

The value of listening

Healthwatch Croydon
Annual Report 2023–2024



About us

Healthwatch Croydon 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 voices 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.



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"They bring invaluable support and challenge to the work in Health & Adult Social Care and help us inform important policy and decision for the better outcomes of the residents in the borough."

See What our stakeholders say on page 10-11.



"Resident got the referral for her relative, that they needed. She rang to thank us for our help."

See Advice and Information page 19-20.



I am very grateful to be given this opportunity by Healthwatch and I think it has given me more confidence in pursuing a career in medicine."

See Our volunteers on page 22.

Introducing our staff and board

Healthwatch Croydon is delivered by three members of staff and supported by a local leadership board comprised of Croydon residents and others with a commitment to the borough.



(Left to right in photograph)

Yinka Faponnle, Engagement Lead

Gordon Kay, Healthwatch Croydon Manager

Jeet Sandhu, Communications Lead

Our local leadership Board

Edwina Morris (Chair)

Martin Faiers

Olusina Adeniyi

Pat Knight

Anantha Ramaswamy (resigned June 2023)

Healthwatch Croydon and Public Voice

Healthwatch Croydon is managed by Public Voice, a nonprofit organisation that delivers resident and community engagement to improve public services and reduce inequalities. Public Voice took on the Healthwatch Croydon service in July 2023. Help & Care held the contract up until 30 June 2023. This service is commissioned by Croydon Council. Local leadership board members have been selected through an open recruitment process and are Croydon residents or those with a commitment to the borough. They bring a wide experience and knowledge of health and care services.

Dan Rogers as Chief Executive Officer of Public Voice is a member of the board. Gordon Kay is the operational manager and so attends the board.

Message from our Chair

The past year has been particularly eventful for Healthwatch Croydon.

We experienced a change of host organisation, with our contract transferring from Help & Care to Public Voice at the beginning of July 2023. Robyn Bone, a valued member of staff, left at the end of March 2023 to take up new challenges in a different not-for-profit organisation. Anantha Ramaswamy, a founder member of, and enthusiastic participant in, our Local Leadership Board, resigned from the board in June 2023 due to ill health and sadly passed away in October. And whilst Covid no longer dominated the headlines, its effects could still be observed in, for example, high waiting lists for health procedures, increased incidences of mental health problems and continued hybrid working for many office-based staff.

However, throughout the year we continued to focus on finding out about the experiences of Croydon residents and on bringing these to the attention of local and national health and care leaders in order to influence positive changes to improve people's experiences. Throughout this report you will find more information about the work that was done. I hope that these snippets of information will spur you to look on our website healthwatchcroydon.co.uk to find the reports which include quotes from residents, summaries of our findings and recommendations for change.

During the year we gathered and presented residents' views about major strategic ambitions for change in local health and care services (the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy, see page 14), London wide health services (Supporting the capital-wide strategy for the London Ambulance Service, page 15), new ways of delivering health care (Understanding barriers to virtual wards, page 13), and new methods of communication about health (Enabling Croydon Health Services NHS Trust to communicate better with patients, page 15). We are also keen to ensure that the views of people who are seldom listened to are presented to health and care leaders, and so we heard from asylum seekers about their experience of accessing and using services (Croydon vulnerable migrants' experiences of health and care services, page 17).



"Throughout the year we continued to focus on finding out about the experiences of Croydon residents and on bringing these to the attention of local and national health and care leaders in order to influence positive changes to improve people's experiences."

Edwina Morris, Chair, Healthwatch Croydon



Message from our Chair

We have also reached out to local Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) that are attached to GP practices, and formed a PPG Network to increase patient feedback to and support of primary care (see page 22).

Whilst our focus is on Croydon health and care, we work with other local Healthwatch organisations across South West London (SWL) to ensure that we influence the Integrated Care System, which includes the SWL health commissioner, the Integrated Care Board. We are also represented on the Croydon Health and Care Board, the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board and a number of other partnership boards and committees, so that we can represent directly the views and concerns of Croydon residents to those people with responsibility for improving services.

If you would like to get involved with Healthwatch Croydon please read our section on Volunteering (see page 22) and contact us.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff, volunteers and board members for their continuing commitment to improving local services.

