

# Cost of Living Online Webinar

## Reflections Report



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](http://www.healthwatchsouthwark.org)

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## Introduction and purpose

During previous engagements, such as the listening tour and general engagement events, the cost-of-living crisis has consistently popped up in conversations as an important topic.

People have expressed concerns about the rising living costs and not knowing where to go to for support. We thought it would be useful to host an online webinar, where people can receive advice about how to navigate the crisis.

As energy costs rose in October, we thought it also would be topical to host a webinar that supports people that may be experiencing fuel poverty, in addition to how the cost-of-living crisis may be impacting other areas of their life such as food insecurity and their mental, emotional and social wellbeing.

## Organisations involved

**The Green Doctors:** a team of expert energy advisers who arrange a one-hour phone consultation or home visit with residents to help with their energy use. This service helps residents save money and reduce the mental stress of bills at an already stressful time.

**National Energy Action:** National fuel poverty and energy efficiency charity. They are currently delivering a project called [Warm Homes, Healthy Futures - National Energy Action \(NEA\)](#).

**Spring Community Hub:** Local organisation tackling food insecurity and hunger. The mission of Spring Community Hub is that through a 'Community Hub' and full activity programme, local people in or at risk of crisis will be supported along their journey to move on and achieve full social, economic and emotional independence to live healthy lives in a community which supports each other.

**Southwark Social Prescribers:** Social prescribing link workers give people time, focusing on 'what matters to me?' to coproduce a simple [personalised care and support plan](#), and support people to take control of their health and wellbeing. Social prescribing link workers also support existing community groups to be accessible and sustainable, and help people to start new groups, working collaboratively with all local partners.

## Planning

The webinar was planned in advance of the 17<sup>th</sup> December. The Healthwatch Southwark team discussed the details of the webinar and decided to include a panel discussion, as well as a presentation from Green Doctors, an energy advice organisation.

The panel discussion was intended to be informative and insightful. We decided that the panel should be formed of the Green Doctors, National Energy Action (NEA), Spring Community Hub and the Social Prescribers.

This was a balanced way of utilising energy organisations and community-based services to provide useful solutions for our target audience, which was the general public and professionals who sought to give advice to people on this topic. We decided to combine NEA and the Green Doctors to give localised support as well as national support on energy.

## Promotion

We utilised Eventbrite to advertise the webinar and used the services to send reminder emails to participants. We had 36 people sign up, including the Healthwatch Southwark team and the panel

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members. We used our various social media platforms, as well as asking our networks to share with their contacts to promote the event. We shared details in our newsletter, in addition to the Community Southwark newsletter and website and a range of in person engagement activities.



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GREEN DOCTOR

Join Healthwatch Southwark for an informative online discussion and learn how to navigate the Cost of Living Crisis.

Tuesday  
17th December 2024

Start At  
4pm to 6pm

[Register Now](#)

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## The webinar

The webinar took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> December from 4-6pm. Our Community Engagement Officer, Mariam, co-hosted the webinar with members of our Community Health Ambassadors Network Omotola and Esther. We started with an icebreaker exercise to make everyone feel welcome and learn a bit about each other. We decided to not record the webinar so that people could participate in a way that they felt comfortable.

The webinar was interactive, with cameras on and the chat feature enabled. We started the presentation with Carolina from the Green Doctors who presented energy advice tips and then we proceeded to the panel discussion.

Mariam selected 7 questions for the panel, ranging from “What are some of the most common challenges you experience when helping people deal with the cost-of-living crisis?” to “How can communities foster more resilience in the face of economic uncertainty?”. These questions were aimed at provoking a wider discussion on relevant topics and engaging the audience with the services.

We emphasized the signposting aspect of our service through highlighting which services did what. There was a strong emphasis on the cross collaboration of services in Southwark, something that the professionals on the call found useful. We had a great presence from our Community Health Ambassadors and local Southwark residents. The Ambassadors were engaging and finding ways to relate this to the work that they do in the community.

The themes from the comments were about the power of collaborations, sign-ups to our newsletter and Ambassadors programme and providing a range of signposting information that participants could share with their service users, friends and family.

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## Feedback

We received feedback from 10 people. The feedback was mostly positive, people were reporting that they found the webinar refreshing and useful.

20%

of attendee feedback said that the webinar **exceeded** their expectations

67%

of attendee feedback said that the webinar **met** their expectations

80%

of attendee feedback found the webinar useful/beneficial to their work

90%

of attendee feedback said they would recommend our services to others

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Some quotes included:

"I have learnt so much about the organisations I can signpost to my clients"

"I love the reminders that kept coming. It was brilliant."

"I've learnt much more around the health landscape in Southwark and how I can better connect with you all to ensure we're working across sectors :)"

"Really refreshing to hear the amazing collaborative work taking place across Southwark! Thank you Healthwatch Southwark for enabling this!"

"It's been useful to learn about other support available in Southwark and motivations to collaborate!"

"Thank you guys I really feel like people are listening, my old borough didn't have this"

## Learnings

One person in the feedback said it wasn't clear who our target audience was. In the future, it would be better if we could highlight that it's for residents as well as professionals in the borough. We learned that a lot of professionals are interested in cross collaboration, and it was great to be able to facilitate that for them.

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An attendee said, *“I’ve been living in the borough for 20+ years, and I didn’t know that all of these services existed”*. We were able to get vital information to residents that may not have been aware of the support that exists within Southwark and shows the importance of continuing to promote local and national services to our communities.

## Next steps

We will continue using our signposting and feedback data, and insights from our engagements to plan future information sharing webinars.

We will continue listening to the current and emerging needs of our residents and feeding these back to local service providers.

We will target our engagement to those that are underserved and underrepresented to ensure that vital information reaches the most vulnerable residents.

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