

# Our Year

**Supporting the people of Bromley**

Healthwatch Bromley Annual Report 2020-21

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# Message from Healthwatch Bromley Committee



**Healthwatch Bromley (HWB) adapted its activities significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In supporting these changes we worked together with staff, volunteers and wider health and social care partners to continue to provide a service to Bromley residents. Some of the committee's activities included:**

- Attending twice-weekly Zoom public/professional meetings for several months - these evolved into valuable discussion groups for agencies including Bromley Council and Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich MIND to share and discuss health work, actions and initiatives in response to the pandemic.
- Working with staff to devise new, virtual methods of conducting Enter and View exercises and piloting these successfully in local care homes.
- Holding regular committee meetings virtually by Zoom, and representing HWB at various local, health-related committee meetings held on Zoom and Teams.

Through the virtual Zoom public/professional meetings, we identified the local issue of digital exclusion which leaves some members of the community isolated and unable to participate in community life during the pandemic. We hope to do further work to investigate this issue locally and ensure equal access to health and social care services for all.

Committee members worked with other volunteers and staff from across YVHSC's Healthwatch contracts on completion of the Quality Framework originated by Healthwatch England. We strongly welcomed this exercise to improve service quality and look forward to new quality improvement measures being implemented.

Committee members interviewed one new committee member who joined during the year, and two further, new members to begin work early next financial year.

Committee members supported the planning and execution of, and report writing on, two research projects, one on local mental health services with patient and provider surveys, the other a literature review of local diabetes services. We have made contact with the borough public health department in relation to the health exclusion of minority groups and hope to take this work further in 2021 – 2022.

## Healthwatch Bromley Committee 2020 – 2021

**Beryl Cross (from November 2020)**

**Carol Ellis (to December 2020)**

**Helen Norris**

**Patricia Wade**

**Frances Westerman**



# Message from YVHSC CEO Tim Spilsbury



**I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce the third annual report for Healthwatch Bromley under Your Voice in Health and Social Care and reflect on what has been a hugely successful and ultimately challenging year. A year that has seen Health and Social Care services respond magnificently to extreme circumstances with the onset of COVID-19 and voluntary sector services work together to achieve the best possible outcome to support local efforts.**

Healthwatch Bromley have continued their statutory responsibility to obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services, make those views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services, provide reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved and promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.

Healthwatch Bromley received 1883 patient experiences in which services across the borough were commended for their overall quality of treatment and care, staff professionalism, attitude and professional advice.

This year Bromley Healthwatch, working with our local authority partners, developed and pioneered a virtual enter and view programme, enabling the service to continue to carry out one of its key statutory functions and ensure services remained responsive and accountable during a very trying time.

25 volunteers contributed 1417 hours of their time to support the service. As a result of this involvement and the staff team's work we have been able to produce eleven reports during the year on services and patient feedback in Bromley.

As we look forward to recovery and the opportunity to meet and greet friends and family I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Healthwatch Bromley staff and volunteers, who have continued to work with dedication to deliver a responsive and vital service to support the local community.

# About us

## Here to make health and care better

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Bromley. 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.



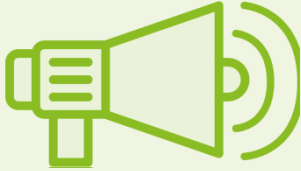
**“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone’s views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear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



We heard from

**1883 people**

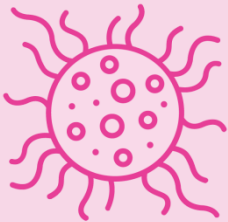
this year about their experiences of health and social care.

We provided advice and information to

**99 people**

this year.

## Responding to the pandemic



We engaged with and supported approximately

**2,511**

people during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

## Making a difference to health and care



We worked on and produced

**11 projects and reports**

about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. In these, we made 20 recommendations for improvement.

**40% of recommendations**

we made last year in the published reports have already been acted upon, at the point where we reviewed progress.

## Health and care that works for you



**25 volunteers**

helped us to carry out our work. In total, they contributed 1417 hours.

**We employ 3 staff**

The equivalent of just over 1.6 full time.

We received

**£78,000 in funding**

from our local authority in 2020-21.



## Virtual Enter and View visits – then and now

**Our role is to explore the patient and public experience of health and social care services, to influence and improve the design and delivery of services. We use our Enter and View Programme to listen to and observe how people experience health and social care services.**

In 2019-20 we carried out 7 Enter & View visits to care homes and non-residential community based services. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic many local services adapted their ways of working and delivering health and care services. Care homes responded to national Public Health England guidance and operated with a restricted access policy protecting residents against the virus. As a result of this and wider national restrictions, Healthwatch Bromley were unable to carry out traditional visits and had to adapt our Enter and View procedure. In response to the challenge, we focused our resources on improving our internal Enter and View processes and developing a virtual model of delivering the programme.

