

People strongly support building on the strengths of our staff and existing services, providing more joined-up and personalised care, working closely with local partners, and continuing to involve people as the strategy develops. However, they raised concerns about how difficult services can be to navigate, communication and digital exclusion, delays and inconsistent access, losing local strengths, and pressures on community organisations.

They also identified opportunities to make care simpler and more joined up, build on local community strengths, offer more choice and flexibility, involve people in shaping change, use digital where it helps, and strengthen links with primary care and community partners.

Cross-cutting themes:

1. People want services to be easier to navigate

People told us that health and care services can be difficult to understand and navigate, particularly for people with more complex needs.

- They want clearer information about where to go and what to expect.
- They want simpler ways to access the right support.
- They want better support to help them navigate services.

What's needed:

Clearer information, simpler routes into care and better support to navigate services.

2. Communication needs to work for everyone

People told us that clear and timely communication is an important part of a good experience of care.

- They want to be kept informed about appointments and what happens next.
- They want information that is clear and accessible.
- They want communication to work for different languages, needs and abilities.
- They want digital options without losing personal contact.

What's needed:

Clear, accessible communication and choice in how people communicate with services.

3. People want care to be joined up around them

People told us that different services do not always work well together.

- They want better communication and information sharing between services.
- They want stronger links between GP, hospital, community, social care and voluntary services.
- They want their different needs to be considered together.
- They do not want to have to navigate separate services on their own.

What's needed:

Better joined-up care, information sharing and coordination around people's needs.

4. Local matters

People told us that local relationships, services and community spaces are important.

- They value care and support close to home where appropriate.
- They want to build on the strengths already found in Dudley communities.
- They want to make better use of local groups, organisations and community spaces.
- They want local identity, relationships and community voices to be retained.

What's needed:

Build on local strengths while keeping communities connected, involved and heard.

5. Access and flexibility matter

People told us that services need to work better around people's lives.

- They want more choice about where and when they receive care.
- They want greater flexibility around appointments and communication.
- They highlighted barriers such as transport, parking and accessibility.
- They suggested bringing more services into community settings.

What's needed:

More choice, flexibility and accessible services closer to where people live.

6. Digital can help – but it must not exclude people

People told us that digital services can offer benefits, but they should not replace other ways of accessing care.

- They see benefits in virtual appointments, apps and digital tools.
- They want non-digital options to remain available.
- They do not want digital services to become a barrier to care.
- They want digital to provide additional choice and flexibility.

What's needed:

Digital options that add choice, while keeping non-digital routes and personal contact available.

7. Prevention starts in communities

People told us that local communities already play an important role in keeping people healthy and connected.

- They want to build on the work of local groups and organisations.
- They want to make better use of existing community spaces and assets.
- They want local support to be easier to find.
- They want to make sure people who are digitally excluded are not left behind.

What's needed:

Build on community strengths and make local support easier to find and access.

What we need to explore next

Communication that works for everyone

What does clear, accessible communication look like for different communities and how can digital and non-digital options work together so everyone can access support?

Care closer to home and stronger communities

What should care closer to home look like, and how can we build on the strengths of local communities.