

Healthwatch Quarterly Impact & Activity Report

Quarter 4: January to March 2025

Contents

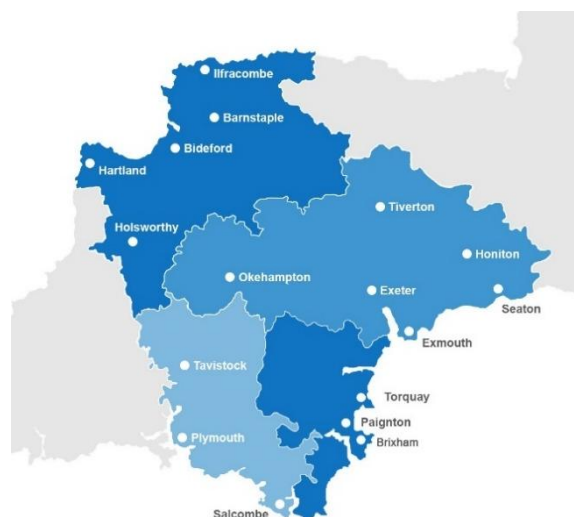
About Us	2
About this report	2
Quarter at a glance	3
Our News in Brief	4
Healthwatch Network News.....	6
Our Engagement Activity	7
Healthwatch Feedback.....	8
Healthwatch Case Studies	11
What we did with your views	12
Our Requests For Information.....	13
Our Current Priorities	14
Coming Up Next Quarter	14
Contact Us.....	15

About Us

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay (HWDPT) are your local health and social care champions.

We're here to speak up for the 1.2 million people in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, making sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear their voices and use their feedback to improve care. We can also help them find reliable, trustworthy information and advice.

We offer dedicated walk-in centres in Torbay and Plymouth, and in wider Devon 'Healthwatch Champions' are located at Citizens Advice offices based throughout the county to carry out Healthwatch core functions.



About this report

This report details our key activities for the last quarter, including how we have engaged with the public, a summary of the feedback we have collected, our reports, recommendations and any outcomes or impact made.



Quarter at a glance

We've met **hundreds** of local people at community events across Devon, Plymouth & Torbay



Social media users have seen our posts over **100,000** times with **5,000** of you seeing our Email Bulletins



191 people have reviewed services on our feedback websites



We have escalated or referred **127** of your complaints or concerns



550 of you have shared your health or care feedback with us this quarter



We've helped **350** of you share your feedback or look for advice through our contact centre



We've released our Report on **the Power of Lived Experience with 'Gifted Women' in Plymouth**, available to read by [clicking here](#)



We launched our **brand new website**, for people in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to share feedback via: www.hwdpt.org





Our News in Brief

A snapshot of some of our main activities during the past three months

Supporting the NHS in Devon to transform health and social care

Our collaborative engagement work with NHS Devon has led to them receiving nearly 3500 individual pieces of local feedback around the new 10 Year Health Plan.

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay independently chaired engagement days across Devon for local residents to speak with NHS Staff about the 10 Year Health Plan to get their voice heard as part of the development process, with the national plan due to launch in spring 2025.

In addition to the five locality workshop events in Paignton, Exeter, Barnstaple, Ivybridge and Plymouth, we gathered feedback via branded postcards at 42 smaller drop in events, talks and meetings (detailed further on page 7), offered people unable to submit their feedback online the chance to do it over the phone for free and created a number of promotional videos of the engagement (like the one above).



Click the play button above to see how it went or visit <https://youtu.be/l4M6TJ0UJxk>

Impact : Your feedback from this engagement will directly inform the development of the Government’s 10-Year Health Plan for England. NHS Devon have agreed to share any outcomes or impact with us from this going forward.

The Power of Lived Experience with ‘Gifted Women’

Healthwatch Plymouth released a new report of their engagement with ‘Gifted Women’ – a charity for women who are rebuilding their lives after substance misuse, homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system – to learn more about their experiences with local health and social care services.

The report highlights how women who experience multiple disadvantages face additional barriers to accessing health and social care, including distrust in ‘professionals’ based on past experiences. It also recommends all GP practices within Plymouth make use of trauma training through the Trauma Informed Plymouth Network.



Impact : This report has been shared with healthcare providers and commissioners in Plymouth and wider Devon and contains a number of key findings and recommendations for change. The full Gifted Women Engagement Insight Report can be read [by clicking here](#).



Take three minutes to share your experience

We are the independent consumer champion for people using health & social care in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay. Your feedback can help services spot issues that are affecting care for you and your loved ones.

Share your healthcare story



Scroll down for more or click one of the logos below for the local Healthwatch in your area:



News and views

View all news and views



Protections on NHS letter delivery agreed between Royal Mail, NHS leaders and patient bodies

8 April 2025 News



AI solution to detect lung cancer launches in south west

Peninsula Imaging Network (PenRAD) has launched an AI-powered chest CT service across four NHS trusts in...

