

Key issues and trends June 2022



Generally over the year - share and triangulate

- People tell us staff are usually great and the help is good when they get it.
- People feel they often struggle to get the support they need - “fighting”.
- People recognise the health and care systems are under pressure and covid has had a massive impact.
- Some people recognise that we have one of the best performing health systems in the country, although mentioned less than in previous years
- Increasing comments about paying for private treatment rather than accessing NHS treatment - still small numbers but noticeable (including scans, operations, GPs as well as dentistry)
- People are frustrated by a number of things that they perceive as being easy to fix, as well as some more systemic issues locally and nationally - Waiting times, communications with services, access to information and customer service issues
- As services have opened up following covid restations, many issues that we heard about pre-covid are re- emerging - transport, access (particularly GP access)

Key findings

- Finding a dentist has been very difficult. Information on the NHS website about dentists taking on NHS patients has not been kept up to date.
- Urgent treatment was prioritised during the pandemic but getting any kind of appointment was a struggle for some.
- There is a need for a clear definition of ‘urgent’. Our data suggests a significant mismatch between the clinical definition and users’ interpretation.
- Generally speaking, people want to be seen within a month for routine treatment or check-ups and within a week or less for urgent issues. This is not what is currently available.
- The cost of both NHS and private care presents a barrier to equal access.
- There is a lack of understanding about the organisation and funding of NHS contracts and the implications for provision of NHS appointments. This has given the impression that private care has been prioritised for the financial gain of dentists.

Wider than the PNA:

- Access to pharmacies could be improved, particularly for those working office hours, by ensuring a spread of pharmacies across the borough that provide extended opening, lunchtime services and publicising these.
- Wider promotion of the range of services offered by pharmacies.
- Staff should be aware of people's concerns over privacy, especially at busy times, and offer use of consulting rooms.
- Where possible, synchronise prescriptions for people with multiple items on different repeats or collecting for those they care for.
- Monitoring medication/stock shortages and setting up processes to facilitate access to alternatives.
- Ensure busy times are managed effectively and seating is available. Consider fast track queue for prescription collection, query box for later response etc.
- Consider suggestions for provision of additional services including (in the report)
- Consider supporting local pharmacies to offer a free delivery service.

‘ I feel I have missed out on my childhood’

Some key messages:

- Many young carers have increased caring responsibilities as a direct result of the pandemic and this continues.
- Young carers prioritised their caring responsibilities over their education.
- Young carers are struggling with their mental wellbeing - increase in self harm and suicidal thoughts.
- Young carers feel people (including their friends, teachers and professionals) don't understand what its like to be a young carer. "What my friends talk about is totally irrelevant compared to the issues I am dealing with."
- Young carers reported an inconsistent approach to supporting young carers across different schools and from individual teachers within a school.
- Young carers are feeling pressurised to achieve from their schools. As well as struggling to juggle homework alongside their caring responsibilities on a daily basis, they are also struggling to catch up on their schoolwork due to the pandemic.



Key recommendations

Planning for any future lockdown

- Plan for future lockdowns and develop a contingency plan to ensure young carers have access to support.
- Social workers must consider the impact on the young carer when services are withdrawn or refused and whether the young person is providing inappropriate or excessive levels of care.
- When teaching lessons with young carers, teachers need to recognise the impact of their caring responsibilities on their ability to be educated to home.

Schools

Education

- Young carers feel they need additional support with their education to catch up after lockdown.
- All teachers must be educated in recognising and supporting young carers.
- Schools need to implement a system to help teachers know which pupils in their class have caring responsibilities.



Emotional wellbeing in schools

- Dedicated emotional support within schools is critical for young carers.
- Access to peer support groups will offer young carers emotional support and help with friendships.
- Personal education sessions need to raise awareness across the whole school population about what young carers do and how it impacts them.
- When young carers are stressed, this must not be misconstrued for poor behaviour and appropriate support put in place.

Support

- Review capacity to support young carers and reduce waiting times.
- More support generally – 1-2-1s, group activities, trips, peer support etc.



Access to information - continue to work with partners and Living Well North Tyneside.

Inequalities and access to support - including:

- Women's Health - women's health clinics in primary care and breast screening
- Audiology services
- Long term conditions and outpatient support
- Transport
- Digital inclusion
- Carers

Integrated and coordinated care:

- Hospital to home - experiences of hospital care, discharge and social care
- Getting care when you need it - particularly NHS111 and GP extended access services.

Service users voice in systems