

Your Voice

Pharmacies in Lancashire

November 2017

Fylde Coast

Report summarising the findings of Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackpool's patient engagement activities in community pharmacies across the Fylde Coast.

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Why we undertook this project	Page 3
Reference for the reader - STP and LDPs explained	Page 3
Methodology	Page 4
Acknowledgments	Page 4
Breakdown of findings for Fylde Coast	Page 5
Fylde Coast findings	Page 6
How we will use this report	Page 13
Who we spoke to during this project (demographics)	Page 14

Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is committed to listening to patients and members of the public in Lancashire and making sure their views and experiences are heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social care services. This is achieved through a core programme of work visiting health and social care services and speaking to service users.

Healthwatch Lancashire, Healthwatch Blackpool and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen were approached to help Community Pharmacy Lancashire gain feedback on their services to the public across the county of Lancashire. The three local Healthwatch organisations of Lancashire collaborated and developed a programme of work which ran from January 2017 to March 2017.

Each local Healthwatch lead in their geographical area. As this part of the project was for pharmacies within the Fylde Coast area, Healthwatch Lancashire delivered engagement activities in Fylde and Wyre, whilst Healthwatch Blackpool delivered those within Blackpool.

Reports for other areas across Lancashire, including a report which combines all findings in the project, can be found on the Healthwatch Lancashire website here:

[http://healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/reports/reports/.](http://healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/reports/reports/)

Why we undertook this project

The aim of this programme was to gather experiences from the public about pharmacy services in Lancashire. Over the past four years, we have received little independent feedback regarding public perceptions of pharmacy services. However, the public are increasingly encouraged to use pharmacy services for minor illnesses or ailments, partly to reduce pressures on primary or secondary care services including A&E. As such, the aim of our pharmacy programme was to gather views and experiences from the public about pharmacy services across Lancashire.

About Community Pharmacy Lancashire

The Lancashire Local Pharmaceutical Committee are known as Community Pharmacy Lancashire. A Local Pharmaceutical Committee, or LPC, is a statutory body that works within NHS regulations to represent and support community pharmacists and owners of community pharmacies. Community pharmacies (also known as chemists) can be found across Lancashire e.g. in health centres, supermarkets and high streets, villages and local housing estates and also online.

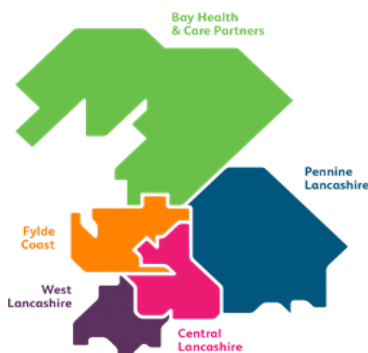
Community Pharmacy Lancashire works with the local NHS England area team, local authorities and other healthcare professionals to help plan health care across the area (including Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council areas). The LPC works with commissioners to implement community pharmacy services. They are available to advise community pharmacists and owners, as well as allied professions such as GPs and hospitals. This advice is also available to those who want to know more about what their local pharmacy can offer them, or those people who are simply visiting the area.

Reference for the reader - STP and LDPs explained

Throughout this report, we refer to Local Delivery Plan (LDP) areas. The five LDPs operate as part of the Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria Sustainability and Transformation Partnership also known as the STP. The STP is a group of organisations including Local Healthwatch who work together to improve health and care in our region. For more information www.lancshiresouthcumbria.org.uk.

Information in this report is provided to organisations within the STP to ensure that the public voice is used to influence change in service improvement and redesign.

Map of Local Delivery Plan area



Below are the LDP areas in Lancashire:

- **Bay Health & Care Partners:** Lancaster and Morecambe
- **Pennine Lancashire:** Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley and Blackburn with Darwen
- **Central Lancashire:** Preston, Chorley and South Ribble
- **West Lancashire:** Ormskirk and Skelmersdale
- **Fylde Coast:** Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre

Methodology

We wanted to find out about:

- Experiences of accessing pharmacies and why people chose the pharmacy they attended
- Awareness and use of community pharmacy services
- Quality of care provided
- Whether using the pharmacy means that people use other health services differently. For example, people choosing to attend their pharmacy rather than going to their GP.
- Awareness, use and helpfulness of the Electronic Prescription Service. **Please note, this service is provided by NHS Digital rather than the pharmacies. For more information on this service please visit the NHS Choices website here:**
<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/pharmacists/Pages/eps.aspx>

The three local Healthwatch spoke to people in a selection of community pharmacies in Lancashire:

- 24 different pharmacies were visited across Lancashire, including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.
- Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackpool spoke to people at six pharmacies within the Fylde Coast Local Delivery Plan area. The findings are detailed in this report.
- 63 people shared their views and experiences.

