

Monthly Feedback Report

May

About us

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Royal Borough of Greenwich. We're here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care.¹



What did we hear in May?

We heard from 477 people² about their experience of health and care services in Greenwich.

“ Very good experience. Nice and friendly staff, all nurses and midwives are great.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ They are responsive; they help me get treatment but waiting time is very bad!

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

¹ Image above taken from engagement with the Vietnamese Women's Group in March 2025.

² Feedback collected through calls and emails to us, meetings between us and local groups or advocates, research reports and outreach and engagement events.

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Accessibility of Services

“ I have been at QE many times and the services are good but the waiting time is too long, more than 2 or 3 hours when I was at the outpatient gynaecology department.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ For me, the service I received from them was satisfactory and the doctors and carers are kind. It was easy and convenient to book appointments at your preferred days and time.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am at the hospital at the fracture clinic. The last time I came I was treated on time but today I haven't been in yet, still waiting. I had a good service from the doctors though, they were professional.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am at the x-ray and blood test department. It has been good and quick so far. I am here all the time, and the services are satisfactory to me.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ There is great service at my practice. However, it takes really long to get appointments as there are long waiting times. It is very frustrating as I can't get closer dates for appointments.

GP Practice

“ The hospital is good but the only thing I hate is the long waiting times for Ear, Nose and Throat services.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“The waiting time is very long but the staff are very good. I had to wait more than three hours.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“I visited QE hospital at the A&E and they sent me to the urgent treatment centre. I had a short waiting time at the A&E but I had a long wait at the urgent treatment centre. However, the care I received from staff was really good.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“I come to the urgent treatment at QE 3 times per week to change my dressings because I had an injury. The services were good the first time I visited after the accident but now I have a really long waiting time, but great staff.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“I have been visiting the hospital for many years, but the A&E is the worst department. I waited there for a long time. They have no television to keep patients busy. The chairs are not comfortable and facilities are poor. They should also have a monitor that has the patient's name on it so it would be easier to know when it's your turn.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“I visited the hospital at the urgent treatment department. I came here from the emergency department. Staff are great but long waiting times.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“Compared to two years ago, the A&E department at the hospital is now very fast because they have appointment booking.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I have been at the A&E department. I waited about 12 hours to be attended to. If the waiting time could be broken down by half it would help. The waiting time is too long. I see that as a form of stopping people from getting care.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am at the urgent care department. It's too busy in here. It took about nine hours from the A&E department and I have spent a further hour so far at the urgent care department. The wait is too long but the staff are very helpful.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am at the urgent care department and the waiting time is too long. We have been here for over an hour and haven't seen a doctor and don't even know when we will be attended to.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I cannot find anything they did well at the emergency department. The waiting time is terrible. The system does not work, example, sending x-rays to my GP that don't arrive.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Provider Response

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

A Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust spokesperson said: "There's lots of useful feedback in here for us this month and we are grateful to our patients who have taken the time to share their experiences with Greenwich Healthwatch. It's always a good to hear that our patients mostly receive good/ great care when they are seen by Team LGT but we know that patients are frustrated by wait times. This is an area we are constantly working hard to improve for our patients. It will take some time as it requires both investment and service redesign and, in the meantime, we would encourage patients to always use the right service when it comes to urgent and emergency care. Many ailments and minor injuries can be treated by GPs and Pharmacies in the community, and it is much better for patients to get speedier treatment away from the hospital if appropriate."

Provider Response

Greenwich Health

"It is really important to gather insights from patient experiences of our services. I am delighted that the care that was received was commended by multiple patients in this report. We acknowledge the concerns raised around waiting times. We continue to work hard to ensure wait times are as short as possible with our average wait time currently around 2 hours 15 minutes. Unfortunately, in times of high demand, often waiting times can be longer and we have to prioritise the sickest patients or those most vulnerable. We have been achieving our highest ever percentages of patients being seen in under 4 hours with over 95% seen, treated and discharged within 4 hours in April which is certainly positive and something we intend on maintaining and improving on."

Staff Communication and Support

“ Good experience, always a professional approach and kind doctors and nurses.

GP Practice

“ There was very good service, friendly staff and they were very helpful when addressing my needs.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ Unable to gain ASD and ADHD screening for my now adult children. I was actually told by one GP that "No such assessment exists for adults". My children have suffered many many years from not having the diagnosis they needed as children, it has caused severe mental illness, that's without them recognising that these diagnoses often come with co-morbidities. Can't get an appointment, can't even gain access to help, once the booking system is closed, they refuse to speak to you. Told to call 111 when 111 can't do anything. No service, no help, now no trust at all in the NHS.