22 April 2025 News



Eye care costs a barrier for people on low incomes

New research from our national partners Healthwatch England reveals costs of additional eye care services are...

22 April 2025 News

Latest reports and publications

View all reports and publications

Healthwatch report on people's experiences of using opticians

22 April 2025

Research from our national partners Healthwatch England has found that costs for additional services when visiting opticians are a barrier to care for people on low incomes.

Find out more



A strain on sight: Waiting for NHS specialist eye care

20 March 2025

A new report from our national partners Healthwatch England warns long waits for eye care are having a huge impact on people's daily lives.

Find out more



Advice and information

View all



Your right to an NHS dentist

Does signing up with your dentist work the same way as registering with your GP? If you think the answer is yes, you're not alone.

7 April 2025



How do I choose the right care home?

Finding a suitable care home for you or a loved one can be difficult. Knowing what to look for and what questions to ask can make the decision easier...

21 March 2025



What support can I get as a carer?

Many people who provide unpaid care are unaware of their rights. If you're an unpaid carer, find out more about the help and support you are...

8 March 2025

"Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay provides a patient voice which is vital for the delivery of NHS services locally. They continue to provide important feedback from patients, on big themes and small, so that as we redesign services we can better tailor them to meet the expectations of our local population."



Steve Moore
Chief Executive Officer for NHS Devon



Sign up for our news alerts

Email address First name Last name

Enter your email address here Enter your first name Tell us your last name

Consent* I agree to my personal data being stored and used to receive news alerts. Please see our [Privacy and Terms & Conditions](#) for more information.

Sign up

We've launched a new Healthwatch website!

We have listened to public feedback and redeveloped our website to make it even easier to give us your feedback about local health and social care services.

Until now - and for over ten years - we have run three separate websites for each of Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay.

But as the healthcare landscape changes and becomes more integrated across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, we are seeing lots of crossover services (services that cover all 3 localities) that are confusing some members of the public who were not sure which website to use.

Our new website therefore has a combined landing page for all three local Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, with separate 'homepages' for each local Healthwatch showcasing local news, events and reports specific to that area.

It will enable local people to easily share their experiences, feedback and concerns about local health and social care services with us and also contains useful advice, information, links and signposts to other places online where they can explore other services available.

Impact : Sharing your feedback via our new website can really make a difference.

Have your say today via:

www.hwdpt.org

Healthwatch Network News



A snapshot of some of our national partner Healthwatch England's news, briefings and reports during the past three months

About Healthwatch England

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 on a national and local level. Healthwatch England (HWE) are a statutory committee of the independent regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC). HWE escalate local Healthwatch concerns to CQC and provide advice to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, NHS England and local authorities. There are 152 independent local Healthwatch set up across each local authority in England.

Healthwatch England Key Reports and Briefings this Quarter

Waiting for NHS specialist eye care – this Healthwatch England report warns long waits for eye care are having a huge impact on people's daily lives. The report focuses on 1,051 people who responded to the questions about waiting for secondary eye care and reveals strong public support for greater use of staff in high street opticians, as people bear the brunt of long waiting times for specialist eye care. Click the link below to read the report's key findings and recommendations in full: [Click here to download the Healthwatch report in full](#)

New research calls for pocket-sized cards to support NHS patients with trauma – Healthwatch England research has found trauma can be a major barrier to seeking medical care. According to a poll of 3,571 adults living in England, nearly a fifth, 18%, of respondents who have experienced trauma said they 'very often' or 'fairly often' avoid services because of their trauma. This figure is much higher for autistic people and people who have Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder/Attention deficit disorder. Healthwatch England have called on the NHS to adopt pocket-sized trauma cards for patients to show during appointments.

[Click here to download the report in full and see key findings and recommendations](#)

Admin issues in the NHS – this joint report with The King's Fund and National Voices highlights the scale and impacts of admin issues on patients and their families. Of those who had used the NHS in the last 12 months, either for themselves or someone they care for, nearly two in three said they had experienced at least one issue with NHS admin or poor communication.

[Click here to read the full findings and recommendations in the joint long read.](#)

NHS complaints system 'lets people down' – this research warns that people have low confidence in the NHS complaints system and struggle to navigate it, which prevents them from acting when they have a poor experience. Healthwatch England's report – **within which Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay get a special acknowledgement for contributing local feedback to** – can be found by [clicking here](#).

Impact : Healthwatch advises Government on new NHS Mandate

The Government has published the NHS Mandate for 2025, using public feedback shared with the Healthwatch Network and advice from our national partners Healthwatch England to set out the objectives and goals it wants health services to focus on. The Government has made cutting waiting lists its top priority, asking the NHS to work towards meeting the 18-week referral-to-treatment target. **To read more information – including the specific Healthwatch advice given to the Government – [please click here](#).**



Our Engagement Activity

Some of the ways we have engaged with our communities this quarter

The last three months have seen us take our information stands out into the community and attended events in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, capturing experiences of local health and social care along the way.

