

Annual Report 2016-17

healthwatch
Croydon

your
voice
can deliver
better services

Healthwatch
Croydon's vision is
of a society in which
people's health and
social care needs are
heard, understood
and met.

Achieving this
vision in Croydon
will mean that:

- Local people shape health and social care delivery
- Local people influence the services they receive personally
- Local people hold services to account

Healthwatch Croydon's legal functions and how we have met them

Gathering views and understanding the experiences of patients and the public:

320 occasions

Making people's views known and acting as a credible voice at strategic meetings:

140 occasions

Supporting the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of services:

136 occasions

Recommending investigation or review of services via Healthwatch England or Care Quality Commission:

17 occasions

Signposting for access to services and support for making informed choices:

34 occasions

Making the experiences of people known to Healthwatch England and other local Healthwatch organisations:

11 occasions

What we have achieved in 2016-17



8,839
health and social
care related issues
were detected

We were assisted by **70** volunteers,
who contributed **2,908** hours in total 
38 evidence-based reports were compiled 
77 outreach visits were completed 

We engaged with **4,225** residents
about their experiences of health and social care services 

We established new working partnerships with **48**
organisations/agencies 

We attended **140** health and
social care related meetings 

2,518 new
stakeholders were
acquired 

Our Year in Numbers



What we have done in 2015-2016

Listening to people who use services

Our committed team of volunteers have enabled us to speak to thousands of Croydon residents about their experiences of health and social care services. Our volunteers are the 'lifeblood' of what we do. We have analysed experiences and produced reports and made recommendations.

See pages 14-32

Making people's views known and influencing decision-makers

We represent Croydon residents' experiences at all the key committees and boards that decide the delivery of health and social care services. See how we have made an impact on improving services.

See pages 33-45

Giving people advice and information and supporting community decision-making

Through training, networking events and consultations we have supported local people in getting people involved in decision-making.

See pages 46-51

Building our reputation

We have invested in staff, events and community engagement to widen our profile and increase impact.

See pages 52-61

Our plans in 2016-17

See pages 62-63

Finance and governance

See pages 64-67



John Davey
Chair 2016-17

We are all acutely aware that our health and care services are under enormous pressure. NHS England and local Clinical Commissioning Groups have developed Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) across the country with the intention of spending the available funding more effectively with the focus on prevention rather than cure and care in the community. These are laudable aims, but no-one should underestimate the difficulty of realising the benefits. We, the service users, have a key role to play. We know what works for us, and we know what causes problems. We need to make sure our issues are addressed.

It is not all doom and gloom. Croydon University Hospital is no longer in special financial measures and staff should be congratulated for the progress they have made. Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is still in special financial measures, and is in the process of withdrawing or changing some services that many would prefer to see continue as they are. While financial imperatives may dictate that everything cannot continue, we must ensure that there is due engagement and, where appropriate, consultation before final decisions are taken. Knowing how the needs of service users will continue to be met after the changes have been made is also important.

Healthwatch Croydon is better placed to represent service users' views than ever before. We now have the views of 5,000 Croydon service users on our database, gathered over the last two years. Our Patient Experience Panel meets every two weeks, and analyses the feedback we receive. We have carried out a number of in-depth surveys on key issues in Croydon and produced six reports as a result. We have placed particular emphasis on ensuring we reach out to groups whose views might not otherwise

be represented. We sit on the Health and Wellbeing Board, and attend CCG meetings and have built constructive relationships with the key players. Armed with our data and reports we are well placed to exert real influence.

This has been a year of change at both Board level and within the staff team. I took over as Chair from Gary Hickey in July 2016, who in turn took over from Vanessa Hosford who had been Acting Chair for some time. I would like to thank Gary and Vanessa for the considerable efforts they made on our behalf, and for the support they have given me since I became Chair. David Court also left the Board and I would like to thank him for his contribution.

On the staff side, Charlie Ladyman, our CEO, moved on in November 2016, and I would like to thank her in particular for putting in place the foundations on which our current operation is built. Annamika Koomoshan also left the team in April 2016 and I would like to thank her for the work she did on Enter and Views, where representatives observe service delivery. Thank you also to our Project Assistant Nana

Apprey-Abraham for her work during her time with us from July to December 2016.

We have been joined by Jai Jayaraman as our CEO, Geraldine Bolam as our Community Engagement Manager and Robyn Bone as Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator. Together with existing team members, Gordon Kay, Marketing Officer; Yinka Alowooja, Executive Assistant and Darren Morgan, Community Analyst, we are committed to ensuring the views of service users in Croydon are taken into account by the commissioners and getting some real benefits for Croydon residents.

We get excellent support from our volunteers, and with the appointment of a dedicated Volunteer and Outreach role, we aim to improve our engagement and provide our volunteers with a better experience. Together we can make a real difference and we will be striving to take our performance to the next level to make a significant impact on decision-making and performance in health and social care services in Croydon.



Jai Jayaraman
Chief Executive Officer

This year we have worked hard to understand the issues in health and social care facing the residents of Croydon and to influence decision-makers based on our findings.

Through our surveys and outreach work, we have collected the views of more than 4,000 people. We have published six research reports (see pages 14-30) on topics as varied as anticoagulation services, carers experience of hospital discharge, mental health services, GP services, experience of refugees and asylum seekers, and teenage sexual health.

More significantly, the impact of our work has had influence with commissioners and service providers.

Sometimes the impact has been relatively swift, as with this year's teenage sexual health research, which gained a commitment from public health for teenagers to have a more active voice in developing services. Sometimes it takes a little time – recommendations resulting from our 2015 urgent care report were taken on board in the repurchase process of 2016, with a Healthwatch Croydon volunteer on the key decision-making committee. Our 2016 child autism event report called for dedicated education support, which is currently being planned in Croydon.

Key to our success has been our data collection and coding which involves independent verification by volunteers at our regular Patient Evaluation Panels (PEPs). This has provided us with a solid evidence base of patient experience. Our database now contains over 18,000 items of data, collected over two years, which can be analysed for reports. As a result we have much more meaningful conversations with service providers based on our evidence, and therefore be in a better place to influence necessary change.

We have continued to represent Croydon residents'

at key meetings such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee and our impact can be seen on pages 35-38. We have strengthened our relationships with all health service commissioners, reviewed the Quality Accounts of all local providers, and influenced decision making at governing body level and at informal meetings. Publicising our work and gaining press coverage for issues of importance has also been a key feature of our work (see pages 52-56).

Over the second half of the year we also provided opportunities for an entire year group of 24 degree-level health and social care students from University College Croydon to understand and contribute to our work. Many of them joined our regular PEPs and conducted outreach for us. They gained hundreds of hours of meaningful voluntary work - a considerable investment of time and knowledge in potential future healthcare workers and leaders of Croydon.

Over the next year, we are looking to build and improve on our successes to date. We have identified a need to expand our work in social care and have

recruited a Community Engagement Manager with more than 20 years' experience in this area. Research tells us that the experience of BME (Black and minority ethnic) carers is under-reported and this is a particular area that we will be focusing on.

