

# Health and care feedback report 2023

Published April 2023



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# Introduction

Healthwatch Tameside is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Tameside. We listen to local people and gather information about their experiences of using health and social care services.

Healthwatch Tameside is informed by our connections to local people and our expertise is grounded in their experience. We are the only body looking solely at people's experience across all health and social care in Tameside. As a statutory watchdog, our role is to ensure that local decision makers put the experiences of people at the heart of their care so that those who buy (commissioners) and provide our services (NHS Trusts, GPs, the voluntary sector and independent providers) can benefit from what Tameside people tell us.

# Executive Summary

Healthwatch Tameside has previously published reports about people's experiences of using health and care services:

[www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/report/2022-03-22/general-feedback-report-2021](http://www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/report/2022-03-22/general-feedback-report-2021)

[www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/report/2022-07-28/general-survey-report-2022](http://www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/report/2022-07-28/general-survey-report-2022)

A new general survey was launched in April 2022, staying open for responses until the end of December 2022.

This new report provides information about those responses.

The questions are the same as in the previous reports. The format of the body of this report is the same as the previous reports, for easy comparison.

The survey was available to complete online, on paper, by QR code and over the phone. The number of surveys (122 in total) completed by each method was:

Online responses – 38

Paper responses – 76

Phone responses – 8

QR code – 0

A new health and care experiences survey was launched in January 2023. This can be completed online at [www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/share-your-views](http://www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/share-your-views). If anyone would like a paper copy, or to complete the survey over the phone, please call us on **0161 667 2526**, and leave a message on our answerphone. We will call you back.

## Key findings

Looking at the responses to the last three surveys, there are many similarities in the feedback provided. The two types of care receiving the most comments were GP practices and hospitals. The similarities included:

### Positive comments:

- Staff received the highest number of positive comments about GP practices in each survey.
- The care provided has the highest number of positive comments, when looking at hospitals.

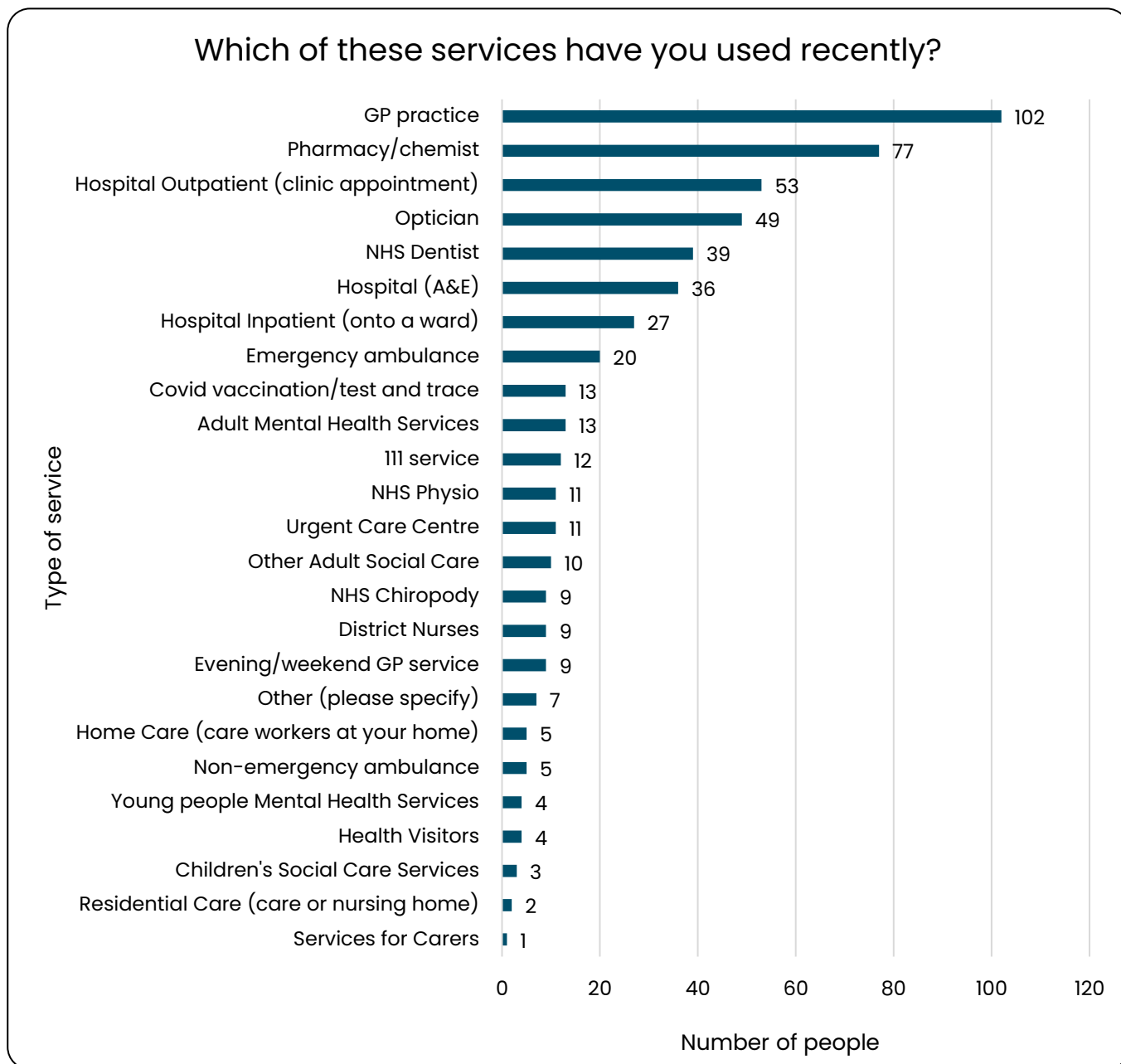
### Negative comments:

- Access to GP appointments, including face to face appointments, and the time waiting for an appointment received the most negative comments about GP practices.
- Looking at comments about hospitals, the themes with the highest number of negative comments were waiting times, communication and needing more staff.

The report includes the details of the feedback from our latest survey, followed by a conclusion on page 27.

# Survey responses

The first question on the survey is - **Which of these services have you used recently?**  
**Please tick all that apply.**



'Other' includes:

Be Well, Lymphoedema clinic, MacMillan nurse, Pulmonary rehabilitation, Sexual Health services, Wellbeing advisor.

The other questions included in this report are:

- **What were the names of the GP practice, hospital, and/or other providers used?**
- **What was good about the health and care services you used?**
- **What could be improved about the health and care services you used?**

We will look at the responses to these three questions all together. We will group them by type of service provided and whether the comments are positive or negative.

The final question is:

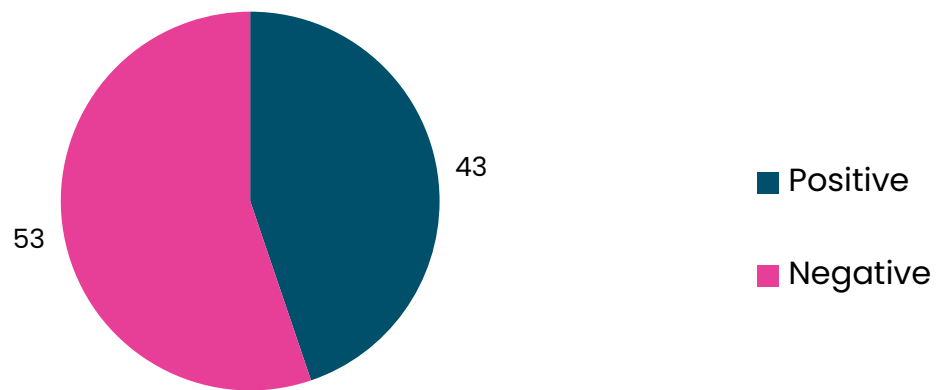
- **Have you delayed asking for medical help with anything, because of the COVID pandemic? Please tell us more. It is important people get symptoms checked out. If you have delayed getting help, and you still have symptoms, have you thought about getting help now?**

Where we have provided lists of positive and negative comments throughout the report, these are based on words and phrases used in the survey responses.

