

# LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD</b>	
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>21st March 2023</b>	
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>HEALTHWATCH CROYDON ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022</b>	
<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>EDWINA MORRIS, CHAIR, HEALTHWATCH CROYDON</b>	
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>GORDON KAY, HEALTHWATCH CROYDON MANAGER</b>	
<b>AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:</b>	[Identify the section giving authority from the schemes of delegation or when specific delegation was conveyed e.g., Cabinet report, date, copy of exact recommendation which gave delegated authority]	
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>	REASON: N/A
<b>CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?</b>	<b>NO</b>	PUBLIC
<b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	ALL	

## 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1. The Annual Report summarises the work undertaken by Healthwatch Croydon between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022. It also sets out the priorities and plans for work in 2022-2023 as identified at the beginning of that year.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report [and its appendices], the Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended:

- 2.1 to note the Annual Report of the work of Healthwatch Croydon in 2021-2022, which is attached as an Appendix to this report.

### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Local Healthwatch organisations are required under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to produce an Annual Report by 30th June each year, and to present the report to the relevant Health and Wellbeing Board.

### 4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 4.1. Healthwatch Croydon works to get the best out of local health and social care services by ensuring the people who use health and care services can influence the way they are delivered. From improving services today to helping shape better ones for tomorrow, we listen to local people’s views and experiences and then influence decision-making.
- 4.2. Help & Care is a charity based on the South coast and is one of the largest providers of Healthwatch services in England. As an organisation, they have been involved in patient and public involvement in health for over 20 years and their work on Healthwatch has enabled them to build on and share their skills and experience as well as offer considerable economies of scale. They strongly believe that enabling people to shape health and care will support the creation of better services that meet needs more effectively. With so much change taking place in health and care services currently, the need to engage effectively with people has never been so important.
- 4.3. Healthwatch has several legal functions, under the 2012 Health and Social Care Act. These are:



- 4.4. **Key statistics for the year:** Healthwatch Croydon heard from 1,722 people during 2021/22 about their experiences of health and social care. They published nine reports about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. They had 20 volunteers who helped to carry out the work. In total, the volunteers contributed 809.5 hours, equaling nearly 108 days, to make care better for Croydon's community.
- 4.5. **Context:** In April 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic was still a major concern, with many people experiencing COVID related bereavement. There were significant pressures on health and social care services, with periodic lockdowns and social distancing still with us. For an organisation whose core work, previous to the pandemic, focused on meeting people face-to-face in community locations such as hospitals, GP surgeries and libraries and with local community groups and organisations, this posed a significant challenge. There were only rare short periods when it was safe to carry out face-to-face interviews that had previously provided rich insight into individual people's experiences of health and care services.
- 4.6. **Response to COVID-19:** Fortunately, the COVID-19 vaccine programme was underway, although uptake monitoring had revealed stark differences. Some people with poorer health outcomes were less likely to be vaccinated. Healthwatch Croydon worked with statutory and voluntary organisations to identify how best to communicate with different communities, (page 24 of the Annual Report) and carried out a survey on views about the COVID-19 vaccine as part of a project for Healthwatch England (page 20) to identify more insight to help commissioners.
- 4.7. **Long Covid:** Together with Healthwatch organisations across South West London, Healthwatch Croydon collected insight from people affected by Long COVID (page 19). They provided information to commissioners at Place and at South West London Clinical Commissioning Group level about the difficulties people experienced, and made recommendations about how services could support people better.
- 4.8. **Urgent care pathway and GP experience via partners text messaging:** Reaching people has been a challenge. By working in partnership with providers, they were able to contact people on their lists so that Healthwatch Croydon could seek people's views via direct text messaging. This has been used to gather information from GP patients working with a New Addington group practice (page 22), which helped the practice in understanding their patients' needs and improving their service. Working with South West London Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch Croydon heard from over 1,000 patients on their experiences of the urgent and emergency care pathway and services – the latter providing hundreds of responses in a matter of days. This has helped redefine services, with Healthwatch Croydon presenting recommendations about better integration of 111 to GP services and to provide GP Hubs near Croydon University Hospital Accident and Emergency and Urgent Care which have been recently adopted.(see page 14)
- 4.9. **Dentistry:** Access to dentistry came up as an issue in a poll undertaken as part of the 2020 Annual Meeting. Following this, in 2021, Healthwatch Croydon surveyed

