

## Pass it on...

Please forward this ebulletin to your friends, family and colleagues.

Healthwatch Harrow is the health and social care champion for local residents.

Join now and get involved!

Picture: Centenary Park, Stanmore

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... plus more!

020 3432 2889  
[www.healthwatchharrow.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchharrow.co.uk)  
[info@healthwatchharrow.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchharrow.co.uk)  
3 Jardine House, Harrovian Business Village, Bessborough Road, Harrow, HA1 3EX  
Twitter: @HealthwatchHarr

Available in additional formats

Contact Us

## ➡ Community Health Services Event, 9<sup>th</sup> October

The latest Healthwatch Harrow Forum took place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October.

Attended by around 80 local people, the theme this time was healthcare services closer to home – with a focus on eyes, ears and mouth.

Prior to the event, a survey was sent out to gather people's views on optician, dentist and audiology services in the borough.

We invited 3 professionals to answer questions from the survey and from everyone who attended.



The Healthwatch Forum, 9<sup>th</sup> October

We would like to thank Nehul Shah (Chair, Brent & Harrow Local Optical Committee), Robsin Syed (Lead Audiologist, London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust) and Kuldipsinh Girirasinh Gohil (Manager, Clocktower Dental Surgery).

And of course, we'd like to thank all those who attended, and helped out on the day.

The event was informative, and greatly enjoyed. Comments include:

"Greatly appreciated the input from all the professionals and the opportunity to ask questions afterwards. I learnt a great deal about available services. Thank you very much for this meeting."

"More forums like this would be good."

Stay tuned for our report – available soon.

**"I can't go shopping without support."**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➡ Out and About in Harrow!

Our staff and volunteers are 'out and about' week in, week out, across the borough.

Recently we attended Stanmore College Freshers Fair, an event where students could speak to organisations about work placements, volunteering and extra-curricular activities. The event was very well attended with around 1,000 students attending.



Stanmore Freshers Fair, 3<sup>rd</sup> September

If you would like Healthwatch Harrow to visit your group or event, do get in touch:

☎ 020 3432 2889

✉ [Sandy.Bowman@healthwatchharrow.co.uk](mailto:Sandy.Bowman@healthwatchharrow.co.uk)

**"The telephone just rings and rings."**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➡ Movember – Men's Health & Wellbeing

Movember, also known as Men's Health Awareness Month, is an annual campaign, encouraging men to grow mustaches and participate in various activities to raise awareness about men's health issues.

This month-long event focuses on promoting physical and mental wellbeing among men, addressing issues such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health challenges and suicide prevention. Movember provides a platform for men to discuss their health openly, seek support, and take proactive steps towards a healthier and happier life. Find out more online. ➡ [More](#)

## ➔ 'Know Your Numbers' on Blood Pressure

Harrow Council writes “‘Know Your Numbers’ Week took place from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Although the campaign week has passed, this article brings you the key information and advice so you can still take action to protect your health.

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, affects around 1 in 3 adults in the UK. Worryingly, many people do not realise they have it because there are usually no obvious warning signs.



Visit your GP, or talk to your pharmacist

That is why it is often referred to as the ‘silent killer’. The first indication can sometimes be something as serious as a heart attack, stroke, or kidney disease.

**“The midwife was right there for us.”**

Join us today and have your say!

The good news is that high blood pressure can be prevented, detected, and managed. With the right support, treatment, and lifestyle choices, it is possible to lower your risk and protect your long-term health.

Why knowing your numbers matters? Blood pressure is a measure of how strongly your blood pushes against the walls of your arteries. If this pressure is consistently too high, your heart has to work harder, which increases the risk of damage to your blood vessels and vital organs.

Most people are unaware of their blood pressure because you can feel perfectly well even when it is raised.

That’s why it is so important to check your blood pressure regularly and to understand what your numbers mean.

Where can you check your blood pressure? Checking your blood pressure is quick, simple, and often free. In Harrow, there are several easy ways to do this.

Many GP practices have blood pressure monitoring stations in their reception areas. You can use these at any time without an appointment.

Several local pharmacies offer free blood pressure checks. Staff can also explain your reading and advise what to do next.

Affordable, reliable monitors are widely available to use at home. This can be a convenient way to keep track of your blood pressure over time.”



Portable monitors are widely available

How to reduce or manage your blood pressure? There are many ways to do this. The British Heart Foundation has compiled a useful resource. ➔ [More](#)

## ➔ NHS Dental Costs

NHS dental costs were updated in April this year, however many patients are unaware, we hear.

As well as increases in the charges, there are also changes to certain exemptions.

