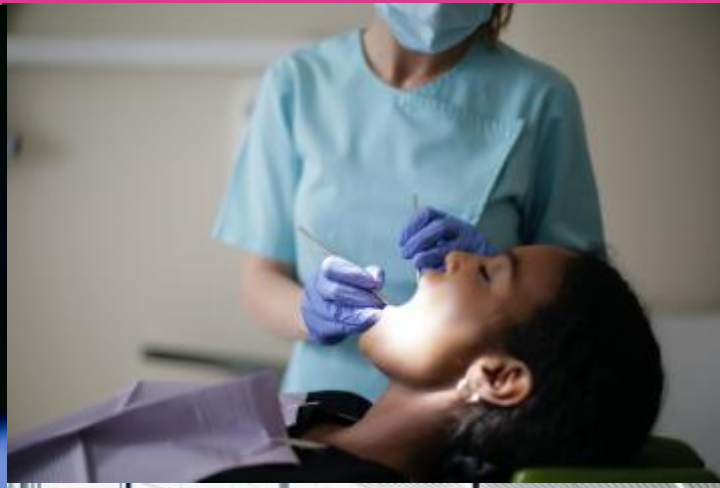


Experience Matters

Mid-Year Review 2020-21



**Spring
2020**

Your Guide to Richmond's NHS, Care & Support

The NHS, social care and local charities provide a huge range of help.

We've produced this leaflet to help you find the help you need when you need it.



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Chief Officer's Foreword

Understanding the impact of the pandemic on our community and on our local services has been an important task for us in 2020 and one that we have found valuable, rewarding and challenging in equal measure. The Coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions have been difficult for everyone but we've also seen huge efforts from the community, from our colleagues in the NHS, social care and the Council.

This mid-year review shows our work since April 2020 and describes the impact we've had on access to health and social care services for the borough in the first part of the year. It also invites feedback on our work and on our communities services.

Meeting people face to face, whether in the community or by visiting NHS or care settings has always been key to our work. Like many, we had to change the way we worked overnight and by adapting the way we work we've continued to work effectively and to provide support to our community in new ways.

Instead of meeting people face to face, we reached over **1,700** people online, through community organisations, by post and by phone. The experiences that people shared with us have been published in **4 reports** that have led to improved communication and service provision locally and, through our wider network, nationally.

By working with local Hospitals we collected around **450** people's in depth experiences of *Maternity Care Amid the Pandemic* through an online survey. The resulting report was every bit as powerful as our pre-pandemic work and local hospitals are working hard to use the findings to improve care for women. A review of more than **300** people's experiences of dental care is due out shortly.

We've also supported our local community in other ways:

- **250** people helped with queries over the phone
- **150** volunteers DBS checked so that they can support vulnerable people
- Helped to set up the Community Hub phone line
- **30,000** people informed by our website, social media and emails
- Distributed the *Guide to Richmond's NHS, Care and Support* to homes across the borough.

Mike Derry
Healthwatch Richmond Chief Officer

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2020.



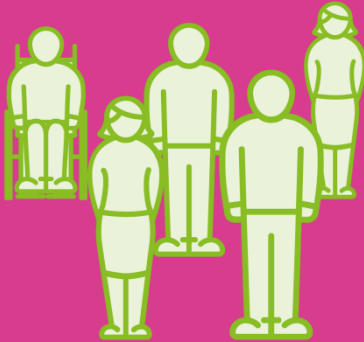
Health and care that works for you



4 staff who work 3.2 Full Time Equivalent

24 volunteers involved in community engagement and outreach work

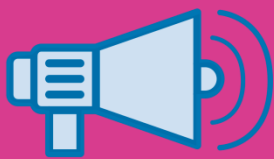
Providing support



150 volunteers DBS checked who can provide support to vulnerable people

250+ people helped with queries over the phone

Reaching out



30,000 people informed by our website, social media and emails

1,700 people listened to through community engagement, email, post or phone

Making a difference to care



We published **4 reports** about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care

A report into **Dentistry** is due to be published in early 2021

Listening to our community



Remote Engagement

Because community groups and activities were disrupted by social distancing and we were unable to reach people face to face, reaching people in the community has been difficult this year.

