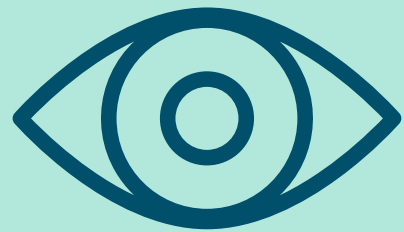


# Insight



The public's health and  
social care views

**August – November 2023**

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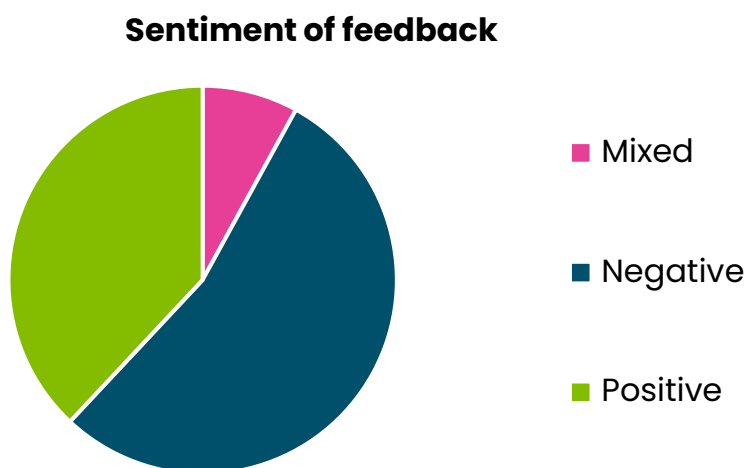
## Introduction

**Healthwatch North Yorkshire, the independent champion for people who use our NHS, 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 ([www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk/have-your-say](http://www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk/have-your-say)).**

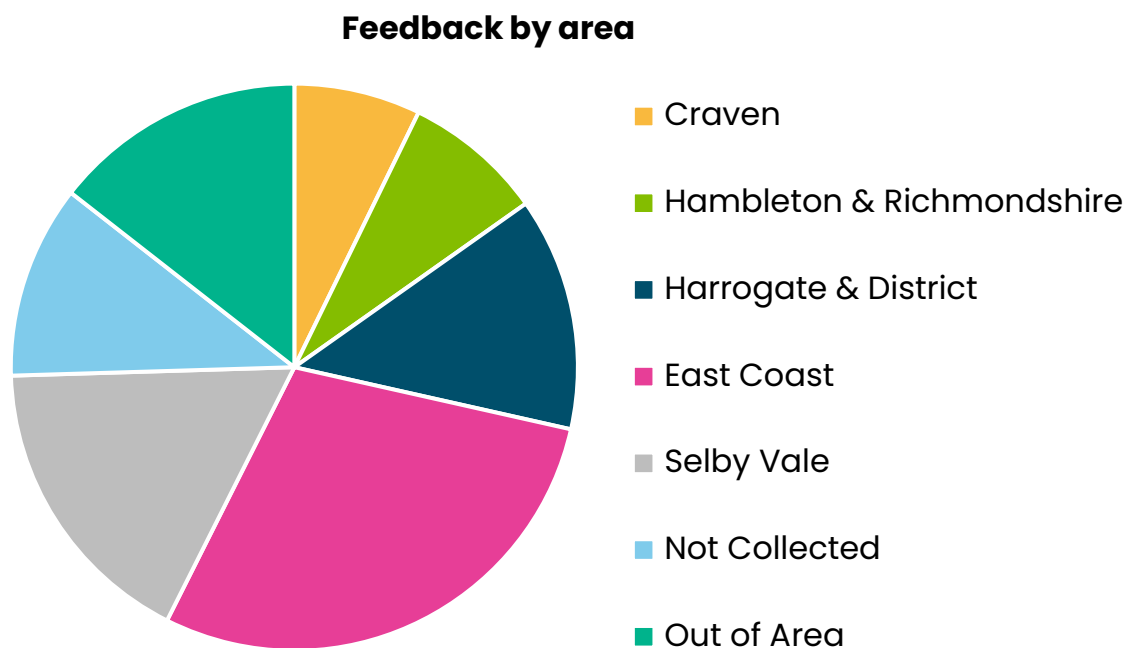
Healthwatch North Yorkshire produce a monthly patient experiences log which brings together feedback from people who have been in touch with us, have talked to us at engagement activities or responded via Care Opinion (which is the UK's leading independent feedback website, enabling patients to share 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 experiences from August–November 2023. We received feedback from 263 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).

