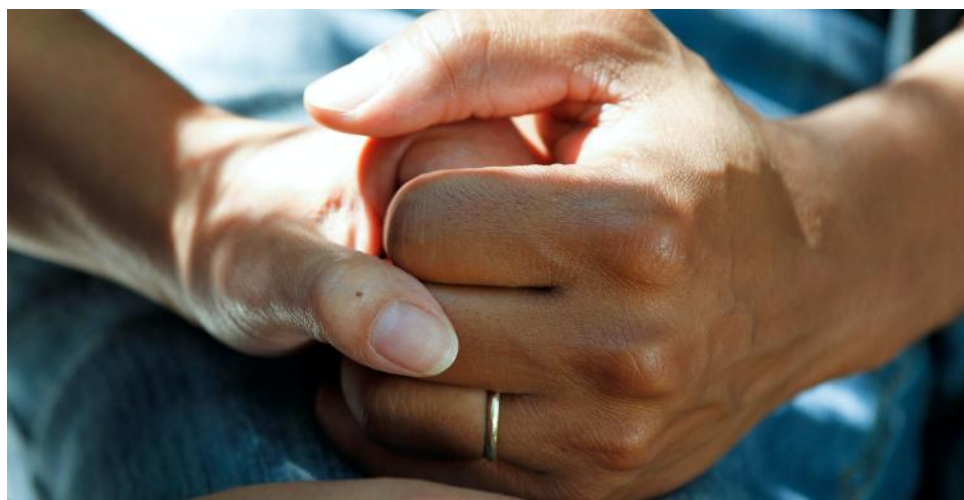


Impact & Performance Report



October - December 2020 (Q3)

AT A GLANCE

Making a difference to care

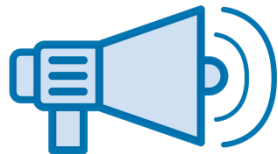


We published

65 reports or case studies

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care. Through these we've been able to show areas for improvement and system learning.

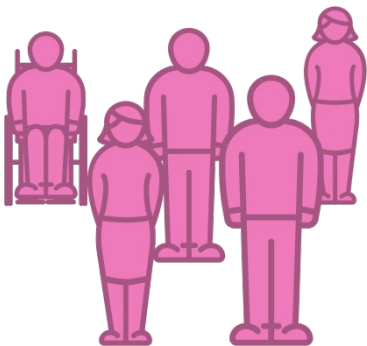
Reaching out



335% increase in insight

compared to the same period last year, recording over 3,700 **pieces of insight**, covering a wide range of services and themes.

Providing support



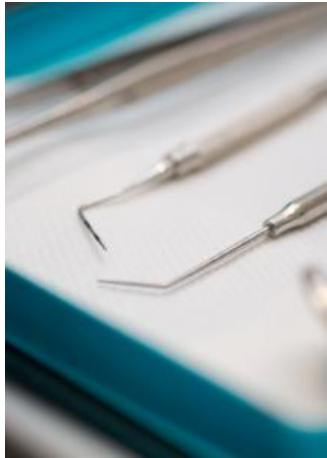
We engaged with

1300+ community partners

focusing on autism and learning disabilities, sensory needs, digital access to healthcare, and communication improvement.

IMPACT: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

At the start of this report we highlight some of the areas/themes where we've had the most impact in the last quarter:



Backbench debate on the effect of COVID-19 on dental services

A backbench debate on dental services and COVID-19 happened on **14 January**. To support the debate the House of Commons Library has produced [a report](#). This shows where your insight goes- take a look at the report (pages 10 and 11).

Here in West Sussex and Sussex as a whole, we've worked hard for this national issue to be pushed forward and for NHS England (who commission dentistry) to recognise the pain and desperation people experience and the potential for widening health inequalities. You can find more information about this in our reports detailed on page 16.

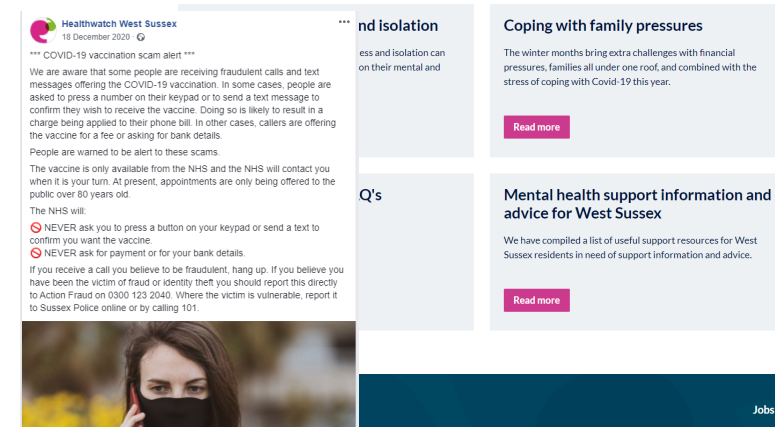
It's particularly good to see Healthwatch being referenced under '*Impact on vulnerable groups*' - which also recognises the issue that we have raised about access to dental services for pregnant women. Currently there is no sign of a positive response and so we continue to share West Sussex resident experiences to help influence change.

