

# Healthwatch Across Cheshire

## September - November 2021

### Cheshire West and Chester Care Communities



## Introduction

### What is Healthwatch Across Cheshire?

Healthwatch Cheshire holds continuous conversations with people to gather and better understand the views of people about their experiences and expectations of health, care, wellbeing support and services. Social distancing guidance and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that much of our conversations with people during 2020 and the beginning of 2021 were held virtually over the telephone or by video call. People had been contacting us about topics such as COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters, flu jabs, and access to services including GP Practices and dentistry. As well as these topics, conversations with those who plan services and support locally have identified that other priorities in Cheshire include pharmacies, self-care, promoting recruitment into the care sector, and voluntary sector support. Therefore, as restrictions and guidance loosened in mid to late 2021, we launched a set programme of activity - *Healthwatch Across Cheshire* - to once again get out into communities and talk to people face-to-face about these topics in all areas of Cheshire, from Malpas to Poynton and Neston to Nantwich.



Over a 9-week period from 20 September to 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire took out our engagement stands and a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health, care, and support. To help with providing more information to people about the COVID-19 vaccine, we focused some of our visits where vaccine uptake has been relatively lower than in other areas, whether this be in terms of location, certain communities or particular age groups.

Everything that people tell us is fed back anonymously to those who plan, make decisions, and deliver health and care services, to help improve people's experiences for the future. This feedback helps the local NHS and Local Authorities to plan how to meet the health, care, wellbeing and support needs of people in Cheshire. It also feeds into Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA), Place Plans, and the priorities of Integrated Care Partnerships. Where possible, we break people's feedback down into individual Care Communities to help inform the development of services and support at a local level and make sure our information is as useful as possible. Care Communities aim to bring together people living, working or involved in an area to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. There are 8 Care Communities in Cheshire East and 9 in Cheshire West and Chester.

This report focuses on the responses from people across Cheshire, and then breaks down the information to a local level, which allows Care Communities to better understand the views and needs of their local population.

Cheshire East Care Communities:

- Alderley Edge, Chelford, Handforth and Wilmslow
- Bollington, Disley and Poynton
- Congleton and Holmes Chapel
- Crewe
- Knutsford
- Macclesfield
- Nantwich, Wrenbury or Audlem
- Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green and Haslington.

Cheshire West and Chester Care Communities:

- Chester Central (City Centre)
- Chester East (Christleton, Littleton, Huntington, Boughton, Upton, Hoole, Mollington, Mickle Trafford)
- Chester South (Blacon, Lache, Saughall, Eccleston, Handbridge, Dogleston, Kinnerton)
- Ellesmere Port
- Frodsham, Helsby and Elton
- Neston and Willaston
- Northwich
- Rural (Tarpoley, Malpas, Ashton, Farndon, Tattenhall, Kelsall, and Tarvin)
- Winsford.

In addition to our team of staff and volunteers, we invited health and care partners to join us in our conversations with people across Cheshire; creating and building partnerships with NHS services, Local Authorities, community representatives and members and organisations within communities, for example Police Community Support Officers, social housing organisations, voluntary sector, pharmacists, councillors, etc.



## What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch Cheshire, consisting of Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West, is an independent consumer champion for health and care across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England. Our role is to make sure that those who run health and care services understand and act on what really matters to local people. We hold continuous conversations with people to listen to their views, experiences and expectations of health, care, wellbeing support and services. The information is then shared with those who plan and commission health and care services and support. The information we gather is then analysed so that we can identify and act upon trends and common themes by presenting our findings to decision makers in order to improve the services people use. We also share people's local views with Healthwatch England, who strive to ensure that the government put people at the heart of care nationally.

This report provides a summary of the feedback Healthwatch received from the public during *Healthwatch Across Cheshire*.



## Summary of findings

The main themes of feedback from people across Cheshire are summarised below:

### Access to GP appointments

The most common theme raised by people in every Care Community was a difficulty in accessing GP appointments. At the time of our Health and Wellbeing During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic project between May 2020 and March 2021, there was a lot of positivity about the convenience of video and telephone appointments. However, during *Healthwatch Across Cheshire*, many people told us that they were frustrated at not being able to access face-to-face appointments when the perception was that other services were now offering this. In some instances, people were unhappy that they were being asked to wait weeks ‘just’ for a telephone appointment.

Another issue was that people are experiencing long waits on the telephone whilst trying to get through to a receptionist to try to make an appointment. People gave us examples of having to wait over half an hour, and in some cases an hour, to get through to their Practice. People preferred the option of a call back service rather than waiting in a queue; we were told this was previously offered at some GP practices but was no longer an option. People continue to report that they are reluctant to tell the receptionist about why they wish to make an appointment, telling us that they believe the receptionist is unqualified and does not need to know that information.

Several people told us that they found pre-recorded voice messages on the telephone when they called their GP Practice to be too long, negative, and one comment labelled it as “passive aggressive”, with parts of the message relating to the pandemic no longer relevant.

People’s experience of GP appointments was also mixed. When people were able to see a GP or nurse face-to-face, they were generally positive about their experience. However, people also told us of long waits for referrals to other services, and that they often had to chase these up, along with results and follow-up appointments they were waiting for.

In terms of video and telephone appointments, we were told of occasions when people had been asked by the GP to send a picture when they felt it was “inappropriate”. Other individuals said that they were not given a specified time for telephone appointments or were called hours after the time window that was given to them, occasionally resulting in them missing the call. This represents a barrier to accessing remote appointments, in contrast to face-to-face appointments which provided a set time.

### COVID-19 and Flu Vaccinations

There was lots of positive feedback about the COVID-19 vaccination rollout and subsequent booster programme, with people feeling it has been well organised, well communicated, and efficient. At the beginning of the rollout, we received lots of queries from people wanting to know when they would be eligible, but as the programme went on and the booster programme started, people were a lot more patient and the feedback has been very positive. Similarly, the flu vaccination programme also received a lot of praise. In particular, the role of local pharmacies in providing vaccinations was spoken of positively, with pharmacies being the subject of many positive experiences.

## **Hospitals**

In terms of hospitals, many people praised the attitude and approach of staff in providing them with positive experiences at all of Cheshire's main hospitals. Outpatients appointments were described as running smoothly, but there were instances of people feeling that communications and administration around appointments has been poor in regard to letters, phone calls and cancellations. Furthermore, particularly in areas close to Cheshire's borders, people told us that communication between hospitals and healthcare services in other areas has been poor with services appearing to not be working in a joined up manner and sharing information. Accessing hospital appointments was also said to be difficult in some rural areas, with public or hospital transport not providing enough coverage for people to attend appointments if they do not drive.

## **Other services**

Our *Healthwatch Across Cheshire* activity has seen people raise issues around dentists that have been a common theme throughout the pandemic, with people unable to register with NHS dentistry or been told they could receive treatment if they went private. This remains a significant concern, and Healthwatch Cheshire have published two reports looking specifically at these issues, which can be found on our websites:

[www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports](http://www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports)

[www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports](http://www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports)

Other comments included criticism of mental health services in various settings, particularly with regard to referrals and waiting times. Long waits and poor experiences were also noted with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP).

People told us they felt that there was a lack of support for carers generally, but there was praise for community groups that provided support for a variety of conditions and situations.

## What we did

Over a 9-week period from 20 September to 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire visited 52 venues across all 17 Care Communities using engagement stands and a promotional van. We held conversations with 1,140 people about health and care services, gaining 731 comments on people's views and experiences.



## Who took part?

In addition to our team of 8 staff and 17 of our volunteers, we invited health and care partners to join us at our events, building partnerships with community representatives and members and organisations. Staff from the following partner organisations joined us at events:

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire East Place Partnership
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Public Health
- Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership
- Cheshire Police Community Support Officers
- NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- East Cheshire NHS Trust
- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- GP Practice Managers
- Patient Participation Groups
- End of Life Partnership
- Everybody Leisure
- Live Well Cheshire West
- Primary Care Cheshire Social Prescribers
- Cheshire Change Hub
- Home Instead
- Guinness Partnership Housing

## What did we use?

- **Healthwatch promotional van** - We hired a promotional van covered in Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West branding to attract the attention of people. We used it as a base to hold conversations with people in locations that are normally difficult to visit due to a lack of venues.
- **Engagement activity** - A programme of activity, covering one Care Community per day was planned in order to reach every area of Cheshire. This included activity based around the Healthwatch van in car parks or community hubs, or engagement stands at events or in town centres. The team spoke to people to obtain comments and create links with community representatives with the purpose of signposting people to support and services they may not otherwise know about. Through this we were also able to signpost to our online Feedback Centres for people to leave

comments and utilise our comment cards for people to feed back their experiences by hand.

- **Promotional materials** - Along with our regular Healthwatch leaflets, posters, and other promotional items, we also used leaflets, posters and banners from local health and care partners for signposting and to promote campaigns such as self care.
- **Portable electronic tablets** - Our team used portable tablet devices to add feedback straight onto our system for us to track themes and produce reports. The tablets also have our 'What is Healthwatch' and 'Share Your Story' videos uploaded onto them with subtitles and British Sign Language, so people can understand what Healthwatch do and why they should talk to us about their experiences in an interactive way.
- **Videos** - We have two videos adapted for our local Healthwatch called 'What is Healthwatch' and 'Share Your Story', both in accessible formats. These were played on a loop on the television screen in the Healthwatch van. Videos and slides from local health and care partners for signposting and to promote campaigns such as accessing primary care, self care and flu vaccinations were used. You can watch these videos on our websites at [www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/about-us](http://www.healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/about-us) and [www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/about-us](http://www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/about-us).
- **Websites** - Our *Healthwatch Across Cheshire* schedule was promoted online on our websites, so that people could come along to our events.
- **Social media** - Our Facebook and Twitter accounts documented our events across Cheshire in threads, and links to these are included on page 13.
- **Newsletter and emails** - Emails were sent to partners to promote our activity and also invite them to attend events. Alongside this, a newsletter advertising our *Healthwatch Across Cheshire* campaign, and asking people to get involved and help promote.





## Conversation topics

Conversations with people during *Healthwatch Across Cheshire* were based upon topics that people had been telling us about during the previous months. These topics were linked into priorities of health and care partners that are known to us. Care Community steering groups were also asked if there was anything locally that would be useful to ask or promote to people whilst in each area, so that we could understand their priorities. We were able to receive feedback from people, and also share information and signpost to relevant support or services. Conversation topics included:

- COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters
- Flu jabs
- Self-care
- Access to services, including GP Practices
- Pharmacies
- Signposting information about local services or groups, including voluntary sector support, etc.
- Promoting recruitment into the care sector
- Transport
- Vaccination bank staff



### Where did we visit?

Healthwatch Cheshire visited 52 venues across all 17 Care Communities in Cheshire, speaking to 1,140 people and receiving 731 comments on health and care services. The number of venues and people spoken to, along with comments received, is broken down by Care Community and Local Authority area below:

**Healthwatch Across Cheshire**

Visiting every community in Cheshire

20 September – 19 November 2021



Area	Number of venues	People spoken to, including signposting and comments	Comment Cards
Alderley Edge, Chelford, Handforth and Wilmslow	1	11	7
Bollington, Disley and Poynton	1	40	26
Congleton and Holmes Chapel	2	22	22
Crewe	4	69	54
Knutsford	2	21	13
Macclesfield	5	186	126
Nantwich, Wrenbury or Audlem	4	72	62
Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green and Haslington	4	129	52
<b>Cheshire East Total**</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>360</b>

Cheshire East\*\* - 9 venues were cancelled



**Healthwatch Across Cheshire**  
Visiting every community in Cheshire  
20 September – 19 November 2021



Area	Number of venues	People spoken to, including signposting and comments	Comment Cards
Chester Central (City Centre)	5	210	83
Chester East (Christleton, Littleton, Huntington, Boughton, Upton, Hoole, Mollington, Mickle Trafford)	1	13	20
Chester South (Blacon, Lache, Saughall, Eccleston, Handbridge, Dodleston, Kinnerton)	2	27	19
Ellesmere Port	2	48	19
Frodsham, Helsby and Elton	3	83	49
Neston and Willaston	2	36	11
Northwich	5	76	52
Rural (Tarpurley, Malpas, Ashton, Farndon, Tattenhall, Kelsall, and Tarvin)	5	87	53
Winsford	2	60	24
<b>Cheshire West Total*</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>335</b>

Cheshire West\* - 3 venues were cancelled



Our full schedule, which was published on our websites is listed below. Some locations were inappropriate for the Healthwatch van, and so those that took place with an engagement stand are noted in brackets:



- Monday 20 September, 11am-2pm - Thrive, Winsford (engagement stand)
- Monday 20 September, 2pm-4pm - The Monday Hub, Knutsford (engagement stand)
- Wednesday 22 September, 10am-2pm - University of Chester Induction Day, Parkgate Road Campus, Chester
- Friday 24 September, 9am-3.15pm - Jobs Fair, Apple Market Street, Northwich
- Saturday 25 September, 9am-4pm - Oakhanger Community Hall, Haslington
- Monday 27 September, 10am-4pm - Winsford Town Centre
- Wednesday 29 September, 10am-4pm - Cheshire Street Car Park, Audlem
- Thursday 30 September, 10.30am-12pm - High Legh Village Hall, Knutsford
- Friday 1 October, 10am-1pm - Oakwood Medical Centre, Northwich
- Friday 1 October, 9am-4pm - Crewe Lifestyle Centre (engagement stand)
- Saturday 2 October, 12pm-4pm - LGBTQ Ellesmere Port Pride Fun Day, Stanney Lane, Ellesmere Port
- Monday 4 October, 8.30am-4pm - Bunbury Medical Practice
- Tuesday 5 October, 10am-12pm - Ness Community Hall, Neston
- Tuesday 5 October, 1pm-4pm - Asda Car Park, Ellesmere Port
- Wednesday 6 October, 2pm-4pm - Tea and Tattle Silver Rainbows, Weaver Museum, Northwich
- Thursday 7 October, 10am-4pm - Nantwich Town Square
- Friday 8 October, 10am-4pm - Everybody Leisure, Macclesfield
- Wednesday 13 October, 10am-2pm - Asylum Seeker Assistance, Hope Church, Crewe (engagement stand)
- Wednesday 13 October, 10am-2pm - Eaton Park, University of Chester (engagement stand)
- Wednesday 13 October, 10am-4pm - Upton Pavilion, Chester
- Thursday 14 October, 10am-12pm - Tarporley Older People Active Lives, Gardenhurst Estate, Tiverton (engagement stand)
- Monday 18 October, 10am-4pm - Tattenhall Village Surgery
- Tuesday 19 October, 10am-2pm - Cheshire East Eye Society Open Event, Macclesfield Town Hall (engagement stand)
- Tuesday 19 October, 10am-4pm - Blacon Boulevard in front of the library
- Wednesday 20 October, 7.30am-4pm - Macclesfield College
- Thursday 21 October, 10am-4pm - Princeway Health Centre Car Park, Frodsham
- Friday 22 October, 9.30am-4pm - Northgate Street, Chester City Centre
- Friday 22 October, 8.30am-2pm - Neston Market (engagement stand)
- Tuesday 26 October, 10am-2pm - Everybody Leisure, Wilmslow
- Wednesday 27 October, 9am-2pm - Disley Community Centre
- Thursday 28 October, 10am-4pm - Car Park between High Street and Lloyd Close, Farndon
- Friday 29 October, 10am-4pm - Lache Community Centre, Chester
- Saturday 30 October, 9.30am-4pm - Northgate Street, Chester City Centre
- Saturday 30 October, 3pm-7pm - Asda, Crewe (engagement stand)

- Tuesday 2 November, 2pm-4pm, Old Saw Mill, Congleton (engagement stand)
- Tuesday 2 November, 10am-3pm - Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve, Congleton
- Wednesday 3 November, 10am-3pm - Alsager Market, Asda Car Park
- Thursday 4 November, 10am-4pm - Frodsham Brio Leisure Centre
- Friday 5 November, 9.30am-3.30pm - Crewe Town Square
- Monday 8 November, 10am-12pm - Macclesfield Hospital Rear Entrance
- Wednesday 10 November, 10am-12pm - Bluecoat Centre, Chester (engagement stand)
- Thursday 11 November, 9.30am - 4pm - Sandbach Market
- Friday 12 November, 9am-3.30pm - Macclesfield Market by the Town Hall
- Friday 12 November, 10am-2pm - Community Hall, Malpas
- Monday 15 November, 10am-12pm - Broad Lane Coffee Club, Stapeley
- Monday 15 November, 12.30pm-2.30pm - Mill House Extra Care, Nantwich
- Tuesday 16 November, 10.30am - 12.30pm - Snow Angels, Keep Connected Cafe, Northwich (engagement stand)
- Wednesday 17 November, 10am-2pm - Antrobus Village Hall
- Thursday 18 November, 9am-2pm - Helsby High School

You can view our Twitter threads documenting our *Healthwatch Across Cheshire* activity here:

<https://twitter.com/HealthwatchCE/status/1438099923057225740?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/HealthwatchCW/status/1438099730924507143>



## Next Steps

Throughout our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity, everything that people have told us has been continually fed back anonymously on a weekly basis to those who plan, make decisions, and deliver health and care services, to help improve people's experiences for the future. We provided updates on the main themes of people's comments at committees and groups to ensure that health and care partners were given access to live real-time information, including at the Cheshire COVID-19 and System Pressures Communications cell, and the Cheshire East Partnership Communications and Engagement Network.

