



# Healthwatch Lewisham

## Q3 Focused Intelligence Report 2017/18

1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017

## Introduction

Healthwatch Lewisham is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

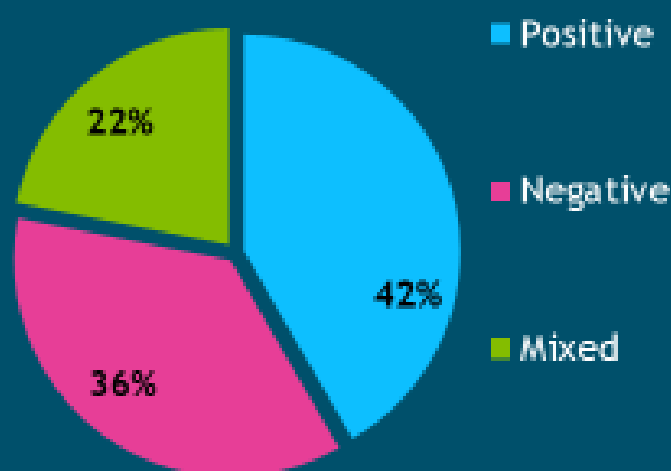
We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

A key function of Healthwatch Lewisham's is to collect people's views and experiences (positive and negative) of health and social care services in the borough. Our intelligence report highlights the key findings and themes that emerged from the experiences Lewisham residents shared with us during the last three months of engagement.

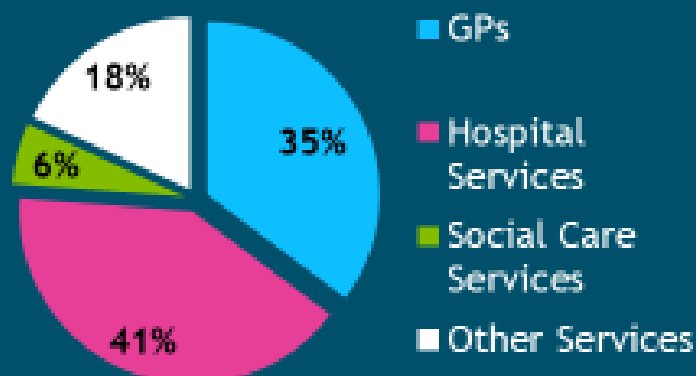


# Patient Story Analysis

## Story sentiment



## Type of service



Other services include feedback about dentists, pharmacies, emergency care and community health services.

## Top 3 Positive Themes

Quality Of Treatment

Staff Attitudes

• Waiting Times

## Top 3 Negative Themes

Waiting Times

Appointments

Communication •

## Advocacy Service

Our organisation provides the Lewisham Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service. We support residents in helping them make a complaint against local NHS services in the borough. Analysis of our advocacy cases enables us to understand the key issues which are causing people to register an official complaint.

During the last three months we have supported 32 residents make complaints about local health services in Lewisham.



Our data continues to show that a high percentage of residents are contacting our advocacy service because they are not satisfied with the standard of care they received. Most of them qualified the care as substandard or poor.

Two people are unhappy with the District nursing service, they are frustrated with the erratic visits they received. The complainants felt there was a lack of communication with the service which led to an inconsistent level of care for their family members.

Two Lewisham residents are complaining about the Rushey Green Dental Practice, with one person unhappy with the practice's official response to a botched wisdom tooth extraction. One gentleman believes the dentist failed in their duty of care by advising him to have an unnecessary procedure.

A serious issue raised by our service was the lack of response by the Queens Road Partnership to an official complaint. The complaint was lodged at the end of November but remains unanswered in full despite the promise of '10 days' turn round.

We found that there was a reduction in the number of cases that involved complaints about waiting times and a slight increase in experiences where there has been a lack of communication. Residents were concerned by the lack of effective internal communication at hospitals.



