

Quarterly Report: April – June 2019/20

Introduction

Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We are a listening organisation working across Northumberland, interested in what people like about services and what can be improved. We act on what people are saying, sharing their views with those who have the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area and record this as ‘signposting’.

People who use health and social care services tell Healthwatch Northumberland about their experiences throughout the year. This report shares a summary of the feedback collected from April to June 2019. The next report will cover July to September 2019.

This quarter we received feedback and enquiries from:

- Telephone calls, emails and social media (61¹%)
- Postal Surveys and Feedback forms (24%)
- Talking to people at local community events (11%)
- Through meetings and third parties (3%)

Areas of Focus

We are open to all feedback about health and social care services. Responses to our Annual Survey helped us to identify three specific Areas of focus which we are prioritising in 2019/20:

1. General Practitioner Services (GP Services)
2. Mental Health Services, including dementia care
3. Access to Services

Aims

The report aims to increase understanding of:

- Who Healthwatch Northumberland is hearing from
- What people are saying

¹ All percentages have been rounded up or down to nearest whole number

- The general sentiment of comments
- What people are experiencing
 - What is working well?
 - Where there are areas for improvement?

Feedback

Between April and June 2019 we received 42 individual pieces of feedback through talking to people at local community events, telephone calls, emails, social media, surveys and feedback forms, and other sources. Additionally, we signposted sixteen people to services². We received six fewer individual pieces of feedback, but signposted eight more people than last quarter.

This report explores who Healthwatch Northumberland is hearing from across the county, presenting a summary of general respondent demographic information. Demographic information shared includes location, gender, age, and whether the respondent is sharing their own health and social care experience or speaking on behalf of a friend or relative.

The general sentiment of comments is also examined, with specific reference to the service type (e.g. primary care, secondary care, mental health, social care), as well as whether the feedback relates specifically to quality of care or access to services. Service category, for instance whether the comment refers to a GP surgery or acute care, is also explored alongside the sentiment of feedback. A list of services mentioned in comments has also been shared.

Who is Healthwatch Northumberland hearing from?

Healthwatch Northumberland has collected and anonymised demographic information where consent has been given. The following presents a general summary of who Healthwatch Northumberland is hearing from.

Location:

In total between April – June 2019, we collected feedback from respondents from 12 different Northumberland postcode areas³, accounting for 60% of all responses this quarter (25 people). A

² Signposting has not been included in analysis apart from in communication methods of respondents on Page 1, and in the 'signposting' section of the report on Page 10

³ Postcodes only counted by postcode prefix, the number of postcode prefixes may be greater than 12

total of 40% of respondents gave no postcode. Below Table 1 shows the number of responses Healthwatch Northumberland received from residents in different Local Area Councils this quarter:

Table 1. Frequency of known responses across Local Area Councils in Northumberland, Q4 2019

Local Area Council	Number
Ashington and Blyth	1
Castle Morpeth	5
North Northumberland	10
Tynedale	3
Cramlington and Bedlington	6

North Northumberland had the most known responses of any Local Area Council, with ten responses from this area. Berwick had the most known responses of all wards (with 4 known responses), closely followed by Hartley, Choppington, Bedlington Central, and Amble (with 3 known responses respectively, and Amble also having the highest known response rate last quarter).

This shows an improvement from last quarter for Cramlington and Bedlington, where between January - March 18/19 there were no known responses, and in April- June 19/20 there have been six. Known responses from Ashington and Blyth are however still minimal, with only one known response coming from the Ashington Central area. Healthwatch Northumberland is aiming to hear from the South East/Central of the county more closely. This is one of the reasons we are holding our annual conference in Blyth on Wednesday 16th October this year.

Age:

Just under half our respondents did not share their age with us (45%). Of those that did, there appeared to be fewer respondents from younger age groups, which is consistent with what was reported last quarter. Known responses from the 19-24 age group increased by one this quarter, and increased by two in the 25-59 age group (shown below in Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency of responses across different age groups in Northumberland, Q1 2019-20

Age	Number
Under 18	0
19-24	1
25-49	4
50-64	4
65-79	8
80+	6

Unknown	19
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Gender:

A total of 62% of respondents shared their gender with us (26 people). Of those that did there was a higher proportion of female respondents, accounting for 43% of all responses (18 people). A total of 19% of responses were from males (8 people). These figures are remarkably consistent with last quarter and the quarter before this. Below Figure 1 shows a breakdown of responses by gender:

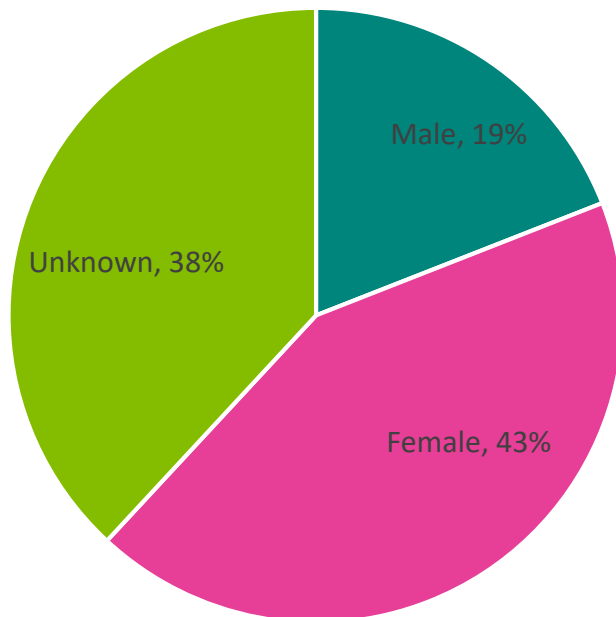


Figure 1. Frequency of responses by gender in Northumberland, Q1 2019/20

Whose experiences are we finding out about?

The majority of respondents were sharing their own individual experience of health and social care with us, with 74% of all respondents in this category. Just under one quarter of all respondents gave us feedback about the health and social care experiences of a relative, friend, or someone they care for (24%). Below a breakdown of all respondent types, and the number and proportion of responses from these groups is shared in Table 4:

Table 4. Frequency of responses by respondent type, Q1 2019-20

Who is feedback from?	Number	Percentage
Individual	31	74%
Client Relative, Friend or Carer	10	24%
Health or Social Care Professional	1	2%
Other	0	0%
Unknown	0	0%

What people are saying and experiencing

Of the 42 total responses⁴, respondents told us about 37 individual services/service providers. Many respondents shared their experiences of using more than one service in their comments, bringing the total number of services mentioned to 54. Please see Appendix 1 and 2 for a list of all the services/service providers mentioned.

The responses were categorised into four sentiment groups positive, negative, neutral, and mixed. The majority of comments received were negative, with 74% of responses reflecting this sentiment (40 sentiments). This reflects a slight increase in negative sentiments from last quarter. The proportion of positive comments was also consistent with last quarter, with 20% of all sentiments falling within this category (11 sentiments). There was a reduction of comments with mixed sentiment with a reduction from 11 to 3 sentiments within this category. There were no neutral sentiments this quarter. People may be more likely to report negative experiences, than if something is going well. Below a series of positive and mixed comments are some examples of what people across Northumberland have told us this quarter⁵:

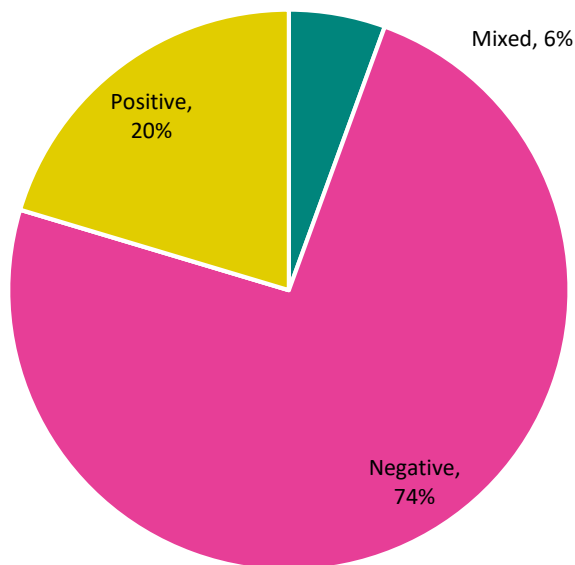


Figure 2. General Sentiment of respondents

Positive:

"[This was the] first time in 40 years I have had faith in medicine. Bedlingtonshire Medical Group have been absolutely brilliant with my husband. Extremely understanding. Very, very helpful. It has helped him both physically and mentally."