**54% was negative, 38% positive and the remaining feedback was mixed.**

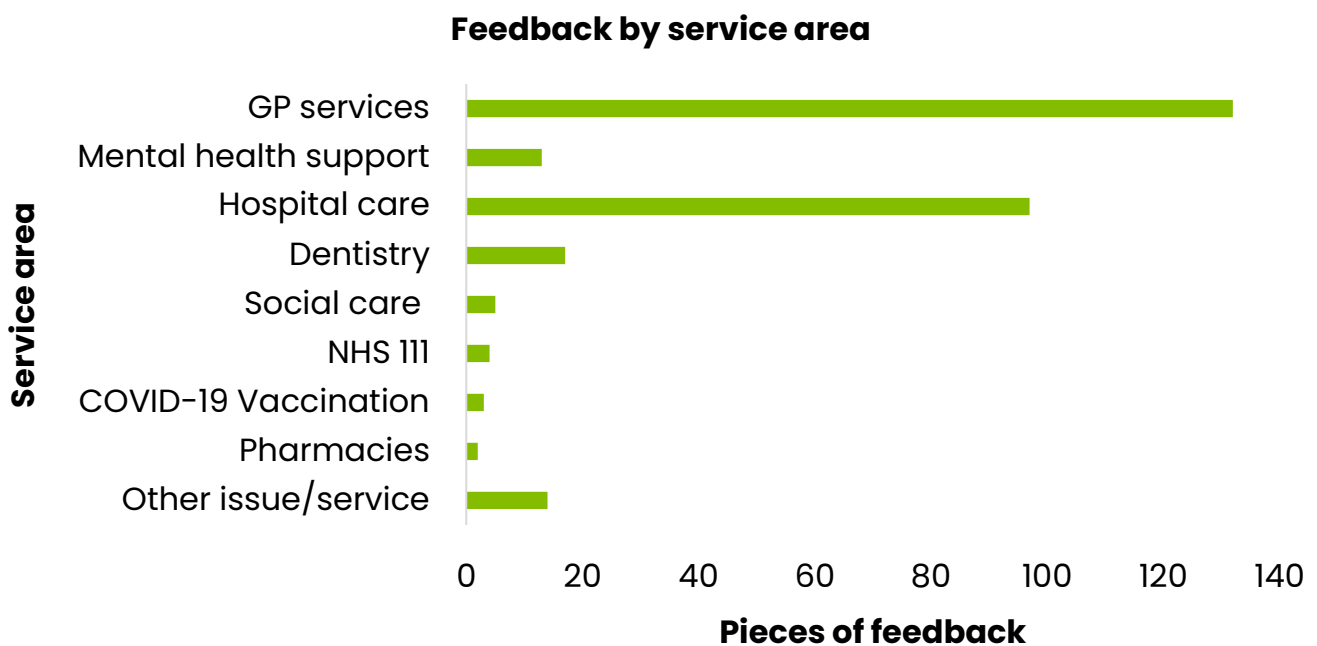


There was a spread of feedback from across the different districts of North Yorkshire, as shown below.



## Feedback by service area

We received the most feedback about GP services (46%), followed by hospital care (34%), dentistry (6%) and mental health support (5%).



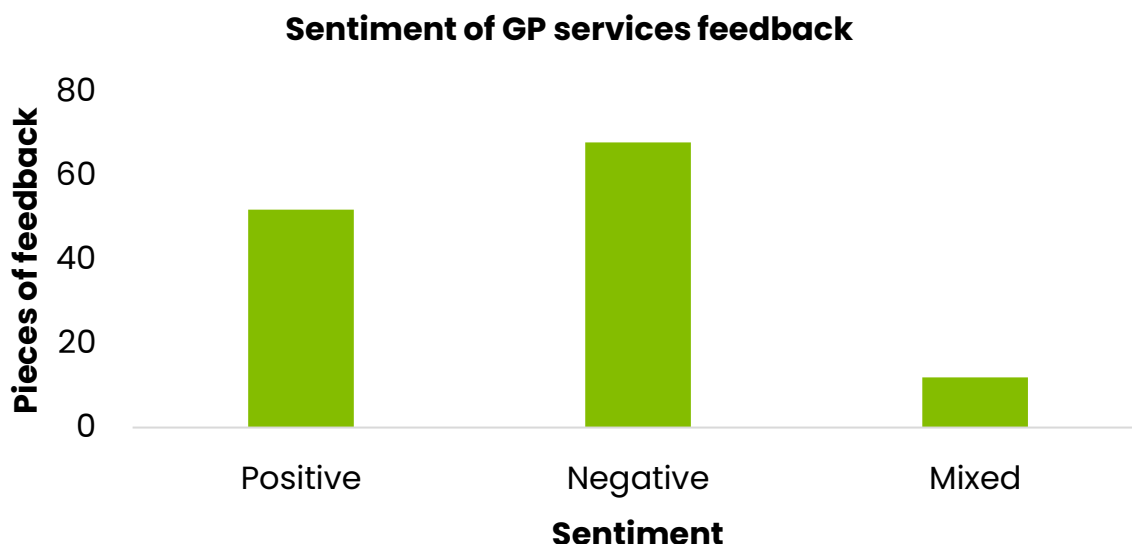
## Feedback about GP services

### What the public told us



**Around 52% of the feedback about GP services was negative.**

The main concern raised was around access, with people expressing frustrations with long phone queues when trying to book an appointment and long waiting times for appointments. When people can get an appointment at their GP practice, they are often happy with the quality of care, the fundamental issue is access.



We received feedback about 41 different GP practices across North Yorkshire. The practices that received the most feedback are explored in more detail on the next page.

## Beech Tree Surgery, Selby

**There were 14 people who shared their views on this practice. Most of the feedback was positive (10).**

- There was positive feedback about the new practice manager that is in place, with people saying the practice has now started to make changes which have improved the service.
- Several people praised the receptionists at the practice, saying they are helpful, kind, and efficient. One person said the receptionist was helpful in sorting out online access for their elderly relative.
- The new online booking system was praised by some as it means you don't have to wait on the phone to make an appointment. However, concerns were raised for those who do not have digital access.
- Despite the positives, there was some negative feedback, mostly centred around long waits for prescriptions and long waits on the phone to get through to the practice which in one case meant a person took her child to Selby Hospital instead.



**Having been a long-standing patient the last six months have seen a great improvement to all patient services since the arrival of the new practice manager.**

She appears to be a much needed and positive breath of fresh air for the surgery after years of frustration I now feel much more content in dealing with my surgery. Long may it continue!"



**Having worked on reception for a GP Surgery for 13+ years I would like to say how delighted I am with the service, care, and professionalism at Beech Tree Surgery.**

I know how difficult it can be to get an appointment, however the surgery is doing its best and will get you in to see or speak with a GP. I needed a repeat prescription item which is not on my repeat script. The receptionist who called me was very pleasant. I felt she genuinely wanted to help me. Thank you so much for sorting this out for me with such speed and professionalism and for your continued support, help and understanding. It's a difficult job.



