

Health & Care SELECT Committee – Healthwatch Hillingdon Update Report

1. Overview

This report provides an update on Healthwatch Hillingdon’s recent activity, focusing on three core areas of work:

- **The Patient Experience Programme**
- **The Enter & View (E&V) cycle for 2025/26**
- **The Hospital Discharge project - soon to commence**

The report summarises what has worked well, the challenges that continue to affect delivery, and areas where suggestions/support is requested from the Committee.

2. What has worked well

2.1 Strong resident engagement

Across GP practices, hospital settings, and care environments, residents have shown high willingness to participate.

2.2 Clear themes from the Patient Experience Programme

Feedback to date highlights consistent themes in both primary and acute care:

GP Access:

- Persistent telephone waits
- Difficulties using online consultation systems
- Limited clarity around appointment pathways
- Low awareness of the wider clinical team

Hospital Experience:

- Strongly positive feedback on staff attitude, communication, and quality of treatment
- Areas of pressure in A&E, particularly long waits and limited real time updates
- Need for realistic timelines for follow-up appointments

Participants have also described uncertainty about processes, expectations, and pathways, reinforcing the need for clearer communication end-to-end.

2.3 Enter & View Programme well received by Providers

The 2025/26 cycle in nursing homes and assisted living settings has been positively received. It has also enabled constructive conversations with staff and practical recommendations on

- Accessibility and signage

- Environment and cleanliness
- Activities, engagement, and communication
- Staff wellbeing

This has led to practical, provider-led recommendations that settings recognise as implementable.

2.4 Hospital Discharge Project – Ready to commence

Fieldwork design is complete and ready to commence once operational access is confirmed. Focus areas include the quality and clarity of discharge information, continuity of care and how prepared people feel at home post-discharge.

3) Where challenges are still being faced

3.1 Operational access barriers

While strategic partners are supportive, achieving consistent operational-level access has been uneven. This is particularly evident in practice level participation in the Patient Experience Programme and site access for hospital-based work. This delays engagement, reduces coverage, and slows the pace at which borough-wide insights can be produced.

3.2 Misalignment with local priorities and limited awareness of the Healthwatch remit

In some areas, the independent Healthwatch remit is not fully understood, and elements of our work (especially practice engagement) is perceived as duplicative rather than complementary. Where organisational priorities are tightly scoped, our requests being treated as optional affects response rates, even though residents show strong willingness to engage.

4) Closing reflection

Over recent months, our Patient Experience Programme and Enter & View visits have generated valuable insight from residents with consistent themes around communication, access, pathway clarity and real-time updates, alongside highly positive feedback on staff care.

At the same time, operational access barriers are limiting the breadth and pace of data collection. Ensuring clarity of remit and facilitating smoother pathways for access will enable Healthwatch to deliver borough-wide insight more consistently and responsively.

We welcome the Committee's guidance on priority areas and support in strengthening operational access so that resident voice continues to inform quality improvement.