

# The value of listening

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets  
Annual Report 2023–2024



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**"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."**

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



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# Message from Tim Spilsbury

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I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the second annual report for Healthwatch Tower Hamlets under Your Voice in Health and Social Care to reflect on what has been a very successful year.

During this time, Healthwatch Tower hamlets have:

- continued their statutory responsibility to obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services,
- make those views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services, provide reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved and promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.

This year, working with our partners in health and social care, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets launched:

- 29 separate reports of which GP access helped to inform NHS and council leaders of the difficulties residents faced when accessing GP services.
- The Healthy Neighbourhoods project on creating LGBT+-focused spaces and raising awareness of these communities in Tower Hamlets were adopted by the Patient Experience team at the Royal London Hospital leading to more inclusive services and;
- we were involved with designing co-production guidance on involving Tower Hamlets residents in creating health services that better meet their needs.

This year we gathered patient experience feedback from 4432 reviews to help us raise awareness of issues and improve care.

This year we were supported by 85 valued volunteers contributing the equivalent of 199 days to the service. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Healthwatch Tower hamlets staff, volunteers and work placement students who have continued to work with dedication to ensure a responsive and vital service continues to support the local community.



**Tim Spilsbury**  
YVHSC CEO

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# About us

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## Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

### Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



### Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



# Year in review

## Reaching out:

**4,432 people**

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

**75 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as GP access and access to NHS dentistry.



## Making a difference to care:

We published

**29 reports**

about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

**Healthy Neighbourhoods** which highlighted local services that are important to residents, and how well these services currently support local people, to live a healthy and fulfilling life.



## Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

**85**

outstanding volunteers who gave up 199 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.  
In 2023 - 24 we received

**£149,000**

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

**4 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

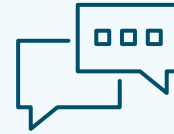


# How we've made a difference this year

Spring



Our report on GP Access helped to inform local NHS and council leaders of the difficulties residents experience when accessing GP services.



We co-produced a project with other North East London Healthwatch organisations on what good health and care mean to residents that resulted in creating a measuring and evaluation framework.

Summer



Our recommendations from the Healthy Neighbourhoods project on creating LGBT+-focused spaces and raising awareness of these communities in Tower Hamlets were adopted by the Patient Experience team at the Royal London Hospital leading to more inclusive services.



Our analysis of feedback on local hospital services highlighted the issues around long wait times and helped to raise awareness of the impact this can have on patients' lives.

Autumn



We were involved with designing co-production guidance on involving Tower Hamlets residents in creating health services that better meet their needs.



The feedback we collected from residents with disabilities as part of our Healthy Neighbourhoods project helped to inform the design of new leisure services in Tower Hamlets leading to more accessible services.

Winter



We engaged with residents including those who do not speak English to find out how local cancer screening services can be improved to enable more people to access these services.



The findings from our Accessing Mental Health Support in Tower Hamlets report were shared with local mental health services to inform how information on services will be promoted in the future.

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# Your voice heard at a wider level

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**We collaborated with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in North-East London influence decisions made about services at NHS NEL Integrated Care System (ICS) level.**

## The Big Conversation

Eight Healthwatch organisations worked with the Integrated Care Board to speak to over a thousand residents about what good health and care looks like to them.

They told us it should be:

- Accessible
- Competent
- Person-centred
- Trustworthy.



For example, 78% of Tower Hamlets residents who participated in the project told us that being cared for by people who understood their specific needs was very important to them.

This highlighted the need for people to be cared for by professionals who understand their medical but also cultural and social needs, leading to better patient care.

The ICB used these findings to develop success measures that will be shared with local people in the coming months, resulting in a single outcomes framework for the Integrated Care System. Focusing on outcomes will strengthen the ICBs' focus on making a difference in what local people feel is most important.

## Health Care Provision in Care Homes

Healthwatch in North East London co-delivered a project on care home residents' access to health and care services.

The project involved Healthwatch Tower Hamlets engaging with residents with severe mental health illness and asking for their experiences of using GP, Dental and other services while living in a care home.

