COVID-19 feedback summary

January 2021

Introduction

- This report presents a summary of the key findings from engagement activities conducted to understand the impact of COVID-19 on health and care services in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

- This summary report is produced by NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit (MLCSU).

Structure of the presentation:

Methodology

Changes experienced during COVID-19

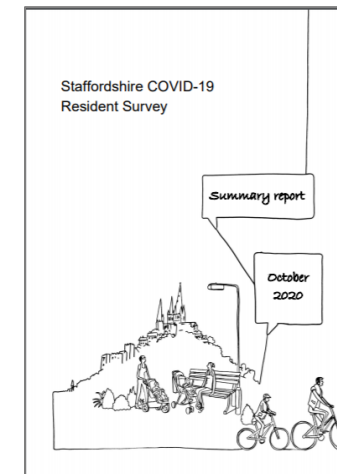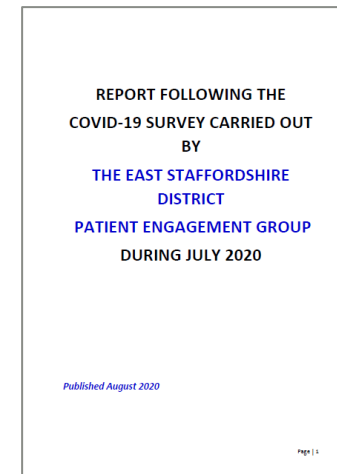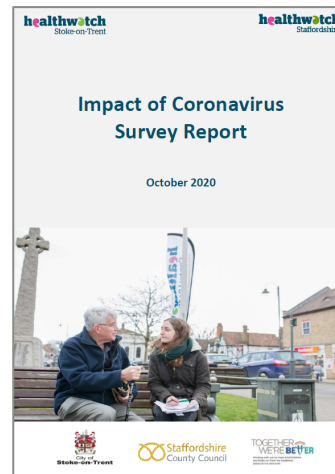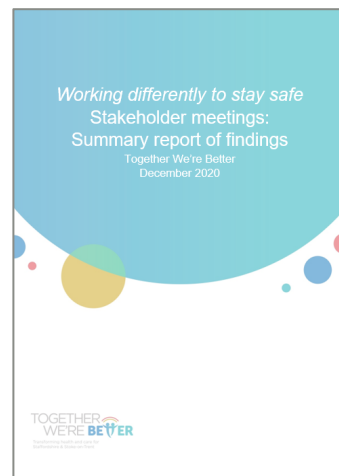What were the local challenges and what could we improve?

What do you think should be our priorities for now and the future?

What went well and what improvements did you experience?

Summaries

Overview of the engagement

This report presents a summary of the findings from:

Together We're Better stakeholder event	**'Working differently to stay safe' stakeholder meetings**	**Healthwatch report**	**East Staffordshire questionnaire**	**Staffordshire County Council report**
A virtual event held on 13 August 2020 with members of the public and staff across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.	21 meetings held with organisations and patient groups across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.	A report based on a survey conducted by Healthwatch on the impact of COVID-19.	Report based on a survey conducted by East Staffordshire District Patient Engagement Group.	Report based on the Staffordshire County Council survey on the impact of COVID-19.

Methodology

This summary focuses on the three questions that were asked of participants at stakeholder meetings:

- What were the local challenges and what could we improve?
- What went well and what improvement did you experience?
- What do you think should be our priorities for now and the future?

During the stakeholder meetings, facilitators made notes on the discussions.

These notes have been summarised and the key themes identified and included in this report.

The key themes from the East Staffordshire, Healthwatch and Staffordshire County Council reports that relate to health and care services have also been identified and are also included as summarised themes to the three questions.

The key themes from all the feedback channels are presented together to provide an overall summary of findings.

Changes experienced

The following changes to health and care services and ways of working were experienced:

Changes experienced by **staff**

Working from home

Redeployment

Increased technology

Working in split teams

Unable to work in the community

Increased freedom to innovate

Virtual meetings

Reduced travel

Wearing PPE

Changes experienced by **patients**

Service availability

Opening hours

Telephone / virtual appointments

Cancelled appointments

Lack of visitors

Location of care

Social distancing measures

Online prescriptions

Online records

Local challenges

Key local challenges were: reduced **access to services** and **accessing care digitally**

- Lack of access to **routine care** and diagnostics
- **Appointments cancelled** and not rescheduled
- Restricted access to **GP appointments**
- Closure of **Minor Injuries Unit** in Leek
- Reduced care for **long-term conditions**
- Reduced access to **social care and homecare**
- Challenges accessing care using **technology**
- Lack of access to **face-to face appointments**
- Lack of access to **dentistry**
- Lack of access to **podiatry**

Other local challenges:

Communication
Lack of information about local service availability and confusing messages around guidance with lack of consistency

Concern about COVID-19
Anxiety over contracting COVID-19 and not wanting to burden the NHS were preventing people from accessing care. Concern over returning to normal life

