

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from our CEO

Hosting Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham under LifeLine

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is hosted by LifeLine. LifeLine Projects is based in the borough and was founded in 2000 by local people who wanted to effect local change for local people. LifeLine exists to impact individuals and influence systems. We do this through supporting local people to become agents for change in their own community. We focus on empowering and enhancing the lives of those people most isolated and vulnerable, building their confidence, and helping them to learn new skills, so that they may live their lives to the fullest and become an active part of their community.

Our role as a local Healthwatch and adapting what we do in challenging times

Healthwatch are here to listen to the issues that really matter to local people and to hear about their experiences of using local health and social care services. We're entirely independent and impartial, and anything shared with us is confidential. The team use a number of different ways to connect with residents to listen to their stories and better understand the challenges they face. This evidence is then used to challenge and provide solutions to service providers and commissioners.

This year the team and volunteers have continued to adapt the way they deliver services in the face of Covid. Following government guidance the team were restricted to mainly telephone and online engagement, but this did not stop them, although unable to undertake Enter and views, instead our volunteers supported with mystery calls to sexual health services.

Our information and signposting service was available by phone and email and the team have supported 288 residents with queries including how to access dental services, how to complain, providing information about covid vaccinations and mental health. As government guidance changed, we started to have safe face-to-face contact.

Involvement and making a difference

In total we engaged with 895 people throughout the year and the team worked on several different projects ensuring the voice of the community influences decisions. For example, we contributed to BHRUTS clinical strategy, sharing feedback about hospital services with the trust, this feedback will now be used as part of the strategy including best practice and looking at improving areas highlighted by patients. Our #Talkaboutit event enabled mental health services, faith organisations and places of worship to discuss challenges posed by the pandemic and practical tips on how to support those with mental health needs.

It is also a pleasure to share that we have won an award along with our colleagues from North East London for providing fast, regular and comprehensive insight about people's experiences of care with their Integrated Care System, helping to develop services that meet the needs of their diverse population.

Moving forwards

I am delighted to announce we have been appointed by Barking and Dagenham Council to continue to deliver Healthwatch in the borough after a competitive tender process. LifeLine have hosted Healthwatch for the last five years and will continue to ensure that residents' voices are heard and that their feedback makes a difference.

In the coming months, the team will work on building a stronger Healthwatch team of both staff and volunteers to ensure that local people continue to have their voices heard. We look forward to seeing the people of Barking and Dagenham get involved – both residents, and those working in the borough.

And lastly, **a very big thank you** to each and every residents that has taken the time to feedback about experiences, volunteers who have contributed in supporting the team, our partners who we've collaborated with and also our team who have continued to ensuring we deliver a well needed service to local people.

I would encourage everyone to continue to share your stories with the team.

Remember at some point in our lives, either ourselves or loved ones will need to access health or care services and—let's be honest—we, of course, want them to be good quality. That's why it's important that you share your experiences with us, your feedback enables us to challenge both commissioners and service providers and share solutions with them.

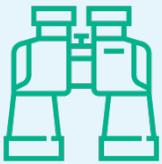


Nathan Singleton
CEO, LifeLine Projects

About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is your local health and social care champion. From **Riverside** to **Eastbrookend** and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other 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.



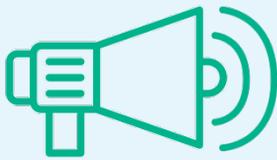
Our values

- 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.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



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

288 people came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19. and access to dental services.

Making a difference to care



We published **3 reports** about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have **15** outstanding volunteers, who gave up **300 hours** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2021-22 we received **£115,677** which is the same as last year.

Between April 2021 and March 2022 we employed **2 staff members**

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2021 to March 2022.



From running advice lines to delivering medication, our volunteers helped combat COVID-19.



Our blog "access to healthcare" was viewed 481 times. The blog highlighted the relationship between language and access to healthcare.



An online social media campaign sharing information and resources on Friday 8th October and Sunday 10th October 2021 took place. Hashtag for the event was #TalkAboutIt. The resources on the landing page were accessed 200 times.