The findings have been used to inform the development of training programmes provided to health and care professionals to deliver better, joint care for care home residents.

As a result, residents will have improved access to services enabling them to better look after their health and well-being.



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# Your voice heard at a wider level

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## We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in North-East London influence decisions made about services at NHS NEL Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch across North-East London to achieve:

### Research Engagement Network



We supported NEL ICB to improve participation and diversity in research by engaging over 300 people from diverse communities at events and over 400 through our survey.

We used the Big Conversation Good Care Framework to lay out how research could be accessible, competent, patient-centred and trustworthy. We identified community priorities such as mental health and diabetes for research.

The focus will be to spread the message about the importance of getting involved in research to develop medical services and products that will better meet the communities' health needs.

### Local Maternity Services

In the past year, we engaged with pregnant women from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities to understand how all babies born in NEL could have the best possible start. As a result, maternity providers committed to working towards cultural competency training and a communications post in each Maternity Unit, trauma-informed care for staff and service users, and the provision of accessible, timely information and multilingual advocates on sites.

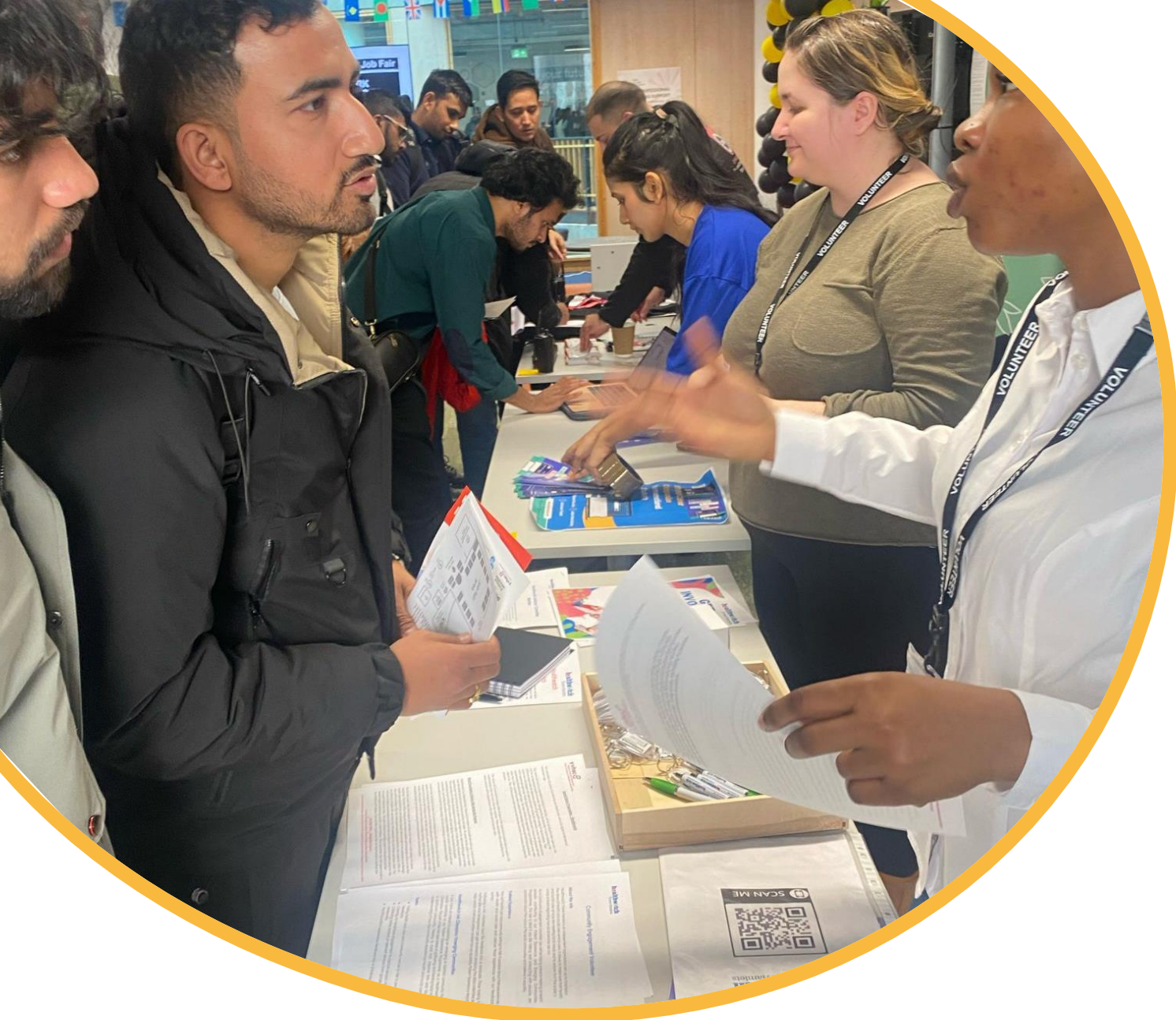


From the feedback obtained, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets provided information to the Tower Hamlets Council's Health scrutiny group assisting them in understanding local community views and influencing plans, service design and delivery of maternity services.

This has led to several improvements in the local maternity services at the Royal London Hospital:

- Translation of online booking system into 100 different languages improving access to maternity care at the Royal London Hospital
- Implementation of additional phones and translators in the labour ward to ensure better communication with patients
- Funding to support two projects to improve care for the Somali community, and an Engagement Officer working specifically with Somali residents.





# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why, over the last year, we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture and feed this back to services and help them improve.

# Reducing barriers in access to mental health support

Last year, we published findings on people's views on what could make accessing mental health support easier.

Our project specifically targeted people aged 65 or over and people from minoritised ethnic communities, who are less likely to access mental health services when needed. We partnered with local community organisations and services to reach out to these groups to gain feedback through a survey or one to one interviews.

