

Access to Primary Care Report

September - December 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 September to December 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 288 comments received about Primary Care Services within Knowsley, please note that during this period there were no comments regarding Opticians. There have also been 988 responses received from the Cheshire & Merseyside GP Access Survey, further information is included within this report.

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.



Additional information from the GP Access Survey have also been compiled using Smart Survey, which is a survey tool that allows Healthwatch organisations to create more specific and bespoke surveys to capture feedback.

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

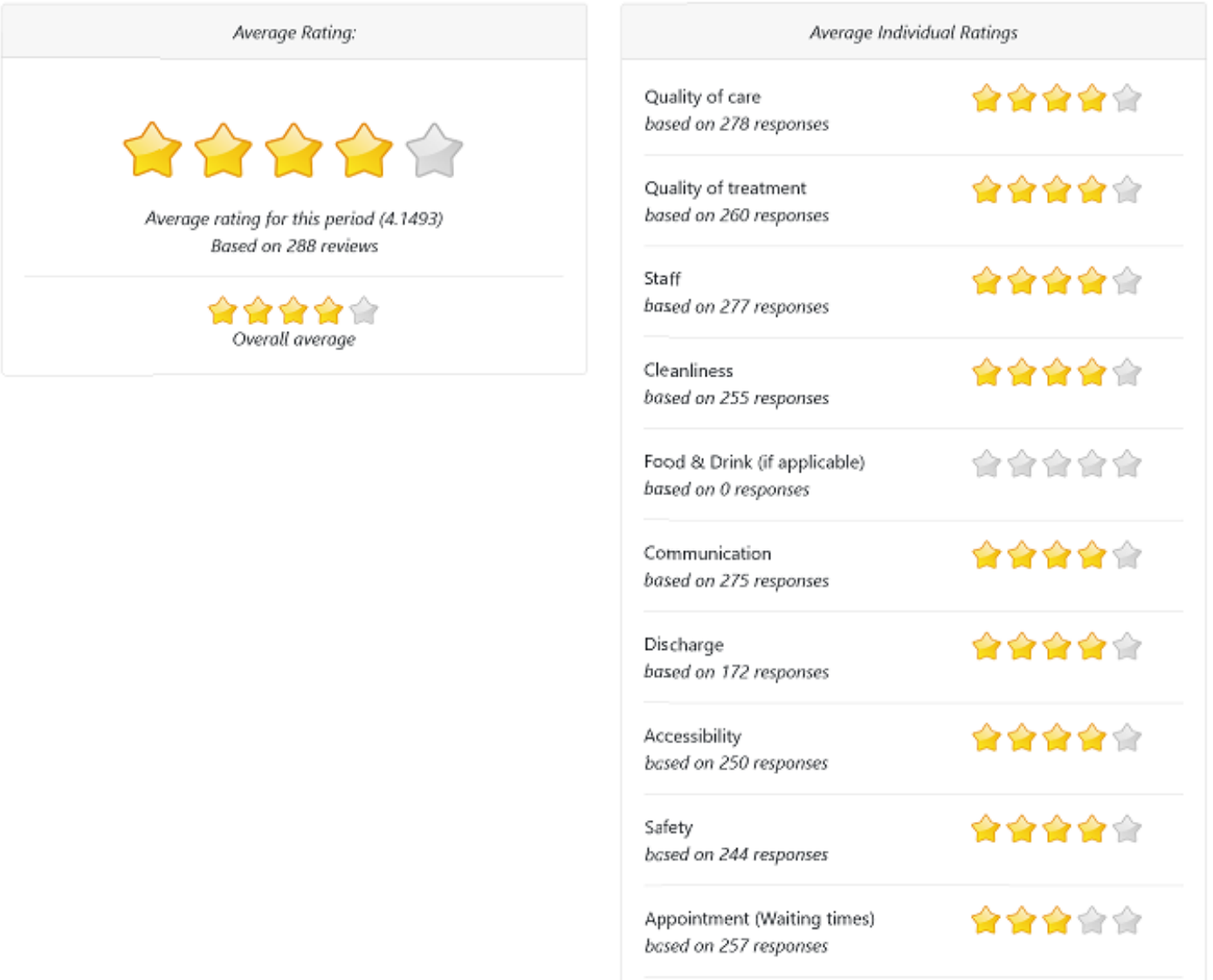
Credible – we value knowledge, seeking information and challenging assumptions with facts

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 September to December 2024 there have been 288 comments received relating to 37 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 and this feedback is recorded under an unknown category. The overall rating during this period is just over 4.1 stars (Good), the average individual ratings are between 3 and 4 stars.



Services

The table below shows those services that received the most comments from September to December 2024 (4 months). GP practices occupy the majority of the top 15 places in terms of volume of feedback generated. However, several dental services make an unusual appearance in this table largely due to well publicised issues at Liverpool Dental Spa. Dinas Lane Medical Centre has received the most comments with 102 reviews and an overall rating of 4 stars (good). Other services include Manor Farm Road Surgery (Aston Healthcare) (58 reviews) and Gresford Medical Centre (46 reviews). The rating for each service is included below.

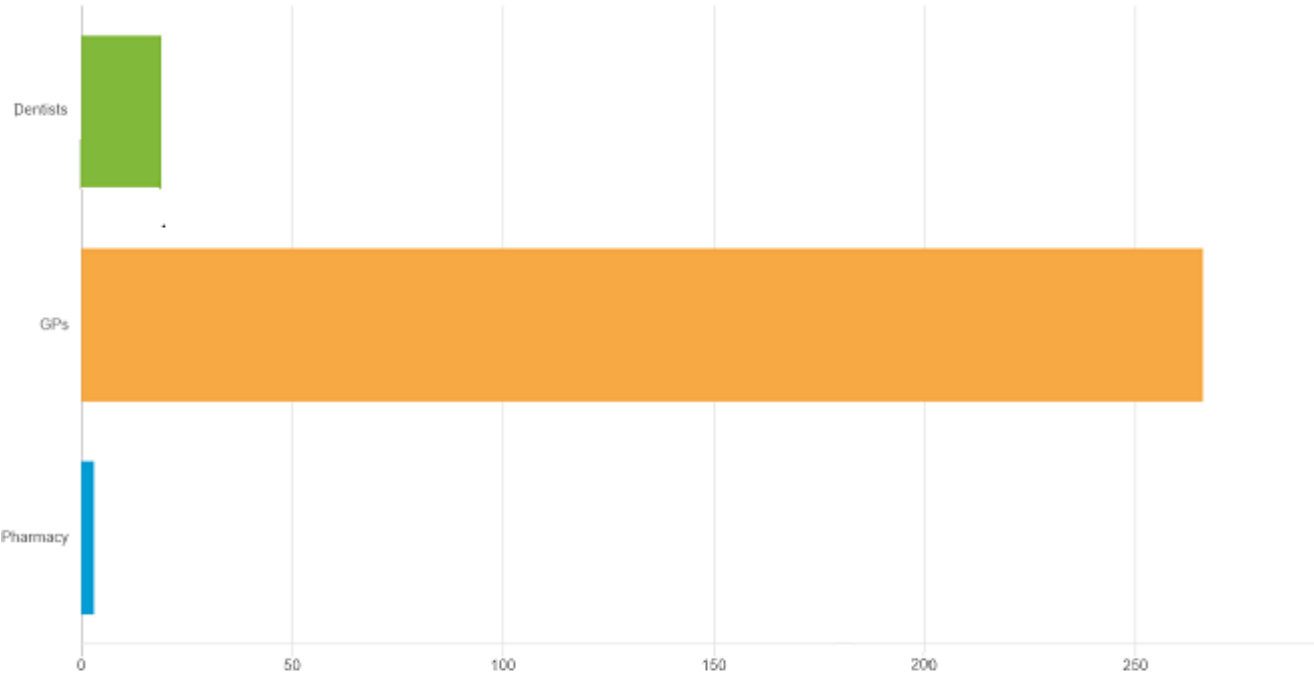
* Please be aware that system does not show 100% of the sentiment, as the system will only show positive, negative and neutral, the remaining % accounts for any mixed responses, which is a combination of positive, negative and neutral.

