

# Quarterly Report: October- December 2019/20

## 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 October to December 2019. The next report will cover January – March 2020.

This quarter we received feedback and enquiries from:

- Telephone calls, emails and social media (31%)
- Postal Surveys and Feedback forms (12%)
- Talking to people at local engagement events (27%)
- Through a meeting (27%)
- Through a third party (4%)

## 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 2019/20:

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:

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<sup>1</sup> All percentages have been rounded up or down to nearest whole number

- Who Healthwatch Northumberland is hearing from
- 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 October and December 2019, we received 26 pieces of feedback through talking to people at local engagement events, telephone calls, emails, our website, surveys and feedback forms, and other sources. Alongside this, we signposted 17 people to services<sup>2</sup>, 5 of which have already been counted in the aforementioned feedback. Altogether we had 39 different recordable interactions this quarter<sup>3</sup>.

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.

We also look at the general sentiment of comments, 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 is hearing from.

### Location:

In total between October and December 2019, we collected feedback from respondents from

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<sup>2</sup> Signposting has not been included in analysis apart from in communication methods of respondents on Page 2, and in the 'signposting' section of the report on Pages 9 and 10

<sup>3</sup> A total of three interactions were between Healthwatch Northumberland and other professional groups. These interactions have been omitted from analysis as they have not been recorded consistently.

seven different Northumberland postcode areas<sup>4</sup>, accounting for 35% of all responses this quarter (9 people). A total of 65% of 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, Q2 2019/20*

Local Area Council	Number
Tynedale	2
Castle Morpeth	2
North Northumberland	3
Ashington and Blyth	2

There are too few known locations of patients, carers, and families to reliably say where we are hearing from most. A pattern with previous quarters is that we knowingly hear most from either North Northumberland or Tynedale, and least from Cramlington and Bedlington.

## Age:

The majority of our respondents did not share their age with us (81%). Of those that did, there appeared to be fewer respondents from younger age groups, which is consistent with what was reported in previous quarters (shown below in Table 2).

*Table 2. Number and percentage of responses across different age groups in Northumberland, Q3 2019-20*

	Number	Percentage
Under 18	1	2%
19-24	0	0%
25-49	3	5%
50-64	3	5%
65-79	9	16%
80+	8	14%
Unknown	34	59%

## Gender:

Consistent with last quarter, a total of 65% of respondents shared their gender with us (17 people). Of those that did there was a higher proportion of female respondents, accounting

<sup>4</sup> Postcodes only counted by postcode prefix, the number of postcode prefixes may be greater than 7

for 46% of all responses (12 people). A total of 19% of responses were from males (4 people). These figures are remarkably consistent with the previous three quarters' analysis, despite fewer responses this quarter. Below Figure 1 shows a breakdown of responses by gender:

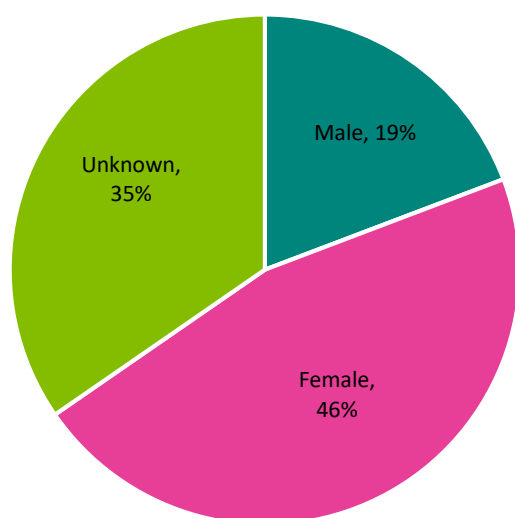


Figure 1. Frequency of responses by gender in Northumberland, Q3 2019/20

### Whose experiences are we finding out about?

Exactly 50% of respondents shared their own individual experience of health and social care with us. Just under 40% of all respondents gave us feedback about the health and social care experiences of a relative, friend, or someone they care for (10 people).