**31%** of respondents told us that not knowing who to contact for mental health support could prevent them from asking for help.



## What did you tell us about mental health services?

- Majority of people told us a GP would be their first point of contact if they were struggling with their mental health.
- For people aged 65 or older, the main barrier to information on mental health support was a lack of online access.
- 1 in 5 told us that it would be easier for them to speak to services and explain their situation if they spoke the same language.
- Almost half of the participants said that digital mental health support would not make accessing mental health support easier for them.

## Our recommendations

- Using appropriate language in information about mental health and mental health services.
- Information on mental health and support services should be available in different formats and languages and be more widely distributed.
- Mental health services should increase the support offered in different languages.
- Digital mental health support should be offered as an option to groups that have online skills and access.
- Self-referral where offered should be promoted more widely.

## Next steps

- Our report has been shared with the Tower Hamlets Mental Health Partnership Board, the Mental Health lead for TH Council's Public Health team, and various other key stakeholders to help inform their decision-making and strategic planning.
- Our findings will be used to inform the upcoming adult mental health needs assessment.
- We have been invited to share our findings at local mental health events and meetings including Age UK's Older People's Reference Group meeting and the Mental Health Promotion Celebration and Learning event to help raise awareness of the difficulties people can experience when accessing mental health support.
- We have been invited to share our suggestions on how information on the NEL NHS 111 Option 2 service which is a new mental health crisis service in Tower Hamlets could be effectively communicated to residents to help raise awareness of the service.

# Improving uptake of routine cancer screening appointments

**We engaged with residents to find out the barriers in people accessing cervical, breast, and bowel cancer screening tests in Tower Hamlets, to enable more people to attend these appointments.**

In total, we spoke with 75 people attending various local events and services including Account3's ESOL Class, the Community Diagnostic Centre at Mile End Hospital, and the International Women's Day event at Maryam Centre in East London Mosque to collect feedback from people from different backgrounds.

**23%**

of people who took part in our survey said they were not given information on what would happen during their cervical screening appointment before their appointment.



## What did you tell us about cancer screening services?

- The procedure is the main barrier for many people not attending their cervical screening, but there are also some misconceptions about the relevance of the test.
- The main barriers to attending breast screening appointments seem to be around accessibility such as the location of the appointment being too far away.
- Although over 90% of people we spoke with found using the bowel screening home test kit easy, some participants suggested that the instructions should be clearer and provided in other languages.

