

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 21/01/2026

Subject: Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham Annual Report

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SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings of the 2024-2025 annual report by Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham, for the Health and Wellbeing Board to note. Since September, Local Voice in the Community has taken on the role of Healthwatch provider, following a re-tender exercise.

Additionally, the report looks ahead to opportunities for exploring deeper collaboration with Healthwatch and health partners, aligning priorities where possible, sharing insights, and embedding co-production, so that local voices can inform decision-making and support measurable improvements in health and social care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Health and Wellbeing Board to note the Healthwatch Annual Report.

Wards Affected: (All)

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Healthwatch strives to improve quality and accessibility of health and social care services for all residents in H&F.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	The core purpose of Healthwatch is to ensure that the views of the public shape local health and care services by listening and gathering the voices of residents, especially those from diverse and hard to reach communities whose voices are seldom heard.

Doing things with local residents, not to them	As well as seeking the public's views, Healthwatch encourages health and social care services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Healthwatch has the power to make sure that those in charge of health and social care services listen to and act on what people want from care and support.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Healthwatch is set apart from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors they work within. They perform public functions and fulfil statutory duties. The outputs of the service will enable commissioners and others to hold organisations to account, monitor and improve the quality of the service and value for money and ensure that services are designed and delivered to best meet the needs of the people they serve.
Taking pride in H&F	Healthwatch ensures that those in charge of health and care services hear resident's voices and that their views shape the support they need. In turn, this improves the quality of health and social care services being delivered across the borough.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Keeping services in-borough reduces transport emissions as residents don't have to travel further to access the service. The service will be able to raise awareness and monitor the health impacts of climate change, through engaging with the local community and advocating for policy change.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Context

1. Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham are a statutory independent organisation for people using health and social care services. Its role is to amplify residents' voices, identify issues, and share recommendations to improve services.

2. The annual report gives an overview of the engagement activities, key issues identified, and recommendations provided by the previous Healthwatch provider between April 2024-2025. Since September 2025 Healthwatch has been provided by Local Voice in the Community.

Annual Report 2024-25

3. Executive Summary

In 2024-25, Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham gathered over 5,000 resident experiences and turned them into practical improvement recommendations across local health and care. This programme is now complete, and partners have acted on its recommendations.

The following summary highlights the key achievements from the 2024-25 Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham Annual Report and introduces further detail in points 5-9.

- Mental health engagement led West London NHS Trust to introduce written care plans, regular ward meetings, and better discharge support.
- Suicide prevention work shaped LBHF Public Health and NHS campaigns and training, making crisis help more visible.
- Maternity insights prompted Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and the NWL Maternity System to strengthen interpreting services and cultural competency training.
- Vaccination engagement Supported removing barriers and increasing access to community clinics .
- Enter and View visits provided evidence for accessibility changes at Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospitals, resulting in clearer signage, Easy Read materials, and improved wheelchair access.

4. Mental Health Inpatient Engagement

Healthwatch visited Hammersmith & Fulham Mental Health Unit, speaking to 172 H&F patients. Residents said they wanted clearer treatment plans, better ward hygiene, and stronger discharge support. In response, West London NHS Trust introduced regular ward meetings and written care plans across H&F units, improved bedding quality, and implemented pest control measures. Discharge booklets with family involvement plans are now being rolled out. These changes mean patients have more clarity about their care and a safer, more supportive environment during and after admission.

5. Suicide Prevention

Healthwatch engaged 122 young people and recently discharged patients to understand barriers to seeking help. One-third did not access formal support when suicidal, citing low awareness and negative past experiences. Working with LBHF Public Health and West London NHS Trust, Healthwatch helped increase visibility of crisis services and delivered targeted training sessions for

frontline staff. These actions are now embedded in local prevention work, ensuring residents in crisis have clearer routes to help and better-informed professionals to support them.

