

The value of listening

Healthwatch Redbridge
Annual Report 2023–2024



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“Working alongside and supporting the diverse communities across Redbridge has seen us identify and deliver outstanding support. This has proceeded to allow us to build trust in what Healthwatch can do and invited communities to understand the power of partnerships.”

Cathy Turland, Chief Executive Officer at Healthwatch Redbridge



Message from our Chair & CEO

This year, we have focussed on developing networks within those communities where we know there are higher health inequalities.

Projects have been created through partnering local community organisations, which has provided a wealth of insight that we have shared with colleagues from the statutory sector.

This year, we have also been fortunate to be involved with a major NHS England pilot project to support the development of a Maternity and Neonatal Independent Senior Advocate role, working across eight boroughs within North East London. We are convinced this work will help us to ensure the family voice is central in maternity services.

Our commitment to ensuring accessible information is available to all patients and service users with communication support needs, has enabled us to work both locally and nationally, contributing to the development of information workshops for Healthwatch, NHS staff and our colleagues within other health and social care settings.

We continue to benefit from the grants we provide to local communities through our Community Cash Fund. This year we have worked with many groups such people with mental health conditions, LGBTQ+ communities, disabled people, asylum seekers, rough sleepers, and children and young people.

Our staff and board has increased during the year. We have welcomed Donna Young and Rafat Kiani to our staff team and David Lyon and Gita Malhotra to our Board of Trustees.

Undoubtedly, we know this year will bring many changes, as we approach our Annual General Meeting where a few of our long-standing board members will be standing down. However, we are viewing this as an opportunity to review and develop our organisation, to go from strength to strength.

We give our heartfelt thanks to all the people of Redbridge who have engaged with us, and supported our work, either through volunteering, or sharing their thoughts and insights about local health and care services. We couldn't do what we do without you.

Lorraine Silver, Chair & Cathy Turland, CEO, Healthwatch Redbridge



“Not only does Healthwatch Redbridge continue to hear the voices of local people; it has also supported the development of services across North East London...

... We can be confident Healthwatch will continue to deliver improved services”

[Lorraine Silver, Chair Healthwatch Redbridge]



About us

Healthwatch Redbridge 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

People should be at the heart of shaping the future of local health and care services.



Our mission

To empower local people to understand and get involved in improving health and care services.



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 voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



Year in review

Reaching out:

1,571 people

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

101 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

7 reports

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

Our most popular reports were

Improving Quality Care at King George Hospital

Working with the patient experience team to highlight the quality of care within two wards.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

16

outstanding volunteers who gave up 431 hours (equivalent to 61½ days) to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority.

In 2023 - 24 we received

£116,400

which is the same as the previous year.





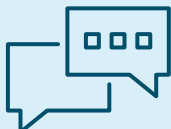



We currently employ

5 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We drew attention to the impact of Post Covid Syndrome and the effects it had on health and social care staff..</p>	 <p>We interviewed care home managers to ensure they were aware of, and able to access specialist support from GP practices to reduce hospital admissions.</p>
Summer	 <p>We interviewed patients on two wards at King George Hospital to understand their experiences as in-patients and the discharge process. This identified issues and led the trust to make changes to systems.</p>	 <p>We linked with our colleagues across North East London to ask, 'What does good care look like', we gathered over 100 local responses which have helped produce the themes for building on better services. .</p>
Autumn	 <p>Commissioned by Healthwatch England, we created an accessible Enter & View training pack for local Healthwatch organisations across the country.</p>	 <p>We continued to develop links with asylum seekers by developing appropriate support and signposting services including information in other languages, improving access to health and care services.</p>
Winter	 <p>We interviewed women about their access to cervical screening. This data is forming part of a national Healthwatch England review. We have extended our local research to increase our data which will be presented as part of our Women's Health Project.</p>	 <p>We completed collecting data on the impact of health inequalities across Redbridge. The data will be shared with our strategic partners.</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

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

This year we've worked with local Healthwatch across City of London, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Havering, and Barking and Dagenham to achieve:



Achievement one: Working with NHS North East London, we were invited to pilot the NHS England Maternity and Neonatal Independent Senior Advocacy (MNISA) role across NEL. One of our team, has been seconded to work alongside people experiencing traumatic or adverse outcomes in their pregnancy. The role seeks to ensure the individuals' voice is heard and listened to by maternity and neonatal care teams. It is hoped the pilot will develop into a regular service provided across the country.

