

Access to Primary Care Report

May - August 2024

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About this report

The focus of this report is Primary Care within Knowsley, and includes comments shared by Knowsley community members between May and August 2024.

The report includes data relating to all services included within the broader definition of Primary Care, namely:

- GP Practices
- Dental Practices
- Pharmacies
- Opticians

There were 604 comments received about Primary Care Services within Knowsley.

All comments used within the report are the actual words of the people who shared them with Healthwatch Knowsley and have not been changed in any way.

Healthwatch Knowsley would welcome any feedback relating to the information contained within this report and encourage Primary Care Services to utilise the Feedback Centre to provide responses to the reviews to create communication between the service and patients.

Feedback Centre

This report has been compiled using the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre. This web based tool enables members of the public to provide patient experience and feedback and rate the services that they use. Real time analysis of the feedback, enabling early identification of trends and issues is available through the system.



About us

Healthwatch Knowsley is your local health and social care champion.

Healthwatch Knowsley is your local health and social care champion. From Kirkby to Halewood and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our vision

Healthwatch Knowsley will be an effective and clear voice for the community of Knowsley in relation to health and social care service provision and commissioning.



Our mission

Supporting you to have your say

We want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.

Providing a high quality service

We want everyone who shares experiences or seeks advice from us to receive a high quality service and understand the difference their views make.

Ensuring your views help improve health & care

We want more services to use community views to shape the health and care support you need today and in the future.



Our values are:

Inclusive – working with all communities across Knowsley

Influential – we are responsive, setting the agenda and making change happen

Independent – we act on behalf of the local community, listening carefully then speaking loudly on their behalf

Credible – we value knowledge, seeking information and challenging assumptions with facts

Collaborative – we work in partnership with health and social care organisations to keep the debate positive and we get things done.



Overall Snapshot

The snapshot below shows that between May and August 2024 there have been 604 comments received relating to 36 Primary Care Services. GP's, Dentists and Pharmacies are highlighted individually within this report (please note there were no comments received regarding Opticians during this reporting period). In some cases, the name of the service has not been identified. This feedback is recorded under an unknown category. The overall rating during this period is just over 4.4 stars (Good), the average individual ratings are 4 stars.

604

Reviews for this period

36

Services reviewed this period

Average Rating:



Average rating for this period (4.4768)
Based on 604 reviews



Overall average

Average Individual Ratings

Quality of care based on 407 responses	★★★★☆
Quality of treatment based on 400 responses	★★★★☆
Staff based on 414 responses	★★★★☆
Cleanliness based on 392 responses	★★★★☆
Food & Drink (if applicable) based on 0 responses	☆☆☆☆☆
Communication based on 409 responses	★★★★☆
Discharge based on 306 responses	★★★★☆
Accessibility based on 390 responses	★★★★☆
Safety based on 381 responses	★★★★☆
Appointment (Waiting times) based on 391 responses	★★★★☆

Services

The table below shows those services that received the most comments from May to August 2024 (4 months). GP practices occupy the majority of the top 15 places in terms of volume of feedback generated, although work has taken place to increase the number of pharmacy comments. Tarbock Medical Centre has received the most comments with 163 reviews and an overall rating of 4 stars (good). Other services include Dinas Lane Medical Centre (91 reviews), Davey's Chemist - Bluebell (51 reviews) and L Rowland & Co - Old Rough Lane - (44 reviews). The rating for each service is included below.

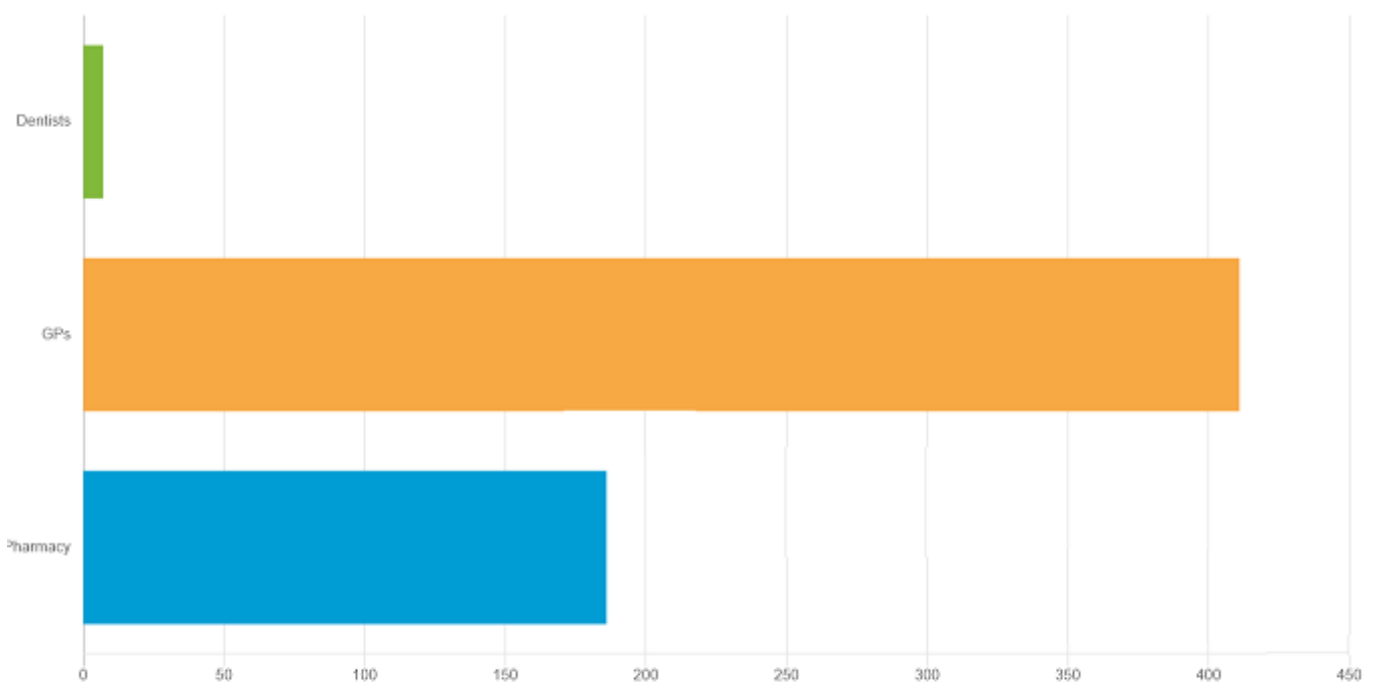
Service	Service Type	Reviews	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rating
Tarbock Medical Centre	GPs	165	77.6%	7.9%	6.1%	★★★★☆
Dinas Lane Medical Centre	GPs	91	83.5%	9.9%	1.1%	★★★★☆
Daveys Chemist (Bluebell Lane)	Pharmacy	51	45.1%	13.7%	27.5%	★★★★☆
L Rowland & Co (Retail) Ltd (Old Rough Lane, Kirkby)	Pharmacy	44	90.9%	0%	2.3%	★★★★☆
Daveys Chemist (Dinas Lane)	Pharmacy	42	71.4%	0%	9.5%	★★★★☆
Daveys Chemist (Manor Farm)	Pharmacy	42	50.0%	26.2%	4.8%	★★★★☆
Manor Farm Road Surgery (Aston Healthcare)	GPs	39	61.5%	20.5%	12.8%	★★★★☆
Gresford Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare Limited)	GPs	31	58.1%	12.9%	12.9%	★★★★☆
Camberley Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare)	GPs	24	91.7%	4.2%	0%	★★★★☆
Cornerways Medical Centre	GPs	19	89.5%	10.5%	0%	★★★★☆
Roseheath Surgery	GPs	14	78.6%	0%	14.3%	★★★★☆
Dr Maassarani and Partners (Towerhill & Melling Surgery)	GPs	6	33.3%	50.0%	0%	★★★★☆
Whiston Primary Care Resource Centre (Aston Healthcare)	GPs	3	100.0%	0%	0%	★★★★★
The Health Centre Surgery (The Halewood Centre) Dr Simo	GPs	3	33.3%	66.7%	0%	★★★☆☆
Wingate Medical Centre	GPs	3	66.7%	33.3%	0%	★★★☆☆

* Please be aware that system does not show 100% of the sentiment, as the system will only show positive, negative and neutral, the remaining % accounts for any mixed responses, which is a combination of positive, negative and neutral.

