

YOUR HEALTH AND CARE

INSIGHT INTO ACTION #6



Insight gathered
13 June - 12 July 2020

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About

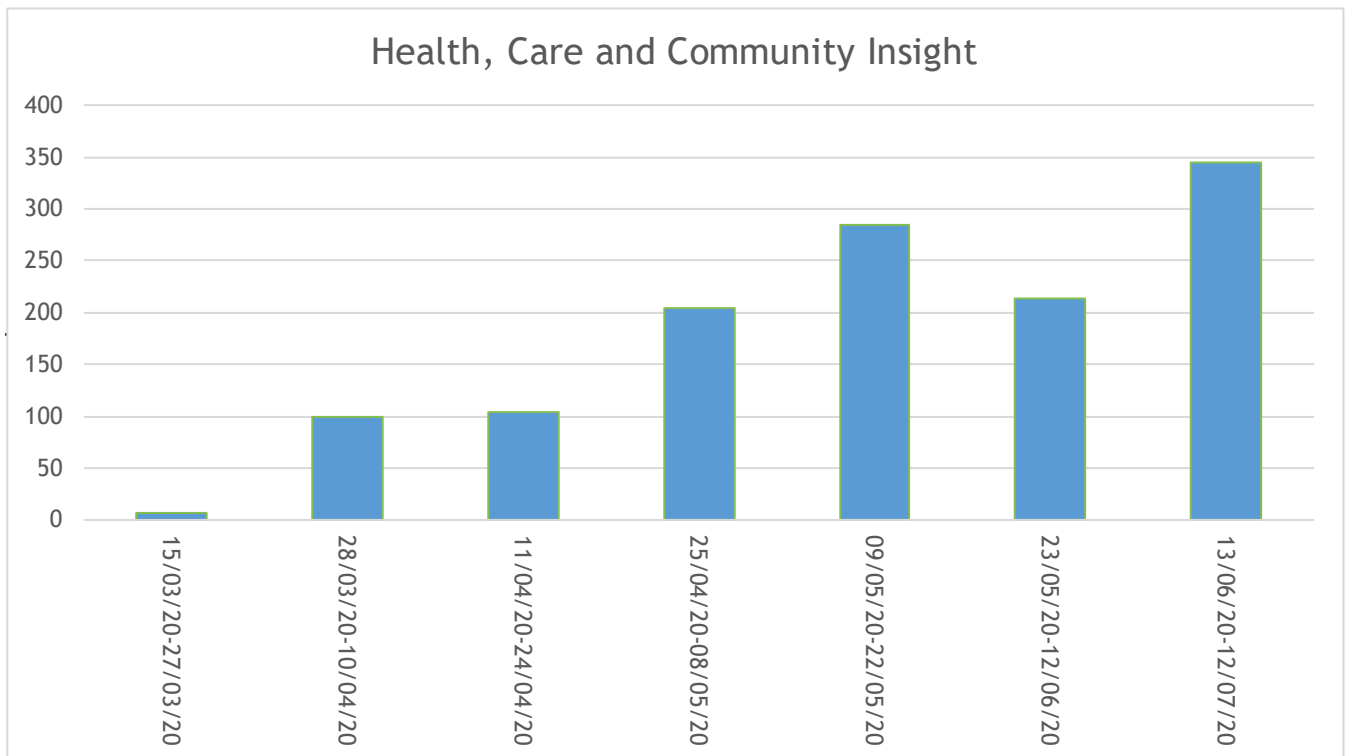
This is our sixth report in this series and covers a month of insight. As detailed in previous reports we are working closely with numerous Health, Social Care and Community and Voluntary Sector organisations. We have focussed on issues being raised by individuals, families and friend carers, as well as the actions taken and outcomes from these.

What are we hearing?

We raise and escalate the issues we hear as soon as we hear them. These reports then collate issues and trends to enable our developing Integrated Care System to plan and adapt to changing needs.

Originally this was a fortnightly report but as we have moved from dealing with the initial pandemic crisis, we are with this edition covering a month of insight.