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, Q3 2019-20

Who is the feedback from?	Number	Percentage
Individual	13	50%
Client Relative/Friend/Carer	10	38%
Advocate	1	4%
Local Campaigner	1	4%
Other	1	4%

### What people are saying and experiencing

Of the 26 total responses<sup>5</sup>, respondents told us about 21 individual services/service providers. Many respondents shared their experiences of using more than one service in their comments and many services were mentioned more than once, bringing the total

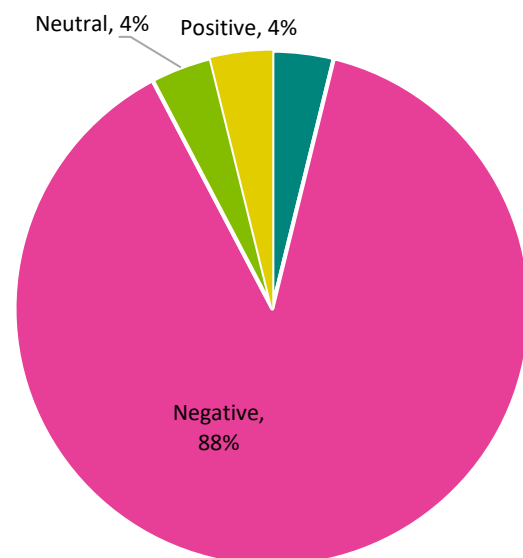
<sup>5</sup> Responses related to 'signposting only' have been excluded from this section of the report

frequency of services mentioned to 30. Please see Appendix 1 and 2 for a list of all the services/service providers mentioned.

The responses were categorised into four sentiment groups - positive, negative, neutral, and mixed. The majority of comments received were negative, with 87% of responses reflecting this sentiment (26 sentiments). This reflects an increase in negative sentiments from last quarter. There was respectively only one positive and one neutral comment this



quarter. People may be more likely to report negative experiences, than if something is going well. In the blue boxes examples of positive, mixed, and neutral comments made this quarter have been shared<sup>6</sup>:



**Positive:**

*"All staff at Gas House Lane practice are extremely helpful and efficient. If deemed urgent we are always seen on the same day. This is most reassuring - especially when attention is needed for elderly relatives. Wish to convey thanks to receptionists, nurses and GPs for excellent service."*  
Patient, Castle Morpeth.

