

NHS Long Term Plan

A report of evidence base collected by Healthwatch Islington

wh  **t**

would you do?

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Introductions

Islington is a small, densely populated, inner London borough with a growing, diverse and relatively young population. It is a borough of stark contrasts. There are high levels of deprivation, with associated long-term benefit dependency, worklessness, high levels of chronic ill health and premature mortality. The borough also contains small areas of great wealth, leading to the common perception that the area is home to media celebrities and the resort of well-heeled shoppers and diners. In fact, Islington is:

- The 24th most deprived local authority in England
- The 5th most deprived local authority in London
- The distribution of deprivation in Islington is complex and there is no clear geographical demarcation between deprived and more affluent areas

During April and May 2019 Healthwatch Islington engaged with 198 local residents in conversations about the NHS Long Term Plan using:

- Healthwatch England survey (general) collecting 6 responses
- Healthwatch England survey (conditions) collecting 6 responses
- North London Healthwatch survey collecting 2 responses
- Focus groups attended by 188 participants

In focus: general Long-Term Plan

Between April 2019 and May 2019, Healthwatch Islington involved local people in conversations about quality of health services and the potential to improve them.

A total of 212 comments were collected from 124 individuals on:

GPs / primary care services	67%
Hospital services	27%
Mental health services	2%
Pharmacy	2%
Dentist	1%
Other	1%

Primary care services

Of the individuals, who engaged in conversations with Healthwatch Islington about primary care services, 23% shared positive feedback relating to their experiences.

‘Nothing to improve at this practice - got a same day appointment and they have a call back service if you can’t get an appointment’

‘All good, nothing to improve now that I can book using the app’

34% explained that they would improve access to their GP practice. This could be achieved by increasing the number of appointments, improving the process of booking an appointment and extending consultation times.

‘More appointments available when you ring up’

‘Make it easier to get through on the phone - it just rings and rings for hours - end up having to come in in person for appointment.’

‘Increase consultation time - sometimes you have 2 or 3 problems to talk about, and you are just in and out.’

34% of respondents also suggested what improvements in the care and/or services they receive from their GP could be implemented.

‘Blood services would be good.’

‘Better to have a named doctor, especially for children, they can get to know the child.’

‘They could send round a little card which tells you ‘what to do if ...’ and things like that.’

‘Publicise much more widely what’s available - how to book, opening hours etc.’

‘Better training for all GPs in LD issues, so that they give more time and understand what people need.’

Hospital services

Evidence base gathered by Healthwatch Islington indicates that 22% of individuals who shared their views have a positive experience of using hospital services. Suggestions to improve the quality of hospital care included:

- improvements in the care and/or services individuals receive from hospital identified by 35% of respondents. These should focus on improving information, reviewing discharge processes and providing training to staff ‘in empathy and sensitive topics’
- shorter waiting times for hospital appointments identified by 22% of respondents
- shorter waiting times in A&E departments identified by 10% of respondents

In focus: Dementia

During May and June 2019, Healthwatch Islington held two focus groups which were attended by sixty-four people. The sessions were organised with local partners Arachne and Islington Somali Community and National Institute of Health Research Bio-medical Research University College London Hospital Partners.

The first focus group was attended by thirty-six individuals and focussed on:

- the types and signs of dementia
- what to do if someone has dementia
- information how certain types of dementia can be affected by lifestyle factors

Two thirds of participants reported feeling more informed about making healthy lifestyle choices and being more able to access dementia services for themselves or someone they knew.

The second focus group was attended by Islington residents who had a diagnosis of dementia (two), who had early signs of dementia (nineteen) or cared for someone with dementia (nine). All participants were aged 50+ with five over the age of 80. Nineteen were female and nine were male. Twenty-one attendees considered themselves to have a disability.

Participant at Healthwatch Islington focus group shared **their concerns about accessing support from a GP**. Many have not sought help because they do not feel their GP will take their concerns seriously.

Awareness of services available to people with dementia was low. One in three had heard of the Memory Clinic run by Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust.

Based on feedback gathered by Healthwatch Islington, there seems to be a tendency for local people and their families to refuse support due to a general mistrust of the health service and a feeling that the services do not care for their needs.

