

Championing what matters to you

Healthwatch Newham
Annual Report 2021-22



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Message from the Team

Introduction:


2021-2022 has continued to be dominated by the Covid pandemic.

Healthwatch Newham has worked closely with residents, community organisations, statutory providers and commissioners to continue gathering their experiences of using health and social care services in a challenging and changing world.

We were concerned that many Newham residents had to turn to digital technology to gain access to services. But we were impressed by their resilience and determination to attend community forums organised by statutory and community organisations, which were initiated and facilitated by the Mayor of Newham.

Many community organisations continued to deliver frontline services using digital, face-to-face and telephone channels. Drawing on the new relationships we had forged during the first stage of the pandemic, we started nuanced conversations with different sectors of Newham's communities to identify ways of increasing their access and influence in shaping local services.

We have shared this feedback with Newham's elected members, commissioners, providers and broader stakeholders.



“Newham experienced one of the highest death rates during the COVID-19 pandemic confirming the national picture of the harsh reality of health inequalities across its diverse communities. We are delighted that Healthwatch Newham was able to draw on trusted relationships and shared insights into the Diverse Communities Health and Wellbeing Forum – a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board. We believe that Healthwatch Newham has played an important role in helping to identify these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities.”

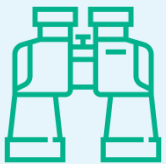
Cllr Ann Easter: Co-Chair Healthwatch Newham Advisory Board



About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Newham is your local health and social care champion. From Little Ilford to the Royal Docks and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision is for a thriving and active community of Newham people who influence and contribute to developing and delivering quality health and social care in the borough.



Our mission is to use our independent voice with residents of Newham who use health and social care services. Our vision is for a thriving and active community of Newham people who influence and contribute to the development and delivery of quality health and social care in the borough.



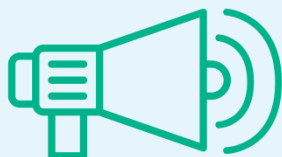
We will do this by:

- **Ensuring we have a powerful relationship with residents, volunteers and service users to gather their views and experiences, capturing and presenting the voices of under-represented communities.**
- **Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services.**
- **Signposting individuals with advice and information to help them make informed choices about their health and social care.**

Our year in review

How we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



243 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

11922

Approached us for straightforward advice and information about topics such as mental health and COVID-19 through our website and other sources.

Making a difference to care



We published

5 reports

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

Keeping All Adults Safe

which highlighted the struggles people have in understanding safeguarding and using service.

Health and care that works for you



We want to thank our outstanding volunteers.

8

They made a significant contribution, and 3 of them are now employed on our staff team to help us improve health and social care in our community.

Our funding from the local authority remains unchanged this year; we received:

£165,000

We also currently employ

3 staff

who help us carry out this work.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we delivered from April 2021 to March 2022.

Spring



Homeless people's access to and experience of GP and Mental Health Support in Newham



Capturing service user experience of Newham's Covid-19 Rapid Testing Service – an additional 764 residents tested positive out of 43,000.

Summer



Our Trend Analysis Report of Maternity Services in North East London confirms patients' continuous dissatisfaction with maternity services in Newham. This will be a key priority for next year.

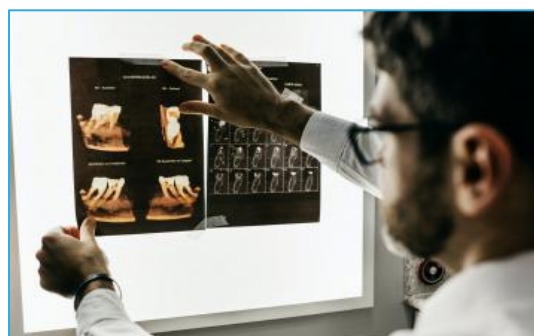


Our Trend Analysis Report of GP Services in North East London showed that residents reported satisfaction with primary care services and information about COVID support and services – all of which were widely promoted by Healthwatch Newham.

Autumn



Our Oral Health report showed the lack of appointments for Newham residents and was presented to Health and Wellbeing Board and described how we have continually raised concerns about the lack of appointments and free treatment.



Winter



We were joint winners of a Healthwatch England award with our HW North East London partners. We were recognised for 'providing fast, regular and comprehensive insight into people's experiences of care with their Integrated Care System, helping to develop services for a diverse population.'