GP Practice

“ I had a fall at home and had a suspected hip fracture. Very happy with 999 dispatcher, ambulance crews and all the NHS staff I came into contact with, and my treatment was very good. Fortunately, no broken bones just soft tissues trauma and a remarkably swift recovery with the help of a bit of physio and painkillers. However, I waited from Friday afternoon until Monday afternoon to be discharged and I was told there were 4 other people in my ward in the same position. We blocked much needed beds as we were told there weren't enough doctors/consultants at the weekend on duty to deal with the amount of patients needing to be discharged.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I am at the hospital at the A&E and also the urgent care department. The doctor we just saw was very good. He was reassuring that everything will be fine which made us calm.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I was at the A&E department and the staff said that because I am 73 years old, they quickly attended to me and referred me to the urgent care department. The services received so far is satisfactory. I am currently waiting at the urgent care department.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ I attended the urgent care department. The services are good. I waited longer there than expected but I was given proper treatment.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Healthwatch Greenwich | Meredith's story: "I needed support...I hope that by sharing my story, they will make changes so other patients don't have to go through what I did"

Meredith's story: "I needed support...I hope that by sharing my story, they will make changes so other patients don't have to go through what I did"

Meredith's recent experience at Queen Elizabeth Hospital's emergency department offers a reminder of the barriers that exist for residents living with disability.

Meredith lives with a significant hearing impairment, which makes verbal communication challenging in busy or noisy environments. Upon arrival, in pain, at the emergency department, she made this clear to the hospital team. **"I spoke to the receptionist and explained that I had a hearing impairment, but she didn't offer any support,"** she recalled. Meredith told us that no reasonable adjustments were offered or provided.

Over the course of a painful five-hour wait, Meredith struggled to keep track of her place in the queue. **"When the air conditioning or heating is on, it creates such a loud noise that I can't hear my name being called,"** she explained. Without access to visual call systems or staff support, Meredith was forced to rely on other patients. **"On several occasions, I got up and walked into the consulting room, convinced my name had been called. At one point, I even turned to the people next to me to ask if they had heard my name."** A simple screen displaying patients' surnames and initials, she suggested, could have made all the difference. **"I know they want to respect everyone's privacy, but they could just display initials and last names on a screen, so that people like me can still know when it's our turn."**

While some members of staff tried to help, inconsistencies remained. **"Some of the staff made a genuine effort to communicate clearly, but some were wearing masks which made it harder to understand what they were saying,"** Meredith said. The use of paper masks, while necessary for infection control, presents a significant barrier for people who are hard of hearing as they muffle sound, and they are impossible for those who rely on lip reading.

Healthwatch Greenwich | Meredith's story: "I needed support...I hope that by sharing my story, they will make changes so other patients don't have to go through what I did"

Physical accessibility within the emergency department also posed challenges. Due to her condition, Meredith needed quick and easy access to a toilet. **"One toilet had a heavy swing door, making it difficult for me to open on my own, and the other was too far from the waiting area to reach in case of an emergency."**

As a result, Meredith asked for a commode, worried that she might have an accident. **"I explained to the nurse that I might need a commode, fearing I wouldn't make it to the toilet in time, but it was unsettling to think that I could end up in such an undignified situation",** she said.

Meredith's experience suggests a weakness in implementing the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. In Meredith's case, these adjustments could have included visual notifications, alternative communication methods, and staff with greater understanding of how to meet the communication needs of patients with hearing impairments. As she put it, **"I needed support from the moment I walked in, and I hope that by sharing my story, they will make changes so other patients don't have to go through what I did."**

In response to Meredith's experience, Healthwatch Greenwich raised the concerns directly with senior leaders at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, highlighting the barriers she faced as a person with a hearing impairment. We shared her experience as an opportunity for system learning and improvement and requested a meeting with the Trust to discuss how accessibility and communication support can be strengthened in the emergency department. We also offered to support a review of the hospital's compliance with the Accessible Information Standard and explore opportunities for co-producing solutions with people who have lived experience.

Healthwatch Greenwich | Meredith's story: "I needed support...I hope that by sharing my story, they will make changes so other patients don't have to go through what I did"

Provider Response

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

A Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust spokesperson said: "We were sorry to hear of Meredith's experience. This really should not have happened as we do have a hearing loop at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Unfortunately, this was broken when Meredith came in and, coupled with the fact that we had reintroduced mask wearing due to high volumes of flu and respiratory infections, contributed to it not being a great visit for Meredith. We are pleased to say that the hearing loop has now been repaired so should not cause any further problems."

Healthwatch Greenwich | Meera's story: "They understood me, my background, and what I needed."

Meera's story: "They understood me, my background, and what I needed."

When Meera, 24, reached out for help with her mental health, she wasn't sure what to expect. Balancing a demanding job, living far from family, and feeling disconnected from her community left her feeling stressed, anxious, and alone. But with the right support from Greenwich Time to Talk, Meera began to feel more reconnected, and her mental wellbeing improved.

Shortly after graduating, Meera landed a competitive role. However, the intense pressure at work, combined with the emotional strain of being away from her support network, began to affect her wellbeing.

"I was constantly stressed. I couldn't sleep properly, didn't feel like socialising, and even talking to people at work became difficult," Meera said. **"I didn't feel like I could open up to anyone."**

Meera found Greenwich Time to Talk through an online search for local services. **"It was late at night after a really hard day. I just couldn't carry on pretending everything was okay,"** she shared. The self-referral form was simple to complete, and within three days, she received a phone call from a therapist.