E. Morris

Edwina Morris, Chair, Healthwatch Croydon



Year In review*

*The new contract managed by Public Voice began on 1 July 2023 and the service was fully restarted on 1 September 2023. Activity for 1 April to 30 June 2023 is not shown on this page but influence of reports published at this time and before is reflected in other sections.

Reaching out:

475 people

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

192 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.



Making a difference to care:

We published

3 reports

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

Our most Impactful report was the

Health and Wellbeing Strategy insight

which shared Croydon resident's views on what should be included and reshaping the strategy that focusing priorities for services until 2028.



Health and social care that works for you:

We were lucky to have

23

volunteers who conducted outreach, contributed to the Croydon Patient Participation Group Network and supported us in our work programme.

We're funded by our local authority.

In 2023 - 24 we received

150,037

which is 0.4% more than the previous year.





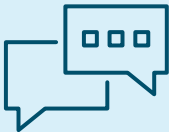



We currently employ

3 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We raised insight of 470 Croydon secondary school children about mental health with key commissioners, emphasising role of family and friends and GPs. See more on our website.</p>	 <p>We shared our work on the MyCare online portal, enabling the portal to be linked to the NHS app within weeks. Community digital inclusion training was also commissioned. See page 15.</p>
Summer	 <p>Croydon resident's insight helped contribute to the new corporate strategy of the London Ambulance Service. This was recognised at the strategy launch. See page 15.</p>	 <p>We reviewed our information and signposting service to enable us to deliver a responsive and effective service for Croydon residents. See page 18.</p>
Autumn	 <p>We contributed to a joint South West London Healthwatch project on barriers around virtual wards, working with Healthwatch in Merton and Wandsworth. See page 9.</p>	 <p>We enabled residents to respond to Croydon's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy both at pre-consultation and consultation stages, influencing changes to the final document. See page 14.</p>
Winter	 <p>We heard from 58 vulnerable migrants from 24 countries on their experience of accessing and using services informing both the Care Quality Commission and local services. See page 17.</p>	 <p>We received commended award from the Healthwatch England Network for our work empowering Black communities around wellbeing which supported the development of a hub. See page 15.</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch in South West London to ensure the experiences of people in Croydon influence decisions made about services at South West London Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

You can read more about what the South West London ICS does here. www.southwestlondonics.org.uk. This year we've worked with Healthwatch across South West London in the following ways.



We helped ensure continued availability of virtual wards to South West London residents. We spoke with people in Croydon, Merton, and Wandsworth to understand their views on virtual wards. Our report was referenced in a South West London-wide business case that successfully extended the virtual wards programme, which helps people stay out of hospitals and receive treatment at home where possible.

We worked with partners to advocate for more accessible dentistry services. We have been working alongside dentists, NHS management, and public health colleagues as part of a new initiative that aims to bring dental services to the people that struggle the most with access, and to help support preventative care.



We hired a South West London Engagement Coordinator. We welcomed Iyinoluwa Oshinowo, who formerly worked in academic mental health research, to our team to help strengthen our capacity to undertake collaborative community engagement across South West London boroughs, including work on virtual wards and the Accessible Information Standard.

We strengthened the South West London Integrated Care System's digital inclusion strategy. The Integrated Care System is rolling out new digital platforms and apps across South West London to help streamline access to care and to support people in self-managing their conditions. We helped ensure that people who are digitally excluded because of poor access to digital devices or the internet, lack of comfort with using digital platforms, disability, and/or low English skills have equitable ways of accessing services and support.



What our stakeholders say

Read what Croydon's stakeholders say about working with Healthwatch.



"I am delighted to have been able to work with Healthwatch to develop our newly refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy. They bring invaluable support and challenge to the work in Health & Adult Social Care and help us inform important policy and decision for the better outcomes of the residents in the borough."

