

What this paper is about:

This paper introduces the way that Healthwatch Camden decides whether to work on an issue as a priority. We gather information about all sorts of issues that are important to local people. We need to have a way of deciding which issues we will focus on at any one time. We describe this as our priorities framework. We welcome people's views on the framework.

Framework introduction

Healthwatch Camden must involve local people in all aspects of our work, including setting our priorities. We are planning various methods to do this, ranging from a community forum to website polls. Through discussion, we have identified a number of factors we should take into account when we are choosing priorities. These factors have been grouped and used to form the basis of a decision tool, as follows:

Initial screening

- Is it about something within our remit?
- Is it relevant to Camden?

Why it matters

- Does it impact on a lot of people? Or a small number very significantly?
- Is it about safety or safeguarding? What is the scale of harm?*
- Does it involve a change in the service - of provider or service model?

Have we got (or can we get) evidence about the issue?

- Number of people talking to us about issue
- What local public data exists?
- Is there past history we can draw on?
- What do we use from our own knowledge?

Does it promote equality, diversity and inclusion?

- Does it promote access?
- Does it promote equality
- Does it give us a way in to less heard or more excluded voices?
- Does it focus on specific areas of deprivation?

Can we make a difference?

- Can our intervention have an impact?
- Is it a health and wellbeing board priority?
- Is it something we can do quickly?
- Who else is working on it? Can they do it better?

External environment

- Is this an issue for other local stakeholders?
- Is this an issue nationally?

And have we got the resources to do it?

- Is it within our strategic priorities?
- Can we support existing work?
- Can we afford it?

Using the framework

The questions can be used systematically to compare one issue with another, using a simple assessment grid. A copy of the grid is attached. The assessment of importance, evidence, equality, impact and resources can result in the emergence of consensus without a formal score. Currently our approach is to give the overall assessment a score on a scale of 1-5, as a way of deciding whether it reaches a threshold for further work. Whatever way we make our assessment, there is always an element of subjectivity.

An example of a completed assessment is attached. We are still at the stage of testing the framework, so future versions might look a bit different.

Comments on the framework

Are we asking the right questions when we look at issues?

What other questions do you think we should ask?

Do you agree with giving each issue an overall score?

Is there some other way of deciding on priorities that you think would work better?

Please let us know. You can e mail us at info@healthwatchcamden.co.uk or use the message box on our contacts page.