

Healthwatch City of London Patient Panel on the City of London Corporation’s new Health and Wellbeing Strategy

On 12th July we held a Patient Panel on the City of London Corporation’s new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy with Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance at the City of London Corporation.

Our Patient Panel sessions provide the opportunity for you to hear about topics you are interested in. We bring you together with an expert in the field to explore and create greater understanding of the subject enabling feedback to service providers that they can take away.

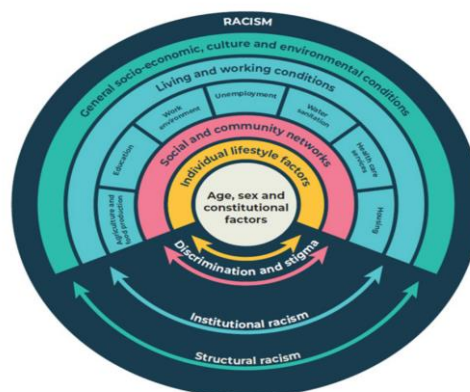
It was an informative session with Ellie going through the new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, creating an understanding of the importance of a joint strategy and the priorities of the strategy. Following the presentation, Ellie facilitated an active discussion amongst attendees who gave their thoughts on the strategy and its priorities, as well as the general health and wellbeing in the City.

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The City of London Corporation has a legal requirement to have a Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy focuses on tackling health inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of the City of London. Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. The strategy is a partnership of health and local authorities as well as partners who sit on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Ellie highlighted that health and wellbeing can change and is influenced by many different interconnected factors. These factors include personal behaviours and choices, as well as broader social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions, also known as the wider determinants of health.

The image below provides a clear example of how social determinants are structured, and how they affect individual lifestyle factors, social and community networks, living and working conditions and general socio-economic, culture and environmental conditions.



Adapted from Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991)

The City of London Corporation identified the priorities needed for the strategy by undertaking desk top research and evidence gathering, they held a range of round table events and workshops, completed engagement across a range of strategies, had a peer researcher project and a joint strategic needs assessment.

The priorities of the strategy are building financial resilience, whilst unemployment in the City is relatively low, this priority involves supporting people to increase their opportunities in employment and ensuring that people are able to financially support themselves through hardship. The second priority is tackling social isolation and building social connection, there are many in the City who are currently struggling with feeling lonely and being isolated, particularly for those who are older. Improving mental health is the third priority, in which the City of London Corporation strive to ensure that people are promoting good mental health and wellbeing and that there are adequate support services that people are able to access when they need to.

Questions and feedback from attendees

Attendees at the meeting had the opportunity to give feedback directly to Ellie on the Strategy. The importance of financial stability was emphasised from attendees, in particular for unpaid carers as those who are caring for someone may not have the option of employment. Attendees also brought up the importance of tackling social isolation, in which one attendee spoke about the need for an increase in befriending services and highlighted practical support.

Homelessness in the City was also a key concern, with many residents seeing the recent increase in homelessness in the City. Ellie highlighted Street Link, an organisation that provides those who are rough sleeping with support. You can make reports on the Street Link website if you are concerned about someone sleeping rough or you yourself are sleeping rough.

The access to affordable foods in the City was also brought up, in the City, there is a limited amount of healthy food that is accessible, which is partly due to the large amount of higher priced grocery stores. Although the City of London Corporation is unable to directly bring in lower priced grocery stores, Ellie highlighted that they are aware of barriers to healthy eating in the City and are looking into finding solutions.

Resources

If you are concerned about a rough sleeper or sleeping rough yourself in the City of London, you can report this on Street Link: <https://thestreetlink.org.uk/>

For cost of living support, visit the City of London Corporation website for advice: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/getting-help-with-the-cost-of-living>