## Our recommendations

- Improve information provided before the cervical screening appointment
- Provide information on relaxation techniques to help alleviate anxiety before the procedure
- Improve the accessibility to breast screening appointments by implementing mobile clinics
- Better training for staff around explaining the procedure and making patients feel comfortable during the appointment
- Improve the accessibility of the instructions provided with the bowel screening home test kit
- Raise more awareness using accessible communication formats on the importance of cancer screening tests

## Next steps

- The findings and recommendations will be shared with various local stakeholders including North East London Cancer Alliance, Tower Hamlets Council's Public Health Team, and Bromley by Bow Health Partnership to ensure patients' feedback is listened to and used to inform decision-making on the local cancer screening services.
- We will attend various events and meetings to share the findings from our report including Health and Wellbeing Week at the Bromley by Bow Centre to help raise awareness of the issues, promote the importance of attending screening appointments, and provide information to local residents on how and where to attend appointments.

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# Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

## Improving access to leisure centres for people with disabilities

**It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provide them with a better understanding of the issues that local people face.**

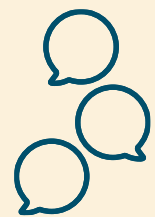
As part of our Healthy Neighbourhoods project, we spoke to people with disabilities, including visual impairments, about what would help them to better access spaces for play and recreation. We heard how people with disabilities were less likely to access these spaces due to the cost, travel or lack of appropriate equipment. We shared this feedback with the staff from Tower Hamlets council who were re-designing the leisure service offer in the borough. Since then, a new 'Be Well' leisure service has been introduced in Tower Hamlets offering an accessible environment, more inclusive activities, and discounted or free services to certain groups,



## Getting services to value patient feedback

**GP practices need to understand the benefits of gaining independent feedback on what people want from services to help improve care for everyone.**

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets worked with the Tower Hamlets Primary Care Transformation Group to ensure all GP practices supported and engaged with Healthwatch Tower Hamlets when carrying out the functions of their patient experience program. As a result of support received from the Primary Care Transformation Group, we have gained access to GP practices in all the Primary Care Networks in the borough leading to a significant increase in the number of patients providing feedback and strengthening our data and insights which we feedback to the local NHS leaders and commissioners.



## Improving care over time

**Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.**

One of the main priorities for us is to carry out our Patient Experience Programme where we visit health and care services to collect feedback from people about using these services. This is an ongoing programme where we produce quarterly reports highlighting good practice, areas for improvement, and recommendations.

This year, we have significantly increased the number of reviews collected and have been invited to provide quarterly updates on our findings at the Tower Hamlets Together Board meeting which will enable us to consistently feedback on issues that local people are experiencing directly to the people who can make changes to the local services and improve patient care.





# Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard, and services meet their needs.

## This year we have reached different communities by:

- Engaging with older residents by attending Prime Time Sessions for Over 50s at Idea Stores in various locations
- Holding two group sessions at Create Day Centre with people with learning disabilities to hear their feedback on mental health support
- Joined Account3's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class to talk to the women about their experiences with cancer screening services.
- Participated at an International Women's Day event at East London Mosque to collect feedback on cancer screening services and provide information and signposting services
- Implementing a work experience programme for local young people attending secondary school, to gain experience working in a professional environment and helping to improve their confidence and communication skills.

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## Supporting people with language barriers

**Our team joined Account3's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class to hear the women's experiences of using cancer screening services.**

Language is a barrier for many people accessing local health services. Healthwatch Tower Hamlets partnered with Account3 to engage with people who do not speak English well to hear their experiences accessing cancer screening services in Tower Hamlets.

The majority of people in the group were Bengali-speaking women. With assistance from Account3, we heard how the women sometimes struggled to book their screening appointments due to a language barrier. They also told us that receiving information in their language would help them fully understand everything.

Based on this feedback, we have made recommendations to make screening services more accessible and for information to be provided in accessible formats.