Access to local information and advice

People shared our information about vaccine scams using [social media](#) (and other posts) just before Christmas, helping us to reach more people with trusted information pages. During the Christmas and New Year period **89% of visitors to our website were new** and for the **first time our home page was not the most popular page viewed - it's was our COVID-19 page** which is regularly refreshed and updated with more useful information so that people know where they can get help and support. We know the festive period was a particularly challenging time for many of us and knowing where to turn was vital.

Developing and innovating

Our application to NICE shared learning collection has been agreed and our partnership work on the development of the **Best Interest Decision making Toolkit** - <https://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk/news/2019-05-08/launch-consent-treatment-best-interest-decision-making-toolkit> has been published and is now an exemplar alongside their guidance - Decision Making and mental capacity NG108 published 2018 as a supporting resource, accessed by clicking [here](#).



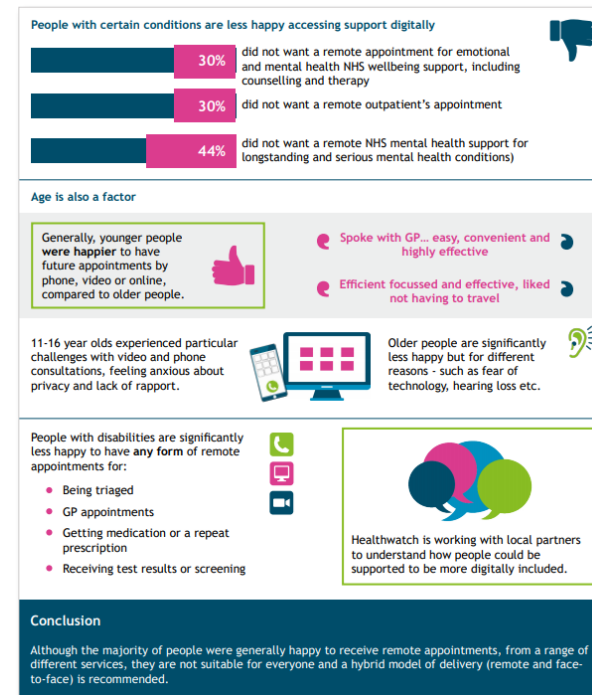
Supporting better digital healthcare

The pandemic and need to socially distance and keep staff and patients as safe as possible has introduced new ways of accessing healthcare through digital platforms.

By sharing what local people have told us works well and similarly where there are challenges or issues in accessing healthcare in non-face-to-face ways we've been able to show the system that there needs to be a blend and personalised approach to how services offer access. In Sussex, our NHS commissioners are investing resources and funding with the community and voluntary sector to explore how more people can be digitally included.

We're also working with young people and the organisations that support them to come up with solutions and tools others can use to give better digital access.

GP Practices are open but are currently receiving very high volume of calls about the COVID vaccines. Where possible (and non-urgently), we suggest people visit their practice website and use the e-Consult, LIVI consultation platforms to seek initial help rather than call. The website can also offer some good clinical advice and information that may help you manage your health and wellbeing without needing to call.



Risk vs Human Touch - understanding the challenge of care home separation

Heartfelt thanks to the 90+ people who joined the Healthwatch in Sussex webinar in November. People, like Lesley here, shared the impact restricted access to residents has had on them and their families. It was also obvious the impact the virus has had on care home providers, who are working to support their residents.

From this, Healthwatch in Sussex has managed to secure further support to meet one of the asks that people on the webinar had, and that is to continue the conversation and to explore the psychological support family carers/relatives of care home residents need as a result of this separation and loss.

For information and now to book on the next webinar please click [here](#).

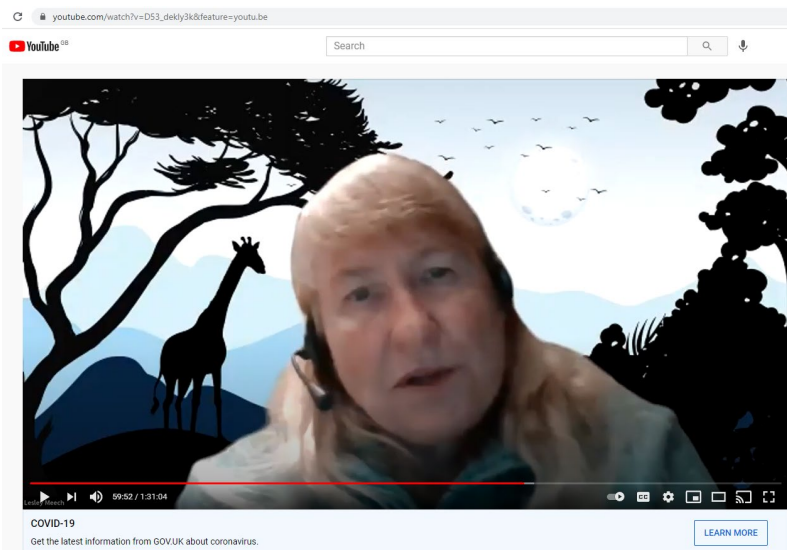


27 Jan Webinar for Care Home Relatives

Online (Community events)

