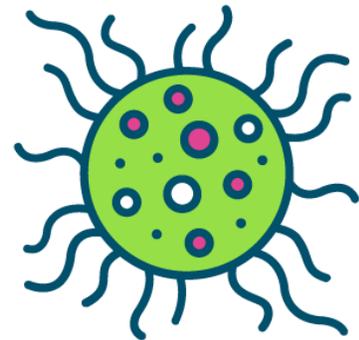




**Welcome to our April update.** This month the Healthwatch Dorset team have been busy keeping connected with our local community and volunteers and working hard to reach out and support local people and services during the coronavirus pandemic.

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## Share your stories and help services adapt to the coronavirus



We launched a new online survey this month, asking local people to share their experiences of accessing health and social care during the coronavirus pandemic.

We are working closely with those in charge of health and care services in Dorset, providing real-time feedback to help them understand and respond to current challenges in a timely way. We will provide ongoing insight through our survey to help them learn and develop effective services and support going forward.

Complete our online survey and tell us what's working well and what could be improved: [smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CoronavirusHWD/](https://smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CoronavirusHWD/). We will share all the feedback we gather (without sharing your personal details) with local NHS and councils to help improve services.

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## Our priorities for the year ahead

We have announced several new projects for the year ahead.

In addition to looking at the impact of coronavirus, we are planning to investigate some common themes raised by local people while also reflecting national and local NHS and social care priorities. Projects will focus on the following broad themes:

- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Primary Care Services (such GPs, pharmacy, and dentistry)
- Transport to health and social care services
- Accident and Emergency Care (A&E)

We will launch these projects throughout the year and let you know how you can get involved. Social distancing means we will need to be creative about the ways we reach people, but there are plenty of ways to share your experiences through online surveys, social media and over the phone.

[Find out more about our plans...](#)

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## If you are an unpaid carer, we'd like to hear from you

Do you provide care, unpaid, for a friend or family member who cannot cope without your support due to illness, disability, a mental health issue or an addiction? We will be sharing local carers experiences of living through this virus outbreak during Carers Week (7-14 June).



We want to raise awareness of carers needs and help local services understand how to provide better care and support for carers across Dorset. If you'd like to share your story with us, [please get in touch](#).

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## Information and support for local people

During these difficult times, most of us need support and reassurance. We've been helping local people by responding to enquiries and requests for information, by sharing up-to-date advice about local support services and support, and by simply listening and talking. We've also mobilised our amazing volunteers to carry out online research and gather feedback about people's current experience of health and social care services.

### Useful information

- **Urgent dental care**  
New centres are being set up in Bournemouth and Dorchester 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, call NHS 111.
- **Community help and information**  
Find out about local support and services in [Dorset](#) and [Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole](#).
- **Health advice and information about coronavirus**  
Read the latest advice from [NHS England](#) and from [NHS 111](#) to check if you have coronavirus symptoms. Look after your [wellbeing](#) while staying informed..



**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 Dorset** is the county's independent health and 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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