

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: Centenary Park, Stanmore

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... plus more!

➡ The Cost of Staying Well

On 15th September we hosted our latest forum, with the topic this time on the 'cost of staying well'.

Attended by around 40 residents and also healthcare professionals, it was an opportunity to hear about the increasing cost challenges - around areas such as over-the-counter medication, travelling to-and-from appointments, and hospital parking charges.

At the themed breakout sessions, both residents and professionals suggested solutions, based on their experiences and expertise. What did we hear?



Medication was one of the many topics

Dentists - those offering private treatment could be more transparent with prices, and costs within the sector could be more standardised.

Pharmacies - how about loyalty schemes to save money on prescriptions and over-the-counter medication. Also, generic alternatives should be offered more often.

Opticians - we wouldn't need to pay for new frames if lenses were fitted into old ones.

Hospital parking - charges should be the same at all London hospitals, with fees payable on exit.

Travelling to hospital - better lighting, along with improved signage, station access and bus shelters, would encourage people to use public transport.

Read more in the full report, available soon.

“My dentist explained the costs.”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Social Media - Volunteer Required!

We are looking for a volunteer to create social media posts to help us promote the work of Healthwatch Harrow. You will be comfortable using X, Facebook and Instagram.



Healthwatch works to improve services

What's involved? Reading our website to identify content that can be repurposed for social media posts; drafting posts that include CTAs (calls to action); brief descriptions based on our website content; and links to relevant content.

Ideally, you would be proficient in Canva to create post images and graphics aligned with Healthwatch branding.

How to apply? Simply get in touch:

☎ 020 3432 2889

✉ volunteer@healthwatchharrow.co.uk

“Difficult to park at the hospital.”

Join us today and have your say!

Long-standing volunteer Mary writes “I retired from the NHS over 10 years ago, and joined Healthwatch as a volunteer. It has been good, as it keeps me up-to-date with the development within the NHS - from both a service provider & service user perspective. I better understand the challenges and have gained very useful insight.”

More about volunteering...

We have a broad range of opportunities, visit the website to find out more. ➡ [More](#)

➔ Stoptober - Time to Stop Smoking?

Choosing to quit smoking is a great step. It can lead to a healthier and happier future for you and your family. Stopping smoking can feel challenging, but you do not have to do it alone. You'll get friendly, expert support to help you every step of the way, with no judgment.

What happens when you stop smoking? The moment you stop, your body begins to heal itself in amazing ways. In just 20 minutes, your heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal. After 8 hours, carbon monoxide levels in your blood decrease.



Is it time for a smoke-free future?

Then, after 48 hours, your senses of taste and smell begin to return. As weeks go by, your lungs start to clear. This makes breathing easier and gives you more energy for daily activities.

Thinking of stopping? you could get one-to-one sessions with a friendly, trained specialist, free nicotine replacement treatment (this could include patches, gums or medicines) and personalised health tips to help manage cravings. To find out more, visit the local website. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Patient Information Resources Translated

The Patients Association writes "With funding from GSK and Novartis, we've translated two of our factsheets - 'Knowing your rights and accessing support as a patient' and 'Getting the most out of your appointments' into Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Romanian and Urdu. View now online. ➔ [More](#)

"We need more disability awareness."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ NHS Public Involvement Survey

The local NHS writes "West and North London Integrated Care Board (ICB) is developing a new Public Involvement Framework for 2027-2030. The framework will set out how we work with residents, patients, carers, community groups and partner organisations to shape health and care services across West and North London.



Making it 'easier for people to share views'

We want to make it easier for people & communities to share their views, experiences and ideas so we can improve services, reduce inequalities and provide better care.

We'd like to hear your views on the draft principles, whether anything is missing, and what you think we will need to do differently."

The survey takes around 10 minutes to complete, and closes on 1st November. ➔ [More](#)

"I feel involved in my care planning."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Help to Shape Local Social Care

Harrow Council writes "Would you like to help improve Adult Social Care services in Harrow?

We are looking for residents, carers and community members to share their experiences and ideas through working groups, workshops, consultations, surveys and other engagement activities."

Visit the website to find out more. ➔ [More](#)

➔ What Are People Telling Us About CVD Care?

Healthwatch England writes “More than seven million adults in England (more than 1 in 10) are living with cardiovascular disease (CVD). This umbrella term covers several conditions that affect your heart health such as heart failure, coronary heart disease and strokes.