Achievement two: Working within the maternity systems across three trusts helped us to establish links with Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partners (MNVPs.), who are people with lived experience of using maternity services. They ensure that service user voices are at the heart of decision-making in maternity and neonatal services. We have set up regular meetings to share insights and issues that have been used to improve services.



Achievement three: We increased our outreach work and saw a growth in our Healthwatch Community Network. We have over 40 Community Network organisations, who are supported to engage with other network members and work together across communities. Some have worked with other organisations to develop accessible leaflets; others have accessed our Community Cash grant to complete a range of projects that will identify and support health and care inequalities.

Achievement four: Working with HW England we gathered women's experiences accessing cervical screening where they had a communication or support need. We held two information sessions and interviewed women about the barriers they faced. This helped us create our own local Women's Health Project where we are carrying out further interviews to extend our local knowledge and look for ways of helping people to access appropriate care.





Listening to your experiences

The greatest improvements to services are made by working with and listening to the views and experiences of local people. 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.

Improving maternity services for people from global majority communities

Last year, we supported North East London Local Maternity and Neonatal System (NEL LMNS) to deliver improvements in maternity services across our ICS.

NEL LMNS is a partnership of organisations, women and their families working together deliver improvements in maternity services in North East London.

Our work helped to reach people from communities identified as having poorer health outcomes when using maternity services. Our report recommendations were used to support the production of the north-east London Equity and Equality action plan.

This work led to Healthwatch Redbridge being approached and invited to work with NEL Local Maternity and Neonatal Service (LMNS) and NHS England to pilot the introduction of a Maternity and Neonatal Independent Senior Advocate (MNISA) working with families who have experienced critical incidences such as the loss of a baby, or severe disability for either the mother or baby.

Did you know:

Women from Black ethnic groups are four times more likely to die than women from White groups. Women from Asian ethnic backgrounds are almost twice as likely to die in pregnancy compared to White women.

MBRRACE-UK report

What are we doing in North East London?

The MNISA will work with individuals to make sure their voice is listened to, heard, and acted upon if:

- the baby died before or during labour (known as stillbirth).
- the baby died within 28 days of being born.
- the baby's mum died.
- the mum had an unexpected hysterectomy (womb was removed) within six weeks of giving birth.
- the mum had an unexpected stay on an intensive care unit or high dependency unit.

What difference did this make?

- We worked closely with the Redbridge Health Overview and Scrutiny sub-committee, joining their maternity task and finish group which will report its findings later in 2024.
- Our Projects Officer has been seconded into the role of the MNISA for North East London. She has completed significant training to ensure she is ready to work with people going through traumatic experiences stated above.
- The MNISA will also seek to escalate complex safety issues to the LMNS Board, NHS Trusts, and directly to NHS England.
- We are the only Healthwatch in the country involved in this pilot.

Supporting marginalised communities

Working with Care4Calais and Clementswood Baptist Church, Healthwatch Redbridge attends regular drop-in clinics specifically working with the refugee & asylum seeker community. The clinics have enabled us to hear from, and support families who are amongst the most vulnerable in our society.

We were approached by a young mother with 3 small children, one of whom was autistic. She explained that her first child was placed in a school nearby, but the school had refused her request to place her autistic child in the same school. She believed the school had made this decision once she had explained that her child was autistic.

The child had not been able to access formal education for months and, although the mother had attempted to resolve the situation, she was worried she would be held responsible for her child not attending school.

We were able to put the mother in contact with colleagues from the education department and signpost her to specific support for her child from SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) experts.

