



SEL Insights

Jan – Mar 2026

healthwatch
Lambeth

Introduction

The insights in these slides are drawn from reports published in the preceding quarter and made publicly available on the websites of the local Healthwatch in south east London. These are Healthwatch Bexley, Healthwatch Bromley, Healthwatch Greenwich, Healthwatch Lambeth, Healthwatch Lewisham and Healthwatch Southwark.

Insight from a local Healthwatch is not included in the quarterly insight if no reports are published on their website.

Before reports are published, findings and recommendations are shared with service providers and commissioners. Providers then share with their local Healthwatch any actions they plan to take or have already put in place.

Local Healthwatch share their reports at Place with a range of groups, committees and boards. All SEL Healthwatch have seats on their local care partnership boards.

The Quarterly Insight reports are produced by Healthwatch Lambeth on behalf of the six local SEL Healthwatch, with funding from SEL ICB. This is a residual arrangement as the ICB and South East London Healthwatch partnership is no longer in place, so the reports do not contain such detailed insight or outcomes as the reports produced during the partnership arrangement. The reports are presented to a limited number of SEL boards and committees and meetings by a SEL Healthwatch lead on behalf of the local south east London Healthwatch.

Who we heard from

1. Young people
2. Older people (over 65)
3. LGBTQ+
4. People experiencing frailty/long-term conditions
5. People with disabilities
6. Black Caribbean/Black African heritage
7. Black men with an SMI
8. Carers
9. Health professionals
10. Community health ambassadors
11. People affected by poor housing and cost of living pressures

What we are hearing about services

In Southwark, positive feedback was received about Evelina Children's Hospital describing staff as brilliant despite pressure, with one comment saying: "The people that work here are fantastic." The feedback was described as overwhelmingly positive, and the work generated useful insight on children's cancer care and transition to adult services.

Very positive experiences reported about cancer care at the Chartwell Unit – 162 of 235 participants rated their experience as very good and 54 as good; patients especially praised staff attitudes and quality of treatment (Bromley – Princess Royal University Hospital in Orpington).

Responsive urgent and specialist care in Greenwich – Priya's case showed positive same day urgent GP assessment, followed by compassionate orthopaedic and physiotherapy support.

What we are hearing about services

Residents value chances to speak directly with NHS professionals in informal, community-based settings. In Southwark's *Every Drop Matters* event, informal feedback was positive and highlighted the value of a relaxed environment for conversations about sickle cell and blood donation.

Strong breastfeeding and postnatal support in Lambeth – residents described Lambeth's breastfeeding team and postnatal/neonatal ward support as kind, helpful and well delivered, with breastfeeding workshops particularly valued.

Common theme: access to services

In Greenwich, residents needed help understanding how to raise GP complaints, navigate social care pathways, and know their rights and entitlements. People are often overwhelmed by multiple services, multiple contacts and unclear processes.

GP access remains an issue in Lambeth. The most common feedback included booking GP appointments by phone or online, and residents described 7am call issues, long waits, and inflexible app-based booking.

Hospital access is also affected by practical barriers. In the Chartwell report, the biggest negative themes were car parking and waiting times, with parking drawing 99 comments and waiting times 37; car parking at PRUH and travel to Denmark Hill were both significant concerns.

In Lambeth there were reports of poor follow-up from hospital teams, and long waits in cardiology, gynaecology, gastroenterology and neurology. One example was a resident still waiting 20 months to be seen by gastroenterology; another had a neurology follow-up 17 months away.

In Southwark, ambassadors suggest that access is also shaped by wider pressures: poor housing and financial strain can make it harder for residents to prioritise, navigate and attend health services.

Common theme: digital barriers

Lambeth NHS App report – 22% could not use the app to book GP appointments or message the GP, 23% said records were incorrect or incomplete, 73% used other health apps, and 23% were frustrated by the number of separate apps and poor compatibility. However, a third (36%) said they had no difficulties using the app, and some described it as a “great and 100% useful innovation” and “super useful”.

Greenwich gives a clear example through Kate’s story: a “digital first” model created more steps, more calls and more stress for someone with communication and sensory needs.