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## Helping to make services better for people with autism

**Healthwatch Tower Hamlets was approached by a resident with autism who shared their struggles of accessing GP services in Tower Hamlets.**

We heard how they were finding it very difficult to communicate with their GP practice and felt that services in Tower Hamlets lack awareness of autism. They were frustrated with not being able to make their voice heard.

Healthwatch asked if the resident would share their feedback at the Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting looking into access to GP services for people with disabilities.

They agreed and shared their lived experience at the meeting representing the voice of people with autism and raising awareness of the difficulties they face in access to GP services.

The priority of our work is to make sure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear the voice of the local people, and we were proud to be able to facilitate an opportunity for the resident to share their experience with local councillors, Primary Care Commissioners, and others who can make change happen.

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## Engaging with older adults

**As part of our engagement work for the Access to Mental Health Support project, we were invited to attend Prime Time for Over 50s sessions.**

These are regular sessions for older adults held at different Idea Stores in the borough and we were pleased to be invited to sessions at Whitechapel, Watney Market, and Cubitt Town.

While the primary aim of these engagement opportunities was to collect feedback on mental health support, we also shared information about Healthwatch work to help raise awareness of our organisation amongst a group often digitally excluded.

In addition, we heard of their struggles with accessing GP services, provided information on how to find an NHS dentist and the new Pharmacy First Scheme, and signposted them to adult social care services.

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# A highlight on our Enter and View programme

## Goodman's Field Medical Practice

**In February 2024, we published our report based on our observations and feedback collected during an Enter and View visit.**

After speaking with patients, staff and managers, and making observations on areas such as accessibility, environment and facilities, safety, reception, and information displayed, we made the following recommendations:

- Regular maintenance for the automatic doors at the entrance that at the time was malfunctioning, ensuring people with mobility issues have easy access to the practice
- Implementing further training to ensure increased efficiency in call handling, so that the patients are required to wait for a shorter duration.
- Translating feedback forms in other languages, such as Bengali and Somali, to improve feedback from patients with a language barrier:

### **In response to our recommendations, Goodman's Field Practice:**

- Raised maintenance issues of the automatic doors with the ICB and NHS Property Services.
- Implemented a call-back system allowing patients to request this rather than wait on the phone.
- Identified that a high number of calls to reception are repeat prescription orders, and as a result, the practice is now working with their local pharmacy to implement ordering repeat prescriptions on patients' behalf to reduce the number of phone calls.
- Sent their Family and Friends Test questionnaire, feedback and complaints forms to their interpreting team to be translated.

## The Albion Health Centre

**In October 2023, we published our report based on our observations and feedback collected during an Enter and View visit.**

We made the following recommendations following our visit:

- Extend the opening hours of the E-Consultation system to improve access
- Display the fire safety procedure and address safety concerns in disabled toilets where we observed exposed wood with nails sticking out
- Display the complaints procedure and consider adding more leaflets available for the patients to access.
- Address staffing issues as staff told us that their workload is unsustainable and not medically safe.

### **In response to our recommendations, The Albion Health Centre:**

- Is displaying the fire safety procedure leading to improved patient safety
- Fixed the safety issue affecting the disabled toilets making the overall environment safer
- Is displaying complaints procedure and has restocked their leaflet display ensuring better access to information for patients
- Recruited a salaried GP, a Practice Nurse and two Receptionists leading to improved access.



# Advice and information

**If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.**

**This year we've helped people by:**

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis



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## Helping to share information on vaccines

**With Covid-19 and the outbreak of Measles, it is important to make people aware of the vaccines to help keep them safe**

In the last year, we have helped keep residents informed of when and how to get their Covid-19 booster vaccines helping those at high risk of serious complications from the virus.

In addition, following the recent outbreaks, we have shared information on measles – what are the symptoms, who is at risk, and the North East London NHS campaign to encourage unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children aged 1-11 years to receive their Polio and MMR immunisations.

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## Providing information on critical services

**Supporting residents to access help and support during cost-of-living crisis**

During the cost-of-living crisis, many residents have approached Healthwatch Tower Hamlets because they struggle to pay their bills and buy basic groceries. We have signposted these residents to local support services.

