

# The Big Conversation

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Update for Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Board

5 December 2023

# About the Big Conversation

## Background:

- We made a commitment in the '*Working with people and communities*' strategy to work with local people and those who draw on our services to identify priorities and the criteria against which we will monitor and evaluate our impact.
- The Big Conversation is about listening to the people in our communities, and understanding their views about health, care and wellbeing, to help us to focus on what matters to them, and to help us to improve what we do. It builds on the [interim integrated care strategy](#) that is turning our ambitions into actions.
- Based on what we already know about the needs of local people and what residents have told us before, the Big Conversation process focused on asking people open questions about our four priorities for improving quality and outcomes and tackling health inequalities:
  - Babies, children and young people
  - Long term conditions
  - Mental health
  - Local employment and workforce
- The findings are intended to help inform the development of success measures - helping us to understand whether we are making a difference to health and wellbeing outcomes - which we will report on annually.
- We know it is not the only way either the ICB or wider ICP engages in dialogue with local people.

## Listening to local people

Over the summer we engaged with around **2000 people** across north east London:

**We promoted an online survey** (over 1000 responses) including questions on:

- Our four ICS priorities
- Living a healthy life, voice and influence and receiving care
- Experiences of using health and care services in north east London

**We held face to face sessions and community events across north east London**

- Eight drop in sessions in places across north east London using facilitated table discussions to enable detailed discussion on the four priorities – Tower Hamlets took place on 25<sup>th</sup> July in The Ideas Store, Whitechapel
- Presence at community events including the Wanstead (Redbridge) Disability Festival and the Waltham Forest women's health event organised with the network of mosques
- Ad hoc sessions e.g. informal discussions with Romanian community in high road cafes
- Targeted focus groups (see next slide) selected in light of the fact that 53% of the respondents to the survey were white British and 73% were women and there were some clear gaps in the voices we heard in the earlier face to face sessions and community events

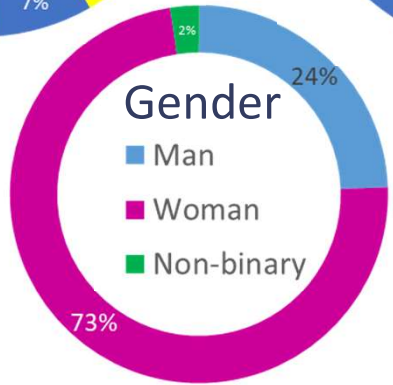
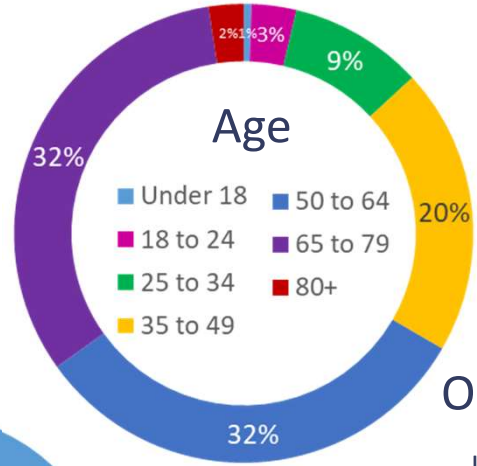
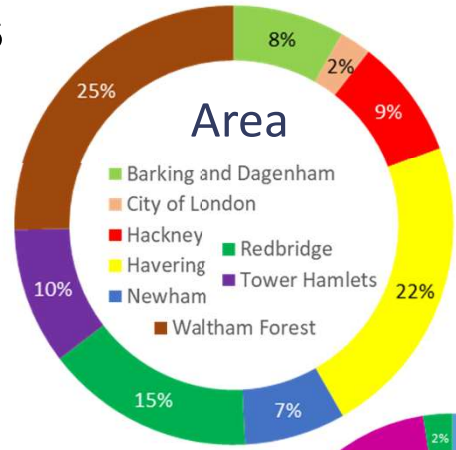
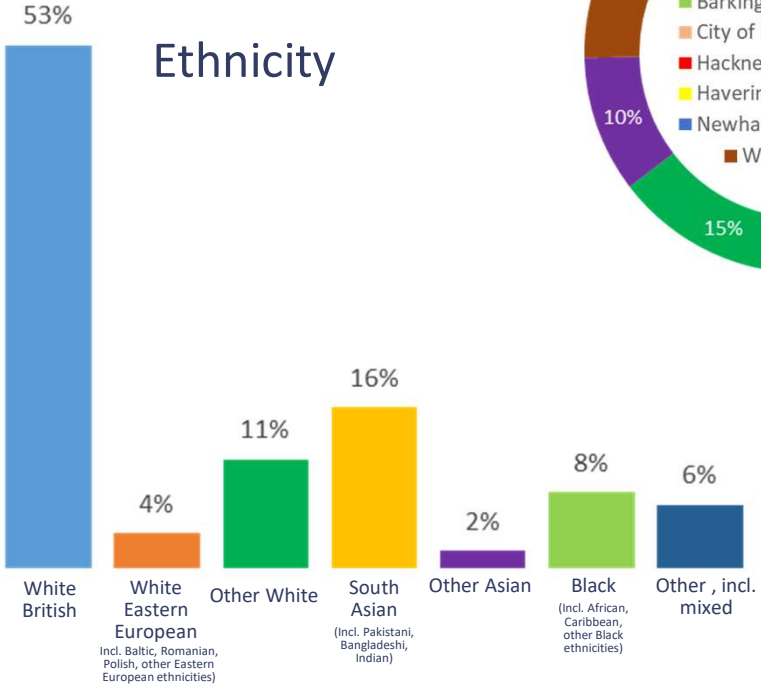
## Additional focus groups

