



WHAT IS WORKING WELL SNAPSHOT

June 2021

healthwatch
Merton

The Context

The key focus of this snapshot report is to share ‘what is working well’.

Towards the end of 2020 Healthwatch Merton decided to explore what had been working well across Health and Social care during the pandemic.

Another aspect of this work was to ask people whether they had started connecting digitally since April 2020 and what support was still needed to help overcome the challenges of staying online.

The insight collected from people, since late 2020, is not reflective of all of the views/opinions and these may also have changed as services have adapted more or could be experiencing other challenges.

The online survey and virtual outreach did flag up ongoing concerns and improvements that could be made which we will use to inform our colleagues, service providers and commissioners as part of our Healthwatch Merton work.

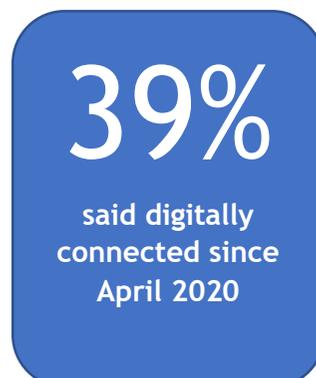
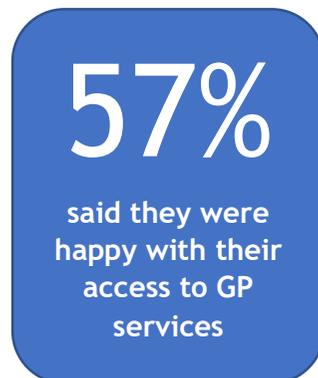
Methodology

An online survey invited Merton residents to share what had been working well remotely with health (e.g., 111 A&E Bookings and pharmacy delivery services), social care and community services (e.g., digital consultations and over the phone).

Examples of good practice were also shared about people’s experiences or those of someone they care for.

Alongside the online survey we also sought examples of what was working well through our virtual outreach programme that we carried out with the Patient and Public Engagement Manager (Merton) from NHS South West London CCG.

Key Findings

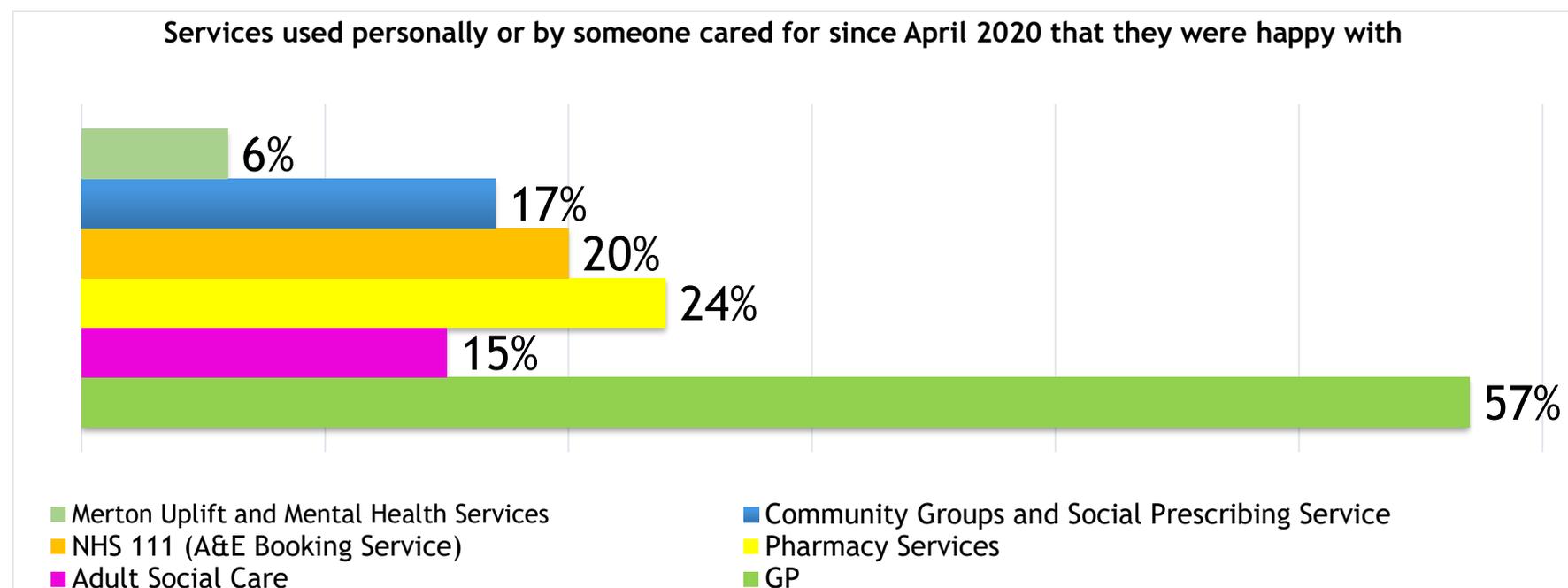


The Responses - What is Working Well Survey

The following questions were listed in the online survey that was shared widely back in early January 2021.

The responses collated below are from the **45** survey respondents.

Which of the following services have you or someone you care for used since April 2020 that you have been really happy with? (people could select more than one option)



Please note the data does not compare these services to each other; it reflects the % of people who mentioned each service in relation to the question.

We asked people to please share an example of a service/s you were happy with and why.

To supplement the online survey, the insights below also include people’s comments from Healthwatch Merton’s outreach (carried out in partnership with the South West London Clinical Commissioning Group Patient and Public Engagement Manager for Merton) at group meetings of the Ethnic Minority Centre, Wimbledon Guild, Merton Patient Engagement Group, Age UK Merton, Carers Support Merton and Merton Centre of Independent Living.

Pharmacy Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing a free delivery service, with a usual turn-around in 48 hours, this saves me the inconvenience and potential risk from having to leave my home and collect prescriptions myself. • Excellent help from local pharmacist with ordering/delivering medication - essential due to shielding • Pharmacist has delivered medication regularly and has been on hand to answer any queries I have had • When I went to pick up my prescription, got a flu jab. • Chemist are working well. Prescriptions and medication being delivered home has been really helpful.
Accessing GP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online GP appointments were great, our surgery stopped ASAP and that’s a shame • Happy dealing with issues by phone rather than going in • Got an ECG in GP surgery, much better than having to go elsewhere and come back for another appt, very efficient, moved the process along very quickly • Calls with GPs have worked really well and have been a pleasant experience. • There is a box outside of the surgery for repeat prescriptions so you don’t have to go into the surgery, this is great for people who cannot go online. • GP Practice has a new system, if there is a long queue on the phones, they offer a service where they will call you back when you're near the front. • Ongoing issues of which I sent photo and the cream needed was sent across to pharmacy who delivered • Great video and GP confirmed issues and we received medication, a very quick turnaround.
NHS 111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I and my family have had to use 111 a couple of times and they have dealt with our problem very well and got us the right help • The NHS 111 (A&E Booking Service) have delivered a very effective service that my aunty is happy about when she had a stroke attack they provided a taxi service for her instead of waiting for hours for the ambulance to arrive because she needed very urgent care

Outpatient Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was given a referral to physio and they contacted me very quickly and worked out a plan to remedy my problem • Efficient service within Oncology Services - where possible telephone consultations, but where necessary face to face - ease of access to the team • Outpatients at the Nelson Hospital give an excellent service • A St George's audiology consultant delivered a telephone appointment with a patient. The patient felt this appointment was better than usual due to the patient feeling they had the doctor's undivided attention. The consultant took his time and the appointment was not hurried.
Community Groups/Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merton Dementia Hub as they were extremely supportive • Wimbledon Guild fabulous with getting messages and help with meals and shopping • Sunshine Café Very friendly staff
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt the vaccine info events were very good, trusted public health information coming from clinicians • I was really impressed with the Vaccine Clinic from the time that I arrived at it to the time that I left. The doctor administering my vaccine was particularly commendable, asking questions and answering them in a calm, measured way that reassured the patient, given the disruption and distress the virus has caused all of us. She also administered the injection in a considerate way and provided effective after-care. 10/10 for the Vaccine Clinic and many thanks. • I was in the queue for the vaccine and a volunteer noticed I was having great difficulty standing, without me asking them to, they came and brought me near to the front of the queue so that I could sit down and wait. • I needed a blood test. It was very easy and felt very safe. • OT and Speech Therapy for my mother post-stroke have been excellent, both in person when possible, and digitally when not.