Those primary care services that have received fewer patient comments on the HWK feedback centre have limited data on which to self-assess and identify any areas of success or others which may require improvement. It is also possible that a small volume of feedback provided voluntarily may represent a bias toward those patients who have had an unhappy experience.

Categories

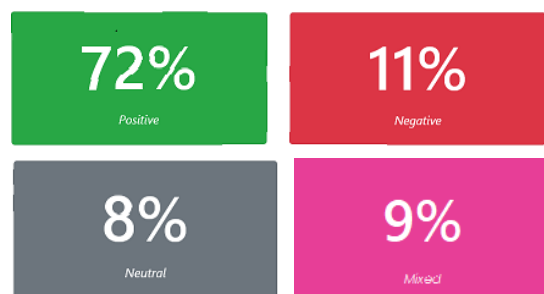
The category that has received the most feedback has been GP services with 411 comments (392), Pharmacies receiving 186 comments (4) and Dentists receiving 7 comments (18). Numbers in brackets represent volume of feedback in the previous 4 months. The table below also shows the sentiment and rating for each category.



Name	Total Feedback	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rating
Dentists	7	28.6%	57.1%	0%	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
GPs	411	76.2%	10.7%	6.1%	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Pharmacy	186	62.9%	10.2%	12.4%	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Sentiment

As well as providing an overall star rating which is based on the ratings given by local people, our feedback centre also uses sentiment technology which looks at each piece of anonymous feedback shared and reviews the positive, negative and neutral sentiments. Analysis of this reporting period shows that comments overall are 72% positive, 11% negative, 8% neutral and 9% mixed (this includes comments that are a mix of positive, negative and neutral).



The word clouds below highlight some of the most used phrases within the comments received, the most used positive word is 'helpful' and the most used negative phrase is 'a problem'.



Friends & Family

Patients were asked if they would recommend the services to their friends and family, with 593 respondents answering this question. 408 people said they would be extremely likely to recommend; 110 stating they would be likely to recommend; 21 stated neither; 26 would be unlikely to recommend, 26 stated they would be extremely unlikely to recommend and 2 people didn't know.

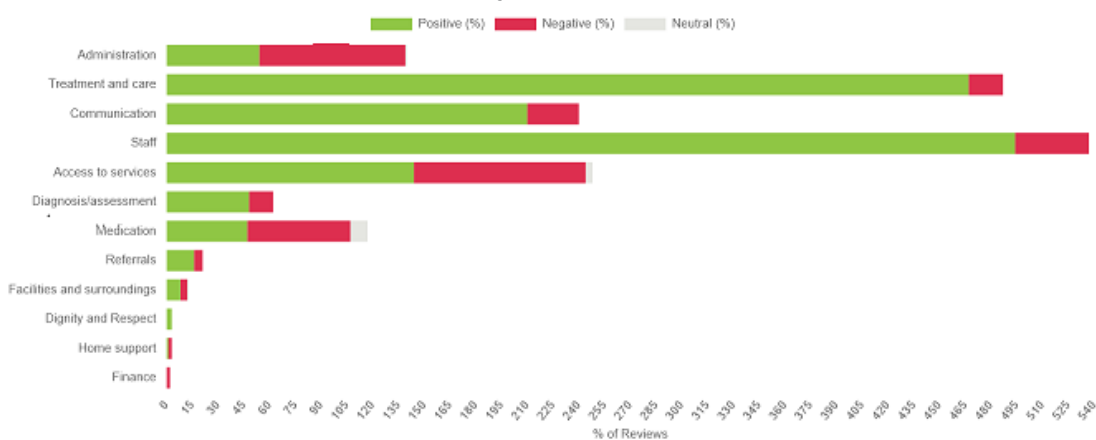


Key Themes

A number of key themes have been highlighted during production of this report where elements of the services have scored particularly well or poorly by significant numbers of respondents.

These include:

- Of 537 comments relating to staff 92% scored this **positively**
- Of 487 comments relating to treatment and care 96% scored this **positively**
- Of 240 comments relating to communication 88% scored this **positively**
- Of 248 comments relating to gaining access to the service 58% scored this **positively**
- Of 140 comments relating to administration issues 61% scored this **negatively**



Please note comments may include multiple themes.

Theme	Count	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Subthemes
Administration	140	39%	61%	1%	Sub-Themes >
Treatment and care	487	96%	4%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Communication	240	88%	13%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Staff	537	92%	8%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Access to services	248	58%	40%	2%	Sub-Themes >
Diagnosis/assessment	62	77%	23%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Medication	117	40%	51%	9%	Sub-Themes >
Referrals	21	76%	24%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Facilities and surroundings	13	62%	31%	8%	Sub-Themes >
Dignity and Respect	3	100%	0%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Home support	3	33%	67%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Finance	2	0%	100%	0%	Sub-Themes >

GP Services - Overview

There have been 411 comments received relating to 20 GP Practices. The overall rating during this period is just over 4.5 stars (Good/Excellent), the average individual rating is 4 stars.

411

Reviews for this period

20

Services reviewed this period

Average Rating:



Average rating for this period (4.5182)
Based on 411 reviews



Overall average

Average Individual Ratings

Quality of care
based on 393 responses



Quality of treatment
based on 387 responses



Staff
based on 400 responses



Cleanliness
based on 380 responses



Food & Drink (if applicable)
based on 0 responses



Communication
based on 395 responses



Discharge
based on 298 responses



Accessibility
based on 378 responses



Safety
based on 370 responses



Appointment (Waiting times)
based on 380 responses



GP - Key Themes

Treatment & Care

In terms of treatment and care the table below shows that a majority of the comments received were positive, with 'experience' being the sub-theme mentioned the most frequently during this reporting period.

Treatment and care	407	96%	4%	0%
Experience	379	96%	4%	0%
Safety of Care/Treatment	1	100%	0%	0%
Treatment Explanation	27	96%	4%	0%

Below are some examples of the comments received within the treatment and care theme.

G "I've been struggling to get in. House bound injuries. But today the surgery have really stepped up and helped me with all my issues. Thank you to them."

"From logging in on screen a very short waiting time. Felt reassured by Dr's friendly words and explanations. Left surgery feeling I had been listened to. Would recommend."