What difference did this make?

- With support from the Welfare Team at Redbridge, her child was accepted into the preferred school with their sibling.
- Our regular presence at the drop-in sessions has established a trusting relationship with people attending the centre. We have seen our referrals grow quickly and people are happy to speak to us.
- We are currently recruiting volunteers from specific communities to help us support this outreach work.
- By translating our information leaflets into community languages, we have been able to provide more information and support for people attending the centre.
- We have been able to identify other community and voluntary sector organisations to increase the range of support for families using the drop-in centre.



“I was moved along from one borough to another but now I am happy my children are together in school and can get an education. I really appreciate that you assisted me. My daughter laughs and smiles all the time”

Mother interviewed by Healthwatch Redbridge

Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Partnership work leads to improved access to services

Saint Francis Hospice wanted to develop an easy read leaflet to ensure that people with additional communication support needs could be made aware of their service.

Through the HWR Community Network, we introduced them to One Place East's quality checkers – a group of service users who review documents to provide feedback on the draft.



“Healthwatch introduced us to One Place East Quality Checkers who edited a draft version of a leaflet which explains the services we can provide at the Hospice. This is now in constant use within our nursing and therapies teams.”

Jan Scott, transformation Development Manager, St Francis Hospice

Developing outreach services to reach a wider audience

Through our Healthwatch Community Network we have been able to develop several partnerships with local communities.

Listening to local people from the VHP Hindu Centre, we identified a lack of translated material impacted South Asian people understanding health and care services. We produced a guide in appropriate languages to help meet this need.

Following regular engagement at an asylum seeker drop-in centre, it became apparent that many of the attendees were not aware they could request an interpreter for health care appointments. We produced a leaflet in appropriate languages to ensure people knew what they were entitled to.



Ensuring accessible information is available to all

We are working with our local authority and ICS to review the current provision of accessible information for people with communication support needs.

We continue to champion the use of the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) in health and care provision. We are involved in an audit of GP practices to identify support opportunities for all practices across the borough. We have also created an AIS information workshop which we are using with colleagues from NHS Trust to promote the revised standard and improve knowledge amongst professionals.





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:

- Providing small grants to local community organisations through our Community Cash Fund..
- Regularly attending rough sleeper outreach events to identify and improve local services
- Holding information workshops to encourage Somali women to support us in identifying barriers to accessing cervical screening..
- Holding a workshop for Deaf BSL users to engage in the NEL ICS 'Big Conversation'. We were able to identify what Deaf people felt were the important issues for them to improve local health and social care services for the future (see photo above).

Redbridge Community Cash Fund – supporting health inequalities across the borough

It is essential that people are not subjected to health inequalities when accessing services.

Since 2022, our Healthwatch Community Cash Fund (CCF) has been able to offer grants of up to £2,000 to community and voluntary organisations across Redbridge, to support seldom heard communities to access health and care services.

Healthwatch Redbridge has supported five projects this year:

1. **'Better Me, Better Life Campaign' – Black Women's Kindness Initiative (BWKI)**. The project focused on encouraging women from Africa, the Caribbean, and the diaspora to seek the appropriate healthcare, community care, and social engagement to support their wellbeing. An event report was presented at our AGM and as part of our report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in December.. Further funding was secured through Community Action Redbridge and NHS NEL.
2. **'Experienced Voices' – One Place East (OPE)** undertook a second review of the accessibility of health and social care hubs for people with learning disabilities. The report was published and initially presented to the LD Partnership Board. The work has also been presented at our AGM and as part of our report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in December. The HWBB has requested an update from the relevant council departments to ensure the recommendations are reviewed.
3. **Increasing hospice support to global majority communities' – St Francis Hospice (SFH)** are seeking to increase hospice usage by global majority communities across Redbridge. SFH held a faith and community leaders' event in May which sought to ensure communities understand the hospice can support individuals with specific cultural needs. A review of service users' involvement with the hospice is planned for next year to identify the impact of this work. The work has also been presented at our AGM and as part of our report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in December.
4. **'The Teashop in Redbridge: Toward Inclusive, Culturally Safe Spaces' – Mind Axis C.I.C.** The project seeks to engage adults in Redbridge to support mental health and wellbeing by offering workshops in art, yoga, and mental wellness; all included with a cup of tea. This project will complete in 2024.
5. **'Rainbow Health and Social Care' – Redbridge Rainbow** is exploring and identifying the reasons for poorer health and care outcomes amongst LGBTQ+ communities within Redbridge and seeks to suggest how these can be addressed. This project is due to complete in July 2024.