Access to and Experience of GP and Mental Health Support by People Experiencing Homelessness in Newham

Homelessness is a public health concern that profoundly affects peoples' health and wellbeing. People experiencing homelessness have the poorest physical and mental health outcomes, with 44% of people rough sleeping in Newham reporting mental health conditions. Nationally, people experiencing homelessness are six times more likely to visit A&E, four times more likely to die by suicide and four times more likely to be admitted to hospital. Over four years, the number of rough sleepers in Newham has risen by 275% (Newham Council, 2019). In response to Newham's homelessness and rough sleeping challenges, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government allocated £1.6 million to tackle the crisis (Caritas Anchor House, 2018). Our aims were to:

1. Identify access to GP and Mental Health services by people with lived experience of homelessness.
2. To understand people's experiences accessing primary care and mental health services in Newham.
3. Identify any barriers and areas of service improvement for people who are faced with homelessness.

HWN staff and volunteers:

- visited statutory and voluntary organisations that work with the homeless
- spoke with 29 people (25% of whom were Black African)
- undertook a mystery shopping exercise with 54 GP practices using a semi-structured script to find out if patients were able to register without proof of address or ID.

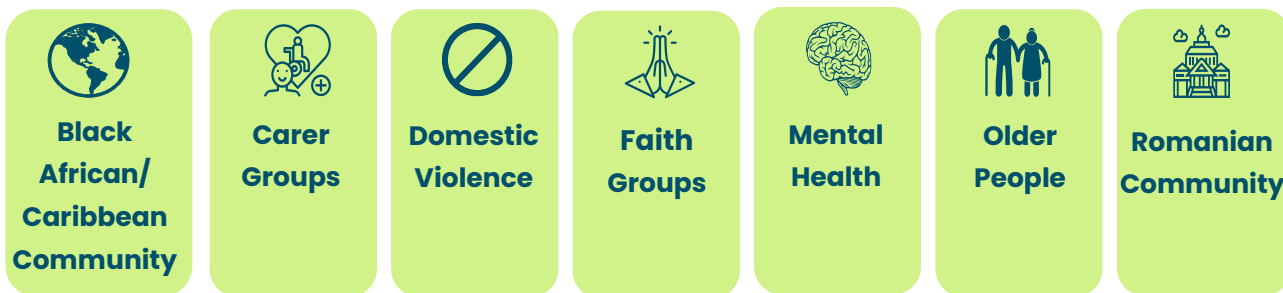
We found that 66% of participants had been experiencing homelessness for more than a year; 59% lived with a long-term condition. 76% of GP practices could not register homeless people without any proof of address or ID, and only 9% of practices said they could register someone without ID/address proof. These GPs that are actively registering and supporting homeless people could be used as examples of good practice.

Our Recommendations are:

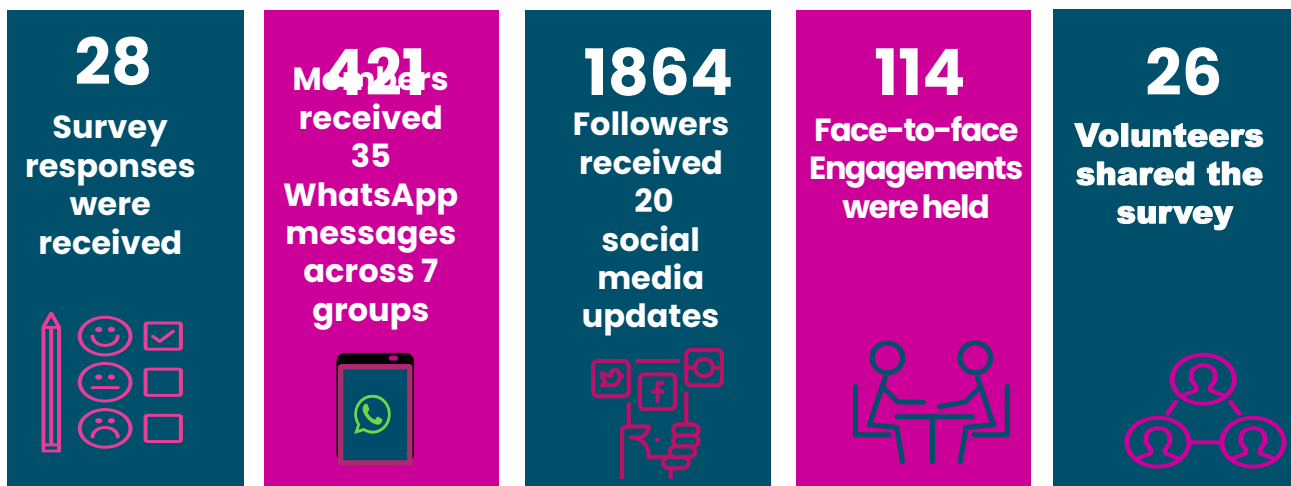
- Develop a single registration process across all Primary Care Networks to facilitate access for the homeless.
- Improve support and access to mental health services for people experiencing homelessness.
- Adopt a multi-agency approach to focus on the council's homelessness strategic plans for Newham.
- Increase integration between mental health services and local community groups to enable better signposting and referrals.

