



Your voice and views

Public feedback across North Yorkshire
May – September 2022

healthwatch
North Yorkshire

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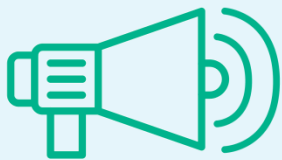
Overview

Your voice and views

We used the opportunity of public events fully restarting in 2022 to go out to shows, market stalls and events across the county to raise awareness of our work and hear about people's experiences of health and care services.

This is part of our ongoing work to collate and feed back to organisations who deliver and commission care (the experiences of local people) so that they can improve local provisions (good and bad) and effect change in how future services are provided.

Reach



1,838 people

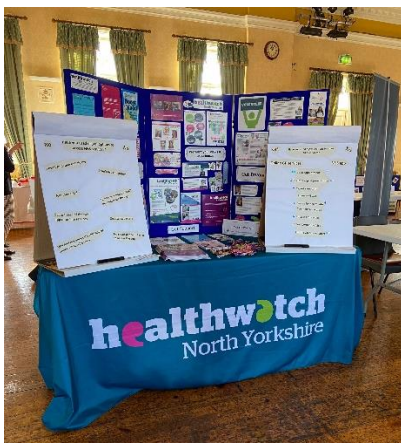
The total number of people we spoke to across North Yorkshire between May and September 2022

185 experiences

The number of experiences we captured in detail.

The events included shows and market stalls across North Yorkshire districts:

- Craven: 3
- Hambleton: 3
- Harrogate: 4
- Richmondshire: 2
- Ryedale: 3
- Scarborough: 4
- Selby: 3



Audience



Very few of the 1,838 people we spoke to had heard of Healthwatch North Yorkshire, so it was an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about our work.

Everyone we spoke to was delighted to hear more and felt our work was important and that they would consider contacting us to raise a concern in the future. 11% of those we spoke to shared their experiences with us across a wide range of issues. This varied by event, but we had similar responses from shows and market stalls where people were equally likely to share their experiences in detail. All experiences were captured and shared as part of our monthly communication with the NHS and social care providers.

Information



We shared information about Healthwatch North Yorkshire, but also information from the NHS about 'My local practice'. Leaflets, booklets and posters outlined information about GP practices including some recent changes to the healthcare professionals available to see patients. We also distributed information about the NHS app, encouraging people to use online systems to access NHS services as appropriate.

Healthcare services are here to help 

MY LOCAL PRACTICE
continues to....



- 1** be open
book online, phone & NHS App
- 2** see patients
online, phone & in person
- 3** use technology
to help me as quickly as possible
- 4** be full of expertise
physio, pharmacist, social prescriber
- 5** ask about me
to understand how to help me
- 6** help
find the right care for me

PLEASE KEEP BEING PATIENT & KIND #MYLOCALPRACTICE

Healthcare services are here to help 

MY LOCAL PRACTICE SOCIAL PRESCRIBER is....



- able to help me with my emotional and mental wellbeing
- knowledgeable in complex social needs which can affect my well-being
- linked in with a network of people or organisations which could help me
- here to help me and others

PLEASE KEEP BEING PATIENT & KIND #MYLOCALPRACTICE

Approach and feedback



At most stalls we had a flipchart of health topics. We gave people three stars and asked them to add those to the flip chart indicating which topic they thought was the biggest issue for health and social care in that local area. People could add three stars to one issue, one star to three issues and so forth.

The flipchart approach enabled us to speak with people about what mattered most to them and why they had put their stars where they did. This also included talking to people about positive experiences of health and social care. In general, a third of feedback was positive that we received over the six months of engagement.

In total 2,142 stars were used as follows:

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	173
Getting a GP appointment	432
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	320
Delayed treatment	121
Getting an NHS dentist	413
Seeing a specialist	79
Getting diagnosed	108
Getting care at home	75
Care homes	76
Too much information online	98
Mental health	247



The issues you told us about

Distance to hospitals and services



We had more stars on this topic and feedback on this issue at the market stalls we attended. A factor may well be that markets are local to people and therefore more accessible by foot or bus. So, there may well be a desire and expectation from those people that their services, including health and social care is also provided locally. In contrast, we heard very little from people who attended the more rural shows about distance to services being an issue. Most probably because they travelled by car, so the need to also travel by car to access services, wasn't seen as a problem for them.

