

Quarterly Report: October - December 2018

Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to listen to what people like about services or what could be improved and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

People who use health and social care services tell Healthwatch Northumberland about their experiences throughout the year. This report shares the issues and themes which emerged from October to December 2018. The next report will cover January to March 2019.

We receive feedback and enquiries from:

- Talking to people at local community events
- Telephone calls, emails, letters and social media
- Surveys
- Focus groups on specific issues

We are open to all feedback about health and social care services. Respondents to our Annual Survey identified five priorities for specific focus these are mental health services, dementia care services, home care, GP services and access to services.

Feedback

Between October and December 2018 we had 98 individual pieces of unsolicited feedback and we spoke with approximately 530 people face to face. We attended flu clinics at GP practices in Tynedale, North Northumberland and Castle Morpeth, talking to a wide range of older residents and those with long term conditions and learning disabilities. We were at Morpeth, Berwick, Prudhoe, and Widdrington libraries during Library Week. We also attended "Winter Warmer" and SEND events, the Carers' Rights Day at Berwick and spoke at the Belford Parish Council and the Belford Practice Patient Participation Group.

We also received feedback from the listening event about the Berwick Hospital proposals, a GP survey and engagement at The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital. We have not included the feedback from these events as they have their own separate reports.

Not everyone told us where they live but those who did were from:

Ashington and Blyth	10
Castle Morpeth	10
Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley	4
North Northumberland	4
Tynedale	7

We have divided the unsolicited feedback and comments by the themes of Primary Care (GPs, dentists, ambulance etc.) Secondary Care (outpatient care in hospitals etc.), Social Care (care homes, support at home etc.), Mental Health (community and hospital services)

We have looked at the comments across all services mentioned to understand:

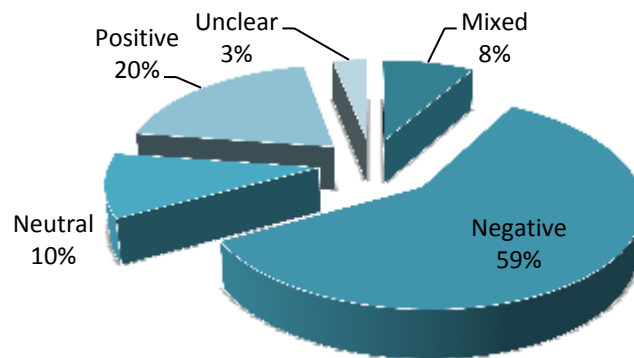
- The general tone of sentiments expressed
- Sentiments about access to services and quality of services as key measures of patient and service user experience
- The balance of sentiments about specific service areas

General Tone of sentiments

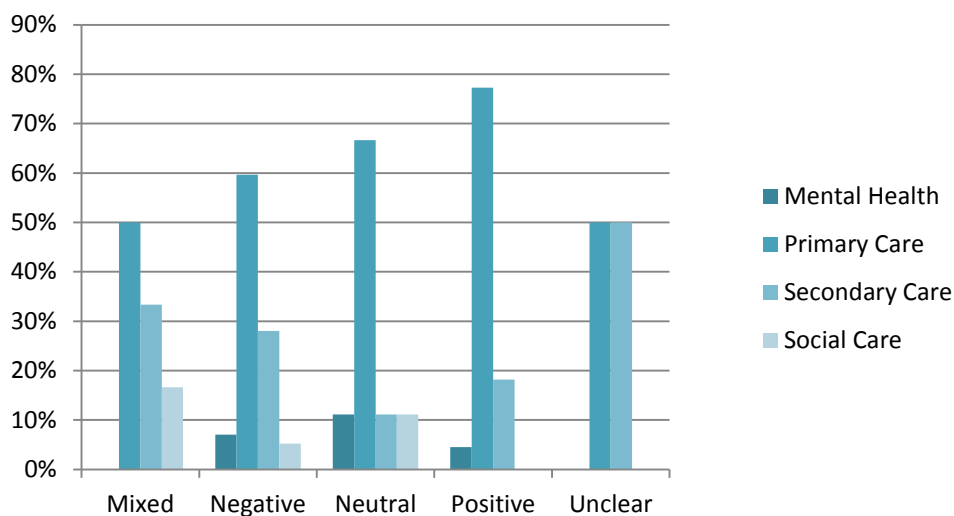
The services/service providers or commissioners which were specifically mentioned in feedback are listed below. Where a specific location has been named, for example Wansbeck General Hospital we have named it rather than Northumbria Healthcare as the service provider.