"Doctor whom I saw was really thorough and he listened to everything I was telling him. My ear infection was treated and he is going to follow up in seven days to see if cleared up."

"Each time I have seeked help & requested to see GP staff have reacted exemplary & I have always been given the best that was possible."

"I cannot speak more highly of (name omitted). Ringing at 08.00 generally gets you an appointment on that day. For less urgent cases, appointments can be booked online in advance. Following blood, chest etc. tests Dr (name omitted) will text with the result. When ordering extras not regularly on a prescription he responds within hours, often during the weekend. All doctors give an excellent, empathetic service and ensure that the patient is happy before they leave the surgery. Waiting times are never long. From what we hear through various media about waiting times to see a doctor we at Tarbock receive a fantastic service. If Dr (name omitted) sees you while waiting he will talk and he knows each of us which must be very rare."

Staff

The majority of comments received that related to staff members have been positive, with 'Clinician' being the main sub-theme (197 comments). Staff attitude (176 comments) is also mentioned positively in the comments received, some examples are included below:

Staff	426	92%	8%	0%
Attitudes	176	93%	7%	0%
Reception Staff	43	84%	16%	0%
Clinician	197	98%	2%	0%
General	1	0%	100%	0%
Continuity	3	33%	67%	0%
Midwives	1	0%	100%	0%
Training and development	1	0%	100%	0%
Suitability	1	0%	100%	0%
Capacity	1	0%	100%	0%
Staffing levels	2	0%	100%	0%



"The lady I spoke to was extremely kind and understanding, patient professional, and deserves to be recognised for her A star treatment of a patient."

"From personal experience I have experienced is that all the staff who work here are dedicated to having an excellent family feel, all the reception staff are helpful and efficient and go the extra mile to help. The medical team are amazing, Dr (name omitted) is the only GP I have met in all of my life that is so dedicated to helping me get my health back on track. The surgery also has a nurse practitioner who is efficient and now a pharmacist is working her to help with any prescription enquiries. This is the best doctors surgery in and around Knowsley, after speaking to many people who are in other surgeries I recognise my family and I are blessed to have this level of care. I am indebted to them all for their hard work and public service."

"Doctor was lovely put me at ease right away thank you"

Communication

The majority of communication themed comments (207 comments) received related to 'general' and have been positive. Some examples are included below:

Communication	216	91%	9%	0%
General	207	95%	5%	0%
Lack of	9	0%	100%	0%



"Listened to me, accessed appropriate help."

"Listened to everything then give me the good advice."

"The staff are very helpful and keep in contact on a regular basis to keep me aware of available treatments."

"On 2 occasions recently I have had to ring for an appointment. After 61 attempts I spoke with a receptionist, I was trying to answer her questions regarding the reason for the Drs appointment but found her flippant and interrupting my answers. I became upset because I felt I was wasting her time and she was rushing me for an answer. I understand other people are probably trying to get through but please show some empathy when dealing with someone who is anxious and concerned for their loved one."

"Spoke to (name omitted) on the phone she was so lovely and helpful. I explained I was really nervous about going to the doctors and she put me at ease."

"Very good experience. (Name omitted) on Reception dealt with my call. She was extremely helpful, listened sympathetically to my history and concerns, and ensured I was given an appointment within the week. I'm always happy with the level of care I receive over the phone and inside the Practice."

Access to Services

We continue to see mixed experiences in those areas relating to **Access to Services**. There is a notable variety of sub-themes within this area including lack of access, waiting times, information and advice, telephone appointments and telephone systems as highlighted in the table below:

Access to services	114	53%	46%	2%
Waiting times	22	55%	45%	0%
Lack of	29	0%	100%	0%
Telephone Systems	11	45%	55%	0%
Use of digital services	7	71%	29%	0%
Telephone Appointments	12	100%	0%	0%
Information and Advice	17	94%	6%	0%
General	3	100%	0%	0%
Face to Face appointments	8	88%	0%	13%
Convenience/Distance to travel	4	0%	75%	25%
Patient choice	1	0%	100%	0%

Examples of comments are included below:

“I know in this day and age a lot of people have issues getting access to their doctors. I called at 8am and had a call back at 9am to then be referred onwards to have scans looked at. Dr (name omitted) was fantastic and very easy to talk to and the reception were also great ringing me to tell me the referral had been sent.”

“When I rang the automated dialling system was inoperable and I had to redial. I was caller number 2 for over 15minutes before being cut off. When I eventually got an appointment everything went well and the nurse was great.”

“I was told to make an appointment but then told I have to wait 2 weeks for it, so makes me a lot more anxious.”

“Appointments seem to getting easier to make with more friendly staff.”

Administration

'Administration' continues to be an area of concern for patients with 60% of the 138 comments received being negative, with a number of people struggling with appointment availability and having issues when booking appointments.

Administration	138	39%	60%	1%
Appointment availability	74	43%	57%	0%
Booking appointments	54	28%	70%	2%
General	4	75%	25%	0%
Management of service	4	75%	25%	0%
Medical records	2	50%	50%	0%

Examples of comments are included below:



“Really challenging to get an appointment, had been trying for over 3 weeks through online system and phoning, I work shifts so can be difficult to access at times available, when I did get an appointment it was cancelled within an hour , told to contact surgery did so and again got told to try daily again. With a national push in other services re waiting times and response to treatment it's disappointing.”

“Phoned for appointment, 11 in que used phone back option phoned back after 15mins. Appointment offered same day with Dr. Had to use different centre than usual.”

“Accessing appointments is impossible when ringing up.”

“Once I got the appointment to see the Doctor all was very good. Trying to get an appointment by phone is impossible. I waited from 07.30 at (name omitted) and I was 10th in the queue. Once in front of the Doctor I was dealt with very professionally.”

“Last time few times I have tried to get an appointment it was over a week of trying to get an appointment. This time I was seen within 24 hours of asking. Appointment ran on time and the doctor extremely helpful.”

Diagnosis/Assessment

'Diagnosis/Assessment' has been a key theme within this period, with a majority (78%) of patients happy with the diagnosis/assessment process within their surgery.

Diagnosis/assessment	60	78%	22%	0%
General	35	80%	20%	0%
Lack of	5	0%	100%	0%
Tests/Results	20	95%	5%	0%

Examples of comments are included below:



"Hi , I have recently had 3 consultations for various ailments by Dr (name omitted) , Nurse (name omitted) and Nurse (name omitted) each consultation was excellent, I felt listened too and any referrals made had been completed to my preferred hospital , the team are continuing to work with me and supporting me manage my complex and multiple health needs. I also want to extend my appreciation to the reception team who speak to me at regular intervals has I am also a carer, the reception team are very friendly and go above and beyond to assist me. Just wished to convey my sincere gratitude and appreciation for all your help and kindness. Many thanks."

"Dr really made time to listen to what the problem was and took time and effort when moving my neck. Since seeing Dr I have had less pain and can concentrate more without pain. Massive help having in local GP practice."

