

Welcome to our quarterly engagement update bulletin for April – June 2026.

Read on for more information about what we have been hearing and what we are currently working on across Derbyshire's health and social care services.

Speaking with the community

Over the last quarter, our engagement officers have been in contact with diverse groups of people. These include:

- People with dementia
- People experiencing financial hardship
- People with learning disabilities
- People experiencing poor mental health.



Thank you to those who have invited us to visit their organisations and groups throughout Derbyshire.

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

- Understanding the experiences of people who use wheelchairs and their carers when using the Derbyshire wheelchair services
- Understanding if people have heard of 'self-referral' services and what their experiences have been of using them
- Enter and View visit to the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Department at Chesterfield Royal Hospital.

This quarter we have had 108 comments about 49 different organisations.

During April – June this year, we heard from people living in each area of Derbyshire, apart from South Derbyshire.

From this feedback we had:

- 32 positive comments
- 60 negative comments
- 16 mixed or neutral comments.

The top three themes were:

- Access to services
- Accessibility and reasonable adjustments
- Quality of treatment.

What are we hearing about?

We have heard about different services. Below are some of the top themes that we have heard about:

Access to services

This was our top theme. We had both positive and negative feedback.

We mostly heard about the quality of treatment received from both mental health services and GP services.

Seven comments for this theme were about mental health services. These comments were negative.

People told us about the following experiences:

- The negative impact that the removal of the dedicated mental health helpline will have for patients
- Long waiting times for psychiatrist appointments
- Lack of support for neurodiverse people in mental health services.

Four comments for this theme were about GP services. Three of these comments were positive, and one was negative.



The positive comments were about GPs making referrals and it being easy to book an appointment.

The negative comment was about a lack of communication between a GP practice and a carer.

For this theme, we also heard about the following services:

- Adult Social Care
- Dementia services
- Dentists
- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)
- NHS 111
- Paediatric care
- Wheelchair services.

Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

This quarter, we have had both positive and negative feedback about this theme.

The feedback relates to nine different types of services, including:

- Dentists
- GPs
- Mental health services
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedics
- Pharmacy.



One person who has autism told us that they have had a positive experience when visiting their dentist.

However, they suggested that this could be improved if their dentist wore a clear face mask.

For the person, being able to see the dentist's full face is important for this person to 'read' the dentist's tone.

Another person, who is deaf, told us that it would have been helpful for their dentist to wear a clear mask so they could lip read.

Quality of Treatment

This quarter, most of the feedback we have received about this theme was positive. The services we have heard about for this theme include:

- Community Mental Health
- GPs
- NHS 111
- Optometry
- Pharmacy.



The positive GP comments were about GP surgery staff being helpful and 'very attentive and friendly'. These comments were about two different GP practices.

We received some positive feedback about the Community Mental Health Team:



"The crisis team was brilliant, and they placed me under a psychologist led service.

"As soon as I was out of 'crisis' I was able to start engaging in therapy once a week and was offered support to help me regain some daily living skills ...

"A year on, I do not require any medication at all, and I feel brighter and more optimistic about life than I have for many, many years.

"The only improvement would be to increase funding so that the service can help more people and families, rather than being limited to strict service access criteria."



We also received some negative comments about mental health services. One of these comments was about mental health support available for people who are neurodivergent.

The two pharmacy comments that we received for this theme were positive.

Chesterfield Royal Hospital

Chesterfield Royal Hospital is the organisation that we have heard the most about this quarter.

The feedback we received was mainly negative and about a range of different services at the hospital.

Some people told us that they had experienced very long waits for appointments:



“I have just had an (outpatients) appointment and had to wait 1.5 hours. The waiting room was packed. Some people had nowhere to sit.”



One person told us that they are seen at both Chesterfield Royal Hospital and Sheffield Hallamshire Hospital for their medical condition. They would like it if the computer systems at the two hospitals could, ‘talk to each other better’.

This would make arranging and confirming appointments easier.

We received two comments about Chesterfield Royal Hospital that were positive.

One of these positive comments was about accessibility and reasonable adjustments.

This patient is registered blind and he told us that the ward team cared for him well. They learnt as they went along, as they hadn’t cared for someone who was visually impaired before.

This patient's details have been shared with the Patient Experience Team so he can share his experiences and help to improve accessibility across the hospital.

This person told us that he:



University Hospitals of Derby & Burton (UHDB).

