

Quarterly Report: January – March 2019

Introduction

Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We are a listening organisation working across Northumberland, interested in what people like about services and what can be improved. We act on what people are saying, sharing their views with those who have the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area and record this as ‘signposting’.

People who use health and social care services tell Healthwatch Northumberland about their experiences throughout the year. This report shares a summary of the feedback collected from January to March 2019. The next report will cover April to June 2019.

This quarter we received feedback and enquiries from:

- Talking to people at local community events (18%¹)
- Telephone calls, emails and social media (55%)
- Surveys and Feedback forms (21%)
- Through meetings and third parties (6%)

Areas of Focus

We are open to all feedback about health and social care services. Responses to our Annual Survey helped us to identify three specific Areas of focus which we are prioritising in 2019:

1. General Practitioner Services (GP Services)
2. Mental Health Services, including dementia care
3. Access to Services

Aims

The report aims to increase understanding of:

- Who Healthwatch Northumberland is hearing from

¹ All percentages have been rounded up or down to nearest whole number

- What people are saying
 - The general sentiment of comments
- What people are experiencing
 - What is working well?
 - Where there are areas for improvement?

Feedback

Between January and March 2019 we received 48 individual pieces of feedback through talking to people at local community events, telephone calls, emails, social media, surveys and feedback forms, and other sources. Additionally, we signposted eight people to services². Separately, we had feedback from 750 people from our annual survey.

This report explores who Healthwatch Northumberland is hearing from across the county, presenting a summary of general respondent demographic information. Demographic information shared includes location, gender, age, and whether the respondent is sharing their own health and social care experience or speaking on behalf of a friend or relative.

The general sentiment of comments is also examined, with specific reference to the service type (e.g. primary care, secondary care, mental health, social care), as well as whether the feedback relates specifically to quality of care or access to services. Service category, for instance whether the comment refers to a GP surgery or acute care, is also explored alongside the sentiment of feedback. A list of services mentioned in comments has also been shared.

Who is Healthwatch Northumberland hearing from?

Healthwatch Northumberland has collected and anonymised demographic information where consent has been given. The following presents a general summary of who Healthwatch Northumberland are hearing from.

Location:

In total between January – March 2019, we collected feedback from respondents from 17 different Northumberland postcodes, accounting for 38% of all responses this quarter. A total of 63%³ of

² Signposting has not been included in analysis apart from in communication methods of respondents on Page 1, and in the 'signposting' section of the report on Page 10

³ Figures add up to more than 100% as they have both been rounded up from 0.5

respondents gave no postcode. Below Table 1 shows the number of responses Healthwatch Northumberland received from residents in different Local Area Councils this quarter:

Table 1. Frequency of known responses across Local Area Councils in Northumberland, Q4 2019

| Local Area Council | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Ashington and Blyth | 1 |
| Castle Morpeth | 4 |
| North Northumberland | 9 |
| Tynedale | 3 |
| Cramlington and Bedlington | 0 |

Castle Morpeth and North Northumberland had the most known responses of any Local Area Council. Amble had the most known responses of all wards.

There were no known responses from Cramlington and Bedlington. Known responses from Ashington and Blyth were also minimal. Healthwatch Northumberland is aiming to hear from the South East/Central of the county more closely. This is one of the reasons we are holding our annual conference in Blyth on Wednesday 16th October this year.

Age:

Almost three quarters of respondents did not share their age with us (71%). Of those that did, there appeared to be fewer respondents from younger age groups, with no known responses from the 19-24 age group, and only two known responses from the 25-59 age group (shown below in Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency of responses across different age groups in Northumberland, Q4 2019

| Age | Number |
|----------|--------|
| Under 18 | 0 |
| 19-24 | 0 |
| 25-49 | 2 |
| 50-64 | 5 |
| 65-79 | 3 |
| 80+ | 4 |
| Unknown | 34 |

Gender:

Over 50% of respondents shared their gender with us (31 people). Of those that did there was a

higher proportion of female respondents, accounting for 41% of all responses (23 people). A total of 17% of responses were from males (8 people). Below Figure 1 shows a breakdown of responses by gender:

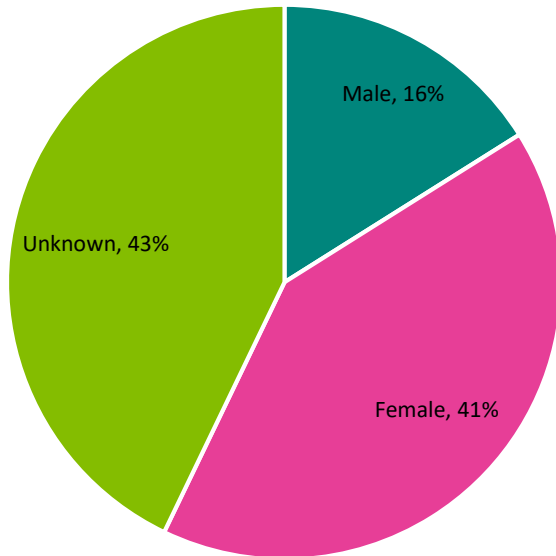


Figure 1. Frequency of responses by gender in Northumberland, Q4 2019

Whose experiences are we finding out about?

The majority of respondents were sharing their own individual experience of health and social care with us, with 63% of all respondents in this category. Just over one quarter of all respondents gave us feedback about the health and social care experiences of a relative, friend, or someone they care for (27%). Below a breakdown of all respondent types, and the number and proportion of responses from these groups is shared in Table 4:

Table 4. Frequency of responses by respondent type, Q4 2019

| Respondent Type | Number | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Individual | 30 | 63% |
| Client Relative, Friend or Carer | 13 | 27% |
| Health or Social Care Professional | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 1 | 2% |
| Unknown | 4 | 8% |

What people are saying and experiencing

Of the 48 total responses⁴, respondents told us about 30 individual services/service providers. Many respondents shared their experiences of using more than one service in their comments, bringing the total number of services mentioned to 61. Please see Appendix 1 and 2 for a list of all the services/service providers mentioned.

The responses were categorised into five sentiment groups positive, negative, neutral, mixed, and unclear. The majority of comments received were negative, with 66% of responses reflecting this sentiment (40 sentiments). Mixed and positive comments were equally balanced, with 18% and 15% responses respectively falling into these two categories (a total of 11 mixed and nine positive sentiments). Only one comment was neutral (2% of all comments). It is important to consider whether people may be more likely to report negative experiences, than if something is going well. Below a series of positive, mixed, and neutral comments are some examples of what people across Northumberland have told us this quarter⁵:

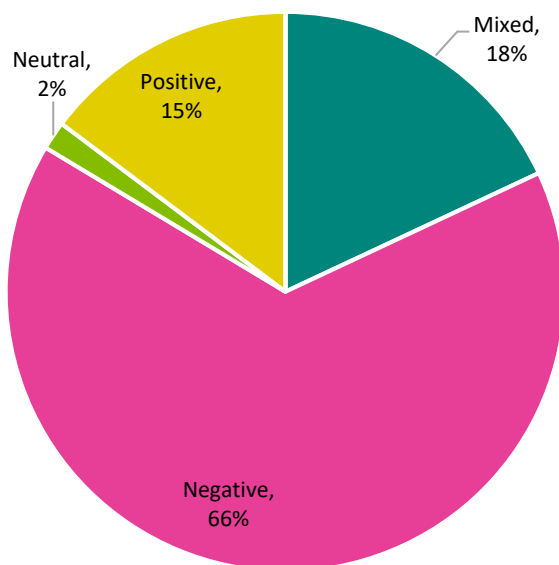


Figure 2. General Sentiment of respondents

Positive:

"I'd be lost without Carers Northumberland" Carer, North Northumberland.

"Local clinic providing hearing aid support provides a brilliant service." Patient, Castle Morpeth.

Mixed:

"Outreach services have been cut. Local GP very good but mental health services very poor and difficult to access." Patient, Tynedale.

Neutral:

"Caller wants to know if local pharmacy can deliver prescriptions to local GP surgery as is done for another surgery." Engagement Officer, Healthwatch Northumberland about Patient in North Northumberland.

