



Healthwatch Wandsworth's Quarterly Newsletter - June 2015

Healthwatch is the consumer champion for health and social care services in Wandsworth

A Sunny 'Hello' from Healthwatch Wandsworth!

Well, summer's finally here! We're excited to see the sun here at Healthwatch Wandsworth and we have our sun cream, shorts and bucket and spade at the ready to prove it!

Seeing the sun doesn't just make you feel happier though, it's good for you too, providing extra doses of Vitamin D. And when the sun is out people are generally more physically active than usual.

Here at Healthwatch Wandsworth we have additional reasons to feel happy with ourselves. Lately quite a few of you have asked us what we do with all the feedback that we collect from you about health and social care services. So we've included an item called 'You Said, We Did' that shows exactly what we've done with your feedback and how the effort has been worthwhile.

We're also happy to have a new team member join us, and we'll be introducing her a little later on.

We're *even* happier now that our Annual Report, which details all our activity during our second year in operation, is finished. We feel that an official 'high-five' is owing to our colleague Hiliwona, who had the onerous task of pulling it all together. You can read our second year Annual Report online at www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk/OurWork or request a copy by sending an email to enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk.

Meet a member of our team - Delia Fitzsimmons

Delia joined Healthwatch Wandsworth in April of this year, but worked closely with us before that as an integral part of Wandsworth Care Alliance (WCA), our partner organisation. We're excited to have Delia join us, as she brings many skills and a lot



of experience to the team. So we thought you'd like to learn a bit more about her.

Delia is originally from Dundee in Scotland. She graduated in Business Studies & Human Resource Management and worked in Human Resource Management for 10 years prior to joining WCA in October 2012 as a Volunteer Coordinator.

In her capacity as Volunteer Coordinator, Delia has gained an increased understanding of different service user groups' needs in the Wandsworth area, which is an excellent starting point for her new role as Outreach & Engagement Lead.

Delia is excited about joining the Healthwatch team and is looking forward to using her skills to help make positive changes both on the ground and at commissioning level.

Welcome to the team Delia!

Healthwatch News

Welcome back Ambra! Auf wiedersehen, Lauren

Following an absence of one year, our manager Ambra is finally back from maternity leave after giving birth to identical twin girls! Mother and daughters are doing well and we're pleased that Ambra will be leading the team forward into what will undoubtedly be an exciting year for Healthwatch Wandsworth and in the world of health and social care in general.

On a sad note, we had to say goodbye to our interim manager, Lauren Ashley-Boyall, who has done a great job keeping all our Healthwatch projects afloat and maintaining excellent relationships with Wandsworth council and local service providers over the past year. We'd like to say a very big *thank you!* to Lauren for her dedication and hard work and wish her all the best for the future.

You Said - We Did

Since Healthwatch's inception in April 2013, we have visited numerous individuals, groups, care homes and organisations to gather feedback on different healthcare related topics always stating that we really wanted to hear your views on these matters. But lately, some of you have been asking us what happens to the actual feedback and does it actually make a difference. We're happy to tell you, yes it does make a difference and listed below are some of the recent consultations we've conducted, along with the end result.

Sheltered Schemes ~ We visited a good number of sheltered schemes in the borough and while feedback from residents and staff was varied, a few common themes emerged.

YOU SAID

- Better communication between care agencies and Sheltered Housing Officers (SHOs) could help to prevent potential safeguarding issues
- Special support systems should be put in place for elderly carers
- There should be better transport arrangements to and from hospital for those that need them

WE DID

Our findings, including a number of potential safeguarding issues, were included in a detailed report that has been forwarded to Wandsworth's Department of Education & Social Services, their Housing Department, Wandsworth CCG and St George's Hospital.



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No Right Ignored, No Voice Unheard ~ We asked people from different groups question 2 from this consultation, which is designed to improve healthcare services for people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues.

YOU SAID

- There is too much paperwork to complete which takes a long time to understand
- Sometimes information provided special needs groups is not relevant and full of jargon
- Different communication needs and ways of learning are not taken into account by some organisations in their dealings with those who have additional needs

WE DID

We included these comments and others in a brief report that has been sent to the Department of Health, as part of the overall response to their consultation.

Seldom Heard Groups ~ Back in March we met with some of the homeless community and got their feedback on the barriers they face accessing health and social care services including the need for better communication between medical and social care services.

We also spoke to a few of the FGM Champions at the Katherine Low Settlement about their experience of health care services in Wandsworth and what could be done to better understand that culture and help end this dangerous practice.

The older members of our community always have lots to say and we were able to tap into their feedback on things like isolation and loneliness, living

independently and being able to make a valued contribution to the community.

WE DID

The feedback we collected from these three groups and many others was included in our Seldom Heard Groups report which has now been sent to Wandsworth CCG for information and action.

All of the above mentioned reports are available on our website - www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk. Alternatively, call 020 8516 7767 if you would like a hard copy.

Enter & View - A Way Forward

Following consultation with Wandsworth locals and with the Healthwatch Wandsworth Executive Board, our Enter & View team has reached a decision about the projects they will be working on over the next six months or so.

