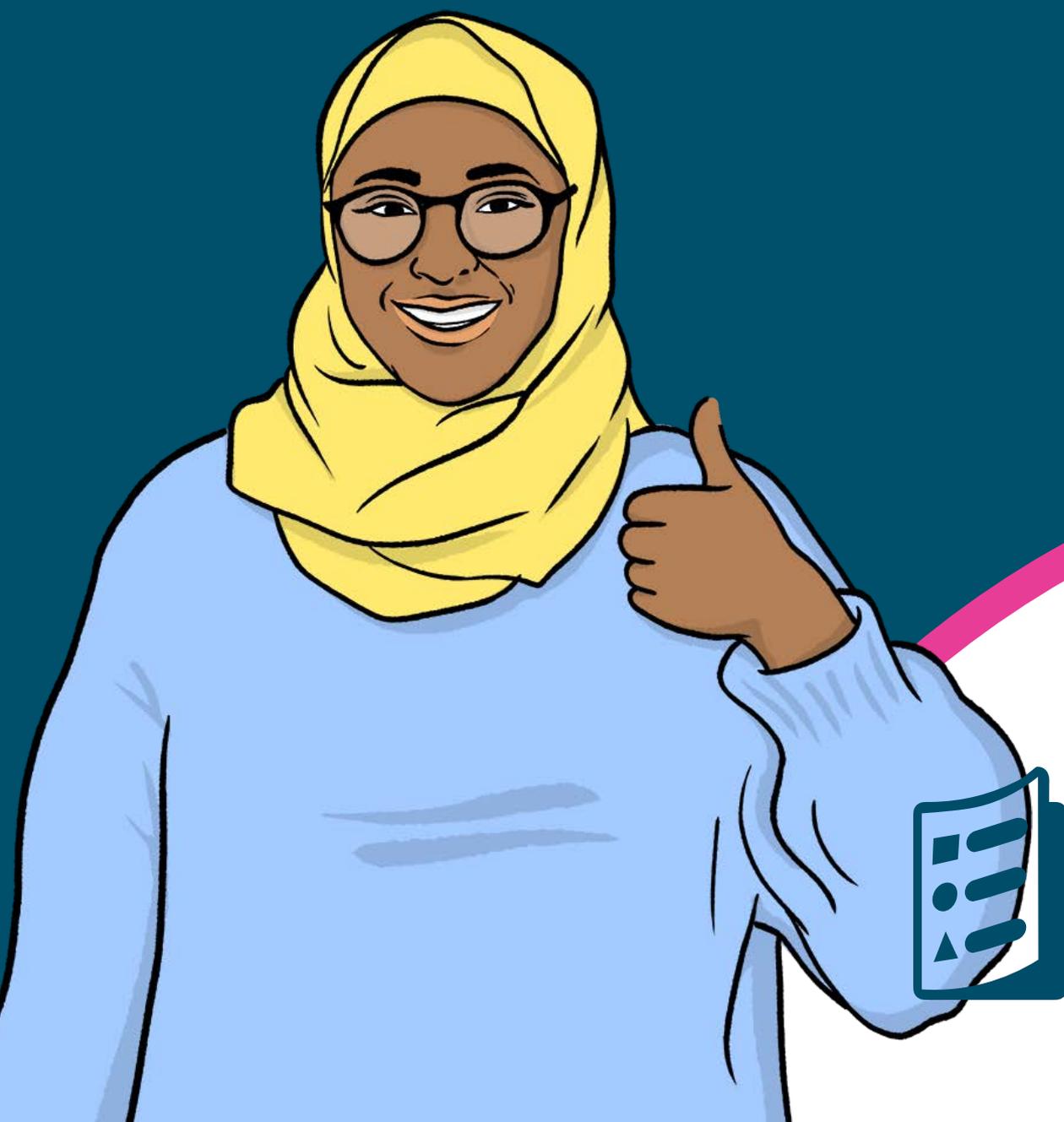


healthwatch

Our yearly report

2020 to 2021



**easy
read**

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In this easy read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are dark pink and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



Every year Healthwatch England writes a report to explain what we have done and what we plan to do next.



Healthwatch England is an independent organisation that:

- helps people who have a problem with their health or care services.



- looks into health and care services and writes reports which say how they should improve.



- tells health and care managers what people think about their services.



This is our report for 2020 to 2021.

About us



We want everyone to get the health and care they need.

We find out what patients think about health and care services.



We also offer advice and information on using local health and care services

We then pass on the information to health and care managers so they can improve their services.



How we work

We listen to people and make sure that their voices are heard.



We include everyone, especially those who aren't always heard.



We think about what people tell us, and work out how to make services better.



We work with other organisations.
We help them to listen to the
people who use their services.



Our organisation

We want to build strong local
Healthwatch services everywhere.



We want to run our organisation
properly and use our money in the
best ways.

