

# Insight

The public's health and  
social care views

April to July 2023

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## Introduction

**Healthwatch North Yorkshire are listening to what people like about services and what they think could be improved. No matter how big or small the issue, we want to hear about it.**

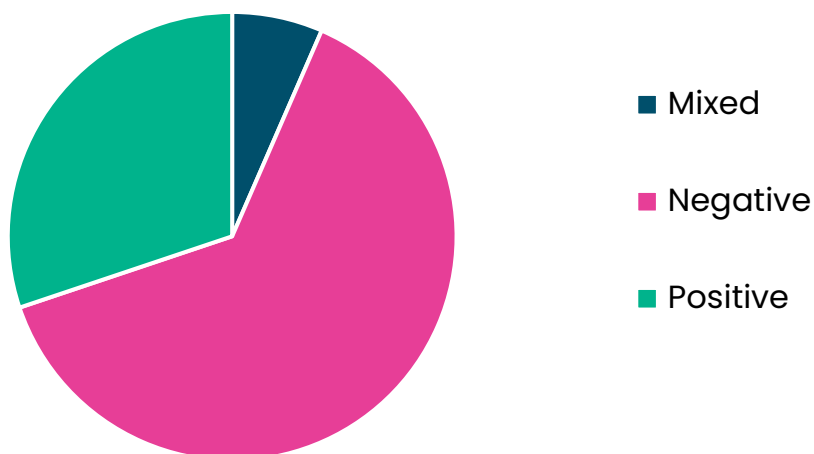
Healthwatch North Yorkshire produce a monthly patient experiences log which brings together feedback from people who have been in touch with us, have talked to us at engagement activities or responded via Care Opinion (which is the UK's leading independent feedback website, enabling patients to share their experiences of healthcare services). These logs provide a snapshot of people's positive and negative experiences of health and care services across the county.

The feedback we receive each month varies but there is often feedback about GP services, hospital care, social care, dentistry, and mental health services to name a few.

This report provides a summary of the patient experience logs from April-July 2023. During this time, we received feedback from 199 people via our phone line, website, email and through engagement events. Please note, this figure does not include the feedback we have gathered for specific projects via surveys and focus groups and does not include the feedback we have received via our visits to care homes (known as enter and view).

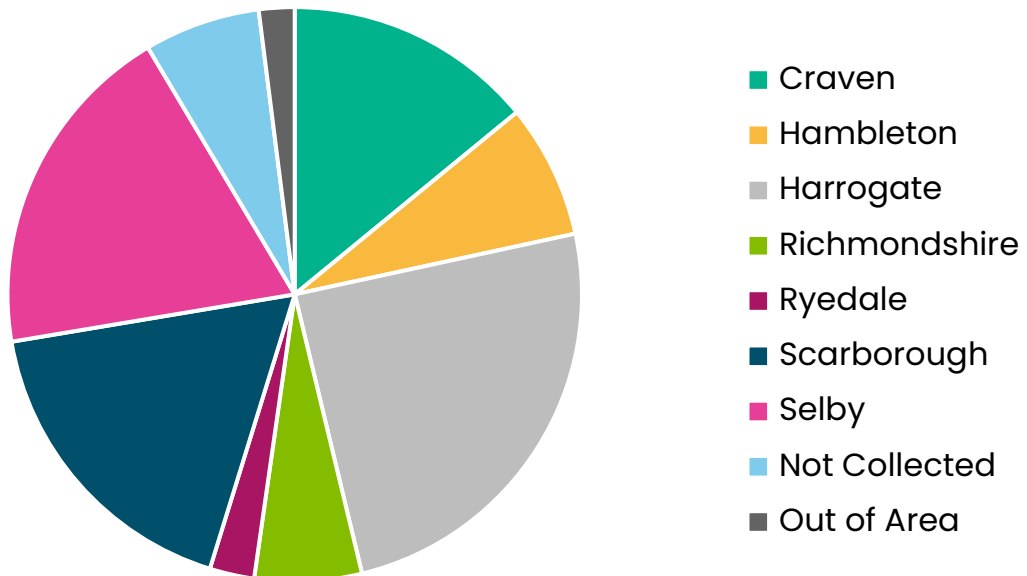
In terms of sentiment, 63% was negative, 30% positive and the sentiment of the remaining feedback was mixed.