"I made an appointment for headaches and palpitations that I've been having for 18-24 months and was sent for blood tests and referred for a 24 hour ECG. After the blood test results were in, I was contacted by a nutritionist who informed me that my cholesterol was slightly high. I mentioned to her that I'm concerned about the headaches and palpitations and she told me "you should make an appointment with your doctor about it". Which I originally did. I was sent for a 24-hour blood pressure monitor despite my blood pressure being fine. I had a 2nd appointment with another Dr who told me that my referral for the ECG had been rejected and it was probably nothing to be concerned about. We also discussed the headaches and he said they're also probably nothing to worry about and that if they continue I should come back for another appointment. I told him again that I've had them for almost 2 years already and he told me the same; "if they don't go away then come back". 4 appointments for various thing later I'm back where I started with no help being given and I'm unsure what to do next."

Medication

'Medication' is another area that has received a majority (80%) of positive comments.

Medication	30	80%	17%	3%
Pharmacy Repeat Prescriptions	5	80%	20%	0%
Medicines Management	25	80%	16%	4%

Examples of comments are included below:



"A very useful meeting to discuss my health, medication and plan to meet be forward."

"I had an appointment 11.30 prescription was in the pharmacy by 2pm."

"When I request my prescription, I need to send a separate letter for creams etc. The main prescription is sent direct to the chemist but I need to send a letter for creams, diabetic strips and Paracetamol."

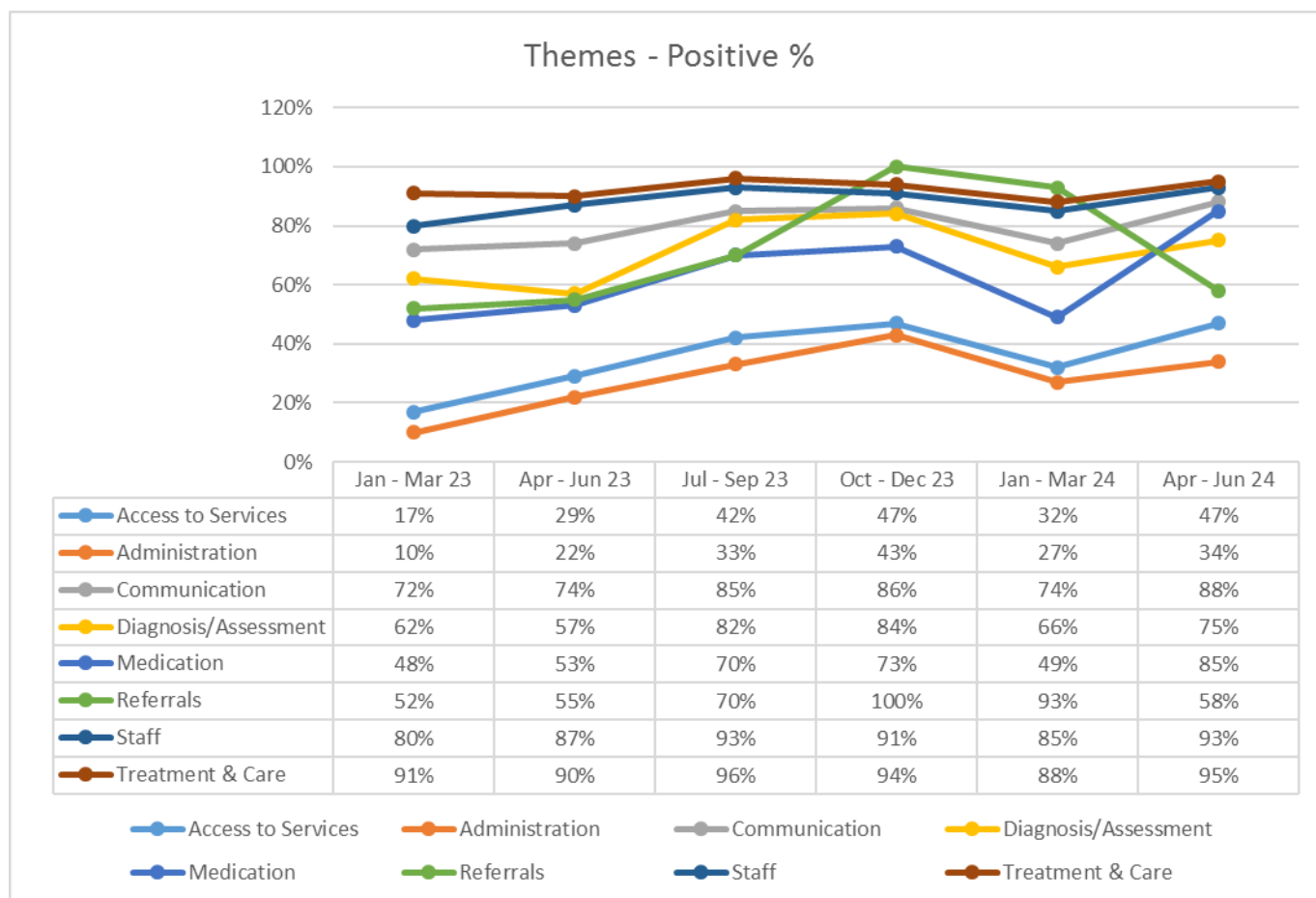
"Appointments are available fairly quick. I had antibiotics the same day after a phone consultation great service."

"Nurse prescribed medication and advised life changes. Follow up visits and checks resulted in a change in medication which did the trick."

"My prescriptions are easy to order online. They have always arrived at the pharmacy. Well done. Holiday vaccinations were all carried out by a excellent knowledgeable nurse."

GP – Reporting Overview

The graph below provides an overview of the % of positive comments relating to the most popular themes between January 2023 and June 2024 on a quarterly basis:



The image shows that overall there has been a small increase in the number of positive comments received.

Responding to Patients

The Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre gives the opportunity for service providers to directly respond and communicate with patients. From the 411 comments received relating to GP Services, 293 comments received a response from the provider.

When we receive low rated reviews or particularly negative reviews, we will contact the reviewer with information about raising their concerns with the Practice directly, as well as information about the Advocacy services within Knowsley to support any complaints relating to health care.

Tarbock Medical Centre

In May 2024, Tarbock Medical Centre approached Healthwatch Knowsley on how they could capture more feedback relating to their service. After a conversation about previous work completed with other surgeries, the Practice agreed to send a text message to their patients with a link to the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre. Following on from this, 163 comments were captured between May and June 2024 and a report was produced with the results.

Within the report, there were some aspects and key themes coming through that are important to work on with the practice, but overall the majority of comments received were positive, with a particular appreciation for staff endeavouring to deliver an excellent service to patients.

Pharmacy Services Survey

During June and July 2024, Healthwatch Knowsley undertook targeted outreach in the following pharmacies:

- Davey's Chemist – Dinas Lane
- Davey's Chemist – Manor Farm
- Davey's Chemist – Bluebell Centre
- L Rowland's – Old Rough Lane

A survey was developed to capture respondents overall experience, the reason for their visit, as well as any suggestions for improvements. NHS Commissioners had input to the survey design so that data collected met their requirements. Two outreach sessions were completed within each venue, during mornings and afternoons, with 176 responses captured.

Overall, the majority (66%) of respondents rated the service received as 5 stars; 23% as 4 stars, 10% as 3 stars and 1% as 2 stars. Most patients (163) were accessing the pharmacy to collect prescribed medication, with some people attending for vaccinations or blood pressure tests, etc. 96% of respondents were satisfied with the care they received when visiting the pharmacy.