What we did in 2020 to 2021



In 2020 to 2021 we:

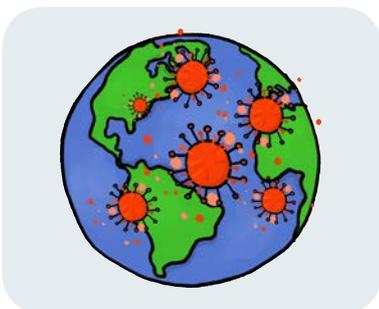
- supported over 700,000 people to say what they thought about health and care services.



- helped nearly 2 million people find advice and information about local health and care services.



In the spring of 2020, we helped people keep safe from **COVID-19**, by giving telephone advice and delivering medicines.



COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus. It is an illness that has spread around the world. It can affect your lungs and breathing.



In the summer of 2020 we:

- talked with over 50,000 people about their health and care issues.



- helped health services find better ways to have online appointments.



In the autumn of 2020 we:

- worked with the British Red Cross to make people leaving hospitals safer from COVID-19.



- told the Government that people were having difficulties seeing a dentist.



In the winter of 2021 we:

- helped communities understand more about the COVID-19 vaccine.



- told the Government that many people did not know about booking emergency appointments using the phone line: NHS 111.



- worked with the NHS to make sure people could see their doctor face-to-face if they needed to.

Listening to people



Last year, because of COVID-19, there were big changes to the way that health and care services worked.



Services needed to hear what people thought about these changes.



Services needed to hear about people who were not getting the services they needed.



We worked with other organisations to help people to speak up about the services they received during the time of COVID-19.



This work helped health and care services to know what needed to improve.



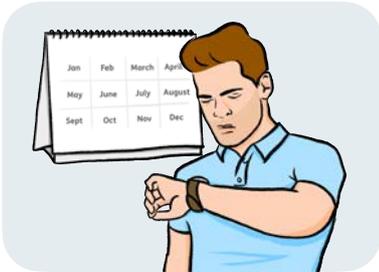
Dentists

Many people had difficulty finding a dentist because of COVID-19.

The main problems were:



- Dentists stopped taking on NHS patients. The only way many people could get a dental service was to pay for private treatment.



- Many people had to wait for months to get an appointment.



- People could not afford the treatment that the dentists said they needed.



Many people stopped getting dental treatment because they could not afford it.



We want the NHS and the Government to look at how dental services are provided by the NHS.

Shielding



Shielding is when you are told by your doctor to stay indoors away from other people to keep safe from COVID-19.



People were told to shield, because they have a medical condition which would get very serious if they caught COVID-19.



Many people thought that they should be shielding, but had not been told to do so.



We got the Government to provide information in ways that people could understand, including using British Sign Language.



Care homes

People were upset because they could not visit relatives in care homes.



We got the Government to tell care homes how they could let people visit their relatives safely.



Do not resuscitate

Do not resuscitate means that someone does not want to be brought back to life if they become very ill.



Patients in hospital have to sign a form if they do not want to be resuscitated.



We heard that some services were getting people to sign the forms without discussing it with the person's family.

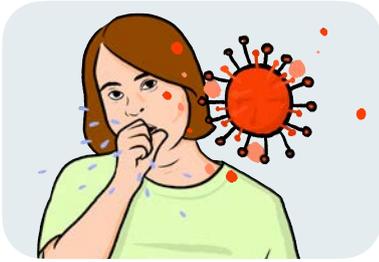


We told the Care Quality Commission. They are looking at how the 'Do not resuscitate' forms were used during the time of COVID-19.

Vaccines



A **vaccine** is a jab that keeps you safe from a certain disease. The NHS has been giving people a vaccine that keeps them safe from COVID-19.



People with a learning disability are likely to be seriously ill if they catch COVID-19.



Unpaid carers could spread the illness to people they cared for, including to people with a learning disability.

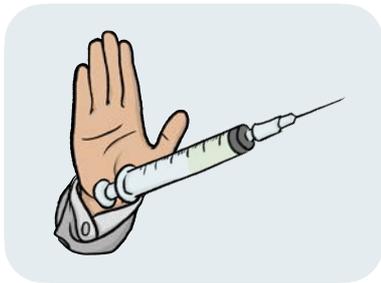


We wanted people with a learning disability and unpaid carers to get the vaccine urgently.



We got the Government to give the vaccine to people with a learning disability and unpaid carers before many other people.

Including everyone



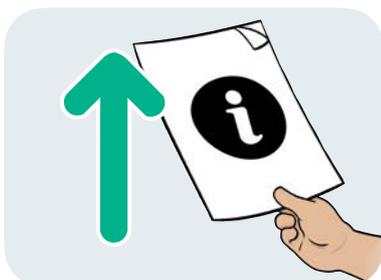
People from certain communities were less likely to want to have the vaccine than other people.



Some people did not believe that the vaccine was safe. They did not trust what the NHS and the Government were saying.



We worked with people from these communities to understand more about what they thought. We wanted to know what information people needed.



We found that:

- people needed more information so they could make their own choices.
- people needed information from people that they trusted. They liked getting information from people in their own community and independent people.





- people wanted all the information about the vaccine.



- people did not like being pushed into having something they weren't happy about.



We also found that there was not enough information that people could understand.

We worked with other organisations to:



- tell people they have a right to information that they can understand.



