

Patient Experience – Pharmacy Services

1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022

April
2022

Summary Report



Contents

Introduction	3
Patient Experience Summary	3
Patient Feedback	3
Themes & Sub Themes	5
Plymouth Sentiment, Themes & Sub Themes	6
Pharmacy Groups	8
Healthwatch Observations	15
Contact Us	17

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Introduction

Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth & Torbay (HWDPT) are the three local independent consumer champions for people using health and care services across Devon. Healthwatch's role is to listen to what people like about services and what could be improved and shares those views with those who have the power to make change happen. HWDPT regularly review patient feedback and recognised that the amount of received feedback around Pharmacy Services has increased during the pandemic.

Patient Experience Summary

This Patient Experience Summary covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Feedback has been received either via the HWDPT Websites or via telephone calls, emails or web chat to the Healthwatch Contact Centre.

Overall, we have seen a total of 58 feedback reviews about Pharmacy services across Devon broken down as:

Devon – 4

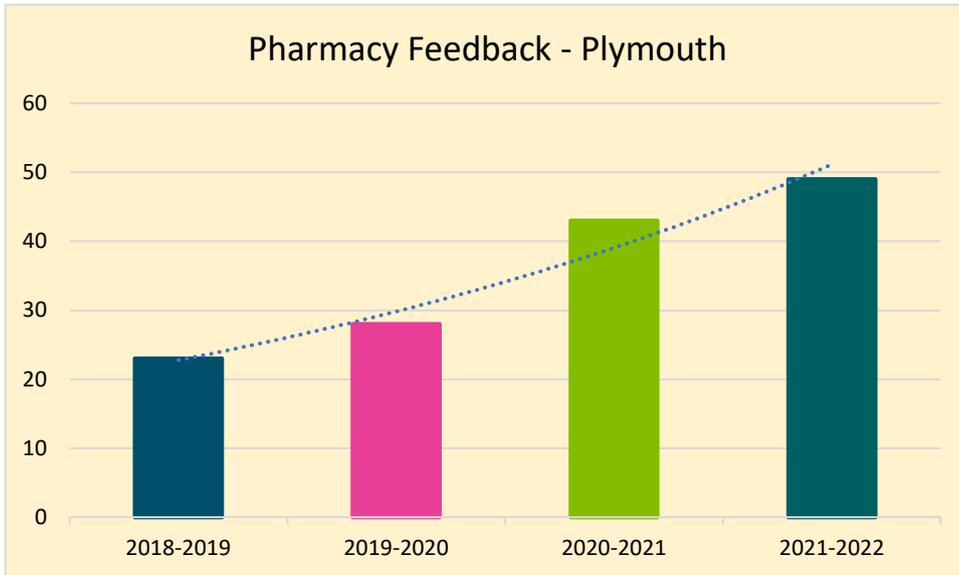
Plymouth – 49

Torbay – 5

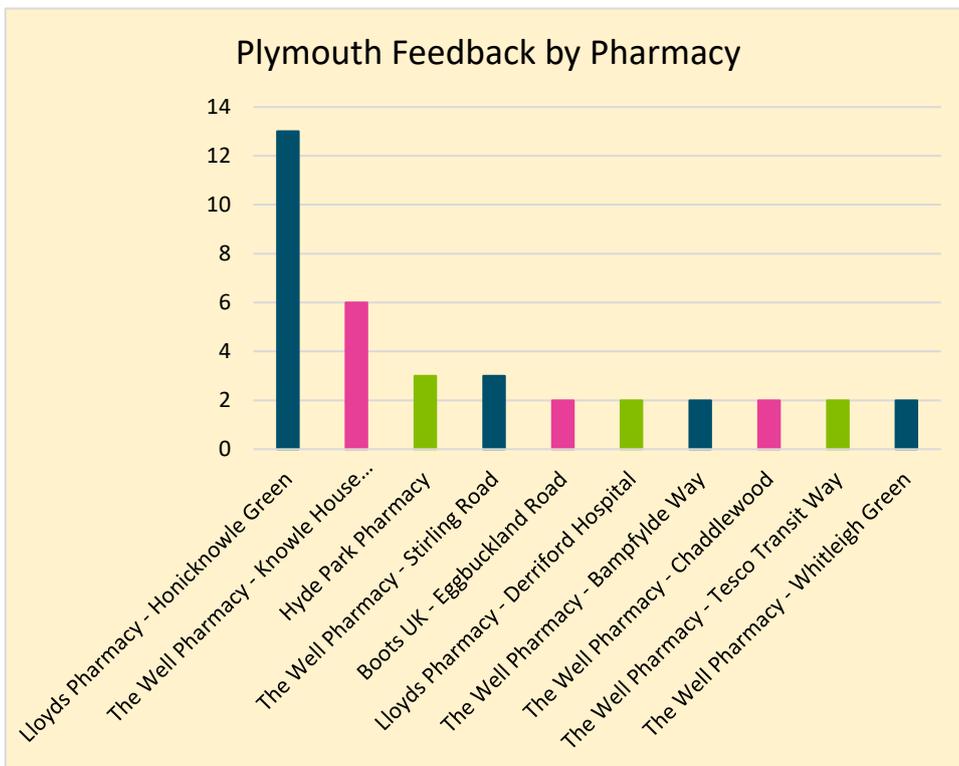
Patient Feedback

This summary will focus on the feedback raised in Plymouth. The data for Torbay and Devon for the last 12 months is not sufficient to draw conclusions or observations, but issues raised have been similar.