Selected events where we have been raising awareness of Healthwatch, gathering feedback and taking the opportunity to discuss & share issues or experiences include:

healthwatch Devon

- Teignbridge community support event
- U3A Ivybridge Annual Meeting
- St Johns Church Cafe, Totnes
- Exeter and North Devon District Hospital
- MS Society event
- Leatside Surgery, Totnes
- Winkleigh Community Wellbeing Fair.

healthwatch Plymouth

- Care Home Lay Visiting
- Family Wellness Day at the Life Centre
- St Budeaux & Barne Barton Wellbeing Hub
- Livewell SW Wellbeing Connections
- Derriford Hospital Drop-In
- VISION ZONE Exhibition.

healthwatch Torbay

- Torbay Hospital Drop-In
- Torbay Council road show
- Paignton Community Hub
- Torbay Council World Cancer Day event
- Diabetes UK - kitchen project.



Click the play button above to see our junior Healthwatch reporters in Plymouth or visit <https://youtu.be/iNIWxZPBZqs>

NHS 10 Year Plan Engagement Events

In addition to the five locality workshop events in Paignton, Exeter, Barnstaple, Ivybridge and Plymouth, we gathered feedback via branded postcards at 42 smaller drop-in events, talks and meetings across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. These are detailed below:

- University of Plymouth, Exeter College & Exeter University
- Derriford, Torbay, Exeter & Barnstaple General Hospitals
- Community Outreach in Teignbridge, Cridton, Exmouth, Harberton & Harbertonford
- Paignton, Torquay, Exeter, Newton Abbot, Ivybridge, Honiton, Okehampton, St Budeaux & Barne Barton & Barnstaple libraries
- Buckfastleigh & Honiton Foodbanks
- Events targeting specific groups such as young people, women, those with MS or diabetes, people working in health & wellbeing, volunteers & Patient Participation Groups, etc.

As part of this engagement, our Junior Healthwatch Reporters attended the “My mind, my body, my money, Family Wellness Day” with Healthwatch Plymouth at the Life Centre in Plymouth to find out what kids think about the future of the NHS.

You can see this in the video above.

Coming up next quarter : we are planning to attend many more outreach locations in Devon, Plymouth & Torbay, keeping you updated via our eBulletin and local website:

www.hwdpt.org



Healthwatch Feedback

Where we gathered your experiences from in the past three months

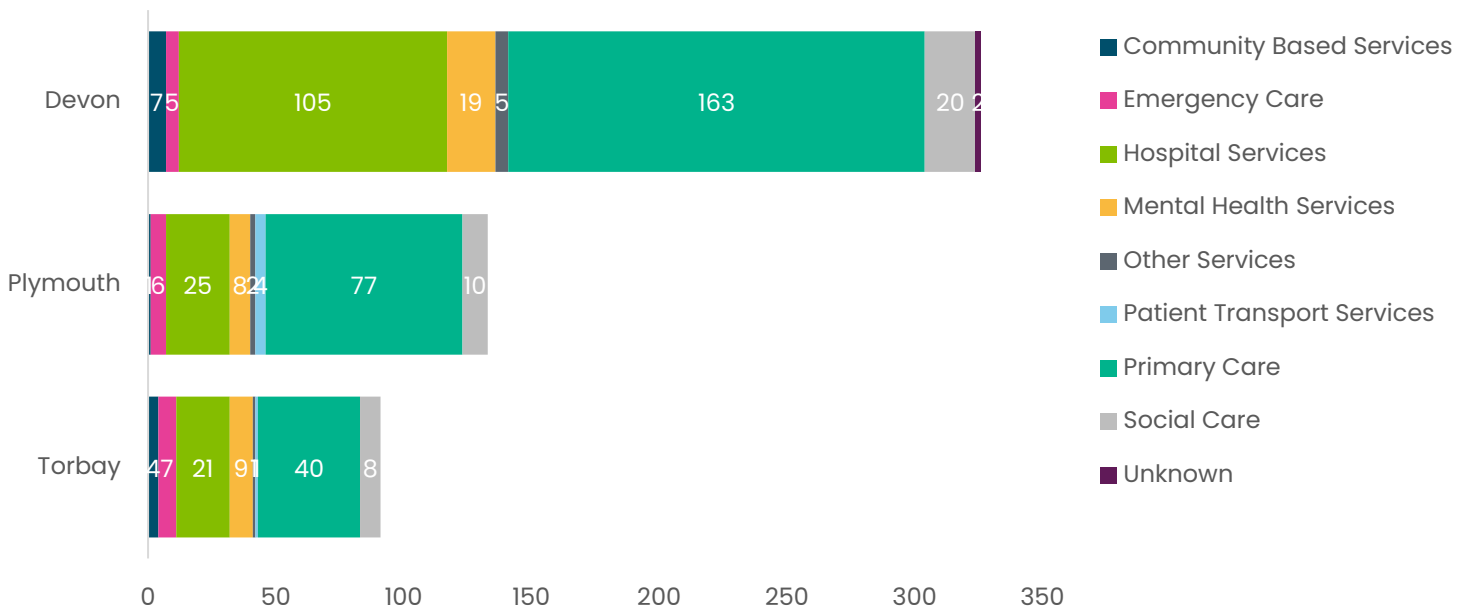
Number of experiences shared with Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

550 people contacted Healthwatch to share their experiences of health and social care services in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. 326 were about services in Devon, 133 about Plymouth services and 91 about Torbay services.

