

Annual report 2019-20

Guided by you



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Message from our chair



Brian Dillon

healthwetch
Chair

Merton

2019/20 was a productive as well as challenging year for Healthwatch Merton. It started with the publication of the Merton Health and Care Plan - which was approved by Merton Council's Health and Wellbeing Board at the end of March 2019. The Plan aspired to better integrate local health and care services with new ways of joint working and funding. Healthwatch Merton worked with our partners to ensure service users and the general public voice was heard in the debate as the Plan evolved and was readied for implementation.

Then in the last 2 months of our reporting year the COVID-19 crisis rapidly became the front-line focus, putting the implementation

of the Merton Health and Care Plan on hold, and culminating in the lockdown of the Borough towards the end of March 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic saw the Healthwatch Merton team contribute all its resources at the beginning of the pandemic to help setup, support and coordinate the community response hub with our host MVSC, local voluntary group partners and Merton Council. In the first weeks of the hub it sent out emergency food parcels while waiting for the government scheme to start two weeks later. The success of the community hub is a true reflection of how effective partnership working is here in Merton. The speed and effectiveness of the hub has shown what we can achieve together with a common focus. We will ensure this successful joint working approach is harnessed for the future and not lost once the immediate Covid-19 emergency response is lifted.

I am pleased to say that our core Healthwatch services have continued during the lockdown with our staff and volunteers working remotely, assisted by the further development of our website and e-bulletin.

Cont.: Message from our chair

We are more focused than ever on developing and increasing our influential role to bring about improvements to health and social care services in the Borough of Merton. Balancing increasing demand while financial resources overall are declining in real terms is a real challenge for service providers. We are pleased to see that services are becoming more integrated and co-ordinated, improving their accessibility for our local community.

I sincerely thank those working in health and social care and within the Borough's vibrant voluntary and community sector for their support throughout the year and particularly for their extraordinary efforts during the pandemic.

I also thank everyone who has contributed to our work and shared feedback. Listening to our diverse communities in Merton is at the heart of our work. Please continue to share your voice with us. It enriches all of our work, deepens the relationships we have with you all and enables us to be more effective on your behalf.



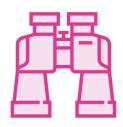
About us

Here to make care better

We are the local independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people, and help make sure your views shape the support needed. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved, and we share these views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area. Nationally and locally, we have the power to make sure that those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

Our vision is to be a strong, Independent and trusted voice of the public for health and social care services across Merton.





Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you. People want health and social care support that works — helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



Our approach

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.

We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations



Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Twitter: @HWMerton

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.



Health and care that works for you



11 volunteers

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 754 number of hours.

We employed

3 staff

2 fulltime staff equivalent - 1 is full-time, and 2 of whom are part-time.

We received

£125,000 in funding

from our local authority in 2019-20, same as the previous year.

Providing support



561 people

shared their health and social care story with

Over 123 people

accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support.

Reaching out



4,488 people

engaged with us through using our website to find the advice and information they need, through social media, E-bulletins, sessions and with us at community events.

Making a difference to care



We published

2 reports

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care, and from this, we made recommendations for improvement.

How we've made a difference



Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.

Take a look at how your views have helped make a difference to the care and support in Merton.

Mental Health Crisis Pathway within Merton

People shared their experience with us about a local mental health recovery café to support a local review of the service to aid the development of future plans for this service.

HWM interviewed users of the Recovery Café about their experience as part of a Merton CCG service review.

We gathered information on the crisis pathway, via different routes, depending on who the target audience was and what was the most appropriate method.

Healthwatch Merton, with Merton CCG Patient and Public Involvement, visited the Recovery café on three different occasions to have one on one discussions with 20 service users.



In addition, we facilitated further focus groups with service users and shared the developed survey with relevant local groups.

Service users expressed that the service not only helps them when they are in a crisis, but helps prevent a crisis from happening. It has become a vital service, which many users access 3-4 times a week.

They would like the service to continue to -

- provide a safe and supportive space to talk freely.
- offer a range of activities.



Young People in Merton Mental Health Directory 2020 Refresh –

Healthwatch Merton worked with Hearts & Minds to refresh the directory that was originally compiled back in 2017.

The directory helps young people around Merton know where to look when they want to make sure they are taking care of their mental health and is downloadable from the Healthwatch Merton website.