The feedback we received about UHDB, which includes Royal Derby Hospital in Derby and Queen's Hospital in Burton, was a mixture of both positive and negative comments.

This feedback was about a range of different services at the hospital sites.



We have received positive feedback about the Royal Derby Hospital's volunteer team.

One person told us that they were greeted by a volunteer when arriving at the main reception and they pointed them in the right direction for Pride Pharmacy.

They were approached by another volunteer at the Kings Treatment Centre who showed them the way to the pharmacy.

This person asked for their thanks to be passed to the volunteers.

The negative feedback received about UHDB was about:

- Communication with patients and their carers about waiting times for appointments
- Procedures being cancelled with short notice
- Waiting times at A&E
- Waiting times for ophthalmology.

A carer told us about trying to get information about an upcoming appointment for the person that they care for.

They had tried to contact audiology multiple times and were unable to speak to anyone. When they did speak to audiology, they felt that they were dismissed by the team.

Another person told us about their experience of their surgery being cancelled during the pre-operative assessment. They told us:



“As an autistic patient, sudden changes and uncertainty are particularly difficult for me to process. The experience caused significant stress and has damaged my confidence in the care pathway.

“I cannot fault the nursing staff and wider hospital team, who treated me with kindness and professionalism throughout.

“Providing clearer explanations earlier in the process and giving patients realistic expectations about the likelihood of the surgery proceeding [could help patients].

“[Also] ensuring consultants fully review previous correspondence and recommendations before pre-op appointments could help prevent unnecessary emotional distress and avoid wasting NHS time and resources.”



The feedback we have received has been shared with the Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS) department.

Annual Report

In this quarter we published our annual report.

In 2025/26:

- 508 people shared their experiences of health and social care with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care
- 1,325 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as how to access advocacy services, how to access support from GP practices and finding an NHS dentist
- 13 reports were published
- Three Enter and View visits were completed.

Our annual report can be found [here](#).

Experiences of using wheelchair services in Derbyshire

This quarter, we have been asking people about their experiences of using wheelchair services.

In Derbyshire, the wheelchair service is provided by Blatchford.



We heard from 92 people through an online survey. We wanted to understand:

- What type of appointments people have had
- How satisfied they are with the service
- How well they have been kept informed by Blatchford.

We are currently looking at the responses to the survey. We will be writing a report with our findings, and this will be published soon.

Live survey: Self-referral services

During this summer, our engagement team will be attending summer fayres, college freshers' fairs and community groups to ask people about their experiences of self-referral services.

Self-referral services are services that people can access without a referral from a health professional (GP, consultant, etc).



We will be:

- Raising awareness of some of the self-referral services that we tell people about most often
- Finding out if people have used any of these services and what their experience was like
- Finding out how people would like to get information about these services.

The survey will be open until 31st October 2026 and can be found [here](#).

Enter and View visits

Ear Nose and Throat Department (ENT) at Chesterfield Royal Hospital



We visited the ENT department at Chesterfield Royal Hospital in April 2026.

The feedback from this visit was mixed, but the main things people told us that could be improved were:

- Better signage to make finding the ENT department from the main reception easier
- The ease of using the ENT website
- Waiting times for appointments.

We have shared our recommendations with the matron of the ENT department.

Once we have received their response to our recommendations, the report will be finalised and published.

Derbyshire Wheelchair Services

Derbyshire Wheelchair Services are provided by Blatchford from two sites in Derbyshire. One site is in Derby, and the other site is in Barlborough.

We have visited both sites.

We are currently writing a report which will include recommendations. These recommendations are based on what people told us during the visit about how they felt the service could be improved.

These recommendations will be shared with the service soon.

Pride Pharmacy

We are continuing to talk to UHDB and Pride Pharmacy about how the recommendations from our Enter and View visit in November 2025 can be implemented.

Future visits

We are currently talking to Chesterfield Royal Hospital about more Enter and View visits in the future.

Inpatient Mental Health

Earlier this year, our engagement officers visited the Radbourne Unit (Royal Derby Hospital), Carsington Unit (Kingsway Hospital) and Derwent Unit (Chesterfield Royal Hospital). The feedback from these visits has been shared with the units.



We are planning to visit the inpatient mental health units again in Autumn/Winter 2026.

Volunteering

Thank you to our volunteers who are busy looking at our surveys, supporting us with data analysis and telling us what their communities are concerned about.

They have also supported our engagement team by attending engagement events.

Our volunteers have also played an important part in our Enter and View visits.