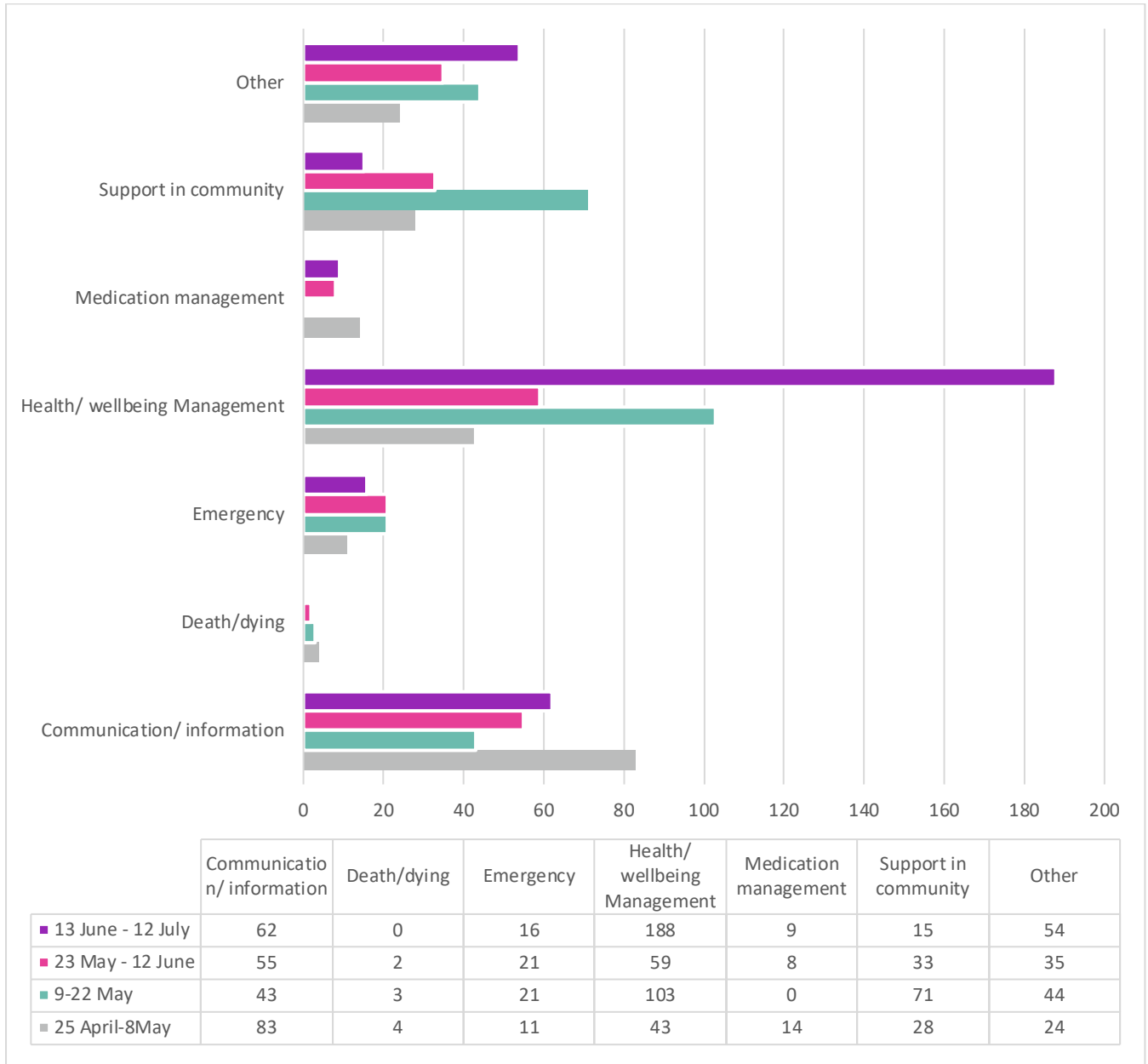
Our aim is to enable the public, our partners and those that are accountable for health and care support and services to gain insight from what people have shared with us and to raise awareness of what has been done as a result.





Intelligence gained from our in-depth conversations with community organisations and support groups and any additional themes will be reported separately.

Below we show the change in insight by theme over the last month as we see the changing response to the Pandemic and move further out of Lockdown.



The vast majority of insight now relates to Health and Wellbeing Management, Communication and Information. As we progress through the Recovery and Restore phases of the Pandemic response we will work our Integrated Care System and Communities to share information and support.



Key message by issue

Access to general practice

- Before COVID-19, access to general practice was an issue and we recognise the demand on GPs has been growing.

Over a third of this month's insight (37%) is about peoples' experiences of general practice. People have shared very different experiences, some very positive with details of how staff have been supportive. There have been some notable exceptions attracting negative feedback and how challenging it continues to be to get adequate support with managing health needs.

Care homes

- This month a number of people have raised concerns around funding for care homes and residents of these, how challenging it has been to stay connected to what is happening in homes and to their family member or friend.



I've just done a 36 mile round trip to deliver new slippers to my partner's mother in her care home. She is 91 next week, and we're still not able to see her. It makes me so sad when I drive past pubs full of people, and the crowds along Littlehampton sea front. She has Alzheimer's, and every passing day is one less when she'll still know who we are.

I manage a home and it is heart-breaking for all if us in the home. I am seeing significant decline in the mental health of my residents and although we allow window visits. Sometimes, I think that is worse as I think the residents feel they have done something terrible to be shut behind a window or a patio door.



- We have been reviewing the use of social media, as a way of care homes staying in-touch with residents' families and friends and will be showing casing some good examples to providers and commissioners.
- We are looking at hosting a virtual information webinar, similar to the one we ran for cancer patients and their families in June. We are keen to hear more from residents about the challenges of staying in-touch and the impact this is having.