Note, the number of respondents varied for each question, as often once people were served or received their prescriptions they did not have time to fully complete the survey. The number of people that answered each question is detailed in brackets under the results of each question.

Acknowledgments

Local Healthwatch would like to thank Community Pharmacy Lancashire, and all the staff working in the individual pharmacies that we visited for making us feel welcome. We would also like to thank the people that took the time to share their experiences of their local pharmacy during our visits. Lastly, we would like to thank local Healthwatch volunteers who supported this project.

We asked people about accessing pharmacies and why they chose the pharmacy they attended and found:

- 92% of people said they did not have any difficulties in attending the pharmacy. The majority that commented further said they did not struggle because the pharmacy is local to them. One person said they had experienced difficulties due to an unreliable bus service.
- 82% of people said they usually attend that pharmacy.
- 84% of people said they usually attend that pharmacy for convenience. 16% said they chose the pharmacy because of the good service it provided.
- The majority of people who chose to comment said they usually attend this pharmacy because the GP is on site or nearby. Of those who commented they do not usually attend this pharmacy, the majority said they chose it because their GP is still nearby.

We asked people about their awareness and use of community pharmacy services and found:

- 47% of people said they use the pharmacy for prescriptions, 20% for healthcare advice, 20% for over the counter medication, 11% said for other reasons including to buy toiletries and 2% because they struggle to get appointments at their GP.
- 85% of people said they were aware of the services available at the pharmacy.
- 66% of people had not used the Minor Ailment Service. The majority of people who provided further comments said they had not needed the Minor Ailment Service. Several said they were unaware of the service and two said some medication was no longer available on it.
- 51% of people had attended a consultation with the pharmacist. Some said they had not needed the service and a small number said they need to their GP.

We asked people about the quality of care provided and found:

- The majority of comments received were positive. 5% of comments were negative including issues with prescriptions, long waiting times and people wanting more services to be available at the pharmacy.
- 18% of people said they felt the pharmacy could improve its services, including a comment on increasing staff numbers to reduce waiting times, accepting sharps disposals, ensuring adequate stock and more advertising of the services.

- The majority of people that had used the Minor Ailment Service said they were happy with the service. One person said the service was not good as ‘information is patchy and you can only have specific medication.’
- The majority of people that had attended a consultation with the pharmacist said they were happy with the service, with particularly good feedback received on medication reviews and advice.

We asked people whether using the pharmacy means that they use other health services differently and found:

- 49% of people said they felt attending the pharmacy meant they do attend other health services less, particularly because they attended the pharmacy for advice. 51% said they did not think it made any difference, largely because they would still also need or prefer to see their GP.

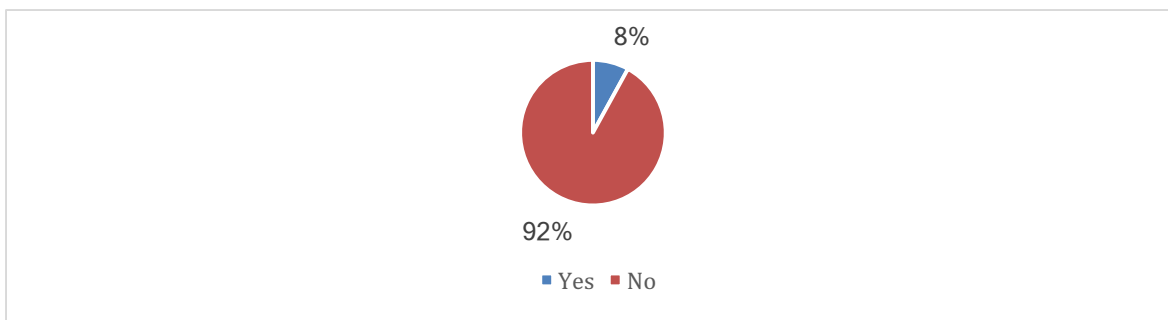
We asked people about their awareness, use and helpfulness of the Electronic Prescription Service and found:

- 67% of people said they use the Electronic Prescription Service.
- The majority of people made positive comments about the Electronic Prescription Service. A small number said the Electronic Prescription Service was not good including issues raised on missing items, some items not enabled to be ordered electronically such as sharps, and medication not stocked.

Fylde Coast results

This section provides further detail on the views shared by 63 people that we spoke to within the Fylde Coast Local Delivery Plan area.

1. We asked: ‘Have you had any difficulties getting here today?’



(63 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided:

"I live across the road."

"I get the bus."

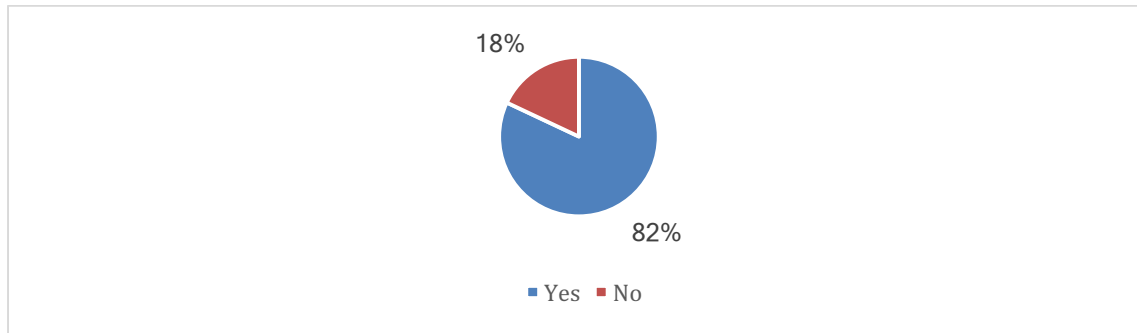
"I'm not great at walking so when I can't get here they deliver for me."

"It was convenient to get here today."

"I need my mobility scooter and can use this here as the building is accessible."

"The car park is handy."

2. We asked: 'Do you usually come to this pharmacy?'



(62 people answered)

3. We asked those that answered yes to the above question: 'why is this?'

84% said for the convenience

16% said for the good service provided at this pharmacy

(47 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided:

"It's closer to home, my GP is here as well."

"I've been coming here for about 20 years. It's close to where I live."

"It's a large pharmacy and has the medicine I need in stock."

"I can get everything I need here."

"When I am out shopping I normally come here."

"The service is excellent and they have knowledgeable staff."

"It's handy for the doctor. They have cheap over the counter medications and toiletries."

"There's easy parking and a flat surface."

4. We asked those that said they do not usually attend that pharmacy: 'why did you choose this pharmacy today?'

Below are some of the comments provided:

"The GP is here."

"I was in the area."

"It depends where I am as to which pharmacy I use."

"For a change."

(11 people answered)

5. We asked: 'What do you use the pharmacy for?'

47% said to obtain prescriptions **20%** said for healthcare advice

20% said for over the counter medication

11% said for other reasons including to buy toiletries

2% said because they were unable to get a GP/nurse appointment

(63 people answered)

6. We asked: 'What do you think of the service you get here?'

Positive comments received:

"Very good."

"Very prompt."

"Friendly, nice and efficient."

"It's good, they know you well."

"The prescriptions services are good and they're well stocked."

"Brilliant. It's better than other pharmacies. The delivery driver here is so much better. He rings the bell and waits patiently for my mother to answer the door which means she isn't rushing and doesn't fall over. When it was another provider, they wouldn't wait and my mum rushed to the door and would often fall over."

"It's very good, better than the GP. I can ask for advice and it's more private and friendly."

