

# Southwark Soundboard: Healthwatch Southwark Listening Tour



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## Executive Summary

This reflection report provides an overview of the Healthwatch Southwark Soundboard Listening Tour. This was an initiative aimed at engaging with Southwark residents to gather insights on local health and social care services. The tour, conducted in partnership with a range of local services, sought to empower community members by providing a platform to voice their experiences, identify gaps in service provision, and influence future improvements.

The primary objectives of the Soundboard Listening Tour were to:

- **Engage with Communities:** Actively engage with people in their own neighborhoods and community spaces, focusing on reaching a diverse cross-section of the population to ensure that all voices, especially those from historically underrepresented groups, are heard and considered.
- **Build Trust and Partnerships:** Establish trusted connections with the community and create partnerships with local services to ensure that residents are aware of available resources and feel supported in accessing them.
- **Gather Insights and Feedback:** Collect detailed feedback from residents on their experiences with local services, including health and social care, whether positive, neutral, or negative, to inform future research and projects.
- **Identify Service Gaps:** Understand the needs and concerns of the community by identifying areas where services are not meeting expectations and use this knowledge to advocate for targeted improvements.
- **Advocate for Change:** Use the insights and feedback gathered to help shape service delivery, ensuring that community input plays a key role in driving meaningful improvements.
- **Foster Community Cohesion:** Promote a sense of unity and inclusion by actively listening to what matters most to the community, addressing concerns, and fostering a collaborative environment where everyone feels heard and valued.

## Background

In 2023, we updated our strategy, emphasising building relationships with historically under-represented communities to guide our work for the coming three years. To prepare for this future work, we planned a listening tour in Summer 2024 to ensure alignment with the current and emerging needs of Southwark residents.

By doing this, we hoped residents and service users are empowered to share their experiences, while providing an opportunity to learn about Healthwatch Southwark, build awareness of services, and authentically build and maintain local relationships.

This reflection report serves as a record of the successes and challenges encountered during the tour, and lessons to improve future community engagement.

## How did we do it?

### *In-person*

We hosted six in-person pop-up events across Southwark. Each venue was carefully selected, focusing on locations where we could engage with diverse and often underserved groups.

To support the initiative, we allocated a budget covering:

- Venue hire costs, refreshments (tea, coffee, milk, water, fruit, biscuits, disposable cups), promotional materials, participation incentives (such as £30 Love2Shop vouchers and goody bag items), necessary resources, and travel expenses.
- Necessary resources such as banners, printed surveys, signs, leaflets, stationery, and more.
- Cabs were used to transport resources and staff to and from venues, especially for distant locations.

Each event featured:

- Two hours of public engagement, with an additional 30 minutes for setup and 30 minutes for pack-down.
- Collaboration with six 'spotlight services' who were chosen based on where we had signposted people to most frequently in the last 6-12 months, tailored to the visitors/users of each venue.
- A minimum of six staff, consisting of Community Southwark staff, Community Health Ambassadors, and core volunteers.
- Event format, risk assessments and an agenda for each venue due to differing start and end times.
- Briefing meetings with venues, spotlight services, and internal teams to ensure clarity and preparedness.

### *Online survey*

We conducted an online priorities survey which was open from 1st July to 19th August 2024 to reach residents who could not attend the in-person pop-up events.

Creation of the survey:

- Reviewed our Priorities Survey from 2022-23 and adapted it for current needs.
- Identified key health and social care services mentioned most frequently in feedback over the last 12 months and broke them into distinct categories with examples.
- Added questions about additional issues, such as food insecurity and the cost of living, and provided options for respondents to share other factors impacting their health or that of friends and family.

- Shared the survey questions with stakeholders, gathered their feedback, and revised the questions accordingly.
- Agreed on a seven-week survey period, aiming to increase response uptake.

#### What the survey asked respondents:

- Share feedback on health and social care services they had used in the past 12 months.
- List additional challenges they faced, such as food insecurity and the cost of living, or any other factors affecting their personal, family and communities' health.
- Rank their health and social care priorities.

