

# Healthwatch Kent Insights

March 2022



**Every day we are hearing feedback from people in Kent about their experience of health and social care services.**

**This report summarises the feedback we've heard in March 2022.**

**If you would like more details, we can supply that.**

**Just drop us a line**

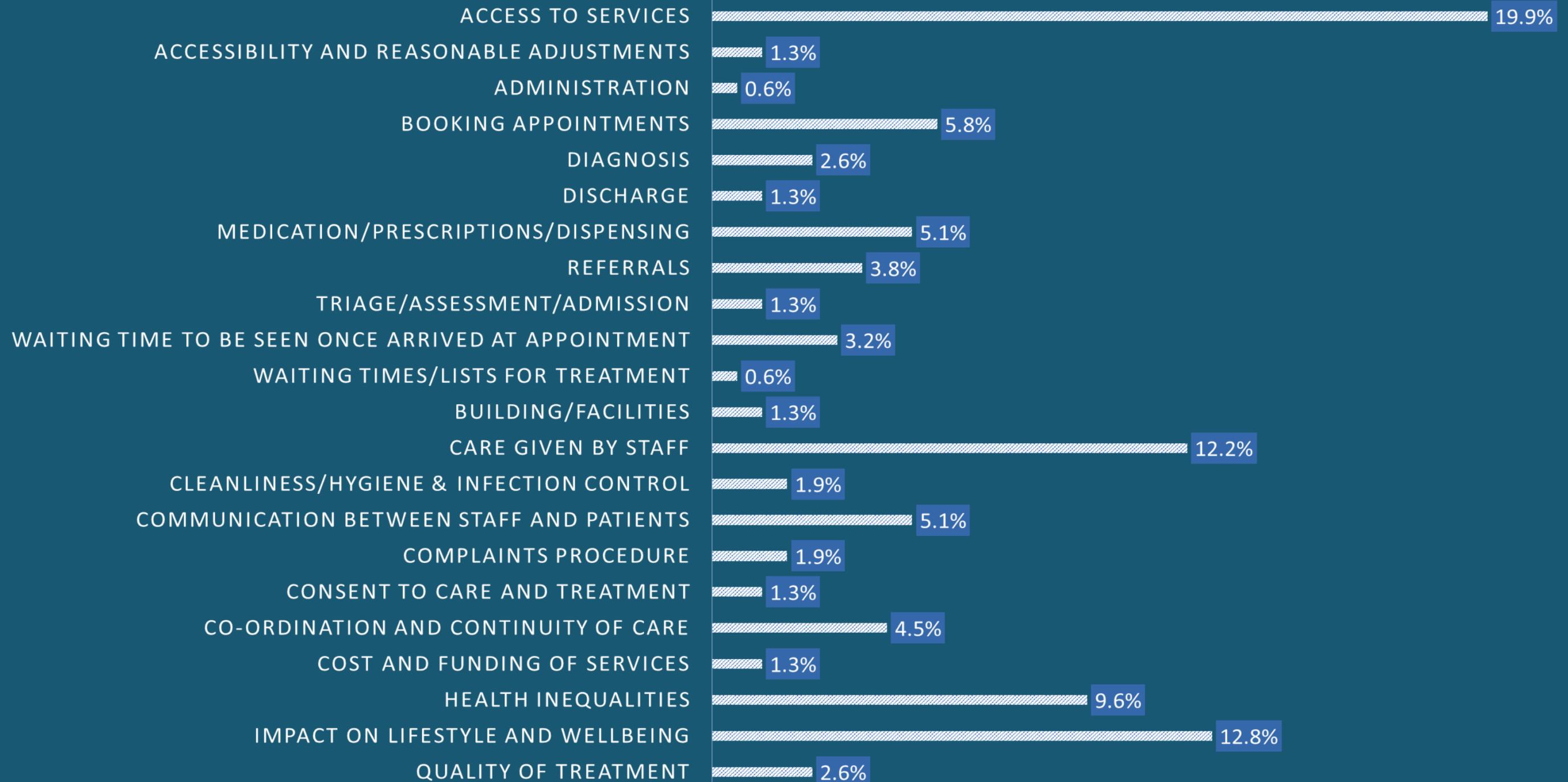
**[feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk](mailto:feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk)**



# What have we heard about this month?

## HEALTHWATCH KENT CATEGORIES

2022  
MAR



# What have we heard?

## Access to Services – 19.9% of the feedback

This month we've seen a shift in the feedback. Although the majority of stories in this category (45%) were about dentists, we have seen a steep increase in the number of issues around GP services.

- Feedback about GPs accounted for 35% of the feedback in this category.
- 29% of the GP feedback were from people telling us that they had ended up in A&E because they couldn't get a GP appointment
- 29% of people told us that their mental health was negatively impacted because they hadn't been able to access the care that they needed

Other stories included people telling us about struggles to access community mental health services, 111, social services and communication issues as a result of disability.