## Fisher Medical Centre, Craven

**There were seven people who shared feedback about this practice. Four pieces of feedback were negative and three positive.**

- 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 there are long phone queues to get through to the practice, with one person saying they waited on the phone for 85 minutes before hanging up and for the whole time they remained at number 4 in the queue.
- The pre-appointment forms that need to be filled in were also mentioned as a negative, particularly for those who find online systems difficult.
- Despite the negatives, a few people did praise the quality of care received once they were able to see a doctor.



**I had a missed call from the GP practice. I called back and was on hold for 85 minutes.**

I was number 4 in the queue for the whole period. Interestingly, this happened on a previous call too. I hung up on both occasions. Is everyone number 4 in the queue? The practice is keen for everyone to use the online system and we can't speak to anyone to make an appointment. I am fairly IT savvy, however, what about the elderly or disabled? If I've been number 4 in the phone system both times, it is impossible to get through. How are the elderly and disabled being treated?



**I have been a patient of this Practice since 2017, and it has always been a good experience until the practice became a part of Modality Group.**

There are lots of barriers now, such as a pre-appointment forms, which they require me to complete every single time before every appointment.



## Sherburn Group Practice, Selby

**There were six pieces of feedback received about this practice. Three were negative, two positive and one mixed.**

- Two people mentioned the long waiting times to get referred for a Musculoskeletal assessment, in both cases the GP said they would refer them but after 4-6 weeks the GP had still not done the referral.
- One person said they could not get an appointment for an asthma review so were instead sent to Selby Urgent Treatment Centre.
- Long waiting times for appointments was also mentioned, however it was noted that once you are able to see a doctor the care is good. It's the process of getting an appointment that is the problem.

**6** **It's taken my GP over four weeks to put in a referral to musculoskeletal services has taken over two weeks for a new prescription for my new pain meds. I still don't have them and have no clue when I'll get to see them, despite being in chronic pain.** **9**

**6** **The actual care of all the doctors have been brilliant for our family, but the process of seeing a doctor is really letting the whole service down and I feel sorry for the receptionists that have to deal with the difficulties and contradictory information they have to give.** **9**





## Cross Hills Group Practice, Craven

**There were five pieces of feedback about this practice. Three pieces were positive and two negative.**

- The positive feedback mostly centred around the staff being kind, caring and efficient.
- One person said they used the online service to get an appointment due to chest pain and difficulty breathing and got a text saying the appointment would be in 2-4 weeks so instead had to go to the urgent treatment centre. However, another person said they used the online e-consult and got a phone call back from a doctor within three hours. This disparity suggests the quality of care is not consistent.
- One person said they were meant to have been fast tracked and seen within two weeks. They were still waiting nine months later.



**I felt very poorly. I did an e-consult. I got a phone call back within three hours and chatted to a GP."**

"We agreed the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment (I'm a retired nurse). My prescription was issued within two hours.



**I was expected to sit at home struggling to breath and with bad chest pains for a month.**

I used the online service to contact the practice (after trying to manage symptoms for over a month). My condition worsened significantly and after reporting chest pain and difficulty breathing (where I was advised on the system that I may need urgent care), I received a text saying they will give me a routine appointment in between 2-4 weeks.

I was then left with no other option but to visit an urgent care department at a hospital where I was seen within 30 minutes, reviewed as an urgent case (due to chest pain and breathing difficulties) and given two prescriptions for a condition which would have had a significant impact on a pre-existing medical condition.

I would consider a routine 2-4-week appointment for a cough and cold etc. but chest paints and issues breathing - that to me is significant and requires a much better service and patient care from the doctors.



## Pickering Medical Practice, Ryedale

**There were five pieces of feedback about this practice. Three pieces were positive and two were negative.**

- One person praised the practice as she wanted to talk to a doctor about a deterioration in her 91-year-old mothers' general condition and was added to the duty doctors list for a phone consultation, however, within a few hours the doctor had made a home visit.
- Another person registered as a temporary patient at the practice due to being on holiday and had great care.
- Flu and COVID jabs were also reported as being organised efficiently.
- There was some negative feedback regarding staff attitude, with one person saying the GP was dismissive of their blood test results.



### **I couldn't wish for better care.**

I wanted to talk to a doctor about a deterioration in my 91-year-old mum's general condition and was added to the duty doctors list for a phone consultation. However, within a few hours the doctor had made a home visit and given advice about diet and fluids.



### **No consideration was given...**

I saw one of the newer GP's following abnormal blood results. The GP appeared surprised that I wanted to discuss the abnormal results.

They were dismissive, stating raised levels were an allergy response due to the time of year and shutdown any opportunity to discuss further.

As a qualified nurse I was fully aware that the rise in this blood level is caused by t things: 1. Allergy 2. Cancer 3. Parasitic infection. However, no consideration was given to anything other than the allergies.



## Nidderdale Group Practice, Harrogate

**There were four pieces of feedback about this practice. All were positive.**

- People praised the efficient, kind and caring doctors, nurses and reception staff.
- People said they did not feel rushed in the appointments and had time to share their concerns.
- The parking and waiting area at the practice was also praised.
- People said the flu jab experience was efficient and smooth.



**Very professional well organized, caring and patient.**

They are always willing to try to accommodate my difficulties. This includes every aspect of the of the surgery operations. There is an encouraging, even cheerful quality from reception onwards.



