

Monthly Feedback Report

October

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 care¹.



What did we hear in October?

We heard from 277 people¹ about their experience of health and care services in Greenwich.

“ I changed to them a month ago and so far, it is OK. Reception is nice and doctor is good and helpful. They call you once your report comes back.

GP Practice

“ I needed blood tests but they said there was a cyber-attack so they said they would get back to me later on. However, it has been 4-5 months and still no update or call from them. I needed to have a blood test as I needed my medication reviewed and my blood pressure is suffering. It is hard to get to the doctor and get an appointment.

GP Practice

¹ Photo above taken from engagement at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in September 2024.

² Feedback collected through our monthly health and social care satisfaction surveys, meetings with local groups or advocates, outreach and engagement events, and research reports.

In this report

About us.....	1
What did we hear in October?	1
What Greenwich residents are saying... ..	3
Accessibility of Services	3
Staff Communication and Support	4
No Place to Call Home: Homelessness and the Impact on Health and Wellbeing	6
Richard’s Story: “I will die first before they move me”	8
James’s Story: “...it feels like I’ve been put on the back burner”	10
Contact Us.....	12

What Greenwich residents are saying...

Accessibility of Services

“ My GP Surgery waiting time is atrocious and you don't even speak to a doctor.

GP Practice

“ A long waiting appointment, up to a week, even to register you have to wait for a long time. Nowadays GP's make it difficult to send people to the hospital with a referral and people waiting for surgery, they have to wait first to be seen by their GP and then by the hospital and that takes ages.

GP Practice

“ I recently visited a relative at QE. What [they] told me is that they were waiting a long time for treatment, that is something that could be improved.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ The elderly should have a dedicated team like the child unit. Having an elderly [father] waiting for 8 hours in A&E is hard. There should be a level of priority for [him].

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

“ My GP surgery is easy to book appointments. I really like the e-consult process and there is good communication regarding childhood vaccines and how to book them.

GP Practice

“ Getting an appointment was very difficult. They don't allow you to see your GP. Not at all satisfied with the services.

GP Practice

“ I found my GP helpful for general colds and fevers but in terms of infections like ear infections, we are getting one year waiting time and more to see specialists.

GP Practice

Staff Communication and Support

“ My GP is very helpful; I am happy to be registered there.

GP Practice

“ No problem with my GP, happy so far.

GP Practice

“ Would rather have face-to-face appointments. Attitudes from receptionist; they want to know about everything and if it's not agreeable to them, they won't give you an appointment. You have to take your own blood pressure and weight when it is the GP's job to do that.

GP Practice

“ The service was quick and easy. The only disadvantage was there weren't many solutions to my [concerns]. But overall, they are good doctors.

GP Practice

“ Pretty poor experience. Unfriendly reception staff and a bad booking process but sometimes, they have a good locum and a good GP.

GP Practice

“ Very good experience at my GP. Good nurse and reception. Did get to be seen on the same day.

GP Practice

“ I was at QE for a week before and after having my baby. I was so well looked after. The postnatal ward wasn't great though as there were no restrictions on visitors, meaning it was noisy.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

No Place to Call Home: Homelessness and the Impact on Health and Wellbeing

Working with Woolwich Service Users Project (WSUP), Healthwatch Greenwich held a discussion group to hear from homeless Greenwich residents about their experiences of local health and care services. Nine residents took part in our discussion group, including two street sleepers and seven living in temporary or insecure accommodation.

For many residents, accessing health services presented many barriers. Without the necessary documentation like proof of identity or address, getting GP and other health service appointments was increasingly difficult. This meant that residents often did not get the care needed to manage their health concerns.

On top of this, living on a very low budget and, for some, worries about their immigration status, made things even worse. Unless in walking distance, many residents could not afford the bus fare to get to health appointments. Moreover, without clear information on service entitlements, many residents, particularly those with uncertain immigration status, felt that they were not allowed to access the care they needed for free.

“Due to immigration, it feels like I am in limbo... My legal status is a problem and is always at the back of my mind”.

Those we spoke to told us how living in poor living conditions, whether in insecure housing or street sleeping, directly affected their mental and physical health. For many residents, this was a vicious cycle. Poor mobility, chronic health conditions and the stress of homelessness all fed into each other to diminish their health. This made seeking care, managing their conditions or even being able to engage in healthy behaviours more challenging. In addition, residents often experienced stigma from services, making them reluctant to try get the support they need.