**Sentiment of feedback**



There was a spread of feedback from across the different districts of North Yorkshire, as shown below.

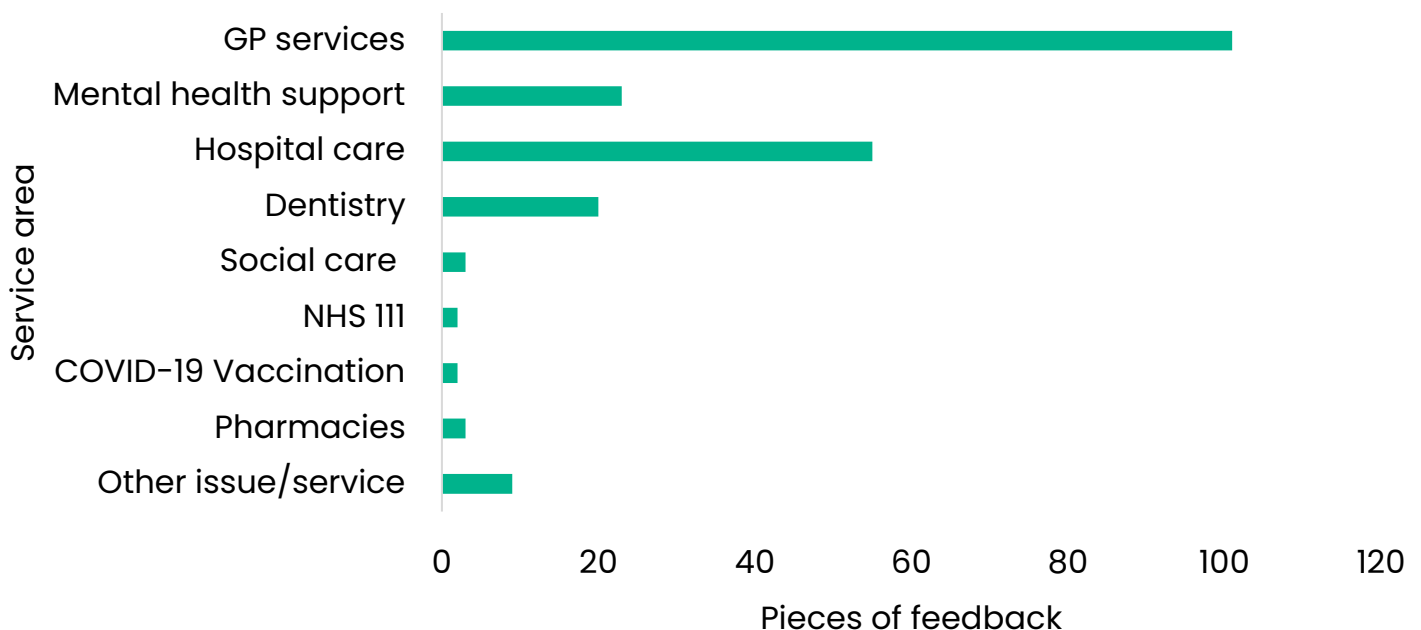
**Feedback by district**



## Feedback by service area

We received the most feedback about GP services (46%), followed by hospital care (25%), mental health support (11%) and dentistry (9%).