We are proud to say that we were one of the leading Healthwatch in the country to carry out a virtual model of visits. Despite the challenges, last year we conducted two visits to Care Homes, making observations using video on digital devices supported by the care home staff. We gathered views and feedback from residents, families, friends and staff using a mixture of video, telephone conversations and paper and online questionnaires.

These new, virtual visits relied on support from care home staff and would not have been possible without their help and commitment. We worked closely with our local authority partners to identify homes which would have capacity to support virtual visits.

We conducted two virtual Enter and View visits, to Baycroft Grays Farm Road Care Home and Clairleigh Nursing Home.

## Baycroft Grays Farm Road Care Home

The Care Quality Commission rated the home as 'Requires Improvement' in August 2019. Five Bromley Healthwatch Enter and View Authorised Representatives attended the visit. They spoke to staff, visitors and family members visiting Baycroft Grays Farm Road Care Home. One group spoke to the management team, then, using appropriate digital devices (iPad/laptop/mobile phone), was given a virtual tour of the premises. The other group interviewed staff, residents and family members by telephone or video conference. They made recommendations for improvement and highlighted good practice.

We put forward eight recommendations based on our visit and feedback received. The home responded to all eight, using four directly to improve services and providing reassurance on the other four.



**"The facilities are good, the staff are so caring, and my mum has been well settled there. The care the staff gave to Dad in his last weeks was excellent."**

## Clairleigh Nursing Home

This Enter and View was also conducted by five Enter and View Authorised Representatives. One group spoke to the management team and then using a mobile phone were shown around the premises. The other group interviewed staff, residents and family members by telephone or video conference. Twelve recommendations have been made on how to improve the service and good practice has been highlighted. The home provided a response to our report, and clarified what is being done in relation to the areas highlighted as requiring improvement.

Healthwatch Bromley shared both reports with the London Borough of Bromley (LBB) who are using the findings to support their own Quality Assurance visits and checks, and ensure ongoing service improvement.





## Research projects

**Healthwatch Bromley conducts regular research into people's perception of local services. In 2020 - 2021 we focused on two topics, Mental Health and Diabetes, and additionally worked with partners on a joint project, Bromley Patient Survey, examining and reporting on the experiences of people using local health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**We adapted our research methodology this year to reflect the impact of national restrictions and new service delivery models.**

### **Mental Health report**

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of how Bromley residents experienced accessing mental health support and services in the borough, both pre COVID-19 and during the pandemic. Our findings indicated varying experiences around access - with approximately half of respondents reporting relative ease of access and the other half encountering considerable difficulties. From the research undertaken, several themes emerged, from which we identified areas needing improvement and made recommendations for local health and social care services to consider.

Some of the key themes identified were:

- Positive experiences – almost 3 in 5 respondents were happy with the mental health support they received.
- Respondents reported long waiting times from referral/self-referral to treatment.
- Feedback suggests that residents would benefit from improved information on mental health services in Bromley.
- GPs were reported as being the first port of entry for 32% of respondents.
- Residents would like to feel more listened to and supported.
- Voluntary sector has a crucial role in providing support to residents.

**The findings and recommendations are being discussed with partners.**

## Diabetes in Bromley: A literature review

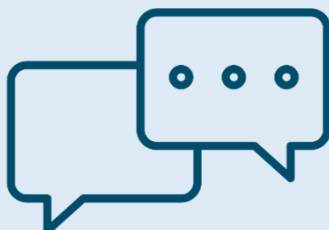
We were made aware through key partners and feedback from local people that there were gaps in awareness and understanding of the diabetes care pathway in Bromley. Our project was a literature review of the available information, to summarise key information and where it could be found, and produce a simple, concise leaflet which local people could use to support their health care journey with diabetes, whether newly diagnosed or already receiving care and support. The project produced two leaflets which are being published and rolled out in the community during 2021/22.



## Bromley Patient Survey COVID-19

**We worked with partners, South East London CCG and Bromley GP Alliance, on a joint project examining and reporting on experiences of people using local services during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

In July 2020, a survey was launched to capture the experiences of patients using primary care services during the pandemic. The report is currently in draft. Feedback from the report will be used to inform improvements in primary care and recovery plans in Bromley.