We spoke to 75 residents with a disability or a long term health condition about their experiences of accessing health and care services. The recommendations resulted in changes to the way health information was provided and influenced changes to vaccination sites.



To support the COVID-19 vaccination programme we talked to different communities to understand their hesitancy towards the vaccine and shared this with relevant partners..

We have continued to receive a high number of calls in relation to COVID-19. Our team supported those individuals with their queries and also kept our dedicated web page updated.

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 feedback to services to help them improve



And the winner is ...



AND THE WINNER IS...

Healthwatch in North East London

Barking and Dagenham, City of London, Hackney, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest

have won an award for working with our Integrated Care System!

We are delighted to share that this year we won an award for working with Integrated Care Systems as part of a partnership with seven other local Healthwatch organisations across North East London (Healthwatch City of London, Healthwatch Hackney, Healthwatch Havering, Healthwatch Newham, Healthwatch Redbridge, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets, and Healthwatch Waltham Forest)

This prestigious national award was presented to us at the Healthwatch Awards 2021, a virtual event held and run by Healthwatch England, the statutory body that oversees the Healthwatch network. The award is in recognition of the combined work of our partnership, which provides the North East London Health and Care Partnership with the valuable feedback it needs to develop better services. It is through providing fast, regular and comprehensive insight into people's experiences with care services that we are able to work towards building a system that truly meets everyone's needs.

We would like to offer a huge thank you to all the residents who have shared their views with us and contributed to improving our local health and care services. It is your voices that are making a real difference in Barking and Dagenham.



The Healthwatch Awards have been a fantastic chance to showcase how Healthwatch makes such a difference to people's lives and Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham's tireless work for its community during the pandemic is a perfect example of this.



Voices of disabled residents and COVID-19

The aim of this project was to seek feedback from residents who are disabled or living with a long-term condition. This was a combined piece of work across eight North East London local Healthwatch, the North East London Clinical Commissioning Group and Healthwatch England.

Each Healthwatch worked with their own voluntary and community sector partners and social care departments to reach residents from a wide range of backgrounds and impairment groups. In Barking and Dagenham we engaged with 75 individuals.

We would like to thank all of the local residents who took the time to complete the survey and be interviewed during what were very difficult times.

Some highlights from our findings:

- Information presented simply, with clear explanations, is accessible to more people.
- Written materials can be made more accessible with large print and plain formatting; however, some may do better with information that is not in written English.
- Most respondents were willing to be vaccinated, and prefer to receive information from their GP.
- Vaccine hesitancy in the BAME community can be tackled by addressing myths and rumours circulating.
- A small number of respondents living with long-term conditions feel that they are not receiving sufficient information specific to their circumstances.
- Disruptions in health and social care services affected people's experience with health and social care services.
- People with hearing impairments and children under 18 had the most negative experience with health and social care services.
- GP practices have adapted to dispense and prescribe medicine efficiently during the COVID pandemic.
- In some cases, COVID protection measures may make practices less accessible.

What difference did this make

Vaccine rollout



Feedback on the best methods to reach different impairment groups was implemented by the ICS Comms and engagement team as soon as they received the information. This helped inform the location and re location of vaccine centres and the production of videos, Easy Read and webinars for specific impairment groups.

Healthcare services



Our profiling of those at risk of digital exclusion was used to train hospital and GP staff to help them to continue to reach everybody in the community.



Communication preferences are being used to inform both improvements in hospital accessible information standards but also to help manage the long delays in elective care that will be a consequence of COVID.



We are participating in a wide range of quality improvement, transformation and co-design programmes including improving hospital communication systems and helping to even out GP services across the ICS.

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust Clinical Strategy

Why we looked into this matter

The hospital trust were looking at how it delivers its current services and what could be done to improve services in the future. They wanted to ensure the views of residents from all backgrounds were captured so the feedback can be used to develop the 'clinical strategy'.

What we did

Healthwatch undertook pop up stands in different settings across the borough engaging with residents about their experiences of accessing hospital services. Whilst some individuals completed surveys others verbally shared their experiences with Healthwatch staff and volunteers.

Emphasis was placed on encouraging as many people as possible to participate in a way that worked best for them. Our team spoke with 75 people in total.