We will be making further improvements to our method of collecting patient experience data by providing an online facility for patients to report their experiences of services as part of our website. This will also help improve our signposting ability and provide further opportunities to engage commissioners and service providers on the quality of services provided. This facility may also open up opportunities to provide independent reporting to support health providers in their delivery of services.

We understand the need to provide more structured opportunities for volunteers and will be developing a strategy and plan to continue to induct and motivate volunteers. We also plan a more enhanced outreach programme and have recruited an outreach coordinator for this purpose.

Introduction

As a Croydon resident, you have the right to express your views and experience on services. We are determined to involve and empower more people in Croydon to have their say in the changes that are affecting their local health economy, and are planning a training programme to achieve this.

My thanks to Charlie Ladyman, our previous CEO, as many of our achievements that appear in this report were under her tenure. Many thanks also to the staff team who have remained committed and focused despite the organisational changes. I also thank our Board for their passion and drive over the last twelve months.

Finally, my thanks goes to our volunteers who support us with zeal, passion and commitment. We cannot achieve what we do without them. I am confident that with the skills of the staff and of our volunteers, and an engaged Croydon community, we will achieve everything we set out to accomplish.



Croydon resident at our GP services public meeting as part of our AGM, October 2016

How our volunteers contribute

We could not have achieved what we have done this year without our volunteers. Below they explain in their own words what they have gained through being involved with Healthwatch Croydon.

"I joined Healthwatch Croydon a year after retiring from a long and interesting career in health and social care. By volunteering with Healthwatch I have found the statement 'give a little and gain a lot' is very true in my case. I have made new friends, feel mentally stimulated and feel I am making a difference.

I attend weekly meetings where, as a group, we discuss comments by, or on behalf of, people who have used health and social care services. It is a mixed group with people of different ages and backgrounds therefore we have different points of view which challenge your own opinions. Healthwatch also offer training and run Forums. It has given me a sense of purpose and I am happy to attend as often as I am able."

Gillian Khalighi

"I have lived in Croydon for 43 years and have been a Healthwatch Croydon volunteer for about 2 years. I have always been passionate about helping people, particularly those over 55 years of age, the vulnerable, the disabled and children.

Healthwatch Croydon staff work hard, representing Croydon residents to improve the Health and Social Services in Hospitals and in the Community. They appreciate volunteers' opinions, contribution, strong commitment and enthusiasm.

I enjoy being a volunteer and find it rewarding, as I feel that I can make a difference. I have also made friends with some of the volunteers. We have learned from each other's experiences as we are from all walks of life."

See Agnes talk more about volunteering for Healthwatch Croydon at <https://youtu.be/f7pn7XFpYLM>

Agnes Tye



How our placement students contribute

Healthwatch Croydon signed up a whole class of 24 public health and social care students on placement from University Centre Croydon in 2016-17.

What they did

The students, based at Croydon College, collected comments from residents at outreach sessions at local hospitals, GPs and community groups. By entering and analysing data, they helped us with the delivery of reports.

Gaining experience

In return, they gained insights into the challenges and issues of health and social care services, as well as developing skills in all aspects of research. This gave them experience and skills to feed back into their studies, and support them in finding work once they graduate or prepare for further study.

Feedback

One of the students, Besem Joy Taku (pictured right), said: “Being someone who is passionate about the quality of care the public receives, I became interested in doing a placement with Healthwatch

Croydon. I have come to know more about Healthwatch and its relationship with the various NHS bodies. I enjoy working in the field and learning how to interact with the public.”

Annette Helliwell, Lecturer for the Foundation Degree Public Health and Social Care course at University Centre Croydon said: “We have been really thrilled that Healthwatch have been able to offer our students this exciting opportunity to put some of their skills and knowledge into action. Many of our students live in the local area and are delighted to be able to work with Healthwatch to help improve outcomes for local people.”



How our placement students contribute

"I was excited to volunteer for Healthwatch as part of my university work placement curriculum; it was a whole new experience for me. I moved from Ireland to London for university in 2016. Since I was fresh from Ireland, I didn't know much about the UK and its government and organisations. Everything appeared to be a bit daunting to me. However, volunteering for Healthwatch was a game changer for me as I never worked in a public health workplace before. It aided me to learn more about Croydon's health and social care services and what the local people of Croydon think of them. Therefore, I learned about different laws and policies in place to satisfy the needs and wants of the service users. Plus, it helped me on my assignments in university and I developed a lot of skills from the experience. Also, I networked with a couple of wonderful people from different professional backgrounds in the organisation. Healthwatch opened up opportunities for me which I am forever grateful for."

Paloma Mavacala,
Placement student from University Centre Croydon



"Healthwatch have really helped me, I have had the opportunity to do my work placement alongside a number of great volunteers from different backgrounds. I have learned the value of the workplace, and been allowed to put theory into practice. With the support from my mentors I have been able to complete my assignments and understand the broader purpose that Healthwatch serves within the community."

Muhubo Ahmed,
Placement student from
University Centre Croydon



Listening to people who use services



One of our key functions is to “gather views and understand the experiences of patients and the public through systematic engagement, analysis of information and use of Enter and View powers.”

This section looks at the work we have done in finding out what Croydon residents think about key healthcare issues and turning those experiences into relevant research that can influence change.

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Anticoagulation report

What was the issue?

Anti-coagulants are medicines that help prevent blood clots. They're given to people at a high risk of getting clots, to reduce their chances of developing serious conditions such as strokes and heart attacks. In 2015, the delivery of anti-blood clotting (anticoagulation) services was reorganised. Originally delivering in six locations comprised of GP surgeries and pharmacies, the new contract was successfully awarded to Boots UK Ltd, following a procurement process. Boots UK Ltd now provides this service through nine sites, three in GP surgeries and six through its pharmacies.

What did we research?

Healthwatch Croydon visited eight locations running the service in April and May 2016, and spoke to patients using the services gaining over 100 comments.

What did we find?

In general the service was praised, with 75% saying they were positive about the services, particularly waiting time, general quality of service, and distance they had to travel. We observed that most patients were seen within 10 minutes of their arrival, regardless of their appointment times. The majority of the negative responses (17%) related to the layout and environment of the pharmacy and distance to travel. This was particularly significant at Boots Purley, where some patients had to stand while waiting for their appointment.

What did we recommend?

A survey showed that users are happy with the reorganised service, which is delivered by one provider. This shows a good model for care shifting from GP services to pharmacies. However, there was a lack of consultation and communication by Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, and this was raised in the report.

What was the outcome?

When Healthwatch Croydon published the report in June 2016, Babar Shafiq, Commissioning Programme Lead Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group said: “I would like to thank Healthwatch Croydon for producing the anticoagulation report. The CCG welcomes the report and the comprehensive patient experience data it contains. The report will guide the future patient engagement of the programme.”

Find out more at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/croydon's-reorganised-anti-blood-clotting-services-receive-praise



Experiences of carers of over-65s

What was the issue?

There are over 50,000 people in Croydon over 65. Croydon has over 33,000 carers, with a significant number looking after over-65s. Around 35% of those registered as carers with Croydon Carers Support Centre look after over-65s. Considering the numbers of carers and their involvement in using health and social services, Healthwatch Croydon considered this was an important area to research.

What did we research?

Healthwatch Croydon, heard the views of over 45 carers in Croydon in June 2016 gaining over 130 items of feedback.