When looking at the Plymouth data specifically and comparing the amount of feedback received since 1 April 2018, we have seen an increase year on year.



The following chart shows the breakdown of multiple feedback received against individual Pharmacies. The table identifies other Pharmacies where only 1 piece of feedback has been received.



ASDA Pharmacy
Boots Uk - Chard Road
Boots UK - Drakes Circus
Church Road Pharmacy
Lloyds Pharmacy - Marlborough Street
Lloyds Pharmacy - Sainsburys
Morrisons Plymstock
Pharmacy General
The Well Pharmacy - Ham Green
The Well Pharmacy - Kings Street
The Well Pharmacy - St Budeaux
The Well Pharmacy - Stoke Village, Devonport Road

Themes and Sub-Themes

HWDPT have developed a fused Database that enables us to amalgamate public feedback data from various platforms into one Public Feedback Dashboard making it easier to interrogate the information.

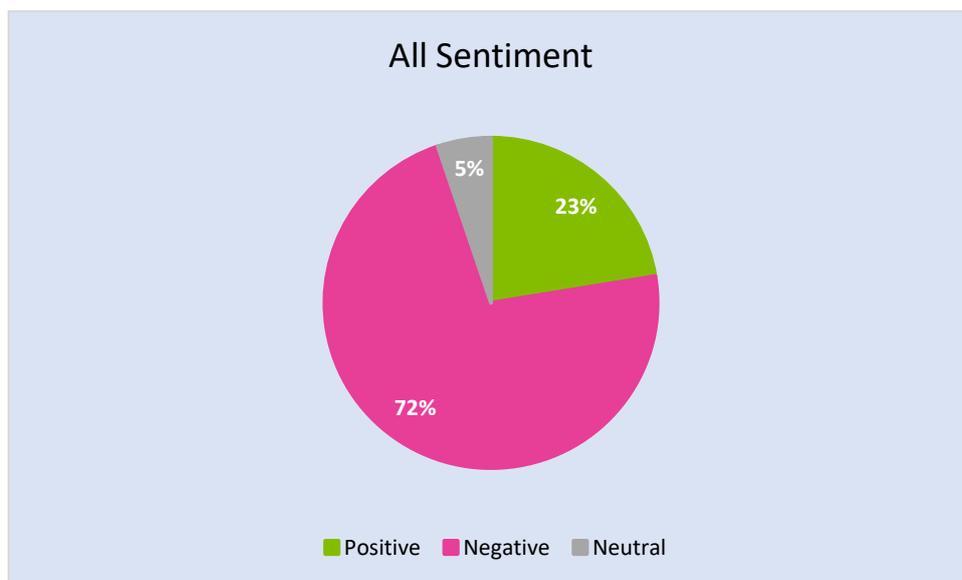
The dashboard allows us to provide individual charts for the three Healthwatch areas (Devon, Plymouth & Torbay). More importantly it allows us to more easily co-ordinate data for a single service provider or group of Pharmacies if required. This has been done by aligning top level themes from each system.

Themes and Sub-Themes are assigned to feedback as it is entered. Each piece of feedback can have multiple Themes. Therefore, the total number of Themes will be usually greater than the number of pieces of feedback received. Sentiment is also added to each Theme as positive, negative, or neutral.