# What have we heard?

## Impact on Lifestyle and Wellbeing 12.8% of the feedback

The majority of stories in this category are from people telling us that their lifestyle and wellbeing has been impacted because of issues with their GP.

Examples include:

- One person told us they phoned the GP practice first thing every day for over 3 weeks but were unable to get through before the appointments were all booked. As a result, they experienced a decline in their wellbeing.
- Two people told us that waiting for referrals from their GP had impacted their wellbeing
- Another person told us that although their GP was being helpful and providing a good level of care, they have been left feeling suicidal as they are on a waiting list for a specialist service with an estimated waiting time of more than 5 years.



# What have we heard?

## Care given by staff – 12.2% of the feedback

We heard feedback about care within mental health services, hospital services and GP services, each one making up 21% of the data in this category.

### Mental health

- The feedback was mostly negative and relating to community mental health services.
- One person told us about the lack of contact with their care coordinator, while others reported a lack of sensitivity from members of staff.

### Hospital staff

- People told us that staff did not explain what they were doing, or why they were doing it. This caused them distress.

### Staff in GP surgeries

- Mostly about the difficulties in getting appointments, or being able to speak to a GP. As a result, many of the people we spoke to ended up phoning 111, calling an ambulance or going to A&E.

# What have we heard?

**Health Inequalities** 9.6% of the feedback

## Dental services

- 53% of the feedback relating to health inequalities was connected to dental services
- Majority of calls were from people telling us they could not get their child registered at a dental practice
- 25% of the dental feedback was from people telling us that they could not afford private dental treatment

## Mental health

- A number of people told us they felt discriminated against due to their mental health diagnosis. This has had an impact on the care they were receiving from health services.

## Digital exclusion

- We heard about elderly people who could not use the online GP services so had been unable to get an appointment or have a medication review for two years.

### Primary care

- In March, 35% of the feedback was about **GP services** and 22% regarding **dental** services. This is a shift from previous months when dental feedback made up a vast majority of what we were hearing.
- We had a significant number of calls from people who **ended up in A&E** because they could not get a GP phone call or appointment.
- We received less positive feedback than in previous months

### Social care

- We've seen a sudden increase in the number of people contacting us about **social care** issues; this made up 10% of the data we heard this month
- 4% of the feedback was from people contacting us about difficulties they've been having accessing benefits like Carers allowance.