One person who we spoke to at the Danby Show (in the North York Moors) commented that when you must drive miles to get a pint of milk, driving to the hospital is not seen as an issue. However, this also needs to be viewed in context; many people living in rural areas may not have access to a car and many would like their services closer to home.

GP appointments and seeing a GP/nurse in person



Issues with GP practices tended to feature highly in feedback as this is most people's initial access to the NHS and health care. People expressed frustration at difficulties in getting through to GP practices by phone or online and then by the triage system which many people felt prevented them from getting the care they need. Often people compared the current situation to pre-COVID when they felt things were much better.

However, in some places the GP practices were praised and often there was a mixed picture of some people praising local GPs and others raising concerns and challenges. Generally, this was about different practices but sometimes it was about the same one. The practices gaining the most praise were in Reeth, Ripon, Leyburn, Knaresborough, Harrogate, Stillington, Easingwold and Dyneley House in Skipton.

In all instances, people were pleased when we explained the current changes to primary care to try to address staff shortages including introducing new roles into primary care networks and GP practices working together. In doing this, we were able to share information provided by NHS North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Getting an NHS dentist



The issue about a lack of NHS dentists was prevalent across North Yorkshire, particularly in Selby. People sometimes selected this issue on behalf of friends/family members, not always from personal experience. What we heard was people's sheer frustration at not being able to register with a dentist, how this affected their wellbeing negatively, how a large proportion of people had gone private as they had no choice, and how this had impacted on their finances. This was particularly highlighted by people as an issue because of the cost-of-living crisis, and parents and families were having to make choices about how they spent their money, and what their own priorities were.

Care at home and care homes



Neither topic got a lot of feedback as most people we met didn't need care and hadn't been involved in securing care for relatives or friends. Most of the feedback we got was from people who had been supporting relatives. They described the issues they faced, which including that there wasn't sufficient help to support them as carers, nor was their sufficient support available to look after their family members at home. Other issues that were identified included long delays in being able to access care at home and limited day care services being available.

Too much information online



People discussed being given links for information that was inaccessible as they didn't have a smartphone. The biggest issue raised was the increasingly common assumption and expectation that people can and will access the internet with no alternatives offered.

Mental health



This issue had most responses at events in Selby and at the Danby Show. Often those who added their stars to this had personal or family experience. Generally, feedback about mental health services was negative, with many people expressing frustrations at incredibly long waiting times to access support. There was then inadequate support and care once they had accessed support, and a feeling that they were not listened to and a burden. However, we did hear from people who had experienced positive support from their GP and secondary care.

Other topics mentioned



We encouraged people to suggest other topics to add. These included:

- Appointment bookings and correspondence.
- Getting medication.
- Maternity services and health visitors.
- Communication (including GP telephone systems).
- Wanting to see the same GP.
- Only able to take one issue to a GP in one appointment, even if more than one had been previously mentioned. There is no longer an option to book a double appointment (Sherburn and Skipton).
- Women's health.
- Time taken to get a blood test via a GP practice.
- New housing estates putting additional pressure on local services including GP practices and NHS dentists - with no increase in those services.
- No pharmacy in Helmsley and a very poor pharmacy (Boots) in Easingwold.



"I'm only allowed to talk about one issue per appointment! Anything more, I must book in again with the doctor!"



Feedback by locality

Craven

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	14
Getting a GP appointment	84
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	53
Delayed treatment	12
Getting an NHS dentist	60
Seeing a specialist	10
Getting diagnosed	15
Getting care at home	6
Care homes	20
Too much information online	19
Mental health	32

One of the events was Skipton Pride where we asked for feedback on LGBTQ+ services and support specifically.