Main Issues raised:

- Issues around prescriptions/repeat prescriptions
- Staff attitudes
- Service Delivery/Opening Hours
- Communication/Telephone access

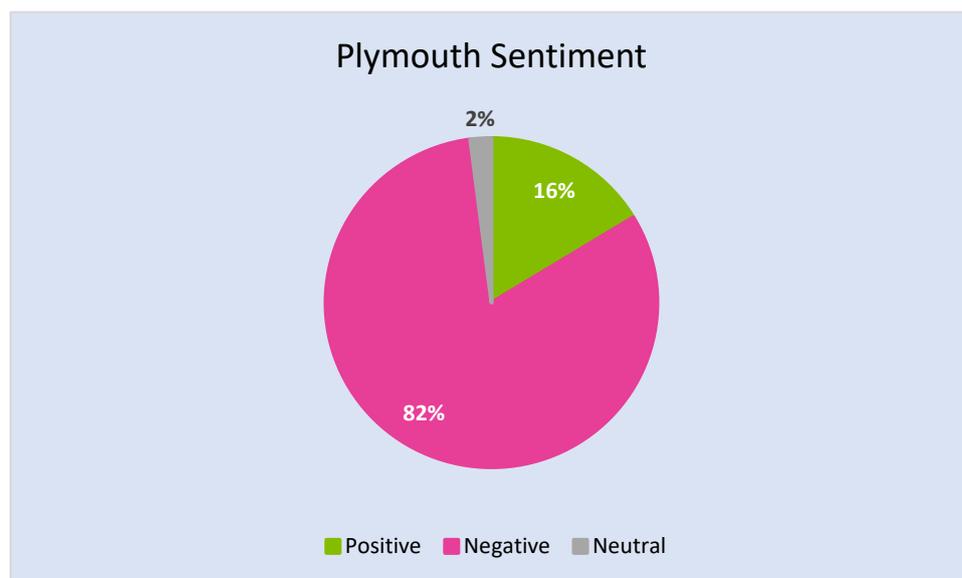
Sentiment across the whole of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay:

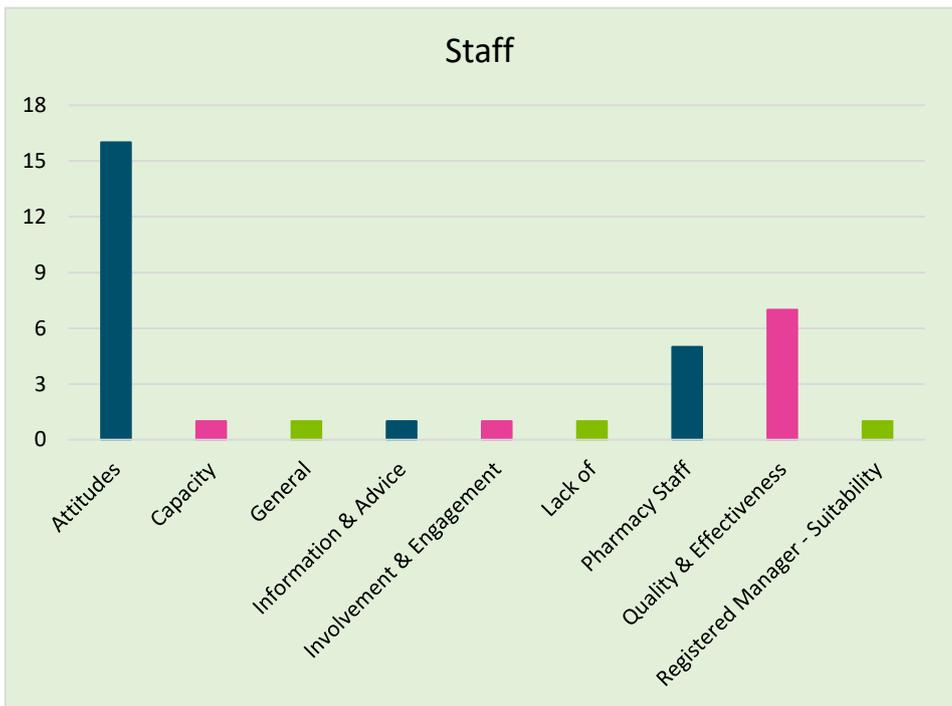
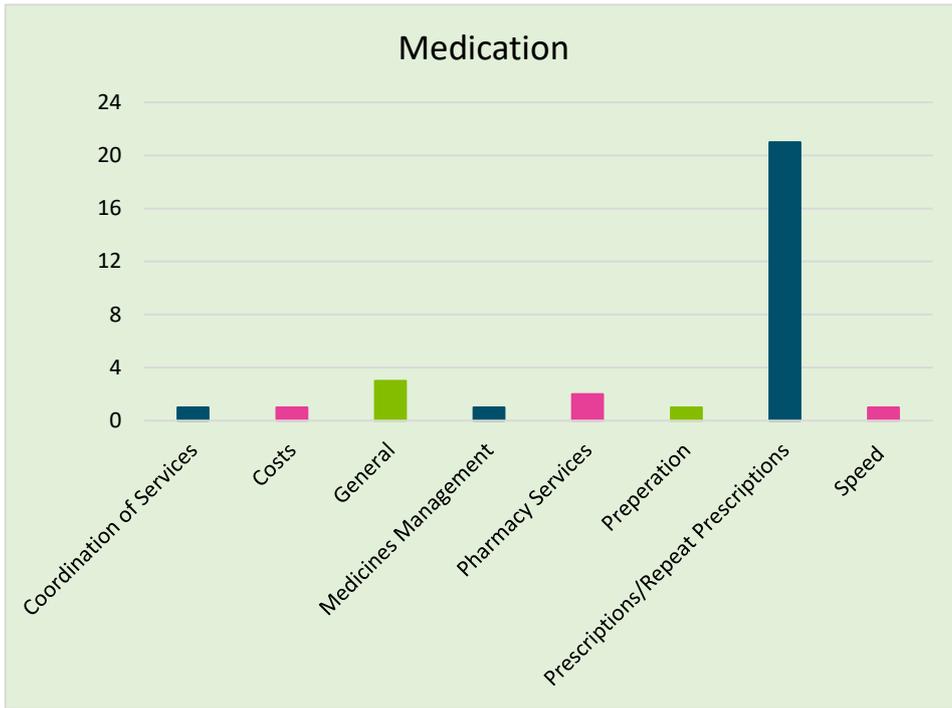