27 January 2021

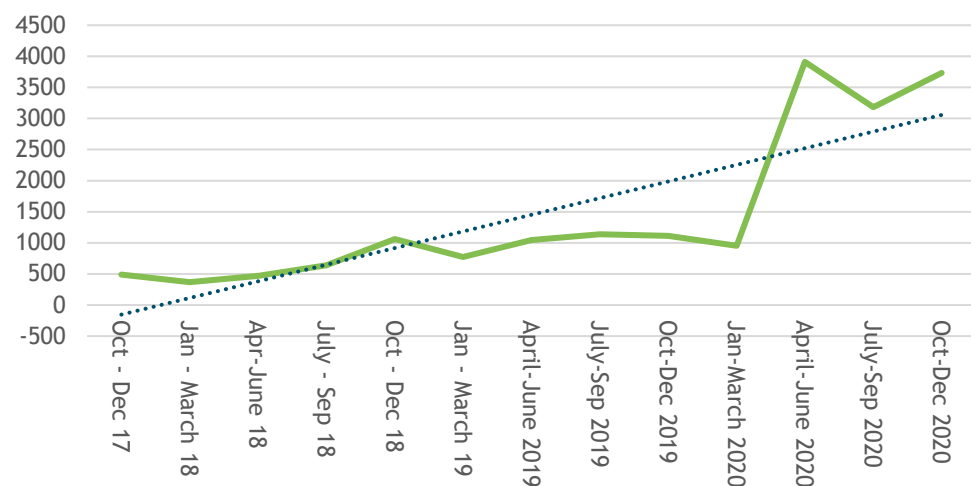
Find out more



We are proud to showcase this, and other reports, on our www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

Total No. of stories on CRM and surveys (from Helpdesk & Local Team)



Once again, it's been a busy quarter with some large scale engagement projects that have included surveys and semi-structured interviews. These included: carrying out the engagement work for the sensory Strategic Needs Assessment for the County Council, working with partners on understanding the needs of autistic people and those living with learning disabilities, family/friend carers of those living in care homes.

We recorded a total of **3732 pieces of insight** (335% increase on this time last year.)

Whilst capturing large volumes of insight is important, our focus is on adding value to the health and care system through the provision of powerful case studies that speak to the heart of the matter. We are working extensively to build and grow community relationships to ensure we're trusted to be the *custodians* of peoples' health and care stories.

We've several engagement activities underway:

- We'll be running focus groups looking at how well our integrated care system (Sussex Health and Care Partnership) works for specific communities.
- We'll be analysing survey insight from autistic residents to build on our reporting that will inform a Sussex Strategic Health Plan.



As Sussex has declared a major incident because of the COVID-19 rate of infection and the impact of this on NHS, we have deferred our planned exploration of communication and experiences of processes for those discharged from hospitals. This work is ready to pick-up again, once the pressure on the system has lifted enough to be in a forward position for learning.

Information, Advice, Communication & Engagement

Supplied to patients, their family and friend carers, community partners and Integrated Care System stakeholders, through all of our communications channels:

	Key performance metrics for current and previous quarter	
	Q2 July - September 2020	Q3 October - December 2020
Enquiries to Helpdesk and frontline team through email, website and social media	565	736
People signposted to IHCAS	48	49
Number of people engaged with (all channels)	42,738	52,328
Number of engagement/influencing occasions	401	568
No. of stories/accounts recorded on CRM and surveys by Local Team & through Community Partnerships	3,181	3,732
Number of community partners engaged with	734	1,315
Active community collaborations	15	25
Reports, Spotlights and case studies	66	65
Website visits	6,754 - 85.4% were new users	8,568 - 88.9% were new users
Facebook: Followers Posts Reach	431 80 11,060	458 88 22,968
Twitter: Followers Posts Reach	1,703 66 22,511	1,717 75 29,300
Heads Up briefing subscribers	396	441
External publications (hard copy and digital)	39 - additional readership c125k	22



Working to understand the sensory needs of young and adult residents

We've been working with a large number of community partners to support West Sussex County Council. Our role is to support the engagement to understand the views and experiences of local people (lived experience) of all ages (including children, young people and adults) and organisations providing services and support. Stakeholders need to understand what is working well, what isn't and identify unmet needs. Additionally, they also want to understand the impact of COVID-19 in terms of impact on people and services.



In partnership with people living with sensory impairment we've agreed (co-produced) the main themes and prompt questions and set up engagement via active groups and focus groups working with providers, organisations and individuals.

This work is important because a Strategic Needs Assessment informs and guide the commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services within West Sussex, in this case for people living with visual impairment, hearing impairment, dual sensory impairment (including deaf/blindness).

