

Quarterly Report: January – March 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 January to March 2020. The next report will cover April-June 2020.

This quarter we received feedback and enquiries from:

- Telephone calls, emails and social media (65%)
- Postal Surveys and Feedback forms (5%)
- Talking to people at local engagement events (15%)
- Through a meeting (5%)
- Through a third party (10%)

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:

- 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 January and March 2020, we received 20 pieces of feedback through talking to people at local engagement events, telephone calls, emails, our website, surveys and feedback forms, and other sources¹. Alongside this, we signposted 20 people to services², 16 of which have already been counted in the aforementioned feedback. Altogether we had 24 different recordable interactions this quarter³.

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.

¹ Feedback we received as part of our annual survey has not been included in this report as this has been reported on separately

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 Pages 9 and 10

Location:

In total between January and March 2020, we collected feedback from respondents from six different Northumberland postcode areas⁴, accounting for 55% of all responses this quarter (11 people). A total of 45% 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, Q4 2019/20

Local Area Council	Number
Cramlington and Bedlington	2
Ashington and Blyth	1
Tynedale	3
Castle Morpeth	2
North Northumberland	3

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 Ashington and Blyth or Cramlington and Bedlington. For this reason we are prioritising hearing from people in the south east of the county this year.

Age:

The majority of our respondents did not share their age with us (70%). There are too few known ages of respondents to say who we are hearing from most (shown below in Table 2).

Table 2. Number and percentage of responses across different age groups in Northumberland, Q4 2019-20

Age:

	Number	Percentage
Under 18	0	0%
19-24	0	0%
25-49	2	10%
50-64	1	5%
65-79	2	10%
80+	1	5%

⁴ Postcodes only counted by postcode prefix, the number of postcode prefixes may be greater than 6

Unknown	14	70%
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Gender:

Consistent with last quarter, a total of 55% of respondents told us their gender (11 people). Of those that did there was a higher proportion of female respondents, accounting for 35% of all responses (7 people). A total of 20% of responses were from males (4 people). These figures are remarkably consistent with the previous quarters', despite fewer responses this quarter. Below Figure 1 shows a breakdown of responses by gender:

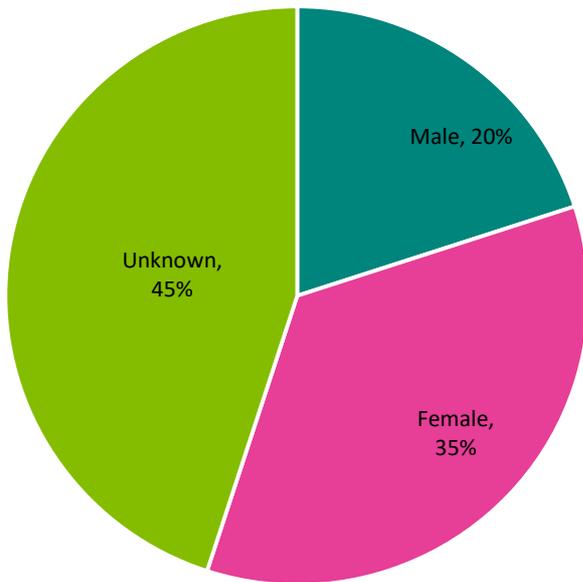


Figure 1. Frequency of responses by gender in Northumberland, Q4 2019/20

Whose experiences are we finding out about?

A total of 60% of respondents shared their own individual experience of health and social care with us. Whilst 30% of all respondents gave us feedback about the health and social care experiences of a relative, friend, or someone they care for (6 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, Q4 2019-20

	Number	Percentage
Individual	12	60%
Client Relative/Friend/Carer	6	30%
Advocate	0	0%
Health or social care professional	2	10%
Local Campaigner	0	0%
Total	20	100%

What people are saying and experiencing

Of the 20 total responses⁵, respondents told us about 18 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 frequency of services mentioned to 25. Please see Appendix 3 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 75% of responses reflecting this sentiment (15 sentiments). There were no positive comments, one neutral comment, and four mixed comments this quarter. People may be more likely to report negative experiences, than if something is going well.

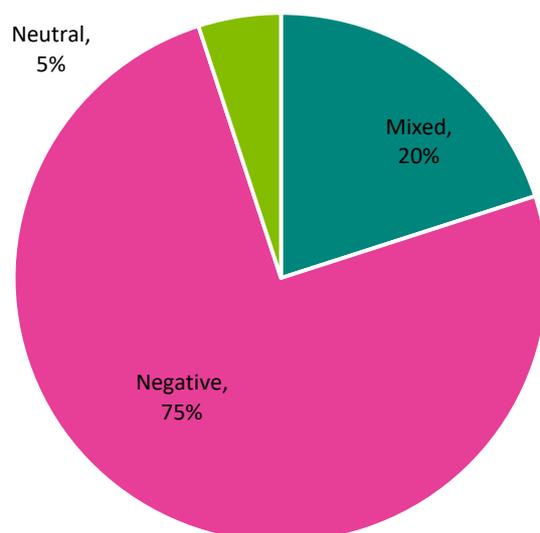


Figure 2. General Sentiment of respondents.

