

# Annual Report 2025/26

Listening to  
local people.

Influencing  
change.

Improving  
health and care.



**Local  
Voice**

People at the heart of  
local health and care

Healthwatch Waltham Forest  
is delivered by Local Voice  
in the Community,  
a registered charity.

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“

Every conversation, survey response and piece of feedback helps us build a clearer picture of what matters to local people. This year, that insight has helped shape improvements in primary care, neighbourhood health, recovery services and efforts to reduce health inequalities. ”



**Dianne Barham**  
Chief Executive

# A message from our Chair



**Ashton McGregor**  
Chair

“

**Real improvement begins by listening to people whose voices are too often overlooked. ”**

**Thank you to everyone in Waltham Forest who shared their time, experiences and ideas with us. Your voices are at the heart of everything we do.**

This year has been one of listening, learning and building trust. We have strengthened our connections across the borough and worked alongside communities to understand what matters most.

What we heard was clear: people want to be listened to, treated with respect and supported to live healthier lives. But too many still face barriers that shouldn't exist in a fair and caring borough.

That is why we are taking a different approach. We look across services and pathways, not in isolation, to understand the shared drivers of inequality. By working in partnership with local communities and organisations, we can design solutions that make a real difference.

Healthwatch Waltham Forest exists to ensure that local people's voices shape decisions that affect their health and care. We are independent, inclusive and committed to challenging inequality wherever we see it.

I am proud of what we have achieved together this year and excited about what we can do next. With your continued support, we will keep listening, working together and pushing for a healthier, fairer Waltham Forest for everyone.

Thank you.

**Ashton McGregor**  
Chair

# About us

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is your local health and social care champion.



## Listen

Hear local people's experiences of health and care services.



## Understand

Analyse insight to identify trends, inequalities and opportunities.



## Influence

Share evidence with providers, commissioners and decision-makers.



## Improve

Support changes that improve services and outcomes.

## Making local people's experiences count

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is the independent champion for people using health and social care services.

We listen to local people's experiences, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure those experiences influence decisions made by commissioners, providers and policymakers.

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is delivered by **Local Voice** and draws on the **Community Insights System** to identify trends, inequalities and opportunities for improvement.

## How our insight made a difference in 2025/26



### Primary Care

GP access, PPG Forums, Enter and View visits and Safe Surgeries reviews helped identify opportunities to improve access, communication and patient experience.



### Health Inequalities

Working alongside Romanian and Eastern European communities to improve health literacy, screening awareness, vaccination confidence and access to care.



### Neighbourhood Health

Community insight informed the development of Locality Hubs and neighbourhood health services designed around what local people value most.



### Recovery & Independence

Supporting the development of the Integrated Recovery & Reablement Sustainability Review to improve recovery, independence and support after hospital discharge.

## 2025/26 at a glance



**6,384**  
Voices heard



**23,063**  
Experiences analysed



**68**  
Reports & intelligence products

# Our year in numbers

Listening to local people, building evidence and helping shape better health and care services.



**6,384**

**Local people engaged**

We spoke to people from across Waltham Forest about their experiences.



**23,063**

**Experiences analysed**

Health, care and community service experiences were collected and analysed.



**83**

**Enquiries supported**

People received information and signposting to help access the support they need.



**68**

**Reports, dashboards and intelligence products**

Insight and evidence shared to support service improvement and decision-making.



**4**

**PPG forums delivered**

Borough-wide Patient Participation Group Forums held during the year.



**80+**

**Partnership meetings attended**

Working with partners and decision-makers across the borough and wider system.

## Where we made the biggest difference

### Most discussed service



**GP Services**

**11,320**

**experiences analysed**

Primary care continued to generate the largest volume of feedback, highlighting the importance of access, communication and patient experience.

### Largest engagement programme



**Romanian & Eastern European communities**

**500+**

**residents engaged**

Community Insight Researchers helped us understand barriers to screening, prevention, health literacy and access to healthcare.

### Biggest influence area



**Primary care access & neighbourhood health**

Insight informed GP access work, Locality Hub development, neighbourhood planning and future service improvement.