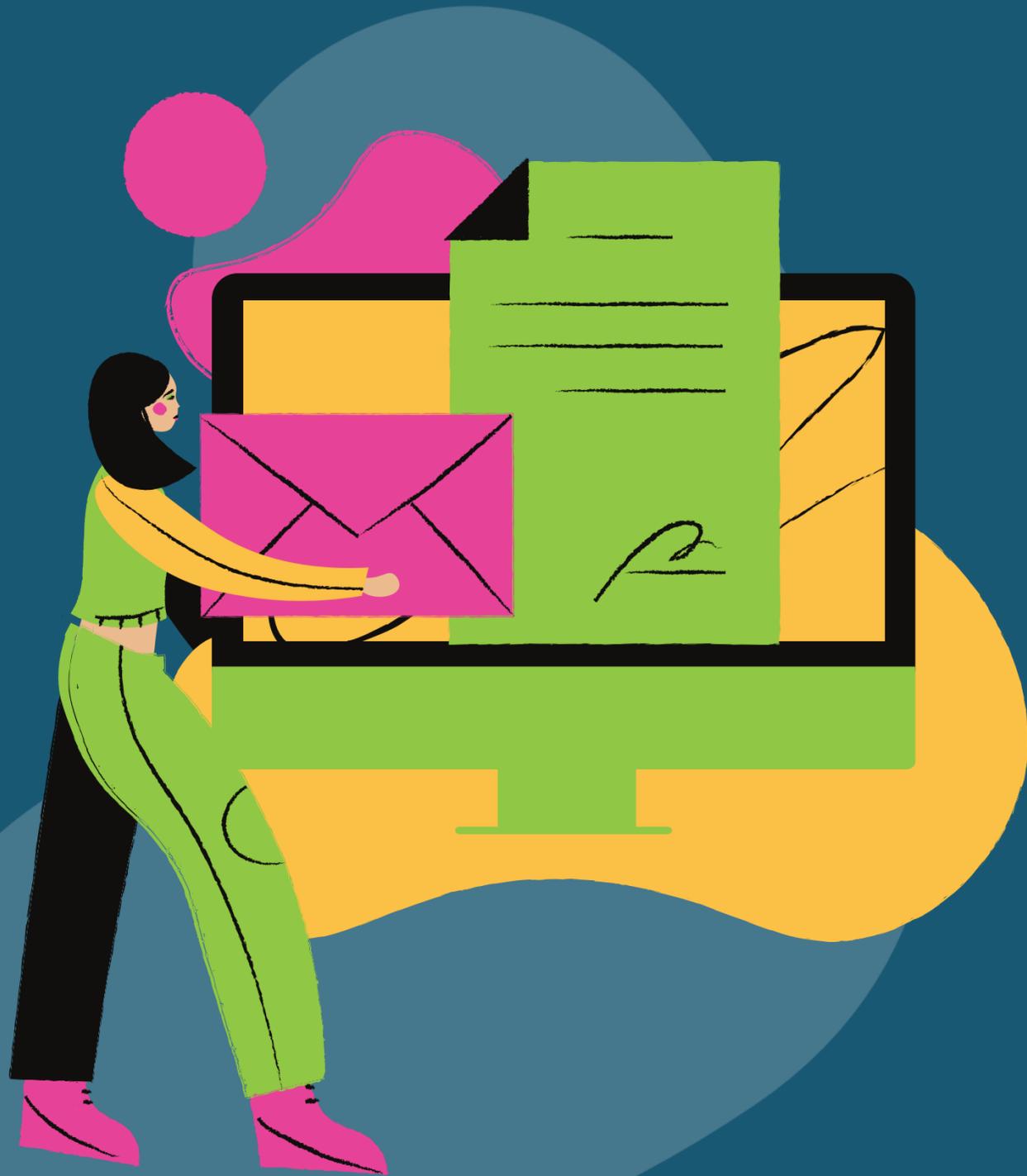
### Mental health

- 13% of the feedback we heard about mental health was from people whose care had caused a negative impact upon their mental wellbeing.

### Children

- 10% of the people we heard from in March, were calling to talk about their children. Of this, almost 40% of them couldn't access dental treatment.

# What have we done with the feedback?



We share the detailed feedback directly with the relevant organisations so that it can inform and influence their own plans.

We will always escalate any safeguarding or urgent cases for immediate action.

This month we have escalated 9 cases. 3 of them have been responded to.

# Focusing on community mental health

We've been proactively gathering feedback about CMHT services across Kent.

47 people shared their stories in detail with us. Feedback included:

**1. Call-backs either don't happen or are very delayed**

*"Call-backs usually take up to a week unless you call daily"*

**2. Appointments were sometimes cancelled with very short notice or no notice at all**

*"I turned up for my appointment waiting an hour to be told it's getting rebooked"*

**3. Some people felt their initial intervention was a positive experience, others viewed it as negative**

*"At an initial assessment at Laurel House, I felt listened to and advised the assessor was helpful"*

*"They made me feel that they didn't have the time to talk to me or that other people needed them more than me"*

**4. Individuals were uncertain what their care plan was or did not feel involved in its design**

*"Care plans are meant to be discussed with the patient. Not decided prior and completely ignore what the patient has said"*

**5. Some people felt supported by the crisis team, others felt that compassion was lacking**

*"I called The Beacon in distress and spoke to the duty team. I felt listened to and the conversation helped"*

*"They make you feel as there is no safety net."*

# What has the Mental Health User Voice Network heard?

111 people shared their experience of mental health services in March



60% of the feedback was about Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), GP Practices and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

The main themes were:

## **CMHT**

- Communication: People are told someone will call but not told when
- Criteria: Some feel they only get support when they have ideation

## **GP Practices**

- Availability of appointments: People are saying they are calling at 8am and told to try again the next day for an appointment
- Feeling let down: People who feel they need to talk to a GP about ongoing treatment and cannot get through the call queuing system are feeling let down

## **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service**

- Waiting times for a second appointment feature heavily in the feedback and lack of communication while waiting

You can find more information about the Kent Mental Health User Voice network [here](#)

# What have we done with the feedback?

## Helping people to get the care that they need

- A caller had been waiting three weeks for blood test results from their GP. They were very stressed and frustrated. We spoke to the practice manager, and they arranged a call with the patient to discuss their experience. The patient felt much better that the situation had been resolved.

## Listening to Carers

- 10 carers talked to us about their experience when the person they care for is discharged from hospital. We brought together a group of decision makers across Kent to listen to the feedback and discuss what they could change. Our findings have influenced the national Commitment to Carers and encouraged Kent hospitals to work better together and learn from each other how they can better support carers.

## Understand the value of our help

- We don't have a magic wand, but sometimes we are able to help people get a dental appointment. We have analysed the social value generated by our interventions. By securing someone in need with a dentist appointment it generates up to £2,500 worth of social value every time. Read more about our calculations [here](#)

**You can read more about what we did with your feedback in March [here](#)**

**We hear feedback via a range of routes including:**



**calls, texts and emails to our Information & Signposting service**



**social media and our online feedback form**



**we proactively reach out to voluntary groups to hear about issues facing their clients**

**This month we've reached 2,395 people**

**“You really listened to me and took the time to support me, thank you”**

**“Thank you very much. The information you gave me was really helpful”**

**“You actively listened and made me feel respected and valued”**

# Want more details?

**Let us know. We can review our data for specific topics and organisations, just let us know what you want.**

**Email:**

**[feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk](mailto:feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk)**