Despite this we've managed to collect 23% more experiences than we had at the same point last through a combination of online and postal surveys, video calls and phone calls.



Listening to you

Though we couldn't engage with people face to face, we reached over 1,700 people, through community organisations, online, by post and phone:

- 1,300 people responded to 6 surveys
- 175 people engaged us through 19 virtual outreach sessions
- 275 people contacted our signposting line

Helping charities to support more vulnerable people

When the Coronavirus lockdown first started back in March 2020, we wanted to find a way to help the community and particularly those who were shielding or self isolating. Which is why we set up a DBS checking service to help out our fellow voluntary care groups in the borough so that they could focus their time on supporting the community.

Since march we have completed over 150 DBS checks for volunteers from 7 different local organisations. Thanks to funding from Richmond Council, Richmond Parish Lands Charity and Richmond Council for Voluntary Service there was not cost to the charities.

In doing so we've enabled these organisations to help many hundreds more people.



*It was fantastic!
Incredibly smooth
process.*

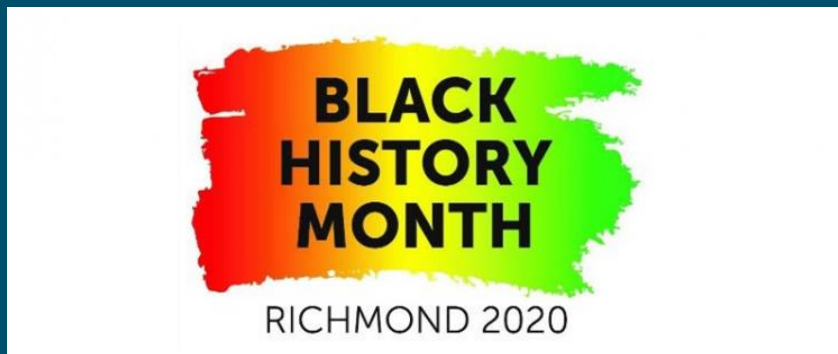


It is the time that it frees up that is most valuable. It has helped us a lot with being able to focus on supporting lots of new residents who need our help

Carers for adults with disabilities

We worked with Mencap Richmond to host an event for carers of adults with learning disabilities on Thursday 10th December. The event gave carers a chance to voice how they have coped since lockdown began, what had worked well and what hadn't and to describe any additional support they need and to ensure that their needs and concerns could be heard by decision makers.

Black History Month 2020



We hosted a remote community discussion in partnership with Richmond Council in October in celebration of Black History Month. We welcomed members of the public who shared social, health, cultural and professional experiences as black residents in the borough.

The discussion covered the challenges that people and families had experienced with accessing services including dentistry and mental health as well as inequalities resulting from stigma and lower levels of literacy in some communities. It also generated many ideas for empowering the community to celebrate diversity in the borough, through ideas for arts, history and cultural events linked with theatre groups and local colleges. As a result of this discussion, we will be supporting further discussions and a Facebook group has been set up to provide people with a voice in health and social care and a way to shape future celebrations.

Making a difference for our community



Based on the experiences of the 1,700 people who engaged in our work we've published a number of responses and improved the information and services available locally.

Aside from the in depth work that is detailed on the following pages, our engagement allowed us to achieve the following impacts:

1. **Helping to improve access to medicines:** People told us that they were struggling to get prescriptions delivered from pharmacies and had to rely on charities to collect them rather than having them delivered. We raised this with a national chain of pharmacies who changed their policies to provide assurance that patients are not missing out on deliveries.
2. **Helping to ensure access to dentistry in the pandemic:** Early in the pandemic dentistry had to close and people told us that they were struggling to access any care locally. We shared these problems with our national network and our local MPs which allowed them to raise the issue with the Government. As a result of the collective feedback on this issue, Urgent Dental Care Centres were set up across the country to provide emergency care safely during the pandemic.

