

Healthwatch Dudley

Annual report 2020/21

Here to make health and care better.

We are the independent champion for people who access health and social care services in Dudley borough. We find out what matters to you and share these views with people who have the power to make change happen.

By listening to what you think is most important, better solutions can be found to problems resulting in services being shaped by local experience.

Helping you to find the information you need

We link people to information and help them to understand what to do if things go wrong with their care and support. This has been vital during the pandemic, as the way many people access health and social care services quickly changed.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has influenced much of our work this year.

As health and care services swiftly responded to the pandemic by finding new ways of working, Healthwatch Dudley also found new ways of engaging with local people.

Where we would normally bring people together in community rooms and coffee shops, you have instead joined us for online events so that your views can continue to help shape services to make them work better for you.

We have remained committed to meeting our statutory Healthwatch functions, by listening to what is important to you and sharing what we hear with those who make important decisions about health and care.

Our year began with the team supporting our host organisation Dudley CVS to match people who were shielding, with volunteers who delivered essential food and medication supplies. We went on to capture their views so these experiences could help to shape what future support might look like should people need to shield again.

This report shares a snapshot of how we have spent an extraordinary year listening and influencing. I would like to thank our partners in health and care for their commitment to continuing to meaningfully involve local people in their decision making in these unprecedented times.

An important thank you also goes out from our staff team, including colleagues who have moved to new roles this year and of course to our valued volunteers for their incredible support.

Jayne Emery
Healthwatch Dudley Chief Officer

Responding to the pandemic

We supported Dudley CVS to help **984** people who were shielding. We provided essential information and put them in touch with volunteers who shopped and delivered prescriptions to keep them safe.

Reaching out

We have hosted **11** online events where **295** people have zoomed in to connect, share and help us to better understand what our communities think about local health and care services.

Supporting people

Our website has received **5,203** visitors, our **2,703** Twitter followers have visited our profile **2001** times, our new Facebook page has already got **116** likes and our mailing list has **398** subscribers.

Listening and influencing

165 people have shared in depth experiences of their health and care and we have given personalised signposting and information. Our **5** published reports contain a wide range of views and experiences based on what we have heard.



COVID-19: A community response

When the UK went into lockdown in March 2020, the Healthwatch Dudley team joined Dudley CVS colleagues to call people who were shielding to match them with volunteers who could help.

The Government told people to stay at home and avoid contact with others and our host organisation Dudley CVS quickly responded. They coordinated an effort to get food, medication and other essential supplies to people who needed it the most.

To find out how volunteers had supported people and made a difference, we went on to call a sample group of 47 people who had been supported during lockdown, to ask how volunteers had helped, what challenges they had faced during the pandemic and what their main concerns were as lockdown was eased.

People told us... You shared how there had been a quick response from local organisations and from communities to support vulnerable and shielding people, how volunteers had helped to reduce anxiety, loneliness and isolation and how this had been especially important for people who didn't have friends or family close by.

People also talked about anxieties around getting to hospital appointments or speaking with their GPs and we were told how people had valued chatting with staff and volunteers and being referred to more specialist support.

Read our report: The COVID-19 Pandemic, a community response in Dudley borough, was published in October 2021 and shared with Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board.
<https://www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/reports>

We were invited to Dudley Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee to present how we had responded to the pandemic in October 2020

Valuing and inspiring our amazing volunteers

We have always involved volunteers with our engagement and awareness raising but as our work moved online during the pandemic, our volunteer opportunities have been limited.

In December, we hosted an end of year Zoom party to thank our supporters for keeping in touch.

Our volunteers received afternoon tea boxes from local charity Lunch on the Run and joined us for an

online session, where we helped people who were nervous to brush up on their zoom skills, had some festive fun and gave an update on some of our work during the year.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not made use of our Enter and View powers. In the coming months we will be needing our volunteers more than ever, as we identify new and safe ways to reintroduce face to face activities in health and care settings and in our local communities.



What new ways of working should we keep as things get back to normal?

We hosted a joint online community event in May 2020 with Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust (DIHC)

Our People's Network and Dudley Healthcare Forum invited people to talk about how COVID-19 had impacted on health and care. 46 people from local communities, health and care settings and voluntary organisations zoomed in 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. In June, we published a report with recommendations that will help to inform local NHS planning.

46 people
took part

“We have collaborated with Healthwatch Dudley over the last year on several issues including bereavement and the NHS restore, reset and recover agenda. Healthwatch Dudley is an invaluable partner who bring a wider view and challenge to the table, in ensuring that some of our quieter voices have the opportunity to be heard and help to influence the way our services are delivered. They are regular attendees at our public Board meetings and our Patient Opportunity Panel, as well as providing rich insight through their networks. We look forward to continuing to build our strong relationship with Healthwatch Dudley over the coming year.”