What did we find?

Carers of people aged 65 and over in Croydon needed far better support including better communication between health providers and carers concerning hospital discharge, more home support, better care planning, and better promotion of rights of carers.

What did we recommend?

Health providers need to build better communications processes, with better information on hospital discharge and clearer medication instructions. Improved access to services is also needed. Social care workers need to regularly update patients throughout the day with likely visit times. Care plans need to be integrated with the focus on the patient's needs, not the needs of the various providers. AAs stronger information campaign on carer's rights and entitlements under Care Act 2014 which is accessible and easy-to-read.

Carers for over-65s

Overview:

- 50,000 people in Croydon over 60. (source ONS)
- 33,000 carers in Croydon, (source ONS) with a significant % looking after over-65s.
- 35% of those registered as Carers with Carers Support Centre look after over-65s.

sample: 46 Interviews, 134 items of feedback



Hospital discharge

View:

- Communication problems
- Patients confused
- Carers not involved in decision-making
- Low information sharing



Recommendation:

- Better communications process
- Better information
- Clearer medication instructions



Support at home

View:

- Difficult to access support
- Delayed, minimal or no support at all
- Carer works do not say they will be late

Recommendation:

- Social and care workers respond to calls promptly



Care planning

View:

- Health, mental health and social care each use care plans, which are not linked

Recommendation:

- Integrated care plans, reflecting the needs of each person



Knowing their rights

View:

- Carers need to know more about their rights and entitlements, including those under Care Act 2014

Recommendation:

- Better information, accessible and easy-to-read

Experiences of carers of over-65s

What was the outcome?

When Healthwatch Croydon published the report in August 2016, a spokesperson from Croydon Council said, “We welcome feedback from Healthwatch, as we recognise the importance of listening to the user and carer voice as an essential part of improving services. The report is timely, given the joint work currently going on between the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Council, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Croydon GPs and Age UK Croydon to design a new model of care for the elderly, which will be much more focused on prevention, seamless joint working, and making more effective use of resources in the community, such as carers: we hope that this report will therefore help to inform the development of this new integrated model of care.”

Find out more at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/croydon-carers-over-65s-need-better-support-services



What was the issue?

Croydon's Annual Public Health Report 2015 stated that 67,000 people had a mental health condition at any one time, which equals to one in six adults in the borough. This is costly to the borough and wider society. With Croydon's population set to grow, there will be increasing numbers of people with mental health problems living in the borough. Healthwatch Croydon wanted to gain insight into the experiences of the mentally ill in Croydon using health services.

What did we research?

Healthwatch Croydon heard the views of over 90 residents (including carers and family members) and with an additional 654 items of feedback on our database about the use of mental health services, or other health and social care services used by mental health patients.

What did we find?

Residents told us about waiting lists of 18 months for specialist psychological services. Many residents said they were not involved in decisions about them, or were not aware of what's in their care plan. There was lack of aftercare with limited, or sometimes no, options. Some residents who had been sectioned were sent to hospitals that are two hours car travel away. Carers told us that they have been denied information, with providers citing confidentiality. Calls to support services often go unanswered, with untimely responses to messages. Clinicians can be too quick to reach for the medication and patients are concerned about side effects.

What did we recommend?

Improve integration for lower waiting lists. Service users, families and carers should be consulted when drafting and updating care plans, and should have ways of influence, and to challenge decisions. GPs and mental health professionals should listen clearly to patients before making referrals to services which

Mental health services

may not be necessary or appropriate. More patients should be admitted locally, or if not, as close to their homes as possible, as this impacts the patient's wellbeing. A main carer should be able to access the same information whether they live in Lambeth, Croydon or another borough as information governance protocols are Trust-wide. Patients should be respected when reporting side effects which cause anxiety, discomfort and potential harm and documented medication side effects should be taken more seriously by the psychiatrists.

What was the outcome?

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust said: "This report provides some useful feedback and we will take on board the recommendations to see where we can make improvements to the care we provide in Croydon. The report acknowledges the particular challenges in Croydon relating to high levels of deprivation and a rapidly changing demographic. The Trust has been aware of these challenges for some time and we are working closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group to address

issues relating to the funding and commissioning of mental health services across the borough."

NHS Croydon CCG said: "Croydon CCG welcomes this report, which highlights some of the difficulties patients and carers have faced in accessing mental health services in Croydon, and sets out the challenges that we had previously identified in our Integrated Mental Health Strategy for Adults. We recognise the need to support people earlier to avoid crises, and we have therefore launched a 24-hour Mental Health Crisis Line. We have also invested in our Early Intervention in Psychosis service to meet national standards. We know there is more to do to improve mental health services for people in Croydon, and we will continue to listen to all patient feedback in improving services.

Find out more at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/croydon's-mentally-ill-need-stronger-support-services

What was the issue?

We wanted to understand more of the views, experiences and expectations of a service that nearly every resident uses. This report was timely as the NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was developing plans on how Croydon GP services will be delivered in the future, as part of the national NHS Five Year Forward View, see www.croydonccg.nhs.uk/about-us/our-plans/Pages/Co-commissioning.aspx

What did we research?

Croydon has 57 GP practices, with 403,045 registered patients according to NHS England. Healthwatch Croydon, heard the views of over of 1,856 patients across Croydon from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016 with every practice represented.

What did we find?

Patients were broadly satisfied with the quality of treatment received. Most patients were well aware of the pressures, particularly on demand, and understand the waiting times and limited options. However, residents perceive Croydon's GP services as less personal. Issues include difficulties in booking appointments by telephone, clinical judgements made by receptionists, and weeks of waiting for routine appointments with a preferred doctor. Many residents do not get to see their GP of choice, or a GP at all, with many not knowing who their GP is.

GP practices



Overview:

- Croydon has 59 GP practices, with 403,045 registered patients (NHS England).
- Patients are broadly satisfied with the quality of treatment received, and most patients are well aware of the pressures, particularly on demand.

Sample: 1,856 comments (1st September 2015 - 31st August 2016)



Non-emergency accessibility

View:

Non-emergency appointments can be difficult particularly by phone, with the lack of appointments meaning the processes is repeated on following days. Online booking, although widely promoted, offers limited choice.

Recommendation:

Staffing and phone capacity should be able to accommodate as many callers as possible during peak times. Online alternatives need to be more effective.



Receptionists making clinical decisions

View:

While deciding the priorities for treatment (triage) is necessary, some patients express concern that receptionists may be making clinical decisions. GP telephone triage is considered a poorer quality consultation.

Recommendation:

When triaging, staff competency needs to be demonstrated. Safe working practices should be clearly demonstrated, with staff fully trained, and adequate safeguards in place to ensure that mistakes will be unlikely, including a second opinion.



Delays and comfortability

View:

Some practices can consistently run late on their appointments and some waiting rooms are not as well maintained as they could be.

Recommendation:

Patients should be informed of delays, not simply left in their chairs; a pleasant environment will make patients more relaxed, and less anxious.



Clinical treatment

View:

Some patients feel they are not actively involved in decision-making and that GPs can be too quick to prescribe with a lack of alternative options.