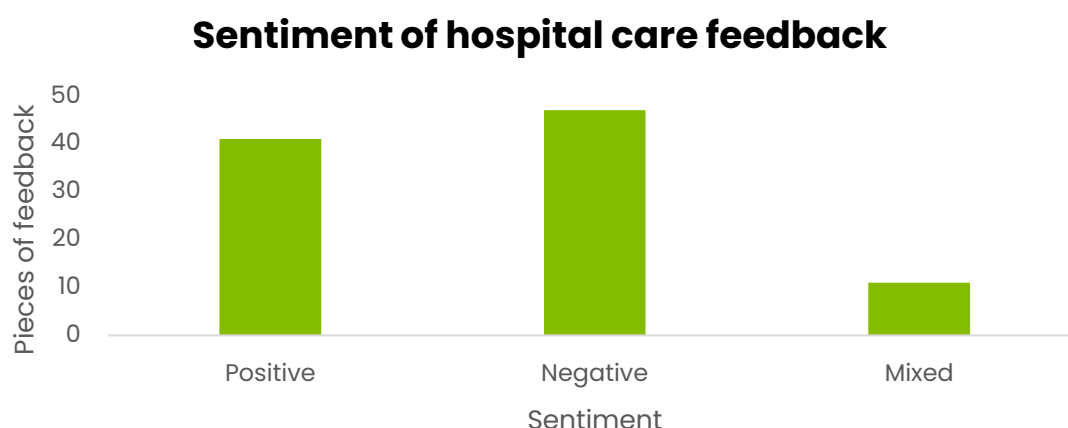
I had a flu jab. I was reminded by email, given an exact appointment time, arrived two minutes ahead, was seen and jabbed within two minutes.



## Feedback about hospital care

**There was an almost 50/50 split in positive and negative feedback**

Praise for staff was reflected in the feedback, with many reporting that the staff they saw were professional, understanding, and efficient. Despite these positives, long waiting times at A&E, long waiting times for operations and issues related to maternity services were also raised.



### Scarborough Hospital

**There were 16 people who shared their views on Scarborough Hospital. 11 pieces were positive and 5 were negative.**

- There was positive feedback about endoscopies at the hospital, with people praising the staff teams carrying out the procedure.
- Long waiting times at A&E were raised, but people said the kindness and care shown by staff was exemplary and very much appreciated.
- Admin issues at York & Scarborough Hospital Trust were raised, one person had a scan at Scarborough Hospital and was then told to go to York Hospital for further tests which ended up being the same scan they had already had at Scarborough.
- There was positive feedback about the Women's Unit at Scarborough Hospital. The team have been praised for providing an excellent, thorough, and thoughtful service, giving people time to discuss issues without being rushed.

- Long waiting times for operations and treatments at Scarborough Hospital were raised:
  - One person has been waiting over 18 months for a knee operation.
  - One person has been waiting over a year to have their gallbladder out.
  - One person has been waiting 12 months for hearing aids and 9 months for arthritis support.



**Nothing was a trouble to them.**

On what was an extremely busy day, I was looked after so well by a wonderful doctor and nurses. They were so kind and professional. I had many investigations to find out what was wrong. After all the horrible stuff that is said about the NHS I have nothing but praise for the way I and my husband were treated.



**Admin is a disaster, with one not talking to the other.**

I went, after waiting months, for a scan at my local hospital in Scarborough and was told they would be in touch if I needed to go back for further tests.

Two weeks later I got a call telling me I needed a scan and this time I had to travel to a private hospital in York. This meant a day off work, a train and taxi both ways only to have the exact same scan and they had no information that I'd had a scan two weeks previously.

It's been a waste of my time, money, and buckets of stress, plus it also took up a place of someone still waiting for an initial scan.





## Harrogate Hospital

**There were 15 people who shared their views on Harrogate Hospital, with a mix of positive (7), negative (6) and mixed (2) feedback.**

- There was positive feedback about A&E; while waiting times can be long, the efficient and caring staff were praised.
- Long waiting times for referrals was raised, one person said they were referred to the diabetes specialist unit at Harrogate Hospital in May and they still hadn't heard anything three months later.
- There was negative feedback about the health visiting service, with people concerned that the six week and one year check is over the phone. The lack of baby weighing clinics was also mentioned.
- Accessibility issues at Harrogate Hospital were raised; one person went for a breast cancer operation and no hoist was available for the disabled patient who was wheelchair bound. She had to be lifted onto the bed.

 My mother had a nasty fall and was taken to the accident and emergency department. **She was seen straight away, treated very kindly, professionally, and thoroughly examined, and the whole experience reinforced one's faith in the NHS,** the practitioners who work in it, and its value as an organisation. A huge thank you to all concerned. 

 **Someone went for breast cancer operation and no hoist was available for the disabled patient who was wheelchair bound.** A sister had to lift her onto the bed. Also attended a bone scan and they said they weren't expecting her to be in a wheelchair even though it is on her records, so they had to lower the bed down and she struggled to get on. 

## York Hospital

**There were 17 people who shared their views about York Hospital, with a mix of positive (8), negative (7) and mixed (2) feedback.**

- There was positive feedback about cancer care from the Magnolia Centre.
- Issues were raised regarding long waiting times at A&E.
- Maternity issues were raised, one person was told they could have a waterbirth at York hospital but when they were in labour and rang the ward, they said it was closed and could not take any patients, so they had to go to Doncaster instead. They then had to have postnatal checks at York and Selby hospital only a few days after giving birth which was difficult and traumatic.



**I can honestly say that I don't think it would be possible to get better care than at the Magnolia Centre.**

The breast cancer was spotted during a lung scan at the end of May, with diagnosis a few days later. I saw a surgeon one week later who allowed me the leeway (three weeks) to take the vacation with my daughter from New Zealand and her family that was already booked and paid for. When I returned it was no time at all before my surgery, a lumpectomy, which went well.

I have returned to the Magnolia Centre in York Hospital several times since then to have dressings changed. As I am taking blood thinners, I didn't want to do it myself at first. I also have a bit of infection going on.

Any time I have called the cancer nurses with a problem, real or perceived, they have accommodated me and have always been pleased to help me.





**I had a fall and spent 12 hours in York hospital A&E. It is understaffed and in a real state.**

I was told after X-rays (at 2am) that I had two broken elbows and would need plasters but needed to see a consultant. I saw him at 8:30am to be told I had two broken wrists and would not be getting casts. When I challenged this, I was told the other staff must have been looking at the wrong X-rays.