Negative impact on maternity services
Anxiety and distress for new mothers with reduced access to perinatal support and partners not being able to attend appointments or be at the birth

Impact on mental health
Need to consider the impact of lockdown on mental health (e.g., loneliness, finance worries and job losses). Improved access to mental health services required

What went well and improvements to continue

Key themes were:

Virtual appointments
Some patients have benefitted from remote and digital appointments, due to reduced travel

Staff
Staff have adapted to new ways well
Excellent quality of care delivered by staff

Quality of care
Good quality of care and good experiences of local hospitals

COVID-19 response
Effective social distancing measures
Excellent work by staff to respond to COVID-19

Communication
Some respondents shared that information on accessing services was clear and concise

Remote working
Build on the rise in community action and sense of community and ensure engagement with local communities

Integrated working
Effective partnership working across sectors. In particular, support delivered by the voluntary sector
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Accessibility
Reduced waiting times in some cases

Priorities for the future

Key themes were:

Virtual appointments
Continue digital appointments where beneficial, but consider those without digital access and ensure patient choice

Mental health and wellbeing
Consider the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health and ensure access to mental health services for the public and staff

Service restoration and provision
Ensure cancelled care is restored, the backlog of appointments is dealt with and adequate provision of services (e.g. flu vaccination)

Vulnerable and marginalised groups
Prioritising vulnerable and marginalised groups (e.g. elderly, people with learning disabilities, care home residents) and address inequalities

Communication
Ensure effective, targeted communication to patients (e.g. those with long-term conditions) and patient awareness of services

Community working
Build on the rise in community action and sense of community and ensure engagement with local communities

Integrated working
Ensure partnership working continues and ensure communication across specialities continues

Consider links with the voluntary sector

Local access to services
Ensure access to services locally (e.g. Minor Injuries Unit in Leek, inpatient mental health in South East)

Summary of themes by area: Local challenges

North	South East	South West
• Impact on mental health • Health and wellbeing support • Access to services • Communication • Virtual appointments • COVID-19 response • Impact on vulnerable groups • Difficulties with digital approach • Lack of services • Effect on services	• Access to services • Communication • Virtual appointments • COVID-19 response • Health and wellbeing support • Lack of services • GP practices • Difficulties with digital approach.	• Access to services • Communication and education • Mental health services • COVID-19 response • Safety concerns • Issues with routine care • Volunteer services.

This slide presents a side-by-side view of the themes raised in response to the question 'What were the local challenges and what could we improve?' across the North, South East and South West. For a detailed view of the analysis and feedback from each area, please see the Together We're Better stakeholder event and 'Working differently to stay safe' stakeholder meetings reports.

Summary of themes by area: What went well

North	South East	South West
• Access to services • COVID-19 response • Quality of service • Virtual appointments • Health and wellbeing support • Integration and partnership working • Community spirit and volunteers.	• Access to services • Quality of care • Communication • COVID-19 response • Online services • Health and wellbeing support • Addressing inequalities.	• COVID-19 measures • Virtual appointments • Partnership working • Quality of care • Blood testing and breast screening • Access to records • Volunteer support.

This slide presents a side-by-side view of the themes raised in response to the question 'What went well and what improvements did you experience?' across the North, South East and South West. For a detailed view of the analysis and feedback from each area, please see the Together We're Better stakeholder event and 'Working differently to stay safe' stakeholder meetings reports.

Summary of themes by area: Priorities for the future

North

- Mental health services
- COVID-19 response
- Communication and integration
- Maternity services
- Vulnerable groups
- Access to service
- Virtual appointments
- Finance
- Service restoration.

South East

- Access to services
- Mental health services
- Communication and education
- COVID-19 response
- Service restoration
- Flu vaccination.

South West

- Service provision and restoration
- Health and wellbeing support
- Mental health services
- Communication and education
- Flu vaccination.

This slide presents a side-by-side view of the themes raised in response to the question 'What do you think should be our priorities for now and the future?' across the North, South East and South West. For a detailed view of the analysis and feedback from each area, please see the Together We're Better stakeholder event and 'Working differently to stay safe' stakeholder meetings reports.

Overall summary of themes

Local challenges

- Impact on maternity care
- Issues with digital approach
- Lack of access to services and routine care
- Impacts of COVID-19 on mental health
- Concern and fear over COVID-19
- Lack of communication

What went well and improvements to continue

- Effective partnership working across sectors
- Positive experiences of care
- Improved accessibility and reduced waiting times in some cases
- The response to COVID-19 locally has been effective
- Staff adapted well to changes and delivered high quality care
- Remote working has been beneficial for some staff
- Some patients have benefitted from virtual appointments (e.g. reduced travel).

Priorities for the future

- Restoring services and rescheduling cancelled care
- Ensuring communication to patients is effective and well-targeted
- Prioritising vulnerable and marginalised groups and tackling inequalities
- Continuing digital appointments where patients benefit
- Ensuring access to services locally
- Ensuring effective integration and partnership working
- Prioritising mental health and ensuring access to mental health support
- Building on the renewed sense of community and involving communities in decision-making.