



healthwatch
Brent

Healthwatch Brent Strategy

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Who is Healthwatch Brent?

Healthwatch Brent was established in April 2013 as the new independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of our community. The contract was taken over by The Advocacy Project in April 2021. Healthwatch plays a role at both national and local level and makes sure that the views of the public and people who use health and social care services are considered.

Our Mission Statement

To amplify the public's voice to improve the quality of local health and social care services in Brent. We listen to you about your experiences of health and social care services and take your voice to the people who commission health and social care services locally.

Our Information and Signposting service can help you navigate Brent's health and social care system to ensure you can find and access the services that are available for you.

Our Aims:

To improve services by:

1. Engaging with communities across Brent and hearing their views.
2. Using feedback from the public and stakeholders to decide our priorities.
3. Investigating issues through enter & view visits and detailed projects.
4. Sharing our findings with commissioners and providers and publicly publishing our report and their response.

5. Developing an action plan from our recommendations and meeting regularly with the organisation involved until the actions are completed.
6. Publishing updates on what has been achieved.
7. Influencing commissioners and providers in strategic decision making.
8. Ensuring high quality consultations and engagement with the public.

Carrying Out Our Statutory Roles

We are described as the consumer champion for health and social care, our role was created by law; The Health & Social Care Act of 2012.

The key requirements of the Health & Social Care Act are:

1. Promote and support the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
2. Obtain the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known.
3. Make reports and recommendations about how local health and social care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
4. Provide advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services.

How we do this in practice

For the Public we will:

Give you Information about health and social care services and signpost you to the correct service, either statutory or in the community.

Inform you about your rights as a patient/ service user, but also your responsibilities to manage your own health and support services to enable them to be effective.

Where you tell us about a personal experience we will:

- Listen to your experiences and signpost you to where to make a complaint and what support is available with complaining.
- Record your experiences and look at trends and themes across the county, using those trends as a basis for what we investigate further.
- Escalate serious concerns to the appropriate authority and monitor the outcome.
- Involve you in how we decide our priorities either through our Grassroots Community Voices or Advisory Group
- Respond to enquiries on our Freephone line within 2 working days.

We will be open and transparent in how we work and publish the following on our website:

- Our Annual report
- Our workplan for the year
- Our Project and Enter & View Reports
- Regular updates of our work
- Records of our regular meetings that set our priorities.

For Commissioners and Providers, we will:

- Work in a spirit of partnership, sharing information, informing you about work we are undertaking and supporting your work that improves patient/service user experiences.
- Share intelligence that we have received from the public.
- Ensure our activities align with organisations timescales.
- Meet with you regularly to discuss shared areas of concern and monitor an action plan made up of agreed issues, Healthwatch Brent report recommendations and CQC findings.
- Act as a critical friend for consultations you undertake.
- Healthwatch Brent frequently gets requests to engage with the public where the organisation making the request should have an inhouse engagement resource that can meet the need. As part of our quarterly liaison with commissioners and providers Healthwatch Brent will encourage good practice engagement and support them with actions that will develop capacity for good quality in-house engagement.
- Healthwatch Brent can provide input in high level strategic issues where there is a need to start to look at how to work with the public or give a high-level view. Further input should then be sought from inhouse engagement.

For neighbouring Healthwatch we will:

- Work in partnership to ensure we coordinate our work with commissioners and providers, so they do not have to speak to each local Healthwatch individually.
- Liaise regularly to agree where we can work together on shared priorities.
- Meet regularly with other local Healthwatch in London and with Healthwatch England.

For the Voluntary Sector we will:

- Work with you to amplify the voices of people in your community.
- Involve you in our public voice programme when we are in your area.
- Involve you in our projects where relevant.

For Brent Council we will:

- Support councillors to share experiences of local residents.
- Keep you updated of the outcomes of our work.
- Work with the Brent Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) to share information.

For our Volunteers we will:

- Be clear about the requirements and expectations of you and be open with you if there are any concerns about how you carry out your role.
- Give you clear roles so you can understand your commitment and what you will achieve.
- Give you training and experience in working in health and social care at a strategic level.
- Reimburse your out-of-pocket expenses.
- Be appreciative of your time and efforts.

To fulfil our other statutory role, we will:

- Use the outcome of escalations, projects and enter & view visits to make recommendations to Healthwatch England / Care Quality Commission to conduct special reviews or investigations.
- Provide Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.
- Work with CQC and NHS England/Improvement where there are significant concerns about an organisation.
- Be effective participants of the Brent Health & Wellbeing Board and influence decisions.
- Be effective participants of the Brent Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and escalate concerns to them.