Alnwick Medical Group	Lintonville Medical Practice
Amble Health Centre	Lloyds Pharmacy (Ashington)
Ashington Academy	Newcastle Freeman hospital
Bedlingtonshire Medical Group	North East Ambulance Service
Blyth Community Hospital	North Northumberland Older People's CCT - Alnwick
Boots Pharmacy (Paikes Street, Alnwick)	Northgate Hospital
Border Links Ltd	Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group
Bridge View	Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Brockwell Medical Group	Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital
Broomhill Health Centre	CYPS Northumberland (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW))
Burn Brae Medical Group	Pleasey Centre (NTW)
Collingwood Medical Group	Patient Transport Service
Corbridge Medical Group	Ponteland Medical Group
Cramlington Medical Group	Railway Medical Group
Dolphin View Care Home	Rothbury Cottage Hospital
Felton Surgery	Royal Victoria Infirmary
Forum Family Practice	Seaton Park Medical Group
Gas House Lane Surgery	Talking Matters Northumberland
Greenacres Community Mental Health Team	The Rothbury Practice
Greystoke Surgery	The Sele Medical Practice
Guidepost Medical Group	Thompson Opticians Ltd (Alnwick)
Haltwhistle Medical Group	Union Brae & Norham Practice
Harbottle Surgery	Wansbeck General Hospital
Helping Hands Community Care	Wellclose Medical Surgery
Hexham General Hospital	Wellway Medical Group
HMP Northumberland	Whalton Unit
JRP Jones and Associates Limited	

The overall sentiments expressed about all services are shown in the chart below. While 59% of feedback had a negative sentiment this is a reduction from the previous quarter (61%) and positive comments have increased from 10% to 20%.



We have grouped these sentiments across the four main service areas: primary care, secondary care, social care and mental health services. Primary care figures strongly in all categories, especially positive comments.



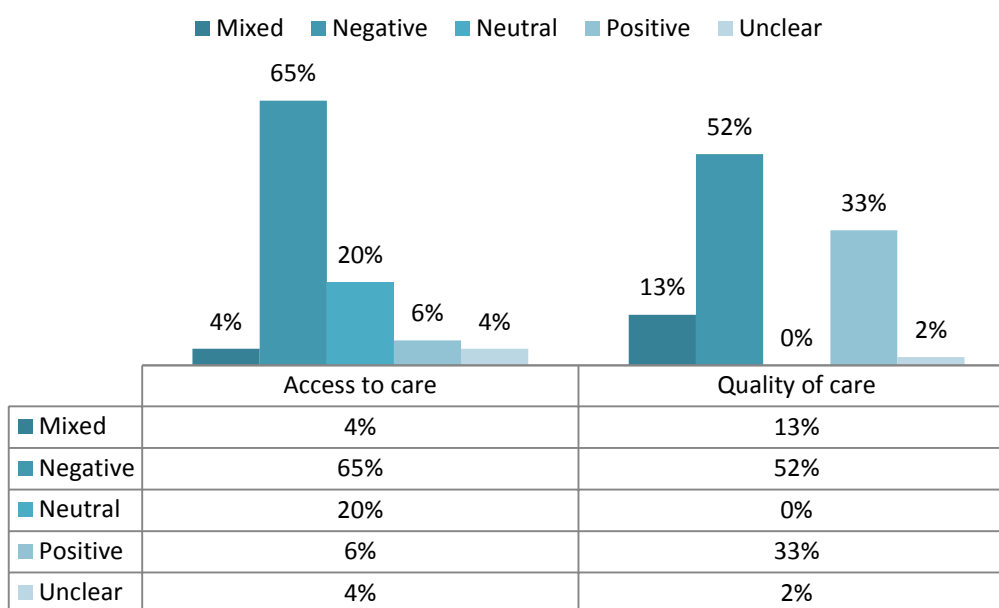
Personal Story: Primary Care

“I think [local GP surgery] is really brilliant for giving people from other surgeries a chance to meet new people, I feel confident, relaxed, comfortable, when I am there. I would recommend other people to give [it] a try. The doctors there are helpful, friendly, polite.”