Recommendation:

It is important that patients feel listened to, are respected, and involved in any decisions. Despite time constraints, GPs should do their best to get to know their patients and listen, before making decisions.



Administration

View:

Issues include being unable to register and then not advised of alternative options, even in situations of need and receptionists taking an enhanced role in repeat prescriptions and communicating test results with the risk of error. One patient found an incorrectly doubled dose and some received an incorrect diagnosis.

Recommendation:

Patients should be equipped with all available information for referral and any other information and signposting advice.

What did we recommend?

Staffing and phone capacity should be able to accommodate as many callers as possible during peak times. Online alternatives need to be more effective. When triaging, staff competency needs to be demonstrated, with full training and adequate safeguards. Patients waiting should be informed of delays, not simply left in their chairs. Despite time constraints, GPs should do their best to get to know their patients and listen, before making decisions. It is important that patients feel listened to, are respected, and involved in any decisions. Patients should be equipped with all available information for referral or signposting.

What was the outcome?

Dr Agnelo Fernandes, local GP and Assistant Clinical Chair of Croydon CCG, said: “We welcome this report, which shows that patients are aware of the pressures that GP practices face in meeting the needs of Croydon’s population. It is clear, however, that patients’ experience of GP services is variable,

and we look forward to working with Healthwatch to understand these issues more closely. We are collaborating with our practices and with NHS England to further develop and improve GP services in line with patients’ feedback and with the NHS Five Year Forward View.”

A spokesperson for NHS England (London) said: “While we are pleased that Croydon residents are broadly satisfied with the quality of treatment and services that they receive from their GP, we know that there are areas where patient experience and access to services can be improved. We will continue to work with our partners to make this happen, in line with the ongoing work of the General Practice Forward View. In particular we hope that advances in technology will translate quickly into a more responsive service for patients.”

Public meeting

As part of our Annual Meeting, Paul Young, Deputy Director for commissioning, and Dr Agnelo Fernandes, Assistant Clinical Chair at NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, who are responsible for buying GP services, presented an overview of service change and took questions from Croydon residents. They then stayed for the patient experience session, where residents discussed issues on accessibility to GP services, customer service and gaining the right services; Paul Young and Dr Fernandes listened to responses and fed-back with comments.

Find out more at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/gp-services-are-becoming-less-personal-say-croydon-residents



What was the issue?

Croydon has a significantly higher than average population of refugees and asylum seekers, due to a key Home Office building being located in the borough. Single adults, without financial support or work visas, can find themselves homeless - desperate to work, but without official documentation and not able to secure legal employment. This places them in a position of vulnerability and risk and many have said they have experienced exploitation, violence, malnutrition and constant tiredness.

What did we research?

We recorded the experiences of over 100 asylum seekers in Croydon of all ages, as well as those working in organisations on the front line.

What did we find?

Front-line staff said it is virtually impossible to get homeless adults assessed by a psychiatrist, since there is a lack of clarity of whether service exists. Many female asylum seekers will only see female GPs for religious reasons, but there are not enough women GPs available. Not all people are aware of the full range of services available and when and how to access them. The Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) don't visit hostels very often, or other venues where vulnerable people may be found. Tamil women spoke of anxiety and depression and were not aware that they could get support.

Children and adults with poor levels of English can feel intimidated at a reception desk and in the consulting room, and a single bad experience can be enough to discourage people from returning and seeking future help. People also often struggle to complete application forms and paperwork, with some finding basic questions difficult. There is a lack of awareness of interpreting services, with variable support offered.

Refugees and asylum seekers

What did we recommend?

Refugees and asylum seekers need to access rehabilitation support. Sharing female GPs across relevant surgeries would be beneficial in reducing waiting times. Better information is needed on when to self-manage, use NHS111, see a pharmacist or doctor, visit a walk-in centre, or attend A&E. Posters and flyers in various formats and languages need to be widely available. CMHT needs to link up with charities to visit and educate groups of vulnerable people, continuing existing good practice of professionals working in partnership with charities. Tamil women need to be signposted to relevant support services.

Particular care should be taken with new and recent arrivals to ensure they are welcomed and understood. Staff should proactively support patients to complete paperwork and signpost to support organisations, where they cannot assist directly. GPs and providers should raise awareness of interpreting support, and do their best to identify, and act on, cases where interpretation is clearly needed.

What was the outcome?

Dr Tony Brzezicki, Clinical Chair for NHS Croydon CCG, said: “We welcome Healthwatch Croydon’s report and their focus on access to healthcare services for refugees in the borough. As the report highlights, we recognise the value in continuing to work with our partners across Croydon to reach those who are in the greatest need of care.”

Find out more at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/survival-more-essential-health-croydon's-vulnerable-asylum-seekers



What was the issue?

The borough of Croydon has significant issues with the sexual health of its teenagers and young people with higher than average statistics for teenage pregnancy, repeated abortions, and diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases, according to Croydon Public Health statistics.

What did we research?

We spoke to over 60 teenage sexual health service users in one-to-one surveys on the experience of using the service, knowledge and awareness of services, and recommendations on what could be improved.

What did we find?

For Croydon's teenagers, accessibility, advertising and awareness of services, relevant help and support and delivery of services could be better. This has an impact on Croydon's public health strategy to improve teenage sexual health outcomes.

What did we recommend?

Healthwatch Croydon recommended that Croydon teenagers are invited to give their views on services to help the design of sexual health services in the borough to better meet their needs.

Sexual health services should focus on supporting teenagers to make informed choices. They need to recognise that feelings associated with seeking advice, information and treatment are reflected in the design of services, as well as ensuring confidentiality at all times.

Faster access to services, with flexible services available at times and locations suited to teenagers, such as evenings and weekends and more walk-in appointments are needed. Teenagers need to be asked for their views on advertising, and advertising needs to be targeted in locations that are right for them. Materials need to be varied, not just online, with reassuring messaging. Focused marketing for teenage boys, black and minority ethnic groups and non-heterosexuals was needed.

Teenage sexual health services

Sexual health services should focus on supporting teenagers to make informed choices. They need to recognise that feelings associated with seeking advice, information and treatment are reflected in the design of services, as well as ensuring confidentiality at all times. Services offered between providers need to be more joined up with a more welcoming environment, appropriate staffing, and positive attitude.

What was the outcome?

Croydon Council agreed to run a joint workshop between Healthwatch Croydon and the Public Health Department to be held in summer of 2017.

Councillor Louisa Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Health and Social Care, said: “The findings from Healthwatch Croydon’s report will be helpful for the ongoing improvements to local sexual health services to ensure that they continue meeting users’ needs. We are in the process of redesigning services to be fully integrated and better focused on prevention and provision in the community,

with the aim of having contraception and sexually transmitted infection treatments available at all sites. We especially welcome the report’s recommendation to increase the engagement of service users with any planned changes to what’s on offer. Young people’s views were integral to the recent cross-borough work to upgrade the Getting It On website, which supports teenagers living in south west London with any concerns around their emotional and physical health and wellbeing. We look forward to working with Healthwatch Croydon and the borough’s youngsters to run a joint workshop in the coming months.”

Find out more at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/croydon-teenagers-gain-voice-designing-their-sexual-health-services



What are Enter and Views?

