



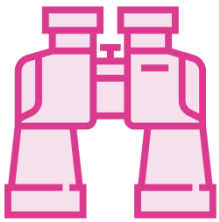
voice counts **healthwatch**
Croydon
This is your NHS and social care service
Give us your views
We want to understand what you think and what you need. Contact us so we can help you.
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Call 0300 012 0235
Email info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk
Visit healthwatchcroydon.co.uk
We work with South East London, Surrey, West Sussex, Kent, and Sussex.
Healthwatch Croydon, 24 George Street, Croydon, UK S9 1PH

Guided by you

Annual report 2019-20

Healthwatch Croydon is here to make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services in Croydon. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally. Our sole purpose is to help make health and social care better for people.



Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you. People want health and social care support that works - helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



Our approach

People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work.
- Running surveys and focus groups.
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations.



Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

Twitter: @HealthwatchCR0

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HealthwatchCR0

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“Healthwatch Croydon are an invaluable part of the architecture of our health and care system in Croydon.

See page 9

The helpdesk signposted her to the NHS Dental helpline, Oral Health foundation and sent a link to NHS complaints information. The client wrote back to thank the helpdesk.

See page 27

Being part of the Healthwatch Croydon team has empowered me to build on what I know and learn new things. I have found a fresh enthusiasm and motivation for the future.

See page 31

Healthwatch Croydon are a key partner to make sure what local people have told us stays at the centre of our joint health and care plan for the borough.

See page 16

Meet our staff and board

Healthwatch Croydon has been delivered by four members of staff and supported by a local leadership board of Croydon residents.



Our team

Jeet Sandhu, Communications Lead
Gordon Kay, Healthwatch Croydon Manager
Robyn Bone, Volunteer and Partnerships Lead
Yinka Alowooja, Engagement Lead

Our board

Emma Leatherbarrow
Anantha Ramaswamy
Edwina Morris (Chair)
Tariq Salim
Martin Faiers (Deputy Chair)
Pat Knight
Brian Matthews
Gordon Kay



Healthwatch Croydon and Help & Care

Help & Care hold the contract for Healthwatch service for Croydon, which is commissioned by Croydon Council. Local leadership board members have been selected through an open recruitment process and are all Croydon residents, reflecting a range of experience and knowledge of health and care services and of Croydon.



Emma Leatherbarrow as Director of Partnerships at Help & Care is a member of the board. Gordon Kay is the operational manager and also attends the board.

Introduction from our Chair



Welcome to our annual report, which aims to give you a better understanding of the work that Healthwatch Croydon has been doing during the past year, the impact that we have had, what we plan to do in the following year and how you can get involved.

The Local Leadership Board was recruited during the winter of 2018/19 (see page 4 for our names and photos) and was fully in place by April 2019. At this time, our work programme for the following months had already been set, but as the year progressed board members became more actively involved in deciding our priorities based on feedback from local people about their experiences of health and care services.

One project, the impact of which we are particularly pleased about, was working with local BAME communities to explore their access to mental health and well-being services. Our findings were instrumental in helping the Croydon BME Forum to design suitable premises at the Whitgift Centre for a wellness centre that opened in February 2020 (page 14).

In 2019, we were also approached by Croydon College and worked with six T-level students to help them to devise, run and analyse a survey to find out about young people's mental health needs, and to present their findings to health and social care managers and clinicians (page 13). This work was very well received and has helped to bring about positive changes in the services that are being commissioned locally.

People told us of their concerns about various changes being proposed to local health and care services. With funding from Healthwatch England we helped Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCCG) develop their plans for locality based primary and community health services and improve their communication with local people about proposed changes (page 22).

Continued on next page

This work was very well received and has helped to bring about positive changes in the services that are being commissioned locally.

Introduction from our Chair



Later, with funding from Croydon CCG, we looked more closely at how this new model could work for specific groups in the Thornton Heath locality, speaking to people from the Muslim community, from African and Caribbean communities, and people managing on low incomes, and provided insight to Croydon CCG to help them amend their services to be more responsive to local people's needs (page 23).

During March 2020, our plans for the coming year were disrupted by the impending COVID-19 pandemic, and we quickly changed our approach. Our office closed, our staff team began working from home and all of our work moved online. We received guidance from Healthwatch England about how we could best help the local response to the pandemic, and we launched our first COVID-19 survey. By April, we had already provided feedback to local health and care services on the views of the first 63 residents who had completed our survey, but more on this on page 11.

We received guidance from Healthwatch England about how we could best help the local response to the pandemic, and we launched our first COVID-19 survey. By April, we had already provided feedback to local health and care services on the views of the first 63 residents who had completed our survey.

I would like to conclude by thanking our staff, volunteers, board members, Croydon residents and our partner organisations for all your help and support during the past year. We look forward to another busy and productive year of helping people to express their views about local services whilst health and social care recover from the unprecedented demands of COVID-19.

Edwina Morris
Healthwatch Croydon Chair

Our priorities in 2019-20

In 2018-19, 1800 people told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20. We also responded to proposed local changes in services and chose themes where we could contribute. These were the six priorities that we undertook as a result:



- Croydon young people asked how young people need and use mental health services. [See page 13](#)



- Croydon BME communities wanted to know more insight to support the new wellness centre. [See page 14](#)



- Insight suggested that new parents needed additional mental health support and services. [See page 15](#)



- Residents raised questions about Croydon's Health and Care Plan as well as support for carers. [See pages 16-17](#)



- More insight into Accident and Emergency use and what the patient experience was like. [See page 20](#)



- Contributing to South West London through insight and scrutinising CCG merger plans. [See page 18](#)

“Healthwatch offers a strong local voice for patients and carers regarding their health and care issues and concerns.”

