

Zoom Meeting - 27 May 2020

SNAP SURVEY and messages of support



46 People



From local communities and organisations from health and care landscape

How can we influence and support organisations to work differently?



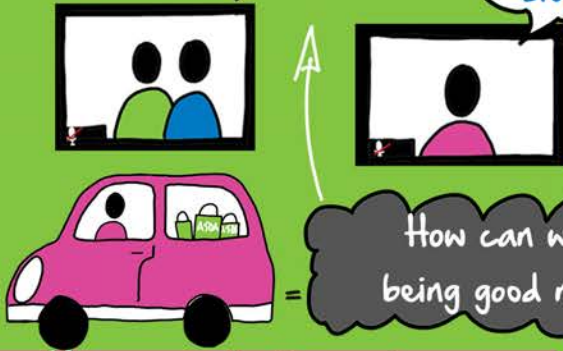
Facilitated conversations

90 mins session



Participants invited to consider ...

in Dudley borough



How people have been supporting communities

Sharing stories

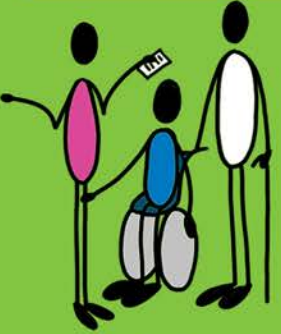
How can we carry on being good neighbours?



Key questions

1.

What has been working well with your access to health and care services?



How have NHS and care services adapted as a result of Covid-19



How can they be improved?

Should these new ways of working carry on?

What difference has it made?

2.

If you could have changed anything what would it be?

Were there barriers to access and what have you learned?

3.

What changes would you keep and what ideas do you have to make access even better?

What have we been doing differently to access health and care services?



thinkingvisually • @thinkingv

COVID-19: impacts on health and care

Healthwatch Dudley, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS joined forces to host an online forum in response to not being able to meet face to face during the COVID-19 pandemic. 46 people from local communities, health and care settings and voluntary organisations came together as part of a 90-minute Zoom session, to share views and ideas on how they had been accessing services and what the future of health and care in the Dudley borough might look like. The event also included British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters to enable members of the Deaf community to participate.



During the event, five facilitated breakout room conversations focused on three key questions:

1. What has been working well with getting access to health and care services since lockdown and what difference has it made?
2. What changes would you keep and what are your ideas for making access to health and care services even better moving forward?
3. If you could have changed anything what would it be, were there any barriers to your access to support and have you learned anything new?

Participants were asked to think about:

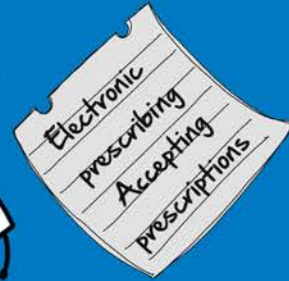
- What is being done differently
- How services have changed and what change should be permanent
- How people are helping each other and how we can continue to be good neighbours
- How communities can have influence over how organisations and services develop and change

The introduction to the event and key points from each discussion were recorded and can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/424067058> - The password to access the recording is: **community**

Doing 80% of my work online



More use of text messages and emails



- welfare calls every 4 weeks
- companion calls to help reduce isolation



and courses online



Use of WhatsApp video calling



Making more of virtual opportunities

TECHNOLOGY

Many meetings can be done online - saving time

JOINT WORKING

Existing and new relationships between services

Easier to book appointments

No sitting in a waiting room

"You get a slot and have the call"

More than Covid-19 issues - wider support

Local community support network



SAVES TIME

Telephone consultations



Responsive, person-focused, speedy

+ Pharmacists doing great work

Call from GP as Advised to shield

GP CONSULTS

Very easy



Booking repeat prescriptions online has worked well

VOLUNTEERS

Reaching out to people who don't go out



Assigned volunteers - a number to call if someone needs help

P.P.E

CCG supplies



Role of Keyworkers



New ways of communicating and getting help

Participants shared that it has been good to be able to get repeat prescription online, as well as information and help from the GP practice over the telephone and by email, Facebook, WhatsApp or a mobile phone app.

“I’m able to book repeat prescriptions online and received a call from a GP to discuss my situation of being vulnerable and advised to shield”

Doctors are telephoning vulnerable people to discuss their health and care situation. And with new contact and communication arrangements in place getting a GP appointment can be easier and more convenient.

Participants were thankful for all of the hard work being done by health and care professionals to help them - especially where they have special needs because they are, for example deaf or affected by sight loss. There is good work going on in communities provided by GPs, therapists, nurses and others.