## Case Study



“Ms X has many complex medical issues and receives care at a number of hospitals including King’s. There had been issues between Ms X and the PALS office in 2009 which lead to them restricting her access to them by a third party only. The hospital reminded her of the restriction once again in 2016 when she tried to contact them. Ms X felt that after 7 years the hospital should review the situation but felt she was in a difficult situation and needed advocacy support.

Our advocacy service, in close contact with the client, wrote to the Trust on her behalf requesting a review and offering to meet to discuss the situation. Initially the Trust said it would only allow limited access via email. Following further discussions with Ms X and drafting of replies, the advocate/client challenged the email-only contact as being unreasonable and counter to the purpose of PALS. A further response from the Trust was received lifting the restrictions altogether and so giving Ms X the same access to PALS as other King’s patients.”



## Social Care

This year we carried out a research project across the borough of Lewisham looking into the social care needs and experiences of the population. The project focused on accessibility issues, social care assessments, care package provision and quality of care.

The project formed a wider piece of work incorporating research undertaken as part of the Healthier Communities Select Committee review of health and adult social care integration.

We organised six focus groups and engaged with a variety of backgrounds and diverse groups including older people, carers, and people who are disabled, as well as those with learning difficulties.

In total we heard the views of **114** local residents.

Through our engagement the following themes emerged which were representative across all of the focus groups.

### • Support provided by carers and care workers

Support provided by carers and key workers was appreciated and valued, especially by people with learning difficulties and those with mental health issues. Unpaid carers played a key role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of people receiving social care support.

### • Activities

Being able to engage in a variety of activities in day centres is a key issue expressed by people with learning difficulties. However, there is a need for more variety both in and outside day centres. Care workers play an important role in ensuring people with learning difficulties have access to activities.

### • Quality of homecare support

Satisfaction levels with social care services were often determined by the quality of service provided by care workers who support people in their homes. The views were mixed, with some people reporting they have excellent care workers, whereas others complained about the quality of the service, citing issues such as rudeness of staff, lack of caring attitudes, punctuality, disrespectful tone and treatment, and a lack of sensitivity around mental issues.



### • Access

Access to social care services was reported as an issue. People experienced difficulties in contacting services, such as being kept on hold for a long time on the phone, and not receiving call backs from services following initial contact.

### • Assessments

It was felt that those in receipt of social care and their carers require a more meaningful input into the assessment, and in some instances felt they were provided with less care than required.

### • Consistency and continuity

Consistency and continuity of the care worker was an important aspect of service satisfaction. Familiarity with the care worker ensures a sense of safety, security and empowerment for the person in receipt of care.

### • Pressure on unpaid carers

The findings suggest many carers are under pressure and often experience stress. There was a fear that this could result in carers experiencing a deterioration of both their mental and physical health. Some of the suggested solutions are increased access to respite breaks, increased provision of social care and involving them in the care process.

Your story has the power to  
make change happen.  
Share your experience of  
local care with us  
#ItStartsWithYou



## Accessible Information Standard

Following the introduction of the NHS Accessible Information Standard (AIS) on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016. We carried out a project one year later to assess the impact on local patient experience, and to assess local implementation of the standard.

The aim of the AIS is to ensure that people with a disability or sensory loss are given information in a way they can understand. It is now the law for the NHS and adult social care services to comply with the standard. (Marzena with blind band Feeling the Noise)



(Marzena with blind band Feeling the Noise)

We conducted focused engagement with organisations supporting sensory loss, people with learning disabilities and representatives of those groups. We spoke to 71 people and engaged with 8 organisations and community groups including: SELVIS, Headlines, Wheels for Wellbeing, Feeling the Noise, Socialeyes, Lewisham Deaf Community Association, Action for Hearing Loss and Lewisham Speaking Up.