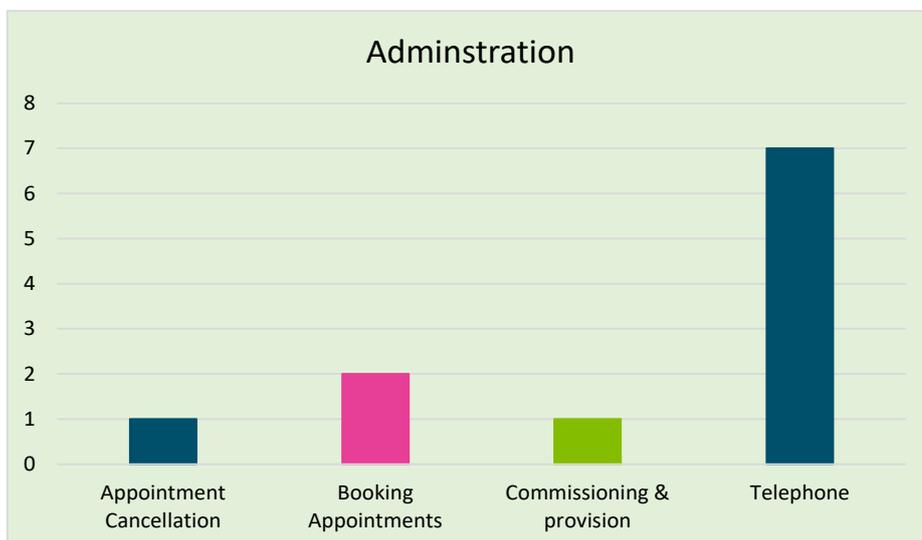
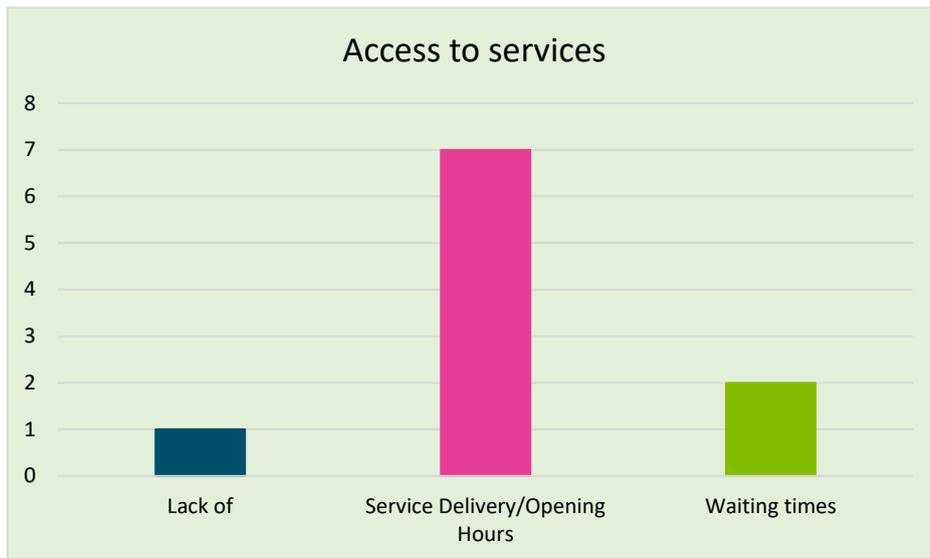
Sentiment in Devon was mixed (total 4 reviews) and in Torbay was 80% positive (total 5 reviews).