Stephanie Cartwright, Director of Operations, Strategy and Partnerships.
Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust.



Finding young COVID champions

Our engagement officer worked with Dudley Young Health Champions and Dudley Council Public Health to roll out a 'Young COVID-19 Champion' initiative to give young people much needed opportunities to volunteer and develop their skills. Young COVID-19 Champions will mirror Dudley borough adult COVID-19 Community Champions, who provide local people with accurate and helpful information about the pandemic.

Active Black Country Survey

We have compiled a questionnaire about people's attitudes to and experiences of physical activity for the Active Black Country partnership, a champion for sport and physical activity across the area. **Over 900 people shared their views which we are currently theming into a new report.**

Winter wellbeing for older people

Over 100 people signed up to take part in three Winter Wellbeing events that we teamed up with Dudley Council Public Health to host in December 2021.

Contributing to national COVID mortality research

Our researcher was part of a working group with Health Research Data UK, University College London NHS Trust and the University of Cambridge to develop an interactive COVID-19 mortality indicator tool. The tool which has been developed for use by health researchers and policy leads, as well as clinicians, to inform conversations with their patients about their health and wellbeing and attitude towards risk, can be found at:

<https://www.hdruk.ac.uk/case-studies/risk-calculator-developed-to-show-how-underlying-health-conditions-can-affect-mortality-rates-in-covid-19-pandemic/>

Adult social care and me

In August 2020 we teamed up with Dudley Council for our People's Network to hear local experience of accessing adult social care services during the pandemic.

35 people
zoomed in
to tell us...

...about feeling anxious, isolated and sometimes lonely, how people have struggled with mental and physical health, how they had accessed their health appointments and their concerns about being disadvantaged as services move online.

Participants also celebrated how communities had pulled together and shared their ideas to help local organisations deliver services in more joined up ways.

The majority of our events (including this one) are signed to enable members of the Deaf community to participate.

In September 2020 we published a report linked to the event and the recommendations have been shared with service leads to aid learning and to influence future service delivery.

<https://www.healthwatchdudlev.co.uk/reports>



“Local Healthwatch have done fantastic work throughout the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is more work ahead to ensure that everyone's views are heard. COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and to tackle these unfair health differences we will need those in power to listen, to hear the experiences of those facing inequality and understand the steps that could improve people's lives.”

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



Zoom Meeting - 27 May 2020



46 People

SNAP SURVEY and messages of support



From local communities and organisations from health and care landscape

How can we influence and support organisations to work differently?



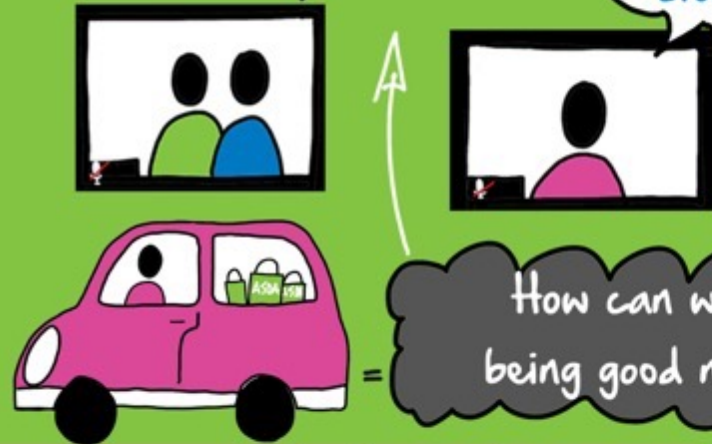
Facilitated conversations

90 mins session



Participants invited to consider ...

in Dudley borough



How can we carry on being good neighbours?



Key questions

How people have been supporting communities

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



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?



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



How can they be improved?

Should these new ways of working carry on?

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

thinkingvisually • @thinkingv

**Supporting
you to
have
your say**



We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.

**Providing
a high
quality
service**



We want everyone who shares an experience or seeks advice from us to get a high quality service and to understand the difference their views make.

**Ensuring
your
views
improve
health
and care**



We want more services to use your views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.

Our Hospital, Our Care

#OurFuture



In January 2021, we teamed up with The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, for a friendly online conversation with local people about the future of local hospital and community health services.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust provides hospital services from Russells Hall Hospital and Guest Outpatient Centre in Dudley and Corbett Outpatient Centre in Stourbridge. The Trust also provides a wide range of community services such as district nursing, continence services, diabetes support, podiatry and physiotherapy, in people's homes and from a variety of different locations across Dudley borough. Plans are being made for the coming five years and we teamed up to invite local people to put the kettle on and Zoom in to share their experiences, views and ideas around what works well, where they see gaps, what would make things better and what the priorities should be for local communities.