## Building the evidence base for improvement

During 2025/26 we produced:



**8**

Quarterly insight reports



**9**

GP patient experience reports



**3**

Enter & View reports



**2**

Locality Hub reports



**3**

Health inequalities and community insight projects



**2**

Safe Surgeries and NHS 10-Year Plan reviews

These reports and intelligence products help ensure local people's experiences influence planning, commissioning and the design of services.

# to local people

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch organisations to ensure people's experiences of care are heard at the North East London Integrated Care System (ICS) level and influence decisions about services.



## Accessible

Easy to find, contact and use.

This includes:



Clear information



Easy to contact



Timely appointments



## Person-centred

People treated with dignity and respect.

This includes:



Listening to people's views



Involving people in decisions



Respecting individual needs



## Competent

Safe, effective and joined-up care.

This includes:



High quality and safe care



Well-coordinated services



Skilled and caring staff



## Trustworthy

Reliable, transparent and responsive services.

This includes:



Openness and honesty



Services that do what they say



Listening and acting on feedback



## How we used the Good Care Framework

The Good Care Framework provided a consistent way to understand and analyse local people's experiences across all our major projects during 2025/26.



**23,063**

experiences analysed using the Good Care Framework

## It informed our work on:

- Improving primary care
- Tackling health inequalities
- Shaping neighbourhood health
- Supporting recovery and independence
- Information and signposting

## What local people told us matters most

Local people told us that health and wellbeing are shaped by wider social, economic and environmental factors, not just healthcare services.



Housing and home



Cost of living and income



Education and opportunities



Community and social support



Green spaces and environment



Transport and connectivity



## North East London impact

The Good Care Framework is now helping to shape resident outcome measures used across North East London. This helps ensure that local people's experiences and priorities are reflected in how health and care partners understand success and measure improvement.



# What local people's experiences tell us

23,063 experiences analysed during 2025/26 helped us understand where people encounter barriers and what matters most to them when using health and care services.



People often describe good care once they receive it.

The **route into care** is where many barriers appear.

## Listening to local people to shape better services

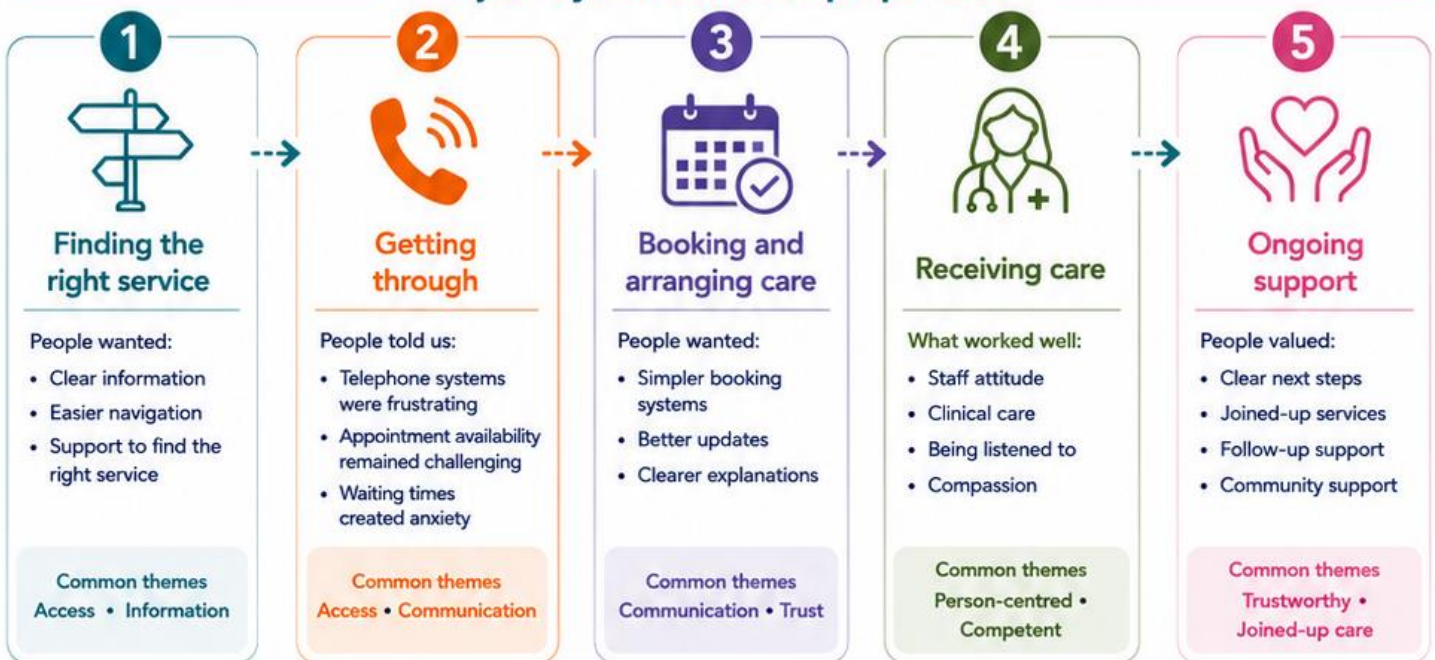
Primary care remained one of the most common concerns raised by local people throughout 2025/26. We continued to listen, analyse and work with partners to drive improvements in GP services across Waltham Forest.



