

Healthwatch Merton Annual Report 2020-21

Then and Now

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Message from our Chair



Brian Dillon



Chair

During the Pandemic Healthwatch Merton has focused on ensuring the public are kept fully informed on the service changes that have taken place as a result of COVID-19.

Engagement and signposting has been achieved using our E-bulletin, website, virtual Outreach, twitter, other social media and our own developed networks. Extensive use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams has enabled our outreach and regular meetings to go ahead as planned alongside our continued involvement with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Merton Council, The Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult Social Services and working groups associated with these organisations.

We helped with the initial setup, development and implementation of the hugely successful Community Hub with other partners to help support the most vulnerable during the pandemic. We have also carried out snapshot surveys at the beginning of COVID-19 to see initial impact on people locally and currently have a survey on Long-COVID that we are working together with our other South west London Healthwatch's on. I'm extremely proud of how our small team has continued to remain involved to support the NHS locally in preventing the harm the misinformation shared via social media about COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccination programme; supporting an open dialogue between doctors and the public transparently challenge any misinformation.

Covid-19 vaccination: your questions answered

Everything you want to know about the Covid-19 vaccination, but were too afraid to ask!

Sunday 31st January, 5:30pm

Hear from your local experts in the field, who are planning and delivering the vaccination programme in Merton.

Expert Panel:

Dr Vasa Gnanapragasam
GP Borough Lead in Merton

Dr Mohan Sekeram
East Merton locality lead

Dr Mohammed Saqib Ayub
GP, Colliers Wood Surgery

Sedina Agama
Associate director of medications optimisation in Merton

Dr Aditi Shah
West Merton locality lead

Dr Adli Siddiqui
GP, Riverhouse Surgery, Wimbledon

Facilitated by:

Aman Nathan
Patient and Public Engagement Manager, NHS Merton

Ben Tunstall
Communications Manager, NHS Merton

Register in advance for this meeting via the following eventbrite link or by emailing mertonccg.getinvolved@swlondon.nhs.uk:

Looking ahead, Healthwatch Merton will continue to do the best we can to help locally to overcome legacy health issues caused by COVID-19 and impact of having to go into a national lockdown. This coming year part of our work will be helping with the journey to get back up and running many local services that the most vulnerable rely on.

About us

Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Merton. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure your views shape the support you need, by sharing these views with those who have the power to make change happen.

Helping you to find the information you need

We help people find the information they need about services in their area. This has been vital during the pandemic with the ever-changing environment and restrictions limiting people's access to health and social care services.

Our goals



1 Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.



2 Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares can experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.



3 Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



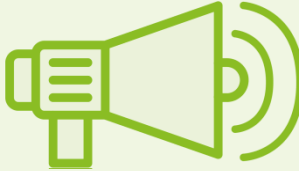
“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people’s lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and how we have engaged and supported people in 2020-21.

Reaching out

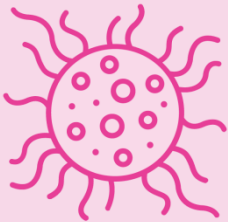


This year

5,255 people

people engaged with us this year through social media, E-bulletins, planned sessions, with us at online community events and through using our website to find the advice and information they need and to be involved in local discussions. their experiences of health and social care.

Responding to the pandemic



We helped, supported and was part of the setting up of the Merton Community Hub in the first three months of April – June helping

1423 People

during that time. The Community Hub continued to help people during the rest of COVID-19 pandemic.

Making a difference to care



We published

2 reports, produced 12 E-bulletins

with a total of **4,496** unique opens all containing a wealth of information on local and wider key information, promotion of events, health and social care wellbeing sessions, development and improvements, engagement opportunities, and much more.

Our behind the scenes work

to keep our finger on the pulse and enable us to give local people's voice a true platform at strategic and decision-making level locally; our team have been part of and/or regularly attended over **30** uniquely different high-level board meetings/ committees/ task groups/ planning meetings etc. in the last year to keep local people's voice/ engagement top of the agenda.

Health and care that works for you



14 volunteers

helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed 116 additional days of resource.

We employ 3 staff

2 full time equivalent, which is same from the previous year.

We received

£125,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2020-21, same as the previous year.



Theme one: Then and now Access GP Services



Then: GP Services

In 2013/2014, GP services was one of the workstreams that was identified by local people as an area for us to focus on. Exploring this in more detail with local people we identified five broad themes and priority areas:

1) access to GP services; 2) information provided at GP services; 3) out of hours GP services; 4) use of technology 5) urgent primary care support.