Feedback from Stakeholder Survey 2019

Highlights of our year

Health and care that works for you



40 volunteers

helping to carry out our work. In total, they contributed **742 hours** over **104 occasions** equal to over **105 days** or **21 weeks**

We employed 4 staff

two five days a week and two four days a week, which is the same as the previous year. (3.6 Full time equivalent).

We received from Croydon Council **£185,223 in funding**

in 2019-20 the same as the previous year.

Providing support



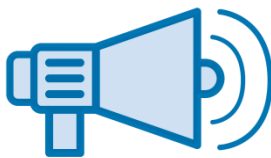
2051 people

shared their health and social care story with us via comment or survey response **251 (14%)** more than last year.

1046 people

asked Healthwatch Croydon for advice and information or contacted us with questions about local support, with many more having accessed information online by our newsletter or via social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Reaching out



8892 hits

through our website, **572 tweets** sent as well as other social media, and **961 people engaged** with us at community outreach, surveys or events.

Making a difference to care



We published 13 reports

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care, and from this, we made **79 recommendations** for improvement.

What our stakeholders say

“We have really appreciated Healthwatch’s work this year, they continue to play a valuable role in our One Croydon partnership. As always, the views of the Croydon residents Healthwatch engages with inform and guide our work and our focus on improvement. In these current times, Healthwatch’s concise insight into residents’ points of view and experiences will be ever more important as we work to develop health and social care within the context of COVID-19. We have also appreciated their support in sharing and signposting important health and care messages through their networks, which actively helps to keep our residents informed and safe.”

Dr Angelo Fernandes, Chair NHS Croydon Borough, NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

“Healthwatch Croydon are an invaluable part of the architecture of our health and care system in Croydon. Bringing local people’s voices to the heart of what we do to improve health and care for local residents. This year Healthwatch have produced a number of reports and attended a range of forums to ensure their findings from their work with residents influence our decision making. I look forward to continuing to work with Healthwatch Croydon and strengthening the resident voice in the coming year.”

Guy Van Dichele, Executive Director, Health, Well-being and Adults, Croydon Council

“We are listening to what our patients have to say and by acting on their experiences we want to keep improving our care in the borough. Croydon is forerunner in the NHS for joining-up local health and care services to give people more coordinated support. As formal observers of the borough’s new Health Board, Healthwatch are helping to ensure peoples’ voices are heard as we continue on this journey. By gathering the views of a panel of patients, Healthwatch is also helping to improve our hospital signage and enhance the experience of people in the Emergency Department. We want to step-up our patient involvement and public engagement, and we are looking forward to the continued support for Healthwatch to help us do this.”

Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive Officer, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust and Place-based Health Leader for Croydon

“We would especially like to extend our thanks to Healthwatch Croydon for their continued engagement and involvement in raising quality matters that impact on the local population and for sharing their engagement work outcomes and findings which has informed and supported clinical pathway developments and learning. We are confident that Healthwatch Croydon will continue to be an important partner in developing and embedding engagement processes in quality surveillance systems going forward.”

Gwen Kennedy, Director of Nursing Leadership & Quality and Regional Lead for Safeguarding (London) NHS England & NHS Improvement

Health Scrutiny in Croydon has been improved immeasurably by the work of Healthwatch Croydon. Having a representative of Healthwatch on the Scrutiny Committee, and receiving regular updates on their work, ensures we improve our chances of “hearing the voice” of Croydon residents, service users and carers in regards the local delivery of health services in our communities.”

Cllr Sean Fitzsimons, Croydon Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee Chair

Looking ahead


This year is going to be defined by the recovery of health and social care services in response to COVID-19. While it has had a massive impact for all involved, it has revealed some interesting insights into our use and expectations of services that can help define them in the future, as well as creating opportunities of real public involvement.

Healthwatch Croydon have also had to respond to this change, with a revised mandate from Healthwatch England prioritising sharing patient experience more swiftly and increased signposting. All of this happening when we are delivering the service from our homes.

Our response has been to ensure we could meet the challenge of producing reports that could be shared in stakeholders in a matter of weeks, rather than our usual months. Twice our record for getting a report compiled and shared with our stakeholders was broken.

At this point, I would like to thank all those key stakeholders at the hospital, in primary care, in Croydon Council and in the voluntary and community sector, who have been open to all our reports, not just our recent COVID-19 responses. Not only have they recognised our reports but they are making changes as a result. We look forward to developing further our good relationship with all of them.

Our challenge is, and has always been, where we can focus our activity to have the greatest benefit. Should be proactively looking at areas where services, or the people they are there for, have been overlooked? Or reactive to the pace of real change taking place, which has now shifted a gear with the recently published aims of recovery? The answer of course is both.

 ***We of course could not do any of this without the views we get from you, the Croydon public.***



Things were already developing before COVID, with the further development of One Croydon and integrated care networks, an established, place-based leader for health and the merger of our local clinical commissioning group into a wider South West London NHS group. This creates opportunities for new ways of working, which need insight from the public.

We are also aware that some people have not had their voices heard on services that mean the most to them and we will look to provide relevant insight where we can. I thank the board and volunteers, who make so much of what we do possible, for their commitment - even in these challenging times.

We of course could not do any of this without the views we get from you, the Croydon public. Irrespective of what the future holds, and it is difficult to make any major plans under these circumstances, we will always seek to ensure your views are represented to the best of our ability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Kay". To the right of the signature are three small icons: a square with a cross, a square with a plus sign, and a square with a plus sign.

Gordon Kay
Healthwatch Croydon Manager

Our plans for 2020-21

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the LLB had prioritised the following areas for further exploration during 2020/21:

Croydon University Hospital: With a large impact on Croydon residents and change taking place in response to the CQC inspections, we can provide relevant insight to support improvements.

