

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 to the Community

Over the past three months, we have visited many groups and listened to a wide range of feedback.

This quarter we have had **133 comments** about 56 different organisations. Of these comments 77 were negative, 33 positive and 23 mixed or neutral.

We have focused on visiting baby and toddler groups. This is because we are doing a Baby and Toddler Flu Vaccination survey.

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



We will be making sure we visit these areas next quarter:

- Bolsover
- Glossop
- North East Derbyshire
- Swadlincote

The top five themes this quarter were:

- Access to services
- Communication with patients
- Caring, kindness & respect
- Accessibility & reasonable adjustments
- Quality of treatment.

What are we hearing about?

General Practice (GP)

The theme that is coming up the most about GPs is communication with patients. This was mostly positive this quarter with people saying:

“My GP practice has always been helpful, both doctors and staff, especially when I have had a specific problem.”

“My husband was discharged from QMC ... with a tracheostomy (so unable to speak). As his carer, and ‘voice’ I was anxious, but the GP practice has been absolutely amazing every time I have had to call (and that is many times).”



The negative comments we received were about:

- Multiple calls to surgeries before being able to get an appointment
- Not being able to see the same doctor
- Reception staff not being empathetic.

Mental Health

The theme that is coming up the most in mental health is access to services. Comments included:

“I tried three times to get through to the mental health helpline and support service ... I gave up.”



“... the mental health and waiting lists are stupid. I have undiagnosed Autism, ADHD, and Borderline Personality Disorder and have been told the waiting list for full diagnosis will be 3-5 years.”

Carers have also spoken to us about their mental health. They have said it has been affected by the struggle to get help and support. Someone told us, "It's a constant fight."

Dental

The theme that is coming up in dental is access to the service. We know that access to dentistry is not good, and most practices are not taking on new patients.



We continue to give this feedback to Healthwatch England. We have written a report on what we have been doing about dentistry over the past few years: [Dentistry in Derbyshire](#).

We knew that patients were frustrated that the Find a Dentist website wasn't correct. We have worked hard on this over the past few years. Our staff and volunteers have made sure that the Find a Dentist website is now correct.

In Derbyshire, we only have 11% of practices that are not updating their status on the website compared to 49% in other counties.

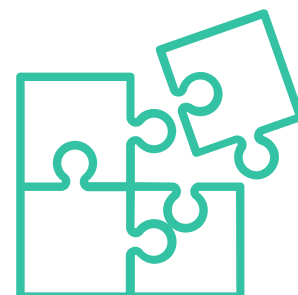
Derbyshire practices are now the best in the UK at updating Find a Dentist. This means that people no longer call practices with no spaces.

There has been some new funding announced, which is positive. Although we know many people are now having to pay for private treatment. The people who can't afford private are not getting treatment.

Services for Autistic People

We have heard from autistic people and parents about the waiting list for a diagnosis:

“I have been waiting for an autism assessment for four years. I have only recently decided to find out where I was on the list ... I was eventually told that they think my application was 'lost' but they are not 100% sure.”



We have also heard about a quick diagnosis turnaround:

“I appreciated the swift assessment of my child; it only took six months.”

We have also heard from someone about the **Neuro Hubs** (new community drop-in hubs for neurodiverse children and young people) that have been introduced:

“I am pleased that they have been introduced to help autistic children, young people, and their families. However, I feel there is still a lack of support for older Autistic people.”

Adult social care

We have had telephone calls and comments about the move from Carelink to Medequip. This is a personal alarm and pendant for people to use to help them stay independent in their own homes.



“I was very happy with the service provided by Carelink which has resulted in home visits on many occasions. The first I heard about the move was a phone call from Medequip telling me that someone would be coming out the following day to install new equipment. The visit was problematic, and the new equipment was unsuitable.”

“I received a letter about the charging change and I would like to express my concern for pensioners and people on low incomes who will not be able to afford the Careline fee of £14.50 per week ...

“It has always been a free service at the point of need for those on benefits. I am a pensioner and with the increased cost of food, energy, and insurance I will have to discontinue the entire service.”

We have also heard about the continuous healthcare budget:

“I had my continuing health care stopped around 12 months ago. My budget was given to my care agency directly, so I have no control of my life.”

We know that health and care services are being reviewed with many cuts or planned cuts to be made to services. This includes Derbyshire early help teams and site-based day services.

We are encouraging people to give feedback to Derbyshire County Council about this matter.

Oncology (Cancer) Services

In Oncology, we have had a mix of positive and negative comments. Some people have told us that they received their scan appointment quickly. Other people have spoken about how happy they were with their doctor.