### Share your views with us

Share your views and give us your feedback on local health and social care services.



[www.healthwatchbromley.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbromley.co.uk)



020 3886 0752



[info@healthwatchbromley.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbromley.co.uk)



# Patient Experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

Identifying and representing people's feedback is crucial to the development of health and social care. The tremendous efforts of staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Bromley enabled us to successfully shift our Patient Experience Programme from our standard in-person community outreach to a comprehensive virtual and phone-based model during 2020.

In addition to our focus on obtaining feedback via direct telephone contact, our Patient Experience team orchestrated a number of innovative ways of hearing from patients and service users:

- Promoting our Patient Experience survey at our public webinars and holding 'virtual stalls' at other community organisations' digital events.
- Working with local Community and Voluntary Sector organisations, including food banks and older adult support groups, to distribute paper copies of our survey to people with no access to digital platforms.
- Improving our digital and social media presence to promote our survey via online channels including our 'Share your experiences' webpage.
- Working with the GP Alliance and borough GP surgeries to promote our survey by sending a survey link for distribution to each surgery and uploading our online survey form to GP surgeries' websites.



## Case Studies: Patient Experience During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**At the start of the lockdown, it became clear that our Patient Experience programme was going to need to operate outside our usual remit to support Bromley residents.**

Our Patient Experience staff and volunteers didn't just gather patients' experiences, but also acted as a befriending service and supported people through the provision of information, signposting and in some cases, going the extra mile to enable individuals to access the treatment and care they needed. For example, one of our Patient Experience volunteers was able to provide information to a resident who was feeling unwell after their COVID-19 vaccine. The person did not know who to contact for reassurance. The volunteer, with the person's consent, contacted their GP surgery to secure the support the patient needed. In addition the volunteer was able to reassure and advise the patient to call 111 in case of urgent need for help.

In addition to direct contact with residents, we reached out to residents, working with our partners. For example we arranged an engagement session with an online support group run by Bromley Well. The group meets weekly on Zoom; it is for people with long term health conditions, such as arthritis, asthma, diabetes, fibromyalgia and others which can be managed well by implementing lifestyle adaptations. During our online session with ten members of the group, we listened to their experiences and explained how they could share their feedback on relevant NHS services. We provided further support by sharing leaflets and resources. Participants commented positively on the opportunity to tell their stories and the up to date information received about services during the pandemic.



**“It has been so difficult to get through to some services this year. Thank you to Healthwatch Bromley for being there and picking up the phone! With services changing so quickly, their support in helping me find the right place was invaluable.”**

*Bromley resident*



### **Leave your online feedback with us.**

Did you know that you can leave your feedback directly on our website? It's easy, simply find a service you would like to review and share your experience.

[www.healthwatchbromley.co.uk/services](http://www.healthwatchbromley.co.uk/services)



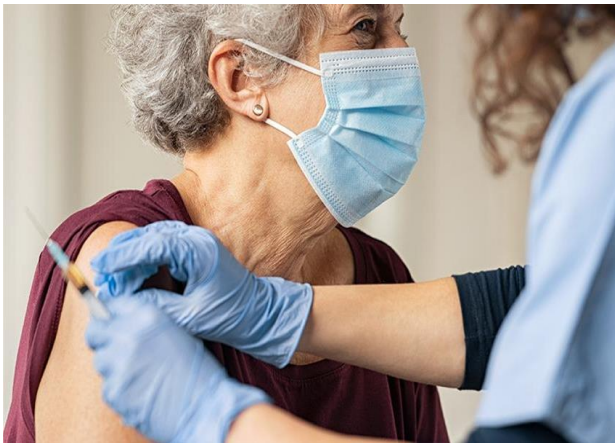
## Responding to COVID-19

**Healthwatch played an important role in helping people get the information they needed, especially during the pandemic. We shared the intelligence we collected with Healthwatch England and local partners to help services operate as well as possible in difficult circumstances.**

**This year we helped 2,511 Bromley residents by:**

- Adapting our ways of working to continue to represent the people's voice and notify health and social care partners about the issues people were facing.
- Providing and promoting up to date information on the local COVID-19 response and national guidelines by creating a dedicated COVID-19 page on the Healthwatch Bromley website and using our social media channels.
- Channelling information through daily phone calls to many residents, directly providing people with information and support needed to access services.
- Supporting the vaccine roll-out by sharing information, e.g. new vaccination sites, and promoting the community volunteer response.
- Working on a joint research project capturing experiences of people using local services, producing intelligence to inform the One Bromley Covid-19 Recovery Plan and longer term priorities.