- give easy information to more people.



- improve the ways that organisations make information easy for people.

Local doctors



Because of COVID-19, most doctors started seeing patients online.

Many people liked this but others found it difficult.



We worked with other organisations to look at ways to make the most of seeing your doctor online.



We found that it's best if patients:

- tell their doctor whether they are happy with meeting online.



- think about the questions they want to ask before seeing the doctor.



- ask the doctor to explain what is going to happen next.



We found that it's best if doctors:

- give patients an exact time when they are going to see them online.



- check that the patient is happy with speaking online.



- check that the patient is somewhere private and quiet.

Problems with local doctors



We wrote a report about what people thought about their local doctors.

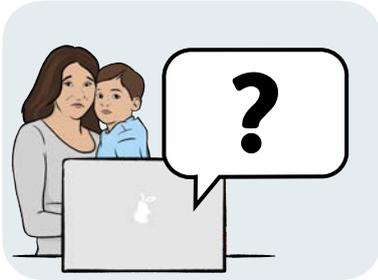
People said:

- local doctors didn't explain the changes to the way they worked because of COVID-19.





- patients had to wait a long time on the phone. It made people feel anxious.



- doctors didn't always understand what local people were saying when they saw each other online.



- patients could not get the treatment and check-ups they needed.

People who can't use computers



We looked into the situation for people who can't use computers.

Many of these people found it very difficult to get a health care service during the time of COVID-19.

Your choice

We have been telling the NHS that:



- people should have the right to decide how they want to speak with their doctor: face-to-face or online.



- you should be given a definite time for an online meeting. You should not have to wait for hours.



- your local doctor should keep a record which says whether you like online or face-to-face meetings.

Patient transport



Many people can't travel to a hospital appointment. This means people are missing out on check-ups and treatment.



The NHS offers a service which will transport people to hospital, but it doesn't always work properly.



It is called the NHS Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service.

We worked with other organisations to look at the problems with the NHS Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service.

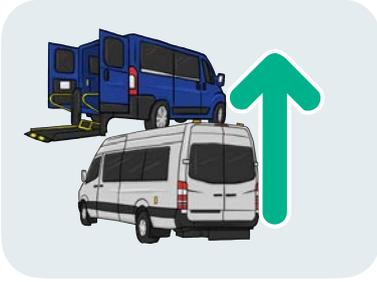


We found that:

- people did not know if they could have this service or not.
- the service worked in different ways in different parts of the country.



Improving the transport



Because of our report, NHS England have decided to make some improvements to the transport service.



NHS England wants to:

- make it clear who can get the transport service.
- use mobile phones better to make sure the transport comes at the right time for each person.



Other work



Using personal information

The NHS wants to use information about patients to help with planning services and finding new treatments.



They won't use people's personal information.



Some people were worried about this, so we looked into what people thought.



We found that:

- just over half of people had heard about this issue, but most didn't understand it.
- just over half of people said they were happy to share their information to help with planning services and finding new treatments.





- about a third of people didn't know whether or not they should share their information.



NHS 111

From December 2020 you can book an urgent appointment with the A&E department at your local hospital by phoning 111.



We looked into this and found that:

- most people liked this idea.



- most people hadn't heard of this idea.



- sometimes the hospital didn't know that someone had booked an appointment using 111.



We showed that:

- the NHS needed to give out more information about this service.
- NHS 111 and the hospitals needed to work together better.



Social care

Social care is support you can get with daily living.



Social care has many problems, including:

- Not enough support for people.
- Not enough information and advice.
- Difficulty in finding workers.





We said that the Government should use local organisations to provide information about social care to local people.



We are pleased that the Government is giving money to help people find the right social care for them.



Leaving hospital safely

People who leave hospital are supposed to get a visit at home to check they are okay.



We found that most people did not get a visit.

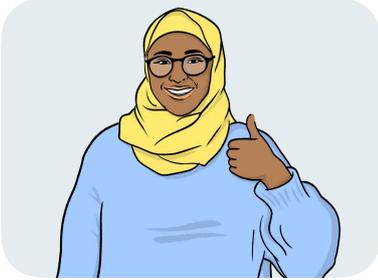
We also said that when people leave hospital, staff should check that they:

- can look after themselves at home.





- have got friends or family to help if need be.



- are feeling happy with themselves.



- have enough money.

Looking ahead

In 2022 we want to work on helping:



- more people access their local doctors and dentists more easily.



- the Government and NHS to listen to people who use services.



- health and care services to work together better.



- services to be fairer to people from all different communities.



- local Healthwatch groups to get the training and money they need.

For more information

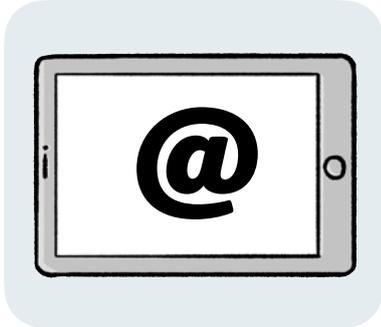


You can look at our website here:
www.healthwatch.co.uk



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