

Quarterly Report: July – September 2018

Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to listen to what people like about services or what could be improved and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

People who use health and social care services tell Healthwatch Northumberland about their experiences throughout the year. This report shares the themes which emerged from 1 July to 30 September 2018. The next report will cover October to December 2018.

We receive feedback and enquiries from:

- Talking to people at local community events
- Telephone calls, emails and social media
- Surveys
- Focus groups on specific issues

We are open to all feedback about health and social care services but respondents to our Annual Survey identified five priorities for specific focus these are mental health services, dementia care services, home care, GP services and access to services.

Feedback

Between July and September 2018 we had 59 individual pieces of unsolicited feedback and we spoke to 170 people at 32 engagement events.

Not everyone told us where they live but those who did were from:

Ashington and Blyth	9
Castle Morpeth	6
Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley	4
North Northumberland	11
Tyndale	8

We have looked at the unsolicited feedback and comments by the themes of Primary Care (GPs, dentists, ambulance etc.) Secondary Care (hospitals etc.), Social Care (care homes, support at home etc.), Mental Health (community and hospital services) and also looked at where people live within the county.

We have looked at these comments across all services mentioned to understand:

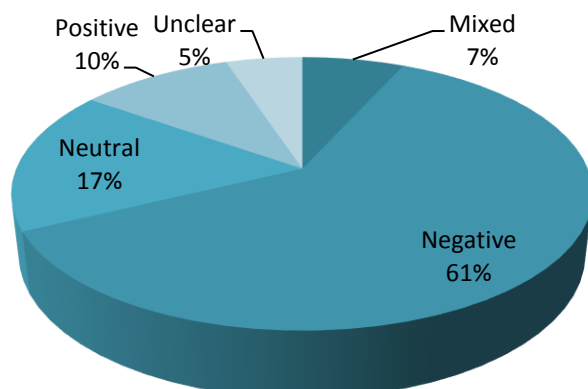
- The general tone of sentiments expressed
- Sentiments about access to services and quality of services as key measures of patient and service user experience
- The balance of sentiments about specific service type

General tone of sentiments

The services/service providers which were specifically mentioned in feedback were:

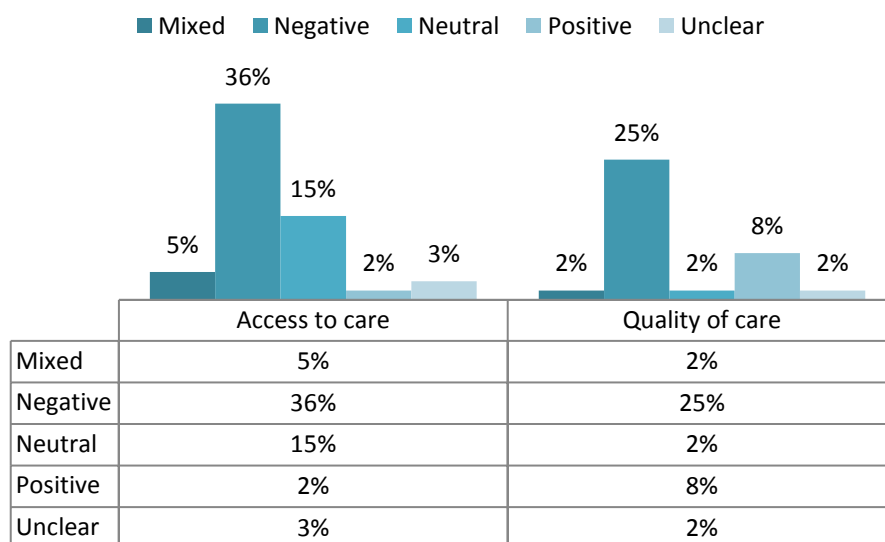
111 service	Hexham General Hospital	Riversdale Surgery	Wansbeck General Hospital
Alnwick Infirmary	HMP Northumberland	Scots Gap Medical Group	Wellclose Medical Group
Berwick Infirmary	Morpeth Dentist Practice	Seaton Park Medical Group	Wellway Medical Group
Boots Pharmacy (Hadston)	Home Care Northumberland County Council	Seaton Terrace Surgery	White Medical Group
Burn Brae Medical Group	Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital	The Gables Medical Group	Wylam Pharmacy
Collingwood Medical Group	Patient Transport	The Rothbury Practice	
Felton Surgery	Railway Medical Group	Tweedmouth Dental Clinic	

The general and overall sentiments expressed about all services are shown in the chart below. 61% feedback had a negative sentiment with the most often sited services being primary care general practice. The positive comments expressed appreciation across different services including GP. We share the individual feedback (anonymised) with each practice.



Access and quality of care

Most comments were about access which includes GP appointments, transport, waiting times and how well (or otherwise) people felt the communication with them went.



39% of the negative comments related to GP services. The largest single issue raised in this group was about the registration process for patients transferring between the Collingwood and Railway practices in Blyth. These queries were raised in July and have not re-occurred.

Although there were fewer comments about the quality of care in all services there was a clear appreciation for services which were experience as being responsive to the patient or users circumstances.