From our project we found that:

- Many people with additional communication needs may not have the confidence to assert their needs or ask for help. Many may not be aware of the patient choice or have access to relevant information.
- Several disabled people are still being contacted by means that are not accessible for them, such as small print letters for people with sight loss and using the telephone to contact deaf people.
- People with sensory loss or learning difficulties reported that the process of getting to their appointment from the reception area posed a great barrier. Many felt lost and confused, especially in larger waiting areas shared by many clinics and services and had difficulty directing themselves.
- Service users would value large print information provided on medicines with a minimum of font size 18. This would enable people with sight loss and people with learning disabilities to better self manage their health and prevent any safeguarding concerns.
- People with sight loss appreciated emails and texts instead of receiving letters.



- Deaf residents reported difficulties in accessing Sign Language interpreters, for example during social care assessments or during medical appointments.
- People with sight loss experienced difficulties in University Hospital Lewisham around food and medicine. Common issues reported included several people being unable to read the menu or not knowing whether their food or drink had arrived. They also explained that they were not being made aware when medicines were being delivered to them.

Our full list of findings and recommendations can be found in our Accessible Information Standard report which will be released in the next few months.

### **In their own words:**

A patient with sight loss describing their experience when in hospital:

*“You feel lost. It is confusing when nurses call your name. You don’t know which way to go or who to follow. Even most capable people feel disempowerment and anxiety.”*



*(Marzena engaging with Wheels for Wellbeing)*

## University Hospital Lewisham

The data we collected during Q3 indicates that patient experiences of the University Hospital Lewisham (UHL) continues to be mixed. 47.50% of all comments were positive in comparison to 40% negative. These are very similar findings to those gathered in July to September 2017.



(Healthwatch Lewisham collecting views at a local park)

The majority of patients praised the hospital for the quality of treatment and care they received and the kind attitudes of nurses and doctors. These two issues are intertwined and many equate staff attitudes with the quality of service they are given.

*“I want to thank the gynaecology team in Lewisham hospital. They are excellent and humble the doctors are very down to earth they kept me alive today. I am proud of the NHS”*

(University Hospital Lewisham/Gynaecology)

However, it must be noted that 35% of stories which mentioned staff attitudes as a theme, saw users critical of how staff had interacted with them. A few people felt receptionists and doctors could be arrogant or dismissive.

*“The person I saw at Orthopaedics’ shouldn’t be in this job. They behave as the most mean spirited bully I’ve ever witnessed, and this is after going to Lewisham for over 20 years. Use your patient choice and go somewhere else, you don’t want major surgery here.”*

(University Hospital Lewisham/Trauma and orthopaedics)

The caring attitudes of staff in the Accident and Emergency Department was evident in multiple patient stories. Visits to A&E can sometimes be traumatic experiences, patients were extremely appreciative of staff who treated them with compassion and reassurance.

Rather than being specific to certain departments, the prominent positive and negative themes covered numerous departments in the hospital. Echoing our previous intelligence reports, hospital comments show that residents are having vastly different experiences even when using the same hospital services. For example, people's opinions of the Maternity Ward continue to differ significantly from person to person.

*“After my baby was born I was left for six hours without any assistance.”*

*“I have been attending Lewisham hospital for my antenatal care and it's been a really good experience. Overall I feel reassured and calm as I know that experienced midwives will be taking care of me and my baby during delivery and after.”*

The difference in the two patient stories perhaps indicates that there is a lack of consistency across the maternity service within the hospital. This is a trend that can be applied to several departments at UHL and needs to be addressed.



## GP practices in the borough

Patients told us that they were frustrated with the lack of available appointments at their GP practice. Numerous residents across the borough explained that they struggled to access appointments when they called their surgery. They shared similar stories of spending significant amounts of time waiting on hold, to then be told by the receptionist that there were no longer any appointments available on the date of the call.



(Volunteer Amanda listening to Lewisham residents)

This finding contradicts resident's experiences shared in Q2 where they explained that they were able to get appointments when they needed them. The significant change might be a result of winter being the busiest time of year for the NHS. The cold weather, coupled with illnesses such as flu, means health services tend to see a rise in the number of frail and vulnerable patients. The increase in illness will cause an increase in demand for GP appointments which might be a factor in why a significant amount of people could get not emergency/on the day appointments.