191 of these experiences were shared with us at HWDPT through one of our three online rate and review feedback centres, with 359 handled by our contact centre or in person.

Source of Feedback shared with HWDPT and Type of Service

Breakdown of feedback recorded by service level and locality



Of these shared experiences gathered across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, the most commonly discussed theme was **Primary Care Services**.

Feedback about Primary Care Services

280 experiences (50.9% of overall feedback) were about primary care services, of those:

- 208 experiences related to GP Services
- 54 experiences related to Dental Services
- 16 experiences related to Pharmacy Services and
- 1 experience related to Opticians Services
- 1 experience related to Out of Hours Services

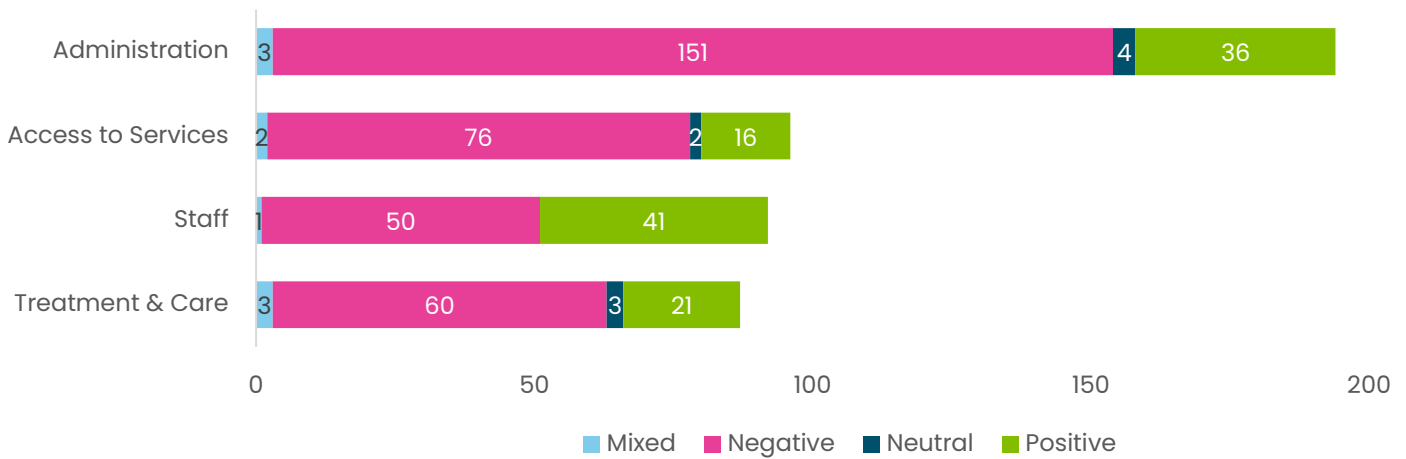


Feedback about Primary Care Services (continued)

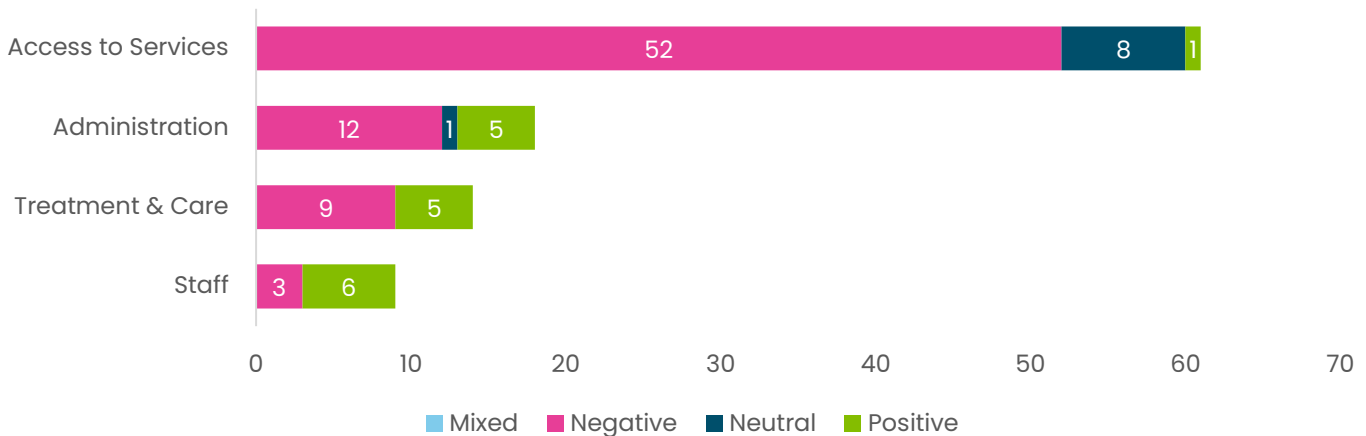
The most common themes in relation to Primary Care Services were **Administration, Staff, and Access to Services**.