‘Communication gaps’ are widely reported

After cancer, CVD is the second most common cause of premature death – about 33,000 lives a year are lost early to it.

The risk of developing CVD differs depending on your characteristics and circumstances, but you are more likely to be affected if you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, chronic kidney disease, or if you are obese or smoke.

“As a carer I also need support.”

Join us today and have your say!

People living in deprived areas, men, and Black and South Asian ethnic groups also experience higher levels of cardiovascular diseases.

What are people saying about detection, treatment and monitoring of CVD? While many praised the NHS response during emergencies, we received more mixed feedback when it came to initial detection, routine monitoring, follow-up care and support to stay well.

The NHS Health Check offered to 40-74-year-olds, is important in identifying the ‘missing millions’ who are at risk of CVD. If invited, this experience can work well.

There can be cost barriers to monitoring blood pressure. People were told to purchase their own blood pressure monitors, including one patient who was refused a loan from the NHS to help buy one, and told to visit a pharmacy twice a day, even though the pharmacy did not offer the service.

Communication gaps left people feeling anxious. Some were concerned when they submitted monitor readings to their doctor but heard nothing back.

Emergency treatment works well, but care varies after the crisis passes. Once a heart attack or other serious issue was recognised, people often described quick, high-quality treatment.



Emergency treatment generally ‘works well’

However, experiences became much more variable after the immediate crisis had passed. Feedback about routine monitoring, medication reviews and follow-up care was much less consistent.

Delays, errors and poor coordination affect patient journeys. People told us about delays at nearly every stage of the care journey, from initial tests and specialist assessment, to medication advice, surgery and follow-up care.

One patient waited nine months for a scan. Another waited 22 weeks for a first cardiology appointment. We also heard about heart surgery cancellations, prescriptions not being processed, and side effects of medications not being addressed. Communication and administration errors added uncertainty.”

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

“Food on the ward has ticked my box!”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ The Importance of Vaccines in Pregnancy

Harrow Council (Public Health) writes “Vaccines in pregnancy help protect babies against different diseases as the protection you develop passes through the placenta to the baby.

This protection from birth is important as babies are more likely to be very ill and to need hospital care if they catch these diseases in their first weeks and months of life.

It is important to have your vaccines at the right time in every pregnancy to give you and your baby the best protection, but you can have your vaccines up until you give birth.



The vaccines are free, safe and effective

Pregnant women and young babies are at higher risk of becoming seriously ill if they catch flu. Getting vaccinated helps protect you and your baby during your pregnancy and continues to protect your baby after they are born.

These vaccines are offered free by the NHS and are thoroughly tested to assess how safe and effective they are.

Common side effects of vaccines don't usually last long and are mild, including an aching arm, feeling tired and a headache

Speak with your midwife, GP or trusted health professional for more information.”

You can also visit the NHS website. ➔ [More](#)

“Weekend opening helps as I work long hours.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Booking is Open for Flu Jabs

The NHS is urging millions of people to book their flu jab, as the health service starts winter preparations ‘earlier than ever’.

The national booking system is now open so eligible people can pre-book their flu vaccinations, which started on 1st September.



Are your loved ones protected?

The NHS wants to do everything it can to ease winter demand after back-to-back heatwaves have seen staff treat record numbers this summer.

A&E attendances hit a record 2.5 million in July – and staff experienced the 3 busiest months ever recorded between May and July in emergency departments.

“My pharmacist had the answers.”

Join us today and have your say!

Flu season usually peaks in December and January, so the NHS is starting vaccinations in autumn, to ensure those at risk are protected and fewer people are hospitalised.

Local NHS services will begin sending invites to the first cohort of people eligible – children and pregnant women – via their GP practice, NHS app or letter.

Eligible people will be able to get their vaccination from a variety of places in their local community, including their GP practices and participating high street pharmacies.

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

➡ Expansion of the 'Pharmacy First' Scheme

Patients can now get quicker, more convenient treatment for some 'everyday conditions' at hundreds of pharmacies in England from autumn, without needing to see their GP first.



Quicker treatment for 'everyday conditions'

People will be able to walk into their participating high street pharmacy and get on-the-spot treatment for acne, migraines, scabies, ear infections and rhinitis from participating pharmacies, helping make people's everyday lives easier.