Partner of Patient, Cramlington and Bedlington.

"I had to go for an x-ray today. I went to the Berwick department. Beautiful place. Lovely staff."

Patient, North Northumberland.

Mixed:

"Patient reports that an otherwise excellent GP practice closes at lunchtime. This means patients cannot book appointments in their lunchtime in person or on the phone" Engagement Officer, Healthwatch Northumberland about Patient in Ashington and Blyth.

⁴ Responses related to signposting have been excluded from this section of the report

⁵ Quotes with negative sentiment are presented later in the report. Where quotes are taken from 'Engagement Officer' these refer to a single piece of feedback a patient or carer has made, and is a quote from the Engagement Officer who recorded the feedback rather than the patient or carer. Often this is the case with phone enquiries.

The services/service providers have been categorised into service type, with the five main groups being: primary care, secondary care, mental health, social care, and urgent and emergency care. If the service/service provider does not fit in one of these categories it has been marked 'other' or 'unknown' depending on what is more relevant. Below, Figure 3, shows the service type and sentiment of responses:

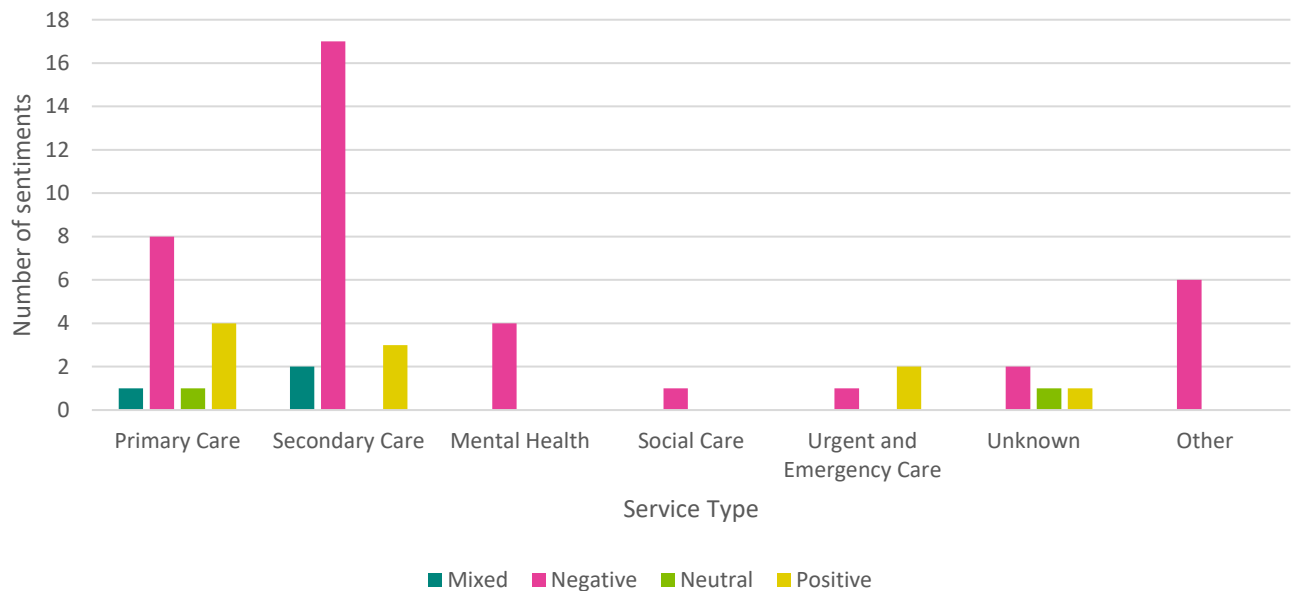


Figure 3. Service Type and Sentiment of responses⁶

Figure 3 shows there is a greater number of negative comments and feedback for most service types, whilst below Table 5 indicates most comments were about secondary (41% of all comments, 22 total comments) and primary care (26% of all comments, 14 total comments). Most negative comments were made about secondary care, and most of these comments related to hospital or hospice provision or availability. The second most popular service type for negative comments was primary care, and this mostly related to GP surgeries. The 'other' category, the third most popular for negative comments this quarter, accounts for service types/providers, which in this quarter included: NHS England, NHS Business Authority, and Northumberland CCG.

As a general trend there were more negative comments than positive, despite most service types receiving at least one positive comment. There were no positive comments about mental health services/service providers but there were only four comments received about this service type

⁶ Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented on the chart. There were more than 42 total sentiments expressed because some people fed back about more than one service.

(Table 5). With mental health, including dementia services, as a key area of focus for Healthwatch Northumberland, we will ensure we are listening and promoting the voice of people using mental health services across the county to allow us to explore general trends. Similarly, social care services, another key area of focus for Healthwatch Northumberland, only received 2% of all comments. We would like to hear more from patients and carers using social care services across the county. In part this will be achieved through Enter and View exercises we are planning on delivering in care homes.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage of responses by Service Type

Service Type	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Care	14	26%
Secondary Care	22	41%
Mental Health	4	7%
Social Care	1	2%
Urgent and Emergency Care	3	6%
Unknown	4	7%
Other	6	11%

Figure 3 and Table 5 are best considered alongside Figures 4a and 4b (shown below), which show whether comments are related to quality of or access to services, and what the related sentiment is.

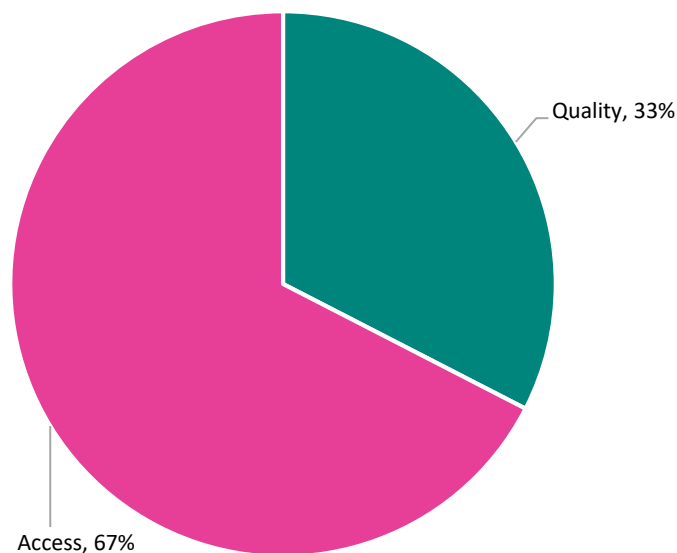


Figure 4a. Proportion of responses related to Quality of Care and Access to Services

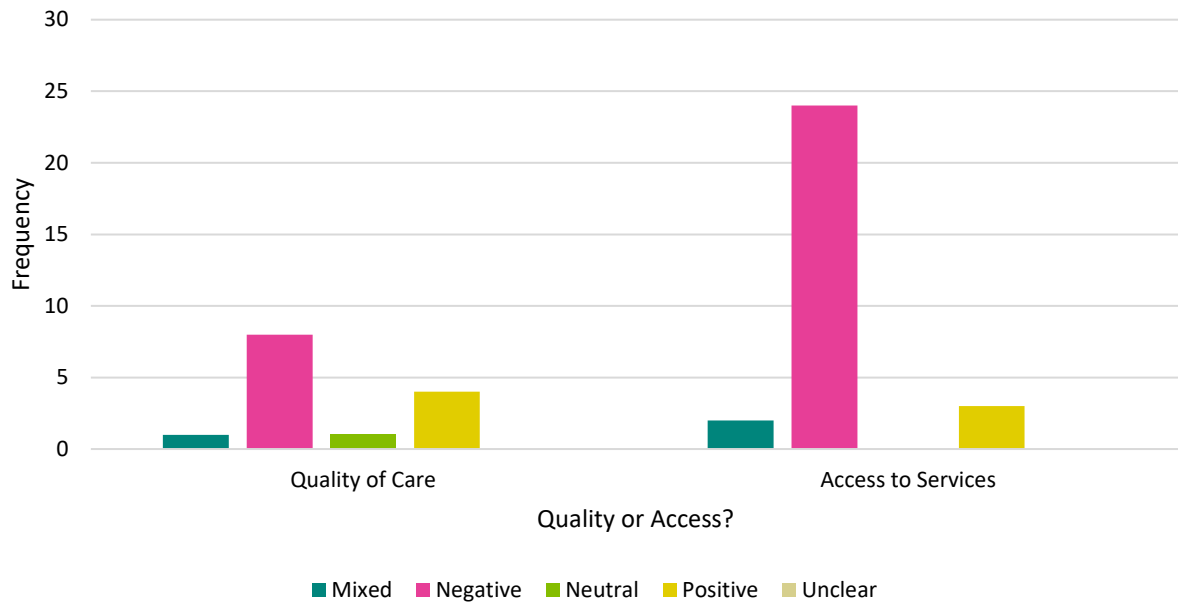


Figure 4b. Frequency of responses related to Quality of Care and Access to Services, by Sentiment

Above Figure 4a and 4b show that an overwhelming majority of responses Healthwatch Northumberland received were related to access to services (67%, 29 total comments) as opposed to quality of care (33%, 14 total comments). Compared to last quarter, this quarter there has been a small increase in comments relating to care and a decrease in comments relating to access. Despite this change, it is still encouraging that the majority of negative attitudes to services/service providers (shown in Figure 3) from people across Northumberland relate to ‘systems’ more than ‘people’ or ‘care quality’. This is further supported by comments people made this quarter:

“[Patient] is concerned that a local service offering support and minor repairs to hearing aids has closed [...] The caller is concerned that she now has a 25 mile round trip [...] She lives in a rural area with limited public transport and she lives two miles from bus stop.”

Engagement Officer, Healthwatch Northumberland about Patient in Tynedale.

“Man had been asked to give a sample to his GP practice. He was not told there was a cut off time of 3pm. He was extremely angry and had to redo the sample the next day. He says he has struggled for 6 months to get the treatment which a GP says he should have. He is a carer and this added to his stress.”

Engagement Officer, Healthwatch Northumberland about Patient in Ashington and Blyth.

"I [...] cannot drive at the moment due to acute sciatica. I have been having treatment at [service location] where my husband could drive me. He is in his 80s. Going to [service locations] buses are not suitable as the hospitals are a long walk from the bus stations. Please reconsider as we are an elderly community,"
North Northumberland patient.

"Caller's husband has many appointments at various hospitals and they are using buses and taxis. Taxis are very expensive but often have no choice [...] Husband has bipolar, dementia, sleep apnoea, pacemaker, glaucoma and hearing loss. Caller is suffering from anxiety and stress and is paying for CBT and hypnotherapy and has had counselling."
Engagement Officer, Healthwatch Northumberland about Patient in Castle Morpeth.



Access to services has already been identified by Healthwatch Northumberland as an area of focus. Healthwatch Northumberland is developing a greater awareness of what the key issues are in this area, for example appointment making. This will help us to inform commissioners and service providers and support greater potential for improvement.

Comments were broken down by service category, which help us to look at services at a more detailed level than service type. This has been cross referenced with sentiment type (see Appendix 2 on Page 13). GP practices and Ear, Nose, and Throat were the joint most highly mentioned categories for feedback, with 13 sentiments respectively reflected in these categories.

Most negative sentiments shared were about the loss of the Hear to Help service (accounting for eleven total comments within the Ear, Nose and Throat category⁷), whilst both positive sentiments in this category referred to people commending the Hear to Help service provided in GP surgeries. This is an issue Healthwatch Northumberland also received feedback about last quarter and are delivering a project on.

⁷ Taken from a total of 54 individual service and sentiment mentions respectively

The joint most mentioned service category was GP surgeries. This could partly relate to people being more likely to attend their GP than other health or social care services. This category had the second highest number of negative sentiments, whereas last quarter it accounted for the most negative sentiments of all categories. This quarter GP surgeries also had the highest number of positive comments.

This quarter negative comments about GP Practices mainly referred to the difficulty people had making appointments, which is consistent with what was reported last quarter. Three comments refer to patients sharing they felt they had not been listened to with two of these comments relating to not being able to access prescriptions. In two further comments patients shared they had difficulty accessing their GP Practice as people who were not housebound but did need to use a wheelchair. Consistent with last quarter, patients mentioned that communication and information sharing could be better between GP practices and patients, with medical records being lost on moving practices and cut-off times for delivering samples not being effectively communicated. Finally, one comment related to the closure of a practice.

GP Practices also had the highest number of positive comments, with people sharing that their GP had been “Extremely understanding. Very, very helpful”; or had “listened and helped”, or that the patient was “very satisfied with treatment and care”.

Every quarter Healthwatch Northumberland sends GP practices tailored feedback from patients and Carers. Feedback is shared anonymously with each practice.

Signposting

In total Healthwatch Northumberland signposted sixteen people who contacted us with an enquiry. This is double the number of people who we signposted last quarter (eight people). Some people were signposted to more than one service. Below Table 6 shows the services Healthwatch Northumberland signposted people to this quarter:

Table 6. List of services people Healthwatch Northumberland signposted people to, Q1 2019/20

Service Name	Service Type
Barnados	Voluntary Sector
Carers Northumberland	Voluntary Sector
Citizens Advice Northumberland (Hexham)	Voluntary Sector
Get-about service	Voluntary Sector
ICAN	Voluntary Sector
Talking Matters	Voluntary Sector
Tyneside and Northumberland Mind	Voluntary Sector
North of Tyne PALS	Health
Northumberland County Council	Local Authority

Table 6 shows the services signposted to are mainly voluntary sector organisations. Health services have also been signposted to, as well as some local authority provided services.

Healthwatch Northumberland also received three positive comments about the work we are doing.

This report has been produced by:

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Appendix

Appendix 1. List of services mentioned in feedback and comments⁸

Services mentioned in feedback and comments in Apr-Jun 19/20	Mentioned in Jan-Mar 18/19
Action on Hearing Loss	Yes
Alnwick Medical Group	No
Bedlingtonshire Medical Group	No
Berwick Infirmary	Yes
Carers Northumberland	Yes
Collingwood Medical Group	Yes
CYPS and School Nurse	No
Fairnington Centre (NTW)	No
Gas House Lane Surgery	No
Glendale Surgery	No
Greystoke Surgery	No
Guidepost Medical Group	No
Netherfield House Surgery	No
Newcastle Freeman hospital	Yes
NHS Business Services Authority	No
NHS England	No
North of Tyne PALS	No
North Seaton Health Centre	No
Northgate Hospital	Yes
Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group	Yes
Northumberland County Council	No
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Yes
Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital	Yes
NTW Crisis Team	No
NTW Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust	Yes
Riversdale Surgery	No
Scots Gap Medical Group	No
Seaton Sluice Surgery	No
Sunderland Royal Hospital	No
Talking Matters Northumberland	Yes
The Bellingham Practice	Yes
The Rothbury Practice	No
Well Pharmacy	No
Wellclose Medical Surgery	No
The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	Yes

⁸ Patient transport service was included in the services mentioned list last quarter but it has since been established that these comments were more to do with general transport issues rather than the PTS specifically

Valens Medical Partnership (Wellway, Brockwell; Lintonville GP practices)	Yes
Wansbeck General Hospital	Yes
Wellway Medical Group	Yes
Whalton Community Hospital	Yes

Appendix 2. Service category and sentiment⁹

Service Category	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Acute Care	0	1	0	1	2
Acute services with overnight beds	0	1	1	0	2
Dentist (non-hospital)	0	1	0	0	1
Ear, Nose and Throat	0	11	0	2	13
GP practice	1	8	1	3	13
Learning disability service	0	1	0	0	1
Cardiology	1	0	0	1	2
Children's services	0	0	0	1	1
Radiography	0	0	0	1	1
Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)	0	1	0	0	1
Neurology	0	1	0	0	1
NHS choices	0	1	0	0	1
Community healthcare and nursing services	1	0	0	0	1
Depression and Anxiety service	0	1	0	0	1
Psychiatry/Mental Health (Other Services)	0	2	0	0	2
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	0	1	0	0	1
Physiotherapy	0	4	0	0	4
Inpatient Care	0	1	0	0	1
Other	0	2	0	0	2
General transport issues	0	2	0	0	2
Outpatients	0	0	0	1	1
Grand Total	3	39	2	10	

⁹ Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented in the table