# 11,320

GP experiences analysed during 2025/26

### The journey into care: what people told us



### What this means

People often described positive experiences once they reached the right service. The biggest challenges were most commonly experienced at the start of the journey, particularly around access, communication and navigating services.

### Voices we heard



Romanian communities



Eastern European communities



Bangladeshi communities



Pakistani communities



Somali communities



Women and maternity service users



Our findings inform discussions across health and care about:

- ✓ Access and appointment systems
- ✓ Communication with patients and service users
- ✓ Digital inclusion and online access
- ✓ Patient participation and involvement
- ✓ Accessibility of services and information



By listening to local people and working in partnership, we are helping to build **primary care services** that are **more accessible, inclusive and responsive** to the needs of our communities.



# Turning experience into evidence



We listen, analyse and report on what matters to local people.

# 68

Reports and intelligence products produced in 2025/26



Routine reporting  
**48** reports

- Quarterly reports (4)
- Quarterly dashboards (4)
- Quarterly Integrated experience reports (4)
- GP borough reports (4)
- PCN reports (28)
- Whipps Cross reports (4)



GP practice reviews  
**4** reviews

Supporting improvements to GP access and patient experience through detailed reviews of local GP practices.

**Key themes**

- Access to appointments
- Telephone and digital access
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Patient experience and quality of care



Health inequalities  
**3** reports

- Romanian community programme report (1)
- Romanian vaccination and health literacy report (1)
- Romanian, Bulgarian and Lithuanian Stop Smoking report (1)



Thematic and improvement reports  
**13** reports

- Locality Hubs reports (2)
- GP Access report (1)
- Safe Surgery report (1)
- Long-term conditions report (1)
- Women's Hub report (1)
- Whipps Cross analysis (1)
- Other targeted insight projects (6)



North East London impact

# 23,063

Waltham Forest experiences analysed



Insight shared through the Community Insights System



Contributed to North East London system-wide intelligence



Experience data and insight helped inform the development of the Insights4Improvement platform

## Turning insight into influence



**Waltham Forest Health & Care Partnership**

Sharing insight to support service improvement and strategic planning.



**Health and Wellbeing Board**

Providing evidence on local people's experiences and priorities.



**Primary Care Networks**

Supporting improvements to access, communication and patient experience.



**Neighbourhood Health programmes**

Informing Locality Hub development and neighbourhood planning.



**North East London Integrated Care System**

Contributing community insight to system-wide improvement and health inequalities work.

# Improving Primary Care

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in **Waltham Forest**. Here are a few highlights.

## Listening to local people to shape better GP services

Primary care remained one of the most common concerns raised by local people throughout 2025/26. We continued to listen, analyse and work with partners to drive improvements in GP services across Waltham Forest.



