

You Told Us

September 2025



You told us...

In September 2025, we reviewed the feedback gathered from individuals across County Durham to identify key trends in health and social care. These shared experiences not only help shape our future engagement priorities but also enable us to pinpoint concerns that may require direct escalation to service providers.

We engaged with...



members of the public, patients and charity sector

We heard from...



people about their experiences of health and care

We reached...



people through our social media and newsletter

We had the most feedback about...

Services



GPs



Dentistry



Hospital Services

Themes



Access to services

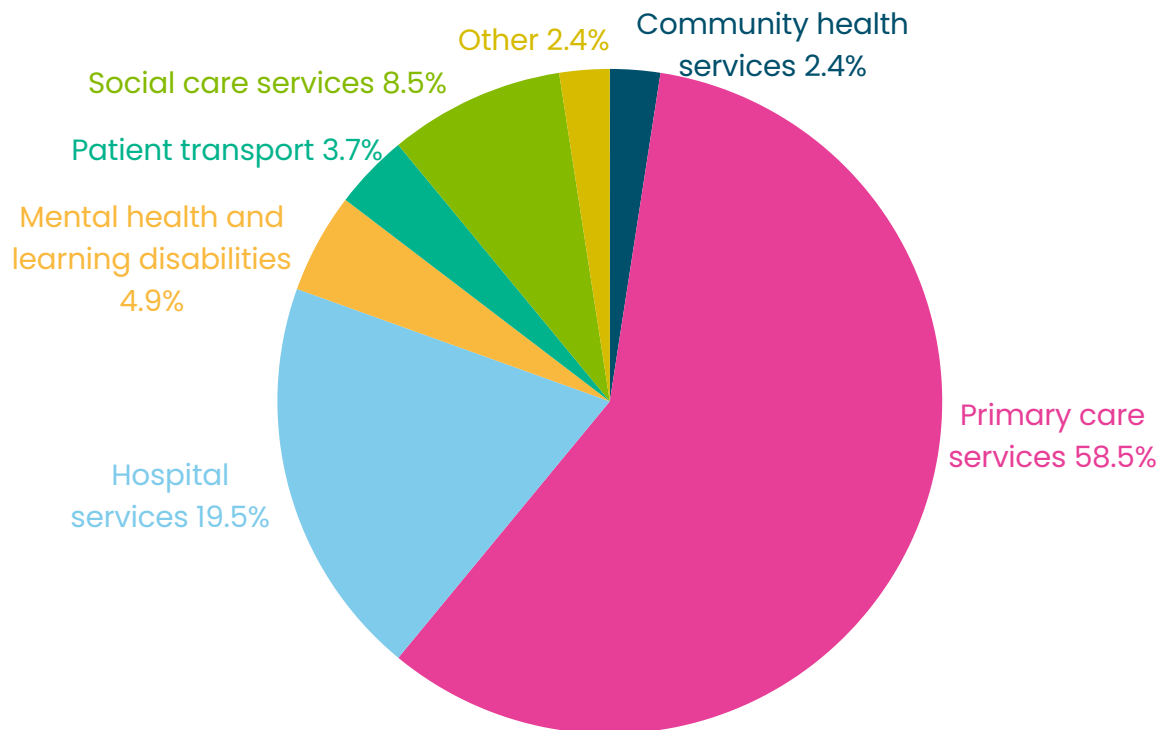


Quality of Treatment

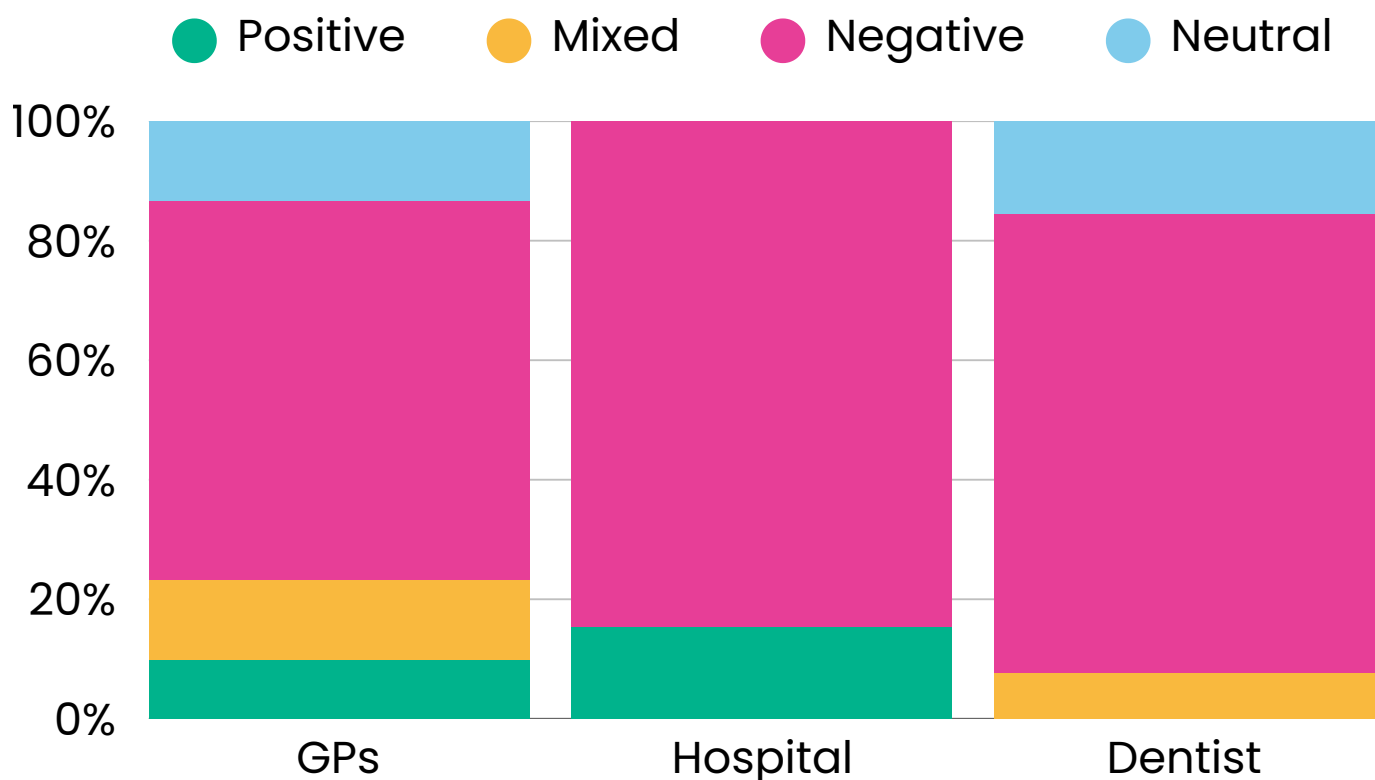


Booking appointments

Most common services you used



Patients gave us the most feedback about GP, hospital services and dentists, and this is how they feel (%)



You told us...



"Nothing went well because all my crowns fell out during covid and I can't find a NHS dentist to sort the problem. My mouth constantly bleeds I have trouble eating and have really bad halitosis which mouthwashes etc don't work and nowhere to turn."

"Great experience at our Well Woman clinic where I was swiftly reassessed & had my HRT prescription renewed for another year. However this followed an appalling experience with a female GP who threatened to stop my HRT at my previous review"



"I went to my pharmacy as I was having trouble with my ear, although it was a little painful it felt blocked too. I told the pharmacist my ailments and they advised me to use some drops for my ears. She didn't have a look in my ear and just went off what I told her. The following day I did an eConsult through my GP practice with my symptoms - because of what I had written it advised that I should call my GP which I did. They offered me an appointment for 2 days later which I refused to accept.

She then offered me a same day one where I saw a Nurse Practitioner. She advised me to stop using the ear drops straight away as could cause more harm than good and prescribed me a 5 day course of antibiotics. If I had not seen a health professional straight away I would have carried on with the ear drops."



You told us...

"On three separate occasions, nurses have had terrible trouble trying to obtain a blood sample and the pain and bruising they have caused me has been absolutely unbearable. I always make sure that I have had something to eat and plenty of water prior to any test.

I made enquiries as to the grade of nurse trying to obtain blood and I was informed they were health care assistants. Band 3. It is only since these band 3 nurses have been employed by the surgery that there has been any trouble taking my blood. When I have raised this issue with reception and asked to put in a complaint that I have come up against an iron clad brick wall when it comes to asking for a higher grade of nurse to take my blood.

Trying to make a complaint has been a terrible experience. I am always promised to speak to a manager but they go home, go on holiday or just simply ignore me.

Meanwhile, I may be a diabetic and not know it. In the past two weeks I have required two paramedics to give me treatment and at one stage my blood sugar was 3.7.

The practice managers will not allow me access to the partners whatsoever.

They want me to change practices so that they do not have to deal with my complaint."



Word on the street...

We asked our volunteers to gather information they are hearing about health and social care services whilst they are out and about. Here are some of the experiences people have shared:

Concerns around weight loss medication

Some people are paying about £150 each month for weight loss injections. We heard people are really worried — not just about the cost, but also about whether the injections are safe. People are scared that taking these injections without enough medical help could cause health problems later on.

Worry around medication and GP decisions

Some volunteers said they feel really worried about how medicines are being given and managed. Many of them think that some doctors might be giving out statins or other drugs when they aren't really needed. They worry this could be more about money than about what's best for the patient. Because of this, some people don't trust their doctors as much, especially when they've looked at their own blood test results and don't see a reason for the medicine.

People are also upset that they're not always told why their medicine is changed — like when the brand is switched or a drug is stopped because of new research, these sudden changes can be confusing or even harmful. Some feel that doctors are just ticking boxes instead of giving care that's right for each person.

Access barriers

Volunteers said many people are having trouble getting the care they need. One person tried to see a doctor about an eye problem, but the GP told them to call 111 or go to A&E if it got worse. Six months later, the problem still isn't fixed, and the eye department has a 14-month wait. People are also frustrated because politicians say it's easier to get GP appointments and that hospital waits are shorter, but that doesn't match what they see. Using phones and apps for healthcare has made things harder too — letters are hard to read, apps are slow, and people worry about their personal data.



We're Listening

Your voice matters and we want to hear it.

There are multiple ways you can share your thoughts with us:

- Call us at 0300 180 0025
- Email us at info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

Whether it's a general experience or a specific enquiry, we're here to help.

If you'd like to leave feedback about a specific service (like your GP Practice, care home or hospital) the best place to do that is on our website:

www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

Stay up-to-date with our activities

Our monthly newsletter keeps you in the loop with where we've been and where we're heading next, plus the latest news on events, campaigns, and projects across County Durham.

It's the best way to stay up-to-date with our work, see how your feedback is making a difference and get involved in upcoming activities.

Read or sign up [here](#).

healthwatch County Durham

News update - October 2025



turn is here and with it comes the latest updates from Healthwatch County Durham. In this edition, we share insights from local people about health and social services, highlight our latest reports and let you know how your feedback is helping to shape better care across the county.

From community stories to ways you can have your say, there's plenty to catch up on this month. Read on to find out more.

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