

Listening in a socially distanced world

Healthwatch Newham Annual Report 2020-21



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Introduction



What a year this has been with Covid-19 sweeping across the world, affecting millions of people, businesses, and communities, and in Newham, it was no different.

The last year has been tremendously challenging for Newham residents and communities, and Healthwatch Newham has been at the heart of the community and service response to the Coronavirus. We want to express our sincere condolences to those bereaved during this time and support those who have had hardship and difficulties.

At Healthwatch Newham, like organisations across all sectors and community groups, we have had to adapt fast to the new circumstances to engage with our communities.

As Covid-19 took hold in the Spring of 2020, Healthwatch Newham responded quickly to find new ways to reach Newham's communities. We provided resources and information and engaged with a range of residents to ensure their experiences and views of health and social care were shared and acted upon.

Our main concern was how the pandemic's limitation on peoples' movements and interactions affected those most in need and those relying on public services, family and friends to cope. Our initial engagement on the impact of Covid-19 revealed that despite services adapting reasonably fast, some residents fell through the cracks, particularly affecting residents looking to access mental health services and those relying on social care to manage their daily lives.

Despite the pandemic and national lockdown, we are pleased to have engaged with over 290 residents and gathered the views of over 1,700 individual residents on their experiences of health and social care services over the year. Despite the restrictions, we used our networks, connections and local relationships and joined the many online forums, WhatsApp and Facebook groups that sprung to life during the lockdown. In addition, we found the patient and resident voice in community centres, food banks and online at events hosted by Healthwatch Newham and our many community partners.



We want to thank all key workers, Healthwatch Newham staff and volunteers that have supported residents through these challenging, distressing and painful times. We also extend our thanks to our partner organisations that have worked with us and continue to do incredible work locally.

We would especially like to thank the thousands of Newham residents who shared their experiences and contributed their time, thought and energy to help improve health and social care services.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Pal'.

Julie Pal
CEO
CommUNITY Barnet

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leonardo Greco'.

Leonardo Greco
Manager
Healthwatch Newham

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Newham. We are here to find out what matters to you and make sure your views shape the support you need by sharing them with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people’s access to health and social care services.

Our goals



Supporting you in having your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



Ensuring your views help improve health and care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



Providing a high-quality service

We want everyone who shares their experience with or seeks advice from us to get a high-quality service and to understand the difference their views make.

Our vision is of a thriving and active community of people in Newham who want to influence and contribute to the development and delivery of quality health and social care in the borough.

Key actions from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged with and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out

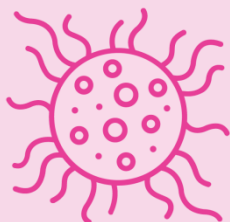


We gathered

6,679 views

and feedback from individuals.

Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported

268 people

during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

Making a difference to care



We published

7 reports

and made

15 recommendations

Health and care that works for you



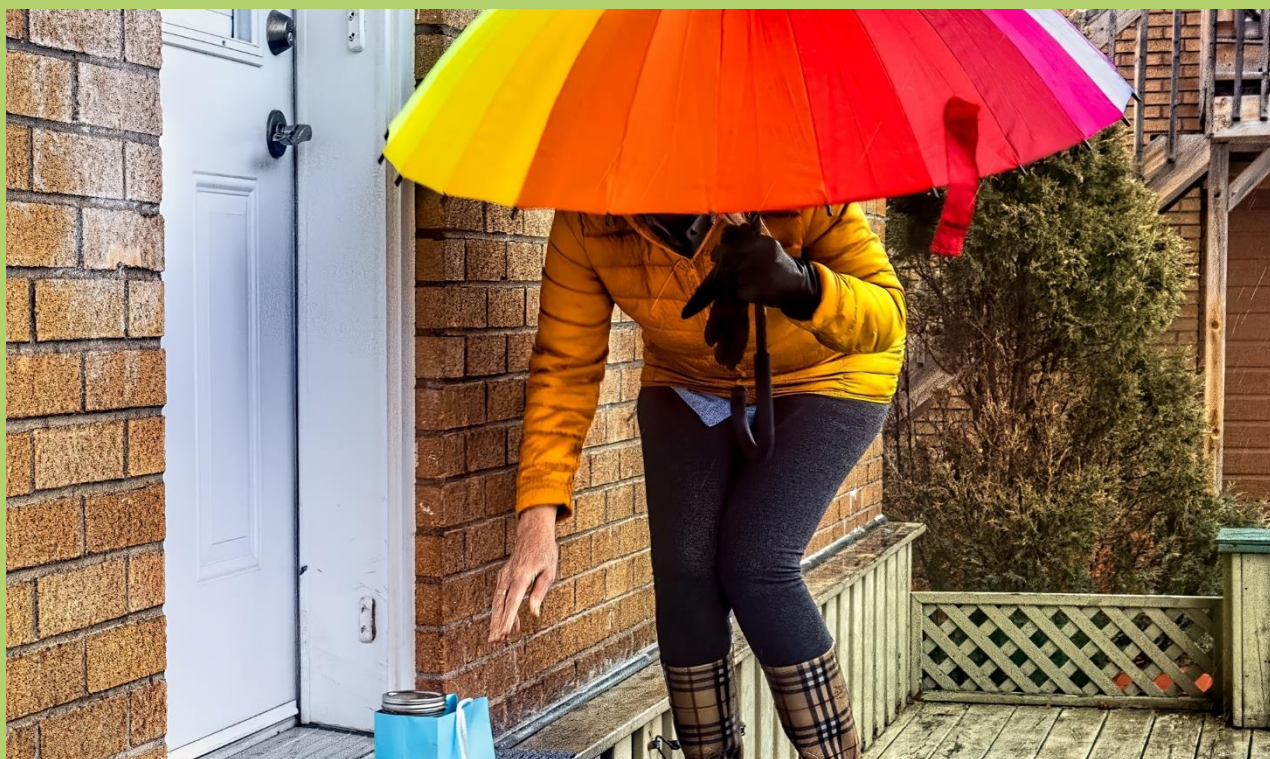
Through our NHS Advocacy service we supported

133 residents

and we listened to

298 residents

talk about their experiences of health and social care.



Complex cases and safeguarding

When the country went into lockdown, health and social care services did their best to adapt rapidly to the changes and find ways to support the community. Nonetheless, some patients faced difficulties and disruption to their support and services.

An elderly resident contacted us about their access to a General Practice (GP). They had moved out of Newham at the beginning of lockdown to self-isolate with a relative so they would not be alone. While away, they signed up to a local GP as they require regular medical attention and medication reviews. As the restrictions eased, they felt confident in returning home and contacted their Newham GP of 40 years to book an appointment regarding their medications. However, the resident learnt that they had been taken off the GP's register and needed to re-register by completing a paper form in person and presenting proof of identity. The patient, who has mobility issues, raised their concerns to the practice to no avail. Consequently, they contacted us to raise their concerns about the situation.

Given that this resident had additional support needs and proof of ID is not required to register with a GP, we raised the issue with the Newham Clinical Commissioning Group (NCCG), who followed up with the practice. Ultimately, the patient decided to sign up with a different practice to continue their care. The practice reviewed its registration processes to ensure all staff were aware and informed of the correct procedure.



Abbreviations

- GP- General Practitioner.
- NCCG- Newham Clinical Commissioning Group.
- NHSE- National Health Service England.
- NHWBB- Newham's health and Wellbeing Board.
- NUH- Newham University Hospital.
- NSAB- Newham Safeguarding Adults Board.
- SLS- Supported Living Services (Supported Living Services are where residents live in the local community, sometimes having mental health conditions or learning disabilities and may be supported by staff to help them live independent lives).

Helping you find the answers

Information and signposting

We help people find the information they need about services in Newham. With the ever changing landscape of the pandemic this has been vital.

2020 saw a surge in the number of people accessing our online directory, enquiring about Covid-19, raising health concerns, and contacting Healthwatch Newham to find out about the support and resources available from formal providers and the community.

Online enquiries increased by a staggering 235% from the previous year to the end of March, with quarter 1 (April-June) and quarter 2 (July-September) seeing the highest increases.

Throughout the year, we have continued to update our online resources and information packs on Covid-19, vaccination and local support, signpost residents to services and support in the community, and answer queries to ensure every resident has access to support and the services they need.

For more information on our Covid-19 resources, visit: <https://bit.ly/HWNCOVID19>.

We help residents find the health and social care they need by signposting people to relevant services.

