

Healthwatch Derby Service Sector Report – Choices and Behaviour – End Report

Reporting to:	All stakeholders
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Date periods covered in the report:	June 2020 – March 2021

Overview of the Report

From June 2020 Healthwatch have had an on-line survey available for people to complete, part of this survey asked the question:

“We are trying to better understand how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected people's choices and behaviours. Has there been any health or social care service/s that you would have accessed during 'normal times' but chose not to during the Covid-19 period?”

This question was removed from the survey at the end of March 2021. This is the summary findings of people's responses though out the 10 month period. It has been broken down into date periods so can be reflected on through-out the different stages of the past 10 months.

Overall Summary

From June to December 1/3 peoples stated that they had changed their choice or behaviour around health and social services – this reduce to 1/5 in January to March 2021.

Throughout this 10 month period the key reason has been:

- There was anxiety or fear around Covid-19
- People did not want to over burden the services
- Access - The service was closed/suspended, urgent only or could not get an appointment
- Communication from services

Summary June 2020

During this period 1 / 3 people stated that they had changed their choices and/or behaviour in regards to health and social care services.

Overall the main reasons given:

- The service/s was closed or suspended.
- There was a anxiety or fear around Covid-19
- People did not want to over burden the services, people feeling that their issues was not urgent or could wait.

Breakdown in sectors:

Primary Care

GPs:

The main areas raised was:

- That they was an anxiety or fear about Covid-19
- People feeling that they did not want to over burden the services or they felt the issue could wait.

Other areas people said that:

- The service they normally attended/needed was cancelled/suspended
- They could not get an appointment.

Individual reasons

- In shielding group and felt they needed a face to face appointment
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Dentistry:

People did not attend dentistry due to the services not operating.

Community Care

People spoke about not attending their podiatry appointment. 3/5 mentioned that they were diabetic.

Main reason was that the regular services/appointments had been suspended and/or only urgent cases been seen.

Other individual reasons given:

- Reluctant to contact service – did not wish to burden the system but also stated that their condition was much worse because of delay.
- They are unsure how the new clinic would run (distancing) so have not made a new appointment

Acute Care

People spoke about not attending acute care services.

The main reasons people did not attend are:

- The service was cancelled and or not available
- There was nervousness or a fear of Covid-19 and/or they did not feel it was urgent.

Social Care

People spoke about Respite. The reason for not using this service was that they were closed.

Summary - July and August 2020

During this period 1 / 3 people stated that they had changed their choices and/or behaviour in regard to health and social care services.

Over July and August there has not been a strong key message as in June. Though there still were a few comments relating to a fear in regard to accessing acute services and not wanting to put more pressure on services.

Communication was a linking factor around primary care issues raised - relating to people not attending due to the messaging, unsure about what services is available or assuming that a service is not running.

Sector Breakdown:

Primary Care

GPs:

People spoke about why they had not attended or delayed attending their GP.

Peoples stated that they have not been or delayed attending due to being communicated not to attend or only to attend when an issue became serious. There were evenly positive, negative and neutral sentiments regarding this.

People spoke about routine appointments not going ahead (40+ checks) or did not think they were going ahead (smear)– there comments around this were mixed being:

- Find it concerning
- It was to reduce infections and so they can deal with serious issues

There were individual experiences of:

- A village surgery being closed and no information on website – confusing and worrying.
- Unsure of the support available at GP
- Not attending due to not appreciating the seriousness of condition
- Feel that they have too much on their plate

These experiences are from 9 people so cannot draw themes; though it is noted that almost all the areas raised are issues around communication.

Dentistry:

People spoke of dentistry – they did not attend due to:

- Thinking that it would be closed
- Not available

Acute Care

People spoke about not attending or delaying A&E, their reasons given were:

Wanting to avoid busy areas, mixing, waiting times and covid-19.

1 family spoke about declining a hospital admission for another family member due to being informed by paramedics that they would go on the Covid red zone due to symptoms. So the family nursed at home until carer could be found. They stated there was a fear of them going on to a Covid ward, triaged and probably not treated.

Summary - September 2020 to December 2020

Though there has been a reduction in responses the amount of people answering “yes” – that they had changed their behaviour or choice has stayed around the same – around 1 out 3 which is consistent with all previous months.

The main issues people stated why they had not accessed a service was regarding access issues or no appointments available (around half of comments). Followed by fear of covid-19.

Sector breakdown:

GP -both comments are regarding issues in accessing the service rather than choosing not to attend.

- To hard to speak to a doctor, felt fobbed off, on-line form too complicated and did not align with illness.
- Can't get an appointment unless urgent, even then difficult to get through.

Dentist - both comments were about accessing rather than choosing not to attend.

- Dentist cancelled check up wont re-book
- No appointments

Hospital Outpatient – individual comment:

Cancelled out-patient appointment due to not feeling safe travelling or going to hospital.

LD – County Services: - individual comment:

- Cancelled 2-hour p/w of a personal assistance that had been put in place to replace day activities due to feeling that this did not meet the needs of the client.

Podiatry - individual comment:

- Fear of Covid-19.

Summary – January 2021 – March 2021

Over this period there has been a reduction in the amount of people stating they have changed their behaviour or choices to 1/5 people.

People gave further insight to why they had choices differently. The services mentioned were mainly their GP, other services mentioned were dentist, hospital and Physio. The main reason given was:

Anxiety and Fear of Covid

- This was in regard to catching covid, avoid high risk areas and not wanting to travel on public transport.

Other individual reasons given were:

- Did not want to overload services
- Told not to
- Not an emergency
- Unsure if could have dental treatment
- Unsure of processes