

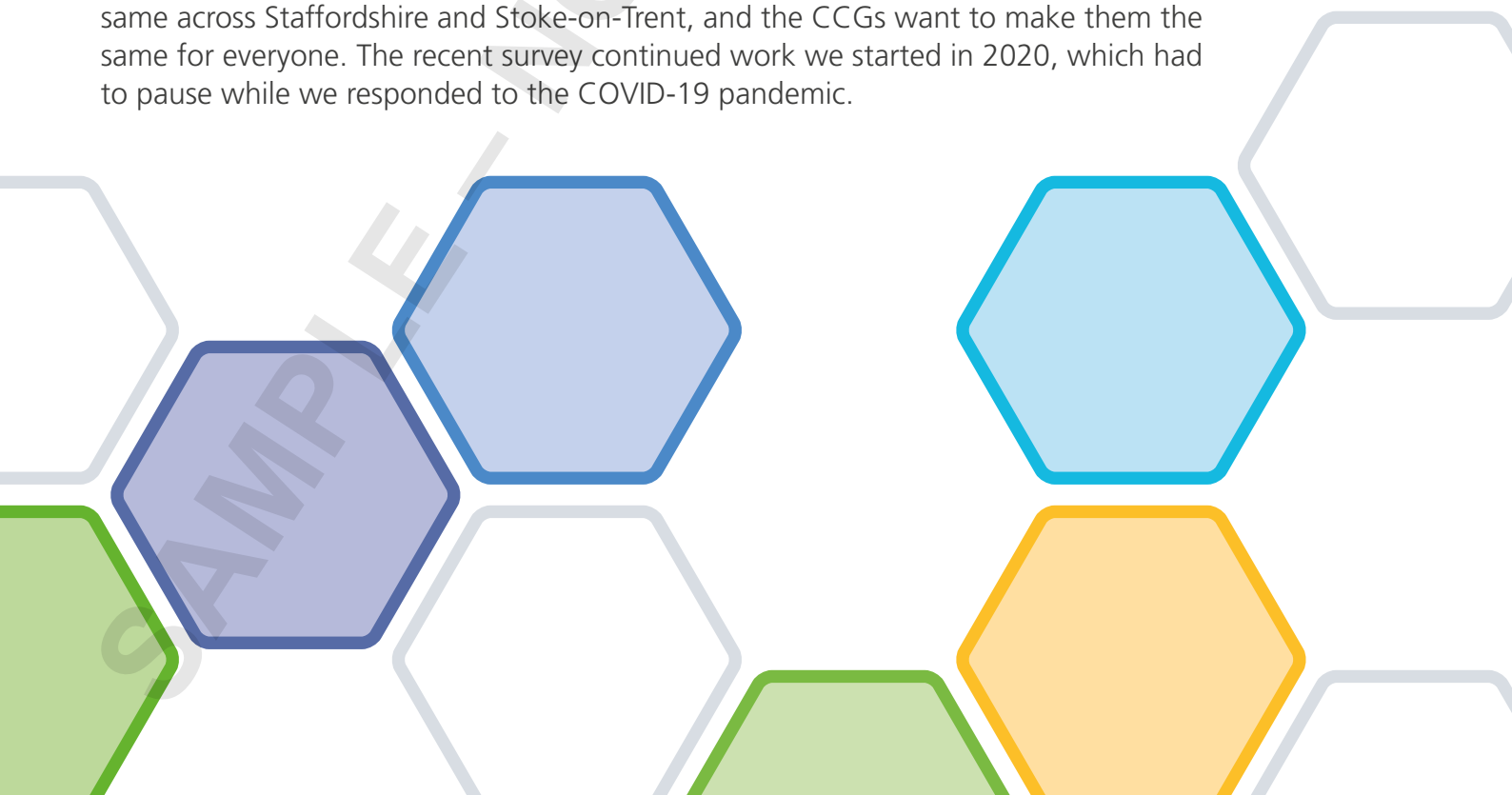
# Difficult Decisions

## a summary of what you told us in 2021

**Between 13 September and 10 October 2021, the six Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) ran a survey about five areas of care.**

- Hearing aids for non-complex hearing loss
- Assisted conception
- Male and female sterilisation
- Breast augmentation and reconstruction
- Removal of excess skin following significant weight loss

The guidelines about which patients are eligible for these procedures are not the same across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and the CCGs want to make them the same for everyone. The recent survey continued work we started in 2020, which had to pause while we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## The work we did in 2020

Between January and March 2020, we carried out a survey and held seven workshop events. We produced a report and summary of the findings, which you can access from the [Together We're Better website](#).

### 2020 survey

**569** responses



### 2020 events

**7** workshops with **56** attending



**2** additional events held with Deafvibe and Action on Hearing Loss



The discussions had to pause while all local health services focused on managing the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. We have now re-started this work, and this summary explains what involvement activity was carried out in 2021.

## 2021 involvement activity

### Why did we carry out another survey?

We ran another survey, in autumn 2021, to help us understand if we need to consider anything new since the pandemic.

We promoted the survey widely, using social media, CCG and local authority websites, and sending emails to stakeholder groups to spread the word.

Because this was a second survey, we advised people not to complete it again if their views hadn't changed or they had nothing further to tell us. Fewer people took part in the second survey than the first.

### 2021 survey

13 September – 10 October 2021

**306** responses



## What you told us in the survey

The answers you gave us were not greatly different to the 2020 survey findings. Many of you said similar things about what had gone well when you used the services, and raised concerns about the same issues.

You can read the full report of findings on the [Together We're Better website](#). Below, you can see the main responses for the five areas.

#### Hearing aids for non-complex hearing loss

- Positive experiences of using the service
- The NHS should fund provision of care and hearing aids
- Service should be available to anyone with hearing loss
- Concern over the impact of hearing loss on patient wellbeing and quality of life.

#### Assisted conception

- Mixed views on funding
- Consistent approach across different areas needed
- Clear criteria for eligibility needed.

#### Male and female sterilisation

- Procedure should be available to anyone who would benefit from it – all respondents agreed
- The costs of pregnancy, strain on social services and costs from population growth are much higher than the cost of this procedure.

#### Breast augmentation and reconstruction

- All respondents agreed with NHS funding of the service for breast cancer patients and clinical reasons
- Eligibility criteria should include those with extremely large breasts, causing back problems
- Procedure should be funded privately for cosmetic reasons.

**Main answers in 2021 survey**

#### Removal of excess skin following significant weight loss

- Mixed views on provision of this procedure
- Most respondents in support of NHS funding this service
- Some respondents felt that this is a cosmetic procedure and should not be funded by the NHS.

# Our reference groups

For the next part of the involvement, we recruited local people to join a reference group. The reference group was made up of patients and members of the public. The group took part in workshops on **4 and 22 March** to review and discuss the different proposals that we are currently developing for the five areas of care.

The reference group gave scores to the proposals, but it is not the body that decides which proposals get taken forward. We are now analysing the information we gathered at the reference group workshops, along with the findings from our surveys and earlier events. We will share what we have learned with our clinicians and managers. This will help them to create a shortlist of proposals from the current longlist.

We still have much work to do before our proposals can be finalised, but we will keep you informed as our plans move forward. Thank you again for sharing your experiences and views with us.

## Contact us

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