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

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

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:

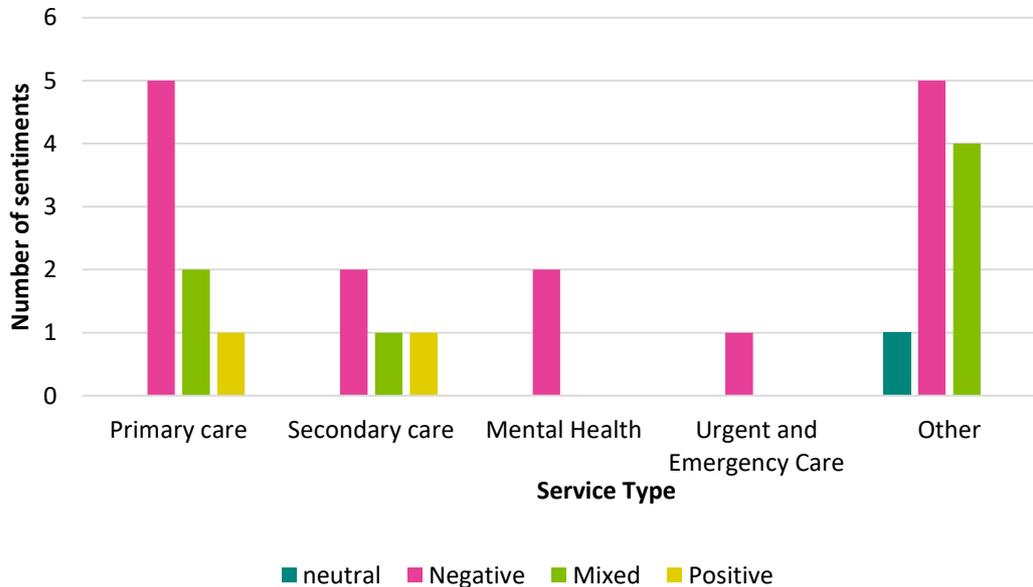


Figure 3. Service Type and Sentiment of responses⁶

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' (6 comments, 30%) or 'other' (8 comments, 40%) services or service providers. 'Other' services or service providers relate to: Trusts like Newcastle Upon Tyne or Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust, or services which do not fit in any other category like Patient Transport Services. Figure 3 shows most negative comments were also about these service types. We received no comments about social care this quarter.

Most of the negative comments about primary care were from patients who had concerns about the regularity and type of prescriptions they received, about the sharing of their information, or their diagnosis. Negative comments about other services included confusion about who can access patient transport and patients having access issues with transport, as well as patients being dissatisfied with timing or quality of care or diagnosis. Some of these issues appear to be complex issues where people have 'fallen down the cracks' between services, whilst other appear to be

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 20 total sentiments expressed because some people fed back about more than one service.

access related. Figure 4a shows almost three quarters of comments are relating to 'access' (70%, 14 total comments), whilst Figure 4b shows that most negative comments made are about access (9 comments).

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 what has been shown in previous quarters. An example of this issue being successfully dealt with has been shared below:

Access to medication

Irene* called us to find out about making a complaint about her GP practice. Both she and her partner, for whom she is a full time carer, have very poor physical and mental health. The problem was that her GP would not issue prescriptions for her partner with more than two months' supply. She was originally told by the GP this was possible. A longer supply gives her one less thing to deal with.

We suggested she contacted the Practice Manager and to ask for a meeting to try resolving the situation informally. We also told her about the process of making a formal complaint and availability of advocacy support. We discussed getting a carers assessment and contacting Carers Northumberland for support.

Irene told us she had followed our advice and the practice was having a meeting where they would discuss her issue. A week later she told us the surgery had called and said they were introducing a new system which would help her and her partner's situation. She no longer wanted to make a complaint. She said it had helped to share her concerns with Healthwatch Northumberland and when she did she 'no longer felt alone'.

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 also collected feedback from a wide range of people across Northumberland through our Annual Survey during the quarter where we heard from more than 800 people. We hope to share the findings of this piece of work soon, including how it will inform our priorities for April 2020- March 2021.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage of responses by Service Type

Service Type	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Care	6	30%
Secondary Care	3	15%
Mental Health	2	10%
Urgent and Emergency Care	1	5%
Other	8	40%

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.