Negative comments received:

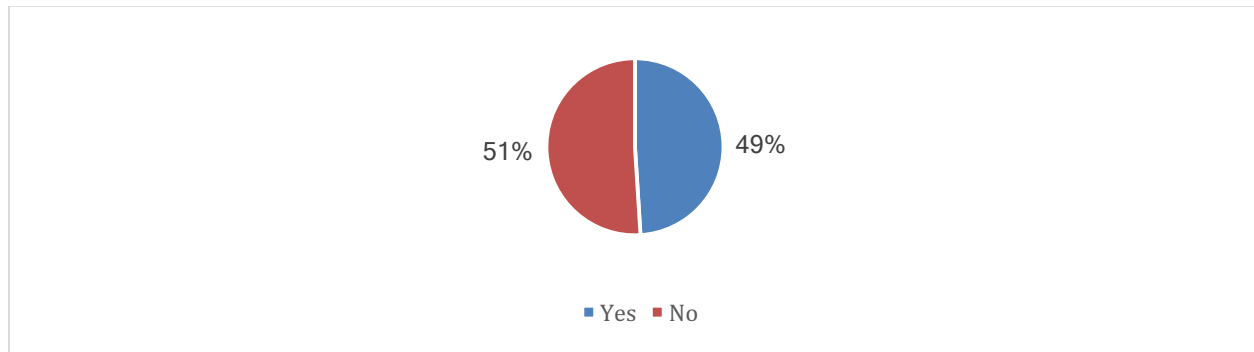
"It's not good but it's not bad. I don't find it particularly helpful though."

"It's not good - I would prefer to go somewhere else if it was more convenient."

“Today they didn't have both items I needed and asked me to come back tomorrow. This is difficult for me.” (When pushed, the pharmacy did offer to deliver the missing items but the patient had already decided to go elsewhere)

(63 people answered)

7. We asked: ‘Do you think that coming to the pharmacy means you attend other health services less?’



(63 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

“I'd come here for advice before going to the GP sometimes.”

“I come here first then go to the GP if needed. It saves time, and appointments are then available for those who really need them.”

“I'm a nurse so I know I can come to the pharmacy for over the counter medicines and self-treat.”

“I get better advice here than at the GP practise. I've had many consultations here.”

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

“I don't think so.”

“Not really - you still need to go to a GP.”

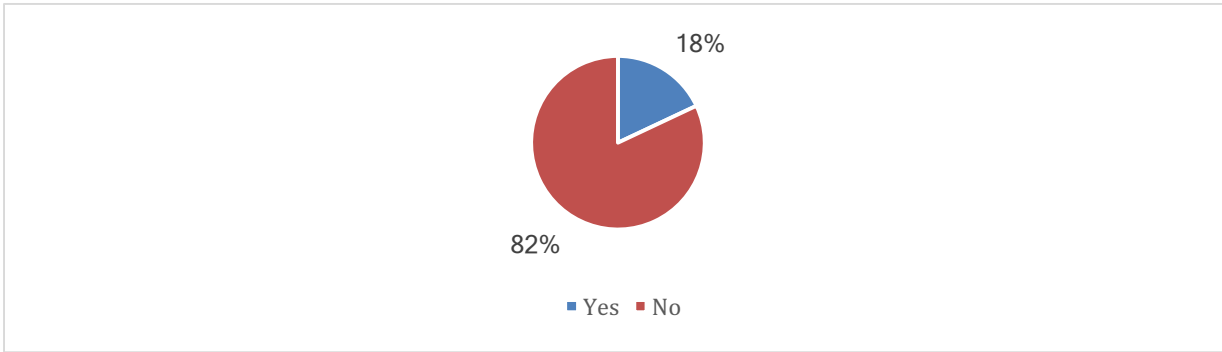
“I don't think it does because it depends what you need the service for.”

“I wouldn't come here over my GP, no way.”

“Not for me, but I think others might.”

“I need regular appointments at my GP for ongoing conditions so it doesn't make a difference for this.”

8. We asked: 'Do you think the pharmacy could improve its services to you?'



(62 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

"I would like to be able to bring used 'sharps' back to the chemist for disposal. At present, they have to be taken back to the GP surgery for disposal."

"More awareness about what services the pharmacy can offer to stop people going to A&E when they don't need to be there."

"Occasionally I think they need more staff so that the waiting time is less."

"They don't always have my special medication here, as I have leukaemia and I always come here for my medication, so they should keep it in stock but often don't."

"Make sure it is fully stocked with fairly ordinary creams, lotions, medicines on prescription."