Cllr Yvette Hopley, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care and Chairman Health & Wellbeing Board



"Healthwatch Croydon's role as the local consumer champion for health and social care is crucial in bringing the voices and experiences of our Croydon residents to life. These are central objectives in how we deliver the Mayor's Business Plan and the Croydon Health and Care Plan. Looking forward, Croydon Council has set out its ambition to radically change over the next five years as set out in the Future Croydon Transformation Plan. Within the plan, I am responsible for an adult social care transformation programme. So, I welcome the support from Healthwatch Croydon as an active partner. In particular their role on my Improvement Board and Programme Boards; and through the Health and Social Care Scrutiny sub-committee and Health and Wellbeing Board. I look forward to continuing our partnership with Healthwatch Croydon."

Annette McPartland, Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health, Croydon Council



"Healthwatch Croydon plays a pivotal role as a critical friend to Croydon Councils' Health and Social Care Sub-Committee. Their diligent research conducted by both staff and trained volunteers, provides substantial insights into patients' experiences with health services in Croydon. The Healthwatch reports are key reading for local health services and serve as a cornerstone for the Sub-Committee's accountability in overseeing local health partners. By actively engaging with the community, Healthwatch Croydon ensures that the voice of Croydon residents is heard. Their contributions significantly inform and shape better services, which benefit the entire community. Through their work, Healthwatch Croydon fosters collaboration, transparency and continuous improvement in health and social care provision."

Councillor Eunice O'Dame, Chair of Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee, June 2023 to date

What our stakeholders say

Hear from what our stakeholders have to say about working with Healthwatch



"Healthwatch Croydon have remained a core part of the One Croydon alliance this year, working alongside our community and voluntary partners and providing valuable local insight into the experiences of those who use our health services, making some important recommendations on how we can improve our care.

"Throughout 2023-24, Healthwatch Croydon has conducted some particularly important research, firstly working alongside the Health Innovation Network looking at both public awareness and sentiment towards the use of virtual wards to deliver care in communities and also in exploring the views of vulnerable migrants accessing healthcare in the borough, allowing us to greater shape how we respond to and seek to address long standing health inequalities.

"As we look towards 2024-25, one of our key priorities will be the refresh of the local health and care plan, which will outline our shared vision for the future of health and care in Croydon and set out our joint priorities for the coming years and I know that the team at Healthwatch Croydon will play a key role in ensuring the voice of patients is heard throughout this work."

Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive and Place-Based Leader for Health



Healthwatch Croydon's team and some board members with Executive Mayor Perry, Matthew Kershaw (Croydon's Health leader), Annette McPartland, (Director of Adult Social Care) and Sarah Burns (Croydon Voluntary Action Director of Communities) at our Annual Meeting in November 2023.



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.

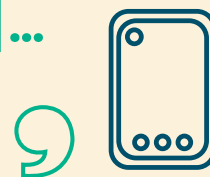
Understanding barriers to virtual wards

In 2023, Healthwatch Croydon, Healthwatch Wandsworth, and staff from the South West London coordination team, worked with the Health Innovation Network to understand why individuals would reject the offer to be admitted onto a virtual ward as well as general views and perceptions of the model. We spoke to patients as well as carers and friends and family.

Residents shared experiences of using this innovation, where a range of monitoring services that would usually happen in a hospital ward happen at home using a portable kit with video calls.

“Totally against digital [technology]...
[I] don't see the use of it.”

Interview respondent



What did you tell us about virtual wards?

- Both patients and carers expressed that virtual wards would provide the opportunity to receive extra support in the comfort of their own homes.
- Participants mentioned that the technological aspect of virtual wards may prove difficult for those who struggle with digital technology or need extra assistance using devices.
- There were some worries around isolation and risk of harm as those who are elderly or vulnerable (those with mental or neurological conditions) could be left alone.
- Though some participants found the term ‘virtual wards’ likeable, participants did suggest names that they felt were more suitable such as ‘Hospital at Home,’ ‘Care in Comfort,’ or ‘Home Treatment.’
- Recommendations included renaming the initiative and considerations around admission onto virtual wards. Hospital staff should also consider a patient’s degree of independence, isolation, mental capacity, suitability of the home environment and financial wellbeing. For example, ability to pay for heating for patient comfort/health and for added electrical costs of running any virtual ward. Carers should also be involved in decision making. There should be better communication about what virtual ward placement will mean for them so that they can make a considered decision about whether to take up a placement.. This must be provided in an accessible way considering language, learning disabilities, sensory disabilities, neurological conditions. Suitable training should also be provided for patients, carers and friends and family.