6. Maternity

Interviews with 32 women from minority ethnic backgrounds revealed gaps in antenatal care and challenges linked to cost of living and health conditions. Healthwatch recommended improvements in staff training, interpreting services, and antenatal provision. Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and NWL Maternity System have begun implementing these changes, including enhanced interpreting access and cultural competency training for staff. This work is improving equity in maternity care and ensuring women receive safer, more inclusive support during pregnancy and childbirth.

7. Vaccination Engagement

Healthwatch partnered with LBHF Public Health and NWL Roving Team to raise awareness of free walk-in clinics for COVID-19, flu, and MMR vaccinations. These clinics improved access. Residents benefited from convenient, community-based vaccination opportunities, and the learning continues to inform borough-level outreach services .

8. Enter and View

Healthwatch's Enter and View visits to outpatient departments at Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospitals examined the full outpatient journey, from appointment letters to signage, wayfinding, and waiting areas. These visits highlighted the need for clearer communications, more intuitive signage, and more accessible waiting environments. These insights informed and strengthened the case for a co-production review led by Action on Disability with Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

The review identified deeper accessibility issues, including inconsistent signage, limited wheelchair and lift access, lack of sensory-friendly spaces, and gaps in support for neurodivergent patients. In response, AoD trustees, disabled residents, and the Charing Cross Hospital Director agreed an action tracker and monthly follow-up meetings. Early changes include improved wheelchair access, enhanced wayfinding with Easy Read materials, plans to install a Changing Places toilet, and autism-aware passports. Feedback from staff highlighted a positive, person-centred attitude among the radiotherapy team.

These commitments are being embedded through provider improvement plans and monitored via co-production governance. At Hammersmith Hospital, providers have also committed to clearer appointment communications and signage upgrades, which are now in progress.

Shaping the Future: a new Healthwatch provider

9. As we look ahead, the Health and Care Partnership is committed to strengthening collaboration with the new Healthwatch provider, Local Voice in the

Community, to ensure that local voices remain at the heart of health and care decision-making. This offers an opportunity to align priorities, embed co-production, and leverage shared insights to tackle health inequalities within the context of available resources, recognising the need to prioritise within current capacity. This work will align with the evolving partnership governance structure as it develops across 2026. By working together, we aim to create a more connected, responsive, and inclusive approach that supports residents to live well and age well.

10. From the engagement conducted in 2025, the new Healthwatch provider has identified three ongoing priorities from the annual report that will be progressed as areas of focus in 2026:
 - Childhood Immunisations
 - Maternal Mental Health & Maternity Outcomes
 - GP Access
11. The Partnership will collaborate with Local Voice in the Community to align these priorities and complement the wider health and care work programme, ensuring a unified approach to improving outcomes for residents. By triangulating insights from Healthwatch and health and care partners, we can take a more holistic view of the factors shaping health and wellbeing and use robust data to drive measurable improvements that reflect this broader context.
12. There is an opportunity to develop these insights from Healthwatch with providers to create tangible changes and improvements. To achieve this, the approach will focus on practical steps such as:
 - Using existing insights to inform and shape solutions collaboratively.
 - Beginning with service-level conversations to understand what improvement work is already underway and agree on further actions, ensuring solutions are shaped by those closest to delivery.
 - Assigning a nominated lead and an SRO for each workstream to partner with Healthwatch in developing an agreed plan.
13. This will provide a platform for joint engagement and a shared evidence base, ensuring efforts remain aligned and sustainable. It will also enable clear and consistent communication among stakeholders and with the wider community.
14. To support this, a shared pool of insight will be developed for stakeholders to draw on, facilitating quick wins through stronger relationships and collaborative thinking. Co-production will be embedded as a core principle, ensuring local communities have a meaningful role in shaping priorities and influencing change. This will require partners to collaborate in shaping a shared understanding of co-production and pinpointing opportunities where it can add the greatest value, ensuring implementation is feasible and impactful.