To find out more, visit our resources and directory pages at: <https://bit.ly/HWNResource> and <https://bit.ly/HWNDirectory>.



Patient experiences of dental services

Since 2017, we have been conducting ongoing research on dental services. Our findings show that access to dental services is limited, with residents unable to obtain routine and emergency appointments.

During the pandemic, we received an increased number of queries and complaints from residents about their ability to access dental services. Using community feedback, we sought to understand how accessible dental services are to residents. The research revealed that the pandemic had only exacerbated the difficulties reported since 2017. We raised these concerns in our report and presented it to the Newham Health and Wellbeing Board to raise these concerns with NHSE.

Meanwhile, the concerns around dental services had come up as a widespread issue affecting Newham and patients across the country, and we began to join forces with other Local Healthwatch. We will continue to work with our partners to address these concerns.

Find out more about our research on dental services here:

<https://bit.ly/HWNDentalReports>.

Your health and wellbeing during COVID-19

March 2020 saw the pandemic gathering a foothold, and the country plunged into lockdown. We launched an online survey at the end of April in partnership with Healthwatch Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. The survey was conducted to understand the impact of Covid-19 on residents' health and wellbeing, both at a local and broader patch level. This research took place from April to July with regular updates and reviews and was presented at Newham's Health and Wellbeing Board (NHWBB). We engaged with 187 residents, gathering their feedback and learning about their experiences during the lockdown and how this affected their physical health, mental health, wellbeing and ability to access services.

Our findings from this research shaped our work for the rest of the year, including the topics covered in our annual public event: mental health services and digital exclusion. You can read more about this later in this report.

In conjunction with community and partner feedback, the findings also shaped our priorities for 2021-22, focusing on mental health, safeguarding and digital exclusion, among other areas. You can read about our future priorities later in this report.

To find out more about the 'Your health and wellbeing during COVID-19' research, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/HWNreport1>.



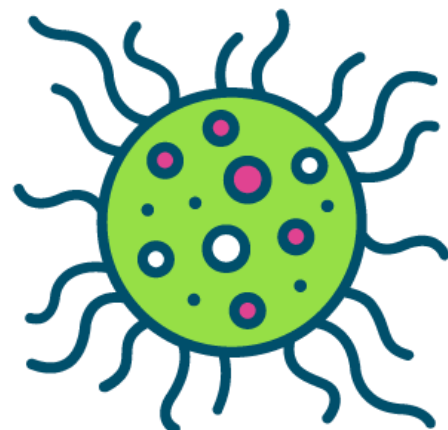


Responding to COVID-19

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people access the information they need. The research we gather is shared with Healthwatch England and our local partners to ensure services are operating effectively during the pandemic.

This year we helped by:

- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally.
- Linking people to reliable up-to-date information.
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out.
- Investigating digital poverty.
- Helping people to access the services they need.



Public meeting

We held our annual public event on Thursday, 12 November 2020. Due to the second national lockdown and social distancing, the '*COVID-19: What's next for Newham?*' event was our first virtual public engagement, which we delivered on Zoom. We were pleased to welcome over 60 people from Newham's diverse communities and those with learning disabilities to the virtual event. This event served as a kickstart to the council-wide vaccination events tailored to Newham's diverse communities.

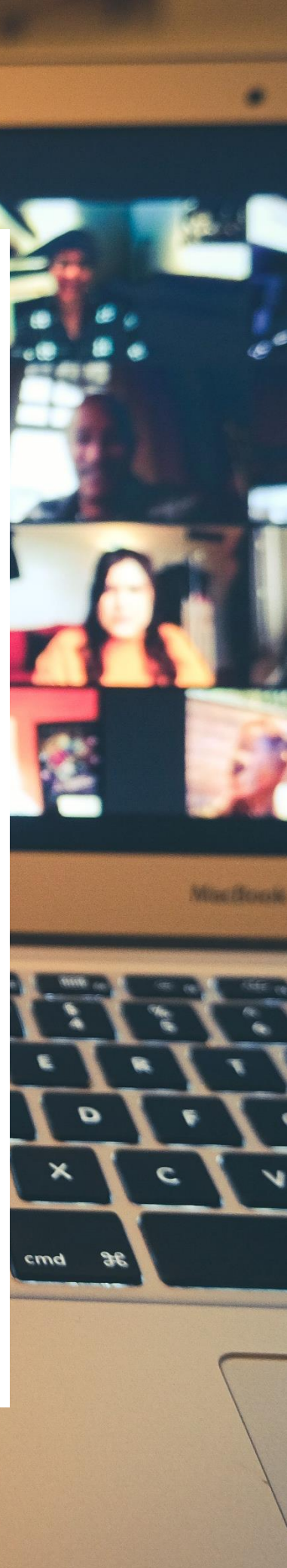
The event focused on access to mental health services and digital exclusion, which were two of the main concerns raised by residents during the first lockdown.