Patient, Cramlington Bedlington and Seaton Valley

Access and Quality of care

There was an even split of feedback this quarter between access and quality of care, and the chart shows the range of sentiments expressed about each aspect.



Access to care

The 20% neutral comments all relate to requests for information about services including Patient Transport Service, Sight Support, Home Care, Collingwood Surgery, Talking Matters Northumberland and Felton Surgery.

The positive comments (up from 2% last quarter) are about Collingwood Surgery and the Rothbury Hospital proposals. Negative comments rose from 36% last quarter. GP appointment systems at a number of surgeries again attracted the most negative or mixed comments.

Personal story: GP appointment

"Couldn't get a GP appointment. The receptionist said there were no appointments available. There have been numerous occasions with the receptionist not being helpful. The doctors and nurse practitioners are very good. Had to go to NSECH emergency department today as could not get a GP appointment."

Valley

Patient, Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton

Quality of care

Positive comments were up from 8% last quarter and typically mentioned particular staff members or groups of staff. There were also reports of better experience in booking Patient Transport Service;

“There is an improvement in how phoning for ambulance transport (Patient Transport) is requested. Not so intimidating!” Patient, Tynedale

Negative comments (which rose from 25% last quarter) tended to highlight the ‘system’ rather than people.

Personal Story: Caring for people with dementia

“My [parent] lives in a care home. I am positive about care home quality. I am negative about Northumbria HCT management of [parent’s] admission as [they] were moved between 4 different services. I am upset I wasn’t contacted before the moves. No-one looked at the notes for my mobile number so messages left on landline while I was at work. During admissions I was not contacted by specialist dementia care staff as advertised.”

Carer, Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley

Balance of sentiments about specific service areas

People told us about a specific place they received care or type of service e.g. “home care” or a general concern. We have divided feedback about GP services and Social Care to better understand what aspects of service are being reported.

It should be noted that in some cases people raised concerns about the administration, organisation or process involved in a service.

The ‘GP registration’ category all relate to people who contacted us about how to register with a practice following the closure of Collingwood Surgery. This was mainly people who had not been able to engage with the re-registration process through personal circumstances or poor mental health and where a third party (carer, relative or health professional) had become involved.

Service	Sentiment					Total
	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Unclear	
Acute care		1		1		2
Administration		1				1
Cancer services	1				1	2
Community Health Services				1		1
Continuing Health Care Funding		1				1
Coordination of care		1				1
Dementia care	1	2				3
Emergency care		4				4
Gastroenterology		1				1
GP appointments	2	12		1	1	16
GP commissioning			1			1
GP general	2	9	1	7		19
GP registration		2	4	1		7
Maternity				1		1
Mental Health		6	2	1		9
Optician				3		3
Patient Transport	1	2	1	1		5
Pharmacy		2				2
Pre-Operative assessment		1				1
Prison health care		3				3
Radiology		1				1
Service Change		1		1		2
Social care Home Care			1			1
Social care Residential care		1				1
Social care Respite care	1	1				2
Support for carers		1				1
Transport		1				1
Urgent Care		3		1	1	5

In the next section we will look at themes and issues which emerged for each of the service areas of Primary Care, Secondary Care, Mental Health and Social Care. Mental Health services are a Healthwatch Northumberland Strategic Priority in 2018/19 and therefore receive a particular focus.