During the event which will inform the Trust's five-year strategy, 48 participants heard from two senior doctors working on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trust shared a commitment to ensuring that planning is influenced by the communities it serves.

Read a summary of the conversations that took place: <https://www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/reports>

Issues raised during the event specifically around communication, are already being looked into and there is a commitment to carry out engagement to enable the Trust to listen and take action around shaping services based on community feedback.

OUTCOME: A 'getting to know you' event has been planned with Dudley CVS in May 2021, to build and strengthen healthy relationships between voluntary sector organisations and the Trust.

The government says we must:

- Listen to what people like and what could be improved and share their views with people with the power to make change happen.
- Share information with Healthwatch England, our national body, to help improve the quality of health and care services across the country.
- Work closely with health and care providers, regulators and inspectors, including the Care Quality Commission, to act on people's views and make recommendations on how services can be improved.
- Hear what people are saying locally and nationally as we're involved in a number of groups that work to help make care better for everyone.
- Connect with our network of other local Healthwatch organisations.
- Have our own independent board, which sets our priorities based on what local people tell us, ensuring people in Dudley borough are listened to and have an influential voice.

Healthwatch Dudley is funded by the Department of Health through Dudley Council and our contract is held by voluntary sector support charity, Dudley CVS.



Finding out about personal budgets

We have been working with Dudley Council to find out how people who receive personal budgets are finding the best people to support them.

Employing a Personal Assistant (PA) can give people more choice and control as they can help with things such as washing and dressing, reading letters, or with activities people most enjoy in the community.

We invited people who already have a PA, or who might be thinking of employing someone using their personal budget, to share their experiences during a series of online events.

Fourteen people joined us for three online conversations in October 2020, December and January 2021. Participants with a wide range of experience including employing a PA using their personal budgets or through self funding, were joined by staff from Dudley Council, Queens Cross Network and Healthwatch Dudley.

People told us

“Peer support is key - could people who are already employing PAs help people who want to find out more?”

“Could a local quality standard be introduced?”

“Dudley Council Adult Social Care have Direct Payments Champions, many who are social worker qualified - Can they be better promoted?”

“There needs to be more clarity and consistency of information for members of the public and better training for staff around personal budgets.”

“Can social media, Facebook and WhatsApp be better used to connect people who employ PAs?”

“Dudley Council website helps people who receive Direct Payments become employers. Could these sections be tailored to support self funders?”

“Could Direct Payments videos be made featuring local people share real experiences of being a self funder and how to be a boss?”

“A local online training course would be good.”

OUTCOME: Dudley Council is using the feedback from these events to review and shape support offered to people who employ personal assistants.



“I didn’t realise that I had a right to a personal budget - people need more information about this but who do we ask?”

Our vision

Is to be a strong, independent and effective champion for people who access health and care services.

Our mission

Is to be the voice of Dudley borough for promoting outstanding health and care services, so that local people can influence how services are planned, purchased and provided.

Our approach

People’s views come first - especially those that find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions to problems. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to your healthcare.

“I went to Adult Social Care and they walked me through the interview process, I was offered support all along the way. They didn’t do it for me and the responsibility was most definitely mine but they asked me what I needed help with and supported me.”

“I am a client first not an employer, what does it mean to have a managed account? What happens if you have a poor experience?”

Life after bereavement

In March, we teamed up with local organisations to host a virtual ‘life after bereavement’ event. Sessions were planned with carers who told us how they wanted to explore end of life information for loved ones, the language people use when talking about death and the support available to people following a bereavement.

35 people zoomed into the event and participants have been invited to help shape hospital bereavement information and advice booklets.

“We look forward to continuing to work with Healthwatch Dudley to ensure we capture the views of Dudley people on the nature of the Bereavement Support that helps the challenges and the heartaches of grief to be a little more manageable.”

Anne Horder
Public Health Nurse



It's helpful to speak to someone who has experienced something similar (an 'equal')

It isn't easy to have these conversations

It takes ... **MORE TIME** ... than you think

If the offer isn't a genuine one, it isn't helpful"

I'm so glad you're coping

"Come round anytime & phone me if you need me"

I'm not

We often don't know who we're talking to as it's in a group

We're NOT in the same shoes, we're in SIMILAR ones

I can imagine what you're going through

I wanted someone to

JUST LISTEN

I haven't had a proper conversation, as people don't know what to say

How do you know?

Not yet, I can't, it's too soon

Use the person's name - people are often frightened to refer to the person by name

People always say "I can imagine ..."