# 11,320

GP experiences analysed during 2025/26

## What we did in 2025/26



### GP Experience Reporting

- 4 borough reports
- 28 Primary Care Network (PCN) reports
- 6 individual practice reports

Regular reporting helps providers and commissioners understand what matters most to local people.



### Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

- 4 borough-wide PPG Forums held
- Ongoing support for PPG development
- PPG audit completed

We champion patient voice and support practices to strengthen engagement and involvement.



### Enter and View Visits

- 4 visits completed
- Royal Medical Practice
- Manor Practice
- Pembina Surgery

We visited services, spoke to people and staff, and identified opportunities to improve patient experience and access.



### Safe Surgeries Project

- Independent review launched
- Focus on accessibility, inclusion and safety in GP practices

Helping to ensure GP practices are welcoming and accessible for everyone.

## What local people told us



### Access to appointments

Continuing difficulties getting through on the phone and booking appointments.



### Communication

People want clear information, good explanations and helpful updates.



### Navigation of services

People told us it can be hard to know where to go and who to contact for the right support.



### Being listened to and involved

People value being treated with respect and having their views considered in decisions about their care.



Our findings informed discussion across primary care about:

- ✓ Access and appointment systems
- ✓ Communication with patients and service users
- ✓ Digital inclusion and online access
- ✓ Patient participation and involvement
- ✓ Accessibility of services and information



By listening to local people and working in partnership, we are helping to **build primary care services that are more accessible, inclusive and responsive** to the needs of our communities.



# Shaping neighbourhood health

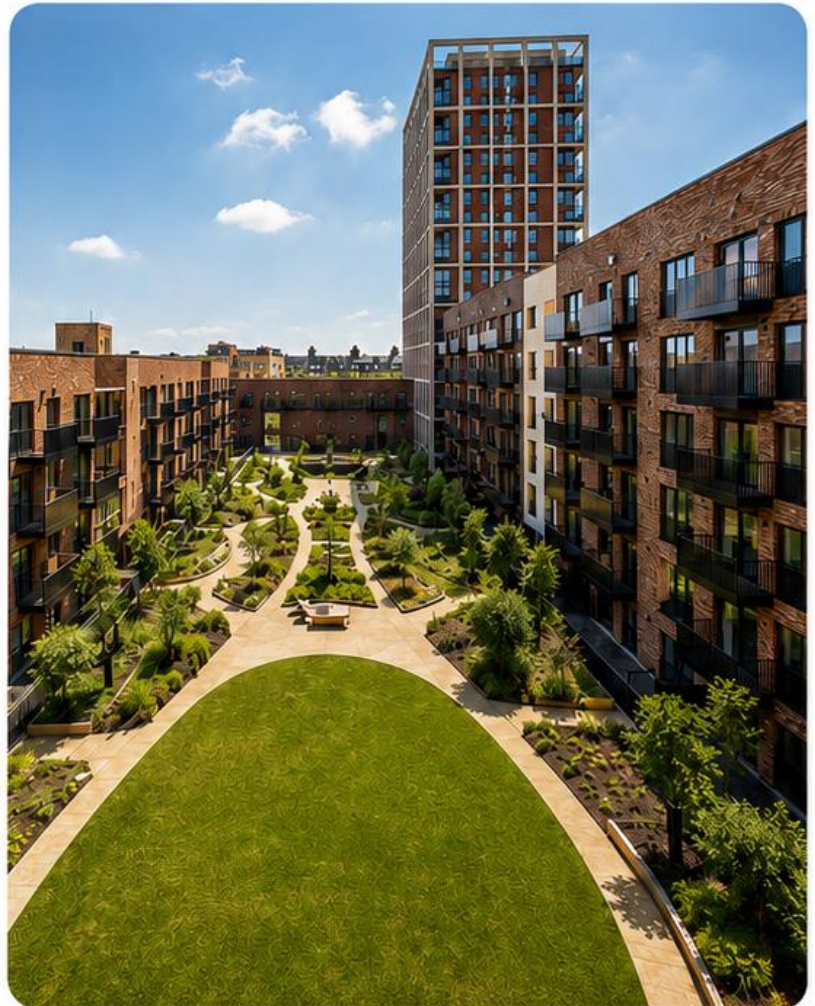
Using community insight to help shape services around what matters most to local people.