Visit the Local Dental Committee website, to find out all you need to know. ➔ [More](#)

**“NHS 111 were fast and efficient.”**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➔ Become an NHS App Ambassador

The local NHS writes “The NHS App is making it easier than ever for patients to manage their health, from booking GP appointments and ordering prescriptions to viewing test results and records.

The NHS App Ambassador programme is inviting NHS staff and community members in North West London to spread the word.

Ambassadors play a simple but important role - helping people discover the app, showing them how to use it and supporting those who may find digital tools challenging. Whether you're a GP receptionist, pharmacist, volunteer or community leader, you can make a difference.



The app 'saves valuable time'

As an ambassador, you'll get access to training, resources, and a supportive network across the country - plus the chance to develop your skills while supporting better patient care.

The NHS App is helping patients take control of their health and saving practices valuable time. By becoming an ambassador, you can be part of that change in your own community.” ➔ [More](#)

### About the NHS App...

The NHS App gives you a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services. Download the NHS App on your smartphone or tablet via the Google play or App store. ➔ [More](#)

**“GP's and pharmacists should work together.”**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➔ CEO Appointed for Integrated Care Boards

The local NHS writes “Frances O'Callaghan has been announced as the Chief Executive Officer for North Central London and North West London Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).

Frances has now begun the role as CEO of North West London ICB, while continuing in her position as CEO of the North Central London ICB - which she has held since 2022.



CEO, Frances O'Callaghan

The new joint CEO role was put in place to enable the two ICBs to work towards a formal merger in April 2026 as part of a move to deliver cost savings, become a highly effective strategic commissioner and continue to deliver for local people.

**“Disabled people find it hard to use the bus.”**

Join us today and have your say!

The merged organisation, which will be called West and North London ICB, will be the largest in England - covering 13 London boroughs and serving a population of around 4.5 million people.

The news comes following the recent appointment of Mike Bell as the new Chair for both organisations.

Mike Bell said ‘I'd like to congratulate Frances on her appointment and I look forward to working with her in this new role as we focus on successfully delivering the merger, on strategic commissioning, tackling health inequalities across our 13 boroughs, and continuing to deliver high quality care for our patients and communities.’” ➔ [More](#)

### ➔ What Should I Do if my GP Removes Me?

Healthwatch England writes "GP practices may apply to remove patients from their list if the relationship between patient and GP has broken down.

What will happen if I'm removed from my GP's list? Your GP will normally explain the problem to you and try to resolve it. They may contact you or they may want to see you.



You may need to register elsewhere

If the problem can't be resolved, the GP will normally advise you in writing that you may be removed from their list.

Why might I be removed from my GP's list? Patients cannot be removed from a GP's list because they've made a complaint. However, the basis of the complaint may mean that the relationship between patient and GP has already broken down.

**“I got my referral for a scan within days.”**

Join us today and have your say!

If a patient has been violent or abusive, or has behaved in a threatening way towards their GP or a member of staff and the police have been involved, they may be removed from their GP's list immediately without warning.

Your GP's practice leaflet may explain their policy for removing patients from their list.

What happens if I move out of my GP's catchment area? You may also be removed from your GP's list if you move out of the area covered by their practice.

If you're removed from your GP practice's list, you may need to register with another GP practice. You will be given 30 days in which to make alternative arrangements.

How do I find a new GP practice? You may choose to register with a different GP practice, but the practice does not have to accept you. This is the same for anyone registering with a GP – it's not related to your removal from your former practice's list.

It may be because you live outside the practice's catchment area or because the practice is not accepting new patients at that time.



Your GP would normally 'explain the problem'

A practice cannot refuse you unless it has reasonable grounds for doing so. These must not relate to race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or a medical condition. It must also give you reasons for its decision in writing.

If you've been removed from your GP's list and you haven't yet registered elsewhere, your local Integrated Care Board (ICB) can find you another GP or you can register with a surgery with the NHS App.

What happens to other family members? If you're removed from your GP's list, it won't necessarily affect other members of your family. However, this may depend on why you've been removed from the list. For example, if you've moved out of your GP's area, other family members will also need to register with a new GP.” ➔ [More](#)

**“Mental Health need not be a hidden condition.”**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➔ Progress 'Stalled' on Hospital Waiting Lists

Healthwatch England writes "Recent figures show that the national waiting list has again increased to a total size of 7.4 million appointments with 6.25 million people waiting for their first appointment.

By 2029, the government is hoping to return to an NHS standard where 92% of patients have a hospital test, appointment or operation within 18 weeks of their referral. Unfortunately, the total list has grown and the latest official waiting times data shows that progress has stalled with only 61.3% of patients seen within this time by the end of July.

Commenting on the latest statistics, William Pett, Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Research at Healthwatch England said 'NHS teams are rightly doing as much as they can, including finding out who still needs help and who doesn't.