Some of the key issues highlighted included:

- Medication shortages
- Waiting times for medication
- Struggling to get through on the phone
- Missing prescription items

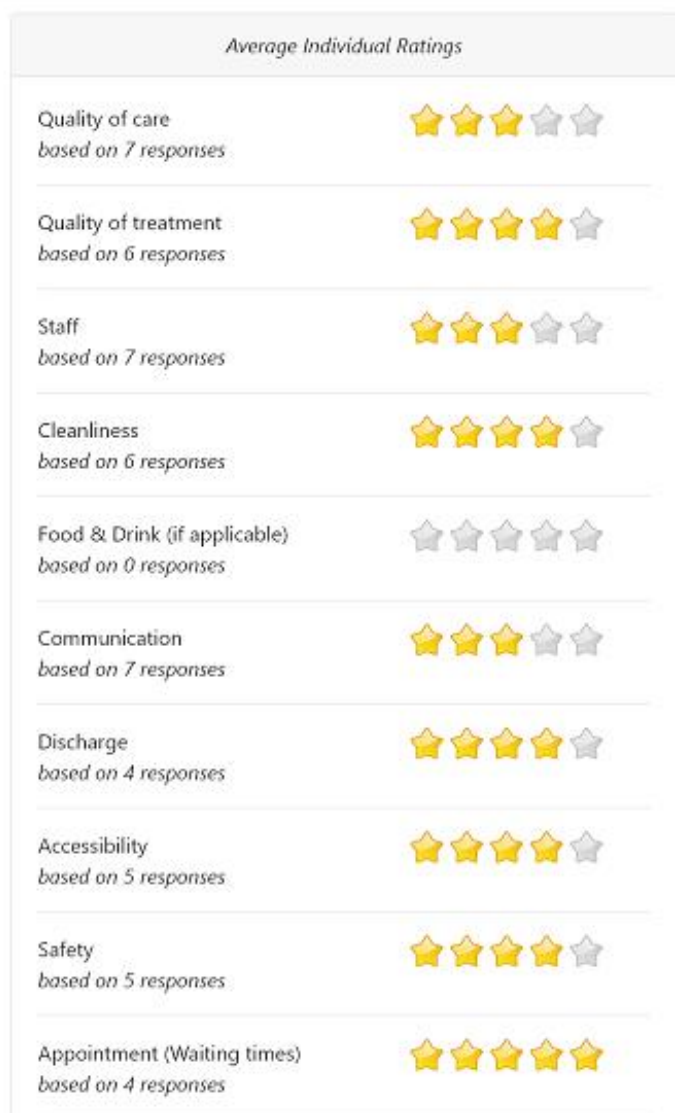
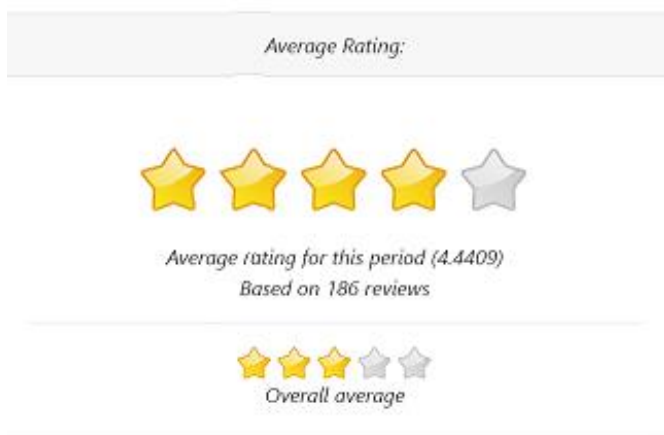
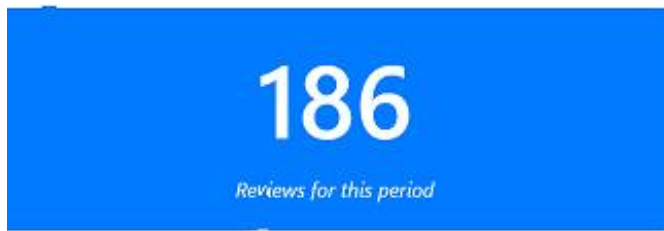
In terms of what had been positive with the service, patients mentioned the following:

- Staff
- Communication
- Quick Service

The information from this activity has been uploaded onto our new survey tool, Smart Survey and the contents will be used to produce a Pharmacy specific report. These comments were also uploaded onto the Healthwatch Knowsley feedback centre and are included in the overview of pharmacy services.

Pharmacy - Overview

In total, there have been 186 comments received relating to 11 Pharmacies (including survey responses). The overall rating during this period is 4.4 stars (good), the average individual ratings are between 3 and 5 stars.



Pharmacy - Key Themes

Access to Services

In terms of 'Access to Services' the table below shows that there are various sub-themes within this area. 65% comments received were positive, with 'waiting times' being the sub-theme mentioned the most (84 comments).

Access to services	128	65%	34%	2%
Lack of	2	0%	100%	0%
Telephone Systems	8	0%	88%	13%
Waiting times	84	79%	21%	0%
Convenience/Distance to travel	11	73%	27%	0%
Use of digital services	2	100%	0%	0%
Service Delivery/Opening Times	12	17%	83%	0%
General	5	40%	40%	20%
Information and Advice	3	100%	0%	0%
Patient choice	1	0%	100%	0%

Below are the comments received within the access to services theme:

 “Very fast and friendly service - ordered a prescription and was ready for collection.”

“I come to collect my medications and have my COVID jab. Sometimes you have to wait at least 20 minutes. They have your medication in, you don't have to come back very often. Improvements could be made to the waiting times at the counter.”

“My prescription is not ready, it has been in since last week. Communication has been good. However, it is difficult to get through on the phone.”

“Seen straight away polite and respectful. Open at convenient times and seen prompt despite being busy.”

“Opening hours could be improved - especially Saturday.”

Staff

The majority of comments received that related to staff members have been positive, with 'Attitudes' being the main sub-theme, some examples are included below:

Staff	107	91%	9%	0%
Attitudes	99	94%	5%	0%
Staffing levels	6	33%	67%	0%
General	1	100%	0%	0%
Clinician	1	100%	0%	0%
Continuity	1	0%	100%	0%



"Prescription for my daughter. The staff are lovely and helpful - I have been advised re a pre-payment card. There are always loads of staff but no-one to serve, sometimes you can wait a while."

"I was seen quickly and the staff are nice. Maybe being open on a weekend would be improved."

"I have been coming here for a long time, it is near to the doctors and the staff are wonderful."

"I have used the pharmacy since I was 10. There needs to be more staff."

"Pleasant and polite staff with efficient service."

"The staff are friendly. Any problems, they are always on hand. It is really good. It can get busy at peak times."

Medication

The majority of comments received that related to medication have been negative 64%, with '**waiting times**' being the main sub-theme, some examples are included below:

Medication	86	26%	64%	10%
Pharmacy Repeat Prescriptions	6	50%	50%	0%
Medicines Management	25	32%	44%	24%
Medication Supply	21	24%	71%	5%
Waiting Times	34	18%	76%	6%



“Frustrated - Have been to two pharmacies to collect unable to find the medication attended Bluebell to collect, to find meds are out of date. Have to return following day. Have more stock of meds and stock checks.”

“Collect repeat prescription meds. Sometimes cannot get hold of meds- it was ordered and got it same day, Staff are brilliant and friendly.”

