

Investing in our tomorrow
Health and wellbeing Strategy refresh

Summary Report

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020 8888 0579



info@healthwatchharingey.org.uk



www.healthwatchharingey.org.uk



Haringey Race
and Equality
Council



Contents

Introduction	3
There should be more than two outcomes that the council focuses on in tackling health inequalities	3
More free, cheap and accessible exercise opportunities for local residents	4
Cleaner environment in Haringey will help to improve health and wellbeing	5
More information about having a healthier lifestyle	6
Too many fast food restaurants unhealthy foods and drinks and places to gamble in Haringey	6
Poverty	6
Better housing in Haringey	7
Lack of public toilets	7
Readdress and addressing the difference in life expectancy between the east and west of the borough	7
Having more GPs and better health services	7
Conclusion	8

Introduction:

Healthwatch Haringey has been assisting Haringey Council as part of its Health and Wellbeing strategy refresh and has been consulting with local groups.

To date four focus groups have been carried by Healthwatch Haringey to find out peoples of views for the Health and Wellbeing Refresh. The service users who participated in the focus groups were the Learning Disabilities Partnership, Personal Budget Group, Age UK Haringey Older People's Forum and Embrace UK.

The groups were chosen as they work with people with some of the poorest outcomes including people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, older people and people from BME backgrounds.

Participants of the focus groups were informed that Haringey Council's existing Health and Wellbeing Strategy comes to an end in 2015 and that the council is starting to develop a new strategy for making health and wellbeing better in Haringey. As part of creating the new strategy Haringey Council have asked us to speak to community groups and local people about their views on what the council does next in tackling health issues in the borough.

Mable informed the group that as part of the new health and wellbeing strategy the council have suggested focusing on 2 outcomes which are:

- **Reducing childhood obesity.**
- **Improving mental health and emotional wellbeing for children and adults.**

Mable asked the groups if we narrow the focus of the health and wellbeing strategy to these two areas did they agree they were the priorities.

Key issues that were raised from the focus groups:

There should be more than two outcomes that the council focuses on in tackling health inequalities:

- Every one we spoke to felt that there should be more than two outcomes that the council focuses on. The majority of participants said that then would be concerned if the council only focuses on these two.
- People at the Learning Disabilities Partnership said that obesity is a huge issue for people with learning disabilities and that the council should not only focus on childhood obesity but also adult obesity and create methods of tackling adult obesity.
- The group felt that the obesity outcome should cover adults as well as children. Particularly if they are vulnerable and rely on others to meet their needs.
- Participants from the Learning Disabilities Partnership said people who support those with learning disabilities are not always aware of what obesity

is, how to deal with it, or how to help, as they might not know what healthy looks like. They said that training and awareness is needed for support workers on what healthy should look like. One of the participants gave an example of a paid carer feeding her son Cornish pasty and chips as a dinner. People at the meeting felt there should be training for carers on what is healthy.

- The Personal Budgets Group had concerns that the council should not focus only on child obesity and improving mental health for adults and children at the exclusion of social care related issues and ensuring there are good quality carers to assist disabled people.
- The Personal Budgets Group said supporting people with disabilities and special needs and awareness is important and should feature in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- The participants from the Personal Budgets Group spoke about health inequalities, the east, the west divide, and the disparity that there is between the service received by the east and west of the borough. One person said that being in Tottenham they are seen as being third class citizens.
- Participants from the Older People's Forum said that the outcomes needed to be specific such as when the council refers to adults what do they mean by adults, and does this include older people?
- Participants from the Older People's Forum wanted the outcomes to be more specific such as reducing loneliness and isolation or to cover areas such as dementia.
- One person from the Older People's Forum said that it is important that if the council is only focusing on two outcomes that there is not a drop in the other areas that they do not look at.
- One participant from Embrace UK said that "the council is going about it the wrong way, by shutting all the sport facilities it stops people from participating in sports."
- Participants from the almost all of the focus groups agreed that people cannot cope who are on the streets. There are lots of people in the borough who have mental issues and there needs to be outreach to them.

More free, cheap and accessible exercise opportunities for local residents:

Most of the participants that we spoke to in the four focus groups felt that there should be more exercise opportunities available for local residents. People felt that exercise was key in preventing obesity and helping people to achieve and sustain healthier lives.