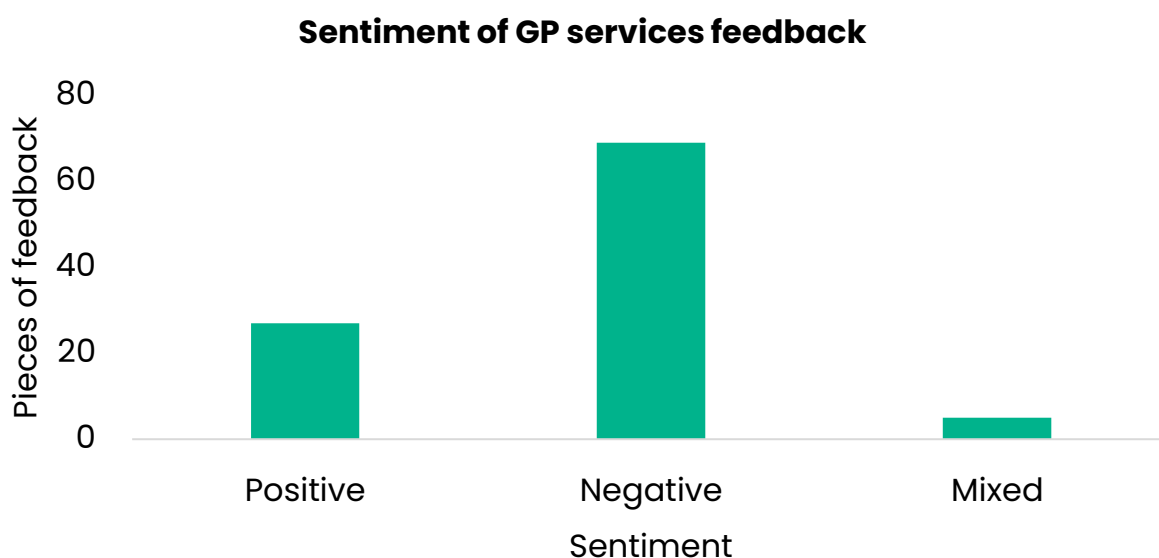
**Feedback by service area**



## Feedback about GP services

### What the public told us

Overall, there was more negative than positive feedback about GP services. The key concern was access, with people expressing frustrations with long phone queues when trying to book an appointment and long waiting times for appointments. Online systems were praised by some but in many cases, these were not working effectively. When people can get an appointment at their GP practice, they are generally happy with the quality of care, the fundamental issue is access.



We received feedback about 23 different GP practices across North Yorkshire. The practices that received the most feedback are explored in more detail below.

### Beech Tree Surgery - Selby

- There were 14 people who shared their views on this practice, with a mix of both positive (4) and negative (10) feedback.
- The positive feedback was centred around the friendly and caring staff, with recognition for one very helpful receptionist.
- However, issues surrounding the online system for booking appointments were raised, with one person reporting that no appointments seem to be available when they have tried to book

online. Concerns around the website being down for a period of time were also mentioned.

- Others mentioned the long waiting times for appointments, with some people waiting for three weeks or more.
- It must be noted that one person acknowledged that the practice has now started to take on board comments about the difficulties experienced by patients and have made some changes which have much improved the service, which they hope continues.

**“The receptionist was helpful, positive and calm.”**

“I spoke to the receptionist regarding some blood test results. Although the receptionist was not clinically trained, she was so helpful and positive with me. She was calm and friendly and gave me the impression it was not too much trouble to her explaining things and making sure I understood. I am very grateful to have spoken to someone with such a nice attitude to patients.”

**“There is a telephone queue of over 30 people.”**

“I tried to contact you on several matters of my health situation and can’t get through due to website being down for whatever reason. Telephone being a queue of over 30 people. Leaving a ring back only to receive a text that ring back has been cancelled. Tried again today only to find web site down again. How do we get through to you?”

**Fisher Medical Centre – Craven**

- All 10 pieces of feedback about this practice were negative.
- The feedback suggests that the practice used to provide an excellent service but since Modality took charge in 2022 the quality of the service has significantly declined.
- People said the phone queues to get through to the practice are long and the staff who answer the phone can be rude and sometimes cut off calls halfway through.
- The online system is not working effectively, with some saying they have submitted online requests and have got no response (despite the website saying you should receive a response within 48 hours). Issues surrounding the online system not being user friendly were also raised.

- Some said when you do manage to get an appointment the doctors are often good but it is near impossible to get an appointment.