The first session looked at the provision of mental health services in the borough and how they have adapted to support vulnerable residents, and the long-term options for the service. Representatives from the East London NHS Foundation Trust, Newham's Assessment and Crisis Hub and Newham Black Mental Health Access and Engagement Group led this session. The second presentation examined how digital exclusion within the borough was handled, with plans to scale up the existing work led by Newham Public Health Team and Skills Enterprise.

After each presentation, attendees participated in small group breakout sessions to raise questions and have them addressed. We were able to gather valuable feedback from residents in this event.

For event details and follow up please visit:

<https://bit.ly/HWNmeeting>.




NHS Complaints Advocacy Service


Our NHS Complaints Advocacy Service supports Newham residents to raise issues and complain about NHS services, including GPs and hospitals. This service, delivered by Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham, supports vulnerable residents who require additional support.


The service supported 133 people from the local Newham community with a wide range of concerns throughout the year. Issues that the service has worked on include:

- Supporting clients to attend local resolution meetings with NHS Trusts remotely.
- Helping Barts Health NHS Trust improve its governance strategy and identify the need for serious incident investigations at an earlier stage.
- Alerting NCCG and Barts to some serious issues, including the End of Life Care.
- Highlighting that staff are not offering language interpretation services.
- Raising concerns about the standard of care in care homes.
- Enabling residents to feel empowered to make an NHS complaint by using the Advocacy self-help pack.

Residents' feedback

 *"I just wanted to say thank you so much for guiding me through this process from the beginning up until this point because it means so much".*

 *"Thank you for your concern. I am so glad you took the time to listen to what I am going through."*

 *"Thank you to you and your organisation for the work you do for people like me who are rarely listened to."*

Contact NHS Complaints Advocacy Service

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with accessing further support, please contact us. Healthwatch is here for you.



NHS Complaints and Advocacy Service

☎ 020 3828 8245

✉ advocacy@healthwatchnewham.co.uk

www.healthwatchnewham.co.uk/advocacy

Your Local Health and Social Care Advocacy Champion

Using your feedback, we can let services know what needs to change

Complaints and Advocacy Service

Providing you with support to raise your concerns

Information Service

Providing guidance on what services are available and who to contact

healthwatch
Newham





Connecting with residents and community organisations

One of our key achievements has been successfully working in partnership with Newham's charities, community organisations and social enterprises, which has come together over the years to reach and engage with Newham's health and social care services users.

Over the year, we have joined several new forums set up to address concerns stemming from lockdown and the pandemic, including:

- Newham Covid-19 Summit.
- Newham Covid-19.
- Community Leaders Summit.
- Local Outbreak Management Board.
- COVID-19 Borough Comms Group.
- Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Community Reference Group.
- Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Test, Trace and Isolate Working Group Meeting.

The objectives of these groups are to identify health and social concerns, review and address the issues resulting from the pandemic, and find suitable ways to engage with and inform local communities on how best to protect themselves and their families.

As a result of these meetings, we began a review of Newham's Rapid COVID-19 Testing Service – published in June 2021. This gave us a unique insight into how people view the testing facilities, what works, and what needs to improve.

The research emphasises a disproportionate representation of women aged 25 to 49 and those from a white British background and highlights the importance of monitoring participation to improve equity of access. More work is needed to address inequalities in uptake of services and Community involvement in evaluation and research.





Enter and View

Healthwatch has the legal power to visit health and social care services and observe them in action. The Enter and View program offers a way for Healthwatch to meet some of its statutory functions and identify what is working well with services and what can be improved.

Our Enter and View volunteers visit a service and record their observations, feedback and recommendations. The scheme manager then reviews the report. The final version of the report is then sent to interested parties, including the head office of the managing organisation, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Adults and Safeguarding Committee, CQC, Newham Council and the public via the Healthwatch website.