Primary care	
Emerging issues	<p>Prison Healthcare: although a serving prisoner may not be a resident of Northumberland habitually, they are signposted to Healthwatch Northumberland if they have concerns about their healthcare. The concerns raised are about delays in arranging appointments particularly outside of the prison.</p> <p>Communications: a Patient Participation Group expressed the view that their practice's ability to communicate with patients in a timely way was being hampered by being part of a bigger group of surgeries.</p>
Ongoing themes	<p>GP appointment system: making a GP appointment continues to cause concern, in particular triage systems and waiting for return calls and the waiting time for an appointment. This theme has been prevalent through 2018.</p>
What are we doing?	<p>We will share feedback received to the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (NCCG) and service providers and we send feedback about individual GP practices to Practice Managers</p> <p>We carried out a survey about GP appointments between September and December and will share the report with NCCG and publish in March 2019. It indicates a lack of clarity about 'new' services such as care navigation</p> <p>Together with Healthwatch North Tyneside and with Northumbria Healthcare we surveyed people in the waiting area at The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington. We are discussing the insights with Northumbria Healthcare and NCCG and will publish our report and recommendations shortly.</p>

“Overall I am very content with the support received from the [local] practice. Staff are friendly, nurses informative. It is relatively easy to obtain appointments EXCEPT if you want a specific GP. I like the online site and use it regularly to obtain repeat prescriptions.” **Patient, Tyndale**

Secondary care	
Emerging issue	<p>Communication: people reported a variety of experiences where they felt communication between the patient, family and the service provider could be improved. This included relatives not being informed of patients being moved to different services, information not being shared between services and letters taking an extended time to reach patients leaving them anxious.</p> <p>Also people attending a support group for physical illnesses expressed concern at closure of the service without discussion with patients or involving them in co-design of alternative provision.</p>
Ongoing theme	<p>Logistics: we continue to receive feedback about problems with the coordination of appointments and people needing to travel for routine and short appointments.</p>
What are we doing?	<p>We will share feedback received with the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group, NCCG, and service providers and sign post people to help with making a formal complaint where this is appropriate.</p> <p>We are meeting the Dementia Lead Nurse at Northumbria Healthcare to discuss the feedback.</p> <p>We have published a report highlighting the barriers people face when having to travel for treatment or as a visitor. The report focuses on Coquetdale but relevance for other areas.</p> <p>https://healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk/transport-implications-for-health-services-in-coquetdale/</p>

*“10 minute ultrasound at the Freeman that could have been done at Berwick. Took a day off work for 6 minute appointment. Wanted me to have a blood test at the Freeman. Refused treatment.” **Patient North Northumberland***

Mental Health	
Emerging issue	Access to care: feedback has covered different individual situations but with an underlying theme of issues of access to care either getting appointments in a crisis, meeting the eligibility criteria for services and the availability of basic information to contact services.
What are we doing?	<p>We received a positive response from commissioners for our Insight Report on preventative services for young people and have had follow up meetings with key individuals and organisations with interest in young people’s mental health to share intelligence and opportunities for collaboration.</p> <p>We have established links with mental health networks and use relevant feedback at the Mental Health Promotion & Suicide Prevention Group convened by Northumberland County Council Public Health and the Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Implementation Group convened by Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group.</p>

“I have had very positive experiences of support from my Community Psychiatric Nurses in the last few years, thanks to [named staff] at [local centre]” **Patient, Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley**

Social care	
Emerging issue	Continuing Health Care Funding: we heard from someone whose parent lives in a care home and applied for Continuing Health Care Funding. The funding was awarded after appeal but the situation is still unresolved and the family has been advised that a legal challenge may be necessary. The family is unhappy with the decision making process and clarity of information at a
Ongoing theme	Home Care: we continue to receive reports of difficulties in securing reliable home care support due to lack of staff.
What are we doing?	We have done further work on home care in the Coquet Valley and will publish our report and recommendations in June 2019. We are meeting with the Director of Adult and Children's Services and the Senior Commissioning Manger Adult Care at Northumberland County Council to share the feedback.

"I am a carer of my husband with Parkinson's disease with Lewy Body Dementia. The NHS has given me everything I need to help at home. The service that the practice gives is first rate. It is a stressful time being a carer." **Carer, Tynedale**