Supporting meaningful information to the patients

Our volunteers and staff have been working with the NHS in many ways this quarter to support good communication with patients. This has included:

- Reviewing a new service for people who have had new medication whilst in hospital. A referral can be made to the person's community pharmacy to work with them and their GP, so they get the most benefits from the medicine. Patient information is now not so clinical and is easier to read and understand.
- Making recommendations on how to improve communications, by focusing on the important aspects for people waiting for an endoscopy appointment.
- In partnership, we have helped to make sure communication for proposed stroke services in West Sussex are holistic, health-promoting and will make sense to people. We want to ensure people can understanding clearly what, why and how any future services may look, so if asked, they can make an informed contribution to a consultation.
- Looking at all 80 GP practice websites in West Sussex (in December) so we can offer practices an individual review of what is good about their communication and any areas that were not so clear. Whilst we are not publishing these publicly as the practices are under significant pressure to deliver the vaccination programme. A draft summary report was shared with the Clinical Commissioning Group.



I really appreciate the constructive approach that you and the other Healthwatch partners take to improving services together.

Pennie Ford, Executive Managing Director West Sussex CCG



Involving Local People

	Key performance metrics for current and previous quarter	
	Q2 July - September 2020	Q3 October - December 2020
Involving local people in designing and delivering our core responsibilities and work is critical to the success of this local Healthwatch:		
Volunteers	48	41
Roles covered by volunteers	105	77
Volunteering interactions (meetings, events)	110	323
Volunteer support hours	309	416
Healthwatch Board Independent Directors	252	256
Estimated value of volunteers **	£26,625	£29,600

** Estimate based on £25 per hour for volunteers who usually work at a high level and £75 per hour for Independent Director volunteers. More virtual meetings reduced the need for travel hours so although a slightly lower number of hours, it reflects increased direct activity.

During this quarter:

We continue to sustain a good level of engagement with volunteers taking part in:

- Phone surveys
- Mystery Shopping activities
- Discussions, forums, AGMs and other meetings
- The Board met virtually for a formal meeting in November.

Some of our regular volunteers remain engaged but are currently unable to be active due to the pandemic.

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

We are pleased to be working with the West Sussex Records Office so these and other reports relating to the pandemic are recorded. Pandemic related reports not only give important information for the here and now, but also give a historical reference.

The following were published this quarter:

COVID-19



[NHS Coronavirus vaccine roll-out begins across West Sussex](#)

December 2020

The first coronavirus vaccinations have been given to patients and the programme is now rolled out across West Sussex. This article provided information and links so the public could find the latest information.



[Coronavirus Information and Advice - Christmas and New Year Updates](#)

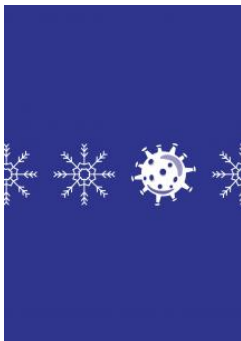
December 2020

Updated information published ahead of Christmas and New Year and promoted on social media, so more people could access important information about services and support.

[Baby It's Cold Outside - West Sussex Winter Resilience](#)

October 2020

We are sharing stories which show the need for all organisations to adapt and find ways for our older and any vulnerable citizens to avoid suffering as we start getting cold and icy weather. Autumn and winter weather brings additional difficulties to people needing to access services - from queuing outside in the cold, wind, rain and ice to impacts on mobility. We are sharing stories which show the need for all organisations to adapt and find ways for our older and any vulnerable citizens to avoid suffering because of changes in the weather.





[Voluntary Sector Response to COVID-19 in Horsham - report 2](#)

October 2020

Horsham District Voluntary Sector Support, and Healthwatch West Sussex are working collaboratively to capture the COVID-19 experiences from voluntary and community organisations of their challenges, solutions, and future planning.

Our first report detailed the responses from our Online Resilience Survey completed by 16 organisations - [click here](#) to read the findings.



[Enabling the Voluntary and Community sector in Arun & Chichester to support people beyond the COVID-19 pandemic - report 3](#)

October 2020

This is our 3rd report. In this report we will be drawing information from our series of semi-structured conversations (carried out by telephone/virtual), with voluntary and community service leaders, who have worked through this extraordinary time.

