healthwatch Cheshire West

healthwatch Cheshire East

Healthwatch Across Cheshire
Frodsham, Helsby and Elton
September - November 2021





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, Dodleston, Kinnerton)
- Ellesmere Port
- Frodsham, Helsby and Elton
- Neston and Willaston
- Northwich
- Rural (Tarporley, 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
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 and 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:



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
Cheshire East Total**	**23**	**550**	**360**

Cheshire East** - 9 venues were cancelled





Healthwatch Across Cheshire

Visiting every community in Cheshire

20 September–19 November 2021



healthwatch Cheshire West

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 (Tarporley, Malpas, Ashton, Farndon, Tattenhall, Kelsall, and Tarvin)	5	87	53
Winsford	2	60	24
Cheshire West Total*	**27**	**640**	**335**

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

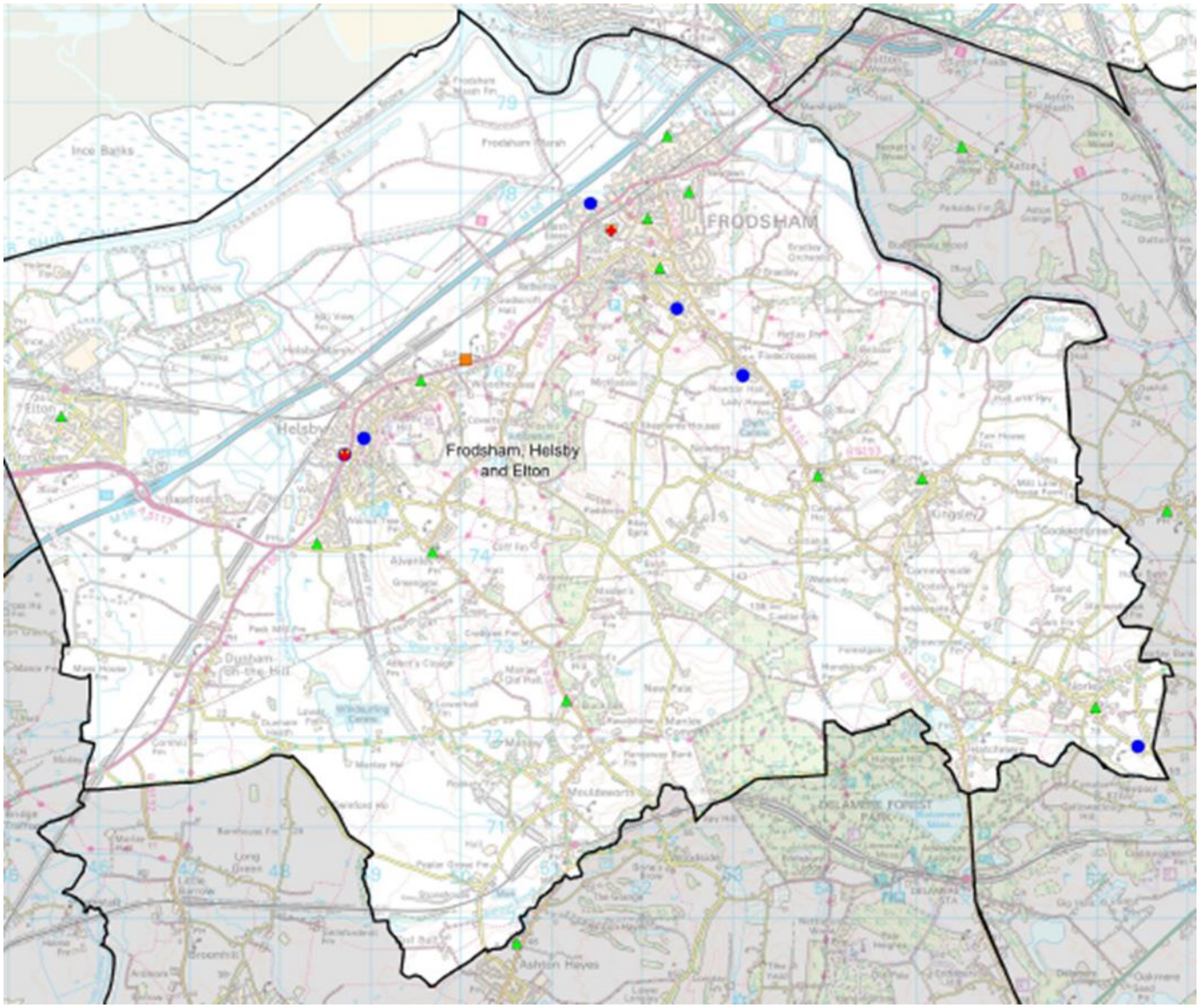
Throughout our Healthwatch Across Cheshire activity, everything that people have told us has been continually fed back anonymously on a weekly basis to those who plan, make decisions, and deliver health and care services, to help improve people's experiences for the future. We provided updates on the 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 provides the findings from our visits to locations in the Frodsham, Helsby and Elton Care Community. Reports from all other Care Communities can be found on our website at www.healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports/

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 76th 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 2nd 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 1st 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 2nd 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 jab 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."*

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

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