What difference did this make?

- The Health Innovation Network incorporated our findings into their wider research work on virtual wards which will influence local and national policy in this area.
- Insights within this report have also helped shape a second wider project on the experience and access of virtual ward which is currently being written up and is due to published in Summer 2024.
- We will use insight from both reports to hold commissioners and providers to ensure patient insight and experience helps drive this innovative development of services.

Read this report at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk



Health and Wellbeing strategy

In 2023, we were invited to contribute to the development Croydon's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, led by the Public Health team. We organised a pre-consultation discussion session as a part of our Annual Meeting in November 2023 and organised a feedback event during the consultation period in February 2024.

50 people gave their views at the AGM and a further 10 came to the consultation event. This is what we heard:

- The importance of good mental health and link to physical health and independence and self-care are key as well as access to green space. Support from services and building a strong relationship between services, patients, and wider community is also important
- The vision statement could be simpler, with less jargon, and grounded. It needs to focus on equity and representation and to show more actions rather than just words.
- Access to services still of more consideration for many. There is a concern about reach and awareness of services that are for all the community. Wider aspects around environment and social behaviour also need to be considered.
- Recommendations included: a significant focus on mental health, independence and self-care; recognizing the environmental impact of good health including green spaces and places for healthy activities; a clearer, simpler, jargon-free vision statement; a focus on equity and representation; clear links to specific actions rather aspirations; consider wider aspects such as housing, employment, environment, and work, which influence health and wellbeing.



"Needs simplifications – does reflect values – general public's wording, too corporate level language. Needs to be resident level language."

Croydon resident feedback



What difference did this make?

- The Public Health project team made several changes in response to our findings by revising the overall statement to make it more understandable to the public as well as strengthening the priority of mental health, links to independence and selfcare, importance of green spaces, equity and representation. It also showed how priorities will link to actions and considered the wider aspects of health such as housing, employment and the environment.
- Healthwatch Croydon also hosted a consultation event in February 2024 to sense check the final report with the public and ensure much of which had been previously mentioned was now clarified in the report. Our place on the Health and Wellbeing Board means we can continue to monitor its progress and effectiveness.

Read this report at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk



Three ways we have made a difference in the community

In this section, we show examples of where we have made a difference to Croydon, London and also presented our work on a national stage.

Empowering Black communities around wellbeing

In 2019, we spoke to over 150 members of Croydon diverse Black and Minority Ethnic communities to ask them what wellbeing meant to them and what non-clinical services they needed.

Five years later, and the Wellbeing Centre is a crucial hub in supporting this community in the heart of Croydon. Our report has been used continually to shape developments from the beginning from making the environment welcoming to the range of services and approach of its staff and activities. Healthwatch Croydon were recognised with a 'Commended' award as part of the Healthwatch England Network Awards, and this profiled this important initiative on a national stage.



Supporting the capital-wide strategy for the London Ambulance Service (LAS)

In 2023, we shared views, experiences and perceptions of emergency and urgent care services, to help shape a new strategy for this key service provider.

Sometimes what we hear in Croydon can support wider initiatives. Along with 19 other Healthwatch in London, we undertook focus groups, surveys and analysed resident feedback data to inform the new LAS strategy. Healthwatch Croydon's input was recognised at the launch event in September 2023 and shows Croydon resident's feedback can go beyond the borough to support city-wide initiatives.



Enabling Croydon Health Services NHS Trust (CHS) to communicate better with patients

In 2023, we gained feedback on a new digital MyCare service that enables patients to have all their document in one place online.

We spoke to outpatients in five areas of Croydon University Hospital and found a range of barriers to using MyCare,. This included: knowing it exists; confusing it with other apps; and lack of understanding or confidence in how to use it. Through our insight, we made many recommendations which were swiftly responded to including linking it to the NHS app within weeks of sharing the report to commissioning of dedicated community-based online training to support patients.