Over the last five months, Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester, and Healthwatch West Sussex have been engaging with voluntary and community service leaders and other stakeholders across the Arun and Chichester area to learn about their COVID-19 experience - the challenges, solutions, and forward planning. See [report 1](#), and [report 2](#)

Case studies from the Voluntary Sector response:

- [4sight Vision Support](#)
- [Age Concern Hassocks](#)
- [Age UK East Grinstead](#)
- [Age UK West Sussex](#)
- [Apuldram Centre](#)
- [Aspergers Voice](#)
- [Cancer United](#)
- [Chichester Foodbank](#)
- [Chichester Public Health](#)
- [Chichester Wellbeing](#)
- [Christians Against Poverty](#)
- [Community Transport Sussex](#)
- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#)
- [Four Streets](#)
- [Friends Chichester Hospitals](#)
- [Home Start](#)
- [Know Dementia](#)
- [Lavant Support Group](#)
- [Making Theatre Gaining Skills](#)
- [My Sisters House](#)
- [PACSO \(Parents and Carers Support Organisation\)](#)
- [Partnerships and Communities Team West Sussex County Council](#)
- [Pregnancy Options Centre](#)
- [Relate North and South West Sussex](#)
- [Sage House](#)
- [Selsey Community Forum](#)
- [Springboard](#)
- [Sussex Clubs for Young People](#)
- [Sussex Oakleaf](#)
- [Stonepillow](#)
- [Streetlight](#)
- [Sylvia Beaufoy Youth Centre](#)
- [The Lithuanian Community of the South Coast](#)
- [The Olive Tree](#)
- [The Phoenix Stroke Club](#)
- [Time 4 Children](#)
- [West Sussex Mind](#)

Spotlight on other services:

[AHS Wellbeing](#) Wellbalanced for Wellbeing is run by AHS Wellbeing, on behalf of Adur & Worthing District Councils, Arun District Council, Chichester District Council and Mid Sussex District Council.

[Amaze](#) - Being on the 'Compass' means that your child or young person will be part of the Disability Register for West Sussex. This register is held by Amaze, an independent charity based in Brighton.

[Apetito](#) - Apetito are described as being the leading producers of delicious and nutritious meals, that have been developed by Apetito head chefs and nutritionists, to ensure the right nutrition is in every meal.

Hospital Care and Discharge



Case Study - Hospital Communication and Discharge during COVID

October 2020

This is Stanley and Barbara's story of their experience of hospital communication and discharge.

We contacted this family, having seen their story, to listen and understand in more detail their experience. We were delighted to be told that telling their story has been cleansing for them. This family's story highlights areas that can cause concern during normal times. The pandemic means these issues can now be magnified with the changes in interactions and limitations on hospital visits. When there are negative impacts, outcomes are intensified.



We know that this has had an impact because shared experiences detail how staff have enabled families to stay in-touch and communicate.



Improve hospital discharge now before winter to manage second peak of Covid-19, warn Red Cross and Healthwatch England

October 2020

Patients felt unready to leave hospital and missed out on vital follow-up visits and assessments according to new Healthwatch and British Red Cross research into hospital discharge arrangements during the first five months of the coronavirus pandemic.

Care Homes and Carers



[West Sussex Care Home Insight](#)

October 2020

We have collated a range of stories that show people's experiences of care home living during and after the Lockdown (July - Sept 20)

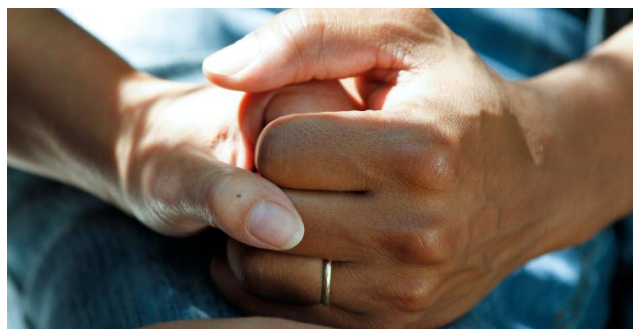
We hope these case studies and insight will help our Health and Care System and care home businesses to recognise the impact of the changes arising from the pandemic and seek ways to address these to support residents and their families to stay in connect going forward.



[Call for better guidance on care home visits: Read letter to Government](#)

November 2020

Healthwatch England wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care expressing concern around the current guidance on visits to care home. Read the letter and the Governments response.



[Risk vs Human Touch - update from our webinar](#)

November 2020

Relatives and family carers of care home residents engaged in lively discussions with professionals from a variety of health and care services and support organisations.

Experiences and views that were shared at the event have been captured and will be drawn together, shared with participants and published to inform future decision-making for care homes. The webinar was recorded and is available for anyone to watch by clicking the following link.



[Spotlight on: Carers Support West Sussex](#)

October 2020

Carers Support West Sussex provide unpaid carers with information and guidance along with practical and emotional support, so they feel valued and supported. Read more in our Spotlight report.

Did you know, 3 out of 5 people will become an unpaid carer? Caring can be both wonderful and tough. It can also often become a full-time job, leaving carers with little or no time for themselves.

Digital healthcare innovation and challenges

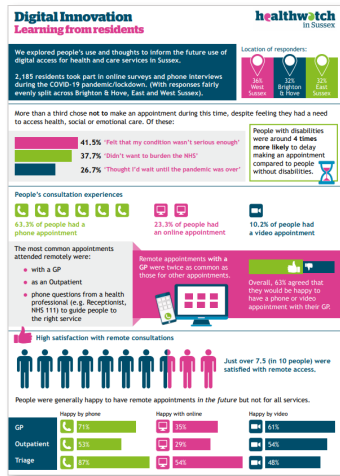


[How to build rapport and help health professionals communicate during a pandemic](#)

November 2020

In October 2020 we had a focused discussion with 14 graduates and 3 youth workers from the National Citizen Service in West Sussex. These are their thoughts and valuable suggestions.

