cell society offers

For local:

- Advice
- Antenatal Screening
- Counselling
- Outreach + monthly support groups

Contact Brent Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Centre:

020 8453 2050 / 2052
nlh-tr.sickle-thal@nhs.net



Scan for more information:

World Sickle cell day

To give blood



#worldsicklecellday