### **James Cook Hospital**

**There were seven pieces of feedback about James Cook Hospital. Six were negative and one was positive.**

- People expressed frustrations with cancelled consultant appointments, one person said their ophthalmology consultant appointment was cancelled a day before the appointment then two weeks later they received a letter saying it has been rearranged for next May (11 months later).
- Negative feedback about the long waiting times and quality of care received in A&E was raised. One person said her daughter spent seven hours on the floor with a coat as a pillow before seeing a doctor.
- Concerns regarding cancelled operations and long waiting times for operations were raised.



**My 39-year-old daughter was collapsing on the A&E floor and was ignored.**

I kept trying to get help. Reception staff said to knock on triage door. The sign on the door said go to reception. When we got into the triage area, my daughter ended up on the floor in the waiting area there.







### **It was terrible.**

I arrived at scheduled time, 8 am for operation at 11am – after a 1 hour 30-minute drive. I waited and waited. Everyone else went down for surgery and I was left alone.

As I have a kidney disease, I need regular fluid intake or a drip – but neither were offered. No specialist arrived until after 1pm when an anaesthetist arrived in a very stropy mood saying they had not had enough time to arrange a bed in the specialist unit for after my operation for cancer on my gums. Then he said he had secured one, but still I waited.

Some hours later he asked if I had a COVID-19 test (no one else had one on that day). They gave me one and said I was positive even though I knew I had not got COVID-19. I was fine with no symptoms.

I was sent home and said they would rearrange the operation for 5 days later – providing I tested negative. On arriving home my son did a test for me. It was negative. Again, its negative today – which can only mean one thing- this was a get out clause to them, an easy solution until they got the bed situation sorted. Not good enough. I live a round trip of some 98 miles and it meant my son had to rearrange his police duties to fit James Cook Hospital.



## Malton Urgent Treatment Centre

**There were five pieces of feedback. All were positive.**

- People praised the efficiency of the urgent treatment centre. The waiting times were reported as being short and people were happy with the thorough examinations, treatment, and advice they were given.
- The friendly and professional staff were also mentioned.



**My son and daughter had really positive experiences.**

My daughter had come home as she had a tonsillectomy two weeks prior. She was worried it wasn't healing correctly and was very anxious, so we went to urgent care. The receptionist was nice and friendly. We only had a short wait. The person we saw was lovely, so reassuring and easy to talk to. My daughter has had bad experiences at other hospitals and is always worried she is wasting their time, but she was treated so well, and he was so kind to her.

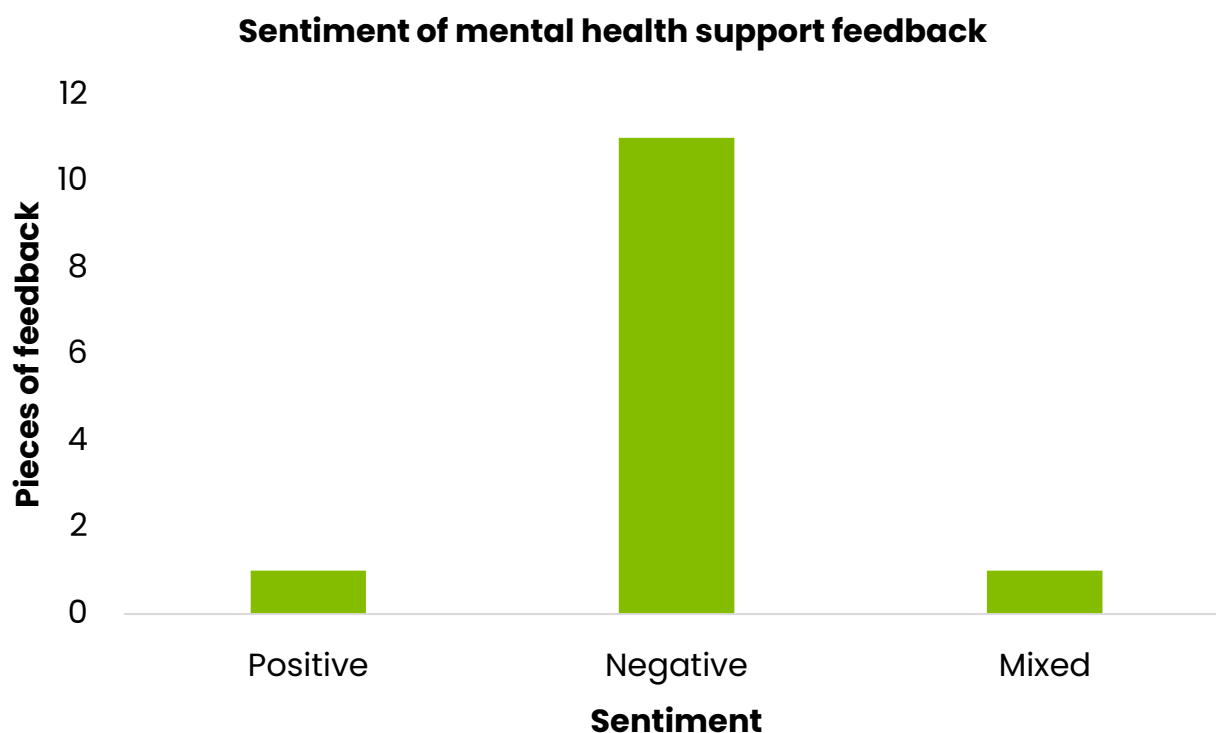
My son was also seen a week prior with a twisted knee and my small grandsons have had to attend urgent care in the past when ill and they all had positive experiences. We are often quick to leave negative feedback but not so quick to leave positive. So, I just wanted to say thank you so much for such a good service.



## Feedback about mental health support

Feedback about mental health support was mostly negative.

Key issues included concerns surrounding the long waiting times to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and issues with Cross Lane Hospital.



