

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO POWER TO MAKE CHANGE



**Healthwatch Southwark (HWS)
Strategy 2023-2026**

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Strategy background and purpose

Healthwatch Southwark (HWS) has achieved considerable impact but needs a clear focus to enhance its unique position in Southwark. Unlike other Healthwatch bodies, HWS benefits from a close link with Community Southwark, allowing it to harness local partnerships, volunteer ambassadors, and community-driven initiatives.

Following recent staff turnover, the team is motivated to refine its purpose, ensuring every role supports residents in voicing their needs for impactful health and social care improvements.

With a small team—comprising a manager, engagement officer, and researcher—HWS must prioritise strategically. By carefully selecting research areas, the organisation can drive meaningful change aligned with community needs.

Enhanced links with local groups and our Community Health Ambassadors programme, this strategy can offer a framework to maximise community presence, build relationships, and foster trust.

To shape this strategy, HWS gathered input from stakeholders, including the NHS Trust, Southwark Council, and various local organisations, through surveys, interviews, and a strategic planning workshop.

These insights have informed a focused, community-centred approach to leveraging HWS's resources and statutory function to benefit Southwark's most underrepresented residents.

Aims and focus moving forward

Healthwatch Southwark's mission is to empower local people to influence health and social care improvements, particularly for those from historically underrepresented groups.

This strategy focuses on building a more inclusive, responsive, and accountable health and social care landscape in Southwark, supporting lasting improvements that genuinely reflect the needs and voices of the community.

HWS team theory of change

We held Healthwatch Southwark (HWS) team away day, inspired by discussions with team members, our Community Health Ambassadors and Community Southwark CEO to develop our strategic action plan, begin priority setting, and foster team cohesion. With recent staff additions, it was an ideal moment to strengthen professional and personal connections.

The day provided a structured agenda, which included reviewing the previous year's lessons and aligning future priorities with HWS's strategic goals.

We discussed current and forthcoming projects, outlined outputs, and encouraged creativity through team-building activities and a 'Tree of Life' exercise to explore professional growth.

We completed reflective and mindfulness activities, combined with forward planning to help map project outcomes and ensure a shared vision. We closed the day with a group reflection for the team to consolidate insights and set a unified path forward.



