

Your Voice Counts 2016: what we heard



So far in 2016 we have attended nine community festivals in Camden: Primrose Hill, Somers Town, South End Green, Camden New Town, Castle Haven, Kings Cross, Peckwater, West Euston, and Haverstock School. We spoke to people who live or work in Camden to find out about their opinions of local health and social care services and which issues they think Healthwatch Camden should be taking action on.

General health and social care survey

We spoke to residents about general health and social care issues by providing a list of options for them to vote on. Residents were given up to three votes each, and over 600 votes were cast. The two most popular choices for us to “take action on” were housing and health (at 28% of the vote) and mental health (at 27% of the vote). These were followed by “better support for young children and families” (19%), “help finding the right services” (17%) and finally, “minimising harm from alcohol” (9%).

People also spoke to us in more detail about specific concerns or opinions they had which were not featured on the list of options.



Housing and health

The most popular option was “housing and health”. Comments recorded on this subject included from people at Canley Street Mental Health Awareness Day who were concerned about, “homelessness due to hospitalisation” and “poor housing”. People in Castle Haven told us about suffering racist abuse from neighbours in social housing and had concerns about “access to housing for people who need it most”.

Mental health

Camden’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) reveals that Camden has the seventh highest rate of depression in London with 14% of the population having been diagnosed

with depression, anxiety or both at some time. Camden also has the third highest rate of people diagnosed with a serious mental illness in London.¹



People we spoke to suggested that mental health services should be valued as important; many people had concerns about the lack of provision.

● Mental health charges in Camden are disgraceful. It's £40 for one day at the Highgate centre so I can't attend if I can't afford. ●

● *There's no facility for post-natal mental health issues in Camden where mothers can go with their babies.* ●

● *We need more mental health services for people on the streets around here.* ●
(child)

● *There's a lack of preventative mental health support.* ●

● *There's not enough one-to-one counselling available.* ●

● *Is there a service to help people on the streets of Camden with mental health problems?* ●

Minimising harm from alcohol

This is notably the least popular option - there are a number of reasons why this might be the case, including a lack of clarity of meaning in the phrasing of this option.

Other key themes

Other key themes to emerge from the comments recorded centred around public health, patient voice and choice, the wider determinants of health, GP services and secondary care services.

Comments on public health centred on **smoking cessation**, health to improve **diet and exercise regimes**, a feeling that more should be done in **educational institutions** and a comment on **air quality**.

A number of people made comments which conveyed a **lack of patient voice and choice**.

¹ See Camden Local Authority (2013) *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*: chapter 18, available here: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/social-care-and-health/health-in-camden/health-decision-making/joint-strategic-needs-assessment/>

- *My GP doesn't listen. 🗨️*
- *Good GPs, good quality of care, but more and more have a lack of respect for patients. 🗨️*
- *Lack of respect from my GP - and they don't take complaints seriously. 🗨️*
- *There's a problem with over medication. 🗨️*
- *I'd like increased access to specialist services. 🗨️*

Some people also spoke about the **wider determinants of health** including, as outlined above, **housing**, but also about **welfare** and **debt** and concerns over a perceived **lack of advice services** available on those topics. A lack of **school places**, concern over **loneliness**, **racism** and **conversation** were also discussed.

People spoke to us about **GP and secondary care** services in Camden, largely with regard to long waiting times, difficulty in getting an advanced appointment and out of hours access. However we did receive some positive comments.

- *My GP is very good. I don't go often but when I did have a problem they sent me for lots of tests. 🗨️*
- *I had liver transplant due to cancer and the service was good, I now attend scans regularly and there are no problems with that. 🗨️*

We also received a small number of comments around the need to consider the promotion of **alternative medicine**, concern around **residential care** and **maternity services**, lack of **social care services**, NHS "**privatisation**", **prescription charging**, **teenage services** and positive comments about **disability services**.