residents on their experience and views of dental services and also assessed dental practice websites, working closely with the Croydon Local Dental Committee. This work found variability in access, with patients having difficulty accessing services when they were in pain, and a lack of information and confusion on how services are delivered. However, there was significant satisfaction with NHS services once people were seen. There were also concerns about costs – even with NHS treatment. 47 practice websites were assessed with examples found of good practice as well as many that could be improved. Working with the Local Dental Committee was a very positive experience for both organisations. Healthwatch Croydon learnt much about the complexity of dental commissioning and how this may well affect resident access and usage of the service. Recently Healthwatch Croydon has been liaising at the South West London ICS level on this with the other South West London local Healthwatch organisations and the recently merged South West London Local Dental Committee. The commissioning of dentistry is planned to be delegated from NHS England to the ICS from April 2023, which provides an opportunity for issues raised locally to be addressed (page 15).

- 4.10. **Focus groups and interviews:** With the Healthy London Partnership, Healthwatch Croydon arranged an online focus group to talk with a diverse group of Croydon residents about their views on a draft GP access guide (page 13). Another online focus group was arranged by Healthwatch Croydon to gather information on the experiences of seldom heard people, including those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (page 21). In addition, members of patient participation groups were brought together to share views on the proposals for the Primary Care section of the Croydon Health and Care Plan refresh to help shape better integrated services across the borough (page 16).
- 4.11. **Supporting the evaluation of the Personal Independence Coordinator service:** Healthwatch Croydon spoke to 64 recent service users about the experience and outcomes for them of this key integrated care service to help shape its future delivery. This helped the wider evaluation of the service to support future planning (page 17).
- 4.12. **National impact on language barriers:** Building on previous work in accessing services, Healthwatch Croydon was funded to work alongside six other Healthwatch organisations to gather intelligence for a Healthwatch England “Your Care Your Way” campaign to review the Accessible Information Standard in terms of language support. Healthwatch Croydon conducted structured interviews – all through an interpreter - with French African, Latin Spanish, and Ukrainian speakers and held a focus group with people from a local Tamil community. A number of professionals who worked across a range of healthcare settings and interpreters were also interviewed. The resultant local intelligence was fed back to Healthwatch England who produced this evidence in their publication [Lost for Words](#). (page 18).
- 4.13. **Advice and information:** Healthwatch Croydon is supported by the Help & Care Healthwatch Hub Team who are there to help give advice, information and support by phone and email. The calls received are often complex with average call times in Croydon in the reporting period of 32 minutes per call including research time. These

calls help people to access the services they need via our dedicated Healthwatch Hub. Information is also provided on the Healthwatch Croydon website and through social media. This year Healthwatch Croydon also helped people by providing up to date information on COVID-19, linking people to reliable information they could trust, and supporting the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programme.

- 4.14. **Volunteers:** Healthwatch Croydon could not achieve all that it does without the dedicated group of 20 volunteers, many of whom are students at Croydon College learning research skills that they can take into their career and providing significant social value. During this year, Healthwatch Croydon was successful in bidding for funding to host a Healthwatch England funded Diversity Ambassador working in Croydon on explore more about issues of diversity and then sharing their learning with another Healthwatch in the East of England to support their diversity initiatives (page 26).
- 4.15. **Strategic Meetings:** In addition to meeting regularly with Croydon Council colleagues and being a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, individual members of staff and local leadership board members have attended a wide range of strategic meetings. These include the Health and Care Board (where the representative sits as an official observer) and the Croydon Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee as a co-opted non-voting member. Representatives also attend a range of other meetings including the Senior Executive Group, Proactive and Preventative Care Board, the ICN+ Project Development Group, Croydon Health and Social Care Communications Meeting, Care Homes Strategy Group, Autism Partnership Board, two Mental Health Programme Boards and the Safeguarding Adults Board. The manager also attends South London and Maudsley Local Healthwatch Meetings and the Healthwatch London Network as well as other network meetings to ensure good relationships are built and maintained.
- 4.16. **Local Leadership Board:** The Healthwatch Croydon Local Leadership Board has been operational since April 2019. Board members are all closely connected to Croydon and provide strategic direction to the delivery of services. All board members take an active role and many also represent Healthwatch Croydon on other boards and meetings.
- 4.17. **What Healthwatch Croydon is working on in 2022-23:**At the beginning of this year, the board and staff team agreed the priority areas for attention which resulted in the following projects: Working with local schools to ask 11 to 16 year olds about mental health needs and service experience to provide insight for commissioners; assessing GP websites to see if they meet patient expectations and provide consistent and relevant information, particularly around registration; asking those with dementia, and those who care for them, about their experience of services to help develop a new Croydon Dementia Strategy; hearing from patients their experience of discharge from hospital and how they are being supported to recover to help improve this key service; finding people with health inequalities who are usually seldom listened to and asking them about their experiences then raising the profile of their needs to inform service

