

How is covid-19 impacting on people's access to and experience of health and social care services in Sheffield?

These emerging issues are based on feedback that we have received from individuals, as well as issues that have been brought to us via voluntary and community sector partners. This briefing is intended to be a snapshot of what we are hearing about; we hope that it is of use to services, and commissioners of services, in indicating potential areas of focus.

Background: [See previous briefings here](#)

Key issues from the two weeks commencing 1st June and 8th June 2020:

- **Dentistry** – We continue to hear confusion around changes to dental services:
 - There has been varying levels of communication from dental practices to their patients. Ahead of government restrictions easing for dentists on 8th June, some practices sent patients a video explaining their current position regarding PPE and treatment availability. However, people who are registered at other practices have told us they have heard nothing from their dentist since before lockdown began. They said they haven't been told what to do if they experience an issue, and don't know if their dentist is now re-opening.
 - We spoke to one person who has remained unable to get a response about when their treatment, which was paused at the beginning of lockdown, would resume.
 - We have also spoken to one dentist who said they were given no advance warning of the government's plan to reopen dental practices – they were confused about the guidance, and said there was no PPE for them to use in order to reopen safely as they were not given time to prepare.
- **Face coverings** – We have heard some confusion about the guidance on face coverings, and who would need to wear them if this becomes compulsory in more settings. We spoke to one person who wears a hearing aid and finds that a face covering interferes with this, but doesn't know how the guidance about wearing a face covering on public transport would affect them.
- **Community Nursing Services** – We have heard positive feedback from one service user about how Community Nurses are managing to work during lockdown.
- **Mental Health** – We have continued to hear from people who say that lockdown is having an increasingly negative effect on their mental health. Most of the people we've spoken to about Mental Health services were receiving treatment or support before lockdown, but feel this is more difficult to access now. We also spoke to one person who told us they had not previously struggled with their mental health, but were finding lockdown extremely difficult and were finding it hard to access early support.
- **Continence Services** – We have heard about issues via a voluntary sector group. Disposable bed pads are made from the same materials as face masks, and a service user's supply was reduced due to shortages. The service was unable to provide washable pads instead.
- **Continuing Healthcare (CQC) assessments** – A voluntary sector group told us about further instances of people with increasing health needs who are not being offered CHC eligibility assessments. It is difficult to find clear information about the current approach to CHC assessments in Sheffield, and the CCG webpage has not been updated with current guidance.