The expansion of the Pharmacy First Scheme allows people to get care for certain common conditions from qualified pharmacists, meaning they can walk into a high street pharmacy at a time that fits with their everyday schedule rather than having to book an appointment with a GP in order to get treatment.

“My vaccine was fast and efficient.”

Join us today and have your say!

The move will also help to ease pressure on GPs and A&E departments ahead of what could be another record-breaking winter for the NHS, ensuring emergency services can focus on those who need them most while making sure people can easily and conveniently access care for common conditions.

NHS figures show there were more than 77,000 hospital admissions for diseases of the ear, 47,500 linked to migraines, 5,000 for vasomotor and allergic rhinitis, and 681 for scabies in 2024/25. Once fully rolled out, evidence suggests 2 to 3 million consultations for the 5 conditions could take place each year in community pharmacies. ➡ [More](#)

➡ Cancer Screening Centre Marks 20 Years!

St Marks writes “Our Bowel Cancer Screening Centre is celebrating 20 years of helping to save lives.

The centre has supported thousands of people across Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon and parts of Ealing identifying early signs of bowel cancer and helping patients access further investigation and treatment when needed.

Sarah Marshall, Clinical Manager, has been with the service since its launch in 2006 at Northwick Park Hospital and has seen it evolve dramatically over the past two decades.



'Over 40' procedures performed weekly

Sarah said ‘When we first opened, we had little dedicated space or equipment. I didn't even have a desk or chair and spent my first few months borrowing office space wherever I could find it. It was a very different service then.

Today, we're proud to have the only purpose-built bowel cancer screening centre in the country, following significant investment in the refurbishment and upgrade of our endoscopy and screening facilities’.

The service has grown substantially since its early days. In its first full year of operation in 2007 it sent out 41,871 home screening kits to people aged 60 to 69 and carried out 10 colonoscopies each week. This has increased to more than 162,000 kits a year, with up to 40 colonoscopies performed each week for patients aged 50 to 74 in 2026.” ➡ [More](#)

“Receptionists do a difficult job.”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Local Home Birth Service Resumes

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) writes “Our home birth service is now up and running again after a temporary interruption when our provider went into administration.

The resumption gives women and families across Brent, Ealing and Harrow greater choice over where they give birth.

The service has returned with a safe and sustainable model that includes 24-hour, seven-day cover, two midwives for each planned home birth, enhanced staff training, clear escalation and transfer procedures, and strengthened clinical oversight and governance.



Giving women and families a ‘greater choice’

A huge thank you to our maternity improvement group and all the staff who worked to get the service reinstated. It means we can again offer more personalised care while maintaining high standards of safety and quality.” ➡ [More](#)

➡ World Mental Health Day 2026

World Mental Health Day took place on 10th October and this year’s theme was on ‘lived experiences’, highlighting the importance of listening to people’s conversations and ensuring their voices can help create meaningful change.

Read more about this year’s campaign in the full article. ➡ [More](#)

“The text reminder was very handy.”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ A ‘Digital Doorway’ for A&E

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) writes “A ‘digital’ front door is delivering significant benefits for patients, staff and the wider organisation by helping create a faster, safer and more streamlined experience for people attending A&E at Northwick Park Hospital.



Patients can now ‘digitally check in’

Patient Check-In, developed by Streamwave, allows patients to use their phone to scan a QR code and digitally check-in.

They answer a short series of questions allowing them to register electronically on the hospital's computer system without queuing at reception.

Chris Nordstrom, an A&E consultant at Northwick Park who helped design Patient Check-In, said ‘Patients traditionally queue at reception and provide front-of-desk staff with details about why they’ve come to A&E which is then manually entered into a PC.

This whole process can often take an hour during peak times leaving patients frustrated and staff spending a huge amount of time on manual admin tasks.

Patients can now scan a QR code using their own mobile phone as soon as they arrive. They are guided through a straightforward registration and initial triage process, with the information entered electronically into our hospital systems.

This removes the need for many patients to queue at the reception desk and gives them a faster, smoother and more comfortable way to register.’

The registration process includes an initial clinical triage helping staff identify potentially unwell or higher-risk patients sooner.” ➡ [More](#)

➤ The Bigger Conversation Café!

Harrow Council writes "Our monthly conversation events are starting again. And they are bigger!

Do you need help with adult social care, being an unpaid carer, understanding benefits and support, or navigating services?



The new café is now bigger!