“I'm lucky today as it is quiet. The staff are nice. The organisation isn't good. Prescriptions are not ready which isn't a problem until there are a lot of people waiting.”

Treatment & Care

In terms of treatment and care the table below shows that there were 74 comments received, with 99% being positive, with 'experience' being the sub-theme mentioned.

Treatment and care	74	99%	1%	0%
Experience	75	97%	1%	0%

Below are the comments received within the treatment and care theme.

6 “Everything is fine, the service is very good.”

“Brilliant staff relaxed environment. Feel safe and welcomed. Chatting to people and its always clean.”

“Did not have to wait and order was completed. Medication is always ready.”

“Very busy. staff under pressure. Very polite and helpful. All hardworking. They are worth their weight in gold and some people are very demanding and rude to staff.”

Communication

The majority of communication themed comments received related to 'general', with people mentioning struggling to contact the pharmacy by phone. Some examples are included below:

Communication	21	62%	38%	0%
General	16	75%	19%	0%
Interpretation Services	1	100%	0%	0%
Lack of	5	0%	100%	0%

6 “It could be improved by getting medications ready and able to get through on the phone.”

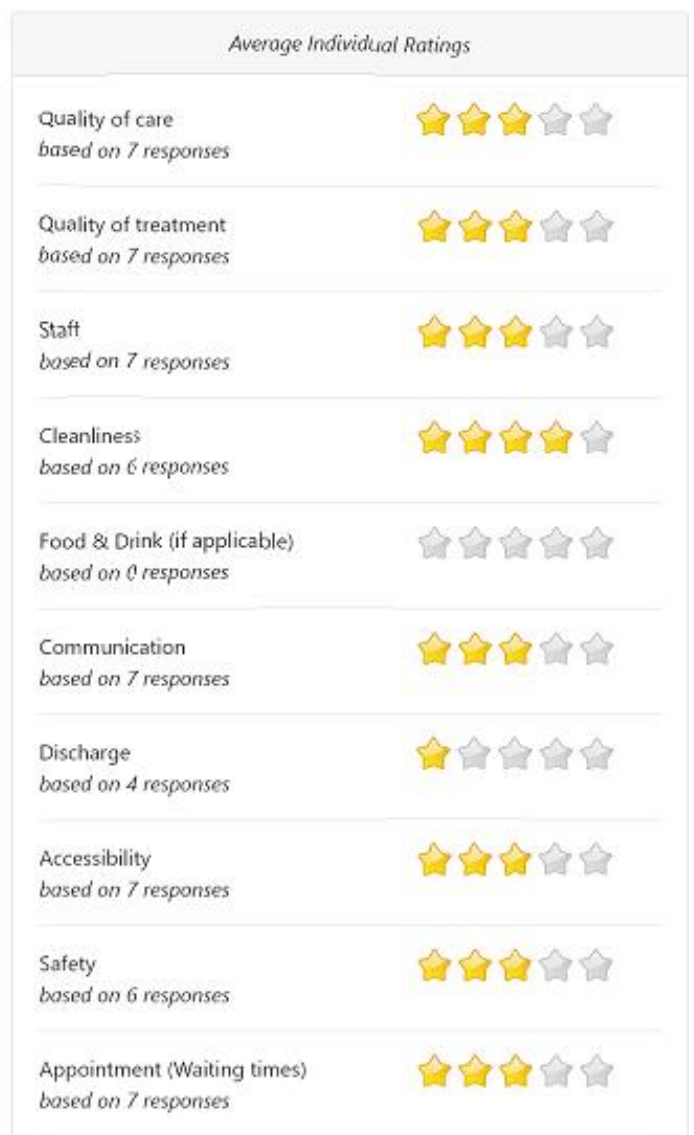
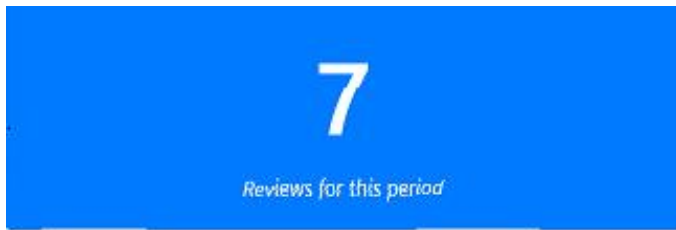
“When you phone no one answers.”

“My prescription is not ready, it has been in since last week. Communication has been good. However, it is difficult to get through on the phone.”

“Usually don't answer the phone previously has to wait 1 hr 20 mins for prescriptions. Served quickly today. It could be improved by answering the phone.”

Dental Services - Overview

There have been 7 comments received relating to 5 Dental Practices. The overall rating during this period is 3 stars (OK), the average individual ratings are between 1-4 stars.



Dentists - Key Themes

Access to Services

In terms of Access to Services for dental care, there have been 6 comments received via the feedback centre; however, lack of access to this service is captured through our signposting and information service. Further information relating to access to dental care is included within this report on page 30.

Access to services	6	17%	83%	0%
Lack of	4	0%	100%	0%
General	1	100%	0%	0%
Waiting times	1	0%	100%	0%

“Implants too tight together, front lower teeth damaged when veneers put on, appointments and follow up disgraceful, felt I'm not listened to when explaining all the issues I have, tried calling for 2 weeks now and voice mail says closed !!! I'm mid treatment for further implants due to first set of crowns falling off.”

“It’s very difficult to get a NHS Dentist anywhere.”

Treatment & Care

In terms of treatment and care the table below shows that the comments received were mixed, with **'experience'** being the sub-theme mentioned.

Treatment and care	6	50%	50%	0%
Experience	6	50%	50%	0%

Below are some examples of the comments received within the treatment and care theme.

“Was initially seen by a very rude dentist, who said oh yes, ten or twelve out, what do you expect when you haven't been to a dentist for years. The hygienist will see you first. Unfortunately on the day my diverticular disease was playing up, and I was late because I did not want to crap myself on the bus. I apologised for being 15 minutes late and said that I would wait until everyone else had been seen. Receptionist not interested, told me that I would not be seen that day and that another appointment would be sent to me, (it never was). That put me right off, and as I was not in pain decided never to back to a place with arrogant, uncaring and rude staff. My bad teeth eventually crumbled and fell out.”

“After struggling to get an appt to see a dentist after weeks of pain and infection thanks to Healthwatch I received an appt with Hillside. I was given a prescription for antibiotics and a letter to take to St Helens Hospital for X rays and further treatment. The service at the hospital and dentist was prompt.”

Staff

The majority of comments received that related to staff members have been positive, with **‘attitudes’** being the main sub-theme (3 comments), some examples are included below:

Staff	4	75%	25%	0%
Attitudes	3	67%	33%	0%
Clinician	1	100%	0%	0%



“I have been coming to Dovecot Dentist for years, I find all the staff extremely polite and efficient.”


“Handled by a very professional and experienced team. The tooth had to be broken in parts to remove it under local anaesthetic.”