The charts below show how the public felt about the Primary Care Services they told us about across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, separated by the type of service, over the past three months:

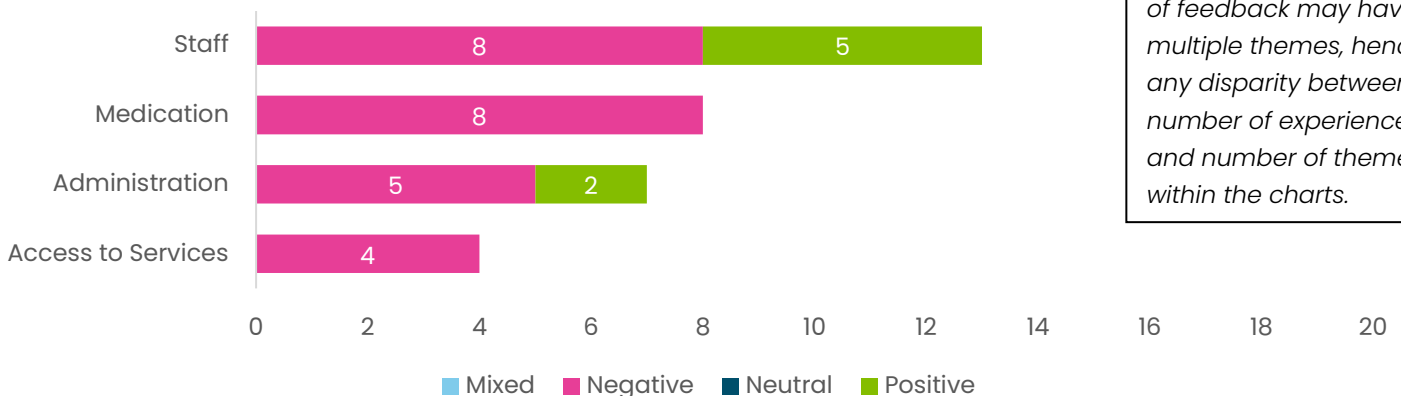
GP Practices



Dentist (non-hospital)



Pharmacy



PLEASE NOTE: Each piece of feedback may have multiple themes, hence any disparity between number of experiences and number of themes within the charts.



Feedback about Hospital Services

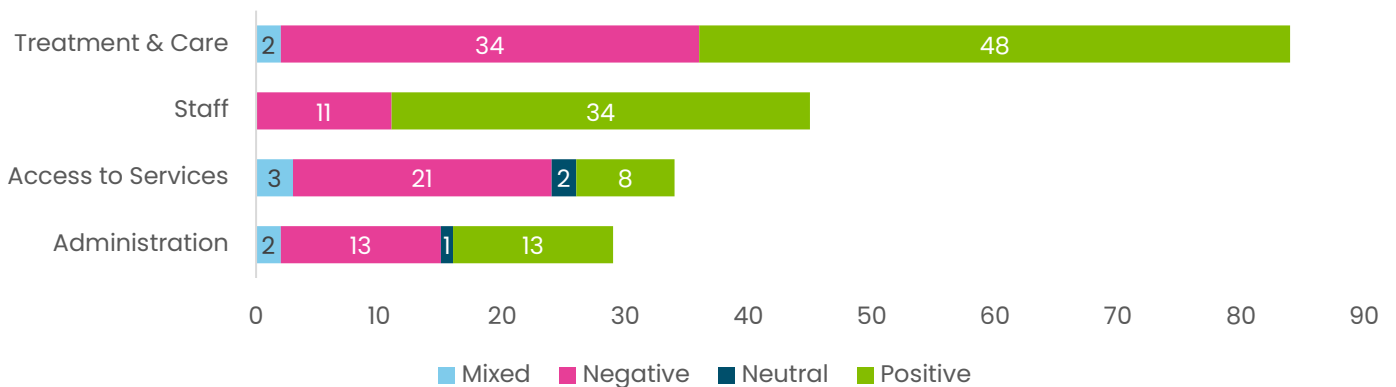
151 experiences (2% of overall feedback) were about hospital services. Of those:

- 105 experiences related to hospital services in Devon
- 25 experiences related to hospital services in Plymouth
- 21 experiences related to hospital services in Torbay.