The timely insight and intelligence from residents of Cheshire was instrumental in influencing messaging around issues including access to primary care, and the rollout of flu and COVID-19 vaccines. By sharing people's views and experiences on vaccination processes, partners were able to adapt messaging to encourage uptake, provide clear information, and respond to local need. It also meant that we were able to take the latest messages and updates from health and care partners out into the community to tell people about how to access vaccines, where the nearest vaccine clinic was taking place during the roving programme of pop-up clinics, and information on self care to help people to solve their ailments without having to visit a healthcare setting.

These reports provide summaries of activities and themes and will be shared with the local NHS, Local Authorities, voluntary and community groups, and Care Community Steering Groups. They will also feed into Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA), Place Plans, and the priorities of Integrated Care Partnerships. In addition, we will be reflecting on what people have told us alongside health and care partners to help plan how to meet the health, care, wellbeing and support needs of people in Cheshire, and inform the development of services and support at a local level.

**The following breaks down the findings from our conversations with people by each of the 9 Care Communities in Cheshire West and Chester, which are organised as appendices.**



- Wednesday 22 September, 10am-2pm - University of Chester Induction Day, Parkgate Road Campus, Chester

At this event, we spoke to 20 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 14 comments on services in total.



- Wednesday 13 October, 10am-2pm - Eaton Park, University of Chester (engagement stand)



At this event, we spoke to 80 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 12 comments on services in total.

- Friday 22 October, 9.30am-4pm - Northgate Street, Chester City Centre

At this event, we spoke to 61 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 48 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Live Well Cheshire West, Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership and Cheshire West and Chester Public Health. We also joined up with an asymptomatic COVID-19 testing pop-up site, which enabled us to link in with staff, get tested ourselves, and signpost people to COVID-19 testing services.





- Saturday 30 October, 9.30am-4pm - Northgate Street, Chester City Centre

At this event, we spoke to 37 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 26 comments on services in total.



- Wednesday 10 November, 10am-12pm - Bluecoat Centre, Chester (engagement stand)

At this event, we spoke to 12 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 5 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by a colleague from the End-of-Life Partnership.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- Jobs in the care sector
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations
- Transport

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *“I have a GP appointment today to discuss my mental state as I am struggling mentally.”*
- *“They are a very good service. The staff are great I have been with them for 20 years now. The phone lines are clearly busier now but I am quite happy as I can use the push 5 option.”*
- *“I have had my flu and COVID vaccine here I am very glad to have had them. I am very happy with the service I receive at the GP.”*
- *“I got asked to take a picture of my toe and I sent this a week ago but I still have not heard anything back. So, I am going there today to be seen and ask what is going on. Other than this they are a lovely service I am very happy with the GP; it is clear they are really struggling at the moment but they still seem to maintain a happy professional attitude.”*
- *“I get to see the GP and I am very happy about this. I have problems with my arms and they treat me so well, I think all of the people there are so great.”*
- *“I feel like lots of people generally talk about problems with people accessing GPs in Chester and elsewhere. Asking people to take pictures is inappropriate and can prove difficult for certain people.”*
- *“I have a lot of medical conditions. I usually get to see the nurses and they are fabulous.”*
- *“I got to have my flu jab here. I happy that I was able to have it.”*
- *“Accessing the GP is difficult. They don’t ring back that day and sending pictures to a GP is not great.”*
- *“I have lost confidence in ringing to book appointments with the receptionist. My friend never bothers ringing now. Having a 10-minute appointment is never enough time. Trying to stick to one problem is difficult if I don’t know if they are linked.”*
- *“They are doing a great job I really appreciate them. They text me about my flu jab they were really quick; I was 30 minutes late for my appointment but they still let me in and for this I was grateful.”*
- *“The GP did my blood pressure manually. That is terrible. GPs need to pull their finger out.”*
- *“I was told I had to wait for a call about the vaccine I will be on holiday at this point.”*
- *“Received a text message to make an appointment for an annual review. I tried for 2 hours but it was constantly engaged. I tried after 6pm and got the answer machine telling me to call tomorrow.”*
- *“I am not happy with my GP services. I was asked to send in a picture after cutting my arm, it needs an x-ray but you can’t get one.”*
- *“Can wait half an hour and still not get through on the telephone. When you do get through, there is an out of date answering system/ recorded message before you speak to a receptionist.”*
- *“There is a lack of transparency for proposal for better medical facilities at the surgery.”*



- *“Information on the surgery’s website regarding the flu jab. The answer phone message is out of date. I ended up going to Boots pharmacy.”*
- *“My GP referred me to the gym for weight loss, although I had to ask them to do so. It can be stressful getting through to the surgery over the telephone and hearing is difficult even with my hearing aids.”*
- *“Face to Face appointments are easy to access. I had my flu jab; the clinic was brilliant.”*
- *“Tried online to book an appointment none available, they go really quickly.”*
- *“I cannot get a face to face doctor’s appointment, it takes 20 minutes to speak to someone, then all the appointments have gone.”*
- *“I had my Covid Booster at the Surgery.”*
- *“There is a 12 month wait at the surgery.”*
- *“I suffered from rectal bleeding. I had a 12 month wait for the consultant due to Covid.”*
- *“10 months wait for a diagnosis of cancer.”*
- *“The surgery is poor.”*
- *“Asked to photograph a problem, sent it in and was told it’s not good enough. Appointment made and the GP took the photo and it was still not good enough. Waste of time.”*
- *“Excellent.”*
- *“Had stomach pains three weeks ago. Spoke to the doctor in the morning - they saw me in person that afternoon and referred me to the Countess of Chester for a colonoscopy. Prompt and excellent service.”*
- *The person we spoke to had a condition and was prescribed medication, although it has not resolved the issue, the gentleman was reluctant to bother the GP again.*
- *“I had a face to face at GP Surgery for ongoing chronic condition/pain.”*
- *“Unhappy with access and experience.”*
- *“Wild horses wouldn’t drag me there - if I could get an appointment.”*
- *“Always had a good experience of GP. Have seen them face to face when needed to.”*
- *“Excellent. Easy to access, Easy to speak to nursing staff.”*
- *“Poor access to GP services.”*
- *“Often on the phone for 45 minutes then told that there are no appointments.”*
- *“Been her for years and pre-pandemic accessing face to face was difficult and it has been worsened by Covid. I don’t want to use the internet.”*
- *We spoke to someone who already has skin and prostate cancer - discovered a lump in the stomach. Rang the GP - had to wait one month for an appointment to see a GP. Been told there is a further three months wait for a scan. Is concerned that the cancer has spread.*
- *“Trying to see a GP is a joke! - Cannot see one.”*
- *“I had one doctor there that I liked; she was there 10 years then suddenly left. The receptionists are awful and are not medically trained at all which is shocking. I am partially deaf and I need face to face appointments, telephone consultations are too difficult for me.”*
- *“I went to see a doctor in person, they were very hostile. They had clearly not read my notes beforehand because I went with pain in my leg and the doctor took a reflex hammer and went to tap my knee and I had to quickly stop them because If they had read my notes, they would know I have a vascular condition in my knee and the hammer would have caused my knee to implode.”*

- *“I find the switch board very frustrating and it also doesn't work that you have to call that morning for an appointment that day, you can't book in advance. If I need the doctor, I have to book a day off work just to call and possibly get an appointment.”*
- *“I would generally rate the practice 4 out of 5. However, this incident would be a 1 out of 5. I had severe and sudden onset of back pain that has happened before. GP informed me to contact her immediately if this happened. The office manager did not inform GP and told me to stop contacting the surgery. I was then misinformed about medication being ready at the chemist, it had been there for several days, I was in agony whilst waiting for it.”*
- *“I have a prolapsed disc and ongoing back problems. I was informed by the GP that she would refer me for a scan but then disputed this. Eventually referred by physio, following request by community and private physios.”*
- *“Fantastic, every time you send in a request you get a reply back, your issues are dealt with quickly.”*
- *“The doctor followed up an issue and showed compassion. I've been able to get a face to face appointment if needed.”*
- *“Very impressed with vaccine roll out. I was contacted personally and informed of appointment. It was pleasant and the staff were helpful.”*
- *“Being new to Chester I felt I needed to register with a doctor as I have a long-term prescription so I went to a surgery and spoke to a lovely lady at reception who was so helpful.”*
- *“Suffering with asthma I needed a prescription quickly. I called to make an appointment but was told it would take a while and was offered a phone consultation so I took this up. The doctor was great listened to my issues and understood I was prescribed medication and collected from the chemist.”*
- *“Poor communication. I called the surgery was provided an appointment time for 2 weeks' time at a set time to allow for child care. On both occasions they have been 55 minutes later and 1 hour late. Very inconvenient affected child care. The call only lasted 5 minutes with no explanation for the delay.”*
- *“Really easy process to register through the University.”*
- *“Great nurses that were supportive following stomach surgery including being supportive over weight concerns. Referred to a Dietitian. Have CBT through the GP which has been online and has been beneficial for managing mental health and social isolation issues.”*
- *One person told us they were comfortable with their GP and are not ready to change yet due to the stressed of starting the University.*
- *“Unable to contact by phone. Repeatedly tried to phone but the line is constantly engaged, very difficult to access anyone.”*
- *“This service is useless; I don't know what they do to triage people?”*
- *“A friend is not eating or taking medication, the doctors seem to have done nothing.”*

## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“Advance treatment of prostate cancer. Good treatment at Arrowe Park. Initially at COCH - they forgot to forward my notes to Clatterbridge.”*
- *“I moved from Folkestone a year ago and it took 6 months for my notes to be transferred.”*
- *“I had a hip replacement 10 years ago; I was very glad to be able to have this done. My hip is still doing well.”*
- *“I come here to have regular injections here they really take care of me.”*
- *“Great service although it is difficult to get to without a car.”*
- *“My daughter has breast cancer and they were fabulous, they were in a rush to start treatment.”*
- *“I wore a back brace for support for 12 months, but I have not seen the physiotherapist since Covid started, it is hard and I need support.”*
- *“Countess of Chester - Excellent Service.”*
- *“Recently had a colonoscopy. They were very thorough in checking me out and very kind to me as I was petrified.”*
- One person we spoke to feels they are getting Outstanding treatment. They have a lump in their mouth, and although the investigation has been delayed due to the pandemic still feels they are being treated well. They had an appointment at the COCH however the scanner was broken and had to go to Arrowe Park.
- *“3 years ago, very poor end of life care for close relative at Leighton Hospital. A meeting was held to discuss the outcome but felt that the NHS had closed ranks.”*
- *“Get no support from the mental health team at the COCH. When you phone them, you only get an answer phone and you can’t leave a message on it.”*
- *“Walton Hospital lost notes - I had a spinal operation it went wrong. I tried to complain, but was told my notes had been lost.”*
- *“Countess of Chester Hospital have a poor standard of cleanliness - workmen wandering about in dirty work clothes.”*
- *“Appointments at the COCH must have been double booked, have to chase follow up appointments, sent to the wrong place in the hospital. It would be very confusing for less able people.”*
- *“I had to go into hospital for two days and the service was that good I didn’t want to go home.”*
- Someone told us there is great cancer support at the Countess of Chester Hospital. This person was diagnosed with cancer and receiving a timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment. Very happy with the NHS. They stated that they are massively underfunded.
- *“I had a fall and badly hurt my leg; I got a taxi to the hospital as I felt it didn’t need an ambulance but that I needed A+E. I know about 111 but felt I needed to go to A+E. The hospital was brilliant they saw me straight away and x-rayed me I did have to wait for 4 hours but felt it was worth it.”*



## Pharmacies

Comments on Pharmacies included:

- *“Whenever I am in there I feel like I am always queuing they seem quite slow.”*



- *“The pharmacy is very good they are approachable.”*
- *“They are very pleasant. I go in to order my repeat prescription and then they deliver it for me which is very good.”*
- *“Brilliant, I got my antibiotics quickly and they gave me my flu jab.”*
- *“The pharmacy is great.”*
- *“Had to go home without medication as pharmacy too busy.”*
- *“They have worked incredibly hard and have carried the doctor’s surgery.”*

## Care Homes

A comment was received from an individual about Care Homes:

- *“Unfair that NHS staff don’t have to have the Covid vaccinations but Care Home staff do or leave their jobs. Also care staff should be paid more money and given more support.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“I was previously at a shelter where all my stuff got stolen it is shut now. Here is okay however I don’t get any help I feel like my head is all over the place.”*
- *“I am going to leave the NHS money in my will as I think they are fantastic they are all so underappreciated and underfunded.”*
- *“I felt like I had to basically tell them my teeth were going to fall out to be seen.”*
- *“I am a private patient and I am very happy with them. They are reasonably priced and a great service.”*
- *“I called 111 and told them about being unable to get my appointment due to being on holiday. They told me to just wait and there was nothing they could do to help me get my COVID booster.”*
- *“Had no support for seven years it is disgusting. Since moving to Cheshire, speech therapist helped. I have spoken to the local MP”*
- We spoke to someone who needs help for a child with Autism, this person had reported significant social health problems, but denies mental health difficulties but services state otherwise.
- *“Not enough funding for mental health support, the waiting lists are fer too long.”*
- *“Privatizing costs more money. NHS hasn’t got enough funding.”*
- *“Too many private companies taking advantage. Not funded sufficiently. The government needs to be accountable. Need decent healthcare package, not got necessary universal healthcare, and not enough being done.”*
- *“Received a call from Track and Trace. Asked to prove who they were. Advised to go to the local pharmacy and get a covid test.”*
- *“Trying to register with an NHS dentist is not possible due to lack of capacity. Trying to force me to go private.”*
- *“I cannot get an NHS dentist in Chester.”*



- *“Carers didn’t turn up or were late. A young man came to wash my mother but she was not asked if this was okay. People are too afraid to complain about the poor quality of care. Carers are not given enough training, support or pay.”*
- *“Backford Hospice - Excellent Service.”*
- *“When the doctor wouldn’t see me, I went to specsavers and they confirmed I had a detached retina, they were brilliant.”*
- *“I used the mental health services at Bowmere, the staff are the best and really helped me get to where I needed to be.”*
- *“I was feeling very stressed and overwhelmed so I approached the student services counselling. They were so lovely and caring taking the time to listen to me and help me overcome my concerns.”*
- *“I could not access mental health support during COVID and being in lockdown at the University I felt they had a lack of empathy towards me. I had tests done in an ambulance for 2 hours and they just said I needed more sleep however I wanted to go to hospital.”*

### General health and wellbeing/ self care

Comments on general health and wellbeing and/or self care included:

- *“I feel like my head is all over the place. COVID has made things harder for people sleeping rough.”*
- *“COVID resulted in social isolation and affected my mental health.”*
- *“Sleep deprivation.”*
- *“I have been affected with mental health issues and have been suffering with social isolation due to COVID. I found being in the rooms at Uni and then at home quite difficult, my studies were affected during his first year.”*
- One person told us they were struggling with mental health and social isolation issues during COVID and were prescribed CBT sessions through the GP.



### Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- The council and law enforcement officers in Chester. Healthwatch previously had a conversation with two Enforcement officers who said they walk round and check in on the homeless to make sure they are doing okay as well as making sure that they are not breaking any rules.
- 119 for Covid queries as they were not aware of this.
- Disability Positive
- Carer’s service
- Livewell Cheshire West
- Student services/counselling
- Vaccination drop in sites
- GP registration



## COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters

Conversations regarding COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters included:

- *"I've had two vaccines awaiting booster."*
- *"I do not use lateral flow tests; I do not like them they give me nose bleeds. I don't see the need in testing anymore seeing as we are vaccinated."*
- *"Queuing right next to each other didn't seem right, had to wait for a long time, there was no social distancing. Had to wait for 30 minutes despite having an allotted time."*
- *"I booked my appointments online and would like to book my booster ahead for December but the system won't let you do it until the last minute which will put a delay on when I can get it as I am busy."*
- *"I booked my first vaccine online easily, only a little bit of waiting."*
- *"I had my second at the racecourse and I was in and out."*
- *"My daughter is due her second jab but has just had covid and we don't understand if you have to wait after being sick for your next jab, it's not very clear."*
- Someone we spoke to had had both COVID vaccines glad to have them and still wants to adhere to wearing a mask and social distancing.



## Flu Vaccines

Comments on Flu Vaccines included:

- *"I have had my flu vaccine."*
- *"I got to have my flu jab at the GP. I was happy that I was able to have it."*
- *"I am not getting my flu jab even though I am eligible because I am normally fine and I don't want to take it from someone who might really need it."*



## Access to Services

Comments on Access to Services included:

- *"There is a homelessness problem that needs addressing in Chester."*
- *"I heard on the media that you can book appointments to be seen at A+E."*
- *"I don't have a fancy phone that can use the NHS app, so I feel excluded, what do I and other older people do."*
- Someone told us they are not ready to register for a new GP or other services whilst at university as are comfortable with getting their parents to organise and pick them up and go with them.



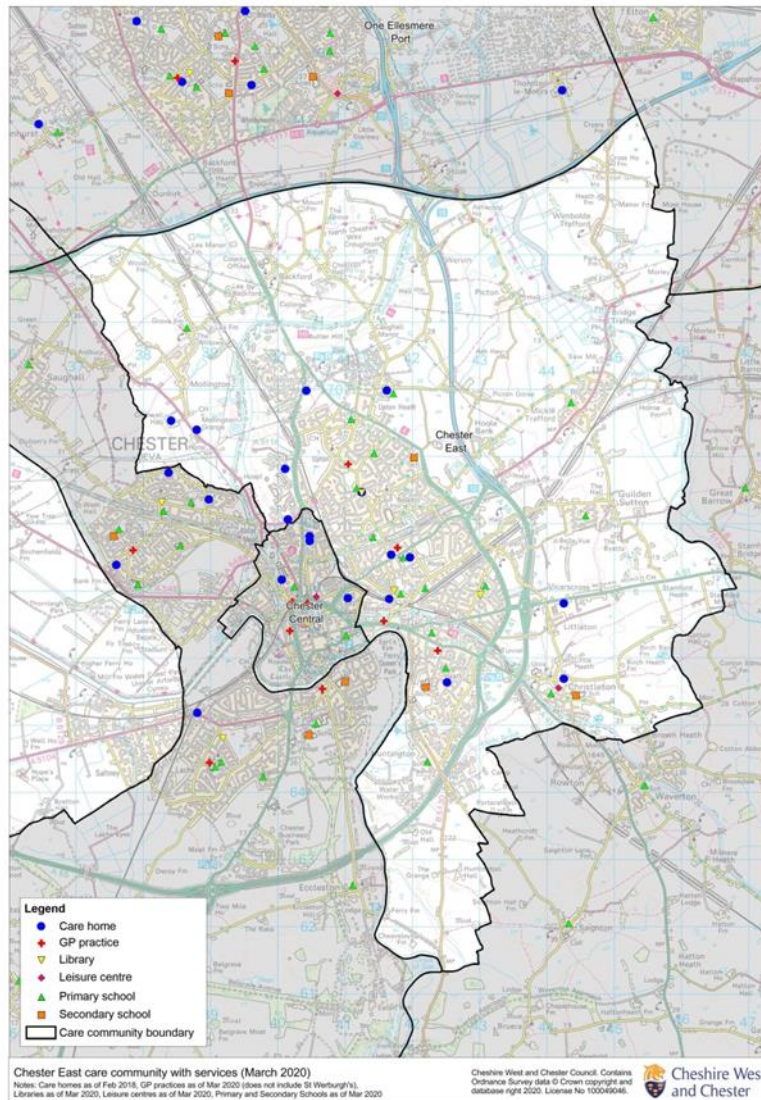
## Transport

Comments on Transport included:

- *"It cost me £16 each way to get to the hospital as my legs were bad. I couldn't get a taxi and we had no community support who have in the past been a great help."*
- *"Bus services in Chester is good."*
- Someone told us they rely on parents. Otherwise, they walk and mainly stay on the University campus.



## Appendix 2 - Chester East



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Chester East Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Wednesday 13 October, 10am-4pm - Upton Pavilion, Chester



At this event, we spoke to 13 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 13 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership, Live Well Cheshire West, Cheshire West and Chester Public Health.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *"I am unable to get an appointment at the GP, I call each morning for a doctor's appointment and I am angry that I am unable to get a doctor's appointment. I am angry that they are only seeing 1-2 patients going through in to see the GP in half an hour, whilst waiting to see the GPs."*
- *"Great! GP took health concerns seriously and sent me promptly for tests at the COCH. Only negative thing is when I rings the GP - they do the call back for triage and then ask me to go into the surgery and I feel like I have to repeat myself."*
- *"I developed a cough in Feb21 and went to the doctors I got referred for an X-ray at COCH and a scan. This detected something, I was told it would be two weeks but got an appointment in October this has now been cancelled I was given a new date in November however I explained I could not make this and so I have been told I am back on the waiting list. I do not feel the surgery have been very helpful. They have cancelled appointments without notice even though they were telephone appointment's and has been booked 2 weeks."*
- *"Changed GP surgeries and during this time I had issues with my blood pressure and I was told by my old practice that it would take 5-6 weeks to transfer me to the new practise and that I should attend my old practice now until the transfer was done but when I tried to book an appointment with the old practice, they said that I should be going to my new surgery."*
- *"There is no way to get an appointment. I really struggle to get an appointment they only allow you to book on the day."*
- *"I had issues with patient access and the front-line staff are poorly trained and unaware of how to work the system. The nurse provided misinformation about how to book a smear."*
- *"A lovely surgery, very helpful, helpful with my prescriptions. They are lovely."*
- *"I cannot get an appointment, I cannot get through on the phone, when I did get a consultation, the GP rushed me. It takes to many days to get a prescription to go through. I feel there is a poor service at this GP it seems wrong that you must phone for an appointment at 8am only, by 8.15am all the appointments for the day are taken and they won't let me make an appointment for another day."*
- *"Quick referral from the surgery to the CoCH."*
- *"They are very good. I would like it if we could have the radio on in the waiting room as it is so quiet you can hear what they are saying."*
- *"I used econsult pre-pandemic and it was great. I like having telephone appointments they suit me around my work. The GP is fantastic they are quick to respond when you use econsult."*
- We spoke to someone who normally gets regular letters and they have stopped sending them out for regular appointments. They have tried ringing them but struggling to get through and has found it is a long wait for appointments event for on the phone.



- “I completed an e consult form and then the doctor called me he was very friendly. I do however feel that after I filled in the econsult form that the doctor should have provided a face-to-face consultation.”

## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“Takes months to get an appointment, I had a 14 month wait for an appointment with a gastro consultant. A 6 month wait for appointment with cardiologist and a 5 wait for MRI heart scan. The NHS is broken.”*
- *“Referred via GP to hospital and received good treatment and I get regular check-ups.”*



## Pharmacies

A comment was received from an individual about Pharmacies:

- We were told by someone about lots of feedback and complaints on the Facebook Chester page community noticeboard, about being unable to reach the pharmacy via the phone, no answer after days/weeks of trying to get through. Issues with stock availability or repeat prescriptions being ordered, taking weeks to fulfil.



## Care Homes

Comments on Care Homes included:

- *“My mum used to be at this care home and while I used to visit her, I used to support and chat to the other residents, I enjoyed this.”*
- *“I feel they are all in it for the money once a management company took over. My parents had very mixed experiences in the care home. My mum who had leukaemia had very good care. However, my dad who had dementia did not have very good care he had 13 different carers in a week. For both my mum and dad I felt the activities the care home organised was not great.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- Someone informed us that their mother struggles to get through to the dentist. The mother used to get letters every 6 months for an appointment, they now ring to try to get these but struggles getting through to the reception and there is a long wait for appointments including telephone calls.



- Someone told us they have had no service from ASC family have had to rely on occupational health colleagues. Called an ambulance waited more than 24-hrs and OT has been a godsend and got family member sectioned. There is no consistency with services
- *"I broke my tooth more than 12 months ago and I have been unable to get an appointment. I called and was told by my dentist that they would call me back and have not been contacted since."*
- *"Not been having my regular dental check up appointments, struggling to get seen."*

### Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- Citizens advice regarding carers allowance
- Livewell spoke to an individual about how to use Livewell to find different services in his area for volunteering opportunities so he can get involved in supporting older people again.
- Econsult, patient access for ordering prescriptions.
- Emergency dentist telephone number



### COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters

Conversations regarding COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters included:

- *"I had my COVID vaccine at Chester Racecourse and this was a very good operation it was very well organised."*
- *"Had both!"*
- *"Had all 3 COVID vaccines. Very happy to be given them."*



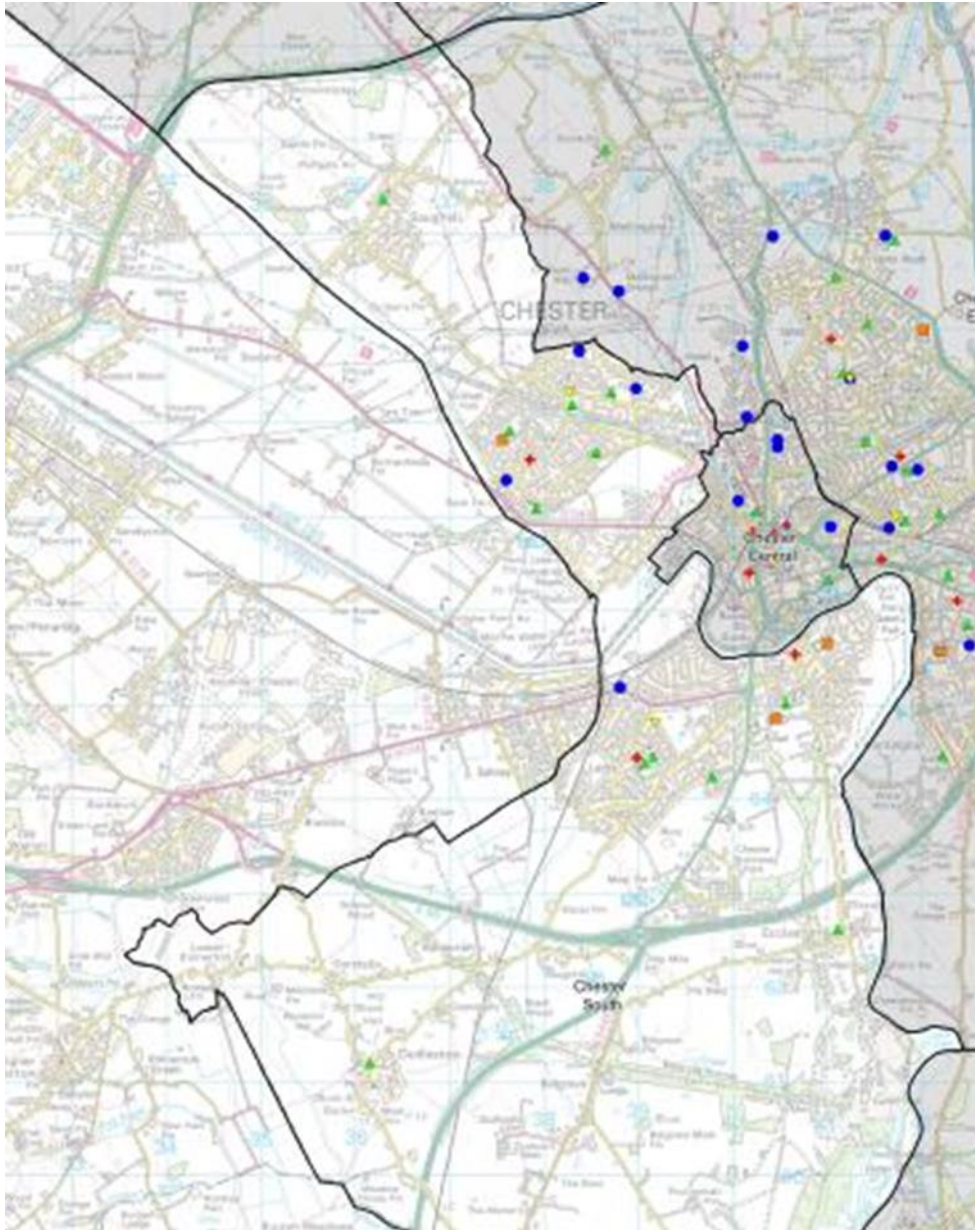
### Flu Vaccines

Comments on Flu Vaccines included:

- *"Had mine!"*
- *"I had my flu vaccine at GP."*
- *"Had my flu vaccine very happy to be given it."*



## Appendix 3 - Chester South



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Chester South Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Tuesday 19 October, 10am-4pm - Blacon Boulevard in front of the library



At this event, we spoke to 15 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 11 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Live Well Cheshire West, End of Life Partnership and Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership

- Friday 29 October, 10am-4pm - Lache Community Centre, Chester

At this event, we spoke to 12 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 7 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership and Live Well Cheshire West.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations
- Transport

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *“They are very good, my experience with my doctor is brilliant. I have been with the surgery since I was born.”*
- *“During COVID I didn’t use them to alleviate stress. I called them recently and was 21 in the que I pressed 5 to get a call back however they never rang back. I went into the GP today to make an appt they said no I have to ring or use an e-form, the receptionist was nice about it. I do not like the website though it is a bit clunky and not very user friendly.”*
- *“They have been helping me to manage my tooth as I have an abscess. Nothing is being sorted however.”*
- *“I can’t get an appointment there are long waiting times on the phone. I waited 40 minutes with no option of a call back.”*
- *“I can’t get an appointment service could be improved.”*
- *“Good service. I have been with the surgery for years. They are taking good care of me.”*
- *“Over many years my husband’s chronic illnesses has been very well looked after. The front of house staff is superb.”*
- *“I had to send a picture to my GP of my ears which were infected. I should have been seen face to face as it was a severe infection. I was prescribed antibiotics once the GP saw the pictures.”*



## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“Breast care COCH- Nothing needs improving as it is outstanding service. I would recommend this hospital to anyone.”*
- *“I had to wait three hours for triage and six hours in total in the A&E department. I saw shocking scenes of the elderly patients falling from chairs, people screaming for help as people in car having a heart attack. There were no wheelchairs anywhere near the A&E unit to help people get into and around the unit.”*
- *“It’s all damage control. The hospital told me wife and her friends that there was nothing else they could do, so sent her to palliative care when it was really because they couldn’t treat her because of covid.”*



## Care Homes

Comments on Care Homes included:

- *“The care homes are doing their best with everything that is going on with the Pandemic. The clients get confused about why their relatives/friends cannot visit.”*





