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Message from our Chair



I hope you enjoy reading about our activities this year. We always need more help, and there are many ways to get involved, so please do come and join us.

This year, we have continued to reach out to a wider range of groups and communities, to get their experiences of health and social care. This has helped us to raise our voice on your behalf. We are pleased to note that our voices are being heard by those running and improving services. For example, the work we did on phlebotomy (blood testing) services was used to improve the future services. See page 12.

We were pleased to be involved of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy. We have developed a way to engage local people and community groups in talking about the relevant issues before the formal meetings, where we can represent their views. See page 9 and 12 for details.

Thanks are due to many people for all their hard work

Our staff: We send congratulations to Jaime Walsh, our manager on the birth of her son. We said farewell to Nafisa Saboowala and Bernadette James who both finished their contracts with us in March 2015. We have a small and new staff team, who have hit the

ground running and we are very appreciative of their hard work! Many thanks to Rebecca Waters who is doing a sterling job covering for the Manager's post. Also to Daniella Muenzel and Joyce Osei, whose energy and dynamism is very welcome. Our associate Darren Morgan continues to support us with information management.

Our volunteers, on who we so depend! This year, they have undertaken a wide range of projects and activities. We were pleased to run a number of training sessions to support them, and others, in this important work.

Our Board, who have spent a lot of time developing the direction and priorities for our work.

I know the coming year will pose challenges that we can tackle and resolve working together with you for better services.

Sue Toole,
Healthwatch Waltham
Forest Chair

2015 - 2016 at a glance

1,063 people follow us on Twitter.

153 people liked our Facebook pages.



We have gathered **11,471** issues from the local population



We've spent **130** hours on attending community engagement meetings this year



We've heard what the public think of **475** services



We've provided information and signposting services to **142** people



We've met **1,133** local people at our community events



Who we are

What is Healthwatch?

We exist to make health and care services work for the people who use them.

Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people. Our sole focus is on understanding the needs, experiences and concerns of people of all ages who use services and to speak out on their behalf.

We are uniquely placed as a national network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

Our role is to ensure that local decision makers and health and care services put the experiences of people at the heart of their work.

We believe that asking people more about their experiences can identify issues that, if addressed, will make services better.

Our vision

At Healthwatch Waltham Forest (HWWF) the public voice is at the heart of our working day. Our priority is to gather and champion the views and experiences of people who use local health and social care services.

We do this by attending strategic health and social care meetings. We build critical but friendly relationships with influential members of statutory bodies. We listen to the voice of the voluntary and community sectors. We signpost people to services and promote events to wider communities. We go where the people are and reach out to hear what you think throughout the year in a variety of community and medical settings. We take those voices with us everywhere we go and use them to inform and shape public services.

Our priorities

The following priorities informed our work in 2015-16

- People from all communities are able to be involved in Healthwatch Waltham Forest
- Health; blood testing centres
- Social Care; care homes
- Community Services; Rapid Response Team
- Ensure service user voice heard in commissioning intentions and procurement
- Transforming Services Together Programme
- Better Care Together Programme
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Key messages

1. **Caring About Care Homes** - our Enter & View activities led to us focusing on this topic at our Annual Conference. Residents and families want to be better involved in the service.
2. **Your voice counts** - residents still feel left out of service redesign. We sent an organisational response to Oliver Road Walk In Service consultation that summarised what we had heard over the previous year. We engage with the voluntary sector via our Gimme5 approach asking for views to be collected for 5 minutes at the end of community meetings.
3. **Services need to change** - HWWF and local residents are concerned about Whipps Cross Hospital improvements. We have been regularly attending Whipps Cross Hospital improvement meetings, contributing to Transforming Services Together discussions and sharing experiences of patients and carers with management and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Communication from the Trust on what is being done needs to increase.
4. **Improve access to Primary Care** - we are members of the Patient Participation Group Steering Group, CCG Governing Body and CCG Patient Reference Group. We regularly focus research on GP services and hear about pharmacies and dentists too. People are very concerned about how difficult it is to secure a GP appointment.
5. **Health & Wellbeing matters** - Public Health commissioned us to gather the view of the public to inform the content of their strategy. Our Health & Wellbeing Forum has 45 members. We promote a range of community activities for all to attend. People talk to us about trying to access healthy activities and seeking support for their elderly family members.