Data was collected from holding seven community outreach sessions with people involved in a variety of active voluntary and community groups; two public workshops to capture ideas for improvements in the patient experience at a GP surgery and a questionnaire survey. The purpose was to identify what areas of improvements, ideas and solutions they would like to see for GP services in Merton, in the future.

We produced a report of our research, including findings and recommendations about how to implement changes to GP services locally, titled 'Strategies for Improving GP Services in Merton'. It was shared widely with the main stakeholders for service change.

At the Primary Care Commissioning Committee in March 2017, the report was featured in an update on Merton's Primary Care Strategy under 'Achievements and Work in Progress' prepared by Merton Clinical Commission Group. Under Section 2: *Progress against key components of Merton's Primary Care Strategy - Primary Care Access Improvement*, the report was mentioned to be used to inform both the design of Merton CCG care pathways into their new primary care access hubs and the quality initiatives that Merton CCG are working on in 2017 and beyond to improve patient experience of access.



Now: improved access to GP Services

The Healthwatch Merton titled 'Strategies for Improving GP Services in Merton' report 2014 was described as a major influence in the decision to put funding into increasing the provision for improved access from 2017 on.

Merton CCG programme was to deliver improved access made up of up of 3 components:

- 1) extended access local incentive scheme to be delivered by all Merton practices;
- 2) provision of two primary care centres (also called hubs) to deliver evening and weekend with one in the east and one in the west of Merton.
- 3) a quality improvement scheme to be delivered within Merton's GP practices to focus on the quality aspect of access by improving access to general practice for all Merton residents and ensure better integration with its local GP out-of-hours and 111 service(s).

Today this has led to an overall increase in Merton of offering up to 50,000 extra GP appointments. Merton now has two hubs that offer 'on the day' and pre-bookable advance appointments during the evening Mon-Fri, from 5pm until 8pm. Both hubs also offer:

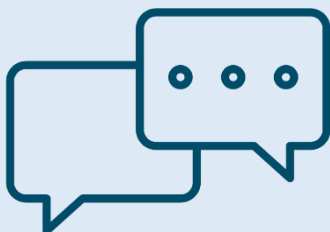
- Saturday opening and Sunday in Mitcham
- Pre-bookable nursing appointments for patients requiring wound care
- Telephone appointments if preferred



"Patients can now be seen in their normal practice or at a local hub where their doctors can access their medical records. We are hoping our hospital emergency departments can now focus on patients with the highest level of medical need as local GPs deal with problems appropriate for GP based care. Local families now have a greater choice of consultation times to fit in with their lives. Our current GP Out of Hours service will continue unchanged in addition to the new hubs."

Merton GP Dr Karen Worthington, Clinical Director for Transforming Primary Care and Governing Body member

Share your views with us



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

 www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk

 **020 8685 2282**

 info@healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Social Prescribing

MERTON



Theme two: Then and now Community Navigation



Then: Community Navigation

2016 Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (Merton CCG) awarded funding to Healthwatch Merton to set up a project to help link local people in Merton who are seeking healthcare to extra non-healthcare services in Merton which they need or could benefit from – known as community navigation.

This was to support their “Whole Merton” vision to build a more supportive, inclusive and resilient community, supporting people in Merton to navigate the range of local statutory and non-statutory local services, activities and support that they may be reluctant or unable to access independently, with resultant wide-ranging benefits tailored to individual needs, goals, preferences and wishes, and based on what they want to make life more enjoyable for them.

The programme involved 4 key activities:

- assessing (help people think about what parts of life to improve)
- information (give information of what services are available or research things you are interested in doing and send emails, help with filling forms i.e. referral forms)
- signposting (finding the right service to help patients based on what they want) and connecting (people with local activities and services to make life more enjoyable or providing practical support)
- supporting (set goals and focus on what is most important to them).



Now: Social Prescribing

Healthwatch Merton was part of the whole journey and development with our host organisation, Merton CCG and public Health until the service was able to appoint its own head of service over a year ago.

Merton now has one of the best and most established Social Prescribing services around and seen as an example for others to follow.

From 1 community Navigator in 2016 **to** 9 Social Prescribers and 1 head of Service, service is in its own right 2021

Social Prescribing is a way of linking patients in primary care with sources of support within the community. It provides GPs with a non-medical referral option that can operate alongside existing treatments to improve health and wellbeing.

Social Prescribers can help link patients to local organisations, to access their services for positive lifestyle changes.

It can also refer them into community health services and social care if necessary. Social Prescribers can also provide patients with information on topics such as employment, training, benefits, housing and legal advice.