Plymouth Sentiment, Themes and Sub-Themes

The following charts highlight the sentiment and main themes based on 49 pieces of feedback from Plymouth only.







Pharmacy Groups

There are three main Pharmacy Groups operating in Plymouth:

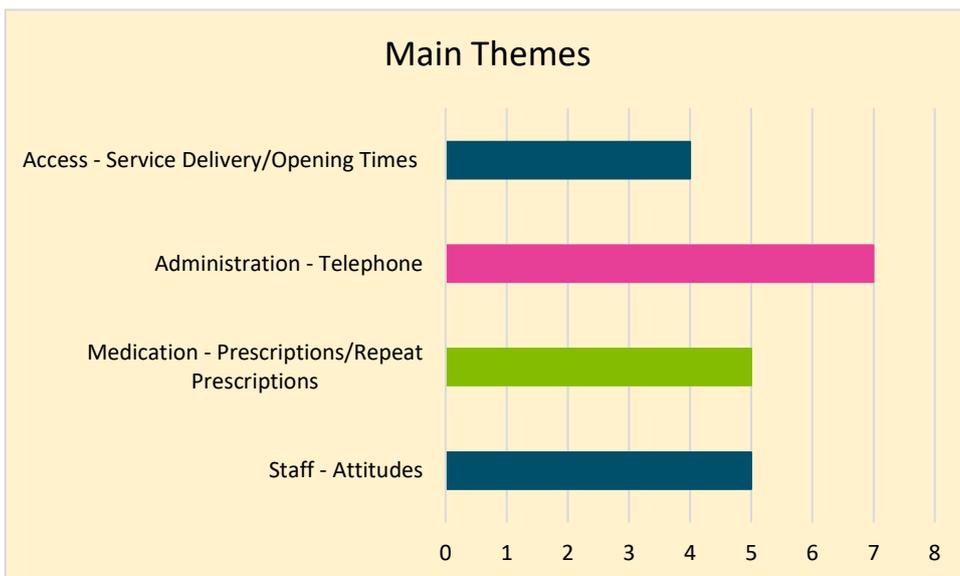
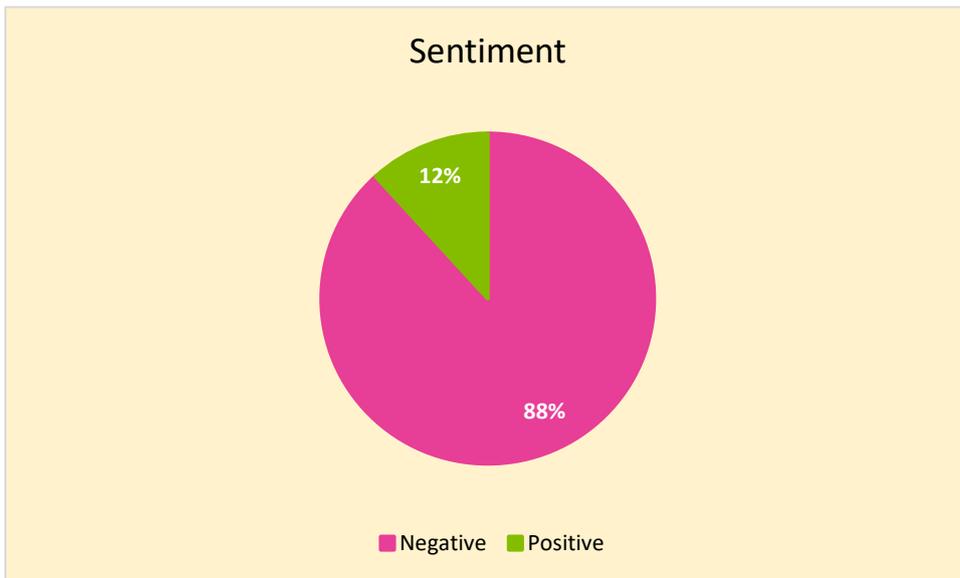
- Boots – 14 branches
- Lloyds – 4 branches
- Well – 19 branches