In addition, we put together a comprehensive list of organisations and support services that can help people during this difficult time.

The list includes food banks, affordable grocery stores, organisations providing hot meals, free debt & money management advice, energy advice and the details of many other organisations that can offer support.

The list has been shared on our social media platforms and monthly newsletters helping to raise awareness of these vital services.

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## A collective approach to sharing information

**The best way to ensure information reaches people from all communities is to join efforts with other organisations**

Tower Hamlets Together has formed the Tower Hamlets Communication Network which – alongside Healthwatch – consists of NHS North East London, TH Council, TH GP Care Group, East London NHS Foundation Trust, Barts Health NHS Trust, and TH Council for Voluntary Services.

The network meets bi-monthly to provide work updates from each organisation and discuss any ongoing campaigns to share across all our media platforms.

This collaborative effort ensures that Healthwatch receives information on health services, campaigns, events, and projects first-hand from service providers to share with local people and provides a channel to share our work on patient experience with all the relevant stakeholders in the borough.



# Volunteering

**We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.**

**This year our volunteers:**

- Attended local events and fairs to promote Healthwatch Tower Hamlets and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences from patients and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out enter and view visits to local services to help them improve
- Engaged with residents on a one-to-one basis and in group settings to gain feedback for our research projects to help improve access to mental health and cancer screening services
- Created posters and written content for our social media platforms and website to help raise awareness of health conditions, events, and other organisations



**“Healthwatch Tower Hamlets has given me more insight into my desired career path than any other experience. My experiences allowed me to obtain several new career skills while also allowing me the opportunity to serve a community I’ve come to know and hold dear. Interning for Healthwatch Tower Hamlets has prepared me well to thrive as a global citizen”.**

**“I think, the greatest thing I learned in these past months is the art of public engagement and interacting with locals. I may have been an outsider to the area, but Tower Hamlets residents made me feel so welcome and proud to serve them”.**



Joie –  
Healthwatch Tower  
Hamlets



**“Healthwatch was a complete mystery to me before this placement. Now I understand they play a vital role in improving healthcare for everyone”.**

**“Hearing directly from people about their experiences has highlighted the importance of clear communication and I am now much more aware of the challenges people face in navigating the healthcare system and the vital role Healthwatch play in bridging the gap”.**



Angie –  
Healthwatch Tower  
Hamlets

## Do you feel inspired?



We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 [www.healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk/how-can-i-volunteer/](http://www.healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk/how-can-i-volunteer/)

 0203 886 0839

 [info@healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk)



# Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£149,000	Expenditure on pay	£119,000
Additional income	£6,500	Non-pay expenditure	£14,500
		Office and management fees	£22,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£155,500</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£155,500</b>

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### Additional income is broken down by:

- £1,500 received from the local authority for the Community Insights System.

## ICS funding

Healthwatch across **NHS NEL ICB** also receives funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Representation on NEL ICS Strategic meetings	£5,000
	£
	£

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## Next steps

**Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.**

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

### Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Sharing our independent research and reports to with leaders within health and social care that have a meaningful impact of local people's health and wellbeing.
2. Working with local and regional partners to tackle health inequalities further.
3. Engage with groups within the community that we don't currently hear from.

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# Challenges for the coming year

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**With funding under pressure and public finance likely to be constrained for the foreseeable future, it will take hard work and imagination to ensure we maximise our impact.**

**After talking to service users, patients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders, we believe that we need to:**

## Challenges



- Continue to raise our profile so every local community knows we are there for them.
- Focus on the big issues that most concern residents and the communities that face the worst inequalities.
- Work with the NHS at every level to find solutions and make listening to service users the default approach across all health and social care.
- Improve opportunities to gain the views and opinions of:
  - Young adults,
  - People from the Bangladeshi community,
  - People from the Somali community,
  - People who are homeless
  - People with sensory impairments
  - Men from various backgrounds and communities, as these groups are currently under-represented when we share feedback with health and social care partners.
- Ensure all partners and stakeholders provide updates to us when our reports and data are used or promoted to improve health and social care services. This will ensure we are always aware of when our work has had an impact beyond our own priority areas.
- Continue to offer personalised and varied student and work placement opportunities for local people, which can be challenging and resource intensive for a small and busy team.