In Southwark, Community Health Ambassadors reported that many residents struggle to access GP services because of digital barriers and limited awareness of support. Ambassadors also said residents need more support with the NHS App, especially older or non-tech-savvy residents.

At the Chartwell Unit in Bromley, patients said digital systems such as emails, SMS and apps were confusing, and that fragmented communication added to stress around appointments and results.

In Lambeth residents also described appointment systems that rely on apps in ways that feel tedious, restrictive and hard to manage.

Common theme: person-centred care

Black Men with an SMI, Lambeth – professionals highlighted that good care depends on trust, empathy, active listening, continuity, family/carer involvement and cultural understanding. They also called for mandatory cultural competence training and more open discussion of racism, stigma and identity.

In Greenwich, residents identified a need for clearer rights-based information, reasonable adjustments and accessible communication, especially for people with communication needs and deaf residents.

In Lambeth's feedback report, people praised services when they were listened to, given clear explanations and treated with care, but some felt clinicians did not take their concerns seriously.

Positive feedback in Southwark highlights the value of kind, welcoming care, where staff take time to explain and guide people.

Common theme: Communication and Continuity in Care

Lambeth residents highlighted issues with being listened to, communication with services, and waiting for care. Poor communication made access and waiting harder.

Greenwich residents highlight that when communication and coordination between services are unclear, the burden falls on them and families, increasing delays, duplication and unmet need.

Professionals working with Black men with an SMI in Lambeth, called for better communication and information sharing between GPs, community services and CMHTs, reporting that lack of visibility over appointments, clinic letters and care coordinator details was a major barrier.

In the Chartwell Unit, Bromley, people wanted better updates about waiting times, clearer communication between staff and patients, and better communication between services when appointments changed or test results were delayed.

Southwark Ambassadors act as a key link to communities, sharing around 30 health messages a month through WhatsApp, phone and face-to-face contact.

Other issues

In Lambeth, residents highlighted problems around home adaptations through adult social care and GP deregistration. In the Peter case study, Healthwatch had to clarify that a patient removed from one practice can still register elsewhere and that the ICB can formally allocate a GP if needed.

Deaf residents in Greenwich reported issues around the absence of interpreters and overreliance on written notes, lip-reading or family members. Also services still phoning people whose records show they are deaf.

Practical issues were reported at the Chartwell Unit that included pharmacy delays, lack of awareness of Blue Badge parking rules, and the difficulty of reaching KCH Denmark Hill from across Bromley, especially for people with impaired mobility.

Southwark flags broader determinants of health, including poor housing, fuel poverty, employment issues, poor living conditions, crime/anti-social behaviour and financial strain.

Other issues

Healthwatch Southwark's consultation response highlights concerns that settlement reforms may create additional pressure for migrants, families and community organisations, with possible knock-on effects for wellbeing, stability and access to support.

Community Health Ambassadors in Southwark highlighted that the Latin American community feels underserved, and that recent policy changes were affecting the mental health of some migrants.

People's own voices

"My GP surgery is excellent. They always provide the care I need." Lambeth.

"They're brilliant – under a lot of pressure but they're doing great." Evelina Children's Hospital, Southwark

"We need to discuss what it is to be a Black male today in Lambeth."

"That unit is more than just a treatment centre; it's a sharing and caring community..." (Chartwell Unit)

"The Ambassadors Celebration left me genuinely uplifted... deeply valued and energised for the work ahead." (Southwark)

Reports referenced

Healthwatch Lambeth, Services Feedback Report: October to December 2025

Healthwatch Lambeth, NHS App and Independent Feedback Report: Lambeth findings

Healthwatch Lambeth, A More Effective Service for Black Men With an SMI

Healthwatch Greenwich, Quarterly Feedback Report: November 2025 to January 2026

Healthwatch Southwark, Strategy 2023–2026 Monitoring, Quarter 3

Community Health Ambassador Network: Q3 Report (1 Oct–31 Dec 2025)

Every Drop Matters: Reflections Report 2026


Ambassadors New Year Celebration – A Night of Joy, Recognition & Community

Healthwatch Bromley, Chartwell Unit – Winter 2025

For more information

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