Once dentistry reopened people told us about other problems that they faced. We have undertaken a review of these challenges and are working to improve care for local people.

3. **Ensuring people felt safe enough to attend appointments:** People who were at higher risk from the virus told us that they were worried about their safety when traveling to or attending appointments. Understanding the control measures in place made them more confident about attending appointments. We shared this with the NHS who have now launched a video explaining how people will be kept safe from the virus accompanied by a communications campaign.

Improving maternity care amid the pandemic

Local maternity care is improving thanks to the 450 women who shared their experiences of maternity services at West Middlesex or Chelsea & Westminster Hospital during the Coronavirus pandemic.

What we found:

Limited visiting hours to postnatal wards strongly impacted the experiences of women, due to not having their partners for emotional and practical support present. This was particularly noted by first-time mothers, women who had C-sections or more complex labour requirements, and non-native speakers, who struggled with being able to do things on their own. Women couldn't always get the support they needed and staff were not always kind.

Women reported that Booking Appointments (the first appointment with a midwife) felt rushed, expressing concern over accuracy of the information being taken and the overall administration, such as delayed or missed appointments.

People found phone and virtual appointments felt too impersonal and rushed. Overall people preferred for face-to-face and video appointments.

Impact

The maternity team at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital responded very positively to our report, and we are working with their teams to make improvements to care based on the experiences that we collected from women.

We want to thank Healthwatch Richmond for their support and energy in producing this report. We welcome the findings to help us drive improvements in relation to: visitor restriction policies, experiences of postnatal care particularly on the ward, virtual appointments and communication especially that being offered online.



Exploring access to Dentistry Services during Coronavirus

In response to around 50 calls regarding difficulty accessing dentistry services in the borough, we started our own research into the matter.

Our volunteers called all of the practices in Richmond to see which were open to new patients and to get a sense of the waiting times for routine and emergency appointments. They identified only 2 that were able to take new patients and heard about the considerable pressure that dentists were under to care for their existing patients. Positively, this allowed us to help most people who needed care to access it.

We also ran an online survey and over 250 people shared their experiences of dental appointments and registering with dentists.

Our findings show that there was a significant difference between NHS and private patients being able to access dental care. The data shows that it is significantly easier for private patients to book routine and emergency dental appointments than NHS patients and a number of people who usually received NHS care had to pay privately to get the care they needed.

We will publish our full report after we have spoken to local dental commissioners and providers about our findings.



Youth Out Loud!

Youth Out Loud! (YOL!), is a group of young people aged 13-17 from Richmond & Kingston who are helping to improve NHS care and the wellbeing of young people.

They have been working on a video demystifying sexual health for young people and explaining how to get help during the pandemic.



I'm loving the passion and enthusiasm in this presentation - fantastic and really well done to all involved - such an important topic

Follow us:

Twitter @Youth_OutLoud

Instagram @youth_outloud

Understanding young people's experiences and sharing our success at Healthwatch Week

Over Summer 2020 we worked with YOL! - a partnership between young people, ourselves and Healthwatch Kingston to collect over 1,700 experiences of health, care and wellbeing during lockdown from 346 young people.

Our resulting report *Young People's Wellbeing During the Covid-19 Crisis*, gives local service providers key learnings around mental health, physical exercise and health and the availability of online support and information that will help them to better meet the needs of young people in Richmond and Kingston.

We were proud to say that this was possible because of the support of local child healthcare providers, schools, youth and sports clubs, Achieving for Children and the charity sector.

We shared our experience, success and achievements from supporting YOL! since the pandemic began, with 42 Healthwatch organisations from across the country at the national Healthwatch Week conference. The presentation was very well received by the Healthwatch network and people were impressed by our outreach. By sharing in this way we helped the network to learn, improve and progress their own work.