#### *For the overall initiative*

#### Promotion:

- Developed marketing materials such as Mailchimp newsletters, social media posts, website content, email footers, direct emails, printed and electronic flyers, and word-of-mouth promotion.
- Promoted the survey before, during, and after the pop-up events to maximise participation.

## When and where?

We conducted a community mapping exercise to help us locate and engage with populations that may not typically participate in surveys or public consultations, such as marginalised or underserved groups. This ensured that the pop-up events captured a diverse range of voices.

We concluded on the following areas within Southwark: **Borough, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Walworth, Peckham and Dulwich** and sourced community venues to host us. Three out of six venues were holding community events and we felt this would be a good opportunity to engage with services who have a good foot fall. As the events were held during the Summer, we varied the start and end times to accommodate a range of audiences throughout the days.

These areas were selected based on:

- Diverse demographics of the area to engage with a wide range of groups across Southwark.
- Previous community engagement levels to target both high-engagement areas like Bermondsey and Peckham, and less-engaged areas like Dulwich.
- Access to underserved communities so we could reach marginalised groups in locations who may face different barriers to services than in other areas.
- Venues with strong community ties such as community centres, libraries, and public spaces with established local relationships.

# SOUTHWARK SOUNDBOARD

## Tour dates 2024

29th July - 12-2pm

Mercato Metropolitan. 42 Newington Causeway, London, SE1 6DR

31st July - 11am-1pm

John Harvard Library - 211-213, Borough High Street, Southwark SE1 1JA

1st August - 4-6pm

RJ4All, Rotherhithe Community Centre, 30 Plough Way, London, SE16 2LJ

5th August - 2-4pm

Appleby Blue - 94-116 Southwark Park Road, Rotherhithe, London, SE16 3RD

7th August - 1.30-3.30pm

Theatre Peckham 221 Havil St, London SE5 7SB

8th August - 1-3pm

Albrighton Community Fridge 37 Albrighton Road, London SE22 8AH

### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR SPOTLIGHT SERVICES



### THANK YOU FOR HOSTING OUR LISTENING TOUR



## The Format

Our initial approach was to have table discussions and note takers recording themes and trends of responses to the survey questions. During the event, a spotlight service would give a brief presentation and we would run a short quiz about local health and social care services.

After discussing the delivery of our first pop up and the challenges we faced when encouraging people to enter the venue and remain for a prolonged period, we changed the format of our upcoming sessions, following feedback from the team of helpers.

As this is a pilot for the Healthwatch Southwark Team, we were open to pivoting with our approach and apply learning along the way. We adopted a drop-in style for the remaining five pop up events of the tour which included street surveying and approaching participants asking for feedback, while supporting them to complete feedback forms if requested. Once completed forms were returned, participants were provided with their goody bag and informed about our next steps.

For the spotlight presentations, one person was allocated to encourage attendees to stay for the 10-minute presentation. This approach worked better in some venues than others and spotlight services also pivoted their presentation delivery by speaking directly to attendees rather than a group.

For three events, we were joined by the Southwark Public Health Outreach team offering free Vital 5 health checks. Staff, helpers and our Community Health Ambassadors encouraged, located interested participants and managed the list of those willing to have a discussion with a trained health professional and complete health checks in a private space within the venues.

## Key Learnings

Being open to honest feedback from our team was key to getting things right. When we listened to their insights, we adjusted our plans and approaches to better connect with the people we are trying to reach. The morale of our team, our helpers and the environments we worked in was important. When our team feels good, it shows in how we interact with the public, making our events and engagements much more successful.

Working together more closely is something we need to focus on. By building partnerships with a shared vision, we made sure that people are getting the health information they need in a way that makes sense to them. There's so much great work happening in our community, but a lot of it does not get the attention it deserves. If we can shine a light on these efforts, more people will know about and benefit from them.

People also appreciated having services brought directly to the places they already spend time. This made it easier for them to access what they needed without going out of their way, which was a big plus.

We noticed that people were more likely to get involved when they knew there were incentives like vouchers or goody bags. These small perks really helped to draw them in and make them interested in what we had to offer.