- *“There is nowhere my mum can go for some respite because she wants to try it for just one day before staying, however, everywhere asks she stays for a minimum of one week. Curzon House was my option but that is going. There are no adult care services available for the elderly.”*
- *“My mum nearly died in a care home and now needs round the clock care. My mum is 97 years old and she gets four home care visits daily provided by the local authority. They have offered her four difference care homes but the last time she went in for respite she was taken ill with a UTI and almost died and a safe guarding investigation was carried out. My mum wants to stay at home but she cannot afford it. Care is all about stakeholders and making money.”*
- *“Dad needs care and I have no idea where to go, its all very daunting. The idea of paying for care for my dad and/or having no clue where to go for free home care if he doesn't want to go into a home.”*

### Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“The dentist does not want to know about my dental abscess. I have called the dental emergency helpline however they will not help me as I am not ticking the boxes.”*
- *“I went to the dentist for a check-up recently it was all great everything very easy.”*



### General health and wellbeing/ self care

A comment was received by an individual regarding general health and wellbeing:

- *“Mental Health support. I am desperate to help a homeless friend in crisis. The GP, 999, local housing support officer, have seen videos of him self harming but they ignore them. He has a family history of crisis, his mother committed suicide, his sister tried to kill herself last week and services are telling then they cannot help as he is self-medicating. The Police have made him homeless claiming his home was being used as a drugs den.”*



### Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on:

- Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)



### Flu vaccines

A comment was received from an individual about their Flu vaccine:

- *“Had my flu vaccine at GP.”*



## Access to Health Service

A comment was received from an individual about access to services:

- *“My mum is on the border and lives in Wales when she went to Chester hospital none of her information was updated. It does not seem like info is updated between England and Wales for healthcare.”*

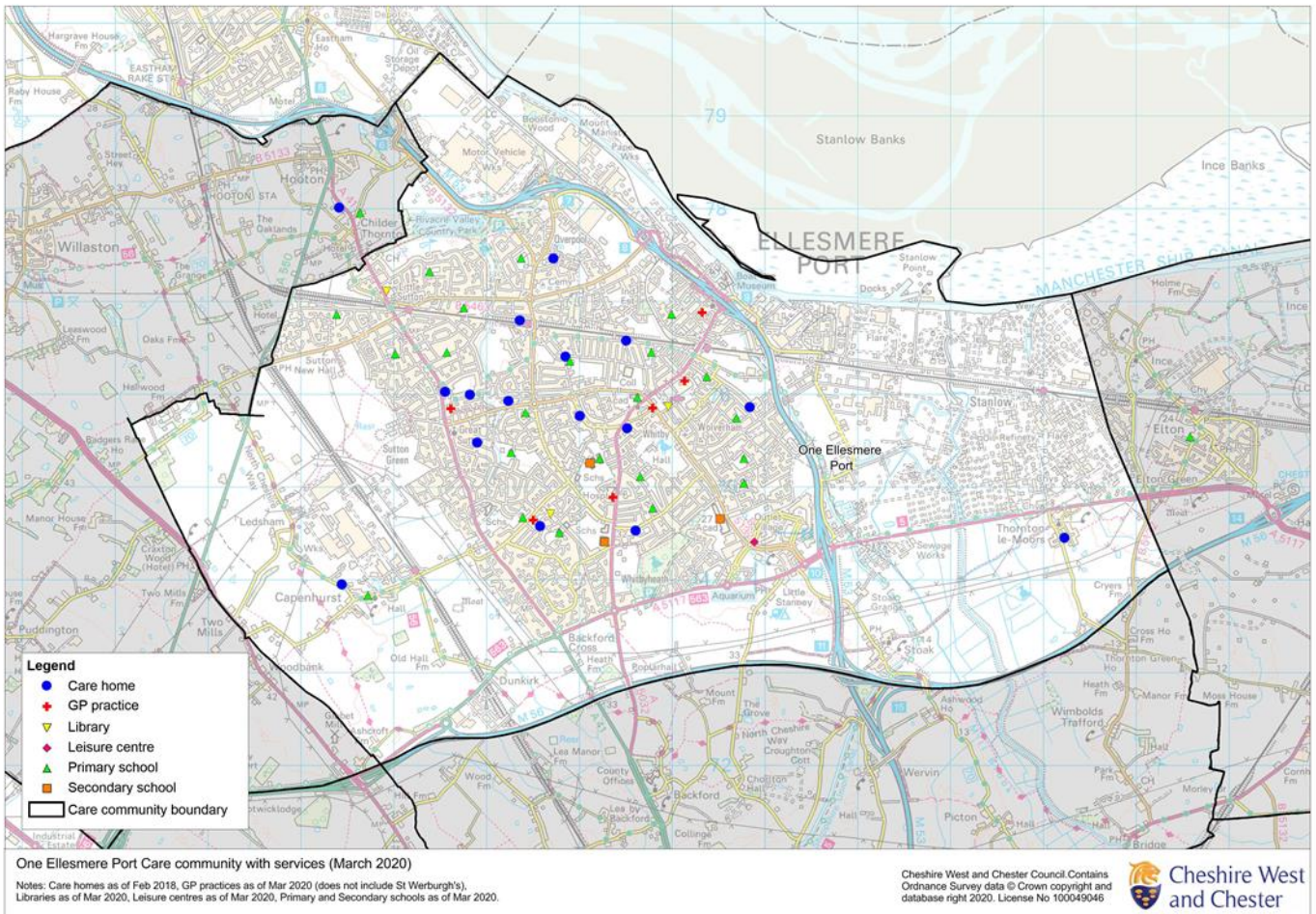


## Transport

A comment was received from an individual about transport:

- *“I can often be picked up late to the hospital. I need dialysis and afterwards I can wait well over an hour to be taken home and I only live 10 minutes down the road from the hospital. I have complained to PALS, but it never gets sorted. I have emailed confirmation and that's it. It is like talking to a brick wall.”*

## Appendix 4 - Ellesmere Port



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Ellesmere Port Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Saturday 2 October, 12pm-4pm - LGBTQ Ellesmere Port Pride Fun Day, Stanney Lane, Ellesmere Port

At this event, we spoke to 46 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 24 comments on services in total.



- Tuesday 5 October, 1pm-4pm - Asda Car Park, Ellesmere Port

At this event, we spoke to 2 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 2 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *“I had my booster jab at the surgery, I felt a little tired but the next day I felt fine. I had it as I have a health condition, well organised.”*
- *“Not good, two years ago my dad had a quadruple bi-pass, recently he started having pains in his upper back. We phoned the phoned the surgery and were told there were no appointments, so my dad went in to the surgery with my mum and got an appointment for that day, so why couldn't he get one when he rang them. My dad was referred to the hospital as the doctor thinks it could be another artery at the back of the heart.”*
- *“Very friendly and efficient.”*
- *“I had my six-week review after childbirth for myself and baby daughter. The GP was amazing and made me feel very comfortable.”*
- *“I have been waiting for access to mental health services from my GP. It just seems a long process made worse by Covid.”*
- *“I came out to my doctor as I trusted him, he was so understanding and helpful and he signposted me to support groups. It is brilliant to know people are understanding.”*
- *“I find it hard to see a doctor face to face, very easy to get a telephone consultation. When will they be available to actually see their patients?”*
- *“I attended the surgery for a face to face appointment. The receptionist was rude, I understand they are under pressure due to Covid, but she was still rude to me. When I did see the doctor however, they were brilliant and out my mind at ease.”*
- *“My partner was not well; it took forever to get an appointment. He needed to have his blood taken but there were no blood bottles available. I had to keep ringing up the surgery to chase up when the equipment would be available, my partner waited six weeks to have his bloods done.”*



## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“Excellent service, so professional. I have a six week cause of treatment and they take the time to explain everything and it is working.”*
- *“I had a Hysterectomy and they hospital was fabulous from start to finish.”*



## Pharmacies

A comment was received from an individual about Pharmacies:

- *“I find it difficult to request new prescriptions now that the pharmacy has stopped ordering for me.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“No plan for when the Psychologist goes off sick and the Psychiatrist never rings.”*
- *“There is no access to support for my four-year-old daughter who is a young carer, the NHS commissioners offer support for children aged six years plus.”*
- *“My dad had his leg amputated in 2019 and he is currently cared for by my 92-year-old mum and other family members. She is exhausted and we have tried to get some respite care for a few days to give her a break. We contacted the social care department who got back to us three weeks later and said they couldn't help us. Does it take an emergency to get any help, if they were on benefits, they would get support.”*
- *“I needed an emergency prescription and I could not get through to my GP surgery so I rang the 111 service at 9:45am, by 10:10am I received a call back, I spoke with a doctor who said if I went to the urgent care unit at the Countess of Chester my medication would be there by 12 noon. My husband went and at 12:10pm he had collected my medication. Brilliant service.”*
- *“I got placed in housing with my daughter in Ellesmere Port I do not feel comfortable here as this is not a very diverse area. I feel the council are not supportive of this aspect.”*

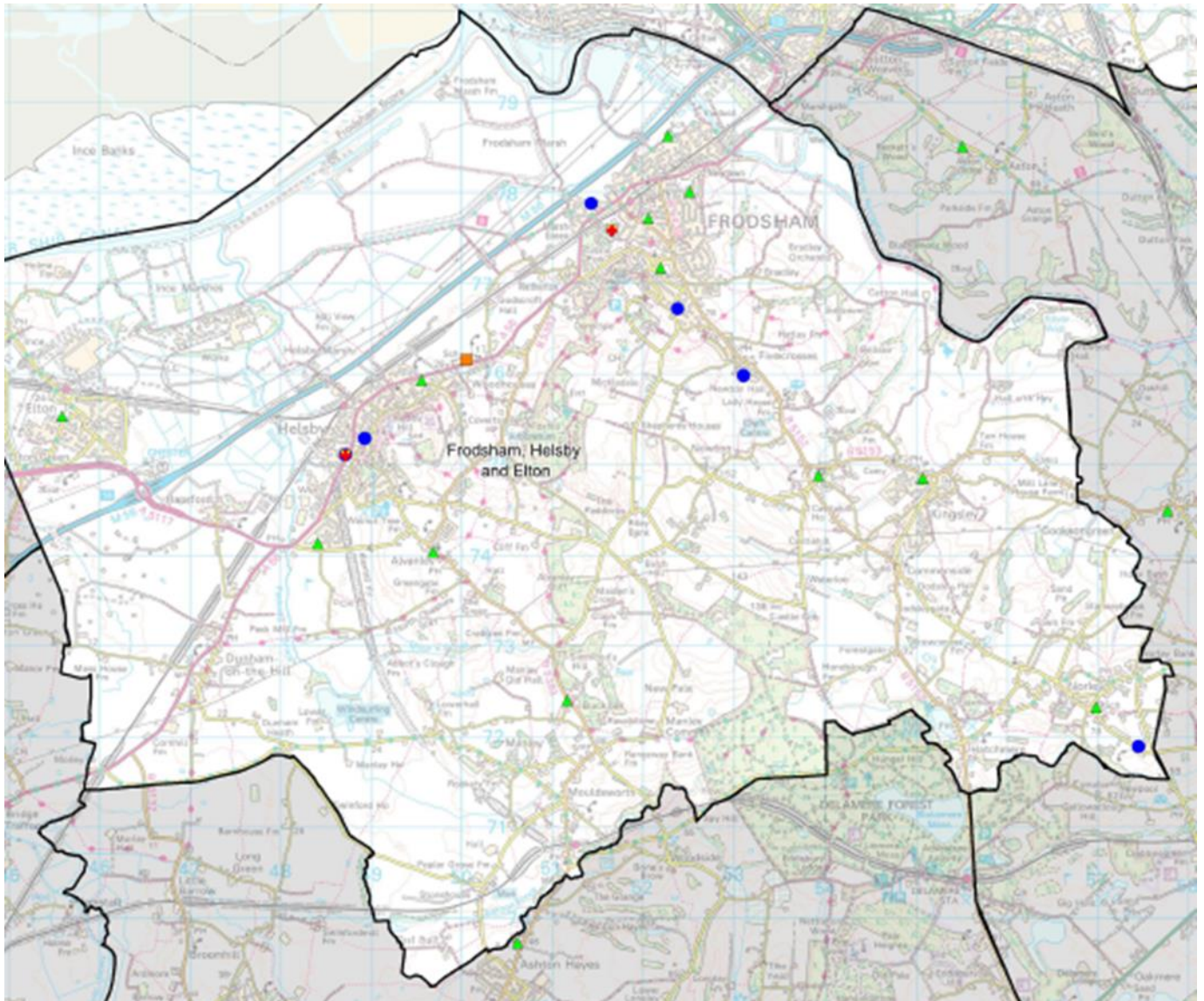
## Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- Phoenix Group in Ellesmere Port
- Mermaids and Unique
- Emails addresses and details of Healthwatch Cheshire for further signposting advice



## Appendix 5 - Frodsham, Helsby and Elton



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Frodsham, Helsby and Elton Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Thursday 21 October, 10am-4pm - Princeway Health Centre Car Park, Frodsham



At this event, we spoke to 25 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 22 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Live Well Cheshire West and Cheshire West and Chester Public Health.

- Thursday 4 November, 10am-4pm - Frodsham Brio Leisure Centre



At this event, we spoke to 30 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 30 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Live Well Cheshire West, Home Instead, Primary Care Cheshire Social Prescribers and Cheshire Change Hub.



- Thursday 18 November, 9am-2pm - Helsby High School



At this event, we spoke to 28 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 12 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Live Well Cheshire West, Helsby and Elton Practice Manager and PPG.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- Jobs in the care sector
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *“The surgery is fantastic. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer; I didn’t have the usual symptoms or signs however the GP was still concerned about me and did some tests and diagnosed me quickly. Having the diagnosis early saved my life and I have been in for remission for 3 years now. I am grateful, thank you.”*
- *“Just wanted to say that they are a great surgery no problems.”*
- *“I rang them there was a long queue which you only find out after listening to the long spiel. I find the landline kicks me off after 30 minutes so I use the press 5 button to get a call back. Sometimes they do not ring me back though.”*
- *“Had my flu jab booked through the GP.”*
- *“It’s hard to get to see a doctor face-to-face. I rang the other week and was told I was 76<sup>th</sup> in the queue. I therefore did the ring back service which I am glad of. I managed to get a face-to-face appointment with a nurse which is good but I don’t like ringing the doctors it feels very unapproachable. Before COVID the GP was a first-class service.”*
- One lady told us she had been trying to get through on the phone for 4 days, but queues of 30mins at a time - can’t wait longer as having to call whilst at work. When finally got through, told that they had no flu jabs and when asked what to do instead, the receptionist said they “didn’t know”. She said that her experience was so poor it would put her off going to the GP in future and would go to A&E if she really needed seeing. Couldn’t get any anywhere in Frodsham for a flu jab or at Ellesmere Port. Booked online at Boots in Runcorn and it was great.
- *“Filled out e-consult form and very quick response - called me back 1hr later. Quick response, quick appointment, thorough questions, better than waiting on the phone.”*
- *“I am quite happy with the service. I like the call back service it is good. I have had a face-to-face appointment recently and was very happy to have this. I have an annual check-up. They have organised my flu vaccine next week.*
- *“I went online to book an appointment I had to send pictures and got a telephone call from this. There was a long wait time however. I would prefer to go and see a GP rather than sending pictures. Pre-pandemic it wasn’t great for appointments either though.”*
- *“My mum is 88 and was in the GP surgery for a blood test and asked if she could have her flu jab at the same time. The daughter had spoken to the receptionists earlier to ask for this to happen. When her mum went into the GP her mum asked for this and the receptionists said abruptly “I can’t remember I might have said that. I’m going on my break now.”*
- *“I was supposed to have my Wellman Check over 2 years I have now been given an appointment for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November.”*
- *“I saw a GP about problems I was having to do with my heart the GP took notes. I then received a text after going to the hospital saying ‘Stop all your medication and come in’ I ended up in hospital as I was misdiagnosed.”*