## GP Practices

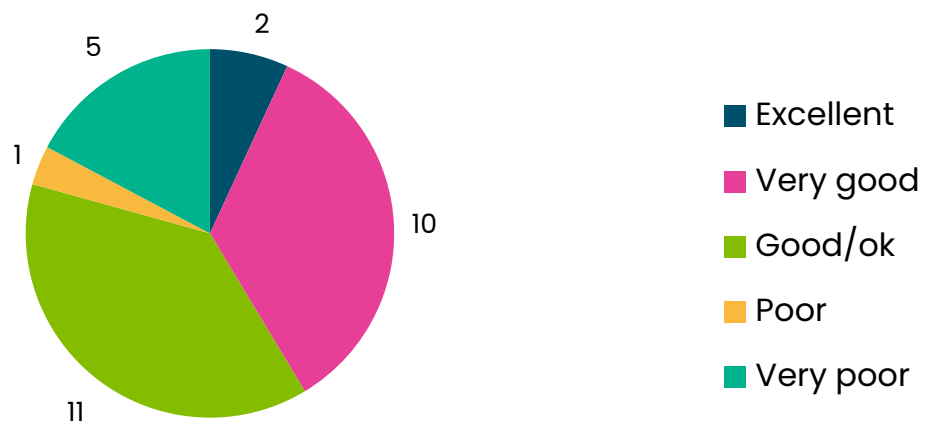
Looking at the graph on page 5, the number of people who had visited a GP practice was greater than any of the other services listed. The feedback about the experience of the visits was mixed, with both positive and negative comments. Some people told us about things that went well, and also things where they thought improvements could be made.

Type of comments about GP practices



Some people used single words to describe a service, before providing more detail.

Description of service provided

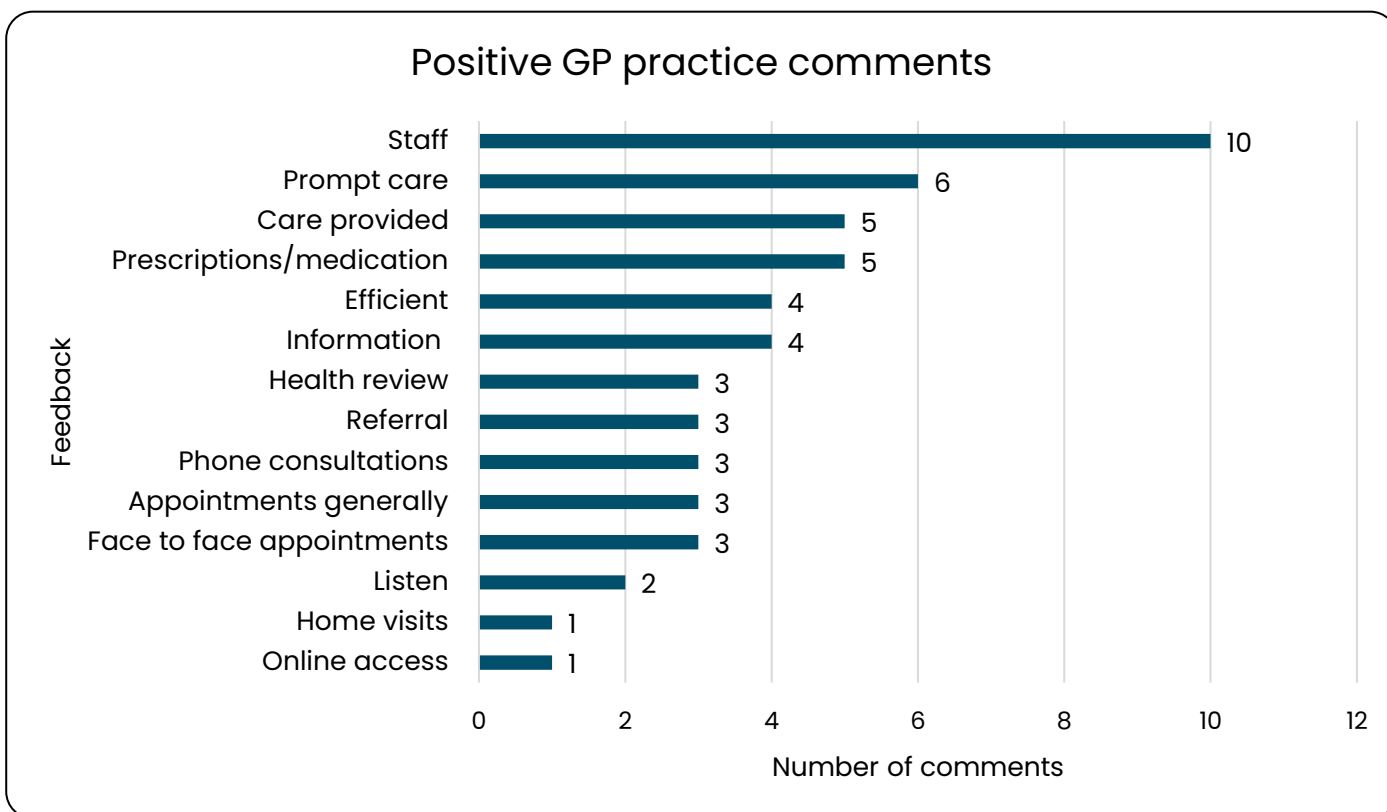


'Very poor' includes 'Not fit for purpose', 'Rubbish', and 'Inadequate'.



## Positive comments

Not everyone named their GP practice in their feedback. We will look at the comments split into themes, and not by individual practice.



Within the themes in the above graph, the feedback includes comments about:

- **Staff:**

- Caring
- Helpful
- Kind
- Pleasant
- Reassuring
- Sympathetic
- Understanding
- Use common sense
- Well-trained

- **Prompt care/efficiency:**

- Not many people in the waiting room
- Speed of care provided
- Speed of follow-up after diagnosis

*Understanding needs of individual patient was good*

*The musculoskeletal nurse at the GP surgery was very good when my mother had the steroid injection for the osteoarthritis in her knee*

- **Care provided/prescriptions/medication:**

- Advised to take painkillers
- Diagnosed with diabetes and put on medication very quickly
- Excellent treatment
- Given medication to lower blood pressure straight away after test
- Regular injection

- **Information and listening:**

- Clear information provided
- Gave good advice
- Listened

*The health professionals gave clear information about blood tests.*

- **Referral:**

- To hospital
- To physio

- **Appointments:**

- Face to face appointments
  - Arranged quickly
  - Will arrange when needed
- Health review
  - Given full health check after not visiting GP for many years
  - Monthly check up for new long term condition
  - Regular blood tests
- Home visits
  - Same day home visit for elderly father
- Online access
  - Can request prescription online
  - Will ring me back if I have a question
- Phone consultations
  - GP phoned when expected
  - OK
  - Phone call helpful
- Other
  - Can always get an appointment when needed
  - More choice of appointment with merged surgeries
  - Will make appointments for people without access to internet

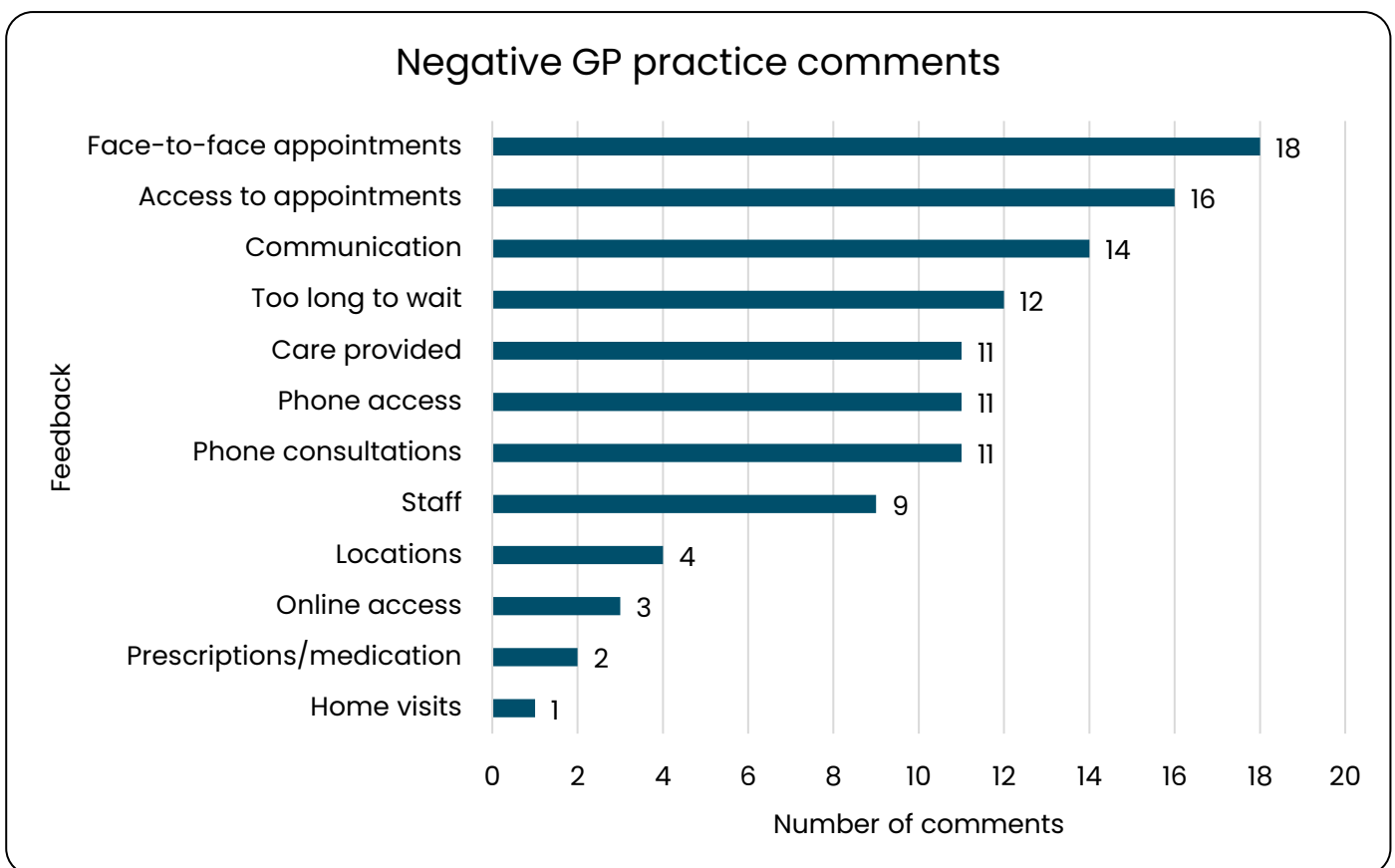
*If I've got a problem with anything, I send them a message and they ring back*

Positive comments were received about the following practices:

Albion Medical Practice, Ashton Medical Group, Audenshaw Medical Centre, Awburn House Medical Practice, Clarendon Medical Centre, Denton Medical Practice, Donneybrook Medical Centre, Dukinfield Medical Practice, Florence House Medical Practice, Gordon Street Medical Centre, Haughton Thornley Medical Centre, Hill Top Surgery (Oldham), HT Practice, King Street Medical Centre, Lockside Medical Centre, Market Street Medical Practice, Millbrook Medical Practice, Millgate Healthcare Partnership, Park View Group Practice (Reddish), St Andrews House Medical Centre, St George's Medical Centre (Manchester), The Brooke Surgery, Vernon Park Surgery (Stockport), Waterloo Medical Centre

## Negative comments

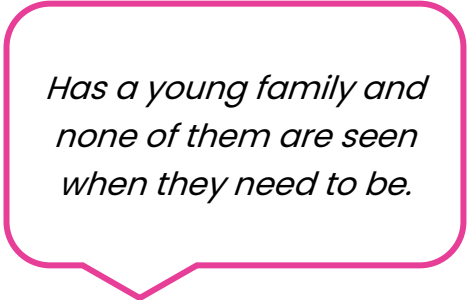
As with the positive comments, not everyone named their GP practices. Here are the themes and comments. People provided longer responses when they were negative.



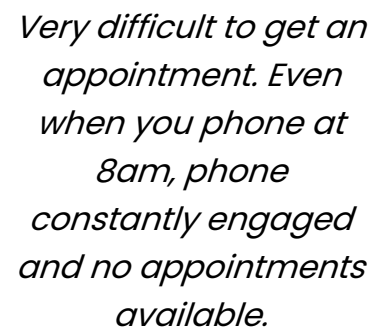
Within the themes shown in the graph on the previous page, the feedback includes comments about:

- **Appointments:**

- Access (availability)
  - Difficult/not possible to get an appointment
  - Told to ring back day after day as no appointments left
- Face-to-face
  - Can only see a nurse, not a doctor
  - In person better for me
  - Phone appointments wasted when I am then given face to face
  - Several calls needed before agreed to arrange diabetes check
  - Sometimes needed
  - They don't want to see people
- Home visits
  - GP says all home visits have been stopped
- Online access
  - Can't go online
  - Not helpful when visually impaired
  - Told to request Fit note online
- Phone access
  - Long wait for phone to be answered
  - Phone engaged
- Phone consultations
  - Call made outside timescale given, so patient not in private place to take call
  - Feel under scrutiny, keep being asked questions
  - Get too anxious on the phone
  - Need help as not confident in English
  - Trying to describe symptoms difficult over the phone
  - Waited for phone call from doctor that did not happen
  - You forget to mention things on the phone
- Too long to wait
  - Wait weeks for an appointment



*Has a young family and none of them are seen when they need to be.*



*Very difficult to get an appointment. Even when you phone at 8am, phone constantly engaged and no appointments available.*

- **Communication:**

- Don't feel listened to, fobbed off
- Found out about diagnosis from PIP form
- Have to chase for results of tests
- Keep asking questions and not getting answers
- Letters need to be in plain English, not full of jargon
- Long delay waiting for diagnosis
- Minimal advice provided after diagnosis, even though life-changing
- Not told documentation waiting to be collected (requested email)
- Online information link not suitable for all patients. Paper print-out needed instead.
- Would like to know who doctors are – they keep changing

*Visually impaired, so doctor sending texts telling me to go online is not helpful. I can't do any of that.*

- **Care provided:**

- Annual reviews not carried out or late (some people have been waiting a number of years)
- Can never get hold of palliative nurse
- Doctor will only discuss one issue at a time, so have to try and get another appointment
- Don't act on hospital advice
- Don't check computer for past history
- Nurse sends me to A & E, instead of letting me see a doctor
- Services not co-ordinated
- Told to ring 111

*After a wait of 3 weeks for phone appointment, I have now been waiting 7 weeks for anything to happen*

- **Staff:**

- Abrupt when answering phone
- I don't want to discuss condition with reception staff
- Not interested
- Nurse rolls eyes at me when I say I can't hear
- Poor attitude
- Rude

- **Prescriptions/medication:**

- Have to request well in advance to allow time for delivery
- See practice nurse, but they can't prescribe

- **Locations:**

- Being sent to different places for change of dressings after surgery
- Difficult to get to other services as don't drive
- GP practice moved location – further to travel

*Sent to another practice for my arthritis, told they are specialists, but hospital would be more accessible.*

The named practices where people felt improvements could be made were:

Albion Medical Practice, Ashton Medical Group, Audenshaw Medical Centre, Denton Medical Practice, Donneybrook Medical Centre, Dukinfield Medical Practice, Gordon Street Medical Centre, Haughton Thornley Medical Centre, Hill Top Surgery (Oldham), HT Practice, King Street Medical Centre, Lockside Medical Centre, Market Street Medical Practice, Medlock Vale Medical Centre, Millbrook Medical Practice, Millgate Healthcare Partnership, St Andrews House Medical Centre, Stamford House Medical Centre, Staveleigh Medical Centre, The Brooke Surgery, Waterloo Medical Centre, West End Medical Centre

## **Covid-19**

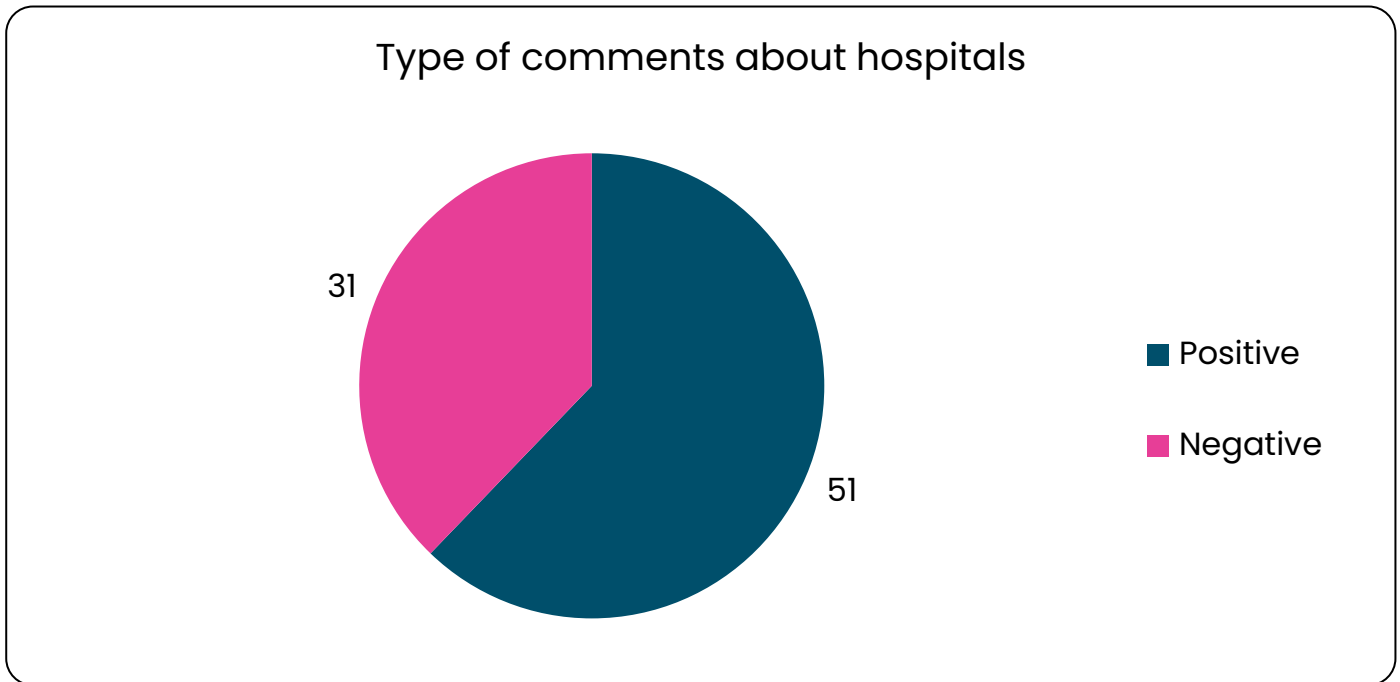
There was little feedback about the vaccination programme or Covid-19 in general. People said they had received jabs at the Etihad stadium, Festival Hall in Denton, Future Chemist, and the vaccine bus.

*Very good, had 3rd jab. Convenient. Just got on the vaccine bus and that was that.*

## Hospitals

The feedback received about hospitals was both positive and negative, and some people experienced both. We have looked at the comments for hospitals together, and not by individual hospital.

Where we have received feedback about a specific location, this has already been included in our regular anonymous reporting to the hospitals concerned.

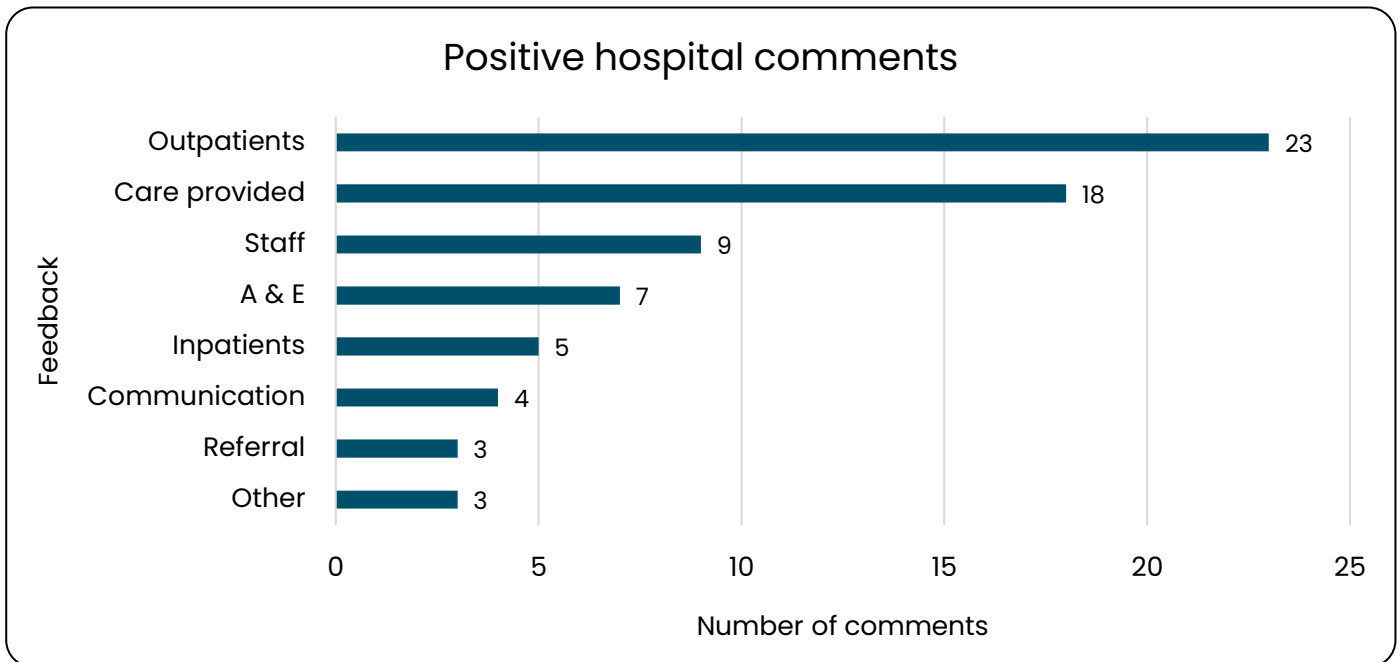


The hospitals mentioned, in addition to Tameside Hospital, included:

Manchester Eye Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Rochdale Infirmary, Salford Royal Hospital, Stepping Hill Hospital, The Christie (Manchester and Oldham), Wythenshawe Hospital

## Positive comments

The following graph shows the themes which were mentioned in the survey responses:



Some people included details of the ward or outpatient department they had received care from in their positive responses. These included:

Inpatient wards – acute care, assessment, surgical

Outpatient departments- cardiology, diabetes, dialysis, gastroenterology, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, paediatrics, pre-op, respiratory, rheumatology, scan/x-rays, urology

Here are some of the themes mentioned in the positive comments graph.

- **Outpatients:**

- Clean
- Efficient appointment system
- Everyone treated equally
- Helpful
- Informative
- Understanding

*Got an appointment for neurology on the same day as already had one for cardiology. So very pleased with that! It avoided making two trips to the hospital.*



- **Care provided:**

- Happy with care – various descriptions about how good the service was
- Helpful
- Regular appointment – no problems
- Take account of disability
- Treat patients with respect

- **Staff:**

- Attentive
- Caring
- Considerate
- Great
- Helpful
- Kind
- Professional
- Reassuring
- Sympathetic
- Well-trained

*Gastro clinic very good,  
very quick the referral  
process was amazing*

*Staff very over worked,  
but brilliant*

- **A & E:**

- Looked after well
- Not too long to wait and be treated
- Offered food and drink

*A&E very good, got what I  
needed, didn't wait long, in  
there, then out*

- **Inpatients:**

- Calm ward
- Good care
- Met needs
- Thorough

*All my physical needs were  
met and the staff took  
time to listen as well,  
which, considering the  
constant turnover of beds  
was amazing.*

- **Communication:**

- Listened to
- Translator provided

- **Referral:**

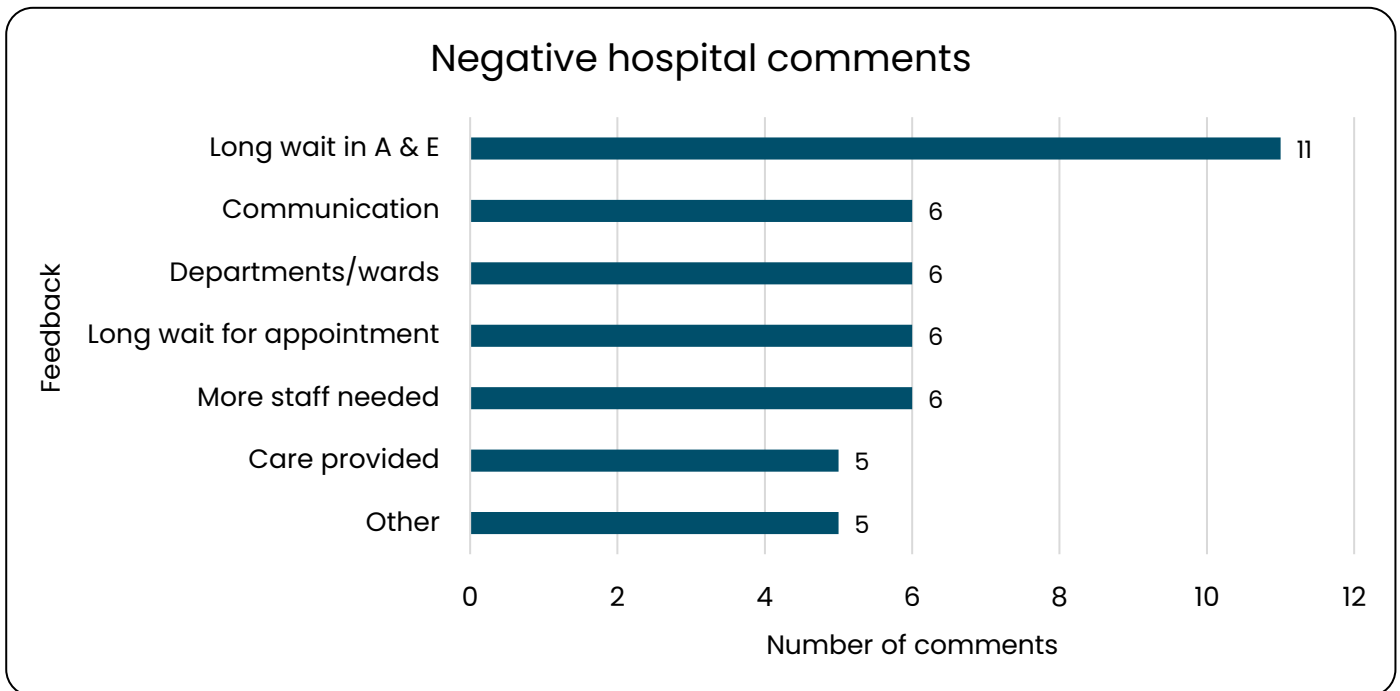
- Appointments received quickly

- **Other:**

- District nurses good
- Walk-in centre good

# Negative comments

The following graph shows the themes which were mentioned in the survey responses:



A few people included details of the ward or outpatient department they had received care from in their negative responses. These included:

Cardiology, district nurses, ward 42.

Here are some of the themes mentioned in the negative comments graph.

- **Long wait in A & E:**
  - No privacy in corridor
  - Waits of many hours described
- **Communication:**
  - Copies of letters to GPs full of medical terms, causing stress to patient
  - Provide more information
  - Results from tests/scans still awaited

*I was there 10 hours. Other people had been there since the day before.*

*There is an issue with poor communication. Why do we have to keep asking and not getting answers?*

- **Departments/wards:**

- Appointments sent for different clinics at the same time
- District nurse calls round without notice
- Food on ward very poor
- Unnecessary outpatient appointment wasted my time

*Appointments with cardiology clinic - I've told them about 100 times that I have dialysis 3 times a week so can't go on those days. Notes are not carried forward. I have to keep changing appointments which is often difficult.*

- **Long wait for appointment:**

- Always longer between appointments than consultant requested
- Long wait for surgery
- Still waiting for appointment

- **More staff needed:**

- Short-staffed
- Staff being over-worked

- **Care provided:**

- Attend appointments and told can't do anything
- Canular not removed
- Decisions repeatedly changed
- Diabetic not given food for eight hours in A & E
- Long wait for care led to emergency cancer surgery
- Pain relief not offered in A & E
- Took five visits to A & E to sort out problem

- **Other:**

- Dirty floor
- Problems with parking
- Travel to hospitals out of area is difficult
- Uncomfortable seating in waiting area

*Not sure if husband is telling me when he is unwell, because he doesn't want to go to hospital.*

## MacMillan cancer support

There were two comments about MacMillan support, both positive. These included:

- Wonderful
- Very supportive

## Ambulance service

The number of comments about the various parts of the ambulance service is small:

Positive – 6

Negative – 5

Positive comments included:

- Caring
- Felt safe
- Prompt arrival of emergency ambulance
- Staff kind and reassuring

*NWAS brilliant - really looked after me, he was very reassuring*

Negative comments included:

- Have to be ready 2 hours before Patient transport due, then long wait after appointment
- Long wait for emergency ambulance
- No patient transport at weekends
- Not enough liaison with next of kin

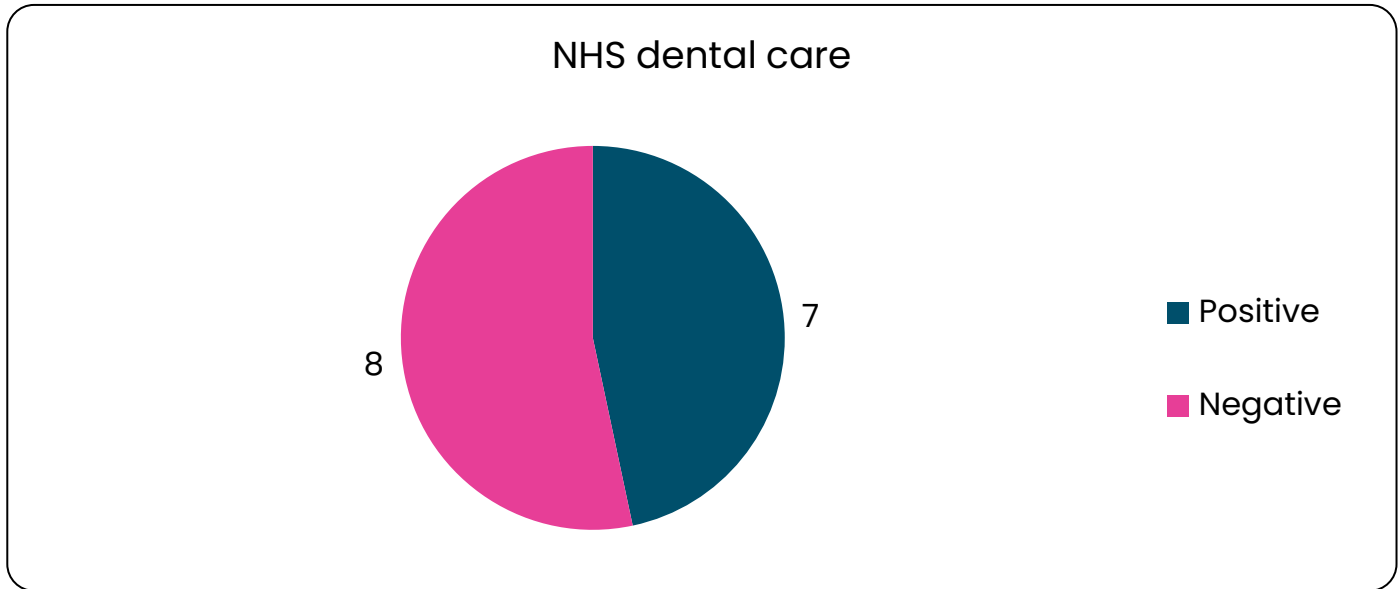
*Ambulances are so stretched, having waited for over two hours meant that I was in more pain by then, plus I did not know what was causing it. Therefore the ambulance staff have to work so much harder when they do get to a patient.*

*I believe lives are at stake. This must have a mental effect on the ambulance personnel.*

## NHS dental care

Although the question about services used (see page 4) specified use of NHS dentists, it is not clear from some of the comments whether these apply to NHS or private dentistry.

We have included all the comments in writing this report.



Positive comments included:

- Dentist was good/excellent/superb
- May have to wait 3 or 4 weeks but can get appointment
- Very good care for my teeth on a regular basis
- Very kind

*My dentist has kept to 6 monthly appointments and monitors my dental health regularly*

Negative comments included:

- Can't get up the stairs
- Never have appointments when you need them
- Unable to get NHS dentist, can't afford what they charge for private treatment
- Very long wait for appointment
- Waited several months for temporary filling – now dropped out

*Stop cancelling appointments for NHS patients in favour of private patients.*

Some comments did not specify the dental practice. The dental practices that were named (either by name or location) included:

Bupa Dental Care Stalybridge, Concord Way Dental Practice, dentist in Denton, Glebe Street Dental Practice, Hyde Dental Practice, King Street Dukinfield, My Dentist Hyde, Simply One Dental, Stalybridge Dental Practice

## Opticians

There were nine comments about opticians, all positive. These included:

- Good, caring people interested in my health
- Kind and helpful
- Reminded me when eye test due
- Thorough

The opticians that were specified were:

Asda Opticians, Boots Opticians (Ashton), Muldoon & Tonge Opticians, Specsavers (Ashton), Steve Mayer Opticians

*An excellent service - I am legally blind and often have a problem with my glasses being broken. They are always helpful and kind*

## Pharmacies

There were 21 comments about pharmacies, of which two were negative, and the rest positive.

The positive comments included:

- Deliver medication
- Gives information and advice
- Good service
- Services working well together
- Sorts medication into a box with compartments
- Text when prescription ready to be collected
- Very professional
- Will sort out any problems

*Brilliant, every 6 months review my medication*

*They deliver in a very timely manner*

The negative comments included:

- Getting medication delivered in time is a problem
- Prescriptions never ready

The pharmacies that were named were:

Ashton Primary Care Centre Pharmacy, Boots Chemist (Droylsden, Oldham Road), Cohen's Chemist (Denton), Direct Pharmacy, Hyde Pharmacy, Manor Pharmacy, Penny Meadow Pharmacy, Pharmaco Pharmacy, Pharmacy (Ashton Road, Hathershaw), R J Lad Chemists, Tesco (Droylsden, Stalybridge), Well Pharmacy (Ashton)

## Social care

There were only five responses about care provision. One person included both a positive and a negative comment.

Positive comments:

- Care of wife with dementia really good
- Social care very good
- Son loves day care services

*Helped me to move house from 3 bed house to bungalow*

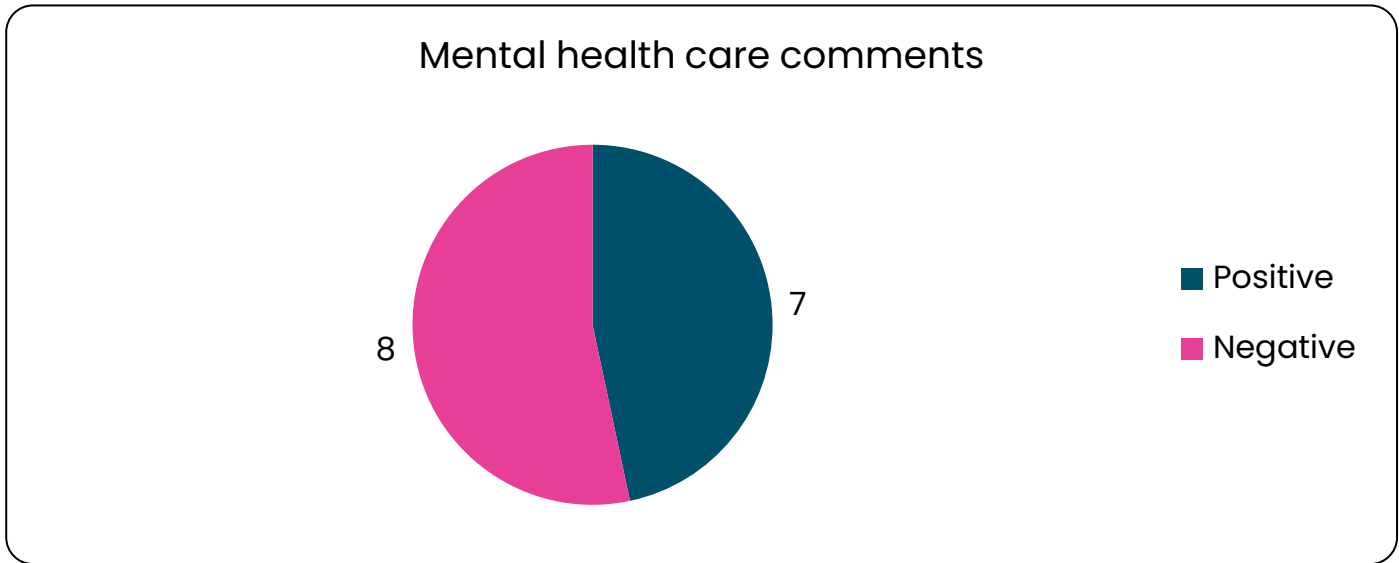
Negative comments:

- Social services do not answer phone
- Social services slow to act
- Would be better to have the same carer each day

*I am really disappointed with them. They have dragged their feet and I ended up paying £5,000 for work to be done.*

# Mental health care

There was a mix of positive and negative comments about mental health care.



The positive comments included:

- Good service
- They calmly handled the situation
- Very good care from my CPN

*Community Mental Health team very helpful*

The negative comments included:

- Minimal advice given after dementia diagnosis
- Need more help with mental health
- Waiting list too long

*My wife has Alzheimer's. I find it hard to accept and deal with.*



## Other comments

In this section we have included comments and suggestions that are not about specific care provided. They include various opinions about health and care services.

### Positive thoughts:

- I have family who work in the NHS and know how hard they work.
- I have no suggestions to make as I am satisfied with the service provided.
- I am always involved in decision making, NOT done to. Have confidence I will be listened to and treated. Only wish that other services could work in the same way.
- Just to say all the health services in Tameside are brilliant. I attend lot of research for NHS and when I hear about other areas, I am so glad I live in Tameside. But as always there is room for improvement in anything.

### Suggestions to improve services:

- **Ambulances:**
  - More ambulances
- **Primary care:**
  - Feel primary care inadequate
  - I think doctors should give you a check-up every 6 months after you get to 70 years
  - I volunteer at groups. It would be helpful to have a visiting doctor periodically.
- **Secondary care:**
  - For A& E I think we need a much better system, especially as we have waited up to 12 hours to be seen at times recently. Allowing patients to sign in and sign out and letting them know when they are moving up the waiting time list – either via a digital notice board or a call back. The system really does need changing to make it less stressful for patients.
  - Patient's copy of letter sent to GP is written in medical terms. I would appreciate the letter to me being in plain English.
- **Staff:**
  - Ideally more doctors and team members to tackle ill health conditions and mental health problems

- **General:**

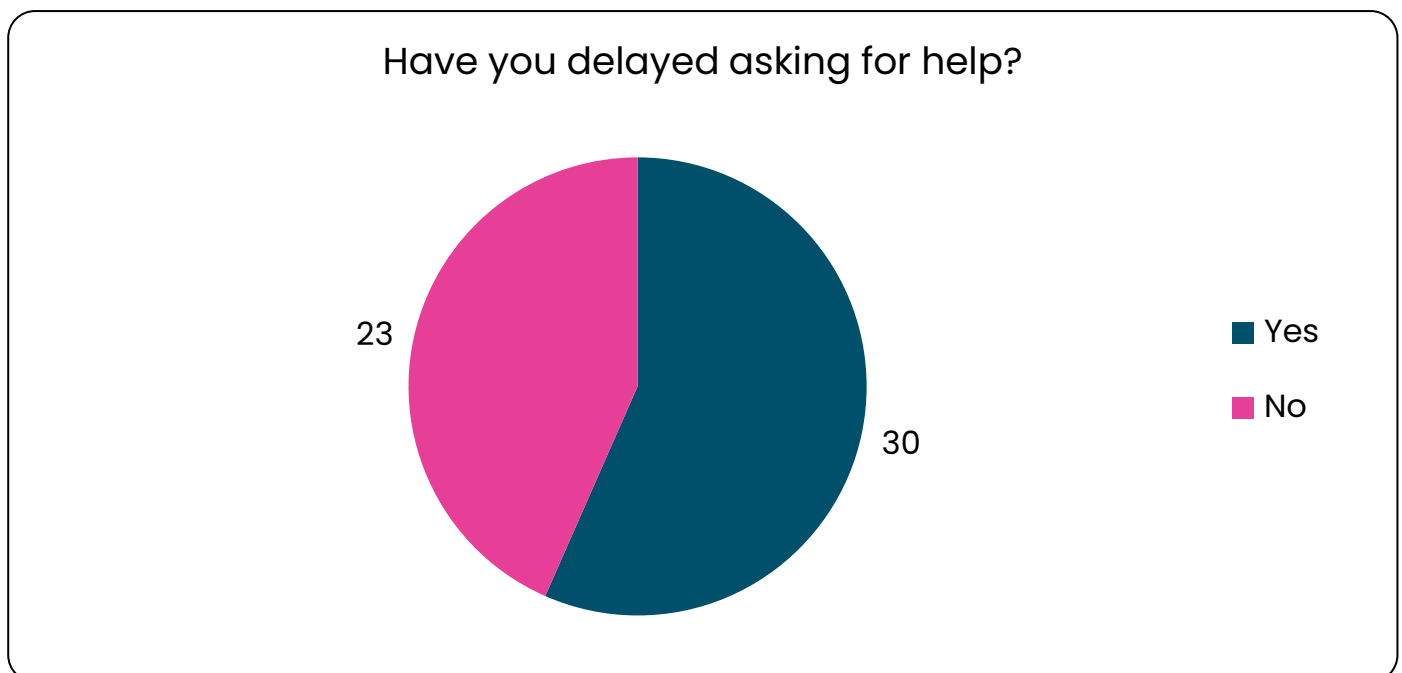
- I think all health services which are keeping to distanced routines which started in the pandemic should think again about their practices, particularly for people with dual sensory loss, such as myself, but really for everyone.
- Keep enforcing the wearing of face masks/coverings please!
- We need more money putting into the NHS and social care services. Everyone is working their socks off.

**Personal comments:**

- Just feel I've been swept under the rug.
- My family keep an eye on me and arrange medical appointments when they are needed
- Not at all happy with the NHS

## Delays asking for medical help

The final question on the survey asked about whether people had delayed asking for help.



The types of care people said they had not asked for help with included:

- Dental care
- Dizzy spells
- Eyes
- Low mood
- Mental health
- Pain
- Shortness of breath
- Ulcer

Not everyone explained why they had delayed asking for help. From the responses that did explain, the reasons given for delaying included:

- Can only have a phone consultation with a GP instead of face to face
- Can't get up the stairs at dentist
- Don't like to bother anyone, try and look after myself
- Too difficult to contact GP
- Too long to wait for a GP appointment
- Too long waiting for Patient Transport
- Too stressful
- Uncaring attitude of GP practice
- Unhappy with service provided previously – not listened to, fobbed off, not a good service

*When feeling low I haven't bothered trying to get an appointment as it will be weeks away or by telephone*

One person told us what happened when they did decide to ask for help:

*We have talked about things now and things seem to be improving. I felt much better after telling her the truth of what was happening to me in my everyday life*

# Conclusion

As part of our statutory functions we have a role to obtain the views of citizens about their needs and experiences of local health and social care services. During the period from April 2022 to December 2022 we received 109 negative experiences from the citizens of Tameside, (in the health and care experiences survey).

The themes from those experiences included:

1. **Long waiting times for appointments, and difficulties in accessing care, including phone access.** There are comments throughout the report showing the effect this has on people, including delaying asking for care.
2. **Communication** – this is a wide-ranging theme. Some of the comments are about:
  - a. Being kept up to date with waiting times
  - b. Being listened to
  - c. Being provided with information and advice (including test results and diagnosis)
  - d. Having questions answered
  - e. Not using jargon
  - f. Receiving information in an accessible way.
3. **Care provided** – another wide-ranging theme. Some of the comments are about:
  - a. Annual reviews delayed or not carried out
  - b. Delays in care provided, including diagnosis and treatment
  - c. Lack of continuity in care provider
  - d. Services not co-ordinated
  - e. Unhappy with the treatment/care provided

In this survey we also received 147 positive experiences.

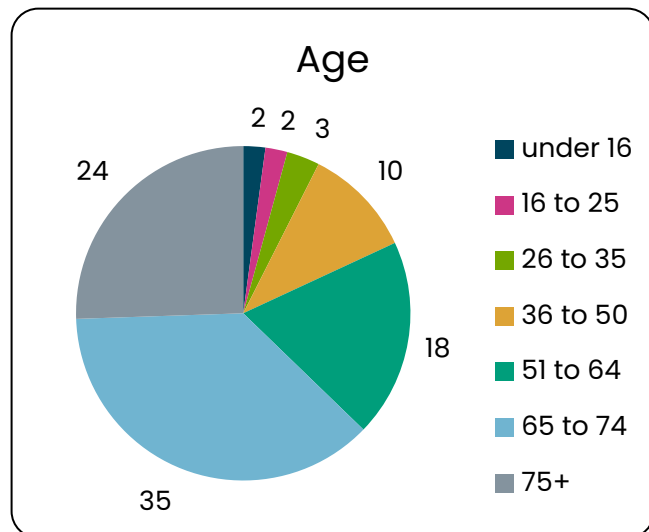
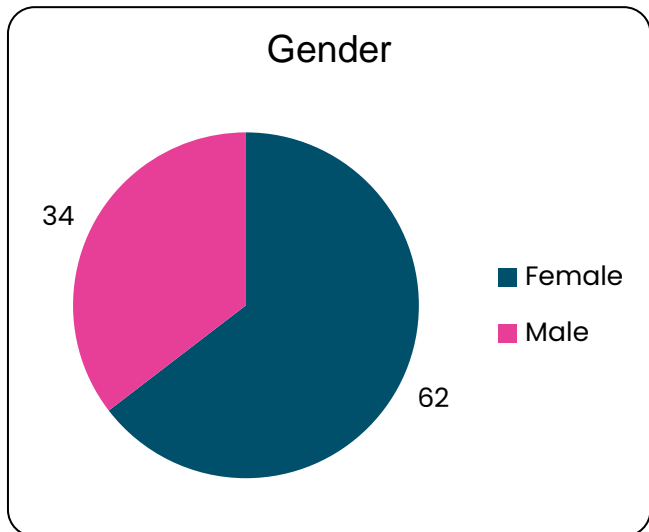
Using this intelligence, we will continue to work with commissioners, providers, and the people of Tameside to understand where services are working well and where further development may be needed.

## Future reporting

Healthwatch Tameside will continue to use your experiences to inform change but will adapt the way we will report our work in relation to the experience that you share with us. We will now produce quarterly impact reports which will highlight how your experiences have been used to influence service providers and commissioners. These will demonstrate the impact we are making. We will also report on key trends and emerging issues within this report which will support our partners to address issues.

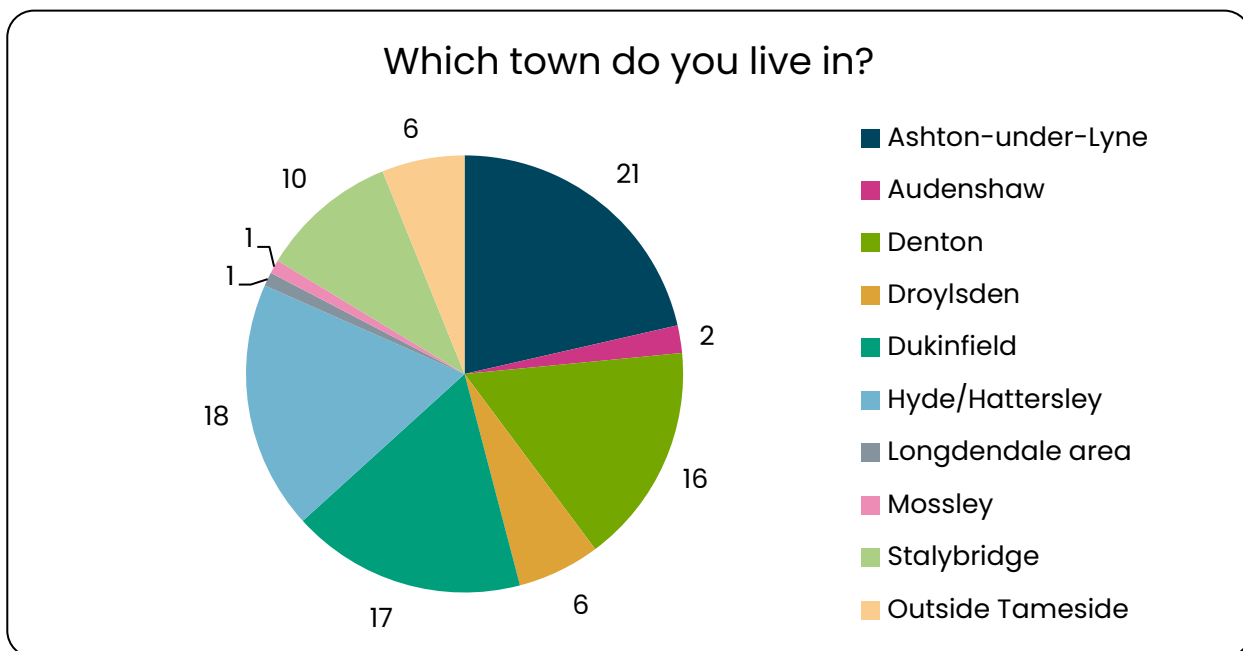
# Demographics

Not everyone answered these questions.

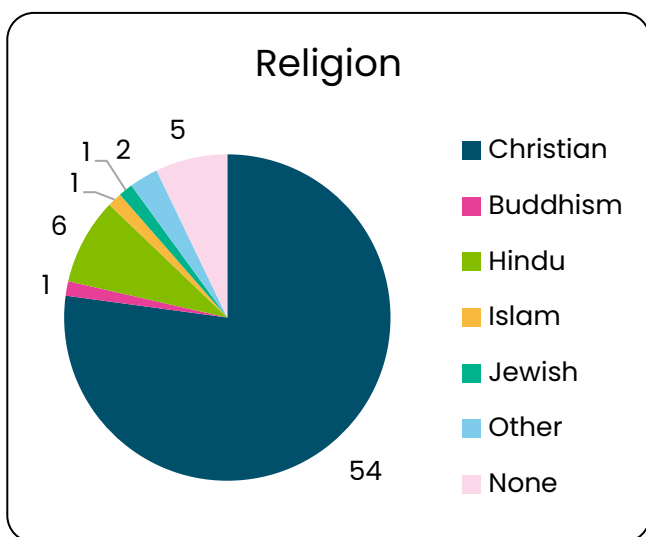
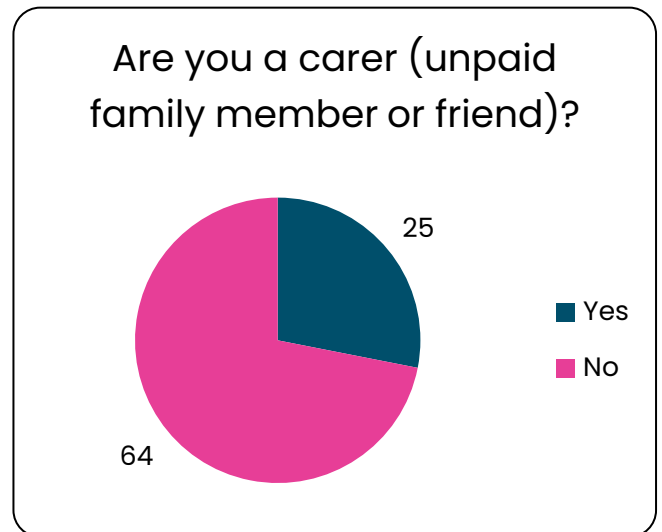
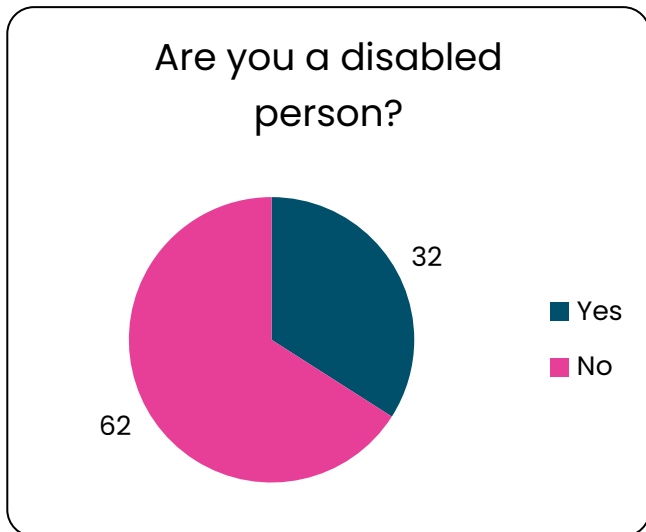
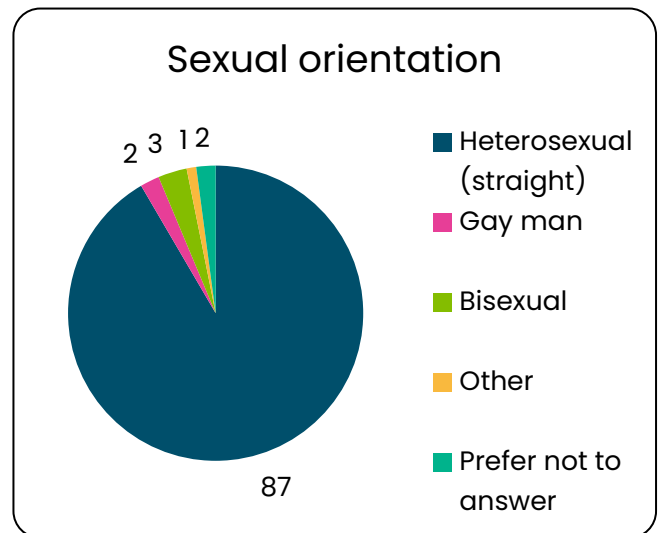
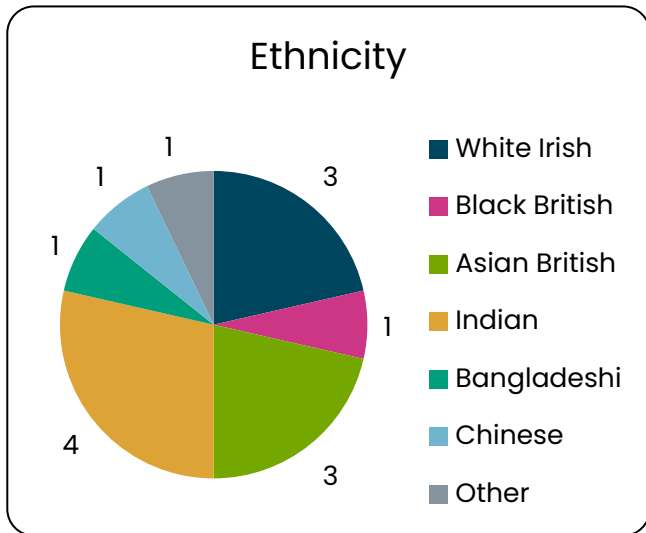


Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

70 people answered this question – 69 answered ‘Yes’ and one person ‘No’.



83 people responded as White British.



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has supported Healthwatch Tameside in our work. This includes the people who complete our surveys, and the individuals and organisations who promote them.

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