Team building exercise

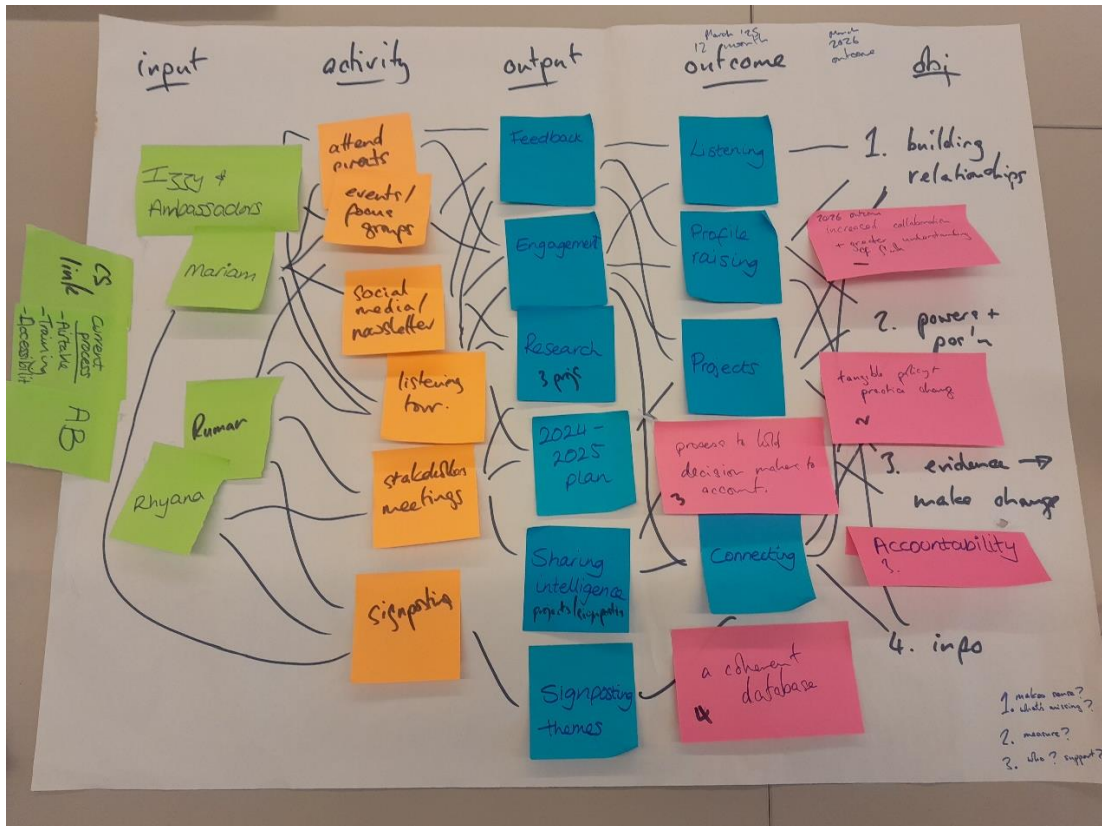


Year in review exercise

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. Across Southwark, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.



Tree of life exercise



Theory of change exercise

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion. Across Southwark, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

Web: www.healthwatchsouthwark.org
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Aligning our core Healthwatch functions, current activities, values of HWS and Community Southwark in addition to the forward planning of our work for the remainder of our contract, we concluded on the following theory of change and associated metrics:

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Mid Term Outcomes	Mid-Long Term Outcomes	Strategic objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthwatch Southwark team Ambassadors and volunteers HWS current processes: Airtable, training, existing relationships, accountability. Links with Community Southwark team and VCS groups HWS Advisory Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend events in local spaces (60 per year) Provide signposting information/gather feedback (2 per event attended) Listening tour Ambassadors integrated into Healthwatch event support, surveys, signposting and feedback (30 per year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback about H&SC services using signposting and feedback themes and trends (4 monitoring reports per year) 2024/25 plan for priorities and projects Ambassadors Theory of Change embedded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to community needs Raising the profile of HWS Future projects appropriately planned with communities and evaluated to address emerging issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and maintain relationships with communities Increased collaborations Greater understanding of Southwark health and social care needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more inclusive, diverse, and equal Southwark
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-led research conducted through events, enter and view visits, surveys, focus groups etc. (2 projects per year) Shared intelligence and themes at meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with community members, leaders, decision makers. (1 case study per year of change/ implementation of recommendations) Meetings with statutory partners (# of meetings with clear documented purpose) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater connections made within communities and among statutory stakeholders Communities having a voice with decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present evidence with communities 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build accountable relationships with statutory partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and embed a process to hold decision makers to account (1 positive case study per quarter) Project progress relative to community needs (receive 100% formal responses, action plans and 6-12 month progress review with potential for enter and view visits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tangible policy and practice change Accountability to making sustained change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the powers and position of Healthwatch 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate using a variety of channels such as social media, website, newsletter, email etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to local residents, VCS and other partners (12 newsletters per year) Mailing list of individuals, partners, and the VCS (100 sign ups per year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improved, clear and simple comms strategy with metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give individuals and groups the information they need 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Airtable and SharePoint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A coherent database to support with feedback and signposting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly maintained and growing database of feedback and signposting information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a well-supported team with efficient processes 	

Impact: To connect people to power so that they can make improvements in health and social care, especially for people who have been historically underrepresented.

Our values

At Healthwatch Southwark, we adhere to the shared values outlined by Healthwatch England which are:

- **Equity:** Embracing inclusivity and compassion, establishing profound connections with the communities we serve, and empowering them.
- **Collaboration:** Nurturing both internal and external relationships, fostering transparent communication, and partnering to amplify our impact.
- **Independence:** Championing the public's agenda, serving as purposeful and critical allies to decision-makers.
- **Truth:** Operating with unyielding integrity and honesty, fearlessly advocating truth to those in power.

- Impact: Pursuing ambitious endeavours to effect meaningful change for individuals and communities while remaining accountable and holding others accountable.