We have learned that people are eager to share their experiences when they are talking to real, empathetic people who genuinely listen. This kind of personal connection helped us to build trust and encouraged open, honest conversations.

What we have understood from the tour is that people know what they need from services, and it is crucial that we all listen to them. Their insights can help health and social care services, and us at Healthwatch Southwark, tailor offerings to better meet their needs.

Services appreciated the opportunity to promote themselves as this allowed them to clearly explain how they can help people live better lives. When the benefits are clear and relevant, people are more likely to engage and take advantage of what is available in our community.

## The Benefits

- ◆ Attendees learned of new services that they can signpost themselves, friends, families, and neighbours to, through the resources given in the goody bags and available from our information station.
- ◆ Spotlight services and venues made connections with one another that could lead to future partnerships or meaningful relationships. For example: The British Liver trust provide liver scans at their road shows and the Vital 5 Public Health outreach team focus on alcohol consumption as one of the checks. They discussed the potential of a collaborative roadshow based on their shared values and service offerings.
- ◆ Attendees appreciated having in person signposting that correlated to their concerns and/or issues raised during the pop-up events. For example: An attendee had discussed their concerns with hoarding in their home. They were provided with signposting information about what support Adult Social Care can provide and learnt how to get a Care and Support assessment.
- ◆ The tour has helped to build stronger relationships between residents and service providers, fostering a greater sense of community solidarity. Building self and community empowerment and actively taking charge of their health decisions through being informed and making decisions they can take ownership.



## The Challenges

- The pop-up events that coincided with activities at selected venues were helpful to increase footfall, however a greater understanding of what these activities are and expected number of attendees would have improved risk planning.
- Ensuring the venue contact shares all information with their teams to avoid delays.
- Some locations attract many tourists and working professionals who do not live in the borough, which was not ideal for meeting Southwark locals.
- We encountered artificial intelligence (AI) bots raiding our online survey. We sought advice about challenge-response tests from Meridian West, Survey Monkey and Thames Information Systems Limited (TISL) and included CAPTCHAs to enhance security and reliability.
- Since there is not a detailed list of Southwark neighbourhoods that goes beyond the Ward level, it was difficult to define a comprehensive list of local areas. We have noticed that many residents are not familiar with their local Wards. Instead, they identify with their local neighbourhoods, which has led to feedback that some areas in Southwark are being overlooked.

## Areas for Improvement

- Asking people where we should focus research was effective to engage in more natural conversations to start the interviews.
- Asking for positive feedback was also a good strategy to get people to engage.
- Choose ticketed events versus relying on footfall, while being mindful that specific venues may require different strategies as ticketed events would come with their own limitations and prevent us from engaging with residents who are unfamiliar with Healthwatch.
- While a large eatery may have been difficult, small and popular establishments may be more suitable such as McDonald's, street stalls, malls, community fairs, free local festivals and markets.
- Consider attending voluntary and community sector (VCS) group sessions that have direct ties to our target populations to support with promotion.
- Consider holding small, frequent pop-ups events, taking into consideration evenings and weekends, community schedules during the year, balancing academic term times, public holidays, and seasonal factors which comes with their own positives and negatives.
- Ask at the start of interactions whether participants live or work in Southwark to ensure our engagement and feedback collected is specific to services in the borough.
- We will explore offering basic health services at all future events to attract more participants and provide additional value.
- Use neighbourhood names or landmarks locally recognised when advertising events.
- Ensure that all future surveys are designed with robust security measures in place from the start to protect data integrity.