- *“I couldn’t book my booster here and I wanted to.”*
- *“I think the technology is an issue. GPs have used COVID as an excuse to just call people. When calling the reception being asked “What’s the name” just lacks the personal touch. Receptionists feel like they have the power. Other than this the surgery is fine. We have to listen the pre-recorded stuff then we get told what your position is I would prefer to know my position first so I can decide whether to stay on the line.”*
- *“They are fab the physio and everything is great. It is a lovely service in a lovely new building the receptionists are lovely. I am however not happy that they are not doing face-to-face appointments at the moment.”*
- *“Can’t get a flu jab. They are booked up until 6 December, but you can’t even see to book far ahead. Boots pharmacy next door were the same. 1 hour wait for appointment booking on the phone. They are not doing ring back anymore. I had a heart issue which I was worried about, but then I was told no further action was needed with no explanation given.”*
- *“1.5 hours trying to get in touch with reception on the phone. Only appointments on the same day and you have to ring at 8am. You only get to see a medical practitioner but I want to see a GP. They’ve turned off the ring back system due to lack of staff. The staff structure seems top heavy. The nurses are good and my appointment was fine, but it seems that the GPs have a lot of time off.”*
- *“Great service with involvement for cancer diagnosis and treatment. Very responsive.”*
- *“A lot of confusion about jabs for flu and covid boosters, whether they could be given together or not. It feels like patients have to be proactive in finding out what is available.”*
- *“I experienced a breakdown in communication between the surgeries and the hospital over the issuing of a prescription, information wasn’t communicated as expected. Apart from this I’m very happy with all the services we’ve received during the pandemic.”*
- *“Issues accessing services due to waiting times. I was number 70 in queue and the call back service was not working. E-consult was really good. They are brilliant with my children.”*
- *“We live in Elton and my sister has needed 3 dressing changers we were told could be done at the GP but we have to travel to Frodsham when our doctors in Elton is on the doorstep. I worry what will happen if I can’t drive.”*
- *“Efficient for appointments, check-ups are good.”*
- *“Patient participation on health management is good.”*
- *“The GPs are good.”*
- *“I moved 2 years ago from Wirral and it was a very good smooth transition.”*
- *“They try and fit you in and are pretty good.”*
- *“The GPs are okay but it’s a different doctor each time which is okay.”*
- *“The vaccines were all good.”*
- *“So far so good. They are very helpful at reception and on the phone, they are kind and patient.”*
- *“I have had 4 GP appointments on the phone another one tomorrow.”*
- *“I have had both my flu and covid vaccinations.”*
- *“I am deaf and there are issues with communication. I am unable to have telephone consultations so the GP texts me but I cannot reply to the texts. I received a cancer diagnosis via text from the GP and instantly had lots of questions but I had to then*

*email the surgery and it is a very slow process as that email then has to find its way to the GP and then be replied to. There should be a way to have a back-and-forth conversation via text or email so I do not have to wait weeks in between replies.”*

- *“Flu and booster there were very quick and efficient.”*
- *“The queues have improved a lot since the 1<sup>st</sup> covid jab.”*
- *“My husband was diagnosed with dementia. The Health Centre have been great with diagnosis and help.”*
- *“Difficulty in getting through for an appointment. The wait times to get through put you off calling.”*
- *“I have been waiting two years now for a hip operation.”*
- *“Excellent flu and covid jab experience. Efficient, quick and lovely staff. They sorted me having my appointments a week apart as I am prone to sore arms afterwards.”*
- *“Great service.”*
- *“The health services just need more funding.”*
- *“I called up and I was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the queue for 30 minutes and so I walked to the surgery with the phone and then it just cut me off. There is one receptionist who is so lovely and apologised for it. Sometimes on the phone I press the wrong option because it is so confusing. It’s depressing.”*
- *“I was very sick a few weeks back and called the surgery, the receptionist told me to go to a walk in in Runcorn. You can never get past the receptionist. When I go there, they couldn’t help and they told me to go to Warrington A&E but I couldn’t do that I was too sick.”*
- *“I went into the surgery in person to request a booster jab because there is no point calling. I thought I was going to have to go to manor park for it but I’m booked in at the surgery now.”*
- *“I have just been to see the doctor as I have a sore bottom and he has told me I have an abscess and asked me to go to hospital now. I’ve refused because I will be there over the weekend. Its Thursday afternoon and if no one sees me tomorrow they will keep me there, I’m sure. The GP gave me some antibiotics I can just use at home instead, so I hope those work.”*
- *“The ring back service they used to have was great but they have got rid of it.”*
- *“A 19 year old person was referred to the primary care mental health trust via the GP in July. This was then postponed to December due to staffing shortages. In this time the young person self-harmed and took an overdose. All they have been given now is a telephone assessment. I just have to hope he stays with us.”*
- *“I am 92 years old and still haven’t heard anything about my flu jab and my friend down the road thought they might have forgotten about me so I called the doctors surgery. I was 43 in the queue and after waiting an hour and a half my phone went dead, so today I came to the surgery to book my flu jab with the receptionist in person.”*
- *“You can never see a GP and the long message about ‘not doing jabs’ is really off putting.”*

## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

*“My son is registered disabled. COCH paediatrics very good. Go over and above, they understand parents’ exhaustion and it’s not just about medical support but emotional too. They work together as a team. We have direct access to them so we don’t have to deal with the GP.”*



- *“There is a backlog I was told it should only be 2 weeks. They rang and said it is now a 4 - 6 weeks delay.”*
- *“They are really excellent. I had a new knee during lockdown. I would like to say thank you. I can only praise you for all you do and have done.”*
- *“I went to the GP with a temperature and they sent me to the hospital, I had a water and blood infection and have a catheter. I waited 5 hours stood up before they found me a bed to lie on. I was so uncomfortable I was unable to sit in a chair. I stayed in for 10 days and just wanted to be at home because the bed was so uncomfortable.”*

## Pharmacies

Comments on Pharmacies included:

- *“I order my prescriptions via email I am very happy with this.”*
- *“It is great they are lovely girls.”*
- *“They offer good advice, brilliant when stuck and they got in touch with other boots for me as well.”*
- *“They’re good.”*
- *“Very good at getting my prescriptions on time, lovely girls there.”*
- *“They were smashing with my flu jab and I go once a month to collect my repeat prescription, I order the next each time I go.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services related to a local dental practice:

- *“Mental health services were irregular. Issues due to government funding rather than CAHMS actual service. Long gaps between appointments and advice like ‘take deep breaths’. People were really nice but stressed. Hopefully funding can be sorted.”*
- *“Found the physios were dismissive and didn’t listen which has led to further problems. They should be listening to patients rather than dismissing and blaming other causes. However currently found a physio who listens, gives exercises at the right level and when concerned has consulted others.”*
- *“My brother went to an urgent care centre; he had hurt his wrist playing football. Absolutely outstanding treatment, seen and diagnosed with a fracture within half an hour and referred to Warrington for further treatment.”*
- *“I rang 111 for a problem, I never know whether to call 111 or 999 at times.”*
- *“I have not seen a dentist since before COVID I haven’t tried ringing them just waiting for them to contact me.”*



- *“There is not enough money in the system to provide enough quality care.”*
- *“Healthwatch are very informative and helpful. I got a free pen; the people were friendly and talkative.”*
- *“They cancelled my dental appointment they have not rang me back yet to rearrange and it’s been a few months.”*
- *“There is a lack of information surrounding our general health and wellbeing. However, there is a balance between not enough and swamping people.”*
- *“My son has Bipolar and had a bad episode last year. It was a bank holiday and I needed help. Out of hours gave me a number for somewhere in Warrington. I was to call at 8 am the following day when they opened. There was no initial help. I called and no one was there. I then called CRISIS who sent a lady to the house however by the time she got there my son had left and gone into Sainsburys where he was being arrested by the police for disruption. Both myself and the lady from CRISIS arrived at Sainsburys to see him being brutally treated by police who had no understanding of his illness. The lady from CRISIS was able to stop the police from taking him but it was all very upsetting.”*

### General health and wellbeing/ self care

A comment was received from an individual about self care:

- *“I keep my cupboards stocked using the pharmacy to be able to do self-care.”*



### Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

Healthwatch recommended calling their dentist to see whether they are still on the NHS list. Then provided information on the NHS find a dentist as well as provided the NHS dental emergency helpline

- Healthwatch advised calling the dentist themselves to book an appointment so they do not run the risk of being removed off the NHS list.



### Jobs in the Care Sector

A comment was received from an individual about Jobs in the Care Sector:

- *“I want to volunteer in care homes and for organisations that look after lonely people. I would like to work in companionship but I'm not 18 till March and so I can't have my second job so no one will take me on.”*



## COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters

Conversations regarding COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters included:

*“Had both of my jabs and have had my letter this week for my third jab (not my booster as I am immunocompromised). I am going to a local vaccine site which is good as I thought I might have to travel with it being a 3rd full vaccine.”*



- *“All jab experiences good. Can't get a paediatric jab even though eligible. Can't have nasal spray.”*
- *“I have not yet been offered my COVID vaccine.”*
- *“Covid jab went well, no side effects.”*
- *“I have had my COVID vaccine at the GPs.”*
- *“The doctors never called me about my second appointment, the 3rd one they did contact me to let me know that I was due this one.”*
- *“I had both my AZ vaccines then had 2 blood clots. So, do I have my booster? Even though it will be Pfizer, I just don't know. There is no point asking my GP because they will tell me to have it. I don't think I will.”*
- *“My husband got his appointment for his booster because he is vulnerable, we went to St Helens for it and they let me have mine too while I was there with him.”*
- *“Overall, a good experience. Quick, effective and informative. However, my vaccinator was very surprised I was getting it at 15 which put me off a bit.”*

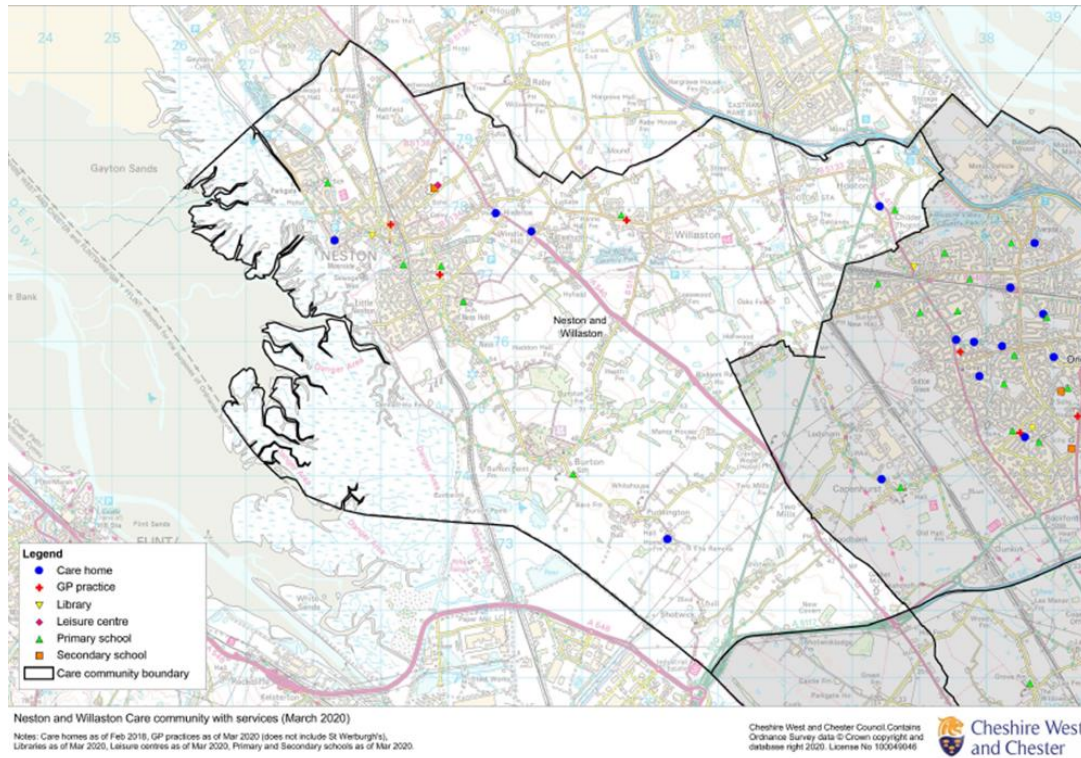
## Flu Vaccines

Conversations regarding Flu Vaccines included:

- *“I had my flu jab and took my son who is 17 but has asthma. We had to pay this year due to him being under 18, if he was 18, he would get it free due to his asthma.”*
- *“I booked this through my GP.”*
- *“I came here today to get my flu vaccine there was a queue however I was not waiting long.”*
- *“I booked my flu vaccine through the GP and was provided a time to attend. When I arrived, there was a long queue I was told I had to wait at the back of the line even though I was provided a time to turn up. I therefore did not get my vaccine today and will try and rearrange and expect to be seen at that time they provide.”*



## Appendix 6 - Neston and Willaston



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Neston and Willaston Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Tuesday 5 October, 10am-12pm - Ness Community Hall, Neston
- Friday 22 October, 8.30am-2pm - Neston Market (engagement stand)

At these events, we spoke to 36 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 11 comment on services in total.

We were joined at these events by colleagues from Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- Signposting information about local services or groups
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters



The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.



## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *“Disappointed with the deterioration of service standards. Receptionists don't always answer the phone.”*
- *“Poor service. Covid injection was okay. Waited 2 weeks for a phone call appointment, my husband has underlying health conditions and I often feel like he is slipping through the cracks in the system.”*
- *“I use asthma as a way to access service for any reason, necessary. As all access is poor right now. I don't use any smartphones or internet to access services.”*
- *“Efficient process, in rear of surgery and quick delivery of the jab sat down, exit front of surgery (for safety as this is the road). Very good. Very happy with local provision.”*
- *“It is hard to get an appointment. I am not sure whether my surgery even offers econsult, I would like to know other ways I can contact the surgery other than just sitting on the phone. When I did get through, they said to just ring 111 as they are too busy.”*
- *“It is not a very diverse GP, as a BAME individual I feel very uncomfortable. I feel my daughter gets treated better than me as she is mixed race and could pass for white.”*



## Hospitals

A comment was received from an individual about Hospitals:

- *“Long wait for ear treatment referral. Poor communication from services. 3 months wait so far, slowly going deaf in both ears.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“Very Good service. Referral took approx. 3m months.”*
- *“Emergency 24-hour team is good. Nursing staff are not sufficiently attentive. We need more local facilities for Mental Health. Access to mental health services is poor. Nurses are overworked, underpaid and undertrained.”*
- *“Lack of community mental health support, particularly that which is suitable for the elderly. Patient experience needs to be reformed.”*

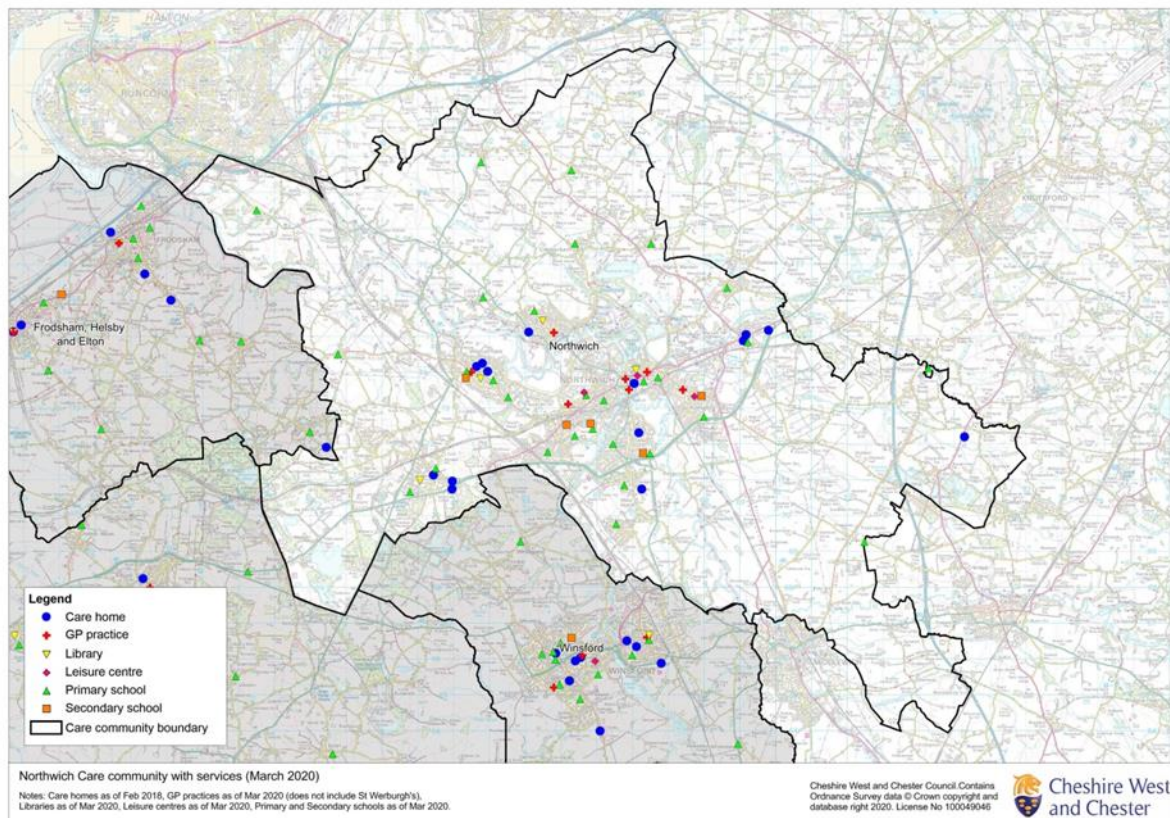
## Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- Self-care going to the pharmacy.
- Advised to check Live Well to see if there are any BAME support groups in the area. Provided Healthwatch volunteering leaflet to help them feel they can connect with the community.



