

Public Feedback about NHS services during the Coronavirus

Issue 4

August 2020

National Survey

As your independent NHS watchdog, CHCs across Wales want to continue to play a vital part in reflecting people's views and representing your interests in the NHS at this critical time.

Your feedback will help make a difference.

We will share with the NHS what people and local communities are telling us. This is so the NHS can see what people think is working well and take action to make care better where this is needed - as quickly as it is possible to do so. Please give us your NHS feedback by taking survey here:

<https://tas.survey-me.com/take-a-survey/6mp1r>

This is what you told us about in August 2020

Eighty people contacted us in August to share their views and recent experiences with NHS Services

Things that could have been better

- A number of people raised concern for paused routine services. Many people told us about ongoing communication issues with their teams and a lack of "keeping in touch" during the pandemic. Some raised issue that conditions had deteriorated and felt let down. Services mentioned include; Vascular, Orthopaedics, Diabetes, Dentistry and Cancer (including Screening Services).

Useful links about the Coronavirus:

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board - guidance on service changes:
<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/coronavirus/guidance-and-changes-to-individual-healthcare-services-and-divisions/>

Welsh Government – guidance:

<https://gov.wales/staying-home-and-away-others-guidance>





Things that could have been better

- The closure of Senghenydd Health Centre (branch of Nant Gawr Road Health Centre) was raised by a number of people who said that travelling further to see a GP or primary care professional was harder due to bus journeys or lack of access to transport for the elderly. Many people felt the surgery should re-open to improve access to local health care.
- A number of people weren't satisfied with or were unsure about the virtual or telephone appointments system for primary or secondary care, one person cited a "fear of technology" and others highlighted that vulnerable people and those less able with digital technology should still have to option of a face to face appointment. A number of people said they were unable to make a determination on the usefulness of virtual appointments yet as they wanted more information about what it is and how it works. Many felt the system would need to be user-friendly.
- One person wrote to us about the discharge arrangements for an elderly relative, they did not live close by and their relative was planned to be discharge home but alone. The elderly patient was re-admitted to a community hospital a few days later. The relative feels that the right package of care was not in place.
- One person wrote to us to share her experiences following an abnormal smear test result in January 2020 and that appointments to follow up on this had been booked but then cancelled due to the pandemic. The lady stated she has since been discharged because of "missed appointments" but she states these were cancelled by the hospital.
- Two people told us that they felt very isolated whilst pregnant due to a lack of ante-natal classes to gain peer support and information on caring for a new-born. One lady found the Maternity Facebook page very helpful but that support offered there was from other service users and they felt it was difficult to contact staff directly for clarity.
- Many people wrote to us to say they were concerned about access to the Flu vaccine. Many people were keen to see information as early as possible about this year's flu programme and feel it should be started sooner and available more widely.



The positives

- Many people reported the ease of access to GP consultations and the quick treatment that followed. Some of these experiences were attributed to face to face appointments and some via telephone appointment.
 - We received some very positive comments from people about the care offered from the maternity service, with the service at Nevill Hall hospital receiving praise.
 - A number of people told us about their experiences when attending either a GP surgery or hospital site for a face to face appointment. Generally, people were impressed with the COVID distancing measures and the organisation of entry to keep people safe. One person did however suggest, that for hospital appointments, it would have been helpful if their appointment letter explained some of the distancing measures and clinic locations so they knew what to expect from the staff greeting them upon arrival.
 - We heard from a number of people who offered praise for the on-going cancer care they were receiving. People offered their thanks for the continuity of their cancer services from Velindre, Dermatology and Breast services.
 - A few people told us about their positive experiences of accessing emergency care and A&E services. One person commented on the speed at which investigations were performed for their relative in A&E at the Royal Gwent Hospital. They felt the staff on the unit and then later on D2 West were amazing.
 - We heard a very positive story from someone who's elderly relative needed a bone density scan.
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The comments

"Had nothing but great services from GP when I was unwell with covid and I have been to A&E twice and been seen quickly and safely. Had my scans and bowel investigations cancelled before lockdown and no new appointment though." *Newport resident*

"Took my mother who is 81 years old and been shielding since the start of the coronavirus emergency. The staff at the department in Pontypool community hospital were friendly, understanding towards my mother's needs (partly deaf) and caring in the matter she was treated. They clearly explained the new process and listened to her concerns."
Blaenau Gwent resident