Specific comments

- Mixed reports about GP practices locally. Dyneley House, Hawes and Bentham GP practices came in for good reviews, but Fisher Group and Cross Hills were not well regarded.
- Generally good feedback about Airedale Hospital.
- A lot of issues around getting an NHS dentist with one person still on a waiting list after seven years.
- Many comments about poor local mental health services. One person said they are on a five-year waiting list for mental health support (CAMHS) and for an autism assessment. They are under 18 and have been told that if they don't reach the top of the waiting list before they are 18, they will have to start again with adult services. One significant concern about the length of waiting time for ADHD and autism assessments for children (2.5 years) delaying support and help especially when the children are moving schools.
- Concern raised around care in such a rural area, with one parent unable to visit the person in care due to distance and no public transport.

Feedback by locality

Hambleton

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	27
Getting a GP appointment	41
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	36
Delayed treatment	7
Getting an NHS dentist	30
Seeing a specialist	8
Getting diagnosed	22
Getting care at home	4
Care homes	6
Too much information online	7
Mental health	15

Healthcare comments

- Not a lot of awareness about different healthcare professionals at GP practices.
- Several people said they had struggled to access a dentist so had to go private.
- Two people commented about the time taken to get a blood test at a local GP practice (Thirsk). For one person, there was a three-week gap between when she asked for an appointment and when she had the blood test. As soon as she had the blood test result, she was rushed to Friarage Hospital for a blood transfusion.
- A few people mentioned transport issues when trying to get to hospital.
- Three people in Easingwold Hospital raised concern over their local pharmacy (Boots), stating that it doesn't have a permanent pharmacist. Additionally, due to its size there are often long queues outside (in all weathers) and poor stock so people often have to go on more than one occasion to get their prescription fulfilled. There is a pharmacy at the local GP surgery, but people living in the town can't get their prescriptions from there; the service is only available to people in the surrounding villages.

Mental health comments

- Varied experiences of mental health. One person praised the support from their GP and their psychological therapy service, whilst another said the support for her husband, who has a serious mental illness, had disappeared. He no longer has a community psychiatric nurse and neither he or she has anyone to talk to.

Maternity comments

- Concerns were raised about maternity services and the lack of support after birth. After being discharged from the midwife, people said they were referred to the district nurse, but they were difficult to get hold of on the phone. There was a feeling that better services are needed as women feel abandoned and often go to their GP with queries that should have been dealt with by the district nurse.



“I feel there’s a lack of support after childbirth. Better services are required!”



Feedback by locality

Harrogate

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	1
Getting a GP appointment	14
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	8
Delayed treatment	13
Getting an NHS dentist	24
Seeing a specialist	2
Getting diagnosed	5
Getting care at home	6
Care homes	3
Too much information online	7
Mental health	12

Specific comments

One of the events included in Harrogate district was the Great Yorkshire Show. We did not use the ‘stars’ approach, but instead just talked to people.

Most local feedback was that GPs were excellent and there was a generally good view of other services, including Ripon Urgent Treatment Centre. Some less positive issues about Harrogate Hospital and the diagnosis and treatment of cancer by a Thirsk GP practice. But overall, the feedback was positive.

Feedback by locality

Richmondshire

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	64
Getting a GP appointment	19
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	25
Delayed treatment	3
Getting an NHS dentist	28
Seeing a specialist	5
Getting diagnosed	4
Getting care at home	3
Care homes	2
Too much information online	4
Mental health	12

Specific comments

- Generally good feedback about local services, particularly the GP service. While some people struggled to get an appointment, a good number of people said they think the service is very good.
- A lot of people talked about the distance to hospitals – especially having to travel to Darlington or Middlesbrough (especially from Reeth). Some feeling that things had changed for the worst at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton, as several services were no longer available there so people were having to travel to the James Cook Hospital and further afield.
- Distance to hospitals and vaccinations was particularly an issue for people who don't drive. However, several people reflected that when you live in a rural area you must accept that you will have to travel to get to a hospital.
- There was outright praise for Reeth Medical Centre. You can get through on the phone and usually have a same day face-to-face appointment.



“It’s difficult to get to an appointment; not all of us drive and public transport isn’t as accessible where we live.”