**“I don’t know where to start in describing how this practice has become so impossible to access since change in ownership.”**

“The phone service is beyond impossible. It’s never answered. The website is unfriendly. There are delays of days or weeks in responding to website requests (or no response). Prescription renewal requests getting lost so run out of meds. GPs are in my experience good. You just can’t get to them. It’s so upsetting to see a good practice become ruined.”

**“They are only contactable online between office hours, don't ring back online requests. This causes anxious waits for vital medication.”**

“There are defensive messages on phone, warnings of outcome if staff are upset by callers and will refuse to deal with you if you can triage online. Elderly patients are unable to negotiate the system giving up and not receiving care and essential medication. Surly, unwelcoming receptionists glaring at you dropping in documentation. The doctors are good if you do manage to speak to one.”

**Scott Road Medical Centre – Selby**

- There were 10 pieces of feedback received about this practice, all of which were negative.
- Long waiting times for appointments was the key issue raised; one person said they rang 6 weeks ago and are still waiting for a phone appointment.
- Issues surrounding how the practice deal with complaints was also mentioned. One person said they tried to complain to the practice manager but have not heard anything back.

**“There was an incredible long wait to get even a phone appointment.”**

“I rang six weeks ago and still waiting for a phone appointment, even though twice double-checked, but they said – to keep waiting and the doctors are really busy.”

**“They might as well not exist.”**

“You call up, wait in a queue, get either get told: ‘its not urgent enough’ or ‘we’re too busy – go to the urgent treatment centre’.”

## Posterngate Surgery - Selby

- There were 8 people who shared their views on this practice, with a mix of both positive (2) and negative (6) feedback.
- There was positive feedback about the speed of getting blood test results, with one person saying they had a blood test at 4pm and by 8am their result was back. Praise was also given for the quality of care received from the clinicians.
- Issues centred around the long waiting times for appointments; one person said it can sometimes be between 3-6 weeks.
- Concerns were also raised about the practice not being very autism friendly.

**“Very poor, management, reception and most of the doctors know nothing useful about autism and don't want to.”**

“They should be kept away from autistic people until they have further training, at least.”

**“I was treated extremely well.”**

“I attended yesterday for an injection in my hand. I was treated extremely well by the practitioner, who explained the procedure to me, including risks and benefits, checked whether I had any questions, and then gave me the injection in a sensitive part of my hand well. She advised me about what to expect and that she would make contact in a couple of weeks to see how I was. Overall, this was an excellent experience from a good clinician. Thank you and well done.”

## Falsgrave Surgery - Scarborough

- All 8 pieces of feedback were negative.
- Very long waits for appointments was the main issue raised. Two people said they have waited for three months for appointments.
- Others said they have waited for a phone call appointment at the allocated time they were told, but have not received any call.

**“It takes such a long time.”**

“After being kept waiting for over nine weeks for an appointment I did finally get to see a doctor. I cannot understand why it takes such a long time? I also was kept waiting for three months for a simple injection for tennis elbow. Why?”



### **“I’ve been waiting 7 weeks for a routine appointment.”**

“In the meantime for the last two weeks suffering with pain in my left side and lower back, need advice about what painkillers are suitable as I am on some regular medication that react to Ibuprofen etc.”

“I did the online thing and got a text saying telephone appointment Tuesday afternoon. On my app it gave a time of 13.20 to 13.40 checked my mobile at 11.15 and realised I had two missed calls at 10.58 from doctors surgery so waited until 2.00 then rang them to be told I would be getting a call sometime that afternoon.”

“There was no call but now showing a missed appointment on my record due to calling in the morning instead of the afternoon apparently it’s my fault for not answering the phone. I was home from 11.15 for the rest of the day mobile and landlines both show missed calls just before 11am.”

### **Cross Hills Group Practice – Craven**

- There were 4 pieces of feedback about this practice, all but one was negative.
- One person said they had a quick response to their appointment request, was seen the same day, referred to a specialist and tested within the week.
- However, others raised issues with the new modality system. One person said they were given a time for a phone call asthma review, but no call ever happened.
- Another person said they have been waiting over 5 months for a referral to a gastroenterologist.