The Healthwatch Waltham Forest staff and board (from left to right): Caroline Rouse, Kat Sandford, Alli Anthony, Sue Toole, Nafisa Saboowala, Jaime Walsh, Bernadette James, Sahdia Warraich, Rebecca Waters

Listening to people who use health and care services



Community Outreach

We go where people are

We attended community festivals across the borough including the Chingford Village Fair, Leyton Big Weekender, Chingford Big Weekender, The Walthamstow Garden Party and the Walthamstow Mela!

We gathered over 350 stories, gave away 1000's of merchandise, ran 4 prize draws, and promoted our work to represent the patient voice. People told us good things about their GP but said they had difficulty booking their appointments. They told us that many services gave quick diagnosis of conditions but took a long time to refer them into their appointments.

What we've acted on as a result of listening

- Sharing your views on Whipps Cross Hospital and Care Homes with CQC
- Involved in Barts Trust and Whipps Cross Hospital improvements on a weekly basis
- Raised lack of public involvement with Barts Trust, the CCG and Social Services
- Reported safeguarding issues to Social Services
- Extended the time allowed for public consultations

How your views have shaped local health and care services

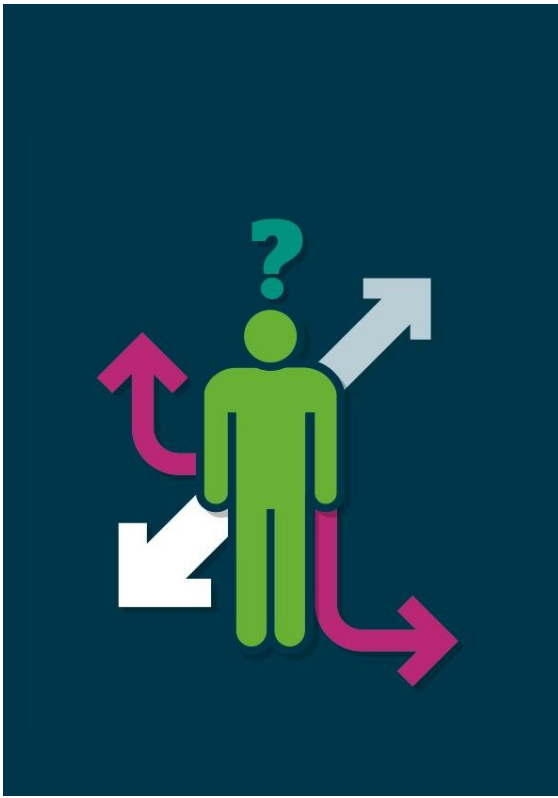
Between November 2015 and February 2016 we visited GP practices in response to issues we flagged from the quarterly GP trends analysis reports. We visited Addison Road Medical Practice and Manor Road Practice, and spoke to a total of 263 patients. The main issues mentioned by patients included need for improvement in booking and telephone systems, general admin, management of waiting times and need for better communication and information for patients.



Speaking to locals at Chingford Village Festival

“Information is not always accessible and takes time and many phone calls.”

GP Surgery Patient



Our reports

We have published reports on the following topics:

- Whipps Cross Hospital Outpatients Findings
- Talking to Looked After Children and Care Leavers; health services and transition
- People's Experiences of Primary Care (a joint research project with Healthwatch England)
- GP patient experience - quarterly trends analysis reports
- Talking to children, young people and parents
- Annual Event: Caring About Care Homes
- Talking with the homeless community in Waltham Forest

Each report contains a set of recommendations that we share with the contributors and relevant staff and communities across health and care.

Working with other organisations

Providing Public Health with local insight

Waltham Forest Health and Wellbeing Board have a statutory responsibility to produce a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to set out how the council and the CCG plan to improve health and reduce inequalities in outcomes over the coming five years.

In order to ensure that this Strategy was built on and informed by the experiences, needs and priorities of local people, LBWF Public Health department commissioned HWWF to undertake a consultation on an early draft of the Strategy.

How we did it;

- Focus groups with a range of different groups, including:
 - 4 focus groups with different age groups
 - 10+ focus groups with particular communities, including named ethnic groups, LGBT community, carers, those with LTCs, and others.
- Case studies, gathered from the community
- Writing up and summarising the findings from engagement, and providing them to those writing the Strategy

As well as the scale of the task, there were also significant challenges around timescales - the entirety of the work needed to be completed in just over 2 months.