Interestingly, none of the people who complained about difficulty in booking appointments were aware of the GP Extended Access Service (GPEA). Through our general engagement at local events we were able to understand that although awareness is increasing, a significant number of residents are either unaware of the service or how to access the GPEA. The forthcoming video from the CCG focusing on access will help to address this issue.

Despite the increase in negative comments around appointments, residents generally continue to be happy with the quality of treatment they receive upon accessing the service. People felt GPs were providing a good level of advice, reassurance, and treatment explanation. Service users also highlighted staff attitudes as extremely positive with GPs and nurses being praised for being kind and attentive to patients



## Examples of Positive Patient Stories received relating to GPs

"The service is very professional. If you call at 8am to get an appointment you will be seen the same day. You can call on two days a week for results. You can get prescriptions and appointments online. I am happy with the service." **(Deptford Medical Centre)**

"I had a very good experience at the extended hours GP at Lewisham Hospital. I arrived at the reception, checked in and was called within 3 minutes. The GP was very thorough, he explained what the solution to my problem was, prescribed medication and explained the next steps to get full treatment." **(GP Extended Access)**

"I always get an appointment when I need one. The doctors explain everything, and I am very happy with them as I feel I can talk to them." **(St John's Medical Centre)**

"My GP is good. When I had a shoulder pain, Dr Wheeler made a quick diagnosis and referred me to a consultant at Lewisham Hospital." **(South Lewisham Group Practice)**

"I am blind and the staff at the surgery are helpful. The doctors come out to help me into the room and the staff help to take me out of the surgery and sometimes even across the road. It is very useful that they send reminder texts. I am very happy with the surgery." **(Wells Park Practice)**

"I always go to the practice with family or carers. Doctors explain everything very well. They talk to me directly and ensure that I and my carer understand." **(Vesta Road Surgery)**

"Doctors are always polite and the surgery is always clean." **(Downham Family Medical Practice)**

"I have been using the service for 27 years. It's a very good surgery. The online booking is good and a reminder of appointment is sent by text. The staff is friendly, understanding, efficient and professional. New GPs will usually liaise/consult with a more experienced GP." **(Grove Medical Centre)**

"Surgery has improved a lot recently. The staff are really nice; before improvements they were rude. When your appointment comes around your name comes up, so it is clear where you need to go. Toilets are also cleaner and, generally, the appearance of the surgery has improved." **(Wells Park Practice)**

"I would like to say a big thank you to the young lady doctor who I saw last night, at 6.50pm. (I was referred from Parkview Surgery.) I didn't find out what her name was, but she was so kind and reassuring during my consultation. She really put me at ease and answered all of the questions I had. Thank you so much." **(GP Extended Access Service)**

## Examples of Negative Patient Stories received relating to GPs

"First of all, let me just say...I don't normally do complaints or review but, the way I was treated was appalling...I was treated like a disobedient child for asking for help with more than one thing. During the appointment I was told i had to choose one issue because she doesn't have time to discuss more than that with me as others only had one and if I have more than one issue I should have booked more than one appointment. Bearing in mind this was not an urgent appointment and it was meant to be a normal check-up... She also said I am now over my ten minutes...And ten minutes is all I am entitled to...i am well upset about it especially her tone, it was as if I was annoying her by even walking through the door, I will never take another appointment with the extended GP service at Lewisham hospital...worst place to go." **(GP Extended Access Service)**

"The practice is not wheelchair accessible. There is a door and a button, but it does not work. When I visit the practice, I need to wait outside for someone to let me in. It's not so bad in summer but not good in winter. I asked when this will be repaired but each time the surgery replies they do not know. I think this means that they are not planning to sort it out. I have to wait for 'a month' to see a doctor. I would prefer to see my own doctor as he knows my long-term condition. Last time I was at this surgery the lift was out of order for five days." **(Rushey Green Group Practice)**