## Service Feedback and Quotes

“  
I found that the event was an excellent opportunity to meet with people from the community that I otherwise wouldn't have had a chance to meet. I thought that it was very well organised and that everyone was very friendly and welcoming  
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“  
The Healthwatch Southwark Listening Tour 2024 has been a profound opportunity to connect with the community, understanding their unique challenges and joys. It's crucial for shaping responsive health and social care services. We are excited to continue working together to create meaningful change.  
”

“  
Adult social care in Southwark is all about teamwork and helping everyone with their care and support needs. This includes giving advice and information for daily life challenges. The Health Watch soundboard sessions were a great chance for people to work together, learn about our services, and help us make them even better. These sessions were key for talking, understanding each other, and supporting one another, making our social care system stronger.  
”



“  
An extremely valuable initiative for the local community and Community Fridge users. It was on hand and easy for them to attend. I feel that a lot of the users gained from it, something that they would not necessarily make an appointment for elsewhere. Hopefully, we see you at the centre again  
”

“

We were delighted to host Southwark Healthwatch's Listening Tour at our RJ4All Rotherhithe Community Centre, expanding key access to health information, resources, support and signposting by meeting people at their own neighbourhood spaces. Parents, residents, and our Centre users who come in weekly for our services (food bank, charity shop, gym, gardening, etc.) were able to voice their health and social care concerns in a safe space while receiving vital health checks, wellbeing coaching, and signposting to relevant services. At RJ4All we are committed to the holistic restoration, wellbeing, and empowerment of the SE16 community, which is only made possible by partnering with local health organisations like Healthwatch Southwark for events like this that work to place health and healthcare choices back into the hands of our community members.

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“

Thanks so much for having us along at the Listening Tour, it was lovely to be able to meet residents in a new location and already started having some good chats around wellbeing and support - plus always a bonus when Monday includes a quiz!  
Thanks again for including us as a spotlight service, it's great to keep sharing about the work and support we can offer in the borough. Hope the rest of the tour goes well and all the best

”

“

The feedback from residents was very positive advising that the outreach teams were friendly and approachable, it was convenient to have the teams on site for them to engage with, have an ongoing delivery in the locations with additional services and creative sessions. From my own reflection it was really positive to engage with residents in all the locations as they were the target areas for low uptake of healthcare and areas of higher deprivation

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## Participant Feedback and Quotes

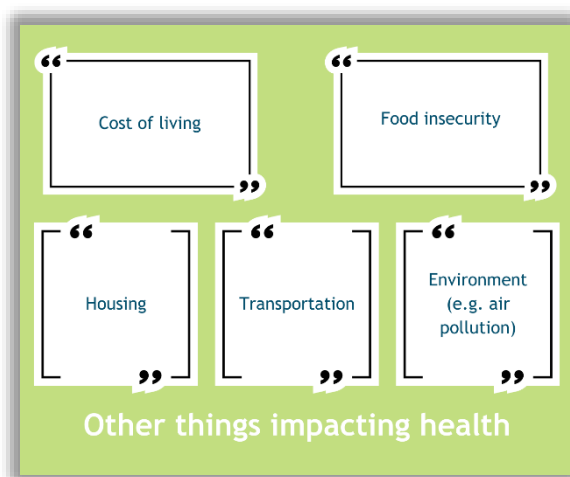
The Healthwatch Southwark Listening Tour exceeded our expectations in terms of participant engagement and the valuable feedback we received. Our initial target was to engage with **60** people across the pop-up events and online survey. By the end of the tour, we had interacted with **139** participants, surpassing our target by **131%**. This was also a significant increase from our previous survey conducted in 2022, where we engaged with **65** people, marking a **113%** improvement in community involvement.

In total **62** residents came and had their Vital 5 checks completed with over half of them being seen on the last day. The team identified **30** raised blood pressure readings, **18** increased BMI and **three** people who were identified with high alcohol intake, all these residents were advised to make appointments with their GPs or were signposted to local support services.

When we asked people what health and social care concerns are most important, some respondents said:



When we asked people what other things have impacted their health, some respondents said:



When we asked people where we should focus our research, some respondents suggested:



## Our Next Steps

As we move forward from the Healthwatch Southwark Listening Tour, we will focus on analysing the valuable insights gathered that will help us to shape our work for 2024-2026, with help from our Community Research volunteer.

We will use intelligence to identify two priority issues raised by the community and one priority area using a range of health population data that are impacting the general public’s health.

We will share findings in a written report and announce our chosen priorities at the joint Community Southwark and Healthwatch Southwark Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Following this, we will begin exploring how we will advocate for targeted improvements in health and social care services in Southwark.