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

- There were three pieces of feedback about CAMHS services. All were negative.
- The long waiting lists to be seen was the key issue raised, with one person saying they have been waiting for three years.



**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [CAHMS] was bad in the way they spoke to me.**

I was treated like a child; I was 17 at the time.



## Cross Lane Hospital

**There were two pieces of feedback about Cross Lane Hospital, both of which were negative.**

- One issue was raised regarding a person who has bipolar and is living independently in the community. They are supported by Cross Lane's older person's community mental health team. Cross Lane could not offer talking therapy. NHS North Yorkshire Talking Therapies (<https://northyorkshiretalkingtherapies.co.uk/>) could not either as she is under the care of Cross Lane (so could only be offered talking therapy if she was discharged from Cross Lane, which would not be safe). She has approached Mind who are great but, due to funding, do not have a service that would suit her needs. Therefore, she has been left with anxiety and depression.

**I am heartbroken that my poor mum has been left to spend the last few years of her life in complete misery with crippling anxiety and depression.**

It is because she is open to one statutory service and as such cannot access support from another. This isn't right and I am at a loss at what else I can do. And I have no doubt my mum is not the only person to be suffering needlessly because of this gap in provision.

[NHS services should] either enable the right statutory support from the right provision regardless of who is open to who, or ensure that funding goes to the local charities who want to help but can't due to funding restrictions imposed upon them.



## Feedback about dentistry

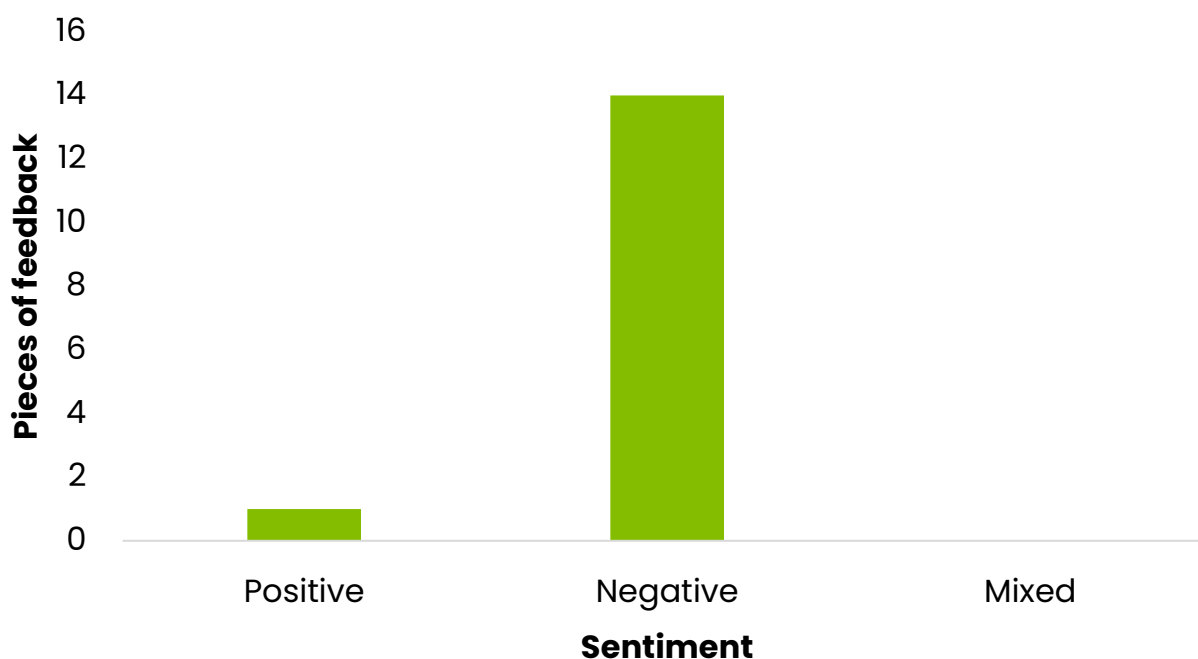
**Most of the feedback about dentistry was negative (93%). Almost all feedback was regarding people being unable to register for an NHS dentist, with some waiting lists being 5 years long.**

Many people said 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.

One person said they have had throat cancer and was advised after treatment to see a dentist every four months, however they have not been able to do this as they cannot get registered anywhere. Another said they are registered with an NHS dentist, but it is 20 miles away from where they live so they have had to rely on a local charity with volunteer drivers to take them to appointments.

The one person who shared positive feedback has an NHS dentist and said they fainted, and their front teeth were damaged. Their dentist referred them to Leeds Dental Institute where they had superb care, X-rays, a CAT scan, imaging, had two incisors extracted and were supplied with a partial denture.

**Sentiment of dentistry feedback**







**I just feel so let down by the NHS dental system at the practice in Selby I have gone to my whole life. Today was my final straw - something must happen soon.**