"I had to wait for 40 minutes for an appointment, even though I was told on arrival that there was no waiting. They could communicate better." **(Burnt Ash Surgery)**

"I have had to wait a long time for a GP appointment. I have been referred to a specialist psychologist but have not heard anything yet." **(Deptford Medical Centre)**

"My last experience was not very positive. I had been given ear drops for a similar problem previously but this time I was denied treatment for the same problem. I was told to go and buy the ear drops. I was shocked because I was sent away in pain." **(Morden Hill Surgery)**

"Appointments are not always available and usually there is a long wait on the telephone. The telephone line always appears to be busy and by the time you get through there aren't any appointments." **(Lewisham Medical Centre)**

"It's hard to get through when I call for an appointment. I feel the doctors do not care and give enough attention to their patients. Online appointments are fine but not for everybody also there is a long waiting time for these 3 weeks. You should be able to just call and get an appointment." **(Amersham Vale Practice)**

"I have found it very difficult to get an appointment. There was no availability and no doctors but when I challenged the reception staff they offered me an appointment." **(Rushey Green Group Practice)**

"The receptions staff seem under pressure and can be tense. It is difficult to get an appointment when you ring at 8.15 it is engaged. It never used to be like that. Doctors do help once you get to see them." **(Vale Medical Centre)**

"The practice and staff are great. The issue is getting access to the service/appointments. Last time I tried there were very minimal listed online appointments and at least a two week wait to get an appointment. It's great there are other services in there though eg. sexual health, blood

testing, midwives. I think they just need to sort out the appointment systems or take on fewer patients if they can't cater for them all.” **(Sydenham Green Group Practice)**

### Examples of Positive Patient Stories received relating to UHL

“I attended Lewisham hospital for a routine procedure in the Urology Department. This is the first time I had been to this hospital and despite feeling very nervous was immediately welcomed in the department and everyone from start to finish could not have been more polite, courteous and efficient which turned an otherwise dreaded day into a not unpleasant one. Many thanks to the Consultant, the Anaesthetist and all the very kind nursing staff you were brilliant, and I would not hesitate choosing you again should the need arise. **(Urology)**

“The staff were really helpful and efficient. As soon as I was booked in I was seen straight away. They get the job done and they are very polite.” **(Physiotherapy)**

“We attended Accident and Emergency yesterday with our 18-month-old who collapsed at nursery. The care we received and the speed at which we were seen was first class. From the lady on reception to the triage nurse to the doctor all were excellent. They dealt with a horrible situation with a calm professional manner and kept us informed at every stage. They were busy, but we were seen, had medical tests and discharged home within two hours. A shining example of NHS services working at their very best.” **(A & E/Paediatrics)**

“The Paediatric Department is very homely, clean and really well decorated. Everything is adapted for children even the hand sink. There is a nice comfortable room for breastfeeding and changing nappies.” **(Paediatrics)**

“Mum was rushed to hospital following an internal bleeding. The problem was sorted out but has since needed regular blood transfusions. These are arranged through the A.C.C. at the hospital. The staff are pleasant and the service is efficient.” **(Ambulatory Care)**

“Discharged yesterday after knee surgery I waited in the discharge lounge for my prescription drugs for two hours. I had plenty of time to observe the staff on the desk there. They were brilliant. They treated us all with respect but with kindness as well. Incredibly professional and efficient in managing a difficult period.” **(Discharge Lounge)**

“Lewisham Hospital Chemo Day Unit - suite 8. They are very nice but always understaffed so the treatment usually takes a long time. The nurses are brilliant.” **(Cancer)**

"Having had an unpleasant experience on a previous occasion, I was apprehensive about having a routine gastroscopy examination. But I have nothing but praise for the way the procedure was carried out this time, as quickly and painlessly as possible. I was given full information before, during and after the procedure and my questions were fully and clearly answered. The care and consideration I was given were second to none." **(Gastroenterology)**