- The participants we spoke to from the Learning Disabilities Partnership said that there was not enough of a range of exercise opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

- One person said around the area of learning disabilities it's difficult for people with learning disabilities to access exercise opportunities as they may not read, and need support to get to a venue. Some of the service users have tried joining Haringey Walking Group but found it hard because there was not a designated person for them to speak to give an overview beforehand.
- Participants from Embrace UK said that there should be free or subsidised gym membership for everyone who lives in Haringey. 50% discount for people who are tenants.
- The participants we spoke to liked outdoors gyms and people from Embrace UK said that there should be more outdoor gyms strategically placed around the borough with weather covering to encourage people to use it whatever the weather is.
- One person from Embrace UK suggested people could have wellness mentors to support them.
- People recommended that there should be a bigger range of exercise opportunities for people who live in the borough. People felt that keeping active and prevention is key.

Cleaner environment in Haringey will help to improve health and wellbeing:

Three of the focus groups commented on the dirty environment in Haringey and talked about the issue of Haringey having a dirty environment including rubbish on the streets, air pollution, recycling and spitting. They said that the environment can affect stress and wellbeing. The groups suggested there should be some enforcement action taken.

- Three of the group raised the issue of spitting being very bad in the borough.
- A person from the Personal Budgets Group said that rubbish builds up over two weeks and can encourage rats and foxes. People felt there should be more frequent bin collections in the borough.
- One person stated that there are diminished morals in the east of the borough and it needs to be cleaned and alleviated.
- People raised issues about drunken men and anti-social behaviour on the streets and people drinking cans and taking drugs in public places.
- People spoke about how having a dirty environment that is not looked after can affect stress levels.

More information about having a healthier lifestyle:

People we spoke to felt that one of the main barriers that people have in achieving a better health and wellbeing is there being a lack of information about having a healthier lifestyle.

- One person from the Older People Forum said that one of the biggest barriers people having is access to information and knowing where to get help. This person felt it was a major issue in the borough.
- Participants from Embrace UK said that there should be more information informing people about the healthier options such as walking instead of taking the bus and information on unhealthy foods.
- There should be education teaching people how to cook and eat healthily.
- People suggested there should be a ban on fizzy drinks and reduce the sugar content in foods.
- One person spoke about the need to educate parents as children are indoors watching TV or playing computer games and not going out to exercise.

Too many fast food restaurants unhealthy foods and drinks and places to gamble in Haringey:

The participants in the focus groups said that there are too many fried chicken shops and bookies in Haringey. They felt that all the fast food restaurants were having a detrimental impact into young peoples and adult's health.

- The whole group agreed that there are too many chicken shops and that children go to these at lunch time and after school. It's become a lifestyle for them.
- One person suggested that in schools there should be a facility for children in schools to heat up their own meals, a microwave for kids.
- People spoke about there not being healthy foods in school canteens and healthy option.
- One person spoke about there being too many sweets, fizzy drinks and vending machines. They stated that it was money making and against healthy living.

Poverty:

Many people spoke about poverty being a key issue in health inequalities.

- One woman from Embrace UK spoke about education and how there is a lack of education, and felt that education is important in having a healthy life. She said most people in this area [Tottenham] are poor and have no jobs.

- One person said poverty is the choice between heating your house or eating, he said there is a food bank round the corner from here which is very busy as people cannot afford to eat.

Better housing in Haringey:

Housing came up as one of the main issues in affecting people's health and wellbeing.

- Better housing = better health.
- Make housing affordable and have concessions.
- More social housing that is affordable.

Lack of public toilets:

- People at the Personal Budgets Group and the Older Peoples Forum agreed that there are not enough public toilets especially for people with disabilities and older people. Some people from the Personal Budgets Group didn't know about the radar key for disabled people. They also said that people in shops sometimes don't allow them to use their toilets.

Readdress and addressing the difference in life expectancy between the east and west of the borough:

- People raised the issue of the difference in life expectancy between the east and west of the borough and asked what the council will be doing to tackle this.
- One person said that the biggest problem is that the council and public health not working together around housing and licensing.
- The Older People's Forum also suggested that the council should fund the things that it has stopped funding including luncheon clubs, day care centres and exercise classes.

Having more GPs and better health services:

- People said that having more GPs and better community health services would support people in living healthier lives.
- Lack of access to GP appointments highlighted in the Healthwatch Haringey GP Tottenham GP Access Report.

