

# Our information and signposting service will go the extra mile for vulnerable members of the community



## How our advice and information service works: Emma`s case.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham provides a service that is sometimes known as signposting. We give information to people who are having difficulties accessing the health and care services they need. Equipped with that information, most Barking and Dagenham residents are then able to take the steps necessary to sort out their difficulties themselves.

However, sometimes we support residents who face barriers that are difficult for them to overcome on their own - they may have vulnerabilities or underlying health problems. They also may struggle to access services because they are digitally excluded or don't have English as their first language. We will provide additional support to vulnerable residents who find it difficult to act on the information we give them. In these cases, we will often contact services on behalf of the person we are supporting.

Emma\* (name has been changed to protect resident`s identity) first contacted us wanting to express that nobody was listening to her. She is an older resident with limited mobility and many other health issues. She lives alone in a flat and is also known to Social Services. Emma is in receipt of a care package, and she told us that she was unhappy about the way her carer treated her. Advisor realized that a safeguarding alert needed to be raised based on the concerns that Emma expressed. She needed

---

support to get back on her chair, and out of hours call was made to adult social care, who put things in place to help her back on her chair. The safeguarding issue was investigated and, as a result, there were changes made in the care that she receives.

Once safeguarding issues had been dealt with, Emma A contacted our information and signposting phone line several times, expressing that she has not been treated fairly by healthcare staff, and that she has no one to listen to her. As we spent time speaking to her, we quickly identified that she was experiencing loneliness and her health issues meant her social life had been severely impacted. Our Healthwatch advisor suggested an option of referral to a befriending service with Emma, and it was mutually agreed that this referral would be beneficial. A referral was made by our Healthwatch advisor and Emma later was contacted by the service.



It emerged later, that Emma`s dissatisfaction with healthcare staff had been increasing, and she felt like she did not know where to express her worries. Concerns expressed included unfair treatment and dismissing her experiences. Our Healthwatch advisor discussed a referral to Independent Health Complaints Advocacy services in Barking and Dagenham and Resident A consented to it.

Despite the signposting that Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham provided to Emma, she continued to contact us detailing numerous issues she was having with her care at home, and that required adaptations have not been provided. Healthwatch advisor has signposted Resident to Disablement Association in Barking and Dagenham to get more advice and support on how to live an independent life.

Emma has reported finding our services very useful, she found our service to be a listening ear and established a relationship with an advisor. She feels comfortable in picking up the phone to ask for support to navigate the system.



As it can be seen in Emma`s case, some of our most vulnerable residents will require multiple services to get involved to get their support needs met and fill the gaps. If you know someone who might benefit from our information and signposting support do let them know about us. Our advice and information service is free for all Barking and Dagenham residents and can be accessed by calling 0800 298 5331 or emailing us at [info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk)