

Letter sent via email

Dr John T Dean  
Chairman Healthwatch Sunderland  
clare.render@pcp.uk.net

27 October 2020

Dear John,

Thank you for sharing with us your COVID-19 survey which took place in June 2020 and received an impressive number of responses.

We very much value all feedback about local health and care services as this helps us to learn and continuously improve the quality of what we do and how we can work together more effectively.

The findings of Healthwatch Sunderland's COVID-19 survey were presented at our Executive Board meeting in September 2020 as part of our regular Communications and Engagement update report. We have also disseminated the report via our Business Group to all of our Programme boards. This means all key health and care partners involved in All Together Better Sunderland have seen a copy of the Healthwatch findings and are sighted on this key feedback from patients and the public which was gathered at the start of the pandemic.

It was certainly reassuring to read that the majority of people had overall very positive experiences when using local healthcare services and that they were able to easily find information and advice. As ever, of course, we are most interested in what we can do better and in particular the feedback around social care support and how we can improve communication with patients and their loved ones during times of such fast paced change.

Of particular note and concern was the negative impact of COVID-19 on peoples' mental health and their physical wellbeing with many more people drinking more alcohol, smoking and gaining weight.

As an alliance of health and care providers, the All Together Better Sunderland Executive Group recently met to discuss some of these very issues which the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown into sharp focus and to reaffirm our commitment to reducing health inequalities in Sunderland.

I hope this is a helpful response and we look forward to continuing to work in close partnership with Healthwatch Sunderland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Foster', written in a cursive style.

**Philip Foster**  
Managing Director