Read these reports at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk





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:

- Raising the experiences of vulnerable migrants.
- Meeting people in outreach from different communities
- Shared insight from Croydon residents with local NHS and social care leaders and the South West London Integrated Care System..

Raising the experiences of vulnerable migrants

In 2023, we were commissioned by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to explore views and experience of vulnerable migrants to support their work. We wanted to understand their experiences of accessing and using health and care services in Croydon as well as their knowledge of the CQC. The CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. We undertook 12 interviews and 46 surveys with a range of vulnerable migrants from 24 countries all resident in temporary accommodation in Croydon .



“The doctor very good I have depression so hard to sleep need help and doctor help me. Very much feel safe here “

Vulnerable migrant respondent



- We met a very diverse population. From 58 people, we represented 24 countries from four continents most fleeing political, religious, or ethnic persecution or war, but some also gang warfare and domestic violence. A small number came in search of work or study and were stranded in the UK.
- GP (doctors) services were most heavily used, with Rainbow Health Centre which is a dedicated GP-led service for homeless and asylum seekers being used the most. Other services included accident and emergency, hospital outpatients, mental health services and dentistry.
- Most are happy with the services they have received, particularly with GPs, but were less satisfied with services beyond primary care such as waiting for hospital services and specialists and access to dentistry. Very few vulnerable migrants had heard of the Care Quality Commission.
- Most found it easy to register with a GP but most had used Rainbow Health Centre which is dedicated to vulnerable migrants. Very few had heard about Safe Surgeries which is a GP-led initiative to support vulnerable migrants. There were a few that registered successfully at other surgeries.
- Suggested improvements were about accessing services quicker and better understanding of the process of getting care beyond a GP as well as support for mental health issues.
- Recommendations included providing dedicated GP services for vulnerable migrants (Rainbow was considered a good model); managing expectations since migrants come from different health systems; communicating Safe Surgeries with the community so they are aware of surgeries that have signed up to this commitment; and an emphasis on mental health support.

What difference did this make?

- The CQC confirmed that this insight helped give further insight into the ways that vulnerable migrants access care and interact with health professionals. The findings are being promoted within CQC to be applied to different areas to enable further co-design and involvement to influence their work.
- After we published our research, Croydon's Strategic Executive Group invited Healthwatch Croydon to present findings and support and recognised the significance of the findings particularly around GP services and further discussion between services is planned.

Read this report at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk





Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Croydon 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 resolve issues with their GPs (doctors)
- Liaising with services to support referrals.

Helping people get the support they need

Delays in getting responses from services can be frustrating for residents

Patient contacted us complaining that her GP practice is not willing to issue a fit to work note after she was absent a certain period from work. This was frustrating to her as the employer was not letting her resume work without the fit note.

Action taken: We wrote to the GP practice requesting a fit to work note to be issued for patient as it was important for her to resume work.

Outcome: Within two weeks, the GP practice issued the fit to work note for patient which she could use for work.

Resident was without a GP and when he approached GP Practice, he was told to register online. He could not complete this online as he did not have digital technology. When he asked the receptionist to help him with the registration, he was told that there was no time for him as there were other clients waiting there. Resident felt undervalued and discriminated.

Action Taken: We sent a complaint email explaining the issue and how resident felt about the GP receptionist service and how it was important to help him with the registration process.

Outcome: Within 7 working days, the reception team registered resident at GP and they sent him a confirmation text. Resident was informed and was happy with the result.

Resident contacted Healthwatch Croydon in relation to his GP surgery preventing him from having his medication and having an appointment after relationship breakdown. Client went to the chemist to collect his medication, but staff said to him that the GP surgery put a mark on his record therefore, they cannot give him his prescription. He had recently had a brain operation which was affecting his health. He had only week supply from the hospital, and he was worried that he will run out of it soon. He did not know which GP he could register with for his medication needs.

Action Taken: We contacted the GP practice which cancelled deducted resident from the list of patients to get information. The reception advised that resident was on self-special allocation practice – which takes up patients who are deducted from their GP due to relationship breakdown. We contacted self-special allocation practice, and they confirmed that resident is registered with them, and have booked a phone appointment. Informed client as above.

Outcome: Client was booked an appointment over the phone with the doctor for medication needs assessment.