"My husband's scan was cancelled and not rescheduled for 4 months. During this time, he had no face to face appointments with his consultant or any doctors at all - the cancer is back and has travelled to the lymph nodes in his neck. Had proper care been provided this could have been detected much earlier. I kept listening to the Health Minister say that the NHS was open for business as usual. I for one would say it wasn't. The care received by my family during lockdown was worse than substandard. Dental care has also been abysmal, leaving a child of 8 years of age in pain for over 4 weeks because no treatment could be provided." *Newport resident*



"Dentist wise shocking, but generally I had good service now undergoing chemotherapy at velindre and I can't thank more if I tried, the service is amazing, just gutted now I have to wait another 9 weeks in pain before my teeth are sorted waste of space NHS dentists." *Area unknown*

"Exemplary! Collecting prescriptions has been straight forward but still very safe. Good that I can still talk to the pharmacist at the surgery. GP appointments have been quicker! A booked phone call first and then a face to face consultation with the same welcome but all in PPE. The Dr and surgery staff ooze confidence." *Monmouthshire resident*

"I have a persistent single cell carcinoma on my hand and required a certain cream to treat it. The GP had a telephone consultation with me and when she said she would like to examine it I went to the surgery. I waited in the car park until I was called in for my appointment by the GP who was in full PPE. She examined me, ordered the prescription which was fulfilled by the in-house dispensary and given to me on the way out. All very smooth and safe." *Monmouthshire resident*



"On two separate occasions I have had infected insect bites, something I have experienced in previous years. A phone call to the surgery, pictures sent by What's app of the bites, phone call by a GP within 30 minutes in one occasion and 90 minutes in the second occasion. Antibiotics prescribed by phone and prescription ready to pick up immediately. Excellent service." *Caerphilly resident*

"Ensured services were flexible for all whilst ensuring safety."
Caerphilly resident

"I have found the doctors have been amazing at adapting and calling me back when needed, the video call option is also very useful. I've actually found the whole process of getting an appointment and a satisfactory outcome easier during lockdown than any other time! Maybe this is because people are not wasting GP time anymore and not going except for emergencies but it has been excellent overall."
Mount Pleasant GP surgery – Monmouthshire resident

"Usk Medical Practice. I tried to book an appointment and was told only telephone consultations were Available, I was happy with that so booked the appointment. The receptionist then called me back to say the doctor would like to see me considering my problem and so made an appointment for that day. When I went to the surgery the whole time I was there I felt very safe with the measures taken to protect me and the surgery staff. Well impressed. I think telephone consultation should remain in place after Covid."
Monmouthshire resident



"It seems to be impossible to actually see a doctor. Sometimes it's fine to do phone consultations but repeatedly needing antibiotics means I should have been examined!"
Newport resident

"Despite my serious reservations and anxiety of attending the RGH Newport and St Woolos Hospitals due to the concurrent covid-19 virus pandemic, the treatment I received by all the NHS staff I encountered was prompt, efficient and professional, the surgery was effective, and the staff friendly and considerate. In particular, I wish to express my special thanks and appreciation to GP Dr Richard Davies for his personal care and attention to my individual medical case." *Monmouthshire resident*

"It was a huge window of time 9.30-12.30 and 2-4pm, have no choice if need to consult a doctor, but very unhappy about the huge window of appointment." *GP telephone appointment – Area unknown*

"The availability of the flu vaccine, and care level. What plans are in place at the moment?"
Blaenau Gwent Resident

"Worried that flu vaccine won't be as easily available as it has been in previous years. Worried that even a GP telephone appointment might be difficult to access. Worried about having to queue outside a pharmacy to collect a prescription in pouring rain or cold winds when I'm already running a temperature." *Monmouthshire resident*



A round up of your feedback

The comments in this bulletin offer a snap shot of the things people told us about. We'd like to thank everyone who wrote to us to share their experiences, this will be used to help the NHS learn from your comments.

To sum up: we heard about the following themes:

- Uncertainty from many about the future of virtual appointments or telephone appointments as more information about the system appears to be needed.
- Many people's confidence in the COVID and distancing measures in place to ensure comfort and safety of people when attending hospital or GP surgery environments.
- Communication needs of people who have experienced paused or postponed services, and who to contact when conditions either deteriorate, pain levels increase or people have worries about their conditions which include chronic conditions and cancer services.
- People appeared keen to understand the plans being made for this year's flu vaccine programme.
- Access issues raised by many registered patients who access Senghenydd Health Centre in Caerphilly.
- A mix of positive and negative experiences with Maternity Care.
- Very complimentary comments about a number of services across primary and secondary care including, A&E/emergency care, Velindre and other cancer services and GP consultations.

Accessible formats

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