Additional focus groups were facilitated by local Healthwatches which selected focus group communities to better reflect the diversity of the local populations they work with. Engaging with these target communities in smaller focus groups enabled more in-depth discussion to explore health, care and wellbeing with groups under-represented in other forms of engagement during the Big Conversation. Examples include (not exhaustive):

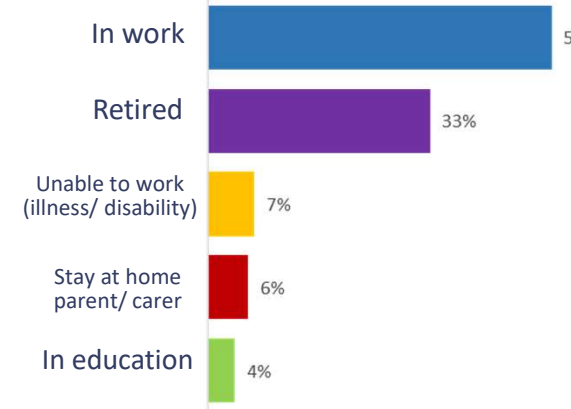
- South Asian men in Tower Hamlets and in Newham
- Turkish mothers in Hackney
- Black African and Caribbean men in Hackney
- Older people in the City of London
- Patients living with Long Covid in Hackney
- Men in Barking and Dagenham
- Deaf BSL users in Redbridge
- Young people in Barking and Dagenham
- Pakistani women in Waltham Forest

# Survey respondents

(some additional information)



### Occupational status



**98%** were registered with a GP  
**93%** had used health or care services in the last 12 months  
**7%** were parents of a child/ children aged under 18  
**7%** were carers for an adult loved one or family member  
**23%** were digitally excluded  
**6%** were disabled  
**3%** were neuro-divergent  
**41%** had a long-term condition  
**3%** were LGBT  
**32%** were struggling financially or just getting by

## **Emerging themes: Babies, children and young people**

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

- A consistent focus on nutrition – healthy eating, cooking, school meals
- Activities – playgrounds, parks and green spaces, areas that are safe to socialise
- Helping children and young people to understand what good physical and mental health looks like, how to attain it and how to maintain it.

*Help to foster community cohesion and identity, help them avoid junk food, make interesting out of school activities available*

## Emerging themes: Long term conditions

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

- Want support to understand and proactively manage their condition/s
- Want to be empowered to advocate for themselves
- Continuity of care/Long term relationships with health and care staff to develop an understanding of their situation is really important

*I get stuck between the GP and the hospital, I have several conditions and the various specialists do not consider these - just their own speciality.*

## Emerging themes: Mental health and wellbeing

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

- Access feels hard to get the support I need
- Availability of support before crisis hits
- People with mental health needs are still stigmatised
- Cause of mental ill-health can be linked to a whole range of reasons, don't make assumptions

*I feel rushed anytime I call up to talk to the doc about how I feel.*





## Emerging themes: Local employment and workforce

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

- Apprenticeships and work experience across health and care
- Be clear what opportunities are available
- Simplify application process for job advert i.e. no lengthy supporting statement
- Flexibility is key - Remove barriers to work i.e. more childcare and carer support services on interview days
- Employ local people and target younger people
- Help publicise volunteering opportunities

*Work that inspires us to be better individuals and help create a great community. Jobs that people can feel proud and passionate about. Career pathways that support financial independence, sustain living in East London and/or provide potential for growth and development if wanted.*

## **Theme: Good care**

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

### **Trustworthy**

- health and care services respond to and anticipate people's needs and are accountable to patients and local people
- patients get reassurance that they are well
- patients' worries and concerns are understood and addressed

### **Competent**

- cultural differences are taken into account
- patients understand how care decisions are taken and believe professionals are providing good treatment
- there is consistency of care, quality of care does not vary based on individual and staff turnover

## **Theme: Good care (cont.)**

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

### **Person centred**


- continuity of care between services and within services
- services work well with each other, at community level/beyond just health and care
- services are interconnected around the patient, not just centred on a condition or specialism
- patients get to make appointments and be seen in a way that works for them
- cultural differences are taken into account
- patients understand how care decisions are taken and believe professionals are providing good treatment

### **Accessible**

- barriers to accessing care are understood and addressed – disability, language barriers, IT literacy, knowledge, costs.


## **Emerging themes: overarching**

What we've heard people would like to see more of and what they believe makes a difference:

- People like to see empathy and compassion from health and care staff
  - People like to see agencies/organisations working well together and to know where they can go to get help/answers
  - People would like to see more ways to support people's wellbeing - to be physically and mentally well - in their local communities
  - People find navigating ways into health and care jobs complicated – people are not sure where to start/being put off
  - People like it when access is made straightforward, especially to primary care
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## **Developing success measures**

Using the analysis to date, we propose success measures based on what is most important to local people, clustered as follows:

- Compassionate care and support which feels human, culturally competent and personalised
  - Organisations working closely together to provide joined up care and support
  - Improved access to primary care as for the majority of local people it is their key connection with health services
  - Clearer ways to support everyone to be physically and mentally well in their local communities by incorporating the wider determinants of health (employment, housing, environment, poverty)
  - Greater opportunities to work in health and care with flexible and accessible routes to apprenticeships, work experience and employment
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## **Next steps: keep talking**

- Continued analysis of data and identification of themes
  - Development of detailed report to share with ICS partners to inform their work
  - Findings inform development /refinement of I statements/success measures
  - Test findings and draft I statements/success measures with local people
  - Further engagement with seldom heard/underrepresented groups where data identifies this is needed
  - Agree new/additional success measures and reporting mechanisms (annually?)
  - Develop a public-facing summary report and commit to regular progress reports
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