Waiting lists have 'again increased'

Yet for those who have waited weeks, months, or even years, any contact from the NHS mustn't leave them feeling further frustrated and forgotten. Keeping people informed and giving them help while they wait can make a huge difference.'

Feedback to Healthwatch concerningly shows that for far too many people, the only contact they receive is a text to ask if they still needed care, with a lack of information on how to manage their condition, access pain relief or mental health support."

Find out more in the full article. ➔ [More](#)

**"Meals are cheap, but well cooked."**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➔ 2025 Health Equity Awards - Nominate Now!

The local NHS writes "Do you know someone making a real difference in reducing health inequalities in North West London? Now's your chance to shine a spotlight on the individuals and organisations who are empowering our communities!

The North West London Integrated Care System (ICS) is proud to announce the 2025 Health Equity Awards. We're seeking nominations for people & organisations from North West London's voluntary sector, NHS, or local authority who have contributed to reducing health inequalities in their community.



Let's recognise our local heroes!

How to nominate? Complete the nomination form in full by 12 noon, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025. Winners will be announced at the ICS Health Equity Summit on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025. ➔ [More](#)

**"The reception team are wonderful!"**

Join us today and have your say!

## ➔ Managing Your Cholesterol

October is National Cholesterol Month. Heart UK writes "Did you know that 1 in 2 adults in the UK have high cholesterol? It's more common than you think — but that doesn't mean it has to be out of your control. Be the boss of your cholesterol.

Take charge of your health with small, manageable changes that can make a big difference - from eating heart-friendly foods and staying active, to checking in with your GP. Knowing your numbers is the first step toward feeling your best." ➔ [More](#)

## ➡ Pharmacists 'Help Heart Patients to Thrive'

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWT) writes "A pharmacist-led initiative will help patients recovering from heart attacks THRIVE by encouraging them to better-manage their blood pressure and cholesterol levels as well as helping them quit smoking.

Targeted Heart Risk Optimization Interventions and Vital Education (THRIVE) is primarily focused on the British Asian community with data showing less than half of those affected (45%) weren't managing their condition as well as they could increasing the risk of a further heart attack.



**Skipping medication can be 'very risky'**

The initiative, funded by North West London Integrated Care Board, wants to improve compliancy rates to 80%.

In response, THRIVE is offering virtual clinic appointments to support blood pressure and lipid management; better integration with cardiac rehabilitation services; and reviewing the quality of patient information offered in different languages.

The latter addresses a study showing poor health literacy among older south-east Asian patients with many struggling to understand how and when to take life-saving medication.

Aanchal Bahl, a senior specialist pharmacist in cardiology, said 'An individual who has had a heart attack can go from not taking any medication to eight tablets a day for the rest of their lives. It can be confusing if your English isn't great or that you don't understand the importance of taking your medication regularly.

These tablets are largely taken to keep the stent(s) open in your arteries. It's very risky to skip or miss this medication and the initiative will provide clearer multi-lingual advice.' ➡ [More](#)

## ➡ Harrow Mayor Visits Art Showcase

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) writes "We were delighted to host our second Art Showcase in Harrow, a project led by service users and supported by Liliana Mandal, Lead Occupational Therapist in the borough.

The day was a joyful celebration of creativity and inclusion. We were honoured to welcome the Mayor of Harrow, Councillor Anjana Patel, along with colleagues from across the Trust.

The event was filled with energy and warmth as service users shared their artwork and personal stories. Many spoke about the difference the group had made to their lives, and others spoke of finding joy, belonging, and purpose through creativity.



**Improving mental wellbeing through art**

In her welcome, Liliana captured the spirit of the day 'These events are really special because they bring together everything we've been building week by week, and today is a celebration of that journey. When I look around, I don't just see artwork - I see the stories, laughter, courage, and kindness that have filled this space. This has become so much more than an art group.'

Speakers including Emma and Gail also reflected on the power of these activities and how they can ease stress and boost wellbeing. They reminded us that projects like this are not just about art, but about community connection, echoing the vision of the NHS 10-Year Plan." ➡ [More](#)

**"Getting physiotherapy  
has been a big help."**

**Join us today and have your say!**

## ➤ Community Ambassadors Programme

Healthwatch Harrow is actively seeking to create a programme of Community Ambassadors as a way to reach out to more people in the borough and to ensure that all of the diverse voices across our communities are represented in our work.

We are keen to involve people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds, to support our work as volunteers and to hear the views from all sections of the community, especially from those who sometimes struggle to be heard but we need your help.

Are you part of a particular group within your community? Please let us know if you are interested in becoming one of our Ambassadors.