Keeping all Newham adults safe

In partnership with the Safeguarding Adults Board, we launched a series of engagement activities with diverse community groups and residents. Using focus groups, one-to-one interviews and online surveys, we gathered feedback about residents' understanding of safeguarding, capturing their concerns and identifying actions to address the issues.



We undertook an extensive engagement programme with Newham's diverse communities:



We found people with language, cultural and social barriers, older people, or those with a physical or mental health conditions were:

- More likely to be unaware of safeguarding
- Less likely to identify a safeguarding concern
- Unaware of how to report the concern either about themselves or others
- And marginalised and isolated people were more likely to be at risk.

We have produced a [Safeguarding video](#), established a community engagement subgroup under the Newham Adults Safeguarding Board, and are working with statutory partners to improve communications and engagement on safeguarding.

Listening to your experiences

We knew that there were numerous barriers to getting tested for COVID-19. Local research in Newham explored the complex issues preventing people from getting tested, including the financial and employment implications of testing positive and mistrust of the authorities.

We captured people's experiences and barriers to Newham's rapid testing services to provide recommendations on how the council and partners can increase people's willingness and ability to get tested.



Newham residents' COVID-19 Rapid Testing Service

Newham experienced one of the country's highest infection and mortality rates during the pandemic. A community testing programme was trialled to increase confidence in the newly developed vaccines and improve access to vaccine centres.

- Funded by DHSC, these centres offered free testing to the public with lateral flow devices (LFDs) twice a week. LFDs involve a swab test and return results within 30 minutes.
- Newham Council opened ten community test sites (public sites) between December 2020 and March 2021. The sites were dispersed across the borough and opened seven days a week to allow easier access.
- The who may otherwise not have known they had COVID-19. Test sites were open to anyone, but those going out to work, study or care for others were encouraged to attend.
- At one point, 43,000 tests were carried out at these sites and identified 764 people who tested positive



74% of people

Were satisfied with the process of registering for vaccination.

Newham's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Disproportionality Test, Trace & Isolate group aimed to address the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19. The Group collaborated with the Newham Public Health team to survey people attending Newham's COVID-19 rapid test sites. Healthwatch Newham led the design and analysis of the survey.

What difference did this make

40% of participants trusted the council's website to provide accurate information when people were unsure what to do.



"The Leadership shown by the Mayor of Newham along with stakeholders across the voluntary sector and statutory partners made us feel that we were working well together."

Newham Resident.



Understanding transgender discrimination

We thank the people using our NHS Complaints and Advocacy Service, which helps us improve and take action on the challenges people face accessing statutory health services. We escalate issues to the NHS and make recommendations for improvements.

Sue was under a Shared Care Agreement between a specialist clinic and local GP and had been prescribed an oestrogen-based gel to assist in the client's transition. Following the departure of the supportive GP from the practice, Sue could not access the prescription. Despite efforts by the community pharmacist, the medication was not issued.

The practice had referred the case to the GP director, who decided they could not manage the medication "safely" within the practice despite a Shared Care Agreement in place with the clinic. The practice decided they no longer wished to work with the clinic despite this not being questioned when the Shared Care Agreement had been signed initially.

With the support and guidance of the Advocacy Service, Sue decided to refer the complaint to the PHSO concerning the Equality Act (2010) and that transgender discrimination had occurred. We are awaiting the outcome of the complaint. However, through our intervention, Sue changed their GP practice and continued with the appropriate treatment.

What difference have we made?

We are clear that without our Advocacy support, Kim would not have been to make a complaint.

The Trans community is significantly under the spotlight across many different sectors. We believe Healthwatch has a role in capturing and advocating for our communities whose voices have often been unheard and their experiences not shared.



I am clear that without the support of Healthwatch Newham, I would never have pursued my case. I am grateful that dedicated professionals can champion my cause.



Three ways we have made a difference in the community

Throughout our work, we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Sharing experiences and working in partnership



The NHS and social care services need to step back and see the bigger picture through hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives. This provides a more profound understanding than using data alone, can challenge assumptions and motivate people to think and work more creatively.