We asked people to share any changes to services accessed, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, that they felt should remain more permanent.

Accessing GP Services by video call/phone
<p>Some GP services are undoubtedly better time-resourced by virtual appointments. On the whole, if one needs to speak with a GP remotely then this will occur within half a day. I do think that more could be achieved by using video too rather than audio alone. I had one in-surgery session with a practice nurse where we consulted, quite effectively, by video with a specialist who needed an anatomical view. Wider adoption of this for patients who are familiar with the technology would also lead to more effective use of everyone's time</p>
<p>The phone call appointment option with the GP service. Sometimes as a chronic pain patient it's not easy to get to the surgery</p>
<p>Ongoing issues can be done online or over the phone but new issues should be in person and video call next best thing as want to see the GP.</p>
<p>Some initial consultations would be fine to be by phone/Zoom etc. if it means GPs are more accessible and their time is better spent</p>
<p>The only change that I have experienced and which I would like to see made permanent (regardless of pandemics) would be the ability to select (or not) phone/video call services. This would be so that clinicians can do a basic assessment of housebound patients without either doing home visits themselves or creating a logistical nightmare for the vulnerable (and those who care for them) to attend the surgery.</p>
<p>Unpaid Carers might [have] to take time off work to get a vulnerable person to and from a medical appointment... I realise that it is time-consuming and sometimes risky for GPs to do home visits but there must be a better solution. Tele-medicine is an option here but this needs to be better run to set appointment times just as it would be in-person.</p>
<p>Option for virtual GP appointments useful in some circumstances</p>
<p>GP telephone consultations - although I think I would prefer video consultations</p>
<p>Digital/phone/email contact with GP worked well for me - I know it doesn't work that way for everyone.</p>
<p>The use of telephone consultations benefits both the patient and the consultant - but only where it is safe to do so</p>
<p>Things like medication reviews online and some online GP appointments</p>

Other
Voluntary community support - marvellous spirit
Merton Uplift Digital Services. Very convenient
Virtual online meetings/events between public and health practitioners themed around health conditions and how to better manage them.

Across the Healthwatch England network other Healthwatch branches have carried out similar insight gathering, and where the comments collected are positive they reflect the ‘What is Working Well’ in Merton residents:

“As a registered patient, I booked online for a video appointment... A text arrived from the doctor at my appointment time. I clicked on it, was able to use the video app in seconds, and there was my doctor on my phone! I never thought it would work. He liked it as he could see me which might help a bit with diagnosis. He issued a prescription which was sent electronically to the chemist for me to collect same day. Very lucky to have this service!” Story shared with Healthwatch Bucks

“I used e-Consult to inform my doctor about a skin problem. I was able to attach a photo and answer a range of questions which narrowed down my condition. I was informed that I would be contacted within 48 hours. That happened, and I was given an appointment to visit a GP within two days. ... At the Practice, the entry was well controlled and seating was spaced apart. I was encouraged to use hand-sanitiser on arrival and departure. I was pleased with the process and the outcome.” Story shared with Healthwatch Shropshire

“Online delivering of healthcare services has made it easier to access services because you speak in your own house and you can show them through video what your problem is, and your Dr gives you more time. They are not in a rush. I just call the pharmacy and get my medication. So, I don’t have to travel. But this is easy for me [because] I don’t have a language barrier. What about those from the community with a language barrier - it is not clear whether you can have a third person there to help with translation. These virtual ways are difficult for those with a language barrier, the elderly who have difficulty to engage with technology.” Healthwatch Birmingham