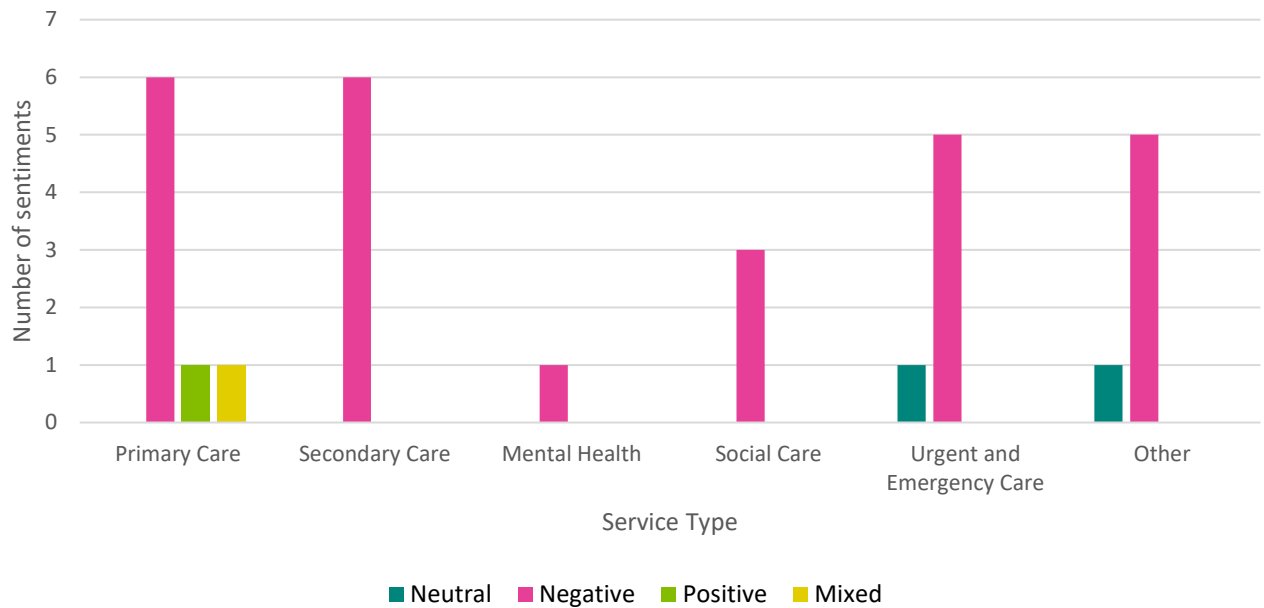
**Neutral:**

*"Need for Hearing Loss training in Northumberland"*  
Anonymous feedback we received at our conference.

The services/service providers have been categorised into service type, with the five main groups 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'. Below, Figure 3, shows the service type and sentiment of responses:

*Figure 2. General Sentiment of respondents.*

<sup>6</sup> Quotes with negative or mixed sentiment are presented later in the report.



*Figure 3. Service Type and Sentiment of responses<sup>7</sup>*

Figure 3 shows there is a greater number of negative comments and feedback for all service types, whilst below Table 5 indicates most comments were about ‘primary care’ or ‘other’ services or service providers (respectively 27% of all comments, eight total comments). ‘Other’ services or service providers relate to: commissioners such as Northumberland CCG, Trusts like Newcastle Upon Tyne or Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust, or services which do not fit in any other category like Patient Transport Services or the North East Ambulance Service. Figure 3 shows most negative comments were made about either primary care or secondary care.

Most of the negative comments about primary care and secondary care related to access to services. This theme is also supported in Figure 4a which shows almost three quarters of comments are relating to ‘access’ (65%, 17 total comments), and Figure 4b where it is shown most negative comments made are about access (15 comments).

<sup>7</sup> Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented on the chart. There were more than 58 total sentiments expressed because some people fed back about more than one service.

It is encouraging that the majority of negative attitudes to services/service providers (shown in Figure 3) from people across Northumberland relate to 'systems' more than 'people' or 'care quality'. This is consistent with last quarter, and a summary of these comments is shared below:

### Primary Care and Secondary care, Negative Comments: Access Case Study

*Patients got in touch with Healthwatch Northumberland about access 17 times this quarter. Eight of these related to primary care and were negative comments.*

*Primary Care comments made about access ranged from: access to medication for patients who are not able to travel, access to a PPG group for a patients' local GP surgery, difficulties communicating with receptionists due to physical barriers, and access to a GP surgery for a patient who felt they had been unfairly banned.*

*Secondary Care comments made about access ranged from: two patients reporting difficulties making an appointment with a physiotherapy service, as was disclosed last quarter; to difficulty accessing a podiatrist; to difficulty accessing mental health services for children and young people.*

*These show a range of different issues despite showing a theme. For this reason Healthwatch Northumberland dealt with these issues on an individual basis.*

### Access: Let's Talk

*"Caller [...] is unable to drive for a month. He asked his GP practice if the District Nurse could administer [regular injections] but was told not and that he could miss a week and it would be all right. He is concerned that his health will suffer and he will not be able to look after his wife. We rang the surgery. A GP will ring the patient to discuss the situation." Engagement Officer about patient, Castle Morpeth.*

*"On notes that patient can't walk to upstairs room. When GP appointment made was told would be in downstairs room. On day of appointment downstairs room not available. Explained to practice needed notice in order to get upstairs as difficulty accessing." Engagement Officer about patient, Tynedale.*

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 the distance between



where people live and where services are. This will help us to inform commissioners and service providers and support greater potential for improvement.