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# Views from Stakeholders – Stakeholder Perception Survey

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Every year we ask our partners and stakeholders to let us know their views about our services, and what we could do to improve..

## Stakeholder Perception Survey results – summary overview

75% of respondents strongly agreed that **we demonstrate our awareness of the issues and concerns that affect residents of our local communities.**

50% of respondents strongly agreed that **we effectively collect insights from people from diverse local communities who are less often listened to.** The other 50% somewhat agreed with this statement.

100% of respondents strongly agreed that we **always base our reporting and analysis on direct evidence obtained from local residents.**

We asked respondents **which health services we should focus on for the coming year:**

- *How language impacts on women getting appropriate services to maintain their health.*
- *Mental health as we see a lot of patients in our emergency departments trying to access help.*
- *Services for children 0-1 year regarding play and communication*

We asked respondents **which communities or groups of people who are less often listened to should Healthwatch Tower Hamlets focus on reaching in the year ahead:**

- *The smaller BAME groups and new arrivals are at a disadvantage with limited advocacy and support*
- *Deaf and hard of hearing. We focus a lot on translation of other languages but not so much accessibility. This should be improved*
- *Informal Carers across all communities, engagement with Chinese, Somali and Vietnamese communities and support for people who are without secure housing.*





## Statutory statements

**Healthwatch Tower Hamlets, Unit 104 The Pill Box, 115 Coventry Road, Bethnal Green, E2 6GG.**

**The contract holder is Your Voice in Health and Social Care, 45 St. Marys Road, Ealing, W5 5RG.**

**Healthwatch Tower Hamlets uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.**



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# The way we work

## Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Local Advisory committee consists of 7 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Local Advisory Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Local Advisory Committee met 4 times and made decisions on matters such as setting our priority research topics and approving any recommendations for our Enter and View visits.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

## Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website take copies to engagement events, publish a monthly newsletter, social media posts, and share it via link or email with relevant stakeholders.

## Responses to recommendations

We had 0 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

## Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to [give some examples of committees or other places where you share what you have heard with decision-makers at the local authority level.]

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in North-East London Integrated Care System. For example, we [meet with 7 other Healthwatch at the NEL level and discuss local issues, current projects and insights within NEL ICS engagement team and feedback our reports into the NEL community insight system.. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

## Enter and view

This year, we made 4 of Enter and View visits. We made 22 recommendations or actions as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Albion Road Health Centre	Patients raised concerns relating to service access. And appointment availability.	Wrote a report with recommendations, – the service followed up on these and took action to improve appointment availability and the appearance of the reception area.
Goodman’s Field Medical Practice	To observe how the practice provided services after continuing to gain a large volume of positive reviews.	Wrote a report which overall found services to be exceptional but should consider some minor improvements for action following visit.
Silk Court Care Home	To observe how the care home operates and achieves significant positive sentiments regarding its care services.	To write a report – overwhelmingly positive experience with only one significant area of improvement identified for recommendation to action.
Rosewood House Care Home	Care home receiving a ‘requiring improvement’ rating from the CQC	To write a report – feedback was generally positive with a few concerns identified which will require improvements.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is represented on the Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board by Matthew Adrien, Service Director of Healthwatch Tower Hamlets.


Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is represented on NHS NEL Integrated Care Partnerships by Matthew Adrien, Service Director, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets and NHS NEL Integrated Care Boards by Matthew Adrien, Service Director, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets.

## 2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Healthy Neighbourhoods project	Partners used the feedback to support their localities planning and improvements to the leisure service provision within the borough for people with disabilities.
The Big Conversation	We took your comments on “What does good care look like” back to NHS NEL partners which will help improve health and care services for the NHS NEL priority areas – (babies, children and young people, long term conditions, mental health and wellbeing, workforce and employment).

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