The Health and Social Care Act allows Healthwatch Croydon representatives to observe service delivery and to talk to service users, their relatives and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

How do you choose who to visit?

The visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally, they can take place when services have a good reputation - so we can learn by sharing examples of what they do well from the perspective of the people who experience the service first hand.

What do we do?

The Enter and View projects work to help local people get the best out of their local health and social care services. We also make recommendations on improving the quality and standard of services.

Healthwatch Croydon representatives observe service delivery and to talk to service users, their relatives, carers and staff on premises such as hospitals, residential homes and GP practices. We can learn about what works and share these examples.

The Board wanted to validate its approach to Enter and View and so decided to focus on residential facilities for young people with learning disabilities.

This year, Healthwatch Croydon undertook two Enter and Views at Russell Villas and Dunheved Lodge. We are currently considering how we can add more value through our use of Enter and View.

See www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/enter-and-view-reports to view in detail

Russell Villa, is an accommodation facility for 10 people with learning disabilities, autism and challenging behaviour. Healthwatch Croydon observed that while there was some person-centred activities, these could be more of a priority. All areas visited were clean and tidy and there were no odours in the home in general. One flat did not seem to be at an appropriate level of cleanliness.

Recommendations and impact: We suggested to prioritise enhanced person-centred activities and specific support for individuals and ensure that one flat was maintained to appropriate levels of cleanliness. The manager responded to say that the flat was at an appropriate standard.

Dunheved Lodge offers residential care for adults with learning disability and can accommodate up to fourteen people. Our observations were that there were good levels of interaction between the staff and the two residents observed, and residents were treated with dignity and respect during our visit. Staff seemed well supported, motivated and caring and the day centre provides an opportunity for

residents to engage in a wide variety of activities.

However, there are some part of the building and facilities that are looking worn; and there is a lift that has been out of operation since 2011, with no plan in place if any resident becomes less able to manage the stairs. Some of the residents' own rooms seem sparsely furnished/decorated, and it could not be ascertained whether this was the residents' choice. There seems to be a small range of activities available to residents at the weekend.

Recommendations: That planned maintenance programme is reviewed and includes a plan to upgrade the facilities in a timely manner, including the requirement for a working lift be reviewed. For staff to review with residents, families and carers whether the bedroom environment meets the needs of individual residents. That the range of activities available at the weekends be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of residents.

Making people's views known and influencing decision-makers



Making views known and influencing decisions

Another of our key functions is to 'make peoples' views known through effective communication and acting as a credible voice at strategic and social care meetings'.

This section profiles the various meetings and organisations we have attended representing the views of Croydon residents.

Health and Wellbeing Board	page 35
Croydon Council Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee	page 37
Clinical Commissioning Group	page 39
Croydon Health Services NHS Trust	page 41
South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust	page 42
Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board	page 43
NHS England Quality Surveillance	page 44
Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England	page 45

What is the Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) brings together local health and social service commissioners (buyers) and providers as well as community organisations. Their role is to understand the health and wellbeing needs of Croydon's residents through the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) and preparing a joint health and wellbeing strategy. Find out more at <https://secure.croydon.gov.uk/akscroydon/users/public/admin/kabmenu.pl?cmte=WEL>

Why does Healthwatch get involved?

Healthwatch Croydon has, by law, a seat the Health and Wellbeing Board with voting powers and this enables us to ensure that the needs and views of patients and the public are always brought to the forefront of the commissioning, provision and management of local health and social care services. Working with the Chair, Cllr Maggie Mansell, and Executive Directors Paul Greenhalgh and Barbara

Peacock, we have established a strong presence, input and dialogue at the quarterly Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) meetings. As a matter of routine there is a regular Healthwatch update on the agenda.

What impact have we had?

Healthwatch Croydon has used this opportunity to present and share the patient experience from all our published reports on anticoagulation services, over 65s carers experiences of hospital discharge, mental health services, GP services, asylum seeker experiences, and teenage sexual health service users.

Each report was well received, and helped inform debate on these key issues most of which had been priorities of Croydon's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Health and Wellbeing Board

What are our plans

We will continue to submit regular reports of our work and also respond to issues raised in the meeting where we can give insight from residents' views and experiences.



“The past year has been very difficult for the NHS and care services. The NHS has had seven years of 1% budget increases while the elderly population is increasing. Government funds to Croydon Council has been halved in five years. Commissioning Groups have difficult decisions when they have to cut services. It is vital that Healthwatch is reporting on the effects on patients of the pressure on staff and services.”

*Cllr Maggie Mansell,
Chair of Croydon's Health and Wellbeing Board*

Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee

What is the committee?

Scrutiny committees listen to local people and make recommendations to Croydon Council on future policies. Croydon has a main overview committee, and three sub-committees that carry out scrutiny work. One of these is the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee which looks at health, adult social care, mental health and housing. Scrutiny is not confined to what the Council does but considers all services. Find out more about the Scrutiny committee at www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/scrutiny

Why do we get involved?

We are a co-opted member of this committee, invited by elected representatives as the official patient champion to inform Croydon councillors on the issues and concerns of patients and service users. Healthwatch Croydon has the power to scrutinise consultation efforts and ensures that the engagement with the community is of value. The committee is empowered to question decision-makers of health,

care and housing and hold them accountable for their decisions.

What impact have we had?

Mental Health - Place of Safety: Currently, residents of Croydon, Lewisham, Lambeth or Southwark experiencing a Mental Health crisis can be supported at a 'Place of Safety' that is local to them, and managed in their own borough. The service provider, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) has proposed to locate provision for all boroughs at one site, based at the Maudsley Hospital.

While this may have some benefits, we feel that change should not occur without substantial engagement with patients and the public. Working with our Healthwatch colleagues in Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark we used our influence at a regional level (Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to support SLaM in hosting a public event on 9 August 2016. In addition, Healthwatch now has a key role in any future engagement around the Place of Safety, so that local residents' views will be taken

Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee

into account on any changes to the service.

GP Access: The ability to get a GP appointment is an increasing local and national issue. When looking at local feedback, we noticed that 20% of all complaints in Croydon are from one ward - South Norwood. We heard accounts of patients finding themselves in long phone queues, not able to be seen in emergencies, and having to wait weeks for routine appointments.

Through the committee we put this to Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and thanks to our intelligence, an official 'Unwarranted Variation in GP Practice' investigation is underway, so that residents should not find themselves at a disadvantage purely because of where they live.

What are our plans?

We will continue react to issues discussed and do our best to contribute to discussion applying the analysis of residents' experiences.

"In the last year, Healthwatch Croydon has contributed to this meeting. It has provided a patient centred focus and bringing his expertise to the fore in questioning Councillors, Council Officers and Healthcare Commissioners and Providers. We welcome having a representative from Healthwatch to assist with fulfilling our statutory duty of holding health and social care providers to account."

*Cllr Carole Bonner,
Chair, Health, Social Care and
Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee*

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Who are they?

The Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) funds the health service providers for Croydon residents. The CCG Board commissions hospital and community healthcare from Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, mental health services from the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and services from other providers. NHS England commissions local primary care (including GPs, dentists, and pharmacies) and some specialised services.

Find out more: www.croydonccg.nhs.uk/about-us/Governing%20body/Pages/default.aspx

Why do we get involved?

