



Healthwatch Brent

Brent Council's joint health and wellbeing Strategy. Phase three consultation findings

January 2022

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Stage 3 Consultation

Summary

In February 2021, for stage one of the consultation into Brent Council's new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Healthwatch Brent (HWB) engaged with the most vulnerable communities and those most impacted by health inequalities via a digital roadshow and an online survey. The aim was to gather information which would help inform the priorities of the new strategy.

In May 2021, stage two of the consultation was launched. HWB and council officers wanted to understand the opinions of stakeholder and key community groups, focusing on how they felt about the interim emerging priorities uncovered in the stage one consultation. The emerging interim priorities were reworked by the strategy development working group and HWB, and officers re-engaged with community groups, forums, networks and steering groups to determine whether the reworked interim emerging priorities are correct. This paper summarises its key findings.

From November 2021 – January 2022, we supported stage three of the consultation. The aim was to understand whether different community groups felt that the strategy met their needs, and to determine whether there was anything missing. We asked the following questions:

- Do you think the strategy meets your needs, and the needs of those you care for?
- Is there anything else that should be included?
- Is there anything that your community can do that you would like to see added to the strategy?

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| Priority Groups reached | Faith based communities Mental Health community Disabled community Learning Disability community Older adults Ethnic minority groups |
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Response to the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Overall, members of the public and community groups responded positively to the draft Health & Wellbeing Strategy, agreeing that it covered the correct key areas and offered support for the things that mattered to them. There were several areas highlighted as being of particular importance and relevance, and people expressed that they would like to see more detail about some of the specific initiatives that appealed most to them. There were also a couple of areas that were highlighted as needing additional support. We have categorized the feedback into key themes below.

Theme one: support for healthy eating initiatives

One of the biggest positive areas highlighted from the draft strategy was around healthy eating, and particularly opportunities for residents to grow their own food. Individuals that we consulted with noted the 'incredible edible' scheme as an area of particular interest, and stated that they would like to hear more about how this scheme operates. Generally there was a consensus that the Council's focus on healthy eating corresponded with the priorities within the community.

We also heard that more information needs to be shared on schemes available for young people, such as the healthy start vouchers. Residents suggested collaborations with organisations such as Mencap on ways to stay healthy/how to eat healthily.

Theme two: more funding and access to resources

Community groups were pleased to see provisions for more funding to help groups set up their own health and wellbeing initiatives, however there were concerns that it did not go far enough. We heard from several groups that lack of funding is often what stands between them and a range of health & wellbeing activities that they would like to carry out.

There was also a suggestion that funding alone is not enough: groups also need access to additional resources and expertise to help them get their initiatives off the ground. For instance, attendees at the Brent Multi-Faith Forum told us that they would like more clarity on how communities are going to be consulted to assess their needs, and what resources people are going to be given.

Theme three: accessibility

The communities we consulted with were pleased to see that changing places toilets and increased numbers of accessible toilets were included in

the strategy. Members of the disability forum also stressed that activities within the borough need to be accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. This means ensuring that the location of activities is accessible, and that staff are trained or have relevant experience working with people with a learning disability to ensure the activities are inclusive. It could also mean ensuring that people with a disability have the right care and support package in place to be able to access services or activities.

Accessible employment has also been raised as a key theme – people said they wanted more access to employment to keep people with a disability mentally and physically active.

Theme four: support for mental health initiatives

There was broad agreement that the strategy is right to focus on the core area of mental health both for children and young people and for adults. People reiterated concerns around difficulty navigating services during a mental health crisis, and were pleased to see this concern specifically addressed within the strategy. Again, there was a call for more detail to help the community understand exactly what new resources may be made available.

Theme five: better access to resources for spirituality

Those in the multi-faith forum noted that one area not expanded within the strategy is access to spiritual resources and chaplaincy. They highlighted the benefits of these services for those receiving in-patient care and were concerned that funding in this area has been cut.

Learnings

We found that people considered the draft strategy lengthy and difficult to digest, with a large amount of information. This made engagement more difficult, as community leaders were worried that sharing the strategy would be overwhelming for their communities. We also found that it was difficult to obtain a translated copy – when we emailed the advertised email address to request a Romanian translation, there was no response. More focus on overall accessibility of the document, and production of digestible summaries will make it easier for people to engage with partners joint plans.

About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Brent is part of a national network led by Healthwatch England, which was established through the Health and Social Care Act in 2012, to give service users of health and social care services a powerful voice both locally and nationally. We are the independent voice for people's views on Brent services, both good and bad. We listen to local people and feedback patient experience and liaise with local commissioners and decision makers, to improve services.