

Welcome to our engagement update bulletin. Read on for more information about what we have been hearing and what we are currently focusing on across Derbyshire's health and social care services.

Speaking with the community

Over the last quarter, our four engagement officers have connected with diverse groups of people, including those with learning disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people experiencing financial hardship.



Alongside our regular community engagement work, we have been working on four other projects:

- Understanding the views on smoking from people living in housing association homes
- Gaining the views of staff working with under 5-year-olds on providing flu vaccine information
- Views and experiences of cervical screening (smear tests)
- Enter & View visits - Sexual Health Services.

We had 221 comments about 98 different organisations this quarter.

This was a big increase in comments since the last quarter due to Healthwatch England's campaign called "Share your Care," which they shared on social media. This gave us lots of additional comments from people living in Derbyshire, whom we potentially wouldn't otherwise have reached.

These comments were:

- 20% positive
- 60% negative
- 14% mixed
- 6% neutral.

The top service categories were:

- General Practice (GP)
- Mental Health
- Dentistry
- A&E.

The top themes were:

- Access to services
- Communication
- Quality of treatment
- Booking appointments.

What are we hearing about?

We heard about a wide variety of services this quarter. Below is an explanation of which services came under our top themes:

Access to services

- Dentistry – There is still an ongoing struggle to access NHS dentistry all over Derbyshire, with many people being forced to pay for private care or going to A&E
- Mental Health – People are speaking to us about waiting for Child & Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and adult services
- GP surgeries – Many positive experiences of staff being helpful and kind. However, there are still some access barriers with people speaking about remote appointments and how technology could be better used.

We spoke to people in full-time employment who said that they felt all GP surgeries need “huge improvements” to create better access and easier appointment booking systems for people who work outside of standard working hours.

They want to be able to quickly ask questions online, get their tests results this way and feel patients need to be persistent to get what they need.

A group of men we spoke to said they find the NHS app helpful for booking appointments, requesting prescriptions and medical records. However,

they also said that the services offered through the app were different between surgeries.

Communication

We regularly hear about poor explanations and follow-up treatment across many services. However, there are also many examples of clear communication, especially from GP surgeries and pharmacies.

Quality of treatment

Some people spoke about negative experiences of A&E and mental health services. However, there were many positive comments about staff members. To highlight one from a patient using the gastroenterology (disorders affecting the digestive system) department at Chesterfield:



“The doctor always provides an excellent service and always goes above and beyond.”



Corridor care

We have heard about some patients experiencing corridor care at hospital. Meaning when the ambulance arrives with a patient there are no beds in wards available for that patient. One person told us:



“... she [my mum] was promptly assessed but it was busy and due to the lack of available beds she was placed in the corridor with at least five other patients.”



We know that there are national issues with waiting times in A&E. It's clear that there is still a lack of available beds for patients.

Waiting and waiting well

The word we are hearing the most is “waiting”. Many of the comments we have received tell us about the lack of communication whilst patients are waiting.

Sometimes patients get communication through the NHS app, but not consistently. Information about how to “wait well” could be helpful to many patients.

 “I was referred to ENT [Ear, Nose & Throat] last August and still haven’t had an appointment yet – six months later. It’s still live and appears on my NHS app so I know it’s there.” 

Chesterfield Royal Hospital

The positive comments were about surgery and A&E. One person spoke about taking her daughter to A&E:

 “... we were impressed by the speed of the service; it was 45 minutes in total and there were clear instructions from the technician regarding the care required ...” 

The negative comments were about mental health, waiting, inpatient care and ENT. However, people did speak about “efficient, compassionate caring staff attitudes”.

University Hospitals of Derby & Burton (UHDB)

We have had some positive comments about inpatient care, food services and cancer services:

 “The hospital staff in the day case unit where my husband attends chemotherapy are brilliant. They have really supported us both during a tough time ...” 

We had a few negative comments about waiting for scan test results:

 “Both my sister and husband have had to wait so long to get scan results. It is both mentally and physically draining to have to wait weeks for the results.” 

Cervical Screening Survey

We did a cervical screening survey throughout January–April with Healthwatch Derby. This included interviews with people experiencing other related health conditions.



We are currently writing this report, and it will be published soon.

People who smoke and live in housing association homes

Between February and March 2025, we collected the views and experiences of 31 residents of housing association homes. This information was collected to influence the social media and advertising stop smoking campaign that's due to go out in summer 2025.



We found that most people are persuaded by advertising that focuses on their physical health with smoking, as well as the money-saving benefits.

Read the full report here: [Views on smoking from people living in housing association homes](#)

Staff working with under 5-year-olds on providing flu vaccine information

Between December and February, we collected the views of 115 people working or volunteering with children under five years old about toddler flu vaccinations. We did this as a survey, alongside 11 semi-structured interviews.

We heard from a variety of people in paid and unpaid roles in health, education, family support and childcare.

Although 31% of people we spoke to said they were “extremely confident” or “very confident” in giving vaccine information to parents. 37% were “not so confident” or “not confident at all.”

Read the full report here: [The views of staff working with under 5-year-olds in providing flu vaccine information](#)

Enter and View visits

Sexual Health Services

We visited two sexual health services in February. The visits included Wheatbridge Health Village and the Sexual Health Outreach Van.



Overall patients, parents and carers shared positive experiences of both. However, there were some accessibility adjustments that could be made to improve the service. This report is due to be published soon.

Gresleydale Health Care Centre

We visited Gresleydale Health Care Centre in March. Overall, this was a positive visit.

However, there were some services that could be better advertised that were less known by patients of Gresleydale, such as their extended hours clinics.

There was also some access and accessibility adjustments that could be made to improve the service.

The full report will be published soon.

Inpatient Mental Health

We are planning our visits for the coming year to the mental health units in Derbyshire.



Volunteering

Thank you to our volunteers who are busy putting up posters throughout the county and telling us about what their communities are concerned about.

Thank you to our student volunteers who have contributed to the analysis of the surveys.

