

# Self-Care Matters 2016

In November 2016 Healthwatch Bromley and Healthwatch Lewisham held a joint Self Care Matters event. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of Self Care Week and the importance of self-care and the self-management of health conditions. The event was preceded by the Healthwatch Bromley and Healthwatch Lewisham Annual General Meeting.



The event was organised in a market stall style, with a variety of themed tables to enable participants to access



information easily. The tables each focused on a particular area, such as long term conditions, minor illnesses sexual health, mental health and activities to promote wellbeing. Participants were encouraged to walk around the stalls to browse the information available. Where possible, a representative from a local organisation was present to engage with the

participants, answer questions and to provide further information. The information on display was provided by Bromley Healthcare, Bromley and Lewisham Mind, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust, Lewisham Breath Easy, SELVIS and Bromley Library, to mention a few.



The event included four separate workshops focussing on particular self care issues: **diabetes**, **eye care**, **respiratory diseases** and **mental health**. The presentations provided a more in depth, focused information on all four topics.



## Workshop Summary

### Diabetes and Self Care

The ex-President of Diabetes UK talked about the importance of self care and the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet and exercising, to maintain physical wellbeing and prevent the onset of the illness. He referred participants to the Diabetes UK leaflet '15 Healthcare Essentials', which identifies the tests those with diabetes are eligible for and can access to ensure their wellbeing.

### Mental Health and Self Care

A representative from Bromley Working for Wellbeing discussed the role of IAPT and the self-referral system, which provides easy access for people who may benefit from therapy. The presentation also discussed different types of mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression, both of which can be helped by IAPT therapy. The presentation included tips for managing your individual emotional wellbeing, including the Five Ways of Wellbeing.

### Respiratory Diseases and Self Care

A Respiratory Nurse Consultant, talked about the common causes of respiratory diseases, such as smoking, and explained healthy lifestyle options that can help prevent the onset of serious conditions. They also provided self care tips for people who experience respiratory disease, including the importance of yearly flu jabs and keeping warm during the winter months.

### Eye Care and Self Care

A representative from South East London Vision (SELVis) talked about the importance of keeping your eyes healthy and free from strain. The workshop was interactive, with participants encouraged to join in with Tai-Chi exercises to help relax their eyes. The audience asked a variety of questions including the early identifiers and symptoms of glaucoma and Macular Degeneration.



## Healthwatch Engagement



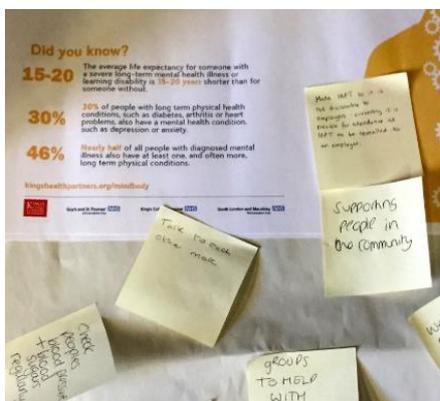
The Self Care Matters event was attended by over 60 people. Attendees were asked to leave their feedback on several interactive feedback boards.

Participants were asked which area of self care was of most interest to them and if they had any specific questions around self care. The feedback received suggests people would like to know where they can access information. Those in attendance also suggested the potential for technology to enable people to self monitor their long term conditions. Another suggestion was to create a directory of available leaflets, so they can be provided in an accessible

format. Participants also emphasised the importance of local activities supporting wellbeing, and healthy nutrition in relation to self care. The engagement findings suggest there is a need to have adequate support in relation to long term conditions, emphasizing the importance of recognising people from the nine protected characteristics (as per the equality act), including LGBT and young people.



Long term conditions and mental health were of most interest to participants, followed by eye health. Information on winter readiness, minor illnesses, activities and sexual health were also considered useful.



The event provided an opportunity for participants to feedback on SLAM's enquiry into the integration of mental and physical health. The feedback received was in relation to providing support groups, physical checks for people with mental health issues, and help to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

**Overall the day was a success and we would like to thank everyone who was involved and participated in the delivery of the day.**





Thank you to everyone who attended our **AGM** and **Self Care Event**

**healthwatch**  
Bromley

**healthwatch**  
Lewisham