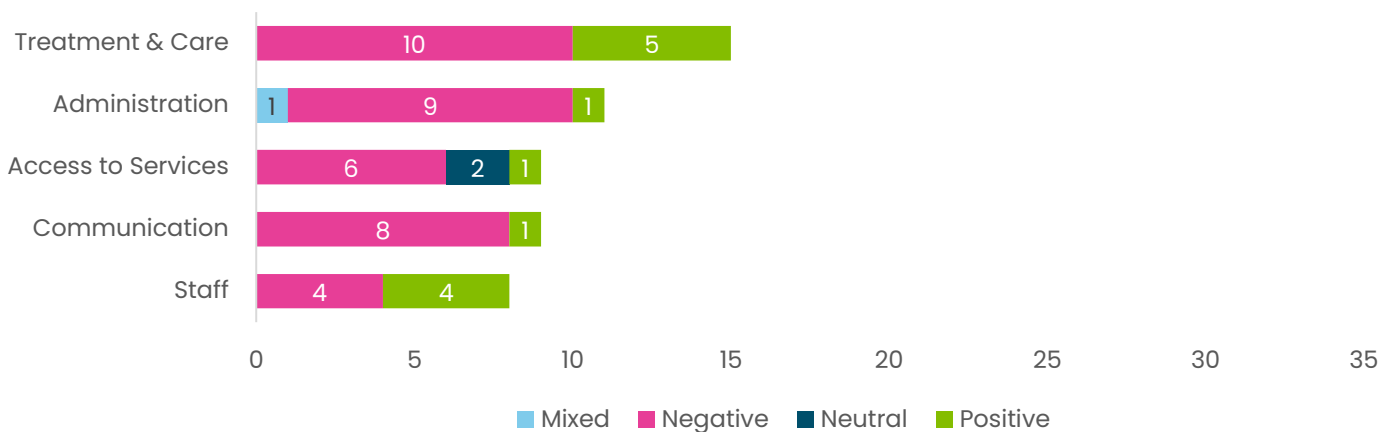
The most common themes overall in relation to Hospital Services were **Treatment & Care**, **Staff**, **Access to Services**, and **Administration**.

The charts below shows how the public felt about the Hospital Services across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, separated by the type the theme and sentiment, over the past three months:

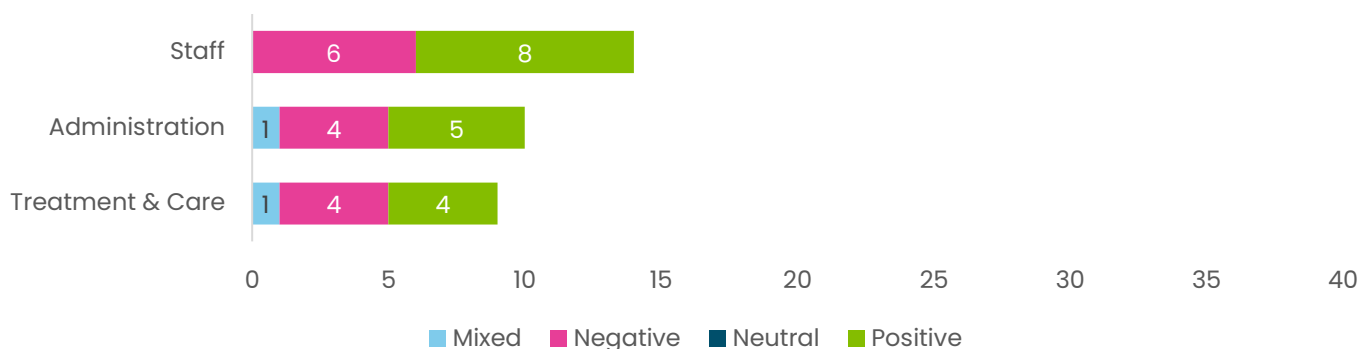
Summary of themes - Hospital Services in Devon



Summary of themes - Hospital Services in Plymouth



Summary of themes - Hospital Services in Torbay





Healthwatch Case Studies

Your experiences of local health and social care in your words

This page shows a case study this quarter from each of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, related to the feedback analysis on the previous pages. **PLEASE NOTE:** *All client's names and photographs have been replaced to protect their identities.*

Helping improve access to care for a housebound patient

Terry from Devon is wheelchair-dependent, registered blind, and dependent on community care transport to get to medical appointments, which he found difficult to obtain. In order to receive home visits for appointments he requested to get formally recognised as housebound on his medical records. His GP responded to say the specialist appointments he needed could not be undertaken at home, and that transport was not possible.

What we did - We advised Terry to call his GP for clarification regarding when district nurses can visit and guided him on how to submit a formal complaint to the NHS Trust if he felt discriminated against. We also signposted Terry to hospital transport services for further support.



Advising a cancer patient in need of dental treatment

Julie from Plymouth is on an NHS patient waiting list for a dentist, however, following cancer treatment she now needs extensive treatment, which she cannot afford privately.

What we did - We advised Julie to have a conversation with her oncologist or GP and request that they write a letter to the emergency dental team to advise of her need for this dental treatment following cancer treatment, as the need for this treatment has become necessary.

Addressing an equipment issue with a hospital patient

Kevin from Torbay lost his hearing aids and had been trying to speak with someone from audiology however no one appeared to answer the phone, there was no voicemail option, and he had no other method of trying to contact audiology.