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

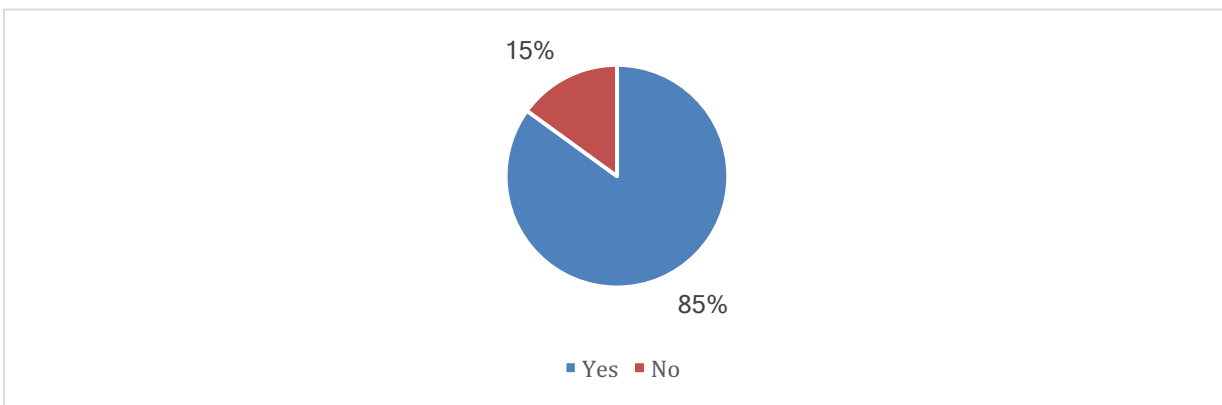
"A good service already provided."

"I'm happy with everything."

"They do enough already, it's not meant to be a walk-in centre."

"They seem to know a lot and do a lot already."

9. We asked: 'Are you aware of the different health services available at this pharmacy?'



(59 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

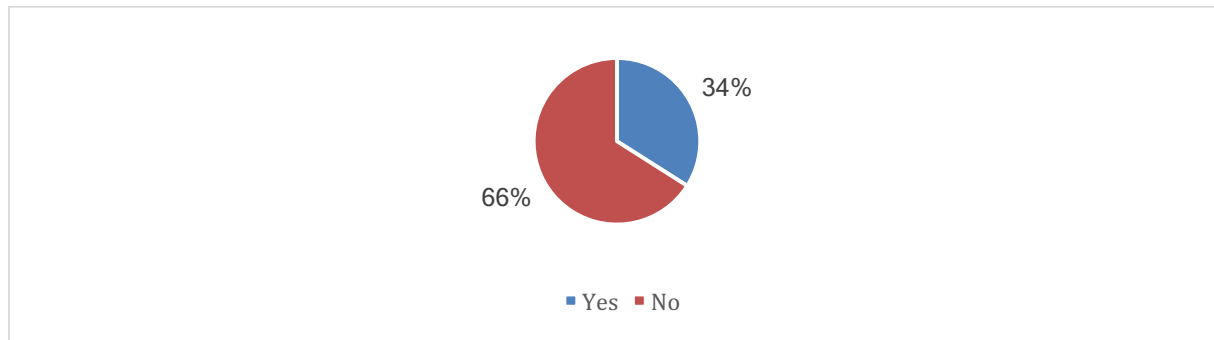
“Yes, minor ailments.”

“I know about them but I only go for advice and prescriptions.”

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

“I’m not sure.”

10. We asked: ‘Have you ever used the Minor Ailment Service? (if provided at this pharmacy)’



(59 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

“Easy.”

“Good.”

“Helpful.”

“It was okay but they have now stopped many medications which were allowed on the scheme.”

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

“I did not know about it.”

“I’m not sure it applies to me.”

“I wouldn’t use it. I would just buy what I need.”

“I won’t use that service.”

“It sounds a good idea though.”