We received fewer comments this quarter than in previous quarters, so can make fewer assumptions about what people in the county care about most. We hope to collect feedback from a wide range of people across Northumberland through our Annual Survey which will be conducted next quarter between 1 February – 31 March 2020. This will help us to prioritise our work for the coming year.

*Table 5. Frequency and percentage of responses by Service Type*

Service Type	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Care	8	27%
Secondary Care	5	17%
Mental Health	1	3%
Social Care	3	10%
Urgent and Emergency Care	5	17%
Other	8	27%

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.

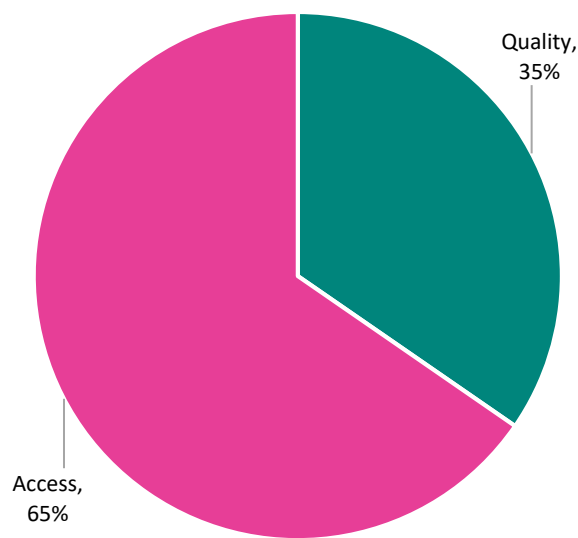


Figure 4a. Proportion of responses related to Quality of Care and Access to Services

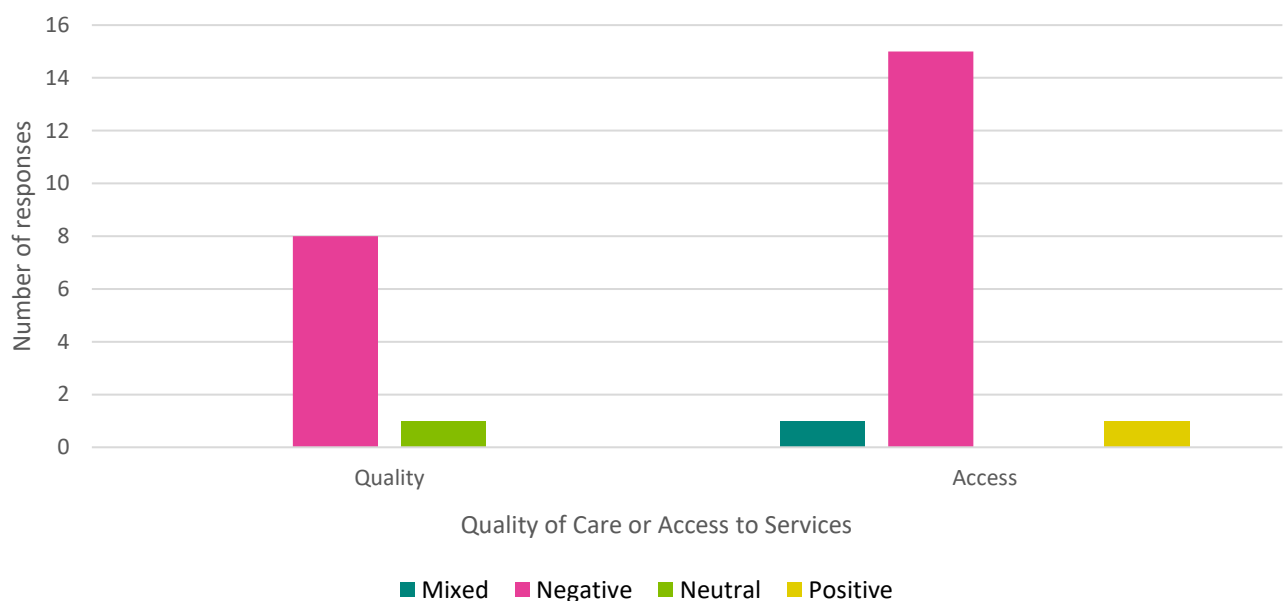


Figure 4b. Frequency of responses related to quality of care and access to services, by sentiment