Helping people get the support they need

Delays in getting responses from services can be frustrating for residents

Resident contacted Healthwatch Croydon to complain about her GP Practice. Client had multiple health issues and wanted to discuss them with the doctor, but reception was not helping her arrange a face-face appointment with them, and client was very distressed as nobody was listening to her.

Action Taken: We sent a complaint email to GP practice explaining how resident was feeling as well as addressing her medical issues. We informed client has about our action regarding the complaint she raised.

Outcome: GP Practice replied to our complaint and confirmed that the case has been investigated and led to patient having a face-to-face appointment.

Referral from Healthwatch England. Client contacted us on behalf of her mother. There have been issues with her mother's care package and payment. We contacted client and informed them about the complaint procedure and that we will contact Croydon's adult social services (ASS) team to address the concerns.

Action taken: We held an in-depth meeting with the ASS Team Manager who was very helpful and knew the case well. Many points raised by client's daughter were clarified,

Summary of outcome from the meeting: The ASS team responded to several enquires/complaints in relation to her mother's case. There were issues about payments and some clarity was needed between carer and the ASS team. There was a role for a social worker to be able to conduct a mental capacity assessment to support a decision to engage in the financial assessment process. The outcome of the assessment will enable the Local Authority, client, and mother to determine next steps. As stated earlier, the ASS team confirmed that they intended to work amicably with client to resolve this issue.

Resident's mother called asking for advice on who to contact to do a hospital referral for a resident who needed a bowel tissue examination. He is currently in a mental health hospital. She said they asked Croydon University Hospital which the client was admitted to previously. but they said they needed a letter of referral from their GP..

Action Taken: We spoke to the GP practice and we advised her to ask the GP Practice for referral . They agreed and said they would also update us.

Outcome: Resident got the referral for her relative, that they needed. She rang to thank us for our help.



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:

- Visited communities and event to promote Healthwatch Croydon and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Created a new Croydon Patient Participation Group Network to share knowledge, information, and best practice to support resident and patient engagement and participation for all Croydon residents.



"I have been volunteering at Healthwatch since November 2022 as part of my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. I want to go into medicine and I have found this the ideal place to volunteer to support that goal.

"I am very grateful to be given this opportunity by Healthwatch and I think it has given me more confidence in pursuing a career in medicine. It has been a large learning experience. Through attending meetings, I have gained a greater understanding of the problems that people face with accessing healthcare, through researching things like neurodivergence and virtual wards I have expanded my knowledge on medical subjects. But more importantly, after talking to people, reading survey responses and hearing stories, I've been told about people's experiences.

"I understand how important Healthwatch Croydon is in ensuring that everyone has access to good healthcare. As from personal experience and from volunteering there and learning about how other people's lives were ruined by either a medical mistake or from not having access to healthcare, and how it had such a tremendous effect on their quality of life."



Cecily Mosedale
Healthwatch
Croydon volunteer

Croydon Patient Participation Group Network

In December 2023, we established a new Croydon's Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) Network to share knowledge, information, and best practice to support resident and patient engagement and participation for all Croydon residents. Members include those Croydon GP PPG, or want to start a PPG in Croydon and are committed to leaning and sharing knowledge and experience of Patient Participation as well as support the values and principles of patient participation as well as those of Healthwatch Croydon. support Healthwatch Croydon in gaining patient insight and experience from Croydon patients and service users.

Do you feel inspired?



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

 www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

 **0300 012 0235**

 info@healthwatchcroydon.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 Croydon Council	£150,037	Expenditure on pay	£94,050
Additional income	£16,666	Non-pay expenditure	£24,188
		Office and management fees	£35,366
Total income	£166,703	Total expenditure	£153,603

Additional income is broken down by:

- £4,000 received from Healthwatch Sutton, host organisation for the South West London Healthwatch Executive Lead, for our contribution to joint working for this project
- £2667 received from Healthwatch Sutton on behalf of the South West London Health Innovations network for work on barriers to Virtual Wards.
- £9,999 received from the Care Quality Commission for work on hearing from vulnerable migrants.