BWKI – Community Wellbeing Hub

As a result of the CCF grant, the founder of BWKI met the Cranbrook PCN Social Prescribing Link Worker during a Community Networking event. This has led to the creation of the Wellbeing Hub; an holistic health and wellness provision designed to enrich the lives of women from ethnic minorities in Redbridge through varied activities on mental health, self-care, fitness, nutrition and more that we have been running for a year.



"This project stands as an exemplary model of community good practice, demonstrating how grassroots efforts and pioneering collaborations can effectively address and bridge gaps in essential services supporting community health, wellness and cohesion."

Raquel, Cranbrook PCN Social Prescribing Link Worker



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it is 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 access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

Supporting people to access health and social care systems

When Healthwatch Redbridge identified concerns about digital exclusion amongst older Asian women's groups; they invited Age UK Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham and Havering (Age UK RBH) to come along and find out more.

Age UK RBH worked with elderly and disabled Asian women to gain a clearer picture of the issues relating to health inequalities. It was quickly established that the women wanted more independent access to health and social care appointments but struggled due to the lack of digital skills (most information is accessed through online portals), and the issue of English being a second language.

As a result of what people shared, HWR and Age UK RBH were able to:

- Provide digital support sessions to increase people's confidence in using online systems.. (Age UK RBH)
- Provide information sessions to identify how people can ask for interpreters to support their independent access to services (HWR).
- Identify further services offered by Age UK RBH such as podiatry support and a falls prevention service, which have proven supportive.



"We don't want to be a burden on our families, we want to be independent and do things when we need it most, especially when we need a Dr, give us the tools and we will learn"

Attendee at session

"...once again you have nailed it...I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your help."

Family member interviewed by Healthwatch Redbridge

Identifying appropriate outreach to better support rough sleepers

We redesigned our outreach engagement to reflect the needs of rough sleepers.

This included:

- We stopped providing written information; preferring to complete active signposting if there were health and social care issues (if an attendee is having trouble booking an appointment, we will actively seek to clarify the concern and deal with it immediately)
- From feedback, we identified thermal or waterproof clothing (socks, rain ponchos and gloves), torches and batteries, as important items for people without access to proper housing, these have been welcomed. It has built up trust and increased our engagement.



Volunteering

We have a fantastic, committed group of volunteers, some of whom have been with us for many years. Several of our volunteers are retired health care professionals, and others bring experience from different fields. We value this experience and greatly appreciate the time and skills they consistently provide. Without this, as a small Healthwatch, it would prove very difficult to conduct our work.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited wards at King George Hospital to find out what improvements could be made to improve patient experience
- Conducted cost-of-living surveys at engagement events
- Supported our community engagement by participating in our outreach programme
- Conducted health inequalities surveys at engagement events
- Continued their professional development by attending relevant training courses
- Provided administration support by inputting surveys onto our survey platform




Healthwatch Redbridge – volunteering through the year



Do you feel inspired?



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

-  www.healthwatchredbridge.co.uk
-  020 8553 1236
-  info@healthwatchredbridge.co.uk



Training

We continue to develop and provide specialised online and in-person training. Healthwatch Redbridge was commissioned to develop an accessible version of the Enter & View training package offered by Healthwatch England and created an introductory workshop for organisations working with the revised Accessible Information Standards. We are also an accredited provider of Mental Health First Aid Training.