The young people took digital engagement to include any engagement that wasn't face-to-face. This included digital platforms, e.g. zoom, NHS digital consultation platforms, email, phone conversations etc.



Digital Innovation - Learning from Residents

November 2020

We explored people's use and thoughts to inform the future use of digital access for health and care services in Sussex. This is the short, infographic version of the full report.

2,185 residents took part in online surveys and phone interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic/lockdown. (With responses fairly evenly split across Brighton & Hove, East and West Sussex).

This is the short, infographic version of the full report. Read the full report [here](#).



Young People's Preferences towards the future of health and social care services in Sussex

November 2020

Young Healthwatch has worked alongside Healthwatch Brighton and Hove to explore young people's experiences of Sussex health and social care services during the coronavirus pandemic

Young Healthwatch also asked young people about their preferences towards the future of health and social care services (including specific preferences for GP appointments), what have been the biggest challenges faced during the pandemic and how these have affected their life.

The Young Healthwatch team have consulted a total of 146 young people through an online survey.



[Preferences towards the future of health and social care services in Sussex: findings during the Coronavirus pandemic - full report](#)

October 2020

A final report from the Healthwatch in Sussex public survey on digital consultations, combined with results from the Sussex CCG's survey on NHS communications with patients (where comparable questions were used).

A combined sample of 2185, the engagement focused on establishing people's experiences of digital or remote consultations during the COVID-19 period and crucially, their expectations and preferences for service redesign and delivery in the restore and recovery stages post COVID.

Dental Care



[NHS Dental Services in Sussex - Update](#)

December 2020

NHS dental services should have resumed from early June 2020. As with so many other services, the need to keep people safe from the virus continues to mean there is less time available for dentists to talk to and treat patients under the NHS.

[Alternative Way of Sourcing Dental Care](#)

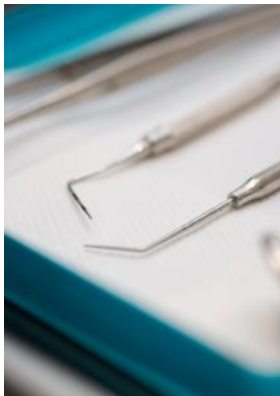
October 2020

Despite the importance of good oral health, access to dentists has long been a health inequality for people who are homeless/sleeping rough as our case studies illustrate. We look into alternatives to traditional building based dental provisions.

[Ferring Dental Practice - ceasing NHS Dental Service?](#)

October 2020

Recently, we've been hearing from the public that Ferring Dental Practice are no longer offering NHS dental treatment due to funding cuts. We raised this with NHS England to find out more information.



Healthwatch West Sussex



[Impact and Performance Report Q2 - July to September 2020](#)

November 2020

A summary of the breadth and depth of our work in the quarter July to September 2020, issues/concerns and our forward plan for the next 3 months.

In these challenging times we've adapted to make sure we find out what matters to you, and others, and to help make sure your experiences and views shape the support you need.

Listening to peoples' experience and needs, we have during this quarter, escalated 34 issues across the system for more urgent attention and resolution.



[Heads Up](#)

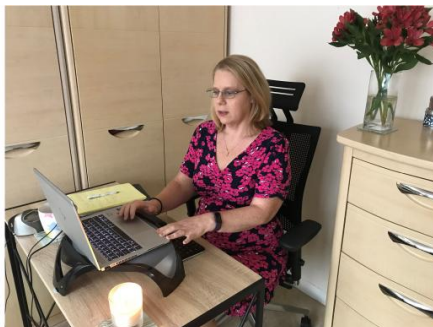
Keeping people up to date on health and social care.

[October 2020](#)

[November 2020](#)

[December 2020](#)

Other



[How I #SelfCare - by Julie \(Blog\)](#)

November 2020

For Self Care Week we **shared** tips, advice and guidance on self care, and how to 'live' self care for a happier, healthier life.

Here, Julie Kalsi, shares how she self cares...



[West Sussex Adult Safeguarding Board - Information Blog](#)

December 2020

Find out who the West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board are, their vision, purpose and aims.



[Early Flu Communication - Reflections & Recommendation](#)

October 2020

We've provided insight to the Sussex Integrated Care System on this year's local communication about flu vaccines, having listened to residents. Here we reflect on what could be done to support more people to get this important protection.

General Practices (GPs) and Community Pharmacies are well versed in communicating and running the flu vaccine programme, having refined this over recent years. Many enlist the support of their Patient Participant Groups (PPGs) in this process.

This year, fear and changing community practices has brought a new dimension to this. Added to which, the Government's announcement in July that more people will be offered the flu vaccine has meant GPs and Pharmacies have increased demand and new cohorts of people to communicate with.