No! You can't

BE REAL

You're husband wouldn't want you to be sad

Think of the good times

"Don't RUSH ME through my grief!"

People don't know how to be supportive ...

It's important to be careful of the language that we use

... **DIFFERENT**

WHAT

do you say to someone who's lost someone?

People feel **AWKWARD** & so they keep

quiet...

Everybody's grief journey is ...

Life after Bereavement - Conversations about grief



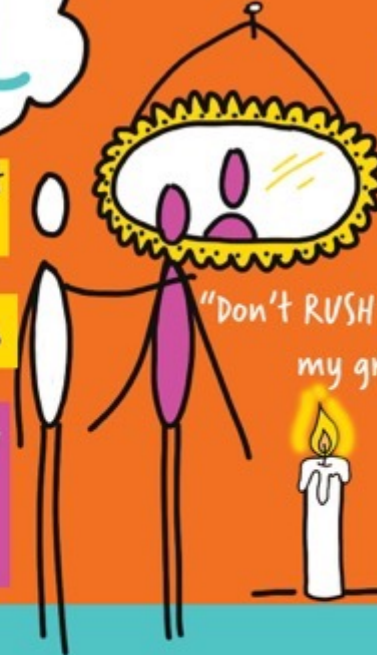
The pandemic made it harder to talk to people

I changed my status on social media to ask friends to call ...

... for a Zoom coffee



I started knitting blankets for a neo-natal unit



What we have spent:

Our reserves at 31st March 2021 total £25,215 and will be carried forward into 2021/22.

This figure includes our additional income, which will allow our team to be sustained beyond our grant allocation, so we can have an even greater reach into local communities to listen to and support local people about their health and wellbeing experiences.

Our income and expenditure is reported fully in the audited accounts of Dudley CVS for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Income	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities:	206,000
Income generated for additional activities:	7,500
TOTAL INCOME	213,500
Expenditure	£
Staff costs including salaries, pensions & travel expenses:	177,883
Overheads including accommodation costs and professional fees:	21,400
Running costs including telephone, printing, postage, office equipment leasing etc:	8,832
Hosting events & workshops:	1,523
Volunteer expenses:	188
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	209,826

Our plans for next year

I'm pleased to share that Dudley CVS has formally accepted an extension to the Healthwatch Dudley contract until 31 March 2023.

This welcome news will give the team and Board time to plan a busy diary of engagement and influencing activities including:

Listening to digitally excluded people

Our umbrella organisation, Healthwatch England launched a research grant programme in September 2020. Healthwatch Dudley was chosen as one of five local Healthwatch to explore issues around the rapid move to digital healthcare during the pandemic and to find out if groups are being excluded. This work is contributing to a national digital exclusion report set to be published in 2021 which will include Dudley voices captured in the study.

Hearing experiences of shielding

Working with Dudley Council Public Health to listen to the experiences of local people who have been shielding and staff who have been supporting them, to find out what further help may be needed should a future lockdown situation occur.

Young people and mental health

Working with four Black Country local Healthwatch and the Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Groups, to create a project to listen to the experiences of young people accessing CAMHS services.

Adult social care portals

New online portals are being developed by Dudley Council to help people with Internet access, quickly and easily find the information they need. We have been asked to involve local people with this journey to help shape and to test the new systems to make sure that the new online portals work for everyone.

Lateral flow testing mystery shopping

Involving our volunteers with testing Dudley Council Lateral Flow test booking systems and review of website information.

Listening, informing & influencing...

In addition to our statutory Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board seat, Healthwatch Dudley is present at a wide range of Boards and forums across the health and care landscape. We will continue to make the most of these opportunities to ensure that local people have a clear and influential voice, as systems recover and evolve in response to the pandemic.

Dudley CVS holds the contract for Healthwatch Dudley and Board members are currently reviewing how future activities will continue to complement and add value to how local communities are supported.

Sitting within the voluntary sector greatly benefits Healthwatch Dudley, giving invaluable access to people supported by local charities and grass roots organisations, who might not otherwise have a strong voice.

We look forward to working with our local communities and partners in 2021 to continue to grow our strong independent local Healthwatch.

Call us: 03000 111 001

Tweet us: @HWDudley

hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk

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Our small team is making a big difference!

Deb Attwood

Community Information and Engagement Officer

Dr Robert Dalziel

Participatory Research Officer

Melissa Guest

Communications Development Officer

The small print... This report can be viewed at: www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/reports and has been circulated to Healthwatch England and our local authority Dudley Council. The Healthwatch trademark (including logo and Healthwatch brand) is used in line with the terms of the licence agreement.

Sally Huband
Dudley CVS
Board



healthwatch
Dudley