

Care Homes Report Approved for Publication



We shared our newly published report '[What is Important to a Person in Care Home?](#)' which was completed for Staffordshire County Council.

Completed in two phases, we spoke to 406 people including 243 care home residents, 42 family members/friends and 116 staff. Three of the most important elements were:

- *Caring & Friendly Staff
- *High Standard of Personal Care and Respect
- *Welcoming Atmosphere, Comfortable and Clean Environment

Virtual Wards Webinar

Baz and Emma attended a webinar on Virtual Wards organised by the CQC (Care Quality Commission). Along with other local Healthwatch we fed back about local awareness of these.

Current Surveys

Dialysis Services

We are now collecting your experiences of [dialysis services in our new survey](#). Please share your experiences to help improve local health and care services.

General Feedback

Our [online survey for general feedback on health and social care](#) will remain open indefinitely for everyone living in Staffordshire County Council's area.



Interested in sharing? Take our survey to make sure your voice is heard.

999 Ambulance Survey

This survey closed in March. We are pleased to report that we reached people who had called 999 for an ambulance.

359

Looking for Urgent Healthcare in Staffordshire?

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board have recently issued 5 guides about where to find urgent healthcare – one for each of 5 local areas: Burton, Cannock, Leek and Biddulph, Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent



[Download each of the guides from our website.](#)

Places of Welcome



We would like to share some information about Places of Welcome, which started in Birmingham. It aims to create a network of **safe places where people can connect, belong and contribute**. There are now well over 700 venues, rapidly spreading to other villages, towns and cities across England and Wales from its West Midlands base.

One of the goals of the movement is to help build a network of places in each area, where you can make friends and meet people, and can be in any location accessible to the public, including churches, mosques, temples, community centres, housing associations, libraries and pharmacies, even community gardens!

More information can be found at www.placesofwelcome.org.uk and for local information [Places of Welcome - Diocese of Lichfield \(anglican.org\)](http://Places of Welcome - Diocese of Lichfield (anglican.org))

Each one is open to anyone and each one follows the following values:

Value	Explanation
Place	An accessible and hospitable building, open at the same time every week.
People	Open to everyone regardless of their circumstances or situation, and usually staffed by volunteers.
Presence	A place where people actively listen to one another.

Provision	Offering free refreshments (at least a cup of tea and a biscuit) and basic local information.
Participation	Recognises that every person coming to a Place of Welcome will bring talents, experiences and skills that they might be willing to share locally.

It is these values that are the key to the whole movement and therefore these cannot be changed or adapted. Each venue agrees to stick to each value. Places of Welcome is not a franchise model and there are no charges for joining.

Places of Welcome Coordinators have the support of a Place of Welcome Facilitator, networking opportunities with other coordinators, promotion, branding and shared resources from the wider Strengthening Communities team, including training sessions and events.

March Feedback

Top Themes – March 2024	#
Access to services	27
Staff attitudes and performance	16
Caring, kindness, respect and dignity	8
Quality of treatment	6
Other	6
Follow- on treatment and continuity of care	5
Waiting for appointments or treatment / waiting times	5
Referrals	4
Assessment process	4

Figures show total times this theme was mentioned Cases may mention more than one theme.

The feedback does NOT cover Enter & View Visits nor responses to Surveys (which will be analysed separately after they close).

Service Categories

Hospital Services again top the list of service categories mentioned this month (19), followed by Primary Care (17), Mental Health and Learning Disabilities (12), Social Care Services (11), Other (7), Community Health Services (6) and Patient Transport (1).

Under **Hospital Services** the responses covered Emergency departments (including A&E) (5), Breast care (2) and Cancer Care (2) with other responses spread across various individual departments.

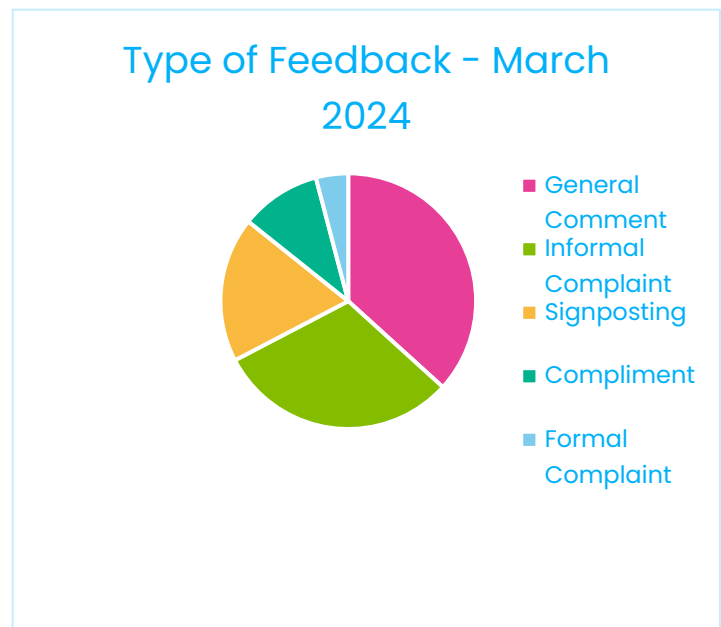
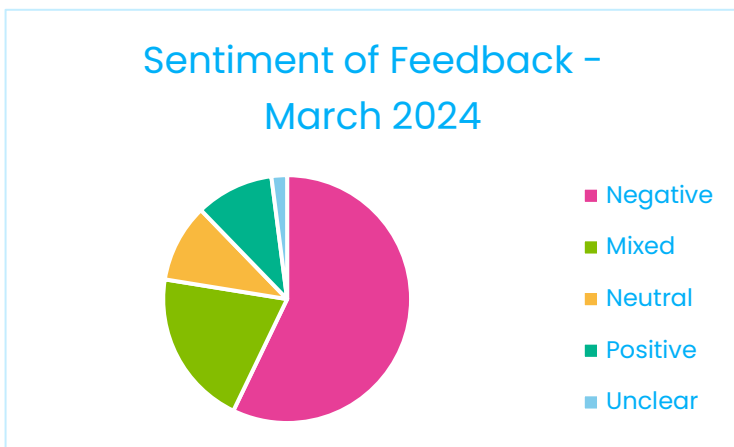
In **Primary Care** the responses were about: GP services (14), community pharmacies (2) and Diabetes care (1).

