



# CHECK INS

**FEBRUARY–APRIL 2022**

This document gives information about the “Check In” engagement work carried out by Healthwatch Leeds and provides a summary of what we heard from people in Leeds from February to April 2022.



The real time information was used by health and care leaders to shape responses to the pandemic and plan future health and care across Leeds.

In 2022, we decided to relaunch the Check Ins, as they had been such a useful way of feeding real-time information about people's experiences into the wider system.

**WHY WE DID IT:**

We knew due to the pandemic people's appointments, tests and treatments had been delayed so we wanted to explore this further.

**February– April  
2022**

During the pandemic, we collated insight under the brand #WeeklyCheckins.

The weekly Check Ins gave people in Leeds an opportunity to share their views on a number of health and care related topics.

**OUR FOCUS FOR THIS CHECK IN:**

We listened to people's experiences of delays in appointments, tests and treatments and how this has impacted their health and well being.



**In total we engaged with :**

**234  
people**



**162 people in  
13 community  
groups**



**69 people  
responded  
to our online  
survey**



**3 organisation  
feedback**



An approach to listening to people living and working in Leeds about health, care, and what matters to them.



You can get involved with check-ins by completing online surveys; calling us; inviting us to one of your groups or promoting/circulating.

Check Ins aim to support the community by bringing their voices and experiences to health and care decision makers.



We Check In online, out on communities and with health and care staff.

## WHAT IS A CHECK IN?

We regularly gather views on a health or care topic. If the topics do not apply to a group, we will listen to wider health experiences.



To keep involved or find out about updates, sign up to our e-bulletin, visit our website or stay in touch with your group.

# LISTENING ONLINE: SURVEY FINDINGS

**A total of 69 people filled in our survey**

The survey mainly asked closed questions around the theme of delayed treatment and had 69 respondents. It was co-designed with health and care commissioners.



## WHAT WERE THE KEY FINDINGS?

### Places where treatment or check-ups have been delayed...

Hospital: 25 people  
GP: 15 people  
Dentist: 8 people  
Mental health services: 7 people  
Community Care: 7 people  
Other: 7 people

### Reasons given for delay in treatment...

Disruption due to covid: 29 people  
reason not given: 28 people  
Staff shortages: 8 people  
Lack of staff with specialist knowledge: 4 people

### Types of care people are waiting for...

An appointment or check-up: 28 people  
A specific treatment: 20 people  
Has been seen but there was a delay: 12 people  
Waiting for a test: 9 people

### How delays have impacted peoples health and wellbeing...

It's not had an impact: 3 people  
Condition has got worse, but found ways to cope: 19 people  
Condition has got worse, and have struggled to cope: 36 people  
The condition has become untreatable or terminal: 1 person  
Have been unable to work and lost job: 6 people  
Financial impact: 7 people  
Emotional wellbeing: 36 people  
Affected my family/friends: 9 people



### Information people would have liked to have received to make waiting easier for them

Information about how long they would be waiting.

"Any communication would be helpful and reassuring".

"To know my treatment hasn't been forgotten about even if I had simply to wait in the queue."

Information about how they can look after themselves or what they should do while they waited.

Reasons why their treatment was delayed and what to do in a medical emergency.

### Not kept informed about delays

55 people out of 69 said they were not kept informed by the service about how long they can expect to wait.

### What people have done to try manage their condition while they wait

"I paid £1 per minute for physiotherapy at home. I could not afford to carry on with the treatment."

Others considered going private, "the cost is estimated £1350 [dentistry]. Where is the NHS here?"

### People also paid for:

Private treatment  
Counselling  
Herbal remedies  
Homeopathy



# LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

**We listened to 162 people in 13 groups**

People who shared their experiences were from diverse ethnic backgrounds and age groups. They included carers; older people; people with a mental health condition; people with a long-term condition or sight, hearing, mobility, and physical impairments; people with English as their second language; people with learning disabilities and autistic people.



## 1 Leeds Refugee Forum

Provides a safe space where refugees can meet and find mutual support.

## Leeds Refugee Forum

There were concerns about the lack of translation and interpreting services. Some found it difficult to register with a GP and 24 people were looking to register with an NHS dentist due to long waiting lists and a lack of interpreters.

## 2 One Formation

Works across generations, cultures and ethnicities to bring together people

## One Formation

Racism was a concern for this group: "We are constantly singled out by the way we look; we know who we are but we have developed resilience at an early age to cope with being a minority".

## 3 Health For All

A group that provides opportunities for the community, especially children and young people.

## Health For All

Alongside concerns around digital exclusion and health appointments, many were struggling to book a GP appointment due to a lack of interpreters.





**4** **ZEST**  
Provides a variety of activities to improve life chances by promoting healthier lifestyles and enabling fulfilling lives.

**5** **People in Action**  
Improving the lives of people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

**6** **Different Strokes Leeds**  
Helps stroke survivors and their families to reclaim their lives through active peer support.



**ZEST**  
The men's group at Zest found it difficult to access mental health services, specifically where to go and whom to contact. They couldn't get an appointment with the GP to discuss their options regarding mental health.

**People in Action**  
Members of the arts and crafts group were happy to be going out again. They had not had any trouble arranging health check-ups but did struggle to understand pandemic related information.

**Different Strokes Leeds**  
There were concerns about missed opportunities for early diagnosis and were disappointed by the lack of NHS aftercare. Insufficient communication left people "worried sick".

7

### Leep 1

Offers a wide range of activities for people with learning disabilities.

8

### BAME Hub

Supporting health, well-being and happiness for older people from the BAME community.

9

### Sunshine & Smiles

A parent-led charity that helps children and young people by providing group, family, and individual support.

### Leep 1

3 out of 12 people said that they had no problems making an appointment or using technology as they are supported by a carer.

### BAME Hub

Alongside concerns around digital exclusion and health appointments, many were struggling to book a GP appointment due to a lack of interpreters and receptionist staff attitude.

### Sunshine & Smiles

Regular reviews, tests, and treatments are important for children with Down Syndrome. Disruptions to routine appointments caused anxiety and further health conditions for some children.



### **Barriers to accessing health care**

Many people have had to have their appointments over the phone or by video call - some found this difficult.

"I spoke to the receptionist about a face-to-face appointment, she said get used to it over the phone and video calling is the new way" (3).

There were other difficulties related to booking appointments due to a lack of interpreters.

"It always was difficult to book an interpreter and now we are not given that option" (3).

Online appointments were not always effective for everyone - one person said a video call with their GP left them feeling frustrated as the call disconnected three times.

### **Insufficient NHS long term aftercare**

People felt as though waiting lists were too long and therefore they were not getting the appropriate care.

"I could no longer wait on the NHS waiting list so paid for physio sessions" (6)

They could not continue due to costs.

Two people said it was important that carers are recognised for what they do.

"They are saving the system money and should not be taken for granted" (6).

### **Issues surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine**

Uncertainty about the risks of COVID during pregnancy forced one woman to go private for a vaccine. Another woman said:

"Misinformation about vaccination during my pregnancy deterred me from getting the vaccine" (1).

Some people initially found it hard to access the vaccine and had to travel quite far in order to get it.

"I got a bus to the city centre then out"(4).

# Your healthwatch Leeds

## Next Steps

The findings from this check-in will feed directly into the Planned Care Board as well as health and care planning groups as appropriate.

## Thank you!

We extend our thanks to the members of the public, organisations and groups for giving their time to take part in the check-ins and for completing the survey.