Mental Health: We have received several reports about people's concerns about access to effective mental health support;

Primary and Community health services: Ensuring continued conversation with residents to contribute to major changes of One Croydon and Integrated Care Networks+ implementation;

Social Care: Enable resident insight to inform decision-making on services in a challenging environment. It also addresses an imbalance in our focus in recent years.

The board had also agreed that during the year Healthwatch would:

- carry out one major survey / project each quarter;
- hold a number of consultation events about issues of local importance;
- implement a themed programme of Enter and View visits to local care homes;
- continue to represent local people's views at key multi-agency meetings.

The board also agreed that, following the success of the T-level students' project in 2019/20, a second T-students' project would be undertaken in the first quarter of 2020/21.

However, COVID-19 pandemic began to have a major impact on our plans. In April, we received guidance from Sir Robert Francis, Chair of Healthwatch England, about how local Healthwatch organisations should change the focus of their work in response to the pandemic.

Up to this date, we have produced two reports, on the impact of COVID-19 on Croydon residents and the T-level project focusing on mental health due to COVID-19 is currently in progress.

We are now considering opportunities which reflect our original aims before COVID-19 while responding to the new environment we are working in such as:

The quality of support that shielded people have had and what they need going forward; The experiences of Care Home residents; Ensuring that the views of local people are taken into account in service redesign or review; Working with Healthwatches and the NHS across South West London to ensure that the views of local people are taken into account as the NHS recovery programme begins with proposals to make temporary changes permanent; Keeping informed about the impact of COVID-19 on BAME and learning disability communities and provide relevant insight to support services.

Prior to undertaking any further projects the board will complete the prioritisation matrix to identify which project(s) should be taken forward. This will be regularly published on our website in the coming months in response to decisions and developments.

How we've made a difference

Read all the reports featured in this section at:
www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk/learn-more/our-reports/



Matthew Kershaw (Place-based Health leader), Rachel Soni (Croydon Council) and Sarah Burns (Croydon Voluntary Action) with Edwina Morris (Healthwatch Croydon Chair) at our 2019 Annual Meeting which included a Health and Social Care Question Time.

Helping Croydon's young people talk about mental health through coproduction

Three quarters of lifetime mental illness starts before age 25, Croydon has more young people than any other London borough, so this was a pertinent area to research.

We worked with a group of six T-Level students from Croydon who chose this subject (see page 29) and asked 146 young people to share their experiences of mental health. We wanted to know what our young people were experiencing in terms of mental health, the drivers for both poor and good mental health, as well as assets and limitations of what Croydon currently offers.

We learnt

- Relationships are key to young people's good mental health;
- Young people turned to friends and family before professionals, but the preferred professional was the GP;
- Support needs to be focussed on the individual, one size does not fit all;
- There needs to be higher awareness of Mental Health both at home and in the community and a mixed provision offered.



Recommendations:

- **Wide reaching:** Young people will talk about mental health, services need to be easy to access and ready to 'meet young people where they are' in order to listen, signpost and support.
- **Focus on the individual:** The same issues need to be addressed in different ways according to personal preference.
- Friends and families can utilise existing resources to reassure each other and be aware of when it is time to escalate to professional support.
- Services should work together to share best practice, ideas, and successes across Croydon.

Impact:

This has started discussions about all the key stakeholders in young people's mental health to see how they work together more effectively to meet help deliver key strategies in both children's services and mental health.

We co-produced this work with a group of students from Croydon College. This model has since been recognised by Healthwatch England and we won funding to disseminate to the wider Healthwatch network to empower hard-to reach groups to deliver relevant insight on their terms.

"This report is helpful and valuable and will help us in our thinking... we recognise that young people are asking for dynamic, compassionate and accessible talking therapies...we will use this report in the coming months in our training, discussions and strategic planning in order that we can continue to rise to the challenge."

Geoff Jones, Assistant Director, Off The Record Croydon

"Reports such as this confirm how crucial it is not only to listen, but to take action...this report offers a young person led and totally contemporary opportunity for local providers, decision makers and commissioners to listen to the voice of the younger community."

Gordon Knott, Director, Croydon Drop-In

Finding out what wellbeing means to BAME residents to support creation of new centre

There has been research undertaken on why BME communities do not take up services, mostly early intervention services. Healthwatch Croydon hosted meet the Changemakers event on “Adult Mental Health” and over 60 people attended in July 2018. We heard about issues concerning self-management, primary and acute care. There was a distinct theme around BAME communities not taking up access to services compared with other ethnic groups and in particular early access services such as talking therapies.

As a result, we identified issues for exploration in the development of early intervention services around wellbeing, i.e. before people approach the GP asking for support.

We learnt

- One in four felt they had nowhere to go.
- 45% wanted a listening space, perhaps reflecting the different stages in each person's journey.
- Wellness is seen as a balance between mental and physical health.
- Of those that did have somewhere to go friends, family and church were important.



The Wellness Centre

Recommendations:

- Ensure the service is supported by trustworthy staff, well trained in mental health issues, but not medically trained.
- Offer a palette of services to meet each person's need.
- While planning on a single location at the Whitgift would be welcomed, some considered having the service in a few established locations making it even more accessible.
- Wellness centre a good idea - people need a place to go without referral.
- Understand each person's needs at the time and offer a range of services.
- Central location works for 75% but what about the other 25% who want services near them.

Impact:

This report was shared with BME Wellbeing Partnership Board and was taken on in designing services for a new centre in line with the insight we provided. The centre opened in February 2020 and was being accessed daily by Croydon residents as a hub of support until the COVID-19 outbreak caused a change of service delivery.

“The Croydon BME Forum was excited to collaborate with Healthwatch Croydon on this project. This research was needed due to the overrepresentation of the BME community members in crisis and acute mental health settings. In 2018, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust reported that BME population in Croydon made up 56.1% of their caseload on acute wards. The feedback from this research is being used so that we can deliver a BME wellness centre that supports the adult community in attending to and learning about their wellbeing.”

