
Update on 2019/20 Work Plan

1. Introduction

Healthwatch organisations are set up to influence the commissioning and provision of local health and care services.

We work in partnership with a range of local community organisations to increase our reach and statutory partners to increase our influence.

Community partners include: Arachne, Community Language Support Services, Eritrean Community in the UK, Help On Your Doorstep, Islington Bangladesh Association, Islington Borough User Group, Islington Somali Community, IMECE, Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation, Jannaty, Latin American Women's Rights Service, Manor Gardens Welfare Trust and we are always looking to develop new partnerships.

We develop our work plan through conversations with our volunteers, Board and partners and try to bring together what is important to residents, and to commissioners and providers.

2. The themes in 2019/20

The NHS Long Term Plan

NHS England commissioned Healthwatch England to carry out work on the Long-Term Plan. Healthwatch England then asked each local Healthwatch to talk to residents about the plan.

To make this as meaningful as possible to residents, we focussed on dementia (one of the themes) and on general opinions on health and social care.

We recognise that the borough has done a lot of good work to achieve a high diagnosis rate of dementia but from talking to residents discovered that some don't realise that memory loss is something to talk to your GP about. So we've been promoting the dementia pathway. We've also run a series of workshops with the Biomedical Research Centre and University College London Hospital on recognising the signs of dementia, lifestyle factors that can affect our chances of contracting some forms of the condition.

We are a member of the Dementia Friendly Communities Steering Group and will be linking dementia friends with our local partners to help spread awareness of the condition.

We also went to local GP practices to talk to residents about health and care more broadly. We held a Patient Group meeting for the CCG on this topic. We have shared our findings with colleagues at the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership and should have feedback this by the time of the Board meeting.

We will also use our statutory 'Enter and View' power (the right to visit publicly funded services) to see how care home residents with dementia are supported with

their oral health. We know commissioners have put a lot of effort in to providing support in this area and want to see what that is like for residents.

Consultations on Estates

As partners will be aware, there are plans for several new facilities to be built in the borough. We want to ensure that local people's views feed in to these great opportunities.

We submitted a partnership response to the Moorfields consultation.

We gathered the views of 16 - 18 year old students at City and Islington College on what makes health and care spaces welcoming.

We ran a series of pre-consultation focus groups and surveys with BME residents, people with physical and Learning Disabilities to inform the Whittington Health estates work.

Social Prescribing

We gathered the views of Black and Minority Ethnic residents on the concept of Social Prescribing and asked them about their awareness of services. Not surprisingly, awareness of this offer was low, though many felt they had experienced social prescribing style services from a range of community organisations. We hope this evidence will inform the model for social prescribing going forward.

GP Access

Still the most common thing that residents will talk to us about is access to general practice services. We will be running a Patient Group for Islington CCG on primary care access in November 2019 and highlighting the range of new services coming to GP practice. We also plan to take this information out to a range of community settings.

Signposting and navigation

One of the Healthwatch roles is to provide local residents with advice and information about local health and care services. We continue to navigate people through the system, supporting them to access what they need, and where appropriate to raise concerns or make a complaint.

Digital Inclusion

We continue to deliver workshops (on a small scale because of funding) to support local residents to become more confident on-line and more able to access a range of information and activities with the aim of them becoming more digitally and socially included.

Evaluation of other community organisations' work

Back in 2016 Manor Gardens approached Healthwatch Islington to carry out an audit of their Bright Beginnings project, a great initiative supporting new parents from migrant communities and funded by the National Lottery.

Seeing this report, local funder Cloudesley approached us to deliver some evaluation support to local organisations funded through their 500 years of Cloudesley Legacy Fund.

These kind of projects will help us to better understand needs, and potential unmet needs, within the borough.

Supporting other partners' user involvement

We have run some training for partners Islington Borough User Group on the role of Service User Representatives in meetings.

Our work would not be possible without the tireless efforts of our volunteers, the support of partners (both in the community and within commissioning), and our committed staff team.