### **“It’s appalling”**

“I have tried and tried to get an appointment for an asthma review. I used the modality system for a time and date. It was never honoured no phone call at the time I was told). Tried again with time and date available online. I received a text to say a phone call would be made on a day I was working (clinically) and not available. I texted back with this information only to receive a text saying my case was closed?”

**“Lots of time and money wasted and frustration caused.”**

"I was informed by a pharmacy that I need a medication review with GP. After three weeks of trying to get through to reception on telephone (e-consult unavailable) I waited in line at 8am at reception to be told I could have a review with a pharmacist! Lots of time and money wasted (phone calls) and frustration caused. This inefficient system needs addressing."

**Ripon Spa Surgery - Harrogate**

- The 4 pieces of feedback received for this practice were all positive.
- All feedback was regarding the excellent way the practice carried out COVID-19 booster vaccinations.

**“The staff at the vaccination centre are doing a fabulous job.”**

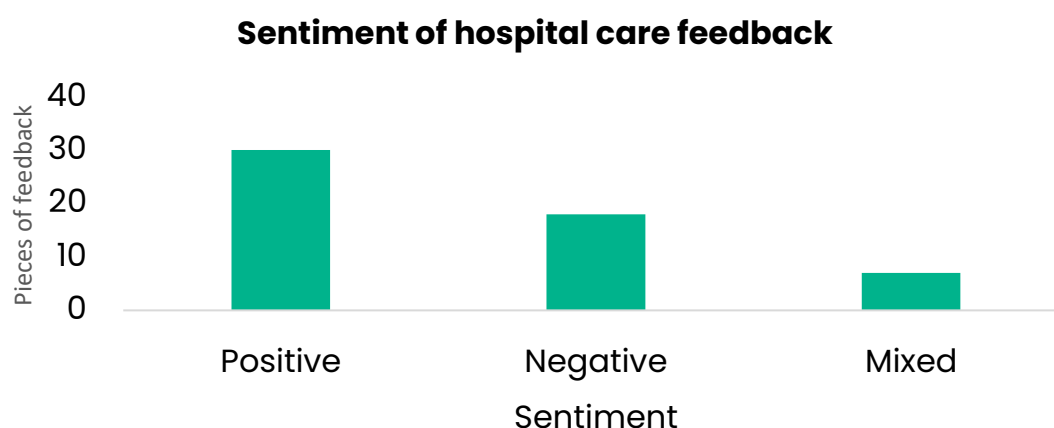
"Today I took my 92-year-old Mum for her COVID-19 booster. Mum is quite unsteady on her feet and standing for a long time is challenging, as soon as we entered the entrance to the doctors vaccination centre we were offered a wheel chair by the lovely lady on the gate, after a couple of minutes in the queue we were called across by another lovely lady who is a member of the great reception and dispensing team, this lady made sure that mum was dealt with as soon as possible by asking one of the nurses to kindly come outside and administer her vaccination. I also witnessed this happening to other patients who were less mobile. Ladies you were all doing a fabulous job and are a credit to this surgery."

"I recently had my COVID-19 spring booster. Had to queue but not for too long and it was very well organised. All the practice staff are helpful and pleasant. This is a well-run practice."

## Feedback about hospital care

**There was more positive than negative feedback about hospital care.**

Praise for staff was in the feedback received, with many reporting that the staff they saw were professional, understanding, and efficient. Despite these positives, long waiting times at A&E and long waiting times for operations, follow up appointments and test results were also raised.



### Scarborough Hospital

- There were 10 people who shared their views on Scarborough Hospital, all feedback apart from one piece was positive.
- The majority of the positive feedback was regarding the kind, friendly, efficient and professional hospital staff, particularly within the A&E department.
- There was also high praise for the ophthalmology department at the hospital.
- The one negative experience was relating a long wait at A&E.

**“I had surgery and the care I received was absolutely amazing.”**

“From admittance to me going home the care was incredible. I really can’t express the gratitude I have for everyone enough. I was so frightened having this surgery, but the staff erased it. Thank you again.”