Croydon BME Forum

Listening to new parents' concerns about their mental health and the support they need

Healthwatch Croydon was awarded a grant from Healthwatch England as part of a larger initiative to find out what new parents were experiencing from their healthcare providers in relation to mental health. We spoke to new parents in Croydon, at local groups such as baby centres, mother and baby classes and other local groups where we would be able to speak to and survey new mums and dads. Our questions were aimed at finding out whether new parents had experienced a new or pre-existing mental health issue. They could also say what they felt about the local services offered from the GP, to the maternity ward and post delivery support such as the health visitor.

We learnt

- Although there was a shared appreciation of local healthcare professionals, service users felt that there was not enough signposting to local mental health services.
- That there is a lack in continuity of care across the service, that mental health services were not able to deliver treatment in a timely manner.
- Service users felt as though there was still a perceived stigma, this was one of the reasons why some opted for private services and that there was a lack of genuine care shown from some healthcare professionals.



Recommendations:

- Increased signposting and information on offer to potential new parents.
- Increased continuity of care, more collaboration between the various services along the maternity pathway.
- Facilitate mental health education amongst the pathway for expectant parents.
- Scope out a new pathway for service users who identify themselves as having mental health challenges.
- Recruitment of staff into the borough, to ensure services are not overstretched.
- Find a solution to variance in service with additional training and benchmarking against exemplar services.
- Communicate effectively the mental health challenges that can be faced by new parents.

Impact:

The report was received well within the community. The recommendations were taken into account at the local Maternity Voices Partnership, as well as a local baby centres. Furthermore Healthwatch Croydon presented the findings at a Public Health department organised event, Perinatal Mental Health Matters which consisted of a large majority of healthcare professionals and local parents.

“We welcome this report in raising awareness about the issues affecting our local community and look forward to working with partners in Croydon to deliver an outstanding service.”

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

“Croydon Maternity Voices Partnership are really pleased to see user voices and experiences at the heart of these recommendations and echo their importance to the wider Perinatal Mental Health pathways as a whole. It is good to see support for improvements.”

Encouraging resident feedback to ensure the new Health and Care Plan reflects their concerns

We gave Croydon residents a platform to feedback to the new health and care plan by publicising the official survey and via an independent public event in June 2019. This ensured residents views and questions were heard.

We learnt

- Measures were needed of what success was and how there would be accountability.
- Residents wanted information on why these changes were necessary.
- Different engagement approaches were needed for different groups.
- More information was required on the proposals and how they fit in with current provision.



Recommendations:

- One Croydon to take the issues raised on board and include it in their planning.
- A SWOT analysis of services, demonstrating clearly the case for change.
- How individual services will be affected, and when these changes will happen.
- Clearer explanations of the new initiatives, including what is underway and what has been proposed and how it works together.
- Residents felt that they needed distinct engagement and communications strategies, rather than the single strategy that was proposed.

Impact:

Our feedback contributed to a review of the draft Health and Care Plan and was mentioned in an update given to the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body meeting in July 2019.

As a result, we were asking to review further edits to the Health and Care Plan including considering references, information and clarity of language. It was released in October 2019 and can be accessed here:

<https://swlondonccg.nhs.uk/your-area/croydon/croydon-our-plans/croydon-health-and-care-plan/>

We continue to have discussions as this plan is implemented.

“The vision outlined in the Croydon Health and Care Plan is simple: we know we must all work together to support local people to stay well and have access to the right services when and where they need them....Healthwatch Croydon are a key partner to make sure what local people have told us stays at the centre of our joint health and care plan for the borough.”

Dr Angelo Fernandes, Chair NHS Croydon Borough, NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Asking Croydon's carers for their views on the new Health and Care Plan

Healthwatch Croydon worked with the Carers Information Service to give the opportunity to Croydon's carers to discuss the new health and care plan. We jointly facilitated a public meeting at the carers information centre which was attended by 22 carers and interested professionals. We explored the themes of the new Health and Care Plan, and discussed how this may impact carers, as well as how the plan might relate to the aims and ambitions of the Croydon Carers Strategy 2018. The discussion generated questions each areas set out in the plan. The key themes that were discussed are listed below.

We learnt

- **Integrated Health and Social Care:** this included issues of staffing, accessibility, inclusivity and communication.
- **Prevention and Proactive Care:** This covered items such as how voluntary partners will work in delivering the proposed services and the promotion of these, reaching isolated and vulnerable groups, communication of the changes with so much going on and how best that is delivered, as well as concerns around funding.
- **Better Start:** Issues were raised around support, such as in schools, and awareness of what is on offer. It was felt that supporting family resilience might not be understood in real terms.
- **Better Health and Wellbeing:** Carers wanted to know how the plan would integrate with the Carers Strategy, how the mental health hubs would work, and the timeline of this work as well as location, access and staffing of the hubs. Carers also wanted to know what the measures are for 'Better Adult Mental Health' services.



- **Better Support for Disabled people:** There were concerns that this section is too general, that there were no practical examples or detail of how the changes will work in practice, and concerns raised about the vagaries of this section.
- Further questions were raised on the wider determinants of health and increased housing costs, a lack of green space, affordability and infrastructure. An equal concern was that of placing too much focus on the wider determinants may dilute what the plan is trying to achieve.
- Other questions that were raised included ongoing mental health support, support for those who are in care homes, ensuring the relevance of social prescribing to the individual, reaching communities that were not seen and heard and the costs of delivering these services.
- Carers also suggested names for the hubs and had further questions about location and requested further involvement in the process via service user focus groups and consultations.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are that One Croydon take the issues raised on board and include it in their planning and implementation.