## Shaping Neighbourhood health

Local people told us they wanted services that were easier to access, better connected and delivered closer to home.

Community insight was used to support Locality Hub development and wider neighbourhood health planning.



## What we explored

- ✓ Access to services
- ✓ Joined-up care
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Community support
- ✓ Care closer to home



## Impact

Community insight informed Locality Hub development, neighbourhood planning and future models of care.

## What local people told us



### Access

People wanted services that were easier to access and navigate.



### Joined-up care

People wanted organisations to work together more effectively.



### Communication

People wanted clearer information and explanations.



### Community

People valued support delivered closer to home.



2

Locality Hub reports produced



4

Key themes identified



### Coronation Square

First Locality Hub location informed by community insight



## Community-led influence

Community insight informed Locality Hub development and neighbourhood planning, including work around Coronation Square and future neighbourhood health services.



# Supporting recovery and independence



Understanding people's experiences of recovery, independence and support after leaving hospital.



## Why this work matters

Through Healthwatch insight, Community Insights System1 analysis, community engagement and discussions with partners, recurring themes emerged relating to recovery after hospital discharge, reablement, coordination between services and access to ongoing support.

This intelligence highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of how integrated care is experienced in practice.



## What we explored

- ✓ Recovery following hospital discharge
- ✓ Reablement experiences
- ✓ Coordination between services
- ✓ Access to ongoing support
- ✓ Carer and family perspectives



## Impact

Existing community intelligence informed the development of the **Integrated Care & Reablement Project**, helping partners better understand how recovery, independence and integrated support are experienced in practice.



## Supporting care closer to home

The Integrated Care & Reablement Project was developed to support Waltham Forest's ambitions for Care Closer to Home and Integrated Neighbourhood Working.

Reablement was selected as the starting point because it connects hospital discharge, community health, social care, carers, housing, prevention and neighbourhood support.

## What local people told us



### Communication

People wanted clearer information about support available after leaving hospital.



### Coordination

People wanted services to work together more effectively.



### Community support

People valued practical support close to home.



### Independence

People wanted support that helped them maintain confidence and independence.



Recovery after discharge



Joined-up support



Independence at home



## Looking ahead

The Integrated Care & Reablement Project will help commissioners and partners better understand how local people experience recovery, independence and support after leaving hospital, and identify opportunities to strengthen care closer to home.



# Tackling health inequalities

Working with local people to understand barriers, build trust and improve access to healthcare.



## Tackling health inequalities

### Improving access and trust for Romanian and Eastern European communities

Through Community Insight Researchers, community events and trusted networks we worked with local people to better understand barriers to healthcare and prevention services.



### What we explored

- ✓ Cancer screening
- ✓ Vaccination confidence
- ✓ Health literacy
- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Primary care access



### Impact

Findings informed local health equity programmes, targeted prevention activity and discussions across the Health and Care Partnership.

## What local people told us



### Information

People wanted clearer information about screening, prevention and healthcare services.



### Trust

Trusted community relationships helped build confidence and encourage participation.



### Prevention

Many residents wanted more support to understand screening and vaccination opportunities.



### Access

Language, confidence and navigating services continued to create barriers for some residents.



**500+**

Romanian and Eastern European residents engaged over two years



**5**

Key topics explored



**3**

Major health inequalities programmes delivered



### Community-led influence

Community Insight Researchers presented findings directly to local partners and at the Romanian Consulate in London, helping ensure community voices influenced health inequalities programmes.



# Information and signposting



Your voice can improve health and care services.



# 83

enquiries supported

Helping local people access the right information, services and support.

## Most common topics



General health



Dentistry



GP services



Women's health



Mental health



Community support



## Key message

Providing information and signposting helps people access the right support at the right time.



## What local people needed help with



### Finding the right service

People often contacted us when they were unsure where to go for help.



### Understanding healthcare options

Support with GP services, dentistry, mental health and specialist care.



### Connecting with community support

Helping people access local organisations and practical support.



