

We Have Listened

Feedback from Community Engagement to inform the development of the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26

Summary Report

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Introduction

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) was commissioned in June 2022 by the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to undertake a range of public engagement activities to inform the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan for 2023-2026.

The engagement process involved a range of methods and opportunities for people to get involved and express their views, including:

An online survey

Face to face engagement sessions in locality venues

Online engagement sessions including evening sessions

Face to face and online meetings with 11 key stakeholder groups

A limited number of one-to-one telephone conversations with those who were unable to access online sessions



The key questions we explored were:

1. What aspects of health and social care work well where you live?
2. Thinking about you and your community, what are the things that help you to continue to live well and independently?
3. What aspects of health and social care could be improved where you live?
4. What do you think should be the key priorities for the strategic plan for the next three years?
5. How might your community and others play an active role in supporting health and care in the Scottish Borders?

The detailed findings can be found in *'We Have Listened: Feedback from Community Engagement to inform the development of the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26'* and its companion report *'Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership: Health and Social Care Community Feedback Survey'* both produced in October 2022.

Listening to voices from different localities and stakeholders

We received a total of **737 responses to the online survey** which was open for a period of five weeks in summer 2022. There was a good range of responses from across the Borders and different age groups. Analysis of responses by locality, carers and people with certain conditions can be found in the full survey report.

The locality and online sessions were attended by 27 individuals. These included people who had had recent personal or family interactions with health and care services, NHS and Scottish Borders Council staff, independent and Third sector service providers, Elected Members and Community Councillors.

Drop-in sessions were held in each locality. As well as consistent themes raised by people across the Borders, the discussions, together with the survey locality analysis highlighted some specific local opportunities and challenges.

For example, people in **Berwickshire, Cheviot and Eildon** raised issues about **GP access** and the importance of having **local health and social care services** more than people in Teviot and Tweeddale. The rurality of these localities, the distance from larger towns and Borders General Hospital, and a lack of public transport may be contributing factors. In contrast, people in **Teviot and Tweeddale** raised addressing **staff shortages in the NHS and social care** as a higher priority than in the other three localities.

We engaged with **130 people from eleven groups of stakeholders** to listen to the views of people from different equality groups. The groups were: Physical Disability Group, See/Hear Group, Mental Health Forum, Self-Directed Support (SDS) Group, People with Learning Disabilities (from Local Citizens Panels), Dementia Working Group, Carers (through survey responses and noting the involvement of carers in a number of these stakeholder sessions), Borders Older People's Partnership, People from Ethnic Minorities (employees at Farne Salmon), People in the LGBT community, and a Homelessness workshop (part of Housing Strategy engagement).

In addition to many of the consistent themes, these conversations highlighted that some issues affected groups in specific ways. People in the **See/Hear Group and Mental Health Forum, people with learning disabilities and people from the LGBT community** all stressed the need to **improve awareness and reduce stigma among health professionals**. Suggestions for putting this into practice included listening to people with lived experience, staff training on equalities and human rights, providing information in a range of media and consistent use of good practice guidance in communicating with specific groups of people.

The **Dementia Working Group, Self-Directed Support Group, and comments from carers** from the survey and at the session for People with Learning Disabilities group, as well as through the Unpaid Carers Survey, all stressed the need for **better support for unpaid carers**, including respite, and for people living in their own home.

The survey analysis showed that **priorities for people with cancer, mental health conditions or physical impairments** were around reducing waiting times, reducing health inequalities and reducing the time that people spend waiting to be discharged from hospital.

Consistent themes

The survey and engagement findings highlighted the **important principles** of:

Maintaining independence
– staying in your own home, in your existing community.

Effective communication -
between services and you, knowing what's happening, when and how and between different parts of the health and social care system.

Living a good life – helping you stay well, with opportunity for employment, meaningful activities, maintaining health and happiness.

Although **the survey** showed some positive responses about what is working well in the Borders (e.g. skilled staff, rapid responses to emergencies), most people felt that the delivery of **health and social care had worsened over the last four years**, in part reflecting the impact of the pandemic; and that the **priorities in the previous Strategic Plan were still mostly relevant**.