Community Services

- The restoring of community services that have been paused at the start of the COVID-19, appears mixed, often with communication difficulties at the heart of peoples' experiences. We understand that this is often because things are changing so quickly in terms of guidelines on how services can operate with the need for professionals to change practices at short notice. However, issues with communication have a huge knock on effect with anxiety and confusion. All elements of the ICS need to work together to provide clarity as soon as possible on each issue.

For example, we escalated concerns over a lack of communication about the immunisation programme for secondary students. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisations recently put out a [statement](#) on the delivery of the human papillomavirus (HPV) programme. This has been developed to acknowledge that the 2019 to 2020 vaccination programme has been disrupted due to COVID-19 and that now the priority of the programme is for all eligible children to receive at least the first dose of the HPV vaccine. We are calling on clear communication to parents.

- Parents expressed concern over a lack of home visits and support for their babies and have questioned if the home visitors are still providing services.



I rang my local clinic Friday, as I wanted to speak to a health visitor for some advice but didn't get an answer. I left a message, but haven't heard anything back, so I'm not sure how to get hold of them?



Dental care

- We continue to hear about the difficulties people are having in accessing the dental care they need. 7% of our total insight this month related to this.

Information from dental practices can be inconsistent as they are all different, meaning people are uncertain about whether services are running again and what treatment is available to them. This issue is likely being compounded by confusing messages at a national level about dentists re-opening when in reality services are very much constrained by their own environments.

People are reported spending hours phoning around to see where they can get support, with so many practices not having availability for NHS patients.

Access to a dental service has become a particular issue to homeless people, who have additional barriers to accessing dental treatment on the NHS.

- It appears no organisation currently holds a list of open practices and what treatment is being offered. We are liaising with the Local Dental Committee to find out if it would be helpful for our volunteers to contact practices over the coming weeks to find out what is available and how this information can be kept up to date.



- We have also heard some cases of dentists applying additional charges to patients to cover Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) costs which gives us concerns that this could make dental care less accessible.

Digital and telephone care

- In addition to this insight gathering, we've also been surveying residents across Sussex about their experiences and attitudes towards digital and telephone care. We know people have given mixed feedback on these remote solutions. Findings from this survey, and others that ask people about their digital experiences, will be available over the summer to help inform the long-term plans for NHS and care.
- Having had some focused conversations with young people about services offered digitally, we have an informative [case study](#) that is aimed at supporting commissioners and services to foster their professional curiosity to explore with a wider group of young people the opportunities and challenges in offering services digitally.
- Listening to feedback from organisations, we are also aware of the inequalities and connectivity issues around digital support, and the impact this can have for those trying to get support this way.

Hospital treatment

- Hospital out-patient appointments have continued for many during lockdown, with some going to an online platform. People have shared their experiences that show how some services are being restored:

“My daughter was referred to Rheumatology back in February. Due to the COVID situation, I was expecting a delay but when we hadn't heard anything by June, I phoned the hospital and then emailed on the address given on the answerphone message. Somebody rang me back within 48 hours to offer a face to face appointment for my daughter a few days later. The swift response more than made up for the delay in hearing from them.

John saw his GP on Wednesday and received an appointment for Southlands Hospital on the Friday for the following week. He shared that the carpark was free. He had to wait in his car until 5 minutes before the appointment time. *“The hospital was like the Marie Celest. I met no one from the carpark entrance to the reception desk. The reception desk has a line on the floor and was surrounded by a table and three chairs - to ensure that social distancing occurred. The receptionist had a mask on so communication was a challenge - with good hearing - and had to ask her to repeat things a few times. Found the clinic area and was called in a couple of minutes before the allocated time. The nurse asked where the area was - on nose - laughter all round. The consultant was very good as he checked if I could understand him - as he had a mask on - he explained the condition clearly and also the treatment. Asked if I needed any information about the condition and the treatment and when I said I would the nurse located this. The consultant then took me through this information. He also explained the procedure - what he was doing etc. He informed of possible side-effects and next steps. A very professional experience all round. The next appointment has been received two days later.*





13 June - 12 July 2020

Talk to us

If you have questions about the content of this update, please either call 0300 012 0122 or email katrina.broadhill@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

How this insight will be used?

We recognise that all health and care services are under pressure at this time and have had to adapt their ways of working. We will share this report with the local NHS, local Government and other providers to help them understand where things are working well and services are adapting to meet peoples' needs, and to help them identify any gaps.

Our local mental health, cancer and maternity insight has been shared nationally to inform the discussion at the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee taking place w/c 27 April.

For help, advice and information or to share your experience

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

We also help people find the information they need about health, care and community and voluntary health and care support services in West Sussex.



Here to help you on the next step of your health and social care journey

We have the power to make sure that the government and those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.



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