## Appendix 7 - Northwich



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Northwich Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Friday 24 September, 9am-3.15pm - Jobs Fair, Apple Market Street, Northwich

At this event, we spoke to 8 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 8 comments on services in total.

- Friday 1 October, 10am-1pm - Oakwood Medical Centre, Northwich

At this event, we spoke to 10 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 7 comments on services in total.



- Wednesday 6 October, 2pm-4pm - Tea and Tattle Silver Rainbows, Weaver Museum, Northwich

At this event, we spoke to 12 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 9 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by Councillor Kate Cernik.



- Tuesday 16 November, 10.30am - 12.30pm - Snow Angels, Keep Connected Cafe, Northwich (engagement stand)

At this event, we spoke to 34 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 20 comments on services in total.

- Wednesday 17 November, 10am-2pm - Antrobus Village Hall

At this event, we spoke to 12 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 8 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Cheshire West and Chester Public Health and Live Well Cheshire West.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations
- Transport

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *"I feel it is impossible to access face-to-face appointments. I would like to ask "when will this change?"*
- *"They were brill with my parents. They treated my dad within the correct time frame even with COVID. They had some appointments on the phone which were all fine. The practice was very COVID safe."*
- *"They always see me in a reasonable time frame and prioritise you if its needed. They have been good with providing earlier appointments for my kids if needed. The appointment system seems very good. They do telephone appointments at the moment but I don't mind as everyone needs to be realistic. If needed they will give you a face-to-face appointment."*
- *"They are very good here, very helpful, the appointment booking is fairly easy. There are waiting lists so I do have to wait however that is not their fault, I understand they are busy."*
- *"It is a very good service; I have been seen recently for a very urgent appointment. All done and dusted in a week. The GP was wonderful when my husband died, I have no complaints."*
- *"The GP is very good; they are very thorough. However, I have not seen a GP face-to-face during COVID."*
- *"They are not wonderful; I have bad anxiety and just couldn't get in to see a doctor which was making my anxiety worse. There is one doctor there who is helping me with my anxiety now and for that I am grateful. 4 years ago, my husband rang the doctors regarding a lung infection and was told by a receptionist that the doctor would not see him he was very poorly."*
- *"It is very good. Except for ringing through this is difficult, it is a nightmare."*
- *"I do not go very often. I go into to request my repeat prescription rather than ringing to keep the phone lines clear. They then send my prescription to the Chemist."*
- *"Not seen the GP, I haven't tried to be seen. I had to take my husband though the service he received was great."*
- *"I was able to have a face-to-face. I was glad of it. It is a very good GP."*
- *"Very pleased with them. They are very good with our son who has a number of disabilities. When he needed his Covid 10 vaccine - they allowed both my husband and I to come in with him to keep him calm. They are great all round."*
- *"I was amazed to find out that the surgery does a 'home visits' service. My grandmas received one when I rang to try and book her an appointment. It was great and they did her flu jab at the same time."*
- *"They are a wonderful doctor's surgery; I know the receptionist and have a good relationship with them. The spiel is long when calling, they are good when you get through. They are very personable."*
- *"I feel like they know me. It is fantastic."*
- *"I had a lump on my elbow I rang the practice and other the phone I was told that I just needed to do some different physio exercises without having been seen. This*



*was uncomfortable however for me and I felt I needed an X-ray I ended up having one concerned it was broken, it was not.”*

- *“I do not feel like we have had the best support with dealing with my partners dementia during COVID. We used to get support then no longer get spoken to. It took 3 years for diagnosis he does however have rare dementia I feel there should be more research on this.”*
- *“I rang the doctors up and they said they wanted to see me the same day so booked me in for an appointment. I was very happy and felt very looked after.”*
- *“Overall, a good GP. I had an infection and was asked to take pictures this was difficult to manage to take good pictures by myself.”*
- *“They were great for dealing with husbands’ dementia they always see us and have been regularly checking in via phone which is appreciated. They referred him quickly to the Walton Centre Pre-Covid.”*
- *“It took us ages to be seen for my mum about getting her diagnosed with dementia. This was pre-covid.”*
- *“I had to wait for 1.5 hours for the phone to be answered. I gave up. I was disgusted and had to leave waiting. My husband rang up the GP and the receptionist said he needed physiotherapy which he eventually was told he never needed.”*
- *“Called practice took a while to get through to the receptionists. Told her I had an ear infection which is what I had the last time I then had a stroke and wanted to be seen. They told me that I can’t have an appointment for this, I asked them if I should ring 111 and the receptionist say she wasn’t sure if they could advise on ear infections.”*
- *“The GP’s have been very good, supportive and understanding when I went to see them for help and hormone therapy as a Trans Women. I have now started testosterone suppression injections and HRT, and had my first injection today. I was referred to a specialist centre in Leeds but the waiting lists are very long. I heard about CMAGIC a gender dysmorphia service provided by Mersey Care who also see patients in Cheshire. I asked to be referred to them and the GP did this and were helpful. I have had an appointment at CMAGIC and they prescribed hormone therapy and also asked for blood tests. The only problem with this is that there needs to be more communication and collaborative working between CMAGIC and local health services. When I first went to see the nurse at my GP’s and took in the CMAGIC blood form she said she couldn’t do it because it was a Mersey blood form. When I explained the nurse did ring CMAGIC and speak to the GP and confirmed they could take the blood test and I was grateful that they took the time to find out. But it would be good not to have to go through that if they worked more closely together.”*
- *“Never had a problem.”*
- *“Covid experience has been good when I’ve needed the GP.”*
- *“Podiatry is excellent although sometimes it’s confusing as to which entrance, I should go to as sometimes I’m able to access through the reception area but today I was told to go into the car park I did this but then was recalled to go to reception. A bit confusing.”*
- *“I have a small child and the phone consultations don’t work; we need more face to face appointments.”*
- *“The time scale to see the GP is far too long. I feel the receptionist is there just to fob people off, is that their job?”*
- *“Trying to get a face to face appointment is very difficult sometimes I feel the system is against people meeting their doctor.”*

- *“Tried to see a doctor however only saw a nurse practitioner. They expressed that they had symptoms but could not see a doctor.”*
- *“I took my daughter there for an ingrowing toenail it was a really great service. I know a few people who go here and always have good things to say about it.”*
- *“The GP is excellent with regards to general health care.”*

## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“I had my breast screening here last month. From my GP, nurse and the physical appointment all has been brilliant.”*
- *“I had my initial consultation 9 months before, and was told I would be called in for an operation. I was offered a number of locations and chose Warrington. 8 months later I received a message to say I had to attend Leighton. I did the service was marvellous but why the wait?”*
- *“This is a great service, always able to pop in to be seen. The staff there are all so lovely really nice place.”*
- *“I had to have an operation without being put to sleep as I have problems with my heart. I had to have lots of screws put in and would have appreciated some music during the surgery so I didn’t have to listen to drilling.”*
- *“I have been in twice, I had to wait in the corridor once. I can understand about the lack of service however. When I had my bloods, they were not very forthcoming about what my problem was they had put me on steroids and I ended up gaining two stone I felt like I needed someone to talk to, I heard through the grape vine that they knew what was wrong with me but wouldn’t tell me.”*
- *“I had a stroke and being at the hospital was awful. The food is awful, the food choices are terrible and the food didn’t taste good either. I overall had a bad experience. Whilst in hospital my wallet was stolen there was nowhere, I could lock my personal belongings away. The staff were fine but the wards are so old fashioned.”*
- *“Leighton and Alder Hey don’t talk to each other which causes delays in treatment. Individually both hospitals are great but we have to use both and they just don’t talk. Notes have been lost and delayed my daughter’s treatment.”*
- *“The Epilepsy Unit at Warrington Hospital is very good. They have really helped us deal better with my daughter epilepsy. It is much more under control.”*
- *“I had some teeth removed here. They were fab. I lost a filling went to the dentist and they sent me to Leighton whilst here they said the dentist should be the one to do it. I felt like there was a lot of back and to about this, Leighton ended up doing it.”*
- *“My husband with dementia was referred to the Walton Centre and has reviews here which are good, very happy.”*
- *“Northwich Infirmary is a gem, so helpful when I attended with a foot injury the other week, staff were brilliant.”*
- *“I had the paramedics come out to me and said I needed to go to hospital they took me to Leighton. Whilst there the paramedic and a member of staff had a conversation in front of me and they said to paramedic “Why have you brought her here, she doesn’t need to be here” I overheard them say “I was milking it.”*



- *“Lack of joined up approach when you live in an area of Cheshire that borders with other local authorities. We live in Frodsham and access a lot of hospitals out of area such as Warrington, Alder Hey as well as the Countess of Chester. They are all individually good but they never talked to each other or have a joined up approach which is really frustrating as then everything has to go back via the GP which causes delays.”*
- *The dental unit at Alder Hey have been very good with my son. They have rebuilt his teeth following an accident. He will need treatment for a number of years as he grows, but he trusts them so he is happy to have the treatment.*

## Pharmacies

Comments on Pharmacies included:

- *“I walk to the pharmacy to collect my prescription it is pretty quick. It is great as they text me to let me know when it is ready to collect.”*
- *“My mum’s delivery was not delivered as she was out. I therefore went to pick it up for her and the pharmacy asked me if I would consider dropping her pharmacy deliveries as they are struggling with them. This made me feel uncomfortable.”*
- *“The delivery driver service is brilliant I know they are busy but they always have time to say hello.”*
- *“Whilst there also had opportunity to speak with the driver who was very friendly mentioned that on Fridays, he would normally have up to 5 prescriptions to attend to.”*
- *“Great place.”*
- *“Never had a problem receiving any prescription.”*
- *“Very helpful.”*
- *“The chemist is wonderful; they often give me advice.”*



## Care Homes

A comment was received from an individual about a local Care Home:

- *“I went here after my operation and felt very well looked after.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“I have not got an appointment at the dentist. They have said they will ring me for a proper appointment when I last went, they only polished them.”*
- *“I don’t have a dentist.”*
- *“It is very good in general; the dentist is very competent and caring.”*
- *“I haven’t been to the dentist in a while, I get sore gums, I need to find a new dentist to go to but I don’t feel like I need to go as I don’t have any real problems.”*





- *“The dentist cancelled my appointment a long time ago. They have not contacted me since to re-book it.”*
- *“I had to wait an appointment for 2 weeks, but I had excellent care by a specific dentist. They have very good hygiene protocols. I had booked a check-up but she has sorted a small problem for me during the same appointment.”*
- *“Bowel and Continence Service - Struggling to get referred. They would accept a referral for my son - saying it was part of his condition - it wasn't. In the end I had to do a lot of research and eventually after two years we have got him dry at 10 years old.”*
- *“Warrington and Cheshire Carers giving out wrong information concerning carers assessments. I called them for advice and support. A lady told me that as a parent I was not entitled to a 'carers assessment'. This is wrong, it clearly states in the Social Care Act that I am. It doesn't give me any confidence in them.”*
- *“Lack of joined up approach between CWAC and Wales (I live in Wales literally just over the border) but my son attends school in England. Unnecessary delays due to authorities not being able to make up their minds as to whether he needs a statement or an EHCP.”*
- *“The NHS are only allowing 4 nappies a day; this is ridiculous and clearly not enough. We are spending a lot of money buying private which we cannot afford.”*
- *“The Continence Service has reduced supplies and is limited people to 4 nappies a day. When I explained that my son is doubly incontinent and needs more, I was told to put a pad in the nappy. This is for a teenager.”*
- *“My son was born blind. Therefore, it has been pretty obvious that he would need a EHCP. He attends a nursery and we have had to go through the assessment for a plan prior to him starting school (mainstream). The nursery itself has never done this before - therefore it is a learning process for them. However, the assessor from the SEN team and the plan writer had just written lots of generic stuff - it was not individualised. Most shockingly it mentioned his ""hand to eye coordination"" my child was born without eyes. I have very little confidence in these services as a result of this. There have been delays in the plan being signed off - all this needs to be in place so that the right measures are in place prior to him starting school.”*
- *“I rang them and they said I can be seen in 6 weeks. They are lovely, but I feel like the dentists here are always changing. I was inconvenienced between being sent to Leighton regarding the filling.”*
- *“The people that work at the dentist are lovely. I had an incident and they said don't worry come back in another week and I will have another look, I rang them earlier as I was concerned, they saw me and said I will feel better they think it was probably a viral infection.”*
- *“Very friendly dentist.”*
- *Someone discussed the friendly service at their dental practice. She suffers from anxiety and the dentist is very understanding, talks her through the process during her treatment and allows her mum to go in with her due to her anxiety issues.*
- *“I asked CAMHS and I am extremely happy with the service I have received with them. I have spoken over the telephone during COVID and this has worked well for me it is nice to have someone to talk to.”*
- *“We are now a private dental patient with them as the clinic went private felt like we had no choice in the matter.”*
- *“The visit to CMAGIC was amazing. I had an hour and a half face to face appointment and was given a lot of time and didn't feel rushed. When is the last time you were*

*given an hour and a half to talk to a doctor? The Doctor I spoke to asked me what I wanted to be called and introduced themselves by first name too and I felt comfortable and listened to. The doctor was also trans and it was great to talk to someone who really understood and appreciated your challenges. I also got offered an appointment much quicker and would definitely recommend this service.”*

- *“111 is great as they always redirect people within a good time frame.”*

## General health and wellbeing/ self care

Comments on general health and wellbeing and/or self-care included:

- *“I haven’t had my over 40s health check yet, I thought I was supposed to get one?”*
- *“I ordered myself a cholesterol test kit from Strava to check my own risk for cardiovascular disease rather than disturbing my doctors to do this.”*
- *“I enjoy being able to attend groups such as this (Friendship Cafe) as being able to speak to other carers about how they deal with different situations with their family member with dementia is a really useful thing. I learn more here than I do at different health care settings such as GP hospital etc.”*



## Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- E-consults
- Support for smoking cessation
- NHS find a dentist
- Using the GP when concerned rather than google
- Speaking to a pharmacy for general care to treat an ear infection.
- Where to get booster vaccinations.



## COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters

Conversations regarding COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters included:

- We spoke to someone who had swelling after the COVID vaccine and called 111, they were concerned it was a blood clot. They told us 111 were great and advised to go to Halton hospital, they were really friendly at the hospital and did a scan immediately.
- *“I got a text from my GP about my vaccine I booked it via the link then had. It was very well run. I also booked my son in and he got done.”*
- *“I booked my COVID vaccines and booster via the online booking system works great it was at a centre that was great.”*
- *“I had my COVID vaccine and recently had my booster, it was excellent, we were sheltered whilst waiting and it was all very well organised.”*
- *“I have had both vaccines and my booster.”*



- *“I have had both vaccines and am grateful to have them done, awaiting my booster.”*
- *“The centre had a really great system. However, the seats/chairs were really low and I struggled to get out of them. I needed help not very dignifying.”*

## Flu Vaccines

Conversations regarding Flu Vaccines included:

- *“I had my pneumonia and flu vaccine in the same arm at the same time. I was very ill due to this and ending up passing out, I am diabetic so was concerned to eat but really struggled to do this living on my own.”*
- *“Had it on a home visit.”*
- *“I have been told I can’t have my flu jab yet as the GP surgery have said they don’t have any and I will be contacted.”*
- *“Awaiting flu vaccine keen to have it done.”*
- *“Having my flu jab next week.”*
- *“Having mine next week, I received a text message.”*
- *“Had flu jab, service was excellent.”*



## Access to Services

Conversations regarding access to services included:

- *“I think for older people they could do with more mental health support similar to what U2 offers.”*
- We spoke to someone who finds the blue badge that says “Please be patient I have dementia” a really helpful thing and hopes more will be made.

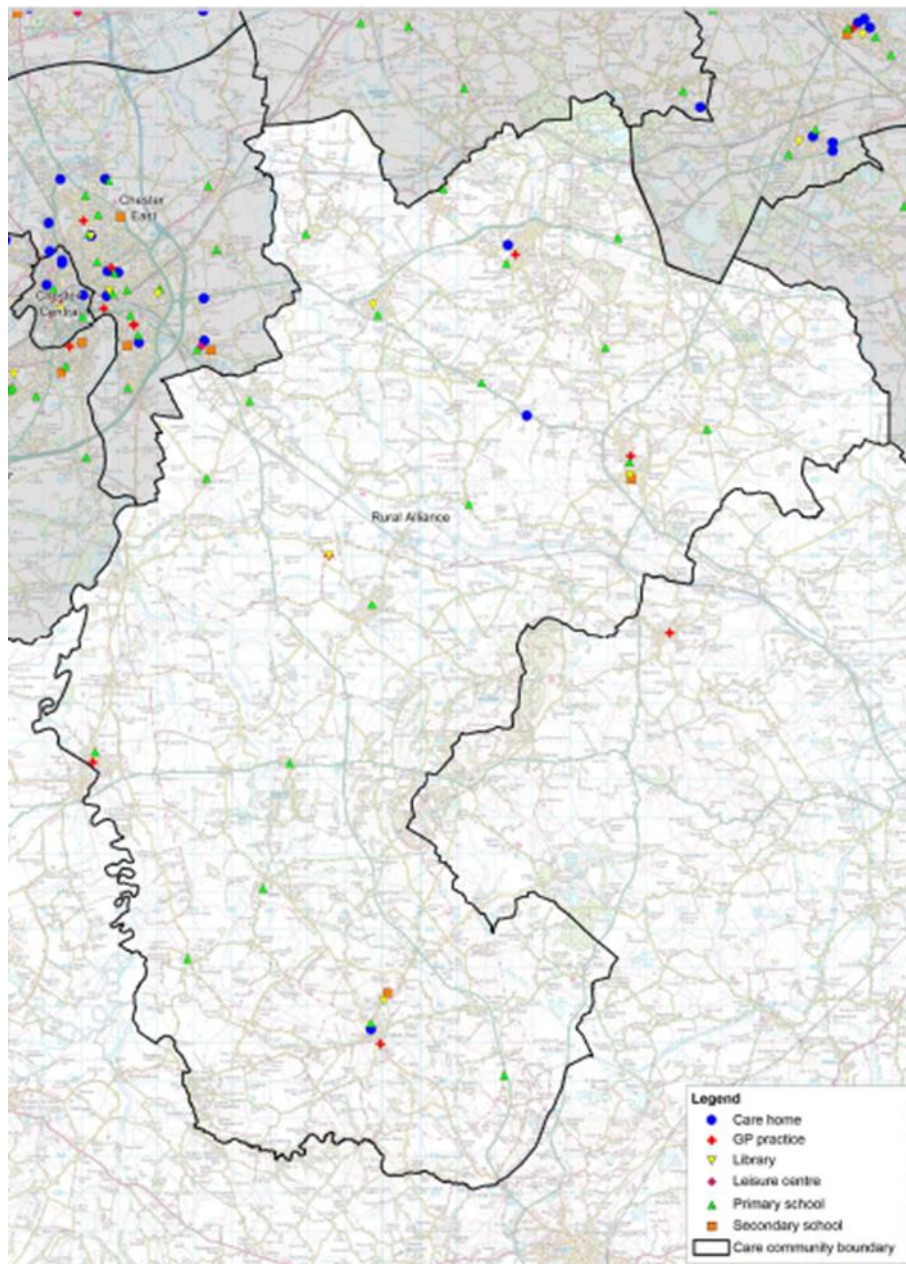


## Transport

A comment was received from an individual about transport:

- This person has to drive his nan to these groups as she can’t travel on her own. He does it around his Uni classes.

## Appendix 8 - Rural



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Rural Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Monday 4 October, 8.30am-4pm - Bunbury Medical Practice



At this event, we spoke to 25 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 24 comments on services in total.

- Thursday 14 October, 10am-12pm - Tarporley Older People Active Lives, Gardenhurst Estate, Tiverton (engagement stand)

At this event, we spoke to 12 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 20 comments on services in total.



- Monday 18 October, 10am-4pm - Tattenhall Village Surgery



At this event, we spoke to 20 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 16 comments on services in total.

We were joined at this event by colleagues from Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Primary Care Cheshire Social Prescribers.

- Thursday 28 October, 10am-4pm - Car Park between High Street and Lloyd Close, Farndon

At this event, we spoke to 13 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 1 comment on services in total.

- Friday 12 November, 10am-2pm - Community Hall, Malpas

At this event, we spoke to 17 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 5 comments on services in total.



We were joined at this event by colleagues from Live Well Cheshire West and Primary Care Cheshire Social Prescribers.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations
- Transport

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:



- *“The Nurse Practitioner has been rude and dismissive of mental health issues in the past.”*
- *“So wonderful to have lovely doctors. They take their time to listen and to talk to me so I understand everything that is happening.”*
- *“The communication is so good; this place is so helpful and it brings great benefits to the community.”*
- *“The Dr is useless and was dismissive of my husband’s skin cancer. We asked for a referral and they told us they were not doing them due to covid. It took lots of chasing up and persistence to get a referral.”*
- *“It takes 5 minutes before you can get in a queue to speak to a receptionist.”*
- *“After an operation the GP surgery have been in contact with me regarding medication. The doctors are just the best, they take their time and listen, they explain everything and are so helpful.”*
- *“I have been here now for a number of years and the service has and still is excellent. The doctors take their time to listen to you and explain. It is a wonder service and I am grateful.”*
- *“Great staff who have worked hard to maintain a good service during Covid 19. I hope as it eases, we will get more face to face as this has been difficult.”*
- *“The Dr was dismissive of my mother in law who was struggling with neck pain, they told her to change her pillow, we called back and made another appointment with another doctor who referred her to physio and that is really helping.”*
- *“Real Asset. I attended after a phone conversation to see the doctor. All very simple, I believe people should just have to be a little patient.”*
- *“The doctors and pharmacy within the surgery are excellent. I find getting a face to face appointment a problem. I am not keen on using the telephone and I do not have a computer to make appointments online.”*
- *“My dad has seen multiple doctors at the practice over the last 5 years with regards to reoccurring UTIs and has never been referred to urology for investigation. He has recently ended up in A&E and they were shocked it had never been investigated and have written to our GPs to request it.”*
- *“Appointments always run late. I appreciate they are under pressure but the system is broken.”*
- *“Very helpful, I have been coming here for over 20 years. The doctors investigate thoroughly, and often gets in touch with me to update because of my health condition.”*
- *“I am really considering moving GP practices.”*
- *“The surgery is very good but I think it is dangerous that we cannot get a face to face appointments easily. It is another barrier to people seeing their doctor, it feels impossible. I am worried for men who are reluctant to talk about their personal information. I was left unhappy with a triage experience, you have to tell the receptionist intimate information, then I got a phone appointment with the nurse, who diagnosed my problem incorrectly and prescribed me antibiotics and steroids. Finally, I spoke to a doctor who diagnosed me with silent reflux and so I*

*needed to change my diet. The doctor was very good, just problems with access. The pharmacy is great and getting my vaccination was great too!"*

- *"After an operation the GP practice have been in contact with me regards to medication."*
- *"The doctors are just the best; they take their time to listen and they explain and are so helpful. Thank you!"*
- *"Can the doctors let us know who they are? Because we have not been able to see face to face and if lucky have a phone call it would be wonderful to know who they are. Can they attend meetings or have pictures at the practice (not that I can get in)?"*
- *"Awful GP receptionist, they don't want to see you and there's a really horrid voice message saying "Don't bully us"."*
- *"Lovely Surgery. But before covid it was fairly easy to access services however whilst i accept covid has had a huge impact I really feel the need to have a face to face meeting. I'm 90+ and feel I am being prevented; I do get phone consultations."*
- *"My mum had her flu vaccine at the GP happy with this."*
- *"Following a stage 3 intervention at COCH the GP surgery would only do the post-natal check over the phone, this has resulted in her being very ill- resulting in her going to A+E where she passed a product, we are awaiting pathology but it is believed to be retained placenta. Phoned the surgery following this and the GP said they tried to ring gynaecology at COCH but couldn't get through but they were off the next day. My mother said 'How has she not had sepsis.'"*
- *"The services are inconvenient even when ringing at 8am I can't get through and I don't like that I can't pick the doctor when I try to book on the NHS app or patient access, I would like to choose the doctor."*
- *"I have Leukaemia and am aware I need a 3rd vaccine. I have had texts and letters confirming this however have been unable to get an appointment from the GP. I cannot get through to the reception."*
- *"I don't think the service here has been very good."*
- *"You just can't get to see them, and making an appointment is really hard too and takes a long time."*
- *"Not had a good experience accessing them during lockdown. It is hard to get an appointment and even harder to get past the receptionists."*
- *"I had a consultation regarding a skin problem over the phone. I sent photos and they treated me so quickly. The diagnosis was correct and they sent me to the Countess of Chester to get treated. I then went back to the GP for stitches. I received a letter from them about my third jab, and will book when I can."*
- *"When calling it is hard to get through the initial message is long, we have to ring at 8 which is not great when you can't even get through."*
- *"I hear a lot about how awful they are and how they don't want to see you."*
- *"I find the voice message really aggressive, 'do not bully our staff'."*
- *"Used e-Consult recently to send photo of head injury and was referred to Dermatology at the Countess of Chester."*
- *"Feels that there is a less personal service provided by the GP practice."*
- *"No real issues with surgery, have been registered with them for 30 years. However, when regular blood tests were needed it was more convenient to bypass the surgery and go to COCH Haematology department."*
- *"I find the telephone message very aggressive."*



- *“They know me there because of my daughter. I have no complaints although I have to wait a week for appointments. I go regularly for blood tests with a lovely nurse.”*
- *“I have regular steroid injections in my knee for arthritis.”*
- *“Did have a delay with getting these in lockdown which was difficult as I was in pain and it affected my mobility.”*
- *“The doctor is very good, though it can be hard to get through via the receptionists but they are very helpful and I'm sure they are very busy.”*
- *“Excellent Service, very happy with my GP. I have seen the GP a few times in lockdown and they have even visited me at my own home.”*
- *“I have vitamin B12 injections at the surgery which the nurse gives, and have had these without disruption, all through the pandemic.”*
- *“Access has been really bad; you can't get to see a GP in person.”*
- *“Not a good service at all during lockdown and ever since at the surgery.”*
- *“You can't get to see a doctor in person at all and I don't think that is a good enough service or why they can't see people in person now.”*
- *“Pain after a flu jab, wanted advice from the GP. Rang the surgery and spoke to a receptionist who the put me through to the Nurse. The Nurse told me to see the doctor in 10 days' time if no better.”*
- *“Very good experience in general. Dr is superb, very quick to sort out serious problems, but difficult to get a face to face appointment.”*
- *“Not had a face to face appt for over 1 year; feels it's important to sort out little things such as tiredness, dizziness, which are difficult to describe over phone.”*
- *“Very satisfied with my Dr, but GPs keep changing every year so don't get sense of continuity.”*
- *“Don't like to fact that have to go through the receptionist. Then it takes 2 weeks to get a phone appointment. Very good on blood tests.”*

## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“I have a great respect for the NHS and the work they do but I prefer to go private where possible as they have better communication, quicker appointments for surgery, better follow up appointments and better reception and customer services.”*
- *“I have suffered with Gallstones for nearly 8 years and I have been bounced between the GP and Leighton Hospital.”*
- *“I have been waiting for surgery for 2 years now and have been informed that the surgeon who was going to do it has left and there is currently no surgeon able to do it. They referred me to Liverpool Women's Hospital who have come back and said they won't take any notes from the COCH and will do their own investigation. The investigation needed is a long and painful process and something I don't want to go through again so I have told COCH I will just wait.”*
- *“The rheumatology department are wonderful and the nurses are always helpful when I need to call regarding my medication. I am always seen by my consultant if I ask for a check-up and she is just wonderful and thorough.”*



- *“I had a serious road accident and both my legs were shattered. I saw the consultant and he carried out an operation which I have to say has left my legs in a better condition than in my youth. Thank you so much.”*
- *“I have a sight concern that makes reading any appointment letters unreadable even with a good light and magnifier. Can the letter words be in bigger print and font please?”*
- *“My mum did not feel well she rang 111 she was on the line for a while waiting to be spoken to, she was told to go to A+E COCH and she ended up having pneumonia.”*
- *“My daughter had her first child 4 months ago. Pre-natal everything was going well. However, birth didn’t go to plan ended up a stage 3 intervention.*
- *“Happy with COCH Haematology department they were very efficient.”*
- *“I think the car parking fees are very expensive if you have to visit VIN or Leighton. They also don’t make it clear that you can get a weekly pass for a lot less money if you are visiting the hospital regularly which is not good as it saves you a lot of money.”*
- *“I had chest pain and as I was on my own was frightened. I rang NHS 111 and they told me to ring an ambulance. I rang the ambulance and they took me to A/E. I didn’t find it a very good experience. After booking in with chest pain I still had to wait a long time to be seen which wasn’t good with a potentially dangerous health problem. I was seen and need treatment for my lungs, and then had a very long wait of 12 hours to get home via the ambulance.”*

## Pharmacies

Comment on Pharmacies included:

- *“We absolutely love the pharmacy they go above and beyond and our just outstanding. So polite and kind and will always deliver to the house within a few days.”*
- *“I am 76 years old and my son showed me how to download the NHS app. I can now organise my prescription which is brilliant and know when it is ready to be collected from the pharmacy. It takes the stress away and wasted trips.”*
- *“Prescriptions are so very expensive.”*
- *“The fact that the pharmacy is situated within the practice is so helpful. There is a box on the wall where if you place your prescription by 11:30am it will be processed normally with 3 - 4 days. If you have a repeat, you can put that in two weeks prior and know it will be there.”*
- *“Prescription Home Delivery Service. Whatever the weather, always delivered with a smile and hello, who I thank for each visit.”*
- *“They go out of their way to try and get the medication, provided by a certain manufacturer, which is easier to swallow (and not available in liquid form). When visiting the pharmacy in person, prior to Covid 19 and to date, they have been helpful and polite, gave advice when it was a new medication to take for shingles.”*
- *“They are superb I go in to request my prescription and then it gets delivered which works well for me.”*
- *“Fabulous service- have my prescriptions delivered straight to the door, it’s very good. The person who delivers it will come into the house to drop them off.”*
- *“I called the pharmacy to make an appointment for a flu jab.”*



- *“Very good experience, no problems with the service”*
- *“Pharmacy is good, but you can no longer collect prescription immediately after appointment.”*

## Care Homes

A comment was received from an individual about a local Care Home:

- *“My mother is in a home and loves it. She couldn't be happier which of course means we feel safe in the knowledge that she is cared for.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“I'm a carer for my daughter and I'm in my 70s. I struggle to locate groups of interest for my daughter to engage with, any I do find are a distance away. I'm reliant on friends to assist.”*
- *“I pay for dental treatment but it's been great. I had a crown fall out and was seen the same day.”*
- *“Dental services have been much better to access than doctors in Winsford.”*
- *“Haven't had any regular dental check-ups recently.”*
- *“No complaints with dentist, goes regularly to one and pays for private treatment.”*
- *“I hear a lot of people saying it has been hard to see a dentist in lockdown.”*
- *“My dentist has been fine and I've had check-ups and hygienist appointments. You have to wait outside to be let in individually and the staff and dentist wear masks, etc., and it all feels safe.”*
- *“I think the dentists have provided a much better experience during lockdown than my GP's.”*
- *“Referred for hearing aids in July. No appointment or indication of when this will be as yet.”*
- *“I was told there is a long waiting list for the dentist but no news or update. Concerned as this is impacting on my ability to socialise.”*
- *“Dentist was very helpful and arranged repair of a denture at the start of Covid. Collected the broken denture from home and delivered back once fixed in a short space of time.”*
- *“Waiting for a check up appointment at the dentists at the moment.”*
- *“I pay for dentistry and the service has been good through lockdown. I have continued to be able to access the dentist for treatment and check ups, and the hygienist has been offering appointments again since August too.”*
- *“OPAL Services are the friendliest group and it is very well run.”*



## General health and wellbeing/ self care

Comments on general health and wellbeing and/or self care included:

- *“I try and attend groups, meet with friends and get some fresh air to keep as well as I can.”*
- *“More important than ever to look after yourself, take any vaccinations offered and try and keep well.”*
- *“My daughter looks after me.”*
- *“Very important to keep mobile, getting out and meeting people. Enjoy visiting the OPAL Group.”*
- *“It’s important to get outside to exercise and keep fit, it’s good for your mind as well as your body.”*
- *“I’ve been lucky in lockdown as I have a daughter to help out, do shopping, etc. I don’t know what I would do without her.”*
- *“It was hard during lockdown, especially when you live alone and I was also supporting my Mum, but looking forward to lots of holidays that I have booked going forward.”*



### Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- Linked to social prescriber and public health officer who were present
- Advocate Chester Maternity Voices
- Self-care leaflets
- Healthwatch feedback centre
- Live Well Website
- Social prescribing



### COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters

Conversations regarding COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters included:

- *“I contacted the CCG directly to sort out my appointment and I was able to get my booster.”*
- *“Organised and good getting the jab, have had the booster already.”*
- *“Happy to have the vaccination and just waiting for the booster.”*
- *“Thought the organisation was amazing.”*
- *“I went locally for my Covid 19 vaccines which were fine.”*
- *“I’ve now had the COVID booster but I had to wait a little it to have it after my steroid injection.”*
- *“I had my COVID jabs. A lovely place, and the whole thing was well organised.”*
- *“Had all of the vaccinations on offer to protect myself and my Mum.”*
- *“Thought that the vaccination clinics ran smoothly and were well organised.”*
- *“I had a COVID 19 booster.”*
- *“It was a long time to wait outside in the cold.”*
- *“I was given an appointment but had to wait outside. It was a very different experience than the first 2 vaccinations.”*
- *“I had an appointment sent through the post for a Covid-19 booster.”*



- *“Long queue of people waiting to be seen. Waited 10 minutes outside even though an appointment time was given. Many people given the same appointment time.”*

## Flu Vaccines

Comments on Flu Vaccines included:

- *“I go to my GP for my flu jab.”*
- *“Had at GP and was happy.”*
- *“Yes, I have this every year and have an appointment to go soon.”*
- *“Good that they now invite over 50's - didn't use to be offered a jab before lockdown but will take it up now.”*
- *“I'm booked in for a flu jab this week on a Saturday. I think it's good they do this at the weekend as well.”*
- *“Yes, I have these. My GP came out to give me this at home which is a very good service.”*
- *“Yes, have this to keep well for myself and Mum who I help.”*



## Access to services

Comments were also received from people regarding access to services generally:

- *“My experiences have been good generally.”*
- *“Mine has been very good- can't complain at all.”*
- *“GP access has been terrible.”*
- *“Difficulty accessing services. Takes 2 week for phone appointment. Don't like triage and having to give personal info to receptionist.”*

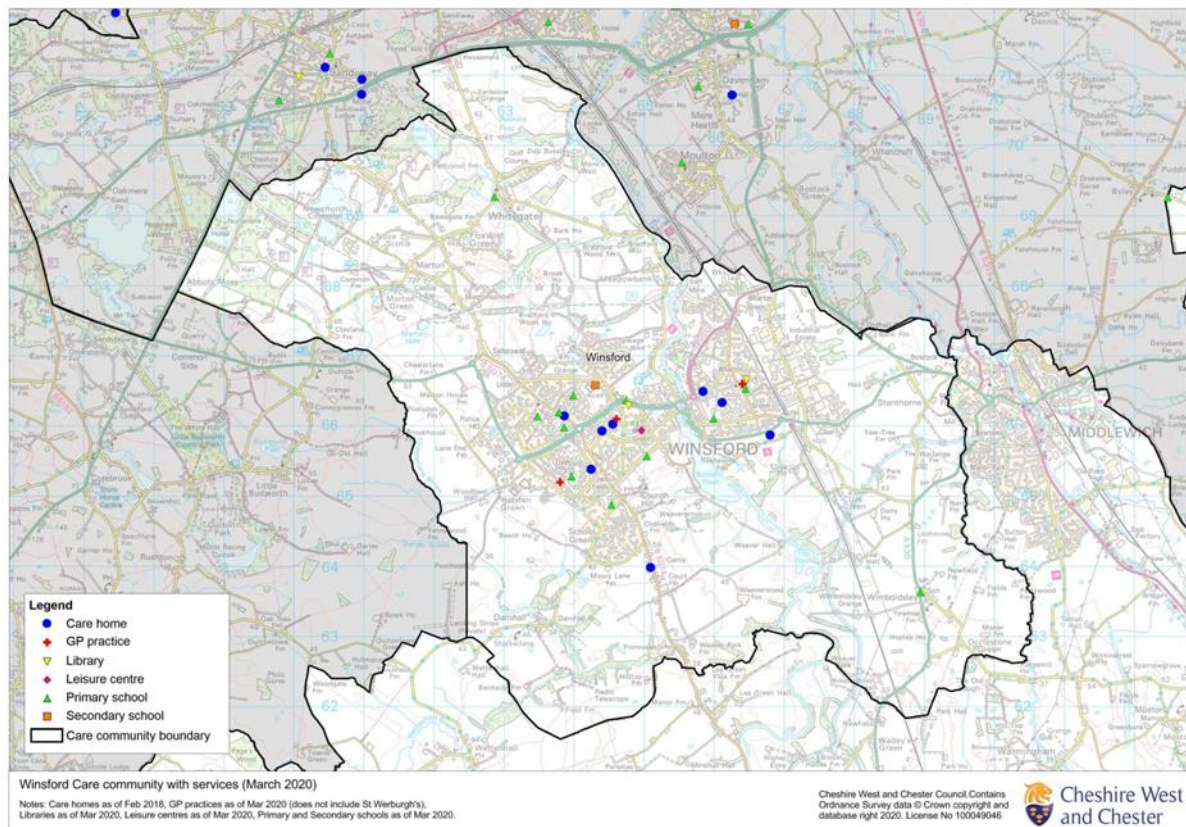


## Transport

Comments on transport included:

- *“We live in Bunbury and find it so difficult if we are without a car. Transport is awful, it leaves me and others isolated.”*
- *“Transport concern to attend GP surgery.”*
- *“We live in Bunbury and find it so difficult as we are without a car.”*
- *“Transport is awful, it leaves me and others isolated, we are cut off.”*
- *“Lacking in rural areas in this instance Malpas.”*
- *“Transport is non-existent, I can't drive so reliant on friends.”*
- *“I can't drive anymore and live in a rural area, but my daughter is a godsend and brings shopping, takes me to appointments, etc.”*
- *“As I live at the edge of the village, public transport is quite difficult to access. My driver's licence was not renewed with no reason given so I am quite reliant on my family to get me to places.”*
- *“I have lifts from family but it can be hard when you can't drive anymore, getting round rural areas.”*
- *“It can be a challenge in rural areas but I'm lucky and have my daughter for lifts.”*

## Appendix 9 - Winsford



During our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity between 20 September and 19 November 2021, Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West visited the following locations in the Winsford Care Community using a promotional van to find out what matters most to people about their local health and care, and to share key information about health and care services:

- Monday 20 September, 11am-2pm - Thrive, Winsford (engagement stand)



At this event, we spoke to 20 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 6 comments on services in total.

- Monday 27 September, 10am-4pm - Winsford Town Centre

At this event, we spoke to 40 people to signpost them to local services and talk to them about their views and experiences on health and care. We received 24 comments on services in total.



We had conversations in this Care Community with people about:

- The role of Healthwatch
- Access to GP services
- General health and wellbeing/self care
- Signposting information about local groups and services
- COVID-19 vaccinations and/or boosters
- Flu vaccinations
- Transport

The following details the comments received and conversations with people in this Care Community.

## GP Practices

Comments on GP Practices included:

- *“I feel misunderstood when talking to the GP. I would like to be seen not just spoken to over the phone.”*
- *“I am receiving specialist treatment from Mersey Care, NHS foundation trust. There appears to be problems when they want blood tests done via my surgery. I have been prescribed medication by the pharmacy. The surgery is trying to get a closed core agreement, I thought we had a national health service and not a regional one. The pharmacy and surgery are trying to help, I do not want to make trouble, as both are helping me. It seems a bureaucratic hurdle. Pharmacist is trying to sort it out, it's further up the chain.”*
- *“Trouble booking an appointment and accessing services. I went through the NHS app to book; however, it couldn't adequately explain my issue on there. I ended up trying to go to the minor's centre but was told to go back to the GP. I had to persist with x3 calls to the GP to get through to someone.”*
- *“My experience has been okay at times in the past. I went for a health screening, blood pressure and blood checks.”*
- *“Mixed experience - I had b12 injections at the surgery with nurses and it was very good. I struggle to get through on the phone to make an appointment.”*
- *“Fast, helpful and excellent response, I rang the GP practice and was offered an appointment that day. GP spoke to me on the phone and then invited me in to the surgery. Antibiotics were prescribed and the problem was sorted.”*
- *“Difficulty seeing a GP for mental health issues. I had a severe mental breakdown a few weeks ago. Asked for help but got no help at all, could not see any GPs, 6 months wait for a counsellor.”*
- *“When calling to see GP about problems, receptionist asked all sorts of questions and then tells me it's not a GP problem so unable to have face to face with GP sometimes things cannot be done over phone conversation. Also, receptionist gets very stroppy.”*
- *“Brilliant service, I like the virtual way the doctors are running now. The doctors keep in touch with texts and you can call up until 8pm which is brilliant provides great flexibility.”*
- *“Appointments great. Overall, 5\* service.”*
- Someone shared with us that their practice has been outstanding during COVID. However, she did "slip through the net" for being contacted about her COVID vaccine and had to contact the GP. Aside from that getting GP appointments is easy the receptionists are great; they are punctual with appointments and they keep in contact for regular check-ups.
- We spoke to someone who is struggling to get an appointment at the GP for his mum. His mum has dementia and has had a district nurse to come out but no one has come out in quite a while to help with things regarding his mum.
- *“Can't fault them. Whenever you ring it is easy to get through and book appointments in a timely way, I have been with this GP for a while and will stick with them.”*





- Someone told us they are struggling to get through to the GP to arrange COVID vaccine for daughter. She mentioned that she was told her daughter cannot book her vaccine online as she previously had COVID.
- *“I would like to have a face-to-face appointment to return back to normal. I need to be seen as I have a blocked artery and I feel I am not getting any answers regarding this.”*
- *“I had different tests carried out which were done in a timely and effective manner. A very good service.”*
- Someone told us they find the ability to phone the GP first and speak to someone easier, as it allows the person to be in work and be able to sort issues out without having to take time off for issues that don't require a face to face appointment.
- *“I've found it is very difficult to get appointments as it's hard to get through the receptionist. I've had particular problems with a specific Dr, she is nasty and doesn't look at me. However, another Dr at the practice is lovely and very helpful.”*
- *“I have difficulties getting through on the phone and getting appointments.”*

## Hospitals

Comments on Hospitals included:

- *“I had a mole removed that was causing concern. My arm was numbed and the whole mole was removed surgically. There was excellent service and the staff were friendly. I am currently waiting for appointments for others to be removed.”*
- *“My daughter went to the maternity ward and they were fantastic. The midwives were very attentive and professional and really put us all at ease.”*
- We spoke to someone who has regular injections in her eyes and wanted to share what a lovely service it is. She said that the waiting time and duration of the appointment is good even during COVID.



## Pharmacies

Comments on Pharmacies included:

- *“Excellent service, friendly staff and very helpful.”*
- *“Excellent cleaning and standard of service overall.”*
- *“Excellent standard of cleanliness, excellent service and very helpful staff.”*
- *“Easy to pick up prescriptions.”*



## Other services

Comments on other services included:

- *“I am really grateful of this service (Thrive) as I felt like I was dropped following the programme for Chronic Pain.”*
- *“I go to the dentist every 3-6 months for check-ups/adjustments. I receive good service and get reminders for appointments and when my check-ups are due.”*
- *“Dentist explained there is a delay on services due to a maternity but that I will stay on the books. I was removed from the books but told I could be added again in April.”*
- *“I have been contacted by Snow Angels and informed of benefits I can receive due to mum having dementia. They have been helpful in signposting me to things that can help.”*



## General health and wellbeing/ self care

Comments on general health and wellbeing and/or self care included:

- Someone spoke to us about self-care kits and keeping stocked up.
- We spoke to someone about calling 111 and recommended using walking into the pharmacy.
- Someone told us how difficult it is dealing with their mum they said they don't have training on how to manage their mum at night when she wants to leave the house, they given sedatives by the doctors to trial but this very overwhelming for them.



## Signposting information about local services or groups

Information was provided by Healthwatch Cheshire staff on the following:

- Carers association
- NHS find a dentist
- Cheshire carers service
- E-consult



## COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters

Conversations regarding COVID-19 vaccines and/or boosters included:

- *“Had all my vaccines very happy and regularly doing later flow testing.”*
- *“I've had the COVID vaccines, I was glad of them due to contracting COVID.”*
- *“Both had COVID vaccines and found the process easy.”*
- *“I didn't get contacted with relevant age group. Had to call the doctor who confirmed I had slipped through the net.”*
- *“Had both Vaccines and found the process easily.”*



- *“I’ve had both COVID vaccines first one at the GP then the second at a site. Curious of when I will get my booster.”*
- *“They kept well to the hygiene rules. I was distressed as I don’t like needles, but excellent service and friendly staff.”*
- *“Excellent standard of cleaning. Offered hand sanitizer at the door. Everything explained in full and given information to take home.”*
- *“Excellent, friendly staff.”*
- *“Went for the COVID vaccine and felt things were explained clearly and there was excellent cleaning.”*

## Flu Vaccines

Comments on Flu Vaccines included:

- *“I’m waiting an appointment.”*
- *“I’m waiting to be contacted.”*
- *“Still haven’t been invited for a flu vaccine but I’m sure it will be within the next month or two and hope it will be with the COVID booster.”*
- Someone told us they got a text for booking their flu vaccine, the individuals clicked the link within 24 hours and were informed there was no more availability for the flu jab. They’re not happy with this as they are both vulnerable



## Transport

Comments on Transport included:

- Someone told us that they think the online way of GPs helps reduce the need of going to Doctors and having to deal with the bus. As transport isn’t great.
- *“Due to having Parkinson’s I had to sell my car, I now now rely on public transport. I find the buses in Winsford difficult as they are not very regular resulting in having to get to appointments significantly earlier. The buses are also quite old.”*

Healthwatch Cheshire continues to provide up to date information to partners and publish reports on our websites. You can read our reports on what people across Cheshire have told us about their experiences by visiting our website:

[www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk)

**You can contact us on:**

- **Tel:** 0300 323 0006
- **Email:** [info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk)
- **Facebook and Twitter:** @HealthwatchCW and @HealthwatchCE
- **Post:** Healthwatch Cheshire CIC, Sension House, Denton Drive, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7LU