"I have needed to visit Lewisham hospital on two occasions in the last six months - once for an ultrasound and once to see a throat specialist. On both occasions I was greeted by a smiling receptionist and was seen promptly on time. I was given clear explanations about my condition and the tests that were being done. In times when NHS often gets bad press, I wanted to share my excellent experiences and thank the hospital staff!" **(ENT/Maternity)**

### Examples of Negative Patient Stories received relating to UHL

"I fell and broke my arm. I went to A&E and had to wait for hours in severe pain. The hospital eventually set my arm and it's now alright although I do still get some pain on cold days." **(A & E)**

"I was told my foot pain was a sprain and was not offered an x-ray. I had to insist on an x-ray and then had to wait 3 hours before they told me my foot was broken. Once they had diagnosed me the treatment was fine." **(A & E)**

"The bed sheets had not been changed for 5 days and when I complained they threw a sheet over the dirty one. The staff did not help to lift me off my bed they said they are not allowed to help. I was left in the toilet for over half an hour waiting for toilet paper." **(Gynaecology)**

"I have had to have a number of interactions with this hospital: A&E, Orthopaedics, Day surgery and Physiotherapy. While treatment of immediate problems has for the most part been satisfactory, everything that has to do with co-ordination and/or administering longer term care is in complete disarray. Correct appointments are not made, letters for appointments are not sent, attempts to contact clinics are impossible - after calling over 20 times a person from the Patients Advice Line had to physically go to the administrator's desk to get any answers on my behalf. If you need ongoing care I would highly recommend going elsewhere - the standard of care I've seen is mediocre at best and just not worth the stress. **(Multiple services)**

"I'm extremely unhappy with my recent experience in gynaecology. Inadequate history, then asked the same questions by 6 different people, then pressure to have a pregnancy test despite being 15 years into menopause, then had a procedure under general anaesthetic which did not solve my problem, waited 6 weeks for results, and was advised to go to A&E or my GP when I phoned to say my problem was ongoing (post-menopausal bleeding). I have since been referred to the Homerton where I was treated with respect and a polyp has been removed in outpatients which was missed by Lewisham." **(Gynaecology)**

"After a long wait for a podiatry appointment at my surgery, they referred me for a biomechanics appointment at Lewisham hospital. The appointment letter said to allow an hour and I was told to expect a gait analysis. What I got was an arrogant consultant who was clearly not interested in anything I had to say, spent about 5 minutes with me and gave me some exercises which they did not explain clearly. Waste of time and disappointing. I am no further forward." **(Podiatry)**



"The service could be better. There seems to be a staffing issue. There are too many managers and not enough nurses and support staff." **(Cardiology)**

"There was a long waiting time in A&E. Some of the waiting areas were not very clean." **(A&E)**

"Blue lighted to A&E due to husband's soon to be operated on brain tumour - he was suffering with severe head pain. Was supposed to go to Kings, but ambulance refused to take us. From the moment we arrived, it was problem after problem. Aside the massive waiting times, and being stuck inside rooms for hours on end with no contact with staff, my husband was treated like he was stupid as he is deaf. Doctors asked- "How do you know if he is in pain? Does he make a noise?" Umm... "No, he tells me, he can talk. " As staff didn't know what to do with my husband (and kept asking why we didn't go to King's?) he ended up being kept in for THREE DAYS. What a waste of a hospital bed! All he needed was some codeine and steroids. Consultants completely messed up my husband's referral and ended up referring him to Oncology (he should have been referred to the Skull Base team) leading to panic that my husband's tumour had turned cancerous. When we were finally discharged, they had not prescribed any pain relief - I kid you not! It was Friday at 4pm, it was then a race against time to get the pharmacist to sort it out - more stress to what should have been a stress-free visit." **(Multiple services)**

## Appendix