Hospital care and pharmacy has adapted to keep in touch with and help people

It was remarked that getting access to hospital accident and emergency or urgent care services seems to be working quite well for people. In the hospital setting more work is being done by staff online and using different technologies to communicate with the public - and they are saving time on travel to meetings.

“As a hospital consultant I’m now doing 80 per cent of my work online... electronic prescribing... online or telephone consultations with people... I have realised how many meetings can be done using technology and have saved time travelling around”

Meanwhile, pharmacists are supporting people with their health and care and stepping up to provide extra support with any questions that they have.

“Pharmacists have been responsive and are listening - they have been amazing”

Community groups have stepped in to help

Then there are the different community groups who are getting health and care information messages out to people’s homes and residences and helping with the delivery of food parcels and medicines.

“My work now is all over the telephone, welfare calls... there are companion calls to try to reduce isolation, weekly calls to people accessing our services from volunteers, we have an online café and dementia café that are on Zoom”

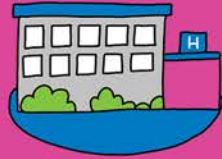
Recognition and thanks for the commitment of key workers

People were asked for their thoughts about health and care key workers and wider. They shared their thanks for the commitment of NHS staff for providing good care during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic and said how key workers are very much going above and beyond what would normally be expected of them.

“A huge thank you to all key workers, they are all doing a fabulous job”

“Key workers are heroes who go above and beyond the call of duty and touch my life in a special way”

Review office space need -
reduce use by Admin and
management ...



SYSTEMS



Keep Covid-19
systems for the
future



Get more
done



Remote meetings can
work well - saves time

Standardisation of
technology across
different services

System to check those who are
chronically ill or vulnerable
- annually



Reduced
travel



Gives people choice

REMOTE vs FACE TO FACE



Reduced waiting times



FLEXIBILITY

Flexible working
patterns, different
ways to come
together

Challenge the culture of 9-5

Less red tape

Non-clinical
interventions done
by phone



REMOTE WORK

Value in
24 hour

helpline for urgent care

RESOURCES

More telephone triage and consults
for other health and care professionals

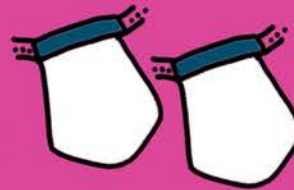
Transparent masks please



Allow facial expressions
and lip patterns: IMPORTANT



KEEP telephone
GP appointments



Clear visors
from a local
community
volunteer group



Technology and support
to use it for those
who need it

Scope for improved healthcare messages and getting more people online

It was felt that in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic some of the health and care messages could have been clearer around what was happening and what to expect - which would have helped to reduce uncertainty and anxiety about personal health and safety.

Group members shared how it might have been helpful if more people had online access to health and care services. They further discussed how that in future, more people should be helped to get an affordable online connection and equipment as well as the support they need to understand and use the Internet.

“We need to consider people who for whatever reason can’t access services online... we also need to develop people’s knowledge and awareness of technology and how it can help”

Participants said that it would be better to have more people knowing about and able to use different technologies and ways of communicating to get access to health and care information and help. At the same time, we need to find new and safer ways to undertake face-to-face meetings with people to help them with their health and care where this is the only or best way to do things.

Group members also discussed how it can be problematic when there are lots of different online and other ways of getting health and care information and help. To avoid people feeling overwhelmed by what is available and the need to learn how to use a lot of different technologies, it would be good to have some standardisation of what technologies and systems are used by health and care organisations and professionals.

Better integrated services and ensuring the best possible relations between clinicians and the public

It was discussed how it was sometimes difficult for people to know and understand what was happening with regard to their or a family member's health and care - especially if it involved going into hospital.

“My mum fell over a month ago and we had to phone for an ambulance and they took her to hospital. I wasn't allowed to go with her because of Coronavirus. I couldn't contact her and she had to stay overnight ... She had to stay [in hospital] for 3 days ... the nurses had a mask on but my mum is deaf and her eyesight is very poor so she couldn't read anything ... and we weren't allowed to visit and it was very difficult”

Differences in the way that health and social care services work were discussed and the need for an improved approach to the integration and delivery of services. Conversations also touched on how Covid-19 has affected people in care and nursing homes and what more could have been done to reduce the scale of the problem.

Getting more from the pharmacy, dental care and call handlers

It was felt there were opportunities for pharmacists to be even more involved in helping people to get health and care information and help, but that it had sometimes been difficult to get through to them on the telephone. There had also been a lack of clarity around what to do if you needed to get access to dental care. And sometimes people had experienced difficulties getting help from services that seemed to be operating at a reduced level and using call handlers who did not always seem to have sufficient training.