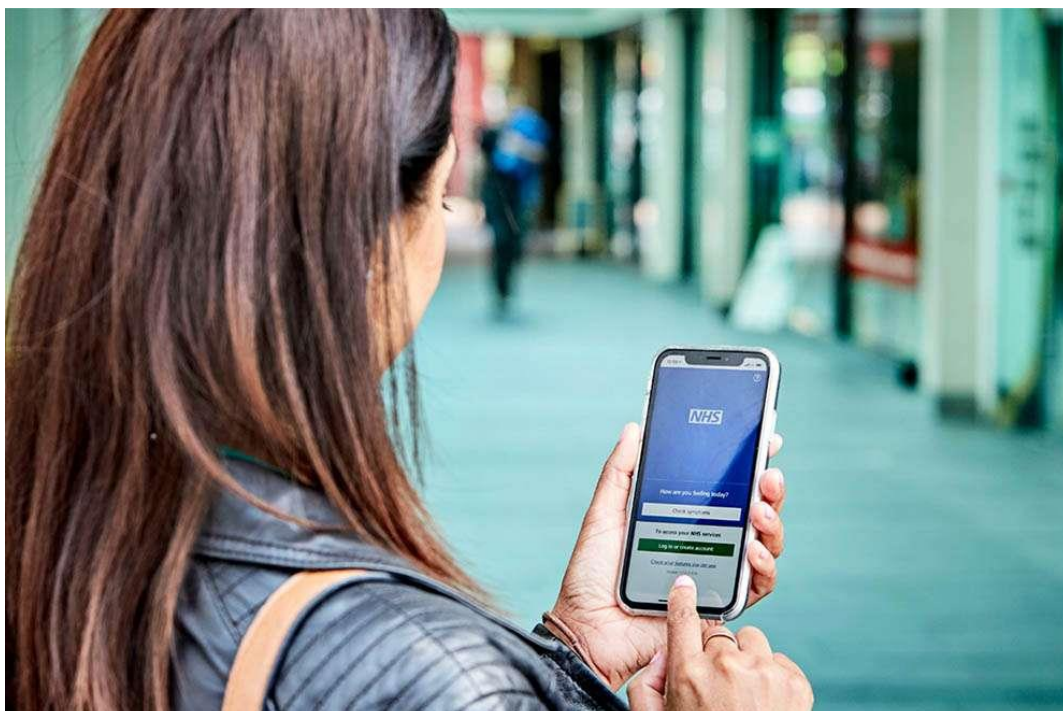
**I fully understand there are shortages but when you have been cancelled on five times within the year you have to understand my frustration with the system.**

I work within a school so just can't come in any day which makes it hard to book. The receptionists on the desk are amazing and I just feel for them as it is always the same person that contacts me to cancel and re-book. She is always apologising when it isn't her fault.

I have tried having messages sent to management, but it has had no effect.

My main concern has finally arisen this evening as I believe I have found a hole that could have been prevented if any one of the 5 appointments had of happened. A checkup would have solved it, whereas now I am afraid it is going to stretch to more time in the dentist chair and that is going to cost me.

It is the dental practice and the NHS system that has, as I see it, failed in my care. I can't afford to go private, and, in all fairness, I shouldn't have to.



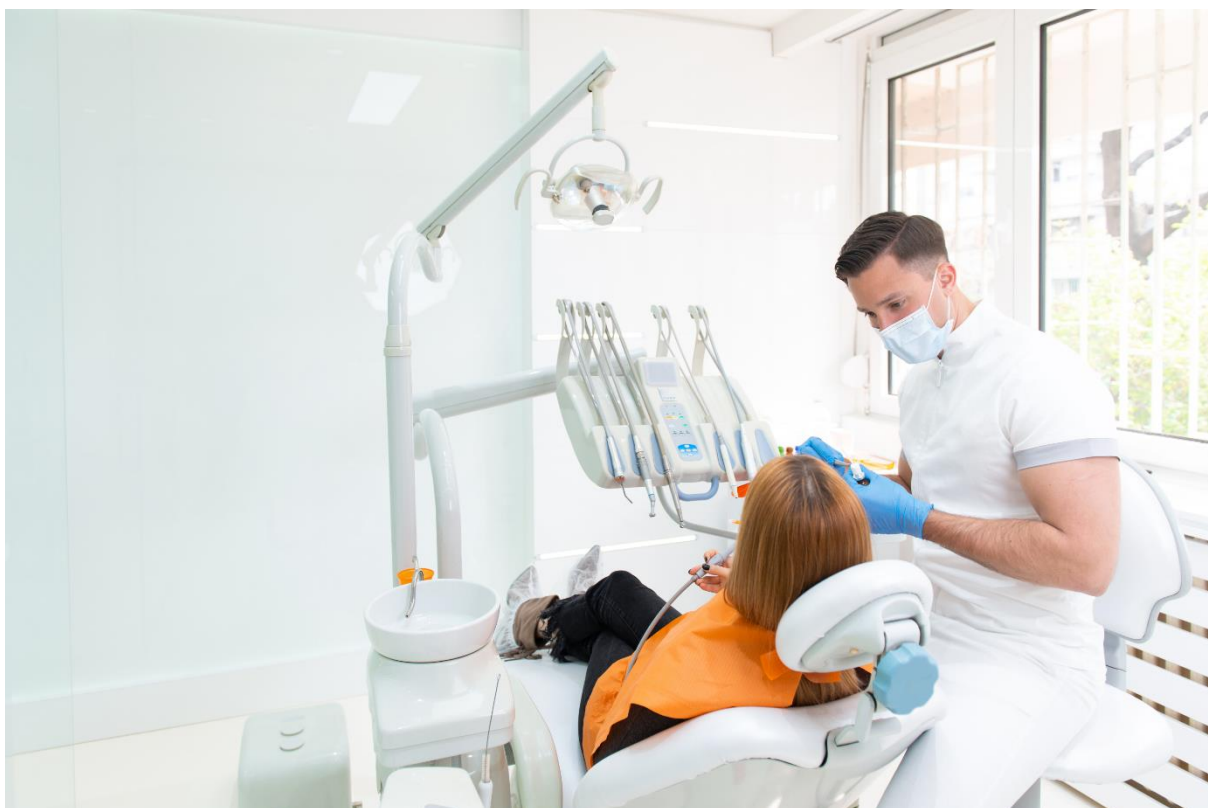


**I was unable to find a dentist to accept me as an NHS patient and had to pay for private treatment.**

I tried to find a dentist that would accept me as an NHS patient for urgent treatment using the online 'find a dentist' service.

I only wanted an appointment to sort out the pain I was in, not register for regular checkups, but couldn't find any dentist that allowed for urgent treatment on the NHS without first being registered.