“I am not in a good place right now, and when your mind is not in a good place, you can end up slipping into bad health habits like drinking or smoking”

“The professionals don't really listen to your past, your story, and how you are. They have a job to do, and they are only paid to do their job, so they don't sit down to really listen to you...”

Community organisations filled the gaps left by formal services. These organisations offer not only practical assistance but advocacy and guidance, helping residents to access medical services, mental health support and wider support that they otherwise may be excluded from.

“Community groups [organisations] provide us with a lot of support calling the GP, how to go about accessing care and teaching us basic things...”

These organisations work to improve not only immediate access to health and care services but also the long-term wellbeing of homeless Greenwich residents and those living in insecure housing.

Richard's Story: "I will die first before they move me"

Richard, 48, is a wheelchair user and lives alone in a first-floor flat. His building does not have a lift, and he cannot leave his flat without help, leaving Richard completely isolated. Despite being told he is on the priority list to be moved; Richard has been waiting for two years.

Once an active member of his community, Richard has seen his world shrink. "It is very hard for me; I don't go outside anymore. Like today, the weather is nice, and I could have gone out for a walk somewhere, but I can't do that now. I feel very sad, you know, because I had my independence, and I have lost it all." Unable to leave the flat, Richard can't visit friends, enjoy his neighbourhood, or even manage basic tasks such as grocery shopping, all of which he was once able to do.

Everyday tasks are difficult, and he used to have carers to help. "I had some carers, but they don't do anything for me. So, I told them not to bother coming back because all they do is just make me a cup of tea". Worried about him not coping alone, his friend Maria stepped in and now does his shopping, cooking, and cleaning. "She [Maria] does everything for me". Feelings of helplessness and sadness are made worse by his reliance on others for even the most basic activities. "They [housing] should have done more to help me so that things can improve with me because I am still young, I have lost all my independence from this".

Living with chronic kidney disease, Richard has dialysis treatment three times a week and speaks about the humiliation of having to be carried because there is no lift. "The only time I leave this floor is when I go for my treatment. They have to come and carry me down the stairs and back up again. It is very frustrating for me".

Despite being on the priority list for a move, two years later, Richard is still waiting. "I have to keep chasing them, finding out what is going on with me, and just live one day at a time. The last time I heard from them, they put me at the top of the list and said they're looking for somewhere suitable for me; that was the same thing they told me last year".

Reflecting on his experience, Richard feels that the housing authority has abandoned him.

"I will die first before they move me."

James's Story: "...it feels like I've been put on the back burner"

After losing a leg, becoming a wheelchair user, and living with serious sight issues, James was told his home would be adapted. But months later, the promised adjustments have not been done, putting him at risk of accidents, and making it harder to manage his mental wellbeing. "I wish they'd communicate more and be a bit more proactive. I don't feel they've prioritised [me] at all..."

James points out that his physical limitations (being a wheelchair user and having sight impairment) are not the problem, it's the delay in making his flat accessible that's created a situation where he can't look after himself or fully participate in his own life. Without support rails, James struggles to look after his personal hygiene as he can't use the shower. "I've had to resort to sink baths... It's not the same. A shower's much more hygienic, you know? I just felt... yucky." Without grip bars everyday activities are exhausting and unsafe, and James worries about falling or injuring himself.

As he can't push or pull doors open, not having automatic doors to get in and out of his block makes leaving the building impossible without help. The promised installation of automatic doors never happened. "They mentioned automatic doors back in May, which would make getting in and out of the building so much easier for me. But it hasn't been brought up since. Not once. That makes it trickier for me to even just go outside, but it's like they've forgotten." For someone who used to have a busy social life, James is now cut off. "I used to go out to karaoke, sometimes twice a week. I loved going into central London, meeting famous people for my autograph collection at the theatre stage doors... All that's been taken away now. "

His isolation and lack of social contact have taken a toll on his mental wellbeing. "I mean, I'm not officially diagnosed with depression, but I feel it... The isolation just makes everything worse." While mental health support has been offered, James says it's fragmented and difficult to access. "They're trying to set something up... like occasional phone calls or therapy. But with all the different organisations I've had to deal with, it gets jumbled in my head. It's overwhelming."

Healthwatch Greenwich | James's Story: "...it feels like I've been put on the back burner"

Thinking about his situation, James feels ignored and abandoned by the very system meant to support him. "They knew my situation—my amputation, my eyesight issues—but it feels like I've been put on the back burner."

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

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