The CCG are one of the key decision-makers of health services. We have a co-opted non-voting seat for the public part of the CCG Governing Body which meets monthly, so we can ask questions and raise issues based on the experiences of our residents, to inform decision-making.

What impact have we had?

We provided volunteers on the repurchase of urgent care services who contributed to the decision of choice of providers (see page 50).

Reporting on our anticoagulation services within pharmacies we confirmed that patients were satisfied with the service but changes should have been better communicated (see page 16). Our mental health services in Croydon report raised a number of issues concerning delivery of services which the CCG said they would consider, (see page 21).

Our experiences of GP services in Croydon and public meeting, was welcome by commissioners in giving insight in shaping Croydon GP services in the future (see page 23). We also raised issues about the effectiveness of services for asylum seekers living in Croydon, from our report, particularly on the need to register with a GP to access other services. (see page 27).

Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

In addition we have raised issues concerns about responding to public responses to service change as a result of the CCGs financial services plan at Foxley Lane women's mental health unit and IVF/ IVSI assisted conception services.

What are our plans?

We will continue to work with commissioners and specialists to address issues and concerns that come from our research, with a particular focus on BME carers and the impact of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan.



"Healthwatch Croydon has supported the significant amount of engagement and consultation work we have completed this year. A small group of Healthwatch volunteers generously gave their time to work with the CCG's Community Engagement Manager to help get the views from Croydon's seldom heard communities about their experience of local services. Due to the financial pressures we have faced this year, the CCG has had to make some very difficult decisions as part of our Financial Savings Plan, and it's been especially important that our partners at Healthwatch pay close attention to how we involve patients, their carers and families in any proposed changes to local health services. We welcome Healthwatch Croydon's continued presence at our Governing Body meetings, and with its insight and knowledge, help us focus on those issues most important to local people."

*Dr Anthony Brzezicki,
Clinical Chair, Croydon Clinical
Commissioning Group*

Who are they?

Croydon Health Services provide hospital and community services from a number of community and specialist clinics throughout Croydon, more details at www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

How have we worked with them?

We have supported their patient and public engagement strategy advising on how it can be sustainable and making it effective for them. Due to our activities they are now using our good practice and embedding PPE through all the directorates. We have advised them to put Friends and Family Test tree on the ward, so people can respond with their comments. We also advised that their PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) could become more an information and signposting hub.

Our Community Analyst liaised with the PALS manager over community support services and good practice. We have encouraged the third sector network to support them, and coordinated with their public

engagement team to get relevant third sector groups to promote their services through PALS. We also encouraged them to increase staff knowledge so, through them, residents can be better informed of what's available in the community.

Our CEO and their Director of Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs meet on a regular basis to share patient issues and concerns.

“Working with Healthwatch Croydon to understand what people say about our care is essential if we are to keep improving our services. Last year, 77 per cent of people surveyed rated our care in hospital as 7 out of 10, with more than a third rating the Trust as 9 or 10 (inpatient survey 2016). Our ambition is to be 10/10 every time. We can only do this by listening to what people say we do well, to spread this best practice across the Trust. We must also act on what you say we could do better still, and it is important to have Healthwatch there to ensure the views of people throughout our community are heard.”

*Michael Bell, Chairman,
Croydon Health Services NHS Trust*

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Who are they?

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) provides mental health and substance misuse services to people from Croydon, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. Visit www.slam.nhs.uk for more information.

Mental health is a significant issue highlighted in Croydon Council's Public Health Annual Report, as it affects a higher than average number of people in Croydon than other boroughs. This is a priority area for Healthwatch Croydon to examine.

How have we worked with them?

We produced a report on the effectiveness of community adult mental health services in August 2016 (see page 21) and made recommendations, which were described by SLaM as useful. They stated that they would take on board the recommendations to see where they could improve care.

Our Asylum seekers report in December 2016 raised concerns about access of mental health services to those living in hostels. This brought to focus the right for asylum seekers to gain access to these mental health services by registering with their GP, but this had not been effectively communicated to the hostels.

"We value the opportunity to work in partnership with Healthwatch Croydon, and during the past year this has included the planning of a new Centralised Place of Safety service. Healthwatch Croydon worked with the Trust on an initial workshop and then in the planning and delivery of a successful Open Day which was attended by 200-250 people. Their network helped us to promote the event more widely and to reach more people who were able to contribute ideas and help us to review and improve plans for this service."

Kay Harwood, Head of Planning, Involvement and Equality, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Who are they?

The Safeguarding Adults Board makes strategic decisions in response to national and local policy developments, suggestions and any problem issues that arise concerning safety of patients in any care facility. It scopes work plans for its sub groups, endorses work carried out by them, and oversees the implementation of decisions. See www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/sva/svaboardgp/svaboard for more information.

How do we work with them?

Healthwatch Croydon is a member, with our vice-chair attending, and supports the Board with the soft local intelligence from Croydon residents providing the vital information on safeguarding issues. Our role is to support adult safeguarding; assessment and eligibility with the Care Act 2014 (www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/carers-rights-care-act-2014.aspx) and the Mental Capacity Act (MCA)

(see www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/mental-capacity.aspx); information and advice; and integration, cooperation and partnerships. They also offer training to our volunteers to increase awareness of issues when they view wards and care homes.

“Croydon Adult Social are actively building a closer working relationship with Healthwatch Croydon. This builds on last year’s training sessions for the volunteer teams. The work continues to be around quality assurance. It had been useful to make early positive links with the new CEO and further build the relationship.

I firmly believe that joint work with Healthwatch helps in preventing safeguarding occurrences in Croydon and that the Prevention principle of the Care Act is the most important.”

Sean Oliver, Safeguarding Coordinator - Adult Social Care, Croydon Council

Who are they and why do we get involved?

Healthwatch Croydon has met other south west London regulators and commissioners of secondary care regularly with NHS England.

The organisations seek to promote common values, based on those in the NHS Constitution, and looking at ways to improve services.

The overarching approach of this group is set by the following: openness and honesty; transparency; understanding of respective statutory (legal) roles, duties and powers, recognising the need to work together as well as individually; engagement on issues of mutual interest and importance, including joint learning and development; early and proactive information sharing at a local, regional and national level; trust; providing and being open to challenge; and ambitious for public patient involvement in the quality monitoring, and re-design, of healthcare services.

In Spring 2016, Healthwatch Croydon presented an analysis of our Enter and View visits to care homes at this group. It received significant attention as it showed collective trends that had come out of the various reports, rather than look at each Enter and View in isolation.

This was an innovative approach in quality reporting. The trends said although the human element was good (staff attitude, user involvement etc), there was evidence of lack of resource (support lacking due to staffing ratios, neglected/ageing physical environment). At the end of the meeting, other Healthwatch organisations attending and some NHS England staff congratulated Healthwatch Croydon on the work.

Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England

Healthwatch Croydon has supported the work of Healthwatch England and allowed Healthwatch Croydon activity to complement an support local Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitoring, inspection and regulatory activity.

Healthwatch Croydon met routinely with the CQC, we had constructive dialogue on access to GPs advising them to inspect two practices in Croydon. We know that the CQC did review services at these practices and our data was shared with the CQC.