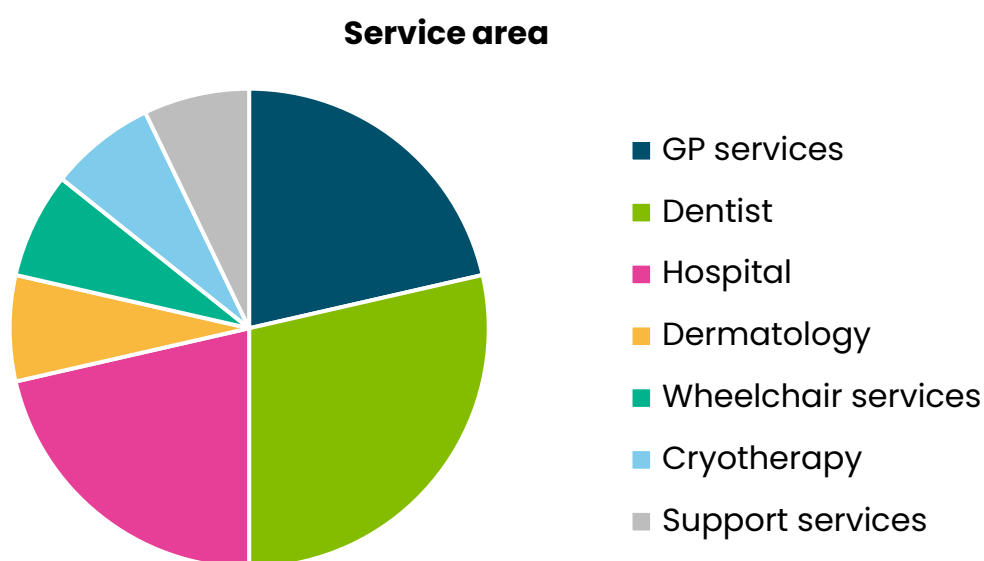
Most of the dentists listed are not accepting new patients, even though the service says they are. In some cases, the service shows them as accepting new patients, but when I contacted the practice, they were just adding them to a waiting list. The online service didn't allow me to search for the nearest dentist accepting new patients. I had to manually go through the list of local dentists to find one that would.



## Other feedback

### Feedback from Wilf Ward residents

We worked with [Wilf Ward Trust](#) to get feedback on health and social care services from adults with learning disabilities. We developed an Easy Read survey which was shared with residents to gather feedback. We received 16 responses overall on a variety of services.



### Dermatology team at York Hospital

There was positive feedback about the dermatology team, with one person saying the dermatologist explained things in easy words so she could understand and she was happy that appointments are local so she doesn't have to travel far.

### Northway Dental Clinic, Scarborough

One person said she had an appointment at the clinic prior to a tooth removal and the dentist explained the procedure and what needed to be done. She also was pleased she had a letter after each appointment explaining what had been discussed.



### **Whitby Group Practice – Springvale Medical Centre**

A member of staff who accompanied a resident to an appointment said staff were very engaging with the individual who was non-verbal. There was lots of conversation and a fun atmosphere to relieve any tension which made the routine procedure a pleasant experience.

### **James Cook Hospital**

One person said the consultant was very clear and direct with what they can and cannot offer and listened to all points made. However, they felt the consultant had not been provided with any information regarding their reason for attending or the complexities involved.

### **Harrogate Wheelchair services**

Issues were raised around Harrogate wheelchair services. One person had a new wheelchair and was told there would be a review in six months, however during this time a number of issues arose with the chair. It then took a further year for the wheelchair to be made fully safe.

### **Harrogate Hospital**

Issues were raised around the quality of care one person received while in hospital due to colitis.

### **Beech House GP Surgery**

There was positive feedback about this practice which nine individuals at Wilf Ward use. The surgery was reported as providing an excellent, personalised service.

### **Kingswood Dental Harrogate**

There was praise for the service provided and the creative methods used by the dentists to support individuals to have their teeth checked.



**Our local GP at Beech House Surgery is truly outstanding and provides us with an excellent service.**

She understands our individuals and listens to staff often asking for our points of view on matters and what we feel needs to happen next. She meets with us every four weeks to ensure we are all up to date with any health or medication needs and organises all our vaccinations. She has provided us with her direct line, so we do not need to sit and wait on a duty line.





**Our local dentist at Kingswood Dental Harrogate provides us with an outstanding service.**

Whilst the waiting lists are long and our individuals often go long periods of time without an appointment due to the wait lists, the dentists themselves truly understand our individuals and often use creative methods to support them to have their teeth checked. They also provide support to our staff team in terms of tips and new methods to try.



## **Social care**

**There were five pieces of feedback relating to social care, all of which were negative.**

- One person was a farmer and a carer for his elderly mother. He said it is a challenge to find suitable care for his mother as he is only able to book respite for seven days. He felt that care companies tailor their care for urban areas not for the rural areas. He said that trying to run a farm is difficult along with being a carer and that he sometimes must take his mother out with him on the tractor if there is no one to look after her.
- There was some negative feedback about the quality of care received from Mount Vale Care Home.

## **NHS 111**

**There were four pieces of feedback about NHS 111. Three were negative and one was positive.**

- Issues were raised around the 111 operators not always being knowledgeable about different conditions, with one person saying you can tell they are just reading text from a computer screen. Another person said the operator they spoke to did not understand the difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.
- One person shared their positive experience; they said they developed cystitis one day before going abroad and as it was a Saturday they rang 111. The doctor rang back within 10 minutes and sent a prescription immediately to the pharmacy.

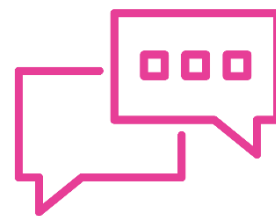
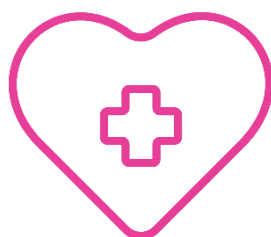
## Conclusion

**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 December 2023- March 2024.

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.



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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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