# Community insight researchers

Working with trusted local people to hear from communities whose voices are often underrepresented in health and care.



## Community voices at the heart of our work

Our Community Insight Researchers (CIRs) help us engage with communities whose voices are often underrepresented in health and care services.

Their language skills, cultural knowledge and trusted local relationships enable us to gather insight that would otherwise have been difficult to reach.

## Key achievements in 2025/26



500+

Romanian and Eastern European residents engaged



3

Major health inequalities programmes delivered



5

Key topics explored

- Screening
- Vaccination confidence
- Health literacy
- Stop smoking
- Primary care access



## Why community insight researchers matter

Community Insight Researchers (CIRs) help us build trust, understand barriers and engage with communities in ways that traditional consultation approaches often cannot.

Their language skills, cultural knowledge and local relationships help ensure that people who are often underrepresented can influence decisions about health and care.



## Impact

Community Insight Researchers played a key role in improving understanding of barriers to screening, vaccination, health literacy and access to care within Romanian and Eastern European communities.

Their findings informed local health equity programmes and prevention activity.



*The CIRs helped us speak with people in their own language and in a way that felt comfortable and respectful. It made a huge difference.*

– Local partner



# Turning insight into improvement



Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Waltham Forest.

Here are a few highlights.



## Improving primary care

### What we did

- ✓ 11,320 GP experiences analysed
- ✓ 3 Enter & View visits completed
- ✓ 4 borough-wide PPG Forums delivered
- ✓ Safe Surgeries review launched



## Impact in action

Evidence shared through PPG Forums influenced conversations with GP practices on access, digital systems and patient communication.

Our Safe Surgeries review informed local discussions on patient safety and access.



### Impact

Access, communication and patient involvement informed improvement discussions across primary care.



## Tackling health inequalities

### What we did

- ✓ 500+ Romanian and Eastern European residents engaged
- ✓ Screening, vaccination and smoking research
- ✓ Community Insight Researcher programme



## Impact in action

Insights from our Romanian community programme contributed to improving vaccination outreach and hospital communication for underserved communities.



### Impact

Findings informed local health equity planning and targeted prevention activity.



## Shaping neighbourhood health

### What we did

- ✓ 2 Locality Hub reports produced
- ✓ Resident priorities identified
- ✓ Good Care Framework analysis applied



## Impact in action

Our Locality Hub reports helped shape planning of services closer to home and supported conversations on what matters most to local residents.



### Impact

Community insight informed Coronation Square Locality Hub development and neighbourhood planning.



## Supporting recovery and independence

### What we did

- ✓ Hospital discharge experiences explored
- ✓ Recovery and reablement priorities identified
- ✓ Carer perspectives included



## Impact in action

Evidence from service user and carer feedback directly informed the Integrated Care & Reablement Sustainability Review and local planning.



### Impact

Helped shape the Integrated Care & Reablement Sustainability Review.

## Insight shared with



Health & Care Partnership



Health & Wellbeing Board



Primary Care Networks



North East London Integrated Care System



Providers and community partners



## Community insight in action

23,063 experiences were analysed and translated into evidence that helped shape discussions, planning and improvement activity across Waltham Forest and North East London.

# Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from the Local Borough of Waltham Forest under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

## Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from London Borough of Waltham Forest	£111,690	Expenditure on pay	91,800
Additional income	7,300	Non-pay expenditure	£27,190
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£118,990</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£118,990</b>

## Additional income is broken down into:

### Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Purpose of ICS funding	Amount
Participation in Governance meetings	£5,000
Understanding the health literacy and sentiments on vaccination in the Romanian community	£2,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,300</b>

Healthwatch across North-East London also receive funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) to support the delivery of the Community Insight service

# Finance and future priorities

**Over the next year, we will continue to ensure local people's experiences help shape health and care services across Waltham Forest.**

Through our insight, engagement and partnership work, we will continue to identify what is working well, where people face barriers and where improvements are needed. We will share this evidence with commissioners, providers and partners to support better outcomes for local communities.