HWDPT have received feedback on 22 Plymouth Pharmacies (equating to 40% of total Pharmacies in Plymouth) of which 86% where about Pharmacies in one of these three groups.

The following charts breaks down the feedback received for Lloyds and Well Pharmacy Groups.

Lloyds

There were 17 pieces of feedback (35% of total feedback) for the 4 Lloyds pharmacies in Plymouth with 13 of these being against the Honicknowle Green Branch. The following charts shows sentiment and themes raised for all feedback for this group:



Commentary

The following is a selection of feedback. These are the views of the reviewer of their experiences using the service and not those of Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth & Torbay.

Ok so this pharmacy was closed at lunchtime on Wednesday and now closed all day on Saturday, surely you have a contract to state you should be open. Both occasions imagine how many customers need their medication. Imagine how many children need urgent medication or advice? The inconvenience this has caused myself due to trying to get end of life medication for my mother-in-law only to be closed on a Saturday, again imagine people working Monday to Friday 9-6 and can only get there on Saturdays all the call backs for Saturday who would have thought this was going to be ok as the store SHOULD be open.

This is the second time in 3 days it's been closed so you are failing your contractual agreement. Your pharmacy has been shocking for the last 2-3 years with a slight improvement, now it's dipping again.

Honicknowle Green - May 2021. Sentiment Negative

Try to ring beforehand to make sure prescriptions ready to pick up they never answer the phone therefore queues of people waiting outside! Upon arriving to pick up the phone rang continuously nobody bothered to pick up!!

Honicknowle Green - May 2021. Sentiment Negative

I put in my script on Monday leave it to next Monday to collect from pharmacy and it is never ready

Honicknowle Green - October 2021. Sentiment Negative

Served by [name redacted] yesterday and she was so rude didn't care that my medication wasn't ready. I said I'd wait but was told it will be a few hours even though it's only 3 lots of tablets. Nobody cares in that pharmacy

Honicknowle Green - October 2021. Sentiment Negative

Unfortunately, I have a serious illness resulting in numerous visits to the hospital and the pharmacy. On each occasion I have been treated really well by courteous staff able to meet my needs. Today when visiting I asked for advice for itchy eye treatment having tried two types of Optrex already that didn't work. I was recommended a different type which has made a huge improvement in reduction of itching with the first dose. Very happy about that.

Derriford Hospital – January 2022. Sentiment Positive

The place was closed when I went to collect.