“I attended Scarborough Hospital for cataract surgery. What wonderful treatment I received from both the theatre staff and the staff on Willow Ward.”

## Harrogate Hospital

- There were 9 people who shared their views on Harrogate Hospital, with a mix of positive (4), negative (4) and mixed (1) feedback.
- There was positive feedback about the cardio team, the coronary care unit and A&E staff.
- There was also some positive feedback about the maternity unit, however issues due to not seeing the same healthcare professional was raised.
- While some praised the staff at A&E, issues were raised regarding the waiting times at A&E, which can be very long.
- Concerns around signage were mentioned. One person said the route to the blood clinic is not well signposted and another said the old directions system at Harrogate Hospital (brightly coloured lines painted on the floor leading to different departments) worked well and they would really like this to be brought back again.
- Issues with parking at Harrogate Hospital (especially for disabled parking) was also highlighted.

**“This is an amazing maternity unit staffed by a great team who for both of my children ensured a safe delivery where I felt listened to and supported.”**

“The only thing I would say is that post-pandemic, there is more of a 'musical chairs' quality about getting assigned to a midwife and obstetrician - you seldom see the same person twice. However, the individuals themselves represent the best of the NHS.”

“Blood clinic at Harrogate District Hospital has been moved upstairs but not signposted well enough.”

## Friarage Hospital

- There were 8 pieces of feedback about Friarage Hospital with a mix of both positive (4) and negative (4) feedback.
- The positive feedback centred around the kind, caring and efficient staff people had encountered.
- Issues were raised regarding long waiting times at the urgent treatment centre.
- There was also some negative feedback about maternity care.

- Continuity of care, and lack of respect from staff were key issues mentioned.

**“I received amazing care.”**

“I had a recent stay on Gara Ward for a hip replacement. I received amazing care – such kind companionate staff from everyone I encountered. I always felt at ease and confident in everyone. It was way beyond anything I have experienced elsewhere. Well done to the team.”

**“I visited the ‘urgent’ treatment centre today with my four-month-old to be left three hours. It’s an absolute shocking amount of time to leave a baby.”**

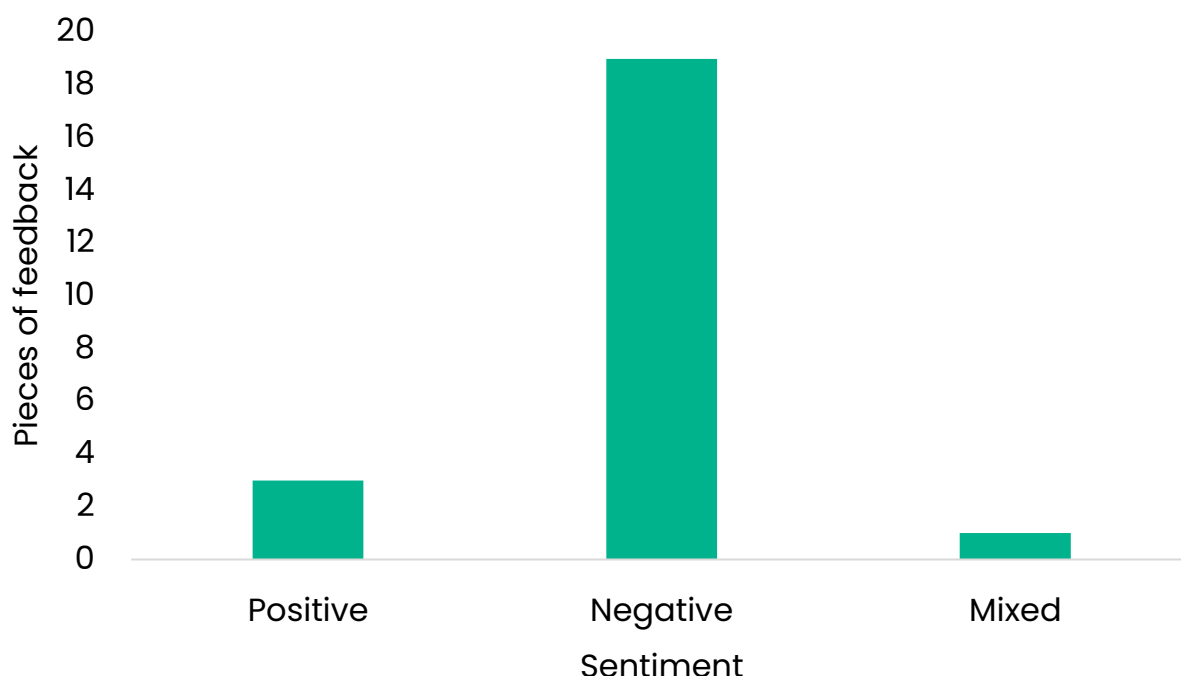
“The wait was before being triaged and then another hour until she was seen by a doctor. I informed them that I had only brought one bottle with me, one of the nurses went looking for some milk for me but never came back. I couldn’t fault the doctor we saw he was brilliant but that is the only good thing I can say about this department. The people who came in after my daughter were being seen first, which is wrong.”