responses. During the year other priorities and opportunities emerge, with potential projects being assessed using a prioritisation process, see Appendix B.

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1. Not applicable.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1. Healthwatch Croydon listens to local people's views and experiences of health and social care services, and works to get the best out of local services by ensuring that the people who use those services can influence decision making and the way services are delivered.
- 6.2. The Annual Report summarises the work undertaken by Healthwatch Croydon during 2021-22 which includes seeking the views of local residents about a number of health and social care services and presenting those views, along with findings and recommendations for changes and improvements in services, to those people with responsibility for commissioning and / or providing those services.

## **7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 7.1. The work of Healthwatch Croydon, as summarised in the Annual Report, contributes to the delivery of the five priority outcomes in the Mayor's Business Plan, but most particularly to outcome 5, "people can live healthier and independent lives for longer".
- 7.2. Healthwatch Croydon works with partner agencies, including those within the One Croydon Alliance, and VCS organisations, to ensure that the voices of local residents contribute to the promotion of people's independence, health and wellbeing and help to keep vulnerable adults safe. This is done through projects that are undertaken with reports written and presented to decision makers, the gathering and reporting of insight, and influencing and representation at various local Boards and Committees.
- 7.3. In addition, Healthwatch Croydon works closely with health and care services and VCS organisations to improve local residents' health and reduce health inequalities. Particular attention is paid to ensuring that the voices of marginalised communities and hard to reach groups are heard and conveyed to local leaders and decision makers, so that their needs are taken into account in the design and operation of local services.
- 7.4. Healthwatch Croydon also provides information and signposting to local residents about health and social care services, both online and via telephone, and enables Croydon residents to participate in community life.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1.1. This report does not have any financial implications. The requirement to produce an Annual Report is included within the service specification produced by London Borough of Croydon officers when letting the contract for delivery of a local Healthwatch service in Croydon. The costs incurred in producing the Annual Report are therefore included in the contract price.
- 8.1.2. Comments approved by Mirella Peters the Head of Finance, Adult Social Care and Health on behalf of the Director of Finance. (Date 23/02/2023)

### **8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.2.1. The Council has a statutory responsibility to commission an independent Healthwatch service for the Borough. Under Section 227 (Local Healthwatch organisations: annual reports) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 local Healthwatch organisations are required to prepare for each financial year a report in relation to the activities of the organisation under the contractual arrangements with the Council. Such reports must include details of amounts spent by the organisation and its contractors in the year concerned, details of what those amounts were spent on, and such matters as the Secretary of State may direct. Such reports must be prepared by 30 June after the end of the financial year concerned. A copy of such reports must be sent to the local authority, and to the overview and scrutiny committee of the local authority.
- 8.2.2. Comments approved by Sandra Herbert the Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 23/02/2023)

### **8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.3.1. Section 149 of the Act requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 8.3.2. Protected characteristics defined by law are race and ethnicity, disability, sex, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief and marriage and Civil Partnership.
- 8.3.3. Healthwatch Croydon has regard to health inequalities throughout its work and will continue to seek out and amplify the voices of people who experience the greatest

health inequalities including people with protected characteristics. This is reflected in the prioritisation tool see Appendix B.

8.3.4. The Health & Wellbeing Board has an overriding principle within the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy to reduce health inequalities. It is therefore critical that the findings of Croydon Healthwatch inform the Board's approach to tackling any inequalities that are identified from their work. This should be a key element of future reports.

8.3.5. Comments approved by Gavin Handford, Director of Policy, Programmes & Performance. (10 March 2023)

## **9. APPENDICES**

9.1 A: Championing what matters to you: Healthwatch Croydon Annual Report 2021-22

9.2 B: Healthwatch Croydon New Project Proposal Form and Prioritisation Tool

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

10.1 None