With Healthwatch England, we have kept in regular contact with them sharing data and content to support their national campaigning. We have been a core member of their Intelligence Reference Group, and our input has been extremely valuable in helping to shape the new coding system for their CRM (the taxonomy used to theme service user experience). We also made a useful contribution in helping to shape their new research protocols, which are in the final stages of development.

Staff and volunteers also contributed to network meetings, events and training concerning the national roll-out of Sustainability and Transformation Plans as well as Peer Review training to assess the impact of Healthwatch organisations.



Giving people advice and information and supporting community decision making



Advice, information and supporting decision making

Two of our functions are 'signposting for access to services and support for making informed choices to give advice and information about health and services' and to 'promote and support the involvement of people in the commissioning and provision of local care services and how they are scrutinised'.

This section looks at the work we have done in relation to these functions.

Signposting: information and advice page 48

Empowering the community page 49

Supporting public engagement page 50

Signposting: information and advice

Croydon is a diverse borough and has a well-developed third sector of charities and community organisations all of whom provide signposting to services.

Healthwatch Croydon has built strong relationships with these providers and shared information on our website and through social media such as Twitter.

Healthwatch has also recorded 30 occasions where we have helped residents find the services they need.



In the last 12 months, Healthwatch Croydon has empowered the community to get involved in local decision-making in many ways.

Patient Experience Panel

The Patient Experience Panel meets every Friday for two hours to scrutinise issues, apply clinical coding, identify serious concerns, monitor equality and diversity, and discover leading health and social care related trends.

Healthwatch Croydon Forum

The Healthwatch Croydon Forum, which meets every three months, advises both the Board and staff on key health and social care issues happening in Croydon, so we can respond to concerns.

In December we surveyed our volunteer base to gain insights into the experience of volunteering with us. In February, we dedicated a Forum meeting to feedback the results and discuss further in two

sessions. The first asked what are we about and the external challenges and volunteers said our most important role of was that of representation, data collection and analysis and communication. They also felt our biggest challenges were recognition and awareness in Croydon, resources, communication and breadth of remit.

The second session was all about improving the volunteer experience. Involvement, training, defining roles and matching were themes volunteers would most like to see developed further, with accessibility, informing residents and providers about our work and focusing on specific areas, as the main issues we need to focus on.

We gained excellent insights into the challenges and aspirations of our volunteers from the Forum, which will help in the development of our strategic plan and new volunteer engagement plan.

Read the report at www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/volunteering

Supporting public engagement

Healthwatch Croydon ensures there is community ownership in commissioning and quality assurance. We let residents know there are opportunities to attend public meetings to hold commissioners and providers to account, or to let them ask questions about their jobs and the needs of the borough.

Urgent care reorganisation

In December 2015, the conclusions of a two-year review of urgent care services, were announced by Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). We held a public meeting and produced a report (see page 26), which was timed with the decision on three final options, which raised key issues that the CCG would need to consider.

We have engaged local people in the scrutiny of the plans to deliver new urgent care. The team and volunteers support the CCG with patient feedback on urgent care services, Three Healthwatch Croydon volunteers were involved in the scrutiny of the CCG's procurement (buying) process. The CCG has provided training to these volunteers to ensure they have

an understanding of the process. The procurement process is well under way. The urgent care services tender result is due in July 2016 and Healthwatch Croydon is part of the scrutiny process.

Healthwatch Croydon has advised the CCG on how they can effectively engage with Croydon resident and listen to their views to deliver services to meet resident's needs.

We supported Croydon residents' in making their views known on the final choice of proposals encouraging them to respond to the engagement events and surveys.

Tariq Salim, a Healthwatch Croydon volunteer on the procurement committee, said: "I found the process hugely interesting and learnt a great deal. I hope the successful bidder succeeds in delivering on this."



You can read more about how Healthwatch Croydon volunteers influenced better urgent care services linked to residents' views here:

www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news/croydon's-urgent-care-service-decision-meets-residents'-recommendations



South West London NHS Grassroots programme

The NHS in South West London, and Surrey Downs, working with Healthwatch Croydon to speak to local people about what they think of local health services in advance of the publications of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

Healthwatch Croydon promoted grants for events through their network of third sector groups, assessed and selected groups for sessions where residents' could give their views to members of South West London NHS and Healthwatch Croydon.

Beneficiaries of the Grassroots programme included people who do not often have the opportunities to share their views. Groups awarded grants for events included: ASKI, AYDA Centre, Croydon People First, Croydon Youth Information and Counselling, Empowering Tamil Families, JAGS Foundation, Lingua House CIC, Mind in Croydon, The My World Centre and Wellbeing and You. See images from some events on page 58.

Building our reputation

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Health providers must provide more support, warns patient watchdog

Carers 'left in dark' about help for Croydon's elderly

ANDREW BOWMAN
Healthwatch Croydon

Healthwatch Croydon said a lack of communication with hospital staff when patients are discharged and confusion over patient care plans were impacting on the quality of care.

It reports into care for over 65s based home support was often delayed or offered minimal help, leaving elderly people worried and unsure.

One carer cited said he was unaware of help available that "would have made mum's life better".

Dorel Smith, 66, of Croydon, was the sole carer for his mother Vera for three years until she died from heart complications aged 90 in 2013.

Mrs Smith suffered a collapsed vertebra in 2010, leaving her unable to look after her mother.

There are 35,000 carers in Croydon

There were support services available in the borough until after she died, he says. Volunteers for the Croydon Carers Support Centre to help others in similar positions.

He added: "There are times when I think, 'if only I had known about this when mum was alive.' It would have made a world of difference to me."

"I hate to think that people are as much in the dark as I was."

There are more than 60,000

passenger in Croydon and 35,000 carers. Of these carers, just 35 per cent are registered with support services.

Charlie Laidman, chief executive of Healthwatch Croydon, said: "There needs to be a commitment by health and social care providers and commissioners to improve these processes, and also promote what is available and reduce this knowledge gap about rights and entitlements which is unfair to those who need it the most."

Agustín Fernandez, assistant clinical chair of Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "Together with Croydon Council and the health providers in the borough, we are working to transform the way services are delivered in the borough for people over 65, by putting the things that matter most to patients, their carers and families at the heart of service provision."

"The models of care we are developing will support carers by joining up their care to better support people in their own homes."

Cyclist collared

A CYCLIST caught on a morning road patrol by police in Waddon, London, was fined £1,200.

A London spokesman said the cyclist was caught on a morning road patrol by police in Waddon, London, was fined £1,200.

A spokesman said the cyclist was caught on a morning road patrol by police in Waddon, London, was fined £1,200.

Healthwatch Croydon can only achieve the work it does by engaging fully with Croydon residents.

As a borough of over 379,000 people, by population the largest in London and the thirteenth largest in England, Croydon has with a rich and diverse third sector community. Therefore, Healthwatch Croydon has to work hard to get heard.

Crucial to this is building strong networks with key decision-makers and influencers but also with those community groups and organisations who deliver services to, or support those, in need.

In this section we review how we have done this:

Press promotion page 54

Community Engagement page 58

Events page 60

Press promotion

Healthwatch Croydon has been mentioned in the press a number of times this year. Here is a selection. Press releases can be viewed at: www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/news



Croydon Guardian, online, 10.8.16



Croydon Guardian, page 8, 17.8.16

These are both in response to our carers for over-65s report see page 18.