The services/service providers have been categorized into service type, with the five main groups

⁴ Responses related to signposting have been excluded from this section of the report

⁵ Quotes with negative sentiment are presented later in the report

being: primary care, secondary care, mental health, social care, and urgent and emergency care. If the service/service provider does not fit in one of these categories it has been marked 'other' or 'unknown' depending on what is more relevant. Below, Figure 3, shows the service type and sentiment of responses:

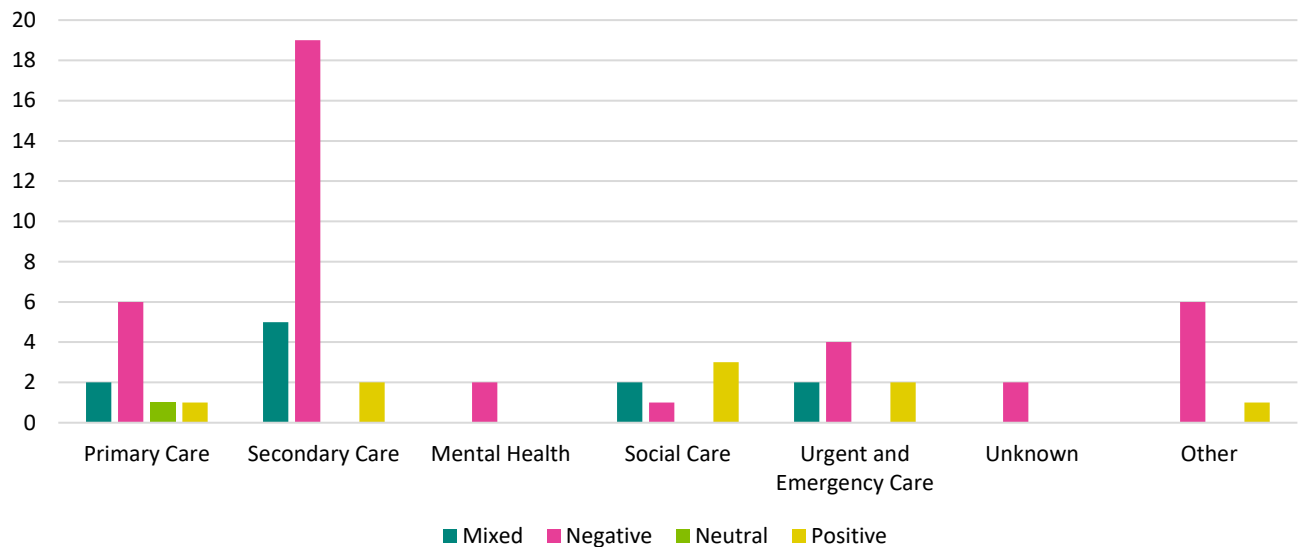


Figure 3. Service Type and Sentiment of responses⁶

Figure 3 shows there is a greater number of negative comments and feedback for most service types, whilst below Table 5 indicates most comments were about primary (18% of all comments, 10 total comments) and secondary care (36% of all comments, 20 total comments). Most negative comments were made about secondary care, and most of these comments related to hospital provision. The second most popular service type for negative comments was 'other'. The 'other' category accounts for service types/providers, which in this quarter included: Northumberland CCG, HMP Northumberland, Northumbria Healthcare, and the Hear to Help drop-in service based within Ponteland Medical Group⁷.

As a general trend there were more negative comments than positive, despite most service types having at least one positive comment. There were no positive comments about mental health services/service providers but there were only two comments received about this service type

⁶ Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented on the chart. There were more than 48 total sentiments expressed because some people fed back about more than one service.

⁷ The Hear to Help drop-in service was a hearing aid/s maintenance service which is no longer running. It was provided by the charity Action on Hearing Loss and operated in a range of locations across Northumberland including libraries, GP surgeries, and community centres.

(Table 5). With mental health, including dementia services, as a key area of focus for Healthwatch Northumberland, we will ensure we are listening and promoting the voice of people using mental health services across the county to allow us to explore general trends. Similarly, social care services, another key area of focus for Healthwatch Northumberland, only received 13% of all comments. We would like to hear more from patients and carers using social care services across the county. In part this will be achieved through Enter and View exercises we are planning on delivering in care homes.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage of responses by Service Type

| Service Type | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Primary Care | 7 | 15% |
| Secondary Care | 20 | 42% |
| Mental Health | 1 | 2% |
| Social Care | 6 | 13% |
| Urgent and Emergency Care | 5 | 10% |
| Unknown | 2 | 4% |
| Other | 7 | 15% |

Figure 3 and Table 5 are best considered alongside Figures 4a and 4b (shown below), which show whether comments are related to quality of or access to services, and what the related sentiment is.