## Feedback about mental health support

Feedback about mental health support was mostly negative. Key issues included concerns surrounding Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), especially for children with autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), issues with the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust's [crisis line](#) and long waiting times for support from [NHS talking therapies](#). Alongside this there were substantial concerns raised about the Do-it Profiler tool for adult autism/ADHD referrals across North Yorkshire (& York).

**Sentiment of mental health support feedback**



### Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

- There were nine pieces of feedback about CAMHS services, all of which were negative.
- The key issue raised was that CAMHS are not supporting children/young people who are experiencing mental health issues and have autism and ADHD. One person said they don't feel like CAMHS have the time to really understand how to communicate with children with autism.
- The long waiting lists to be seen were also mentioned.

“The waiting list was very long and it took a long time to get my daughter some help. They couldn't help with her autism assessment. I'm not sure why. After five or six years I got her assessed and she was diagnosed just before her 19th birthday. This has had a detrimental effect on her mental health, and nobody is interested in helping her sadly. I am going through the same process now for my other daughter. Over three years later, I am still waiting for an assessment.”

“I have a 14-year-old daughter who was diagnosed with autism last year. My daughter also has high anxiety which makes it hard so we were put on the waiting list for CAMHS We got through to the first bit, but my daughter would not engage she was discharged. I just don't feel like they have the time to really understand how to communicate with children with autism.”

### **Cross Lane Hospital**

- There were three pieces of feedback about Cross Lane Hospital, two were positive and one was negative.
- One person expressed the lack of care they received while staying at Cross Lane. They said their needs as an autistic adult were not met and they were unsafely discharged, despite telling staff they would try to commit suicide if they were discharged.
- In contrast, two people praised the care they have received from Cross Lane, expressing their gratitude towards the kind and caring staff.

“My daughter recently spent two weeks in Esk ward have experienced a severe manic episode. **The staff were excellent. Highly professional and respectful.**”

**“They spent time with patients addressing their practical, functional, and emotional needs.”**

“The psychiatrist was excellent and listened to the views of my daughter, myself and staff to develop the best treatment plan for my daughter going forward. My daughter was able to have supported leave and was ultimately discharged after 10 days. Thank you.”