Do you need support for your own health and wellbeing?

Join us, and connect with people and organisations that can support you. Meet Adult Social Care, Citizens Advice and a wide range of local charities and community groups offering advice, guidance, practical help and opportunities to get involved in your community.

“My prescription costs are going up.”

Join us today and have your say!

Friendly, face-to-face support every week at:

St Peters Church
Tuesdays 10am to 1.30pm (Sumner Road, HA1 4BX)

North Harrow Community Library
Wednesdays 2pm to 4.30pm (Pinner Road, HA1 4HN)

Belmont Community Hall
Thursdays 10:30am to 1pm (Kenton Lane, HA3 8RZ)

Drop in, or get in touch to find out more.”

☎ 020 4583 4088 or ✉ ccafe@harrow.gov.uk

➤ Introducing ‘elop’

Charity ‘elop’ is an award-winning LGBTQ+ mental health and wellbeing organisation, with over 30 years of experience supporting communities in London and adjoining Essex borders.

Whilst they don't have any direct provision or youth clubs in Harrow, they offer free 1-1 mentoring for 12-24 year olds, and free counselling with a qualified counsellor for under 18s.

For a more detailed overview of how their youth service works why not sign up for a short lunchtime session. The next takes place on 25th November, 12.30pm - 1.15pm. Booking is now open. ➡ [More](#)

➤ New Activities at Harrow Leisure Centre

Harrow Leisure Centre writes “We have started new clubs and sessions for a variety of ages and ability.



A variety of classes, and of course swimming!

Our inclusive multi-sport sessions are running weekly, including table tennis (Mondays 10.30am), boccia (Thursdays 10.30am) and badminton (Fridays 2pm).

We also have our yoga session starting for ages 0-5 years (Tuesdays 9:30am) and netball for ages 11-13 (Mondays 6pm).

Other sessions include women's only chair yoga, and this features a secondary discussion afterwards.”

Visit the official website for more. ➡ [More](#)

“Online booking worked well for me.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Debt Advice from the CAB

Dealing with money issues can sometimes be off-putting.

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

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



Don't 'lose out financially' - get advice

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

Latest Newsletters

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

News Summary

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- ➔ [NHS rolls out prescription ready alerts on smartwatches and mobiles](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [National social care assessment service should be created to tackle 'postcode lottery'](#). ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ ['Ominous signs' of winter pressure growing as A&Es and ambulances see record September](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [High-street pharmacies to launch seven-minute cholesterol checks](#) ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ [Think Ahead charity to close with ending of fast-track social work programme](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [NHS staff suspected of snooping on patient records to be immediately suspended](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Unpaid carers increasingly under strain, DHSC survey reveals](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Adult social care complaints spike but number upheld by watchdog falls](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [NHS pilots rapid genomic test to transform brain tumour diagnosis](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [500,000 NHS staff to get new artificial intelligence tools to free up more time for patients](#) ➔ [More](#)
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- ➔ [Supermarket scans spotting thousands of cancers](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [NHS to expand 'life-saving' Martha's Rule to all A&Es](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Hospital patients can now check appointments in the NHS App](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [NHS rolls out discreet home-testing kits against cervical cancer for millions of women](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Social care practitioners to form part of neighbourhood health teams](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [NHS delivers almost a quarter of a million MenB jabs to young people ahead of university year](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Councils to face full adult social care assessments every 3 to 4 years, CQC confirms](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Thousands recruited for "new era" severe mental illness study](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [NHS kicks off flu jabs for children and pregnant women ahead of winter](#) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ [Chair of new NHS online hospital trust is named](#) ➔ [More](#)

We are looking for participants to take part in a research study



You can take part if you

- Have Cerebral Palsy
- Are aged 40+
- Live in West and North London



Taking part in the study involves meeting with our specialised link worker



Theo McCarthy Budzynski is our CP link worker. He will help you to find and connect with **local** services that can support your **non-medical needs**. For example, he can help you join local groups, fill in forms, and connect you with support services. The support is based on what you find most useful.

Recruitment will be open between January 2026 and November 2026

Would you like to take part or to know more?

Email Dr Erica Ranzato at e.ranzato@surrey.ac.uk

This study has a favourable ethical approval by the NHS Research Ethics Committee (25/NW/0364 dated 5/01/2026).

IRAS ref: 355807

Flyer Version 2.0 - 23/09/2026