Helping you find the answers

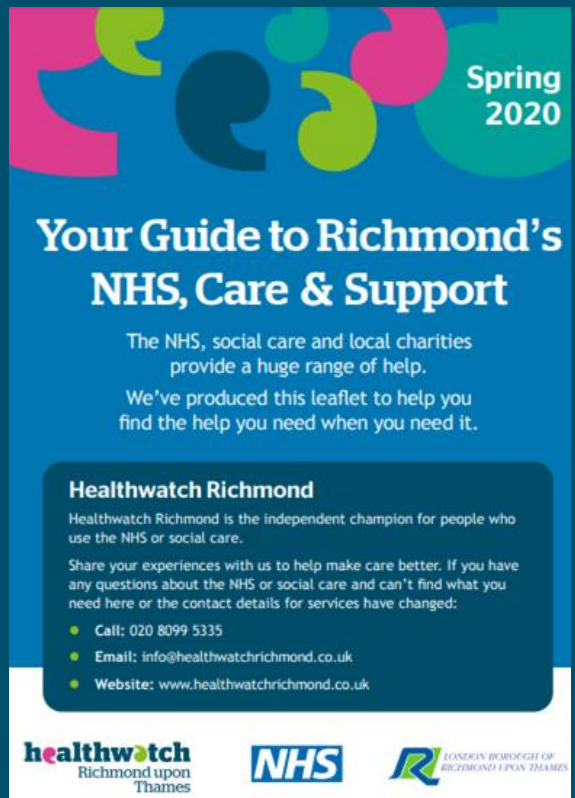


Helping people to access services

In April we distributed *Your Guide to Richmond's NHS, Care and Support* to homes across the borough. It's not possible to know how many people used this, but the feedback has been excellent from professionals and the public alike and we've heard from lots of people who called us a result of seeing it.

Our signposting and information service was uninterrupted by the pandemic and, since April 2020 we helped around 275 people to access services or information by phone or email.

Call us on **020 8099 5335** to request a copy of the guide or for help with any NHS or social care issue.



I called you last week to find how to get a dentist. As you advised me I called 111 and I got an appointment. It worked really well for me and I was able to solve my dental issues very quickly. Thanks to you I am not in pain anymore.

Your Guide to Richmond's NHS, Care & Support is excellent. I keep a copy on my desk and got your number from it to call today



Helping people find information

Our bulletins, website and social media have kept people informed of key information such as the changes to services, government restrictions, social distancing measures, and important support services people should be aware of.



Tonight I find out, from an @HW_Richmond bulletin that there is an online version of @NHS111. The first I'd heard of it. A big thank you for your informative and friendly newsletter/bulletin

Over 30,000 people reached through our communications. As a result, 18,000 people have engaged with our content to do things like reading our reports, booking a coronavirus test or to find more information about local issues.



Congratulations to the Healthwatch team for all these EXCELLENT bulletins which I read from top to bottom. Well done all!

Contact us to get the information you need



If you have a query about a health or social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch Richmond is here for you.

Telephone: 020 8099 5335

Email: info@healthwatchrichmond.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchrichmond.co.uk

Helping you and helping us

All of our work has been supported by a dedicated team of staff, volunteers and Trustees. Their incredible flexibility, hard work and determination have been central to the support that we've been able to provide to the community.

We're immensely grateful to the people who have shared their experiences with us, the groups that have allowed us to join them and speak to their members, their groups and engaged with our surveys and reviews. These experiences are what allows us to make meaningful improvements to services for local people.

How can we help you?

- Sign up to our free mailing list to get bulletins to ensure you keep up to date with local changes
- Share your experiences with us by calling
- Ask us your questions about NHS or social care by calling
- Visit our website to read our reports or to find information about key local issues
- Invite us to speak to a group or community that you're a part of groups
- Follow us on Facebook or Twitter



**Talk
to us...**

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