

Welcome to our engagement update for November. Read on for more information about what we're currently focusing on, what we have been hearing, updates, and our project work.

Speaking to the Community

In the past three months our engagement officers have visited a range of groups around Derbyshire to listen to feedback about health and care services. We have had 48% negative comments, and 27% positive. All other comments were neutral or mixed.

Our engagement officers have done a mix of general **engagement** and **spoken to specific groups**. These include groups supporting people with dementia, mental health conditions, and those who struggle with financial inequalities. We have also spoken to people with learning disabilities, long-term conditions, people with sight loss, and neurodiverse people.

The areas we visited the most were Erewash, Chesterfield, Amber Valley, and South Derbyshire. Next quarter we will visit Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Bolsover, and North-East Derbyshire.

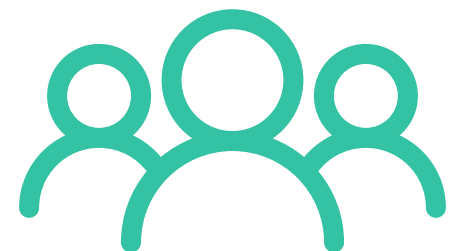


What are we hearing about?

GP and dental access

Problems accessing a GP or a dentists are things we continue to hear about in our engagement work. We continue to share this feedback with Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The themes that have been coming up the most around **GP access** is **communication** between patients and the GP practice. This has mostly been around **explaining treatments** and verbal advice given to patients. Also, follow-on treatment and continuity of care.



Many people are telling us they are **phoning 111** due to being unable to access a GP.

It's considered that many GP practices are going "digital by default". This means that people who can't access digital technology are **struggling to get an appointment** at their GP surgery.

Waiting times

In both health and social care, the concern we are hearing the most about is **waiting times**. Feedback from the public spoke about a lack of **communication** when waiting for care. This includes phone calls, appointments, and planned treatment. One member of the public stated, "I don't know how I will cope for another 18 months."

We have been signposting and giving information and advice on **waiting well**. We are hearing about hospital waiting times for rheumatology, pulmonary rehab, dermatology, and ophthalmology. We are also hearing from Healthwatch England, as well as locally, about assessment waiting times for autism and ADHD. We've also been told about long wait times for CAMHS support for children and young people.

Pharmacy

Pharmacy is a subject that has started to come up more often. With people struggling to access GP services, many people are **relying on pharmacies** more. Local people have told us about reduced number of staff and no regular pharmacists. We've also heard about issues with communication between GPs and pharmacies and the **closure of pharmacies** in rural areas.

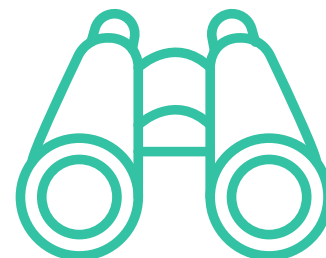
Support for people with additional needs

Support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism has been a subject that has become more frequent in the past year. Many carers have said they are **struggling** to find **respite** and that there is a **lack of appropriate support**.

We have also had feedback about delays for **wheelchair fittings** and getting the correct mobility equipment. This is something that we will be asking the public more about in future, as well as reasonable adjustments for people with hearing loss.

Enter and View

Our Enter and View Officer, Lisa, and our volunteers will be **visiting three** Derbyshire County Council care homes over the next few months. Reports will be published in early 2024.



Dental Project

November is the last time our Engagement Officer, Helen, and our volunteers review the NHS Find a Dentist website. We have been regularly checking this website to make sure it is kept up to date on which dentists are accepting NHS patients.



The contract is now with the Integrated Care Board which will oversee this in greater detail.

Our research on the NHS Find a Dentist website has been shared with the primary care commissioning team at JUCD. This will **inform conversations** they are having regionally about making sure the NHS Find a Dentist website is up to date. Our project has meant that they know where the **patterns and hotspots** are across Derbyshire. We will be writing a report on the past two years' worth of data we have collected.

Inpatient Mental Health Support

We continue our quarterly engagement visits to the inpatient units and will be visiting again next quarter.

Hospital Discharge

Our hospital discharge report is now available on our website. It's also available on Healthwatch England's website, and the Patient and Public Insight Library. Some of our **recommendations** in the report have already been started to be **implemented** by the hospitals. Our volunteers are also coproducing a welcome booklet.



Volunteering

Our volunteers are continuing their **hard work promoting** Healthwatch Derbyshire. One way they've been doing this is by giving presentations around Derbyshire.

The work our volunteers have done with the asylum seeker community has meant that a QR code with multiple languages is now available in the Serco hotels that accommodate **30,000 people**. Our volunteers will be reviewing the **impact** of this in the coming months.



New Staff

We have **two new staff** members who started with us on the 6th of November as Engagement Officers.

We **welcome** Kath Dawson who has moved over from Mental Health Together, and Abi Stott-Marshall who is new to the team.