**Ambassadors have an important role**

Ambassador Asha writes "I wanted to volunteer with Healthwatch Harrow to support people in sharing their experiences and gathering feedback from the local community with the aim of improving local health and social care services.

I care about making services easier to access and understand, and I am keen to gather information and feedback to share with the team. By doing this, I hope to contribute to positive changes for both service users and health and social care staff.

My goal is to ensure that service users can receive fair, effective, and efficient care that meets their needs, and ensure that they feel heard and comfortable when sharing their feedback.

Why I wanted to be an ambassador? I chose to be an ambassador for two groups, one for young people and another for visually impaired individuals of all ages.

By drawing on my lived experience, I hope to share my own experience, raise awareness of challenges that other visually impaired individuals face, and help to make services more accessible and inclusive."

## ➤ Join the Befriending Week Campaign!

Befriending Week, 1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> November is the annual campaign to raise awareness about befriending and highlight the power of social connection in reducing loneliness and social isolation.



**Could you be a volunteer befriender?**

It's a chance for communities to raise awareness about befriending, celebrate the contributions of befriending volunteers and the staff who support them, and advocate for befriending to local and national decision-makers. ➤ [More](#)

Do you volunteer for a befriending project? Befriending Networks is running a special online event on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November to say thank you to befrienders. Connect with other volunteers, share your experiences and celebrate the power of befriending - sign up for free. ➤ [More](#)

## ➤ Introducing ScotsCare

ScotsCare is a London charity supporting first and second-generation Scots resident in London.

They offer a range of financial, practical and emotional support, through services including grant giving for essential household items, and education and training for adults.

ScotsCare also provide sheltered housing for those over 55, or 50 living with a disability (waiting lists apply). ➤ [More](#)

**"The diabetes nurse was full of useful advice!"**

**Join us today and have your say!**

## ➡ Think Pharmacy First!

Pharmacists can offer advice on a range of illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, ear infections and aches and pains.

They can also give advice about medicines.

This includes how to use your medicine, worries about side effects or any other questions you have.

Most pharmacies can offer prescription medicine for some conditions, without you needing to see a GP, this is known as 'Pharmacy First'.



**What can your pharmacist do for you?**

Ask a pharmacist to find out what they can offer. You can also read more online. ➡ [More](#)

## Latest Newsletters

- ➡ [Harrow Council - Harrow People Newsletters](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Harrow Carers - Newsletters and Bulletins](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital - Articulate Newsletters](#) ➡ [More](#)

## News Summary

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- ➡ [NHS to screen all newborn babies for life-threatening metabolic disorder](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Shingles vaccine to be offered to hundreds of thousands more immunosuppressed adults](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Huge increase in flu vaccination as cases rise](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Access to NHS continuing healthcare 'unfair and inconsistent', study finds](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Record summer of NHS activity](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Debt and mental illness: how to spot if someone is struggling](#) ➡ [More](#)
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- ➡ [Age UK responds to possible eye tests for motorists over 70](#) ➡ [More](#)
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- ➡ [NHS scanning trucks help thousands get potentially life-saving liver cancer checks](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [NHS App's family access feature "as simple as switching Netflix profiles"](#) ➡ [More](#)
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- ➡ [NHS supporting record numbers of people living with dementia](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Student nursing numbers rise for first time since pandemic surge](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Age UK responds to Government's 10 year NHS plan and neighbourhood services](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [New suicide prevention training rolled out for NHS mental health staff](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Targeted breast cancer treatment approved for routine NHS use](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [Record number of cancer checks and treatments despite strikes](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [97% of home care providers limit staff sick pay to statutory minimum, finds survey](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [First NHS round-the-clock mental health unit opens under 10 Year Health Plan](#) ➡ [More](#)
- ➡ [New GP drive to find undiagnosed infected blood patients](#) ➡ [More](#)

# Be an Ambassador for Healthwatch Harrow

**Make local healthcare better for everyone**

**What are the main health and social care issues in your community group or place of worship?**

The voices of people in your community don't always reach the decision makers. You can change this by becoming a Healthwatch Harrow Ambassador.

Your connection with people through shared cultures, beliefs, languages, and interests is important. You are in a unique position to share valuable feedback with Healthwatch Harrow.

**The information you give to Healthwatch Harrow is anonymised.**

## Healthwatch Harrow is independent

- We champion your views on health and social care in Harrow
- We regularly meet the people who commission health and social care services
- We tell the commissioners what you say and what you need

## How to become a Healthwatch Harrow Ambassador

For more information about this voluntary role, please contact

**healthwatchharrow.co.uk | 020 3432 2889 |**  
**info@healthwatchharrow.co.uk**

3 Jardine House, Bessborough Road  
Harrow HA1 3EX



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### Our partners