“The accessible Enter and View training materials are a valuable resource for the network. They have been viewed over 500 times since being added to our network site in September 2023....

.... we hope they will enable more local Healthwatch to train a diverse range of their own volunteers. ”

Marianne Patterson, Learning and Development Manager,
Healthwatch England



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 Government	£116,400	Staffing costs	£152,024
Surplus HWR income from 2022-23	£4,915	Operational costs	£7,007
Additional income	£98,551	Office and management fees	£32,314
Total income	£219,866	Total expenditure	£191,365

Additional income is broken down by:

- £55,000 from £30,000 from Redbridge Place Based Partnership Board for Health Inequalities projects.
- £4,000 received through the Home Office Dispersal Fund for Asylum Seeker support.
- £4,790 received from Healthwatch England for work on a women's health projects, and training packs related to Enter & View, and Accessible Information Standards.
- £3,700 received from Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Trust for supporting a patient engagement project.

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Supporting attendance for Lead Officer at ICS regional meetings.	£5,000

ICS funding

Healthwatch Redbridge, along with Healthwatch across NEL also receives funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support new areas of collaborative work at this level, including:

Next steps

Over the next year, Healthwatch Redbridge 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 three priorities for the next year are:

1. To use our influence to tackle health inequalities and to further strengthen community engagement.
2. To set our strategic direction and commitment through the development of our medium and longer term 3-year strategy/business plan.
3. To further strengthen our HWR Board and its development by delivering a robust recruitment strategy for new board members.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Redbridge, 103 Cranbrook Road, Ilford IG1 4PU

Healthwatch Redbridge 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 six 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 twelve times and made decisions on matters such as the development of our new strategic business plan and the creation of our new risk register.

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 into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and share it with our statutory sector partners and our Community Network members to share in their newsletters and on their websites.

Responses to recommendations

When requested, all providers contacted have responded to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Redbridge Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee, The Redbridge Place Based Partnership Board, and the Redbridge Health and Wellbeing Board. We also work closely with our NHS Trusts, patient engagement panels, community and voluntary organisations.

We also take insights and experience to decision makers in our Integrated Care System (ICS), NHS North East London. Working closely with our local Healthwatch colleagues in the eight boroughs covered by the ICS through a Community Insights System group. Our data is shared Healthwatch England to address health and care issues at a national level.

Enter and view

This year, we did not use our Enter and View powers to visit local health and social care services. We were, however, able to arrange visits to several services.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Redbridge is represented on the Redbridge Health and Wellbeing Board by our Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Turland. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by continuing to raise health inequality issues, provide further insights into the provision of asylum seeker support across the borough, and to raise concerns regarding maternity services for women from global majority communities.

Our CEO also represents Healthwatch Redbridge is represented on North East London Integrated Care Partnership board, Redbridge Integrated Care Board, the local Quality Surveillance Group, and the Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board.


Our Chair, Lorraine Silver represents us on the Redbridge Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Supporting the redevelopment of Whipps Cross Hospital.	HWR continues to ensure patient voice is central to the redevelopment plans for a new hospital in Waltham Forest, used by 20% of patients from Redbridge.
Making Safeguarding Personal	We remain committed to ensuring the service user voice is at the heart of all safeguarding reviews. We sit on the Local Safeguarding Adults Board and continue to support the development of processes to ensure service user feedback is collected.
Supporting Asylum Seekers in Redbridge	We were awarded £4,000 through the Home Office Dispersal Fund to support our work with Asylum Seekers across Redbridge. Among signposting work, we have also been able to support one individual with settled status to update their experience and transition into a midwife position with the NHS. We have also been able to support maternity service users to access birth reflections support after a traumatic birth.
Women's Health Project	We interviewed women about the barriers some faced when accessing cervical screening. This initial work has been used as part of a national review by Healthwatch England to understand the barriers faced by some communities when accessing support. We have used this initial review to create our own local project and are currently interviewing more women across Redbridge.

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