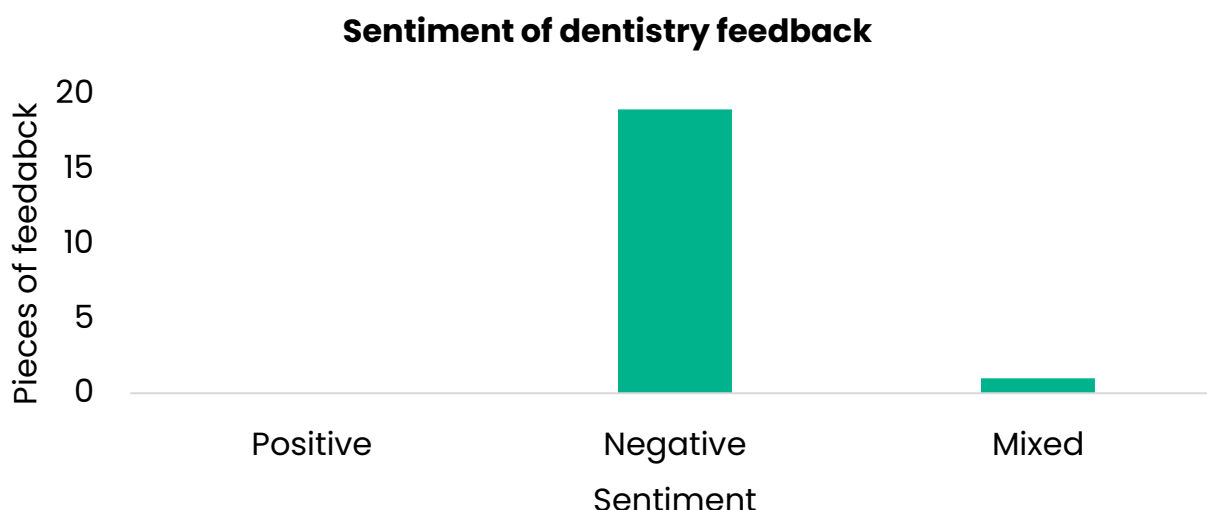
## Feedback about dentistry

**There was no positive feedback received about dentistry. Almost all feedback was regarding people being unable to register for an NHS dentist, with some waiting lists being over two years long.**

People also expressed the difficulty they have experienced when trying to register with a new dental practice due to their current practice closing.

Many people expressed frustrations that when they try to register with an NHS dentist, they are told there is no availability, but they could be seen as a private patient. However, many cannot afford this.

Not being able to register with a dentist has also had a negative impact on other aspects of people's lives such as mental health and employment.



**“When we moved house, it proved impossible to find an NHS dentist.”**

“I was told to ring in every month to see if they had availability, but it became obvious, they didn't. I had excruciating pain from an abscess so had to pay for root canal treatment which was over £400. Now, two weeks later, I must have root canal treatment in a different tooth. How can we afford these charges?”

**“My teeth are so bad I feel unable to go out socially or for job interviews and have no money to go private.”**

“The impact on my mental health is getting worse and cannot move forward with my life while my teeth are in such a state. I cannot access any NHS dentist in the area as not taking on new patients.”



## Other feedback

### Wheelchair services

- Difficulties were raised regarding wheelchair services; for example people having issues when trying to book repair and maintenance appointments.

### Dementia waiting times

- Long waiting times for NHS dementia assessments was another issue raised. The average wait in North Yorkshire can be anything from six months to two years.
- We have heard that Dementia Forward have even had to change their care model to support people pre-diagnosis because of the length of waiting time and significant deterioration in the persons dementia over this waiting period.



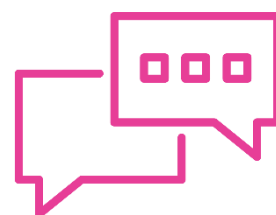
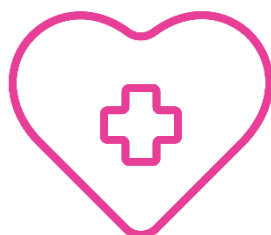
## Conclusion

**This summary report highlights that access continues to be the key issue for many, whether it be access to GP appointments, hospital appointments, mental health support or dentists.**

However, when people do receive treatment and support, they are often positive about the care they have received and tend to be appreciative of the caring and hard-working staff.

We ask that service providers and commissioners who are mentioned in this report act on the feedback and insight and share with us what actions they have or intend to take to remedy these concerns. Our next insight report will be based on feedback from August–November 2023.

Thank you to the people who shared their feedback with us, your voices will help inform and shape health and care services across North Yorkshire.



**healthwatch**  
North Yorkshire



**Committed  
to quality**

We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit so that we can be certain of this.


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