"The therapist was warm and genuinely listened. It was the first time in a long time I felt like someone truly saw what I was going through," Meera explained. She was offered options tailored to her needs, including digital tools and regular one-to-one sessions. Despite missing a pre-therapy wellbeing questionnaire during a particularly tough week at work, her therapist followed up with a call. **"That call meant so much. I was overwhelmed and behind on everything, but they didn't let me fall through the cracks."**

Through weekly therapy sessions, Meera worked with her therapist to address both the emotional and practical challenges she was facing.

"One of my biggest struggles was social anxiety, I couldn't even start conversations with people I knew well," she said. **"But therapy gave me tools I could use right away. Little things, like how to pause and calm myself before speaking, really helped."**

Her therapist encouraged her to set small, manageable goals, like saying hello to colleagues, attending a local event, or reconnecting with friends. **"It wasn't about changing everything overnight,"** Meera explained, **"It was about building myself back up, step by step."** Throughout the process, her therapist took a culturally sensitive approach, acknowledging that Meera often felt misunderstood and hesitant to share her feelings with others, fearing judgment and cultural stigma, and helped her navigate these complex feelings. **"They didn't just understand mental health,"** Meera said. **"They understood me, my background, and what I needed."**

After just six weeks, Meera noticed a big difference. **"I felt more in control. I wasn't as anxious at work, and I started sleeping better. I was reconnecting with people and finding my place again."**

Meera's story shows the impact of personalised, accessible, and culturally sensitive mental health support. Greenwich Time to Talk recognised how Meera's cultural background, feelings of disconnection from her community, and fear of stigma affected her wellbeing. The service offered an easy self-referral process, quick follow-up, flexible support options, and proactive contact when she missed an appointment. Meera's therapist built trust by acknowledging her cultural experiences, tailoring goals to her needs, and empowering her to rebuild confidence at her own pace. As a result, Meera felt truly understood, better supported, and saw real improvements in her mental health.

When services are proactive and provide tailored support that considers cultural context, they create a space for meaningful recovery, connection, and improved wellbeing. By sharing Meera's story, we encourage system-wide learning, and for providers of services to build on this excellent example.

Healthwatch Greenwich | Meera's story: "They understood me, my background, and what I needed."

Provider Response

Greenwich Time To Talk NHS Talking Therapies

"Thank you for taking the time to share your experience of our service. Your kind words mean a lot to us. We always strive to provide a responsive, person centred and flexible service to our clients. Your feedback is invaluable to us in our effort to continually enhance the experience of people accessing our service. Your positive words motivates us to work even harder."

Listening to the Vietnamese Women's Group: The Importance of Inclusive Care

In April, we spoke with the Vietnamese Women's Group which offers an important space to access support and community connection for older women. What emerged from our conversations, conducted entirely in Vietnamese and Cantonese was a consistent message: language remains a significant barrier to accessing care, understanding rights, and feeling included in the wider community.

Language as a Barrier

The women we spoke to said they often feel disconnected from the wider Greenwich and national community. **"We need someone to tell us what is happening in the UK."** Women said they often miss out on updates about available support, changes to benefits, or even eligibility for services because the information isn't accessible.

Women told us they rely on family members, particularly children or grandchildren, to attend appointments, translate medical information, and advocate on their behalf. This places a burden on relatives and raises concerns about privacy and autonomy. More critically, those without family support fear they will be excluded from services altogether. **"When my children are working, there's no one to help".**

Although many are aware that the NHS offers interpretation services, they told us that using them is not straightforward. Some women described not knowing how to request an interpreter, what to ask for, and how to explain the reason for their appointment. **"A lot of people don't know how to ask for an interpreter."** This makes an already stressful experience even more daunting. **"There's a lot of work involved to get registered with a doctor. When I call, the doctor doesn't understand Vietnamese and I don't understand English, so it's really difficult".**

One woman told us she'd waited days for a call back from her GP. When the call came, it was delayed further because she had to wait for the service to arrange translation support. She explained how this delayed her from getting timely medical advice.

More Translated Information and Verbal Language Support

From our conversations, it's clear that while translated written materials are valued and there is interest in having more information available in translation, it may not be enough for communities where literacy, in either English or Vietnamese, isn't given. For older Vietnamese women in particular, verbal communication, through trusted interpreters, bilingual health workers, or accessible audio resources, is likely to be more effective.

Working Towards Inclusive, Culturally Sensitive Care

At Healthwatch Greenwich, we recognise that effective communication is about more than just language; cultural competence is also key. Based on what we have heard, services will be more effective when they demonstrate an understanding of cultural norms, respect for different experiences of health and illness, and show sensitivity to the challenges migrant communities face.

Next Steps

We follow up on all concerns or issues raised.

We work with commissioners, providers, regulators, and service users to understand where services are working well and where there needs to be further development.

Contact Us

For more information on our feedback report, or to request it in large print or easy read format, contact:

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