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 11). Similar to last quarter GP practices was the joint most highly mentioned category for feedback (six total sentiments, mostly negative). It is important to note that despite access being mentioned as negative for GP practices this quarter (see page 7), we did receive a positive comment about accessing GP practice this quarter (page 5).

Every quarter Healthwatch Northumberland sends GP practices tailored feedback from patients and carers. Feedback is shared anonymously with each practice.

The other joint most highly mentioned category was end of life care (four total sentiments), where issues were shared relating to a couple of different services. The issues were related to someone's Emergency Health Care Plan not being followed, as well as someone wanting to feed into the End of Life Strategy for Northumberland.

## Signposting

In total we signposted 18 people who contacted us with an enquiry. Some people were signposted to more than one service. Below Table 6 shows the services Healthwatch Northumberland signposted people to this quarter:

*Table 6. List of services Healthwatch Northumberland signposted people to, Q3 2019/20*

Organisation signposted to	Service Type	Number of times signposted to	Signposted to in Oct-Dec 19/20
Adapt NE	Voluntary Sector	2	No
Age UK Northumberland	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Alnwick Medical Group	Health	1	No
Alzheimer's Society Northumberland Office	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Ashington Leisure Centre	Public Services	1	No
Autism Northumberland	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Continence Service Northumbria NHS Trust	Health Trust	1	No
Coram Voice	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Equipment and Loans Service	Health Trust	1	No
Getabout	Voluntary Sector	1	No
ICAN	Voluntary Sector	2	Yes

In It Together	Voluntary Sector	1	No
LGBT Hexham	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group	Health	1	Yes
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Health Trust	1	Yes
Patient Transport Service	Health Trust	1	No
Reengage	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Seaton Deleval Community Centre	Voluntary Sector	1	No

Additionally, Healthwatch Northumberland signposted to our upcoming work, where we gave someone information on an upcoming dementia project we are going to be working on.

Table 6 shows 61% of the services signposted to are voluntary sector organisations. Health services and trusts, and public services have also been signposted to.

**This report has been produced by:**

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## Appendix

### *Appendix 1. List of services mentioned in feedback and comments*

Services mentioned in feedback and comments in Oct-Dec 19/20	Mentioned in July-Sept 19/20
Berwick Infirmary	No
Burn Brae Care Limited	Yes
Care Managers	No
Gas House Lane Surgery	No

JMAPs	Yes
Laburnum Medical Group	No
Morpeth Health Centre	No
North East Ambulance Service	No
Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group	No
Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust	Yes
Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital	Yes
NTW CYPS Northumberland	No
Patient Transport Service	No
Prudhoe Podiatry	No
Riversdale Surgery	No
Talking Matters Northumberland	Yes
The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	No
The Rothbury Practice	No
Thomas Knight Care Home	No
Wansbeck General Hospital	No

## Appendix 2. Service category and sentiment<sup>8</sup>

Service Category	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Ear, Nose and Throat	0	2	1	0	3
GP practice	1	4	0	1	6
Patient Transport	0	2	0	0	2
Physiotherapy	0	2	0	0	2
Urgent care services	0	1	0	0	1
Northumbria CCG	0	2	0	0	2
Child & Adult Mental Health Services (Other Services)	0	3	0	0	3
Care at Home	0	2	0	0	2
End of Life Care	0	4	0	0	4
Acute services without overnight beds / listed acute services with or without overnight beds	0	1	1	0	2
Nursing Care Home	0	1	0	0	1
Podiatry	0	1	0	0	1
Hospital	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	

<sup>8</sup> Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented in the table