Impact

The One Croydon Alliance are planning to organise an event with carers to discuss these questions further, working with the Carers Information Centre and us. This will be the basis for more conversations on how carers can best be supported as the Health and Care Plan gets implemented.

Ensuring Croydon’s voice is heard at South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth CCGs proposed a merger in 2019 intending to streamline commissioning across the whole of the South West London region, the proposal is also part of the NHS Long Term Plan. Our role at Healthwatch Croydon is to help residents have their say about the merger so that they too contribute to the decision making.

We held public meetings with local professional and key leaders within Croydon to help facilitate this. The outcome of this meeting led to the formation of eight recommendations based on the discussions that took place.

We learnt and recommendations:

- Representation: Healthwatch Croydon to agree a way forward on representation at South West London NHS Governing Body.
- Role of PPGs: Healthwatch Croydon to discuss with the CCG to look at how PPGs can be developed within Primary Care Networks and Integrated Care Networks.
- Closer working between Healthwatch Croydon and PPGs.
- Public questions at NHS meetings in public, to be facilitated at regular occasions during the meeting.

the timetabling of meetings in public to allow enough time for effective scrutiny.

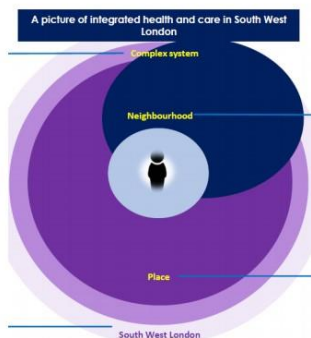
- Independence: The Healthwatch Croydon Local Leadership Board will ensure that the organisations reputation for independence is maintained.
- Forums and platforms: Healthwatch Croydon to consider the coordination of regular place-based platform events.
- Role of volunteering: Croydon Health Services and the place-based team to consider the roles for volunteers.

Impact:

The outcome of these suggestions were considered by our then local Croydon CCG and we were able to successfully represent the residents of Croydon at the local level. Since 1 April 2020, Croydon has become part of the South West London Clinical Commissioning Group, of which Healthwatch has been invited to the Governing Body meeting as a single representative for the whole area.

We are in discussions with our fellow South West London Healthwatch organisations and South West London NHS to find a solution that ensures Croydon’s residents are adequately represented, through efficient and effective processes and structures.

We continue to have representation on Croydon-based local boards as well.



Gaining insight into the journey of Croydon's street homeless

Healthwatch Croydon researched on the journey of street homeless people using Croydon's Health Services based on findings from the previous homeless research project in 2018. We spoke to 50 people at Crisis, Salvation Army and the Rainbow Health Centre to capture experiences from the homeless who access these services.

We learnt

- Street homeless found it easy to access services in Croydon: Most had utilised the hospital for one treatment or more, the dentists, pharmacist, A&E and the GP. Positive comments show some degree of improvement from when Healthwatch Croydon embarked on a similar project two years ago.
- Most found dedicated homeless services positively impacted their health and wellbeing.
- Nearly a quarter had a physical and/or mental disability: We found out during this research that 22% respondents had one form of disability or health condition including psychological trauma, heart problems, depression, diabetes and mental health issues.
- Unemployment, health issues, relationship breakdown had led to many becoming street homeless.
- Some were homeless due to awaiting immigration status.
- Nearly one in three were homeless from two to five years.



Photo courtesy of Crisis.

Recommendations:

- Dedicate further support and access to other key health services for street homeless.
- Encourage training and support and enable street homeless to gain employment.
- Further develop local support for income and housing benefit.
- Maintain permanent accommodation options for street homeless.
- Provide support with those awaiting immigration status decisions.
- Provide dedicated therapies and rehabilitation: There is a need for medical attention for those street homeless who have mental and physical health issues.

Impact:

We have raised this with the key health and social care stakeholders and are in discussions with them on how to move forward and enable an improved service for street homeless.

“At Crisis Croydon, we are pleased to have been able to support Healthwatch with this research project. We support the conclusion that further resources need to be dedicated to improving access to these services for those experiencing street homelessness, and to improving the quality of services available to those with multiple and complex needs.”

Croydon University Hospital: Hearing views on journey to A&E experience of A&E and using general hospital signage.

In July and August 2019, we spoke to 346 attendees at Accident and Emergency (A&E) about how they got there. From August to October 2019, we heard from 79 patients about their experience of using Accident and Emergency. In October and November 2019, we worked with 19 potential patients to see how they would use signage at the hospital.

We learnt:

How did you get here?: Over 50% of people use A&E as a first choice, 40% contacted one other service, almost 70% were advised to attend A&E due to the severity of their condition, 60% contacted their GP first and 15% attended A&E as they were unable to obtain a GP appointment. We found customer journeys are varied and individual and did not follow the expected pathway.

Experience survey: Overall high satisfaction for A&E, but issues concerning communication of waiting times, facilities, more consistent quality in staff and processes. Expectations of waiting time may vary with age.

Signage: A majority found the patient letters unclear and found the signage unclear or difficult to follow due to consistency and clarity of display. This affected the time it took to get to a location. There was little support if lost or confused. Toilets could be found but not in good order. Lifts are available but there was confusion about public access. Better route planning is needed for those with mobility issues.



Recommendations:

How did you get here?: Realigning the pathway to reflect real patient use as opposed to original defined clinical model. More focus on the role GPs can play in improving capacity so that people go to A&E who need to go there; ensure urgent care hubs deliver their commissioned service not just be there for the gap in GP services.

Experience survey: Better communication of A&E waiting times to manage patient expectations; improvements in physical facilities for those who are likely to be there a long time; ensure consistency in staff approach and processes; more work into understanding expectations of waiting times with reality to inform services.