We spoke with residents who shared their experiences of contacting Adult Social Care at our Public Event. The poignancy of their stories and their pragmatic suggestions for improvement has enabled us to open up conversations between the strategic and operational arms of the service. This will be continued into our new work programme in 2022.

Health inequalities and making changes



Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

We have been working closely with Healthwatch across North-East London and collating data, insights and experiences of patients accessing and using primary, secondary and acute health care. We have found differences in experiences for those using maternity services. We are concerned that Newham residents described the maternity wards as a 'hostile environment'. In response, we will be undertaking a collaborative project scrutinising such disparities as part of our 2022/2023 programme.

Commitment to improving dental services



Change takes time. We often work with health and care services behind the scenes, consistently raising issues and pushing for changes.

We have known about dental problems for a long time. In 2016 we published our report highlighting that some people were struggling to access dental care. Since then, Newham residents have continued to tell us of access problems. Last year we called for reform of NHS dentistry. This work will be prioritised in the newly formed Integrated Care System and will be used to inform local commissioning from 2024.

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Newham is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and accessible information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or to choose a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information on COVID-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need



Advice Information Service

Healthwatch Newham Website Resources

Visit www.healthwatchnewham.co.uk to see our up-to-date resources, including updates on GP and hospital and social care providers, support and guidance on COVID-19, specific information for high-risk groups and details of support available locally, shopping and prescription deliveries to looking after one's physical and mental health whilst in isolation. We review and update all our resources regularly.

For more information, visit

<http://www.healthwatchnewham.co.uk/covid-19>.

We help residents find their required health and social care by providing details and signposting people to relevant services. To find out more, visit our resources and directory pages at healthwatchnewham.co.uk/resources-1 and healthwatchnewham.co.uk/directory.

Call us on 020 3866 2969 for any health and social care questions.

Complex cases and safeguarding

Occasionally residents, patients or their relatives face barriers in accessing services and support or feel lost or not listened to by service providers. They refer to Healthwatch for signposting and support.

Supporting people who needed additional information

During the lockdown, traffic to our website increased as we provided information on the different resources produced by partners across Newham. The voluntary and community sector provides care and advice for many people using health and care services and advocacy services during the year.

We worked closely with Newham University Hospital, LBN, and the CCG alongside community organisations, including Compost, Bonney Downs Community Centre and Subco Trust, amongst others, to ensure residents knew where to access information. Almost 13,000 people accessed our website, including advocacy information.



Improving access to primary care for vulnerable patients.

This project explores the impact of total triage (TT) and remote-by-default (RbD) consulting in general practice by seeing how they are being implemented, understanding their impact on access for vulnerable patient groups and coproducing and piloting practical solutions too.

Delayed by Covid, this ground-breaking project will engage people experiencing homelessness, sex workers, asylum seekers/migrants and Roma gypsy/travellers communities. By contacting and meeting with relevant community organisations, we will understand the challenges these communities face when accessing primary care.



The results from this pilot will inform the three-year programme recently awarded to Queen Mary's University. We will provide updates on this project in 2022.

NHS Complaints Advocacy Service

Our Advocacy Service helps residents, particularly those that are vulnerable or need additional support, to raise a complaint if they are unhappy with the care or treatment they or someone they know has received from the NHS.

During the year, the service supported 494 residents with more than 300 issues, working with a wide range of communities in Newham, reflecting the diverse local population.

The service has:

- Helped improve the response time for complaints by meeting with the Barts and Newham Hospital Complaints Team.
- Alerted NCCG and Barts to some serious issues, including End of Life Care, and that staff were not offering language interpretation services.

The Advocacy Service is delivered in partnership with Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham, which has achieved the 'Quality Performance Mark' for advocacy quality standards.

For more information and advice, please get in touch with the NHS Complaints Advocate for Newham:
advocacy@healthwatchnewham.co.uk,
020 3828 8245 or visit healthwatchnewham.co.uk/advocacy

What a difference we made

Complex cases and safeguarding

We received a query from a distressed resident about their mental health condition and the support they felt they were not receiving. We referred the case to the Safeguarding Adults team, who took up the case to identify the issue and follow up with the resident.

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Newham. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we can understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

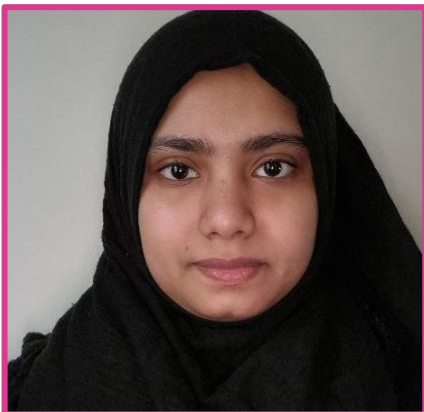
- Helped people have their say from home, carrying out surveys over the telephone and online.
- Created digital content on our website and social media.
- Carried out the website and telephone reviews for local services on their information and assessed their accessibility.
- Continued to help with the local volunteering efforts supporting those who were self-isolating.