However, we did hear about accessibility and reasonable adjustments not being met:

“I have dementia I feel disabled by the health admin. I have a long-term cancer diagnosis and dementia and I feel constantly pushed to go digital when I need appointment letters to keep track of my care.”

Wheelchair services

This quarter and last quarter we have had many comments about wheelchair services. People have said that there is a big waiting list, and they aren't able to get through to customer services.



We produced a survey in February to see if this was the case for other wheelchair users, their families and carers.

We have written a report which was shared with AJM Healthcare (Derbyshire's provider for NHS wheelchair services) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

AJM has written a public action plan and started to address the issues brought up in our report. This action plan has been published alongside our report: [**Experiences of Derbyshire wheelchair services.**](#)

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

We have been hearing about long waits for CAMHS and children not meeting the criteria for a referral into the service after a review of their mental health:



“Over a year on a waiting list after being referred as urgent due to suicidal thoughts...Then we finally got an appointment which was basically just to tick boxes to say we’d been seen. Still no suitable therapy five years after initial referral.”

“My child has mental health issues and self-harms. We have been referred to CAMHS, but we have been told they do not meet the criteria to access the service.”

We have received lots of comments about communication while waiting for CAMHS.

Young people have told us they would like to receive updates and reminders while on the waiting list. They want updates about how long it will be until they are seen. They have said this would reduce their anxiety and help them plan.

Pharmacy

We have received a mix of positive and negative comments about pharmacy. The positive comments have been about staff members being “helpful and friendly”.



The negative comments were about not being able to get blister packs (a weekly pill organiser).

We have spoken to **Community Pharmacy Derbyshire**. They told us that the NHS does not fund blister packs. They said that it is up to the pharmacy to decide whether this is a reasonable adjustment for the person. They have also said that many medications cannot go into blister packs.

Community Pharmacy Derbyshire will be putting out some communication to explain this to patients and carers. We will also be doing this.

Learning Disability (LD) Community Support

We have been speaking to people with learning disabilities and their carers. They have spoken to us about their experience of community support.



Enter and View

We have done two Enter and View visits. We have visited the Ilkeston and Whitworth Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs).



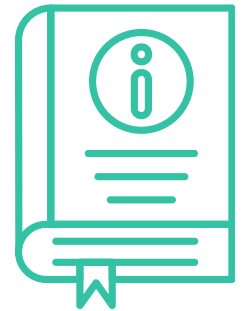
CDC's are new and are supposed to provide a single point of access to a range of services in the community. They have things like MRI scanners, Ultrasound, and blood tests.

Both Ilkeston and Whitworth reports have now been published and can be viewed by clicking the below links.

- [Ilkeston Hospital CDC report](#)
- [Whitworth Hospital CDC report](#)

How to access your GP Guide

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



This is currently being looked at by our volunteers and will be published soon.

Inpatient Mental Health

We regularly visit both the Hartington and Radbourne inpatient mental health units. We continue to speak with patients about their experiences while at the unit.



We have written a report on the feedback and outcomes for patients: [Hartington and Radbourne Units: Experiences of mental health inpatients.](#)

Flu Vaccinations for 1, 2, and 3 year olds

We are doing a survey on flu vaccinations for under 4-year-olds. We are working with Joined up Care Derbyshire to hear from parents and guardians.

Information from this survey will influence this winter's flu vaccination campaign.

We started this in March and have already heard from 193 parents and guardians. We will be continuing this work until the 10th of June.

A report will be published after June. The survey can be accessed here: [Baby and Toddler flu vaccination survey.](#)



Flu and COVID vaccinations

We are doing a survey on flu and COVID vaccinations. We are working with Joined up Care Derbyshire and Amber Valley CVS.

We are asking people in certain areas as they have a low vaccination uptake. The areas are Langley Mill, Somercotes and Marlpool.

Thank you to Amber Valley CVS and to Somercotes Medical Centre for collecting responses. We already have 709 responses. The survey finishes in June. The survey can be accessed here: [Flu and COVID vaccination survey.](#)



Volunteering

Our volunteers have helped co-produce Chesterfield Royal Hospital's Welcome Booklet. This is currently being looked at by the hospital.

Healthwatch Derbyshire volunteers have also given feedback on Derbyshire County Council's Quality Assurance Strategy. They gave feedback about the standard strategy and the easy-read version of this.

Our volunteers are currently looking at our GP Access booklet that we are co-producing. They're making sure it makes sense for the public and is to a good health literacy standard.

They have also been putting up posters, doing presentations and been a part of our enter and view visits. They've also been doing accessibility checks which are part of our enter and view reports now.



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