Signage: Letters need review and testing; make signage easier to read applying wayfinding features; direct patients on the best entrance to use; Ensure step-free access routes to all locations; Ensure toilets are in good working order; Support lost visitors with reception's telephone number.

Impact:

How did you get here? This was presented at A&E delivery board in September 2019 and are the basis for further discussions with providers. The **Signage report** and **A&E patient experience** report has been recently shared and further discussions are being planned.

“By gathering the views of a panel of patients, Healthwatch is also helping to improve our hospital signage and enhance the experience of people in the Emergency Department.” **Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive Officer, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust**

Supporting the Long Term Plan - Integrated Care Networks + model

Healthwatch Croydon accepted a grant from Healthwatch England to gain patient insight into the NHS Long Term Plan. With agreement from NHS England, Healthwatch England and South West London NHS, we agreed to gain initial resident feedback on a new model of care being devised in Croydon called Integrated Care Networks (ICN+) and Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

We learnt and recommendations

- **Understanding the model:** ICN/PCN model needs to be presented from the patient perspective. Healthwatch Croydon can provide a neutral role and advise on simplifying the language and setting this out from the patient perspective.
- **Widening access:** Look to build strong relationships and learn from organisations beyond health and social care services such as schools and relevant government departments. Enhance the link workers role to be the facilitators of real community engagement, co-production and representation, or create new roles in terms of community development.
- Go where working populations are and do not expect them to come to providers. Create or maintain funding streams to build community assets and raise profile of new ICN/PCN networks.

Communications

- Create opportunities for personal face to face contact to occur; Expectations need to be managed concerning rollout and timescale, with communication of clear timetables and regular updates to build confidence;
- **Building community ownership and representation:** Community mapping to build networks across different groups and relevant materials to get out to hard to reach groups. Apply principles that worked with Department of Work and Pensions 'Yes We Can' event and SLAM membership schemes to build a community engagement and empowerment structure.
- Look beyond current approaches to ask the public for their ideas around some simple questions.
- Consider a community engagement model that leads to ownership and then leadership in neighbourhoods.

Impact:

We presented these findings at the Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2019. It was accepted by One Croydon that more work needed to be done in understanding the resident/patient response to this model particularly in communication and engagement. This led to a more focused piece of work, funded by the CCG that took place in January 2020 on hard to reach groups in Thornton Heath - see next page.

It's clear from the report and Healthwatch's recommendations that we need to continue to engage local people to make sure both local people and our partners can participate as fully as possible and help shape the development of engagement for a new primary care system in Croydon. We look forward to developing a strong approach for outreach engagement in the near future and we will work closely with Healthwatch."

Dr Angelo Fernandes, Chair NHS Croydon Borough, NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Providing insight to One Croydon to help the development of Integrated Care Networks (ICN+)

Healthwatch Croydon was funded by NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group to gain residents' views of the new Thornton Heath Integrated Care Networks (ICN+) footprint in January 2020. We visited five locations in the Thornton Heath area from 23 January to 8 February 2020, and spoke to 52 residents, including 23 Afro-Caribbean residents, 16 Muslim residents and a minimum of 16 from the Job Centre and Foodbank and 16 people who were interested in further engagement discussions about the services.

We learnt

- Most like the idea that services will be based locally and see it as more convenient and community centred with local support and a focus on integrated care.
- More education is welcomed.
- Concern that current staffing and transition to new model may impact current services.



Recommendations:

- Information strategy: Residents would like accessible information about the range of services and how they will be delivered.
- Education strategy: Residents would like information on how they can proactively improve and maintain their health.
- Communications strategy: Focusing on those not engaged and explaining the impact of changes both positives and negatives to manage expectations.

Impact:

This independent insight is being used by the One Croydon partnership of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, South West London Clinical Commissioning Group, Croydon GP Collaborative, Croydon Council, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and Croydon Age UK to help develop the new Integrated Care Network (ICN+) model not just in Thornton Heath but across the other five areas of Croydon.

“We welcome the Healthwatch report and its important findings about the views of key seldom heard groups in the Thornton Heath area. The insights are helpful for guiding the development of the ICN+. We note local residents’ desire for more education and information about how to stay well and self-help. This will form part of focus on prevention. We take on board the need to reassure residents that providing more online options will not leave behind people without digital access and to ensure they will still be able to access services. Ongoing local engagement is a key aspect of local community networks. We are pleased that so many of the outreach participants would like to continue to be involved with the development and scrutiny of the ICN work.”

Dr Angelo Fernandes, Chair NHS Croydon Borough, NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Helping you find the answers