The service is now managed by Merton Connected in partnership with the Merton Clinical Commissioning Group, Merton Council, Merton GP Practices and the voluntary and community sector.

Social Prescribers refer patients to organisations focusing on the below:

- Art and leisure activities
- Benefits advice
- Budgeting
- Befriending
- Bereavement support
- Employability support programmes
- Exercise sessions
- Health walks
- Informal carers support
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Support
- Personal Development
- Social activities
- Support groups (e.g. diabetes)
- Transport (e.g. dial-a-ride)
- Volunteering



www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Responding to COVID-19



Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need, especially through the pandemic. The insight we collect is shared with both Healthwatch England and local partners to ensure services are operating as best as possible during the pandemic.

This year we helped 1423 people by:

- Supporting the initial setting up, development and delivery of the Community Hub
- Providing up to date advice on the COVID-19 response locally
- Helping clarify and challenge misinformation
- Supporting the vaccine programme roll-out
- Supported virtual workshops

COVID 19 VACCINE ZOOM CHAT YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED
 Wednesday 17th March at 7pm

Hosted by:
 Dr Paul Riley - Rowans Surgery
 Dr Abdullah Zakaria - Figges Marsh Surgery
 Dr Mohan Sekeram - Wide Way Medical Centre
 Dr Nany Chang - Crickall Green Medical Practice
 Dr Santino LaPorta - Tamworth House Medical Centre

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/958165735477?pwd=Y1BrczBhbnRvVWVkbHdzcVZlbnQ0OQ>
 Meeting ID: 958 1657 3547 Passcode: 669127

EAST MERTON | **healthwatch Merton**

NHS Covid-19 vaccination: your questions answered
 Everything you want to know about the Covid-19 vaccination, but were too afraid to ask!

Sunday 31st January, 6.00pm

Hear from your local experts in the field, who are planning and delivering the vaccination programme in Merton.

Expert Panel:
 Dr Vasa Gnanapavan - GP Borough Lead in Merton
 Dr Michan Soteriou - East Merton locality lead
 Dr Mohammed Saqib Ahsan - GP Colliers Wood Surgery
 Dr Adib Shah - West Merton locality lead
 Dr Adil Siddiqui - GP Riverside Surgery, Wimbledon

Facilitated by:
 Aman Nathan - Patient and Public Engagement Manager, NHS Merton
 Ben Tunstall - Communications Manager, NHS Merton

Register in advance for this meeting via the following eventbrite link or by emailing mertonccp@nhs.uk

healthwatch Merton
SURVEY KEY FINDINGS
 Out of 63 responses

80% STATED COVID-19 IMPACTED ON THEM OR THEIR FAMILY/FRIENDS

85% RECEIVED ENOUGH INFORMATION TO MINIMISE INFECTION

53% FELT COVID-19 HAD IMPACTED ON THEM ACCESSING HEALTHCARE SERVICES

79% ACCESSED THEIR GP PRACTICE FOR NON-COVID 19 RELATED ISSUES

METHOD AND NUMBER OF GP PRACTICE CONSULTATIONS STATED

PHONE	VIDEO	FACE TO FACE
40	3	7

JUNE 2020

Volunteers

At Healthwatch Merton this year we have been supported by 14 volunteers. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, our usual way of working, including carrying out face-to-face work in the community, has ceased and both staff and volunteers have become home based.

The volunteers have remained as dedicated and enthusiastic as ever, supporting our activities and keeping up to date with all things health and social care related. They have dedicated over 100 days over the past year.

This year we ran a student volunteer programme:

Our student volunteering programme developed after a request from a young Merton resident in need of a placement to complete her undergraduate degree. A further two student volunteers came on board together giving us 3 student volunteers for the programme. Elilagini (EJ), Sheila and Isata. With the volunteers we devised a programme which would develop their outreach skills over a number of months.

The program began with an induction into Healthwatch Merton and the outreach role giving them opportunity to attend local community events and take notes from on our behalf, feeding back their findings.

The second part of the placement involved attending outreach jointly with HWM outreach staff team, and beginning to take a presenting role. Two examples of this was presenting to the Merton Young Adult Covid Champions and to Healthwatch England Volunteering Leads Masterclass.

