

Your Voice Counts 2017: what we heard



Healthwatch Camden exists to listen to your views on local health and social care services and use our powers to help bring about improvements. Part of the way we find out what people think of services is by heading out into the community and talking to residents. This summer we went to 13 community events in Camden at: Primrose Hill Community Centre, South End Green Association, Kentish Town Community Centre, the Albert Street Party, NW5 Community Play Project, Castlehaven Community

Centre, St Pancras Community Association, the King's Cross Mela, Camden New Town Community Festival, Kings Cross Sports festival, Ingestre Road Community Centre, West Euston Partnership, Somers Town Medical Centre and Haverstock School.

General results

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 650 votes were cast.

Percentage of votes for each topic	
Help for older and disabled people	27
Cancer screening	16
Local plans for the NHS	14
Ways of getting health advice	13
Help to find and use services	12
Services being right for my age, background and culture	9
Eye health and opticians	8

The most popular topic that people wanted us to take action on is “help for older and disabled people” which received 27% of the vote share. This was followed by “cancer screening” (16%) and “local plans for the NHS” (14%). Concerns about local plans for the NHS were particularly marked at the NW5 Play Project and the

Castlehaven Community Centre. The next most popular options were “Ways of getting health advice” (13%) and “Help to find and use services” (12%) “Services being right for my age, background and culture” (9%) and “Eye health and opticians” (8%).

People also spoke to us in more detail about specific concerns or opinions they had which were not featured on the list of options. We heard 215 additional comments about GPs, mental health, air pollution, help to get healthy, patient voice and choice, oral health, pharmacies, lack of accessible services for disabled people - and of course, lots of positive comments about how happy and appreciative people were of a range of NHS and social care services.

Help for older and disabled people



The most popular option from our list was “Help for older and disabled people”. Comments recorded on this subject included concerns about cuts to funding, cuts to benefits for disabled people and general comments about the services.

“Funding for day-care is being cut” (Kentish Town Community Centre)

“We need dramatic changes in delivery of support for people with dementia” (NW5 Play Project)

“The social workers only come for ten minutes - mum struggles with English so it’s really hard for her to communicate with them” (Kentish Town Community Centre)

“I’d like to see more support for visually impaired people and disabled people such as transport” (Kings Cross Mela)

“More care workers and more visits” (Somers Town Medical Centre)

“My sister has cerebral palsy and there aren’t enough services” (Haverstock School)

Cancer screening

The second most popular option was cancer screening. Cancer screening rates in Camden are lower than the national average for bowel, breast and cervical

screening.¹ We heard comments expressing a desire to preserve and extend the parameters of existing screening programmes. We also heard that some people felt that their doctor did not take them seriously if they had multiple concerns. Comments included:

“Screening for ovarian cancer should be routine” (Primrose Hill Community Centre)

“Free cancer screening is very important as otherwise I wouldn’t have it done” (South End Green Association)

“I don't think they should stop screening at 70 for breast cancer - my sister had it at 80” (St Pancras Community Association)

“There should be cervical cancer screening for under 25’s; they still have all their lives ahead of them” (Haverstock School)

“Cancer screening is important - sometimes the doctors think you are a hysterical woman if you go in too much” (Kentish Town Community Centre)

Local plans for the NHS

The third most popular choice was local plans for the NHS which was a particularly popular topic at the NW5 Play Project and Castlehaven Community Centre. We also heard concerns about perceived cuts to NHS budgets and a threat of “privatisation” from a number of sites and excessive bureaucracy.

“There’s not enough money as it is - why spend money on STPs (Sustainability and transformation plans) - why not use it to improve services” (St Pancras Community Centre)

“I’m worried about cuts to NHS - they are selling off NHS Professionals and that will cost more money in the long run” (Ingesture Road Community Centre)

“I’m concerned about money going to surveys, research, meetings, advertising rather than money going directly into services” (Kings Cross Mela)

“Camden council consultations are a charade - they ask but don't listen” (South End Green Association)

¹ Public Health Outcomes Framework, Health Improvement indicators 2.20i, 2.20ii and 2.20iii.
<http://www.phoutcomes.info/public-health-outcomes-framework#page/0/gid/1000042/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000007>

Help to find and use services



Although only the fifth most popular choice in terms of votes, we received a number of comments about lack of help to find and use services. Tellingly, there were a number of comments about a lack of social activity services for older people, although Camden is fairly well served in this respect.

“It’s hard to find services in Camden” (Somers Town Medical Centre)

“NHS 111 services is rubbish - used it once” (Kings Cross Sports Festival)

“More education on what's on offer in the health services” (Camden New Town Festival)

“More information on how to access keep fit services for younger kids” (Primrose Hill Community Centre)

Additional key themes to emerge

Other key themes to emerge from the comments we recorded centred around GPs, mental health, help to get healthy, patient voice and choice, the environment, oral health, pharmacies, lack of accessible services for disabled people - and of course, lots of positive comments about how happy and appreciative people were of a range of NHS

General Practice



A number of people made comments about their GP services. Many of these were positive:

“I get good service from my GP surgery” (Primrose Hill Community Centre)

“Doctors are good they help people and are really important” (NW5 Play Project; child)

“Our doctor is very good you can get an appointment quickly if it is an emergency”

(Camden New Town Festival)

But many people also had concerns about *access* to their GP, in particular the waiting times for appointments, lack of out of hours services and an inability to see the same GP.

“It’s hard to get a GP appointment - you have to wait 2 - 3 weeks” (Camden New Town Festival)

“Waiting one month for GP appointments and having to tell the receptionist not the GP about the problem” (Kentish Town Community Centre)

“Waiting times to see GPs is a problem” (Albert Street Party)

“I would like to see the same GP every time but don’t and I feel it loses the personal touch.” (Camden New Town Festival)

Mental health services

A number of people also spoke to us about **mental health** services; concerns centred largely on lack of service provision and waiting times to access services.

“Focus on mental health problem for young people” (South End Green)

“There’s long waits for mental health help.” (Albert Street Party)

“Need more support and help for mental health problems - places to go, things to do, courses to self-manage, people to talk to - support in crisis, good support in the community” (Camden New Town Festival)

Health promotion



A number of people told us that they want to see more services aimed at preventing people from getting ill by helping them to become physically and mentally healthy.

“More targeted health promotion to different groups to look after themselves” (Kings Cross Sports Festival)

“Such a shame that posture stability classes have largely disappeared” (South End Green Festival)

“Cooking skills for older people” (Somers Town Medical Centre)

“More health promotion for people to prevent dementia” (Kings Cross Sports Festival)

“Education for health in school” (Camden New Town)

“I’m concerned that people on low incomes have worse health, especially around healthy eating” (Haverstock School)

Other comments

We also received a small number of comments around **accessible information** for people with disabilities, **patient transport**, **cancelled hospital appointments**, lack of **places to change colostomy bags**, lack of **public toilets**, referrals between services, **advice on aging**, **drug treatment services**, access to **complementary therapies**, **transport and air pollution**, the **general environment and housing**.



Let us know what you like about health and social care services you use and what you'd like to improve. Email info@healthwatchcamden.co.uk