

Scrutiny feedback December 2020

Since March 2020 all face to face methods of public, patient and service user engagement ceased and all staff began to work from home. As a result alternative ways of working began in order to allow us continue to listen to members of the public and promote and provide our information and signposting service. This has included:

Public engagement/awareness raising

- **Regular virtual sessions with seldom heard groups** – these sessions help us to maintain regular contact with groups such as; Sunderland People First, Essence Service, Headway Wearside, BAME community groups etc. to listen to and collate their feedback and answer their questions.
- **Attendance at VCS events and coffee mornings** – these provide us with the opportunity to network and promote our service.
- **Regular contact with key groups across the VCS** - this is an alternative way for us to reach people and collect feedback. We have regular contact with those groups who are still provided virtual or face to face provision to their service users who are passing on any concerns, questions or feedback on behalf of their staff and service users.
- **Awareness raising campaigns** – we are beginning to establish week long campaigns around key health and social care areas. This has included to date a range of events including our recent self-care campaign that was aimed at groups and the general public.

Newsletter/social media/website - we have adapted our e-newsletter and produced shorter more frequent editions to keep up with changing environment and worked on increasing our social media presence. Both our Twitter and Facebook have seen increase in followers - about 50 on each platform - we use these regularly to communicate key messages and information.

Our website is also seeing far more activity than ever with 3,000 hits on average per month – with our focussed COVID-19 pages and Care Home Life proving very popular. <https://www.healthwatchsunderland.com/coronavirus-links>

BAME Community work

In response to feedback we have begun closer working with the BAME community following. We now have regular contact with the community, collecting their feedback on services and linking them up with a range of services available to them locally. Again this work is having a positive impact, for example we recently collected feedback from a listening session with the Bangladeshi and international Centre, brought to our attention that some communities are likely to be unintentionally excluded from current COVID-19 and Flu communications, and that some messages were not being well understood. We communicated this to the CCG who responded

and have now allocated funds to target BAME communities around COVID-19 and flu communications.

COVID-19 experience survey

During the month of June we undertook a piece of work that looked at people's general experiences of using health and social care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. We collected data from 714 respondents who completed a survey during which was collated in to 5 findings reports.

These reports and findings were well received and key service providers are now incorporating the findings in their future delivery plans.

<http://www.healthwatchesunderland.com/healthwatch-sunderland-consultations-reports>

CCG Mental health strategy - from November to January we are supporting the CCG with their engagement work linked to the development of their new Adult Mental Health strategy for the city. We have been making the public aware of the opportunity to contribute to the development of the strategy by sharing the survey and we will also be delivering focus groups with VCS groups.

Links to Care homes

As we are unable to carry out our usual visits to care homes we have been looking at alternative links and established two pieces of work.

- Care home use of social media

Three volunteers have looked at how our care homes in Sunderland have utilised social media platforms as one way to interact and stay connected with friends, families and the wider community during this time. The short document outlines what our volunteers found and shares some of the good practice they noted.

- Connection care homes to their community

We received feedback from staff of care homes and family of their residents who were looking for ways to keep residents connected to their local community whilst restrictions were in place. We carried out a piece of research through our information and signposting function and have created a document collating this information which was disseminated to all care homes and supported accommodation.

Local Authority/Care and Support working group

We are participating in a working group that is reviewing the service that provides assistive technology in the home. Utilising some of our volunteers who have all had/have caring responsibilities we have been able to ensure that potential users of the service have had opportunity to influence the design of the work.