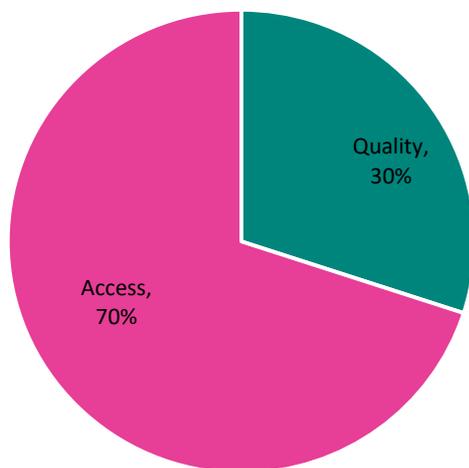


Figure 4a. Proportion of responses related to Quality of Care and Access to Services

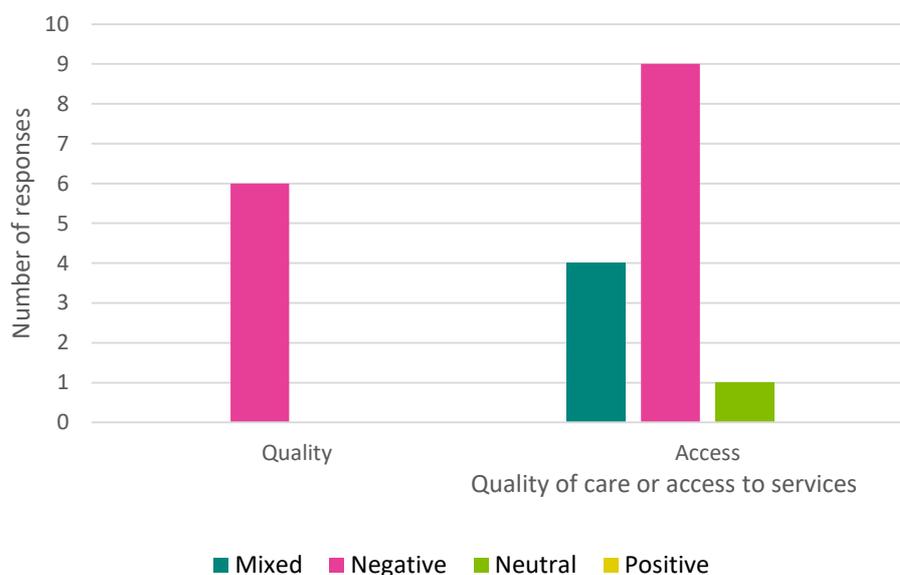


Figure 4b. Frequency of responses related to quality of care and access to services, by sentiment

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).

The other joint most highly mentioned category was hospital care (six total sentiments).

Signposting

In total we signposted 11 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, Q4 2019/20

Organisation signposted to	Service Type	Number of times signposted to	Signposted to in Q3 19/20?
Adapt North East	Voluntary Sector	1	Yes
Autism Northumberland	Voluntary Sector	1	Yes
Azure Charitable Enterprise	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Carers Northumberland	Voluntary Sector	1	No
Gateway into the Community	Voluntary Sector	1	No
ICAN	Voluntary Sector	5	Yes
North of Tyne PALS	Health	1	No
Northumberland CVA	Voluntary Sector	1	No
NTW Crisis Team	Mental Health	1	No
Parkinson's UK - South East Northumberland	Voluntary Sector	1	No

Table 6 shows 80% of the services signposted to are voluntary sector organisations.

Health services and trusts have also been signposted to.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. List of services mentioned in feedback and comments

Organisation signposted to	Signposted to in Oct-Dec 19-20?
Adapt North East	Yes
Autism Northumberland	Yes
Azure Charitable Enterprise	No
Carers Northumberland	No
Gateway into the Community	No
ICAN	Yes
North of Tyne PALS	No
Northumberland CVA	No
NTW Crisis Team	No
Parkinson's UK - South East Northumberland	No

Appendix 2. Service category and sentiment⁷

Service Category	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Accident & Emergency	0	1	0	0	1
Community Mental Health service	0	1	0	0	1
Dentist	1	0	0	0	1
Foundation Trust	0	1	0	0	1
GP practice	1	4	0	1	6
Hospital	2	2	0	2	6
Mental Health Recovery Service	0	1	0	0	1
Patient Transport Service	2	2	0	0	4

⁷ Where more than one service type and sentiment has been collected per record, it has been presented in the table

Pharmacy	0	1	1	0	2
Trust	1	2	0	0	3
Total	7	15	1	3	

Appendix 3. Services mentioned in feedback

Service name	Frequency
Bell View Medical Centre	2
Boots Pharmacy, Prudhoe	1
Community Psychiatric Nurse	1
Corbridge Medical Group	1
Elsdon Avenue Surgery	1
Hexham General Hospital	1
Horizon Dental Clinic, Blyth	1
North East Ambulance Service	4
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	3
Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital	1
Pharmacy (general)	1
Railway Medical Group	1
Royal Victoria Infirmary	1
Talking Matters Northumberland	1
The Freeman Hospital	1
The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	1
The Rothbury Practice	1
The Spire	1
The Village Surgery, Cramlington	1