



Healthwatch Redbridge Community Network



Information Pack



About Healthwatch Redbridge

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We help people get the best out of their local health and social care services by listening to what they like about services and what could be improved.

We share those views with the organisations with the power to make change happen. We also share them with Healthwatch England, the national body, to help improve the quality of services across the country.

People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

Local Healthwatch is here to:

- help people find out about local NHS health and social care services
- listen to what people think of services
- help improve the quality of services by letting those running them and the government know what people want from care
- encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England.

What services do we gather feedback on?

We want to hear from people about their experiences of any publicly funded NHS health or social care service. This includes:

- GPs
- Hospitals
- Dentists
- Pharmacies
- Community health services such as district nursing, chiropody, and occupational therapy
- Opticians
- Care homes
- Domiciliary care
- Mental health services

The main ways we gather feedback are:

- Via telephone calls and email
- Social media
- Surveys
- Face-to-face at community events and outreach visits to services



How do we gather feedback?

People speak to us about the issues that matter most to them. We then share these experiences with local health and social care services so that they can be improved. We also share them with Healthwatch England, the national body, which identifies common issues affecting people across the country, and informs those with the power to make change happen.

As an example, in May 2020, during the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic we heard from families who told us their relatives had been issued with 'Do Not Resuscitate' (DNR) orders after they had been admitted to hospital. Families were concerned that they were unable to be with their loved ones, and they had not been consulted about the decisions taken.

We raised this with Healthwatch England, and discovered it was a national issue, reported by other Healthwatch across the country. Healthwatch England were able to immediately notify the Department of Health which led to a swift review of the regulations and issue further guidance to all hospital trusts across England. Without this feedback, this issue may not have been resolved effectively.

The importance of people's voices

It is essential that local health and social care services hear from people about their experience of using those services. This ensures they understand.

It is important that they hear directly from service users about what it is really like; what works and what could be better. There is a strength (and power) in a collaboration of voices working together with a common aim.

There are many areas that people may wish to share their experiences with us including: access to services, appointments, care, communication from services, digital access, efficiency, support, and staff.

Redbridge is a large borough with a diverse population, and it is important that services meet individual's needs, needs which will vary across the borough. The more people we hear from sharing their individual experiences, the more we can work with services to help shape them to meet individual needs.

To give you an idea of how the people's voices can make a difference, here are a few examples:

1. Following concerns from people about a lack of blood testing facilities in the west of the borough, we worked with the Clinical Commissioning

Group and the Health Scrutiny Committee to increase the number of facilities.

2. We shared the findings of our Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy report with Public Health Redbridge. This led to them engaging with specific groups and producing information in different languages and, making this more accessible and holding online meetings for specific communities.
3. We worked closely with an organisation supporting refugee and migrant communities to highlight the specific barriers faced by people accessing services. This led to changes within the health and social care services and an acknowledgement that the statutory sector needed to address the specific needs within this group.
4. A carers organisation worked with us to emphasise the additional support needed for people caring for individuals with dementia. The work led to additional funding being secured to address specific support needs.
5. We are currently working with Deaf people and raising their concerns over the lack of appropriate support for people to access health and care services.

These examples give some insight into how the service user voice can help to positively create change.

Developing the Healthwatch Redbridge Community Network

We want to build greater links within our local area to ensure that we hear from all communities. Gathering this information will enable us to have a greater understanding of what is and is not working for different people. This can support the development of future project work or be shared with relevant stakeholders which can help improve local services.

Why a Community Network?

We would like the Healthwatch Redbridge Community Network to be a two-way process. By sharing your members experiences of health and care services with us, you will be supporting our work, but we hope that in turn we will be able to support your members by signposting them (if appropriate) to relevant services.

We hope that organisations sharing information can help support one another. Our intention is to create links between our members. There are a number of ways we intend to do this:

1. We will create a map with a link to each Community Network organisation's website, allowing other organisations to find you/each other
2. We will signpost when relevant amongst organisations
3. We will share information from organisations about upcoming events via our e-newsletter
4. When we return to holding face-to-face events, we will invite Community Network members to have a stall to promote their organisation

How will it work?

We hope that this will be a two-way process as we would like your help to establish and develop the Healthwatch Redbridge Community Network.

We want the network to be supportive and to promote the work that individual organisations do across the borough, and we want to be able to publicise our work and ensure everyone within our diverse communities, has a voice and can be heard.

There are several ways that you will be able to share your members feedback with us.

- If your organisation meets regularly; it would be helpful if we could arrange to attend (possibly every six months) and talk to attendees in a relaxed and informal way. We would hope this would provide people an opportunity to share their experiences in a setting they feel comfortable in.
- We would hope to be able to answer any questions and provide the relevant information quickly, but for any issues raised that cannot be dealt with immediately, we would ensure further research was carried out in order to provide a full response.
- Sometimes we may want to attend to discuss a specific issue relating to a project that we will be working on. This will be run in a more structured way as a focus group, asking specific questions.
- We will provide you with Healthwatch "Have Your Say" leaflets that your members can fill in at any time and return to us.



What we can offer your organisation/group	What we would like from your organisation/group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A named Healthwatch staff member contact who you can liaise with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A named contact within your organisation who we can liaise with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information about your organisation in a 'Community Partners' section of our regular e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information about Healthwatch Redbridge in your newsletter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retweeting or linking with your social media messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retweeting or linking with our social media messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive updates about local and national health and social care issues via our website, emails and e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up to our e-newsletter and share within your organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost your members who may need support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost people who use your services to us to share their experiences of local health & social care services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost members of the public to you and other Community Network members to your organisation where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in our surveys and focus groups when required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently developing an online map with a link to each Community Network organisation's website, allowing other organisations to find you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A link from your website (if you have one) to ours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health First Aid Training at a reduced rate for our Community Network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide some information about your organisation and what it does, we will add it to our website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement in any of our reports that your organisation/members contribute too with feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep us informed about upcoming events and opportunities to raise awareness of Healthwatch Redbridge and what we do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An invite to our AGM 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stall to promote your organisation at our community events 	



And finally.....

We hope that this information has inspired you to join the Healthwatch Redbridge Community Network.

We are currently planning a launch event in March 2022 with a view to increasing membership throughout the next few months.

We hope you will consider signing up to this exciting venture!

If you would like more information, or to book your place at our next meeting, please contact us.



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