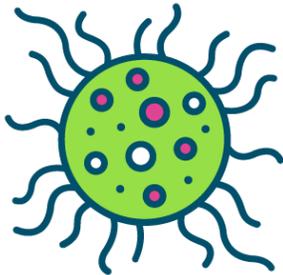




Welcome to our April update. This month we have been keeping a close eye on the rapid changes in health and social care and ramping up our work to inform and guide people when they need to access services. We have also been finding new ways to engage with and support our health and social care services, local groups and users, while looking forward to work we hope to do later in the year.



Share your stories and help
services adapt to the
coronavirus

New survey: accessing services during the coronavirus

We have set up a new online survey, asking local people to share their experiences of accessing health and social care during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working closely with those in charge of health and care services in Gloucestershire, providing real-time feedback to help them understand and respond to current challenges in a timely way. Our survey will provide a more in-depth picture over time to help them learn and develop effective services going forward.

Complete our survey and tell us what's working well and what could be improved: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CoronavirusHWG/>.

So far, the common concerns we are hearing about accessing services fall into three main categories: people who are self-isolating and in need of help; those who are anxious about regular appointments or treatments and having difficulty finding the right information; and those with anxieties and issues around getting prescriptions and medications. Positive messages and experiences are centred around GP practices and how they are working well, albeit, sometimes in different ways.

Call out to carers: share your stories to influence change

We are particularly concerned about what is happening in care at the moment, for care providers, carers, and those they care for.



If you are a carer or receive care, we would love to hear from you. We want to make your voice count when we raise the profile of carers and their needs during Carers Week (7-14 June). Your experience could help others, so do please get in touch.



Tell us about your experience of mental health support

For Mental Health Awareness Week (18-24 May), we would like to share your stories about how local services have helped you or how things could have been done differently. [Please get in touch](#). Your story can be anonymous if you would prefer.

Working with local organisations

We will be working in partnership with local organisations and charities whose members can give us a good understanding of what is working and where there are concerns. If you are involved in a local organisation and you would like to work with us, [please get in touch](#).

Information and advice about local services

Please check our social media and get in touch if you have any questions or concerns about local health and social care services and support.



- **Urgent dental care**

New NHS centres are being set up in Gloucester and Cheltenham, for patients who need urgent dental treatment while their own surgeries are closed due to coronavirus. To be assessed and referred, patients need to contact their own surgery or, out of hours, call NHS 111.

- **Health advice and information about coronavirus**

Read the latest advice from [NHS England](#) and from [NHS 111](#) to check if you have coronavirus symptoms.



Our longer term plans

Before the UK went into lockdown due to the coronavirus, we had agreed a number of priorities to investigate during the next 12 months. These were identified from public feedback and through consultation to ensure they feed into national and local NHS, and social care priorities. We will review our future work programme in light of current restrictions to ensure our work continues to be relevant and beneficial to the situation people will be facing locally. The broad themes we hope to investigate later in the year are:

- GP surgeries
- Transitions between services
- Young people's experience of services
- Social isolation

We're here to help make health and care better for local people, so please get in touch, share your stories, and share our news.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's independent health and social care champion. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers listen to what people like about local health and care services, and what could be improved. These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations in the county, so together we can make a real difference.

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