

Having an impact in 2016



The work of our volunteers, and our approach to volunteering, was celebrated as the best in the country at the Healthwatch network awards in June. Our project on mental health services for young adults and our ongoing partnership with 'Help on Your Doorstep' (where staff and volunteers go out door knocking on local housing estates to offer support and learn about residents' needs) were singled out for particular praise.



We worked with Islington Council and two local providers, to reach some 600 people receiving council funded care in their own homes. We provided signposting to those that needed it, helping with enquiries about how individual contributions to the costs of home care were calculated, and giving out complaints information. We also carried out phone interviews, gathering some great feedback on people's experiences of home care which we are publishing and sharing with commissioners this summer.



The work we began nearly two years ago, to increase the use of interpreting services in our GP practices, is beginning to show results. Overall the number of bookings in the last six months has increased, and more practices are offering interpreting. Islington Clinical Commissioning Group have told us that our involvement has really helped them to prioritise this work and expand the monitoring of usage rates. We've also worked directly with community organisations supporting clients who find it difficult to communicate in English, and have produced EasyRead guidance in Arabic, Greek, Spanish and Turkish about getting interpreting support at the doctors.



Our mystery shoppers visited local hospitals and phoned local GP practices, to find out how easy it was for patients on low incomes to receive support under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme. Our findings brought about an immediate change of policy at Moorfield's Eye Hospital, and an eventual one at the Whittington. Islington Clinical Commissioning Group also promised to raise awareness of the scheme with GP practices across the borough, and to work with the council to promote it directly to patients likely to be able to benefit.