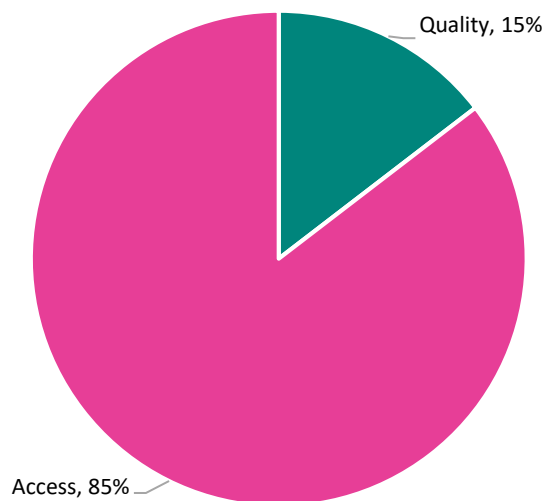


Figure 4a. Proportion of responses related to Quality of Care and Access to Services

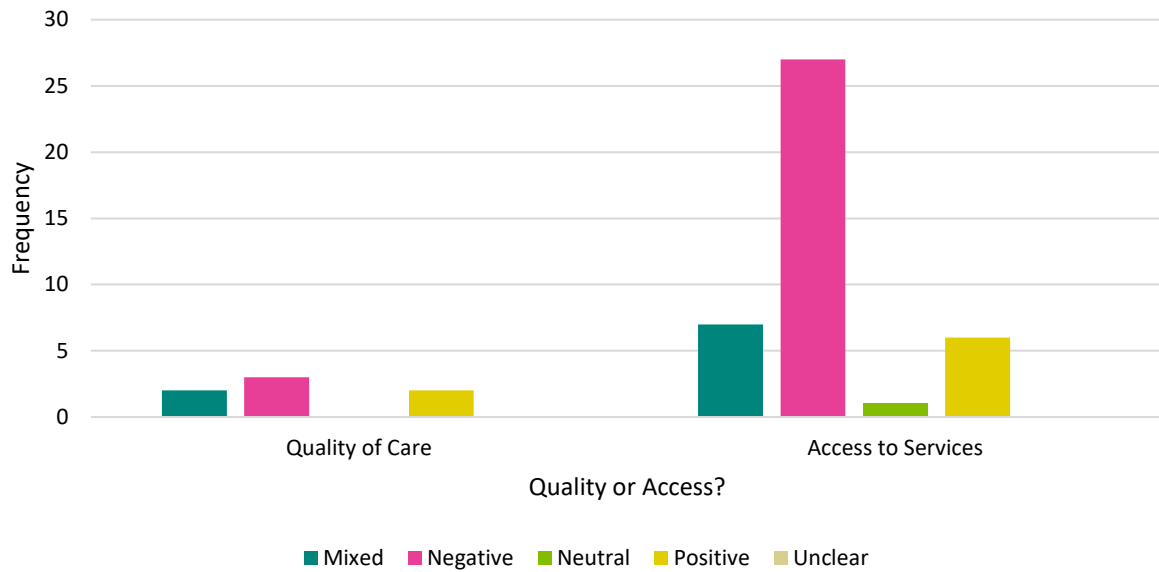


Figure 4b. Frequency of responses related to Quality of Care and Access to Services, by Sentiment

Above Figure 4a and 4b show that an overwhelming majority of responses Healthwatch Northumberland received were related to access to services (85%, 41 total comments) as opposed to quality of care (15%, 7 total comments). This fact is encouraging and shows that negative attitudes to services/service providers (shown in Figure 3) from people across Northumberland are more about the ‘systems’ than ‘people’ or ‘care quality’. This is further supported by comments people made this quarter:

“I would like to complain about transport home when admitted to hospital,” Patient.

“Why [in] simple cases like this, where only a small prescription is required, are we being asked to travel over 60 miles for a 5 minute consultation?” Patient.

“Charging this amount for parking is not fair,” Patient.

“I do know of people that have had [ear wax removal] done (as I used to)- why can some get it and not me?” Patient.