HWWF set up and ran focus groups in collaboration with existing community groups and charities, in order to ensure good attendance and reach. Running the focus groups and reporting on the findings required considerable skills in organisation and planning, motivational outreach, facilitation of group discussions, and synthesis of views and findings.

In total, *11 focus groups took place, and 176 people were reached through the engagement process.* The feedback that was provided was invaluable for informing the final Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which was edited significantly based on the results of the consultation. The final Health and Wellbeing Strategy has now been published, and is available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/healthandwellbeingboard

Community Sector Small Grants

In November 2015 we awarded Small Grants for amounts ranging between £500 and £1,000 to 5 local community organisations.

The purpose was to engage local organisations and support them to run projects to get to know their service users better, understand their health & social care priority areas, and ensure the voices of their community can be heard.

The findings were added to Healthwatch Waltham Forest's database and fed into our insight of local needs and key issues, to be carried forward to our discussions with relevant providers and commissioners of local services. Where relevant we also suggested further pathways in which the group itself could be more engaged in improving local health & social care for their service users.

Four organisations completed their research project;

- **ELOP** (an LGBT support group) who reported on how the LGBT community wish to be represented within local services.

“An educated and professional service that takes into account my sexual and gender circumstances when they are relevant and ignores them when they are not.”

- **Disability Resource Centre** (a user led disability centre) ran an evaluation of home adaptations services.

“There could be aids and equipment out there that could really make a difference to our daily lives, but it's hard to know what would actually be useful to us as individuals,”

- **Significant Seams** (an arts based community centre) ran a series of discussion groups and covered the subjects of mental health, personalisation, social prescribing and independent living.

“Sport but also craft and social groups should be available for everyone to access and be inclusive, so there isn't any stigma involved if someone is not as well as someone else.”

- **Waltham Forest Carers Association** (representing the carers network) aimed to gather detailed information with regard to experiences of the carers assessment process and respite care in particular, in order to be better informed about carers needs and experiences

“Would not apply for holiday grant again- too stressful going through process.”

Involving local people in our work

Enter & View at blood test centres

Healthwatch Waltham Forest received numerous comments from local residents about community phlebotomy services as part of its normal intelligence gathering exercises over the past two years. The main comments were about waiting times, with waits of over an hour commonplace, and clinics closing early because of volume of patients.

During October and November 2015, our Authorised Enter & View Representatives visited the community phlebotomy services in Waltham Forest, which are based at 7 centres. We looked at the following areas: Accessibility / Environment / Waiting times / Staff / Information / Results and follow up. To capture as many views as possible we issued a patient questionnaire.

The aims of our Enter & View visits to the community phlebotomy services were:

- a) To extend our investigation and understanding of the issues patients experience with phlebotomy services across the borough;
- b) To add value to the existing body of knowledge by coming up with ‘patient led’ suggestions on how to improve services locally;
- c) To share this information with the service provider, to help shape service improvement.
- d) To share this information with the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and influence future proposals concerning investment in the community phlebotomy services.

We included volunteers and service users in the compiling of the evidence and shared these findings with the CCG Patient Reference Group. During the Enter & View visits, our representatives explained why were there and what we hoped to do with their views.

What did we do with the findings?

We summarised the main findings and came up with 19 recommendations for service improvement. A number of the changes can be actioned quickly to give immediate positive results. Others may require further investigation or further investment in terms of time and funds. These recommendations were shared with the Health Centre Managers that host the services, Barts Health who hold the provider contract and Waltham Forest Clinical Commissioning Group (WFCCG) who are the commissioners for blood testing services.

The stakeholder organisations were given 20 days to respond to our recommendations. They did so, and in our report you can see which actions they accept and will respond to, and which elements of the service they choose to remain as they are.

The report was quickly shared across the local health economy and raised the profile of Healthwatch Waltham Forest, in particular amongst the staff of Barts Health.

THANKS TO THE VOLUNTEER ENTER & VIEW REPRESENTATIVES; MARGARET ELIAS, CHERYL WHITTLE, EVALINA STRUM, ELEKTRA DEMETRIOU, NICHOLAS SUAREZ, ANDREA ELFERS AND ALLI ANTHONY.

How has did Enter & View improve people's experiences?

The WFCCG included our findings in their service specification redesign with a view to commissioning a new service in 2017.