- People in Tottenham not having prenatal care and there being a lack of GP practices and GPs in Tottenham.
- The people at the meeting agreed that there should be a health drop in centre in Tottenham.
- One person said that there is an issue with no GPs if you live in the edge of the west of the borough, as there are no doctors in Stroud Green.

Conclusion:

Many issues were raised from the focus group around the things that affect people's health and wellbeing in the borough and similar emerging themes around the environment. Not having enough accessible information about how to access healthier lifestyles is an issue, and needing better GP and health services in the borough. Healthy inequalities are a cause of concern for many people.

Everyone we spoke to felt that for the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy that the council should focus on more than two outcomes as by focusing on two it moves its focus away from other important areas such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, older people, loneliness and isolation etc.

People in the focus group were in agreement that there should be more collaborative work with the council, the NHS and the communities in building healthier lives for our residents.

Summary of what people *said* and *feel* about where Public Health's focus should be to refresh Haringey's Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Where the strategy should focus

On narrow focus to the two priorities:

Joining up support and services

Improving access to primary care

What the focus should be

- Concerns were raised around the risk that other areas of health might suffer as a result
 - People wanted the outcomes to be more specific, such as:
 - Reducing loneliness and isolation
 - Dementia support
 - Ensuring there are good quality carers for disabled people
 - Wider social care services should still be available
 - The obesity outcome should include adults as well as children, particularly if they are vulnerable and rely on others to meet their needs
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- Promote health education information to all ages, learning from other boroughs
 - Integrate support services
 - Support self help
 - Take a community development approach, providing access to advocacy and employment opportunities
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- Introduce a maximum 1-week GP access time
 - Increase GP practices in Tottenham and South Green

Reducing social isolation

- Preserve rather than close community centres
- Support more drop in centres and luncheon clubs to reduce social isolation
- There should be a drop in centre in Tottenham

Reduce health inequalities

- Health inequalities between the east and the west of the Borough were highlighted with some Tottenham residents feeling they were treated as third class citizens
- Supporting people with disabilities and special needs, along with public awareness
- Malnutrition was a problem among elderly people and it was noted that there was inadequate nutrition for elderly people in Whittington Hospital
- Provide better support for carers, not just online

Long term health condition

- Improve GPs in relation to these conditions
- Co-ordinate advocacy support
- Provide support for carers

Mental health

- Raise awareness, for example, through talks in schools, a directory of support provided
- Research people's needs, including hospitals and prisons
- Provide more interventions at an earlier stage to tackle social isolation
- Provide better support for carers, not just online

Obesity

- Support mothers to continue breast feeding through health education activity
- Provide education for parents and children, for example, inter-

- generational healthy eating/cooking classes run by GP practices
- Enable school children to access healthy food through school breakfasts, lunches and free fruit during holidays
- Provide access to regular sport activities
- There should be a bigger range of exercise opportunities for people who live in the borough

Improving support for carers

- Support for carers needed strengthening, generally

Environment and community safety

- Poor street cleansing was leading to an increasing in rats and foxes and increased stress for residents
- Antisocial behaviour such as spitting, drug and alcohol misuse in public spaces
- Lack of public toilets, especially for people with disabilities

Pre-natal care

- Improve access to pre-natal care in Tottenham

Working with community groups

- Participants recommended that the council worked closer with faith groups and neighbourhood schemes

Other significant health and wellbeing issues identified:

- People felt there was a lack of confidence in NHS management
- Poverty, housing, domestic violence and safety were all noted as having a significant impact on health and wellbeing in the borough

Champion the rights of older people

- Have an active older people's champion in the Council to ensure that older people's voices are heard and their rights are upheld

Promote existing support and services

- Ensure people over 50+ have information on help available and where to get it
- Improve access to information, generally

Reduce social isolation

- Reopen luncheon clubs and day centres that the Council has closed

Improve access to primary care

- Increase the number of GPs to improve service quality, for example by employing session doctors
- Health centres should be open 24/7 or at least 16 hours a day, 7 days a week with nurse and junior doctors available to deal with less urgent cases. This would reduce A& E waiting times

Environmental improvements

- More enforcement on dirty streets and noise pollution
- Making spitting illegal as Enfield Council have done

Join up services

- More joined up services to avoid wasting money