However, Healthwatch England advised that Enter and View visits should be postponed due to the pandemic and social distancing regulations this year.

Following guidance from Healthwatch England and the CQC, Healthwatch Newham has stopped Enter and View visits. Nonetheless, we look forward to our award-winning Enter and View volunteers resuming visits as soon as it is safe to do so.



Volunteers

In 2020-21, we recruited a small number of new volunteers, who supported us with our online and virtual engagements. We are very grateful for their support and commitment to their local community and Healthwatch.

We look forward continuing to work with our volunteers and welcoming more new volunteers in the coming year.

We would like to thank all of our volunteers for their hard work and commitment to Healthwatch Newham and the residents of Newham.





Our future priorities

Our priorities are based on feedback from residents, our volunteers and health and social care workers. We always welcome Newham residents' views, so please contact us to tell us about your experiences, suggestions and comments.

These are our main projects for this year.

- Mental Health Services.
- Newham University Hospital (NUH) Discharge.
- Newham Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB).
- Young Healthwatch Newham.
- Digital exclusion.
- Homes and supported living Services (SLS).



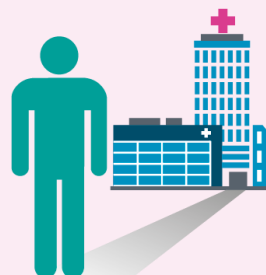
Contact us

If you have any queries about a health and social care service or need help with accessing further support, please contact us. Healthwatch is here for you.