What we did - We confirmed that the listed number for audiology kept ringing with no answer and no voicemail option and called different numbers until a relevant member of staff answered. We explained Kevin's issue and they were able to contact him directly to resolve it. They also agreed to investigate the listed phone number with no voicemail.



Impact : We regularly share all of your stories and our intelligence with key stakeholders, including health & social care providers & commissioners, the Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board, our local authorities, Local Care Partnerships and the voluntary sector. We also share our data with the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.



What we did with your views

Where we escalated your concerns and complaints

Impact : Escalations and Referrals

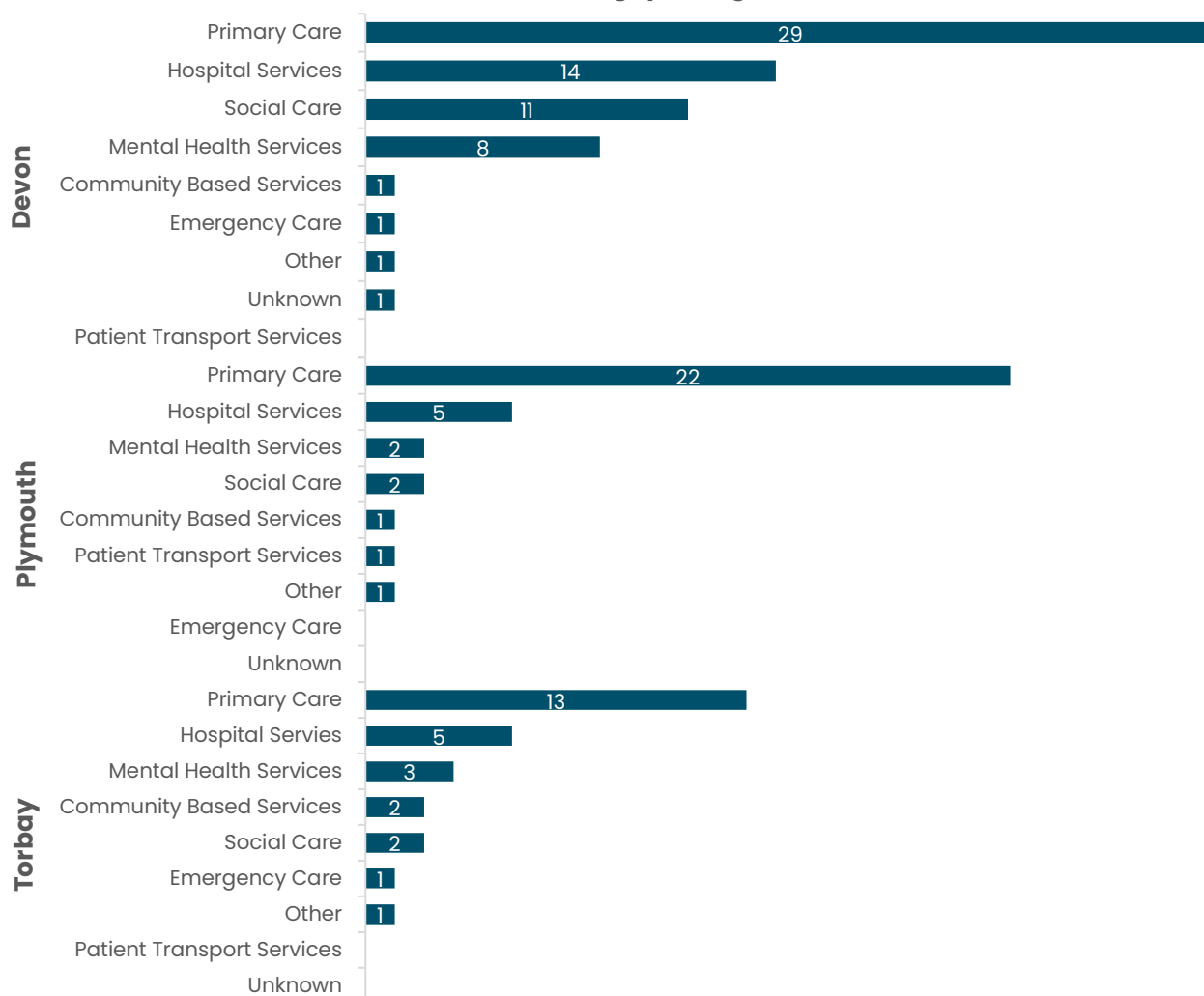
All public feedback we receive is logged in our secure system for further analysis. This includes working with other local organisations to gather feedback such as Citizen’s Advice, Community Trusts and Community Hubs. Some are serious concerns or complaints that need to be escalated further for immediate action. This quarter there have been **127** such cases. Of these:

- 47 were provided with advice and information by the contact centre,
- 23 were referred to a Healthwatch Champion,
- 3 were signposted/referred to PALS,
- 40 were signposted/referred to an advocacy service,
- 7 were signposted other services (community support, information services)
- 7 were signposted/escalated to the provider.