Service	Service Type	Reviews	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rating
Dinas Lane Medical Centre	GPs	102	83.3%	5.9%	5.9%	★★★★☆
Manor Farm Road Surgery (Aston Healthcare)	GPs	58	67.2%	22.4%	8.6%	★★★★☆
Gresford Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare Limited)	GPs	46	58.7%	30.4%	4.3%	★★★★☆
Dr Maassarani & Partners (St Chad's) formerly Trentham Medical Centre	GPs	7	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	★★★☆☆
Cornerways Medical Centre	GPs	6	100.0%	0%	0%	★★★★☆
Camberley Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare)	GPs	6	83.3%	0%	16.7%	★★★★★
Liverpool Dental Spa	Dentists	6	50.0%	33.3%	0%	★★★☆☆
Millbrook Medical Centre	GPs	5	0%	80.0%	0%	★★★☆☆
Wingate Medical Centre	GPs	5	60.0%	20.0%	0%	★★★★☆
Dr Maassarani and Partners (Towerhill & Melling Surgery)	GPs	4	75.0%	25.0%	0%	★★★★☆
Roby Medical Centre	GPs	3	100.0%	0%	0%	★★★★★
Tarbock Medical Centre	GPs	3	33.3%	0%	66.7%	★★★★☆
Stockbridge Village Medical Centre (Dr P Rigby and Partners)	GPs	3	66.7%	0%	33.3%	★★★★★
Cromer House Dental Practice	Dentists	2	100.0%	0%	0%	★★★★★
Atlantic Dental Practice - Croxteth	Dentists	2	0%	100.0%	0%	★★☆☆☆

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

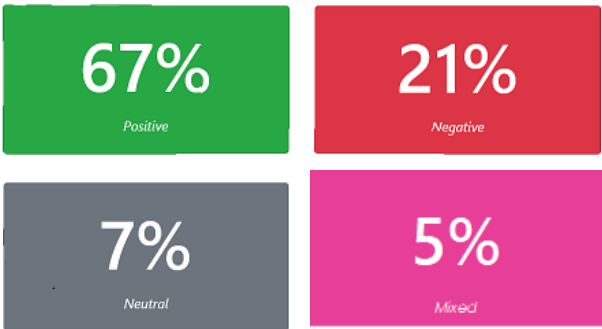
The category that has received the most feedback has been GP services with 266 comments (411), Pharmacies receiving 3 comments (186) and Dentists receiving 19 comments (7). Whilst a slight uplift in the volume of dental comments has already been referenced, pharmacy comments has significantly reduced compared to the previous report which included a targeted survey at some pharmacies. Numbers in brackets represent volume of feedback in the previous 4 months. The table below also shows the sentiment and rating for each category.



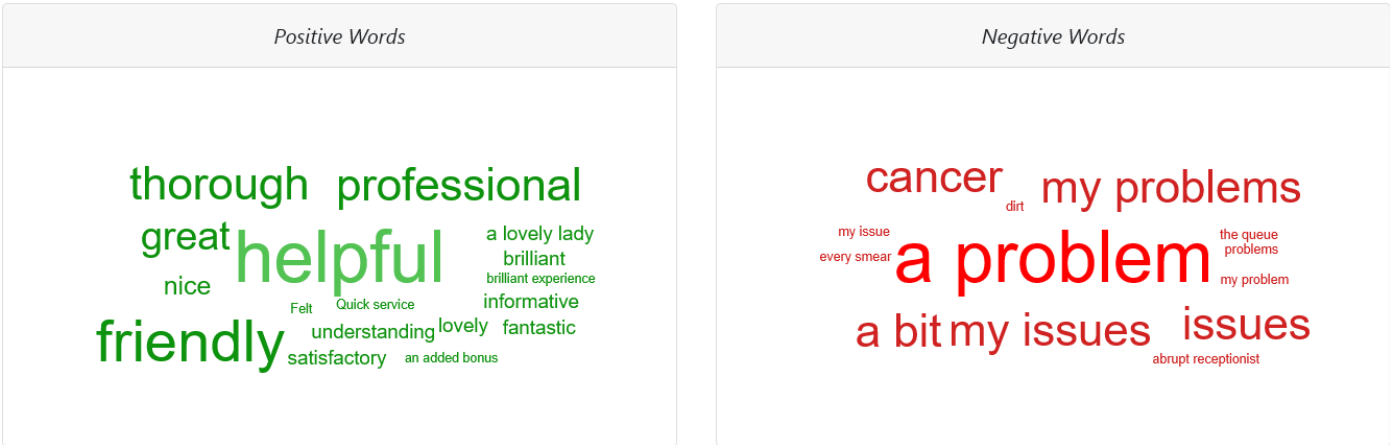
Name	Total Feedback	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rating
Dentists	19	57.9%	21.1%	5.3%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
GPs	266	68.8%	20.3%	6.8%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Pharmacy	3	0%	100.0%	0%	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

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 67% positive, 21% negative, 7% neutral and 5% 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 285 respondents answering this question. 171 people said they would be extremely likely to recommend; 56 stating they would be likely to recommend; 17 stated neither; 10 would be unlikely to recommend, 24 stated they would be extremely unlikely to recommend and 7 people didn't know.



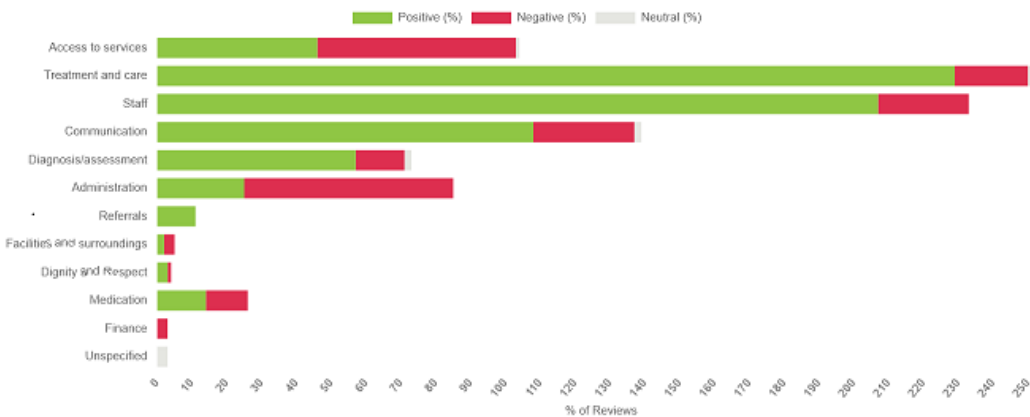
Key Themes

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 251 comments relating to treatment and care 91% scored this **positively**
- Of 233 comments relating to staff 89% scored this **positively**
- Of 139 comments relating to communication 78% scored this **positively**
- Of 104 comments relating to gaining access to the service 55% scored this **negatively**
- Of 85 comments relating to administration issues 71% scored this **negatively**