" A directory of services and projects for young people experiencing mental health issues is vital. When a young person may not be well enough to be in school, college or work and then they or their carer end up having to spend hours each day trying to find places they can access and ways to contact these projects to check if they meet the requirements it can be soul destroying. Particularly, for 17-25-year olds for whom there is very little because they fall between the youth and adult age group. It's been brilliant working with Healthwatch to update the directory and move it online so that Merton young people and their carers no longer have to go through this. We hope to now work with other areas to do the same."

> Beth Ingram, Director of Hearts & Minds



Joint Workshop with 'Off the Record' Counselling Service

Off The Record (Merton) and Healthwatch Merton supported a group of 22 young people working towards their life skills component on their Duke of Edinburgh award by delivering a workshop on "Looking after your Mental Health and Wellbeing".

The workshop explored:

- What does Mental Health Mean to you?
- Self awareness and mindfulness taster activities
- Tools to help with managing your own stress

Following positive feedback, the plan is to assist young people working towards their award in this way again.

Supporting East Merton and North Merton's Primary Care Network (PCN) Health and Wellbeing Fair

Healthwatch Merton were recognised for the support they offered and look forward to future collaborations with PCN's.

"The East Merton Primary Care Network is made up of five practices in the Mitcham/Pollards Hill area, and although the member practices are not new to collaborating between them, engaging with the public and local community as a unit, rather than individual practices, is something the Network has yet been able to do.

East Merton Primary Care Network decided to collaborate with a neighbouring PCN (North Merton) and set up a 'Health and Wellbeing' event, offering not only the possibility for the public to meet and learn what is available locally, but also an occasion for the staff of our member GP practices to engage with other local health and wellbeing providers.

The event, held in late February at Vestry Hall in Mitcham, was a success, with over 20 local exhibitors and more than 120 attendees throughout the day.



possible had it not been for the guidance and support provided by Healthwatch Merton. Throughout the organising phase, the build-up and the day of the event Bec Yusuf's (HWM Outreach and Information Officer) input and advice was invaluable.

Healthwatch took our basic idea of engaging and raising awareness of the PCN locally and helped transform it into a successful Health Fair we were proud to call our own and will look to repeat and build on in the future"

East Merton PCN Business and Operations Manager



Social Prescribing

From 1 Social Prescriber in 2016, to the current service in 2020 of 9 Social Prescribers, A Head of Social Prescribing and the service being provided in all 22 GP practices in Merton. Healthwatch Merton have played a crucial role in Social Prescribing movement in Merton. The initial pilot was led by us in 2016, this directly informed decision making, helped with learning and was the catalyst for the wider East Merton social prescribing service.

The current service is now being managed by our host organisation MVSC with a Head of Social Prescribing taking the lead. Until November 2019 Healthwatch Merton managed, supervised and headed the operational responsibility of the Social Prescribing service, including the recruitment of the additional 6 social prescribers and the Head of the Social Prescribing whom now leads on this work.

The service is now recognised as one of the best examples of Social Prescribing Nationally and HWM are proud to be part of it.



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.

Website: www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Telephone: 020 8685 2282

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Long Term

Plan

#WhatWouldYouDo

Highlights







More than **40,000** people shared their views nationally with Healthwatch.

In South West London the views of over **1,000** people informed regional plans.

We heard from over **60** people who attended our sessions and responded to our survey.

South West London collaborative approach to engagement on the NHS Long Term Plan

Healthwatch organisations across south west London and South West London NHS Health and Care Partnership collaborated to speak to local people about specific plans for our local services.

We focused on "What was important to the BAME community and their families who have recently been diagnosed or already living with Type 2 Diabetes".

In each borough, local Healthwatch investigated one of the following areas of care:

- Diabetes (Merton)
- Cardiovascular Disease (Wandsworth)
- End of Life (Kingston)
- Crisis in Mental Health (Richmond)
- Outpatients (Sutton)
- Respiratory Disease(Croydon)

Working with NHS England and Healthwatch England



Healthwatch Merton (along with our other south west London
Healthwatch organisations) agreed with NHS England that our work would diverge from the Healthwatch England Long Term Plan Survey to enable us to engage with our local partners and community on the locally relevant development of NHS plans.