[Case Study: Homeless Communities in West Sussex](#)

October 2020

This is an independent focused case study showing how homeless people struggle to access some basic primary care services, which has worsened due to the pandemic.

Healthwatch West Sussex has been working with community partners that support homeless people in West Sussex to understand their changing health needs.

Notes: we'll be publishing more homeless insight next quarter.

INDEPENDENT HEALTH COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY (IHCAS)

Supplied to patients, their family and friend carers, community partners and Integrated Care System stakeholders through offering support in learning from complaints and patient concerns:	Key performance metrics for current and previous quarter	
	Q2 July - September 2020	Q3 October - December 2020
One off information, advice and support	25	33
New referrals for support	48	49
Advocacy support concluded	49	50
Ongoing advocacy support cases	76	75

During this quarter:

- The referral rate has continued to be similar to last quarter but with ‘flurries’ of new cases.
- Many of the referrals to the service are complex. We are soon meeting with other Local Healthwatch IHCAS providers to explore support needs to see if West Sussex is an outlier in its complaints’ complexity.



My Healthwatch case worker has been a fantastic resource advising me on self-advocacy.

My client had bounced around various medical provider for over a year and was had been discharged from an acute hospital during COVID-19 (2020). They felt let down by the system and their partner told us how they watched, as the whole thing was just sucking the life out of their partner.

Over two months, I’ve been able as their advocate, to suggest various organisation they could make contact with and ideas for working with their GP to get access to the crisis team. I’ve provided information about making an NHS complaint.

When they were readmitted to hospital in great pain, I contacted Patient Liaison Service (PALS) and took external advice on how to deal with the situation. As a result of sharing this information and advice, the person’s partner was able to talk to the Ward Manager and it was agreed the consultant would make direct contact and discuss the situation as the person was unable to walk, in pain but was classed as medically-fit to be discharged. After communicating with various parties, it was agreed to monitor the situation for 48-hours before discharge.



FINANCE

Finance and Performance Board Sub Committee and Actions

We continue to pursue additional commissioned work and social enterprise opportunities and believe this is enabling us to work creatively to supplement and support the core objectives of a local Healthwatch. Several small-commissioned projects are underway or concluding. We're also delighted to be working with Healthwatch England in relation to young people transitioning to adulthood with mental health needs and cancer experiences for Black men (this is part of the NHS England Integration Index Toolkit development).

The finance subcommittee met on 1 February 2021.

- Impact and Performance report (published document)
- Finance report (internal document) & refreshed Risk Register (internal document).

LOOKING FORWARD

Following government advice and guidance Healthwatch West Sussex team members continue to work from home. All face-to-face engagement activities stopped in mid-March 2020 and we will continue to operate a flexible work plan for our staff and volunteers for the foreseeable future.

Future opportunities



We continue to work collaboratively with our colleagues in Healthwatch Brighton & Hove and East Sussex, where issues are Sussex-wide, including additionally commissioned work.

Healthwatch West Sussex currently lead on behalf of local Healthwatch on: Cancer, Autism and Learning Disabilities, Dentistry, Children & Young Peoples future engagement with the implementation of the Foundations for Our Future recommendation implementation.

What we have done to date and will continue to do:

- Built on our existing good home working practices and using the time to maximise on technology to deliver effective communications. Our staff have access to MS Teams, Skype and Zoom so we can have virtual meetings both internal and with external stakeholders
- We are exploring the use of What's App to elicit insight and share information.
- Maintain effective and productive relationships with all key partners. We will:
 - continue to use *a constructive partner* tone of voice in our conversations, whilst recognising our independence and responsibility to the public
 - give stakeholders insight early, to enable them to respond swiftly and will then publish any reports
 - produce case studies and update using our routine communication channels: monthly Heads Up, website and social media
 - capture our escalations, recommendations, outcomes and testimonials, in a central document and will share this with system partners - this will enable us to demonstrate the difference our work makes
- We've reviewed our work plan and agreed the deferment of some activities to avoid putting any added pressure on the West Sussex/Sussex health and care system, whilst rates of infection and hospitalisation are high.
- We will share important information relating to local COVID-19 issues and signposting to date information regarding local and national services to residents
- Ensure we provide ongoing support for voluntary and community sector organisations.
- IHCAS will continue to support residents with their NHS complaint options throughout these difficult times, recognising the pressure the NHS is currently under and the need to delay some investigation - recognising the need for good communication during this time. Our advocates are now using What's App to work with some clients.

January 2020 - March 2021

Clear and accurate information, advice and signposting

- Work with key stakeholders to create information relating to COVID vaccine and any other support based on what residents say are their emerging themes - using a narrative that enables local people to understand what is changing and how this could impact them.
- We will focus on supporting our place-based system to improve the content of written material to residents, for example, hospital leaflets and general letters, focusing on delayed care and diagnosis
- Use our social media presence to deliver trusted information and advice to local people and engaging people, which when appropriate may include surveys.
- Develop our information and advice through digital innovation to maximise the investment in our Healthwatch Hub and Community Partnership engagement and knowledge of West Sussex.
- We will be reviewing our Heads Up communication to see how we may improve on this communication tool.