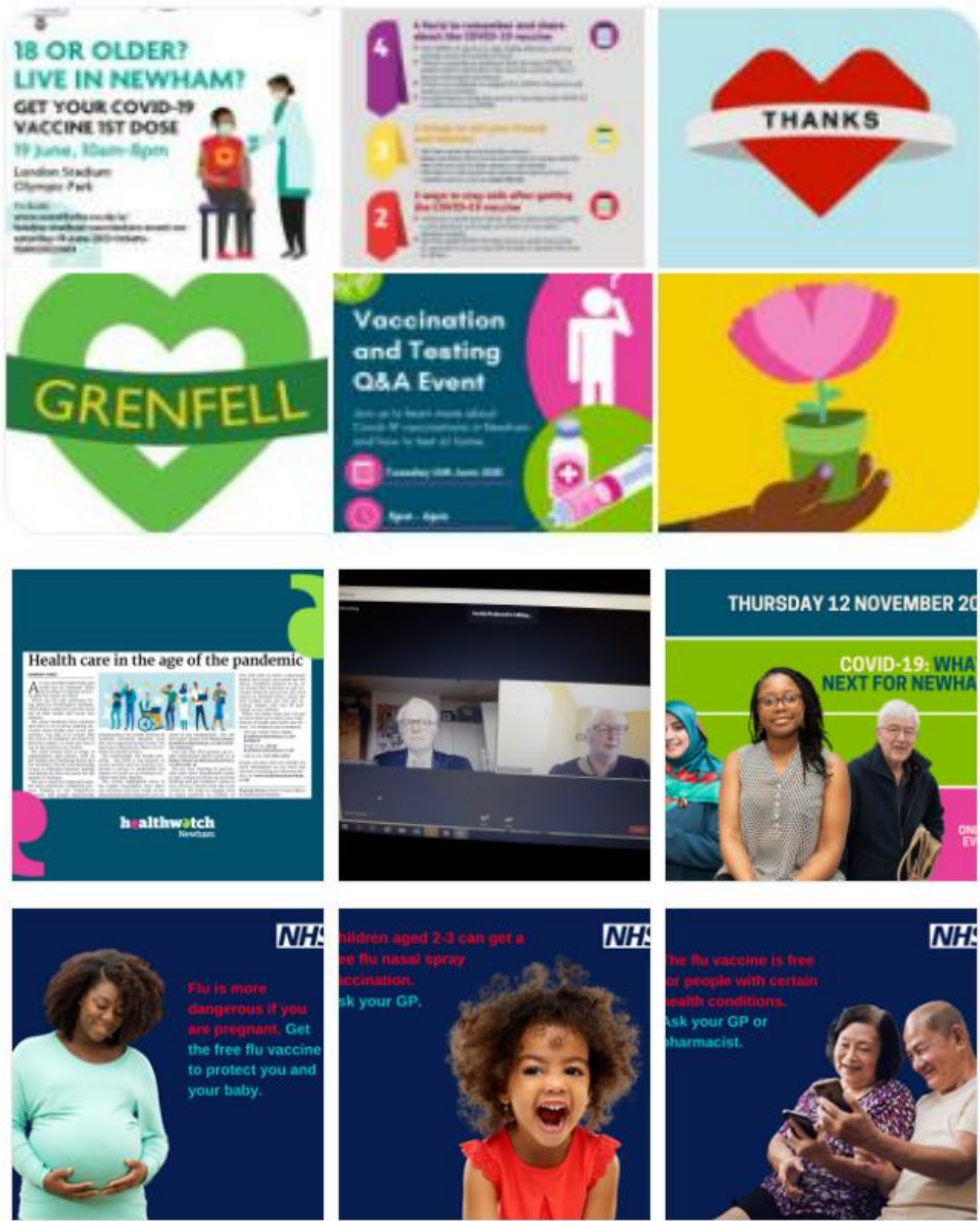
☎ 020 8366 2969

✉ info@healthwatchnewham.co.uk

www.healthwatch.org/Newham



Social Media



Our connections with Newham residents

1,832

Social Media Followers

3,559

Website visits

31

Statutory meetings attended

3,559

Website Visits



14

Public events

133

Advocacy cases

6,679

Views gathered

1,724

Number of people feeding back



44

Network and community meetings attended

Advisory Board

Healthwatch Newham is leading one of the largest charity partnerships in Newham. It works with Newham's charity, voluntary and community organisations, and we would like to thank them for their guidance, particularly in our work with some of Newham's key communities.

- Councillor Anne Easter (Co-Chair).
- Julie Pal (Co-Chair) – CommUNITY Barnet /Healthwatch Newham.
- Leonardo Greco – Healthwatch Newham.
- Claire Helman – Aston Mansfield.
- Angus McKenzie Davie – Co-Production Forum.
- Sandra Amoah – Co-chair ASK Mental Health Peer Support Group.
- Elif Huseyin – Caritas Anchor House.
- Zoraido Colorado – Community Links.
- Fiona Scaife – Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham.
- Michelle Kabia – Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham.
- Violet White – Older People's Reference Group.
- Peter Laing – The Renewal Programme.
- Taskin Saleem – Subco Trust.
- Anab Hoffmann – Heal Together CIC.
- Zhenreenah Muxhinga – Carer's Mental Health Group.

The Advisory Board's membership is drawn from Newham-based organisation representatives. Its role is to help Healthwatch Newham:

- Identify key areas of work.
- Develop and deliver activities.
- Provide guidance and support to project teams.
- Offer expertise, experience and knowledge which will promote and support Healthwatch Newham activities.
- Review applications to our community grants scheme.

We met with our Advisory Board four times to discuss changes to NHS and social care services and the short-term and longer-term impacts of the pandemic on our residents. We used these discussions to strategise and build on our years of experience working in the borough to develop new ways to support our residents.

The Advisory Board's membership is growing with increasing grassroots community groups that represent Newham's diverse communities. In 2021-22, Healthwatch Newham will continue to diversify and grow the board membership.





Statutory statements

About CommUNITY Barnet

CommUNITY Barnet is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House. We are governed by a Board of Trustees.

Healthwatch Newham is a borough-wide service. It functions through collaborations between committed and passionate Newham-focused organisations with local knowledge and insight and that are experienced and trusted. The partnership is the eyes and ears in the community and can effectively act on complaints and concerns due to its direct access to individuals from seldom heard and under-represented communities.

Community Barnet's Board of Trustees are Paula Arnell, Prithma Athma-Shah, Chris Cormie, Mav Ghalley, Anita Harris, Michael Lassman, Sharon Rutter, Jyoti Shah and Tony Vardy.

Financial Information

Healthwatch Newham is funded to carry out statutory activities.

Funding is carried out by the London Borough of Newham.

Income

Funding received from local authority to deliver

local Healthwatch statutory activities	£165,000
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Additional Income	£20,642
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Total Income	£185,642
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Expenditure

Office costs	£31,648
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Staff Costs	£113,718
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Direct delivery costs	£40,276
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Total Expenditure	£185,642
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You can download this publication from www.healthwatchnewham.co.uk/annualreport.

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