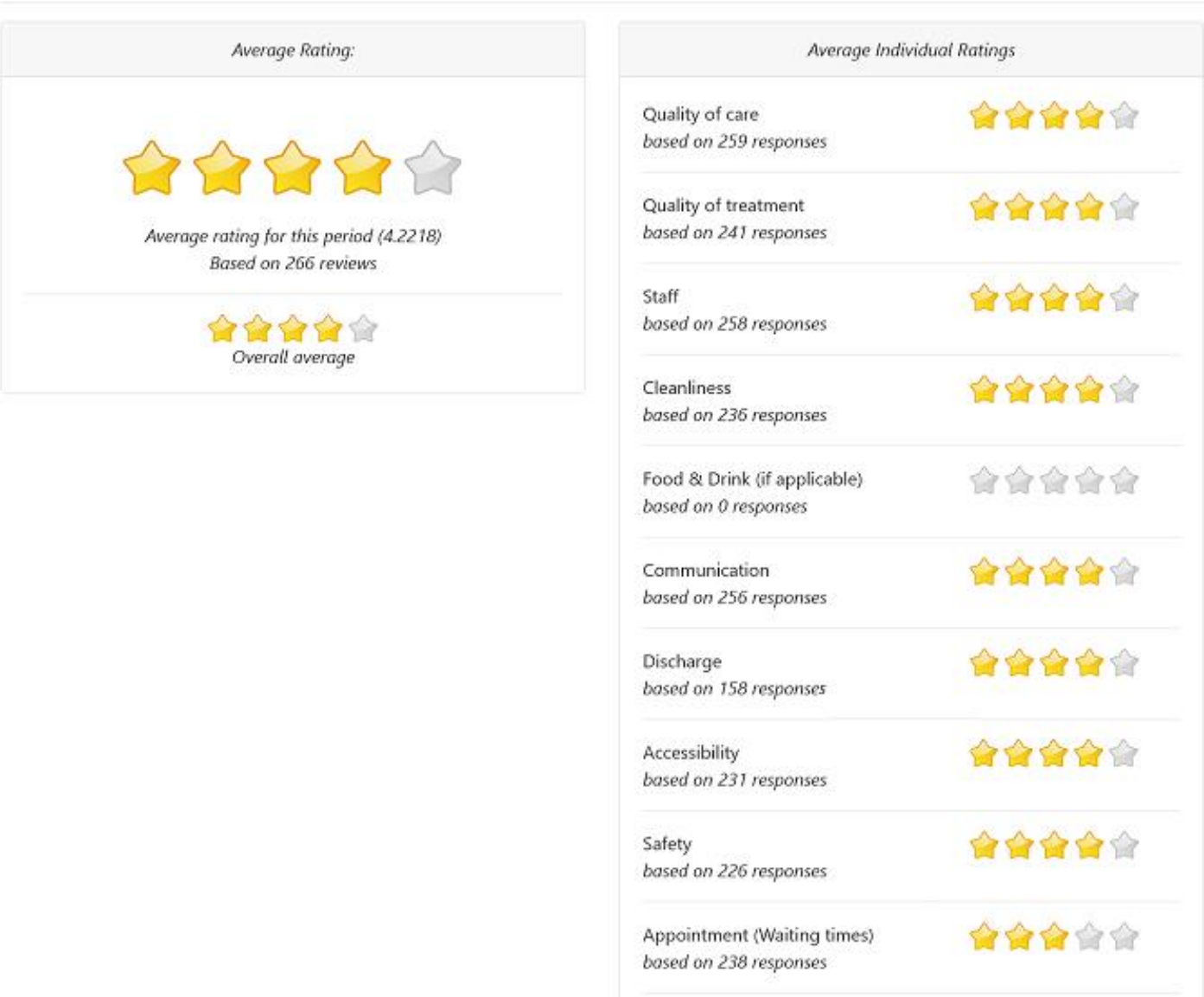
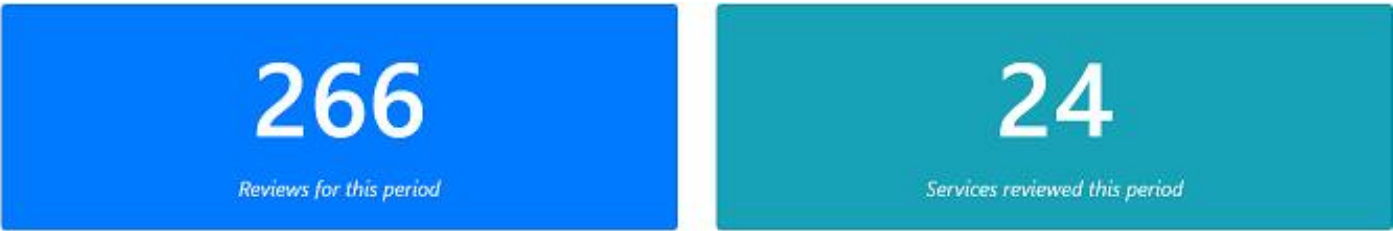
Please note comments may include multiple themes.



Theme	Count	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Subthemes
Access to services	104	44%	55%	1%	Sub-Themes >
Treatment and care	251	91%	8%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Staff	233	89%	11%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Communication	139	78%	21%	1%	Sub-Themes >
Diagnosis/assessment	73	78%	19%	3%	Sub-Themes >
Administration	85	29%	71%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Referrals	11	100%	0%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Facilities and surroundings	5	40%	60%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Dignity and Respect	4	75%	25%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Medication	26	54%	46%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Finance	3	0%	100%	0%	Sub-Themes >
Unspecified	3	0%	0%	100%	

GP Services - Overview

There have been 266 comments received relating to 24 GP Practices. The overall rating during this period is just over 4.2 stars (Good), the average individual rating is between 3 and 4 stars.



GP - Key Themes

Overall, patients have been marginally less positive in describing their experiences across several of the main service themes, this is identified further in the chart on page 16.

Treatment & Care

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

Treatment and care	227	94%	6%	0%
Experience	210	93%	6%	0%
Safety of Care/Treatment	2	50%	50%	0%
Treatment Explanation	18	94%	0%	0%

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



"Professional and very understanding. Dealt with my issues immediately."

"My experience today was very good I was listed to very well and my doctor was amazing she talked to me and reassured me a lot."

"Earlier today I attended an appointment with Dr (name omitted); upon entering the room I was greeted well with my full name, asked my profession and thanked. During the appointment the doctor filled me full of confidence as to what we were going to do moving forward with my medication. We discussed the possible options and came to a conclusion which I am very happy with. Throughout the appointment he appeared to be very confident and precise in what he was recommending which equally gave me confidence and a sense of relief. Thank you!"