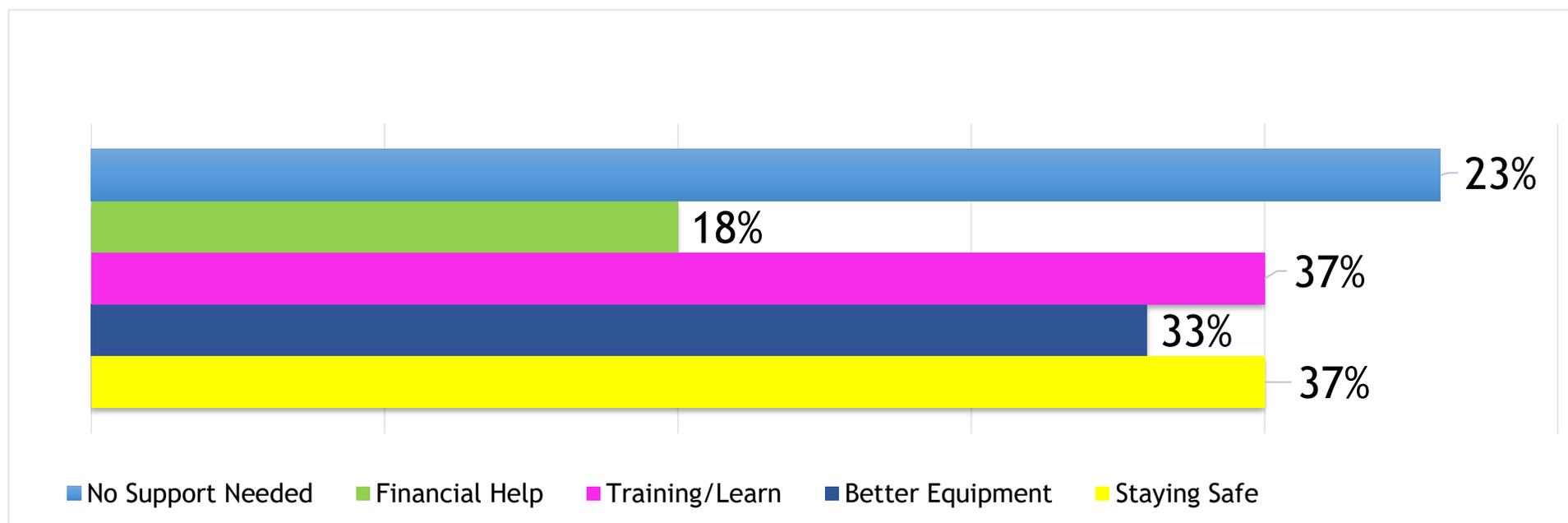
Connecting Digitally

To supplement our insight gathering the Merton Connected Social Prescribing Team asked **24** people the 2 digital related questions from the What is Working Well Survey. Total responses to the digital focused questions **69**.

We asked people if they had started accessing services digitally (e.g., virtual meetings, face time, using apps, etc.) since April 2020.

Out of the **69** responses **39%** said they had started connecting digitally since April 2020.

In addition, we asked people whether they would benefit from further training, financial help, better equipment and help with staying safe online (people could tick more than one).



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The key focus of this ‘What is Working Well’ snapshot was to share the insights and views of people living or caring for someone in Merton of what has been working well.

Healthwatch Merton feel that it is important to showcase these examples that can help shape and inform services/providers approach to serving Merton’s community. As new approaches of engaging people in health and social care evolve, these practices should be seen as an option for people rather than a substitute for what happened pre-pandemic.