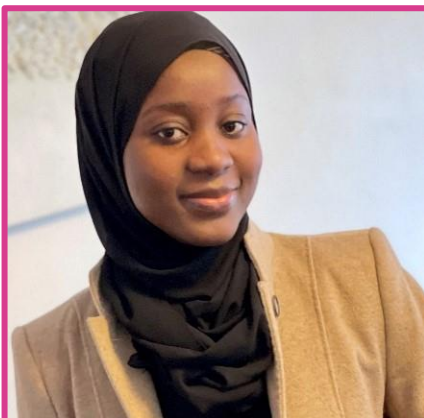
Taniyah

"I am an experienced social worker and have worked in adult social care for nearly 22 years. I have been volunteering with Healthwatch Newham for approximately two years. I am incredibly interested in listening to residents of Newham who have mental health needs or don't receive adequate service provision. My main goal is to work with residents to empower their lives by using available resources to promote their freedom and choices so that they can live independently."



Rozina

"I have been volunteering at Healthwatch Newham since March 2022... Volunteering with Healthwatch helps me to engage with the local Newham community as I can make a difference in how residents interact with the health and social care sector in Newham. It has helped me develop research experience and improved my communication skills which will be an asset when expanding my horizons."



Fatima

"I became a work experience volunteer at Healthwatch Newham in February 2022 while pursuing my MSc Degree in Chronic Disease Management.

My enthusiasm for providing local community members with the tools and support required to take charge of their health through accessing the various health and social care services in Newham resulted in a work placement award by St. Mary's University Twickenham."

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

#NationalVolunteersWeek2022




healthwatch
Newham



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 www.healthwatch.org/contact-us

 020 3866 2969

 info@healthwatchnewham.co.uk

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight into their experience of health and care services. During 2021/22, we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision-makers.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible.

Responses to recommendations and requests

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

Our Healthwatch escalated no issues or recommendations to Healthwatch England Committee. Therefore, there are no special reviews or investigations.

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

working together
to make your voice count

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work, we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income	
Funding received from local authority	£165,000
Additional funding	£8250.00
Total income	£173,250

Income	
Office costs	28,639
Staff costs	101,064
Operational costs	43,547
Total expenditure	173,250

Top three priorities for 2022–23

1. Publish findings of our engagement, including critical messages from residents about statutory services
2. Promote models and achievements demonstrating the impact of collaborative partnerships, which have reduced health inequalities
3. Engage communities in service design/redesign by working with health/community champions. Focus on specific diseases/conditions such as diabetes, atrial fibrillation, hypertension and psychological therapies.

Addressing Inequalities

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by ensuring your voice is heard, and decision-makers reduce the barriers you may encounter.

Statutory statements

About us and CommUNITY Barnet

Healthwatch Newham is the independent voice through which Newham residents can share their experiences using health and social care services. It is delivered by a Newham-based staff team, a partnership of Newham-based voluntary and community organisations and a team of capable volunteers.

Healthwatch Newham is an arms-length department of CommUNITY Barnet, an independent legal entity, a registered charity, and a company limited by guarantee.



Healthwatch Newham is delivered in partnership with local organisations. We have established the Healthwatch Newham Advisory Board, whose role is to support the core team and shape the work programme around the needs of Newham residents.

Healthwatch Newham is leading one of the most significant charity partnerships in Newham. It works with Newham's charity, voluntary and community organisations, and we would like to thank them for their guidance to Healthwatch Newham, particularly 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, Chief Executive, Aston-Mansfield

Sandra Amoah – Co-chair Co-production Forum, Chair – ASK (User Led Mental Health Group)

Elif Huseyin – Caritas Anchor House

Zoraido Colorado – Community Links

Fiona Scaife – Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham

Violet White – Older People's Reference Group

Taskin Saleem – Subco Trust

Maria Abraham – West Ham United Foundation.

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

- 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



Healthwatch Newham
Stratford Advice Centre
Newham
London E14

www.healthwatchnewham.co.uk

t: 020 3866 2969

e: info@healthwatchnewham.co.uk

 [@hw_newham](https://twitter.com/hw_newham)

 [@healthwatchnewham](https://www.facebook.com/healthwatchnewham)