

Healthwatch Kingston Mental Health 2023-24 End of year activity update

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024



Healthwatch Kingston's Mental Health priorities during 2023-24 were:

- Continue to provide the independent chair and administrative support for the 'Kingston Mental Health and Wellbeing Group'.
- Provide independent facilitation for community scrutiny of progress against Kingston's better mental health priorities.
- Provide independent evaluation of the South West London Community Mental Health Transformation Programme in Kingston.
- Provide independent evaluation of the South London Mental Health Partnership, Integrated Community Rehabilitation Service (Bridge 24) pilot in Kingston.

Mental Health services support and signposting

Throughout the year, Healthwatch Kingston continued to address the pressing issue of mental health within the local community. We have provided support and signposting to information and services and support, both directly with those in need reaching out to Healthwatch, and via our [Mental Health Services](#) page on our Healthwatch Kingston website. The [Connected Kingston](#) website has also been an instrumental tool, supporting the Healthwatch Kingston statutory signposting role, while combating isolation, and promoting wellbeing activities.

Across the year, between April 23 – March 24, over 5300 people came to Healthwatch Kingston for advice and information. For more information on the work of Healthwatch Kingston please see our newly published [Annual Report – The value of listening to you](#)

Our commitment to collaborative working

Healthwatch Kingston remains dedicated to its partnerships with Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector, as well as Public Health and the NHS. By amplifying the voices of service users and individuals with lived experiences of mental health challenges, we advocate for improved services and support.

In April, a staff away day took place, where the team reflected on their individual remit's coverage of mental health and the impact of their work on local mental health strategies and programs. This exercise proved beneficial in enhancing team cohesion and effectiveness.

Kingston Mental Health and Wellbeing group

Healthwatch Kingston facilitates the Mental Health and Wellbeing Group, bringing together stakeholders from various sectors to address mental health service needs in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK), alongside those with lived experiences of mental health. The group has supported the development and implementation of key strategies and programs, including the [Kingston Better Mental Health JSNA](#) and [Suicide Prevention Strategy](#).

The Kingston Mental Health and Wellbeing group meets bimonthly. Throughout the year, notable speakers and topics have included:

NHS South West London, who have presented the [South West London Mental Health Strategy](#). Our group has been able to contribute to the development of this strategy.

The Metropolitan Police, delivered an update on the '[Right Care, Right Person](#)' Strategy, and highlighted significant changes in emergency services' response to mental health related calls.

The group heard about the introduction of the [Kingston Welfare Benefits Advice service](#) to the Integrated Recovery Hubs at South West London & St George's (SWLStG) NHS Mental Health Trust. This dedicated service aims to offer a range of mental health, wellbeing, and social support services to service users and carers. Richmond Advice and Information on Disability (Richmond AID) collaborates with the Mental Health Trust to deliver this service in Kingston and Richmond.

RBK regularly provide updates on mental health work streams, such as progress against the implementation of the [Kingston Carers' Strategy](#), and RBK's commitment to transforming into an Age-Friendly borough. Kingston has joined the Centre for Better Ageing UK network of Age-Friendly Communities, alongside over 60 other towns and cities in the UK. The focus is on enhancing healthy aging and increasing healthy life expectancy in Kingston, intertwining this initiative with mental health priorities outlined in the Better Mental Health JSNA.



South West London



**South West
London
Integrated
Care System**

healthwatch
Kingston upon Thames

NHS
**South West London and
St George's Mental Health**
NHS Trust

Kingston and Richmond Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Group (SWL NHS):

In late 2023, this group reconvened after a hiatus and commenced discussions on the priorities for young people in Kingston and Richmond Mental Health JSNAs. Additionally, the South West London iThrive Working Group was discussed.

Healthwatch Kingston mental health leads participated in the relaunch, and they will continue to attend and contribute to shaping the group's direction, and establishing governance and determining its placement (i.e., who the group reports to) are essential next steps.

Healthwatch Kingston Independent Evaluation of the Kingston Community Mental Health Transformation Programme

South West London and St George's NHS Mental Health Trust (SWLSTG) is undergoing a transformation of community mental health services in Kingston. The Mental Health Trust commissioned local Healthwatch to gather and report on mental health service user experiences.

Our independent evaluation report brings together, summarises and compares findings from three surveys of mental health service users in Kingston carried out between 8 June 2023 and 28 March 2024.

The findings will help the Mental Health Trust to identify strengths and weaknesses in community mental health services and make improvements as they continue to roll out a three-year transformation mental health service programme which began in late 2022.



Healthwatch Kingston Independent Evaluation of the ICRS/Bridge 24 Community Rehabilitation Service pilot (Summary Report)

Healthwatch Kingston conducted an independent evaluation of the Integrated Community Rehabilitation Service. The ICRS/Bridge 24 is an innovative pilot providing nine month's intensive rehabilitation in the community for people with complex mental health needs.

The service is jointly delivered by South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust (SWLStG) who provide clinical in-reach, and the voluntary sector organisation Bridge Support which provides the accommodation, support workers and managers.

In the evaluation Healthwatch Kingston found the ICRS/Bridge 24 provides a safe, homely, supportive, and well managed service for people with complex mental health needs. Most clients said their mental health had improved since being in the service and they felt safer and more independent in some areas of their lives. A full set of recommendations was provided to SWLStG MHT, the full summary report can be found on our website:

[Independent Evaluation of the ICRS / Bridge 24 Rehabilitation Service pilot \(Summary Report\) | Healthwatch Kingston](#)


The Year Ahead for Healthwatch Kingston

Healthwatch Kingston is committed to furthering its engagement with the community on mental health needs. We will be turning our focus to the health and care needs of under fives, and their families, and the social isolation needs of physically disabled people. We are looking forward to working in partnership with key stakeholders to understand the needs of these groups.

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