To begin with they will be looking at extra care supported housing (accommodation for older people or for those with special needs); what current provision looks like, how this compares with other leading models and what an excellent supported housing scheme should include. They'll also be looking at the quality of the services provided at our local GP surgeries, including services like 'Choose & Book' (a government initiative that allows you to choose the time, date and hospital for specialist treatment or tests).

The team is also investigating the possibility of assessing the quality of prison healthcare services and the local IAPT (Improving Access to Physical Therapies) service.

All the findings from our Enter & View projects are uploaded to our website. Each individual home then responds to the recommendations in our report by means of an Action Plan which includes a number of measures for improvement, based on feedback from the residents. To read our reports or the action plans visit



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www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk/resources/enter-&view-reports or call 020 8516 7767 for a hard copy.

In and around Wandsworth

HEAR TO HELP

Do you suffer with impaired hearing and live in Wandsworth? Perhaps you need some help with your hearing aids? If so, the 'Hear to Help' service may be able to help you!

'Hear to Help' is delivered in partnership with St. George's NHS Trust and they provide support to NHS hearing aid users, enabling people to make the most of their hearing aid and manage their hearing loss effectively.

The service is community based and is provided via community support officers and volunteers who conduct home visits and run a drop-in service. This free service includes:

- tubing, minor repairs, ear-mould cleaning and battery replacement
- basic training for hearing aid users on maintenance and usage of their hearing aid
- advice and support to enable people to make the most of their hearing aids
- information on other equipment and services.

If you would like more information on the 'Hear to Help' service visit www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/heartohelp or call 07501 257 443.

Mental Health First Aid Training

Lifetimes will be delivering FREE Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training in July and October. MHFA is an educational course that teaches people how to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health problem. In the same way as we might learn physical first aid, mental health first aid teaches you how to recognise the crucial warning signs of mental ill health.

MHFA training is an intensive 12-hour course delivered over a series of 3 sessions. The course is aimed at those without specialist mental health training who might encounter mental health issues in the course of their work, volunteering or within their family and friends network.

For more information on the course email info@life-times.org.uk or visit mhfa21-22-23july.eventbrite.co.uk or mhfa6-7-8october.eventbrite.co.uk to book a place.

Healthwatch Events

Are You up for The Challenge?

In September, Healthwatch Wandsworth is planning to have a team of young people work along with them for one day as part of The Challenge. The Challenge is a programme designed to get 15-17 year olds to take on new challenges and learn new skills. It also enables them to meet new people, discover new talents and realise their potential.

If you are between 15-17 years of age and would like to take part in The Challenge, then please email us at enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk telling us a bit about yourself, why you'd like to take part and what you hope to gain from being part of the 2015 Challenge programme. You can also email us if you know someone who you think might benefit from participation in the programme, and who fits the eligibility criteria.

Healthwatch Assembly & Voluntary Sector Forum - 22nd June

On the 22nd of June we held our Assembly and Voluntary Sector meetings at Earlsfield Library. Both meetings were very well attended with lots of new faces there for the first time.

Highly anticipated was Peter Jenkinson's presentation on St George's current financial situation. The presentation was very informative and provoked many



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interesting questions from users of the hospital and voluntary sector organisations. We will be providing a summary of those questions and will upload it to our website in the next week or so.

The Voluntary Sector meeting revolved around a presentation from Public Health called “Happy and Thriving Communities”, based on their annual report. The presentation looked at the support needed for sufferers of mental ill health and especially at prevention and early intervention, at all stages of life.

Both of the above presentations will be available to watch on our website - www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk.

Why not come along to our next Assembly or Voluntary Sector meeting? They will be held on Friday the 25th of September from 11am-1pm (Assembly & lunch) and then from 1.30-3pm (Voluntary Sector). The theme is ‘Patient Groups - what are they for and how can they help improve health services in Wandsworth?’ We hope to see you there.

Healthwatch Wandsworth’s Information and Signposting Service

The Healthwatch Wandsworth Information & Signposting service can provide independent information to help people access local health and social care services. If you require help to access information about health or social care services, or other local services, call 020 8516 7767 from Monday to Thursday between 9am-5pm, and between 10am-2pm on Friday.

Alternatively, email: information@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk or visit www.care4me.org.uk - an online based community directory of voluntary and community organisations that provide services, information and activities in Wandsworth.



Get Involved

Enter & View Needs You!

The Enter & View team has recently welcomed a new member - Deirdre Feehan joins the team with a background in healthcare policy and legislation with the Department of Health. She also has some experience of supported living arrangements, which will be welcome when the team starts its supported housing project in the next month or so.

We still need a few more volunteers for the Enter & View team and the work they do is not only varied and interesting, it's also very important. If you think you'd like to work with them and you're good with people, organised, can take clear and coherent notes, able to travel within the borough of Wandsworth and feel that you could make a valid contribution to this work, please request an application form by emailing enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk or call 020 8516 7767.

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