Feedback by locality

Ryedale

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	18
Getting a GP appointment	63
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	51
Delayed treatment	12
Getting an NHS dentist	56
Seeing a specialist	9
Getting diagnosed	17
Getting care at home	10
Care homes	7
Too much information online	15
Mental health	27

Specific comments

- Mixed responses about GP services. Some people said theirs was very good and others said they can't get an appointment and not one face-to-face with a doctor. Different views of triage; one or two think it is great and working well while others found it difficult and felt that receptionists are determining their medical needs when they aren't trained to do so.
- Generally good comments about the local GP practices in Helmsley and Kirbymoorside were given.
- Positive feedback that a new NHS dentist had just opened in Helmsley.
- Some people talked about difficulties of care and others about poor hospital experiences (Harrogate and Scarborough). Two people said they had paid for treatment due to waiting times and others had experienced delayed treatment/waiting time for surgery and poor support for people who are autistic.



Feedback by locality

Scarborough

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	38
Getting a GP appointment	108
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	75
Delayed treatment	46
Getting an NHS dentist	112
Seeing a specialist	23
Getting diagnosed	21
Getting care at home	21
Care homes	21
Too much information online	19
Mental health	70

Specific comments

- Concern over mental health services and some very bad experiences shared.
- Significant concern was raised around getting an NHS dentist with many people saying they had to travel or go private. There is a good hospital dental service in Whitby for those who can't access a high street dentist.
- There were mixed views on GP practices. The ones in Danby, Egton and Stillington were generally praised, whilst in Stokesley we had mixed reviews.
- Two concerning incidents were shared by people having their issues dismissed by a GP (Danby and Great Ayton) to later have significant issues with a foot injury (totally shattered and ongoing issues with hip and back as well as foot for years) and skin cancer (led to significant surgery).
- Mixed views of hospital services from excellent to issues with discharge, end of life care, waiting at appointments and diagnosis.
- Some mentions of care including care at home (leading to delayed discharge), poor communication between health and care, and low staffing at a care home.



"I suffer with my mental health and haven't had the best experience when it comes to support."



Feedback by locality

Selby

Topic	Stars
Distance to hospital/services	78
Getting a GP appointment	92
Seeing a GP or nurse in person	53
Delayed treatment	87
Getting an NHS dentist	49
Seeing a specialist	24
Getting diagnosed	27
Getting care at home	25
Care homes	18
Too much information online	31
Mental health	81

Specific comments

- Mixed responses with regards GP practices; some people found the local Sherburn one very good and could get appointments, while others couldn't.
- Spoke to a GP who said a key issue is that the same people are taking up the appointments. So even when they release more appointments it is the same people who book them, and others don't get a chance. Also said that people in Sherburn won't go to the Selby Urgent Treatment Centre as they expect the local GP practice to provide the services.
- A lot of people talking about a lack of or poor social care. Several people working in care homes were worried about a lack of staff.
- In Sherburn in Elmet there was a lot of concern about the new housing estates that have been built putting additional pressure on local GPs, without there being any increases in local services.
- A particular issue raised was only being able to book a single 10-minute appointment with a GP, with no option to discuss more than one. This was raised at two events in Selby.



“We’re really worried about the lack of funding and care home staff; it’s the residents who suffer.”



Conclusion

Your voice and views in North Yorkshire

Our public engagement was very successful and incredibly helpful in understanding the positive and negative experiences of health and social care services for people across the county. We received a mix of both positive and negative experiences with many people keen to praise the care and support they had received.

The feedback varied across different districts, but in all instances, people found it reassuring to find out about Healthwatch North Yorkshire and to be able to share their experiences and know that these would be fed back anonymously to the organisations delivering the services.

The most significant topic and issue for them was about access to primary care services, and it was evident by the responses and feedback that we received that the public felt passionately about their local GP practice. Being able to see their GP, get an appointment and a see a GP or other healthcare professional in person, was overwhelmingly the most important issue for people.

Access to NHS dentists was also a common issue across all districts as were challenges with mental health services.

We have fed back people's specific experiences to those responsible for delivering care and will use the information gathered to help inform our work in the future. We intend to carry out a similar engagement exercise in 2023 and beyond.

We look forward to continuing to champion the voice and concerns of the public across North Yorkshire.





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