“The HW report has had a huge impact on the new specifications including bookings, prioritisation of some patients, improved communications to patient's improved engagement and feedback mechanisms and supports for more vulnerable patients. Thank Nafisa for your work on this. The CCG is a better commissioner when it involves local people and so we will continue to work with Healthwatch to ensure that our residents are able to represent Waltham Forest's diverse population effectively.”

Carl Edmonds, Deputy Director of Strategic Commissioning

HEALTHWATCH WALTHAM FOREST WAS HIGHLY COMMENDED AT THE NATIONAL HEALTHWATCH ENGLAND CONFERENCE 2016 IN THE COMMISSIONING CATEGORY FOR ITS ENTER & VIEW OF BLOOD TESTING CENTRES.



Our work in focus



Our work in focus: Patient Involvement

Whipps Cross Outpatients Outreach

We conducted three months of outreach to better understand patient experiences of Outpatient Services at Whipps Cross Hospital. We were especially interested to hear about; making appointments, waiting list, appointment letters and other communications, appointment cancellations or changes, waiting times, patient transport, patient files, follow up treatment/arrangements, customer service and Information.

“I always ask Doctor questions and I get answers. It's a brilliant team here.”

Outpatient, Whipps Cross Hospital

10 volunteers completed 15 outreach sessions and listened to 1,077 issues from patients, relatives and carers.

We concluded that the service received is of good quality, but capacity is an issue that is causing long waiting times for outpatients. Largely people were happy with a local service and the comments were in favour of raising standards further.

“Lost notes in hospital and re-scheduling ...When you try to complain they refer you back to your GP.”

Outpatient, Whipps Cross Hospital

Based on our findings we made some recommendations:

1. Manage patient expectations more effectively. Such as by explaining expected waiting times in the appointment letters.
2. Text message reminders telling patients which waiting area to go to.
3. Whipps Cross acknowledged “Progress to improve DNA rates is dependent on a functioning and efficient telephone and appointments booking systems.”
4. Make a sitemap available on arrival at Outpatients Reception.
5. A peer learning opportunity enables the higher performing departments to mentor the lower performing departments. This should involve both clinical and administrative staff.
6. Parking costs could be explained in the appointment letter in order to manage expectations.
7. Improve the accessibility of information. To be compliant with the Accessible Information Standard each record should say, if not already, which patients require accessible information.



Our work in focus: Young People

Talking to Looked After Children

This work was commissioned by WFCCG. Young people at transition can experience multiple health problems, compounded by inconsistencies or disorganised discharge processes. The absence of a stream lined approach to discharge can lead to a loss to follow-up, disengagement from services, and increased vulnerability to exploitation.

We carried out interviews with 13 young people between 17-21 years old who were either in care or care leavers. We discussed services such as GP, Pharmacy, Sexual Health, Maternity, Outpatient, social workers, A&E, and Mental Health services, and talked about areas including support networks, awareness of services, accessing information, Safeguarding, Consent and confidentiality, integrated care, referrals and transition.

“Personalised, individual treatment according to individual circumstances - a standard offer is not always helpful“

Young Adult Interviewee

The conversations that took place were very insightful in offering real lived experiences of services and offered potential areas for consideration in improving services for LACs.



We spoke to young people at Chingford Village Festival

This includes ensuring understanding of local health services available, signing up to GP and other primary health care services and offering options and future avenues for health and wellbeing support, particularly around the local mental health offer. In addition, culture and ethnicity were labelled as factors inhibiting quality service delivery.

“Change the attitude of staff and make sure they have a smile on their face”

Young Adult Interviewee

Cultural and ethnic sensitivities need to be considered in terms of both foster placements and personal healthcare provision. Suggestions from Looked After Children and Care Leavers included need for more and better doctors to improve GP access and reduce waiting times at A&E, which are both similar to sentiment often expressed by the wider patient population.

Overall we found that, young people in care and recent care leavers need better information on what is on offer, how they can access these, and communication and support around health in general, health services and how they work.



Our work in focus: Homeless Service Users

A focus group on Primary Care services for Homeless People

In April 2015 we worked with two local organisations - Turning Point (now known as Lifeline) and PL84U-Al Suffa - with an aim to better understand some of the health and social care issues faced by the homeless community. Turning Point is a national social enterprise, offering information, advice and support for anyone over 18 concerned with drug or alcohol use in Waltham Forest. PL84U-Al Suffa provides a hot meal and befriending

“A&E: Patients with alcohol issues, drug addictions and mental problems to be treated with the same care like any other patient, no more be treated like scum and statistics”

services to a community of elderly, homeless and people in need.