Balance of sentiments about service areas

We looked at services by type where this was clear or by issue – for example a specific hospital or mention of “home care services” or general concern. Note the feedback regarding the Berwick Hospital proposals here predates the report published by Healthwatch Northumberland following the engagement event at the end of September.

We have divided feedback about GP services to better understand what aspects of a GP service are being reported.

	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Unclear	Total
111 service		1				1
Access to mental health services		1				1
Audiology				1		1
Berwick Proposals		2				2
Cancer services				1		1
Dental services		2				2
Gastroenterology			1			1
General inc travel distance	1	3			1	4
GP - appointment		4				4
GP - plans			1			1
GP - general				3		3
GP- Medication Review		1				1
GP - Patient records		2				2
GP - Registration	1	6	1		1	9
GP - service organisation		1				1
Health care in prison		1				1
Home Care		2				2
Hospital discharge	1					1
Inpatient Service			1			1
Maternity services		1				1
Mental Health services			1			1
Orthopedic		1				1
Outpatients		1				1
Patient Transport		1	2		1	4
Pharmacy		1		1		2
Support services in the community			3			3
Urgent Care		5				5

In the next section we will look at the themes which emerged for each of the service areas of Primary Care, Secondary Care, Mental Health and Social Care. Mental Health services are a Healthwatch Northumberland Strategic Priority and therefore receive a particular focus.

Primary care	
Emerging themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service changes – there have been a number of actual or proposed changes to GP services. Feedback about each is specific but there is an underlying concern about how patients are involved and kept informed about the changes and the time that it takes. With the closure of Collingwood Surgery in Blyth some people were anxious about how to register with a new practice, how they would be received and the impact on surrounding practices. • Feedback about Urgent Care identifies uncertainty about when and where to go for urgent care – e.g. approaching a GP surgery for help but being directed to NSECH. Mention was made of confusion about opening times at that the Urgent Care Centres with recurring changes to overnight opening times at Hexham in particular. • The ability to ring the 111 service from a mobile phone on the O2 network was raised by one person.
Ongoing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP appointment system – the availability and process of making a GP appointment continue to cause concern in particular triage systems, making appointments in advance and waiting for return calls. • Patient Transport – although only mentioned once directly, the availability of patient transport was an underlying issue in enquiries about alternative transport options to get to health appointments. Focus groups with seldom heard groups have also discussed patient transport as being an issue.
What are we doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We pass the feedback received about individual practices to Practice Mangers and Team Leads every quarter. • We have launched a GP Services Survey. See our website www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk • We will keep this survey open to gather on-going experiences. We will discuss the information we collect with the individual practices and with the Clinical Commissioning Group/NHS England. • We enabled Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group to contact voluntary and community sector support groups in the Blyth area to help support people with the process of registering with a new GP.

Secondary care	
Emerging themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berwick Hospital Proposals. The main feedback from the engagement about the new Berwick Hospital were the range of hospital services currently available at Berwick, both outpatient and inpatient. The coordination of appointments across sites which can lead to people travelling long distances for short appointments or having to travel long distances to visit.
Ongoing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to receive feedback about travelling to Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH, Cramlington). • Local hospitals. Positive responses also indicated that people were happy with the quality of their care once received. Alnwick Infirmary and Hexham General Hospital received positive feedback.
What are we doing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shared the feedback we received at the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust and Northumberland County Council engagement event in September. This clearly set out the concerns about the joint site proposal, the engagement process and the range of services to be offered at the new hospital. This report is available on the Healthwatch Northumberland website. • Healthwatch Northumberland and Healthwatch North Tyneside will carry out a survey of patients using the A&E department at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital between 12 – 30 November. The purpose is to enable Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust to further understand why people choose to or are directed to go to NSECH.

Mental health	
Emerging themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A theme in this quarter from enquiries and feedback relating to mental health services related in some way to the availability of information about support services or community services – for example contact details for the advocacy service or for support groups for specific conditions.

<p>What are we doing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have published an Insight Report based on engagement with young people and their carers about general information and support about mental health. We have used the report as the basis for our response to the Northumberland County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group draft Children and Young Peoples Emotional health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan <p>We are developing the next phase of this work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have engaged with Northumberland Tyne&Wear NHS Trust (NTW) and the network of support organisations and groups to ensure that people know how share their experiences.
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Social care	
<p>Ongoing themes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents reported concerns about home care services that are reliable, with consistent staffing and where adequate time is allowed for appropriate care in more rural areas.
<p>What are we doing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are conducting primary research with Carers Northumberland to explore people's experiences of getting care at home. A survey carried out by people receiving a service highlighted where improvements to scheduling and communications could be made. This was received positively by Northumberland County Council and Age UK Northumberland. <p>A second survey is being done to see the impact of changes and ongoing experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are reviewing how we promote the Healthwatch role as a champion for people who use social care services as we receive less feedback than about health services. If, as is possible, this denotes high levels of satisfaction about these services we would like to be able to capture this and feed it back as examples of good practice. <p>A focus for this will be dementia services as respondents to our Annual Survey identified this as a priority.</p>