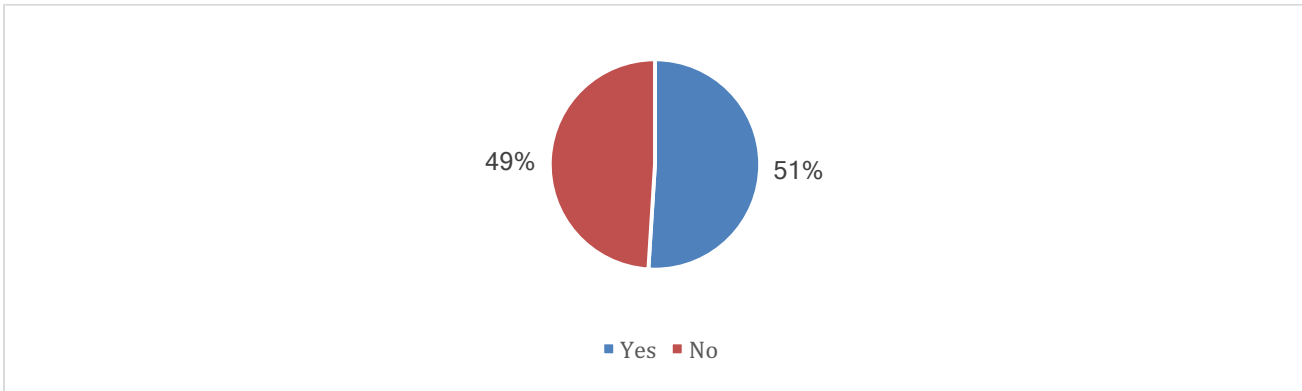
“I just ring 111.”

“Not good - information is patchy and can only have specific medications.”

“You can self-medicate without using this service.”

“I prefer to see my doctor.”

11. We asked: 'Have you ever had a consultation with the pharmacist here?'



(59 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

"I had my medical review."

"Very approachable."

"It was regarding my prescription medication and it really helps."

"It's really useful and they make time for you."

"The consultation was fine and the pharmacist was helpful. I felt he was confident in what he was doing."

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

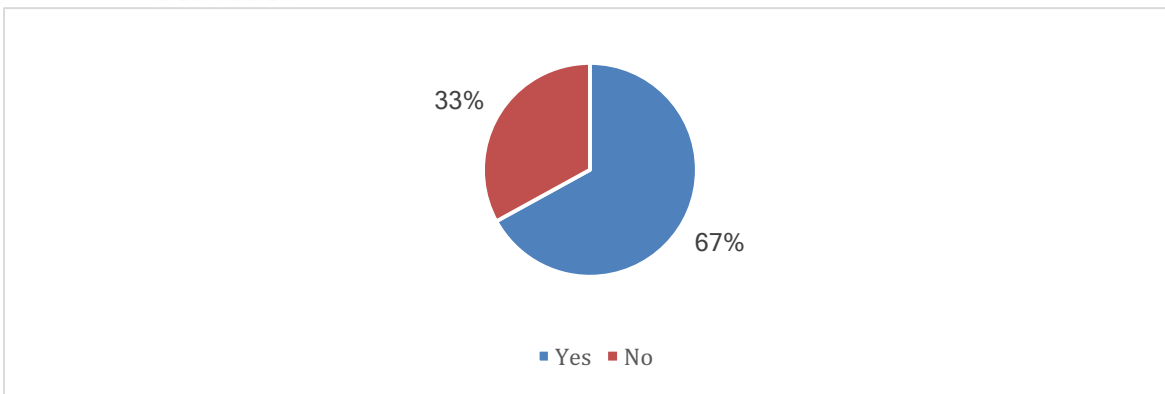
"I've not had to use it."

"I'm a nurse so can mostly self-help."

"I prefer to see doctor."

"I've never thought about it. I've only just noticed the sign now you have pointed it out to me."

12. We asked: 'Do you use the Electronic Prescription service?'



(60 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided:

“It has been okay, staff could do with more IT training.”

“Good and quick.”

“Very convenient.”

“A lot better than ringing through the GP practice.”

“Good, as long as I remember my password to log on.”

“My prescriptions for my sharps (needles, as I self-inject my medication) can't be sent electronically. Therefore, I have to go to GP to pick up that prescription but then the other items I need are sent electronically so it doesn't really benefit or work better for me.”

“It was ok. However, the GP's need to know their areas better as they often send you to a pharmacy that isn't convenient for you.”

“It works. Sometimes they don't have my medication in stock so I have to come back another time to collect what is owing.”

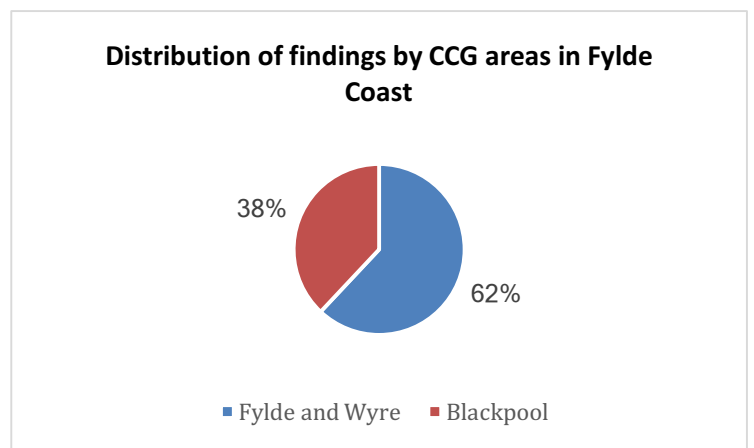
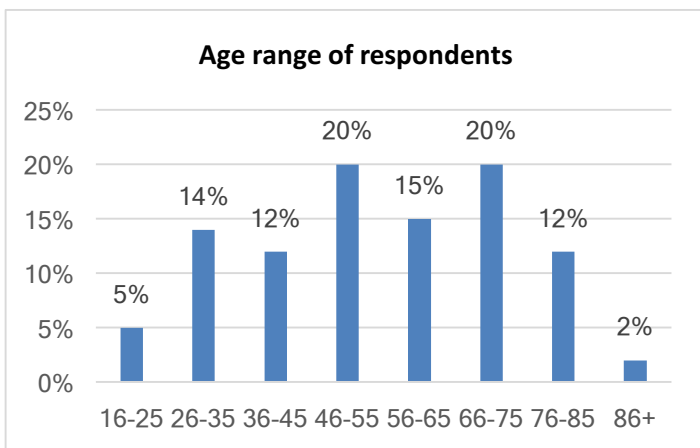
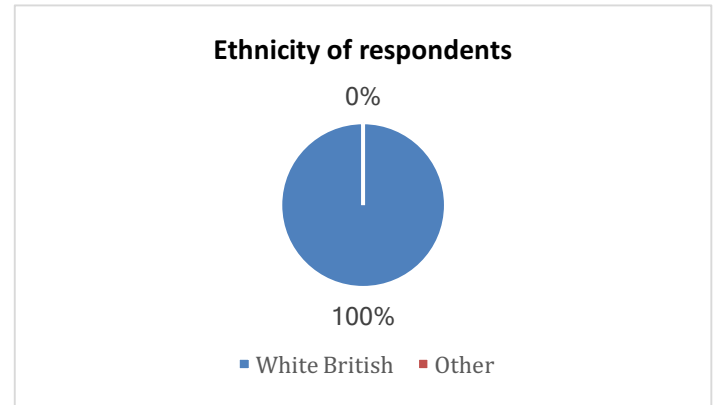
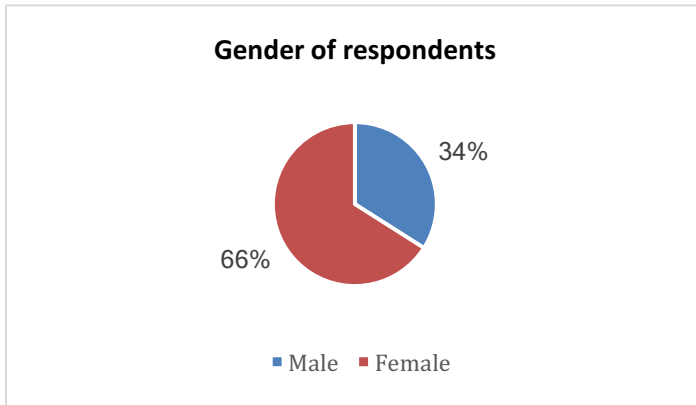
“Good, but the GP surgery needs to give all correct and updated information to the pharmacy for it to work, otherwise your prescriptions are delayed.”

How we will use this report

- The experiences and views shared by people in this report will be shared with and used within the Primary Care Strategy and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment as a tool to influence decisions on these services.
- This report will be shared with:
 - Local Clinical Commissioning Groups
 - NHS England
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in Lancashire
 - Healthwatch England to help generate a picture of public views on pharmacy services across England

Who we spoke to during this project

Below shows some demographic characteristics of people we spoke to and where they were within the Fylde Coast Local Delivery Plan area:



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 Facebook: facebook.com/lancshealthwatch