Our work was split across two distinct activities:

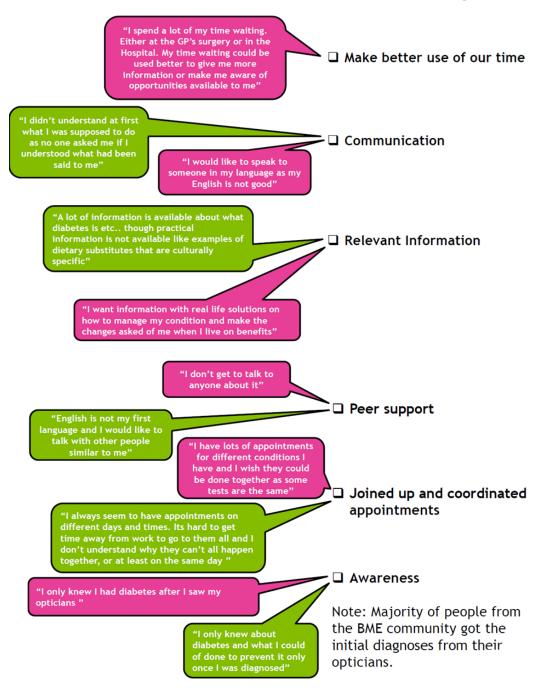
- 1. Supporting the South West London Clinical Conference in April 2019
- 2. Supporting engagement with the Health and Care Plan discussion documents at a borough level.

HWM - Diabetes Type 2 in the BAME community

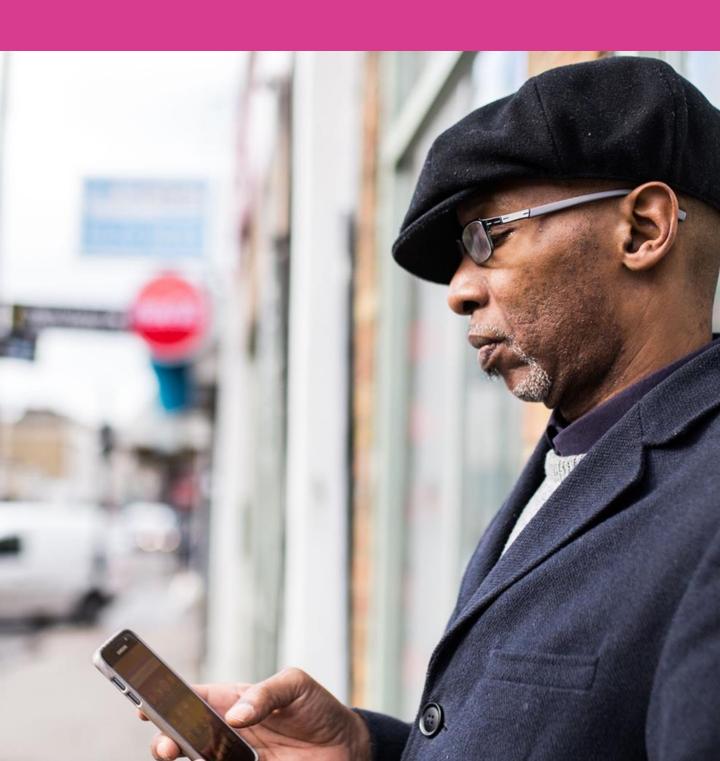
We spoke with community groups at a several sessions and events in addition to a survey we created.

Our report informed discussion at the SouthWest London Clinical Conference 30th April 2019 of the experiences and views from our BAME community on Type 2 diabetes.

We learnt what matters most to those who took part:



Helping you find the answers



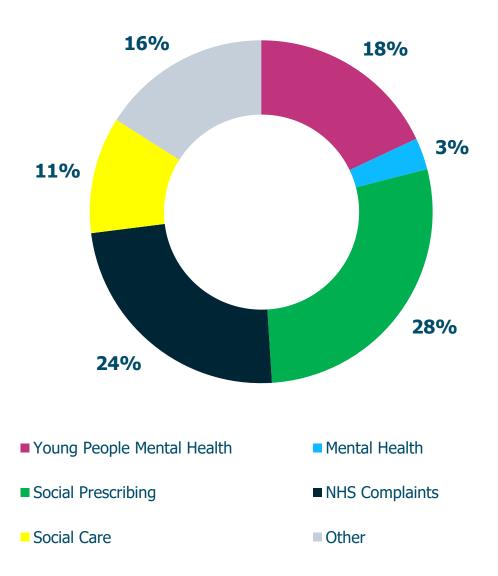
Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful.

Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.

This year we helped over **123 people** get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people's queries about services over the phone and by email.
- Talking to people at community events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.

Here are some of the areas that people asked about.



How we helped local people access the right information and find support



We noticed an increase in the number of young people enquiring for information about mental health services locally.

We teamed up with local young people Mental Health organisation Hearts & Minds to do a **Young People** in Merton Mental Health Directory 2020 Refresh of the original version from 2017 to help support this need.



Mr X phoned us with multiple issues including isolation, finances and benefits. He also mentioned regular appointments with his GP, so we checked with him if he knew about Social Prescribing at his practice. He did not, so we explained how the service works and the way to access it. After seeing a Social Prescriber he managed to join a local group, sort out some benefits and his regular visits to his GP stopped.



We met a Mr Z at an outreach event and he was asking us for help to understand the support available for his son who was having personal difficulties. We informed him of a local young people's counselling service called 'off the Record' that could potentially help. His son is now using this service and benefitting from the passing interaction we had with his dad.



Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or 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.

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Volunteers



At Healthwatch Merton we are supported by 11 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what people would like to improve, to services in their communities.

This year our volunteers:

- Raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community and with health and care services.
- Visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support.
- Helped support our day-to-day running.
- Listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.

Our volunteers are invaluable to the work we do.

The Healthwatch Merton Operational Committee (HWMOC) has continued to support and lead on areas of our work over the last year. The members come with a wide range of experience. Some bring direct experience of having worked in health or social care or are still working in health and social care, while others bring a strong understanding of the needs of communities within Merton.

The Healthwatch Merton team have found the guidance, advice and perspective shared by the HWMOC extremely valuable, useful and helpful. Especially at crucial times of need when they have supported us in our delivery and in carrying out Healthwatch Merton duties.

Our ability to gather local intelligence and insight would be greatly reduced without the members of the HWMOC.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our HWMOC for their continued support and help throughout the year.

We currently have vacancies on our Operational Committee. We would love to be able to have a Committee that truly reflects the population of Merton and will be actively recruiting new members in 2020—2021.



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.

Website: www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Telephone: 020 8685 2282

Email: info@healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Finances



25

We are funded by our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £125,000.



Our plans for next year



Message from the Head of Healthwatch Merton

In the next year Healthwatch Merton will:

- Increase the number of volunteers and our volunteering opportunities and offer.
- Put the spotlight on local inequality of BAME community and push for improvement by engaging more and more with communities that were disproportionately impacted by Covid-19.
- Increase and strengthen our partnerships with organisations in the VCFS sector to further support inequality work.
- Support health and social care in the restoration and recovery of services, while holding providers and commissioners to account for implementing positive changes for the public who we proudly serve.

I am proud that Healthwatch Merton has continued to grow in influence and impact. I would like to thank all people who have shared their experiences with us. We can only help to improve health and social care in Merton if people continue to share their voice and experiences with us.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported us and our dedicated staff, volunteers and Operational Committee members.

The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the many health inequalities we already knew existed in Merton. We will continue to hear from as many diverse communities in Merton as possible. All feedback we receive increases our understanding of these inequalities and will help to improve health and social care services.

We worked hard as a team to support the most vulnerable in Merton in the early stages of the Covid-19 lockdown with the Community Responsive Hub (Find out more visit www.mvsc.co.uk). The partnership work between VCFS organisations, CCG, Merton Council and others was amazing. It showed how we can react, initiate and develop a service to meet needs in time of restriction and ever-growing pressures. Lets build on the positive partnership working built on the Covid-19 response to tackle the inequalities our local communities faced before, during and will continue to face post Covid-19

Dave Curtis Head of Healthwatch Merton

Thank you

your

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 experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary, community, faith organisations and partners that have contributed to our work.



Contact us

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Merton Voluntary Service Council 2020.

Merton Voluntary Service Council is a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4164949, registered in England and Wales. Registered Charity No: 1085867

Registered office: The Vestry Hall, London Road, Mitcham CR4 3UD

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Merton