Key Trends

In terms of access overall there are some important areas that have been highlighted through the comments received. This includes the systems in place for patients to access the surgery and appointments with a clinician. Examples are highlighted below:

Accessing GP appointments

Some patients continue to be frustrated about the process they have to follow in order to try to get an appointment. With most surgeries asking patients to call at 8am for an appointment, this has meant an increase in the number of patients trying to get an appointment at the same time and if they are unsuccessful, repeating this process the next day, or needing to use alternatives such as Walk in Centres. During this reporting period, people have continued to report that in order to get an appointment they have had to physically attend the surgery rather than try the 8am "lottery":

 "The surgery is ran well and I never have any issues except for trying to get an appointment for the same day. I don't bother calling anymore and queue outside at 7.30 to make sure I am able to see a doctor. This isn't great when ill or standing for half an hour is an issue but the only way to get through at 8am unfortunately."

"Once I got the appointment to see the Doctor all was very good. Trying to get an appointment by phone is impossible. I waited from 07.30 at Manor Farm and I was 10th in the queue. Once in front of the Doctor I was dealt with very professionally."

"I think it's ridiculous you can only book appointments on the day. Last time I called, at around 8.10/8.15am all the appointments had gone already, I asked if I could book one tomorrow and was told no, try the walk in, where I waited 6 hours!"

"Appointments are punctual and doctors and nurses are proactive compared to my previous experience. My only complaint is this 8.00 a.m. cut off time for appointments. I was under the impression this practise was stopping. It can be very difficult to get through to make an appointment."

"The appointment system is completely ridiculous! Everyone is told to ring at 8am, which means it is nigh on impossible to get through. If you are lucky enough to secure an appointment, when you arrive in the waiting room you're usually the only person there! The whole thing feels like you're competing in some kind of strange game show."

However, despite there still being some negative comments, more patients have mentioned finding booking and accessing appointments easier. Some comments include:

G “I used to have to queue up but rang today and got through after 10 mins had call back then call from doctor leading to an appointment. Dr (name omitted) is a fantastic doctor very thorough and really lovely. Great experience today.”

“I know in this day and age a lot of people have issues getting access to their doctors. I called at 8am and had a call back at 9am to then be referred onwards to have scans looked at.”

“Last time few times I have tried to get an appointment it was over a week of trying to get an appointment. This time I was seen within 24 hours of asking. Appointment ran on time and the doctor extremely helpful.”

“Called at 8.00 am and was seen by doctor 17.30 same day.”

“You can always get an appointment, if not face to face, a telephone consultation. The receptionists are lovely and go above and beyond their job. Doctors listen with interest and are happy to help.”

GP Telephone Systems

Although some people are still struggling to get appointments, some comments have noted the changes to the telephone system within their GP surgery:


G “The call back system has worked so well when I've rung the surgery, it's brilliant. Dr (name omitted), is absolutely lovely as well as really approachable & gets things done immediately. So much easier getting appointments, thankfully.”

“Overall I am very happy with service I receive from the Doctors. I appreciate in this day and age it is difficult to have a face-to-face appointment when you feel particularly poorly and have difficulty getting through for an appointment. Having said that I am happy with call back service and have always been able to achieve a positive solution without the need to attend the surgery, which suits me fine. In conclusion I am very happy with the service provided.”

“Doctor was concerned about my blood results and called me the same day to discuss, was very thorough and caring. Call back service now available by phone which has helped communication.”

Support from GP Staff

A notable trend during this reporting period has been a number of comments highlighting patient's positive experiences of staff, with patients mentioning staff going above and beyond to help them. Some examples include:

 "I have to give credit where credit is due. I was unable to get a face-to-face appointment. The receptionist rang me later that morning with an appointment for the afternoon as more had become available. I'm sorry I can't remember her name. I was very impressed that she'd taken the trouble to do this for me. It really was appreciated."

"The ladies on reception do a very good job .helpful and polite in getting me appointment."


"Receptionists nurses and GPs have been attentive caring and compassionate in their care towards myself and family and are also supportive re mental and physical health issues. I have had other GPs in areas I have lived and can honestly say this practice goes above and beyond and involve you in decisions about your health with clear explanations."

"Receptionists always do their best, the centre is immaculately clean. All Doctors and Practitioners are a credit to their patients. We are very lucky indeed to have these people looking after our community. Well done to all concerned and a great Big Thank You to you All."

"I've been with this surgery for almost 10 years now and I've always had very positive experience when dealing with reception staff and doctors. I've always found them to be very helpful, kind and understanding, and often go the extra-mile to help you. Thank you all, your hard work and kindness does not go un-noticed."

Accessing Pharmacy Services

Despite a number of comments relating to the 'quick service' they received at their surgery, a number of people noted that the service could be improved with increased opening hours, particularly opening on Saturdays:

 "It would be helpful if the pharmacy was open on a Saturday. Usually have to wait for script meds. Staff are friendly. It could be improved by increasing opening times and have script meds completed prior to collection."


"It would be helpful if children were able to be in clinic to diagnose. Normally collect monthly prescription - Polite staff. Opening hours could be improved - especially Saturday."

“Good. Speedy friendly service. Could be improved with opening on Saturdays.”

“Only one pharmacist which then takes longer. Having to wait for Prescription. It could be improved with more Pharmacists and open on a Saturday.”

Medication Supply – Pharmacy Services

Some of the comments have shown that when accessing pharmacy services, some patients are facing delays due to medication being out of stock and unavailable:

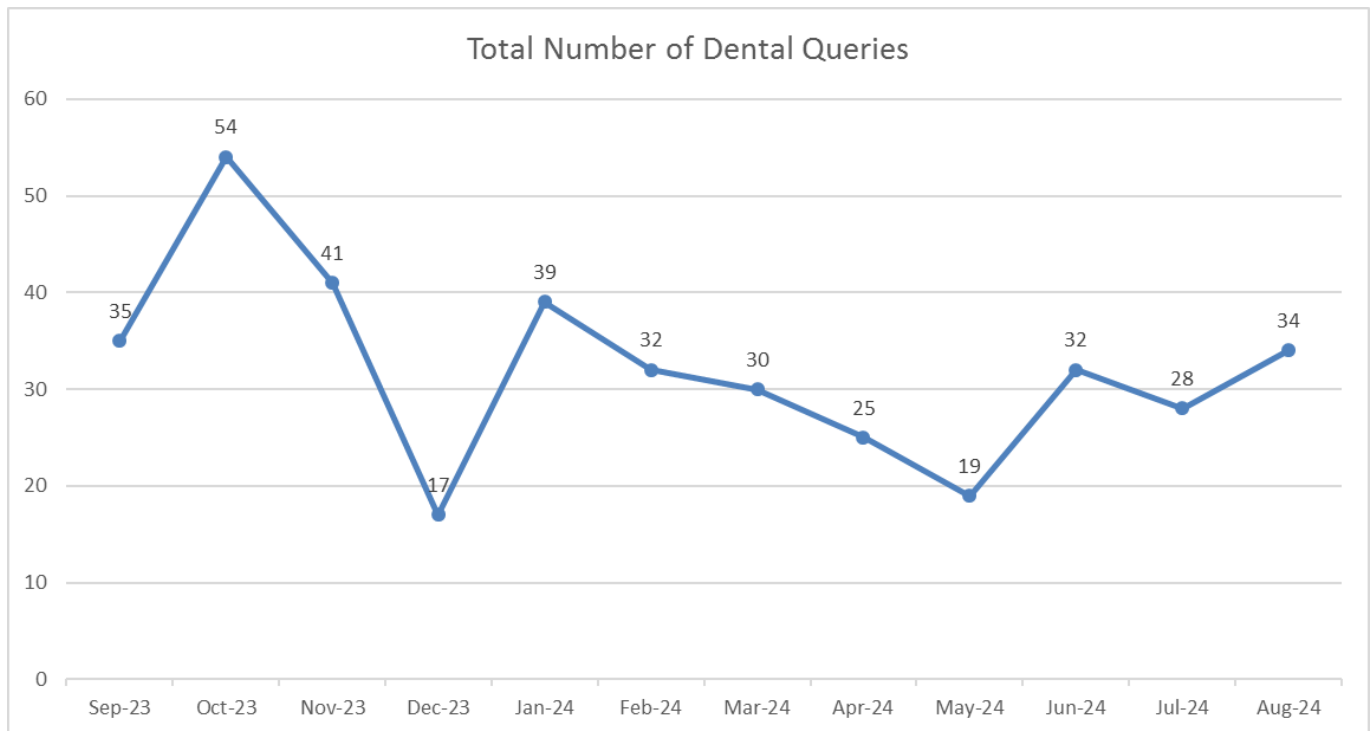
 *“I need to come back as my medication needs to be ordered. It's brilliant - the consultation room is really good, when I have needed to use it the staff have been very discreet. Medication being in stock could be improved.”*