Alvin Kinch - Volunteering and Regional Network Manager for London at Healthwatch England said:

"EJ & Sheila did really well at the Masterclass in telling the participants (Healthwatch staff who manage volunteers) their experiences, thoughts and views. They had really positive feedback from participants who appreciated them presenting at the session. I particularly appreciate the fact that they have told their student peers and communities about the different volunteering opportunities that are available in their local areas as well as the benefits of volunteering. They are great advocates for volunteering. I can see how Sheila and EJ, whilst learning from their experience at Healthwatch Merton, have also contributed a great deal. This is all in the context of receiving support, advice and guidance from Healthwatch Merton staff, namely Erin and Bec through the Outreach Volunteer Programme. Each local Healthwatch, including volunteers, has needed to adapt in the last year where much, if not all of the community and stakeholder outreach has been online. Healthwatch Merton has risen to the challenge of this change and have shown they can still fulfil the crucial responsibility of every Healthwatch's role of involving local people in the monitoring and scrutiny of health and social care commissioning and provision."

The final part of the placement was hosting their own outreach session. EJ and Sheila arranged for their peers to attend and structured their session around youth mental health, getting 9 participants to take part; Isata identified Long Covid (a relevant and timely topic) to create a presentation on for the Ethnic Minority Centre (EMC) group, presenting to 27 attendees.

Sabitri Ray, Director of EMC

"very informative, and well presented. It was interesting, especially the attendees involvement. Thank you so much once again for this arrangement which was very useful and now we know where to get help."

We enjoyed developing our student volunteer programme around outreach and we received the following feedback:

Elilagini

"I have been volunteering with Healthwatch Merton from last year and I absolutely love it! Through this volunteering, I was given various chances to participate and build communication and networking opportunity in the local community. Personally, I was influenced to empower the community health and social care need and want to make sure their voices are heard by doing the volunteering. The staffs are fun, friendly, caring, attentive, supportive, and positively inspiring to develop my own skills and knowledge. Healthwatch Merton is an absolutely right place for volunteering! I am privileged to say as one of the first young student volunteer, I felt valued, respected, supported, and treated with equality and promoted me to develop my professional career."

Isata shared this statement with our Healthwatch Merton Operational Committee

"It is indeed a privilege to work with Healthwatch Merton and be given the opportunity to build my confidence and develop my career path. I never knew I had such presentation skills until I was asked to perform such tasks. I had to build on confidence within to calm my nerves and treat it as a learning process which has to start from somewhere; I decided to learn from my mistakes and carry on. But to my surprise the feedback I have received are very encouraging and I am looking forward to more learning experiences. Working in the community has been very rewarding and it makes one feel that you are part of them; and by so you want the best for them especially in terms of their wellbeing."

Outreach team - Erin and Bec - acted as supervisors for the three volunteers, and summed up the program so far:

"it's amazing to see how far our student volunteers have come. Their confidence has really started to shine through as they have worked with us, and they've really been a credit to Healthwatch Merton in everything they've done. For that alone I'd call the program a runaway success, but in addition to that they have all expressed an eagerness to continue as volunteers for us after their exams which is fantastic news!"

Our student volunteers gave us permission to use their names in this section.



Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at Healthwatch Merton.



www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk

020 8685 2282

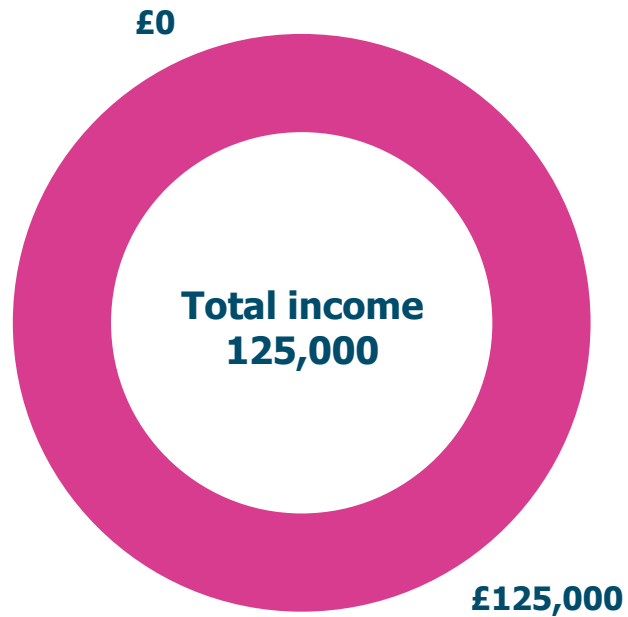
info@healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Finances