Gather feedback and the views of peoples' needs and experiences in relation to COVID 19 and other services where it relates to patient safety

- Our team will use existing networks within the community, and a range of designed communication tools to establish and encourage individual and groups to provide *eyes and ears* feedback around health and care:
 - Confusion and contradictions information
 - Gaps and blockers in accessing support and services
 - Positive experiences of accessing services and the innovative things that people are finding beneficial which could be maintained after the pandemic
- This includes joining more geographical Facebook Groups and seeking out opportunities to talk to voluntary and community group members virtually.

Reporting

- Spotlights on community services, using a refreshed design that shows others the impact these services have on the individuals who benefit from accessing them
- Learning for Recovery case studies (published) and insight briefing (non-published).
- Construct or contribute to and share Sussex-wide Healthwatch Reports.
- Enable our place-based system to respond to insight and then publish reports.

Involving Local People

- By working with our existing and where possible new volunteers, we'll create opportunities for online review of information sources, and phone-based interactions with other residents to support the system to improve services through the lens of local people.

Issues and Concerns - “Hot Topics”

With Sussex having declared a major incident we must help people and stakeholders to understand any areas of concern and offer support in communicating with our residents. We share peoples’ concerns over the spread of the virus within our County and the sad loss of life. We’ll share anonymised positive stories that come to us directly with providers as we appreciate this gives staff a boost in these challenging times.

We continue to offer our health and care colleagues access to our lay-perspective for any written material and communications, as a way of sense-checking the information being conveyed.

Like many, were receiving **high-levels rates of vaccine-related enquiries** and we’re using this knowledge to support the system, including taking part in regular communication and engagement advisory group meetings.

Access to Day Services and Respite Care - following high levels of insight received from individuals, families, carers and community support organisations in relation to the impact of no access to Day Services and Respite care we sent a letter outlining concerns to all MPs and elected members in early January. Follow up case studies sent later in the month.

We’re starting to listen to some accounts of **discharge of hospitals** that are both worrying and sadly an indication of staff fatigue/shortages, against COVID demand. We’re advising people to seek assurance that inappropriate placements are temporary and that assessments of needs will be fully carried out after the immediate major incident issues start to de-escalate. Whilst we have deferred our planned discharge work to April (to be reviewed mid-February) it will be important to see what can be learnt from peoples’ experiences.

We wait to see if the increase in delivery requirement (from 1 January 2021) for contractual units of **dental** activity (from 20%-45%) will have an impact on the volume of enquiries and negative insight.

From many sources Healthwatch is hearing the **Mental Health** support demand in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is profound. Sometimes in quantity of enquiries, and very often in the intensity of referrals.

We’re flagging our concern that there are some Voluntary and Community Sector services that currently have no agreed funding from 1 April 2021. These include:

- Pathfinder service in Chanctonbury/Downs area of West Sussex - Provided by West Sussex Mind
- Worthing Staying Well service - Provided by West Sussex Mind
- BeOK youth mental health service - Service for 16-25 year olds linked to adult Pathfinder services- Provided by WSX Mind and Brighton Housing Trust
- Sight Loss Advisors - 4Sight

Issues and concerns continued ...

Access to GP services (in its broadest sense of primary and community care not just GPs) we reported last time was becoming a stronger theme again and we do not anticipate this to decrease, given the need for GP-led vaccine services and the high volume of calls into practices. We are continuing to both field vaccine enquiries and to encourage people to wait to be contacted about their vaccine to do what we can to reduce the call demand. However, we are realistic that for some people we will not provide satisfaction in answering their vaccine enquiry when we can't confirm an actual date.

Dentistry - we continue to hear and share insight around access to treatment.

Care Homes Webinars - with other local Healthwatch colleagues we continue to hold webinars to listen to and support families of care home residents. The latest of these at the end of January had 30 West Sussex participants. We heard of fears and desperation over staying in contact with family members, vaccinations and practical and emotional support needs. A further two webinars are scheduled. We hope that a member of the WSCC Public Health will be able to attend the next one.

Board meetings

The CIC Board met informally for a workshop on 14 October 2020 to take stock of the current situation nationally, at an integrated care system and at a West Sussex level to review and refresh Healthwatch West Sussex priorities. It has been agreed that the next six to nine months will focus on: COVID-19 and resulting “Hot Topics”.

Future public board meetings are scheduled below and will remain virtual using Zoom until it is possible to safely hold them face to face:
10 February 2021 12 May 2021

A new Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed from 1 April to take over the reins after our current Chair Frances Russell stands down after 8 years of outstanding support for West Sussex Healthwatch. Frances Russell will continue her support as a non-board volunteer.

Several additional Independent Non Executive Board Directors are currently being sought through recruitment adverts across appropriate West Sussex channels.