People also remarked that we need to have the best possible systems and ways of working in place to ensure those who need health and care help get it - including those who do not have an underlying health condition but are vulnerable because they are isolated or lonely.

Remote care is not appropriate for all

TECHNOLOGY



Equipment loan?
Help to use it?



Ways to develop people's knowledge
and awareness of technology

SIMPLE TECH!

People need to have the equipment!

Reluctance of people to go out.
How do we support this choice?

SERVICES



More flexible prescription
delivery - a way to
check on health and wellbeing

Too much reliance
on online information



Consider service access 'out of hours'
especially where safeguarding involved



Digital →
depiction.
Remember the role of **REAL**
human
interaction



People who are homeless, have
limited vision, are older or part of
deaf community may be vulnerable

HOSPITAL CARE

Older people - better ways to
communicate and
keep relatives informed

Not everyone has (or wants) computer
access - difficult to get information

Information on dental services
hard to get



Clear masks
easier to read

UPDATE

NEWS



Bespoke shopping service
to help if people can't get out

INFORMATION

Pharmacy opening times
not always clear



Information sharing between partners and
organisations - to then pass on to the public

Reassure people it's safe to use services
for non-Covid-19 treatments



People's Network & Dudley Healthcare Forum
What to change, what are the barriers and what have you learned?



“Getting access to health and care services online is convenient and helpful”

Group members discussed how it can be helpful and convenient to use technology or go online to access health and care services - they can be ways of communicating and getting information that work well for people. Another advantage is they help to keep people out of the GP practice or hospital who do not need to be there. Much can be done without direct contact with a clinician and it is possible to save time on unnecessary travel to these places for help and advice.

“Remote meetings can work well, it is possible to get more done that way with less wasted appointments and non clinical interventions by video or phone”

At the same time, it was discussed how, for different reasons, there are people who cannot get access to health and care services online. And there are those who, for example, have learning disabilities, are deaf, are affected by sight loss or do not have much spare money who might experience particular difficulties getting access to health and care services online.

“For people who are vulnerable: deaf, blind, have learning disabilities or are homeless we need to make sure things work well for them”

“Face masks make it difficult for deaf people to see facial expressions and to lip read, using masks with clear panels would help with this”

We need to know what help is available, support people and have organisations that work well

Health and care information and messages must be timely and clear was a key discussion area. People need to know what help and support is available and how to easily and conveniently get access to it. And there should be more contact with and support for vulnerable people and those with long term physical or mental health conditions, so that they can have improved control over their wellbeing and keep safe wherever they happen to be living.

“We implemented a 24-7 helpline for people to get access to urgent mental health support... We redeployed a number of staff... We now need to look at what the longer-term model will look like. We think [the new helpline] will be part of the crisis home service but it will need resourcing... It’s definitely something that we want to keep”

People said how there is a renewed opportunity now to review and reconfigure health and social care services to make them work better together. It was felt that despite much good work happening there were instances where health and care or other community-based organisations did not work as well as they might with similar organisations or each other. The Covid-19 pandemic has opened up new opportunities for organisations to review how they work, collaborate and make the most of technology and innovative ways of working to improve services, job satisfaction and quality of life.

Communities are vibrant and people want to help, especially in difficult times

People celebrated how there is a great deal of energy and goodwill in communities that it would be good to maintain and nurture. In particular, there is all of the extra volunteering and self-help activity that has been going on in different localities and neighbourhoods combined with a strong desire to watch out for and reach out to those who need help.

Snap survey

Prior to the event, participants were invited to take part in an online snap survey, asking people to share what had been happening with their healthcare, following the declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Government imposed lockdown.

What is working well?

People remarked that they were able to get support from the NHS 111 telephone advice line, their GP surgeries the hospital and the ambulance service. Where they were able to, people were going online to get help with healthcare problems.

Others were managing to get the help they needed especially with prescriptions from their pharmacy. At the same time, people remarked that they were getting support from carers, through direct payments and with help from voluntary sector organisations, their local church or contact that they had with healthcare professionals working in their communities.

“Good communications from the medical practice to patients using text messages and Facebook”

“Care company has made sure there is a continuity with carers coming in to support”

“My local church and neighbours have posted cards through our door with contact details if we need shopping or other help”

“Had to call an ambulance, it took a while to arrive but when it did the crew were brilliant and incredibly caring. We were all frightened so it made a big difference”

“My breast cancer care has remained good throughout the recent crisis”

“We employ our own pa by means of a direct payment and have had no problems with our care”

“Being able to order medication electronically has been a big help”

“Weekly contact with a member of the Voluntary Service to make sure that I’m ok and am not struggling with my mental health”

“Telephone appointments have been easy to arrange at short notice”

“Regular phone calls from occupational therapist at Russell's Hall and weekly updates from surgery with weekend emergency contact details”

“I got to talk to a doctor within 3 hours of reaching out which wouldn't have happened had we not been in lockdown.”