## Case Study



During the pandemic, we were contacted by a relative of an elderly resident who was vaccinated with a first dose at a local vaccination hub. The resident then became frail, housebound and unable to attend the hub for a second dose. We contacted the local Clinical Commissioning team who put us in touch with Bromley GP Alliance, (managing the vaccine programme) explained the issue and requested help. They were extremely supportive and a second dose of the vaccine was arranged and delivered in the comfort of the resident's home.

## Top four areas that people have contacted us about:



23% on GP services



18% on Dentistry



7% on Hospital Care





18% on Pharmacies



### Contact us to get the information you need

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.healthwatchbromley.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbromley.co.uk)

 020 3886 0752

 [info@healthwatchbromley.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbromley.co.uk)



# Volunteers

**At Healthwatch Bromley we are supported by 25 volunteers to help us find out what people think is working, and what improvements people would like made to services.**

## **This year our volunteers have:**

- Helped people to have their say, carrying out Patient Experience surveys over the telephone and on line.
- Provided up-to-date health and social care information on our website, e-newsletter and social media channels.
- Supported our research projects through distributing surveys, analysing data and writing up findings.
- Carried out website reviews for local services on the information they provide.
- Helped local residents by sharing information and signposting them to the relevant services.



**Bromley representative on the South East London Patient Voice Committee - Katie**

"Since my appointment in December 2020 as Bromley representative on the South East London Patient Voice Committee, I have been very impressed with the work of Healthwatch Bromley (HWB) and particularly how it has managed new ways of working in the pandemic. HWB has a clear strategy and works extremely well with partner agencies to promote the health and welfare of Bromley residents."

**Volunteer - Manika**

"I started volunteering for Healthwatch Bromley in July 2020. I am involved with the patient engagement work. This incidentally was also my first work assignment after a 4 year career break. I could not have asked for a better opportunity to get back to work. I also got lucky to get involved in a research project which aimed to find out 'Healthcare options for BAME community in Bromley' and got to liaise /interact with a number of people from different organisations and it has been truly engaging and enriching. I am looking forward to more opportunities with Healthwatch where I can learn and also contribute significantly."

**Helping online - Isadora**

"I started my volunteering experience at Healthwatch during the pandemic and their way of working had been adapted to virtual support. Although it has been challenging I have been able to realise how important hearing the patient's experience is, not only for the improvement of the services, but also for bringing the user's awareness of the opportunities and support that they have within their community. I have been developing many interpersonal skills, such as active listening, communication, assertive communication to name a few. The support from the team and their compassion is very encouraging and empowering!"



**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 with us



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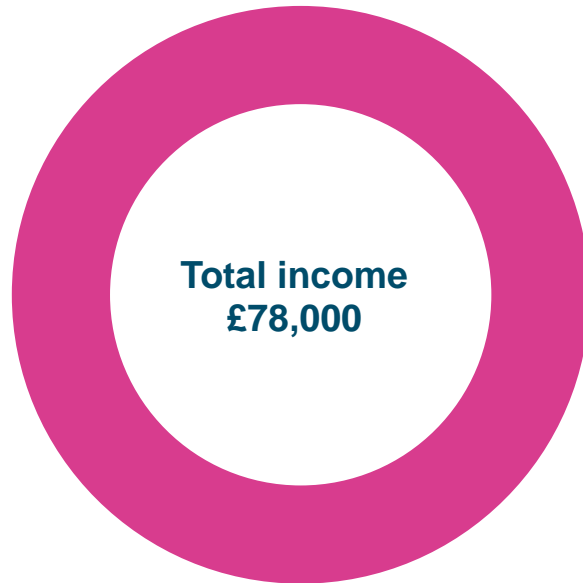