Most of the GP comments were negative or mixed and covered accessing appointments, referrals to Mental Health Services, lack of diabetes care (or nurse) at practice, issues with diagnoses, unwanted changes to medication and ordering of medication no longer required. Alarming, one case mentioned a GP slamming his fist on the desk and another a GP shouting.

In contrast we were told that at the Crown Practice in Tamworth, *“We have an amazing group of doctors available at our practice”*.

Under Mental Health and Learning Disabilities we heard about Community mental health teams (CMHT)/specialist mental health(3), Counselling/psychotherapy/improving access to psychological therapy (3) and services for people with a learning disability (3). People felt they always had to fight for services for disabled children.

There seem to be some issues with mental health referrals – people not being called back or feeling they are being passed around, CBT waiting times are too long and administration issues. Some say it is so frustrating they give up trying to access help. *“I have repeated my experience five times and have not received any support”*.



On the other hand, a GP practice, clinical psychologist and hospital outpatients were praised for mental health support.

There was also praise for St Chads House at St George's Hospital in Stafford. *“The Kinver Ward (Eating Disorder) at St Chad's Stafford, is excellent, staff are very good. The outpatient service is also very good. Lucky to have this service.”*

Data was collected from across the County as follows:

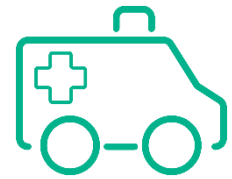


We reached 16 carers, 8 people who were geographically isolated and 1 who had limited family and social networks. Long term conditions and disabilities included diabetes; cardiovascular disease; Parkinson’s; Alzheimer’s; Rheumatology; Musculoskeletal condition; overactive thyroid; menopause; allergies; anaemia; bowel conditions and cancer (breast, prostate and skin respectively).

Highlights from Local Engagement & Networking

Hospital Visits

In a final push for the 999 surveys, we visited local hospitals. Emma and volunteer Andrew visited Royal Stoke Hospital while Christine visited County Hospital in Stafford. Both visits included the Accident and Emergency Departments. Chris also visited the AMU (Assessment Medical Ward) and Emma and Andrew visited PALS, the Outpatients Reception, and the Discharge Lounge.



Kinver Wellness Event

Chris attended this event and spoke with around 25 people plus 10 professionals. She explained what our service is and took feedback about a GP and compressions stockings at a pharmacy. Enquiries about dementia support, home care assessments and benefits were signposted to the relevant services.



Asda Visits

Chris, Emma, Claire and volunteer Margaret promoted our service and our surveys on '999 Ambulance calls' and 'Men over 55' in the foyer of Asda, speaking to a range of shoppers on 2 separate visits.



Patient Participation Groups in North Staffordshire

Emma visited PPGs at Park Medical and Biddulph Valley. She spoke about the role of Healthwatch and helped Biddulph Valley PPG with suggestions for recruiting young people and put them in touch with Kidsgrove PPG.



Carers Groups

Dave visited Lichfield Carers' group at Lichfield Fire Station. One of the social prescribers was also in attendance, so the group talked a lot about GP surgeries. They were able to explain how practices are changing and the development of the ARR's roles. Other items discussed included Ambulance services (both 999 and non-urgent Patient Transport) and [Continuing Health Care](#).

Emma attended a meeting of Leek Carers' group which discussed defibrillator maintenance, community first responders and a lack of day services for disabled people, among other things.



Stafford VCSE Forum

Chris attended the Stafford Voluntary, Charity, and Social Enterprises (VCSE) Forum in Walton where colleagues from Support Staffordshire were also present. [These forums](#) allow people to share information and network with local VCSE colleagues.



Cross Border Mental Health Reassurances

Following negative feedback from members of public about travelling long distances to access mental health support Baz and Dave contacted ICB colleagues who gave assurances to Healthwatch that there are cross border agreements in place to allow residents to access mental health services in other local areas such as the black country. Healthwatch and



Councillor Paul Harrison delivered a joint update to South Staffordshire District Council on current progress and will continue to work together on how to support improving access for residents affected by travel and county cross border concerns.

Social Media



We joined Healthwatch England's **#ShareforBetterCare** campaign and promoted our [new general survey](#) in the process. We asked about experiences of self-referral for physiotherapy and people's awareness of Virtual Wards and followed up with information about [Virtual Wards](#).

We also promoted NHS campaigns for: [viewing your GP health record](#) with the NHS App; Talking Therapies; [Stop Smoking](#); [free Blood Pressure checks at pharmacies](#) for over 40s and Every Mind Matters' [Loneliness](#) Campaign. We publicised Healthwatch England's [National Impact Award](#) to Healthwatch Coventry for Improving Maternity Care. We also shared details of 2 Diabetes 8 events in Burton and a Health and Wellbeing Event for Leek and the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Get in touch

Healthwatch Staffordshire

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