



# news

healthwatch  
Islington

## What's on our radar in 2016?

Healthwatch listens to the local community. You tell us what you like about the health and social care support you receive, and you tell us where there are gaps and shortfalls. We collect your stories and feed them back up the chain. Sometimes we do additional research so we are better placed to work with commissioners to improve services. We work on behalf of the whole community, but prioritise issues that affect the most vulnerable groups in Islington.

Here's just some of the work we're doing right now (January and February 2016):

- ▶ gathering views from people who receive council-funded care in their own homes.
- ▶ interviewing patients using ophthalmology services (for eye problems) to find out whether they'd rather receive treatment in hospital or in community settings.
- ▶ holding focus groups with black and minority ethnic organisations to gather feedback about contraception services.
- ▶ going into care homes to speak to staff and residents about the support the homes receive from their local GP practice.
- ▶ training a group of young people to consult with their peers about health and care issues.

We're doing lots more as well. [Our full workplan is on our website](#). Get in touch to share your views on the local services you use.

**Winter 2016**

# Weekend GP appointments



**'I only phoned this morning, it's quick. The local hospital is closer but it would have been a long wait.'**

Patient accessing weekend IHUB service at Ritchie Street Group Practice

Did you know you can now be seen by a GP or a practice nurse on weekends or in the evening?

This is a new trial service to test ways of making primary care easier to access for Islington patients. Three hubs offer pre-bookable and on-the-day appointments between 6.30pm and 8pm each weekday and 8am to 8pm at weekends. It's called the IHUB service.

These appointments are available at any one of three centres (called GP Hubs) in Islington:

## Where are the GP Hubs?

- 1.** Andover Medical Centre  
270-282 Hornsey Road  
London N7 7QZ
- 2.** Islington Central Medical Centre  
28 Laycock Street  
London N1 1SW
- 3.** Ritchie Street Health Centre  
34 Ritchie Street  
London N1 ODG

## How do I book?

Simply phone your usual GP surgery from when it opens until 8pm every weekday, and 8am to 8pm at the weekend.

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**'Booked for yesterday morning but nurse was sick so re-scheduled for me today. It was good not to have to wait.'**

Patient using the IHUB service at Andover Medical Centre

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## Healthwatch investigates

We spoke to local residents using the IHUB service, 15 at each centre on three separate weekend mornings in November and December 2015. We approached everyone who had used the service, as they left.

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**'Asked for an appointment [at my normal GP] on Thursday at 8am, for an emergency. I phoned for a long time, then it was too late when I got through. Friday I phoned again but it was fully booked until 16th December, so they sent me here.'**

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Patient using the IHUB service on a Saturday at the Islington Central Medical Centre

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The people we spoke to said that they had found it easy to make their appointment, easy to locate the GP Hub, and felt that the time of the appointment was convenient to them. Several patients commented on the service not feeling rushed, compared to their regular GP service. Feedback on both the reception staff and clinical staff was also very positive. Staff were described as 'brilliant', 'helpful' and 'lovely'.

Of the 45 people we spoke to, 42 were likely or very likely to recommend the IHUB service to a friend or family member. [The full report on our visits to the IHUB service is up on our website.](#) If you've used the service and would like to share your own opinion of it, please get in touch.

## How long will the trial last?

Initially, the IHUB service will be available until the end of June this year. Then a decision will be made on whether the service will continue.

# Garlanded with praise



**Frank Jacobs, valued member of our Enter and View team and the Whittington Hospital Patient Experience Committee, one of 30 Healthwatch volunteers thanked in person by Deputy Mayor Kat Fletcher and Council Leader Richard Watts.**

At a Town Hall reception just before Christmas 30 of our volunteers were thanked by Islington Council for the work they have done to improve local health and care services over the past year.

Volunteers went into the borough's care homes, to hear what the residents thought about each home, and what they thought about the medical care they received from the ICAT service\*. Volunteers also fed back their own impressions of the physical and social environment inside the homes.

Others looked at mental health services, carrying out 50 interviews with young adults to learn what kind of support would best suit young people. Members of the Enter and View team visited the mental health day centre on Isledon Road to observe how that service was delivered.

Volunteers carried out phone interviews with patients coping with long term conditions, and with people who had made a complaint about the NHS. Mystery shoppers went undercover to see how easy it was for patients on low incomes to reclaim travel costs. They also went online to check on the accessibility of web based GP appointment booking systems.

- ▶ In all, Healthwatch volunteers have been involved in 10 distinct projects in the past 12 months.
- ▶ [Reports on all 10](#) have been sent to commissioners along with recommendations for service improvements.
- ▶ If you'd like to get involved give Jeni a call on 020 7832 5821 or pop her an email [jennifer.kent@healthwatchislington.co.uk](mailto:jennifer.kent@healthwatchislington.co.uk)

\*Integrated Care Ageing Team service - patients are seen by a medical specialist in older people's health who tries to coordinate their care.

# Elections are coming up



In fine democratic tradition, Healthwatch Islington holds yearly elections. The organisations and individuals in our steering group are voted in for a three year term. This year six seats on the steering group are up for election.

- ▶ Our steering group helps to decide what our priority areas of work should be each year. They also monitor [our workplan](#).
- ▶ The steering group meets every two months. The meetings are two hours long and held in the evenings.
- ▶ As a member, you will apply your personal knowledge and experience of health and social care services, but speak on behalf of the whole local community.

## Interested?

To stand for election you fill in a short form telling us what experience you would bring. If you have questions please ask them at least a week before the deadline.

- ▶ Applications must be received by 10am, Wednesday 24 February 2016.

For further information [visit the website](#) or contact Jeni Kent on 020 7832 5821 or at [jennifer.kent@healthwatchislington.co.uk](mailto:jennifer.kent@healthwatchislington.co.uk)

## Steering group meetings

The next meeting of the steering group is on 23 February from 6 till 8pm at Resource for London 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA. This meeting is open to the public. Please let us know if you intend to come along.

Following that, the steering group meets again on 12 April. This will be a closed meeting, so that the newly elected members can be introduced to the workings of the group.

## Our contact details

You can visit our website to give feedback on any health and social care services you use, and get information about other services that are available. If computers aren't for you, you can call us, or write a letter. You won't need a stamp.

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