

## Dacorum Community Information Event Notes

### Summary of the Dacorum Community Information Event

The Macmillan Anchor Project Community Information Event for Dacorum brought together 69 representatives from across the NHS, VCFSE and local community organisations. The session was highly engaging and well facilitated, creating space for open discussion and shared reflection. Interactive elements such as participants identifying key themes from flipcharts, helped surface what truly resonated with people in the room.

Presentations from Community Action Dacorum highlighted the role of the VCFSE sector within the wider health and care system, reinforcing the need to recognise community organisations as integral to delivering care. Herts Welcomes Refugees shared insights from their work supporting asylum seekers, while the Proactive Anticipatory Care service provided a powerful case study demonstrating the impact of coordinated, community-based support.

Overall, the event offered valuable insight into how support is accessed in practice, the strength of local partnerships and the critical role of community-led approaches in improving access and outcomes.



### Relationships (Primary access)

People mainly access support through people they know:

- Friends, family, neighbours
- Word of mouth
- Trusted relationships and human contact
- Lived experience (family and friends)
- Families (matriarchs)
- Faith leaders
- Carers
- Community champions
- By accident



### Community (VCFSE and local support)

Support rooted in community organisations:

- Local charities / voluntary sector
- Community groups / peer groups
- Home Start charity
- Volunteer-led advice
- Faith community communication
- Community housing

### HOW PEOPLE ACCESS

#### Services

#### (Secondary access)

Formal routes into health and care:

- General Practice
- Health visitors / Public Health
- Nurse
- Pharmacy / health services
- Social prescribers / community navigators
- Social services / support workers
- Support agencies
- Herts Help, CAB
- Age UK

#### Digital access (Conditional)

Used when people have the tools and support:

- Internet / online support
- Social media
- Council websites / statutory services
- Artificial Intelligence
- Online advice (often supported by friends or family)



### Communication channels (Supporting layer)

How information is shared locally:

- Newsletters (local groups)
- Local newspapers / magazines
- Notice boards / bus stops / posters
- Television
- Information from trusted organisations



### Everyday places (Proximity access)

Support accessed through day to day environments

- Libraries
- Schools / children's centres / toddler groups
- Community centres / local groups
- Leisure centres / football clubs
- Businesses / supermarkets
- Cafés, pubs, hairdressers
- Access via home visits

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### What Gets In The Way

#### Human factors

Fear, stigma, anxiety  
Confidence to ask for help  
Cultural expectations  
Language barriers  
Lack of trust  
Isolation

#### Inequality

Transport  
Money / poverty  
Time and childcare  
Mobility  
Rural isolation  
Digital exclusion



#### Navigation

System is hard to move through:  
Not knowing where to start  
Juggling multiple services  
Fragmentation  
Limited data sharing  
Information exists but is hard to use

#### Gap: System visibility

Missing resident voice  
Limited local insight and data  
No hyper-local directory  
“Not knowing who we don’t know”  
Communities within communities not understood

### Who is less likely to be reached

Refugees and asylum seekers  
Travellers, Roma communities  
Deaf and sensory impaired  
Homeless and housebound  
Carers  
Ex-offenders  
Minority ethnic communities within communities  
Neurodiverse  
Disabled groups



### Insight: Relational access

People access support differently  
Access is shaped by relationships  
Communities within communities  
Confidence to ask matters  
Trust is central



### Suggested Actions

- Test community information days in local neighbourhoods (e.g. bringing services, VCFSE and residents into one space)
- Identify and support community connectors and champions (e.g. people already trusted within communities)
- Create simple, local ways to find support (e.g. WhatsApp, face to face support, trusted community routes rather than directories alone)
- Set up local drop-in sessions where people can get support without an appointment (e.g. in community centres, faith spaces, libraries)
- Bring services together to improve coordination (e.g. reducing duplication and making it easier for residents to navigate support)
- Use local data and insight to prioritise key communities (e.g. focusing on groups who are not currently being reached)

