

Having an impact in 2015



We investigated how well GP practices support patients that don't speak English. We found that that in many cases interpreting services were not being offered, and this was resulting in poor care. Islington Clinical Commissioning Group responded to our report by contacting all GP practices, urging them to offer interpreting whenever there was a need. They will follow up with individual practices that are slow to comply. They are also producing a briefing designed to empower local residents to insist they are given an interpreter whenever they visit their doctor.



Healthwatch volunteers made 8 visits to view conditions inside care homes, and to gather the views of more than 60 residents, relatives and members of staff. We noticed that in some care homes, gardens were in a state of disrepair. Also in one home residents told us there wasn't much to do. We reported our concerns to Islington Council, who are following up with the providers and asking for more access to outdoor space for residents. They will also explore ways that voluntary organisations can help to deliver new activities at care homes throughout the borough.



We also identify what is good about existing services. We went back into care homes to find out how the service provided by the Integrated Care Ageing Team was viewed. We learned that residents and relatives valued the way this team managed difficult conversations about end of life care. As a result Islington Clinical Commissioning Group has decided that these discussions will be more systematically delivered and monitored, to make sure this strength isn't lost as the service expands out of care homes into the wider community.



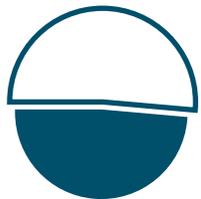
We've handled 217 requests from people needing help to access health and care services in the past year. One patient had been incorrectly advised that they would be discharged if they were unable to attend a physiotherapy appointment at the Whittington they had been given at very short notice. Our intervention led to staff at the Whittington being retrained. We helped another to report her dentist for negligence. That dental practice was then investigated by the Dental Council and required to take action to improve their services. When we resolve problems for individuals, it can lead to changes which improve services for everybody.

From adult safeguarding to customer service in GP reception areas, we've published 15 reports on local services in the last 12 months. One of our latest was picked up, and shared more widely, by the King's Fund, the national think tank that helps shape health and social care policy and practice.

The King's Fund >

39 formal recommendations

for improvements to services made by Healthwatch Islington in the last 12 months. 15 have been acted on already by Islington Council, by Islington Clinical Commissioning Group, or by local NHS Trusts.



18 of **34** GP practices

now displaying Healthwatch Islington's up-to-date complaints guidance on their own websites



Outreach & diversity

16 local organisations representing black and minority ethnic clients needing support to communicate in English have taken part in our work on interpreting services. The project has allowed us to engage with them in a practical and relevant way, and 2 of the organisations now sit on our steering group.

1800+ We've knocked on nearly 2,000 doors on some of the most disadvantaged housing estates in the borough. We're reaching people who are isolated or have mobility issues, people most in need of social care services in particular, who we would be unable to reach through other means.



This year, we worked with the Deaf community to investigate the accessibility of NHS complaints processes (we also worked with partners at the Elfrida Society to capture the views of people with Learning Disabilities). And a team of Deaf service-users are currently being trained to 'enter and view' services across the whole of North, Central and East London.

72 volunteers

visiting services, talking to local residents, and feeding back to commissioners and providers



96 visits to GP practices by our mystery shoppers

17 young adults trained to interview their peers about mental health

51 interviews with local people who have complained about the NHS.

137 general comments on services gathered from members of the public

6 briefings

This year we've delivered a series of public events keeping local people informed about key issues in health and care for Islington. Recent briefings have covered the new Care Act, improving mental health in the borough, and NHS England's plans to share personal medical data more widely.