Integrated Care System funding

Healthwatch across South West London receive funding from the South West London Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level. Healthwatch Croydon receive £4,000 from Healthwatch Sutton, who is the host organisation for this funding on behalf of all six Healthwatch. They manage the Executive Lead and Engagement Officer. The other five Healthwatch in South West London also receive the same amount for supporting this work

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
South West London ICB	£110,000

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 priorities for the next year are:

1. Developing the role of the Croydon Patient Participation Group Network to share knowledge, information, and best practice to support resident and patient engagement and participation for all Croydon residents.
2. Further extending the work we have done previously on people’s experience of mental health services.
3. Supporting the reduction of health inequalities through understanding the needs of the minority communities with specific health conditions.
4. Understanding the impact and experience of new service developments being delivered in health and social care.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Croydon, 24 George Street, Croydon CR0 1PB under contract managed by Public Voice, Tottenham Town Hall, Town Hall Approach Road, London, N15 4RX

Healthwatch Croydon 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 four 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.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 7 times and made decisions on matters such as agreeing to our workplan of the year which included the projects presented in this annual report, and the need to increase the size of the board to represent Croydon borough. Three new board members were recruited in March 2024, and were fully inducted in April 2024..

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 about their experience of health and care services. During 2023-24, we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, attended a range of virtual meetings of community groups and fora, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media, as well as some outreach sessions. We also established a Croydon Patient Participation Group Network to understand patient needs and support patient representation and participation.

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, speaking to vulnerable migrants about their experiences of services. (see page 17),

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 and promote and share it across the community, including printed copies distributed at our Annual Meeting and when we engage in the community.

Responses to recommendations

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

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us. In our local authority area for example we take information to Croydon Council, Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board, Croydon Health and Care Board, and Croydon's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in South West London ICS (see page 9 for more detail). 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 no Enter and View visits but were able to monitor the quality of care homes through participation in the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board and Care Homes Strategy Board.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Croydon is represented on the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board by Edwina Morris, Chair of Healthwatch Croydon. During 2023–24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by ensuring that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy refresh enabled due regard to be given to the views of local residents. She also contributed to discussions about the future role and membership of the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board, following the establishment of the South West London Integrated Care System, and to reviews of various strategies, including the SWL Integrated Care Partnership Strategy, the SWL Mental Health Strategic Plan and Croydon Dementia Strategic Plan, to ensure that issues raised with Healthwatch Croydon by local residents were addressed. We also presented the 2022–23 Healthwatch Croydon Annual Report and contributed to discussions about the progress being made by the multi-agency Frontrunner hospital discharge programme in improving residents' experience of being discharged from hospital.

Gordon Kay, Healthwatch Croydon Manager is co-opted as a member of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and presents reports at each meeting. This included reports on Young People's Mental Health, MyCare online portal, Asylum Seekers and GP website mystery shop, where residents reviewed all of Croydon's GP websites, (see our website for more detail). We also asked questions about public involvement in changes to the delivery of adult social care and publication of the adult safeguarding report. Healthwatch Croydon is represented on the South West London Integrated Care System by Alyssa Chase-Vilchez, South West London Healthwatch Executive Officer, who attends the Integrated Care Partnership, Integrated Care Board and other key boards and groups and liaises with the six local Healthwatch organisations.

2023 – 2024 Outcomes


Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Patient knowledge and experience of the MyCare Patient Portal at Croydon University Hospital	Changes to the service were made within weeks of the data being shared including linking it to the NHS app. A community training programme was commissioned and developed to enable those who needed to use MyCare to increase their knowledge and confidence it and help increase uptake.
London Ambulance Service strategy letter	Having won funding from LAS to provide insight to help define their strategy they have acknowledged the contribution we have made and are using this along with 19 other London Healthwatch to define their strategy. We attended the launch of the strategy in September 2023 and were publicly acknowledged for our contribution.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	We facilitated two events to ensure resident voice shaped the development of this key policy. A key number of actions were made from content, to communication including using clearer language improved its development- see our website reports page for more information
Vulnerable Migrants	The CQC have taken our insight to refine their engagement strategy on how they connect with this group. Local discussions at a senior level are now taking place with senior Health and Social Care leaders.

healthwatch

Croydon

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