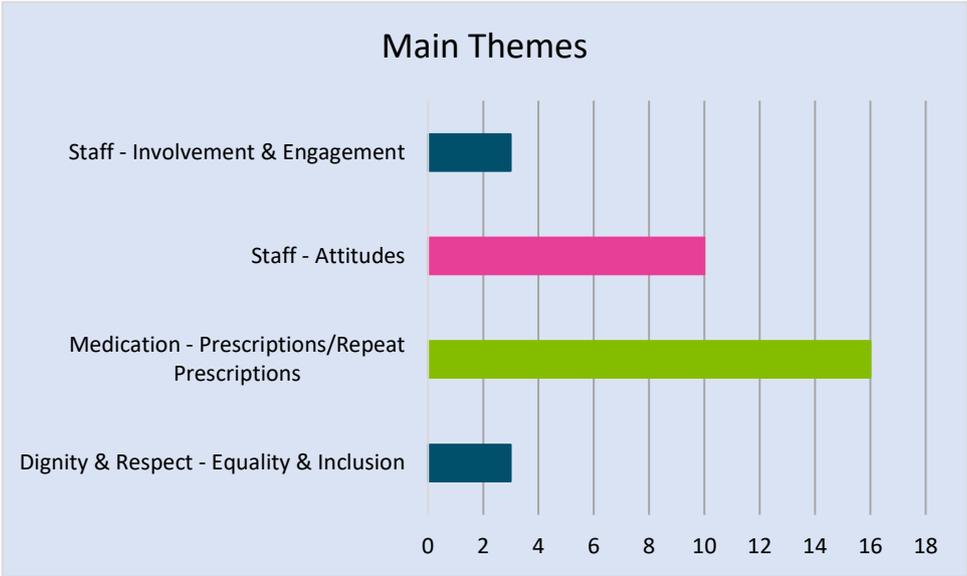
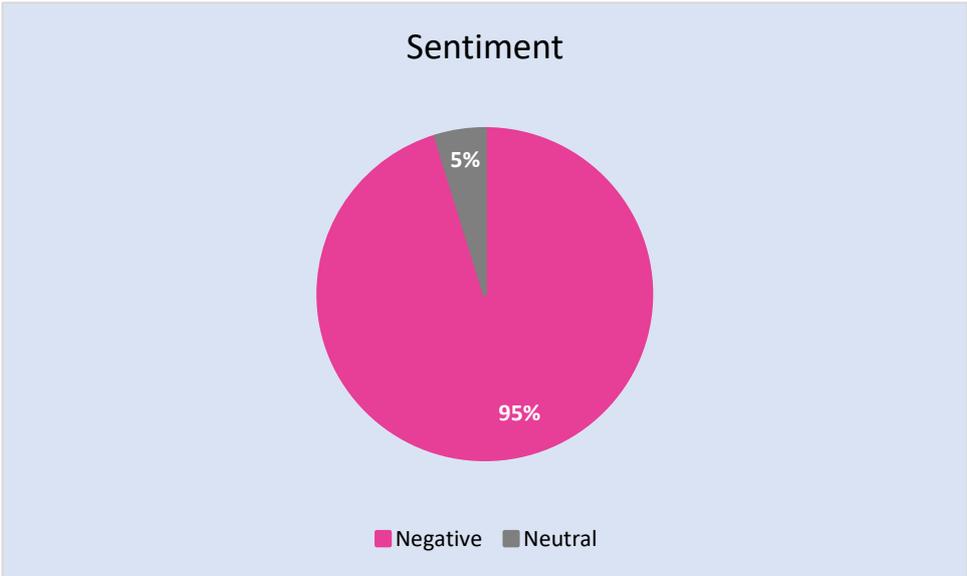
Honicknowle Green – January 2022. Sentiment Negative

Served very quick and the staff are very helpful.

Sainsbury's – February 2022. Sentiment Positive

Well

There were 21 pieces of feedback (43% of total feedback) for 10 of the 19 Well pharmacies in Plymouth with 6 of these being against the Branch adjacent to Knowle House Surgery. The following charts shows sentiment and themes raised for all feedback for this group:



Commentary

The following is a selection of feedback. These are the views of the reviewer of their experiences using the service and not those of Healthwatch Devon, Plymouth & Torbay.

Extremely rude and arrogant staff in my opinion I felt bullied in two occasions. This pharmacy is really quite horrendous how it treats people.

Whiteleigh Green - July 2021. Sentiment Negative

Since staff changed and a young guy started working in this pharmacy going there became very unpleasant. He is very rude arrogant and makes me feel like I am unwelcomed there. Each time I come for my prescription that's being sent from my surgery he tells me he only just got it even though it's been sent 7-10 days earlier. He said to his colleague today that it is always me asking without waiting for the text msg. On one occasion he told me I could buy the thing I had prescribed instead of waiting for my free prescription. I have social anxiety and depression and experiences like this make me afraid of going to get my medicine.

Bampflyde Way - April 2021. Sentiment Negative

Mother trying to find out if medication for son is ready: "I've tried the number on google says it's not possible to connect my call".

St Budeaux - July 2021. Sentiment Neutral

Healthwatch investigated and the number was correct but apparently not being answered or had no voicemail availability

Prescriptions never ready despite leaving 10 days from requests at the surgery to collection. Very slow to respond to customers in the shop. More often than not the script is not complete. No leadership qualities with the staff (they just wander around at the back and completely ignore waiting customers). Premises are very untidy. Although scripts (if done) are alphabetically stored it always takes so long to find them. Constantly queuing in the shop and onto the paving outside. Just generally a traumatic experience at every visit.

