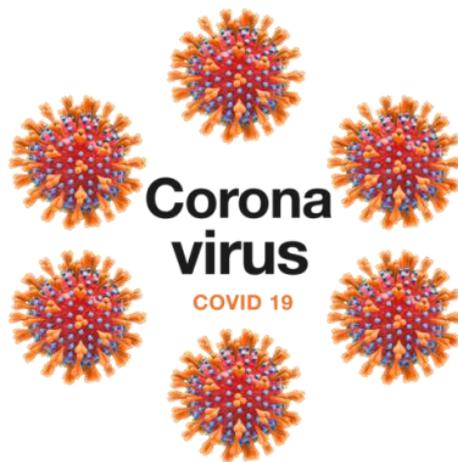


North West Elected Member Commission

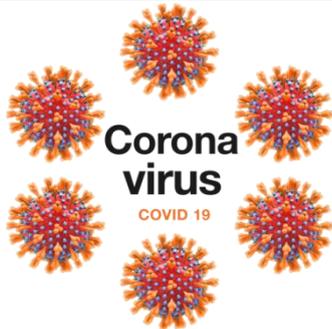
The impact of Covid-19 on adults with social care needs and their families



December 2020



North West ADASS works to improve adult social care.



We wanted to look at the impact of Covid-19 on adults, their families and communities.



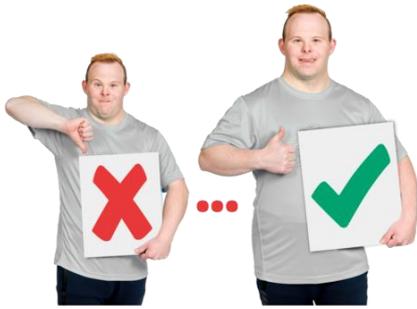
Also, what this tells us about the role our communities should play in supporting people to live independently at home.



So we set up a group of councillors called an Elected Commission to look into this.



We wanted to hear lots of stories about how the lockdown affected people or how their community supported them.

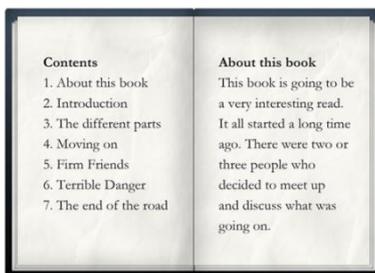


We will use these stories to learn from them and develop better services for people.



In September we send round an advert asking for people's stories.

We also had an easy read version.



42 people replied with stories involving 102 people.



We held four online listening sessions in October 2020.



We spoke to 16 people who were:

- People with care and support needs
- Family members
- Paid carers
- Organisations who support people.



People were given 30 minutes to tell their story and answer questions.



People told us



- Life had been hard during this time and their mental wellbeing has been affected.



- Stress had been caused by services stopping and becoming hard to contact.



- Some had to provide a lot more care to family members which places stress on families.



- Online services helped some people but others could not access them.



- Some valued community services providing things like food, check-in calls and information.



- Not being able to visit family in care homes or supported living caused distress.



- Some who have direct payments were not happy as they were not allowed to use them flexibly to buy things like iPads.



Organisations told us



- Services had to quickly adapt to changing needs.



- Community organisations adapted quickly to provide practical support like food parcels.



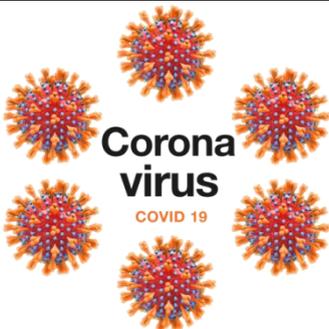
- They were free to do things for people who may not normally access services and be brave.



- In the future online services will play a more important role in providing more choice.



- Organisations providing social care were frustrated by national policy and guidance which often changed.



- Local communication tended to focus on the virus rather than services and support available.



- A care home provider talked about the hard work of their staff and balancing keeping people safe with quality of life and values.



Conclusions

The needs of family and other unpaid carers are increasing. They need support, information and guidance.



The pandemic has caused issues with mental health, anxiety and depression. We must look at ways of supporting people, carers and the workforce.



Some people are now not getting person-centred support and human rights are affected by things like the loss of care home visiting.



People want to use their direct payments flexibly in the way that best supports them.



Providers were able to deliver services in ways which suited them and their communities. This led to better outcomes for people.



Lots of services are now a mix of online and face-to-face.



Local Recommendations

Councils should say thank you to services.



Build up community organisations to provide health, care and wellbeing services.



Improve the wellbeing support, guidance and information available to family and unpaid carers.



Increase the use of direct payments and make them quick, easy to get and flexible.



Use local leaders to communicate across organisations helping vulnerable and isolated people.



Support providers to be creative.



Work to make services use online and face-to-face contact to meet need.



Work with care home providers to design safe visiting.



Day Centre

Work with providers and people who use services to redesign day services to create more choice, flexibility and accessibility.



National Recommendations
Share best practice around:

- infection control



- care home visits



- direct payments



- working with volunteers



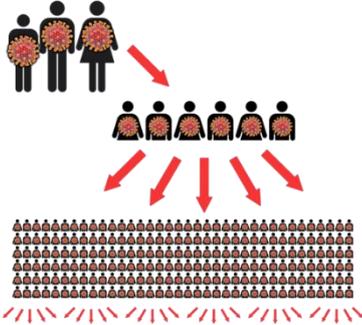
- day services



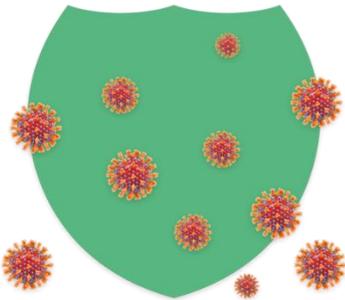
- outcome-based commissioning.



Plans should take account of the needs of family and unpaid carers around the workforce, living well at home and stopping people from going into hospital.



Develop new models of care based on the experience of the pandemic.



We believe adult social care services played an important role in protecting lives.



They will continue to support people long after the virus is gone.



We believe adult social care must now be seen as equal to the NHS with a fair funding settlement and long-term plan.



The report has been sent to the 23 North West councils and the people who shared their stories.



It has also been shared with:

- North West MPs



- National ADASS



- The Local Government Association



We want to thank everyone who bravely shared their story.