What we found

It was evident that where departments placed an emphasis on swift, clear, informative communication with the families of their patients, that families felt reassured and were confident that their relatives were being well cared for. Where communication lacked and communicated sporadically, or at a later date, relatives were more anxious about their family members.

Staff who found ways to enable patients and their families to have FaceTime or video calls were greatly appreciated by the families. This served as a means for reassurance for some residents .

Feedback shows that, in general, patients felt that staff were very good and caring, staff should be praised ongoing care during this time.

However, it was also obvious from feedback that in some cases staff were tired and anxious after working in a high stress situation for several months. At the time there was a risk that the current workforce could suffer from burn out.



What difference did this make

Thoughts about appointments



People felt that the trust should consider mixed appointments across all services.

Where needed arrangements should be made for face-to-face appointments, especially where someone has a disability or language barrier.

Generally, patients felt care closer to home was the way forward, as long as it really was closer to home and in the community was exactly what they wanted.



We were delighted to work with Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham as part of our clinical strategy refresh. The detailed report provided us with valuable insights to help us understand the different experiences of patients who have accessed services at our hospitals. We look forward to continue our working relationship in the year ahead.



World Mental Health Day 2021 Building Resilient Faith Communities

In October, in order to prepare for World Mental Health Day, we meet with mental health service users and North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) and our commissioner to discuss what our focus should be. This was fantastic as it meant service users would play big part in planning the day. Feedback during the session concluded that the focus should be on faith leaders.

A talk-show discussion on Building Resilient Faith Communities took place on Thursday 7th October 2021. This was aimed at Faith leaders and anybody connected to a place of worship. The event was hosted by Nick Brewer mental health advocate, and featured panellists from the Barking and Dagenham faith community, and a representative from the mental health service.

During the talk show, the discussion panel shared stories and an gave insight into how deeply local communities have become affected by a variety of mental health needs and shone a light on how faith communities have supported residents during lockdown as well as the practical help in place for the local communities to recover. Everyone agreed that mental health issues had increased as a consequence of COVID.

Safiyah from North East London Trust provided a view from a mental health clinical perspective and shared information about services on offer. The panel were also provided with scenarios they may come across within their community and asked what they would do in the situation. Safiyah was able to share details from the clinical perspective.

The event video has been viewed 126 times across social media platforms. Please take the opportunity to [watch this very interesting and insightful discussion in full](#).

What difference have we made

- Faith Communities shared what they were hearing from their communities.
- Resources were shared with everyone who attended the workshop to enable them to signpost individuals who reach out for help.
- FaithAction gave tips on how to make places of workshop friendly places and practical examples. This will enable places of worship and those involved in groups of faith to adapt environments.

Enter and View

Enter and View visits are carried out under section 221 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It imposes duties on certain health and social care providers to allow authorised representatives of local Healthwatch organisations to enter premises and carry out observations for the purposes of Healthwatch activity.

During the visit Healthwatch representatives who have been recruited and trained gather the experiences of service users, their relatives or friends and staff to collect evidence of the quality and standard of the services being provided. The visits enable us to share examples of best practice and make recommendations for improvements from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.

This year, Enter and Views were on hold, therefore we took time out, to relook at our training sessions and make some changes to it to incorporate safety around COVID19 and vaccinations. This means that as we begin to undertake Enter and Views this year, current volunteers will need to take a refresher training session and new volunteers will attend the new revamped sessions.



What difference have we made

Feedback from volunteers shows that they feel more confident knowing they will receive guidance and training on how to take part in Enter and View with extra safety measurements in place.

Local people feel comfortable in volunteering and getting involved with their local Healthwatch in a safe way.

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, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need



Signposting people to ear wax services

In our last annual report we reported on a case study of a local resident who contacted Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham to raise an issue of the Ear Wax removal services for older people. She had initially contacted her GP to be told that the service and procedure was no longer available at the practice and that she would need to find the service elsewhere. No guidance or alternative solution was offered by the surgery by way of providing the details of a local service.