## **Our priorities for 2026/27 are:**

### **1. Turning insight into improvement**

Continuing to gather, analyse and share local people's experiences to help commissioners, providers and partners make informed decisions about health and care services.

### **2. Supporting neighbourhood health and integrated care**

Continuing to provide community insight to help shape Locality Hubs, neighbourhood health services and care delivered closer to home.

### **3. Improving primary care services**

Using community feedback and patient experience data to support improvements in access, communication and patient involvement across primary care.

### **4. Improving access and reducing health inequalities**

Working with communities experiencing poorer health outcomes to improve access, health literacy, prevention and early intervention.

### **5. Supporting recovery and independence**

Helping partners better understand people's experiences of recovery, rehabilitation and support after leaving hospital through our Integrated Recovery & Reablement work.

# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Waltham Forest, Local Voice, 80 Redmans Road, London, E1 3AG

**Healthwatch Waltham Forest uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.**

## The way we work

### **Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making**

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is delivered by Local Voice, an independent charity that works to ensure local people's experiences influence decisions about health and care services.

Our priorities are informed by what local people tell us through community engagement, Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), Community Insight Researchers, information and signposting enquiries, surveys and feedback gathered through our Community Insights System.

Each year we review this evidence to identify emerging issues, health inequalities, communities whose voices are less often heard and opportunities for improvement. The Waltham Forest PPG Forum also helps identify priorities for primary care improvement.

### **Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences**

We use a range of approaches to hear from local people, including community engagement, Community Insight Researchers, surveys, Patient Participation Groups, Enter and View visits, information and signposting enquiries, our website, social media and partnership working.

During 2025/26, we heard from **6,384 local people** and analysed **23,063 experiences** of health and care services.

We are committed to hearing from people whose voices are often underrepresented. During the year, we worked with Romanian and Eastern European communities through our Community Insight Researcher programme and with the Waltham Forest Black & Asian Led Alliance to better understand health inequalities and barriers to care.

We also use demographic information within our Community Insights System to identify gaps in engagement and help ensure a wider range of communities are represented in our work.

This annual report will be published on our website and shared with local partners and community organisations across Waltham Forest.

# Statutory statements

## Responses to recommendations

We had one provider who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

## Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

In Waltham Forest, we share evidence and recommendations with the Health and Care Partnership Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Primary Care Networks, GP practices and local NHS providers.

We also share insight and experiences with decision-makers across the North East London Integrated Care System (ICS), working alongside the other seven Healthwatch organisations in North East London. Through the Community Insights System, we help identify trends, inequalities and opportunities for improvement across the region.

We share our evidence with Healthwatch England to help inform improvements to health and care services at a national level.

## Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is represented on the **Waltham Forest Health and Wellbeing Board** by **Dianne Barham**, the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Waltham Forest and Local Voice.

During 2025/26, our representative ensured that local people's experiences and priorities informed discussions on primary care, health inequalities, neighbourhood health, hospital services and integrated care.

Healthwatch Waltham Forest is also represented on the **Waltham Forest Health and Care Partnership Board** and contributes to a range of North East London Integrated Care System (ICS) programmes and forums through collaborative work with the other Healthwatch organisations across North East London.

# Statutory statements

## Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Leyton Healthcare	To understand patient experience of access, appointments and care delivery.	Shared findings and recommendations to improve access, communication and patient involvement.
Penrhyn Surgery	To understand patient experience of appointments, accessibility and care.	Shared recommendations to improve communication support and access to appointments.
Kiyani Medical Practice	To understand patient experience and access to primary care services.	Shared findings and recommendations with the practice to support service improvements.

## 2025 – 2026 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
Community Intelligence and Insight	Produced 68 reports and intelligence products which informed primary care, neighbourhood health, health inequalities and recovery programmes.
GP Access Improvement	Evidence used by practices and commissioners to better understand barriers to accessing primary care and inform service improvements.
Enter and View Programme	Independent assessments of GP services highlighted strengths and practical improvements to accessibility, communication and patient experience.
Community Engagement with Underrepresented Groups	Increased engagement with Romanian and other Eastern European communities, improving awareness of screening, vaccination and local healthcare services.

Healthwatch Waltham Forest

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