Members of the public wanting to make an official complaint have been referred to organisations such as the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), the Advocacy People, Devon Advocacy Consortium, health trusts, Safeguarding, the Devon Integrated Care System (ICS), NHS England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The graph below shows a breakdown of where these **127** cases originated in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and which type of service they referred to.

Breakdown of the service level in each locality where commentator required advice, information or signposting to another service



How your views help shape ongoing work in the local community



We regularly share your feedback with decision-makers via meetings such as each of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Health & Wellbeing Boards (H&WBB), Health & Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Boards (H&SC OSC), Safeguarding Adults Partnerships, Local Care Partnerships, Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board (ICB), Devon Learning Disability Partnership Board, plus local healthcare Trusts and Public Health meetings. In addition, this quarter we have provided upon request specific feedback and intelligence for the following organisations, groups or decision-making Boards:

- **Devon County Council (DCC)** – we were asked for feedback on why some people in Devon have chosen to move away from having direct payments for their adult social care support and have instead chosen to go back to receiving commissioned packages of care. We provided DCC with **9** service user stories related to this request.

Our Requests for Information

An RFI (request for information) is a formal process for gathering information from providers of a service such as health care trusts or commissioners. Based on patient feedback, this quarter we made **3** requests for information related to our priorities to support our work – two were Devon-wide and one was for Torbay – these are detailed in brief below:

- **NHS Devon:** We requested information about Hearing Aid Equipment after hearing from a patient that they had trouble getting suitable hearing aids through the NHS, including those supplied by the special audiologist. We wanted to know whether the patient was able to get a second opinion or a contribution if they had to go private to resolve this.

Impact : NHS Devon referred to Devon Referral Support Services, who confirmed with the audiology department that the NHS do not currently contribute to hearing aids, but the patient can be seen privately via the NHS and is entitled to have a 30-minute free consultation, but the cost of private hearing aids would be down to the patient to pay. They also said different hearing aids are available which might work for the patient but to gain a second opinion they would need a GP referral.

- **Torbay Childrens Services & NHS Devon** – Healthwatch Torbay raised public concerns related to difficulties in obtaining medical certificates from local GP Practices by Foster Carers in Torbay, which was often holding up the process for several months.

Impact : NHS Devon responded to say that the outstanding health medicals for foster carers – including the ones we spoke with – has been completed. They also stated that a longer-term plan for medicals for foster carers, adults seeking a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and Kinship carers is currently being agreed after receiving our feedback.

- **Devon County Council** – We raised a query regarding a news article where a Devon care home had refused to agree to Ombudsman recommendations – asking if Ombudsman recommendations are even allowed to be refused.

Impact : Devon County Council responded thanking us for raising the query and referring it to the Devon Care Homes Lead for further investigation and to provide us with a response.



Our Current Priorities

How your feedback shapes our local priorities in the community

All your feedback is used to inform us on the specific priorities we should be focussing on when working with local health and social care organisations. Currently our key priorities are:

1. Using technology to help people access services at home.
2. Helping people access social care services and care homes.
3. Improving and joining up services for children and young people.
4. Making sure all patients can access health services equally.
5. Helping people access mental health services for conditions like depression.
6. Helping people access GP, hospital and mental health services. GP means family doctor.
7. How cost of living affects people’s health and wellbeing.

Coming Up Next Quarter

Some of our other engagement work set to be completed and shared next quarter :

healthwatch Devon

- North Devon and Exeter Hospitals
- Drop-in sessions at various outreach locations such as Buckfastleigh Foodbank, Newton Abbot library and Buckfastleigh Memory Café.
- Barnstaple Lifestyle & Wellbeing Fair
- Exeter PRIDE festival.

healthwatch Plymouth

- Derriford Hospital Drop-in
- St Budeaux & Barne Barton Library
- Care Home Lay Visiting across the whole of Plymouth.
- Other outreach events across Plymouth and Ivybridge.

healthwatch Torbay

- Torbay Hospital Drop-Ins.
- Drop-in sessions at Paignton Community Hub.
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) event in Paignton
- NHS Business Services Authority event at Paignton Library.

Other Healthwatch Reports or Campaigns Coming Soon

- Healthwatch England will be releasing **four** new reports next quarter on eye care, ADHD, the healthcare experiences of trans people and people’s views on what should be in the NHS 10 Year Health Plan.
- We will be launching our brand new Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay **Annual Report** for 2025, containing all of our statutory activities from April 2024 to March 2025.
- We will also be looking to speak with people regarding their experiences with **Adult Social Care** across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. Watch out for more information on our website – www.hwdpt.org.

Impact : What we do with this report

We publicise this report on our website, email bulletin and various social media channels. We share it with key stakeholders, including health and social care providers & commissioners, the NHS Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board, our local authorities, Local Care Partnerships and the voluntary, community or social enterprise sector. We also share this report with the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level. For more information, please contact us using our contact details on the right.

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healthwatch
in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

Our vision

A place where we can all get the health and care we need.

Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.