"I am well aware of the time constraints that GPs are under with appointments and at times as a patient one can leave a little disappointed but yesterday the Dr addressed all concerns as they were related to my concerns. I actually thanked the lady and stated that our discussion and treatment plan had improved my mind-set which was an added bonus."

"Excellent care for my husband following his heart attack and stroke. Reviewed very quickly, easy to access and for bloods. However, getting an appointment for my husband is stressful sometimes."

Staff

The majority of comments received that related to staff members have been positive, with '**Clinician**' being the main sub-theme (126 comments). Staff attitude (62 comments) is also mentioned positively in the comments received, some examples are included below:

Staff	212	92%	8%	0%
Clinician	126	96%	3%	0%
Continuity	4	50%	50%	0%
Attitudes	62	92%	6%	0%
Reception Staff	17	82%	18%	0%
Suitability	3	0%	100%	0%
Staffing levels	1	0%	100%	0%
Training and development	1	100%	0%	0%



"Very nice doctor and listened to my concerns."

"My Doctor was very quick on furnishing me with the details of my recent blood test in time for my hospital phone consultation."

"My doctor was very efficient and arranged some pain control, when needed. A blood test, a scan which I will be notified of and needed to get back to me with regards to an x-ray or scan, which she did and I can go for next week. She was polite and friendly which makes things so much easier and reassured me on something. I couldn't have asked for better than that. Thank you."

"Staff have a very polite attitude. I seen the GP and Nurse for my learning disability annual health check, which took about 30 minutes. I did not receive a health action plan to take home."

Communication

The majority of communication themed comments (126 comments) received related to 'general' and have been positive. Some examples are included below:

Communication	126	79%	19%	2%
General	115	87%	10%	2%
Lack of	13	0%	100%	0%

6

"When I have issues they are always ready to listen and book appointments."

"I managed to secure an emergency appointment at this surgery via my own surgery at manor farm, I was seen and assessed by a courteous pleasant and helpful advanced nurse practitioner and was referred for an emergency appointment with the hospital. In the evening I received a text from the practitioner explaining next steps and also a text from the hospital to advise referral has been made. I am very pleased with this excellent prompt service."

"Very good experience on time good interaction with the doctor was able to explain all of the alternatives available to treat my condition."

"Very satisfactory outcome. Clear communication from all staff satisfied with all aspects."

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	94	45%	54%	1%
Waiting times	23	65%	35%	0%
Telephone Appointments	9	33%	56%	11%
Lack of	23	0%	100%	0%
Information and Advice	13	100%	0%	0%
Convenience/Distance to travel	3	0%	100%	0%
Use of digital services	4	50%	50%	0%
Telephone Systems	7	0%	100%	0%
General	2	100%	0%	0%
Face to Face appointments	6	83%	17%	0%
Patient choice	4	50%	50%	0%

Examples of comments are included below:



“Care is good but the problem is trying to get appointments have sometimes tried from 8am on several days. However when in contact with medical staff, caring and listening to issues and responding.”

“Getting through to make an appointment is the most difficult part, as a carer it’s impossible for me to ring at 8 on the dot and keep trying to get an appointment, by the time I am back from my drop off all the appointments have always gone, it is so stressful trying to get someone to try and ring for me, or bring someone along to keep pressing redial while I am driving. This I feel is the only thing that lets the surgery down. However, My Doctor today was Dr (name omitted), I really like Dr (name omitted) is always great at listening and is very thorough, has a lovely reassuring bedside manner! Thank you.”

“I managed to get a face to face appointment with the doctor after a quick phone call. I could discuss my medical issues without feeling rushed. I only

gave a 3 star rating for appointment waiting times as, like many other patients, I queued at 8am for 30mins to be able to ask to see a doctor."

"Had a telephone consultation as could not get to see my doctor. Then told would be a week before I could see a doctor. Told to get a self certification in the meantime. I didn't want to take so much time off work. This had also now had a negative effect on my health and well being as am not only ill but now stressed out about work and paying for my bills. Where I have had to put one star I would realistically have put a zero."

"Whilst I have benefited from a range of health screening measures over the last 10 years I have noticed a welcome increase in measures from Aston in the last year. More frequent blood tests and face to face appointments aimed at controlling my diabetes and potential heart/lung condition. This, apart from, being welcome generally serves to increase my confidence in my health and really feels like they care and enables me to make informed decisions set targets and manage my condition effectively. I like the patient access app and the way it opens up my results for inspection and makes appointments easy to arrange and respond to. Please keep it up and thankyou."

Administration

'Administration' continues to be an area of concern for patients with 71% of the 82 comments received being negative, with a number of people struggling with appointment availability and having issues when booking appointments. Examples of comments are included below:

Administration	82	29%	71%	0%
Appointment availability	45	40%	60%	0%
Booking appointments	30	17%	83%	0%
Medical records	2	0%	100%	0%
Management of service	3	33%	67%	0%
General	2	0%	100%	0%

6 "Been with this surgery for 30 plus years and it is the worst it has been. Still using covid as an excuse to not see patients. Wait 3 weeks for a telephone consultation then an extra 2/3 weeks to see a doctor. Get pushed to see the practice nurse who I know is unable to help with the problems. Receptionists telling you there are no appointments then when a friend comes in they give

them an appointment same day. Reception staff telling you they will reschedule a doctor call back then when you call to see why you haven't received a call they take no responsibility (same receptionist) and tell you to call back at 8am even though the next day you are unable to due to work commitments. I honestly am in disbelief as I type this but it's a terrible service that needs investigating."

"I have been trying to get an appointment for two weeks but every time I phoned up all appointments were filled."

"Still disappointed you haven't opened up making an appointment via the automated phone service whereby you selected a date/time. Extremely difficult to get through at 8am to get an appointment."

"Always able to get an appointment with minimal wait."

"Excellent care and treatment. need a better system for appointment."

"Flexible appointment booking process. Significantly more focused on patient needs than the process in place at Manor farm."

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. Examples of comments are included below:

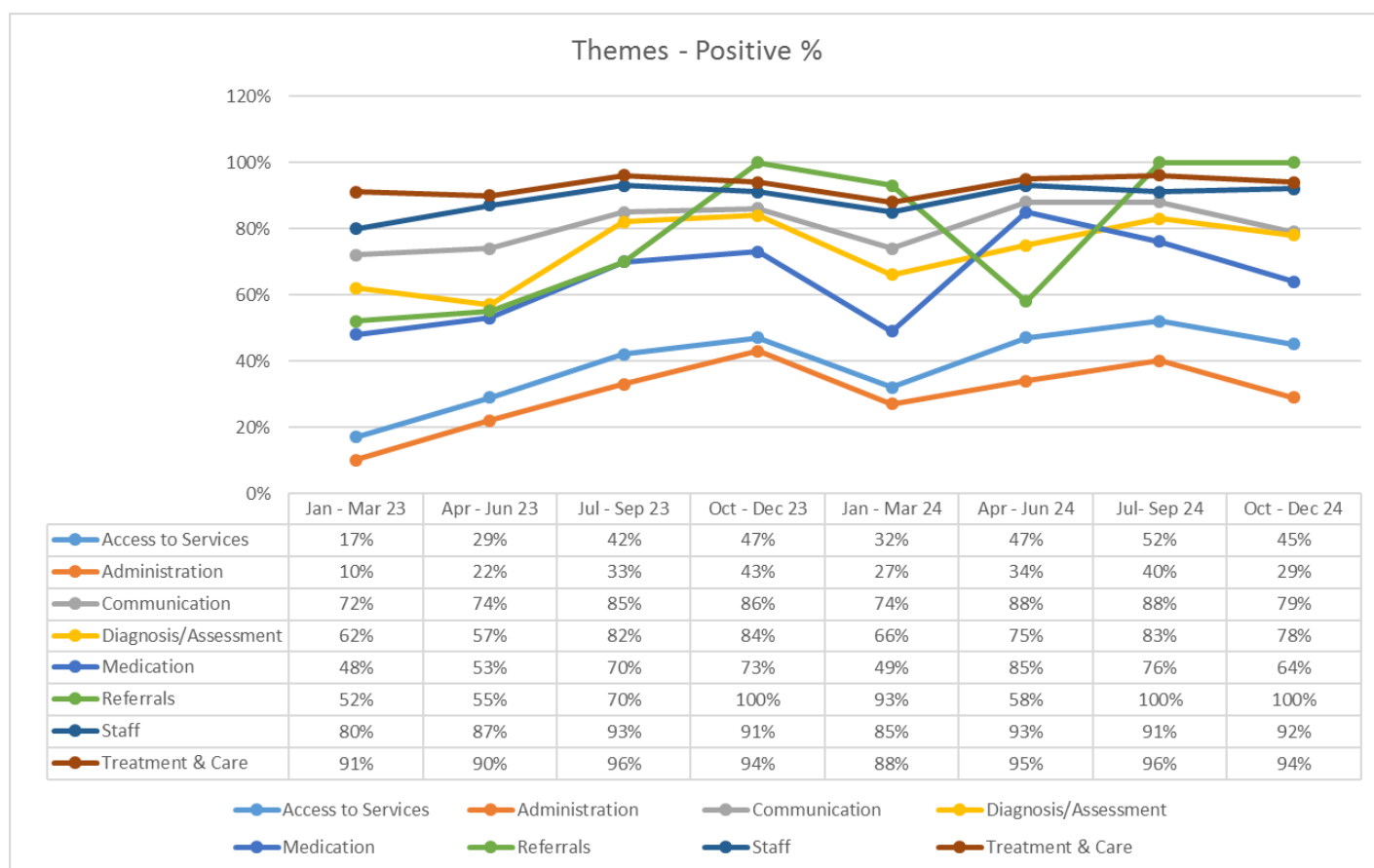
Diagnosis/assessment	72	78%	19%	3%
General	48	94%	6%	0%
Lack of	7	0%	86%	0%
Tests/Results	18	61%	28%	11%

6 "This was an emergency appointment referred from my own Surgery. Very competent thorough and efficient assessment/ examination. The APN had a nice professional manner and made me feel comfortable throughout the whole examination. Excellent communication and information sharing."

"Visited through injury and had referral to physio. Discovered hypertension and promptly treated and supported with understanding of tests and treatment."

GP – Reporting Overview

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



The image shows that overall there has been a small decline in some areas, specifically in relation to access to services and administration in the percentage 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. 308 comments received a response from the provider (please note that some of the responses related to comments received in August 2024).

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.

Cheshire & Merseyside GP Access Survey

We have been contributing to a joint piece of work with all nine local Healthwatch organisations across Cheshire and Merseyside.

Plans to improve patient access to primary care services were launched in spring 2024. The Cheshire and Merseyside ICB have asked Healthwatch to report what change if any, people have noticed since then in their experience of GP services.

The survey went live in October and is open to all residents in Cheshire and Merseyside. It allows individuals to share their personal experiences of using, or attempting to use, GP services in the past 12 months. The information gathered will be used to identify gaps in services, highlight areas of improvement, and provide recommendations directly to service commissioners, ensuring that the voice of the community is reflected in service planning and delivery.

Healthwatch Knowsley has used its own extensive networks, including the support of GP surgeries to encourage responses to the survey from local residents. As a consequence of the 2911 responses received so far across Cheshire and Merseyside 988 (34%) have been received from Knowsley residents,.

The survey will remain open over winter. The results and recommendations will be published on local Healthwatch websites and shared with Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board and local partners in Knowsley.

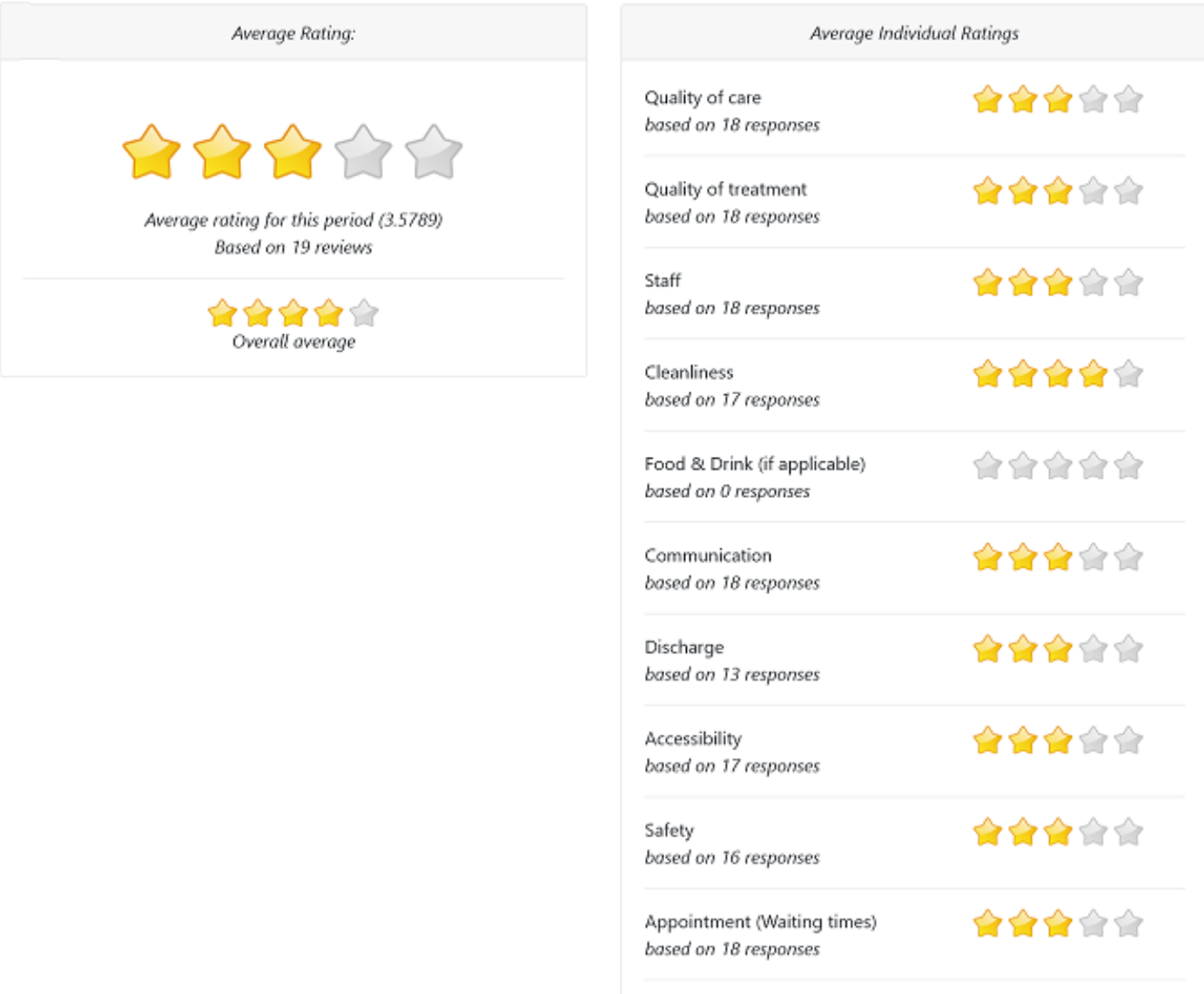
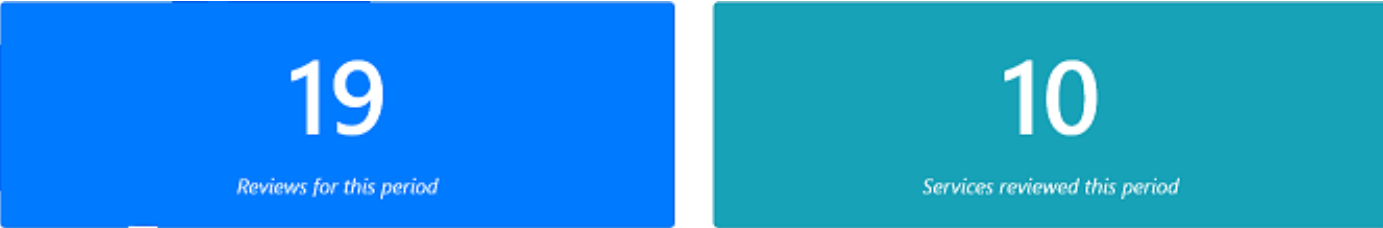
Booking Appointments Survey