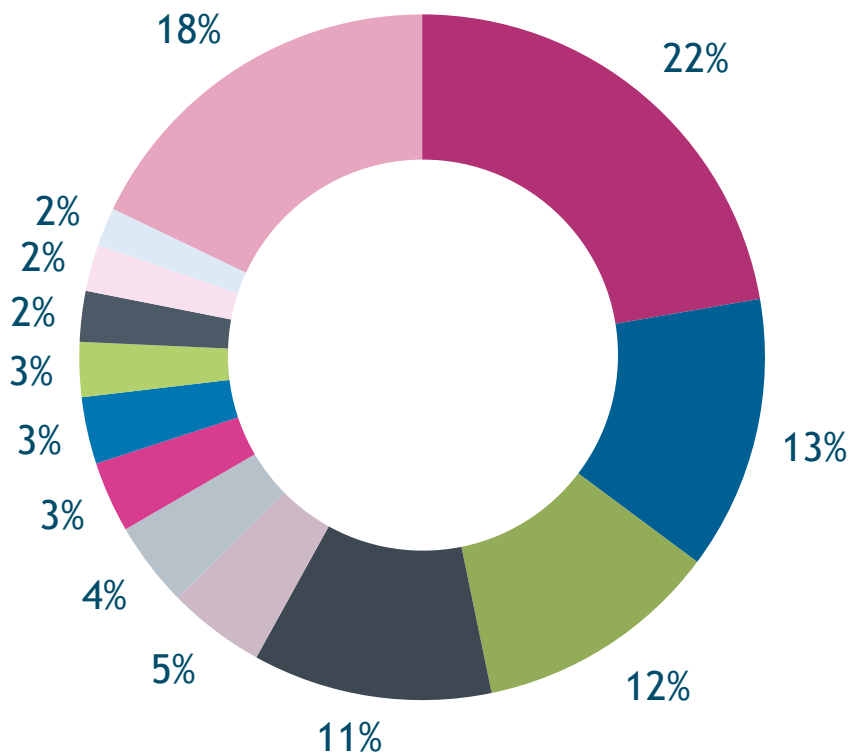


Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch Croydon plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.

This year we helped **1046 people** get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people’s queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.

Here are some of the areas that people asked about.



- Standard of Treatment (medical care)
- Waiting within a service/waiting times
- Staff attitudes
- Getting an initial appointment
- Communication to patients
- Dignity and respect (treated as an individual)
- Staff skills & training
- Other Information
- Buildings & facilities
- Follow-up & support
- Service co-ordination
- Standard of Treatment (non-medical care)
- Other

Supporting a patient to get the medication he needs

We received a complaint about a GP surgery in Croydon on advice of the ombudsman. The caller had a brain injury and PTSD and required regular medication. This had been stopped without notification. The surgery continued to prescribe his medication that was not controlled, so he had access to blood pressure tablets and steroid injections, but he had not been dispensed pregabalin or diazepam.

When he had chased his prescription, he had been told that a letter had been sent to him requesting that he attend a review before he could order any further prescriptions.

The caller had advised reception staff that he could not walk or mobilise without his pain relief and would have to buy the medication on the street if they could not sort it out.

He reported that the receptionist was not been helpful and agreed to let the doctor know. The caller lived in a flat mile away from his family and friends and would like support to find more suitable accommodation.

The Helpdesk suggested he contact NHS England re. his complaint if he felt that surgery would not take his complaint seriously.

We signposted to Croydon advocacy to discuss NHS Complaints.





Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or social care service or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch.

Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch Croydon is here for you.

www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

Call 0300 012 0235

Email info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

Supporting autism assessment:

We received an email received from the mother of a 4-year-old boy waiting for an assessment for autism. He had been assessed by a speech and language therapist in Community Paediatricians Croydon and had been found to be eligible for speech therapy. He was still waiting for this support. The child's mother requested an autism assessment at another hospital which had been denied. The child's school applied for an education plan, but this had been denied by the local council. The Healthwatch Hub replied by email, signposting to NHS Complaints procedure, National Autistic Society's helpline and the National Autistic Society (NAS) Croydon Branch Parent Group as well as the Inclusion Manager at school.

Helping get better dental care:

A client emailed as she had a bridge fitted by Croydon Dental Care but a week later, she was still in pain and the teeth were not completely filled. She had already paid but was told she would have to pay again to get it sorted out. The helpdesk signposted her to the NHS Dental helpline, Oral Health foundation and sent a link to NHS complaints information. The client wrote back to thank the helpdesk.

Advising on mental health support:

We responded to an email on a difficult experience with mental health services in Croydon. A Croydon mother had spent eight months on mother and baby unit, half of this time placed on a section and half voluntarily. She reported having been discharged on the same day as having two seizures, that she had attempted suicide and, after going missing, had been placed on one-to-one care with no follow-on support. She requested support from the mother and baby unit but was told that they could not help her, so she went to Accident and Emergency. She reached out to other services but could not get help, until she went missing and found by the police. The Healthwatch Hub provided signposting to a GP, Mind in Croydon, NHS Complaints process and Advocacy for All.

Our volunteers



At Healthwatch Croydon we are supported by 40 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what people would like to improve to services in their communities.

This year our volunteers:

- Raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community and with health and care services.
- Visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support.
- Helped support our day-to-day running.
- Listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.

Croydon College students coproduce report on young people's mental health making local and national impact

We worked with a group of six T-Level Students from Croydon and asked 146 young people to share their experiences of mental health. They chose a subject having reviewed a range of issues, developed their methodology, created and piloted a survey, went out and undertook face-to-face surveys (breaking a Healthwatch Croydon daily record for these type of responses in a single day). They then analysed the data and presented their initial findings in July 2019, just three months after they began. Read more on page 13 about the research that was undertaken.

The impact of this report has started discussions about all the key players in young people's mental health can work together more effectively to meet various strategies. The model has since been recognised by Healthwatch England and we won funding to disseminate to the wider Healthwatch network to empower hard-to reach groups on their terms.

We have continued the project into 2020, despite the challenges of COVID-19 and not being able to have face-to-face contact.



Croydon T-level students 2019: Stela Gkioka; Khateer Hingah, Beth Jardine, Adrianna Krajewska and Lance Bogle, with Gordon Kay Healthwatch Croydon Manager (centre)

"We did the research, created and distributed the survey made reports analysed all the results and eventually did a presentation, it was amazing and I'm really glad I had the opportunity to do so as it gave an in depth look at young people's mental health, their experiences of services and what could be improved in young people's opinions. The best part was workplace environment and teamworking, T level continues for three months, vital to improvement, great opportunity that I would like to see continue at Croydon College."

Beth

Watch Beth's video here:
<https://youtu.be/b4Vzd-2Qb5Q>

Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear what they do.