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'He needs someone to talk to': The problems with Croydon mental health services in patients' words

By Tom Matthews | Posted August 30, 2016

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SHARES



Mental health patients are waiting too long for treatment (stock picture)

Comments (0)

People who use Croydon's mental health services have given personal accounts of their struggles and experiences in trying to access the borough's mental health services.

The anonymous accounts were published as part of a new report into the borough's mental health services by Healthwatch Croydon.

Long waiting lists and shortages of beds hurt quality of care

Mental health worries

REPORTER

ANDREA GOWNEY



One-in-six adults in Croydon will experience mental health issues during their life, according to a health watchdog

LENGTHY waiting lists, a feeling that "nobody listens" and a lack of hospital beds is impacting the quality of care people with mental health conditions in Croydon receive, according to a patient watchdog.

A Healthwatch Croydon report into mental health care in the borough revealed patients were waiting up to 19 months for specialist psychological services, with one family left in limbo for more than two years after referral.

It also found that patients and carers often feel they are not involved in decisions about treatment and that, once sectioned, patients are being offered specialist beds as far away as Scotland.

One mother, who did not wish to be named, said it was "frustrating and dangerous" that medics often wouldn't tell her about her schizophrenic daughter's treatment plans, despite the fact she was her carer.

The woman, a former Croydon teacher, said it took seven years for her daughter to be diagnosed, adding: "It was a thing actually wrong with her: 'I do feel that if doctor-patient confidentiality is overused, carers are in a slightly different position from the man next door, because we are looking after this person.'

"At one point I was looking after my mother, who had dementia, and my daughter and nobody in the medical profession had a problem talking to me about my mother but everybody had a problem talking to me about my daughter, because she was deemed to have capacity."

"We need to know the quality of care she is on, we need to know the side-effects of that medication, we need to know who to contact in a crisis."

According to the report, one-in-six adults in Croydon will experience a mental health condition at some point in their life, lower than the Mental Health Foundation's estimated national average of one-in-four.

Charlie Lashman, chief executive of Healthwatch Croydon, said: "There needs to be a significant improvement in waiting lists, better communication between patients, carers and providers, and a priority in admitting people locally, where they can be supported more effectively by friends and family."

A spokesman for South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the borough's mental health care provider, said: "Long waiting times for some patients are unacceptable, especially for children and adolescents, and do not reflect the standard offered by the trust in the other London boroughs we serve."

"The waiting times highlighted in the report relate to specialist secondary psychological services in Croydon – and not people who need attention

Croydon Advertiser, online, 30.8.16 and Croydon Guardian, print, 31.8.16. In response to our report on Croydon's mental health services. See page 21.

Press promotion



Left: Croydon Advertiser, print, 18.5.16, in response to national report that suggested Croydon's health services was behind planned target.

Right: Croydon Advertiser, 2.10.16 online, in response to our report in GP services (see page 23).





Left: Croydon Advertiser, online, 12.12.16, in response to our asylum seekers report (see page 27).



Right: Croydon Advertiser, online, 8.3.2017 in response to our teenage sexual health services report (see page 29).

Community engagement

Healthwatch Croydon has been committed to getting out and about in the community, visiting various groups and organisations.

Anti-clockwise from right: South West London NHS Grassroots events which we recommended for funding (see page 51); Croydon People First (July 2016); ASKI (July 2016) and Wellbeing and You (November 2016).



Community engagement



Outreach at Park Hill Park Festival (May 2016) and South Norwood Festival (July 2016).



Outreach at Croydon Pride (August 2016) and Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group AGM (September 2016).

Annual General Meeting - October 2016



Paul Young, Deputy Director for Commissioning at NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group was guest speaker on GP services. The Mayor of Croydon Cllr Wayne Trakas-Lawlor said "Healthwatch Croydon is doing an amazing job highlighting the challenges and improvements that need to be made."

Watch his speech at
https://youtu.be/3uxeN2TYx_0



Public meetings



Above clockwise: As part of our AGM, we held a GP services workshop to gain real feedback with the commissioner in attendance (October 2016). Public Engagement on the South West London NHS collaborating commissioning proposal for extended access to primary care run by one of our volunteers, Sylvia Wachuku-King (March 2017).



Our Strategic Objectives for 2017-2018



Our strategic objectives for 2017-2018

Improve the way we obtain the views of people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local care services (including the seldom heard).

Further develop our ability to influence the public and our partners.

To improve the utilisation and experience of volunteers through an effective volunteer management programme.

To increase public awareness of the health and social care services available to them by providing information and signposting services for the people of Croydon.

To improve the effectiveness of patient involvement in Croydon - provision of information, engagement, consultation and participation.

To improve the governance structures of Healthwatch Croydon and ensure the medium term future of the organisation.

Finance and Governance



INCOME: £	
Funding received from London Borough of Croydon	206,000.00
Income carried forward from 2015/16 recognised	10,000.00
Other income	201.65
Total income	216,201.65

EXPENDITURE: £	
Commissioned work	1,242.00
Staff costs	140,135.58
Running costs and overheads	59,027.44
Total expenditure	200,405.02

Surplus/(Deficit)	15,796.63
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Finance and governance

Financial overview

The total expenditure for the financial year 2015/16 was £200,405.02, making a surplus of £15,796.63. The main funding for Healthwatch Croydon comes from London Borough of Croydon. We also secured £10k other income was received from Grassroots project. For the financial year 2016/17, Healthwatch Croydon has received £206k funding from the London Borough of Croydon.

Healthwatch Croydon will continue to ensure that value for money is achieved in undertaking all its financial activities.

Governance

The Advisory Forum advises both the Board and the staff of issues and concerns that Healthwatch Croydon might want to prioritise. The public and volunteers are encouraged to contribute to the debate on what areas need focusing on via the Healthwatch Croydon Forum and surveys. Issues are also prioritised based on public comments about

services. So for example, a series of comments on one service would raise it as a priority. Other sources for identifying priority issues include reports such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Healthwatch Croydon makes decisions about its activity in an accountable, open and transparent way, based on a business plan, reflecting the local needs for Croydon. The Board and Chief Executive work together to build a sustainable, realistic and effective plan to reflect key issues. Identifying priority issues is also monitored by Croydon Council to ensure it meets its aims and objectives.

About the Annual Report

This annual report is publicly available from 30 June 2017 on our website. It has been sent to Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and Croydon Council.

Thank you from team and Board



Healthwatch team 2016-2017

Nana Apprey-Abraham (until January 2017), Charlie Ladyman (CEO until November 2016), Gordon Kay, Darren Morgan, Yinka Alowooja.

Left-to-right below main picture: Jai Jayaraman (CEO from November 2016), Robyn Bone.



Healthwatch Board 2016-2017

Left-to-right: Urvashi Bhagat, Vanessa Hosford, Richard Pacitti, Sandra Wright, David Court (left November 2016), John Davey (Chair 2016-17),
Left to right below main picture: Anne Hooper, Gary Hickey.



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24 George Street, Croydon CR0 1PB

020 8663 5648

info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk



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