Knowsley Place has approached Healthwatch Knowsley about developing a bespoke single question survey. The survey asks patients about their experience of contacting their GP, providing options ranging from very good to very poor; there is also an opportunity for the patient to include any additional comments.

It is anticipated that the survey will continue as a rolling programme able to provide periodic updates about patients experiences of the booking process. Responses would be able to be filtered by individual GP practice, PCN, or place PCN's and reported on a regular basis.

Dental Services - Overview

There have been 19 comments received relating to 10 Dental Practices. The overall rating during this period is just over 3.5 stars (OK), the average individual ratings are between 3-4 stars.



Dentists - Key Themes

Treatment & Care

In terms of treatment and care the table below shows that the comments received were positive, with ‘experience’ being the sub-theme mentioned.

Treatment and care	23	70%	30%	0%
Experience	16	69%	31%	0%
Safety of Care/Treatment	1	0%	100%	0%
Quality	1	0%	100%	0%
Treatment Explanation	3	100%	0%	0%

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

“Saw (name omitted) regarding a troublesome back molar. He examined the tooth and took x-rays then discussed in detail treatment available. I opted for an extraction, which, on attending, (name omitted) explained every step of the way, what he was going to do. The extraction was quick and painless. And aftercare advice was given.”

“I just want to say a huge thank you to both reception, staff and dentist for the kind care and understanding shown to me yesterday from a troublesome tooth which had me in tears the tooth extraction I didn't even feel had been taken out that quickly but the total care throughout was exemplary. I would certainly recommend Roby Rd Dental Practice, Huyton Liverpool, also asked call back Monday to see all ok. Thank you again.”

“Been going here for a long time, all went pair shape with their personnel problems lost all the good staff after lock down current staff very poor never had the same person see me more than once never even had the curtesy to let me know they were closed but kept taking my monthly fee takes a lot to get my back up, the treatment I had from (name omitted) was always top notch.”

Staff

The majority of comments received that related to staff members have been positive, with ‘attitudes’ being the main sub-theme (9 comments), some examples are included below:

Staff	19	63%	37%	0%
Attitudes	9	56%	44%	0%
Clinician	7	100%	0%	0%
Continuity	1	0%	100%	0%
Staffing levels	1	0%	100%	0%
Reception Staff	1	0%	100%	0%

“Reception staff have awful customer service rude doesn't even cut it. Child been neglected for months and being left in pain only given antibiotics. Dental practice just trying to push us to go private.”

“(Name omitted) was an exceptionally good dentist. Five starts from me. Sadly, he retired and the business is now run by a dentist that has poor manners, and does not do a very good job generally. Repeat visits have been necessary due to poor 'fixes'.”

“I recently had the pleasure of visiting (name omitted) for porcelain veneers, and I can honestly say it was a life-changing experience. From the moment I walked into his clinic, I felt completely at ease, which is something I never expected at a dental office.”

Communication

The majority of communication themed comments (10 comments) received related to 'general' and have been positive. Some examples are included below:

Communication	12	67%	33%	0%
General	10	80%	20%	0%
Lack of	2	0%	100%	0%



"The staff and dentist explained everything that needed to happen and included a treatment plan. The dental work itself was brilliant. Improvements could be more staff and better dental chairs for patients.

"Polite staff who put you at ease. High standards of care and treatment. Reassurance for nervous patients. Good staff team - explained procedures. Accessibility for disability is an issue with no lift due to listed building."

"The student was excellent in explaining the process s made me feel completely at ease."

Access to Services

In terms of Access to Services for dental care, there have been 10 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	10	40%	60%	0%
Information and Advice	2	100%	0%	0%
General	2	100%	0%	0%
Waiting times	1	0%	100%	0%
Lack of	4	0%	100%	0%
Telephone Systems	1	0%	100%	0%



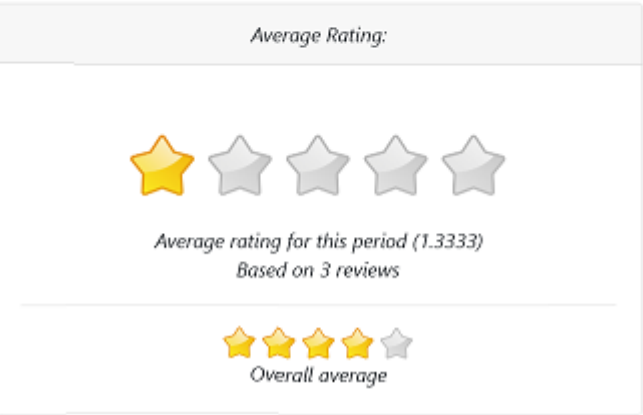
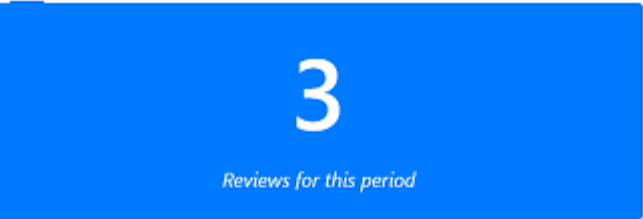
"No emergency appointments despite being 1 in call queue. Waited 20 minutes for call to be answered despite being 1 in the call queue. Unable to pre book appointment despite fact the broken tooth would require treatment. Receptionist hung up prior to me finishing my call - I wanted to confirm my contact details in case of cancellation."