“I had a cataract op [...] it went well and I was told that I'd have to return for a check up within 6 weeks [...] She checked and said none were available [...] 3 or 4 days later I received a letter with an appointment in Berwick. Why do we have to be so forceful to get what is obviously available after all?” Patient.

Access to services has already been identified by Healthwatch Northumberland as an area of focus. Healthwatch Northumberland is developing a greater awareness of what the key issues are in this area, for example public transport. This will help us to inform commissioners and service providers and support greater potential for improvement.

Comments were broken down by service category, which help us to look at services at a more detailed level than service type. This has been cross referenced with sentiment type (see Appendix 2 on Page 12). Most negative comments were about GP Practices (nine total comments⁸). Negative comments about GP Practices mainly referred to the difficulty people had making appointments, with some people mentioning they had no access to a computer or that they needed to wait weeks before being able to get an appointment. Other comments were that communication and information sharing could be better between GP practices and patients, whilst a couple of comments were also made about difficulty accessing treatments. Lost samples and difficulty registering with a practice were also shared as negative comments about GP practices. Every quarter Healthwatch Northumberland sends GP practices tailored feedback from patients and carers. Feedback is shared anonymously with each practice.

Acute care also had a significant number of negative comments (six total comments). Negative comments about acute care services only reflected access to the service, rather than quality of care, and were mentioned in reference to: people wanting to be able to attend services which were convenient or easy to get to, communication about appointments being unclear, and long waiting times.

Ear, Nose, and Throat services had a greater number of responses than most service categories, with negative comments referring mainly to the loss of the Hear to Help service, and mixed comments including patients sharing how they had benefited from the service.

⁸ Taken from a total of 61 individual service and sentiment mentions respectively

Signposting

In total Healthwatch Northumberland signposted eight people who contacted us with an enquiry. Below Table 6 shows the services Healthwatch Northumberland signposted people to this quarter:

Table 6. List of services people Healthwatch Northumberland signposted people to, Q4 2019

| Service Name | Service Type |
|--|------------------|
| Boots Pharmacy (Rothbury) | Primary Care |
| Collingwood Medical Group | Primary Care |
| Grandparents Plus | Voluntary Sector |
| Haydon Bridge and Allendale Medical Practice | Primary Care |
| Northgate Hospital | Secondary Care |
| Primary Mental Health Team | Mental Health |

Table 6 shows the services signposted to range from secondary care to mental health, to the voluntary sector, despite the majority of signposts being towards primary care services.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. List of services mentioned in feedback and comments

| Service list |
|--|
| Action on Hearing Loss |
| Adult Social Care |
| Alnwick Infirmary |
| Belford Medical Practice |
| Berwick Infirmary |
| Carers Northumberland |
| Collingwood Medical Group |
| Coquet Medical Group |
| General Practitioner (GP Surgery) |
| HMP Northumberland |
| Newcastle Freeman hospital |
| NHS 111 |
| North West Ambulance Service |
| Northgate Hospital |
| Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group |
| Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust |
| Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital |
| NTW Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust |
| Ponteland Medical Group |
| Railway Medical Group (formally Station and Waterloo Group) |
| Royal Victoria Infirmary |
| Save Rothbury Cottage Hospital |
| Seaton Park Medical Group |
| Talking Matters Northumberland |
| The Bellingham Practice |
| The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust |
| Valens Medical Partnership (Wellway, Brockwell and Lintonville GP practices) |
| Wansbeck General Hospital |
| Wellway Medical Group |
| Whalton Community Hospital |

Appendix 2. Service category and sentiment⁹

| Service Category | Mixed | Negative | Neutral | Positive | Total |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Accident & Emergency | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Acute Care | | 6 | | 2 | 8 |
| Acute services with overnight beds | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 5 |
| Appointments | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Cancer Services | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Care at Home | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Child & Adult Mental Health Services (Hospital Services) | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Continuing Care | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Dentist (non-hospital) | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Depression and Anxiety service | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Ear, Nose and Throat | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 7 |
| GP practice | 2 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 13 |
| Learning disability service | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Maternity | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Mental health recovery service | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Ophthalmology | 2 | 1 | | | 3 |
| Other (Community services) | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Out of Hours | | 2 | | 1 | 3 |
| Patient Transport | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Social Care | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 11 | 40 | 1 | 9 | |

⁹ Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented in the table