Tammy and Warren

Tammy: “It is tricky to find a suitable placement where I am both challenged and can take my companion; I am living with a mental illness but do not have additional learning needs. The signage project worked for me, I enjoyed the fact I would be making a difference, the work was stimulating, and I could do it at a time of my choosing. It was interesting because we noticed things we would not have normally and had an opportunity to give a voice to ordinary people who use the hospital.”

“We agree that being part of the wider Healthwatch Croydon Volunteer team is something we enjoy, the team are from diverse backgrounds and communities with one thing in common, the aim of improving services for the people of Croydon. Seeing the final report gave us a sense of achievement, and we look forward to participating in the next suitable project.”

Warren: “Although I was inducted as a Volunteer so I could support Tammy, we were a good team and sparked from each other, working as a pair gave us double the insight as we see things in different ways. It was a fulfilling project for us both, I got to help Tammy and Tammy got to help the community. I would not naturally Volunteer, but we made the most of it, even stopping for tea and cake!”



Our volunteer approach

We welcome all Croydon residents to become volunteers and want to find meaningful and fulfilling roles which can make a real difference to our work. As you can see, we have a range of volunteers and try to match their skills and interests to our projects. Speak to us about what we can find for you.



Volunteer with us

Come and join our volunteer team. We can't do what we do without you. Robyn would love to hear from you.

www.healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

Call 0300 012 0235 or email

robyn.bone@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

“Volunteering for Healthwatch gave me the opportunity to explore many aspects of dealing with service users, especially communication and confidentiality. This has increased my confidence and determination to carry on with difficult situations and bring solutions to them. I learned how people’s views in relation to Health and Social care services can influence decision makers.

I have learned workplace values through the support of my mentor and was also part of a project on hospital appointment letters and signage. This helped me to have a better understanding on how to measure how services deliver to the service users.

I am ambitious to continue working and learning and be useful by contributing positively to the community and improve the well-being of the people who live there.”

Modesta



“Working with Healthwatch Croydon has been a steppingstone for me. I have used communication skills through outreach, critical thinking skills with our mystery shopping work and had the opportunity to try public speaking at our annual meeting.

Being part of the Healthwatch Croydon team has empowered me to build on what I know and learn new things. I have found a fresh enthusiasm and motivation for the future. As well as continuing with Healthwatch I am applying for other community-based roles where I can add value and really be of service.”

Jade

Our finances

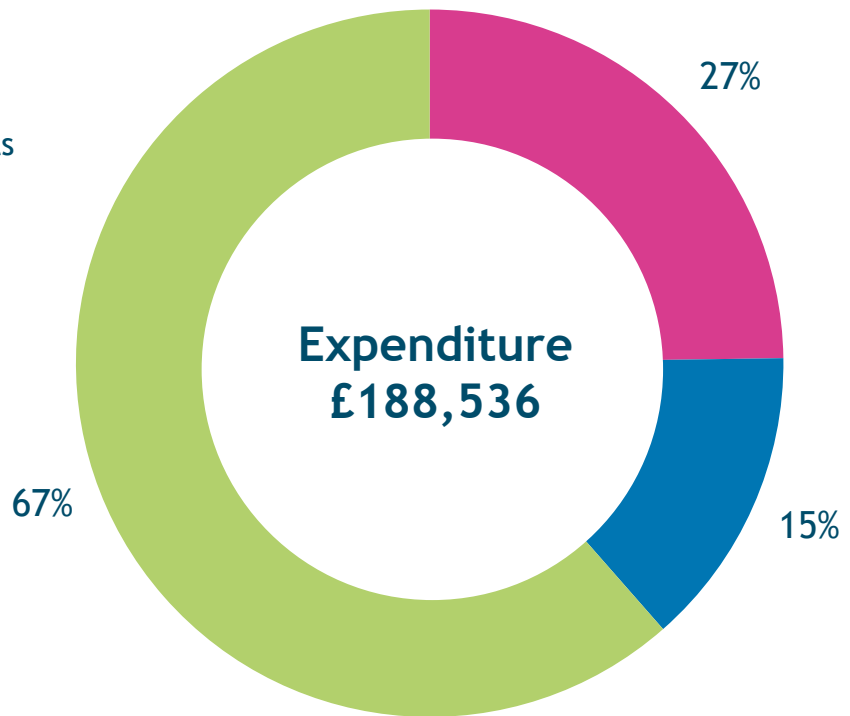


We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £188,536

■ Other costs

■ Management costs

■ Staff costs



■ Central funding received from Croydon Council

■ NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group



Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care, including:

- Members of the Croydon public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The organisations that have contributed to our work including:
 - Asian Resource Centre of Croydon
 - Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health
 - BME Forum
 - CALAT Thornton Heath
 - Carers Information Service/ Carers Support Centre
 - Crisis
 - Croydon Council
 - Croydon Dementia Action Alliance
 - Croydon Drop In
 - Croydon Health Services NHS Trust
 - Croydon Libraries
 - Croydon Maternity Voices
 - Croydon Nightwatch
 - Croydon Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Centre Thornton Heath
 - Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals
 - Food Bank, Pilton Estate, Pitlake
 - Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
 - Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Inaspectrum
 - Job Centre Thornton Health
 - Maternity Voices Partnership
 - NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group
 - NHS England South London Quality Surveillance Group
 - Off the Record
 - One Croydon Alliance
 - OPAM
 - Parchmore Community Centre
 - Proactive and Preventative Care Board
 - Rainbow Health Centre
 - Salvation Army
 - South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
 - St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
 - Thornton Health Islamic Centre.



Contact us

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0300 012 0235

info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk

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*Please note our office is closed until further notice due to COVID-19. You can still call and email us. When the office reopens, we will update via our website, newsletter and social media.

Contract holder as of 31 March 2020:
Help & Care, The Pokesdown Centre, 896 Christchurch Road,
Bournemouth, BH7 6DL

0300 111 3303

www.helpandcare.org.uk/contact/

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