I have paid a lot of money for full mouth restoration so far, implants too tight together, further issues ignored, Now have to pay again as crowns fell out breaking tooth that now have been extracted leaving gaps either side. Now I am mid implant treatment again, called multiple times in August but they had closed shop and moved and didn't inform patients, had to remove my own stitches. Been promised call backs 3 times with follow up appointments and no one has called, I am mid treatment and feel lost."

"Lucky because I pay for treatment - never been denied an appointment or treatment. Can't fault it because it's private and not NHS patient."

Pharmacy Services - Overview

In total, there have been 3 comments received relating to 3 Pharmacies. The overall rating during this period is 1.3 stars (poor), the average individual ratings are between 1 and 3 stars.




Pharmacy - Key Themes

Medication

The comments received that related to medication have been 100% negative, some examples are included below:

Medication	3	0%	100%	0%
Waiting Times	1	0%	100%	0%
Medication Supply	1	0%	100%	0%
Medicines Management	1	0%	100%	0%




“He won't provide my prescription because he said its too expensive. I've been on the said prescription for 25 years.”

“Have to wait 30minutes for prescription. I also make sure they know how many items I've ordered as I was told I only had amount given.”

Staff

The comments received that related to staff members have been negative, with 'Attitudes' being the sub-theme, an example is included below:

Staff	2	0%	100%	0%
Attitudes	2	0%	100%	0%



“Male member of staff humiliated and made sarcastic remarks about me to another customer just because I couldn't wait for my prescription order whilst I stood there won't ever go here again nor recommend anyone going there.”

Other themes

Other themes included treatment and care, finance and communication.

Treatment and care	1	0%	100%	0%
Experience	1	0%	100%	0%
Finance	1	0%	100%	0%
Financial Viability	1	0%	100%	0%
Communication	1	0%	100%	0%
General	1	0%	100%	0%

During this period, Healthwatch Knowsley have supported the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment process, through promotion via the website, social media and e-bulletin. Work was completed directly with Knowsley residents through outreach sessions to support them complete the survey.

Key Trends

In terms of access overall there are some important areas that have been highlighted through the comments received. 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.

“Getting an appointment is a nightmare when I had my last appt they didn't have enough time and told me I would have to make another appt to discuss more issues. Also waiting on appointment date for surgery and not willing to chase up for me. Need to improve appointment systems and seeing same doctor.”

“Care is good but the problem is trying to get appointments have sometimes tried from 8am on several days. However when in contact with medical staff, caring and listening to issues and responding.”

“Still disappointed you haven't opened up making an appointment via the automated phone service whereby you selected a date/time. Extremely difficult to get through at 8am to get an appointment.”

“Couldn't get an appointment, told to ring the following morning. Couldn't get through, went to reception and met by abrupt receptionist. Not helpful. Eventually rang enquiry line and a lovely lady called Pauline who helped me get an appointment same day. I have COPD and I needed to be seen urgently. Need a better system.”

Some patients have continued to report having to queue up outside the surgery before opening in order to get an appointment, with patients feeling that this is the best way to guarantee an appointment:

“I managed to get a face to face appointment with the doctor after a quick phone call. I could discuss my medical issues without feeling rushed. I only gave a 3 star rating for appointment waiting times as, like many other patients, I queued at 8am for 30mins to be able to ask to see a doctor.”

“It is very difficult to get an appointment, after 2 days of calling at 8am to be told no appointments available my sister started queuing outside the practice

at 7.15am and she was 5th in the queue. However once seen the service is good and the doctor was thorough and referred me to the hospital quickly."

"I like the doctors that I've met at the surgery. Wish you didn't have to queue of a morning to get an appointment. Other than that, it's a nice surgery."

"My daughter queued at 7.30, and Dr (name omitted) phoned me at 11am. She wanted me to go to the surgery for examination. As my husband had a blood test appointment, we both went together. Dr (name omitted) was very kind and prescribed me antibiotics for a chest infection."

"I have had to queue from 7.30 am each time I have needed an appointment. This needs reviewing urgently as the vulnerable are missing urgent GP care! The drs are very good."

Staff

During this reporting period, there have been 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:

G *"I called for an appointment but was advised by (name omitted) there was none available until the next morning. I asked could she keep my name in case of a cancellation and 30 minutes or so later, she called and left a voicemail offering me a same day appointment! (Name omitted) also sent this information via text message. Absolutely excellent service (name omitted). She really went above and beyond. Thank you."*

"Felt comfortable with the advice given by the doctor was seen to quickly. And the staff on the phone and reception were very helpful and answered all my questions."

"From appointments to speaking to receptionist nothing too much trouble for anyone. (Name omitted) GP has been amazing, trying to get to root cause of recent on going illness. Couldn't be more grateful if had to go private."

"Practice manager very supportive of my needs and arrangement made for a one to one appointment. Doctor (name omitted). Very supportive and gave me time to address my mental health. Came out of the appointment feeling I had been heard. All issues regarding my health concerns have been addressed and referrals to other health professionals done."

"(Name omitted) is a credit to yourselves he treats people with respect and nothing is too much trouble a most valuable employee. (Name omitted) was very friendly and put me at ease. Once again as with (name omitted) she is a great representative for organization"

Appropriate Staff

Some patients have reported that in some cases they felt the clinician they have seen hasn't been the appropriate member of staff, particularly when patients feel they need a Doctor and receive an appointment with a Nurse Practitioner. Some examples include:

“There are never any appointments available with doctors. Only nurses who are great but not doctors so when they can't help you are (language omitted).... I've been several times to see the nurse knowing that it's a doctor who has been recommended by the last nurses who have seen me. Without seeing a doctor there will be no progress. If I've developed anything that needs to be picked up by a doctor over the last two years it will likely not be treatable by the time I do get to see doctor.”

“The doctor at my local practice (omitted) advised me to make an appointment with a nurse about my diabetes medication. I could only get an appointment with a nurse at (omitted). When I was called in, I wasn't in the room for longer than 2 minutes. The nurse said she doesn't deal with chronic illnesses and couldn't help me. I travelled 30 mins for this appointment on the advice of my doctor and got nowhere. Ridiculous.”

“Unprofessional nurse who speaks to you like you are a piece of dirt with a very poor attitude. Nurse had very little knowledge and understanding about the medication which you've booked for and repeatedly dismissed NHS guidelines. Dangerous and unsafe clinical practice, would not recommend to anyone.”

Children's Health

During this reporting period, there has been a small trend of parents who have provided feedback relating to getting treatment for their child, highlighting some key concerns in which parents had to look at other health services to get the treatment and care needed:

“Went to the doctor for my son advised I believed he had croup like symptoms. Doctor completely belittled me and asked “is this your first child” in which I responded “no”. The doctor went on to say my son was teething and just needs “a decent teether that goes in fridge”. Thankfully I trusted my gut and took my son to Alder Hey in which case he was treated with a steroid medicine, as the doctor stated he had a wheeze on his chest, which could be bronchitis or croup. If this treatment happened to a first time mum maybe they would question themselves and believe they are “over reacting” and children can deteriorate quickly.”