Recommendation 1 - When choosing a method of service delivery (i.e. in person or distance consultation) there should be no assumed default, as each can be a disadvantage in various circumstances. Services should be adaptable enough to deliver via the most appropriate method in any individual circumstance, and proactive about ascertaining which method that is. This would ideally include hybrid delivery in the situation where group services are running. Care should be taken to make sure that no method of delivery privileges those who choose it over those who choose another method.

Recommendation 2 - To ensure connecting digitally is an option for more people. The barriers blocking those who are excluded need to be addressed and could inform a Merton wide digital strategy/plan.

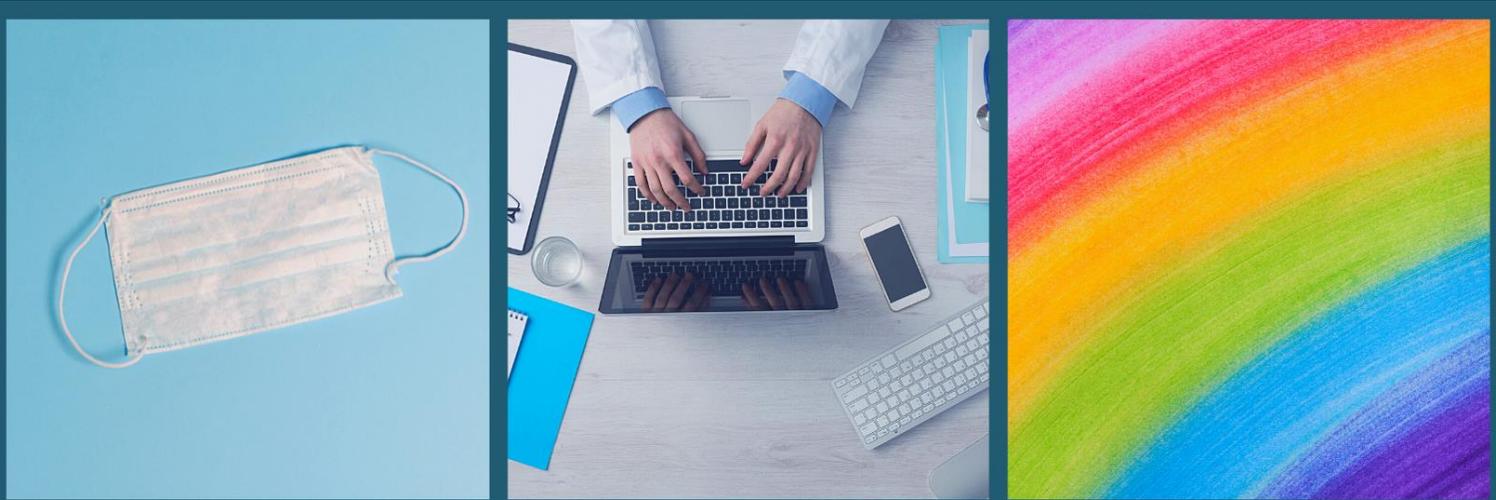
Our Key Recommendation (below) - is linked to the key findings that came from the ‘Connecting Digitally’ part of our ‘what is working well project’:

We suggest a Merton Digital Summit

We feel this summit should be held as a hybrid (some people online and at a physical venue) to embrace the new digital ways of working together.

The Key themes of the Merton Digital Summit could explore: -

- Start a mapping exercise of digital support of what is already out there to meet the emerging needs (e.g. Carers Support Merton Digital Champions)
- Share findings from reports or pieces of research that has been carried out by organisations across all sectors over the last 6 months
- Enable innovative ways to help communities excluded from being online (e.g., Digital Pods across the Merton that could be supported with Digital Chaperones to ensure people are supported safely when logging online)
- Formulate a Merton or South West London Digital Strategy
- Create a Digital Connect Pilot Fund to enable innovation (e.g., similar to Clarion Digital Grants)



WHAT IS WORKING WELL SNAPSHOT

June 2021



Vestry Hall
London Road
Mitcham
CR4 3UD

T: 020 8658 2282
E: info@healthwatchmerton.co.uk
W: www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk