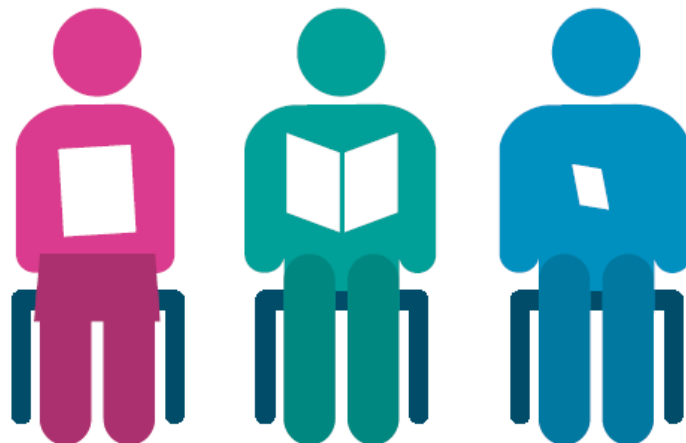


# GP Digest

September 2017

Trends from 1 March to 31 August



[www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk)

## Introduction

This report is developed to present to the Primary Care Quality Group. It aims to present the feedback we have received on a 6-monthly basis to highlight good practice and areas in need of improvement. Healthwatch North Tyneside have collected the feedback received between 1 March to 31 August 2017 to understand how GP surgeries within North Tyneside are performing. We received feedback from 140 people about GPs throughout this period, this included general feedback from 120 people and feedback from 20 people through our online Feedback Centre. We received feedback about a range of GPs from across the borough:

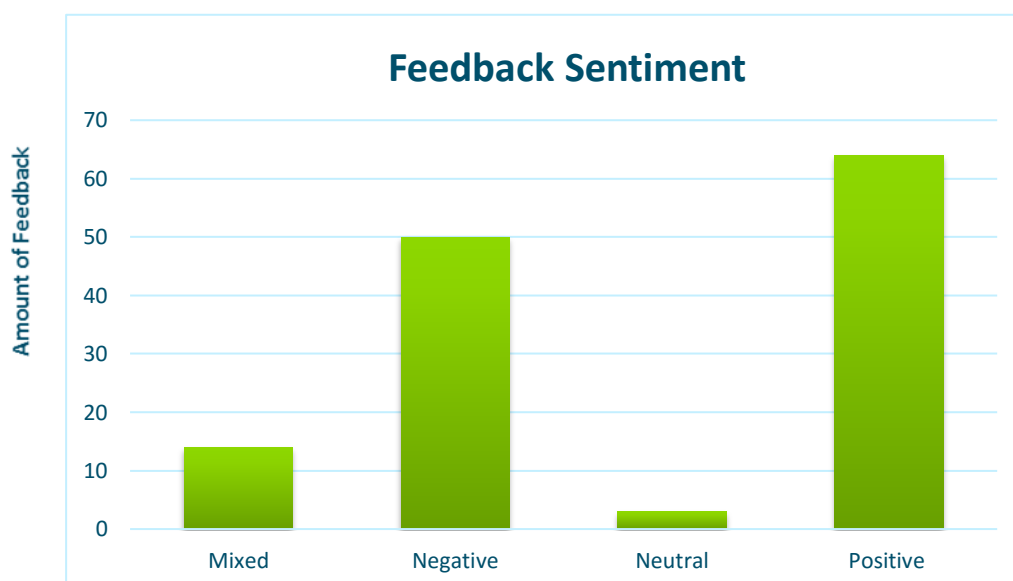
GP Practice	Feedback
Forest Hall Medical Centre	4
Spring Terrace Health Centre	3
Park Parade Surgery	1
Collingwood Surgery	3
Portugal Place Health Centre	16
Earsdon Park Surgery	3
Appleby Surgery	2
Marine Avenue Medical Centre	4
Beaumont Park GP	3
West Farm Surgery	2
Monkseaton Medical Centre	2
Battle Hill Health Centre	2
Bewicke Medical Centre	10
Garden Park Surgery	7
Village Green Surgery	15
Bridge Medical	3
Jubilee Park Surgery	2
Mallard Medical Practice	1
Tynemouth Village Day Centre	1
Whitley Bay Health Centre	2
Netherfield House Surgery	1
Wideopen Medical Centre	9
Wellspring Medical Practice	2
Park Road Medical Practice	6
Swarland Avenue Surgery	1
Redburn Park Medical Centre	3
White Swan Surgery	1
Lane End Surgery	1
Unstated	30
<b>Total Feedback</b>	<b>140</b>

It is important to note that we received a significant amount of feedback from some surgeries and less or none from others. This may be due to surgeries promotion of Healthwatch feedback forms, the number of patients at the particular surgery who we have happened to meet or how happy or unhappy people felt with the service provided. Therefore, data may be skewed due to the amount of feedback a surgery received. We will continue to promote our feedback centre and engage with surgeries across the borough and increase our understanding of why feedback is increased or reduced for a number of practices.

We analysed our feedback by looking for key themes in order to understand where GPs are working well and areas where improvements can be made. A key theme was identified if more than 8 people commented on a particular service issue. However, themes often had feedback from between 30-50 people. Feedback was analysed in relation to the following thematic areas:

1. **Quality of service**
2. **Staff attitude**
3. **Availability of appointments and booking system**
4. **Continuity of GPs**
5. **Surgery location and environment**

Overall the feedback we received demonstrated that the majority of people were happy with the service that their GP was currently providing. However, a significant amount of people also highlighted areas where service could be improved.



## 1. Quality of Service

### Positive experiences

41 people's feedback was specifically about the general quality of service people had experienced from their GP surgery. 26 people told us about positive experiences of the quality provided by their GP service:

**“Practice is good, no problems with them, they listen, If I need anything I get it”**

**“Quality of treatment - second to none - whole practice brilliant”**

The surgery which was most highly praised for their good quality of service was the **Village Green surgery**. This was closely followed by **Portugal Place, Marine Avenue and Park Road**.

### Areas for improvement

15 people told us about their negative experiences of the quality of service received:

**“GP's blamed all my problems on stress and ignored abnormal test results but worst of all, wouldn't listen. After leaving there was diagnosed with several serious health conditions”**

People raised a number of issues that had contributed to their poor experiences such as diagnoses and prescribing, however there were no clear recurring themes. We will continue to monitor the reasons behind people's poor experiences of quality of service over the following period. Additionally, no particular GP practice was identified repeatedly as significantly poor in terms of quality of service.

## 2. Staff attitude

### Positive experiences

Of the 50 people whose feedback was about staff attitude, most people (39) described positive experiences of engaging with GP staff:

**“Staff are always willing and able to answer any questions and concerns”**

**“But can't fault them - they are a good team - been fantastic”**

**Garden Park surgery and Village Green surgery** were repeatedly praised for their staff's approach and attitude towards patients.

## Areas for improvement

11 people also discussed experiences of poor staff attitude:

**“GP refused time off sick for patient who has medications for substance misuse and is progressing well with treatment. This has affected patient’s ability to complete training and patient feels this is very unfair - GP told the patient 'just get a job', felt very dismissive of progress.”**

However, the majority of issues about poor staff attitude were in relation to reception staff, with 8 of the 11 negative experiences directly relating to the attitude of reception staff:

**“The receptionist was very rude and dismissive”**

**“Not a good attitude - if you want an appointment the receptionist is 'like a brick wall between you and the doctor”**

People specifically spoke about receptionist staff’s poor attitude and were also concerned about issues of confidentiality and data protection:

**“Receptionist asks lots of questions and for personal info - I don't like that or giving it to someone on the desk - I want to see the doctor - they shouldn't be judging people”**

**“Receptionist was very rude insisting I told her what was wrong in a room full of people”**

As the first person a patient may come into contact with when visiting their GPs, it is vital that reception staff are approachable, and people feel comfortable disclosing the initial information required to make an appointment. However, these comments indicate that a number of patients may feel uncomfortable doing so. Furthermore, this may suggest there’s a gap in the training reception staff receive around patient care and confidentiality. When considering GP practice’s overall staff attitude there were no particular GP practice that was identified repeatedly as significantly poor in terms of staff attitude.

### 3. Availability of appointments and booking system

Views on the availability of appointments were largely mixed, with half (35) of those who gave feedback about it suggesting they were happy with the current availability and booking system they used and half (35) describing significant barriers to accessing an appointment.

## Positive experiences

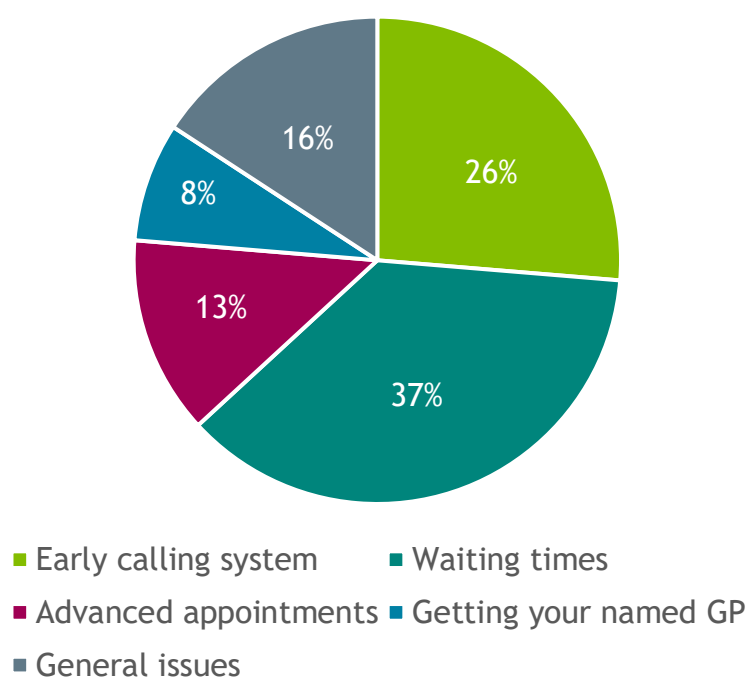
**“Can get appointments easily. Never refused or turned back”**

**“Pretty good and appointments especially emergency appointment - usually get one within 24 hours”**

35 people described how they found it easy to access appointments at their GP surgery. Overall, **Garden Park Surgery** and the **Village Green Surgery** received the most positive comments about their availability of appointments.

## Areas for improvement

### Reasons behind difficulty in accessing appointments



35 people also described negative experiences of accessing appointments.

The largest factor that people described as an issue when accessing appointments was waiting times. This was in relation to both routine appointments and emergency appointments:

**“...for general appointments to check things out you have to wait a month”**

**“Mother has a difficulty - has chest problems and can’t get an appointment for 2 weeks”**

**“They ask if it’s an emergency - I don’t know I need to speak to the GP. Have to wait a week or two weeks to get an appointment”**

Over a quarter of people's feedback on appointment availability was in relation to the early morning booking system. This was often in relation to the practicalities of ringing on the morning:

**“Not easy to get a GP appointment, ring at 8.30 is difficult when working”**

Of those who were able to use this system, a number suggested that it was difficult to get an appointment even when ringing in the early morning slot:

**“Went to GP at 8am but all appointments gone”**

**“Ring at 8am and still can't get an appointment”**

Other feedback people gave us about appointment availability linked to general difficulties, being able to make advanced bookings and availability of appointments with their named GP.

**Portugal Place** and **Bewicke Medical Centre** were both identified as surgeries where people found difficulties in accessing appointments in a timely manner.

#### **4. Continuity of GPs**

As noted in the previous section, people largely valued being able to see their named GP. The feedback we received identified this importance but also the challenges people faced when trying to get an appointment with their named GP.

##### **Positive experiences**

Out of the 13 people who discussed the continuity of their GPs, 5 people suggested that they were able to and were sometimes actively encouraged to see their named GP:

**“Amazing continuity of care”**

**“You are encouraged to see the same doctor”**

**“Always seen same GP”**

##### **Areas for improvement**

However, 8 people also discussed significant barriers to seeing their named GP. This was largely due to increased waiting times:

**“Has to wait 3 weeks to see particular doctor”**

**“...daughter doesn't get appointment for the doctor she wants”**

Another reason people identified was around temporary and the constantly changing amount of staff at their surgery and GPs working hours:

**“Can’t see the doctor person wants to see, as doctor only in one day a week. Different doctors everyday so no continuity”**

**“GPs changed around all the time, so have to see any GP”**

It was evident that getting to see your named GP was important to people but often not possible. Continuity of GPs did not seem to be an issue which was practice specific, with no GP practices identified repeatedly within this periods feedback.

## **5. Surgery location and environment**

A minority of people’s feedback was in relation to their GP surgeries location and environment. Although no key concerns were identified it is important to note that people were concerned about the size and busyness of their practice, this is specifically important as it could cause further anxiety around confidentiality issues discussed earlier.

Feedback was generally not received about the location of people’s GP surgery. However, recent changes to GP surgery location were concerning some people about how they would continue to access their services.

## **Conclusion**

Local residents continue to share their experiences of accessing and using their GP services with HWNT. A significant proportion (37% over this 6-month period) of the feedback that we receive relates to people’s experiences of their local GP surgery. We will continue to promote our service and encourage people to speak up about their experiences of good practice and areas in need of improvement.

We will report back in March 2018, detailing the feedback we have received from 1 September 2017 to 28 February 2018.

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