Chaddlewood - October 2021. Sentiment Negative

Staff ignored me although I was the only customer in the shop when they did serve me it was with attitude and not at all helpful.

Knowle House - March 2022. Sentiment Negative

I delivered my repeat prescription by hand on Thursday and as I hadn't heard from the pharmacy to say it was ready by the following Thursday, I thought I had better find out what was going on. I must have tried to call them by phone some 20 or so times but no-one answered so I rang my GP service next door, and they said the request had been sent over on Monday and that it had been dispensed. I kept trying to ring them and on my 10th attempt someone finally answered. I said that I was calling to see if my prescription was ready and the somewhat bad attitude and frosty reply, I received was to tell me I would receive a text when it was ready. Later that afternoon I finally received confirmation that my prescription was ready for collection. I asked my wife to collect my prescription on her way home from work, which she did. On inspecting the package, I quickly realised that there were 5 items missing and I was worried that I would run out as the only chance I had was the following day (Friday) as the pharmacy is closed at weekends. The following morning (Friday) I drove to the pharmacy and entered the building. I was told by a lady at a computer that she would be with me as soon as she could, and this was whilst three other members of the pharmacy staff were busy 'chatting' behind her. I eventually got asked what I needed, and I told the lady that my wife had collected my prescription but that there were five items missing and I gave the lady a list of the missing items. She went back to her computer and after a little while said, "it's not ready yet as we're waiting for it to come in, hopefully it will be in later this afternoon". I said "HOPEFULLY! Why then send me a text to tell me it was ready in the first place?" I walked out of the shop in disgust and the first thing I did when I got home was to find out if I could transfer my prescription requirements to the Co-op pharmacy in Crownhill village.

Knowle House – March 2022. Sentiment Negative

Healthwatch Observations

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the last 24 months have been like no other in recent memory for individuals, NHS and Social Care services, business, and the nation in general as we all came to grips with lockdown requirements and the uncertainty of day-to-day life that saw many of us impacted in various ways by this virus.

NHS and Social Care services have had to adapt at pace to tackle the virus, keep people safe and where needed provide treatment for not only Covid-19, but for other illnesses and conditions be it routine or emergency.

Pharmacies have been vital in providing medication for patients and more recently for helping to deliver both Covid-19 and flu vaccines. However, it is clear from patient feedback that service delivery has not been easy, especially around prescribing/repeat prescribing where timelines appear not to have been met, staff attitudes to patients/customers have not been as they should have, and short notice closures and apparent non answering of the telephone enquiries have exacerbated the situation.

Healthwatch accept the pressures that staff have been working under due to the pandemic, especially where staff have been following national guidance around self-isolation leading to reduced staffing, but the number of comments around negative staff attitude is a concern. There also seems to have been a breakdown in other communication methods as well (text service and telephone enquiries). Shortages of staff for pharmacies in North Devon has also been raised to us by one of our Healthwatch Assist Groups (Devon Carers).

Issues around medication have also been raised with prescriptions not received or not being fulfilled – pharmacies may know there has been a supply issue for certain medication but was this fully relayed to the patient?

Even before the pandemic there have been concerns raised by patients around the prescription/repeat prescription process between GPs and Pharmacies that has left patients having to shuttle between the two to try and find out what has gone wrong as each service apparently blamed the other. Once the patient has tried to collect a prescription from the Pharmacy and an issue has been highlighted, surely this should be dealt with by process and not the patient ending up as 'the go between' to get the issue resolved?

Anecdotally we are becoming aware that dependent on how a repeat is requested (i.e., via a request handed into GP reception, request via the GP website or through the NHS App), differing times are occurring between requesting medication and it being ready for collection. Patients need to be fully informed about the ways to request medication and the period of time between requesting and when medication will be available to collect so that an informed choice can be made. We have heard that ordering a repeat prescription via the NHS App will generally mean it is ready for collection 'next day' rather than 4 to 5 working days.

Finally, as Pharmacies are asked to do more under the Community Pharmacy Framework and where patients are being signposted to Pharmacies before seeing their GP or referred into by other services, there is a concern that demand is outstripping capacity. By doing this without ensuring suitable resource is available are we not just kicking the problem down the street?

Contact us



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