Photo from Homeless Focus Group

Two focus groups took place. In total 50 people attended and spoke to us about; **GP Access, A&E at Whipps Cross Hospital, Mental Health services at Whipps Cross and in the community, Ambulance services, Pharmacies, Opticians and Dentists.**

Full copies of all our reports are available on our website
<http://www.healthwatchwalthamforest.co.uk/reports>

Decision making

Each year the team and board have an away day. We work together to agree the strategy and vision for the year ahead.

Our work plan informs our practical daily work and helps the small team keep on track with our aims. Our board has six members and meets every two months. The public are welcome to have copies of our minutes on request.

We take a deep look at the trends raised over the past year and use them to inform our next activities.



Photo of E17 Market taken by Edmund

If you would like to volunteer with us or observe a board meeting please contact the main office by phone, email

How have we involved the public in our work?

- We could not deliver our work without volunteers. In particular our outreach work, which includes data entry of all comments, and the Enter & View visits to services.
- All volunteers are invited to observe board meetings as part of their induction
- ***Volunteers gave 606 hours of their time 2015/16***

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- Every week at the Patient Experience Panel, volunteers code every comment received
 - We look at the trends of what people say and use them to escalate reoccurring issues and choose our Enter & View topics
 - Over 1,000 locals and professionals receive our monthly E-bulletin via email
 - 190 people receive our quarterly newsletter by post
 - We have trained 40 local people to become Patient Representatives
 - We ran a photography competition so local images can be used in our publications or posters

Our plans for next year



Future priorities

We have many insights and local challenges that we want to research further. In 2016/17 we hope to do this by working in partnership more often. Partnerships mean we can share resources, expertise and reach more residents.

Social Services Users

As an organisation we are very lucky to hear lots of health service experiences. But we acknowledge that we do not have enough examples of how people feel about their social and community services. We are working with the local council to improve the service user engagement structures.

Mental Health Service Users

Following our work on the Health & Wellbeing Strategy we know that people are finding it difficult to access the support they need to maintain good mental health. We want to look into this closer and help services understand how to improve access for all.

Accessible Information Standards (AIS)

Following our partnership work, with HENCEL on disability access to A&E, we have formed an AIS partnership. To ensure that clear, easy to read information is made available by us and the wider community in varies formats. This also applies to making sure our events have full access needs me to enable all to participate.

Young People

We have already started to strengthen our relationship with local colleges. Our engagement officer is planning some targeted work to gather the views of local young people. We are championing young people to be developed as future the local health & social care workforce.

Public Involvement

There are various Public Involvement policies in place across Health & Social Care services. We want to explore the similarities and work with statutory and voluntary agencies to agree a standard for how our residents can be included in influencing public services.

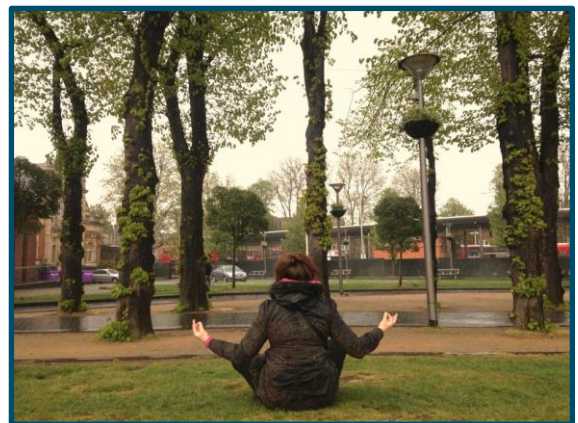


Photo of a meditator in Walthamstow taken by Angela

Our finances



INCOME		£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities		160,000
Additional income (underspend from 2014/15 and commissioned work)		20,180
Total income		180,180
EXPENDITURE		
Operational costs		75,905
Staffing costs		84,143
Office costs		6,028
Total expenditure		166,076
Balance brought forward		14,104

Contact us



Get in touch

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We will be making this annual report publicly available by 30th June 2016 by publishing it on our website and circulating it to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our local authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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