In addition to the shared values, we adhere to the values of Community Southwark, our hosted organisation, which are:

- We are bold
- We work with the community for the community
- We make a difference
- We are inclusive

These values are always underpinned by:

- Our commitment to respecting diversity and promoting equality
- Putting Southwark communities at the heart of everything we do

Healthwatch Southwark functions

Healthwatch Southwark (HWS), in common with all local Healthwatch organisations, is required (under the 2012 Health and Social Care Act) to deliver a set of specific activities.

F1: Gathering views and understanding the experiences of patients and the public
F2: Making people’s views known
F3: Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the commissioning and provision of local care services and how they are scrutinised.
F4: Recommending investigation or special review of services via Healthwatch England or directly to the Care Quality Commission
F5: Providing information and signposting to services and support for making informed choices (advice and information)
F6: Making the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England.
F7: Support individuals to access information and independent advocacy if they need help to complain about NHS services via the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS). {Commissioned by a separate contract in Southwark. HWS role limited to supporting referrals to service when necessary}

Strategic priorities, outputs and outcomes

1. Building relationships (function 1)

Position HWS as a trusted community advocate, building strong, ongoing relationships with underrepresented communities across Southwark. HWS will expand its reach through a consistent presence at local events and by co-hosting activities with key voluntary sector (VCS) partners.

We will do this by:

- Event engagement: Attend 60 community events each year, enabling HWS to connect with diverse groups, including marginalised communities.
- Ambassador programme: Integrate 30 ambassadors annually to support events, engage communities, and collect feedback directly from residents.
- Listening and feedback collection: Hold structured listening sessions, aiming to gather 120 pieces of feedback per year to guide community engagement strategies and future projects.

2. Utilise the powers and position of Healthwatch Southwark (function 3)

Leverage HWS's influence to ensure community concerns reach decision-makers in health and social care sectors, highlighting recommendations that reflect local needs.

We will do this by:

- Community-led projects: Conduct two community-led research projects each year, developed in collaboration with residents, targeting specific health and social care concerns raised by the community
- Formal stakeholder engagements: Schedule regular meetings with clear objectives to present community insights and maintain an ongoing advocacy for meaningful changes.
- Enter and view visits: Prepare to relaunch Enter and View visits by 2025, training a new cohort of volunteers to support transparency and accountability in health and care settings.

3. Present evidence with communities (functions 2, 4 and 6)

Share evidence-based findings effectively to influence policies and practices, prioritising actionable recommendations from the community to drive targeted improvements.

We will do this by

- Case studies and reporting: Publish a quarterly case study demonstrating how HWS has held stakeholders accountable, contributing to policy or practice changes based on community feedback.
- Progress reviews: Implement formal action plans with a 100% response rate goal, followed by reviews at 6-12 months to ensure sustained impact and accountability
- Public feedback sessions: Host sessions post-report publication, closing the feedback loop to show how residents' insights inform HWS's advocacy.

4. Give individuals and groups the information they need (function 5)

Develop a robust communications strategy that equips residents with clear, accessible information about health and social care services, empowering them to make informed choices and engage with HWS initiatives.

We will do this by:

- Newsletters and mailing lists: Distribute monthly newsletters and aim for 100 new mailing list sign-ups annually, while strengthening social media outreach to maximise engagement.
- Accessible content creation: Prioritise concise, visually engaging reports and resources that residents can easily understand, including translations when necessary.
- Digital engagement and workshops: Increased use of our online platforms to inform residents about available support in the borough and opportunities to engage in shaping health and social care services.

5. A well supported team with efficient processes

Build a skilled, adaptable team with streamlined processes to ensure HWS remains responsive to community needs and efficient in our service delivery.

We will do this by:

- Database and process optimisation: Regularly update and maintain an organised database of feedback and signposting information, ensuring efficiency in how we deliver our services.
- Staff training and process documentation: Provide ongoing training for staff and ambassadors, with clear guides on feedback handling, event management, and project processes.
- Collaborative decision-making: Engage the HWS Advisory Board and team in decision-making, promoting a unified vision for strategic initiatives and strengthening service quality.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will track progress against our strategy and action plans:

- Monthly: Track event attendance, quality of feedback, and engagement across digital and in-person platforms.
- Quarterly: Review progress through accountability case studies, stakeholder engagement, and reach of communications.
- Annually: Evaluate the success of community-led projects, volunteer impact, and the overall effectiveness of HWS's advocacy.