# Finances

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

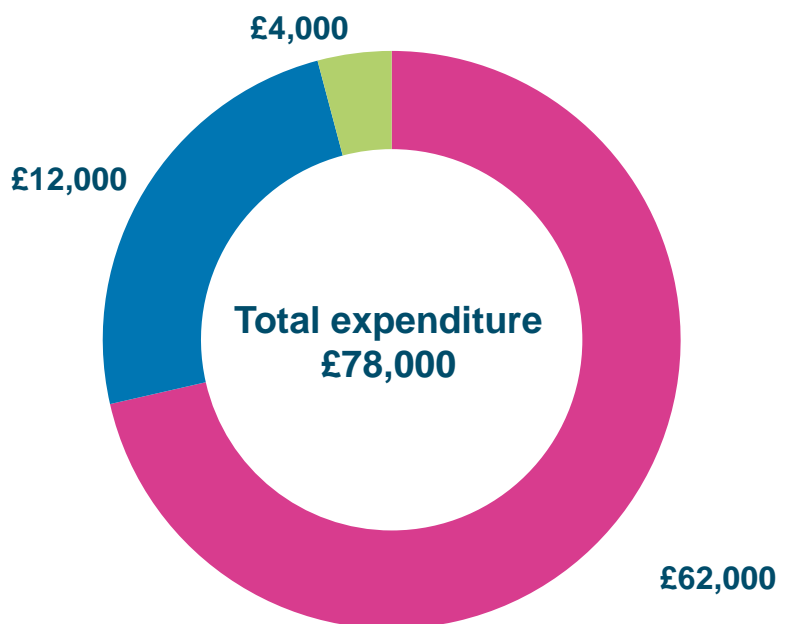
## Income

- Funding received from local authority



## Expenditure

- Staff costs
- Operational costs
- Support and administration



# Next steps

## Top three priorities for 2021-22

- Working with partners to monitor different GP appointment types/platforms and enabling patient choice of these, ensuring access for all remains the overriding priority.
- Strengthening engagement with BAME and seldom heard communities.
- Increasing community intelligence and feedback on social care services through stronger engagement with Bromley's active community and voluntary sector.

## Next steps

In line with guidelines and the recovery roadmap Healthwatch Bromley is taking a stepped approach to resuming all activity during 2021/22. This remains at the core of our plans to meet our priorities for the year.

Workplan and priorities are informed by feedback we receive from Bromley residents, the Healthwatch Bromley Committee and our local partners. The pandemic has impacted on many areas of our life including health and social care services and the way they are delivered. During the year we will be monitoring the experiences of local residents, informed by national and local recovery plans. Items considered include:

- Following up the recommendations we provided to services before and during the pandemic and supporting these services in their implementation.
- Working with key partners to support and deliver plans that address BAME inequalities and feed into longer term COVID recovery.
- Monitoring and improving access to services for people who are digitally excluded.
- Visiting care homes to gather and promote good practice, learning from using IT to support communication between relatives and residents.
- Transitioning back to face-to-face community outreach and engagement.
- Ensuring a strong Bromley voice at the regional South East London Clinical Commissioning Group and Integrated Care System.



**"Tackling unfair health differences 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, and then to act on what has been learned."**

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



# Statutory statements

## About us

Healthwatch Bromley, Community House, South Street, Bromley, BR1 1RH

Contract holder: YVHSC, 45 St Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RG.

Healthwatch Bromley 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 committee consists of 5 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide advice, guidance and scrutiny to our activities. Our committee ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. In 2020/21 the committee met 5 times.

We also facilitate wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities; the information we gain from residents helps shape our research projects and direct Healthwatch Bromley.

## 2020 – 2021 Summary

### Methods and systems used to obtain people's views and experience.

We used a wide range of approaches to give as many people as possible the opportunity to provide us with insights on their experience of health and care services. We were available by phone, text, and email. We provided a webform on our website and a feedback centre/rate and review system. We attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media and distribution of paper surveys and freepost envelopes.

We are committed to obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds, including those less often heard by health and care decision makers. This year we created accounts on varying platforms such as the Nextdoor App, which allowed us to collect a wider range of reviews of services from residents. We also engaged with residents via direct telephone calls, enabling us to reach digitally disadvantaged and/or housebound people including older demographics; many of those contacted were aged 80+.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to say thank you to all stakeholders who supported us this year to enable Bromley residents to feed back their experience of health and social care services.

### 2020-21 priorities

This year brought challenges like no other. In shifting and challenging circumstances we reached out to residents across the borough and worked with key commissioning and provider partners to support local efforts to control the pandemic and help Bromley residents in greatest need. Whilst we were able to make great headway in our Patient Experience Programme and carry out two studies reviewing mental health services and mapping the diabetes pathway, our work changed significantly. We recognised that service providers were focused on developing new ways of working to meet the immediate needs of their patients. We hope to engage with these service providers in the coming year to understand the impact of our 2020 – 2021 reports and continue our work with local health partners to explore how our recommendations can have greater impact and support further improvement.

### Responses to recommendations and requests

- All providers responded to our requests for information or recommendations during this year.
- This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we only carried out two Enter and View visits. Twenty 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 Bromley is represented on the Bromley Health and Wellbeing Board by Frances Westerman, Healthwatch Bromley committee member. During 2020/21 our representative has effectively carried out this role by contributing to discussion around changes and adaptations through patient voice representation.

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