Of these **previous priorities**, inpatient hospital care was rated the worst, along with support for carers, and integration of health and social care. The best-rated priority area was improving the use of technology in care and support.

When asked what they consider to be the **current gaps in health and social care services**, people tended to identify systemic issues such as staffing, availability of carers and funding. Access to a GP and long waiting times were also seen as challenges.

The **engagement sessions supported the findings from the survey** and provided a wealth of additional detail about people's experiences of services as well as with useful suggestions about how things could be improved. In summary they showed us:

What is working well?



Involvement of some groups in developing strategies and service redesign



Crisis intervention. An emergency response was there when needed for most people



Role of Third Sector for community support. This came to the fore during Covid and needs to be built on to harness community assets and expertise



Peer Support services in mental health and for people living with dementia



The range of community and third sector groups that engaged in this exercise and enable people with diverse lived experience to have a voice about services in local communities

Where are the gaps – what needs to be improved?



Consistency of access to GPs - some good experiences but also real difficulties with seeing a GP, particularly in Berwickshire and for people with long term conditions



Workforce challenges and staff shortages in NHS and social care – people were aware of these and the impact of this on waiting times and access to services



More support for family/unpaid carers – particularly for carers of people with complex care needs through home care, specialist day services and respite



Post-diagnostic support for people with dementia – which means there is a gap in GP and other support between a diagnosis and 24-hour care and support



Access to NHS dentistry – which has worsened following the pandemic



Better links between services and more joined up service responses



Better communication – keeping people informed about waiting times, clearer more up to date information about what is available - where to get what, when needed



Engagement that involves people with lived experience at an early stage of planning and designing services



Access to local health and social care services and **improved transport**

How can people and the community get involved?

People and communities identified ways they could help maintain and improve their own health and care. This included accessing local community, sports and social activities. People spoke of being able to provide peer support and befriending and were eager to find out about employment opportunities and volunteering.

Priorities for the Strategic Plan

There was also consistency in the emerging priorities for the Strategic Plan, albeit with specific details and nuances for particular groups.

The top priorities are:



Communication about how services can be accessed when needed, waiting times, and information available in different media and formats



Engagement of local communities and stakeholder groups so people with diverse lived experience can participate in service planning, design and monitoring



Consistent access to primary care. Including to GPs, NHS dentists and community nursing services, especially for ongoing support for people with long-term conditions



Workforce planning and addressing staff shortages - with suggestions for attracting people to the Borders and improving access to transport and affordable housing



Integration and joint working between services for a person-centred approach



Improved access to social care and support. Addressing waiting times for assessment, eligibility, Self-Directed Support, home care and respite



Support to unpaid carers. Through opportunities for socialisation and stimulation for people with dementia and/or other disabilities and respite for carers



Preventative approach. To reduce the need for crisis responses and pressure on acute services and enable early intervention and holistic, community-based support



Reflecting the rural nature of the Borders more access to **local health and care services and improved transport** to access appointments

Key messages from Community Engagement

The **people of the Scottish Borders have engaged openly and actively** on the development of the Health and Social Care Partnership's future Strategic Plan, welcoming the opportunity to input, inform and shape decisions around services and support available in their localities. In many cases, people described the quality of services that they had received from health and care staff as good or even exceptional. Concerns tended to be about systems, communication and accessing services.

Whilst the availability of resources is an important factor in the determination of priorities in the Strategic Plan, a number of the improvements and ideas that are summarised in this report could be viewed as ones that may not require significant resources; rather they are **suggestions that require a shift in approach, thinking or ways of working**. This includes communicating with local communities about their involvement in health and social care, e.g. about participation in planning and service design, monitoring and giving feedback on services, setting up local activities, and volunteering and providing peer support..

Listening to the voices of local people to inform the development of the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26 is the first step in genuine engagement, involvement and participation in the co-production of services. The **HSCP can build on this platform by creating an ongoing partnership** with local people and communities as well as with a wide range of services and stakeholder organisations.

Further reading

The detailed findings can be found in:

- *'We Have Listened: Feedback from Community Engagement to inform the development of the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26'*
- *'Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership: Health and Social Care Community Feedback Survey'*

An Easy Read version is also available.

These can be accessed from:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/877/scottish_borders_health_and_social_care_integration_strategic_plans