

# Engagement Updates

Welcome to our engagement updates bulletin. Read on for more information about what we're currently focusing on, what we have been hearing, updates, and our project work.

## Speaking with the community

Over the past three months, our engagement officers have visited many groups around Derbyshire to listen to feedback about health and social care services. This quarter we have had 156 comments of these 63% were negative, 23% positive and 14% mixed or neutral.

Our engagement officers have continued to carry out general engagement activities. The groups we have spoken to the most are carers, children and young people, older adults, parents LGBTQ groups, people with long-term conditions, and those with mental health conditions.

The areas we have heard the most from are Erewash, High Peak, Buxton, Chesterfield, and Dronfield.

## What are we hearing about?

### Pharmacy

We are hearing more about a lack of blister packs available at pharmacies. This is a weekly pill organiser that can help users keep track of their daily medication and stay safe.

Pharmacists put the tablets into individual boxes in the trays, each one indicating when they should be taken. However, these now not being available has had a knock-on effect for carers. They are telling us that organising medication has become an added pressure for carers already juggling responsibilities.

With pharmacy first happening, we will be going out and asking more about pharmacy over the next quarter.

### Dental

We are still hearing about the lack of NHS dental access. Many people are unable to pay for private dental treatment and are choosing not to get treatment:

“I am unable to find an NHS dentist and I have been told that it will cost £1000 to remove a molar privately, I just can’t afford it.”

Others who do have access to an NHS dentist may not in the future with one person saying:

“My dentist has left and I was told I have to pay privately now. I noticed others were still receiving NHS care at the practice. The practice has agreed to keep me on the books for 2 years in the hope that they get a replacement dentist”

People are calling 111 to see if they can get emergency dental treatment but one person told us that:

“I no longer trust the information provided by NHS 111. They sent me to an emergency dentist in Macclesfield and when I arrived, I was told that they no longer do dental emergencies.

Parents and carers of children with additional needs have told us they may be able to afford private for their children’s check-ups, but if they have to pay for treatment, they will be unable to do so.

### General Practice

25% of our comments over the past three months have been about general practice. Many of the comments have been about patients struggling to access an appointment on the phone. A few people told us that their GP practice will only book same-day appointments.

“You can only book on-the-day appointments. I made 37 calls to the surgery, by the time I got through there were no appointments left.”

Patients have also told us about a lack of continuity of care and having to see a different GP if they want an earlier appointment.

However, we have had positive comments from patients about alternative ways of contacting their GP practice. One person said,, “I find using the NHS app really useful to be able to book blood tests, check test results, request prescriptions.”

### Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

We have been hearing about long wait times for appointments for CAMHS.

People said that they are feeling unsupported. Also, the delays and long wait for support can further impact their wellbeing. This affects not only the children or young person but also the family, friends, and school.

The people who have been able to access CAMHS have been telling us that CAMHS is not “patient-centred” and can be aimed at children rather than young people.

Families are telling us that there is a lack of explanation about what to do when CAMHS is unable to provide support.

### Learning Disability (LD) Community Support

We have been speaking to people with learning disabilities and their carers about community support and hearing about their experiences.

### Patient Initiated Requests to Move Provider (PIDMAS)

You can now move hospitals to receive care/treatment if you have been waiting for longer than 18 weeks using PIDMAS.

We have heard that there needs to be clear and understandable information for the public about this new offer, so patients can decide knowing all the facts.

### Wheelchair Services

We have been hearing more about wheelchair services. People are telling us that they have been waiting for a long time for new wheelchairs, repairs, or deliveries.

“In approximately April 2023 my son was measured for another wheelchair due to him having outgrown his other. We are currently still waiting for his

wheelchair from the manufacturer. When I called for a progress update, I was told he probably wouldn't have it for his school trip, but it should be with them in August (school holidays). It's now November and I have still heard nothing."

We will be doing a survey to understand more about this topic.

## **Enter and View**

We have done three enter and view visits at Derbyshire County Council care homes. The homes visited were Castle Court, Thomas Fields, and Whitestones. The reports are available on our [website](#) and the [Public and Patient Insight Library](#), which you can join for free.

We are currently doing enter and view visits at the new Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs) as part of a Healthwatch England piece of research. The reports will be available later in the year.

## **Patient Participation Group (PPG) Guide**

We are co-designing a PPG best practice guide with the PPG network, Joined Up Care Derbyshire, and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

This will be finished in April and will be available to all GP practices.

## **How to access your GP guide**

We will be co-designing a guide with members of the public and Derby and Derbyshire Local Medical Committee (LMC) to give handy tips for accessing your GP.

## **Inpatient mental health engagement**

We are continuing our regular engagement work at both the Hartington and Radbourne inpatient mental health units, and we send regular feedback to both units.

For example, we have been told that activities are very important to patients. Patients have made suggestions of the kinds of activities that benefit them and their wellbeing whilst at the unit, such as music and cooking.

This has been raised with staff and the staff have created a timetable of activities, considering the patient's views.

We are writing a report to highlight the impact that patient feedback has made.

## **Flu vaccinations for 2–3-year-olds**

Between March – June we will be doing a survey and some interviews with parents and carers of toddlers who are about to be, or who are, eligible for the flu vaccination. This feedback will then impact how the winter campaign for 2024 is delivered in Derbyshire.

## **Volunteering**

Our volunteers have been working hard to promote Healthwatch Derbyshire by delivering presentations face-to-face and on teams. They have also been delivering our posters all around the county.