



Attended by over 15 members, the forum provided an opportunity for members to share their experience and learnings on dealing with Coronavirus.

The Forum kicked-off with a discussion on the boundary between the community and NHS services, before moving on to a more general discussion among attendees.

Key discussion points included:

- Social isolation is a significant challenge and new skills are needed to support **quality contact** for vulnerable and isolated people
- People are more empathetic to the impact of social isolation; it is critical to tap into this to further **develop peer support** for the future
- Good **Patient Participation Groups** are proving very valuable, especially as online meetings of up to 16 people can be convened quickly and efficiently
- There are concerns that non-COVID-19 patients are **not presenting** at surgeries or A&E – often they are worried about contracting Coronavirus and/or using NHS resource
- Where communities are **connected and working well**:
 - most vulnerable people don't fall through the net/ are quickly referred
 - service providers are catching-up
- **Housing associations are well placed** to provide additional support, often with a focus on practical help, wellbeing and finances/employment

Finding new ways of working included:

- Better define the frequency and impact of **quality contact** to provide a benchmark against which community skills can be developed/assessed
- Learn from the **success of the Mutual Aid Societies'** response to COVID-19
- Community engagement needs to be a **parallel funded process** to the statutory/formal sector – we need to **provide evidence** that community and network support, and the ability for people to take more control, is what helps people to stay/keep well
- Engage with the **Health Research Authority** who are undertaking research into the learnings from COVID-19 and the community response to this

Summary of 7 April Forum

Discussion points

- Clinical staff have largely been redeployed
- Communities are stepping up/barriers removed
- Reaching isolated people remains a challenge
- Coronavirus is increasing inequities
- Mental health is and will continue to be a major issue

Potential solutions

- 'A right to contact'
- Contacting all tenants/patients
- Community strengthening activity
- Helping people to get online



If you want to hear the outputs from an NHS Voluntary Responders Q&A session hosted by the Royal Voluntary Service and NHS England NHS Improvement last week, please click on the link provided by one of our members here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=curyEsn283o&feature=youtu.be>