“Satisfied with the care received during visit. I have come to collect my son's epilepsy medication but there is a stock shortage so they are trying to get him a different brand. I have been waiting 30 minutes up to now. They are trying to find him an alternative or try to get the medication from a different pharmacy.”

“Did not have all med in stock have to come back next week. Can be quicker for service than others. Could improve stock levels.”

Accessing Dental Care

Access to dental care continues to be one of the highest most requested signposting queries received by Healthwatch Knowsley, with people struggling to get a dentist within the area, as well as people requiring both emergency and specialist care. From September 2023 to August 2024, Healthwatch Knowsley received 386 queries relating to dentistry (as highlighted in the graph and table below). Between May to August 2024, there were 113 queries from people struggling to access NHS dental care, which shows a small decline in the number of queries received in comparison the previous reporting period (126 queries).



Healthwatch Knowsley have regularly contacted all dental surgeries within Knowsley to understand their capacity for taking on new patients, accessing emergency appointments, as well as any waiting lists for appointments. Despite a few dentists taking on new patients initially, this has quickly changed due to high demand in the borough. The most recent call around for all dental surgeries has shown there is little change in access for NHS patients

In relation to signposting people, we suggest that people contact local dental surgeries to be added to their waiting lists, or provide contact for other Healthwatch organisations in other areas to check availability. Information has also been shared about dentists offering private dental care, as well as the surgeries who offer payment plans. If the person is in pain or struggling to eat we will signpost them to the emergency helpline to get support with accessing an emergency appointment.

Working with Primary Care Networks

Patient Forums

We continue to support the development of PCN Patient Forums, Healthwatch Knowsley are now supporting the three Primary Care Network Patient Forums.

Kirkby PCN

The Carers Centre attended to discuss how carers can be supported within Primary Care and highlighted the 10 steps to better practice, support for young carers, training in power of attorney and the Carers Passport.

The group also discussed the potential to produce a survey in relation to the Capacity and Access Plan to capture feedback from patients to help make improvements to services.

In July, the group discussed the Let's Talk About Kirkby consultation and asked residents to complete the online survey.

West PCN

A meeting took place in July, the group discussed the background to social prescribing and a representative from Care Merseyside explained that the aim is to help GP's have extended space and time by referring patients to the social prescribing teams.

An update was provided on the work of the PCN and explained that the PCN are looking at ways to increase the uptake of screening programmes within the borough and in particular:

- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening
- Severe Mental Health Illness health checks
- Immunisation uptake

South & Central PCN

Healthwatch Knowsley was introduced to the group and HW staff discussed their role, as well as their involvement with the other PCN's in Knowsley.

Conclusions

This report identifies a number of key themes and highlights some concerns raised in relation to accessing Primary Care services.

Treatment & Care

Treatment and care has continued to be the most highly rated theme. Healthwatch Knowsley regularly receive a consistent number of positive comments relating to the treatment received, showing that despite some people stating they have struggled with access, when they do receive care it has been a positive experience.

Access to Services

General Practice

In relation to access, concerns emerge from trying to contact their surgery at 8am to obtain an appointment, relaying their frustration in having to call the surgery numerous times or even attending the surgery in person only to be told all appointments have gone and therefore have to repeat the process again the following day.

Some suggestions about improvements to services have been included below:

- Avoiding patients getting lost in the gap through repeatedly trying each day to access an appointment – offering an option for all patients who access the service.
- To look at how improvements could be made to avoid patients feeling they need to attend the surgery before 8am in order to access an appointment, including clear communication about options and new telephone systems.
- To continue the use of alternative methods to treat and connect with patients, triage, telephone consultations and digital services to meet all patient's needs.
- Improvements to support carers and people in employment to access services to meet their needs, e.g. providing a time for telephone consultations.
- Continued use of digital services and support for people who need additional help accessing services online and ensuring that this is readily available to patients who require this service.
- Understanding that not all people will or are able to access services online.

This report suggests some improvements in patients being able to access GP appointments, during the most recent full quarter (Apr – Jul). This is evident from a decrease in the number of comments relating to access; within this report 114 comments were received about access, whereas 183 comments were received within the previous report. There has also been an increase in the number of positive comments relating to access to services, from 32% in January – March 24 to 47% in April – June 24.

Some practices have both promoted and utilised the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre with patients and have been able to respond to comments in order to directly communicate with patients, specifically relating to current services and options in place to support the needs of patients. HWK would encourage practices to use any communication opportunities to relay these options and services to their patients to raise awareness, therefore helping to improve access to their services.

Healthwatch Knowsley are aware that there are significant pressures and demand for primary care services. It is hoped that this information can help inform the ongoing work to respond to patient needs.

Pharmacy Services

Targeted outreach activity has shown that although the majority of people are pleased with the service they receive, others are experiencing delays with medication. There needs to be clear communication with people when there maybe potential delays due to supply shortages, as well as alternative support when vital medications are delayed.

A number of people mentioned extending opening hours to include Saturdays, as smaller local pharmacies are only available during weekdays. It might possibly be worth considering if this would be a viable option for local pharmacies, to make services available at a local level at weekends.

It is important to note that Healthwatch are aware of the concerns and pressures on local pharmacies, particularly in relation to stock shortages and issues with supplies.

Dental Care

In relation to access to NHS dental health care, this continues to be an ongoing issue with Knowsley residents, with people struggling to find dental care within their locality. People are continuing to struggle to access emergency care, as well as follow up care after emergency treatment. Despite a monthly call to dental practices there has been no significant changes to access for NHS patient. However, in discussion with colleagues in neighbouring boroughs, some Liverpool dental surgeries have become available to new NHS patients, with Knowsley residents being signposted to services outside of the area.

It is hoped that the Government's Dental Recovery Plan will help to improve access to affordable NHS dental treatment, although we are aware that this will not be an overnight fix. Healthwatch Knowsley will continue to contact all dental surgeries within Knowsley to monitor their availability for both NHS and private patients.

healthwatch Knowsley

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**Committed
to quality**

We aim to provide the best service we can to our community and to make the greatest difference we can to local people. Every three years we undertake a comprehensive assessment of our work to understand what we are doing well and where we might need to improve.