Through research, she discovered the nearest service was private and based in Upminster, at a cost of £80.00. She told Healthwatch "it was far too expensive and out of financial reach for most people"

She was concerned for elderly people who would require the service.

Healthwatch raised the issue at a Local Quality Surveillance Group (LQSG) meeting and a subsequent request was put forward that Healthwatch should escalate it by email through the Chair.

A response was received and shared with the resident and uploaded on the Healthwatch website to inform others. This is still one most accessed pages on our website and also an area that local people often contact the team about.

World Mental Health day

An online social media campaign sharing information and resources on Friday 8th October and Sunday 10th October 2021 took place. As part of the campaign Healthwatch asked local residents to share feedback on what they feel works well and what does not work well in terms of mental health in Barking and Dagenham. They were also asked what they felt the solutions should be. The hashtag for the day was #TalkAboutIt, a hashtag already associated with a mental health theme via artist Nick Brewer, who is an ambassador for Anxiety UK.

We created a landing page on our website (a standalone web page, created specifically for the purposes of a marketing or advertising campaign: where a visitor "lands" when they have clicked through from Google or similar). This page provided information about the online campaign, a link to the video from the event with faith leaders and information about where to get help and support.

The landing page was viewed 200 times. We also shared information on social media channels. The team devised 162 tweets, which included self help, information about local and national services and shared videos. We had 347 engagements and 63 retweets. In addition to this, 63 people liked our tweets and 86 people viewed our media tweets.

Volunteers

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

This year our volunteers:

- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Created digital content on our website and social media.
- Carried out website and telephone reviews for local services on the information they provide and assessing their accessibility.
- Assisted as part of 'Readers' Panels' – checking local services' publications to make them more people focussed and easier to read.
- Continued to help with the local volunteering efforts supporting those who were self-isolating.





Quotes from our volunteers and work experience students



"It was really nice to get back into the community and see people face to face. I enjoy talking to people, being at home during the lock down was very lonely, even though I spoke to lots of people over the phone, so when I got the call from Healthwatch about face to face contact it made my day"

"It was great undertaking some of the mystery calls for Healthwatch, it gave me an opportunity to see what it was like for those trying to access a particular service. I could do this in my own time which fits in with my college timetable"



Do you feel inspired?

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

 www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

 [0800 298 5331](tel:08002985331)

 info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.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.

Income	
Funding received from local authority	£115,677
Additional funding	£0
Total income	£115,677

Income	
Staff costs	£99,579
Operational costs (including support services)	£16,098
Total expenditure	£115,677

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Looking into the experiences of those who accessing maternity services
2. Looking into access to primary care
3. Experiences of accessing maternity services and the maternity pathway

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is managed by LifeLine Projects.

LifeLine House,
25 Neville Road,
Dagenham, Essex RM8 3QS
[020 8597 2900](tel:02085972900) | info@lifelineprojects.co.uk

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.



The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch board consists of 8 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2021/22 the board met **4** times and made decisions on matters such as projects to undertake and engagement priorities.

Meet our Board



Daniel Singleton
Interim Chair



Elsbeth Paisley
Member



Rachel Allen
Member



David Sollis
Member



Barbara Sawyer
Member



Val Shaw
Member



Zahra Ibrahim
Member



Kim Blyth
Member

Our work priorities

We ensure public involvement in deciding our work priorities. Our annual survey is completed by residents and service providers every year, giving them the opportunity to reflect and help us identify our strengths and areas of improvement. Areas of improvement which have been highlighted influence the new work plan.

We also look at themes emerging from our information and signposting service, as well as feedback we have gathered through several different engagement methods, including face to face, over the phone or digitally.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, undertaking interviews over the phone with those who are disabled or have a long term condition.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We publish it on our website www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

Responses to recommendations and requests

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting of special reviews or investigations. We did contribute to the dental services review.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch **Barking and Dagenham** is represented on the **Barking and Dagenham** Health and Wellbeing Board by **Nathan Singleton**. During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by sharing feedback we received from the local community, on issues such as access to dental services, arrangements for the Integrated Care System.

Meet our staff



Manisha Modhvadia
Acting Manager



Richard Vann
Officer



Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham

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