“CVS volunteer doing a splendid job of shopping and prescription collecting”

What could be better?

It was felt it was sometimes more difficult to get help with a non Covid-19 health problem or to get access to healthcare services. Others felt there could be clearer messages on what to do to get help with health and care problems and what response to expect.

Some people remarked that they had had problems getting GP or dental care help when they needed it. Others commented that they had experienced difficulties getting online grocery deliveries, help for deaf people or help for people not able to get online to get access to health and care services.

“The doctor that called my husband back after we called NHS 111 sent him to hospital when it was not needed - that was what the hospital staff said - which during the pandemic is obviously a big concern”

“It has been impossible for me and people I know to get tested which has impacted on our physical and mental health”

“My mum had fall and ambulance took her to hospital and I was not allowed to go with her so she went alone as she is profound Deaf and partly blind. I don't know where she was in which ward also they have no informed us how she is”

“A more proactive part played by health practitioners when someone has coronavirus symptoms. ie. telephoning people to see how they are doing after contacting 111 and being told to stay home”

“I wasn't able to book a covid test. The website said slots were there but I couldn't get one”

“GPs should be taking non related covid illnesses seriously, they still have a duty of care. - GPs in the Dudley borough seem to only be doing telephone consultations, they should always do video consultation where possible, if not possible they should visit a patient with correct PPE”

“I would have preferred a face to face appointment, with my doctor but not at the moment. The telephone consultation was reassuring but it doesn't replace a face to face health check as things can be missed”

“Non-existent communication about what is happening to non-urgent, non-trivial matters, eg: follow-up blood tests. Something on that would be welcome rather than silence”

“I feel messages could be clearer and communication with residents in Dudley could reassure what people should/should not be doing to with all the mixed messages from the news and social media. People seem to think they see one shop open or a group out and that they can, even when the message has not changed”

“I think dentists should be open as this is an essential service. People are being advised to buy temporary filling kits rather than having filling repaired properly”

“I was worried that the ambulance crew didn't have enough protection from COVID”

Thank you key workers

The survey also asked if people wanted to share messages of support, which they did in abundance:

“I had a regular mammogram before Christmas. By the end of January I had been told I had breast cancer, given pre op assessment, bloods done, mastectomy done and back home recovering, the NHS at it's very best. Fortunately before lock down but since lock down I have had raised calcitonin level due to my previous cancer of my thyroid. Had an appointment to see my specialist who wasn't happy with my throat, an ultrasound scan booked and all clear given. Thank You Everyone!”

“Well done to all of the key workers who are having to come into contact with many people outside of their family group and often with no protection at all”

“Thinking of you (as a retired nurse) and really hoping all are well and coping”

“Key workers are doing a brilliant job, including couriers, delivery drivers as well as NHS staff”

“West Midlands Ambulance service have got some amazing people. Thank you for caring”

“All experiences with GP, NHS 111 and ambulance crew were absolutely out standing. You're all doing a fabulous job in the most difficult of times. Keep positive, you are amazing”

“I'm very proud of the NHS, we need to protect it and the people it employs”

What next?

What can be done to...

- Keep and develop new and useful ways of delivering health and care services, either online or through other technology?
- Standardise or make getting access to health and care systems and help online easy for people?
- Get more people to access health and care services online?
- Ensure future consistency of service for people who for whatever reason are unable to access online health and care services?
- Look at new and safe ways of meeting people face-to-face when needed moving forwards?
- Ensure services such as dentistry can continue to be provided during a time of crisis such as that seen with the Covid-19 pandemic?
- Make better use of pharmacy services to help with delivery of health and care services?
- Further improve integration of health and social care services and make them work better for people?
- Build on community strengths and people's willingness to volunteer and help take care of each other?
- Build on the good work being done by voluntary and community organisations that is based on their knowledge of communities, their ability to react quickly to events and step in to fill gaps in service?
- Make better use of technology and new ways of working to free up time for professionals to spend with people most in need of help?
- Enable organisations to work better together and do things differently to provide health and care or community-based services for people?
- Ensure health and care messages are timely and clear?
- Ensure good relations and communications are maintained between clinicians, people accessing care and their family members or carers?
- Better support people to stay healthy, be safe and maintain a good quality of life for as long as is possible?



“Thank you to everyone who took part in discussions or helped with leading each session to make our first online community event such a success!”

Healthwatch Dudley has produced this engagement report in collaboration with Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS

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