“Will never see nurse in there ever again took my daughter as she was unwell and had big sores over her body the nurse said she was fine well clearly she weren't, she kept saying as she fell no she hasn't fell over these are Sutton more serious! Anyway she

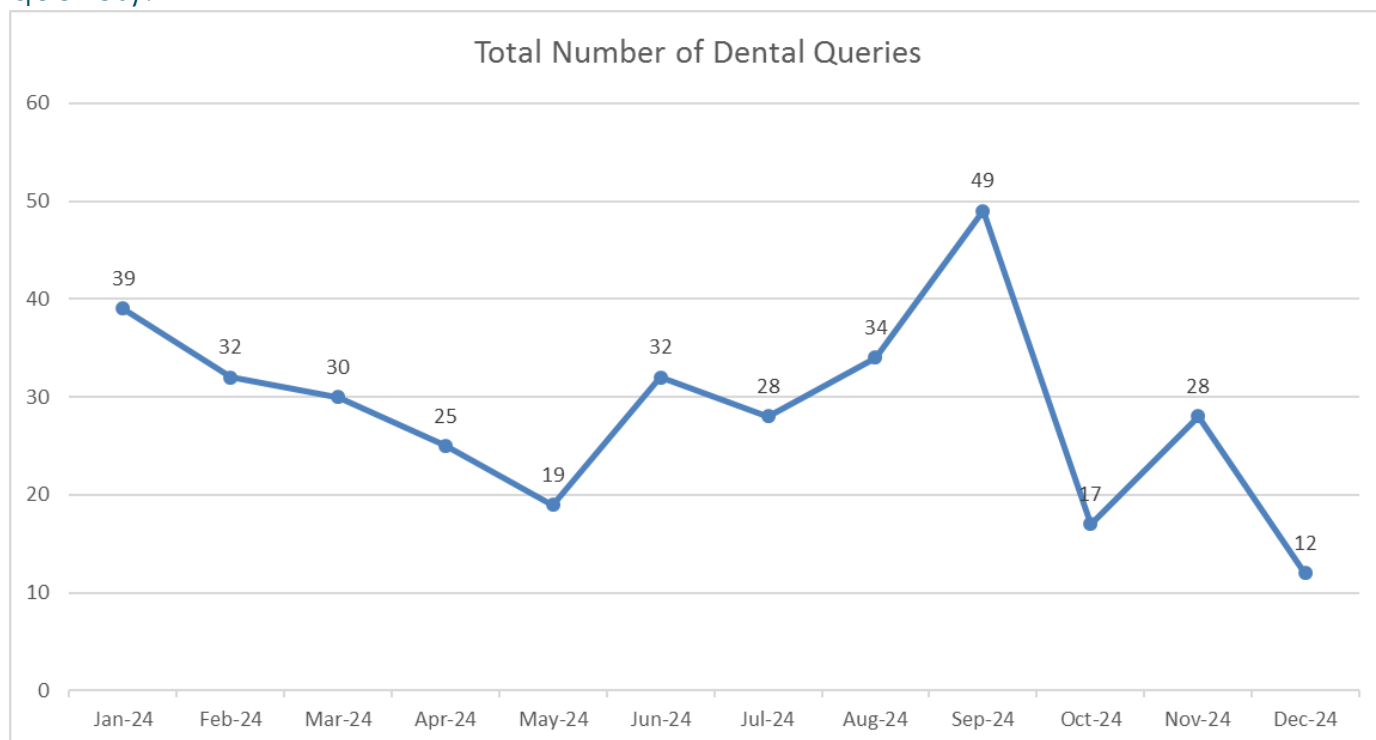
just kept saying she fine I didn't get listened to at all... so I went the chemist which is right next door to doctors an asked someone to look at her the women said take her straight to walk-inn or hospital, as I thought I thought her the walk inn she was diagnosed with STAPH and now on Antibiotics! So this so called nurse needs to listen and check people properly! I think this is disguising my little girl could have got much worst if I listened to this nurse ac forgot her name but I will be posting it as well shouldn't be allowed to nurse anyone!"

"Went with my 1YO who had high temperature, waited 30 min beyond the time of the appointment. The doctor scared her and made her cry, barely listed to her breathing and provided advice which contradicts the information on the NHS website and provided no diagnosis. Went to Walk-in centre straight after to get a proper check and a diagnosis."

"I asked for a repeat prescription of my child's inhaler. I was told the prescription would take 3 days. I stated that he needed it before 3 days as he is severely asthmatic. I was told by GP surgery receptionist that if he became ill to take him to A&E. I explained this was crazy as he just needed on inhaler. I then went to Walk in Centre they took him to into triage and was then asked to wait - the son had an autistic meltdown and I had to leave - no inhaler given. I asked at a chemist on my way home - they said they couldn't give one over the counter. Exhausted all avenues went home they my son became very ill in the night and I had to phone 111 who then phoned for an ambulance for my son. The ambulance came and they were brilliant with my son - gave him a nebuliser mask. We had to go to A&E where we waited hours. Was eventually seen late morning the next day. Was provided with an inhaler and spacer by Dr in A&E. This disrupted my son's routine who is autistic and he missed school and it had a knock on effect."

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 January 2024 to December 2024, Healthwatch Knowsley received 345 queries relating to dentistry (as highlighted in the graph and table below). Between September and December 2024, there were 106 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 (113 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.

Healthwatch Knowsley are aware that in October Origins Dental Surgery closed its venues in Prescott and Halewood, which has further impacted Knowsley residents trying to access dental care. Within this period, Healthwatch Knowsley received a number of queries from frustrated residents who were unable to access their dentist without any notice of the closures.

First of all a number of concerns have also been raised by patients accessing Liverpool Dental Spa, in which people have issues with private treatment received. The comments have raised issues relating to finance, as well as suggesting the work that has been done has not been completed and dental work was not to an appropriate standard. In these cases, Healthwatch Knowsley have signposted patients to the General Dental Council and Dental Complaints Service.

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

At the meeting in September, the group discussed the changes to the diabetic service within Knowsley. Feedback was also requested for the telephone call back systems in place within GP surgeries.

During the November meeting, the MacMillan Cancer Care co-ordinator attended the meeting to discuss their service. The group also discussed the potential for a Joint PCN Forum in the future.

West PCN

A meeting took place in October; the focus of the session was to discuss Pharmacy First. Discussions also took place about childhood vaccinations, liver screening, digital technology and care for MDD.

South & Central PCN

At a meeting in September, Spirit Heath attended who are supporting the changes to the diabetes service within Knowsley. In December, the group also discussed the enhanced access service, CQC Inpatient Surveys and dementia workshop.

During this period, all PCN forums have discussed medicines management, including discussion relating to stock levels and ongoing campaigns. The agendas also included information about current and ongoing surveys within Knowsley, for example the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.

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 the only way to guarantee an appointment is to attend the surgery before 8am, 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.
- Understanding that not all people will or are able to access services online.

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.

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

Healthwatch Knowsley
The Old Schoolhouse
St Johns Road
Huyton
Knowsley
L36 0UX

www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

t: 0151 449 3954

e: enquiries@healthwatchknowsley.co.uk

🐦 @HWKnowsley

📘 [Facebook.com/Healthwatch.Knowsley](https://www.facebook.com/Healthwatch.Knowsley)



**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.