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

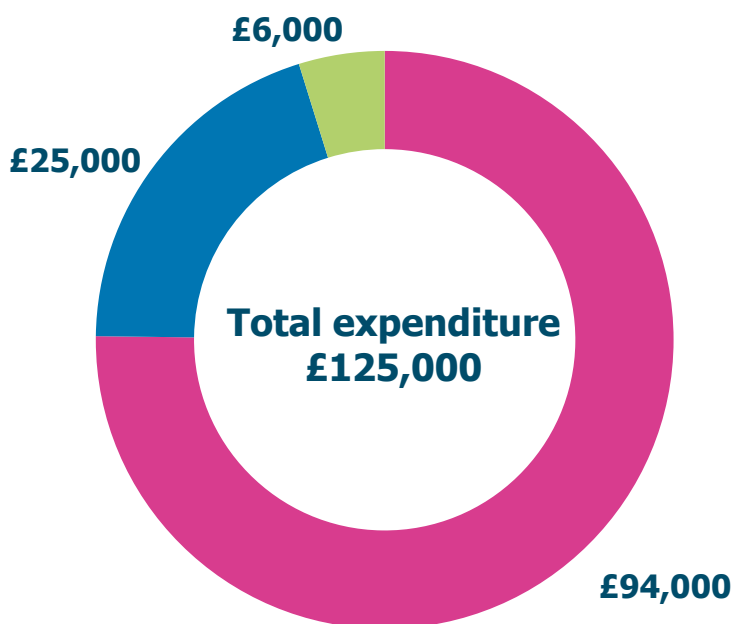
Income

- Funding received from local authority
- Additional funding



Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Office Cost



Next steps & thank you

Top three areas for 2021-22

Access to non-Covid related healthcare
Covid vaccinations and Long Covid
Mental Health and Wellbeing

Next steps

As we move away from national restrictions Healthwatch Merton are very much looking forward to getting back to working directly with people in communities again. When safe to do so, we will be able to meet and see you all again in person, which I know my team and I have truly missed.

Together we will get to gather and hear even more of your views on health and social care services as we continue with virtual outreach sessions while re-establishing previous face to face outreach activities.

Healthwatch Merton are committed to ensuring local health and social care services are equally accessible to all residents in Merton. We will continue to build on our working relationships with organisations within the voluntary and faith sector as well as all statutory services/providers. It is going to be even more important as restrictions lift completely to get the local services that the most vulnerable rely on back up and running as quickly as possible whilst using the opportunity to have these services take on the new ways of working from the learning brought about by having to adapt services during this time, so we get the very best out of our local services.

We will further develop our workstream areas for 2021-2022 as we go along to ensure our resources influence and inform the most urgent areas.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of Health and Social Care, including:

- **Members of the public who shared their views and experiences with us.**
- **All of our amazing staff and volunteers.**
- **The voluntary, community, faith organisations and partners that have contributed to our work.**



Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Merton, Vestry Hall, London Road, Merton CR4 3UD. Host organisation MVSC, trading under the name of Merton Connected manage the Healthwatch Merton contract.

© Merton Connected 2021. Merton Connected is the trading name of MVSC, a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4164949, registered in England and Wales. Registered Charity No: 1085867.

Healthwatch Merton uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Healthwatch Operational Committee consists of 9 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Operational Committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Through 2020/21 the committee met virtually 5 times and made decisions on matters such as redirecting our resources to support initial the setting up and delivery of the Merton Community Hub to support the most vulnerable locally during the pandemic.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities through public meetings, other outreach and engagement projects. We also review any intelligence we gather and receive from contacts and feedback to assess what key themes may be emerging.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a webform on our website, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, holding a Youth Summit for Young People who do not actively engage well in education in partnership with our host organisation and the Social Prescribing service exploring rights, responsibilities and what they would like to see for young people in the borough.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be available on our website, and we will also share it with Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS England and the London Borough of Merton.

2020-21 adapted workstream areas

Project / activity area	Changes made to services
Community Hub (COVID-19)	New service locally we helped to setup, deliver and implement in the first two months of Lockdown to support the most vulnerable affected by the National Lockdown. The Hub is still operating.
Mental Health	Worked with partners to hold virtual 'Wellbeing Matters' workshops to increase mental wellbeing awareness, how to manage stress, and services and opportunities available.
Covid Vaccine Programme	Promote the vaccine programme and support virtual sessions between local GP's and residents to give a direct dialogue for discussions and questions about the vaccines.

Responses to recommendations and requests

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Merton is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board by Brian Dillon Healthwatch Merton Chair.

During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by ensuring that local people's views are included in the discussion items on the agenda. He has also made the Health and Wellbeing Board aware of our work and checked that decisions made at the Board have considered the views of local people.

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Twitter - @HWMerton
